

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Teachers union goes on strike, speaks out against Jew-hatred  
— PAGE 4

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 88/NO. 5 FEBRUARY 5, 2024

## Canada court rules gov't use of Emergency Act was illegal

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — In a victory for hundreds of truckers who demonstrated two years ago in Ottawa and other cities as part of the Freedom Convoy, a federal judge ruled Jan. 23 that the Canadian government's invocation of the notorious Emergencies Act to bust up their protests in 2022 was "unrea-

### AS WE GO TO PRESS

sonable," "unjustifiable" and violated basic rights in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Using these anti-working-class emergency powers, the government unleashed 3,000 heavily armed cops with military-grade weapons to clear out the protesters camped in front of Canada's Parliament in downtown

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## Life of Elmore Nickleberry set an example for all workers

BY AMY HUSK

Elmore Nickleberry, one of the last survivors of the 1968 sanitation workers strike in Memphis, Tennessee, died Dec. 30 at the age of 92.

The 1,300 workers walked off the job in February 1968, protesting inhuman and discriminatory treatment by the city. Their fight for dignity, safety, as well as fair wages and treatment, was a historic union and civil rights battle.

The overwhelmingly Black sanitation workers faced horrendous working conditions. They carried large plastic tubs full of garbage on their backs or their heads. The tubs often had holes in them "and the garbage and maggots would crawl down your back and onto your clothes," Nickleberry said in a 2014 *New York Times* interview.

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## Fight against Jew-hatred!



Hostages Family Forum

Rally outside U.N. headquarters in New York City Sept. 20 demanding release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas terrorists in Gaza Strip. Over 240 people were kidnapped as Islamist terrorists murdered 1,200 in Israel Oct. 7, the largest single-day massacre of Jews since Holocaust.

## World politics shifting since Oct. 7 pogrom

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Alongside Moscow's murderous invasion of Ukraine, Hamas' Oct. 7 massacre of Jews in Israel — backed and promoted by the rulers in Iran — marked a watershed in world politics. The subsequent acceleration of military conflicts in the Middle East and mounting tensions between rival capitalist powers globally, ensures the world can never go back to the way it was before the Hamas pogrom.

Today Washington is being drawn more deeply into conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere as it seeks to protect its weakened but still dominant place in an increasingly unstable imperialist world "order," and advance its own economic and political interests. The U.S. rulers wield unmatched military power and have shown a willingness to use it from Vietnam to Iraq.

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## Moscow threatens to crush Ukraine, Ukrainian people

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

It has been nearly two years since Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime launched its invasion of Ukraine, hoping to seize Kyiv, kill the elected leadership and take control over the country within a few days. But working people of Ukraine, determined to defend their country's independence, rose up and beat them back. Millions worldwide have been inspired by their resistance.

Moscow has stepped up its deadly bombardment of Ukrainian cities even as its forces have been pushed out of half the territory they occupied at the start of the invasion. It still occupies 18% of Ukraine, including all

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## Defend Israel's right to exist, defend itself

BY SETH GALINSKY

In a Jan. 19 phone call, President Joseph Biden pressed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to wind down Israel's military offensive against Tehran-backed Hamas in Gaza.

Biden insists Israel agree to withdraw all its troops from Gaza in exchange for Hamas releasing the remaining hostages. And that Israel accept a "two-state solution": a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank alongside Israel. But Hamas and Tehran want the destruction of Israel and the Jews, and have no interest whatsoever in two states.

In a Jan. 16 interview with a Kuwaiti reporter, Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal

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## SWP campaign: Support union struggles, fight antisemitism

BY JANET POST

The Socialist Workers Party 2024 campaigns are being launched across the country and are getting attention.

A Jan. 15 press release announcing the party was running Joanne Kuniansky for U.S. Senate from New Jersey and Lea Sherman for U.S. Con-

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## New York meeting celebrates Cuba's socialist revolution



Militant/Mike Shur

Yuri Gala López, left, Cuba's ambassador to the United Nations, and Socialist Workers Party National Committee member Steve Clark spoke at Jan. 21 celebration of 65th anniversary of Cuban Revolution, hosted by Socialist Workers Party branches from New York and New Jersey.

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK — "We have had to face many challenges and adversities to get here, *but it has been worth it*," Cuban Ambassador to the United Nations Yuri A. Gala López said at a Jan. 21 meeting here to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. He was quoting Army Gen. Raúl Castro Ruz, a historic central leader of the revolution, who spoke at the Jan. 1 celebration in Santiago de Cuba. (See full text on page 6.)

Sixty-five people attended the event, sponsored by the New York and Northern New Jersey branches of the Social-

ist Workers Party. Everyone received a copy of Castro's speech. The Cuban leader expresses confidence in Cuba's working people, with their "immense

**SPEECH BY RAÚL CASTRO**  
— see page 6

creative capacity" and hard work, to conquer the challenges the socialist revolution faces due to more than six decades of economic war and aggression

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### Inside

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Fight continues against Alabama execution by nitrogen suffocation 2

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Northern Ireland public sector workers in massive one-day strike

# Fight continues against Alabama execution by nitrogen suffocation

BY JANET POST

The state of Alabama has set Jan. 25 for the execution of death-row prisoner Kenneth Eugene Smith, slated to suffer the first execution in the country by suffocation from nitrogen gas, despite the fact that appeals in the case are still pending.

Smith's execution using nitrogen "could amount to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment," Ravina Shamdasani, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, warned Jan. 15. Smith's lawyers say authorities are trying to make him a "test subject" for an untried execution method.

Because of the shortage of chemicals required for lethal injections, partially due to their ban in Europe, states are turning to firing squads, hanging and nitrogen suffocation. Officials in Alabama, Mississippi and Oklahoma have authorized the use of nitrogen. Authorities in Nebraska are considering it.

Nitrogen will be administered through a gas mask over Smith's nose and mouth. The odorless, tasteless and invisible gas supplants any oxygen in Smith's body, killing him.

Prison authorities attempted to execute Smith in 2022 by lethal injection. They stopped after stabbing him repeatedly with needles for nearly four hours in his arms and hands, and eventually near his heart, unable to set an intravenous line. Smith said the botched execution "felt like a knife" even though he was supposed to have been fully anesthetized. Three U.S. Supreme Court judges called it "torturous."

Saying his constitutional rights are

being violated for attempting to execute him a second time, Smith has an appeal pending with the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals.

Smith also says that the untested execution protocol could expose him to a "severe risk of a persistent vegetative state, a stroke, or the painful sensation of suffocation" in violation of the Eighth Amendment's ban on "cruel and unusual punishment."

Dr. Philip Nitschke, a pioneer in assisted suicide in Europe and Australia, has witnessed at least 50 suicide deaths by nitrogen hypoxia, and invented a nitrogen "pod" for those procedures.

In an interview with the *New York Times*, Nitschke questioned the use of a mask in Smith's execution. He said "it could create a higher chance of there being a leak — allowing oxygen in and prolonging the process — than a room, pod or a plastic bag would."

U.S. District Judge R. Austin Huffaker rejected Smith's request for a preliminary injunction Jan. 10.

In 2022 the Supreme Court ruled that officials must allow spiritual advisors to pray and lay hands on inmates in the death chamber. Smith's pastor, Rev. Jeffrey Hood, has filed a lawsuit to halt Smith's execution, saying it "presents potentially significant dangers to his own life and violates the religious liberties of both himself and Mr. Smith." For Smith's execution Hood was required to sign a waiver that he would stand 3 feet away from the prisoner, in case of a nitrogen leak.

Hood told the *Times* there was a possibility that Smith would physically resist the execution attempt. "When you



Gabriel Tynes/Courthouse News Service

Jan. 23 protest at Alabama State Capitol in Montgomery against execution of Kenneth Eugene Smith, by untested nitrogen protocol. Speaking is Smith's spiritual advisor, Rev. Jeffrey Hood.

strap someone down like that, you can't expect someone who's choking to death — suffocating to death — to not resist."

## Judge overturns jury decision

Smith, now 58, was first convicted of capital murder and sentenced to death in 1989, at the age of 23.

Smith denied having committed the killing. There was no physical evidence against him, but he was convicted of "aiding and abetting" the murder.

Smith's conviction and sentence were overturned by an appeals court, finding the state had based challenges to prospective jurors on their race. At his retrial in 1996, Smith was convicted again, but this time the jury voted 11-1 for life imprisonment without parole. The judge overruled the jury,

sentencing Smith to death.

In 2017 the state eliminated the power of a judge to override a jury, but the ruling was not made retroactive. Smith remained on death row.

There have been 1,582 executions in the U.S. since 1976 — by electrocution, hanging, firing squads, lethal injection and lethal gasses other than nitrogen.

"The death penalty is part and parcel of the capitalist 'justice' system, defended by every administration — from Clinton to Trump to Biden," John Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Ohio, told the *Militant*. "The SWP calls for the abolition of the death penalty, a tool used by the capitalist rulers to terrorize and intimidate working people."

## Join Socialist Workers Party 2024 campaigns

Fight in the interests of the working class  
Solidarity with union battles today

### California

Laura Garza, U.S. Senate  
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 Kuniarsky, U.S. Senate  
Lea Sherman, U.S. Congress

### Ohio

John Hawkins, U.S. Senate

### Texas

Alyson Kennedy, U.S. Senate

# THE MILITANT

For unity between native-born and immigrant workers

The bosses pay immigrant laborers cheap wages and use this to lower wages for all workers. The *Militant* explains that fighting for an amnesty for immigrants in the U.S. — and not letting the bosses divide us — will unify the working class and help build strong unions.



Alamy/Bob Daemrich

Farmworkers harvest onions near Alamo, Texas. The SWP supports amnesty for immigrants who live and work in the U.S.

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

# SWP campaigns get hearing

Continued from front page

gress from the state's 8th District was picked up by InsiderNJ and New Jersey Globe.

The announcement describes what Globe reporter Joey Fox called, "an unusual combination of foreign policy priorities, including support for Israel's war against Hamas, defending Ukraine from Russia's invasion and ending the United States' 'economic' war against socialist Cuba."

Fox quotes from the SWP candidates' statement, "Working people need to break from the capitalist parties — Democrats, Republicans, Greens and Libertarians — and build a party of our own that can lead the working class to overturn capitalist rule and use workers power to rebuild society from top to bottom and join the fight for a socialist world."

