

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Ingredion workers win contract
after six-month strike
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 87/NO. 5 FEBRUARY 6, 2023

Calif. farmers face ongoing drought amid record rain

BY BERNIE SENTER

VISALIA, Calif. — Three years of drought and now floods from heavy rains have had a severe impact on the conditions and livelihoods of farmers and workers in the San Joaquin Valley, one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world.

This is not a result of natural disasters, but of the political priorities of the profit-driven capitalist system and

SWP: DROUGHT CRISIS IS RESULT OF PROFIT SYSTEM p. 7

its crisis-ridden conditions today.

A common sight are small farms and homes with wells with contaminated water, and some that are dry adjacent to enormous lush green orchards of almonds, alfalfa and citrus. This contrast exposes a sharp class differentiation. Those with the resources drill deeper wells or have water rights to tap into the irrigation canals that bring water from the Sierra Nevada mountains. They are the wealthy farmers owning thousands of

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Support Ukraine independence, fight to defeat Putin’s invasion

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Russian President Vladimir Putin is now preparing to turn his nearly year-long invasion of Ukraine into a drawn-out and grinding war, with systematic air and artillery attacks on civilian targets. He’s building up troop levels and weaponry for a new offensive as the weather improves.

His regime’s assaults on heavily populated urban areas have the same smell as U.S. imperialist attacks during World War II, like the firebombing of Dresden, Germany, and of Tokyo. These attacks, like Putin’s in Dnipro and other cities, had no military objective. Their goal was death, destruction and demoralization.

In the face of this, the Ukrainian people remain ever more determined to resist. Putin hopes to exploit rifts among the U.S. rulers and their allies who back Kyiv.

The Kremlin’s army has suffered casualties in the tens of thousands in largely futile human-wave attacks in eastern Ukraine, using conscripted workers-in-uniform and former prisoners as cannon

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Iran protests, strikes demand better life, end to repression

Protests strongest among oppressed nationalities



Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Workers Union
 Retirees from Haft Tappeh and Pars Paper plant in Shus, Khuzestan, Iran, rally Jan. 22, demand protection against inflation, end to discrimination. Placard on right says: “No to humiliation!”

BY SETH GALINSKY

Retirees and other workers protested outside at least a dozen government offices across Iran Jan. 22 demanding a substantial increase in the minimum wage and pensions.

Called by the Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Workers Union, the Coordinating Committee to Help Build Labor Unions, the Khuzestan Social Security Retirees and the Retirees Union Group, the workers are planning further nationwide actions every Sunday.

Workers fighting to improve job con-

ditions and defend workers’ rights have gained confidence in the wake of three months of protests after the death of Zhina Amini Sept. 16. The young Kurdish woman had been arrested in Tehran by the “morality police” for allegedly violating the dress code.

The government’s announcement of a 20% wage increase for public workers is in reality a wage cut, the coalition said, because inflation is close to 50% annually. The capitalist crisis is exacerbated by the cost of the regime’s military in-

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‘Militant’ supporters urge subscribers to renew, get new book by SWP leaders



Fatemah Hejazifar, right, gets *Militant* subscription from Socialist Workers Party member Jacquie Henderson at Jan. 8 march and rally in Cincinnati in solidarity with protests in Iran.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom are launching efforts to get out *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* as widely as possible.

The campaign to promote this book by party leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-

Alice Waters and Steve Clark runs alongside winning *Militant* readers to renew their subscriptions.

In Lincoln, Nebraska, SWP member Joe Swanson is off to a good start. Even before the new book arrived, he reported sales of six prepaid copies along with three *Militant* renewals, with two more on the way.

“Three workers who bought the

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Mood of gloom and doom pervades the ‘globalists’ at the Davos summit

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A mood of doom and gloom hovered over the gathering of some 2,700 bosses, bankers, speculators, government officials and meritocratic hangers-on at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Jan. 16-20. Underlying their despondency is the sharpening political and social crisis confronting capitalist rivals, the impact of Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine and their fears that the crisis of the capitalist system today will drive more struggles by working people and the oppressed.

Since 1971, “the World Economic Forum in Davos has been the meeting place and cheerleader for global capitalism,” wrote *Financial Times* columnist Martin Wolf Jan. 18. But today, “perceptions have, in sum, shifted towards ‘dog eats dog.’”

In fact, the theme of this year’s conference — registration fees could run \$250,000 — was “Cooperation in a Fragmented World.” Conspicuous by their absence were heads of government. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz

was the only one from the Group of Seven powers in attendance. No big capitalists came from Russia.

The get-together occurred as competition and tensions among the U.S. and other capitalist powers for markets and raw materials increases amid declining production and trade, rising inflation, and the first full-scale war between two state powers on the European continent in over 75 years.

At the same time, a rise in working-

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- Manchester rail workers join nurses pickets, bring support
- Workers in France strike over attempt to raise retirement age

103 years since ‘Palmer Raids’ unleashed FBI against workers

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

“This Day in History” on Fox News retold the story about the Jan. 2, 1920, “Palmer Raids,” carried out by Democratic President Woodrow Wilson, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and his right-hand man, J. Edgar Hoover. They “unleashed a shocking and often violent unconstitutional nationwide dragnet,” the article said, “detaining as many as 10,000 people.”

The arrests, deportations and prosecutions targeted unions, the newly formed Communist parties and immigrant workers.

Throughout the next 100 years the rulers’ political police have continued assaulting freedoms that are vital to working people. Last year the FBI attempted to interrogate some 60 members of the Cuba Solidarity Committee in Puerto Rico. It raided the offices of the African People’s Socialist Party and Uhuru Movement, claiming they were “Russian agents.” It orchestrated the entrapment and frame-up of 14 men in Michigan for an alleged “plot” to kidnap the state’s governor in 2020.

The rights of free speech and worship; freedom of the press, association, and assembly; prohibition of “unreasonable search and seizure”; and other constitutional freedoms needed by working people must be unreservedly defended by unions, workers, farmers and organizations of the oppressed and exploited.

