

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Bangkok conference addresses threats against Chinese overseas
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Derailment at CSX, toxic fire create crisis in Kentucky town

BY AMY HUSK

LIVINGSTON, Ky. — “The smoke was so thick you couldn’t see your hand in front of your face,” said Andrea Johnson. “I’ve had migraines, sores in my nose and throat, and stomach pain.”

Johnson and other workers who live in this area met with *Militant* worker-correspondents Dec. 11 to discuss what they’ve faced since a 16-car CSX train derailment, chemical spill and fire Nov. 22. Residents of this central Kentucky town of 200 were told to evacuate after two cars transporting molten sulfur caught fire after being breached, releasing sulfur dioxide into the air. The chemical can cause serious health issues.

The railroad says the derailment was caused by an overheating wheel bearing. This was also the cause of the toxic derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, in February, that brought national attention to rail safety.

CSX handed out “inconvenience payments” of around \$2,000 per household to most area Livingston residents fol-

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Biden says all is swell, but workers face a different reality

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Joseph Biden administration and his boosters in the liberal media are churning out propaganda claiming prospects for the U.S. capitalist economy have never looked better. They say inflation has been lowered to “acceptable” levels, full employment abounds and the stock market — home of speculation by the rich — is soaring.

“The ‘soft landing’ is in the bag,” former Federal Reserve economist Claudia Sahm boasted to the *Washington Post*. “Barring any other catastrophe, the economy has done the impossible.”

But for the working class, reality looks quite different as we struggle to make ends meet. The fact is a deepening capitalist economic and social crisis continues for our class, something that official government figures can’t gloss over.

One indication is workers are turning to their unions to fight boss attacks and battle to make up ground

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Defend Israel’s right to exist! Fighting Jew-hatred is union question



Reuters/Amir Cohen

Israeli soldiers in large reinforced tunnel in northern Gaza, Dec. 15, part of sprawling Hamas underground network to launch attacks on Jews in Israel, like Oct. 7 pogrom. Safe in their strongholds, reactionary Islamist group uses Palestinian civilians as human shields.

Unionists discuss fight against antisemitism

BY MAGGIE TROWE

SAN LEANDRO, Calif. — The Oct. 7 massacre of more than 1,200 men, women and children in Israel by death squads organized by Hamas, the Tehran-backed Islamist terror outfit that rules Gaza, was a turning point in the class struggle.

Along with Israel’s efforts to prevent Hamas from being able to do this again, the massacre has spurred a needed discussion among trade unionists about what position unions should take on the war to defend Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews.

Under the impact of today’s deepening economic crisis and wars millions of workers worldwide are getting drawn

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Israel battles to stop new Hamas pogroms

BY SETH GALINSKY

The U.S. government is ratcheting up pressure on Israel to wind down its war against Tehran-backed Hamas in Gaza, a war aimed at defending Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews and preventing the reactionary Islamist outfit from carrying out more massacres of Jews — as it has promised to do.

Washington demands fewer Israeli airstrikes and ground assaults, leading to a cease-fire. During a Dec. 18 visit to Israel, Secretary of Defense Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin euphemistically called this “transitioning to the next phase of operations.”

Austin’s trip took place amid in-

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SWP expands reach of ‘Militant,’ supports today’s union struggles



Militant/Betsy Farley

John Hawkins, left, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Ohio, brings solidarity, the *Militant* to picket line of striking DHL workers in Hebron, Kentucky, Dec. 8.

BY JANET POST

Members of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. and the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the U.K. are discussing the fight against Jew-hatred, building support for today’s union struggles and presenting a revolutionary working-class program to workers on their doorsteps, at plant gates and strike picket lines, and to students on campus.

SWP members Candace Wag-

ner, Dave Ferguson and Tony Lane campaigned outside the Wabtec locomotive engine plant near Erie, Pennsylvania, Dec. 12. Last summer the 1,400 members of the Electrical Workers union there had gone on strike to fight for better pay and health care, and the right to strike over grievances. SWP members joined their picket line in solidarity.

“We’re campaigning against Jew-

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Support struggle of the Ukrainian people to defend their independence

BY ROY LANDERSEN

At his end-of-year press conference Dec. 14, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared that the aims of his invasion of Ukraine “have not changed” despite the fierce resistance his forces continue to face. Working people in Ukraine are determined to defend the country’s independence.

The day before, Moscow unleashed missile and drone strikes on Kyiv and Odesa targeting Ukrainian infrastructure. Putin continues to claim Ukraine is part of Russia. He threatened the conflict would be “resolv[ed] by force” in a long, bloody war unless the Ukrainian government capitulates.

Last year’s press conference was cancelled so Putin didn’t have to acknowledge Moscow’s battlefield defeats. His forces had been pushed out of half the territory they had occupied at the start of

the invasion. Today the front lines of the war have been static for many months. Putin plans to win a long war of attrition over the blood and bones of working people in both Russia and Ukraine.

The annual press conference was intended to let people air grievances and create the impression Putin is giving consideration to their concerns about the

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Bosses’ profit drive, not the weather, is killing rail workers
UK rail workers vote up offer, end strike actions

Memphis strikers get support from Kansas, Texas, Dominican Republic

BY HILDA CUZCO

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — “We drove eight hours from Topeka, Kansas, to be here in support of BCTGM Local 390G union strikers,” Sam Burns, a union steward from Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 218 at Frito-Lay, told the *Militant* Dec. 15 on the strike picket line at International Flavors and Fragrances.

Burns came with Jessy Sevoy, another union steward; Chantel Mendenhall, the local’s business agent; Jerry Freed, an executive board member; and two other workers. They brought a big trailer equipped with a barbecue grill and were ready to cook a delicious hot lunch for everybody, receiving a warm welcome.

“Local 218 members held a fundraiser for the members of Local 390G who’ve been on strike against International Flavors and Fragrances here for six months,” said Mendenhall. “The support from other BCTGM members across the nation has been so tremendous.” The Local 218 delegation brought \$500 to support the strike.

“We came from Texas bringing solidarity greetings from our co-workers at Bimbo Bakeries in Grand Prairie, BCTGM Local 111,” said Gerardo Sánchez Corona, a local member who came with this co-worker and *Militant* worker-correspondent.

The nearly 200 members of Local 390G went on strike here June 4, more than a year after their last contract expired. International Flavors and Fragrances produces soy protein products used by companies like Nestle, Nestle Purina and Abbott Nutri-

tion to manufacture baby formula, pet foods, soy-based nutritional powders and other products.

“They are very kind to support us and it’s necessary,” Cedric Wilson, president of Local 390G, said of the solidarity teams from Topeka and Grand Prairie. “This is the first time this plant has been on strike. The company has no respect for us. They want to eliminate paid lunch breaks.”

Overtime pay is another issue. “They’ve already implemented that overtime pay starts after 40 hours, not after eight,” he said. “If you’re asked to work overtime and refuse, it means a point.” He added that the vote for the strike was overwhelming.

Solidarity comes from all over

The unionists from Kansas cooked up a lunch of pulled-pork sandwiches, turkey, hot dogs and mac and cheese, served with chips, pickles and other condiments. They even brought dinner plates and plastic ware.

Everyone ate in the tent pickets used to take breaks. Drivers passing by blew their horns in support, prompting cheers from the workers. Many strikers said they’ve gotten jobs at other places to make ends meet, but they stop by the picket line as much as possible.

The next day strikers and supporters gathered at the Local 390G union hall. They were welcomed by Wilson and Jason Thomas, BCTGM international organizer.

