SWP drive expands reach of ‘Militant,’ books, fund

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

As the Socialist Workers Party drive to expand the readership of the Militant and books by revolutionary leaders of the working class enters its final week, party members are finding interest in the need to build a working-class movement independent of the capitalist two-party system.

The paper’s coverage of the recently concluded Canadian National Railway strike by Teamsters, and the ongoing copper workers battle against Asarco’s union-busting drive in Arizona and Texas point to the impact of working-class solidarity in advancing struggles that are in the interests of all workers. And the protests shaking capitalist regimes from Colombia, Chile and Ecuador to Iraq, Lebanon and Iran today pose questions about forging the leadership working people need — questions that are addressed in books by revolutionary leaders Continued on page 3

COPPER STRIKERS CHALLENGE ASARCO UNION-BUSTING

Protests in Chile demand end to attacks by gov’t, capitalist rulers

BY SETH GALINSKY

Pro-business pundits used to call Chile the “Latin American tiger,” which they attributed to its rulers’ embrace of the capitalist free market, “fiscal responsibility” and openness to imperialist penetration. Eduardo Frei, president in much of the 1990s, even privatized the delivery of drinking water.

But the myth of the Chilean “miracle” has been shattered by mass protests that began Oct. 15. The economy contracted 3.4% in October, Reuters reported Dec. 2, the biggest drop since the worldwide financial crisis in 2008.

High school students were first to take to the streets, demanding reversal of a 30 peso increase in subway fares. Then protests mushroomed as workers, peasants and students aimed demands at the government — like similar actions in Colombia and Ecuador.

Chile President Sebastián Piñera — who just days before had boasted that the country of 18 million people was an “oasis” in a region rife with social unrest — unleashed the hated carabineros, the national police. The Continued on page 9

Democrats drive to oust Trump targets working class

BY TERRY EVANS

The Democratic Party is sharply divided, with its leaders panicking that their drive to impeach and indict President Donald Trump — which began the day he took office and has continued ever since — is failing to win support. They fret that none of their myriad of presidential hopes can defeat the president in 2020.

One of their responses is to step up efforts to keep working-class and other third parties off the ballot, dealing blows to the political rights of working people.

The ruling U.S. capitalist families maintain their hold on power through their two-party system, convincing workers and others to vote for the “lesser evil” of a Democrat or Republican, back and forth, in each election. The fraying of this operation is one of the key things revealed by the Trump victory in both the 2016 Republican Continued on page 6

Bitter strike battle enters 8th week, no end in sight

BY SETH GALINSKY AND BERNIE SENTER

As the bitter strike by some 1,700 workers against Asarco copper boss — union-busting drive entered its eighth week, the company claimed there is an “impasse” in negotiations.

It is implementing its “best, last and final” offer as of Dec. 2. Asarco’s final offer includes doubling or tripling health insurance costs, freezing wages for three-quarters of the copper works — who haven’t had a raise in nearly 10 years — freezing pensions and eliminating contractual protections for union activity on the job. The only people toiling at the company’s mines, smelters and refineries today are a growing number of strikebreakers and some Continued on page 5

CN rail workers ‘strike for safety’ won broad backing

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Following a Nov. 26 tentative agreement between Teamsters Canada Rail Conference officials and Canadian National Railway bosses, the 3,200 CN conductors, including yardmen and yard- Continued on page 6

Communist League in UK: ‘Jew-hatred is deadly threat to the working class’

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn’s handling of anti-Semitism makes him “unfit for high office” writes Ephraim Mirvis, the U.K.’s chief rabbi, in the Times of London, weeks before Corbyn faces Prime Minister Boris Johnson in the country’s parliamentary election, Dec. 12.

A Jewish Chronicle editorial urged people to not vote Labour, while Johnson utilized Mirvis’ remarks to rail against Corbyn.

Mirvis’ claim that a “poison” has taken hold in Labour “sanctioned at Continued on page 2

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Copper strikers fight Asarco union-busting

Striking copper workers picket at Asarco Ray Mine near Kearny, Arizona, in November.

All out in solidarity with striking copper workers!

