

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

SWP: For recognition of a Palestinian state and of Israel

— PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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SWP: 'Workers need to build our own party, a labor party'

BY JACOB PERASSO

ALBANY, N.Y. — Socialist Workers Party candidates Ved Dookhun for Albany mayor and Kathie Fitzgerald for Albany Common Council president have been joined by supporters campaigning in working-class areas of the city since announcing their campaign at a press conference here May 19.

The following day WAMC-radio featured the campaign. Fitzgerald, a retail worker, "was inspired by the civil rights movement as a young teen. In 1964 she joined CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality, and has participated in protests against police brutality and racism," reporter David Lucas said.

The council president, Fitzgerald told Lucas, "should use his or her position to mobilize support for organized workers or organizing workers. The SWP candidate "pointed to the one-day protest strike last December by nurses at Albany Medical Center hospital, fighting staffing ratios that are unsafe."

Earlier this month Fitzgerald had
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Stand with coal miners on strike in Alabama!

Fight to win pay, benefits lost in bankruptcy



UMWA

May 20 McCalla, Alabama, rally in solidarity with United Mine Workers on strike against Warrior Met Coal. Miners are fighting to reverse concessions forced on them five years ago.

BY JOHN BENSON

BROOKWOOD, Ala. — Some 1,100 United Mine Workers of America union members have been on strike since April 1, seeking to win back concessions forced on them five years ago by Warrior Met Coal company. They have set up a dozen or so picket shacks at mine portals, railroad cross-

ings, and other mine facilities and are reaching out for solidarity.

Henry Clay Dennison, a rail worker and former coal miner from Seattle, and this worker-correspondent stopped by picket lines here May 21-22 to talk with strikers about their fight and to bring solidarity from rail workers in western Washington.

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After the cease fire, what road forward in the Middle East?

BY SETH GALINSKY

Both Hamas, the reactionary Islamist party that rules the Gaza Strip, and the government of Israel claim they "won" the latest round of fighting that ended with a May 21 cease-fire. This is the fourth time since 2008 Hamas rocket attacks against Israeli civilian areas have been met with Israeli retaliation.

In fact, neither side won a "victory," and the only thing certain is that this bloody cycle is likely to be repeated. The only road forward, the Socialist Workers Party explains, is "for the Israeli and Arab governments and leaderships of Palestinian organizations to begin immediate talks to recognize both Israel and an independent Palestinian state." (Excerpts from this statement are available on page 8.)

Until then, it is working people in Israel and the Palestinian territories who will pay the price.

Hamas fired more than 4,300 missiles targeting civilians in Israel, killing 12 people, including three immigrant workers and two Arab citizens. Some 242 people were killed in Gaza by Israeli airstrikes or, in some cases, by Hamas' own rockets falling short. Those killed

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After calls for clemency are rejected in Texas, state executes Quintin Jones



May 18 protest at governor's mansion in Austin, Texas, urging state grant Quintin Jones, inset, clemency, life in prison. Capitalist rulers use death penalty to intimidate working people.

BY JANET POST

Quintin Jones, a 41-year-old African American, was executed at the Texas State Penitentiary in Huntsville May 19. After 20 years on death row, he was given a lethal dose of pentobarbital, which attacks the brain and central nervous system and is used to euthanize animals.

Appeals against the execution

went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, whose denial came less than 30 minutes before Jones was executed. His petition for clemency and life in prison was rejected by the state's parole board, a decision Texas Gov. Greg Abbott declined to reconsider.

Jones was sentenced to death in 2001 for killing his 83-year-old great-

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Working people face fight for jobs, steepest price hikes in many years

BY TERRY EVANS

With hiring picking up, but still slowly, working people confront both large-scale joblessness, pressure on wages and working conditions, and the steepest price hikes in over a decade.

Join 'Militant' in fight to overturn bans by Florida, Indiana prisons!

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

As of May 26 the *Militant* has not received any word from the Florida Department of Corrections Literature Review Committee about whether it will reverse the ban of all five March issues of the paper by Century Correctional Institution prison authorities. The committee told David Goldstein, the *Militant's* attorney, they had scheduled a May 20 meeting to review the bans.

If upheld, Goldstein plans to file an

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The class-struggle road to changing these conditions starts from expanding solidarity with today's labor struggles — strikes at Warrior Met Coal, ATI steel, Volvo trucks, St. Vincent Hospital in Massachusetts, and battles against lockouts at the Marathon Petroleum and ExxonMobil refineries.

Some 16 million remain officially out of work, and at least another 6.6 million workers want a job but are

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Back Quebec iron ore workers strike against ArcelorMittal

Massachusetts nurses strike over safety goes into 12th week

Bakery workers in Northern Ireland win strike, pay raise

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN
AND ÓLÓF ANDRA PROPPÉ

BELFAST, Northern Ireland — Two hundred bakery and dispatch workers won an improved pay offer from bosses at Hovis and voted to return to work May 24. The workers, members of the Unite union and the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, had been on strike since May 14.

At stake was regaining some of the ground lost over the past 12 years. “We got an increase in basic pay” in 2009, “but lost all premium payments for shifts, weekends, overtime, public holidays. Year by year it’s fallen back,” shop steward Justin Clarke told the *Militant* on the picket line May 20. The workers were demanding wage parity with the company’s seven sites in Britain, amounting to a 10% raise.

Hovis is the second-largest bread production company in the U.K.

These reporters, members of the Communist League in London and Manchester, England, visited the picket line to learn more about the workers’ fight and to bring a solidarity card signed by 35 striking refuse workers from Thurrock, just east of London. We received a warm welcome from strikers, who were trying to maintain their picket line as torrential rain and 60 mph winds uprooted their gazebos and brought down a fence adorned with a union banner.

When he saw the card from the refuse workers, Clarke said, “This is great!” He went to draw up a card in reply.

“We really appreciate you coming,” said Irena Movakova, originally from Slovakia. She is one of the few women working at the plant and described the support she’s received from male co-workers to learn and hold down the job.

Extending solidarity

David Blackhorn, a bakery laborer with 27 years at the plant, proudly told us he was one of 20 strikers who went to Queen’s University here to extend solidarity to workers at the college child care center who are organizing protest strikes against having to work an extra hour a week with no extra pay.

Bakery workers’ demands are “unsustainable,” Hovis bosses said. They initially offered a 3% raise. A week later, they increased it to 8.4% over three years. This was rejected by workers in

May 30 caravans: ‘End US economic war against Cuba!’



Militant/Norton Sandler

Caravans and rallies are being organized in cities across the U.S., and in Canada, the U.K. and other countries — including in Cuba — May 30 to demand: End the U.S. embargo against Cuba! U.S. out of Guantánamo now! End U.S. travel restrictions against Cuba.

These monthly protests — initiated at the end of last year by the National Network on Cuba; Puentes de Amor (Bridges of Love), a Cuban-American group started by Seattle teacher Carlos Lazo; and local Cuba coalitions — have been growing. They include participants driving cars, riding bicycles and holding other public events. Above, April 25 rally in Los Angeles.

These protests have been welcomed in Cuba, where solidarity actions were organized. During last month’s caravan on April 25, some 3,000 people in Santa Clara and Las Tunas joined in, riding bicycles, motorcycles and skateboards.

