

THE MILITANT

BLACK HISTORY MONTH FEATURE
Malcolm X aimed to wake people up to their 'self-worth'
 — PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 90/NO. 6 FEBRUARY 16, 2026

After 4 crashes, 45 dead, Spain rail union calls three-day strike

BY TERRY EVANS

A collision between two high-speed passenger trains in Andalusia, in southern Spain, Jan. 18 left 45 people dead and at least 150 injured. In the week after the disaster, three other crashes took place. The Spanish Railroad Engineers and Trainmen's Union (SEMAF) responded by calling a nationwide strike Feb. 9-11 to protest the "constant deterioration of the rail network."

For months SEMAF has been demanding the rail bosses take steps to repair problems on Spain's rail trackage.

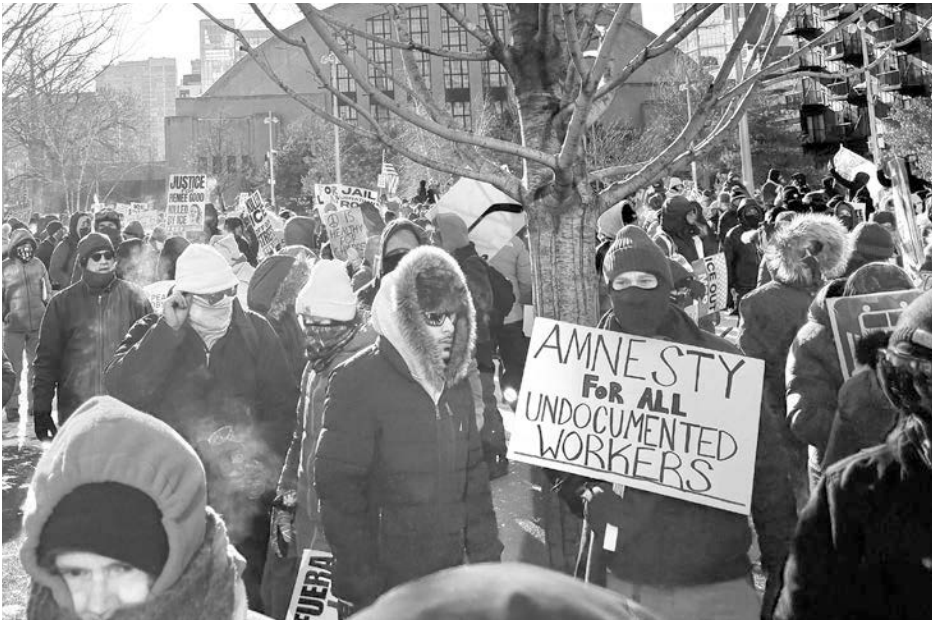
One of the trains, running between Málaga and Madrid, derailed near Amaduz in Córdoba province, then hit a train running on the adjacent track, traveling from Madrid to Huelva. Both trains derailed, with the second plunging down an embankment.

Some passengers got free of the wreckage, and firefighters and others rescued those still trapped. People came from nearby towns and helped get the injured to the hospital, and blankets and aid to the crash site.

The train traveling to Madrid was operating.
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Fight for amnesty for all immigrants in the US!

Protests against ICE arrests, deportations spread



Militant/Gabby Prosser

Thousands joined nationwide protests Jan. 23 to defend rights of immigrant workers against ICE assaults. Above, union-sponsored march in Minneapolis set disciplined, peaceful example.

Unions help build Minneapolis protests to unite working class

BY EDWIN FRUIT

MINNEAPOLIS — Across the country last week unionists, high school students and others marched to defend the rights of immigrants to live and work in the U.S. From Chester, New York,
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SWP campaigns against gov't attacks on immigrant workers

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

As protests against Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents' attacks, arrests and brutality against immigrants, and those who come out to support them, spread, growing numbers of unionists and others have looked to come to their aid.
 Socialist Workers Party members are
 Continued on page 4

US rulers send armada to Iran, demand gov't give up nukes

BY SETH GALINSKY

Seeking to repeat the kind of gun-boat diplomacy Washington used to make substantial gains in Venezuela, President Donald Trump has now sent a large armada to the Middle East. He hopes the threat of military action will convince Tehran to end its nuclear weapons program, restrict its missile cache, and end aid to its so-called axis of resistance.

At first Trump claimed he was sending the armada to support protesters in Iran, but that was just a pretext.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Tehran is willing to negotiate, "provided that a suitable environment exists — one free from threats and unreasonable expectations." Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told CNN he was "confident that we can achieve a deal" and "ensure that there is no nuclear weapons."

At the same time, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei — the real ruling power in Iran, not the elected parliament — warned that any attack on Iran would spark a "regional war."

Moscow has offered to take custody of Iran's enriched uranium, as they
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Cuba prepares to defend its revolution as Washington threatens intervention



Ricardo López Hevia

Thousands of students, young workers and soldiers joined torchlight march in Havana Jan. 27 in proud defiance of mounting U.S. imperialist threats against Cuba's socialist revolution.

BY RÓGER CALERO

"This is not an act of nostalgia, it's a call to action," Litza González, national president of the Cuban Federation of University Students (FEU), told tens of thousands of students, young workers and soldiers as they marched from the steps of the University of Havana through the city's streets Jan. 27.

The annual torchlight march honors the life of national hero José Martí, who

led the 1895 Cuban war of independence against Spanish colonial rule. The march is a proud demonstration of Cuba's heritage of revolutionary struggle against imperialist domination. This year, it was also a show of defiance to the U.S. rulers' stepped-up threats against the Cuban people and their socialist revolution today.

Two days later, President Donald Trump
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As capitalist crisis deepens, Canadian gov't looks to break from Washington

BY STEVE PENNER

MONTREAL — Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney received a standing ovation at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, last month, when he said he was

speaking for the world's "middle powers" threatened by the "great powers." Even though he wasn't explicit, everyone knew he was talking about the U.S. capitalist rulers.

"Middle powers must act together because if we're not at the table we're on the menu," Carney said.

The deepening crisis of capitalist production and trade is causing sharpening conflicts among rival national ruling classes, an escalation in arms spending, major wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.
 Continued on page 2

US workers face fewer jobs, high prices and tough times to come

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The capitalist economic crisis continues to weigh heavily on the backs of working people despite upbeat reports from the White House and the business sections of the boss press.

It is true the capitalist rulers and their upper-middle-class hangers-on are enriching themselves through stock market speculation, buying and selling luxury items and otherwise enjoying the perks they think they're entitled to,
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Canada looks to break US grip

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East, and the drive to more wars.
The U.S. rulers are trying to bolster their weakening world domination by using their unmatched military and economic power to advance their own interests.

Canada’s capitalist rulers are highly vulnerable to this assault. Seventy-six percent of Canadian exports go to the U.S., far more than from any other country. In addition, the Canadian and U.S. economies are highly integrated.

Since taking office, the Donald Trump administration has hit Canada with a slew of tariffs, including 50% on steel and aluminum, 25% on autos and 35% on most goods traded outside the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. While at least half of Canadian exports are sent to the U.S. tariff free under this treaty, it is up for renegotiation this year. Washington has made clear it intends to impose terms much more favorable to U.S. bosses.

Carney says the only way forward for the Canadian capitalists is to “diversify our trade partnerships.” With this in mind he met with Chinese President Xi Jinping last month and announced a “new strategic partnership” with China.

Carney’s plan an illusion

The idea that this will lessen the Canadian capitalists’ dependence on U.S. trade is an illusion. Currently, Canada’s exports to China are less than 4% of its total.

Ottawa has had sharp trade conflicts with Beijing for years. It has imposed a 100% tariff on Chinese electric vehicles. Following the meeting,

Ottawa agreed to reduce this tariff to 6.1%, while Beijing dropped duties on some Canadian agricultural imports.

When Carney announced his “strategic partnership” with Beijing, Trump revoked the invitation for Ottawa to join his so-called Board of Peace and threatened to impose 100% tariffs on all Canada’s goods and services.

In face of Trump’s threats Carney quickly reversed course, assuring Washington he has no intention of starting comprehensive trade negotiations with China.

Moreover, Canada’s rulers are deeply integrated into Washington’s military operations, including in Asia. Canadian air force planes at U.S. bases in Japan patrol skies around North Korea as part of Washington’s enforcement of sanctions against that country.

Canada’s capitalist rulers have been trying to lessen their economic dependence on the U.S. for decades, without success. With today’s sharply accelerating world capitalist rivalries, it’s even harder.

