

# THE MILITANT

EDITORIAL

Cuban Revolution shows road to end threat of nuclear war

— PAGE 9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 87/NO. 31 AUGUST 21, 2023

## SWP campaign offers program working people can use to fight

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Socialist Workers Party candidates and campaign supporters are presenting a political program and demands that point a road forward to defend the interests of working people, and advancing the need for solidarity with unionists fighting attacks by the bosses — from longshoremen in Canada to locomotive builders in Erie, Pennsylvania.

They are joining strike picket lines, organizing solidarity with working-class struggles, going door to door in cities and the countryside to talk to fellow workers and introduce them to the *Militant*, and participating in a wide variety of protests, including actions in defense of Ukraine independence in face of Moscow's aggression. Members of the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom are doing the same.

In Los Angeles, Socialist Workers Party members and supporters of the campaign of Laura Garza for U.S. Senate from California have been

Continued on page 3

## LA hotel, city workers strike, join fights by actors, writers

Common actions build working-class solidarity



Over 11,000 Los Angeles city workers, including sanitation and airport workers, mechanics, gardeners and lifeguards, held 24-hour strike Aug. 8, protesting understaffing and overwork.

BY BILL ARTH AND ELLIE GARCÍA

LOS ANGELES — Hotel workers held their fourth round of rolling strikes here Aug. 3-7. Thousands of UNITE HERE Local 11 members

struck at 26 of the 60 area hotels where union contracts had expired June 30. Area hotels are filled to capacity for the summer tourist season. In addition, pop star Taylor Swift's Eras tour was holding six nights of sold-out concerts at the 70,000 seat SoFi Arena.

On Aug. 5, 300 strikers and supporters

Continued on page 5

## As economy slows, Chinese youth face lack of jobs, fear of the future



A jobs fair in China, where one-fifth of young people cannot find jobs today. Alienation spreads as China's exports slump, construction falls, amid sharpening worldwide conflicts, competition.

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

"You must not aim too high or be picky about work," Huang Zongming, president of Chongqing Metropolitan College of Science and Technology in southwestern China, told more than 9,000 graduates in June.

A record number of Chinese college graduates this year, 11.6 million, will be seeking jobs, worsening already bleak employment prospects.

More than one in five young people in China are jobless today, the highest level since the country started recording such statistics in 2018. And the actual level of unemployment for young workers is estimated to be far higher, with 45% either not working or in school.

China's economy — hamstrung by heavy borrowing, a property-market downturn, and the danger of more state

Continued on page 9

## Defend free speech for all! Drop charges against Trump

BY TERRY EVANS

Defending constitutionally protected free speech is at the heart of fighting the latest assault on political rights by President Joseph Biden's Justice Department. Special counsel Jack Smith's second indictment of former President Donald Trump would gut the First Amendment in an attempt to drive Biden's main rival for the presidency out of the 2024 race and put him in jail.

The Bill of Rights, the post-Civil War Reconstruction amendments, and other constitutional protections are crucial for working people. It was militant struggle by artisans and farmers that won freedom of speech and assembly, due process and other rights. These are necessary whenever working people defend ourselves, build unions and engage in political activity in our own class interests.

Under capitalism, all suppression of political rights — regardless of who

Continued on page 6

## Amazon workers picket warehouses in UK over long hours, low wages

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

COVENTRY, England — Hundreds of workers picketed outside Amazon's large BHX4 warehouse here Aug. 4. Dozens more picketed at a smaller facility in nearby Rugeley. Altogether over 1,000 workers took two days of strike action, marking the first anniversary of spontaneous sit-down strikes and protests at Amazon sites in Coventry, at Tilbury in London and elsewhere. Those actions came in response to boss attacks on their wages.

Continued on page 6

## Ukraine resists Putin's invasion, anti-war views spread in Russia

BY ROY LANDERSEN

For 18 months, the Ukrainian armed forces, with decisive support from working people, have fought courageously to repel Moscow's invasion. A Ukrainian counteroffensive begun two months ago is aimed at defeating Russian President Vladimir Putin's drive to crush Ukraine's inde-

### DEFEND UKRAINE'S INDEPENDENCE!

pendence and re-establish the prison house of nations that existed under the Russian czars.

The Ukrainian command shifted tactics after its forces ran up against heavily mined and fortified front line positions backed by Moscow's greater air power. To reduce Ukrainian losses, Kyiv is using strikes at ammunition depots, command posts and bridges behind Russian lines, including on

Continued on page 4

### Inside

- Gov't-sponsored race-baiting led to Toronto teacher's death 2
- Canada port workers ratify new four-year contract 3
- Judge orders release of 'Newburgh 4' framed by FBI 7
- On the picket line, p. 5—
- Hotel workers strike against Sheraton Vancouver Airport 3,700 Toronto-area workers strike Metro grocery stores



# Gov't-sponsored race-baiting led to Toronto teacher's death

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Ontario Education Minister Stephen Lecce announced July 25 his department will review the allegations made by longtime Toronto school principal Richard Bilkszto, who committed suicide July 13. Bilkszto had launched a lawsuit against the Toronto District School Board for failing to support him when he was falsely accused of racism by a “facilitator” during sessions of a mandatory April 2021 diversity, equity and inclusion program for school administrators.

Bilkszto, after a 24-year career as a teacher, retired in 2019. He continued working for the Toronto school board as a contract principal. He was a member of the Toronto chapter of the Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism, which he helped to establish.

The diversity, equity and inclusion instruction was being led by Kike Ojo-Thompson. She is black and the CEO of the KOJO Institute, which has been contracted by the Toronto school board.

The program is similar to many others being promoted by “woke” officials throughout North America. The KOJO Institute is also well-remunerated for “facilitating” programs for the federal and Ontario governments, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and dozens of universities, banks and other capitalist outfits.

“We are here to talk about anti-black racism,” Ojo-Thompson said in the session. “But you in your whiteness think that you can tell me what’s really going on for black people? Your job in this

work as white people is to believe.”

However, Bilkszto did speak up, disagreeing with Ojo-Thompson’s assertion that Canada was a more racist country than the United States. He had taught earlier in Buffalo, New York, and was familiar with education and life in both countries.

The next day Ojo-Thompson doubled down on her attack on Bilkszto, telling the group his comments were an example of “resistance” that upholds white supremacy. She said his reference to “facts” was an attempt to derail the conversation and discredit her words, and encouraged everyone attending the session to push back when they see others being “accosted by white supremacy” by people like Bilkszto.

School board officials backed up Ojo-Thompson. Its executive superintendent thanked Ojo-Thompson on Twitter for “modeling the discomfort that administrators” — Bilkszto — “may need to experience in order to disrupt ABR” — anti-black racism.

Other school board officials berated him for displaying “male white privilege.”

In his lawsuit against the Toronto school board, Bilkszto says that it retaliated against him by disinviting him from graduation for a program he helped create and revoking a contract offer. His educational career had been all but terminated.

Bilkszto filed a claim with the Ontario Workplace, Safety, and Insurance Board, which investigated and concluded that Ojo-Thompson “was abusive, egregious and vexatious, and rises to



Inset, TVOntario



Longtime Toronto teacher and principal Richard Bilkszto, inset, a founding member of local Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism, was falsely accused of upholding “white supremacy” and continually bullied during government-mandated diversity, equity and inclusion program for school administrators in April 2021.

the level of workplace harassment and bullying.” They said she “appeared to intend to cause reputational damage and ‘make an example’ out of” Bilkszto.

The experience during the course resulted in Bilkszto taking a six-week medical leave from work. “The stress and effects of these incidents continued to plague Richard,” said a statement by his family released July 20 by his lawyer, Lisa Bilty. “His family and friends have been left reeling.”

Socialist Workers Party leader Mary-Alice Waters commented on programs — similar to those that KOJO runs — in the recently published Pathfinder Press book *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity — The Long View of History* by Frederick Engels, Karl Marx and George Novack. She said the “woke”

political framework they are based on is a reactionary barrier to objective, critical fact-based thinking, an understanding of class struggle as the fundamental motor force of human history, and the development of a revolutionary working-class movement capable of replacing capitalist society with socialism.

