

THE MILITANT

EDITORIAL

Support workers, farmers in East Palestine!

— PAGE 9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 87/NO. 13 APRIL 3, 2023

Join 'Militant' to extend reach of paper, books, \$165,000 fund

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The international campaign to expand the reach of the *Militant* — by getting 1,350 subscriptions, selling 1,350 books by Socialist Workers Party and other revolutionary leaders, and raising \$165,000 — has gotten off to a good start.

When Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Fort Worth, Texas, knocked on her door March 12, Marta Sanchez wanted to talk about last year's gubernatorial race in which Democratic Party candidate Beto O'Rourke lost to Republican Greg Abbott. "I will never forget when Beto O'Rourke campaigned on my street and knocked on my door," she told Kennedy. "As long as Texas has Gov. Abbott, there will be problems."

"The problems we face will not be solved by whether there is a Republican or Democrat in office," Kennedy replied. "They both represent the wealthy class. Workers need our own party, a labor party, that can organize the struggle."
Continued on page 3

NY meeting: 'End the US economic war against Cuba!'

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK — "Fidel Castro used to tell us, 'If we had given in just once to the demands of the imperialists, the Cuban Revolution would not exist today. What has stayed their hand is the heroism of our people — the imperialists know the price they would have to pay,'" said Osmayda Hernández, member of the National Secretariat of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC).

Hernández was one of the featured speakers at a March 11 public meeting here demanding the U.S. government end its six-decade-long economic war against the Cuban Revolution. Held at the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Center, it drew some 150 people.

The rally was part of a two-day conference organized by the US-Cuba Normalization Committee and local Cuba solidarity groups in several U.S. and Canadian cities. The aim of the gathering was to promote activities demanding that Washington re-
Continued on page 7

Fight for working people to control derailment cleanup

Jeep caravan shows support for East Palestine



Militant/Dave Ferguson

Jacob Tate and family came from Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, to join Jeep caravan in East Palestine March 18 to back fight of residents to win control of cleanup, rebuilding after toxic derailment.

BY NAOMI CRAINE

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio — Throngs of residents here lined Market Street March 18 to cheer the "Jeep Invasion" into this small town. The caravan was organized to help working people and small-business owners recover from the disastrous Feb. 3 Norfolk Southern train derailment, fire and release of toxic chemicals.

Initiated by nurse Terri Galeski from nearby East Liverpool, Jeep clubs from Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia brought more than 100 vehicles with their owners and families to visit the town, bring solidarity to those fighting for control over the rebuilding of the area and support local businesses.

This public support stands in sharp

contrast to the siren song of dozens of lawyers who are bombarding area residents with invitations to join their class-action lawsuits by whipping up an atmosphere of hysteria. Worker-
Continued on page 4

Defend Ukraine independence! Demand Moscow's troops out now



Reuters

Crimean Tatars, the indigenous people there, protest Feb. 26, 2014, six days after Moscow used its troops to seize the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine. After the Kremlin tightened its repressive grip last year, Putin stopped there March 18 to try to legitimize annexation.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

After a year of waging a near-genocidal war against the Ukrainian people, Russian President Vladimir Putin is trying to put a facade of legitimacy on his regime's seizure of almost a fifth of the country. He went to Moscow-occupied areas of Ukraine for the first time since the war began.

Putin visited Sevastopol in Crimea, the long-time home of the Crimean

Tatars, nine years after it was invaded and annexed by Russian forces. Moscow has tightened its grip there, shutting down the Mejlis, the Tatar parliament, in 2016, forcing Tatar leaders into exile and carrying out a sustained campaign of oppression there.

Putin then flew to Mariupol, which was captured by Moscow last May after being bombarded for weeks. Ukrainians

Continued on page 6

Black farmers rally in Washington, DC, discuss road forward for farmers today

BY ELLIE GARCÍA AND SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON — Some 100 mostly Black farmers and their supporters from across the Southeast rallied at the White House here March 1, part of a campaign for long overdue government compensation for past discrimination. The protest came as part of two days of interviews, lobbying members of Congress and ongoing discussions and debates concerning lessons from past fights against attacks on farmers and what is the way forward today.

The rally, and a dinner meeting the evening before, marked the anniversary of the 1999 consent decree in Pigford v. Glickman, where farmers sued the

Continued on page 8

US working people face a deepening crisis of capitalist trade, production

In the wake of the collapse of three regional U.S. banks March 8-12 and the subsequent turmoil in financial markets worldwide, the *Militant* is excerpting below a section from *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-
Continued on page 9

Get this new book!

The low point of labor resistance is behind us

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY LOOKS FORWARD

JACK BARNES
MARY-ALICE WATERS
STEVE CLARK

\$7 until May 31 (normally \$10)
\$5 with 'Militant' subscription

Communist League: ‘Amnesty for immigrant workers in UK’

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

MANCHESTER, England — “The unions should fight for amnesty for all workers who the government says don’t have ‘proper’ papers,” Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for Manchester City Council, told retired sewing machine operator Pam Grocock when he knocked on her door here March 11. “And workers born abroad should have the same rights as those born here.”

“I don’t know about all these immigrants coming here,” Grocock replied. A new bill to immediately deport the growing number arriving in small boats on England’s south coast is being debated in Parliament.

Clifford explained the key question was fighting for the rights of immigrants already in the U.K. He is a rail worker and described the conditions faced by workers. Many work for a contracting agency and many are immigrants. Some are inspired by the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport’s fight for pay and are now fighting for union rights and better conditions themselves. But bosses have threatened them, saying they need to be “careful” because they don’t have papers.

“You’re right there,” Grocock said. “The bosses look for any way to scare people. It’s divide and rule.”

“The battle to win the labor movement to defend the rights of workers, whatever their status, is inseparable from the fight to build, extend and strengthen our unions,” Clifford said.

Under the government’s Illegal Migration Bill all immigrants making an unauthorized entry into the U.K. will be detained for 28 days and automatically

deported. They will lose the right to claim asylum and be banned from ever re-entering the U.K.

Despite making a perilous journey and facing possible jail sentences when they arrive, the numbers coming here on small boats rose from 28,000 in 2021 to 45,000 last year. Most come from Albania, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria.

The opposition Labour Party says it shares the government’s aims, but will vote against the bill.

Far from preventing immigration, the government’s goal is to impose greater control over the flow of cheap labor to satisfy bosses’ shifting needs for workers. Over a million arrived in the U.K. last year, many under a visa scheme introduced in 2021. Nurses and care workers, butchers and chefs entering under the scheme come largely from Nigeria and Zimbabwe and not from European Union member states following Brexit. Agricultural workers recruited under a parallel arrangement are now arriving from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Indonesia and Nepal rather than EU countries or Russia and Ukraine.

Clifford also met school catering worker Ufouma Olorunfunmi. She described her experience of the second-class status confronting immigrants in Ireland. “I was living in Dublin, working at the Dunnes department store,” she said. When the company cut the workforce, Olorunfunmi not only lost her job but also had to leave the country because she’s not an Irish national. Now she’s living in Manchester with two children while her husband is still in Dublin with their other child.

“The majority of my workmates are



Jess Hurd

Tens of thousands of teachers and civil service workers demonstrate in one-day strike in London March 15 for higher pay, better working conditions. Labor battles today require unity of all workers, including countering government anti-immigrant measures and demanding amnesty.

immigrants,” building worker Paul Jones told Communist League member Debra Jacobs when she knocked on his door in South Ockenden. “If I lived where they come from, I’d probably do the same as them. But then they discover attacks on living standards and job conditions here. I used to pay 50 pounds (\$61) for a box of mastic [grout] that I use in my work. It’s now 180 pounds!”

“They see coming here as the only way out given the conditions they face,” Jacobs said. “But it’s the same here. We need to build militant unions and a party that defends working-class interests wherever we are.”

Defend freedom of speech

Gary Lineker, a former captain of the national England soccer team and now a presenter of a popular BBC sports show, said the Illegal Migration Bill was “directed at the most vulnerable people in language not dissimilar to Germany in the 1930s.” Lineker was greeted by a sympathetic chorus from the middle-class left, including former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. Following pressure from ministers angered by Lineker’s comments, he was suspended.

Communist League members found broad support for Lineker’s right to free speech among working people when they campaigned door to door. “Lineker was wrong to compare the government’s measures to 1930s Germany. Nothing

compares to the Holocaust. But he has the right to his view,” Jacobs told warehouse worker, Ali Djafic.

“Freedom of speech is very important,” Djafic replied. He arrived in the U.K. as a child in 1993 from a refugee camp during the Bosnia war.

