Striking coal miners rally, reach out for solidarity
BY SUSAN LAMONT
MCCALLA, Ala. — A third weekly solidarity rally for 1,100 United Mine Workers of America union members on strike at Warrior Met Coal in nearby Brookwood drew several hundred miners.

Steelworkers stand up to ATI union-busting attack
BY TONY LANE
WASHINGTON, Pa. — Over 1,300 United Steelworkers members are locked in a strike battle against union-busting bosses at Allegheny Technologies Inc. at nine plants in five states. The strikers on the picket lines are standing tall and winning solidarity from other workers.

As hiring steps up, workers gain new fighting spirit and self-confidence
BY TERRY EVANS
Hiring is edging up as government coronavirus lockdowns are lifted and growing numbers of vaccinated workers return to work force. Better conditions are being created for workers to come together on the job to beat back attempts by the bosses to defend their competitive position against rivals at home and abroad and boost profits at the expense of our wages, safety and working conditions.

Protests erupt in Colombia over jobs crisis, gov’t brutality
BY RÓGER CALERO
In the face of massive demonstrations and nationwide strikes that broke out April 28, Colombian President Iván Duque withdrew a “reform” bill May 2 raising sales taxes that would hit working people the hardest. But the protests continued. Brutal police attacks on peaceful demonstrations are adding fuel to the fire.

Called by the National Strike Committee, which includes Colombia’s main union federations, farmer associations, organizations of indigenous peoples, student groups, independent trade unions and others, the protests have become an outpouring of pent-up popular outrage over government and employer moves to make working people pay for the deep capitalist crisis.

Colombia’s economy contracted 6.8% last year, leaving 7.5 million people out of a population of 50 million, eating less than three meals a day. Just under 8% of the population has received COVID-19 vaccinations as of May 7, lowest in the world.

‘Militant’ fights bans by prison authorities in Florida, Indiana
BY BRIAN WILLIAMS
Prison officials are at it again! Five issues of the Militant have been banned in Florida and two in Indiana in violation of inmates’ constitutional rights and the rights of the Militant to reach its subscribers behind bars.

On May 3 the paper received notices from the Century Correctional Institution in Florida that they had impounded five straight issues of the paper for March, nos. 8-12.

The articles prison officials say they are attempting to serve a warrant for his arrest on alleged illegal drug activity.
According to a private autopsy report, Brown was killed by a gunshot to the back of his head. Of the seven deputies involved, three have been put on administrative leave and four were reinstated.

Seventeen days and no one has
Continued on page 9

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Striking Massachusetts nurses win solidarity

North Carolina protests say ‘Release video of cops killing Andrew Brown’

Protests erupt in Colombia over jobs crisis, gov’t brutality

Get the word out! Support mine, steelworker strikes!
Capitalist crisis weakens UK rulers’ hold on North Ireland

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Social and political turmoil came to the surface in Northern Ireland days before the April 28 resignation of Arlene Foster as its first minister. As is the case elsewhere in the United Kingdom, working people face the carnage of capitalist decline and joblessness that has intensified during the pandemic.

Forced out of office by members of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Foster’s resignation registers the deepening crisis of the parties that defend the province’s union with Britain. Her decision to quit was precipitated by sharpening conflicts within her Democratic Unionist Party and the Ulster Unionist Party over their prized possession of Northern Ireland against anti-sectarianism and gave a boost to all-Ireland unity and entrench their domination over the country from British rule. Through partition, Britain’s rulers sought to minimize the loss of the Irish Republic, shore up their dwindling world role, and entrench their domination over the most profitable industries in the North. Through divide and rule, pitting Protestants against Catholics, London aimed to undermine working-class solidarity and struggle in both Ireland and the U.K.

Massive struggles in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland against anti-Catholic discrimination in employment, housing, education and political representation exploded at the end of the 1960s. The civil rights movement gained support of working people in the South and internationally. Failure to crush civil rights fight

In 1969 the U.K.’s Labour government sent troops to the North in an attempt to repress these mobilizations and prevent them threatening the British rulers’ hold over their prized possession. During the ensuing conflict, London interned thousands without trial, silenced Irish nationalist leaders and unleashed deadly violence against protesters demanding civil and national rights. Nonetheless, Sinn Fein, a bourgeois nationalist party that was a key force in the civil rights struggle, has made electoral gains in the Republic. These come at the expense of the Fianna Fail and Fine Gael parties, which are currently in coalition government with the Greens.

