

# THE MILITANT

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Selma-Montgomery mobilizations  
in 1965 won voting rights victory  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 85/NO. 12 MARCH 29, 2021

## Protest: ‘Indict the police who killed Breonna Taylor now!’

BY NED MEASEL

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — On the March 13 anniversary of the midnight police raid that took Breonna Taylor’s life last year, hundreds of people marched through downtown Louisville to demand the police responsible be held accountable. Demands to prosecute the police are very popular among working people here and around the country.

“Until a jury trial tells us that these officers are not guilty, there’s always time to indict,” Lonita Baker, one of the attorneys for Taylor’s family, said at the protest. “And that’s what we’re going to continue to fight for.”

This was the first large street protest since October. Tamika Palmer, Taylor’s mother, marched behind a banner bearing her daughter’s image. In addition to Palmer, other speakers included Taylor’s boyfriend, Kenneth Walker; Ben Crump, an attorney for the family and for the family of

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## Biden hypes ‘Rescue’ bill, but workers need jobs now

BY TERRY EVANS

When President Joseph Biden went on television to deliver his first presidential address March 11, it was to tout the Democratic Party-controlled Congress passing his \$1.9 trillion “American Rescue Plan.” He claims it puts “working people in this nation first.” But the bill contains nothing to reverse the massive unemployment that has battered millions of workers for over a year.

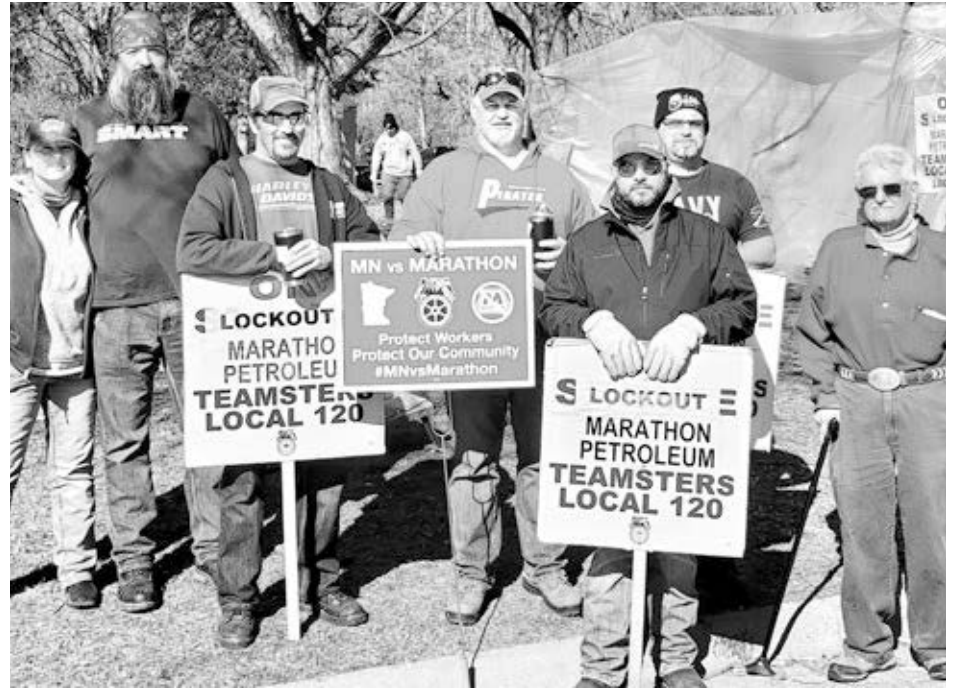
Nine million more people are unemployed than a year ago.

Biden says Democrats govern for “all Americans” and everyone should work together for the “common purpose.” But the capitalist ruling families—who own the factories, banks and all the means of production—and working people—who own nothing but our labor power—have no “common purpose.” Our class interests are in sharp conflict.

The rising insecurities and hardships facing millions today are a product of social relations based on class exploitation.

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## Back locked-out Marathon oil workers’ fight for safety! ‘Your fight is our fight,’ say Nebraska workers



Militant/Nick Neeser

Workers from Nebraska brought solidarity to locked-out Marathon refinery workers in St. Paul Park, Minnesota, March 13. At left, Diane Dormer and railroad conductor Lance Anton. At right, Joe Swanson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Lincoln, Nebraska, City Council.

BY GABBY PROSSER

ST. PAUL PARK, Minn. — Locked-out Marathon oil refinery workers continue to picket here 24/7 and receive much-needed solidarity from other workers and unionists.

The 200 workers, members of Teamsters Local 120, were locked out by the bosses Jan. 22 after a one-day strike. The central issues in their fight are the bosses’ push to contract out work involving hazardous chemicals, job cuts and job combinations. The company is keeping its operations running using managers and contract workers.

Pickets welcomed a carload from Lincoln, Nebraska, March 13 who delivered a solidarity message signed by over 100 workers.

“You are fighting not just for yourselves, but for the safety of the community surrounding the refinery where you work,” the message read.

“Marathon Oil, like all bosses, tries to keep workers divided and isolated. But your fight is our fight. Working people must stick together! Stay strong!”

The locked-out workers are up  
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## Protests in Myanmar continue in face of military junta killings



Myanmar Now

March 15 protest in Thanlyin Township, on outskirts of Yangon, day after military and cops killed 71 people. Junta’s brutality has failed to quell protests by workers, farmers in Myanmar.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Despite unleashing ever more brutal violence against peaceful protesters across the country, the military junta in Myanmar has so far failed in its attempts to quell the massive movement against its Feb. 1 seizure of power. As of March 17, the regime’s police and army troops had killed more than 217 people, wounded hundreds, and jailed more than 2,100.

In the bloodiest day since the coup, at least 71 protesters were killed

March 14, including 39 in Yangon, Myanmar’s largest city. The repressive forces also violently attacked protests in Hpakan, the jade-mining hub in Kachin state in the northeastern part of the country; in Mandalay, the country’s second-largest city; in Bago in the southwest; and other regions. But tens of thousands of protesters keep coming back.

Police and soldiers have repeatedly attacked demonstrators in working-

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## Give your new gov’t ‘stimulus’ to the Socialist Workers Party!

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Socialist Workers Party announced March 13 a special “stimulus” capital appeal to help finance the long-term work of the party. Party members, supporters, *Militant* readers and a growing number of workers, farmers and youth that SWP members are meeting and working with will welcome the opportunity to contribute from the recent government \$1,400 stimulus payment.

“I’ve gotten my new ‘stimulus’ payment already,” electrician and party supporter Ray Parsons wrote March 15. “Simply put, where should I send it to help the movement?”

You can send your check, made out to the Socialist Workers Party, to the SWP, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

The contributions will go toward augmenting capital and will make a big difference in expanding our reach as we present our program and organize along with other fighters on the line of

march of the working class to power, the coming American revolution and joining with the toilers of the world to end exploitation, and open a new stage in human history.

The *Militant* will feature weekly coverage on the progress of the appeal.

### Inside

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—On the picket line, p. 4-5

Support Amazon workers’ fight for union in Alabama!

Nurses strike in Massachusetts over dangerous understaffing

# Protest Breonna Taylor killing

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George Floyd, who was killed by cops in Minneapolis; and Sadiqa Reynolds, Louisville Urban League president.

Relatives of others killed by police around the country also took part. Half an hour before Sean Monterrosa was killed by cops in Vallejo, California, last June his sister, Michelle, told the crowd that he had texted her urging she sign a petition for justice for George Floyd.

The rally was organized by Until Freedom and Taylor’s family.

In an attempt to discourage participation, city officials erected concrete barriers and stationed dump trucks in the streets around the rally site.

Protests demanding the Louisville cops responsible for killing Breonna Taylor be brought to justice have dwindled in recent months. They got smaller as vandalism, looting and confrontations against local small businessmen and workers organized by antifa and Black Lives Matter leaders increasingly marked actions here and elsewhere last summer. This discouraged many working people from participating. The involvement of a group armed with long guns along the perimeter of the anniversary rally site, supposedly providing “security,” also limited the appeal.

Just a week earlier, people carrying “Black Lives Matter” banners organized a small action outside a cheerleaders competition at the Kentucky Convention Center. “The reason why you get to be here in these pretty little gorgeous outfits and your gorgeous hair and your gorgeous bows is because of your white privilege,” Carmen Jones of the Black Women’s

Collective lectured the young women and their parents. “Breonna is dead. Black mothers are burying their babies while white mothers send their daughters to cheer competitions.” She told them to “do something black today with your white privilege.”

