

THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 90/NO. 7 FEBRUARY 23, 2026

Unions help lead protests for rights of immigrants in Minneapolis

BY EDWIN FRUIT

MINNEAPOLIS — Despite the government’s “drawdown” removing 700 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, 2,000 of them remain in Minnesota. They’re conducting raids and arrests of immigrant workers and increasingly of protesters who obstruct their operations.

At the same time, more labor unions are getting involved, helping to assure disciplined, peaceful protests against the “Operation Metro Surge” assault on immigrants and the whole working class here.

“Our union members are being detained while commuting to and from work, tearing apart families,” regional AFL-CIO President Chelsie Glaubitz Gabiou told hundreds at a labor-sponsored immigrants’ rights protest in frigid temperatures in Brooklyn Park Feb. 7. “We must deepen our solidarity for our neighbors and co-workers.”

All kinds of signs were carried, including some calling for amnesty for all immigrant workers in the U.S.

Labor and other sponsoring organizations provided marshaling, including SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa, Minnesota Somali Community

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SWP call to action: US hands off Cuba! End Washington’s economic blockade!



Militant photos: Left, Glen Swanson; right, Mary Martin

Left, Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Florida, joined Miami Coalition for End of the Blockade, others in Feb. 8 protest in Miami against U.S. rulers’ attacks on Cuba. Right, SWP joined Minnesota Cuba Committee, SCOTA, others in picket line in Minneapolis Feb. 9.

SWP campaigns to defend Cuba, amnesty for immigrants

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom are urging working people to join them in organizing and building protests against Washington’s stepped-up oil blockade and threats of worse against Cuba. They’re campaigning widely to get out the truth about Cuba’s socialist revolution and they’re joining actions to defend immigrant rights.

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Cuba’s working people respond to US threats

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL AND JONATHAN SILBERMAN

HAVANA — A team of *Militant* correspondents arrived here Feb. 6 to report on the response of the Cuban peo-

Reporter’s notebook from Havana

ple and their government to the sharp escalation in the U.S. rulers’ economic war against them.

Combined with direct military threats, Washington hopes its brutal economic squeeze can bring about what they euphemistically call “regime

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A Call to Action by the Socialist Workers Party

The following statement was released February 7, 2026, by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, on behalf of the party’s National Committee.

There’s a pressing need today for a call to action by working people to oppose the US rulers’ tightening economic squeeze of the Cuban people and escalating military threats against Cuba.

In face of Washington’s brazen lies to rationalize its assaults on Cuban sovereignty, working people in the United States have both an obligation and an

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Thousands of San Francisco teachers rally in the rain in first strike since 1979



Militant/Betsey Stone

Thousands of teachers rallied in San Francisco Feb. 10 after going on strike the day before demanding higher wages, smaller class sizes, better health coverage, hiring much needed staff.

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO — After going on strike Feb 9, teachers here have set up picket lines at schools across the city and held giant rallies to press their demands. This is the first teachers strike in San Francisco in 47 years.

Thousands rallied at a city park Feb. 10, making it clear they’re determined to win demands they deserve, including a 9% wage increase, smaller class sizes, health coverage for family members and an end to unfilled staff vacancies.

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Political protests start up again at funerals, begin to spread across Iran

BY SETH GALINSKY

Merchants of the Grand Bazaar of Tehran have called for nationwide actions Feb. 17, 18 and 19 to commemorate the thousands massacred across Iran by the reactionary capitalist regime during the recent wave of protests against its

rule. Families in Iran traditionally hold commemorations for their loved ones 40 days after their death.

The merchants “invite the honorable people of Iran to simultaneously in their own cities keep the memory of those killed alive and continue the national uprising.” The “40th day is not the end,” the merchants said. “It is the beginning of our collective responsibility.”

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Communist League campaign in the UK gets a wide hearing

BY PETE CLIFFORD

MANCHESTER, England — “The Communist League stands in the front lines of battles by working people,” Hugo Wils, the CL’s candidate in the Gorton and Denton parliamentary by-election said. He was talking with seven workers, originally from Pakistan, at a meeting in their house here Feb. 1. Wils was accompanied by Sajad Ahmad, an aerospace worker at the factory where they both work.

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70 years after his execution Tommy Lee Walker cleared 11

Demonstrations across Quebec demand rights for immigrants

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL — Thousands joined rallies and demonstrations in eight cities across Quebec Feb. 7 protesting the provincial government's abolition of its Quebec Experience Program (PEQ). Under the program thousands of workers from abroad were brought to work in Quebec, providing a route to permanent residency, and down the road, Canadian citizenship. Thousands of immigrant workers and their families in Quebec now face a completely uncertain future.

Abderrahmane Mahmoudi, a pastry chef and electrical engineer, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent at the rally here how he had sold his two bakeries in Algeria to come to Quebec along with his wife and two children. The PEQ was abolished two months before he would have become eligible to apply for permanent residency.

The actions were organized by a coalition called "Quebec is us too." More than 1,000 people took part in the Montreal rally.

What was striking about this day of action was the increased presence of union banners and contingents, much more so than in earlier actions. Quebec's three largest union federations and several other unions called on their members to turn out. Student and community groups also took part.

The Montreal Metropolitan Area Central Council of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) said it stands "with all people who see their work permits not renewed even though they belong here. It is unthinkable that in the Quebec we love, where we keep our word, such injustice is accepted."

This growing social movement in



Militant/Ernest Mailhot

Marchers in Montreal joined demonstrators across Quebec Feb. 7 to defend the rights of immigrant workers. The increased presence of union banners and contingents was striking.

defense of the rights of immigrants in Quebec and across Canada comes as the Liberal government in Ottawa is significantly tightening immigration and stepping up deportations. In 2025 over 19,000 people were deported, a record number.

Mamadou Saidou Bah, a 27-year-old Guinean, told the *Militant* he came to Canada as an accounting student. He said, "I preferred to come to Quebec because people speak French." He just got a factory job, with a start date

in two days, and now he doesn't know what the future holds for him.

"I was inspired by the movement against deportations in the United States," Daniel Caron, a retired social worker, told the *Militant*. "We need a real social movement both in the U.S. and Canada."

"We're still here. We're going to continue to fight until we're going to win," Nadir Belaid, a spokesperson for "Quebec is us too," told the Montreal rally.

San Francisco teachers rally, strike

Continued from front page

Giant cheers went up when it was announced the school board was beginning to retreat on its insistence that money could not be found for better health care for dependents, a key demand.

"Teachers have to pay a lot more for insurance similar to what city workers now get," Michael Ungar, a government and history teacher at Lowell High School, told the *Militant*. "We need full coverage for dependents," Lowell English teacher Stephanie Grabtree added. "Now, they are saying if we want this health coverage we have to make concessions in other areas. We say no!"

As they streamed into the park, teachers sported United Educators

of San Francisco shirts, hats and other union regalia. Off and on rain did not deter them from listening to rally speakers and joining a milelong march from Dolores Park to the Civic Center near City Hall.

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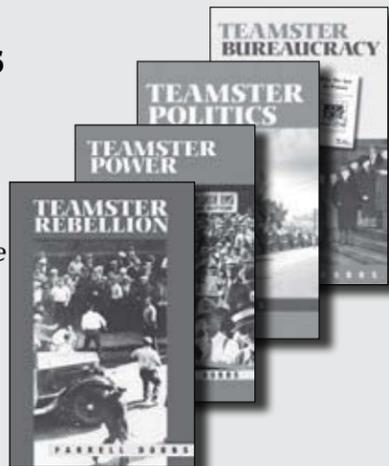
Lessons of U.S. labor battles from the 1930s

by Farrell Dobbs

"The principal lesson of the Teamster experience is not that under an adverse relationship of forces, the workers can be overcome, but that with proper leadership, they can overcome."

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THE MILITANT

Workers in China face worsening conditions

Working people in China are finding jobs harder to come by, stagnating pay, and increasing debts.

Washington sees the capitalist regime in Beijing as the main threat to its weakening control of the "world order" and is moving to push back against it.



Pretend to Work Unlimited Company Hangzhou
With high youth joblessness in China many pay for pretend work. Above, mock office.

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The Militant

Vol. 90/No. 7

Closing news date: February 11, 2026

Editor: John Studer

Managing Editor: Terry Evans

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Martín Koppel, Roy Landersen, Jacob Perasso, Vivian Sahner, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, three weeks in June, and one week in September.

Business Manager: Bob Bruce

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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Nurses in California, Hawaii, New York fight for contracts

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

LOS ANGELES — Some 31,000 Kaiser Hospital nurses and other health care workers in California and Hawaii, organized by the United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals, have been on strike since Jan. 26. Over 3,000 pharmacy technicians, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 770, joined the strike Feb. 9, expanding what is now the largest health care shutdown in the U.S.

When *Militant* worker-correspondents visited the picket line at the West Los Angeles Kaiser hospital, strikers were chanting, “Hey, hey, Ho, ho. Corporate greed has got to go” and “Kaiser, Kaiser, you’re no good. Treat the workers as you should.”

“Every Alliance union has rejected Kaiser’s effort to divide us and end the national agreement,” a UFCW strike update reported. The Alliance of Health Care Unions is a coalition of unions representing health care workers at Kaiser hospitals. “Kaiser wrote to every local union proposing local bargaining on national issues. Every Alliance union told Kaiser no.”

