

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Thousands march in Havana to honor Martí, Cuban Revolution
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 86/NO. 6 FEBRUARY 14, 2022

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 García for U.S. Senate and Joel Britton for governor is underway. García 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.

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Steelworkers strike enters 4th month in West Virginia

Rail track workers join picket line in solidarity



Ryan Fischer/The Herald-Dispatch via AP

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

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. Some 450 mem-

bers of United Steelworkers Local 40 on strike there got a big boost when a group of railroad workers joined their picket line in a show of support. The rally was organized by the USW local and members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division — International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

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

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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

AS I SEE IT

largest rail unions — the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, 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-

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'Militant' backs Ukraine independence

What is behind the events in Eastern Europe?



Avramenko Alexander

Dec. 1, 2013, Maidan protest in Kyiv, part of mass movement that forced out Moscow-backed regime. Fight to defend Ukraine independence and sovereignty is in interest of all workers.

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

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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 rampant expansion of government regulatory agencies with powers to intrude into every aspect of workers' lives.

Using anti-labor federal regulations, a U.S. District Court judge Jan. 25 issued an order to block thousands of rail workers at BNSF from striking

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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 wrote on the packing slip: "Malcolm X not allowed." And recently a prisoner at Trousdale Turner Correctional Facility there had his *Militant*

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Bus driver wins back job at Manchester Go North West

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 egg on 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 survey the landscape around 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 nighttime trip, four of them — including Big Dan, who was paid \$54,000 for his services as “Confidential Human Source-2” — were either government informants or undercover FBI agents.

Fourteen men were arrested a month later, in a move hailed as one of the most important domestic terrorism prosecutions in a generation. The trial of five of them on the kidnap-plotting charge will begin March 8 in the U.S. District Court in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The case is being used — alongside the witch hunt congressional “investigation” into the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol — to target former President Donald Trump and others as far-right criminals who need to be driven out of politics. At the trial, federal prosecutors are expected to introduce hundreds of hours of carefully edited FBI-recorded conversations and text messages, re-

cords of bomb-making sessions, and graphic discussions of violence against police and politicians.

Six of the men were charged with kidnapping conspiracy, which can carry a life sentence. Three of the six were also charged with using weapons of mass destruction based on their discussions about blowing up the bridge and practicing building and detonating bombs. The other eight were charged with providing material support.

Twenty-six-year-old Ty Gerard Garbin, one of those charged with kidnapping, was pressured into plea-bargaining guilty and sentenced to six years in prison. The price of the deal: he’s expected to testify against the others at the trial.

How rulers’ political police operate

This sort of frame-up is nothing new for the FBI. These methods have been used for decades by it and other government political police outfits, primarily to block advances by the working class.

In the early 1970s the Socialist Workers Party launched a political campaign and court suit that exposed decades of FBI spying and disruption against the party, labor movement, and the fight for Black rights. In the course of the successful 15-year campaign, the FBI was forced to admit to breaking into party offices more than 200 times. Using these black-bag jobs, wiretaps and hundreds of informants, they amassed 10 million pages of files on the SWP, its members, their families and political collaborators.

The SWP won its case in 1986. Despite all the FBI’s spying and disruption, and attempts to provoke and entrap party members, it couldn’t produce a



AP Photo/Edward Kitch

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.

shred of evidence the political work of the party was illegal.

Similar and more deadly tactics were used against the Black liberation movement. An FBI informer gave police the floor plan to Fred Hampton’s apartment in Chicago that was used in a murderous late-night police raid where Hampton, a leader of the Black Panther Party, was killed as he slept in his bed. The bedroom was marked on the map.

On Nov. 18, 2021, two of the three men who had been convicted for the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965 were exonerated after spending decades in prison. It turned out FBI informers knew they weren’t guilty, but hid the information as part of the decadeslong government campaign by the capitalist rulers against Malcolm X and his revolutionary political ideas.

The aim of the FBI’s Michigan operation was to paint supporters of then President Trump as criminal terrorists. Their deeper target is to legitimize frame-ups like this against working-class militants, who the capitalists fear and loathe.

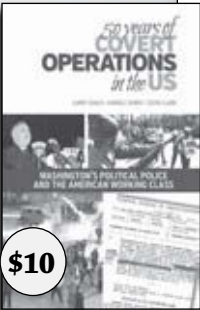
On Dec. 25, defense attorneys for those charged in Michigan filed to have the charges dismissed. “[T]he evidence here demonstrates egregious overreaching by the government’s agents, and by the informants those agents handled,” they wrote. “When the government was faced with evidence showing that the defendants had no interest in a kidnapping plot, it refused to accept failure and continued to push its plan.”

They said the government initiated the case “despite the fact that it knew there was no plan to kidnap.” A number of the informers and FBI agents involved have been removed from the frame-up case. 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 to build 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 fiancée 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?”

50 Years of Covert Operations in the US Washington’s Political Police and the American Working Class

Decades of spying and disruption by FBI targeting working-class groups and other opponents of government policies. “National security” state to protect capitalist rule had bipartisan backing.



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THE MILITANT

Freedom for framed-up prisoner Carlos Harris!

Carlos Harris has served 17 years in California after being railroaded to prison in 2005. Demonstrations, backed by the ‘Militant,’ have called for his freedom, as well as others unjustly imprisoned. “Incarcerated lives matter too,” said Harris’ cousin Aisha Hampton.

