

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Venezuela claims on Guyana region threaten new conflict

— PAGE 4

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 2 JANUARY 15, 2024

Quebec public worker strikes make advances

BY JOHN STEELE AND JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL — Under the pressure of a lively five-week strike by 66,000 primary and secondary school teachers — members of the Autonomous Federation of Education (FAE) — and the threat of a strike in early 2024 by the Common Front of four union federations representing 420,000 additional teachers, health care and other public sector workers, the Quebec government signed tentative agreements with the unions Dec. 28.

The proposed contracts will be voted on by union members in weeks to come at union meetings where they will see the agreements.

Another 80,000 public workers, members of the Interprofessional Health Federation of Quebec (FIQ), mostly nurses, are still negotiating with the government.

Both the FIQ and the Common Front had organized a series of short strikes that at times overlapped both with each other and the ongoing FAE strike. This meant that at times almost 600,000 public sector workers walked picket lines and marched in demonstrations together all across Quebec.

Continued on page 2

Defend Israel's right to exist! Join fight against Jew-hatred Defeating Hamas opens door to unite Jews, Arabs



Brian Noel

Filipino migrant workers in Israel volunteer to help bring in the crops after Oct. 7 pogrom. Hamas had killed not just Jews, but Filipinos, Thais and Arab Israelis who worked with Jews.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Israeli forces continue making gains against the Tehran-sponsored Hamas terror organization in Gaza. These advances are increasing openings to bring together Jewish, Arab and other workers in Israel and the Middle East in common struggle.

Israeli forces, with the backing of the country's people, are willing to

agree to a short-term pause in the fighting to allow for the release of hostages held by Hamas and its allies. But despite pressure from Washington and other “democratic” imperialist regimes, they are determined to continue their campaign to destroy Hamas’ ability to launch new pogroms.

The reactionary bourgeois-clerical regime in Iran has worked with Hamas for years to build up an army whose goal is to kill Jews and destroy Israel. Hamas uses Palestinian civilians in Gaza as human shields, and blames their deaths on Israel to win

Continued on page 6

Fight attacks on political rights! Defend Trump's right to ballot

BY TERRY EVANS

Without even a court hearing, Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows threw Donald Trump off the presidential ballot Dec. 28, following a similar ruling by Colorado's Supreme Court. Both decisions were based on Section 3 of the 14th Amendment, adopted in 1868 to bar

Constitutional rights fight key in class struggle — see page 8

former Confederate rebel officers from taking office after they were defeated in the Second American Revolution — the war to overthrow the slavocracy.

The questions involved in the attack on Trump are weighty, as working people face an economic and social crisis today bred by the workings of capitalism and are looking for ways to advance our class interests. For this

Continued on page 6

SWP: Defend unions, Ukraine, Israel! Chart a working-class road forward



Militant/Bill Arth

Laura Garza, center, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from California, joins New Year's Eve march by hotel workers from UNITE HERE Local 11 in two-day strike at hotels in Pasadena.

BY JANET POST

Socialist Workers Party member Susan LaMont and another party member in Atlanta took the *Militant* and visited a busy area truck stop Dec. 19. They had a discussion about the political situation in the Middle East with trucker Michael Wilson, who's been driving tractor-trailers for 22 years and lives in Iowa.

“Things are tough in the Middle

East,” Wilson said. “Working people should support Israel's right to defend itself as a refuge for Jews in today's world of growing Jew-hatred and antisemitic attacks,” LaMont responded.

“We discussed how important it is for working people to learn the facts about what's happening in Israel's war against Hamas and not just rely on big-business media, which is often

Continued on page 3

Profit drive by drug bosses leads to shortages of cancer medicines

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A growing shortage of drugs key to the treatment of cancer today, which could mean life or death for millions of people, exposes in one of the most graphic ways how health care in the U.S. is sacrificed to the capitalists' dog-eat-dog drive for profit.

“Fifteen crucial drugs — the kind that can render cancers curable — have been out of stock in hospitals for months,” *Scientific American* reported Sept. 18. “Doctors have had to ration their dwindling supplies, scrimp on dosages and swap out prescriptions with inferior alternatives.”

The most important treatments in short supply include the platinum-based injectable drugs carboplatin and cisplatin, which are used to treat cancers of the lung, bladder, breast and prostate, among others.

Continued on page 3

Back battle for Ukraine national independence

BY ROY LANDERSEN

President Vladimir Putin's regime in Moscow has stepped up its murderous rain of airstrikes against heavily populated areas of Ukraine. But working people there are determined to defeat his invasion and defend their independence. In recent months hundreds have protested to demand more government resources be used to strengthen the fight to defeat Moscow's war.

In its biggest aerial barrage so far, Moscow launched 122 missiles and dozens of drones against Ukrainian cities across the country Dec. 29.

Ukrainian air defenses shot down most of the rockets and drones, but at least 41 civilians were killed, some 144 injured and more are buried under rubble. Moscow claims its targets are military but a maternity hospital, apartment blocks and schools were among buildings damaged.

