

## Cuba's int'l solidarity vs. US bosses' drive for vaccine profits

BY RÓGER CALERO

There are two different class approaches to the vaccination efforts against COVID-19 confronting workers and farmers around the world today. One ensures the profits of the ruling capitalist families, who own the giant for-profit pharmaceutical and medical insurance monopolies.

The other, championed by the Cuban people and their socialist revolution, concentrates social resources to develop vaccines for every single person in Cuba and for every country in the world that wants it.

It's essential that all workers and their families get vaccinated. In order to rebuild the workforce in the U.S. and elsewhere in the capitalist world — which has been decimated by layoffs, job combinations and speedup, accelerated by the pandemic — workers need to band together in our workplaces to fight in defense of our jobs, wages and safety.

But the cut-throat competition for market share by mammoth profit-

Continued on page 4

## Back striking Steelworkers fighting ATI union busting!

Join the picket lines, send support, donations



Buffalo News/Robert Kirkham

Steelworkers picket at ATI in Lockport, New York. Union members are on strike in five states.

BY MALCOLM JARRETT

WASHINGTON, Pa. — “The concession stand is closed,” was the slogan used by Steelworkers at Allegheny Technologies Inc. when the bosses locked them out for seven months in 2015-16. Today some 1,300 United Steelworkers members are on

strike against ATI bosses’ demands to cut jobs and worsen conditions.

“The concession stand is *still* closed,” is the message several of them asked me to report when I visited their picket line here April 5.

I said I would do everything I can to get out the word and build support for their fight.

“The company says they’re going to cut jobs from 1,300 to 900. They’re hoping to break the union,” said Carl Decker at another picket line in Vandergrift April 3. “They take a

Continued on page 7

## Coal miners in Alabama stand up to Warrior Met

BY SUSAN LAMONT

BROOKWOOD, Ala. — More than 1,100 United Mine Workers of America members struck Warrior Met Coal April 1, after contract negotiations with the bosses failed to reach an agreement acceptable to the union.

“I was at the picket line all night last night after the strike started,” Antwon McGee told *Militant* worker-

### As we go to press . . .

Members of United Mine Workers Local 2397 are voting April 9 on whether to accept a tentative agreement with the owners of Warrior Met Coal reached on April 5.

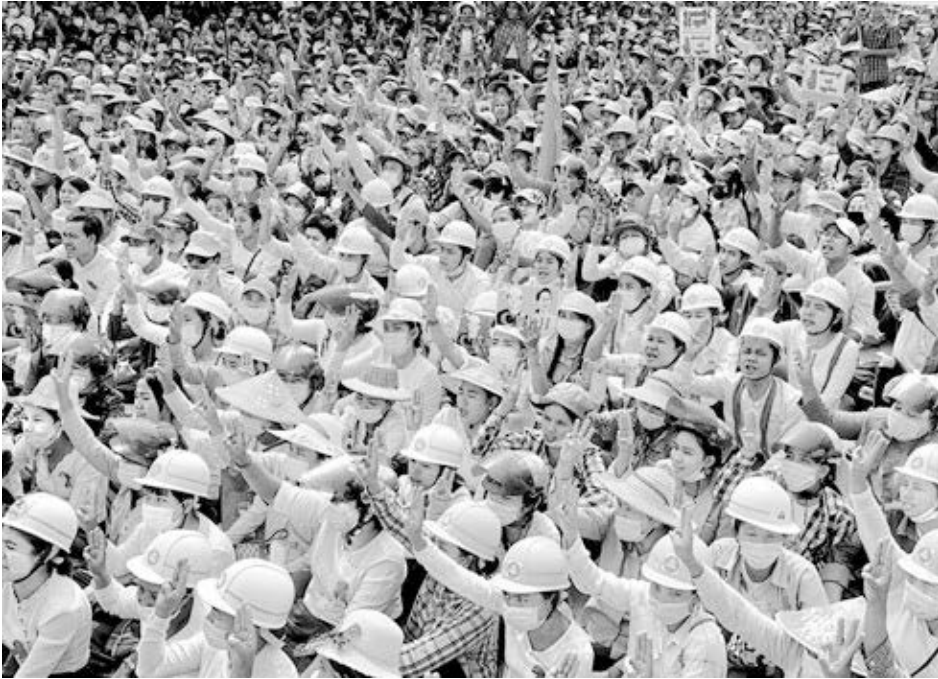
correspondents at the UMWA Local 2397 union hall, which represents miners at the No. 7 mine. “I’ve been over there all day and now I’m taking a short break and getting ready to head back over to the line again.”

The strike includes the company’s No. 4 and No. 7 mines, their coal preparation plant and a central shop, all located in Tuscaloosa County.

Spirited picket lines are up at all the strike sites, where union members are getting organized with supplies, burn barrels and portable bathrooms. Young miners and veterans

Continued on page 6

## Protests continue in Myanmar in face of military’s deadly attacks



Ko Sat

April 1 protest against military coup in Tant Se, in Myanmar’s Sagaing Region, by workers, farmers, Buddhist monks, students from surrounding towns and villages. Region has history of farmers fight for land, as well as Chin and other ethnic minorities’ battles for equal rights.

BY SETH GALINSKY

The junta in Myanmar has been unable to quell daily protest marches, candlelight vigils and strikes opposing the Feb. 1 military coup despite killing hundreds of protesters and jailing thousands.

The police pulled over several public transit buses for no reason April 2 in Yangon’s North Okkalapa Town-

ship, a working-class stronghold of opposition to the military regime. “They told the passengers to get off and kneel down. They beat not only the passengers but also the drivers,” a witness told *Irrawaddy*, a news site that backs the Civil Disobedience Movement.

The Assistance Association for Po-

Continued on page 7

## Organize to fight for jobs! White House plan leaves millions jobless

BY TERRY EVANS

Persistent, large-scale unemployment — a result of the crisis of capitalist production and trade exacerbated by government lockdowns — remains the biggest challenge before working people today. Organizing a fight to get the millions who have been thrown out of work back into jobs is essential to put workers and our unions in a stronger position to fight as a class against the bosses’ attacks on our wages, working conditions and basic dignity.

While hiring has begun to pick up, and some workers are being called back, millions are still without jobs, isolated from fellow workers. There are still almost 10 million the government lists as unemployed.

One of the biggest steps that can help is for all workers to get vaccinated. So far the biggest obstacle has been the for-profit system, which relies on private industry to develop, produce, distribute and deliver inoculations. They do so only for profit, at

war with each other, with no centralized organization to maximize speed as well as safety.

The latest example is the contamination of at least 25 million doses at Emergent BioSolutions, a major fac-

Continued on page 6

### Inside

Small fishermen in UK face gov’t, EU attack on livelihoods 2

SWP ‘stimulus’ appeal at \$98,700 and growing! 2

Join in building solidarity for today’s labor battles! 9

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Quebec state workers fight gov’t attacks on unions, services

Oregon medical workers win first union contract

# Small fishermen in UK face gov’t, EU attack on livelihoods

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

HASTINGS, England — “The first thing you need to know is that the commercial fishing industry is divided between those fishing from boats shorter or longer than 10 meters,” Paul Joy told Andrés Mendoza, Communist League candidate for London mayor when they met here March 12. Joy has fished off the south coast of England for 48 years and is the chair of the Hastings Fishermen’s Protection Society.

Hastings, on the coast of East Sussex, is home to two dozen fishermen. They fish for cod, skate, sole, plaice and cuttlefish when the tide and weather permit the boats to go out from the beach. They are winched back by tractor upon their return.

Mendoza is using his campaign to champion union battles as well as the common interests of workers and other exploited producers, like fishermen.

Small fishermen have been hit hard by the government’s pandemic-driven decision to close all restaurants, Joy told him. “The wholesale price has been driven down with the drop in demand.”

Another problem is the Brexit deal agreed to by Prime Minister Boris Johnson and European Union officials. It effectively restricts fishermen from the UK in vessels under 10 meters (33 feet) to fishing within 6 miles of the coast.

“If we drop our pots, nets and lines outside the 6-mile limit, large trawlers not only scoop up the fish but they scoop up our gear too,” Joy said.

“We were for ‘no deal’ [with the EU], to bring to an end the operation of the EU’s Common Fisheries Policy,” Joy said. In the name of preserving fish

stocks the policy is used by different EU member states against their rivals inside and outside the bloc — to the detriment of small fishermen. Some capitalist politicians pit fishermen in the U.K. against those in Europe, calling Johnson’s trade deal a “betrayal” that surrenders continued access to U.K. coastal waters to certain EU member states.