Photo courtesy of Hampton family

Rally Jan. 17 at capitol in Sacramento, California, demands, “Free Carlos Harris.”

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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 and 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 readership of the paper.

Bill Arth in Los Angeles said one subscriber he talked to this week “renewed his subscription for a year and signed to put García on the ballot.” The two SWP candidates will be leading a weekend of campaigning in the Oakland 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 videographer 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 doing,” 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 includes articles by Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, George Novack and SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

They discussed the origins and development 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 divided. Capitalism developed the productive forces and created its own gravediggers, the working class, who fight for democratic rights that are needed to challenge the domination of the ruling class.

“If capitalism was progressive,” Anderson 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 different 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 conditions Blacks have faced, including slavery. Such ideas are advanced by privileged layers in the meritocracy 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 reimpose Jim Crow segregation in the South today, as Democrats demagogically claim. The character of chattel 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 racist oppression couldn’t be eliminated by reforming capitalism, that it would take a revolution,” Benson said.

Anderson asked Benson and LaMont



Militant/Glen Swanson

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 campaign is explaining the working class needs to take political power “as workers and farmers in Cuba did,” Fruit said.

to come back again to talk more about Malcolm X. They’ll encourage him to join in campaigning for the SWP candidates in Georgia, Sam Manuel for governor and Lisa Potash for U.S. Senate.

End US economic war on Cuba

Several of the party’s recently announced candidates joined Jan. 30 protests against the U.S. economic war on Cuba around the country. Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for governor of Florida, joined the action in Miami. “We explained that the work-

ing class needs to organize to take political 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 introduce 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 themilitant@mac.com.

Socialist Workers Party 2022 candidates

California

Eleanor García, US Senate
Joel Britton, Governor

Florida

Rachele Fruit, Governor

Georgia

Lisa Potash, US Senate
Sam Manuel, Governor

Minnesota

Gabrielle Prosser, Governor
Kevin Dwire, Lt. Governor
David Rosenfeld, US Congress

New Jersey

Joanne Kuniansky, US Congress

Ohio

Samir Hazboun, US Senate

‘Militant’ Renewal Drive Jan. 1 - Feb. 15, week 4

Country	Quota	Sold
UNITED STATES		
Albany*	20	13
Atlanta	16	13
Chicago	25	21
Cincinnati	10	8
Dallas-Fort Worth*	15	15
Lincoln*	4	3
Los Angeles	17	15
Miami	7	6
Minneapolis	12	11
N. New Jersey	16	13
New York	25	15
Oakland	18	18
Philadelphia	10	9
Pittsburgh	12	10
Seattle	13	9
Washington, DC	11	12
Total U.S.	231	191
Prisoners*		
	20	20
UNITED KINGDOM		
London	10	10
Manchester	8	7
Total U.K.	18	17
Canada	30	20
New Zealand	5	6
Australia	10	6
Total	314	260
SHOULD BE	300	200
*Raised Goal		

Website upgrade eases search for revolutionary books

BY MARY ELLEN MARUS

Recent enhancements to the website of Pathfinder Press — www.pathfinderpress.com — make it easier for working people and youth to find their way to books presenting the lessons of 175 years of revolutionary working-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 the construction of a communist party in the United States — an objective that is inseparable from the building of a communist movement internationally,” explains Mary-Alice Waters, Pathfinder’s president.

Now available on the website are excerpts from over 400 reviews of more than 161 titles, reflecting the broad interest in the authors and subject matter, to help the books reach a wider audience. Some date back to the 1930s, including a *New York Times* review of Samuel Yellen’s *American Labor Struggles*.

Nine reviews are now available of *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and the *Road to Workers Power* by Social-

ist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes. An excerpt from *Foreword Reviews* says, “People who are interested in the history of civil rights, political theory, or socialism will find it fascinating.”

Thirteen reviews are posted for *Woman’s Evolution: From Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family* by Evelyn Reed. *Publishers Weekly* notes the book is “certain to become a classic text in women’s 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. Site visitors are able to flip through sections of a book — its contents, introductions, some photographs 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 Authors” 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 Waters. And the 2020 introduction to the new edition of Abram Leon’s *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*, by SWP leader Dave Prince, can be read on the website.

Pathfinder Press is constantly improving its titles with larger and more readable 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 fighters and internationalists.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

OHIO

Cincinnati

The Working-Class Road to Peace in the Mideast. Speaker: Maggie Trowe, Socialist Workers Party. Sat. Feb. 12, 1 p.m. Bond Hill Library, 1740 Langdon Farm Road at Jordon Crossing. Tel.: (502) 835-0987.

Thousands march in Havana to honor Martí, Cuban Revolution

BY JANET POST

Tens of thousands of Cuban workers and youth marched in Cuba's provinces Jan. 27, the eve of the 169th 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 central leader of Cuba's 19th century independence struggle against Spain, and opponent of the U.S. rulers' efforts to seize Cuba as their colony.

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 where Martí was put to forced labor in 1871 when he was imprisoned for his political activities at the age of 17.

Santana invited the young marchers to attend FEU's 10th congress later 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 political reversal, the CIA issued a report admitting 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 diplomats in Havana in 2016, then later in other embassies around the world, had been the victims of mysterious covert "sonic attacks." Washington used the false charge to slash its Havana embassy personnel in half, expel 15 officials from the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C., and to issue a "do not travel" advisory for those planning 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 causes, undiagnosed medical conditions or stress," wrote the *New York Times* Jan. 20.

