

# THE MILITANT

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Sankara spoke for exploited, oppressed of the world

— PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 3 JANUARY 22, 2024

## Flight attendant unions unite in call for pickets on February 13

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

“Join us on Tuesday, February 13, for picketing at over 30 airports worldwide,” says the call posted on-line Jan. 3 by three unions representing nearly 100,000 flight attendants. “Stand in solidarity with us to demand that airline management stop the stall tactics and negotiate the contracts we are due.” More than three-quarters of these workers are locked in long-standing contract fights with the airlines, including at United, American, Alaska and Southwest.

The united call by the Association of Professional Flight Attendants, Association of Flight Attendants-CWA and Transport Workers Union Local 556 says, “Our time on the job must be compensated. We have earned long-term security and benefits.”

These flight attendants are working under contracts that have been extended for years. Buried under massive red tape by the infamous anti-union Railway Labor Act, they face

Continued on page 5

## SWP campaign in Oakland joins protests against attacks on Israel

BY MAGGIE TROWE

SAN LEANDRO, Calif. — The Socialist Workers Party campaign joined other supporters of Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews to speak out against Jew-hatred at City Council debates here and in Alameda Jan. 2.

This author is the SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in District 12, which includes Berkeley, Oakland, Alameda and San Leandro. Supporters of the SWP campaign have attended meetings in all four cities to oppose resolutions to demand Israel agree to a “permanent cease-fire.” The Israeli government launched a military effort to crush Tehran-backed Hamas after the Jew-hating outfit sent death squads from Gaza to kill as many Jews as they could in their Oct. 7 pogrom. Some 1,200 were killed and more than 200 taken hostage in that attack.

In Alameda, nearly 200 people came to debate a letter proposed by Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft that would call on Washington to support an immediate

Continued on page 3

## Defend Israel’s right to exist! Fight against Jew-hatred is union issue



Bill Motchan

Hundreds protested in St. Louis Dec. 10 in defense of Israel as refuge for Jews, against antisemitism. Reactionary support for Hamas massacre of Jews has spurred counterprotests.

## Reactionary gov’t in Iran key to Mideast conflict

BY TERRY EVANS

The reactionary bourgeois clerical regime in Tehran is driven to increase its regional power and influence by force of arms. Its leaders strive to extend beyond Iran’s borders the four-decade-long political counterrevolution that pushed back the workers, farmers, women and oppressed nationalities that carried out the historic Iranian Revolution of 1979. Their latest move was to join Hamas to plan, arm and launch the Islamist group’s murderous pogrom in Israel Oct. 7.

Israel’s war today to dismantle Hamas is also a war to deal blows to the rulers in Tehran, who openly proclaim their

Continued on page 6

## Call for Israel ‘cease-fire’ gives support to Hamas

BY SETH GALINSKY

U.S. officials say they’re focused on preventing a widening of the war between Israel and the Tehran-organized “axis of resistance,” which includes Hamas, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Tehran-backed militias in Syria and Iraq, and Houthi-based Islamists in Yemen.

“I have been quietly working with the Israeli government to get them to reduce and significantly get out of Gaza,” Biden said Jan. 8 after a handful of opponents of Israel disrupted his campaign talk at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. He praised the disrupters’ “passion.”

Continued on page 7

## Cuba’s socialist revolution points the way forward for working people today



Cuban Council of State

Workers in Havana, August 1960, demonstrate support for Cuba’s revolutionary government’s nationalization of U.S. banks, businesses, represented by coffins thrown into sea.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

This year the *Militant* joins in celebrating the 65th anniversary of the victory of the Cuban Revolution, one of two great socialist revolutions of our epoch. The other was the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia led by V.I. Lenin in 1917. The lessons of these momentous events help point the road forward for the working class in the U.S. and worldwide.

The Cuban Revolution triumphed be-

cause of the central political role of Fidel Castro, leader of the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army. He led workers and farmers to defeat the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista on Jan. 1, 1959, and take political power. This opened the door for the toiling majority to win land for the peasants, make ever-deeper inroads against capitalist property relations, and transform themselves in the process.

Continued on page 4

## Defense, extension of political rights key for the class struggle

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

President Joseph Biden implausibly likened himself to George Washington Jan. 5, at the same time he pressed further attacks on constitutional freedoms won during the Revolutionary War and the class battles that followed it.

Biden and his Democratic Party have made clear he wanted Donald Trump prosecuted and imprisoned. He’s been running a reelection campaign centered on the need to jail his main rival. Biden’s speech in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, a key base used by Washington’s Continental Army, was no different. In a 35-minute address, Biden used the words “insurrection” 11 times and “Trump” 40 times.

Biden railed against the tens of millions who voted for the former president.

Continued on page 9

## Soldiers’ relatives protest Putin’s war on Ukraine

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Russian President Vladimir Putin’s war to conquer Ukraine and its people has failed to dent the determination of working people there to defend the country’s sovereignty. Resistance to the war and its consequences continues to rise inside Russia.

Despite this, Putin hopes the Russian Federation’s three-times-larger population and greater resources will ensure his forces outlast Ukraine’s. Seeking new troops without large conscription,

Continued on page 2

### Inside

Editorial: End Washington’s economic war on Cuba! 9

Iran steelworkers make gains with 9-day strike 6

# Russians protest war on Ukraine

Continued from front page

Putin signed a decree Jan. 4 fast-tracking citizenship applications for foreigners, including the tens of thousands children his forces have kidnapped from Ukraine.

As the government has turned Russia's economy to prioritizing war production at the expense of making things working people need, protests have surfaced.

Residents of Podolsk, a town outside Moscow, took to the streets Jan. 4 after 21,000 people lost power and heat in subzero temperatures. The outage was the result of a burst pipe in an ammunition plant where company officials initially refused to report the incident. Protesters demanded authorities restore their heat, as well as punish those responsible.

