

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Conflicts, shifting alliances mark politics in the Middle East

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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‘Militant,’ book, fund campaigns go over the top!

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The international campaign to expand the reach of the *Militant*, sell books by Socialist Workers Party leaders and other revolutionaries, and raise needed funds for the paper has been a big success. Members of the SWP and Com-

WELCOME NEW READERS!
— see page 9

munist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the U.K. have sent the campaign over the top, winning 1,451 new readers to the *Militant*, and selling 1,817 books. In addition \$165,682 was raised for the Militant Fighting Fund. The eight-week campaign ended May 16.

Campaigners spoke to thousands of workers and farmers on their doorsteps in cities and rural areas, taking advantage of the political openings resulting from the beginnings of a rise in confidence and combativeness of working

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What is road forward for the working class in 2024 election?

BY TERRY EVANS

The 2024 presidential campaign is well underway, with Donald Trump, Joseph Biden, Ron DeSantis, Nikki Haley, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and more announced or just running. Biden threw his hat in the ring via video, evidently not wanting to make any gaffes in person.

There is more disdain for the Democrats and Republicans, and the candidates they’re offering, than in years. That won’t stop the capitalist rulers and their media from going all-out to convince working people we should hold our nose and pick a “lesser evil” from their two main parties.

The campaign takes place as the ruling capitalist families face a deepening economic crisis of their system as prices continue to rise at the same time production and trade begins to contract. Their

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Rail workers build support for people of East Palestine

Residents seek control over cleanup, health care



Militant/David Ferguson

Michelle and Dave Shaffer talk with SWP member Kaitlin Estill in East Palestine, Ohio, April 30. He said rail disaster proves “we can’t trust politicians, the government or Norfolk Southern.”

BY TONY LANE

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio — In an ongoing series of meetings here hosted by the Environmental Protection Agency, working people, farmers and small-business people continue to express their anger and distrust at claims being made by the railroad and government agencies. Their focus is on looking for ways to exert more control over cleanup operations and health care services following the Feb. 3 Norfolk Southern derailment and chemical burn-off that sent toxic chemicals into the air, land and waters here.

Rail unions and officials are speaking out in solidarity, explaining how the

bosses’ drive for profits is responsible for this disaster and how this and a growing number of other derailments threaten both rail workers and communities the railroads run through. The rail bosses have slashed the number of workers,

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11,500 Writers Guild union members strike, deserve widespread solidarity



Militant/Deborah Liatos

Hundreds of Writers Guild of America strikers and their supporters picket in front of Netflix in Los Angeles May 11. Writers are being forced to work longer hours for less pay.

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

LOS ANGELES — After 98% of the union’s members voted to strike, the 11,500-strong Writers Guild of America union took to the picket line here, in New York and in other cities May 2.

The union is demanding wage increases and higher bosses’ contributions to the WGA’s health and pension plans. The union also demands a crackdown on new industry practices that have cut back writers’ pay, such as the so-called mini-rooms where writers are hired to draft shows before they’re sold, replacing what had been the industry practice of making pilot episodes.

Strikers on the picket line in front of Netflix here May 11 told the *Militant* the bosses’ Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers have used the rapidly multiplying introduction of streaming programs on television that replace broadcast TV to attack how writers are compensated. Writers work longer hours for less pay and can’t rely on residuals — income from program reruns — they used to get.

“Pay discrepancy between streaming and broadcast is humongous,” Eli Henry said. He’s been an actor in Canada and the U.S. for 20 years and is a member

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Gov’t, bosses seek to use border crisis to stoke divisions among workers

BY JANET POST

Along the Mexican border over 10,000 immigrant workers per day, including many families, attempted to cross into the U.S. to seek asylum the week before the end of Washington’s COVID-era border policy known as Title 42. It expired May 12.

That policy entitled the government to immediately deport workers without papers crossing the border. It suspended laws permitting asylum-seekers to stay in the country while their claims were processed. Title 42 was initiated by Donald Trump’s administration and expanded under President Joseph Biden.

Since the start of the pandemic, more than 2.6 million workers have been sent back to Mexico or other

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Moscow driven back in Bakhmut, support Ukraine independence!

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Moscow’s troops have been pushed back by Ukrainian forces in Bakhmut, the primary target of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s winter offensive. The retreat was a blow to Putin who predicted control of the city by May 9, a

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Conflicts, shifting alliances mark politics in Middle East

BY SETH GALINSKY

After five days of trading missile fire, the Israeli government and Gaza-based Islamic Jihad agreed to a cease-fire May 13. The latest round of fighting — the 15th major clash between the Israeli army and Islamist militias in Gaza since 2008 — began May 9 after Islamic Jihad launched over 100 missiles at civilian populations in Israel May 2.

Islamic Jihad — which does the bidding of the reactionary regime in Iran — launched the rockets after Khader Adnan, one of its longtime spokesmen, died on the 86th day of a hunger strike in an Israeli prison.

By May 13, Israeli forces had killed six Islamic Jihad leaders and hit 420 targets in Gaza. Hamas officials said 33 people were killed. Over half were members of anti-Israel militias, some were civilians.

All but a handful of the more than 1,400 missiles and mortars Islamic Jihad launched were shot down by Israel’s anti-missile weapons, landed in unpopulated areas or fell short in Gaza. Two people were killed in Israel, one of them a Gaza resident working near the border.

Hamas — which rules Gaza and is the largest and best-armed Islamist group there — stayed out of the conflict. Despite sharing the aim of Islamic Jihad and Tehran to destroy Israel and drive all Jews “from the river to the sea,” Hamas depends on a modus vivendi with the Israeli government to stay in power and is reluctant to directly confront Israel militarily, despite previous clashes, at least for now.

Some 20,000 Gaza residents have permits to work inside Israel, a big source of income in a territory with an official unemployment rate over 45%. With the agreement of Israeli authorities, the Qatar government sends \$8.2 million a month, mostly for Hamas’ administration.

A new escalation would not be popular among most working people in Gaza, who suffer the consequences of every war with Israel and who are chafing under the Hamas regime’s brutal stifling of any dissent.

The latest clash occurs amid shifts taking place in the relations and alliances among rival powers in the region and worldwide, exacerbated by Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

The counterrevolutionary bourgeois-clerical regime in Iran has stepped up its anti-Israel rhetoric in the wake of reestablishing diplomatic relations between Tehran and the government of Saudi Arabia in March. While that accord reflects a weakening of U.S. influence, the Saudi monarchy seeks to remain a U.S. ally while reviving relations with Tehran and seeking to return the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria to Arab League membership.

The Saudi royal family also played a key behind-the-scene role in encouraging the governments of the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kosovo, Morocco and Sudan to establish diplomatic and trade relations with Tel Aviv in 2020.

The 22-member Arab League readmitted the Syrian regime this month. It was expelled in November 2011 after launching a bloody massacre against protests by working people



Majdi Fathi/Tazpit Press Service

Palestinians in Gaza apply for Israel work permits Oct. 6, 2021. Hamas has accord with Israeli gov’t for 20,000 permits. Islamic Jihad missile killed Gazan worker in Israel during recent clash.

demanding democratic rights and the fall of the regime.

Despite funding and arms from the governments of Saudi Arabia, Turkey and others, rival bourgeois opposition forces and Islamist militias were unable to topple Assad, who survived due to aid and military intervention from Moscow and Tehran. The Turkish government took advantage of the civil war to occupy part of Syrian territory and attack Kurdish groups on its border it sees as a threat. The Kurds used the war to establish autonomy in northern Syria and allied with Washington to defeat Islamic State.

3.6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey

More than 300,000 civilians were killed during the war in Syria and 14 million Syrians — out of a prewar population of 23 million — fled their homes. While 6.8 million are “displaced” inside Syria, others left the country, including more than 3.6 million now in Turkey.