The SWP candidates are discussing the party's working-class program and course with workers far and wide, on their doorsteps, at strike picket lines and at labor and political actions.

Lisa Potash, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in Georgia's 5th District, campaigned at events in Atlanta commemorating Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 15.

This included a rally near the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park and a march of several thousand that included union contingents from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Communications Workers of America, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Amalgamated Transit Union and others.

Zoey Johnson, who had graduated from Alabama State University in Montgomery, was interested in hearing the SWP candidate's explanation about the need to defend Israel's right to exist as a refuge for Jews and to defeat Hamas. And for workers, unions and young people to combat

rising Jew-hatred worldwide.

"In one class our professor showed us videos about the Palestinians," she told Potash.

"The Palestinian people are paying the price for Hamas' actions," Potash replied. "Hamas doesn't represent Palestinian working people in any way." They suffer for the murderous attacks Hamas unleashes against Israel.

Johnson got a copy of the *Militant* and took a SWP campaign statement.

"I know I have to educate myself about what's happening with Israel," Jasmine Atkins told Potash. She got the book *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon at the table set up by SWP campaigners at the action.

Many people took copies of Potash's campaign flyer, eight bought copies of the *Militant* and five books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries were sold.

## Workers need own party

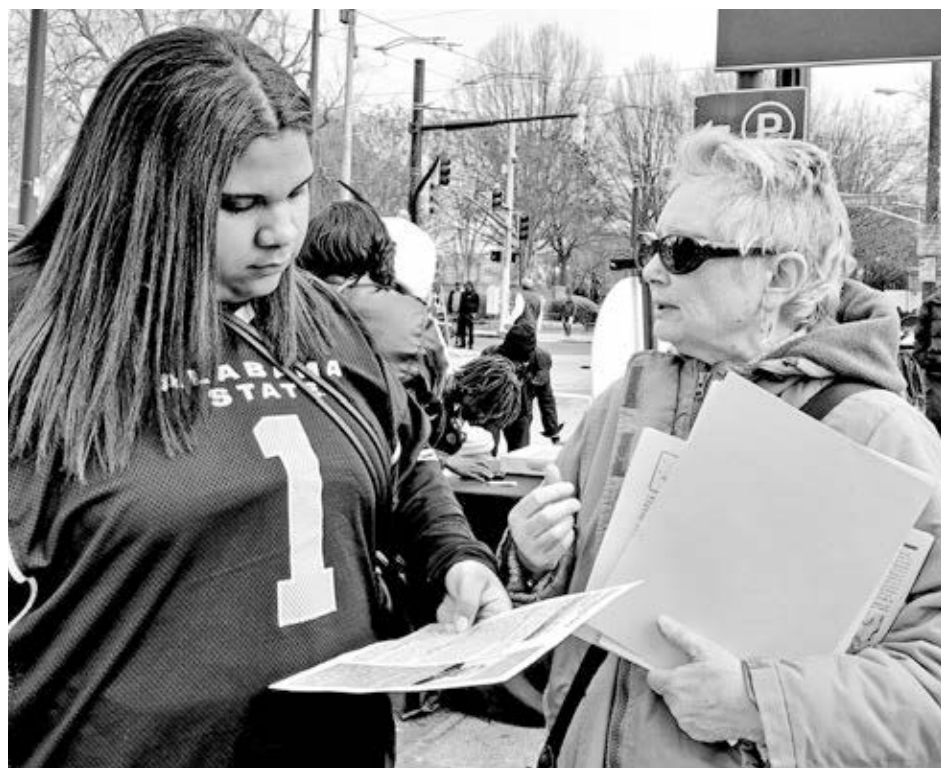
In Montreal, Communist League campaigners Félix Vincent Ardea and Katy LeRougetel discussed the CL's program with Mary Brady on her doorstep. She is an urban planner who is recuperating from surgery.

Vincent Ardea described the recent strike by Quebec education and health care workers for better wages and conditions. "Workers need our own political voice," he said.

"When I was in the hospital I heard nurses talk about working 70 hours a week!" Brady said. "We do need our own voice."

Vincent Ardea invited her to attend a celebration of the 65th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution in Montreal. "This is what we need to do here," he said. "Workers and farmers took political power and began building a society that puts human needs first."

"I'm originally from Haiti," Brady said, praising the work of Cuban vol-



Militant/John Benson

At Atlanta Martin Luther King Day Jan. 15, Zoey Johnson, left, bought a *Militant* after discussion with Lisa Potash, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress, about need to fight Jew-hatred.

unteer doctors who provide desperately needed health care there. "The Cuban doctors work like machines, one operation after another." She got a copy of the *Militant* and kicked in

a contribution to the work of the CL.

To join SWP or CL members campaigning, contact the party headquarters nearest you listed on page 10.

## Pro-Hamas thugs in California attack opponents of Jew-hatred

BY ERIC SIMPSON

EL CERRITO, Calif. — On Jan. 6 thugs physically attacked counterprotesters here who were defending Israel's right to exist and fighting for the defeat of Hamas. The attackers screamed epithets, knocked down and bloodied one woman and grabbed two Israeli flags and set them on fire. Numerous people came to city council meetings in Berkeley, El Cerrito and Albany Jan. 16 and 19 to speak out against the attacks.

"A small group of Israeli supporters were repeatedly harassed and attacked," Faith Meltzer told the Albany City Council at its Jan. 19 meeting. "Masked

protesters surrounded [us] and screamed antisemitic epithets and ripped up [our] signs and burnt [our] flags."

"I was assaulted," she said. "Another woman was thrown in the street and left bloodied, bruised and in tears. The police were nowhere to be seen."

A cellphone video of the attacks, posted on the internet by the Jewish Community Relations Council, record a man masked by a kaffiyeh yelling through a bullhorn inches away from the face of a Jewish protester, who is holding a banner calling for the return of the hostages held by Hamas. "If you want them to go back home all they got to do is just go back to Europe where they belong," he shouts. Others shouted obscenities.

Protesters chanted "Intifada, intifada," "From the river to the sea," "Occupation no more" and other calls for the destruction of the state of Israel. A masked group posed for photos holding a ripped-up poster where only the word "Hamas" was left, making a victory sign.

Jewish residents of the San Francisco Bay Area and their defenders refused to be intimidated. They went to the city council meetings of both Albany and El Cerrito the next weeks to express their outrage and demand that the councils condemn Jew-hatred.

Others came to press the city councils to pass resolutions calling for Israel to stop fighting and implement a permanent cease-fire.

El Cerrito Mayor Tessa Rudnick opened its Jan. 16 City Council meeting by reading a statement against the attacks. "I condemn any actions of anyone who crossed the line and incited violence on Jan. 6 either with their words or with their actions," she said.

Margaret Trowe, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress, spoke at the council meeting and condemned the violent attacks at the Jan. 6 El Cerrito demonstration. "The defeat of Hamas will give more political space to working people in Gaza, in Israel, in Iran and around the world, including in the United States," she said.

## Cuban consul in Montreal: 'Revolution sets an example'

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

MONTREAL — "Jan. 1 marked the 65th anniversary of the victory of the rebels in Cuba, who were fighting to build a better society based on respect and full dignity of man," Angélica María Fuentes, Cuba's consul in Montreal, told a Jan. 20 celebration of the Cuban Revolution organized by the Communist League and sponsored by the Table de Concertation de Solidarité Québec-Cuba (Québec-Cuba Solidarity Roundtable).

Pointing to the call for the meeting, Fuentes added, "Cuba has managed to be an example for the workers of the world." She welcomed all activities taking place around the world aimed at combating the "unjust economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba and the inclusion of Cuba on the spurious list of countries that sponsor terrorism."

Sean O'Donoghue, secretary of the Québec-Cuba Solidarity Roundtable, invited participants to join with the coalition in actions in solidarity with Cuba.

Michel Prairie, speaking for the Communist League, described the achievements of Cuba's socialist revolution made possible by the conquest of power by Cuban workers and peasants Jan. 1, 1959.

Prairie concluded by describing



Militant/John Steele

From left, Sean O'Donoghue, secretary of the Québec-Cuba Solidarity Roundtable; Communist League member Philippe Tessier; and Angélica María Fuentes, Cuba's consul in Montreal, addressing Jan. 20 meeting celebrating the 65th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution.

how working-class struggles have exploded around the world, including the strikes by 600,000 Quebec public-sector workers whose struggles are not yet over. "The workers who participate in these struggles need to learn the lessons of the Cuban Revolution," he said. "And these workers' struggles create new openings to build solidarity with Cuba."

Among the over 35 participants in

the meeting were construction workers originally from Cuba, supporters of the Solidarity Roundtable, rail workers, bakery workers and a participant in the revolution in Grenada in the early 1980s. Most stayed after the presentations to talk more, especially with Consul Fuentes, and look at a display of photos showing key moments in the revolution. A wide range of refreshments and snacks was served.

# Teachers union goes on strike, speaks out against Jew-hatred

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Some 1,100 teachers and 800 teaching aides went on strike in Newton, Massachusetts, Jan. 19 following an overwhelming vote for action by members of the Newton Teachers Association.

“The most important issue is better pay and schedules for the teaching aides,” Kelly Henderson, a union member, told the *Militant* by phone. “Not only do they get low pay, the school system schedules them for 19- to 22-hour workweeks so they can avoid paying health insurance and other benefits.”

The teachers need a cost-of-living wage increase as well, she said. “Because of the increase in health care insurance, we effectively have taken a pay cut and they want to raise the costs again. We also need better parental leaves.”

The unionists had been working without a contract since August last year.

Hours after the strike began, Middlesex Superior Court Judge Christopher K. Barry-Smith ordered the union to immediately return to work. The teachers have continued their strike.

“We expected court action,” Henderson said. “Strikes by teachers are illegal in Massachusetts but this is the seventh one since 2019. Everyone was fined.”

The first day of the strike teachers marched around Newton North High School chanting, “We are the union! The mighty, mighty union!” Passing motorists honked in support.

Two thousand strikers and their supporters filled the steps of Newton’s City Hall later in the day.