Continued on page 8

Inside

Lesson of Holocaust exhibit: Socialist revolution is road to end Jew-hatred 7

—On the picket line, p. 5

“Thank you for standing up for workers everywhere”

Hotel workers in Pasadena strike, celebrate the New Year

Quebec public workers advance

Continued from front page

The workers, whose union contracts expired last March, have been fighting for wage increases to catch up with inflation, protect them against future price rises, and to improve their standard of living. They demanded an end to intolerable working conditions generated by the worsening crisis in Quebec's education and health care systems, decades in the making. It's a result of government spending cutbacks and a series of anti-working-class "reforms."

In a failed attempt to turn the population against the workers, Quebec Premier Francois Legault blamed the unions for the deplorable conditions in the schools and hospitals. He charged that "for decades we have failed to improve education and health services, much because of the rigidity of collective agreements. It's not right that our network be managed by unions rather than by managers."

Striking teachers set the pace

The FAE strikers had been at the forefront of the fight, picketing daily and calling a series of mass demonstrations, including a march of many thousands through Montreal as their strike began.

Hundreds of FAE strikers mobilized Dec. 21 to block the truck entrances to the major ports of Montreal and Quebec

City, shutting them down for two hours. Their goal was to press the Legault government to negotiate seriously.

"I came here to encourage the teachers," parent and retired teacher Benoit Mathieu told one *Militant* worker-correspondent at a Dec. 22 strike organized rally. "The rich continue to get richer, and the poor continue to get poorer. I have been here for 50 years, and I no longer recognize the Quebec to which I immigrated."

"We are angry," said Montreal teacher Angelina Glom. "We are fighting for the future."

"The government has no respect for young people or for teachers," secondary school teacher Jean-Nicolas Gagnon told the *Militant*. "In 2018 they said they would prioritize education, but that's not true."

The militant actions by the strikers won the support of millions of working people across the province. Solidarity came from other unions including the United Steelworkers, Unifor, and the Public Service Alliance of Canada — the federal government workers' union. Together these unions donated 272,000 Canadian dollars (\$205,350) in funds and grocery gift cards to help FAE strikers in need. Lacking a union strike fund, they received no strike pay.

Social crisis in Quebec

In the seven days leading up to Dec. 11, 32% of hospital emergency room patients in Quebec spent more than 24 hours waiting on a stretcher before receiving any care.

This year the Quebec government admitted the school system was short 5,000 teachers. The education minister promised parents there would



The Canadian Press/Ryan Remiorz

Striking teachers march in Montreal Dec. 12. Banner reads, "Aiming higher for teachers and public schools." Almost 600,000 public sector workers have walked picket lines across Quebec, often at the same time, forcing the government to offer tentative settlements Dec. 28.

be "one adult" in every class, but couldn't ensure they would have any teacher training or a degree.

Further revealing its disdain for the working class, the Legault government Dec. 9 rammed two pieces of legislation through the National Assembly, "restructuring" down the education and health care systems in the name of "more efficiency."

In this context, many parents organized to back the striking teachers, despite facing the challenge of organiz-

ing day-to-day life with their children out of school for weeks.

"You can't change things without fighting for them," Hacene Megouli, a parent with three children, one of school age, told the *Militant* at a Dec. 20 parent-organized picket and solidarity potluck lunch held on the lawn of the Ecole des Monarques primary school in Montreal. "This strike is for the education system, and this is why parents are supporting it. In unity there is strength — parents, and teachers together."

Opponents of Jew-hatred rally, outnumber pro-Hamas protest

BY MICHELE SMITH

ISSAQUAH, Wash. — Supporters of Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews here organized a counterprotest against the Issaquah Students League, a chapter of a group called the Revolutionary Student Union. It led a march and rally at the office of Congresswoman Kim Schrier, who is Jewish, calling for "From Issaquah to Gaza! Global intifada!" Dec. 17.

The counterprotesters said they were out to show "Issaquah that we will not rest until our families in Israel are safe, and the hostages are safely returned."

The counterprotest drew 60 people, outnumbering the pro-Hamas marchers two to one. Participants chanted, "Bring them home now!" "Ho, ho, Hamas has got to go!" and "Show your face!" The Jew-haters had urged their supporters to cover their faces, as Hamas does.

Socialist Workers Party members Rebecca Williamson and this *Militant* correspondent joined the counterprotest carrying a party poster reading, "Calls for cease-fire = support for Hamas!" and "Fighting Jew-hatred is a working-class issue."

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THE MILITANT

Hundreds protest anti-Chinese law in Florida

Hundreds have protested Florida law that bars Chinese students from entering a laboratory without a special permit. "Do we really have academic freedom to talk to scientists around the world?" asked Florida State University professor Lichun Li. "We have to speak up."



Militant/Rachele Fruit

Dec. 16 protest of 200 in Miami. Professor Lichun Li, left, speaking with Laura Anderson, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress.

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SWP: Chart a working-class road forward

Continued from front page

slanted against Israel,” LaMont told the *Militant*. “Wanting to learn more about the war in Gaza and the fight against antisemitism, he decided to get a subscription to the *Militant*, and the book *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs.

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the U.K. are using the *Militant* to campaign against Jew-hatred, build support for today’s union struggles and present a revolutionary working-class program to workers on their doorsteps, at plant gates and strike picket lines, to students on campus and at public political debates and actions.