“We need broad disciplined protests open to everyone who supports the demand to prosecute the police responsible for the raid as well as those that pulled their triggers,” said Margaret Trowe, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor here.

### Continuing pressure for action

No police or city official has been charged in Taylor’s killing. Three cops involved in the raid have been fired. Brett Hankison, the only officer indicted for anything, was fired last year. He was charged, not with killing Taylor, but for wanton endangerment after shooting into neighboring apartments during the raid. Detective Joshua Jaynes was fired earlier this year for lying to obtain the search warrant, and Detective Myles Cosgrove, who launched the fatal shot, also was dismissed.

The day before the protest, Taylor’s mother filed complaints against six officers for their actions that night and in the “investigation” that led to the raid. This includes obtaining the court order for the raid under false pretenses, failure to turn on their body cameras during the assault, and tampering with a crime scene and evidence.

Last year Palmer settled a wrongful death suit with the city for \$12 million and officials’ agreement on a series of supposed reforms, including more oversight by top command-



AP Photo/Timothy D. Easley

**Tamika Palmer, center, marches behind banner with portrait of her daughter Breonna Taylor, in Louisville March 13 on first anniversary of fatal shooting by police. Hundreds who took part demanded the cops responsible face criminal charges over her killing.**

ers, safeguards in conducting raids, and flagging officers accused of using excessive force. The city admitted no wrongdoing in Taylor’s killing.

As the cops broke through the door to Taylor’s apartment, her boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, not knowing it was police, fired his legally owned pistol

once, wounding Sgt. Jonathan Mattingly. Walker was arrested, then released, and a week before the rally all charges against him were permanently dismissed by a judge.

The crowd at the rally cheered when Walker announced the charges had been dropped for good.

## 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

### Lincoln, Nebraska

Joe Swanson, City Council at-large

### Los Angeles

Bernard Senter, State Assembly Dist. 54

### Louisville, Kentucky

Maggie Trowe, mayor

### Miami

Anthony Dutrow, mayor

### Minneapolis

Doug Nelson, 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.

## The Militant

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## THE MILITANT

### Working people in Texas face capitalist disaster

*Working people in Texas were left on their own facing social disaster caused by for-profit capitalist system after recent storm. Workers and farmers turned to help each other. The ‘Militant’ champions fight for nationalization of energy companies under workers control.*



Courtesy of John Paul Dineen III

Working farmers in Texas were hit by capitalism’s lack of preparation for winter storm.

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# Ky. SWP launches campaign, ‘Workers need their own voice’

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — “Working people need a voice and a movement,” Margaret Trowe told Rebekah Dow of WLKY-TV as she interviewed the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor at a press conference outside City Hall March 12.

“Like the 18 other SWP candidates across the country I will use my campaign vigorously to build solidarity with workers in struggle for unions, against racism, for women’s rights,” said Trowe.

“We traveled to Bessemer, Alabama, last weekend to support the Amazon workers’ unionizing drive there,” she said. “We joined others to build support for the Harlan County coal miners, who set up camp on the railroad tracks in 2019 after Blackjewel Coal, with the blessing of the bankruptcy court, clawed the last paychecks from their accounts. The success of those miners in getting their money back was a victory for all working people. They showed what we

can do when we stand together.”

Trowe’s campaign was covered in a feature article March 15 in the online edition of Louisville’s daily paper, the *Courier Journal*, headlined, “Socialist Workers Party Candidate Enters 2022 Louisville Mayor’s Race.”

“As a teenager, Trowe said she became active in the movement to defeat Jim Crow segregation,” the article said, “and now wants to see charges against officers involved in Breonna Taylor’s killing on March 13, 2020.”

“A year has passed since Louisville police knocked down Breonna Taylor’s door in a midnight raid and killed her. No one has been charged for her death,” Trowe said in her announcement. “I urge all working people to demand that all those responsible for her death be charged and prosecuted.”

“We need broad, disciplined and sustained protests of unionists and other working people, churches and students to win this fight,” she told the *Courier Journal*.



Militant/Kaitlin Estill

Maggie Trowe, with campaign supporters, speaks at March 12 press conference in front of City Hall to announce her campaign as Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Louisville.

The article was accompanied by a picture from the *Militant* showing the Socialist Workers Party candidate in Harlan County speaking with Chris Rowe, a leader of the Blackjewel miners, during the miners’ encampment on the train tracks.

“The parties of big business — the Democrats and Republicans — act in the interests of the billionaire families who rule the U.S. Workers and farmers need to break from these parties and organize in their own interests,” Trowe said in the television interview. “In this way we will transform ourselves on the road to ending the dictatorship of capital and establishing a workers and farmers government.”

“Is that really possible?” Dow asked. “Yes, it’s possible and necessary,” Trowe said, pointing to the example of the revolution made by workers and farmers in Cuba.

## SWP ballot drive in New Jersey gains ground

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

UNION CITY, N.J. — Supporters of the campaign of Joanne Kuniansky and Candace Wagner, the Socialist Workers Party candidates for governor and lieutenant governor of New Jersey, made steady progress during the second weekend of a six-week effort to put the SWP ticket on the ballot and introduce the party’s activity and program to working people.

By March 15, 467 signatures were collected, just shy of a third of the 1,500 signatures campaign supporters plan to collect, almost double the 800 required.

One highlight of the weekend was a trip to Bridgeton, a city of 25,000 in a farming area in the southern part of the state. Each year 25,000 seasonal farmworkers come to South Jersey to harvest fruit and vegetables.

“Our strength is that we work,” Lázaro Cornejo, a machine operator at a meatpacking plant told SWP campaigner Craig Honts on his doorstep. “The work we do binds us together, it’s what makes us strong.” But “many of us don’t have any access to medical care, and when we are sick we still have to go to work. We don’t have the option of staying home. The pandemic has hit us hard.”

Honts pointed to Cuba’s socialist revolution, where working people took power into their own hands. After the revolution, medical treatment ceased being a commodity to be sold at a profit, but became a right available to all free of charge. Cornejo liked that idea and got a subscription to the *Militant*.

SWP campaigner Janet Post discussed what working people could do to resist the impact of today’s capi-

talist crisis with Herb Willis Jr., who works for a boat manufacturer. “The only way to win what we need is to fight for it together,” Willis said. “If all the truck drivers across the country went out on strike, we could win almost anything.”

Post described the huge labor battles that built the industrial unions in the 1930s. “Teamsters in Minneapolis organized to win support for their strikes from other workers, the unemployed and farmers. They became confident they could win,” she said. In the course of those struggles they forged a leadership that showed what working people are capable of doing.

She showed Willis the 2021 Pathfinder catalogue with the four-volume Teamster series by Farrell Dobbs, a leader of the SWP and central organizer of the strikes and organizing drives that transformed the Teamsters union in the Midwest into a fighting social movement. Willis signed the petition and told Post he wants to order the books.

### Workers need to fight for jobs

“If the government is going to offer help, it should help everyone. But we got nothing because both my husband and I are still working,” Jennifer Martinez told SWP campaigners Gale Shangold and Terry Evans on her doorstep in Paterson.

Martinez described the mounting cost of utility bills, feeding their children at home with no school meals available, and the challenge of trying to do her job as an accountant at home and look after three children at the same time. “I’ve got a deadline to be back in work in June,” she said. “But what if the schools aren’t open then?”

“Workers don’t need one-time handouts. We need jobs,” Shangold said, referring to the government’s most recent “stimulus” package. “That’s why SWP candidates call on unions to wage a fight for a federally funded public works program to put millions back to work at union-scale pay building the things we need.”

There is a special expanded ballot effort in New Jersey March 19-22. To join campaign teams there or anywhere else, contact the nearest party campaign office, listed on page 8.

## Marathon workers fight for safety

Continued from front page

against the largest oil refining company in the U.S. and face a serious fight.

Joining the picket line from Lincoln were Lance Anton, a Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad conductor and member of SMART-TD Local 0305; Diane Dormer, a furniture store worker; and Joe Swanson, a former railroad and meatpacking worker and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council at-large in Lincoln.

