

THE MILITANT

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Forum discusses gov't probe against unions, immigrant rights supporters
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 90/NO. 32 SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

Tehran fears its working people more than US military might

BY SETH GALINSKY

Worried about deepening opposition among working people to the Iranian regime’s dictatorial rule and its wars, the country’s Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, threatened Aug. 28 that “engaging in anything that harms social cohesion is prohibited” and will be punished.

The Iranian rulers’ fear of the working class and oppressed nationalities is reflected in many ways.

The regime has made only a tepid attempt to push back the growing number of women who have stopped adhering to the reactionary dress code, which requires them to cover up their hair. It shut down dozens of cafes and other businesses that have allowed in women customers without a hijab, but decided against ordering large-scale arrests, fearing this would spark a new “women, life, freedom” movement, bigger than the one that swept the country in 2022 following the death of Zhina Amini after her arrest by the morality police.

While defiance of the dress code is more open in middle-class neighbor-

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1963: Turning point in fight to overthrow Jim Crow

BY TERRY EVANS

By the end of 1963 the nationwide movement fighting to abolish Jim Crow segregation was drawing in hundreds of thousands of working people and youth, imparting new confidence to fighters on frontline battles in the South and having a growing impact on struggles unfolding in cities across the North. It was transforming the attitudes of millions of workers — Black and Caucasian alike.

In August 250,000 joined the March for Jobs and Freedom in Washington, D.C., the largest-ever action against Jim Crow. Months earlier the battle to desegregate Birmingham, Alabama, had been followed avidly on TVs in the U.S. and worldwide. These actions marked a turning point in the fight to topple Jim Crow.

Desegregation struggles that broke out in cities large and small were less and less contained there. The movement was acquiring a mass character, openly declaring its aim was to eradicate every aspect of racial segregation. A new generation of fighters who had led lunch counter sit-ins, Freedom Rides and oth-

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US hands off Cuba! End blockade, threats of war!



Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

Over 60 people joined Aug. 30 protest against Washington’s brutal blockade on Cuba at Grand Central Station in New York. Similar actions are taking place across the country and worldwide.

Defend Cuban sovereignty! Defend constitutional rights!

Washington is relentlessly ratcheting up its political, economic and trade blockade against Cuba, raising the stakes for workers the world over to protest its drive to break the Cuban people. The U.S. government is making it hard-

EDITORIAL

er and harder to live, to get food, medicine and other basic human necessities.

At the same time, the U.S. rulers are coupling their assault on Cuba with an

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As US blockade tightens, Cuba defends its revolution

BY KATY LEROUGETEL, MARTÍN KOPPEL AND CLAUDIA KAISER-LENOIR

HAVANA — A team of *Militant* correspondents from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom was here in early August to report on the brutal impact of Washington’s relentless aggression against Cuba, and how millions of Cubans and their government are responding to it with dignity and through enormous effort.

As one person after another told us, the U.S. imperialist rulers seek to starve

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Black lung is spreading in Appalachia, miners need control over production



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

Members of National Black Lung Association, United Mine Workers of America, miners and their families protest rise of black lung, government inaction in Washington, D.C., Oct. 14, 2025.

BY TONY LANE

PITTSBURGH — “Little to no change”: Central Appalachia black lung disease hits 50-year high,” was a headline in an article here in response to a sobering report on the continuing increase in deadly black lung in miners published by scientists at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in early August. “What

is certain,” the report states, “is that the prevalence of pneumoconiosis among coal workers has reached its highest level in the past 35 years.”

The worst rates are in Central Appalachia, where the black lung rate today “among long-tenured, working miners in the central Appalachian states of Kentucky, Virginia and West

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Moscow targets workers and cities, Ukraine toilers stand tall, fight back

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Four and a half years since its invasion began, Moscow’s stalled ground war and murderous bombardment of Ukrainian cities continue daily, but are failing to break the resistance of the Ukrainian people.

Its escalating campaign targets civilian populations in residential areas, schools and hospitals while Ukraine has dwindling supplies of defense weapons. Conversely, Ukrainian forces don’t target civilians but are trying to cripple military sites and industries that underpin Moscow’s war economy. The regime of

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As profits of bosses, banks soar, workers suffer falling wages, persistent inflation

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

“U.S. corporate profits surge to record as worker payouts wilt,” an Aug. 28 *Financial Times* headline said, pointing to the deepening class divisions under capitalist rule today. Increasing numbers of workers face greater difficulties in making ends

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‘Too hot to work!’ London bus drivers strike over conditions

Protest: ‘Defeat Montreal City Council motion against Israel’

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL — A major political confrontation took place at City Hall here Aug. 24 when Projet Montreal, the opposition party, submitted a resolution calling on the City Council to sever all ties with Israel, falsely claiming Israel is an “apartheid state that is committing genocide” against the Palestinians.

The motion was backed by an open letter issued by the Central Council of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) for greater Montreal, League of Rights and Freedoms, Amnesty International Canada (Francophone), Quebec Co-alition URGENCE Palestine, and Palestinians and Jews United.

Some 700 cultural figures signed a letter supporting Projet Montreal’s attack against Israel. A coalition of petty-bourgeois radical groups and nongovernment organizations, as well as the Confederation of National Trade Unions labor council, organized two demonstrations to support the resolution, each drawing 100 and 150 people on the day of the council meeting. They said nothing about the growing number of attacks on Jews in Montreal, or about the Oct. 7, 2023, pogrom by Hamas in which over 1,200 Jews and others were murdered.

On the other side, in the days leading up to the council meeting some 60 political, business and cultural figures called on the council to vote the resolution down in a full-page ad in the *Journal de Montreal*. Signers of the ad included Louis Lacroix, former president of Teamsters Canada; leaders of immigrant groups of Filipinos, Jamaicans, Greeks, Italians; and others. The

Federation of Combined Jewish Appeal reported it gathered more than 6,000 signatures and over 150,000 emails, which were sent to City Hall.

The resolution was denounced by Montreal’s leading Jewish organizations and by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, Federation CJA, and B’nai Brith National Organization of Canada. They pointed to the rise in attacks against Jews in Montreal over the past few months. “If passed, Projet Montreal’s proposed motion would further normalize the targeting of our Jewish community,” B’nai Brith Canada said.

Katy LeRougetel, who was the Communist League candidate for mayor of Montreal last October, issued a public statement calling for the defeat of Projet Montreal’s resolution. “The Canadian government,” she said, “is responsible for fueling these antisemitic attacks. Ottawa opposes Israel’s defensive war against the reactionary rulers in Tehran and their allies and says it is committed to arresting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu if he sets foot on Canadian soil.

“Fighting against all acts of Jew-hatred is a life-and-death question for working people,” she said. “Jew-hatred is the inevitable product of capitalism in crisis. Unions should take responsibility for physically defending Jews and building actions that protest Jew-hatred and violence.”

Joe Young, the CL candidate in the upcoming Oct. 5 election to the Quebec National Assembly, joined campaign supporters at City Hall to speak with people waiting to attend the debate. The majority of participants were there to



Joe Young, right, Communist League candidate for Quebec National Assembly, joins opponents of anti-Israel resolution being debated by City Council at Montreal City Hall Aug. 24.

oppose the antisemitic resolution, including Paola Samuel, B’nai Brith Canada’s regional director for Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

“The Holocaust by the Nazis in Germany didn’t happen all at once,” Ryan Stotland, a singer-songwriter who came to oppose the resolution, told the *Militant*. “First Jews were excluded from certain occupations. Then their businesses were seized and their movements restricted, and it escalated from there.”

Amended version fosters Jew-hatred

Mayor Soraya Martinez Ferrada, leader of Ensemble Montreal, the party in power in the city, argued the Projet Montreal resolution fell outside the city’s jurisdiction and was divisive. But neither she nor other members of Ensemble Montreal said anything about the anti-Israel slanders in the resolution.

Martinez Ferrada’s party used its majority on the council to pass a series of amendments stripping the Projet Montreal resolution of its accusations of Israel’s “apartheid” and “genocide,” as well as its call to sever ties with Israel, while retaining the rest of the motion. Seven members of Ensemble Montreal voted against it because a section calling for sanctions against Israel was not removed.

While welcoming the fact that the most offensive sections of the resolution were not adopted, Federation CJA President Yair Szlak said that members

of Projet Montreal repeated “one-sided characterizations of Israel and the war with Hamas. They spewed misinformation and lies about the conflict, Israel, and the war, and did not refer to Hamas as a terrorist organization. That omission is not a technicality. It is a lapse that disgraces this council.”

“The Projet Montreal anti-Israel resolution needed to be decisively defeated, not amended,” CL candidate Young said. “The fight against Jew-hatred in Canada and the need to defend Israel’s right to exist as the only refuge for Jews against another Holocaust, threatened by Iran and its proxies Hamas and Hezbollah, is a key battle for the entire working class.”

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

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THE MILITANT

Protest killing of Salgado; demand amnesty!

Workers in Texas have been rallying to protest the July 7 killing of immigrant worker Lorenzo Salgado Araujo by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The ‘Militant’ supports the fight for amnesty for all immigrants who live and work here as a central issue for the labor movement.

Reginald Mathalone/NurPhoto via AP

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Expanded picket at Seattle hotel backs UNITE HERE strike

SEATTLE — Over 100 unionists joined the striking UNITE HERE Local 8 workers on their picket line in front of the Embassy Suites Hotel Aug. 20. “We are fighting for ourselves, but also because if we win this strike it can lead to changes for other hotel workers in the area,” striker Aspen Desmarais told the *Militant*. Signs and chants indicated rejection of the company offer of a mere 40 cents an hour wage increase.

Other area unions sent delegations, including United Food and Commercial Workers Local 3000, Service Employees International Union, the Amalgamated Transit Union, Seattle Education Association, and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. About 10 members of Local 8, who work in the food service kitchens at Microsoft, joined the action.

