

THE MILITANT

CUBA'S STATEMENT

**'No US immigration jail in Cuba!
US out of Guantánamo!'**

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 89/NO. 6 FEBRUARY 17, 2025

SWP: Break with the bosses' parties, build a party of labor

BY JANET POST

Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party's 2025 campaigns are discussing with fellow workers on their doorsteps, on strike picket lines and elsewhere what we can do to defend ourselves from the impact of the unfolding capitalist crisis.

One important question on workers' minds is immigration. In northeastern Minneapolis, SWP campaigners Mary Martin and Tyler Phorn-Hurtgen met caregiver Christine White Feb. 2. Phorn-Hurtgen told White that a demonstration of hundreds for immigrant rights was held in the city the day before.

"I was just talking to my friend about immigration and the fear the government is spreading. It's no good," White said. "Working-class people are trying to survive and we care about this. Rich people don't seem to care."

"The pace of immigration is determined by the ups and downs of the

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New protests in Georgia call for end to Moscow domination

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

For the third month thousands across Georgia continue to demonstrate for a new presidential election and the release of people jailed by the pro-Moscow and increasingly authoritarian Georgian Dream government.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime invaded Georgia in 2008 to try to reassert Moscow's domination of a nation that had been oppressed under the rule of the former Russian czars. Moscow's forces then withdrew from most of the country, but still occupy South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The Georgian Dream party was re-elected in a disputed election in October. Then it suspended further steps toward joining the European Union Nov. 28, leading to daily protests in Tbilisi, the country's capital, and other cities, including Batumi, Akhmeta, Telavi, and Zugdidi.

A three-hour strike Jan. 15 shut down hundreds of businesses — banks, retail stores and universities —

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Defeat of Hamas is key to road forward in Mideast

Israel is refuge from Jew-hatred and pogroms



Al Jazeera/Faiz Abu Rmeleh

Destruction at Kfar Aza Kibbutz from Hamas death squads, Oct. 7, 2023. Hamas promises to do this "again and again." That's why Israeli leaders insist Hamas must be dismantled.

BY SETH GALINSKY

The increasingly unstable ceasefire in Gaza between Israel and Hamas leaves unresolved the key challenges facing Israel in securing its existence as a refuge from Jew-hatred and pogroms. Hamas, though weakened by Israeli blows over the last year, is taking advantage of the ceasefire to try to reassert its dictatorial domination over the Palestinians in Gaza. Its goal has not changed: to destroy Israel and to kill the Jews.

During the anti-Jewish pogrom Hamas carried out on Oct. 7, 2023, its death squads murdered 1,200 people, wounded thousands and seized

251 hostages.

As of Feb. 5, Hamas had released 13 of the more than 90 Israeli hostages still held in Gaza. At least 34 are dead. Hamas also released five Thai farmworkers it had kidnapped. The Nazi-like outfit targets all those who collaborate with Jews.

All of the hostages Hamas holds should be freed immediately, ceasefire or no ceasefire.

In exchange for releasing 33 hostages in the first 42 days of the ceasefire, Israel has begun releasing 737 Palestinians accused or convicted of killing Jews, in-

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Amnesty for immigrant workers in the US! No to deportations!



Militant/Kevin Dwire

Over 1,000 protesters marched in Minneapolis Feb. 1 demanding end to government arrests and deportations of immigrant workers. Similar protests took place all across the country.

BY TERRY EVANS

One thousand immigrant workers and others marched in Minneapolis Feb. 1, one of many actions in defense of the rights of immigrants across the country. "We need to be here, there is no work in our country to help the family," one worker originally from Ecuador told the *Militant*. "That is why we are here at the demonstration."

In Tallahassee, Florida, over 100 marched Feb. 3, and some small businesses shut down for the day. Jose Guil-

len, a U.S. citizen originally from El Salvador, came with his wife and two children. His sign read, "We are not criminals. We build your houses. We cut your grass. We cook your food. We make America Great!"

"Nobody likes the deportations they're doing," he told the *Tallahassee Democrat*. "I know they're trying to find criminals, but there are more good people."

These actions came in response to

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As capitalist crisis deepens, more workers take 2 or 3 jobs to get by

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The deepening economic crisis of capitalism today forced the largest number of workers in years to take on two jobs to try to make ends meet

in 2024. But some economists cynically try to argue that many of these are just "side hustles" or hobbies, and actually reflect that workers are doing great today.

"It's pro-cyclical," Dean Baker, a founding economist of the Center for Economic Policy Research, told the *Washington Post* Jan. 28. "You increase the number of multiple-job holders during good times." People

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Join fight against ban on 'Militant' in Phoenix jail!

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The fight to reverse the unconstitutional ban of the Nov. 11, 2024, issue of the *Militant* by authorities at the Lower Buckeye Jail in Phoenix is winning support from defenders of civil liberties and prisoners' political rights from around the U.S. and abroad.

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office says this issue, no. 42, was impounded because of "a photo on the cover of the newspaper that was found

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Quebec forum builds solidarity with Cuba's socialist revolution

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL — The Feb. 1 Militant Labour Forum here featured a panel, “Defend Cuba’s socialist revolution against the war of Washington and its allies: Remove Cuba from the list of countries that ‘support terrorism.’” Panelists included Michel Prairie from the Communist League; Idrisse Diallo, a medical doctor originally from Guinea; and Sean O’Donoghue, secretary of the Quebec-Cuba Solidarity Roundtable.

Katy LeRougetel, one of two Communist League candidates here in the coming federal elections in Canada, chaired the meeting. Over 20 people attended.

CL leader Prairie pointed to the mobilization of a half million people in Cuba Dec. 20 demanding the U.S. remove Cuba from its list of countries supporting terrorism and end its punishing economic embargo. It showed the determination of the Cuban people to defend their socialist revolution.

The U.S. government has maintained the embargo against Cuba since 1960, with devastating consequences for the Cuban people. Cuba is shut off from crucial food, health and industrial necessities, which have led to widespread power outages. Being on the list of “countries that support terrorism” means increased restrictions on bank loans and commercial transactions.

“Under the leadership of Fidel Castro, the workers and peasants of Cuba established their own revolutionary government in 1959, taking control of their economy and transforming their conditions of life — carrying out the first socialist revolution in the Americas and

building a revolutionary leadership not seen since the early years of the 1917 Russian Revolution,” Prairie said.

“It’s this example that Washington and its imperialist allies, including Canada, seek to obliterate. The biggest challenge the Cuban Revolution faces today is the fact there have been no lasting revolutions since,” he said. “The biggest contribution we can make is to carry out a socialist revolution in Canada. For that, the example and defense of the Cuban Revolution is crucial.

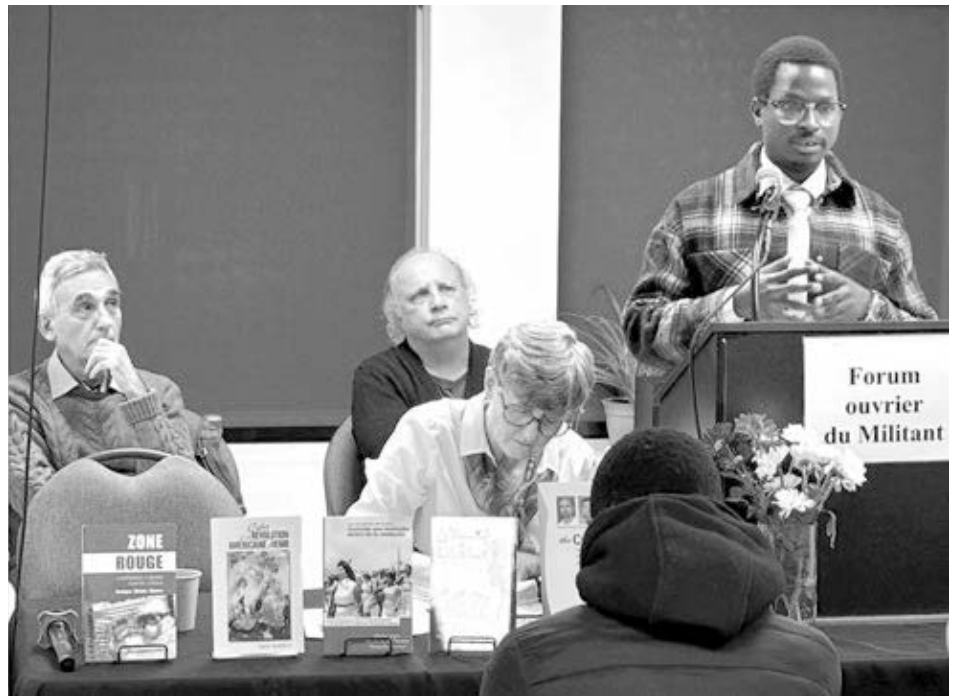
“The Communist League is working to build a party here that can lead working people to follow the example of the Cuban Revolution.”

