

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Defying repression, new protests
push Iranian regime back
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 90/NO. 8 MARCH 2, 2026

Why amnesty for immigrant workers in US is key for labor

BY EDWIN FRUIT

MINNEAPOLIS — Hundreds gathered in South Minneapolis Feb. 16 for a march and rally sponsored by the Minnesota AFL-CIO to protest the Immigration and Customs Enforcement and border control agencies' ongoing arrests and brutality here.

Speakers urged people to keep protesting. The march proceeded to the memorial sites where Renee Good and Alex Pretti were killed by federal agents as they tried to confront and obstruct ICE agents' operations.

As the much publicized Donald Trump administration's wind down of its deployment of ICE and Border Patrol agents in Minnesota proceeds, surveillance and arrests of immigrant workers continue. On Feb. 12, auto mechanic Jesus Flores was surrounded and grabbed by ICE agents as he was lured out of his home by a female agent posing as a stranded motorist.

Volunteers acting as a neighborhood watch continue to follow agents driving around the area, as well as stand watch in defense of restaurants and stores

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Support nurses strikes in New York, California and in Hawaii

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

LOS ANGELES — The strike by some 31,000 members of the United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals at hospitals and clinics in California and Hawaii entered its fourth week Feb. 16. Spirited strike lines of nurses and other health care workers continue. At the west Los Angeles Kaiser hospital here Feb. 13, drivers and passengers passing by in cars and trucks honked in support.

Some 3,000 pharmacy technicians, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 770, had walked out and joined the picket lines in solidarity for three days. They went back to work Feb. 12. The local said more Alliance of Health Care Unions will be issuing 10-day strike notices soon.

Founded in 2018, the Alliance is a federation of 23 local unions representing over 60,000 Kaiser Permanent employees who work in hundreds of job classifications everywhere Kaiser has a presence.

Kaiser is California's largest private employer, with close to 19,000 physi-

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US hands off Cuba! Build protests against US blockade

Help get out truth about Cuba's socialist revolution



Militant/Marklyn Wilson

Protest in Atlanta Feb. 17 sponsored by Socialist Workers Party, Democratic Socialists of America demands "U.S. hands off Cuba!" Similar actions are being organized worldwide.

Join Socialist Workers Party campaigning to support Cuba

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

As Washington's blockade of the Cuban people intensifies, members of the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom are campaigning to get out the truth about, and defend, Cuba's socialist revolution.

They're organizing public protests to demand "U.S. hands off Cuba!" and urging working people to join and build the actions. And they're using SWP election campaigns, the *Militant* and Pathfinder

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Cuban people, gov't organize to defend their revolution

BY RÓGER CALERO

Since late January, when Washington imposed a blockade on Cuba's access to imported oil, the U.S. rulers have stepped up their drive to deal

Reporter's notebook from Havana
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further economic and political blows to the Cuban people and their government. Workers and farmers on the island are organizing to try to limit

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3,800 meatpackers in Colorado vote to authorize strike against JBS bosses



Denver Public Library, Western History Collection/RMN-036-4776; Rocky Mountain News/Ahmad Terry

Greeley, Colorado, JBS plant employs majority immigrant workers, with over 1,000 from Haiti. In 2006, above, raid by ICE agents was met there by relatives, supporters defending the workers.

BY JOHN STUDER

Over 3,800 meatpacking workers, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7 at JBS in Greeley, Colorado, voted by almost 99% Feb. 4 to authorize a strike, but a strike deadline has not been set. They are fed up with conditions in the plant that threaten life and limb, a blistering speed on the line and other degrada-

tions from management.

JBS is the largest beef and pork meatpacking company in the world. The Greeley plant butchers at least 10,000 cows daily.

"This strike authorization is the direct result of JBS's unlawful and bad-faith conduct," Local 7 President Kim Cordova told the press.

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'Militant' fights Florida prison ban on issues backing the rights of immigrants

BY JANET POST

Prison authorities at the Taylor Correctional Institution in Perry, Florida, have now impounded three consecutive issues of the *Militant*, dated Feb. 2, Feb.

9 and Feb. 16. They object to three lead articles in each issue, which report on the fight to defend immigrant workers against far-reaching arrests, deportations and abuse in Minneapolis.

They object to the front-page article in issue no. 4, "Amnesty for immigrants, to unify the working class! Course of liberals, left poses obstacle to progress"

Continued on page 4

Communist League points way forward in UK elections

BY PETE CLIFFORD

MANCHESTER, England — "From what I know Cuba won't break so easily as Venezuela," David Lawrence, a gateline ticket checker at Manchester Piccadilly rail station, told Hugo Wils. Wils is the Communist League candidate in the parliamentary by-election for the Gorton and Denton constituency here. Lawrence and Wils were discussing Washington's stepped-up military threats against Cuba as Wils cam-

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Proposed Quebec law is attack on religious, democratic rights

BY STEVE PENNER

MONTREAL — Ignoring a union-sponsored demonstration here Nov. 29 that drew 50,000 people — unionists, students, community group members, doctors and others protesting a series of laws either adopted or proposed by the Coalition for the Future of Quebec (CAQ) government of Premier Francois Legault — the Quebec government has introduced another attack on democratic freedoms, Bill 9.

As hearings by the Quebec government were held, several unions, democratic rights groups and others denounced it. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association called it “another assault on religious freedoms, equality, and basic human dignity.”

The proposed law is the third brought in by the Legault government under the false pretext of “defending secularism.” Each imposes legal restrictions that would deepen divisions among working people along religious, language and immigration lines, in order to weaken our ability to organize to defend our class interests.

Law 21, the first of these laws, was passed in 2019, banning many public sector workers in government, education and health care from wearing any religious clothing or symbols at work, such as Muslim women wearing head scarves, Jewish men wearing kippahs (skull caps), or Sikhs wearing turbans. Thousands marched to protest the law.

Next, Law 94 extended the ban on wearing religious clothing to all school support staff and volunteers, including janitors, secretaries and cafeteria workers, as well as parents picking up

their children from school.

The new Bill 9 would extend these discriminatory restrictions to day care centers, private schools, French-language classes and immigration proceedings. It could prevent parents wearing a head scarf or any other religious symbols from attending a parent-teacher meeting. It bans all group prayers in public places if they don’t have a government permit. That could include any outdoor religious services.

Asked if children in schools would still be allowed to have Christmas or Hanukkah parties, Jean-Francois Roberge, the minister responsible for “secularism,” said that would depend on whether they would involve “the transmission of faith or religious manifestations.”

The government also plans to phase out funding for most private religious schools over the next three years, while continuing to subsidize nonreligious private schools.

The government has attempted to ensure these attacks on the right to worship, which are supposedly guaranteed by Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms, can’t be challenged in court by invoking the charter’s “notwithstanding clause.” That anti-democratic, anti-working-class clause says that “notwithstanding” all the rights included in the charter, they can be suspended by the federal or any provincial government in Canada with the stroke of a pen.

Quebec gov’t attacks challenged

Nonetheless, the Supreme Court has agreed to hear a strong challenge to the law by dozens of groups, led by Cana-



Militant/Jim Upton

2019 protest against Law 21 in Montreal. Placard reads, “Muslims, Jews, atheists and Christians are all citizens.” New bill would extend discriminatory restrictions on wearing religious symbols at work, day care centers, immigration proceedings, French-language classes and more.

dian Civil Liberties Association, National Council of Canadian Muslims, the Autonomous Federation of Teachers (FAE), English Montreal School Board and the World Sikh Organization. Other interveners in the case include the Canadian Labour Congress, Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Quebec League of Rights and Freedom.

“Bill 21 is a discriminatory law that violates the fundamental rights and freedoms of Quebecers,” Canadian Civil Liberties Association leader Hari-ni Sivalingam told the media. “To make things worse, when passing Bill 21, the government of Quebec used the notwithstanding clause to override important charter protections such as religious freedoms and equality rights.”

Melanie Hubert, president of the teachers union, explained that unions need to “defend the rights” of all workers in the schools, not only their “right to freedom of religion, but above all, the right to equality.”

The Canadian Labour Congress issued a statement saying that Canada’s unions “stand in solidarity with and fight for the human rights of all workers” affected by Bill 21. “Workers should not have to make the choice between working in the professions of their choice and practicing their faith.”

At the Nov. 29 Montreal demonstration, Nawal Chi, a unionist and school secretary in the Montreal school board, held a sign reading, “The woman

wearing a headscarf is a human being capable of deciding what to put on her own body. No to Law 94 and to Law 21. My veil, my choice, my dignity, my freedom of dress.”

“I am a mom with three children,” Chi told the *Militant*. “This is about human values, not ‘Quebec’ values. No child has ever asked me at school why I wear a headscarf. They see me as someone who is there to protect them. I’m here so my union will defend me.”

“Attacks like this, on fundamental rights the working class needs aren’t taking place only in Quebec,” Joe Young, the Communist League candidate in the Quebec provincial elections, told the *Militant*. “They’re being spearheaded by the federal government in Ottawa. Since its illegal use of the Emergencies Act to crush the trucker-led Freedom Convoy in 2022, Ottawa has moved to rule illegal strikes called by every single union under its jurisdiction in the past year and a half.

“It’s part of an offensive by the bosses and their governments to block working-class and union resistance as the capitalist economic and social crisis facing working people deepens. This is especially true as the rulers’ rivalries and drive toward new and deadlier wars grow.

“Opposing the rulers’ attempts to divide us, as the CAQ’s laws aim to do, is essential to build the unity needed to defeat their attacks,” Young said.

THE MILITANT

Executed 70 years ago, Tommy Lee Walker is cleared

On Jan. 21, a Dallas court voted unanimously to exonerate Tommy Lee Walker, a 19-year-old Black man falsely convicted of the rape and murder of Venice Parker, a white woman. He was executed in 1956. Walker’s and Parker’s sons embraced and celebrated after the decision.



