

THE MILITANT

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

'In Defense of Socialism'
by Fidel Castro

— PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 4 JANUARY 29, 2024

As immigration spikes, workers look to unify the working class

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

FORT WORTH, Texas — Over 300,000 immigrants crossed the southwest border of the U.S. last month, the highest number ever recorded. In one week in December some 12,000 migrants crossed the Texas border with Mexico at Eagle Pass.

Last month Gov. Greg Abbott signed Senate Bill 4, which will go into effect in March. It authorizes local and state police to arrest and deport anyone illegally crossing the 1,200-mile-long border.

In response, the Biden administration's Justice Department sued Texas, saying the law is an unconstitutional violation of federal government authority over immigration.

State officials' stepped-up efforts to curtail immigration date back to "Operation Lone Star" in 2021, which included constructing 29 miles of concertina wire along the Texas-Mexican border near Eagle Pass and allocating \$11 billion for more state troopers and National Guard.

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Panel blown off Boeing airplane shows need to end profit system

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The near disaster when a door-sized panel on an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max 9 jet ripped off in midflight Jan. 5 exposes once again how the bosses' drive for profits above all else comes at the expense of safety and workers' lives. And it shows the complicity of U.S. federal agencies that are supposed to "regulate" the airworthiness of the nation's aircraft.

With the door plug gone, air rushed out of the gaping hole in the plane, depressurizing the cabin at an altitude of 16,000 feet. The 171 passengers and six crew members were exposed to powerful winds. Because of the efforts of the pilots and flight attendants, the plane landed successfully in Portland, Oregon, with no further damage or threat to the passengers. Luckily, no one had been in the seat next to the panel when it blew out.

The following day the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration grounded 171 Max 9 jets for inspection. This includes

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Defend right of Israel to exist as a refuge for Jews



Protest at U.N. World Court in The Hague Jan. 11 as South African rulers' case charging Israel with "genocide" opened. Protesters said case is political and legal cover for Hamas' Oct. 7 pogrom against Jews in Israel, which the Tehran-backed outfit says it will do "again and again."

Prosecution of Israel in the World Court is a frame-up

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The South African government is seeking to speak for all those who oppose the existence of Israel. It went before the United Nation's World Court Jan. 11 to charge Israel with committing genocide against the Palestinian people. The accusation stands history on its head. Israel was founded as a refuge for Jews who had survived the Nazi Holocaust, an attempt to exterminate the entire Jewish people.

As the hearing opened, supporters of Israel's right to exist rallied outside the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Pro-Hamas protesters gathered in support of the South African charges.

The accusation provides a "political and legal cover" to Hamas, which carried out a murderous pogrom against

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Fight to destroy Hamas is in interests of all workers

BY SETH GALINSKY

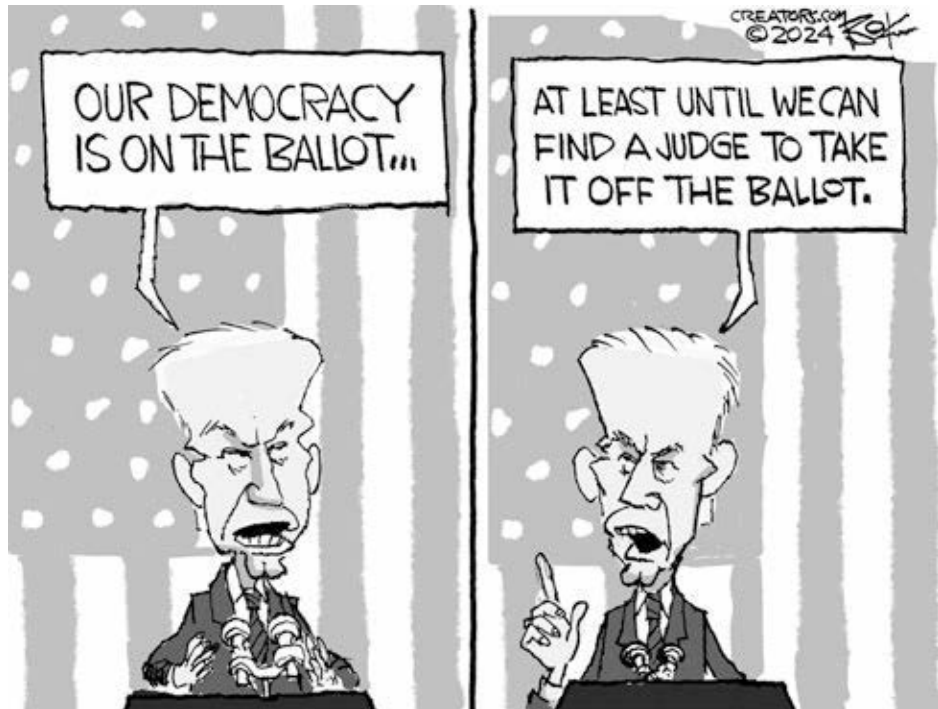
Tens of thousands joined protests around the world over the Jan. 12 weekend to demand Hamas release all the remaining hostages the Tehran-backed group kidnapped as part of its murderous pogrom in Israel Oct. 7. The protests in London, Paris, Berlin, New York, Tel Aviv and other cities marked the 100th day of their captivity and mistreatment in Gaza.

There were events across Israel, including a 100-minute strike called by the Histadrut, the country's largest trade union federation.

"If we maintain unity and solidarity," David Arnon Bar, chairman of the Histadrut, told the rally of 100,000 in Tel Aviv Jan. 14, "overcome everything and rebuild everything they tried to destroy."

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Saying 'Trump is a fascist,' Democrats deepen attacks on constitutional rights



Joseph Biden, above, and his Democratic Party are leading attack on constitutional freedoms.

BY TERRY EVANS

Attempts to prevent Donald Trump from winning the Republican nomination for president came apart with his win in the Iowa caucuses Jan. 15 by a big margin. Liberals cannot be sure Trump will lose the 2024 race to an unpopular incumbent, Joseph Biden, a fact that is sharpening the anti-Trump hysteria on the left of capitalist politics, as well as Democrats' efforts to use the courts to jail their main rival for the White House.

In their search for a way to prevent people from being able to vote for the candidate of their choice, Democrats are dealing serious blows to constitutional freedoms that workers will need in labor and political battles to come.

While Trump attended hearings on the indictments against him, he won 51% of the vote in the Iowa caucuses, with a near 30-point margin over his nearest rival, Florida Gov. Ronald DeSantis.

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Join SWP in fight against Jew-hatred, to advance working-class struggles

BY JANET POST

Socialist Workers Party members in Washington, D.C., called on area unions to condemn a Jew-hating attack on holiday displays in the Hampden neighborhood of Baltimore Dec. 23.

Lights were torn from the front fence of Rabbi Moshe Moskowitz's house. He had a yard sign saying, "We stand with Israel." The house of Joshua Lamont with a "Happy Hanukkah" light display was also vandalized. The yards of both homes were strewn with pieces of smashed watermelon, a symbol reflecting the colors of the Palestinian flag.

"Working people and the labor movement should speak out against this act of vandalism and stand in solidarity," read a statement by Ar-

rin Hawkins, chairperson of the SWP branch in D.C. "The banner of the working class everywhere must include an uncompromising fight against Jew-hatred.

"The Socialist Workers Party de-

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Feb. 13, build union solidarity 9

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—On the picket line, p. 5

Teamsters 'extended picket line'
backs striking US Foods drivers

Mass 2014 Maidan battles fought to defend Ukraine's independence

As Moscow's murderous war against Ukraine nears its third year, the Militant is running articles we wrote during and on the heels of the popular mass Maidan movement and Ukraine's earlier history that led to the overthrow of the Moscow-backed regime of Viktor Yanukovich and advances for Ukraine's independence. The excerpts below come from an article in the Feb. 3, 2014, issue, as protests against Yanukovich and Moscow exploded, drawing in thousands of workers.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Some 100,000 people demonstrated in Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, Jan. 19 to demand repeal of new laws that curtail the right to protest. Underlying months of anti-government protests are national aspirations of the Ukrainian people, who — with the exception of the early years of the Russian Revolution — have lived for centuries under Russian domination.

