

THE MILITANT

REPORT ON 2026 SWP CONFERENCE

'Live a life focused on conquering workers power from capitalists, war makers' — Cuban Revolution set example for fighters
— PAGES 8-11

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 90/NO. 31

AUGUST 31, 2026

NY march demands independence for Puerto Rico, end to US colonial rule

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — More than 125 people marched in the Bronx here Aug. 16 demanding independence for Puerto Rico. Thousands marched in similar actions in Puerto Rico and cities in the U.S. over the last month.

Speakers pointed to the deepening crisis working people there face without running water for days at a time, frequent electrical blackouts, high unemployment and a serious housing crisis — all consequences of over 100 years of U.S. colonial rule.

"Independence is the solution," Justin, who prefers to use only his first name, speaking for the Diaspora Pa'lante Collective, told the crowd at a short rally before the march stepped off.

Along with banners calling for independence for Puerto Rico, there were placards demanding "Yankees out of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean," a reference to Washington's recent moves to expand military bases there to attack Venezuela and threaten Cuba.

A central theme of the march was the impact of 10 years of the Financial Oversight and Management Board for
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Organize, build protests to demand US hands off Cuba

Stop gov't targeting defenders of Cuba, political rights!



Bob Schwartz from Global Health Partners speaks at National Nurses United event June 30 in Washington, D.C., opposing U.S. blockade on Cuba. More protests like this are needed today.

1,000s attend events in Cuba to back its nat'l sovereignty

BY NAOMI CRAINE AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA — Thousands of people across Cuba paid tribute to the revolution's central leader, Fidel Castro, Aug. 13 on the 100th anniversary of his birth. Here in the capital, the cen-
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Stand with the Cuban people against Washington's attacks!

The *Militant* urges its readers to stand side by side with the Cuban people against Washington's oil blockade, expanding sanctions and threats of invasion!

EDITORIAL

Workers and our unions should demand the unconditional end of the U.S. rulers' decades-long economic and po-
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US rulers seek to strangle Tehran's economy, expand clout in Mideast

BY SETH GALINSKY

While Washington tightens its brutal economic blockade of Iran, Tehran is retaliating with attacks on commercial ships near the Strait of Hormuz and threatening to strike oil facilities and other economic and military sites of U.S. allies in the Middle East.

The U.S. rulers hope that their economic squeeze — which has paralyzed close to 100% of Iran's oil trade — and the threat of future military strikes will eventually force the regime to give in to Washington's demands and put U.S. imperialism in a better position to deepen its plunder of the oil, gas and other resources in the region.

The dominant wing of the faction-ridden Iranian regime believes it can withstand Washington's sanctions and inflict enough economic and military pain on U.S. allies that President Donald Trump's administration will acquiesce to Tehran's control of the strait.

While the U.S. military has not retaliated against Tehran's latest strikes on ships, Trump threatened to "bomb the s--- out of" Oman — a longtime U.S. "ally" — if the government there "gets in the way" of U.S. efforts to reach a deal with Tehran. Oman officials have been negotiating with Tehran over joint control of the Strait of Hormuz, undercutting U.S. demands that both govern-
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Gloria Richardson, mass movement in Maryland showed how to fight Jim Crow



Gloria Richardson, who led desegregation fight in Cambridge, Maryland, pushes aside National Guardsman's rifle July 21, 1963. Richardson drew thousands into action, backed armed self-defense as needed, joined Malcolm X in efforts to build independent Black political action.

BY TERRY EVANS

Like battles against Jim Crow segregation across the South and elsewhere, the 1963-64 struggle in Cambridge, Maryland, was marked by the courage of its participants standing up to cops, racist mobs and the National Guard. It was also marked by the character of its

central leader, Gloria Richardson, who drew thousands into action, including Blacks organized to defend themselves. She collaborated closely with Malcolm X and rejected backing either the Democratic or Republican parties.

Despite Blacks having exercised the
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Texas protests demand justice in ICE killing of Lorenzo Salgado Araujo

BY GERARDO SÁNCHEZ AND ALYSON KENNEDY

CONROE, Texas — In the month since construction worker Lorenzo Salgado Araujo was shot dead by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents

while driving to work with three co-workers July 7, several events have been held here protesting his death.

A car caravan protest advertised by the Texas AFL-CIO drove past the site where he was killed in this heavily Mexican East End neighborhood Aug. 7. The site is marked by a memorial of candles, flowers, signs and photos of Salgado, set up by community members immediately after the shooting. Over the last month
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Putin trip to Kuril Islands points to threat of new wars

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to the disputed Kuril Islands Aug. 13 was aimed at reinforcing Moscow's control over what is a crucial military gateway to the Pacific as it seeks leverage for its war in Ukraine. Besides Moscow, Pyongyang and Seoul, Beijing and Tokyo have crucial interests in the area. All but Beijing have naval bases in the Sea of Japan.
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After two years, Dallas Black Dancers win first union contract

As new wars threaten, Ottawa plans attacks on political rights

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL — As the crisis of capitalism deepens and friction between the rulers in Canada and the U.S. grows, the Liberal government of Prime Minister Mark Carney has over the last two months stepped up its assaults on the political freedoms of working people in Canada. It pushed through the so-called Lawful Access Act, known as Bill C-22, after moving to limit debate in the House of Commons. It includes sweeping attacks on the right to privacy, strengthening the powers of the cops and other government agencies to spy on working people who protest government policies and on other political opponents of the government.

The bill, which now moves to the Senate for debate, has been condemned by supporters of political rights across the country since its introduction in March.

The Foreign Influence Transparency and Accountability Act, introduced in 2024 under Carney’s predecessor, Justin Trudeau, made it a crime — punishable by up to life in prison and fines of up to 1 million Canadian dollars (\$700,000) — to engage in “surreptitious or deceptive conduct” at the direction of a foreign government with the goal of “harming Canadian interests.” The government announced Aug. 4 that it had established a registry where groups that come under the law’s sweep have to sign up.

These attacks are the latest steps by Canada’s capitalist rulers to cut back the political space working people need to organize to defend ourselves as the bosses increasingly move to put the cost of their crisis on our backs. They follow Ottawa’s use of the draconian Emergen-

cies Act in February 2022 to crush the truckers’ Freedom Convoy protest in the capital, and their repeated use of Section 107 of the Canadian Labour Code to attack the labor movement, ordering striking longshore, postal, rail and airline workers back to work.

Bill C-22 would require digital service providers to allow the cops, Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Canada’s national spy agency, access to internet communications and data of anyone they target.

Threat to privacy rights

It would also enable cops and government spies to dig out precisely which phone company you are using and dramatically speed up using a warrant to access your communications. It would also allow them this information to track your location.

“This legislation presents one of the greatest threats to privacy in Canada of the past two decades,” Tim McSorley, national coordinator of the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, said. “Its provisions will weaken the rules governing police access to personal information, all while facilitating a vast expansion of government surveillance. This is another clear case of the decades-long trend of governments using national security as an excuse to erode civil liberties and human rights.”

Other groups protesting the bill include the Quebec League of Rights and Freedoms, Migrant Justice Clinic, British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, Canadian Muslim Public Access Council and the Canadian



Reuters/Blair Gable

Cops used pepper spray against truckers, supporters during 2022 protests in Ottawa. Preparing for bigger class battles to come, Canadian rulers are escalating attacks on the unions, political freedoms of working people. Bill C-22 will strengthen police powers, government spy agencies.

Civil Liberties Association.

For decades working-class fighters in the U.S. and other capitalist countries have faced government use of so-called foreign agent laws to attack their political rights. On the eve of World War II in 1938, the imperialist rulers in Washington passed the Foreign Agents Registration Act, using it to label labor and anti-war groups as agents of Germany, the Soviet Union or other foreign powers. Washington turned it on the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party and others in the 1950s. And they’re using it today to go after opponents of the U.S. rulers’ attacks on Cuban sovereignty.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association pointed to a section of the new Foreign Influence Transparency and Accountability Act that makes it a crime for anyone to interfere with “essential infrastructures,” such as railroads, ports and highways. This could be used to “suppress protests” or labor actions, the association said.

The government has also stepped up use of Section 107 of the Canadian Labour Code as a strikebreaking tool, ordering tens of thousands of strikers back to work. But the refusal by 10,000 Air Canada flight attendants, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, to bend to a back-to-work order against them in August last year has set a powerful example.

“The courage of CUPE flight attendants to defy the government’s

back-to-work order is an inspiration for all workers,” Dustin Saunders, chairperson of the Engineers division of Teamsters Canada Railway Conference Division 945, told the *Militant* in Vancouver. The Canadian Labour Congress also saluted the flight attendants’ victory, saying, “Any employer thinking of leaning on Section 107 in the future should think twice.”

Fight attacks on rights and freedoms

“The unions need to protect the political space we’ve won and badly need, to lead a fight by all supporters of political rights to fight against these anti-working-class laws and to prevent them from being used by both the federal and provincial governments against us,” Joe Young, Communist League candidate in October’s Quebec National Assembly elections, tells workers as he campaigns.

The CL is campaigning on the importance of opposing these escalating attacks on the rights of working people. “The CL joins with unionists and defenders of political rights fighting to make the government withdraw Bill C-22 and its foreign agents registry act and against its attacks on unions’ right to strike,” Young said.

The ‘Militant’ is taking a one-week vacation break. The next issue will be mailed Sept. 3.

THE MILITANT

Hundreds of protesters in Ohio: ‘Let Haitians stay’

For second Sunday in a row, protesters lined the street outside a regional immigration office in Blue Ash, Ohio, Aug. 9 to demand Temporary Protected Status for Haitians be extended. The ‘Militant’ calls on labor unions to lead fight for amnesty for immigrants in the U.S.



Militant/John Hawkins

Over 700 people in Ohio rally, demand TPS protection continue for Haitians Aug. 9.

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

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Concert builds support for BP workers locked out in Indiana

GRIFFITH, Ind. — A special benefit concert is being put on here by three bands — the Effigies, the Bollweevils and the Rumble — to raise money and build solidarity for the 800 oil refinery workers, members of United Steelworkers Local 7-1, who have been locked out by BP for five months.

The unionists are determined to continue their fight to get a contract and their jobs back. They're winning widespread support in this heavily unionized northwestern part of Indiana near Chicago.

"I heard a little bit about the lock-out," Steven E. James, who lives in Chicago but most of the time is on the road with his band, the Effigies, told me on the phone Aug. 15. "So I looked at the newspapers on the internet, including the *Militant*, to get more information. I thought, what little thing can we do to help them?"

"I talked with union President Eric Schultz and the other bands, and we came up with the idea of a concert Aug. 21 at a very nice venue, Avenue 912 in Griffith. If we help raise some funds, great. But we mainly want to build morale.

"When we first started the band, I was young. I wasn't very aware politically. I didn't know what the unions were fighting for," he said. "But the older I got, the more frustrated I became. The band traveled all over. I saw homeless people living under bridges and immigrants stuffed into abandoned warehouse buildings. And I decided that something had to be done about it.

"I hope other entertainers of many kinds of genres will do the same. We can change society. But we need everyone to work together."

