

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Malcolm X: Leader of working people of all colors and creeds**  
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 85/NO. 8 MARCH 1, 2021

## SWP: 'Join in, build support for workers' struggles'

BY MAGGIE TROWE

After campaign supporters turned in seven times the number of required signatures, Gerardo Sánchez, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Dallas City Council, was certified for the ballot Feb. 10.

Supporters of the campaign of Joe Swanson, the party's candidate for City Council in Lincoln, Nebraska, will finish collecting signatures needed to get on the ballot over the Feb. 20 weekend. Swanson will speak at a Lincoln campaign forum that day in support of locked-out Marathon oil refinery workers in Minnesota.

"SWP candidates champion the struggles of working people here and around the world, point to the example they set and are using their campaigns to build much-needed solidarity," John Studer, the party's national campaign director, told the *Militant* Feb. 16. "From workers locked out at the Marathon oil refinery in Minnesota, to farmers in India fighting laws that threaten their livelihoods, the party's candidates explain what is at stake in these struggles and urge everyone we

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## Solidarity with Marathon oil workers in Minnesota!



Teamsters Local 120

President of Minnesota Nurses Association delivers firewood donation to workers locked out by Marathon Petroleum in St. Paul Park, Minnesota. Strike support is crucial for the union.

### SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT

Statement by Rebecca Williamson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Seattle City Council, Feb. 17.

I'm asking workers and our unions to spread the word and build solidarity with workers fighting anywhere against boss attacks today — from oil refinery

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### Workers stand up to largest refinery company in US

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

ST. PAUL PARK, Minn. — An important labor battle is playing out here that pits Marathon Petroleum — the largest oil refining company in the U.S. — against 200 workers, members of the Teamsters union. These workers deserve solidarity and support to strengthen their hand.

They were locked out Jan. 22 after a one-day strike in a fight over safe working conditions and against boss moves to replace union workers with subcontracted labor.

This *Militant* worker-correspondent joined a Feb. 14 caravan of more than 70 cars here, decked out with signs proclaiming solidarity with the locked-out Marathon workers, as it snaked past the multiple refinery entrances. The action

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## Victory! Prison ban on 'Militant' in Pennsylvania is overturned

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Victory! Pennsylvania state officials informed the *Militant* Feb. 12 that they had overturned the ban on the Jan. 4 issue of the paper at the Camp Hill State Correctional Institution.

"We did pull the publication to review and determined that the publication will be added [to] our Reviewed Publication List as 'Permitted,'" Diana Woodside, director of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections' office of Policy, Grants and Legislative Affairs, emailed *Militant* attorney David Goldstein

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## Myanmar protests say, 'Down with military rule'

BY SETH GALINSKY

Despite arrests, internet shut-downs, and police and military assaults on demonstrators, protests against the Feb. 1 military coup in Myanmar continue. Hundreds of thousands took to the streets across the country Feb. 17, in response to the army's ludicrous claim that most people support the coup.

Workers and their trade unions have helped lead the fight against the coup. Hundreds of thousands of garment workers, railroad workers, flight attendants and air traffic controllers, miners, bus drivers, oil workers, bank tellers, fishermen, farmers, doctors and nurses, and government employees are on strike or have joined protests in cities and towns, large and small.

Also protesting are students, artists, musicians, Buddhist monks and Catholic clergy.

Continued on page 4

## Democrats' drive to impeach Trump part of attack on constitutional rights

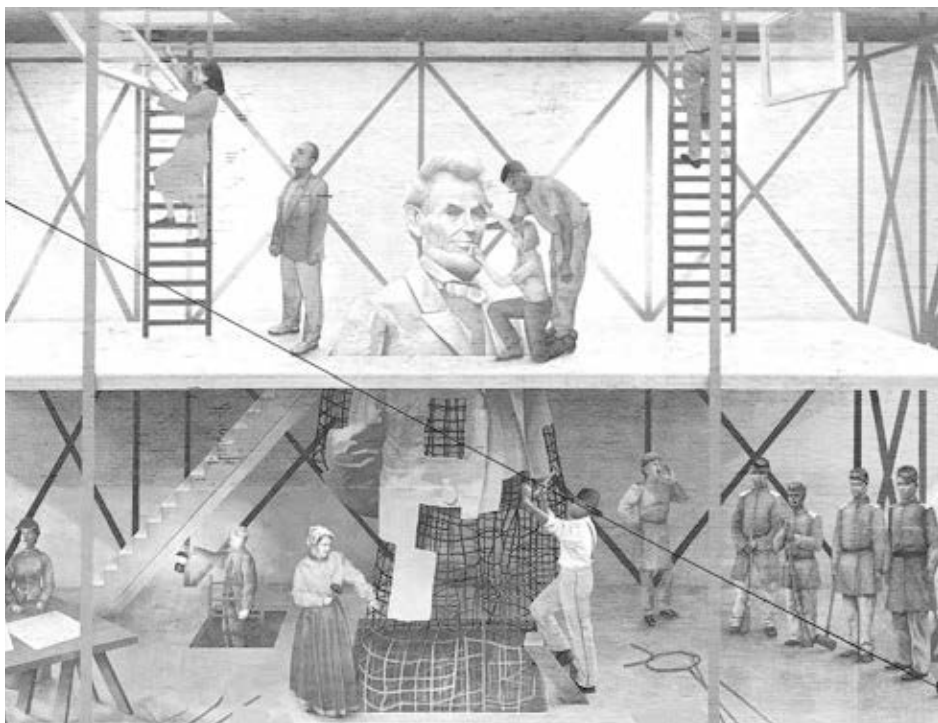
BY TERRY EVANS

Even before the Senate voted Feb. 13 to reject the impeachment of former President Donald Trump, Democrats and other liberal groups were pursuing additional ways to break him. They want to bankrupt and block him from ever running for office again.

Their target, in fact, isn't Trump — it's the tens of millions of working people they slander as "deplorable white supremacists" because they voted for him. The Democrats are

Continued on page 6

## San Francisco renames 44 schools, 'cancels' US revolutionary history



Partial view of mural "People's Progression Toward Equality," painted by Jared Bader in downtown Philadelphia. Mural portrays war to end slavery and postwar fight for equal rights for former slaves. Abraham Lincoln, center, played key role in this second American Revolution.

BY BETSEY STONE

OAKLAND, Calif. — The San Francisco Board of Education voted Jan. 26 that 44 public schools, nearly a third of the total, would be renamed. Among the names of those to be canceled are poet Robert Louis Steven-

son, abolitionist poet James Russell Lowell, Paul Revere and Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln.

In an interview with the *New Yorker*, school board President Gabriela

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Amid crisis, Haiti protesters demand president resign 3

As opposition grows, Virginia gov't votes to end death penalty 5

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Union vote underway at Amazon warehouse in Alabama  
Coles warehouse workers in Australia fight 3-month lockout



# Biden says he'll continue Trump policy, keeps Mexico border shut

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

DALLAS — White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki announced Feb. 10 that the Joseph Biden administration will continue to use a COVID-19 order from President Donald Trump’s administration to immediately expel would-be immigrants who cross the border from Mexico. “The vast majority of people will be turned away,” Psaki said.

The Biden administration has also opened a new 160,000 square foot immigration detention center in Donna and announced plans to reopen the Influx Care shelter to house migrant children in Carrizo Springs.

Hurricanes that hit workers and farmers hard in Central America last year, on top of the economic crisis there and in Mexico have led to a sharp increase in migrant workers trying to cross into Texas. The U.S. Border Patrol arrested over 78,000 immigrant workers in January, up from 36,679 in January 2020.

“Biden’s election has created hope for many migrants. But things haven’t changed,” said Enrique Valenzuela, head of a Chihuahua state migrant aid agency in Juárez, Mexico. While Biden has issued executive orders calling for a review of some Trump immigration policies, he has not overturned them.