“I feel hurt on behalf of these educators who have been through so much,” Alison Lobron, the mother of two Newton North High School students, told the *Boston Globe*. Lobron is the founder of Newton Parent/Educator Collaborative, a group of parents who back the teachers’ fight for a better contract. “What they want to be doing is teaching our kids and they don’t have the resources to do their jobs.”

On Jan. 21 members of the Myrtle Baptist Church in West Newton joined the picket lines.

Teachers unions across the state

have sent messages of solidarity to the strikers, as has Teamsters Local 25 in Boston.

Teachers in Woburn carried out a five-day strike in January 2023. They won a 13.75% pay raise for the teachers, and 40% increase for the aides, who typically started at a salary of \$22,000 a year. The union was fined \$225,000, according to the *Boston Globe*.

Judge Barry-Smith imposed a \$25,000 fine against the Newton teachers union, a figure that is set to double with each day schools remain closed, up to \$200,000 if a deal isn’t reached by Jan. 25. Henderson told the *Militant* they were already organizing fundraising.

The Massachusetts Teachers Association has lobbied legislators to overturn the ban on public-sector workers striking. But Democratic Gov. Maura Healey, like her Republican predecessor, backs the ban.

The mayor of Newton, Ruthann Fuller, is “trying to drag out negotiations, to turn the public against us,” Henderson said. “She says there is no money even though she recently announced there was a \$40 million budget surplus.

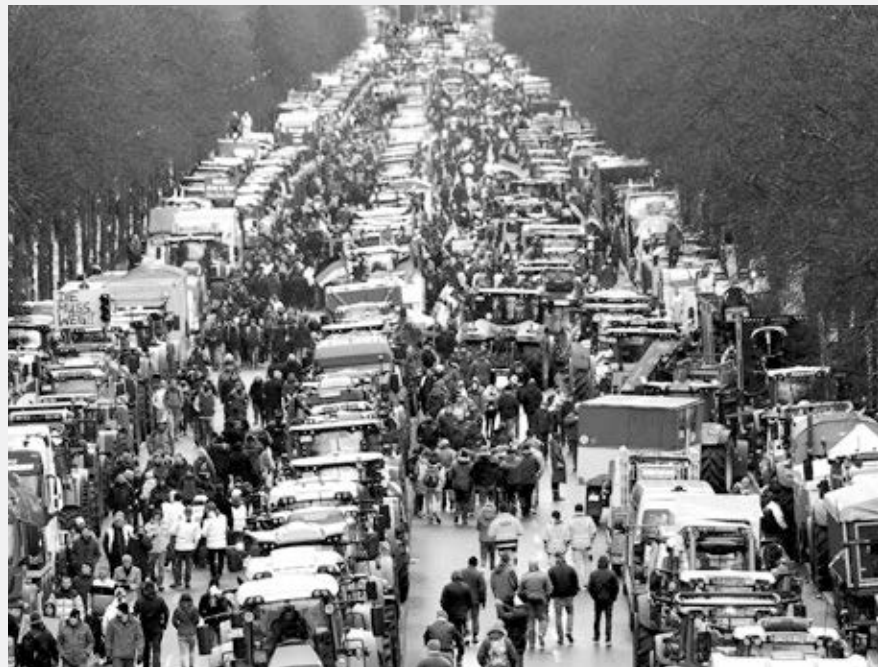
“We have gotten a lot of community support during the strike, and welcome more,” she told the *Militant*. Messages of support can be sent to the Newton Teachers Association at 46 Austin Street, Suite 302, Newtonville, MA 02460.

## Union opposes call for cease-fire

The Newton Teachers Association has joined the debate in the labor movement over how to respond to Hamas’ murderous pogrom against Jews in Israel Oct. 7 and the Israeli government’s response. The union condemned a Dec. 9 call by the Massachusetts Teachers Association for the Israeli government to implement a permanent cease-fire in Gaza. The MTA says Israel’s war to dismantle Hamas is “genocidal war on the Palestinian people.”

“The NTA unequivocally dissoci-

## German farmers clog Berlin, protest rising prices



Reuters/Liesa Johannessen

Some 5,000 tractors and 30,000 protesters brought Berlin’s city center to a standstill Jan. 15 as farmers protested rising prices and German government plans to cut agricultural fuel subsidies, above. Arriving overnight from across the country, farmers parking tractors nose-to-tail along the route were joined by other workers driving trucks and forklifts.

The crowd held signs and banners saying, “Without farmers, there’s no future,” and “We farmers take care of your food.” “This is about the farming future,” Werner Schuermann, a farmer from Resthausen, told Global News. The government subsidies aren’t what we need, he said. “Farmers want fair prices for our products and we want to make ends meet.” The action culminated weeks of protests.

German Finance Minister Christian Lindner addressed the crowd, insisting there was no money for the subsidies and that “everyone has to do their bit.” He was met with a barrage of boos and calls of “liar.” On Jan. 18 the government announced it was going through with the cuts.

The German capitalist class’s economy — the largest in Europe — is faltering. Industrial production has fallen five months in a row, and German bosses now preside over the slowest growing economy among the 20 countries using the euro. Their moves to make the working class pay for the crisis are deeply unpopular.

On Jan. 19 Berlin’s city center was paralyzed again, this time by a milelong convoy of some 1,500 truckers. Drivers demanded the government reverse increases on their highway tolls and on levies they have to pay for fuel emissions.

Calling protests to date just “foreshocks,” Joachim Rukwied, president of the German Farmers’ Association, said Jan. 19, “If nothing changes now, there may be an eruption.” He said they would call “more far-reaching” protests all across the country.

— VIVIAN SAHNER

ates itself from this statement,” wrote Mike Zilles, president of the Newton union, Dec. 12. It “fails completely to hold in mind the atrocities against Israelis on October 7, the complexity

of the situation and the trauma, pain, and fallout the Israeli, American, and international Jewish communities are experiencing.

“The very use of the word ‘genocide’ to characterize the actions of a people who experienced the Holocaust is callous,” Zilles said. “The motion approved by the MTA Board will provoke further antisemitism.” He called on the Massachusetts Teachers Association to retract the statement.

# Canada court rules against gov’t

Continued from front page

Ottawa. They froze the bank accounts of many protesters. Truck companies were ordered to tow away demonstrators’ rigs, and parts of downtown Ottawa were declared no-go zones.

Over 200 were arrested, many charged with criminal offenses, including spokespeople for the Freedom Convoy whose trials are currently underway or set to begin later this year.

The ruling by Federal Court Justice Richard Mosley is the result of four challenges filed by civil liberties groups, including the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and Canadian Constitutional Foundation.

The declaration of a “national public safety emergency” under the act — used for the first time since it replaced the former War Measures Act in 1988 — was justified by Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who claimed the Freedom Convoy was a threat to Canada’s “national security.” The truckers were protesting job-threatening COVID mandates, and other anti-labor government policies.

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia

Freeland announced the government intends to appeal the ruling.

The judge’s decision rebuts the conclusions of a monthslong Public Order Emergency Commission last year that white-washed and justified Ottawa’s imposition of the Emergencies Act after conducting an “investigation” of the government’s action.

The Communist League submitted arguments before the commission denouncing the government’s actions and calling for the immediate repeal of the Emergencies Act. It called the cop mobilization against the truckers “one of the largest acts of police repression in modern Canadian history.”

“Ottawa’s aim was to criminalize a political protest that challenged government policies,” the Communist League explained. “It used its assault to establish a precedent to be used against future protests, against our unions, and against working-class and political parties that the government considers a threat.”

The CL demanded all charges against Freedom Convoy leaders and participants be dropped.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

#### Los Angeles

**As Immigration Spikes, Workers Look to Unify the Working Class.** Speaker: Laura Garza, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from California. Sun., Feb. 4, 5 p.m. Donation: \$5. 2826 S. Vermont Ave., Suite 1. Tel.: (323) 643-4968.

#### Oakland

**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.

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### Manchester

**The Working Class and Communist Continuity in the Fight Against Jew-Hatred.** Speaker: Anne Howie, Communist League. Sun., Feb. 4, 2 p.m. Donation: £2.50. 329 Royal Exchange Buildings, 3 Old Bank Street. Tel: (0161) 312-8119.



## Join flight attendants’ rallies!

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

# Nickleberry sets example

Continued from front page

The workers who were white had showers at work but the Black workers weren't allowed to use them. "I couldn't ride the bus home because I stunk so bad," said Nickleberry. He walked the 6 miles.

Strikers carried "I AM A MAN" signs. "The supervisors called us 'boy,'" Nickleberry said. "You'd tell them, 'I ain't no 'boy.' I am a man. And they'd keep calling you 'boy.'"

On Feb. 1, 1968, two workers, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, climbed into the back of a garbage truck to escape a downpour. A malfunction caused the compactor to start running and they were crushed to death.

The union representing the workers, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1733, demanded a meeting with city officials. When they refused, 700 workers voted to strike.

The workers demanded union recognition and a contract with equal treatment on promotions and in the retirement system, overtime pay, increased wages and more. Wages were so low that 40% of the workers qualified for welfare and food stamps.

When city officials refused to meet the workers' demands, telling them their strike was illegal, organizations in the Black community rallied behind the unionists. A thousand strikers met daily at the Rubber Workers hall. They and their supporters organized meetings and marches that mobilized thousands of workers. They were met with violence and brutality from city cops and state troopers. Thousands of National Guardsmen were called out.

The strikers held their first mass march Feb. 23. The cops attacked. "The police started whupping us," Nickleberry told the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* in 2018. "I got hit hard."

In March, Southern Christian Leadership Conference leader Martin Luther King Jr. came and spoke to 12,000 people at the Mason Temple and led a march of over 15,000. A small number of participants broke

some store windows, which the police used as a pretext to attack marchers again.

*Militant* reporter Howard Reed gave a first-hand report of the brutality of the police. "The cops waded into the demonstrators with tear gas, chemical Mace and with clubs flying. They gunned down at least four people, and shot to death 16-year-old Larry Payne." When demonstrators went to a church to wash tear gas out of their eyes and attend to their injuries, "the cops sprayed tear gas into the church," Reed wrote.

King was assassinated in Memphis on April 4, a few days before he was to lead another march in support of the strike. His killing sparked mass protests throughout the country, including a march of over 40,000 in Memphis. The march in memory of King and in support of the sanitation workers included thousands of unionists. Fred Halstead and Paul Boutelle, the Socialist Workers Party candidates for president and vice president, joined the march.