In *Revolutionary Continuity: Birth of the Communist Movement, 1918-1922*, Socialist Workers Party leader Farrell Dobbs explains why the Palmer Raids were organized. He says the impact of the 1917 Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution

on workers in the United States was among the factors giving rise to the militancy displayed from Lawrence, Massachusetts, to Seattle in the massive strike wave in 1919. “The proletarian victory sweeping across the former Russian Empire,” Dobbs said, “enabled U.S. workers to perceive more clearly their inherent power as a class, and they wanted to use that power in their expanding fight to wrest concessions from the bosses.”

During World War I, Dobbs wrote, the capitalists “raked in ever-larger profits, while workers’ wages lagged farther and farther behind rapidly climbing prices.” By the time the war ended, workers “began to revolt on a massive scale.”

In February 1919 textile workers in Lawrence and copper miners in Butte, Montana, went on strike. A general strike gripped Seattle. Some 365,000 steelworkers walked off the job in September, in part to prevent U.S. weapons from getting to counterrevolutionaries in Russia. By November a half-million bituminous coal miners were striking to demand more pay, a six-hour day to offset unemployment and safer working conditions.

During the 1919 steel strike, the political police arrested hundreds of members of the Communist parties, mainly in New York. This particular raid was intended to buttress a phony charge that the strike was part of a “Bolshevik plot.”

Then came the Palmer Raids, an all-out offensive, extending from coast to coast. “Federal agents invaded communist meetings, party headquarters, and the workplaces and homes of individuals. They seized literature, party records, and private correspondence,” Dobbs



Mass arrests of union, communist militants during 1920 “Palmer Raids” under Democratic President Woodrow Wilson led to arrests of up to 10,000, politically motivated deportations.

wrote. “By the end of January thousands of political militants were in jail on framed-up charges.”

Foreign-born workers bore the brunt of the attack. Picked up by chance by agents armed with nameless John Doe warrants, almost 3,000 immigrants were arrested and some 750 were deported.

The rulers ordered the FBI into action against labor again as the capitalists prepared to take the U.S. into World War II. In September 1939, Democratic President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued an executive order centralizing and strengthening the FBI as a federal political police agency acting at the behest of the White House, under both Democratic and Republican parties.

Within weeks, FBI agents descended on the homes of Teamsters’ leaders in Des Moines and Sioux City, Iowa, and in Omaha, Nebraska, the center of the fight to strengthen and expand the Teamsters’ union.

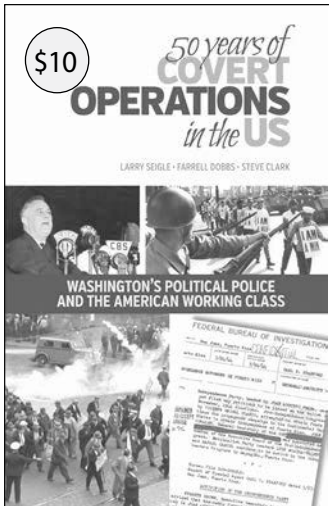
In June 1941, FBI agents and U.S. marshals raided offices of the Socialist Workers Party in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, and arrested leaders of the party, many of them members of Teamsters Local 544. Using the newly adopted Smith Act, a gag law put in place to silence critics of Washington’s war drive, 18 leaders of the SWP were framed up and jailed for up to 16 months.

In March 1947, as the U.S. rulers stepped up their “Cold War” against the Soviet Union, President Harry Truman ordered that all federal civil service employees be screened for “loyalty.” At-

torney General Tom C. Clark issued the Attorney General’s List of Subversive Organizations the following December, a “blacklist” used to assault constitutional rights and to carry out a purge in the labor movement.

In 1956, as the civil rights movement gained momentum, the White House and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover launched the FBI’s spying, disruption and harassment Cointelpro operations. This targeted the Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party, Black organizations leading the fight against Jim Crow segregation, and later those organizing opposition to the U.S. war on Vietnam.

Despite relentless efforts by the ruling class to refurbish the FBI’s reputation, this 100-year record exposes its true role as the capitalists’ main political police — crucial to upholding their rule — and a deadly foe of the working class and our allies.



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THE MILITANT

New York nurses win gains in staffing levels, pay

Some 7,000 nurses at two large hospitals in New York waged a three-day strike for better pay and staffing levels. The ‘Militant’ reports on struggles by unionists around the world, which show that the decadeslong retreat of the labor movement has come to an end.



Militant/Sara Lobman

Some 7,000 nurses picket as part of 3-day strike at two New York hospitals Jan. 9-11.

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Road to women's emancipation debated at US women's marches

BY NAOMI CRAINE

MADISON, Wisc. — Some 2,000 people took part in a women's march and rally here Jan. 22 calling for the overturn of an 1849 state law banning nearly all abortions, and for the reopening of clinics that provide the procedure. Similar actions were held around the country the same day to protest the U.S. Supreme Court's Dobbs ruling that overturned Roe v. Wade last June.

Organizers of the Madison action called for getting out the vote to elect a liberal judge to an open spot on the Wisconsin Supreme Court as the way to advance their aims.

Members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party campaigned for a different class course, starting from the fact that the fight for women's emancipation is bound up with combating the devastating effects of today's capitalist crisis. They got a serious hearing.

Following the overturn of Roe v. Wade, opponents of abortion in Wisconsin have sought to implement the 1849 law. As a result, women seeking abortions must travel to neighboring states such as Illinois and Minnesota. Most speakers at the main rally denounced the Dobbs' ruling as a blow to women's rights, and promoted electing Democrats on a state and federal level.

Speaking during an open mic at the end of the program, Ilona Gersh, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Chicago mayor, started from a working-class perspective.

"Birth rates are down, suicide and drug addiction are increasing, young adults are forced to live with their parents for an extended time," Gersh said. "We need a union-led fight for jobs — with wages and conditions that allow workers to support a family. We need to fight for child care, health care, cost-of-living raises. And for access to contraceptives and safe, legal abortion when needed.