On Dec. 12, Margaret Trowe, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress from California’s District 12, and campaign supporters attended a Berkeley City Council meeting of hundreds considering a resolution calling for a cease-fire in Gaza.

“Over 50 supporters of Israel’s right to exist protested the loud and disruptive campaign by opponents of Israel at the meeting,” reported campaign supporter Carole Lesnick. The pro-Hamas forces had disrupted the last two council meetings.

Participants were only granted one minute to speak. When Trowe began by saying, “I wish to speak against a cease-fire resolution,” opponents tried to shout her down, Lesnick told the *Militant*. But they failed.

“The Oct. 7 massacre initiated by Iran and Hamas demands a decisive response from working people and unions around the world,” Trowe said.

“The pogrom had one objective — to kill and take hostage as many Jews as possible, with the goal of eliminating Israel and Jews in the Middle East and beyond,” she said. “The fight against Jew-hatred is a life-and-death question. Israel was born out of necessity after the Holocaust when Washington turned away boatloads of Jews.

“A cease-fire is handing over a victory to Hamas,” she said, as jeers and catcalls continued. “A victory against Hamas will be a victory for working people who are Palestinian, Jewish and others around the world.”

As Trowe returned to her seat, she was greeted with cheers and handshakes by supporters of Israel’s right to exist.

Berkeley resident Tania Schweig

told the meeting her sons have been harassed while wearing their yarmulkes. “Since Oct. 7, I feel increasing fear around being a Jew,” she testified. “On my morning walks I see signs and graffiti calling Jewish people Nazis and ‘Jesus killers.’”

The council failed to pass any resolution.

“Later that night an 11-foot, 350-pound menorah used for a public Hanukah celebration at Oakland’s Lake Merritt was destroyed,” Lesnick said. “Pieces of the menorah were cut up and tossed into the lake. Anti-semitic graffiti was left on the base.” This included a threat to Jews reading, “We’re gonna find you, you’re on f--king alert.”

“The night after the destruction SWP campaign supporters joined over 300 people gathered in a determined protest against the antisemitic vandalism and to light a new menorah,” Lesnick said. “Some people recognized us from the City Council meeting and thanked us for speaking out.”

In Carrollton, Texas, SWP members Josefina Otero and Dennis Richter spoke with members of United Auto Workers Local 2360 at the Stelantis distribution center Dec. 20. They had been part of the nationwide Big Three auto strike last fall. “A few workers remembered us from our solidarity visits to the picket line,” Otero told the *Militant*.

In the parking lot they met two of the workers who had subscribed to

the paper during the strike and also got *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. As they were talking, a company guard told Otero and Richter they had to leave. But the autoworkers told him, “We are their friends, and they are here with us,” said Otero.

Five workers bought the *Militant* and one subscribed. “The new subscriber said he couldn’t agree with us more on defending Israel’s right to exist and the importance of the fight against Jew-hatred,” said Otero. “He also agreed with the defense of Ukraine’s sovereignty, saying, ‘I’m with you!’”

SWP members are also calling people who subscribed to the *Militant* during last fall’s subscription and book campaign, seeing how they’ve liked the paper and if they want to renew.



Militant
SWP member Susan LaMont introduces *Militant*, Pathfinder books to Michael Wilson at Atlanta truck stop. Eager to learn more, he got a subscription and bought *Teamster Rebellion*.

For more information on the party, its program and activities, or to subscribe to the *Militant*, contact party branches listed on page 4.

Drive for profit leads to shortages of cancer medicines

Continued from front page

These and many other cancer drugs are generics that big pharma companies determined were no longer profitable to produce. Over the past year the closing of factories in the U.S. producing these two drugs, as well as methotrexate, have cut the supply of these three key drugs nearly in half.

A Sept. 12 statement by the Joseph Biden White House vowed that its so-called Cancer Moonshot project would do something about this crisis. But over three months later, little has happened. The problem, Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Robert Califf told the *New York Times* Dec. 19, “is due to economic factors that we don’t control.” He wouldn’t say it, but he means the for-profit system that runs the medical business in the U.S.

Often there are only a few companies — or even just one — that produce a given generic drug. And a so-called gray market of distributors exploits drug shortages to boost profits. They purchase generic medications at lower prices and then sell them to hospitals and clinics at steeply marked-up prices, sometimes 1,000% higher.

Bosses skimp on safety

Bosses skimp on safely producing these drugs, endangering the lives of those desperate to use them. That’s what happened at an Intas Pharmaceuticals plant in northwestern India, for example, which supplies 50% of the U.S. supply of cisplatin. An FDA inspection showed that the company altered records, skimmed on testing raw ingredients and flouted lab control protocols. “It even destroyed evidence of its wrongdoing — by dousing documents with acid,” reported *Scientific American*. The plant halted production in December 2022, compounding shortages over the next year.

Stephanie Scanlan, a manager of a state office in Tallahassee, Florida, told the *Times* she found herself unable to get two of the three drugs, including cisplatin, over the spring and summer last year. Her doctors told her that with the drugs she had a good chance to overcome a rare bone cancer. As a result of the shortage, the cancer spread to her ribs and spine. She was then forced to have a part of her arm amputated in September, which otherwise could have been repaired.

