

SWP Oakland campaign helps expand reach of the 'Militant'

BY BETSEY STONE

OAKLAND, Calif. — Some 230 people were happy to sign to put Socialist Workers Party candidate Joel Britton on the ballot during a three-day petitioning window for the Aug. 31 special election for State Assembly in the 18th District. Election officials informed Britton, a Walmart worker, May 3 that he had enough signatures to win ballot status and didn't have to pay the filing fee of over \$1,100.

Campaign supporters distributed hundreds of flyers with the party's program and won 15 new *Militant* subscribers as they fanned out across the district, talking with workers at their doorsteps and in Walmart parking lots.

The course of independent working-class political action and support of labor and social struggles today advanced by Britton and the national slate of 21 SWP candidates around the U.S., as well as Communist League candidates in the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada,

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Protest gov't order to shut down Quebec dock strike

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL — On April 30 the minority Liberal Party government in Ottawa, with the support of the Conservatives, pushed a law through Canada's Parliament declaring longshore workers at the Port of Montreal to be "essential workers" and ordering them to return to work. The government claimed the strike was harming the national economic recovery and preventing COVID medical supplies from reaching the population.

The anti-labor bill says that a mediator-arbitrator will be appointed to set the terms of the workers' contract. Refusal to obey the law can result in fines of 100,000 Canadian dollars (\$80,000) a day for the union.

The 1,150 workers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 375, went on strike April 26 after several provocative actions by the employers. They've been without a contract since December 2018.

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Build support for striking miners and steelworkers!



Militant/Glova Scott

April 28 picket line at ATI steel mill in Washington, Pennsylvania. Bosses want to force union to accept job losses to contract workers, deeper two-tier divisions, increase in insurance costs.

Steelworkers reject ATI threats, pickets stay up

BY MALCOLM JARRETT

WASHINGTON, Pa. — The strike by 1,300 United Steelworkers members against Allegheny Technologies Inc. heated up as the union categorically rejected the bosses' ultimatum to swallow their concessionary offer by April 26 or face worse. The strike began March 30.

"The company demands that we accept a permanent, second tier of health insurance for new hires and establishing expensive premiums for current workers," a union statement said after the company announced its threat. "ATI has been trying to divide and conquer the USW membership at our plants since locking us out in 2015 and probably longer. We have shown management at every step that our solidarity will not be broken."

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Miners plan weekly rallies to build support for strike

BY SUSAN LAMONT
AND LISA POTASH

MCCALLA, Ala. — Over 1,100 United Mine Workers of America coal miners are locked in a serious strike against Warrior Met Coal bosses in Brookwood, Alabama. They are backed by family members, UMW retirees and members from other mines, workers in the area, and by other unions.

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Myanmar protests, strikes continue popular fight to oust military junta



Tachileik News Agency

Thousands march in Kyaukse City in Myanmar's Shan state, part of May 2 nationwide Spring Revolution. Feb. 1 coup, imposition of military rule and growing repression against mass upsurge has brought workers, farmers, minority ethnic groups together in struggle.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Labor unions in Myanmar, alongside associations of farmers, students, Buddhist monks, ethnic minorities and others, are appealing for solidarity in the fight to oust the brutal military junta, which seized power Feb. 1.

"Not only is the military shooting at us in the streets, but factory managements are often collaborating with the military, calling them to crack down on protests and strikes," says an April

22 statement from the Federation of General Workers Myanmar, the All Burma Federation of Trade Unions and Food not Bombs Myanmar.

Over the last 10 years foreign-owned garment and other factories have mushroomed in Myanmar. Before the coup there were some 700,000 garment workers in Yangon, Mandalay and other cities. Although less than 1% of workers belong to unions, they are an important

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Chauvin trial was a blow to rights workers fought for and need today

BY TERRY EVANS

"Isn't a just and working-class demand to prosecute, convict and jail killer cops?" reader Kyle Edwards

REPLY TO A READER

asks in response to the *Militant's* coverage of the trial and conviction of Minneapolis cop Derek Chauvin.

We fight for the prosecution of cops who carry out brutal assaults, like the one inflicted by Derek Chauvin on

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Biden's '100 days' trying to shore up capitalist rule at home, abroad

BY TERRY EVANS

The liberal press is full of articles about the unexpectedly "radical" actions of Democratic President Joseph Biden's first 100 days in office. Many compare him — favorably — to predecessor Franklin Delano Roosevelt. They do have something in common — both

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Locked-out Marathon workers mark 100 days on picket line

Quebec packinghouse workers strike over wages, respect

High court hears challenge to California disclosure law

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Oral arguments were held before the U.S. Supreme Court April 26 on a lawsuit that challenges the state of California's requirement that the over 100,000 charities registered there must hand over lists of major donors. The case poses an important issue for working people — the right to freedom of association and privacy without interference by the state, as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

State officials say they want the names to see if they suggest evidence of fraud, so they can prosecute. In other words, it's a dangerous fishing expedition.

The case, filed by the Americans for Prosperity Foundation — set up and financed by conservative political activists Charles and David Koch — and the Thomas More Law Center, has won the support of an array of organizations. These include the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the American Civil Liberties Union and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

About a decade ago, California officials began demanding that any charity soliciting funds provide the state with a list of large contributors. Several groups challenged the forced disclosure rules, saying they could subject donors to violence and retaliation from political opponents. Members of the Americans for Prosperity Foundation have been physically attacked by middle-class radicals in a number of places.

In 2014 then California Attorney General Kamala Harris responded by insisting individuals' confidentiality was protected by the state. But this wasn't true. Over 1,800 contributor lists have been

posted on the attorney general's website.

After a legal challenge, a federal district court in California ruled against disclosing donors' names in 2016. But the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals reversed this decision. That led to the Supreme Court case.

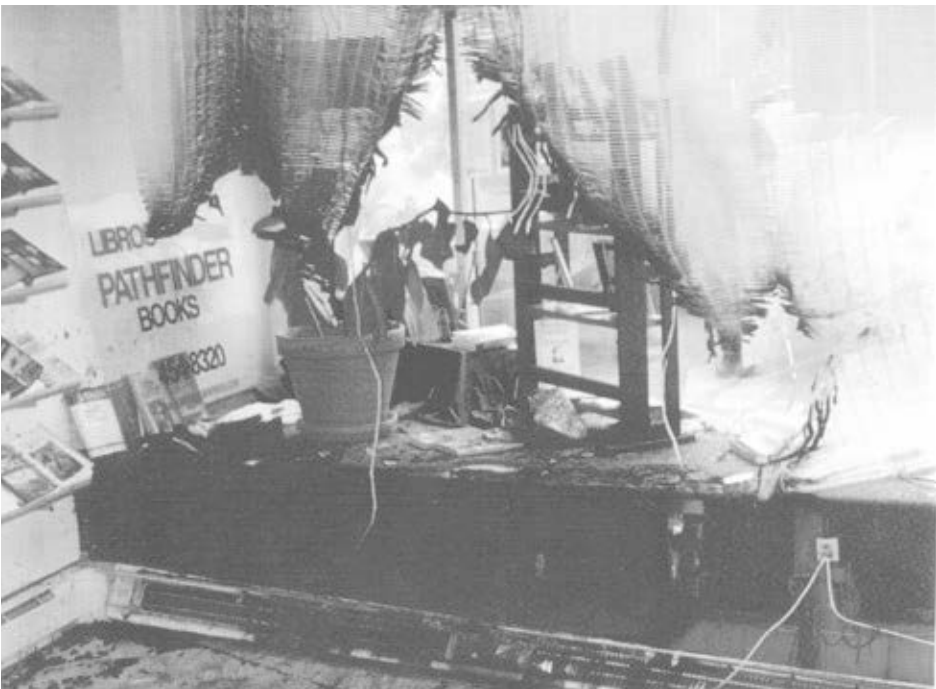
While a ruling isn't expected until June, many justices in the April 26 hearing "seemed skeptical of California's demand," the *New York Times* reported. California is just one of four states with this invasive requirement on the books. "The brief filed by the ACLU and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund says that we should regard your system as a system of de facto public disclosure because there have been such massive confidentiality breaches," Justice Samuel Alito Jr. told the lawyers for California.

