

# THE MILITANT

PREFACE TO NEW BOOK

'Revolution and the Road to Peace in Colombia,' by Fidel Castro

— PAGES 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 89/NO. 16 APRIL 28, 2025

## Opposition to Hamas grows in Gaza and the West Bank

BY SETH GALINSKY

In one more reflection of the growing opposition to Hamas and its Jew-hating allies in Gaza, Mohammad Sakr, head of nursing at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, called on armed thugs of Islamic Jihad to stop using the medical facility as a military base. His statement comes in the wake of continuing protests by thousands in several areas of Gaza demanding "Hamas out."

Sakr wrote on Facebook that he had asked Islamic Jihad to leave the hospital to prevent it from being a military target, given the huge need for medical care during the war. "Now I am being blatantly threatened," he said, reporting that Islamic Jihad wrote him, "You've crossed the line — be careful. This is your first warning."

Hamas apologists — echoed by anti-Israel liberal bourgeois news media like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* — repeatedly claim that Israeli forces attack hospitals in

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## Washington-Beijing conflict sharpens with new tariff clash

BY TERRY EVANS

The battle over tariffs unfolding between Washington and Beijing, and worldwide, is driven by the determination of the capitalist rulers in every country to defend their own national interests against all others, as the crisis of their dog-eat-dog system deepens. At the same time, they all move to intensify their exploitation of working people at home to boost their competitive position.

Washington has now "paused" reciprocal tariffs on many countries after 75 rival governments asked for talks, which points to the likelihood of concessions by the U.S. rulers' competitors.

But the U.S. government has levied a massive 145% tariff on goods from China, and Beijing responded by placing tariffs of 125% on U.S.-made commodities in return.

Washington emerged as the world's dominant imperialist power following its blood-soaked victory in World War II. Today, it seeks to shore up its weak

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## SMART union, family fight against deportation of worker to El Salvador



Tom Hudson/ZUMA Press

Vigil outside White House April 14 calls for return of Kilmar Garcia, wrongfully deported to and now imprisoned in El Salvador. His wife, Jennifer Vasquez Sura, center with stroller, other family members are fighting to bring him home, as is SMART, Abrego's union.

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

GREENBELT, Md. — "Today is 34 days after his disappearance and I stand here filled with a spirit that refuses to back down. I will not stop fighting until I see my husband alive," Jennifer Stefania Vasquez Sura, wife of Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia, told supporters prior to an April 15 court hearing in U.S. District Court here.

"I have found overwhelming support

from our brothers and sisters in CASA, leaders and members of SMART and others who have supported us," she said. Abrego Garcia is a member of his union, SMART, the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers, as well as the immigrant rights group CASA de Maryland.

The 29-year old SMART Local 100 member has the full support of his

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## Socialist Workers Party 2025 campaign

## Defend immigrants rights! Back fight to unite the working class



Militant/Joel Britton

Eric Simpson, second from left, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Oakland, joined hundreds of trade unionists April 12 at Cesar Chavez labor parade and festival there.

## 'We need to build a party to take political power'

BY JACOB PERASSO

SEATTLE — Eric Simpson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Oakland, and SWP campaign supporters joined with hundreds of trade unionists April 12 at a labor parade and festival in San Francisco marking Cesar Chavez Day. Chavez had been a founder of the United Farm Workers union.

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## 10 days: 1,278 people sign to put SWP on NJ ballot

BY TERRY EVANS

UNION CITY, N.J. — Ten days into the fight to win ballot status for the Socialist Workers Party candidates in New Jersey — Joanne Kuniansky for governor and Craig Honts for lieutenant governor — campaigners have signed up 1,278 people to put the party on the ballot.

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## As Trump calls for ceasefire, Moscow steps up bombing civilians in Ukraine

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The regime of Russian President Vladimir Putin has stepped up its relentless aerial assault on civilian targets in Ukrainian cities, increasing deaths and destruction. Putin is punishing the

Ukrainian toilers for their intransigent defense of their country's sovereignty. And his escalation is an unambiguous answer to ceasefire negotiations pushed by the Donald Trump administration.

A "double-tap" ballistic missile strike on Sumy in northeast Ukraine April 13 — Palm Sunday — killed at least 34 people and injured over 100. The attack, 18 miles from the Russian border, is the second recent large-scale missile attack on a major Ukrainian city. Russian missiles targeted the city center of Kryvyi

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## Gov't cuts federal labor mediators from 143 to 4. Is this a problem?

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Liberal media and politicians are sounding the alarm about one of President Donald Trump's executive orders last month that eliminated the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, saying it will lead to more labor strife. Only four mediators remain at the agency today, down from 143.

"If you don't have that agency, you're going to have more disputes," Lynn Rhinehart, former general counsel of

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## Inside

Back Ukraine sovereignty! US troops, weapons out of Europe! 11

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'Jews and Kurds are united in a common struggle' 7

Dominican nightclub collapse shows bosses' disdain for safety 10

# Canadian court convicts two leaders of Freedom Convoy

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — After an unprecedented yearlong criminal trial in an Ottawa court, Judge Heather Perkins-McVey in an April 3 ruling convicted political activist Tamara Lich and trucker Chris Barber on the frame-up criminal charge of mischief. They face up to 10-year sentences. Lich and Barber were among the most prominent spokespersons for the 2022 trucker-led “Freedom Convoy,” a three-week mass protest in downtown Ottawa, Canada’s capital, demanding an end to job-threatening COVID mandates and other government policies.

The court will reconvene April 16 to set a sentencing date.

Lich and Barber were arrested Feb. 17, 2022. Three days before, then Liberal Party Prime Minister Justin Trudeau invoked the draconian never-before-used Emergencies Act, claiming the protest created a “national public order emergency” and a “threat to national security.”

Mark Carney, former governor of the Bank of Canada and now the prime minister, told the *Globe and Mail* during the Freedom Caravan that the protest was “sedition” and an “insurrection” that challenged Canada’s founding constitutional principle of “peace, order and good government.”

Trudeau used the Emergencies Act to send 3,000 heavily armed cops into downtown Ottawa to break up the protest. Last year a federal court ruled the application of the act against the truckers was illegal because there was no “national security” emergency, and its use violated the Canadian Charter of

Rights and Freedoms. Ottawa has appealed that decision.

“What are my options?” Lich told the online Rebel News April 9. “I can cower in the corner like I’m some kind of victim, which I am certainly not. Or I can hold my head up high.” She said she intends to fight to overturn her conviction.

“It seems like the threshold or the standard now for being convicted of mischief is basically if you get charged,” said Barber.

Under Canada’s federal criminal code, “mischief” is a serious charge, involving damaging public property and preventing people from access to it.

Lich and Barber each faced six charges, including intimidation, obstructing police and counseling others to do the same, as well as mischief. Perkins-McVey found them not guilty of intimidation and obstructing police. But, in addition to the guilty verdict on the mischief charge, she found Barber guilty of counseling others not to obey a court injunction banning truckers from blasting the air horns on their rigs during the peaceful encampment in downtown Ottawa.

## Guilty of ‘sarcasm’

In issuing her ruling, Perkins-McVey pointed to TikTok videos Barber made as key evidence he was guilty of mischief. “My goodness, I had to watch all these TikToks because words themselves really don’t do them justice,” she said. “You need to see the sarcastic tone or hear it.”

The idea you can be convicted of a crime for having a “sarcastic tone”



Adrian Wyld/The Canadian Press via AP

Truck barricade in Ottawa Feb. 8, 2022, during three-week Freedom Convoy. Canadian government invoked draconian Emergencies Act to use cops to end the protest, arrest leaders. Justin Trudeau, then prime minister, claimed protest was a “threat to national security.”

underscores the assault on freedom of speech in the case.

Last November, Pat King, another prominent spokesperson for the protest, was convicted on five charges, including mischief, counseling to obstruct a public or police officer, and sentenced to three months of house arrest. He had already spent nine months behind bars before being convicted of anything. Government prosecutors are appealing this sentence, demanding the maximum 10-year sentence.

## ‘Overturn the convictions’

“These convictions are a blow to the democratic freedoms of free expression and the right to assemble and to protest, rights working people need,” Philippe Tessier, Communist League candidate for Parliament in the Montreal electoral

district of Bourassa in the April 28 federal election, told the *Militant* April 10. Tessier works as a conductor for the Canadian National Railway and is a member of the Teamsters union.

“Lich, Barber and King have been convicted for what they said to participants in the protest, not any action they took,” he said.

“Ottawa’s goal is to reduce the political space for working people to use our unions to fight back against the drive of the bosses and their government to make us pay for the deepening worldwide crisis of capitalism,” Tessier’s running mate, Katy LeRougetel, the Communist League candidate for Dorval-Lachine-LaSalle district in Montreal, said.

“In addition to demanding the repeal of the Emergencies Act, the labor movement should demand these convictions be overturned,” she said.

# THE MILITANT

*Military junta made Myanmar quake disaster worse*

*Huge earthquake in Myanmar March 28 killed over 3,000 people, injured thousands. Disaster was deepened by ruling junta, which sent troops, not to aid victims but to repress the population. Thousands of volunteers, working with their bare hands, rescued survivors.*

AP Photo/Aung Shine Oo  
Volunteers search for earthquake survivors in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, March 28.

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**Telephone:** (212) 244-4899  
**Fax:** (212) 244-4947  
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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant's* views. These are expressed in editorials.

# UK refuse workers confront government strikebreaking

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

BIRMINGHAM, England — Now into their sixth week on strike, hundreds of Unite union members at three refuse depots here remain solid in the face of mounting attacks by the City Council, the cops and the Labour government, and they're winning support. The strikers have voted overwhelmingly to reject a new employer offer that government ministers were urging them to accept.

As garbage piles up on the streets, the Birmingham City Council declared the strike a "major incident," a term usually applied to rail disasters, floods and terrorist attacks. It gives council bosses the power to call in the police, fire brigade or army to try to break the strike.

Police erected barriers to prevent pickets standing at depot gates, and threatened to issue a "Section 14" notice under the Public Order Act, authorizing them to break up any "public assembly" of more than two people.

"Unite, Unite — we stand and fight!" chanted 150 strikers at a protest in response to the attacks outside the council offices April 8. Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham condemned the council's decisions, saying the union "backs these workers 100%."