Ukraine President Viktor Yanukovich pushed through the law in an attempt to undercut protests that began in November when he backed out of a deal to sign a trade and "association" agreement with the European Union and instead moved to maintain close economic and political ties with the government of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Hundreds of thousands took to the streets, demanding that Yanukovich resign. A central slogan was, "Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the nation! Ukraine above all!"

The new law passed by Parliament last week bans the unauthorized public installation of tents or stages and use of loudspeakers in public and imposes jail

terms for participating in "mass disorder" and wearing balaclavas or helmets.

Some protesters who fought with police defiantly wore saucepans and colanders on their heads. Some 1,500 protesters needed medical attention after the clashes.

The suppression of national rights in Ukraine goes back centuries. Eastern Ukraine became a possession of the Romanov Dynasty in 1654 and from that time on the feudal monarchy carried out a policy of Russification. While rule over the western part changed hands between Austria, Poland and Russia over centuries, the czars banned the Ukrainian language, suppressed the Ukrainian church and promoted Russian colonization in areas under its control.

By the early 1900s Ukraine made up 20% of the population of the Russian Empire. Russia was a "prison house of nations," in the words of V.I. Lenin, central leader of the Bolshevik Party and 1917 Russian Revolution.

Lenin champions self-determination

The Ukrainian bourgeoisie remained small and weak. "In the Ukraine and White Russia [Belarus]," wrote Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky in 1932, "the landlord, capitalist, lawyer, journalist, was a Great Russian, a Pole, a Jew, a foreigner; the rural population was wholly Ukrainian and White Russian."

At the same time, Ukraine was a key conquest of the empire, serving as a breadbasket for Russia and major source of its coal and iron production.

Among the central tasks of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution under Lenin's



AP Photo/Darko Bandic

More than 50,000 people demonstrated in Kyiv's central square Feb. 2, 2014, in 10th week of protests demanding pro-Moscow Ukraine President Viktor Yanukovich resign.

leadership was the emancipation of tens of millions of oppressed peoples — from the culturally more advanced people of the Baltic region to the Muslims of the Caucasus to nomadic tribes of the Far East.

The Bolshevik Party's championing of the right of oppressed nations to self-determination leading up to the revolution was decisive in uniting, educating and organizing the working class to take political power, which included forging an alliance with the peasant majority from all backgrounds.

The Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party stated in November 1919 that Bolsheviks in Ukraine "must put into practice the right of the working people to study in the Ukrainian language and to speak their native language in all Soviet institutions; they must in every way counteract attempts at Russification that push the Ukrainian language into the background."

But by the early 1920s the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party had begun, personified by the rise to power of Joseph Stalin after the death of Lenin in 1924. Stalin headed a counterrevolution representing the interests of a growing privileged social layer centered in the increasingly bureaucratic state apparatus. This reactionary caste reversed the Bolsheviks' course and resurrected the Great Russian chauvinism of the empire, including the re-subjugation of oppressed people.

"Nowhere did the purges and repression assume such a savage character as they did in the Ukraine," Trotsky wrote in 1939.

When the Stalinist regime in Russia and Eastern Europe finally collapsed under pressure of growing social contradictions in the early 1990s, the new regime continued to dominate Ukraine.

Competing factions of emerging and aspiring capitalists arose following the collapse of the Soviet Union, drawn largely from remnants of the Soviet bureaucracy. In Ukraine, the factional contest was partially based on divisions of east and west, Russian and Ukrainian, orientation toward Moscow and the West. Meanwhile, the national aspirations among Ukrainian working people against the Russian boot remain strong.

At the end of 2004, in what became known as the Orange Revolution, hundreds of thousands of people, mostly from the western part of the country, took to the streets to oppose the continuing Russian domination of the country and what they saw as a rigged election that gave the presidency to Yanukovich, who was then prime minister.

As a result, a new election was called and bourgeois opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko was elected president, taking office in 2005, but a series of corruption scandals left him with little support by the end of his term.

Yanukovich returned to the presidency after winning elections in 2010.

THE MILITANT

Moscow out of Ukraine, send Russian soldiers home!

Resistance inside Russia to President Vladimir Putin's murderous war on Ukraine continues to grow. The 'Militant' explains this opposition coupled with the courageous fight by working people in Ukraine to drive Moscow out are in the interests of working people everywhere.



SOTA
Wife of Russian soldier fighting in Ukraine says get the soldiers home, Moscow Jan. 6.

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Help advance workers' struggles

Continued from front page

fends the right of Israel to exist as a haven for Jews and condemns the Jew-hating pogrom" carried out by Hamas Oct. 7, Hawkins wrote.

Party members visited the neighborhood Dec. 29 to talk with working people. They delivered the statement to Moskowitz and Lamont, who is a sign language interpreter. Lamont got the book *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon and a subscription to the *Militant* from the SWP campaigners.

Two weeks later, Lamont told party member Arlene Rubinstein that he had gone from "being a guy stringing holiday lights to a 'supporter of genocide' on social media" since the attack on his home. At a 7-Eleven convenience store, the night of the vandalism, he said he was called a "dirty Jew."

"I decided to speak out — I was attacked for being Jewish. I appreciate what you say in the *Militant* about the labor movement helping to lead a discussion because there needs to be a real conversation and a movement," Lamont said. "In fact, the working class is where I have gotten the most support — offers of help and commitment, and cookies.

"Whenever there is a crisis, there's a need to find the bad guy and Jews are scapegoated. Historically, they have been punted to the next country until there is no safe country," he said.

"There is no solution to the Jewish question or any other question humanity faces under capitalism," Rubinstein replied. "The Socialist Workers Party aims to educate and organize the working class to take power. That will open the door to ending war, exploitation and oppression — and getting rid of Jew-hatred once and for all."

Interest in 'Militant' in Montreal

Communist League members Francois Bradette and Katy LeRougetel campaigned in Montreal's Saint Laurent neighborhood Jan. 13. They met warehouse workers Parneet Kaur and her husband, originally from India. LeRougetel showed Kaur a photo in the *Militant* of a Russian mother demonstrating against Moscow's war in Ukraine. "My brother arrived in Ukraine to study two months before the war started there," Kaur said.

"The CL supports Ukrainians' fight for independence," Bradette said.

The CL members told Kaur about the *Militant's* coverage of the fight by farmers in India in 2020 and 2021. The farmers successfully pushed back a threat to their livelihoods after the government tried to end state-guaranteed prices that farmers get for grain. Tens of thousands of farmers had set up protest encampments in New Delhi.

"My brother, father and grandfather were all part of that," said Kaur. "You say there were marches in Quebec in solidarity with them?" "Yes," said LeRougetel, "and the *Militant* ran articles to get out the truth." Kaur signed up to be informed about the Militant Labor Forum.

Communist League members in Montreal are also staying in touch with workers who were part of the strike actions this year in Quebec by some 600,000 public sector workers.

After their contracts expired last March, education support workers, nurses and health care workers, social workers and others began their fight over wages and working conditions. Some 420,000 workers in the Common Front, a coalition of four union federations, set up picket lines around the province. Workers began voting on a tentative agreement Jan. 15.



Militant/Terry Evans

Lea Sherman, right, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress from New Jersey, campaigns at Jan. 12 "Bring Them Home" action at U.N. to demand return of hostages seized by Hamas. Sponsored by Jewish organizations, it drew over 2,500 people, including high school student contingents.

Bradette and CL member Beverly Bernardo visited striker Melina Legault at her home in Boisbrand, north of Montreal, Jan. 7. Legault had subscribed to the *Militant* at a demonstration in Sherbrooke last May. She asked them to receive *Militant* articles translated into French each week.

They also showed Legault *The Jewish Question* along with a *Militant* ar-

title describing the campaign of Pathfinder Press volunteers to place the book and other titles on revolutionary working-class struggle in libraries and bookstores. In a discussion Jan. 13 Legault said she would go to her library to ask them to order the book.

To join campaigning with members of the SWP or CL, contact the branch nearest you listed on page 8.

Seattle panel discusses building fight against Jew-hatred

BY BARRY FATLAND

SEATTLE — A well-attended Militant Labor Forum here Jan. 6 featured a panel discussion on how to effectively fight Jew-hatred and defend Israel's right to exist in the wake of the murderous Oct. 7 Hamas pogrom against Jews in Israel.

