Join Socialist Workers Party, ‘Militant’ in campaigning
BY SETH GALINSKY
The international Militant subscription renewal drive is giving a boost to Socialist Workers Party election campaigns that have been announced in six states with more to come. At the center of the Jan. 1 to Feb. 15 drive is getting together with readers to discuss the challenges working people face and a road forward to defend our interests amid the deepening capitalist crisis.

In California the fight for ballot status for SWP candidates Eleanor Garcia for U.S. Senate and Joel Britton for governor is underway. Garcia and Britton explain why working people need our own party, a labor party, based on fighting unions that stand up to the bosses’ attempts to gut our wages and working conditions. It would put forward our own foreign policy, one that starts from solidarity with working people around the world and defends the sovereignty of oppressed nations such as Ukraine.

Continued on page 3

Steelworkers strike enters 4th month in West Virginia
Rail track workers join picket line in solidarity

BY AMY HUSK
“Union power! Who’s got the power? We got the power! Union power!” These were the chants on the picket line in front of Special Metals in Huntington, West Virginia, Jan. 22, fighting bosses’ push to jack up health insurance costs and refuse to raise pay. Rail workers joined the picket line.

Steelworkers picket Special Metals in Huntington, West Virginia, Jan. 22, fighting bosses’ push to jack up health insurance costs and refuse to raise pay. Rail workers joined the picket line.

The workers walked out Oct. 1 when the company proposed a contract that included no pay raises and a substantial hike in health care premiums — “four

Continued on page 6

BNSF bosses get court to outlaw nat’l rail strike
BY HENRY DENNISON
SEATTLE — Bosses on the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway, the second largest of the seven Class I lines in the U.S., announced in early January that as of Feb. 1 they would unilaterally impose “Hi-Viz,” a new and complicated absentee policy that would sharply limit the time rail workers can take off work.

Workers were outraged and the two largest rail unions — the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, and Transportation Union, known as SMART-TD, and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen — responded by preparing for a strike against the attack on their members. The two unions organize 17,000 engineers, conductors, switchmen and brakemen on the BNSF.

The bosses went to court, demand-

Continued on page 4

‘Militant’ backs Ukraine independence
What is behind the events in Eastern Europe?

BY ROY LANDERSEN
A substantial and growing Russian troop mobilization is arrayed today on all sides of Ukraine — from Russia itself, to occupied Crimea, Belarus and Russian-run Transnistria.

This mobilization — and the threat of war on Ukrainian soil — is aimed at bringing the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine to a halt and imposing the diktats of Moscow. It threatens to unleash a bloody and brutal war, which would be the first in Europe for decades, against the peoples of the region.

The propertied rulers in Russia are pushing to expand their economic and political sway over what they call their “near abroad” — nations that won back their independence after Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

Whatever Russia’s capitalist rulers
Continued on page 6

Jump in federal crime laws reflects assault on political rights, constitutional rule
BY TERRY EVANS
Over the last few decades both Democratic and Republican administrations have vastly expanded the number of federal crimes on the books, handing the capitalist rulers powerful tools to use against militant workers, and increasingly against each other. The number of federal crimes has increased 36% since the 1990s.

The creation of these crimes has gone side by side with the expansion of executive orders by the White House to impose legislation it can’t get through Congress; and the ram- pant expansion of government regulatory agencies with powers to invade into every aspect of workers’ lives.

Using anti-labor federal regula-

Continued on page 7

AS I SEE IT

Tennessee prisons ban Malcolm X, block subscription to the ‘Militant’
BY SETH GALINSKY
Officials at South Central Correctional Facility, a privately run state prison in Clifton, Tennessee, sent back a shipment of three books a prisoner there ordered from Seattle-based Books for Prisoners in November. They were on the packing slip: “Malcolm X not allowed.” And recently a prisoner at Trousdale Turner Correctional Facility there had his Militant subscription cut off.

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Inside

Defend right to strike! Defend political rights! 9
FBI uses informers, entrapment to bring Michigan kidnap charges 9
Cops in North Carolina kill two unarmed men 9

On the picket line, p. 5
Chevron refinery workers rally as contract expiration nears

Bus driver wins back job at Manchester Go North West

AUSTRALIA $1.50 · CANADA $1.50 · FRANCE 1.00 EURO · NEW ZEALAND $1.50 · UK £1.00 · U.S. $1.00
FBI uses informers, entrapment to bring kidnap charges in Michigan

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

At least 12 FBI informants and three FBI agents worked together to entrap and entrap 14 men, and then frame them up for supposedly plotting to kidnap Michigan’s Democratic Party Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in late 2020. In September 2020 a group of men gathered in a Michigan rural camp to conduct military-style exercises. As part of this, they were organized to spy on and disrupt the Whitmer’s nearby vacation cottage. Two of them inspected a bridge in the vicinity and allegedly discussed how it could be blown up. When they gathered together that evening, a man identified as “Big Dan” wanted to know if everyone was “down with what’s going on.”