Sánchez approached Wilson and asked if he could give a brief presentation on a solidarity message he had brought from sugarcane workers in the



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Picket at International Flavors and Fragrances in Memphis, Tennessee, was boosted by BCTGM members from Topeka, Kansas, and Grand Prairie, Texas, Dec. 15. The next day Gerardo Sánchez from Bimbos Bakeries in Grand Prairie, second from right, reported to union on sugarcane workers conference in Dominican Republic, brought solidarity message to strikers.

Dominican Republic, and to hand over the contributions from our local. “Sure, let’s do it,” Wilson said, and introduced Sánchez.

Sánchez explained he is a packer in the Bimbo Bakeries in Grand Prairie, Texas. He had been invited through his union local to participate in a conference of the Sugarcane Workers Union in the Dominican Republic in November.

“We can learn from their struggle, and they can learn from ours here,” he said.

Sánchez explained the sugarcane workers are mostly Haitians. “They’re fighting for the same things we are: better wages, including overtime after eight hours; better working and living conditions; decent health care for themselves and their families; good pensions; and an end to discrimination against Haitian workers by Dominican government officials.

“I told them workers here confront the same kind of bosses they do,” he said. “This kind of contact between workers around the world will strengthen our unions and help build a worldwide labor movement based on solidarity and unity. That is the only way we can win.”

Strikers wanted to hear more. “How much do the sugarcane workers make?” “It’s \$53 a week,” Sánchez said. “What about health care?” The strikers couldn’t believe it when he reported that “they don’t even

have a first aid box. The closest clinic is an hour away.”

He gave the strikers pictures of the sugarcane workers, along with their message of support for the Local 390G strike that they had signed. At Sánchez’ initiative, Wilson invited the strikers to have their photo taken with Sánchez holding up the cane cutters’ greetings to send to the Dominican Republic.

Then everyone looked at a card signed by workers from the Grand Prairie Bimbo’s along with their contribution of \$443 for Local 390G’s holiday toy drive for strikers’ children. To send support and contributions, go to www.gofundme.com/f/bctgm-local-390g-iff-memphis-workers-on-strike.



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THE MILITANT

Workers in Dominican Republic fight for unity

Dominican rulers fan anti-Haitian prejudice as part of dividing working people and driving down wages, working conditions. A union fight against this discrimination is beginning, aims to unite working people, strengthen battle against the local rulers and U.S. imperialism.



Vladimir Fuentes
Haitian sugarcane workers in Dominican Republic are a key part of union fights there.

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Expand reach of the ‘Militant’

Continued from front page

hatred and explaining the importance of unions joining this fight,” party members told workers who stopped to talk.

“Why didn’t the union tell us you were coming?” one worker asked Lane. “I’ll go now to the ATM and get some cash.” He soon returned, bought a copy of the *Militant* and the book, *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark. He donated the balance of his \$20 bill before going into the plant.

Most workers appreciated hearing a working-class perspective on Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews. But one worker told Wagner he is against the U.S. government getting involved anywhere in the world.

“The U.S. military defends the interests of the U.S. rulers worldwide, not those of the working class,” Wagner replied. “What we’re explaining is the right of Israel to defend itself and the need to defeat Hamas.”

The worker did not agree. “Israel is Zionist and doesn’t deserve support,” he said.

All told, two workers subscribed to the *Militant* and five bought single copies.

Jew-hatred is a union question

On Dec. 14 supporters of Naomi Craine, SWP candidate for Congress, campaigned outside the Ford assembly plant in Chicago where 4,600 members of UAW Local 551 had struck this fall along with thousands of fellow autoworkers across the country.

“What Hamas did on Oct. 7 was horrible,” one worker told party member Dean Hazlewood. “Coming in on paragliders, taking hostages, killing children. What kind of group does that?”

Hazlewood pointed to the determination of Hamas to kill Jews in Israel and its overall reactionary character.

Around the world “Jews are scapegoated for the deepening economic crisis,” he said. “Charting an independent working-class course to take political power is the only road to end Jew-hatred.”

The worker told Hazlewood he wanted to learn more about the SWP. Along with four others he got a copy of the *Militant*.

Since the Oct. 7 pogrom, SWP

members in Minneapolis have set up a campaign table four times at the University of Minnesota with signs saying, “Defend Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews” and “Defend Ukraine’s right to sovereignty.”

“We noticed quite a few ‘thumbs up,’ and of course, some negative responses as well,” party member Edwin Fruit told the *Militant*.

One student told Fruit she was angry at women’s rights organizations that refused to speak out against the sexual assaults against women by Hamas during its Oct. 7 massacre. Fruit showed her a chart in the *Militant* portraying the plunge in the Jewish populations of several European countries from 1933 to today, as a result of the Nazis’ Holocaust. She said she hadn’t seen this before, got a copy of the paper and said she’d consider subscribing.

In Philadelphia, SWP members joined more than 1,000 people at a rally against Jew-hatred at the Rodeph Shalom synagogue Dec. 10. In attendance was Michael Solomonov, owner of the Goldie falafel shop there. Pro-Hamas demonstrators menaced his shop and call for a boycott of Jewish-owned businesses.

“As people waited to get into the synagogue, they saw our sign saying, ‘Condemn Jew-hating pogrom! Defend Israel’s right to exist!’” SWP member John Staggs told the *Militant*.

“One person looked at the paper

Miami rally protests laws targeting the Chinese



Militant/Rachele Fruit

MIAMI — Some 200 people protested at the Torch of Friendship here Dec. 16 against discriminatory anti-Chinese laws adopted in Florida and 13 other states. Laura Anderson, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress, joined the action, meeting Lichun Li, a professor at Florida State University in Tallahassee.

“Hundreds of FSU students and faculty members have signed a petition asking the university to clarify language that says Chinese students can’t enter any laboratory without a special permit that can take six months to get,” Li said. “Do we really have academic freedom to talk to scientists around the world about nonsensitive subjects? We have to speak up for ourselves.”

— RACHELE FRUIT

and said, ‘You need to get this out. I hope this helps.’ He reached into his pocket and gave me all the \$1 bills he had.” A total of 27 *Militants* were sold

and another \$20 was donated.

To join in campaigning with the SWP or the Communist Leagues, contact the nearest branch listed on page 8.

Biden says all is swell, but workers face different reality

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our wages have lost to inflation. There are fights over work schedules, to allow time for family, union meetings and recreation, and for dignity on the job. Strikes this year have resulted in the highest number of workday stoppages in 40 years.

The consumer price index over the past 12 months rose 3.1%. But this doesn’t reflect the sharp class divisions between how prices affect the ruling rich and what we face with our rent, groceries, car bills, child care and other necessities.

While the inflation rate has slowed from previous months, prices on many items and services that workers depend on keep rising faster than our wages. Since February 2021 consumer prices have gone up 17%, while workers’ take-home pay declined 4.2%. This is one of the reasons the majority of working peo-

ple say Biden’s handling of the economy isn’t working for them.

Grocery prices over these three years are up 21%, with some items even higher, including chicken, up 24%, and cereals and baked goods, up 25%. Energy prices are up over 30%. Fertilizers have risen 36%, making it harder for working farmers to meet their costs of production.

In Pennsylvania grocery prices have increased 8.2% over the last year, the largest jump in any state. And prices increased even more in rural areas around the country, places where workers’ average income is lower.

Rents are 22.1% higher than they were four years ago, forcing a growing number of young people to move in with their parents, other relatives or friends. And monthly home mortgage payments have risen over the past two years to 52% higher than the average apartment rent.

Sky-high housing costs have resulted in record-high homelessness. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, more than 653,000 people have found themselves homeless this year, a 12% rise since 2022. These “tallies are widely considered to be undercounts,” admitted the *Wall Street Journal*.