"They're making picketing illegal," George Wilson, a union representative at the Lifford Lane depot, told the *Militant*, "even stopping us from talking to the drivers as the wagons go out and threatening us with arrest."

In a boost to the strikers, the Fire Brigades Union rejected calls by some local councilors for its members to remove the refuse.

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner and Health Secretary Wesley Streeting backed the attacks on the strike. "It is totally unacceptable that Unite," Street told the media, "has been blocking bin lorries from leaving the depot."

Ayoub Khan, a Member of Parliament for Birmingham Perry Barr, has called for the army to be brought in. Khan is a member of the group of "independent" MPs led by former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. The editors of the *Times* also urged the government to use the army. Now the government has deployed army personnel to help direct the anti-strike effort.

The refuse workers have been on

strike since March 11, in response to the council's decision to eliminate some jobs and downgrade others, leaving some 150 workers up to 8,000 pounds (\$10,460) out of pocket — 25% of their yearly wage. The new offer gave a two-year respite to the wage cuts facing workers whose jobs were being axed, but extended the regrading to drivers and loaders — meaning that more workers would take a hit to their pay.

The council has engaged in other "cost cutting" measures since it declared bankruptcy in 2023, targeting public libraries and the provision of special educational needs.

## 'Fighting for future generations'

"Our wages and conditions are the result of previous union fights," Paul Boddy, a striker at the Lifford Lane depot, told the *Militant*. "We're in a fight not just for ourselves, but for future generations and for other workers in Birmingham. And we're getting support."

In the face of the government attacks, union solidarity is crucial to the strike's outcome.

## SMART union, family fight worker's deportation

Continued from front page

union, both nationally and here. Other unions have also stepped forward to defend him and demand he be returned home, including the North American Building Trades Union. The Metropolitan Washington Council of the AFL-CIO urged union participation at the April 15 hearing.

The fight to bring Abrego Garcia home is a flashpoint in the fight against deportations and for defense of the rights of undocumented workers in the U.S. His case has special resonance in unions and industries where a large percentage of the workforce are immigrants, like in construction and in hotels and restaurants. It is an attack on the whole labor movement.

After working his shift as a sheet metal apprentice, Abrego Garcia picked up his 5-year-old son from his grandmother's house March 12 and began driving home to Beltsville. Cops stopped him for what he thought was going to be a routine traffic infraction.

Instead, he was arrested and three days later, without any hearing or sem-



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Some 150 strikers protested outside Birmingham City Council offices April 8. Hundreds of Unite unionists on strike for six weeks at three refuse depots there have won support as they face mounting attacks by the council, cops and Labour government in the UK.

Simon Edwards and Mike Parfitt, Unite union reps and branch officers of refuse workers in Cardiff, Wales, visited the Lifford Lane picket line to show their support April 9.

"Good to see Birmingham refuse crews still standing," Unite Branch Secretary Stephan Thorpe wrote to the strikers. Thorpe led a successful two-month strike by refuse workers

in Warrington, Lancashire.

Two rail workers from Manchester were enthusiastically welcomed by the strikers after bringing a message of solidarity from the South Manchester branch of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union.

Andrés Mendoza contributed to this article.

## Steelworkers rally in contract battle with ATI bosses

BY TONY LANE

VANDERGRIFT, Pa. — "They gave us something, but not enough," said Lonny Heilman, a crane operator at the Allegheny Technologies Inc. plant in nearby Brackenridge. He was one of over 50 United Steelworkers members who joined the rally in front of the plant here April 10 to press their demands. As well as wages and a signing bonus, Heilman said lack of "family time" is a key issue. He said he's currently working six to seven days, with a scheduled double Saturday into Sunday.

Workers joined the rally during the shift change. It drew workers from the Vandergrift, Brackenridge, and Latrobe plants, north and east of Pittsburgh. They had rejected a tentative agreement in early March.

"It's important to have a show of

solidarity," Keith Beavers, unit chair of USW Local 1138 at Vandergrift, told the *Militant*. "All we are asking for is a fair contract."

Beavers also told the Pittsburgh *Tribune-Review*, "We just want to get back a little bit of what we lost over the years." He said the union wants to get wages up to the industry standard.

"I just want to be on the same pay scale as U.S. Steel and Cleveland-Cliffs," Chad Claypool, a crane operator at the Brackenridge plant, told the paper. "They're drawing from the same labor pool and offering \$5 to \$6 an hour less."

The paper reported that between a company lockout in 2015 and 2016 and a hard-fought strike in 2021, ATI workers lost their pension and profit-sharing benefits, all while getting only modest raises. ATI made \$368 million

last year, raking in a profit of \$137 million in the fourth quarter alone.

Beavers said that there are only seven plants under the master contract today. In the 18 years since he hired on, bosses have closed eight or nine plants. Heilman said when he "hired on, there were almost 3,000 workers at the Brackenridge plant, now it's less than 300."

A simultaneous action took place at the Washington, Pennsylvania, plant, organized by USW Local 7139-05 there. Retirees, veterans with decades in the plant and some with only months took part. Unit chair Jeremy Bloom told the *Militant*, "Wages are an issue, but what workers are looking for more than anything is respect and quality of life."

Kathie Fitzgerald contributed to this article.

was refusing to follow the orders both she and the Supreme Court have issued. Justice Department lawyer Drew Ensign protested that they have no control over what the sovereign government of El Salvador does with Abrego Garcia, a Salvadoran citizen, and can only facilitate any issue with "U.S.-side barriers."

President Nayib Bukele of El Salvador, who came to the U.S. for a White House meeting with President Donald Trump the day before the hearing, told the press he had no intention of releasing Abrego Garcia. "Of course, I'm not going to do it," he said. "How can I smuggle a terrorist into the United States?"

Judge Xinis ruled that much more needs to be found out about what the government knew, and when, and what they did or didn't do. She ordered two weeks of "expedited" discovery to determine if the U.S. government is acting in good faith.

Many reporters noted that court rulings holding the executive branch of the U.S. government in contempt are extremely rare. "During the [Jimmy] Carter administration, then-Attorney General Griffin Bell was held in contempt for refusing to release files identifying Federal Bureau of Investigation informants who had infiltrated the Socialist Workers Party," the *Wall Street Journal* noted.

This ruling came as part of the SWP's historic victory against Washington's unconstitutional attacks on the party, Black rights fighters, unionists and others.

"The more I hear and learn about this, the only just thing would be for Abrego Garcia to catch the first ride out of El Salvador," Glen Forcey, a hotel worker and UNITE HERE Local 25 member, told the *Militant*. "They need to treat him right. The U.S. government made the mistake, not him."

The outcome of this fight can be affected by the actions of workers, immigrants and native-born alike. It can strengthen the union movement.

# Kurds' fight for independence marks 2025 book fair in Erbil

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region, Iraq — The 17th Erbil International Book Fair opened here April 9 with thousands participating, a registration of the gains of the oppressed Kurdish people in their centurylong struggle for national rights and a homeland. To highlight growing international recognition of the Kurdish language and book publishing here, of both Kurdish and translated literature, the slogan of this year's fair is "The World Speaks Kurdish."

The Kurdish struggle has made advances amid world capitalism's accelerating disorder and sharpening conflicts in this region. These include the blood-drenched 1991 and 2003 U.S.-led imperialist invasions of Iraq; the rise of Islamic State with its reign of terror; the spread of militias advancing the expansionist moves of the regime in Tehran; as well as the decade-long civil war in Syria and overthrow of the Bashar al-Assad dictatorship there late last year.

Participants at the book fair are looking for titles on Kurdish and world history; on science, technology, art and architecture; classics of world literature; language-learning resources; and children's books. Reports in the press here note the special interest in books in English.

Pathfinder books are on prominent display here, with a stand set up by the publisher's London distributors for the fifth time since 2017. Pathfinder is organizing a meeting here to publicly launch the new edition of *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women* by Mary-Alice Waters, Joseph Hansen, and Evelyn Reed. The book presentation is being held jointly with the Idea Foundation of Sulaymaniyah, which published a Kurdish translation of the book this year. By midway through the

fair the English edition has sold 38 copies. Other top sellers include *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by Jack Barnes (65 copies); *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, George Novack and Waters (43); and *Washington's Assault on Iraq: Opening Guns of World War III* (22).

"Our language was suppressed for decades, now we can use it freely. We really value it," Mohammed Haji told the *Militant* when he visited the Pathfinder stand.

"I like Che Guevara, he represents the best of humanity," Haji said. "But I can't see the transformation to socialism he talked about happening here. We have only just started overcoming backwardness and developing our economy."

Another person at the stand told Haji about the 1983-87 revolution in Burkina Faso and how Thomas Sankara led millions of working people there to mobilize to tackle the backwardness of the country, to begin acting as makers of



Militant/Ögmundur Jónsson

Thousands participate in 17th Erbil International Book Fair in April registering gains made by oppressed Kurdish people, international recognition of Kurdish language and book publishing.

history. After hearing about that, Haji bought *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions*, a selection of Sankara's speeches, as well as *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*

In addition to the many book stands here, there are panel discussions on a wide range of topics, including poetry recitals and musical performances.

One is by Mirzo Band, a group of Yazidi musicians. The Yazidi people had been targeted for genocide by Islamic State, which also targeted Christians and other minorities during its rule over parts of northern Iraq and Syria a decade ago. Events here reflect the determination of these minorities not just to survive but to flourish.

## SWP: 'We need to build a party to take political power'

Continued from front page

Alongside contingents of carpenters, letter carriers, longshore workers, electrical workers and others was a large contingent from the Amalgamated Transit Union, including transit workers recently on strike in San Jose, California.

Many participants were interested in the *Militant* article "Unions take up the fight to defend the rights of immigrant workers," which describes the efforts to win the return of sheet metal union apprentice Kilmar Abrego Garcia to this country after his "mistaken" deportation to the infamous CECOT prison in El Salvador.

"The growing labor support defending the rights of immigrants is crucial to building the unity workers need to take on the bosses," Simpson told union roofers he marched with on the parade.

"Discussions at the SWP table were non-stop," party campaigner Betsey Stone told the *Militant*. "We distributed flyers explaining that the attacks on workers and our unions, as well as today's wars, have their root in the world economic crisis of capitalism. And that workers need to replace the rule of the capitalists with a government of our own."