"The police arrived quickly to disrupt us. I wish they'd brought back heating as fast as they dispatched the cops," a resident said in a video of the protest.

## Russian conscripts' wives protest

For months, anger has grown among families of reservists called up in Putin's Sept. 21, 2022, mobilization. The reservists remain at the front with no prospect of troop rotation, unlike prisoners who "volunteer" to serve in the army for six months with a promise of freedom when they're finished.

Some 15 women, wives of Russian reservists, laid flowers Jan. 6 at the flame of the unknown soldier at the Kremlin. In St. Petersburg, a similar action was held. They demanded their husbands be brought home from the front.

Their protest is "the only peaceful action that has not yet been banned by law," Paulina, one of the Moscow demonstrators, told Agence France-Presse.

"We shall carry on every day, every Saturday," she said. "At some point, it will be impossible to ignore us."

Another soldier's wife held a solo picket outside the Ministry of Defense the same day.

"I'm not afraid to talk about it. I'm not afraid to fight because the worst thing that could happen has already happened," she told the website of The Way Home, an organization of soldiers' relatives. "More and more wives, mothers and sisters are beginning to understand that their inaction could get their husbands or brothers killed."

Police have so far only issued warnings to the soldiers' relatives, not the detentions, fines and imprisonment normally used against anti-war protesters. The Kremlin knows that despite its patriotic propaganda, the war is not popular. Another call-up of reservists, to allow rotation and replenish troops killed over the last year, could easily lead to wider protests by working people.

Russian state media is instructed to ignore the women's protests. The Krem-



Wife of Russian soldier fighting in Ukraine protests outside government offices in Moscow Jan. 6. Her sign says, "Get the mobilized soldiers home! Down with conscription slavery!"

lin seeks to uphold a facade of national unity backing what Putin continues to call a "special military operation" as March presidential elections near.

The Way Home has gained more than 37,000 followers on its Telegram channel in support of calls for the demobilization of reservists.

## Capitalist rulers attack Ukraine unions, seize offices

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Ukraine's capitalist rulers, with the urging of their imperialist backers in Washington, are using wartime conditions and claims they're advancing "de-Sovietization" to attack the union movement and weaken its ability to fight to protect workers' interests. This includes moves to seize buildings and offices that were formerly state property under the Soviet Union and now are used by the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU), the largest union fed-

eration in the country.

This attack is part of a broader assault on Ukraine's unions being promoted by the government. The country's two main union federations — the FPU, whose continuity dates back to the state-sponsored unions under the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union, and the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) — have joined together to fight these attacks.

The KVPU was founded out of the Independent Miners Union, which led a series of mass strikes and protest marches in 1989 and 1991 as the Soviet Union disintegrated.

The working class is the backbone of Ukraine's production and defense today.

Claiming the unions are wracked with corruption, and taking advantage of wartime martial law that bans strikes and protests, the government is moving to seize the FPU's properties.

To carry this through, President Volodymyr Zelensky's ruling party is trying to replace state consultative bodies that include union representation

with a bogus "Confederation of Trade Unions" it has created, led by Serhiy Kaplin, a bourgeois politician and former candidate for president. Kaplin is campaigning to carry through the seizure of the FPU properties.

Making a thinly veiled threat, Kaplin told openDemocracy that war veterans could be used to "restore order" and remove "corrupt" union leaders. The key prize in this property fight is Kyiv's Trade Unions House, which was at the center of the Maidan popular uprising a decade ago that brought down the pro-Moscow regime of Viktor Yanukovich, advancing the struggle for Ukrainian independence. It was gutted by fire Feb. 19, 2014, amid murderous assaults by Yanukovich's riot police on protesters taking shelter there.


Over the next five years the building was fully restored with the help of unions all over the world. It continues to house a number of national unions.

The FPU says that by the end of 2022 most buildings under its auspices were used for people displaced by the war.

# THE MILITANT

## Strikes by Quebec public sector workers win gains

Almost 600,000 Quebec public sector workers, including teachers on strike for five weeks, picketed or marched last month winning tentative agreements from the provincial government Dec. 28. Unionists were fighting for better wages and conditions in face of inflation, cutbacks.



The Canadian Press/Ryan Remiorz  
Striking teachers march Dec. 12 in Montreal.

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# SWP campaign in Oakland

**Continued from front page**  
cease-fire. While condemning Hamas for its “barbaric attack” Oct. 7, the letter focuses its fire against Israel’s “seemingly unrestrained violence” for “the ongoing destruction of Gaza and escalating humanitarian crisis.”

More than one-third of participants spoke against the letter, including four supporters of the SWP campaign.

Among those who applauded Ashcraft’s letter was Seth Morrison, who identified himself as Jewish. He wore a “Not in our name” T-shirt, and called on people to “stand up against Israel’s genocide.”

The slander that Israel carries out genocide is bandied about freely by cease-fire proponents. In fact, Hamas plants its soldiers and weapons in hospitals, schools and densely populated neighborhoods, guaranteeing civilian casualties, while Israel’s military urges civilians to evacuate before attacking.

“The word genocide is used against Israel,” Robert Bonham countered. “I would ask you to read the Hamas charter and Israel’s declaration of independence” to see who calls for genocide.

“Hamas invaded Israel unprovoked and carried out a pogrom,” SWP member Jeff Powers said. “Who’s responsible for the civilian deaths? It’s Hamas. It will be a victory for all if Hamas is defeated.”

Barbara Schick also blamed Hamas

for the violence. “Since 2005 there have been at least six cease-fires, all broken by Hamas,” she said. Another cease-fire now would only allow Hamas to regain strength for further attacks. “Both Palestinians and Israelis, Jewish and Arab citizens alike, deserve a chance to determine their destiny without interference from Hamas.”