Carney’s call for an alliance of the “middle powers” against Washington — to compensate for the shattering of the “rules-based international order” — is utopian. All the capitalist powers are in fact driven to defend their own national interests against each other.

The facade of a “rules-based world order” is being torn apart by the consequences of today’s deepening world economic crisis.

Ottawa aims to target workers

“The only real option Canada’s capitalist rulers have is to try to resolve their crisis on the backs of work-



Militant/Tony DiFelice

Some 10,000 flight attendants, members of Canadian Union of Public Employees, above in Toronto, struck Air Canada in August 2025, defied federal gov’t back-to-work order.

ing people,” Joe Young, Communist League candidate in next October’s Quebec provincial election, told the *Militant*. “And to prepare for war.”

“They’ve been waging a major offensive against working people and democratic freedoms ever since they deployed 3,000 heavily armed police against protesting truckers in Ottawa in 2022,” he said.

Ottawa’s attack on the right to strike is at the center of its offensive. In the past year and a half the federal government has tried to block every strike under its jurisdiction — by rail workers, WestJet pilots, port and postal workers, and Air Canada flight attendants.

Two unions successfully defied government back-to-work orders, showing that it is possible to defeat such attacks with broad union support. Some 55,000 striking education support workers disobeyed the Ontario government in 2022 and 10,000 Air Canada flight attendants stood up to Ottawa’s dictates last August.

Since 2021 around 1.5 million workers have gone on strike to fight for better wages and working conditions.

However, most union officials support the Canadian government in its trade conflicts with Washington and the rulers’ chauvinist anti-American diatribes. They serve only to divide

workers in the U.S. and Canada, who are one another’s most important potential ally.

“The working class in Canada has no interest in fighting for the victory of Canada’s ruling families in their conflicts with the ruling rich in the U.S. and elsewhere,” Young said.

“Instead, working people must break with the parties and governments of the ruling rich, join struggles to defend our rights and our unions and build a working-class party,” he added. “A party whose goal is to organize millions of working people to take political power into our own hands and join the fight for a socialist world. That’s the kind of party the Communist League is building.”

The low point of labor resistance is behind us

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Fidel: Why Cuba has no need for nuclear weapons

“No one should have the right to produce nuclear weapons, much less the privileged right demanded by the imperialists,” Fidel Castro, central leader of the Cuban Revolution, said in 2005. “One weapon we haven’t renounced, the only weapon we have, is our people.”

Fidel Castro places memorial to thousands killed in Hiroshima, Japan, March 3, 2003.

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

15,000 New York nurses continue strike over staffing, health care

NEW YORK — “We’ve had lots of support on the picket line, in spite of the bitter cold weather,” a nurse in the cardiac-surgical unit told the *Militant* on the picket line in front of Mount Sinai Hospital Jan. 21. Steelworkers, electricians, hospital workers at Lenox Hill that aren’t on strike and, “of course, our co-workers in SEIU 1199,” which organizes technicians and support workers at Mount Sinai, have joined us, she said. She asked that her name not be used for fear of reprisals from the company.

Some 15,000 nurses, members of the New York State Nurses Association, have been on strike since Jan. 12 at three of the major hospital systems in New York City — New York-Presbyterian, Mount Sinai and Montefiore.

The two biggest issues are staffing levels and medical insurance. “We need safe staffing,” Anne Farrington, a nurse at Montefiore for 15 years, told News 12. “In the emergency room, patients are packed together. We need better care for our patients.”

The hospitals are trying to take out all the contract language won after a hard-fought strike three years ago that forced the companies to maintain agreed upon staffing quotas in each department or face substantial fines. “Without facing sizable penalties, the hospital will understaff. They’re a business and it’s all about profit to them,” the cardiac-surgical nurse said.

Nurses on the picket line had different reactions to news reports that Mount Sinai and New York-Presbyterian had agreed to maintain the nurses’ current health plan with no cuts. Some were relieved. Other nurses were reserving judgment. “Until a contract is signed, it’s just a promise,” one said.

During the strike, Montefiore Hospital has cut off health coverage for the thousands of striking nurses there.

— Sara Lobman

Strike by 31,000 Kaiser nurses in 2nd week in California, Hawaii

LOS ANGELES — The strike by some 31,000 Kaiser nurses and other health care workers, members of the

United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals, in California and Hawaii entered its second week Feb. 2.

The central issue the union is fighting for is enforceable rules to ensure nurse-to-patient ratios are actually followed.

So far, the union said in a Jan. 30 press release, Kaiser has failed to make any meaningful staffing proposal. “Our nurses are being asked to do the work of two people, sometimes without adequate CNAs [certified nurse assistants], without break relief, without charge nurses able to function in their actual role,” the union said.

“I’ve worked at Kaiser 18 years. I’m in the recovery room,” Sukarti Hill, a nurse at the company’s west Los Angeles hospital, told the *Militant*. “There have been increases in surgeries, but not increased staff — an increase from 35 to 50 patients a day.”

Kaiser management filed a lawsuit against the union Jan. 21 in federal court in the Central District of California seeking to negotiate individually with each local unit, not the coalition of unions they now face.

Sandra Flores, chief of staff for the Alliance of Health Care Unions, said the company was using this to break down bargaining. The union’s collective bargaining agreements with Kaiser Permanente expired Sept. 30.

— Deborah Liatos

Deaths in US mines rise as bosses push to boost profits

BY TONY LANE

PITTSBURGH — The coal mining bosses reported 33 miners were killed in industrial accidents in 2025, up 27% from 2024, when the Mine Safety and Health Administration reported 26 miners died on the job.

The majority of last year’s fatalities occurred at mines producing products other than coal, like copper, phosphates, sand and gravel. Coal mines accounted for eight deaths, down from 10 the year before.

The *Militant* spoke to Gary Hairston, president of the National Black Lung Association, who worked as a

Moscow drone strikes kill 12 Ukraine coal miners



Ukrainian State Prosecutors Office

Drone strikes by Moscow killed 12 coal miners and injured 16 more in Ukraine’s Dnipropetrovsk region Feb. 1. In the “double tap” attack, the Russian pilot of an Iranian-made drone targeted a bus with workers coming off their shift from a mine run by DTEK, the country’s largest coal and power company. Then, as the injured passengers evacuated the vehicle, another drone pilot zeroed in, hitting them with his deadly load. Above, the burnt-out bus.

DTEK said this was part of a broader Russian attack on its mining operations and coal trains in the area, set to deliver essential energy and heating fuel in the coldest winter in more than a decade. Overall, company CEO Maxim Timchenko told the press, strikes by Moscow have killed at least 19 DTEK miners and other employees, and injured 119 on the job.

At the same time, Moscow also attacked Ukraine’s rail system, hitting both passenger and freight cars, locomotives, tracks and buildings.

These strikes follow Russian President Vladimir Putin’s campaign to target attacks on Ukraine’s power grid, leaving hundreds of thousands in the capital, Kyiv, without heat, water and electricity, as the temperature could fall as low as minus 22 F.

Moscow hopes to break the will of Ukraine’s working people, but their response is the opposite — determination to continue to resist.

— ROY LANDERSEN

coal miner for 30 years.

“The inspectors don’t get out like they used to. It makes it hard when you don’t have someone to protect you,” Hairston said. More and more coal mines in the U.S. are nonunion today, there are less mine inspectors, and conditions have become increasingly dangerous.

“For months, coal communities have been raising the alarm about how cuts to MSHA and NIOSH [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health] would be disastrous for our miners,” Vonda Robinson, vice president of the National Black Lung Association, told The Associated Press. “We’re going to

keep making progress and do whatever it takes to protect coal miners from black lung disease and accidents.”

Significant gains were made earlier by the United Mine Workers in mighty battles in the 1960s and ’70s. The miners organized and transformed the union, using it to win control over safety in the mines, including the power to shut down mines that workers found to be dangerous. They also fought for and won black lung clinics across the coalfields. But the bosses have largely driven the union back today, and black lung is on the rise again.

Six of the eight coal mine deaths in 2025 were in West Virginia, most in underground mines. Three of the West Virginia deaths were in a six-week period in November and December.

West Virginia News ran a story Nov. 28 titled, “Uncontrolled trains, highwalls and rib falls: West Virginia 2025 mine fatalities span diverse hazards.” It said, “MSHA investigations into these fatalities highlight critical lapses in mandatory procedures, particularly surrounding equipment operation, ground control and adequate safety examinations.”