The concert will be held at Avenue 912, 202 W. Ridge Road in Griffith. A ticket costs \$20, which will go to the USW 7-1 Strike and Defense Fund. All the union members get in free. Doors open at 6 p.m., music begins at 7.

For more information on the lock-out, or to find out how to send a contri-

bution, call the union at (219) 659-1181 or write to Local 7-1 at 2045 Schrage Ave., Whiting, IN 46394.

— Ilona Gersh

Teamsters strike Quaker Valley Foods in fight for a pension

PHILADELPHIA — Some 35 truck drivers, members of Teamsters Local 500, have been on strike, picketing 24 hours a day, at Quaker Valley Foods here since Aug. 5. The company distributes meat, deli and specialty foods along the East Coast.

The drivers' contract expired Aug. 1. The 35 inside workers in the warehouse — packers, clerks and others — have a different contract expiration date, but are honoring the drivers' picket line.

"This is a single-issue strike. It's about getting a pension and with it retirement security," Teamsters Local 500 President Doug Edwards told the *Militant*. We want the company to set it up and administer the plan, he said, but "it would be fully funded by the members. The company rejected it." The bosses have agreed on every other issue in the proposed contract, including a 50% wage increase over five years.

The strike is solid and getting support, including help picketing as well as food and drink donations from the labor movement, especially from many Teamsters locals in the area.

Shop steward Juan Lafuente, who has worked at the plant for 12 years, told the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that with all the news coverage on the threat of Social Security running out he is worried about providing for the future. "All we ask for is a pension," he said.

— Abby Tilsner

Teamsters strike Cargill Salt over wages, healthcare costs

NEWARK, Calif. — "No contract, no salt!" chanted members of Teamsters Local 853 picketing at Cargill Salt in the Bay Area where they've been on strike since Aug. 11.

Two months of negotiations have failed to produce an agreement between the union and Cargill, with wages and healthcare costs the key sticking point.



Militant

Members of Teamsters Local 500 picket Quaker Valley Foods warehouse in Philadelphia Aug. 12. The truck drivers walked out Aug. 5 in fight for pension benefits and a wage raise.

"Every plan they have absorbs our raises," Teamster Business Agent James Long told workers bringing solidarity to their picket line. Right now, they have to pay \$1,200 a month for family coverage. "It's about \$7 an hour out of their wages. You take \$7 out, it's hard to survive in the Bay Area," he said.

The union has also filed an unfair labor practice complaint against the company for retaliation against a shop steward.

Cargill is one of the biggest manufacturers of sea salt in North America. The company manufactures 500,000 tons of salt a year for use in food, water softeners, swimming pools and for deicing roads and pavements. The 120 men and women at the plant here harvest the salt from huge evaporation ponds, then turn it into finished products.

— Andrea Morell

After two years, Dallas Black Dancers win first union contract

DALLAS — Ten members of the Dallas Black Dance Theatre troupe were fired Aug. 9, 2024, after they joined the American Guild of Musical Artists, a union that represents dancers. They launched a fight, including mounting popular protests at shows using nonunion dancers, winning far-reaching support from other performers, the

union movement and others.

The dancers also filed charges against the company with the National Labor Relations Board. The Dallas City Council cut some \$248,000 in funding to the theater for the 2024-25 season because of the firings. As a result, the dancers won a \$560,000 settlement from the bosses, as well as a public apology by the theater's board of directors.

The dancers had planned to hold two special performances to raise strike funds Dec. 18-19, 2024, but turned it into a celebration. Both performances sold out. Afterward, none of the dancers decided to return to the company, saying they needed to move on. They also said, "The fight for accountability and justice at Dallas Black Dance Theatre is far from over."

This August, the Dallas Black Dance Theatre finalized a union contract with a new troupe, their first collective bargaining agreement. It runs through 2029. Griff Braun, American Guild of Musical Artists national organizing director, helped to negotiate the agreement.

"We understand the significance of this moment and the path that brought us here," the dancers on the negotiating committee said in a written statement. "We're proud to have negotiated a first contract that provides meaningful protections for today's dancers while strengthening the company for those who will come after us."

The contract guarantees employment to at least 12 performers in the main troupe for at least 41 weeks a year, increases wages with built-in raises, and a seniority-based wage scale. It also guarantees health insurance and retirement contributions and strengthens parental, personal and sick leave.

The contract goes into effect Aug. 17 when dancers report for the start of the 2026-27 season.

— Josefina Otero

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT

August 27, 2001

The following statement was released by Frank Forrestal, a union coal miner and Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh.

"The federal court decision rejecting the coal industry's challenge to new regulations on black lung disease is an important victory for the United Mine Workers, the National Black Lung Association, and the entire labor movement.

"The decisive factor in defending these benefits has been the struggle that miners and their union have waged for decades — a struggle that sets an example for all working people in the fight for lifetime health insurance.

"That black lung is still the main killer of coal miners is simply one glaring example of a system that puts profit-making above the health and safety of working people. This is why the SWP campaign points to the need to fight for a government of workers and farmers."

THE MILITANT

September 3, 1976

On June 24 a meeting was held in New York City to demand the release of Mustafa Dzhemilev from a Soviet prison. Dzhemilev was incarcerated for his activities in defense of the Crimean Tatar people.

The Crimean Tatars, forcibly deported to Central Asia in 1944, are demanding the right to return to their homeland. The more than 100 persons who attended the meeting heard a wide range of speakers, among them exiled Soviet dissident Pavel Litvinov, who said: "Crimean Tatars were not alone. Other nationalities — Kalmucks, Greeks, Chechens, Bulgars, earlier it was Germans. Fourteen nationalities had the same fate; they were all accused of being traitors.

"Dzhemilev sympathized not only with the cause of the Crimean Tatars but with the whole problem of human rights, with the rights of minority groups, of nationalities like the Ukrainians, and many others."

THE MILITANT

September 3, 1951

Amid worldwide protest, the U.S. is preparing to compel Asia to accept a Japanese peace treaty which arranges affairs there in the best interests of American imperialism. The treaty conference will open on Sept. 4. Britain and France fear that a revived Japanese imperialism, in cahoots with American imperialism, will push out all other commercial and industrial interests.

The Japanese people, who continue to suffer under foreign occupation, are not happy about it. A poll showed a strong majority opposed. The pact is being railroaded despite bitter opposition from almost every important force in Asia, both popular and government. The biggest powers, India and China, will either boycott the conference (India), or be excluded (China).

Imperialist U.S. has arrogantly announced that the treaty is to be signed either intact or not at all. "Take it or leave it," the world is being told.

Read about the battles that forged the US labor movement



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The working class is critical to the advance of human history

Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International, Documents: 1907–1916; the Preparatory Years is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for August. It records the political battle Lenin led within the leadership of the international workers movement to oppose imperialist war by a revolutionary course of organizing to lead the working class to overthrow the capitalist rulers. "The historical destiny of the doctrine of Karl Marx," was published March 14, 1913, the 30th anniversary of Marx's death. Copyright © 1984 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY V.I. LENIN

The chief thing in the doctrine of Marx is that it brings out the historic role of the proletariat as the builder of socialist society. Has the course of events all over the world confirmed this doctrine since it was expounded by Marx?

Marx first advanced it in 1844. The *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels, published in 1848, gave an integral and systematic exposition of this doctrine, an exposition which has remained the best to this day. Since then world history has clearly been divided into three main periods: (1) from the revo-

lution of 1848 to the Paris Commune (1871); (2) from the Paris Commune to the Russian revolution (1905); (3) since the Russian revolution. ...

At the beginning of the first period Marx's doctrine by no means dominated. It was only one of the very numerous groups or trends of socialism. The forms of socialism that did dominate were in the main akin to our Narodism: incomprehension of the materialist basis of historical movement, inability to single out the role and significance of each class in capitalist society, concealment of the bourgeois nature of democratic reforms under diverse, quasi-socialist phrases about the "people", "justice", "right", and so on.

The revolution of 1848 struck a deadly blow at all these vociferous, motley and ostentatious forms of pre-Marxian socialism. In all countries, the revolution revealed the various classes in society in action. The shooting of the workers by the republican bourgeoisie in Paris in the June days of 1848 finally revealed that the proletariat *alone* was socialist by nature. The liberal bourgeoisie dreaded the independence of this class a hundred times more than it did any kind of reaction. The craven liberals grovelled before reaction. ... All doctrines of non-class socialism and non-class politics proved to be sheer nonsense.

The Paris Commune (1871) completed this development of bourgeois changes; the republic, i.e., the form of political organisation in which class relations appear in their most unconcealed form, owed its consolidation solely to the heroism of the proletariat. ...

Towards the end of the first period (1848–71), a period of storms and revolutions, pre-Marxian socialism was dead. Independent proletarian parties came into being: the First International (1864–72) and the German Social-Democratic Party.

The second period (1872–1904) was distinguished from the first by its "peaceful" character, by the absence of revolutions. The West had finished with bourgeois revolutions. The East had not yet risen to them.

The West entered a phase of "peaceful" preparations for the changes to come. Socialist parties, basically pro-



Workers, soldiers at Winter Palace in Petrograd, Russia, as Lenin announces overthrow of Provisional Government, installing dictatorship of proletariat and poor peasants Oct. 25, 1917.

letarian, were formed everywhere, and learned to use bourgeois parliamentarism and to found their own daily press, their educational institutions, their trade unions and their cooperative societies. Marx's doctrine gained a complete victory and *began to spread*. The selection and mustering of the forces of the proletariat and its preparation for the coming battles made slow but steady progress.

The dialectics of history were such

"All doctrines of non-class socialism and non-class politics proved to be sheer nonsense."

—V.I. Lenin

that the theoretical victory of Marxism compelled its enemies to *disguise themselves* as Marxists. Liberalism, rotten within, tried to revive itself in the form of socialist *opportunism*. They interpreted the period of preparing the forces for great battles as renunciation of these battles. Improvement of the conditions of the slaves to fight against wage slavery they took to mean the sale by the slaves of their right to liberty for a few pence. They cravenly preached "social peace" (i.e., peace with the slave-owners), renunciation of the class struggle, etc. They had very many adherents among socialist members of parliament, various officials of the working-class movement, and the "sympathising" intelligentsia.

However, the opportunists had scarcely congratulated themselves on "social peace" and on the non-necessity of storms under "democracy" when a new source of great world storms opened up in Asia. The Russian revolution was followed by revolutions in Turkey, Persia and China. It is in this era of storms and their "repercussions" in Europe that we are now living. No matter what the fate of the great Chinese republic, against which various "civilised" hyenas are now whetting their teeth, no power on earth can restore the old serfdom in Asia or wipe out the heroic democracy of the masses in the Asiatic and semi-Asiatic countries. ...

The Asiatic revolutions have again shown us the spinelessness and baseness of liberalism, the exceptional importance of the independence of the democratic masses, and the pronounced demarcation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie of all kinds. ...