Claudia Margarita Diaz, who has worked in the kitchens for 16 years, told the *Militant* it took a yearlong organizing drive to win union recognition at Microsoft a few years ago. “We came to support this strike here because we don’t want them to suffer abuses.”

Four kitchen workers from Meta joined the picket line, one saying they are fighting for a union contract.

— Jacob Perasso

Calif. ready-mix cement drivers strike, beat back company attack

HAYWARD, Calif. — Over 350 Teamster ready-mix concrete drivers at CalPortland in northern California ended a two-week strike Aug. 20, overwhelmingly ratifying a one-year contract. “I feel really good about it,” driver Rudy Gomez told the *Militant*. “They were trying to break our union, but we gave them a lot of trouble and they didn’t succeed!”

By striking at 15 locations in the Bay Area and beyond, the drivers put construction work on hold, including at the San Francisco airport. They won increases in wages, health benefits and a common contract expiration date.

The fight began when CalPortland, a subsidiary of the Taiheiyo Cement Corp. in Japan with operations along the U.S. and Canadian West Coast, purchased

the California assets of Vulcan Materials, a competitor whose truck drivers were represented by four Teamster locals. At first CalPortland refused to keep the unionized Vulcan drivers. Then, as part of a settlement with the Justice Department, the company was ordered to rehire 90% of the Vulcan employees.

CalPortland then demanded that each of the four locals agree to separate negotiation dates. The company also implemented changes in contract language without the union’s agreement.

All four Teamster locals went on strike, making the victory possible. “By winning a common expiration date, we can strike together again, if we need to,” Gomez said.

“We voted to strike because we know the true value of our labor,” Gary Kunes, a 30-year ready-mix member of Local 853, said in a union statement. “All of us were united and ready to stand on the line for as long as it took.”

When the picket line at CalPortland was taken down in Pinole, a city north of Oakland, Rudy Gomez took the leftover refreshments to locked-out Marathon refinery workers’ picket lines nearby.

—Eric Simpson and Betsey Stone

Chisago County Teamsters win contract after 122-day strike

CENTER CITY, Minn. — After a hard-fought, months-long strike, some 170 Government Services Professionals and Human Services workers, members of Teamsters Local 320, ratified a new three-year contract with Chisago County Commissioners here Aug. 28.

“The agreement addresses two main sticking points that led to the lengthy strike — including a wage increase of 20.5% over three years, and offering health insurance through the Teamsters,” Erik Skoog, the union’s secretary-treasurer, told the press.

“The county health care plan has a family deductible of \$10,000. We wanted to switch to the Teamsters plan, where the deductible is \$1,500,” Amy Perusse, a business agent for Local 320, told the *Militant* on the picket line. “And we wanted the county to contribute their share to this plan.”

Leading up to the settlement, strikers had defeated moves to decertify the



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Over 100 unionists joined UNITE HERE Local 8 striking hotel workers in front of Embassy Suites in Seattle Aug. 20. Workers rejected bosses’ offer of paltry 40 cents wage increase.

union in the Government Services Professionals unit.

“Their stalling effort of a decertification campaign failed,” Matt Synicyn, a facility engineer and part of the Government Service Professionals, said. “In the meantime, county services were not being met and clients of the social workers weren’t able to get the services they need.” Synicyn said that the strike showed him the importance of unions. “If you don’t have one, you are left to the mercy of the employer.”

— Edwin Fruit

‘Too hot to work!’ London bus drivers strike over conditions

LONDON — “No air con — no buses,” read signs held by striking bus drivers outside the Arriva North London garage in the Tottenham district here Aug. 14. Some 1,500 workers at eight garages walked out over intolerable work conditions imposed by the company bosses.

“No worker should be made ill by their job,” Sharon Graham, general secretary of the Unite union, said in a news release. This was the start of a series of walkouts to last through Oct. 20.

“Some drivers have faced 48.5 degrees Celsius [119 F] on the bus, and in the winter there is poor heating. The bosses have got away with this too long, but not anymore,” Tara Nash, secretary for the Unite branch at the Arriva North London garage in the Enfield district, told the *Militant* at its lively 40-strong picket line the same day.

“There has been massive support for our fight. Passengers know that we are fighting for them as well,” Nash said. “They are suffering from the same heat as us.” There are new electric buses with “air cooling,” but no air conditioning. Passing cars honked in support and strikers cheered back. Drivers said the big windscreen in front of them magnifies the sun’s heat so they feel like they’re sitting in a greenhouse.

On Aug. 17 Arriva made an offer and the next round of stoppages was suspended for workers to vote on it. They rejected it. “We’ve had promises in the past that the bosses reneged on. We want to see something tangible,” Peter Skinner, lead shop steward at Wood Green bus garage, told the *Militant* Aug. 25.

— Dag Tirsén

Barbecue builds support for locked-out Siemens Steelworkers

TROIS-RIVIERES, Quebec — Over 100 Steelworkers and others gathered in front of the Siemens Energy electrical transformer plant here Aug. 28 for a barbecue picnic to support the 105 United Steelworkers Local 8396 members locked out April 15.

“The fight waged by workers in Trois-Rivieres is important in Canada and elsewhere in the world,” Steelworkers International Secretary-Treasurer Myles Sullivan told the crowd. “When workers are attacked in one country, we unite and build solidarity.”

Among those present were Quebec Federation of Labour Secretary General Olivier Carriere and Quebec Steelworkers Director Nicolas Lapierre. Steelworkers Local 6951 Vice President Daniel Martel, representing the 300 Steelworkers on strike at ArcelorMittal’s Contrecoeur West plant, participated.

Steelworkers from the nearby ABI aluminum plant also joined in. They are donating to the Siemens picket fund through weekly membership pay deductions. Picket pay for locked-out workers has risen to 600 Canadian dollars (\$430) a week thanks to such help.

Locked-out workers told the *Militant* the company is going after seniority in job transfers and is pushing to pay overtime only after 40 hours a week, rather than eight hours a day. And they haven’t even started talking about wages! they say. The workers haven’t received a wage hike for 2 1/2 years.

“Morale has never been stronger,” said Alexandre Laplante. “Bonds of friendship have been reinforced on the line. They’re trying to destabilize the union, but we won’t give up.” Show your support! Join the picket lines 24/7 at 3400 rue Bellefeuille, Trois-Rivieres.

— Katy LeRougetel

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

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

September 10, 2001

The following message by Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda was sent to the participants in the World Festival of Youth and Students held in Algeria. Cancel Miranda spent over a quarter-century in U.S. prisons.

Since July 25, 1898, we have been a militarily occupied country, a colony of the U.S. They use our youth as cannon fodder for their imperialist wars. They wanted to use me against the Korean people. I refused to go, so they sent me to jail. In recent days, the people of Vieques voted overwhelmingly to stop the bombing of Vieques and to get the Yankee Navy out now.

I ask you to extend your solidarity with the struggle in Vieques — which is the struggle of all — in whatever form you think necessary. Vieques is where they train the criminal forces that could attack any of your countries at any moment.

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

September 10, 1976

Johannesburg, the main industrial center of South Africa, was shaken by a general strike of tens of thousands of Black workers August 23-25. In the weeks before, more than 170 Black activists were detained without charges. The government also sent large numbers of police and troops into Black areas.

The apartheid regime tried to break the strike by using violent vigilante gangs of Black strikebreakers. The rulers also tried to portray Black workers as having been “intimidated” into striking by radical youths. The apartheid regime has tried to separate different African nationalities from each other so as to increase “tribal” frictions.

The strike was a major step forward for the oppressed Black majority in South Africa. The power of the Black proletariat shown on a South Africa-wide level can be used to overthrow the whole system of apartheid.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

September 10, 1951

The Socialist Workers Party will place a presidential ticket in the field in 1952. The National Committee unanimously recommended Farrell Dobbs as the candidate for President, and Grace Carlson for Vice President. The first step will be the organization of energetic petition campaigns to place the party on the ballot in every possible state.

In a discussion of developments since the outbreak of the Korean war, the National Committee observed the rapidly developing signs of social crisis in this country. The divisions within the ruling class; the uncontrolled inflation; taxes on low incomes and the drive toward an all-out war economy tend to sharpen the class struggle and are producing a growing dissatisfaction and restiveness among the workers.

The SWP stands as the sole spokesmen in this country for true revolutionary socialism.

Black lung spreads in Appalachia

Continued from front page

Virginia is approximately 32.5%, nearly tenfold higher than in the remainder of the country.”

“The new estimated rate for the central Appalachian underground miners is more than a fourfold increase since the prevalence of the disease hit a low point: just 7%, in 1999,” the Kentucky Lantern reported.

The levels of black lung had been largely beaten back by mighty battles waged by coal miners in the 1960s and ’70s. United Mine Workers of America members organized, fought the bosses and transformed their union, using it to win control over safety in the mines, including the power to shut down production when they determined conditions were dangerous.

They also won the establishment of black lung clinics across the coalfields, benefits for affected miners, and federal regulations on mine ventilation and coal dust levels. But over decades, profit-driven bosses have driven the union back, meaning black lung is on the rise again.

In response to the NIOSH report, the UMWA demanded implementation and enforcement of a new federal silica-dust rule first issued in 2024, which mandated halving the level of permissible dust. But it has been derailed by bosses’ court challenges and government inaction.

“Every day federal regulators drag their feet and sit on this rule,” Brian Sanson, UMWA president, told the press Aug. 13, “another working father, mother, husband, wife, sister or brother contracts an incurable, fatal disease. Someone’s life is forever changed.”

The National Mining Association and other boss outfits have challenged the new silica rule, calling it “arbitrary and capricious.”