"In this era," Justice Clarence Thomas said at the hearing, "there seems to be quite a bit of loose accusations about organizations — for example, an organization that had certain views might be accused of being a white supremacist organization or racist or homophobic."

Campaign finance disclosure laws

Liberal Justice Stephen Breyer, on the other hand, said there were good reasons to defend the California rules, expressing concern that ending this disclosure requirement could mean other such laws would be threatened. "This case is really a stalking horse for campaign finance disclosure laws," he argued.

Taking advantage of growing mistrust by working people in the 1960s with the capitalist ruling parties — the Democrats and Republicans — liberals pushed so-called campaign finance



Militant/Brian Taylor

Socialist Workers campaign office in Hazleton, Pa., damaged by firebombing Sept. 11, 2004. Disclosure laws open workers, organizations to attacks by government, political opponents.

reform. These laws, which require the public release of names and address of those giving funds to political candidates, attack workers' political rights.

The ruling rich, who hold economic, political and military power, could always find ways around these laws. But working-class parties could be forced to expose the names and addresses of their members and supporters, making them subject to attack by government agen-

cies and other anti-working-class outfits.

The NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund — one of the groups backing the challenge to the California law — fought against "disclosure" laws as part of the mass movement to overthrow Jim Crow segregation. In the 1950s, the state of Alabama passed a law demanding the NAACP "disclose" the names of all its members, which would have

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SWP 'stimulus' donations hit \$158,940, keep climbing!

Over the past week 10 new contributors donated \$10,140. Contributions to the Socialist Workers Party from U.S. government \$1,400 "stimulus" payments are at \$158,940 from 121 people and increasing!

The U.S. government continues to send out the stimulus payments as we enter the ninth week of the SWP "stimulus" appeal. The many notes from contributors around the country capture the political confidence in the working class and commitment to building a revolutionary working-class party in the U.S.

"Our contributions are to 'stimulate' the advancement of our class — to use the money to enable the party to continue and expand its work," wrote Bobbi and Greg Sack, from Edgerton, Wisconsin, with their contributions.

"Sending in our two contributions with great pleasure!" wrote Ellie Garcia and Bill Arth from Los Angeles. Markie Wilson, from Atlanta wrote, "Happy to contribute."

Join the effort! Each contribution makes a difference toward expanding the ability of the party to bring its program to many thousands of workers and exploited toilers, and to 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 joining with toilers worldwide to end social relations based on exploitation — class vs. class — and build a socialist society based on human solidarity.

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

Support food delivery workers' fight!

Delivery workers are protesting for higher wages, decent work conditions from app companies that classify them as "independent contractors" in order to exploit them to the hilt. The 'Militant' backs steps to organize workers in the "gig economy" to win union contracts.

Militant/Jacob Perasso
"Deliveristas" protest in New York April 21 for higher wages, better working conditions.

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Expand reach of the ‘Militant’

Continued from front page

are a key feature of the nine-week international drive to sell 1,400 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 1,400 books on working-class politics and raise \$145,000 for the Militant Fighting Fund. The drive runs from April 24 to June 29.

The response in the first week of the drive — 327 subscriptions and 294 books sold — shows the growing openings for expanding the readership of the *Militant*, communist books and support for the SWP campaigns among working people and youth who are thirsty to understand the roots of the capitalist crisis they face and are looking for a road forward. The *Militant* and books by leaders of the SWP and other revolutionaries are invaluable for learning the lessons of past working-class struggles and for joining together today to advance the interests of working people.

Britton and campaign supporter Jerry Freiwrth were warmly greeted by retired tire company worker Jerry Jordan outside his home here. Jordan told them he had heard the speech by President Joseph Biden the night before outlining his plans for spending over a trillion dollars for various government programs. “I’m hoping something good will come out of this,” he said.

“This is not the first time the capitalist politicians have made big promises to change things,” Britton said. “But the Democratic and Republican parties will never solve the fundamental problems, like unemployment that working people face.” The Democrats especially try to convince working people that the way to solve problems is to rely on the government and spend a lot of money. Much of this spending is just a transfer of wealth into the hands of the bosses.

“There used to be centers in Oakland where thousands of young people learned construction skills,” Jordan said. “Now that’s long gone.”

“Instead of relying on the capitalist politicians, workers ourselves need to get organized, to strengthen our unions, to fight for a massive government-funded public works program at union-scale wages to put people to work, building hospitals, child care centers and other things workers need,” Britton said. “We need to build a labor party that can fight to take power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and establish a government of workers and farmers.”

Jordan signed the petition and subscribed to the *Militant*. “I’m glad you came by,” he said.

‘Tired of the Democrats and Republicans’

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

DALLAS — “While campaigning at the AFL-CIO union election day picnic May 1, I met a worker who told me, ‘I just voted for you because I’m tired of the other candidates who don’t do anything for us,’” Gerardo Sánchez, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in District 1 here, told over a dozen participants at a campaign forum that evening.

The SWP candidates don’t promise to do anything *for* working people. They say that working people need to fight *together*, to come to the aid of fellow workers on strike, to organize the unorganized, to speak out against capitalist exploitation and oppression everywhere in the world.

“Two young people told me, ‘Hey we know you. You changed our tires,’” said Sánchez, who works in Walmart’s auto department. They were among the seven people at the picnic who got *Militant* subscriptions. Three others bought Pathfinder books.

Sánchez and supporters took the campaign all over Dallas and the region. They joined protests against the military junta in Myanmar. “We walked the

picket line with United Auto Workers on strike in Scottsville,” Sánchez said. “These workers agreed to extend a union contract for a year when the pandemic began. Now they are fighting to end a seven-days-a-week, 12-hour-a-day schedule.

“Some 650 members of the United Steelworkers at the Exxon oil refinery in Beaumont were locked out of their jobs last night,” he said. “We’re going to head their soon to learn about their fight and bring solidarity.”

Róger Calero, SWP candidate for mayor of New York City, joined weekend campaigning and spoke at the forum. “The bosses came out of the pandemic thinking workers will be desperate,” Calero said. “But they are finding out their assumption was wrong. The ATI steelworkers say, ‘This concession stand is closed.’ Workers locked out at Marathon Oil remain strong. And coal miners in Alabama rejected an insulting contract proposal and went on strike against Warrior Met coal bosses.”

Over \$900 was collected



Militant/Eric Simpson

Rebecca Williamson, SWP candidate for Seattle City Council, talks with construction worker Luis Montes, right, while campaigning to put Joel Britton on the ballot in California’s 18th Assembly District April 28. Montes, who worked at Tesla, said bosses “treat us like we’re stupid.”

to help expand the reach of the Dallas Socialist Workers Party in Texas. Participants in the meeting also pledged \$1,940 for the international Militant Fighting Fund. Unlike the capitalist press, the *Militant* depends entirely on the contributions of working people.

Want to help expand the readership of the *Militant* and other communist literature? Contribute to the Militant Fighting Fund? See page 4 for the distributor nearest you. Or you can log on to themilitant.com to subscribe or contribute online.

Myanmar protests, strikes continue

Continued from front page
part of resistance to the coup.

The day after the generals dissolved parliament and arrested leaders of the governing National League for Democracy, the junta invited the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar to be part of a “social dialogue.” A coalition of unions and farmers groups rejected the “invitation,” calling a nationwide strike that shut down much of train service as well as a large section of garment shops, mining, the oil industry and public hospitals.