Of the dozen men on that night trip, four of them — including Big Dan, who was paid $5,000 for his services as “Confidential Human Source-2” — were either government informants or black-bag jobs, wiretaps and hundreds of offices more than 200 times. Using these FBI spying and disruption against the working people.

In the early 1970s the Socialist Worker’s Party launched a political campaign and court suit that exposed decades of FBI spying, harassment and court suit that exposed decades of government policies. The SWP won its case in 1986. Demonstrations, blockades and permitted building and detonating bombs. The case was to paint supporters of then President Trump and others as far-right political police outfits, primarily to try to push its plan.”

The government dropped plans to use testimony from FBI agent Jayson Chambers when it became public that he had used his position to drum up business for his private security firm. Agent Richard J. Trask II was fired by the FBI after pleading no contest following his arrest for beating his wife. A third agent was accused of perjury in a murder case.

When Amanda Keller, the former fiancé of one of the accused, was recently questioned by a new agent, she asked — only half kidding: “So what are we going to find out about you?”

They said the government initiated the case “despite the fact that it knew there was no plan to kidnap.” A number of the informants and FBI agents involved have been removed from the frame-up case. United Kingdom: Six dropped plans to use testimony from FBI agent Jayson Chambers when it became public that he had used his position to drum up business for his private security firm. Agent Richard J. Trask II was fired by the FBI after pleading no contest following his arrest for beating his wife. A third agent was accused of perjury in a murder case.

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Thousands paid their respects at home of Black Panther Party chair Fred Hampton after he and mark Clark were set up by FBI informants and killed there by Chicago cops, Dec. 4, 1969. Entrapment by FBI in Michigan case continues frame-up methods used against working people.

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

Continued from front page

Readers of the socialist newsweekly can help petition to get party candidates on the ballot, join them in bringing solidarity to strike picket lines and participate with them in protests in the interests of working people. They can organize house meetings to introduce the campaign to friends, relatives or neighbors or get invitations for candidates to speak to their unions, churches and community groups.

With two weeks of the drive to go, 260 readers have renewed out of the goal of 300. Going over the goal is in sight, expanding the long-term reader ship of the paper.

Bill Arth in Los Angeles said one subscriber he talked to this week “re- renewed his subscription for a year and signed to put Garola on the ballot.” The two SWP candidates will be leading a weekend of campaigning in the Oak- land area Feb. 5 and 6.

Interest grows in new book

John Benson and Susan LaMont visited subscriber Devin Anderson at his home in Atlanta Jan. 29. Anderson is 34 years old, a photographer and vid- eographer whose family is originally from Jamaica.

He subscribed a few months ago when Militant supporter Mike Najim knocked on his door. “Mike told me that the Militant was for workers, so I subscribed to support what you’re do- ing,” Anderson said. “I can tell you’re a grassroots organization, because you’re here, knocking on people’s doors and we’re talking.”

Anderson renewed his subscription and bought the recently published Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity, which introduces the reader to Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, George Novack and SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

They discussed the origins and de- velopment of class society and how capitalism was an advance from feudalism but has exhausted its progressive role and now threatens humanity’s future.

The book explains that slave and feudal societies were also class divid- ed. Capitalism developed the productive forces and created its own grave- diggers, the working class, who fight for democratic rights that are needed to challenge the domination of the ruling class.

“If capitalism was progressive,” An- derson said, “I can’t see that people are morally better than before, if you look around and see all the violence and other problems we face.”

“Capitalism promotes dog-eat-dog relations, including among workers,” Benson said. “When we start to fight together, in our interests, that begins to change.

“The civil rights movement is a great example of that,” Benson added. “The young people and workers who became the leadership and backbone of the movement fought with courage and discipline and became a new vanguard of working people. Workers involved in the labor strikes this past year are starting to learn what it means to fight together.”

Anderson said he opposes views that whites are to blame for the continuing Blacks have faced, including slavery. Such ideas are advanced by privileged layers in the mercantilism under the banner of “Critical Race Theory.”