Diallo quoted Fidel Castro’s speech at the opening of the “Victory of Playa Girón” school of medicine in Havana in October 1962. “Of course, today we can send 50 doctors to Algeria. In eight or 10 years we don’t know how many, and we will be able to help our brother peoples,” Castro said. “Because each year more students will attend medical school.”

Diallo said he “had been deeply moved by reading the French edition of *Red Zone*” by Cuban journalist Enrique Ubieta. It describes how Cuba’s volunteer doctors and nurses participated in the fight against Ebola in Africa 2014-15.

He quoted from an October 2014 statement by Castro entitled “The heroes of our time,” explaining Cuba’s “army of white coats” would have a place of honor in history. Cuba sent 256 doctors and nurses to Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea — the three countries hit hardest by the deadly epidemic.

Quebec-Cuba Solidarity Roundtable



Militant/Guy Tremblay

Militant Labour Forum defends Cuban Revolution in Montreal, Feb. 1. From left, Michel Prairie, Communist League; Sean O’Donoghue, secretary of Quebec-Cuba Solidarity Roundtable; Katy LeRougetel, CL candidate for Parliament; Idrisse Diallo, doctor originally from Guinea.

Secretary O’Donoghue described, and encouraged forum participants to join in, the group’s activities to build friendship with Cuba. These include monthly pickets to “end the U.S. blockade of Cuba” and raising funds and material aid to send to Cuba. Several people signed to get regular emails on the group’s activities.

During the discussion period one participant, born in Burkina Faso, spoke of the close relations between the revolu-

tionary government of Thomas Sankara that held power in Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987 and the Cuban Revolution. “I was interested to find out about the connections between Cuba and Burkina Faso, including their call for cancelling the debt to the imperialist countries,” Anta Djibo, originally from the Ivory Coast, told the *Militant* after the forum. She got a copy of *Red Zone* to learn more about Cuba’s record of solidarity around the world.

Minnesota labor rally backs drive to win unions at Delta Air Lines

BY KEVIN DWIRE AND JOANNE MURPHY

ST. PAUL, Minn. — “We don’t want to talk about what we don’t have, we want to talk about what we’re going to get,” ramp worker Rob LaVigne told a Jan. 25 rally of 200 people at the St. Paul Labor Center supporting the union-organizing drive at Delta Air Lines.

“Do you feel respected by Delta Air Lines?” LaVigne said. “Respect is not fearing that you are going to lose your full-time schedule every six months because the company wants to make \$4.7 billion in profit, instead of \$4.6 billion.”

The rally was sponsored by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers and the Association

of Flight Attendants. The IAM is organizing ramp and cargo workers, AFA is organizing the flight attendants. This is the third time workers are trying to establish unions at Delta.

Unionized Northwest Airlines had merged with Delta in 2008. Workers at the combined company then voted down the union by a small majority.

“I’m here today because I had a union” at Northwest, Harrod Anderson, a flight attendant with 30 years experience, told the crowd. When the company tried to discipline and fire him the union fought back.

Colleen Schwartz, with the Delta Association of Flight Attendants organiz-

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THE MILITANT

Speak out against Jew-hatred, graffiti attack!

Miriam Restaurant in Brooklyn has received an outpouring of solidarity after antisemitic graffiti was painted on its window. Supporters have come to eat, or called and written messages of solidarity. The ‘Militant’ condemns all acts of Jew-hatred wherever they arise.



Courtesy Miriam Restaurant
Brooklyn’s Miriam Restaurant owner Rafael Hasid shows antisemitic graffiti put up there.

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

SWP: Break with bosses' parties

Continued from front page

bosses' demands for a layer of workers with second-class status they can super exploit," Martin said. "A political fight by the labor movement is absolutely necessary to win an amnesty for all undocumented workers in the U.S., to unite working people and overcome the divisions bosses try to impose so all can join together in the class struggle."

White signed up for a *Militant* subscription and said she would like to attend the Militant Labor Forum series in the city.

'Build a party of labor'

Katy LeRougetel, Communist League candidate for the Canadian Parliament from the Dorval-Lachine-LaSalle riding in Montreal, and CL member Steve Penner campaigned Feb. 1 in the Bourassa riding where the CL's Philippe Tessier is running.

They met laid-off Amazon driver Anmol Rana, one of thousands of Amazon workers who are losing their jobs as all seven Amazon distribution centers in Quebec are closing. He hopes to get another truck-driving job.

"It was like a blast to all the employees," said Rana. "Amazon says you can move to Ottawa or Brampton or to the U.S., but people say, 'We have families!'" Many workers think the job cuts are the bosses' response to the successful unionizing drive at the Amazon warehouse in Laval, outside Montreal, which resulted in the first Amazon union certification in Canada.

"The government doesn't support

labor battles, it's a government of the capitalists," LeRougetel said. "More and more workers are turning to their unions to fight the effects of inflation and improve working conditions," Penner added.

Rana told the CL campaigners he'd seen picket lines in front of Montreal's Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth Hotel where 600 union members have been locked out or on strike since the end of November, fighting for a new contract.

"We have to rely on ourselves and build a party of labor to lead the fight for a government of workers," LeRougetel said.

"But the elites control everything," Rana replied. "It's hard to change things."

"It's a challenge, but it's not impossible," LeRougetel said, pointing to Cuba's socialist revolution. "Led by Fidel Castro, workers and farmers took power into their own hands and defended their revolution from Washington's attempt to overthrow it."

She pointed to photos of union struggles on the cover of the Pathfinder book *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward*. "That's what we can do together. Building solidarity with these fights is one of the goals of our election campaign."

Rana signed to put Tessier on the ballot.

Campaign kicks off in Texas

Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for mayor of Fort Worth, Texas, joined in solidarity with strikers at Hertz Car Rental at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport Jan. 28. Forty-five members of Teamsters Local 745 have been on strike there since Jan. 18, fighting



Militant/Mary Martin

"Thank you for all you are doing," caregiver Nimo Shafi told SWP campaign supporters Joanne Murphy and Tyler Phorn-Hurtgen in Minneapolis Feb. 2 as she bought a *Militant* subscription.

for a contract with higher wages.

Kennedy, a member of UNITE HERE Local 23 at LSG Sky Chefs at the airport, promised strikers she would let her co-workers know about their fight.

Supporters of her campaign, Dennis Richter and George Chalmers, got a good response at the Pilot truck stop north of Fort Worth Feb. 1. Trucker Printus Smith told Richter he'd been in the U.S. Army in Afghanistan but didn't go back for a second tour because "I didn't like what the U.S. military was doing."

Smith bought a *Militant* subscription and *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class* and three other books on revolutionary working-class politics. Richter had spoken with him about the history of Hamas, and how its origins came from forces with deep ties to Adolf Hitler's Nazi re-

gime during World War II.

A Salvadoran truck driver from McAllen, Carlos Guerro, got a copy of the *Militant*, telling Chalmers he agreed with him that "Israel has the right to defend itself and has spent many years fighting." Chalmers told the *Militant* that showing the front-page photo in the paper of an antisemitic graffiti attack on a Jewish restaurant in Brooklyn had a powerful impact on the truckers he spoke to.

Altogether, truckers bought three subscriptions, three copies of *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch*, and one copy each of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us* and *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

To find out more about the campaigns of the SWP and the Communist Leagues, contact the nearest party office, listed on page 8.

Delta Air Lines

Continued from page 2

ing committee, told KARE 11 News, "Without Delta being unionized it's just really holding everybody else back in the whole industry."

Two ramp workers came to the rally from Atlanta. "We're being forced to work 20-hour weeks," one, who didn't want to be identified for fear of retribution by the bosses, told the *Militant*. "If workers don't work a certain number of hours in a year, they're denied health benefits."