In light of this massive outpouring of support, the determination of the workers to continue their strike and some pressure from President Lyndon Johnson, the city settled with the workers. "We got a good raise. We got showers. We got better working conditions. We got health benefits," said Nickleberry. "The union came in and we got respect. They stopped calling us 'boy' and started calling us, 'A Man. A Sanitation Man.'" They also got protection against racial discrimination on the job.

Nickleberry served in the Army in Korea. "They treated me better overseas than I was treated in Memphis," he said.

## Building unions in the South

"The victory of the 1968 strike was important for building the unions in the South," Nickleberry's great-nephew, Niqualus Nibley, a business agent for the International Brotherhood of Electrical



Above, The Withers Family Trust/BAM; inset, AFSCME, Indiana-Kentucky Council 962  
Workers protesting during historic 1968 sanitation strike in Memphis, Tennessee. Inset, Elmore Nickleberry, one of the strikers, who died Dec. 30.



Workers union Local 474 in Memphis, told the *Militant*. "We've come a long way but we still have a long way to go." Nibley's local has been active in supporting the eight-month-long strike by members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union at International Flavors and Fragrances in Memphis.

"The labor movement today is definitely still aware of the fight the sanitation workers fought and we are stronger because of it," Kermit Moore, president of the Memphis A. Philip Randolph Institute, told the *Militant*. Moore, who's uncle was a striker, has also helped build support for the BCTGM strike.

Some of the IFF strikers carry "I AM A MAN" signs. Striker Kenneth Cooper told the *Militant*, "They were bullied and they stood up and got justice."

## — ON THE PICKET LINE —

### Northern Ireland public sector workers in massive one-day strike

LONDON — Some 150,000 teachers, health care workers, bus and train drivers, and other public sector workers stopped work Jan. 18 in the largest union day of action in Northern Ireland in decades. Members of 16 unions picketed and joined marches and rallies in Belfast, Derry and elsewhere.

The work stoppage included action by unions that organize workers in both Northern Ireland and the Republic

of Ireland, as well as unions based in the United Kingdom. Workers who prevent ice from forming on roads announced a weeklong strike beginning Jan. 18, and 800 school workers began an eight-day walkout.

Real wages have declined sharply since 2008 throughout the U.K., ravaging workers' living standards. Wages of public sector workers in Northern Ireland have fallen disproportionately compared to those of their counterparts in England, Scotland and Wales. Many have not received a raise in two years.

Northern Ireland is directly ruled by London. A devolved government was established by the 1998 Belfast Agreement. But it hasn't functioned since February 2022 when the Democratic Unionist Party walked out of the Northern Ireland Executive. The DUP fears the growing tendency toward ending the British rulers' division of Ireland, imposed against the wishes of the Irish people over a century ago.

Pay negotiations are now in the hands of the U.K. government. Its Northern Ireland secretary, Christopher Heaton-Harris, says London has allocated a pay offer totaling 584 million pounds (\$742 million), but has made the payment conditional on the restoration of the Northern Ireland Executive in an attempt to put pressure on the DUP to return to the government.

Unions have called for decoupling the pay raise from the restoration of the Executive. Their call is backed by Sinn Fein, the largest party in both Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. It calls for a united Ireland.

Without an end to London's conditions, further strike action will be inevitable, declared Gerry Murphy of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

— Jonathan Silberman

## — 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



February 8, 1999

After a two-week strike and a five-day march toward the capital Bucharest during which they fought pitched battles with the police and military, miners from the Jiu Valley in Romania scored a victory against government attempts to shut down some of the mines. Ten thousand miners laid down their tools Jan. 5, demanding a 35 percent wage increase and a halt to plans to close two mines in the region.

As the government refused to negotiate, some 8,000 miners began a more than 200-mile march on Bucharest Jan. 18. By Jan. 20, the column was estimated as large as 20,000. Farmers were providing food along the way.

The miners had marched on Bucharest three times in 1990 and again in 1991, when they helped bring down the first openly pro-capitalist government. In 1977 the miners led the first uprising against Stalinist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.



February 8, 1974

ON ROUTE 224, Ohio — A highly organized protest has almost emptied the highways and turnpikes of trucks in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The protest is being conducted by the Independent Council of Truckers.

The protest, which began after a "coffee-break" vote on Jan. 24, has been harassed by the Highway Patrol. The protest was needed because of the cost of fuel, foodstuffs, repairs, and the many taxes truckers have to pay. "It boils down to survival," said strike supporter Stan.

Teams of protesters are presently stationed on many busy highway intersections waving down trucks to persuade their drivers to join the stoppage. The trucks are escorted to stations where, over a cup of coffee, new members are recruited to the cause.

The Ohio division of ICT began its protest Jan. 17. Nationally the ICT has set a strike target date of Jan. 31.



February 7, 1949

Periods of peace are growing shorter as capitalism declines. The periods resemble lulls in war when the opposing sides hold their positions waiting for fresh supplies to mount a new offensive.

The Marshall Plan is patching up the worst ruins left by World War II and reviving the battered capitalist economies of Europe. The North Atlantic Pact picks up where the Marshall Plan leaves off. Its aim is rearmament of the Western Powers and mobilization of new armies from the thinned ranks of Europe's youth.

The Atlantic Pact is designed to bypass the old legal hurdle that America cannot be committed to war without Congressional approval.

Every worker who wants enduring peace must help organize to achieve it. That means joining the Socialist Workers Party and participating in the struggle against imperialist war and for a socialist world.

# Raúl Castro: ‘We’ve faced many challenges, but 65 years of Cuba’s socialist revolution is worth it’

*Speech delivered by Army Gen. Raúl Castro Ruz, leader of the revolution, at the celebration of the 65th anniversary of the triumph of the revolution, at Céspedes Park, Santiago de Cuba, Jan. 1, 2024, “Year 66 of the Revolution.” He spoke along with Miguel Díaz-Canel, president of Cuba and first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. Translation is by the Militant.*

## BY RAÚL CASTRO RUZ

Compatriots:

We arrive at the 65th anniversary of the triumph of our socialist revolution. We have had to face many challenges and adversities to get here, but it has been worth it. The work of the revolution and its social achievements, even in the midst of difficulties, corroborate this.

The first thought of Cubans in this historic commemoration has been for Fidel, especially here, in the heroic city of Santiago de Cuba that treasures his immortal remains, as well as for all those who have fallen in the noble purpose of achieving and preserving the independence of the homeland.

We are gathered in the same place where Fidel proclaimed on Jan. 1, 1959, the triumph of the only revolution that has ever existed in Cuba, initiated on Oct. 10, 1868, by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, the father of the homeland, whose name this square bears.

By paradoxes of history, the then nascent Yankee empire consummated the military occupation of Cuba on Jan. 1, 1899; therefore, its total domination over our island lasted exactly 60 years.

One of the most shameful and outrageous acts of the occupier in those days was to prevent from entering the city the troops of the Liberation Army commanded by Major Gen. Calixto García, without whose action the Spaniards without doubt would have defeated across the board those arrogant but quite inept invaders. That is why Fidel, when he was at the gates of Santiago, said in his speech on Radio Rebelde: “This time the Mambises will enter Santiago de Cuba ... The history of ’95 will not be repeated,” he concluded.

I remember that memorable night of Jan. 1, 1959. As many know, by decision of the commander in chief, I had arrived in Santiago a few hours earlier, with the mission of consolidating the surrender of the troops of the Moncada Barracks, some 5,000 men who were in this city, in addition to the main force of the navy. I was just one more among

the crowd that filled this square.

When Fidel saw me, he ordered me to go up to the stand and speak to those present. I only said a few brief words, which have not been preserved, but that is not important. But Fidel’s words were, and on that occasion he warned us: “The revolution begins now. The revolution will not be an easy task, the revolution will be a hard endeavor and full of dangers.”

Eight days later, after his triumphal entry into the capital, he insisted on this, when he said: “The joy is immense. And yet, there is still much to be done. Let us not delude ourselves into believing that everything will be easy from now on. Perhaps everything will be more difficult from now on.”

That was his early warning not to overestimate the successes and to prepare to face the most difficult possibility. And life proved he was quite right. The road we have traveled has not been easy. We have had to face the continuous and perverse aggressiveness of the enemy, which has even resorted to military invasion, terrorism and a ruthless and cruel blockade — condemned by the overwhelming majority of the world’s nations — in its failed attempt to destroy our revolution and erase its inspiring example for other peoples, that it is possible to build a just and humane society, with equal opportunities for all.



The policy of permanent hostility and blockade of the United States government is the main cause of the difficulties of our economy. This is an irrefutable fact, even though the enemy invests millions of dollars and much effort to hide it. It is endorsed by some who act against their own homeland, either out of a desire to make money or simply out of a slave mentality. Others allow themselves to be misled by their lies, and unconsciously play into them to some extent, overwhelmed by difficulties of everyday life. With the latter we cannot lose patience. We must listen, and explain to them until we convince them with the powerful weapon of truth, which is on our side.

This does not mean in any way that we can disregard our flaws and errors, which have never been of principle. The leadership of the revolution has been characterized, throughout these 65 years, by its transparency and self-critical spirit, by discussing with the people any deficiency, aware that only together will we be able to eradicate them.

In the transition on the unknown



Militant/Mike Shur

Participants in New York meeting Jan. 21 received copies of Raúl Castro’s Jan. 1 speech to deepen their understanding of Cuba’s revolution and example it sets for workers worldwide.

road of building socialism in a poor country subjected to constant aggressions, we have been forced to create our own ways of doing things, evidence that the Cuban revolutionary process has always been marked by an immense creative capacity.

Today we can say with healthy pride that neither external aggressions, nor the blows of nature, nor our own mistakes have prevented us from reaching this 65th anniversary. Here we are and here we will be! (Applause.)

This has been possible, first of all, because of the proven resistance and self-confidence of our heroic people; because of the wise leadership of Commander in Chief of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro Ruz; because of the existence of a party that has become a worthy heir to the trust placed by the people in its leader; and because of the unity of the nation.

Comrade Díaz-Canel referred to this track record a few moments ago in his overview of the epic the Cuban people have lived through during these 65 years, which reaches back to the difficult and unforgettable moments of the Moncada, the Granma and the struggle in the Sierra and the plain, until we reached the real victory on a day like today.