“I don’t care what flag the large boats sail under,” Lee Colgan told Mendoza on a second visit here March 26. “All boats over 10 meters should be excluded from [within] a 12-mile limit. Until that happens, small fishermen will not be able to expand our catch no matter how much the quota is increased.” Colgan works as crew on three boats owned by different family members.

Under the terms of the Brexit agreement, the U.K. quota was enlarged by 15% this year, and will be increased by 2.5% annually until 2026 when the arrangement comes up for review again.

“The ‘under 10s’ were promised by George Eustice, secretary of state, that with Brexit we’d get access to thousands of tonnes more fish,” Jerry Percy told the *Militant* by phone. Percy, who fished for many years, today works fulltime for the New Under Tens Fishermen’s Association. “We anticipated a progressive move to exclude all larger vessels. But none of that has happened.” Similar challenges face small fishermen throughout Europe, Percy pointed out.

“The quota system is stacked against small fishermen,” Joy said. “Boats under 10 meters account for nearly 80% of the U.K. fishing fleet, over 4,000 vessels, but can land just 2% of the U.K. quota.” Seventy per cent of the total U.K. catch



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Andrés Mendoza, left, Communist League candidate for London mayor, talks to Lee Colgan March 12 in Hastings, south of London. Colgan, a small fishing boat crewman, said because of U.K., EU restrictions, he “can’t make a living as a fisherman” and has to work a second job.

was landed by vessels over 24 meters (79 feet), including “super trawlers” owned by big capitalist outfits.

The government delegates to Fish Producer Organisations, which are dominated by big fishing companies, set regional quotas. Just five ruling-class families control 30% of the U.K. quota.

Quotas are commodities, which can

be bought and sold. Small fishermen “will always be outbid by the large companies,” Joy said.

Last year the government regulator, the Marine Management Organisation, heaped another burden on the small fishermen, obliging them to record their catch weight on board and log it into a

Continued on page 3

## SWP ‘stimulus’ appeal at \$98,700 and growing!

Contributors to the Socialist Workers Party “stimulus” appeal from the \$1,400 U.S. government payments are setting the appeal on course toward \$120,000! As we go to press \$98,700 has been donated by 77 individuals.

From Pittsburgh, Tony Lane wrote with his contribution, “Hope there are a lot more checks coming.” He captures the spirit!

Contributions are coming every day from around the country. The following are a small sample of the many notes and letters that have been sent.

From Louisville, Kentucky, Jacquie Henderson writes, “Happy to be able to give it over to the party.” From Josefina Otero in Los Angeles: “Here is my contribution!” And from Laura Anderson in Albany, New York: “So many openings are there waiting for the working class to take them.”

“A stimulus for communism. Bravo!” Joe Swanson, SWP candidate for City Council in Lincoln, Nebraska, writes with a contribution to the appeal from himself and Marie Swanson.

These contributions are making a tremendous difference toward expanding the ability of the party to bring its program to many thousands of workers and exploited toilers, and join with other fighters in labor and social struggles. To build on a course toward the working class taking political power in the U.S. and to join with toilers worldwide to end social relations based on exploitation — class vs. class — and build a socialist society based on human solidarity.

Send your contribution! To contribute, make out your check to the Socialist Workers Party and send it to SWP, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. The *Militant* will report weekly on the progress of the appeal.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

## The Militant

Vol. 85/No. 15

Closing news date: April 7, 2021

Editor: John Studer

Managing Editor: Terry Evans

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galsinsky, Emma Johnson, Martin Koppel, Roy Landersen, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January.

Business Manager: Valerie Johnson

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

Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: For one year send Canadian \$45 to the Militant, 7107 St. Denis #204, Montreal, Quebec H2S 2S5.

United Kingdom: Send £30 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, 5 Norman Road (first floor), Seven Sisters, London, N15 4ND, England.

Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: Send £85 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

France: Send 100 euros for one year to Diffusion du Militant, BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15.

New Zealand and the Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$55 for one year to P.O. Box 13857, Auckland 1643, New Zealand.

Australia: Send A\$70 for one year to P.O. Box 73 Campsie, NSW 2194 Australia.

Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

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

## THE MILITANT

### Fight for workers control of production!

From locked-out Minnesota oil refinery workers to Amazon workers fighting for a union in Alabama, bosses’ attacks and hazardous working conditions have fueled working-class resistance. The *‘Militant’* backs union fights for workers control of production.



Militant/Doug Nelson

UAW unionists join locked-out Marathon refinery workers in Minnesota, March 28.

## SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

### NEW READERS

☐ \$5 for 12 issues

#### RENEWAL

☐ \$10 for 12 weeks

☐ \$20 for 6 months

☐ \$35 for 1 year

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

E-MAIL

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,  
306 W. 37TH ST., 13TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018.  
OR SUBSCRIBE ONLINE AT:  
WWW.THEMILITANT.COM

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia, A\$10 • United Kingdom, £4 • Canada, Can\$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £8 • France, 8 euros • New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, NZ\$7 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

# SWP in Amarillo: Asarco strike lessons, back labor fights today

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

AMARILLO, Texas — Gerardo Sánchez, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Dallas City Council, and a team of campaign supporters spoke with a wide range of workers during a campaign visit here March 31 to April 1.

“Workers in Dallas, in Amarillo, across the U.S. and in other countries, need to see and act on our common class interests,” Sánchez told everyone we met.

Sánchez had come to Amarillo before to extend solidarity to the United Steelworkers locked in a bitter nine-month strike against Asarco copper mine bosses here and in Arizona in 2019-20. Like he did then, Sánchez explained the importance of union fights going on today.

“The fight for a union at Amazon in Alabama is an example of what workers at Walmart, where I work, and those at many other workplaces need to do,” Sánchez said. “The same is true for the fight of locked-out Teamsters union members at Marathon Petroleum in Minnesota. They refused to accept the company bringing in nonunion contractors and have been locked out of their jobs since Jan. 22.”

Sánchez had helped get a solidarity message and contributions from his Walmart co-workers for the Asarco strikers. He told people he is doing the same thing today for the Minnesota Teamsters.

This *Militant* worker-correspondent also had brought solidarity to the picket lines and union actions in Texas and

Arizona during the Asarco strike. So we were especially interested in learning what conditions were like in that refinery since the strike ended. Many of the workers are back at work, but the strike hadn’t been able to force the company to withdraw its concession demands.

The first stop was a local cafe where we were treated for breakfast by Leonardo Segura, former vice president of USW Local 5613 and picket organizer.

“There are about 40 workers in the refinery now, working 12-hour shifts, five to six days a week. Before the strike, there were about 160 workers and we worked eight-hour shifts,” Segura said. He retired after Asarco tried to put him on a lower-paying job he wasn’t trained for.

After breakfast Segura took us to the union hall where we were welcomed by former strikers Robert Stine and Liza Tarango. “The strike was worth it. What Asarco was doing wasn’t right,” said Tarango, who had worked there for eight years and still hasn’t been called back. “I don’t regret the strike and would do the same thing again. We hadn’t had a raise in 12 years. It was time to do something.”

We don’t win every fight we’re in, Sánchez told them. But workers can come out stronger, more united, and gain experience in winning solidarity, reaching out to other workers. This is a taste of what is possible when we stand up and fight, he said. That puts working people in the best position to make gains in union battles today and those to come.

Sánchez pointed to the lockout at Marathon and the strike by Steelworkers at ATI as examples of struggles that need solidarity today.

Tarango got a subscription to the *Militant* to follow these and other labor battles.

We also met Maria England at the union hall. She was laid off by Asarco bosses and is expecting to be called



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

In Amarillo, Texas, April 1, roofer Marcos Mendoza, left, told Gerardo Sánchez, SWP candidate for Dallas City Council, that bosses take advantage of undocumented workers to pay them lower wages. SWP fights for amnesty for all immigrant workers in the U.S., Sánchez said.

back. “I was a machine operator before the strike. They are working 12-hour shifts now. They have to eat on the job,” she said. “One worker who had no breaks decided to stand up. The union fought this and now he gets breaks.”

Fights like these on the job are important for rebuilding a fighting union movement, said Sánchez.

Workers and our unions also need to “fight for a public works program to put millions to work at union scale wages, building hospitals, schools, affordable housing, revamping the worn-out power plants that collapsed during the freeze in Texas last month, and other things working people need,” Sánchez told England.

Fighting for this, and for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, can help overcome the biggest divisions the working class faces today — between those who are working and those without a job, said Sánchez.

### Doorsteps, plant gate campaigning

Segura joined us in campaigning at the Tyson beef meatpacking plant here. A number of workers laid off by

Asarco are now at this plant, which is organized by the Teamsters. “This is a workers’ paper,” Segura told workers as they came off their shift. We sold 11 copies of the *Militant*. A carload of workers originally from Myanmar, who saw that the *Militant* covers the fight against the military dictatorship there, bought several copies.