Participants purchased seven subscriptions to the *Militant* and nine Pathfinder Press books on revolutionary working-class politics, including two copies of *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward*; *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the*

*Road to Workers Power*; and *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*.

A question and answer with Simpson was published on the front page of the April 9-15 *Oakland Post*, an African American newsweekly.

"Boom-and-bust cycles, downturns when millions lose their jobs and homes are permanent features of capitalism," Simpson told its readers. "So is war — using the wealth produced by workers and farmers to build up a war machine that threatens humanity."

The origins of the SWP, he said, start "in 1919 with the example of the Russian Revolution. We stood against Stalin's counterrevolution and welcomed the Cuban Revolution, led by Fidel Castro. This is a party of workers with a record of integrity and leadership." The special election was April 15.

### Boost to Militant Fighting Fund

Campaigning for the SWP candidates and program is strengthened by the party's eight-week spring campaign, along with the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the U.K., to win 1,300 new readers to the *Militant*, get out the same number of books by SWP and other revolutionary leaders and to raise \$165,000 for the Militant Fighting Fund.

"I'm glad to help," wrote Mike Sanchez, a retiree and former member of Carpenters Local 14 from San Antonio, with his contribution. Sanchez had initially pledged \$500, but mailed in \$800. "It's the least I can do. I hope we reach our goal."

The *Militant* is written, distributed and funded solely by working people.

In Seattle, SWP campaigners Barry Fatland and Rebecca Williamson met Ryan Oak, a third-generation Boeing worker and recent subscriber who had picked up the paper when he was on strike last fall.

"When I heard we were going on strike, I was like, 'Hell, yeah!' I felt I was doing this for my father, and

grandfather too. The company took the pensions, they threatened to take production away for some airplanes if we didn't vote for what they were offering, then they took them away anyway."

Williamson pointed out how workers change when we go through strikes and other struggles.

"Yes! Everything changed!" Oak said. "I didn't follow the news until we were on strike." When he did, "I couldn't believe it. It was 'fake news,' all lies" about the union's fight. Oak said he appreciated the *Militant's* coverage and its calls for solidarity.

"Everything we win, the bosses immediately try to figure how they can take it back," Williamson said. "Ultimately, millions of working people will have to mount a struggle for political power to change society, to end the wars and other social crises that the capitalists have no solutions for."

A few days later, the SWP campaigners called back and Oak renewed his subscription for a year and got the four-volume *Teamsters* series by Farrell Dobbs. The books describe the strikes and organizing drives that transformed the Teamsters in the 1930s and paved the way for the rise of the CIO.

To join in campaigning for the SWP candidates, contact the party branch nearest you listed on page 10.

To contribute to the Militant Fighting Fund, send a check to the *Militant* at 307 W. 36th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018 or donate online at [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)

### Campaign to expand reach of 'Militant,' books, fund March 22-May 20 (week three)

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UNITED STATES						
Atlanta	55	23	55	15	\$10,000	\$3,275
Chicago	65	24	65	23	\$13,500	\$4,799
Cincinnati	50	23	50	24	\$5,000	\$1,158
Fort Worth	60	30	60	25	\$5,000	\$2,065
Los Angeles	100	42	100	48	\$15,500	\$4,100
Miami	30	7	30	10	\$5,000	\$1,504
Minneapolis	65	32	65	22	\$5,500	\$2,255
N. New Jersey	70	32	70	31	\$7,500	\$2,469
New York	90	38	90	38	\$20,500	\$6,574
Oakland*	90	51	90	74	\$15,000	\$9,347
Philadelphia	50	25	50	20	\$5,500	\$950
Pittsburgh	50	19	50	20	\$6,000	\$200
Seattle	60	17	60	22	\$15,000	\$1,900
Washington	45	21	50	18	\$4,500	\$150
Other		0		0		\$200
Total U.S.	880	384	885	390	\$133,500	\$40,946
Prisoners		53				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	45	21	45	36	\$3,000	\$1,800
Manchester*	40	21	60	43	\$1,200	\$25
Total U.K.	85	42	105	79	\$4,200	\$1,825
Canada	90	34	100	38	\$11,350	\$5,990
Australia	30	9	30	10	\$4,500	\$2,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,085</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>\$153,550</b>	<b>\$51,061</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>\$165,000</b>	<b>\$61,875</b>
* Raised goal						

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# In 10 days: 1,278 people sign

Continued from front page

“That’s a sign of the interest in the party,” Kuniasky told the *Militant* April 15, “and a serious response to Gov. Philip Murphy’s attempt to restrict ballot access and deny working people the right to vote for the party of their choice.” Months earlier the governor signed a bill backed by all the Democrats in the legislature more than doubling the signature requirement to 2,000.

“Over the coming weeks we’ll push on to collect 3,200 signatures, well over the new requirement,” Kuniasky said. SWP campaigners have sold 46 subscriptions to the *Militant* and 44 books by SWP and other revolutionary working-class leaders during the ballot effort.

“One thing that’s notable is the high number of people picking up the *Militant* — 170 people have gotten single copies already,” she said. Several have taken handfuls of the campaign flyer or a petition to help spread the word.

“It’s no surprise that the party is winning such support and finding interest in its working-class program,” she added. “Millions sense the world is becoming more dangerous and that neither the Democrats nor Republicans have any solution to the problems workers face.

“All parties appeal to workers for support,” she said, “but only the SWP explains all political questions from a working-class point of view, whether that’s immigration, high prices, rising crime or U.S. military intervention around the world. Our appeal is for workers to get active with the SWP campaign, to help build the party the working class needs.”

Kuniasky met Dante Warren, a tugboat operator from south Texas who was visiting New Jersey while she was campaigning in Garfield April 12.

“Trade conflicts, like the one taking place today, can lead to shooting wars,” Kuniasky said. “The SWP is building a party to help lead the working class to take power.”

Warren pointed to the influence that the wealthy owners of big business, like Microsoft’s Bill Gates, have on government policies.

That same day, President Donald Trump’s administration announced it was pausing tariffs on smartphones and other electronic equipment manufactured in China. This shows that “Trump is just a puppet who takes his orders from the rich,” Warren said.

Both the Democrats and Republicans serve the ruling class, Kuniasky said, pointing out that Washington’s tariffs aren’t in workers’ interests and that we need to rely on ourselves to fight for the things that our class needs.

The SWP advances a fighting program for the unions to protect every worker’s right to a job and to fight the scourge of inflation. The campaign calls for a union-led fight for 30-hours work for 40-hours pay to spread the available work around, and for cost-of-living adjustments in all contracts and government bene-

fits so that when prices rise, workers’ wages go up to match them.

The SWP also calls for a government-funded public works program to provide jobs at union-scale wages building things like child care centers, hospitals and schools working people need.

SWP candidates have championed these demands since the party ran its first presidential campaign in 1948.

Warren got a subscription to the *Militant* and a book by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes.

## A road to unify working people

In East Orange, SWP campaigners Susan Anmuth and Vincent Auger spoke with Rendell Stott, a FedEx driver, on his doorstep.

“The two parties say they’ve got solutions but nothing changes,” Stott told them. Stott is part Dominican and is following the targeting of Haitian immigrants by the government there for deportation.

“I know most of them are just workers, but something needs to be done to figure out who are the gangsters,” he said.

“The government in the Dominican Republic looks after the interests of the ruling families, not working people,” Auger replied. “The bosses try to pit Haitian and Dominican

## UNITE HERE fights for new contract at Sky Chefs



UNITE HERE Local 11

LOS ANGELES — UNITE HERE Local 11 organized a daylong action April 15 to demand a contract with higher wages and affordable health benefits for LSG Sky Chefs workers in front of the company’s facility at Los Angeles International Airport. Workers joined before and after work and during their breaks. They prepare the food and deliver it to the airlines.

“Workers have gone about five years without a contract and only get paid the minimum the law allows for airport workers,” Ana Sheran, an organizer for UNITE HERE Local 11 at Sky Chefs, told the *Militant*.

“Today we are having actions around the country to show the company we are serious, to talk to workers, inform them of negotiations and that we need to get ready to fight,” she said.

— DEBORAH LIATOS

workers against each other.”

“But there is still a problem,” Stott responded. “Some immigrants are involved in gangs and drug dealing.”



Militant/Edwin Fruit

After discussion with Craig Honts, left, SWP candidate for N.J. lieutenant governor, Barry Barrett signed SWP petition, got *Militant* sub, *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* April 10.

“Violence, gangs and drugs are products of the dog-eat-dog system that workers are exploited under. You’re right, this is a serious problem,” Auger said. “Stopping this requires workers uniting around our common class interests to fight for political power, not rallying behind attempts by capitalist governments to target fellow workers.”

Stott said he still wasn’t sure he agreed with the SWP on crime, but liked what he heard enough to make a contribution to the campaign and got a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. Stott encouraged the SWP campaigners to contact him again because he was interested in helping spread the word about what the party is doing.

Edwin Fruit in New Jersey contributed to this article.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

### THE MILITANT

April 24, 2000

DENNILTON, South Africa — “Our mission here is not just to help people — it is political. Cuba is making a contribution. We are representatives of the continuity of Cubans who fought and who are still fighting today,” said Antonio Valdez, 37, one of 379 internationalist doctors who are working in South Africa.

“The poorest of the poor want us here,” said Antonio Otel, 34, an orthopedic surgeon. “We are working in rural areas basically where no one else wants to work.” The first Cuban doctors began arriving at the request of the ANC government in 1996.

Nearly all patients are black. Many are farm workers employed on capitalist farms, still more are unemployed. “South Africa is a country of two worlds. In the world of whites, hospitals have everything; in the world of blacks, rural hospitals like this one are very different,” said Otel.

### THE MILITANT

April 25, 1975

Postal workers, who are opening contract talks April 21, are victims of a double-bludgeon operation. On one hand they must deal with the noose of government-imposed arbitration, curbing their right to strike. On the other hand they are up against the profit-seeking “private management” that Congress in 1971 put in charge of the mails.

The Postal Service plans further cuts by refusing modest wage increases demanded by the unions in the negotiations this year. Postal officials do not fear a strike. They are counting on Congress to “keep the mails moving.”