"We need to get out the facts about what happened on Oct. 7, and to correct misinformation. We need to continue to remind people what Hamas did," Randy Kessler, a leader of Stand-WithUs Northwest, told forum goers. "Every week we are learning new things. Hamas still holds a hundred hostages, and we count each day."

Kessler explained the first rally the Jewish community organized turned into a confrontation with groups opposed to the existence of Israel as a refuge for Jews. "We are not aiming to disrupt others' free speech," he said, "but we intend to get out our point of view."

StandWithUs Northwest has joined with other organizations in the Jewish community to hold eight more public rallies since then, he said.

David Solovy, another organizer of the series of rallies and a veteran of the Israel Defense Forces, spoke, saying he

was glad when he heard the Socialist Workers Party reaches out in support of Israel's right to exist. He said that anti-semitism "in the name of socialism" has been growing in Seattle.

"We need to create a left that knows the truth and is honest. I'm here to learn — this is quite a bookshelf," he said, referring to the books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries on sale there. He encouraged people in the audience to subscribe to the *Militant*.

"Many people at the rallies are surprised to learn that there are socialists or communists who support the fight against Jew-hatred," said Jacob Perasso, speaking for the Socialist Workers Party. "But in fact this is part of our continuity going back over a century. The Bolshevik Revolution led by V.I. Lenin in Russia not only ended anti-Jewish pogroms that were common under the czar, but encouraged the revival of Jewish culture."

Israel's war to defeat Hamas is key to opening up political space to allow Jewish, Palestinian and other workers to join together in struggles in the interests of all working people, Perasso said.

"We see a sharp rise in antisemitic attacks since Oct. 7, but our experience is that Jew-hatred is not growing

in the working class," he added. When party members introduce the *Militant* in workers' neighborhoods and on the job, we find working people abhor the Oct. 7 massacre.

"The increased resistance of working people in recent years bodes well," said Perasso. "Working people and the unions will inevitably struggle not only on an economic level, but also a political one — which includes fighting against Jew-hatred."

A lively discussion followed the presentations. Some participants reported that just hours before the forum hundreds shut down the most traveled freeway in Seattle for several hours, calling for a "permanent cease-fire" in Gaza — a move that would allow Hamas to rearm and attack Jews in Israel again. The action sparked anger from working people.

Over 40 people participated in the meeting, including more than a dozen who had never been to a Militant Labor Forum before.

The low point of labor resistance is behind us

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—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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Malcolm X and the Working-Class Road to Confront Capitalist Crisis. Speaker: Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Feb. 4, 5 p.m. Donation: \$5. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

TEXAS

Fort Worth

'Exodus 1947 — The Ship That Launched a Nation.' Documentary film about the true story of the 1947 voyage that attempted to bring Jewish refugees, Holocaust survivors to Palestine after World War II. Commentary: Hilda Cuzco, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Jan. 27, 5 p.m. Donation: \$5. 6815 Manhattan Blvd., Suite 108. Tel.: (817) 899-6720.

Look to unify the working class

Continued from front page

Abbott blames the Democrats for what he calls “the Biden immigration crisis.” The Democrats blame the Republicans. In fact neither of the bosses’ parties have a solution that will advance the needs of the working class.

In 2022 Abbott, a Republican, began sending undocumented immigrants to Democratic-Party-dominated “sanctuary” cities by bus and plane. So far, over 12,500 migrants have been transported to Washington, D.C.; 35,600 to New York; 29,400 to Chicago; 15,000 to Denver; and 1,400 to Los Angeles.

Most of the hundreds of thousands of workers crossing the border today come from Central and South America, as well as Asia and some Eastern European countries.

The immigration policies of the U.S. capitalist rulers, and of the Democrats and Republicans alike, aren’t to stop it, but to allow enough immigrants in to meet the needs of the bosses for cheap labor. And they create the divisions between native-born and migrant workers to drive down the wages and conditions of the working class as a whole.

The capitalist rulers’ profit-driven immigration policies are a deadly threat to the working class. Charting a course to overcome the divisions that bosses foster between immigrant and native-born workers is essential to strengthening our unions and beating back the attacks of the bosses.

Workers discuss what must be done

Members of the Socialist Workers Party here have been discussing these questions in working-class neighborhoods and with co-workers on the job. “It’s bad what is going on,” Juanita Castillo, a retired factory worker, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent when I knocked on her door and said I was the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Texas and wanted her opinion. “Immigrants who are coming now don’t care about the law. Before when immigrants were coming they were scared they were going to be deported or put in jail, now they are not,” Castillo said.

“I am from Mexico and have been here since 1975. Then the laws were different, it was easier to get papers,” she said. “The Democrats say they are ‘helping,’ but it isn’t true. The Republicans are kind of worse, but what Trump says is good.”

I said the SWP supports fighting for an amnesty for immigrants who live and work in the U.S. “The bosses pay immigrant labor cheap wages and use this to lower wages for all workers. We must build unity between native-born and immigrant workers and not let the bosses pit us against each other. Fighting for an amnesty will help strengthen the fight to unify the working class and build strong unions we can use to defend ourselves.”

Castillo said, “In Texas the minimum

wage is \$7.50 and many jobs pay this, especially for immigrants. I worked in a warehouse that paid \$8.25 an hour and they lowered it to \$7.25. With the cost of living today you can’t survive. I agree that there should be an amnesty for immigrants who are here.”

Another worker I met was Raul Rubio, who was born in Mexico and has lived here 20 years. He works at a recycling factory. “Today things are worse. Before it was easier to come here,” he said. “With the cost of living today everything is more expensive. When I came you could buy a house for \$20,000 to \$30,000. Today it costs over \$200,000. The solution is not to come to the U.S. There should be more security at the border.” Both Castillo and Rubio bought a copy of the *Militant* to find out more information about the SWP.

SWP campaigners Dennis Richter and Alex Huinil met Colton Sullivan when they knocked on his door in Crowley. “Immigration isn’t being handled as it should be,” he said. “People are being demonized. Those who want to come to the U.S. in the right way are lumped together with everybody else and called criminals. The media doesn’t show the big picture, why people want to come and work.

“They show a little piece of the problems and make it look like all immigrants are bad. People should have the right to come into the U.S. if they need to.” Sullivan bought a copy of the *Militant*.

While campaigning in Fort Worth, I met Alejandra Drado and her husband, Saul Ramos. “In other countries the wages are really low and that is why a lot of people are coming to the U.S.,” Ramos said. Drado added, “The government doesn’t see immigrants as human. They spend more money on the border instead of housing. Everything costs more since the pandemic.” Drado and Ramos got a subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*.

“It started with the Trump adminis-



Alamy/Bob Daemrich

Farmworkers harvesting onions near Alamo, Texas. The SWP calls for amnesty for all workers living in the U.S. regardless of where they come from. Overcoming the divisions between immigrant and native-born workers is essential to beating back attacks by the bosses.

tration that was trying to control immigration,” Jerome Crawford, a union steward for Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 111 at Bimbo Bakery in Grand Prairie, told me. “Then Biden stopped the wall and ever since then it has spiraled out of control. When people leave to flee to another country, it has to be bad. Some drown crossing the river, some died in locked trucks. If you do make it, it is going to be better than where you came from.”

Immigration is a union question

“I work with immigrants from Cuba and El Salvador. In Minnesota I worked with workers from Romania and Bosnia at a bakery,” Crawford said. “They came from war-torn countries for a better life. You have the president telling them they are welcome and the governor rebutting this. It is a union issue because you can’t join unions if you don’t have citizenship.”

The deepening crisis of capitalism worldwide and absence of any revolutionary leaderships that present a road forward for working people throughout the hemisphere means many toil-

ers will look for ways to get into the U.S. to escape from economic misery and state repression.

But what is needed is the construction of parties and leaderships that can chart a course to take political power and organize working people to transform their countries and their lives. In fact what these fellow workers face is the same challenge as working people do in the U.S. — to fight to defend our class interests.