The next day Segura joined us talking to workers on their doorsteps.

“I’m a roofer,” Marcos Mendoza told Sánchez after the Socialist Workers Party candidate introduced himself. “I’m around workers who come from Mexico all the time and I see how they are paid lower wages because the bosses think that they are afraid to speak up.”

“That’s why my campaign supports amnesty for all workers without papers who live and work in the U.S. today,” Sánchez said. “The majority of those coming across the border today are from areas where there’s no jobs and very low wages. The bosses use immigration to divide us and pit us against each other. They pay immigrants poor wages and then drive everybody’s wages down.” Mendoza bought a subscription to the *Militant*.

Sánchez also knocked on the door of Chris Null and told him about the organizing drive at the Alabama Amazon warehouse. “I was laid off by Amazon here seven months ago,” Null said. After discussing the need for workers to fight back, including politically, Null got a copy of *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* and a *Militant* subscription.

Party campaigners plan to keep in touch with the former Asarco strikers and other workers they met in Amarillo, to work together to build solidarity with working-class battles wherever they break out.

## UK fishermen

Continued from page 2

smartphone “Catch App.” Failure to be accurate within 10% is a criminal offence and most “under 10s” don’t have deck space for weighing gear.

“Imagine,” Percy told the Press Association, “it’s dark, it’s raining, you have wet and cold fingers that are swollen from dragging nets in all night, and now you’re trying to type into some piddly little smartphone. One mistake and you become a criminal.”

When Lee Colgan can’t fish, because of weather or the boats are out of action, he reverts to his trade as a plasterer. “Even though it’s my preferred job, you can’t make a living as a fisherman,” he says. As crew, he doesn’t receive a wage, but a percentage of the catch.

“The catch is divided four ways: between the owner, the skipper, the crew and the wholesaler,” his sister, Terry Lee, told Mendoza at Tel’s Place, a kiosk just off the beach where she sells fresh fish directly to the public. “I select what I want from the catch and the rest goes to the wholesalers, who drive a hard deal.”

Half of fish caught in the U.K., and 70% of the Hastings catch, is exported to EU member states. With the increased paperwork post-Brexit, a number of the local fishermen are turning instead toward fishing for whelks destined for South Korea.

Many small fishermen are being driven out of the industry.

“The government should guarantee a price to the fishermen sufficient to cover their costs and give them a livelihood that doesn’t demand they have multiple jobs,” Mendoza said.

## Communist League candidate for Manchester mayor calls for solidarity with bus drivers strike

“At the center of my campaign has been getting support for workers on strike at the Queen’s Road bus depot,” Peter Clifford, right, Communist League candidate for mayor of Greater Manchester, said in an online-candidates debate March 31.

Clifford is a train dispatcher at Piccadilly station in central Manchester and a member of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers. He has joined the bus drivers’ picket line and built support for their strike. The RMT branch he is a member of has donated 200 pounds to the strikers’ fund.

“By striking,” Clifford said, “the drivers are setting all working people an example.” He challenged other candidates, including Labour Party mayor Andy Burnham, to say where they stood on the strike. In his closing remarks, Burnham voiced support for the strike and said he’d been planning to visit the picket line.

But building on the capacities of working people was not the focus of Burnham’s remarks, or those of the other capitalist candidates. Each presented the opposite course, relying on city authorities to regulate capitalist enterprises that operate the city’s transportation.

In contrast Clifford pointed to the fact that transport “is a commodity under capitalism, an item that money is made out of.” Key for working people, the CL candidate said, is advancing a fight to “take control of production into our own hands.”

Workers control of production, the CL’s campaign statement points out is “a crucial step in the fight to take political power” out of the hands of the capitalist class.



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

— ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**Celebrate the 60th Anniversary of Crucial Victories of the Cuban Revolution.** Speaker: Mary-Alice Waters, member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press. Sat., April 24. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: Dinner \$10, program \$5. University Church, 2nd floor, 5655 S. University Ave. Tel: (312) 792-6160.

# Cuba vs. US vaccines for profit

Continued from front page

driven capitalist pharmaceutical companies, which have received billions of dollars in government largesse for vaccine research, development and distribution, is tearing this kind of world outlook to shreds.

This medicine-for-profit approach, alongside the capitalist rulers’ me-first, the rest-be-damned protectionism, will leave billions in underdeveloped countries without the possibility of vaccination for months to come, if at all. Prolonging the length of the pandemic will further devastate the livelihood of millions, and raise the potential of viral mutations that can sweep across the globe.

Under this pressure, the temptation for pharma bosses to fudge their test results to get to market more quickly is huge.

On March 1, almost three months after the wealthiest capitalist countries like the U.S. bought up the most promising vaccines and started their inoculation campaigns, the governments of Ghana and Ivory Coast had each received about 500,000 doses from Covax, a program run by the World Health Organization. This is barely enough to begin inoculating health care workers and the elderly.

Most of the 142 countries enrolled in Covax are in a similar situation. The *Guardian* reported in January that Africa, with a population of 1.3 billion, will receive only 140 million doses by June, at best.

And the Covax program is unraveling as pharma giants prioritize deals with the highest bidders.

As of mid-January, more than 7 billion vaccine doses had been purchased globally, with 4.2 billion going to major capitalist countries, the *Guardian* reports. Some of these governments have purchased enough doses to cover their populations several times over. The Biden administration is sitting on tens of millions of doses of the AstraZen-

eca vaccine, waiting to be approved for use. In the meantime, it says it’s considering “lending” Mexico some.

## ‘Vaccine protectionism’

Tensions are high even among competing imperialist powers. In early March, the European Commission blocked exports of AstraZeneca vaccines produced within the EU bloc to countries with “better vaccination coverage.” It complained the manufacturer wasn’t meeting production targets, affecting the vaccine rollout in member nations. EU representatives have attacked AstraZeneca for using factories located in Europe to make doses destined for the United Kingdom, demanding this be stopped.

The German government is seeking to accumulate a mass of vaccines to hoard. Meanwhile, the Indian government was scolded after announcing March 26 that its Serum Institute, the world’s largest vaccine manufacturer, would temporarily “adjust” down exports to give priority to its own immunization campaign.

The truth is the scarcity of vaccines is created by the workings of capitalism. Rather than mobilize all the resources of society, vaccine creation and production is left to the “market” and its “profit motive.” The winners hope to make trillions. Working people are the losers.

## Cuba: ‘We share what we have’

Cuban people greeted with excitement and pride the progression of late-stage trials of two of the five vaccines being developed there — Soberana 2 and Abdala — which put Cuba well underway to becoming the first Latin American country to make its own vaccine.

After positive initial test results, a much larger Soberana inoculation study was launched in late March. It will vaccinate 1.7 million people — most of the adult population of

## Tampa caravan: ‘End US embargo of Cuba!’



Courtesy of Carlos Lazo

TAMPA, Fla. — Some 40 people, mostly Cuban Americans, joined a caravan here March 28, part of protests in the U.S. and around the world demanding the U.S. government end its nearly 60-year embargo against Cuba. The action was sponsored by Puentes de Amor (Bridges of Love), whose founder, school teacher Carlos Lazo, came from Seattle to participate.

Twenty cars decked out with Cuban flags set out from Ybor City. They included a large van plastered with handwritten signs against Washington’s ban on travel and trade with Cuba, restrictions on Cuban Americans sending remittances to relatives on the island, for normalization of state relations, and more.

Tens of thousands of Cubans worked in Ybor cigar factories over 100 years ago and supported the Cuban revolutionary uprising in 1895. José Martí, the historic Cuban revolutionary leader, helped build one of the largest chapters of his Cuban Revolutionary Party there.

The caravan garnered the most attention as it passed along Ybor’s main street, bustling with visitors and tourists, many of whom signaled support. *La Gaceta* newspaper ran a feature on the action, with photos and a statement by Lazo.

Next month participants plan to come early for sign making.

— KARL BUTTS

Havana — by the end of May. A second effort was initiated in the eastern provinces using Abdala shots. The goal is to inoculate 70% of the country’s population by August, the rest by the end of the year, Dr. Ileana Morales Suárez of Cuba’s Ministry of Health reported on Cuban television.

Cuba’s medical and scientific achievements are possible because working people made a revolution in January 1959 and took power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and their U.S. imperialist backers.

In 1962 the revolutionary government of Cuba began a countrywide National Immunization Program, on the heels of a completely successful mobilization that vaccinated every Cuban under 15 against polio in one week.

The new program, Miguel Galindo, its director, explained in 1999, relies on four basic principles.