Kim Mullen, a nurse at Kaiser’s South Bay Medical Center and a union negotiator, told local media outlet LAist that on a short-staffing day there aren’t enough nurses and other health care workers to cover the number of stroke victims on their ward.

Kaiser Permanente is one of the nation’s largest “not-for-profit” health chains, serving 12.6 million people at 600 medical offices and 40 hospitals.

Kaiser raked in \$7.9 billion in net income in the first three quarters of 2025, building up a \$66 billion surplus.

A video of Kaiser strikers on the union’s social media shows strikers sending their solidarity to fellow nurses on strike in New York City. Some 15,000 nurses, members of the New York State Nurses Association, have been on strike there since Jan. 12.

Two of the three hospital chains — Montefiore and Mount Sinai — signed tentative contracts with their nurses Feb. 9. Nurses at the third, New York-Presbyterian, remain on the picket line.

“The strike has been good for the nurses, good for the union,” Melbourne, a nurse for 14 years at Monte-



Militant/Deborah Liatos

Striking nurses, other health care workers picket West Los Angeles Kaiser hospital Feb. 9. Some 31,000 hospital workers in California, Hawaii are fighting for more staffing to care for patients.

fiore Hospital, told the *Militant*. “We got more by standing together and fighting. We showed other workers that it’s good to have a union and that

we’re the real patient advocates.”

Sara Lobman in New York contributed to this article.

Spanish rail workers make gains in nationwide strike over safety

BY TERRY EVANS

The Spanish Railroad Engineers and Trainmen’s Union (SEMAF) ended a three-day nationwide strike early on Feb. 11 after reaching an agreement with the government over safety as well as other measures. The strike followed a series of train crashes. They included the worst disaster in many years, in Andalusia where two high-speed trains collided Jan. 18, with a death toll that has now risen to 47.

The “ongoing decline in rail safety is unacceptable,” the union told the press.

SEMAF said participation in the strike was close to 100% among drivers, except for those barred from striking under anti-labor laws forcing workers to cross the picket line to provide a minimum level of rail service. The union complied with the law, but said it was an abuse of workers’ right to strike. More than 330 trains were cancelled Feb. 9.

Most of Spain’s other unions that or-

ganize crafts on the railroad joined the strike as well. This included those in the country’s two largest union federations, the General Union of Workers (UGT) and the Trade Union Confederation of Workers Commissions (CCOO).

After the Jan. 18 disaster in Andalusia, government investigators found a 15-inch crack in the track near where one of the trains derailed. Two days later a commuter train derailed in Catalonia, killing the driver when a wall collapsed onto the track after heavy rainfall.

SEMAF-organized drivers in Catalonia walked off the job until track inspections and repairs were completed along routes in the region. Union members demanded and won the right to be part of the inspection teams.

SEMAF called the Feb. 9-11 strike to demand the hiring of more workers, greater government investment in maintenance and safety, and guarantees that bosses will act on rail workers’ warnings about dangerous conditions.

At the main rail station in Barcelona, Francois Monti told Reuters he’d waited for a train as three of them were cancelled due to the strike, but said, “I understand the train drivers.”

After the strike began, talks between the unions and the government led to a tentative agreement. SEMAF says the government will increase investment in rail infrastructure and hire more rail workers. The unions say they will monitor implementation of the agreement.

Strike shuts down commuter trains in Germany

Some 100,000 transportation workers walked off the job in Germany Feb. 2, bringing subway trains, buses and trams across the country to a halt in one of the largest labor actions they’ve carried out there in years. The 24-hour strike by Verdi, the second-largest union in Germany, followed months of stalled contract talks.

The union is fighting for shorter work hours, more rest time between shifts, higher pay for night and weekend work and wages that keep up with inflation.

The bosses haven’t budged. The next round of negotiations is set for Feb. 9. The union has said that further strike action could follow if there isn’t progress.

Germany’s economy, the third largest in the world, has barely grown since 2022. With unemployment now close to 3 million, the government has sought to put the blame on workers. With “an exaggerated work-life balance, prosperity cannot be maintained,” German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said in January, complaining that German workers call in sick for work too often, and in general, suffer from a poor work ethic.

— VIVIAN SAHNER

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

February 19, 2001

For decades the British government has sought to cover up its responsibility for the 1972 killing of the civil rights marchers in Derry who were shot down in cold blood by British troops.

London hoped this murderous assault would help break the resistance of the Irish Catholic population of Northern Ireland, whose land has now been occupied by thousands of British soldiers for more than 30 years.

The Catholic population refuses to get down on their knees or give up their demands for the truth to be told about Bloody Sunday and for an end to the British military occupation of the six counties of Northern Ireland.

Working people around the world should join with Irish freedom fighters in their demands for a united, democratic Ireland and for British troops to get out of the country.

THE MILITANT

February 20, 1976

Ukrainian dissident Leonid Plyushch, now living in France, held a news conference Feb. 3 at which he thanked all those whose protests helped secure his release from a Soviet psychiatric prison hospital:

“In 1966 I began to write articles for the samizdat press, articles on the nature of the Soviet government, on its ideology, on the national question in the USSR. A Marxist by conviction, I took Marx and Lenin as a point of departure for my examination. On Jan. 15, 1972, I was arrested. From 1973 to 1976 I was subjected to a ‘treatment.’ The aim is to break the human being during the first few days, to break his will to resist.

“We Soviet neo-Marxists have always placed hope in the Communist parties of France, Italy and Great Britain. We hoped that these parties would compel the Soviet Communist party to choose between Mao-Stalinism and Communism.”

THE MILITANT

February 19, 1951

The railroad workers have just had another lesson on justice under capitalism. Two events have served to drive this lesson home: the government’s smashing of the railroad strike and the terrible Woodbridge, N. J., derailment that took 84 lives and injured 500.

When the low-paid, over-worked workers go out on strike, the full power of the capitalist movement is hurled against them. President Truman slanders them as unpatriotic and “like a bunch of Russians.” They are whipped back to work at forced labor under military command by an Army ultimatum.

But the railroad corporation that is responsible for murdering hundreds of passengers and crewmen and injuring more than a thousand in a series of accidents does not receive even a censure from Truman. The nationalization of the railroads under workers control has become a burning immediate need.

Read about the battles that forged the US labor movement



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Unions lead Minneapolis protests

Continued from front page

Center, and the Organization of Liberians in Minnesota. Teamsters Local 120 members brought their mobile kitchen truck to provide hot dogs and Liberian donuts to marchers.

Greg Nammacher is the president of Service Employees International Union Local 26, which represents 8,000 workers at the airport, Uber and Lyft drivers, janitors, window cleaners and others in the Twin Cities area. He told a February Jacobin radio podcast that 20 of his union members had been “abducted by federal agents just in the last month. None had any criminal records.”

According to the UNITE HERE union, one-third of U.S. hospitality industry workers are foreign-born. The union’s Local 17 said that in the Minneapolis area, ICE’s assaults have made some hotel workers too fearful to come to work.

“There’s just a different level of fear in the hotels,” said Christa Sarrack, president of UNITE HERE Local 17.

The growing, peaceful protest actions make it easier for workers — with or without papers — to get involved.

At the same time, some ultraleft forces are concentrating on putting up barricades on streets in parts of the city. They stop drivers and demand to see their ID — just like ICE does — supposedly to flush out ICE agents and disrupt their operations. The city police tear down the barricades daily.

Similar forces have set up noisy gatherings at hotels where ICE agents are said to be housed, or at locations where arrests are reported, seeking to confront federal agents and interfere with their operations.

These actions weaken the protest movement and threaten immigrant workers.



Militant/Mary Martin

Rally in defense of immigrant rights in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, Feb. 7, sponsored by Teamsters Local 120. Growing union involvement is essential to build broad and effective protests.

The Karmel Mall, in Minneapolis, is the nation’s first Somali shopping center, home to shops, child care centers, an eldercare facility, a

mosque and a Quran school.

This *Militant* correspondent and SWP member Mary Martin visited with workers we had first met at the union-sponsored march for immigrant rights last Dec. 20, which ended with a rally at the mall.

Somali people have been a special target of the ICE raids in Minneapolis, despite the fact that they are in large majority U.S. citizens. President Donald Trump smeared Somalis here, calling them “garbage people.” ICE has targeted and detained scores of Somalis. ICE deploys agents outside the mall entrance, which has resulted in a near collapse of business as shoppers steer clear.

Somalis speak out

In a small electronics shop, one of the few places open on the ground floor, we talked with Abdi who works there. He gestured to the empty corridor and shuttered doors. He said organizing to protest peacefully is important for the defense of immigrant rights.

“I don’t agree with protesters who throw things at ICE or break windows at the hotels where they stay. The ICE agents want to provoke us. We need to have large, peaceful protests,” he said. He signed up for a *Militant* subscription.

At the restaurant across the way, Abdi introduced us to Khadijo War-

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Communist League campaign in UK gets wide hearing



Militant/Andrés Mendoza

Communist League candidate Hugo Wils, left, discusses campaign at Feb. 1 house meeting.

Continued from front page

Ahmad had set up the gathering.

“Our campaign begins with the accelerating military moves by the U.S. rulers to assert their domination around the world. The U.K. rulers want a piece of the pie too,” Wils said. The Labour government is pushing forward plans to make the U.K. “war ready,” including upgrading its nuclear weapons capabilities.