Both Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his opponent, Kermal Kilicdaroglu, caught up in a hotly contested presidential election, say they want to send the refugees back. It’s no secret that Washington favors Kilicdaroglu, hoping an opposition victory would spark a shift from Erdogan’s growing relations with Moscow.

Assad has conditions for accepting the refugees’ return — Turkish troops out of northern Syria. The foreign min-

isters of Turkey, Russia, Iran and Syria met in Moscow May 12 to try to reach some agreement.

While Beijing helped “broker” the Saudi-Iran deal — looking for purchase in the area — and Moscow is trying to do the same in easing tensions between the Syrian and Turkish regimes, neither one has the military or economic clout to take the place of U.S. imperialism, still the predominant foreign power in the region. While Washington’s weakened role has increased the jockeying among rival powers, the new diplomatic agreements between the regimes in Iran, Turkey, Beijing, Moscow and Saudi Arabia doesn’t mean they have broader common interests.

Rivals compete in Lebanon

That’s certainly true in Lebanon, where the government reels from crisis to crisis, and the country has been without a president since October.

Tehran wants the next president to be from its close ally, the Shiite-based Hezbollah, the most powerful armed group in the country. Until now an earlier peacekeeping agreement had assigned that post for Maronite Christians. Both the Saudi and U.S. governments object to this change.

Meanwhile, the deep crisis facing working people there continues. In the year leading up to June 2022 food prices soared 332%. And there remain an estimated 1.4 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

THE MILITANT

Fight to end capitalist rulers’ death penalty!

Richard Glossip has had nine execution dates and three last meals while in prison 26 years. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled May 5 to hear his appeal after Oklahoma’s attorney general said trial was plagued by errors. Join the ‘Militant’ to demand end to the death penalty.

AP Photo/Sue Ogrocki

Sister Helen Prejean speaks against death penalty May 4 at Oklahoma Supreme Court.

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Telephone: (212) 244-4899
Fax: (212) 244-4947
E-mail: themilitant@mac.com
Website: www.themilitant.com

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

‘Militant’ campaign over top!

Continued from front page people in the U.S. and worldwide. SWP members have gotten a positive response as they’ve joined picket lines of teachers striking in Los Angeles; at rallies by Teamsters for a new contract with UPS; in discussions with hundreds of participants at book fairs, including in Los Angeles and Berkeley, California; at actions protesting Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine; and at events demanding a halt to the U.S. rulers’ economic war against Cuba’s socialist revolution.

Trucker Caleb Fernandez got a subscription to the *Militant* from SWP members at a drivers’ protest organized by the Truckers Movement for Justice in Washington, D.C. He thanked the *Militant* for covering the action as part of its roundup of May Day events across the country. “That’s a great blurb in a larger article of solidarity and action. I love it,” he wrote to SWP member Arlene Rubinstein, who he’d met at the D.C. rally. The truckers’ group, which Fernandez is a member of, seeks to unite all drivers, whether they are fleet drivers, lease drivers or owner-operators. Fernandez told Rubinstein truckers elsewhere are fighting attacks on their livelihoods by shippers, brokers, truck bosses and government agencies. “Mostly South Asian American drivers are organizing a strike and protest in Greenwood, Indiana,” he said. “They are welcoming all to join. They have reached out in solidarity, so we are spreading the word about the May 17 action. We are building an alliance with Tamexun, a truckers’ group in Mexico, and will join their upcoming action.”

Crisis in health care

In Sherbrooke, Quebec, Eliane St-Germain was attracted to the display of books the Communist League set up

at a May 13 rally of 1,000 public-sector workers demanding higher pay and better working conditions. She works at the university hospital there. “The government is responsible for the crisis in the health care system,” St-Germain told CL campaigner Rosemary Ray. “This is pushing nurses to resign.” “What’s needed is for the working class to break from the parties of the capitalist rulers,” Ray responded. “This is what Félix Vincent Ardea, CL candidate for Parliament, explains. Workers need a labor party based on the unions.” St-Germain bought a *Militant* subscription and *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us* by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark. Communist League campaigners sold three more copies of the book in French.

During the final week of the campaign, party members from Fort Worth, Texas, visited the small town of Cleburne May 11. “We got a good response to the recent article in the *Militant* on the explosion at a dairy in Dimmitt,” said SWP member Alyson Kennedy. “We sold four subscriptions, one to a customer at a local feed store, and two copies of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*.” Kennedy also spoke at a May 13



Militant/Beverly Bernardo “The government is responsible for the crisis in the health care system,” hospital worker Eliane St-Germain, right, told Communist League campaigner Rosemary Ray at protest in Quebec, May 13. St-Germain got *Militant* subscription, *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*.

international workers day event organized by the AFL-CIO in Dallas. “President Biden and Democrats and Republicans in Congress refused to support the rail workers’ unions and ordered them not to strike last fall,” Kennedy told participants. “Working people need a labor party based on the unions. More workers are open to this today.” SWP members sold four subs

and five books at the event. The spring campaigns were an important political preparation for the SWP-hosted International Socialist Educational Conference taking place at Oberlin College in Ohio, June 8-11. To join in campaigning for SWP candidates or find out more about the conference, contact the party branch nearest you listed on page 8.

More Pathfinder books are now up at bookshare.org

BY HARVEY MCARTHUR

Spread the word! Pathfinder’s latest title, *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward*, is now available at www.bookshare.org for workers and others who are blind or face other barriers to reading print books. This book by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark draws from the trade union and broad political work of party members and others who look to the Socialist Workers Party, highlighting opportunities ahead for class-conscious workers. It sets the course of action needed to forge a labor party built on the unions, and a mass proletarian vanguard able to lead the struggle to end capitalist rule, opening a future for humanity. Maurice Peret, from Baltimore, tells the *Militant* he has just finished reading *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us* in Braille with a file downloaded from Bookshare. “Having the book under my fingers most closely replicates the reading experience of a sighted person reading words on a printed page. Reading Braille I have the fewest distractions. I can pause, think about something, back up and run my fingers over the text again and again.” He also reads Pathfinder books on a portable audio reader using DAISY files from Bookshare. “I have a whole library of Pathfinder books in my pocket. This technology really helps reading and

studying these books with others.” “It is extremely beneficial to have Pathfinder books available at Bookshare,” says Dave Perry, a factory worker and union activist from Cincinnati, who is blind. “The information in Pathfinder books is so important, especially for working people. I can download a book and read it on my phone any time or any place.” There are an estimated 7.5 million people with blindness or limited vision in the U.S. Millions of others have dyslexia and other learning or physical challenges that make it difficult for them to read and study print books. So do many millions more around the world. Making Pathfinder titles available in accessible form provides tools to help draw broader layers of working people into discussion, study, social and political protests, and revolutionary working-class activity. Nine other Pathfinder titles are now available as fully-accessible e-books at Bookshare: *The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party*; *Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions*; *The Communist Manifesto*; *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity*; *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?*; *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*; *Teamster Rebellion*; *Socialism and Man in Cuba*; and *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*. An additional 30 titles are available in a text-only format. Bookshare is an online library that makes e-books available to people around the world who, for whatever reason, have trouble reading books and other material in print. These books can be read or listened to on a computer, tablet, smart phone or specialized reading devices. Readers can increase the type size, change the typeface or change the background color — whatever makes it easier to read. They can hear the text read out loud on their computer or phone while they follow it on screen.