Biden did order a 100-day “pause” in deportations, but that was immediately challenged by the Texas attorney general and blocked Jan. 26 by U.S. District Judge Drew Tipton.

“It is only through the actions by working people independent of the Democratic and Republican parties that we can push back the assaults by the bosses and their government on both immigrant and native-born workers,” Gerardo Sánchez, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Dallas City Council, said in a statement released Feb. 15. “The bosses use the second-class status of workers without papers to intensify the competi-



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

**Gerardo Sánchez, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Dallas City Council, left, talks to Arnulfo Alvarez Jan. 25. “SWP campaign fights for amnesty for all 11 million undocumented immigrants who live and work in the U.S.,” Sanchez said in a statement Feb. 15.**

tion among workers, leading to lower wages, worsening job conditions and weaker unions for all.

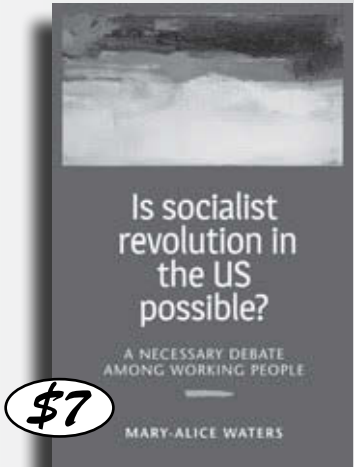
“The SWP campaign fights for amnesty for all 11 million undocumented immigrants who live and work in the U.S. and against deportations,” he said. “This is a crucial question to unite the

working class. My campaign will join and back all struggles by working people who stand up to the bosses.”

On Feb. 10 Sánchez was informed he will be on the ballot in the May 1 election after turning in petitions containing 222 signatures — over seven times the requirement.

## Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters



“The class battles ahead of us are inevitable, but their outcome is not. That depends on us. On our capacity to face the truth and speak with clarity to fellow combatants, to learn to rely on our own class solidarity and unity in struggle.”

**pathfinderpress.com**

## THE MILITANT

### Support India farmers against gov’t attacks

**Millions of working farmers across India are protesting new laws by the Narendra Modi government that will allow big corporations to drive them into debt and off their land. The ‘Militant’ champions their fight and builds solidarity around the world.**



Press Trust of India

India farmers stage “chakka jam” on New Delhi road Feb. 6 against Modi’s new laws.

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The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

**Telephone:** (212) 244-4899

**Fax:** (212) 244-4947

**E-mail:** [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com)

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



# SWP: Join workers' struggles

Continued from front page  
meet to back them.”

Supporters of the campaign of Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Atlanta, have been getting out the word about the fight to get a union at the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama. Solidarity from workers and unions around the country can put workers there in a stronger position to win union representation. (See article on page 5.)

On Feb. 13 Fruit visited Tamika Lewis, a carpenter who subscribes to the *Militant* and previously worked at the Gresham Walmart in Atlanta.

After hearing more about the union-organizing drive at Amazon, she renewed her subscription.

The paper “talks about things they try to keep covered up, like where people are trying to get together and do something about their situation,” Lewis told campaign supporter John Benson. “We have to learn about our history and from our history. Different generations need to come together, not blame each other. That’s what will keep the fight going!”

The article, “Montreal Meeting Celebrates 62nd Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution,” caught Lewis’ eye.

“Working people in Cuba took control of their country when they made a socialist revolution,” Benson said. “They took control of the resources of their small island and put them to work to meet the needs of the working people there and to bring solidarity to workers around the world. That’s why Washington remains so hostile to Cuba. The U.S. rulers fear the powerful example it sets for working people everywhere.”

### Join fight against Myanmar coup!

Róger Calero, SWP candidate for New York mayor, is using his campaign to build support for a Feb. 20 demonstration in Queens in solidarity with those fighting against the military coup in Myanmar.

“Campaign supporters are calling working people we know to encourage them to go to the protest,” Calero said. “We’re talking to people we’ve met at rallies in solidarity with Indian farmers, to union members we met during the recent strike at the Hunts Point Produce

Market and to *Militant* subscribers.”

“We tell them their solidarity can reinforce protests by people in Myanmar against the generals’ clampdown. It also strengthens working people here as we look for ways to stand up to the attacks we face from the bosses and the government.”

In Montreal, Francis Janvier told Communist League mayoral candidate Beverly Bernardo he enjoys reading the *Militant* when she called at his house Feb 11.

“I didn’t realize the U.S. still imposes an embargo on Cuba — I thought that all ended with Obama,” he said. Bernardo gave him a leaflet for the upcoming Feb. 18 picket against the embargo at the U.S. Consulate in Montreal.

While former President Barack Obama reestablished diplomatic relations with Cuba and eased some restrictions, his administration continued Washington’s decadeslong economic war against the people of the island. The Trump administration tightened Washington’s embargo even further, “making life for the Cuban people even more difficult,” Bernardo said.

“That’s why getting the truth out about the Cuban Revolution and organizing actions in its defense is so important,” she added.

Janvier had enjoyed reading the French-language edition of *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* by Socialist Workers Party



Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

Róger Calero, left, SWP candidate for mayor of New York, with Alberto Mendoza, a worker at Hunts Point Produce Market, Feb. 10. “The bosses use the unemployed to drive down our wages,” Mendoza told Calero. “Then they tell us, if you don’t like it, there’s the front door!”

National Secretary Jack Barnes, so he picked up *Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions*, in which five revolutionary leaders — Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Farrell Dobbs, and Barnes — explain why organizing to strengthen the unions is essential to the fighting unity and political striking power of the working class.

He asked Bernardo to return in a few weeks so he can renew his *Militant* subscription.

A few days later Lynda Little and Katy LeRougetel were campaigning for Bernardo in the Lasalle neighborhood of Montreal and met Claudette

Coderre, a recently laid-off grocery worker, who is looking for work.

“There are a lot of people out of work,” she told the CL campaigners.

“We need unions, so we can fight for decent working conditions,” Little said. “And we need to fight to shorten the workweek with no cut in pay to spread the available work around.” Coderre got a copy of the *Militant*.

If you’re interested in joining actions in solidarity with workers in struggle, meeting SWP or Communist League candidates or contributing to the campaigns, contact one of the SWP or CL branches listed on page 8.

## Amid crisis, Haiti protesters demand president resign

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Chanting “We are back to dictatorship! Down with Moise!” hundreds of Haitians marched through the streets of Port-au-Prince Feb. 7 demanding that President Jovenel Moise resign. Police fired tear gas at the demonstrators and journalists at the action and arrested over 20 people.

Thousands more again marched there Feb. 14.

These demonstrations are some of many protests that have rocked Haiti for more than a year, as the government has become more tyrannical and the capitalist economic crisis takes its toll on working people there. After decades of U.S. imperialist exploitation, Haiti is one of the poorest nations in the world.

Moise was voted into office in a 2015 poll, but because of election fraud the vote was shelved and an interim government put in place. Moise was elected again in 2016 and sworn into office on Feb. 7, 2017. He claims that since he lost a year in office, his presidency doesn’t end until February 2022, but protesters say it expired this month.

Moise’s administration issued an executive decree Feb. 8 “retiring” three Supreme Court justices who opposed his remaining in power another year. One of them had been arrested as he participated in the protest the previous day. Washington, on the other hand, backs Moise remaining in office for another year.

Since January 2020 Moise has

ruled by presidential decree. He suspended two-thirds of the Senate, the entire lower Chamber of Deputies and every mayor throughout the country. He is seeking to change the country’s constitution over the coming months to expand presidential powers.

Working people in Haiti are still dealing with the effects of the catastrophic 2010 earthquake and Hurricane Matthew that struck the country in 2016, as well as a cholera epidemic spread by U.N. military forces posted there. Over 60% of the population has no access to electricity. The official unemployment rate is 40%. And 60% of the population makes less than \$2 a day.