In its final report on the death of Billy Shawn Stalker at the Black Eagle Mine last February, MSHA found that Marfork Coal Company, a subsidiary of Alpha Metallurgical Resources Inc., failed to adequately support an area of the mine to protect the miners and failed to conduct adequate preshift examinations of conditions, leading to Stalker’s death.

Four of these deaths took place at mines owned by two companies: Alpha Metallurgical Resources Inc. and Alliance Resources Partners LP. They rank among the five largest coal producers in the Eastern United States.

All five of the mines in West Virginia where miners were killed on the job are nonunion.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

February 12, 2001

Over the past few months Russian president Vladimir Putin has taken measures to increase Russia’s leverage over neighboring countries, particularly Georgia and Ukraine, which were once republics of the former Soviet Union.

Russia’s state-owned gas companies shut off natural gas supplies to Georgia for several days in January. Georgia is wholly dependent on Russia for gas. Moscow is seeking to convert Ukraine’s \$2.2 billion gas debt into shares in Ukrainian state enterprises, particularly the gas pipeline system used to transport Russian gas to European customers.

In other developments, Russia halted plans to remove troops from Moldova last year, speeded up unity talks with Belarus, and created what the *Financial Times* termed a “Eurasian NATO” with several central Asian states.

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

February 13, 1976

Congress began debating in late January a proposal to reorganize the way the U.S. dominates the island colony of Puerto Rico. For almost 500 years the residents of Puerto Rico have not had control over their collective destiny, forms of economic and social organization, or relations with other countries.

This situation has led to increasing struggles by the labor movement. It is in this context that the “Compact of Permanent Union Between Puerto Rico and the United States” is being proposed in the U.S. Congress. The compact continues, virtually unchanged, the complete U.S. domination of the island. The urgent economic and social needs of the Puerto Rican people are totally ignored.

Washington has no right to dictate how much self-government Puerto Rico should have. That is a matter for the Puerto Rican people themselves to discuss and decide.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

February 12, 1951

The walkout of railroad yardmen went into its 9th day as members of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen demonstrated their rebellion against the two-year stall of their completely justified demands. Courts in Chicago are trying to implement forced-labor injunctions.

President Truman has centered all his fire upon the union. The answer of the workers was typified by the remarks of one worker quoted in the *N.Y. World Telegram*: “President Truman put the skids under us in 1946. We tried to strike and we were told to get back to work or be drafted. They’re always talking patriotism when something like this comes along.”

Truman and the rail barons are trying to use the Korean war to jam an unfair, dirty deal down the throats of the railroad workers. Unionists everywhere should rally to the trainmen. Their fight is every worker’s fight.

CL candidate Hugo Wils looks for workers to take state power

BY PETE CLIFFORD

MANCHESTER, England — “The Communist League explains that the only way to prevent another world war and the mounting devastation workers face, is for the working class to take political power,” Hugo Wils, the CL’s candidate in the Gorton and Denton constituency, told former airport worker Samantha Wilson as they talked on her doorstep Jan. 31.

“We are the peace party,” he said. Wilson signed to nominate Wils in the parliamentary by-election Feb. 26.

Wils, 38, is a leader of the Communist League, a shop floor worker in an aerospace factory and a member of Unite the Union. Two of his workmates who live in the constituency signed up to propose and second him. One took out a subscription to the *Militant*.

“Our campaign is on the front lines of today’s working-class battles that lay the groundwork for building the party workers need,” Wils told them.

The first day of his campaign, Wils joined a solidarity picket line with Unite union refuse workers in Birmingham, who have been striking since March 2025 against a wage cut. Delegations from the Rail, Maritime and Transport union and the Fire Brigades Union were among the several hundred trade unionists who joined the Jan. 30 action.

Danny Taylor, one of the strike leaders, hailed the support the strikers received. He told Wils that agency workers — who the bosses tried to use to break the strike — were now joining the union’s fight despite the bullying and harassment from bosses at the Labour-run City Council. Taylor and other strikers welcomed Wils’ campaign.

The strike “is an important fight and an example for all workers, in the face of the never-ending erosion of living standards,” Wils told an interviewer from the Politics Joe YouTube channel on the picket line. He said workers need to organize independently of the bosses’ parties, which try to lure workers into the dead end of trying to fix capitalism.

That afternoon Wils and campaign supporters joined some 300 Kurds in Manchester protesting the military assault by forces of Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa against Kurds in Syria. With Washington’s backing, al-Sharaa is trying to seize an autonomous region in northeast Syria carved out by Kurds, denied their national rights for decades by successive Syrian rulers.

Roddeen Osman and Mazloum Chike told Wils that their hometown of Kobani in northern Syria had been cut off during the fighting and they feared for their families who they can no longer contact. Wils spoke at the rally

‘Workers need own foreign policy’

“Your fight today is in the interests of all working people” he said. Washington and London “can’t be trusted. They care more about their relation with the al-Sharaa regime and business deals with Arab regimes than about the Kurds. The U.S. rulers care more about their so-called Board of Peace than the fight by Israel to defeat Hamas and prevent it carrying out a new Holocaust.

“The British rulers’ foreign policy is an extension of their course against working people at home,” Wils said. They defend the interests of the capital-

ist class. The CL advances the interests of working people worldwide. Its campaign calls for “US/UK hands off Cuba! Defend Cuba’s socialist revolution!”

The by-election was called after Labour Member of Parliament Andrew Gwynne quit. He’d been suspended from the Labour Party after allegedly making a series of abusive comments about working people, Jews and Labour MPs Angela Rayner and Dianne Abbott. The election is pitched by the media as make-or-break for the increasingly unpopular Labour government, headed by Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

“Our campaign begins with the world and the class questions that underlie all politics,” Wils told campaign supporters as they set out to get nominations Jan. 31, “not with the turmoil between Labour, Conservative, Reform, Greens and other capitalist parties.”

“One party says they are on the left and the other on the right, but they are part of the same team,” Diarietou Coulbaly told this *Militant* reporter on her doorstep in Gorton. She liked the Communist League’s perspective

SWP campaigns against gov’t attacks on immigrants

Continued from front page

finding that workers and young people are attracted to the perspective of building a powerful mass movement backed by the unions to fight to win amnesty for all immigrants in the U.S. They’re eager to discuss broader political questions exploding in the class struggle today.

After Alex Pretti, an intensive care unit nurse and member of American Federation of Government Employees Local 3699 in Minneapolis, was shot and killed in a Jan. 24 confrontation with ICE agents, his union called for vigils to remember him across the country. On Jan. 28 hundreds of nurses attended a vigil and rally at the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington.

When Pretti confronted ICE agents he had a gun in his waistband, but videos of the confrontation showed he had been disarmed before he was shot and killed. Thousands of workers have turned out for protests against his being killed.

“This is a fledgling movement. We need experience to organize and lead it. We need a savvy leadership,” ICU nurse Elizabeth Deal told SWP member Sarah Ullman at the VA action.

“Yes, we need working-class leadership, with the unions taking the lead. Disciplined protests, like this one is, so that workers — with papers and without — and their families can participate in large numbers,” Ullman replied.

“In 2006 some 2 million immigrants and other workers marched in the streets for an amnesty,” SWP member Arlene Rubinstein told Liz Grosh, an ICU nurse who is fighting to win her job back after being fired for union activity last March.

“At the hotel where I work,” Rubinstein said, “one of my co-workers said she participated in those protests in 2006, marching with her parents when she was 6. She remembers being inspired by the power and confidence of being part of a mass movement. This is possible to do again today.”

“I’ve been looking for this newspaper. Strengthen the unions whenever you can,” United Food and Commercial Workers member Yuval Lev said as he



Hugo Wils, Communist League candidate for Parliament in Gorton and Denton constituency, interviewed by Politics Joe internet reporter at Birmingham refuse strikers picket line Jan. 30.

for working people to organize independently of the capitalist parties. She got a subscription to the *Militant* and the book *Cuba and the Independence War in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde: The Fall of the Last Colonial Empire in Africa*.

After four hours campaigning, CL supporters got the 10 nominees needed to put Wils on the ballot.

“Why does Hugo Wils say that

immigrant rights are a union question?” one person asked CL member Andrés Mendoza.

“The attacks on immigrants are an attempt to divide working people,” Mendoza replied. He pointed to attempts by rail bosses in Manchester “to caution immigrant workers not to join a fight for union rights, but the union made clear that it had these workers’ backs and the fight won out.”

subscribed to the *Militant* at the Veterans Affairs action. Many participants said they were following and supporting the New York nurses strike.