“The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is looking anything but united,” opined the editors of the Sunday Times May 2 on the eve of the 100th anniversary. “London’s rule over Northern Ireland should be ended now,” Andres Mendoza, the Communist League candidate for London mayor, told the Militant May 3. For decades the CL has fought unconditionally for Irish self-determination. “This is in the interests of working people in Ireland and Britain. It should be fought for by the labor movement in the U.K., paving the way to unite workers and farmers in struggle, along the road to a workers and farmers government in each country.”

In October 1968, Belfast University students joined Northern Ireland civil rights movement against anti-Catholic discrimination in housing, education and political representation. In 1969, London sent British troops to repress movement with deadly force. Sinn Fein, a bourgeois nationalist party that was a key force in the civil rights struggle, has made electoral gains in the Republic. These come at the expense of the Fianna Fail and Fine Gael parties, which are currently in coalition government with the Greens.

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The Militant Vol. 85/No. 20
Closing news date: May 12, 2021
Editor: John Studer
Managing Editor: Terry Evans
Editorial volunteers: Roger Calero, Seth Galsky, Emma Johnson, Martin Kopp, Roy Lundersen, Jacob Perozo, 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 10008.
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 10008.
Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10008.
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.
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New Zealand and the Pacific Islands: Send NZ$75 for one year to P.O. Box 13857, Auckland 1640, New Zealand.
Australia: Send A$70 for one year to P.O. Box 73 Campsie, NSW 2194 Australia.
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For recognition of a Palestinian state and of Israel

For workers’ solidarity in Israel, Palestine, the world over

Socialist Workers Party statement

Download flyer at www.themilitant.com

By Jonathan Silberman

LONDON — Social and political turmoil came to the surface in Northern Ireland days before the April 28 resignation of Arlene Foster as its first minister. As is the case elsewhere in the United Kingdom, working people face the carnage of capitalist decline and joblessness that has intensified during the pandemic.

Forced out of office by members of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Foster’s resignation registers the deepening crisis of the parties that defend the province’s union with Britain. Her decision to quit was precipitated by sharpening conflicts within her Democratic Unionist Party and the Ulster Unionist Party over their prized possession. During the partition, Britain’s rulers sought to minimize the loss of the Irish Republic, shore up their dwindling world role, and entrench their domination over the most profitable industries in the North. Through divide and rule, pitting Protestants against Catholics, London aimed to undermine working-class solidarity and struggle in both Ireland and the U.K.

Massive struggles in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland against anti-Catholic discrimination in employment, housing, education and political representation exploded at the end of the 1960s. The civil rights movement gained support of working people in the South and internationally.

Failure to crush civil rights fight

In 1969 the U.K.’s Labour government sent troops to the North in an attempt to repress these mobilizations and prevent them threatening the British rulers’ hold over their prized possession. During the ensuing conflict, London interned thousands without trial, silenced Irish nationalist leaders and unleashed deadly violence against protesters demanding civil and national rights. Nonetheless, the nationalists fought back and scored some victories.

The 1998 Good Friday Agreement between London, Dublin and political parties in Northern Ireland registered some of these gains. Through these battles most anti-Catholic discrimination was reversed and the British rulers dismantled much of their repressive apparatus across the province.

The agreement kept Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom. Divide and rule was perpetuated with so-called peace walls — some 100 physiological barriers that still separate areas where Catholics or Protestants predominated in Belfast and other towns — and segregated education continued. But huge blows were dealt to sectarian divisions among working people.

At the same time the agreement marked the weakness of British imperialism and gave a boost to all-Ireland nationalist development. In 1999 a Northern Ireland Assembly that would collaborate with the government of the Irish Republic on cross-border issues was established.

Much of the industry in the North, so precious to British capital a century ago, is in terminal decline. Foreign investment has sought new industries in the South and cross-border trade and investment has grown. The weighty agricultural sector has always had an all-Ireland character.

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Socialist Workers Party statement

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Back fight in Myanmar to end military rule

The Militant has provided regular coverage of the protests and strikes by working people in Myanmar against Feb. 1 military coup and ongoing repression. Mass upsurge has brought workers, farmers and ethnic groups together in struggle to overthrow the military junta.

The Militant
Continued from front page parties that support them.”
She pointed to the importance of solidarity with fights going on today, including Steelworkers on strike at Allegheny Technologies Inc., United Mine Workers members on strike at Warrior Coal in Alabama, and Teamsters locked out by Marathon Petroleum in Minnesota.

Stettler took a flyer to learn more about the campaign and got a copy of In Defense of the US Working Class by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

Socialist Workers Party candidates and campaigners are talking to working people on union picket lines, car caravans opposing U.S. embargo against Cuba, and at their doorsteps in cities, towns and rural areas. They are getting a good response as they advance the nine-week international drive to sell 1,400 subscriptions to the Militant, 1,400 books by SWP leaders and other candidates and campaign literature to the Militant Fighting Fund. Those funds are crucial for meeting the paper’s operating expenses.