Other speakers at the rally included AFA President Sara Nelson and Minneapolis Federation of Teachers President Marcia Howard.

A number of area elected officials also spoke, including the 4th District's U.S. Congresswoman Betty McCollum, a representative of 5th District Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, and two members of the Minneapolis City Council.

Other participants included members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Teamsters, Service Employees International Union, Minnesota Nurses Association, and United Auto Workers.

No US immigration prison in Cuba! US out of Guantánamo!

After Washington announced plans to imprison thousands of immigrant workers on the U.S. Naval Base in Guantánamo, Cuba's Ministry of the Exterior responded Jan. 29. The U.S. rulers seized Guantánamo Bay in 1903 as spoils of their victory in the 1898 Spanish-American War, a war that announced the imperialist epoch. It has continued to occupy it in violation of Cuba's sovereignty. The first flight carrying detained migrants from the U.S. landed Feb. 4 as the Donald Trump administration threatens to expand a detention center there. The ministry's statement is reprinted below.

Cuba rejects the decision announced by the President of the United States to use the Guantánamo Naval Base to imprison tens of thousands of migrants he has set out to forcibly expel. It is a demonstration of the brutality with which that government is acting to supposedly correct problems created by the economic and social conditions of that

country, by their own governmental management and its foreign policy, including hostility toward countries from where the migrants hail from.

Many of the people that the United States is expelling or intends to expel are victims of the government's own plundering policies and meet the labor needs that have historically existed in agriculture, construction, industry, services and various sectors of the U.S. economy. Others are the result of facilities at the border to enter the country; of selective, politically motivated regulations that welcome them as refugees; and also of the socioeconomic damage caused by unilateral coercive measures.

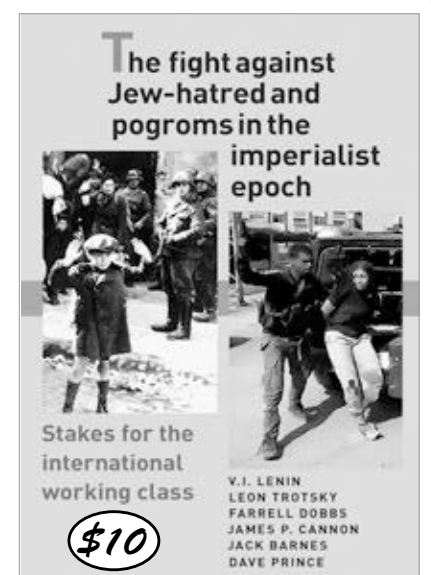
A significant number of them contribute and have contributed to the economy of that country. They are employed, have homes, have formed families and have planned to make their lives in the United States.

The territory where [the U.S. government] intends to confine them does not belong to the United States. It is a

portion of Cuban territory in the eastern province of Guantánamo, which remains militarily occupied illegally and against the will of the Cuban nation. This military installation is internationally known, among other reasons, for housing a torture and indefinite detention center, outside the jurisdiction of U.S. courts, where people have been held for up to 20 years without ever being judicially processed or convicted of any crime.

Its irresponsible use would generate a scenario of risk and uncertainties in that illegal enclave and its surroundings; it would threaten peace and would lend itself to errors, accidents and misinterpretations that could alter stability and provoke serious consequences.

Recommended reading



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—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

GEORGIA
Atlanta
Lessons From the Civil Rights Movement for Today's Labor Struggles. Speaker: Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Feb. 16, 4 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave., SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

Socialist Workers Party Campaign Join in building the working-class alternative

California
Eric Simpson, mayor of Oakland

Florida
Laura Anderson, mayor of Miami

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Ohio
John Hawkins, mayor of Cincinnati
Ned Measel, Cincinnati City Council

Texas
Alyson Kennedy, mayor of Fort Worth
Hilda Cuzco, Fort Worth City Council

Amnesty for immigrant workers!

Continued from front page
stepped-up moves in Washington to crack down on immigration. In all attempts to divide native- and foreign-born workers, working-class solidarity is key. That requires a fight by the labor movement for an amnesty for all workers in the U.S. without papers.

The current round of high-profile arrests by President Donald Trump's administration is the latest step in the bipartisan course of the Democratic and Republican parties over decades toward the 11 million-plus undocumented workers in the U.S. today.

The country's capitalist rulers try to regulate immigration as the economy expands and contracts to maximize their profits. They seek a layer of workers with second-class status living in fear of deportation, who they hope will be more easily exploitable. And they aim to sharpen divisions among working people, to prevent them from uniting to beat back the rulers' attacks against the unions and against wages and working conditions.

To advance the rulers' aims, former President Joseph Biden's administration left office with deportation orders against nearly 1.4 million people. Trump ran for office claiming he'd one-up Biden and launch the "largest deportation program in American history." In reality, neither Biden nor Trump aim to expel millions of workers without papers, but to frighten them and create conditions to intensify their exploitation.

The Trump administration is focused on apprehending and deporting immigrants who either have criminal records, are members of criminal gangs, or have overstayed their visas. He's also trying to close the border. He ordered every regional Immigration and Customs Enforcement office to arrest a minimum of 75 immigrants per day beginning Jan. 25. In nine days through the end of January, immigration cops arrested more than 7,400 people at their homes, workplaces and elsewhere.

'We come to work'

Often there is collateral damage, arrests of other immigrants in the wrong place at the wrong time. David Salinas, an undocumented warehouse worker from Ecuador, was arrested along with

two co-workers following an ICE visit to his workplace, Ocean Seafood Depot in Newark, New Jersey, Jan. 23. Four days later, Salinas' co-workers, friends and relatives won his release after raising a \$10,000 bond.

"We are not bad people. We come to work," Salinas told the *Washington Post*. Robinson Sanchez, another of the detained workers, was also released, while the third worker, who had overstayed his visa, faces deportation proceedings.

The unsettling impact of the arrests on workers is exacerbated by Trump's habit of exaggeration. His "border czar," Tom Homan, said the administration would launch "shock and awe" operations.

The impact is also worsened by liberals' hyperbolic response and rumor-mongering. Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez claimed Feb. 2 that Trump's policies would mean there would be no farmworkers left in the country.

A central factor in the administration's threat to impose hefty tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico was part of an effort to get the governments there to each put 10,000 troops at the U.S. border to reduce unauthorized entry into the U.S. and stop fentanyl and other drugs from being smuggled into the country.

The Department of Homeland Security has tightened other immigration controls.

Trump signed a separate bill Jan. 29 authorizing the deportation of workers without papers who have been arrested or charged with shoplifting, burglary or other crimes, but have not had a trial. The legislation, known as the Laken Riley Act, is a blow to equal protection under the law and reinforces the pariah status of undocumented workers.

Amnesty for workers without papers

The administration's anti-working-class moves are provoking a much-needed debate.

Craig Honts, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for lieutenant governor in New Jersey, told the *Militant* about discussions in the locker room at the factory where he works.

"One worker said, 'There's a lot of jobs in restaurants and construction

SWP: 'Fight to unify the working class'



Militant

DALLAS — Alyson Kennedy, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Fort Worth, and Hilda Cuzco, the party's candidate for Fort Worth City Council, joined a rally downtown of thousands here Feb. 2 to protest the step up in immigration raids and deportations. The SWP candidates carried signs reading "Amnesty for immigrant workers! No deportations!"

The demonstration was called by the Next Generation Action Network.

Hector Oyarvite, center, a waiter at a local restaurant, told Kennedy, "I heard about the march from a co-worker." Kennedy said, "Trump, like Biden, represents the interests of the owners of the factories, restaurants and retail stores where we work. Both back a system that super exploits the labor of workers who don't have papers, to drive down the wages and working conditions of all working people. The problems we face are caused by the capitalist class."

"I agree that capitalists are the problem," Oyarvite said.

— HILDA CUZCO

that are low paying. If immigrants are deported, these companies will be forced to pay more. That's good for us."

"Another said, 'Who are these people who just show up in the U.S. expecting an easy life?'"

"They're workers," a third worker replied, "many have been here for 10 or 20 years. They're part of us. But now I can see people in my neighborhood living in fear."

"Workers' strength is in our numbers and our unity," Honts told his co-workers. "That's why I'm for an amnesty for undocumented workers who are in the U.S., to advance working-class solidarity and to strengthen the unions."