Liberals and middle-class radicals say to resolve this crisis we should demand, “Open the borders.” But this would just create chaos. Borders, like currencies, laws and other facts of life, will continue to exist as long as capitalism exists.

Under capitalism workers compete for jobs. Opening the borders would vastly intensify that competition, fueling unemployment and spreading misery among working people, immigrant and native-born alike.

Instead, the call for amnesty for all workers living in the U.S., regardless where they come from, coupled with support for revolutionary battles abroad, is the road forward for the working class.

No guarantee you’ll have a place to live when you retire

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Many older workers in the U.S. confront the harsh reality that working your entire adult life doesn’t guarantee you will have a roof over your head if you retire.

Millions of older adults who depend on meager Social Security benefits for nearly all their income find it increasingly difficult to cover the soaring costs for rent or mortgages, food and other necessities. The minute your car breaks down or you or a family member faces unexpected medical expenses, the road to homelessness can loom.

According to the latest government figures — widely accepted as an undercount — the percentage of people who have nowhere to live surged in the U.S. last year by 12%, the highest increase ever recorded. And more than one-quarter, the fastest growing segment of those homeless, are over 54 years old.

Affordable housing for older adults is increasingly scarce. Volunteers of America of Florida told the *Wall Street Journal* that hundreds there are on waiting lists. “The reason we don’t have more is because the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development asked us to stop taking applications,” said Volunteers of America of-

ficer Janet Stringfellow.

Florida resident Judy Schroeder told the *Journal* she lost an apartment after her landlord jacked up the rent and she lost a part-time job. She couch surfed with friends for months, then began eyeing her 2004 Pontiac Grand Am as a last-resort shelter. “I never thought, at 71 years old, I’d be in this position,” she said.

Near Tampa, 2,600 seniors are on waiting lists for long-term-care housing covered by Medicaid. The median price for a room in a private nursing home in Florida was \$115,000 a year in 2021.

But even if you can afford private care it doesn’t mean you’ll get what you pay for. At Lavender Farms, an upscale assisted-living facility outside Boulder, Colorado, that advertises “24/7 on-site care,” 97-year-old resident Mary Jo Staub died in 2022 after banging repeatedly on the doors when she was locked out in subfreezing temperatures. Staub’s family was paying an extra \$1,500 per month for a higher level of care on top of the standard charges of \$6,800 per month.

Assisted-living facilities — where more than a million older adults now live — are a \$34 billion profit-producing business. As the bosses move to squeeze

out even more profits, nurses aides make an average of \$15 an hour nationally and each one can be expected to be responsible for two dozen residents. No matter how hard they work, it’s inevitable that some medications are missed, falls go unnoticed and bedsores untreated. According to the *Washington Post*, nearly 100 residents over the last five years have died after wandering away or being left unattended outside.

“When you see how much work you do at the end of the day and you get paid that amount? It’s insane,” Culix Wibonele, a certified nursing assistant who earns \$16 an hour at an assisted-living facility in Atlanta, told the *Journal*.

Lavender Farms is owned by Welltower, a \$40 billion investment firm and the biggest owner of senior homes in the country. More than \$1 billion in dividends is distributed to shareholders annually and the pay package for its CEO was \$38 million last year.

After security cameras recorded Staub’s struggles and death, Lavender Farms had them permanently removed.

The number of older adults who need assisted living will soar in the decades ahead as the large post-World War II baby-boom generation ages. But the capi-

Continued on page 5

— CALENDAR —

NEW YORK

New York

Celebrate 65 Years of the Cuban Revolution. An Example for Workers in the U.S. and Worldwide. Speaker: Steve Clark, Socialist Workers Party National Committee; others. Sun., Jan. 21. Reception, 2 p.m.; program, 3 p.m. Donation: \$10. 307 W. 36 St., 13th floor. Sponsored by the New York and Northern New Jersey branches of the SWP. Tel: (646) 434-8117 or (551) 240-1512.

Panel blown off Boeing plane

Continued from front page

nearly 20% of the planes flown by Alaska Airlines and 79 planes operated by United Airlines. Other carriers grounding Max 9s include Panama's Copa Airlines, Aeromexico and Turkish Airlines.

These initial inspections have already exposed growing numbers of problems. Technicians at both Alaska and United found loose bolts and other defective parts on some planes as they accessed the door plug area to prepare the fleet for inspections. In the case of the Alaska Airlines Flight 1282 plane, it is unclear whether the four door plug bolts had ever been installed.

The FAA is supposed to inspect planes and certify that they can fly safely. But in many cases it delegates these responsibilities to third-party outfits or to the company that built the plane itself. The plane in the Alaska Airlines incident was granted an FAA airworthiness

certificate Oct. 25, 2023, and was issued a seven-year certificate Nov. 2. However, the agency's records do not say who granted the certificate.

The plane's maiden flight took place in early November and safety issues arose right away. A warning light indicating pressurization problems on the plane went off three times, once in December and twice in the week leading up to the door plug tearing off. Alaska bosses responded by putting restrictions on the plane — it could continue flying, but not long distances over water!

This is far from the first potentially deadly malfunction that turned up on Boeing Max planes. Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft went down in two deadly crashes that took 346 lives in 2018 and 2019. One crashed in Indonesia in October 2018, killing everyone on board. Six months later another crashed after takeoff in Ethiopia, again killing everyone on board.

Both disasters were caused by a new "anti-stall" software system, which became active without the crews' knowledge and without having received training on it. This repeatedly forced the planes into what became uncontrollable dives. Boeing's Max 8 planes were



Kelly Bartlett

Door-size panel tore off Alaska Airlines plane Jan. 5, forcing emergency landing in Portland, Oregon. Threat to passengers, crews is a result of the bosses' insatiable drive for profits.

grounded for nearly two years, before government regulators declared them safe to fly again.

"This Has Been Going on for Years." Inside Boeing's Manufacturing Mess," was the headline on a feature article in the Jan. 13 *Wall Street Journal*. In their drive to speed up production and boost profits, Boeing bosses increased subcontracting and outsourcing work on

key airplane components. One of these subcontractors is Spirit AeroSystems based in Wichita, Kansas, which up to 2005 had been part of Boeing. It builds fuselages used in many Boeing jets, including the Alaska Flight 1282 plane.

"We have planes all over the world that have issues that nobody has found because of the pressure Spirit has put on employees to get the job done so fast," Cornell Beard, president of the International Association of Machinists union at the Wichita factory, told the *Journal*. The Boeing bosses plan to ramp up production to 42 planes a month by February, from the 31 a month produced a year ago.

The company is "acknowledging our mistake," David Calhoun, Boeing's chief executive, told the media Jan. 9 after the Alaska plane debacle, without explaining what "mistake" he was referring to. Boeing officials haven't elaborated on his remark.

To guarantee the safety and lives of passengers and airline workers alike, airline unions need to fight to win workers control of production. The profit-driven bosses and their oh-so-compliant government have proved themselves incapable of doing the job. Boeing and other airline factory workers on the ground and flight crews in the air need the power to say, "Stop! This plane isn't flying until we say it's safe."

Older workers

Continued from page 4

talist rulers have no plan for this.

For the bosses, if you can no longer work and generate profit for them, your life is over. That became harrowingly obvious during the pandemic, as hundreds of thousands of older adults died unnecessarily, put on the bottom of the list for respirators and barred from visits by family and friends.

Over the past few years there have been a growing number of union-led fights by nurses and aides for lower patient ratios and higher wages, and some gains have been won. Last year the United Auto Workers fought to get the Big Three auto companies to restore paid health care and pensions for retirees that earlier generations of autoworkers won, but the bosses refused.

These union fights are crucial to expand employer and government responsibility to provide for workers' retirement. They deserve support by all working people.

But it's only when the working class is organized in its millions to overturn the capitalist system that puts profits above all else, that we can reorganize society to meet human needs.

— ON THE PICKET LINE —

Teamsters 'extended picket line' backs striking US Foods drivers

BENSENVILLE, Ill. — More than 130 striking drivers at the US Foods distribution center here are getting support from fellow Teamsters around the country. Teamsters Local 705 is sending striking workers to other US Foods warehouses around the country in what they call an "extended picket line." US Foods workers from California to New Jersey, Minnesota to Missouri have honored the picket lines, shutting down work for a day or two before the Local 705 pickets move on.