Dallas Public Library

Crowd came daily outside 1954 Dallas trial of Tommy Lee Walker, framed-up for murder.

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

Support nurses on strike

Continued from front page

cians and more than 180,000 employees overall. It also has a major presence in Washington, Colorado, Georgia and other states.

One of the central issues is the hospital bosses' refusal to hire enough staff. When asked what this means for health care workers, Jenny, a relief charge nurse for 12 years at Kaiser, told the *Militant*, "I don't know where to begin. It's very stressful. You want to do a good job but you get your resources taken away from you. It's not just patients but their families. Lack of staffing, not enough equipment, computers shut down, thermometers missing."

"I've been a nurse for 10 years and at Kaiser for three years," added Dawn, a registered nurse. "You are constantly doing more than one job. That's the main issue. You see the camaraderie on the job and on the picket line. It's not about the money. It's the lack of resources. There are not enough certified nursing assistants to work with patients and their families. We work as fast as we can. Sometimes we don't get to take any breaks on a 12-hour shift."

Kaiser strikers need your support! Go to the union website — at UNAC/UHCP Home — and click on "Take Action!" You'll find information on the strike and time and locations for joining the picketing.



BY SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK — "The most important issue we're fighting around is safe and enforceable staffing levels," labor

and delivery nurse Kimberly McCoy told the *Militant* Feb. 14. McCoy was on the picket line outside New York-Presbyterian Hospital as nurses there began their second month on strike.

"The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit is always overfilled. This is dangerous for both the babies and the nurses," she said. One of the handmade signs carried by another striker said, "Closets are for clothes, not babies," referring to the hospital's practice of putting cribs for sick infants in closets when space in the unit fills up.

Nurses at three hospital systems here — New York-Presbyterian, Mount Sinai and Montefiore — went on strike Jan. 12. Mount Sinai and Montefiore nurses approved new contracts that met their key demands and returned to work Feb. 14. More than 4,200 nurses at New York-Presbyterian overwhelmingly rejected a worse contract and continue to maintain energetic picket lines.

When this *Militant* correspondent was there a DJ was playing dance music, several carts of donated barbecue had just been delivered, virtually every car and city bus that drove by honked in support and an overhead drone took photos as strikers and their supporters waved and applauded.

As a result of a strike in 2023, nurses at Mount Sinai and Montefiore had won enforceable nurse-patient ratios. This time around they successfully beat back attempts by those hospitals to cut those clauses from the contract, as well as keeping their current medical insurance plan and pensions, and winning modest pay raises, said Carol McGowan, a Mount Sinai nurse for 37 years who currently works in the neurosurgical ICU. She had come to join the picketing and show solidarity with the New York-Presbyterian nurses before she returned to work Feb. 16.

"At NYP we didn't win the enforceable language three years ago," McCoy said. "And the contract we voted on last week didn't include it. That's why we voted it down."

"It's not just nurses," Marie Berguin-Francois, who currently works in postpartum and has been at New York-Presbyterian for 34 years, said.



Militant/Sara Lobman

Nurses picket New York-Presbyterian Hospital Feb. 14. Some 4,200 have been on strike here for over a month in fight to force bosses to provide adequate staffing to meet patients' needs.

"They don't bring in enough cleaners, transport, and so on. So the nurses end up having to do some of that work as well."

Bobby Ancog has worked there for 28 years. He's an operating room nurse. "When there's a pause between cases in the OR, they try to force us to other units where we're not actually trained," he said. "First they threatened to cut our medical benefits and pensions. When they gave up on that, they acted like we owed them a favor" and should give up on fighting for adequate staffing.

Last year New York-Presbyterian

laid off 2% of its workforce, about 1,000 workers in all.

Eloisa Principe, a nurse with 18 years at this hospital, came to the picket line with her husband Alexander and their two children. "The patients can't get the good care they deserve if there aren't enough nurses," she said. "I tell her, 'don't back down. You have to keep fighting,'" Alexander said.

To join their fight, go to the New York State Nurses Association website for more information, including on picket sites at New York-Presbyterian's three locations.

Teachers in San Francisco make gains in popular four-day strike

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO — The spirits of the nearly 6,000 teachers here are high as they return to their classrooms following a four-day strike. The agreement they won includes wage increases as well as fully funded family medical coverage. Starting in January 2027, all members of the union will have 100% of their health care premiums paid by the school district. They also won lower costs by 50% for medical coverage starting this July.

At a large strike rally Feb. 10 organized by the union, United Educators of

San Francisco, teachers told the *Militant* that winning medical care for dependents was their key demand. Some said they had been paying as much as \$1,500 a month to have their families covered.

Negotiators for the school district argued that teachers' pensions should be cut in exchange for increased medical benefits. The teachers said no and kept pressing, winning support for their fight by mobilizing rallies attended by thousands of teachers, students and others. This went hand in hand with daily picketing at schools across the city.

This was the first strike by members of the union since 1979. Janitors, cafeteria and other school workers, members of Service Employees International Union Local 1021, walked out in a sympathy strike and joined the rallies. On Feb. 11, teachers mobilized at the beach, using their bodies to spell out "Strike for our students."

The union didn't win all their demands. Teachers got a 5% wage increase over two years, not the 9% they asked for. But the lower-paid members of the union, paraeducators who assist teachers and students in the classrooms, got a bigger wage boost of 8.5%.

The agreement still has to be voted on by both union members and the school board. School district officials say they are facing a \$100 million budget shortfall and will have to consider school shutdowns or other cuts in the future to close the gap. So, the fight will continue.

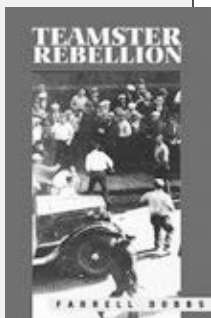
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Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as recounted by a central leader of that battle.—\$16

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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

February 26, 2001

The entire labor movement has a stake in supporting efforts by the coal miners to defend and extend black lung benefits. It is part of the fight for human dignity, the right to a safe workplace, and for the employers to be responsible for the damage they do to the bodies and lives of working people.

The decision by a federal judge to put new regulations affecting black lung benefits on hold, the product of a vigorous campaign by the coal bosses, means that miners and widows who wish to file for black lung benefits cannot do so for several months at best.

The social movement that is growing among working and retired miners and their families and others in the coalfield communities from Pennsylvania and West Virginia to Utah and Colorado strengthens the fight for health care, safe working conditions, and dignity for the entire working class.

THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

February 27, 1976

In less than a week, MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) has made a series of military gains. By Feb. 13 MPLA forces, backed by thousands of Cuban troops, were within 130 miles of the positions held along Angola's southern border by the South African army.

The racist minority regime in Pretoria has threatened to throw its military forces into action if MPLA attempts to extend its drive to the border between Angola and South African-occupied Namibia (South-West Africa).

Parallel with its military advances, the MPLA has also made major diplomatic gains. On Feb. 11, William Eteki M'Boumoua, the general secretary of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), announced that the MPLA's People's Republic of Angola had been recognized by the OAU as Angola's legitimate government.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

February 26, 1951

The belated resignation of the labor members from the Wage Stabilization Board was an act of self-preservation. They could no longer stifle the anger of the workers against the oppressive burdens of war mobilization. War profiteers are running wild and trampling labor underfoot. The question is: what to do?

The break with the board was a step in the right direction. Formation of the United Labor Policy Committee is a necessary move toward labor unity against the government-Big Business offensive. The United Committee should summon a conference of rank and file delegates from all local unions. Such a democratically chosen and truly representative Congress of Labor would check the anti-labor drive.

No more trust in the two old capitalist parties! Organize labor's own political party to fight for these demands on the political field.

CL campaign points way forward

Continued from front page
paigned around the station Feb. 13.
“Working people in Cuba have a stake in the defense of their revolution,” Wils said, “and so do workers here. It’s an example that there’s an alternative to capitalist rule.”

Hussein Mohamed joined the discussion. He told Wils, “My people are under attack,” referring to immigration raids targeting Somalis in Minneapolis. Wils said that trade unions there had backed disciplined demonstrations for immigrant rights.

“Union support for immigrant workers in our fight for union recognition was important,” Mohamed said. He was part of a yearslong struggle by more than 150 rail workers employed by Carlisle Support Services who won recognition for the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union in 2024.

Wils spoke at a candidates debate Feb. 10, organized by Local Voices Gorton and Denton, and at another Feb. 12, organized by the Levenshulme Community Association. The meetings drew over 300 people.

“The U.S. government’s efforts to force other governments to stop supplying oil to Cuba is a war move,” Wils told both meetings. He explained that “the Communist League is the peace party,” because it’s the one party that points a road forward for workers to take power from the capitalist war makers and into our own hands.

At the Feb. 12 debate the candidates were asked about their response to the rise of antisemitism. Both Charlotte Cadden, the Conservative candidate, and Labour’s Angeliki Stoglia described antisemitism as a “hate crime.” Reform UK candidate Matthew Goodwin said it was “depressing” that “Jews were leaving Britain” in response to the rise in Jew-hating attacks.

A refuge from Jew-hatred, pogroms

Antisemitism “is not another ‘hate’ crime,” Wils said. Jews are targeted “by reactionary forces to blind working people from seeing our real enemy — the capitalist class. That’s been true from the times of the czarist empire to the Nazis, up to today. Working people have a big stake in defending Israel, the one country that unconditionally offers Jews a refuge.”

Candidates were asked if they agreed that there was “genocide” in Gaza today. The Liberal Democrats’ Jackie Pearcey and Green candidate Hannah Spencer both claimed Israel was carrying out “genocide” against the Palestinians.