And the greater the difficulties and dangers, the greater the need to be more demanding, for more discipline and unity. Not a unity achieved at any price, but one based on the principles so accurately defined by Fidel in his reflection of Jan. 22, 2008, and I quote: “Unity means sharing the struggle, the risks, the sacrifices, the objectives, ideas, concepts and strategies, arrived at through debates and analysis. Unity means the common struggle against annexationists, sellouts and corrupt people who have nothing to do with a revolutionary militant.”

And he added another essential idea: “We must avoid that, in the enormous sea of tactical judgments, the strategic lines are diluted and we imagine nonexistent situations.”

Such is our unity, which did not arise out of thin air, which we have patiently built among all of us, brick by brick. In the Cuban Revolution there has been room for every sincere patriot, with the only requirement to be willing to confront injustice and oppression, to work for the good of the people and to defend their conquests.

In that furnace of action and thought our party was forged, alien to authori-

tarianism and impositions, listening and debating different criteria and involving all those willing to join in the work. Modesty, honesty, adherence to the truth, loyalty and commitment have been the key. Our capacity to resist and win is based on socialism and its work, in unity and revolutionary ideology. (Applause.)

Unity is our main strategic weapon. It has allowed this small island to succeed in every challenge. It sustains the internationalist vocation of our people and its feats in other lands around the world, following Martí’s maxim that homeland is humanity. Let us take care of unity more than the apple of our eye! I have no doubt that you will. I am convinced that the new saplings, our combative youth, will guarantee it.

The unity formed by the party, the government, the mass organizations and all our people, and as part of it the combatants of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and the Ministry of the Interior, is the shield against which will crash, once again, all the subversive plans of the enemy, from its systematic use of lies to terrorism.

Today I can state with satisfaction that the Cuban Revolution, after 65 years of existence, far from weakening, is getting stronger (Applause), and as I said a decade ago on a day like today and in this very place, with no obligations to anyone at all, only to the people. (Applause.)



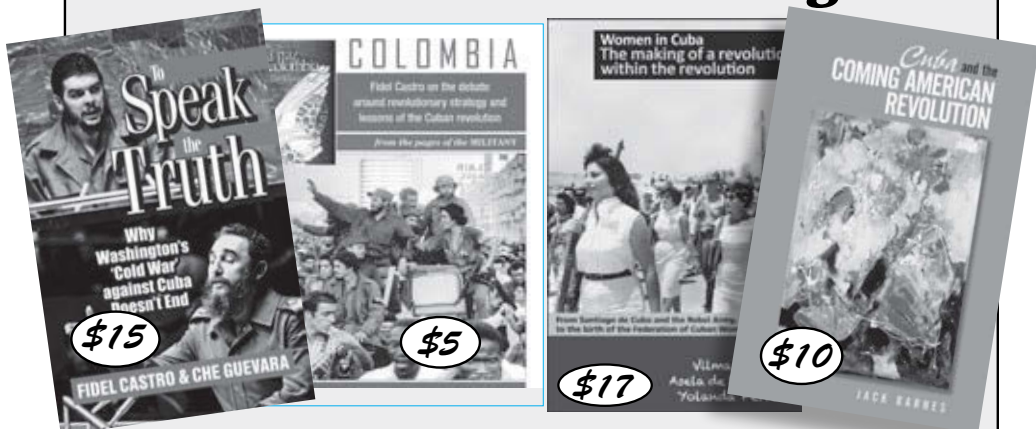
Compañeras and compañeros:

I know that I express the sentiment of the historic generation in ratifying the confidence in those who today occupy leadership responsibilities in our party and government, and in the other organizations and institutions of our society, from the highest positions to the tens of thousands of grassroots leaders who are in the front line of combat. In very difficult circumstances, the vast majority of them have been demonstrating with their actions the necessary revolutionary firmness and will to overcome the current difficulties and move forward together with our people.

Those who — due to insufficient ability, lack of preparation or simply because they are tired — are not up to the demands of the moment, should make way for another compañero or compañera willing to assume the task.

I call on all our cadres to reflect ev-

## Recommended reading



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Granma

Raúl Castro, second from left, with other historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution, José Ramón Machado and Ramiro Valdéz, and President Miguel Díaz-Canel, second from right.



AP photo/Harold Valentine

Fidel Castro at Havana rally January 1959, after overthrow of Fulgencio Batista dictatorship. Castro led Cuba's toilers in their millions to transform their country and themselves, making a socialist revolution.

ery day on what more can be done to justify the trust and exemplary support expressed by our compatriots, even in the midst of so many needs, not to be naive or triumphalist, to avoid bureaucratic responses and any manifestation of routine and insensitivity, to find realistic solutions with what we have, without dreaming that something will fall from the sky. Likewise, within the many daily tasks and challenges, to find time to better ourselves, knowledge has always been an essential weapon, and even more so in the present.

If the current challenges and difficulties are great, greater is the work of the revolution, which constitutes its best and irrefutable defense against the slanders of the enemy, a palpable work seen in any corner of Cuba in the material and spiritual order.

The revolution dignified Cuba and Cubans. The very concept of power took on a new dimension when politics ceased to be the fiefdom of an elite and all the people became protagonists of their destiny. That is why we have to defend and carry forward this revolution of the humble, by the humble and for the humble.

History has taught us amply where resignation and defeatism lead to. Let us not limit ourselves to resist. We are going to get out of these difficulties, as we have always done, by fighting! (Applause), With the same determination of Baraguá, of Moncada, of Granma, of Girón and with the firm convictions instilled in us by the commander in chief.

Today this means working harder and, above all, doing it well. It is our obligation to the glorious history of the

homeland and the best tribute to the fallen.

As the prime minister, compañero Manuel Marrero, explained in a transparent way a few days ago in the National Assembly of People's Power, in the complex and pressing economic battle, it is vital to make progress with productivity, order and efficiency, even if it implies some sacrifices to create the conditions that will allow us to get out of the current situation and develop.

Finding an answer to these difficulties is an unavoidable duty of all Cuban revolutionaries. On such a significant date, I ask our people to join

consciously and responsibly, as we are accustomed to, in this endeavor that the homeland demands today.

I reiterate a conviction that I expressed in the Cuban parliament on Aug. 1, 2010: "We, Cuban revolutionaries, do not lose any sleep at night because of difficulties. Our only path is to continue the struggle with optimism and unshakable faith in victory." (Applause.)

In this supreme endeavor, the Revolutionary Armed Forces and the Ministry

of the Interior, faithful and firm guardians of the revolution, will participate decisively. If yesterday the new homeland emerged free, beautiful, powerful and invincible from the weapons of the Rebel Army, I can state today that in the face of any threat or weakness its combatants will not waver in continuing to be, together with the party, the soul of the revolution. (Applause.)

Dear compatriots:

**Continued on page 10**

## New York meeting celebrates Cuban Revolution

**Continued from front page** by U.S. imperialism.

Speaking along with Gala López was Steve Clark, a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from New Jersey, chaired.

Yes, Clark said, the revolution *has* been "worth it — worth it for the Cuban people and for hundreds of millions of working people in the United States and the world over." It is, along with the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution led by V.I. Lenin, "one of the two great socialist revolutions of the past century."

The 1959 victory, Raúl Castro explained, was "the triumph of the only revolution that has ever existed in Cuba, initiated on Oct. 10, 1868." A revolution that began in the fight for colonial independence and abolition of slavery, Clark said, and "culminated 90 years later in opening the road to the first socialist revolution in the Americas."

From the earliest days, Clark said, the SWP has gotten out the truth about the revolution, using the *Militant* and more than 40 books published by Pathfinder Press, mostly speeches and interviews by its leaders. "We get the books you see on the shelves here into the hands of workers and youth."

Clark recounted how Jack Barnes, now SWP national secretary, spent the summer of 1960 in Cuba. At the time he was a student at Carleton College. When Barnes returned, he reported what he'd seen and learned to SWP leaders in Minneapolis, already active champions of Cuba's revolution. "These workers told Jack that the duty of those won to the example set by Cuba's working people was to build a workers party capable of making a victorious socialist revolution in the U.S.," Clark said. Barnes tells this story in *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, published by Pathfinder.

The Cuban Revolution "was not about ideologies, systems, about mechanisms or structures," Clark said. "It was about involving the working men and women who made the revolution and have built and defended it right up to today. It's about their transformation as human beings as they do so."

Several years after the 1959 victory, Fidel Castro spoke about the Freedom Caravan, the eight-day journey the victorious Rebel Army made across Cuba from Santiago to Havana, stopping to talk to workers and peasants who poured out to greet them. "As we moved through the towns and cities, I saw hundreds and thousands of men and women with the red-and-black uniforms of the July 26 Movement," Fidel said. "But many more thousands wore uniforms that weren't black and red but were the work shirts of workers and farmers."

That marked the point when Fidel "went beyond being a leader of any particular pre-1959 political organization," Clark said, "and charted a course to forge a working-class leadership of Cuba's working people able to make a socialist revolution and defend it."

### End the embargo now!

"The blockade" — enforced by the last 12 U.S. presidents, both Democratic and Republican — "is an act of economic warfare aimed at annulling the Cuban government's capacity to attend to the needs of the population" and making the country ungovernable, Ambassador Gala López said. It's "a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of all our people and the greatest obstacle to our development."

He said that the damages for just one year, from March 2022 to February 2023, were at least \$4.8 billion, some \$13 million every day. At current prices, the accumulated effects over the more

than 60 years Washington has waged its economic war against Cuba and its people exceed \$159 billion. "What would Cuba be like today if it had these resources?" he asked.

In spite of this, Gala López said, "Cuba will continue to renew itself in the construction of a sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable nation."

### Here we are, here we will be

"Neither the external aggressions, nor the blows of nature, nor our own mistakes have prevented us from reaching this 65th anniversary," said Raúl Castro in his Jan. 1 speech. "Here we are and here we will be!"

"The Socialist Workers Party joins in that revolutionary commitment," Clark said. "Here *we* are and here *we* will be — in the fight to emulate Cuban toilers in the battle for workers power and socialist revolution right here in the most powerful, most brutal, and, most important of all, the *last* empire in human history. Long live the Cuban Revolution!"