Mass action led by unions needed

Thousands joined protests in San Francisco, San Jose and many smaller cities in the Bay Area Jan. 28-30. Students in Oakland walked out of school to protest ICE’s assaults, swelling a Jan. 30 rally at Fruitvale Plaza in the heart of a working-class immigrant community.

SWP member Betsey Stone reports many protesters stopped by the literature table that party members set up. They were interested in discussing the SWP’s proposals on advancing the fight to defend immigrant workers, the deepening crisis of capitalism, and the threat of more wars.

SWP campaigners found real interest in the example of Cuba’s socialist revolution, selling three copies of *Cuba and the Independence War in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde: The Fall of the Last Colonial Empire in Africa* by Cuban revolutionary leader Víctor Dreke.

“There will be protests against ICE violence and deportations all across the country today,” Margaret Trowe — a member of the UNITE HERE union, hotel housekeeper and SWP candidate for Congress — told co-worker Henry Bautista over coffee before work. “There will be a big one in Minneapolis like there was last Friday, and one in Oakland at the Fruitvale BART station.”

Later in the day, Bautista told Trowe he had taken a video of the Berkeley protest from the hotel balcony. After watching the video together, Trowe thanked him, adding “Our class has the power to win.”

“I think so too,” Bautista agreed.

In Seattle Jan. 31 more than 1,000 people came out for a peaceful rally backed by the Service Employees International Union, teachers federations and others. SWP members participated with a banner reading, “For workers’ rights to organize & unionize! Amnesty for undocumented immigrants!” in

both English and Spanish.

SWP member Rebecca Williamson spoke with Jennifer Beaton, marching with the health care workers contingent. Beaton described the life-and-death stakes in their fight for adequate staffing ratios.

“It will take a mass movement of tens of millions of workers to take power to begin to really deal with these issues,” Williamson, a rail worker, replied. Beaton was one of eight rally participants to subscribe to the *Militant*.

Support Kurdish self-determination

Over 100 people took part in a rally at the Hollywood-Fort Lauderdale International Airport demanding the extension of Temporary Protected Status for Haitian immigrants. SWP member Rachele Fruit met an activist in a Haitian rights organization there.

“I just drove 15 hours to join a Kurdish demonstration in Nashville,” he told her as he bought a copy of the *Militant* with an article on the fight by the Kurdish people for their national rights. Nashville has the largest population of Kurds of any city in the U.S.

Several hundred people marched in Montreal Jan. 31 in solidarity with Kurds in Syria fighting violent government attacks. Joe Young, Communist League candidate in the upcoming 2026 Quebec elections, joined the action, bringing the CL’s support.

That evening three young Kurds, Ramazan Efe Dogan, Yilmaz Aydogan and Siyar Zana, joined CL member Annette Kouri on a panel at a Militant Labor Forum in solidarity with the Kurdish struggle. “Kurds don’t ask for pity. They seek the right to speak their own language, live on their own land,” Dogan told the meeting.

Two participants subscribed to the *Militant* and one got *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* which describes the victorious fight for immigrant rights in the U.S. in 2006 and 2007.

To campaign with the SWP and Communist Leagues, contact the *Militant* distributor nearest you listed on page 8.

Will rulers in China replace US imperialism as world's top dog?

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The U.S. imperialist rulers regard the state-capitalist regime in Beijing as the main threat to their ebbing control of the “world order.” Washington is pushing back Beijing’s influence in the Western Hemisphere, trying to isolate it elsewhere and putting together new alliances to counter the Chinese rulers’ growing military power and global ambitions.

Beijing is looking for ways to respond to Washington’s moves, but does so from weakness. It has been unable to reverse a yearslong slowdown in economic growth, while widening class inequality. The crisis facing working people in China is driving them to look for ways to change the worsening conditions they face.

Chinese President Xi Jinping admitted Jan. 31 that China’s economy is “big but not strong,” referring to the disparity between its global clout and its low per capita income — \$13,810 a year, well below Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea. Over two-thirds of China’s population now live in cities, yet the regime has failed to develop a strong internal market.

The slump in China’s real estate market, which was for decades a driver of economic expansion, is into its fifth year. Local governments, reliant on selling land to developers, are burdened with huge debt. New home sales are at their lowest in 15 years. At the same

time, the price of housing is plummeting, forcing many home owners to cut back on spending.

Over decades of rapid state-guided capitalist growth, the Stalinist-molded regime in Beijing policed the industrial working class, holding down wages and enriching foreign and increasingly Chinese bosses.

In Shenzhen Jan. 12, police encircled workers at the Yi Li Sheng factory, who make audio equipment, on their fourth day on strike. Large parts of production were shifted abroad, leaving workers with reduced hours and take-home pay.

“Last month my wages were only 1,900 yuan [\$270],” one woman told Sky News. “It’s impossible! How can you survive in Shenzhen on that wage! The factory’s exploitation is unbearable.”

China has a shrinking and aging population with high youth unemployment.

Over 300 million migrant workers, whose labor powered the industrial boom in the cities over previous decades, remain excluded from state benefits like health care and schooling, unless they return home to the countryside.

On the edge of Beijing, 67-year-old Hu Dexi and his wife work 13-hour shifts as cleaners earning 4,000 yuan monthly. “No one can look after us,” Hu told Reuters. “I don’t want to be a burden on my two children and our country isn’t giving us a penny.”

Many of the 100 million workers who migrated from rural areas to work in



Pretend to Work Unlimited Company Hangzhou

With high youth unemployment in China, many students who can’t find jobs pay for the “privilege” of pretending to work to fulfill university diploma requirements, reassure their parents. Above, mock office with students at Pretend to Work Company in Hangzhou, China.

industries in the cities reach retirement age in China over the next 10 years. They face returning to their village to live off monthly pensions of 123 yuan.

China’s working-age population has been contracting since 2012. In June 2023, the official unemployment rate for youth soared to 21.3% before the government stopped publishing the data.

Youth pay to pretend to work

Unemployed youth can pay for the privilege of pretending to work in special fake offices. Some are graduates who have to “prove” they’ve got an internship before universities will forward them their diplomas.

“What I’m selling isn’t a workstation but the dignity of not being a useless person,” the owner of the Pretend to Work Company in Dongguan told the BBC. He says his business “uses lies to maintain respectability.”

Many young people give up looking

for a job altogether.

A popular new app in China is “Are You Dead?” It requires people to click a button every two days to confirm they’re alive, or else your emergency contact is informed. It is aimed at young people, many of whom live alone. There will be up to 200 million one-person households in China by 2030, according to Chinese state media.

Despite China’s huge population of 1.4 billion, only 7.9 million babies were born last year, the lowest since records began. This decline is fueled by high living costs and an aging society, with almost a quarter of the population now over age 60.

China’s population is forecast to fall to around half a billion or less by the end of the century.

These challenges reflect the widening contradictions of the regime in Beijing that rules over the world’s second-largest but deeply stagnant economy.

US sends armada to threaten Iran

Continued from front page

did in the earlier nuclear deal negotiated by the Barack Obama administration, but which did not prevent Tehran from making progress toward producing a nuclear weapon.

As with his other moves in the Middle East — like imposing a ceasefire in Gaza without allowing Israel to complete its defeat of Hamas and inviting governments in the region to be on his “Board of Peace” over Gaza, as well as his abandonment of the Kurds in Syria to form a bloc with the new Ahmad al-Sharaa regime there — Trump is looking to forge a Pax Americana, one that will include Tehran’s rulers. His goal is to advance U.S. imperialism’s place as the dominant Middle East power, reaping superprofits from oil and other resources there and pushing back inroads made by archrival Beijing.

With the arrival of the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier, transporting 5,000 troops, Washington now has at least 12 warships in the region. It also sent more than 36 additional aircraft, including fighter jets. Before their arrival, the U.S. military already had some 40,000 troops at eight permanent bases and 11 other sites in the region.

Tehran had agreed that Araghchi would meet with U.S. envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner in Turkey Feb. 6. The Turkish government — encouraged by Washington — had invited representatives of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Oman and the United Arab Emirates to be observers, as a way to press Tehran to make concessions and avoid a war.

But on Feb. 3 Tehran insisted the

talks take place in Oman, with only U.S. and Iranian negotiators present, and limited to discussions on its nuclear weapons program.