On June 23 the United Nations General Assembly is scheduled to hear debate and vote on a resolution demanding the U.S. government end its over 60-year economic war against Cuba. The National Network on Cuba is organizing protests at the U.N. in New York; in front of the White House in Washington, D.C.; and in other cities that day. That month caravans will be held Sunday, June 20, to focus attention on the U.N. vote.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

Join caravans against US embargo on Cuba! Sunday, May 30

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

Join monthly car/bike
caravans in cities across
the US and Canada.

For the protest nearest you,
contact the National Network
on Cuba at nnoc.org or see list of
Militant distributors on page 8.

THE MILITANT

Back India farmers in fight for their livelihoods!

Hundreds of thousands of farmers in India have organized encampments on roads to New Delhi for the last 5 months protesting government anti-farmer “reforms” which would be devastating for them. Subscribe now to the *Militant* for ongoing coverage of their struggle!



Bharti Kisan Union Ekta Ugrahan
Protest May 12 outside New Delhi by
women in Indian farmers’ movement.

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a picket line vote, reported Unite official Donal O’Coffaigh. “Within hours management made another offer of 8% over two years,” he wrote. That offer was accepted by a 79% vote.

“We’re rock solid and united,” bakery worker Richard Finch told us, pointing out the strike involved workers who were both Catholic and Protestant. Sectarian divisions fostered by the British rulers to undermine common action by working people in Northern Ireland have declined in recent decades.

Pointing to the profits bosses have made recently, Finch said, “This plant has been booming during the pandemic, providing about half the bread

in Northern Ireland. Its sales to the Republic of Ireland have doubled.”

Shoppers sent reports and photos to the *Belfast News Letter* that showed supermarkets increasingly short on bread during the 11-day strike.

Workers on the picket line blasted police attempts to curtail their picketing, which they organized round-the-clock.

“They’ve cited COVID to try to reduce picket numbers against workers who have worked throughout the pandemic providing much needed bakery supplies,” said Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union official Laura Graham.

Marnie Kennedy in Belfast contributed to this article.

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'Workers need a labor party'

Continued from front page

visited the picket line of striking nurses at St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester, Massachusetts, to deliver a \$60 collection and solidarity card from her Walmart co-workers.

"We need to organize solidarity with miners, steelworkers, nurses and others on strike," Dookhun, a freight rail conductor, told Francesca Jones on her porch in Albany May 21. "As the unions become strengthened through fights like these, we need to build a party independent of the Democrats and Republicans."

Jones voiced concern about crime and violence in her North Albany neighborhood. "How can we be free enough to walk the street?" she asked. "We need police reform and educating officers," including "more police of color."

"The role of the police under capitalism is to keep working people in line," Dookhun said. "We need a different society and a different kind of police force. Reform is not going to change their function." Jones took out a subscription to the *Militant* and purchased *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP leader Jack Barnes.

SWP candidates help win new readers for 'Militant,' books

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Socialist Workers Party candidates and campaigners are talking to working people at their doors in cities, towns and rural areas; at union picket lines; protests against cop brutality; and caravans opposing the U.S. economic war against Cuba. Communist League campaigners are doing the same in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Everywhere they report a good response as the party approaches mid-way in the nine-week international drive to sell 1,400 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 1,400 books by SWP and other revolutionary leaders, and to raise \$145,000 for the Militant Fighting Fund. Those funds are crucial for meeting the paper's operating expenses.

In Minneapolis the SWP began May 22 campaigning to put Doug Nelson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, on the ballot. Thirty people have signed toward the 500 signatures needed.

In South Minneapolis, Amran Gutale thanked Nelson when he told her that his running mate, David Rosenfeld, had recently gone to Moorhead, Minnesota, to join a protest forum in the Moorhead

mosque parking lot after the mosque was spray painted with anti-Islamic graffiti. Rosenfeld is the party's candidate for City Council.

Gutale said she would like to invite Nelson to meet some friends in the Somali community at her house.

"We know that the problems facing the working class will not be solved by me or anyone else getting elected," Nelson said. "To address these problems, we need to build a movement capable of replacing capitalism."

SWP candidate files for N.J. ballot

"Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey governor, files over 1500 signatures on May 20th at the Office of Elections in Trenton," headlined an article May 21 in the online publication *Insider NJ*. That number of signatures was nearly twice the official requirement.

The article noted the SWP charts "a course to replace capitalist rule with a workers and farmers government." The May 25 online *New Jersey Globe* also featured the campaign.

Kuniansky campaigned in Clifton May 23, showing Maurice McCarthy the *Militant* at his house.

"I was just talking about the Indian farmers with my friends," he said, noting the paper's coverage of the massive protest by farmers in India to defend themselves from government moves threatening their livelihoods.

McCarthy smiled when Kuniansky described her campaign's staunch opposition to the U.S. embargo of Cuba. "When my grandmother went blind, we sent her to Cuba for treatment and they cleaned it up," he said.

To learn more about the Cuban Revolution he got the book *Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa* along with a subscription to the *Militant*.

The book explains the difference working people carrying through a socialist revolution makes. It describes how the Cuban government responded to calls from three West African countries for help as they faced the largest recorded outbreak of the deadly virus, sending hundreds of medical volunteers to provide hands-on care. McCarthy said he has three or four friends who will be interested in meeting the SWP candidate.

Kuniansky also talked with Yarlynn Martinez on her porch in Clifton the same day. Martinez moved here



Militant/Jacob Perasso
Ved Dookhun, SWP candidate for mayor of Albany, speaks to Francesca Jones on her porch May 21. Jones subscribed to *Militant*, got *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

from Puerto Rico six years ago to get medical treatment for her daughter that wasn't available on the island.

"I was a teacher in Puerto Rico but my certificate is not recognized here," she said. "Puerto Ricans are not treated equally. We pay for Social Security but only get half the benefits at retirement" that U.S. citizens receive.

Such second-class treatment shows that Puerto Rico is a colony of the U.S., Kuniansky said. Martinez agreed, pointing out that "electricity is still not restored in parts of Puerto Rico years after the hurricanes."

Workers in Puerto Rico and the U.S. face a common enemy, Kuniansky said. That's why working people here need to rally behind Puerto Ricans fighting for independence from U.S. colonial domination. Martinez subscribed to the *Militant* to read more about working-class struggles.

Boost to Militant Fighting Fund

In Chicago, Dan Fein spoke by phone with Michael Zimmerman, a retired veteran who lives in Westfield, Indiana, to discuss the Militant Fighting Fund May 24. Zimmerman subscribed to the *Militant* in November. He said his family "loves the paper." They all read it aloud and discuss the articles. He contributed \$100 to the fund and told Fein, "I like the fact that the *Militant* promotes class consciousness."

Stephen Coenen, a subscriber in St. Louis who is a trainer at a pharma-

ceutical company, contributed \$50 the next day. He told Fein he supports the *Militant* because "the only way to address the inequalities in society is to build a working-class movement and more unions."

To help expand the readership of the *Militant* and books on revolutionary working-class politics, and to contribute to the Militant Fighting Fund, see the directory page 4 for the distributor nearest you. Or visit themilitant.com to purchase a subscription and contribute online.

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Militant/Lea Sherman
May 20 filing in Trenton, New Jersey, to put Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey governor, on ballot. From left are SWP candidates, Róger Calero for New York mayor; Osborne Hart for Philadelphia district attorney; Kuniansky; Candace Wagner for New Jersey lieutenant governor; SWP attorney Lawrence Otter; and campaign supporter Gale Shangold.