The postal unions have said, “No contract, no work.” If they strike it will be an opportunity to demand a public review of the whole crooked scheme and to replace it with a nonprofit postal service operated under workers’ control. That is the only way low-cost postal service can be restored.

### THE MILITANT

April 24, 1950

On this May Day, the Socialist Workers Party addresses the American workers in the tradition and spirit of those labor heroes and martyrs of 1886 who led the first May Day struggle.

The American workers have it in their power to end unemployment, witch-hunts and imperialist war. The key not only to their own salvation, but to the emancipation of all mankind is class unity in economic and political struggle against capitalist rule at home and class solidarity with the workers of Europe and the colonial peoples fighting for socialism and independence abroad.

We call on the working masses of America to break all links with capitalist politics and politicians.

Support the Socialist Workers Party candidates. Join with the SWP to forge working-class solidarity in battle against capitalism for plenty, security, and peace.

## New International

A magazine of Marxist politics and theory, 1934 to present

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# Washington-Beijing conflict

Continued from front page  
ening place at the head of the capitalist world “order” and push back the economic and military rise of Beijing.

The Chinese rulers have extended their economic reach across Asia, Africa and Latin America and are deploying greater military clout, especially in the Pacific, as well as threatening to seize control over Taiwan. In response, the U.S. rulers are reinforcing their military alliances with the rulers of Japan, Australia and others in the region.

Long before the current trade clashes, political and military tensions were rising between the U.S. rulers and Beijing. In 2019 Washington banned Chinese-owned Huawei, the world’s largest cellphone and telecommunications company, claiming this company threatened U.S. “national security.” For its part, Beijing has banned U.S. arms manufacturers from the Chinese market.

What’s at stake for Washington in these clashes is both its military supremacy as well as its dominant place in investment and finance. Both are decisive in meeting the challenges the U.S. rulers face in today’s increasingly unstable world, as rival powers rearm and prepare for more wars. Military competition has deepened worldwide since Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine and the Oct. 7, 2023, deadly pogrom against Jews in Israel by Hamas.

When Trump launched his “Liberation Day” levy of tariffs against some 90 countries April 2, it triggered a sell-off on the stock market and a sharp fall in the price of U.S. Treasury bonds, long considered a “safe” asset by wealthy capitalist investors and foreign governments everywhere.

“People were getting a little queasy,” Trump said. These “people” — including the ruling capitalist class in the U.S. — consider as untouchable the interest payments they get from providing the government with credit. As the value of their bonds slumped, they found ways to let Trump know to back off. And he did so.

Trump announced April 11 additional exemptions from tariffs for companies that make smartphones, laptops, semiconductor chips and other electronic goods, saying he was giving bosses at these companies time to relocate their production from China to the U.S.

Each step by Washington and Beijing to target the other scuttles the illusion that we live in a rules-based world order where mounting clashes

between nuclear-armed rival capitalists can be controlled.

What underlies capitalist trade conflicts is laid bare in a series of indispensable articles in the *New International*, published by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party.

“Every time we hear about one of these so-called trade deals on TV ... what we’re watching unfold is the growing use of political and military clout to achieve economic ends,” writes Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes in “Imperialism’s march toward fascism and war” in *New International* no. 10.

“None of this has anything to do with advancing free trade, remedying unfair competition, or any of the other high-flown rationalizations emanating from the White House and bipartisan Congress. It’s the use of power to drain surplus value from wherever it’s produced by workers and toiling farmers into the pockets of capitalists in the United States.”

## Crisis of capitalist overproduction

Some bosses welcomed Trump’s tariffs, saying they’re a necessary response to Beijing’s dumping of cut-price commodities on U.S. markets. The American Iron and Steel Institute said, “Government action to address this unloading of steel overproduction on world markets is overdue.”

Whenever bosses talk about overproduction, what they mean is there are more goods on the world market than they can sell for high enough profit. In response, they slash production, throw workers out of jobs and often dump goods on markets at rock bottom prices. The purpose of capitalist production is to maximize profit amid cutthroat competition for resources and markets. It has nothing to do with satisfying the unmet needs of billions for food, housing and other necessities.

## SWP: ‘Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun’

*Below are excerpts from “Capitalism’s long hot winter has begun,” the title article in New International no. 12. It addresses two questions, the reasons behind the deepening crisis of the U.S.-led imperialist world “order” today and the need to build the core of a mass revolutionary party in the U.S. Copyright © 2005 by New International. Reprinted by permission.*

BY JACK BARNES

If you simply add up figures on economic output, arms budgets, and conventional and strategic weaponry, then U.S. imperialism is the strongest power in world history, towering above its closest rivals on every front. But that’s a snapshot lifted out of time as well as political and economic context and direction of development. The course we’ve been describing here is that of an imperialist power that is *weakening* vis-à-vis its ability to stabilize a world in which the lives of hundreds of millions of restive toilers in semicolonial countries are marked by the increasing turmoil, want, and disease produced by the world capitalist system itself. An imperialist power less and less able to handle the political challenges it cannot but create, because it is a power that cannot stabilize the global capitalist economy, the effects of which keep coming down on workers and farmers



U.S. Naval Forces Japan

Joint war games by U.S., Japanese, Australian military forces in the Philippine Sea in 2020. U.S. rulers look to defend their military, financial supremacy from expanding reach of Beijing.

Last year Beijing was targeted by the U.S.-led World Trade Organization a record number of times over allegations it dumped goods on world markets to boost Chinese exports. The rulers in Beijing are especially vulnerable to tariffs, as they depend heavily on exports of manufactured goods.

Trump claims tariffs are needed so that “jobs and factories will come roaring back into our country.”

But the failure of capitalists to increase investment in manufacturing in the U.S. over many years wasn’t a “mistake.” As profit rates fell at home, the ruling capitalist families turned to investing wherever they could get the highest return. Over decades they exported more and more capital to semicolonial countries, where they could pay workers less and exploit them more. Moreover, Trump’s call on working people to get behind Washington’s protectionist measures, seeks to boost “American” nationalism and turn workers in the U.S. against workers in China and elsewhere, dividing us from our real allies, billions of fellow working people who face the

same class enemy and many of the same challenges we confront at home.

Imperialist investors and Chinese capitalists have long valued the no-strike pledges and low wages enforced by the regime in Beijing. But like elsewhere in the world, workers in China are seeking ways to resist the conditions foisted on them. In December, workers at Emei KVE Sporting Goods Co. in Sichuan province went on strike after bosses failed to make social security payments required for workers’ pensions.

Their action, one of many reported in the China Labour Bulletin, is a small glimpse of the class struggle unfolding there today, as conditions for Chinese workers worsen.

The unfolding trade battle and armaments escalation between Washington and Beijing points to one central lesson. Workers in both countries need to develop the political leadership necessary to advance the fight to establish our own governments, and work together for a world where humanity can move forward.

This is what the Socialist Workers Party is out to do.

worldwide. A power that must bear a disproportionate load in policing the planet for imperialism in one crisis of its own making after another, from the Balkans to every corner of the semicolonial world. One that has not achieved its goals in a single major war since 1945. One that now, after supposedly winning the Cold War “without firing a shot,” is no longer exempt from attacks on its home soil.

An imperialist power in its heyday is able to bend regimes to its will. To order “allies” to turn to. To crush resistance by toilers in the colonial world. It has the economic reserves to stabilize its international currency and state finances. That is not the situation of U.S. imperialism today, however, and has been less and less so since the mid-1970s. Instead, the moves we are witnessing are part of the decline of the world’s final empire, which today faces the political and military consequences of its imperialist course at the same time it is entering its greatest economic crisis since the 1930s.



A mass revolutionary party is forged in the heat of great social crises, political upheavals, and wars. Such turmoil unfolds unevenly and extends, with ebbs and flows, over substantial time. But the core of a proletarian party — seasoned in mass work, knowledge-

able and disciplined in working-class politics, with cadres spread across several generations — is built *before* such giant class battles and revolutionary explosions erupt. Such a party cannot be built from scratch once decisive class confrontations posing which class shall rule have begun. That is the lesson Lenin and the Bolsheviks taught us in practice.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

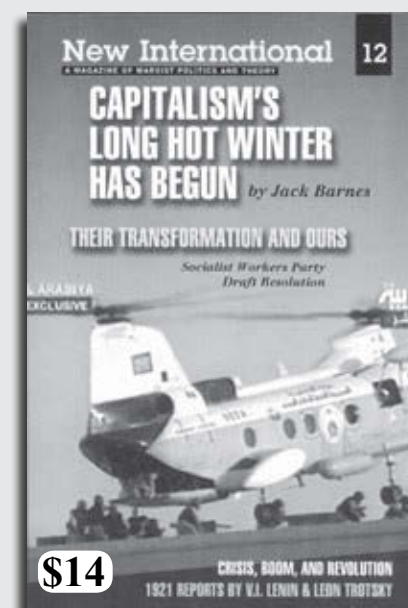
### GEORGIA

**Atlanta**  
No Deportations, Unify the Working Class. Speaker: Susan LaMont, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Atlanta. Sun., April 27, 4 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

### CANADA

**Montreal**  
Build the Working-Class Alternative! Meet the Communist League Candidates. Speakers: Philippe Tessier, CL candidate for Parliament in Bourassa; Katy LeRougetel, CL candidate in Dorval-LaSalle. Sat., April 26, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 7107 St-Denis #204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

## New International no. 12



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# Opposition to Hamas grows

Continued from front page  
Gaza to target civilians.

But it's no secret to anyone in Gaza that Hamas and Islamic Jihad routinely place their command posts and ammunition stores in hospitals, schools, residences, mosques and U.N. compounds. The Tehran-backed group knows that Israeli policy is to minimize civilian casualties. Hamas is willing to sacrifice countless numbers of Palestinian lives and then accuse Israel of "genocide."

What's different now is that more Palestinians in Gaza are speaking out, denouncing Hamas as terrorist and calling for the release of the Israeli hostages. More information continues to come out on the brutal torture of the hostages, including the 24 still believed to be alive.

The Nazi-like group, backed by the reactionary regime in Tehran, never had majority support in Gaza. For nearly 20 years it has terrorized the population.

But with Israeli advances against Hamas — Israeli soldiers now control one-third of the territory — growing numbers of Palestinians in Gaza and beyond are willing to speak out against its reactionary course.