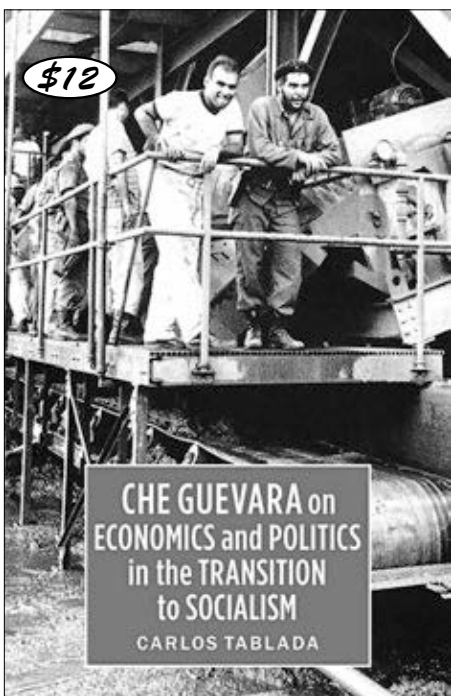
Kuniansky ended the program by introducing six members of the team heading to Cuba in February to staff the Pathfinder booth at the Havana International Book Fair.

A generous spread of food encouraged participants to come early and stay late sharing experiences and ideas. Participants came from Boston, New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia. They had met SWP members on the job; at their doors introducing the *Militant*, books, and party election campaigns; or other activities.

Many were able to talk with members of the Cuban delegation, including individuals originally from Jamaica, Guinea Conakry, Chile, Mexico and elsewhere, some of whom told of their experiences with Cuban volunteers bringing solidarity to their home countries.

## Hot off the press!

**New expanded edition**



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# Politics shifting after Oct. 7

Continued from front page

The root of Israel's war to defeat Hamas lies in facing the expansionist course of the bourgeois clerical regime in Iran. Over decades Tehran has backed militias based among Shiite Muslims in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen to advance its interests against all rivals, and to pursue its goal of eliminating Israel and the Jews.

Tehran orchestrated Hamas' Oct. 7 pogrom, the largest one-day massacre of Jews since the Nazi Holocaust, with the aim of provoking an Israeli response and preventing the government of Saudi Arabia from pursuing talks to normalize diplomatic and trade relations with Israel.

"As threats of a wider war spread — accompanied by rising Jew-hatred — the stakes grow for workers to chart a course that can prevent more deadly conflicts, including the use of nuclear weapons," Naomi Craine, the Socialist Workers Party's candidate for U.S. Congress from Illinois, told the *Militant* Jan. 22. "The only solution is for the workers here and around the world to build parties that can lead tens of millions of working people to take political power into our own hands. Socialist revolution is the *only* way to disarm *all* the capitalist warmakers."

## Iranian rulers launch airstrikes

Examples of these developments abound, posing the threat of new conflicts and wider wars. Senior Iranian commanders were among five Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps members killed in a missile strike in Damascus

Jan. 20, which Tehran blamed on Israel.

In Lebanon, an Israeli strike hit an Iran-backed Hezbollah militia position. The same day, missiles launched by Iran-backed militants in Iraq targeted U.S. forces at the al-Asad air base there, causing several injuries.

Tehran also launched a missile attack inside Pakistan Jan. 16, targeting the Baluchistan province and killing two people. Baluchis are a mostly Sunni-Muslim oppressed nationality in both Iran and Pakistan. The Pakistani rulers retaliated with a strike two days later at a Baluchi area inside Iran.

In mid-January, Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria fired dozens of rockets at U.S. bases there. Washington responded with a strike that killed a top Iraqi militia commander. Tehran is trying to get U.S. and other foreign troops expelled from Iraq by Baghdad. The Iranian rulers also launched airstrikes into Iraqi Kurdistan, leading hundreds in Erbil, the capital, to protest Tehran's intervention Jan. 16.

Iranian forces seized an oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman Jan. 11 and took it to an Iranian port, saying it was retaliation for Washington's confiscation of the same vessel and its oil last year.

U.S. and U.K. forces launched airstrikes against eight Tehran-backed Houthi targets in Yemen Jan. 22, in retaliation for Houthi assaults on ships in the Red Sea, one of the world's busiest shipping routes.

Since Oct. 7, the Houthis began targeting what they claimed were "Israeli-linked" vessels, seizing one of them. Dozens of Houthi rocket at-

# Houthi clan in Yemen was built on hatred of Jews

BY TERRY EVANS

Missile attacks launched by Houthi forces in Yemen on shipping in the Red Sea are aimed at weakening Israel. They hope to get Washington to step up pressure on Israel's rulers to call a cease-fire in Gaza, putting an end to Israel's efforts to decisively defeat Hamas.

Like Hamas, the Houthis are part of Tehran's reactionary "axis of resistance," spreading the poison of Jew-hatred. The Iranian rulers supply both groups with funding, missiles and military collaboration.

Houthi attacks on shipping lanes intensify the challenges Washington faces defending the U.S. rulers' own capitalist interests in the Middle East and highlight the accelerated crisis of the imperialist world order. Several rounds of U.S. airstrikes on Houthi weapon facilities in Yemen have not deterred the group from its attacks in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Commanders from the Iranian rulers' Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps are based in Yemen, Reuters reports, helping to direct the attacks.

Between 70% to 80% of container traffic in the Red Sea has been rerouted since December, as shipping companies turn to lengthier routes, cutting profits and disrupting supply chains. Since Oct. 7, Houthi forces have also launched drone and missile attacks on Israel, which have so far either missed their targets or been shot down.

Bloodthirsty Houthi leaders glorify Hamas' Oct. 7 slaughter of Jews in Israel. Houthi Political Bureau member He-

zam Al-Asad posted a picture of Hitler Oct. 29, along with him saying, "I could have killed all the Jews in the world, but I left some of them alive so the world would know why I killed them."

"We want to tell them that the fish are hungry," Al-Asad said Nov. 15.

## Who are the Houthis?

The Houthis are an extended clan based in northwestern Yemen who practice the Zaydi branch of Shiite Islam. Zaydis make up 35% of the country's population. The majority of Yemenis are Sunni Muslims. And not all Zaydis support the Houthis. It is Tehran's backing that accounts for their strength. The Iranian rulers are also Shiite Muslims.

Jew-hatred has been integral to the movement that Houthi leaders have built since emerging as a political force in the early 2000s. Hussein al-Houthi, a prominent Zaydi cleric and former member of parliament, rallied supporters to protest against Yemen President Ali Saleh and his ties with the U.S. and Israeli governments. Saleh and Washington were allied against al-Qaeda, which bombed the USS Cole in the Yemeni port of Aden in 2000, killing 17 sailors.

"The Jews are really ruling the world," al-Houthi claimed in a widely circulated 2001 sermon. Zaydi Muslims have "a great responsibility," he said, to "be more conscious than the Iranians, more than Hezbollah... to bear enmity toward the Jews." We "will not be delivered from the evil of the Jews except by their eradication, and by the elimination of their entity [Israel]."



Volunteer rescue workers carry survivor from building hit by Russian rocket attack in Kyiv, Ukraine, Jan. 2. Invasion of Ukraine by Russian President Vladimir Putin in February 2022 shook imperialist world "order," accelerating war preparations by capitalist powers worldwide.

tacks aimed at Israel have been mostly shot down by U.S. warships.

These conflicts in the Middle East are unfolding as the rival governments that make up the BRICS alliance — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — have won new allies to join their bloc, which was set up to challenge Washington's supremacy. Middle-class radicals who look to the capitalist powers in BRICS as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism are at the forefront of actions around the world denouncing Israel and defending Hamas' slaughter of Jews.

## Military conflicts, shifting alliances

Tensions between rival capitalist powers have been ratcheting up worldwide since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, the first major war in Eu-

rope since the imperialist slaughter in World War II. Russian President Vladimir Putin's ambitions extend beyond conquering Ukraine to much of Eastern Europe, once under Moscow's domination under Joseph Stalin.

Today Moscow is deepening ties with the government of North Korea as well as Tehran, acquiring drones and missiles from both for its assaults on Ukraine.

In addition, the U.S. rulers confront Beijing's economic clout and its accelerating military buildup in the Pacific. Chinese President Xi Jinping is stepping up Beijing's threats to seize the self-governing island of Taiwan. In his New Year's address Xi stated that Taiwan's "reunification" with China "is a historical inevitability." The administration of President Joseph Biden has repeatedly vowed to respond militarily if Beijing invades.

"Political and military alignments — 'spheres of influence' that had shaped the global imperialist order since World War II — are being shaken and new alliances between competing powers put together," says the 2022 political resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party. It's printed in *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* by party leaders Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

The resolution explains that the "threat of an expanded conflagration" is posed by Tehran's "declared aim of eliminating the State of Israel, home to nearly half the world's Jews." The most important curb to this danger is Iran's working people of all nationalities who have been protesting for years "in defiance of the regime and *all* its wings."

## Houthis seize territory, target Jews

Following the spread of broader anti-government protests inspired by the Arab Spring revolt in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, Saleh was forced to resign. New President Abed-Rabbo Mansour Hadi had little popular support and Houthi forces were able to seize territory, capturing Sanaa, the capital, in 2015. They deepened their links with Tehran.

Under Houthi rule, working people face reactionary assaults. Women are oppressed, not allowed to travel without the permission of a male relative. In 2015 Houthis publicly beat two of the few remaining Jews, boys in Sanaa who refused to disavow their religion. Since seizing the capital, their sharia courts have issued some 350 death sentences against political opponents, journalists and others.

A coalition of nine Arab govern-

Continued on page 11

# Defend Israel's right to exist, defend itself as a refuge for Jews

Continued from front page

insisted they will continue to fight to conquer the entire region, "from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea." He also said their 17-year rule over Gaza was "political and administrative cover" to amass weapons, dig tunnels and prepare for attacks on Jews in Israel.

Biden claims "two states" would protect Israel's security, but his demand would leave Hamas intact. The U.S. ruling class that he serves has only one concern: defending U.S. imperialism's own economic and political interests in the region.

After the call Netanyahu reiterated that Israel "must maintain full security control in the Gaza Strip" and will not accept any proposal that allows Gaza to be a staging ground for future anti-Jewish massacres.