By the end of the second week of the drive working people had picked up 463 subscriptions and 519 books! Over $20,000 has already been sent in to the fund.

Their interest reflects the increased thirst among many working people for discussing how to stand up to the bosses’ attacks, as more people get vaccinated and get back to work.

Truckers protest gov’t interference

SWP campaign supporters from Louisville, Kentucky, and Chicago went to Indianapolis May 1 at the invitation of Teamsters members on strike at Marathon Petroleum.

Truckers protest government interference and to the labor movement, the Minneapolis cop’s right to due process was violated.”

“He agreed with that.”

“My boss made me employee of the month,” Paul Stettler told Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for New Jersey governor, on his doorstep May 6. “So I had to get this T-shirt.”

“IT’S NOT RIGHT THAT THE GOVERNMENT Dictating Work Rights Workers Fought for and Need Today.”

In the printed edition of last week’s Militant there is an error in the article “Chauvin Trial Was a Blow to Rights Workers Fought for and Need Today.” It says, “The ex-cop faces a combined 75 years behind bars. Prosecutors are calling for more.” But Minnesota law says the judge must only apply the sentence covering the most serious charge, in this case second-degree murder.

The sentence should have read, “Under Minnesota sentencing guidelines that would likely mean he would get a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison. Prosecutors say they will file motions for additional penalties to make the sentence longer.”

Correction

Militant/Terry Evans

Militant Politics

Teamster Series

Lessons of U.S. labor battles from the 1930s by Farrell Dobbs

“THE PRINCIPAL LESSON of the Teamster experience is not that under an adverse relationship of forces, the workers can be overcome, but that with proper leadership, they can overcome.”

$16 each or all four for $50 pathfinderpress.com

Teamster experience is not that under an adverse relationship of forces, the workers can be overcome, but that with proper leadership, they can overcome.”

$16 each or all four for $50 pathfinderpress.com

For more information about the Militant Fighting Fund see page 8 for the distributor nearest you.

Or visit themilitant.com to purchase a subscription and contribute online.

Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, fund

April 24 - June 29 (week two)

Country Sub quota Books sold Books quota Fund quota received
UNITED STATES
Albany 80 19 80 17 $8,000 $200
Atlanta 80 31 80 19 $11,000 $150
Chicago 115 34 115 35 $13,200 $3,050
Dallas 40 23 40 15 $3,000 $300
Lincoln 15 4 15 3 $400 $100
Los Angeles 105 51 105 55 $13,250 $30
Miami 35 9 35 7 $4,000 $1,725
New York 100 29 100 12 $5,000 $1,000
Philadelphia 50 30 50 5 $3,500 $1,490
Pittsburgh 50 10 50 7 $3,000 $400
Seattle 95 29 95 24 $12,500 $50
Twin Cities 50 23 50 19 $4,500 $700
Washington 65 19 65 5 $6,000 $805
Other
Total U.S. 1,120 362 1,115 347 $122,600 $15,521

Prisoners 25 $16

UNIFIED KINGDOM

London 45 17 45 20 $4,000
Manchester 40 14 40 12 $2,000
Total U.K. 85 31 85 32 $6,000

Canada* 95 27 115 41 $12,200 $1,840

New Zealand 30 18 30 14 $3,500 $2,100

Australia 30 9 30 11 $2,000 $990

Total 1,385 463 1,391 519 $146,300 $20,361

*Shipped to

Should Be 1,400 308 1,400 308 $145,000 $31,900

Total

This week

$16 each or all four for $50 pathfinderpress.com

Teamster Politics

Dobbs along with a subscription to the Militant; the SWP’s candidate for New York mayor, campaigned in the Middle Village neighborhood of the city May 9.

“We noticed a sign in one window that said: ‘No police beyond this point, without a warrant,’” Williams said.

“We noticed a sign in one window that said: ‘No police beyond this point, without a warrant,’” Williams said.

“It’s not right that the government will force all truckers to join a union,” said Johnson.

Owner-operators are fellow workers

“The government dictating workers into unions undermines building a fighting union movement,” Henderson said. Workers, including independent owner-operators, have to be convinced that fighting for a union is in their own interests, she added.

She showed Johnson the four-volumed Teamster series written by Farrell Dobbs, a leader of the organizing drives that transformed the union across the Midwest in the 1930s. Dobbs was a time incidental candidate of the Socialist Workers Party. Henderson described how the union approached independent owner-operators as fellow workers with interests in common with other drivers. The union championed their demands against companies that leased them trucks.

“Please sign up with a subscription to the Militant.”