“I’m scared to death,” she told the *Times*. “This is America. Why are we having to choose who we save?”

Nearly every major U.S. cancer center reported they faced chemo-

therapy drug shortfalls last spring and summer. One study released in August said nearly 60% of more than 1,000 pharmacies that responded described the shortages as “critically impactful.”

Among those hit the hardest are working people residing in rural areas where supplies of these drugs are even more scarce in smaller hospitals and clinics. Patients are forced to travel long distances to access treatments, assuming they can find somewhere where they’re available.

Peggy Ashworth, 87, was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in early 2021. Last February, her doctors informed her that because of the shortage, she would need to drive two hours from her home on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, to the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston to get treatment. “It seemed kind of unreal,” she told NBC News. “You just kind of wonder how in this day and age that can happen.”

“These experiences point to the deadly contradiction between workers need for health care and the for-profit medical business under capitalism. Health care is a basic human right. It needs to be free and available to all from cradle to grave,” Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from New Jersey, told the *Militant* Jan. 1. “To win this, working people need to build a class-struggle leadership and millions-strong movement to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist thieves who run the health industry racket today. And join the fight for socialism to end the system of capitalist exploitation and oppression once and for all.”

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Venezuela claims on Guyana region threaten new conflict

BY RÓGER CALERO

A territorial dispute between the governments of Venezuela and Guyana dating back to 1811 has come back to the fore, putting a spotlight on the danger of military conflict amid the growing instability of the capitalist world order. At issue is control over the Essequibo region, long under the control of Guyana, where large oil and mineral deposits have been found near the border with Venezuela. The oil reserves in Essequibo could make Guyana the world's fourth-largest offshore oil producer.

In light of growing concern in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as pressure from Washington, Guyanese President Irfaan Ali and his Venezuelan counterpart, President Nicolas Maduro, met in Kingstown, capital of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dec. 14. Their agenda was to attempt to diffuse escalating tensions over Essequibo.

The two governments released a joint statement saying they "will not threaten or use force against one another in any circumstances" and "will refrain, whether by words or deeds, from escalating any conflict or disagreement."

The dispute had escalated after the Maduro government held a national referendum Dec. 3 calling on voters to agree with steps by Caracas to reclaim sovereignty over the area. The vote was held despite a warning from the United Nations' International Court of Justice to refrain from any action challenging Guyana's long-standing control over the territory. The vote was marked by low turnout, the press reported, despite Maduro's efforts to mobilize support.

Over two centuries, the territorial dispute has ebbed and flowed as Venezuelan politicians have used it to rally nationalist support for their rule. The main bourgeois opposition figure in Venezuela's upcoming 2024 presidential election, María Corina Machado, accused Maduro of trying to distract attention away from the current economic and social crisis in Venezuela, while joining in pledging to defend Venezuela's territorial claims.

The Essequibo region comprises more than two-thirds of Guyana's territory and 16% of its population. In 1811, when Venezuela proclaimed its independence, the new government there claimed the disputed territory was within the boundaries of the former Spanish colony. The United Kingdom seized Guyana from the Dutch around the same time and eventually succeeded in bringing the Essequibo region under its control.

An international arbitration tribunal in 1899 composed of two U.S. officials, two from Britain and one from Russia

ruled 3-2 to grant the British rulers control over 94% of the disputed territory.

The Essequibo dispute was rekindled in 1966 when Guyana won its independence.

Venezuelan President Maduro's sabre rattling has increased tensions in the region. He announced shortly after the national referendum that his government would grant operating licenses for oil exploration and exploitation in Essequibo and create a Comprehensive Operational Defense Zone over the disputed territory. His government says it's clearing land there to create an airstrip.

The Guyanese government denounced the referendum as a pretext for a land grab and says its borders are not up for discussion. "Should Venezuela proceed to act in this reckless and adventurous manner, the region will have to respond," President Ali said Dec. 6.

Threat in the region

Guyana's 4,000-strong armed forces are no match for Venezuela's military, which numbers over 120,000 troops.

The Venezuelan government has bought large quantities of heavy weapons from Moscow, Beijing and Tehran, making it one of the most heavily armed countries in Latin America.

Following the Essequibo referendum, Maduro gave foreign companies operating there 90 days to register under Venezuelan law or pull out. In September, Guyana received bids for eight of 14 offshore oil and gas exploration blocks it offered for auction, including from Hess, Arabian Drilling Co., and Wataad Energy, the last two connected to Saudi Arabia.

Exxon Mobil operates its largest foreign oil project in offshore Guyana. China National Offshore Oil Company is a 25% partner in this Exxon-led consortium.

While Beijing maintains close relations with Caracas, in the last decades it has also sought to deepen diplomatic and trade relations with the Guyanese government, pursuing infrastructure and mining projects.

For its part, Washington would "stand in Guyana's corner when it comes to threats to its territory and sovereignty," Nicole Theriot, Washington's ambas-



Map shows Guyana territory Venezuelan government claims. Region is rich in minerals, large offshore oil reserves. Territorial dispute has long been used by Venezuelan politicians to rally nationalist support. Broader moves in region seek to blunt chance of wider conflict, war.

sador to Guyana, told the press. The U.S. Southern Command conducted "routine" joint flight operations with Guyana's defense forces Dec. 7.