These books are also available to download for electronic devices that produce refreshable Braille displays (BRF files), DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) “talking book” files, MP3 audio books and other formats. A team of volunteers is converting more Pathfinder print books into accessible e-book files. The volunteers write descriptions of each photograph, map, graph or other image. They add coding so screen reader and other specialized software can help the reader understand the structure and find their way around in the book. Pagination encoded in the e-book matches the pagination of the print book, to facilitate discussion between those who have either the e-book or the print book. Anyone in the world who needs this service can sign up at www.bookshare.org. There is a small annual fee for most users, with no charge to download individual books. The reader will need to provide Bookshare with certification of the condition that requires access to these books. Readers in some other countries can sign up with local organizations that partner with Bookshare to access books. These include the Royal National Institute of Blind People (rnib.org.uk) in the United Kingdom; CELA — Centre for Equitable Library Access (celalibrary.ca) in Canada; and Vision Australia (visionaustralia.org).

Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, fund						
March 18-May 16 (final chart)						
Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Atlanta	50	54	50	66	\$9,500	\$9,727
Chicago*	100	104	125	134	\$14,000	\$14,547
Cincinnati*	55	56	55	57	\$6,000	\$6,256
Dallas-Fort Worth	60	61	60	66	\$5,000	\$5,409
Lincoln	15	16	15	16	\$500	\$520
Los Angeles*	90	125	110	146	\$16,000	\$16,022
Miami*	45	45	70	112	\$5,500	\$5,775
Minneapolis	70	71	70	86	\$5,500	\$5,651
N. New Jersey	85	88	85	90	\$7,000	\$7,499
New York	100	103	115	128	\$20,500	\$20,715
Oakland	90	94	90	91	\$15,000	\$15,462
Philadelphia*	50	55	60	62	\$6,000	\$6,470
Pittsburgh	45	46	45	47	\$6,000	\$6,586
Seattle	75	78	75	97	\$14,000	\$14,580
Washington	50	53	50	51	\$4,500	\$4,598
Other		102		287		\$3,500
Total U.S.	980	1151	1075	1536	\$135,000	\$143,317
Prisoners	50	83				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	40	46	40	55	\$2,450	\$2,825
Manchester	35	40	40	46	\$1,200	\$1,340
Total U.K.	75	86	80	101	\$3,650	4165
Canada	90	94	90	132	\$12,000	\$12,200
Australia	35	37	35	48	\$6,000	\$6,000
Total	1,230	1,451	1,280	1,817	\$156,650	\$165,682
SHOULD BE	1,350	1,350	1,350	1,350	\$165,000	\$165,000
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Rail workers back East Palestine

Continued from front page

ignored needed maintenance, instituted more and more on-call 12-hour shifts with little time off, and run 200-plus car trains containing hazardous waste.

Militant worker-correspondents Candace Wagner and Tony Lane showed people here the recent Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers — Transportation Division union paper with its headline, “Rail disasters make the nation take notice.” It was featured in the *Militant*.

Mallory Aponick, disaster services coordinator at the First Church of Christ, was in the middle of dispensing a third donated shipment of air purifiers. She told us 500 more units are coming, and “that will take care of everybody who wants one.” As supplies come in, she works with a local agency to “tell people that food has come in, there’s cleaning supplies, get people to come down.”

Aponick said she supports rail workers, that without trains and trucks nothing gets shipped. But, she said, the rail bosses “are making money hand over fist.”

In the “Flowers Straight from the Heart” shop, owner Joy Mascher described the situation people face as the cleanup crews dig up contaminated soil and it gets tracked around town. “It’s a real mess, they have pads on the streets, a lot of dust, sweepers constantly clean-

ing the streets.” She told us that they are now talking about finding more contamination from the area where the toxic vinyl chloride was burned off.

There was a crowd of some 50 residents jammed into the fourth weekly “informational session” held by the EPA May 11 that we went to. At the presentation on cleanup in area streams, Ohio EPA Water Quality Supervisor Bill Zawiski was met with skepticism and challenges.

A contractor — CTEH — is testing the water. “They may be the contractor but who pays them? Norfolk Southern does,” East Palestine resident Jami Wallace said. “How do you expect us to take these results seriously when you are letting the person that did this be the ones that tests it?”

“Step out of your EPA gear and imagine yourself as an East Palestine resident,” Linda Murphy added. “Norfolk Southern has not been transparent, not been accountable and not been honest.”

It is the actions by workers and others here like at this meeting that has won every concession the rail bosses and government agencies have been forced to make. They’re pressing for more facts and more action.

“I know there are concerns that we’re painting a picture that everything is good,” EPA spokesman Mark Durno admitted, “but we recognize there is still



Militant/Tony Lane

About 50 East Palestine residents attended May 11 Environmental Protection Agency “information session” to challenge government, rail bosses, demand more control over cleanup there.

a lot of contamination out there.”

The agency officials confirmed there is still contamination in Leslie Run and Sulphur Creek, the two waterways directly affected by the disaster.

Residents brought up many other questions. Rick Tsai asked why they excavated under the railroad tracks and not the burn pit, and what was going to be done with that.

For the first time, Durno said they have begun to excavate the burn pit, and they “had to go deeper, there was higher levels of contamination.” He admitted a

neighboring ditch was being dug out as well, confirming it was contaminated.

There was also discussion on another Norfolk Southern derailment the night before in nearby New Castle, Pennsylvania. Nine cars in a 216-car train went off the tracks on a rail bridge over the Mahoning River and spilled soybeans and paraffin wax. Authorities say no hazardous material spilled into the water. Because of the length of the train, crossings were blocked for hours in small towns south of the derailment.

Norfolk Southern had told area residents they would run shorter trains there, but the train that derailed in New Castle was over 50 cars longer than the one that polluted East Palestine.

Gov’t, bosses seek to use border crisis to divide workers

Continued from front page

countries. As there was no legal penalty for deportation, many workers tried again. In 2022 there were over 2.3 million illegal border crossings, the highest ever. In cooperation with Washington, the Mexican government apprehended nearly 450,000 additional migrant workers, stopping them from crossing the Rio Grande River that year.

Severino Ismael Martínez Santiago, director of the Pan de Vida shelter in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, told the *Washington Post* many immigrant workers are confused about what the lifting of Title 42 means. They believe that “the doors to the United States will be opened, and they can cross. But that is far from the truth. It will be worse for them.”

In El Paso, Texas, across from Ciudad Juarez, border patrol agents put immigrants in front of two massive gates at the wall on the border. “We just want to pass, but this process is so slow,” Jesus Juarez told the *Post*. Juarez spent a month traveling from Venezuela to reach the door. The agents periodically let in 10-15 people for processing, “but then 100 more arrive,” he said.

“We want to follow the rules, but it’s hard,” said Francisco Ortiz, who came

with his wife and 1-year-old son from Honduras, hoping to work in construction in the U.S. “All I want to do is work and raise my son somewhere where we aren’t afraid of the violence.”

Washington’s new border policy

Under Washington’s new immigration rules, border authorities will automatically deny asylum to most migrant workers who haven’t first applied for asylum in another country along the way. Immigrant workers who reach Mexico can try to schedule an appointment at a U.S. port of entry by using a new cellphone app, CBP One.

Ramon Elias Suarez has been living in a squalid tent camp in Matamoros, Mexico for three months. “He’s tried repeatedly to access the CBP One app, showing a reporter how he’d get a reply that the app needed to be updated. When he pressed the button to do so, it took him to a Google symbol,” the *Post* reported May 12.

The new policy has exemptions for medical emergencies, children traveling alone and for Mexican nationals. And the government will accept up to 30,000 individuals per month from Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba and Haiti, who can stay for two years — *if* they meet a number of requirements, including a U.S. sponsor.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in his press conference, “Let me be clear, our border is not open and will not be open after May 11.” Pointing to the agency’s 24,000 border agents, he said there would be “tougher consequences” for people trying to enter or re-enter the U.S. illegally.