“I’m a Muslim,” he said. “Many people speak about Muslims as terrorists. They’re wrong but they have the right to say what they think without fear of losing their job. If not, I could lose my job when I speak up.” After a storm of protests, Lineker was reinstated.

“The unions should defend freedom of speech,” CL candidate Peter Clifford told the *Militant*, “and oppose ‘canceling’ those you disagree with. This is key to building working-class solidarity and advancing a program that defends workers’ interests.”

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

OHIO

Cincinnati

Cuba’s Socialist Revolution: An Example for All Working People. Speaker: John Hawkins, participant in Havana International Book Fair. Fri., March 31. Reception, 7 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 2300 Montana Ave. Suite 230. Tel.: (513) 837-1038.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: For one year send Canadian \$45 to the *Militant*, 7107 St. Denis #204, Montreal, Quebec H2S 2S5.

United Kingdom: Send £30 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, 5 Norman Road (first floor), Seven Sisters, London, N15 4ND, England.

Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: Send £85 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

France: Send 100 euros for one year to Diffusion du *Militant*, BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15.

Australia: Send A\$70 for one year to P.O. Box 73 Campsie, NSW 2194 Australia.

New Zealand and the Pacific Islands: Send A\$70 for one year to above address.

Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

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

THE MILITANT

Back workers standing up to boss attacks!

A recent strike by New Jersey sanitation workers, members of Teamsters Local 115, over wages and against severe disciplinary measures is an example of how workers are using their union power. The ‘Militant’ gives voice to fights by workers worldwide.



Militant/Janet Post

Joanne Kuniansky, NJ state Senate SWP candidate, visits Teamsters strikers in Camden.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

\$5 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

\$10 for 12 weeks

\$20 for 6 months

\$35 for 1 year

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,
306 W. 37TH ST., 13TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018.
OR SUBSCRIBE ONLINE AT:
WWW.THEMILITANT.COM

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia, A\$10 • United Kingdom, £4 • Canada, Can\$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £8 • France, 8 euros • New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, A\$10 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

The Militant

Vol. 87/No. 13

Closing news date: March 22, 2023

Editor: John Studer

Managing Editor: Terry Evans

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Martín Koppel, Roy Landersen, Jacob Perasso, Vivian Sahnner, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, two weeks in June, one week in August, two weeks in December.

Business Manager: Bob Bruce

The *Militant* (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Peace protesters get ‘Militant,’ discuss unions, war in Ukraine

BY TERRY EVANS

WASHINGTON — Socialist Workers Party members found interest in the party’s program and activities when they campaigned at a March 18 “Fund people’s needs, not the war machine” protest across from the White House.

The action was called by a coalition of Stalinist and radical groups that claim the Kremlin’s attempt to crush Ukraine is a “proxy war” between Moscow and Washington. Their aim is to mobilize sentiment against imperialist war in the U.S. in order to strengthen forces in capitalist politics that want to see Washington back off support for Ukraine and to pressure the Ukrainian government to abandon the fight to defend the country’s independence.

But the march organizers largely promoted the action as a peace protest that commemorated the 20th anniversary of Washington’s murderous 2003 invasion of Iraq. Some 1,000 people attended, including workers and youth looking for ways to express their opposition to the U.S. imperialists’ wars — past and future — and open to discussing what it will take to overturn their rule.

Jacob Cudmore and Scott Stohlman, students at Salisbury University in Maryland, stopped by the SWP table. Cudmore said his father was in the Marines during the Iraq War. “Saddam Hussein was a bad guy, but that war was fought for the rich,” he said. “There need to be talks today to stop the war in Ukraine.”

“To discuss Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine, working people need a different starting point — the right of the Ukrainian nation to exist,” I replied. “And the need to fight for Moscow to withdraw immediately to advance the common interests of working people in Russia and Ukraine.”

“The invasion was immoral,” Stohlman said. “Russia should withdraw.” He pointed out the U.S. government was using the war to advance its own interests.

“We need to take power out of the hands of the capitalist war makers in this country,” I said. “The working class is the only force that can do that.”

Both students had been following the devastation facing working people in East Palestine, Ohio, following

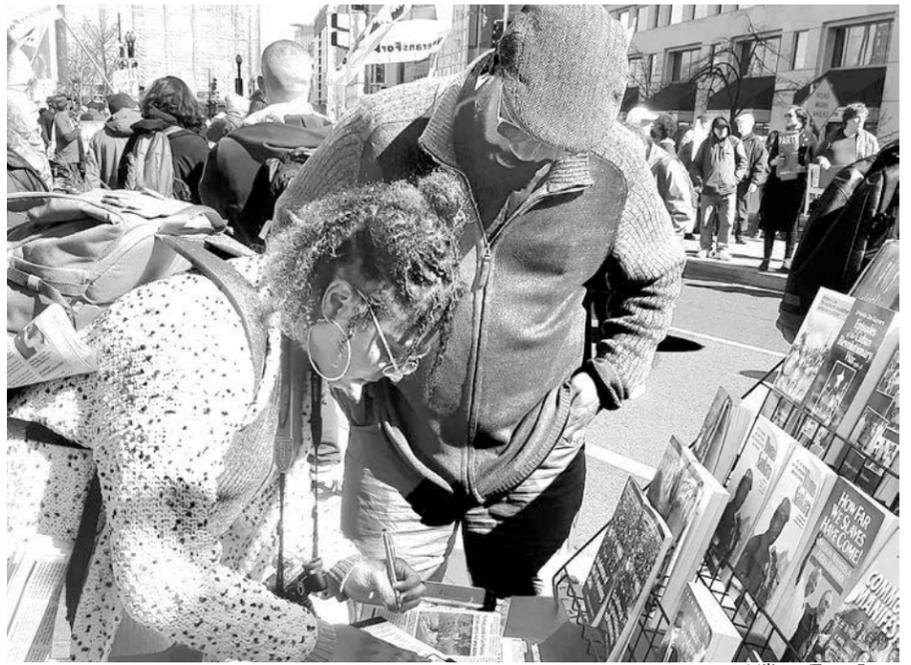
the derailment of a Norfolk Southern train carrying toxic chemicals. “There’s hundreds of derailments across the country,” Stohlman said.

“This happens because rail bosses have cut thousands of jobs,” explained Chris Hoepfner, SWP candidate for mayor of Philadelphia and a freight rail worker.

“Trump deregulated the railways and then Biden banned rail workers from striking,” Cudmore added. “Democrats and Republicans both look after corporate interests.”

“Both parties were afraid of rail workers going on strike,” Hoepfner said. “They fear the power of working people.” He described how he and co-workers used their contract fight to get out the truth to fellow workers and other unionists about the increasingly dangerous conditions they confront.

“Workers need a labor party based on the unions,” Hoepfner said. Both Cudmore and Stohlman got subscriptions to the *Militant* and the book *The Low*



Militant/Terry Evans

Navy veteran Tanesha Stebb subscribes to *Militant* after discussion with SWP member Willie Cotton at March 18 peace protest in Washington; 11 subscriptions and 18 books were sold.

Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

Navy veteran Tanesha Stebb was visiting D.C. from Louisiana when she saw the march go by. “I came to see the cherry blossoms but I had to join the march,”

she said. Now working as a photographer, Stebb said she was disgusted by the contempt for human life displayed by U.S. forces that she witnessed during her deployment to the Middle East.

SWP member Willie Cotton showed her *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and

Continued on page 4

Join in ‘Militant,’ books, \$165,000 fund effort!

Continued from front page

gles of working people to fight for better conditions.”

Thinking about it, Sanchez said, Democrats and Republicans make “promises, promises that go in the air. I’m tired of both parties.” She bought a *Militant* subscription and told Kennedy that she became a U.S. citizen when President Ronald Reagan signed an amnesty bill in 1986. “The SWP campaign supports fighting for amnesty for all those living and working in the U.S.,” Kennedy said. “This can help build a strong labor movement and organize unions.”

The eight-week campaign runs through May 16. A key part of this effort will be getting the book *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark into the hands of as many working people as possible, alongside building the June 8-11 SWP International Educational Conference at Oberlin College in Ohio.

Kennedy also spoke to a dozen people

at a March 15 candidates meeting held in Tarrant County. “Fort Worth is a railroad center and rail workers unions’ fight for safety is underscored by the train disaster in East Palestine, Ohio,” Kennedy said. “This was caused by cuts made by Norfolk Southern and other railroads to increase profits.”