Campaign to expand reach of 'Militant,' books, fund

April 24 - June 29 (week four)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Albany	80	35	80	34	\$8,000	\$1,750
Atlanta	80	39	80	33	\$11,000	\$3,302
Chicago	115	60	115	53	\$13,200	\$6,784
Dallas	40	31	35	21	\$3,000	\$850
Lincoln	15	6	15	4	\$400	\$100
Los Angeles	105	59	105	70	\$13,250	\$4,445
Louisville	90	45	90	38	\$5,000	\$2,150
Miami	35	8	35	9	\$4,000	\$2,581
N. New Jersey	80	39	80	42	\$6,250	\$2,030
New York	100	62	100	91	\$16,000	\$8,072
Oakland	90	42	90	46	\$13,000	\$3,273
Philadelphia	30	11	30	16	\$3,500	\$2,635
Pittsburgh	50	24	50	19	\$3,000	\$925
Seattle	95	41	95	31	\$12,500	\$2,820
Twin Cities	50	19	50	22	\$4,500	\$1,100
Washington	65	33	65	37	\$6,000	\$1,532
Other						
Total U.S.	1120	554	1115	566	\$122,600	\$44,349
Prisoners	25	24				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	45	24	45	27	\$4,000	\$400
Manchester	40	16	40	17	\$2,000	
Total U.K.	85	40	85	44	\$6,000	
Canada*	95	43	115	57	\$12,200	\$5,390
New Zealand	30	23	30	16	\$3,500	\$3,150
Australia	30	15	30	14	\$2,000	\$1,180
Total	1,385	699	1,399	697	\$146,300	\$54,069
SHOULD BE	1,400	616	1,400	616	\$145,000	\$63,800
*Raised goal						

Road forward in Middle East

Continued from front page

were mostly Hamas and Islamic Jihad combatants, as well as children and other civilians.

Much of Gaza lies in rubble from Israeli strikes that hit 1,500 rocket launchers, command posts, ammunition stores and tunnels that Hamas deliberately placed in working-class neighborhoods.

This time there was a new development, as small groups of Arab youth waving Hamas and Palestinian flags attacked synagogues and Jewish businesses, homes and individuals. And small groups of Jewish Israeli right wingers attacked Arab businesses and homes, desecrated Muslim cemeteries and beat Arabs in “mixed” cities.

Most working people, Jewish and Arab alike, oppose these attacks. Palestinians helped douse the flames when the Dossa Synagogue in Lod was set on fire by rioters and denounced the violence against Jewish residents.

Jewish workers came to the aid of Arab neighbors and co-workers and vice versa. After 56-year-old Jewish electrician Yigal Yehoshua was killed by a brick hurled at him by a mob in Lod, his family said they felt “honored” that his kidney was transplanted in a Palestinian woman.

“There must be peace between Jews and Arabs, real peace,” Randa Aweis, the Jerusalem woman who received the kidney, told the press.

The family of 17-year-old Arab high school student Mohammed Kiwan, reportedly killed by police in Umm al-Fahm, donated his organs to six people, five of them Jews. “We respect all people. Both Arabs and Jews,” his father Mahmoud told the press.

These examples demonstrate the potential for a different road.

Hamas: Drive the Jews out

Hamas cynically claims that it started its rocket fire against Israeli cities to support Palestinians fighting evictions in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem and to oppose the presence of Israeli police at the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

But Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Hamas Political Bureau, explained the group’s real aims in a speech in Qatar May 15. “The theory of coexistence between the two peoples [Jews and Arabs] within the 1948 borders — a theory they have been cultivating for 70 years — is being trampled underfoot,” he said.

The Hamas official said in another talk that diplomatic relations the governments of the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, Morocco and Kosova have made with Israel over the last year had been destroyed.

But Haniyeh is wrong. Steps by Arab regimes to reduce the pariah status of Israel, which can lay the groundwork for broader talks, have not been reversed. The UAE is going ahead with a \$1 billion oil exploration deal with Israel, according to Al Jazeera.

In a May 20 interview with Britain’s Sky News, Mahmoud al-Zahar, a co-founder of Hamas, was even more blunt. Al-Zahar boasted that the group consciously targets “civilian society” in Israel with its rockets. When asked if Israel has the right to exist, al-Zahar said, “No. Why? Why?” adding, “We are the owners of this.”

The “liberal” press in the U.S. covers up Hamas’ anti-working-class actions, including its initiation of the latest round of fighting and broad scope of its targeting of Israeli civilians.

The admissions by the two Hamas leaders still had not been reported by any major U.S. media as of May 25.

Arabs face discrimination in Israel

Despite being Israeli citizens, Arabs, who make up 20% of the population, face widespread discrimination in housing, education and jobs.

About 30% of Arab youth in Israel are neither employed nor in school; among Jewish youth that’s only 13%. In 2014 the average wage of Jewish citizens of Israel was \$3,157 a month. For Arab men it was less than \$1,900.

Fidel Castro: ‘No one has been slandered more than the Jews’

BY SETH GALINSKY

Supporters of Hamas and some middle-class radicals have responded to the recent fighting between the reactionary Islamist group and the Israeli military by organizing protests under the slogan “From the river to the sea, Palestine must be free” — a call for the destruction of Israel and expulsion of the Jews. But it’s worth remembering what Fidel Castro, the central leader of the Cuban Revolution, had to say about Israel and antisemitism.

Castro often strongly disagreed with the actions and politics of the Israeli gov-



Rambam Health Care Campus

Jewish and Arab workers at Rambam Health Care in Haifa, hold Arabic and Hebrew signs May 16 saying “Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies.” This is key to class-struggle road forward.

There is broad sympathy among Israeli Arabs with the plight of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. During the recent fighting, some Arab youth were drawn into seeing Jews as targets. That dangerous development registers the absence of any working-class leadership organizing to unite working people in Israel in struggle against discrimination and capitalist exploitation.

Of the more than 1,500 arrested for joining in the wave of inter-ethnic violence, 168 are Jewish. This disparity reflects both the larger number of attacks by anti-Jewish mobs and the more lenient approach by police toward the anti-Arab rightists.

Attacks on Jews in U.S., Europe

In the last week of the Israel-Gaza fighting, large demonstrations took place in cities across the United

States and Europe under the slogan “Free Palestine.” Many actions, including a protest of several thousand in Brooklyn, New York, May 15, took place under Hamas’ slogan, “From the river to the sea, Palestine must be free.” This is an open call to destroy the state of Israel and drive Jews out of the region.

These actions were accompanied by acts of Jew-hatred, including in New York and Los Angeles. Thugs waving Palestinian flags beat a Jewish man on his way to a pro-Israel action in Times Square and threw fireworks at bystanders in New York’s nearby diamond district where some stores are Jewish-owned.

At the same time, thousands marched in Tel Aviv May 22 in a show of support for an end to the violence and for “coexistence” between Jews and Arabs.

ernment. But he went out of his way to explain he supported the right of Israel to exist as a refuge for the Jews.

In 2010 Castro invited Jeffrey Goldberg, a reporter for the *Atlantic* monthly, to come to Cuba and interview him about Israel and Tehran. Castro urged Goldberg to print his comments, and then defended him for doing so. His remarks were covered worldwide.

Over the previous year, then-Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had been speaking out, claiming that the Holocaust — the systematic murder campaign in which 6 million Jews were

killed by the Nazis — was a lie, an “unprovable and mythical claim” invented by the Israeli government to justify the country’s existence.

“I don’t think anyone has been slandered more than the Jews. I would say much more than the Muslims,” Castro told Goldberg. “They have been slandered much more than the Muslims because they are blamed and slandered for everything.”