An association spokesperson told the *New York Times*, “work conditions had improved over the last decade but that the benefits had yet to be reflected in the disease data,” claiming “a 2014 rule that lowered the acceptable amount of airborne dust had reduced dust levels.”

Explosion in black lung cases

But over a decade out from the rule’s implementation, Dr. Scott Laney of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health said he “had been seeing more black lung, not less.” The group’s scientists reported, “Substantial evidence indicates that exposure to the respirable crystalline silica component of coal mine dust plays an important role in contemporary disease patterns, particularly in central Appalachia,” concluding, “inhalation of coal mine dust is the sole cause of coal workers’ pneumoconiosis.”

The UMWA press release said the heart of the crisis is “in central Appalachia’s nonunion mines. Miners there

are forced to cut through razor-thin coal seams locked in rock using massive, high-powered machinery. And without union backing, speaking up about toxic air or broken dust controls usually means risking your job.”

Leaders of the National Black Lung Association and black lung clinic staff also responded to the report. “People that have been involved in it so long like myself are just kind of getting frustrated,” said Dr. Brandon Crum, a pulmonologist in eastern Kentucky. “We’re a decade out and we’ve shown just how bad the problem is and how severe it is, with little to no change in anything that would hopefully help our miners.”

“That’s why we worked so hard to get the silica rule passed, and we did, because we knew this was going to start happening,” Vonda Robinson, vice president of the National Black Lung Association, told the *Militant*.

Robinson and her husband, John, a retired miner with black lung, are featured in a Fault Lines documentary entitled “Black Lung Rising,” and also in a photo documentary, “Living by Coal, Dying for Breath,” put out by the Virginia Center for Investigative Journalism. This documentary is available on YouTube.

In March, Robinson, members of Black Lung Association chapters in Virginia and Dr. Crum joined forces with UMWA leaders, including President Sanson, Secretary-Treasurer Mike Phillippi and Safety Director



March by UMWA coal miners demanding black lung benefits in Charleston, West Virginia, in 1969. They built a powerful movement, won gains in safety, healthcare for all miners, families.

Josh Roberts, in a meeting with Virginia Sen. Mark Warner at the union’s regional office in Castlewood.

“I visited a coal mine and handed out my cards,” Robinson told the meeting. “I asked them, ‘Have you been checked?’ And the first thing they said was, ‘No, I’m scared. I’m afraid I’ll lose my job.’”

She said politicians in Washington today are saying, “‘Dig, baby, dig.’ OK — then let’s make our miners healthy again. Let’s make them safe again. I’m telling you, these miners need to be protected.”

Gary Hairston, president of the Black Lung Association, told the *Militant* the rise of black lung is because the coal operators “are cutting

more rock, more silica,” as they pursue smaller coal seams. “And almost everything is nonunion now.”

“All coal bosses want to do is run coal, fastest way they can,” Hairston said, and they “want workers to wear dust masks, instead of protecting them from the dust.” The UMWA also opposes bosses’ push to substitute personal respirators for necessary mine ventilation controls.

Support of these fights will be on the agenda at the National Black Lung Association annual meeting Sept. 11. Last year’s meeting organized a successful rally a week later at the Department of Labor in Washington with the UMWA and others demanding the new silica dust limits be implemented.

US court upholds ‘Foreign Agents Registration’ law conviction

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

In a blow to constitutional rights, a U.S. Court of Appeals in Florida Aug. 5 upheld the government’s use of the notorious Foreign Agents Registration Act, adopted in 1938 as part of the U.S. rulers’ drive to enter the second imperialist world war. The court confirmed the conviction of African People’s Socialist Party Chairman Omali Yeshitela, African People’s Solidarity Committee Chairwoman Penny Hess, Uhuru Solidarity Movement Chair Jesse Nevel, and Augustus Romain Jr., a leader of the Black Hammer Party.

The defendants had filed the appeal after a lower court decision in 2024 found them not guilty of being unregistered Russian agents, but, in a contradictory ruling, found them guilty of *conspiring* to act as agents of Moscow. In front of a courtroom packed with supporters of the APSP and of free speech, all four were then sentenced to three years probation and 300 hours of community service. They had faced a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

FBI raided APSP offices

Acting under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, FBI agents backed by local police had carried out predawn raids on the offices and homes of leaders and supporters of the African People’s Socialist Party in St. Petersburg, Florida, and St. Louis, July 29, 2022. Armed with automatic weapons, they used battering rams to break down the doors and handcuffed those there at gunpoint, while agents seized laptops, financial records, office equipment and files.

Prosecutors claimed the group’s political activities were being directed by Moscow — since its members openly back Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, met

with Russian political figures, published articles, organized virtual conferences and made public statements in support of Moscow’s political opinions. But the African People’s Socialist Party explained in and out of court that these were their own opinions, protected by the Constitution. Despite this, the appeals court ruled the Foreign Agents Registration Act has been written to be “content neutral,” so the First Amendment doesn’t apply.

The court also ruled that under this act there is “important governmental interest” to regulate a group’s conduct whether what they do “is legal or not.”

And it said the defendants were guilty even if they didn’t know about the registration act. The ruling argues the group could have avoided all of these problems if they had just notified the attorney general about its political activities.

The government’s use of the Foreign Agents Registration Act isn’t new. In addition to being put on the books as part of a crackdown on political and union groups on the eve of World War II, including the Smith “Gag” Act convictions of Socialist Workers Party and Teamster leaders, it spawned additional frame-up laws used in the 1950s. This included the Subversive Activities Control Act, which was used to convict the Communist Party of being “substantially directed, dominated, or controlled” by the Soviet Union, and ordered it to turn over the names of its leaders and members to the government.

Stepped-up use of the Foreign Agents Registration Act was called for in a September 2025 National Security

Presidential Memorandum 7, which projected investigation of any group the government claims promotes “domestic political violence.”

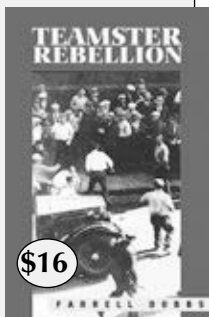
In July, The People’s Forum, Break-Through News and Tricontinental: Institute of Social Research were hit with federal government subpoenas ordering them to turn over financial records and disclose the identity of their contributors. Jason Smith, chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means, accused People’s Forum of “using tax exempt status to spread foreign propaganda while acting as a foreign agent.”

Sen. Bill Cassidy, chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, sent a letter Aug. 13 to the International Association of Machinists, a union with some 600,000 members, demanding information about its links to the Cuban government. According to Fox News, “investigators” are looking at whether participation in events that included Cuban officials, from church meetings to podcasts, amounts to a violation of the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

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



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Join Labor Day actions all across the country!

Unions are organizing marches, rallies and picnics around Sept. 7, an important opportunity to get out the word about and stand in solidarity with union battles across the country.

All out for Labor Day!

To find times, location of actions near you, go to:

www.mobilize.us/aflcio/map/

1963: A turning point in the fight to overthrow Jim Crow

Continued from front page

er protests were acting on the fact that the U.S. rulers would never grant concessions unless massive pressure was put on them.

And their actions were increasingly impacting the Democratic Party administration of President John F. Kennedy and the U.S. ruling class that it served. For decades the Democratic Party was based on a coalition of big city governments, the union officialdom and the racist Dixiecrats in the South.

The Aug. 28 March on Washington drew thousands more in support actions around the country. Several thousand turned out in Charleston, South Carolina, to see off a contingent heading to the march, the Sept. 2, 1963, *Militant* reported. "In '63 we shall be free," one teenager shouted joyously from the train window.

Harold Reape carried a placard on the march that read, "I face life imprisonment in Monroe, N.C., for fighting racism," the *Militant* said. Reape was a defendant in the Monroe "kidnapping case" — an attempt to frame up Robert F. Williams, who led the armed self-defense of the Black community against deadly Klan assaults there.

At the rally, A. Philip Randolph paid tribute to some of the women leaders of the fight. These included Rosa Parks, who helped lead the victorious Montgomery bus boycott and who went on a speaking tour to win support for that fight across the country; Diane Nash, a founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and organizer of battles in Nashville, Tennessee, and across the South; Gloria Richardson, the courageous leader of an ongoing struggle in Cambridge, Maryland; and Daisy Bates, who was at the center of the school desegregation fight in Little Rock, Arkansas. All of these struggles had been reported on TV, radio and in newspapers nationwide.

Lewis: 'We will not wait'

The march organizers were concerned that the program not be too militant. They forced SNCC Chairman John Lewis to tone down his prepared speech after pressure from the archbishop of Washington, the Kennedy White House and others. The *Militant* reprinted the entire uncensored speech.

"We will not wait for the President, the Justice Department, nor Congress, but we will take matters into our own hands," Lewis' uncen-



In August 1963, 250,000 joined March for Jobs and Freedom in Washington, D.C., the largest action ever against Jim Crow. Thousands more rallied in actions across the nation as impact of movement spread and grew.

sored talk said. "We cannot depend on any political party, for both the Democrats and the Republicans have betrayed the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence."

Lewis pointed to SNCC's plan to take the fight to end Jim Crow across the country. The forces of reaction, he planned to say, "won't stop this revolution. The time will come when we will not confine our marching to Washington. We will march through the South, through the Heart of Dixie, the way Sherman did."

The officialdom of the AFL-CIO had shamefully defaulted on its responsibilities to throw the power of the unions behind the protest. It refused to endorse the march, fearing that doing so would weaken the Democratic Party heading into the 1964 presidential election.

The newly formed Freedom Now Party used the march as a launching pad for its candidates. It issued a rousing *Declaration of Washington*, printed on the front page of the Sept. 2 *Militant*. "One hundred years after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, we American Negroes are resolved to end all political dependence upon the political parties upholding segregation and to take our destiny into our own hands," it said.

The *Militant* is an invaluable source of information about the movement to overthrow Jim Crow. Back issues can be read at www.themilitant.com.

