**SWP candidate on ballot in Nebraska, gives workers a voice**

**BY NAOMI CRAINE**

LINCOLN, Neb. — Joe Swanson, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Lincoln City Council at-large, and supporters spent the Feb. 20-21 week-end building solidarity for locked-out workers at the Marathon Petroleum refinery in Minnesota and collecting signatures to put Swanson on the bal- lot for the April 6 primary.

“As a 60-year union veteran, Swanson said he would advocate for workers, help them organize and increase their rights,” wrote the Lincoln Journal-Star.

Continued on page 3

**Solidarity with struggle against Myanmar junta!**

**BY SETH GALINSKY**

Hundreds of thousands took to the streets across Myanmar Feb. 22 on the first day of a general strike demanding an end to military rule. They did so despite the junta’s threat that protesters will “suffer loss of life” if they continue. Myanmar’s military commanders overthrew the National League for Democracy-led government elected overwhelmingly in November. The party’s leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, is under house arrest.

In an escalation of the repression, police and army soldiers killed two people and wounded at least 30 in Mandalay, Myanmar’s second-largest city, Feb. 20. But far from deterring the fight, coup opponents responded with more protests and strikes.

Thousands returned to the streets of Mandalay the next day to protest the killings and demand the junta step down. Thousands also lined the streets of

Continued on page 4

**Bosses’ profit drive at heart of capitalist catastrophe in Texas**

In act of working-class solidarity, Jessica Villa-Gomez, owner of Boombox Taco, has given out thousands of tacos to workers in Houston who have been without electricity for days.

**BY ALYSON KENNEDY**

DALLAS — An unusual major winter storm beginning Feb. 12 spread snowfall and damaging ice here, all across Texas, in other parts of the South and Midwest, and in northern Mexico. Snow blanketed 80% of Texas, from Dallas to Brownsville on the southern border.

Some 25 million people in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi were under a hard freeze warning for the next week.

The storm produced a disaster here and across Texas. “The cause of the social catastrophe confronting workers and farmers in Texas and beyond

Continued on page 6

**Back refinery workers’ fight over lockout by Marathon**

**BY GABRIELLE PROSSER AND HELEN MEYERS**

ST. PAUL PARK, Minn. — The fight of 200 locked-out Teamsters Local 120 members against attacks by Marathon Petroleum — the largest refinery company in the U.S. — is now in its fifth week. Solidarity and support is critical, and it continues to come. Keep it coming!

Visiting the picket line Feb. 19 and 20, we met Kerrylo Felder, an organizer for the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation. She pulled her car up to the pickets and served pots of steaming hot jambalaya to those walking the line. “I’m a Teamster too, and these are my boys. I am here to support them,” she told the Militant.

Workers said she comes out once a day, seven days a week, bringing a hot meal.

Another time we visited a small dump truck pulled up to one of the picket lines and dropped off a big load of firewood. The pickets told us the driver was a former contract worker at the refinery who now works at a construction company and knew the dangerous conditions they faced.

As he left, he said, “I’ll be back with more.”

The two key issues in the standoff are safety for workers on the job and in the surrounding community and

Continued on page 7

**SWP candidates campaign to build support for fights of workers, farmers**

**BY TERRY EVANS**

NEW YORK — The SWP candidates in 2021 are going to use our campaigns to get out the story and build support for whatever working-class struggles are taking place, no matter how big or small.” That’s what John Studer, Socialist Workers Party national campaign director and editor of the Militant, told a lively Militant Labor Forum here Feb. 20.

Studer pointed to the example set by Farrell Dobbs, the party’s presidential candidate in 1956, who urged unionists across the country to organize donations of station wagons to the Black community in Montgomery, Alabama. They were fighting to desegregate city buses there, a watershed battle in the growing movement to overthrow Jim Crow segregation.

The party used Dobbs’ campaign — and the Militant — to join in this historic battle. Studer held up the front page of the April 2, 1956, Militant with a banner headline, “Montgomery Free-
Communist League candidates back labor struggles in the UK
BY ÖGMUNDUR JÖNSSON
MANCHESTER, England — Workers at British Gas, members of the GMB union, went on strike on Feb. 19-22 protesting the company’s attempts to impose increased hours while cutting pay. The union said the company refused to drop its threat to “fire and rehire.” This means using the “fire and rehire” stick to impose the concession contract.

The Communist League candidates are building support for the gas workers and bus drivers. “I heard about the drivers,” Tommy Edwards told this Militant worker-correspondent and campaign supporter Anne Howie Feb. 21 when we knocked on his door in the Gorton area and raised the two labor battles. “You’re right, it’s what a lot of people are facing.” Edwards, who works both as a drummer and coffee server, said the coffee chain where he’s employed often puts him on “flexible furlough.” This means his hours are cut and he receives only 60% of the lost wage paid from the government.

The CL’s platform calls for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay in return to job-wage cuts, as well as a government-funded public works program to provide jobs at union-scale pay replacing decaying infrastructure. The estate where Edwards lives is a case in point. Several houses are being torn down after a massive sinkhole opened up in the street following heavy rain in January. “I never considered myself political, but when it catches up with you, you can’t hide from politics,” Edwards said as he subscribed to the Militant and took a copy of the CL’s election platform. At the end of a successful day of campaigning in the Moston area, campaigners spoke with Vartan Lloyd Morris, an agency nurse who first met the CL at a protest following the killing of George Floyd. “I’m not surprised the bus drivers voted to strike,” she told Mendoza. “It’s no secret that they’ve been unhappy about the way they’ve been treated for a long time.” Lloyd Morris endorsed the Communist League campaign. “This is the right time for a working-class campaign,” she said. “People’s minds are open because of what’s happening all around them.” Seven people subscribed to the Militant and lived endorsed the election campaign over the Feb. 20-21 weekend here.

The CL campaign is reaching out across the country, including to working people in small towns, to farmers and other small proprietors.

