

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
Havana book panel discusses *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity*  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 86/NO. 22 JUNE 6, 2022

## Vote reflects the growing support for Irish unity

**BY TONY HUNT AND ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON**  
An end to the British rulers' domination and centurylong partition of Ireland has been thrust back onto the agenda following the emergence of Sinn Féin as the leading party in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This is an opening for workers and farmers on both sides of the Irish Sea.  
For decades Sinn Féin, a bourgeois nationalist party, led the struggle to liberate Ireland from British rule. It became the largest party in the May 5 elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly for the first time ever. Two years ago it won the most first preference votes in parliamentary elections in the Republic of Ireland, but rival parties formed a coalition government. According to the *Sunday Times*, Sinn Féin is "well placed to win elections in the republic, which are due by 2025." The party demands a referendum on a united Ireland.  
The partition of Ireland was imposed  
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## Moscow's troops out now! Defend Ukraine independence!

Unite Ukrainian, Russian workers against Putin's war!



May 22 protest in Hallandale Beach, Florida, initiated by Russian immigrants against Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Putin regime is trying to crack down on opposition to war inside Russia.

**BY ROY LANDERSEN**  
In the first three months of the widespread and fierce resistance by Ukrainian working people against Moscow's invasion, they have succeeded in repelling the ill-prepared and increasingly

demoralized Russian forces who sought to take Kyiv, the capital, and Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city, as well as the regions around Sumy and Chernihiv. They did so despite murderous bombardment that reduced parts of these cities and their suburbs to rubble.  
Withdrawing in defeat, Moscow has focused its war in the south and east of Ukraine. Russian forces have consoli-

**Defeat Moscow's invasion!  
End US sanctions on Russia!**

dated their occupation of Kherson and Mariupol and are now battling with so far only modest success to conquer ground in Donetsk and Luhansk in the midst of more bloody destruction.  
The price Moscow is paying for Presi-  
**Continued on page 6**

## As capitalist crisis deepens, workers need road forward

**BY TERRY EVANS**  
Since the 2008 financial crash, living and working conditions in the U.S. have starkly declined for workers and our families, exacerbated by the effects of government lockdowns during the pandemic. Class inequalities have widened. Today, skyrocketing inflation, coupled with a slowdown in production and trade, poses more sharply the need for workers to organize and use our unions to defend ourselves from this spreading capitalist social crisis.  
Federal Reserve Chairman Jay Powell says the bank will tackle inflation by continuing to raise interest rates, while acknowledging this will likely push up unemployment. Former Reserve Chairman Bernard Bernanke predicts we're stuck with *both* higher prices *and* job losses. The bosses call this "stagflation."  
The capitalist rulers have no answer to the ups and downs of their "business cycle." To them the only figure that truly matters is the bottom line — are they  
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## Socialist Workers Party campaigns across Minnesota, fights for ballot



SWP Minnesota governor candidate Gabrielle Prosser and supporter Vincent Auger, right, talk with meatpacker Daniel Romero at JBS packinghouse in Worthington, Minnesota, May 23.

**BY ALYSON KENNEDY**  
MINNEAPOLIS — During the first week of the drive to get the Socialist Workers Party's ticket of Gabrielle Prosser for Minnesota governor and Kevin Dwire for lieutenant governor on the ballot, supporters of the SWP from across the country have talked to thousands of working people on doorsteps in working-class neighborhoods, at plant gates, at transit stops and in shopping center parking lots.  
Minnesota election law requires

parties that don't already have ballot status to collect over 2,000 signatures within a tight May 17-31 window.  
As of May 24, 1,633 people have signed to help put the party's ticket on the ballot, 53 got subscriptions to the *Militant* and 29 are now reading Pathfinder books on the revolutionary lessons of working-class struggles.  
"We are going to the hilt to bring the SWP program broadly to the exploited classes in Minnesota. This is a national effort to get on the ballot,"  
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## Montreal casino dealers strike for wages that cover inflation, safety

**BY KATY LEROUGETEL**  
MONTREAL — Over 500 dealers walked off the job at the Montreal Casino in their first strike ever, marching from the Ile Ste-Helene Metro station to the casino and setting up a large, loud and lively picket line May 21. They are members of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3939. The casino, the largest in Canada, is run by Loto-Quebec, which manages all four government-run casinos in the province, as well as the lottery and sports betting.  
"At the blackjack table, we deal between 6,000 and 8,000 cards in a shift," croupier Patrick Gagné told this *Militant*  
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## Biden Asia trip seeks allies for US imperialism against Beijing

**BY VIVIAN SAHNER**  
President Joseph Biden's May 20-24 trip to Asia comes amid increasing calls in the press and Congress for the White House to return to making its top foreign-policy priority countering Beijing's rising economic clout and the growing reach of its military. This puts discussion with the rulers of Japan, South Korea, Australia and other Asian allies high on their agenda.  
Democrats and Republicans both present their foreign policies as a de-  
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### Inside

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Refuse collectors, street cleaners in Rugby strike for wage raise

British Columbia hotel workers win new contract, make gains



# Working class needs to lead fight against racist violence, Jew-hatred

BY SETH GALINSKY

A horrific mass shooting by a lone racist and antisemite left 10 dead at a supermarket in the Black community of Buffalo, New York, May 14.

This tragedy is being used by the Democratic Party and liberal media to promote their view that the biggest problem in the U.S. and the world today isn't capitalism in crisis — tearing at the jobs, conditions and rights of workers and our families — but right-wing violence and “white supremacy.”

“The Socialist Workers Party condemns the shooting in Buffalo in the strongest way possible,” Sara Lobman, SWP candidate for Senate from New York, told the *Militant*. “Anti-Black violence as well as Jew-hatred are a deadly danger to all working people and need to be fought. The answer to all those who seek to divide working people by skin color, religion or sex is to stand together, to build fighting unions, to fight for working people to take political power into our own hands.”

The liberals hope to parlay outrage over the massacre into votes for Democrats by claiming Republicans are racist proponents of the reactionary “white replacement” theory espoused by Payton Gendron, the 18-year-old killer.

Gendron's ravings blame Jews for seeking to “replace” Caucasians with Blacks and immigrants. He says that a key goal of his attack was to incite “retaliation and further divide” Blacks and immigrants from Caucasians. These rightist views can be found widely on the internet.

Democratic Party politicians from President Joseph Biden to New York

Gov. Kathy Hochul and Sen. Charles Schumer are also using the killings to push through measures that undermine political rights in the name of combating “domestic terrorism.”

To promote these steps, the liberals cover up basic facts, including by trying to block access to the vile 180-page manifesto written by Gendron.

Jew-hatred permeates Gendron's manifesto. As the crisis of capitalism deepens, the rulers will increasingly use Jew-hatred to divert attention from the real source of the problems working people and the middle class face, which is capitalism. The fight against Jew-hatred is crucial to the working class.

## Buffalo shooter calls for war on Jews

“The real war I'm advocating for is the gentiles vs the Jews,” Gendron wrote. “Jews are the biggest problem the Western world has ever had. They must be called out and killed, if they are lucky they will be exiled.”

While articles in the press referred to Gendron's “antisemitism,” few, if any — outside of the Jewish press and some media in Israel — quote what he actually said. That's because to do so doesn't advance their “narrative” that the targeting of Blacks by white supremacists is the biggest problem in the U.S. today.

The *New York Times* ran an entire article May 16 on Gendron's writings without mentioning Jews or antisemitism even once! Yet Gendron's manifesto refers to Jews more than any other group.

The intertwining of Jew-hatred with attacks on the fight for Black rights



Above, demonstrators attacked by police in Birmingham, Alabama, 1963, during massive national movement that overthrew Jim Crow segregation. Fight against discrimination and racist violence is key part of working-class fight for political power, as is the fight against all manifestations of Jew-hatred. Inset, New York 2020 march of 25,000 after series of antisemitic attacks.

is nothing new. Hatred whipped up against their Jewish lawyers was a big part of the racist campaign against the Scottsboro Boys — nine Black teenagers framed up on charges of rape of two Caucasian women in the 1930s.

Racism is an integral part of capitalism — used by the rulers today to try to divide the working class and drive down wages. But the mass Black rights movement of the 1950s and '60s that overthrew Jim Crow segregation transformed working people and social relations, and cannot be overturned without a bloody counterrevolution.

The horrific massacre in Buffalo is far from the only recent mass shooting over the last several years. They've come from both left, right and people destroyed by capitalism who have no political motivation.

In 2017 a fan of Democratic Sen. Bernie Sanders shot up a baseball practice by Republican congressmen, nearly killing Rep. Steve Scalise. Quick action by two of Scalise's security prevented a worse disaster.

That same year, for motives still unknown, a lone gunman killed 58 people and wounded 489, mostly Caucasians, at a country music festival in Las Vegas.

The liberal press prints article after article blaming supporters of former President Donald Trump and other Republicans for the Buffalo massacre, claiming their anti-immigrant

views are equivalent to “replacement theory” and that this is at the root of Gendron's actions.

In fact it is a wing of the Democratic Party that openly calls for getting as many immigrants as possible to become citizens, hoping they'll vote Democrat and tip elections that way for years to come. That's the heart of a widely circulated 2002 book *The Emerging Democratic Majority* by liberal pundits John Judis and Ruy Teixeira. They call Democrats “the party of transition” as “white America is supplanted by multiracial, multi-ethnic America.”

Using immigration for partisan political advantage with the aim of manufacturing anti-Republican voters undermines the fight for amnesty and the rights of undocumented workers. And it gives anti-immigrant, anti-worker forces a handle for their reactionary conspiracy theories.

## More gov't power a threat to workers

Just as dangerous for the working class are attempts to use the massacre to undermine constitutional protections embodied in the Bill of Rights.

The day after the Buffalo killings, U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said he hopes to charge Gendron with a federal “hate crime,” which would make possible the death penalty.

Continued on page 3

# THE MILITANT

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Construction workers picket in Ontario May 10, part of 43,000 on strike in Toronto area.

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# SWP campaigns in Minnesota

### Continued from front page

Dave Prince, a member of the party's National Committee, told those at a special Militant Labor Forum here May 19. "Workers are interested in the party's program and the class questions we pose."