Chad Moore, a nonpartisan candidate for the Tarrant County District Water Board, spoke next. “Everything she just said about the railroads is true. I know because I am an engineer for the BNSF.” Moore’s a member of Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Local 817.

Two *Militant* subscriptions and five books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries were sold at the debate, including two copies of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*.

‘Militant’ tells strikers’ story

From Chicago, SWP member Dan Fein reports that the *Militant* has been getting around on the picket line of United Auto Workers Local 588 members on strike against Metal-Matic in nearby Bedford Park. “I showed a striker a copy of the article on the strike I wrote for the *Militant*,” Fein reported. After reading the article, he said, “This is great — it gives our side of the story. I am going to show the paper to the guys at the other tent.” Five strikers got a copy of the paper and another subscribed.”

Fein and co-worker Rosa Escobedo, a shop steward at the Nabisco plant in Chicago for Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 1, visited the strikers March 15 to show support for their fight. Escobedo brought cookies and soda for the pickets.

Linda Harris, Communist League candidate in the New South Wales state elections in Australia, campaigned in the Blacktown neighborhood of Sydney March 11. “This capitalist system is driven by profit and not the needs of human beings,” retiree Izeldin Elgalad told Harris.

They discussed a range of topics, from Moscow’s war against the Ukrainian people to concerns he has about woke gender indoctrination

foisted on his grandchildren at school.

“I only read Arabic,” Elgalad said. He handed over \$5 as a down payment to Communist League members who promised to bring back Pathfinder books on revolutionary politics and working-class struggles in Arabic.

SWP members Roy Landersen and Nancy Boyasko met Davon Davis, a school bus driver, when they campaigned in the apartment building in Paterson, New Jersey, where Najee Seabrooks was shot and killed by police March 3. They discussed the fight against cop brutality. Landersen said cop brutality was part and parcel of capitalist rule and pointed to how it was done away with during Cuba’s socialist revolution. After workers and farmers conquered power, he said, “the old dictatorships’ cops were replaced by revolutionary fighters from among workers and farmers.”

Davis invited them in. Boyasko showed him pictures of workers’ struggles worldwide in *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers Power*.

“They don’t teach any of this at school. This is mind blowing,” Davis said. “The best thing to have in the world is knowledge.” He got the book and a *Militant* subscription.

St. Paul Louis, a maintenance worker in the Miami-Dade County school system, has been reading the *Militant* for months. At a March 17 Militant Labor Forum on the fight being waged by workers, farmers and small-business people following Norfolk Southern’s derailment disaster in Ohio, he purchased *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers Power* by Barnes and *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon, both in French. “The capitalists try to keep us divided,” he said, “but I went to Jerusalem in 2019 and saw Jewish and Palestinian workers together while shopping at the market.”

A chart with goals and results through the first week of the campaign will be printed in the next issue. To join in campaigning, contact distributors near you listed on page 8.

Many attracted to ‘Militant’ at Havana Int’l Book Fair

HAVANA — An indication of the interest in revolutionary working-class politics among workers and youth visiting the Pathfinder stand at the Havana International Book Fair this February was the 31 who subscribed to the *Militant*.

Volunteers at the Pathfinder bookstand called the subscribers later to get their impressions of the paper. Many said they were especially interested in the *Militant’s* coverage of the conditions and the struggles of working people in the U.S., which they sometimes hear about from relatives who live there, but don’t hear much from other news sources. Two of the subscriptions were sold to people visiting Cuba from the U.S.

Some of the new readers asked where they could find more Pathfinder books in Cuba. We said a number of titles are available at the Havana bookstore of Casa Editora Abril, the publishing house of Cuba’s Union of Young Communists.

Three of the subscriptions were renewals. A couple of readers who subscribed last year said they enjoyed the *Militant’s* coverage of the activities of socialist workers they had met at the Pathfinder stand who were running as Socialist Workers Party candidates. A few asked how to send letters or comments to the paper.

Some didn’t agree with the *Militant’s* position opposing Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine, but liked its coverage of other issues. One new subscriber said he disagreed with the Ukraine coverage but was curious to learn more because he knew the *Militant* was accurate in its other reporting.

— RÓGER CALERO

Fight for control over cleanup

Continued from front page
correspondents for the *Militant*, including rail workers, have found many residents skeptical of their doom and gloom claims, but wary of the assurances by company and government officials that they will take care of everything. Many welcome a discussion of what workers and farmers in the area, along with rail workers and our unions, can do to take control over their future and prevent similar profit-driven rail disasters in the future.

“I’ve seen East Palestine compared to Chernobyl,” Jacob Tate told the *Militant*. Tate came with his wife and daughters in their Jeep from Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. “The derailment is really bad, these same tracks run right next to my house just a few miles away,” he said. “But some people are exaggerating the danger today for their own interests. We came to show our solidarity.”

“This show of support is an answer to those who are whipping up the idea that you will get poisoned if you come to town,” Sue Dunlap, a self-employed house cleaner, said. “There’s a chiropractor here who had to move her operation to another town because patients were scared to come here after the derailment, and my hairdresser had the same experience.” Dunlap and her husband, Randy, an International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers member at a nearby factory, drove their Jeep in the caravan. They have lived in East Palestine for 21 years.

“This means so much to us,” said Maggie Guglielmo. “I hear that people are organizing fundraisers to help us out. One church had a fish fry. I say, ‘give the money to your parishioners and ask them to come to East Palestine and spend money here.’” Guglielmo has a silicone bracelet-decorating business. Her raw materials absorbed the smell of the chemical burn and she’s out of business until she gets Norfolk Southern to pay for the damage.

The night before the Jeep invasion, the Dunlaps attended the grand opening of McKim’s Honeyvine and Winery. The venue is 250 yards from where the train derailed. Ashley and Michael

McKim have been making wine for several years, starting in the basement of their house. The grand opening of their wine shop had been planned for months. “Groups renting our space for birthdays and parties have been canceling since the derailment,” Michael McKim told the *Militant* in a previous interview.

“The grand opening was packed. People really turned out to support the McKims,” Sue Dunlap said.

A few days earlier, farmers from Indiana came to deliver 17 tons of seed, straw, hay, toys and other necessities for livestock and pets to Freedom Ranch, a horse stable north of Salem, Ohio. Ranch owners Kaylee Ball and Chase Brown had opened their facility for animals that had been evacuated from around East Palestine following the derailment and related government evacuation orders.

When what they did was publicized in *Farm and Dairy*, Lisa Hilbert and Susie Keller in Carmel, Indiana, organized a supplies caravan. “I would hope somebody would do this for my small town if it happened,” Hilbert told *Farm and Dairy*.

They contacted Ball, and she and her husband said they’d be happy to store all the supplies and make sure they got around. A group of Ball’s friends, family and other volunteers met the caravan to help get it unloaded and organized.

These mobilizations of solidarity show the potential to unite workers, farmers and small producers in a fight to force the rail bosses and government to clean up the area and provide lifelong health care, under control of those directly affected.

Debate over the road forward

Knocking on doors a few blocks from the derailment site March 15, members of the Socialist Workers Party found a wide range of opinions. Some told us they “trust what the government is doing,” but that seemed to be a minority view.

Lon Berresford, a carpenter who lives just south of the tracks, said he and his wife weren’t sickened by the chemical release, but heard there were more complaints on the other side of the tracks. Like several neighbors, they said they have no plans to leave. “If you’re afraid, you’re afraid,” he said, “but a lot of people are speculating on this.” So far 22 lawsuits have been filed against Norfolk Southern by area residents, and all but one are being consolidated into one big class-action suit.

Berresford had no doubt the railroad cut corners on safety. “All businesses try to make money, so it’s no surprise. That’s big business.” Like several other people we spoke to, he remembered when trains used to have a caboose, with crew members on the end who could respond to problems, like the overheating axle bearing that caused the derailment here.

Just north of the tracks, Kathy Smyth and Mark Thompkins said they and their 10-year-old daughter have all had symptoms since the derailment, including rashes, nose bleeds and severe eye irritation. SWP member David Rosenfeld said, “You can’t trust Norfolk Southern, the government regulators and politicians, or the wave of lawyers who’ve descended on this town.”

“That’s right,” said Smyth, who works two jobs, at a grocery store and a nursing home. “The only people we



Militant/Naomi Craine

Tony Lane, Socialist Workers Party member from Pittsburgh, brings solidarity to Joy Mascher at her florist shop in East Palestine March 16. Her son made sign, “East Palestine Lives Matter.”

can trust are each other.”