“This goes hand in hand with the erosion of workers’ living standards and attacks on immigrants. The only way out is to fight to change which class rules, to bring working people to power,” he said.

“The fight against Jew-hatred is key for the working class,” Wils added. Following the killing of two Jews in an assault on a north Manchester synagogue last year, Wils had joined actions in solidarity with Jewish worshippers there. As the crisis of capitalism deepens, the bosses will try to scapegoat Jews for the disaster facing workers, rather than the real cause — the system they profit from.

“Whether you are Jewish, Muslim or Christian, we must fight together for our rights,” Ahmad added.

Asad Khan, a warehouse worker, asked Wils why the government is “planning to increase the waiting period for immigrants from five to 10 years before you have the right to remain in the U.K.? They’re making it much harder.”

“They do it to divide working people,” Wils replied. “The CL fights for an amnesty for immigrants in this country, so all workers would have the same rights from day one. This is in the interests of all workers, whether you’re British or foreign-born.”

When Labour Home Secretary Sha-

bana Mahmood announced the new measures, both the Conservative and Reform party spokespeople agreed. Mahmood, Wils pointed out, has now extended the wait time for some immigrants to 20 years before they can apply for citizenship.

Oppose U.S. blockade of Cuba!

Communist League members introduced Wils’ campaign to working people on their doorsteps in Denton Feb. 8. In the course of discussions, they pointed to the stakes for workers in opposing Washington’s oil blockade against Cuba, which aims to advance the U.S. rulers’ goal of overturning Cuba’s socialist revolution.

“What’s this got to do with me?” one person angrily asked this *Militant* reporter when I knocked on his door. “Let’s sort this country out first.”

I explained that the rulers’ foreign policy and their wars abroad are an extension of what they do against working people at home. After some further discussion we shook hands and he said he’d appreciated talking with us.

“I wish Trump had attacked the rulers in my country, Iran, like he did with Venezuela,” airport worker Mojtaba Habibi told Wils on his doorstep.

The U.S. rulers only intervene to advance their own class interests, Wils said, and their military intervention in the Middle East should be opposed by workers everywhere. “Today, they fear instability and a new revolution in Iran far more than they fear the country’s bourgeois clerical rulers.”

“The clerics stole the 1979 revolution,” Habibi said, pointing to the uprising that overthrew the U.S.-backed shah of Iran and the cleric-led coun-

terrevolution that came later.

By the end of the weekend CL members had sold six subscriptions to the *Militant* and five books by revolutionary working-class leaders.

A lively Feb. 7 campaign meeting was attended by 17 people. “In previous campaigns people often told us they didn’t want to talk about the election,” Wils said. “But this time there’s a real search for answers and interest in what the CL is presenting.”

The increasingly unpopular and crisis-ridden Labour government hopes to retain the Gorton and Denton seat. Its main opponents “are the Green and Reform parties, which campaign on what they are against, not what they’re for. The Greens say a vote for them is a vote for ‘hope’ not ‘hate,’” — a reference to Reform’s anti-immigrant policies — “while Reform says a vote for them is a vote to get rid of the Labour government.”

In sharp contrast, the CL starts from the capacities of the working class to join together and fight for the measures it needs. It urges a union-led fight for jobs with wages and conditions that make it possible for workers to raise families. It advances a course for workers to organize independently of the capitalist parties — Conservatives, Labour, Green and Reform — in order for workers to take power into our own hands.

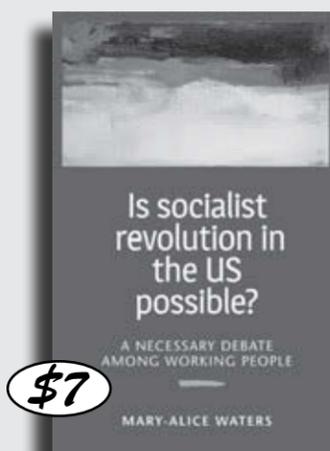
Wils told the meeting that one person who had nominated him, Rose Whelan, said she was concerned that “the unions don’t seem as strong as they were.”

Wils replied that “a corner has been turned from decades of retreat by the unions. There are more union fights today, and these struggles win support from fellow workers.” He pointed to recent union backing “for protests against the deportation threats to immigrants. Union support for these kind of struggles is something new and positive.”

Wils described a discussion with retired worker Michael Pope, who had told him he thought “there should be a wealth tax on the rich” — a policy promoted by the Greens. Wils explained there isn’t a way to use the tax system to make the rulers pay. “Such measures lure us into thinking capitalism can be reformed and away from working people’s own potential to fight to change the conditions we face.”

Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters



“The battle to win the labor movement and the big majority of working people to defend the rights of immigrants is inseparable from the battle to organize the working class as a whole and rebuild the trade unions.”

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SWP campaigns to defend Cuba

Continued from front page

In Minneapolis SWP members joined a Feb. 7 union-supported march for immigrant rights with a sign on their table demanding “US hands off Cuba!” Despite the cold weather, several people stopped to talk. “I’ve been to Cuba and I’m glad to see your signs,” one man wearing a union peacekeeper T-shirt told SWP member Mary Martin. John DenBoer, a small-business owner from Milwaukee, told the *Militant*, “I don’t know much about Cuba, but I have kids and I don’t want to see a war there or anywhere.”

Roddie Stuckie said she’d come to the march because her father had been active in the Teamsters’ hard-fought strike battles in Minneapolis in the 1930s. “He was involved in fighting to organize truck drivers against corporate businesses. Today the fight for the rights of immigrant workers is the same kind of fight.” Stuckie looked at the book *Teamster Rebellion*, a first-hand account of the truck drivers’ fight by SWP leader Farrell Dobbs, and said she’d get it the next time she saw party members.

Follow example of Cuban Revolution

When SWP members Helen Meyers and Joanne Murphy were campaigning door to door in Fridley, north of Minneapolis, Feb. 2, they met Jacob and Anna Wegner. Anna said she was proud of people in Minnesota who are coming out to protest against immigration raids and deportations. After looking over the *Militant’s* coverage, she decided to subscribe for six months.

“We’re seeing what fascism is like, the kind of system that tries to keep us down. We need to change the current administration,” Jacob Wegner said.

“If we were actually living under fascism it would be very difficult to have this kind of discussion,” Murphy replied. Both Democratic and Republican administrations, she said, are responsible for enforcing the second-class status of immigrants to try to divide the working class.

“The working class is capable of doing what working people did in Cuba — taking power from the capitalists. The SWP is building a party to accomplish that here. You should join us,” Murphy said.

In the Dallas-Fort Worth region

hundreds of high school students at several schools, including Haltom, Jasper, Plano and others, have walked out of their classrooms in the last two weeks to protest the ongoing round-ups, arrests and deportations of immigrants. On Feb. 5 some 100 students from Forney High School lined the road just north of their school, many drivers honked and waved in support. Some students waved flags from Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua and the U.S. “Proud daughter of immigrants,” read one sign.

“A cook’s daughter in the restaurant where I work participated in the walk-out at L.D. Bell High School Jan. 30,” SWP member Josefina Otero told the *Militant*. “And a Mexican-American host had a brother who walked out at another school.”

“I think it’s really important for everyone to come and protest and show that this isn’t OK,” Atlas Lee, a student who participated in a Jan. 30 walkout at Richland High School, told Otero. “ICE wanting to barge into people’s houses without judicial warrant, it’s an overreach of power. It affects every one of us.”

Amnesty for immigrants in U.S.

“No deportations! Amnesty is the way to unify the working class,” was the title of the Feb. 7 Militant Labor Forum in Fort Worth. A woman from El Salvador attended with her husband and picked up the SWP National Committee statement “US hands off Cuba.” “I agree we need action in defense of Cuba. Cuba is different than the U.S. In Cuba they put a priority on education, health and ecology,” she said during the discussion. The SWP is working to

Minneapolis unions help lead fight for rights of immigrants

Continued from page 4

sawe, who explained that she organizes a group named Neighbors United to help people impacted by the ICE presence. She and other Somali shop owners regularly bring hot tea to visitors at nearby makeshift street memorials for Renee Good and Alex Pretti. They were both killed when they were involved in street confrontations with armed ICE agents.

Waris Mohamud, another small-shop owner in the mall, has been here several decades. “I voted for Donald



Militant/Mary Martin

At a union-supported march for immigrant rights in Minneapolis Feb. 7, SWP supporters set up a table including placard, “US hands off Cuba!” One man wearing a union peacekeeper T-shirt stopped by to say, “I’ve been to Cuba and I’m glad to see your signs.”

build a “US hands off Cuba!” protest at the Fritz G. Lanham Federal Building in Fort Worth Feb. 16.

In Miami the José Martí Cultural Association held a protest to support Cuban families Feb. 8. SWP members joined the action. Carlos Tamayo, who was trained as a doctor in Cuba and lives in South Carolina, bought a *Militant* subscription there as well as a copy 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 Victor Dreke.

In Pittsburgh Feb. 8, more than 400 people participated in an action supporting immigrants. SWP members carried signs that read “US hands off Cuba!” and “Amnesty for all immigrants.” Speakers at the rally celebrated the release of Jose Flores, original-

ly from Nicaragua, from Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody where he’d been detained for eight days. Flores has a work permit and an asylum application pending.

