

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Working people in El Salvador seek way out amid capitalist crisis
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Beijing looks to expand but can't match weight of US imperialism

BY ROY LANDERSEN

For decades the rulers in Beijing have sought to expand control over trade routes and increase their military while seeking markets for their rapidly growing capitalist economy. Rivalry with the U.S. rulers for influence in Asia, the Pacific and beyond continues to sharpen today. But they have no road to displace Washington as the world's prevailing power, despite the relative erosion of the U.S. rulers' economic dominance and their failure to win wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Prospects for the Chinese capitalists are closely tied to those of their competitors. China is now the top trading partner for over 120 countries. But about half its exports go to developed capitalist countries in North America, Europe and the Pacific, where markets are contracting and all face the worldwide slowdown in production and trade.

The U.S. rulers and their allies have imposed export controls on technology

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Rail workers send solidarity to residents in East Palestine

Working people step up fight after toxic derailment



Raquel Natalicchio/Houston Chronicle via AP

Shell chemical fire in Deer Park, near Houston, May 5, one of several recent disasters in East Texas. Big business drive for profits causes such "accidents," as it did in East Palestine, Ohio.

BY CANDACE WAGNER

PITTSBURGH — "By speaking out and supporting efforts to hold the nation's rail carriers accountable," SMART-TD, the rail conductors' union, proclaimed in its spring 2023 newsletter,

"We do our part to keep what happened in East Palestine from happening again." The union was describing the 20-car derailment Feb. 3 in Ohio that led to a giant fireball of burning chemicals.

Norfolk Southern bosses and government officials decided to drain and burn off five tanker-car loads of highly toxic vinyl chloride, contaminating the land, waters and air in the area. Quickly after the burn-off, the company began running trains again in search of lost profits.

Trade unionists, in rail and other unions, were inspired by the SMART-TD union statement. Karl Brendle, a member of United Steelworkers Local 1046 in Louisville, Ohio, told *Militant* worker-correspondent Tony Lane, "Yes,

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Truckers' Indiana caravan protests brokers' moves to slash their income



Hundreds of owner-operators, fleet drivers protested in Indianapolis May 17 against brokers slashing of freight rates. Punjabi drivers from India and Pakistan are 20% of all U.S. truckers.

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

WASHINGTON — Hundreds of owner-operators and fleet drivers joined together May 17 to protest the disastrous impact of freight brokers slashing rates. The caravan of bobtails — trucks without their trailers — cars and pickup trucks convoyed from Greenwood, Indiana, rolling across the 52-mile loop of Interstate 465 around Indianapolis.

The Punjabi-driver-organized protest welcomed all participants. Workers from the Punjab, an area spanning

northwest India and eastern Pakistan, make up 20% of U.S. truckers. "African Americans, Caucasians and Latinos came together with us. We need as much support as possible from each other," Rajpreet Walia, one of the organizers, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent by phone.

"We are one," Narinder Johal, an owner-operator for 25 years, said. "We are bringing awareness and educating fellow truck drivers not to pick up cheap

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Durham report details attacks by Democrats, FBI on rights

BY TERRY EVANS

Department of Justice special counsel John Durham's 306-page report released May 15 meticulously details the unconstitutional spy operation and "Russian collusion" witch hunt instigated by FBI bosses and Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign to try to prevent Donald Trump from winning the election.

As the campaign unfolded, FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe and Deputy Assistant Director for Counterintelligence Peter Strzok opened an FBI investigation into the Trump campaign without any evidence of collusion with Moscow, Durham shows. And FBI leaders were aware the probe was predicated on unfounded rumors supplied by the Clinton campaign in an attempt to rig the election. But they went ahead anyway.

CIA Director John Brennan provided

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Support Ukraine independence! Defeat Moscow's bloody invasion!

BY ROY LANDERSEN

On May 20 Yevgeny Prigozhin's Wagner mercenary army claimed it had pushed Ukrainian forces defending Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine out of the devastated city. For nine months it has been the bloodiest battleground in Russian President Vladimir Putin's attempts to conquer Ukraine.

Putin has hailed Moscow's first gain in nearly a year. Despite the city's lim-

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Communist League in Canada: 'Defend immigrant workers! Build a labor party!'

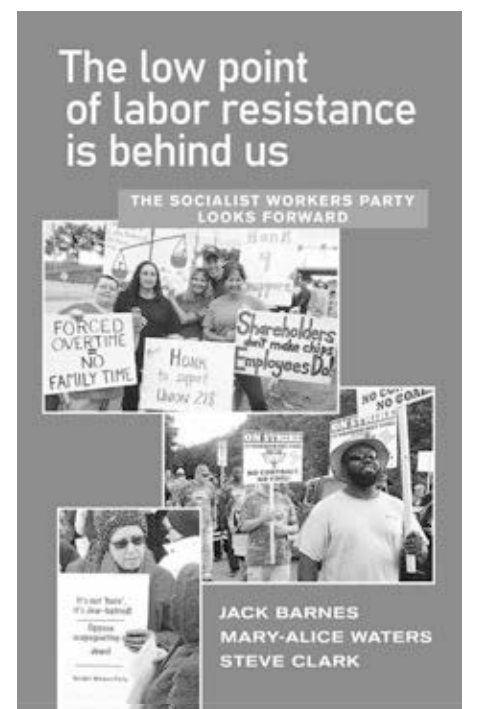
BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — "Defense of the rights of immigrant workers is a crucial question for our unions and all working people. What is at stake is the fighting unity of the working class against the deepening attacks by the employers and their governments," Communist League candidate Félix Vincent Ardea said. He is running for Parliament in the Notre-Dame-de-Grace-Westmount district here in a June 19 federal by-election. Vincent Ardea was speaking at a special Militant Labor Forum here May 20.

"Fighting on behalf of all working people is the road the unions need to take," the candidate said. "And it is along this road that working people can

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‘Defend immigrant workers!’

Continued from front page
forge a labor party based on the unions that can act to mobilize working people to defend our class interests, including fighting to replace capitalist political power with a workers and farmers government.”

Vincent Ardea is a Canadian National Railway freight conductor and member of the Teamsters union. He shared the platform with Steve Penner, organizer of the Communist League in Canada.

“Last December the three main labor federations in Quebec set an example for all the unions by signing an open letter with many other organizations calling for the federal government to grant status to the thousands of workers without papers in this country,” Vincent Ardea told the meeting. “Then in April, the United Steelworkers in Baie-Trinite, Quebec, signed an important union contract on behalf of about 100 who work at a shellfish processing plant, the majority of whom are Spanish-speaking foreign temporary workers.

“The contract covers all the workers regardless of their immigration status. The union provided Spanish-language translation at the meeting to discuss the contract and the company was forced to sign a letter of understanding protect-

ing their rights, including membership in the union,” the Communist League candidate said. “These examples point the way forward for all unions and unorganized working people in uniting and strengthening the working class.”

Penner took up additional aspects of the fight, which is front and center in Quebec politics today. “To create divisions between workers born here and immigrant workers, the Quebec government and newspapers like the *Journal de Montreal* are waging a chauvinistic, nationalist and reactionary anti-immigrant campaign,” he said.

“Quebec Premier Francois Legault’s assertion that use of French is in decline and that non-French speaking immigrants are to blame is a lie. Some 90% of working people in Quebec use French as the language of work,” he said. “What has increased is French-English bilingualism, a reflection of how workers’ struggles have strengthened working-class unity.

“This is a blow to Canada’s capitalist rulers, who seek to weaken our ability to fight back against their drive to load the impact of the growing crisis of their profit system on our backs,” Penner said.

“Legault’s stance gets an echo from the federal government and all the bosses’ parties in Ottawa. The recently adopted revision of the federal Official Languages Act, Bill 13, incorporates Quebec’s Bill 96, which purports to defend the use of the French language by restricting the use of English. Legault intends to ban non-French-speaking immigrants by 2026,” he said.