Union leaders driven into hiding

Khaing Zar Aung, president of the Industrial Workers’ Federation of Myanmar, said in a statement April 22 that after 37 mostly Chinese-owned factories in Yangon were set on fire by unknown arsonists March 14-15, “many trade union leaders had to go into hiding, because the military started searching for them.”

The junta used the fires as a pretext to step up repression. As of May 5, the regime has killed 769 people and jailed 3,696. Thousands of factory workers left without work returned to their home villages in the countryside.

Now “most factories have reopened,” Khaing Zar Aung said, but the bosses have fired thousands of workers who didn’t return, as well as union militants. The union is demanding unpaid leave for those who can’t come to work and severance pay to laid-off workers.

While protests have gotten smaller under the repressive blows, they continue. Thousands around the country joined “Spring Revolution” protests across the country May 2. Solidarity actions took place in the U.S., Taiwan, British Columbia and London, where exiled Hong Kong protest leader Nathan Law took part.

The junta’s propaganda daily *The Global New Light of Myanmar* recognized the impact of the protests in a front-page article April 23, demanding supporters of “CDM” — the Civil Disobedience Movement — “return to their workplaces as quickly as possible.”

The paper has printed the names of dozens of doctors, celebrities and students indicted for “inciting” opposition

to the regime and supporting a shadow “national unity” government set up by ousted members of parliament.

Junta fears fracture in the army

Irrawaddy, an opposition news media, recently got hold of some internal army memos. One April 11 memo instructs soldiers to “annihilate” protesters. An April 14 memo admits there are protests in “every township in Sagaing, Mandalay, Yangon and Bago regions and in Mon State.”

Showing its lack of confidence in the loyalty of rank-and-file soldiers — most from farm villages as well as working-class families in the cities — the high command is prohibiting “troops and families from listening to the media.” They banned use of Facebook, and instructed officers to bar “strangers” from military camps. The junta relies mostly on police and elite army units, infamous for “counterinsurgency” against ethnic minorities, to attack protests and strikes.

From before the time the British rulers conquered Myanmar, then called Burma, it has never been one unified nation. British colonial rule with its divide-and-rule strategy further pitted the Bamar ethnic majority and more than 135 ethnic minorities against each other.

Though they succeeded in ending British colonial rule in 1948, the independence movement didn’t unite working people regardless of ethnicity or religion. Those independence fighters who considered themselves Marxists and formed communist parties were schooled by anti-revolutionary forces beholden to either Moscow or Beijing. Instead of combating the divisions fueled by imperialism, they reinforced them. Working people there still pay the price for this today.

The starkest example is that when the military launched a murderous assault on the mostly Muslim Rohingya minority in Rakine province, killing thousands and driving hundreds of thousands into exile. These attacks were backed by Aung San Suu Kyi, head of the National League for Democracy.

Many of the protesters across the country have raised the need for all working people — including all “ethnic minorities” — to come together.

Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, fund						
April 24 - June 29 (week one)						
Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	received
UNITED STATES						
Albany	80	14	80	13	\$8,000	
Atlanta	80	23	80	14	\$16,000	\$50
Chicago	115	23	115	27	\$13,200	
Dallas	40	19	35	11	\$3,000	
Lincoln	15	3	15		\$400	
Los Angeles	105	42	105	39	\$13,250	
Louisville	90	15	90		\$5,000	
Miami	35	2	35	3	\$4,000	\$900
N. New Jersey	80	15	80	24	\$6,250	\$790
New York	100	26	100	46	\$16,000	\$100
Oakland	90	24	90	22	\$13,000	
Philadelphia	30	3	30		\$3,500	\$1,490
Pittsburgh	50	8	50	7	\$3,000	
Seattle	95	16	95	18	\$12,500	
Twin Cities	50	20	50			\$600
Washington	65	13	65	11	\$6,000	
Other						
Total U.S.	1120	266	1115	235	\$123,100	\$3,930
Prisoners	25	13				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	45	5	45	12	\$4,000	
Manchester	40	8	40	4	\$2,000	
Total U.K.	85	13	85	16	\$6,000	
Canada	95	15	95	30	\$12,200	\$374
New Zealand	30	12	30	6	\$3,500	
Australia	30	8	30	7	\$2,000	\$650
Total	1,385	327	1,355	294	\$146,800	\$4,954
SHOULD BE	1,400	111	1,400	111	\$145,000	\$16,110

April 1986 Chernobyl disaster and Cuba's internationalism

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Thirty-five years ago, the worst nuclear disaster in history occurred at the Chernobyl power plant in Ukraine, then part of the Soviet Union, with devastating and long-lasting social and environmental consequences. On April 26, 1986, a test went terribly wrong. Reactor 4 exploded, blowing the roof off. The active core began to melt and an intense 10-day fire broke out, releasing clouds of radioactive dust into the atmosphere.

A more catastrophic meltdown was only averted by the self-sacrificing efforts of thousands of “liquidators” — cleanup workers, soldiers and pilots who volunteered, or were ordered, to contain the disaster. The plant’s firemen, the first to go in, were given no protective gear. Within three months at least 31 workers died from the radiation.

Untold thousands more died from long-term effects of cancer and other radiation illnesses. The unplanned evacuation of tens of thousands of people living in the surrounding area was delayed for days, as Stalinist officials in Moscow and locally tried frantically to cover up the calamity. Evacuations in Pripjat weren’t ordered for over a day. They were told they’d only be gone for a couple days.

Invisible clouds of radioactive dust were carried by winds from Ukraine and Russia across Europe. The worst fallout was in neighboring Belarus, but it also reached 700 miles to Scandinavia. The explosion released 400 times more radiation than Washington’s criminal atomic bomb assault on the Japanese population in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

The containment of the ruins, which will be radioactive for centuries, re-

mains a serious challenge today.

A steel and concrete shelter was hastily erected to encase the site, which soon began to deteriorate. A huge outer covering was only finished in 2019. Taking steps to remove the pile of radioactive material inside will take until 2065!

The whole disaster was caused by Stalinist misrule and contempt for working people. Soviet officials had decided to build the reactor without a containment structure or other safety features that would have impeded any release of radiation. Then, when the reactor exploded, Moscow did all in its power to cover it up. The resulting social crisis was one factor in the collapse of the Stalinist regime in Moscow and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Stalinist officials kept Chernobyl’s three other reactors running for years. The last two units were closed by the now independent Ukrainian government in 1996 and 2000, when public pressure over thyroid cancers among children finally forced officials to act.

Over 8.4 million people were exposed to Chernobyl’s radiation. Some 350,000 people were eventually relocated from scores of towns in Ukraine and Belarus. An official 18-mile-wide exclusion zone still surrounds the radioactive plant.

John Studer, the current editor of the *Militant*, went to the Chernobyl area as part of a reporting team to Ukraine after the powerful working-class uprising called the Maidan that overthrew the Moscow-backed government of Viktor Yanukovich in 2014. Studer met with some workers who had served as liquidators, including union rail workers and coal miners, all members of the Free Trade Unions of Ukraine.

At the request of the nuclear work-



Cuban President Fidel Castro, left, greets children arriving from Ukraine, March 29, 1990. Over 25,000 affected by Chernobyl radiation poisoning, mainly from Ukraine but also Belarus and Russia, received free medical treatment under internationalist program of Cuban Revolution.

ers union, Studer visited Chernobyl and the village where workers at the plant now live — Slavutych — after Pripjat became uninhabitable.

Cuba's internationalist response

In stark contrast to the Stalinist regime’s callous disregard for the lives and health of working people in the region, the revolutionary government of Cuba responded rapidly with offers of support and help. The Ukraine government agreed. Between 1990 and 2011, Cuba provided complete medical care free of charge to over 25,000 Chernobyl victims, mainly children from Ukraine. This shows the Cuban Revolution’s unbroken record of internationalist working-class solidarity.