Tensions in the region are high. Later that day a jet from the Abraham Lincoln shot down an Iranian drone the Pentagon claimed had “aggressively” approached the carrier.

Opponents of the Tehran regime inside Iran have spoken out against Washington’s war threats. The Free Union of Iranian Workers warned that contrary to aiding the fight against the regime, foreign military intervention would be an act “aimed at beheading the formation of a democratic and free Iran.”

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‘We won’t retreat in the face of the massacre,’ Iranian oil workers say

BY SETH GALINSKY

The systematic massacre of 10,000 or more protesters by Tehranw’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, police and paramilitary thugs cut short the wave of demonstrations that was spreading across Iran. But far from demoralizing working people, the repression deepened their anger and their resolve to overturn the reactionary capitalist regime.

Every day new actions are being called — from public statements to sit-ins, rallies and marches — by unions, students, retirees and others. They’re demanding the release of imprisoned protesters and political prisoners as well as justice for those who were murdered. Some actions are a few dozen, others, like some campus protests, have involved hundreds.

“We will not retreat in the face of any level of killing,” the Council for Organizing Contract Oil Workers Protests said in a Jan. 31 statement. “The perpetrators and those who ordered the murder of our loved ones must be tried and punished.”

The protests began Dec. 28 among merchants and businesses in Tehran’s bazaar and then spread across the country, with chants “Death to the dictator,” “Freedom, freedom, freedom,” and “Not for Gaza, not for Lebanon, I will die for Iran.” Oppressed nationalities, including Kurds, Baluchis, Azerbaijanis and Arabs, joined in.

On Jan. 7 workers from two oil re-

fineries — key to Iran’s economy — joined the protests, while a coalition of Kurdish groups the following day held a general strike.

Fearing its rule could be overturned, the regime even brought in thugs from Hezbollah in Lebanon and Tehran-backed militia groups the regime has organized in Iraq and Syria, part of its anti-Israel “axis of resistance” to aid in the slaughter.

Within days, family members began turning funerals of those killed into expressions of opposition to the regime, its assault on democratic rights, and its drive to destroy Israel and expel the Jews there.

On Jan. 31, Feb. 1 and 3 hundreds of nursing, medical and dentistry students held rallies and sit-ins in at least five universities in Shiraz, Tehran, Tabriz, and Mashhad calling for a boycott of exams. “You killed our classmates, blinded and injured many. We will not return to normal life until this government is overthrown,” they said.

A few dozen retired workers in Shush and Rasht restarted their weekly protests, which had been taking place for over a year. Their actions on Feb. 1 demanded freedom for all imprisoned protesters and all others arrested for opposing the regime.

On Feb. 2, police used pepper spray and beatings to disperse a sit-in and protest by municipal workers in Ilam who haven’t been paid in three months.

Unions help build protests

Continued from front page

to Pocatello, Idaho, to Ames, Iowa, to Spokane, Washington, and other places, large and small, people gathered to protest Immigration and Customs Enforcement's sweeping arrests and deportations in Minnesota.

Many working people who believed President Donald Trump when he said immigration raids were aimed at getting rid of violent criminals, the "worst of the worst," now see ICE targeting their co-workers and neighbors.

In Minneapolis, substantial demonstrations have called for the removal of ICE and Border Patrol agents from Minnesota. Thousands marched here Jan. 30 after government agents shot and killed nurse Alex Pretti, a regular participant in confrontations with them. The Minneapolis march was called by groups from the University of Minnesota and Stand With Minnesota. Across the country hundreds of demonstrations were organized in solidarity that day.

Seeing the spread of protests, Trump ordered the replacement of Border Patrol chief Gregory Bovino, an aggressive figure leading ICE's "Operation Metro Surge," with his boss, Tom Homan. The two ICE agents who shot Pretti have been relieved of duty and are under investigation. Trump promised to "de-escalate" the situation.

But government agents continue to roam the streets of the Twin Cities, as an ICE memo claims they have sweeping powers to forcibly enter people's homes without needing a warrant. Co-workers of this *Militant* correspondent at an industrial bakery, including workers from Venezuela and Nicaragua, told me they go straight home after work every day fearing being detained if they go shopping. They depend on delivery services and neighbors to get groceries for them.

A labor-led fight for amnesty

At a Jan. 31 Militant Labor Forum, Helen Meyers, speaking for the Socialist Workers Party, discussed the road forward. "We always start with what advances the interests of the working class," she said. "We oppose ICE's Operation Metro Surge, but, more importantly, we advance a strategy to defend immigrant workers, unify the working class and strengthen the ability of the unions to take on the attacks of the bosses and their government. We fight to build a movement of millions to demand amnesty for all undocumented workers in the U.S."

"Along this road, we oppose the provocative actions of those seeking confrontation with armed federal agents," said Meyers. "They only lead to two things — danger for all the participants and a serious obstacle to the participation of immigrant and other workers."

Court blocks gov't move to revoke TPS for Haitians

On Feb. 2, federal Judge Ana Reyes blocked the Donald Trump administration from revoking Temporary Protected Status from some 350,000 Haitians in the U.S. This means they can stay and work here. In the last month a number of union-backed protests have been held in defense of Haitians in South Florida, where over 100,000 live.

Meyers said that the fight for amnesty needs to be led by the labor movement. "It's a life-and-death question for the unions. Actions like those the unions helped organize on Dec. 20 and Jan. 23, disciplined and peaceful, point the way forward to involving more and more working people, with and without papers," she said.

Meyers pointed to the powerful example set by immigrant workers and their supporters in 2006 and 2007, as they led mass actions involving millions in cities, towns and villages all across the U.S. Their banner was, "We are workers, not criminals." The size and breadth of the protests led to defeat of the Sensenbrenner bill, a reactionary law which would have made undocumented immigrants into felons and levied penalties on anyone aiding them.

The U.S. capitalist class doesn't want to deport 11 million undocumented workers, she said. They need them in agriculture, health care, packinghouses, construction and more. The rulers' goal is to instill fear to keep these workers working for lower wages, in worse conditions. Then they use this to drive down the wages of all workers, and to weaken our fighting capacity.

The only realistic road forward

Meyers said the fight for amnesty is not utopian. One amnesty was won in 1986 under the Ronald Reagan administration that led to nearly 3 million immigrants getting legal status.

A labor-led battle for amnesty for all immigrant workers in the U.S. would go much further today and greatly strengthen the whole working class.

Meyers concluded by saying the bosses will continue to attack the work-



Militant/Rolande Girard

UNITE HERE contingent at May Day 2006 Chicago rally of 400,000, part of nationwide mass actions involving workers with and without papers that defeated anti-immigrant legislation.

ing class as long as capitalism rules. To end this, working people need to organize to take political power into their own hands. And that requires a revolutionary party — like the Socialist Workers Party is out to build.

A lively discussion ensued. Chris Pennock, a postal worker and member of the National Association of Letter Carriers, described how his union had sponsored a protest against ICE agents staging operations in post office parking lots. He said there is a discussion going on where he works on whether the union should take a position on social questions, like immigration, or just deal with workplace issues.

Meyers said one question she is asked about is the right of Alex Pretti to legally carry a gun at a protest. The SWP supports the constitutional right to bear arms, but that has nothing to do with what is wise to do at a demonstration. If you confront armed federal agents while carrying a weapon, you put your life and

those of others around you in jeopardy.

She pointed to an example from the 1934 Minneapolis Teamster strikes. Farrell Dobbs, an SWP leader and one of the union leaders in those strikes, explains in *Teamster Rebellion* how after two Teamsters had been brutally murdered by Minneapolis cops, workers wanted to arm themselves for picket duty.

The union decided to disarm strikers before allowing them to picket. Not doing so, he said, could have led to a provocation where government officials could attack the strikers, including calling for federal troops to put them down.

The biggest problem in Minneapolis today is the lack of a broader leadership to advance these perspectives, Meyers said. Simply calling for "ICE out" or organizing confrontations won't bring immigrant workers out of their homes or strengthen the labor movement. This will take a more decisive political fight — a popular, working-class-led fight for an amnesty.

Georgia high school students walk out to defend immigrants

BY SUSAN LAMONT

ATLANTA — "My family comes from Mexico and I can see every day how poorly immigrant workers like my parents are treated in this country," Tri-Cities High School student Santiago Ozuna, 16, told Socialist Workers Party members Lisa Potash and Susan LaMont when they met Jan. 30, after a walkout by some 70 students there.