Wils disagreed. “Who is responsible for the death and destruction in Gaza? It’s Hamas,” he said. “Their Oct. 7, 2023, pogrom, backed by the reactionary rulers in Iran, signaled its intention to carry out a new Holocaust.”

Candidates were also asked about a

recent U.K. Supreme Court ruling that men and women are defined by their biological sex. The ruling means that same-sex services for women — from hospital wards, to women’s refuges and sports can exclude men who say they identify as women. The Green and Liberal Democrats candidates said they opposed the ruling.

Wils said the ruling defended “gains for all working people won as a result of the fight for women’s rights.” This is deeply tied to the fight “to win jobs for women and for separate changing rooms.”

After the debate some participants stayed around to tell Wils they’d appreciated his comments. One person got a copy of *The Fight Against Jew-Hatred and Pogroms in the Imperialist Epoch: Stakes for the International Working Class*.

Another debate earlier in the day was hosted by the *Manchester Evening News*, which excluded Wils from participating despite the fact he’ll be on the Feb. 26 ballot. Spencer from the Green Party told participants that the Labour government’s immigration restrictions were “terrifying,” and accused her opponents of “cozying up to Trump.” Goodwin from Reform UK lambasted authorities for allegedly allocating housing in the Denton area “to illegal immigrants” and said his party would “slash immigration.”

Wils spoke to this question in an interview with the *Tameside Reporter*.

“There’s a terrific housing crisis, especially in Manchester,” Wils said “That crisis is going to deepen, because we live under class rule. The government and



Militant/Pete Clifford
Hugo Wils, Communist League candidate for Parliament, told Feb. 12 debate in Manchester he supports Cuba’s socialist revolution, calls for protests against oil blockade by the U.S. rulers.

the state are organised for the interests of big business, not working people.”

The CL calls for a government-funded mass “public works programme,” not “as a promise but a demand to fight for,” in order to provide jobs to build “the housing, schools, hospitals and roads that working people need,” Wils said. His campaign calls for an amnesty for all immigrants in the U.K. in order to unite working people and strengthen the labor movement.

Wils met Adeola Badmus when he campaigned near a Gorton market Feb. 14. They discussed the growing threat of more wars. Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer had announced the same day that London was deploying a naval fleet to join U.S. forces in the Arctic. Starmer declared that governments in Europe had “to be ready to fight.”

“The British rulers deployed their

armed forces to assist Washington when it seized an oil tanker linked to Venezuela in the Atlantic,” Wils told Badmus. “This is another dangerous step on the road toward a world war.” He described how the British rulers had been complicit with the U.S. economic and political war against Cuba for decades.

“That’s because Cuba gave solidarity to countries in Africa and round the world,” Badmus said, pointing to the unparalleled contribution of Cuban international volunteers. “That’s the U.S.’s real problem.”

Several people came by the CL street table that day saying that they had already received Wils’ campaign material through their doors. The CL took advantage of a free mailing to get its program to 49,600 households in the constituency.

‘Militant’ fights Florida prison ban on three issues

Continued from front page

by Mary Martin. It includes her photo of a broad, labor-supported rally Jan. 10.

The second notice is for a front-page article in the next issue by Helen Meyers, “Join fight for amnesty for all immigrants in the US! Unions need to lead to unify the working class.” It’s accompanied by a photo of thousands of people marching in downtown Minneapolis Jan. 23, captioned, “Area unions built and organized to help ensure it was a disciplined, peaceful action.”

The third denounces the front-page article “Fight for amnesty for all immigrants in the US!”

Prison officials claim each of the three articles is “dangerously inflammatory in that it advocates or encourages riot, insurrection, rebellion, organized prison protest, disruption of the institution, or the violation of the federal law, state law, or Department rules.” It adds that they present “a threat to the security, order, or rehabilitative objectives of the correctional system or the safety of any person.”

For weeks, the *Militant* and news media worldwide have been reporting on the response in Minneapolis and other cities to the escalation of assaults, raids, arrests and shootings by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents and police against immigrant workers, their families and supporters.

Far from being inflammatory, or urging disruption, or riots, much less insurrection, all three articles argue for mass, legal, working-class protest. “The assaults are prompting widespread discussion among working people about what we can do to be effective to defend

workers without papers, stop attacks on constitutional protections like due process and unite the working class,” Martin wrote in her article.

In issue no. 5, Meyers points positively to recent actions that show “the potential for building a powerful and disciplined union-led movement to fight and win amnesty for those in the working class without papers.”

She said a Jan. 23 march in Minneapolis “reflected the determination of many working people to stand up in defense of immigrant workers — their co-workers, neighbors, fellow unionists, church members and more. The Minnesota AFL-CIO Executive Board endorsed the action and urged its members to attend. Many did.”

The articles all contrast these broad union-backed rallies to the ineffective and dangerous ultraleft tactics and thuggery that have led to demonstrators being injured and even shot. They back a course of action that can draw millions of workers into action that can be effective and win an amnesty.

We have to assume our continuing coverage of this political fight will lead to further bans unless we can overturn them.

Letters of support needed!

“We request the you reverse the ban by Florida prison authorities and that all impounded copies” be delivered to subscribers at Taylor C.I., wrote Samuel J. Morley, general counsel of the Florida Press Association, in a Feb. 16 letter to the Florida prison system’s Literature Review Committee. The association represents all the daily and most of

the weekly newspapers in the state.

“We believe this action infringes upon the First Amendment rights of both *The Militant’s* publisher and its incarcerated subscribers,” the letter says.

“The justifications offered for the ban are unsupported by the article’s content. The news article strongly condemns ‘ultra-left actions aimed at disrupting ICE’ as well as any ‘provocations leading to violent clashes,’” Morley wrote. “It explains the need for large, peaceful, disciplined protests calling for amnesty for undocumented immigrant workers.

“Nothing in the article can rationally be considered to meet the criteria cited,” he says. “Rather, the decision appears to be arbitrary and irrational.”

“We thank the Florida Press Association for its support,” John Studer, editor of the *Militant*, said. “We ask other organizations that defend free speech and the freedom of the press, unions and individuals to send letters defending the right of prisoners to read what they wish and to form their own opinions about political developments in the world. In Florida 135 prisoners currently subscribe to the *Militant* at 31 state prisons.”

Militant attorney David Goldstein is preparing an appeal to have the impoundment overturned.

Letters urging reversal of the ban can be sent to: Literature Review Committee, c/o Saritza Legault/Melvin Herring, Library Services Administrator Florida Department of Corrections, 501 S. Calhoun St., Tallahassee, Florida, 32399-2500. Or emailed to Melvin.Herring@fdc.myflorida.com and Saritza.Legault@fdc.myflorida.com with a copy to the *Militant*.

—**MILITANT**
LABOR
FORUMS—

ILLINOIS
Chicago
The Fight for Amnesty for Immigrant Workers: Lessons from Malcolm X and the Black Struggle. Speaker: Dean Hazlewood, Socialist Workers Party. Sun. March 8, 6 p.m. Donation: \$5. 4750 S. Pulaski Road. Tel: (312) 792-6160.

SWP campaigns to back Cuba

Continued from front page
books by Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and other Cuban revolutionaries.

Party members are campaigning in working-class neighborhoods, on union picket lines, and at immigrant rights protests, explaining the stakes for working people in opposing Washington’s assaults on Cuba’s sovereignty.

“The government’s threats against Cuba are totally wrong,” Jessica Wallace told SWP members Marklyn Wilson and Susan LaMont when they spoke with her outside her apartment in Union City, a suburb of Atlanta, Feb. 14. LaMont and Wilson showed Wallace the Call to Action issued by the SWP National Committee, “US hands off Cuba! End Washington’s economic blockade!”

“The resources of their country are for the Cuban people. They shouldn’t be bullied by anyone,” Wallace said. Her mother’s family originally came from Cuba. She was glad to learn about the Feb. 17 protest to demand “U.S. hands off Cuba!” in downtown Atlanta.

“As capitalism’s world crisis grows, it’s the example of Cuba’s socialist revolution that the U.S. rulers fear,” LaMont said. She described how both Democratic and Republican administrations have enforced the U.S. rulers’ economic and political war against Cuba for more than 60 years.

Wallace subscribed to the *Militant*. Several other workers in the apartment complex, who said they were unaware of the mounting threats against Cuba, picked up single copies of the paper.

Attacks on Cuba and U.S. workers

In Oakland, Margaret Trowe, the SWP candidate for governor of California, met striking Kaiser Permanente midwife Neel Arant on the picket line Feb. 11. She was eating the pizza lunch

the union provided. Arant reacted favorably to the SWP’s call to action in defense of the Cuban Revolution.

“I’ve heard about the Latin American School of Medicine in Havana,” she said. Tens of thousands of doctors from all over the world have been trained free of charge at the school before returning to their countries to provide much-needed health care to working people.

“There’s a connection between the bosses’ attacks on workers like you, the stepped-up deportation of immigrant workers and the economic war against Cuba,” Trowe said. “The rulers’ wars abroad are an extension of their war against workers at home.” Arant got a year’s subscription to the *Militant*, *Cuba and the Independence War in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde: The Fall of the Last Colonial Empire in Africa* by Cuban combatant Victor Dreke and made a contribution to the SWP campaign.

Trowe joined a lively Feb. 10 march and rally of thousands of teachers, para-professionals, students and others in support of striking teachers in San Francisco. She met Mission High School music teacher Osvaldo Carbajal, who emigrated from Cuba in 2001.

“I agree with that,” he told her after seeing the SWP call for action. “I’m against the blockade.”

SWP campaigners there sold two *Militant* subscriptions, several *Militant* copies and *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. The book explains why the U.S. ruling class underestimates the capacities of working people in both Cuba and the U.S. to take control of their own destinies.