“In face of a declining birth rate, and an aging population, the rulers are looking to immigration to boost the pool of workers,” he said. “Last year, Canada’s population increased by more than a

Join fight for freedom for Carlos Harris!



Photo courtesy of Hampton family

OAKLAND, Calif. — Rachel and Aisha Hampton, the mother and cousin of unjustly imprisoned Carlos Harris, are asking that letters supporting his freedom be sent to them as he faces a resentencing hearing June 7.

Harris was falsely accused of attempted murder of Robert “Bobby” Carr, a man he never saw. He wasn’t present when the man was attacked in San Jose in 2004 and he didn’t fit the victim’s description of his attackers. Harris wasn’t picked out in a police lineup.

He insisted he was innocent and demanded a jury trial, refusing a plea bargain offer by prosecutors. The state pressed his co-defendants to give perjured testimony to help frame him, offering them lighter sentences.

Harris was found guilty and sentenced to 14 years and two months in prison, but that sentence was illegally doubled by the judge under California’s notorious “three-strikes” law. That 1994 law provided for doubling a sentence if a defendant had been convicted of a “serious felony” earlier. In this case, the conviction the judge used was a misdemeanor in 1991, three years before the three-strikes law even went into effect.

Harris will have strong family support upon his release. He has taken advantage of educational and work programs in several California prisons, and jobs barbering and in construction have been arranged after his release. Above, 2022 protest in Sacramento demanding Harris’ release.

Send letters of support for his appeal to: freecarlosharris@gmail.com. For more information: <https://freecarlosharris.wixsite.com/2020>.

— JOEL BRITTON

Correction

The article “Conflicts, shifting alliances mark politics in the Middle East” in the May 29 issue of the *Militant* had a couple of factual errors in the section on Lebanon. It is true, as the article states, that Tehran on one side and Riyadh and Washington on the other back different candidates for the presidency. But none of the proposals would tear apart prior agreements that reserve that post for a Maronite Christian.

THE MILITANT

Build labor support for East Palestine fight!

While government agencies tell working people in East Palestine, Ohio, that everything is “safe” following derailment, toxic chemical burn off, residents continue their fight to take control of their lives. The ‘Militant’ campaigns to bring their fight to working people worldwide.

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million for the first time, almost entirely due to immigration.

“However, the large majority weren’t admitted as permanent residents with the same rights as other working people, but as ‘temporary foreign residents.’ They’re a source of cheap labor to help employers meet shortages for the lowest-paying jobs, like laborers, truck drivers, fast services workers and farmworkers. Ottawa deports thousands every year.”

More fights by unions set example

“Their anti-immigrant campaign isn’t aimed at stopping or blocking immigration,” Penner continued, “but to control it to meet the bosses’ needs, and use it to divide working people. To create a pariah layer in the working class that isn’t

in a position to defend themselves and to drive down wages at a time when more and more workers are stepping forward to use union power to fight back.”

The Communist League leader pointed to 55,000 Ontario education workers who defied and defeated anti-strike legislation last year, as well as 155,000 federal government workers who recently carried out a militant strike for wage increases to offset the punishing effects of inflation. These fights show new possibilities for the labor movement today.

On May 23 the Communist League received confirmation that Vincent Ardea is on the ballot. The party had turned in nominating papers with 154 signatures, well above the 100 required.

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Forum protests FBI attacks on constitutional freedoms

BY EDWIN FRUIT

MINNEAPOLIS — Some 30 people attended a Militant Labor Forum here May 20, “Oppose Government Spying and Harassment; Defend Political Freedoms Under Assault.” The speakers were Leah Fifield, from the Uhuru Solidarity Movement; Cynthia Wilson, president of the Minneapolis NAACP; and Kevin Dwire for the Socialist Workers Party. Gabrielle Prosser, SWP candidate for City Council Ward 11 here, chaired the meeting.

Fifield spoke about state-sanctioned attacks on and the arrests of leaders of the Uhuru Movement and the African People’s Socialist Party. She said her group “is an organization of white people who work under the leadership of the Black-led and Black-created APSP and Uhuru Movement chaired by Omali Yeshitela.”

She described the July 2022 pre-dawn FBI raids on the APSP in St. Petersburg, Florida, and St. Louis. Yeshitela and other party members were handcuffed with assault rifles pointed at them. The FBI used flash-bang grenades, drones and a battering ram to break down doors and windows, causing tens of thousands of dollars in damage, and stole personal and political property.

Members of the APSP and Uhuru Movement were indicted in April and charged with being unregistered agents of a foreign government, namely Russia.

Fifield urged forum participants to get the word out on these attacks. She said the latest information and a way to donate to the legal defense fund is on their website at www.handsof-fuhuru.org.

Cynthia Wilson, president of the Minneapolis NAACP, described a federal lawsuit her organization has filed against the Minneapolis Police Department for using fake social media accounts to keep tabs on and criticize Black community leaders.

She explained Minneapolis officers posed as Black community members to criticize city officials and members of the NAACP, dirty tricks that weren’t part of any legitimate investigation. She said the cops used the accounts to track the activity of Minneapolis NAACP

members and to push racist stereotypes about Black people. This operation took place between 2010 and 2020.

“We are all here for defense of democratic rights,” SWP speaker Kevin Dwire said. Quoting from the SWP’s resolution and new book *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*, he explained, “Defending and extending the freedoms protected by the U.S. Constitution is at the center of the class struggle today.”

Dwire said the African People’s Socialist Party was under attack for its political views and to set a precedent. He said the Democratic Party is the leading force in assaulting constitutional freedoms, noting the Minneapolis mayor, liberal Democrat Jacob Frey, is backing the police against the NAACP lawsuit.

Dwire pointed to the photo on the forum’s flyer showing FBI agents raiding the SWP headquarters here in 1941 and described the historic victory won in the SWP’s political and legal campaign against decades of FBI spying and disruption. This helped push back government assaults on our rights.

Today, he said, Democrats and Republicans — each in their own way — are pushing to refurbish the image of the rulers’ political police for use against working-class fights and po-



Militant/Mary Martin

Minneapolis Militant Labor Forum May 20 protests government, FBI attacks on political rights. From left, Kevin Dwire, SWP; Cynthia Wilson, Minneapolis NAACP president; chair Gabrielle Prosser, SWP candidate for City Council; Leah Fifield, Uhuru Solidarity Movement.

litical struggles to come.

Dwire demanded the government drop the charges against the APSP and the Uhuru Movement and urged meeting participants to support the NAACP in its lawsuit and stand together to support anyone whose rights come under attack by the government.

A lively discussion followed. “If you’re being spied on you must be doing something right!” one participant commented.

Edwin Fruit, SWP City Council candidate for Ward 1, said FBI spying and harassment goes back to the late 1930s

when, on the eve of Washington’s entry into the second imperialist world war, the Franklin Roosevelt administration tasked the FBI with being the rulers’ political police. He noted that the FBI’s armed raid on former President Donald Trump’s estate in Florida occurred around the same time as the raid on the APSP.

It doesn’t matter if you agree with Trump or not, he said, stand up for anyone unconstitutionally targeted by the U.S. political police, regardless of their political views, as “the ultimate target is the working class.”

Join SWP candidates, reach out with the ‘Militant’

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Over the coming weeks, members of the Socialist Workers Party, and the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and United Kingdom will be building on the successful completion of their spring campaigns that expanded the reach of the *Militant* by over 1,400 subscribers, raised over \$165,000 to fund the paper and got over 1,800 books by SWP and other revolutionary leaders into the hands of working people looking for a road forward.

They continue to work to introduce the SWP, its election campaigns and the *Militant* and books. Josefina Otero and Alyson Kennedy, who was the party’s candidate for mayor of Fort Worth, went to Comanche, Texas, a small town of just

over 2,000 in a dairy farming area about two hours southwest of Fort Worth May 16. They spoke to Benny Lopez in front of a tractor and farm supply store there.