“I came here to bring solidarity,” Anton told the *Militant*. “People and labor are what make production happen.” Anton got signatures of support for the refinery workers’ fight from 59 rail workers, 21 other unionists and five friends and neighbors. He said the first thing he plans to do when he goes back to work is to talk up his experience and try to get co-workers to join another trip to walk the picket line.

“This is a just and important cause,” Dormer said. Visiting the picket line was “a good experience.” Sixteen of her co-workers signed the solidarity message.

Marathon bosses “don’t want to fix the problems,” Mark Crow, one of the locked-out workers, told Swanson. “They want to take more jobs away, and we’re already short-handed. That’s what we’re fighting for. If we all stand together, they’ll get nervous.”

“Many workers are facing attacks from the bosses today,” Swanson replied. “We can relate to what you face.”

Eliazar Forseca has worked as a console operator at the refinery for 10 years. His family lives nearby and would need to evacuate in case of an emergency at the plant.

“We haven’t even talked about money,” he told the *Militant*, referring to contract negotiations with the bosses. “This is about us keeping our jobs with-

in the union. They want to keep these jobs subcontracted, and it’s not safe.”

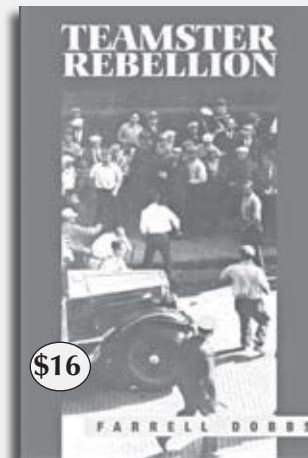
Forseca has brought his family to the picket line. “The company won’t let our kids picket,” he said. “Anyone who wants to support us should be able to come out. How does it look for the company when kids and families are out here over safety concerns? They’re just showing us that they have the power.”

Forseca’s father-in-law, 86-year-old Wayne Washluske, also joined the picket line. He is a retired member of United Steelworkers Local 12775 in Indiana. “I wanted to come out and help,” he said.

The food giveaway by the Teamsters to the community continues. Messages and donations to the strike fund can be sent to Teamsters Local 120, 9422 Ulysses St. NE, Blaine, MN 55434.

### Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs



The story of the 1934 strikes led by Teamsters Local 574 in Minneapolis, paving the way for the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations as a fighting social movement.

pathfinderpress.com

## — CALENDAR —

### WASHINGTON

#### Seattle

**Protest Against Military Coup in Myanmar.** Fri., March 26, 2 p.m. 140 4th Ave. N. Sponsored by Save Burma/ Myanmar Committee, Seattle.

# Puerto Rico fighters celebrate life of Rafael Cancel Miranda

BY SETH GALINSKY  
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

Several events were held in Puerto Rico from Feb. 28 to March 7 to honor the life of revolutionary leader and independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda, who died March 2 last year.

They also marked the anniversary of the 1954 armed demonstration by Cancel Miranda and three other Puerto Rican independence fighters inside the U.S. Congress, organized to focus international attention on the struggle to free Puerto Rico from U.S. colonial rule.

The weeklong program began with a public event at the Casa Aboy cultural center in San Juan. It featured a talk by María de los Ángeles Vázquez, Cancel Miranda's wife.

On March 1, 1954, Cancel Miranda — then 23 — joined Lolita Lebrón, Irvin Flores and Andrés Figueroa Cordero, all Puerto Rican Nationalist Party members, to unfurl a Puerto Rican flag inside the U.S. Capitol. They fired shots to draw attention to the brutal realities of U.S. colonial rule and the fact that Washington's claim the island nation was "self-governing" was a lie. A few months earlier, the U.S. government had rammed through a resolution in the U.N. removing Puerto Rico from its official list of colonies, on the basis that it was now a "commonwealth."

Our goal was "to tell the world that there were Puerto Ricans who were willing to die for our independence," Cancel Miranda told the *Militant* in a 1998 interview.

Vázquez noted that Cancel Miranda had joined the liberation struggle at an early age and was first arrested in 1948 — at age 18 — and sentenced to two years in prison for defying the U.S. draft. He was sent to the federal prison in Tallahassee, Florida.

"To me it didn't make sense to be in the same army that invades your country and massacres your people," Cancel Miranda told the *Militant*. "If you're going to fight, you should fight *them*." While he was in prison, the U.S. war on the Korean people began and the colonial regime in Puerto Rico crushed an October 1950 revolt inspired by Nationalist Party leader Pedro Albizu Campos.

After completing his sentence, Cancel Miranda returned to Puerto Rico. But he was threatened with arrest again if he didn't comply with the draft and he took refuge in Cuba. In March 1952 Fulgencio Batista staged a military coup and imposed a U.S.-backed dictatorship in Cuba. Cancel Miranda was deported to

Puerto Rico. The FBI jailed him again, this time at the notorious La Princesa prison in San Juan.

Vázquez told the audience a little-known story about the revolutionary fighter. To get him out of jail "and make it possible for him to carry out a future action," he and the Nationalist Party decided Cancel Miranda should sign up for the U.S. Army. "Rafael was sent to Camp Buchanan [in San Juan]. There, during his brief stay, he took part in various incidents, and he told me that he had stirred up the draftees with his Nationalist speeches."

Worried Cancel Miranda's anti-colonial propaganda would fall on receptive ears in the midst of the Korean War, the military brass "declared him unfit for military service," Vázquez said with a smile.

### Political work in New York

By December 1952 Cancel Miranda was living in New York City, helping to organize the Nationalist Party in the Puerto Rican community. He worked two jobs, one in a factory in Brooklyn and one in Manhattan, working for two French brothers who owned Édouard Custom Shoes, which made shoes for Broadway actors.

In the days after the 1954 armed protest in Congress, the U.S. media attempted to paint the Nationalists as dangerous outlaws. But, Vázquez said, Mr. Édouard told the press "he didn't know anything about Rafael's political activity, but Rafael was a very decent person and when he got out of jail, if he wanted,



Both photos: Fundación Casa Albizu

**Feb. 28 meeting in San Juan honors political life of Puerto Rico independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda a year after his death. María de los Ángeles Vázquez, Miranda's wife, speaks.**



he could come back to work at the store."

Cancel Miranda and his three comrades spent a quarter century in U.S. prisons. As a result of a growing international campaign on their behalf, President James Carter finally released Figueroa Cordero in 1978 and Cancel Miranda, Lebrón and Flores a year later, along with another jailed Nationalist, Oscar Collazo.

Cancel Miranda spent the next four decades speaking out and joining actions for the freedom of Puerto Rico, in defense of Cuba's socialist revolution and other struggles the world over.

The week of activity, sponsored by Casa Albizu Foundation and Cancel Miranda's family, included the launching of the website [sembrandopatria.com](http://sembrandopatria.com) (Sowing the seeds of the homeland) to make accessible his writings, books and lifelong political record. Included on the site are 294 pages from the indepen-

dence fighter's extensive police files, going back to when he was 16 — a record he always wore as a badge of pride.

One of the events featured a talk by prominent independence advocate Eduardo Villanueva on the political background to the 1954 events.

In the western city of Mayagüez, where Cancel Miranda is buried, a graveside ceremony and memorial Mass were held in his honor.

One of the solidarity messages to the events' sponsors was sent by the Socialist Workers Party. It quoted from a letter sent last year to Vázquez and her family by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the SWP: "We honor the life of comrade Rafael Cancel Miranda by continuing to educate working people, as well as the youth who join them in battle, about the road of revolutionary class struggle, the only road to a free Puerto Rico and a socialist world."

## Support Amazon workers fight for union in Alabama!

BY SUSAN LAMONT

ATLANTA — "I have two grandsons who work at Amazon in Bessemer," retired coal miner and United Mine Workers union member Maxwell Wilson told the *Militant* March 14, from his home in Midfield, a suburb of Birmingham, Alabama. "This is their first full-time job and I've tried to educate them about why it's better to have a union. All workers need that protection. They told me they sent in their 'yes' votes."

Discussions like this are taking place throughout north central Alabama and beyond, as workers at the Bessemer warehouse head into the final two weeks of a union authorization vote.

The warehouse workers are fighting to win recognition for the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union

to strengthen their ability to improve working conditions and wages and defend their dignity on the job. Some 5,800 workers are eligible to vote.

The company has been working hard to cajole or intimidate workers into voting "no." The vote, which is being conducted by mail-in ballot, ends March 29.