Learn about Cuban Revolution

Party members in Washington, D.C., went door to door Feb. 8 in a



Militant/ Marklyn Wilson

“Washington’s threats against Cuba are totally wrong,” said Jessica Wallace, right, outside her home in Union City, Georgia, agreeing with SWP campaigner Susan LaMont Feb. 14.

building where several people had recently subscribed to the *Militant*.

They met the daughter of a subscriber from El Salvador. She works in a Cuban restaurant and told SWP member Sarah Ullman she was sorry for the suffering of the Cuban people following Washington’s oil blockade and a recent earthquake.

“She hadn’t heard about the accomplishments of Cuba’s socialist revolution and its importance for workers everywhere,” Ullman told the *Militant*. To learn more, she bought *Cuba and the Independence War in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde* in Spanish, so her mother could read it too.

In Minneapolis SWP members joined hundreds gathered for a march and ceremony on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Day of Remembrance Feb. 14 at the American Indian Center there.

The SWP literature table was a center of nonstop discussion. Malia Little Wolf told SWP member Mary Martin that her mother was one of those missing and murdered women

who was being remembered on the march. She bought a six-month subscription and *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity: The Long View of History* by Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, George Novack and Mary-Alice Waters.

“I’m looking for answers, I think I can find them in this book,” she said.

The sign “US hands off Cuba” at the SWP table caught the eye of Sharrell Villebrun. She told Martin she had heard about Washington’s threats against Cuba and wanted to learn more about the revolution. She got a subscription to the *Militant* and *Revolution and the Road to Peace in Colombia: The Example of the Cuban Revolution* by Fidel Castro. Seven participants subscribed to the *Militant* and eight books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries were sold.

To learn more about the SWP’s campaigns or to join in distributing the SWP National Committee’s Call to Action and the *Militant*, contact the area nearest you listed on page 10.



Militant/Mary Martin

Socialist Workers Party members, from left, Joanne Murphy and Helen Meyers speak to participants at Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives action Feb. 14 in Minneapolis.

Oregon students protest attacks on immigrant workers



Militant/Louise Goodman

BEND, Ore. — Some 1,000 high school students walked out of school here to protest ICE brutality and attacks on the rights of immigrants Feb. 13. The protest was organized by Bend Student Voices. Students from all four of the large Bend high schools, and some of the smaller ones, participated. They all marched from their schools to Peace Corner downtown and held a joint rally.

In addition to the hundreds of students on all four corners of the major downtown intersection, many cars drove by with students holding signs out the windows. Lauren Shein, an 18-year-old senior at Summit High, one of the organizers, was leading chants with a bullhorn standing atop a utility box. She told the *Militant* that the fact the students had organized the protest themselves helped account for the big turnout.

Caleb Banks, a 16-year-old student from Realms High School, said he was very proud his small school of just over 150 had a contingent that walked out.

— LOUISE GOODMAN

Join in building the Socialist Workers Party 2026 campaign

California

Margaret Trowe, governor
Laura Garza, mayor of Los Angeles

Florida

Rachele Fruit, U.S. Senate
Nelson Gonzalez, governor

Illinois

Naomi Craine, U.S. Senate

Minnesota

Kevin Dwire, U.S. Senate

New Jersey

Joanne Kuniansky, U.S. Senate
Craig Honts, U.S. Congress

New York

Paul Mailhot, governor
Willie Cotton, lieutenant governor

Ohio

John Hawkins, U.S. Senate

Pennsylvania

Ved Dookhun, U.S. Congress
Sergio Zambrana, U.S. Congress

Texas

Alyson Kennedy, governor
Dennis Richter, U.S. Senate

Do workers see their wages ‘blowing past expectations’?

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS
“Hiring rebounded in January,” proclaimed a headline in the Feb. 12 *Wall Street Journal*, hailing the Labor Department’s announcement that 130,000 jobs were created that month. This “blew past expectations,” the *Financial Times* enthused, “signaling that the labour market is healthier than economists had feared.”

But this rosy description in the big-business media skews the reality of what happened and falsely argues things will now get better for the millions of working people that every day have to fight to make ends meet.

These weren’t industrial jobs that point to a robust expansion of the U.S. economy. Nearly all of these new jobs are in health care. Many are for home health aides, who get low pay, few benefits and who are working long hours. Far from being overjoyed at this situation, nurses and other health care workers have been going on strike to fight for more jobs, staffing that allows for better care for patients, and decent working conditions. Thousands are on strike today, from California to Hawaii to New York City. These struggles need support from all workers and our unions.

While the capitalist media hails the government’s “job creation” report, the bosses are laying off more workers. Over 108,000 jobs were cut in January, more than any other January since 2009. This included UPS’s decision to eliminate 30,000 jobs after severing ties with Amazon, and Amazon’s decision to cut 16,000 jobs.

Bosses cut jobs, press speedup

The Bureau of Labor Statistics released revised figures showing that during the last year of President Joseph Biden’s administration, and then under Donald Trump’s, jobs have been shrinking.

Just 181,000 new jobs were created in 2025 — that’s 15,000 a month — the report says. From April 2024 to March 2025 there were 862,000 fewer jobs created than the government ini-

tially reported. And this hiring slowdown has continued since then, hitting workers in manufacturing, transportation and retail.

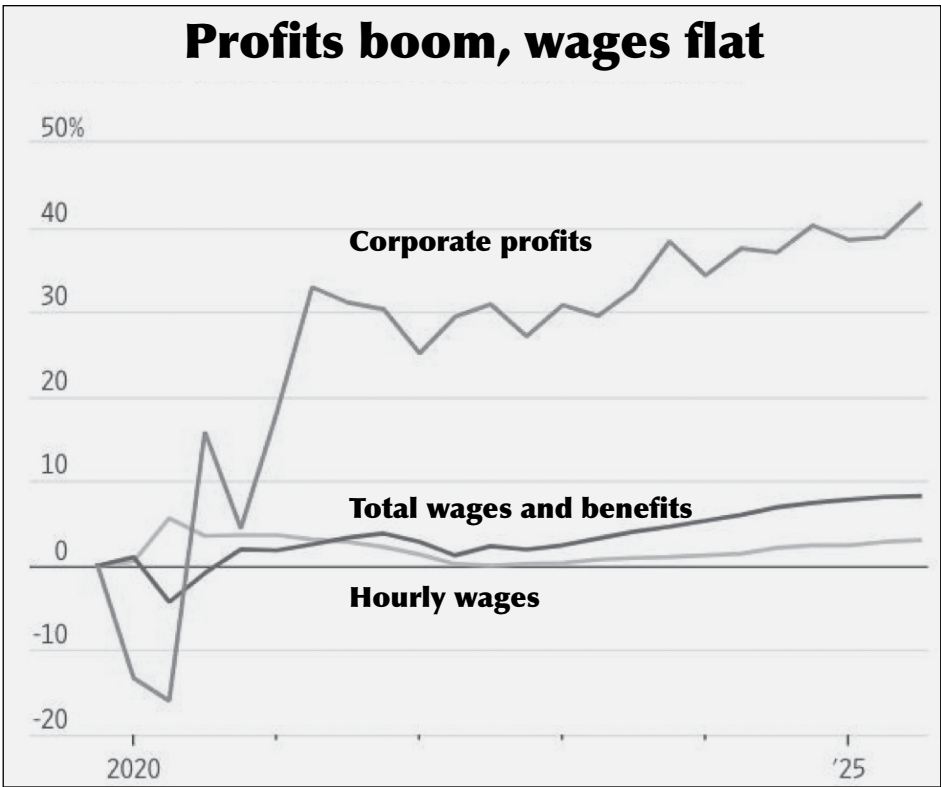
Factory workers have been particularly hard hit. Last month there were 285,000 fewer industrial workers in the U.S. than there were in January 2024. While showing workers the door, the bosses are pushing speedup on the remaining workers to increase their profits at the expense of workers’ lives and limbs.

And, if you’re unemployed, it’s getting much harder to get a decent-paying full-time job. The average amount of time for workers to get hired again is almost half a year. And many of these jobs are at significantly lower pay.

Meanwhile, working-class households face increasing pressure to cover the rising cost of basic necessities, from groceries, transportation, health care, rent and much more. Mortgage delinquency rates in working-class areas reached a 10-year high, reports the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, while debts owed on credit cards and for auto loans continue to climb.

The consumer price index climbed 2.4% in January from a year earlier. While this pace of price rises has slowed from what it was earlier, it’s still going up, as it has over the past five years, putting a huge burden on the working class. The January CPI showed ground beef rose by 17.2%; home health care by 12.7%; hospital care, 6.6%; and public mass transit, 4.9%.

An estimated 200,000 people a day are resorting to selling their blood to try to make ends meet. “Everything’s



U.S. Commerce and Labor Departments
Corporate profits jumped 43% while workers’ wages stood still over the past six years.

just so much more expensive,” Erin Ragnetti, who lives in Fresno, California, told NBC News. “To make ends meet, I’ve got to find a way to make more money.” She started selling her blood to pay off debts and bills not covered by her cleaning jobs.

Jill Chamberlain in Phoenix works up to 80 hours a week, but still needs to sell her blood to get by. “I was ashamed at first, but now I’m angry,” she told NBC.

‘Big money is going to capital’

“The big money in today’s economy is going to capital, not labor,” admitted a Feb. 9 *Journal* article. In 1980 “labor received 58% of the total proceeds of economic output,” the article says. But “by the third quarter of last year that had plummeted to 51.4%. Profits’ share, meanwhile, rose from 7% to 11.7%.”

