

SWP, books, ‘Militant’ spark interest among working people

BY DAN FEIN

When teachers and other school workers went on strike May 7 in Pueblo, Colorado, Walmart worker Helen Meyers and a team of other Socialist Workers Party members and supporters were there to join in solidarity and

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY SPRING DRIVES

introduce the party, its paper the *Militant* and books by party leaders.

They got into a discussion at a noon-time rally with Tina Gurule, a school counselor, about the need to unify the working class and others in struggle to build a strong working-class movement to organize independently of the Democrats and Republicans, the parties of the bosses.

Gurule agreed. If the teachers could deepen their struggle alongside those fighting against police brutality, in defense of immigrants and the rights of women and gay people, “we can make a change,” she said. Gurule got a copy of *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* by SWP National

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Rulers’ disdain, anti-working-class attacks fuel protests in Puerto Rico



Elorientalpr.net/Esteban D. Rodríguez Flecha

April 30 protest in Humacao. Second sign from the left says, “Being old is not a crime. Enough already of the lies and deceit.” The sign next to it reads, “Lights for everyone, stop ignoring us.”

BY SETH GALINSKY

Officials of the government-run electric company in Puerto Rico claim that 98 percent of the U.S. colony now has electricity, eight months after hurricanes Irma and Maria ravaged the island, and just a month before the next hurricane season begins. But almost nobody believes them,

Join teachers for May 16 protest in North Carolina!



Militant/Diane Shur

Teachers at April 26 news conference in Greensboro, North Carolina, announcing May 16 march and rally in Raleigh to demand better wages, work conditions and funds for schools.

Back teachers, join Socialist Workers Party campaign!

The following statement was issued, May 9 by John Studer, Socialist Workers Party national campaign director.

After three decades of retreats something new is happening in the labor movement. With courage and

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Teachers, school workers build for Raleigh action

BY DIANE SHUR

GREENSBORO, N.C. — The school workers uprising that started in West Virginia in late February and has since rolled across Kentucky, Oklahoma, Arizona and Colorado, has hit North Carolina. More than 11,500 teachers have already filed for personal days to march and rally outside the Capitol in Raleigh at the opening of the state legislative session May 16.

“13 and Counting” is the headline

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US rulers, Tehran fight over sway in Middle East

BY TERRY EVANS

Determined to protect U.S. imperialist interests in the Middle East, push back Tehran’s growing military interventions and prevent Iran’s capitalist rulers acquiring nuclear arms, President Donald Trump May 8 withdrew the U.S. government from the 2015 nuclear deal signed by former President Barack Obama. That agreement — also signed by the rulers in Germany, France, Britain, Russia and China — eased sanctions on Iran in exchange for curtailing its nuclear program through 2030.

Trump said Washington will impose sanctions and take other steps to press Tehran to make additional concessions. More punishing sanctions will sharpen the crisis facing Iran’s capitalist rulers and fall most harshly on working people.

Washington holds a vast nuclear arsenal. According to a White House statement, the president will “assemble a broad coalition of nations to deny Iran all paths to a nuclear weapon.” Businesses and banks that trade with Iranian companies will have up to 180 days to end these operations.

Government spokespeople in London, Berlin, Paris and Tehran all say they will keep the deal working by allowing Iran’s oil exports and other trade to continue while Tehran keeps restrictions on nuclear activity. The three European capitalist regimes say they will

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‘Join fight against Iowa attack on women’s right to choose abortion’

BY LEA SHERMAN

More than 100 supporters of women’s right to choose abortion gathered at the state Capitol in Des Moines for an “Iowa Fights Back rally” May 4. They were protesting Gov. Kim Reynolds signing into law that day a so-called fetal heartbeat bill. The law would ban abortions so early in the pregnancy — at six weeks — that a woman might not even realize she was pregnant.

The fight for reproductive rights is “all of our fight,” Suzanna de Baca, president of Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, told the rally, “and it’s on all of us to push against these attacks on our lives, our bodies ... our rights.”

The law requires doctors to give all women an ultrasound before performing an abortion. If any pulsation is detected, then an abortion cannot be performed. Any doctor who does perform the medical procedure could see their license revoked or charges

filed by local prosecutors, though no penalties are set by the bill.

“The law is bad. Every woman has the right to make her own decision. Very young women get pregnant ac-

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Ukraine workers rally May Day in fight for wages, work safety

School workers in New Zealand rally for equal pay for women

Grenfell Tower fire survivors demand housing, fire safety

BY PAULINE HARTFORD

LONDON — Marking 10 months since the Grenfell Tower fire, where 72 people were killed and hundreds left homeless, thousands of survivors and supporters marched here April 14. Every month survivors mobilize to demand government action. This was the biggest demonstration to date.

The Grenfell inferno was a disaster waiting to happen, prepared by the callous indifference of government officials and the building’s owners and managers. It was fed by cladding installed on the building’s exterior that was a known fire hazard. There was no sprinkler system in the tower and substandard fire doors that failed to withstand the flames. A poignant moment at each march is when protesters turn in silence to view the still-standing charred remains of the tower, a monument to the rulers’ contempt for working people.

The survivors refuse to let the government’s announcement of a public inquiry into the causes of the fire shift attention away from the need for action now on rehousing and fire safety measures. Their actions have won broad support.

“As we made our way from the Kensington and Chelsea town hall to the tower, local residents leaned out their windows and people on the streets would stop their conversations and face the marchers to show solidarity,” Hugh Robertson, Communist League candidate for Plaistow South in the May 3 local council elections, told the *Militant*. The League built and joined the protest.

“Solidarity with the fight of the survivors is growing,” he said. “It shows what would be possible if the unions were to

get behind the fight for rehousing, for tearing down the flammable cladding on other buildings across the country, and for installation of sprinkler systems in all housing.” Robertson is a member of Unite at the Ford plant in Dagenham.

Dozens of bikers from different clubs, organized by the Muslim motorcycle organization Deen Riders, met at Ace Café in North London to drive through the city and lead off the April 14 march.

“We can’t distance ourselves from such an atrocity,” Jamaal Richards of Deen Riders said at the rally concluding the protest. “We have to ensure everyone gets justice.”

Pavel Viatkin, a young design engineer from Russia who has lived in London for five years, was one of the bikers. “We rode by Parliament to get here. Thousands saw us and were filming us with our signs for Grenfell United. We helped spread the message!” he said.

Speaking for the survivors’ organization Grenfell United, Adel Chaoui announced they hope the next march May 14 will be on Parliament where a debate on the composition of the panel for the public inquiry is scheduled.

“What we call ‘health and safety gone mad’ is wrapping a tower in a petrochemical blanket,” Chaoui said. The government had deregulated building controls to permit use of flammable



Motorcyclists lead April 14 march in London demanding government action to house victims of Grenfell disaster 10 months after fire killed 72. Disaster was result of rulers’ contempt.

cladding. Solidarity actions took place in Liverpool, Bristol, Brighton, Thanet, Southampton and Scotland.

Of the 209 Grenfell households that needed rehousing, only 60 have moved into permanent homes. A further 68 have accepted offers, but are still in emergency housing.