“There’s nothing about the Oct. 7 attack that has anything to do with saving the Palestinian people,” retired union machinist and SWP campaign supporter Raúl Gonzalez said. “There are no freedom fighters in Hamas. Its foundational documents call for driving all Jews out of Israel, as do Iran’s rulers.”

Several speakers told of escalating attacks on Jews in the Bay Area. “Since Oct. 7 I have seen swastikas spray-painted on the walls, I’ve been verbally attacked for wearing a Star of David,” eighth-grader Eli Fuchsman said. “A letter calling for a cease-fire argues against Israel’s right to defend itself from blatant terrorism.”

“I work with Jewish teens,” Karen



## 9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

**Margaret Trowe, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in California’s District 12, speaks against San Leandro City Council motion for an Israeli cease-fire, which would only strengthen Hamas.**

Fegenberg, an Israeli American and veteran of the Israel Defense Forces, said. “One teen was yelled at recently by a passerby for being a Zionist for wearing a star of David. Another was

told by a classmate it was a shame Hitler didn’t finish the job.”

After hours of debate the council voted 3-1 against sending Ashcraft’s letter.

## Join SWP campaigning in the working class!

BY JANET POST

The Socialist Workers Party candidates and their supporters invite you to join in taking the party’s revolutionary program to working people on their

doorsteps, on strike picket lines, and at social protest actions.

Since the Tehran-backed Hamas massacre of Jews in Israel Oct. 7, members of the SWP and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom have been using the *Militant* along with Pathfinder books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries to explain why workers and our unions have a stake in fighting Jew-hatred wherever it rears its ugly head.

SWP members explain the importance of supporting Israel’s right to exist as a refuge for Jews, as well as discussing how organizing to make a socialist revolution in the U.S. is the only road to end anti-Jewish violence for all time.

Party candidates and supporters are also participating in activities supporting the courageous fight by the Ukrainian people to defeat Moscow’s invasion. The struggle against Jew-hatred and support for the sovereignty of Ukraine are both deeply in the interest of the working class and the unions.

Defending and extending consti-

tutional freedoms from attack by the capitalist rulers is at the center of the class struggle. From the Democrats’ campaign to keep Donald Trump off the presidential ballot to anti-working-class laws like the Railway Labor Act that clamp down on unions’ right to strike, the *Militant* champions the political rights we won in struggle and the need today to defend ourselves against the attacks of the bosses and their government.

To help discuss these important political developments in the world, *Militant* readers can introduce the paper to co-workers, fellow union members, neighbors and others. If you’re on strike or involved in a struggle along with your co-workers, write up a report for the *Militant* to help spread the word.

The SWP is running its own candidates — the list of 2024 candidates to date is printed here, with more to be announced, including our candidates for president and vice president. To join in, contact the SWP or Communist League branch nearest you, listed on page 8.

### Join Socialist Workers Party 2024 campaigns

**Fight in the interests of the working class  
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Margaret Trowe, U.S. Congress

#### Florida

Rachele Fruit, U.S. Senate  
Laura Anderson, U.S. Congress

#### Georgia

Lisa Potash, U.S. Congress

#### Illinois

Naomi Craine, U.S. Congress

#### New Jersey

Joanne Kuniandy, U.S. Senate  
Lea Sherman, U.S. Congress

#### Ohio

John Hawkins, U.S. Senate

#### Texas

Alyson Kennedy, U.S. Senate

## Rail workers contribute bonuses — ‘truly blood money’ — to the SWP

BY JOHN STUDER

Over the last couple of months the Socialist Workers Party has received a number of special contributions to further its long-term political work. A number come from holiday, production and other “bonuses” from the bosses.

A more accurate description is “blood money.” These payments from the bosses encourage workers to risk life and limb for “our” company, and to discourage fights by workers and their unions against lousy wages, dangerous working conditions, hours that wreak havoc with family and personal lives, and for time for union and other activities, and the other insults the capitalist system lays on us.

Some came from rail workers. “I’m putting in the mail today two checks totaling \$1,700 from myself and another rail worker I know,” conductor Naomi Craine wrote from Chicago. “They are ‘service bonuses’ we received from the railroad as part of the contract imposed by the government in December 2022. The bosses use the bonuses to try to

sell a contract that includes work rule changes that will make already grueling schedules worse.

“At the same time they’re cutting maintenance jobs, trying to reduce crew sizes, and running longer and heavier trains,” Craine said, “leading to disasters such as the toxic derailments in East Palestine, Ohio, and Livingston, Kentucky.”

“This is truly blood money, and we’re glad to put it to good use building the Socialist Workers Party.”

Some other rail unionists have told the party they expect similar checks to come soon, and look forward to sending them in. They provide an important opportunity for supporters of the party to explain this tradition to their co-workers, talk about the true character of these “bonuses,” and invite them to join in using them in the best possible way — strengthening the working-class movement and its vanguard party.

If you get the opportunity, consider following their example.

### Learn more about Cuba’s socialist revolution

#### To Speak the Truth: Why Washington’s ‘Cold War’ Against Cuba Doesn’t End

**Fidel Castro, Che Guevara**

In speeches before UN bodies, Castro and Guevara address the peoples of the world, explaining why Washington fears the example of the socialist revolution and why its effort to destroy it will fail.

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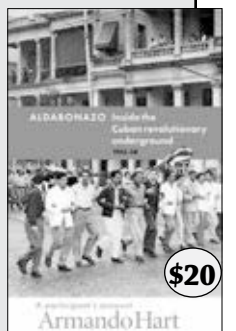
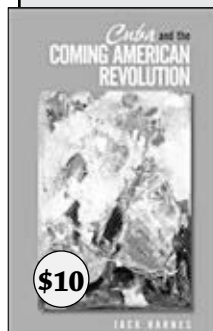
#### Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution

**Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer**

Also in Spanish, Greek, Farsi

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# Cuba's socialist revolution

Continued from front page

The imperialist rulers in Washington responded by launching a six-decades-long campaign to try to destroy the revolution, carried out by Democratic and Republican administrations alike. They have carried out a relentless economic, trade, financial and political war against the working people of Cuba.