The Israeli government and people have little choice but to fight to eliminate Hamas. The reactionary Islamist group — financed, trained and armed by Tehran — put together an army of some 40,000 combatants.

Hamas thugs murdered 1,200 people in cold blood in Israel Oct. 7, mostly civilians, wounded more than 5,000 and took more than 240 hostages. The Islamist death squads raped, tortured and mutilated many of their victims. It was the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust.

They also abused, murdered or took hostage dozens of Arab, Thai, Nepalese, Filipino and African workers for the "crime" of working with Jews.

More than 200 Israeli soldiers, including Bedouin Arab volunteers and Druze, have died since the Israel Defense Forces began its ground offensive in Gaza.

The Hamas-run Gaza Ministry of Health states that more than 25,000 Palestinians have been killed. While nothing Hamas says can be trusted — it still claims the hostages are well treated and denies its thugs raped and mutilated women and killed children — thousands of civilians have died. Israeli officials says more than 9,000 of those Gazans killed are armed fighters.

## Hamas maximizes civilian deaths

Unlike every other capitalist army in the world, the Israel Defense Forces makes efforts to get civilians out of combat zones. Hamas does the opposite. The terror group seeks to maximize the deaths of civilians by using them as human shields.

After gaining control over most of northern Gaza and under pressure from



Israeli soldiers in Hamas-built tunnel in Khan Younis. Hamas ruled Gaza not to aid Palestinians, but for cover to build tunnels, store weapons and prepare attacks on Israel, like Oct. 7 pogrom.

Washington, Israel has adjusted its military tactics. That's meant a 50% drop in civilian deaths over the last month, but also fewer daily deaths or capture of Hamas and Islamic Jihad thugs.

The fighting in Gaza could be stopped. All Hamas has to do is release the remaining hostages, exit its network of tunnels under Gaza, and hand over those who ordered or carried out the Oct. 7 pogrom.

For Hamas, just keeping its command structure intact would be a victory, allowing it to reorganize and launch future assaults. And any "victory" for Hamas would put wind in the sails of Jew-haters around the world, who have been using the deaths of the civilians in Gaza — the "martyrs" created by Hamas — to step up their antisemitic actions.

As Israeli soldiers advance they have found how extensive Hamas' tunnel network is. Israeli officers estimate there are up to 450 miles of tunnels, with nearly 5,700 shafts, in a territory that is only 25 miles long. The tunnels are intertwined under and inside mosques, hospitals, schools, residences and other civilian infrastructure, a central part of Hamas' strategy.

In Khan Younis Israeli soldiers found jail cells more than 20 yards underground where some 20 hostages had been held.

Israel pulled out all its settlements and troops from Gaza in 2005. Then Hamas narrowly won election in Gaza. By 2007 it had imposed a brutal dictatorship. It used the newly independent Palestinian state to execute its opponents in Fatah, enrich top Hamas leaders and attack civilians in Israel.

## Tehran, Hamas target West Bank

Meanwhile, Hamas leaders outside Gaza together with Tehran are sending arms, cash and cadre to the West Bank, hoping to turn it into another Gaza.

Three million Palestinians live in the West Bank. The growth of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, now some 468,000 Israeli citizens in more than 340 settlements, has been a source of tension and controversy inside Israel for decades. Some of the more extreme rightist settlers have tried to push out their Palestinian neighbors and grab their farmland, leading to violent clashes.

About 60% of the West Bank is under direct Israeli military control.

## Liberal media, left use misquotes to attack Israel

Articles in the liberal media and by the middle-class left claim that key Israeli government officials admit their genocidal aim is to wipe out the Palestinians in Gaza. There's just one small problem. The quotes they use are not what those officials actually said.

In November Syracuse University College of Law professor David Crane was interviewed by NPR reporter Leila Fadel, explaining that unlike Hamas, which calls for genocide against Israel, no Israeli leader says the same about Palestinians.

Fadel insisted that wasn't true, quoting Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant as saying, "Gaza won't return to what it was before. We will eliminate everything." But Fadel left out a key phrase from the quote. Gallant actually said, "There will be no Hamas. We will eliminate it all." This misquotation has been cited over and over by the *New York Times*, BBC, the *Guardian*, Bloomberg, the *Washington Post* and other liberal outlets, and by the South African government prosecutors in their charge that Israel is guilty of genocide before the International Court of Justice.

Fadel, Bloomberg and others also claim that Gallant called Gazans "human animals." This quote comes from a talk he gave to soldiers fighting against Hamas. "We are fighting against human animals," Gallant said. "This is the ISIS of Gaza."

"One can certainly take issue with Gallant's language," *The Atlantic* journalist Yair Rosenberg commented, "but not with the fact that the defense minister's words referred specifically to Hamas."

— SETH GALINSKY

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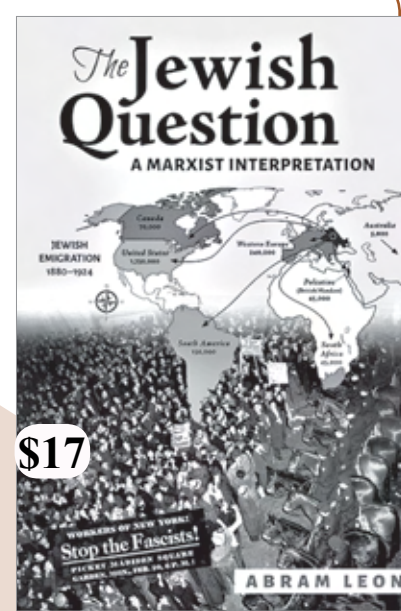
**"There is no solution to the Jewish question under capitalism, just as there is no solution to other problems before humanity..."**  
— Abram Leon

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

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

Abram Leon, 26, was killed in October 1944 in the Nazi gas chambers at Auschwitz.

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see distributors on page 10





# Building a proletarian party is needed to lead struggle for power

This excerpt is from *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon. It is one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month for January*. The book records the fight to build a party, proletarian in program and composition, that can lead working people to topple capitalist rule in the U.S. It was written as part of the political battle led by Leon Trotsky against a petty-bourgeois opposition in the Socialist Workers Party. Trotsky's companion volume is *In Defense of Marxism*. Under the pressure of the approaching second imperialist world war, the opposition and its central leader, James Burnham, recoiled from the party's proletarian course. Cannon was a founder of the communist movement in the U.S. and national secretary of the SWP from 1938 to 1953. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



At left, Socialist Workers Party leaders V.R. Dunne and James P. Cannon lead 15 members of SWP, Teamsters Local 544-CIO to Minneapolis federal courthouse, Dec. 31, 1943, to be taken to prison in frame-up for opposing Washington's entry into second imperialist world war.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

The fundamental conflict between the proletarian and the petty-bourgeois tendencies expresses itself at every turn in questions of the party organization. But involved in this secondary conflict are not little incidents, grievances, personal friction, and similar small change which are a common feature in the life of every organization. The dispute goes deeper. We are at war with Burnham and the Burnhamites over the fundamental question of the *character of the*

## Raúl Castro

Continued from page 7

As the commander in chief said in his message when the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution was created 30 years ago: "There are no generational contradictions in the revolution for one simple reason: because there is no envy or craving for power among its sons.

"None of us old fighters cling to positions nor do we think the homeland owes us for having rendered it a service. As long as we have strength left we will be in the post assigned to us, however modest it may be." Those were Fidel's words, which could have been spoken today.

On this date of such significance I can say that our greatest pride and satisfaction is to have stood by Fidel in every moment of joy, indignation or sadness; to have learned from him the decisive importance of unity; not to lose serenity and confidence in victory no matter how insurmountable the powerful obstacles of the enemies or how great the dangers may seem; to learn and draw strength from every setback until we turn it into victory.

Faithful to his teachings and his example, here we are! And from the heroic Santiago de Cuba we ratify that we remain with our foot in the stirrup and ready to charge with the machete, together with the people as one more combatant. (Applause) Ready to charge against the enemy and our own errors, certain that the Mambi cry will always resound in this land:

Long live free Cuba! (Exclamations of: "Viva!")

(Ovation.)

party. Burnham, who is completely alien to the program and traditions of Bolshevism, is no less hostile to its "organizational methods." He is much nearer in spirit to Souvarine and all the decadents, skeptics, and renegades of Bolshevism than to the spirit of Lenin and his terrible "regime."

Burnham is concerned first of all with "democratic guarantees" against degeneration of the party after the revolution. We are concerned first of all with building a party that will be capable of leading the revolution. Burnham's conception of party democracy is that of a perpetual talking shop in which discussions go on forever and nothing is ever firmly decided. ... Consider his "new" invention — a party with two different public organs defending two different and antagonistic programs! Like all the rest of Burnham's independent ideas, that is simply a plagiarism from alien sources. ...

Our conception of the party is radically different. For us the party must be a combat organization which leads a determined struggle for power. The Bolshevik party which leads the struggle for power needs not only internal democracy. It also requires an imperious centralism and an iron discipline in action. It requires a proletarian composition conforming to its proletarian program. The Bolshevik party cannot be led by dilettantes whose real inter-

ests and real lives are in another and alien world. It requires an active professional leadership, composed of individuals democratically selected and democratically controlled, who devote their entire lives to the party, and who find in the party and in its multiform activities in a proletarian environment, complete personal satisfaction.

For the proletarian revolutionist the party is the concentrated expression of his life purpose, and he is bound to it for life and death. He preaches and practices party patriotism, because he knows that his socialist ideal cannot be realized without the party. In his eyes the crime of crimes is disloyalty or irresponsibility toward the party. The proletarian revolutionist is proud of his party. He defends it before the world on all occasions. The proletarian revolutionist is a disciplined man, since the party cannot exist as a combat organization without discipline. When he finds himself in the minority, he loyally submits to the decision of the party and carries out its decisions, while he awaits new events to verify the disputes or new opportunities to discuss them again.

The petty-bourgeois attitude toward the party, which Burnham represents, is the opposite of all this. The petty-bourgeois character of the opposition is shown in their attitude toward the party, their conception of the party, even in their method of complaining

and whining about the "grievances," as unfailingly as in their light-minded attitude toward our program, our doctrine, and our tradition.