“The common white man did not enslave us. It was the slave-owning aristocracy,” Anderson said. He also agrees with the SWP in rejecting the view that there’s a serious effort to re- impose Jim Crow segregation in the South today, as Democrats demagogically claim. Their character of racial slavery in the U.S., the revolutionary war that uprooted it and the fight to end racist oppression are all addressed in the book.

“Malcolm X held the view that rac- ist oppression couldn’t be eliminated by reforming capitalism, that it would take a revolution,” Benson said.

Anderson asked Benson and LaMont to come back again to talk more about Malcolm X. They’ll encourage him to join in campaigning for the SWP candi- dates in Georgia, Sam Manuel for gov- ernor and Lisa Potash for U.S. Senate.

End US economic war on Cuba

Several of the party’s recently an- nounced candidates joined Jan. 30 protests against the U.S. economic war on Cuba around the country. Rachelle Fruit, SWP candidate for gov- ernor of Florida, joined the action in Miami. “We explained that the work- ing class needs to organize to take po- litical power like the Cuban workers and farmers did,” she said. Gabrielle Prosser, SWP candidate for governor of Minnesota, joined 35 people at a car caravan in Minneapolis protesting the U.S. rulers’ embargo.

Want to help campaign or intro- duce friends, co-workers, neighbors and relatives to the Militant and the Socialist Workers Party candidates? See page 8 to contact the party branch nearest you, or contact the- militant@mac.com.

###

**Socialist Workers Party 2022 candidates**

**California**

Eleanor Garcia, US Senate

Joel Britton, Governor

**Florida**

Rachelle Fruit, Governor

**Georgia**

Lisa Potash, US Senate

Sam Manuel, Governor

**Minnesota**

Gabrielle Prosser, Governor

Kevin Dwre, Lt. Governor

David Rosenfeld, US Congress

**New Jersey**

Joanne Kuniansky, US Congress

**Ohio**

Samir Hazboun, US Senate

**Website upgrade eases search for revolutionary books**

BY MARY ELLEN MARUS

Militant readers point to Pathfinder Press website — www.find- pathfinderpress.com — make it easier for working people and youth to find their way to books presenting the lessons of 175 years of revolutionary work- ing-class struggle, through the eyes of participants, from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels to Fidel Castro, V.I. Lenin, Malcolm X and leaders of the Socialist Workers Party today.

The books are published “to advance political theory, or socialism will find it fascinating.”

Thirteen reviews are posted for Woman’s Evolution: From Matriar- chal Clan to Patriarchal Family by Evelyn Reed. Publishers Weekly notes the book is “certain to become a classic of feminist history ... lucid and absorbing reading.”

‘Inside this Book’ feature

In addition to being able to magnify the front and back cover images of each book, another new feature is an “Inside this Book” tab. Readers are able to flip through sections of a book — its contents, introductions, some photo- graphs and captions and the index. This allows readers to get a sense of a book’s content and quality before deciding whether to buy.

One example is the “About the Au- thors” section in Pathfinder’s newest title, Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity. Visitors to the website can read biographies of the book’s au- thors — Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, George Novack and Mary-Alice Wa-

thers. And the 2020 introduction to the new edition of Abram Leon’s The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpre- tation, by SWP leader Dave Prince, can be read on the website.

Pathfinder Press is constantly improv- ing its titles with larger and more read- able type; more photographs, maps and illustrations; new and attractive covers; glossaries, footnotes and indexes.

Pathfinder books are an indispensable library for today’s working-class fight- ers and internationalists.

###

**MILITANT LABOR FORUMS — OHIO**

Cincinnati

The Working-Class Road to Peace in the Mideast. Speaker: Maggie Trace; Socialist Workers Party. Sat. Feb 12, 1 p.m. Bond Hill Library, 7300 Langston Farm Road at Jordan Crossing. Tel.: (513) 833-0987.

Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Florida governor, joins Miami protest over U.S. economic war against Cuba Jan. 30. At heart of SWP’s campaigning is explaining the working class needs to take political power “as workers and farmers in Cuba did,” Fruit said.
Continued from front page

The Militant February 14, 2022

BY JANET POST

Tens of thousands of Cuban workers and youth marched in Cuba’s provinces Jan. 27, the eve of the 189th birthday of Cuba’s national hero, José Martí. Called the March of the Torches, this annual event celebrates the anti-imperialist and revolutionary legacy of the centennial of Cuba’s 19th century independence struggle against Spain, and opponent of the U.S. rulers’ efforts to seize Cuba as they did Haiti.