Washington will open regional processing centers starting in Guatemala and Colombia, operated by the International Organization of Migration and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, to review immigration applications there. The U.S. is also scaling up the

number of “removal flights,” including flights to Cuba, which resumed in April.

CNN reported May 12 there are an estimated 155,000 migrants in Mexican shelters or on the streets there. The backload of asylum cases in U.S. immigration courts has topped 820,000, the most ever.

The Associated Builders and Contractors in the U.S. estimates a shortage of half a million construction workers this year. “U.S. executives call for immigration reform to staff manufacturing boom,” read a May 16 headline in the *Financial Times*.

“The goal of immigration policies under capitalism is not to block immigration but to control it — to best meet the demands by the bosses for cheap labor and to reinforce the pariah status of undocumented workers,” Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City Council, told the *Militant*. “This is posed even more sharply today with the declining U.S. birth rate.

“The bosses seek to foster and exploit divisions between immigrant and native-born workers,” he said. “The SWP says the labor movement must fight for amnesty for all undocumented workers currently in the U.S. This is the road to unify the working class and strengthen our ability to fight back against the bosses.

“With the deepening of the worldwide capitalist economic crisis which hits workers in semicolonial countries especially hard, toilers will continue to try to get into the U.S. and other economically developed countries to escape poverty and repression,” Calero said.

“These fellow workers face the same challenges working people in the U.S. do — the need to build a revolutionary working-class leadership wherever they live. To organize independently of the bosses and their political parties, to fight to defend their class interests and to take political power into their own hands.”

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Working-Class Stakes in the Fight for Amnesty. Speaker: Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 27, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Teamster truck drivers protest ABF, TForce and Yellow bosses

SAUK VILLAGE, Ill. — Some 100 Teamsters rallied here May 11 in the parking lot of a huge ABF Freight terminal, 35 miles south of Chicago. The union is in negotiations with two trucking companies, ABF and TForce Freight, and talks will start soon at Yellow trucking. The three companies employ about 40,000 Teamster drivers.

The union's last strike against the trucking bosses was in 1994, when 75,000 Teamsters went out for three weeks, the longest national trucking strike in its history.

John Murphy, Teamsters freight division director and chief negotiator, told the rally the union's goal is to "get everyone into the \$30-an-hour range." He got applause when he added, "If we don't have a contract ratified by the members on June 30, we will be on strike."

The national contract at ABF expires that day. TForce Freight's contract expires a month later.

Yellow Corporation bosses just filed a change-of-operations notice to reorganize work rules and seniority. Their contract doesn't expire until next March. They want to merge their seniority lists and restructure jobs to make truck drivers work on the dock as well as drive. Yellow, which posted a fourth-quarter loss of \$15.5 million, says that these changes are necessary for them to compete with nonunion outfits.

Murphy noted on a member call that the union gave Yellow "literally billions of dollars in wage and pension concessions" in the last contract. Drivers there are paid \$5 an hour less than at ABF.

When COVID-19 hit, the company stopped paying health care or pension contributions for four months, until it got a \$700 million bailout loan from the federal government, he said.

"Bottom line, members: We have given, and given, and given, and this company has not demonstrated that it can do a good job managing itself," Murphy said. "The concessions stand is closed."

"I'm tired of concessions," Darnell Jackson, who picks up loads at ABF, told the *Militant*. "We've taken pay cut after pay cut. Because of that, I make only \$3 an hour more than 17 years ago when I started."

"Wages have to keep up with infla-

tion," said Robert Hunt, another ABF driver. "I voted for a strike. We have to stand together. Some working people don't realize that red and blue don't matter, both the Republicans and Democrats are screwing us."

—Ilona Gersh

1,000 Quebec public workers march for higher wages

SHERBROOKE, Quebec — Some 1,000 public sector workers in Quebec and their supporters marched and rallied here May 13 outside the convention of the Coalition for Quebec's Future (CAQ), the province's governing party. They are demanding better pay, protection from inflation and improved working conditions for 600,000 workers in schools, health and social services, and higher education.

Quebec's Common Front, which includes the Quebec Federation of Labor (FTQ), the Council of National Unions (CSN), and the Alliance of Professional and Technical Health Personnel (APTS), organized the action. Its theme was, "Together as one."

The contracts for government workers expired March 31. The Quebec government has so far offered wage increases of 9% over five years, well below the inflation rate, as well as a 1,000 Canadian dollars (\$742) lump sum payment that isn't rolled into wages.

The Common Front is asking for either a CA\$100 per week increase or the consumer price index plus 2% for the first year of the contracts, whichever is more advantageous to workers, then CPI plus 3% for the second year and CPI plus 4% for the third.

The crowd was loud and angry, as the CAQ government had just proposed giving all members of Quebec's National Assembly a CA\$30,000 raise. Protest organizers set up tables for unionists to make signs on the spot.

Lisa Després, who works as a technician in special education at the Saint-Camille de Cookshire school in the Hauts Cantons, wore boxing gloves to back up her sign, which read, "We're going to fight for the services offered to our children."

Anne Marie Marcinkowska, a medical secretary and CSN member at Montreal Children's Hospital, told the *Militant* she was so angry at the government



Militant/Katy LeRougetel

Over 1,000 public employees and supporters marched in Quebec May 13 demanding contracts with better pay, working conditions for 600,000 workers in schools, health, social services.

"offering peanuts to its workers that I decided to come out to my first demonstration in 29 years."

—Beverly Bernardo

Meatpackers fight for union at two plants in southeast Iowa

COLUMBUS JUNCTION, Iowa — Workers at the Tyson Foods pork processing plant here and at West Liberty Foods, owned by Iowa Turkey Cooperatives, have begun union organizing drives with United Food and Commercial Workers union Local 431. The 1,400 workers at Tyson cut up 10,000 hogs a day. There are 600 workers at the turkey plant.

Socialist Workers Party members went to the Tyson plant at a shift change May 6 to discuss what workers there face. We met workers from Mexico and other Latin American countries, and from Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Myanmar. While many indicated they support the union, including a few who said they had signed cards, most didn't want to speak about the drive. Some said they do not support the union.

We also knocked on doors in neighborhoods near the plant. While no worker wanted to be quoted for fear of retaliation by the bosses, many described speedup, too few people on the production lines, months of forced Saturday overtime and discrimination toward immigrants by the bosses. There are anti-union signs posted in the plant.

In 2021, when immigrants in the area

were denied pandemic relief aid, some workers organized with the community-based group Escucha Mi Voz (Hear My Voice). They succeeded in winning benefits. This has given confidence to the effort to organize a union with the help of the UFCW and Escucha Mi Voz.

Tyson is the second-largest meatpacker in the world and has the highest injury rate of all meatpacking companies in the U.S.

—Helen Meyers

Nurses in UK fight over pay and conditions in gov't health system

LONDON — Thousands of nurses and other health workers took part in a one-day work stoppage at half the hospitals across England May 1, in a long-running dispute with the government over pay and conditions. The work stoppage was called by the Royal College of Nursing, the largest nurses' union in England. They are demanding a pay increase 5% above the official inflation rate, which is currently over 10% a year.

In April union members voted down the union leadership's recommendation that they accept the government's offer of a 5% pay rise at the National Health Service. Members of Unite, which organizes ambulance drivers and other health care workers, rejected it as well. Unison, which also organizes nurses, and two other unions, accepted the offer.

On the picket line at Guy's and St. Thomas' Hospital here many strikers held homemade signs and placards. One read, "Too important to strike + Not important enough to pay fairly = Nursing."

The nurses were adamant that their fight is not mainly over pay but over conditions, especially the understaffing of hospitals.

Nurse Helen Guyatt, a member of the Royal College of Nursing, told the *Militant*, "The strike is not only about money but how nurses and other staff at the hospitals are treated. After three years of the pandemic we were labeled as heroes, but now we are worth nothing." She was outraged that the London High Court had outlawed a second planned strike day because of a technicality.