Today more than one-quarter of homeless adults are over age 54. The number of homeless families with children rose by 15%.

Hard to find decent jobs

More and more workers find good-paying jobs are hard to come by. Over the past six months most job openings have been in health care, leisure and hospitality, historically lower-paying jobs. Nearly 8.5 million workers say

they have had to get two or more jobs to try and cover expenses for themselves and their families. Others try and make it by signing up for all the overtime they can get. And another 4 million have only been able to find part-time jobs.

The boss press started off December by gloating that manufacturing jobs had increased. But this was a lie. What changed was that United Auto Workers union members were back on the job after their hard-fought six-week strike against General Motors, Ford and Stellantis. And some of them were promptly laid off as the bosses tried to make up wage increases by speedup. GM bosses announced they’re cutting 1,300 more jobs at two auto plants in Michigan Jan. 1.

Jobs in manufacturing have continued to decline over the past 13 months. This includes drops in wood products, non-durable goods, and utilities production, as well as in textiles, apparel and leather. Reuters reported Dec. 15 that manufacturing bosses “were not overly optimistic that business conditions would improve over the next six months.”

The percentage of workers over 65 who have to keep working to get by has nearly doubled since the late 1980s. Many see no other choice, with inadequate or no savings or pensions, and paltry monthly Social Security payments that don’t come close to covering their rising housing, food and medical expenses.

Some 20% of workers over 65 had jobs this year, up from 11% in 1987, reported Pew Research Center. Workers 75 and older are now the fastest-growing age group in the workforce. About 9% of adults age 75 and older are employed, compared with 4% in 1987.

Recommended reading



from pathfinderpress.com

Bangkok conference addresses threats against Chinese overseas

BY PATRICK BROWN

BANGKOK — A conference here Dec. 9-10 focused on the history and experiences of Chinese communities from Southeast Asia to virtually every corner of the globe. Organized by the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas, the gathering was attended by some 150 people, including university professors, students and others. It was hosted by Bangkok's Institute of Science, Innovation and Culture at the Rajamangala University of Technology.

Participants at the gathering, ISSCO's 23rd regional conference since its founding in 1992, came from Asia, the U.S., Canada, Australia and elsewhere, with the largest number from China. Regional and larger-scale international conferences have been hosted by universities in China, Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea and in the Southeast Asian nations of Singapore and Malaysia. Other conferences have been held in the U.S., New Zealand, Canada, Cuba, Australia and Panama.

ISSCO was founded by academics in the U.S. and Southeast Asia to counter the lack of study into the past and present lives, culture and development of the millions of people of Chinese birth or ancestry living around the world. ISSCO's leaders were determined to unearth the real history of these communities, including their struggles against prejudice and discrimination.

In addition to opening and closing plenary sessions, there were dozens of workshops on a variety of topics. These included the political fallout from the COVID-19 epidemic on the Chinese community in New York City and elsewhere, efforts to combat divisions between different waves of Chinese immigration in the Philippines and other countries, and many more.

Niyom Ratamarit, a professor at Thammasat University here in Thailand, told participants that successive wars and social crises in China in the 18th and 19th centuries had pushed working people in their millions to seek work abroad. Many settled in Thailand — today home to the biggest population of Chinese descendants outside mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

"We have always believed that ISSCO should hold a conference in Thailand" for this reason, said ISSCO President Minghuan Li at the opening ceremony. Minghuan is a professor at Xiamen University in Fujian Province in southern China.

"The social position and status of Chinese overseas is often precarious, subject to changing national and international politics," she said. "Chinese overseas have become political victims under the shadow of superpower competition."

Threats against Chinese overseas

At one workshop, Carmelea Ang See from the De La Salle University in the Philippines said conflicts and disputes over sovereignty to islands in the South China Sea between the Philippines and China are having a significant impact on the Chinese-Filipino community. Other presentations also touched on disputes between Beijing and governments in the Pacific and Asia.

In the discussion period after the opening presentations, Liu Hong from Nanyang Technological University in Singapore said that growing U.S.-Chi-



Militant/Patrick Brown

Xia Jiang, right, professor from China's Huaqiao University, addresses Dec. 10 ISSCO workshop. Washington has repeatedly suspected Chinese scientists of "being disloyal to the U.S.," he said, "some even accused of being spies." Inset, Audience at opening conference session Dec. 9.

na conflicts have led to threats by various U.S. police agencies of prosecution for allegedly providing classified information to Beijing.

An increasing number of scientists

of Chinese descent are leaving jobs in the U.S. and returning to Asia, Liu said. He cited a report saying migration has increased "from 900 scien-

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Workshop highlights role of Chinese in Cuba's revolution

BY PATRICK BROWN

BANGKOK — Since *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution* was first published in 2005, the book has had a political impact in many parts of the world. The account by the three Cuban revolutionary leaders interviewed in its pages was central to the Dec. 10 workshop presentation by Steve Penner at the regional conference of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas here.

Penner was standing in for Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and the editor of the book, who was scheduled to speak but unable to make the trip.

"The Unique History of the Chinese in Cuba," the title of the presentation, is true from several standpoints. It is unique not only due to the scale of the Spanish colonial government's import of Chinese indentured workers into 19th-century Cuba, as well as the subsequent import of Chinese-born immigrants driven out of the United States by anti-Chinese laws and racist discrimination.

Most important, Penner said, the Chinese Cuban history is unique because of the "150-year continuity of revolutionary struggles in which Chinese Cubans played a major role."

The three Chinese Cuban generals interviewed in the book — Armando

Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong — describe their lifelong participation in the Fidel Castro-led revolution, starting as teenagers in the battles that led to the 1959 overthrow of the imperialist-backed military dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. They took leadership responsibilities in the consolidation and defense of the revolution, including the powerful land reform, triumphant mass literacy campaign and the wholesale expropriation of sugar plantations, banks and other properties of Cuban and U.S. capitalists.

Among these historic achievements, Penner said, were decisive steps to end "discrimination against Cubans who were black or Chinese." Moisés Sío Wong had attended ISSCO's 1999 conference in Havana, where he was asked about this by the organization's then President Wang Gungwu. "Before the triumph of the revolution, we Chinese faced brutal discrimination and oppression," Sío Wong answered. "The difference is that here a socialist revolution took place.

"The revolution eliminated discrimination based on the color of a person's skin. Above all, it eliminated the property relations that create not only economic but also social inequality between rich and poor."

"We're going through a watershed in world politics that has been building up for years," Penner said. "The outcomes of the wars being waged by Ukraine and Israel to defend their very existence will have enormous consequences for humanity.

"In their attempts to resolve the worldwide crisis of their capitalist system today," Penner added, "the ruling rich use racism, chauvinism and xenophobia to try and divide and drive back working people. Ultimately, they'll again turn to fascist violence and Jew-hatred to smash the working class when their rule is threatened."

"In this world of deepening capitalist crisis and wars," Penner said, more and more working people in North America and beyond are looking for political answers and for ways to fight effectively for their class interests and win. "The example of Cuba's socialist revolution, and of Fidel Castro's leadership in mobilizing workers and peasants to take

control of their own destiny and extend a hand to working people worldwide, points the way forward."

These conquests of the Cuban Revolution, Penner pointed out, are interconnected with the earlier struggles for independence, sovereignty, human dignity, the abolition of slavery and of indentured servitude — in which Cubans of Chinese origin were engaged as combatants and leaders from the outset.

Alongside Penner on the workshop panel were Titiporn Siriphant Puntasen of Thailand's Rangsit University and Xia Jiang of Huaqiao University in China. (See accompanying article on the ISSCO conference.)