“Cuba played a really big role in helping those stricken by the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl, especially for such a small country,” Liliya Piltyay told Studer in Kyiv. She had been a Young Communist leader who organized to get Ukrainian children and others in need of medical attention to the island.

When the first planeload of the sickest children arrived in Havana, they were personally greeted by Fidel Castro, central leader of the Cuban Revolution. He “went into a huddle with other government representatives right there, and by the time the second plane landed three hours later,” Piltyay said, “he announced that Cuba would take 10,000 children from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia.”

In less than three months, 7,000 Cuban volunteer workers helped transform the Tarará youth camp, on the coast

near Havana. It is now the largest medical care and rehabilitation center in the world for children from other countries.

Dr. Julio Medina, director of Pediatric Hospital of Tarará, was one of those interviewed on the 2006 documentary, “Chernobyl and Cuba.” (You can order or watch the video at themilitant.com.)

He explained that “even in the most difficult moments of the Cuban economy” during the Special Period, “when our enemies did everything possible to choke public health in our country,” we kept the program going. Medina was referring to Washington’s efforts to step up its punishing decadeslong trade embargo, during the period of severe shortages after Cuba lost most of its aid and trade when the Soviet Union collapsed.

In 2012 the Ukrainian government stopped funding air travel for the program. In May 2015, more than 150 people, from youth still in line to go to Tarará to Ukrainian doctors and former health ministers, attended a conference in Kyiv titled “Children of Tarará — Children of Ukraine” that Piltyay helped organize. They appealed to the Ukrainian government to resume funding the “Children of Chernobyl” program.

“Cuba is willing to continue the program,” Piltyay told Studer. “Some people still get care in Cuba, but they have to raise the funds to cover transportation themselves.”

“Cuba was the only country in the world to organize a program like this,” she said. It “showed the Cuban Revolution is alive and that solidarity with Cuba is very important.”

Supreme Court hears disclosure case

Continued from page 2

opened them to the wrath of government officials and groups like the Ku Klux Klan. The NAACP fought this law and succeeded in getting the Supreme Court to overturn it in 1958.

In 1973 the Socialist Workers Party launched a political campaign and court suit that over the next 15 years exposed decades of FBI spying and disruption against the party, winning a court ruling ordering the FBI to cease and desist. Using evidence exposed through this fight, the party also won exemption from campaign finance requirements to turn over the names, addresses and workplaces of campaign contributors and its vendors, that held from 1974 to 2017. The SWP was the only party ever to win such an exemption by the Federal Election Commission.

In Washington state, teachers fighting to defend their union at Seattle Central College are battling a lawsuit by the anti-union Freedom Foundation that seeks to use state disclosure laws to get personal information on workers to go after those active in union-organizing efforts.

Last year state officials there threatened to disclose names and addresses of electors for the SWP presidential slate of Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett. The party fought back, winning broad support, including from the state teachers union. State officials backed off.

“A victory in this Supreme Court case would boost all those fighting to defend

their members and supporters from attack by the government, their political police and ‘cancel culture’ political opponents,” John Studer, chair of the Socialist Workers Party National Campaign Committee, told the *Militant*. “I hope Justice Breyer’s fears are justified, and we can use a victory to fight to end similar invasive disclosure requirements that target supporters of our campaigns.”

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Locked-out Marathon workers mark 100 days on picket line

ST. PAUL PARK, Minn. — Some 200 members of Teamsters Local 120 locked-out by Marathon Petroleum here marked their 100th day on the picket line April 30. They set up informational pickets at different Speedway gas stations, owned by Marathon, in a 19-mile radius from the refinery. This is referred to as the “Burn Zone,” home to 1.5 million people who would be threatened by any potentially lethal disaster involving hydrofluoric acid used in the plant.

The bosses locked out workers after they held a one-day strike Jan. 21 over safety, subcontracting of jobs and job combinations.

“They’re putting corporate greed over community safety,” Matt Foss, who has worked as a fire mechanic in the Emergency Response Team at the refinery for 22 years and now organizes the informational pickets, told the *Militant*.

Laborers International Union of North America Minnesota and North Dakota issued a report in April: “What They Don’t Know: An Analysis of Worker and Public Safety Hazards at Marathon Petroleum’s St. Paul Park Refinery.” This document exposing the dangers to both workers and those who live around the refinery received widespread press coverage in the local and national media.

“These workers cited management decisions to eliminate safety positions, and to replace local contractors and workforce with decades of experience at the facility, in an apparent effort to cut operating costs,” the 23-page report says. It includes interviews with workers about unsafe practices in the plant and what’s at stake in the bosses’ lockout.

“The report indicates that Marathon is playing Russian roulette with the lives of its workers, the residents surrounding the refinery, and the Mississippi River ecosystem,” Chris Parson, president of Minnesota Professional Fire Fighters, said in a statement issued April 25. He says that the Cottage Grove fire depart-

ment, the closest to the refinery, is not equipped to deal with a chemical spill or accident of that magnitude. “The firefighters would just be focused on evacuation during a large incident and letting the fire burn out, as during the Husky fire.” That 2018 explosion at the Husky oil refinery in Superior, Wisconsin, injured 36 workers.

“We are the workers who have the training, skills, and familiarity to run the Marathon Petroleum refinery,” Teamsters Local 120 says. “But because we demanded that Marathon use our skilled labor instead of out-of-town contract workers, corporate executives locked us out from our jobs in January. Without us there, our friends, our families, our neighbors, and our entire community is in the chemical burn zone of some of the most dangerous chemicals on the planet.”

Solidarity messages and donations to the strike fund can be sent to Teamsters Local 120, 9422 Ulysses St. NE, Blaine, MN 55434.

— Helen Meyers

Quebec packinghouse workers strike over wages, respect

VALLEE-JONCTION, Quebec — After bosses refused to respond to the union’s April 19 proposal for wage increases, and then refused to show up for a scheduled negotiating session, more than 1,000 unionized meatpackers at Olymel’s large pork slaughtering plant walked off the job April 28. The strikers are members of the Union of Olymel Workers at Vallee-Jonction (STOVJ), which is affiliated with the Council of National Trade Unions (CSN). Between 35,000 and 37,000 hogs are killed and processed at this plant each week.

Olymel, the largest pork producer in Canada, operates packinghouses in five provinces with some 15,000 workers overall.

The union’s six-year contract expired March 30. “The key issues in the strike are respect and wages,” Denis Vachon, a plant mechanic for 40 years, told the *Militant* at a spirited picket line of more than 150 workers April 30 in the rain.

Like many other packinghouse work-



Militant/Katy LeRougetel

Striking packinghouse workers picket Olymel cut and kill plant in Vallee-Jonction, Quebec, April 30. Over 1,000 unionists walked out in fight for new contract, wage raise and respect.

ers in North America, meatpackers here have worked in the face of conditions exacerbated by the effects of COVID-19. Last October some 80 cases and one death were reported by the union.

“In 2007 the union narrowly accepted 38% wage cuts because Olymel was threatening to close the plant,” union President Martin Maurice told the *Militant*. In 2015 Olymel once again threatened to shut the plant. The union went on strike for more than two weeks, but only succeeded in getting wage increases of 2% in the first two years and 1.5% following that. “We work for peanuts,” Maurice told the press.

Stickers reading “On strike soon,” put up before the walkout, were plastered all over the front of the plant. Many workers talked about the punishing line speed and the high rate of injuries. Since 2015, some 1,800 workers have been hired at Olymel, and 1,700 have quit.

“It’s good to know there are people behind our union struggles,” Dominic Trépanier told this *Militant* reporter, who came from Montreal to show solidarity. Many passing cars, including vehicles driven by area farmers, honked in support of the striking workers.

The union and bosses are now scheduled to meet with a conciliator May 5.

The company has said it will present its wage offer then.

Solidarity messages and contributions for strikers can be sent to Syndicat de Travailleurs d’Olymel, Vallee-Jonction, 243 Rue Principe, Vallee-Jonction, QC G0S 3J0.