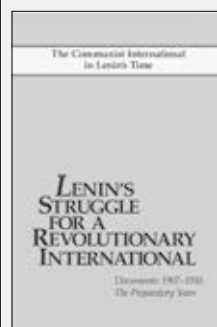
After Asia, Europe has also begun to stir, although not in the Asiatic way. ... The frenzied arming and the policy of imperialism are turning modern Europe into a "social peace" which is more like a gunpowder barrel. Meanwhile the decay of *all* the bourgeois parties and the maturing of the proletariat are making steady progress.

Since the appearance of Marxism, each of the three great periods of world history has brought Marxism new confirmation and new triumphs. But a still greater triumph awaits Marxism, as the doctrine of the proletariat, in the coming period of history.

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Maryland movement fights Jim Crow

Continued from front page

right to vote there for decades, Cambridge was below the Mason-Dixon line separating what had been slave states from the North. In the 1960s, African Americans were denied access to the city's hospital. Public schools and other facilities were segregated and housing for Blacks was dilapidated. While unemployment for Caucasians was over 7%, twice the national average, Black unemployment in Cambridge was a devastating 29%.

Members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee came to town to hold a march and sit-in Jan. 13, 1962. They were assaulted by a racist mob and several were arrested, but they got enthusiastic support from the town's Black residents.

Scores of high school students walked out of class to support the marchers at their court hearings. Days later a mass meeting established the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee. Area unionists and Black World War II and Korean War veterans were among its members.

Soon after the group's founding, Richardson became its central leader. She had been involved in battles for Black rights before, joining protests against segregation in the late 1930s when she was a student in Washington, D.C. She turned CNAC toward recruiting Black workers, integrating workers onto its executive committee and working closely with the unions.

When the city's cinema owners moved to restrict Blacks to the back rows of the balcony, CNAC picketed the theaters March 29, 1963. Richardson and 16 others were arrested.

After further marches, two 15-year-old students, Dwight Cromwell and Dinez White, were arrested and sentenced to indefinite imprisonment at the state's juvenile facility. Infuriated by the sentences, hundreds marched in downtown Cambridge June 11. As they headed back to the Black community they were assaulted by Klan-type thugs.

Self-defense, union involvement

The next night state troopers were mobilized to protect the racists as they carried out more assaults. The following night, June 13, some 500 protesters against Jim Crow marched downtown with several carrying arms to protect the demonstrators, as Black veterans organized an armed patrol to guard the perimeter of the Second Ward, the Black neighborhood.

"The men's role was to protect the Second Ward as soon as night fell. There were exchanges of gunfire," Richardson later recalled. "They knew what they were doing. They organized themselves, even down to having medical supplies."

Maryland Gov. J. Millard Tawes called for the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee to halt protests for one year in exchange for promises he would speed up desegregation. Richardson said no. Tawes then called out the National Guard June 14 and imposed a curfew. The troops would remain in the city for almost a year.

Four days later, city officials insisted they should decide who represents the Black community in future negotiations. Again Richardson said no. "No Negro except those selected by us will act as an intermediary," she said, the June 24 *Militant* reported.

The most famous picture of Rich-

ardson protesting in Cambridge was taken one month later. When a National Guardsman approached her with his bayoneted rifle extended, she simply reached out and pushed it aside. The photo appeared in papers around the world. "I wasn't afraid," she said years later. "I was upset. And if I was upset enough, I didn't have time to be afraid. And besides, we had guns too."

The desegregation fight in Cambridge was tied to battles by the unions, especially ones with a substantial number of Black workers. CNAC members joined picket lines of the United Packinghouse Workers during a strike at a plant in Trappe, Maryland, helping to convince immigrant workers not to act as strikebreakers. Richardson was invited to speak at the union's District 6 convention the following year.

International Ladies Garment Workers Union members at the Rob Roy factory in Cambridge invited Richardson to join a mass meeting to press union officials to fight to win the same pay that workers got at the company's New York factory. Black and white workers asked Richardson to speak.

After she spoke, union officials tried to eject her from the meeting. "The local white ILGWU members," Richardson recalled, "got up and said, 'Oh no, if she goes, all of us go.'"

The White House feared the impact the deepening fight in Cambridge would have across the country. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy met with Richardson and agreed to establish a public commission charged with desegregating all the city's facilities. He also promised construction of public housing and a federal jobs program.

But segregationist forces filed for a



Associated Press/William A. Smith

Gloria Richardson, front in white dress, leads rally in Bethel AME Church in Cambridge, Maryland, July 23, 1963. Movement drew thousands of workers into fight for Black rights.

referendum to overturn the deal. Before the vote, a Black church in Birmingham, Alabama, was firebombed and four children killed. CNAC called a memorial march, but it was banned by the National Guard.

Days later, on Sept. 27, Richardson urged Blacks to boycott the upcoming referendum. "Why would we agree to submit to have our civil rights granted by vote," she told the media, "when they were ours already, according to the Constitution."

Malcolm X: revolutionary leader

On Nov. 10, 1963, Richardson heard Malcolm X speak in Detroit at the Grass Roots conference. "The first time I heard him," Richardson said, "I had the feeling *wow!*" Malcolm pointed to the example being set by the battle she was leading and she was invited to address the

gathering. The conference voted to support the principle of self-defense and to back candidates of the newly formed Freedom Now Party.

Richardson and Malcolm both spoke at a conference hosted by the Freedom Now Committee in Chester, Pennsylvania, in March 1964, helping build support for Freedom Now candidates. In June of that year Richardson accepted Malcolm's invitation to join the Organization of Afro-American Unity.

The fight in Cambridge unfolded as the Battle of Birmingham and the March on Washington took place, and the movement to end Jim Crow was drawing hundreds of thousands into the struggle and making gains. By July 1964 the Kennedy administration was compelled to sign the first national Civil Rights bill and segregation in Cambridge and other cities began to be dismantled.

SWP 2026 candidates point working-class road forward

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

The Socialist Workers Party is running candidates in 12 states across the country in 2026, advancing a road for the working class to defend itself from the exploitation and drive to war of the capitalist class and to fight to take political power into its own hands. They are walking strike picket lines and building support for locked-out workers in Indiana and elsewhere as they defend their jobs, wages and working conditions.

The candidates and their supporters are helping build public protests against the U.S. rulers' assaults on Cuba, demonstrations in defense of immigrants, including calling for amnesty for all immigrants in the U.S., and actions against Jew-hatred, a life-and-death question for the working class.

Nelson Gonzalez, SWP candidate for governor of Florida, and Rachele Fruit, the party's candidate for U.S. Senate there, brought solidarity to nurses and other union members belonging to 1199SEIU in Florida, joining an informational picket outside HCA Woodmont Hospital in Tamarac Aug. 12. Workers pointed to the need to win higher wages, an increased nurse-to-patient ratio and safer working conditions.

Nora Duncan told Fruit she has worked at HCA for 47 1/2 years. Originally from Georgia, she transferred to its Westside Regional Hospital in 1990. "The union was organized here in 2011, and I have been a union delegate ever

since," she said. "The turnover rate is the biggest issue I see. We don't have enough workers."

When Fruit asked about workers who have lost their Temporary Protected Status, Duncan said, "I know several who've left. It's not right. The government is breaking families apart, even though people came here when it was legal. The entire workforce in South Florida will suffer."

As they discussed what workers face today, Duncan was interested in finding out more of the growing efforts by workers in different industries to use their unions to fight to improve their conditions. She decided to get two Pathfinder books, *The Low Point of Labor Resistance Is Behind Us: The Socialist Workers Party Looks Forward* and *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning under Capitalism* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, as well as a subscription to the *Militant*.

Glenda Sumner, a member of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 390G at International Flavors and Fragrances in Memphis, Tennessee, recently talked with SWP member Amy Husk and decided to renew her subscription to the *Militant*. Sumner was a stalwart on the picket line during the 10-month strike over wages and benefits by the 200 workers at IFF in 2023-24.

Sumner had met Husk and party member Ned Measel during that fight

when they came to Memphis to help build solidarity with the fighting union and report on the strike for the *Militant*.

Sumner told Husk she went back to work at IFF after the strike ended and continues to support the union there.

This month a co-worker organized a potluck dinner at his apartment building community room. He invited Jacob Perasso, the SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in Washington state who is a grocery store worker and member of the BCTGM union, and other SWP campaign supporters to come and discuss the party's campaign. Another one of Perasso's co-workers and their family had donated and helped cook a dinner for 40 people to help Perasso's campaign successfully raise the \$1,700 filing fee required to be on the ballot.

The SWP campaign joined the thousands gathered for the Fourth Annual Puerto Rican Day Parade and Festival in Lorain, Ohio, Aug. 15. After marching under a sea of Puerto Rican flags, participants gathered in Oakwood Park for live musical performances, food and family activities.

Talking to workers on their doorsteps in cities and rural areas, SWP candidates explain why it's decisive for workers to break with the Democrats and Republicans, the two parties of the capitalist class, and organize independently in our own interests.

Join with us in this effort. See the directory on page 4 for the location of the SWP nearest you.

1,000s attend events in Cuba

Continued from front page

tenary was marked in neighborhoods all over the city.

The main event, held at the Karl Marx Theater, was the closing session of an international symposium “Fidel: Legacy and Future.” Among those attending were historic leader Raúl Castro, President Miguel Díaz-Canel, government ministers, army generals and Communist Party leaders. The 1,500 participants in the symposium included 1,000 international participants from 63 countries. For the closing session they were joined by delegations from Cuban workplaces and mass organizations.

Speakers during the conference countered the campaign of slanders by capitalist politicians and media in the U.S. and internationally. One example was the *Wall Street Journal* article “Cuba throws a birthday bash for Fidel as his legacy lies in ruins.” Speaking at the opening session of the event Díaz-Canel told the conference how Cuba’s “economic collapse” referred to by the *Journal* resulted from over six decades of Washington’s attempts to overturn the revolution through its unbroken political and economic war.

That war has sharply intensified over recent months, with the imposition of a total oil blockade and other sanctions accompanied by a shrill propaganda campaign asserting Cuba is a threat to U.S. national security. The State Department issued a 100-page report last month, “Cuba: The Capital of 21st Century Communism,” claiming that Cuba is bent, under Fidel Castro’s lingering influence, on “conquering the neighboring United States.” It also names dozens of U.S. organizations as dangerous Cuban agents.

The Washington-led drive to suffocate Cuba has resulted in extreme shortages of running water, electricity and transportation that have fueled rampant inflation. The consequences include a doubling of the infant mortality rate.

Many speakers pointed to the fact that the Cuban Revolution *is* a threat to the United States — not a military threat, but the threat of its example.

Before the revolution, President Díaz-Canel reminded the conference, over half the Cuban population “lived in shacks, barracks, and slums without even the most basic living conditions, and with no access to electricity at all.” Nearly 40% of the population was illiterate. Today, Cuba enjoys one of the highest literacy rates in the world.

Program ‘flowed from real needs’

The program that Fidel Castro led through the revolutionary struggle — land reform, labor rights, an end to anti-black discrimination, women’s equality and other measures to advance the interests of workers and peasants — wasn’t “a doctrine imported from some manual,” Díaz-Canel said. It flowed from the real needs and aspirations of working people, who were mobilized and led to carry it out.