The fulfillment center in Bessemer opened last March. When union supporters began circulating cards for the RWDSU last fall, they gathered hundreds of signatures in just a few months, winning a decision by the National Labor Relations Board authorizing the election.

Hundreds of thousands of other Amazon workers are watching the outcome, as are Walmart and Target workers and millions of others who face similar — or worse — conditions. More than 1,000 workers at other Amazon facilities have contacted the RWDSU about unionizing their workplaces in recent weeks, reported the March 9 *Washington Post*.

The [Bamazonunion.org](http://Bamazonunion.org) website, which carries news about the drive, features statements of support from union officials from Peru, Japan and elsewhere.

Sen. Marco Rubio from Florida, a Republican, backed the Amazon workers in a *USA Today* opinion piece March 12.

Elsewhere some 8,500 workers at Amazon warehouses in Italy will walk off the job for 24 hours in the first company-wide stoppage there March 22. Their unions are requesting the company review its plans for workloads, shifts and bonuses.

The Bessemer union drive has won support from area unions and more solidarity is needed. Let your union, church, or community organization know what the workers are fighting for. Messages of support can be sent to [mid-south@rwdsu.org](mailto:mid-south@rwdsu.org).

### MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

#### CALIFORNIA

##### Oakland

**'Sankara's Orphans,' a Documentary.** Speaker: Eric Simpson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 26, 6:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

#### GEORGIA

##### Atlanta

**Socialist Workers Party 2021 Campaign: Join In, Build Support for Workers' Struggles.** Speaker: Sam Manuel, SWP candidate for president of Atlanta City Council. Fri., March 26, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$10. 3437 Bobby Brown Parkway. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

#### ILLINOIS

##### Chicago

**The Stakes for the Working Class in the Conviction of George Floyd's Killers.** Speaker: Ilona Gersh, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 26, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 1858 Cermak Road, 2nd floor. Tel.: (312) 792-6160.

#### TEXAS

##### Dallas

**U.S. Troops Out of the Middle East!** Speaker: Gerardo Sánchez, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council District 1. Fri., March 26, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 1005 W. Jefferson Blvd., Suite 207. Tel.: (469) 513-1051.

### Join Cuba Solidarity Caravans March 28

**Halt Washington's economic war against Cuba!**

**End travel restrictions! U.S. out of Guantánamo!**

#### Albany, New York

Caravan leaves 1 p.m., Lincoln Park Road in Lincoln Park. Afterwards, rally in Townsend Park.

#### Chicago

Gather 2 p.m., south end of Douglas Park on S. Farrar Drive.

#### Miami

Meet at 9 a.m., Kmart parking lot at 7th St. NW and 37th Ave.

#### Minneapolis

Rally, 1 p.m., 1200 Washington Ave. S.

#### New York City

1 p.m. - depart from 125th St. and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd. Caravan through "Spanish Harlem." 1:30 p.m. rally E. 111th St & Lexington Ave.

#### San Francisco

Assemble 11:30 a.m., 1875 Marin St.

#### Seattle

Picket and caravan 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at West Seattle Junction. Picket SW Alaska St. and California Ave. SW.

#### Washington, D.C.

Caravan leaves 3 p.m., from African American Civil War Museum, 1925 Vermont Ave. NW.

# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## Nurses strike in Massachusetts over dangerous understaffing

WORCESTER, Mass. — Eight hundred union nurses at St. Vincent Hospital here went on strike March 8 over dangerous understaffing and unsafe working conditions. The workers, members of the Massachusetts Nurses Association, have been in contract negotiations with Tenet Healthcare bosses since November 2019.

In the last year alone, nurses filed more than 600 “unsafe staffing” complaints. They document increased patient falls, bed sores, and delays in patients receiving medications, all due to inadequate staffing. Nurses are being over-assigned and support staff has been cut.

They are demanding the nurse-to-patient ratio be reduced to four patients to a nurse, as opposed to five, that management insists on. The bosses have hired replacement workers to keep the hospital open.

Hospital officials claim “there is no valid research that concludes that staffing ratios improve patient outcomes.”

Tenet Healthcare is a Dallas-based, for-profit corporation. St. Vincent is Tenet’s most profitable operation in Massachusetts. On Feb. 10 it announced a profit over the last year of \$414 million.

The strike is in its second week and has gotten solidarity from workers in the community and other unions. United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1445, which organizes 600 hospital patient-care assistants, technicians, clerks, housekeeping workers and aides and whose own contract expired Feb. 28, hasn’t gone on strike but its members have joined in the nurses’ picketing.

“We have 23 patients for one PCA, this is unheard of,” Local 1445 Business Agent Steven Lajoie told the press. “That is simply unsafe.”

“This is not my first strike, I was out here in 2000,” Trish Walmot, a nurse of 29 years at the hospital, told the *Militant*. She was referring to the successful 49-day strike where they won their first contract.

“We are here in solidarity with the

nurses,” Jim Marioles, who came with a delegation of 25 National Grid gas workers from Boston organized by United Steelworkers Local 12003, told the *Militant*. “When we were locked out for seven months the nurses gave us solidarity, now it’s our turn.”

— *Ved Dookhun*

## New Zealand home-care workers picket in fight for union contract

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Home-care workers and their supporters were on the picket line again March 12 in their ongoing fight for a union contract. “We’re doing this for the next lot of workers coming up, not just for those of us here now,” said union delegate Helen Taufa.

Some 100 E tu union members work for Lifewise services, a division of the Methodist Church, providing care for people who are elderly or disabled. They have been in negotiations with the bosses for over a year and a half, fighting for more guaranteed hours of work and increased sick and bereavement paid leave.

The picket was held outside Auckland Hospital. The E tu union said they are calling on “the Auckland District Health Board to step in and push Lifewise to resolve the situation.” The board is the government agency that gave Lifewise its contract to provide home-care services.

Workers explained that the company wasn’t giving them enough hours of work. One worker said she was “hanging and dangling” each week, on call to see if the company would give her extra shifts. Lifewise guarantees each worker a certain minimum number of weekly hours, “but someone might be available to work 40 hours and she’s only given 10 or 15 guaranteed hours,” said Taufa.

— *Janet Roth*

## Oregon medical techs end strike, set March 31 contract deadline

The Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals, which organizes the 150 medical technicians at the St. Charles Medical Center, agreed



Patch/Neal McNamara

**Hundreds of members of Massachusetts Nurses Association picket St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester March 8 as strike began over understaffing and unsafe working conditions.**

March 12 to end their nine-day strike. The union said in a joint press release with the hospital that it expects to reach agreement on a contract by March 31.

The strike started March 4 after a year of negotiations had failed to produce a contract the workers could accept. The joint press release says the two sides are now making progress with the help of federal mediators.

The unionists won widespread support from people in the area. They had organized daily picketing in front of the hospital, informational picketing downtown, and planned a support rally for March 15. Their strike was supported by the nurses union at the medical center.

Medical Center bosses brought in replacement technicians and threatened strikers, sending staff members an email saying, “Once a caretaker chooses to participate in a strike, they are no longer able to come back to work while a replacement is in place.”

With the new agreement, however, all the aides are set to return to work March 15.

Hospital bosses said everything was fine while the technicians were on strike. However, workers in the hospital told the press that wasn’t the case.

“There are only two technicians that even know how to use the equip-

ment I was going to use,” neurosurgeon Priscilla Pang told Oregon Public Broadcasting, explaining why she canceled a surgery during the strike. “And frankly, I don’t feel safe with a bunch of temps coming in.”

“It’s in everybody’s interests for St. Charles to support these workers,” she said.

— *Louise Goodman*

## Bus drivers strike wins solidarity in UK

MANCHESTER, England — Workers in Manchester and beyond have joined the picket line of Go North West bus drivers here, to bring solidarity to the striking Unite union members. The drivers walked out Feb. 28 to fight a company move to impose longer working hours at the same pay.

The bosses are determined to break the strike. They have relocated the Queens Road bus depot to a separate location in the city and are outsourcing their routes to nonunionized bus and coach companies.

A delegation of six workers from Pilgrim’s Pride meat factory in Dukinfield went to the picket line March 11, bringing a solidarity card signed by more than 40 co-workers and a donation of 55 pounds (\$76) to the strike fund.

“What the drivers are doing is good,” Akwasi Gaisie, who was part of the delegation, told the *Militant*. “It encourages other workers to fight things like this.” Anthony Matley, Community union branch secretary at Pilgrim’s, joined the delegation. “If you let this go, what are you going to accept in the future?” he said. “The company is using bully tactics.”