First trucker to sign up was a former cop

The ex-cop faces a combined 75 years behind bars. Prosecutors are calling for more.”

But Minnesota law says the judge must only apply the sentence covering the most serious charge, in this case second-degree murder.

The sentence should have read, “Under Minnesota sentencing guidelines that would likely mean he would get a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison. Prosecutors say they will file motions for additional penalties to make the sentence longer.”

Correction
What are the lessons from the fight for a union at Amazon?

BY SUSAN LAMONT

On April 9 the National Labor Relations Board released the results of the union vote at Amazon’s fulfillment center in Bessemer, Alabama, where a union drive had been underway since last year.

Of the 5,876 workers eligible to vote, 2,794 voted against a union. The Amazon “unionized” center in Bessemer, Alabama, is now the only one in the country, and one of the few nationwide, where a union drive had been under way since last year.

A group of workers inside the Bessemer warehouse, which opened a few months after it opened, opened to fight for a union, and got a positive response from the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union. A few months later, they got several thousand workers to sign union cards asking the NLRB to authorize an election, a sign that the union effort had struck a chord.

The decision to try to organize was a bold one. They were taking on one of the largest U.S. corporations, whose bosses had fought tenaciously to keep unions out of all its U.S. facilities. For this reason, the drive drew attention in the media.

What is the road forward?

Since there have been articles in the capitalist media about why the union lost, and by such a large margin. Some pundits say the vote was a “major defeat” for building the labor movement. Workers discussing what happened and trying to draw some lessons for the future should reject this view.

Workers in the Birmingham-Bessemer area had followed the organizing drive with interest and, for many, with support. There is a long history of union struggles in the steel and other industries in the area. Even with the severe contraction of these industries in recent decades, unions ties remain stronger than ever.

Socialist Workers Party campaigners went door to door in working-class areas of Bessemer and nearby Hueytown in the months leading up to the vote. We spoke with workers in all kinds of jobs — from coal miners to fast-food workers to warehouse workers and more — who were hoping for a union vote.

Amazon workers and others met, some of whom had worked there and quit, confirmed the difficult work conditions, long hours, inadequate pay, and disrespect from the bosses that fueled the organizing drive.

They didn’t get defeated because wages and working conditions are so great under capitalism today. Rather it is because the union officialdom all too often forgets the lessons of what it took to organize the CIO industrial unions in the 1930s.

For decades the union movement has been in decline. Today only 6% of workers in private industry are union members.

The officialdom has become increasingly tied to class collaboration, relying on “common interests” with the bosses and help from “friends of labor” in the Democratic Party. Today they are building President Joe Biden and the Protecting the Right to Organize Act he’s promoting, which would tie organizing workers to government regulations, not to their own fighting capacities. The officials less and less look to rely on the workers themselves as the source of the union’s power.

There was no serious effort to organize Amazon workers themselves to help lead in winning support in the plant, or in organizing workers in Alabama and across the country to build the kind of social movement powerful enough to win.

Reliance on “social media” and support for the union drive from “celebrities” and a handful of Democratic Party politicians couldn’t substitute for this.

Workers and our unions will learn from our struggles to rely on ourselves, from experiences like the one in Bessemer, that our parties and more red tape and labor legislation. We will be able to use our unions to organize and fight effectively again.

There are stirrings in the working class today, with workers on strike or locked out by bosses at Warrior Met coal mines in Alabama, at ATI steel, Marathan Petroleum in Minnesota, and more.

For every worker looking to learn from the experiences of the mass work-class-class mobilizations that organized the CIO in the 1930s, there is no better place to go than Teamster Rebellion by Farrell Dobbs. He was a participant and leader in those struggles. This book is not a “manual” or a handbook, but a celebration of what can be studied and absorbed by class-conscious workers and farmers who find themselves in the midst of other struggles, at other times, in other conditions.

In this issue we will feature a story on page 12 “not allowed.” The offending photo, part of an article in Spanish about the Cuban Revolution, shows a celebration by Cuban militia members after their defeat of the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. A similar article appeared in the previous issue in English that a close friend of Johnson informed the Militant was also banned.

Johnson is a well-known political activist who has faced previous attempts by prison authorities to impound issues of the Militant and other publications. Last November the Militant won a victory reversing Indiana prison officials’ banning of one of his papers.

“The Militant fought bans by prisons in Florida, Indiana and other states and it’s not the capitalist government, their partners that could impound our papers.”

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Protests erupt in Colombia

Continued from front page

hard-hit Brazil. There are nearly 500 dead, mostly on a truck, a higher per capita rate than in India.