Fidel Castro belongs not just to Cuba but “to all those who fight for a better world,” he said, a sentiment repeated by many speakers.

Tjitunga Elijah Ngurare, prime minister of Namibia, and Nikosazana Dlamini Zuma, former foreign minister of South Africa, spoke of Cuba’s immense contribution to liberation struggles in Africa. “I wouldn’t be standing here if it weren’t for Fidel, for Cuba,” said Dlam-

ini Zuma. Hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteers fought in Angola over 16 years to push back repeated invasions by the apartheid regime in South Africa, culminating in its defeat in 1988.

“Cuba didn’t go away,” she added. When one of the largest epidemics yet of Ebola was spreading in West Africa in 2014, Cuba sent doctors who turned the tide in the fight against its spread. “We owe a big debt to the Cubans. We have to act against the blockade.”

Among the international participants were many who had organized protests in their own countries against the attacks on Cuba’s sovereignty as well as other working-class struggles. Joel Cruz, a teacher from Monterrey, Mexico, reported he had raised money to bring medicines, solar panels and other aid to Cuba. Ignacio Bardesio, a carpenter and union member from Uruguay, told the *Militant* construction workers there had just won a reduction of the workweek from 44 to 40 hours.

Speakers at some 300 panel discussions included Osnay Miguel Colina, secretary general of the Cuban trade union federation, the CTC; Félix Duarte Ortega, president of the National Association of Small Farmers; and Federation of Cuban Women President Teresa Amarelle. Duarte described how the U.S. blockade of fuel, fertilizer, pesticides and other inputs has devastated food production and distribution.

Labor leader Colina highlighted the blows dealt to industrial and agricultural production and the efforts being made by workers to keep factories running, which is at the heart of the way out of the crisis and defending workers’ interests.

Other panels were held on education and health; “Fidel and religion”; the struggle for women’s emancipation; the “war of the entire people” advanced by Castro that is at the center of the country’s military defense; art, sports; and more. The Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples held daily workshops to promote the revolution’s defense.

‘Our principles are not negotiable’

Cuba is in favor of talks with Washington, but “doesn’t negotiate our principles,” said Elier Ramírez, vice-director of the Communist Party’s ideological department. Facing threats and pressure from Washington, “we did not give up our aid to the defense of Angola,” he said, “nor our support for Puerto Rico’s independence.”

The Cuban government played an instrumental role in securing the release in 1978-79 of the five Puerto Rican nationalists who had spent a quarter century in U.S. prisons, noted Juan Camacho, one of 30 delegates who came from Puerto Rico who are active in the Cuba solidarity committee there.

At a special session, a newly published 23-volume *Selected Works of Fidel Castro* was presented by René González Barrios, director of the Fidel Castro Center, which organized the symposium. González Barrios was flanked by Ramírez and Vu Trong Lam, director of Vietnam’s national publishing house, which financed publication of 3,000 copies. A digital version was provided on a flash drive to all symposium participants

In his opening speech, Díaz-Canel said Fidel Castro taught that “yes, imperialism is powerful” but “history is on the side of the people. ... We’re committed to resist the imperialist blockade



Inset, Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Above, symposium on “Fidel: Legacy and Future” was held in Havana Aug. 10-13. Inset, René González Barrios, right, director of Fidel Castro Center, which organized conference, presents newly published 23-volume *Selected Works of Fidel Castro*. Vu Trong Lam, left, head of Vietnam’s publishing house that financed production. Participants got flash drive with entire set.

however many years are necessary. ... Cuba won’t sell out, won’t surrender, won’t go down on its knees.”

Greetings were sent to the event from Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping. Platform speakers included leaders of the Communist parties of Spain, Portugal, Chile, Turkey, Vietnam and Laos.

International Book Fair

The 34th Havana International Book Fair, originally scheduled for February, had been postponed by the impact of Washington’s economic war. A scaled-down fair was organized to coincide with the symposium, and the two events intertwined in book presentations at venues across the city.

“Holding this fair, amidst the conditions the island is experiencing, is a clear demonstration of the country’s unwavering commitment to culture,” said Juan Rodríguez, president of the Cuban Book Institute.

Making it more accessible to people in the capital, the fair was held at the

recently established “Cultural Station” in central Havana, and at the Fidel Castro Center itself. Stands included Cuban national and regional publishing houses responsible for 1,400 new titles. Due to shortages of paper and ink, a big majority of new titles have been published as e-books.

The book fair honored writer Marilyn Bobes and historian José Bell Lara, editor of a multivolume *Documents of the Cuban Revolution* who was awarded the national social sciences prize. Pedro Pablo Rodríguez of the José Martí Studies center received a prize for his lifelong work on Cuba’s national hero.

Russia, the country of honor, had a large stand presenting 1,500 titles. The Russian delegation included writers, translators and artists.

Following the Havana leg, the book fair will travel to each provincial capital, ending in Santiago de Cuba in the far east of the country on Sept. 6.

Jonathan Silberman and Claudia Kaiser-Lenoir contributed to this article.

‘Grateful working people of Grenada give back to Cuba’ raises \$250,000

BY RÓGER CALERO

Under the theme “Grateful Grenada Gives Back to Cuba,” groups dedicated to solidarity with Cuba and other organizations held a successful fund-raising campaign all across Grenada, and on the smaller islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, to aid the sister people of Cuba, who are facing a far-reaching economic and political assault by the U.S. rulers.

Launched on April 14, the campaign by mid-July had raised close to a quarter of a million dollars, organizers said, “going beyond our expectations.”

“Grenadians are rallying to assist as best they could,” Ruggles Ferguson, one of the organizers of the initiative, said to Telesur. “We see the images of blackouts in Cuba,” he said, that have caused so many surgical operations “to be postponed.”

“We cannot abandon a friend in need and Cuba has been a friend to us.”

Activities were held in all six of Grenada’s parishes, including raffles, barbecues, dinners and a concert headlined by well-known calypso musicians.

The two single largest contributions came from a “Collection Day for Cuba” at Catholic and Seventh Day

Adventist church services and masses. Beautifully decorated boxes were passed around for donations at May Day rallies organized by the Grenada Trades’ Union Council.

Participants in these events heard presentations about the impact of Washington’s brutal economic and oil blockade against the Cuban people. Many Grenadians know about and hold in high esteem Cuba’s ongoing solidarity with Grenada dating back to 1979, when working people took power there in a popular revolution.

Cuba has assisted Grenada’s development, including “the single, largest economic project, ever” on the island, the building of the Maurice Bishop International Airport, Ferguson said. Cuba also gave hundreds of scholarships to study medicine and other fields in Cuba, and has provided specialists and other personnel for Grenada’s hospitals over the decades.

Announcing the results of the fund drive on July 16, Malachy Dottin, another organizer of the campaign, said, “I want to congratulate the churches and all the stakeholders, especially the trade unions. They have shown that solidarity for Cuba is a continuum.”

Texas protests condemn ICE killing

Continued from front page
working people from the Houston area and other parts of Texas have gone there on a daily basis to honor Salgado. His family announced to the media that the memorial will be moved to the Houston public library, where it will be set up as a permanent exhibit.

Later that evening his family and community members held a vigil and celebration of his life at the memorial, which is now marked with a big wooden sign saying “Somos Lorenzo.” (We are all Lorenzo.)

The next day, Immigrating Youth Texas organized a march to the Immigration Detention Center here, where the three workers — including Salgado’s brother — who were in the van with Salgado when he was killed, were taken.

One of the witnesses, Jose Trinidad Rojas Pliego, was released July 29 and within hours he visited the memorial. “They took Lorenzo Salgado’s life away. Instead of giving him [help], they immediately handcuffed him and slammed him to the floor,” he told the media, “and that’s not right. I want justice for Lorenzo Salgado.”

In addition to releasing Rojas, U.S. District Court Judge Keith Ellison barred the government from deporting him.

The Harris County District Attorney’s Office, which is conducting its own investigation into the killing, says it is helping all three of the construction workers who were in the car with Salgado get special U visas to remain in the U.S. as material witnesses to the shooting.

The League of United Latin Ameri-

can Citizens, the largest Latino civil rights organization in the U.S., hailed the judge’s decision and spoke out against the jailing of the three riders and killing of Salgado. “This community will not rest until all of them are home and until Houston is told the truth about what took place on Canal Street,” LULAC Chief Executive Officer Juan Proaño told the press.

Immediately following Salgado’s death, the Department of Homeland Security claimed Salgado “weaponized his vehicle in an attempt to run over an ICE law enforcement officer” and that the officer fired in self-defense. The three witnesses have disputed that account, saying the ICE agents were on the side of the van, not in its path. Rojas said the government’s version is “a lie.”

Shortly after his release, the federal government filed an appeal seeking to return him to ICE custody.

Protest at Conroe detention center

At the march to the ICE detention center, Stephy Padilla from Immigrating Youth Texas, told the *Militant* that Rojas “is forced to wear an ankle monitor and cannot work.” The Conroe detention center, one of more than 20 in the Houston area, is owned by GEO, a private prison system.

“We should focus our fight for immigrants’ rights on amnesty for all im-



Reginald Mathalone/NurPhoto via AP

Demonstrators gather July 8 at street in Houston where Lorenzo Salgado Araujo was fatally shot day before by ICE agents. Protests over justice for Salgado, immigrant workers, continue.

migrants who live and work here, not ‘ICE out,’” Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Texas, told Padilla. “Getting rid of ICE would not stop attacks on immigrant workers. The bosses knowingly hire workers without papers and superexploit their labor, dragging down wages for all workers. They aim to divide the working class and deal blows to the unions. That is why this needs to be a central issue for the labor movement. We must focus the fight on demanding amnesty and justice for Lorenzo Salgado.”

After Salgado’s killing, the FBI

sought a search warrant to test “crystal-like substances” found in the van that they claimed could be methamphetamine. A week later, U.S. Attorney Aaron Reitz told the *Texas Tribune*, “I can confirm what’s already public: lab testing showed the substance in the baggies was not meth.” Salgado’s family always insisted it was salt that the men mixed with water and lemon to stay hydrated while working.

On Aug. 6, Harris County commissioners voted to release \$2.5 million to fund an investigation by the District Attorney’s office into Salgado’s death.

Unions in Australia fight for better conditions in the mines

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY — For the first time in over 25 years, workers at BHP’s iron ore operations at Port Hedland in the Pilbara, a remote region in Western Australia, went on strike July 16. BHP, one of the largest mining companies in the world, has five iron ore operations across the region.

Some 160 members of three unions — Electrical Trades Union, Australian Manufacturing Workers’ Union and Australian Workers’ Union — at BHP’s iron ore export hub at Port Hedland walked off the job for eight hours July 16, and for 48 hours on Aug. 8. Electrical workers, members of the Electrical Trades Union at BHP’s operations near Newman, East Pilbara, also went on strike Aug. 8-9.

The three unions representing the port workers are in the midst of a fight for a new union contract to cover their 450-strong workforce at Port Hedland, where BHP ships out all its iron ore.

In 1999 the company started pushing workers at their iron ore sites onto “individual workplace contracts,” moving to shut the unions out of its operations.