Strikers here told the *Militant* that the company's warehouse workers in Bensenville, who are members of a separate Teamsters local, have honored Local 705's picket lines and stayed home since the beginning of the strike. They

also said US Foods has brought in workers from some of their nonunion centers to try to keep their Chicago-area operations going.

The drivers, who walked out Jan. 8, are fighting to defend their health care benefits. They also seek to block a move by US Foods bosses to be able to unilaterally designate any accident they choose as "serious" and fire the driver. In a letter to supporters of the strike, Local 705 says, "This isn't about safety; it's about exerting control over the drivers."

US Foods is one of the largest food distributors to restaurants, health care and hospitality facilities, government operations and educational institutions in the country. It employs over 25,000 workers at 60 locations.

— David Rosenfeld

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



February 1, 1999

President William Clinton repeated in his State of the Union address a favorite theme of bourgeois politicians: that Social Security may be bankrupt within a few decades because a bigger section of the population is living longer after retirement.

The 1935 Social Security Act and other programs that provide some income security for workers — unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, Medicare, and Medicaid — were concessions by the employers' class to massive struggles by the toilers.

All these programs have been eroded by the bipartisan assault on the social wage, aimed at increasing the portion of surplus value the bosses rob from workers and at tearing the solidarity of the working class apart. Clinton, for example, in 1996 ended Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the first gutting of the Social Security Act since 1935.



February 1, 1974

Widespread opposition to the activities of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency by Thai students and workers was expressed in large demonstrations in January. The protests were triggered by the revelation that a CIA agent had forged a letter to the Thai premier, in the name of a Communist guerrilla leader, asking for negotiations and offering a cease-fire.

A demonstration was held outside the U.S. embassy in Bangkok, demanding that the CIA and U.S. Ambassador William Kintner get out of the country. With 35,000 U.S. troops and 575 aircraft at half a dozen bases, Thailand is the major U.S. fortress in Southeast Asia.

The Thai labor upsurge, fueled by rampant inflation, is apparently continuing as well. In mid-December a strike by 6,000 longshoremen tied up the port of Bangkok. The strikers were demanding a 100 percent pay increase.



January 31, 1949

FROM THE FEDERAL COURTROOM, New York — So far 16 of the 23 grand jurors in the government's thought-control trial of 11 Stalinists have been questioned by the defense, and their testimony shows that federal grand juries are packed with the rich and their agents.

A similar jury panel indicted and convicted 18 Trotskyists under the same Smith Act in 1941. The Stalinist betrayers cheered the railroading of the Trotskyists to prison, and they applauded the Supreme Court for refusing to grant the Trotskyists a hearing.

Today the Stalinists treacherously claim to be the first victims of the Smith Act, thereby weakening the fight against the Act by concealing its true history. Despite their lies and betrayals, the Stalinists must be defended against this attack under an unconstitutional law.

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Case against Israel is a frame-up

Continued from front page

Jews in Israel Oct. 7, the Israeli government said.

Israel has been put on trial for its “conduct in a war it did not start and did not want,” the Israeli defense team said. It is fighting Hamas “whose brutality knows no bounds.”

Hamas and its sponsor, the reactionary bourgeois clerical regime in Iran, have time and again stated their aim is to eliminate Jews and wipe Israel off the map.

Hamas thugs carried out “the largest calculated mass murder of Jews in a single day since the Holocaust,” said Tal Becker, the lead Israeli defense counsel speaking on behalf of the foreign ministry. They “proudly filmed and broadcast their barbarism.”

Pretoria’s submission to the U.N. ignores all this, focusing instead solely on Palestinian suffering. It relies on Hamas sources that hide the large number of Hamas combatants killed, instead counting them as part of the total of civilian casualties. The charges cover up the fact that the disaster in Gaza is a consequence of “Hamas’ reprehensible strategy of seeking to maximize civilian harm to both Israelis and Palestinians, even as Israel seeks to minimize it,” Becker said.

He showed the court pictures of hostages seized by Hamas.

“Residents of the Gaza Strip are not the enemy,” Israel’s foreign ministry said. It pointed out that it strives “to allow humanitarian aid to enter the Gaza Strip.”

The genocide charge “seeks to thwart Israel’s inherent right to defend itself, to let Hamas not just get away with its murder, literally, but render Israel defenseless as Hamas continues to commit it,” the Israeli opening statement said. South Africa has long “celebrated its ties with Hamas figures,” including hosting senior Hamas leaders just weeks after the Oct. 7 massacre.

The rulers of the “democratic” imperialist powers that established the United Nations use the court to advance their own interests against opponents, especially rivals they have and will defeat in their predatory wars.

In this case the South African rulers are trying to use the court to advance their interests, drawing other governments to support them. Its accusations are backed by the governments of Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Jordan, Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey, along with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, a bloc of 57 states led by the rulers of Saudi Arabia.

So far Pretoria has had a lukewarm response to its charges from Moscow and Beijing, who are allied with it in the BRICS bloc. The group of governments of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa was set up to challenge Washington’s supremacy. It postures as the champion of peoples in the semicolonial world.

Pretoria’s case is applauded by liberals predominating in “nongovernmental” bureaucracies, the U.N. and academia and other agencies within imperialist countries, as well as Stalinist-trained forces on the middle-class left.

South Africa’s ruling African National Congress faces elections in which it could lose its parliamentary majority for the first time since Nel-

son Mandela’s victory in 1994. At that time it was a national liberation movement at the head of a mass struggle to overthrow apartheid. Today the ANC presides over a capitalist government whose crisis is marked by world-record unemployment, growing inequality and breakdowns in basic services.

S. African Christians protest case

As the South African government prepared its case against Israel, an open letter opposing the charges was sent by nearly 30 Christian organizations from across South Africa.

“Israel does not seek to wipe Gaza or the Palestinians off the face of the map,” the letter said. “It seeks to defend itself.”

Pretoria’s charges “could be interpreted as direct support to Hamas’s tactics, including using civilians as human shields and diverting aid for military purposes and the building of tunnels, rather than humanitarian relief sent to the Palestinian people.”

The signatories noted that the South African government’s “one-sided approach ... has placed its Jewish citizens at risk by inciting antisemitism as well as eroding the freedom of religion of Christians in South Africa.”

Israel has existed as a refuge for Jews for over 75 years. It came into existence for three reasons, the horror of the Holocaust with the slaughter of 40% of Jews worldwide; the refusal of the imperialist rulers in Washington and London to

Washington forum highlights Cuba’s socialist revolution

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

WASHINGTON — “We seek to preserve the economic and social transformation of Cuba today. To protect the rights of the Cuban people in a world more difficult and more dangerous than 1959,” Alejandro García del Toro, deputy chief of Mission from the Cuban Embassy, said at a Jan. 6 Militant Labor Forum sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party here to celebrate the 65th anniversary of Cuban Revolution.

“We defend rights that the political system in the United States is unable to provide, that are still waiting for solutions in poor communities, such as health care and education,” he said.

Fidel Castro and the Rebel Army led the Cuban people to overthrow the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in January 1959, opening the road for workers and farmers to carry out a socialist revolution and begin building a new society in Cuba.

“The sanctions and measures against Cuba put in place by Donald Trump are still in place. President Biden continues those policies,” García del Toro said. “The consequences impact the daily life of the Cuban people.

“It is important to celebrate this occasion tonight as we say ‘End the blockade of Cuba,’ and ‘Remove Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list.’”

García del Toro was joined on the platform by Arrin Hawkins, organizer of the Socialist Workers Party branch here. “This past year, tens of thousands of autoworkers, bakery and hotel workers, dockworkers and more, participated in strikes and labor actions in the U.S. that showed a confidence and a willingness to fight.

“None of this is a prediction of suc-



Jews deported by train from Hungary arrive at Auschwitz death camp in Poland in 1944. In the Holocaust, Nazi capitalist rulers in Germany and their allies killed 6 million Jews, a systematic, genocidal state-sponsored mass murder, the scope of which no other people have ever faced.

cess, but it shows that the decades-long rout of the labor movement — where few strikes happened, and with more defeats than wins — is behind us,” said Hawkins, who is a member of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 68 in Baltimore. “It points to the growing confidence and unity of the working class.”