After Batista fled Cuba, some of his generals remained, planning a coup to hold onto power. But millions responded to Castro's call for a general strike and Che Guevara led his army into Havana to seize the garrison. Castro also planned to get to Havana as rapidly as possible.

But as his Rebel Army column started out, "the people stopped me in the towns. I was not able to do anything else but speak with the people," Castro said, in what became known as the Freedom Caravan.

"As we moved through towns and cities, I saw lots of men and women, hundreds and thousands of men and women with the red-and-black uniforms of the July 26 Movement. But many more thousands wore uniforms that weren't black and red but were the work shirts of workers and farmers," Castro said in a March 26, 1964, speech, describing the impact the Freedom Caravan had on him. Since that day, "I belonged to the people, to the revolution, because we had truly accomplished something that was greater than ourselves."

This year, during the first week in January, a Caravan of Freedom is traveling across Cuba to commemorate this historic journey. The caravan is going through the same towns and cities Castro visited, greeting people in Las Tunas, Camaguey, Ciego de Avila and more.

Over the first two years after the triumph of the revolution, 100,000 landless peasants became landowners, with land guaranteed to all who wanted to farm it. The workers and farmers government carried out far-reaching nationalizations of industry and utilities, owned by U.S. companies and native capitalist alike, among other deep-going steps. Millions of working people were involved.

In the summer of 1960 thousands of young people from across the Americas and beyond attended the First Latin American Youth Congress in Havana. Among those participating was

Jack Barnes, today national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.

## This revolution is 'Marxist'

They were addressed by Cuban revolutionary leader Che Guevara, who posed the question, "Is this revolution communist?"

"I would answer that if this revolution is Marxist — and listen well that I say 'Marxist' — it is because it discovered, by its own methods, the road pointed out by Marx," Guevara said.

"The Cuban Revolution was moving forward, not worrying about labels, not checking what others said about it, but constantly scrutinizing what the Cuban people wanted of it," he said.

Writing in *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, Barnes noted, "Guevara's explanation coincided well with the conclusions I was groping toward during that decisive summer, when all the major imperialist-owned industries in Cuba were nationalized by massive mobilizations of working people from one end of the island to the other."

Barnes, who returned for his senior year at Carleton College in Minnesota, became one of the organizers of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee there. He wrote that he got a deeper understanding of the class questions posed by the Cuban Revolution and the defense of its gains in the U.S. through discussions with communist workers in the Twin Cities, like V.R. Dunne. Dunne had been a member of the Communist International from its founding in 1919, a leader of the Teamsters strikes and organizing drives in the Upper Midwest during the 1930s, and one of the first workers railroaded to prison by the federal government under the Smith "Gag" Act for opposing the U.S. imperialist rulers' war drive leading up to and during World War II.

"These workers pointed us to the history of the class struggle in the United States, to the lessons we needed to learn from the workers and farmers in this country, whose fighting legacy we inherited," Barnes wrote. "Above all, they taught those of us who, like themselves, were so strongly and passionately attracted to the example being set by the fighting workers and peasants of Cuba that the challenge — for us — was not in Cuba. Our fight was in the United



Granma

Fidel Castro and Camilo Cienfuegos, standing in jeep, right to left, during Freedom Caravan to Havana, Jan. 2-8, 1959. "They stopped me in the towns," Castro said, "to speak with the people." The revolution "had truly accomplished something that was greater than ourselves."

States," to make a victorious socialist revolution here.

## Mass literacy campaign

One of the first actions of Cuba's revolutionary government was organizing volunteers to participate in a mass literacy campaign. Over 100,000 youth from the cities, the majority women and most still in their teens, mobilized to go to the countryside and got an education themselves about class relations in the countryside from the rural workers and peasants they were teaching to read and write.

The literacy campaign was central to strengthening the worker-peasant alliance on which revolutionary Cuba was founded, as well as narrowing the gap between toilers in city and countryside.

The U.S. rulers were determined to overthrow the Cuban Revolution and its example. They organized, armed and trained a counterrevolutionary army, which landed at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. To their utter surprise, Cuba's revolutionary militias, police and armed forces defeated in under three days the 1,500 mercenaries deployed by Washington. This marked the first defeat for U.S. imperialism in this hemisphere.

The U.S.-backed forces failed because "they lacked a just cause to defend," Guevara said in a speech to electrical workers after the victory. "They failed to measure the moral relationship of forces."

"Compañero workers and peasants, this is the socialist and democratic revolution of the working people, by the

working people, and for the working people," Castro told the Cuban people the day before the invasion. And for this revolution, "we are prepared to give our lives."

This was not a "proclamation" of the socialist character of the revolution, but an affirmation of what working people had accomplished through their mass mobilizations since they took power.

Along this course, a series of popular mass organizations were formed, including the new armed forces, the Cuban trade union federation, Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and more. The Federation of Cuban Women was established in August 1960. "Sometimes I'm asked to give a one-word definition of the Cuban Revolution," said FMC leader Vilma Espín in an interview reprinted in *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*. "I reply that it's about participation — the participation of the entire people in everything." Women "began to understand the point Lenin emphasized over and over — that for a revolution to move forward, to develop, women had to participate."

Socialist Workers Party leaders have edited and written over two dozen books published by Pathfinder Press through which Cuba's revolutionary leaders — including Castro and Guevara — explain what Cuban working people have accomplished. There is no better place to see what is possible for workers here in the U.S. to accomplish if we follow their example.