- Vaccination efforts encompass the entire Cuban people.
- Vaccination is integrated into primary health care services.
- The program relies on active community participation.
- Vaccination is free of charge.

Cuba’s goal is not only to provide inoculation against COVID-19 to its population, and to anyone who visits Cuba, but also to make it available around the world. Cuba’s revolutionary government is organizing to provide free vaccines to the most exploited nations and at a sliding scale to others.

Like other internationalist aid Cuba has provided around the world, the vaccine development is done under the revolution’s principle, “We don’t give what we have left over. We share what we have.”

We’re demonstrating here in Cuba that “this vaccine is effective and that we can help fight the epidemic in the entire world,” José Luis Saldivar told Cuban television as he volunteered for the Abdala clinical trial in Guantánamo province.

Parallel clinical trials of the Soberana 2 are underway in Venezuela and Iran, and other countries have expressed interest in getting the vaccine as well. Iranian health officials say that millions of doses could be produced under an agreement with Cuba that allows technology transfer and joint production.

## Jonas Salk on polio vaccine: ‘Could you patent the sun?’

Sixty-eight years ago, Dr. Jonas Salk announced he had successfully developed a vaccine for polio, which has saved millions of lives. Unlike the big pharmaceutical companies that place patents on drugs they market — to jack up the prices and reap superprofits, like they’re doing today with COVID-19 vaccines — Salk simply made his vaccine available to all of humanity.

After the announcement, CBS newsman Edward R. Morrow asked Salk, who owned the patent for the polio vaccine? “Well, the people, I would say,” replied Salk, in light of the millions of charitable donations raised by the March of Dimes that funded the vaccine’s research and field testing. “There is no patent. Could you patent the sun?”

In 1952 alone 58,000 children in the U.S. were paralyzed by polio, as well as hundreds of thousands more around the world. The impact of Salk’s vaccine in the U.S. was dramatic, reducing polio virus infections by about 95% between 1955 and 1962.

While researching and developing the vaccine, Salk was also being spied on by the FBI. The federal cop agency’s director, J. Edgar Hoover, gained access to Salk’s personnel file at the University of Michigan, where he was a researcher and assistant professor in Ann Arbor, to determine his “loyalty” and to see if his political views were too “leftist.”

A few years later, Dr. Albert Sabin developed an oral polio vaccine, which also was not patented. Its first test was in the Soviet Union, which was successful, and 77 million youths there — everyone under 20 — were vaccinated.

In 1962 the revolutionary government of Cuba used the oral vaccine to carry out an unprecedented massive nationwide effort.

In Cuba, where there was not enough available refrigeration to store a perishable vaccine, health authorities decided to vaccinate all the children in the country in just a few days. And six months later they did the same thing for the second dose. This deprived the virus of all its potential carriers, eradicating the disease from the island.

Sabin traveled to Cuba in 1967 and met with virologists to discuss joint work on future vaccines, efforts that were thwarted by the U.S. government embargo against Cuba and its revolution.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

## New York City: 60 Years Since Cuba’s Victory at the Bay of Pigs and Launching of the Campaign that Ended Illiteracy! *Cuba’s Socialist Revolution: Its Impact in the US and World*

### Speakers:

**Ambassador Pedro Luis Pedrosó Cuesta**, Permanent Representative of Cuba to UN  
**Mary-Alice Waters**, Socialist Workers Party National Committee; editor of *Bay of Pigs/Playa Girón: 1961, Washington’s First Military Defeat in the Americas*

**Catherine Murphy**, director of new documentary on Cuba’s literacy drive, who will introduce clip from her new video, *Maestros Voluntarios* (Volunteer teachers)

### Sunday, April 18. Reception, 3 p.m.; Program, 4 p.m.

307 W. 36th St., 13th floor, Manhattan. Tel.: (646) 434-8117 or (551) 240-1512  
Sponsored by New York and New Jersey Socialist Workers Party

# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## Quebec state workers fight gov't attacks on unions, public services

MONTREAL — Under the slogan, “Sound the alarm for public services,” over 1,000 teachers, nurses and other government workers simultaneously rallied at the Quebec National Assembly in Quebec City and at Premier Francois Legault’s office here in downtown March 31.

They insist the government stop using the pandemic as an excuse to refuse to meet demands for better working conditions, wage increases and to improve education, health and other services.

The two-city demonstration was coordinated so that union leaders speaking at the Quebec City protest could be seen and heard live on a giant screen by chanting unionists with union flags in Montreal. The united action involved government workers from Quebec’s two main union federations, the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) and the Quebec Federation of Labor, as well as the teachers and nurses unions.

Quebec’s 550,000 public sector workers have been working without contracts since they expired in 2019. The government won’t negotiate seriously. In the name of fighting coronavirus, it has used Quebec’s health emergency laws to nullify contracts of hundreds of thousands of teachers and nurses, imposed forced overtime, canceled vacations and taken other measures against the workers.

“Instead of respecting our contribution, they have chosen to violate our rights,” nurses union president Nancy Bedard told the rally in Quebec.

“Right now our government is trying to increase our workload without any further remuneration,” said teachers union leader Kathleen Usher. “We are breaking, our public schools are at the breaking point.”

On March 30, some 10,000 teachers, professionals and support staff in the junior colleges carried out a one-day strike. Unions for 73,000 French and English preschool, elementary and secondary school teachers have announced a strike for April 14. The nurses union has threatened a general mobilization if the government doesn’t end the emergency suspension of its union contract.

— Annette Kouri and John Steele

## Oregon medical workers win first union contract

BEND, Ore. — Medical technicians, therapists and other workers at St. Charles Medical Center overwhelmingly ratified their first union contract March 31. They had voted to join the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals in 2019 and had been fighting for a contract ever since. St. Charles is the only hospital here, and the largest employer in central Oregon.

The contract was approved by almost 95%, respiratory therapist Deidre Moore told the *Militant*. While wage gains of up to 25% were won for some positions, she said the fight for a contract was about a lot more than money. “It’s about having a voice and being treated fairly.”

Moore considered the contract a victory, even though they didn’t get ev-

everything they wanted. The agreement doesn’t make the hospital a closed shop; new workers don’t have to join the union.

This *Militant* worker-correspondent joined the picket line all nine days of the strike. Everyone I talked to described the bad working conditions, especially with the extra challenges of the pandemic. Most signs at the picket demanded respect on the job and a contract that would improve support for their patients.

“Alongside pay equity, workers will now have a comprehensive ladder for wage increases based on years of experience and tenure,” the union said in a press release.

“The contract also ensures that workers will have the ability to challenge contract violations through a grievance procedure and binding arbitration,” it said. Many workers told me this was an important issue.

Hospital bosses put out their own news release, trying to play down the gains won by the strike, especially on wages, KTVZ News reported.

“We wouldn’t have this contract today if we hadn’t went on strike,” Beatrice Redding-Walczyk, a radiation therapist at the hospital’s Cancer Center, told KTVZ, answering the bosses. “We had no future bargaining dates, they were not agreeing to anything, they were trying to ‘union bust’ us.”

“The dispute brought people together,” said Deedee Schumacher, an ultrasound technologist. “We gained representation, unity and a voice in our workplace.”

— Louise Goodman

## Rally marks five weeks of bus drivers strike in Manchester

MANCHESTER, England — Determined to win further support for their fight, hundreds of striking bus drivers at Go North West and their supporters gathered at the Queen’s Road depot in north Manchester April 3 to mark five weeks on the picket line.

Joined by trade unionists and others, the drivers rallied nearby before marching through the area. A caravan of two dozen cars came from the south of the city decked out in Unite union flags.

“Day 35 of the strike. Look around you,” Colin Hayden, Unite union branch



Militant/John Steele

**Public sector workers protest in Montreal March 31, part of fight for a contract, to stop government attacks on wages and working conditions, for more funds to schools and other services.**

chairman, told the crowd. “We’re solid. Our members are solid. We are out and we are staying out.”

Two days earlier, Unite announced talks with the company had ended and the strike would continue. The drivers walked out after bosses gave them eight days to sign up for a longer workweek and cuts in sick pay, or be dismissed.

“We are dealing with an aggressive employer, using aggressive tactics of fire and rehire,” Hayden said.

Some 7,000 GMB members around the country at British Gas have held 42 days of stoppages since the start of the year in face of similar demands. A further walkout is set for April 14. This is a day before bosses have threatened to dismiss thousands of gas engineers if they don’t accept a pay freeze, longer hours with no extra pay and changes to conditions. Unite strikers at Go North West have twice sent solidarity delegations to the GMB picket line.