Horrendous conditions, produced by the workings of capitalism, are driving millions in Latin America and worldwide to seek a better life in the U.S.

Bosses use immigration to heighten competition among workers for jobs. But as newly arrived immigrants join the labor force they become part of the working class and its struggles. Immigrants have not only joined, but led strike battles. Fighting side by side, native-born and foreign-born workers develop confidence in themselves and in each other.

Many workers today are too young to have any memory of the millions who took to the streets on May Day in 2006 and 2007 in cities and small towns across the U.S. Immigrant workers and their supporters rose up to protest a federal bill that would have made it a felony to be in the U.S. without a visa. Their actions set a powerful example, advanced the self-confidence and unity of the working class, and strengthened the labor movement. The bill was defeated.

During workplace raids at that time,

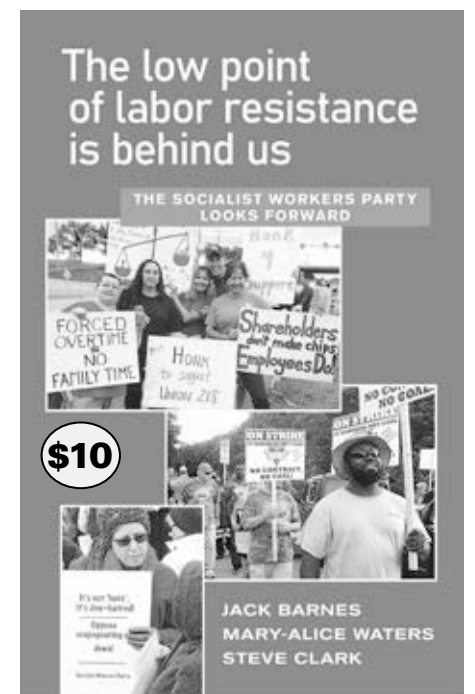
fellow workers, including those born in the U.S., helped hide immigrants or took in their children if their parents were seized. By 2008 the U.S. rulers concluded the political cost of the raids was too high and shifted to other methods to try to regulate the bosses' need for cheap labor.

Whatever the current Trump administration does in the coming days and weeks, the capitalist rulers will continue to target immigrant workers. The fight to defend them and to unify the working class will continue as well, requiring a union-led fight for an amnesty.

There have already been two far-reaching amnesties in recent U.S. history, one of over 3 million under President Ronald Reagan in 1986, and a second of some 1.5 million by George Bush in 1990. Another victory can be won.



Front page of May 15, 2006, *Militant*, part of paper's coverage of the mobilizations of workers across the country in 2006 and 2007 that pushed back government attacks on immigrants.



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Fight continues against South Africa gov't over miners deaths

BY VED DOOKHUN

The death toll from the South African government's five-month blockade of miners underground at the abandoned Stilfontein gold mine stands at 88. This includes bodies retrieved by community volunteers prior to the Jan. 13-15 rescue when 78 bodies along with 246 survivors were brought to the surface.

It was only when local residents forced the government to allow Mandla Charles and Mzwandile Mkwayi, who volunteered to retrieve the trapped workers, that the true extent of the carnage underground became known. Hoisted up and down in a cage, they made 30 trips to retrieve remaining survivors and bodies of the dead.

"Mandla Charles and I decided to volunteer and save them because all we have wanted this whole time was to rescue the people who were trapped in the mine," Mkwayi told the *Daily Maverick* Jan. 19.

Their actions were part of a fight led by the community and other organizations that came together in solidarity with these workers. They decided to confront the African National Congress-led government campaign to criminalize foreign-born miners.

Some 6,000 abandoned mines in South Africa have become battlegrounds for miners and gangs that prey on them, as the price of gold has hit a historic high of nearly \$2,900 an ounce.

And the government has carried out a vicious anti-immigrant campaign to dehumanize these miners, mostly immigrant workers.

"The government has to be held responsible," Magnificent Mndebele told the *Militant*. He is a spokesperson for the Mining Affected Communities United in Action.

"If you go to a dangerous place, such as a neglected mine, and stay there for about three months, starving yourself to death, how does that become the responsibility of the state?" Mineral and Petroleum Minister Gwede Mantashe told the press.

Only 25 of the survivors were admitted to a hospital, the rest were arrested pending deportation, despite pleas from health care workers and doctors. The



Protest by relatives and friends of miners trapped in underground gold mine near Stilfontein, South Africa, in November. Death toll from government blockade of mine now stands at 88.

Stilfontein Crisis Committee protested the miners' incarceration, demanding proper medical care be provided.

The government claims the owners of the abandoned mine are ultimately responsible. But it was the blockade of the mine by the South African Police that prevented miners from getting needed food, water and supplies that led to the agonizing deaths underground. The police took down the primitive rope and pulley system used to lower food and supplies down the 2,500 foot hole.

"This was barbaric, cruel and spiteful," Bishop Paul Verryn of the Church Unity Commission said. He has been working with the Khuma and Khanana devastated communities — some 300,000 people living around the Stilfontein mine, many of whose lives depend on working underground.

These communities were set up in the 1950s when the mining industry was booming and the migrant labor system was run by the South African apartheid government to provide a source of cheap, exploitable labor. At its high point half a million workers were employed in mining. Today, with the mines closing, these areas are in crisis.

The unauthorized mining operations are largely controlled by profit-driven gangs, with government connections

and police protection. One of the ring-leaders of the gang in charge of the Stilfontein operation was among the 246 rescued. James Neo Tshoaeli, also known as "Tiger," was arrested but never arrived at the jail. Four cops have been arrested for aiding his escape.

"Why did they let a known leader of the gang go?" asked Mndebele. "It's in the interests of people in government who benefit from this to keep it going."

Many of the surviving miners told the press how Tshoaeli used violence and intimidation to control miners underground.

Gangs profit from forced labor

The gangs in control also profit from selling food and other supplies at exorbitant rates, even charging miners a toll to enter and exit the mine. Many run up unpayable debts, forced to toil for months underground.

Shortly after Charles and Mkwayi were interviewed by the media, including the *Wall Street Journal*, about what they saw, Mkwayi was arrested Jan. 17. The police claimed by speaking to the press he violated parole conditions under a prior murder conviction.

In an interview shortly before he was taken into custody, Mkwayi told the *Daily Maverick* that what he experi-

enced will haunt him as long as he lives.

"Every time I came out of that shaft, I was so down," he said, "but we had to be strong for the miners."

"We rescued these people with our own hands. Even the dead, we picked them up and put them in body bags with the help of the miners."

Mametlwe Sebei, president of the General Industries Workers Union of South Africa, told the *Daily Maverick* that Mkwayi's arrest was a "clear attempt to intimidate and silence him, preventing him from revealing the testimony of atrocities at Shaft 10 that were shared with him by survivors."

Mkwayi was arrested again the next day, as cops claimed he had violated another condition of his parole, community service. This was particularly ironic, since he had just spent three days retrieving the living and dead from the mine.

Union says cops blew up Shaft 10

The miners were trapped in two shafts, 10 and 11. Shaft 10 was a ventilation shaft with concrete walls, no stairs or ladder except for a destroyed guard rail. Some miners attempted to make the treacherous climb, only to fall to their deaths. Survivors who did get out described the horrific sight of mangled torsos and body parts.

In a public statement the General Industries Workers Union of South Africa claims that the South African Police had detonated explosives in Shaft 10 while miners were still trapped there. "The death toll is much higher and they do not want the truth to come out."

Sibe said several organizations requested police send sniffer dogs and rescue personnel into the shaft to search for bodies and survivors. Instead, the shaft was blown up. "We are not allowed near the shaft to inspect it," he said.

The police deny there was an explosion, claiming the allegation is "misinformation and lies." They also issued a warning, saying that it is a crime under the Explosives Act 26 of 1956 to pass false information regarding any alleged explosion.

Community organizations organized a protest at a major conference of mine bosses, government officials and major investors, held in Cape Town Feb. 5.

"Over the past months, South Africa has witnessed a state-sanctioned massacre unfold in Stilfontein," the call for the action said. "We have watched as artisanal miners have been subjected to cruelty and brutality, and many were condemned to an unjust fate."