Solidarity with fishermen
On Feb. 12 rail worker Pamela Holmes, CL candidate for London Assembly, traveled to England’s south coast to meet with fishermen, who are being hit hard by a drop in the wholesale price of fish. “Price is always an issue but the pandemic has contributed,” said fisherman Mark Dewey. “There used to be a market in local restaurants but that’s dried up with the lockdown. Most of us are selling directly to the public now.” Dewey vowed to continue his campaign.

‘Stimulus’ fund for ‘Militant’ goes over $78,000!
Though the pace has slowed a little, the Militant is still getting contributions to our special “stimulus” fund appeal, hitting a total so far of $78,480 from 181 readers!

“Since its founding nearly a century ago, the Militant has served as a beacon for working people and the oppressed — a true ‘tribune of the people,’” Patti Hayna wrote along with her check. The appeal assures the paper has the funds available to respond to developments in the class struggle. Our goal is to make a difference in the fights workers wage and help draw the lessons from them to build a fighting working class vanguard.

Please give as generously as you can to the Militant, 306 W. 37th St., 11th Floor, New York, NY 10018, or online at themilitant.com — JOHN STUDE
SWP: Support fight against Myanmar coup!

NEW YORK — “Working people here and around the world should join in denouncing the coup in Myanmar and demand freedom for all the political prisoners,” Roger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York, told a Feb. 20 rally of 250 here in solidarity with the protests in Myanmar. “The rulers everywhere make working people pay for the capitalist crisis.” He pointed to the “millions who are facing the consequences of capitalist greed” in the wake of waste outages across Texas, and to India, where farmers are standing up to attacks by the Indian government.

“History teaches us that working people can only rely on our own strength,” Calero said. “The ruling classes have their foreign policies,” he added. “The working class must have our own foreign policy — to support the struggles of working people everywhere.”

— SETH GALINSKY

Commuter League in Canada launches 2021 campaign in Quebec

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — “Working people in the Soviet Union and around the world should act to support the struggle of the people of Myanmar against the recent military coup,” Beverly Bernardo, Communist League candidate for mayor of Montreal, told over two dozen people at a Militant Labor Forum here Feb. 21. The meeting celebrated the launching of the CL’s campaign.

“The hundreds of thousands of people protesting in the streets, including striking coal miners, garment, dock, railroad and government workers, are an inspiration and an example for working people here looking to advance our struggles,” she said.

Philippe Tessier, CL candidate for mayor of the Montreal borough of Saint-Laurent, pointed to the example of the determined struggle by hundreds of thousands of farmers in India against the government’s drive to end the decades-long state system of subsidizing the prices farmers get for their produce.

“There are lessons in this struggle for working people to dramatically limit the impact of the coronavirus, with the repressive ‘stay-at-home’ decrees of Ottawa and Quebec City that have thrown millions out of work, isolating them from fellow workers. These two candidates urged those present to build and participate in the upcoming Feb. 28 car caravan to demand the end of Washington’s embargo against Cuba and the return of the U.S.-occupied Guantánamo naval base. The action, which will take place in the morning, starts at the intersection of Notre-Dame and Sainte-Catherine streets in downtown Montreal at 2 p.m. from Parc Lafontaine in the Sherbrooke Street parking lot.

Campaign in UK

Continued from page 2

By HEMINGWAY

THE MILITANT — Elected official in a hurry

Continued from page 2

Tens of thousands of farmers in India and around the world have been battling the Indian government’s drive to end the decades-long state system of subsidizing the prices farmers get for their produce.

new subscribers to the Militant and sold four books about the party’s program.

“I appreciate you said impeachment isn’t really the point of the campaign,” commented Joseph Rathe, a greenhouse worker who’d gotten a subscription to the Militant from a SWP campaigner the day before.

“This is not our government, it’s a capitalist state,” Swanson responded. “It’s their Constitution. All of the rights we have, everything that has been changed in our interest, came out of the streets. Living under capitalist rule, you can often hear the view ‘things will never change.’ That’s not true. You can have your struggles by men and women ‘from nowhere.’”

“I’d like to bring others to learn about this,” Rathe said after the meeting.

Over the course of the weekend, supporters of the campaign signed up seven new subscribers to the Militant and sold four books about the party’s program.
Continued from front page capital, Naypyitaw, chanting, “Our upris- ing must succeed!” for the funeral of 19-year-old student Mya Thet Thwe Thet Khine. She was shot in the head Feb. 9, the first protester killed since the coup. Other protests across the country Feb. 21 filled thousands of farmworkers and farmers, who marched in the small town of Hlegu north of Yangon.

As the general strike began, police arrested early 200 as thousands from the surrounding countryside attempted to enter Naypyitaw. The sparsely popu- lated city was set up as the capital by the generals in 2005 to insulate it from protests in Yangon, the country’s largest city and former capital.

Almost the entire population of Yangon, some 5 million in a country of 53 million, “was joining the moving rivers of people along major roads in the city,” reported Myanmar Now news service. Sai Kyi was deported the first time in 1989, after the military massacred thousands to crush massive protests. She became head of the government af- ter the election in 2015, just five years after being released from her most recent house arrest. Since the 2015 election Suu Kyi has often collaborated with the generals, es- pecially in defending the military’s domin- ial repression of the Rohingya people in Rakhine state. But she is still viewed by many as a symbol of opposition to the military and its long history of bloody rule. Her father, Aung San, was a cen- tral leader of the independence struggle against British imperialism and was assassinated in 1947.

Under the 2008 constitution, drawn up by the military, the generals appoint 25% of the seats in parliament, granting them a majority of 200, or 30 more seats. But they still feared that the 2020 election results would lead to inroads on their grip on power, including their many lucrative corporate holdings in key sectors. But they still feared that the 2020 election results would lead to inroads on their grip on power, including their many lucrative corporate holdings in key sectors.

Security forces open fire

The deadly assault in Mandalay took place after working people rushed to the Yadanaqon dockyard to support workers who had refused a police order to leave a half-filled tank.