Fighting racism in North

The spreading mass movement to desegregate the South was inspiring fights against racism in the North. The Sept. 2, issue of the *Militant* reported on protests in Chicago against city officials' attempts to prevent desegregation of the schools; a fight in Philadelphia against slum landlords in the Black neighborhoods; and a picket by the NAACP in Elizabeth, New Jersey, demanding construction jobs for African Americans.

But in a big majority of the South, especially in most of Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi, racial segregation remained deeply entrenched. Night riders and Ku Klux Klan thugs continued to act with impunity as they carried out violent assaults, embold-

ened by the fact that state and federal authorities looked the other way.

A month before the March on Washington a group of Blacks tried to buy tickets at a whites-only counter at a cinema in Americus, Georgia, where SNCC was organizing a voter registration drive. Cops arrested 15 young women, aged 12-15, holding them for 60 days in squalid conditions with no working toilet or shower. They were forced to sleep on concrete floors with minimal food and water.

After SNCC discovered the girls' location it sent a photographer to the stockade. His pictures, and the outcry that followed their publication, led to the girls' release.

In 2023, Carol Barner Seay, one of the Leesburg Stockade Girls, as they became known, spoke to CNN about the desegregation fight and her incarceration. It "should have made me bitter,"

she said. "But I stand here today to tell you it made me better."

The *Militant* reprinted a special report by SNCC about the fight in Americus in its Sept. 30, 1963, issue. It reported three SNCC field workers had been accused of trying to incite an insurrection, a charge that carried the death penalty in Georgia. They were released when a federal court threw out Georgia's insurrection law after protests and a broader public response to the attack.

New battles to come

In the face of challenges like this, the methods of struggle and leadership needed to break the back of Jim Crow were being widely discussed.

Malcolm X had emerged as a revolutionary working-class leader who was looked to by growing numbers of fighters against Jim Crow. In December 1963 he was suspended from the Nation of Islam, the bourgeois nationalist organization for which he was the most well-known public spokesman.

"They put me out because of my uncompromising approach to problems I thought should be solved," Malcolm later told the *Young Socialist* magazine. "I felt the movement was dragging its feet in many areas. It didn't involve itself" in the fight to end Jim Crow.

"The only way it could function and be meaningful in the community was to take part in the political and economic facets of the Negro struggle," he said.

The fight against Jim Crow was spurring struggles by Blacks for equal rights on the job, and against racist discrimination and violence across the country. Expanding struggles lay ahead, including for the right to vote.



The Aug. 28 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom — It was the biggest civil-rights demonstration the Capital ever saw.



In Wake of Capital March: No Let-Up in Rights Battle

By George Lavan
Where does the Negro people's fight for equality stand now that the March on Washington has passed into history?
The Aug. 28 march, the largest demonstration Washington has ever seen, commanded the attention of the whole world. Between 200,000 and 250,000 people — schoolchildren being installed in the black ghetto to avert the transfer of Negro children to adjacent, white, school districts where there are empty classrooms. Meanwhile, neighborhood Negro leaders announced plans for citywide protest actions against widespread school segregation in the city.
On Sept. 2 Gov. Wallace of Alabama used state troopers to prevent carrying out of taken.

Continued US Aid in Vietnam Refutes 'Freedom Fight' Lie

Front-page coverage of Aug. 28 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in Sept. 9, 1963, *Militant*.

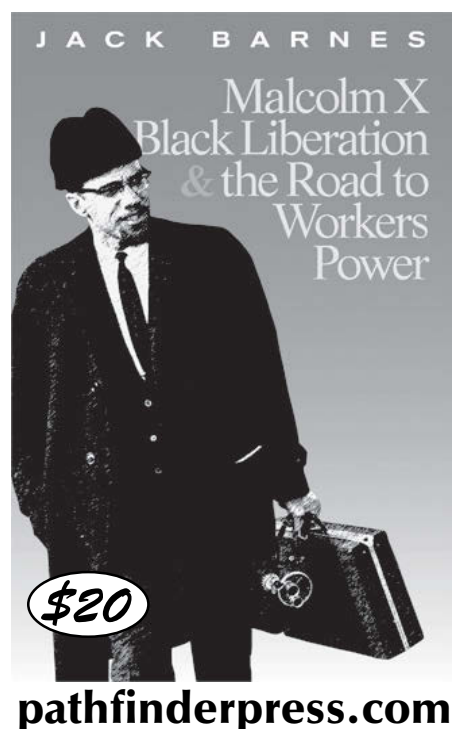
'Militant' sells entire bundle at Washington protest

Members of the Socialist Workers Party from across the country joined the historic 1963 March for Jobs and Freedom in Washington, D.C. They "were pleased because they sold 7,500 copies of the paper," the *Militant* reported after the march. But they were also "frustrated because they could have sold several thousand more if they had them."

Priscilla March, a party member from New York, "decided not to expend her energies selling single copies. Instead she sold 66 introductory subscriptions to the paper."

As the fight to tear down Jim Crow segregation spread, expanding interest in the *Militant* showed just how rapidly political opportunities can open up when working people move into action.

— T.E.



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Tehran fears its working people

Continued from front page
hoods in Tehran, it’s growing in small towns and rural areas, and even at Muslim religious ceremonies.

In the wake of mass anti-government protests in December 2025 and January 2026 — in which the regime massacred more than 7,000 protesters — the rulers accelerated their use of the death penalty. In one recent week at least 32 people were executed.

Weekly hunger strikes against the death penalty, organized by the prisoner-based “No to Execution Tuesdays” group, have now spread to 62 prisons. In a Sept. 1 statement, the group notes that those arrested for joining the protests have been “subjected to injustice without the right to a defense or a fair trial.”

Still the executions are spurring ever more protests. “We oppose all forms of execution, regardless of the charges involved, and consider it incompatible with human dignity, the right to life, and justice,” reads a petition being circulated by the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers’ Trade Unions. As of Sept. 1 more than 850 people had signed.

68 labor actions in 30 days

According to Davtalab, an Iranian Telegram site that reports on labor issues, in the last month alone there were at least 68 labor actions in some 25 cities.

Workers at oil and gas facilities, including offshore platforms, have been holding weekly protests every Monday for six weeks. At Sept. 1 actions they demanded protection for pensions, pay hikes and raising the minimum wage for newly hired workers.

Many protests by hundreds of retirees take up not only demands around pensions and healthcare, but opposition to the imprisonment of trade union activists and the death penalty. The actions are getting larger and bolder, often on busy streets, where they’re seen by tens of thousands.

Nationwide protests by teachers have been announced for Sept. 6 under the slogan “The teacher is not a slave.”

War a lose-lose situation for workers

The regime’s fear of the working class is also reflected in an article published by the government-funded Iranian Labour News Agency Sept. 1. It reports on the worsening conditions confronting workers at the Shahid Rajaei Port outside Bandar Abbas on Iran’s southern coast.

The article notes that because of the U.S. naval blockade, “the enormous cranes that were once symbols of vitality and movement now stood motionless in the distance, like the metallic skeletons of extinct dinosaurs.”

The contractors they worked for “ruthlessly put the blade of layoffs to the throats of thousands of workers,” the article notes. “It is the workers who pay for the cost of this historic shutdown with their empty dinner tables.”

Yaser, who worked for a customs clearance company, told the news agency “the company neither officially dismisses us,” blocking workers from receiving severance pay, “nor gives us an official ‘no longer needed’ letter” that would allow them to apply for unemployment.

“The war is a lose-lose situation for us workers,” Rahim, a longtime port worker, said. Those that are still

working, moving more than 135,000 containers that were at the port before the blockade began, are getting only “70% of last year’s wages” despite skyrocketing inflation, Rahim said. “They say it’s wartime and the company has no income.”

The boss “simply calls and says ‘don’t come tomorrow,’” said Saeed, another customs worker. Meanwhile, the boss “drives his Porsche around Tehran.”

For Afghan immigrants as well as workers from the oppressed Baloch nationality, conditions are worse. Thousands of Baloch, born and raised in Iran, are denied ID cards by the government. Nemat, a 24-year-old Afghan worker, told ILNA how they are given the hardest, lowest paid jobs, working 14 hours a day “without masks, without gloves.” Despite the intense heat, “we even have to buy our own ice water.”

With the layoffs and inflation, “we the working families are the ones paying the price of sanctions and the blockade,” Aminah, the wife of a laid-off worker, said.

“Thousands of exhausted men” are “waiting for the day when these great gates will set aside a fairer share for their calloused hands.” The point of the article was to warn the regime that instead of “waiting,” more workers may be preparing to join together to fight for what they need.

Rival wings of the regime

Public disputes among rival wings of the reactionary regime over what to do in the face of U.S. imperialism’s sanctions, blockade and intermittent military attacks have increased. Some



Council for Organizing Protests of Third Party Oil Workers

Oil workers demanding lifting of salary cap, raising of wages for newly hired workers, protection of pensions at weekly protest in oil fields in Asaluyeh, Iran, Aug. 18. “We will not rest until injustice and discrimination are eliminated,” one of the handwritten signs says.

officials are calling for negotiations while others call for new military offensives against U.S. allies and bases.

Whatever their differences, the main factions are all committed to the longer-term goal of the destruction of Israel as a refuge for Jews.

“Every kind of false dichotomy — such as war versus negotiation, consensus versus extremism, or compromise versus warmongering,” Khamenei claimed, “weakens” the country. Talking about the economic crisis and other problems only aids the “American-Zionist enemy,” he said.

The regime has suffered significant blows to its military, industrial and economic capacity, despite its bluster about having “defeated” U.S. imperialism in the 40-day war.