A battle with real stakes for all working people is playing out today in the copper towns of Arizona and Texas. Asarco workers are fighting a naked union-busting assault by bosses — they need our solidarity. Build support for their struggle! Every fight working people wage Continued on page 9

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Threat of Jew-hatred

Continued from front page the very top,” is contested only by the Labour leader’s most devoted backers. They claim he just opposes Israel’s attacks on Palestinians.

But Corbyn has associated with Holocaust deniers and defended an anti-Semitic mural that depicts Labour’s main political opponents as Jews conspiring to control the world on the backs of exploited and oppressed. He has described as “comrades” and “friends” leaders of Hamas, an organization that advocates the killing of Jews and the destruction of Israel. He has participated in a commemoration of the terrorists who murdered Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics. He protects Labour Party leaders who have slandered Jews.

When asked Nov. 26 by BBC interviewer Andrew Neil to apologize for the party’s record of anti-Semitism, Corbyn declined. Since he became Labour leader in 2015, thousands of middle-class radicals who call for the destruction of Israel have joined the party. Thirteen Labour Members of Parliament have re-signed from the party, citing its leader’s refusal to fight anti-Semitism.

CL: “No to Jew-hatred”

The Communist League is standing its own candidates against the Conservative and Labour Party’s main capitalist parties. As it explains why workers need to organize independently of the bosses and their parties, the CL’s campaign program points to the necessity of combating Jew-hatred.

And its candidates — this worker-correspondent in Tottenham, London, and correspondent in Brighton, the CL’s candidates condemned the “growing menace of Jew-hatred. CL’s stance on anti-Semitism and Israel’s long record of anti-Semitism.

In his denunciation of Corbyn, Mirvis said, “The British government is divided between conflicting classes, with opposing class values. The fighting program the CL campaigns with today calls for the rejection of Jew-hatred, [and] for the need to build a movement of militant, anti-imperialist workers who face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System.”

Ernest Bevin, foreign secretary in the post-World War II Labour government scapegoated Jews for shortages of basic necessities. He led the government’s effort to block the creation of Israel.

Anti-Semitism divides workers, the CL’s letter to the BIA explained. “Work-er’s government in the U.K. Thousands of copies have been circulated during the campaign, as has my reply to the BIA explaining the stakes for working people in fighting Jew-hatred. CL campaign supporters are discussing this and other questions facing working people on picket lines, doorsteps, with workmates and at social protests.

James Jackson, Communist League candidate for Tottenham in U.K., speaks Dec. 2 at pre-election candidates forum of 40 people at Turkish Cypriot Community Association, along with candidates from Labour, Liberal Democrats and Conservatives. “We need to build an independent working class movement like in the Cuban Revolution,” he said.

Jew-hatred and murderous violence.”

The statement concludes by pointing to the need to build a movement of million to establish a workers and farmers government in the U.K. Thousands of copies have been circulated during the campaign, as has my reply to the BIA explaining the stakes for working people in fighting Jew-hatred. CL campaign supporters are discussing this and other questions facing working people on picket lines, doorsteps, with workmates and at social protests.

CALENDAR— New York

Thomas Sankara’s Legacy Today. Sankara Everywhere. Sankara Nowhere. Speakers: Dr. Boskary Sawadogo, professor, City College; Isaa Zoonsangara, project coordinator, Stand for Life & Liberty; Baswinnie Youssouf, artist, teacher; Peter Thanjiant, Socialist Workers Party. With the participation of Paul Sankara, brother of Thomas Sankara. Sun, Dec. 8, 4 to 8 p.m. Translation from French: 1 p.m. £13.50. Sponsored by the International Committee of Sankara Annual Conference.

Commemorate and Celebrate 5th Anniversary of Freedom for All of the Cuban Five. Speakers: Ana Silvia Rodríguez, Cuba’s ambassador to United Nations; Martin Garbus, lead attorney for Cuban Five and author of North of Havana; Alice Waters, author and editor, “If the Poor Win the Scavenger of the U.S. Justice System”; The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class Solidarity video message by the Cuban Five. Music performed by Bombo Yo. Sat., Dec. 14. Re-ception, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Sponsored by Freedom for All of the Cuban Five. $20 West Side Union. Sponsored by the New York/ New Jersey Cuba SI Coalition. Tel. (917) 987 8730.