Waters condemns “today’s spreading ‘cancel culture’ among privileged middle-class layers in the universities, foundations, media and government circles, as well as the profoundly anti-working-class, anti-science ‘woke’ politics they promote.”

The bullying treatment meted out to Bilkszto at the hands of the Toronto District School Board administrators and the tragedy of his death is only one recent example of this reality.

## THE MILITANT

**Build solidarity with the Cuban Revolution!**

The ‘Militant’ tells the truth about and helps build solidarity with Cuba’s socialist revolution. This is key not only to the defense of the revolution from the U.S. rulers’ relentless economic assault, but to advancing working-class consciousness and struggles worldwide.



World Federation of Democratic Youth International youth delegates in Havana May 27 protest U.S. embargo against Cuba.

## SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

### NEW READERS

\$5 for 12 issues

### RENEWAL

\$10 for 12 weeks

\$20 for 6 months

\$35 for 1 year

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

from [pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com)

## The Militant

Vol. 87/No. 31

Closing news date: August 9, 2023

Editor: John Studer

Managing Editor: Terry Evans

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

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

Business Manager: Bob Bruce

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

Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com)

Website: [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)

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

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# SWP offers program to fight

Continued from front page

participating in a wide range of labor actions, from practice pickets at UPS before the Teamsters' contract expired, to rallies and picket lines of hotel workers on strike. "Over three days we sold eight subscriptions and 20 books to Teamsters at UPS," SWP leader Norton Sandler told the *Militant*.

## UPS workers get the 'Militant'

Sandler and SWP member Ellie García spoke to workers Aug. 6 going into a Teamsters local union meeting for UPS workers so they could learn more about the details of the tentative contract. Sandler and García set up a table with books by leaders of the SWP and other revolutionaries and stayed around for several hours talking to workers as they came out of the meeting. At that one meeting five UPS workers bought subscriptions and 17 books.

"The key was that we had participated in four of the practice picket lines in the area the union organized ahead of a possible strike," said Sandler.

"When we went to the practice picket lines, we would get there early. Party members would introduce ourselves as unionists and retired unionist supporters and let them know 'We're with you guys,'" García added. "We'd show the *Militant* and ask them about conditions they faced on the job."

"By the time of the union contract meetings, many workers already knew us," García said. "They saw us as part of their fight. It's not just the books and the *Militant*, it's getting to know people and building relations with them."

"That's how we learned about the contract discussion meetings," Sandler said. "Two workers texted us to let us know the details."

"We've sold a slew of *Teamster Rebellion* especially, but also *Teamster Power* and *Teamster Politics*, books by Farrell Dobbs," Sandler said. Dobbs was the central leader of the Teamsters union in Minnesota and a leader of what became the Socialist Workers Party at the time. "UPS workers want to know their history," Sandler said, so they can strengthen the union. The four volumes by Dobbs, including *Teamster Bureaucracy*, describe lessons of the class-struggle leadership of the strikes and organizing drives that transformed the Teamsters union in much of the Midwest in the 1930s into a fighting

social movement.

Also sold were copies of *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, and *Malcolm X, Black Liberation and the Road to Workers Power*, by Barnes.

"We're doing the same things in the rotating strikes by hotel workers," said García. They made copies of a campaign statement by Laura Garza and have been distributing them at the rallies and picket lines.

## NJ nurses strike for more staffing

In New Brunswick, New Jersey, Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for State Senate, and Osborne Hart, SWP candidate for Philadelphia City Council, joined picketing nurses on strike at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Aug. 6.

"When we demanded better staffing, Barnabas, the hospital owners, told us that nurses in all their other hospitals would want that!" picket captain Nancy Lipschutz told Kuniansky. "We have been asking for better staffing ratios for years. Safe staffing saves lives."

Lipschutz said that Barnabas Health gives huge campaign contributions "to both sides of the aisle." She noted that New Jersey Gov. Philip Murphy, a Democrat, "hasn't said a word about our strike."

"I am at a crossroads. I don't know what the answer is," Lipschutz said. "Voting for the lesser of two evils is no way to vote."

"And you still end up with one of the evils," said Kuniansky. "We need a working-class party, a labor party, based on the unions. It would be supported by a lot of workers and farmers."

"I absolutely agree," said Lipschutz. "Candidates should be a service to the community, not just out there raising these outrageous campaign budgets."

It's through today's struggles, including strikes by nurses, writers, actors and hotel workers, that workers begin to see the power of solidarity, Hart said, and the need to organize independent of the capitalist parties.

Lipschutz and other nurses took



Militant/Janet Post

Joanne Kuniansky, right, SWP candidate for New Jersey State Senate, joined in solidarity with striking nurses, members of USW Local 4-200, at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, Aug. 6. From left, picket captain Nancy Lipschutz and nurse Patrick Miller.

campaign literature and got copies of the *Militant*.

## Anti-working-class tax scheme

In London, some 200 people rallied in Trafalgar Square Aug. 5 to protest the city government's expansion of its Ultra-Low Emission Zone to the outer boroughs. The anti-working-class scheme, championed by Mayor Sadiq Khan, imposes a 12.50 pound (\$16) daily charge on all vehicles driving within the zone if they are deemed "noncompliant" with emission standards.

Members of the Communist League joined the protest with a sign saying, "Stop ULEZ! For a union-led fight against green taxes on working people."

"It would cost 15,000 pounds to replace our two vans that are non-compliant," Dave Whittington, who works for a small printing company in Staines, told Communist League member Ögmundur Jónsson.

"It's through strikes and other union-led struggles, including against regressive taxes like ULEZ," Jónsson said, "that workers can build a party of labor that fights for all working people and can lead the struggle for a workers and farmers government."

Whittington bought a copy of the

*Militant* and left his number to stay in touch. "I'm glad to meet like-minded people here," he said.

Many at the rally were interested in discussing the witch hunt in the U.S. against Donald Trump led by the Democratic Party and FBI and the dangers this poses for political freedoms working people need. Rally participants bought four books, including *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us* and *Fifty Years of Covert Operations in the US: Washington's Political Police and the American Working Class* by Larry Seigle. One *Militant* subscription was also sold.

Partisans of the *Militant* should take advantage of the increase in labor battles to get in touch with subscribers, invite them to bring solidarity to strike picket lines, to further discuss the working-class course presented in the paper, and to encourage them to renew.

To join in campaigning with the SWP candidates and Communist Leagues, see list of party campaign offices on page 8.

Janet Post in Philadelphia and Ögmundur Jónsson in London contributed to this article.

# Canada port workers ratify new four-year contract

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Rob Ashton, president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada, announced Aug. 4 that after rejecting a previous contract offer the week before, the union's members had voted by over 74% to ratify a new four-year agreement with the BC Maritime Employers Association.

The ILWU's 7,400 members on the West Coast had shut down all 30 port terminals in British Columbia from July 1-13. These ports handle some 25% of Canada's foreign trade. The workers demanded a two-year contract, wage increases to cover inflation, and job protection from the bosses' drive to step up automation and contract out union jobs.

Despite government strikebreaking threats, union members voted twice to reject the bosses' offer of a 5% a year raise in the first two years and 4% for each of the final two. This is below the rate of inflation.

In the contract the workers voted up,

they won new language "that addressed the union's concerns about employers outsourcing maintenance work to non-union contractors," the Aug. 5 *Globe and Mail* reported. Still, some 25% of the ILWU members were not convinced they got enough.

Canada's largest shippers across the country called for the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Ottawa to recall Parliament from its summer break, bar any further strike action, and impose the bosses' proposal.

Trudeau called in the Canada Industrial Relations Board, a so-called independent body appointed by the government, which set an Aug. 4 deadline for the union to accept a contract.

Even with the agreement, Labour Minister Seamus O'Regan issued threats against workers' right to strike in the future. "This dispute caused serious disruption to our supply chains, risking our strong international reputation as a reliable trading partner," he told the press. "We will have more to

say on this soon."

The determined fight by longshore workers to make gains won widespread solidarity from working people worldwide, including the refusal by ILWU locals in the U.S. to handle cargo diverted from Canada.