The Labour Party is cynically trying to evade responsibility for the disaster by making use of a leaked report that the spread of the fire was due to shoddy refurbishment work done by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

“The fact that the fire was in Kensington and Chelsea, one of the richest boroughs in the country, highlights the real face of capitalism,” said Catharina

Tirsén, Communist League candidate for Longsight in Manchester, who came to London to march. “But it could have happened anywhere. The last Labour government presided over similar accidents waiting to happen around the country. In no borough anywhere — Conservative or Labour — has there been a crash program of sprinkler installation or flammable cladding removal following the fire.”

Over 300 other blocks have been identified as covered with dangerous cladding, according to the government. That includes 158 social housing blocks, 134 private sector buildings and 14 public buildings, including hospitals and schools.

Volunteers expand reach of revolutionary books

BY MARK SEVERS

Volunteers for Pathfinder Press, which publishes books by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and other revolution-

aries worldwide, have been involved in activities across North America over the last several months to expand sales and distribution of the books.

They’ve met with bookstore buyers; librarians at public, university, and prison libraries; book distributors; and staffed booths promoting Pathfinder books at academic conferences. They are tapping into a great deal of interest in books that explain the social and economic crisis facing working people and point to the road out of it.

This work is an invaluable supplement to the day-to-day efforts of SWP members and supporters, who take rev-

olutionary literature as they knock on workers’ doors and join in strike battles and social protests across the country.

The volunteers surpassed their fall sales goal of getting 95 orders, netting 100 orders in the United States and Canada. The real backbone of the effort is consistent, month-in and month-out work contacting buyers and setting up face-to-face meetings — “shoe-leather work,” as it has long been known. Over the years this has built long-term relationships with a growing number of buyers who order Pathfinder books.

In Montreal, a buyer for the main

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THE MILITANT

For a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula!

Inter-Korean summit discussions and coming talks with U.S. President Trump on the de-nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula are welcomed by working people in Korea, Japan and the region. The ‘Militant’ demands U.S. rulers get their troops, weapons out of Korea.

Seoul Times
Kim Jong Un, left, and Moon Jae-in at inter-Korean summit, Panmunjom, April 27.

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

SWP, ‘Militant’ spark interest

Continued from front page Secretary Jack Barnes, along with a subscription to the *Militant*. The strike in Pueblo is just the latest manifestation of the uprising of teachers and other school workers that is shaking up class politics in the U.S. — from Arizona to West Virginia, Kentucky, Colorado, North Carolina and elsewhere. It reflects the fact that the propertied rulers’ relentless attacks on working people, as they try to prop up profit rates on the backs of workers, is getting a response. And that generates greater interest in the SWP, its publications and the fund drive party members are organizing for the *Militant*.

The party is asking workers to join them in building and attending a big statewide rally May 16 in Raleigh, North Carolina, called by the teachers’ union there. If you can go, contact the party branch nearest you listed on page 8.

Knocking on workers’ doors in Pueblo that evening, team members met warehouse worker Rudy Romero, and his 9 year old son. “I want this paper because I need to know what’s going on in the world,” Romero said, as he got a subscription.

The party is on an eight-week drive to win 1,400 new readers to the *Militant* and to sell an equal number of five campaign books. (See ad below). The subscription drive, now in its seventh week, is ahead of schedule, partly because of the response of workers to the teachers’ battles. The Militant Fighting Fund is seeking to raise \$112,000 for the ongoing publication of the paper. The party is appealing for workers and youth to join in the drive, which ends May 22.

“I appreciate getting the analysis and the coverage through the socialist lens,” Adam Bailey told SWP member George Chalmers at the May 1 rally for immigrant rights at City Hall in Philadelphia. Bailey picked up a subscription along with *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. Party members got a similar response at May Day actions across the country. “I’m not interested in politics,” Magdalena Halliday, a housekeeper and member of Local 1199SEIU, told SWP members Terry Evans and Seth Galinsky when they knocked on her door on the Lower East Side in New York May 4. “It’s bad that Trump is trying to get rid of immigrants,” she said.

“He doesn’t want to deport all the immigrants. Like Obama and Bush before him, he’s trying to scapegoat and drive them down as a way of deepening divisions in the working class,” Galinsky replied. “The bosses need immigration, but they want workers who live in fear of deportation. That’s why the SWP fights for the unions to organize all workers, against deportations and for amnesty for workers without U.S. documents.”

After further discussion on the history of the class struggle in the U.S., Halliday purchased *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and a subscription.

In West New York, New Jersey, Lea Sherman and Róger Calero met Seferina Santana May 7. She invited them in to her home to discuss the ongoing fight by teachers around the country, and the need to build and use industrial unions to defend workers everywhere.

“It has to begin somewhere,” said Santana, commenting both about what the teachers are doing and the work of the SWP to expand the party’s reach. “We need to have a voice. The politicians in government are doing what they want,” she said. Like millions of workers, Santana supports President Trump because she’s attracted to his call to “drain the swamp” of capitalist politicians in government. “They’re all scoundrels,” Santana said. She said she used to be a



Militant Socialist Workers Party member Leslie Dork, second from right, part of team introducing *Militant* and books by party leaders to participants in April 26 teachers’ rally in Phoenix.

supporter of Hillary Clinton, but she looks down on the workers. Originally from the Dominican Republic, Santana works part time as a home health aide worker. “I need the medical insurance,” she said. “If I don’t have food, I can scrape something together from a relative or friend, but if I can’t buy my medicine, I can’t get it anywhere else.” “Everywhere people are going out in the streets to protest because they’re

fed up,” she said, talking about what workers face worldwide. Santana got a subscription to the *Militant*, saying she looks forward to hearing about the Socialist Workers Party election campaign in New Jersey, and to introduce us to her son, who is also interested in social and political issues. Join in the SWP’s efforts to win more readers to the *Militant* and its books, and give a contribution to help the *Militant* get around!

Expand reach of revolutionary books

Continued from page 2 chain of 30 primarily French-language bookstores told a team of Pathfinder sales representatives that he was excited to get books like theirs into his stores across Quebec. He placed a large order, which included three recently published books from Pathfinder in French — *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* and *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record* — as well as two titles by Thomas Sankara, *The Communist Manifesto* and *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

A visit to a book distributor in Baltimore that features books on Africa resulted in two orders, the first for 50 copies of *We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions* by Sankara, followed by another order of 50 titles. Sales volunteers are contacting prison librarians with the goal of making more revolutionary literature available to

workers behind bars. Thus far, contacts and visits with over 15 librarians have been made, mainly in the vast system of state prisons in California. Pathfinder titles have also caught the attention of Baker and Taylor, one of the largest book wholesalers in the U.S. Pathfinder books have been featured in their twice yearly Shelfworthy sales promotion, which offers immediate shipment of titles from smaller publishers to retail bookstores. The wholesaler’s Shelfworthy web page includes 25 titles from Pathfinder, often with a picture of the cover and description of the book. The spring sales effort began March 10 and runs through July 31. Volunteers are setting goals, with special attention to establishing new bookstore and library accounts in cities and towns throughout North America, making it easier for workers to get their hands on books that go to the heart of explaining politics today.

Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, fund

March 24–May 22 (week six)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Received
UNITED STATES						
Albany+	95	83	95	54	\$5,400	\$3,458
Atlanta	90	50	90	30	\$9,700	\$3,205
Chicago*	120	103	120	81	\$11,500	\$5,875
Dallas*	50	46	40	25	\$1,900	\$875
Lincoln*	25	21	20	16	\$300	\$222
Los Angeles+	125	119	125	97	\$10,500	\$8,904
Miami	35	20	35	22	\$3,200	\$2,873
New York	165	128	165	80	\$16,700	\$8,645
Oakland	85	66	85	50	\$13,000	\$8,684
Philadelphia	65	62	65	38	\$3,600	\$1,130
Seattle	95	87	95	61	\$7,900	\$5,855
Twin Cities*	85	58	85	46	\$4,500	\$1,054
Washington	70	61	70	40	\$7,500	\$6,029
Total U.S.	1,105	904	1,090	640	\$95,700	\$56,809
Prisoners	25	26				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	70	61	70	49	\$2,500	\$1,030
Manchester	50	43	50	22	\$950	\$460
Total U.K.	120	104	120	71	\$3,450	\$1,490
CANADA						
Montreal	60	52	60	42	\$5,700	\$4,648
Vancouver	45	33	45	24	\$3,000	\$1,931
Total Canada	105	85	105	66	\$8,700	\$6,579
NEW ZEALAND						
	45	42	45	24	\$4,000	\$2,256
AUSTRALIA						
	40	36	40	16	\$800	\$737
FRANCE						
					500	396
Other						
						500
Total	1,440	1,197	1,400	817	\$113,150	\$68,767
SHOULD BE	1,400	1,050	1,400	1,050	\$112,000	\$84,000
*Raised sub quota +Raised fund quota						

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Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power by Jack Barnes \$15. With subscription: \$10

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\$7 EACH WITHOUT SUBSCRIPTION

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

Teachers, school workers walk out in Pueblo contract struggle

BY HELEN MEYERS

PUEBLO, Colo. — “Get up! Get down! Pueblo is a union town,” chanted hundreds of people May 7 as they rallied outside the offices of Pueblo City Schools District 60, the first day of a strike by school workers here. “Education is a right! That is why we have to fight,” they yelled.

Teachers and other school personnel, as well as supporters from area unions and others, came to the noon rally from picket lines at schools and busy intersections across the city. Reflecting the fact that Pueblo is an industrial city and many teachers come from a union background, a number wore “Union Town” buttons.

Two unions were on strike, the Pueblo Education Association and the Pueblo Paraprofessional Education Association. They have been without a contract since last August, but didn’t vote to strike until a couple weeks ago, clearly inspired by the rising movement of school workers across the country. Over 10,000 teachers and supporters rallied outside the state

Capitol in Denver April 27, demanding more funding for schools. The last teacher strike in Colorado was in 1994.

Many workers here say it’s not just about getting a raise, it’s about respect and dignity and the dire conditions in the schools created by cuts made by the state government and local board. To save money the school board decided that next year schools will go to a four-day week.

“I have to supply the paper, pencils, notebooks and more to the students,” teacher Christine Hanson told Socialist Workers Party members who joined the strikers to bring solidarity. “The one-time 2 percent payment the board offered doesn’t cover these costs.” Other participants say both pensions and health insurance are at risk.

Area unions supported the rally, including the United Steelworkers, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Laborers Local 5, National Association of Letter Carriers and SMART rail workers’ union.

Pueblo is home to the USW-orga-



Militant/Raul Gonzalez

Paraprofessionals Marge Sanchez, Traci Dewey, Diana Gomez and Joan Arguello join in May 7 rally in Pueblo, Colorado, during strike by teachers there. They can work no more than 37 hours a week. Three of them work second job at night in retail and medical field.

nized EVRAZ steel mill, the largest manufacturer of rail in North America. The mill, which dates back more than a century, was formerly run by Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, owned by the Rockefeller family. Company bosses there were responsible for the bloody Ludlow massacre of striking coal min-

ers in 1914.

“We had people at different schools this morning to support the picket lines,” said Jerry Bellah, IBEW eighth district vice president. “We’ll raise money, open the union halls for their meetings if they need, help with a food bank. We’ll support them for as long as necessary.”

District officials had said there was no money to meet workers’ demands. But three days before the walkout they suddenly said they’d found money to offer teachers a one-time cash payment, a higher COLA and additional money toward health premiums. But union members said it was unacceptable and attempts by the board to pit teachers and paraprofessionals against each other just made them madder.

The unions set up a food distribution site from noon to 3 p.m. in the parking lot of a former Safeway grocery store. They arranged reduced-cost day care at First Presbyterian Church, so area workers could get to their jobs and know their kids would be cared for and fed. The Pueblo Zoo offered half-price admission, the YMCA had open swim, and all-day activities were offered in the city’s parks.

Raul Gonzalez and Leslie Dork contributed to this article.

Join North Carolina teachers for May 16 protest!

Continued from front page

in the May 8 *Raleigh News & Observer* — adding up the number of school districts that have announced they’ll be closed for the protest. District officials say too many teachers have marked off to keep the schools open.

They are joining the tens of thousands of teachers, other school workers and supporters who have protested wages and working conditions, attacks on pensions, increased health premiums and deteriorating schools.

Guilford County is one of the growing number of counties closing their schools for lack of teachers May 16. “I think it’s a clear indicator that teachers are fed up with a lack of funding, a lack of workplace dignity, a lack of resources,” Todd Warren, a teacher and president of Guilford County Association of Educators, the main teachers union, told the media May 7.

The union presented its demands and publicized the action at a press conference here April 26, attended by teachers, parents and supporters. They also called for relief for schools that were severely damaged, along with many homes, when a tornado ripped through the east side of Greensboro 11 days earlier. They said the damage to the schools could have been prevented if the buildings had been maintained and renovated.

“We celebrated today when Guilford announced it would close,” Susan Skinner, who teaches at Swann Middle School here, told the *Militant* May 7. She is a member of the union and has been active building the May 16 rally. “We’ve talked about how we need to talk to everybody — teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians, everybody.”

Skinner said that as they’ve been building the actions, workers have gotten more confidence and are beginning to broaden the discussion.

“You know, you’re in your classroom, fairly isolated and have little experience of collective strength,” she said. “Then you see this movement rolling across the country and what it has achieved. Discussions are shifting a bit now to what is most important and what it will actually take to win.”

North Carolina is one of the centers for manufacturing in the U.S., with substantial automotive and aerospace industries, as well as food processing, furniture manufacturing and tobacco. Goodyear and Bridgestone Tire companies, Smithfield Foods, Tyson Farms, Volvo, Caterpillar and dozens more have thousands of workers in the state. Of course Walmart is the largest employer.

Workers have been hit hard. Between

2004 and 2006 almost 39,000 workers lost their jobs as bosses searching for higher profits outsourced the jobs, devastating the state’s textile and furniture industries.

And, unlike some other states where teacher uprisings have broken out, North Carolina has a sizable Black population with a history of battles against racism and police brutality that date back to Radical Reconstruction. In 1960 students sat down at Woolworths in Greensboro, helping launch a wave of sit-ins against Jim Crow segregation across the country.

Today there is an ongoing debate about what to do with still-standing statues of defenders of slavery in the Civil War. These struggles have affected the working class as a whole, including the International Longshoremen’s Association local in Wilmington.

And the legacy and battles around slavery and racism affect the schools. “People talk a lot about the disparity between the conditions in some ‘whiter’ areas, as opposed to the worse conditions in schools that have more Black students,” Skinner said.