Rebecca, a pharmacist and member of the Unite union who did not want to use her last name, said for her it's "mainly about the working conditions — people leave and others have to cover their work because recruitment is slow in order to save money. There are dangers of mistakes when we are overworked, which can kill people if we give them the wrong drugs or dosage."

—Andrés Mendoza, Dag Tirsén and Pamela Holmes

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



June 1, 1998

Indonesian president Suharto announced his resignation May 21 under the mounting pressure of tens of thousands of workers, students, and others who converged on the parliament the day before demanding his ouster.

The social crisis choking Indonesia was triggered by the wave of currency devaluations in the region that unfolded last July. The Indonesian rupiah has plummeted 80 percent since then and inflation has soared. Indonesia, the world's fourth-largest country with more than 200 million people, faces a massive default in loans. More than 8 million workers have lost their jobs and millions more may also be on the streets. Peasants and farm workers are being driven off the land, with nearly 500,000 expected to enter Jakarta.



June 1, 1973

After a full year of denials, President Nixon has finally been forced to admit a part of his role in directing and attempting to cover up the worst of the Watergate-related crimes that have been revealed over the past weeks. In this statement Nixon tries to separate the Watergate break-in case from the government operations dealing with "national security."

But the Watergate bugging is just a minor incident in the picture of secret police spying, provocations, and violence that has emerged from this scandal. The U.S. rulers need this secrecy because their wars and foreign policy are carried out in the interests of a tiny minority of capitalists, not in the interests of American working people.



May 31, 1948

Seventy-two hours before the strike deadline set by the United Auto Workers for 225,000 members, General Motors agreed to a general wage raise. For the first time in any major union agreement, the proposed contract incorporates the principle of the sliding scale of wages. This will provide automatic wage increases proportional to rising living costs, adjusted every three months on the basis of the cost-of-living figures of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The index of the government is heavily weighted to minimize the real rise in living costs. The only reliable cost-of-living index would be one maintained by the unions themselves.

However, the principle of the sliding scale of wages represents a great forward step in this period of inflation.

Back Ukraine independence!

Continued from front page
celebration marking the former Soviet Union's victory in World War II.

The nine-month battle for Bakhmut, the longest of the Ukraine war, is the scene of the bloodiest ground combat in Europe since the second imperialist slaughter, with thousands of Russian soldiers killed and many Ukrainians, including countless civilians. The city has been largely destroyed, with a fraction of its 71,000 inhabitants still there. Yevgeny Prigozhin, whose Wagner forces have borne the brunt of Russia's casualties in Bakhmut, complained bitterly about Moscow's military blunders.

Ukrainian troops have seized the ground overlooking the city and reopened the main highway from the west, after being pounded for months.

Moscow has shown no sign of ending its invasion despite growing opposition inside Russia. There are fresh graveyards across the country, some as large as several football fields. More Russian soldiers have been killed in Ukraine than in the 10-year Soviet-Afghan War and the First Chechen War combined.

Many were fathers and their family's sole breadwinners. The country's birth-rate next year is expected to drop to a level not seen since World War II.

More than 1,000 men in Russia have

been convicted of evading mandatory military conscription. And over 1,000 soldiers have had criminal cases opened against them for abandoning their units.

Teachers refuse to follow Putin line

Since September the new school week has started with a class called "conversations about important things." The Kremlin decides what these "things" are and pushes its propaganda supporting the invasion.

When 10-year-old Varya Sholiker skipped these lessons, authorities visited her home, finding blue and yellow — the colors of the Ukrainian flag — in the apartment. They concluded her mother, Yelena, "does not exercise parental control" and ordered mother and daughter to undergo psychological counseling.

Irina Gen, an English teacher, condemned the invasion in class. After a student recorded her remarks, she received a five-year suspended sentence and a ban from teaching for three years.

Many teachers don't openly speak out against the war, but avoid talking about it so they don't have to parrot Putin's lies about the invasion.

Math teacher Tatyana Chervenko used class time to teach math instead of the Putin-decreed "conversation." Word got out and she was taken to the police



Farmers fix remote-controlled demining machine near Kharkiv, Ukraine, April 26. Oleksandr Kryvtsov protects his tractor from explosions with armor plates from destroyed Russian tanks.

station for interrogation and then fired. The Russian Alliance of Teachers defended Chervenko. Its chairman, Daniil Ken, has been classified by authorities as a "foreign agent."

After baker Anastasia Chernysheva was ordered to pay a fine of \$446 last month for decorating cakes with anti-war slogans, nearly all of the cakes customers have since ordered have been with anti-war decorations.

"Until I get jailed," 22-year-old Chernysheva told the Moscow Times, "I'm just planning to bake cakes."

For a second year Ukrainian farm-

ers are planting crops under war conditions. Grain output, which was 60% of the country's exports before the war, has dropped sharply.

Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal told the press in April that about 30% of Ukrainian territory had been mined by Moscow, part of Putin's campaign of terror against the Ukrainian people.

Near Kharkiv, one Ukrainian farmer has come up with a novel way to remove mines and unexploded shells from his fields. He outfitted his tractor with panels stripped from destroyed Russian tanks and operates it by remote control. "We started doing this just because the crop-sowing time has come," Oleksandr Kryvtsov told Reuters, and "the rescue services are very busy."

This year Kyiv has broadened the exemption from military service to include workers on smaller farms, saying it is doing everything to ensure food production. Grain output could drop as low as 44.3 million tons this year, just over half of the record 86 million tons in 2021, before the war started.

The United Nations-brokered deal that allowed safe export of grain from three Ukrainian ports since the invasion expires May 18, with Moscow signaling it will not extend it unless Washington and its imperialist allies facilitate the export of Russian grain and fertilizer.

Cuba. They were well received.

"Other marchers came up to us and gave us donations so we can bring more solidarity to Cuba," Rivera said.

Rivera expects more than 30 people on this year's brigade, many for the first time. They will perform voluntary work alongside Cubans, meet with mass organizations and participate in a Caribbean solidarity conference.

"This year's brigade will also be a way of saying that Puerto Rico is a nation," Rivera said. "Of saying that Puerto Rico continues its fight."

You can contact the committee at solidaridadprcu@gmail.com.

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Oakland forum takes up fight to defend constitutional freedoms

BY ANDREA MORELL

OAKLAND, Calif. — "I am a symbol of countless victims of the FBI's Cointelpro," Watani Stiner told a Militant Labor Forum here April 30. "Yet I am a survivor of it."

Stiner and Joel Britton of the Socialist Workers Party were addressing why working people should stand up in defense of constitutional freedoms and against efforts to refurbish the image of the FBI, both led primarily by the Democrats.

The bureau framed up Stiner in 1969, part of Cointelpro, short for its counter-intelligence program, aimed at discrediting, disrupting and destroying political and labor forces the capitalist rulers viewed as dangerous to their rule.

Among the organizations the FBI targeted were Us, a Black nationalist organization in Los Angeles that Stiner belonged to, and the Socialist Workers Party.

Stiner handed out copies of FBI memos made public under the Freedom of Information Act showing the bureau's efforts to stoke differences between Us and the Black Panther Party.

One November 1968 directive said the FBI would take steps "in order to fully capitalize upon BPP and US differences as well as to exploit all avenues of creating further dissension in the ranks of the BPP."

An FBI memo written a few days later said the agency was preparing an anonymous letter purportedly from an Us member to send to the Panthers claiming Us was onto plans the BPP had made to kill Ron Karenga, the leader of Us, and planned to retaliate.

In January 1969 a shootout occurred between members of the two organizations on the University of California at Los Angeles campus. Stiner was framed on murder charges for the deaths of two Panthers. He spent some two decades in exile and two decades in prison.