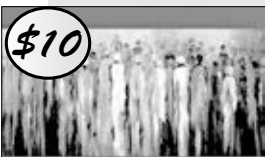
"Thank you to all of my sisters and brothers of ILWU international, port workers from around the world, and numerous nonport workers unions who came in solidarity to support us in our fight," Rickey Baryer, vice president of ILWU Local 500, said Aug. 5.

"Local 500 passed a resolution to show solidarity with the workers who have been locked out at the Pan Pacific Hotel here for two years," machine operator Daniel Hutton told the *Militant* Aug. 2 after the union's meeting to discuss the contract offer. "They took the time out to support us during our strike."

"They have shown a lot of courage and strength. We owe it to them to reciprocate to see that they get a contract," he said.

## Are they rich because they're smart?

*Class, Privilege and Learning Under Capitalism*  
by Jack Barnes



Are they rich because they're smart?

CLASS, PRIVILEGE AND LEARNING UNDER CAPITALISM  
—  
JACK BARNES

A growing layer of well-paid professionals "are mortified to be identified with working people. They fear someday being ruled by those they worry could become the 'great mob': the toiling and producing majority."

pathfinderpress.com



# Ukraine resists Putin's invasion

Continued from front page

the Crimean Peninsula occupied by Moscow since 2014. Seaborne drones are attacking Russian warships in the Black Sea.

The Kremlin's response is to step up its murderous airstrikes against civilian targets. A guided bomb hit a blood transfusion center in the northeastern city of Kupiansk, Aug. 5, causing a large fire, killing two people and injuring four.

Putin's government is using hundreds of thousands of workers and farmers in Russia as cannon fodder. It recently lifted the upper age of conscription from 27 to 30 years of age as of Jan. 1, stirring opposition to the war.

"From next January, I can be called up," Peter, 27, a salesman in St. Petersburg, told the BBC. "I don't want to take part in this war and die for someone else's goals."

Desperate to hold onto Ukrainian territory, Moscow is thrusting elite forces into combat. Mikhail Teplinsky, commander of the Russian Airborne Forces, admitted at least 8,500 of his troops have been wounded since the war began. The BBC estimates at least 1,800 paratroopers have been killed. Teplinsky's online posting was quickly deleted by the Kremlin as it tries to keep its devastating losses hidden from working people in Russia.

## Ukraine health staff protest attacks

While working people overwhelmingly support the defense of Ukraine's independence, they try to find ways to fight against attacks on their wages and working conditions by the bosses.

Despite the government's wartime ban on protests, a dozen unionists and medical workers in Ukraine demonstrated at the Ministry of Health in Kyiv July 27. They tried to present a letter demanding a halt to wage cuts, but were prevented by officials.

Over several years, medical workers and their unions have resisted government efforts — backed by the International Monetary Fund — to cut expenditures on the nationalized hospital system. These have led to hospital closures, job losses, speedup, lower wages and excessive workloads.

In recent months primary care workers have gone unpaid, there have been more job cuts and nurses are quitting due to work overload. Social care nurses in residential homes for the elderly or children, or in kindergartens and

schools, get especially low wages.

These problems are all too familiar to medical workers across the rest of the capitalist world.

Before the war BeLikeNina, a movement of medical workers, organized rallies to protest these conditions.

Previously "our movement achieved an increase in nurses' salaries," Oksana Slobodiana, the head of the organization, told Open Democracy after the July 27 action. "If there was no war we would have brought a lot of doctors to Kyiv" to protest.

## Putin jails anti-war opponents

In Russia, Putin has tried to silence opponents. He is fearful that the impact of the war on working people will prompt wider resistance.

Dmitry Skurikhin was sentenced to one and one half years in prison Aug. 3 for "discrediting" the Russian military. He was arrested after conducting a one-man protest outside his store on the anniversary of Moscow's invasion Feb. 24.

Skurikhin had painted "Peace to Ukraine, freedom for Russia!" on the front of his store outside St. Petersburg, and listed Ukrainian cities devastated by the war. Despite repeated fines, he persisted with the support of many vil-



Dmitry Skurikhin

Aug. 3, Russian court extended jail time for Dmitry Skurikhin after his Feb. 24 protest, "Ukraine, please forgive us." He painted "Peace to Ukraine, freedom for Russia!" on his store near St. Petersburg, names of Ukrainian cities hit by Moscow's invasion. Many villagers support him.

lagers. "I couldn't not do it," Skurikhin told his lawyer.

A court outside Moscow Aug. 4 added another 19 years to the prison sentence of Alexei Navalny, Putin's main bourgeois political opponent. He was found guilty of establishing an "extremist organization," which started as an anti-corruption campaign exposing Putin's lavish lifestyle. He

was already serving a nine-year sentence in a remote penal colony after being arrested in 2021. From prison he has urged supporters to "turn people against the war."

"They want to frighten you, not me," he said after the new sentence, "and deprive you of the will to resist. Putin should not achieve his goal. Don't lose the will to resist."

# Finding a job is even harder for former prisoners

BY JANET POST

A *New York Times* article in July claimed the "U.S. unemployment rate is hovering near lows unseen since the 1960s" and "everyone who wants a job, has a job." At the same time, it pointed to one problem: "Ex-Prisoners Face Headwinds as Job Seekers, Even as Openings Abound."

Of course, a lot of those jobs aren't so hot. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are at least 4 million people today working part time who want, but can't find, full-time jobs. And nearly one-third of all workers in the U.S. make less than \$15 an hour.

That reality is even harsher for those who have spent time in prison. Today there are nearly 1.9 million people in federal, state and local prisons in the U.S., 830,000 on parole and 2.9 million on probation.

A staggering 64% percent of unemployed men in their 30s have a criminal record, including those who have an arrest on the books, were convicted or served prison terms. The statistics are worse for workers who are Black and Hispanic.

According to the Brookings Institution, in the first year after being released, only 55% of former prisoners report having any job at all. Of those, 4% earned less than \$500, and 32% earned between \$500 and \$15,000 that year.

Tom Haney, a former prisoner and president of Books Through Bars in

Philadelphia, which sends donated books free to prisoners, told the *Militant* that the so-called justice system does almost nothing to prepare inmates for work when they get out.

"Just like in the schools now, everything is being cut — libraries, skills training, sports, the arts. Prisoners can't even get art supplies, except maybe colored pencils, let alone train for a job," Haney said. "They might have one or two computers for hundreds of prisoners. Teachers from Penn State used to teach in prison programs, but that's gone."

There are some jobs like repairing shoes and sewing clothing in the Pennsylvania prisons. But because many garment and textile factories have closed, this doesn't help much with job hunting once released, he said.

"The longer a person has languished in prison, the lower is his ability to find a job. As hard as it is for all people in their 60s and 70s to find work, it's even harder for older prisoners," Jose Hamza Saldana, director of New York's Release Aging People in Prison group, told the *Militant*. "Who's going to hire you?"

"Plus health care in the prisons is so bad that when inmates who have served longer sentences get out, they have to prioritize getting their health back and putting a roof over their head even before they can look for work," Saldana added. "And they have background checks for housing, too!"

It is now illegal in some dozen states for bosses to ask applicants for many jobs if they have a criminal record. Even there employers are allowed to conduct back-

ground checks after offering someone a job, and use information on arrests or convictions that pop up to drop the job offer. "The background checks really hurt looking for jobs," said Saldana. "We need to make it so landlords and employers cannot do them."

"Millions of former prisoners face discrimination. They are denied the right to vote, to get decent housing, go to school or get a job," Laura Garza, Socialist Workers Party 2024 candidate for U.S. Senate from California, told the *Militant*.

"Along with fighting for a public works program, to put people to work at living wages to build housing, child care centers, mass transit, hospitals and other things working people need, the unions need to fight to end the discrimination against those who have a record," Garza said. "This is part of uniting the working class."



Londarel Harris

Londarel Harris got Wendy's fast food temp job 10 days after being released from prison. He was sentenced to 15 years, the first 10 being mandatory, at age 17. After a day of posting the story he got 700,000 "likes" with congratulations, and many stories of others' years of job hunting.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### FLORIDA

#### Miami

The Fight for Immigrant Rights Is in the Interests of All Working People. Speakers: Steve Warshell, Socialist Workers Party; Winnie Tang, Asian American Federation of Florida; Sonia Moreno, Florida Immigrant Coalition. Sat., Aug. 19, 2 p.m. Donation: \$5. 5711 NW 7th Ave. Unit B. Tel.: (305) 929-8966.