Also participating in the workshop was Pedro Pablo San Jorge Rodríguez, Cuba's ambassador to Thailand. As it happens, the ambassador recalled, "I had very close relations with one of these generals — Armando Choy." San Jorge said he had worked alongside the Cuban general when Choy led the cleanup of Havana Bay and other development projects. Choy, like Chui and Sío Wong, shouldered a variety of responsibilities in addition to their decades of leadership in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces.

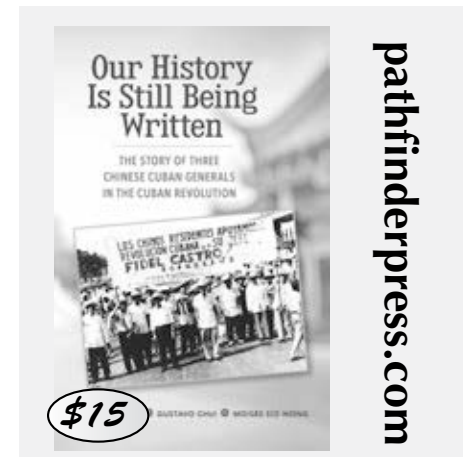
At the workshop, Titiporn Siriphant Puntasen said how impressed she was to hear for the first time about these decisive steps by Chinese Cubans in the Cuban Revolution. She was one of many participants who wanted to find out more.

At conference sessions and from a table in a book area at the ISSCO event, Pathfinder supporters sold all the copies of *Our History Is Still Being Written* in English they had brought as well as three in Chinese.



Militant/Patrick Brown

Cuba's ambassador to Thailand, Pedro Pablo San Jorge Rodríguez, left, speaking with Steve Penner, organizer of Pathfinder Press circulation in Canada, at Dec. 10 ISSCO workshop. Panel discussed important role of Chinese Cubans in Cuba's revolutionary development.



Bosses' profit drive, not the weather, is killing rail workers

BY FÉLIX VINCENT ARDEA

MONTREAL — After a series of deadly accidents, the U.S. Federal Railroad Administration issued a recent “advisory” urging rail bosses to expand use of technology to deal with the increased danger of operating in adverse weather conditions. According to the federal railroad agency, there have been 123 rail “incidents” in which severe weather or weather-related conditions may have contributed in part or in whole to an accident since 2021. More than half were main-track derailments.

But railroad workers in North America and their unions know it is the profit drive of the rail bosses that endangers them and other workers who live and work near the tracks, not the weather.

One of the most treacherous stretches of railroad in North America is a mountain slope near Field, British Columbia. It falls 2.2 feet for every 100 feet of track in a little over 3 miles, with several sharp curves.

Canadian Pacific engineer Andrew Dockrell, conductor Dylan Paradis and trainee Daniel Waldenberger-Bulmer were killed Feb. 4, 2019, when their train rolled on this stretch of track without adequate air brakes. The train had been pulling 112 loaded grain hoppers, weighing over 15,000 tons. It was over 5,500 feet long. All but 13 cars derailed.

Prior to the derailment, a brake failure had forced an earlier crew to park the train and engage the emergency air brakes. The train remained immobilized for two and a half hours until the relief crew of Dockrell, Paradis and Waldenberger-Bulmer arrived, while the weakened air brake system was losing air.

The new crew was told by their supervisor to get going as soon as possible. The engineer thought it would be safer if the conductor and trainee applied a number of hand brakes to keep the train still while the air brakes recovered. Before they could even get started, the train started rolling. They tried to stop it but it was impossible.

This slope has been the site of nu-

merous runaway trains and derailments over the last century, including one just a month before. A 159-car Canadian Pacific Railway train suffered an emergency air brake release, bringing it to a sharp halt and causing 15 cars to derail.

The families of two of the three men killed in the February derailment filed a lawsuit in April 2021 charging negligence against Canadian Pacific, its CEO, board of directors, CP police and the federal minister of transport. They charge the company with cutting corners to increase profits at the expense of employees' safety.

Canadian Pacific had a history, the lawsuit says, of keeping in service “bad ordered” cars that had malfunctioning brakes and other mechanical defects. As for the train in this disaster, “where these cars had any brakes at all, they were worn beyond their capacity for safe and effective application,” the suit says. The case is still working its way through the courts.

In another death related to adverse weather conditions, Jarrod Ward, a 34-year-old Canadian National conductor, was killed March 16, 2014, when an autorack railcar he was riding on derailed on an icy grade-crossing. Coroner Michel Ferland wrote in his report the tracks where Ward was working hadn't been cleaned since the start of winter. Many workers, including Ward himself, had urged management to get the ice cleaned off the tracks.

“This death could have been avoided with better maintenance of the environment, or simply by not moving cars under these conditions,” Ferland found.

Ward's two sisters sued the company for \$1 million, charging negligence. “The defense neglected to follow simple measures of rail maintenance and, as a consequence, a 34-year-old father lost his life,” the family's lawyer, Laura-Ann Weir, said.

Railroad workers need to organize to use union power to fight for workers' control over working conditions and safety. Rail conductors on the Cana-



Rail bosses' push for profits led to Canadian Pacific 2019 derailment killing three rail workers in British Columbia. From left, Daniel Waldenberger-Bulmer, Andrew Dockrell and Dylan Paradis.

dian National set an example with their “strike for safety” in 2019.

Today this includes fighting for trains no longer than 50 cars, proper maintenance and for bigger train crews. Each one of the above-cited

incidents could have been avoided by one or more of these measures.

Joe Swanson, a retired rail worker in Lincoln, Nebraska, contributed to this article.

— ON THE PICKET LINE —

UK rail workers vote up offer, end strike actions

MANCHESTER, England — After 33 days of strikes, beginning in June 2022, members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union voted overwhelmingly to approve an offer from 14 different rail companies covering 20,000 workers.

When the strikes began the government and rail bosses thought union actions would be isolated. But nurses, teachers, civil servants and postal workers began to strike in the face of soaring prices. On Feb. 1 half a million struck for a day. These actions buoyed the rail workers.

Under the deal, rail workers get a 5% raise or 1,750 pounds (\$2,205),

whichever is highest, for 2022, with talks on a 2023 raise ongoing. Prior to 2022 rail workers had faced a two-year pay freeze.

“We were told a pay offer would only come with changes to our terms and conditions, including driver-only trains,” Clayton Clive, Manchester South RMT branch secretary, told the *Militant*. But bosses backed down. The government also shelved plans for the closure of all rail ticket offices, which would have led to huge job cuts, in the face of a popular union-led campaign.

“For us the raise is worth more than the 5%,” said John Carroll, a Manchester Piccadilly station train cleaner here. “As we're lower paid we get the flat figure of 1,750 pounds, so most of us voted for the offer. This is the first time I've joined picket lines.”

“It's not the pay percentage we wanted,” said conductor Sean Nunan, who works at the same station, “but there is no immediate change to conditions.”

Concessions from the union “will still be up for discussion next year,” Clive warned.

In a separate fight, more than 100 RMT-organized on-board catering workers took seven days of strike action over three months, winning a 21% pay raise. “We were blown away by what we achieved,” said Nora Higgins, a union representative for Rail Gourmet contractors. “Our union membership has grown too.”

Train drivers organized by the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen continue to fight for a pay raise that is not conditional on an attack on their conditions.

“The government has refused to negotiate since January,” Gary Boyle, engineers' union representative for TransPennine Express workers, told the *Militant* at a strike picket line here Dec. 8. “We are solid. It's not going to be easy for them to shove us off.”