Actions protest U.S. economic war against Cuba



Puentes de Amor

Nearly 100 people, a majority Cubans and Cuban Americans, gathered Jan. 30 at City Hall in Miami to demand an end to the U.S. embargo against Cuba. A close to 100-car caravan then circled through the Little Havana neighborhood for over an hour, ending with music and dancing at the José Martí monument.

This action was one of over 30 taking place worldwide that day. The monthly caravans and rallies are organized to protest Washington's more than 60-year-long economic war against Cuba's socialist revolution.

"We will not stop protesting as long as these sanctions remain in place. We will be out here again on Feb. 27!" Carlos Lazo, a Seattle teacher and leader of Puentes de Amor (Bridges of Love) who initiated the monthly actions in 2020, told the Miami demonstrators.

In Minneapolis 35 protesters 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 Prosser, 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 peasants on horseback.

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

— J.P.

BNSF bosses get court to outlaw rail strike against new absentee policy

Continued from front page

ing a temporary restraining order banning strikes, sickouts, slowdowns, picketing or any kind of worker protest against the onerous new policy. U.S. District Court Judge Mark Pittman in Fort Worth, Texas, the home of the company's headquarters, granted their motion and more.

He brushed aside the unions' arguments, saying "BNSF would suffer substantial, immediate, and irreparable harm" for a strike, while the union (and, presumably, its members) "would not suffer any harm." He added that any strike "would exacerbate our current supply-chain crisis — harming the public at large, not just BNSF."

The judge also ordered the rail unions to take action to prevent workers from organizing any kind of protests that might interfere with BNSF operations.

Outside the courthouse, family members of rail workers picketed, explaining the impact Hi-Viz would have on workers' safety and family lives. The unions are appealing the decision, which is set to run through Feb. 8, arguing there are substantial workers' issues and rights involved and a strike is legal.

"Our members have simply had enough of the treatment they are enduring from BNSF," SMART-TD President Jeremy Ferguson and Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen National President Dennis Pierce said in a joint statement after the court ruling. The company's new Hi-Viz policy is "outright insulting."

Conditions facing rail workers today are daunting. Crews have been cut, hours increased, and safety conditions deteriorated. Most have no set schedule of hours, or work a schedule that is subject to frequent changes. These schedules don't allow them to plan time off with their family, set medical appointments, care for sick relatives, or take care of other needs. Many work 12-hour shifts and are entitled to only 10 hours of undisturbed rest from the moment they finish a shift. Fatigue is a major problem, and the strains of the work schedule impact workers' lives off the job.

Previously, BNSF workers could miss five weekdays and two weekend days a month without penalty — as long as the day wasn't a holiday. The new policy penalizes workers for each and every absence, with greater penalties for holidays, Fridays and weekends, and for taking extra time off before or after vacation days and legally mandated rest periods. Bosses will allow workers to "earn back" attendance points slowly, if they remain constantly available for work. Missing work under the Family Medical Leave Act or for union business resets any time you have "earned back," which penalizes union officers who take time off to represent workers accused of rule violations by the company.

"I've never been in trouble for attendance in the seven years I've worked here. A lot of times I don't take the seven days I was allowed

each month," said Matt Sabey, a conductor in the Seattle area. "But under the new absentee policy, that can still get me fired in a few months."

Hobbled by government red tape

Rail transportation is essential to the profits of all the ruling capitalist families. It is economically, politically and militarily central to the U.S. economy. The efficiency of moving massive quantities of commodities by rail make the coal, oil, steel, agribusiness, chemical, and automobile industry bosses — among others — deeply dependent on rail transportation for transforming the labor of workers into their profits.

Every fight over wages and working conditions by railroad workers over the past 140 years has faced direct intervention by the government, especially since the anti-union Railway Labor Act was passed in 1926. The pro-boss law, the Federal Railway Administration admits, is meant to prevent workers from being able "to take action in bargaining disputes until they have completed an elaborate, time-consuming process involving negotiation, mediation by the National Mediation Board, possible review by a Presidential Emergency Board, and cooling-off periods."

Each new rail labor struggle has been answered by the federal government with efforts to deprive workers of the right to strike. But boss attacks on working conditions force rail workers to push back.

"Union membership in this country used to be as high as a third of all Americans, and now we're down to in the private sector like 6%," said Matt Weaver, director of internal organizing with the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, at a Jan. 22 rally in support of Steelworkers on strike at Special Metals in Huntington, West Virginia. "I think that as you see union numbers coming down, the rich people are getting richer, and the working class is just standing still or getting worse for us." He added, "Unions have to stand up for one another."

The fight against Hi-Viz "is an issue that affects rail workers nationally," Joe Allen, a conductor with over 16 years experience at CSX railroad told the *Militant*. "Rail workers all over could unite around this common theme. This unity is the basis for a stronger voice."

U.S. rail bosses have been demanding more concessions, including a one-person "crew," in contract negotiations.

We should fight for no trains over 50 cars in length, with four-person crews — two engineers on the locomotive and two workers on the rear of the train. We need enough workers so we can take control over our work schedules and the right to take time off as we need. And, for a safe workplace, we need to use union power to fight for workers control.

Henry Dennison works as a conductor for the BNSF in Seattle.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Chevron refinery workers rally as contract expiration nears

RICHMOND, Calif. — “Power in solidarity” read one of the signs carried by the more than 100 members of United Steelworkers Local 5 outside the main gate of the Chevron oil refinery here Jan. 27. The maintenance workers and process operators mobilized to press the union’s demand for a “significant” wage increase in the national oil bargaining negotiations with industry representative Marathon Petroleum. This is crucial to help workers meet the effects of rising prices.