“I don’t have a life,” Jean-Marc Francois, who works in construction and at warehouses, told The Associated Press. “I don’t have any savings. I have three kids. I have to survive day by day with no guarantee that I’ll come home with bread to put on the table.”

Over the past two years there has been a growing proliferation of gangs, many with ties to the government, that have targeted opposition neighborhoods and attacked protesters demanding better living conditions.

The government “is filled with kidnappers and gang members,” 57-year-old driver Zamor, who gave only his middle name out of fear of retribution, told the *New York Times*.

The only respite for Haitian toilers has been Cuba’s contingents of doctors who have volunteered there for over 22 years, helping meet a succession of health crises. Over the last year a special contingent has come to join in combating the COVID-19 pandemic at the Port-au-Prince hospital. They take responsibility for those who develop the most severe symptoms.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### GEORGIA

#### Atlanta

**Abolish the Death Penalty, an Anti-Working-Class Weapon in the Hands of the U.S. Rulers.** Speaker: Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 26, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**Malcolm X, the Internationalist.** Speaker: Naomi Craine, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 26, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 1858 Cermak Road, 2nd floor. Tel.: (312) 792-6160.

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Philadelphia

**Legacy of Malcolm X: Black Liberation and Road to Workers Power.** Speaker: Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for district attorney. Fri., Feb. 26, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 2824 Cottman Ave., Suite no. 16. Tel.: (215) 708-1270.

## 2021 Socialist Workers Party candidates Fight in the interests of the working class Workers need our own party, a labor party

### Albany, New York

Ved Dookhun, mayor  
Kathie Fitzgerald, Common Council president

### Atlanta

Rachele Fruit, mayor  
Sam Manuel, City Council

### Dallas

Gerardo Sánchez, City Council Dist. 1

### Los Angeles

Bernie Senter, California State Senate Dist. 30

### Lincoln, Nebraska

Joe Swanson, City Council At-Large

### Louisville, Kentucky

Maggie Trowe, mayor

### Miami

Anthony Dutrow, mayor

### New Jersey

Joanne Kuniansky, governor  
Candace Wagner, lieutenant governor

### New York City

Róger Calero, mayor  
Willie Cotton, public advocate  
Sara Lobman, Manhattan Borough President

### Philadelphia

Osborne Hart, district attorney

### Pittsburgh

Malcolm Jarrett, mayor

### Seattle

Henry Dennison, mayor  
Rebecca Williamson, City Council

See directory on page 8 to contact party campaign office nearest you.



# Myanmar: ‘End military rule’

Continued from front page

“Workers were already angry, they were already activated,” Moe Sandar Myint, 37, leader of the Federation of General Workers Myanmar, told Reuters Feb. 12. She was referring to union fights for higher wages and better conditions that were taking place prior to the coup. The federation organizes many of the more than 600,000 garment workers, who produce largely for markets abroad, including Gap in the U.S.

“Union leaders came under intense pressure from management and the police,” she said. “The only answer was to go to the streets.” Police raided her home Feb. 6, but couldn’t find her.

Moe Sandar Myint went out herself, standing on car tops to urge workers to “fight against the military dictatorship until the end.”

Protesters are demanding the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other leaders of the National League for Democracy, the bourgeois party that won the November elections in a landslide. Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the leader of the military, claims the results were a fraud.

Under the 2008 constitution imposed by the military, the generals appoint 25% of the seats in parliament — giving them veto power and control of the main ministries.

The military high command saw the lopsided vote as a threat, even though Suu Kyi, who became de facto head of state in 2015, has not challenged the military’s power, its lucrative control of many industries, and its hostility to the country’s ethnic minorities. In fact, she has been the most prominent apologist for the military’s savage treatment and mass expulsion

of the Rohingya Muslim minority.

These national divisions are a legacy of the divide-and-rule strategy of the former British colonial rulers.

## Political prisoners

Suu Kyi is under house arrest, charged at first with possessing illegally imported walkie-talkies. On Feb. 16, when she had her first hearing on the charges, she was denied assistance by her attorney and discovered the junta had added the charge that she violated COVID-19 restrictions.

Along with Burmans, the majority in Myanmar, there has been widespread participation in the protests by working people from minority ethnic groups — 40% of the population — whether or not they voted for Suu Kyi.

A group of Rohingya marching in protests in Yangon against the coup were well received, Khin Maung Lwin, who was part of the contingent, told *The Atlantic*.

Police and soldiers used rubber bullets and slingshots to attack protesters outside the Central Bank in Mandalay Feb. 15. In several cities cops fired water cannon and tear gas in failed attempts to quell the protests.

When police surrounded the National League for Democracy headquarters Feb. 15 in Yangon, trapping party officials inside, thousands gathered outside and the cops retreated.

Police went to a housing complex on the outskirts of Yangon to order railway workers back to work Feb. 14. The cops left after they were confronted by an angry crowd.

There have been solidarity actions around the world, especially where



Solidarity Trade Union of Myanmar

Workers in Yangon’s Shwepyithar Industrial Zone protest Feb. 17 against military coup and for better job conditions. Workers, unions are key component of protests against military rule.

there are expatriate communities. An action is planned for Feb. 20 in Jackson Heights in New York City.

While the police and army have so far mostly refrained from using live ammunition, there is no guarantee that will remain the case.

In 1988 massive protests broke out against military rule, which had been imposed in 1962 and lasted until 2011. The military responded with bloody violence, killing hundreds and possibly thousands. In 2007 the regime brutally repressed a series of protests by Buddhist monks.

## Neighborhood patrols

Protesters call today’s actions the Civil Disobedience Movement. They have organized to keep the protests disciplined and peaceful, seeking to give

the military regime as little pretext as possible to launch deadly attacks.

The regime pardoned and released 23,000 nonpolitical prisoners last week. This had happened during the 1988 mobilizations when the generals organized some of those released to attack protest strongholds and do other provocations. Many protesters today believe the military brass is using the same tactic.

Workers in several cities have set up community watch groups, aiming to prevent provocations that could give the military an excuse to step up repression. According to *Myanmar Times*, so many community night patrol groups have been organized that flashlights are out of stock in Yangon’s markets.

The Yangon-based *Irrawaddy* newspaper reports these watch groups have stopped some suspicious activity but, having learned from 1988, they’ve prevented those detained from being mistreated. Instead, after questioning them, they hand them over to the police or send them back to their families.

Daily protests have taken place outside the Chinese Embassy, calling on Beijing to condemn the coup. So far the Chinese rulers, who are the main arms supplier to the Myanmar army and the country’s largest trading partner, have refused to do so, calling developments there “an internal affair.”

## The ‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send check or money order payable to the ‘Militant’ marked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018 or donate online at: [themilitant.com](http://themilitant.com)

# Students in Turkey protest regime imposing new rector

BY ROY LANDERSEN

For over a month students in Turkey have been mounting protests at Bogazici University in Istanbul, one of the country’s most prestigious schools. They’re calling for the resignation of a new rector appointed at the beginning of January by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Support actions have spread to other universities and cities, such as Ankara, Izmir and Bursa, and stirred resistance to the government’s police-backed attacks on the students.

Working people near the Bogazici campus have joined students in banging pots and pans from their balconies at 9 p.m. daily, revealing a wider mood of discontent against the Erdogan regime.

For decades the university rector was chosen by an open election from within the campus. This was part of a broad tolerance of different political and religious opinions and affiliations there.

But this time Erdogan stepped in and appointed Melih Bulu, a failed mayoral candidate of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). Protests began almost immediately as people at Bulu’s installation ceremony Jan. 5 turned their backs on him.

To try to break up the protests, police began arrests, firing rubber bullets and tear gas and erecting barriers. Over 600 demonstrators have been detained since Feb. 1. But the unrest has continued.

A defiant Feb. 6 open letter by student protesters to the Turkish president read, “Do not mistake us for those who obey you unconditionally. You are not a sultan and we are not your subjects.”