“We need to join up the campaigns against these practices,” Ritchie James, Unite North West regional secretary, told bus drivers at their rally.

— Ögmundur Jónsson

## Amazon India delivery workers strike over payments, benefits

Over 8,000 Amazon workers at 20 delivery hubs in Delhi and Pune, India, stopped work March 16, a day after the bosses at the giant e-commerce company slashed pay for parcel deliveries. The

drivers, mainly hired through subcontracting firms, are demanding the restoration of the regular rates for delivery plus health insurance benefits.

After this, the main drivers union, the Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers, called for a national 24-hour strike. Some drivers at Amazon India went out in Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad and Pune at the end of March.

A union statement explained that the rates for drivers of three-wheeled autorickshaws were cut from 35 Indian rupees (48 cents) per delivery to 10 for delivering smaller packages. Delivery van drivers’ higher rates were also cut.

Amazon delivery staff had been making around 20,000 rupees a month before the national pandemic lockdown last year, the drivers union said. The earnings of most of the workers have now been halved by the bosses.

“We are getting less money after working more,” a striking driver told the media at the March 16 action in Pune.

Organizing efforts and labor actions are growing with Amazon bosses’ attacks on wages and working conditions in the U.S. and around the world. Some 2,000 workers at six of the company’s sites in Germany, including Werne, Leipzig and Koblenz, started a four-day strike March 29 over deteriorating working conditions. A national strike by some 40,000 Amazon workers in Italy took place the week before.

— Roy Landersen

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 22, 1996

The Clinton administration is leading the bosses’ assault on immigrant workers. Clinton has pushed for increases in border cops and use of U.S. armed forces to aid them. Under his Democratic tutelage raids, arrests, and deportations of immigrant workers have shot up.

Much of the big business debate seeks to convince immigrants who have papers to identify as “American” and pit themselves against undocumented workers — “illegal aliens” scapegoated as the cause of unemployment, crime and drug trafficking.

Washington’s and Wall Street’s real aim is to drive a wedge into the working class and justify greater use of repressive measures, and the wholesale denial of rights to a growing number of those who toil on the land and in thousands of U.S. factories. The key to taking on the bosses is unity of the workers.



April 23, 1971

The last two months have seen important new developments in the attitude of the American people to the war in Southeast Asia. With the fiasco of the Laotian invasion and the revelations about U.S. war crimes in Indochina, public opposition has reached an all-time high.

Meanwhile, the antiwar movement is preparing for demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco on April 24, and they could be the largest ever held.

The answer to all of the “peace offensives,” phased withdrawals, partial withdrawals, “neutralizations,” bombing halts, and other phony plans of the ruling class is the continued mobilization of the masses of the American people in the streets until every last soldier, sailor, airman, advisor, CIA operative, and U.S. AID person is out of Indochina. That is what the demonstrations on April 24 represent.



April 20, 1946

The 400,000 soft coal miners on strike since April 1 mean business about securing their precedent-setting social demands before they will even consider the question of wages.

These are directed at eliminating the terrible toll of accidents in American mines; providing adequate health, medical and sanitation facilities in the filthy, decrepit company towns; ensuring the welfare of miners’ widows and orphans; compensating the injured and their families; restricting the price-gouging in the monopoly country stores and rent-gouging on company-owned dwellings.

The mine operators dismissed the demands as “trivia.” This “trivia” includes the slaughter of 28,000 miners and injury of more than a million in the past 14 years. If they win they will set an example for the rest of American labor that may have far-reaching consequences.

### ‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send check or money order payable to the *Militant* and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

# Alabama coal miners strike

**Continued from front page**  
together hold the “United We Stand with UMW Miners” picket signs and wave back at the many trucks and cars whose drivers honk their horns and wave in support. This is the first UMW strike here in Brookwood in decades. Many strikers are second- or even third-generation miners.

“The company can’t keep mistreating us and not expect to get a reaction,” 61-year-old Rocky Davis said on the picket line outside the prep plant. “We feel like the company is trying to get rid of the union.” He said he had started in the mines when he was 17 years old.

The Warrior Met mines mainly produce metallurgical coal used in steel production by manufacturers in Europe, South America and Asia. The company was set up in January 2016 following the bankruptcy of Jim Walter Resources and its parent company, Walter Energy, the year before.

The Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Alabama approved the sale to a couple of hedge funds that were senior creditors of Walter Energy.

The “new” mine owners used the capitalist bankruptcy court and subsequent company reorganization to press for concessions on wages and working conditions that UMW members had fought for and won over decades.

Under the five-year contract the union agreed to in 2016, several miners told us, the company forced wage cuts, loss of sick days and holidays, higher costs for health care, no overtime pay until after 40 hours work, widening wage gaps between job classifications, loss of paid lunches, forced Sunday work, increased use of outside contractors, and attempts to shortcut safety to speed up production, along with other measures.

Before the strike, company officials had announced plans to spend mil-

lions to expand their mining operations, but claimed they couldn’t meet the union’s demands due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, upper management recently paid themselves \$35,000 bonuses.

“The company is using more and more contractors to do jobs that used to be worked by union members,” said veteran miner Efrén Barrientos, originally from Mexico, at the prep plant picket line. Formerly there was a contractual limit on how many outside contractors the company could use, a limit the company now regularly exceeds, he and other miners said.

“We are one! — that’s us!” Tyler Bittle, 22, who has worked at the No. 7 mine for two years, told us while picketing at the mine entrance. Like many other younger miners, he first came in as a contract worker and then was hired by the company and joined the union. “We are standing together, all the men — and the women too!”

Miners in Brookwood are very aware of the union-organizing drive going on at the Amazon fulfillment center in nearby Bessemer. UMW Local 2397 President Carl White attended a solidarity rally for the drive held in February. “I hope they win the union, they really need it,” many striking miners told us.

The strikers have begun receiving support from area workers and unions. Volunteers and staffers from the Retail, Wholesale and Depart-



United Mine Workers of America Local 2397 members on picket line at Warrior Met mine No. 7, April 2. At left is Tyler Bittle; right, Antwon McGee. Over 1,100 went on strike day before.

ment Store Union — the union Amazon workers are trying to win recognition for — visited the miners’ picket lines April 3.

A United Steelworkers union official from the U.S. Steel pipe mill near Birmingham brought burn barrels for the picket lines April 2, promising further solidarity from the USW.

Warrior Met bosses said they have contingency plans to “continue meeting the demands of our key customers.” Miners are alert to any steps by the company that point toward an attempt to restart production, such as

bringing in more contract workers.

“This strike is helping educate the young miners on what the union is all about,” said veteran miner Steve Mote at the No. 7 picket line. “The company has money and they’re spending it,” he said. “They just don’t want to spend it on us.”

Messages of support and solidarity can be sent to: UMW District 20, 21922 Hwy. 216 (Miners’ Memorial Parkway), McCalla, AL 35111. Email: umwadistrict20@bellsouth.net. Phone (205) 477-7500. Fax: (205) 477-0004.

on production and commerce.

As job callbacks and hiring grow, the fight between bosses seeking to boost profits off our backs and workers fighting to defend jobs, wages and safe working conditions will sharpen. Today major labor battles are unfolding at ATI steel, the Warrior Met coal mine, Marathon Petroleum, St. Vincent Hospital and more. These fights call for maximum solidarity from all working people to help tip the balance in favor of labor.

At the same time, Democratic President Joseph Biden unveiled a \$2 trillion-plus so-called American Jobs Plan, touted as the most far-reaching infrastructure program ever. But the fact is, this program does not create a single job. If it passes — far from a sure thing — it would give billions to bosses and governments at every level, with instructions to use them for a host of “green” and other schemes.

Biden promises to use the money to end pollution from carbon emissions by 2050, massively boost charging stations for electric cars, and other “woke” projects. Some, he says, will get bosses to provide union jobs. All will be tied to generating profits for the bosses.

One of the biggest beneficiaries will be Elon Musk, whose Tesla electric car, which costs thousands more than your car, is expected to use all those charging stations. Musk is the planet’s second richest person, with \$169.9 billion on his asset ledger as of March 5. *Forbes* says he made \$60 million that day.

Musk, like Jeff Bezos, owner of Amazon and the *Washington Post* and number one on the richest person list,

is notoriously anti-union. He prevented efforts by the United Auto Workers to organize a union at his Tesla electric vehicle plant in California in 2017. Last year he pressed to keep unions out of Tesla plants being built in Germany.

Others who will find a spot at the trough are Amtrak bosses, who would get \$80 billion; port and airport owners, \$42 billion; and \$100 billion to tech bosses to extend broadband.