And they were putting the company on notice that they’re ready to strike over working conditions and other local issues at Chevron, issues that are negotiated refinery by refinery after wages and other industrywide issues are settled.

On Jan. 31 the union rejected the company’s latest proposal — a 3% wage raise for each of next three years — and offered to keep working as long as further negotiations are fruitful.

“The corporations are making profits galore,” BK White told the *Militant*. White, an operator for 28 years and Local 5 vice president, highlighted how Chevron has taken advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to cut back on preventative maintenance. “The public will pay for these decisions,” pointing to the history of serious fires and explosions at the refinery.

Short staffing and lots of forced overtime, increasing burden of the costs of medical care, tightened disciplinary measures, and the soaring cost of living were among the issues the unionists discussed on the picket line with worker-correspondents for the *Militant*.

On Jan. 28 Steelworkers union negotiators rejected Marathon’s offer of a pay hike of only 1.3% for each of three years of new agreements for the 30,000 refinery and chemical-plant workers represented by the union. The current contract, which expires at midnight Jan. 31, had included 3.5% wage increases for the first two years and 4% in the final year.

Marathon’s “wage proposals to date are paltry,” the union said in a public

statement. “In light of their earnings and dividends to shareholders, they are offensive.”

— Joel Britton

New union votes set at Amazon Alabama, New York warehouses

The National Labor Relations Board has set a second union election at the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama, to begin Feb. 4, ruling the notoriously anti-union company, owned by billionaire Jeff Bezos, intimidated workers and corrupted the earlier vote. The balloting on whether the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union will represent workers will be conducted by mail-in ballots, to be counted by the NLRB beginning March 28.

The RWDSU lost the first election last April by a more than 2-to-1 margin, with 738 votes for the union, 1,798 against, and 2,759 not casting a ballot. The union challenged the results, documenting harassment and violations of a fair election, and won.

In its Jan. 11 statement setting the date for the second election, the NLRB wrote that Amazon “interfered with the employees’ exercise of a free and reasoned choice by creating the appearance of irregularity in the election procedure by causing a mailbox to be installed outside the Employer’s main entrance and by improperly polling employees’ support during mandatory meetings.”

Nearly half of the more than 6,100 warehouse workers in the Bessemer warehouse today have been hired since the first union vote.

Leading up to the balloting, Amazon bosses have ramped up an anti-union drive, as was done prior to the first vote, by forcing workers to attend anti-union harangues at work and posting anti-union bulletins in the bathrooms. Union supporter Isaiah Thomas told the media he was reprimanded for advocating the union in the warehouse during his break.

At another Amazon warehouse in Staten Island, New York, workers have obtained enough signatures — from 30% of the 5,000 workers at the facility — to hold a union election there, the



Militant/Jerry Freiwirth

Chevron oil workers, members of USW Local 5, rally outside gate of company’s oil refinery in Richmond, California, Jan. 27 in fight for new contract with wage raise to cover rising prices.

NLRB said Jan. 26.

The company has been “threatening, surveilling, and interrogating” members of the Amazon Labor Union and other warehouse workers “engaged in a union-organizing campaign,” Kathy Drew King, a regional director for the NLRB, reported Jan. 27 in response to a complaint by the union. A hearing on the complaint is scheduled for April 5.

— Brian Williams

Bus driver wins back job at Manchester Go North West

MANCHESTER, England — After making gains during an 11-week strike last year, Unite union bus workers at Go North West here won another victory, forcing bosses to reverse their sacking of driver and union stalwart Tracey Scholes.

Scholes, with 34 years on the job, had complained that changes made to wing mirrors on vehicles she drove left her with a dangerous blind spot. Bosses responded by suspending and then later dismissing her, claiming she lacked the “capability” to drive the bus. She won her appeal Jan. 17. During last year’s strike at the Queens Road depot, Scholes ran the union’s kitchen.

The union campaign to prevent bosses from firing Scholes received widespread media coverage. It was backed

by the Trades Union Congress, which said Scholes faced “the sack for being too short.” She is 5 feet tall and couldn’t see the newly installed mirrors properly.

A petition to reinstate Scholes was signed by 25,000 people. A rally of some 100 bus drivers and other unionists was held at the depot Jan. 11 as Scholes went in for her final appeal. Workers chanted, “Go North West listen to us; just let Tracey drive her bus.”

At the action were four workers on strike at CHEP pallet company. Scholes talked with them about last year’s bus strike. “Some days are hard,” she said, “but keep it up.” Scholes said she and other drivers would visit the CHEP workers’ picket line.

Scholes was the first woman driver at the Queens Road depot, and one of the first in Greater Manchester. She started in 1987 when women were fighting their way into better-paying jobs they had been excluded from. “I’ve had comments, sexual remarks, a lot of things,” Scholes told the *Guardian*. “And I’ve dealt with that. I’ve not gone to management. I’ve gone and solved it and hit it head on.”

During her appeal, bosses offered Scholes alternative work at lower pay and less hours. Scholes rejected this.

On Jan. 17, Go North West caved in to the union’s demand. Scholes will keep her job with no cut in hours or pay and be able to drive what a company statement called, “a bus with wing mirrors of her preference” — in other words, a vehicle she can drive safely.