The official unemployment rate is more than 17%, and over 20% in some cities. It’s estimated that half a million businesses closed in the last year as a result of government lockdowns.

Protests swallowed across the country after police brutally attacked demonstrators. At least 25 people have been killed since the protests started, hundreds injured, more than 800 arrested and dozens are “missing.” The government deployed army tanks, fired live rounds, in an attempt to quell the protests.

The protesters have set up roadblocks on major highways, cutting off supplies into Bogotá, Cali and other cities. The government threatened to seize the trucks and vehicles used to build the blockades. These “termination of ownership” measures weren’t backed by force. Thereafter, allegedly to combat “terrorism” and drug trafficking.

While most of the protests have been peaceable, at least five people have been shot, mostly focused on participants who burned down police kiosks and public buildings, and some looting that took place. Trucker protests in Medellín and other members of the National Strike Committee condemned the acts of vandalism.

In Cali, on the first day of the protests, demonstrators recovered stolen items and marched to the stores to return them. They chanted, “We the good people are the majority; a strong response to the government’s violence-baiting of them.”

Toilers’ response to attacks

“The companies are using the pandemic as an excuse to fire workers, including some who are ill. Despite the government giving them subsidies to not lay off people, the companies lay workers off anyway and keep their money,” said Oscar Gutiérrez, of Dignidad Agropecuaria Colombiana, a federation of small farmer groups, told the Militant by phone from Riohacha.

Starting May 6, some 230 fired miners and truckers who carry rice, corn, and milk from the Sintarcarbon miners’ union, told the Militant by phone from Riohacha. Starting May 6, some 230 fired miners and truckers who carry rice, corn, and milk from the Sintarcarbon miners’ union, told the Militant by phone from Riohacha. Starting May 6, some 230 fired miners and truckers who carry rice, corn, and milk from the Sintarcarbon miners’ union, told the Militant by phone from Riohacha.

They’re maintaining a ban on his views on Facebook and other “social media,” in hopes of preventing him from running for president again in 2024. But if they remain in their blood lust, their real targets are the workers who voted for Trump, as well as freedom of speech and political rights.

Trump, as well as all other Republican and Democratic Party politicians, defends to the hilt the interests of U.S. imperialism. But Trump also presented himself as an outsider who would work to end the carnage working people face and take on the “swamp” of politicians in Washington.

What liberals fear most is the working class, the “deplorables” as Hillary Clinton famously termed them, especially in smaller cities where workers account for a large part of the population. The measure includes over 74 million who voted for Trump in 2020, and the 80 million who didn’t vote for either capitalist candidate.

On May 5 Facebook’s so-called oversight board upheld the edict by company CEO Mark Zuckerberg to ban Trump from Facebook, where he had more than 55 million followers. Facebook’s January decision to block Trump was also blocked from Snapchat and Twitter, for example, has frequently blocked accounts of organizations and political leaders in Cuba who defend the revolution.

Last October, Facebook “deactivated” for 24 hours the account of Cheryl LaBash, a co-chair of the National Network on Cuba, and 14 others for posting information on a Nov. 14-15 conference organized to fight against the U.S. rulers’ economic war on Cuba.

Facing growing criticism over censorship, Facebook’s Zuckerberg, in a public-relations scam, set up his “oversight board” of “experts” last October to review company rulings. While backing Facebook’s January decision to block Trump, the board said Zuckerberg has to decide for himself whether to maintain the ban indefinitely.

In a recent U.S. Supreme Court case, Justice Clarence Thomas suggested that these tech platforms should be regulated like the gas and electric utilities. This would circumscribe the censors at Facebook, Google and Twitter.

The protests in Colombia portend unrest across Latin America as the capitalist rulers move to impose cuts in health care, education and other social spending, the Militant said.

On May 6 the Colombian government ordered the expulsion of Omar Rafael Garcia, first secretary of the Cuban Embassy in Bogotá, claiming that he was “carrying out activities in the country that are incompatible” with diplomatic relations.

An impending crisis

Latin America registered the sharpest economic contraction in the world in 2020. Tens of millions have been left without jobs, facing conditions similar to those in Colombia.

Governments in the semicolonial world have borrowed heavily from foreign and domestic capitalist lenders to try to keep their economies afloat. Many of these countries, which depend heavily on remittances and remittances, were already deeply indebted before the pandemic slowdown. The International Monetary Fund and World Bank have suspended payments or restructured debts for some of the countries.

The Militant/Dan Fein

Witch hunt against Trump, political rights continues

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a highly unusual move, FBI agents raided the Washington-area home of Victoria Toensing, a lawyer who worked closely with Giuliani. They seized her cellphone.