— Pete Clifford

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



January 11, 1999

LONDON — Thirty days after being sacked for a one-day strike, workers at the Skychef catering company at Heathrow airport are still standing firm. “We're going to win it and that's the end of the story,” said G.S. Mann, a driver, speaking at the 24-hour picket outside the factory.

The original one-day strike, the first of a projected series of four, was over broken promises by Skychef to compensate workers for big changes in working practices. Workers at other parts of the airport are supporting the strikers. There are 30,000 members of the Transport and General Workers union at Heathrow, including Skychef strikers.

A ramp worker at one of the airlines said, “This is an issue for all workers in the airport. People are increasingly thinking that if they defeat the union at Skychef, they'll try and do the same in other parts of the airport.”



January 11, 1974

Labor party talk is heard again in union halls and at some union conventions. No resolution for a labor party has been adopted by any union convention for more than 20 years. But there is serious talk in the ranks and among some secondary officials of the need for independent political action by labor.

The economic and political crises, beginning with the 1971 wage freeze and continuing uninterrupted right up to the present energy crisis, has greatly weakened the illusion that the Democratic Party can or will serve the needs of workers.

Demands can be won only when the union movement is mobilized to fight for them. This will require political action by the unions independent of the political instruments of the employers. Labor party talk relates to the most urgent issues of the day, and there is no other way the unions can cope with them.



January 3, 1949

“I never realized how unpopular children are — how discriminated against, even how hated — until I went across America in search of apartments to rent,” Howard Whitman declares in the *January Woman's Home Companion*.

“My mind still echoes with ‘No Children,’ ‘Adults only,’ ‘No dogs or children.’ Discrimination against children would be bad enough any time. It's fantastic in the worst housing shortage in American history.” From coast to coast Whitman found apartment house doors barred to children.

Capitalism puts profits first. It always has and always will. Only under socialism will the welfare of the family be placed first and children welcomed as our most precious asset. A step in that direction can be taken right now by mobilizing public pressure on Congress for a federal housing program to relieve the present impossible conditions.

Israel battles to stop pogroms

Continued from front page

creased attacks on Israel by Tehran's Jew-hating, so-called axis of resistance. This includes clashes with Hezbollah on the Lebanese border, missiles fired at the Golan Heights by Tehran-funded militias in Syria, and drone attacks on Israeli ports and ships in the Red Sea by Houthi militias in Yemen.

Meanwhile, imperialist governments in Canada, France and the U.K.; bourgeois pacifists; and supporters of Hamas around the world are all calling on Israel to shut down efforts to render Hamas incapable of more assaults and agree to a permanent cease-fire. Hamas says it will never recognize the right of Israel to exist. Its goal is to kill or force out the Jews. It says it hopes to carry out more and bigger massacres. The government and people of Israel — where nearly half the world's Jews live — have no choice but to fight.

The Hamas death squads slaughtered over 1,200 men, women and children — mostly civilians — wounded thousands more and took 240 hostages Oct. 7, the largest single-day massacre of Jews since the Nazi Holocaust. As part of their planned assault, Hamas thugs tortured, raped

and mutilated many of their victims.

While most of those killed were Jews, the thugs also murdered dozens of Thai migrant farmworkers and Arab citizens of Israel, for the “crime” of working with Jews.

Like Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, this marked a watershed in world politics. And it poses a challenge to all those who say they speak for the working class.

Liberal media's biased coverage

The liberal news media foments anti-Israel sentiment by blaming the growing suffering of people in Gaza on Israel, not Hamas, and minimizing the horror of the Oct. 7 massacre and Hamas' brutal hostage taking.

But they never ask anyone they interview in Gaza if they know that the purpose of the Israeli offensive is to prevent Hamas from killing Jews. Nor do they ask Gazans what they think of Hamas placing its deadly arsenal, tunnels and command posts underneath and inside hospitals, schools, mosques and residential buildings as part of its strategy of using civilians as human shields.

They certainly don't ask about Hamas' brutal dictatorship since taking over Gaza in 2006 and its arrest, torture

Threats against Chinese overseas

Continued from page 4

in 2010 to 2,621 in 2021.”

The targeting by Washington of Chinese researchers was also addressed the next day by Xia Jiang, a professor from China's Huaqiao University currently teaching in Phoenix, Arizona. “Chinese scientists have repeatedly been suspected of being disloyal to the United States, and some have even been accused of being spies,” he said.

Behind this, Xia Jiang said, is the “threat to U.S. economic and technological hegemony” by China's “rapid economic rise and progress in high-tech development.” There's a need to confront such discrimination, suspicion and the crackdown on scientists of Chinese origin, he emphasized.

He pointed to the example of Anming Hu, a Chinese-born Canadian citizen, who worked in the engineering department at the University of Tennessee. Hu was accused in 2020 of being a “potential spy” by the FBI, only because “he had participated in the Thousand Talents program” run by the Chinese government. He fought back and was exonerated in a U.S. court.

These and other frame-up attempts have “a chilling effect on scientists of Chinese descent,” Xia Jiang said.

At the same workshop, Steve Penner of Montreal noted that the 2022 ISSCO conference in San Francisco had also discussed the “sharpening conflict between Washington and Beijing.” Speakers there, he said, “described how the U.S. government's anti-Chinese drive had fostered racist harassment and violence against Chinese and other Asians in North America and elsewhere.”

Cuba and overseas Chinese

Penner made a workshop presentation on “The Unique History of the Chinese in Cuba.” (See accompanying article on page 4.) He drew on the book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The*

Story of Three Chinese Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution, published by Pathfinder Press.

The presentation was initially to have been given by Mary-Alice Waters, who had conducted and edited the three interviews in the book and who has spoken at previous ISSCO gatherings. When Waters was unable to attend at the last moment, she asked Penner, who helps organize Pathfinder distribution in Canada, to stand in for her. A special guest at the workshop was Cuba's ambassador to Thailand, Pedro Pablo San Jorge Rodríguez. ISSCO President Minghuan welcomed the ambassador to the conference.

Penner called attention in his workshop remarks to the “wars being waged by Ukraine and Israel to defend their existence against the Putin regime in Russia and the Jew-hating terrorist organization Hamas in Gaza.” These events, he said, are a “watershed in world politics that is shaking up social classes, political parties and governments everywhere.” These sharpening conflicts, he said, “are drawing into politics millions of workers, oppressed peoples and youth, around the world,” and are interlinked with the issues in the Pacific and Asia being focused on at the conference.

The final conference session featured leaders of the hosting Rajamangala University's Institute of Science, Innovation and Technology and of ISSCO. Teresita Ang See, a founding ISSCO leader, presented a slideshow on the organization's history and the issues taken up at its conferences. The ISSCO banner was then officially handed over to representatives of Maranatha Christian University in Bandung, Indonesia, which will host the next regional conference Nov. 7-8, 2024.

Linda Harris and Steve Penner contributed to this article.



Israeli Defense Forces Spokesman's Unit
Ninety Hamas fighters based inside Kamal Adwan hospital in Jabaliya, Gaza, surrender Dec. 16.

and assassination of political opponents, crushing of union struggles and oppression of women.

Israeli officials report that on Dec. 15 Israeli soldiers mistakenly killed three hostages in Gaza who walked toward them, waving a white flag, asking for help in Hebrew. The incident took place near where nine soldiers had been killed by Hamas earlier in the week.

Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzli Halevi went to Gaza and told the soldiers that this was a breach of IDF protocols. “Even those who fought and now put down their weapons and raise their hands — we capture them, we don't shoot them,” Halevi said. “This is a strength, not a weakness.”