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 14, 2000

Dairy farmers in the Northeast held coordinated actions Feb. 1 to protest the low prices they are receiving for milk. Prices have fallen 39 percent since September. Such low prices have not been seen since 1978. "Milk the Cow, Not the Farmer!" was the slogan carried by about 75 farmers and supporters outside the Dean Foods milk processing plant in western Pennsylvania.

One person who came to support the farmers was Larry Pugh, a locked-out steelworker from AK Steel in Mansfield, Ohio. The 600 workers there have been locked out since the end of August. When asked why he had driven the 135 miles to the rally, Pugh responded, "I volunteer to help anybody who has a problem. Working people are going to have to lock elbows and stand together."

Farmers were interested in talking to Pugh and took the literature he passed out about the lockout.



February 14, 1975

In *Internationalism or Russification?* Ivan Dzyuba describes how a poetry reading in honor of the Ukrainian national poet, Taras Shevchenko, in March 1965 was interrupted by a Communist Party official who shouted, "Translate that into human language, we don't understand Banderist language!" (A derogatory term for Ukrainian.)

This official was sent to the Sixth World Congress of Trade Unions as a member of the Ukrainian delegation.

"I am firmly convinced," writes Dzyuba, "that the anxiety felt by an ever-widening circle of Ukrainian youth is the inevitable result of a total revision of the Leninist nationalities policy carried out by Stalin in the 1930s and continued by Khrushchev in the last decade." These policies are the same tsarist Russifying program, carried on in the name of proletarian internationalism.

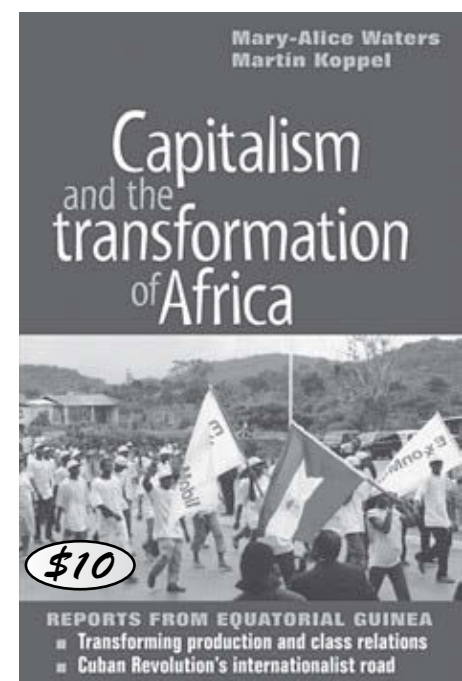


February 13, 1950

For the eighth time Truman personally has invoked the Taft-Hartley Act against American workers. The president, who before election promised repeal of this law, is now using it for the third time against the coal miners.

The miners have answered this attempt to club them back into the pits without a contract with their characteristic independence and militancy. They shut down almost all bituminous mines, adding some 270,000 strikers to the 100,000 out prior to Truman's decree. Truman has joined forces with the parasitic coal operators, the steel corporations, the Congressional labor-baiters.

The decisive question in this crucial struggle against government strike-breaking is: What will the AFL and CIO unions do? The government's deadly thrust at all labor can be ward off by the concerted action of the whole labor movement.



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Putin cracks down as anti-war sentiment grows across Russia

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Russian President Vladimir Putin is preparing a harsher crackdown targeting wider layers of organizations and individuals that oppose his regime's war against the people of Ukraine. A special target is 172 ethnic and indigenous rights groups and media outlets branded as "terrorist." They're on a list released in early January by Russia's political police agency, the Federal Security Service (FSB).

"We weren't really surprised to find our name on the list," Batlay Matenov, co-founder of Asians of Russia, a media outlet for Russian republics with indigenous Asian people, told the Moscow Times.

"Though it turned out that half of the organizations listed there don't even exist in real life," Matenov added. He laughed at the inclusion of the "Belgorod People's Republic," which is purely fictional.

"The Taliban are being removed from the list of terrorists, while we are being added to it," Marina Khankhalaeva told the paper. She founded the Tusgaar Buryat-Mongolia movement and Buryat Independence Committee, which both appear on the FSB's new list. She advocates the independence of her native republic of Buryatia in eastern Siberia using strictly nonviolent means.

Khankhalaeva said she and her supporters always knew that "opposing the Russian Empire and the Kremlin comes with consequences."

The indigenous people of Buryatia, which borders Mongolia, have a history of struggles against Moscow's oppression. Ethnic Buryats, who speak a Mongolic language, comprise about one-third of the republic's population. Like people from other poor, largely non-Russian ethnic regions in the Russian Federation, Buryats have suffered disproportionate losses from Putin's war. A Buryat soldier was 35 times more likely to die at the front in Ukraine in 2023 than a Russian from Moscow.

As part of leading the Russian Revolution in 1917, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin led the fight to remove the yoke of Great Russian domination by actively supporting the right of self-determination for all nationalities, including Buryats, who had been oppressed in the czarist prison house of nations.

With Lenin's support, Buryats in the early 1920s established an autonomous republic and voluntarily remained part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This led to the flowering of their language and culture, as happened in Ukraine.

But these historic gains were overturned in a bloody counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin. Working people were driven from political power and Moscow's domination over nations recently freed from its grasp was restored.

With the implosion of the USSR in 1991, space emerged again for struggles by working people and oppressed nations. Now, Putin is using the prolonged war in Ukraine to try to close those openings.

Fight for Buryat rights today

One prominent voice from Buryatia is Viktoria Maladaeva, who joined the resistance to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine three years ago by helping found the Free Buryatia Foundation. It provided support to Buryat conscientious objectors and others. She now heads Indigenous of Russia, which seeks to unite the country's indigenous peoples "against Russian colonialism" and promotes their



Matthew Luxmoore

Protesters in Ulan-Ude, capital of Buryatia, Russia, Sept. 21, 2022. Despite police attacks and hundreds of arrests, thousands rallied that day from the Far East to Moscow, demonstrating against military call-up by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Sign in center reads, "No war!"

basic rights, including for their languages and historic lands.

Now living in the U.S., she advocates the right to self-determination for indigenous people in a free Buryatia. She calls for open debate and a popular decision on whether to remain in the Russian Federation or seek independence.

The Putin regime is turning back to methods used by Stalin, where entire

ethnic groups were labeled "enemies of the state," with brutal consequences. This was the case with the deliberate mass starvation of Ukrainians in the 1932-33 Holodomor. The label was also used to carry out mass deportations during World War II of hundreds of thousands of Crimean Tatars, Kalmyks, Ingushs, Chechens and other peoples, smearing them as collaborators with Nazi Germany.

Georgia protests call for end to Moscow's domination

Continued from front page

across the country. Banners appeared throughout Tbilisi urging support for the action as workers and students filled the streets. Agricultural workers in the vineyards downed their tools.

The action followed a three-hour strike the previous day by 43 media outlets, in support of freedom of the press. The strikers demanded freedom for Mzia Amaglobeli, editor in chief of Batumelebi, a news network in Batumi, and its online magazine, Netgazeti.

Amaglobeli was arrested Jan. 11 at a protest. The next day she was charged with assaulting a police officer, an act punishable by up to seven years in prison. Since her arrest she has refused food. Media representatives and other supporters are demanding medical care and her immediate release.

Across Georgia, theaters are either silent or supporting the anti-government protests. "Since the protests started, we have not done any shows," Niniko Lekishvili, a stand-up comedian, told the press. "Our stage was stolen from us, and we are in this fight together."

In its first broad show of force since the brutal attacks on hundreds of demonstrators in December, Georgia's police attacked a peaceful demonstration on the outskirts of Tbilisi Feb. 2. After thousands of protesters briefly blocked a road, the police pulled motorists out of their cars and beat them.

At least 25 people were arrested, including Nika

Melia, leader of the largest opposition group in Georgia, the Coalition for Change, and former Tbilisi Mayor Giorgi Ugulava. After his release, Melia told the press that he had been physically attacked by cops in the police station. Both Melia and Ugulava have spent years in prison under Georgian Dream rule.

Raids, beatings

Police raided the homes of three protest organizers Feb. 1, beating two of them. "Family members were also roughed up," Ruso, a protester in Tbilisi, told the *Militant*. "Cops showed up three hours before the demonstration Feb. 2 and began yelling anti-gay slurs at protesters as they arrived. They trapped demonstrators in the area next to the road."