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### Manchester

Capitalist Rulers' Climate Change Policies: A Threat to the Working Class. Speaker: Anne Howie, Communist League. Fri., Aug. 18, 6 p.m. Donation: £2.5. 329 Royal Exchange Buildings, 3 Old Bank St., M2 7PE. Tel.: 0161-312-8119.

### The 'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the 'Militant' earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018 or donate online at: [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)



# Hotel, city workers strike in LA

Continued from front page

porters rallied in Santa Monica, marching from the Viceroy to the Fairmont Miramar Hotel.

Hotel workers and members of Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the Writers Guild of America — on strike against the production companies — have joined each other's picket lines and received support from members of the teachers and nurses unions.

"They've been showing up for us and we've been showing up for them," striking actor Demetri Belardinelli told the *Financial Times*. "That's what makes this moment what it is — the cross-union solidarity."

On Aug. 8 they were joined by over 11,000 Los Angeles municipal workers holding a one-day strike. These members of Service Employees International Union Local 721 include sanitation workers, custodians and other workers at Los Angeles International Airport, tugboat captains and many others.

As the hotel workers' march assembled, a resident at a pricy condo next to the Viceroy cursed the strikers and threw water at them. Some unionists were wrestled to the ground by hotel security thugs at the Miramar when they stepped onto hotel property. After the scuffle, the strikers marched right up to the hotel entrance and circled in front. The police admitted the strikers had the right to do so.

At the E-Central Hotel picket line near downtown Aug. 4, Juliza Duran took time out from leading the chants to talk to the *Militant*. We first met Duran, a member of the union's bargaining committee, when the union struck the hotel in early July.

"The hotels want us to accept a \$6.25 raise over four and a half years. That's nowhere near enough," Duran said. "The bosses just walk out of the negotiations. They leave us sitting there."

Workers are demanding a \$13 an hour raise over the course of the contract, along with increases in pensions and health insurance and a more humane workload. They want the hotels

to contribute to a housing fund for workers, given the soaring costs of living in Los Angeles, and to stop using E-verify, a Department of Homeland Security-operated data base used to prevent workers without U.S.-recognized papers from holding down jobs.

"When we strike, they bring in contract workers and give them free parking," Duran said. With particularly galling disrespect, hotel bosses charge union workers who drive to work as much as \$200 a month to park.

Duran showed us a screenshot of the hotel charging \$1,200 per night when taxes are added in per room for this busy weekend! Six or more people cram into these rooms and share the cost, she said, "but the bosses don't give us any more time to clean the rooms."



Militant/Ellie García

Hotel workers, members of UNITE HERE Local 11, rally in Los Angeles Aug. 7 as part of fourth round of rolling strikes for a pay raise, better working conditions and for affordable housing.

## — ON THE PICKET LINE —

### Hotel workers strike against Sheraton Vancouver Airport

RICHMOND, British Columbia — "We are staying strong in our fight for a living wage. Solidarity from other unions is very important," Ana Wong, a housekeeper for over 30 years at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport and member of UNITE HERE Local 40, told the *Militant* on the picket line Aug. 2.

Over 200 housekeepers, banquet staff, front desk workers, shuttle bus drivers and Starbucks workers at the Sheraton walked off the job June 14. They are also demanding better working conditions.

"For all classifications of workers we get about \$5 an hour less here than hotel workers get in Vancouver. It's not enough to survive," union organizer Mat Demarky said. "We've been getting support from the longshore workers. We participated and brought solidarity to their strike rally July 9 in Vancouver."

Strikers have been picketing outside two nearby nonunion hotels, the Hilton Vancouver Airport and Marriott Vancouver Airport hotels, as well, Demarky said. "They are all owned by the

same company, Larco Hospitality." Five airlines stopped sending flight crews there.

"This owner has gotten rich off the backs of our labor," said Manfred Sandhu, a shuttle bus driver for 32 years. "When this owner built the Marriot and Hilton my workload increased without an increase in pay."

"Air Canada is sending passengers across our picket lines," union spokesperson Sharan Pawa told a rally at the airport Aug. 4. "We're here to protest that, to ask Air Canada to respect our striking hotel worker members." Join the picket lines! They're up from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily.

— Ned Dmytryshyn

### 3,700 Toronto-area workers strike Metro grocery stores

TORONTO — Workers at 27 Metro grocery stores in the Greater Toronto Area walked off the job July 29 after voting down a proposed contract. The strike includes 3,700 clerks, cashiers, department managers, and pharmacy and Starbucks staff. They are members of Unifor Local 414.

Full-time workers' wages aver-

age \$22.60 an hour, and part-timers — some 70% of the workforce — get \$16.62. Pickets at a Metro store here told the *Militant* that "courtesy clerks," who round up shopping carts and clean washrooms, get \$2 less an hour. According to the Ontario Living Wage Network, it takes a minimum of \$23.15 an hour to live in Toronto.

"This decision to go on strike comes after years of these workers being nickelled and dimed while facing increased precarity and eroded job quality. It comes after having pandemic pay stripped away. It comes at a time of record profits and soaring CEO compensation," Lana Payne, Unifor national president, said in a union press release.

The Canadian government's Competition Bureau released a study reporting that the three biggest retail grocery chains — Metro, Loblaws, and Sobeys — had \$3.6 billion in profits last year.

"Some of our members are eating at the food bank," Kim Coughlin, a Metro employee of 23 years, told the *Toronto Star*. "They can't afford to live, can't afford to pay rent, while these grocery barons are getting raises."

Join the picket lines! Send messages of support to [414contact@uniforlocal414.ca](mailto:414contact@uniforlocal414.ca).

— Susan Berman and Toni Gorton

## — 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



August 24, 1998

The U.S. government's interference in the Teamsters union has just taken one further, egregious step with the expulsion of the elected president, Ronald Carey, from the union by a court-appointed "Independent Review Board." This attack is a deadly threat to the Teamsters membership and the entire labor movement. Unionists should demand that all courts, "monitors," and federal boards keep their hands off the Teamsters.

Washington's intervention in the Teamsters has nothing to do with concern over corruption. The last thing the U.S. government wants is a democratic union controlled by the ranks.

The latest moves against the Teamsters began days after the strike victory by 185,000 workers at United Parcel Service in August 1997. Bosses everywhere viewed the Teamsters' victory as a dangerous example for other working people.



August 31, 1973

A nationwide civil liberties defense campaign is now underway to build support for a lawsuit to stop government harassment. The plaintiffs are the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance. President Nixon was served with a summons on July 24.

The suit charges the government with 25 years of "illegal acts of blacklisting, harassment, electronic surveillance, burglary, mail tampering and terrorism" against the SWP, its members, candidates, and supporters, and similar acts against the YSA.

The suit asks for a court injunction to stop all illegal intimidation and harassment of the SWP and YSA. In addition the plaintiffs ask for more than \$27 million in damages.

The Political Rights Defense Fund is organizing the defense campaign. Supporters have held news conferences in eight cities to publicize the suit.



August 23, 1948

MINNEAPOLIS, Aug. 16 — The Hennepin County CIO Council here has adopted a resolution demanding that the Truman administration restore the civil rights of the 18 Socialist Workers Party and Minneapolis Drivers Local 544-CIO leaders imprisoned during the war under the infamous Smith "Gag" Act.

The Minneapolis CIO, in the past as now under the domination of the Stalinists, opposed the defense of the 18. Now 12 leaders of the Communist Party itself are under indictment on the same count of the Smith Act — "advocacy of the overthrow of the government by force and violence."