Tehran, Hamas target West Bank

Tehran and Hamas have been sending weapons and prodding their



Houthi Military Media
Armed gunboats driven by Houthi fighters from Yemen, part of Tehran's so-called axis of resistance, escorting ship they hijacked in Red Sea. They threaten to seize any ships with ties to Jews or with Israel.

“There is no solution to the Jewish question under capitalism, just as there is no solution to other problems before humanity...”

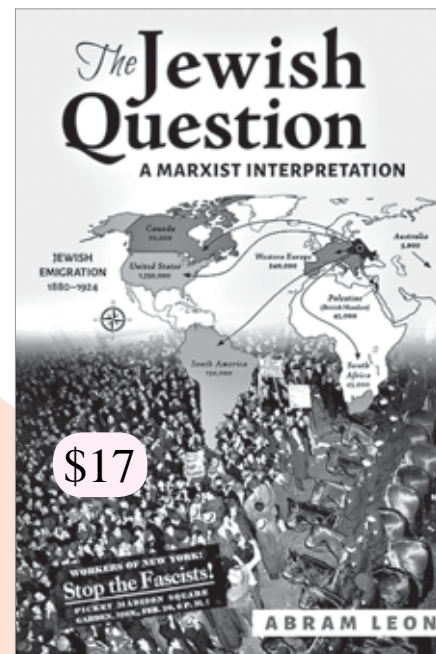
— Abram Leon

From antiquity to feudalism, to capitalism's rise and death throes of imperialism — Jews have been targets of persecution.

Why is Jew-hatred again raising its ugly head? What are its class roots? Why is there “no solution to the Jewish question under capitalism” without revolutionary struggles that transform working people as we fight to transform the world?

Abram Leon was killed in October 1944 in the Nazi gas chambers at Auschwitz. He was 26 years old.

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or see distributors on page 8



Left, Chabad of Oakland; above, Digital First Media/Jane Tyska
Above, remains of menorah, smashed up in Oakland, California, Dec. 12 by vandals who left antisemitic screed. Members of Socialist Workers Party joined protest against Jew-hatred of 300 the following night, left, where rebuilt menorah was lit.

estinians from Israeli occupation.

Despite Washington's claim of solidarity with Israel's fight to crush Hamas, U.S. imperialism's goal — like its rivals in Berlin, London and Paris — is not to protect Jews or defend Israel, but to defend its own economic, political and military interests.

Defense Secretary Austin's trip to Israel Dec. 18 was aimed at prodding the government to tamp down its

war. While saying the White House agrees with Israeli officials that Hezbollah needs to move its forces away from the border with Israel, Austin emphasized that the U.S. government wants to avoid a wider war. Up to 100,000 people in northern Israel have left their homes since Oct. 7, fearing Hezbollah attacks.

The *Wall Street Journal* described Washington's stepped-up pressure on

Rise in Jew-hatred before Oct. 7

The vast majority of working people in the U.S. are repelled by Hamas' Oct. 7 massacre, but Jew-hating forces have been emboldened by it. Hundreds of synagogues and Jewish institutions across the U.S. received bomb threats by email the weekend of Dec. 16, the Jewish Telegraph Agency reported.

An article in the *Los Angeles Times* Dec. 14 noted that the rise in antisemi-

tism is “deeply unsettling American Jews, many of whom had viewed it as a relic of past generations, destined to fade away.” The article added that “the upsurge began before the war in Gaza and has now accelerated.”

In the imperialist epoch, Jew-hatred is a crucial tool for the rulers whenever the crisis of their capitalist system leads the working class to challenge for political power. They turn to fascist forces and assaults on Jews to try to crush the unions. On hundreds of college campuses today Jew-hatred is promoted under the cover of “Anti-Zionism.” Jonathan Isla Rampagoa, a student at Hunter College in New York City, told *New Yorker* magazine that those who were killed Oct. 7 are “deemed innocent” but “innocence is only so limited when you are occupying land.”

Actions organized by the middle-class left have featured speakers who called Hamas' massacre of Jews “wonderful news” and a “jailbreak” for Palestinians in Gaza. These forces are likely to find themselves in fascist gangs in the future. A significant part of Hitler's Nazi party was recruited from the left.

The *Guardian* newspaper reported that in France in the six weeks following Oct. 7 there were 1,500 incidents of antisemitic acts ranging from the desecration of cemeteries to vandalism against Jewish property, threats and a handful of assaults.

Unionists discuss fight against antisemitism, Hamas slaughter

Continued from front page

Some union leaderships in the U.S., like in the United Auto Workers, the American Postal Workers Union and the United Electrical Workers are endorsing calls for a permanent cease-fire, pointing to the rising death toll in Gaza.

Several hundred turned out for a “Labor for Palestine” rally in Oakland Dec. 16. A statement by the organizers called for a permanent cease-fire, the end of U.S. aid to Israel and “an end to Israel's occupation,” in effect a demand that Israel cease to exist.

“I'm against such a cease-fire because it means Hamas will continue to exist, attack Jews and pursue the destruction of Israel,” I told Abel Albor, a co-worker at the chocolate factory where I work. We're members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 125. “Hamas started the war with its Oct. 7 massacre and continues rocket attacks on Israel. Some say Israel is responsible for civilian deaths in Gaza, but Hamas uses Palestinians as human shields.”

“Hamas hides behind women and babies,” Albor agreed. “They need to be defeated.”

Socialist Workers Party member Eric Simpson also works at the plant. Since Oct. 7 we've been presenting the party's response to Hamas' massacre and the need for the unions to combat Jew-hatred to fellow workers.

I told shop steward Joann Velasquez I thought it was wrong for unions to call for a cease-fire.

“Unions shouldn't take any position,” she replied.

“I think the labor movement does have a big stake in opposing the destruction of Israel,” I said. “Unions fought against Jew-hatred in the U.S. in the 1930s.” In Minneapolis the leadership of the Teamsters initiated a defense guard to protect picket lines and unionists against the Silver Shirts, an anti-union Jew-hating fascist outfit that was backed by some of the city's bosses. “Today labor should defend Israel's right to exist.”

“When someone attacks you, you have to fight,” Velasquez said.

Simpson and I discussed with Mar-

tha Bautista, a machine operator trainee, how Israel's formation became inevitable after the betrayal of revolutionary struggles in Europe in the 1930s by Stalinist parties. These struggles could have brought workers to power, but their defeat led to the Nazis taking power and to the Holocaust. In addition, Washington and London refused to allow entry to masses of Jewish refugees seeking to escape the Holocaust, the slaughter of 6 million Jews.

“Why did the U.S. turn away from Jews?” she asked.

“The billionaire rulers in this country are antisemitic,” I replied. “They had quotas on Jewish immigrants, even as Nazis stepped up the incineration of Jews. And they care only about profits, not human beings. The Socialist Workers Party demanded Washington open its doors to the Jews.”

I told machine operator Seng Saeliew that I had been booed by some participants at a recent Berkeley City Council public meeting when I argued against calls for a cease-fire. I'm the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress from California and had attended the meeting to present the party's campaign.

“A lot of young people who support the Palestinian struggle call for support of Hamas,” Saeliew said. “They have been misled to think it's a liberation organization. It's the opposite.”

An Algerian mechanic, who is a Berber, an oppressed nationality in North Africa, told Simpson he opposes Hamas because of his own bitter experience with similar repressive Islamist currents in Algeria.

These discussions highlight why the labor movement needs its own foreign policy. The unions have no interest in calling for an end to the fight against Hamas. The defeat of Hamas will open political space for working people who

are Palestinian, Jewish, Christian and workers of all nationalities and religions in the Middle East, creating better conditions to build united struggles against the exploiting classes and the governments that serve them. Already Gazans are speaking out against Hamas' responsibility for what they have been put through.