Stiner said the FBI took advantage of what he called the "warrior mentality" of the Us organization, which left members open to cop provocation.

"If you want to know why the FBI shouldn't be refurbished, just look at the history," Britton said. From the late 1930s on, the FBI has targeted unions, Black organizations, Puerto Rican independence fighters, the movement for women's liberation and anti-Vietnam War organizations.

SWP forces out truth

Much of Cointelpro's treachery was forced into the open by a lawsuit filed by the Socialist Workers Party against the FBI in 1973. It exposed details of the Cointelpro operation against the party over decades. These included spying, blacklisting, mail covers, wiretaps, use of undercover informers and break-ins at party headquarters. It revealed poison-pen letters written anonymously by agents trying to sow divisions within the party and to disrupt collaboration between the SWP and Black rights and anti-Vietnam War groups.

The party won the suit, Britton said, showing that, though the rulers' political police, like all their cop agencies, cannot be reformed, they can be pushed back.

These exposures and the SWP's vic-

tory helped discredit the FBI for years, weakening its ability to target working-class fighters, Britton said. But now the capitalist ruling families need their political police as working people look for ways to take on the bosses and their push to place the burden of the crisis of their system onto the backs of working people. That, and their partisan factionalism, is why the Democrats seek to refurbish the FBI's reputation and use it.

The Justice Department has gotten a federal grand jury to indict members of the African People's Socialist Party and its Uhuru Movement supporters on trumped-up charges of being "foreign agents." In fact, "the APSP was carrying out legal activities," Britton said. "The real target is freedom of speech, which the prosecutors accused the party of 'weaponizing.'"

Britton said that since Donald Trump was elected president in 2016 the Democrats have used the FBI and trampled on constitutional rights to try to prevent him from ever holding office again. "What the government does to him, it will try to do to us. It is really aimed against the working class," he said. He pointed out the FBI raids on the homes and offices of the APSP and Uhuru took place on the heels of the raid by heavily armed FBI agents on Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate.

"All of a sudden the FBI are good guys," Watani said disbelievingly. "I see it as a family squabble I do not take a side in."

"Whenever there are attacks on the rights of anyone," Britton said, "it always comes down hardest on the working class and our organizations and the most conscious fighters. This is because the capitalists are in power. It is their police, FBI and CIA. Whatever differences there are among them, when working people threaten their interests, both parties turn their repressive forces loose against us."

Participating in the forum were family members of Carlos Harris, who was framed up and convicted in 2005 of attempted murder and other charges. He

Montreal cemetery workers fight union-busting attack

BY FRANÇOIS BRADETTE

MONTREAL — After many months on strike, 117 office, operations and maintenance workers, members of two locals of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), are taking on a union-busting drive by the bosses at the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges cemetery here. At 343 acres, the cemetery is the largest in Canada.

Militant worker-correspondents were warmly welcomed on the picket line at the main entrance May 11. We brought solidarity as members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union.

CSN banners and stickers covered the gates along with posters in French and English declaring: "Cemetery abandoned. We deserve better." This referred to both the strikers and family members who have been prevented from visiting the graves of their loved ones by management's decision to close the cemetery to visitors, hoping to turn their

Teachers organize protests in 32 cities across Iran



Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers' Trade Unions

According to the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers' Trade Unions, teachers in at least 32 cities across Iran "went to the streets once again to raise their rightful demands" May 9. The income of working and retired teachers "has not increased in line with the inflation rate," the council said, forcing many teachers "to turn to second and third jobs."

The protests demanded the government guarantee students' safety amid reports of continuing chemical attacks on girls schools; an end to attempts to insert the "ideological" viewpoint of the Tehran regime into science and other textbooks; and for freeing teachers and others imprisoned for their union or political activities.

The union added that by cutting funding the government has violated Article 30 of Iran's constitution, which guarantees the right to free public education for all.

The actions ranged from less than a dozen to a couple of hundred people. Some university student groups, other unions and groups of retirees backed the actions. Above, the protest in Ahvaz.

While most took place without incident, in Bushehr, on the Arab-Persian Gulf, soldiers and anti-riot police blocked the streets around the Department of Education and threatened to arrest anyone who tried to protest there, the union reported.

In Saqez, in the western Kurdish region, despite security forces blocking the streets, teachers and retirees were able to demonstrate. But police violently dispersed the protest march in Sanandaj, arresting two teachers.

In Rasht, on the Caspian Sea, attempts by thugs loyal to the counter-revolutionary clerical regime to drown out the speakers failed.

— SETH GALINSKY

has served 18 years of a 28-year sentence after refusing to take a plea bargain, insisting on his innocence. Harris and his family have waged a long and determined fight for his freedom, which has been covered in the *Militant*. They reported he has secured a transfer out of maximum security and is in a work release program, preparing for a court resentencing hearing June 7.

Britton urged forum goers to support the fight to free Harris and to join in the defense of the African People's Socialist Party. "The APSP and Uhuru are charged with building support for Russia's attempt to seize Ukraine," Britton said. "The SWP doesn't agree with these views, but we defend their right to hold them and to collaborate with forces abroad."

anger and frustration against the union.

The strikers said the main issues are wages and staff cuts. The administration of the Notre Dame Parish of the Catholic Church, which runs the cemetery, has refused to negotiate and there have been no face-to-face discussions since the end of January.

The 17 office workers who walked out Sept. 20 have not had a contract since December 2015, and the 100 outside workers who struck Jan. 12, since 2018.

In face of persistent inflation the bosses have offered what amounts to a wage cut — 14% over five years. Since they haven't had a wage increase for four years, the proposed increase really amounts to less than 2% a year.

Strikers said the cemetery bosses are out to bust the union, and Administrative Council President Miguel Castellanos had been brought in to do the job.

"We are at a dead end," Eric Dufault, president of the office workers, told the *Militant* by phone May 13. "We're stand-

ing together with the outside workers and we've put our demands together."

After an April ice storm left trees damaged, the bosses demanded strikers come back to work temporarily to clean up the mess. "If the employer says the situation is urgent, let them come back to the bargaining table and then we can settle it," the union responded.

A headline in the May 10 *Montreal Gazette* said, "With bodies piling up pressure mounts to end Montreal cemetery strike." As of mid-March, 125 bodies were in freezers awaiting burial.

Under pressure, the administration opened the cemetery for graveside visits for May 13, Mother's Day.

A government conciliator has been assigned to talk to the two parties. If that results in a contract proposal that is positive, the union says it will be put to a vote.

The strikers deserve support! The picket line is up from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday.

‘Malcolm X told the uncompromising revolutionary truth’

On the 98th anniversary of his birthday this month, the *Militant* is featuring a selection from Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. Barnes said that “Malcolm X was a revolutionary leader of the working class in the United States.” The excerpt is from “He spoke the truth to our generation of revolutionists.” Barnes’ speech was a tribute to Malcolm two weeks after his assassination in Harlem Feb. 21, 1965. Copyright © 2009 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