Pete Clifford, Communist League candidate for Greater Manchester mayor, campaigned at the gates of the Pilgrim’s plant March 5. “Many workers stopped to greet me, learn more about the CL campaign and the bus drivers strike,” said Clifford, who used to work there.

Eight rail workers organized by the Rail, Maritime and Transport union also visited the bus drivers’ picket line March 10 to hand over a 200-pound donation to the strike fund.

Messages of support and checks to the fund can be sent to Pat Gleave, c/o Unite Branch NW5/4, Quayside House, Salford Quays M50 3SU. Funds can also be transferred to “TGWU Queens Road,” sort code: 60-83-01, account number: 20256669, reference: “STRIKE2021.”

— *Hugo Wils*

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



**April 1, 1996**

DAYTON, Ohio — The strike here by 2,700 workers began March 5 at two GM brake parts plants and has ground the auto giant’s production to a halt. As the walkout began to cause shortages in assembly plants, more than 166,000 have been idled and GM has shut down 26 of its 29 production factories in North America. This is the longest strike against a major U.S. auto maker since a two-month strike against GM in 1970.

Some 3,000 members of Local 696 of the United Auto Workers Union walked out over plans by GM to shift work out of the Dayton plants to lower cost suppliers, a practice called outsourcing. Health and safety issues and staffing levels that lead to overtime also play a role.

Big business is watching this strike carefully. The company has made it plain it intends to make as many workers as possible suffer to win this strike.



**April 2, 1971**

NEW YORK — Over 5,000 Puertorriqueños turned out in the South Bronx here to commemorate the thirty-fourth anniversary of the Ponce Massacre and to show solidarity with the independence movement in Puerto Rico, under attack by the right-wing assimilationist government.

Over 160 people have been arrested as a result of a campaign of repression and terror the colonial government, along with right-wing forces, has unleashed on the independence movement.

This follows the March 11 police attack on students at the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras. The government has been trying to crush the independence and anti-Vietnam war movements. Adding fuel to the fire was the arrest of 14 independentistas for demonstrating in Culebra, an offshore island used for target practice by U.S. Navy planes and ships earlier this year.



**March 30, 1946**

In the wake of the appalling devastation wrought by World War II, famine and disease are killing millions of people throughout the world, and menacing millions more. The imperialist bandits plan to ruthlessly exploit this misery of the masses for their own reactionary ends.

There is ample evidence that food is again being used as a weapon against the working people of Europe and Asia. Food will once again be used to impose brutal dictatorships upon the workers and peasants of Europe.

American labor and farmer organizations must undertake collection of food and medical supplies to rush abroad immediately. It is necessary to make certain that relief supplies go to the workers and farmers and not to their enemies. This can only be guaranteed if control over the supplies remains in the hands of labor and farmer organizations.

# Myanmar protests continue

**Continued from front page**  
class and industrial neighborhoods that surround Yangon, including Hlaing Thar Yar, North Okkalapa, and Shwepyithar, where huge garment and other factories are located. Unions there have been fighting for years for better wages and work conditions.  
“They are not dispersing the protests. They are just murdering the people with violence,” one protester in Hlaing Thar Yar told *Irrawaddy*, a Yangon-based news site that backs the Civil Disobedience Movement.  
Gen. Min Aung Hlaing reimposed direct military rule Feb. 1, just days before the new parliament was to convene after Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy won the November 2020 election in a landslide. Suu Kyi has been the head of the government since 2016.

On March 8, 18 unions, union federations and farm and farmworker associations began a general strike aimed at toppling the regime. Attacks by the government on news media and frequent shutdowns of internet and cellphone service have made it more difficult to gauge the spread and impact of the strike.  
But one indication, according to the Frontier Myanmar website, is that strikes by truck drivers, port workers, custom agents and staff at other government agencies have brought sea-bound trade to a halt at Yangon’s port.  
In an attempt to break the strike on the railroads, cops and soldiers evicted 1,000 families from government-owned housing for rail workers in Yangon March 10. The soldiers told the workers their homes would be bulldozed and their families shot down if they refused to leave. The police and soldiers confiscated rice and other goods that had been donated to the rail workers in solidarity with their strike.

## Martial law in six townships

Arson attacks carried out by unknown individuals against dozens of garment factories in Yangon March

14 dealt a blow to the strike action by garment workers and others across the country.  
The attacks gave the junta a pretext to declare martial law in six of Yangon’s 33 townships. This includes trials by military courts, and the threat of the death penalty, on any of 23 different charges, including spreading “false news” or having ties to “unlawful” associations.  
The attacks were reported to be aimed at Chinese owners, because of Beijing’s long-standing support for the military. While most of the factories attacked had ties to Beijing at least one was owned by a Taiwanese company and two by a Japanese retailer. Some employees of the companies were injured in the attacks.

Anger at the regime in Beijing is not surprising. Beijing is the largest supplier of arms to the Myanmar army, and has numerous joint enterprises with Myanmar military-owned companies. While demanding the junta protect Beijing-owned factories, the Chinese government has refused to condemn the coup, calling it an “internal matter” in Myanmar.  
Numerous protests in front of the Chinese Embassy in Yangon have called for Beijing to change its position and condemn the coup.  
Prior to the coup, Beijing had friendly relations with both the army high command and the National League for Democracy, the bourgeois party Suu Kyi helped found. The rulers in Beijing care little about who is in the government in Myanmar, as long as they back the economic and political interests of the Chinese rulers.

By appearing to target “Chinese” companies, the arson attacks are also a threat to the unity among Myanmar’s 135 ethnic minorities and to the protest movement. Divisions between the predominantly Buddhist Bamar majority, nearly 70% of the population, and dozens of ethnic minorities, including Shan, Karen, Rakhine, Rohingya, Kachin, Chin and Chinese, are a legacy of British colonial rule.

## LA, NY protests hit deadly raids by Philippine gov’t



Militant/Deborah Liatos

LOS ANGELES — Sixty people participated in a spirited demonstration outside the Philippines Consulate here March 13, protesting the government’s cold-blooded killings of nine political and labor activists six days earlier.  
Actions took place elsewhere, including 50 people demonstrating at the consulate in New York March 15.  
The raids occurred just two days after the country’s president, Rodrigo Duterte, ordered security forces to “kill” and “finish off” the “communist rebels.”  
Security officials told the press they could confirm the deaths, saying the raids were carried out by the military and the Philippine National Police. The coordinated attacks took place in Cavide, Laguna, Batangas and Rizal provinces, all on Luzon Island near Manila.  
Two of the nine were slain as their 10-year-old son hid under his bed, the rights group Karapatan reported. Those “executed” included a leader of a group that works on behalf of Filipino fishermen. Six other political activists were arrested, including a paralegal who works for Karapatan.  
Phil Robertson, deputy director for Asia at Human Rights Watch, said, “This campaign no longer distinguishes between armed rebels and noncombatant activists, union leaders and advocates.”  
Signs and banners at the mostly young protests in Los Angeles and New York read, “Stop the killings! Stop the attacks!” and “Junk the anti-terror law.” Some carried placards with the names of those killed March 7.  
— NORTON SANDLER

At a March 13 demonstration of 500 in New York City in solidarity with the fight against the military coup, this reporter spoke with Win Naing, who is from the Chinese ethnic minority in Myanmar.  
“Some people in Myanmar said that the Chinese don’t care, but we are part of the Burmese people,” he said. After Kyal Sin, a young ethnic Chinese woman, was shot dead at a March 3 protest in Mandalay, “more people could see that ethnic Chinese are part of the fight against the military coup.”  
Linn Lunn HlaMyaing told the *Militant* that he is from the Bamar ethnic majority in Myanmar. “I tell everyone that it doesn’t matter what your race or color or religion, we are human and have to be united against the military dictatorship.”  
The working class in Myanmar has

grown explosively over the last decade, alongside the expansion in foreign investment. In the garment industry alone the number of workers grew from 340,000 in 2018 to some 700,000 — mostly women — by 2020. Along with companies based in China, others are based in Singapore, Japan, the United Kingdom and the U.S., all taking advantage of the low wages in Myanmar.  
These shops bring together workers of all nationalities, drawn from the countryside by the work. The General Strike Committee of Nationalities made up of young people from 27 ethnic groups, stands firmly with all those “who are fighting for the end of dictatorship in all different ways,” the group said March 15, after the latest increase in violence by the junta. “We are determined to fight together until we reach our ultimate goal.”