"Working people are beginning to use their unions to fight for these things. We need to build a labor party, based on our unions. Not look to the Democrats and Republicans, the capitalist parties that have gotten us to this point," she said.

These were some of the questions SWP members and supporters dis-

cussed and debated throughout the day.

"I don't agree with looking to the courts to advance our interests," Gersh told Claire, a volunteer handing out flyers urging participants to vote in the upcoming state Supreme Court election. "The Roe v. Wade ruling was the Supreme Court acting as a legislative body. Dobbs was good, because it put the issue back to the states and the people. We need to take advantage of that and debate the issue to win a majority. What we need is a fight to repeal the 1849 law."

"I think of the court election as a stopgap measure," responded Claire, who didn't want to give her last name. "Getting a different balance on the court can block the law. I agree the Democratic Party has failed us, but I'm scared for women's lives right now." They left it at that, and each continued talking to other participants.

As the march gathered, Gersh spoke with nursing students Jessica Forsgren and Ashley Morgan. "The biggest obstacle we have is people are so divided between Democrats and Republicans," Forsgren said.

"What's at the root of sharpening conflicts today is actually the divide between the capitalist class and the working class," Gersh said, "as the bosses and their government make us pay for their crisis."

"Well, it's a big step to reach that



Militant/Lisa Rottach

Ilona Gersh, SWP candidate for mayor of Chicago, and campaign supporter Naomi Craine, right, talk with nursing students Jessica Forsgren, front left, and Ashley Morgan about the working-class road to women's emancipation at rally in Madison, Wisconsin, Jan. 22.

understanding," said Forsgren.

Gersh pointed to Malcolm X, who explained his aim was not to awaken African Americans to their oppression, but to their self-worth, to their own capacities. "There's more resistance by working people today, you can see it in some of the labor battles taking place," she said. Forsgren and Morgan had been following some of those fights, including the strike by nurses at Mount Sinai and Montefiore hospitals in New York, and got a copy of the *Militant*.

This *Militant* correspondent talked with Parker Rosenbauer, a young data consultant who had just signed up for a subscription to the paper.

From the stage someone started chanting, "A fetus is not a baby."

"I don't like that chant," I said. "You can't win the political argument for why abortion should be decriminalized like that. A fetus will become a baby if a pregnancy is carried to term. We can't deny there's a question of life involved."

Opponents of women's rights, "call a fetus a baby to say abortion is murder," Rosenbauer said. "Women dying because they can't get a safe abortion is also a question of life." But he agreed the chant was not helpful.

The interest in discussing the SWP's program and course was reflected in the

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'Militant' subscriptions, new book by SWP leaders

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book were active in public rallies and in their union supporting the rail workers fight for a contract late last year," writes Swanson. "One rail conductor bought two books, one for himself and the other to take to work to show his co-workers."

"This paper is very good," Louis St. Paul told Socialist Workers Party members Chuck Guerra and Rachele Fruit when they visited him at his home in Miami Jan. 21. "Here you see the competition for jobs between Blacks and Haitians, and they blame the immigrants if there aren't enough jobs."

"The rulers are always looking for

ways to divide the working class," Guerra said. "That's why our demand for amnesty for all immigrants living and working in the U.S. is so important."

St. Paul is a custodian in the Miami-Dade County schools and a member of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. "The capitalists are killing people," he said. "They get you when you're young and work you until you have to retire because you're sick."

Fruit showed him the French edition of *The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party*. "This book is about our party," Fruit said, and its work with fellow workers to build unions. "It points

to the power the working class has to lead a revolutionary transformation of society against capitalist political rule."

St. Paul got the book and three other titles in French by SWP leaders and renewed his subscription.

Some 200 people rallied at Times Square in New York Jan. 22 backing the nearly yearlong fight for Ukrainian sovereignty and against Moscow's invasion. Among those addressing the crowd was SWP member Seth Galinsky. The week before, Galinsky said, a "so-called 'peace' demonstration took place in almost this same spot calling on Ukraine to negotiate. That movement is just a cover for backing Moscow's invasion of Ukraine."

Galinsky pointed out that "here today are working people from Russia, who support Ukraine's fight for independence. Workers in the U.S., in Ukraine, in Russia have common interests in demanding Moscow's troops out of Ukraine now." Fifteen copies of the *Militant* were sold to people attending the action.

SWP members in Cincinnati joined a Jan. 8 march and rally of 50 people in solidarity with the protests in Iran. Fatemah Hejazifar got a *Militant* subscription and a book in Farsi, *Pages from History: Women and Revolution* by Mary-Alice Waters. Participants in the action reached out to Cincinnati Bengals fans passing by on the way to a football game. Some joined the protest.

The new book is available at the special price of \$7 through May 31 and for \$5 with a *Militant* subscription. To help expand the paper's reach and to get out books on revolutionary working-class politics, contact the branches of the SWP and CLs listed here.

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Ongoing drought as rain falls

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acres. It's a different world for those who toil on a few acres of land, work in area industries or in the fields.

Sergio Caballos lives in Tooleville, an unincorporated community of a couple hundred in Tulare County. "The county delivers water to us since our well water is contaminated," Caballos said as he was getting ready to go to his job as a truck driver hauling material in and out of farms. Pointing to the well down the block, he said, "That well ran dry last year. I think it's less than 400 feet deep. Our problems started when two neighbor farmers drilled 800 feet and then we had no water." Caballos explained that with rising costs his brother, who grows lemons on six acres, pays more for water than he gets in income from his crop.

Government admits water unsafe

A 2022 government audit of the State Water Resources Control Board reported, "Nearly a million Californians face possible long-term, negative health outcomes — including an increased risk of liver and kidney problems, as well as cancer — because they receive unsafe drinking water from a failing water system."

Martín Jimenez, who lives on 16 acres west of Visalia, is a case in point. Nitrates from the cattle farm across the street have leached into the groundwater. He gets by on 5-gallon jugs of water delivered by the county, and officials plan to place a filter for nitrates on his well.