Candace Wagner, a rail worker and member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, pointed to the victory residents won in forcing Norfolk Southern bosses to rip up the tracks and remove contaminated soil, ballast and trackage from the area of the derailment. Their initial move was to get the trains rolling as quickly as possible, to start profits rolling again, and minimize the cleanup.

That was a victory, Smyth said, but the railroad-organized project is also kicking up toxic dust. She has visited clinics twice with severe eye irritation since it began. The town government has responded with street sweepers that can be seen on local streets.

Smyth and Thompkins, who work at a nearby factory, were interested in the issues rail workers face. “One of the main issues rail workers were ready to strike over last fall was schedules that make it hard for workers to build their union or have family time,” Wagner said. “But the Biden administration and Congress intervened to ban any strike and impose a contract on us.”

We discussed the fight needed by rail workers and our unions to control the conditions we work under with Sue Libert, who works as a church secretary. “They need to take better care of the rail workers,” Libert said. “I can’t believe how they work on call and don’t have sick days. And the trains are way too long.”

Rail bosses’ profit drive

A Feb. 15 CBS News article quoted interviews with Norfolk Southern workers familiar with the train that derailed, who said excessive length and weight were a factor in the scope of the disaster. The train was 149 cars — nearly 2 miles long — and weighed 18,000 tons. “There should be some limitations to the weight and the length of the trains,” one worker told CBS. He kept his name anonymous for fear of employer retaliation.

The same article quoted Sarah Feinberg, who served as an administrator in the Federal Railroad Administration from 2015 to 2017. At that time “I was not happy with the lengths of the trains, and they were 80 or 90 cars long,” she said. “This train was 50% longer.”

All the major rail carriers have cut back on crews carrying out inspections and repairs on tracks and equipment. “There’s a good chance the car that derailed had not been properly inspected for some time,” Jared Cassity, alternate legislative director for the rail conductors’ union SMART-TD, told CBS. He

said the railroad wants inspections of freight cars to be done in 60 seconds or less. “You combine that with the added length and tonnage, plus the fact that it had all this hazardous material, and this was predictable. If nothing changes it will happen again.”

As if to underscore his point, further derailments have gotten national attention practically every week since the East Palestine disaster.

‘We need better information’

“We need to be getting better information,” Joy Mascher told me and Tony Lane when we visited her florist shop on Market Street March 16. “Many people around here keep chickens. No one can tell you if it’s OK to eat the eggs. It’s frightening.”

“Yes, it can be frightening,” Lane said. “But it’s encouraging that there’s more labor resistance than in many years. It means it’s a good time to organize a response. Rail workers have common interests with workers, farmers and small-business people in this community.”

“I think it’s crazy the railroads want to have just one person on the train. It’s all about the bottom line for them,” Mascher said, referring to the bosses’ push to implement engineer-only “crews.”

“We need a fight by the unions to limit the trains to 50 cars and put crew members on the rear as well as the front,” Lane said, “and they should be forced to go slower than 50 miles an hour when passing through towns.”

“Committees of working people in the area could demand access to the rail bosses’ ‘business secrets,’ which they try to hide, so we can know what’s going on and have a say in what happens,” he said.

“They thought we’d just take this, but we won’t be quiet,” Mascher replied. “There’s a lot of people who don’t like the media attention here. But we need all we can, so that we can be heard.”

Rail workers continue to look for ways to fight. Jakob Forsgren, a track worker and local chair of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees in Lincoln, Nebraska, told the *Militant* the BMW has called a protest March 24 at 10 a.m. outside the Omaha Berkshire Hathaway headquarters, to highlight issues facing rail workers today. Berkshire Hathaway is owned by Warren Buffett, who also owns the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad.

Naomi Craine is a freight conductor and member of SMART-TD. Candace Wagner contributed to this article.

Peace protesters

Continued from page 3
the Road to Workers Power, also by Barnes. He pointed to the book’s description of the powerful fight by toilers in the South for Radical Reconstruction governments after the overthrow of slavery in the Second American Revolution — the Civil War. Cotton described the accomplishments of those governments and their overthrow by the ruling capitalist class. Stebb got the book and a subscription to the *Militant*.

“We want the U.S. to withdraw its forces from Korea,” Soobok Kim told the *Militant*. He was part of a contingent of Koreans on the march. “Last Monday the U.S. began Freedom Shield military exercises with South Korea, including B-1 bombers.” Washington’s provocative actions carry a constant threat of war on the Korean Peninsula. These exercises are the largest in five years.

Two Russians opposed to Moscow’s invasion also joined the march. Eleven subscriptions to the *Militant* and 18 books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries were sold from our table. It was a good place to meet young people looking for a working-class road forward.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Los Angeles school workers, teachers rally for new contract

LOS ANGELES — Thousands of public school workers held a spirited rally here March 15 outside City Hall to demand the Los Angeles Unified School District negotiate a new contract. The rally was organized by Service Employees International Union Local 99, with some 30,000 members, including bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria and other food service workers, and the 35,000-member-strong United Teachers Los Angeles.

Local 99 members are demanding a 30% pay raise in addition to \$2 an hour more for workers in the lowest wage grades.

“It’s important the teachers are here with us,” Dana Wallace, a food service worker who has labored for the Los Angeles school district off and on since the 1990s, told the *Militant*. “We want a big raise, not a little bitty one. We can’t really afford to go on strike and I think the current board is trying to wait us out.”

United Teachers Los Angeles is seeking a 20% raise over two years, starting with the 2022-23 school year. Negotiations began last May. Another key issue is for smaller class sizes. “We need a raise at least to match inflation,” said David Estuaran, chapter chair for the union at his school in South Central L.A. “Teachers are showing solidarity with other school workers in SEIU. School officials treat them like dirt. Many are part time and have no benefits.”

Local 99 leaders told the rally the union will hold a three-day strike March 21-23. UTLA has pledged to honor the picket lines.

— Bill Arth

Workers rally for a union at Amazon Air Hub in Kentucky

FLORENCE, Ky. — “Who has the power? We have the power! What kind of power? Union power!” was one of the main chants by some 65 union supporters rallying March 18 outside the large and growing Amazon Air Hub at Northern Kentucky CVG Airport. They were joined by 20 Amazon workers who marched out of the parking lot

after their shift.

Other Amazon workers on their way to or from work blew their horns in support, as did drivers on the street. An Amazon Prime truck driver laid on the horn and another driver shouted, “Iron Workers 44 supports you!”

Griffin Ritze, a worker at the airfreight hub and one of the union organizers, spoke to the media at the rally, as did Chris Smalls, president of the Amazon Labor Union at the JFK8 Amazon Fulfillment Center in Staten Island, N.Y.

Amazon has warned workers not to speak to any “third party,” by which they mean the union organizers. One worker said, “We’re not a ‘third party,’ we’re the workers. We load the planes and sort the items. Management doesn’t make the place work. We do.”

The demands of the union supporters are for a \$30-an-hour starting wage, 180 hours of paid time off annually and union representation at disciplinary meetings.

“We’re working to live, not living to work,” Ritze said. “This is going to be a good union job with a fighting union.”

He said this is what workers call the “firing season.” After the holiday rush Amazon bosses push to trim the workforce. With a fight, they’ve won some jobs back. “We have to act like a union before we can win the union.”

Union organizers have tables set up outside the airfreight hub facilities to collect union-authorization cards. The company says they present a safety hazard. “But it’s protected activity like our rally just now,” Ritze said.

Other speakers at the rally included Brian Griffin, executive secretary-treasurer of the Cincinnati AFL-CIO labor council, and Ed Clarke, who was fired from Amazon in January for what many workers believe was his support for the union.

Contributions to the union-organizing effort announced at the rally came from International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 212, Iron Workers Local 44 and Laborers Local 265.

“Support from other unions is crucial,” Ritze said. “The labor movement has to make our struggle their struggle.”



Militant/Jan Gangel

Los Angeles public school workers, supporters rallied by City Hall March 15 to demand new contract with pay raise and smaller class sizes. Signs included, “One job should be enough.”

Amazon’s airfreight hub is still expanding. With over 2,000 workers, and at only about a quarter of its projected size, it already handles some 30% of Amazon’s airfreight. Upon completion it’s projected to be the largest airfreight hub in the world.

— Ned Measel

Australia garbage collectors take strike action

SYDNEY — Garbage workers organized by the Transport Workers Union at the Cleanaway depot in Canberra went on a 24-hour strike March 11 pressing for a new contract. Workers here and in Queensland also took strike action in recent weeks, and more strikes are planned as the bosses try to impose 12-hour days, including weekend work.