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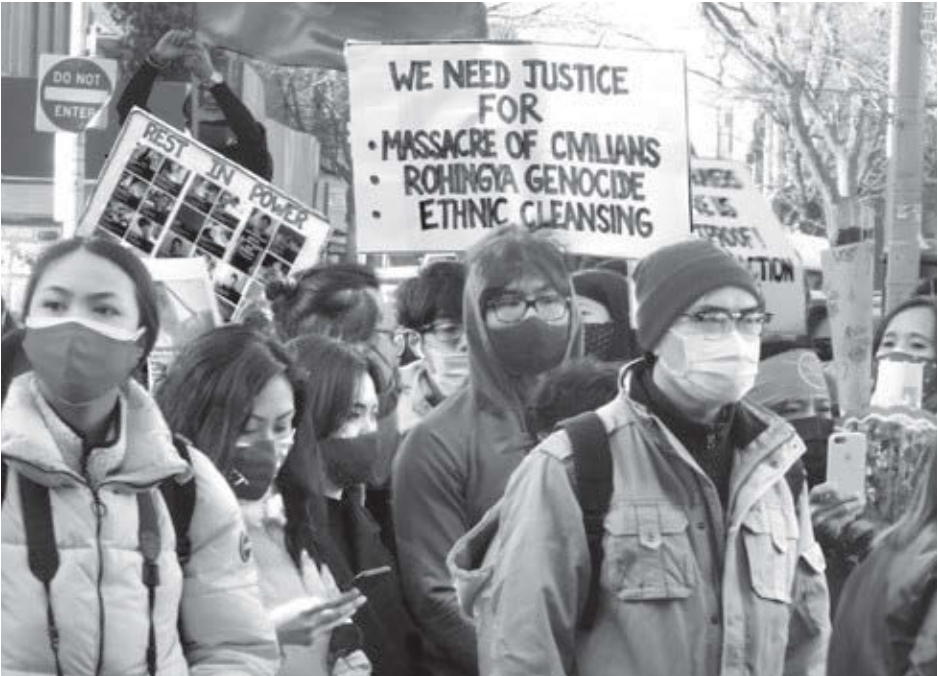
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Militant/Seth Galinsky

Some 500 protesters marched in New York March 13 against the military coup in Myanmar. Some participants demanded justice for Rohingya people, 700,000 of whom had been forced to flee the country under a brutal ethnic cleansing operation in recent years led by the military.

# 1965 Selma-Montgomery mobilizations won voting rights victory

How Black-led civil rights fight that overthrew Jim Crow strengthened the fighting capacities of the working class

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

This month marks the 56th anniversary of the historic voting rights march from Selma, Alabama, to the state's capital, Montgomery. Together with the 1956 Montgomery bus boycott and 1963 Battle of Birmingham, these actions were high points in the proletarian-led civil rights struggle that overturned Jim Crow segregation.

This victory changed the course of U.S. history, strengthening the fighting capacities of the working class that nothing short of a counterrevolution could reverse. There is less racism today among working people than ever before.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee had been organizing efforts to win the vote for Blacks in Selma and surrounding Dallas County. Blacks made up the majority of the population but only 2% were registered. By early February 1965 over 3,400 demonstrators demanding the right to vote were jailed. On Feb. 18 state troopers attacked SNCC-led activists in Marion, shooting and killing protester Jimmie Lee Jackson.

In the midst of this, Malcolm X visited Alabama to meet with young civil rights fighters. After addressing 3,000 students Feb. 3 at Tuskegee Institute, a university in Tuskegee, members of SNCC invited him to nearby Selma the next day.

Addressing 300 youths at Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church Feb. 4, Malcolm offered his assistance to SNCC. He put the fight for Black rights in a world context, saying, "I pray that you will grow intellectually, so that you can understand the problems of the world and where you fit into, in that world picture." He said a Klan segregationist hiding behind white sheets "is nothing but a coward," and "the time will come when that sheet will be ripped off. If the federal government doesn't take it off, we'll take it off."

SNCC and Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference decided to organize a march from Selma to the state Capitol in Montgomery to demand arch-segregationist Gov. George Wallace protect Blacks registering to vote. Wallace ordered state troopers "to use whatever measures are necessary to prevent a march."

When the protesters set out March 7 they were ruthlessly attacked by the troopers and sheriff's deputies, who used clubs, tear gas, whips and rubber



Above: AP Photo  
Demonstrators cross Edmund Pettus Bridge out of Selma, March 21, 1965, after victory in fight to march to state capital in Montgomery. Inset, days earlier, sheriff's deputies attack protesters in Montgomery. Second from right is John Studer, who came to join the historic protests from Ohio. Studer is now editor of the *Militant*.

tubing wrapped with barbed wire to assault the protesters.

That night ABC-TV was airing "Judgment at Nuremberg," a movie about the Nazi regime's responsibility for the brutality of the storm troops in fascist Germany and the Holocaust. Nearly 50 million people were watching. The station interrupted the broadcast to show filming of the racist brutality in Selma.

There was an immediate reaction. Protests in solidarity with the voting-rights marchers took place across the country. SNCC and SCLC called for volunteers to come to Selma and Montgomery to fight for the right to march on the capital.

On March 15 President Lyndon Baines Johnson spoke before Congress, saying he was going to submit a voting rights bill. A federal court ruled the march could take place. Johnson federalized the Alabama National Guard and ordered it to protect the participants. The march, swelling to over 25,000, reached Montgomery March 25. The Voting Rights Act was signed on Aug. 6.

## An inspiring example

The mobilizations in Selma and Montgomery "were an inspiring example of the determination and willingness to fight by Blacks there, and volunteers like myself responded to the call to join them," *Militant* editor John Studer said in an interview. At the time Studer was an 18-year-old student at Antioch College in Ohio, and a member of the Antioch Committee for Racial Equality. Studer and others from the school and the nearby historically Black college of Wilberforce jumped in their cars and drove down.

"When we got to Montgomery we joined in the daily protests, and in big church meetings each night where what to do next was debated," Studer remembers. "A sheriff's posse on horseback went after us with clubs on one of the marches, but we were able to retreat into the Black community, which they didn't have the nerve to go into."

On March 15 when Johnson gave his speech announcing support for passage of voting rights legislation, "I watched it on TV with dozens of others crammed into a house in the Black community in Montgomery," said Studer. "We laughed

when Johnson felt the pressure to use the slogan of the civil rights movement at the end, saying, 'We shall overcome' in his sharp Southern drawl.

"But everyone knew that coming from a Texas segregationist political figure it showed how powerful the mass mobilization led by Black working people was and the impact it was having throughout the country."

Covering these developments at the time, the *Militant* called for sending federal troops to Alabama to protect Blacks' constitutional rights, for the arrest and removal from office of local officials who sanctioned the bloody assaults, and for the federal government to arm and deputize Black citizens there to defend themselves.

On March 21 court orders allowed protesters to begin their four-day 54-mile Selma to Montgomery march.

Nearly 50,000 supporters — Black and Caucasian — rallied in front of the state Capitol in Montgomery when the

marchers arrived.

In response to these mass mobilizations, which included support actions in many other cities and towns nationwide, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, a milestone on the road to the defeat of Jim Crow segregation.

## Montgomery bus boycott

Nine years earlier the Montgomery bus boycott helped launch the modern civil rights movement. "Court Battle Reveals Turbulent Movement That Is Shaking South" headlined an article by Farrell Dobbs, writing from Montgomery, in the April 2, 1956, *Militant*. Dobbs was the Socialist Workers Party candidate for president in 1956 and a leader of the fight by Teamsters in the 1930s to organize a union in Minneapolis and over-the-road truck drivers throughout the Midwest.

The SWP campaigned for workers and their unions to donate station wagons so workers could get to work while boycotting the Montgomery bus system. Dobbs drove one of the first ones down. "I have seen nothing like the rank and file outpouring of grievances here since my days in the rising union movement of the Thirties," Dobbs wrote. "Now as then, a deep well of resentment has been tapped. A burning desire to seek redress has arisen. A growing determination to get action has taken hold."