Brand Vang sells greens he grows

on five acres near Fresno at the Visalia Farmers Market. Last year his well ran dry and he had to drill a new one 300 feet down costing \$37,000, he told the *Militant*. "I was lucky, because shortly afterward drilling prices sharply increased."

"Over the past 10 years my well has dropped an average of six feet a year," said Jim Van Foeken. He farms 30 acres of citrus in Ivanhoe. "One good rain doesn't solve the drought and with inflation, the best scenario is I break even. You're on the workers' end of the squeeze and I'm on the farmers' end of the squeeze," he told me after I described the conditions factory workers like myself face today.

The San Joaquin Valley and the Sacramento Valley produce 25% of all food in the United States, as well as 40% of fruits and nuts.

The San Joaquin Valley is a semi-arid steppe where nearly 90% of surface water from irrigation canals and an underground aquifer is used for agriculture. The drought has forced farmers to increase pumping of the aquifer to irrigate crops. Ninety percent of valley residents also rely solely on water from the aquifer. Land subsidence due to a dropping water table is a mounting problem.

Frank Ferreira spent most of his working life breeding 5,000 cows on a nearby 3,000-acre dairy farm. Today he has a 30-acre farm west of Visalia growing wheat and corn silage. "The big guys want to screw everyone. They want to have the little guy give up," he said. "They use water like crazy. They have three, four, five people



Militant/Bernie Senter

Frank Ferreira, who grows wheat and corn on his 30-acre farm in San Joaquin Valley, California, talks to *Militant* Jan. 7. He said capitalist farmers, the "big guys," who can pay for deeper wells, take out 90% of the water for irrigation. This literally leaves working farmers high and dry.

filling out applications for water and they get 90% of it." He explained that satellites monitor water evaporation rates and says plans are afoot to fine farmers with "excessive" rates.

Low pay, job cuts hit farmworkers

Thousands of farmworkers are now harvesting citrus and pruning trees. A dozen farmworkers, taking advantage of a day off because the fields were too muddy, were having a fish fry outside one of their homes.

One farmworker explained they work in almond orchards. When the temperature exceeds 95 degrees in the summer, they are sent home without pay. They get paid the \$15.50 minimum wage, alongside confronting some of the highest unemployment rates of any metropolitan

area in the country. Exacerbating the lack of jobs is the state's decision to pay farmers \$2.5 million to leave 531,000 acres unplanted last year.

Decisions of what cash crops to grow are determined by what can most profitably be marketed. Orchards of almonds and pistachios, primarily for export, fetch a high price these days and have expanded rapidly. Grape, alfalfa, and citrus farms are located next to large dairy operations. There are 20,000 farms in the San Joaquin Valley. Across the state more than half of all cropland is owned by 5% of farmers.

The J.G. Boswell Company farms 150,000 acres in California's Central Valley. Along with Bill Gates and Ted Turner, Boswell is one of the 10 largest capitalist farm owners in the U.S. and uses his clout to monopolize access to water. In a 1989 interview Boswell vowed to "spend a lifetime defending" his control over this vital resource. Big landowners hold contracts for transporting much of the water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and own portions of the ditch companies that divvy up water from the King's River and ferry it to farms.

The recent deluge of rain in California resulted in extensive flooding across the state. It also exposed the fact that for decades the government has done virtually nothing to build an infrastructure for flood protection, or dams and reservoirs to capture rainfall. The downpour "could have filled a reservoir the size of Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy almost every 24 hours," a *Wall Street Journal* editorial noted, Jan. 17. "Instead, nearly 95% of the Delta's storm water this year has flushed into the Pacific Ocean."

Gloom and doom pervades 'globalists' at Davos summit

Continued from front page

class resistance is underway, with protests against rising prices and declining living conditions from France to Panama to Indonesia. There's been an important uptick in strikes, from rail workers in the United Kingdom to coal miners in Alabama. More workers in the U.S. are fighting for, and looking to join, unions.

The bosses and their governments increasingly fear what the future holds for their class. Pricewaterhouse Coopers reported that nearly 40% of more than 4,400 CEOs recently surveyed said their companies would not be viable over the next decade unless they "transformed at a faster pace" — bosses' code words for layoffs and speedup on the job.

This crisis is also transforming political and military alignments. "'Spheres of influence' that had shaped the global imperialist order since Washington emerged as the dominant power coming out of World War II — are being shaken and new alliances between competing states put together," says a Socialist Workers Party resolution published in *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark. "Working people the world over are hit by the effects of growing global conflicts over trade, currency, raw materials, and immigration."

The consequences of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine "are only beginning to be registered worldwide," the resolution states, "and the economic, political, and military shifts and un-

certainities it creates, are temporarily overshadowing other 'great power' conflicts, such as the long-smoldering confrontation between China and the US-led imperialist governments in the Pacific."

President Joseph Biden repeatedly says Washington will respond militarily to any steps by Beijing to impose its direct domination over Taiwan. Since the formation of the AUKUS military pact in 2021 between the governments of Australia, the U.K. and the U.S., the ruling class in Japan, another crucial ally of Washington, has embarked on the biggest military buildup since World War II.

Over several years the Chinese government has fortified armed outposts on island chains claimed by other Asian regimes, from Japan to Vietnam, the Philippines and others. In his Chinese New Year message Jan. 20, President Xi Jinping said Beijing was "fighting resolutely in major struggles against separatism and foreign interference," in its relations with Taiwan.

Washington maintains some 28,000 troops and massive armaments in South Korea, ready for use in the region.

Meanwhile, China's economy, which was looked to by the well-heeled attendees at Davos for decades as a key arena for capitalist profits, has slowed to one of its lowest levels since 1976. The increase in the country's gross domestic product was at 3% last year, a drop from 8.1% in 2021.

At the same time China's giant property bubble has burst, with declining sales of homes and land and widespread job losses by construction workers. And

for the first time in decades the Chinese population declined in 2022.