The action was organized by Cuba’s Federation of University Students (FEU) and the Union of Young Communists. In the front lines of the Havana march were Army Gen. Raúl Castro, President Miguel Díaz-Canel, Rebel Army Commander José Ramón Machado Ventura and FEU President Karla Santana. The demonstration gathered on the steps of Havana University and marched to Martí’s Forge, the site of a former quarry owned by Martí, where he worked from 1871 when he was imprisoned for his political activities at the age of 17.

Santana invited the young marching thousands to attend FEU’s press conference this year “to become like Martí among those who dream, the foolish and the indispensable, the militants of life who live their youth afire.”

In the first March of the Torches on Jan. 27, 1953, revolutionary leader Fidel Castro led a contingent in the first large street action opposing the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship, which took power in a military coup the previous year. Batista banned the action, but 5,000 young Cubans took to the streets. Martí was a revolutionary fighter, poet, writer, speaker, journalist and combatant. He founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party in 1892 and organized the 1895 independence war against Spanish colonial rule, where he was killed in a battle with Spanish troops. His anti-imperialist program and revolutionary writings are at the center of Cuba’s traditions and political heritage.

A week earlier, the U.S. rulers had to back off smears against Cuba they’ve used to step up their attacks against the revolution. In a typical CIA incitement, a supposed “report” that the so-called Havana Syndrome doesn’t exist. Previously the spy agency, and both the Donald Trump and Joseph Biden administrations, claimed that U.S. diplomats have been targeted in a “sustained global campaign by a hostile power.”

The U.S. rulers alleged their diplomatic threats of Havana in 2016, then later in other embassies around the world, had been the victims of mysterious covert “acoustic attacks” on embassy personnel. The CIA’s false charge to slash its Havana embassy personnel in half, expel 15 officials from the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C., and to “do not travel for those plans to visit the island to further justify its punishing economic war against the Cuban Revolution.

The State Department said embassy personnel in Cuba had suffered symptoms, including “ear complaints, hearing loss, dizziness, headache, fatigue, cognitive issues and difficulty sleeping.”

Now the CIA admits the vast majority of those cases “can be explained by environmental conditions, undiagnosed medical conditions or stress,” wrote the New York Times Jan. 20.

“Relation with Cuba on the Up”

In Minneapolis 35 protestors against the embargo gathered in front of South High School. “Cuba is an example for workers and farmers here that a socialist revolution is possible,” Gabrielle Poster, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Minnesota, told the demonstration.

In Canada there were caravans in Vancouver, British Columbia, and Montreal, as well as rallies in front of the U.S. consulates in Toronto and Calgary, Alberta.

Caravans were also organized in two cities in Cuba — Bayamo and Santa Clara. Hundreds of students started off the action in Santa Clara on bicycles and motorcycles and in cars. They were joined by 50 revolutionaries on horseback.

For information on future protests, contact the National Network on Cuba at mncinfo.

— J.P.
British government has so far rejected norther six counties. The inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday, speakers called for an international investigation into the massacre by British Paratroopers of 14 unarmed civil rights marchers here Feb. 2, the culmination of events at Derry. The anniversary of the massacre by British Paratroopers of 14 unarmed civil rights marchers here Feb. 2, the culmination February 17, 1997.

The unions should demand escalator clauses retroactive to last June, tor clauses retroactive to last June, terms of the cost of living. The implications of Washington's rapprochement with Peking are far from peaceful, whatever mileage Nixon hopes to gain from them in the 1972 elections. Washington's objective is to use Pe king's policies of peaceful coexistence to strengthen imperialism's drive to contain Vietnam by continuing its efforts to bring about a complete and immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Southeast Asia.

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The Militant February 14, 2022

The U.S. capitalist rulers.

which has expanded its own NATO

fellow toilers in Ukraine by demand-

clash in which workers and farmers

and their NATO foes say, miscalcula-

Back Ukraine independence!

...the price of avoiding a threatened Russian inva-

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gton that Ukraine and Georgia will never be ad-

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Woodworkers strike enters 4th month in West Virginia

All of the special courts were set up to advance the interests of the bosses.

The workers charged with the crime, and the bosses who prosecuted them, are there solely to advance the interests of the bosses.

There are no guarantees that any workers charged with a crime will be able to prove their innocence in the bosses’ courts.

The bosses and their courts are institutions of the class enemy.

If you are arrested, call your local union immediately and get legal help.

 outdoors, the police have nothing to lose.