“Over 2,000 years they were subjected to terrible persecution and then to the pogroms,” Castro said. “The Jews have lived an existence that is much harder than ours. There is nothing that compares to the Holocaust.”

“Let’s imagine that I were [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu,” Castro said, “that I were there and I sat down to reason through [the issues facing Israel], I would remember the 6 million Jewish men and women, of all ages were exterminated in the concentration camps.”

The communist revolutionary told Goldberg that the Iranian government needed to understand the dangerous consequences of Holocaust denial and Jew-hatred. When Goldberg asked Castro if he would tell Ahmadinejad the same thing, Castro replied, “I am saying this so you can communicate it.”

Goldberg asked Castro, “Do you think the State of Israel, as a Jewish State, has a right to exist?”

“Yes, without a doubt,” Castro replied.

Goldberg was surprised. He shouldn’t have been. Castro’s defense of the right of Israel to exist and opposition to Jew-

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Back Quebec iron ore workers strike against ArcelorMittal

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

PORT-CARTIER, Quebec — More than 2,500 iron ore miners, processing, rail and office workers here and in Fermont, members of United Steelworkers Locals 5778, 6869, 8664, 7401 and 7401-FP, have been on strike against ArcelorMittal since May 10. The company is the largest steel company in the world and biggest private employer on Quebec's North Shore.

Fermont, where the mine is located, is a town of less than 3,000 in Quebec's far north, where temperatures are similar to Siberia. Port-Cartier, a port town of just under 7,000, lies on the St. Lawrence River mouth, from where the ore is shipped to steel mills along the Great Lakes. Both Port-Cartier and Fermont were developed by the steel bosses for their profit, and conditions of life in Fermont are particularly difficult.

The question of schedules is a major question for the strikers. "No to 7/7, We want a schedule for families here," was one of the most popular hand-written slogans on the strike signs this reporter saw on picket lines. The company wants to be able to fly workers into work seven days a week, and then fly them out for the next seven.

Prices of iron ore, an important ingredient in making steel, have risen, and workers are demanding improvements in their contract.

Key issues are wage increases, improved pensions, higher premiums paid to workers in remote locations and better working conditions. The union says the bosses have broken promises made in 2017, which has deepened the bitterness of union members, particularly on health, cleanliness and issues related to work camps and food services.

Union representatives met with the company May 20 for the first time since the strike began. "The meeting this afternoon allowed us to see that there is no basis for an agreement possible at this time," Nicolas Lapierre, United Steelworkers coordinator for the North Shore, said in a statement on the Quebec Steelworkers website.

"I support the guys in their strike. For me it is important to fight for good working conditions and prevent abuses by the big companies," 19-year-old Marc-Antoine Fortin, marching on the picket line May 14 in solidarity with his striking father, told the *Militant*.

"There's a real movement of solidarity among workers here," said production operator Johanne Proulx. She said that in response to one of the picket signs saying "Honk," many people in cars and trucks passing by did so as they drove by on Highway 138, the North Shore's only route along the St. Lawrence River.

On May 20 members of Steelworkers Local 9344 from the Iron Ore Company of Canada in Sept-Iles joined the picket line here, bringing a check for 5,000 Canadian dollars (\$4,150) and a pledge to start giving CA\$10 per member per month for the duration of the strike.

Strikers also received a CA\$25,000 donation from Steelworkers Local 9996, which represents workers at the Quebec Iron Ore Company mine at Lake Bloom, only 10 miles from Fermont. "We are now in negotiations ourselves, and several of the realities raised by our broth-



Militant/Michel Dugré

Over 150 people in Longueuil, near Montreal, march outside ArcelorMittal headquarters May 21 to support iron ore miners on strike in Port-Cartier and Fermont in northern Quebec.

ers and sisters are also ours," Local 9996 President Yves Lapierre explained in a statement on the Quebec Steelworkers website. "We share the same Fermont way of life. For us it is a duty to be there when our brothers and sisters need it."

Over 150 people turned out to support the strikers May 21, marching to the company offices in Longueuil, near Montreal. In addition to several strikers from the North Shore, there were steelworkers from throughout Quebec —

including from Gaspésie, Sherbrooke, Quebec City, Sorel and Trois Rivières. Others came from different unions, like Unifor Local 121 members locked-out by Shell Canada since November 2020.

To support the ArcelorMittal strikers send messages and checks to: Syndicat des Métallos, 737 Boulevard Laure, Bureau 200, Sept-Iles, QC G4R 1Y2, Canada.

Michel Dugré contributed to this article.

ON THE PICKET LINE

Massachusetts nurses strike over safety goes into 12th week

WORCESTER, Mass. — "You can't spread nurses thin as they have done to us. The hospital is complaining that we will not back off our demand of four patients per nurse. But what is so bad about that demand?" Sandra Thomas, who has been a nurse for 16 years at St. Vincent Hospital here, told the *Militant* on the picket line May 12.

"We also want an increase in benefits so nurses can stay working here," she said. The hospital owners "see only the bottom line, and want us to work for them at low cost. They see the patient as a commodity — but they're a person!"

"We were taken advantage of, they

didn't respect us. That pushed us over the edge."

Thomas is one of the over 700 nurses here, organized by the Massachusetts Nurses Association, who've been on strike for 12 weeks against St. Vincent, which is owned by the Dallas-based Tenet Health chain.

"If we win language on staffing in our contract, there has to be teeth to it," said Karen Coughlin, who serves on the association's board of directors. "Seven hundred nurses walked out because we can't care for our patients. This strike is about safety. We're on strike because they did not listen to us"

"We have wonderful community support. We have had three interfaith

vigils on the picket line. We are part of the community. We live here and this is our hospital," Dominique Muldoon, co-chair of the union negotiating committee, told us May 23.

The most recent negotiations broke down after the hospital refused to consider a new contract proposal made by the union May 7. Following that the hospital announced it would hire permanent replacements for strikers and posted 102 job offers. The nurses responded with this action.

"It's a publicity stunt," Muldoon told the *Militant*, referring to the job postings. A recent survey showed widespread support for the strike among nurses statewide.

There has been informational picketing over contract issues by Massachusetts Nurses Association members at the Cambridge Health Alliance, Cape Cod Hospital, Falmouth Hospital and other medical facilities in recent weeks.

Some 120 United Steelworkers members on strike against ATI steel in New Bedford, part of a companywide strike by 1,300 workers in five states, "have joined our Saturday standouts at St. Luke's Hospital there to show support for our contract fight," Coughlin said, adding that the nurses have joined the steelworkers' picket lines too.

— Jacob Perasso

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



June 10, 1996

PARIS — "Massively reduce work time to create jobs," read the lead banner of the May 23 union demonstration here. The demonstration drew more than 10,000 people. Workers in a number of shops took part in work stoppages so that they could demonstrate.

The march was the first of a series of national actions. On May 29 several unions, including one of the teachers' unions, called a national day of action and a demonstration in Paris. On May 22, 1,500 Alcatel workers from Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium, and France participated in a demonstration in Paris to protest planned cutbacks.

The same day 1,500 marchers demonstrated to defend 300 undocumented workers who have been demanding regular immigration papers. The CFDT railroad workers' union invited the 300 immigrants to move into an unoccupied rail freight warehouse in Paris.