But President Donald Trump’s administration has been unable to win

what it anticipated would be a quick victory, forcing Tehran to put off its goal of acquiring nuclear weapons and form a working relationship with Washington. The U.S. rulers seek to increase their plunder of the resources of the region and push back their rivals, especially Beijing. Though greatly weakened, Tehran is still able to threaten ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, a key choke point for world trade.

With no clear end to the on-again, off-again U.S. airstrikes and negotiations, other capitalist regimes in the region are jockeying to advance their own rival interests.

The governments of Turkey, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia recently formed the “Mecca Defense Alliance,” which they say will allow for joint use of their militaries and “efforts to combat terrorism.”

As Moscow targets Ukraine workers, toilers there stand tall

Continued from front page

Vladimir Putin still hopes to wear down Ukraine using Russia’s larger population and vastly greater resources. Moscow’s airstrikes have killed hundreds of Ukrainian civilians in recent months. A jet-powered drone struck an ammunition depot that shouldn’t have been in a Kyiv suburb Aug. 28, killing 38 people.

Moscow has also targeted printing presses and publishing houses across Ukraine, destroying 12 million books and damaging the record of Ukrainian history and culture. A million textbooks were demolished just before the Sept. 1 start of the school year. Over the past two months, one-third of all the books printed in Ukraine this year have been lost to airstrikes.

“I believe it is deliberate on the part of the Russian Federation,” Viktoria Haidai, commercial director of Konvi publishers, one of the firms hit, told the BBC Aug. 31. Its forces are “destroying printing houses in an attempt to erase Ukraine as a nation,” she said. “But frankly they will not succeed.”

Moscow is adding Chinese-made turbojet engines to its Iranian-model drones, making them faster and more lethal. During four days at the end of August, 1,500 long-range drones were launched against Ukrainian cities.

Ukraine is moving to develop its own more advanced interceptor drones to try to shield its cities. Now its front line is protected by swarms of drones causing heavy casualties among the invading forces. Moscow is now losing 6,000 more troops a month than it can replace through re-

cruitment. Yet the Russian army has only made tiny advances in the eastern Donbas region this year, while losing ground to Ukrainian counterattacks in the country’s south.

Ukraine is rapidly improving the range, speed and lethality of its long-distance drones, bringing more of Russia’s vast territory within reach. A Ukrainian drone strike Aug. 26 caused a massive fire at one of Russia’s largest oil refineries 280 miles east of Moscow. Recent widespread strikes on Russia’s refineries have caused a significant fuel crisis.

Russian miners strike over wages

The capitalist rulers in Russia face an economic contraction and sullen resistance by working people.

More than 1,700 miners at the Severny Kuzbass company went on strike to demand nearly a year of unpaid wages. “We are not asking for charity; we are demanding what we earned through hard mining labor,” striking coal miners in the Kemerovo region of Siberia said in a video appeal to the Russian State Duma.

The mining industry across the region, which produces about half of the country’s coal, is in crisis. Four-fifths of the enterprises are operating at a loss and 18 have already closed. Coal production has fallen to 2011 levels. Instead of paying the miners, Severny Kuzbass used the wages fund to pay off debts and issue bonuses to its bosses.

Andrei Klepach, chief economist at the Russian state-owned development bank VEB, was dismissed Aug. 16 for criticizing the way the continuing

war in Ukraine is weakening Russia’s capitalist economy.

“We are losing the global race, both technologically and economically,” he said, referring to intensifying rivalry among capitalist powers. “We aren’t just losing to China and the U.S.” but could also lose “the competitive race in this war of attrition” with Ukraine.

“A social crisis could erupt at a time when no one is really expecting it,” Klepach warned, noting that in 1917 “no one expected the February Revolution either.”

Some among Russia’s capitalist rulers backed Klepach’s views. “We constantly hear talk about the need to mobilize the entire economy ... toward the war effort,” Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said. “But if there is no civilian economy ... then we won’t achieve success in the war either.”

Russia’s Supreme Court Aug. 17 approved the disqualification of the liberal bourgeois opposition party Yabloko from September’s parliamentary elections. The Kremlin doesn’t want there to be any way for working people to register their opposition to the war at the ballot box.

The same day, a Russian court sentenced Yabloko deputy leader Lev Shlosberg to 11 years and one month in prison after he was convicted on the frame-up charge of “discrediting the use of the armed forces.”

Shlosberg used his closing statement at the trial to call for an immediate ceasefire with Ukraine and to condemn the Putin regime’s assaults on free speech and targeting of political opponents.

Minneapolis meeting raises funds to send medical supplies to Cuba

BY KEVIN DWIRE

MINNEAPOLIS — Some 150 people attended a political meeting and showing of “Cuba After Castro” at the Main Cinema here Aug. 26. The film, made by Abby Martin and Matthew Belen, is an interview with Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel, who describes the escalating 67-year campaign by the U.S. government to overthrow the Cuban Revolution. It also highlights how Cuban working people are collaborating to deal with this every day.

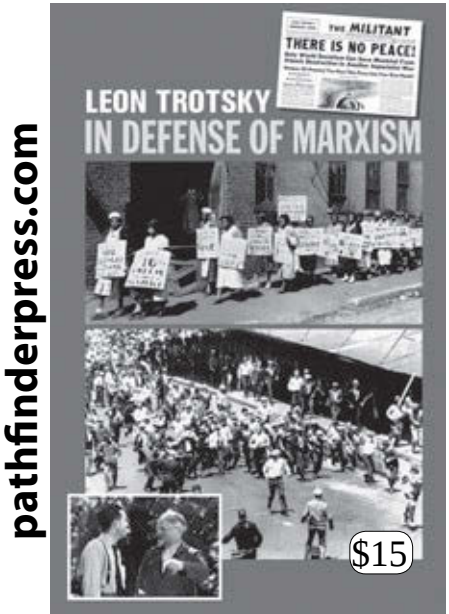
The film showing was sponsored by the Minnesota Cuba Committee, Solidarity Committee on the Americas,

Witness for Peace, Veterans for Peace, May Day Books, Doctors for Humanity and the MSP Film Society. It raised donations for the Global Health Partners Neonatal and Maternal Healthcare Initiative to send medical supplies to Cuba, with the Minnesota Cuba Committee matching each donation \$2 for \$1. An estimated \$5,000 was raised for the GHP initiative.

Martin told the crowd via Zoom that the film was made before the recent U.S. oil blockade and other sanctions that have led to continual blackouts, food shortages and a decline in medical care due to lack of medicines, supplies and electricity.

Bruce Nestor and Susana DeLeón from the National Lawyers Guild, Minnesota chapter, spoke about their experiences at the recent international symposium “Fidel: Legacy and Future” in Havana, which featured Fidel Castro’s historic contributions to Cuba’s socialist revolution.

A display of books on the Cuban Revolution published by Pathfinder Press drew a lot of interest after the film. Almost a dozen books were sold, including several copies of *Cuba and the Independence War in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde: The Fall of the Last Colonial Empire in Africa* by Cuban revolutionary leader Victor Dreke. Half the proceeds from book sales were donated to the GHP initiative.



San Francisco hotel workers strike for new contract, wage increase

BY JEFF POWERS

SAN FRANCISCO — Fifteen spirited pickets from UNITE HERE Local 2 chanted and banged on pots Aug. 16 outside Hotel Spero here, concluding a five-day strike. The workers have been without a contract for four years.

In March the hotel management, without negotiating with the union, arbitrarily cut paid-time-off days from 15 a year to six. And workers discovered they had lost all the PTO of over 40 hours that they had accrued.

Spero is a relatively small 236-room boutique hotel, with worse wages and conditions than larger nearby hotels, like the Hilton San Francisco Union Square, Marriott Marquis and Grand Hyatt. Workers at those hotels car-

ried out a hard-fought 93-day strike in 2024 and succeeded in keeping their medical benefits and raising wages to over \$30 an hour.

“Workers at the Spero are paid \$21 an hour,” José Lara, a Local 2 member from the Hotel G a few blocks up the street, told the *Militant* on the Spero picket line. “You can hardly afford to live in the Bay Area on those wages.”

“Family-owned corporations are a thing of the past,” he added. “All the hotels are owned by hedge funds. They just squeeze workers by taking away a little more each time.”

“We need more solidarity here,” Lara said. “Other hotels are watching. This is a challenge and we don’t want to lose. Next time they’ll try to take away our medical benefits.”



Members of UNITE HERE Local 2 picket outside Hotel Spero in San Francisco Aug. 16, part of five-day strike for wage increases and to protest bosses slashing their paid days off.

Support won for Cuba at NY Grenada Day Festival



Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

NEW YORK — Pathfinder Press has participated in the annual Grenada Day Festival, held in Brooklyn, since 2014. Inspired by news of the recent “Grateful Grenada Gives Back to Cuba” fundraising campaign on the island, volunteers at this year’s Pathfinder booth Aug. 23 distributed Global Health Partners flyers and raised funds for its “Neonatal and Maternal Healthcare Initiative” for Cuba.

We introduced everyone who visited the table to the campaign and asked if they’d like to contribute. Taking a cue from the Grenada Trades’ Union Council that passed around “beautifully decorated boxes” to collect donations across the country, an embellished jar was given pride of place on our front table. By the end of the day, the jar was stuffed and \$410 had been raised.

Not one passerby said they supported Washington’s brutal economic blockade of Cuba. A number told us they’d studied medicine or dentistry in Cuba.

“Cuba was always there for Grenada,” said Shirelynn George. “They provided doctors, gave people back their eyesight. They built the airport and then, when the Americans attacked, they were the ones who put up a fight. For me to be able to help Cuba is really an act of love.”

Many donors expressed anger over what they’ve seen on the news about the dire economic situation in Cuba today. “Cuba gave us solidarity, we have a duty as Grenadians to show them that same solidarity,” said one woman who stuffed a \$20 bill into the jar.