Ozuna and other students had stopped at the McDonald's — which happens to be across the street from the Socialist Workers Party headquarters — to warm up. Ozuna, Aziza Abdush-Shakur, 18, and Dulce Sandoval, 15, were glad to talk with us about their protest.

Thousands of students walked out of some 100 high schools across Georgia that day, WRDW-TV News reported. Students had walked out of Tri-Cities on Jan. 27 as well, Ozuna told us. Some of the teachers supported the students' action, he said. A number hid the students' signs when they got to school until the walkout started.

"We can see people being killed by ICE," Ozuna said. "The constitutional rights of many others are being violated. My parents have been here 25 years. It's not right that they shouldn't be able to become citizens."

"My mom, who's been here 17 years, works so hard to support me and my two sisters," Sandoval said. "The higher-ups have done a good job of dividing people, but we're protest-

ing against that. The teenagers are standing up for what's right."

"We can help to overcome those divisions by fighting for amnesty for immigrant workers," Potash said. The students said they'd never heard of the demand for amnesty and were interested in learning more about it.

"The attacks on immigrants by the wealthy capitalist rulers and their government are aimed at keeping working people divided," Potash said. "But there's broad support among working people and the unions for equal rights for immigrants and their families that a fight for amnesty could mobilize."

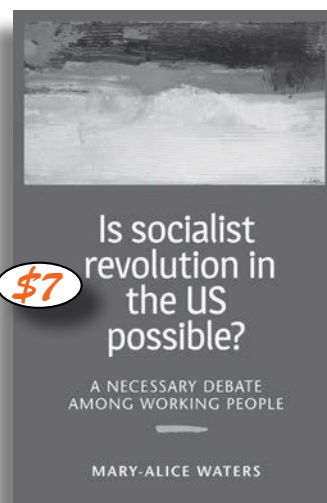
She explained that two amnesties had been won in the past, covering millions of immigrant workers.

The students said they had heard about the fight of Kilmar Ábrego

García, but they hadn't heard about how his union, SMART, has championed his fight for asylum since day one, or that a number of unions played a big role in building the Jan. 23 demonstration of thousands against the Immigration and Customs Enforcement attacks and deportations in Minneapolis, making sure it was a peaceful, disciplined action.

The students were determined to organize their protests despite threats of punishment by the school administration. "They can't expel us all," Abdush-Shakur, who is African American, said.

The students took copies of the *Militant* to learn more about the fight for immigrant rights around the country, as well as other world developments.



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Speak Out: Oppose ICE Raids, Deportations! Back Amnesty for Undocumented Workers! Unions Need to Lead Fight to Unify Working Class. Sun. Feb. 15, 6:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel: (510) 686-1351.

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Amnesty for Immigrants, to Unify the Working Class! Why the Course of Liberals, Left is an Obstacle. Speaker: Dean Hazlewood, Socialist Workers Party. Sun. Feb. 15, 5 p.m. Donation: \$10. 4750 S. Pulaski Road. Tel: (312) 792-6160.

Cuba prepares to defend revolution as Washington threatens

Continued from front page

Trump signed an executive order authorizing new sanctions targeting any country that sells or provides oil to Cuba. The measure was preceded by Washington blocking oil supplies from Venezuela to Cuba a couple of weeks earlier and threats to the Cuban government “to make a deal, before it is too late.”

For more than 60 years, Cuba has been the target of a relentless economic and political war by the U.S. government that has no parallel. Enforced by both Democratic and Republican administrations, Washington has maintained sweeping measures that impose obstacles to Cuba’s ability to purchase fuel, foodstuffs, medical supplies and other essential items from the U.S. and elsewhere.

As a direct result of these measures, power outages are already a daily occurrence, with most people having electricity for only a few hours a day. By cutting off oil supplies, the Trump administration hopes to bring the Cuban people to their knees and force them to submit to its dictates.

To justify these latest assaults, the White House claims Cuba represents an “unusual and extraordinary threat” to U.S. national security.

“Under mendacious and empty arguments” President Trump wants to suffocate the Cuban economy, said Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Jan. 30.

Cuba is “a country of peace, solidarity, and cooperation,” the Cuban government said Jan. 30. “It’s also a country of courageous fighting people. Imperialism is mistaken to feel confident that with economic pressure and inflicting suffering on millions of people, it will crush our determination to defend our national sovereignty.”



Council of State Office of Historical Affairs
Cubans have long, proud history of fighting Washington’s interventions. Above, protest against U.S.-backed coup by Fulgencio Batista, April 6, 1952. Raúl Castro is waving flag.

The march was one of several mass actions that have taken place across the island since Washington’s Jan. 3 bloody assault on Venezuela and kidnapping of President Nicolás Maduro, a blatant violation of that country’s sovereignty.

Half a million Cubans across the island marched Jan. 18 to pay tribute to the 32 Cuban combatants who died fighting against the U.S. assault on Venezuela. Regular army units and popular militias carried out military exercises in several provinces in late January. The trade unions and mass organizations are holding meetings to prepare for any possible military attack and to organize stepping up efforts to increase production of food and other essential items.

We “do not accept any shackles, new or old,” FEU President González said. Like the generation that staged

the first torchlight march, led by Fidel Castro from the university 73 years ago, we “will not surrender, we will not sell out.”

On Jan. 27, 1953, that march was the first large street action opposing the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, which had taken power through a military coup the year before. The Centennial Generation, as that generation of workers and students became known, refused to accept the tyranny and corruption that marked Cuba at the time. Under the leadership of Fidel Castro, the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army, they went on to carry out a six-year revolutionary struggle that overthrew the dictatorship, and opened the road to a socialist revolution. Some 20,000 Cubans had paid with their lives by the time Batista and his henchmen fled the country Jan. 1, 1959.

The U.S. rulers seek to “return to a utopian and romanticized past that can only exist in their imagination, and to the power the revolution took away from them,” read a Jan. 31 column in *Girón*, the provincial newspaper in Matanzas.

Cuba’s socialist revolution targeted

Despite Washington’s threats, the U.S. rulers know any attempt to carry out a “surgical precision” military operation in Cuba, like they did in Venezuela Jan. 3, would not have the same results.

“If the Americans put a single foot on Cuban soil, it won’t be like their cowardly ambush of our combatants in Venezuela,” Cuban revolutionary leader Víctor Dreke told the BBC last month. “Over here, things would be different.” Dreke was a combatant in the revolutionary war that overthrew the Batista dictatorship. Since then he has shouldered central leadership responsibilities, including in Cuba’s internationalist missions that provided decisive aid to national liberation struggles in Africa.

“The U.S. is actively seeking regime change in Cuba by the end of the year” headlined a Jan. 22 *Wall Street Journal* article. It reported that U.S. officials, emboldened by their removal of Maduro, are “searching for Cuban government insiders who can help cut a deal” to push out the regime.

That approach would only be one more in a long line of attempts by the U.S. rulers who have underestimated the class consciousness of millions of Cuban workers and farmers.

“We have problems, and we know we have a lot problems,” Yadián Silva, a taxi driver, told The Associated Press. “But when things happen in Cuba, it’s because people truly feel they should happen. Not because someone from the outside says, ‘do this.’”

The *Girón* column also had an answer to U.S. officials quoted in the *Journal*: “Before they celebrate or fantasize about building casinos and McDonald’s in Havana, they should understand — that no matter how grandiose their rhetoric may sound to people worn down by material deprivation, no matter how attractive their promises for the future may seem to many victims of hopelessness, there is something that is much more deeply rooted than their hollow slogans.”

US rulers hate Cuba out of ‘fear of Latin American revolution’

As part of celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Fidel Castro, the central leader of Cuba’s socialist revolution, the Militant is printing excerpts of his political writings over the coming year. This one is from *The Second Declaration of Havana*, presented by Castro and adopted by a million-strong General Assembly of the Cuban People on Feb. 4, 1962. The full text is available in *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*. Copyright © 2007 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

Celebrate the 100th anniversary of birth of Fidel Castro

Cuba affronts the imperialists in a special way. What is it that is hidden behind the Yankees’ hatred of the Cuban Revolution? What explains it is fear. Not fear of the Cuban Revolution, but fear of the Latin American revolution.

By crushing the Cuban Revolution they hope to dispel the fear that torments them, the specter of revolution that threatens them. By eliminating the Cuban Revolution, they hope to eliminate the revolutionary spirit of the people. They imagine in their

delirium that Cuba is an exporter of revolutions. In their sleepless merchants’ and money lenders’ minds lives the idea that revolutions can be bought, sold, rented, loaned, exported and imported like a piece of merchandise. Ignorant of the objective laws that govern the development of human societies, they believe that their monopolistic, capitalistic, and semi-feudal regimes are eternal.