SWP member Candace Wagner reports that many at the action had heard about Washington’s blocking of oil shipments to Cuba and wanted to learn more about what could be done to defend the Cuban Revolution. Participants bought two *Militant* subscriptions and 10 single copies. One participant bought a copy of *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* to learn more about the fight for immigrant rights in 2006 and 2007 that was led by immigrant workers.

To join in distributing the SWP National Committee call to action and the *Militant*, contact distributors nearest you listed on page 7.

Trump because I am a conservative person. For example, I believe there are two sexes, men and women,” she said. “But I don’t agree with what the administration is doing now.

“Still, no one can intimidate the Somali people,” she said. “Several of us tried to help a pregnant woman ICE agents had dragged from her car in front of the mall. There were a lot of us, so they let her go.”

Farhio Khalif, who also has a small business in the mall, said, “The government has two parties, but they are one bird with two wings.” She urged young people to read the speech by Malcolm X: “The Ballot or the Bullet.”

While we were having this meeting some young people came into the mall saying they were from Black Lives Matter. They said the Somalis should come to a meeting they were holding to discuss what to do about ICE. They said it was for Blacks only.

Mohamud pointed to us and said, “You mean they can’t come?” “No, only African Americans and Africans,” was the reply.

“OK, that is your meeting,” Mohamud and the other Somalis there explained. “But we want you to know that in our meetings we don’t exclude anyone.”

Militant Labor Forum

Four members of Neighbors United attended the Militant Labor forum Feb. 7, “U.S. hands off Cuba!” and spoke about their struggles as Somali people in the crosshairs of ICE.

“There is a need for a clear course forward built around a call for amnesty for the 11 million people without papers in the U.S. A movement led by the unions is what is needed,” said forum speaker Mary Martin.

“The ruling class, and their two main parties, the Democrats and Republicans, are not out to deport the 11 million immigrants,” she said. “They just want to keep them in a pariah status, to scapegoat them and divide the working class, to drive down wages and conditions for all workers.

“Immigrant workers led the way in 2006 and 2007 when millions of workers demonstrated in the streets all across the country. We succeeded in defeating the notorious Sensenbrenner bill, which would have made it a felony to be in the U.S. without papers the rulers consider proper.

“Many here call for ‘ICE out,’ but we have to ask what happens when ICE leaves? The rulers’ assaults on immigrant workers, on all workers will continue,” Martin said.

“We live under a capitalist system that thrives on dividing us, the better to carry out their wars over power and profits abroad and threats like they’re doing today against Cuba’s socialist revolution. This is why the SWP says we need to build a movement capable of replacing capitalism through socialist revolution.

“This is why the SWP says we need to build a truly mass movement for working people to take political power into our own hands.”

BBC covers Communist League election campaign in UK

The article below by Paul Burnell was published on the BBC North West online edition Feb. 4, reporting the Communist League is running Hugo Wils in the by-election in the Gorton and Denton constituency in Manchester, England.

A trade unionist has been announced as the Communist League’s candidate for the forthcoming Gorton and Denton by-election in Greater Manchester.

Hugo Wils, a 38-year-old aerospace factory worker and member of the Unite trade union, was revealed on the day nominations closed for the 26 February by-election.

Wils said: “The march to another world war is a giant attack on the desire of working people to live in peace — and on our living standards, jobs and working conditions.”

The by-election was triggered by the resignation on health grounds of former Labour MP Andrew Gwynne.

Wils, who opened his campaign by joining a solidarity picket line with striking refuse workers in Birmingham, also said: “Only the working class can prevent another global slaughter by taking political power into our own hands.”

He added: “These are the central issues, not media hype on the turmoil within and between Labour, Conservative, Reform, Greens and other capitalist parties.”

Eleven candidates are standing in the by-election.

Moscow assault on light, heat in Ukraine fuels toilers' resistance

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Four years into its invasion of Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime has intensified its bombardment of energy generation facilities to deny heat, water and electricity to punish and attempt to demoralize Ukraine's civilian population. But this has just fortified the resolve of working people there to defend the country's sovereignty.

Moscow's relentless assaults have depleted Ukraine's air defense missile stocks. The country's defense industry has now developed a low-cost drone interceptor system designed to nimbly and effectively limit the damage. But enough airstrikes get through to do serious harm. Repair crews from around the country work in freezing conditions to restore power.

Kyiv's electricity supply is now limited to a few hours per day. At one point over 1,600 high-rise buildings, which house as many as 800,000 people, lost power and central heating after Moscow's missiles destroyed one of Kyiv's largest combined generating and heat plants.

The Kyiv Post reported Jan. 27 on a visit to a tent camp in the city's Troieshchyna district. The emergency services set it up to provide people there with shelter, heat and comradeship in sub-zero temperatures.

Hundreds of people go to warm up and meet neighbors. Children play games. They can also get hot drinks and meals, charge their phones and work on their laptops. Student volunteers help to keep watch.

Ukraine union youth council appeal

"Bombed cities, freezing homes — a call to trade unions to stand with Ukraine" was the headline of a Feb. 2 statement by the Youth Council of the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine.

"No electricity. No heating. No water. Children trying to sleep fully dressed under several blankets. Hospitals running on generators — until the fuel runs out," the Youth Council reported.

"This is not a natural disaster or a technical failure" but a deliberate strategy "executed by one state against another's people."

Disruption to power networks extended beyond Ukraine, the council noted. "Blackouts were recorded in parts of Moldova and Romania."

The statement paid tribute to "soldiers holding the front at the cost of their lives. Energy workers, medics, rescuers, utility workers restoring what is destroyed — again and again, under fire and enormous risk."

It noted that Moscow is "attacking

railways and national logistics, putting workers under fire, killing them and cutting lifelines for millions of people.

"But Ukraine is still standing. Because its people refuse to break."

At sunset on the frozen-over Dnipro River in Kyiv, people were dancing, racing cars and having barbecues, National Public Radio reported Feb. 5. One dance party on the iced-over river had a DJ and generator-powered sound system, creating a rave on ice.

Zhenia Chyphiha told NPR that it helps "to have fun in such dark moments of our life." She described Moscow's efforts to make Ukrainians' lives so miserable that they will supposedly agree to end the war on Putin's terms.

"They think they will bomb power plants and we will leave. But no, it doesn't work like that," she said.

People don't have power or water but, "it's negative 20 degrees and they are out here partying," Farhad Ostovari told NPR. Ostovari came from Washington, D.C., to work in Kyiv helping wounded Ukrainian veterans.

DJ Vitalii Svichynskyi said the parties are an act of resistance. He wants to give energy to people who "will never give up."

Ukrainians seek culture in wartime

As Moscow bombards Ukraine's power grid, performances at packed concert halls and on underground stages



Reuters/Thomas Peter

People dance at sunset on frozen Kyiv Sea reservoir on Dnipro River in Ukraine Feb. 1. Working people refuse to be intimidated despite Moscow's airstrikes on country's electrical infrastructure causing widespread power and heating outages in middle of the winter.

are taking place. Museums, galleries and bookshops are open.

"Culture during wartime is not a luxury. It strengthens, unites, shapes memory and works toward future recovery," Myroslava Makarevych wrote in the Jan. 21 Kyiv Post.

Makarevych interviewed Oksana Lyniv, an acclaimed Ukrainian conductor. She has been denounced by some for conducting music by Russian composer Peter Tchaikovsky. Makarevych asked Lyniv why she opposes the Ukrainian government's calls to boycott Russian culture.

Lyniv has explained that performing works by Russians shouldn't be considered "siding with the enemy."

"The works of Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, etc., stand alongside the works of Berlioz, Chopin, Brahms, Beethoven, Ravel," and other great composers. They're a "mandatory repertoire that every professional musician should master," she said.

"It's akin to our defenders on the front lines seizing the enemy's weapons and using them to reclaim new territories," Lyniv said.

For Ukrainian working people, calls to boycott Russian culture only create barriers to forging ties with the most important potential allies in their fight against the Putin regime's attempt to conquer Ukraine — fellow workers in Russia.

Washington acts to reinforce its domination in the Mideast

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Washington has carried out a massive military buildup in the Mideast in recent weeks, including sending the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier, destroyers, fighter jets and thousands of troops, on top of the 40,000 already stationed in eight bases across the region, available should the government decide on attacking Iran. U.S. government representatives held talks Feb. 6 with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, hosted by Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi. The session focused on Tehran's nuclear program.

Washington is seeking broader concessions, but the clerical regime in Iran is resisting.

"They want to make a deal, as they should want to make a deal," President Donald Trump said. "If they don't make a deal, the consequences are very steep."

He pointed to what the U.S. rulers did in Venezuela. "If you remember Venezuela, we waited around for a while," he threatened, "and we're in no rush."

The U.S. rulers' military buildup and threats of attack have nothing to do with advancing the fight of working people in Iran against the clerical, capitalist regime there. What Washington seeks is to advance its own imperialist interests in reaping superprofits from oil and other resources in the region. It seeks to maintain stable, capitalist rule with influence and sway over all governments across the region, including Tehran, Ankara, Riyadh and Israel.