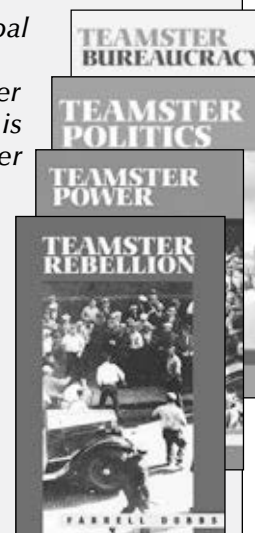
The SWP and its presidential and vice-presidential candidates, Farrell Dobbs and Grace Carlson, are being commended in labor circles here for their principled stand in calling for working-class solidarity and a united front to defend the indicted CP leaders from a frame-up.

### Special Offer Teamster Series

*Lessons from U.S. labor battles of the 1930s*

by Farrell Dobbs

"The principal lesson of the Teamster experience is not that under an adverse relationship of forces, the workers can be overcome, but that with proper leadership, they can overcome."



\$16 each  
or all four for \$50  
[pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com)



# Defend free speech for all! Drop charges against Donald Trump

Continued from front page

is targeted — “bear down upon the working class, particularly its most advanced elements. That is a law of history,” Leon Trotsky, who had been a leader of the Bolshevik-led 1917 Russian Revolution, said in 1939.

Smith’s indictment is built on conspiracy charges, because Biden’s prosecutors and the FBI have no evidence of Trump actually breaking the law. It’s based on what the former president *said* about the 2020 election being stolen. Trump’s opinions are speech protected by the Constitution, even if he knew what he said is false.

Democratic and Republican politicians lie all the time, to justify the exploitation and oppression that’s built into capitalist rule and to denigrate the capacities and courage of working people. Their lies get exposed in the course of working-class struggle. Answering their falsehoods — not silencing opponents — is the way to strengthen the unity and political independence of the working class.

The indictment tries to justify criminalizing political speech by invoking an anti-business-corruption law, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, in ways it was never intended to be used. The statute was passed to stop businesses “impeding an official proceeding,” after Arthur Andersen, the auditor at energy company Enron, destroyed potentially incriminating documents in 2002.

Applying this law to political speech can be a dagger to go after the capitalist rulers’ primary enemy, the working class. What unionists say during a strike will be prosecuted by bosses who claim they’re lying. Socialist Workers Party candidates could be targeted for telling the truth about the workings of



capitalist exploitation and oppression.

The judge assigned to preside over Trump’s trial is a Barack Obama appointee, Judge Tanya Chutkan. She is infamous for sentencing defendants involved in the Jan. 6, 2021, melee more harshly than government prosecutors requested.

Chutkan says that on Aug. 28 she’ll set the date for Trump’s trial. Prosecutors demand it begin within three months, while the defendant’s lawyers say years will be needed to review evidence and prepare exculpatory material. The Constitution protects the rights of the accused to get the legal defense they need.

The real reason for prosecutors’ push for haste is the 2024 elections. “The Normal Paths to Beating Trump Are Closing,” headlines an Aug. 5 *New*

*York Times* piece by Ross Douthart. Some of the multiplying legal cases concocted against Trump are clearly a “partisan put-up job,” he admits, but turning him into a criminal “will work out for the Democrats.”

Smith has followed up Trump’s indictment with demands for a court order banning the former president from discussing evidence the government plans to use against him or criticizing government lawyers. This is a blatant violation of both his Sixth Amendment right to a public trial and his right to campaign freely as a candidate for president. All the while Biden, congressional Democrats, Never-Trump Republicans and the middle-class left are free to say whatever they wish about Trump.

“Historically, liberals were far more

supportive of free speech than conservatives,” *New York Times* columnist Thomas B. Edsall wrote Aug. 2. That’s no longer true, he says, quoting liberal Catharine MacKinnon. She argues that the First Amendment was once a weapon for “socialists and pacifists, the excluded and the disposed,” but “over the last hundred years has mainly become a weapon of the powerful.”

Any look at the past 100 years of class struggle would tell you that’s a lie. The use of free speech and assembly marked struggles against the U.S. capitalist rulers’ entry into World Wars I and II, and the courageous working-class battles that built the industrial unions in the 1930s and uprooted Jim Crow segregation and terror in the 1950s and ’60s. These rights were needed to resist witch hunts carried out by *both* Democratic and Republican administrations.

Throughout the past century, the working class and its most class-conscious leaders have had to constantly combat the erosion of constitutional freedoms by the government and the rulers’ political police, the FBI. Under Democratic President Franklin D. Roosevelt, leaders of the Teamsters union and the Socialist Workers Party were framed up and imprisoned for their class-struggle views.

MacKinnon goes on to complain free speech today has “become a sword for authoritarians, racists and misogynists, Nazis and Klansmen, pornographers and corporations buying elections in the dark.”

Edsall traces liberals’ turn against the First Amendment to concern “over the potential harm free speech could inflict on marginalized groups.” He points to liberals’ push to criminalize “hate speech.”

Liberal Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan joins the growing outcry against the First Amendment, complaining it has become “weaponized.”

## Liberals go after Supreme Court

Part of the liberals’ assault on the Constitution is their attempt to gut its separation of powers and to use Congress to eviscerate the authority of the Supreme Court out of their political hatred for the court majority.

Last month the Senate Judiciary Committee adopted the so-called Supreme Court Ethics, Recusal and Transparency Act. It would give Congress free rein to dig into and punish the conduct of the justices and to force them to recuse themselves from cases. “We’re just at the beginning,” said Democratic Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse.

*New York Times* writer Jamelle Bouie complains Democrats don’t have the votes to carry out this attack on the Constitution. But, “the necessary first step” is “to undermine the court’s legitimacy.”

In contrast, Justice Samuel Alito made the obvious point, “Congress did not create the court,” he told the *Wall Street Journal*. “No provision in the Constitution gives them the authority to regulate the Supreme Court.”

Defending constitutional liberties will continue to be at the center of U.S. politics throughout the 2024 presidential campaign. Defense of free speech means demanding Smith’s charges against Trump be dropped.

## UK Amazon workers picket over long hours, low pay

Continued from front page

“What do we want? 15 pounds! [US\$19.20] When do we want it? Now!” the pickets chanted, and “We’re not stopping!” Over the last year the workers have taken 26 days of strike action, including a weeklong stoppage in March, steadily building their forces.

“Long hours, low pay,” striker Valentina Avram replied after the *Militant* asked what’s driving the actions. “Many of us have to work a 60-hour week,” Samuel Ijiyemi said. “We can’t survive on 40 hours. When my family moved from London rents were much cheaper here. Not anymore! Food prices in supermarkets are going up and up. Everything’s been going up. Even the price of the weekly Coventry bus pass has just been raised.”

Inflation in the U.K. officially stands at 10.7%. Food prices have risen 17.4%.

“Sixty hours means no family time,” Umar Diaz said, a comment echoed by many workers. Diaz, who helped start up the union in the plant, was speaking from a megaphone at an end-of-picket rally.

Others spoke of brutal working conditions, where their every move is timed and computer logged to help in setting the pace of work. A number of pickets carried “I’m not a robot” signs.

“We’ve proved that today, defending our dignity,” said Girmachew Tessema, who’s worked at Coventry

for four years. “I feel very good about today’s action. It shows that we’re keeping up the momentum.”

The Coventry BHX4 plant is a “cross-dock” operation where large orders of goods are received, sorted and then distributed to 20 or so different fulfillment centers that prepare customer orders for delivery. Union action here has a big impact on the rest of Amazon’s operations — something the striking workers are keenly aware of.

GMB regional organizer Kerdousara Uddin joined both the Rugeley and Coventry pickets. She reported that when a majority of the workers signed up for the union, the bosses expanded the workforce in an attempt to stave off the union’s application for recognition. Amazon also established an “associate forum,” an alternative to the union.

“But their maneuvers are not succeeding,” Uddin said. “There are now just over 1,000 GMB members at Coventry out of a workforce of around 2,000.”

Uddin encouraged strikers to join a solidarity rally held outside the warehouse the next day. The company responded by sending day-shift workers home early and telling night-shift workers not to come in to work, she said.

Delegations of trade unionists from around the country joined the rally. Coral Fineman, senior GMB representative for Serco refuse workers in Milton

Keynes, said she and her workmates had been inspired by the Amazon workers’ fight. “To forge united action they’re having to overcome a great deal,” she said, pointing both to company maneuvers and the fact workers in the plant speak a multitude of languages. One rally speech was given in Punjabi and a union flyer was translated into Romanian. Some 80% of BHX4 workers were born outside of the U.K.