The liberal media— New York Times, Washington Post and NBC News—rushed to get the “news” in print so fast that they reported it inaccurately. Each had to retract false claims in their coverage saying Giuliani had received FBI warnings on “Russian disinformation.”

At the same time, federal Judge Amy Berman Jackson is going after former Attorney General William Barr, claiming he had “missed” her and Congress about former FBI Director Robert Mueller’s nearly two-year-long witch hunt against Trump on baseless charges he had secret ties with Russia.

The goal of the liberals isn’t just to ruin, and imprison if possible, Trump and those around him. It’s to send a message to anyone who doesn’t think “cor- rectly”—that is, as they do— of what can be done to them.

Seth Galinsky contributed to this article.

In high and against Trump, political rights continues

Giuliani “We don’t want to talk about legal gagging,” Robert Costello, Giuliani’s lawyer, told the media. Costello said the object of the search was to smear Giuliani as a political enemy of the fact his client had twice offered to answer any prosecutors’ questions. FBI agents also executed a search warrant at the Washington-area home of Victoria Toensing, a lawyer who worked closely with Giuliani. They seized her cellphone.

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Seth Galinsky contributed to this article.
Continued from front page against bosses lockouts.

“These attacks by the bosses have staked attacks for all working people and soli- darity is crucial,” Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for California State Assembly, told the Militant. “Bosses at both plants are determined to keep production going with scab la- bor. Working people and our unions need to build the widest possible sup- port for these labor struggles.”

Workers confront attacks from em- ployers and their governments across North America. This includes steel- workers at ATI, costumers at Warren Met in Alabama, nurses in Worceste- ter, Massachusetts, and packinghouse workers at Olymel in Quebec.

Port workers in Quebec walked out over intolerable and dangerous work schedules, but were ordered back to work by the federal government. Using anti-labor tactics to hold the line, claiming the unions’ fight for safety was disrupting “essential” work, includ- ing distribution of medical supplies. But it is the government, more than the Canadian government itself, is responsible for the crisis in medical care and vaccination there. They admit only 26% of Canada’s population has been fully vaccinated as of May 7.

Bodies, gov’t look to squeeze workers

All of these fights deserve wide- spread publicity and support. Even with a spurt in hiring, the unem- ployment rate in the U.S. actually rose last month to 6.1%, after falling since the beginning of the year.

New layoffs and new layoffs came out, the bourgeois press has been full of articles with headlines like the Wall Street Jour- nal’s “Millions Are Unemployed. Why Can’t Companies Find Workers?”

The fact is, workers see that many of the jobs available today — at McDon- ald’s or Walmart and the like — are low paying. They feel capable of waiting for something that pays more. This makes bosses furious. Their idea is that wages and conditions everywhere should be most employers and workers — and without trou- ble some unions.

The Chamber of Commerce and some politicians say the problem is un- employment pay too well, especially with pandemic-motivated extra payouts and longer terms. These measures were adopted both by Joseph Biden and Don- ald Trump. A growing number of state governments are canceling the extra $300-a-week federal payouts.

Some liberal commentators worry that leaving workers in the lurch with- out jobs or a handout may make them rebellious. Throwing money at people who “have been left out and are most distrustful” is necessary, New York Times columnist David Brooks wrote May 6, in order to “reduce the sense of menace and threat” from millions who have “seceded from the cultural, political and social institutions of na- tional life.” Brooks sees handouts as es- sential to controlling working people he loathes and considers dangerous.

President Biden has been sitting on the bandwagon of those insisting work- ers take whatever job they’re offered or suffer the consequences. “The law is clear: if you’re receiving unemployment ben-efits and you’re offered a suit- able job, you can’t refuse that job and just keep getting the unemployment benefits,” he said May 10. “No one should be allowed to game the system.”

Biden used April’s rise in unemploy- ment to claim his trillions-dollar “Amer- ican Jobs Plan” infrastructure scheme is needed. This is built around bailouts for state governments and spreading lar- gesse to construction and other bosses, in hopes they’ll hire. The plan itself doesn’t actually provide a single job.

“The Socialist Workers Party says we need to fight for a government-funded public works program to create mil- lions of jobs at union-scale pay build- ing schools, hospitals, day care centers, housing and other things workers need,” Britton said. “The program should be run under workers control, to make sure what is built is done safely.

“Our unions need to fight to cut the workweek with no cut in pay, to share the work available around,” he said. Fighting for these steps would unite employed and unemployed workers in common struggle.” Alongside per- sistent unemployment, workers face a 4.2% rise in inflation over the past 12 months, the biggest hike since 2008. Gas prices have risen 22% over the past year.