## Palestinians on the West Bank

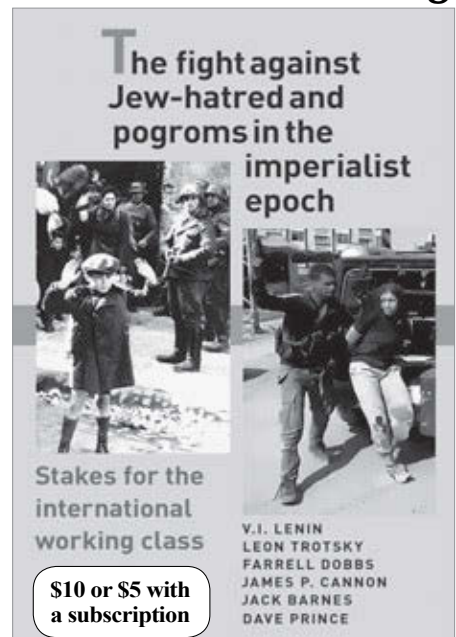
This is also true on the West Bank. Israel wrested control of the West Bank from Jordan during the 1967 Six-Day War, after launching a preemptive strike ahead of a planned assault by neighboring Arab regimes aimed at destroying Israel.

Today 60% of the West Bank is under Israeli control, 18% ruled by the Palestinian Authority and 22% by Palestinian civil authority in cooperation with Israeli police. Some 3 million Palestinians live there, interspersed with more than 500,000 Israeli citizens in a patchwork of settlements scattered throughout the territory.

Hamas tries to take advantage of the anger of many Palestinians that's fueled by disputes over access to water, restrictions by the Israeli government on their rights and access to land, and violent attacks and harassment by right-wing elements among the settlers. Hamas hopes to channel this into Jew-hatred and its murderous assaults on Jews.

Since the Hamas-organized Oct. 7, 2023, anti-Jewish pogrom, there has been an increase in clashes in the West Bank between Israeli soldiers and Hamas and Islamic Jihad thugs. The

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**The fight against Jew-hatred and pogroms in the imperialist epoch**

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Iranian regime continues to find ways to smuggle in weapons and explosives.

But interviews by Corey Gil-Shuster in Ramallah March 29 and Bethlehem April 5 and in nearby villages in the wake of the protests in Gaza, puncture the myth that most Palestinians want the destruction of Israel.

Gil-Shuster produces the Ask Project videos, which he posts on YouTube, asking questions proposed by his viewers. The question this time was "Do you want more Oct. 7th style attacks?"

Ahmad in Ramallah said he was in favor of more attacks no matter how many Palestinian people die when Israel responds. "You can't have peace with Jews," he said. "You can't have peace with enemies." He claimed "not less than 98%" on the West Bank agree with him.

But only one other person interviewed held similar views.

## 'We want to live with the Jews'

"Nobody wants a war," said Amar in Bethlehem. "We want to live with the Jews." Gil-Shuster seemed surprised, saying, "He said the Jews?" The Arabic-language translator confirmed, "Yes, he said the Jews."

"We want to live in peace," said another man. "We don't agree with killing from our side or their side."

"We don't want to make excuses for Oct. 7," said Mohammad in Ramallah. "At the same time it's unfair that Gaza has been under siege for so long."

Several of those interviewed said they wanted peace and also criticized the policies of the Israeli government in the West Bank. One said, "They occupied our land and do not allow us everything."

The changing attitudes and courage of workers, farmers and fishermen in

## 'Jews and Kurds are united in a common struggle'

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

LONDON — A panel discussion "Reconnecting with Roots: History and Culture of Kurdistan's Jews and their Impact on Israeli-Kurdish Relations," was held in the House of Commons March 19, organized by the Jewish-Kurdish Network and the Centre for Kurdish Progress.

"Ten years ago, when Kurds were battling Islamic State, many Jews showed up at demonstrations in support," said Lyn Julius, who chaired the panel. "Now Kurds are showing up at demonstrations against attacks on Jews."

Julius is the founder of Harif, the UK Association of Jews from the Middle East and North Africa.

"It's a joy to be with fellow Kurds here," Yehuda Ben-Yosef told the audience of 80 people. He's the president of the Jewish Community of Kurdistan in Israel and chairman of the Israeli Kurdish Friendship Organization.

"In 1936 my grandfather moved from Duhok," in the Kurdish region of Iraq, to what became Israel, he said. Thousands more Kurdish Jews arrived there after Israel's founding and today over 200,000 live there.

"Oct. 7, 2023, was the worst pogrom Jews have faced since the Holocaust," he said. "Many Kurds serve in the IDF, including in the highest ranks." Ben-Yosef is an officer in the reserve.

"Kurds are the largest nation without a country," he noted. There are over 30 million Kurds, in Turkey, Syria, Iraq



Ahmad

Thousands march against Hamas in Beit Lahiya, Gaza, April 16. When a dozen men showed up with signs opposing disarming Hamas, protesters tore up their signs and kicked them out.

Gaza and the West Bank in opposing the anti-working-class course of Hamas shows the possibilities for advancing common struggles by working people — Arabs, Jews, Christians and others — in the region.

## Debate in Israel over the war

Meanwhile, bourgeois political competitors of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel have been holding protests demanding he end the war, negotiate with Hamas and make freeing the hostages his top priority. One action involved some 200,000 people March 22.

More than 1,000 air force veterans and other reservists, including former members of the military brass, have signed an open letter calling for "the return of the hostages now and the cessation of fighting." They claim that Netanyahu is waging the war for "personal interests," not to defend the existence of Israel.

While Netanyahu is a capitalist politician who seeks to collaborate with U.S. imperialism, he acts on the understanding that Hamas, backed by Tehran, has not abandoned its goal of destroying Israel and eliminating the Jews and it must be dismantled.

But the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois currents that are at the heart of the anti-Netanyahu protests operate on the dangerous illusion that Hamas can be contained and doesn't need to be uprooted. Their views are reinforced by the stance of the U.S. imperialist rulers whose overriding concern is achieving stability for their own economic and political interests across the region, not preventing future pogroms.

Most working people in Israel understand that Hamas leaders are telling the truth when they say that they plan to carry out massacres like Oct. 7 "again and again." They want the renewed offensive to continue until victory.

and Iran, with millions of others spread throughout the world. He pointed to gains the Kurdish struggle for a homeland has made over recent decades. These include carving out an autonomous Kurdish region in Iraq.

Ofra Bengio, director of the Kurdish studies program at Tel Aviv University, said, "Jews and Kurds in the Middle East have something in common: the fight for a state of their own."

Given decades of military collaboration between the governments of Israel and Turkey, and ties between Kurdish groups and armed Palestinian organizations, relations between Kurds in Turkey and Israel were frozen for many years.

But alignments in the Middle East are changing rapidly after the Oct. 7 pogrom, with Israel dealing serious blows to Tehran-backed Hamas and Hezbollah and the overthrow of the Bashar al-Assad dictatorship in Syria.

Edwin Shuker, a self-described Babylonian Jew who now lives in the U.K., described how he grew up in Baghdad, a third of whose population was Jewish in the first half of the 20th century. That community existed for 2,500 years.

"The first eight years of my life were bliss, the next eight years were hell," after the Jew-hating Ba'ath Party launched a coup in Iraq in 1963, he said. It led to the establishment of the bloody Saddam Hussein tyranny some years later.

On Jan. 27, 1969, 14 people were hanged in a public square in Baghdad, nine of them Jews. "On their front it

said 'Jew,' on their back their name and address," Shuker said.

"Our lives were saved thanks to the brave Kurdish people," Shuker said. In 1971, he was among a large group of Jews from Baghdad who were led over the mountains into Iran by Kurdish Peshmerga forces, providing safe passage from the Iraqi regime's assaults. One of the escorts was Masoud Barzani, who became the first president of the Kurdistan Regional Government when Kurds in Iraq won autonomy in 2004.

"They saved 1,900 Jews this way," Shuker said.

One audience member pointed out that both Kurds and Jews had been promised land by the British ruling class, and in both cases were betrayed.

"And by the U.S.!" Bengio responded. In 2017 the Kurdistan Regional Government held a referendum on independence, which passed overwhelmingly. The Iraqi government, backed by both Washington and Tehran, responded with the armed seizure of one-third of KRG territory, including oil-rich Kirkuk. Israel was the only state that supported the outcome of the referendum.

## Kurdish community in Israel

Weysi Dag, a researcher at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, said the infamous 1941 "Farhud" pogrom in Baghdad, which heralded the persecution of Jews in Iraq, did not extend to the Kurdish areas. But after the Iraqi rulers

Continued on page 11

# Cuba's revolutionary course and proletarian morality

Preface to new book, 'Revolution and the Road to Peace in Colombia,' writings by Fidel Castro

Below is the preface to *Revolution and the Road to Peace in Colombia: The Example of the Cuban Revolution*, published by Pathfinder Press, a collection of writings by Fidel Castro. Available for the first time at the Bogotá, Colombia, international book fair, April 25 to May 11, it can be ordered from [pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com) now in English and Spanish. Copyright © 2025 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY RÓGER CALERO AND STEVE CLARK

*Revolution and the Road to Peace in Colombia* presents political lessons drawn by Fidel Castro as the revolutionary leadership of Cuba helped efforts to bring an end to a decades-long armed conflict in Colombia. By 2008 that war between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) as well as other guerrilla groups in that country had taken a toll of more than 220,000 lives over more than half a century.

The origins of this conflict date back to a period known in Colombia as "La Violencia" — a bloody factional feud from 1946 through 1958 between the Liberal Party and Conservative Party wings of the capitalist ruling class. Having been sidelined from the government for sixteen years, in 1946 the Conservative Party won the presidential election. The new regime soon unleashed violent repression and land evictions targeting Liberal Party supporters and others.

In 1948 longtime Liberal Party leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán was assassinated, sparking a widespread popular explosion known as the *Bogotázo*. The young Fidel Castro, coincidentally in Bogotá at the time for a Latin American student conference, joined in the protests. In face of government and paramilitary assaults, Liberal Party followers and Communist Party members active in the countryside each organized separate self-defense groups among farmers,

landless peasants, and other rural poor.