While the protest takes place in Raleigh, teachers in Greensboro have organized a food committee to bag lunches and staff distribution points to feed several hundred students.

— CALENDAR —

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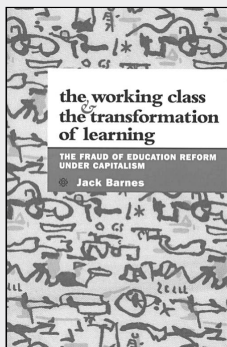
Reportback from May Day International Brigade to Cuba. Fri., May 18. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: \$10. Trinity Episcopal Church. 125 E. 26th St. Tel.: (312) 952-2618. Sponsored by Chicago Cuba Coalition.

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The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism

by Jack Barnes



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For participants in May 16 march and rally in Raleigh, North Carolina

www.pathfinderpress.com

Education under capitalism is a class question

Below are excerpts from *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. Copyright © 2000 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

The purpose of education in class society is not to educate. It is to give “the educated” a stake in thinking they are going to be different than other people who work all their lives. ...

If we do not explain education under capitalism as a class question (that is, from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie, two totally separate and unrelated questions for two different classes); if we do not present working-class schooling as the social destruction of human solidarity, as the organization of a society based on class differentiation, where human beings late in their teens become units of production in the minds of personnel managers and social planners; if we do not point out the fundamental issue of truly universal, lifetime education — if we cannot explain education this way, then we cannot explain it at all. ...

Explaining the communist approach to education is part of preparing the working class for the greatest of all battles in the years ahead — the battle to throw off the self-image the rulers teach us, and to recognize that we are capable of taking power and organizing society, as we collectively educate ourselves and learn the exploiters in the process.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

This column gives a voice to those engaged in labor battles and building solidarity today — from school workers in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Arizona and Colorado, 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.

Ukraine workers rally May Day in fight for wages, work safety

In a rebirth of May Day in Ukraine, iron ore miners, steelworkers and their supporters marched and rallied May 1 in Kryvyi Rih, one of the main industrial centers in the country. The action was organized by the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine (NPGU), and its affiliates at the Sukha Balka and Kryvyi Rih Iron Ore Combine mines and the giant ArcelorMittal steel works. These unions have grown in the last couple of years through successful fightbacks against boss attacks. Yuri Samoilov, citywide head of the NPGU, led the demonstration.

“It’s very important for us to unite,” Samoilov told the rally. “I do believe in solidarity among workers in Kryvyi Rih, as well as in Ukraine and the whole world.” The action attracted members from a wide variety of unions.

The members of the union at the ArcelorMittal steel plant, which employs more than 20,000 workers, were a prominent contingent. They marched for safe working conditions, pay raises and job protection.

“Every one of us has the right to decent jobs and salaries,” Mykola Moria-kov, chairman of the NPGU at Arce-lorMittal, told the rally. “And a right to work in safe conditions.”

Negotiations on a new union contract should have started last year, but Arce-lorMittal bosses have refused to bargain. The May Day rally was part of a series of actions by the unions to put pressure on the company, the largest steel producer in the world.

In mid-March workers mobilized to promote their demands — raise monthly wages to 1,000 euros (\$1,200); put all mill buildings, structures, equipment and work rules under examination to enforce safety and sanitary conditions; stop cutting workers and outsourcing jobs; and for the company to cease attacks against union members.

The nine unions at the plant, including both the independent and the old government-run trade unions, organized an unprecedented special conference March 27 to coordinate the campaign for their demands. Three-quarters of the 400 conference delegates voted in favor of strike action if the company continued its refusal to bargain.

The month before, more than 12,000 workers signed an appeal to the bosses supporting their demands.

Workers held a “night action” May 3, occupying the company offices after negotiations failed to produce any results, Samoilov reported. The company then agreed to talks and a deal was reached May 6 to set up a “conciliation commission” to address the unions’ demands.

Over the past year and a half there have been protests, mine occupations and other actions demanding payments of wage arrears, raises and safer working conditions across Ukraine.

— Emma Johnson

University of California workers strike three days for contract

Some 25,000 nonteaching workers at the statewide University of California system — custodians, groundskeepers, food service workers, truck drivers, lab



University of California workers march in Los Angeles May 8, part of statewide strike.



Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine

Workers march on May Day in Kryvyi Rih, a major industrial center in Ukraine, in fight for pay raise, safe working conditions and new union contract at ArcelorMittal steel plant there.

technicians and nurses aides — went on a three-day strike beginning May 7.

These members of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3299 were joined for the next two days by solidarity actions of 14,000 members of the California Nurses Association who work at the university’s medical centers and student clinics, and 15,000 members of the University Professional and Technical Employees, who work as pharmacists, social workers, physical therapists, physician assistants and researchers.

Union leaders and state college bosses failed to reach agreement last year and mediation efforts have since failed. Low wages, health care premiums, pen-

sions and job outsourcing are some of the main issues.

Workers were particularly upset when the union published a study in April based on university statistics that had not been public that showed a growing gap between pay for administrators and workers. It also showed that workers who were Black, Latino and female were paid less for comparable jobs.

Union members voted by 97 percent to strike. University officials then imposed their rejected offer on workers.

— Carole Lesnick

School workers in New Zealand rally for equal pay for women

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — More than 200 early childhood teachers, school support workers, teacher aides, school administrators and their families and supporters joined a “Fair’s Fair” rally here May 5 for equal pay for women. The action, part of protests nationwide, demanded the Labour Party-led government implement its pre-election promise to close the gap in pay between male and female workers. Despite laws on equal pay dating back to 1972, women are still paid 9.4 percent less than men, with no real change in that gap for over a decade.

“Join the union. Pay the Sisters the Same as the Masters,” read one participant’s T-shirt.

The action was organized by NZEI Te Riu Roa — the New Zealand Educational Institute — a union that represents some 50,000 teachers, support staff and principals.

“I represent the large army of administrative workers, mostly women, who are often invisible,” the union’s Julie-Anne Roberts told the rally. “It’s time that we were recognized and paid for the skills we bring.” Members of the Post Primary Teachers’ Association and Maritime Union of New Zealand joined the protest.

Many workers also turned out to protest low pay rates. One school support worker said that even those in the top pay grade earn less than 20 New Zealand dollars an hour (\$14).

Others said they had to cope with overcrowded classrooms and heavy workloads. “As a teacher I’m not happy dealing with the problems of a society that’s not working,” Cheryl, an early childhood teacher, told the *Militant*.

A number of participants had read about the strikes and rallies by school workers in the United States on the internet, and were eager to get the *Militant* to learn more about them. Three people signed up for subscriptions.

— Felicity Coggan

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 24, 1993

PENSACOLA, Florida — Chanting “We won’t back down” and “Choice Now,” more than 2,000 people marched through Pensacola May 8 to support abortion rights and protest the murder of Dr. David Gunn, who was killed outside a clinic in this city March 10. Joining the large number of Pensacola residents and people from small towns in the surrounding area, were marchers from Tallahassee, Tampa, and Gainesville, Florida and Atlanta, and Birmingham.

Signs of the march, called by the National Organization for Women, said “Pensacola is pro-choice.” “Abortion is legal, shooting doctors is not.”

Among those speaking at the rally was Gunn’s daughter, Wendy, a high school senior. “The government has put women’s rights on a blacklist,” she said. “But we won’t go back.”