“Profits have soared since the pan-

demic,” the big-business daily admits. “The result: Capital, which includes businesses, shareholders and superstar employees, is triumphant, while the average worker ekes out marginal gains,” or more accurately, doesn’t.

Over the past six years average hourly wages rose by 3%. But “averages” are dangerous. Some workers may fight and win higher wages that help curb the disastrous impact of inflation. But many don’t, and fall further behind. At the same time profits climbed 43%!

The 10% of households with the highest incomes now account for nearly half of all U.S. consumer spending.

The class-divided impact of the deepening capitalist economic crisis shows the need for a union-led fight for jobs with wages and conditions that make it possible for workers and families to survive.

3,800 JBS meatpackers in Colorado authorize strike

Continued from front page

What is different about this strike vote is that the majority — between 80% and 90% — of workers in the plant are immigrant workers, including large numbers of Haitians, Beninese, Somalis, Burmese and others. Some have papers, some don’t.

Over 1,000 Haitians are able to work and live in Greeley because the government granted Haitians Temporary Protected Status after a series of disasters on the island, government crises and widespread gang terrorism.

In fact, the strike vote came one day after the government had said it was going to terminate TPS for Haitians. That night U.S. District Court Judge Ana C. Reyes ruled this was illegal, an example of “hostility to non-white immigrants,” allowing Haitians with TPS to stay and work in the U.S. The Donald Trump administration is appealing the ruling.

Despite their status and the fact the government is stepping up Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids and deportations across the country, these workers were not cowed or hiding at home in fear. They are determined to fight for a decent living and some respect from the bosses, and they’re willing to take to the picket line if the company refuses to meet their demands.

This is especially true of the Haitian workers. Many of them were ensnared into coming to Greeley to work by false offers of free housing and special treat-

ment. In fact, their housing was in tiny rooms with one bed in a failed motel, where up to 11 workers were put, men and women alike. They were put on a midnight shift, where the line speed was pushed up to 370 cows an hour, 70 more than on the day shift, and sometimes more. Their safety training was conducted in English and Spanish, languages they don’t speak.

Long fight for safety, respect

Last December a number of Haitian workers filed a federal lawsuit against JBS for this discriminatory and abusive treatment. The bosses have faced a number of lawsuits by workers over safety, discrimination and other issues. In 2021 they had to pay \$5.5 million for discrimination against Muslim workers who were denied time and a place to pray.

Workers in the plant have also had to confront ICE before, when it was owned by Swift. ICE arrested 273 workers there in a raid in 2006. When they learned about the raid, dozens of workers’ relatives and supporters headed to the plant to protest.

In recent weeks workers “began coordinating short work stoppages on the line,” *High Country News* reported, “letting beef slide by on the conveyor belt uncut and untrimmed while banging their meat hooks on the sides of the metal work stations.”

The secret ballot vote on a strike authorization was held at the DoubleTree

Hotel and took all day. The union organized members and others to translate information on the ballot in Haitian Creole, Spanish, Beninese and a number of other languages spoken by workers. Union representatives assured workers it was a secret ballot, with two choices — STRIKE/HUELGA or NO STRIKE/NO HUELGA.

“We have been bargaining for eight months and JBS has prevented us from reaching a contract,” union member Leticia Avalos told the press. “They continue to increase chain speeds and create dangerous working conditions.”

“JBS has left us no alternative but to authorize a strike,” she said, “Enough is enough.”

Union representative Tchelly Moise told *High Country News* the union has ordered 4,000 strike picket signs.

The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us

The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward

The global order imposed by victors of the inter-imperialist slaughter of World War II is shattering with explosive ramifications for workers and farmers worldwide. A decadeslong retreat by the working class and unions has come to an end. More and more workers

are saying, “Enough is enough!” They’ve begun to wield the collective power of the exploited producers in response.

pathfinderpress.com



Defying repression, new protests push Iranian regime back

BY SETH GALINSKY

Tens of thousands protested across Iran Feb. 17-18 to mark the 40-day commemoration of the massacre of more than 7,000 protesters at the hands of the bourgeois clerical regime. “This flower that was cut down has become a gift to the homeland” and “if one person is killed, 1,000 will take their place” were among the chants at the actions.

Thousands of high school students heeded the call of the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers Unions and dozens of university student groups, who called on teachers and students to strike and boycott classes Feb. 18 and join the 40-day commemorations.

Thousands of people filled the Behesht Zahra Cemetery in Tehran Feb. 17, despite a large police presence. Many chanted, “We swear by the blood of our comrades; we will stand until the end” and “Death to the tyrant!”

Thousands gathered in Najafabad, Isfahan province, the same day to honor those killed by the regime, marching and protesting into the night.

In Abdanan, Ilam province, a mostly Kurdish town and the site of some of the worst violence by the regime, thousands took to the streets, releasing balloons into the air in honor of those slain. The regime’s forces clashed with protesters and blocked the entrances to its cemetery with military vehicles.

Videos show protests of thousands, including in small towns like Hashtgerd in Alborz province and Bandar Genavah in Bushehr province.

Regime covers up deaths

The Iranian regime has published a list of some 3,100 people killed during the 11 days of protests. Human rights groups say they have lists of more than 7,000 and are investigating thousands more. The regime continues to slander the protesters as “terrorists” and “rioters” working for Israel.

The protests began Dec. 28 when merchants and capitalist traders at Tehran’s Grand Bazaar took to the streets to protest the declining value of Iran’s currency and rising prices that were driving them out of business. Like previous waves of protests since late 2017, workers and students across the country joined the actions to oppose the regime’s trampling on democratic rights and its backing of proxy forces like Hamas and Hezbollah. Its war moves are aimed at destroying Israel and eliminating the Jews there.

The overwhelming majority of deaths took place Jan. 8 and 9 when the regime ordered the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, paramilitary Basij, and the police — with the help of thugs brought in from Hezbollah in Lebanon and Tehran-organized militias in Iraq — to crush the protests.

Some 50,000 people were arrested during and after the actions, including workers, union activists, university students and at least 82 children, as well as 19 lawyers and more than 100 doctors and nurses.

The regime has also stepped up its use of the death penalty. “Tens of thousands of those arrested in the recent protests are now under pressure and torture, and plans are being made to issue execution sentences and long prison terms for them,” the prisoner-based campaign called “No to Executions Tuesdays” said in a Feb. 17 statement. Since late January, the group said, more than

300 prisoners have been hanged.

“Many of those who were in favor of the death penalty for whatever reason until yesterday, will reconsider today,” the Iranian Pensioners Council said, “given the large number of detained juveniles and the serious risk of them being given the death sentence.”

Regime can’t stop protests

Instead of quelling the protests, the deadly crackdown is deepening opposition to the regime and exposing its growing weakness.

Asiyeh Touhidnezhad, a reporter for Iran’s *Ensaq* newspaper, recently visited the Behesht Zahra Cemetery. The reporter noted that the names on many of the newly dug graves do not appear on the government’s list.

At one graveside a woman tells her, “May we avenge the blood of our youth.”

Another woman told her, “During the war [with Israel], when everyone struggled, the main owners of our company just got richer. We’re the ones who become poorer.”

In an unprecedented challenge to the regime’s media censorship, the popular news site Bartarinha published the poster announcing the 40-day ceremony at Tehran University of Medical Sciences for medical student Aida Heidari, killed during the protests.

One of the regime’s biggest worries is the participation of workers in oil and gas production — Iran’s key industry.

Some 200 oil workers were arrested



Participants rally Feb. 18 in Najafabad, Isfahan province, to commemorate those massacred by Iranian regime. They chanted, “Cannons, tanks, machine guns no longer have an effect.”

after striking for back pay and better conditions in Asaluyeh in southern Iran simultaneously with the recent protest wave. According to the Council for Organizing Protests of Contract Oil Workers, detained workers are still being held in a warehouse belonging to Khatam al-Anbiya construction, a company owned by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

The council called Feb. 16 for the immediate release of the workers “and all those arrested in the revolutionary events of January.”

Meanwhile, the Donald Trump administration is sending a second aircraft carrier group led by the USS Gerald R. Ford, the world’s largest warship, to join the USS Abraham Lincoln

in waters near Iran. In the middle of negotiations with Iran’s foreign minister, Washington sent another 50 fighter jets to bases in the region.

Vice President JD Vance said Iran had failed to acknowledge “core U.S. demands,” but Washington agreed to give Tehran two more weeks to bring in a new proposal. Implicit is the threat of a U.S. military attack. The Trump administration has dropped its pretense that it’s concerned for victims of Tehran’s repression.

Washington’s intervention, like its bombardment of Iran last year, is aimed at advancing its place as the dominant imperialist power in the region, and to further the U.S. capitalists’ drive for markets, resources and labor to exploit.

Syrian gov’t deals blows to Kurds right to self-determination

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The fight of Kurds for self-determination was dealt serious blows when Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa sent forces in January to seize the autonomous zone controlled for years by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in northeastern Syria. Washington backed al-Sharaa’s move and has dropped its earlier support for the Kurdish zone, but Kurds continue to resist the Syrian government offensive in the city of Kobane.

Kurds make up 10% of Syria’s population of 23 million. Over 30 million Kurds, the world’s largest nationality without their own homeland, are divided between Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. They have waged a long fight for national rights in each of those countries following the carve-up of the Middle East by the imperialist rulers in London and Paris after World War I.

The Syrian army drove the SDF out of Kurdish neighborhoods of Aleppo, killing at least 82 people Jan. 6-11, forcing tens of thousands of people to flee. Most later returned.

The Syrian army then advanced into SDF-held territory in the northeast, seizing majority-Arab cities like Raqqa and Deir al-Zor, along with key oil fields. A U.S.-backed ceasefire agreement between the Syrian government and the SDF Jan. 30 imposed Syrian domination over many areas formerly run by the SDF.