By 1954 the two guerrilla groups had begun operating together. In 1964 they formed the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), whose subsequent course under the leadership of Manuel Marulanda is the focus of much of this book. Marulanda, whose birth name was Pedro Antonio Marín, had led the Liberal Party guerrillas who joined the fused organization.

Following the January 1, 1959 revolutionary victory by workers and peasants in Cuba, guerrilla groups of different political origins emerged across Latin America to wage armed struggle aimed at overturning repressive capitalist regimes. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, most had been defeated or dissolved. Among the guerrilla organizations in Colombia were the National Liberation Army (ELN), which remains active today, as well as the April 19 Movement (M-19), Popular Liberation Army (EPL), and the Quintín Lame Armed Movement (MAQL).

As indicated by this book's title, the articles, letters, and other writings by Fidel Castro collected here return time and again to lessons of revolutionary strategy from the Cuban Revolution, a revolution whose course and cadre were forged in struggle under his political leadership:

- How workers and peasants were organized and led to fight for and win state power in Cuba, opening the first socialist revolution in the Americas.
- How the proletarian internationalism and ethics that guided Fidel and the Cuban leadership from the outset were a cornerstone of their political course of relying on the revolutionary mobilization and political class consciousness of working people in Cuba itself.
- How they set an example for working people across the Americas and worldwide, including in the United States.
- And how this course of Cuba's



Rebel Army column led by Ernesto Che Guevara is joined by people of Santa Clara after that Cuban city and Santiago de Cuba were liberated Jan. 1, 1959. Within hours, Batista dictatorship fell. Revolutionary war, Fidel Castro said, was won with "a minimum of weapons and a maximum of moral values."

Rebel Army and July 26 Movement stood in stark contrast to that of the FARC and other guerrilla organizations in Colombia.

At the center of this small book are Fidel Castro's introduction and afterword to a larger collection: *La paz en Colombia* (Peace in Colombia), published in 2008 by Cuba's Editora Política under Castro's political direction. That book attracted worldwide interest and was launched at an event attended by more than five hundred people during the International Book Fair in Caracas, Venezuela, in November 2008.

In addition to the central pieces by Fidel Castro contained in these pages, some chapters of *La paz en Colombia* not reprinted here summarize writings by Marulanda and other FARC leaders about that organization's origins and political course. Others recount episodes from the Cuban leadership's initiatives over the years to help negotiate an end to the war between the Colombian government and guerrilla organizations. They give accounts of discussions to advance that goal by Cuban government and Communist Party leaders with top figures of the FARC, ELN, and M-19, as well as Colombian government officials. Other material included by Castro in *La paz en Colombia* is described later in this preface, as well as by the Cuban leader himself in his 2008 introduction and afterword.

This Pathfinder Press collection — *Revolution and the Road to Peace in Colombia: The Example of the Cuban Revolution* — opens with a 1958 speech by Castro. It was broadcast over Radio Rebelde, the Rebel Army's radio transmitter in Cuba's Sierra Maestra mountains, during the revolutionary war to overturn the US-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista. Castro emphasizes the revolutionaries' respectful and humane treatment of soldiers in Batista's armed forces who surrendered or were wounded and captured by

the Rebel Army — conduct that underscores the consistent record that distinguishes Cuba's communist leadership.

This collection also includes two brief articles by Fidel Castro published in *Granma*, the daily newspaper of the Communist Party of Cuba, in July 2008, that lay the political groundwork he builds on in *La paz en Colombia*.

Fidel wrote the articles in the immediate aftermath of the July 2008 rescue by Colombian army troops of fifteen hostages held by guerrillas of the FARC. Among those freed were Ingrid Betancourt, kidnapped in 2002 while campaigning for president of Colombia; eleven Colombian soldiers and police; and three US citizens.

Castro condemned a brutal military operation that had been carried out three months earlier by the Colombian government with Washington's complicity. He pointed to the regime's bombardment "of a camp on Ecuadorian soil, where Colombian guerrillas and young visitors of various nationalities were sleeping." He denounced "the shooting of the wounded at point-blank range, and the abduction of their bodies." These actions, he said, were part of Washington's attempts to exploit the kidnappings in Colombia to advance its imperialist interests in Venezuela, Bolivia, and elsewhere in the Americas.

Castro went on to explain his longstanding disagreement with the political course of FARC leader Manuel Marulanda, who had also been a central leader of the Communist Party of Colombia until the FARC's breakaway from the CP in 1993. Marulanda had died a few months earlier in 2008.

Marulanda, Castro said, "envisaged a long and prolonged struggle," noting that the FARC leader "had begun his armed resistance sixty years ago." This was "a view I did not share," Fidel added. "But I never had the opportunity to talk with him."

The Colombian CP, "like all those in Latin America, was under the influence of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, not of the party in Cuba," Castro noted. It "never had the goal of taking power." The guerrilla force the CP had organized was from its outset "a resistance front. It was not the basic in-



José Ramón Fernández, above left, commander of main column of Cuban forces that defeated U.S.-backed mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, walks beside prisoners captured there. Inset, Cuban doctor treats wounded mercenary. Fidel Castro led communist course of respectful, humane treatment of prisoners of war, accelerating the disintegration of regime's army.

strument for conquering revolutionary power, as it had been in Cuba."

Under Castro's leadership, the Rebel Army and July 26 Movement acted on the conviction that a genuine revolution was possible only through the massive involvement of working people, independent of all of Cuba's bourgeois parties. Fidel led a growing guerrilla force — the Rebel Army, composed overwhelmingly of exploited workers and peasants — to defeat the powerful military and police forces of a dictatorship backed by Washington and establish a popular revolutionary government. Support among working people for the revolutionary struggle expanded in cities and rural areas alike across Cuba. The fall of the Batista regime on January 1, 1959, came only two years after the Rebel Army's first battle.

Using their new revolutionary government, workers, peasants, and agricultural workers began transforming themselves as they worked and fought shoulder to shoulder to transform social conditions and property relations in their country.

- They mobilized to eradicate illiteracy within one year and carried out an extensive land reform.
- They joined voluntary brigades that built much-needed housing, clinics, schools, and daycare centers.
- They formed popular militias to defend their political and social conquests against US-organized attacks.
- Faced with mounting aggression from foreign and domestic capitalists, they expropriated US-owned factories and plantations and then the properties of Cuban exploiters.
- From their very first days in power, they extended solidarity to those fighting imperialist oppression and exploitation around the world.

Cuba's socialist revolution led to a revival of Marxist, genuinely communist leadership, on a mass scale for the first time since the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia under V.I. Lenin.

In *La paz en Colombia*, Castro also expressed strong disagreement with the FARC's practice of taking civilian hostages and its treatment of prisoners. "My opposition to holding prisoners of war — to applying policies that humiliate them or subject them to extremely harsh jungle conditions — is well known," he said. "Nor was I in agreement with capturing and holding civilians who have nothing to do with the war."

During the revolutionary war in Cuba, Castro wrote, "we handed over to the International Red Cross the

soldiers and officers captured in each battle." Otherwise, he said, no soldier of the class enemy's armed forces "will ever surrender."

The consistency of that political course is confirmed by two letters written by Fidel in 1983 and first published in his 2008 book in a chapter titled, "The value of principles." Those letters, which are included here, were addressed to Colombian President Belisario Betancur, condemning the kidnapping of Betancur's brother by the National Liberation Army (ELN).

Four years after *La paz en Colombia* was released, in November 2012, initiatives by the Cuban government led to the opening of negotiations between the FARC and the Colombian regime. With the agreement of both sides, those talks were conducted in Havana, with the governments of Cuba and Norway serving as hosts and guarantors.

In his July 2008 *Granma* articles, Castro had affirmed that the Cuban leadership was "in favor of peace in Colombia." The goal of establishing "real peace, even if remote and difficult," is the course "Cuba has advocated for that nation for three decades."

At the same time, Fidel added that Cuba would "never support the *Pax Romana*" that US imperialism "tries to impose on Latin America." For that reason, he emphasized, he was not calling on the FARC to lay down its arms.

In 2016 the Colombian government and the FARC signed a "Final Agreement to End the Conflict."

Negotiations with the ELN were suspended in 2019 by Colombian President Iván Duque. Restarted in 2022 by newly elected president Gustavo Petro, the talks were again suspended by the government in January 2025, as the ELN renewed the fighting.

With unrivaled imperial hypocrisy, the US rulers have lied about the Cuban government's political role in facilitating negotiations with the ELN as a pretext to redouble their relentless drive to crush the example set by Cuba's working people and leadership in making a socialist revolution. Since the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, these ruthless efforts have included everything from direct military aggression in the early years, to nonstop terrorist activity staged by counterrevolutionary groups from US soil, to a decades-long US economic embargo against the Cuban government and people.

These policies have been carried



Cuban volunteer troops join Angolan celebration in 1981 after stopping a U.S.-backed South African invasion. Cuba's internationalism reflects values of the working class in power, socialist revolution.

out by every single US administration, Democratic and Republican, since 1959, including both the Donald Trump and Joseph Biden White Houses. As part of this brutal political, economic, and diplomatic war, Washington has included Cuba on its list of "State Sponsors of Terrorism." That outrageous measure imposes even more suffocating sanctions that block Cuba's access to the world banking and credit system. That, in turn, squeezes off vital imports of raw materials, fuel, medicine, and food, sharply intensifying hardships for the Cuban people.

As its pretext for keeping the Cuban government on its "terrorist" list, the US government cynically charges that Havana refused the Duque government's demand to extradite ELN officials who had traveled to Cuba for the peace negotiations. Cuban leaders replied that complying with that demand would be a flagrant violation of protocols agreed to by all sides. The Norwegian government — like Cuba, one of the talks' four guarantors — backed Havana's refusal to extradite the ELN leaders.

In 2022, the government of President Gustavo Petro in Colombia withdrew the extradition demand and resumed talks with the ELN. Colombia's Congress gave the Cuban government an award for its selfless efforts toward ending the armed conflict. This was another blow to Washington's slanderous charge that Cuba's revolutionary government is a "state sponsor of terrorism."

To this day, however, Cuba remains on Washington's list.

*Revolution and the Road to Peace in Colombia: The Example of the Cuban Revolution*, concludes with two items from the pages of the *Militant*, a socialist newsweekly published in New York.

One is a rebuttal of a 2008 article by a well-known US academic, James Petras. Petras's polemic was pointedly headlined, "Fidel Castro and the FARC: Eight Mistaken Theses of Fidel Castro."