Militant/Joseph Hansen

Picket line of over 500 people called by Fair Play for Cuba Committee outside United Nations, Nov. 26, 1960, to protest moves by U.S. Navy fleet in Caribbean. SWP worked with other groups in building Fair Play committee to get out the truth about, defend Cuba's revolution.

## New York public meeting

# Celebrate 65 years of the Cuban Revolution

An example for workers in the US and worldwide

Sunday, January 21

2 p.m. reception; 3 p.m. program

Speakers:

Steve Clark, SWP National Committee; others

307 West 36th St., 13th floor, New York City

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# Flight attendants call rallies

Continued from front page

no-strike provisions that the bosses take advantage of to force endless delays. It's the same law used last fall by Democratic President Joseph Biden and Congress to block a rail strike and impose a contract that union members had rejected.

Far from the glamorous life sold to the public, most flight attendants are only paid from when the plane door closes for takeoff to when it opens after landing, forcing them to work unpaid hours and hours loading and unloading passengers and during flight delays.

Beginning flight attendants are hired onto reserve status — and can stay there for years — with no set schedule, on call whenever the company needs someone. It makes it nearly impossible to plan a family life or any other activities.

Alaska Airlines flight attendants told the *Seattle Times* that with the pay tiers in their long-expired contract, workers with less than 10 years' seniority barely get by on poverty-level wages. Some survive by qualifying for

food stamps and housing assistance.

"When you go to work, you see all these bright shining faces," flight attendant Rebecca Owens said. "You don't see the difficulty that people are facing."

"Jobs across our economy are in crisis right now," Sara Nelson, Association of Flight Attendants international president, said. And with labor power being shown in action, from the autoworkers to UPS workers and Hollywood writers, "there's an expectation now across the working class that things are going to get better."

The *Militant* urges its readers to spread the word and help build solidarity far and wide for these Feb. 13 actions. For more information on locations and times, go to the unions' websites.



Association of Professional Flight Attendants  
American Airlines flight attendants rally at Dallas-Fort Worth airport Sept. 5. More than 75,000 workers on four airlines are fighting for higher pay for all hours they work, livable schedules.

## State prisons plan use of nitrogen to carry out death penalty

BY JOE SWANSON

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska would become the fourth state in the U.S. where prisoners subject to the death penalty would be suffocated to death by forcing them to breathe pure nitrogen gas under a bill introduced here by State Sen. Loren Lippincott. The other three are Alabama, Mississippi and Oklahoma.

Seventeen of Nebraska's 49 state senators have signed on as co-sponsors of Lippincott's bill.

The nitrogen protocol, where a mask that fits tightly over the inmate's nose and mouth would deliver pure nitrogen, causes death by hypoxia. Nebraska's current method of execution is by lethal injection.

Using nitrogen to kill prisoners sentenced to death has never been tried in the U.S. No one knows what will actually happen. Alabama is the only state that has developed a "protocol" for actually carrying out such executions, but the copy of it that was made public is heavily redacted.

Alabama inmate Kenneth Eugene Smith is set to be the first guinea pig for the procedure, sentenced to be executed Jan. 25.

Smith has been on death row for three decades after being convicted of a 1988 murder. The jury voted 11-1 for life imprisonment, but the judge overrode their decision and sentenced Smith to death.

Alabama officials had previously attempted to execute Smith in November 2022, but failed to insert an IV line for the lethal injection. They poked and cut him for hours trying, finally giving up.

A panel of U.N. special human rights rapporteurs has called on state officials to cancel Smith's execution, saying nitrogen hypoxia "may subject him to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or even torture."

"This is akin to death by being ejected into the vacuum of space," Joel Zivot, a professor of anesthesiology at Emory University, told *Newsweek*.

In a phone interview with the *Lincoln Journal Star*, Lippincott calously said, "It would be effective and a very humane way of putting a person to death."

Nebraska is one of 27 states where the death penalty is still on the books. Four people have been executed here

since 1976. The last was the 2018 execution of Carey Dean Moore. He was killed with an untested four-drug cocktail featuring fentanyl, the opioid drug responsible for thousands of overdose deaths in working-class communities around the country.

"The shift to using nitrogen for executions has come as pharmaceutical companies have limited the availability of certain drugs, like sodium thiopental, for executions," Alex Houchin, development coordinator of Nebraskans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, told the *Militant*. "People who make pharmaceuticals, generally speaking, make them to help people. There's no clean way to kill somebody."

The death penalty is a class weapon used by the capitalist rulers to dehumanize and terrorize working people.

### Lessons of Teamster battles from 1930s

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## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 25, 1999

The Clinton administration is on the offensive to get Black farmers to quit their struggle against discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Capitalist newspapers across the country are carrying stories presenting the consent decree signed by lawyers for the government and for Black farmers as the end of the fight.

But the struggle is far from a settled matter because hundreds of Black farmers don't accept the decree. Black farmers have explained that no amount of money can compensate for the government's assault on their dignity, loss of livelihoods, and the havoc wreaked upon their families.

The outcome of this fight is inseparably linked to the breadth of support among the toiling majority. Now is the time to organize as many trade unionists as possible to turn out in Washington for the March 2 demonstration!



January 25, 1974

In a breakthrough for the socialist suit against Watergating, the government has admitted conducting a broad spy operation against the Socialist Workers Party dating back to 1945, and more recently, against the Young Socialist Alliance.

The government revealed the existence of an "SWP Disruption Program" from 1961 to 1969, admitted "limited national security electronic surveillance of certain plaintiffs" from 1945 to 1963, and placing a "mail cover" on all correspondence to the SWP national headquarters from January to May 1973.

The government also concedes that its agents single out members and supporters of the SWP and YSA for special victimization, including intimidation from FBI agents and visits to families or employers. This discriminatory treatment is justified on the basis that the SWP is on the attorney general's "subversive" list.