They face divisive anti-immigrant demagoguery spread by the U.K. government, and, for many, costly visa renewals that run up to thousands of pounds.

Amazon recently announced it is closing the Rugeley facility and opening another much bigger warehouse in Sutton Coldfield, 20 miles away. Many of the Rugeley workers will transfer to the new plant, taking the unionization drive with them.

Joining the Rugeley picket were rail workers from Manchester Piccadilly who brought greetings from their Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union branch. Amazon worker Dale Crook was keen to discuss the common challenges faced by unions today — be it the fight for union recognition at Amazon or the RMT’s fight for a wage raise and against the closure of ticket offices.

“This is how Coventry began a year ago,” Chris Hoofe, a GMB regional organizer, told the Rugeley pickets. “Every time we strike we get bigger.”



# New report shows rail bosses caused East Palestine disaster

BY JOE SWANSON

LINCOLN, Neb. — Aug. 3 marked six months to the day that 150-car Norfolk Southern train 32N derailed in East Palestine, Ohio, causing a social disaster. The train was almost 2 miles long, weighing 18,000 tons. The derailment dumped 50 cars on the ground, 11 carrying hazardous chemicals, including five tank cars containing toxic vinyl chloride.

The fire and massive smoke plume descended across the area, contaminating the land, waters and air. The first priority of the rail bosses was to get trains running again, rebuilding the tracks on top of contaminated ballast and soil in search of lost profits.

In hearings conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board and elsewhere, rail workers and their unions have explained that the company's greed is the cause of the derailment. In the bosses' drive for profits over the last decade, Norfolk Southern and the other four U.S. Class 1 railroads have slashed their workforce, run fewer and longer and heavier trains, raking in cash.

"As long as it's more profitable to clean up a disaster than to prevent one, these Wall Street-driven rail corporations will continue to hold communities like East Palestine hostage," Jeremy Ferguson, president of SMART-TD, the largest rail union, which organizes train conductors, said after the derailment. "Trains are much longer than they used to be, with some now over 4 miles in length. Even as the trains have gotten longer, the workforce supporting them has gotten smaller."

Today, he said, "fewer railroaders with less training are taking longer trains made up of more hazardous materials down tracks with more wear and tear."

## Job cuts and speedup

More evidence keeps coming out about how the bosses' job cuts and speedup made East Palestine inevitable. On July 29, The Associated Press reported sobering facts on the likely cause of the derailment. It quoted from an interview done by the NTSB with Gary Rambo, a Norfolk Southern automatic train control worker who staffed the Wayside Help Desk the night of the derailment. The board is investigating the disaster following an outcry from East Palestine area residents.

Rambo was working "solo" on a computer at home. The job was a 12-hour shift, with no scheduled lunch break or time to use the bathroom. He was responsible for monitoring every train on the company's 19,500 miles of track to see if any of the company's hundreds of Wayside detectors reported any overheating axles.

That night he was busy. When the detector in Salem, Ohio, some 20 miles from East Palestine, sent him an alert that the temperature of a wheel bearing on the 23rd car of Norfolk Southern train 32N had soared to over 103 degrees F, he didn't notice. He said he gets around 300 alerts on a shift.

"Honestly, I didn't see it when it first came in," he testified. "There were three other trains I was working on."

These alerts are not sent to the train's

operating crew. The rapidly rising temperature was just short of what Norfolk Southern required before an emergency alert would have gone to the workers on the train. But if Rambo had seen it, he would likely have intervened.

Rambo said there used to be two people on each shift, but that was eliminated as part of the bosses' staffing cuts.

When the train got to the next detector, in East Palestine, it read over 250 degrees F and alerted both Rambo and the crew. The engineer tried to stop the train, but it was too late, and cars started coming off the tracks.

Rambo told the NTSB he didn't know for sure the train had derailed until he heard from the chief dispatcher's office that "we got a lot of cars on the ground" and "they're on fire."

Astonishingly, Norfolk Southern responded in a statement, saying, "The Wayside Help Desk functioned as it was supposed to with respect to Train 32N."

Similar staff cuts and speedup implemented by profit-hungry bosses force track inspectors and all other rail crafts into similar difficulties.

## Derailments in East Palestine

There is a long history of derailments in East Palestine and along the tracks that Norfolk Southern train 32N traveled on.

A 1970 derailment sent a Penn Central freight train careening into a bridge there. Two people driving over the bridge narrowly escaped injury.

Penn Central bosses promised to pay for a new bridge, but declared bankruptcy soon after and never paid. The bridge sat unfixed for years, preventing emergency crews from reaching parts of town when trains blocked rail crossings. The city and county wound up footing the bill for a new bridge.

In March 1973 an Amtrak passenger train derailed and crashed into a fabricating plant near the tracks, killing an Amtrak worker "deadheading" on board and injuring 19 other passengers.

# Judge orders release of 'Newburgh 4,' framed by FBI

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK — After being arrested in 2009, convicted a year later for a "conspiracy" that didn't exist, and imprisoned for the last 14 years, three men who are part of a group known as the "Newburgh Four" were granted compassionate release July 27 by federal Judge Colleen McMahon.

The four, who are Muslims, were framed up on charges of conspiring to bomb synagogues in the Bronx and to fire Stinger missiles at military planes at Stewart International Airport, near Newburgh.

The entire plot was "an FBI-orchestrated conspiracy," the judge ruled. After the lawyer for the three men filed a motion for their release, the judge had taken three months to review the case and determined it was 100% a setup. Bombs were left outside two synagogues in the Riverdale section of the Bronx — but they were fakes, built by the FBI.

"Nothing about the crimes of conviction was defendants' own doing," McMahon wrote. "The FBI invented



AP photo/Gene J. Puskar

Uncontrolled toxic fire instigated by Norfolk Southern bosses after derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, six months ago prioritized getting trains running as opposed to safety of area residents.

The *Salem News* reported at least nine freight derailments in East Palestine between 1946 and 1976, including one in 1961 that crashed into another factory. Several of the derailments were caused by poorly maintained tracks.

On July 20, 1973, a Penn Central freight train derailed in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on the same line that runs through East Palestine. Eight cars loaded with hazardous materials, including two tankers carrying vinyl chloride, went off the tracks. One was punctured, leaked vinyl chloride, caught on fire and exploded, sending out shrapnel that destroyed a nearby house. Some 3,000 people within 2 miles were evacuated.

Like in East Palestine, firefighters there weren't told what types of chemicals they were dealing with, and didn't have masks or protective clothing. The tracks were relaid and no serious clean-up was organized.

The federal government bought up Penn Central, creating Conrail in 1976. This helped bring the rail line up to profitability, and it was then sold to Norfolk Southern and CSX.

Under public pressure, Norfolk Southern claims to have changed its policy on overheated bearings, following a coal train derailment in Virginia last month.

Randy Fannon, leader of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen union's safety task force, said

that someone at the railroad's headquarters in Atlanta working the "hot box detector desk" told the crew to go ahead and move the train 8 miles down the track. The crew told union officials that they weren't comfortable with moving the train at the track speed of roughly 40 mph, so they kept the speed to around 20 mph. But the train still derailed.

"We're just lucky right now that it's coal. If it had been ethanol or LP gas or chlorine or anything like that, it could have been a totally different situation," Fannon said. "I think the key to this is no qualified mechanical person inspected the train."

The new policy, the bosses claim, says anytime a hot bearing is reported, they will send out a mechanical inspector before the train can be moved. And if that is permitted, the train can go no faster than 10 mph, stopping every 3 miles for the crew to reinspect the bearing.

The rail bosses hate interference, claiming their "business secrets" are inviolate. But East Palestine shows once again that this only means they're free to place our health, safety and living conditions in jeopardy.

Rail workers and their unions need to force the "secrets" of the rail bosses out into the open and fight for control over train operations and safety. This is the road forward for both rail workers and those who live near the tracks.

the conspiracy; identified the targets; manufactured the ordnance"; and "federalized" the charges by driving several of the men across state lines into Connecticut to "view the 'bombs.'"