This is part of Washington's broader drive to reinforce its domination as the top dog in the imperialist world. This was the fruit of it emerging the victor out of the imperialist slaughter in World War II, where over 70 million perished. The U.S. rulers are pushing to rebuild

their industrial might today and use it to further expand their military might. The oil and other resources of the Middle East are an important part of this, as well as an effort to deal blows to their rivals, especially in Beijing.

While Trump described the session as "good talks," as soon as they ended the State Department imposed new sanctions on Iran, saying it would block any transactions with 14 vessels that transport Iranian oil, including ships flagged from Turkey, India and the United Arab Emirates.

While the jockeying is going on, the rulers in Tehran look to continue to advance their capacity to attack Israel and the Jews who live there. This informs all their moves with Washington today.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Trump in Washington Feb. 11, in talks that will center on the Iran negotiations.

As far as Israel and Gaza are concerned, the Trump administration plans to impose phase two of its "peace" plan. Washington is determined to prevent Netanyahu from completing the destruction of Hamas, instead seeking to wrap him up in a whole series of red

tape measures that the U.S. rulers can control and profit from.

A meeting of the U.S.-led "Board of Peace," with government representatives from more than 20 countries, is being organized in Washington Feb. 19.

This phase is supposed to include formation of a "technocratic" government in Gaza, the arrival of a multinational peacekeeping force that does not yet exist, and some measure of "disarmament" of Hamas.

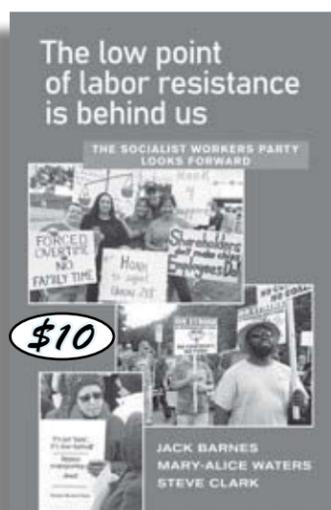
Hamas, the Nazi-like group that carried out the anti-Jewish pogrom in Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, that killed 1,200 people, kidnapped 251 and raped and mutilated dozens of women, has made clear it has no intention of being disarmed.

Hamas rebuilds since Gaza ceasefire

In fact ever since the White House imposed its ceasefire on Gaza four months ago, the Tehran-backed outfit has been reestablishing its police power in much of Gaza and rebuilding its military capabilities.

"Hamas is taking steps on the ground intended to preserve its influence and grip on the Gaza Strip from below,"

Continued on page 7



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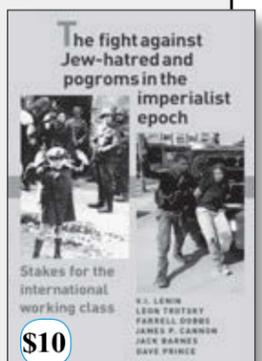
The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch

Stakes for the International Working Class

by V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Farrell Dobbs, James P. Cannon, Jack Barnes, Dave Prince

Jew-hatred and pogroms are part of the permanent social convulsions of the imperialist epoch. Bolshevik-led revolution in Russia showed there is a road to uproot national oppression.

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Protests start up again in Iran

Continued from front page

In a Jan. 30 statement the Council for Organizing Protests of Contract Oil Workers said, “You will hear our cry of rage and protest at the commemorations for those who were killed while seeking rights and freedom.”

The protests began Dec. 28 when shopkeepers and capitalist traders at the Tehran bazaar shut their doors and took to the streets in the face of rising prices and steep declines in the value of Iran’s national currency.

Sections of the working class took advantage of the actions by the capitalist traders in the bazaar, who in the past had supported the regime, to broaden their own protests.

Demonstrations spread around the country to cities and towns large and small. Chants included “Death to the dictator!” “Freedom, freedom, freedom!” and “Not for Gaza, not for Lebanon; I give my life for Iran” — a reflection of the deep-seated opposition among working people to the regime’s deadly attacks on Israel and its other military adventures in the region. Oil workers in the south began to join the actions, as did oppressed nationalities, including Kurds, Baluchis, Arabs and Azerbaijanis.

Dozens were killed during the first week of demonstrations, before the regime unleashed its most murderous assaults Jan. 8 and 9, ending the protest wave for the moment. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, police, paramilitary thugs, and operatives brought in from Hezbollah in Lebanon and Tehran-organized militias in Iraq joined together in brutal assaults on protesters. Snipers, thugs with knives and clubs, and operatives with machine guns went on an orgy of killing.

Deepening hatred for the regime

Instead of demoralizing working people, the massacre deepened their resolve to fight to overturn the regime.

Funerals and the first 40-day commemorations for those killed in the first few days of the protests have already become anti-government actions, with hundreds chanting and dancing to celebrate the lives of those who were killed fighting for freedom. In some neighborhoods, photos of the dead are posted all over the streets.

The family of 27-year-old Saeed Tavakolian, killed in Shiraz Jan. 7, did not wait for the 40 days. They returned Feb. 8 to the site where he was shot, holding up his photo and tossing flowers into the street. Passing drivers honked in solidarity and some stopped to hug his mother.

Continuing arrests

Trying to quell the protest movement, the regime has been arresting members of the teachers unions, nurses, lawyers and others, often denying them their rights to a lawyer or to talk with their families.

Government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani was challenged by a reporter during a live broadcast on state-run IRINN TV Jan. 27. Mohajerani claimed that it was “terrorists” backed by Iran’s enemies — a reference to Israel and Washington — who “distorted” the protests and caused the deaths. Parisa Hashemi — a journalist with *Ham-Mihan* newspaper that was recently shut down by the regime — challenged Mohajerani.

“There is a lack of free and unfiltered access to information,” Hashemi said. “Discrimination runs rampant in every corner of the country, and poverty strikes everywhere.”

“Now [the government] says that the enemy has destroyed our protests, massacred us, and caused the bloodshed. There is no doubt that whoever shot our youth, our children, and our men and women is, indeed, an enemy of this country.” No one could miss Hashemi’s meaning.

Cracks in the regime

The regime has been weakened by the blows Israel has dealt to it and its so-called axis of resistance since Hamas’ Oct. 7, 2023, pogrom, and by the growing resistance among working people. It’s also facing deepening divisions within the capitalist class.

Although there is an elected parliament and president in Iran, the real power that rules for the capitalist class is Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

A prominent leader of the reformist wing of the regime, Mir Hossein Mousavi, a presidential candidate in 2009 and a former prime minister, has been under house arrest since 2011. While calling for some democratic



Hundreds join Feb. 7 Hamedan province funeral for Somayeh Ghobadi, 39-year-old sewing factory worker killed in Tehran during protest. Funerals in Iran are turning into demonstrations.

rights, this wing has always professed loyalty to the Supreme Leader.

In the wake of the latest massacre, Mousavi issued a statement calling on the regime to “lay down your guns and step aside from power.” He called for a constitutional referendum. The regime rapidly arrested three Mousavi advisors as well as Azar Mansouri, the head of the Reformist Front. Some regime supporters called for Mousavi’s execution.

Return of the monarchy?

Sections of the bourgeois press in the U.S. have been trying to pretty up Reza Pahlavi, the exiled son of the Shah of Iran, as a potential pro-Washington replacement for the regime. The brutal rule of the shah was overthrown in a deep-going popular revolution in 1979. The *Wall Street Journal* ran an article by U.S.-based Babek Seradjeh Feb. 8 headlined “I Was Born in the Shah’s prison. Now I Support His Son.”

The Union Retirees Group of Iran noted that the U.S.-backed shah’s rule

in Iran was “always dictatorial, repressive, and predatory.” If Reza Pahlavi came to power, it explains, “the plunder of the people of Iran would be repeated with cruelty and savagery many times over.”

Despite the de facto martial law in parts of the country and the threat of more repression, workers keep looking for ways to fight for their own interests.

Even though a number of oil workers in the region have been arrested in the wake of the protests, contract workers at the 10th Refinery of the South Pars Gas Complex went on strike Feb. 3 over unpaid wages and poor conditions in their housing, including severe overcrowding.

The Council for Organizing Protests of Contract Oil Workers issued a statement Feb. 9 calling for solidarity with the strike. It noted that many co-workers “are being held in prison under very harsh conditions and deprived of any contact or phone calls with their families.” The council demands “their immediate and unconditional release.”

US reinforces domination in Mideast

Continued from page 6

reported Israel’s Channel 13 News, citing a recent Israel Defense Forces document. “This is being done by integrating its operatives into government ministries and the security apparatuses.”

“Even if Hamas officially announces that it has handed over control of Gaza to the technocratic government,” said the Times of Israel, “it would still have

tens of thousands of armed members in its military wing and internal security forces across the Strip.”

Hamas has used deliveries from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, in which it long ago enmeshed its supporters, to conceal weapons supplies. On Feb. 3 the IDF reports it “located approximately 110 mortar shells, several rockets and additional weapons, which had been hidden inside blankets and UNRWA humanitarian aid bags.”

Appointed to the “Board of Peace” by Trump, the governments of both Turkey and Pakistan have offered to send troops to the Gaza peacekeeping force. But both regimes have been allies of Hamas and are outspoken opponents of Israel’s right to defend itself as a refuge for Jews. The Israeli government strongly opposes them having any role in “policing” Gaza.