The Militant

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‘Militant,’ funds drive

Chalmers showed Young a copy of The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People, by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, pointing to the book’s description of the massive jump in the number of people incarcerated under Bill Clinton’s presidency. Clinton also lays “justified claim to the shameful designation, the ‘death-penalty president,’” Barnes writes. His administration expanded the number of crimes subject to capital punishment.

Young bought a copy of the book, a subscription to the Militant and asked Chalmers to stay on such: “I like what you say about workers needing our own party,” electrician Max Subuchov told Jonathan Silberman, Communist League candidate for the Tottenham seat in this month’s U.K.’s parliamentary election, when Silberman knocked on his door in Tottenham Hale, Dec. 1.

“Vietnamese workers needed our own party — Workers control over safety — Vote Communist League,” Barnes wrote.

“Workers need our own party,” said Subuchov, referring to the mobilizations and pitched street battles that led to the overthrow of the hated pro-Moscow regime of Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko in 2004. The powerful movement had a big impact on the confidence and fighting spirit of working people across the country. Subuchov bought the CL campaign button that reads “Workers need our own party — Workers control over safety — Vote Communist League.”

The same day, students Christian and Dana Dunca picked up campaign buttons and got a subscription to the Militant. “We came here from Romania to improve our lives and bring up a family,” Christian Dunca told CL campaigners, “but the parliamentary parties do not represent the views of working people.”

Push needed to complete fund

The drive to sell 1,100 Militant subscriptions and 1,250 books runs through Dec. 10. At the same time the SWP is on a drive to raise $100,000 to help fund the party’s political activities. A final push to win new contributions can ensure the party meets and exceeds its nationwide quota.

To facilitate a greater understanding of the SWP’s revolutionary program, all Pathfinder books and copies of the Marxist magazine New International are being offered at a 20% discount through the end of the drive. Also, eight titles are offered at half price when purchased with a Militant subscription.

And the new title The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party by Jack Barnes is available at a special price of $12, or $10 with a subscription. Three copies of the book were sold by party members in Dallas, after they contacted Militant subscribers, Alyson Kennedy reports.

The book “is about the working-class program, composition, and course of conduct of the only kind of party worthy of the name ‘revolutionary’ in the imperialist epoch,” writes Barnes in the introduction. “The only kind of party that can recognize the most revolutionary fact of this epoch — the worth of working people, and our power to change society when we organize and act against the capitalists and all the economic, social, and political forms of their class rule.”

Those wanting to join the effort to broaden the reach of the Militant and revolutionary books and help with the fund drive can contact the SWP or Communist League branches in your area listed on page 8.

Socialist Workers Party Fund Drive

Chalmers explained that the SWP runs against the capitalist two-party system. Republicans, Democrats and their socialist hangers-on. And he pointed to the capacities of working people to fight together to change the conditions we confront. He described the protests organized by the family of Rodney Reed that forced state authorities to grant a stay of execution to Reed just days before it was scheduled.

Reed, an African American, was convicted by an all-white jury in 1998 for the rape and murder of 19-year-old cashier Stacey Stites in Bastrop, Texas. “I just heard about Reed’s case,” Young replied.

Fall Campaign to sell Militant subscriptions and books

Oct. 5 - Dec. 10 (Week 8)

Special offer on books...

Prices are: Book only/Book with subscription.

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New International magazine from 1934 & Intercontinental Press from 1963 to 1986

Militant

December 16, 2019 3
French rulers expand military intervention into West Africa

BY PETER THIERJUNG

French ground troops are being deployed to Burkina Faso. This is the first major dispatch of imperialist troops that Western African countries, an attempt to shore up a weakening capitalist regime in a region racked by instability. The deployment was announced Nov. 4.

Two days later, gunmen slaughtered at least 38 gold miners and wounded 60 more in an attack on a five-bus convoy, a France-led coalition to a mine in eastern Burkina Faso. Miners told the press that demands they made for greater protection five months earlier had been ignored. The Canadian-based owner.