May 24, 1968

The giant demonstration of 1,000,000 workers, students and teachers in Paris May 13 has touched off a political crisis in France that may well spell the beginning of the end for the de Gaulle regime.

The sudden turn in the political situation in France has incalculable consequences not only for that country but for all of Europe, including the East European countries and the Soviet Union. By rallying to the side of the beleaguered students and advancing their own demands, the French workers have given new impetus to the student movement throughout the world. It has been shown in life how it is possible to bring into action the mightiest of all social forces, the working class — and despite the restraining influence of an ossified labor bureaucracy.



May 22, 1943

The growing gap between the great mass of the CIO workers and their top officials has been demonstrated in their contrasting attitudes toward the miners’ fight.

The workers are for the miners. The attitude was shown in the two big conferences of the United Auto Workers — the May 1-2 conference in Detroit of 1,000 delegates representing 350,000 Michigan members, and the May 6 conference in New York of 1,000 delegates representing all the eastern locals. Both by overwhelming majorities — only a handful of Stalinists in each case were the main opposition from the floor — adopted resolutions for all-out support of the miners’ fight. Moreover, this was voted against the opposition of the entire UAW executive board!

US class struggle a feature at Havana conference

Panel from US describes capitalist rulers’ offensive, growing resistance by working people



Above: Maykel Espinosa/Juventud Rebelde; right, Lourdes Ortega/Cuban History Institute
Members of panel on class struggle in the U.S. at 12th International May Day conference. From left, Willie Head, Omari Musa, Alyson Kennedy, Jacob Perasso and Mary-Alice Waters. At right, René González Barrios, conference organizer. Photo at right, section of participants in conference.

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND RÓGER CALERO

HAVANA — “Did the 2016 electoral victory of Donald Trump register a rise in racism, xenophobia, misogyny and every other form of reaction among working people in the United States? Is that why tens of millions of workers voted for him?”

That question was posed by Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, in one of the featured talks at a three-day conference here. The gathering was one of several events held in conjunction with the celebration of the international day of the working class, May Day, when more than a million workers mobilized in Havana and across the island.

Waters also posed a second question: “Is a socialist revolution in the U.S. really possible? Or are those like ourselves, who answer with an unhesitating ‘Yes,’ a new variety of utopian socialist fools, however well-meaning?”

Her talk, which focused on answering those questions, initiated a two-part program on the class struggle in the United States. The second part was entitled “From Clinton to Trump: How working people in the U.S. are responding to the anti-labor offensive of the bosses, their parties, and their government.” It was a panel of leaders and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party with years of trade union experience in major industries and other sectors of the economy, including agriculture. They described the multifaceted forms of capitalist exploitation and oppression working people face in the United States, and

even more importantly, the growing resistance that the owners’ offensive is generating.

The two-part program was a central feature of the 12th International May Day Conference, held here April 24-26. The main sponsors of the event were the History Institute of Cuba and the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), the country’s trade union federation. It was attended by some 130 people. Most came from cities across Cuba. Others were from Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, the United States, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

CTC General Secretary Ulises Guilarte opened the conference with an address on challenges facing Cuban working people and the unions today, from the vantage point that here “the working class is in power.” Presentations were also given by leaders of Cuba’s Commercial and Food Workers Union and Tourism Workers Union.

Silvia Odriozola, of the National Association of Economists and Accountants, spoke on the state of the Cuban economy today. Another feature was a panel discussion on the Cuban sugar industry. Liobel Pérez, of the state sugar company Azcuba, explained steps underway to improve irrigation systems and the mechanization of the sugar harvest, as well as to develop biofuel from sugarcane derivatives.

Orlando Borrego, who fought under the command of Ernesto Che Guevara in Cuba’s revolutionary war, and served as sugar minister in the 1960s, spoke about his experiences working with Guevara in the revolutionary

government. He described Guevara’s qualities as a communist leader who instilled confidence in working people that they could build a socialist society on new economic foundations and transform themselves in the process.

The conference program included more than 20 panels. Some discussed the situation facing working people internationally, from Argentina to Venezuela. Others took up the history of the working-class movement in Cuba, from the role of Julio Antonio Mella, founding leader of the Cuban Communist Party in the 1920s, to the textile workers strike during World War II. Another series focused on women in the Cuban workforce and unions.

The conference itself was held at a historic trade union and cultural center, the Cigar Rollers Palace. Founded by the tobacco workers union in 1925, it served for decades as a broader center for educational, social and organizing activities of the labor movement. It is now being restored to become a



social center and museum on the history of the Cuban workers movement.

Presentation on U.S. class struggle

The final day of the conference featured the two-and-a-half-hour program on the class struggle in the United States. In her talk, titled, “In defense of the U.S. working class,” Waters addressed misconceptions and prejudices about the U.S. working class that are common in Cuba and elsewhere.

In replying to the two questions she posed, Waters described in some detail the importance of the teachers strike that exploded in West Virginia and has spread to Oklahoma, Arizona, and elsewhere. She explained how it is a response to decades of attacks on the living standards of working people by the owners of industry and their gov-



Protesters in 50,000-strong April 26 action by teachers and supporters in Phoenix.

ernment. In West Virginia, she noted, the teachers strike “became a genuine social movement fighting for the needs of the entire working class and its allies.”

Waters said it’s not surprising that most of the states where teachers have walked out are where Trump won big majorities in 2016. She quoted a teacher from West Virginia — one of the most economically ravaged regions in the country — who said that people there voted for Trump for the same reason they went on strike. They have nothing but distrust and growing hatred for what they call the political establishment, both Democrats and Republicans, from Washington to state Capitols across the country.

Far from growing reaction, what we’re seeing among working people in the U.S., Waters underlined, is greater openness today than at any time in our political lives to consider what a socialist revolution is and why our class should take state power. That’s what SWP

members have learned firsthand as they go door to door talking with working people in rural and urban areas across the country.

Is a socialist revolution in the U.S. possible? Waters answered, “Not only is it possible, but even more important, revolutionary battles by the toilers are inevitable.” What is not inevitable is victory. That depends above all on the caliber of proletarian leadership.

As evidence of the kinds of battles to come and the revolutionary capacities of the working class, she pointed to three of the most important class-struggle upsurges in the U.S. in the last century. One was the mass labor battles of the 1930s that organized millions of workers into the industrial unions, and especially the union-organizing drive led by the Minneapolis Teamsters throughout the Upper Midwest, who had a class-struggle leadership that included members of the Socialist Workers Party.

Another was the mass Black, proletarian-led movement of the 1950s and ’60s, which brought down Jim Crow

in San Juan, including large union and student contingents, to protest the anti-working-class measures. Many workplaces, especially in the capital and other large cities, were shut down for the day.

One march of thousands went to the Capitol and then continued on to La Fortaleza, the residence of Gov. Ricardo Rosselló. A second protest, with five feeder marches, converged on the Milla de Oro commercial and banking center.

Protesters carried signs against the planned shutdown of nearly 300 public schools, deeper cuts to pensions, the junta’s proposed labor “reform” and the transfer of hundreds of workers incarcerated in Puerto Rico to prisons in the United States.

Cops and SWAT teams used the excuse that a small group in one of the feeder marches were wearing masks and might become violent to stop it from getting to the rally site. As the protest was winding down the cops attacked with tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets and billy clubs.