— Beverly Bernardo

Coffee workers in UK fight big-time wage cuts

BANBURY, England — Dozens of workers at Jacobs Douwe Egberts staged a May Day plant gate action here in rural Oxfordshire 80 miles northwest of London. The Unite union members have started escalating strike actions in a fight against the bosses’ attacks on the wages, conditions and pensions of the 291 workers, along with the threat they’ll be fired if they don’t sign up to onerous new contracts.

“The turnout is fantastic,” process operative Sakwinder Mann, who has worked in the plant for 22 years and faces a wage cut of 15,000 pounds a year (\$20,900), told the *Militant*. “We’re not only fighting for ourselves but for future generations,” said Kal Mann, another of the three Mann brothers working here.

Packing operator Kim Spencer Davies, one of some 60 women workers, says she faces a wage cut of 5,000 pounds. “The different cuts have to do with different departments and shift patterns,” she said. “For eight years we’ve also had two tiers. New starts get half the paid break I get.”

The coffee-making company is making big profits, union convener Chris Moon said. “During the pandemic coffee drinking has sky-rocketed, and so too have sales. But the Dutch-based company pits one plant against another.” A spokesman for plant management told the media they “need to reset Banbury’s manufacturing operations for the company to remain competitive.”

Jacobs Douwe Egberts is itself owned by JAB Holding Company, a massive German-based corporate empire that includes Peet’s Coffee, Keurig, Dr. Pepper, Panera, Krispy Kreme doughnuts, Einstein Bagels, Pret a Manger, Au Bon Pain and much more.

“They’re taking advantage of increased job insecurity that many workers feel with the pandemic,” said Mark Russell. He’s worked in the plant for 39 years “during which there’s never been a strike — until now!”

— Jonathan Silberman

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 20, 1996

The following statement was issued May 8 by Socialist Workers candidates James Harris for U.S. president and Laura Garza for vice-president.

The Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. Congress are joining forces to deal a blow against workers rights with new anti-immigrant legislation. The proposals would codify a second-class status for a layer of the population, denying them access to basic social services, almost doubling the number of immigration cops, and introducing something close to a national identification system allowing “Big Brother” to code in information about any worker a boss might want to check up on. These measures are a threat to every worker.

The labor movement needs to lead a fight to raise the minimum wage, end mandatory overtime, and shorten the workweek with no cut in pay in order to create jobs for all.



May 21, 1971

The following article by a correspondent of The Southern Patriot appeared in the April 1971 issue of that publication.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Welfare mothers from across Tennessee are fighting a proposed law that would force women with one or more “illegitimate” children to submit to sterilization or lose all welfare benefits.

It was introduced by freshman Rep. Larry Bates, a Democrat. When the session started on Feb. 23, Bates was met by an irate group of welfare recipients. The women picketed again in early March and won a public hearing on the bill. At the hearing March 15, a wide range of people spoke out against the bill — doctors, Black legislators, representatives of social agencies and human rights groups.

The most angry and outspoken opposition was provided by some 200 welfare women — mostly Black, some white.



May 18, 1946

JERUSALEM, April 25 — The biggest strikes in the history of Palestine, far surpassing any which have taken place until now, broke out during the last fortnight. The strike encompassed about 32,000 workers, while about 50,000 stood behind them, greatly stirred by their action and ready to join them if called upon. The strikers made up 15 percent of the Palestinian working class.

The government attempted to break the strike by recruiting strikebreakers, but despite the promises of high payment no scab could be found. It tried also to divide the united ranks of Arab and Jewish workers, but again without any success whatsoever.

Large demonstrations were held, and it was encouraging to see immense processions of strikers making their way through the Arab and Jewish quarters carrying slogans in Arabic and Hebrew calling for support.

Miners plan weekly rallies to build support for strike

Continued from front page

They marked their fourth week on strike with a solidarity rally at Tannehill State Park here April 28.

This was the second rally to back the miners, who went on strike in a fight to regain ground lost over the last five years in wages, benefits and working conditions.

The 2016 contract, which expired April 1, was forced on the union under pressure of the bankruptcy of the previous mine owner, Jim Walter Resources. Owners of Warrior Met, a “new” company run by the major creditors of Jim Walter, used the bankruptcy reorganization to go after the workers. They insisted the union accept wage cuts, higher medical costs, loss of holidays and overtime pay, and much more, giving up gains fought for and won over decades by the union miners.

The miners work at two underground mines, No. 4 and No. 7; a coal-preparation plant; and in the company’s central shop.

“We went to the rally to support the Warrior Met miners and for the unity of all coal miners,” Anthony Davis told the *Militant* by phone May 1. He is vice president of UMWA Local 2133 at the Oak Grove mine in nearby Bessemer. More than 100 Local 2133 members attended the April 28 rally, Davis said.

“We posted a ‘memorial day,’ so that everyone could take off and attend the rally,” he said. Their union contract enables miners to take off 10 days a year for union purposes.

“Miners at Oak Grove are aware of how bad the conditions are at the Warrior Met mines,” Davis said. “And we support them in their strike. Miners from our local are joining the Warrior Met picket lines.”

Retiree Maxwell Wilson was one of the Oak Grove miners at the rally. “I’m talking to our younger members about the stakes in this fight,” he told the *Militant* after the rally. “If the company prevails in the Warrior Met strike, there will be a target on the back of every other mine union local in Alabama.”



Militant/John Benson

Members of American Federation of Teachers join April 28 solidarity rally for United Mine Workers on strike against Warrior Met Coal in Brookwood, Alabama, in Tannehill State Park.

A delegation of a dozen members of the American Federation of Teachers, which has backed the strike from the outset, were called to the stage and introduced. Six members of United Steelworkers Local 1013 at U.S. Steel in Fairfield, and a group of Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union members were also on hand to lend support.

“Today is Workers Memorial Day, celebrated by every union in the United States of America every April 28,” said featured speaker UMWA President Cecil Roberts. “Today before you get home tonight and put your head on your pillow, another worker somewhere in this country will be killed on the job.”

The entire Brookwood community

remembers well the Sept. 23, 2001, explosions at the then-Jim Walter Resources mine No. 5 that killed 13 miners.

Roberts told the rally that the union would now begin holding marches, as well as weekly rallies, to back the strike.

Bren Riley, president of the Alabama AFL-CIO and member of the United Steelworkers, recalled how 200 UMWA members, dressed in camouflage, had come to the Goodyear plant in Gadsden to show their support of the USW’s strike there in 2006.

Warrior Met is using managers and strikebreakers, some of whom were contract workers before the strike started, to mine coal at the No. 7 mine. Picketing UMWA strikers report that a few union members have crossed the picket line.

Ongoing solidarity rallies will continue every Wednesday evening at 6 p.m. here at Tannehill State Park.

Bring your co-workers and fellow unionists to join the rallies! Send contributions and messages of support to UMWA District 20, 21922 Hwy. 216 (Miners’ Memorial Parkway), McCalla, AL 35111. Email: umwadistrict20@bellsouth.net. Tel.: (205) 477-7500. Fax: (205) 477-0004.

John Benson contributed to this article.

Steelworkers reject ATI threats, continue strike

Continued from front page

The day after the ultimatum expired, the union organized a solidarity motorcycle ride to visit the picket lines in Vandergrift, Latrobe, Washington and Brackenridge of 20 to 25 riders. This *Militant* worker-correspondent joined up with them.

Retiree Skip Loundon, former unit chair of Local 7139 here, rode a motorcycle with a sticker saying, “Thou Shalt Not Scab.” “A lot of guys on this ride are retirees, but our hearts are still at the plant, and we stand with the guys,” Loundon said. “We still go to the picket lines to help out in every way we can.”