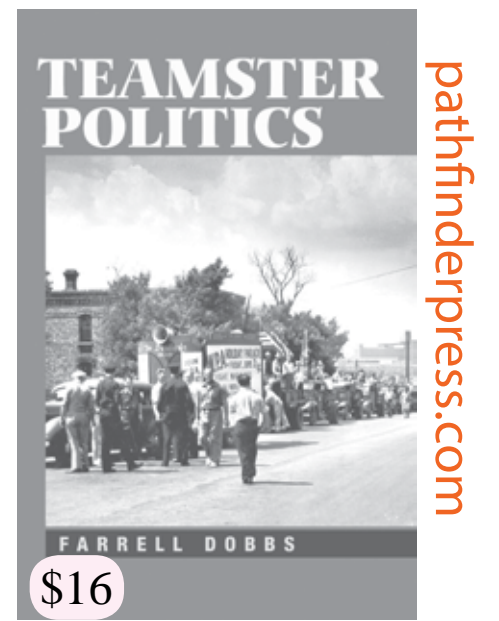
Dealing a decisive blow to Hamas will also help push back similar forces around the world who scapegoat Jews for the crisis created by capitalist exploitation. Jew-hatred will be the banner of reactionary outfits that the capitalist rulers turn to, to try to crush the unions, as they did in Hitler's Germany in the 1930s. Fascist assaults on Jews went hand in hand with attacks on workers, unions and revolutionary working-class parties.

The building of unions that can fight boss attacks is strengthened whenever workers take on and fight forces that try to utilize Jew-hatred here or elsewhere around the world.

Eric Simpson contributed to this article.



Part of 600-member Union Defense Guard initiated by Teamsters Local 544 in Minneapolis in 1938 to defend picket lines, stand up to Jew-hating and anti-union thugs like fascist Silver Shirts.



Malcolm X: 'An outstanding leader of the entire working class'

Malcolm X Talks to Young People is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. The book contains an interview and four talks given to young people in Ghana, the U.K. and the United States in the last months of his life. On Feb. 21, 1965 — 10 days after the final talk in this collection, presented at the London School of Economics — Malcolm was assassinated as he was speaking to an Organization of Afro-American Unity meeting at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem. Socialist Workers Party leader Jack Barnes said Malcolm had increasingly become an authentic voice of the coming American revolution. Below are excerpts from the preface. Copyright © 2002 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Malcolm X speaks at SEIU Local 1199 rally called to fight for union recognition in New York City in July 1962. Malcolm praised Local 1199 President Leon Davis, who spent 30 days in jail for refusing to comply with court order telling him to call off 56-day hospital workers strike.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY STEVE CLARK

Malcolm X seized every occasion to talk to young people. All over the world, it is "young people who are actually involving themselves in the struggle to eliminate oppression and exploitation," he said in January 1965, responding to a question from a young socialist leader in the United States.

They "are the ones who most quickly identify with the struggle and the necessity to eliminate the evil conditions that exist. And here in this country," he emphasized, "it has been my observation that when you get into a conversation on

racism and discrimination and segregation, you will find young people more incensed over it — they feel more filled with an urge to eliminate it." ...

By the opening of the 1960s, Malcolm was politically drawn more and more toward the rising struggles by Blacks and other oppressed peoples in the United States and around the world. He used his platforms in Harlem and Black neighborhoods across the country, as well as on dozens of college campuses, to denounce the policies of the U.S. government both at home and abroad. He campaigned against every manifestation of anti-Black racism and was outspoken in condemning the pillage and oppression of the peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America for the profit and power of the U.S. and other imperialist regimes.

"The black revolution is sweeping Asia, is sweeping Africa, is rearing its head in Latin America," Malcolm said in a November 1963 talk to a predominantly Black audience in Detroit. "The Cuban Revolution — that's a revolution," he continued. "They overturned the system. Revolution is in Asia, revolution is in Africa, and the white man is screaming because he sees revolution in Latin America. How do you think he'll react to you when you learn what a real revolution is?"

By 1962 it was becoming more and more noticeable that Malcolm was straining against the narrow perspectives of the Nation of Islam, a bour-

geois nationalist organization with a leadership bent on finding a separate economic niche for itself within the U.S. capitalist system. ...

During the last year of his life, Malcolm X spoke out more and more directly about the capitalist roots of racism, of exploitation, and of imperialist oppression. Malcolm never gave an inch to U.S. patriotism, let alone imperialist nationalism. Blacks in the United States are "the victims of Americanism," he said in his May 1964 talk at the University of Ghana. ...

In 1964 Malcolm refused to endorse or campaign for Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon Baines Johnson against Republican Barry Goldwater. "The Democratic Party is responsible for the racism that exists in this country, along with the Republican Party," he said in the *Young Socialist* interview. "The leading racists in this country are Democrats. Goldwater isn't the leading racist — he's a racist but not the leading racist. ... If you check, whenever any kind of legislation is suggested to mitigate the injustices that Negroes suffer in this country, you will find that the people who line up against it are members of Lyndon B. Johnson's party." It was also the Johnson administration, Malcolm often pointed out, that was presiding over the U.S. war against the people of Vietnam and the slaughter of liberation fighters and villagers in the Congo. The revolutionary integrity underlying

this political intransigence in the 1964 elections set Malcolm apart from, and helped earn him the enmity of, just about every other leader of prominent Black rights organizations or the trade unions, as well as the vast majority of those who called themselves radicals, Socialists, or Communists.

Malcolm X stretched out his hand to revolutionaries and freedom fighters in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and elsewhere. In December 1964 Malcolm, who had demonstratively welcomed Fidel Castro to Harlem four years earlier, invited Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara to speak before an OAAU meeting in Harlem. At the last minute Guevara was unable to attend but sent "the warm salutations of the Cuban people" to the meeting in a message that Malcolm insisted on reading himself from the platform. ...

In the United States, Malcolm X spoke on three occasions — in April and May 1964, and again in January 1965 — to large meetings of the Militant Labor Forum in New York City organized by supporters of the revolutionary socialist newsweekly, *The Militant*. This was a departure for Malcolm. Even while still a spokesperson for the Nation of Islam, he had spoken on campuses to audiences that were not predominantly Afro-American. Malcolm's decision to accept the invitation to speak at the Militant Labor Forum, however, was the first time he had agreed to appear on the platform of a meeting outside Harlem or the Black community in any city. ...

"One of the first things I think young people ... should learn how to do is see for yourself and listen for yourself and think for yourself," Malcolm told the McComb students at the opening of 1965. "Then you can come to an intelligent decision for yourself."

This book shows how hard Malcolm X worked to do just that — to help young people step outside the bourgeois influences that surround them and come to decisions for themselves. What's more, it demonstrates how important an element working with young people was in Malcolm's own decision to commit his life to building an internationalist revolutionary movement in the United States, one that could join in the fight worldwide to wipe racism, exploitation, and oppression off the face of the earth.

December BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Colorado ruling Trump off ballot is blow

This statement by Socialist Workers Party National Campaign Director John Studer was issued Dec. 20.

In a 4-3 ruling by Colorado's all-Democratic-Party-appointed Supreme Court Dec. 19, Donald Trump was barred from appearing on the state's presidential ballot in 2024. It also barred any write-in votes cast for him from being counted.

This 213-page decision prevents voters there from choosing the candidate of their choice. It is a clear violation of constitutionally guaranteed political rights.