In June and early July there will be another national effort, organized in Philadelphia to put Chris Hoepfner, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in the 3rd C.D., on the ballot there.

David Rosenfeld, the SWP congressional candidate from the Minneapolis area, described the party's plans to introduce workers and farmers to the program and activity of the Socialist Workers Party and reknit ties with union fighters in the Red River Valley, Austin, the Iron Range and other cities, small towns and farming areas. Nearly \$1,400 was raised toward this effort.

Among those Prosser met while campaigning at a local shopping center was Nicholas Mckusik, a fencing worker. "I'm making \$20 an hour. That's not bad money, but with inflation it's just not enough," he said. McKusik explained he was conservative and voted Republican in the last election. "When Republicans were running things, we didn't have all this inflation."

Prosser said the Socialist Workers Party pushes for the labor movement to fight for cost-of-living escalator

clauses in union contracts, pension plans and all social benefits, along with a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to create jobs.

"Neither the Democrats nor the Republicans ever have working-class interests in mind, because they govern for the benefit of the superrich families who own the big banks and corporations and most of the land in this country. Working people need to break with the two capitalist parties and build an independent labor party based on a fighting union movement," she said. Mckusik signed the SWP petition and bought a subscription to the *Militant*.

### Fighting to defend workers, farmers

The rising cost of living and deteriorating conditions facing working people was on the minds of many that the socialist campaigners met. "People have left the workforce. It's not that people are lazy. I cringe every time I hear that," Micky Neuffer, who works at a casino, told party supporter Mindy Brudno. "Seniors who've retired over the last two years have had to go back to work at low wages just to make it." Neuffer said young people are in the same situation, because jobs at low wages are oftentimes the only thing they can get, and "you can't pay rent on those wages."

One campaign team visited the Red



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

Michael Norville, left, signs petition to put SWP candidates on Minnesota ballot May 19 after discussion with Danielle Snyder about the party's support for workers' rights and unions.

River Valley in the western part of the state where an important union battle took place in 2011-12 when American Crystal Sugar bosses locked out their workers. "I read about the lockout of your union in the *Militant*. The bosses locked you out for almost two years, right?" SWP member Samir Hazboun asked Vernon Lebby, a member of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union, outside the American Crystal Sugar plant in Grand Forks.

"Twenty-two months," Lebby said, explaining the lessons he learned during that fight and how he got a feel for what other workers were going through. "I started working at an Amazon warehouse during the lockout. At first it wasn't that bad of a job but over time they started speeding things up and pushing for more and more," he said.

Lebby said he's encouraged that Amazon workers are fighting for a union now. He signed to get the SWP on the ballot, bought a *Militant* subscription and got a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

Campaigning in a working-class apartment complex near the Twin Cities airport, Prosser knocked at the door of Krista Kleinboehl, who works from home doing customer service and sales. She responded enthusiastically when Prosser explained she was running against both the Democratic and Republican parties' candidates and putting forward a program to advance the interests of the working class.

"What's your opinion about abortion?" Kleinboehl asked and went on to explain, "I personally wouldn't do it, but I think women must be able to make that choice for themselves."

Prosser responded, "The fight for the right to abortion is only part of the fight for reproductive rights and family planning, which is in turn only one facet of the fight for the emancipation of women. And the fight for women's emancipation is totally bound up with the fight to strengthen working-class families, an important refuge workers have in this crisis-ridden capitalist system."

"Working people need to organize and fight for a significant increase in the minimum wage, for universal health care from cradle to grave, for affordable child care and elder care, for job training and jobs, for elimination of the obstacles to adoption," she said, "and in that framework for reproductive rights and family planning, including abortion."

"You're right," said Kleinboehl. "The truth is we need to change the entire system from top to bottom."

"That's exactly what we're campaigning for, to organize workers and our allies to do just that," said Prosser. Kleinboehl signed the SWP petition.

The campaign has been getting press coverage. The *Globe* in Worthington interviewed Prosser May 24. "Ensuring the solidarity of the working class, fighting for jobs, and protecting against inflation are a few of the SWP's priorities," *Globe* reporter Emma McNamee wrote.

Anyone who would like to help get Socialist Workers Party candidates on the ballot can contact supporters of the SWP listed in the directory on page 4. The drive to get the party on the ballot in Philadelphia begins June 17.



Militant/John Hawkins

Gabrielle Prosser, left, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Minnesota governor, discusses with Krista Kleinboehl at her Twin Cities' apartment May 22. Kleinboehl told Prosser she was hit with a \$50,000 hospital bill when her baby was born prematurely before her health insurance kicked in. "Workers need to fight for universal health care," Prosser said.

## Buffalo shooting

### Continued from page 2

ty. Gendron has already been indicted for first-degree murder by a New York grand jury. A federal indictment would be double jeopardy under the Bill of Rights, which bars being charged for the same crime twice.

Maya Wiley, president of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, backs some of the government's measures. But she told the *Washington Post* she opposes asking for the death penalty because Blacks and other oppressed minorities are disproportionately targeted by capital punishment.

Gov. Hochul used the massacre as a pretext to sign an executive order creating domestic terrorism units in the state police, giving the cops even more leeway to go after working people. The Justice Department had already done the same earlier in the year.

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### Socialist Workers Party to host Int'l Conference

The Socialist Workers Party is hosting its annual International Conference June 9-11 in Wittenberg, Ohio. If you're excited by what you read in the *Militant* about the program and activities of the party, and if you are considering joining in to help build a party that works to advance working-class struggles today and fights to emulate Cuba's socialist revolution here in the U.S., you should think about asking to come.

Contact the SWP branch nearest you, listed on page 4.



# Women played the leading role in prehistoric society

Woman's Evolution: From Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family by Evelyn Reed is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for June. Reed (1905-79) was a leading member of the Socialist Workers Party and participant in the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and '70s. She also wrote Problems of Women's Liberation, Is Biology Woman's Destiny? and other titles. She was one of the authors of Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women. This excerpt is from the introduction by Reed to the book. Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

### BY EVELYN REED

The early history of half the human species — womankind — has largely been hidden from view. To bring it to light requires a reinvestigation of anthropology, where the role and accomplishments of women in prehistoric society are buried. This book is a contribution to unveiling that remarkable record.

The resurgence of the women's liberation movement has thrown the spotlight on certain dubious assumptions and disputed questions regarding the past. Foremost among these is the subject of the matriarchy. Was there a period in history when women

held a highly esteemed and influential place? If so, how did they lose their social eminence and become the subordinate sex in patriarchal society? Or is the matriarchy, as some say, a myth that has no historical basis?

The matriarchy is one of the most hotly contested issues in a hundred-year controversy between contending schools in anthropology. This book affirms that the maternal clan system was the original form of social organization and explains why. It also traces the course of its development and the causes of its downfall. Such partisanship on the side of the matriarchy would alone make this book controversial. But it contains other challenges to long-held opinions on prehistoric society.

Disagreements are to be expected in a field that covers so vast a stretch of human evolution, extending from the birth of our species to the threshold of civilization, and where the available data derived from biology, archaeology, and anthropology is fragmentary and uncoordinated.

Anthropology was founded as a distinct science in the middle of the nineteenth century. Most of the founding fathers (women entered the profession only later) had an evolutionary approach. Morgan, Tylor, and other pioneers regarded anthropology as the study of the origin of society and the material forces at work in its progress. They made brilliant beginnings in illuminating the main stages in human development.

Morgan delineated three great epochs of social evolution — from savagery through barbarism to civilization. Each was marked off by decisive advances in the level of economic activity. The most rudimentary stage, savagery, was based on hunting and food-gathering. Barbarism began with food production through agriculture and stock raising. Civilization crowned the development of the ancient world by bringing it to the point of commodity production and exchange.

These three epochs were of extreme-



Militant/Ögmundur Jónsson

The sole statue of a woman in the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad's Neo-Assyrian galleries, which cover 911-612 B.C. Featured instead are massive statues and carvings of kings and their male servants during this period. In the galleries of the museum dedicated to earlier millennia there are numerous images of women, reflecting the dominance of the matriarchy. This vividly reflects how the development of class society led to the subjugation of women.

ly unequal duration. Savagery lasted far longer than either of its successors. Although savagery is sometimes differentiated into an earlier "primeval" and a later "primitive" stage, both of these rested upon a hunting and gathering economy. Savagery had a span of a million-odd years, comprising more than 99 percent of human existence. Barbarism began about eight thousand years ago; civilization only three thousand years ago.

The early investigators of savage society, to their own surprise, came upon a social structure totally different from ours. They found a clan and tribal system based on maternal kinship and in which women played a leading role. This stood out in sharp contrast with modern society which features the father-family and male supremacy. Although they were unable to tell how far back the maternal sys-

tem went, we propose to show that it dates from the beginning of humankind.

They made other astonishing discoveries. They observed that savage society had egalitarian social and sexual relations, arising from collective production and communal possession of property. These features too were at odds with modern society, based on private property and class divisions. Thus the maternal clan system, which gave an honored place to women, was also a collectivist order where the members of both sexes enjoyed equality and did not suffer oppression or discrimination.

Subsequently, these discoveries evoked doubts and resistance from the schools of anthropology that became dominant in the twentieth century. There arose a deep division between evolutionists and anti-evolutionists that has persisted to the present day. It is only through the evolutionary approach, however, that the concealed history of women — and of men — can be uncovered.

The principle of universal evolution had already been applied to the problem of the genesis of *Homo sapiens* with the publication in 1871 of Darwin's book *The Descent of Man*. [H]e demonstrated that the earliest subhumans, the hominids, arose out of the anthropoids. ...

The question of the matriarchy is decisive in establishing whether or not the modern father-family has always existed. The very structure of the maternal clan system precluded it. Instead of being the basic social unit from time immemorial, as most anthropologists contend, it is a late arrival in history, appearing only at the beginning of the civilized epoch. ...

This is especially true when we consider the outstanding role played by women in ancient times. The knowledge that female inferiority today is not biologically determined, that it has not been a permanent fixture throughout history, and that our sex was once the organizers and leaders of social life, should heighten the self-confidence of women who are today aspiring for liberation.

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# Casino strike in Montreal

Continued from front page

worker-correspondent. This has led to a high number of repetitive motion injuries, workers say. This issue, as well as abusive scheduling and the bosses' demand to cut wages for new dealers, is at the heart of the strike.