Dobbs further notes, "If the Negro people are to win their democratic rights, if the firm alliance of the unions and the Negro movement so imperative for the unionization of the South is to be forged, then the freedom fighters of Montgomery must be supported to the hilt and all the way to their final victory."

"We saw the same inspiring power there in 1965," Studer said. "These powerful class battles, coupled with Blacks getting into industry and fighting for equal rights there, decisively strengthened the fighting capacity of the working class in the U.S."

## Song backing dictator in Belarus removed from Eurovision contest

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The fight by working people to bring down the dictatorial regime of Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus found a new outlet this month after mass protests and work stoppages last year were beaten down by government brutality. The monthslong political crisis there resurfaced over the country's official entry into the Eurovision Song Contest. The controversial song, "I'll Teach You," by the pro-Lukashenko band Galasy ZMesta, openly mocks the protesters.

The front man of Galasy ZMesta, Dzmitry Butakov, laments the breakup of the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union. The song's refrain includes, "I'll teach you how to dance to the tune / I'll teach you to take the bait / I'll teach you to toe the line."

After an outcry both from inside Belarus and across Europe, the Eurovision organizers rejected the official Belarus entry March 11.

Lukashenko's regime was shaken to the core last year as hundreds of thou-

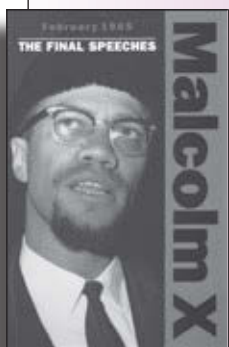
sands took to the streets and strikes spread across the country after he claimed victory in rigged presidential elections. Lukashenko has been in power for more than 26 years. Since the mass protests began, more than 33,000 people have been arrested, hundreds beaten and a number of people killed by the regime's police. Many protest and strike leaders, as well as Lukashenko's bourgeois electoral opponents, have been imprisoned or forced into exile.

A film about the opulent lifestyle and wealth of the Belarusian strongman was viewed online over 4 million times after it was released March 8, sparking renewed outrage.

Neighborhood protests continue, especially in the Belarusian capital, Minsk. On March 10 more than 100 people were detained after police raided a number of apartment blocks.

The Lithuanian government has spurned Lukashenko's demand to extradite Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, widely seen to have won the 2020 elections, to face charges.

## Malcolm X: February 1965 The Final Speeches



Includes Malcolm's talk "The House Negro and the Field Negro" given in Selma, Alabama, Feb. 4, 1965. A Klan segregationist hiding behind white sheets "is nothing but a coward" and "the time will come when that sheet will be ripped off. If the federal government doesn't take it off, we'll take it off," Malcolm said. \$17

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# ‘Workers need to fight as a class to protect their interests’

One of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for March is *Teamster Power* by Farrell Dobbs. The book tells the story of how members of Teamsters Local 574 learned to wield the union power they forged through three 1934 strike victories in Minneapolis. Under class-struggle leadership, the Teamsters extended their union throughout the Midwest, helped organize other unions and the unemployed, and strove for working-class political independence. The book is the second volume in a four-part series by Dobbs, who emerged from the ranks to become organizer of the Teamsters’ 11-state campaign to unionize over-the-road truckers in the Midwest. Dobbs went on to serve as national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party from 1953 to 1972. The excerpt is from the chapter “Class-Struggle Policy.” Copyright © 2008 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FARRELL DOBBS

With the change in official leadership, efforts to construct an ever-stronger left wing took new forms within the local. It was no longer a matter of building a broad caucus around a militant program in order to displace misleaders sitting on top of the organization. Conscious revolutionists were now at the helm, and they enjoyed harmonious relations with the rank and file. As matters now stood

the union itself had become a left-wing formation in the local labor movement and in the IBT [International Brotherhood of Teamsters]. Internal differentiations had been reduced essentially to varying degrees of class consciousness. From this it followed that the next major task was to make the general membership more aware of the laws of class struggle.

Workers who have no radical background enter the trade unions steeped in misconceptions and prejudices that the capitalist rulers have inculcated into them since childhood. This was wholly true of Local 574 members. They began to learn class lessons only in the course of struggle against the employers.

Their strike experiences had taught them a good deal. Notions that workers have anything in common with bosses were undermined by harsh reality. Illusions about the police being “protectors of the people” began to be dispelled. Eyes were opened to the role of the capitalist government, as revealed in its methods of rule through deception and brutality. At the same time the workers were gaining confidence in their class power, having emerged victorious from their organized confrontation with the employers. ...

These endeavors stood in marked contrast to the policies of bureaucratic union officials. Bureaucrats don’t look upon the labor movement as a fighting instrument dedicated solely to the workers’ interests; they tend rather to view trade unions as a base upon which to build personal careers as “labor statesmen.”

Such ambitions cause them to seek collaborative relations with the ruling class. Toward that end the bureaucrats argue that, employers being the providers of jobs, labor and capital have common interests. They contend that exploiters of labor must make “fair” profits if they are to pay “fair” wages. Workers are told that they must take a “responsible” attitude so as to make the bosses feel that unions are a neces-



Teamsters Local 574 leader announces victory in May 1934 Minneapolis truckers strike. Workers began to “learn class lessons in course of their struggle against the employers,” said union and SWP leader Farrell Dobbs.

sary part of their businesses. On every count the ruling class is given a big edge over the union rank and file. In carrying out their class-collaborationist line, the union bureaucrats exercise tight control over negotiations with employers. They try to avoid strikes over working agreements if at all possible. When a walkout does take place, they usually leap at the first chance for a settlement. ...

Local 574’s leadership flatly repudiated the bankrupt line of the class collaborationists. There can be no such thing as an equitable class peace, the membership was taught. The law of the jungle prevails under capitalism. If the workers don’t fight as a class to defend their interests, the bosses will gouge them. ...

In a similar vein, conservative union officials are prone to make a general no-strike pledge when the capitalist government proclaims a “national emergency.” They do so by bureaucratic fiat, giving rank-and-file workers no voice in the decision. Such “labor statesmanship” amounts to proclaiming an overall “truce” between the workers and the bosses. Actually no truce results at all. The capitalists simply use their government to attack the trade union movement under the guise of a “national

emergency”; and the workers, deprived in such a situation of their strike weapon, get it in the neck.

A development in the fall of 1934 involved this very issue. In the name of “national recovery,” President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked labor to forgo its right to strike. Concerning disputes with employers, he said, trade unions should accept decisions by government boards as final and binding. William Green, president of the AFL, was quick to second Roosevelt’s proposal and call upon the labor movement to put it into practice. Local 574 gave both Roosevelt and Green its answer through an editorial in *The Organizer*:

“Labor cannot and will not give up the strike weapon. Labor has not in the past received any real benefits from the governmental boards and constituted authorities. What Labor has received in union recognition, wage raises and betterment in conditions of work, has been won *in spite of such boards*. ... The strike is the one weapon that the employers respect. ... Whether or not there is a period of industrial peace will depend upon the employers’ reply to our demands.” (Emphasis in original.)

It did not follow from this position that Local 574 called strikes lightly. There are always hardships involved for the workers in such struggles. If the union moved blithely from one walkout to the next, without careful regard of all factors in the situation, it could easily wear out its fighting forces. The important thing is that a union stand ready and able to take strike action when required. In fact there are occasions where readiness to use the strike weapon can make its employment unnecessary.

Retention of the unqualified right to strike and readiness to use the weapon were central to the local’s enforcement of the 1934 settlement with the trucking firms. Employer attempts to impose arbitration of workers’ grievances were brushed aside. There had to be full and immediate compliance with the settlement terms — or else.

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March

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# SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT

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## Working class needs its own foreign policy

*Statement by Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey governor, March 16.*

Democratic and Republican politicians alike claim to wield U.S. economic and military influence at home and abroad in the interests of “all Americans.” Workers and farmers in the U.S. know only too well what that means here — mass unemployment, rising prices, cop brutality and attacks on our political rights, wages and working conditions. Amazon workers in Alabama fighting for a union and locked-out oil refinery workers at Marathon Petroleum in Minnesota are setting an example and deserve support.

The drive of the ruling capitalist families to dominate world markets and exploit working people around the world flows from the same ravenous profit drive that is the source of conditions workers face at home.