Erdogan has smeared the demonstra-

tors as “extremists” and “terrorists” in an effort to polarize the country against them. Taking advantage of an art exhibit on campus that included one piece showing flags supporting the rights of those who are gay, lesbian and transgender that his interior minister claimed insulted Islam, the cops went after members of the campus LGBTQ group. The regime’s goal was to try to divide students and alienate Muslim workers from the campus protests.

But many Muslim students opposed the arrests. Ece Sevik, a 21-year-old third year student, told the *Financial Times* that a wide range of students take part in the protests. “There are Muslims, atheists, conservatives, secularists,” she said. “People of all dif-

ferent views believe that the appointment of the rector was wrong.”

This is one of the most significant challenges the Erdogan regime has faced since widespread protests in 2013 brought up to 3 million people into the streets.

While his 18-year rule has been marked by a growing effort to position Ankara as a major Middle East player, with military interventions from Syria to Libya, a deepening crisis has made the regime less stable. The fallout from lockdowns during the coronavirus pandemic, rising living costs, unemployment reaching 25%, a plummeting value of the Turkish lira and continued oppression and attacks on the Kurdish people have devastated millions.

# Victory! Pennsylvania prison ban on ‘Militant’ reversed

Continued from front page

Feb. 12. “The SCI will be instructed to deliver the publication to the inmate.”

The *Militant* had received a letter from our inmate-subscriber Jan. 25 reporting the ban and sending a copy of the denial form. Goldstein spoke with Woodside Feb. 1 and sent her the denial notice and a PDF file of the issue. He requested that the impoundment be reversed, saying otherwise the *Militant* would file a “substantive appeal.”

“We fight every time prison officials anywhere try to ban the paper, and in most cases we win,” said *Militant* editor John Studer. “Prisoners have the right to read and think about political views and

speak out on political issues and social struggles. And the *Militant* has a constitutional right to reach its readers.”

According to its denial form, officials at the Camp Hill State Correctional Institution impounded the Jan. 4 issue because “Socialist Workers Party Action, speaks on social unrest and standing against law enforcement.” Prison authorities were most likely referring to the Socialist Workers Party action program, the SWP’s election campaign platform that the paper has run dozens of times over the past year for its candidates in both 2020 and 2021.

Institution officials claimed the article could “create a danger within the context of the correctional facility.”

Pennsylvania has the second-largest number of inmate subscribers to the *Militant* in state prisons across the country, after Florida.

This is the second time the paper has succeeded in overturning an impoundment at Camp Hill. Last July an issue of the *Militant* sent to a different subscriber was banned there, but state officials reversed that ban also.

“Fighting these efforts to ban the *Militant* every time they happen is part of the broader working-class struggle against attacks on political rights, free speech and of the press,” said Studer. “Whenever this issue comes up — anywhere, anytime — we will respond. And we get widespread support.”



# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## Union vote underway at Amazon warehouse in Alabama

ATLANTA — Nearly 6,000 workers at the Amazon fulfillment center in Bessemer, Alabama, began voting Feb. 8 on whether the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union should represent them in their efforts to improve wages and working conditions and defend their dignity on the job.

This union drive, which began last fall, is the largest and most serious effort yet by workers at any of the retail giant's facilities. It is winning solidarity in the labor movement and support from other workers who learn about it.

It's also getting attention in the business papers, as the bosses are concerned a "yes" vote would encourage further organizing efforts that would threaten their control and profits.

"I got my ballot yesterday," Amazon worker Sharon Franklin, who requested that her real name not be used to protect her from retaliation, told the *Militant* in a phone interview Feb. 13. "Now I have to sit down, fill it out and send it back. There's a mailbox by the Amazon center for people to drop their ballots in. The postage is prepaid, but you have to make sure you sign the back of it in the right way for it to be counted.

"I'm voting for the union," Franklin said, "but I would say some of my co-workers are 50-50 on the vote. They're concerned about losing the insurance and other benefits, which are pretty good compared to some other jobs in the area."

Union representatives have been calling workers to talk about the vote and answer their questions, Franklin said, and the RWDSU has invited workers to a meeting to discuss their concerns and how they will benefit if they get union representation. Voting ends March 29.

Volunteer RWDSU members who work at other plants are now often standing by the entrances to the warehouse, holding signs urging a "yes" vote and answering questions. The union also has a tent by a nearby gas station where workers can stop in to learn more about the union.

A Feb. 6 solidarity rally held near the distribution center drew some 100 workers, RWDSU officials and members

of area unions, including the United Steelworkers, Teamsters, Communications Workers of America, United Mine Workers, United Auto Workers, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, as well as supporters from Atlanta, Louisville and elsewhere.

"We think it's very important to build solidarity with the organizing drive at Amazon," Carl White, UMW Local 2397 president, told the *Militant*. "Miners are very aware of the union drive. Many of us have family and friends who work there."

White has worked at Warrior Met no. 7 mine in Brookwood, Alabama, since he was 19 years old and attended the Feb. 6 rally.

A success for the union drive at Amazon will strengthen the labor movement in the whole region, he said. "In the 'right-to-work' South, we face harsher conditions, worse pay, fewer benefits.

"Our contract at Warrior Met expires April 1," White said. Some 1,400 miners are covered by the UMW contract. "We're in negotiations now and they're not going well. We feel like they're trying to push the union out."

Meanwhile, Amazon is working overtime to try to convince or bully workers into voting "no."

"Amazon is in my texts, they're in our breakroom, and they're even in the bathroom telling us to vote union no," Darryl Richardson, a picker in the warehouse who backs the unionization effort, told *The Hill* Feb. 8. "It's an insane level of propaganda, and all of it is very misleading."

— Susan LaMont

## Coles warehouse workers in Australia fight 3-month lockout

SYDNEY — Some 350 warehouse workers at Coles distribution center in Smeaton Grange in southwest Sydney have been picketing since the bosses locked them out Nov. 19.

Coles announced they decided to extend the three-month lockout indefinitely Feb. 9 after the workers refused the company's latest offer. Coles, one of the major supermarket chains in Australia, had offered a \$1,000 signing bonus to get the United Workers Union members to accept the offer.



Militant/Linda Harris

Rally in Sydney Dec. 12 protests lockout by Coles warehouse bosses of 350 members of United Workers Union. They're fighting for better severance pay and end to bosses' threats.

On the picket line Feb. 8 workers told *Militant* worker-correspondents that the company's offer was just a bribe to try and get them to settle. "It was like offering a lollipop to a child to stop crying," one said.

Workers are continuing their fight for a redundancy (layoff) package that will provide satisfactory compensation when the warehouse closes in 2023 and to ensure that they do not face disciplinary action when they return to work.

All we want is "an agreement that recognizes the length of service that people have put in" and "protects the future of their families," said Ian Dixon, one of the union delegates. "We want Coles to respect us."

But in the midst of this battle, an anti-labor group known as the World Socialist Web Site has joined the bosses in attacking the workers and their union. They have gone to the picket line to ag-

gressively tell workers they should quit the union, and, as a result, have been told they aren't welcome there.

The website, run by a group that calls itself the Socialist Equality Party, has nothing to do with the fight of the working class or socialism. This outfit has a long history of trying to demoralize workers involved in labor battles and encourage them to quit their unions.

A Jan. 26 post described the workers' union "as a police force for management." It added, "What is required is a complete break with the union."

This is the exact opposite of what is needed to advance the working-class fight. The road forward is not to split the union in the middle of a fight, but, through the struggle, to strengthen our unions. "On a fight like this you realize who the union is," Ian Dixon said, "It's all of us together here."

— Linda Harris

## As opposition grows, Virginia gov't votes to end death penalty

BY JANET POST

Virginia will become the 23rd state, and the first in the South, to vote to eliminate the death penalty. The state Senate repealed it Feb. 3. Gov. Ralph Northam has said he will sign the bill into law.