Response in Latin America

"If there is one thing we don't want here in South America it's war," Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said in response to the growing threats. Brazil's officials have reiterated the "inadmissibility" of acquiring territory by force, and deployed 600 soldiers and armored vehicles to its northern border to block the only paved road running from Venezuela to Guyana through the dense jungles. Brazilian state-controlled oil company Petrobras has also placed bids for development in Guyana.

Maduro's threatening moves are running into political difficulty with the stated positions of leaders of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which has declared the region a "Zone of Peace."

Guyana has sought support from the Caribbean Community, Caricom, which along with representatives of Brazil, Colombia, the U.N., and CELAC was present at the Dec. 14 meeting in Kingstown.

Guyanese President Ali called for Cuba to help mediate the dispute.

Cuba, a leading member of CELAC and Caricom, has ties with Guyana that go back decades. In the early 1970s, along with three other English-speaking newly independent former British

colonies — Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago — Guyana established diplomatic ties with Cuba, despite Washington's pressure.

In late 1975, as imperialist-backed South African apartheid forces were moving toward Luanda, seeking to crush Angola's newly won independence, the Cuban revolutionary leadership responded to requests from Luanda and sent combatants to stop the offensive. Cuba approached several Caribbean countries for permission to refuel its planes transporting troops and materials. The government in Guyana made facilities available.

President Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders defended Guyana's territorial integrity when in the past it was threatened by Venezuela's capitalist rulers. And Havana has extended support to Guyana's economic and social development.

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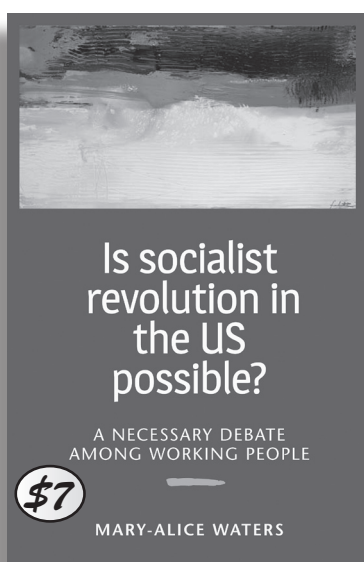
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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

‘Thank you for standing up for workers everywhere’

MINNEAPOLIS — Members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 22 at Jerry’s Broadway Bakery here responded to the call for solidarity from strikers fighting a union-busting drive by International Flavors and Fragrances in Memphis, Tennessee. They organized the local to raise donations and support for a Christmas toy drive for the striking workers’ families.

BCTGM Local 390G striker Zandra Lee set up a GoFundMe site in Memphis so “all the families on strike can still place toys under the tree this holiday season.” IFF bosses, she noted, “don’t care if our families eat or starve and is not willing to negotiate with the Union.” The strikers have been on the picket line for six months, fighting to prevent the company from eliminating overtime pay after eight hours of work and other key issues.

“Thank you for standing up for workers everywhere” read the solidarity card signed by 25 union workers here, who kicked in \$250.55 for the toy drive. “It’s good to show support so they feel that they’re not alone,” Monee Morriseau, one of the organizers of this act of solidarity, told the *Militant*.

The international union posted an article on BCTGM.org showing photos of Broadway Bakery workers, their card and the union bulletin board display where the toy drive was featured. “Our Local Unions exemplify the true meaning of solidarity through actions,” the article said. BCTGM International President Anthony Shelton also wrote a letter to workers here, thanking them for “the tremendous acts of solidarity you have shown.”

Based on a tally at the toy drive GoFundMe site, union members from Atlanta to Los Angeles, the Bay Area to the Midwest, along the Eastern Seaboard of the U.S., as well as Montreal donated over \$4,000 at

last count. More donations were sent directly to BCTGM Local 390G.

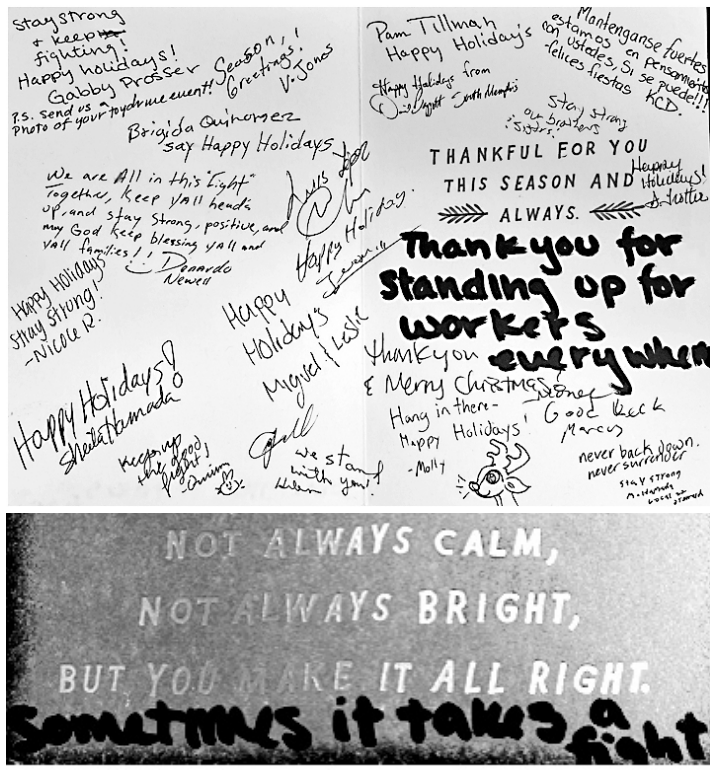
— Gabby Prosser, member of BCTGM Local 22