Up to half the workforce has suffered injuries due to repetitive motion or back strain, said Denis Galy, local union president, who worked 21 years as a dealer. He said the government-run insurance board refuses to recognize many of them as work-related. Many strikers carried signs reading, "I'm wagering on my health."

During the pandemic, dealers won the right to a half-hour break after one hour of work — time needed to rest their bodies. The casino now proposes to dock them 30 minutes pay daily for continuing these breaks. The union is demanding the half-hour breaks after every hour worked be maintained with no pay cut.

On top of a long-term decline in business, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the casino hard. "They've gone from 120 tables to under 60, and from a 24-hour operation to 18 hours a day," Patrick Roux said. "They've replaced a lot of games with electronic tables or they've eliminated them. After 12 years of service, I'm back to the same schedule that I had when I started, working weekends." At its height in 1995 the casino employed 1,200 dealers.

This didn't prevent Loto-Quebec from turning a profit. In fact, the company announced it netted 900 million Canadian dollars (\$703 million) in the last three months of 2021.

"I have 12 years seniority," Gagné said. "I just came back last month after two years of not working during the pandemic, and I'm on call now. They give you three hours' notice." Better schedules are a key issue in the strike.

"The casino cut the workday," Galy said. "You work more days now for the same pay." Dealers often work six days just to go over 30 hours of work on their paycheck.

One of the casino bosses' demands

is to slash the wages of new dealers by 10%. "Young people are already quitting because there's no hope of improvement," said Gagné. Strikers all stressed their determination to refuse the proposed 10% reduction in new workers' pay. The current starting wage is CA\$18.40.

Loto-Québec rammed through a 2% raise with employees at other government casinos, and refuses to negotiate anything different here. But this is well below the rate of inflation. Some picket signs read, "IPC 6.8, it's not 2.5," referring to the government's official consumer price index.

The strikers deserve widespread support from other workers. Drop by the picket line, which is up from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day in front of the casino. Send solidarity messages and contributions to SCFP/CUPE Local 3939 care of denis.galy@sccm3939.com.



Graham Hughes/The Canadian Press via AP

Canadian Union of Public Employees members picket Montreal casino May 21 in strike over working conditions that cause repetitive motion injuries. Sign at right says, "I bet on my health."

## ON THE PICKET LINE

### Refuse collectors, street cleaners in Rugby strike for wage raise

RUGBY, England — Some 70 street cleaners, lorry drivers and loaders here have been on strike since April 26 for higher pay.

"The 1.75% wage offer from the Local Government Association is a wage cut when you think inflation is standing at 9%," Paul Hancox, a Unite union shop steward, told the *Militant*. "We have people who are using food banks to get by."

The union estimates that council workers have faced a 22% drop in wages over the last 11 years.

"When we tried to negotiate a better deal with Rugby Borough Council they offered us 'employee loans.' Who wants to work all week then ask the employer for a loan? It was an insult," Hancox said.

Seven out of nine agency workers employed by the council have joined the strike.

"It had to be all of us," Hancox said. "The agency lads, they're part of the team and we'll make sure they're not

laid off as a result of striking. We don't go back without them."

Dozens of strikers picket the waste depot early in the morning then move to the Town Hall. "People see us out here every day, with our union flags and barbecues, and they wonder what's kicking off. This is the first major strike in Rugby since the 1970s," Darren Hunter, another Unite steward, said.

Refuse lorry drivers in nearby Coventry have been on strike since Jan. 31 for higher pay. "We went to their march and rally," Hunter said. "And they joined us here yesterday. We'll be going back there."

— Julie Crawford  
and Pamela Holmes

### British Columbia hotel workers win new contract, make gains

BURNABY, British Columbia — Hotel workers at the Hilton Metrotown here, who had been fighting a lockout by the bosses for 391 days, voted overwhelmingly to ratify a four-year contract May 11.

The workers, members of UNITE

HERE Local 40, won full recall rights for 97 terminated workers without loss of seniority or wages. The new agreement restores housekeeping jobs and daily room cleaning that the bosses had previously eliminated. Also won were wage increases, protection of union health and pension benefits and gratuities, and stronger recall protections.

"We have shown Hilton Metrotown and other hotels in B.C. that hotel workers will stand up for respect and justice to raise standards in the industry," Liza Secretaria, a night auditor and union bargaining committee member, said in a union statement. "We went through so much together during the lockout and the pandemic, but we're stronger than ever now that we have fought for our co-workers to return and won a fair contract."

At the nearby Pacific Gateway Hotel, May 12 marked one year on the picket line. The bosses terminated 143 staff and the fight to win back their jobs, benefits and pensions continues.

— Dan Grant

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



June 9, 1997

TEHRAN, Iran — More than one million people attended the 10th Tehran International bookfair, held April 26-May 5. Most of the books presented were in Farsi, Arabic, and English, including titles from more than 1,300 Iranian publishers and 400 English-language publishers. More Romance-language foreign publishers took part this year as well. The booth set up by Pathfinder Distribution, London, got a good response.

The bookfair was covered in the national press as an important cultural and educational event. Busloads of people came to the fair from all over Iran. Schools and colleges organized trips for students, bringing hundreds of thousands to buy books at rates subsidized by the government.

This is the sixth year Pathfinder books have been presented at the fair. There was a heightened interest in books on Malcolm X, Cuba and U.S. politics.



June 9, 1972

BUENOS AIRES — A crowd of 3,000 jammed into a theater here on May 26 to hear Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Linda Jenness. This meeting was the highlight of several gatherings in Argentina, part of the candidate's speaking tour of several Latin American countries. Jenness addressed crowds of more than 1,000 people in the cities of Tucuman, Rosario, and Mar del Plata.

The response demonstrates the wide interest in socialist ideas. Jenness's speech, delivered in fluent Spanish, was interrupted repeatedly by cheers, chants, and showers of confetti from the balcony.

She expressed the solidarity of those fighting against Yankee imperialism in the United States with those who fight to free their own country from U.S. aggression. She said that a victory for the Vietnamese revolution will be a victory for the workers of the entire world.



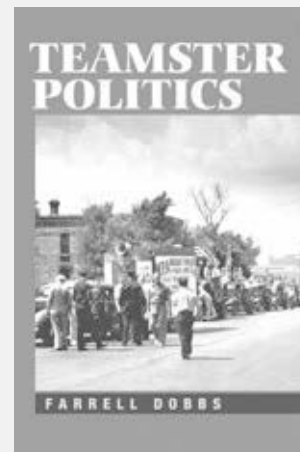
June 2, 1947

CHICAGO, May 30 — Representatives of over 20 labor, civil liberties and civic organizations launched a united campaign to end the discriminatory policies in the hiring of sales clerks that prevail in the department stores in the downtown Loop. The conference organized a United Committee to direct the campaign and mobilize labor and community support.

The campaign was started in April by CORE after the rejection of Doris Dixon, who applied at Goldblatt's Department Store.

Miss Dixon, a graduate of the Chicago Public Schools and Tennessee State College, had been informed that Goldblatt's was hiring sales clerks. She was told that no jobs were available and was refused an application. Ethel Weiss, a white girl who entered the employment office a few minutes after Miss Dixon, was given an application and urged to have an immediate interview.

### Recommended reading



"Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade-union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party."

— Farrell Dobbs

Other books in four-part series:  
**Teamster Rebellion**  
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**Teamster Bureaucracy**

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**pathfinderpress.com**



Back Ukraine independence!

Continued from front page  
dent Vladimir Putin’s war of conquest is substantial. Troops and their weaponry have been badly damaged and their moral standing demolished.

Workers strikes and protests continue to take place, and, despite new laws with heavy penalties against all forms of protest, opposition to the war and its effects at home are widespread.

Moscow’s war — the largest fought on European soil since the second imperialist world war in the 1940s — has intensified the growing capitalist world disorder, as each country’s predatory rulers seek new armaments and recalibrate alliances to best defend their own national economic and political interests.

Claims by Washington that it has put together a large, bipartisan and united coalition of nations against Moscow are unraveling, a casualty of the rival capitalist rulers’ conflicting interests.

“The Socialist Workers Party hails the courageous resistance by Ukrainian working people to defend their country’s national sovereignty and independence,” Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania, said May 23. “We are for the defeat of Moscow’s invading forces and their complete withdrawal.

“We also oppose the U.S.-led sanctions, which, whoever they target, fall heaviest on Russian working people,” he said. “They erect obstacles to developing the class solidarity needed between workers and farmers of Ukraine, Russia, here in the U.S. and worldwide against this invasion.”

Kissinger tells Ukraine ‘call a halt’

Henry Kissinger, a former U.S. secretary of state, was a featured speaker at the annual gathering of capitalist politicians and glitterati in Davos, Switzerland. He told the crowd it would be disastrous “for the West to get swept up in the mood of moment and forget the proper place of Russia in the European balance of power,” the May 23 *Telegraph* reported him saying. He lectured the Ukrainian people that “the proper role for the country is to be a neutral buffer state.”

A *New York Times* editorial May 19 had a similar theme, saying a protracted war is “not in America’s best interest,” and that Ukraine “will have

to make the painful territorial decisions that any compromise will demand.” It urges Biden to conduct U.S. policy accordingly.

Kissinger said Russia had been a key guarantor of the balance of power in Europe for the last 400 years. This refers to the reactionary role played by the czarist dictatorship, by the Soviet Union under anti-working-class Stalinist rule, and by Putin today in helping police the capitalist world order.

These recent statements show the predatory self-serving interests behind imperialist claims to support Ukrainian independence. They stand poised to use the flow of arms as leverage to force Kyiv to “compromise.”

Working-class resistance

It is working people who are at the heart of Ukraine’s successful resistance to Putin’s invasion.

As well as keeping essential supplies flowing for the war effort, “many rail workers volunteered to join the fighting in the territorial defense militia,” Volodymyr Kozelskyiv, chair of the Free Trade Union of Railway Workers of Ukraine, told an ASLEF conference in London by video link May 19. ASLEF is Britain’s trade union for train drivers.

He spoke of resistance being organized in Russian-occupied Melitopol. On May 18 and again on the 23rd partisans there disabled rail tracks and blew up Russian trains carrying armor and troops.