Most of the 3.7 million people in Georgia, a former Soviet republic, oppose the growing influence of the

Putin regime in the country. But the government shows no sign of conceding to the demand for new elections. President Mikheil Kavelashvili told parliament Feb. 4 that threats to the country's stability will continue until "the war in Ukraine ends and groups promoting the interests of foreign countries" — code words for anti-government protesters — "are further weakened."

Moscow is building a new naval base in Ochamchire, Abkhazia, one of the areas it occupies. Since the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the Russian government has lost or sustained damage to roughly a third of its fleet in the Black Sea and has abandoned its base on the occupied Crimean Peninsula. Ochamchire, about 435 miles from Ukraine, could provide Moscow with a base that remains largely beyond the range of Ukraine's existing long-range strikes.

Protest three years of war on Ukraine!



Washington, D.C., Feb. 22

• 2 p.m. at Lincoln Memorial

London, Feb. 22

• 12 p.m. Assemble

St. Volodymyr Statue

• 1 p.m. Rally Russian Embassy

Toronto, Feb. 23

• 3 p.m. Toronto City Hall

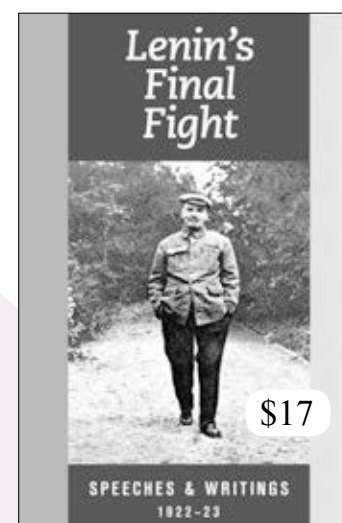
"I declare war to the death on Great Russian chauvinism."

"It must be absolutely insisted that the union Central Executive Committee should be presided over in turn by a Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, etc. Absolutely!"

— V.I. Lenin, 1922

In 1922 and 1923 Lenin waged his last political battle. At stake was whether the revolution would remain on the proletarian course that had brought workers and peasants to power.

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Defeat of Hamas key in Mideast

Continued from front page

cluding members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. It has also started releasing more than 1,000 Gazans detained since Oct. 7. The release of the remaining Israeli hostages — mostly men of military age — would be part of negotiations for phase two.

During phase one of the ceasefire, Israeli troops are supposed to leave the Netzarim corridor, which divides Gaza in two, and is an important tool in weakening Hamas' hold on the territory. A small privately run force of Egyptian and former U.S. soldiers has begun operating there, overseeing the checkpoints where thousands of Gazans are returning north.

During the second phase of the ceasefire Israeli troops are also supposed to withdraw to a buffer zone inside Gaza along the Israeli border. Hamas says that Israel must completely withdraw from the Philadelphi corridor along the Egyptian border as part of the deal, but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu disputes this. Any Israeli withdrawal while Hamas is not dismantled is a deadly threat to Israel's existence. In fact, little has been settled in the negotiations that could lead toward the accords stated goal of "sustainable calm."

Hamas' stage-managed releases

Armed and masked Hamas thugs have dominated the stage-managed releases of the hostages. The hostages are ordered to wave and smile. In at least one of the "ceremonies," a representative of the International Red Cross sat on stage and signed Hamas' "release form."

That action by the Red Cross, which never once visited the hostages in captivity to ensure their well-being, was designed to bolster Hamas' legitimacy.

During the releases of Gadi Moses, Arbel Yehoud and Agam Berger, it was clear that Hamas instructed the crowds to act threateningly toward the hostages, "protected" by Hamas fighters. That's to foster their false narrative that most Gazans share Hamas' Jew-hatred.

Hamas is using the hostage release to send a message to the people of Gaza as part of trying to rebuild its forces. They are saying, challenge us at your own risk. And to the hostages, we've released you now, but we plan to return to massacre more Jews as we did on Oct. 7.

One of the slogans on the banner Hamas used as a backdrop during the hostage releases says, "The victory of the oppressed people vs Nazi Zionism." That stands reality on its head.

Israel came into existence because the Jews had nowhere else to go after the Holocaust, where the Nazis organized the slaughter of 6 million Jews — 40% of all the Jews in the world — and the "democratic" imperialist powers in Washington and elsewhere slammed their doors shut.

Hamas comes out of the reactionary legacy of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and of Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who organized pogroms against the Jews in Palestine in the 1920s and '30s and worked directly with the Nazis during World War II to try to extend their Holocaust to the Middle East.

The 1988 founding covenant of Hamas expresses its goal — the same as the Nazi's "Final Solution" — kill the Jews.

And Hamas' claim to represent the "oppressed people" of Gaza is also a lie. Hamas — with its promotion of Jew-hatred, its use of the Palestinian people as human shields, its dictatorial rule in Gaza — is the biggest obstacle the Palestinians in Gaza and beyond face to be able to fight for their national rights.

More information is coming out on the conditions the hostages have faced. Just freed Gadi Moses, 80 years old, was kept isolated from other hostages for his entire 15 months captive. Like other hostages, he lost weight due to the harsh conditions and lack of food, in his case more than 30 pounds.

While joy over the release of each hostage is widespread in Israel, few ignore the reality that the accompanying release of hardened Jew-hating terrorists boosts Hamas' capacity to carry out more pogroms.

"We must bring everyone home," Itay Dekel-Chen, whose brother Sagui is still being held hostage, told Ynetnews, "but at the same time, this comes at a heavy price, with serious future security risks. There is the sanctity of life and the sanctity of our people and land."

U.S. gov't goal: defend imperialism

The incoming administration of Donald Trump was part of pressing Netanyahu to agree to the tenuous ceasefire. At the same time, the new administration has released weapons that the Biden administration had frozen in its bid to force Israel to end its war before Hamas is defeated.

The U.S. government's starting



Armed Hamas thugs drive through Gaza carrying Israeli hostages Ofer Calderon and Yarden Bibas before they were released to Red Cross Feb. 1 in Khan Younis. Though weakened by Israeli blows, Hamas is using ceasefire to try to rebuild, reassert its dictatorial rule over Gaza.

point — whatever party is in power — is advancing and enforcing the rapacious economic, political and military interests of U.S. imperialism in the region, not ensuring the safety of the Jewish people. Exactly how the new U.S. administration plans to do this remains to be seen.

The *Jerusalem Post* reported Jan. 30 that Omer Dostri, a spokesperson for Netanyahu, said the ceasefire accord "isn't perfect — it came at a cost."

Netanyahu, while seeking U.S. imperialism's backing, has acted on the basis that Israel must be prepared to act alone to defend itself if needed or it could cease to exist, something that would be a huge setback for working people everywhere.

Netanyahu became the first foreign head of state to visit Trump, since the

president's second term began.

"Israel has three goals," Netanyahu said at a joint press conference Feb. 4 after their meeting. "Destroy Hamas' military and governing capabilities, secure the release of all of our hostages, and ensure that Gaza never again poses a threat to Israel."

In response to questions from the press on whether or not the ceasefire will continue, Netanyahu noted that in the middle of "this temporary ceasefire" Hamas leaders continue to boast that they are going to do Oct. 7 again and bigger.

"We can't leave Hamas there because Hamas will continue the battle to destroy Israel," he said. "You can't talk about peace ... if this toxic murderous organization is left standing."

Israel: 'We will ensure Iran never makes nuclear weapons'

BY SETH GALINSKY

Israel continues to face deadly threats from the reactionary bourgeois regime in Tehran — Hamas' main backer — as it advances efforts to produce nuclear weapons. Iran Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei calls Israel a "cancerous growth" that must be "uprooted and destroyed."

Tehran launched two waves of ballistic and other missiles at Israel on

April 13 and Oct. 1, 2024. Most of them were stopped by Israel's Iron Dome and other air defenses, with some help from U.S. military forces as well as some neighboring Arab governments, causing relatively little damage. Israel retaliated, taking out a large part of Tehran's air defense system.

Israel is only 263 miles long and 72 miles across at its widest, and its three largest cities — where both

Jews and Arabs live — are within 100 miles of each other. One ballistic missile with a nuclear warhead making it through Israel's defenses could cause another Holocaust.

At his joint press conference with President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated that Israel is committed to "ensuring that Iran never develops a nuclear weapon."