Today more than half of the operators at BHP in Port Hedland have joined the unions to fight together for equal pay for equal work and for working conditions to be clearly set out in the contract.

Negotiations with the company began last October. They “were stonewalled for month after month” before taking industrial action, Adam Woodage, electrical workers union secretary in Western Australia, told the media. Now, “workers have had enough, they’re stepping up, and they’re fighting back.”

Workers want a union contract that recognizes “the high volume, high risk work” and dangerous conditions at BHP operations in the Pilbara. In February 2023 a worker died after being struck by a train in the rail yard at Port Hedland.

Twenty-three workers were killed between 2014 and 2024 in all mining operations in Western Australia. In 2023-24 there were some 600 serious injuries.

Already there have been more deaths this year in the entire mining industry than the average for the previous five years. The most recent death was Aug. 3 when Paul Phillips, a 59-year-old member of the Mining

and Energy Union, was killed while operating a mobile processing unit at the United Wambo coal mine in the Hunter Valley, north of Sydney.

The Northern district of the Mining and Energy Union said the union was working “to ensure a thorough investigation” and that “every worker has the right to return home safely at the end of every shift.”

Stand with the Cuban people

Continued from front page

litical war against Cuba. And we should speak out against the U.S. government’s growing campaign targeting the constitutional rights of unions, political groups and others to organize and build opposition to its assaults on Cuba.

EDITORIAL

Ever since Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement led working people to take political power and put an end to capitalist exploitation, the U.S. rulers have systematically lied about Cuba’s socialist revolution and done everything in their power to destroy it. They’ve worked ceaselessly to try to hide from working people the fact that workers and peasants in Cuba knew exactly what they were doing when they rose up to transform their conditions of life and work in a mighty revolution, a conquest and example for workers the world over.

Washington’s deceit and venom know no bounds. Today it shamelessly blames the deepening economic crisis in Cuba on the Cuban government itself, as if its own decades-long blockade had no effect! This turns reality on its head. It is Washington’s drive to starve the Cuban people into submission that is the source of the growing hardship they face.

Build public protests to demand

“U.S. hands off Cuba!” Work to involve your union and others you know. Help ensure workers and farmers in Cuba don’t fight alone!

In Grenada, solidarity groups just collected almost a quarter million dollars to aid the Cuban people. Their example can be emulated elsewhere, by organizing efforts to gather medical supplies, solar panels and other sorely needed supplies for Cuba. Broad support can be won from working people when they learn the truth about the revolution there.

As it intensifies its drive to suffocate the Cuban people, Washington is organizing red-baiting assaults on organizations in the U.S. who speak out against its brutal assaults on Cuba. It calls them “foreign agents,” demands they open their books and threatens to drag them into court. Whenever the government tries to silence any political opponent, it strikes blows to free speech and other constitutional safeguards that are vital to all workers and our unions.

Working people should demand an end to the government’s witch hunt. We should join actions to defend the sovereign right of Cuba’s workers and farmers to make a socialist revolution and to organize society as they see fit. The fact is, what Washington’s rulers fear most is the example Cuba’s revolution sets for workers here to emulate!

U.S. hands off Cuba!

Special sale of books by Marx and Engels

Pathfinder Press has launched a special sale of selected volumes of the collected writings of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, as well as the collected writings of Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin. The books are on sale for the special price of \$15 a volume!

This is a unique opportunity for anyone looking to fill out their set or to purchase the writings for the first time. Many of these volumes were rescued in Russia shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 when they were going to be pulped. They remain in good shape today.

Among the volumes being offered on special is Marx and Engels volume no. 25, which includes Engels’ *Anti-Dühring* and *Dialectics of Nature*. Lenin wrote that *Anti-Dühring* analyzes “highly important problems in the domain of philosophy, natural sciences, and social science.”

This special sale will continue while supplies last and more volumes will be added in coming months. You can find out more information or make a purchase on the Pathfinder website — pathfinderpress.com or on the link below.

— Norton Sandler



pathfinderpress.com

‘Live a life focused on conquering workers power from capitalists, war makers’ — Cuban Revolution set example for fighters

Last week’s Militant featured part one of an article on the Socialist Workers Party’s June 11-14 international socialist conference, held in Oberlin, Ohio. It covered the opening report by National Secretary Jack Barnes, in which he told participants that the SWP today “is proletarian in our program, our class composition and our norms and habits of political conduct. Our communist program is stronger than ever.”

Socialist Workers Party 2026 Conference

The SWP’s political activity and organizational methods, Barnes said, are aimed at building a revolutionary working-class party, based on Marxist foundations. A party that — in the course of class battles ahead — can become the cornerstone around which millions of working people are organized and led in a successful revolutionary struggle for workers power, as part of the battle for a socialist world.

“We don’t have to create that revolutionary party,” Barnes said. “It exists. Its name is the Socialist Workers Party. Our job is to build it.”

Below is the final part of the article.

BY STEVE CLARK
AND ROY LANDERSEN

The second day of the Socialist Workers Party International Conference opened with a talk by SWP National Committee member Mary-Alice Waters entitled, “Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba’s Socialist Revolution: Deeper into the Working Class.”

Waters placed the U.S. rulers’ aggressively stepped-up economic and military measures targeting Cuba within Washington’s broader imperialist course at home, abroad and, in particular, across the Americas.

The U.S. rulers are driving to dominate and exploit what they regard as “their” hemisphere. That extends from declaring that they must “own” Greenland and annex Canada as the 51st state; to declaring that the Panama Canal was stolen from the United States and the Gulf of Mexico is henceforth the Gulf of America; to staking a claim on the moon and outer space for U.S. military bases, nuclear reactors, commercial mining and other private business.

Barely three days into 2026, the Trump White House carried out its “shock and awe” assault on Venezuela, kidnapping and imprisoning President



Audience of 300 at 2026 SWP international conference. “The Socialist Workers Party exists, born in class struggle. Build it!” says banner.

Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores, his wife. Washington is now preparing to place both of them on trial in U.S. courts.

These deepening attacks on Cuba’s national sovereignty come atop more than six decades of a bipartisan U.S. trade and financial embargo, brutally intensified by this year’s full naval oil blockade of Cuba. Washington’s aim is to punish the Cuban people for opening a socialist revolution at the beginning of the 1960s and to overturn that historic conquest.

This year’s savage new measures are aimed at denying the Cuban government every possible source of hard currency, as the U.S. rulers deprive the Cuban people of energy, food, water and life-sustaining medicines and equipment. In addition, the U.S. government is cranking up military threats and taking political measures designed to lay the groundwork for armed aggression. These include the frame-up indictment targeting the one living central leader of the 1959 revolution, Raúl Castro.

By imposing a humanitarian crisis in Cuba, Waters said, Washington is preparing the way to take any opportunity it might see to intervene with military force on the pretext of “saving the Cuban people.” That is, “saving” them from the government they have freely chosen for nearly seven decades.

The Cuban Revolution, Waters said, has been the target of “a nonstop propaganda offensive by the U.S. rulers and their mouthpieces in both imperialist parties. Their aim is to poison the minds of millions by slandering Cuba as ‘a ruthless dictatorship’ and a ‘failed state.’ They suppress knowledge about the gains of the revolution,” Waters said. “They heap lies and slanders on the proletarian internationalist example revolutionary Cuba has set from Latin America, to Vietnam, to Africa and beyond.”

It’s vital to counter these lies “by get-

ting out the truth to workers and others wherever we can reach them across the United States and worldwide.” That’s the political importance, she emphasized, of the new book published by Pathfinder Press, *Cuba and the Independence War in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde: The Fall of the Last Colonial Empire in Africa* by longtime Cuban revolutionary leader Víctor Dreke.

“Party members and supporters have already been working with others to organize events to get this book into the hands of working people and students, encouraging them to read and use it. Along these lines, important meetings have already taken place — from Rhode Island and Massachusetts to Norway, from Havana and Paris to Sydney and Montreal,” Waters said.

“And we’re just barely out of the starting blocks.”

Branches of the SWP and Communist Leagues will be doing much more with this book over the months ahead. “Campaigning with it is a powerful new weapon right now in defense of the Cuban Revolution,” Waters said. “It tells the truth, in the words of those who fought and whose lives were shaped by the revolution. It leads us to reach people who are new to campaigning against assaults on the Cuban Revolution.”

In short, Waters said, this campaign helps the party advance along the proletarian course pointed out by the subtitle of her conference presentation, “*Deeper into the working class.*”

As the SWP has been doing for more than 65 years, Waters said, we are politically “in the trenches with the Cuban toilers, their mass organizations, and their government in the fight for national sovereignty and against U.S. imperialist economic and military assaults of any kind.”

That includes initiating and building protests in the streets, wherever we can and with the broadest possible forces, to demand U.S. hands off Cuba!

Our biggest challenge

The biggest political challenge for revolutionaries everywhere, Waters said, is that for the past 67 years, since the triumph in Cuba, there has “not been a single victorious socialist revolution anywhere in the world.”

There have been revolutionary struggles from Latin America and the Caribbean, to Africa and Asia. And there have been powerful social and political struggles in the imperialist countries as well, above all the proletarian-led movement that brought down Jim Crow segregation, Waters said.

“But for more than two-thirds of a century, there have been no new examples of what the working class and its

allies are fully capable of achieving with decisive proletarian leadership, such as that of V.I. Lenin and Fidel Castro.”

Waters pointed to the deepening political class divide in the U.S. and beyond between the Socialist Workers Party and our sister parties, on the one hand, and, on the other, countless radical middle-class currents calling themselves “left” or “socialist.”

Most of the latter are Stalinist either in origin or evolution. In many cases today they look to the Maoist variant of that counterrevolutionary historical current, she said. Others claim social democratic or anarchist roots. “But as we’ve seen time and again since the birth of the communist movement almost 200 years ago,” Waters said, “the results of such anti-Marxist political misleadership are always the same.

“Not only do their ultraleft verbiage and actions push working people to the sidelines of the class struggle, as observers or even victims, not fighters and leaders,” Waters said. “Above all, their course channels working people into bourgeois electoral politics aimed at the self-defeating hope of ‘reforming’ capitalism.”

Today many such currents are coalescing around a shared political attraction to and glorification of the economic and military rise of capitalist Beijing and its counterfeit Chinese Communist Party. More than three decades after the fall of hated Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, these petty-bourgeois radical currents look to China as the principal alternative to what they see as U.S. imperialism’s “unipolar” world. Beijing is both the Stalinists’ new capital of “world socialism” and creditor-in-chief of “the Global South,” the wished-for capitalist counterweight to U.S. imperialist dominance.

Despite all this, Waters said, there is not some new worldwide resurgence of Maoism today, in any sense



Havana, May 22: Quarter of a million rally against Washington’s oil blockade, war threats and indictment of Raúl Castro, a central leader of Cuba’s socialist revolution. SWP is politically “in trenches with Cuban people, their mass organizations and their government,” Mary-Alice Waters told conference.

comparable to its heyday from the 1950s through the 1970s.