Syrian government forces replaced SDF fighters in two other Kurdish-majority cities, Qamishli and Hasakah. The agreement establishes a new military division for the northeast that will include three SDF brigades.

Syrian armed forces have besieged

Kobane, a mainly Kurdish town in the north of the country. The people of Kobane withstood a brutal Islamic State siege in 2014-15, which was backed by the rulers of Turkey.

The current offensive has displaced over 200,000 people, Sheikhmous Ahmed, who oversees displacement camps, told Rudaw Feb. 10. In Kobane people face a dire situation with basic services like water, power, baby food and medicines cut off.

Ahmed said that Syrian government forces have killed several people in villages south of Kobane, while Kurdish property in Raqqa and elsewhere has been looted.

Protests by Kurds against the Syrian government offensive have spread across the Middle East and beyond. In Turkey Jan. 20 over 1,000 marched in Nusaybin. In Erbil, in Iraqi Kurdistan, protesters demanded the protection of Kurdish national rights in Syria.

Trump advances U.S. rulers’ interests

Just over a year ago, al-Sharaa, a former leader of al-Qaeda, led Islamist groups, some backed by the Turkish government, to topple the weakened Bashar al-Assad regime. It had been propped up for years by Moscow and Tehran, but the rulers in Iran withdrew their forces shortly before Assad’s overthrow. Al-Sharaa is now trying to impose his control across the country, especially over its different nationalities and religions.

President Donald Trump swung his backing behind al-Sharaa. The U.S. rulers see better relations with him as a way to advance their domination and access to resources in the region. Washington handed over its main

military base in Syria at al-Tanf to Syrian forces Feb. 11.

In Aleppo, “we didn’t have any serious problems like what happened on the coast or in Sweida,” Ali Sheikh Ahmad, a former SDF policeman who now runs a clothing shop there, told the Associated Press. He was referring to violent assaults by pro-government Islamist thugs that killed hundreds of members of the Alawite and Druze minorities last year. Like many Syrians, Sheikh Ahmad has been displaced many times since the Assad regime brutally repressed popular protests in 2011.

Shortly after the Washington-backed deal was imposed, the Syrian government recognized Kurdish as a national language alongside Arabic and adopted Norwruz, a Kurdish celebration, as a national holiday. It also restored rights to tens of thousands of Kurds who had been stripped of citizenship by the Syrian rulers in 1962.

Al-Sharaa appointed Nouredin Issa, a Kurdish official, as governor of the Hasakah region in the formerly autonomous zone Feb. 14.

For over a decade, Washington had relied heavily on Kurdish troops to help it defeat Islamic State, which had seized one-third of Syrian territory.

Alongside the U.S. rulers, regional capitalist powers from Turkey to Saudi Arabia are also driving to extend their influence in Syria.

The Turkish rulers are providing arms supplies and military training to Syrian government forces and are pushing to get access to Syrian air bases. They’ve long pushed for an end to Syria’s Kurdish-led autonomous zone, fearing it sets an example to Kurds at home who are also fighting for their national rights.

Cubans defend their revolution

Continued from front page
the extensive impact of the blockade as they defend the conquests of their socialist revolution.

“Farmers have truly responded to the call to keep production going,” Idia Ruiz, director of *Revista ANAP*, the paper of the National Association of Small Farmers, told the *Militant*. “They are using organic fertilizers, natural pesticides and animals to pull farm equipment,” she said. “But it’s difficult to plant all their land because they don’t have the fuel or inputs they need.”

The shortage of fuel caused by the U.S. rulers’ blockade affects every aspect of production and life in Cuba. Being able to use tractors to plow, to irrigate during the short hours when there is electricity, and getting produce to markets are daily challenges for farmers.

Using U.S. imperialism’s economic domination, President Donald Trump issued an executive order Jan. 29 threatening to impose punishing tariffs on any country that sells or provides oil to Cuba. So far, the threat has proved effective with no oil shipments arriving since Jan. 9. Cubans now face even longer daily blackouts, water shortages, scarcities and increased prices for food and transportation.

“The economic suffocation of Cuba has been a central component of U.S. policy toward Cuba, with the aim of limiting the Cuban people’s right to exercise their sovereignty,” Yuri Gala López, Cuba’s ambassador to the United Nations, told a webinar sponsored by the coalition organizing the Action Conference for US-Cuba Normalization, scheduled for March 14-15 in New York City (see article below).

‘U.S. rulers can’t forgive Cubans’

“It bothers them that they can’t bring us down. They can’t forgive us for our defiance just 90 miles away from their coast,” Yasmani Toirac Laffita, a farmer and member of the Waldo Diaz Agricultural Production Cooperative in Güira de Melena, in Artemisa province, told the Mexican daily *La Jornada*. “They are haters, but we are people who extend solidarity to others. We send doctors, not bombs to other countries.”

Toirac Laffita and other members of the cooperative belong to ANAP. Since its creation in 1961, ANAP has played a central role in organizing small farmers to defend the socialist revolution carried out by millions of Cuban workers and peasants following the Jan. 1, 1959, overthrow of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

They overturned capitalist exploitation and oppression, and used state power to serve the interests of working people, not the former capitalist rulers. This is what the U.S. rulers aim to reverse when they talk about “regime change” in Cuba.

As part of its 65th anniversary celebrations, ANAP members are organizing events at farms, local schools and medical clinics to recognize their contributions to the community, Ruiz said. Farm cooperatives regularly donate produce to institutions such as child care centers, homes for the elderly and maternity homes, helping to protect the most vulnerable from the grow-

ing impact of Washington’s blockade. This orientation is a proud hallmark of Cuba’s socialist revolution.

ANAP was born two years after Cuba’s First Agrarian Reform Law was passed in 1959. The law nationalized millions of acres of large plantations owned by foreign and Cuban capitalists, and granted land titles to landless peasant families. It guaranteed farmers the right to their land, access to cheap credit, and prices to provide a livable income. The revolution also extended access to education, health care, child care and other rights to workers in the countryside.

At the Aniceto Pérez Cooperative, *La Jornada* reporters encountered farmers who took part in internationalist missions as soldiers, teachers and doctors, to aid national liberation movements and other struggles around the world. There are hundreds of thousands of Cuban men and women who have done so.

“Trump is seeking to provoke a popular uprising against the government,” Amelia González, president of the Aniceto Pérez Cooperative in Artemisa, told *La Jornada*.

“I was in Angola” in the late 1980s, said Lázaro González, one of the 14 cooperative members who fought in Africa. The victory of Cuban and Angolan forces there defeated the invading South African army and precipitated the fall of the apartheid regime itself. “That experience strengthened the Cuban Revolution and its defense,” he said.

“This has to make [the imperialists] think. This is not just any other people,” he added, and “we have real combat experience. Every people has to be able to defend itself.”

Imperialist rulers step up assaults

Since the Jan. 29 executive order, the U.S. rulers have stepped up their

Ambassador Yuri Gala López explains Cuba’s revolution

BY RÓGER CALERO
“U.S. government policy of hostility toward Cuba has been in place since the very triumph of the Cuban Revolution back in January 1959,” Yuri Gala López, deputy permanent representative of Cuba to the United Nations, told a Feb. 15 webinar sponsored by a coalition of groups from Canada, Puerto Rico and the U.S.

Under every U.S. administration since — Democrat and Republican alike — this aggression has remained unabated “simply because our nation dared to achieve true sovereignty and independence,” he said, and has preserved it through a socialist revolution.

The program was organized to respond to the latest escalation of Washington’s relentless aggression against the Cuban people and government following a Jan. 29 executive order imposing an oil blockade on the island.

Other speakers included Peter Kornbluh, an analyst with the National Security Archive; Déborah Santana of the Cuban Solidarity Committee of Puerto Rico; Julio Fonseca, co-chair of the Canadian Network on Cuba; Kevin Kucera, International Associ-



Radio Rebelde/Mireya Ojeda Cabrera
National Association of Small Farmers delegation, above in Cienfuegos Feb. 6, is touring Cuban farms, cooperatives and honoring Fidel Castro, central leader of Cuba’s socialist revolution and its worker-farmer alliance. Cuba’s toilers are determined to defend their revolution.

economic and political war against the Cuban Revolution. Airline bosses from Canada joined the assault by suspending all flights to the island. The decision strikes a blow to Cuba’s tourist industry, a major source of foreign currency that’s needed to cover purchases of basic necessities.

Bowing to the Trump administration, the government of Guatemala announced Feb. 10 that it will begin phasing out a program that has provided Cuban medical professionals for the country’s health care system for nearly three decades. The U.S. government falsely claims the medical program exploits Cuban medical workers through forced labor and deprives the Cuban people of essential medical care.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Since the early years of Cuba’s socialist revolution, Cuban doctors and nurses have taken part in volunteer internationalist missions throughout Latin America, Africa and the Pacific, bringing vital treatment to people in the most remote rural regions or poorest urban neighbor-

hoods. Cuba has also trained free of charge thousands of medical professionals from these countries to make health care more accessible to underserved populations.

Public health is one of the social conquests of the revolution hardest hit by the nearly seven-decade-long economic war Washington has waged against the Cuban people. The recent tightening of sanctions has posed new challenges for caring for patients, keeping electricity running in hospitals and clinics and staff transportation. The cancellation of commercial flights will aggravate medicine shortages as the freight costs of importing medications increase.

To mitigate the situation, health and transportation authorities are joining efforts with local taxi cooperatives, which are volunteering to bring patients in need of critical care, such as dialysis, for their daily treatment. Wherever possible, the ministry of health is assigning doctors and nurses closer to where they live, and deploying medical brigades to remote areas.

ation of Machinists District 190 area director and others.