Nearly 2,500 Ukrainian fighters emerged from the destroyed Azovstal steel works in Mariupol by May 20. Many had held out underground for 86 days before yielding on orders from Kyiv. Russian forces took the wounded to hospitals, the rest to a prison interrogation camp in Russian-occupied Donetsk.

Kyiv hopes to secure their exchange in a prisoner swap. But this was undermined by a Ukrainian court decision May 23 to impose a life sentence on a 21-year-old Russian soldier for “war crimes.” Under direct orders, he shot and killed a civilian in northeastern Ukraine in the first days of the war. But it is Putin and his high command who bear responsibility for Moscow’s brutal conduct of the war, not Russian workers in uniform.

Stalin’s 1944 exile of Crimean Tatars commemorated despite Russian occupation



May 18 was the 78th anniversary of Moscow’s forced deportation of the entire Crimean Tatar people from their homeland to Central Asia in 1944. Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin said the Tatars were all agents of the Nazis. The date is marked annually by Tatars in Crimea and across Ukraine. Despite a ban on Tatar actions imposed for the past eight years since Russian troops seized and occupied the peninsula, hundreds gathered solemnly at a memorial monument in Kerch.

Over two days in 1944 over 200,000 Tatars were herded into cattle cars, locked in, and taken by rail deep into Russia, above. Over half died during the journey and by privation over the next two years.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, waves of Tatars began returning home, to discover their homes had been seized under Moscow’s attempts to “Russify” the population. Today the Tatars, the native people of Crimea, make up some 12% of the population. With Ukraine’s independence in 1991, Tatar culture flowered and identification with Ukraine expanded.

But in 2014, after the popular Maidan uprising, Putin responded by using his thousands of naval troops — stationed in Crimea under an earlier agreement with Kyiv — to take power, oust Ukrainian forces and crush independent mobilization by Tatars. Their organizations, like the Mejlis, their national council, and its leaders, were banned. Newspapers and schools were closed down and cultural institutions shuttered. The Russian government cracked down on all opposition, arresting and framing up any Tatars who spoke out.

Moscow has doubled down on its repression since its invasion of Ukraine. “Since the beginning of Russia’s total war against Ukraine, a large number of Crimean Tatar civic activists and journalists” have been sentenced to 12-to-19 years in jail on fabricated criminal charges, Halya Coynash of the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, said.

— ROY LANDERSEN

Kyiv’s “war crime” prosecutions of prisoners of war aid the Kremlin’s plans to put Azovstal defenders on trial and charge them with “war crimes.” Moscow especially targets members of the Azov National Guard unit, who led the resistance to the Russian takeover of Mariupol. Putin falsely brands them as “neo-Nazis.”

In the occupied parts of Luhansk and Donetsk, spontaneous protests by family members of young men forcibly conscripted by pro-Moscow separatists broke out May 16-17.

The leaking of sober views by Kremlin supporters on Russian state TV continues. Igor Markov, a former Ukrainian parliamentarian who backs the Kremlin, told Moscow’s Channel One that Russia might lose, not win, the war. He said, “I don’t see how we’re going to do it.”

Toilers inside Russia continue to find ways to protest Putin’s invasion of Ukraine. In a number of areas, posters have gone up with pictures of a dog named “Peace.” “PEACE lost,” it reads. “He was kind and fun and didn’t cross our neighbor’s border. He gave comfort and hope. We need our PEACE back.”

In occupied Enerhodar in southern Ukraine, dozens of firefighters went on

strike May 20, standing outside their station, demanding their chief, Vitalii Troian, who was seized from his office two days earlier, be released.

Dozens of Russian immigrants protested in Hallandale Beach, Florida, May 22. When Socialist Workers Party members, including Rachele Fruit, the party’s candidate for governor, came, two protesters asked if they could carry her sign, “No war! No sanctions! Defend Ukraine independence!” A statement by the SWP was read to the protesters.



In order not to be charged, fined and possibly imprisoned for “discrediting the Russian army,” protesters against Putin’s war spread photos of their pets with captions saying “PEACE lost. He was kind and fun and didn’t cross our neighbor’s border. He gave comfort and hope. We need our PEACE back.”

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# Protests sweep Iran over rising prices, effects of rulers’ wars abroad

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Demonstrations against government moves to lift subsidies on basic foods, which touched off a torrent of rising prices, erupted across Iran in mid-May. They spread to dozens of cities and towns. Protesters in many of the actions raised political slogans, demanding “Down with [Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali] Khamenei, down with dictator” and “We don’t want mullahs ruling.”

The actions reflect mounting opposition by working people to the bourgeois-clerical regime’s counterrevolutionary rule, including its military and political interference across the Gulf region, from Iraq and Syria to Lebanon and Yemen.

The actions responded to the Iranian government’s announcement May 11 cutting state subsidies on essential items, including cooking oil, eggs, milk and chicken. This resulted in price hikes by as much as 300% for a variety of flour-based staples like bread and 400% on pasta, a staple of the Iranian diet. Eggs and chicken nearly doubled. Cooking oil increased by over 400% overnight.

### Prices rising ‘by the hour’

Prices were rising “by the hour,” Mohammad, a 40-year-old private sector worker, told Agence France-Presse in Tehran. “How can people live like this?”

Promises by the administration that prices would be reduced have not quieted protesters, who are fed up with years of anti-working-class government attacks.

The protests quickly spread to provinces of Isfahan, Khuzestan, Lorestan, Ardebil, Charmahal and Bakhtiari, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad. In an effort to stifle the demonstrations, Iranian officials cut off internet in areas with ongoing protests. Demonstrators have faced attacks by the notorious Basij militia, which has been used in the past to crack down on protests.

Iranian authorities have yet to report any deaths. However, Al Arabiya, Saudi Arabia’s semi-official TV network, reported May 18 at least six people have been killed since the protests began.

One of the largest actions was in Dezful, in the oil-rich southwestern province of Khuzestan, where the IRNA, Iran’s official news agency, reported cops dispersed hundreds of people and arrested 15.

“There were lots of anti-Khamenei



Anadolu Agency

Protests across Iran erupted in mid-May over government lifting of subsidies on basic foods, effects of rulers’ war moves in the region. Angry demonstrators raised political demands: “Down with [Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali] Khamenei!” and “We don’t want mullahs ruling!”

slogans simply because he’s the one responsible for our situation,” said a Twitter message from a protester at the action. “His politics over the past 30 years have brought us here — useless uranium enrichment, interfering in internal affairs of neighboring countries, stupid enmity with Israel, the list is long.”

Iran’s workers and farmers are facing the impact of the worldwide capitalist economic crisis, compounded by the economic sanctions imposed by Washington and other imperialist powers that hit working people the hardest.

The official inflation rate is about 40%. Almost half Iran’s of 82 million population live below the government’s official poverty line.

It’s getting harder and harder to get and hold down a job, with the value of wages eroding. According to Iranian government statistics, over 22% of Iran’s youth are unemployed. In some provinces, like Khuzestan, it’s up to 33%. And growing numbers of young people have to move in with their parents because they can’t afford to make it on their own.

Amid these spreading demonstra-

## Biden trip seeks allies for US imperialism against Beijing

### Continued from front page

fense of “American interests.” In fact, they act to safeguard the interests of the U.S. capitalist rulers who are preparing for sharper conflicts with rivals and future wars to defend their profits and strategic interests in the face of the growing capitalist world disorder following Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

Over recent decades the Chinese rulers’ massive expansion of capitalist production and trade has challenged Washington’s domination of markets and investments, especially in Asia and the Pacific. Tariffs on China, imposed by former President Donald Trump, are slowing Beijing’s rise. They have been continued by the Biden administration.

Though far short of the military armaments and capabilities of Washington, China’s rulers have poured huge sums into expanding their military in the region. In April, Beijing secured a deal with the rulers of the Solomon Islands that could allow it to station troops there. For years the Solomon Islands have been a semicolony of the Australian rulers, punctuated by occasional detachments of troops led by Canberra.

Beijing is also negotiating deals with the governments of additional island nations, including Kiribati, located just 1,800 miles from Hawaii, the home to the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.

Biden’s trip highlighted the challenges facing the U.S. rulers. The centerpiece of his visit was launching the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, a Washington-dominated trade pact that includes the governments of Australia, India, Japan and nine other

countries in the region.

Aimed at strengthening economic ties among them and countering Beijing, the deal offered little that was tangible to the ruling classes signing onto it. It doesn’t provide any of them with greater access to U.S. markets, nor lay out proposals aimed at reducing their own tariffs. As part of the deal the White House dangled \$150 million for clean energy and infrastructure projects in the region — a pittance compared to recent investments by Beijing.

Beijing has extended massive loans for giant infrastructure projects in countries across the region aimed at expanding trading routes and gaining access to markets for the Chinese capitalists’ commodities. Chinese trade with nations making up the Association of Southeast Asian Nations dwarfs that of the U.S.

A May 24 meeting of officials from Australia, India, Japan and the U.S. during Biden’s tour exposed some of the differences in their national interests. A joint statement released following the meeting referred to “a tragic conflict raging in Ukraine,” without condemning Moscow’s invasion.

### Moscow-Beijing joint war games

On the final day of Biden’s trip, Chinese and Russian armed forces held their first joint military exercise since Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine, sending bombers over the seas of northeast Asia in a show of force. A U.S. official condemned the war games, saying they threatened countries in the region that had territorial disputes with Beijing. Over the last decade Beijing has conducted dozens of joint military exercises with Moscow, including mock

tions, dozens of union bus drivers in Tehran walked off the job May 16 demanding payment of overdue wages and a substantial raise that had been approved by the Supreme Labor Council more than two months ago. The Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company reported that a dozen of its members were detained the next day. The unionists have vowed to keep up the fight until their demands are met.

The strike follows weeks of strikes and protests by teachers in cities across Iran earlier this year.

Iranian toilers overthrew the pro-Washington regime of the shah in 1979 in a popular revolutionary upsurge. Workers committees — “shoras” in Farsi — were set up in factories, oil refineries and more; women joined in the struggle demanding equal rights; and oppressed nationalities like Kurds and Arabs fought for greater freedom. Over years these struggles were put down by the reactionary clerical rulers, but deep sentiments remained.