“The cops attacked everyone, young and old, there were pregnant woman, too,” said Lenna Ramírez, a student at the University of Puerto Rico and a leader of the Hostosiano Youth, a pro-independence organization.

Rulers’ disdain, anti-working-class attacks fuel Puerto Rico protests

Continued from front page
than 100 residents in Humacao and a May 7 evening torchlight march of hundreds there to demand electricity.

“It’s the first time I ever did anything like that,” Castro said. “It began as a conversation among neighbors.

“We went to the radio station and they interviewed us and broadcast the announcement for our meeting. The Catholic Church let us use a room,” she said. “So many people came that they didn’t fit. We decided to hold a march to the energy company offices.”

At the April 30 action one woman carried a bucket and washboard on her head, symbolizing the eight months they have had to wash clothes by hand. Another waved canned goods, because they can’t store fresh food. One carried a sign with the receipts for fueling her gas generator.

It’s not just the electricity, Castro said. “Water service is erratic. Wooden houses were total destroyed, others lost their roofs. Yet the government is still just ‘evaluating’ the damages.

“There is no plan, it’s been a disaster,” she said. “We are still a colony. We depend on the U.S. but we don’t have the same conditions. There are pluses and minuses for statehood or for indepen-

dence. But being in the middle, not one or the other, doesn’t work. We have to lose the fear that we can’t survive if we are independent and discuss it as an option.”

It is the U.S. capitalist rulers, not the hurricanes, that caused the crisis. Since U.S. troops wrested control of Puerto Rico from the Spanish government in 1898, Washington has plundered the natural resources and labor of the Puerto Rican people. The conditions of working people worsened in 2006, when the worldwide capitalist economic crisis began battering the island.

Scores of factories have shut down since then, while the debt to wealthy bondholders has mushroomed to at least \$74 billion today.

To get the funds to pay on the debt, the colonial government has cut retirement benefits, increased sales taxes, laid off 30,000 public workers and closed more than 100 schools.

The public electric company also laid off workers, cut back on maintenance and halted any plans to improve the deteriorating power grid. Transmission towers were corroded, power plants covered in rust and spare parts in short supply. By the time the hurricanes hit, it was a disaster waiting to happen.

segregation. Combined with the deep impact of the simultaneous example of Cuba’s advancing socialist revolution, it gave new generations unshakable confidence in what the working class could achieve.

These struggles became intertwined with what became the millions-strong movement against Washington’s war in Vietnam, which reached into the draftee army and shook the confidence of the U.S. ruling class.

In the second part of the program, Jacob Perasso, a union freight rail conductor in Albany, New York, described working conditions in the industry as bosses reduce crew sizes, extend workdays up to 12 hours, and cut corners on safety. He noted how his co-workers are seeking ways to resist these attacks and their openness to discuss what socialists put forward.

Alyson Kennedy, who was part of the first wave of women who fought their way into underground mining jobs, related some of the battles she was involved in, from West Virginia to Alabama to Utah during her 14 years as a coal miner. Currently working as a cashier at a store in Texas, she talked about the teachers strike in Oklahoma and its impact on working people throughout the region.

Willie Head, a small farmer in south Georgia, described the long struggle by farmers who are Black to keep their land and some of the forms of discrimination they face from the banks and the government. He explained how, like most small producers, he has had to work many different jobs off the farm in order to earn enough income to keep farming.

Róger Calero, drawing on his involvement in union struggles by meatpackers in Minnesota and coal miners in Utah, explained how anti-immigrant prejudices are driven by the U.S. rulers, not working people, and why the fight to prevent scapegoating of immigrant workers and win amnesty is a life-and-death question for the working class.

Omari Musa, a veteran of decades of union battles as well as the Black rights movement, gave numerous examples showing how and why today it is harder than ever for the U.S. capitalist rulers to use anti-Black racism to divide workers, and how this has strengthened the working class.

One panelist, Harry D’Agostino, a musician, who was unable to participate at the last minute, wrote out his remarks, which were distributed to everyone present. He discussed the particular

challenges faced by young people just entering the workforce — and the impact of seeing the working class in action for the first time.

‘Amazed at conditions in U.S.’

After the presentations, a Cuban audience member asked why all the struggles in the United States seem to be by different “sectors” isolated from each other.

Waters replied that the apparently disparate struggles register the fact that working-class resistance in the U.S. is only now beginning to develop into a social movement, led by the working class, that can eventually become strong enough to bring together fights on different fronts so they reinforce each other. These different fronts are all class questions, she said, part of the fight to unify the working class in struggle.

The discussion continued informally over the next few hours. Numerous delegates said they especially appreciated the concreteness of the descriptions of job conditions and labor struggles in the United States — and were amazed by the facts presented.

A teacher from the Autonomous University of Chapingo, Mexico, told Waters that what she learned “completely changed” how she viewed what is happening in the United States today. Two Argentine teachers from the National University of Southern Patagonia told the *Militant* they were glad to hear the discussion on the need to defend immigrant workers in face of deportations, an issue posed in Argentina as well, where the ruling class scapegoats Bolivian and other immigrants.

Discussion on Cuban economy

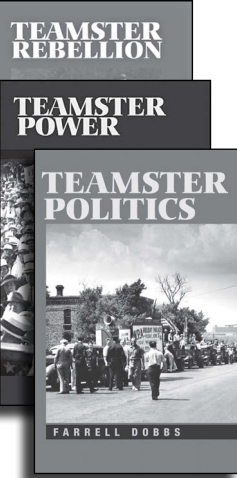
The economic and political challenges in Cuba today were a central thread of discussion at the conference. CTC General Secretary Guilarte reported that 584,000 people now work in what is often called here the “nonstate” sector of the economy. These include both owners and workers at private restaurants, landlords who rent rooms to tourists in private homes, members of cooperative enterprises in construction, transportation, and many other small businesses. Guilarte as well as economist Silvia Odriozola explained that the CTC is seeking to organize all those involved in the “nonstate” sector.

A Chilean delegate asked if that meant the CTC is organizing both owners and employees of small businesses as if they

Continued on page 9

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Unions lead fight against racism, for working-class unity

Fighting Racism in World War II is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. This selection — "CIO Committee Fights Jim Crow" from the Nov. 4, 1944, Militant — is by Charles Jackson, the pen name for Dr. Edgar Keemer. Keemer, a Black doctor, was indicted as a draft dodger during World War II because he opposed discrimination in the Navy. With the support of the Socialist Workers Party and others, he fought the charges and the government dropped the case. Keemer was in the SWP from 1943 to 1947, subsequently returning to practice medicine in Detroit. In his 1980 autobiography, Confessions of a Pro-Life Abortionist, he writes about his support for women's rights and how he was imprisoned for 14 months for performing abortions, and his role in the fight to legalize the procedure. Copyright © 1980 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY CHARLES JACKSON