The U.S. economy is also slowing down. Retail sales fell by 1.1% in December — usually the biggest month for holiday purchases. Manufacturing output dropped by the largest amount in nearly two years that month.

Despite the problems registered at Davos, "an internationally open capitalism remains the foundation of future prosperity," *Financial Times* columnist Wolf proclaims. Yet all the evidence shows it is in fact the foundation for sharper crises, more national conflicts and wars, and deeper struggles by workers and farmers. Out of such battles working people will have the opportunity to forge the leadership our class needs.

Road to women's emancipation

Continued from page 3

18 participants who subscribed to the *Militant* at the action. Nearly 50 got a single copy.

Elsewhere, Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for New Jersey state Senate, spoke at a Women's March rally of 180 in West Orange, New Jersey, the same day. She got a good response when she called for solidarity with workers on strike at Harper Collins in New York City. Many of the strikers are women who can't live in New York on what they make. "Today I don't mourn the reversal of Roe v. Wade," Kuniansky told participants. "The Dobbs decision did not ban abortions." It opened a "debate to win a majority of working

people to support decriminalization."

"I came to the rally because I support accessible health care," Diana Chica told Lea Sherman, SWP candidate for New Jersey General Assembly. "I want to make sure that if a woman does need to have an abortion in some medical situations, she can," she said. Chica works as a doula, providing guidance and support to pregnant women during labor.

"Women need maternal health care," Sherman replied. "There is a lack of it for working-class women."

Chica was one of two women who got *Militant* subscriptions.

Roy Landersen in New Jersey contributed to this article.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Manchester rail workers join nurses pickets, bring support

MANCHESTER, England — “Representatives from the RMT and ASLEF rail worker unions came and showed their solidarity with the nurses. They handed around a sheet with 130 messages of support from workers from Piccadilly Station,” reported the *Manchester Evening News* Jan. 18 in its coverage of strike action taken that day by nurses here and around the country.

Clayton Clive, a train conductor and Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union branch secretary, along with Gary Boyle, representing the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, handed over the card of messages mostly signed on picket lines during earlier rail workers strike days. Joining the nurses’ picket line “was fantastic and inspiring,” Clive said when he reported back to co-workers.

The rail workers had joined some 60 nurses at a noisy picket line outside Christie hospital to back their fight for a pay raise to match inflation, plus 5%, as well as to protest worsening conditions in the National Health Service.

“National Hell Service,” read a placard held by Fiona Brennan as she and other nurses welcomed this *Militant* worker-correspondent and fellow rail workers. “You all started this off,” they told us. Since rail workers began a series of strikes months ago more trade unionists have found ways to fight. Ambulance drivers in England and Wales, teachers in Scotland, London bus drivers and nurses nationwide are the latest to walk out.

The nurses told us they rejected demands by Health Secretary Steven Barclay that they accept workplace “efficiencies” before the government would consider a pay raise.

— Pete Clifford

Workers in France strike over attempt to raise retirement age

PARIS — Striking workers led over a million people at some 220 demonstrations across the country Jan. 19 to protest President Emmanuel Macron’s attempt to raise the retirement age. Protests were accompanied by strikes of gas, electrical

and rail workers, other public transportation workers and teachers.

“Most of us never go out on strike but we are today,” Frederic Duten told the *Militant* at the demonstration here. Duten is a shop steward for the CGT union at a company that is part of the Airbus aeronautic construction group. Unions at Airbus in Toulouse reserved 42 buses to go to the action.

Workers are protesting a government plan to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 years of age. This is the eighth similar plan since a previous government attack was defeated by striking rail workers in 1995. Another “reform” was withdrawn following strikes and demonstrations in 2019 and 2020.

Within hours of the demonstrations, eight union confederations met and called a second day of action for Jan. 31.

— Nat London

Chicago university faculty strike for six days, win student support

CHICAGO — Nearly 900 faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago struck Jan. 17, demanding pay raises to keep up with inflation, job security and expanded mental health support for students. They are members of UIC United Faculty, an affiliate of the Illinois Teachers Union, and were working without a contract since August.

Striking bus workers get hearing at Virginia King Day parade

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

LEESBURG, Va. — Striking Loudoun County bus operators, mechanics and other members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 marched in the annual Martin Luther King parade here Jan. 16. They formed part of a labor contingent that included the Northern Virginia AFL-CIO and members of Service Employees International Union Virginia Local 512. Some 130 transit workers walked out Jan. 11, after voting 96% to authorize a strike.

Grueling split-shift schedules and lack of time to spend with families are some of the issues strikers face. “I work from 3 a.m. to 9 a.m. and then 4:45 p.m.



Militant/Pete Clifford

Maggie Heaton, left, Royal College of Nurses union representative for North West England, discusses strike for pay raise and improved working conditions Jan. 18 with rail workers Ólof Andra Proppé and Gary Boyle, who brought solidarity from Manchester Piccadilly Station.

The union is requesting that students get access to free evaluations for learning disabilities, a benefit that students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign already receive, and free psychological and neuropsychological testing. Students have been picketing and joining union rallies.

“Our teacher said, ‘Class dismissed — join the picket line,’” freshman Catherine Nida told the *Militant*. So she and her classmates enthusiastically

joined the pickets outside the student center. “The student support has been overwhelming,” said Justin Vlasits, a philosophy professor.

“We need diagnostic testing for learning disabilities,” Latin professor Krishni Burns said. “I was diagnosed with dyslexia while in college and the help I received was invaluable.”

A tentative agreement was reached Jan. 22 and classes resumed the next day.

— Dan Fein

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 9, 1998

The conduct of Cuban president Fidel Castro and of hundreds of thousands of Cuban people during the Pope’s visit provided a joyous glimpse of what it means for the proletariat to be in power with a firm, communist leadership. It showed the confidence of the working class in itself and its vanguard. Castro pointed to the uncompromising struggle against colonialism by the Cuban people and their determination to stand up to the mightiest imperialist power on earth.