At the same time, these developments are tied to a spreading malignancy among meritocratic upper layers of the professional middle classes and campus-based students, Waters emphasized. “That is the Stalinist-style exaltation of thug violence against political opponents, whom they seek to ‘cancel.’”

What’s new today is the convergence of these currents with the sharp rise of reactionary, Islamist, Jew-hating organizations and actions around the world, which has accelerated since the Oct. 7, 2023, pogrom against Israel.

What’s mounting once again is the level of political thuggery and worse that seeks to prevent political discourse. “That violence is born of weakness and fear of the working class, not political strength,” Waters said. Such forces, she added, “are increasingly attracted to the example of Nazi-inspired Hamas and Hezbollah death squads cultivated by Tehran.”

In the United States, these class-collaborationist “radicals” operate under the illusion they are doing something “new” by channeling layers of privileged students and former students into the imperialist Democratic Party and its vote-catching left wing. In fact, they are treading in the footsteps of renegades from Marxism for well more than a century.

From elite neighborhoods of New York City’s Manhattan and Brooklyn’s Park Slope, to comfortable enclaves in big cities, suburbs, and university towns across the country, these insecure mid-

dle-class layers hold the working class in contempt. Under the impact of capitalism’s deepening economic and social crises, more and more of them are afraid that they themselves will be hurled down among the working classes.

Their celebration today of anti-materialist and anti-working-class identity politics, Waters said, feeds the capitalist rulers’ sought-after counterrevolution against gains won by the Black rights movement and women’s liberation struggles.

This “woke left” cult of victimhood, however, does not flourish widely in the working class, Waters underlined. SWP members, she added, “know this from their own work and experience on the job. We know it from discussions with our co-workers. We know it from campaigning door to door in working-class neighborhoods week in and week out, and from exchanges and experiences with working people of all skin colors, national backgrounds and both sexes.

“These attitudes, values, and conduct all have a class character,” Waters said. “The correct term for them is *petty bourgeois*. For the vast majority of working people, these are alien class attitudes.

“Here, too,” Waters said, “a rise in the class struggle and new victories of the socialist revolution will heighten both the political need for and opportunities to forge cadres of a working-class leadership, opportunities to build a proletarian revolutionary party, the Socialist Workers Party.”

Two Middle East wars

The third conference talk, presented by National Committee member Steve Clark, was entitled, “Iran, Israel, and the United States in the Imperialist Epoch: Two Wars in One.” Washington’s military, political, and diplomatic course since launching its assault on Iran in February 2026, Clark said, helps class-conscious workers clarify to other working people that there are two different wars being waged in the Middle East today.

One is the imperialist war launched by Washington against Iran in late February. Its widening aerial destruction of military targets, infrastructure, and civilian “collateral damage” in Iran has been mixed from the outset with on-again, off-again “peace talks” with that country’s reactionary bourgeois-clerical regime. The U.S. rulers’ goal, one they



Workers at health center in Yazd province of Iran April 25 protest over working conditions, wages. Since U.S. rulers began war, a million have been laid off and prices have skyrocketed.

initially misjudged as a quick fix, is an economically and strategically advantageous live-and-let-live arrangement with Tehran, as well as with other capitalist governments in the Middle East.

Topmost for the U.S. ruling families are their own imperial interests in oil and gas resources, other lucrative markets, arms sales, and control over strategic sea routes and straits worldwide. Neither Washington’s war aims nor its “peace” blather, however, have as a central objective defense of Israel’s right to exist and prevention of another Holocaust. That fact, Clark said, is underlined by the overt rise of antisemitism and political hostility toward Israel in both the imperialist Democratic and Republican parties.

For the great majority of the more than 7.2 million Jews living in Israel, as well as many of its Arab citizens and others, Clark said, Israel has been waging a defensive war for close to three years. It’s a war on seven fronts, they often explain, pointing to Tehran’s heavily armed proxies across the Middle East.

The goal of this second war, Clark said, “is to prevent another Holocaust, such as that announced by the murderous pogrom of Oct. 7, 2023. That massacre was launched by Hamas, with full involvement by Tehran and its subordinate Jew-hating armies and militias in the region, from Hezbollah in Lebanon to those in Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere.

“Israel’s defensive war is impelled, above all, by recognition that Tehran’s drive to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missile delivery systems,” Clark said, “is a threat to the very existence of Jews not only in Israel but elsewhere around the world.”

Tehran and its now battered proxies

are also brutal class enemies of Arab, Iranian, Kurdish and other oppressed and exploited peoples across the Middle East, Clark added. “Politically conscious workers should never stop explaining that class reality,” Clark said.

These reactionary forces have sustained enormous blows from defensive operations by Israeli forces since the 2023 massacre of some 1,200 Jews and others, the wounding of thousands, and brutal abductions of 251. Today that phalanx of Jew-hating armies is weaker than ever, Clark said, citing a June 8 statement by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. “But our struggle against them is not yet over,” Netanyahu cautioned.

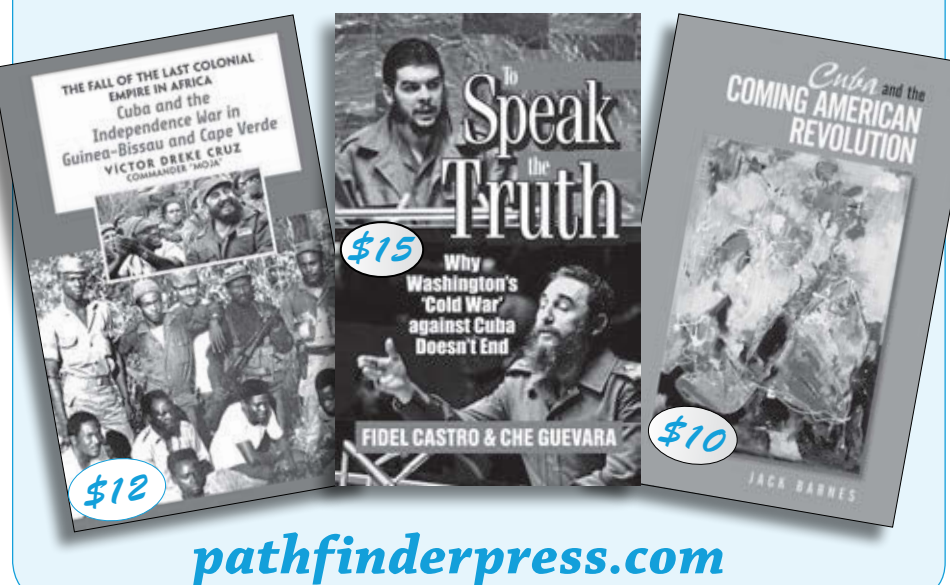
The Israeli government and people are determined not to have a prettied-up but perilous Pax Americana rammed down their throat by Washington or its “Board of Peace” — a body that includes governments that, far from being regional “peacemakers,” also have the goal of eliminating a viable Jewish state in the Middle East.

“Such an outcome would guarantee Hamas’ ability to stage new ‘October 7s,’” Clark said. “It would ensure ongoing deadly Hezbollah missile assaults on Jewish and other Israeli civilians. And it would bring closer and faster Tehran’s deployment of a nuclear arsenal with Israel as the bull’s-eye.”

That’s why Washington is making it increasingly clear that it views Israel as an obstacle to the U.S. rulers achieving their imperial goals. In April Trump, with all his trademark arrogance and bombast, announced that he was “prohibiting” Israel from bombing Hezbollah targets in Lebanon. Then in May the

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Defending Cuba’s socialist revolution



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Willie Cotton, SWP candidate for lieutenant governor of New York, speaks at June 24 protest against antisemitism. “Working class and unions must rally against Jew-hatred and pogroms,” Steve Clark told conference.

Books on building a working-class party

In Defense of Marxism

By Leon Trotsky

The low point of labor resistance is behind us:

The Socialist Workers Party looks forward

by Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters, Steve Clark

pathfinderpress.com

Conquering workers power

Continued from page 9

U.S. president said that Netanyahu will do “whatever I want him to do.” And in early June: “I call all the shots. Netanyahu doesn’t call the shots.”

But to no avail. “Jews refuse to surrender their very survival as a people,” Clark said.

The working classes, the oppressed, and the labor movement worldwide, he emphasized, must rally behind the fight against Jew-hatred and pogroms.

Clark reminded participants of the fact, underlined by Jack Barnes at the international socialist conference two years ago, that the political roots of Hamas lie in the reactionary drive by Hitler and the Nazis for a “Final Solution,” the extermination of two-thirds of Europe’s Jewish population — and well more than a third of the Jewish population of the entire world — during the closing years of World War II.

“The intention of the Jew-hating leaderships of the Tehran regime, Hamas, Hezbollah and others,” Clark said, “is to succeed where Hitler failed.” That and only that is the political content of, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!” It has nothing to do with the aspirations for freedom of oppressed Palestinians.

As Leon Trotsky wrote in December 1938, “Now more than ever, the fate of the Jewish people — not only their political but also their physical fate — is indissolubly linked with the emancipating struggle of the international proletariat.” To this day, Clark said, the Socialist Workers Party works to educate and organize class-conscious workers and the labor movement the world over to act on that fact of history.

Struggles in Iran

The war on Iran unleashed this year by Washington also set back for a time the struggles by workers, oppressed nationalities, and students against the tyrannical regime there. Fights by these forces had been on the rise, despite stepped-up executions and murderous repression by the Iranian government’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its paramilitary gangs of thugs, the Basij.

For sure strikes and protests have been curbed for now by war-fueled fears, opposition to imperialism’s assault on Iran’s sovereignty, and ongoing government terror, Clark said. “But resistance continues.”

Oil workers, garment workers, truckers, retirees and many other working

people confront unpaid wages for months on end, job losses, and shortages of water, electricity and other basic necessities. Iran’s many oppressed nationalities and immigrant workers continue to face not only superexploitation but denial of language rights and simple human dignity.

Clark pointed to a June 9 statement issued by an association of oil contract workers in Iran calling for safe job conditions and other demands. “We seek justice,” the oil workers declared. “We press our demands. *Hear our footsteps approaching.*”

The unresolved class and national conflicts in the Middle East — in Iran, in Israel, Palestine, Kurdistan and across the region — will inevitably sharpen, as new imperialist wars, civil wars, and social convulsions spread, Clark said. As in the U.S. and worldwide, workers of all national and religious origins, languages and skin colors need to forge strength and revolutionary confidence through solidarity in action. They need to build communist parties to overturn the class dictatorship of capital and establish workers power in every country on earth.

As workers and the oppressed take steps forward in overcoming seemingly age-old divisions that benefit only the exploiting classes, Clark said, then the property-holding rulers — from New York, London, Paris and Sydney, to those across the Middle East and beyond — will truly begin to “hear our footsteps approaching.”

On the road to the SWP

In his summary remarks the last day of the socialist conference, Barnes returned to one of the foundations of Marxism he had singled out in his opening presentation: building a party of professional revolutionaries. He described what led him and several other young people he knew in the early 1960s to decide what was worth devoting their lives and energies to.

Barnes recalled their trip to Cuba in the summer of 1960 to see for themselves the revolution unfolding there.