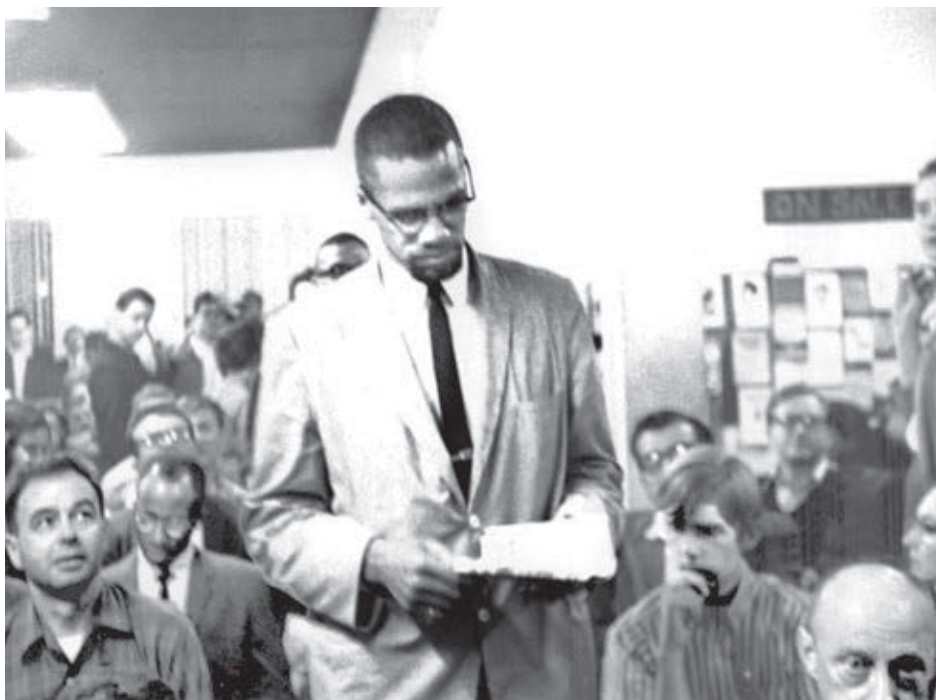
BY JACK BARNES

Malcolm was the leader of the struggle for Black liberation. He was, as stated at his funeral by Ossie Davis, our Black shining prince, the manhood of the Harlems of the world. To his people he first and foremost belongs.

But he was also the teacher, inspirer, and leader of a much smaller group, the revolutionary socialist youth in America. He was to us the face and the authentic voice of the forces of the coming American revolution. He spoke the truth to our generation of revolutionists.

What attracted revolutionary youth worldwide to Malcolm X? More important, what often made youth who listened to him — including youth who are not Black — start down the road to becoming revolutionists? ... [H]e spoke the simple truth — unadorned, unvarnished, and uncompromising. ...

Malcolm asked the Black American: Who taught you to hate yourself? Does he hate himself? Who taught you to be



Militant/Harry Ring

Malcolm X speaking at the Militant Labor Forum in New York, May 29, 1964. Jack Barnes said he was “the face and the authentic voice of the forces of the coming American revolution.”

a pacifist? Was *he* a pacifist? Who said Black people cannot defend themselves? Does *he* defend himself? Who taught you not to go too far and too fast in your fight for freedom? Did *he* stand to lose something by the speed of your victory? Who taught you to vote for the fox in order to escape from the wolf? What does the fox give you in return? ...

Though Malcolm X came from the American ghetto, spoke for the American ghetto, and directed his message to the American ghetto first of all, he became a figure of world importance, and developed his ideas in relation to the great events of world history in his time.

If Malcolm X is to be compared with any international figure, the most striking parallel is with Fidel Castro. Both of them belong to the generation that was shaped ideologically under the twin circumstances of World War II and the monstrous betrayals and defaults of Stalinized Communist parties. These men found their way independently to the revolutionary struggle, bypassing both Social Democracy and Stalinism.

Each started from the struggle of his own oppressed and exploited people for liberation. Each embraced the nationalism of his people as necessary to mobilize them to struggle for their freedom. Each stressed the importance of the solidarity of the oppressed all over the world in their struggle against a common oppressor.

Fidel did not start out as a thoroughgoing Marxist or as a revolutionary socialist. Like Malcolm, he was determined to pursue the national liberation of his people by “whatever means necessary” and without any compromises with those with any stake in the status quo.

Fidel Castro’s dedication to political independence and to economic development for Cuba led him to opposition to capitalism. So, also, Malcolm’s uncompromising stand against racism brought him to identify with the revolutions of the colonial people who were turning against capitalism, and finally to conclude that the elimination of capitalism in this country was necessary for freedom. Just as Fidel Castro discovered that there can be no political independence and economic development in a colonial country without breaking from capitalism, so Malcolm had come to the conclusion that capitalism and racism were so entangled in the United States that you had to uproot the system in order to eliminate racism.

Malcolm’s Black nationalism was aimed at preparing Black people to struggle for their freedom. “The greatest mistake of the movement,” he said in an interview in the February 25 *Village Voice*, “has been trying to organize a sleeping people around specific goals. You have to wake the people up first, then you’ll get action.”

“Wake them up to their exploitation?”

the interviewer asked. “No, to their humanity, to their own worth, and to their heritage,” he answered.

Everything he said to Black people was designed to raise their confidence, to organize them independently of those who oppressed them, to teach them who was responsible for their condition and who their allies were. He explained that they were part of the great majority — the nonwhites and the oppressed of the world. He taught that freedom could be won only by fighting for it; it has never been given to anyone. He explained that it could be won only by making a real revolution that uproots and changes the entire society.

Thus it is not surprising that many who considered themselves socialists, radicals, and even Marxists could not recognize and identify with Malcolm’s revolutionary character. They could not recognize the revolutionary content of this great leader clothed in the forms, language, and dark colors of the American proletarian ghetto.

Even with all his uniqueness and greatness as an individual, he could not have reached this understanding unless the conditions in this country were such that it was possible. Even though no one can fill his shoes, the fact that he did what he did, developed as the revolutionary leader he was, is the proof of more Malcolms to come.

He was a proof as Fidel is a proof. Fidel stood up ninety miles away from the most powerful imperialism in the world and thumbed his nose and showed us, “See, it can be done. They can’t go on controlling the world forever.”

Malcolm went even further than Fidel, because Malcolm challenged American capitalism from right inside. He was the living proof for our generation of revolutionists that it can and will happen here.

May
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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.

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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

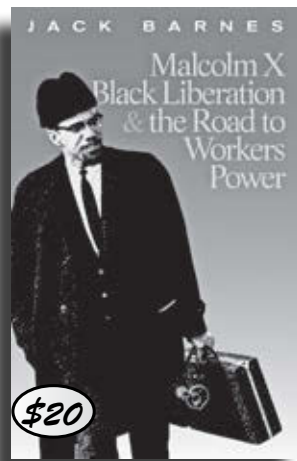
QUEBEC: **Montreal:** 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. Email: clcmontreal@fastmail.com

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



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Welcome to new ‘Militant’ readers

The *Militant* extends a warm welcome to new readers who subscribed during the recent campaign to increase its readership. The paper is true to its masthead — a socialist newsweekly published in the interests of working people.

Its reports on today’s union and working-class struggles are indispensable. They show what workers and farmers are doing to meet the attacks by the bosses and their government. From the strike by the Writers Guild across the U.S. and the intertwined struggle of rail workers and the working people of East Palestine, Ohio, to fights by working people for political rights in Iran and Ukrainian toilers battling to defend their independence, the *Militant* is a voice for mobilizing working-class solidarity here and worldwide.

Involved in a strike or action in defense of workers’ interests? Drop the *Militant* a few lines to help get out the truth and build support.

Union struggles for better wages and conditions are the foundation for everything workers do to defend ourselves. But as Karl Marx, one of the founders of the modern communist movement, said in 1866, “If the trade unions are required for the guerrilla fights between capital and labour, they are still more important as organized agents for superceding the very system of wages labour and capital rule.”

So-called friends of labor in the Democratic and Republican parties subordinate workers’ class interests to the bosses’ class interests and profits. The *Militant* explains why workers need a party of our own, a labor party based on the unions.

And it lays bare the reality that the interests of the toiling majority on *any* question cannot be reconciled with those of the ruling capitalist class.

Big shifts unfolding in world politics are explained in its pages from the viewpoint of the common interests workers share internationally against the imperialist rulers in Washington and capitalist governments worldwide.