“Fidel Castro and the Cuban leadership understood, as Lenin and the Bolsheviks before him, that to have a genuine revolution — to overthrow capitalist class relations and put power in the hands of the working class — you need a communist leadership,” she said. “And it meant mobilizing and leading millions into revolutionary action.

“The lessons of the Cuban Revolution are decisive, all the more so in face of the watershed events of world politics today,” Hawkins said, pointing to Moscow’s war to destroy Ukraine and its people, and the counterrevolutionary regime in Tehran working with Hamas to carry out the Oct. 7 pogrom against Israel and Jews.

Hawkins described how workers, farmers and youth in Cuba are commemorating the anniversary of the Freedom Caravan held after the victory of the revolution. Fidel Castro led the caravan as it traveled across Cuba from Santiago to Havana in the first days of January 1959. Hundreds of thousands of working people turned out to meet and hear from Castro and “the bearded ones” in cities and towns along the route.

Raúl Castro Ruz, the leader of Cuba’s revolutionary armed forces, and Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel commemorated the 65th anniversary Jan. 1 in Céspedes Park in Santiago. Raúl Castro recounted what Fidel Cas-

tro said as they began the caravan to Havana: “The revolution begins now. It will not be an easy task; it will be a hard enterprise full of dangers. And yet, there is still much to be done.”

“The victorious socialist revolution in Cuba, made possible by workers and farmers under the leadership of Fidel, gives us a living example we can learn from, defend and most importantly, fight to emulate,” Hawkins said.

Joining in the celebration were representatives from the Cuban Embassy, SWP members and supporters and others looking to learn more about the Cuban Revolution. The presentations were followed by a lively discussion and a spread of food and refreshments.

The challenges facing Cuba today in confronting the U.S. embargo and the unwillingness of the U.S. government to respond to recent physical attacks on the Cuban Embassy here, were among the issues discussed.

remotely comparable to the actual war crimes carried out by the Allied imperialist powers in World War II. London and Washington carpet-bombed German cities Dresden and Hamburg, suffocating or incinerating tens of thousands of people in the ensuing firestorms.

The interests of the working class lie in leading the fight against antisemitic vitriol and violence that is surging worldwide, especially from the self-proclaimed left, in the wake of Hamas’ Oct. 7 pogrom. The only way to stop the scourge of Jew-hatred is for the working class to take political power to uproot capitalist exploitation and all oppression.

Showing its depravity, Hamas toys with the emotions of the hostages and their families. On Jan. 14, saying “tomorrow we will inform you of their fate,” the group published photos and a video of three hostages. The next day they said that Yossi Sharabi and Itai Svirsky were dead, claiming they’d been killed in Israeli airstrikes, but that they were still holding Noa Argamani, a 26-year-old woman.

Sharpening conflicts

There has been a sharp step-up recently in attacks by Tehran and its “axis of resistance” — Hamas, Lebanon-based Hezbollah, Tehran-organized and trained “militias” in Syria and Iraq, and Houthi-based forces in Yemen — on U.S. forces in the region.

These moves reflect the watershed effect on government alliances and actions in the region and worldwide since Oct. 7. They threaten to unleash wider combat and possible strikes by rulers possessing nuclear arsenals.

According to the Pentagon, there have been 130 drone, rocket, mortar and missile attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria over the last three

Fight to destroy Hamas crucial

Continued from front page

The reactionary Islamist group cynically claimed at first that the more than 240 hostages it seized were well-treated “guests.” Taking hostages was a central objective of their pogrom. Some 1,200 people were murdered and more than 5,000 injured, mostly civilians, in what was the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust. Dozens of Arabs, Thais, Nepalese, Filipinos and African workers who worked with Jews were also killed or taken hostage.

The Israeli government is now making public more of the facts on how the Hamas death squads tortured, raped and mutilated many of their victims, and the sexual abuse and torture of hostages.

Agam Goldstein-Almog, a 17-year-old held captive by Hamas for 51 days, was one of the speakers at the Tel Aviv rally. She described what must be going through the minds of the women still captive. “Has he entered the shower again, stripped the pajamas that he gave you, touched the wound from the bullet that he shot, that really hurt you?”

Workers at Israel’s National Center of Forensic Medicine in Tel Aviv, who are still trying to identify the remains of the 1,200 who were murdered, described their findings to *Yedioth Aaronth*. One disturbing image was of a 12-year-old girl who was shot in the head by the Hamas thugs and then decapitated.

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According to the Pentagon, there have been 130 drone, rocket, mortar and missile attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria over the last three

months, injuring 69 soldiers.

There are some 2,500 U.S. soldiers stationed in Iraq, ostensibly to advise the Iraqi army in fighting the Islamic State group. Tehran and the militia forces it spawned in Iraq have been pressing the government there to expel U.S. forces from the country.

In a new escalation, Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps fired at least 10 ballistic missiles at what it claimed was an Israeli “espionage center” in Erbil Jan. 15 in the semi-autonomous Kurdish region of Iraq and at Islamic State bases in Syria. Ludicrously, Tehran claims the IS group is an agent of Israel.

Iraqi officials say the missiles hit the residence of a well-known Kurdish businessman, killing him and his 11-month-old daughter.

The violation of Iraqi sovereignty was so egregious that even the Iraqi government — which has integrated Tehran-allied militias into its armed forces — complained, recalling its ambassador.

Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Masrour Barzani said the attack shows that U.S. troops need to stay in Iraq.

At Tehran’s behest, Hezbollah has so far avoided launching a major assault on Israel. Instead, the group fires missiles and mortars a few miles into northern Israel almost daily. On Jan. 9 Hezbollah drones hit an Israeli army base near the border. On Jan. 14 an anti-tank missile hit a home in Kfar Yuval killing a woman and her son.

Israel retaliatory strikes have killed over 135 Hezbollah fighters.

Tehran is behind the spate of attacks on ships in the Red Sea by Ansar Allah (supporters of God) in Yemen. The armed group based on the mostly Shiite Muslim Houthis — about 35% of the country’s population — has been fighting a civil war there against Saudi-backed former government forces for years. With arms and training from Tehran, the group controls most of the country.

Recently Houthi forces have launched dozens of missile and drone



Left, Haaretz; right, screen shot from video filmed by Hamas. Right, Tanzanian dairy worker Joshua Mollel abused by Hamas thugs during Oct. 7 pogrom, before they stabbed him to death. Hamas filmed its atrocities. They kidnapped, murdered Jews and anyone who worked with them. Above, ruins in Kibbutz Nir Oz, where Mollel worked.

attacks at ships in the Red Sea, claiming they are involved in trade with Israel. The attacks caused a growing number of shipping companies — including from Qatar, where the regime has had friendly relations with Hamas and the Ansar Allah — to reroute ships, adding days of travel and extra expenses to avoid going through the Red Sea and Suez Canal.

Some 20% of the world’s container ships travel through the Suez Canal.

The U.S. and British military, with aid from the armed forces of Australia, Bahrain, Canada and the Netherlands, retaliated Jan. 11 and 12 for the Houthis’ latest attack targeting a U.S. ship, striking more than 60 targets in Yemen. U.S. officials say up to 80% of the group’s mobile launchers are still intact.

At the same time, the White House continues to press the Israeli government to wind down the war in Gaza. U.S. imperialism’s starting point is not defending Israel or Jews. What it wants is stability for Washington’s economic and political interests in the region.

The *Times of Israel* reported Jan.

Hamas leaders get rich raising funds to make war on Jews

BY SETH GALINSKY

Hamas is a murderous, reactionary and anti-working-class outfit whose founding covenant calls for wiping Israel off the face of the earth and the slaughter of all the Jews. It has become an increasingly central link in Tehran’s “axis of resistance.”

Hamas imposed a brutal dictatorship in Gaza after narrowly winning elections there in 2006. It is not only a deadly threat to Jews. It’s also the biggest obstacle Palestinian workers face in finding a way to collaborate in class battles with fellow workers from Israel as well as organizing to defend their own national interests.