The legislature is still deciding

whether those sentenced to life in prison under the new bill will be eligible for parole. Virginia had executed a higher percentage of death-row prisoners than any other state, the Death Penalty Information Center reported.

Opposition to the death penalty is growing among working people, and the number of state legislatures barring it has grown. Across the country there are still more than 2,500 working people on death row. Fifty of those are federal prisoners incarcerated at the Terre Haute Federal Correctional Complex in Indiana, where all federal executions take place.

There had been no federal executions for 17 years until the Donald Trump administration scheduled and carried out 13 beginning last July.

"The death penalty in the U.S. is marked by the brutality and class prejudice that is inherent in the capitalist 'justice' system. The purpose of capital punishment is to intimidate and terrorize working people, to deter them from coming together and fighting against the attacks of the bosses and their government," Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Philadelphia district attorney, told the *Militant*.

"There are no millionaire businessmen, no cops who have killed workers, or bourgeois politicians on death row," Hart said. "And capital punishment is meted out disproportionately to workers

Continued on page 9

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 4, 1996

The grim consequences of the rail bosses' drive to increase productivity and profits through "cost cutting" measures have been driven home with deadly force this month. Eighteen people have been killed in rail accidents in 21 days.

But the causes of these deadly accidents lie not with errors by workers, signal failures, or faulty safety equipment. They are the inevitable results of the drive by the rail bosses, with the aid of the government, to increase profits. In the last decade train crews have been cut from an average of five to three, and sometimes two.

By leading a fight to protect the lives of rail workers, community residents, and passengers, and to protect the environment, rail workers can win wide support in their battle against the bosses, who put a price tag on people's lives.



March 5, 1971

DETROIT — The few hundred Vietnam veterans who attended the Winter Soldier Investigations here Jan. 31-Feb. 2 came from all parts of the country to testify about their experiences in Vietnam, the daily atrocities and the effects of the war on themselves.

Jamie Henry was against the war when he was drafted. Today, because of what he saw, he is more active in the antiwar movement than ever.

Another veteran, Bob Walker, joined at the age of 17 and was levied to Vietnam in 1969 as a combat engineer. Like most GIs he was indoctrinated with the idea that the Vietnamese were inferior.

Then one day he talked to a 15-year-old Vietnamese who spoke English and realized that the Vietnamese were just as human as he was. After that, he could no longer accept what the U.S. was doing there and he began to oppose the war.



March 2, 1946

A fiery slogan is sweeping India. "Long Live the Revolution!" The people themselves have thus placed the label of "revolution" on the staggering blows they dealt imperialist Britain's despotic colonial rule during the past week. Their battle for India's independence is shaking the British Empire to its foundations.

Uprisings are occurring in all India's major cities. The workers are moving to the forefront in the unfolding crisis.

[In] Bombay the British rulers confined members of the Indian Royal Navy to Castle Barracks to prevent them from joining civilian demonstrators. When the men responded with a strike, the British posted armed guards. The besieged naval strikers tried to get out into the streets. When they were threatened by the British with violence, other members of the Navy maneuvered nine warships into battle position.



Attack on constitutional rights

Continued from front page determined to prevent these workers from affecting the outcome of future elections.

It is these working people that the capitalist ruling families and their meritocratic hangers-on increasingly fear, along with the 70 million more who were so disgusted with the choices before them in 2020 that they didn't vote at all. They fear what is building up among millions of workers and farmers who bear the brunt of the current crisis. Increasing numbers of working people recognize today that neither the Democratic nor the Republican party has any intention of curbing the bosses' assaults on jobs, working conditions and wages. These politicians rule in the interests of the capitalist class.

Until working people draw the conclusion that we need to build our own party, a labor party, the anti-working-class course of the Biden administration will create conditions in which millions will be drawn to Trump again, or another like him. That is, a capitalist politician who claims they'll sweep aside the swamp in Washington, find a way to provide jobs and end the American carnage.

Mockery of constitutional rights

The Democrats, and a handful of Never-Trump Republicans, failed to impeach Trump on charges of "inciting insurrection" at the Capitol Jan. 6. The rulers historically aim these types of charges against workers and our struggles. The Constitution does not sanction Congress ousting someone who is already out of office.

Recognizing this, Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts refused to preside over the Senate show trial. Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy — who switched back and forth between prosecutor, "judge" and jury — replaced him, claiming that was the "practice" in earlier trials of presidents out of office. But there has

never been any other such case. Much of this so-called trial featured attacks on political rights.

Trump argued the election results were falsified. But he had no evidence that the scope of election fraud, a common phenomena in capitalist elections, changed the outcome of the vote. In fact, Democrats and their liberal media allies did use the FBI, slanders and lies to wage a four-year hysterical effort to get him thrown out of office.

Trump told a crowd protesting the election results Jan. 6 to "fight like hell" to have the vote overturned.

But to try and convict him, the Democrats had to insist his remarks aren't protected by the Constitution, which forbids Congress from making any law "abridging the freedom of speech."

To reinforce their case, Democratic House managers presented a crude amalgam of other remarks by the former president going back to 2017, claiming that he has a propensity for violence. Trump's defense team replied by citing the many occasions when prominent Democrats used exactly the same language that Trump used.

"Regardless of who these attacks on free speech are aimed at, their target is always the working class," Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey governor, told the *Militant*. "Workers have a stake in opposing all efforts to restrict political rights. We need these rights to discuss, debate and organize to fight for our own interests."

In Washington, the defense of free speech has been turned over to the conservatives. And they use it to try and take the high ground in advancing attacks on unions, women's right to choose abortion and other anti-working-class political moves.

Liberal groups like the American Civil Liberties Union and NAACP vociferously backed the impeachment crusade, arguing that Trump deserves no constitutional protections. This stance goes hand in hand with argu-



ments by liberal forces that political rights must be sacrificed to meet the threat of rising "domestic terrorism" from a racist working class.

The impeachment "trial" was a mockery, where the former president was denied the same right to due process that any other private citizen would expect when facing criminal charges. Rules for Trump's impeachment had nothing to do with legal protections required in a court of law. In a rush to get finished, the five-day operation had no provision for calling witnesses.

When Democrats suddenly raised calling some people to testify at the end of the proceedings, the defense team said if there were witnesses, they had plenty to call — starting with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The Democrats responded that since this wasn't a court of law, *they* — not the defense — would decide how many witnesses they could have. In the end, they stuck with no witnesses, took the vote and went home.

Attacks on political rights continue

The failure of impeachment far from ends the liberals' drive to crush Trump and corral the "deplorable" working class. Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer says he's thinking of putting Trump's right to run again up for a vote. Legal probes of Trump have been opened in both Georgia, over his efforts to contest the vote there, and in New York, where the Manhattan district attorney is digging into the former president's financial dealings.

Seeking unspecified money damages, the NAACP filed a lawsuit Feb. 16 against Trump, Rudy Giuliani, the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers, charging they all conspired to violate the 1871 Ku Klux Klan Act.

The liberal offensive yielded some violent results when Michael van der Veen, one of Trump's attorneys, had his home attacked with the windows broken, threats spray painted on his driveway and his family terrified.

The 2020 election and its fallout has exacerbated the crisis wracking both of the two main capitalist parties. Trump backers and Anti-Trumpers are at each others' throats, with rumors of splits in the offing. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell berated the former president, saying he is "morally responsible" for Jan. 6 and liable "for every-

thing he did while he was in office."

The differences between the Biden wing of the Democrats and the party's socialist reformers was quieted by agreement on the impeachment drive, but will spring forth again as they debate political priorities.

One thing there is bipartisan agreement on is preparing broader moves aimed at extending the power of the capitalist rulers' political police, the FBI. A Domestic Terrorism Prevention bill proposes an expansion of FBI surveillance, increased cooperation between the rulers' various spy agencies and includes the option of the death penalty.