The latest actions reflect this, as well as growing anger against the regime in recent years based among poorer working people in cities and rural areas. This includes Iran-wide mobilizations in December 2017 and 2018 that swept some 90 cities and towns; mass protests in 2019 over gas price hikes and the effects of the regime’s war moves abroad; as well as protests in 2021, initially in response to widespread water shortages.

seizures of islands, patrols by long-range bombers over the Sea of Japan and East China Sea.

At a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping last February, they declared a “no limits” partnership. Putin reaffirmed Moscow’s support for Beijing’s claim that Taiwan is part of China. Xi has refused to condemn Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

Biden kicked off the Southeast Asia tour in South Korea, where the U.S. stations 28,500 troops. With newly elected President Yoon Suk Yeol, Biden agreed to discuss expanding provocative joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises. These war games threaten North Korea and worsen tensions across the Korean Peninsula.

In Tokyo May 23, Biden pledged to use the U.S. military to defend Taiwan, remarks the White House quickly walked back, insisting that the U.S. decades-old policy toward Chinese claims on Taiwan remained in place. Under the policy of “strategic ambiguity” Washington sells arms to Taiwan and at the same time acknowledges Beijing’s claim that Taiwan is part of China.

Despite their rising regional power in recent years, the Chinese rulers also face difficulties. Industrial production in China fell sharply last year and many cities remain under harsh pandemic lockdowns, stirring angry protests among residents. Loans made by Beijing to governments across Asia, as part of its expansionist Belt and Road Initiative, have become difficult, if not impossible, for some debtor nations to repay amid spreading social and economic crisis.

## — CALENDAR —

**Protests to end the U.S. economic war against Cuba!  
Sunday, May 29**

### FLORIDA

#### Miami

Meet 11 a.m. on Ponce de León Boulevard, between Salamanca and Calabria avenues in Coral Gables.

### NEW YORK

#### New York

Meet 1 p.m. in front of José Martí statue at W. 59th Street and Center Drive in Manhattan.

[www.us-cubanormalization.org](http://www.us-cubanormalization.org)

For more information on actions in your area, check the National Network on Cuba Facebook page.



# ‘Capitalism won’t disappear by itself, it must be disappeared’

## Havana book fair panel discusses importance of scientific, Marxist understanding of history

**BY RACHELE FRUIT AND MARTÍN KOPPEL**  
HAVANA — “We all know, or at least sense, that the first large land war on the European continent in more than 75 years signals a new stage in the unraveling of the imperialist world order established by the victors of World War II,” said Mary-Alice Waters at a book launch during the Havana International Book Fair.

“The politics we are discussing here today have everything to do with our ability to chart a working-class course in this unknown future.”

Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press, was speaking as part of a panel that presented Pathfinder’s newest title, *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity: The Long View of History*. (For the text of Waters’ remarks, see page 9.)

A new and urgent sense of the need to understand the roots of sharpening class conflicts in the world today is what attracted many people at the fair to that book and other titles available at the Pathfinder booth. It also marked the April 24 book presentation, which drew some 50 people.

The panel included Fernando González, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP); Zuleica Romay, director of Afro-American Studies at Casa de las Américas; Pedro Pablo Rodríguez, lead editor of the complete works of José Martí; and longtime revolutionary combatant Víctor Dreke. Pathfinder editor Róger Calero chaired the meeting.

*Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* includes writings by Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, and George Novack, along with an opening article by Waters that takes up the importance of those fundamental works of Marxism in today’s class struggle. They are the real answer, she stressed in her remarks, to the “anti-working-class, anti-science, race-baiting ‘identity politics’ and ‘cancel culture’ that increasingly permeate privileged middle-class layers” in U.S. universities and far beyond.

“This is a much-needed book,” said Zuleica Romay in her remarks. “We are living through a time of contention between struggles to bring about a better future for the human



April 24 panel at Havana International Book Fair. From left, Róger Calero, Pathfinder editor; Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press; Fernando González, president of Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples; Zuleica Romay, director of Afro-American Studies at Casa de las Américas; Pedro Pablo Rodríguez, lead editor of complete works of José Martí; and Víctor Dreke, longtime revolutionary combatant.

species and a system, capitalism, that refuses to disappear.”  
“People can go out and fight around everyday problems,” she said. “But they need clear reference points to be able to transcend these individual situations as they fight. That’s exactly what this book is about.”

### A scientific understanding of history

A scientific, Marxist understanding of history helps provide that broader perspective, Romay said. In Cuba, for example, with all the lessons of its revolutionary struggles, how can you fight for a better future “if you don’t have knowledge about the history of your country? What values are you going to defend if you don’t know how much it has cost to be able to enjoy the things we have won?”

She pointed to how the politics of “identity fundamentalism,” pervasive in Latin American academic and left circles today, obscures a class understanding of the world, and that “in Cuba we’re not exempt from that.”

Romay cited several examples. She told of attending international conferences where some argued “that the problems of sexism can only be addressed by women, that the problems of racial discrimination can only be dealt with by those of African heritage.”

The capitalist rulers around the

world “are very happy” with such views because it means “we’re fighting among ourselves while the status quo remains unchanged.”

Similarly, there are those who claim that the Marxism of the founders of the communist movement in the 19th century was “European and racist.” They counterpose it to what they call “black Marxism” today. “No, there is only one Marxism,” Romay replied. “It is a great river enriched by many different tributaries flowing into it.”

Referring to arguments that slavery and racism have been the driving force of history, Romay said, “You can’t ignore the place of slavery in U.S. history,” or in the history of Cuba and the entire Caribbean. “But you also can’t say that everything begins and ends with that. History didn’t begin with slavery. Capitalism already existed.”

Víctor Dreke also addressed this question, arguing against those who call for tearing down historical statues and buildings because they are identified in some way with slave owners.

He pointed to the beauty of the newly restored 18th century Spanish colonial building in Old Havana where the meeting was being held, known as the Palacio del Segundo Cabo (Palace of the Second Lieutenant, the Spanish vice governor).

### ‘What, tear down this building?’

“As I was climbing the stairs to enter this building,” Dreke said, “another compañero told me, ‘These stairs are impressive.’ And I told him, ‘Yes, and they weren’t built by the Spanish slave owners. They were built by Black slaves and Chinese indentured laborers.’”

“So, what are we going to do?” he asked the audience. “Should we tear down this building? No, we should preserve, defend it, make it even more beautiful.”

He underscored that revolutionaries in Cuba have contributed to the communist movement, from Carlos Baliño and Julio Antonio Mella, founders of the early Cuban Communist Party in 1925, to Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara. He noted that the book launch was being held April 24, the anniversary of the day in 1965 when a forward detachment of revolutionary Cuban combatants set foot in the Congo to join national liberation fighters there. Dreke

was second-in-command of the 128 Cuban volunteers led by Guevara.

Books like *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* are important in the world today, Dreke said, “and they’re important for us in Cuba today.”

He recalled his work over the years with the Socialist Workers Party, including a 2002 speaking tour in the United States to present the book *From the Escambray to the Congo*, an account of Dreke’s revolutionary course over decades, published by Pathfinder. He described how SWP members, leading others, defended a public meeting in Miami where he and Ana Morales spoke, preventing counterrevolutionary Cuban Americans from storming the platform and busting up the meeting.

Fernando González picked up on Romay’s comments about “identity politics” and joked that he happened to be a “white male” who was going to talk about the fight for women’s liberation. González is one of the five Cuban revolutionaries who spent up to 16 years in U.S. prisons for their work to protect the Cuban people against violent attacks by U.S.-based counter-

Continued on page 11



In class society, steps to expand world commerce and revolutionize means of production have simultaneously transformed such progress “into means of destruction of land and labor,” says Waters. Above, deforestation in colonial Brazil, early 1800s.



Thousands demonstrate August 1960 in Havana, backing revolutionary government’s nationalization of U.S. and other imperialist-owned companies. Coffins bearing names of imperialist companies were tossed into sea. Cuba’s socialist revolution shows that working people can take state power out of hands of capitalist class and build a new state created by the working class.

# ‘A book about forging a working-class vanguard of all nationalities, religions, skin colors, and both sexes’

Following are the remarks Mary-Alice Waters gave to the April 24 Havana International Book Fair presentation of Pathfinder Press’s recently released book, *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* by Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, George Novack, and Mary-Alice Waters. The book has been published in English, Spanish and French. The event was held at the Palacio del Segundo Cabo in Old Havana.

Waters is a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee and president of Pathfinder Press. Copyright © 2022, reprinted by permission.

### BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

As its title suggests, the book we’re presenting here today is about humanity’s long journey, about how we have arrived where we find ourselves, through a millennia-long process full of contradictions, dialectical leaps, unanticipated combinations and inevitable unevenness.

For all that, it is not a book primarily about the past.

This is a book that contains and cites

extensively from the most profound and clarifying works by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and other communist leaders, rooted in materialist dialectics.

Yet for all that, it is not a book produced by or for philosophers. “Philosophy” was something Marx and Engels left behind them going on two centuries ago when they issued the Communist Manifesto, the program of the world’s first revolutionary workers party. As they wrote there, communism is not an idea or a doctrine “invented or discovered by this or that would-be universal reformer.” Insofar as it is a theory, it “merely expresses in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes.”

So what is this book about? It’s primarily about the class struggle today. A book for working people searching for a way forward politically, and for youth attracted to the battles of the working class and its allies.

It is about *understanding* history, understanding that we both live and labor as part of nature, live and labor as biological beings, live and labor in history. In the words of anthropologist Peter W. Wood that our chairperson just read, it is a book that tells us “what a truly radical reading of the human past looks like, and how both biological evolution and social evolution have a major claim to our attention.” [See box on this page.]

Without that knowledge, we remain prisoners of the present. We remain unable to see beyond the relations of capitalist exploitation and oppression that warp every aspect of our lives, social relations, personal values, observations ... and “theorizing.”

Without that knowledge, we easily fall victim to pseudoscience and pseudohistory. We will never be able to chart a course toward the higher — that is, *proletarian* — moral standards that Fidel [Castro], Che [Guevara], Armando Hart and other historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution led the toilers of Cuba to make your own. And offered to revolutionists throughout the world to make *our own*.