Working people in Iran — retirees, oil workers, teachers, nurses, railroad workers, steelworkers, miners and more — have been demanding higher wages, job safety, and adequate pensions. A popular slogan has become "Stop warmongering. Our table is empty." It's working people of all nationalities — Persian, Azerbaijani, Arab, Kurd, Baluch and more — that are the biggest obstacle to the regime's war moves. Opposition to its attacks on Israel is widespread.

On Feb. 4 Trump signed an executive order to restore "maxim pressure" on Iran. These punishing U.S. economic sanctions will exacerbate the economic crisis workers there face. Trump said his goal is to "drive Iranian oil exports to zero" and force Tehran to negotiate an end to its nuclear weapons program. He threatened if that failed, Washington would cause "a very catastrophic situation."

Israel has the right to take action against Tehran's nuclear sites to prevent it from producing nuclear weapons and launching a new Holocaust.

But Washington's moves against Iran are aimed at defending the U.S. rulers' own imperialist interests in the region.

'Porcelain Wars' is graphic depiction of Ukraine defiance to Moscow's invasion

"Porcelain War," a film by directors Brendan Bellomo and Slava Leontyev. Showing in theaters now. In Ukrainian, with English and Russian subtitles.

BY GABRIELLE PROSSER

MINNEAPOLIS — I saw "Porcelain War," a recent documentary film made in Ukraine, early in January. As a member of the Socialist Workers Party I have been inspired for years reading about the determined resistance of Ukrainian working people against Moscow's invasion and murderous war.

We campaign among fellow working people in the U.S., showing them the *Militant* and discussing why workers should support the Ukrainian workers' fight to defend their national culture and national sovereignty. I recommend this film to anyone who wants to get a close-up look at the lives of everyday Ukrainians waging that fight.

"Porcelain War" focuses on hard-

fought resistance against Vladimir Putin's drive to wipe out the Ukrainian nationality. Alongside their courageous military defense, making and enjoying art is another form of cultural resistance and resilience. It is part of what makes Ukraine Ukrainian. Among the tens of thousands of workers on the front lines are writers, musicians, actors and artists. "When they erase these people, they erase Ukraine," Anya Stasenko says in the film.

Stasenko is one of the three main characters in the film, along with Slava Leontyev (who is also one of the film's directors) and Andrey Stefanov (the film's main cinematographer). All three are real people, and the film is about their lives.

Stasenko and Leontyev live in an apartment in Kharkiv, not far from the Russian border. They are lifelong companions in art and in love. Though

Continued on page 9

'Che, your ideas have not died. We will continue the struggle'

Pombo: A Man of Che's Guerrilla: With Che Guevara in Bolivia, 1966-68 by Harry Villegas is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. Villegas, known the world over as "Pombo," the nom de guerre given him by revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara, at whose side he fought in the Cuban Revolution, the Congo and Bolivia. The excerpt is from "The Yuro ravine." In 1966 Guevara went to Bolivia to command revolutionary forces from there and Cuba that were fighting the U.S.-backed dictatorship of René Barrientos. Villegas describes the fighting in which Che was captured and murdered Oct. 9, 1967. Copyright © 1997 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Courtesy of Richard Dindo
Ernesto Che Guevara, left, and Pombo in Bolivia, 1966-67. Upon Che's murder, Cuban revolutionaries in Bolivia took oath to continue fighting on together "until death or final victory."

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY HARRY VILLEGAS

Everything indicated that Che had retreated down into the ravine, because we heard a series of shots coming from that direction, and later, sporadic firing. That was the moment we lost contact with Che for good.

Urbano, Ñato, and I were trying to climb up to the left ridge when Benigno saw us, made signals, and shouted to us at the top of his lungs not to advance or the army would kill us, because it overlooked our position from the front slope. We climbed down and took positions.

From there, we listened to the voices

of the soldiers. One of them shouted: "There are three of them in the ravine." "Let's get them out with bazookas and flame throwers..."

We asked each other about Che. No one had seen him leave. Faced with this dilemma, we lightened up our knapsacks and started to climb up the hill to reach the regroupment point Che had designated. At 9:00 p.m. we arrived and confirmed that a group of our comrades had been there, because we found traces of food (apparently to lighten their knapsacks). Then we remembered that Che had told us of his intention of breaking the encirclement during the night and heading to the Piraypani river in order to reach Valle Grande, looking for the road to Puerto Breto.

We advanced upward, trying to reach the junction with the road going from Pucará to La Higuera. We wound up in a ravine filled with thick vegetation and water, and climbed up to a completely open ridge. Crossing over a hedge atop the summit, we were able to confirm that we were on the road to Pucará. We crossed it with great caution, without leaving footprints, and stopped to rest. Here, I asked a question that was on everyone's mind: Which would be the best road to take? I asked each comrade to give his opinion. Even though the group was very small and I had been elected leader, decisions needed to be made col-

lectively as much as possible.

Following Benigno's proposal, we marched to the right to make the crossing as far from the army as possible. The path was hellish, completely open. There were only small, thorny bushes. The earth was sandy. We were advancing three steps only to take ten steps back.

When day came, we hid ourselves better and stationed lookouts. We were in front of the little schoolhouse in La Higuera. At 7:00 a.m. on October 9, a helicopter began to hover above, protected by an airplane. At that time, we thought it might be due to the visit of some high military leaders, including Ovando and Barrientos.

We listened to news on the radio about the army's capture of a guerrilla fighter who might be Che. We thought it was not possible. At noon, they denied the story and said it was his lieutenant. The description they gave made us think it could be Pacho, because of his physical resemblance to Che. ...

During the night, using great caution, we climbed down and saw how the soldiers were singing and dancing and holding a happy celebration. At 9:00 p.m., they were called to formation, which surprised us somewhat. The dogs began to bark. We descended until we reached a creek that had some vegetation and drank a little water with sugar

(we had not eaten anything since October 6, when we ate the fritters). We rested and resumed the march at midnight, eventually stumbling into an impassable ravine. We tried to cross it in various places, and in all of them it turned out to be impossible. Then we understood why the army was so confident, because they had made a cordon along the head of the ravine, which was the only place one could get through.

Tying the ropes of the hammocks to the exposed portion of a root, Urbano lowered himself down a cliff. We were able to get down into the ravine, even though the descent was not easy. ...

To the right, some two hundred meters away, was a road on which some peasants were descending, accompanied by soldiers.

In the afternoon of October 10, we heard the news of Che's death. There was no room for doubt; they gave his physical description and the way he was dressed. They mentioned the sweater that belonged to Tuma, which he carried as a keepsake; the two watches: his own and Tuma's (he was keeping this to give to the son Tuma had never seen); the sandals Ñato had made for him; two pairs of socks (Che always wore two pairs because he had very fine skin and these protected him).

There was a deep silence, we felt indescribable and profound pain. For the first time in my life, tears flowed without needing to have another person cry beside me. I understood more than ever that Che had been a father for me.

We held a meeting in which I communicated the news to the rest of the comrades. I asked Darío and Ñato to decide what course of action they intended to follow, and I asked Inti, as political leader, to give a presentation. I proposed to carry forward the struggle until death and to continue on under the slogan put forward by Che of "Victory or death."

The following oath was taken: "Che, your ideas have not died. We who fought at your side pledge to continue the struggle until death or the final victory. Your banners, which are ours, will never be lowered. Victory or death."

A second oath was taken, according to which none of us would abandon the group, much less the struggle. We would continue on together and no one would be taken prisoner.

February
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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SWP campaign: All politics is class politics

President Donald Trump threatened to levy sizable tariffs on goods from Canada and Mexico, seeking to achieve a political goal — to force their governments to send troops to more tightly secure their borders with the U.S., to cut down on immigration and drug trafficking. His protectionist threats prepare the ground for further conflicts between the three governments.

He also increased the tariffs that Washington imposes on Chinese products, as it tries to push back the Chinese capitalists' expanding reach worldwide.

Clashes like these play a special role in the imperialist epoch, as national ruling classes are driven to compete for markets to secure their own survival at the expense of their rivals. There are no new sources of raw materials and markets in today's world. Sharpening trade conflicts preceded the slaughter of World Wars I and II, as the imperialist powers fought to redive the world to their advantage.