The operation was set in motion and pushed by FBI informant Shahed Hussain. Posing as a wealthy Pakistani businessman, he promised to pay up to \$250,000 to James Cromitie, the fourth defendant, who would get others involved.

Under the ruling the judge slashed the 25-year mandatory minimum sentence for Onta Williams, David Williams and Laguerre Payen to time served plus 90 days. The delay in their release involves time to find them housing.

Cromitie wasn't part of the compassionate-release request. His attorney, Kerry Lawrence, said he intends to speak with him about pursuing similar action.

McMahon, who had imposed the original 25-year sentence on the four men, wrote in her ruling setting them free that that sentence "was the product

of a fictitious plot to do things that these men had never remotely contemplated, and that were never going to happen."

"We are tremendously pleased that our clients are on their way home — even if it's 14 years too late," Amith Gupta, one of the lawyers representing Payen and the Williamses, told the media. The three men were "entrapped for their race, religion and working-class backgrounds by a government looking to spread fear of Muslims and justify bloated budgets."

There are similar entrapment frame-up convictions engineered by government agencies as part of an anti-Muslim scare in the years following Sept. 11, 2001, around the country that deserve similar reconsideration today.

## Discounted books for prisoners

Pathfinder Press offers books to prisoners at a 50% discount, plus \$2.75 shipping per order. For more info visit:

[pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com)



# Imprisoned for opposing US war drive, Debs ran for president

The selection below is from Eugene V. Debs Speaks, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for August. Debs, a railroad union fighter and pioneer socialist agitator, supported the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. The excerpt is from his speech to a rally in Canton, Ohio, in June 1918 opposing the first imperialist world war and the U.S. rulers' predatory intervention. He was indicted under the Espionage Act of 1917 and sentenced to 10 years in federal prison. He stood as Socialist Party candidate for president from his cell in 1920, receiving almost 1 million votes. After an outcry of working-class opposition, he was freed in 1921. Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Eugene V. Debs Foundation

At rally in Canton, Ohio, June 16, 1918, Eugene V. Debs speaks against first imperialist war and in support of Russian Revolution. U.S. rulers tossed aside Constitution's protection of free speech for him and others, put him in prison. Debs was leader of rail workers, Socialist Party.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY EUGENE V. DEBS

[A]ll our hearts now throb as one great heart responsive to the battle cry of the social revolution. Here, in this alert and inspiring assemblage [applause] our hearts are with the Bolsheviki of Russia. [Deafening and prolonged applause.] Those heroic men and women, those unconquerable comrades have by their incomparable valor and sacrifice added fresh luster to the fame of the international movement. Those Russian comrades of ours have made greater sacrifices, have suffered more, and have shed

more heroic blood than any like number of men and women anywhere on earth; they have laid the foundation of the first real democracy that ever drew the breath of life in this world. [Applause.] And the very first act of the triumphant Russian revolution was to proclaim a state of peace with all mankind, coupled with a fervent moral appeal, not to kings, not to emperors, rulers or diplomats but to the people of all nations. [Applause.] Here we have the very breath of democracy, the quintessence of the dawning freedom. The Russian revolution proclaimed its glorious triumph in its ringing and inspiring appeal to the peoples of all the earth. In a humane and fraternal spirit new Russia, emancipated at last from the curse of the centuries, called upon all nations engaged in the frightful war, the Central Powers as well as the Allies, to send representatives to a conference to lay down terms of peace that should be just and lasting. ... Was there any response whatever to that appeal for universal peace? [From the crowd, "No!"] No, not the slightest attention was paid to it by the Christian nations engaged in the terrible slaughter. ...

I have a copy of these treaties, showing that the purpose of the Allies is exactly the purpose of the Central Powers, and that is the conquest and spoliation of the weaker nations that has always been the purpose of war. ...

[T]he working class who fight all the battles, the working class who make the supreme sacrifices, the working class who freely shed their blood and furnish the corpses, have never yet had a voice in either declaring war or making peace. It is the ruling class that invariably does both. They alone declare war and they alone make peace.

Yours not to reason why;  
Yours but to do and die.

That is their motto and we object on the part of the awakening workers of this nation.

If war is right let it be declared by the people. You who have your lives to lose, you certainly above all others have the right to decide the momentous issue of war or peace. [Applause.] ...

To turn your back on the corrupt Republican Party and the still more corrupt Democratic Party — the gold-dust lackeys of the ruling class [laughter] counts for still more after you have stepped out of those popular and corrupt capitalist parties to join a minority party that has an ideal, that stands for a principle, and fights for a cause. [Applause.] ...

They would have us believe that if we had no "intellectuals" we would have no movement. They would have our party, the rank and file, controlled by the "intellectual" bosses as the Republican and Democratic parties are controlled.

These capitalist parties are managed by "intellectual" leaders and the rank and file are sheep that follow the bellwether to the shambles. ...

The government is now operating its railroads for the more effective prosecution of the war. Private ownership has broken down utterly and the government has had to come to the rescue. We have always said that the people ought to own the railroads and operate them for the benefit of the people. We advocated that twenty years ago. But the capitalists and their henchmen emphatically objected. "You have got to have brains to run the railroads," they tauntingly retorted. Well, the other day McAdoo, the governor-general of the railroads under government operation, discharged all the high-salaried presidents and other supernumeraries. In other words, he fired the "brains" bodily and yet all the trains have been coming and going on schedule time. Have you noticed any change for the worse since the "brains" are gone? It is a brainless system now, being operated by "hands." [Laughter.] But a good deal more efficiently than it had been operated by so-called "brains" before. [Laughter.] ...

[W]ar comes in spite of the people. When Wall Street says war the press says war and the pulpit promptly follows with its Amen. In every age the pulpit has been on the side of the rulers and not on the side of the people. ...

Do not worry over the charge of treason to your masters, but be concerned about the treason that involves yourselves. [Applause.] Be true to yourself and you cannot be a traitor to any good cause on earth.

Yes, in good time we are going to sweep into power in this nation and throughout the world. We are going to destroy all enslaving and degrading capitalist institutions and re-create them as free and humanizing institutions. The world is daily changing before our eyes. The sun of capitalism is setting; the sun of socialism is rising. It is our duty to build the new nation and the free republic. We need industrial and social builders. ...

In due time the hour will strike and this great cause triumphant — the greatest in history — will proclaim the emancipation of the working class and the brotherhood of all mankind. [Thunderous and prolonged applause.]

**August**  
**BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

**Pathfinder Readers Club Specials**



**Eugene V. Debs Speaks**  
The great socialist and labor agitator speaks in defense of the U.S. union movement against union busting and for international working-class solidarity with the Russian Revolution and for socialism.  
\$17. **Special price \$12**

**Teamster Politics**  
FARRELL DOBBS  
\$16 **Special price \$11**

**Thomas Sankara Speaks**  
The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87  
\$20. **Special price \$14**

**Cuba and the Coming American Revolution**  
JACK BARNES  
\$10. **Special price \$7**

**Their Morals and Ours**  
LEON TROTSKY  
\$10. **Special price \$7**

**Los Cosméticos, las modas y la explotación de la mujer**  
(Cosmetics, Fashions and the Exploitation of Women)  
EVELYN REED, JOSEPH HANSEN, MARY-ALICE WATERS  
\$12. **Special price \$8.50**

**Join the Pathfinder Readers Club for \$10 and receive discounts all year long**

**30%**  
DISCOUNT

ORDER ONLINE AT  
**PATHFINDERPRESS.COM**  
OFFER GOOD UNTIL August 31

## IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

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

### UNITED STATES

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

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

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

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

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

**NEBRASKA: Lincoln:** P.O. Box 6811.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### AUSTRALIA

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

### CANADA

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

### FRANCE

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

### UNITED KINGDOM

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



# Cuba shows road to end threat of nuclear war

“We have never considered the idea of fabricating nuclear weapons, because we don’t need them,” former Cuban President Fidel Castro said in 2005, recorded in the book *My Life*.

“What’s the purpose of producing a nuclear weapon when your enemy has thousands of them,” he pointed out. “It would be entering an arms race all over again. No one should have the right to produce nuclear weapons, much less the privileged right demanded by imperialism.”