Let me cite just one example of the “contemporary” observations you’ll find in the book. It is a short passage

from Engels’ well-known polemic *Anti-Dühring*, which he wrote in 1877:

It is very easy to inveigh against slavery and similar things in general terms, and to give vent to high moral indignation at such infamies. Unfortunately all that this conveys is only what everyone knows, namely, that these institutions of antiquity are no longer in accord with our present conditions and our sentiments, which these conditions determine. But it does not tell us one word as to how these institutions arose, why they existed, and what role they played in history. ...

When, therefore, Herr Dühring turns up his nose at Hellenism [Greek civilization] because it was founded on slavery, he might with equal justice reproach the Greeks with having had no steam engines or electric telegraphs.

Those are words that could have been written yesterday or today. Words that arm us against the Dührings of the here and now.

### ‘Social media,’ rulers’ weapon

As we all know and have been discussing this afternoon, one of the challenges the working-class vanguard now confronts has to do with the technological advances introduced by the internet and its interrelated extensions.

Across human history, all great sci-

entific discoveries and advances in technology that have increased the productivity of human labor — from the invention of the wheel and the lever onward — have come with contradictory consequences for the toiling masses. Not only is the greater material wealth that’s created distributed unevenly, but the rate of exploitation of working people is also brutally intensified. Under capitalism, the introduction of new means of production simultaneously transforms them into means of destruction of land and labor.

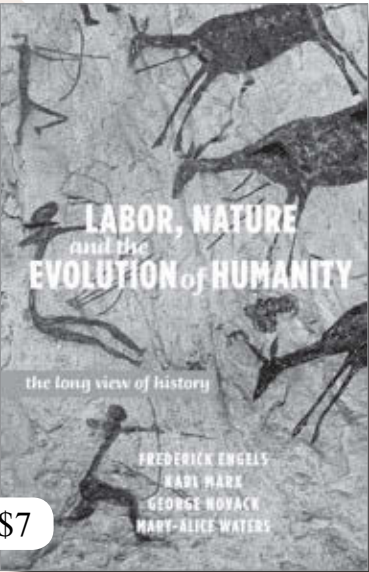
If the internet and its associated technologies had been developed under the control of the working class, the future would be brighter for us all. In the hands of the capitalist rulers, however, it has been born as a pernicious weapon to advance *their* class interests against workers and farmers.

Not only has it extended, to previously unimaginable lengths, the hours of the day during which our labor is exploited. It is a weapon used to penetrate every aspect of our lives from infancy on, every minute of our day. It works to batter down all resistance to the petty-bourgeois social relations it promotes.

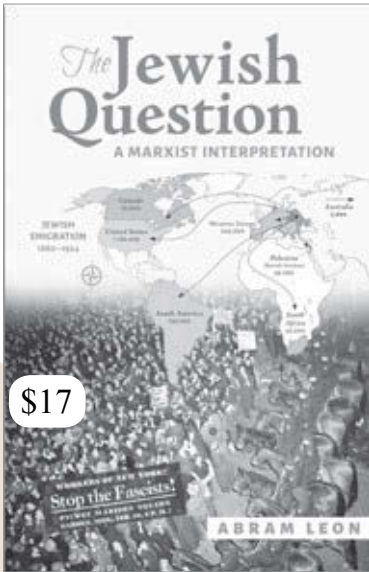
Far from the “social media” it claims to be, it atomizes and divides us. It celebrates the epitome of petty bourgeois

Continued on page 10

## Two books on long view of history



\$7



\$17

www.pathfinderpress.com  
or see distributors on page 4



Participants visit book table after panel discussion on *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity*. During Havana book fair it was one of Pathfinder’s best-selling titles.



# Working-class vanguard

Continued from page 9

self-promotion and self-interest. Under the banner of promoting individual “freedom,” its masters are the conscious enemy of social solidarity of the working class and our allies. These servants of capital do everything possible to undermine and destroy such solidarity.

In short, in the hands of the capitalist class, it is a new and poisonous counterrevolutionary force.

Armed with the knowledge and the political course the writings in this book offer us, however, a working-class vanguard of all nationalities, religions, skin colors, and both sexes — engaged in struggles together with millions of other working people — can overcome these obstacles. They can develop the experience, fighting capacities and political confidence to chart a revolutionary course. That is a road along which they can lead the toilers to take state power out of the hands of the propertied rulers and build governing institutions and a new state created by the working class.

That was the lesson of the Paris Commune and of the Bolshevik Revolution under Lenin’s guidance. It is the lesson the working people of Cuba led by Fidel have given us.

## A long view of history

I want to say a few words about how this book was born. Looking at its beautifully designed cover, when I see my name in the same size type as the names of the historic founders of the modern working-class movement and a decades-long leader of the Socialist Workers Party at whose knee I first learned about scientific socialism, I admit to being uncomfortable. It feels pretentious.

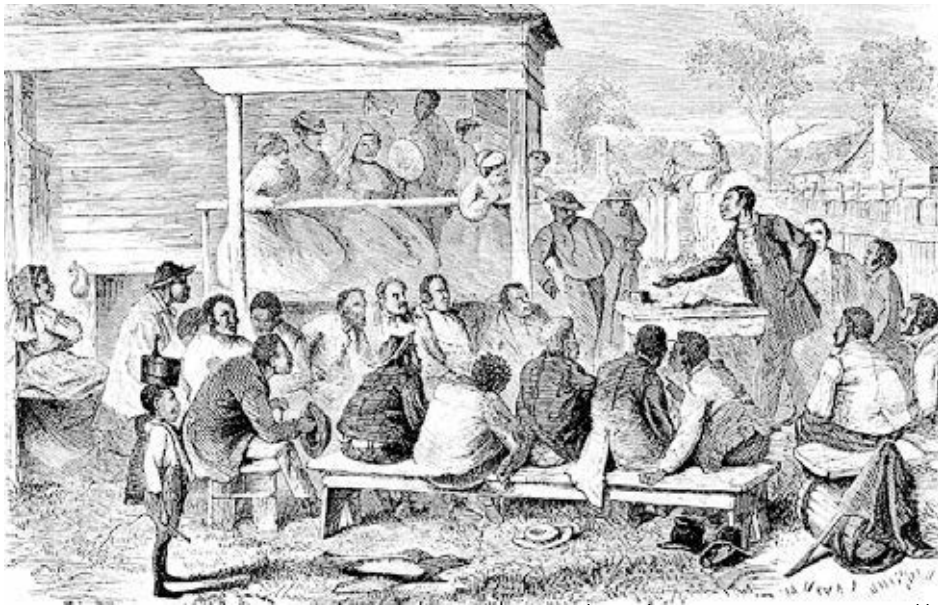
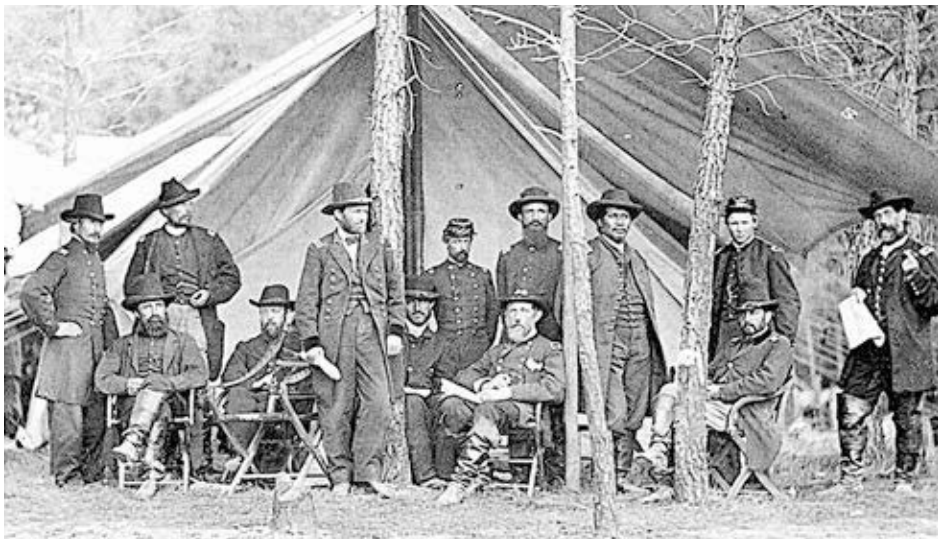
The two articles by George Novack

included in the book — “How Humanity Climbed to Civilization” and “The Main Course of American History” — were written almost 70 years ago as classes he taught to members and young recruits to the Socialist Workers Party. Then as now, young people attracted to the communist movement knew nothing about the scientific foundations of Marxism.

Novack’s classes, to which he gave the title “The Long View of History,” were directed toward “newly awakened minds.” His purpose was to offer “a popularized account of the main line of evolution from fish to mankind,” he wrote, and then from the origins of human society “to contemporary capitalism in the United States.” As he insisted, those classes presented “an extremely simplified outline of the immense and complex range” of that process.

The articles were first produced on a mimeograph machine — the advanced technology of the day — as an internal educational bulletin for Socialist Workers Party members. They were then published as a pamphlet in 1960, as a tool to win new members to the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance. The recruitment of a new generation was then accelerating under the impact of the victorious Cuban Revolution and growing mass proletarian-led struggle against apartheid-like racial segregation in the U.S. Novack’s classes have been kept in print ever since by Pathfinder Press and its predecessors, educating generations of workers and students.

But we didn’t have the pamphlet in Spanish. A couple years ago our long-time friend and compañera Esther Pérez — who planned to be with us here today, but was unable to for medical reasons —



Top, Library of Congress; Bottom, Harpers Weekly

New book sheds light on Second American Revolution and popular class character of largely Black-led governments during post-Civil War Radical Reconstruction. **Top:** Gen. Ulysses S. Grant (in front of tree) and staff in Virginia, less than a year before slaveholders’ rebellion was crushed in April 1865. **Bottom:** election meeting in former slave state, 1868. Reconstruction governments barred race discrimination; established public schools and universal male suffrage; expanded women’s rights and medical access.