In response to the mandates of Washington, Netanyahu issued a statement reiterating his government’s “uncompromising demand for the disarmament of Hamas, the demilitarization of the Gaza Strip, and the fulfillment of the war objectives prior to the reconstruction of the Strip.” The Israel Defense Forces is the only force with the capability to completely defeat and disarm Hamas.

This perspective, decisive to the defense of Israel as a refuge from Jew-hatred, clashes with Washington’s imperialist aims in the region.

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SWP call to action: US hands off Cuba!



Left, tens of thousands march in Havana Dec. 20 demanding end to U.S. economic war, military threats against Cuba. Above, Feb. 9 Minneapolis protest calls for U.S. hands off Cuba. There is a pressing need for more and larger public actions in U.S. and worldwide.

Continued from front page
opportunity right now to get the truth about Cuba's socialist revolution to the broadest layers of the population. The US rulers' dangerous actions bring closer the prospects of war against Cuban working people, toilers who made and have defended that revolution for nearly seven decades. At the same time, these acts by the war makers threaten workers and the oppressed in the United States and the world over.

Washington's course since the opening of 2026 poses the biggest US imperialist dangers to the Cuban Revolution and Cuban people since the October 1962 "missile crisis." Then the John F. Kennedy administration, with bipartisan support, brought the world to the brink of nuclear war and ultimately had to back off plans to invade the island. The stakes for working people and the labor movement in opposing the US government's course today are enormous.

Washington has mobilized naval and air power in the Caribbean on a scale unprecedented for nearly half a century. The US rulers unleashed those brutal forces January 3 to carry out their "shock and awe" assault on Venezuela, kidnapping and imprisoning President Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores, his wife. The Trump administration has leveraged that assault on Venezuela's sovereignty to increase its economic and military pressure on the Cuban people.

At the center of this escalation have been measures to cut off Cuba's access to imported oil and other energy resources, steps that increase blackouts and are leading to sharp reductions in the availability of the most basic human necessities. This comes on top of a tightening squeeze during the previous Trump and Joseph Biden presidencies of Cuba's access to world markets and banking credit for food, for the most elementary medical and health products (resulting, among many other things, in a rise in both infant and maternal mortality and an epidemic of mosquito-borne viruses), for books and other educational and cultural conditions, and more.

The noise and tone emanating from the current US administration have been marked by euphoria since last summer from its June 22 "bunker buster" assault on Iran and its recent attack on Venezuela. Top billing in this regard goes to Secretary of State Marco Rubio; Pete Hegseth (the administration's re-branded "secretary of war"); and President Trump himself.

"There will be no more oil or money going to Cuba — Zero!" Trump announced on January 11. "I strongly suggest [Cuban leaders] make a deal, before it is too late." During Senate testimony later that month, Rubio

"Washington's aim to cut off oil shipments to Cuba sharply increases the risk of war"

added: "We would love to see the regime there change."

All this has opened a bourgeois tactical breach with others in the so-called MAGA movement who campaigned for the Republican ticket in 2024 on pledges to working people not to pursue such war policies. However these divisions play out among the Republicans and Democrats, both parties — and every single one of the thirteen US presidents since January 1959 — have been and remain committed to overthrowing Cuba's socialist revolution.

All capitalist ruling classes in the imperialist epoch have promoted the self-serving illusion that intensifying economic and armed conflicts, either by them or among them, can somehow be "limited" and "controlled." History proves the contrary, at the cost of many tens of millions of human lives. Small wars all too often grow into big wars.

The US rulers also have numerous other ways at their disposal to crank up the pain on Cuban working people. The US government can extend the de facto blockade to necessities beyond oil and other energy resources. Washington can further restrict or even end all flights to Cuba. The outrageous US imperialist campaign targeting Cuban doctors and internationalist medical missions can be deepened. Monetary remittances to Cuban families from relatives living in the US can be cut even more.

And, as part of the administration's wider victimization of immigrants, deportations of Cubans back to the island are already exacerbating shortages and social tensions there.

Washington's announced aim to cut off oil shipments to Cuba is not just another White House "tariff" extortion. It sharply increases the risk of war. If any government decides to test Washington's demand, there is no way for the US military to stop an attempted delivery of oil or other vital goods to Cuba other than by shooting at the tanker, comman-

deering it, or even sinking it — whatever national flag it may be flying. It could be a ship from nuclear-armed Russia, or a ship from China. It might even be a tanker from Venezuela or Mexico, whose governments have already succumbed to pressure from Washington by effectively cutting off oil to Cuba.

Ever since the victory of the Cuban Revolution, Washington has sought to excuse its aggression and violations of Cuba's national sovereignty by spreading outright lies through their media, schools, and other propaganda mouthpieces. The US rulers warn of "a danger to national security" from a country with 3 percent the population of the United States. What's more, while the Cuban government has sought normal economic and diplomatic relations from the outset of the revolution, it was Washington that unilaterally ruptured such ties at the opening of the 1960s. Cuba's armed forces have no nuclear arms or any program to develop them, nor have they ever initiated military action against a US target.

What the US rulers truly fear is none of this. They fear the political and moral example and attraction among working people and the oppressed the world over of Cuba's socialist revolution and its internationalist solidarity.

The Cuban government is willing and ready to have talks with the US government, as it always has been, said Cuban president Miguel Díaz-Canel at a two-hour February 5 press conference in Havana.

"It is very reprehensible that a power, with the size of the United States, should

adopt such an aggressive and criminal policy towards a small nation," Díaz-Canel said. "Because what does it mean to not allow a drop of fuel to reach a country? . . . How do we keep children in school without fuel? How do our vital systems function without fuel? How do we distribute food? How do we plant? How do we plow? How do we prepare the land? How do we harvest the crops? How do we get around?"

The Cuban president pointed to immediate measures the government

"US rulers fear the political and moral example among working people the world over of Cuba's socialist revolution"

is taking to ensure that increasingly scarce resources are reallocated to confront these worsening conditions. Gasoline and other energy sources are being rationed, with conscious attention to doing so in ways that don't fall most heavily on those in rural areas, the elderly, primary schoolchildren, and other working people.

Díaz-Canel described the massive popular mobilizations across the island in recent weeks against the US government's stepped-up aggression in the Caribbean and against Cuba itself. "The reality is that Cuba is a peaceful country," he said. "Our country's defense doctrine or military doctrine is based on the concept of the War of the Entire

Continued on next page

Reporter's notebook from Havana Working people respond

Continued from front page
change," that is, overturning Cuba's socialist revolution. It's the goal the U.S. capitalist families and their government have vainly pursued for six and a half decades.

We tell everyone we speak with that we'll return home to explain to fellow workers in the U.S. and other countries the truth about what we've seen. The following are just a few examples.

Brutal U.S. oil blockade

During our first days on the ground here, we stopped by the home of Carlos Muñiz and Magela Elepán. Muñiz, 58, a self-employed welder, confirmed that daily blackouts of many hours, a result of the U.S. government's economic war, have become longer and more frequent since Washington's Jan. 3 assault on Venezuela and blockade of oil shipments to Cuba.

"Two weeks ago, we had electric power for just two hours a day," he said. "I couldn't do my job for a few days."

The oil cutoff and resulting blackouts, Muñiz noted, have affected everything, from industrial and agricultural production to bus and car transportation — every aspect of daily life.

The day after we arrived in Havana, the government sharply increased the rationing of gasoline sales to conserve fuel. No gas will be sold to individual Cuban vehicle owners. Government administrative offices will be operating on curtailed schedules. Small shopkeepers told us they already face delays and higher costs in truck deliveries of agricultural produce to the city. And the heightened rationing will make this worse.

María Eugenia Arnet, a retired gar-

ment worker, told the *Militant* reporters, "The shortages of energy and other resources, the long blackouts — all that is part of the aggression against us that the U.S. empire has intensified. They will never forgive us for making a socialist revolution."

Response to U.S. attack on Venezuela

"Early in the morning of Jan. 3, we woke up to the news of the U.S. aggression against Venezuela," Muñiz told us. "We were stunned. My first thought was: we need to be in the streets. We were glad our government issued a call for a demonstration that same day at the Anti-Imperialist Plaza" on Havana's seafloor.

"The response to the call was incredible. Thousands of people turned out," said Magela Elepán, 47, an office worker at a government agency responsible for Cuba's national museums. "Unlike other rallies where participation is facilitated by workplaces or unions and student organizations, the turnout was spontaneous. People heard the call and came on their own, mostly on foot."

Muñiz added, "This was even before we learned that Cubans had been killed in the attack. People were expressing solidarity with the people of Venezuela, outrage at the kidnapping of Venezuela's president."

When news came that 32 Cubans had been killed during the U.S. assault in Caracas, "it had a huge impact here. There was a deep feeling of anger



Militant photos/Jonathan Silberman



"Millions of Cubans value what we've gained through the revolution," said Carlos Muñiz, above center, in Havana. Retired garment worker María Eugenia Arnet, far left, told Mary-Alice Waters, "They will never forgive us for making a socialist revolution." Like other Cubans, Arnet has been getting military training, in case of invasion by Washington.

and grief," Elepán said. "And not only among supporters of the revolution like us. Even among many who don't support the government."

On Jan. 18, half a million Cubans in cities across the island turned out to pay homage to the 32 internationalist volunteers. In Havana the tribute was held at the Revolutionary Armed Forces Ministry building, near the Plaza of the Revolution, where coffins with the remains of the fallen combatants were displayed.