## SWP: Workers need jobs now!

“What workers need is not a better plan to ‘fix’ capitalist exploitation, or to hash over Biden’s bill,” Malcolm Jarrett, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Pittsburgh mayor, told the *Militant* April 6. “We need a totally different class perspective, starting with building support for workers’ fights for jobs and wages — like the strike today by unionists in five states against attacks by ATI steel bosses.”

Jarrett walked the picket lines of striking ATI steelworkers around Pittsburgh this week.

“We need to use our unions to fight for a federal government-funded public works program to create millions of jobs at union-scale making things workers need, like housing, schools, hospitals, child care centers and much more,” he said. “And workers need to impose workers control of production in these jobs, to make sure they meet workers’ needs and are done safely.”

“Our unions need to fight for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to prevent further layoffs. The fight for these measures can unify and strengthen the working class and rebuild our unions as effective fighting instruments,” Jarrett

# Protests continue in Myanmar in face of military attacks

**Continued from front page**  
litical Prisoners said April 7 that the death toll stands at 598, most killed when the police and army units fired on unarmed demonstrators.

The junta, led by Gen. Min Aung Hliang, seized power after the National League for Democracy, a capitalist party led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won the November elections in a landslide. Suu Kyi had shared power with the military command since the party first won an overwhelming majority in the 2015 elections. Under the 2008 constitution, the high command automatically controls 25% of the seats in the parliament, and key ministries.

As the military unleashes further repression, working people and youth have been adjusting their tactics to keep up pressure on the regime while minimizing their own losses.

In Yangon, Myanmar’s largest city and the one that has suffered the brunt of the repression, smaller groups — including some led by members of the garment workers union — are carrying out short actions that disperse before the police or army units have time to attack.

Early in the morning April 6, protesters sprayed messages in red paint all over Yangon. “The blood has not dried,” read one message. Another appealed to soldiers: “Don’t kill people just for a small salary as low as the cost of dog food.”

The junta has relied on the police and elite army units to repress the peaceful

protests and strikes by workers. But the bulk of the soldiers are from rural farm areas, as well as unemployed youth from the cities.

## Unequal combat

Daily protests, some in the thousands, and strikes that have involved tens of thousands of workers over the past two months, continue.

Workers, farmers and youth in at least a dozen small towns and villages have stood up to police and military assaults with bows and arrows and hunting rifles.

In Kalay city, in a majority Chin ethnic area in northern Myanmar, young people armed with rifles and homemade weapons fought for hours March 28 with soldiers from an army unit and police who were using machine guns and hand grenades.

Later in the week, seven plainclothes police captured by the protesters were released in exchange for nine residents detained for violating the evening curfew imposed by the junta. Unlike the way the junta treats protesters, “We treated them [the police] well. There were no beatings,” a protester told Myanmar Now.

## History of ethnic divisions

Myanmar’s capitalist rulers have relied on the military to wage a series of wars with dozens of armed groups in mountainous border areas where ethnic minorities make up the majority of the population. By 2013 the government had negotiated de facto, if uneasy, cease-fires with most of them.

These conflicts originate in the divide-and-rule strategy of the British colonial regime. Their continuation is in



part because no revolutionary working-class leadership emerged from the hard-fought battles that brought colonial rule to an end. The British rulers had excluded the Bamar majority from the colonial army, instead recruiting from the Karen, Kachin and Chin ethnic minorities. For government positions, it brought in officials from India.

After gaining independence in 1948, the new government reversed the discrimination against the Bamar, but at the expense of the ethnic minorities.

More than a third of the population is made up of 135 ethnic minorities recognized by the government.

The largest of these are the Shan with 9%, Karen 7%, Rakhine 4% and ethnic Chinese with 3%. The government does not recognize Rohingya, a Muslim minority in the west, as an ethnic

minority. In 2017 the military carried out deadly assaults on Rohingya, forcing 700,000 to flee to neighboring Bangladesh. Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy defended the repression.

The junta wants to keep the ethnic armies from bolstering the movement against the coup. At the end of March it announced a unilateral cease-fire to run through the end of April.

The United Wa State Army, based on the Wa people — one of the smaller ethnic groups — has not criticized the coup. But it is the largest standing ethnic army, with 25,000 soldiers, and surface-to-air missiles and heavy artillery provided by Beijing. It is not willing to jeopardize its long-standing accommodation with the Myanmar military high command that accepts its control over a large region along the Chinese border.

A dozen other armed groups have expressed their solidarity with the nationwide protests against the military junta.

Both the Kachin Independence Army and the Karen National Union have clashed with the Myanmar military since the coup. The Karen National Union noted in a March 30 statement that despite a 2013 cease-fire agreement, “the Burmese military has been expanding its military presence in several Karen territories” for years.

Some 12,000 Karen people fled their homes in the Papun and Nyaunglebin districts after the junta carried out airstrikes March 27-31, killing 14 villagers.

Demonstrations in solidarity with those fighting military rule in Myanmar took place across the U.S. March 28 and April 3. More actions are planned.

*James Khyne in Houston contributed to this article.*

# Back striking Steelworkers fighting ATI union busting!

**Continued from front page**  
little bit from each contract. I’ve been here 20 years. It’s time to stop the bleeding. They’re trying to take more this time.”

Decker said he had to transfer to Vandergrift from a plant in Indiana after it closed. Other strikers, he pointed out, were facing a third round of job cuts, having moved twice previously from shuttered ATI plants. The company is pushing to close a production line in Brackenridge and plants in Connecticut and Ohio.

At the picket line at the Brackenridge plant strikers explained that one key issue in their strike is the company’s demands to increase the number of tiers for pay, and cut retirement and health care benefits.

Rob Baker, with seven years in the mill; Craig Hrivak, with 14 years; and Zach Walker, with only two years, all work in the same department. Walker is currently laid off.

“You have three divides right here,” Baker said, “Craig is a legacy guy, I have

the pension but no option, and Zach is on the 401(k) and lower pay.” Walker will get no health care after retirement.

“These tiers create a divide between working people,” Walker said.

ATI has nine plants where workers are on strike — across Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Company spokeswoman Natalie Gillespie defended the health care concessions bosses are seeking in the March 31 Pittsburgh *Tribune-Review*. “Employees at our competitors — again, including those represented by the USW — pay premiums, giving them a competitive advantage over us,” she complained.

“ATI will continue operations by using nonunion employees and temporary replacement employees,” Gillespie said. She argued the union had rejected the contract because it was not “rich enough” for union members.

“When you haven’t gotten a raise in seven years, you’ve got to do what’s right,” Dave Brestensky, an electrical

technician on strike at the Brackenridge plant, told the *Review*. At the Vandergrift picket line horns never stopped honking as cars passed by. Some drivers stopped to talk to strikers. At the Washington plant, coal miners have visited the pickets and sent 20 pizzas to feed them.

At the Walmart where I work a couple of workers helped get two cakes delivered. One had the slogan, “This concession stand is STILL closed” and the other had, “These Walmart workers stand with ATI workers.”

Organize to get the word out about the strike, join the picket line and build solidarity in your union and community. You can contact USW Local 1196 at 1080 Brackenridge Ave., Brackenridge, PA 15014, and at unionhall1196@gmail.com.

USW Local 7139 is at 1505 Jefferson Ave., Washington, PA 15301.

*Malcolm Jarrett is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Pittsburgh mayor. Campaign supporters Tony Lane and Ruth Robinett contributed to this article.*

**BOOKS WORKERS NEED TODAY...**

**...ABOUT BUILDING THE ONLY KIND OF PARTY WORTHY OF THE NAME "REVOLUTIONARY"**

**The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party**  
by Jack Barnes **\$8 WITH A SUBSCRIPTION**

**Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions**  
by Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Farrell Dobbs and Jack Barnes **\$7 WITH A SUBSCRIPTION**

**Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power**  
by Jack Barnes **\$10 WITH A SUBSCRIPTION**

**SPECIAL OFFER \$25**  
FOR ALL THREE BOOKS WITH A MILITANT SUBSCRIPTION

**The Jewish Question**  
*A Marxist Interpretation*  
by Abram Leon **\$12 WITH A SUBSCRIPTION**

**Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa**  
by Enrique Ubieta **\$12 WITH A SUBSCRIPTION**

**Are They Rich Because They're Smart?**  
*Class, Privilege, and Learning under Capitalism*  
by Jack Barnes **\$5 WITH A SUBSCRIPTION**

PLUS **20% OFF** ALL OTHER PATHFINDER BOOKS

SEE DISTRIBUTORS PAGE 8 OR VISIT [PATHFINDERPRESS.COM](http://PATHFINDERPRESS.COM)

# Paris Commune was first workers government in history

This week's special feature commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune, the world's first working-class government. It lasted from March 18 to May 28, 1871, before its overthrow in a bloody counterrevolution. The excerpts below are from an article, "Communism and the Fight for a Popular Revolutionary Government: 1848 to Today," by Mary-Alice Waters, in New International no. 3. Waters is a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and an editor of New International, a journal of Marxist politics and theory. Copyright © 1984 by New International. Reprinted by permission.