— Anne Howie

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 17, 1997

DERRY, Northern Ireland — “You are a heart-warming sight,” Martin McGuinness told a crowd of 40,000 marchers here Feb. 2, the culmination of four days of events to mark the 25th anniversary of the massacre by British Paratroopers of 14 unarmed civil rights demonstrators. McGuinness is a leader of Sinn Fein, the nationalist party fighting for a united Ireland. He and other speakers called for an international inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday, as the day is known here.

Thousands of people from the working-class Catholic neighborhoods of the Creggan and Bogside joined contingents from throughout the British-occupied northern six counties.

The aim was an inquiry that would tell the truth about what the British troops did, and smash the official report that exonerated the killers. The British government has so far rejected these calls.



February 18, 1972

President Nixon’s trip to Peking “is the key to his bid for reelection as ‘a man of peace,’” wrote James Reston, Washington editor of the *New York Times*, Jan. 12.

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 Peking’s policies of peaceful coexistence to strengthen imperialism’s drive to contain the colonial revolution, particularly in Southeast Asia. Nixon wants Chairman Mao to bring pressure on Hanoi to reach a settlement that will redivide Indochina and leave the imperialists their foothold in Saigon.

The antiwar movement in this country can help to relieve the pressure on Vietnam by continuing its efforts to bring about a complete and immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Southeast Asia.



February 15, 1947

The CIO Oil Workers International Union has just given a dollars-and-cents demonstration of the value of the sliding scale of wages that provides automatic pay rises to meet rises in living costs. Under an escalator clause in the contract with Sinclair Oil Company, some 7,000 members received an automatic seven-cent-an-hour wage boost.

The cost-of-living raise is in addition to a flat wage increase of 18 cents an hour secured in the contract signed on Nov. 15, 1946. Had the other CIO unions fought for and won such a clause before the war, wage rates would now be double what they are in terms of the cost of living.

The unions should demand escalator clauses retroactive to last June, at least, which would provide wage raises of 30% to 35% right now. The unions should insist on tangible protection from the effects of any further inflation.

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Back Ukraine independence!

Continued from front page and their NATO foes say, miscalculations and unintended consequences of their moves could precipitate a bloody clash in which workers and farmers will bear the deadly consequences. Working people in the U.S. and worldwide need to offer solidarity to fellow toilers in Ukraine by demanding “Russian hands off!” Washington, which has expanded its own NATO forces across Europe, is no friend of the Ukrainian people. It intervenes on behalf of the predatory interests of the U.S. capitalist rulers.

The Russian military, “once creaky,” is now “modern and lethal,” the *New York Times* pointed out Jan. 27. Moscow’s deployment of over 130,000 troops to Ukraine’s borders comes complete with field hospitals and blood supplies.

Responding to the 2014 mass popular Maidan uprising that overthrew the pro-Moscow regime in Ukraine, Russia’s capitalist rulers armed and participated alongside pro-Moscow separatists in occupying part of eastern Ukraine. Russian forces invaded and occupied Crimea. And in 2020 President Vladimir Putin threw Moscow’s backing behind the embattled regime of President Alexander Lukashenko as it crushed a mass uprising for political rights in Belarus. Lukashenko backs Moscow’s threats against Ukraine today. In January Moscow’s troops helped suppress anti-government protests in Kazakhstan. And the Putin regime has stepped

up attacks on political rights and labor struggles in Russia itself. As the price of avoiding a threatened Russian invasion, Moscow demands guarantees from Washington that Ukraine and Georgia will never be admitted to the U.S.-led NATO alliance. It demands no further alliance forces in Eastern Europe. The U.S. rulers have brought NATO troops ever closer to Russia’s border, by expanding alliance membership eastward. The Kremlin threatens “retaliation” if its demand for a halt to NATO expansion isn’t met.

Putin’s military threats to Ukraine have enabled him to exploit divisions among rival powers in the European Union, especially in regard to the capitalist rulers in Germany, who are torn between Washington and Moscow.

U.S. rulers lost the Cold War

With the coming apart of the Soviet Union, the U.S. rulers acted on the illusion that they’d won the Cold War and were now free to intervene wherever they wanted, with no consequences. From 1994 to 1999, deadly bombing campaigns by Washington in the Balkans accelerated the breakup of the Yugoslav workers state, and reinforced Washington’s position as the dominant



Map shows where 130,000 Russian troops are amassed around Ukraine’s borders, posing the danger of war.

political and military power in Europe. The U.S. rulers then invaded Iraq and Afghanistan, where they became bogged down. The reality of what they could and could not accomplish began to become clear. Their intervention in Syria and growing conflict with both Moscow and Beijing have made the utter falseness of the U.S. rulers’ judgment in 1991 obvious. Today President Joseph Biden has readied the deployment of 8,500 troops and extra warships and aircraft to Eastern Europe, but has categorically ruled out sending U.S. forces to Ukraine.

Despite the deepening political crisis wracking the U.S. rulers, and the sharp conflicts between the two major political parties, no wing of bourgeois politics advocates going to war to defend Ukraine. Instead, they threaten harsh economic sanctions, hoping that can avert a conflict.

In Europe the rivals of U.S. imperialism seek ways to advance their own interests as the war threat in Ukraine increases. French President Emmanuel Macron promotes the French rulers’ interests by opening up a dialogue with Putin, independent of NATO-ally Washington. He says he wants a new “stability order” in Europe that includes Russia.