Teenage market laborer Wai Yan Tun was shot in the head and killed. Car- penter Thet Naing Win, 36, was killed with a shot to the chest. The security forces threw spikes — designed to cut through sandals — as they charged into the crowd. “We are fighting for the crowd. “We are fighting for the rights of ethnic minorities.”

Legacy of British rule

Divisions between the ethnic minori- ties and the Burmese majority are a leg- acy of British colonialism’s rule. The Myan- mar government officially recognizes 135 ethnic groups, but excludes the mostly Muslim Rohingyas, who it falsely claims are “illegal immigrants”. In Bangladesh, denying them citizenship, Burma, renamed Myanmar in 1989, became independent in 1948. The Brit- ish colonial regime had stoked ethnic divisions as part of its divide- and-rule strategy, largely excluding Burmans from the government. After indepen- dence the new government, now led predominantly by Burmans, enforced its own discrimination against other eth- nic minorities.

The violent protests are notable for the participation of workers and farmers from all the ethnic groups. While many are skeptical of Suu Kyi, they are united in opposition to military rule.

Over the last decade Myanmar has be- come a major center for world garment production, with over 600,000 workers. Its main trading partner and supplier of its military is Beijing, but capitalist com- panies from Singapore, Japan and India have substantial investments, all attract- ed by wages that are roughly half those in Cambodia and Vietnam.

Workers and farmers in much of the country don’t have access even to essen- tial services. As of 2014, two-thirds of households didn’t have electricity, 70% depended on firewood for cooking and barely 2% had flush toilets. Workers and their unions have been at the forefront of the protests. Moe Sandar

NY solidarity action: ‘Down with military gov’t’

NEW YORK — “We don’t want military government!” 250 protesters shouted in English and Burmese at a Feb. 20 rally here against the Feb. 1 military coup in Myanmar. “Military generals. Criminals! Criminals!” The ac- tion was held in the Jackson Heights neighborhood of Queens.

The protest also called for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, the head of the National League for Democracy, and hundreds of others arrested since the coup.

“The military rulers oppress and try to divide the people of Burma,” Kha- ing Hsu Wai, 26, told the Militant at the protest. “But in the fight against the military, we are united as people of all ethnic groups, that face discrimination in Myanmar. This includes the Rohingyas, who have been brutalized by the army, a policy defended by the Suu Kyi government.

“Some opponents of the coup at the protest called for Washington and the U.N. to send troops and intervene. “I don’t want the U.S. Army to come,” said Aung Bobo Lwin, who is from the Karen ethnic minority. “We want to create a democracy. We have to solve our problems ourselves.”

Seth Galinsky

Militant/Seth Galinsky

Byle Gale Shangold

Supporters of the Socialist Work- ers Party who volunteer to get Path- finder books into prisons and jails in Eastern North America surpassed their goals during the fall 2020 sales effort. Now they’re look- ing forward to an even more successful spring sales campaign building on that achievement.

Pathfinder publishes titles by SWP leaders, as well as works about the Civil War and labor battles, and by Malcolm X, Thomas Sankara and other revolutionaries. For even though many libraries were shut down and bookstores were not running at full capacity, volunteers won 104 or- ders, with 29 of them coming from new buyers and librarians more orders than in any past sales effort.

“In the face of widespread shutdowns, we had to be persistent, but the persis- tence paid off,” Nick Castle, a volunteer from Los Angeles, told the Militant. Volunteering was growing in interest in understanding the roots of today’s capi- talist crisis and what working people can do to find a way out of it.

“Since the US invasion of Afghanistan,” said Carole Wagner for New Jersey state, “we’ve had much more interest and we’ve done a lot of boosting — wanted Mal-colm X and other related titles, re- sponding to last year’s protests against police brutality,” Castle said.

Volunteers found an interest in a broad range of Pathfinder’s 450-plus titles. A longtime book distributor in Maryland whose focus has been titles on Africa and the struggle for Black rights ordered over 200 books, including The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation by Abram Leon; Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa by Enrique Ubieto; and The Turn to In- dustry: Forging a Proletarian Party by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

Volunteers call their efforts “shoe leather work,” since they have to be persistent to face the most effective way to intro- duce Pathfinder’s titles.

“We got the third order from this rural bookstore in the last 10 months,” reports Rosemary Ray, a volunteer from Ham- ilton, Ontario. “Last July and August were the busiest months he’s ever had as people got away from cities and vis- ited small towns.” When Ray visited the buyer, “He bought seven titles, includ- ing The History of the Russian Revo- lution by Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky.”

Several prison librarians told Ray they have no budget to buy books. But at one Ontario prison, “7a cart of do- nated books goes around to prisoners twice a week. Two librarians respond- ed positively when we asked if they

would put Pathfinder brochures on the cart so prisoners could see what was available and order online.” Pathfinder offers a 50% discount to prisoners.

Most public and campus libraries re- main closed, but volunteers were able to get the new edition of The Jewish Ques- tion into a number of them.

Scott Breen from Seattle got a sig- nificant order from a campus librarian there, including that title and The Turn to Industry. Seattle volunteers also get titles adopted by a number of profes- sors for their courses.

A spring sales campaign from Jan. 11 to July 4 has been launched with goals in the same range of 100 orders, with 20 of them from new bookstores, libraries or classrooms. That effort has gotten off to a good start in Washington, D.C., Arrin Hawkins reports.

“After months of lockdown, layoffs and the presence of 20,000 National Guardsmen on the streets since the inauguration, we knew many working people would be searching for books that answer some of the questions they are asking today,” she said. Volunteers there are visiting streets they haven’t been to for several years.

Black History Month and Women’s

Continued on page 9

Volunteers expand Pathfinder bookstore placements
Amazon workers fighting for union in Alabama need solidarity!

Some 80 unionists and others turned out in Philadelphia Feb. 20 for a solidarity action with workers fighting for a union at an Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama. Almost 6,000 workers there began voting Feb. 8 on whether the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union should represent them to help fight to improve wages and working conditions and defend their dignity on the job. Voting ends March 29.