A special welcome goes out to new readers behind bars. The *Militant* defends the rights of incarcerated workers to be treated as human beings, including the right to get the reading material of your choice. The paper always fights any attempt by prison authorities to ban it — consistent with the *Militant*’s unconditional opposition to attacks on free speech, due process and other constitutional freedoms.

Over the coming weeks you’ll read about the Socialist Workers Party candidates explaining how all political questions today are class questions and laying out a concrete working-class program and road forward.

You’ll read selections in the weekly “Books of the Month” column about lessons from past union, social and revolutionary struggles, from the fight to forge a proletarian party in the U.S. to the two great socialist revolutions in Russia in 1917 and Cuba in 1959.

The paper is a tool for building a party that can assemble, educate and organize a vanguard to help lead the fight to replace capitalist rule with a workers and farmers government. The *Militant*’s working-class continuity means it can proudly run a column that reprints articles from 25, 50 and 75 years ago. In five more years, we’ll have to add in 100 years back.

Help the *Militant* get around. Show it to your friends, family and co-workers! Get involved in the SWP’s campaigns!

John Stader *Militant editor*

Road forward for the working class in 2024 election

Continued from front page

answer is to assault our wages, working conditions, health care, and the constitutional freedoms we need, as well as prepare for new wars. Workers face rising insecurity, falling life spans, declining birth rates, rampant drug addiction and other reflections of the effects of the crisis on our lives and our families.

Despite Biden’s insistence that he is labor’s “best friend ever” in the White House, workers remember how he led a bipartisan coalition to bar rail workers from striking last fall and shoved down their throats a contract the majority of them voted down.

More working people today are open to discussing why neither the Democrats, Republicans nor any third capitalist party can be bent to serve the needs of our class. Socialist Workers Party candidates and campaigners find real interest when they explain that workers need to break from the bosses’ parties and build our own party, a labor party based on the unions.

Crisis in bosses’ parties

The liberal *Washington Post* is nervous about Biden’s presidential campaign. He is “harming the presidency and the nation,” its editors complain. By refusing to ever hold press conferences, he’s failing to “instill confidence that he can do the job.”

The only thing the Democrats agree on is that Trump must be stopped at all costs. They became apoplectic when CNN bosses, Democrats’ longtime cheerleaders, had the effrontery to invite the former president — and his supporters — to a live New Hampshire “Town Meeting” in prime time May 10.

Giving the former president airtime was a “disaster,” Republican Never-Trumper Peggy Noonan said in the *Wall Street Journal*. She bemoaned the fact that the Republican race in 2024 is “all about Trump’s fate.” She concludes that right-thinking Republicans have to start a “brawl” with Trump and destroy him.

Biden calls Trump’s supporters “MAGA Republicans” and “fascists,” just like Hillary Clinton called them “deplorables.” For his part, Trump harps away on the illegitimacy of the 2020 elections.

None of this has anything for working people.

In their fervent drive to find a crime to pin on Trump, Democrats are attacking free speech and making a mockery of the right to be innocent until proven guilty.

Safeguarding these vital protections is central to workers’ efforts to build unions, stand up to oppression and to defend our own class interests in the political arena.

New York State Judge Juan Merchan upheld an unprecedented order demanded by prosecutors that bars Trump from seeing, disclosing or commenting on evidence that will be used against him when he goes on trial there. Trump faces the far-fetched accusation by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg that he violated federal campaign finance laws by falsifying his financial records to cover up hush money payments to Stephanie Clifford with the nefarious aim of influencing the 2016 election.

Of course he wanted to “influence the elections” — he was a candidate! But violating national campaign finance laws is a federal crime, not actionable in New York City, and federal prosecutors refused to file such charges.

The judge’s order prevents Trump from reviewing material prosecutors say is “sensitive,” without his lawyers present, and only with the permission of the prosecution.

Bragg insisted the order be imposed on Trump, claiming the former president is a special case underserving of constitutional protections because he has “a singular history of attacking witnesses.” To the contrary, the Sixth Amendment says anyone accused of a crime has a right to confront their accuser. They must have access to all evidence against them. The judge’s gag order is a blow to these protections.

When the rights of a capitalist politician are curtailed, you can be sure the same and more will be done to working people.

Both Democrats and Republicans seek to restrict access to the ballot for independent capitalist third parties like the Greens and Libertarians. New Mexico became the most recent state to raise petitioning requirements in March. In their fierce partisan rivalry, the two traditional parties of the bosses want no one to siphon off votes.

More importantly, they will use these restrictions to try to limit the hearing the Socialist Workers Party gets for its call for labor to break from the bosses’ parties and form a labor party, based on the unions.

If you want to help foil their attack on rights, contact an SWP campaign office, listed on page 8.

Writers Guild on strike

Continued from front page

of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, as well as the Canadian television and radio artists union. He joined with hundreds of writers and supporters marching that day.

“We all want the same things — respect, fair pay and to be treated with dignity,” he said.

Several young writers who have only worked a year or two in the industry were picketing that day, but aren’t yet in the union. One WGA member who has worked since 2016 didn’t want to give his name for fear of boss retribution. He said the mini-rooms previously hired eight to 10 writers for five months or so to write a show. Now, he said, often four writers are expected to do the same work in half that time.

Producers don’t want to pay writers to be involved in production or postproduction because they get paid more when on the set.

After inflation, pay for a screenwriter declined 14% in the last five years, the union says. “Ninety-nine percent of us barely make our rent,” he said.

Hollywood studios, and companies like Netflix, Warner Bros. Discovery and Disney have laid off thousands of workers.

The companies have created a “gig economy inside a union workforce,” the Writers Guild said. Several pickets told the *Militant* most workers in the entertainment industry work job to job, which gives bosses a lot of leverage. Only a minority of writers, directors and actors make a livable income or work the hours they need, and most have other jobs to make ends meet.

The contracts members of the Directors Guild of America, with 19,000 members, and Screen Actors Guild, with 160,000, have with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers expire June 30.

Margaret Lebron has been member of the WGA for one year and of IATSE, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, before that. “You have to get hired for a studio production covered by the WGA contract to get into the union,” she said, “and it’s hard to get an interview for those jobs.”

Strikers have gotten a lot of support on their picket lines, she said, from “SAG-AFTRA, IATSE, the musicians’ unions, Teamsters, teachers in the United Teachers Los Angeles, and the Directors Guild. We get lots of honks from those who drive by. The picket line is open to everyone, we encourage support.”

For picket line schedules and locations in New York and Los Angeles go to wga.org. The Central Labor Council in New York also posts picket locations and times regularly.

Paper workers in the UK strike over pay, respect

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

MANCHESTER, England — Forty production workers at Saica Paper UK here have been carrying out a series of one-day strikes for higher pay and better job conditions.

The Unite union members voted 97% in favor of strike action after rejecting the company’s offer of a 6.5% pay increase plus a one-time lump sum amounting to 3% of wages. The official inflation rate is 13.8%.

“Yesterday they offered a 10% increase, but I told them I know the guys won’t settle for that,” lead union representative Scott Wildman told the *Militant* at the picket line April 29.

Saica processes recycled paper that goes into cardboard boxes used by Amazon, beverage giant Diageo and Dominoes Pizza.

“Managers have been trying to run production,” Wildman said. “Normally we make 12-14 rolls in a shift, and they’re making two.”

“This is also about respect,” he said. “We work four days on, six off, and those days off include our holidays.” The bosses have workers come in for training on holidays “and then they expect you to come in when you’re sick.”

Workers said that they don’t get guaranteed lunch breaks on their 12-hour shift, often having to eat at the machine. As a result, “staff turnover is 27%,” Wildman said. They were inspired by contract fights by workers at Saica in Zaragoza, Spain, where the multinational company is headquartered, he said.