“I was a young person like many others then who knew little or nothing about Marxist politics or its materialist foundations,” he said.



“This revolution discovered, by its own methods, the road pointed out by Marx,” Che Guevara, inset, told 900 at Havana youth congress, July 1960. Above, peasant families at new homes during Cuba’s agrarian reform.



Photos, Granma

“I wanted to visit Cuba for one reason. Because a revolution, the first one I knew about in my lifetime, was going on there.” He described the political impact of getting to know and spending time with some of the workers, farmers and militia members in Cuba who were making and defending that revolution.

Barnes also took a few minutes to talk about what he had learned politically from an article he read while in Cuba. It was published in the spring issue of the *International Socialist Review*, a quarterly magazine edited and published by the SWP leadership. The headline was, “Case History of an Experiment.” It was written by Murry Weiss, a longtime SWP leader.

Barnes said he knew nothing at the time about the Socialist Workers Party and had never met a party member. He bought the magazine because its front cover featured a large photo of a Cuban militia unit, above the headline, “Cuba’s Year One.” It caught his eye on a newsstand he stopped at in front of the New York Public Library during a flight layover en route to Havana.

Many of the students who visited Cuba in the summer of 1960, Barnes said, knew that a U.S. invasion of some kind was coming, as it did just a few months later in April 1961 at the Bay of Pigs. “So we were reading anything we could get our hands on to understand more clearly what was happening in Cuba and why the U.S. government was so determined to destroy the example of the Cuban people and their leadership.”

During the 10 weeks Barnes was in Cuba, a Latin American Youth Congress was held in Havana in late July. It drew some 900 young people from across the Americas and elsewhere around the world. Che Guevara, a central leader of the revolution, presented the opening speech, in which he addressed a question on the minds of many, “Is this revolution communist?”

The answer was still being hotly debated during the first couple of years of the revolution, Barnes said, including among its supporters. Leaders of Moscow-oriented Communist parties across the Americas — many of whose young members attended the youth congress — were answering, “no,” Barnes explained. The Cuban Revolution, these CPers said, was anti-imperialist and anti-feudal in class character, not socialist. And Fidel Castro and other central leaders were revolutionaries, but not communists.

Guevara’s answer was strikingly different, Barnes said. After frankly posing the controversial question in his talk, Che emphasized: “*I would answer that if this revolution is Marxist — and listen well that I say ‘Marxist’ — it is*

because it discovered, by its own methods, the road pointed out by Marx.”

Che’s statement rang true to what Barnes himself had seen and was thinking, he said. What’s more, it resonated with the very first lessons he was learning about proletarian politics from the magazine article he had begun reading.

The author of that article told the story of the collapse of a monthly magazine that had been launched in 1954 by several former SWP leaders who had broken from the party. They had left under pressures of the post-World War II anti-communist witch hunt, a conjunctural upswing in capitalist “prosperity,” and the related political retreat of the union movement from its high point in the late 1930s.

Initially the new monthly had “made a considerable impression in radical and student circles,” the article said. But the founders’ hopes for “a radical upsurge” in middle-class milieus hadn’t borne fruit, bringing to a close their magazine “experiment” after just a few years.

Even the name they had chosen for the failed monthly magazine said a great deal about its political perspectives, Barnes noted. Unlike the *International Socialist Review*, edited and promoted by cadres of the SWP, those who had broken from the party dubbed theirs, *American Socialist*.

But there is nothing uniquely *American* about socialism, about Marxism, or about the world communist movement, Barnes said.

Marx, Engels, and many of the revolutionary-minded workers who had recruited them to the Communist League in 1847 were *German*.

And the two outstanding socialist revolutions and proletarian leaderships of the 20th century, led by Lenin and by Fidel Castro, were *Russian* and *Cuban*.

Yes, Cuba is truly very much of the Americas. But it’s not “American” in the sense clearly intended by those who launched their magazine five years before workers and peasants stormed to victory in Cuba in January 1959.

Barnes pointed again to the banner hanging at the front of the hall, as he and others had done throughout the conference: “The Socialist Workers Party exists, born in class struggle. Build it!”

When those 900 young people gathered in July 1960 in Havana’s Blanquita Theater (today the Karl Marx Theater), Barnes said, Che Guevara was in fact using his time at the microphone to explain to them why a proletarian communist party needed to be built in Cuba.

“That’s why I could hear echoes of the article I was reading,” Barnes said. “It helped me see who was right and who was wrong in the debates

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United Steelworkers Local 7-1

Thousands applauded and grabbed picket signs from members of United Steelworkers Local 7-1, locked out by BP in Whiting, Indiana. Unionists joined in Pierogi Fest Parade there July 24. As labor resistance deepens, actions like this gain wider working-class solidarity.

Conquering workers power

Continued from page 10
raging all around me.”

Marxism might be “palatable to many dilettantes and dabblers in radicalism,” the author of the *ISR* article said, “if it weren’t so insistent on converting its program into an organized working-class political struggle.” Those who broke from the SWP in 1954, the article concluded, did so “over the concept and role of a Leninist party.”

After spending two and a half months in Cuba amid an advancing working-class revolution; hearing and debating about Che’s talk; reading his first article by an SWP leader; and then meeting several party members also in Havana that summer — after all that, Barnes said, “I was well along the way to joining the SWP when I returned to the United States.”

‘Seeds in the wind’

Barnes explained that those who abandoned the SWP in the 1950s and briefly published the *American Socialist* “used to make fun of the party’s subscription campaigns for the *Militant*, our SWP election campaigns, and our sales of pamphlets and books to working people on the job and elsewhere.” They made light of the disciplined and systematic way we carry out trade union work alongside other rank-and-file workers and union members, he said.

So do the party’s petty-bourgeois opponents to this day, Barnes added.

“The SWP just tosses seeds into the wind and hopes they’ll fall to the ground and take root somewhere,” our opponents laughed.

At the same time, Barnes added, these currents were — and still are — convinced “that *they do know where to find people* who are ‘intelligent,’ who are equipped ‘to understand complex questions.’ People who are ‘woke,’ we might add today.”

Where? Barnes asked. “Where do you think? University malls, faculty lounges, urban neighborhoods and better-off suburbs and towns that these colleges and universities often dominate. In the ‘nonprofits,’ ‘NGOs,’ and professional associations of all kinds. In thuggish milieus of Stalinist, ‘antifa,’ and other middle-class groups like the DSA, who change out of their fashionable clothes for a few

hours, or troll ‘social media,’ when someone who doesn’t share their ‘progressive’ views needs to be ‘canceled’ or ‘shut down.’”

Yes, in fact, Barnes said, the cadres of the Socialist Workers Party “*are* advocates of ‘tossing seeds into the wind’” — of reaching out as widely as possible to working people on the job, in their neighborhoods, in cities and small towns, on union picket lines and social and political protests of all kinds.

Barnes said that he learned a lot more about building a party of professional revolutionaries when he returned to Minnesota in fall 1960, during his senior year at Carleton College. Through SWP members he had met in Cuba, he and his friends ended up spending long hours talking with experienced communist workers in the Twin Cities.

As Barnes and others recounted their experiences visiting Cuba, he said, these workers “talked with us about the history of the class struggle in the United States, and how the SWP was responding to U.S. and world politics,” from the Cuban Revolution to the Black struggle and developments in the unions.

Reinforced by what he had learned in Cuba and from reading the *International Socialist Review* article, Barnes said, he could now understand “why contempt for the party’s own history and communist continuity means you can never be a revolutionary.”

Barnes said he also learned that when the SWP met people like himself and his friends — people who wanted to fight, people who wanted to make a socialist revolution in the United States — then party members devote a lot of time, thought and energy into recruiting them to the SWP.

“Neither your commitment to join the SWP, nor the party’s decision to take you into membership,” Barnes said, “will ever be decided by what social class you were born into. Or by what level of formal education



Left, cover of Spring 1960 *International Socialist Review*. Jack Barnes told conference how reading article “Case History of an Experiment” in magazine influenced him amid debates about socialist character of Cuban Revolution. Above, July 11, 1960, issue of the *Militant*.

you may have had.”

What’s decisive, Barnes said, “is how much you want to *build* the revolutionary party that *exists*.”

“How much you want to build the party that over decades has proven by its working-class program, and by its centralized and disciplined activity in the U.S. and world class struggle, that it is capable of forging a leadership of the working class and our allies that can lead tens of millions in a revolutionary struggle for workers power in the United States. A victorious socialist revolution.”

That revolutionary party today is the Socialist Workers Party. Its founding leaders were forged in the programmatic, political and organizational continuity of the early years of the Communist Party in the U.S. and of the Communist International founded by Lenin.

And they organized and worked for more than a decade under the political leadership of Leon Trotsky, who alone among the central leaders of the Bolshevik Party remained true to Lenin’s proletarian internationalist course. Trotsky led SWP leaders in the battle to defend Marxism, and to rebuild a proletarian party and a world communist movement, in face

of the Stalinist political counterrevolution at the close of the 1920s.

One thing worth paying attention to in the new 2026 introduction of Trotsky’s *In Defense of Marxism*, Barnes said, “is its strong reaffirmation of our more-than-century-long conviction that no matter what you may have been doing with your life beforehand, no matter what ‘career path’ may have been open to you, it is never ‘a sacrifice’ to join the revolutionary party.”

To the contrary, Barnes said, “not only are you committing yourself to the most productive and satisfying life anyone can have. Above all, you’re committing yourself to the most vital task facing the working class and all humanity.

“You are taking your place on the front line of the historic battle to take state power out of the hands of the imperialist exploiters, oppressors and war makers. You’re becoming a professional revolutionary in the fight to put an end once and for all to capitalism’s dog-eat-dog social relations and replace them for the first time with truly human relations based on solidarity and social labor,” Barnes said.

“You’re joining in the fight for a socialist world.”

New York march demands Puerto Rico independence

Continued from front page

Puerto Rico, imposed on the island’s people in 2016 by then President Barack Obama and a bipartisan U.S. Congress. Widely known as the Junta in Puerto Rico, it has veto power over all financial decisions by the colonial regime. Its purpose is to force work-

ing people in the U.S. colony to bear the burden of paying the \$72 billion in government debt to wealthy U.S. bondholders.

The board made paying the debt the government’s priority, while the island’s housing and water and electrical systems deteriorated. Accord-

ing to the water department workers union, over the last period, the number of workers there was cut nearly in half. It’s estimated that some 60% of water for homes and businesses in Puerto Rico is lost because of unrepaired leaks in the system.

U.S. rulers impose Junta

“The Junta Fiscal is one of the most tangible expressions of Puerto Rico’s colonial oppression,” Ben Ramos, from the Pro-Libertad Freedom Campaign, told the *Militant*. “In the last 10 years there’s been a consistent decline in services in Puerto Rico, an energy crisis, a water crisis, a privatization crisis, a remilitarization crisis. A lot of this comes from the demands of the Junta.”

“We know that the financial board is a fundamental part of the crisis,” Eric Ramos, a leader of the New York chapter of the Puerto Rican Independence Party, said at the march.