When asked why he organized the

bike ride, Keith Beavers, president of Local 1138 in Vandergrift, said, “We wanted to bring the guys together to do something positive to show solidarity.”

Beavers said anyone who wants to help can “come hang out at the picket lines, bring your family, friends, whoever, it’s that kind of support we need. Hanging out on the lines, talking with us about the issues and spreading the word is the most important — Solidarity.”

Bosses say workers have to give more

ATI spokeswoman Natalie Gillespie said the company’s old offer had “expired.” Their new offer, she said, among other things, will reduce a lump-sum payment in the first year from \$4,000 to \$2,500. And she said the union will have to back off on health care and job security. ATI recently announced they took in \$693 million in the first three months of 2021.

“Each of our business units must earn more than its costs of capital on a stand-alone basis,” CEO Robert Wetherbee said. “The Specialty Rolled Products business has struggled to consistently meet this profitability threshold for some time. ... So we’re decisively taking the actions necessary to fix it.”

While the company says they’ll offer some wage increases, “we only get these raises if we agree to take concessions in other places,” USW negotiating committee member Randy Denman Jr. from the plant said in a statement given to me. “I believe this contract will destroy our union, cost us our health care and retirees their health care.”

Organize solidarity with the ATI strikers! Send messages of support or strike fund contributions to USW Local 7139 at 1505 Jefferson Ave., Washington, PA 15301, or USW Local 1196 at 1080 Brackenridge Ave., Brackenridge, PA 15014.

SWP calls Int’l Active Workers Conference in Ohio July 22-24

BY SETH GALINSKY

The Socialist Workers Party is hosting an International Active Workers Conference at Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio, July 22-24. Due to lockdown restrictions imposed by all levels of government since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the last time the party was able to host an international conference was nearly two years ago.

As more people get vaccinated and restrictions are lifted, working people and youth from around the world should be able to attend the three-day gathering.

There will be talks by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party on the key questions facing working people today; classes on the history of the labor and

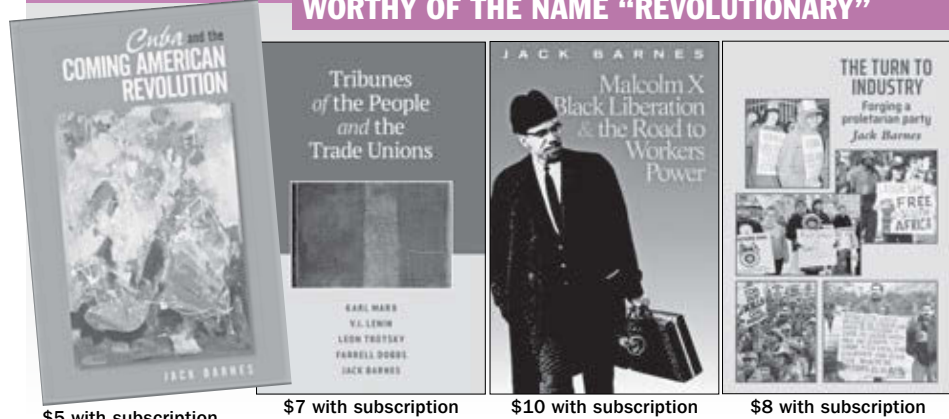
communist movement, and the example of the Cuban Revolution; panel presentations; socials and plenty of time for informal discussion with fellow conference participants.

The conference takes place as more workers are getting back to work and as some strikes and union-organizing drives have broken out, one indication that growing numbers are looking for a way to stand up to the moves by the capitalist class to shift the burden of their crisis onto the backs of working people.

If you are interested in being part of building a revolutionary working-class party and would like to discuss attending the conference, see page 4 to contact the SWP or Communist League branch nearest you.

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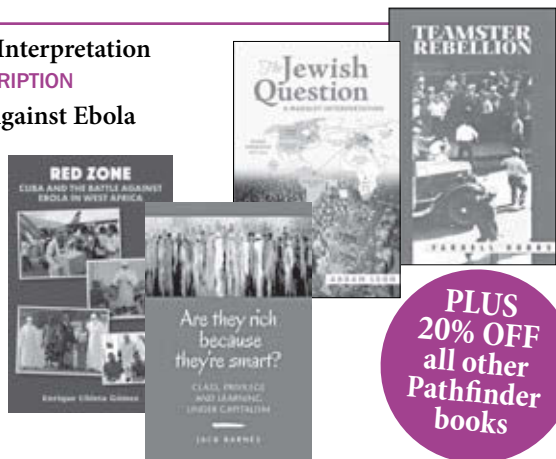
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Quebec meeting celebrates Cuba's socialist revolution

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL — “We’re here to celebrate the 60th anniversary of three historic turning points in the Cuban Revolution,” said Communist League leader Michel Prairie, welcoming some 40 people to an April 17 meeting organized by the Communist League and supported by the Table de concertation et solidarite Quebec-Cuba.

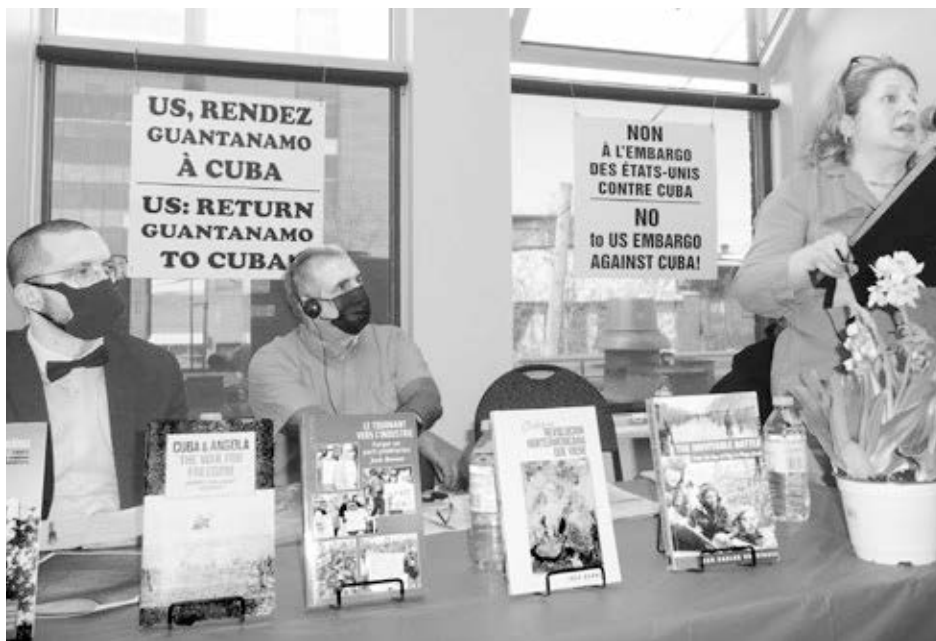
The meeting celebrated the defeat of the invasion of Cuba at Playa Girón by 1,500 U.S.-organized mercenaries in April 1961; the description days before by Fidel Castro of the socialist character of the revolution, affirming what workers and farmers accomplished as they made deep inroads against capitalist property relations; and the success of the campaign to teach hundreds of thousands of peasants how to read and write that same year, carried out by 100,000 young volunteers who went to the countryside to live and work with those they taught.

Through these far-reaching actions workers and farmers transformed themselves, deepening their self-confidence, class consciousness and awareness of the character of their socialist revolution.

Mara Bilbao, Cuban consul general in Montreal, Consul official Eduardo Escandell, and Philippe Tessier, rail worker and Communist League candidate for mayor in the Montreal borough of Ville St-Laurent, spoke.

“This celebration takes place at the time of deepening threats caused by the U.S. blockade of Cuba and the unprecedented health crisis caused by COVID-19,” said Bilbao. “We see the support of the people for the defense and continuity of the Cuban Revolution.”