January 24, 1949

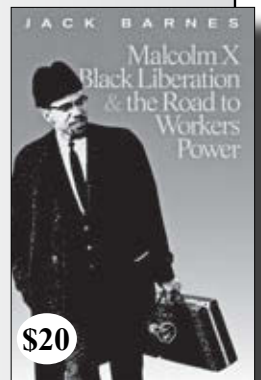
The announcement of the Chiang Kai-shek dictatorship that its government headquarters will be shifted from the capital of China at Nanking to the southern city of Canton sounds the death knell of Chiang's hated regime. Chiang himself is evidently preparing to move to the island of Formosa.

Chiang's defeat at the hands of the Chinese people is a major defeat for the foreign policy of American imperialism. Wall Street calculated on using this regime as a puppet government to give preference to American investments over the needs of the Chinese people.

The spotlight thus focuses on the program of the Chinese Stalinists. Basing themselves on the insurgent peasantry in their bid for government power, the Stalinists seek to prevent the revolution from advancing to the stage where the working class takes the lead and establishes a workers state.

### Malcolm X, Black Liberation and the Road to Workers Power

"Only the conquest of state power by the working class can lay the foundations for a world based not on exploitation, violence and oppression, but on solidarity among working people."  
— Jack Barnes



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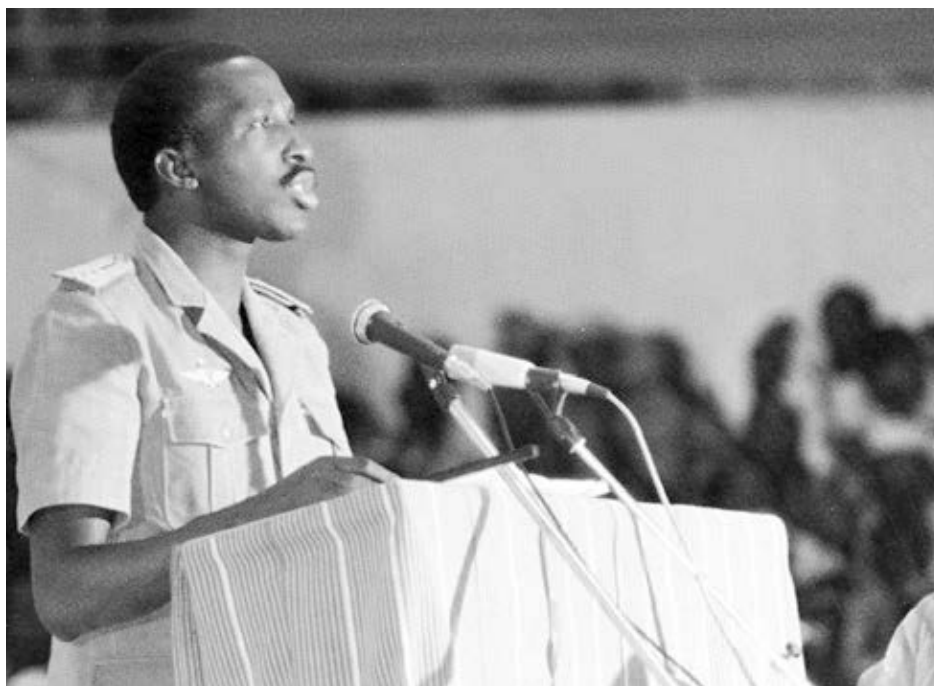
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Defend Sovereignty of Israel and Ukraine — Only the Working Class Can Prevent Threats of Wider Wars. Speaker: Norton Sandler, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Jan. 21, 5 p.m. Donation: \$5. 2826 S. Vermont Ave., Suite 1. Tel: (323) 643-4968.



# Sankara spoke for the exploited and oppressed of the world

One of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for January is the French edition of *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions: Speeches from the Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87* by Thomas Sankara. In August 1983 a popular revolutionary government arose from an uprising led by Sankara in the former French colony of Upper Volta. He organized workers, peasants, women and youth to take control over their own destiny in one of the poorest countries on the planet. When he addressed the United Nations General Assembly on Oct. 4, 1984, Sankara followed the example of Cuban revolutionary leaders Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, speaking out in the interests of all those fighting colonial oppression worldwide. That speech, "Freedom must be conquered in struggle," is excerpted here. Sankara was assassinated in a counterrevolutionary coup Oct. 15, 1987. Copyright © 2007 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Militant/Ernest Harsch

"Without a fight no new order will be built," Thomas Sankara told a mass rally on March 8, 1987. "We are not looking to organize what exists but to definitely destroy and replace it."

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY THOMAS SANKARA

I make no claim to lay out any doctrines here. I am neither a messiah nor a prophet. I possess no truths. My only aspiration is twofold: first, to be able to speak on behalf of my people, the people of Burkina Faso, in simple words, words that are clear and factual. And second, in my own way to also speak on

behalf of the "great disinherited people of the world," those who belong to the world so ironically christened the Third World. And to state, though I may not succeed in making them understood, the reasons for our revolt. ...

This is what we glimpsed — we, the Burkinabè people — during the evening of August 4, 1983, when the first stars began to sparkle in the skies of our homeland. We had to take the leadership of the peasant revolts, signs of which were visible in a countryside that is panic-stricken by the advancing desert, exhausted by hunger and thirst, and abandoned. We had to give meaning to the brewing revolt of the idle urban masses, frustrated and weary of seeing limousines driving the elites around, elites that were out of touch, succeeding one another at the helm of state while offering the urban masses nothing but false solutions elaborated and conceived by the minds of others. We had to give an ideological soul to the just struggles of our popular masses as they mobilized against the monster of imperialism. The passing revolt, the simple brushfire, had to be replaced forever with the revolution, the permanent struggle against all forms of domination.