Hotel workers in Pasadena strike, celebrate the New Year

PASADENA, Calif. — Hotel workers, members of UNITE HERE Local 11, struck the Hilton Pasadena and Hyatt Place Pasadena hotels New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day. The city hosts the annual Rose Parade and Rose Bowl football game that weekend, drawing thousands of tourists and fans.

The strikers and their supporters celebrated New Year’s Eve with a picket line at the Hilton and a march through the city, wearing party hats, carrying balloons and blowing on noisemakers. A contingent of Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists members, veterans of the recent actors strike, joined in.

Hotel workers throughout the area have been fighting for a contract since July with a series of rolling work stoppages. “The main issues are a raise,



Solidarity card for IFF strikers in Memphis, Tennessee, from 25 workers in BCTGM Local 22 in Minneapolis. Right, Local 22 bulletin board asks for donations for strikers’ holiday toy drive.

health care, workloads and pensions,” Milton Acevedo, who works in bar service at the Hilton, told the *Militant*. He said the current walkout was the sixth work stoppage at the Hilton.

The union is fighting for contracts for 15,000 workers at 60 area locations. So far, 24 hotels have signed tentative contracts pending ratification.

— Bill Arth

‘Jewish Question’ by Abram Leon is ‘truly important’

BY GALE SHANGOLD

Following Hamas’ Oct. 7 massacre of Jews in Israel, Pathfinder Press volunteers in the United States and Canada launched a special three-week campaign to get orders from bookstores and libraries for *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon. The book explains how in the age of imperialism, Jews become a special target by the ruling capitalist class to try to salvage their system in its death agony. And why only the working class organizing to overthrow capitalism can open the door to putting an end to Jew-hatred.

The results show both the need and the widespread interest in such a book today as discussion and debate on anti-semitism rage across the world. Bookstore buyers and librarians placed 59 orders, purchasing at least 118 copies. Pathfinder volunteers estimate that they spoke with 177 buyers and librarians.

Those discussions included intro-

ducing *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, a companion book to *The Jewish Question*. During the course of the campaign, 12 orders were received for this book, putting 44 more copies on bookstore and library shelves. The effort also led to orders for other Pathfinder titles.

This is what Pathfinder salespeople call “shoe leather” work. Susie Berman from Toronto reported that on a regional trip she was part of “all four booksellers responded right away. Three bought *The Jewish Question*. Two also got *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*. One bookseller told us that he and his wife, who is Jewish, have been discussing this issue a lot at home. She had family members slaughtered in the Hamas pogrom. He ordered both books two days later. Not bad for Day

One of our campaign effort.”

A college librarian in Washington state had a similar response: “Thank you! I will have our acquisitions specialist order this book. Truly important right now.”

Two recent bookstore orders from Washington, D.C., and San Francisco included multiple copies of *The Jewish Question*, *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*, and quite a few other Pathfinder titles. Both stores, for example, ordered *50 Years of Covert Operations in the US: Washington’s Political Police and the Working Class*. The San Francisco order included the two titles in Spanish and French.

Based on these successes, volunteers are now preparing for Black History Month in February. Many Pathfinder titles, like *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Barnes, help readers deepen their understanding of the central place of the Black struggle in the U.S.

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



January 18, 1999

At 2:00 a.m. on Jan. 1, 1959, Fulgen- cio Batista, the U.S.-backed dictator of Cuba, fled the country in face of the advancing forces of the Rebel Army. Speaking over Radio Rebelde from the outskirts of the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba, Rebel commander-in-chief Fidel Castro denounced Batista’s attempt to turn power over to a military junta, and called for a nationwide general strike. Cuban workers responded to this revolutionary appeal with a massive uprising. By the time the main Rebel Army columns arrived in Havana January 8, the revolution had triumphed, opening the door to Cuba’s independence from U.S. imperialism and the road to the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

In celebration of the 40th anniversary of this victory, the *Militant* will publish speeches and other materials documenting the revolutionary acts of Cuba’s workers and farmers in power.



January 18, 1974

ST. PAUL — A crowd of 2,000 turned out for leaders of the American Indian Movement who are on trial here for their participation in last year’s Wounded Knee, S.D., occupation. Dennis Banks and Russell Means face a 10-count federal indictment, which their lawyers say is merely a cover for the government’s real purpose: the destruction of AIM.

A focus of the trial will be the 1868 treaty signed by representatives of the Sioux nation and the U.S. government. The treaty makes the government the trespasser during the Wounded Knee confrontation last year rather than the Indians. “Our land is inviolate from outside forces, be it the U.S. government or any other power,” Means said.