The “Gives Back” campaign in Grenada raised close to \$250,000 for Cuba, punching above its weight when you consider Grenada’s population is just 117,000!

These efforts, great and small, are part of broad solidarity work with the Cuban people to help mitigate the humanitarian crisis brought on by six decades of U.S. sanctions and the more recent oil blockade of the island. If you’d like to take up a collection in your area, contact Global Health Partners at ghpartners.org.

— TAMAR ROSENFELD

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!

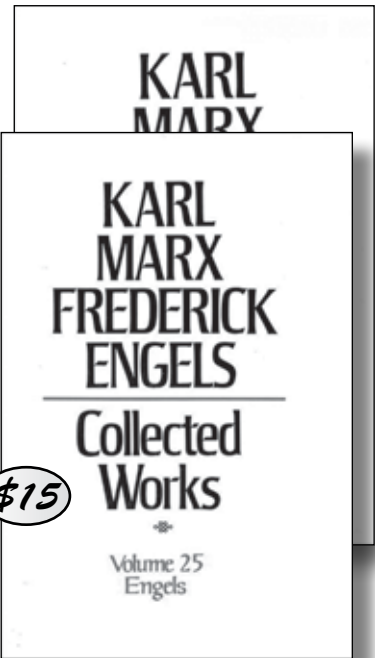
This is a unique opportunity for anyone looking to fill out their set or to purchase the writings for the first time. Many of these volumes were rescued in Russia shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 when they were going to be pulped. They remain in good shape today.

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 at left.

— Norton Sandler



Cuba defends its revolution

Continued from front page
working people into submission. They want to overthrow Cuba's socialist revolution and erase its longstanding example for millions around the world. That's the goal they have pursued for more than six decades under Democratic and Republican administrations alike.

Reporter's Notebook from Havana

Here are a few examples of what we learned.

Challenge of U.S. oil blockade

We spoke with Carlos Muñiz, who we had interviewed on a reporting trip six months earlier. At that time, the self-employed welder, along with his wife, Magela Elepán, both strong supporters of the revolution, told us the prolonged blackouts and other economic hardships had worsened since Washington's Jan. 3 assault on Venezuela and its near-complete blockade of oil shipments to the island.

After Jan. 3, thousands of outraged Cubans mobilized to condemn the U.S. attack on Venezuela's sovereignty and stepped-up military threats against Cuba itself. Many, Elepán included, volunteered for arms training exercises across the island. Today, weekly "Days of Defense" training exercises continue to be held, rotating through different areas of the country.

But the cumulative impact of the U.S. blockade on oil and other necessities weighs even greater than it did in February, Muñiz said. "Our focus is overwhelmingly the challenges of everyday life. The uncertainty — not knowing what tomorrow holds for us."

Blackouts of more than 20 hours a day are the norm, Muñiz said. The alumbrones — or "lights-on," as Cubans call the unpredictable moments when power returns, sometimes in the middle of the night — are when families move into action to charge electrical devices and use appliances for daily chores. Households buy food items that won't quickly spoil from lack of refrigeration. And the blackouts also lead to irregular running water.

Vegetables, fruits, eggs and other basic food items are available in private stores, but inflation ravages the living standards of the majority. The fuel shortages increase the cost of transporting produce from the countryside, while working people often get hit by price-gouging, especially in the privately owned street stands and stores where most Cubans buy their food.

In addition, most wages and pensions

in Cuba are deposited directly in banks. When people attempt to withdraw their funds, a cash shortage "leads to unending lines," Muñiz said.

"These days it's not possible for me to live as a welder," he told us, given the lack of reliable electricity. So Muñiz finds odd jobs from home maintenance to taxi work. Elepán is working two office jobs plus cleaning houses and apartments. Muñiz, a Communist Party member, said he has seldom made local party meetings in recent weeks.

You feel the U.S. blockade personally, Muñiz said. "But we know it's the country as a whole — the lack of fuel and essential imports. Hospitals face an uphill battle in treating kids with cancer, or people on dialysis. Elderly people are dying unnecessarily. Infant mortality is on the rise.

"So we continue to resist with dignity. We reinvent ourselves every day, determined to defend our sovereignty and independence. The solidarity from friends abroad is a big boost to the Cuban people."

Protecting the most vulnerable

In face of this crisis, the Cuban government has taken measures to give priority to the most vulnerable in society, and thousands of working people have pitched in to make a difference.

Karina González, president of the National Association of the Blind (ANCI) for Havana province, welcomed us into her living room to talk one afternoon. She explained that ANCI members are proud of their long record of integrating the blind into all areas of society — one of the gains of Cuba's socialist revolution. But the fuel shortage has sharply limited their mobility, "so we've organized more activities in local communities."

That week Cubans nationwide were celebrating the centennial of revolutionary leader Fidel Castro's birth. In the neighborhood of San Miguel del Padrón, González said, "ANCI is holding an all-night block party with music and a traditional caldosa," a communal pot of stew where everyone contributes some ingredient.

"And despite today's conditions, we're still producing audiobooks for the visually impaired. It's what Fidel taught us, 'Never stop!'" This year, she noted proudly, ANCI once again organized a booth at the Havana International Book Fair, although the festival itself was substantially scaled down.

Sonia Fernández, a special education teacher, traveled a long distance by electric tricycle from her home in the working-class district of Marianao to talk to



Militant/Martin Koppel
Special education teacher Sonia Fernández from Marianao discusses effect of lack of transportation caused by US rulers' oil blockade of Cuba with *Militant* correspondent Jonathan Silberman.

us about some of her experiences.

"Many kids in the special school for blind children where I work in Marianao can no longer get there because there is no transportation," she told us. "We had no choice but to integrate them into general schools near where they live. That upset some parents, concerned that the kids are not getting the attention they need."

Fernández is one of the specialized teachers who now go to the general schools to work together with staff and pupils to help integrate the visually impaired children. "Yes, it's more difficult. But we have worked to convince

centers across the island as a result of Washington's barbaric efforts to deprive Cubans of fuel and other basic necessities. Blackouts wreak havoc on the ability to perform surgeries. Basic medicine and medical supplies are extremely scarce.

The surgeon described health workers' creative approach to the lack of resources, including the use of cellphones as a source of light while performing surgery during blackouts. "We lack a certain polyester thread for post-surgery sutures, so we now use a finer thread we fold over five times to meet the required



Ana Martha Panadés/Escambray
Workers install solar panels at healthcare facilities in Trinidad in March 2026, part of lessening impact of fuel shortages caused by U.S. rulers' escalation of economic war against Cuba.

the parents that we have to adapt and it's possible. And eventually the children are going to have to learn how to function in broader society.

She described the painstaking efforts by teachers, including herself, to convince the sighted students to be more conscious about making their blind classmates feel welcome, and to increase the self-confidence of the visually impaired youth themselves. Everyone, students and staff alike, Fernández noted, was surprised at the progress they have made through these efforts.

Healthcare vs. U.S.-imposed scarcity

We learned of many other examples of social solidarity under such adverse conditions, on a scale possible only in a country where a socialist revolution was made. A surgeon at the Calixto García hospital in Havana told us what healthcare personnel and patients face at medical

strength," she said.

The government is providing special buses free of charge to maximize the ability of healthcare workers to get to major medical centers. But those efforts are limited by the shortages.

In Havana and cities across Cuba, countless doctors, nurses, and health workers, determined to take care of their patients, walk long distances in hot weather, sometimes combined with taking electric tricycles, to get to and from work.

The surgeon we spoke with has received offers to practice in other countries, she told us. "They tell me, 'You could be a millionaire in the U.S.' Well, maybe. But my patients are here, and this is where I stay."

In a future issue, the Reporter's Notebook from Havana will take up efforts by working people to use solar power to help meet transportation needs, collect garbage in local communities and other initiatives.

Read more on the example of the Cuban Revolution

pathfinderpress.com

US hands off Cuba! End blockade! Defend constitutional rights!

Continued from front page

attack on constitutional freedoms here at home. They're attacking groups who speak out in defense of Cuba, threatening them with intrusive probes and prosecution. They're especially targeting unions like the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers that have joined in actions to defend Cuba.

EDITORIAL

Workers and farmers in Cuba refuse to bow down. They're fighting not only to survive, but insist on living with dignity and ensuring the most vulnerable don't go without.

That is only possible because they made a socialist revolution, overturning dog-eat-dog capitalist exploitation and transforming themselves as they joined together to change their conditions of life and work.

They offered solidarity — arms in hand — to people fighting for independence, from Guinea-Bissau, Angola and South Africa to Bolivia and Vietnam.

The response of working people in Cuba to the brutal impact of Washington's offensive today is captured in the "Reporter's Notebook from Havana" starting on the front page of this issue.

For more than six decades the U.S. propertied rulers have tried to wipe out the powerful example set by the first socialist revolution in the Americas for the exploited and oppressed in the U.S. and the world over.

We need to step up our efforts to build more and larger protests against Washington's war on Cuba. And we should help aid programs like the Global Health Partners Neonatal and Maternal Healthcare Initiative get needed medical supplies to Cubans.

The U.S. ruling class that is leading the brutal assault on the Cuban people is the same class driving to put the brunt of today's capitalist crisis onto the backs of workers in the U.S. It's attacking our wages, slashing jobs and targeting groups of undocumented workers for deportation. Like its attacks on Cuba, the profit-driven offensive here is being met with resistance by workers and our unions.

The rulers' moves are bipartisan, under Democrats or Republicans alike. Both parties govern for the tiny handful of capitalist bosses and bankers seeking to defend their class rule. The foreign policy of the U.S. government is simply an extension of the capitalists' assaults on workers at home.

The rulers try to turn workers here against toilers in Cuba, but their slan-

ders have little effect. Without a shred of evidence, Secretary of State Marco Rubio has made outlandish claims that the Cuban government is "exporting Marxism, racial resentment and Communist violence across the world."