Burkina Faso is in the midst of a gold rush driven by imperialist interests, making it the fourth largest gold-producing country in Africa. Only a decade ago, Burkina Faso’s primary export was cotton. But the discovery of gold has now become a key part of the vast majority of working people in what is one of the world’s poorest countries, with a population of 20 million.

Since 2015 there have been more than 1,300 casualties in Burkina Faso resulting from some 620 attacks by armed criminal gangs and reactionary jihadist terror groups associated with al-Qaeda and Islamic State.

Many more have been killed by government forces and local militias in “counterterrorist” operations. Burkin Faso’s military is implicated in dozens of killings of innocent civilians, Human Rights Watch reported. These include a raid on a village where troops were reported to have pulled 150 men and boys from their homes and summarily executed them.

Since the end of 2018 the Burkina Faso government has declared states of emergency in several northern provinces where it has effectively lost control. More than 267,000 people since July, and half a million overall, have fled their homes to neighboring countries.

U.S. military personnel are stationed in Africa as part of the U.S. Africa Command organized Operation Flintlock in Burkina Faso to train African special operations forces in counterinsurgency tactics and intelligence gathering. Today about 7,200 U.S. military personnel are stationed in Africa. Some 1,300 special forces operate in about a dozen countries on the continent. Washington has also dispatched some $100 million in military aid to Burkina Faso over the last two years.

Florence Parly, the French armed forces minister, misstated that the crisis in the Sahel, if not resolved, will find its way to Europe’s doorstep. Europe “will have two swords of Damocles over its head,” she said, “terrorism and kidnappings, but also illegal immigrants.”

Revolution led by Thomas Sankara

The escalating violence in Burkina Faso can be traced back to the rule of Blaise Compaoré, who seized power in a 1987 coup against the revolutionary government of Thomas Sankara, in which Sankara was assassinated.

Through the 1983 revolution led by Sankara, millions of tons joined in massive protests against land reform, to eliminate illiteracy, and to wipe out curable diseases. They organized to preserve the environment by planting millions of trees and built a nationwide railroad to tie the nation together. The revolution promoted self-sufficiency in food and clothing and drew women into economic, social, and political activity.

Sankara spoke out in the interests of workers and farmers internationally, and resisted imperialist pressure and sabotage from Paris and Washington. He collaborated with revolutionary Cuba and others struggling against oppression. His speeches, published by Pathfinder Press, remain popular today not only among Africans but many others as well.

Compaoré reversed the gains of the revolution, ruling with an iron fist. His regime renewed close ties with the capitalist rulers in France and the U.S. and collaborated with terrorist groups in the country and region with the aim of fend- off challenges to his rule.

Australia: Women make gains in right to choose abortion

BY FELICITY COGGAN

SYDNEY — In a gain for women’s rights, a new bill decriminalizing abortion passed the New South Wales state parliament Sept. 26. The vote followed a rally of 500 held here Sept. 14 in support of women’s right to choose an abortion, followed by a two-day anti-abortion protest of several thousand the next day.

The new Abortion Law Reform Act removes abortion from the Crimes Act and allows abortion on a woman’s request up to 22 weeks of pregnancy. After this it introduces the restriction that a woman must gain the approval of two specialist medical practitioners to obtain an abortion.

New South Wales is the last Australian state to remove abortion from the criminal code, and it is the state with the largest population. It had said that anyone who “unlawfully uses any instrument or other means” to procure an abortion would face up to 10 years in prison.

Despite the archaic provisions of the law, legal abortion has in fact been widely available in New South Wales and elsewhere in Australia since the rise of the modern women’s rights movement in the 1970s. A series of common law court rulings established that abortions in certain instances could be legally carried out. A 1969 decision in the state of Victoria was followed by the landmark 1971 “Levine ruling” in New South Wales, which defined abortion as “lawful” if necessary to preserve the woman’s life, or her physical or mental health. Further court decisions upheld and broadened these provisions, which were legal at any stage of pregnancy.