Already the government has managed to tie up AIM in what may amount to years of litigation. Indictments could total 300 before the government completes its dragnet.

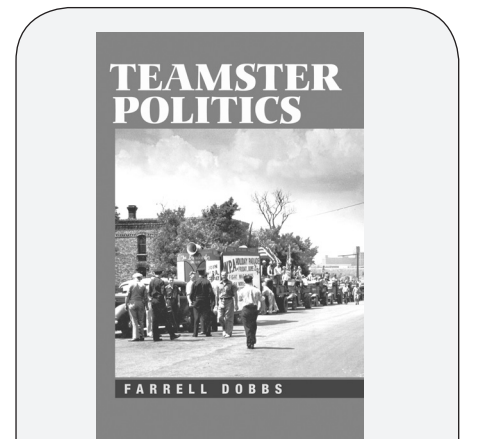


January 17, 1949

The first victims of the Smith Gag Act were the 18 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party railroaded to prison in the infamous Minneapolis Trial of 1941. At the time the Stalinists cheered the persecution and stood idly by while the government forged a weapon that could be used against any party or political grouping that differs with the party holding office.

Today the Stalinists are being prosecuted under this same law. Many trade unionists who have had first-hand experience with Stalinism are cheering this persecution.

This is a fatal course. Without the slightest sympathy for their poisonous politics, labor must come to the defense of the 12 Stalinists. Labor is fighting for its rights against Taft-Hartleyism, the current witch-hunt and “loyalty” purge. Success requires an uncompromising defense of democratic rights.



“Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade-union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party.”

— Farrell Dobbs

Other books in the four-part series:
Teamster Rebellion
Teamster Power
Teamster Bureaucracy
 \$16 each or all four for \$50
pathfinderpress.com

Constitutional rights fight key in class struggle

Defending constitutional freedoms from attack by the capitalist rulers is at the center of the class struggle. That fact is born out by the latest attack on Donald Trump, barring him from the Colorado and Maine ballots.

The unqualified defense of basic freedoms is at the heart of a resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party, reprinted in *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by party leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

“Class conscious workers,” they write, “must unconditionally oppose anti-constitutional assaults by the government on freedom of worship and speech; freedom of the press, association and assembly; prohibition of ‘unreasonable search and seizure’; and other liberties needed and used by the toilers.”

These freedoms are needed whenever workers mobilize to defend ourselves. They’re being used today by striking bakery union workers in Memphis, Tennessee; at actions defending Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews; and at protests demanding an end to Washington’s economic war against Cuba’s socialist revolution.

Democrats are mounting an unparalleled number of court actions against Trump, seeking to deprive working people of the right to vote for the candidate of their choice, whoever that might be. Among the indictments are violations of thought-control conspiracy and espionage laws, and statutes used by the rulers to target opponents of Washington’s wars, labor leaders and socialists.

“Under conditions of the bourgeois regime, all suppression of political rights and freedom, no matter whom they are directed against in the beginning, in the

end inevitably bear down upon the working class, particularly its most advanced elements,” Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote in 1939. “That is a law of history.”

Overall the U.S. Constitution codifies the class rule of the capitalists who exploit working people. But protections against government attack were won by struggles of working people and two great revolutions, in 1776 and the Civil War.

These freedoms are under serious assault. “Bourgeois and upper-middle-class political forces, organized especially in the imperialist Democratic Party today, are seeking to disenfranchise those the liberals and the ‘left’ scorn as benighted working people, whom they increasingly fear as well,” the SWP resolution explains.

The Socialist Workers Party is running its own candidates. They present a program for the working class to fight for our own class interests and point the road toward taking political power into our own hands.



FBI raids Socialist Workers Party headquarters in Minneapolis June 1941, as Roosevelt administration led assault on constitutional freedoms to silence opposition in labor movement to U.S. rulers’ preparations for World War II.

Defend sovereignty of Israel and Ukraine

Moscow’s murderous war on Ukraine, its culture and its people, and the Tehran-sponsored Hamas pogrom seeking to smash Israel and kill as many Jews as possible are two watershed events whose ramifications effect politics worldwide. Both are deadly threats to the working class and can be fought to the end.

Working people in Ukraine are waging a courageous fight to push Moscow’s forces out of their country, all of their country.

Israeli toilers, Jewish and Arab alike, alongside Bedouins, immigrant workers and growing numbers of Gazans are fighting to defeat and destroy Hamas so it and its mentor in Tehran are incapable of such Jew-hatred and brutality again.

These heroic struggles are intertwined. They are in the interests of workers and our unions everywhere. These gains open up crucial political space for the toilers in Ukraine and Russia, in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, to work and struggle together.

The “democratic” imperialist powers, first and foremost here in Washington, have no answers for working people. The only goal worshipped by the ruling capitalist families is at the altar of ever more profit ripped off the backs of the toilers. Their foreign policy and massive military forces exist for only one reason — to defend their blood-soaked system.

The imperialist world order has been deeply shaken by Putin’s invasion and Tehran’s drive to destroy Israel. There is greater danger today of new wars and the threat of nuclear destruction.