“I grew up near here on a small dairy farm. I live in Santa Ana, a few miles away, and worked in Dallas for 30 years as an electrical lineman and moved back here to retire,” he said. “I have a dozen cattle and want to get more and ranch with my son.” They showed him the *Militant* coverage supporting the fight of Ukrainian working people to defend their independence against Moscow’s invasion.

“I’ve been following what is going on in Ukraine and support their fight,” Lopez said. “I think it’s important to know about what is going on in the world.” He

got a *Militant* subscription and *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.

SWP members will be getting back in touch with recent subscribers, discussing their reaction to the paper’s coverage of the battles of workers and farmers here and abroad, and to the party’s program. They’ll encourage new readers to renew their subscriptions and to join the party and its candidates in activity — from attending strike picket lines to joining protests like opposition to the brutal repression organized today by the reactionary regime in Iran.

“This outreach, leading up to the SWP-sponsored International Educational Conference at Oberlin College in Ohio, June 8-11, and afterwards will be part of stepped-up efforts to campaign for the SWP candidates in elections this year and into 2024,” said John Studer, the editor of the *Militant* and SWP national campaign director.

Eleven featured Pathfinder books are available to subscribers at special reduced prices (see ad on page 6), and all other Pathfinder titles are available at 20% off. Party members will continue to prioritize introducing *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*.

The book explains, “A decades-long retreat by the working class and unions has come to an end as owners of capital and their parties shift the burden of their crisis onto working people’s backs. More and more workers — of all ages, skin colors, and both sexes — are saying, ‘Enough is enough!’ They’ve begun to wield the collective power of the exploited producers in response.” The book is on special for \$7 until May 31 and for \$5 for anyone with a *Militant* subscription.

Truckers caravan protests brokers’ moves to slash rates

Continued from front page

freight. We organized not to disrupt traffic — but to get our point across.”

According to Freightways, the national average spot rate for truckers is \$1.49 a mile, lower than in 2019. But when you deduct the 30 cents a mile increase in expenses over the past three years — not including fuel — the current rates are the equivalent of \$1.19 a mile.

“The brokers who set the rates are scavengers, searching for the cheapest carrier,” Johal said. A broker offered

him a job last week. “After truck payments, insurance, fuel, driver pay, repairs, gas tax and more, the load price on a trip from Louisville, Kentucky, to Michigan would have left me with \$16.

“I don’t have time for the attitude’ was the broker’s response,” Johal said after he protested about the low rate.

The crisis owner-operators face today is the result of the drive by shipping bosses and brokers — backed up by the Democratic and Republican parties — to maximize profits at drivers’ expense.

In 1980 the government deregulated trucking, opening the door to a union-busting offensive. It turned a largely Teamster-organized industry into a scrum of nonunion bosses seeking to drive down wages, extend hours and enforce more unpaid labor.

Since truckers are paid by the mile, time spent at warehouses waiting to be loaded or unloaded, repairing breakdowns or idling in traffic tie-ups counts

for nothing and yields no income.

“Like all workers, we don’t want to work a minute for free,” said Walia.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, a federal agency, winks at the provisions brokers have in the contracts that force truckers to waive their rights to view transaction records as a condition for getting work.

The Indianapolis action was the latest push by truckers to fight attacks on their livelihoods by shippers, brokers, truck bosses and government agencies. On May 1 the Truckers Movement for Justice led a protest outside the U.S. Department of Transportation here, carrying signs that demanded, “All hours paid for all hours worked” and for “Paid overtime.”

“This has been going on for years,” trucker Caleb Fernandez told the *Militant* at the D.C. protest. “We don’t need task forces and studies. We need to organize.”

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Working people in El Salvador seek way out of capitalist crisis

BY RÓGER CALERO

Riding a high approval rating amid widespread crime from his “war on gangs,” President Nayib Bukele of El Salvador is paving the way for reelection in 2024 despite a constitutional prohibition on serving a second term. On May 10, Bukele claimed his government had accumulated 365 days without murders since he took office in 2019. He contrasted it to 2015 when there were over 6,600 homicides in El Salvador.

For years the lives of working people have been torn asunder by criminal violence, and they see little option except to choose between that chaos and a “lesser evil” as Bukele’s government cracks down, accompanied by the suspension of constitutional rights and civil liberties.

In March 2022, following a spate of killings, Bukele’s administration declared a “state of emergency” and curtailed freedom of assembly, rights and protections of the accused. He also lifted bans on cops spying — without a court order — on phone calls and mail of anyone authorities deem a suspect. Initially presented as a temporary measure, the government has extended it 14 times and vows to continue the measure “until every gang member is in prison.”

More than 68,000 people have been arrested. Thousands of heavily armed troops and cops have sealed off and swept through working-class neighborhoods seizing “suspects.” Along with gang members, however, thousands have been arbitrarily arrested and held for months awaiting trial.

“It’s an injustice,” Lilian Laínez told CNN May 11, standing in front of a local jail where she and dozens of others demanded the release of their incarcerated relatives. “They’re taking them without saying a word.”

Others interviewed by the press said relatives who have been convicted of previous offenses and served their time are also being detained. Some said they’ve had to pay bribes of \$1,000 or more just to visit them.

The Ministry of Justice announced it has released some 5,000 people, more than 7% of those arrested, admitting they had no gang affiliation.

Rise of Bukele

Bukele has exploited a wave of discontent with the two traditional parties — the conservative National Republican Alliance (ARENA) and the formerly revolutionary Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). They have alternated in power since 1992, at the end of the country’s 12-year civil war.

He is a product of the deepening

crisis for working people, as the capitalist rulers have proved incapable of alleviating the scourge of unemployment, inflation and crime. Bukele portrays himself as an outsider, standing up against the “same old” corrupt politicians he tries to blame for the grim living conditions workers face.

“There’s enough money to go around as long as no one steals,” is one of Bukele’s favorite demagogic catchphrases. He seeks to obscure the fact that the biggest thieves of the wealth produced by working people are the capitalist rulers, and that he has no intention of interfering with their system of exploitation and oppression.

Bukele is a businessman who comes from a leftist family. He rose out of the ranks of the FMLN, elected mayor first of a small town in 2012 and then of San Salvador, the country’s capital, in 2015. Expelled by the FMLN in 2017, he became the presidential candidate of the Great National Alliance (GAN), a conservative capitalist party that is also widely discredited.

Like other elected capitalist officials in Latin America today, Bukele has gone after the press, as well as non-governmental organizations critical of his administration, and has concentrated power in the executive branch. Following last year’s legislative election in which his new party, Nuevas Ideas (New Ideas), gained a two-thirds majority in Congress, his administration replaced five Supreme Court justices and the attorney general. This is cause for concern among ruling circles who would



Press Office of the Presidency of the Republic of El Salvador

Prisoners at so-called Terrorist Confinement Center in Tecoluca, El Salvador. The prison is built to hold 40,000 people. Those incarcerated hit 4,000 in March, one month after it opened.

rather maintain a semblance of bourgeois democracy and stability.

Target is working people

The real target of Bukele’s war on crime, as well as the “alternative solutions” proposed by his opponents, is working people, even if for many it seems to be lowering the devastating level of violence.

Trade unionists, environmental activists, and defenders of democratic rights have condemned recent arrests of protesting workers. In January, a municipal workers’ protest in Soyapango was broken up by the police. They were demanding unpaid wages and bonuses, and proper tools, shoes and uniforms.

“Let them go!” yelled other protesters and bystanders in a video. One can be heard calling out, “Are these the ‘new ideas?’”

The ruling class uses the police and

armed forces to keep workers in line and put down working-class resistance as the class struggle heats up. This is something fresh in the minds of generations in El Salvador.

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw a rise in workers strikes, factory occupations, and fights by landless peasants and the rural poor, coupled with university and school occupations. The forces behind the FMLN of that day participated and helped advance these struggles. As the struggles took more of a political and revolutionary character, and began to threaten capitalist rule, they were met with brutal repression by the government, backed by Washington.