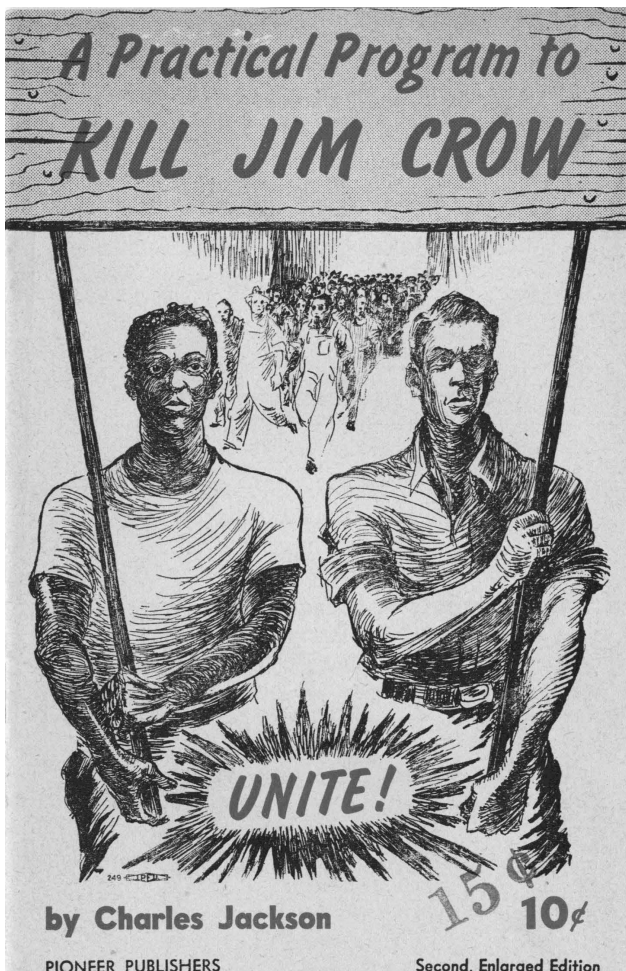
Just because the Negro worker today is a hundred times as trade union conscious as he was fifteen years ago, and just because there is a concerted effort on the part of the progressive labor movement to fight for industrial equality regardless of race, is

not enough to warrant a shout of victory. These tendencies have forced the ruling class to imprint more firmly the pattern of segregation and thereby more forcibly crystallize the well-indoctrinated interracial prejudices. The attacks upon the color line have not caused the owning class to discard it as an antilabor weapon but, rather, to draw it all the more tightly.

The CIO, which contains more progressive elements than any other union organization in the country, has recently embarked on a counterattack which, if carried on with increasing militancy, will bode no good for the vile plans of those who want to continue their exploitation by pitting the Negro and the white workers against each other. A significant unit in this counterattack is the CIO Committee to Abolish Racial Discrimination. This committee has been setting up new branches all over the country and on more than one occasion has been the instrumental factor that meant success instead of defeat in various fights against racial discrimination.

According to Director George Weaver's most recent report, the number of state, county, and municipal committees has increased from fifty as of March 15, 1944, to eighty-five as of August 15, 1944. Most significant is the fact that committees have been organized for the first time in Georgia, North Carolina, West Virginia, Kentucky, Texas, Kansas, and Alabama. Any movement capable of organizing effective branches committed to abolish racial discrimination in those states really means business. Furthermore, it bids fair to become the medium through which will come the final victorious assault on all the forces of reaction that are so firmly entrenched in the "deah old South."

In a series of conferences held by the



A Practical Program to Kill Jim Crow, 1945 pamphlet by Charles Jackson, pen name for Dr. Edgar Keemer, a regular columnist on Black rights for Militant in 1940s.

Ohio state committee, the importance of upgrading and seniority rights without regard to race was stressed. One of the discussions centered upon the responsibility of the union in the post-war period in relation to the minority question. The importance of maintaining full employment was considered the key to the racial question. It was admitted that without full employment, the scramble of returning soldiers and war workers to compete for too few jobs will pit majority groups against minority groups and vice versa. On this point, of course, we know and we warn again that it will be impossible to maintain full employment until we have socialism.

The Michigan state committee initiated the prosecution of the Cody Hotel in Grand Rapids, involving discrimination on July 11 during the Michigan CIO convention. The delegation from Local 208, UAW-CIO, had arranged to house their delegates at this hotel. The local had received written confirmation from the manager agreeing to house the entire del-

egation. The white delegates arrived first and were housed. Later, when the Negro members of the delegation arrived, they were refused accommodations. The following resolution was submitted to the convention and unanimously endorsed: "That the hotel be criminally prosecuted and that until these issues are resolved in favor of CIO policy, the Hotel Cody be placed on the unfair list." Similar action was initiated last week by the UAW-CIO against the Webster Hall Hotel in Detroit.

The Philadelphia committee, the Industrial Union Council, which was only appointed in April, reports successful cases involving discrimination in upgrading Negro workers in the steel industry in the Philadelphia area. One was a job as narrow-gauge engineer, a job never yet held by a Negro. In the industrial cases, the Committee to Abolish Racial Discrimination has been working in close collaboration with the FEPC [Fair Employment Practice Committee]. ...

In areas where there was already friction, this committee has made efforts to educate the backward, prejudiced workers so that working-class solidarity could be maintained.

An outstanding example was in Marion, Ohio, where a group of Mexican workers had been imported. Feeling the job insecurity that is normal under capitalism, with its ever-increasing catastrophic depressions, many of the workers showed resentment against the Mexican workers. Largely through the efforts of the county antidiscrimination committee the white workers were educated, the Mexican workers were unionized, and a dangerous struggle between workers was averted.

These are only a few examples of what the CIO is doing. It deserves and has the allegiance of the Negro people. With the more crushing oppressions that are planned by the ruling class, the labor movement will have to adopt more militant means to defend the brown workers against race discrimination. In defense of the trade union movement itself, it is of utmost importance that every militant worker, black or white, rally support within his union to fight discrimination and Jim Crowism wherever it rears its ugly head.

May BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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The Militant May 21, 2018

Back teachers fight, join SWP campaign

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determination teachers are showing in practice the capacities workers have to organize united and effective action as they combat assaults on wages, deteriorating school conditions and workers’ dignity.

By using union power and building a social movement in support of their fight they have set an example to millions of workers looking for ways to say “No!” to what the capitalist rulers are doing to us.

This includes the consequences of the broader social and moral crisis of capitalist rule — from never-ending wars, to cop brutality, attacks on women’s right to abortion and spreading drug addiction.

These battles have erupted in states where Hillary Clinton slandered workers as “deplorable.” She claimed women there voted for Donald Trump because male relatives told them to. But a majority of those on strike in these states today are women. They are not waiting to be told what to do but are relying on their own capacities to build unity, reach out for solidarity and fight, inspiring workers everywhere. This is a product of the irreversible changes in the way both women and men think about women’s place in society. And it’s why the fight for women’s equality has increasing weight in politics today.

Teachers and other school workers have refused to

be divided, holding out in their fights to ensure that the broadest number of workers gain from whatever they win. They’ve organized to make sure children get fed and cared for when they walk out, winning over students and parents to their fight.

Facing federal, state and local governments that care nothing for what they confront, more are coming to the conclusion that appeals by Democratic and Republican politicians that “we” Americans must sacrifice together are based on a lie. Workers face an irreconcilable fight against bosses and their political parties whose only solution to the crisis of the capitalist system today is to offload it onto our backs. Our interests are not theirs, but lie with fellow workers worldwide.

All workers have a stake in the battles waged by teachers today. Join the thousands who will march in Raleigh, North Carolina, May 16.