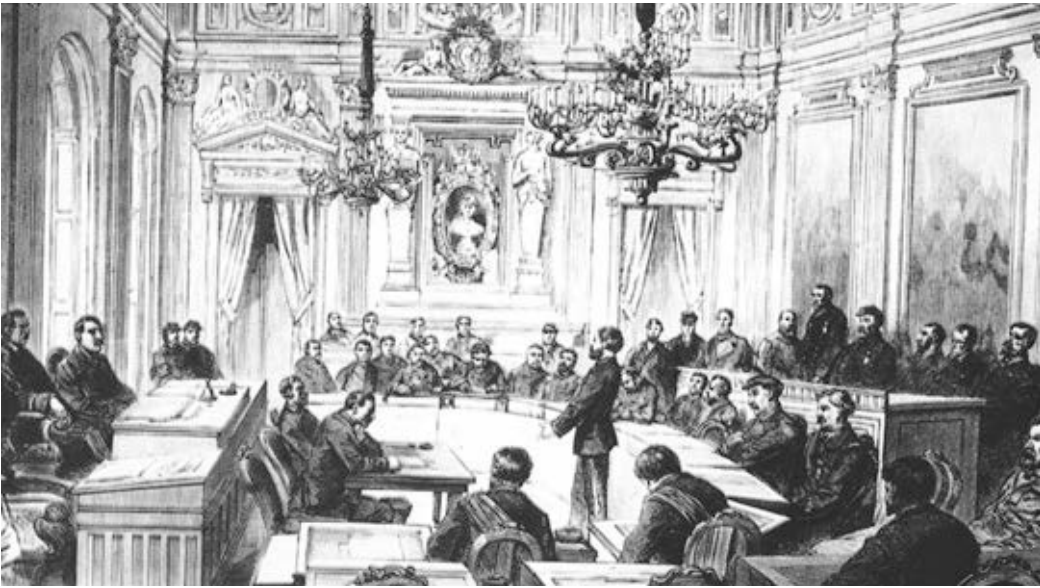
## 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

The revolutionary upsurge of 1871 that led to the Paris Commune was precipitated by the defeat of the French armies in the Franco-Prussian War. "Storming heaven," as [Karl] Marx put it, the working people of Paris seized power, drove the government of the French bourgeoisie out of the city, and held the advancing Prussian army at bay.

"The political rule of the producers" was established, said Marx. "The proletariat for the first time held political power." The Paris Commune, "the glorious harbinger of a new society," showed the way forward for all humanity. ...

What was Marx's conclusion? The secret of the Commune, as he put it in *The Civil War in France*, was that "it was es-



Meeting of elected representatives of Paris Commune, which lasted for 72 days in 1871. Karl Marx called the Commune "the glorious harbinger of a new society," where "the proletariat for the first time held political power." It showed the future, not just for France, but for working people worldwide.

entially a working-class government."

By this Marx did not mean that the Commune was a minority government of Paris, a city that still had only a small industrial work force. Marx said that the Commune was a "government of the people by the people," a government of the producers. It was a government that led the nation.

The economic and social trajectory of this revolutionary dictatorship was clear. The Commune, Marx said, was "the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour." It was a tool for organizing and leading the transition from the society it inherited to a new order. The Commune, he emphasized, was "a lever for uprooting the economical foundations upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class-rule." That was not a task to be accomplished overnight. The Commune, however, showed the political form that would enable the exploited producers to organize to wrest from the exploiters, by degrees, the productive property rightfully theirs.

Marx carefully studied the actions of this first government of the producers, including those that pointed to its chief weaknesses.

"The first decree of the Commune," Marx noted, "was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people." With that act — the precondition for a real people's revolution — a new government began to function, a revolutionary dictatorship whose legitimacy was based on the armed might of the popular majority. ...

The armed people inside Paris, organized and led by the Central Committee of the National Guard, began to assume all public functions. Through the institutions of the newly elected municipal government, the Paris Commune, the masses of working people were drawn into the tasks of deciding all questions affecting their daily lives — food distribution, education, health, public order and defense — and then implementing these decisions.

The Paris Commune was "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word," [Frederick] Engels wrote in 1875. It was no longer an instrument for suppressing the majority, which had been the function of the state throughout all prior history. In place of a special coercive force, the armed population itself was organized through the Commune government and became the guarantor of popular majority rule. ...

The Paris Commune showed for the first time how a qualitatively new kind of political power begins to emerge as soon as the minority — the old ruling classes — no longer exercise a dictatorship suppressing the majority — the exploited classes.

It was still necessary, however, to suppress the armed resistance of the minority — the French bourgeoisie and landed property owners. Most of these exploiters fled Paris for nearby Versailles when the Commune took power. They continued to collaborate with the Prussian army, which was at the gates of Paris. As always, the old ruling classes, though shocked and stunned by the

revolutionary victory of the people, were determined to restore their rule at any price.

It was in part what Marx called the "too great decency" of the Paris working people, their reluctance to use decisive military force against their class enemies, that led to the Commune's early defeat after seventy-two days of tumultuous existence. The counterrevolutionary forces showed no such decency. They carried out one of the bloodiest slaughters ever inflicted on a city. The victorious forces of reaction ruthlessly murdered some 20,000 men, women, and children. ...

While Marx and Engels considered the heroic uprising of the Parisian workers to have been the

greatest revolutionary action by any section of the international proletariat up until that time, they were by no means uncritical of the Commune's leadership or its policies. The Commune reinforced every lesson previously drawn concerning the need for an organized vanguard party of the proletariat, based on a scientific — not a utopian, petty-bourgeois — program. ...

It is worth noting that among the many descriptions used by Marx to capture various aspects of the Paris Commune's significance, he nowhere described it as the dictatorship of the proletariat. Engels did describe it in these terms on one occasion twenty years later — in the final sentences of his introduction to the 1891 edition of *The Civil War in France*. He derisively pointed to the hypocrisy and spinelessness of those on the right wing of the German Social Democratic Party who feigned reverence for the Commune, but were "filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen," Engels rebuked them, "do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune."

As history has demonstrated, however, the revolutionary dictatorship established by the Commune was, more accurately, a transitional, revolutionary government of the producers — the first anticipation of what we today call a workers and farmers government. As such, it illuminated, briefly but brilliantly, the future not just for France and Europe, but for the world.

April

BOOKS  
OF THE MONTH

PATHFINDER  
READERS CLUB  
SPECIALS

30%  
DISCOUNT

Problems of Everyday Life

by Leon Trotsky

Social and cultural issues in the struggle to create the foundations of a new society by a central leader of the October 1917 revolution.

\$20. Special price: \$14

Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution

by Joseph Hansen

\$23. Special price: \$16

Our History Is Still Being Written

The Story of Three Chinese Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution

by Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, Moisés Sio Wong

\$15. Special price: \$10.50

Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built the industrial movement in Minneapolis, paving the way for the rise of the CIO, recounted by a central leader of that battle.

\$16. Special price: \$11.25

Sandinistas Speak

Speeches, writings and interviews with leaders of Nicaragua's revolution

\$15. Special price: \$10.50

Habla Nelson Mandela

(Nelson Mandela Speaks)

\$10. Special price: \$7

Join Pathfinder Readers Club for \$10 and receive discounts all year long

ORDER ONLINE AT  
WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM  
OFFER GOOD UNTIL APRIL 30

## IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find distributors of the *Militant*, *New International*, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

### UNITED STATES

**CALIFORNIA:** **Oakland:** 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Zip: 94621. Tel: (510) 686-1351. Email: swpoak@sbcglobal.net **Los Angeles:** 2826 S. Vermont. Suite 1. Zip: 90007. Tel: (323) 643-4968. Email: swpla@att.net

**FLORIDA:** **Miami:** 1444 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 215. Zip: 33132. Tel: (305) 929-8966. Email: swpmiami@icloud.com

**GEORGIA:** **Atlanta:** 777 Cleveland Ave. SW Suite 103. Zip: 30315. Tel: (678) 528-7828. Email: swpatlanta@fastmail.com

**ILLINOIS:** **Chicago:** 1858 W. Cermak Road, 2nd floor. Zip: 60608. Tel: (312) 792-6160. Email: SWPChicago@fastmail.fm

**KENTUCKY:** **Louisville:** 1939 Goldsmith Lane, Suite 134. Zip: 40218. Tel: (502) 882-1041. Email: louisvilleswp@gmail.com

**MINNESOTA:** **St. Paul:** 1821 University Ave. W Suite S-106A. Zip: 55104. Tel: (651) 340-5586. Email: twincities.swp@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### AUSTRALIA

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

### CANADA

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

### FRANCE

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

### NEW ZEALAND

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

### UNITED KINGDOM

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

# Join in building solidarity for today’s labor battles!

*Statement by Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party Texas state campaign chair, April 7.*

Solidarity is needed now to strengthen the strike by 1,300 steelworkers at Allegheny Technologies Inc., 200 locked-out oil refinery workers facing off with Marathon Petroleum bosses in Minnesota and over 700 nurses on strike against St. Vincent Hospital in Massachusetts. All working people have a stake in these struggles.