Speakers urged participants to attend the March 14-15 Action Conference for US-Cuba Normalization in New York, which will feature representatives of the Federation of Cuban Women and other Cuban mass organizations and institutions.

Ambassador Gala described how Cuban people are facing the crisis aggravated by Washington’s oil blockade. We are going to overcome this very difficult period “with the creative resilience, effort, and talent of the majority of Cuban women and men.”

For more information about the conference visit actionconference.org.

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Cultural events show dignity of Cuban people in face of US threats



Militant photos by Katy Lerougetel
Valentine’s Day *peña* (cultural celebration) was organized by the University for Older Adults in the Vedado neighborhood of Havana, Feb. 14. Above, part of the audience with singer who also presided over the event; inset, another singer who also performed at the *peña*.

BY KATY LEROUGETEL AND ARRIN HAWKINS

HAVANA — *Militant* reporters joined 75 people for a poetry reading at a popular cultural center here Feb. 13. The next day we were invited to a Valentine’s Day *peña* (cultural performance) hosted by members of the University for Older Adults. The following day we went to the Chinese New Year celebration in Havana’s historic Chinatown.

Reporter’s notebook from Havana

Cultural and other events like these happen every day in Havana and throughout Cuba. They are just one expression of the dignity of the Cuban people and the determination of millions here to stand up to Washington’s latest efforts to bring down their socialist revolution.

At the poetry recital, many participants took the microphone to share their poems. The event had originally been planned as part of the annual Havana International Book Fair. After the fair was suspended — one of many steps by the Cuban government to save fuel and other resources in the face of Washington’s brutal oil blockade — it was turned into a community activity. Other music, dance and theater events are also being shifted to venues closer to where artists live, making them more accessible to people in their own neighborhoods.

Alpidio Alonso, Cuba’s minister of culture, told the audience, “We’re reorganizing everything we can to maintain projects like this one. There will be no blackout of culture. We’ll continue to defend our sovereignty, our country, our revolution. Poetry is a trench in our struggle.”

Afterward, Omar Herrera, 69, one of those who read his poetry, told the *Militant*, “Trump says Cuba is a danger. He’s right. We are a danger. We’re an example to the world.”

The Valentine’s Day celebration brought together 100 people, mostly older residents of central Havana. They listened to musical performances and joined in lively singing and dancing. The event was held in the same venue where many of them take history, English and other classes offered by the University for Older Adults, a nationwide educational movement based in

communities across the island.

The next day, China town resident Margarita Colón invited us to join her on her stoop for a front-row view of the Lunar New Year celebration. Some 150 people gathered in that historic neighborhood, coming from all around Havana despite the U.S. oil blockade-induced transportation difficulties they face. On a cordoned-off street, dozens of artists of all ages and skin colors, dressed in traditional colorful outfits, performed Chinese dances, music and wushu (martial arts).

Roberto Vargas Lee, director of the Cuban Wushu School, concluded the program. “The culture we are celebrating here is as much Chinese as it is Cuban,” he said. “It’s important for the culture of humanity, for peace and solidarity.”



Celebration of Lunar New Year in Havana’s Chinatown, Feb. 15. On right is Roberto Vargas, director of Cuban Wushu (Martial Arts) School. He said such joint Chinese and Cuban culture is important for the future of “humanity, for peace and solidarity.”

‘Hands off Cuba’ protests spread across the United States

BY JANICE LYNN

ATLANTA — Twenty-two people joined a busy downtown street protest here Feb. 17 with signs demanding “U.S. hands off Cuba” and “No economic blockade.” The Socialist Workers Party and the Democratic Socialists of America Cuba Solidarity Working Group co-sponsored the action, which was called to oppose the U.S. rulers’ deepening economic war against Cuba.

This was the latest in similar actions being organized around the country.

Demonstrators were buoyed by the cacophony of horns in support of their action from drivers. Some joined in the chants.

A television news cameraman filmed part of the protest and interviewed two of the organizers. DSA leader Matthew Nursey said he was part of a delegation of 40 who had visited Cuba last fall to see the revolution for themselves. “The biggest take away,” he said, “was the solidarity they have — the cooperation and helping one another.”

SWP leader Susan LaMont pointed to the support for the protest from passersby. “Working people in this country have no interest in going to war against Cuba,” she said. “They want peace. The Cuban people are determined to defend their revolution.”

BY RACHELE FRUIT

MIAMI — The Jose Martí Cultural Association, a group of local Cubans

opposed to Washington’s blockade, held a protest Feb. 8 at the Simón Bolívar Plaza here to support Cuban families, in the face of Washington’s sharp escalation of its decadeslong economic and political war against the Cuban people.

“La familia sí, bloqueo no,” chanted the 20 participants. Members of the Miami Coalition to End the Blockade joined the action. They helped keep the action peaceful and separated from a counterdemonstration of 20 Cubans opposed to the revolution.

Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate, joined the action, carrying a sign demanding “US hands off Cuba! End the criminal economic blockade!”

BY EDWIN FRUIT

MINNEAPOLIS — Twenty-five people marched in front of the federal courthouse downtown here Feb. 9 to call for “U.S. hands off Cuba” and “End Washington’s economic blockade.” Sponsors of the event included the Minnesota Cuba Committee, the Solidarity Committee on the Americas, Socialist Workers Party and Women Against Military Madness.

After the lively picket line, August Nimtz, from the Minnesota Cuba Committee, Arroyo Garcia-Torres for the Solidarity Committee on the Americas and Kevin Dwire, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Minnesota, spoke to participants.

Dwire emphasized the important stakes for working people and the unions in opposing the U.S. government’s attacks. He urged protesters to reach out to other organizations and individuals where they live and work to join in protests and public meetings to help educate about Washington’s brutal assaults on the Cuban people and get out the truth about the Cuban Revolution.

A Call to Action in Defense of Cuba by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes was handed out to all participants. An airport worker took a few extra to give to his co-workers.

FOX TV 9 televised the event.

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Lenin, Castro led political movements that changed history

Understanding History: Marxist Essays by George Novack is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. The excerpt is from the article "From Lenin to Castro: The role of the individual in history making." In it Novack deals with a disagreement raised by Isaac Deutscher in his biography of Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Russian Revolution and the fight against its Stalinist degeneration. Deutscher challenged Trotsky's view that V.I. Lenin was decisive to the success of the October Revolution and of the role of the individual in history in general. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Published by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

Marxism does teach that no individual, however talented, strong-willed or strategically situated, can alter the main course of historical development, which is shaped by supra-individual circumstances and forces. Therefore, reasons Deutscher, the revolution would have triumphed in 1917 with other leaders even if Lenin had been removed from the arena by some accident. Trotsky himself, or a team of other Bolshevik chiefs, might have filled his place. ...

The leadership, collective and individual, embodies the conscious element in history. The influence of an individ-



Granma

Fidel Castro prepares workers and peasants to defend their socialist revolution against 1961 U.S.-backed mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs. Under his leadership, they prevailed.

ual in determining a course of events can range from negligibility to totality. The extent of his effectiveness in action depends upon the stage of development of historical conditions, the correlation of social forces, and the person's precise connection with these at a given conjuncture. ...

The conscious factor has a qualitatively different import over an entire historical epoch than it has in a specific phase or situation within it. ...

Time is an all-important element in the conflict of contending social forces. The indeterminate phase when events can be diverted in either direction does not last long. The crisis in social relations must be resolved quickly one way or the other. At that point, the activity or passivity of dominant personalities, groups, parties and masses can tip the scales on one side or the other. The individual can enter as the ultimate factor in the total process of historical determination only when all the other forces in play are temporarily equalized. Then the added weight can serve to tip the balance. ...

Lenin's imperishable contribution was the push he gave to opening an entirely new path for Russian and world history, redirecting it from the dead end of capitalism onto the beginning of socialism. ...

The type of leadership was very different in the two revolutions of 1917. The February Revolution was not planned

or directed from above. Trotsky pointed out in the chapter of his *History of the Russian Revolution*, "Who Led the February Revolution?" that it was led "by conscious and tempered workers educated for the most part by the party of Lenin." As educator and organizer of these key workers, Lenin was to that extent necessary to the February overturn, even though he was not on the spot in person.

Between February and October he became more and more decisive because of his resolute and farsighted positions at a series of crucial moments, starting with the reorienting of the Bolshevik cadres in April and culminating in his insistence on insurrection in October. According to Trotsky, Lenin's role could not have been duplicated. This was not simply because of his personal gifts but even more because of his exceptional standing in the Bolshevik party, which was largely his creation.

The question of leadership in the Russian Revolution had a dual aspect. While the Bolsheviks led the workers and peasants to victory, Lenin led the Bolshevik party. His paramount role came from the fact that he *led the leaders* of the revolution.

Trotsky knew better than anyone else how Lenin could sway the higher echelons as well as the ranks of his party. His authority was a considerable help from April to October in getting the correct

proposals adopted over the resistance of other Bolshevik chiefs. This accumulated capital of prestige was not at the disposal of others, including Trotsky, who had a different organizational history and relations. That was the objective basis for his opinion that the October Revolution would most likely not have taken place unless "Lenin was present and in command." ...

Trotsky viewed the Bolshevik party as one of the components of this historical necessity, and Lenin as the most conscious exponent and skilled practitioner of the political science of Marxism based on these laws. It was not purely fortuitous that Lenin was able to play the role that he did. He was no chance comer. "Lenin was not an accidental element in the historic development, but a product of the whole past of Russian development." For years he had prepared himself and his party for the task of steering the expected revolution to victory. ...