The bosses want the workers to keep quiet and not challenge the state.

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Thomas Sankara spoke for the oppressed all over the world

We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions: Speeches from the Burkina Faso revolution 1983-87 by Thomas Sankara is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for February. In August 1983 Sankara led a revolution in the former French colony of Upper Volta, estab-
lishing a government under the leadership of an armed movement that organized workers, peasants, women and youth to take their destiny into their own hands. Sankara was assassinated in a military coup in October 1987. The excerpt is from the book’s preface, remarks made by Pathfinder Press President Mary-Al
Press. Reprinted by permission.

**BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

**February**

**Pathfinder Readers Club Specials**

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Speeches from the Burkina Faso revolution, 1983-87

THOMAS SANKARA

How the popular revolutionary government led by Sankara led the fight against hunger, imperialism and imperialist imposed underdevelopment.

$10. Special price $7

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$12 Special price $8.50

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JAMES P. CANNON

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**The Challenge of the Left Opposition (1923-25)**

LEON TROTSKY

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**Haciendo Historia**

José Ramón Fernández, Enrique Chagoya, Martín Lázaro, Nestor López Cura

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OFFER GOOD UNTIL: February 28
Operating craft workers on the BNSF Railway the second largest in the country — are up in arms against the bosses’ unilateral imposing a new and more onerous absentee policy, and are determined to take strike action. But the bosses got a compliant federal judge to use an anti-labor federal regulation to grant a restraining order barring the rail unions from striking, or taking any other action that could interfere with the company continuing to rake in profits.

This order follows a series of court rulings last fall restricting striking workers at Warrior Met Coal, Kellogg’s and John Deere from picketing effectively. These rulings blatantly aim to cripple workers’ use of a powerful weapon — our capacity to shut down production and transportation to defend ourselves from the bosses’ ruthless drive to maximize their profits off our backs.

Each of these orders shows the cops, courts and federal regulators aren’t neutral arbiters of “justice.” Like the bosses, the cops are making preparations for conflict — wars abroad alongside assaults on jobs, wages and working conditions at home.

Without a course to organize independently of the exploiting class — at all levels — workers will roll over in insurmountable obstacles. Union officials urge workers to get Democrats elected, telling us we need “friends of labor” in office. But both parties rule for the bosses. This week’s reason for the two-party sham, shell game, to keep us tethered to lesser-evils politics while guaranteeing profits for their capitalist masters.

Workers need to break out of this whole framework. We need to build our own labor party. As union struggles grow, workers need to see ourselves, and to act, as a class. A labor party based on our unions would unify and mobilize labor’s ranks to fight for protection from inflation, justify demands made by the capitalist state to attack our rights. It would lead the fight against the capitalist rulers’ efforts to use workers and farmers as cannon fodder in their wars for markets, resources and domination abroad.

It would chart a course for our classes to lead millions of toilers oppressed and exploited by capitalist rule to fight for political power and establish a socialist society.

For Jason Walker, has called for nightly protests. Family members of other victims of police shootings across the region are participating. No charges have been filed, and Hash is on paid administrative leave pending an internal investigation. So far, Fayetteville city officials have released only four minutes of police body camera footage. They say they have edited the material “to protect witnesses.” City officials have been petitioning to get remaining footage released.

Three days after Walker was killed, Daniel Turcios was shot dead by cops in Raleigh shortly after he lost control of his vehicle and crashed. Initially knocked unconscious, he was disoriented as he walked around outside the car. The cops tried to apprehend him but he walked away from them.

Bystanders yelled in Spanish at Turcios, telling him to sit down. His children shouted at the police calling on them not to shoot him. But, Turcios, who spoke limited English, did not respond. Officer W.B. Tapscott used his taser and Turcios fell to the ground.

Five cops surrounded him. A police report says Officer A.A. Smith shot Turcios twice, and then when Turcios got up and moved toward Smith, the cop shot him three more times. Cops say Turcios swung a knife at them. Turcios, 43, originally from El Salvador, was announced dead at the hospital.

“He wasn’t doing anything,” his widow, Rosa Jer- ez, said at a press conference. “He didn’t understand anything they told him. They murdered him like a dog. They didn’t care about him at all.”

A vigil was held Jan. 14 by family and supporters. The State Bureau of Investigation is conducting an investigation. Police say Tapscott have been placed on administrative leave pending the results of the investigation.