Paul Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of New York, and campaign supporters participated in the march, carrying signs saying, “Solidarity! Workers in Puerto Rico and U.S. fight together! Independence for Puerto Rico! End U.S. blockade of Cuba!”

Locked-out Cargill workers vote up five-year contract in Colorado

BY MARY MARTIN

Over 1,700 members of Teamsters Local 455 who work at the Cargill meat processing plant in Fort Morgan, Colorado, voted by a large majority Aug. 17 to approve a new five-year contract and to return to work. They were locked out by Cargill bosses May 20 after they voted to reject the company’s substandard wage raise offer of just \$2.15 an hour total increase over five years.

A tentative agreement had been announced July 28, which workers voted down Aug. 3 by a narrow margin.

While details of the contract workers approved have not been disclosed, the union said workers would be re-

turning to work over a 30-day period as the plant gears up production.

“While this contract is not perfect, it is a legally binding agreement that provides security for the more than 1,700 men and women who keep Cargill running,” a union statement said. “Teamsters Local 455 will continue to be on the ground in Fort Morgan to build strength and solidarity at Cargill and to enforce the terms and conditions of the new agreement.”

A significant number of workers in Fort Morgan are from Haiti or other countries outside the U.S. and are now facing the loss of their Temporary Protected Status, which allows them to live and work here.

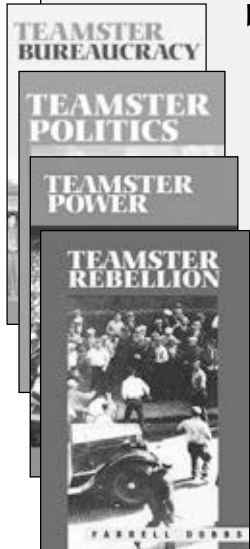
Special Offer Teamster Series Lessons from U.S. labor battles of the 1930s

by Farrell Dobbs

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

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Working class must lead fight against Jew-hatred

The scourge of Jew-hatred has confronted the working class worldwide with full force since the unfolding of the imperialist epoch, exploding with unthinkable consequences in the Nazi Holocaust in World War II. It has accelerated again since Hamas’ Oct. 7, 2023, pogrom. Deadly terror attacks against Jews, assaults on synagogues and attempts to “boycott” Jews and drive them from public life are growing in the U.S. and worldwide.

This is fed by efforts of the middle-class left to target Israel, the one country that provides Jews with an unconditional refuge. These forces lie about Oct. 7, the worst single act of violence against Jews since Hitler’s Holocaust. They blame Israel for today’s wars in the Middle East. Israel, in fact, is fighting a defensive war to maintain its existence from the threats of Tehran, Hamas, Hezbollah and other terror groups that are determined to wipe it out and slaughter the Jews.

Israel also has to defend itself from the U.S. rulers, whose goal is to use the Jewish state as a poker chip in extending their plunder of the region. For the vast majority of working people, Jew-hating assaults are repugnant. The roots of these attacks lie in the nature of imperialism, as rival ruling classes are driven to redivide the world in search of resources, markets and labor power, making social crises and new wars inevitable. Under these conditions, ruined middle-class layers make easy targets for Jew-haters looking to recruit

thugs, as are some workers who lose confidence and become demoralized. When the capitalist crisis grows deep enough, the big capitalist families turn to fascist demagogues, financing their growth and brutality. This is what led to the rise of Hitler’s Nazi Party.

Against this, millions of workers look to the unions and struggle against capitalist tyranny in its death agony, along with its foul antisemitism. The imperialist epoch is also an epoch of socialist revolution.

A resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party at its founding convention in 1938 explained the party “has the duty of exposing the real aims of the capitalists, hidden behind the smokescreen of anti-Semitism and thereby inoculating the masses against the poison; it has also the special task of mobilizing the real defense of persecuted Jews, a defense of necessity based on the might of the organized working class.” The party has acted on this ever since.

The SWP’s political continuity is rooted in the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Under the leadership of V.I. Lenin, a proletarian party was forged that stood in the forefront of the defense of Jews amid czarist-inspired pogroms. That party proved capable of leading hundreds of millions to take state power and end capitalist exploitation, as it led working people to eradicate Jew-hatred and all forms of national oppression.

That is the kind of party the SWP is building in the course of today’s working-class struggles. Join us!

US rulers strangle Tehran’s economy, expand clout

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ments allow unimpeded transit through the waterway.

The harshest consequences of Washington’s blockade fall on working people in Iran. With growing shortages of fuel and rising prices, wages — even when workers get paid on time — now often cover just a third or less of monthly expenses. Many are buying food on installment plans to stave off disaster.

Regime tries to shore up its rule

The regime is taking steps to shore up its reactionary rule. It has given the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps more control over Iran’s regular army and stepped up production of missiles and drones after the severe blows its military suffered in its wars against the U.S. and against Israel.

Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei recently appointed six new commanders to the Guard Corps and the Basij, its paramilitary thug force. His regime aims to advance coordination with Tehran’s “axis of resistance” — the Houthis in Yemen, the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq, Hezbollah in Lebanon — to attack economic and military targets in Saudi Arabia and other U.S. allies in the Middle East; to be ready to unleash more repression against working people in Iran; and, in the longer run, to destroy Israel as a refuge for Jews.

Brigadier Gen. Ahmad Vahidi was appointed commander-in-chief of the Guard Corps and Mohsen Rezaei, head of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council. Prosecutors in Argentina charge both with helping plan the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people and wounded more than 300.

The Iranian regime’s biggest fear is that working people and oppressed nationalities will take to the streets in big enough numbers to challenge its rule.

Since March of this year, it has executed at least 39 people who participated in anti-regime protests in December and January, or who’ve been accused of other political “offenses.” More than 60 political prisoners are on death row.

“The rulers once again respond to the people’s demands for bread, work, justice, freedom and human dignity with the most brutal instrument of terror and fear: the gallows,” the Union of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company said in an Aug. 13 statement.

The regime is using “wartime conditions” to violate “the legal procedures required,” to carry out the executions the union added. It called for “an immediate ceasefire and an end to the war, the immediate halt of all executions in Iran, the unconditional release of all imprisoned labor and political activists, and the complete abolition of the death penalty.”

The regime issued summons and threatened to arrest 100 prominent figures, including more than 20 well-known movie and television actors, for publicly opposing the death penalty.

“Since the beginning of the U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran,” the Iranian Teachers Trade Union in Tehran said Aug. 14, “another war has intensified inside the country — the war between the established authorities and society and independent civil forces.”

Since March more than 60 teachers and union activists have faced arrest, dismissal and other sanctions, the union said. This has been especially severe in the Kurdish region. Kurds — like Baluchs, Arabs and other oppressed nationalities — have fought for the right to use their native languages and against discrimination in housing, jobs and education.

“Protesting discrimination, demanding free and quality education, defending students’ rights” and other fundamental rights “must not be answered with prison sentences,” said the Tehran Teachers Union.

Despite the increased repression, more working people are taking to the streets. Hundreds demonstrated outside the Central Prison in Sanandaj, the second largest Kurdish city in Iran, Aug. 17 and into the early morning the next day against the planned execution of Kaveh Rafoosheh. The 35-year-old Kurdish man was found guilty of murder in a street fight. Despite the protest, Rafoosheh was executed.

Every day there are new protests.

In one week in August there were dozens of protests around the country by retirees from the telecommunications and steel industries against inadequate pensions; oil workers demanding to be hired directly by the company instead of by contractors; municipal workers, healthcare workers and nurses demanding higher wages; unemployed youth demanding jobs; retired coal miners protesting problems with their health insurance; university professors forced into retirement; and patients and their families protesting the high prices and scarcity of essential drugs.



Putin trip to Kuril Islands

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Putin’s trip ratcheted up tensions with Tokyo in a more than 80-year dispute over the islands, which Moscow seized from the defeated Japanese rulers at the end of World War II. The trip and Tokyo’s response also reflect the deepening threat of new wars today.

The trip was the Russian president’s first to the Kurils in his 26-year rule. It comes amid stepped-up naval exercises by Russia’s Pacific Fleet in the area.

“Accompanied by the governor of the Sakhalin region east of Siberia, Valery Limarenko,” wrote the New York Sun Aug. 13, “Mr. Putin made the islands a symbol of Russia’s refusal to compromise on its claims to Ukraine, at the opposite end of the Russian land mass.”

In video coverage widely released by the Kremlin, governor Limarenko insisted Russians are 100% in support of Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine, “even in the most remote areas.”

“These are our people,” Putin enthused. “The genetic code of the conqueror.”

Putin visited Iturup, within eyesight of Japan’s northern island of Hokkaido and the largest island in the southern Kurils. While there he toured a fish processing plant, a hospital and a school named after Eduard Norpolov, a Russian lieutenant killed by Ukrainian forces in 2023 during Moscow’s attacks near the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

Capitalist rulers try to use Ainu people

The Kurils, an archipelago of 56 islands, extends for 750 miles from the southern tip of the Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia to the northeastern corner of Hokkaido. Historically the islands were the sparsely populated home of the Ainu people, of little concern to the rulers in either the Japanese monarchy or czarist Russia. In 1855 the two governments signed the Treaty of Shimoda, which gave control of the four southernmost islands to Japan and the rest to Russia. Twenty years later another treaty shifted ownership of the Kurils to Japan in exchange for the czar getting Sakhalin Island, north of Vladivostok, Moscow’s largest Pacific Coast port.

The monarchy in Japan moved to transform the country into a modern military dictatorship at the end of the 19th century, determined to expand its influence and power. This was strengthened by its victory in the 1904-05 Russo-Japanese War. Their spoils included control of Korea, Manchuria, and half of Sakhalin Island. The Japanese rulers had emerged as an imperialist threat, forming an alliance with London in preparation for the coming first imperialist world war.

After the war, Washington looked to become master of the Pacific, pressing London to break its ties with Japan, leaving Tokyo to search for new allies and ending up with Hitler.

In August 1945 the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and seized the islands. Shortly after Washington dropped nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese emperor announced his country’s unconditional surrender, ending the war in the Pacific. Over the ensuing months Soviet authorities forced Japanese residents out of the Kurils, as well as the remaining Ainu people. They took the Ainu into Russia, replacing them in the Kurils with a few thousand transplanted Russians. But Moscow refused to recognize the Ainu as a people. They were excluded from the list of minorities and forced to assimilate or leave.

The current dispute centers on the South Kuril Islands, which include Iturup. The Japanese rulers claim these are its “Northern Territories.” Some 20,000 Russian citizens live there, farming and fishing, while Moscow refuses Japanese requests to visit.

In 2018 Putin announced Moscow now recognizes the Ainu as an indigenous Russian people, raising concerns among Ainu and others on Hokkaido, as well as with the rulers in Tokyo. At the same time, Beijing, which had long backed Japan’s claim on the Kurils, flipped its stance to support for Moscow’s control.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi called Putin’s appearance in Iturup “absolutely unacceptable.” Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chair of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, responded, saying the islands “were, are, and will remain Russian land.” He added, “Anyone who fails to understand this will face the monstrous consequences of their delusion.”