Since then, new abortion reform laws have introduced term limits on abortion request in most of Australia, with restrictions for later term abortions. The change in the law was an advance for women, Margaret Kirkby, a long-time activist in Women’s Abortion Action Campaign, told the Militant, but “term limits are not what we want. It comes down to abortion should be a woman’s right to choose.”

“We welcome the decriminalization of abortion, something women have long been fighting for,” said Linda Harris, the Communist League candidate for Granville in the New South Wales state elections earlier this year. “The Communist League stands for women’s right to unrestricted access to family planning services, including the right to safe, secure abortions and low-cost child care,” Harris said. “We oppose the state intervening in a woman’s right to control her own body. The League does not support the restrictions on access to abortion introduced under the new law.”

Opponents of decriminalizing abortion were successful in forcing a ban on “sex-selection abortion” in the law, which they falsely insisted would become widespread if it passed without this restriction.

Dr. Deborah Bateson, medical director of Family Planning New South Wales, said this would make doctors become “inquisitors,” probing the motivations of patients to avoid prosecution. “We’ve worked in the area for many, many years,” she said. “I’ve never had anyone talk to me about wanting to have an abortion based on gender selection.”
New York labor rally supports Amazon warehouse workers

STATEST ISLAND, NY. — Workers at the large Amazon warehouse here were joined by some 200 area unionists and other supporters to greet workers coming and going from their jobs at the giant e-commerce company’s fulfillment center here Nov. 25.

Banners and signs said, “We are not robots,” referring to the grueling work pace bosses demand from Amazon pickers and packers here and across all their warehouses. The pace is set to keep up with the growing number of robots.

A recent study by the New York City Department of Health describes the high injury rate among the 2,500 warehouse workers at the Staten Island facility. Of those interviewed, fully 60% of the workers described “time off task,” pain from trying to keep up on their jobs, and 42% said the pain continued after they left work.

Other placards and chants highlighted the company’s refusal to help with transportation to the warehouse’s remote location and the need for water and bathroom breaks that don’t count against production rates. Amazon management calls these health needs, “Time Off Task.”

Several of the Amazon workers addressed the crowd, describing the pressure from their speed of work and the number of injuries daily. Workers are pushed to return to work injured as the company looks to minimize any efforts to change the conditions they face would continue.

Teamsters Local 863 hosted a bus to bring Teamsters from New Jersey to the rally. This local organizes over 3,000 workers, including ShopRite warehouse workers. The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union also had a sizable presence, along with the Communications Workers of America and the groups Make the Road and New York Communities for Change.

Continued from front page

The story of the strikes the men carried out in Minnesota in 1934, paving the way for the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations as a fighting social movement.

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TEAMSTERS REBELLION

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Workers at seniors’ residences picket during five-day strike for $15 Canadian an hour, Nov 26.

Bitter Asarco strike battle enters 8ths week

Bright Asarco workers picket. The company is days away from forcing the workers back to work.

Are you involved in a union organizing drive or strike? Brought solidarity to fellow workers on the picket line? Let us know! Send articles, photos and solidarity videos in both Spanish and English to the Militant/Millicent@mac.com or through our website, or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

In Quebec City, residences in Quebec City, including FTQ President Daniel Boyer, joined the picket line there on the first day of the strike.

“Solidarity is very important,” striker Isabelle Martel told this Militant worker-correspondent on the picket line.

Beverly Bernardo

“Time Off Task.”

“Time Off Task.”

“Asarco is willing to forego substantial profits today in their drive to defeat the strike and break the unions, and make up the “loss” and then some afterwards.

Century of union battles

There is a long history of fights for union protection and job safety by workers in Arizona copper mines, as well as vicious attacks by the copper barons backed by the government to block advances by the union.

Between 1906 and 1907 some 1,200 men were fired for fighting for a union in the copper mines, many of them workers of Mexican and southern European descent. In July 1917 armed vigilantes at the service of Phelps Dodge and other copper barons rounded up more than 1,000 copper workers on strike for better wages and safe working conditions and forcibly “deported” them to New Mexico. The Bisbee town government mounted guards on all roads into town to make sure “troublemakers” couldn’t return.