June 11, 1971

FT. GREELY, Alaska — After an overwhelmingly favorable reaction among troops to the first issue of the pro-GI-rights and antiwar *Arctic Arsenal*, GIs at Ft. Greely are pushing ahead with determination to continue publishing their paper and broaden the movement throughout military posts in Alaska.

In response to this expression of GI solidarity, company commanders at Ft. Greely have initiated an intensified campaign of harassment toward individual GIs and openly slandered and red-baited the *Arctic Arsenal*.

Far from letting the initiative swing to the brass in this case, the offensive has been taken in defense of constitutional rights. On May 30, a quickly called discussion was held at the post service club. It was generally agreed to reach GIs at other posts, setting the example and providing help for the establishment of their own papers.



June 8, 1946

Every worker must be troubled by a paradox which stares him in the face today. One after another, the biggest monopolies in the country were paralyzed by great strikes and then forced to concede substantial wage increases. Neither propaganda nor threats could weaken the strike front.

Yet this unprecedented power appears practically impotent today before the offensive of the capitalist government. Spearheaded by President Truman, Congress is driving through the most reactionary, labor-crippling laws seen in this country since the open shop days that followed the first World War.

During this critical phase of its war against the profit-greedy billionaires, organized labor finds itself without political weapons. The clear, unavoidable answer is that labor must have its own party, a labor party based upon and controlled by the trade unions.

In Defense of the US Working Class

by Mary-Alice Waters

"The years that are coming will bring organized resistance — worldwide — by growing vanguards of working people."

pathfinderpress.com



Joblessness, steep price hikes

Continued from front page

“discouraged,” as the bosses put it, and have stopped looking for work over the past four weeks.

Competition for jobs is aggravated by a sharp rise in inflation, officially 4.2%. But that figure masks the true impact on working people, because basic necessities, a big proportion of our monthly expenditures, are rising at a much faster pace. Meat prices rose 5.5% through 2020, pan white bread went up 13% between January 2020 and this April, and gas prices are the highest since 2015.

Used car prices soared 10% last month, as workers who can no longer afford to get a new car search for a ride.

Over two decades ago President Bill Clinton helped bosses fake the real extent of cost-of-living increases bearing down on us. They rejiggered the way the Consumer Price Index is calculated to exclude essential items whose prices were rising the fastest. For instance, when steak goes up, they say, working people substitute hamburger. So they replaced steak as an item in the CPI with ground beef. Shazam! No inflation.

Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell says don't worry, the price increases are only “transitory.” Some commentators in the bosses' press even tell us inflation is necessary to lubricate the wheels of the capitalist recovery. These middle-class commentators believe in their heart that higher profits for the bosses is the only way forward and the ruinous impact that even small price rises have on workers' lives is just something we have to live with.

New York Times economics correspondent Neil Irwin says restaurant owners blame price rises on workers who insist on better pay to come back to work after months of shutdowns and unemployment. McDonald's says that to expand hiring it will raise wages for 36,500 workers at its company-owned stores, but not at its franchise operations, which include the large majority of the hamburger emporium's workers.

Some bosses are fighting to keep wages down as they gear up for more hiring by offering one-time signing bonuses that do nothing to protect us from the ravages of inflation.

Wage rises don't create inflation

The myth that high prices are caused by workers' wage demands is used by

Castro on Israel

Continued from page 4

hatred was nothing new. The revolutionary government that came to power in 1959 established diplomatic relations with Israel and maintained them until 1973.

“True revolutionaries never threaten to exterminate a whole country,” Castro told *Le Monde* in September 1967, explaining his view it was a mistake for Arab governments and organizations to call for Israel's destruction.

Even after the Cuban government broke diplomatic relations with Israel in 1973, the two countries maintained economic relations. Jews in Cuba continue to visit Israel and Israeli athletes have been welcome to compete at international sporting events held in Cuba.

bosses to try to pit us against fellow workers who they call “consumers” to weaken our fighting capacity. But successful wage fights only allow workers to win a higher percentage of the wealth our labor produces.

Inflation isn't caused by workers winning pay hikes. It occurs when “the purchasing power of a national currency declines,” writes Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, in *New Internationalist* no. 10.

This is especially true today as capitalist rulers in Washington and elsewhere are printing money and raising their governments' national debt like there's no tomorrow, claiming it doesn't matter. At the same time, the International Monetary Fund, run by those same governments, impose onerous “austerity” budgets on semi-colonial countries that try to do the exact same thing.

“Governments and banks crank out money in various paper forms, eventually far outstripping the output of commodities that could be purchased with that money,” Barnes says. This feeds inflation.

Short of taking political power into our own hands, there is no way for workers to prevent periodic bouts of inflation under capitalism. But by organizing to build unions and fighting together for higher pay and escalator clauses in our contracts, we can protect our living standards.

“That's why each of the labor struggles taking place today sets an example for millions of other workers,” Rebecca Williamson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Seattle City Council, told the *Militant*. Williamson and her co-workers at a Walmart store organized a solidarity collection for locked-out Marathon oil refinery workers in St. Paul Park, Minnesota.

“The SWP urges workers and our unions to fight for a sliding scale of wages and hours. Thirty hours work for

Overtake bans on ‘Militant’ in Florida, Indiana prisons

Continued from front page

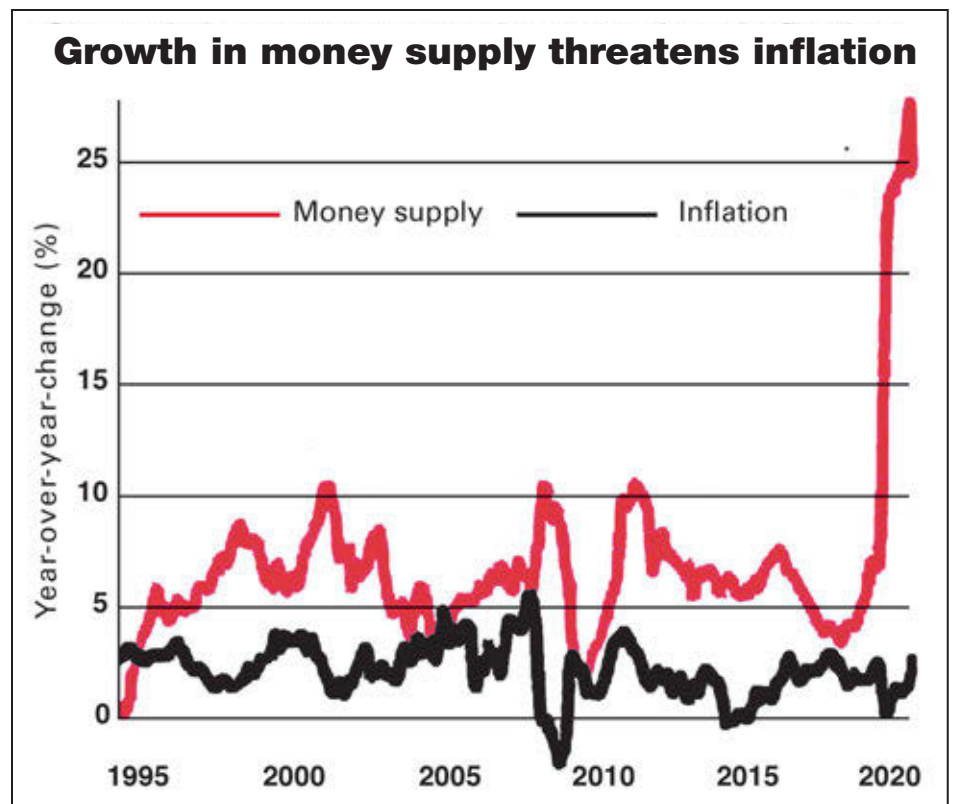
appeal demanding the impoundments be reversed.