San Francisco board renames 44 schools, 'cancels' US revolutionary history

Continued from front page

López made clear the board's view that race is essential to understanding U.S. history and politics today, not the class divisions that actually underlie all exploitation and oppression.

She said the people whose names were removed were guilty of "white supremacy, racism, colonialization, ties to slavery, the killing of indigenous peoples or any symbols that embodied that."

Paul Revere, known for his role in the first American Revolution, was crossed off because he allegedly took part in an expedition against a Native American tribe. But that never happened. In the ensuing outcry against the decree, historians have objected to the board's reliance on Wikipedia and other untrustworthy sources to determine what names should go.

Washington and Jefferson were removed because they owned slaves. Lincoln for policies toward Native Americans.

Absent was any consideration of the role played by these historical figures in the two revolutions that were turning points in U.S. history, the revolution for freedom from the rule of the British crown and the second American Revolution, the Civil War.

The war for independence was the first victorious anti-colonial revolt of the capitalist epoch. It gave an impulse to the French Revolution of 1789, a turning point in the fight against feudalism in Europe.

The Declaration of Independence of 1776, written by Jefferson, pro-

Malcolm X: Leader of working people of all colors and creeds

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Feb. 21 marks the 56th anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X. Malcolm was "the face and the authentic voice of the forces of the coming American revolution. He spoke the truth to our generation of revolutionists," Jack Barnes, then national chairman of the Young Socialist Alliance, told a March 1965 memorial meeting in New York City.

The example Malcolm set as a revolutionary leader of the working class is more important than ever to working people of every skin color seeking ways to resist the impact of the capitalist crisis today. His legacy can be read and studied in the eight collections of speeches and interviews published by Pathfinder Press, and in *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Barnes, today the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.

Malcolm was born in 1925. When he was 6 his father, a follower of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, was murdered by a racist gang. As a teenager, Malcolm became involved in petty crime. He was sent to prison on burglary charges in 1946. It was while behind bars that Malcolm began to read broadly — history, philosophy, science, literature, whatever he could find in the prison library.

His conversion to Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam while in jail was the particular road he took that allowed him to pull his life together and begin acting on his own capacities. Following Malcolm's release in 1952, he became



Malcolm X speaking at July 1962 New York rally called to support fight for union recognition by Local 1199. Malcolm praised Leon Davis, SEIU Local 1199 president, who spent 30 days in jail rather than comply with court order to call off 56-day strike by hospital workers.

a prominent spokesman of the Nation, speaking out against all forms of anti-Black racism, as well as U.S. government policy at home and abroad.

By the early 1960s, Malcolm was increasingly attracted to the rising struggles to end Jim Crow segregation and of oppressed peoples around the world. His initiatives to join these struggles came into growing conflict with the perspectives of the Nation of Islam, a bourgeois nationalist organization that sought to carve out a place for itself within American capitalism. In March 1964, Malcolm split from the Nation.

worst setback ever inflicted on working people in the U.S.

It took further struggle by the Black-led working-class movement for civil rights a century later to bring down Jim Crow.

Many of those who try to eradicate the record of these struggles hold that all who are Caucasian benefit from and are responsible for Black oppression. They let the real culprit off the hook: the ruling capitalist class, which uses racism and perpetuates other forms of prejudice to divide working people. By denying that it is in the interests of workers to unite, the rulers undercut what is central to union and other working-class struggles.

The same Board of Education voted in 2019 to cover over a mural at George Washington High School that portrayed Washington's life. During debates over that decision board members baited those who opposed destroying the mural, labeling them "white supremacists."

Such race-baiting along with the suppression of opposing views are common among the growing meritocratic layers who administer government agencies, foundations, universities and other institutions. "Woke" politics has become, for many of them, a tool for curtailing rights and for furthering their own careers.

In the midst of the controversy over the removal of the names, the board sent a letter informing parents that schools may not open until the fall.

"The school board has mistaken priorities," retired nurse Janet Leep-

During the last year of his life, Malcolm organized and spoke with increasing clarity on questions that remain central for working people today.

"I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that do the oppressing," he told a television reporter in 1965. "I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice, and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation. I believe that there will be that kind of clash, but I don't think that it will be based upon the color of the skin, as

er told Joel Britton, chairman of the Socialist Workers Party campaign in northern California, as he campaigned near Paul Revere Elementary School. She said she thought "children need to be in school. My grandson, who is 6, cannot sit still in front of a screen for hours each day."

Leeper opposes the school renaming. "Students need to know history," she said. "They need to know why the schools were named for these individuals and the significance of what they did."

Others that SWP campaigners met agreed with her. But there are also some who say they would like names of some schools to be changed. Families of students have tried for years to rename James Denman Middle School, which was named after a school superintendent who denied Chinese students a public education.

"Workers need to know our history," Britton told the *Militant*. "As SWP candidates join strike picket lines, build support for union struggles and campaign widely among working people, they get books with the history of our struggles — including the two revolutions here and in other countries — into the hands of those who need them."

"That history shows that with an effective leadership, it is possible for working people to defend our interests," he said. "And to build a movement to replace the rule of the capitalist class with a workers and farmers government — a third revolution."

Jeff Powers contributed to this article.

Elijah Muhammad had taught it." Malcolm acted on his conviction that the fight to end racial oppression here was part of the worldwide struggle against colonialism and imperialism. He met and worked with other revolutionaries, taking two extended trips to Africa and the Middle East. He was attracted to the workers and farmers governments that had come to power through popular revolutions in Algeria and Cuba.

He was drawn to work with the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S.

Speaking at a Militant Labor Forum in New York in May 1964, Malcolm pointed to the example set by the Chinese and Cuban revolutions, where the capitalists and landlords had been expropriated. In contrast, he said, "The system in this country cannot produce freedom for an Afro-American. It is impossible for this system, this economic system, this political system, this social system, this system, period."

Malcolm remained a determined fighter for the rights of Black Americans, increasingly seeking opportunities to collaborate in action with those fighting to expand voting rights, access to jobs and public facilities, organize unions, and more. But unlike prominent figures in the fight for Black rights, such as Martin Luther King Jr., he did not act on the illusion that U.S. capitalist society, its government and its twin political parties could be won to advancing the interests of the oppressed.

He rejected the trap of choosing the "lesser evil" between the capitalist Democratic and Republican parties. He stood virtually alone in the 1964 presidential election, apart from the SWP, in refusing to campaign for — and subordinate the fight for Black rights to — the election of Democrat Lyndon Johnson.

Malcolm understood, from his own experience, that the biggest challenge for those oppressed and exploited under capitalism is to throw off the self-image that the ruling class teaches us — to gain confidence in our own capacities. In one of the last interviews he gave before he was killed, Malcolm was asked if he was trying to wake people to their exploitation.

"No, to their humanity, to their own worth, and to their heritage," he replied.

He became convinced by meeting Algerian revolutionaries who were white that Black nationalism was an inadequate political outlook. "I haven't been using the expression for several months," Malcolm told Barnes in one of his last interviews.

"Malcolm challenged American capitalism from right inside," Barnes said, in his 1965 tribute. "He was living proof for our generation of revolutionists that it can and will happen here."

In the decades since Malcolm's assassination, numerous books have been written about him, along with movies and plays. Nearly every one distorts or obscures his legacy as a revolutionary leader of the entire working class.

But as Malcolm told young civil rights fighters in 1965, you need to "see for yourself and listen for yourself and think for yourself."

A good way to start is with Malcolm's speeches and by reading *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. These titles are available at the book centers listed on page 8 or from pathfinderpress.com.