At the end of the Cold War, East and West Germany were reunified. The two countries’ military forces were merged and the new German government slashed them by 75%, hobbling their capability. Ever since, they have looked for military protection from either Washington or Moscow.

The German rulers have subjugated the weaker capitalist nations of southern Europe through their domination of the European Union.

Economic stagnation, Moscow’s expanding control over Germany’s natural gas supplies, and the threat of a war in Ukraine have thrown Berlin into a political crisis. German industry gets 55% of its imported gas and a quarter of its oil from Russia, and the newly completed Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline will deepen that dependence. Berlin is highly vulnerable in the present crisis, all the more so as it moves to phase out nuclear power and coal.

Berlin is “a pathetic excuse for a U.S. ally,” the Jan. 25 *New York Post* complained.

“The threat of war is a sharp danger to the working people of Ukraine,

across Europe, in Russia and in the U.S.,” Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress from New Jersey, said Feb. 2. “The SWP demands, ‘Moscow hands off Ukraine! Defend Ukraine’s sovereignty!’ And we demand Washington get its troops out of Eastern Europe. They are there solely to advance the interests of the dog-eat-dog capitalist rulers in the U.S. and are a threat to peace and the working class everywhere.”

Steelworkers strike enters 4th month in West Virginia

Continued from front page times what we pay now,” Chad Thompson, president of USW Local 40, told the *Militant*. That’s “still the main issue to be resolved.”

The union and the company have had several bargaining sessions since with little progress. Thompson told the Huntington *Herald-Dispatch* that the union negotiating committee rejected the bosses’ latest concession offer after showing it to local members. He told the press Jan. 27 that negotiations might resume Feb. 2.

Jump in federal crime laws hits political rights, constitutional rule

Continued from front page against onerous new work schedules. (See article on front page.) When the Constitution was drafted in 1791 only three federal crimes were spelled out — treason, piracy on the high seas and counterfeiting. Nowhere are the total number of federal crimes workers can run afoul of totaled up. It is estimated that 5,199 federal crimes are on the books. Many are tucked away among the thousands of regulations passed by Congress in recent years. The sharpest rise took place 1994-96 during the Bill Clinton White House. And under Clinton the number of federal crimes subject to the death penalty — an instrument of terror against working people — also rose.

The Bill of Rights — added to the Constitution by vote of the majority of states in 1791 — was forced on the federal government after an uprising by artisans and farmers known as Shays’ Rebellion. It overwhelmingly consists of strictures against government interference in the lives of the country’s population and other protections. It concludes by sharply limiting the powers of the federal government, saying, “The powers not delegated to the United States



Democrats are driving to increase Supreme Court, above, with more judges who will do their bidding. The U.S. capitalist rulers face a deep political crisis and the two parties who have protected their power for decades are no longer capable of maintaining stable rule. This is leading to assaults on Constitution.

by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” Fewer than 3% of all those charged with a federal crime went to trial in 2018. Prosecutors intimidated defendants with threats of draconian sentences to force them to resort to a plea bargain conviction, undermining the

constitutional right to a trial by jury. The federal prison population rose from 24,640 in 1980 to 153,293 today. And Congress abolished federal parole in 1984.

Under federal law there are often harsher sentences than those for the same crime under state law, and more mandatory sentences. When you’re prosecuted by the federal government it can wield all its massive resources — the FBI, Washington’s political police; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; various military cops; and numerous other federal agencies, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the IRS. The propertied owners hold state power and see workers as outlaws who must be held in check. This is the role of their massive criminal “justice” system. It cannot be reformed to our benefit. But protections written into the Constitution and Bill of Rights are vital for working people to safeguard. We need to speak out whenever rights we use are threatened, no matter who is being prosecuted. Under capitalist rule and sharpening class struggle, working people need to be ever mindful that we are likely to find ourselves as defendants in the bosses’ courts.

make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States ... nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

The capitalist rulers face a serious political crisis today. Neither of their two main political parties, the Democrats nor Republicans, are able to win stable majorities to chart a self-confident course for the rulers out of the worldwide economic slump, or prevent a rise in working-class struggle this crisis foretells.

They have no policies to prevent mounting clashes with their rivals abroad, including the threat of war in Ukraine, nor halt the instability and wars devastating peoples across the Mideast. Increasingly they turn against each other in a frenzied effort to grab control of the federal government, trampling on the Constitution and our rights in the process.

They are in full assault mode against the structures and norms of rule established by the First American Revolution, which established a constitutional republic with power largely reserved for the states. Whoever wins power — Biden or Trump — seeks to use the executive office to invoke its array of executive orders, oppressive regulatory agencies, ballooning repressive laws and cops to go after their political rivals as well as working people.

Democrats are at the forefront of these efforts today. They are pushing to abolish the Electoral College and to change the way the Senate is elected, hoping to guarantee they can win the presidency with support from a few heavily populated areas and disenfranchise those who live in smaller states and farm areas. This is the real content of their hue and cry over “voting rights.”

As conflicts between the bosses’ two main parties sharpen, working people will need to jealously guard rights we use to advance our own interests today and even more as the class struggle heats up in the years ahead.

History of the fight for Ukrainian independence

With the threat of Moscow’s troops crossing the border against the people of Ukraine — launching the first serious land war on European soil in decades — class conscious workers worldwide side with the long fight of Ukrainian toilers for independence and sovereignty. The right of oppressed nations to self-determination, including independence, has been an important part of the program of the international communist movement for over 150 years.