There are no struggles on that scale today, and the FMLN is just another capitalist electoral party. But new class battles will certainly come as the capitalist economic and social crisis deepens.

Iran oil workers: ‘Death penalty threatens everyone’



May 18 rally in Junqan, a city in Iran’s Chaharmahal-Bahktiari Province, commemorating death of Jamshid Mokhtari, killed a year ago during protests over sharp hike in price of bread.

BY SETH GALINSKY

The May 19 execution of three men active in “Women, Life, Freedom” protests in Isfahan has fueled demonstrations against the death penalty in Iran and around the world.

The government alleged that Saleh Mirhashemi, a karate champion and coach; Majid Kazemi, a welder; and Saeid Yaqoubi Yaqoubi, a real estate agent, had killed two members of the Basij militia and a police officer during a protest action Nov. 16.

Family members say the three were tortured into giving false confessions and were denied lawyers of their own choosing.

There has been a sizable increase in

executions in Iran — already among the highest in the world — since the start of protests against the death of young Kurdish woman, Zhina Amini, after she was arrested by the “morality” police for not adhering to the regime’s reactionary dress code.

Most of those executed have been for alleged criminal, not political, activity, especially drug trafficking. They are disproportionately from oppressed nationalities, including Baluchs, Kurds and Arabs.

“These executions are a threat to all of us, the workers and the people, who cried out for freedom for women and protested against the murder of Mahsa Amini for violating the hijab

law,” said the Council of Oil Contract Workers in a May 20 statement.

Thousands of contract oil workers are on strike, demanding a 79% wage increase to keep up with soaring inflation and more humane work schedules.

The rulers “carry out executions to impose wages that are several times below the poverty line, to push back the striking oil workers whose lives have been exhausted by discrimination, inequality and intimidation by contractors, and to silence the retirees who after years of work and hardship are still struggling with poverty,” the union said. “We demand the abolition of the death penalty and executions forever.”

Family members of those sentenced to death protested in the days leading up to their executions outside prisons in Isfahan, Karaj, just north of Tehran, and in Bandar Abbas. Students at the University of Tehran and elsewhere held protests. Despite an attack by the regime’s security forces, several hundred students at Beheshti University protested for over an hour.

The day before the executions thousands of Bakhtiari, an oppressed nationality, in Junqan commemorated the life of Jamshid Mokhtari, who was killed by the regime a year ago during protests against a sharp rise in bread prices.

There were protests against the executions in over 40 cities around the world, from Australia to Germany, the U.S. and Canada May 20.

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June 25

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Involved in a union organizing drive or strike? Brought solidarity to a strike picket line? Let us know! Send articles, photos, letters to themilitant@mac.com or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Negotiations with UPS continue, Teamsters prepare possible strike

NEW YORK — With most local contracts agreed to by UPS and union officials, negotiations have shifted to key national issues before the contract expires July 31. The Teamsters are demanding an end to two-tier wages for drivers, along with substantial pay increases for part-time workers who sort packages and load trucks. Part-timers in New York start out at just 50 cents an hour over the minimum wage of \$15 here.

Some 25% of drivers — known as “22.4” workers, who have less seniority — make up to \$6 an hour less than other drivers and are the first ones laid off. Workers say all drivers should get paid the same.

“We’re fighting for the part-timers to get at least \$25 an hour,” driver Antoine Andrews, a union organizer and shop steward at the Canarsie distribution center, told the *Militant* May 22.

Since the end of the pandemic, “package volume has dropped significantly,” he said. “And the company has been laying people off and putting some on split shifts, which is very brutal.”

The Teamsters continue to prepare for a strike if no agreement is reached.

Winning improvements for UPS workers “can be a catalyst for workers where there are no unions, like Amazon and Starbucks,” Andrews said. “It’s a great time to be part of the labor movement and to join hands and forces to get what we deserve.”

— Seth Galinsky

Clara Maass nurses in NJ fight for contract, increased staffing

BELLEVILLE, N.J. — “Safe staffing and fair pay, this is the way!” was among the signs at a rally of hundreds of nurses outside Clara Maass Medical Center here May 16. Last August 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East won nearly 80% of the vote for union representation by nurses at the hospital. But negotiations for a first contract for the 540 nurses have stalled.

Registered nurse Tanya Howard told the *Militant*, “Management told us that they planned to offer the bare minimum in a contract. We are not bare-minimum nurses!”

“The number of patients each nurse takes care of is unfair to us and the patients,” said nurse Lia Devers.

“A safe nurse-to-patient ratio in ICU should be two patients to each nurse, now it is three-to-one,” added Barbara Villanueva, who works in the Intensive Care Unit. Along with safe staffing and higher wages, nurses want a say in how the hospital is run.

On April 26 nine nurses, including Howard and Devers, attempted to deliver a petition to management with 170 signatures of doctors and nurses to protest disciplinary action taken against a rapid response team nurse who has since been fired. The nine nurses were suspended for two weeks by management.

Clara Maass bosses claim the fired nurse “violated hospital protocols.” But the union says she acted to “protect the safety of her patient and herself.”

“It’s outrageous that management suspended us for speaking up for each other in the middle of a chronic nurse shortage,” Howard told the press.

— Joanne Kuniansky

‘Striking for the contract we need,’ say Ohio battery workers

HOLLAND, Ohio — More than 400 members of United Auto Workers Local 12 at the Clarios battery plant here, near Toledo, went on strike May 8 after voting overwhelmingly to reject the company’s proposed contract. The factory produces 150,000 batteries a week for Ford, General Motors and other auto companies and stores like Autozone.

Strikers set up lively picket lines 24/7 at all four of the gates. Clarios immediately went to court, complaining that pickets were causing trucks to slow down and got a judge to issue an injunction. It restricts strikers to no more than five within 100 feet of an entrance and orders them to stay at least five feet from



Militant/Joanne Kuniansky

Hundreds of nurses, members of 1199SEIU, rally for their first union contract May 16 at Clara Maass Medical Center in Belleville, New Jersey. Union is demanding safe staffing, higher pay.

vehicles entering or exiting the facility.

“The injunction hasn’t intimidated us one bit,” Earl Hopings, who has worked there for 37 years, told this *Militant* reporter when I joined him on the picket line May 14. The company wants to pay straight time for up to 12 hours a day, in reality a pay cut. That offer, he said, “was an insult! We are here to stay until we get the contract we need.”

At another gate, Viva Leyva and her husband, Jacob Leyva, were joined by their daughter, Jasmine. “When your mother and father both work here you don’t get to see them very much,” Jasmine said. “The company doesn’t care about their lives.”

“And they don’t care about our safety!” Viva Leyva said. “We have to buy protective equipment ourselves because the company doesn’t care about the holes made in workers’ clothes when the battery acid bubbles over. And they don’t care about Mother’s Days or Sundays or anything. They just want you to work more and more so they make more and more money!”

“That’s the biggest problem we have with their contract,” Jacob Leyva said. “We’re expected to work until we’re hurt or worse.”

Robert Vasquez, a fellow UAW Local 12 member at the Toledo Jeep plant, showed up with fried chicken for the pickets at another gate. “Clarios is try-

ing to do what Jeep would like to do,” he said. “We have to stand together.”

Everyone is welcome to join the pickets. Get your union to send a message of solidarity to UAW Local 12 at uawlocal12info@gmail.com.

— Jacquie Henderson

Philadelphia Teamsters strike at Coca-Cola won broad solidarity

PHILADELPHIA — Teamsters Local 830 ended its nearly monthlong strike against Liberty Coca-Cola Beverages May 8. The union, representing 450 drivers, warehouse and production workers, set up picket lines April 16.

The Liberty plant is the largest Coca-Cola producer and distributor in a region that covers Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. It bottles Coke as well as Dr. Pepper, Dasani Water, Monster Energy, Minute Maid and Sprite.