Among Cubans sanctioned by Washington is the leadership of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples — an organization "that for over six decades has promoted friendship, international solidarity and peace — the exact opposite of what the secretary of state has always championed," Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez has explained.

Side by side with mounting aggression abroad, the State Department is targeting organizations in the U.S. that defend Cuba, providing a hit list in its report, "Cuba: The Capital of 21st Century Communism."

The government is also demanding The People's Forum, BreakThrough News, and Tricontinental: Institute of Social Research turn over their financial records and lists of contributors, claiming they are "foreign agents."

These attacks are a blow to free speech and association — rights all working people have a vital interest in defending.

The U.S. imperialists' assaults on Cuba are part and parcel of their broader

moves to prepare for new and bloodier wars on the horizon. Capitalist rulers worldwide are doing the same amid today's sharpening competition for markets, resources and labor to exploit. They're moving fast to rearm and prepare for more wars. The U.S. rulers increasingly act as if the world is simply theirs to take, from Venezuela to Greenland, Cuba and the Strait of Hormuz.

The fact is, far from being a danger to U.S. workers, Cuba's socialist revolution is an example we can learn from to use in our class struggle. It's crucial we get out the truth about what the Cuban Revolution has accomplished and how it shows what working people in power can do.

A key part of this is expanding the readership of the *Militant* and circulation of books by the revolution's leaders. *Cuba and the Independence War in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde: The Fall of the Last Colonial Empire in Africa* by Víctor Dreke is a wonderful example. It's a firsthand account of the international solidarity extended by working people in Cuba to the historic independence struggle there that also helped bring down the fascist regime in Portugal.

Join us in this battle — a battle with serious consequences for working people everywhere.

Minn. forum discusses gov't spy probe against unions, immigrant rights supporters

BY HELEN MEYERS

MINNEAPOLIS — Kevin Dwire, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Minnesota, told participants in a well-attended Militant Labor Forum here Aug. 22 that working people and the unions need to speak out in protest against recent revelations of a far-reaching government spy operation, investigation and indictments.

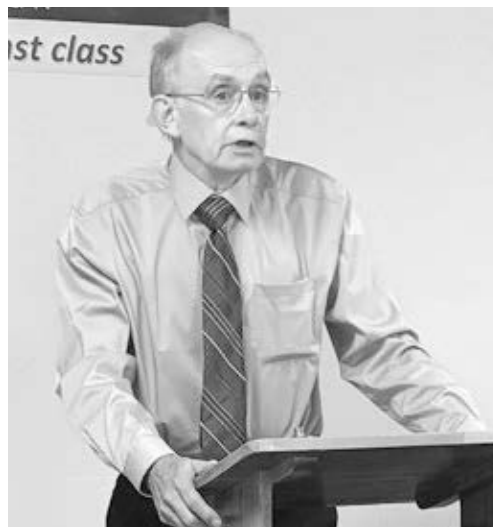
The headline in the Aug. 13 *Minnesota Star Tribune* read, "Federal agents surveilled Minnesota unions in hunt for Antifa conspiracy case." It detailed how Department of Homeland Security agents had targeted unions and other participants in protests against U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's so-called Metro Surge raids, arrests and deportations of immigrants.

This assault on the constitutional right to free speech and association must be answered and fought, Dwire said. He pointed to the fact the government is carrying out a similar spy and slander operation against those who protest against the U.S. rulers' stepped-up economic and political war against Cuba. Fox News reports federal agents are considering charging defenders of Cuban sovereignty with violating the notorious Foreign Agents Registration Act.

Among the unions targeted by the federal spy operation — code-named Operation Puppet Master — are the Minnesota AFL-CIO, the Minneapolis Federation of Educators, and local chapters of the Communications Workers of America, Service Employees International Union and others.

The SWP calls on unionists and defenders of political rights to join together to speak out against this attack, regardless of their political views on other questions.

The unions here had played a key role in mobilizing thousands in well-mar-



Kevin Dwire, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate.

shaled street actions that helped wind down the ICE raids and arrests.

Undercover government agents had posed as activists, spied on and recorded meetings at the United Labor Centre building in Minneapolis, in Loring Park, at the Augsburg Park Library and in a number of churches, the Minnesota Reformer reported.

Agents collected the license plate numbers of attendees at a meeting of anti-ICE protesters at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Roseville, later pulling up their names. The agents then compiled a growing dossier, including attendees' names, photos, addresses, vehicle registrations and job information on their families.

Kevin Riach, lead defense attorney for one of the 15 indicted, told the media about government documents he has reviewed. They show that an undercover agent attended a meeting of the environmental group Sunrise Movement and learned it focused on "peaceful" protests. So he offered his construction skills to build items for use in more "direct action" protests.

The Department of Justice produced

a 94-page indictment claiming that 15 anti-ICE protesters and some Minnesota unions and other organizations were part of an antifa conspiracy to finance domestic terrorism.

As part of its grand jury presentation, the Justice Department displayed a diagram arguing that major labor unions were connected to the "the Conspiracy" at the core of the case.

Stepped-up attacks on area unions

Homeland Security is now demanding financial records from the Minnesota AFL-CIO, the Minneapolis Federation of Educators, Minnesota Association of Professional Employees and the SEIU. "The Minnesota AFL-CIO and several of our affiliated unions are being targeted simply because our state's Labor Movement stood in solidarity with our immigrant union members and neighbors," Minnesota AFL-CIO President Bernie Burnham told the press.

The 15 opponents of the government's assault on immigrants here who have been indicted are charged with federal crimes, including conspiracy to impede a federal officer, multiple counts of interstate stalking, interstate threats, solicitation to commit a crime of violence, assault on a federal officer, destruction of government property and committing acts of violence against ICE personnel. They are fighting the charges.

"The Department of Justice is attempting to criminalize people's civic engagement and silence those who spoke out during Operation Metro Surge. Activists, constitutional observers and union members are being targeted through federal indictments," the Minnesota Nurses Association Board of Directors said in a statement June 17, the day after the indictments were issued.

Kia Lor, a Hmong immigrant from

Laos who runs a tea and herb stand in the Hmong Village complex in St. Paul, joined Dwire on the platform. Her son, 48-year-old Xue, has a computer repair shop next to her herb stand. He was arrested by ICE last December and is still being held in an ICE detention center in southern Minnesota. He is threatened with deportation to Laos, a country he left as an infant.

Lor explained that after the Vietnam War, she and other Hmong women, whose fathers and husbands had fought alongside U.S. forces, fled retaliation from Pathet Lao soldiers. She swam across the Mekong River at age 14 with baby Xue on her back, ending up in a Thai refugee camp. Then she was able to relocate to Minnesota in the 1980s and gain refugee status.

Lor is one of a number of small vendors in the community who, like many in the area, have had their livelihoods upended by the ICE operation.

"The U.S. rulers' campaign against immigrant workers takes place amid today's deepening world economic crises and the intensifying competition between imperialist and other capitalist powers it breeds," Dwire said. "It pushes them to drive down the wages and working conditions of toilers here, to pit native-born and immigrant workers against each other, seeking to create a pariah layer of superexploited workers. The mass actions against Operation Metro Surge helped unify workers, setting an important example."

Dwire said his campaign calls for a union-led fight to win amnesty for all immigrants in the U.S. to help unite the working class. And he pledged his campaign would help expose and fight against the government's attacks on constitutional freedoms workers need.

A \$225 collection was taken to help with legal expenses of Xue Lor.

Women’s liberation intertwined with working-class fight for power

Feminism and the Marxist Movement by Mary-Alice Waters is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for September. Marxists have always explained that the economic roots of women’s oppression are an integral part of the workings of capitalism. Only the overthrow of boss rule by the working class can lead to the transformation of the entire social system required to achieve full equality for women. The excerpt below is from the section on “Lenin’s views on female emancipation.” Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS
Clara Zetkin’s book, *Recollections of Lenin* ... is based on two meetings with Lenin in Moscow in 1920. These were preliminary discussions, part of the process of drafting the resolution on work among women for the Third Congress of the Comintern in 1921.

First, Lenin urged that the document should stress “the unbreakable connection between woman’s human and social position and the private ownership of the means of production.” To change the age-old conditions that subjugate women within the family, communists should seek to link the women’s movement with “the proletarian class struggle and the revolution.” ...



Literacy class for women in the Soviet Union in 1920s, in early years of the Russian Revolution. The Bolsheviks mobilized working class to win universal literacy, advancing women’s equality.

“We derive our organizational ideas from our ideological conceptions,” he told Zetkin. “We want no separate organizations of communist women! She who is a Communist belongs as a member to the Party, just as he who is a Communist. They have the same rights and duties.”

“However,” he continued, “we must not shut our eyes to the facts. The Party must have organs — working groups, commissions, committees, sections or whatever else they may be called — with the specific purpose of rousing the broad masses of women.”...

Zetkin commented that many party members had been denouncing her for making similar proposals on the basis that such ideas were a return to Social Democratic traditions, and that “since the Communist Parties gave equality to women they should, consequently, carry on work without differentiation among all the working people in general.”

“How,” Lenin asked Zetkin, “do such guardians of the ‘purity of principles’ cope with the historical necessities of our revolutionary policy? All their talk collapses in the face of the inexorable necessities.”

“Why are there nowhere as many women in the Party as men,” he demanded, “not even in Soviet Russia? Why is the number of women in the trade unions so small?” In sharp terms he defended the need to put forward

special demands for the benefit of all women, of working women and peasant women, and even women of the propertied classes who also suffer under bourgeois society.

Finally, Lenin was sharply critical of the national sections of the Comintern for not doing as much as they should. “They adopt a passive, wait-and-see attitude when it comes to creating a mass movement of working women under communist leadership.” He attributed the weakness of women’s work in the International to the persistence of male chauvinist ideas which led to an underestimation of the vital importance of building a mass women’s movement. For this reason he thought the resolution for the Third World Congress of the Comintern was especially important. ...