He ended by explaining that there is no other country better equipped to understand that the equitable distribution of wealth and human solidarity must be spread around the globe. One of the main points Castro made is that religious freedom, that is respect for believers and nonbelievers alike, has been one of the pillars of the Cuban revolution from its triumph.



February 9, 1973

Black workers won a major victory Jan. 16 when the Labor Department ordered an end to discriminatory policies at the Bethlehem Steel plant in Sparrows Point, Md. The ruling affects nearly 8,000 Black employees.

A government-appointed committee found that Blacks had long been assigned to the “dirtiest, least desirable jobs.” It also charged that Bethlehem policy forced Blacks to stay with these jobs because anyone transferring to another unit lost seniority and pay status. If Bethlehem does not comply with the order, it faces the possible loss of millions of dollars in government contracts. The order was based on the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Most Blacks at the plant welcomed the ruling. One crane operator said he gave up 17 years of seniority when he shifted to another unit seven years ago. He will now have 24 years of seniority.



February 9, 1948

The assassination of Gandhi was political news of importance.

His simplicity of life, and the way he dramatized it, caught the imagination of the Indian masses. His loin cloth, his spinning wheel, his skillfully timed fasts, his campaigns against the British — these were the means by which he concentrated on himself, and himself alone, the attention and political obedience of scores of millions. This influence gave him his enormous power among the hard-boiled politicians of the Indian National Congress.

Gandhi never alienated the Indian capitalists and landlords. Historically, Gandhi will have his due share of the credit for his struggles against British imperialism. He will also have his due share of discredit for having strengthened the native ruling class against the great masses of the people who alone can regenerate India.

from Charles County, Maryland, to join the contingent. During a 2019 strike by transit workers at the Cinder Bed Road depot in Lorton, Tyger brought logs to keep the fire barrels burning on the picket line. “If it wasn’t for them, Metro Access workers wouldn’t have made gains. When we all come together, we are very powerful,” he said.

Troy Barnes, an organizer with the union, explained that bosses failed to induce workers to accept their proposed contract with a \$2,000 signing bonus. “It didn’t work with us,” he said, noting the company continues to cut retirement and health care benefits. The recent company proposal cuts the guaranteed weekly hours from 38 to zero.

Keolis took over the Loudoun County bus contract in April 2021. Bosses refused to recognize the union and forced workers to hold another union recertification election. Transit workers in the county voted 95% to keep their union.

“Keolis’ contract offer was insulting and shameful,” ATU Local 689 President Raymond Jackson told the media. “This company continues to treat our members with disrespect and disdain and continues to bargain in bad faith.”

Pickets continue outside Keolis’ offices from 3 a.m. to 4 p.m. Messages of support can be sent to ATU Local 689 at 2701 Whitney Place, Forestville, MD 20747. Email: info@atulocal689.org.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Oakland

The Working Class Needs Its Own Foreign Policy. Speaker: Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Feb. 5, 5 p.m. Donation: \$5. 675 Hegenberger Rd., Suite 250. Tel: (510) 686-1351.

Paul Ehrlich is still peddling ‘population bomb’ hysteria

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

If you tuned into “60 Minutes” on Jan. 1 you heard Paul Ehrlich, a Stanford University biologist, tell the audience, “I and the vast majority of my colleagues think we’ve had it; that the next few decades will be the end of the kind of civilization we’re used to.”

It’s the same prediction Ehrlich made in his 1968 bestseller *The Population Bomb*. “The battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970s,” he wrote then, “hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death.”

His book gave a patina of scientific legitimacy to policies of the World Bank, United Nations Population Fund and others used by governments to forcibly drive down fertility in the semicolonial world.

In Egypt, Tunisia, Pakistan, South Korea and Taiwan, health workers’ salaries were set by the number of intrauterine devices they inserted into women. Millions were sterilized in Mexico, Bolivia, Indonesia, Bangladesh and elsewhere. In the Philippines, according to *Smithsonian Magazine*, birth-control pills were pitched out of helicopters over remote villages.

In India, some states required sterilization for both men and women to obtain water, electricity, medical care and pay raises. More than 8 million men and women in India were sterilized in 1975 alone.

Today Ehrlich is joined by the likes of Greta Thunberg and other “climate activists” who insist we are on the precipice of “mass extinction.” Les Knight, founder of Voluntary Human Extinction, says the best thing humans can do to help the Earth is to stop having babies and die out. “Look what we did to this planet,” Knight told the *New York Times*. “We’re not a good species.”

Instead of pointing to the capitalist system whose profit drive condemns billions of human beings the world over to live with insufficient food, clothing, medical care, shelter and more, Ehrlich and others like him say the problem is too many people.

But we aren’t the problem. It’s our labor that transforms nature, and is the source of all wealth, and all advances in social productivity, culture and conservation. It’s a matter of how social labor is organized, to whose benefit, to what social and economic ends.

And that depends on which class holds state power, as the Socialist Workers Party explains in “The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land

and Labor,” printed in *New Internationalist* no. 14.

“The dog-eat-dog laws of rival capitals ensure that every ‘energy policy’ implemented by corporations and bourgeois governments will serve the interests of maintaining capitalist rule,” the SWP statement says, “not the economic, social, and cultural needs of the earth’s population, nor the health and safety of the workers involved.

“Communists oppose anti-working-class” — and anti-scientific — “‘solutions’ promoted by big business and various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois reformers. We expose and counter their reactionary notion, for instance, that ‘too large’ a population of toilers — as well as too much consumption and too high living standards for many of them — is a threat to a ‘livable’ world.”

Today the spiraling costs of child care and rent and declining real wages have led more young men and women to hold off starting families in countries across the world. In the U.S. the birth rate plunged 4% from 2019 to 2020, the sharpest single-year decline in almost 50 years.

The employers’ ceaseless “productivity drives,” their speedup, job combinations and other “cost-cutting” measures increase injuries and kill workers in factories, mines and fields in the U.S. and worldwide.