The union was seeking higher wage compensation and lower health insurance costs. “We’re just looking to make sure that these guys get a good inflation raise,” union member Frank Rider told the media. “Inflation is up sky-high.”

Workers had unanimously voted to strike after the old agreement expired.

On the first day of the strike management canceled workers’ medical coverage. In the 2018 contract the company had replaced the union’s health and welfare plan with a more expensive one.

The new five-year contract includes an 85-cent hourly raise per year, no increase in the cost of medical coverage the first three years, and a \$1,500 signing bonus.

Workers had overwhelmingly rejected the bosses’ previous offers, before the strike and the day after it began. The latest one was approved in a vote held at the plant May 9, not at the union hall.

Unionists from throughout the area had joined the Teamsters in solidarity during their strike. A delegation of eight rail workers, members of SMART-TD Local 1373, walked the line. They provided coffee, food and a donation of several hundred dollars.

Jerome Johnson, a rail conductor and vice chair of the local, who had previously worked at the Liberty Coke facility for 12 years, said, “Solidarity is important, we all have the same cause. At the end of the day, the union is only as strong as its members.”

Members of United Auto Workers Region 9 also picketed in solidarity. A neighborhood church organized a solidarity rally at the plant May 4. Dozens of parishioners and the Philly Harvest Motorcycle Ministry brought food for the strike.

— Ved Dookhun

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



June 8, 1998

Striking Russian coal miners in Siberia and the North Caucasus lifted their blockade of the Trans-Siberian railway May 24 after government officials promised to pay overdue wages. Miners in Inta, near the Polar Circle, on strike since the first week of May, continued blocking the railway there. The miners’ battle boosted actions by hundreds of thousands of workers who are responding to the deepening economic crisis that is gripping the country.

The miners blocked key railways, cutting the country in half and paralyzing the transportation network. Mikhail Shmakov, the leader of one of Russia’s trade unions, warned that “railway tracks will be dismantled the very next day” if the government tried to use troops against the miners to end the blockade.

Moscow has cut government subsidies as part of pressing for brutal “market reforms.”



June 8, 1973

COACHELLA, Calif. — As the deadline for the beginning of the grape harvest approaches in this Mohave desert agricultural area, a showdown is shaping up between the United Farm Workers Union, and an alliance of growers and Teamsters union bureaucrats.

The Farm Workers had signed three-year contracts with the Coachella Valley grape growers in 1970. When those contracts expired the growers announced they had signed agreements with the Teamsters union. One of the major gains of the 1970 contract was establishment of the union hiring hall and abolition of the hated labor contractor system. The Teamsters sweetheart contracts provide for abolition of the union hiring hall and reinstatement of the contractor system.

The gravity of the situation should not be underestimated. The very existence of the union is in the balance.



May 24, 1948

‘End capitalism to stop war’ — speech on national NBC radio launching campaign of the Socialist Workers Party’s first presidential candidate, Farrell Dobbs:

Less than three years after the termination of the Second World War we are threatened with the imminent outbreak of another war. This is the cycle of capitalism — war, depression, inflation, and again war.

Capitalist production for profits cannot be reconciled with peace and prosperity for the people.

There can be no effective struggle against the twin monsters of war and military dictatorship unless it is directed towards the establishment of a Workers and Farmers Government, which will organize the country and the world for a society based on human needs, without profits, classes or exploitation.

Back Ukraine independence!

Continued from front page

ited strategic value, the assault cost tens of thousands of deaths, the majority on the Russian side. Ukrainian forces have advanced to occupy hills flanking the west of Bakhmut. To hold the city, more Russian reinforcements are being sent.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian forces are being readied for counteroffensives along the 600 miles of the front. Several pro-war Russian commentators expressed doubts about Moscow's need to seize Bakhmut.

It "will turn out to be a Pyrrhic victory," commander Igor Girkin said. Girkin was a defense minister in Moscow's puppet government in the so-called Donetsk People's Republic in 2014.

"The best strike units of the Russian Armed Forces are exhausted from months of fighting. Stocks of ammunition are minimal," Girkin says. If Ukrainian forces attacked in the Donetsk region, toward Mariupol, they would face troops "that are badly shattered and 'thinned out' by redeployment of reserves to Bakhmut."

Kyiv repeatedly sends messages in Russian to Moscow's troops, urging them to surrender under protection of the Ukrainian "I Want to Live" program. It provides secure contact details for Russian soldiers or their wives or mothers to use.

Working people bear brunt of war

Moscow's invasion has devastated Ukraine's economy, cutting output by almost 30%. Inflation has reached 26.6% and unemployment is over 20%.

For older Ukrainians trying to get by on a pension, life is particularly tough. More are turning to city street trading to make ends meet.

"With the outbreak of war, it has become worse," 60-year-old Oleksandr

told the *Kyiv Post* at a street market in the capital. "I used to repair cars, jeeps, and anything with a petrol engine," the former mechanics teacher at the Kyiv Polytechnical Institute said. Having lost a leg, he can't do that now.

His pension is only \$76 per month "and they say electricity and water will become more expensive soon." Now he is selling "my things. For food, for a living."

Amid the dislocations of the war, the Ukrainian parliament discussed a draft law May 2 allowing the new owners of companies to rip up union contracts, opening the door to further assaults on workers' wages and conditions. Mykhailo Volynets, a leader of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine and a member of parliament, moved to amend the law to protect workers' rights.

A key aim of the Independent Trade Union of Mineworkers of Ukraine (NPGU) "is to help our members who were drafted into the army and the members of their families as well as displaced persons and those living under shelling near the frontline," Pavlo Holota, a leader of the NGPU told the U.K.-based Ukraine Solidarity Campaign in March. They've also organized actions around unpaid wages and boss attacks on working conditions.

Members of the NGPU resisting Moscow's occupation in parts of eastern Ukraine have had their union banned by Kremlin authorities.

Kremlin arrests cultural figures

The Putin regime has waged a campaign to suppress criticism of the war since it started. The repression has intensified as Moscow's losses have mounted. A Moscow court handed opposition activist Mikhail Krieger a seven-year



Armed Forces of Ukraine
Shelled building in destroyed city of Bakhmut, eastern Ukraine. Moscow's forces suffered devastating losses during nine months of combat there, taking most of the city by May 20. Ukrainian forces took hills to west of city. They're planning to launch a counteroffensive.

prison sentence May 17 on charges of "justifying terrorism" and "inciting hatred." He was arrested in November after posting anti-Putin comments.

Just ahead of his sentencing Krieger addressed the court.

"I am being persecuted for my anti-war and now openly pro-Ukrainian position. I don't try to hide it. To the contrary, I try to make it clear to as many people as possible at every opportunity." He said he hoped "for a Ukrainian victory in every way," because "if Russians are to win their freedom, it will only come out of this victory."

Krieger told the judge and prosecutors that his perspective defends their rights as well as his, "so that your sons, brothers, fathers and husbands are not taken off to fight in this criminal war and returned to you in a body bag. It seems to me that your stake in this is as great as mine. Only you are more afraid."

Putin's assault on opposition to the war is also dealing blows to Russian culture. A Moscow court ordered the

fessions" coerced by torture that they described in court and statements by three "secret witnesses."

At the sentencing hearing, Dzhelyal wore a T-shirt with the colors of the Ukrainian and Tatar flags, saying, "Two flags, a united people." Asan Akhtemov's T-shirt said, "We will lay down body and soul for our freedom," words from the Ukrainian national anthem.

In April, 21-year-old Appaz Kuramet, a Ukrainian Tatar language teacher, was sentenced to seven years in a Russian prison after visiting Crimea and lending a friend less than \$14 in July 2022. He was framed up on charges that his loan was to support an illegal armed group after his friend joined the Ukrainian "Crimea" volunteer battalion, a group of Tatars who fought to defend Kyiv in the early months of the war.