Let these workers know they do not fight alone — tell your co-workers, fellow unionists, family and friends about these battles, and send messages of support. Donations to their strike funds, as well as food and other supplies, are needed.

“You pick a fight with one of us — you pick a fight with all of us,” was the message delivered by United Auto Workers Local 722 President Steve Frisque to the Marathon workers. Urge your union to do the same — spread the word about these fights and or-

ganize the members to back them.

The Massachusetts nurses are fighting to reduce unsafe nurse-to-patient ratios. Marathon workers are fighting for safety for themselves and everyone in the communities near the refinery. Steelworkers at ATI have gone seven years without a pay raise and now face demands for more concessions. They set an example for millions of us who face similar conditions.

This week’s strike by miners at Warrior Met Coal in Brookwood, Alabama, is about resistance to boss plans to deepen divisions among workers. “We are one — that’s us!” miner Tyler Bittle proudly told the *Militant*.

Win or lose, the organizing fight at Amazon’s warehouse in Alabama has caught the attention of workers across the country. Unions must organize the unorganized “into their ranks. They must look carefully after the interests of the worst-paid trades,” wrote Karl Marx, a founder of the communist movement,

in 1866. “They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions.”

We can advance this perspective by fighting to wrest control of production from the bosses and taking it into our own hands. Work can be carried out without harm to life or limb if workers take control over how it is organized, if *we* set line speeds and if *we* decide how many workers are needed. That is also the road to preventing bosses from making shoddy and dangerous goods and halting their contamination of the earth, air and waters.

Through these kind of fights, we’ll rebuild the labor movement, learn to rely on the collective power of working people and act on the conviction that it is possible for our class to run the entire economy. To do so we need to build our own political party, a labor party, to fight to overturn capitalist rule and replace it with a workers and farmers government. That is the road forward presented by the SWP. Join us!

## Don’t say ‘mother’! Speech code is blow to fight for women’s rights

**BY MAGGIE TROWE**

Liberal social engineers are striking blows to women’s rights as they push laws and regulations that eliminate the word “mother.” This is the latest front in their drive to deny women’s oppression under capitalist rule and to hide the long struggle for women’s equality that has made gains and strengthened the working class.

The Democratic majority in the House of Representatives approved a code of conduct Jan. 5 that establishes “gender-inclusive” terms as the recommended official language of the legislative body.

Legislators are now instructed to replace “father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, father-in-law or mother-in-law” with “parent, child, sibling, spouse or parent-in-law,” and to replace “himself or herself” with “themselves.”

“Visionary” was how House Speaker Nancy Pelosi dubbed to the changes.

Manhattan’s Grace Church School— where tuition is \$46,030 a year — is urging use of similar terms. School authorities say words like “mom,” “dad” and “parents” should be eradicated as they make “assumptions” about the students’ home lives, and should be replaced by “grown-ups,” “folks,” or “guardians.”

Manchester University in the U.K. announced March 6 new guidelines that replace the words “mother” and “father” with the “gender-neutral” terms “parent” or “guardian.” And Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust has new guidelines that replace the term “breastfeeding” with “chestfeeding.”

All of this is bad for the working class.

It’s false to deny that human beings belong to the class of mammals, and are therefore divided into two sexes: males, and females who have a uterus and mammary glands. But that’s what is being done in the name of fighting discrimination against people who don’t identify with their sex.

What’s worse, these anti-scientific thought police try to erase the existence of women, deny the history and current reality of the fight against women’s oppression, and bigot-bait anyone who doesn’t agree.

A friend of mine who went for prenatal care was referred to by a medical professional as a “pregnant person,” because a transgender “man” can have a baby. At a public forum in Louisville, Kentucky, on a woman’s right to abortion one of the invited speakers lectured participants that we should say “a person’s right to abortion” for the same reason.

Some good news: female human beings give birth to 385,000 babies in the world each day. That’s how the human race continues to exist. If a few of the mothers don’t identify as women, that’s their prerogative and they shouldn’t face discrimination, but it doesn’t change reality.

### Fight for women’s rights today

For the working class under capitalism, the lion’s share of the financial, emotional and practical responsibility for child rearing falls on children’s mothers, including shopping, cooking, and keeping up a clean

and decent place to live, usually while holding down a job. In the U.S., 40% of babies are born to unmarried women. Nearly 16 million children lived with a single mother in the U.S. in 2019. Many working-class women have difficulty obtaining family planning and prenatal and postnatal care. Women earn on the average 81% of what men earn.

But these facts and the fight to change these conditions don’t count for much among woke liberal ideologues who say the main thing is fighting for the freedom to decide one’s own gender.

The social layer pushing these notions is based in academia, liberal think tanks and the media. They increasingly make up whole layers of government regulatory agencies and act in the interests of the wealthy capitalist rulers by hiding the oppression of women.

Women’s subjugation developed with the rise of class society. Under capitalism the rulers use it as a central way to divide working people and to superexploit women, driving down the wages of all workers.

But those pushing “gender-inclusive” terms say the problem isn’t capitalist society and the necessity to fight for women’s emancipation as part of the working-class struggle to take political power into our own hands. They think the working class is backward, racist and transphobic and that we are duped into think-

ing there are men and women. They want to nudge and bully us into thinking and talking right. Most workers reject these efforts to regulate us.

Pretending that the existence of two sexes can be dismissed and replaced by each person choosing their “gender” and inventing themselves is a pipe dream of middle-class radicals who seek to deny science and the class struggle. Women’s oppression will not be eradicated by women refusing to be women, but by deepening the fight for women’s rights and other struggles in the interests of the working class.

That starts today by supporting workers’ fight for higher wages, safe working conditions and dignity at Amazon, Marathon and ATI steel. It requires demanding the prosecution of the cops who killed Breonna Taylor and pointing to the example set by women and men who have taken to the streets in Argentina and Poland recently to fight for abortion rights — a fight that needs to be emulated here.

Campaigning broadly among working people, Socialist Workers Party candidates find a welcome response to our program, which starts from the capacities of working people to join together to change our conditions and to advance our self-confidence and class consciousness—the opposite of identity politics. A good reason to join the SWP campaigns!

## Massachusetts nurses fight for safety, patients



**Nurses’ strike “is about safe care,” nurse Bill Lahey, right, told rail workers Jacob Perasso, left, and Joe Allen, second from right, in Worcester, Mass., March 31.**

**BY JACOB PERASSO**

WORCESTER, Mass. — “This strike isn’t about the money, it’s about safe care,” Bill Lahey, a nurse for 44 years at St. Vincent Hospital here, told Joe Allen and myself, two rail workers who came to show solidarity from Albany, New York, March 31.

Some 700 Massachusetts Nurses Association members are now in the fifth week of their strike. Nurses report that very few strikers have crossed the picket line, and that a number of those who hadn’t walked out have been won to join the strike.

“This is a blue collar town and the public is

supporting us. I couldn’t begin to tell you the list of unions that have come to the picket line,” said Lahey, adding that many local politicians have backed the strike as well. He thanked us for coming and said the train crews blow the horn in support every time they go by on the tracks that run alongside the hospital.

A key demand is to reduce the current unsafe 1-to-5 nurse-to-patient ratio to 1-to-4, with additional nurses to help if needed. Hospital bosses have tried to get nurses to back off this demand, offering up to 30% wage increases for workers.

“If we win, this new staff ratio will be the standard. The strike has

ramifications for the region and the entire country,” said Lahey. That’s why the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association is helping St. Vincent and its owner, hospital monopoly Tenet, absorb the over \$5 million in weekly expenses caused by the strike.

The strikers are not receiving strike pay and are awaiting a decision on their application for unemployment income, Lahey said. “We have set up a strike fund, which is over \$50,000.” To support the fund, checks payable to MNA St. Vincent Nurses Strike Fund can be sent to: Massachusetts Nurses Association, 340 Turnpike St., Canton, MA 02021.