Cleanaway is the biggest garbage-collection company in Australia, with around 5,000 trucks operating out of more than 200 locations. Contracts are negotiated depot by depot.

At Cleanaway’s Hillsdale depot servicing the City of Sydney council — Sydney’s downtown and nearby residential districts — workers carried out four 24-hour strikes in January and February. Having received no pay rise for two years, they say they now

get some 4 Australian dollars (\$2.68) an hour less than workers at other depots in the city. They are also fighting company demands to eliminate overtime pay while extending the normal workday from eight to 12 hours, and on weekend work as well.

After Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore declared she had spoken with Cleanaway and expected the dispute to be resolved quickly, the Transport Workers Union organized a rally of Hillsdale workers outside Sydney Town Hall Feb. 14. Richard Olsen, New South Wales state union secretary, explained that the contract with Cleanaway had expired last June and the company refused to negotiate. The contract they were trying to impose would cut a worker’s pay by “hundreds of dollars a week,” he said, adding that “workers are threatened with dismissal” if they speak out.

The Transport Workers Union says that the Hillsdale depot is seriously understaffed. Despite more overtime hours being worked and the company using subcontractors, garbage collection in the City of Sydney council area has been affected for months.

— Bob Aiken

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 6, 1998

NEW YORK — “The question of women is permanently on the agenda of the Cuban revolution,” stated Mirtha Hormilla, a member of the permanent mission of Cuba to the United Nations, at an event on March 21 titled “Women In Cuba Today.”

“The revolutionary government has worked to guarantee equal opportunities for women’s participation,” Hormilla explained. “No woman doubts that she has equal rights to men.”

Economically and socially, women in Cuba have gained as much ground in 40 years as it took women in the U.S. 150 years to cover, Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, said. This was possible only because a socialist revolution eliminated the economic foundations of women’s oppression. The Cuban revolution shows us that socialist revolution is possible, and that women’s liberation is possible, she said. “The rest is up to us.”



April 6, 1973

Working people throughout the country are boiling mad over the outrageous food prices we’re forced to pay. The Democratic and Republican parties keep promising action to fight inflation. But these politicians are interested in protecting the right of the capitalists to make a profit. They don’t care about the right of working people to a decent standard of living.

The top labor leaders haven’t come up with a program to defend the interests of union members and other workers either. They tell us to rely on the Democratic and Republican parties and the capitalist government.

The labor movement needs to defend its own interests in the political arena and to organize its own party. The current food price increases show that production under this system is geared solely to producing profits — not to meeting the needs of working people.



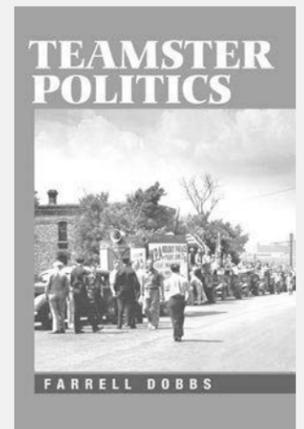
April 5, 1948

The plight of European Jewry and other displaced persons is a tragically real one. 850,000 men, women and children remain in the Displaced Persons camps, facing a future with no perspective or hope.

The Washington statesmen have shed pious tears about these victims of Nazism and the war. And yet these same U.S. leaders have not taken one single practical step to provide asylum for these war refugees. In the House the totally inadequate Stratton Bill, which would admit 400,000 displaced persons over a four-year period has been pigeonholed in committee for nine months.

The time has come for the Jewish people to stop depending on the slippery imperialist statesmen for help. Let them call upon the labor movement to inaugurate an aggressive campaign to let down the immigration bars into the U.S. and permit the entry of the Displaced Persons.

Invaluable 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
Teamster Power
Teamster Bureaucracy
 \$16 each or all four for \$50
pathfinderpress.com

Back Ukraine sovereignty! Moscow out now!

Continued from front page

in the city heroically defended the besieged Azovstal steelworks, holding out for 83 days and winning support from working people around the world. Putin “arrived in the night like a thief,” the Ukrainian Defense Ministry said, to a pristinely cleaned-up area. He kept hidden from Russian audiences the scars of destruction throughout the city.

He returned to Moscow to host Chinese President Xi Jinping March 20-22. The Chinese and Russian presidents sought closer ties, despite their conflicting national interests. Moscow has been weakened in the course of its so-far futile attempt to obliterate Ukraine. It is looking for greater aid from Beijing, which has helped capitalists in Russia offset the impact of some of Washington’s sanctions and provided political cover for the invasion.

As Beijing advances its own interests, it is increasing its leverage over the Russian rulers and will extract a growing political and economic price from Moscow, as it becomes increasingly dependent on the Chinese government. This is part of the shifts in political, economic and military alliances worldwide that are resulting from Moscow’s invasion.

At the same time, Xi is posturing as “neutral” in the war and as a mediator who could broker an end to the conflict. However, his plan contains no pullback of Russian forces from Ukraine. He hopes to maintain relations with capitalist powers in Europe, where there are important markets for Chinese exports.

Tensions between Washington and Moscow spiked when Russian warplanes forced down a U.S. spy drone over the Black Sea March 14, destroying it. Two fighter planes buzzed the pilotless aircraft, dumping jet fuel on it before one clipped its propeller blade. Russian forces are now trying to bring some of the debris up to study.

Russian conscripts from Irkutsk in Siberia complained in a March 7 video appeal to Putin that they were “being

sent to the slaughter.” Thousands have been killed in human wave attacks on Bakhmut in recent weeks, far outweighing losses by Ukrainian forces.

“This amount of Russian losses hasn’t caused an explosion in Russian society yet, but it resonates a lot inside the Russian army,” Yevhen Dykyi, a Ukrainian war veteran, told a TV show. “And the longer these crazy losses — unjustified in the opinion of lower- and middle-rank soldiers — go on, the lower the morale of the Russian army will be at the time of our counteroffensive.”

By contrast, Ukrainian troops are motivated to defend their country’s sovereignty in the face of Moscow’s destructive assaults. At the same time, Ukraine is a capitalist country whose government lets the greatest hardships fall on working people.

Production in Ukraine has been crippled by the war, creating a serious crisis. Workers face rising prices for food and other essentials, alongside irregular wage payments.

Thousands of businesses have been shut down, moved or been destroyed. On top of that the Ukrainian government just cut salaries for non-frontline military personnel. Some soldiers have received a fraction of their monthly pay.

The state military health care system is overwhelmed by an influx of wounded troops. Although soldiers receive free hospital care, they have to pay for follow-up private medical treatment. Volunteers raise funds to help the injured make payments.

‘Russia is not Putin’

“I hear the voices of Russia” is the title of a series of artworks created by Alisa Gorshenina in Nizhny Tagil, a city in the Urals. One piece repeats the phrase, “We are against the war” in different languages.

“Russia is a multinational country, and I noticed that people had started to speak out against the war in their native languages,” she told the Mos-

cow Times. A fifth of Russia’s population of 144 million are from over 160 ethnicities other than Russian. The Russian army’s foot soldiers come disproportionately from poorer regions like Buryatia and Dagestan and suffer high casualty rates in Ukraine. This spurs protests in these areas.

Hundreds have been dragged before Russian courts charged with the “crime” of spreading “fake news” about the war.

Dmitry Ivanov was sentenced to over eight years in prison March 7. He was accused of “political hatred” for posting online news about Moscow’s deadly attacks on Ukrainian civilians.

The day of the verdict, his supporters packed the courtroom. Ivanov expressed solidarity with fellow political prisoners and asked his supporters to write them letters and to attend their trials.

“Russia is not Putin. Tens of millions of Russians are against this criminal



Cape on artist Alisa Gorshenina in the Urals region of Russia says “No to war” in more than a dozen of the languages spoken across the huge country. “Russia is a multinational country, and I noticed that people had started to speak out against the war in their native languages,” she said.

war,” he said. He noted that many have relatives in Ukraine. “This is a dark moment of our history, but the darkest moment always comes before dawn.”

Association of the Blind draws interest at Havana book fair

BY HARVEY MCARTHUR AND RÓGER CALERO

HAVANA — One of the most interesting and lively stands at this year’s Havana International Book Fair, held in February, was organized by Cuba’s National Association of the Blind (ANCI).

The association regularly has a stand here, at Cuba’s largest cultural festival. This year they featured a daily program designed to promote participation of their members and families in cultural, sports and productive activities.

Every morning of the 10-day fair, several dozen people took a bus organized by ANCI up to the historic San Carlos de La Cabaña fortress, where dozens of publishers had book displays. They crowded in front of the stand, eager to take part in that day’s program and check out books in Braille or digital book files to take home. Each day’s session focused on a different topic, such as youth, older adults, sports, computer technology and the history and geography of Colombia, this year’s country of honor.