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# ‘Imperialism can’t forgive us for making a socialist revolution’

One of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for February is *Our Power Is That of the Working People: Building Socialism in Cuba*, a collection of historic speeches by Fidel Castro, the central leader of Cuba’s revolution. The excerpt is from “Defending Cuba’s Socialist Revolution,” given April 16, 1981, 20 years after he proclaimed the socialist character of the revolution as part of preparing the Cuban people to resist an imminent invasion organized by Washington. The Moncada program Castro refers to was his famous speech, “History Will Absolve Me,” delivered at his trial after the 1953 attack on the Moncada Barracks. It outlined the political and social goals of the revolutionary struggle. The July 26 Movement used this program to mobilize Cuban working people to victory on Jan. 1, 1959. Copyright © 1983 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

### BY FIDEL CASTRO

We commemorate today a very important date, April 16, 1961. On an afternoon like this, sunny and clear, we gathered in a solemn, revolutionary mass ceremony to bury the combatants that had died during the cowardly, criminal, and treacherous air raid launched by surprise against the airports of Ciudad Libertad, San Antonio



Council of State Office of Historical Affairs  
**Fidel Castro, center, leads revolutionary combatants released from prison May 15, 1955. They had been jailed for starting Cuban Revolution with their attack on Moncada Barracks.**

de los Baños, and Santiago de Cuba. A huge crowd of members of the militia and the people as a whole gathered that afternoon. It was on the eve of the mercenary attack on Playa Girón. It had taken many months to organize everything and all was ready: the mercenary troops, the air raids, the publicity, the propaganda, the cover-up. The whole thing was organized by the U.S. government, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Pentagon, but that wasn’t being admitted publicly.

At that time many lies and myths were exposed, but also the affair taught us a lot. It wasn’t like today when after twenty years of revolution our people are much better prepared and better educated politically, with a better understanding of the world’s social and political problems. But those outrageous, shameful events taught our people a lot. It was at that time that the socialist nature of our revolution was proclaimed, [Applause] and there couldn’t have been a better opportunity for it, since another lie was also current: that our people had been deceived, that they had been betrayed by their leaders.

By that time, we could say that the Moncada program had been completed. [Applause] All the laws passed during the first years of the revolution were laws and measures proclaimed in essence in the Moncada program, since it contained the seed, created the conditions for a socialist revolution. [Applause] And in our country at that moment there

could have been no revolution other than a socialist one, [Applause] if any of us were real revolutionaries.

Our enemies said that our struggle against Batista’s tyranny had been for another kind of revolution. But at the very moment when we confronted the most powerful enemy, Yankee imperialism; when we resolutely confronted their plans and their forces; on the very eve of battle, when the people prepared once again to struggle, to shed their blood and die, the socialist nature of the revolution was proclaimed.

And no one knew what that struggle would cost, because if the mercenaries had not been defeated immediately, in less than seventy-two hours, thus preventing them from establishing a beachhead, with a solid territory in their hands and with a so-called provisional government which — as the dispatches said — would be immediately recognized by many governments, that struggle could have cost our country hundreds of thousands of lives. And yet our people did not hesitate; they got ready and struggled with all their might, struggled and shed their blood during those heroic days for the socialist revolution of Cuba. [Applause] The struggle for the socialist revolution, for the revolution of our people in that historic period, for the only real revolution, had been the struggle, in one way or another, of all those who had died since the last century for the freedom of our country: those who struggled for independence,

struggled for a just revolution — which at that time was a revolution of independence that could not yet have been a socialist revolution; those who struggled throughout the period of the pseudo-republic, who struggled at the Moncada, on the *Granma* expedition and in the mountains, those who struggled in the underground; they were all in one way or another struggling for the only just revolution: the socialist revolution. But those who struggled at Girón struggled directly for the socialist revolution.

At that time I said: “What the imperialists cannot forgive is that we are here, what the imperialists cannot forgive us for is the Cuban people’s dignity, their integrity, their bravery, their ideological strength, their spirit of sacrifice, their revolutionary spirit ... and that we have made a socialist revolution right under their noses, under the nose of the United States itself ... [Applause] and that we are defending that socialist revolution with these guns, and that we are defending that socialist revolution with the same courage shown by our anti-aircraft gunners yesterday as they riddled the enemy planes with bullets. And we do not defend that revolution with mercenaries, we defend it with men and women of the people.”

“Who has the weapons?” I asked then. ... Whose hands are these that raise the weapons? ... Aren’t they workers’ hands? [Shouts of “Yes!”] Aren’t they peasants’ hands? [Shouts of “Yes!”] Aren’t they hands calloused by work? [Shouts of “Yes!”] Aren’t they hands that create? [Shouts of “Yes!”] Aren’t they the humble hands of the people? ... Do the poor have the weapons? [Shouts of “Yes!”] Are the privileged the minority? [Shouts of “Yes!”] Are the poor the majority? [Shouts of “Yes!”] Is a revolution in which the poor have the weapons democratic?” [Shouts of “Yes!”]

Then I continued: “Comrade workers and peasants: this is the socialist and democratic revolution of the poor, with the poor, and for the poor. And for this revolution of the poor, by the poor, and for the poor we are ready to give our lives.” [Applause] ...

Thus the socialist nature of our revolution was proclaimed that day. Exactly twenty years have passed and we have the same answers to the same questions; faced with the same threats, the same people have the same determination to struggle and to win.

February

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**NEBRASKA:** **Lincoln:** P.O. Box 6811. Zip: 68506. Tel: (402) 217-4906. Email: swplincn@gmail.com

**NEW JERSEY:** 3600 Bergenline, Suite 205B, Union City. Zip: 07087. Tel: (551) 240-1512. swpnewjersey@gmail.com

**NEW YORK:** **New York:** 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (646) 434-8117. Email: newyorkswp@gmail.com **Albany:** 285 Washington Ave. #1R. Zip: 12206. Tel: (518) 810-1586. Email: albanyswp@gmail.com

**PENNSYLVANIA:** **Philadelphia:** 2824 Cottman Ave., Suite 16. Zip: 19149. Tel: (215) 708-1270. Email: philaswp@verizon.net **Pittsburgh:** 5907 Penn Ave., Suite 313. Zip: 15206. Tel: (412) 610-2402. Email: swppittsburgh@gmail.com

**TEXAS:** **Dallas:** 1005 W. Jefferson Blvd., Suite 207. Zip: 75208. Tel: (469) 513-1051. Email: dallasswp@gmail.com

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:** 7603 Georgia Ave. NW, Suite 300. Zip: 20012. Tel: (202) 536-5080. Email: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

**WASHINGTON:** **Seattle:** 650 S. Orcas St., #120 Zip: 98108. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Email: swpseattle@gmail.com

### AUSTRALIA

**Sydney:** Suite 103, 124-128 Beamish St. Campsie. Postal Address: P.O. Box 73 Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 8677 0108. Email: cl\_australia@optusnet.com.au

### CANADA

**QUEBEC:** **Montreal:** 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. Email: clcmontreal@fastmail.com

### FRANCE

**Paris:** BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15. Email: militant.paris@gmail.com

### NEW ZEALAND

**Auckland:** 188a Onehunga Mall, Onehunga. Postal address: P.O. Box 13857, Auckland 1643. Tel: (09) 636-3231. Email: clauack@xtra.co.nz

### UNITED KINGDOM

**ENGLAND:** **London:** 5 Norman Road (first floor). Seven Sisters. Post code: N15 4ND. Tel: 020-3538 8900. Email: cllondon@fastmail.fm **Manchester:** 329, Royal Exchange Buildings, 3 Old Bank St. Post code: M2 7PE. Tel: (0161) 312-8119. Email: clmanchr@gmail.com

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The Militant March 1, 2021

# Solidarity with locked-out Marathon workers in Minnesota!

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workers battling against a boss lockout at Marathon Petroleum in Minnesota to warehouse workers fighting for a union at Amazon in Alabama.

I had the great pleasure joining the refinery workers and labor supporters in a solidarity caravan. And I brought greetings with me from the Washington state *Trajabadores Unidos por la Justicia*, a union of fruit packers, and from some of my co-workers at Walmart.