“Come to a meeting tonight with the workers in Bessemer,” Adam Rizzo, a worker at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, told the crowd at the action. “The museum workers have voted by 99% to be represented by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, he said. “Like at Amazon, they tried to divide us, they tried to break us up.”

Also participating were members of the nurses union at Temple University Hospital. “Our struggles are connected,” said Marty Harrison, a representative of the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals. The Amazon bosses fire the workers on the assembly line down to the minute to squeeze every ounce of labor out of them, she said, but now “they take workers off the floor for mandatory anti-union training.”

The action was one of a number held as part of a national day of solidarity, one of which drew the largest number of workers.

In Atlanta, 75 people attended a rally, including students who were just learning about the union fight in Bessemer Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor, and Sam Manuel, SWP candidate for City Council president, were among those who took part. They met Wyatt Schroeder, an art student at Georgia State University, who told them, “I first got active last summer in the protests against the killing of George Floyd.”

“Today’s fight is part of movement that workers together, not only breaking down segregated neighborhoods and schools but also segregation in the workplace,” Manuel explained. “That intertwined history, with union coal mines and steel mills in that part of Alabama, is a big part of why the organizing drive is happening in Bessemer. The battle makes workers stronger, more confident.”

— Janet Post and Susan LaMont

DHL Liverpool workers use union power to win raise

LIVERPOOL, England — After 10 days of strikes since mid-December, 120 drivers and warehouse workers at DHL’s Croxteth depot here ended their current round of action Feb. 8, winning a pay raise.

The striking workers, members of the Unite union, were flagging down trucks arriving at the warehouse to persuade other drivers not to cross their picket line when this reporter visited them Feb. 2. One driver parked his vehicle and joined the picket line for a while, discussing with the workers how he could win support for their fight at his warehouse. Workers won a 3% pay raise, backdated to April 2020, and a further 3% for 2021, along with a 75 pound ($105) one-time payment.

The union “will not allow its members to be mistreated and will consider all avenues to protect them, including fresh industrial action,” Unite regional officer Kenny Rowe told the media as the union announced its settlement with the company Feb. 8.

Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for Greater Manchester mayor, visited the warehouse workers picket line on several occasions to show his support for their fight. He told workers their action set an example for others.

“Not only won they some gains but go back more able to use your union to stand up to the bosses,” he said.

— Anne Howie

Visually impaired workers fight boss attack in Ohio

BY JACQUE HENDERSON

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — “Not just those of us who are visually impaired, but all workers in any fight for any thing we get,” Dave Perry, a member of Teamsters Local 100 in Cincinnati, told participants at the Feb. 5 Militant Labor Forum here.

Perry described how he and fellow workers at the Teamster-organized factory run by the Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired have stood up to the bosses’ attacks. Workers slit tape; produce exit signs and craft and exam paper; assemble kitchen gadgets; and prepare products for shipment.

Two-thirds of the workers, including Perry, are blind or visually impaired. Bosses “tried to ignore seniority and pay rates — the workers’ safety — but they brought back workers after a COVID-related shutdown last spring,” Perry said. “And they put some people on different jobs, at lower rates of pay. They rearranged machines, eliminating the physical barrier keeping workers out of a danger zone where cranes move huge tape rolls to sliding machines.”

A high proportion of workers at the plant who were visually impaired weren’t initially called back to their jobs according to seniority, Perry said.

Some workers organized a petition against these violations and presented it to management. “We are still fighting for safety, pay, and to get everyone back in the building,” he added.

“I have learned over the years that you can’t be afraid to fight for rights — to get together, and really go for it,” Perry said.

“Only by all of us sticking together are the bosses going to understand that we mean what we say,” Perry said.

“All workers should support struggles of visually impaired workers,” Maggie Trowe, speaking at the forum for the Socialist Workers Party, said. “It’s part of unifying the working class and rejecting the bosses’ efforts to divide us. The fight of the Teamsters in Cincinnati strengthens all workers in our fight for our rights and dignity.”

Trowe, a Walmart worker, pointed to the efforts by Amazon workers in Bessemer, Alabama, to win representation for their union, the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

“They have won some victories to a mail-in vote for union recognition,” she said.

Trowe said the bosses are driven by the crisis of their capitalist system to push hard to defend their profits, attacking workers’ jobs, pay and working conditions. And there have been some important fights against those attacks.

She pointed to the example set “by our union members in 2019 when they were laid off by BlackJewel Coal in Harlan, Kentucky, and bosses refused to pay them what they were owed with the blessing of a bankruptcy court.”

“The miners blocked the railroad track leading out of the mine for two months, winning solidarity from working people and getting the pay that was stolen from them,” she said. “Last year miners at Quest Energy followed their example when bosses failed to pay their wages, winning the pay they were owed in just three days.”

Trowe also pointed to lessons from the historic wave of strikes and organizing drives in the 1930s described in the four-volume Teamsters series by Farrell Dobbs, a leader of those battles and of the SWP. Perry said he enjoyed hearing that the leaders of those fights preferred a short, page-long union contract.

“While some of us might have trouble reading more than a page,” he said, “the bosses clearly seem to have more difficulty sticking to even that length of a contract without us making them do it.”

“Taking part in labor struggles, protests against police brutality and other actions in the interests of the working class, builds workers’ self-confidence and class consciousness. Only working people can resolve the crisis we are facing today,” Trowe said.

The Militant March 8, 2021

Militant/Osborne Hart

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

March 11, 1996

At a February 26 press conference, President William Clinton announced a new round of hostile measures against the socialists in the former Yugoslavia.

These moves followed by two days the action of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces in shooting down two Cessna aircraft that, despite unambiguous warnings by Cuban air traffic controllers, invaded Cuban airspace on a course toward the capital city of Havana. The planes were piloted by members of a group called Brothers to the Rescue, led by Cuban-American counterrevolutionaries, a number of them with long histories of armed acting against the Cuban state.

The invasion on February 24 was the second hostility incursion that day and the tenth such invasion over the past 20 months. Throughout this period, Washington had done nothing to stop these provocations organized from U.S. soil.