Ukrainian South

Whatever views participants at the book presentation might have on Moscow’s military assault on Ukraine, Waters said, “We all sense that the first large land war on the European continent in more than 75 years signals a new stage in the unraveling of the imperialist world order.” **Above,** March 21 protest in Kherson, Ukraine, against Moscow’s occupation.

told us she had some time available and would like to translate something. This excellent Spanish translation of “The Long View of History” was born.

Our plan was to get a new edition out quickly in both English and Spanish, for which I would write a new, short preface. But as often happens when we start working on a book, like all things in nature and society, it evolves. We soon realized that too much had transpired in the class struggle the last 70 years to simply reprint the original without updating, amplifying, and reinforcing some of the material in Novack’s articles.

By the time we went to press, we had added Engels’ “The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man” and the opening section of the Communist Manifesto, “The Epoch of the Bourgeoisie and the Forging of Its Gravediggers.” As well as excerpts from writings by longtime SWP leader Jack Barnes on the vanguard role in the U.S. class struggle of workers who are Black.

We added many illustrations and what we call “text boxes.” Some focused on the Second American Revolution, commonly known here in Cuba as the War of the Secession, the name the slavocracy gave one of the bloodiest wars in history. Others pointed to the revolutionary class character of largely Black-led governments in the former slave states during the post-Civil War decade of Radical Reconstruction. We integrated the Cuban Revolution into these pages as well. And brought in the writings of Evelyn Reed on the importance of women’s productive labor in forging the first social bonds of humanity.

In the process, the “brief preface” by me was also transformed. Through collective work, the introduction evolved into a more substantial article, “Without Materialist Dialectics There Can Be No Working-Class Revolution,” placing these historical lessons in the context of the class struggle today.

We believe the book we’re discussing this afternoon, the product of this extended effort, is a more powerful weapon.

## Anti-science, anti-working-class politics

In my remaining time, let me focus on just one of the dozens of questions dealt with in this book — one of the reasons we expanded its scope to include what Peter W. Wood refers to as the refreshingly “frank materialism of the old-fashioned Marxist left.”

He’s correct. The course advanced in

these pages is the only possible counter to the poisonous anti-working-class, anti-science, race-baiting, “identity politics” and “cancel culture” that increasingly permeates privileged middle-class layers in U.S. universities, media, arts, NGOs, the tech world, the legal, medical and other professions, to say nothing of the entire “left.” And it is increasingly dominant in the Democratic Party leadership.

For this meritocracy, who consider themselves an intellectual elite, the vast majority of the working class are, as Hillary Clinton blurted out during her 2016 presidential bid, “a basket of deplorables,” a “racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic” enemy, “irredeemable.”

Countless books have been published the last few years claiming to “reexamine” the history of the United States to show that slavery and anti-Black racism — not capitalism, as Novack, building on Marx and Engels, so cogently explains — has been the driving force of U.S. history. This “new origin story” teaches that anyone born with light-colored skin carries the incurable “disease of whiteness.” And that “white supremacy” is the underpinning of all Western civilization, whose history and contributions to the cumulative culture of humanity must be eradicated from schools, universities, the arts, and libraries worldwide.

Primary and secondary school administrations have attempted — over increasing parental resistance — to introduce textbooks for children as young as kindergarten teaching them that they might not be a boy or a girl, that there are not two sexes determined by biology. Instead, there is supposedly a near infinite number of genders, with no biological foundation, from which they can “choose.”

Anyone — such as J.K. Rowling, author of the popular Harry Potter books — who dares to state simple scientific facts is charged with being “transphobic” and becomes the target of a modern-day lynch mob orchestrated over social media. Book contracts are broken, speaking engagements and performances canceled, firings handed down and lives torn apart.

The most important thing we hope you’ll take away from this event is the recognition that the political offensive of this privileged middle-class layer is *hated* and *resisted* by the working class in the U.S. — of all skin colors. It is this



class polarization that underlies all politics in the U.S. Moreover, this polarization has been accelerated by the consequences of the pandemic and its economic repercussions, including a now soaring inflation, with worse yet to come.

Three brief examples capture the reactionary character of the 21st century book burners and witch hunters.

Howard University, the oldest and most prestigious Black university in the U.S., announced a year ago that it is eliminating its classics department. One of the most prominent intellectuals in the U.S. who is Black, Cornel West, at that time a professor at the Harvard University Divinity School, wrote a searing opinion piece in the *Washington Post* denouncing this decision for its “deep intellectual narrowness,” a sign of the moral decline “running amok in American culture.”

He reminded readers that the famous abolitionist and former slave, Frederick Douglass, began his “great journey of emancipation” by defying the slave owners’ laws that forbade him to learn to read and write, risking death to get hold of and read the likes of Socrates, Cato, and Cicero. That Martin Luther King refers to Socrates three times in his famous 1963 “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”

And we must add Malcolm X, who began his self-transformation not only by reading every word in the dictionary he found in the prison library, but every book he could get his hands on there — from W.E.B. Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson, to works by Homer, Shakespeare, as well as Spinoza, Kant, and others “of the old philosophers, Occidental and Oriental,” as Malcolm put it in *The Autobiography*.

A second example. The Princeton University Ballet, a student-run ballet club, recently drafted a document — circulated by the university’s Dean of Students and its Office of Diversity and Inclusion — denouncing the “perfect white standard” of ballet, declaring it to be “an imperialist, colonialist and white supremacist art form.”

The author who brought this information to light responded, “Gosh, better not tell these woke dingbats about Alicia Alonso, the Cuban prima ballerina, founder of the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, and ardent Castroite.”

Third. A so-called climate activist in Washington, D.C., recently showed up at a meeting of the DC Metro Coalition in Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution, which was planning a public meeting to which they had invited as a speaker the Cuban ambassador to the United States, Lianys Torres Rivera. It was the first time this person had attended a coalition meeting. She immediately demanded that the invitation be withdrawn. Why? Because she said she had information that the ambassador’s grandfather had owned slaves.

None of this is about teaching the real history of the United States or the world. The Socialist Workers Party and Pathfinder Press have been doing that for decades. But there is no separate “Black” history, or “women’s” history, or labor history for that matter. Our histories, our social relations are dialectically and inseparably interwoven.

Of course racism is systemic in the United States. That’s been true since the first European settlers arrived. But the contradictory social system of production and reproduction that

has evolved from that time to this is not “white supremacy.” It is capitalism. Just as the social system responsible for women’s second-class status is not sexism, or patriarchy, let alone “the family.” It is private property, on which all class society is built.

It is only a strong, increasingly class-conscious and battle-tested working class, united across lines of race, sex, nationality, religion, and language, that can change these relations of exploitation and oppression.

That knowledge is what brings us together here today.



I will end on one final point.

It is safe to say that for all of us here, the war that is devastating Ukraine is never far from our minds, even as we talk of other burning issues, as we’re doing right now. We undoubtedly have a range of different positions on the roots of Moscow’s military assault, which we’re not here today to discuss.

But we all know, or at least sense, that the first large land war on the European continent in more than 75 years signals a new stage in the unraveling of the imperialist world order established by the victors of World War II.

None of us will be able to ignore the consequences, which have barely begun to unfold.

The politics we are discussing here today have everything to do with our ability to chart a working-class course in this unknown future.

That is why the opportunity to have these kinds of discussions at the Havana International Book Fair with comrades-in-arms is so vital for those of us who feel the weight of our responsibilities in the class struggle on the other side of the Florida Straits — the bastion of imperialism, where the future of humanity will ultimately be settled.

That is why we thank all of you here today, and especially the members of our panel, for this opportunity.

Gracias.

## Sri Lanka action unites all nationalities



AP/Eranga Jayawardena

Working people of all nationalities demonstrated in Sri Lanka’s capital, Colombo, above, May 18 to commemorate those who died in the country’s 1983-2009 civil war. The victims included tens of thousands of Tamils, an oppressed minority in the majority Sinhalese country. The government has long denied that Tamil civilians were killed in the conflict.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the target of mass protests in recent weeks as workers and farmers suffer the worst economic crisis in the country since independence in 1948, had organized to put the Tamil rebellion down in blood during the civil war.

As the capitalist country’s crisis deepens, its currency has fallen 40% against the dollar. Food prices are up 46.6% this year. Hospitals are short of lifesaving medicines and officials warn many people face imminent starvation.

The government has been forced to suspend a \$7 billion payment on its massive foreign debt. Newly installed Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said it “could not find even \$5 million to import gasoline,” so fuel tankers remained anchored offshore.

Farmers cut back production and organized protests last year after the government barred the use of chemical fertilizers. Under this pressure, the ban was reversed. Many can’t afford to plant this year, rice farmer Niluka Dilrukshi said, “as the yield has gone down, while prices have gone up.”

Moscow’s war on Ukraine has severely exacerbated this crisis. Sri Lanka imports 45% of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine.

Hundreds of students from the Inter University Students’ Federation protesting against the government marched on Colombo’s central Fort area May 19. The police pushed them back with tear gas and water cannons. The president has given cops the power to shoot to kill.

— JANET POST

## ‘Capitalism won’t disappear by itself’

**Continued from page 8**  
revolutionary groups.

During those years in prison, González said, “I was a beneficiary of many Pathfinder books. “I had a lot of time to read,” he joked, and “I came out of prison more revolutionary than when I went in.” One of the books he studied there was George Novack’s *The Long View of History*, “which gave me a historical perspective about the advance of humanity.” That pamphlet is now incorporated as two of the chapters in *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity: The Long View of History*.

Holding up a copy of *Woman’s Evolution*, by Evelyn Reed, González said it was one of his favorite books while in prison. He noted that *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* cites Reed’s work on the centrality of women’s social labor in the rise of civilization. He also highlighted the importance of the chapter by Frederick Engels, “The part played by labor in the transition from ape to man.”

### ‘Capitalism won’t disappear by itself’

Studying these books, he concluded, “is essential for understanding the world in which we live. Capitalism will not

disappear by itself. It must be disappeared, through the struggles of men and women to transform society.”

Pedro Pablo Rodríguez said that in the course of preparing an edition of the complete works of José Martí, leader of Cuba’s 19th century independence struggle and opponent of slavery, he had previously studied writings by George Novack that “opened my horizons” to a materialist explanation of U.S. history.

Novack’s articles in the new book, he noted, began as classes he gave in 1955 “to young people at a socialist summer school,” part of the SWP’s work to educate new generations of youth attracted to the communist movement. Today, he said, the party is continuing that political work with the most recent books published by Pathfinder.