Others have explained before me, and others will explain after me, the extent to which the chasm has widened between the affluent peoples and those who aspire only to eat their

fill, quench their thirst, survive, and preserve their dignity. But no one can imagine to what extent "the poor man's grain" in our countries "has fattened the rich man's cow"! ...

I protest here on behalf of all those who vainly seek a forum in this world where they can make their voice heard and have it genuinely taken into consideration. Many have preceded me at this podium and others will follow. But only a few will make the decisions. Yet we are officially presented as being equals. Well, I am acting as spokesperson for all those who vainly seek a forum in this world where they can make themselves heard. So yes, I wish to speak on behalf of all "those left behind," for "I am human, nothing that is human is alien to me."

Our revolution in Burkina Faso embraces the misfortunes of all peoples. It also draws inspiration from all of man's experiences since his first breath. We wish to be the heirs of all the world's revolutions and all the liberation struggles of the peoples of the Third World. Our eyes are on the profound upheavals that have transformed the world. We draw the lessons of the American Revolution, the lessons of its victory over colonial domination and the consequences of that victory. We adopt as our own the affirmation of the Doctrine whereby Europeans must not intervene in American affairs, nor Americans in European

affairs. Just as Monroe proclaimed "America to the Americans" in 1823, we echo this today by saying "Africa to the Africans," "Burkina to the Burkinabè."

The French Revolution of 1789, which overturned the foundations of absolutism, taught us the connection between the rights of man and the rights of peoples to liberty. The great revolution of October 1917 [in Russia] transformed the world, brought victory to the proletariat, shook the foundations of capitalism, and made possible the Paris Commune's dreams of justice.

Open to all the winds of the will of the peoples of the world and their revolutions, having also learned from some terrible failures that led to tragic violations of human rights, we wish to retain only the core of purity from each revolution. This prevents us from becoming subservient to the realities of others, even when we share common ground because of our ideas.

Mr. President:


It is no longer possible to keep up the deception. The new international economic order for which we fight and will continue to fight can be achieved only if we succeed in destroying the old order that has ignored us; if we impose our rightful place in the political organization of the world; and if, conscious of our importance in the world, we obtain the right to participate in discussions and decisions on the mechanisms governing trade, the economy, and currencies on a global scale.

The new international economic order should simply be inscribed alongside all the other rights of the people — the right to independence, to the free choice of governmental forms and structures — like the right to development. And like all the peoples' rights, it is conquered in struggle and by the struggle of the people. It will never be the result of an act of generosity from the powers that be.

I personally maintain unshakable confidence — a confidence shared by the immense community of Non-aligned countries — that, under the pounding blows of the howling anguish of our peoples, our group will maintain its cohesion, strengthen its collective bargaining power, find allies among all nations, and begin, together with those who can still hear us, to organize a genuinely new international system of economic relations.

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# End Washington's economic war on Cuba!

The fight to end the brutal economic, trade and financial war against the Cuban people waged by the U.S. capitalist rulers and their government in Washington is deeply in the interests of workers and our unions. This punishing embargo is enforced in hopes of starving working people in Cuba into submission and overturning the first socialist revolution in the Americas — an example for those exploited and oppressed everywhere.

For more than six decades the U.S. rulers have inflicted severe shortages of fuel, food and medicines on Cuba, with the deliberate aim of maximizing everyday hardships. Their economic war prevents Cuba from importing machinery, spare parts and other goods and exporting what it produces to cripple the country's economic development.

The Donald Trump administration placed, and Joe Biden's administration continues, to keep Cuba on Washington's list of "state sponsors of terrorism." This imposes additional sanctions. These restrict foreign assistance, limit Cubans abroad from sending money to their families on the island and curb Cuba's access to the international banking network.

These measures are the most wide-ranging sanctions ever imposed on Cuba, coming on top of the Helms-Burton Act signed by former President William Clinton in 1966. It allows U.S. citizens who claim a link to any company or property nationalized by the Cuban Revolution to sue to take control out of Cuba's hands, as well as to stop businesses in other countries from maintaining trade with Cuba.

Against the will of the Cuban people, Washington

has occupied Cuban territory at Guantánamo Bay for 120 years, a fundamental violation of the country's sovereignty. It maintains a military base — and the notorious prison there.

Despite the intensification of the U.S. rulers' economic war against Cuba, working people there refuse to yield. Arms in hand they repelled a U.S.-backed mercenary invasion at Playa Giron in 1961. They have staunchly resisted Washington's embargo from the moment it was imposed more than 60 years ago.

Since then, every Democratic and Republican administration has enforced the embargo. Both parties serve the interests of the U.S. capitalist rulers. The same class that is waging an unrelenting assault on workers' wages, working conditions and political rights at home, will never forgive working people in Cuba for overturning capitalist rule, and setting an example for working people everywhere.

Most importantly, working people here need to build a party to advance the same revolutionary course led by Fidel Castro and the Rebel Army in Cuba — to bring the working class to power. Forging a party to lead a socialist revolution in the U.S. is the road to bringing down the world's final imperialist empire.

Help get out the truth about Cuba's socialist revolution! Win fellow workers and your union to demand an immediate and unconditional end to Washington's embargo. Take Cuba off the list of state sponsors of terrorism! Return Guantánamo to the Cuban people!

# Support Canadian sugar workers on strike 15 weeks



Public and Private Workers of Canada Local 8, on strike at Rogers Sugar in Vancouver, Oct. 12, fighting boss demands for 12-hour shifts, 7-day workweek, no overtime pay.

**BY FRED NELSON AND NED DMYTRYSHYN**

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — The members of Public and Private Workers of Canada Local 8 are now in their 15th week of a hard-fought battle against Lantic's Rogers Sugar bosses, who are trying to force a concession contract down workers' throats.