"The enemy doesn't understand us"

"The line of people, young and old, who came to pay their respects to our martyrs was unending," Elepán said. "We were hit by a downpour and got drenched. But people didn't leave. The procession began in the early morning and was supposed to end at 6 p.m., but there were so many in line that it continued until 10 p.m."

"The enemy doesn't understand us," Muñiz said. "In 1961 the Cuban people defeated U.S. imperialism at Playa Girón," referring to the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs.

"Millions of Cubans value what we've gained through the revolution. We learned from Fidel [Castro] and from our experience that a socialist revolution means human beings becoming more educated, more cultured. Becoming freer, more able to think for ourselves. It means a culture of solidarity."

"It's true that, with the intensification of the U.S. economic blockade against Cuba over the years, we've seen an erosion of solidarity among some people," Elepán said. "The younger generations have known nothing but shortages of many things."

We mentioned that the day before, an employee of a small store had told us bluntly he was glad Washington was seeking to increase popular discontent and bring about "regime change" in Cuba. Referring to the oil cutoff by the U.S. government, he said, "What they're doing now is the best thing that could happen to us. I'm tired of living like this."

That view remains a small minority, Elepán said. "One thing is certain," she told us, "most Cubans — of all ages — don't want to be colonized and subjected to a foreign power. Yes, we have many, many problems, which we have to solve ourselves. But we don't want anyone from the outside telling us how to do things."

As an example, they pointed to the tens of thousands of students and young soldiers who turned out for the Jan. 27 nighttime "March of the Torches." This year's event, which is organized annually by the Federation of University Students to honor the anti-imperialist legacy of José Martí, Cuba's national hero, was seen as a defiant answer to Washington's stepped-up threats.

"I'm learning to shoot a rifle"

People also described to us the nationwide military training exercises that have been stepped up since Washington's assault on Venezuela.

Since the early days of the revolution, every Cuban receives military training on one level or another. They know what to do, where to go, in case of a military attack.

For many years, preparedness drills have been held twice a year. Beginning Jan. 10 — one week after the "shock-and-awe" military attack on Venezuela — they have been held every Saturday, each time in different areas of the island. Tens of thousands have participated through the volunteer Territorial Troop Militias, organized by geographic areas, and the Production and Defense Brigades, organized in workplaces. The exercises also include units of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

"I took part in the training two weeks ago at Martí Park," here in Havana, Elepán said. "I had been part of previous National Days of Defense, but this was the first time I heard live grenades exploding. It was the first time I held an actual rifle in my hands and began to learn to fire one," she said with a proud smile.

Response to new economic measures

On Jan. 29, the U.S. government declared a de facto total oil blockade against Cuba. "It's outrageous that a big country like the United States won't allow a small nation like ours to get oil."

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US rulers step up economic war, military threats against Cuba

BY RÓGER CALERO

President Donald Trump signed an executive order Jan. 29 aiming to sever Cuba's oil supplies and bring its people to their knees. The decree, intended to force Cubans and their government to bow down to the U.S. rulers' imperialist dictates, imposes punishing tariffs on goods from countries that sell or provide oil to Cuba.

The White House claims Cuba "constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat" to U.S. national security. That's the deliberate lie used by every Republican and Democratic Party president since 1959 to excuse their efforts to destroy the Cuban Revolution. The Trump administration accuses Havana of aligning itself with "malign actors" and "inviting" hostile countries "to base sophisticated military and intelligence capabilities" in Cuba.

Tightening the chokehold on Cuba builds on the White House blockade of oil supplies from Venezuela following the unilateral Jan. 3 U.S. military assault on that country.

Washington has succeeded in pressuring the government of Mexico, until recently a supplier of crude oil to Cuba, to halt shipments. The Mexican regime now claims this was a "sovereign decision" by PEMEX, the state oil company.

To enforce the blockade, Washington

is maintaining its naval armada in Caribbean waters. So far, the U.S. military has seized eight oil tankers transporting "sanctioned" crude. The most recent, the Aquila II, was seized in the Indian Ocean Feb. 9 after tracking it from the Caribbean since early January. "No other nation on planet Earth has the capability to enforce its will through any domain," said a warmongering post by the Pentagon. "By land, air, or sea, our armed forces will find you and deliver justice." *Pirates'* "justice," that is.

The Cuban government is denouncing these moves toward a complete naval blockade as an act of war, rejecting Washington's accusations.

"Cuba poses no threat to the United States," said Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernández de Cossío Feb. 5. "With the exception of the U.S. base in Guantánamo," there are no foreign military bases in Cuba, he said. The Guantánamo Bay was seized by U.S. troops in 1898. Washington has occupied it ever since, against the will of Cuba's people and government.

De Cossío and other government officials have also dispelled the capitalist media's breast-beating about the Cuban government having "conceded" under pressure to talks with the Trump administration. "There is no change," said de Cossío.

Dialogue has always been "Cuba's historical position," dating back to the Jan. 1, 1959, revolutionary victory under the leadership of Fidel Castro, said Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel at a press conference the same day. As



U.S. Department of War

U.S. forces commandeered oil tanker Aquila II in Indian Ocean Feb. 9 after pursuit from Caribbean. Washington is using its blockade to try to bleed working people in Cuba.

between any governments, such talks must be "without pressure," with "respect for our sovereignty, our independence, our self-determination."

Seek to bring back capitalism

The U.S. capitalist rulers see an opening to deal blows to Cuba's socialist revolution. For over six decades, the U.S. government — under both Democratic and Republican administrations — has waged a relentless economic and political war aimed at punishing the Cuban people for overthrowing capitalist exploitation and oppression, and setting an example for working people everywhere to do the same.

"A lot of people that live in [the U.S.] are treated very badly by Cuba," said President Trump Feb. 1, "and we want them to be treated well." These "badly treated people" are capitalist owners of

big tracts of land, factories and financial interests who lost their ability to grow wealthy off the exploitation of Cuban workers and rural toilers after they took political power and began organizing society for the benefit of the majority.

A good example of the "people" Trump is talking about are capitalist interests behind two lawsuits currently in front of the U.S. Supreme Court — brought by Exxon Mobil Corp. and Havana Docks Corporation. These two U.S. corporations are seeking millions of dollars in damages from Cuban state enterprises for the nationalization of assets by the revolutionary government.

The "people" Washington says it wants "to help" do *not* include the 10 million in Cuba whose lives have been drastically worsened by the U.S. government's economic war. Nor does it include the tens of thousands of Cubans living in the U.S. at risk of being deported by the Trump administration, many of whom are now joining protests against deportations across the country.

Reporter's notebook from Havana

Continued from page 9

Muñiz told us, paraphrasing the words of President Miguel Díaz-Canel. "Think what it means for hospitals, for schools, for transportation, for farmers who grow food."

In face of the oil blockade, the Cuban government announced immediate measures to maximize the use of scarce energy resources, prioritizing essential services and social needs.

"It will mean tightening our belts even more," Muñiz said. "There is a lot of uncertainty about what will happen in the coming weeks. But I agree with giving priority to protect those who are most vulnerable. Assuring fuel for hospitals, facilities for older adults, centers for children with special needs. Allocating our limited supply of solar panels to isolated rural communities, medical centers, and so forth. Most Cubans can understand that."

As part of the rationing of resources, a number of major countrywide cultural events have been canceled, including the University 2026 conference, which in the past drew thousands of educators from across Latin America as well as Cuba. The Havana International Book Fair, Cuba's largest cultural festival, held every February, was postponed until further notice.

Washington's economic squeeze may lead to more electrical blackouts, but "there will be no cultural blackout," declared Cuba's ministry of culture in a Feb. 7 statement. "Art will continue to be a space for resistance, creativity, and support."

Ana Morales, the program coordinator at Casa de África, a cultural center in Old Havana focusing on Cuba's African heritage, told us large national cultural events — which involve substantial transportation and other fuel costs — will be shifted to community-based activities, from concerts to book presentations and art classes.

One of the people we visited was Herminio Fernández, a longtime trade unionist who manages a minihotel run by the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), the national trade union federation. His deeply felt words captured the attitude of a broad range of Cubans we've talked with, especially among working people.

"We face a severe lack of fuel, electric power, and many other things because the U.S. government is trying to strangle us," Fernández told us. "But we're not about to give up, and they won't defeat us."

"They really don't know who we are."

Mary-Alice Waters contributed to this article.

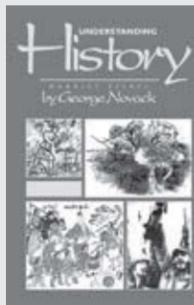
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US rulers' assault on Cuba is a bipartisan policy

Washington's punishing oil blockade against Cuba, as well as military threats against the Cuban people by President Donald Trump's administration, are a sharp escalation of the bipartisan course followed by the U.S. capitalist rulers for over 60 years. It's not a "Trump" thing, but a policy championed under every U.S. government — both Democratic and Republican — since Cuba's working people took power into their own hands in 1959.

The U.S. rulers' moves are aimed at inflicting more hardship on Cuban working people in hopes of achieving one of the key foreign policy goals of the U.S. capitalist rulers ever since working people in Cuba made the first socialist revolution in our hemisphere.