The 1961 victory of Cuban armed



Militant/Jim Upton

Mara Bilbao, Cuban consul general in Montreal, speaking at Montreal celebration of Cuban Revolution April 17. Other speakers, from left, Philippe Tessier, Communist League candidate for mayor in Montreal borough of Ville St-Laurent, and Consul official Eduardo Escandell.

forces and volunteer militias at Playa Girón “was the first major military defeat of U.S. imperialism in Latin America and demonstrated the unconditional support of the Cuban people for their revolution,” Escandell said.

Internationalist mission in Angola

Fourteen years later Cuba sent thousands of volunteers to Angola at the request of its government “to defend the country from the South African invasion,” added Escandell.

In 1983 he volunteered to join that internationalist mission. “Together with the Angolans, my comrades and I shared the meager rations, the long nights of guard duty and the moments of tension in combat,” Escandell said. He returned to Cuba that year to recover from injuries sustained during his duties.

The “Cuban presence was extended for more than 15 years to preserve the integrity and independence of Angola. Throughout that period, not only combatants from Cuba, but tens of thousands of teachers and health and construction workers participated in this epic struggle,” he said.

The victory of the Angolan and Cuban peoples in 1988 “opened the way to the independence of Namibia,” Escandell said. “It was one of the factors, together with the struggle of the South African people,” that accelerated the fall of the apartheid regime.

Cuba, example for working people

The victories celebrated at the meeting are an example to working people in Canada and worldwide, Tessier told the celebration.

“Cuba is the only country today

where workers and farmers, led by a proletarian leadership, have taken state power and embarked on the road of liberating themselves.”

Tessier explained how the victories won in Cuba in 1961 helped convince a generation of revolutionary-minded young people in the U.S. and Canada of the need to make socialist revolutions in North America and to build the proletarian parties needed to lead that struggle. He encouraged participants to read *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. Barnes went to Cuba in 1960 and describes the impact of the revolution on himself and others.

“It is impossible to build a proletarian party without putting defense of the Cuban Revolution at the center of what we do,” Tessier said.

He urged those present to join monthly car caravans called to demand an end to Washington’s economic war against Cuba and to build solidarity with the strikes by Montreal longshore workers against unsafe work schedules and other labor battles.

“It is through struggles like these that the leadership our class needs can be forged,” Tessier said. Along that road working people can build a movement “to lead a struggle to take political power into our own hands.”

During the discussion Escandell was asked about the impact of the Cuban volunteers’ participation in the Angolan war inside Cuba itself. Over “300,000 Cubans out of a population of 10 million went to Angola,” he said. “The imperialists had to imagine if we fought that hard some 16,000 kilometers away [10,000 miles], how hard we would fight if they invaded Cuba.”

“What message would you send to the people of Africa today?” asked Djondo Koffi, originally from Benin.

“In Angola we saw the real nature of capitalism and it made us that more committed to what the Cuban Revolution was doing,” Escandell replied. “My message is you have to fight, there is no other solution.”

Texas refinery workers fight lockout by ExxonMobil

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

DALLAS — More than 650 members of United Steelworkers Local 13-243 were locked out May 1 by ExxonMobil bosses at their refinery in Beaumont, Texas. Negotiations had begun in January for a new contract, but company officials walked workers out of the plant two by two after rejecting a union proposal to extend the six-year agreement ratified in 2015 for another year to facilitate negotiations.

“The company is attacking job security, safety and seniority,” USW staff representative Richard Landry told the *Militant*. “One of our long-standing safety protections is having lead operators on the units who direct workers when we have weather problems. The company proposes to do away with them.”

Over the past year, the unionists have had to deal with working in ice storms, floods, a blackout and hurricanes.

The union said Exxon has refused to budge from its demand for major contract changes.

After being escorted out of the refinery, workers set up pickets around the plant.

The company said they plan to continue operating. Before the lockout, they had begun advertising for 40 temporary experienced process operators. The Beaumont refinery processes 366,000 barrels of crude oil per day, 2.8 billion

gallons of gasoline annually, and manufactures and packages Mobil 1 synthetic motor oil.

The union reports that refinery workers in Texas, California, Louisiana, Montana and New Jersey are organizing

to send supplies and aid to the locked-out workers.

Donations and letters of support can be sent to USW Local 13-243, at 2490 South 11th St., Beaumont, Texas 77701. Tel.: (409) 842-3952.

Protest gov’t order to shut down Quebec dock strike

Continued from front page

At the center of the workers’ fight is unsafe and intolerable work schedules. The Maritime Employers Association had unilaterally forced dockworkers to work 19 days out of 21. And they only get a one-day notice of what shift they will be on.

“It’s not the wages. It is the hours of work. It’s so we can have a family life,” port truck driver Émilie Wolfe told this *Militant* worker-correspondent as she was going into work April 20.

The strike had received widespread labor support, including from both the International Longshoremen’s Association and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, which organizes dockworkers in Vancouver on the West Coast.

On March 21 the workers rejected the latest offer from the bosses by 99.7%.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau “just sent a loud and clear message to every employer in the country,” CUPE National President Mark Han-

cock told the press after the strikebreaking law was adopted. “Don’t bother bargaining in good faith with your workers, because if things get tough, we’ll be there to back you up.”

As it became clear the government would pass the law, Maritime Employers Association representatives walked out of negotiations with the union the day after the strike began.

Union spokesperson Michel Murray told hundreds of longshore workers at a rally April 29 that CUPE would challenge the law in court and filed a formal complaint before the International Labor Organization charging that workers’ right to strike had been violated. Workers returned to their jobs May 1.

In a statement issued after the law was passed, Beverly Bernardo, Communist League candidate for mayor of Montreal, denounced Ottawa’s attack on the right to strike. “Our right to withdraw our labor is essential to fighting for better wages and working

conditions,” she said. “Our power lies in our numbers and the fact that it is our labor that produces all wealth.

“The whole labor movement needs to oppose this attack on workers’ rights by mobilizing support for the fight of the longshore workers.”

Statements of support can be sent to CUPE Local 375, 7020 rue Notre-Dame est, Montreal, QC, H1N 3L6, Canada.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

TEXAS

Dallas

Cuba’s Socialist Revolution: Its Impact in the U.S. and the World. Speaker: Hilda Cuzco, Socialist Workers Party. Film showing: “Voluntary Teachers” by Catherine Murphy. Fri., May 14, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 1005 W. Jefferson Blvd., Suite 207. Tel: (469) 513-1051.

Chauvin trial: blow to rights workers need

Continued from front page

George Floyd. But we don't support undermining their right to protections working people have conquered in over 200 years of class struggle.

Cops do not exist to fight crime. Along with the courts, they are an essential part of the state apparatus that serves the ruling capitalist families and upholds social relations based on the exploitation of workers and farmers.

Time after time cops evade prosecution after carrying out assaults. But working people should never allow frustration at this fact to bolster calls for restrictions on legal and constitutional rights. No matter who is in the dock, any attack on these rights will always end up being used to deal blows to the working class.

Without an unequivocal defense of the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, the establishment of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, and opposition to mob justice, the capitalist government's hand will be strengthened. To these rights, the right to a trial by a jury of your peers and unanimous jury decisions must be added.

All these rights provide working people with some protection from the cops and courts. Millions of workers know from their own experience that cops, prosecutors and judges continually erode these rights, assuming workers are always guilty.

As working-class struggles deepen, cop assaults will target militant workers, our picket lines and unions. Working people will have to defend ourselves from frame-ups on the road to fighting for our emancipation and will need the right to due process.

That's why class-conscious workers don't join with capitalist politicians celebrating the conduct and outcome of Chauvin's trial. Well before the trial began, the rulers decided the lesser-evil for their class was Chauvin's conviction. That's why they used their huge resources to rig the trial, trampling on due process and turning it into a mass public spectacle. Top Minneapolis law firms volunteered attorneys to join the prosecution, while Chauvin was

abandoned by cop officials, who testified against him, and left him with minimal legal defense. Despite a huge military operation in downtown Minneapolis, which would inevitably effect the trial, the judge refused to change the trial's venue.