For centuries the Ukrainian people were under the boot of Russia’s czarist rulers to the north. The Ukrainian people won independence briefly during the first few years of the 1917 Russian Revolution, as V.I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks fought for a voluntary Union of Soviet Socialist Republics that respected the Ukrainian people’s autonomy and the advance of the Ukrainian language and culture. After Lenin’s death, Joseph Stalin led a bloody counterrevolution, reimposing Great Russian national chauvinism, along with brutal policies that led to what Ukrainians know as the Holodomor, where millions perished of starvation. An independent Ukraine only reemerged on the heels of the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

In 2014 a popular mass Maidan uprising in Ukraine battled in the streets and overthrew the pro-Moscow regime of Viktor Yanukovich. Millions joined the political struggle, gaining in confidence as they fought Moscow’s plans to reimpose domination over the country. The struggle gave impetus to the national struggle of the Tatar people in Crimea.

Russian President Vladimir Putin responded by seizing the Crimean Peninsula and backing a long, bloody proxy war by separatists in eastern Ukraine. That crisis has deepened a sense of Ukrainian national identity among working people across the country.

Mustafa Dzhemilev, a long-time leader of the Crimean Tatar people, explained that this was the way “society consolidates and a nation emerges.” He noted that Ukrainians had “united, regardless of origin or faith.”

The Maidan victory gave a spur to working-class struggles that still resonate today in the coal and iron ore mines, steel mills, railroads and other industries across Ukraine.

Putin justifies Moscow’s threats against Ukrainian sovereignty with claims Russians and Ukrainians belong to “one people,” and that “true sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in partnership with Russia.”

He says he stands on the legacy of the czarist empire, which imposed what Lenin dubbed “a prison house of nations” in Russia. And he claims the Bolshevik Revolution and Lenin’s policy on the national question were the worst disaster that ever befell Russia.

Despite the face of capitalist rule in Ukraine today — a challenge working people will need to take on — workers and farmers there are determined to fight to defend their independence from Moscow and their sovereignty.

— R.L.

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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, establishing a popular revolutionary government that organized workers, peasants, women and youth to take their destiny into their own hands. Sankara was assassinated in a counterrevolutionary coup in October 1987. The excerpt is from the book's preface, remarks made by Pathfinder Press President Mary-Alice Waters to a 2005 meeting in Havana presenting the Spanish-language edition. Copyright © 2007 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

From the very beginning, one of the hallmarks of the revolutionary course Sankara fought for was the mobilization of women to fight for their emancipation. As he says in one of the speeches published here, an October 1983 talk that presents the program of the government he headed, "The revolution and women's liberation go together. We do not talk of women's emancipation as an act of charity or out of a surge of human compassion.



Kwame Brathwaite

"Freedom must be conquered in struggle," Thomas Sankara told the United Nations Oct. 4, 1984. Speaking for the Burkinabe people and also the "great disinherited people of the world," he explained this is "the reason for our revolt" and "special relations of solidarity."

It is a basic necessity for the revolution to triumph. Women hold up the other half of the sky."

Sankara's powerful speech to a gathering of several thousand women on International Women's Day, March 8, 1987 — also contained in *Thomas Sankara Speaks* — has been published by Pathfinder as a pamphlet, *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle*. ...

We are proud that with the publication of this selection of some of the most representative of Sankara's other speeches, his voice will now be heard more broadly in Spanish. *Somos herederos de las revoluciones del mundo* includes, for example, his powerful speech on imperialism's destruction of the trees and forests of Africa, given to an international conference in Paris in 1986.

Before top dignitaries of the French imperialist government, Sankara affirmed:

The battle against the encroachment of the desert is a battle to establish a balance between man, nature, and society. ...

As Karl Marx said, those who live in a palace do not think about the same things, nor in the same way, as those who live in a hut. This struggle to defend the trees and forests is above all a struggle against imperialism. Imperialism is the arsonist setting fire to our forests and our savannahs.

That speech by Sankara is cited ex-

tensively in the recently produced issue number 13 of *New International* magazine, which is also being presented here today. From its lead article, entitled "Our Politics Start with the World," by Jack Barnes, to the photo of Earth at Night on its back cover — a photo that captures the economic and cultural inequalities, the veritable abyss, that exists between the imperialist and semi-colonial countries, and among classes within almost every country — this issue of the magazine of Marxist politics and theory distributed by Pathfinder deals in depth with many of the same political issues and the course of action Sankara fought to advance.

To end, I want to point to the depth of Sankara's internationalism so evident in these pages. For him, the popular, democratic, revolutionary struggle of the people of Burkina Faso was one with the struggles to bring down the apartheid regime of South Africa; it was one with the anti-imperialist struggles of the people of Angola, Namibia, Palestine, Western Sahara, and Nicaragua; it was one with the people of Harlem who so warmly welcomed him there in 1984; it was one with the working people of France, the United States, and across the imperialist world.

It was in Managua in 1986 that I had the pleasure of meeting and coming to know Sankara as a leader. We were both delegates to an international conference marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of

the founding of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and the tenth anniversary of the fall in combat of founding FSLN leader Carlos Fonseca. Sankara was chosen to speak at the rally on behalf of the 180 international delegations present there.

When he learned that a delegation from the Socialist Workers Party in the United States was present, he made a point of heading straight to our table to greet us. It was not just as an act of diplomacy; he came to talk politics with fellow revolutionists. He knew that the *Militant* newsweekly was one of the few papers outside Africa that regularly wrote about the revolutionary course unfolding in Burkina Faso, carrying interviews and speeches by Sankara whenever we could get them.