Far from being an organization that fights for national liberation — as its apologists around the world claim — Hamas is an armed capitalist party with a financial empire across the Middle East that its leaders use to enrich themselves and help finance their murderous assaults, along with funds siphoned off U.N. aid directed toward Palestinians in Gaza.

The *Wall Street Journal* Jan. 4 reported that Hamas leaders own a portfolio

with hundreds of millions of dollars in real estate assets and stakes in companies in Turkey, Algeria, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates. They cultivate relations with the governments of these countries and with Moscow.

In addition, the paper estimates that Hamas gets hundreds of millions of dollars from the government in Tehran, as well as millions from taxes it imposes on both legal and smuggled goods imported into Gaza. And Hamas apologists around the world find ways to funnel money to the group.

The Islamist group’s central leaders and their families live lives of luxury in Qatar, Turkey and elsewhere. Israeli government officials assert that Hamas leaders Moussa Abu Marzouk, Khaled Mashaal and Ismail Haniyeh, the current head of Hamas’ political bureau, are billionaires.

Some apologists of Hamas, like the author of a recent article in *Eyerys*, an Indonesia-based website, claim the charges of obscene wealth are exaggerations. But even that article had to admit that “the three leaders have been seen at Qatar’s diplomatic clubs, photographed

11 that Secretary of State Antony Blinken — on his latest visit to Israel — told the Israeli cabinet they need to scale back combat in south Gaza, allow Gazans to begin returning to the northern part of the Strip, and declare it is ready to negotiate “a pathway to a Palestinian state.”

But the Israeli government has no intention of stopping the war in Gaza until Hamas is dismantled.

One of the reasons for the Oct. 7 timing of Hamas’ pogrom was Tehran’s hope to spark an Israeli response that would keep the government of Saudi Arabia from signing on to the “Abraham Accords.” That’s the name given to the normalization of diplomatic and economic relations with Israel by the governments in Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Sudan.

But that goal may be backfiring on Tehran’s “axis of resistance.”

“We’ve been at this for a long time, and willing to accept Israel for a long time,” Saudi Ambassador to the United Kingdom Prince Khalid bin Bandar told the BBC Jan. 9. “It’s a reality that’s there that we have to live with.”

inside private jets, stay at five-star hotels and mansions, dine at some of the Middle East’s best restaurants.”

Hamas leader Abu Marzouk was asked by Russia Today in October why Hamas has built hundreds of miles of tunnels, but not a single bomb shelter for civilians.

He said they have no responsibility for that. “It is the U.N.’s responsibility to protect them,” Marzouk argued, because “75% of the population of Gaza are refugees.”

The Israel Defense Forces estimate that Hamas used 6,000 tons of concrete and 1,800 tons of metal to build the tunnels. Some are 200 feet underground and include elevators, running water and electricity. Constructing them took thousands of hours of labor power over years and tens of millions of dollars, resources that could have been invested in extending waterlines, building factories and power generation, increasing agricultural production, and constructing decent housing to improve the lives of people in Gaza.

But that has never been the goal of Hamas.

Fidel Castro: 'Never had such a profound change taken place'

One of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for January is *In Defense of Socialism: Four Speeches on the 30th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution* by Fidel Castro, its central leader. The triumph of the Cuban people on Jan. 1, 1959, bringing down the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship, opened the way under Castro's Marxist leadership to the first socialist revolution in the Americas. In these 1989 speeches, as the Stalinist regimes of the Soviet bloc were collapsing, Castro defended socialism as "the only hope, the only road for the peoples, the oppressed, the exploited, the plundered. And today, when our enemies want to question it, we must defend it more than ever." The excerpt is from "The Young Generation Must Improve and Defend Socialism." Copyright © 1989 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Fidel Castro's Freedom Caravan enters Havana, Cuba, Jan. 8, 1959. "A sea of people," he said, met rebel fighters after popular insurrection, general strike sealed victory in revolutionary war.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FIDEL CASTRO

The memory of that day when we arrived in the capital will never be erased. We had crossed the island practically from one tip to the other and a sea of people welcomed our motorcade everywhere. Thirty years have gone by since then.

Like today, there was a big crowd gathered here, perhaps bigger than this one since there was more space then. This was then a big military camp and the fate of the country was decided here, and that day it was full of people.

It wasn't a school, as it is today. There was great symbolism in the fact that the people gathered in precisely this military camp. It meant that the history of coups d'état, the history of military dictatorships had disappeared for good in our homeland. [Applause] It meant that repression and crime had disappeared for good in our country. From that time on, defending the people and the country would no longer simply be the task of the armed forces but of the entire people. ...

In our nation there were many things to do. The problems we had then are not those of today; we had a whole world to change, we had a revolution to make.

I remember that our main concern that night was the question of unity among the revolutionary forces, preventing splits and clashes from breaking out among those who had fought against the dictatorship, avoiding conflicts and divisions among our people. For as Martí had believed, it was precisely conflicts and divisions that had made victory impossible in the Ten Years War. And throughout our history divisions had made it very difficult for independence to fully triumph in our nation. ...

I also remember something I said that evening of January 8, that we would always have the necessary patience once revolutionary power was in our hands, and that if the day ever came when our patience ran out we would always seek more patience, all the patience required

to assume the responsibilities and enormous power that a triumphant revolution bestows on its leaders. ...

I believe that the changes that took place in our country have been extraordinary; the tasks we tackled then are not those of today. At that time we had a triumphant revolution within a capitalist country, within an imperialist neocolony. That entire social system had to be demolished. The ownership of our industries, our public services, our land, our mineral resources, banking, trade, practically everything, was in the private hands of a minority of exploiters. And a significant portion of all that wealth and those industries was in the hands of foreign corporations. ...

Our people did not then have the level of political awareness they later acquired. They were a militant people, an enthusiastic people, a warmhearted people, a rebellious people, a people who hated crime, injustice, abuse, corruption, and embezzlement, all the vices that characterized politics in capitalist times. They were, above all, a people who hated oppression, and that was why there was an extraordinary joy prevailing in those times. ...

If you asked people whether they wanted agrarian reform, they said yes. If you asked people whether they wanted a cut in rent, they were in agreement. If you asked about urban reform, they were in agreement; about freeing

the peasants from middlemen, from all forms of exploitation, they were in agreement. If you asked them whether the public services, that is, telephones, electricity, transportation, or the large factories and the big banks, ought to be the property of the entire people, they were in agreement.

But if you asked some citizens whether they agreed with socialism, they said no, not with socialism, no. They didn't know what socialism was, they didn't know what communism was. Our people were so saturated with that propaganda that a large part of the population was not in agreement with socialism or communism, without even knowing what socialism or communism were.

That's why during the first stage of the revolution it was necessary to implement the Moncada Program — it was generally accepted that it was, so to speak, the forerunner of socialism but it was not quite socialist. It did not yet speak of building socialism in our country.

How did our people become a socialist people? It was the revolutionary laws more than words, preaching, or reasoning that made our people socialist. When rents were cut, which profoundly affected the interests of those landlords, the entire people supported the measure. When the agrarian reform was carried out the entire people supported the decision. The interests of the workers were taken care of. Social justice was implemented with a strong hand from one end of the country to the other. For the first time in our country's history, the state and the government ceased being on the side of the rich and put themselves on the side of the poor. When the vast majority of our population saw that the government resolutely attacked the interests of the rich and the bourgeoisie to support the people, little by little all those lies and that whole antisocialist and anticommunist campaign came tumbling down like a house of cards. In this way a new political thinking, a true political awareness was created among our people.

Never before had such fundamental changes taken place in the social life of our country. Never before had such fundamental changes taken place with regard to the means of production. Never before had such a profound change taken place in the people's consciousness.

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Join flight attendants' rallies Feb. 13, build union solidarity!

Working-class solidarity is crucial to strengthen today's union struggles and build a more powerful labor movement.

Flight attendants are urging fellow workers to join their picket lines at 30 airports worldwide Feb. 13 as part of the fight for new contracts where they're paid for all the hours they work and win better wages, schedules and pensions. Bring your co-workers!