The only realistic road forward is to unify the working class in struggle and to build the party we need in the U.S. and worldwide to lead the fight to overthrow capitalist exploitation and oppression and take political power into our own hands.

Join the Socialist Workers Party in distributing the *Militant*, which tells the truth about the road forward for the workers of the world.

LETTERS

Celebrate life of Helen Ayres

Helen Ayres, a long-time member and supporter of the Communist League in New Zealand, died in Auckland Dec. 25 at 86.

Ayres was drawn into political activity as a trade unionist and campaigner for women’s rights in the mid-1970s after she returned to work after 15 years at home raising five children. Many knew her as Helen Dee when in December 1976 she joined the Socialist Action League, the forerunner of the Communist League.

Ayres participated in many union fights and other working-class struggles. She was a stalwart at the historic 1977-78 Maori land occupation at Bastion Point in the

heart of Auckland. She was a leader of the Working Women’s Council in Auckland and its representative on the Auckland Trades Council, the citywide labor federation. Their campaign led to the national union movement adopting the Working Women’s Charter in 1980.

Ayres worked in meat plants and factories in several cities,

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

helping to strengthen trade unions, build solidarity and recruit to the communist movement.

In her later years, she was one of the hundreds of volunteers organized in the Print Project worldwide. These supporters of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. and Communist Leagues in a number of countries collaborate to produce, print and distribute Pathfinder Press books written by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries.

More than 50 family members, friends and Communist League supporters celebrated Ayres’ life at a gathering at a daughter’s home in Auckland Dec. 28.

Mike Tucker
Sydney, Australia

Ukraine independence

Continued from front page

The government in Kyiv retaliated with a drone attack Dec. 30 on Belgorod, a Russian provincial capital 19 miles from the Ukrainian border, causing casualties. Putin cynically uses assaults like this to claim Ukraine is the aggressor. The Ukrainian government does not see working people in Russia as an ally that can help bring an end to Moscow’s murderous assaults.

A Ukrainian cruise missile attack destroyed a Russian warship in the Crimean port of Feodosia Dec. 26. In the past four months, such attacks have taken out a fifth of Moscow’s Black Sea Fleet, breaking Putin’s attempted blockade of Ukrainian wheat shipments, part of his regime’s efforts to cripple the Ukrainian economy.

Moscow’s forces still occupy 18% of Ukraine, including Crimea, and last year’s Ukrainian counteroffensive has stalled.

Kyiv protests: ‘Drones, not parks!’

“It’s better to buy drones than build a new park!” and “The more money we spend on the army, the faster Ukraine will win this war!” chanted 500 young Ukrainians protesting outside the Kyiv City Council Dec. 14. At similar actions in Odesa, Lviv and other cities, working people are demanding that officials channel funds into the country’s defenses.

“At a time when our friends, parents and acquaintances are dying at the front, we have more pressing matters than rebuilding roads and beautifying parks,” Kateryna Zaderey told The Associated Press at the action.

Protests began in Odesa when a few dozen people demanded money allocated for repairing a courthouse be spent on the fighting instead. Workers despise the theft and corruption that mark the capitalist government in Ukraine. Outrage had swept Kyiv months earlier when three people died in a missile attack because they were unable to enter a locked-up bomb shelter despite city officials allocating \$32.5 million for the maintenance of the shelters.

“It’s a question of the nation’s survival,” Iryna Ignatovych, a founder of the protest group Money for the Armed Forces of Ukraine, told the *New York Times* in Kyiv. “Russia is a very big country with a lot of resources. Ukraine is not so big, so in order to win we must redirect all our efforts to help our military. The rear must support the front.”

In contrast to Ukraine, where working people volunteered to join the fighting at the front, in Russia opposition to the war continues to percolate.

‘Our men are dying for nothing’

The Way Home is a Russian organization of wives, mothers and other relatives of soldiers calling for the return of their loved ones and an end to Moscow’s mobilization. It released a video plea Dec. 28 by a soldier’s widow decrying the invasion of Ukraine.

Maria Ishkova from St. Petersburg spoke out in the Moscow-occupied Ukrainian city of Berdiansk where she planned to celebrate the New Year with her husband. She hadn’t seen him since he was one of 300,000 reservists called up in Putin’s mobilization in September 2022.

“I came on my own to the Zaporizhzhia region to greet the New Year with my husband,” said Ishkova. “Today ... his comrades called me and said that he died.”

“What I want to tell everyone who is fighting for their beloved men ... [is that] there is no time left because every day can become fatal, and it most likely will. Fight for them at this very moment, do everything possible,” she said. “I want to tell you that people here don’t need this [war]. Our men are dying for nothing.”

The Way Home gained attention Nov. 7 when its members protested in Moscow calling on the Kremlin to rotate mobilized men out of the frontlines. The government accuses the organization of having ties to the U.S. and other imperialist powers.

“They call us traitors to the motherland,” the mother of one soldier told the *Washington Post* Dec. 28. “How can we be treated like this?” Her son and fellow soldiers were held in a squalid military prison for a week after refusing to storm an enemy position. She wrote letters to officials to protest their treatment, “but only received bureaucratic replies.”

“I have not participated in rallies, street protests, but I think very soon I will agree to do so.”