“Since our founding in 1975, we have encouraged participation by our members in cultural activity and society in general,” said Carlos Ramírez, ANCI’s director of culture and education, as he welcomed a group of visitors. “The quality of a person’s life and their freedom depend on the culture they’ve acquired, and that needs to be cultivated.”

Since January 1959, when working people here took power and began to trans-

form society, Ramírez told the *Militant*, “the social programs of the revolution have included not only the blind but all persons with disabilities.”

ANCI leaders proudly described how people with disabilities, backed by Cuba’s revolutionary leadership, fought to be included in the revolutionary transformations wrought in those early years, breaking down prejudices and other barriers in the process. They were part of the 1959 land reform. They took part in the 1961 mass mobilization of volunteer teachers that wiped out illiteracy in Cuba, as well as subsequent literacy efforts specifically for the blind. They joined in the efforts to create jobs for all.

One program ANCI put on highlighted Cuba’s participation in the international Paralympic Games. The discussion was led by Enrique Cepeda, a Paralympic gold medal winner. He described how since the 1992 Barcelona games Cuban athletes with disabilities have won 91 Paralympic medals, ranking third in Latin America after Brazil and Mexico.

“In Cuba everyone has the right to participate in sports” and steps are taken to make that a reality, Cepeda said. Local and national championships are organized to select athletes to compete in the Paralympics.

In the last year especially, however, shortages of fuel and other essentials, exacerbated by Washington’s economic embargo, have made it harder for athletes to travel to compete in different regions of the island.

Confronting U.S. embargo obstacles

“We want to develop wheelchair basketball and baseball for the blind,” said Cepeda. “But these require special wheelchairs and other equipment made with U.S. components” that Cuba can’t buy because of the sanctions. “Nor

End US economic war on Cuba!

Continued from front page

move Cuba from its spurious “State Sponsors of Terrorism” list and end all its economic and travel sanctions against the Cuban people and their government.

Over 200 people attended the March 11-12 conference, held at Fordham University Law School here. Others tuned in online from other cities.

Among the special guests at the gathering were members of the Cuban delegation participating in the annual session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Several of them spoke in the main sessions and panels at the conference, which also heard greetings from Cuba’s ambassador to the U.N., Pedro Luis Pedrosa, and a recorded message from Cuba’s ambassador to the U.S., Lianys Torres.

The opening conference session included presentations on prospects for normalization of U.S.-Cuba relations and efforts to remove Cuba from Washington’s “State Sponsors of Terrorism” list. It was followed by multiple concurrent panels.

Cuba’s deputy ambassador to the U.N., Yuri Gala, spoke on a panel titled “Cuba and the African Diaspora.” He highlighted Cuba’s history of internationalist combat and medical missions in Africa.

Hernández, the FMC’s director of international relations, and Nancy Valiente, president of the National Union of Cuban Jurists in Matanzas province, addressed a panel on “Women’s Rights in Cuba Today.”

Other panels covered subjects from “Cuba and the Labor Movement” to “Resolutions and Legislative Outreach.”

Joining other panelists on “Youth and Cuba Solidarity,” Gabby Prosser, of the Socialist Workers Party in Minneapolis, spoke about her recent visit to Cuba and discussions with leaders of the food workers union there. She contrasted the unsafe conditions she and her co-workers face at an industrial bakery with the control Cuban workers have over safety conditions on the job, a by-product of Cuba’s socialist revolution.

Cuban resistance to U.S. embargo

Washington’s economic war against the people of Cuba affects every aspect of economic and social life there, explained Noemí Rabaza, vice president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), in remarks to the opening session. Hundreds of measures designed to cut off all sources of revenue to the Cuban government “impact wages, the availability of food and medicine, electrical service, international financial transactions, industry, construction, services, trade, investment, health and education,” she said.

“The inclusion of Cuba on the arbitrary U.S. list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism,” Rabaza noted, subjects foreign companies and banks to heavy sanctions and thus “prevents access to financing, credit and new investments.”

“Despite the enormous efforts of our government,” FMC leader Hernández told the audience at the rally, “no Cuban family escapes the effects of these inhumane U.S. policies.” Shortages and high prices for food and other essentials “come down especially hard on women,” who shoulder the bulk of responsibility for the care of children and elderly relatives.

Washington is also waging “an intense campaign of political interference in our domestic affairs,” Hernández said. “The purpose is to create political and social instability amid economic hardships created by the U.S. government itself.”

Cubans, she said, are responding



March 11 rally at Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Center in Harlem was part of two-day U.S.-Cuba Normalization Conference to build fight to end Washington’s punishing embargo.

with “creative resistance,” using existing resources to solve problems in ways that reinforce solidarity. As part of a National Program for the Advancement of Women, the FMC is helping lead initiatives from setting up child care centers in workplaces to building homes at no cost for single mothers with three or more children.

Also speaking at the rally, Leima Martínez, ICAP’s director for North America, underscored that the event was taking place at the historic site where Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965. That same year, she noted, Cuban volunteers under the command of Ernesto Che Guevara fought alongside liberation fighters in the Congo. Malcolm had welcomed Fidel Castro to Harlem five years earlier.

“Fidel always reminded us that our people come from Africa and we have a debt to the peoples of that continent,” Martínez said.

Example of Cuba’s revolution

Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, introduced the Cuban delegation at the rally. “The importance of the example of the Cuban Revolution and the work of the FMC over 60-plus years, registered in historic strides toward women’s emancipation, would be hard to exaggerate,” she said.

“The steps necessary to advance women’s participation in the revolution — from the campaign to wipe out illiteracy, to the establishment of child care centers, electrification of the countryside, universal health care, and jobs — have at every stage been led by the revolution’s central leadership starting with Fidel,” Waters said.

Many nurses don’t know much about the Cuban Revolution or they only know what they hear from the U.S. government, she said. “But the conditions they work under here change their attitudes. And visiting Cuba opens their eyes to other possibilities.” Those worsening conditions, she added, led 7,000 nurses at New York hospitals to wage a successful three-day strike in January demanding better staffing and higher pay.

The conference concluded with a session that discussed and adopted an action plan encompassing the activities of diverse solidarity groups across North America. These range from brigades and delegations to Cuba to pushing local city councils to adopt resolutions against the embargo, to car caravans and other public protests against the U.S. economic war on Cuba.



Solimar Ortiz from the Cuba Solidarity Committee in Puerto Rico explained how Cuba’s socialist revolution is a powerful example for those fighting U.S. colonial rule.



Osmayda Hernández of Federation of Cuban Women said U.S. rulers’ aim is to “create political and social instability amid hardships” by 64-year-long economic war on Cuba.

SPECIAL OFFER FOR MILITANT SUBSCRIBERS

Books workers need today

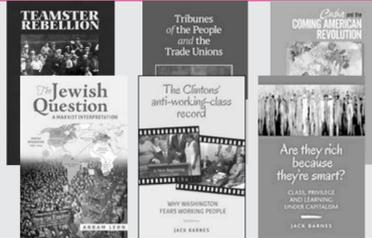
About building the only kind of party worthy of the name “revolutionary”

20% OFF ALL OTHER PATHFINDER TITLES



ALL 5 BOOKS ABOVE FOR \$40 WITH A MILITANT SUBSCRIPTION

- Teamster Rebellion / \$10
- The Jewish Question / \$12
- Tribunes of the People & the Trade Unions / \$7
- The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record / \$5
- Cuba and the Coming American Revolution / \$5
- Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? / \$5



SEE DISTRIBUTORS ON PAGE 8 OR VISIT PATHFINDERPRESS.COM

Road forward for farmers today

Continued from front page

U.S. Department of Agriculture for a long history of discrimination in loans and services. Many farmers were disappointed with the ruling because it allowed the government to avoid a trial in open court.

The event was organized by Tracy McCurdy, executive director of the Black Belt Justice Center, a nonprofit advocacy group for Black farmers; Lawrence Lucas, president of the USDA Coalition of Minority Employees, which joined many of the protests by Black farmers in the 1990s and had its own discrimination complaints against the USDA; and Lloyd Wright, the USDA's director of civil rights in 1997-98.

Among the signs at the rally were "No check, no vote," "We can no longer support the Democratic Party under these conditions," and "No more auction block." They also called for the ouster of Thomas Vilsack, secretary of agriculture in Joseph Biden's administration.