March 12, 1971

The Stalinist Polish bureaucracy announced that the price rises that sparked a massive workers’ uprising in December were being rescinded. This latest round of far-reaching retreat was the direct result of a textile strike in Lodz, Poland’s second largest city. Eighty percent of the workers are women, and the majority of the 10,000 strikers were women.

The workers are among the lowest paid in Poland. Added to this are inadequate housing in the city for the workers and their families. Insufficient maternity leaves, and the low number of women managers. Initially, strikers were represented as “hysteric” and “unrealistic.”

The workers won for every worker in Poland wage increases comparable to what they were demanding for themselves.

The Kremlin bureaucrats are watching the developments and fear repercussions among other East European and Russian workers.

March 9, 1946

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 28 — In defiance of a court injunction, mass picket lines of CIO workers, determined to defend their right to picket and peacefully assemble, have fought bitter pitched battles on two successive days against motorized and mounted police near the strike-bound General Electric plant here. Over 5,000 men and women surrounded City Hall today in an angry demonstration against police brutality.

Police force was instigated by the corporation and local capitalist press, after General Electric early this week obtained an injunction limiting the number of pickets to 10. Special Police for the attack was a group of union veterans.

Veteran Richard Duane declared, “They’re taking it out on our vets because the company and the cops had expected the vets would serve as strikebreakers. Instead, they’re our best union defenders.”

— Mike Davis

THE MILITANT

March 25, 1946

The Militant March 8, 2021            5
Social catastrophe in Texas

Continued from front page

is not the storm,” Gerardo Sánchez, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Dallas City Council, said in a statement Feb. 23, “but the dog-eat-dog capitalist system, which puts profits for the few over the human needs of the millions.

“The Socialist Workers Party says workers need to fight for workers control of all aspects of production, from the plants and refineries where we work to workers control on a state and national basis,” he said.

Temperatures plunged below 20 degrees for days and below zero at night in Texas, a state where homes and businesses are usually not winterized. Almost every energy source in the state became paralyzed, as power companies have installed little protection for subfreezing temperatures, as that cuts into profits. Ice-covered wind turbines in West Texas stopped running, 185 power generating units, including gas and coal-fired power plants, tripped offline and a nuclear unit in South Texas broke down because its water supply froze.

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas, which runs the electrical grid, began ordering power outages. “Unfortu-nately,” ERCOT CEO Bill Magness cynically told the press, “those have terrible outcomes for people when they have to last a long time.”

By Feb. 16 over 4 million people were without heat and lights in the coldest temperatures in decades.

Thousands in Killean, home of Fort Hood, the biggest military base, were without power for over a week. “I have three small children — you know I have an infant and there was no problem with the heat,” said Madrigal. Many contracts give the power companies the ability to take the money for their bills directly out of your bank account.

There are three power grids in the Texas, as are allowed to offer electric rates that vacillate based on demand, many workers are starting to get outrageous bills. “My uncle got a bill for $14,000, and was told that he’s got to pay it,” said Madrigal. Many contracts give the power companies the ability to take the money for their bills directly out of your bank account.

Before her power was restored, everybody had to wear two sweaters at night. “I got a big scare when I noticed my 4-year-old daughter Alondra’s hand was getting too cold, frozen I thought, so we wrapped it with blankets to stay warm.”

Because power companies in Texas are offered to offer electric rates that vacillate based on demand, many workers are starting to get outrageous bills. “My uncle got a bill for $14,000, and was told that he’s got to pay it,” said Madrigal. Many contracts give the power companies the ability to take the money for their bills directly out of your bank account.

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That’s because their “model” is based on maximizing profits, not assuring power supplies.

‘Nationalize energy industry’

Sánchez, the SWP candidate for Dallas City Council, said that in addition to rebuilding after the disaster, “Working people and our unions need to fight for a federally funded public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages reparing broken pipes, damaged homes and apartment buildings, and replacing the worn-out power systems and other infrastructure in Texas and around the U.S.

“We cannot rely on the Democrats and Republicans, the two parties of the bosses. We need our own party — a labor party based on our unions — to champion and lead the fight for the nationalization of the energy industry under workers control;” he said. “Such a fight can inspire and give confidence to working people, showing that we are capable of building a movement of millions that can draw in all those exploited and oppressed by capital to replace capital-

 Farmers meet across India, plan to expand protests

Some 125,000 farmers and farmworkers gathered in a grain market in Bar-

nala, in Punjab, India, Feb. 21 to discuss and protest three new laws enacted by the Indian government that threaten their livelihoods.

The government’s laws would end state-backed minimum prices for crops, opening up agricultural production and distribution to greater exploitation by agribusiness conglomerates. Millions of farmers fear being driven into greater debt, or off the land altogether, as a result.

Rally speakers called on participants to join the tens of thousands of farm-

ers who have set up protest encampments on the main roads into New Delhi, India’s capital, since Nov. 26. “The sea of supporters, including tens of thou-

sands of women, began gathering in Barnala early in the day, riding in on busses, tractors, trailers and cars,” Reuters reported. Farmers’ union leaders called for a mass mobilization outside the capital Feb. 27.

“Special assemblies are being held to discuss the fight,” Gursimran Singh told the Militant by phone Feb. 20 from Mandiani in Punjab. People from his village attended one in Jagraon Feb. 17, he said. “They are not giving up.”

Singh said he just got back from a visit to the Punjab city of Amritsar. “There are trolleys full of people on the road to Delhi,” he said. “Every 5 kilometers [3 miles] there is food. I can tell you, people are fully confident.”

“If we remain peaceful, we will win,” Balbir Singh Rajewal, president of the Bharatiya Kisan Union, told a mass meeting in Jagraon Feb. 18. “If there is any violence happens, Modi will win.” He noted that provocations at the last big tractorcade in New Delhi Jan. 26, India’s Republic Day, were a “setback.”