Cops in North Carolina kill 2 unarmed men

BY PAT TRAVIS
RALEIGH, N.C. — Two deadly police shootings of unarmed men in North Carolina within days of each other provoked an outcry and protests demanding the officers be held accountable. In Fayetteville, on Jan. 8, off-duty Cumberland County Deputy Sheriff Jeffery Hash shot and killed Jason Walker, a 37-year-old Black man and single father. The chronology of events leading up to the killing is disputed.

Hash claims that as he was driving, Walker ran into the street. Hash shouted, he says, and Walker jumped onto his pickup truck, pulled his windshield wipers off and broke his window. “I just had to shoot him,” Hash told the police dispatcher in a call moments later.

Nurse Elizabeth Ricks witnessed the shooting and tried to compress Walker’s wounds, but he died at the scene. Contrary to Hash’s account, she told ABC News she saw Hash “brake, completely stop, and then keep going. I saw him hit Jason … then his body was slamming into the windshield.”

She says Hash shot at Walker through the wind- shield and then got out of the vehicle and shot him in the back of the head. “I never had been so truly turned to voraciously, “I never had been so truly

Militant

Prison bans Malcolm X

Continued from front page

subcription rejected as coming from an “unap- proved vendor.”

Prison officials gave no reason for the censorship of literature by or on Malcolm X. The banned book is Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary, a biography written by students of Walter Dean Myers. It won the American Library Association’s Coretta Scott King award in 2017.

“It’s a kids’ biography, not a movement call to arms or anything. Malcolm X’s name comes up in Meer Books for Prisoners, told the Militant Jan. 29. “If you can’t allow prisoners to read a book like that, then what can they read? It’s confounding to me that it’s an issue.”

“This is not an unusual event,” Chan said, describing the experiences Books for Prisoners has had in sending used and new books at no charge to prisoners.

The group has faced many attempts to suppress books over the years. They get 1,000 to 1,200 requests for books a month, which they send to inmates in more than 45 states.

“Tennessee has not been one of the more diffi- cult states, but in the last few months it has become more difficult,” he said.

“For a period of time it really did seem like it was getting easier and easier around the country,” Chan said, pointing out that two new books for unconventional race because they claimed it would ‘inflame’ racial tensions” have become less frequent.

But now, he said, “there’s this more modern form of censorship, spreading ‘white supremacy book- band,’ like in Pennsylvania where authorities claimed illegal books could be soaked into book pages.

“There’s an associated issue,” Chan said. Some prisons have tried to block physical books in gen- eral, claiming that “technology can replace books.

Prison authorities then charge prisoners inflated prices for e-readers and rent out books at inflated prices that most can’t afford.”

It’s ironic that it was a book on Malcolm X that was blocked. Malcolm X spent several years in prison, where he came to reject his youthful criticism and anti-Semitism. In a quote that is displayed on the Books for Prisoners website — that when he began reading, which he turned to voraciously, “I never had been so truly free in my life.”

“I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading opened to me,” Malcolm X told Alex Haley in his Autobiography. “I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awake inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive.”

“Militant” withheld from prisoner

The Militant, which has prisoner subscribers in some 25 states, has also recently faced what appears to be a de facto ban on the paper in a prison in Tennessee. A prisoner of a state class A maximum- security prison informed the Militant that he hasn’t been getting his paper. One issue was returned to the Militant, stamped “unapproved vendor.” But that’s a violation of the prison’s own rules, which say newspapers sent directly from the publisher don’t need any special authorization.

No other notices have been received by the prisoner subscriber or by the Militant saying the paper has been banned. Prison officials state that the publisher and in- mate must be informed of bans and allowed to appeal. Militant attorney David Goldberg has contacted Tennessee prison authorities seeking clarification. If necessary, the group will apply to the courts to keep and launch a public campaign to ensure our subscribers get their papers.

“The number of prisoners across the U.S. reading the Militant has steadily increased over the last year or so,” Militant editor John Studer said Jan. 29. “Workers, no matter what side of the prison wall they are on, have a right to read material of their choosing, to think for themselves, to take positions on political questions, large and small.

“We join with all those demanding that South Central Correctional Facility reverse its unconsti- tutional ban on all ‘Militant’ and other books,” Studer said. “And we expect Tennessee prison authorities to re- move any obstacles in the way of our subscribers receiving their subscription to the Militant.”

By Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, George Novack, Mary-Alice Waters

Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity

The Long View of History

Where did humanity come from? How did we arrive where we are today? Why is that even important? Because without understanding how human soci- ety, since our remotest ancestors, has been created through social labor, work- ing people remain prisoners of the capitalist epoch in which we live.

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