The Democrats have been in a frenzy for months, as incumbent President Joseph Biden's poll numbers have plummeted while Trump's have risen. They've turned to the courts in a desperate attempt to avoid having to run against Trump, seeking some way to either imprison him or bar him from the ballot. They've filed a myriad of criminal and civil cases against him, and dozens of state court

cases, like the one in Colorado.

These cases rely on Section 3 of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, which was added after the Civil War to bar former Confederate officers from the ballot because they had been involved in a war against the Union.

The Colorado court upheld the suit's claim that Trump's speech on Jan. 6, 2021, amounted to an insurrection.

The court stayed its decision until Jan. 4 to allow time for Trump to appeal this unprecedented ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Socialist Workers Party intends to run our own candidate for president, to present a program for the working class to fight to take political power into our own hands.

Defending and extending the freedoms protected by the U.S. Constitution are at the center of the class struggle today.

Overtake Colorado's dangerous assault on our rights!

Unions need to join fight against Jew-hatred

Wars in the imperialist epoch are an inevitable product of the natural workings of a system founded on exploitation and oppression. The death, destruction and suffering wars cause are hated by the working class that always bears the consequences.

Nonetheless, just wars fought to end oppression are in all workers' interests. Ukraine's war to defeat Moscow's invasion and occupation is one such war. Moscow's complete withdrawal from Ukraine — including Crimea — will create better conditions for working-class struggle.

Israel's war to defeat Tehran-backed Hamas, free the hostages and prevent the reactionary Islamist organization from carrying out more pogroms is a just war that deserves the support of all workers, as well as the unions. It is being fought to defend Israel's right to exist as a refuge, in the face of Hamas' insistence it will continue its attacks until all Jews are dead or gone, and in the face of rising Jew-hating violence around the world.

The labor movement needs its own foreign policy, starting from workers' common interests worldwide. That includes backing Israel's war against Hamas and joining fights against Jew-hatred everywhere.

Nothing the "democratic" imperialist U.S. rulers are doing in the Middle East is aimed at that goal. Above all else they seek security and stability for their own profit-driven interests as they vie with rivals for markets, resources and political influence. Growing calls by Washington and other powers for Israel to agree to a long-term ceasefire are against the interest of workers of all nationalities and religions.

Fighting Jew-hatred is a decisive question for the labor movement. When the rulers fear that working-class struggles threaten their rule, they turn to fascist forces to crush unions and destroy working-class political parties. Jew-hatred is the banner the Nazis fought under.

The ruling class cannot be persuaded or pressured to disarm, nor to end the wars, pogroms and social catastrophes its system spawns. It falls to the working class to take political power into our own hands, to organize fellow workers to end capitalist exploitation, to defend workers' power arms in hand and join the worldwide struggle for socialism. Building a working-class party to lead this fight is the road to ending war, Jew-hatred and all oppression once and for all.

Kentucky derailment

Continued from front page

lowing the derailment.

Johnson and her husband, Johnny Bowling, own an auto repair shop here. Bowling has been plagued with health problems since the derailment and doesn't have health insurance.

"My joints are swollen and sore. I can't work," he said. "I got the CSX payment but a little money won't help if it makes me sick the rest of my life. It's hard enough to live and survive without this."

Some local officials have downplayed the issue and praised the response of CSX. "It was a terrible inconvenience for everyone," Rockcastle Judge/Executive Howell Holbrook Jr. told the local press, "but in my opinion there is really no reason to worry about health issues or the environment."

Many residents disagree. Evelyn Scalf works at the Marathon station and has been campaigning to get out the truth about the medical effects of the chemical spill and fire. She reports a lot of nurses from Rockcastle Hospital come into the Marathon station and say that "they've been overwhelmed with sick people."

Lauren Webb, a firefighter who fought the chemical fire for 13 hours, has since experienced trouble breathing, headaches and respiratory infections. She was one of two women who have filed a class action lawsuit against CSX seeking damages. Others have since joined the case.

The lawsuit says that CSX places its hot bearing detectors — which detect overheating wheel bearings — too far apart on some less-traveled sections of tracks, including in the Livingston area.

Two railroad unionists who work in the Lincoln, Nebraska, area, track welder Jakob Forsgren, a member of Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, and Lance Anton, conductor and member of the SMART-Transportation Division, spoke with the *Militant* Dec. 17 about recent derailments.

"Railroad union workers have been warning the public for years that the trains are way too long, too heavy, and the railroad bosses have cut workers that are needed to inspect and repair the railroad cars and trackage and operate the trains," Anton said.

"The rail bosses hate interference, claiming their 'business secrets' are only their business. We as union railroad workers urge working people in the Livingston area to organize together, contact local rail unions and other unionists to get support and solidarity," said Forsgren.

"Workers and their unions are the only true defenders of industrial safety and can lead a fight for workers control under union power to enforce it."

Support struggle of the Ukrainian people to defend their independence

Continued from front page

impact of the war. In fact, it is a stage-managed sham, with the government continuing to imprison its main political opponents as well as anti-war protesters.

Still some uncomfortable questions got through. Flashing up on a giant screen on the stage, one said, "Why does your reality differ from ours?"

Opponents of the war continue to speak out. Members of The Way Home, a group of wives and mothers of mobilized reservists, are demanding the return of their loved ones from extended service at the front.

In a Dec. 18 statement, the group told Putin, "We Russians have no hope left under your leadership." It urged his government to "sit at the negotiating table" with Kyiv.

"Let us live in peace! Or go to the front line yourself and die there."

At his press conference, Putin admitted that troop rotation is "a burning issue." But if the Kremlin were to relieve troops without a fresh mobilization, its forces would be seriously weakened. A new mobilization, however, would be deeply unpopular and likely set off protests in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other cities, like those that followed the mobilization the regime decreed last September.

Today Putin claims "1,500 volunteer fighters [are] being recruited every day throughout the country." This is largely from police raids at centers where Central Asian migrants gather or work. Thousands of prisoners also have been induced to sign up in return for



Protest by soldiers' mothers and wives in Novosibirsk, Russia, Nov. 19. Sign says, "I am disabled, return my son, there is no one else to look after me."

freedom if they survive six months at the front.

Putin is gambling that the Russian Federation, with a population more than three times that of Ukraine, and with the economy being cranked up for war, can outlast Ukraine's working class. He is also banking that Washington and its allies will waver in their financial and military support to Kyiv, and this will pressure the Ukrainian government to concede territory.

Congress is divided, for now, on the latest U.S. aid package to Ukraine. But however that is resolved, the U.S. rulers will continue to act as they have done since the start of the war, to advance their own interests.

Mothers and wives of soldiers in Russia have a well-earned reputation for organizing opposition to the deadly consequences of the regime's wars. Their pro-

tests helped bring an end to the decade-long occupation of Afghanistan by forces from the Soviet Union in the 1980s. This, in turn, helped bring down the Stalinist regime there. During the 1994-96 war in Chechnya, relatives of soldiers held protests and collected signatures across Russia to demand their sons be brought home.

A video of remarks by a Russian soldier accompanied The Way Home's Dec. 18 statement. The soldier, who called himself Alexander, criticized Putin for ignoring the group's request to impose a one-year service limit for 300,000 Russian men who were mobilized last year.

He said he had watched Putin's press conference "and there's no hope."

"How cynical do you have to be to continue this mayhem and put on a brave face?" The Way Home asked Putin. "Will you not stop until you kill all the young people?"

"Will you be having a good time ringing in the New Year with your close ones and a glass of champagne?" the group said. "Well, not our boys."

'Militant' publishing schedule

This is a two-week issue. The next issue will be mailed out January 4.