A 17-year sentence was handed down May 18 against Oleksandr Sizikov, a blind man who could not have read the books that the Russian police planted in his home as "evidence" of his involvement with the banned Muslim Hizb ut-Tahrir. The group is legal in Ukraine. Fellow prisoners Alim Sufianov, who wore a T-shirt at the sentencing reading, "Hard times give birth to strong people," and Seiran Khairedinov, whose T-shirt read, "We are your prisoners, but not your slaves," were given 12-year sentences.

Rail unionists send solidarity to residents in East Palestine

Continued from front page

it's only the unions that have the power to make the changes needed." Brendle was part of the strike against Allegheny Technologies Inc. in 2021. His local is a member of the Hall of Fame Central Labor Council, which includes East Palestine and Columbiana County.

Members of two Lincoln, Nebraska, rail unions initiated a solidarity statement that was endorsed by their locals, Lodge 1320 of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and SMART-TD Local 0305. The statement reads in part, rail union members "value the fight of working people of East Palestine as you continue to press to gain control over all the needed steps to clean up the area since the February 3rd derailment and protect your health long-term. Your fight is our fight."

They plan to have the locals send copies of the statement to their national union leaderships and Central Labor Councils in the East Palestine area.

In late March, President Felix Martinez, Secretary-Treasurer Marty Frates and other officials of Teamsters Local 70 in Alameda County, California, endorsed rail unions' demands for government action in support of East Palestine area residents. Local 70 organizes auto truck drivers, car haulers and helpers.

"We know this wreck is not simply a one-off," they wrote. "Historically the relentless pursuit of profits by corpora-



Militant/Arrin Hawkins
Union rail workers picket in Baltimore Oct. 23 during battle for a national contract. Rail unions are speaking out on East Palestine derailment, joining fight for control over health and safety.

tions across business sectors is to blame any time workers or community members fall victim to industrial disasters."

Workers in the chemical and oil industry, and communities near those plants, have faced similar disasters to the East Palestine derailment. On May 18 Mike Smith, chair of the National Oil Bargaining Program of the United Steelworkers, denounced the death of a union member in a fire at the Marathon Galveston Bay, Texas, refinery.

Smith wrote, "In just the past few

weeks, four workers were hospitalized due to a gas leak at Marathon's Wilmington Refinery in Los Angeles and nine more as a result of a massive fire in Deer Park at a Shell Chemical Plant [in Texas]. We must continue to fight to ensure our employers don't get away with putting profits ahead of safety."

These actions show the potential for the unions to take the lead in the fight in East Palestine and more broadly.

The outcry of local residents in East Palestine and the spotlight it has put na-

tionally on the bosses' drive for profit, forced Norfolk Southern bosses to reverse their decision to restart running trains on tracks laying on top of contaminated ballast and soil. They had to remove the tracks and dig up toxic soil, and to pay for air, water and soil testing around the derailment site.

But residents remain deeply suspicious of the measures the company and government agencies are taking and the consequences for themselves and their families in the future. Many are looking for ways to gain some control over the cleanup and their long-term health.

A well-attended May 16 meeting was called by the newly formed Unity Council for the East Palestine Train Derailment. The group invited Norfolk Southern; local officials, including the East Palestine mayor; and the Environmental Protection Agency. Only local Region 5 EPA representatives came.

Organizers asked everyone whose family members were showing medical problems to raise their hands. Most did.

The group's demands were presented by Hillary Flint from Enon Valley, Pennsylvania. The train derailment took place on the Ohio-Pennsylvania border and the chemical fires spread contamination to towns in both states.

Participants demanded that the Ohio governor declare a state of emergency so they can gain access to more government funding; for residents outside the artificial "1-mile" from the derailment limit to get free testing and financial aid; for Norfolk Southern to pay for the relocation of any families who feel unsafe in their homes, temporarily or permanently; for residents to choose and hire an independent scientist "to complete air, water and soil testing" at bosses' expense; and that Norfolk Southern finance independent medical testing and treatment under the control of residents.

Many voiced their frustration with the actions and attitudes of Norfolk Southern and the government.

Linda Murphy, who is active with the group and has been outspoken since the derailment, wasn't able to make the meeting but got a full report from those who did. "It was really large, by the end there was standing room only," she told the *Militant*. "More people who haven't felt comfortable speaking out before came and it helps shine a light on how many are still concerned."

In relation to the weekly public EPA meetings being held, Murphy said, "It's all smoke and mirrors. The EPA officials want to give you lots of 'facts,' but don't want you to challenge it."

At the EPA meeting May 18, agency speakers had to confirm Norfolk Southern has begun construction of a wastewater treatment plant on the derailment site. This didn't go over well. EPA response coordinator Mark Durno said processing wastewater on site would save the railroad money.

Tricia Edwards, EPA onsite coordinator, said there are 20,000 to 25,000 tons of contaminated soil still piled up at the site. When it rains, she admitted, chemicals can run off into surrounding areas.

Angry residents complained about how the Norfolk Southern-paid contractors doing the cleanup had set up industrial fans to circulate the air where they were working. "But the fans also kick up and circulate potentially contaminated dust into the air," *Salem News* reported.

US banks rake in record profits while banking crisis threatens to spread

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

As working people struggle to try and make ends meet, U.S. banks reported all-time record profits of \$80 billion in the first quarter, up 33% from a year earlier. Over half of these profits went into the coffers of the First Citizens and Flagstar banks, which bought out the remnants of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank, respectively, after they collapsed in March.

But the crisis facing regional banks didn't end. At the beginning of May,

First Republic Bank began bleeding depositors and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation seized it, then sold it May 1 at a bargain basement price to banking giant JPMorgan Chase. Chase is now three times the size it was before the 2008 financial crisis, with control over assets of nearly \$4 trillion.

The capitalist rulers fear these bank failures could spread, threatening a broader economic crisis in the U.S. and worldwide. On the heels of the First Republic collapse, nearly 10% of deposi-

tors withdrew their funds from PacWest Bancorp. PacWest stock has plummeted over 70% so far this year.

A May 4 Gallup poll found 48% of people surveyed are worried about their deposits, a higher percentage than during the 2008 world financial crisis. The FDIC insures about \$7.4 trillion deposited in U.S. banks. A larger amount — \$10.5 trillion — is not insured, because it's over the FDIC's \$250,000 cap on insurance. If the recent bank collapses were to expand into a broader banking crisis, this distinction would become meaningless. The funds the FDIC has to cover losses is \$128 billion, enough to cover just 1.27% of all insured deposits!

'Next shoe to drop'

Many regional banks have counted on making a killing in commercial real estate loans, a \$5.6 trillion industry. But that isn't going so well.

"US lenders warned that commercial property is 'next shoe to drop,'" the May 9 *Financial Times* headline read. The paper interviewed billionaire Charlie Munger, vice chair of Warren Buffet's Berkshire Hathaway. He said bluntly, banks are "full" of "bad loans" today.

"A lot of real estate isn't so good any more," he said. "We have a lot of troubled office buildings, a lot of troubled shopping centers."

There's 74.5 million square feet of vacant office space in New York City, enough to fill more than 26 Empire State Buildings. And Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and a number of other cities are facing a similar situation, as the effects of the pandemic, rising rents and mortgages, and deteriorating working and living conditions convinced many to move out of town.