“Only the leadership of a workers and farmers government, conquered in revolutionary struggle,” says the SWP statement, “can lead working people to even *face* confronting the vast worldwide pathologies of capitalism, let alone bring to bear their creativity, energies, discipline, and solidarity to cure them.”

Atlanta cop attack, antifa riot leads to ‘terrorism’ charges

BY JANICE LYNN

ATLANTA — Georgia State Patrol cops shot and killed Manuel Teran as they cleared out an encampment in Intrenchment Creek Park in Dekalb County Jan. 18.

Teran was part of a group of middle-class radicals and anarchists attempting to block the building of a training center for police and firefighters. Cops say they shot Teran after he opened fire on them without warning. Participants in the occupation dispute this. A state trooper was shot during the incident and is in a hospital.

The cop killing follows a Dec. 13 raid by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Atlanta Police Department, FBI and oth-

Ingredion workers win contract after six-month strike



Militant/Dan Fein

CHICAGO — “I’m glad we stayed strong because we ended up with a lot better contract,” bakery worker Elaine Sweiger told the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*. Sweiger was one of 122 members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 100G who struck for 175 days at Ingredion’s Iowa plant. Union members approved a new contract Jan. 22.

Workers need unions and “a decent wage and a work-life balance,” Sweiger said. Bosses had demanded a schedule of 14 days straight of 12-hour shifts, higher health premiums, job cuts and ending overtime pay after eight hours.

Union members “went out together and all are returning together,” Veronica Hopkins, a member of the union’s negotiating team, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent in a phone interview. The company was forced to drop demands that five workers be subject to disciplinary procedures upon returning to work, she said.

Local 100G members received widespread support from BCTGM locals throughout North America, the Cedar Rapids labor movement, the AFL-CIO and affiliated unions and other organizations.

The four-year contract also increases pay rates and retains seniority for overtime.

“We won because no union member crossed the picket line,” Kasey Klein told the *Militant* by phone the day after the contract vote. “We discussed and debated the proposed contract for two and a half hours.”

“The contract is not all we wanted,” Juan Rodriguez said. “I think the strike was worth it. It made us stronger.”

“With each new day on that picket line,” BCTGM International President Anthony Shelton told the press, “our members grew in strength, courage and determination.”

— DAN FEIN

For further reading



The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class in New Internationalist no. 14

“Communists oppose anti-working-class ‘solutions’ promoted by big business and various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois reformers. We expose and counter their reactionary notion, for instance, that ‘too large’ a population of toilers — as well as too much consumption and too high living standards for many of them — is a threat to a ‘livable’ world.”

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Drought crisis is result of profit system

Statement issued Jan. 25 by Ellie García, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from California in 2022.

Working farmers are victims of conditions over which they have no control. But these are not primarily natural disasters such as the drought raging in California today. They are social conditions, the result of the workings of capitalism.

Farmers are exploited by the banks and real estate sharks that hold title to their land. Processing and distribution of food and other farm products is monopolized by giant corporations that ruthlessly squeeze them. The manufacturers of farm implements, seed, fertilizer, and pesticides, and the energy and grain trusts, have first dibs on farmers' incomes.

One of the results of the for-profit setup is the fact that today's heavy rains in California are allowed to run off into the ocean, leaving no relief for drought-plagued working farmers.

Under capitalism, working farmers take all of the risks: the burden of crop failures, unstable market conditions, high interest rates and taxes. In the case of drought, regulatory bureaus — such as the numerous California water boards and agencies claiming to “protect the environment” — tighten restrictions on access to water, benefiting capitalist agriculture. This means that in rural communities, workers' wells are left contaminated and often dry.

There are different classes of farmers, both ex-

ploited and exploiters, with sharply conflicting class interests. Working farmers are debt slaves. Workers are exploited by the capitalists who profit from our labor. We face a common enemy, the capitalist class. The working-class movement, our trade unions, can be strengthened by extending solidarity to working farmers.

The labor movement needs to take a lead in forging an alliance between workers and farmers, so we can fight together for a program that guarantees farmers their costs of production, including their living expenses, and relieves them of the staggering debt burden they carry. Farmers need to know that our unions are behind them against attempts to foreclose on their land and rob them of their livelihood. They need relief from the economic uncertainty and ruin that constantly hangs over their head.

When the workers and farmers in Cuba made a revolution in 1959 they went on to establish their own government and fought to carry through far-reaching nationalizations of industry and utilities. Titles to land were given to thousands of peasants who wanted to farm. By nationalizing the land, the government abolished the rents and mortgages system and debt slavery, and guaranteed the land would be in the hands of those who wanted to use it. A thoroughgoing revolution that takes power out of the hands of the capitalist class and replaces it with a workers and farmers government can accomplish the same in this country and set a powerful example for toilers the world over.

Support Ukraine independence, defeat invasion

Continued from front page

fodder. His goal remains to conquer all of Ukraine and its people.

Months of drone and missile attacks on Ukrainian cities targeting infrastructure and housing have choked production and left millions with sporadic heat and light in subzero temperatures. Not only has this failed to break the morale of Ukrainian working people, it has increased their resolve to defend their country's independence.

The working class remains the backbone of the defense. Crews of maintenance workers and engineers work long hours in perilous conditions to restore power networks. Regarded as war heroes, at least 10 have died on the job since the barrages began in October.

“I closed my eyes [to it] and just got on with work,” Roman Horbatiuk, 39, told the *Wall Street Journal*. He became a target while repairing power lines.

“We are a battalion of electricians,” 64-year-old Volodymyr Ovdei told the paper. Some electrical workers have come out of retirement to replace the hundreds who have joined the armed forces.

At the same time, workers face attacks by bosses seeking to profit from the war, backed by the capitalist Zelensky government. Trolleybus drivers in Kharkiv face the lowest wages in the country, about 45 hryvnias (\$1.22) per hour, a driver named Vitaliy wrote in an appeal for help to independent trade unions, journalists and international supporters Jan. 19.

“For many years, there have been problems with massive violations of safety regulations, labor legislation and wages in our companies,” he said. Drivers are forced to pay for trolleybus repairs at their own expense.