“The banning of these issues by Century officials is a blatant attack on the *Militant's* constitutional rights of freedom of speech and of the press,” said John Studer, the paper's editor. “It deprived our readers behind bars access to their papers for over two months now.”

The rejection notices cited 11 articles that prison authorities claim “encourages riot, insurrection, rebellion, organized prison protest, disruption of the institution, or the violation of the federal law, state law or Department rules.”

But not a single article in the *Militant* has anything to do with this. The articles in the banned issues cover important developments in the labor movement: from the union-organizing drive at Amazon in Alabama to strikes by steelworkers against ATI and by bus drivers in Manchester, England, over pay and work hours. Labor struggles like these have been and will be the subject of numerous articles by newspapers worldwide.

One of the issues was impounded because authorities objected to an



Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

Top line shows expansion of money supply to record levels in past year as government grows debt, which feeds inflation. Price rises at 4.2% are highest for 12 years. Ruinous bouts of inflation highlight need for workers and unions to fight for higher wages, cost-of-living adjustments.

40 hours pay to share the work available around! And for cost-of-living adjustments in every contract, in our retirement benefits and in Social Security to offset every price increase,” she said.

Big grocery store and retail chain owners are looking to protect their profits from the effect of price rises on their sales. They expect customers will be looking for cheaper alternatives to brand names and are expanding the range of generic goods they produce. Bosses at Whole Foods have increased their “365” brand line to 3,000 products since it was introduced two years ago.

In the face of the global slowdown in production and trade, many capitalist governments have devalued their currencies, seeking to defend their own bankers and bosses against foreign competition by making imports more expensive. At the same time, massive unemployment continues to bear down. Millions of working people are being squeezed as prices of essential goods soar.

Many have been forced to cut meat and fruit from their diet and eat less nutritious but cheaper food.

In Pakistan the price of chicken has risen 85% over the last year. Imported rice rose 60% in Sierra Leone after the value of country's currency plunged.

These conditions are driving working people to take action to defend themselves. “No to high prices! Not to hunger!” chanted protesters in Nya-la, Sudan, as they and others in cities across the country took to the streets to protest a sharp rise in bread prices earlier this year.

“The road forward is for working people to break with the bosses' parties,” SWP candidate Williamson said “The Democrats and Republicans do the bidding of the ruling capitalist families. Workers need to build fighting unions and our own political party, a labor party. We need to organize in our millions to take political power into our own hands and establish a workers and farmers government.”

article headlined, “Protest: ‘Indict the Police Who Killed Breonna Taylor Now!’” This has been a topic frequently covered in the national press. Prison authorities also expressed objections to reports on the success that the *Militant* and Socialist Workers Party have had in winning contributions from readers from their government “stimulus” checks.

“At issue is the right of workers behind bars to read, think for themselves, and form their own opinions about what can be done about the economic and social crisis facing the working class today,” said Studer. “The *Militant* urges our growing number of prison subscribers to let us know if they are prevented from getting their paper.”

In Indiana, Kevin “Rashid” Johnson at the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility in Carlisle has also been deprived of a couple issues of the *Militant* that report on revolutionary advances made by working people in Cuba in the early 1960s. Authorities said they didn't like a photo showing “images of guns.”

At issue is a well-known historical photo of Cuban militia members celebrating after the defeat of the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at the Bay

of Pigs in April 1961 that was aimed at overturning the socialist revolution.

This is not the first time prison authorities have banned Johnson, a leader of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party, from receiving the *Militant*. In 2019 and again last year the paper fought successfully to reverse impoundments of his paper by authorities at different jails.

Among those who have spoken out against previous efforts by prison officials to ban the *Militant* are Amnesty International USA, National Lawyers Guild, PEN America, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, Florida Press Association, American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, union officials and many others.

Send letters urging these bans be reversed. In Florida, to Charles Huber, Literature Review Committee, Department of Corrections, 501 South Calhoun St., Tallahassee, FL 32399 or email Charles.Huber@fdcc.myflorida.com. In Indiana, write to Chief Counsel Jon Ferguson, Indiana Department of Correction, 302 W. Washington St., Room E-334, Indianapolis, IN 46204 or email jFerguson1@idoc.IN.gov. Please send a copy to themilitant@mac.com.

UAW Volvo truck workers vote bosses' contract down by 91%

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

DUBLIN, Va. — Some 2,900 members of United Auto Workers Local 2069 voted overwhelmingly to reject a proposed tentative agreement with Volvo Truck North America's New River Valley Plant bosses. The vote was 91% against Volvo's offer as a whole, and 83% against their wage proposal. After a 13-day strike, pickets had been taken down on April 30, but the fight for a contract continues. Back at work, workers are debating a new six-year contract, which will be voted on June 6. As of May 26 they've only seen a summary.

"I liked being on the picket line, it was the most fun ever. We got to know each other. We don't want to be divided," Kari Warren, who has worked here for three years as an absentee replacement worker covering unfilled shifts, told the *Militant*. "We have a union, we have to use it."

"We got solidarity from the Mack Truck plant in Hagerstown, Maryland, and some of the union truckers drove into the plant here and then drove back out," she said. The Sweden-based Volvo Group also owns Mack Trucks. In 2019 more than 3,600 autoworkers went on strike against Mack, and Volvo workers joined their picket lines.

Knocking on doors here to talk to workers and build solidarity with the Volvo fight, some workers told *Militant* worker-correspondents that they are following the union's efforts. Many have been discussing the issues with friends, neighbors and relatives who work at or retired from the 1.6 million square foot plant — Volvo's largest truck manufacturing facility in the world.

"When a trucker wanted a lift to the plant, I said, 'No,' I won't cross the picket line," said Michele Chewning, a former textile worker who now works at the breakfast bar in a local

hotel. "I might not have personally worked there, but I know how hard they work. Like any union fight, they need support. Volvo's not broke, the workers deserve what they need."

The unionists feel like they have a lot of leverage. Volvo has made record profits off truck sales over the last few years. Its profits rose by 89% to \$1 billion in the first quarter of 2021. Sales are surging so fast that Volvo bosses say they can't keep up with orders. The plant is in the midst of \$400 million in advanced technology upgrades and site expansion to prepare for future products, including the new Volvo VNR electric truck.

The plant has added 1,100 jobs since the last union contract was adopted in 2016, and is on track for more hiring to fill approximately 600 new positions in 2021. Under that contract, which set a series of different wage tiers, new hires make \$16.77.

In addition to the wages and tiers, another major issue is standing up for the retirees.

"It's even more important for those who aren't there to have someone to stand up for them. Workers get forced out, when their bodies can't handle the stress of work," said Kari Warren. "We fight for retirees. We are their voices now."

ATI strikers 'hang tough' after 9 weeks on picket line



Militant/Tony Lane

PITTSBURGH — Some 1,300 steelworkers union members at nine Allegheny Technologies Inc. plants in five states have been on strike since March 30. A federal mediator was called in after ATI bosses refused to bargain in good faith. Whenever *Militant* worker-correspondents have visited the picket lines to show solidarity and cover the strike, we've found workers determined to win back gains lost in a bitter seven-month lockout in 2015-16. An example of this is the strikers we met outside ATI's Vandergrift mill near here.