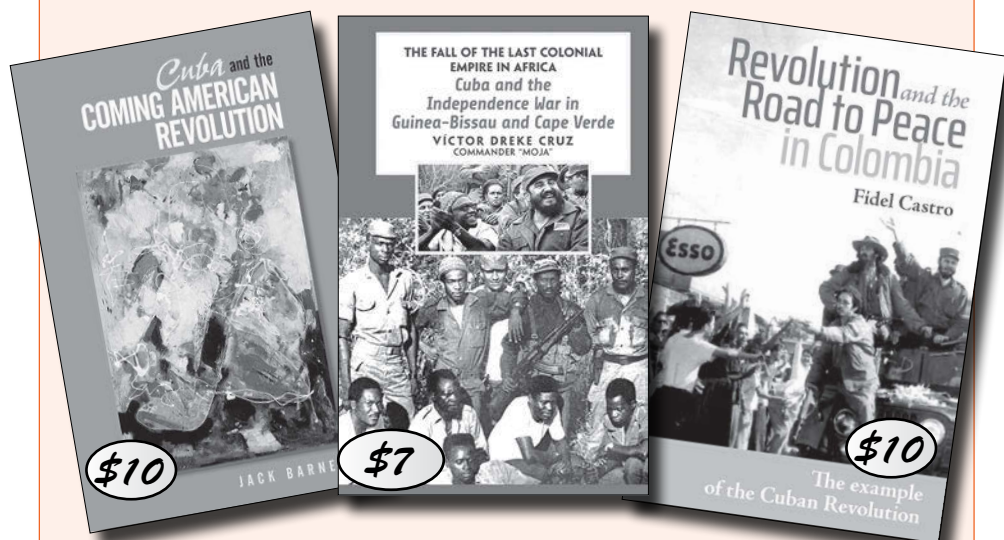
Always, in each historic epoch, the ruling classes have committed murder. They do so invoking the “defense of society, order, country” — their “society” of the privileged minority against the exploited majority; their class “order,” maintained by blood and fire against the dispossessed; the “country,” whose fruits only they enjoy, depriving the rest of the people — all this to repress the revolutionaries who aspire to a new society, a just order, a country truly for all.

But the development of history, the ascending march of humanity, cannot and will not be halted. The forces that impel the people, who are the real makers of history, are determined by the material conditions of their existence and by the aspirations for higher goals of well-being and liberty that emerge when man’s progress in the fields of science,

technology, and culture make this possible. These forces are superior to the will and the terror unleashed by the ruling oligarchies.

Imperialism considered us a powerless and submissive flock. Now it begins to be terrified of that flock — a gigantic flock of 200 million Latin Americans in whom Yankee monopoly capitalism today sees its gravediggers.

Read more on the example of the Cuban Revolution



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Malcolm X aimed to wake people up to their own ‘self-worth’

To mark Black History Month, *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for February features Malcolm X on Afro-American History by the most outstanding leader of the Black liberation struggle in the U.S. The book contains speeches and other selections from Malcolm addressing the proud but largely hidden struggles and accomplishments of African Americans. Below is an excerpt from the 1990 preface by Steve Clark. Copyright © 1990 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY STEVE CLARK

Malcolm X was an intransigent opponent of the U.S. government and its imperialist policies. He fought the racist oppression of Blacks and the profit-driven plunder of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. He expressed this revolutionary political outlook in the opening years of the 1960s while a major spokesperson for the Nation of Islam. Following his March 1964 break with the Nation, Malcolm's views continued to evolve — first in an anticapitalist, and then increasingly in a prosocialist direction.

During the last year of his life, Malcolm organized the Muslim Mosque, Inc. Alongside it, in June 1964, he founded a secular political group, the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU). He spent much of the last year of his life in Africa and the



P. H. Polk/Tuskegee University

Malcolm X spoke to thousands at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama Feb. 3, 1965. Then SNCC Black rights fighters took the revolutionary leader to speak in Selma, where a sharp battle was raging.

Middle East observing, speaking, and meeting with political leaders there. He visited and addressed audiences in France and Britain as well.

On January 24, 1965, Malcolm X gave the speech on Afro-American history published here. Four weeks later he was assassinated in New York City.

Around the time Malcolm gave this talk, he was interviewed by a reporter for the *Village Voice*, a New York weekly. “The greatest mistake of the movement,” he said, “has been trying to organize a sleeping people around specific goals. You have to wake the people up first, then you’ll get action.”

“Wake them up to their exploitation?” the reporter asked.

“No, to their humanity, to their own worth, and to their heritage,” he responded. For Malcolm, an understanding of the historical achievements of Black people, as well as the origins and evolution of their oppression in recent centuries, was an essential weapon in the hands of those struggling for their liberation.

Chattel slavery's crime, Malcolm explains in this speech, was to dehumanize Blacks — stripping them of their humanity and heritage — as it exploited them. “We got to where we had no language, no history, no name. The white man named us after himself — Jones, Smith, Johnson, Bunche, and names like those. ... He convinced us that our people back home were sav-

ages and animals in the jungle.”

Malcolm repeatedly emphasized the common interests of the oppressed. “Our interests are worldwide rather than limited just to things American, or things New York, or things Mississippi,” he explained, and “we look upon ourselves not as a dark minority on the white American stage, but rather ... as a part of the dark majority who now prevail on the world stage. When you realize you are part of the majority, you approach your problem as if odds are on your side rather than odds are against you. You approach demanding rather than using the begging approach.”

At a time when many saw imperialism as invincible, Malcolm focused on how the growing struggle of the exploited was changing the world. “There is no nation today,” he said in this speech, “that can brag about its power being unlimited, or that it can take unilateral action in any area of the earth that they desire. No white nation can do this. But just twenty years ago they could do it. Twenty years ago the United States could do it, twenty years ago England could do it, France could do it, even little old runt Belgium could do it, and Holland could do it. But they can't do it now.”

Malcolm pointed to the Cuban revolution, which triumphed against a U.S.-backed tyrant, Fulgencio Batista, in 1959. “The Cuban revolution — that's a revolution. They overturned the sys-

tem,” he said in November 1963.

Six months later, at a meeting sponsored by the Militant Labor Forum on May 29, 1964, he explained, “When Castro was up in the mountains of Cuba, they told him the odds were against him. Today he's sitting in Havana and all the power this country has can't remove him.”

Malcolm's internationalism, combined with optimism in the future and confidence in the capacities of the oppressed, was well founded. The pattern he described has continued, with the crushing defeat of the U.S. government in Vietnam in 1975; the defeat of the South African army at Cuito Cuanavale, Angola, in early 1988 by Cuban, Angolan, and Namibian forces; and the unfolding democratic revolution against the apartheid system in South Africa in the late 1980s and as the 1990s opened.

Today tens of millions around the world are attracted to this outstanding working-class revolutionary leader whose words speak the unvarnished truth about their lives, history, common struggle, and aspirations.

The January 24, 1965, speech was planned to be the first of three Malcolm would give at Harlem's Audubon Ballroom on consecutive Sundays, as part of laying the political groundwork for the new program the OAAU leaders were preparing. The first talk was to focus on Afro-American history, from the ancient African civilizations through slavery to the present day; the second, to discuss current conditions; and the third, to discuss the future of the Black struggle and present the new program.

The second of these public meetings took place on January 31. But the third meeting was not held on February 7 because Malcolm had accepted last-minute invitations to speak in London and Paris that week. It was postponed to Monday, February 15.

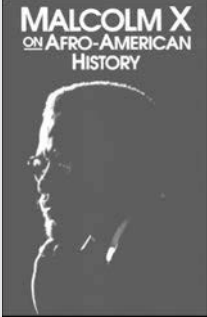
Early in the morning of February 14 — a few hours after his return from Britain — Malcolm's home was fire-bombed while he and his family slept. As a result, the presentation of the new program was postponed again and the February 15 meeting devoted instead to his speech on the attack and the issues it raised.

At the next OAAU meeting on February 21, Malcolm was cut down by assassins' bullets as he started to speak.

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The SWP is the peace party in the working class

Growing numbers of workers are looking for the way to bring an end to today’s wars and prevent even more deadly conflicts. Workers’ desire to live in peace is founded on the fact the working class has no interest in exploitation or oppression. In contrast, capitalist rule is based on the dog-eat-dog competition of rival states chasing profits at the expense of each other. This drives their race to build larger and deadlier weaponry.