The Socialist Workers Party, which has worked with a number of the farmers gathered here in opposing farm foreclosures and discrimination over decades, joined the activities to support the farmers. They brought a Feb. 21 SWP National Campaign statement by Ellie García, the party's 2022 candidate for Senate from California, and carried placards reading, "Build an alliance of workers and farmers!"

The questions participants discussed over the two days are crucial for the line of march forward for all working people.

A delegation of 38 farmers and their supporters met with Senators Cory Booker from New Jersey and Elizabeth Warren from Massachusetts to discuss the recently introduced Justice for Black Farmers Act.

This bill was the result of recent developments. The Biden administration included payments to "socially disadvantaged" farmers to account for past government discrimination in his March 11, 2021, \$1.9 trillion stimulus package. But after a legal challenge by well-funded conservative groups on behalf of Caucasian farmers saying they also deserved help, the program was dropped.

Skepticism about politicians

Many farmers here expressed skepticism about the usefulness of the meetings with elected officials. "We've done this way too long," said Robert Binion, from Clanton, Alabama, who had taken part in meeting with Booker and Warren. "The USDA has been doing wrong to farmers — Black and white — for years.

"Now they want us to wait and be patient for nine more months? Why?"

Binion also questioned why the U.S. government gives billions to Ukraine and nothing to Black farmers. "The U.S. government is only looking out for its interests," Atlanta SWP member Sam Manuel said. "But it's a trap to counterpose the interests of workers and farmers in the U.S. to workers and farmers in Ukraine fighting the Russian invasion."

At the opening dinner, García talked with Karla Bates, whose parents, Bernard and Ava Bates, lost their Nicodemus, Kansas, farm in 1988, and with Louisiana farmers Dexter Davis and Alfred and Edith Gross.

García met the Bates family at their farm foreclosure protest in 1983. Darrell Ringer, a Caucasian farmer, had organized the protest. In the 1980s the So-

cialist Workers Party joined with trade unionists and farmers who were organizing meetings, rallies and discussions to unite workers and farmers.

"We need an alliance of workers and farmers," García said, "not the politicians of the two parties of the capitalist class. There are different classes of farmers, and our fights are class against class. We need a labor party that can fight for the interests of workers and farmers."

She pointed to strikes by bakery union workers, union miners and rail workers as opportunities to build solidarity to advance such an alliance. "Being divided — worker against farmer, Black against Caucasian — only benefits our common oppressor, the capitalist class."

"It used to be like that," Edith Gross commented. "Everyone helping each other, now the white farmers are over there and we're over here."

Over breakfast the next morning Gross told García, "I was thinking all night about what you said about the unions and workers and the divisions. How come they came for the Black farmer first, before any other farmer? But then I thought, it is not a 'me' thing, it's an 'us' thing. All farmers need to take caution, pay attention to each other's struggles."

Cuba's revolution and farmers

García gave Curley Jackson, a 73-year-old tree farmer from Wilmar, Arkansas, a copy of greetings farmers in the U.S. — including two of the farmer protesters there, Willie Head and Eddie Slaughter — sent to the National Association of Small Farmers in Cuba in May. Jackson was surprised to hear that titles to their land had been given to tens of thousands of farmers during Cuba's agrarian reform in 1959 and how land and industry there were nationalized. "I have never heard of that!" he said.

García said Cuban workers and farmers had taken political power, had formed their own government, a workers and farmers government, and nationalized the land, ending the rents and mortgages system. They distributed land to all peasants who wanted to farm. She showed him a copy of *New International* no. 4, which features articles on the crisis facing U.S. farmers and on Cuba's agrarian reform.

"How do I get this book? I want to

Disabled workers force regime in Iran to pay up



Disabled People's Campaign

Workers with disabilities in Iran won a victory this month when the government finally deposited funds in the bank for their welfare payments and supplies, as well as what it owed to rehabilitation centers, including for physical therapy and wages for health care workers.

The victory comes after a series of protests since January organized by the Disabled People's Campaign, which was formed in 2016. They were joined by their families and health care workers, in Tehran (above) and other cities. The actions were organized when, as the end of the fiscal year neared, the government had only paid 50% of the funds allocated for the disabled.

After the protests began the government agreed to pay the arrears by March 18, but the official Iranian Labour News Agency reported that with the Iranian "New Year two days away, the wages have not been received."

The Disabled People's Campaign held a march that same day of dozens, led by three people in wheelchairs, which culminated in a sit-in in front of the government Program and Budget Office in Tehran. Government officials invited leaders of the protest inside. After a heated exchange, the protesters were promised payments would be made right away.

On March 20 the Disabled People's Campaign said the funds had been deposited.

This fight for the rights of disabled people takes place in the wake of the "Women, life, freedom" protests that broke out last year when Zhina Amini died after she had been arrested by the hated "morality" police and amid a deepening capitalist economic and social crisis.

The same day the funds for the disabled were deposited the government's Supreme Labor Council approved a 27% increase in the minimum wage. This is less than the official annual inflation rate of 40%. Most sources say the real rate is 57%.

— SETH GALINSKY

know more about the land titles. Why don't I know about this?" he said.

Dexter Davis farms 1,000 acres of corn and soybeans in Soudheimer, Louisiana. In 2002 Davis and farmers from Georgia, Texas and Alabama organized a protest at the USDA office in Louisiana against government refusal to approve loans and other services to Black farmers. About 100 farmers participated.

"After that protest I couldn't get a loan

from the USDA either," Davis said.

Three years later Davis was arrested on frame-up charges, which he fought successfully. But the time and resources taken to fight the false charges, on top of the USDA denying him a loan, led to his losing a lot of his farm. He said that all the land he purchased in rebuilding the farm came from Caucasian farmers.

Davis said he disagreed with the term

Continued on page 9

IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find distributors of the *Militant*, *New International*, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: Oakland: 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Zip: 94621. Tel: (510) 686-1351. Email: swpoak@sbcglobal.net **Los Angeles:** 2826 S. Vermont. Suite 1. Zip: 90007. Tel: (323) 643-4968. Email: swpla@att.net

FLORIDA: Miami: 5711 NW 7th Ave. Unit B. Zip: 33127. Tel: (305) 929-8966. Email: swpmiami@icloud.com

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 777 Cleveland Ave. SW Suite 103. Zip: 30315. Tel: (678) 528-7828. Email: swpatlanta@fastmail.com

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 1858 W. Cermak Road, 2nd floor. Zip: 60608. Tel: (312) 792-6160. Email: SWPChicago@fastmail.fm

MINNESOTA: Minneapolis: 2401 1/2 Central Ave. NE, Unit B. Zip: 55418. Tel: (612) 271-1930. Email: swpminneapolis@gmail.com

NEBRASKA: Lincoln: P.O. Box 6811.

Zip: 68506. Tel: (402) 217-4906. Email: swplincoln@gmail.com

NEW JERSEY: 3600 Bergenline, Suite 205B, Union City. Zip: 07087. Tel: (551) 240-1512. swpnewjersey@gmail.com

NEW YORK: New York: 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (646) 434-8117. Email: newyorkswp@gmail.com

OHIO: Cincinnati: 2300 Montana Ave., Suite 230. Tel: Zip: 45211. (513) 837-1038. Email: swpcincinnati@gmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 2824 Cottman Ave., Suite 16. Zip: 19149. Tel: (215) 708-1270. Email: philaswp@verizon.net **Pittsburgh:** 5907 Penn Ave., Suite 313. Zip: 15206. Tel: (412) 610-2402. Email: swppittsburgh@gmail.com

TEXAS: Dallas-Fort Worth: 6815 Manhattan Blvd., Suite 108 Fort Worth. Zip: 76120. Tel: (817) 899-6720. Email: dfswp@gmail.com

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 7603 Georgia Ave. NW, Suite 300. Zip: 20012. Tel: (202) 536-5080. Email: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 650 S. Orcas St., #120 Zip: 98108. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Email: swpseattle@gmail.com

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: Suite 2, First floor, 275 George St., Liverpool. Postal Address: P.O. Box 73 Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (61) 435-995-604. Email: cl_australia@optusnet.com.au

CANADA

QUEBEC: Montreal: 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. Email: cllcmontreal@fastmail.com

FRANCE

Paris: BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15. Email: militant.paris@gmail.com

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: London: 5 Norman Road (first floor). Seven Sisters. Post code: N15 4ND. Tel: 020-3538 8900. Email: cllondon@fastmail.fm **Manchester:** 329, Royal Exchange Buildings, 3 Old Bank St. Post code: M2 7PE. Tel: (0161) 312-8119. Email: clmanchr@gmail.com

Support workers, farmers in East Palestine!