[The book also] contains Sankara's tribute to Che on October 8, 1987. That twentieth anniversary of Che's fall in combat was barely a week before the counterrevolutionary coup d'état that ended Sankara's own life.

It is only because of a fortunate combination of circumstances that Sankara's words at that memorable event are available to us today. The exhibition focusing on Che's revolutionary course and example, inaugurated that day by Sankara, coincided with the opening of an international antiapartheid conference in Ouagadougou attended by delegations from some twenty-nine countries. Among them were compañeros from the United States and Canada, supporters of the *Militant* newspaper, and of Pathfinder Press.

They were looking at the displays when Sankara arrived together with Che's son Camilo and a number of other Cuban compañeros. When Sankara began his impromptu remarks, one of the Canadian compañeras pulled out a tape recorder she had in her backpack and recorded them. The *Militant* transcribed and published them shortly afterward, and they are included here in their totality.

Che taught us "we could dare to have confidence in ourselves and our abilities," Sankara pointed out on that occasion. Che instilled in us the conviction that "struggle is our only recourse."

Che, Sankara insisted, was "a citizen of the free world — the free world that we're building together. That's why we say that Che Guevara is also African and Burkinabè."

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Defend right to strike, political rights!

Operating craft workers on the BNSF Railway — the second largest in the country — are up in arms against the bosses’ unilaterally 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 rest of the capitalist state, they are the tools of the trade for bosses to use to go after working people.

Because of the worldwide stagnation of capitalist production and trade with sharpening competition for markets, both here and worldwide, the rulers 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 run into 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 is the whole reason for the two party shell game, to keep us tethered to lesser-evil politics while guaranteeing profits for their capitalist masters.

Workers need to break out of this whole framework. We need our own party, a 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, joblessness and *all* attempts 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 class to lead millions of toilers oppressed and exploited by capitalist rule to fight for political power and establish a workers and farmers government.

This is at the heart of the campaign being waged by the Socialist Workers Party in 2022. Join the SWP campaign!

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 facts about what really transpired.

In Fayetteville, on Jan. 8, off-duty Cumberland County Deputy Sheriff Jeffrey 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 stopped, he says, and Walker jumped onto his pickup truck, pulled his windshield wipers off and broke his windshield. “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 slammed into the windshield.”

She says Hash shot at Walker through the windshield and then got out of the vehicle and shot him three more times. Other witnesses say they heard at least four shots. “I didn’t see him [Walker] pose a threat,” Ricks told cops.

Anthony Walker said he called his son to come back to their nearby home as he was walking into the street, but Jason kept going and then jumped onto the hood of Hash’s vehicle.

The Walker family has retained civil rights attorney Ben Crump. He led a meeting of some 100 at Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church Jan. 13, urging participants to keep the pressure on authorities to investigate Walker’s killing.

A newly formed group in Fayetteville, Justice

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 say they 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 on Turcios and he fell to the ground.

Five cops surrounded him. A police report says Officer A.A. Smith shot Turcios twice, and then when he tried to get up and move 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 Jerez, 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 with family and supporters. The State Bureau of Investigation is conducting an investigation. Smith and Tapscott have been placed on administrative leave pending the results of the investigation.

Prison bans Malcolm X

Continued from front page

subscription rejected as coming from an “unapproved 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 for students by 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 like that,” Andy Chan, from 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 at all.”

“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 difficult 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, noting that attempts to ban books “for even mentioning race because they claimed it would ‘inflamm’ racial tensions” have become less frequent.

But now, he said, “there’s this more modern form of censorship, including spurious concerns of contraband,” like in Pennsylvania where authorities claimed illegal drugs could be soaked into book pages.

“There’s an associated issue,” Chan said. Some prisons have tried to block physical books in general, 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 crimes and anti-social behavior. He wrote — 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 awoke 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.

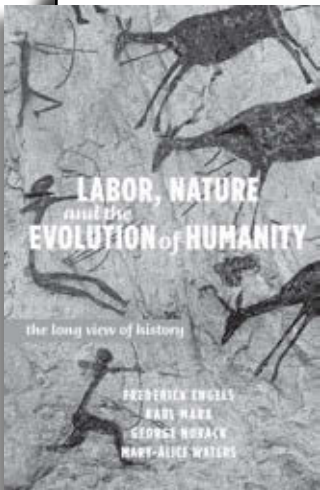
A prisoner at Trousdale Turner Correctional prison informed the *Militant* that he hasn’t been getting his paper. One issue was returned to the *Militant*, stamped “unapproved vendor.” But that’s a violation of the prison’s own rules, which say newspapers sent directly from the publisher don’t need any special authorization.

No other notices have been received by the prisoner subscriber or by the *Militant* saying the paper has been banned. Prison rules state that the publisher and inmate must be informed of bans and allowed to appeal.

Militant attorney David Goldstein has contacted Tennessee prison authorities seeking clarification. If necessary, the *Militant* will file an appeal and launch a public campaign to ensure our subscribers get their papers.

“The number of prisoners across the U.S. reading the *Militant* has 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 unconstitutional ban on Malcolm X books,” Studer said. “And we expect Tennessee prison authorities to remove any obstacles in the way of our subscribers there receiving their subscription to the *Militant*.”



Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity

The Long View of History

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

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

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