Chatting with audience members after the meeting, Rodríguez recounted how he had been confronted by a participant in an activity organized by the José Martí Studies Center who chided him, “How can you defend Martí? He wasn’t black!”

*Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* “is not a book primarily about the past,” said Mary-Alice Waters in her closing remarks. It’s above

all “about the class struggle today.”

Without knowing how labor transforms nature, how it is the motor force of humanity’s advances, she noted, “we remain prisoners of the present. We remain unable to see beyond the relations of capitalist exploitation and oppression that warp every aspect of our lives, social relations, personal values, observations — and ‘theorizing.’”

It is only the perspective advanced in this book, she said, that will allow a working-class vanguard of all nationalities, religions, skin colors, and both sexes to “develop the experience, fighting capacities and political confidence” to lead millions to overturn capitalist rule and build “a new state created by the working class,” Waters concluded.

*Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* was one of the highest-selling Pathfinder titles over the course of the Havana book fair. Some 150 copies were bought at the book stand and the presentations. In addition, more than 100 were donated to various institutions as well as the José Martí National Library and the University of Havana library for distribution to libraries in every province across Cuba.



# Get Moscow out of Ukraine, *all* of Ukraine!

Workers worldwide have a big stake in the courageous struggle waged by working people in Ukraine to defend their country's independence and defeat Moscow's invasion. But the people of Ukraine may have a "peace" settlement forced on them that leaves much of Ukraine under Russian occupation by Washington and other imperialist powers who put their own national interests over those of Ukrainian freedom fighters.

Whatever the result, working people in Ukraine will continue to fight to win back all the territory seized by the Putin regime. They will aid fellow countrymen mounting resistance under Moscow's boot. Today they face attacks on two fronts — from Moscow's murderous assault and from the capitalist Ukrainian government that is using the war to attack political rights and the labor movement.

The Russian government is weakened. Its army suffered heavy losses in a war Putin believed would be a pushover. Workers in Russia — in and out of uniform — are seeking ways to defend themselves from a regime that has nothing but contempt for their lives, demanding more sacrifices from them and their families. Openings exist to forge bonds of unity and common struggle between workers in Russia and Ukraine against the Putin regime and its war.

Moscow's war marked a new stage in the growing

capitalist world disorder. Capitalist powers everywhere are rearming and reassessing their alliances in preparation for new and more deadly conflicts. The boss class is accelerating efforts to dump the spreading economic and social crisis of their system on the backs of workers and farmers.

Our future is in the hands of the working class — the only class that is capable of stopping imperialism's march toward fascism and war. Key is building a party of our own, a labor party, that fights uncompromisingly against capitalist exploitation and oppression. Workers need such parties in Ukraine, Russia and worldwide.

The Socialist Workers Party is "presenting an independent working-class foreign policy," SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes said in a statement for the party's National Committee. "A foreign policy that starts from the interests of the toilers at home and internationally."

"Working people must see the necessity of taking political power into our own hands — as toilers did in Cuba at the opening of the 1960s, following a popular, workers-and-farmers-based revolution — or we will face a future of social devastation, reaction, world war, and even nuclear catastrophe.

"Join us in this effort to raise an independent working-class voice in the United States."

## As crisis deepens, workers need road forward

Continued from front page

extracting enough profits off the backs of our labor.

These conditions aren't just battering workers and farmers in the U.S. Out-of-control inflation is a worldwide phenomenon, spurring protests from Sri Lanka to Iran. Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine, and the sanctions and counter sanctions imposed by Washington and other capitalist governments that inevitably fall hardest on working people, further erode the conditions we face.

At the same time, industrial production in China, whose leaders claim to head the world's largest economy, fell 3% year on year in April.

Global economic outlook is "challenging and uncertain," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen admitted May 18. Since the start of the year, the stock market has fallen 18%, with over \$7 trillion going up in smoke.

As the central bankers raise interest rates, workers feel the effects right away. Mortgage interest rates rose to 5.2% last month, and average mortgage repayments are now 70% higher than before the pandemic.

Credit card debt rose from \$804 billion to \$856 billion in the last three months of 2021, the biggest quarterly increase on record. The rise in the Fed's rates will increase credit card interest rates. In March, delinquencies on credit card and personal loans rose for the eighth month in a row. Unpaid debt on auto loans and leases hit an all-time high in February.

### Workers need to organize

"Workers need to join together to fight for protection from the impact of this crisis," Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress from New Jersey, told the *Militant*. "Strikes for better wages and conditions by autoworkers in Wisconsin and Iowa and refinery workers in California point the way forward.

"Bosses push to get more work out of fewer of us. Workers and our unions need to fight for 30 hours work for 40 hours pay to spread the available work around, to stop being saddled with longer and more arbitrary schedules, and to combat bosses' speedup."

Today's inflation hits hardest at the things workers need most — food, fuel, electricity and other necessities. Rapid price rises mean more workers are struggling to put food on the table. The Salvation Army re-

ports an increase in people who previously used food banks to supplement their shopping but now depend on them as their primary source of food. Officials at the Feeding America food bank network say 15% more people used their facilities in March.

Some 36 million workers who depend on federal food assistance programs are able to buy less and less. Their benefits are calculated on the price of food *last summer*, but food inflation in April rose 9.4% over the past year.

"To protect our wages from inflation," Sherman said, "we need cost-of-living adjustments in every contract and all government benefits, so that when prices rise our wages and Social Security go up immediately and automatically."

### Social crisis

Today's fall in the living standards of workers and farmers is part of a decadeslong broader social crisis spawned by capitalism in decline. This breeds insecurity and despair. Drug overdoses and suicide rates are growing in rural areas and cities alike.

Deaths from drug overdoses soared in 2020. This was partly a result of government pandemic shutdowns that imposed social isolation and closed the 12-step programs that provide vital human contact and support for those battling alcoholism and addiction.

Among Blacks the drug mortality rate has quadrupled in less than eight years. Rising overdose deaths have affected working people as a whole in small cities and rural areas.

Overdose deaths rose again by 15% to nearly 108,000 in 2021, a record-breaking level. For the past 50 years overdose deaths have increased every single year, except once, in 2018. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention attributes this to the growing spread of fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, on the streets. Fentanyl overdoses accounted for two-thirds of the 1 million drug deaths in the U.S. since 1999.

Democrats and Republicans of all stripes bemoan this spreading crisis. But none have a solution, which would mean an assault on the workings of the dog-eat-dog capitalist system they are pledged to support.

"Only by joining together and fighting for what we need can working people win protections from unemployment, inflation and today's social crisis. In doing so we begin to discover our own capacities," Sherman said. "That's the road to transforming ourselves, gaining the class consciousness, discipline and confidence we need to be able to build a movement of millions that can put an end to the social ills bred by capitalism. We need to take political power into our own hands."

## Support for Irish unity

Continued from front page

by London in 1921 after a popular war of independence liberated most of the country from British control. Britain's rulers clung onto the northern six counties, seeking to shore up their dwindling world role and entrench their domination over the profitable industries there. Through divide and rule, pitting Protestants against Catholics, London aimed to undermine working-class solidarity and struggle in both Ireland and Britain.

Massive struggles in Northern Ireland erupted at the end of the 1960s against anti-Catholic discrimination fostered by the British rulers in employment, housing, education and representation. The civil rights movement gained support of working people in the South and internationally. In 1969 the U.K.'s Labour Party government sent troops to the North in an attempt to repress these mobilizations and prevent them from threatening British rule. During the conflict, London interned thousands without trial, tried to silence Irish nationalist leaders and unleashed deadly violence, but failed to crush the struggle for civil and national rights.

This led to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement between London, Dublin and parties in Northern Ireland. The British rulers dismantled much of their repressive apparatus and, over time, anti-Catholic discrimination lessened. The deal established a Northern Ireland Assembly that would collaborate with the government of the Irish Republic on cross-border issues.

The agreement kept Northern Ireland in the U.K. But in subsequent years blows have been dealt to sectarian divisions fostered by London among working people. Bakery workers on strike last year at Hovis in Belfast told *Militant* reporters that Catholic and Protestant workers were united in their fight for better pay.

### Sinn Fein: 'Prepare unification'

Following this month's election, Sinn Fein Deputy President Michelle O'Neill called on the Irish government to establish an all-island citizens' assembly tasked with planning for unification of the country.

The Democratic Unionist Party had been the largest party in Northern Ireland prior to the election and came in second. It favors continued "union" between Northern Ireland and the U.K. Sinn Fein is now entitled to nominate the First Minister for Northern Ireland — a bitter pill to swallow for unionist parties.

The DUP says it will refuse to take its seats in the power-sharing Northern Ireland Assembly, ensuring the body can't function. It demands U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson scrap a post-Brexit deal with the European Union on custom checks in Ireland. Under that agreement, customs checks on goods going to and from the U.K. are not carried out at the border dividing Ireland, but at Northern Irish ports, ensuring a free flow of goods across the island. The Republic of Ireland remains in the EU.

Last week Johnson threatened to get rid of that customs arrangement. The conflict over this has exposed a contradiction between unionist parties, like the DUP, and the needs of many capitalists who operate in Northern Ireland, Britain and elsewhere.

Alongside the aspirations of workers and farmers for Irish unity, the operation of capitalism is propelling moves toward the reunification of the country. Especially since 1998, cross-border trade, investment and travel have mushroomed.

Paul Murnaghan, Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief, decried the Democratic Unionist Party's refusal to sit in the assembly. "While this continues, the reputational damage to Northern Ireland as a place to invest and work grows daily," he told the *Belfast Telegraph*.

EU officials threaten trade sanctions on the U.K. if London unilaterally ends current customs arrangements and imposes new ones at the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. President Joseph Biden called on Johnson to retreat on this.

"Britain should get out of Northern Ireland now," said Pamela Holmes, Communist League candidate for mayor of Tower Hamlets in east London in U.K.'s May 5 local elections. "This would strengthen unity and struggles of working people in each country in defense of their class interests. Championing Irish independence is vital to forging the working-class leadership needed for a revolutionary struggle for a workers and farmers government — both in Ireland and in Britain. Ireland is one!"

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