Nearly 200 members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 390G have been on strike at International Flavors and Fragrances in Memphis, Tennessee, for over six months against bosses' attempts to gut hard-won union gains. They're fighting against elimination of paid lunch breaks, cuts to their retirement plan and boss demands to take away overtime pay after eight hours of work. They deserve all the support they can get.

Bosses at Rogers Sugar in Vancouver, British Columbia, tried to force a concession contract down workers' throats. It includes 12-hour shifts, a seven-day workweek and no overtime pay. Members of the Public and Private Workers of Canada Local 8 said, "No!" and walked out. Working-class solidarity can

be decisive to the outcome of their strike.

Gains won by strikes by autoworkers, actors, nurses and other unionists last year showed what's possible when workers shut down production and won support.

Wherever unionists are standing up to employers' attacks, they fight for *all* workers. Tens of millions face difficulties paying for rent, child care, transportation

and other essentials needed to hold a family together, as the boss class drives to hold down wages and profit off our backs. They push unlivable work schedules, longer hours and speedups that threaten life and limb.

Building unions is the first step in overcoming the divisions that bosses foster, including pitting native-born workers against immigrants, to try to undermine working-class resistance.

Building more powerful unions is a crucial step on the road to building the leadership of a working-class movement that can fight to take political power into our own hands and end capitalist exploitation and oppression once and for all.

More labor struggles are on the horizon. Members of the International Longshoremen's Association at ports on the East and Gulf Coasts and the Great Lakes have eight months left on their contract. Union leaders say they're ready to call a strike if bosses try to force through introduction of automation to cut jobs and speed up work for those still working.

An injury to one is an injury to all! Spread the word about today's union struggles! Join the flight attendants' picket lines Feb. 13!



Association of Professional Flight Attendants
Flight attendants at LaGuardia Airport, New York, after union members voted 99.4% Aug. 30 to authorize strike in contract fight.

Democrats deepen attacks on constitutional rights

Continued from front page

Biden had relaunched his failing campaign Jan. 5, insisting he *must* be reelected or Trump will use the White House to impose modern-day fascism.

Typical of the renewed bout of liberal hysteria is the cover of the Jan. 15 *New Yorker* magazine, which features a huge cartoon of a goose-stepping Trump looking like Italian fascist Benito Mussolini. The day after Biden's speech, the *New York Times* editors wrote that a second Trump presidency would open "an all-out assault on the structures of American government."

Whenever liberals vent their anti-Trump panic, vilification of the millions of workers who support him isn't far away. *Times* columnist David French writes that for those backing the Republican front-runner "vice is virtue and virtue is vice." A Trump win will not be "the culmination of a short-lived reactionary movement, but rather the harbinger of a greater darkness," he predicts. Underneath liberals' contempt is a growing fear of the working class and a determination to prevent those they deem "deplorable" from having a say in the election.

But a second Trump term is no more likely to replace capitalist democracy with a fascist tyranny than the first did.

'Democracy is on the ballot'

President Biden increasingly places blatant falsehoods about the Jan. 6, 2021, melee at the Capitol at the center of his reelection bid. "This is the first national election since the Jan. 6 insurrection placed a dagger at the throat of democracy," he said in his speech. His pitch today is: "Democracy is on the ballot."

More than three years after Jan. 6, not one of the partisan Democratic prosecutors going after Trump has tried to charge him with insurrection. In fact the only time he's faced this charge was a Democratic Party-led impeachment effort at the end of his term — and he was acquitted.

The freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution weren't a gift from the ruling classes. They were won through mighty class battles by working people over two and a half centuries. Defending and extending these rights today falls to the class that has the most need for these freedoms — to workers confronting deepening attacks from the capitalist rulers.

Claims by Democrats and Republicans that their efforts are aimed at uniting all the people to "protect democracy" are a fraud. The capitalist rulers and their two parties claim "we're all in this together" whenever they're trying to win support for military intervention wars abroad, or when they want to force sacrifices on workers to protect their own profit-driven interests.

"Democracy is still a sacred cause, and there's no country in the world better positioned to lead the world than America," Biden said in his speech. But the real record of Washington and all the other "democratic"

imperialist powers is not one of fighting the rise of fascism, but of creating the conditions that lead to its rise.

In the 1930s, the depth of the capitalist crisis and the rise of powerful working-class struggles led sections of the capitalist class in Germany and elsewhere to turn to fascist forces to inflict crushing defeats on the working class in order to safeguard their rule.

In the name of "fighting fascism," the "democratic" imperialist powers launched attacks on basic freedoms as they prepared to enter World War II, a war they fought to protect their own economic and political interests. The U.S. rulers jailed leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Teamsters union, pushed a no-strike pledge on the unions and unleashed the FBI to target fighters for Black rights.

Both the Democratic and Republican parties pretend that what happens at the ballot box in November will alter the fundamental course of capitalist politics. But whoever is in the White House, the bosses will use the government to defend their profits and power at workers' expense. The deepening crisis of this blood-sucking system will breed growing instability and head toward sharper class battles and more wars. It is these conditions that breed the rulers' desire to curtail constitutionally protected rights as they try to quell working-class resistance.

Defense of freedoms workers need

For workers today there are high stakes in defending free speech and other rights from Democrats' attacks.

During Trump's New York trial on alleged business fraud, Judge Arthur Engoron initially blocked Trump from making a closing statement. Then the judge relented, allowing him to speak Jan. 11, only after imposing wide-ranging restrictions on what he could say.

But when Trump told the court the case was "a political witch hunt," Engoron interrupted, saying he wasn't allowed to express that opinion.

"You have your own agenda," Trump replied.

At the request of Democratic Party prosecutors, Engoron ruled that Trump was guilty before the trial even started, threatening to seize Trump's New York businesses. At issue today is the extent of the damages imposed on Trump.

In a further attack on free speech, Trump went on trial Jan. 15 for the second time, facing a new financial penalty for protesting claims by writer E. Jean Carroll that he raped her sometime in the 1990s, a quarter of a century ago. Last year a jury found Trump not guilty of the rape charge that Carroll made in a 2019 lawsuit, but convicted him of "sexual abuse." Each time Trump speaks out against these rulings, it becomes a new "crime" and Carroll seeks more money. In 2023 she was awarded \$5 million.

Whenever Democrats try to silence Trump, they strike at constitutional freedoms, creating a precedent that will be turned against workers in the future.

Big jump in 'Militant' readership behind bars

BY SETH GALINSKY

The number of workers behind bars who subscribe to the *Militant* grew from 191 in March 2023 to more than 260 today — a 36% increase in less than a year! And there's no sign the increase is slowing down. Hundreds more read issues fellow inmates get every week.

The *Militant's* geographic reach is also growing. It is now read in more than 120 local, state and federal prisons in 33 states. Over the last several years more women prisoners have also started subscribing to the socialist newsweekly.

The interest in the *Militant* among prisoners is a reflection of what is happening in the working class more broadly. Working people are looking for ways to defend their interests in the face of the deepening economic, social and moral crisis of capitalism. Workers behind bars want to know what is going on in the world, discuss it with fellow inmates and express their opinion.

Like other workers, most prisoners are horrified by the Tehran-backed Hamas anti-Jewish pogrom in Israel Oct. 7. "Thanks! Thanks!" one Florida prisoner sent with his renewal this month. "The truth must not only be the truth ... it must also be told!"

Of course, just like everywhere else, prisoners hold a range of views. "I do not agree with your views on the Israel/Palestine conflict," wrote a longtime subscriber in a Pennsylvania prison, "however I have that right as you do yours. But your newspaper is of vital importance, so I'm not letting this undercut my support."

Many prisoners also know the *Militant* defends their constitutional rights to read the books and periodicals of their choosing, and we fight every effort by prison authorities to bar the paper from reaching its subscribers.

And we are proud of our record of successfully overturning almost every attempt made to suppress the *Militant*.

The *Militant* offers a special discount for prisoners: \$6 for six months, \$12 for a year. Most of our prisoner subscribers find even that is more than they can afford, and we give them a complimentary subscription. Others contribute whatever they can.

Keeping up the complimentary and low cost subscriptions for our fellow workers behind bars costs us over \$10,000 a year.

You can help by contributing to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018, or online at themilitant.com. Note on your check or money order that your donation is for the "Militant Prisoner Fund."