Workers succeeded over time in battling and winning the union at the major copper complexes in the state. But in 1983, Phelps Dodge decided it would no longer go along with “pattern” bargaining agreements reached between the unions and bosses at Kennecott and Magma, forcing the workers out on strike.

When the bosses brought in scab labor to reopen their Morenci mine, a thousand strikers and supporters blocked the gates, shutting down production.

Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt, a Democrat, traveled to the area and pleaded the union’s case to a 10-day cooling off period, promising this would lead to an acceptable settlement.

Many of the workers found they’d been bamboozled. On the morning of Aug. 19, 1983, a miles-long convoy of armored tanks, other vehicles, armed national guard and SWAT teams made its way up the mountain road to the mine entrance, ensuring the scabs could go back to work.

In October 1984, Phelps Dodge engaged a new contract negotiating team — with the strikers excluded — that decertified the union. By February 1986, the strike was officially over and the National Labor Relations Board rejected the unions’ appeal.

The mine is now owned by Freeport-McMoRan and is still run nonunion.

Over the past decades the remaining unionized mines closed, leaving Asarco as the only major unionized copper company in the state.

International solidarity

The striking unions have filed an unfair labor practices complaint with the National Labor Relations Board, which hasn’t said when it intends to take it up. But with the bosses planning to crank up production with strikebreakers, strike solidarity is needed more than ever.

Solidarity has begun coming in from around the world. “We support your struggle for fair pay rises, fair bonuses and fair treatment after years of austerity and pay freezes,” said a resolution sent by the Mining & Energy Workers division of the CFMEU of Australia. The union represents 20,000 coal and metal-ore mining workers.

The Fensuagro agricultural workers union and the USO oil workers union in Colombia as well as indigenous and Afro-Colombian groups there sent solidarity videos in both Spanish and English to the Asarco strikers.

More is needed. Strike supporters are encouraged to come strengthen the picket lines, which are up 24/7. Urge your union to send a generous contribution to the strike fund and food pantry, to the Pima Area Labor Federation Community Services via paypal.me/palfcommunityservice. Circulate solidarity messages, cards and holidays greetings for coworkers to sign and send them to the strikers at palfish@gmail.com.
CN rail workers ‘strike for safety’

Continued from front page

masters, returned to work Nov. 27 after an eight-day “strike for safety.” That week of work to meet the debate over the proposal over the next few weeks and vote in the weeks after.

The strike won wide support among working people, many of whom face similar attacks from bosses on working conditions, hours and schedules.

CN supervisors managed to run a few trains, but fuel, wheat, fertilizer and manufactured goods largely remained sitting idle in rail cars and warehouses.

Bosses in oil, mining, chemicals and other industries, backed by a compliant big business set up a howl of protest. They demanded the government order an end to the strike, which Ottawa has done in past rail strikes. They hoped to convince CN bosses that they had too much inventory on hand.

But parliament wasn’t in session, and the minority Liberal-government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau decided not to call legislators back, due in part to the strike’s popularity.

Many farmers were affected by the strike. Some protested outside CN headquarters in Montreal, demanding the rail bosses get them propane, needed to keep animals warm and to dry crops at harvest. CN had plenty of tank cars loaded with propane, but hadn’t taken steps to deliver the gas to farmers, hoping they would turn against the strike.

When some rail workers and their supporters — including members of the Communist League — went to farmers’ protest outside CN headquarters in Montreal, demanding the rail bosses get them propane, needed to keep animals warm and to dry crops at harvest. CN had plenty of tank cars loaded with propane, but hadn’t taken steps to deliver the gas to farmers, hoping they would turn against the strike.

The strike began Nov. 19 after work- ers voted to take on the profit-driven move by CN bosses to cut crew size, reduce rest periods, and other demands that would have plenty of costs on de- railments, injuries and deaths.

During the strike workers adapted the generic printed Teamsters union picket signs with the slogan like “I’m tired of being tired” and “Rail Workers lives matter.” They explained the dan- gers both they and working people liv- ing in the vicinity of railway tracks face from the inevitable consequences of the bosses’ disdain for safety.