Across the country, antifa forces and some Black Lives Matter leaders have ferreted out home addresses and other personal information of political opponents, urging retaliation. A defense witness had his home vandalized after testifying.

Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters threatened that protesters would "get more confrontational" if the verdict was "not guilty." Before the jury could end its deliberations, President Joseph Biden weighed in calling the evidence "overwhelming."

To be sure that Chauvin remained behind bars regardless of the trial, in blatant disregard for constitutional protections against double jeopardy, the Justice Department said it was prepared to arrest and indict the former cop after his trial on federal charges, if the jury failed to convict him. They now say they're going to do so anyway.

Some liberals argue a trial of Chauvin wasn't even necessary, because "we've all seen the video." Chauvin's indifference to Floyd's obvious distress angered millions.

Virtually every capitalist newspaper repeated before and after the trial that Floyd died because Chauvin held his knee on Floyd's neck for over nine minutes. But the prosecution's own medical expert, Andrew Baker, testified Floyd's death was not caused by asphyxiation, but as a result of Chauvin's restraint, not always with his knee on Floyd's neck, but also on his back, leading to heart failure. Baker told the trial that Floyd's use of fentanyl, as well as his underlying heart disease contributed to his death. Basic questions of fact were cast aside in almost all reporting to help get the "right" verdict.

Democrats and Republicans both seized on the trial to claim the "system works," as they seek to convince working people to rely on them to reform the cops.

A statement by Doug Nelson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Minneapolis mayor, pointed to the danger of calling for harsher sentences for Chauvin "than the evidence and standards of due process would normally allow." The ex-cop faces a combined 75 years behind bars. Prosecutors are calling for more. Anything done to legitimize the use of long and vindictive sentences only helps strengthen a precedent that will be used against workers facing prison time.

This trial was not a victory for working people. It was a blow to crucial rights we need. It will not advance the just fight against police brutality.

When working people in Cuba made a thoroughgoing revolution in 1959, they did not "reform" the henchmen who policed the bloody rule of U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. Nor did they drag them through the streets and lynch them. Led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, they disbanded Batista's cops, replacing them with tested veterans of the revolutionary struggle. Some cops were put on trial, but initial moves to hold mass trials were halted by Castro, who explained they violated the revolution's sense of justice. Some trials led to executions. Other cops were offered productive jobs. The new police force was built based on new class relations, where government attacks on working people are alien.

That powerful example remains one working people here should emulate.

LETTERS

Chauvin trial

I don't understand at all the statement from Doug Nelson in the May 10 issue, "Chauvin trial dealt blows to rights workers need." Isn't serious jail time for killer cops after big protests in the street a victory? The masses in the streets are what made the state take this prosecution seriously. Isn't a just and working-class demand to prosecute, convict, and jail killer cops? If so, is that a demand that deals a blow to the presumption of innocence?

Kyle Edwards

St. Paul, Minnesota

Biden's first '100 days'

Continued from front page

have served the country's ruling families defending their profits and prerogatives at home and abroad, as has every Democratic and Republican administration.

Biden handed over trillions in government money to bosses and local governments, doing nothing to help workers fight large-scale joblessness or take the bosses' drive to profit off our backs.

In an address to Congress April 28, Biden says that under his administration there are "more new jobs in the first 100 days than any president on record." But more hiring was inevitable once the first vaccines got Federal Drug Administration approval under Donald Trump's administration and inoculation began.

By the end of April some 100 million Americans had been fully vaccinated, almost 40% of the adult population. All workers should urge co-workers and family to get the shot. It is only at work that we can unite to meet the bosses' attacks.

Vaccination and lowering of government lockdowns have driven the recent dip in unemployment. Nonetheless over 16 million people are still collecting unemployment benefits, unable to get a job.

Moreover, Biden does nothing to end U.S. pharmaceutical bosses' monopoly on vaccine sales by keeping their patents a secret, hindering production of the vaccine and increasing deaths worldwide.

Biden has made a "decisive break with the era of small government," pundit Samuel Moyn gushed in the May 2 *New York Times*. But his "big" government of expanding federal regulators and snoops has just made things worse for working people.

Capitalist exploitation continues to take its toll. As workers get back to work, bosses are cutting wages, speeding up production and attacking our unions. Cop brutality continues and millions of undocumented workers are forced to live and work under the threat of deportation.

"Workers are finding ways to defend ourselves," Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor in New York City, told the *Militant*. Calero uses his campaign to build solidarity with locked-out oil refinery workers at Marathon in Minnesota and other labor struggles.

"We are told our only 'choices' are between two parties that both defend capitalist exploitation and imperialist wars abroad," Calero said. "Workers need to break with the bosses' two-party system and build a party of our own, a labor party. It would attract millions to its ranks in the course of uncompromising working-class struggle."

Biden's presidency hasn't created a single job, outside of its growing bureaucracy. His "American Jobs Plan" and "American Rescue Plan" bailed out state governments; offered "stimulus" checks for some; and promised investments to bosses, claiming they'll hire some workers for infrastructure and other projects.

His latest "American Families Plan" would extend temporary tax credits for some workers with children, increase the months each year some workers can get free school meals for their kids, and expand parental leave. But reform measures like this are mainly aimed at increasing workers dependency on the capitalist rulers' state, to deter us from organizing to fight in our own interests. They do nothing to address the central challenge we face — getting back to work.

Biden defends bosses' interests abroad

Biden is advancing the U.S. rulers' imperialist interests abroad, redeploying U.S. forces from Afghanistan to reinforce their massive military might elsewhere in Central Asia and around the world.

So far, the new administration has done nothing to reverse the restrictions on travel to Cuba and trade and financial sanctions on the Cuban people imposed by every previous administration. Officials say changing these policies is not a priority for Biden.

"Working people need our own foreign policy starting from solidarity with fellow workers and farmers around the world," Calero said. "SWP candidates join and build the monthly car caravans in cities around the country demanding a halt to Washington's embargo against Cuba.

"We point to Cuba's revolution as an example for working people here to emulate," he said. "We need to take political power into our own hands, build a workers and farmers government, and join hands with toilers worldwide."

SWP condemns attack on Minnesota mosque

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

MOORHEAD, Minn. — Hundreds gathered at the Moorhead-Fargo Islamic Community Center and mosque here April 26 carrying paintbrushes and cleaning chemicals. They had come to remove vulgar, anti-Muslim graffiti spray-painted there the day before, including "Death to Islam," "Women can't vote," "F--- you," and a Nazi swastika.

"We had some members who were scared to return to the mosque," Otoo Haaron, president of the Islamic Center, told the *Militant*. "But the response of support was overwhelming, so many people came to help."

On May 1 some 60 people attended a forum in the mosque parking lot called "Moorhead United Against Hate." They heard leaders of the Islamic Center, representatives of Jewish and Christian congregations, and area politicians. I read a solidarity statement from SWP Minneapolis mayoral candidate Doug Nelson.

"The Socialist Workers Party condemns this reactionary anti-Muslim vandalism, along with other attacks on mosques and synagogues," Nelson wrote. "We call on workers, farmers, unions and all defenders of democratic rights to speak out against this attack.

"The labor movement was founded on the idea that an injury to one is an injury to all," Nelson continued. "Working-class unity and our ability to organize to fight against all manifestations of exploitation and oppression can only be built if we act in defense of all who suffer discrimination, scapegoating and victimization. We are ready to help, now and in the future."

Benjamin Enderle, 22, was charged by police with the attack after being identified by a Walmart worker on a store video. At the May 1 gathering, leaders of the mosque offered forgiveness to Enderle and invited him to come to learn about the Islamic community.

David Rosenfeld is SWP candidate for Minneapolis City Council.