"We are hanging tough, we know what this fight is about. We are remaining unified and will through this whole thing," Weston Patcyk, who has worked six years in Vandergrift, told us May 13. "This fight is about solidarity. We have given concession after concession, no more." When we arrived and introduced ourselves, Patcyk and a fellow striker shouted out, "I know that paper supports our strike!" They pointed to a weeks-old copy of the *Militant* that had been passed around in the strike tent. They got the latest *Militant* and *In Defense of the US Working Class* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters. Several other strikers got copies of the paper, and one for the strike tent.

At the picket line in Washington, south of Pittsburgh, 30 strikers and their supporters gathered for a show of solidarity May 22, above. Strikers and others spoke, addressing the importance of the fight and their determination to last "One Day Longer" than the ATI bosses.

— MALCOLM JARRETT

Stand with coal miners on strike in Alabama!

Continued from front page

At a picket shack by the main entrance to the Warrior Met No. 4 mine we met Chris Daniel, a miner with over a decade of experience in West Virginia and Alabama.

"The main reason we are out here is because of Warrior Met's unfair labor practices," he said. "We need better wages and better benefits, like we had before. We need better working conditions and safety."

Five years ago, Warrior Met miners gave up major concessions in wages, benefits and working conditions under pressure from the bankruptcy courts and the mines' new owners after the previous owner, Jim Walter Resources, went belly up. Warrior Met is highly profitable.

"I work in Seattle," Dennison told Daniel, "but I worked in the coal mines in West Virginia and Alabama for 18 years, including five years near here at the Oak Grove mine.

"I came to Brookwood to bring a solidarity message from Pete Gushwa, president of my union, SMART-Transportation Division Local 324," Dennison said. "Workers in many industries face attacks by the bosses. My co-workers agree we have to stand together and use our unions to strengthen each other."

"If people don't think this strike affects them, they should remember the air traffic controllers," Daniel said, referring to the 1981 firing of 11,000 striking air traffic controllers by then-President Ronald Reagan. Members of other airport unions were not mobilized to honor and defend the strikers' picket lines, and the strike went down to defeat, setting up a long series of union-busting drives by employers in major industries.

"Three days ago was the 101st anniversary of the battle at Matewan," Daniel said, referring to the 1920s battles by the UMWA to organize nonunion mines in southern West Virginia. "The company hired goons who went into striking miners' houses and put their things out on the street. In Matewan, the miners fought back," Daniel said. "I don't want people to forget our history."

"The railroad bosses want to lower the price of our labor and are laying the

groundwork for major attacks on wages and working conditions," said Dennison. "We talk about this in our union. That's why my local president wrote a letter of support for the UMWA here."

"We need to rebuild the habit of solidarity with other unions to get ready for what the bosses are preparing to do to us on the railroads," Dennison said. "It's how we can gain the confidence to do what we need to defend ourselves and move forward. We have to use the unions we have — and organize unions where there aren't any."

Miners from the Oak Grove mine have been visiting the Brookwood miners' picket lines and attending the weekly solidarity rallies organized by the union at Tannehill State Park, each Wednesday at 6 p.m.

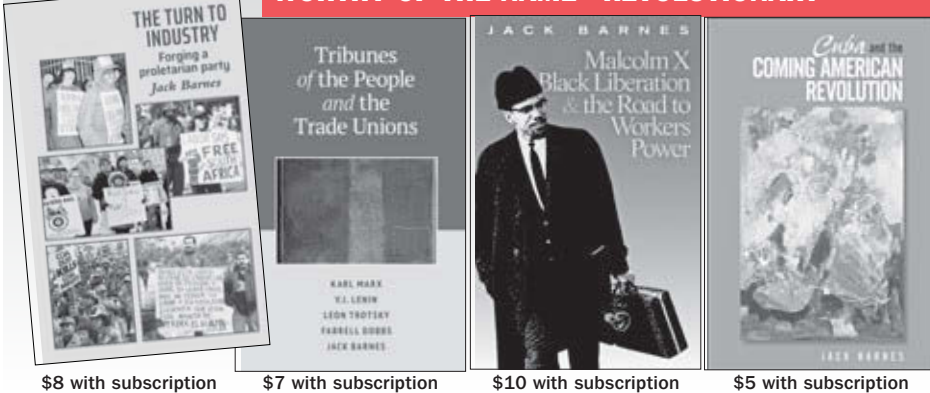
Dennison and I also went to an "Alabama Strike Fest" concert, organized by The Valley Labor Report, a weekly talk radio show, outside UMWA Local 2397's union hall May 22 to raise funds for the union's strike fund. The concert was attended by several hundred miners, family members and strike supporters. It was also livestreamed on YouTube, making it possible for people around the country to send in donations.

Help spread the word about the strike! Support and solidarity are needed. All donation checks should be made out to UMWA 2021 Strike Aid Fund and sent to: UMWA Strike Aid Fund, P.O. Box 513, Dumfries, VA 22026. Messages of support can also be sent to UMWA District 20, 21922 Hwy. 216 (Miners' Memorial Parkway), McCalla, AL 35111. Email: umwadistrict20@bellsouth.net.

Henry Dennison is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Seattle mayor.

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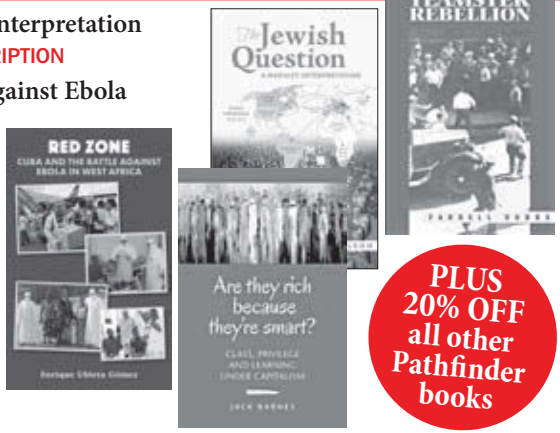
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For recognition of Palestinian state, Israel

The following is based on excerpts from a December 2017 statement by Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary.

Pressing for the Israeli and Arab governments and leaderships of Palestinian organizations to begin immediate talks to recognize both Israel and an independent Palestinian state is a burning political necessity today. Such an agreement must recognize the right of Jews everywhere to take refuge in Israel in face of the global rise of Jew-hatred and anti-Semitic violence, as well as the unconditional right of the dispossessed Palestinian people to a contiguous, sovereign homeland on territory — including East Jerusalem — conquered and occupied by the Israeli government during the 1967 war.

If such talks are to succeed, there is no question that the Palestinian representatives would insist on East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. Nor can there be any doubt that the Israeli delegation would need to agree to West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. ...

It is along this road that working people of all national backgrounds, religious beliefs and political allegiances in Israel and Palestine can use and defend their space to speak, organize and begin redressing the blood-drenched legacy of imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation. These historic outrages include ruthless colonial and national oppression across the Arab and Muslim countries, as well as the genocidal crimes of the Holocaust, the murderous pogroms preceding it across Eastern and Central Europe and Russia, and the enduring reality of Jew-hatred in today's crises-ridden capitalist world.

Prospects for sustained and effective struggle led by working people in Palestine or elsewhere in the Middle East against Washington's policies, and against their own local exploiting classes, are hobbled by political exhaustion in face of decades of setbacks and defeats due to anti-working-class misleadership, whether Stalinist, bourgeois nation-

alist or Islamist.