Washington, the weakening but still dominant imperialist power, uses both free trade and protection to advance the U.S. rulers' efforts to outsell their rivals. Karl Marx, the founder of modern communism, explained that whichever trade policy capitalist governments pursue, workers "go to the wall" either way.

The U.S. rulers always try to mask their trade policies as a defense of our common "American interests." But the U.S. is class-divided: bosses on one side and workers on the other. Our fundamental interests are counterposed, a division that underlies all political questions. The capitalists' foreign policies advance their class interests against ruling families abroad in battles over which of them gets to appropriate the big-

gest hunk of the wealth workers produce.

Workers have an opposite class standpoint. Our advance cannot be based on competition with fellow workers elsewhere, but on the common interests we share. We are part of the one truly international class.

The labor movement needs its own working-class foreign policy, one based on solidarity with struggles of fellow workers and oppressed peoples worldwide. Its number one opponent is the bosses and bankers here at home. A working-class foreign policy would call for an end to the crushing debts imperialism imposes on governments in the semicolonial world and would back struggles for national independence.

Trade conflicts do lead toward shooting wars, including worldwide cataclysms like in 1914 and 1939, but only if the capitalist rulers find a way to turn the working class into cannon fodder. This can't happen without explosive class battles taking place first in which workers will have the opportunity to take power.

The imperialist system is marching toward fascism and a third world war. Organizing our own political party, a party of labor, to lead workers' struggles today and to organize to take power from the capitalist war-makers is the road forward for working people.

On that basis workers worldwide can join hands in the struggle for a socialist world, ending capitalist exploitation, national conflicts and the bloody wars that threaten the existence of all humanity.

This revolutionary working-class perspective is at the heart of the Socialist Workers Party campaigns for office around the country in 2025.

'Porcelain Wars' depicts Ukraine defiance to invasion

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they are now living among rubble, blackouts and the sounds of nearby explosions they find time for art and pleasure.

Putin's aggression followed them to Kharkiv after they fled Crimea in 2014. Together they create and paint magical porcelain creatures and place them amid the rubble of the war for others to find. And they stand strong in face of the war taking place in their backyard.

Leontyev is also a member of the Ukrainian Special Forces, providing weapons training for workers who want to become soldiers. While he is away, Stasenko stays home, painting on their porcelain creatures. They come to life and help tell the story of the Ukrainian people and the war — loss, hope and defiance.

"Porcelain is like Ukraine," Leontyev says, "easy to break, but impossible to destroy."

On the front line, the documentary joins him and his military unit, code-named Saigon. All its members are volunteers from the area, including a dairy farmer and computer programmer.

The documentary shows what Stefanov, a painter as well as a filmmaker, has to go through to help get his wife and daughters to Lithuania, a

long and precarious journey. His story shows us what lengths people will go to keep their family safe, and how war tears families apart.

The soldiers' fear, compassion and bravery all strike us when Leontyev's unit takes on an assignment in Bakhmut. Scenes from the GoPro camera they are using bring the audience into the battlefield. One soldier laments over how the Russian military's murderous conduct of the war involves such a waste of human life. They send their soldiers out as bait, doomed, in hopes the Ukrainian forces will shoot them and reveal their own location.

I recommend this film. A central theme is that war is ugly, but justified and necessary for the Ukrainian people to fight for their freedom. "The stories we tell through art, they are also our resistance," Leontyev says.

Stasenko explains a bright spot in all this destruction and death is that she had no idea how many heroes walked among them. The war has brought out amazing qualities in the most unexpected people, she says.

The film won the U.S. Grand Jury Prize Documentary at the Sundance Film Festival in 2024 and has just been nominated for a Best Documentary Feature Oscar this year.

Join fight against ban on 'Militant' in Phoenix jail

Continued from front page

to violate MCSO policy," which "does not allow photos of weaponry."

The photo illustrated armed Hamas thugs seizing a woman and taking her hostage during the Oct. 7, 2023, pogrom the reactionary outfit carried out in Israel. The photo — which also appeared in newspapers all across the country and worldwide — accompanied a *Militant* article explaining why the fight against Jew-hatred and the potential for a new Holocaust is crucial to the working class in the U.S. and worldwide.

"The right of incarcerated workers to stay in touch with the world outside a prison is vital for both themselves, their families and the working class as a whole," Ann Fiander wrote from Manchester, England, to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Feb. 4. "Using the pretext that this widely used image has a weapon in it does not hold water. Other publications showing the image have not been banned.

"I understand confiscation of an inmate's political literature violates important First Amendment rights," she wrote. "I ask you to reverse the ban."

Militant attorney David Goldstein filed an appeal of the ban Jan. 13. He pointed out that the paper is mailed to over 300 inmate subscribers in 29 states at 156 state, federal and municipal prisons or jails. No other facility "found the photo (or anything else) in no. 42 justified rejection," he wrote. The ban "is discriminatory and arbitrary, in violation of the *Militant's* rights to Due Process and Equal Protection under the Constitution's 14th Amendment."

Join the fight to get this impoundment overturned. Spread the word. Mail letters urging the reversal of the ban to Ancillary Services Division Commander, MCSO, 3250 W. Lower Buckeye Road, Phoenix, AZ 85009. Email a copy to mso-centralmailroom@mco.maricopa.gov, and also to themilitant@mac.com.

More working 2, 3 jobs

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have "more flexible opportunities" to show their "entrepreneurial spirit," Tessa Conroy, an associate economics professor at the University of Wisconsin, told the paper.

The *Post* highlights the example of Grace Wilbanks, who holds what she calls a "cushy corporate gig" at a credit union in Atlanta, and picks up extra income "pursuing her passion making collage art." She sells it to friends, family and local businesses, charging thousands of dollars for some pieces!

But this has nothing to do with what millions of workers face every day, many living paycheck to paycheck as they struggle to cover the stifling costs of groceries, child care, rent and mounting credit card debts.

In December over 5% of all U.S. workers had more than one job. That's nearly 8.5 million people. The percentage was even higher for women, at 6.1%, and 6.4% for Blacks. In some states, including Wisconsin, North Dakota and Hawaii, the percentage of workers with more than one job was around 10% last year. And this doesn't count workers without proper papers or who work off the books.

Monique McClain, an Uber driver in Nashville, Tennessee, told the *Post* she also works shifts at a nearby warehouse and a job at a convention center in order to pay the rent on her one bedroom apartment. Over the past two years her rent has jumped from \$800 to \$1,100 a month.

"I sleep between each of the different assignments — a four-hour window here and there," McClain, 42, said. Sometimes she works 60 to 80 hours a week. "I was recently put on medication for high blood pressure and heart problems. These jobs are hard on my body, but I have no choice."

Fifty percent of workers forced to take on a second or third job today are employed in some of the lowest-paying jobs, including in health care, retail trade and hotel and food services.

More part-time workers

The fact is bosses reap bigger profits employing workers part time with less pay and benefits. In December the number of full-time workers increased by 87,000 while the number of part-time workers went up by 247,000. Part-time workers now make up 17.3% of the workforce.

"I don't want to have to work two jobs to pay the bills," Kirn Gill II, from Springfield, Missouri, said. He works for a Google contractor from his home for \$14 an hour and then works as a salesman for Walmart's wireless phones for \$13.75 an hour. "With the cost of living going up," he said, "it's difficult to even stay in place. You're being constantly dragged down."

Laura Norman, an elementary school English teacher for non-native speakers in Baltimore, had to take on a second job working part time at a theater to get by, especially after she had a baby last year.

"I know very few teachers that don't have a second gig — babysitting, nannying," or something else, Norman told the *Post*. "I absolutely find it upsetting."

Another graphic example of the squeeze on workers today is reflected in a 2023 poll by the Maryland State Education Association, which has 75,000 members. It reports 44% of the state's public school teachers have to work more than one job to try to make ends meet.

"Wages and benefits for American workers see smallest gains in three years," headlined a Jan. 31 MarketWatch article. It noted that in the fourth quarter of 2024 workers got the lowest year-over-year wage gains since the third quarter of 2021. This reflects the bosses' relentless drive to reap more profits at the expense of working people.

So much for the fairytale that workers are taking on more jobs to have fun and to reap income from their hobbies. Under capitalism, millions of working people are forced to work two or three jobs to try to scrape by.

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced-rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the 'Militant' and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at www.themilitant.com