MoDy government and bourgeois media tried to divide and weaken the movement by focusing on acts of violence that occurred there and flags raised by some Sikh separatists. But “it took just two days for people to understand,” Singh Rajewal said, and again return to the protests “on the Delhi borders,” Modi, he added, “still says it is a morcha [demonstration] only of Punjab,” which is majority Sikh. But, he said, the protests are much broader than that.

Farmers held a nationally coordinated four-hour-long “rall roko” protest across the country Feb. 18. Hundreds sat on the railway tracks in Delhi, Hary-

ana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, West Bengal and elsewhere.

— ROY LANDERSEN

Our Politics Start With the World

by Jack Barnes

In New International no. 13

“Electrification is an elementary precondition if modern industry and cultural life are to develop, and communists fight for it to be extended to all the world’s 7 billion people. This is a prime example of how our politics start with the world” — Jack Barnes

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Gerardo Sánchez, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Dallas City Council, speaks to Claudia Acosta in Dallas Jan. 26. She told him, “We have to come together. There has been many years of bad conditions and violations of our rights.” In wake of winter storm, social catastrophe caused by workings of the capitalist system deepened crisis for working people.
Cuban volunteers plan vaccination drive, extend int’l solidarity

BY RÓGER CALERO

Pharmaceutical institutions in Cuba are gearing up to produce 100 million doses of Soroventa 2 — one of four vaccines against COVID-19 in development there — by the end of the year.

It will soon be given to 42,000 Cuban volunteers for the final stage of clinical trials. The Cuban daily Granma reports the first 150,000 doses have been produced, with more on the way. A vaccination drive is being prepared that will make Cuba one of the first countries to inoculate its entire population by the end of 2021.

This follows the government’s mobilization of working people over the last year to knock on people’s doors across the island to see if anyone feels sick or needs help. No one was left on their own.

Cuba will be the first Latin American country to produce its own vaccine. The name Soroventa, Spanish for “reservoir,” underscores the Cuban people’s longstanding struggle to defend their independence from U.S. imperialism.

Similar trials for Soroventa 2 are under negotiation or underway in Iran and Mexico. “The spread of the virus is not very high in Cuba,” said Dr. Vicente Vérez, director of the Finlay Vaccine Institute in Havana, Jan. 26, “that’s why we’re using larger samples of population in phase 3 trials from other countries to confirm its effectiveness.

After a year of action by the Cuban people that limited the spread of illness and death and preserved Cuba’s social structures from a surge of infections. In mid-February confirmed cases climbed to 900 a day for the first time. Cuba reopened the island to tourists and foreign travelers recently. Even with strict controls, this facilitated the increase.

While those figures are still tiny compared to other countries, they are serious enough to place additional strain on the country’s resources.

The “COVID-19 mortality rate in the world is above 2%,” said Dr. Eduardo Martínez Díaz, director of Cuba’s Biotechnological and Pharmaceutical Industries Group, Feb. 4. “In our country it’s at 0.74%, but we’re deeply saddened by the death of 220 Cubans,” he added, expressing the conviction that guides the country’s government that every life is precious — no matter how old or young.

The U.S. rulers’ economic war on the Cuban people and their socialist revolution is having a serious impact on the country’s ability to produce and buy medication and supplies, said Martínez. No other country has ever been subject to such a severe or long-lasting embargo.

Its brutal consequences are felt in the gathering of raw materials to produce vaccines. Some vendors refuse to sell the components we need, explained Dr. Eduardo Ojito, director of the Center for Molecular Immunology. They cite U.S. restrictions banning sales to Cuba of medical supplies that contain more than 10% of U.S.-made products.

“But medication to treat COVID is a priority,” Martínez said, “to save lives.” Less than 3% of imprisoned patients in Cuba develop serious illnesses, he explained, compared to more than 10% in the rest of the world. “When our medical personnel asked for COVID treatment they provide are responsible for saving these lives.”

A product of the revolution

Cuba’s medical and scientific achievements are possible because of the conquests working people made when they took power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and their backers in Washington in 1959. Internationalism and solidarity have been a hallmark of the Cuban Revolution ever since. In developing a vaccine, the Cuban government aims to not only inoculate its own population, but to make it available to working people in other countries.

Cuban doctors and nurses have been at the forefront of treating people infected with COVID-19 around the world. More than 200 arrived in Panama, the Central American country with the largest number of COVID cases, at the end of December. Prior to their arrival, the Panamanian government’s appeals for aid had been rejected by eight other governments, including Washington.

“Not enough vaccines are being produced worldwide,” said Martínez. “Only 108 million doses have been administered so far. That’s just a little over 5% of the world population.”

With production and distribution controlled by big pharmaceutical monopolies, he said, the vaccines are inaccessible to most countries.

U.N. Secretary General António Guterres announced grim figures Feb. 17 — some 75% of all vaccinations have been administered in just 10 countries. Government programs in more than 130 countries have yet to receive a single dose.

Back refinery workers’ fight over lockout by Marathon

Continued from front page

workers’ opposition to the bosses’ demand to use more nonunion contract labor.

“As workers, we all need the support of other working people to win our battles against the bosses,” Chris Pennock, a shop steward in the National Association of Letter Carriers Minnesota branch, told the Militant. He’s been on the picket line a number of times. “One thing union members can do is to speak up to our union brothers and sisters in support of strikes that are going on. Solidarity is the road forward.” His local has contributed $500 to the locked-out workers’ fund.

Kyle Edwards, a member of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3800, which organizes clerical workers at the University of Minnesota, told the Militant he and several other union members had participated in the 70-car caravan held the previous week in support of the refinery workers.

“I went because I want to show the locked-out workers standing in the freezing cold they have support from workers across the state,” he said.

Local 3800 President Cherrence Horazuk spoke at a Feb. 6 support rally for the Teamsters. “The pandemic has drained already rare Marmon’s patience,” he said. “We’re risking their lives while the big companies are raking in profits, showing no concern for workers’ safety, especially if they can turn a faster buck,” she said. “But when workers stand together, they have power to turn things around. Teamsters 120 members are setting an example for the labor movement as a whole.”