“Some drivers work 14 to 16 hours a day,” forced to ignore rules on rest and shifts to try to make up their pay with overtime, Vitaliy said. This is dangerous for drivers and passengers alike. They're pressed to keep driving during air raids and artillery fire.

He says that despite the fact they are exempt from the draft as “critical infrastructure workers,” many drivers have volunteered to go to the front.

The country's independent unions, organized in the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine, continue to mobilize to provide aid to workers and soldiers who have come under attack. After miners and others in the city of Hirnyk in the Donetsk region, the home of Kurakhivska Mine, were hit by Russian artillery Jan. 14, the confederation brought aid to repair miners' homes, the trade union office and other facilities,

as well as delivered to area families. Similar aid trips have been made to mining towns across the country.

Russians demand ‘No to war!’

Thousands of Russian emigres in more than 60 cities around the world joined rallies Jan. 21 chanting “No to war” and “Freedom to political prisoners.” The protests were organized by supporters of Alexei Navalny, Putin's most prominent bourgeois opponent, who was jailed two years ago. He and his political network have been denounced as “terrorist” by the Kremlin for exposing corruption and speaking out against the war in Ukraine.

In a series of open letters to Putin in the past two weeks, hundreds of Russian doctors, some 50 lawyers and the same number of politicians objected to Navalny's confinement in isolation. They demanded he be given access to medical treatment.

Protesters held placards and waved the Ukrainian flag as well as the Russian flag with the red removed — an anti-war symbol there. There were also a number of solo protests inside Russia, where gatherings of demonstrators face arrest and jail under onerous wartime censorship laws.

“I came here because I don't support the political regime in my country and I believe that the war needs to end,” Yulia told the Moscow Times at a rally of several hundred people in Belgrade, the Serbian capital.

In response to the Kremlin's deadly Jan. 15 missile strike on an apartment complex in Dnipro that killed and injured scores, many Russian working people have found ways to honor the dead and protest the war. In Moscow, flowers and children's toys are placed at the monument to the Ukrainian writer Lesya Ukrainka on Ukrainsky Boulevard. A photo of the destroyed housing block was also placed there. While police detained several people, including a passerby walking his dog, more floral tributes keep appearing.

Similar memorials have been put up at Ukrainian cultural sites in St. Petersburg and other cities. Police removed the tributes, sometimes making arrests. But the widespread protests have continued.

“Ukraine: not our enemies but our brothers,” was a sign held by Ekaterina Varenik, 26, a lawyer, in front of Ukrainka's statue Jan. 21. She told the *New York Times* that Putin's crackdown was getting “worse and worse, and stricter and stricter” every day. But she stood defiant for half an hour before she was arrested.

Iran protests, strikes

Continued from front page

interventions in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen and the impact of U.S. and European Union sanctions. The value of Iran's currency in relation to the U.S. dollar dropped to a record low Jan. 22.

Workers need a monthly minimum wage of 25 million tomans (\$556), the statement said, “to defend their lives and the lives of their families and loved ones.”

Dozens of retired teachers in Tehran, mostly women, chanted “High prices, inflation, disaster for people's lives.” Protests were held in Kurdistan, Yazd, Khuzestan, Gilan, Isfahan and other provinces.

Officials of the Islamic Republic claim to defend the interests of working people, but a leader of the protests said that the government's Supreme Labor Council, which sets the minimum wage, acts in “the interests of the capitalist owners and nothing else.”

“Workers can exercise our power and be decision-makers for class interests only by creating independent labor organizations, independent from the government, the bosses and the political parties,” retiree Ali Nejati wrote on the sugarcane workers union website.

While the bourgeois-clerical regime has killed more than 500 protesters and arrested thousands since the protests began, it has been more cautious in its approach to struggles by workers over wages and conditions. Over the last several years a good number of leaders of the teachers and bus drivers unions have been imprisoned on trumped-up charges, but the police have not interfered in most of the latest labor actions or protests by farmers, a sign of the rulers' fear of the power of the working class.

Weekly protests continue in Baluchistan — including one of thousands in Zahedan Jan. 20 — home to the mostly Sunni Muslim Baluch people and other oppressed minorities.

Close allies of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei have denounced Zahedan-based Maulana Abdul-Hamid, the most prominent Sunni cleric in the country, for calling for freedom of worship, women's equality, an end to the death penalty, equal rights for Baluchs, Arabs, Azerbaijanis, Kurds and other oppressed nationalities and release of political prisoners.

The government had admitted to “shortcomings” after 80 peaceful protesters were killed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps police and Basij thugs at a Sept. 30 protest in Zahedan. Nonetheless, at the end of December the government appointed Revolutionary Guard Corps Brig. Gen. Mohammad Karami the new governor of the province.

The Revolutionary Guard are widely hated for their brutal assaults at home and their role in the Iranian rulers' wars abroad. Opposition to the bourgeois-clerical regime's counterrevolutionary military adventures abroad, aimed at extending its reactionary presence across the Middle East, has been a feature of the wave of protests since late 2017.

Regime struggles to enforce dress code

After Amini's death, the regime pulled the “morality police” off the streets in Tehran, hoping to avoid provoking more protests. Thousands of women there — and to a lesser extent in other cities — don't cover their hair, while others continue to do so.

“A weak hijab is inappropriate,” stated Khamenei Jan. 3, “but it should not cause that individual to be seen as outside of religion and the revolution,” a recognition of the challenge the regime faces.

In mid-January it issued new rules that women who violate the code will face fines, confiscation of their vehicles and firing from their jobs instead of arrest. Businesses that let them enter would also face fines.

When three female high school students in Yazd boarded a bus recently, one passenger and her daughter told them to cover up and put on their hijab and threatened to report the students to school officials.

“It has nothing to do with you,” one student said, refusing to cover her hair. The older woman told the driver he shouldn't let women ride the bus without proper hijab.

The bus driver replied, “It's none of my business.”

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