I used to live in Minneapolis and was part of some fierce labor battles at the Dakota Premium Foods meatpacking plant there. The solidarity caravan was initiated by my old union, the United Food and Commercial Workers.

At the heart of the Marathon workers' fight is safety, both their own and that of those who live around the refinery. The bosses there use anhydrous hydrofluoric acid to boost octane in the gas they produce. That chemical caused an explosion at a Husky Energy

refinery in Superior, Wisconsin, in 2018 that injured three dozen workers and forced evacuations in the city.

Like employers everywhere, Marathon bosses count on keeping workers divided and our struggles isolated. They got judges to put limits on the size of the picket lines. But they misjudge our capacities for determined resistance and building solidarity.

Having gone to Minnesota puts me in a better position to win more support. I'm asking you to join us. Tell your family, friends, co-workers and union about this fight and urge them to send support messages and donations. Visit the picket line, if you can.

Socialist Workers Party candidates around the country champion every struggle working people wage for jobs and to improve wages and working conditions. We explain that the two main classes — bosses and workers — have diametrically opposed interests.

The bosses control the cops, courts and government at all levels. But the workers have something stronger,

if we use it — the overwhelming strength of our numbers, our ability to bring production and distribution to a halt, and the power of our solidarity.

The bosses face a crisis in their capitalist system today. They aim to make workers and farmers bear the brunt of the crisis. More workers will be forced to fight to defend their jobs, wages and working conditions.

Winning broader support for workers' battles is the road to building the fighting labor movement we need. It strengthens those who offer solidarity, helping us learn our real capacities and build class consciousness.

It points in the direction of workers and our unions organizing independently politically as well. We need our own party, a labor party. Such a party would organize workers in our millions to fight for the interests of all the exploited and oppressed, charting a course to take political power.

Join us building support for the Marathon refinery workers in Minnesota!

## Workers stand up to largest US refinery company

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warmed the spirits of the picketers on a bitterly cold Valentine's Day.

Rebecca Williamson, a Walmart worker and Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in Seattle, also joined the caravan and gave the workers messages of support she brought from Washington state.

The solidarity caravan was made up of workers from many unions, including the Teamsters, United Steelworkers, United Food and Commercial Workers, Roofers, Laborers International Union, National Association of Letter Carriers, Minnesota Nurses Union and others. Claire Van den Berghe, an organizer with UFCW Local 1189, initiated the caravan.

"I was surprised by how many cars participated," Van den Berghe told the *Militant*. "A few of us got the word out. My union helped make signs. We need to keep organizing solidarity."

Williamson presented the solidarity statements to Tom Erickson, president of Teamsters Local 120, and gave copies to workers on the picket line. "This is a message of support from the *Trabajadores Unidos por la Justicia* (Workers United for Justice)," she told Erickson. "They walked off the job to protest unsafe conditions in the fruit packing warehouses in central Washington and inspired workers to walk out at seven other packinghouses."

The message from Agustín López, president of Workers United for Justice, said in Spanish, "We support all your members. Forward! You can do it!"

She also presented a card from her co-workers at the Federal Way Walmart where she works.

Upon reading the statement from the fruit packers union and hearing about the conditions they face, one picket said, "Migrant workers get abused. I don't care where you are from, you don't deserve to be treated like that."

Williamson and Gabby Prosser, a campaign supporter in Minneapolis, talked with locked-out workers in a Teamsters trailer set up near the pickets, where workers warm up and get a snack during their six-hour picket shifts. "This isn't about money. It's about safety," said Don Lande, who has worked for Marathon for over 20 years. "They cut jobs and put more on us. It's not safe having us do six different jobs."

A number of the workers said that safety was the key issue, both for them and for those who live near the refinery.

"These kind of attacks are happening to workers all over," Williamson said. "That is why it's so important that you all are standing up. We need to build a fighting labor movement. And we need to build our own political party, a labor party, that can help mobilize the support and power of working people."

"I agree with that," said Ron Linker, another picket.

Washington County Sheriff's Department cops sit in their cars monitoring each picket site. The company won an injunction limiting the number of pickets to six crossing the road at a time. "The cops, the judge, and the company are all in this together," said John, a picket who asked that his last name not be used.

Scott Kroona, Teamsters Local 120 business agent, told the *Militant*, "We've gotten unbelievable union and community support." Supporters have dropped off several cords of firewood. Volunteers from Laborers International Local 563 have cooked hot dogs and hamburgers for the picketers for the past week.

### A serious class battle

Marathon is a multibillion dollar capitalist outfit that runs 16 refineries across the U.S., including in Texas, California and Illinois, and supplies a number of gas station chains, including Marathon, Arco, Speedway, Hess and Tesoro.

Business has fallen during the coronavirus pandemic as driving and gas purchases have declined. Marathon reported a loss of \$1 billion in the third quarter of 2020.

"This is a serious fight," Williamson told the *Militant*. "The bosses are looking to make the workers pay for their crisis. It makes getting the word out about the lockout and winning support for the workers more important."

During the caravan Williamson reconnected with fellow fighters in the United Food and Commercial Workers union. She was a member of Local 789, which later merged with Local 1189, and took part in a hard-fought victory against a company-led effort to decertify the union at Dakota Premium Foods slaughterhouse in South St. Paul, where she worked some 13 years ago. The slaughterhouse,



Rebecca Williamson, right, from Seattle, brought support messages to Teamster Local 120 President Tom Erickson.

which is now closed, was located 5 miles from the Marathon refinery.

The next day Williamson and local SWP supporters met with officers and a former co-worker at the Local 1189 union hall to discuss solidarity with the Marathon workers and other workers' battles today.

"We are partners with the Teamsters in this fight," said Jennifer Christiansen, president of UFCW Local 1189.

The Teamsters maintain their picket lines 24/7 and welcome all who want to help. Send messages of support and contributions to the strike fund at Teamsters Local 120, 9422 Ulysses St. NE Blaine, MN 55434.

## Virginia gov't votes to end death penalty

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who are African American and Latino."

Led by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, 82 organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, sent a letter Feb. 9 to President Joe Biden calling on the administration to immediately halt all federal executions and dismantle the death-chamber building in Terre Haute.

Though Biden has a 30-year record in the U.S. Senate of support for the death penalty, in his drive to win the presidency Biden said he had changed his mind. In 1994 he co-authored the "Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act," which was signed into law by then President Bill Clinton. It added 60 new offenses subject to the federal death penalty. "We do everything but hang people for jaywalking," Biden bragged at the time.

"The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world," Hart said. "The SWP campaign unreservedly defends the rights of prisoners, including the right to have access to the reading material they want, such as the *Militant*, in order to form their own opinions and be part of the working-class movement worldwide."

"We call for an end to solitary confinement and for the immediate abolishment of the death penalty!"

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld a lower-court decision that put a stop to the execution of Alabama inmate

Willie B. Smith III, a 51-year-old Black prisoner. He had been sentenced to death at age 22 in 1992 for the murder of Sharma Ruth Johnson, the sister of a Birmingham police detective. Smith was scheduled to be executed Feb. 11.

The ruling was made the night the execution was set to take place. The issue was Smith's request to have his personal pastor accompany him in the execution chamber.

"Alabama has not carried its burden of showing that the exclusion of all clergy members from the execution chamber is necessary to ensure prison security," Justice Elena Kagan wrote for the court majority. Justices Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Amy Coney Barrett, a Donald Trump appointee, concurred in the decision.

The lower court had also ruled the execution should be put off because he is intellectually disabled, and to put him to death violates the constitutional prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment. The Supreme Court overturned this, agreeing with Alabama officials that the appeal had been filed too late.

If the execution had taken place, it would have been the first state execution since July 8. A number of scheduled executions since then have been stayed, partly because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The next state execution scheduled is of Ramiro Ibarra, set for March 4 in Texas.