Tyle Sarderson, a locked-out worker, told us on the picket line, “We really haven’t been getting any coverage from local media. One of the platforms we’ve been using to share information is Facebook, but they’ve started editing some of our posts or wouldn’t let us post at all. They’re censoring us. Everyone should be able to use these platforms. Agree with him or don’t, but it’s not right what they did to Donald Trump. They shouldn’t be able to shut down anyone.”

“The company is making the workers’ pay for the pandemic and its losses,” picker Steve Sklavenitis said. “When the government gave the company money to support its ‘essential workers,’ the company kept it for their own interests. The workers continued its attacks on the workers.”

Sklavenitis was referring to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, which was promoted as a measure to provide emergency relief from damage wrought by COVID-19. But Marathon took $411 million in rebates over losses from before the pandemic.

The Teamsters picket 24/7 and welcome all who want to help. If you can, join them and bring some solidarity. Send messages of support and contributions to the lockout fund at Teamsters Local 120, 9422 Ulysses ST. NE, Blaine, MN 55434.
Socialist Workers Party wins victory against FBI spying

FBI On Trial: The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit Against Government Spying is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for March. It contains federal court proceedings from the 15-year legal battle waged by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) against decades of spying, harassment, and disruption, by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The ruling in this case places a valuable new weapon in the hands of all workers and people fighting to defend their rights and living standards and all those struggling for progressive social change. It can and should be used widely to win broader freedoms for everyone.

The SWP and YSA filed the lawsuit July 18, 1973, in federal court in Manhattan. They charged government agencies with “illegal acts of blacklisting, harassment, electronic surveillance, burglary, mail tampering, and terrorism” against the socialist organizations. They demanded a court injunctive order to halt these illegal activities and that the government be ordered to pay damages.

The trial opened in New York April 2, 1981, and continued for three months. In eight years of pretrial proceedings the plaintiffs had managed to pry hundreds of thousands of pages of government documents out of the files of the FBI and other government agencies, substantiating many of the allegations made in the original complaint. Many of these documents were submitted into evidence at the trial.

Five years after the trial, on August 25, 1986, U.S. District Judge Thomas Griesa ruled in favor of the plaintiffs.

The judge found the FBI guilty of violations of the constitutional rights of the SWP and YSA and of their members and supporters.

On August 17, 1987, Judge Griesa issued an injunction barring any further government use of the files on the SWP, YSA, and their members and supporters that had been compiled illegally. …

Judge Griesa found that “the FBI’s disruptive activities, surreptitious entries and use of informants” were “violations of the constitutional rights of the SWP and its members and supporters.”

The court ruling provides a compelling summary of the government’s illegal operations against a SWP sued to defend and not even revealed in the case. Judge Griesa dealt extensively with the FBI’s use of informers to spy on and to disrupt the SWP and YSA.

His decision deals with all the 15- fed workers, and Su- bjections against arbitrary vices. And, as he has done in the past, Judge Griesa has excluded from evidence at the trial.

The ruling makes clear that protection of the right to be free from unconstitutional government activities applies to communist organizations such as the SWP and YSA, as well as to noncommunist groups.

The program and activities of the SWP since its founding in 1938 were very much at the heart of this fight. The SWP called many witnesses to the stand during the trial to testify about the party’s views, organization, and actions.

In addition, dozens of government witnesses, ranging from a former U.S. attorney general and other top Department of Justice officials to FBI street agents, explained the FBI’s goals and methods in combating “subversion.”

The first two witnesses were Farrell Dobbs, SWP national secretary from 1943 to 1972, and Jack Barnes, who became national secretary after Dobbs.

On the witness stand, Dobbs traced the history of the SWP, described some of the party’s fundamental political concepts, and discussed the 1941 conviction of eighteen leaders of the party and the Teamsters union in Minneapolis—innocent, he said, and under provisions of the thought-control Smith Act, which makes advocacy of communist ideas illegal. Dobbs testified that he believed the SWP advocates today are the same as the ones he and others were imprisoned for during World War II. Dobbs’s testimony is cited extensively by Griesa in his decision.

The fact that the ruling in this case places a valuable new weapon in the hands of all workers and people fighting to defend their rights and living standards and all those struggling for progressive social change.

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According to its website, the Socialist Workers Party is a political party in the United States that advocates a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist ideology and is affiliated with the International Communist Movement. It is one of the few major political parties in the United States that openly advocates revolution against the capitalist system.

The SWP was founded in 1938 by a group of American workers who were disillusioned with the Communist Party of the United States, which had been aligned with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The SWP opposed the USSR’s policies and criticized the CPUSA’s alignment with the Stalinist regime in the USSR. The SWP was also critical of the policies of the US government, which it viewed as oppressive and anti-working class.

The SWP has been involved in various political and social movements throughout its history, including anti-war, anti-racist, and anti-imperialist campaigns. It has also been active in labor and community organizing efforts, and has supported a variety of social and political causes.

However, the SWP and other communist parties in the US have faced legal challenges and harassment from the government. The SWP has been the subject of government surveillance, harassment, and other forms of repression for many years. In the 1950s, the US government passed the Smith Act, which made it illegal to advocate the violent overthrow of the government. In the 1960s, the FBI launched a campaign to undermine and disrupt communist organizations, including the SWP.

Despite these challenges, the SWP has continued to operate and grow. It has a membership of over 10,000 and is active in a variety of political and social movements. The SWP also publishes a weekly newspaper, The Militant, which focuses on current events and political analysis.

A special feature in this issue of The Militant is “Socialist Workers Party wins victory against FBI spying.” This feature provides an overview of the legal battle waged by the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance against decades of spying, harassment, and disruption by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The ruling in this case places a valuable new weapon in the hands of all workers and people fighting to defend their rights and living standards and all those struggling for progressive social change. It can and should be used widely to win broader freedoms for everyone.
Every battle workers find themselves in is strengthened by solidarity and support by fellow workers — from the fight for a union by Amazon workers to the struggle of locked-out Marathon refinery workers in Minnesota.