The crisis wracking the banking sys-

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‘There is no solution to the Jewish question under capitalism’

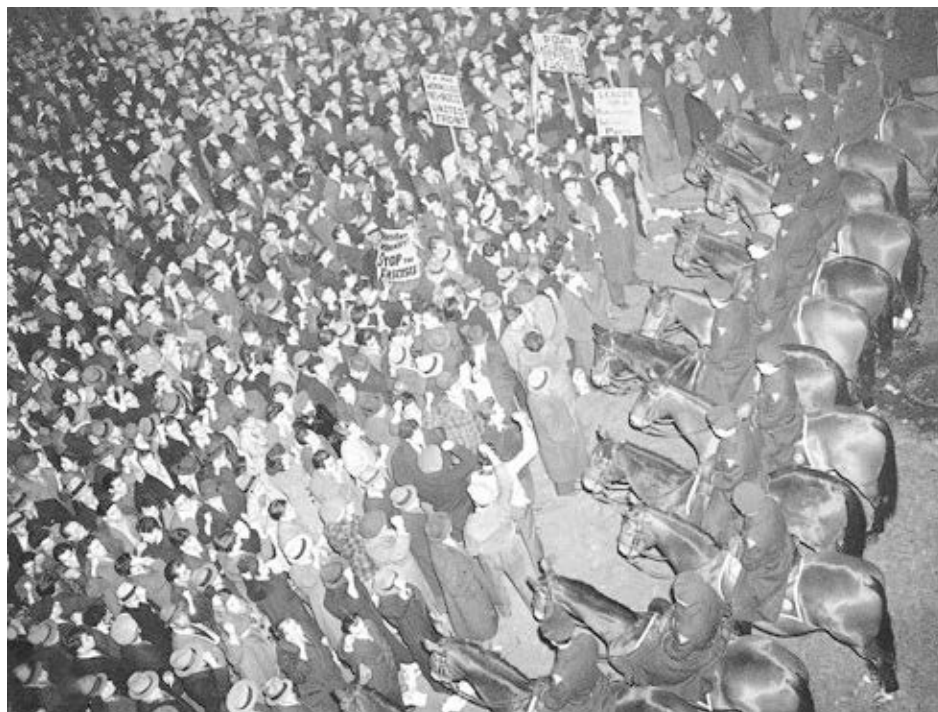
The French edition of *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon is one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for May. Leon's centuries-long history of the Jewish people and the struggle against Jew-hatred was begun on the eve of the second imperialist world war as the Nazi regime in Germany began what became the Holocaust. He completed the book as a revolutionary communist leading underground resistance against the Nazi occupation of Belgium. The fate of the Jews and all humanity, he wrote, was tied to the victory of proletarian revolutions against imperialist war and fascism. In 1944 he was arrested and sent to Auschwitz, where he was killed in the gas chambers at 26. Copyright © 2020 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY DAVE PRINCE

The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation was completed by Abram Leon in 1942 in Belgium during the wartime occupation by Germany. As the twin slaughters of World War II and the Nazis' "Final Solution" were unfolding, Leon wrote the book to explain the foundations of Jew-hatred in the imperialist epoch, as well as the road to its eradication.

"There is no solution to the Jewish question under capitalism," he said, "just



When fascist groups called a rally at Madison Square Garden in 1939, 50,000 working people came out in New York for a countermobilization called by the Socialist Workers Party.

as there is no solution to other problems posed before humanity, without profound social upheavals," revolutionary upheavals. "Unless the deep roots of the Jewish question are eliminated, the effects cannot be eliminated."

That fact of history, of the class struggle, has been confirmed and reconfirmed many times during the last one hundred and fifty years, as capitalism has become more and more dominant the world over.

In addition to murderous pogroms across Eastern and Central Europe and Russia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, 40 percent of the world's 16.6 million Jews were slaughtered between 1941 and 1945. That's 6 million human beings. Today, seventy-five years after the end of World War II, the world Jewish population is 14.5 million, still some 15 percent below what it had been when the war began. Over that same period, the overall population of the earth has more than tripled.

The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation is a contribution to understanding the place of the fight against Jew-hatred as an integral part of the program and strategy of the revolutionary workers movement. ...

These conclusions have been reinforced by the anti-Semitic demagoguery and activity spreading among bourgeois liberals and the middle-class left in the United States, United King-

dom, and other imperialist countries. In the UK we've seen the deepening anti-Jewish evolution of the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn, while in the US, Democratic Party leaders in Congress refused to call for a vote censuring one of their own members for making anti-Jewish slurs.

The so-called Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) campaign rampant on campuses seeks to quarantine Israel as a pariah among nations. It systematically targets those in North America, Europe, and elsewhere who do business with individuals, companies, and institutions in Israel and organizes to exclude Israeli Jews from participation in the arts, sports, medical conferences, and university-sponsored events the world over.

Anti-Semitic rants and violence against Jews today are not an historical aberration. They are not one-off events. The underlying causes of Jew-hatred remain unresolved and are fueled today by accelerating class polarization as a result of the deepening capitalist crisis. ...

Individuals and groups guilty of acts of Jew-hatred and anti-Semitic venom in recent years not only cross the spectrum of bourgeois politics from left to right, but also skin colors, religious creeds, and national origins. Whether carried out by white supremacists, Islamists, or those who themselves face racial, religious, or national oppression, assaults against Jews are an at-

tack on human solidarity within the working class and its allies. They are a deadly diversion from, an obstacle to, forging in struggle the revolutionary working-class solidarity necessary to bring closer a socialist world.

Such actions meet with opposition and revulsion among broad layers of working people and the oppressed. ...

Among Jews and other oppressed peoples across Russia and Eastern Europe, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were held in high regard for their uncompromising combat against anti-Semitic persecution. "It is not the Jews who are enemies of the toilers," said Lenin in a speech to the workers and peasants of Soviet Russia in March 1919. "The enemies of the workers are the capitalists of all lands. ... Disgrace and infamy to whoever sows enmity against Jews and hatred against other nations!"

From their origins in 1903 as a politically distinct working-class current, the Bolsheviks had led the fight throughout the tsarist empire against pogroms and persecution of Jews. The new workers and peasants government in Soviet Russia established by the October 1917 Revolution not only ensured the political rights of Jews but also encouraged a Jewish cultural revival — from everyday life to music, literature, painting, and theater. Publications and performances in the Yiddish language flourished.

The Bolshevik-led government put an end to murderous pogroms against Jews. It did so during the devastation of a three-year-long counterrevolutionary war waged by Russia's toppled landlords and capitalists, who joined forces with invading armies of fourteen imperialist powers — from London and Paris, to Tokyo and Washington. ...

The Bolshevik course to end oppression of the Jews was incorporated into the programmatic foundations of the Communist International. The Comintern, as it became known, was founded in March 1919 at the Bolsheviks' initiative as a world movement of proletarian parties seeking to emulate in each country what workers and peasants had begun in Russia a year and a half earlier.

That program and political line of march remain to this day the foundation on which the Socialist Workers Party and the world communist movement of which it is part stand.

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BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Build support for today’s union struggles

The following statement was issued May 24 by Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey State Senate.

Around the country Writers Guild members are striking against bosses’ drive to slash wages and residual payments, and worsen working conditions. I had the great pleasure to join hundreds of Guild members in a spirited New York City rally yesterday.

Teamsters at UPS nationwide are fighting for a contract that ends two-tier wages and for substantial pay raises for part-time workers.

In the last two weeks, United Auto Workers members at the Clarios battery plant near Toledo, Ohio, walked out for better wages and conditions; nurses in Belleville, New Jersey, rallied for safer staff/patient ratios and higher pay; and meatpackers at two Iowa plants have begun union-organizing drives.

Working people in East Palestine are fighting for greater control over medical care and the cleanup of the area after a toxic train derailment there. They’re winning growing support from the unions.

Bosses count on help from the big-business press to maintain a wall of silence around these fights. My campaign and the *Militant* strive to build working-class solidarity. All these battles deserve wide support.

Help spread the word! Help involve your union in sending messages of support, visiting picket lines and organizing contributions for these strikes.

Millions are learning from their own experience that politics today is class vs. class. They sense that new winds are starting to blow, and they’re increasingly open to getting involved. Victorious labor struggles set an example.

More workers are also learning they can’t look to the bosses’ political parties — the Democrats and Republicans — in these class struggles. The employers count on workers believing the only choice they have is to hold their nose and choose the “lesser evil” between parties that govern for them at home and abroad. But evil is evil. Millions have given up and no longer bother to vote.