Workers, farmers and small proprietors in East Palestine are fighting to take control over the cleanup and rebuilding of their region. They need solidarity from your union, fellow workers and from farmers with their struggle. Let them know they're not on their own!

Out-and-out contempt for their lives and livelihoods has marked the response of rail bosses, the government and the army of lawyers who have descended on the Ohio town since the Norfolk Southern toxic train derailment. The poisoning of soil, water and air killed wildlife and threatens residents' long-term health. Many small businesses in the area were forced to shut down.

It falls to the working class, our unions and to working farmers to build the solidarity that's required. An outcry by area residents already forced rail bosses to rip up tracks they hurriedly re-laid in their quest for profit and to remove tons of contaminated soil.

"They thought we'd just take this, but we won't be quiet," East Palestine florist Joy Mascher told the *Militant* March 16.

Every show of support — like the "Jeep invasion" caravan and delivery of farm supplies from Indiana reported in this issue of the *Militant* — reinforces their fight and their determination to continue.

This fight goes hand in hand with efforts by rail workers across the country to fight to take control of their schedules, crew size, train lengths and other conditions crucial to their lives and livelihoods out of the hands of rail bosses whose only concern is profits.

The disaster left in the wake of the derailment is a result of the workings of capitalism. It shows that workers' needs cannot be reconciled with those of the bosses, nor the government and political parties that serve them.

The working class not only creates all wealth with our labor, but is also the bearer of solidarity. Doing so is the road to building our unions, acting on the interests workers and farmers share in common and forging the unity we need for the deepening class struggle that lies ahead.

Deepening crisis of capitalist trade, production

Continued from front page

Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

The government bailout of wealthy capitalist depositors has failed to stanch the crisis, which continues to reverberate. Shares in Credit Suisse — one of only 30 banks designated as a "global systematically important bank" by the Financial Stability Board — tumbled by more than 30% to an all-time low March 15.

To try to protect the U.S. banking system from a panic-fueled sell-off, 11 banks, led by JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Citigroup Inc., deposited \$30 billion in First Republic Bank March 16, after its stocks plummeted and S&P Global Ratings downgraded it to "junk" status.

The excerpt below describes the long-term capitalist crisis unfolding today, the resulting social and moral crisis being foisted on workers, farmers and other exploited producers and the SWP's perspective to help organize our class and unions to respond. Copyright © 2023 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Class polarization is accelerating under the impact of US and world capitalism's profit-driven crises of production and trade. As the obscene wealth of the Gateses, Zuckerbergs, Waltons, and Musks grows, to say nothing of the Rockefellers, Mellons, DuPonts, and other longtime ruling-class families, the deterioration of living and job conditions of working people and our families undercuts all pretense that "a rising tide lifts all boats."

In the wake of billions of dollars of pandemic handouts, as well as sharp reductions in capitalist investment, production, and trade, the prices of food, fuel,

housing, health care, and other necessities are rising (boats no, prices yes!). An extended period of stagnation, combining inflation with stagnating capitalist production and hiring, is increasingly likely both in the US and worldwide.

Even the share of workers in the US who are part of the workforce — that is, those who hold down a job or are looking for work — has declined since the late 1990s. For men between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-four, this so-called labor-force participation rate has fallen sharply, from 97 percent in 1960 to 88 percent today. Real wages, adjusted for inflation, have stagnated since the 1970s. The birth rate is falling. Life expectancy in the US has declined to seventy-six years, its lowest level in more than a quarter century.

Exploited farmers face skyrocketing prices for fuel, seed, fertilizer, equipment, and other supplies. At the same time, reaping vast profits from land speculation, capitalists — from the likes of superrich "philanthropist" Bill Gates, to wealthy farmers and agricultural corporations — buy up more and more farm acreage, driving up land prices and preventing small farmers from obtaining enough to be economically viable. Much of this accumulation has occurred under the guise of promoting "environmental protection."

State and federal regulatory bureaus, such as water boards, groundwater agencies, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and various environmental bodies on state and local levels, increasingly tighten restrictions on access to water to the benefit of large-scale capitalist agriculture.

Working farmers are pushed deeper into debt and often off the land entirely. Ranchers have no choice but to sell off all or part of their herds. Available water in rural communities, especially in drought-stricken areas, is vastly depleted, leaving many with wells gone dry. Every opportunity to drive a wedge between exploited producers on the land and working people in cities and small towns is promoted.

Working people the world over confront either comparably declining conditions, or much worse in the oppressed countries of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Neither we nor anyone else can predict the direction of economic trends immediately ahead, or exactly how the class struggle will unfold. Amid inevitable cycles of capitalist business and trade, however, economic upturns will affect the working class, bolstering confidence and readiness to struggle. We've seen examples of this fact in the post-pandemic strikes and union struggles in the US, as we did during slumps and recoveries in the Great Depression of the 1930s.

What we do know is that whatever happens in capitalist economic and social life and the class struggle, our political course and program remain unchanged. Through building the unions and our conduct as unionists together with all other union members, we will respond to and advance the interests of our class and all the exploited.

Farmers' road forward

Continued from page 8

"socially disadvantaged" farmers. "That's a term the USDA put on us," he said. "It's to make you feel inadequate. Like you need help."

Davis added that he also disagreed with the way the government claims to be helping Black farmers. "We don't need separate pools of money for 'socially disadvantaged' farmers, Black farmers over here, Hispanic farmers over there, Native American farmers over here. That's like taking us back to separate water fountains. We're all just farmers!"

He said he does believe white farmers are better able to get what they need from USDA.

Mack Harmon is a retired farmer and volunteer firefighter, one of some 18 farmers who came to the rally from Alabama. He grew peanuts, watermelons, tomatoes and corn. "All working people need to be united to fight for our rights," he said.

He recalled an incident when he worked at a Curtis Mathis TV assembly plant. He and a group of co-workers went across the street from the plant for lunch. "One of the guys with us was white," he said. They took seats together in the back of the diner. "The waiter came over and told our white co-worker that he had to take a table up front and couldn't eat with us in the back." Harmon said his white co-worker looked the manager in the eye and said, "Either we all eat together, or I can't eat here. That was in the '60s!"

At the rally, Muhammad Robbalaa, a farmer from Fort Coffee, Oklahoma, pointed to the common history of struggle between Blacks and Native Americans. "Taking of the land of Native Americans and Blacks happened jointly in Oklahoma," he said. Many Black freedmen and escaped slaves were living among the Seminoles who had been forcibly removed from Florida. "So, when land was taken from the Seminoles in Oklahoma it was also taken from Blacks.

"White farmers are also losing land to debts and speculators," Robbalaa said. Asked how many farmers are left in his area, he said, "Three families," all Black. "We're all in this together and we all need to fight together."

After two days of action and discussion, a number of the farmers and SWP members exchanged contact information to keep in touch through calls, email and future farm visits to continue the discussion started here.

Blind workers in Cuba

Continued from page 7

leading to it.

On another day, ANCI leaders invited volunteers from the nearby Pathfinder stand to come over and explain the work of socialists in the U.S. to make Pathfinder books available in digital form so working people, blind and sighted alike, can read and discuss the same books as part of building a revolutionary workers movement.

We also told ANCI members about a recent fight in the U.S. by blind workers to win back their jobs at Amazon, which fired them claiming they couldn't do the work. The National Federation of the Blind defended the workers, and finally won an agreement by Amazon to provide the job conditions they needed and to rehire them.

"We know these are not technical problems," Ramirez said. In capitalist countries, bosses have the material resources but their bottom line is profits. "The problem is their view that people with disabilities are not useful to society."

"Our view is that the disabilities are created by the environment," said Jorge Luis Cabrera, ANCI's public relations representative. "If job conditions are adjusted to the needs of the blind person, we are capable of doing the work."

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the 'Militant' and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at www.themilitant.com

LETTERS

'I appreciate this book'

From the Dominican Republic and on behalf of the Sugarcane Workers Union UTC, we send our appreciation for the writings by George Novack in *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity*. We were pleased to read George Novack's biography (1905-92) and about his joining the Socialist Workers Party in the United States.

His writings about how humanity rose to civilization — as well as his analysis of the fundamental course of U.S. history — is of great importance, and in our view, essential to understand the present and future development of humanity, of the working class, and its future socialist system. It's a pleasure to read and study his works because they make clear our political responsibility and provide a genuine understanding of the past, present, and future struggles of the working class and its vanguard, which is the party.

Honor and glory to George Novack.

Jesús Núñez

Dominican Republic