Washington's decadeslong economic and political war against Cuba involved orchestrating a failed mercenary invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in 1961. It involved numerous attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro and other leaders of the revolution. And brought the world to the brink of a nuclear disaster in the October "Missile" Crisis in 1962.

The U.S. rulers' policy toward Cuba isn't an option. They can never forgive working people there for acting in their millions to overturn capitalist exploitation, and providing a powerful example to workers and the oppressed world over. There is an alternative to the indignities, misery and wars we face under capitalism.

All 12 U.S. presidents have maintained that policy since Democrat John F. Kennedy initiated the U.S. trade embargo of Cuba in 1962 to try to starve the Cuban people into submission. The Democrats and Republicans are the twin parties of the ruling rich,

whose wealth and power comes from exploiting working people. They have political differences, but on all decisive questions — from imperialist war to the drive to overturn the Cuban Revolution — they are one.

And the mouthpieces in the Trump-hating liberal press overwhelmingly back the administration's moves.

"Washington's pressure on Havana is working," the editors of the *Washington Post* claim Feb. 6. "It would be unwise to settle for anything less than dramatic change on America's terms." They echo the White House's lies about Cuba, claiming "the 67-year experiment with communism has been an abject failure" — without mentioning the devastating impact of the U.S. blockade — before urging Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel, who they claim is a dictator, to flee the country.

The *New York Times* turned a column over to Cuban counterrevolutionary blogger Yoani Sánchez Jan. 16. She lauded the U.S. forces killing of Cuban security guards in Venezuela during Washington's bloody Jan. 3 intervention there. She said the operation showed Cuban forces "are not invincible" and claimed it "undermined the power" of the Cuban government.

The lies told by the capitalist press — of whatever political hue — about the Cuban Revolution and about Washington's war moves against it, underline the importance of working people having a newspaper like the *Militant* and a party like the Socialist Workers Party campaigning to get out the truth about Cuba as widely as possible. Join us in demanding "U.S. Hands Off Cuba! End Washington's Economic Blockade!"

Over 1,000 rally in Ohio to back TPS for Haitians

BY BETSY FARLEY

SPRINGFIELD, Ohio — More than 1,000 supporters, double what organizers expected, packed St. John's Missionary Baptist Church here Feb. 2 calling for an extension of Temporary Protected Status for Haitians, one of many recent solidarity actions. Hundreds more were turned away by a fire marshal who said the crowd exceeded the building's capacity.

"Our city of 60,000 is home to around 15,000 Haitian immigrants. Many have lived and worked under TPS for years," Viles Dorsainvil, cofounder and executive director of the Haitian Community Help and Support Center, told the *Militant*. "These are workers — factory workers, medical workers, education workers — who are building the country and have contributed so much to the community all over Ohio."

Later on Feb. 2 U.S. District Court Judge Ana C. Reyes blocked the government from revoking TPS for Haitians, one day before it was set to expire.

"The court ruling provides temporary relief, but we

know the Trump administration is appealing," Dorsainvil said. "Right now many people are afraid, but we have to continue to speak out. The huge protests in Minneapolis are a signal to us that growing numbers in this country condemn targeting people based on skin color, language or country of origin."

The Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union is calling for full legal status and no deportations. BCTGM Local 57, which organizes workers at a Klosterman's commercial bread bakery here, issued a statement Feb. 10 against the arrest and deportation of Haitian immigrants.

"Our union's guiding principle is solidarity," the statement says. "All workers deserve the same legal rights, regardless of the country in which they were born. Together we can fight for decent wages and benefits and safety on the job and in our communities."

"We urge all working people to join in solidarity to defend Haitian workers in Springfield from deportation. An injury to one is an injury to all!"

Arizona judge revokes laws limiting abortion access

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Maricopa Superior Court Judge Greg Como struck down three state laws that restricted access to abortion in Arizona Feb. 6. The laws required women to provide a reason for seeking an abortion, barred abortion in cases of nonfatal genetic abnormalities, prohibited doctors from prescribing and mailing abortion pills and ordered women seeking an abortion to schedule at least two documented doctor visits before legally having the procedure. These restrictions had remained on the books despite voters overwhelmingly approving a state constitutional guarantee of women's right to choose to have an abortion in 2024.

"Each of these laws," Judge Como ruled, "infringe on a woman's 'autonomous decision making' by mandating medical procedures and disclosure of information regardless of the patient's needs and wishes."

"For the first time in a long time, my patients will not have to jump through hoops to get the care they need," said Paul Isaacson, one of the doctors who filed the suit against the restrictions.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, for good reasons, handing the issue over to the states and the people to decide, millions of

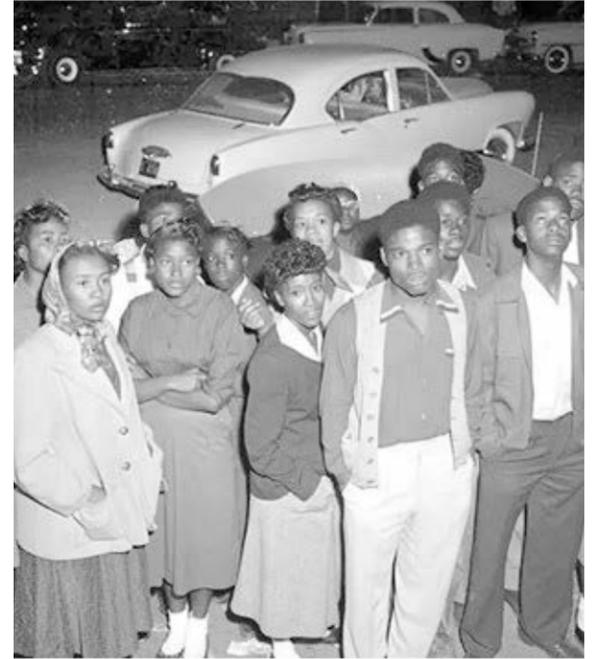
working people have debated the issue. Voters upheld state pro-abortion-rights laws in a large majority of them. Today abortion is a woman's affair to decide in 30 states and Washington, D.C. Abortion restrictions will be on the ballot in at least two more states in 2026, Missouri and Nevada, and possibly more.

"The Socialist Workers Party champions the decriminalization of abortion as part of the broader fight to advance the rights and lives of women and working people as a whole," Margaret Trowe, the party's candidate for governor of California, told the *Militant*.

"The crisis of capitalism makes it harder for workers to sustain families and have children today," she said. "In contract fights across the country, unions are fighting for wages that can support a family, work schedules that allow family life and affordable medical care. We need a union-led fight for a government-funded public works program, with jobs at union-scale wages, to build affordable child and elder care centers, housing and other things workers sorely need."

According to the latest Gallup poll, 51% of Americans now identify themselves as "pro-choice," an increase from 2021 and product of the debate over the issue.

70 years after his execution, Tommy Lee Walker cleared



Dallas Public Library

Crowd outside Dallas County Courthouse during Tommy Lee Walker's 1954 trial. Walker, an African American, was framed-up, convicted by an all-white jury and executed.

BY GEORGE CHALMERS

FORT WORTH, Texas — On Jan. 21, the Dallas County Commissioners Court voted unanimously to exonerate Tommy Lee Walker. Walker, a 19-year-old Black man, was convicted by an all-white jury of the rape and murder of Venice Parker, a 31-year-old white woman store clerk he had never seen or met, 72 years ago.

A video taken at the trial shows Walker, who vigorously protested his frame-up, saying, "I feel that I have been tricked out of my life." He was strapped into an electric chair two years later and executed in May 1956.

The exoneration grew out of an investigation by journalist Mary Mapes, who published her conclusions in a 2016 article. It showed that Walker was nowhere near the site of the crime, but was with his girlfriend who went into labor.

Three miles across town Parker got off work and went to a bus stop to go home. She was beaten, raped and her throat was cut. Racist police claimed she told them the attacker was "a Negro," but several witnesses there said her injuries prevented her from speaking.

Forced confession was only evidence

The police department and prosecutor's office were notoriously racist. Homicide Bureau Chief Will Fritz was a known member of the Ku Klux Klan. Fritz spent hours browbeating Walker in the city jail without an attorney present, insisting the cops had the goods on him and he'd be executed if he didn't confess. Out of fear he did so, but immediately retracted it. That so-called confession was the only evidence presented against him in court, besides the fact he was Black.

The defense put 10 eyewitnesses on the stand who testified Walker was with his girlfriend. The last thing Walker said before he was executed was that he wasn't guilty.

The prosecutor was Henry Wade, a notorious racist who had 35 of his convictions overturned by exoneration. He wrote a memo instructing all the prosecutors to strike from juries, "Jews, Negroes, Dagos, Mexicans or a member of any minority race."

The Dallas Express, the Black community newspaper at the time, printed pictures of thousands of Black residents who came to stand outside the courtroom to bear witness every day of the trial. The paper printed each name of the 5,000 people who came to Walker's funeral.

The mighty proletarian battles that overthrew Jim Crow segregation in the South, the Southwest and across the country transformed social relations in the U.S.

When the Dallas County Commissioners voted to exonerate there were a number of people present, including Walker's son, Edward Smith, now 72, other members of Walker's family, and Joseph Parker, the son of Venice Parker.

Smith and Parker embraced and they stood together arm-in-arm, celebrating a little piece of justice.