“Tied to fighting for jobs, our unions need to organize workers to struggle for cost-of-living adjustments in every con- tract, and in unemployment and retire- ment benefits,” Britton added. “Every- time prices rise so must our wages.”

As hiring steps up, workers gain confidence, fighting spirit

BY SETH GALINSKY

hiring steps up, workers gain confidence, fighting spirit, and organizing power.

Working people face serious chal- lenges. We have taken big blows over the last several decades, a consequence in part of union officials fostering reli- ance on capitalist politicians to “help” us, instead of mobilizing our own strength through our unions.

The Socialist Equality Party takes advantage of these real challenges, not to point a road forward that can build the unions, but to demoralize workers and undercut union power.

After learning what the group is up to, on some occasions strikers have told the Socialist Equality Party to leave the picket line. This anti-labor outfit’s provocative actions can place barriers in front of the Socialist Work- ers Party and others who come to bring solidarity, learn more about the strik- ers’ battle and help get out the word.

But one of the strongest weapons strikers have to win solidarity is tell- ing their stories, the truth about con- ditions on the job, the depth of the take-backs the bosses are trying to impose, the importance of their fight for safety, better wages and working conditions, and respect.

The more solidarity we can or- ganize, the less room is there for an anti-working-class operation like the World Socialist Web Site to ply their anti-union wares.
First US general strike in 1877 showed power of labor

The “Great Strike” of 1877 sparked by starvation wages and brutal working conditions, started among rail workers and then grew in more than a million others. It alarmed the capitalist rulers. Federal, state and city governments unleashed troops, cops and gangs of thugs on strikers, cheered on by the bosses’ press. Karl Marx wrote that this mighty class battle “could very well be the point of origin for the creation of a serious workers’ party.” The exception being that for the next 20 years, the federal troops had to intervene at least 11 times to suppress strikes. More than a hundred workers were killed and several hundred badly wounded. For a full week the strikes crowded from the front pages of the newspapers all reports of the war between Russia and Turkey, then in progress, and of the campaign against the Sioux Indians in the Idaho territory. The general public, both workers and employers, became aware that a national labor movement had been born.

Although the strikes were primarily a protest against reductions in wages, they had a more profound origin in the depression that resulted from the panic of 1873. Stimulated by the Civil War, industry and commerce had prospered. For a number of years all kinds of business enterprise had been confidently undertaken. The first transcontinental railroad had been opened in 1869. In the cities, factories had replaced home industry. Immigration had been encouraged and the population had increased. Corporations had sprung up and the foundations for vast fortunes had been laid. The working class understood that the failure of the Crédit Mobilier and the Union Pacific had disclosed to the public a financial thieving that had gone into the Pacific and the Transcontinental Railroad.

Many thousands lost food, clothing, shelter, medical attention. …

The railroads, which had cut wages steadily, prepared for another reduction, in order that freight rates might be lowered. The Pennsylvania Railroad led the way with a 10 per cent cut to take effect June 1. On many other lines — the Erie; Lake Shore; Michigan Southern; Indianapolis and St. Louis; Vandalia; New York Central and Hudson River — a similar reduction was announced for July 1. These notices threw the men, already earning barely enough to support their families, into despair. When they protested against the cuts, their committees were summarily discharged and their small unions dissolved. With thousands of jobless men begging for places, the railroad officials felt certain that the workers, no matter how intense their dissatisfaction, would be able to walk out of the country.

But the railroads failed to calculate the sharp popular feeling against them. Farmers throughout the country resent ed the high, almost confiscatory freight rates. … Workers were sullen because of continued wage cuts and unemployment, and the railroads, as employers of the largest number of workers, stirred up great ill-will. Besides, scandals like that of the Crédit Mobilier and the Union Pacific had disclosed to the public a fraction of the bribery, corruption, and financial thieving that had gone into the building of the railroads.

From the Baltimore and Ohio, the Pennsylvania, the Erie, and the New York Central roads the “striking mania” rolled westward. Once this stimulus was present, the discontent of the entire railway system was unleashed everywhere disclosed itself. With-in a week after the first walkout at Camden Junction near Balti-more, strikes spread on the Lake Shore; Michigan Central; Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago; Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and St. Louis; Ohio and Mississippi; Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati and Indianapolis; Chicago, Alton and Indiana; and St. Paul and Minneapolis.

And so for the next 30 years a general strike followed every 2 or 3 years. Railroads were on strike 82 times in the 1870’s, 128 times in the 1880’s, 509 times in the 1890’s. In 1883 the railroad officials had to decide whether they should pay or not. That year a strike of 3,000 men was crushed by the militia and an army of 8,000 federal troops without a shot being fired. Thus ended the national strike movement.