The Socialist Workers Party is preparing to announce its 2018 candidates — workers who have been participating in and championing these struggles. They will point to how working people will be transformed through the bigger class battles that are coming, gaining the capacity to draw all the oppressed and exploited alongside them, to overthrow the capitalist rulers and take political power into their own hands. Join our campaign!

US rulers, Tehran fight over sway in Mideast

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“defend the more than €20bn of trade [\$23.7 billion] that now exists between the EU and Iran,” the *Financial Times* reported May 9, “up from €6.2bn in 2013.”

Since the pact was signed in 2015 the Iranian rulers have continued to advance their counterrevolutionary role in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen, building on decades of military incursions across the region. The country’s capitalist rulers’ moves abroad are an extension of their efforts at home to push back the gains made by working people during the 1979 revolution that toppled the U.S.-backed shah of Iran.

Tehran’s Revolutionary Guard, along with Hezbollah and other Shiite militias, intervened in Syria to shore up the rule of the Bashar al-Assad dictatorship after it put down a popular uprising. They have been backed by Moscow’s air power. As a result, Iran’s rulers have established bases across Syria, installing missile and weapons systems. Their military forces are deployed ever closer to the border of Israel.

Syrian government officials and opposition forces both report Tel Aviv carried out a missile attack against an Iranian-linked army base in al-Kiswah, eight miles south of Damascus, May 8. Nine Revolutionary Guard or Shiite militia troops were killed, reported the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The *Jerusalem Post* said this attack came after “it became known,” that Hezbollah and Revolutionary Guard forces were planning a missile attack on Israel.

After a missile strike that killed seven Iranian troops in early April, senior Iranian cleric Ali Shirazi threatened “to turn Tel Aviv and Haifa into dust.”

But so far the Iranian rulers have not retaliated. They remain wary about the impact at home of the bloody outcome of more clashes with Israel. For years the capitalist rulers have offered inducements to Afghans and other refugees to serve as cannon fodder in their wars in Syria and Iraq. They hope to lessen the number of Iranian casualties and quell opposition to their murderous conflicts.

But widespread discontent with the impact of their wars drove working-class protests throughout Iran in late December and early January. Since then, strikes by steel, rail and hospital workers and teachers were reported in the *Wall Street Journal*. Workers were enraged when the government’s budget was revealed in December 2017, showing huge funds for wars while workers face cutbacks.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Tehran would try to maintain the agreement with the pact’s other signatories. He reiterated that the country’s rulers have no intention of relinquishing their “influence in the region.” Moscow says that if Washington resumes sanctions it would expand trade with Iran.

Washington: Biggest military force in Mideast

The U.S. rulers have the largest military force in the Mideast, with 2,000 troops in Syria and massive reserves, air power and naval patrols throughout the area. And they are getting their allies in the region to do more. The Saudi Arabian monarchy says it will send troops to be part of a joint-Arab force in Syria. The rulers in Egypt say they also may join in. U.S. troops are in land controlled by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, some 25 percent of the country.

As the same time the U.S. rulers are seeking to broker a deal between Tel Aviv and Palestinian leaders. The new U.S. Embassy is due to open May 14 in Jerusalem. U.S. officials denied reports by Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman that they had asked the Israeli government to withdraw its forces from four neighborhoods in east Jerusalem so a future Palestinian capital could be located there. But Liberman reiterated that “the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem will come at a price and it is worth paying it.”

A Dec. 11 statement by the Socialist Workers Party — “For Recognition of a Palestinian State and of Israel” — explains that the U.S. government is “putting it to its allied regimes in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Egypt and Jordan, as well as to the bourgeois misleaders of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, that Washington is ‘making them an offer they can’t refuse.’” It adds that the U.S. rulers are “combining the stick of an anticipated U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem with the carrot of greater economic and military aid to Sunni-led governments against their feared rival in Shia-led Tehran.”

The starting point, the SWP statement says, has to be “the class interests and solidarity of workers and toiling farmers across the Middle East — be they Palestinian, Jewish, Arab, Kurdish, Turkish, Persian or otherwise, and whatever their religious or other beliefs — as well as working people in the United States and around the world.”

Abortion rights fight

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cidentally and now they won’t have the option,” Ramona Chavez, a certified nursing assistant in Marshalltown, Iowa, told the *Militant*. “Personally, I don’t believe in abortion for myself, but I think every woman has the right to decide.”

The American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa and Planned Parenthood announced they will file a lawsuit challenging the law, which they are confident will be struck down.

This “would be the most restrictive abortion law in the country,” Iowa ACLU Executive Director Mark Stringer told the press. “It is clear that the goal of this legislation is to overturn Roe v. Wade, ultimately banning all abortions.” Proponents of the bill in the legislature readily agreed that the bill was promoted so it could be challenged in hopes it would allow a revamped Supreme Court to outlaw abortion.

If this bill goes into effect, it could close the residency program in obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Iowa, the only such program in Iowa.

Similar abortion bans in Arkansas and North Dakota were ruled unconstitutional in 2013. Other “heartbeat” law proposals are being pushed in Missouri, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma and Tennessee.

Attempts to restrict abortion rights have been facilitated by the reasoning in the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling itself. The Supreme Court didn’t base its decision on a woman’s right “to equal protection of the laws” guaranteed by the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, but on “medical criteria” instead.

Enemies of women’s rights use the fact the court allowed state governments to ban most abortions after “viability,” described in the ruling as the point at which a fetus is “potentially able to live outside the mother’s womb.” Medical advances inevitably make this earlier and earlier in pregnancy.

Havana conference

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are all workers. Odriozola said that was accurate and argued in favor of the policy, saying that “many things are new and changing, and the problems are still being worked out.”

During a panel discussion on “regional economic integration,” an important debate took place between Pedro Ross, former longtime CTC general secretary, and one of the Argentine participants. Ross took the floor to argue that the fundamental problems facing workers and farmers in Latin America will not be addressed until capitalism is overturned, as was done in Cuba. He reinforced a point made by two University of Havana students on the panel who said the world capitalist system is in a long-term economic crisis that means no end to unemployment and poverty for millions.

When panel moderator Nerina Visacovsky, a professor at the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina, began to close the discussion period, saying, “We all need to learn from Che,” Ross interjected, “And Marx, Engels, and Lenin.”

Visacovsky replied, “Yes, it’s true we must study the classics of Marxism, but we also need to see how conditions today have changed so we don’t follow outdated recipes.”

Ross responded in turn, “In Cuba we made a socialist revolution. Ours is a proven ‘recipe.’ Capitalism must be overturned.” He added, “And to learn more about this, I urge everyone to listen to what the American compañeros will say,” referring to the panel on the U.S. class struggle scheduled for the next day.

Closing the final session of the conference, Cuban History Institute President René González Barrios thanked the U.S. socialists not only for the presentations but for bringing an array of books on the subjects discussed. Over the course of the three days, conference delegates purchased some 140 of them.

Among the most popular were *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by Mary-Alice Waters, and two books by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes: *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* and *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*. A good number of participants got one or more volumes of the four-part series by Farrell Dobbs on the 1930s Teamsters battles, now available in its entirety in Spanish.

Coming soon!

The *Militant’s* new website

By the end of May the *Militant’s* upgraded website will be in place, offering easier access to the paper’s coverage of working-class politics — from today back to 1928. Lets readers purchase subscriptions online.