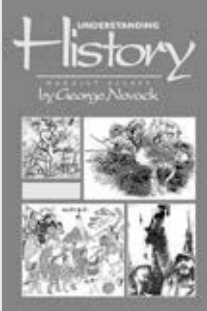
This dialectical unity of the objective and subjective factors in the making of a revolution has been both exemplified and theorized by Fidel Castro and his close associates. If ever an historic event could be considered the work of one man, that was — and is — the Cuban Revolution. Castro is truly its "lider maximo" [main leader].

Castro has explained, notably in his December 21, 1961, speech on Marxism-Leninism, that the founders of the July 26 Movement did not wait for *all* the objective conditions required for revolutionary success to emerge spontaneously. They deliberately set about creating the still missing revolutionary conditions by fighting. Their guerrilla warfare did bring about the moral, psychological, political changes needed to overthrow Batista's tyranny.

The transformation of the balance of forces in favor of the progressive side by the initiative of a small band of conscious revolutionary fighters in Cuba dramatically demonstrates how decisive the subjective factor can be in making history. Yet Castro's intentions would have miscarried and his combatants would have been rendered powerless without the response they received, first from the peasants in the mountains and then from the masses in the rural and urban areas.

February
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Fidel Castro: ‘We have made a socialist revolution right under their very nose’

As part of celebrations in Cuba and worldwide marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of Fidel Castro, the Militant is printing excerpts over the coming year from the speeches and writings of the central leader of Cuba’s socialist revolution.

On April 16, 1961, Castro addressed hundreds of thousands of Cubans at a funeral procession for combatants killed in a bombing raid ordered by President John F. Kennedy. The speech was part of Cuba’s preparations for meeting the coming Washington-backed mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs. The full text is available in *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs, 1961: Washington’s First Military Defeat in the Americas* by Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández. Copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

What the imperialists cannot forgive is the dignity, the integrity, the courage, the firmness of ideas, the spirit of sacrifice, and the revolutionary spirit of the people of Cuba. [Applause]

That is what they cannot forgive, that we are here under their very nose. What they cannot forgive is that we have made a socialist revolution right under the very nose of the United States! [Applause and shouts] That we defend this socialist revolution with these guns! [Applause] That we defend this socialist revolution with the same courage shown yesterday when our anti-aircraft artillery riddled the aggressor’s planes with bullets! [Applause and shouts of “Venceremos!” and other revolutionary slogans.]

This revolution is not defended with mercenaries. This revolution is defended by men and women of the people.

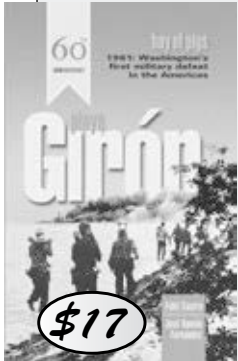
Who has the weapons? Do the mercenaries perhaps have the weapons? [Shouts of “No!”] Because mercenaries and millionaires are the same thing. Do the little rich boys perhaps have the weapons? [Shouts of “No!”] Do the overseers perhaps have the weapons? [Shouts of “No!”] Who has the weapons? [Shouts] In whose hands are these weapons now being raised? [Shouts] Are they the hands of playboys? [Shouts of “No!”] Are

they the hands of the rich? [Shouts of “No!”] Are they the hands of the exploiters? [Shouts of “No!”]

Whose hands are now raising these weapons? Aren’t they the hands of workers? [Shouts of “Yes!”] Aren’t they the hands of peasants? [Shouts of “Yes!”] Aren’t they hands hardened by work? [Shouts of “Yes!”] Aren’t they hands that create? [Shouts of “Yes!”] Aren’t they the hands of the humble, of ordinary men and women? [Shouts of “Yes!”] And who are the majority of the people — the millionaires or the workers? The exploiters or the exploited? The privileged or the working people? [Shouts]

Do the privileged have the weapons? [Shouts of “No!”] Are the privileged a minority? [Shouts of “Yes!”] Are the working people a majority? [Shouts of “Yes!”] Is it democratic to have a revolution in which the working people have the weapons? [Shouts of “Yes!” Applause and shouts of “Fidel, Fidel!” and various revolutionary slogans.]

Compañero workers and peasants, this is the socialist and democratic revolution of the working people, with the working people, and for the working people. [Applause] And for this revolution of the working people, by the working people, and for the working people we are prepared to give our lives. [Shouts]



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Ukraine drones supply cookies, not just bombs

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The shopping list is radioed, as it is every morning. Today it’s for oatmeal cookies, smoked bacon, mayonnaise, vegetables and fruit, coffee, bread, some sandwiches. “Copy that,” the supply chief replies.

The “customers” are Ukrainian soldiers in front-line trenches, ordering provisions to be rounded up at the rear and, under cover of darkness, delivered the next night by Ukrainian-made Vampire drones.

Attack drones on both sides now dominate the battlefield, holding deadly risks for any movement on the front, including supply columns. Driven by necessity, Ukrainian forces have organized to use these drones for bomb runs in the daytime, then refit them to deliver food and supplies to the soldiers at night.

“We try to make it a bit nicer for them, to lift their spirits, so they don’t feel too down out there,” a soldier handling the orders who goes by Lesyk, told the *New York Times* Feb. 12. He’s a wounded former front-line soldier, who now packs parcels for drone drops on the eastern Dnipro battleground. Deliveries also include water, power banks, newspapers, toilet paper, wet wipes and other essentials.

“Even small things matter,” he said. He tops off each specially prepared bag up to its maximum 22-pound weight limit by throwing in packs of cigarettes and sweets. The morale of Ukrainian troops is lifted by these daily visits from “Santa Claus.”

In stark contrast to this human touch, the regime of Russian President Vladimir Putin is contemptuous of the lives and well being of Russian workers in uniform. They are used as cannon fodder, paying a terrible price in life and limb, in “meat grinder” attacks to gain an inch.

The Kremlin’s disdain is also shown by the lack of provisions. An intercepted call posted by the Ukrainian military Feb. 3 caught Russian soldiers at the front complaining they are starving as supplies of food and water have dried up. One complains he’s “just skin and bones now. We don’t eat, we don’t drink anything.”

Why amnesty for immigrant workers in the US is key for the labor movement

Continued from front page

owned and frequented by immigrants.

Democratic Party officials like Gov. Tim Walz and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey are patting themselves on the back for denouncing ICE and standing up for the city’s cops as an alternative to federal forces. Overall, they tell workers their problems are the result of a reactionary Republican in the White House.

It is time to draw a balance sheet of what has unfolded here over the last couple of months to help workers and our unions project a road forward to unify the working class.

The Socialist Workers Party is campaigning to explain the class roots of the attacks on immigrants are built into the very nature of the capitalist system. Kevin Dwire, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Minnesota, explains that the boss class needs immigrant workers so they can superexploit them in a variety of industries — from work in the fields, to construction, restaurants, garment, delivery and much more.

By scapegoating them because they were born overseas, the capitalist rulers aim to turn them into a pariah layer under constant fear of deportation. They tell U.S.-born workers that immigrants are here to “steal” their jobs, trying to turn two sets of workers against each other. Their overall goal is to drive the wages and working conditions of all workers down and to weaken the fighting capacity of the working class.

Even if all the Border Patrol agents leave Minnesota, Dwire notes, there are still millions of immigrant workers in this country without documents. They are our co-workers, neighbors, and have children in the same schools as ours. Many have lived here for decades.

The SWP calls for the labor movement to take up a fight for amnesty for all undocumented workers in the U.S., Dwire says. This is the road to unify the

working class, strengthen the unions and fight for our class interests.

It must be a movement that all workers, including those without papers, can participate in and help lead.

The capitalist rulers always have their border and ICE cops out on the prowl, to intimidate immigrant workers and to find ways to pit them against U.S.-born workers. After that, their immigration system is like a spigot, Dwire says. When they need more labor, they open it. When their economy contracts, they start up new raids and deportations.

In 2006 and 2007 millions of undocumented workers set a marvelous example to think about today, Dwire says. When the draconian Sensenbrenner bill was introduced in Congress, which would have made it a felony to be in the U.S. without papers that the capitalist rulers deem proper, immigrant workers poured into the streets. Their banner was, “We are workers, not criminals.”

The first major action of the campaign, on March 10, 2006, drew some 100,000 people to a march in Chicago.

On May Day protesters launched a nationwide boycott, called A Day Without an Immigrant. Undocumented immigrants stayed away from work and school. Millions marched in the streets in cities big and small. Over 1 million marched in Los Angeles alone. Unions were attracted to the protests. The bill went down to defeat.

A dead-end class alternative

The Democratic Party, the liberals and the middle-class left have a different perspective. They urge people to demonstrate March 28 in yet another “No Kings” rally targeting Donald Trump as the source of all the “peoples” problems. They say what is key is to elect Democrats to retake Congress.

But Democratic presidents from William Clinton

to Barack Obama to Joseph Biden were responsible for the deportations of millions of immigrants when it served the interests of the capitalist rulers.

In 1996 Clinton signed into law the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act and the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. These laws were directly responsible for expanding arrests of immigrants, creating a “fast track” for deportations without due process, setting the foundation for local police and ICE collaboration and making it harder for workers without papers to win legal status.

On Jan. 14 Mayor Frey bemoaned the fact ICE was in Minneapolis. He also said, “I do not support abolishing ICE,” but want to know, why aren’t they going after immigrants in “Texas or Florida or Utah, where you do actually have a large number of undocumented immigrants?”

This was intended as a dig at Trump and Republican governors, but makes it clear the liberal mayor has no principled objection to arrests and deportations. It all depends on the needs of the employers.

The majority of working people in the U.S. are opposed to widespread arrests, deportations and abuse by ICE. They would be attracted to a labor-led campaign for amnesty today.

The fight for amnesty is a life-and-death question for the unions. It is a crucial step in the fight against exploitation and oppression endemic to the crisis-ridden capitalist system.

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign!

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