Throughout their history, the Democratic and Republican parties have backed Washington’s wars, from the First and Second World Wars, to Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as their drive today to reassert domination of the Western Hemisphere, from Venezuela to Greenland.

The U.S. rulers are driving to rebuild their industrial capacity and seize resources to feed their war machine. They know they have to expand or be crushed by more ruthless rivals. The choice left to workers is to overthrow their rule or face nuclear devastation.

The Socialist Workers Party is the peace party in the working class. It’s the only party that advances a road for the working class to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist war makers, to make a socialist revolution. It is deeply involved in today’s struggles of workers and our unions, pointing a way

to unite working people of all colors and nationalities, with or without papers, and to deepen our reliance on each other, not the bosses and their parties. The SWP points to the capacities of the working class to take society’s immense productive wealth and use it to meet the basic needs of all, to truly liberate humanity.

The U.S. rulers can only go to war if they can convince us we have a common interest in doing so. They say the road to peace is through war on “our” rivals. These claims are a fraud. Their march to war is driven by the capitalists’ unquenchable thirst for profit and plunder.

“Our party is unalterably opposed to all imperialist wars,” SWP National Secretary James P. Cannon told a federal court in 1941. He was among 18 leaders of the SWP and the Teamsters union framed up and imprisoned for organizing opposition within the labor movement to U.S. entry into World War II.

Since its founding in 1919, the communist movement in the U.S. has stood in implacable opposition to every one of the rulers’ military operations, up to their murderous assault on Venezuela and threats against Cuba today. The SWP is forging a vanguard working-class party in the U.S. that can lead tens of millions to end the source of imperialist war. Join the SWP!

Fewer jobs, higher prices and tough times to come

while the working class continues to feel the squeeze from high prices for groceries, rents and mortgages, health care, electric bills, car payments and more.

At the same time, it’s become increasingly difficult for workers to get and keep a decent-paying job, as a growing number of bosses at some of the country’s biggest companies are slashing workforces. U.S. bosses eliminated 1.2 million jobs last year, the highest annual figure since 2020 during the COVID pandemic.

UPS announced Jan. 27 that it is cutting 30,000 jobs this year, in addition to the 48,000 the company eliminated in 2025. Amazon is laying off 16,000 employees, three months after cutting 14,000 workers in the fall. Verizon began laying off more than 13,000 workers in November, its largest reduction ever. Dow Chemical is cutting 4,500 jobs, after axing 2,300 workers last year. Tyson Foods said it is closing a plant that employed 3,200 packinghouse workers in Lexington, Nebraska, affecting nearly a third of that town’s population.

Those of us who find ourselves out of work are having an increasingly difficult time getting another job. Some 26% of the 7.5 million on the government’s unemployment rolls have been looking for work for over six months. And millions more are no longer counted, chopped off as “discouraged,” not in the labor market.

“More than half of workers have less than three

months of living expenses saved up in the case of a layoff,” a recent *USA Today* survey said. “Nearly a third only have enough to last one month.”

The bosses are reaping big profits off the backs of working people. “The portion of the U.S.’s economic output that workers receive through salary and wages decreased to 53.8% in the third quarter of 2025,” gloated *Fortune* magazine, the lowest level since the Bureau of Labor Statistics started keeping these figures in 1947. Meanwhile, corporate earnings have skyrocketed, hitting a record \$1.87 trillion in 2024 for Fortune 500 companies, with bloated CEO salaries.

The capitalist rulers say this reflects increased “productivity,” with fewer workers producing more while getting less and less of the wealth we produce. Workers call this speedup, with a real toll on life and limb.

Health care premiums skyrocket

Particularly daunting is the cost of health insurance. From the start of this year premiums rose, most dramatically for millions who signed up for coverage under the Affordable Care Act, known as Obamacare.

“Lenny and Mandee Wilson, who are 47 years old and live in Charleston, W.Va., paid \$255 a month last year for a low-end ACA plan,” said the *Wall Street Journal*. “Late last year they learned their bill would be going up to \$2,155 a month, a sum nearly triple their monthly mortgage payment of about \$760.”

So, they dropped their insurance. “If we step off the ladder wrong and make a trip to the ER,” Lenny Wilson said, “that would pretty much wipe us out financially.”

Prices for both new and used cars are rising, along with interest rates on loans to pay for them. Many workers end up owing more than their vehicles are worth. This spirals into higher debt payments when they try to trade in the old car for a newer one. A record number of car buyers today have monthly payments of \$1,000 or more.

The price of keeping a roof over your head is also going up, by more than one-third since 2021, to a median home price of nearly \$400,000. Together with high mortgage rates, many young people find themselves unable to move out of their parents’ place in hopes of beginning to raise a family.

But never fear, some people are finding new digs. “Sales Over \$10 Million are Skyrocketing,” headlined a Jan. 29 *Wall Street Journal* article. The paper runs a column called “Mansions,” featuring huge homes on vast estates. The number of these homes that went for over \$10 million in 2025 rose nearly 32% over the previous year.

Rail strike set in Spain

Continued from front page

erated by the Italian national rail company Iryo, the second by the Spanish state-owned rail company Renfe. The rail infrastructure in Spain is controlled and managed by the state-owned ADIF Alta Velocidad company.

After the crash Transport Minister Óscar Puente dismissed the possibility it was caused by a failure to maintain the track, claiming the high-speed line had been “completely renovated” recently.

Days later Puente was forced to backtrack, after the government agency charged with investigating the disaster issued a preliminary finding that pointed to an over 15-inch crack in the track. Iñaki Barrón, the head of the investigation, disputed the government’s claim the track had undergone recent renovation. Black boxes from both trains have yet to be examined.

Rail workers and their union are looking for ways to take greater control over safety. SEMAF had written to the company responsible for maintaining the track last August, warning about severe wear and tear across the country, including in the area where the derailment occurred. The union also pointed to pot holes, bumps and imbalances in overhead power lines that were causing damage to trains.

“It’s a vicious cycle,” Diego Martin, SEMAF general secretary, told Reuters. “If there are defects in the track they are transmitted to the train, and defects in the train are also transmitted to the track.”

“We cannot nor should we question our network,” the transport minister told the press after the union announced the strike. He admitted the network is “not infallible,” but claimed, “it is a great transport system.”

Three more accidents in the days after the deadly collision gave the lie to that claim. A train engineer was killed when a commuter train near Barcelona derailed Jan. 20 after a containment wall collapsed onto the track following heavy rainfall. The same day, another train in Catalonia derailed because of a rock on the line. Luckily no one died there.

Catalan drivers walk out

The following day 134 of the 140 train drivers on the Rodalies commuter rail network in Catalonia refused to work, regardless of assurances by ADIF that the tracks were safe.

After six hours of talks, an agreement was reached between the union, the Catalan government, ADIF and Renfe for track inspections along 13 key routes. They were carried out by train drivers, union representatives and technicians assigned by the company. SEMAF refused to set a time for service to resume, saying this would occur progressively as each of the inspections was done, along with any needed repairs.

“In these sections, every time storms occur, numerous elements fall onto the tracks — walls, rocks, trees, etc. — a circumstance that could be avoided through adequate preventative plans,” SEMAF said.

Elsewhere in southeast Spain the arm of a crane next to the tracks struck the windows of a passing commuter train Jan. 22, injuring six passengers.

Spain has a bigger high-speed network than any country other than China, with some 40 million passengers using it in 2024. But government negligence and rail bosses’ thirst for profit have led to increasingly treacherous conditions.

In the wake of the worldwide 2008-09 financial crisis, Spanish government debt spiraled up, and successive governments moved to slash spending, including on rail infrastructure, under pressure from the European Union. Investment in rail infrastructure in 2024 was less than a third of what it was in 2009. Between 2018 and 2022, the vast majority of infrastructure spending went into new track, not into maintenance, renewal and upgrading of existing lines.

The government’s own figures show reports of deterioration and breaks in rail trackage rose from 440 in 2015 to 716 in 2024. Derailments correspondingly increased over that same period.

All three of the country’s main union federations are backing the Feb. 9-11 strike call.

SEMAF points out that rail workers notify authorities about the need for track maintenance they see on the job, but these reports go “without response or action for months, and even years.” It’s now seeking measures to force rail bosses to respond in a timely way.