The memory of the 2013 Lac-Még- antre oil tank car disaster in Quebec was an important factor in the broad sup- port for the strike.

Millions of working people across the country turned support to the CN bosses, risking their lives and limbs of the CN workers.

This was reinforced both by the offi- cial report of the Transportation Safety Board of Canada and by the fact that a prob- able verdict finding union train crew members Tom Harding and Richard Labrie not guilty in the 2018 frame-up trial of the CN bosses, ordering the govern- ment tried to pin the blame for the de- railment on them.

On the final day of the strike this Mili- tant worker-correspondent distributed a well-received press release from the Coalition and Organizations Commit- teed to Canadian Rail Safety. In clarifying they were “eager to give its full support to CN Rail workers who are currently struggling to improve their working conditions.”

Bosses disregard for workers’ safety

“There are no small consequences when a train is stopped by a CN employee,” said Richer, a CN worker, told the online La Presse while picketing at CN headquar- ters in downtown Montreal Nov. 26.

“There is the risk of injury and deaths when a locomotive engineer is tired,” other workers agreed. “I am here be- cause it is important for other workers to come to support the conductors. They are fighting for big stakes, like health and safety,” Walmart worker Pierre-Luc Filion, who came to the picket line to show support, told La Presse.

The CN bosses said they face the same push by the bosses to cut crews and safely followed the strike closely. Solidarity messages were hand-deliv- ered by the agreement to stop his railroad Job in Chicago and in a card sent by BLET Di- vision 226 in the New York/New Jersey/ Pennsylvania region signed by 25 engi- neers, conductors and van drivers.

The day before the agreement Teamsters union officials made public a 2018 tape recording of a CN superv- isor ordering a conductor, who has 30 years of experience, to move his train through a residential area east of Toronto despite the fact that he says repeatedly that after almost 11 hours of work “he just can’t be bothered.”

The tape was played repeatedly on televi-

Democrats drive to oust Trump targets working class

Continued from front page

The Democrats' strategy today is no different than that under Obama. The best they hope for is to preserve the weak Afghan govern- ment and corrupt the Taliban.

Both Republicans and Democrats — Trump, Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sand- ers, Joe Biden, etc. — seek to protect the interests of the capitalist ruling class.

In contrast to both the Democratic and Republican wings of the capitalist two-party system, the Socialist Workers Party candidates in 2020 “demand the immediate and unconditional withdraw- al of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan, which has been a stage-managed witch hunt with growing disinterest. In fact, recent polls show op- position to Trump's. Of growing is shallow.

Democratic Party crisis deepens

In response, the Democrats are split be- tween one wing that believes they have to find a way to win back work- ers who voted for former President Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 and then switched to Trump in 2016, all in search of some “change,” and another wing that believes they have to find a way to win back working people living in the country's metropolises.

Both wings of the Democratic Party, like other meritocrats and the capitalist rulers they serve, fear the working class, sensing the crisis of capitalism impact- ing on the livelihoods of working people will lead to rising struggles.

On his side, Trump is campaigning for reelection by pointing to the fact that there are more jobs today, which gives workers more confidence to fight for better wages and working conditions.

But the real beneficiary of the stock market boom today is the capitalist class, whose growing wealth stands in stark contrast to what workers face.

The crisis of the capitalist system con- tinues to deepen — regardless of mod- eration of ups and downs. Workers’ life expectancy is falling, the U.S. rulers’ wars go on and on, bosses from Asarco copper mining to Walmart are pushing for speedup with more hours and less safety, and household debt is exploding.

Trump also brags he has “Made America Great Again” worldwide by rebuilding Washington’s military might while continuing to stage-manage the Afghanistan war. The president flew to Afghanistan Nov. 28 and announced his administration intends to reduce U.S. troop numbers there from 14,000 to 8,600 and resume talks with the Talib- an. He said U.S. forces would remain until “we have a deal or we have to tol- erate the real that way.”