The other is a 2023 talk presented in Havana by Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the US, underlining the principled consistency over decades of Fidel Castro's communist course. Its title captures a theme that runs throughout the pages of this book: "Proletarian internationalism is not only a foreign policy, it is an expression of the revolution itself."

"If Fidel belongs first to the working people of Cuba," Waters says, "he also belongs to oppressed and exploited peoples the world over."

As an aid to readers of *Revolution and the Road to Peace in Colombia*, a time-

line and a glossary can be found at the end of the book to identify terms, places, individuals, and dates of events.

In preparing the 2008 book, Fidel decided to open *La paz en Colombia* with two programmatic foundations of Cuba's socialist revolution, issued in 1960 and 1962. "From the earliest days," he wrote in his brief introduction to the book, "the Cuban people gathered in mass rallies to send their message, in the First and then Second Declarations of Havana, to the fraternal peoples of Latin America."

The Second Declaration was presented by Fidel to a rally of more than one million in February 1962. Workers and peasants poured into Havana from across the island to repudiate threats to the revolution the previous week by the Organization of American States, dubbed by them the "Yankee ministry of colonies."

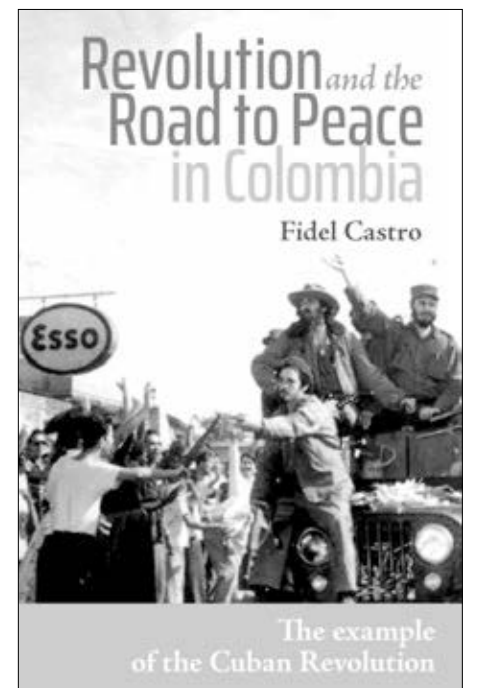
The conquest of workers power is needed not just in Cuba, the Second Declaration boldly declared, but in countries throughout the Americas. "What unifies and incites" the capitalist ruling classes, it said, is "fear that the plundered people of the continent will seize the arms from their oppressors and, like Cuba, declare themselves free people of the Americas."

"The duty of every revolutionist is to make the revolution," the declaration asserted. Everywhere in the Americas, including the United States, and everywhere in the world.

That is what this book is about. Above all, that's what the Cuban Revolution and the millions of working people who made that revolution and continue to defend it have lived up to.

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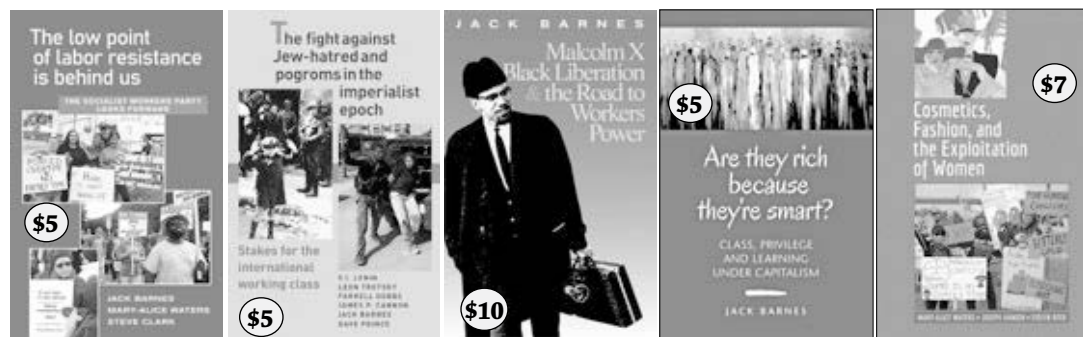


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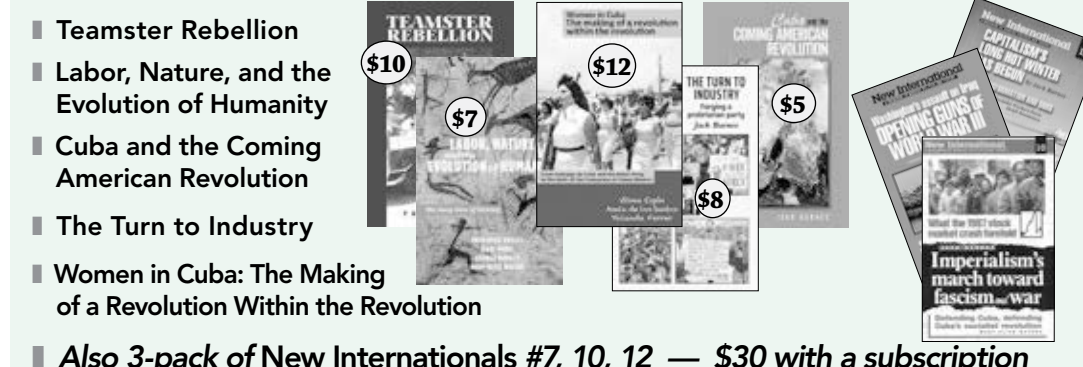
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# Dominican nightclub collapse shows bosses' disdain for safety

BY RÓGER CALERO

"The capitalist owners of that nightclub are scumbags who only care about their self-interests," said Jesús Núñez, squarely putting responsibility for the roof collapse at a popular nightclub in the Dominican Republic where it belongs. Núñez is national coordinator of the Sugarcane Workers Union.

The iconic Jet Set club in the capital city of Santo Domingo was packed when dust began falling from the ceiling in the early hours of April 8, before the entire roof collapsed, killing over 200 people. Some 145 others were rescued from the wreckage. In a call to a radio program, singer Sergio Vargas described seeing Jet Set employees sweeping debris from the ceiling a night after his performance. When asked about it, the workers told him, "This happens all the time."

"The falling dust from the roof was a warning, but the managers attitude was to keep their 'party' going," Núñez said, pointing to bosses' disregard for safety.

While much of the attention has gone to prominent victims — well-known musicians and professional athletes, as well as government officials and their relatives — very little has been said in the news about dozens of the establishment's employees and other workers killed in the disaster.

Among the victims were 24 residents of Haina, a major industrial working-class district near Santo Domingo. They were fans of popular merengue singer Rubby Pérez and had managed to come up with the money to pay the steep cover. Pérez, who was killed in the collapse, also comes from Haina.

"Haina is in mourning," said Núñez. Among the 24 were welders, pipefitters and electricians who were active in the labor movement and the community. Many had worked in major construction and refinery projects on neighboring Caribbean islands and in the U.S., Núñez said.

The losses of all the victims have been felt throughout the Dominican Republic and its diaspora in the New York region and other states. Many express their outrage about the causes of the tragedy, and their concern the club owners will get away with not taking responsibility because of their ruling-class connections.

"The children and grandchildren left without their parents should receive government compensation and benefits," said Núñez. "The responsibility lies with the government for allowing building practices that lead to these disasters." He recalled other similar incidents there, including an explosion and fire at a factory in 2023 that killed 38 people.

Dominican authorities have not yet started an investigation of the cause of the collapse. More facts will undoubtedly come out, but the conditions that led to the disaster are hardly a mystery.

Built in 1973, under a zoning permit for a movie theater, the structure's walls and roof were made of T-Slab prefabricated concrete. Engineers speaking to *El Diario Libre* April 10 pointed to images of the collapsed infrastructure showing signs of major water leaks that had been improperly



AP Photo/Eddy Vittini

Rescue workers search for survivors after nightclub roof collapsed in Dominican Republic April 8. Government allowed "building practices that lead to these disasters," said Jesús Núñez.

repaired, weakening the integrity of the building. They also pointed out signs of damage around large air-conditioning units and other heavy equipment placed on the roof, and the effects

of the constant stress of pounding vibrations from the music at the club.

"They never remodeled the building properly, they only redecorated it," Núñez said.

## Gov't cuts federal labor mediators. Is this a problem?

Continued from front page

the AFL-CIO and senior counselor to the labor secretary under former President Joseph Biden, told Bloomberg Law April 8. But labor "disputes" come from the offensive by the bosses against working people caused by the bosses' drive to defeat their competitors and boost profits.

The history of federal mediators is a long record of assisting the bosses against the workers and the unions. Whatever Trump's goal is, their disappearance is good for the working class.

These "independent" mediators have been well-remunerated by the bosses' government. As of this month, their going salary is nearly \$100,000 a year, with the top dogs raking in more than twice that amount.

The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service was set up by Congress in 1947 as part of the notorious anti-union Taft-Hartley Act. This law, adopted to make going on strike more difficult and placing other restrictions on the unions, was known by workers as the "slave labor bill." It gave the president the power to use court injunctions to declare strikes illegal and impose "cooling off" periods.

The shuttering of the mediators' agency is part of broader cuts the Trump administration is implementing on the size of the bloated federal government. Some of them deal blows to programs workers need, like the Postal Service and Social Security, while others, like the mediators, target government bureaucrats whose main task is to "administer" working people.

The capitalist government dispatches federal mediators when they think they can help the bosses bludgeon or cajole labor into making concessions and taking down their picket lines. They claim to be impartial, or, even better, "friends of labor." Whatever works.

### How Teamsters dealt with mediators

During the powerful 1934 Teamsters strike seeking union recognition and a contract for General Drivers Local 574 in Minneapolis, federal mediators intervened. But it turned out the savvy, class-conscious union leadership — leavened with members of the Socialist Workers Party — knew how to deal with them. This story is described in *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs, a leader of the strike who became a longtime leader of the SWP.

In the midst of this battle, E.H. Dunnigan, a "Commissioner of Conciliation" from the Department of Labor, came to Minneapolis, requesting to meet with the local union leadership.