First US general strike in 1877 showed power of labor.
The latest violence in East Jerusalem, Israel and the Gaza Strip highlights the necessity for the Israeli and Arab governments and the leadership of Palestinian organizations to work together, both to end the deadly Gaza-Israel fighting and for recognition of both an independent Palestinian state and of Israel.

The spark for today’s crisis is the refusal of the Israeli government to halt attempts to evict 300 Palestinians from 13 households in Sheikh Jarrah, in East Jerusalem. Regardless of who “owns” the homes, Palestinians have lived in them since the 1950s. While the Israeli government portrays this as a private landlord-tenant dispute, Palestinians rightly fear that allowing the evictions would open the floodgate to more, and to Israeli government refusal to ever accept a Palestinian state. The spark has been fueled by the renewed Terry assault on Palestinians by Israeli settlers outraged by the threatened evictions only made matters worse, and to Israeli government refusal to ever accept East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state. People are watching like sharks — hoping there’s blood in the water.

The Militant, May 24, 2021

Steeworkers stand up to ATU union busting
Continued from front page
other mills over the last decade. As part of their attacks on the union, bosses locked out the union workers in May 2020.

At the same time, they’ve opened a large nonunion underground at Warrior Met’s No. 7 mine, told the strikers May 15. Strikers from other locals are planning to at- tend. ATU has refused to set severance and retirement packages for workers facing the looming shutdown at Louisville unless and until the contract is settled.

Strikers are determined to help each other and build solidarity with other striking workers. The company claims the reason they don’t want to make a revised offer, but instead of negotiating, the com- pany says, “You don’t pay your share. But I have to come home.”

"You face a job with no vacation, no pension, and high medical expenses families face. The bosses insist they are offering good wage in- creases. But they also say these offers are “based on savings generated from other proposals,” including in- creased productivity, “so 13 police officers from out of town could be housed there. That arrangement was ended when it became public. During one demonstration against Brown’s killing, legal aid lawyers were arrested after being pulled out of their car. Charges against them were later dropped.

The Militant, May 24, 2021

Striking miners rally, ready out for solidity
Continued from front page
ers, family members of retirees and other support- ers to Tannenhall State Park here May 5. The strike has entered its second month.

UMWA coal miners who work at Warrior Met’s two underground mines, coal preparation plant and central shop struck April 1 when their contract exp-ired. They’re fighting to regain ground lost in 2016 when major concessions in wages, benefits and work- ing conditions were forced on the union. Jim Walker, Resources, the former owner, went belly up and its creditors used a federal bankruptcy court to demand union concessions or they would close the mine.

UMWA said it would have to strike, along with William Londrigan, president of the Kentucky AFL- CIO; West Virginia American Federation of Teachers President Fred Albert; and others.

"The company is doing their best to starve us out,” UMWA member Steve Motte told the Militant May 8. He works at the coal preparation plant as a washer and cleaner in the room of machines.

Some miners’ families have formed a support group to help deal with medical bills and other problems workers face during the strike. Chelsea Prestridge, whose husband Andrew Brown, Jr., 25, was killed in a state of emergency is in place ahead of possible release of the body camera footage. Permits are now required for each demonstration. National organizations op- posing these restrictions include the NAACP and the American Civil Liberties Union. Clergy led a demonstration of over 100 representa- tives from around the region.

Protesters say they’ll continue marching.

Andrew Brown Jr.
Continued from front page
been arrested? Something is wrong,” Glenda Brown, Andrew’s aunt, told a May 9 rally.

Demonstrators have called for the arrest of the deputies involved in the shooting and the release of their body camera footage. Protesters have traveled to Elizabeth City and Greeneville, Tenn., and to Raleigh, North Carolina to take part in the actions. There have been smaller solidarity actions in other parts of the state.

Authorities allowed Brown’s family to view only 20 seconds of the cops’ body camera footage last month. On May 6 a judge ruled they would be al- lowed to see just under 20 minutes. After seeing that excerpt May 11, Brown’s son, Jadon Freebee, said that his father “did not de- serve to get killed. In any way, shape, or form, he did not pose any threat at all.”

“Twenty seconds, not enough. Twenty minutes, not enough,” Glenda Brown said May 9. “We want to see the whole tape.”

Under North Carolina law a judge has to order the release of footage by body-worn cameras. In this case Judge Jeffrey Foster refused the Brown family’s request after authorities argued it would jeopardize their investigation. Since then the fam- ily has called for the law to be changed.

Under pressure from ongoing demonstrations, various political leaders in the state, including Justice Secretary Pam闻ad, have backed those calls. Changing the law would effect other cases in the state involving African Americans who died in police and prison custody.

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Continued from front page
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