The Cuban government refuses to develop a weapon of mass destruction. “Who are you going to use it against? Against the American people? No! That would be unfair and absurd,” Castro said. He always explained that workers and farmers in the U.S. were class allies, not enemies.

His words ring even more true today. Moscow’s brutal assault on Ukraine sovereignty, and the resulting moves by capitalist powers worldwide to rearm and search for new military alliances, herald a future of more wars that make use of nuclear weapons increasingly likely.

Aug. 6 is the 78th anniversary of the U.S. rulers’ deadly use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, and Aug. 9 on Nagasaki. It was a threat aimed at Moscow and working people worldwide. Washington is the only power to ever use nuclear weapons.

The ruling capitalist families in the U.S. gave serious consideration to using nuclear weapons to try and stem losses in their invasion of Korea and Vietnam, and against the socialist revolution in Cuba. No arms-limitation treaties, pacts between capitalist powers, nor pacifist calls for disarmament will stop the spread of nuclear weapons.

But there is a road forward.

The Cuban people, Castro said in 2005, “possess a weapon as powerful as nuclear power. It is the immense justice for which we are struggling.” We have the “invincible power of moral weapons.”

For more than six decades working people in Cuba have defended their socialist revolution and prevented the mightiest imperialist power on earth from crush-

ing them, despite the accelerating toll from Washington’s 64-year-long punishing economic war.

The stakes are enormous. Capitalist competition has already led to two devastating world wars, and other wars of conquest. But whether or not there is a third will be decided in the class struggle between the billions of working people and the world’s capitalist rulers.

A future of nuclear conflagration can be prevented by workers and our allies taking political power out of the hands of the capitalist warmakers. This is the course that Castro and the Marxist leadership he forged in Cuba showed is possible.

Building parties in the U.S. and worldwide that are working class in program, conduct and composition is indispensable to leading workers and farmers to victory. The social devastation and wars that grow inevitably out of the workings of capital will lead to revolutionary struggles.

Join the Socialist Workers Party in striving to overthrow capitalist oppression and exploitation and to bring a workers and farmers government to power here that can join the international struggle for socialism. This is the road to send all armaments — conventional and nuclear — to the scrapheap once and for all.



Cuban President Fidel Castro places wreath for victims of atom bomb at memorial in Hiroshima, Japan, March 3, 2003.

# New Jersey nurses strike over work conditions

BY JOANNE KUNIANSKY

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — Seventeen hundred nurses, members of United Steelworkers Local 4-200, went on strike at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital here Aug. 4 after three months of negotiations produced no new contract.

“This is not a step we take lightly, but we have reached a breaking point. We have to stand up for ourselves and our patients,” Local President Judy Danella told MyCentralJersey.com. The nurses are striking for the first time since a four-week strike in 2006.

Spirited picket lines went up at hospital entrances. Handmade placards like “Safety first, listen to your nurse, scabs don’t heal” and “Hey RWJ, love your nurses, not your purses” were held high alongside United Steelworkers signs.

Construction workers heading home for the day cheered the nurses. A UPS truck stopped and the driver shouted his encouragement. Passersby honked their horns.

“This is about people’s lives. In my unit we regularly have three patients per nurse — it should be two at most,” Nancy Lipschutz, a cardiac critical care nurse for 34 years and a picket captain, told the *Militant*.

Hospital spokesperson Wendy Gottsegen issued a statement Aug. 4 saying that “we offered to go to arbitration,” but the union rejected the offer. She claimed it is “among the highest staffed hospitals in the state.”

“Last contract we agreed to go to binding arbitration and ended up with a terrible contract,” noted Lipschutz. “What’s that saying? Fool me once shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me! We won’t be fooled again.”

Elizabeth O’Donovan has been a pediatric emergency room nurse for 20 years. “We work for hours without taking a break. It isn’t unusual to start at 7 a.m. and not have a first break until 5 p.m.” She said that emergency admissions wait a long time on gurneys for

a room. “Part of the problem is that housekeeping is low paid and short-staffed — rooms may be empty but not cleaned for a new patient.”

Robert Wood Johnson is one of only three Level 1 Trauma Centers in the state, meaning it treats the sickest patients in the region, often sent by other hospitals that can’t provide the same care.

The main issue in contract talks is staffing levels. Other issues include wages, retirement benefits, and capping health care costs. Lipschutz said that their health insurance is expensive and “the copay for an emergency room visit is \$250!”

Two associate deans at the Rutgers University medical school affiliated with the hospital sent an email to students asking them to “volunteer” at the hospital during the strike. More than 370 students signed a petition in response saying that “respecting the rights of the striking nurses and their demands is essential to supporting the fight for fair working conditions” and patient safety. Rutgers faculty members who belong to the American Association of University Professors-American Federation of Teachers called the administration’s “anti-union behavior abhorrent and unacceptable.”

RWJBarnabas Health, which owns the hospital, has brought in highly paid strikebreakers from an agency that specializes in providing nurses during strikes, paying more than \$17 million to the agency before the strike started. Nurses pointed out the fenced area where these replacement nurses are dropped off by buses for their shifts.

Sarah Caley, a nurse in the radiation department, has worked at the hospital for eight years. “Having the union is very important. The other nursing jobs I’ve had were all nonunion. Then they just pull the rug out from under you whenever they want,” she said. “At the core of the strike is patient safety. There’s been such a decrease in staffing levels in the time I’ve been here.”

# China youth fear future

Continued from front page

spending exacerbating the damaged economy — is contracting. In June factory prices fell at their fastest pace in more than seven years and exports from Chinese factories declined at their steepest annual pace in years. China is the top trading partner for over 120 countries, meaning that the slowdown there will have serious ramifications for the global capitalist economy.

Young people in China are increasingly being pushed aside from the futures they expected. Some students who graduated from college in June have taken to social media to protest.

Growing numbers are opting to “lie flat,” as young people call it, trying to get by without a job. Others, with families to support them, are dubbed “full-time sons and daughters” on social media after moving back home.

There are jobs available, but many young people say being forced to get a job locked down in dormitories working endless hours for companies like Foxconn is no future. Or working for tech companies that demand “996” work schedules — 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., six days a week.

Increasingly, they couple “lying flat” with alienation from the political propaganda of the Chinese rulers.

Nancy Chen, a 24-year-old college graduate, worked as a private tutor until 2021 when the government banned for-profit tutoring services. She said she hasn’t landed anything since because of “furious competition.” There were 30,000 applicants for three recent job vacancies at a municipal government in her province, she told CNN.

On the streets of Majuqiao, where migrant workers — young and old — scramble for construction work, the job situation is increasingly grim. One worker told the *Washington Post* he was accepting lower pay rates than he made five years ago.

In the city of Chengdu, Yang, an accounting graduate, has secured a job that pays about a third of what her father earns as a construction worker. “My father has paid so much money for my education, he thinks the investment is not worthwhile,” she said, adding that she could not imagine saving enough money to buy a home, marry or start a family.

Beijing’s response to all of this has been to blame the young people themselves. Their overly high expectations, China’s President Xi Jinping says, are the problem.

Young people need to stiffen their spines, he said, and stop thinking they are above doing manual work or moving to the countryside. Lecturing about the need to lower their aspirations and the virtues of hardship, Xi told the *People’s Daily* in May, “Choosing to eat bitterness is also choosing to reap rewards.” The article mentioned “eat bitterness” five times.

The Communist Youth League has urged young Chinese to “take off their suits, roll up their sleeves, and go to the farmland.”

The Communist Party press tells tales about young people making a decent living delivering meals, recycling garbage, setting up food stalls, fishing and farming.

But after years of being told that studying hard was the key to the future, government appeals now for young people to “get a job first, then find a career” are a hard pill to swallow.

Marriages in China are at a record low, despite the ruling Communist Party campaign urging people to get married and have babies. Last year, about 6.8 million couples registered for marriage, down by almost half from the 13.5 million couples who married in 2013.

**Cuba and the Coming American Revolution**  
by Jack Barnes

This is a book about the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary — it can be made.

Also in Spanish, French, Farsi

**pathfinderpress.com**