The petty-bourgeois intellectual, who wants to teach and guide the labor movement without participating in it, feels only loose ties to the party and is always full of "grievances" against it. The moment his toes are stepped on, or he is rebuffed, he forgets all about the interests of the movement and remembers only that his feelings have been hurt; the revolution may be important, but the wounded vanity of a petty-bourgeois intellectual is more important. He is all for discipline when he is laying down the law to others, but as soon as he finds himself in a minority, he begins to deliver ultimatums and threats of split to the party majority.

The leaders of the opposition are running true to type. Having recited the whole dolorous catalogue of their petty and inconsequential and mostly imaginary grievances; having been repulsed by the proletarian majority in their attempt to revise the program; having been called in sociological and political terms by their right names — having "suffered" all these indignities — the leaders of the opposition are now attempting to revenge themselves upon the party majority by threats of split. That will not help them. It will not prevent us from characterizing their revisionist improvisations, and showing that their attitude on the organization question is not disconnected from their petty-bourgeois conceptions in general, but simply a secondary expression of them.

Organization questions and organizational methods are not independent of political lines, but subordinate to them. As a rule, the organizational methods flow from the political line. Indeed, the whole significance of organization is to realize a political program. In the final analysis there are no exceptions to this rule. It is not the organization — the party or group — which creates the program; rather it is the program that creates the organization, or conquers and utilizes an existing one. Even those unprincipled groups and cliques which have no program or banner of their own, cannot fail to have a political program imposed upon them in the course of a struggle.

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# Does capitalist crisis mean war is inevitable?

As the crisis of the imperialist world “order” deepens and the capitalist rulers worldwide look to build up their militaries and search for new allies, the danger of more wars — and threat of nuclear conflagration — grows. This is sharpened by Moscow’s war against Ukraine and Hamas’ pogrom against Jews in Israel.

One call that is bringing together the rulers in Tehran and Moscow, as well as Stalinist-minded left groups worldwide, is a clamor of accusations that Israel is carrying out “war crimes” in Gaza. These false claims are aimed at escalating the pressure on the Israeli government to abandon its war to defeat Hamas.

The likelihood that actual crimes against humanity will be perpetrated is increasing today. It’s built into the sharpening conflicts among rival capitalist powers. Every one of these powers’ rulers is prepared to shed the blood of countless numbers of people to advance their own cutthroat class interests.

Israel’s war to defeat Hamas is a battle in the interests of workers across the Middle East, in the U.S. and worldwide. It’s a war against Jew-hatred and to defend Israel’s existence as a refuge for Jews.

There is a long record of actual war crimes perpetrated on a horrific scale by the U.S. rulers and their imperialist allies in World War II, as they targeted the working people of Germany and Japan in their battle with the rulers of those countries over the redivision and plunder of the world.

The firebombing of workers’ districts in Dresden and Hamburg by U.S. and British forces had the sole aim of inflicting maximum civilian deaths. Later that year Washington did the same in Tokyo. And throughout the war, the imperialist rulers and their Nazi government in Germany drove to exterminate the Jewish people, killing 6 million.

“There Is No Peace,” was the banner headline run in the Aug. 18, 1945, *Militant*, after Washington’s use of nuclear bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima brought an end to the war. That statement has been borne out many times over, from the U.S. rulers’ use of napalm and carpet bombing of Korea and Vietnam, to their “Turkey shoot” of Iraqi soldiers on the road to Basra in the 1991 Iraq War. Each one of their atrocities had the wholehearted backing of both imperialist parties in the U.S. — the Democrats and Republicans.

The imperialists’ crimes against humanity are only rivaled by the counterrevolutionary Stalinist regime in Moscow. Millions perished in a famine it imposed on Ukraine in what is known as the Holodomor — extermination by hunger — in 1932-33. Stalin murdered hundreds of thousands of revolutionaries in the Soviet Union and elsewhere as he organized betrayal after betrayal of working-class struggles in the 1930s and after.

“The possibility of the use of weapons of mass destruction in today’s world can be seen not only in Tehran’s drive to develop nuclear arms and delivery systems,” explains the Socialist Workers Party in *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us*. “Such a prospect is underscored by Putin’s nuclear sabre rattling, in face of growing setbacks to his regime’s efforts to crush Ukraine’s national independence and sovereignty.”

But a third world war is far from inevitable. Workers will have our chance to take power out of the hands of the capitalist warmakers — as working people did in Cuba. Out of today’s strikes and working-class struggles proletarian parties capable of leading millions to make socialist revolutions here and around the world can be built.

## Bashkirs protest jailing of native rights fighter

BY ROY LANDERSEN

In one of the biggest outbreaks of social unrest since Russian President Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine nearly two years ago, thousands have protested in Baymak, in the Republic of Bashkortostan. Baymak is over 850 miles east of Moscow near Russia’s border with Kazakhstan. On Jan. 17 some 3,000 protested the court’s imprisonment of Fail Alsynov for four years in a penal colony on charges of “inciting ethnic hatred” and discrediting the Russian army.

Alsynov has led calls for greater cultural and economic autonomy for the Bashkirs, a Turkic majority-Muslim people who make up about a third of the region’s 4 million residents. He has also spoken out against Moscow’s war on Ukraine and the Kremlin’s 2022 call-up of conscripts. He led successful protests in 2020 to prevent mining operations on a hill Bashkirs consider sacred.

Protesters chanted “Freedom!” and demanded the dismissal of Radiy Khabirov, Bashkortostan’s governor, who spearheaded the prosecution of Alsynov. Riot police used batons and tear gas against demonstrators, injuring 20 and making arrests. Protesters defended themselves by pelting the cops with snowballs. About 1,500 protested two days later in the capital, Ufa, where another 10 were arrested.



Protest Jan. 15 in Baymak, Russia, at jailing of Fail Alsynov, fighter for Bashkir rights against Kremlin’s war, conscription of ethnic minorities.

A disproportionate number of young men from Russia’s oppressed nationalities, like the Bashkirs, are sent to the front and suffer the greatest casualties. About 1,350 Bashkir men have been killed so far, more than in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s or in Moscow’s wars in Chechnya in the 1990s. “This is not our war,” Alsynov said. “Our land has not come under attack.”

The protests reveal deepening national and class divisions caused by Moscow’s war, especially among the 21 ethnic republics across the Russian Federation.

## Houthi clan in Yemen was built on hatred of Jews

Continued from page 8

ments, led by the Saudi monarchy, began airstrikes against Houthi positions in 2015, aiming to restore the rule of the unpopular Hadi government. But the rulers of Iran stepped up the provision of arms and funding to the Houthis, which was decisive for them maintaining control of the territory they had seized. A cease-fire was signed with Riyadh in April 2022. In the course of the war close to 400,000 Yemenis were killed and millions faced starvation and disease.

For the rulers in Tehran, getting a base of support in Yemen, on the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, provides another outpost in their drive to expand their reach and reactionary political aims. It strength-

ens their capacity to target the Saudi rulers, their main rival among Arab governments, as well as Israel.

The bourgeois clerical regime in Iran came out of a counterrevolution aimed at pushing back gains won by workers, women, oppressed nationalities and farmers during the popular 1979 Iranian Revolution that toppled the U.S.-backed shah and opened up space for working people to fight in their own interests.

Since then Iran’s capitalist rulers have established Shiite-based armed forces, like Hezbollah in Lebanon, and militias in Syria and Iraq, as well as in Yemen. They have substantially extended their power and influence by force of arms, pursuing the aim of annihilating Israel.

## Moscow threat to Ukraine

Continued from front page

of Crimea, and, after initial successes, last year’s Ukrainian counteroffensive stalled.

Hundreds of thousands of Russian troops conscripted and sent to the front lines of these battles have been sent into battle as cannon fodder, poorly trained and killed or injured in large numbers. This has resulted in growing protests by mothers and wives of soldiers and others within Russia.

Despite all this, leading Russian government officials continue to threaten to crush the Ukrainian people unless they submit to Moscow’s dictates. Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev posted a message on Telegram Jan. 17 making clear that Moscow’s goal remains the obliteration of Ukraine as a sovereign nation.

“The existence of Ukraine is fatally dangerous for Ukrainians,” he wrote. “They will understand that life [with Russia] in a large common state, which they do not want very much now, is better than death. Their deaths and the deaths of their loved ones. And the sooner Ukrainians realize this, the better.”

He added, “Whoever is at the helm of the cancerous new formation called Ukraine, it will not add legitimacy to his role or legal standing to the ‘country’ itself.”

But even Medvedev, who currently serves as Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, had to admit that this is not a very popular view among Ukrainians.

### Ukrainian-language books banned in Luhansk

In the Russian-occupied areas of the Luhansk region in eastern Ukraine, the puppet government has banned all Ukrainian-language books and educational materials. All these materials are now banned from school libraries and will be destroyed. Moscow is replacing them with over 1.3 million Russian-language books of instruction and literature being sent to Luhansk.

The so-called Luhansk People’s Republic was established in 2014 after Kremlin-sponsored thugs, assisted by Russian troops, forced out Ukrainian authorities there. This occurred shortly after the victory won by working people in the mass, popular Maidan movement that overthrew the Russian-backed regime of Victor Yanukovich, advancing the fight for the country’s independence.

As a further insult, officials in the Russian oil-drilling city of Nefteuhansk, in west Siberia, have opened up a museum that focuses on personal belongings looted from Ukrainians living in areas occupied by Moscow. It includes Ukrainian military uniforms and equipment, as well as newspapers and children’s books in the Ukrainian language.

The purpose of the “museum,” according to the thieves who set it up, is to show that Ukrainians are really Russians.

Even in Crimea, which was occupied by Russian troops and annexed by Russia in 2014, Moscow has failed to crush expressions of support for Ukraine’s independence fight. At least 590 prosecutions have been brought against Crimeans, many of them indigenous Crimean Tatars, on charges of “discrediting” Russia’s armed forces by expressing pro-Ukrainian views, the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group reports.

These charges have been used to fine or imprison people “for playing/singing Ukrainian patriotic songs; displaying the Ukrainian flag or saying, ‘Glory to Ukraine.’”

These renewed threats of annihilation have been coupled with stepped-up missile and drone attacks aimed at civilians in cities across Ukraine, with increased casualties. In December, 100 were killed and nearly 500 injured, according to a Jan. 16 U.N. report.

### ‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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