"Dunnigan tried to create the impression that he was secretly on our side," wrote Dobbs. "On that basis he asked us to authorize him to make 'minor' concessions to the bosses concerning the union demands, stressing that he needed such leeway for 'bargaining purposes.' We flatly rejected the request, pegging it for what it was, a con game calculated to make suckers of the workers. After informing him of what the workers wanted from the employers, we suggested that he go see what he could do about getting some action from them."

As the union prepared to strike in July 1934, Gov. Floyd Olson, working behind the scenes with Dunnigan and another federal mediator, Rev. Francis Haas, tried to pressure the workers to accept a so-called fair settlement. Their con job failed.

On July 26 Olson switched tactics, imposing martial law — declaring that a "state of insurrection" existed in Minneapolis and calling out 4,000 National Guard. Six days later Olsen's troops invaded Local 574's strike headquarters.

In mid-July the union organized a highly effective monthlong strike, winning support from tens of thousands of workers throughout the area.

Haas and Dunnigan came back around, requesting the strike leaders allow them to speak directly to the union's rank and file. Confident in the membership, the union leaders agreed. But when they gave their pitch to the meeting, the strikers let the two mediators know they were onto their game. Getting nowhere, the two government agents left the meeting. Soon after, they left town.

In a 1942 public talk on the Minneapolis strikes in *The History of American Trotskyism*, James P. Cannon, then national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, commented on the role of these mediators. "We despised them and all their wily artifices and tricks, and their hypocritical pretenses of good fellowship and friendship for the strikers," he said. "They were nothing but the agents of the government in Washington, which in turn is the agent of the employing class as a whole."

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# Back Ukraine sovereignty! US out of Europe!

With no letup in Moscow's murderous bombardment targeting civilians in Ukraine, working people everywhere should join in backing the Ukrainian people's courageous fight to defend the country's sovereignty. Moscow out now!

Over three years ago Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime invaded, aiming to make short work of conquering Ukraine and incorporating it into Russia. His plans were thwarted by the heroic resistance of the Ukrainian people, who rose up and continue to fight back against far larger forces.

Putin wants to claw back for the Russian rulers the territories previously part of the czarist prison house of nations. His war is an extension of Moscow's 2014 seizure of Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk.

The Ukrainian people won self-determination with the aid of the revolutionary government that came to power after V.I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks organized working people in Russia to take power in 1917. They led millions of toilers to end capitalist exploitation, withdrew Russia from the imperialist world war and established a voluntary federation of nations — the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. A counterrevolution against Lenin's course, headed by Joseph Stalin, ensured once again that the Ukrainian people were placed under the Great Russian boot.

Today, Putin is willing to sacrifice the lives of tens of thousands of Russian workers in uniform to grab as much Ukrainian territory as he can. Recent estimates say some 160,000 Russian soldiers were killed in Ukraine since Putin's invasion in February 2022.

Washington — as the actions of both the Biden and Trump administrations demonstrate — has no real interest in the defense of Ukraine's sovereignty. Its only concern is stability for the U.S. rulers' profits and strategic interests, including their domination of Europe, cemented after their victory in the second imperialist world war.

Washington has 84,000 troops stationed in Europe and a massive arsenal, including nuclear weapons deployed on six European bases. Under the lash of capitalist competition, Washington is driven to contend against its rivals, and trade wars lead to shooting wars. To compete successfully, U.S. bosses push to drive down the wages and conditions of workers at home.

Working people need our own foreign policy based on our shared class interests with fellow workers worldwide. We call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Europe, as well as all conventional and nuclear arms.

The toilers of Ukraine have powerful potential allies that can help their fight. Working people, especially those in Russia, are the only dependable allies of the toilers in Ukraine. The sanctions Washington imposes on Russia fall heaviest on workers and farmers there and we demand they be lifted.

Only by building a working-class party in the U.S. can working people in our millions chart a course to replace capitalist rule with our own government and extend the world socialist revolution. That is the road to ending for all time the social catastrophes, wars and national oppression that mark the imperialist epoch.

## 'Jews and Kurds united in a common struggle'

Continued from page 7

declared war on Israel in 1948, Jews across the country, including in Kurdish areas, fled.

Shuker said all the belongings of Jews in Baghdad were taken as they were expelled from the country. "But Kurdish Jews were not robbed, and their homes in Kurdistan are still locked to this day. The tomb of prophet Nahum is protected by Peshmerga in Alqosh."

The day after the panel discussion, the Jewish Society at King's College London showed a documentary by Dag, "Roots: Jews of Kurdistan in Jerusalem."

Many Kurds who came from Iraq, Syria and Turkey to Israel following its founding became workers in construction and agriculture.

"It's often said that Kurdish Jews built Israel," Dag

said. "At the same time, they faced pressures to 'Europeanize' and abandon their identity."

The film shows the discrimination faced by Kurds in Israel. "When I was a child, I felt embarrassed to be Kurdish. But I became proud when I learnt Kurdish music and dance," one interviewee said. Today Kurds are found in all walks of life in Israeli society.

"When the film was shown at a Kurdish film festival in Berlin," Dag said, "people were shocked to see the vibrant Kurdish community in Israel." They had been bombarded with hostile propaganda claiming Israel was an apartheid state.

Both meetings contributed to a greater understanding of the common threads in the fight against Jew-hatred and for Kurdish national rights.

## Opposition grows to death penalty in Iran

BY SETH GALINSKY

Weekly hunger strikes by political prisoners in Iran, "No to execution Tuesdays," began 64 weeks ago and had spread to at least 38 prisons by April 8.

The reactionary bourgeois-clerical regime executed at least 975 prisoners in 2024, the highest number since 2015 and one of the highest in the world.

On March 18 union members, former prisoners and other defenders of civil rights protested outside Lakan Prison in Rasht. They demanded the revocation of death sentences for Sharifeh Mohammadi, a former member of the Coordinating Committee to Help Create Labor Organizations, and Manouchehr Fallah.

Fallah was tortured to extract a confession that he placed two sound bombs that caused no damage in front of government buildings. He was accused of "waging war against God."

On April 5 the regime executed five political prisoners without giving advance notice to their families or granting them a final visit. The five were arrested in 2015 and later charged with "baghi" — armed rebellion — despite lack of any evidence. Family members say they had been beaten and tortured.

Torture, solitary confinement and threats against family members are frequently used by the regime to force prisoners to confess. Despite the right to a lawyer guaranteed in the Iranian constitution, prisoners are frequently denied access to a lawyer of their choice.

Many of those facing execution were convicted of possessing or selling illegal drugs. Executions fall dis-



National Union of Retirees of Iran  
Protest against death penalty at Lakan prison in Iran March 18.

proportionately on members of oppressed nationalities, including Baluch, Kurds, Arabs and others.

More than 50 political prisoners are facing execution. In addition to Mohammadi, there are at least two other women on the list — Pakhshan Azizi and Varisheh Moradi. The Iranian government claims Azizi and Moradi are members of the Kurdistan Free Life Party. Moradi was detained after returning to Iran from the Kurdish region in Syria. She had joined Kurdish forces there in the fight against Islamic State and was wounded in battle. Azizi had volunteered there to aid refugees fleeing Islamic State.

In an April 8 statement, political prisoners leading the weekly protests called for "complete abolition of the death penalty."

## Moscow bombs civilians

Continued from front page

Rih, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's hometown, April 4. Nine children in a playground were killed.

"I was told they made a mistake, but I think it's a horrible thing," President Donald Trump said after the deadly attack on Sumy. "Cities are being destroyed all over Ukraine."

Two days earlier Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, met with Putin in St. Petersburg. Top U.S. and Russian officials have also met in Saudi Arabia to discuss a possible ceasefire. While the Ukrainian government has agreed to a U.S. proposal for a 30-day halt to fighting, Moscow responded with stepped-up assaults.

Trump continues to dish blame out on everyone else for Moscow's war. "Biden could have stopped it, and Zelensky could have stopped it, and Putin should have never started it," he told reporters April 14. "Everybody's to blame."

The White House is seeking to end the conflict, not to defend Ukrainian sovereignty, but to achieve a measure of stability in the region to advance the U.S. rulers' economic and political interests. Trump also hopes to make a deal with Putin to draw him into a bloc with Washington against Beijing.

### Russian casualties stir opposition to war

As the bloody war drags on, fewer and fewer Russian men are volunteering for Putin's army. The Kremlin is desperate to avoid another round of mobilization, which might make the widespread opposition to the war break out in public again, despite the fierce repression the regime enforces.

In January, the regional government in Samara offered a record signing bonus of \$40,000, the independent investigative news website Vyorstka reported. Putin's regime hopes this incentive is high enough to attract volunteers even though Moscow's assault squads in Ukraine are said to have a survival rate of just 5%!

The battle front in eastern Ukraine is largely frozen today. The small gains Russian forces have made came at a very high cost — more than 1,200 casualties per week. Over 48,000 Russian troops were killed or severely wounded in both December and January. In 2024, the Kremlin claims they averaged 36,600 recruits per month. That leaves a shortfall of 12,000 a month.

Kyiv's commanders have a higher regard for their soldiers' lives. Ukrainian forces' losses are four times less than Moscow's army.

The April 15 *Kyiv Post* reports on the way Russian soldiers are being demoralized by the brutal treatment they face at the hands of Putin's officer corps.

Russian infantryman Artem Ushakov and a number of his fellow soldiers fighting in eastern Ukraine surrendered to a drone that led them to the Ukrainian lines. He told the Ukrainians, "If you want to try and go back, they shoot you, they eliminate you, you have no chance."

Another Russian soldier told Ukrainian forces how his commanders would push their troops to keep moving forward even if it meant certain death. "Our instructors chased us forward," he said, telling them if they didn't move quickly enough, "they would shoot us in the knees or kill us."

Salomachu Shokubodov, another captured Russian infantryman, said, "The treatment we got wasn't human. They would hit us with fists, with rifles. On the head. That's how they beat us."

The *New York Post* in March interviewed dozens of Russian troops captured by Kyiv who said they enlisted in the military for the money. Very few mentioned any sense of patriotic duty and none could suggest any reason or need for the war.

Vladislav Balgrabskiy, a company commander in Russia's 18th Motor Rifle Division, told Ukrainian reporter Yury Butusov April 3 that the only rational choice for an honest Russian unit leader is to find a Ukrainian outfit and surrender.

### '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](http://www.themilitant.com)