Zetkin’s second discussion with Lenin conveys an even richer idea of how he (and Zetkin) approached the problem of winning the masses of women on a world scale. It underscored the Bolsheviks’ lack of sectarianism or ultraleftism. Their discussion makes clearer than most formal resolutions exactly how they carried out their work.

Zetkin proposed that the communist women from various countries should take the initiative in calling and organizing an international congress of women to help promote the tremendous new ferment and radicalization of women of all classes and sections of society

in the post-World War I period. She suggested that they contact “the leaders of the organized female workers in each country, the proletarian political women’s movement, bourgeois women’s organizations of every trend and description, and finally the prominent female physicians, teachers, writers, etc., and to form national nonpartisan preparatory committees.”

The conference, she proposed, should take up questions like the right of women to engage in trades and professions, problems of unemployment, equal pay, labor protection for women, social care for mothers, social measures to relieve housewives, and the status of women in marriage, family legislation, and legal rights. The proposal was based on similar conferences of nonparty working women being organized inside the Soviet Union at that time.

She outlined an international campaign to publicize and build such a conference, and also pointed out how it would be necessary for the communist women themselves to work together in a disciplined fashion in order to bring it off. “Needless to say, all this requires as an essential condition that women Communists work in all the committees and at the congress itself as a firm, solid body and that they act together on a lucid and unshakable plan.”

Lenin’s reaction was one of wholehearted approval. But he questioned whether the Communist fraction at such a congress on an international scale would be strong enough to win the leadership of the delegates, whether the bourgeois and reformist women might not be stronger. Zetkin responded that she thought it was not a great danger because the communist women would have the best program and proposals for action. And even if they did lose, it would be no disaster. Lenin agreed. “Even defeat after a stubborn struggle would be a gain,” he commented.

On further reflection, Lenin pointed out that this congress of women “would foment and increase unrest, uncertainty, contradictions and conflicts in the camp of the bourgeoisie and its reformist friends. ... The congress would add to the division and thereby weaken the forces of the counterrevolution. Every weakening of the enemy is tantamount to a strengthening of our forces.”

September

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Bosses' profits soar, workers suffer

Continued from front page

meet, while for the capitalist class and its upper middle class hangers-on, things have never been better.

In the second quarter this year profits of U.S. companies hit an astonishing \$4.8 trillion per year — 18% of national income — while workers' share fell to 60%, the lowest since the 1950s.

Profits soared for big tech, oil companies and large banks, among others. This is “getting close to as good as it gets,” JP Morgan Chief Executive Jamie Dimon boasted to the *Times*. But this is a world apart from the worsening conditions of life and work confronting the working class. The capitalists make huge profits off the superexploitation of working people, and then use these funds to make even more money through speculating on stocks, hedge funds, derivatives and other forms of paper money.

For the second quarter of this year “S&P 500 companies are on track to notch up 47.4 per cent year-on-year earnings,” reports the *Times*, while workers' real wages have been declining.

Among workers employed by the same company from 2021 to 2024, more than 40% saw real wages decline by an average of 9%, a recent University of Chicago study said. Many other workers have been forced to take jobs at lower pay and benefits than they previously had been getting.

This decline — and the bite of inflation — have been key issues in recent strikes and lockouts.

Workers' wages have been stagnant over decades. At the same time, “the decline in labour's share of income has gained pace in the past five years and especially over the past 12 months,” noted the *Financial Times*.

The official unemployment rate was 4.1% in July, a slight drop from the previous month despite the fact the Labor Department said 23,000 jobs were “lost” in July.

Workforce drops by over 1 million

But even more stunning is the fact that the size of the workforce declined by over 1 million people over the past year, with the biggest drop being over the last couple of months.

The labor force participation rate is one of the ways the rulers mask the extent of the unemployment figures, by reducing the number of workers considered part of the workforce. It includes those who hold down a job or who the government says have been looking for work over the past four weeks. It's dropped to 61.4% in July, the lowest since February 2021, during the COVID pandemic. If you exclude the decline in jobs during COVID, the percentage of those who hold jobs is the lowest in 50 years.

Meanwhile, some 1.8 million workers — 25.5% of all those on government unemployment roles in July — have been out of work for at least six months and no longer considered part of the workforce.

More young adults live with parents

The capitalists' drive to continually expand their profits at workers' expense impacts working-class households in different ways. Growing numbers of youth who can't afford today's high rent and housing costs can't move

out on their own and raise a family.

Some 49% — almost half — of adults aged 18 to 29 live with their parents or other relatives, while another 47% receive help from someone outside their household to pay their living expenses.

The share of young adults still living with their parents has risen by 12 percentage points since 2019. The report notes that 23% of all those who are renting an apartment had fallen behind on the rent at some point in the past year.

Another sign of the deepening social and moral crisis of capitalism is that 26% of adults did without needed medical care because of rising costs. Those covered by workplace insurance “are expected to spend an average \$5,297 this year on healthcare,” says the *Wall Street Journal*. Much of this is for yearly deductibles, copayments and expenses that insurance companies refuse to cover.

Millions of workers this year dropped out of coverage under the Affordable Care Act, known as Obamacare, after subsidies expired and insurance prices skyrocketed. Suzanne Mercer and her husband Kip dropped their plan because they couldn't afford to pay more than \$4,000 a month for coverage. Instead, like many others, they've just stopped seeing doctors.

“It's awful, you just cross your fingers,” she told the *Journal* after not getting a scan that a doctor ordered after a mammogram turned up a spot. “I just don't want to know right now, because I can't do anything about it.”

This is feeding growing moods in the labor movement for action to protect workers from the twin scourges of rising prices and unemployment, conditions that are continually reproduced by the very workings of the capitalist system itself.

Maryland Teamsters out on strike at Verbal Beginnings

BY JAMES HARRIS

ROCKVILLE, Md. — Nearly 100 striking Teamsters, members of Local 639, and their supporters, held a lively rally outside of Verbal Beginnings here Aug. 27. “Who are we?” shouted one striker, “Teamsters!” the pickets yelled back.

Verbal Beginnings is a privately owned Applied Behavior Analysis treatment facility that specializes in the care of children from ages 1 to 6 on the autism spectrum. The 33 registered behavioral technicians who work there voted overwhelmingly to unionize in 2025. They have been fighting for a contract, along with higher wages, a guaranteed 40-hour workweek and safe working conditions for themselves and the children they serve. Workers told the *Militant* that they don't always get the equipment they need to work with these vulnerable children, like gloves, masks and diapers.

The workers are the first group of behavioral technicians to unionize and strike in the U.S. They're fighting for their first contract at Verbal Beginnings. In the sixth week of their strike, they are winning support in the labor movement and among parents. “I am here to support these guys. This company not only doesn't treat their workers right, they don't treat the children or the parents right either,” Brandon, whose child is

New Jersey rally: 'Back independence for Puerto Rico!'



Militant/Terry Evans

JERSEY CITY, N.J. — A lively march and rally demanding independence for Puerto Rico drew some 60 people to City Hall here Aug. 29.

“Puerto Rico has been occupied illegally by the U.S. for 128 years,” Jason Cruz, president of Victory in Puerto Rico, the group that organized the action, told participants. “Independence is the only way to stop the atrocities our people face.”

He described the devastating impact of persistent water shortages and school closures, explaining they were a result of the actions of the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico, appointed 10 years ago and charged with controlling all government spending there. The board — widely known in Puerto Rico as the Junta — prioritizes debt payments to Washington over meeting the needs of the people.

“The U.S. has used Puerto Rico as a staging ground for its aggression across Latin America and the Caribbean for decades,” Craig Honts, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress, told the rally, above.

He pointed to Washington's escalating attacks on Cuba today. “The fight for independence for Puerto Rico, to defend Cuba's sovereignty and its socialist revolution, and to advance the interests of working people here in the U.S. are tied together,” he said.

Viannca Vélez, a Jersey City resident of Puerto Rican descent, pointed to powerful struggles on the island over the last three decades. “It was our people who fought in 1999 to get the U.S. military out of the island of Vieques. In 2010 students fought to stop the doubling of tuition fees. People's actions forced out Gov. Ricardo Rosselló in 2019. Millions survived the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria because they came together and helped each other.

“We need to organize Puerto Ricans to get the U.S. boot off our necks,” she said.

—TERRY EVANS

enrolled at the facility, told the rally.

Fighting for something bigger than themselves has changed these workers. Collin Johnson, a leader of the strike, said, “First and foremost we are fighting for the well-being of the kids we work with. Every one of us cares deeply about the work we do, and we just want to be compensated and respected to be able to serve our community to the best of our abilities.” Johnson thanked the Metropolitan Washington AFL-CIO and its affiliates for coming to the picket line.

Brittany Bucksell, 20, another union leader, spoke at the 2026 Teamsters Women's Conference, held in Washington Aug. 23-26. “I can't say it hasn't been nerve-racking. No amount of ‘research’ could have prepared me for the first day” on strike, she said. “But we came with a passion and it's been nothing but passion on the picket line for six weeks.”

“These workers show up for vulnerable children in one of the country's most expensive counties,” William Davis, president of Local 639, told the media. “And they deserve a contract that recognizes their dedication, skill and sacrifice.”

Participants at the protest included members of the Montgomery County Education Association; Metropolitan Washington AFL-CIO; UNITE HERE Locals 23 and 25; American

Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 709; the DC Labor Chorus; and members of the Sheet Metal Workers union.

Workers from Compass Behavioral Group in Richmond, Virginia, another ABA facility, sent greetings. They have followed the example of the workers in Rockville and organized and won a union. Spirits at the rally were high.



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