In the United States and other imperialist countries, organizations of middle class radicals claiming to be communist or socialist explicitly disavow any course to advance class solidarity among Palestinian, Jewish and other working people, often raising the reactionary cry, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!" This course to drive Jews out of the region disqualifies such groups from any moral or political legitimacy to speak as what Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin more than a century ago called "tribune[s] of the people ... able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects."

In opposition to Washington, to bourgeois governments and political organizations across the Middle East, and to the middle class left here in the United States, the Socialist Workers Party has a different starting point: the class interests and solidarity of workers and toiling farmers across the Middle East — be they Palestinian, Jewish, Arab, Kurdish, Turkish, Persian or otherwise, and whatever their religious or other beliefs — as well as working people in the United States and around the world.

We are *for* whatever helps working people organize and act together to advance our demands and struggles against the capitalist governments and ruling classes that exploit and oppress us and their petty bourgeois political servants and media apologists.

We are *for* whatever renews our class solidarity and self-confidence, advancing us along a revolutionary course toward a united struggle for workers power.

This is the proletarian internationalist course of action, part of our communist program, that members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party are discussing with workers as we campaign door to door in their neighborhoods, with co-workers on the job and their friends and family members, and with those we join in protests against Washington's anti-working-class policies at home and abroad.

Protest: 'Charge cops who shot Andrew Brown'

BY PATRICIA TRAVIS

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Protesters took to the streets in Elizabeth City May 18, just hours after Pasquotank County District Attorney Andrew Womble announced he had ruled that the shooting death of Andrew Brown Jr. by sheriff's deputies there was "tragic, but justified." Womble said no criminal charges will be filed, that the officers involved needed to use deadly force to protect themselves.

The seven cops had come to Brown's home to serve warrants related to drug charges. He tried to drive away and, Womble said, once Brown put his car into gear it became a "deadly weapon." But during the press conference, Womble played body camera video that showed Brown, an African American, was driving away from the officers when three of the cops opened fire, one hitting him with a fatal shot to the back of the head.

There have been almost daily disciplined and orderly protests since the killing. His family was finally permitted to see 20 minutes of the police body camera videos, but are demanding the full recording be released publicly.

After Womble's press conference, the family's attorneys said his decision "was an insult and slap in the face to Andrew's family."

"This should not have happened this way," Pasquotank County Sheriff Tommy Wooten told the family. He said none of the cops will be fired, but that the three who opened fire will be "disciplined and retrained."

Womble tried to paint Brown as a dangerous criminal, saying he had a record of arrests, including for assault with a deadly weapon. But he also had to admit the officers were told that Brown was not known to carry a weapon and there were no weapons found in the car.

The media asked the district attorney if those disappointed with his decision had any alternative. He said they could vote him out at the ballot box.

"We don't have to wait for the ballot box," Rev. William Barber, co-founder of the National Poor People's Campaign, said at a press conference May 21, where he was joined by Rev. T. Anthony Spearman, president of the North Carolina Conference of the NAACP, and Keith Rivers, president of the Pasquotank County NAACP.

They said they would take a more direct approach and will be going to Washington, D.C., to personally urge Attorney General Merrick Garland to launch a federal investigation.

"We can keep marching on nonviolently now," Barber said. "A warrant is not a license to kill."

LETTERS

Chernobyl, Cuban Revolution

Thanks for the article on Cuba's assistance to the victims of Stalinist mismanagement in Chernobyl. Teaching at the community college in Miami in the first decade of this century, I had several students who were among the children and youth rescued by Cuba who had taken ad-

vantage of opportunities to immigrate to the U.S., as well as several people who left that area and immigrated to the U.S. from the Ukraine and Russia after that disaster.

Even those who professed anti-communism to get into the U.S. remain amazed at the solidarity and utter humanity of the Cuban

Revolution and the difference from the alienated self-centered mentality they had experienced under Stalinism, as we all have under U.S. capitalism. What wonders will humanity experience when we can all follow the road of the Cuban Revolution.

Tony Thomas
West Palm Beach, Florida

Texas state execution

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aunt, Berthena Bryant, with a baseball bat in Fort Worth in 1999. Michael Mowla was the attorney representing Jones in his attempts to have the death penalty set aside. Jones had a long history of heavy alcohol and drug abuse — including cocaine and heroin — that started when he was 12 and suffered traumatic physical and sexual abuse as a child. These factors were not considered in his trial or sentencing.

Jones' case was similar to that of Thomas Whitaker, a Caucasian prisoner sentenced to death for killing his mother and brother. In 2018 the governor had commuted Whitaker's sentence to life in prison. Mowla filed a civil rights suit saying Jones' clemency plea was turned down because he was Black. This was rejected.

Several members of Jones' family pled for clemency, including his aunt's sister, Mattie Long. "Because I was so close to Bert, her death hurt me a lot. Even so, God is merciful," Long wrote in an affidavit. "Quintin can't bring her back. I can't bring her back. I am writing this to ask you to please spare Quintin's life."

Since capital punishment resumed in 1982, Texas authorities have executed 571 persons, including more than 50 since Abbott took office in 2015.

In the execution chamber, Jones said his final words into a microphone hanging over the gurney he was strapped onto: "I would like to thank all of the supporting people who helped me over the years. I was so glad to leave this world a better, more positive place."

"I became a man on death row. So now you're killing the man and not the child," Jones had said in a video appeal to Gov. Abbott. "Being in death row for 20 years, you're around death a lot."

For the first time since executions resumed in Texas, Jones' killing was not witnessed by the media. The Associated Press and *Huntsville Item* reporters on site weren't informed or escorted to the execution chamber due to a "miscommunication," prison officials said.

A demonstration of a couple dozen took place for hours outside the Huntsville prison walls, and was shown live on Death Penalty Action's website. The evening before, a rally and prayer vigil were held outside the governor's mansion and the State Capitol in Austin. A petition was delivered calling for "Clemency for Quin" with more than 170,000 signatures.

Among the demonstrators were family members of Rodney Reed, who has been on death row in Texas for over 20 years, one of 202 people on the state's death row. Four more executions are scheduled there in 2021.

Rulers debate how to execute

For the last few years, as drug companies have stopped making chemicals used in executions, the rulers have been scrambling to find new drug cocktails or other methods to put people to death. Last November the Justice Department changed its execution protocols to allow firing squads, electrocution and poison gas if state governments decide to use them.

South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster signed legislation this month saying death row inmates must choose between the electric chair or a firing squad if lethal drugs are unavailable. Mississippi, Oklahoma and Utah also allow firing squad executions.

Only 9% of people in the U.S. think a firing squad is humane, reported a *USA Today* poll. In 2019 a Gallup poll reported that a majority of people — 60% to 36% — think life imprisonment should be the maximum sentence for murder.

"Despite proclamations and posturing by Democratic and Republican capitalist politicians, including President Joseph Biden, who backed the death penalty for decades but says he has changed his mind, working people continue to be sent to the death chamber," Gerardo Sánchez, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Dallas City Council, said in a statement to the press.

"Executions are a brutal tool of punishment meted out to the working class by the ruling class to intimidate us and try and deter us from fighting against their dog-eat-dog capitalist system," Sánchez said. "We need to break from the political parties of the rulers and form our own party, a labor party, to organize working people and our allies to take political power into our own hands. Workers and farmers will then tear down the whole capitalist criminal 'justice' system with its cops, courts and barbaric death penalty, and replace them with revolutionary combatants."