President Joseph Biden says his foreign policy is the policy of “our country.” But countries don’t have foreign policies, they are class-divided. Under capitalism, the government’s foreign policy defends the class interests of the wealthy ruling families. The U.S. rulers’ military and trade moves abroad flow from their class needs at home. The predatory imperialist exploitation of toilers worldwide enriches them, while working people serve as cannon fodder for their wars abroad.

Working people need our own foreign policy, starting from the interests workers worldwide share and the indispensable place of working-class solidarity.

Join actions here to support the strikes and protests for political rights and against military rule in

Myanmar; oppose the murderous repression meted out to political and labor activists by the Philippines government; support farmers in India fighting new government laws that threaten their livelihoods; and back the Cuban people’s decadeslong fight against the U.S. rulers’ embargo — an economic war aimed at overturning their socialist revolution.

The U.S. rulers are armed to the teeth to confront their capitalist rivals and to crush rebellions by working people anywhere. As long as the capitalists hold power they will not hesitate to use their military might when they judge it necessary. Neither will they surrender their place as the world’s top cop without a fight.

When Biden talks of restoring “American leadership” he means combining the threat of military action with punishing economic sanctions against the peoples of Iran, North Korea and Venezuela, as well as tariffs against rival capitalist powers.

The single most important thing working people here can do is to build a movement to take power out of the hands of the U.S. capitalist class. This would remove forever the threat of U.S. imperialist interference with the battles of working people worldwide.

Forming a workers and farmers government would lead millions to join the worldwide struggle for socialism. This is a realistic and liberating goal that has to be prepared, organized and fought for.

Join SWP campaigners in supporting today’s class battles and presenting this internationalist perspective. Help build the working-class combat party we need for the bigger battles to come.

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## Biden hypes ‘Rescue’ bill, but workers need jobs

**Continued from front page**

tion. The ruling capitalist families are trying to boost profit rates by stepping up assaults on workers’ wages and conditions. And they’re using the mounting competition among workers for jobs — intensified by government lockdowns — to help do that. This setup is loyally defended by all wings of both the Democratic and Republicans parties.

Instead of putting people back to work, Biden’s \$1.9 trillion plan will send some workers a “stimulus” check. Those who qualify — it’s means-tested — get a one-time payment that can help meet some bills. But what workers need is *jobs*, to be at work alongside their co-workers, where they can fight to defend their wages and working conditions.

Gloating that the “era of big government” is back, *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman brags that the “stimulus” includes a new tax break for families with children. He defends it, saying that “nobody will be able to live on child support.”

And he has to admit that the dismantling of “welfare as we know it” was driven through by President Bill Clinton and continued under Barack Obama. This deepened the economic crisis for millions of working people. Like Biden, nowhere does he raise the real question — the fight for jobs for all who need them.

“The Socialist Workers Party calls for a government-funded public works program to provide millions of jobs at union-scale wages building schools, hospitals, child care and other things workers need,” Gerardo Sánchez, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in Dallas, told the *Militant*.

Like the “stimulus” package adopted under former President Donald Trump, Biden’s measures are primarily aimed at covering losses of the bosses. Biden also bails out indebted state governments, especially those where Democrats hold power. The difference in the approach of the two administrations is that Biden and his liberal supporters seek to build up a “big government,” to exert control over workers, who they consider incapable of running their own lives. And who they increasingly fear will rise up against the effects of the capitalist crisis bearing down on us.

Biden is using the bill’s passage to bolster his party’s political support in preparation for elections in 2022 and 2024. Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris announced a publicity tour beginning in Pennsylvania and Georgia, states they narrowly won in November.

As the administration pursues its course to defend

capitalist interests, the FBI is widening its probe of the few hundred militia members, conspiracy theorists and some Donald Trump supporters who entered Congress Jan. 6.

About 300 have already been charged. Agents are trying to find ways to pin conspiracy charges on any of them they can, bolstering these thought-control laws. One target is Stewart Rhodes, a founder of the Oath Keepers militia, even though Rhodes urged its members not to bring weapons to Washington Jan. 6.

Former federal prosecutor Peter Skinner advised the FBI how to get conspiracy charges to stick. If there is a problem finding evidence, he says, the best way to convict “is by flipping someone who will testify” — that is, threatening them with hard time unless they finger those the government wants to take down.

### Conspiracy laws undermine rights

Sedition and conspiracy charges target people for what they say and think, not what they do. They have been used for decades to frame up militant trade unionists, Black rights fighters, leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and others. Regardless of who such laws are aimed at today, they will be used in the years ahead against those the ruling class really fears — workers and farmers fighting to prevent the bosses and their Democratic and Republican parties from offloading the capitalist crisis on our shoulders.

The hunt for “domestic terrorists” is aimed at justifying the Democrats’ drive, backed by Trump’s opponents in the Republican Party machine, to prevent him from ever running for office again. If possible, they hope to crush him under a barrage of civil suits, tax investigations and every other possible avenue. They aim to prevent the millions who voted for Trump from being able to do so again.

Liberals’ bitter and enduring hatred of Trump is rooted in their contempt for those “deplorables” who couldn’t bring themselves to vote for Biden. They view working people as racist and backward.

“The ruling class and both its political parties consider workers and farmers to be ‘trash,’” Sánchez said. “But working people in our millions will prove we are capable of organizing to resist what they do to us.

“As we discover our self-worth in the course of our struggles, working people will build our own party, a labor party, to fight to replace the rule of the capitalist class with a workers and farmers government,” Sánchez said.

## US rulers step up attack on right to be on ballot

**BY BRIAN WILLIAMS**

The capitalist rulers and their Democratic and Republican parties have been stepping up attacks on ballot access for the Socialist Workers Party, and other independent political candidates. This effort is bipartisan, as millions of workers and farmers, facing worsening working and living conditions and seeing no serious answers coming from the two parties of the bosses, are looking for new political answers.

State legislators, backed by court rulings, have been imposing increasingly onerous ballot requirements — upping the number of signatures that must be gathered on petitions and pushing deadlines for meeting filing requirements further and further away from scheduled elections, sometimes into the year before.

The Democrats fear that the SWP — which calls for workers to build their own party, a labor party, based on their unions — would get more media and attention from working people if it is on the ballot. And they fear losing votes to third pro-capitalist parties like the Green Party, which could cost them close elections. The Republicans don’t want to see parties like the Libertarian and Independence parties siphoning off votes that could cost them an election.

The capitalist rulers in the U.S. have governed for decades through their two-party shell game, telling working people that if you don’t like one of their parties, just go for the other one.

In New York state, a new law in 2020 promoted by Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo boosted to 45,000 the number of petition signatures required when third parties try to run for statewide office, three times the already high 15,000 set before.

The law also increased the number of votes a third party had to get to retain party ballot status in the next election, from 50,000 to 130,000. This meant the Libertarian, Green, Independence and Serve America Movement parties have been removed from the ballot in the future. Now they’ll have to petition for every single office they want to run for going forward.

When these parties challenged the new restrictions, a federal appeals court refused to hear their case, saying removing them from the ballot would improve the chances that the winner of the election will have received a majority of the vote!

### Ballot requirements raised

In Iowa, the state Senate passed a bill Feb. 23 that would increase petitioning requirements from 1,500 to 3,500 signatures for independent candidates and minority parties running for president, U.S. Senate or governor. It also imposes a new distribution requirement of getting at least 100 signatures in each of Iowa’s 19 counties. The state’s House of Representatives is now considering the bill.

In Arkansas, the House unanimously passed a bill Feb. 4 to increase petition signatures from 1,000 to 5,000 for independents or other parties running for president.

The U.S. Supreme Court Feb. 22 refused to hear a challenge to the decision by North Carolina officials that petitions for independent presidential candidates must be submitted by the first week of March — eight months before the general election. Their decision means that similar deadlines could also be set in Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia, and even earlier in South Carolina — in February.

Not to be outdone, the Montana legislature has begun discussing pushing back the deadline for a new party to file petitions there to December of the year before the election.

In Arizona, the State Supreme Court removed independent presidential candidate Kanye West from the ballot last year, saying it would explain why later. “He was apparently removed from the ballot because his elector candidates didn’t file campaign finance documents,” wrote Richard Winger, publisher of *Ballot Access News*, not because of any problem with his petitions. “Never before had the state required electors to file such documents.”

In Alabama, the state charged the Libertarian Party \$36,000 to get a copy of the list of registered voters, while “ballot-qualified parties” — the Democrats and Republicans — got the list for free.

Doesn’t there seem to be a trend here?