We urge workers to take these fights to your union, church and to co-workers, friends and neighbors. Organize to get signatures of support and contributions to the strike fund. Socialist Workers Party candidates are doing the same as we join every fight and campaign for solidarity.

There is no one else we can turn to for support besides our fellow workers and other who suffer the assaults of the capitalist rulers. We have to rely on this class solidarity against the attacks of the bosses and their government.

To advance our struggles, working people need a party of their own, a labor party. It would attract millions through its experience of all the exploited and oppressed and by the conduct of its members in working-class struggles. It would help us understand that the bosses’ twin parties — the Democrats and Republicans — are obstacles to working-class making progress. Through our struggles, we build our self-confidence and class consciousness.

Every political question working people confront today, from the loss of the huge power of wages in Texas to persistent joblessness to U.S. military intervention abroad, has to be answered from the standpoint of the interests of the working class.

Both Democrats and Republicans tell working people that they have “common” interests and need to join in defending “our” way of life from foreign competition. This is a lie. Like all capitalist countries, the U.S. is class divided. Both of the bosses’ parties protect the ruling families and their drive for profits at the expense of working people at home and abroad. U.S. militarized intervention aims to shore up the fortunes of the world’s dominant imperialist power and is used to put down inevitable rebellions by working people. The working class needs its own anti-imperialist foreign policy solidarity with the battles of workers and farmers against the rapacious encroachments of U.S. imperialism.

There is an example we can emulate. Led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, working people in Cuba rose up to overturn the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and took power into their own hands. They established a workers and farmers government and, through their struggle, gained the consciousness and experience to use that government to forge a new future. Join us!

**SWP candidates campaign to build support for fights of workers, farmers**

Continued from front page

vory bus boycott, Studer said, the party’s 2021 national slate of candidates will act on the example Dobbs set.

Working people don’t need “critiques” of the squabbles between the bosses’ parties, the Demo-

crats and Republicans, Studer said. They need a clear presentation of how to advance the line of making capitalism into a class struggle.

“Politics is explaining and defending the inter-

ests of working people, the vast majority, against the attacks of the capitalist rulers and their system of class division and oppression,” he said. “What workers need is a clear picture of how the working class can move forward.”

Studer pointed to the Militant’s coverage of the trip by Rebecca Williamson, SWP candidate for Se-

attle City Council, on a bus tour of support from the union of fruit packing workers in Yakima Valley, Washington, and from her co-workers at Walmart to locked-out Marathon Petroleum workers in Minne-

apolis last week. She joined a solidarity car caravan for the refinery workers initiated by United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1199, the local William-

son was a member of when she was part of union battles at Dakota Premium Beef a decade earlier.

Labor solidarity like this “can make a difference and it’s what SWP candidates seek to organize every-

where,” Studer said.

**Forum leaflet misleading**

“There is a problem with the leaflet for this meet-

ing,” Studer said, pointing to the headline, “Constitu-

tional Rights: What’s at stake for working people?” Studer said, “This is misleading.”

“While the U.S. Constitution was a product of historical in the 1930s and changed attitudes among working class to unite against capitalist rule.

Overturned Jim Crow, and that opens the door for the working class to unite against capitalist rule.

Proponents of “equity say the state must make up the deficiencies in the system by handing out money, especially to the “experts” leading the ‘woke’ crusade,” Studer said.

Liberals like Garland champion ever-more govern-

ment regulation and interference in the lives of work-

ing people who have contributed so much. Many com-

mentators describe the proliferation of such rules as a growing “administrative state,” Studer said.

But when the Militant used that expression in a re-

cent article, he said, that was misleading. “There is only one kind of state under capitalism, a bourgeois state, dedicated to preserving the role of the capital-

ists. It will take different forms. But until workers and farmers take power into our own hands, its class char-

acter remains the same,” he said.

In the imperialist epoch, the capitalist state tends to expand its bureaucracy and size, but that doesn’t change its class character. Studer said. The liberals in particular like to use regulations to “nudge” and “con-
trol” working people.

The lively forum discussion included comments on the privilege and power of the ruling class, as a product of the workings of the capitalist system — and a report by Roger Calero on a solidarity ac-

tion earlier that day with the struggle against military rule in Myanmar. Calero, SWP candidate for mayor of New York, spoke at that action.

What is the road forward? one participant asked.

“We need two things,” Studer said. “An expan-

dition of the class struggle — something which the con-

ditions inflicted on working people over time by the working of capitalist will ensure.

And, out of our struggles, we need to forge a lead-

ership like working people did in Cuba — one that uses that government to forge a new future.

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**Bookstore sales expand**

Continued from page 4

History Month offer opportunities to win orders.

The Kansas City Star interviewed during Black History Month with local bookseller Willa Robinson, who said she was keen to present books by Malcolm X so people could learn about what he stood for. Robin-

son prominently displays titles by Malcolm as well as Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Work-

ers Power by Jack Barnes in her store.

Lessons learned in the course of previous working-

class battles are vital for working people to advance our interests today. But there is a far-reaching effect by “woke” liberals to “eradicate any notion that the class struggle is the motor force of history,” Studer said. They try to impose racism of Caucasians and other workers is the defining “fact” of U.S. history, obliterating the massive struggles that brought down the oppression of the British Crown, ended chattel slavery, toppled Jim Crow, built the union move-

ment in the 1930s and changed attitudes among working people toward each other ever.

Studer described how a New York public school principal engaged the volunteer parents of art class to “seek the white” identities describes them and to rank their own de-

gree of “white privilege.” Race overrides everything for these middle-class forces, Studer said.

Similar ideas are shared by President Joe Biden’s nominee for attorney general, Merrick Garland, Studer pointed out. “The administration wants to be rooting out “violent extremism” and “ensuring racial equity.” The banner of equity, Studer noted, is the opposite of the demand for equal rights that was at the center of the student movement that overturned Jim Crow, and that opens the door for the working class to unite against capitalist rule.

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