Tyson Costa, Local 8's plant chair at Rogers Sugar, told the *Militant* the company "is demanding a mandatory 24-hour operation with 12-hour shifts, seven days a week and no overtime pay." In exchange, bosses held out the prospect they would scale back or drop demands for cuts to workers' benefits.

The contract, which had expired last February, set three shifts at eight hours a day, with any overtime or weekend work being voluntary. The union is demanding the schedule remain the same over a three-year contract, with a 6% wage increase each year.

The union proposes the company hire more workers if they want to boost production, while continuing with voluntary overtime and weekend work. "Our members are not prepared to ruin our family lives while the company already makes record profits from our work," Costa said. "They're offering less than 3% per year for five years.

"On Dec. 8, when the company sent their

concession demands to the negotiating committee, they also emailed them directly to the union membership and sent them by regular mail to union members' homes," he said.

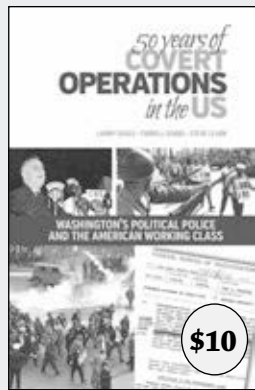
The union negotiating committee called a membership meeting and presented a side-by-side visual display of the company demands and what the union was asking for. In a hand vote, workers voted to back their union and continue the fight. "Every time we get a proposal from the company, we hold a meeting where we present the proposals openly to the membership," Costa said.

The union also held a secret ballot vote Dec. 17 on the company's offer. "We voted 89.3% to reject the company demands," Costa said.

Solidarity has come from area unionists. Members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union bring propane cylinders to the picket line to keep strikers warm and dry. Millwrights, Machine Erectors and Maintenance Union Local 2736 brought 16 gift cards for food and Christmas toys for strikers' children.

Messages of solidarity can be sent to PPWC Local 8 President Adrian Soldera, 596 Albert Street, Nanaimo, BC V9R 2W2; or to ppwc8@telus.net

## 50 Years of Covert Operations in the US Washington's Political Police and the American Working Class



Larry Seigle, Farrell Dobbs,  
Steve Clark

*Decades of spying and disruption by FBI targeting working-class organizations and other opponents of government policies. How expansion of "national security" state used to protect capitalist rule has bipartisan backing.*

**pathfinderpress.com**

# Defend political rights

Continued from front page

"MAGA supporters," he claimed, "not only embrace political violence, but they laugh about it."

Biden crowed about the more than 1,200 people his Justice Department has charged so far for their participation in the Jan. 6, 2021, break-in at the Capitol. "Nearly 900 of them have been convicted or pled guilty," he boasted. "Collectively, to date, they have been sentenced to more than 840 years in prison."

Those people include Russell Dean Alford, the owner of a body shop in Etowah County, Alabama. Alford remained inside the Capitol for just 15 minutes. The trial evidence showed he was neither violent nor destructive. Mostly he filmed protesters chanting, "Stop the steal." The videos he posted on Facebook led the FBI to his door.

Alford was convicted and sentenced to one year in prison last January by U.S. District Court Judge Tanya Chutkan, who will preside in the Justice Department case brought against Trump stemming from the \$12 million-to-date investigation by special counsel Jack Smith. Chutkan has sentenced a large number of Jan. 6 protesters more harshly than prosecutors called for.

A three-judge panel for the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals said that while Alford didn't do anything, his case had to be judged "in context." They even held that there should be no reduction in his sentence because he had the nerve to contest the case in a trial rather than accept a plea bargain!

## More prosecutions to come

Every week a few more people are sentenced to jail time of up to 20 years after Jan. 6-related convictions. Judges have ordered prison time for about half of those convicted of misdemeanors, far above the 16% national average.

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed Dec. 13 to hear a challenge to far-fetched charges brought against more than 300 of the Jan. 6 defendants, and Trump. All are accused of "obstructing an official proceeding."

The indictments were brought under a 2002 anti-business corruption law, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. It was passed to penalize company officials, like those at Enron, who destroyed potentially incriminating documents. But such activity has nothing to do with the "crimes" the Jan. 6 defendants are accused of.

The reason the Justice Department used this law is that it has far harsher penalties than all the other charges brought in Jan. 6 cases, except for seditious conspiracy. Multiple charges and the threat of more jail time are used by prosecutors to force plea bargains.

Two of the four felony charges brought by Smith against Trump are based on the Sarbanes-Oxley statute. Applying this law to his speech at a Jan. 6 rally opens the door to attacks on free speech protections needed by the working class.

Many of Biden's earlier campaign pitches fell flat, as he claimed "Bidenomics" engineered a "robust economy," despite the reality of falling real wages and worsening conditions confronting the working class. Just before year's end, Biden's approval ratings fell to 38%, tying his record low. His Valley Forge speech made clear that the Democratic Party-led attack on democratic rights will continue, including its effort to deny Trump the right to appear on state ballots.

Democrats are using Section 3 of the 14th Amendment as a justification to remove Trump from the primary ballot in Colorado and Maine. Yet that amendment was ratified in 1868 when there were no ballots printed by the government. Every vote was write-in and any voter could vote for anyone they chose.

After government-printed ballots were established at the end of the 19th century, state courts almost unanimously held that it was unconstitutional to prohibit a voter from voting for anyone. Even the Colorado Supreme Court dismissed in 1912 a state law that forbade write-in votes. "Every qualified elector shall have an equal right to cast a ballot for the person of his own selection, and that no act shall be done by any power, civil or military, to prevent it," the court said.

In 1972 Colorado officials printed the name of Linda Jenness, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, on its ballot, even though she was 31 years old, four years below the requirement.

The Supreme Court agreed Jan. 5 to review the decision by Colorado's top court to knock Trump off the ballot. Defending constitutional freedoms will continue to be at the center of the 2024 campaign.