Working people need our own party, a labor party based on the unions, that can speak for and mobilize all those exploited and oppressed by capital — small farmers and shopkeepers, immigrant workers and more.

A labor party can fight to put in power a workers and farmers government to rebuild society in our class interests. With power in our own hands, we can end the system of wage slavery and join in the worldwide fight for socialism.

Durham details attacks on rights by Democrats, FBI

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Durham with his notes of an Aug. 3, 2016, meeting with President Barack Obama, then-FBI boss James Comey and other officials. Brennan writes he briefed them about an “alleged approval by Hillary Clinton on July 26, 2016, of a proposal from one of her advisors to vilify Donald Trump by stirring up a scandal claiming interference by the Russian security services.”

After Trump took office, the FBI helped turn its operation into a two-year-long open-ended special counsel probe headed up by ex-FBI boss Robert Mueller. Its aim was to cripple the Trump presidency and cover up the FBI’s spying on him. At its conclusion, Mueller had to admit he “found no evidence that Trump’s campaign colluded with Russia.”

As Durham continued his investigation, Democrats decided to try to upstage him. Department of Justice Inspector General Michael Horowitz “investigated” the FBI’s conduct. He concluded in 2019 that no one involved was shown to “act out of political bias.” He especially singled out Strzok and Lisa Page, a special assistant to McCabe.

Durham shows this is a bald-faced lie. The two exchanged over 50,000 texts attacking Trump. And the FBI says it “lost” five months of their correspondence.

Page called Trump “a loathsome human.” Strzok called him a “disaster.” He said, “Hillary should win 100,000,000-0.” Later Strzok turned his venom on working people who would vote for Trump, saying they “will get what the voting public deserves.”

Democrats have tried to dismiss Durham’s report as old news and nothing to get excited about. The FBI said it had “already implemented dozens of corrective actions,” to prevent what Durham describes from happening again. Don’t worry, says current FBI boss Christopher Wray, those responsible for spying on Trump’s campaign have long since left the agency.

Strzok, who was fired by the FBI as it tried to cut its losses, claimed Durham’s report vindicated him!

US rulers seek to refurbish FBI image

Both Democrats and Republicans know the FBI’s standing has been damaged as decades of illegal spying and disruption were forced into the public eye. The targets were Black rights fighters, unionists, opponents of Washington’s wars and political groups, including the Socialist Workers Party.

The Democrats continue to use the political police agency to go after Trump and other political foes, telling their liberal and middle-class left base this shows the agency has changed its spots.

Republicans decry these attacks. A return to “the old” FBI is needed, Durham says, if the spy agency is to fulfill its mission statement to “Protect the Ameri-

can People and Uphold the Constitution.” He’s talking about the FBI of the 1950s and ’60s.

For working people there never were any good old days. Upholding constitutional protections is incompatible with the tasks of an intelligence agency whose job is the defense of capitalist rule.

Durham ends his report with a warning, quoting former Attorney General Edward Levi in 1977. “Nothing can more weaken the quality of life,” Levi said, “than our failure to make clear by words and deed that our law is not an instrument of partisan purpose.”

Levi was tasked with resurrecting the FBI’s reputation after revelations of the Richard Nixon administration’s Watergate scandal, including wiretapping and burglary against its rivals in capitalist politics.

As part of his cleanup attempt, Levi also announced the FBI was terminating its Cointelpro program of spying and disruption against the SWP. This came three years after the party launched a political and legal campaign to force out the facts and extent of FBI attacks on the SWP and others. This included the FBI file on Fred Halstead, a longtime leader of the SWP and its presidential candidate in 1968.

“Twenty-nine years it covers,” Halstead told a meeting of 300 people in New York in 1976. “This is just 533 pages of how they followed me around every place I went. And to every job I had. And every apartment I lived at. And they spoke to my employers, and my landlords, and the business agents in my union, and even to people I interviewed when I wrote articles for the *Militant*.”

“If they can do this to me they can do it to anyone,” he said. The FBI was forced to admit it had collected *10 million* pages of files on the SWP.

Levi’s effort to resurrect the reputation of the FBI failed. The 15-year-long political battle by the SWP won the support of thousands. It resulted in a federal court ruling in 1986 that broke new ground. For the first time a court ruled that the use of the FBI or other cop informers to spy on individuals, including SWP members and other working-class militants, violates freedom of association; that burglaries to steal papers or plant microphones violate the Fourth Amendment; that the covert disruption of the party’s activity and the lives of party members described at length in Judge Thomas Griesa’s ruling are illegal.

“The party’s campaign and the victory won for the SWP,” says the political resolution adopted by the party in December, “helped keep political space open for all working people to speak, organize, and act ... wherever the exploited and oppressed classes are thinking politically, discussing and fighting back.” It’s printed in *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward*.

Beijing looks to expand

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to China, citing concerns that it will be used by Beijing to enhance its military. These measures also curb economic growth in China.

Over several decades Beijing opened its economy to international capital and export markets. Across China hundreds of millions of peasants were pushed to migrate to cities to provide a pool of cheap labor. As the economy expanded 15-fold in the two decades leading up to 2021, vast wealth accumulated in the pockets of foreign and state-backed domestic capitalists.

Washington and other imperialist powers abandoned hope that this giant expansion, now slowed, would boost profits, and stabilize the world order they preside over. Instead, Beijing is now seen by them as a dangerous rival. Tensions between it and Washington have escalated since Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

The Chinese rulers are grappling with how to lessen their reliance on export-driven growth by boosting the home market. But their own Stalinist-trained, capitalist-minded regime has long held down wages.

Tens of millions of urban migrant workers are excluded from state benefits like health care and schooling. China’s internal consumption per capita is \$8,700 a year, substantially lower even than South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore. China’s working-age population has been contracting since 2012 and its total population is now declining for the first time in 60 years. Youth unemployment has reached over 20%.

Local governments and state-run corporations are weighed down by colossal debts. Decades of loans for infrastructure projects have been swollen by the cost of brutal pandemic quarantine measures imposed by Beijing. About a third of China’s major city authorities can barely pay the interest, let alone the principal, on their debts.

Workers and farmers have taken to the streets in unprecedented numbers recently to protest unpaid wages and cuts to retirement funds and public services.

Belt and Road runs into problems

The Belt and Road Initiative, dubbed by China’s President Xi Jinping as the “project of the century,” made Beijing the world’s largest lender to semicolonial countries. The network of infrastructure and trade links was meant to boost the profits and political influence of Chinese capitalists.

But it has lost momentum. In many Chinese-financed projects, from Latin America to Africa and Asia, overpricing, allegations of graft and construction flaws have plagued these mega-projects.

Chinese-built hydroelectric plants, touted as a means to fill the needs of millions for electrical power, have dangerous defects. Officials in Pakistan shut down the Neelum-Jhelum hydroelectric plant last year — concerned that its tunnels would collapse — just four years after it opened. Over 17,000 cracks found since 2016 in the Chinese-built Coca Coda Sinclair dam in Ecuador have proved to be unreparable.

As the global capitalist crisis bites, many semi-colonial nations struggle to repay debts incurred to finance Beijing-funded projects. In case of default, Beijing can seize facilities, as with Sri Lanka’s port of Hambantota.

In the Asia-Pacific region, Beijing’s military expansion and aggressive moves include the fortification of artificial islands in the disputed South China Sea, strangling political rights in Hong Kong, and threats to invade self-ruled Taiwan. Washington threatens to respond militarily to any aggression against Taiwan.

The U.S. rulers have unmatched military might and have strengthened their alliances with imperialist powers like Japan and Australia, and with the governments of India, South Korea, Vietnam and the Philippines, to counter Beijing’s growing military clout.

Amid this intensifying competition no other capitalist power is anywhere near to having a currency that can challenge the dollar’s status as the world’s reserve. The greenback accounted for 60% of global currency reserves at the end of last year, in contrast to the euro’s 20%. Trade in the yuan accounted for less than 3%.

‘Militant’ Prisoners Fund

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