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The making of a union bureaucrat

From ‘The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party,’ new book from Pathfinder Press

The following is a chapter excerpted from The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes. The Militant is re-publishing an excerpt of the new book’s introduction in its Nov. 11 issue, and will continue to publish further excerpts.

Marcel Scholl, a 50-year caudte of the Socialist Workers Party, was a leader of the women’s auxiliary during the 1934 strike and organizing drive led by Teamsters Local 574 (later 544) in Minneapolis. She served on the staff of the local’s Federal Workers Section, which organized the unemployed to fight for their interests during the Great Depression. Scholl contributed to the North West Organizer, the Minneapolis Teamsters weekly. In the 1960s and 1970s she wrote regularly for the Militant, including for many years the National Pocket Line column. The following article appeared in the April 14, 1972, issue of the Militant. Copyright © 2019 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY MARVEL SCHOLL

The Militant has many new readers, many of whom have never belonged to trade unions. Therefore, it’s possible that the words “bureaucrat” and “bureaucracy” applied to the organized labor movement may not have much meaning or may be confused with the government hacks who wrap everything up in yards of red tape in order to maintain the status quo.

While there are a great many similarities between the government and trade-union bureaucracies, there are also many differences, particularly in how each type of bureaucrat or bureaucracy got that way.

The trade-union officialdom, especially in the higher echelons, is composed of people who have interpreted their own international constitutions in such a way as to prac
tically perpetuate themselves in office — some of them for life, but most of them, in any case, long after they have outlived their usefulness. This is done by rigging the conventions where most international officers are elected or by questionable balloting procedures in referendum votes. But the men and women who make up this select coterie are not those I would like to discuss.

It is the men and women in the lower and middle echelons of the hierarchy, the business agents and organizers, that need examining. These people are charged directly with keeping the rank and file in order, riding herd on them in strike situations, and getting them out to vote for the Democratic “friends of labor.”

Some of these lower echelon union officials “got on the pic,” as workers characterize getting on the union payroll, with malice aforethought. They demonstrated their villainy in the plant primarily to further their own ambitions.

But many others got there by another route — being kicked upstairs in order to get them out of the hair of both management and the union hacks.

Let’s take a not-so-mythical example of one militant trade-unionist who was turned into a typical bureaucrat.

Joe Jones worked on the line in an auto plant, alongside his best friend, Jack. Both men’s families had a close social life. Jack was a good union militant, but not an aggressive one. He looked to Joe for leadership and support. They were close at the growing number of unsettled grievances in his file, he fought with a foreman and was fired. Word went through the plant like wildfire and all the men walked off the job. Joe got his job back.

By now both management and the union hacks knew he had to do something about Joe.

Management decided to offer him a supervisory job — an old gimmick that sometimes succeeded in making the former militant union one of the best of company men.

Over 10,000 farmers in Germany protest against glyphosate

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Over 10,000 farmers from all over Germany drove more than 5,000 tractors in a 6-mile-long convoy crawling through the streets of Berlin Nov. 26 to protest government plans to sharply restrict the use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizer. Farmers also protested in France and Ireland.

In response to regulations and fines imposed by the European Commission, Germany’s capitalist rulers plan to phase out and ban the weedkiller glyphosate by 2023 and tighten regulations on the use of fertilizers, supposedly to reduce nitrate content in groundwater. The government also charges the chemical is reducing the number of butterflies and bees.

Glyphosate, an active ingredient in weed-control products like Roundup, is “useful,” say many farmers who use it to boost production. These products have been the target of lawsuits and challenges by environmental reformers, profit-driven attorneys and radical middle-class currents.

Banners on some of the tractors read, “No farmers, no food, no future” and “We fill you up.” One large sign described in English the dictionary definition of “farming” as “The art of losing money while working 400 hours a month to feed people who think you are trying to kill them.”

Another banner said, “7.5 billion farmers — 200 million can feed themselves as hunters and gatherers. The rest are farmers.”

The German government restrictions come on top of a deepening economic crisis facing farmers worldwide. They are accused by capitalist monopolies controlling inputs like seed and fertilizer as well as processing and distribution, and by falling prices.

“Enough is enough,” farmer Benjamin Meise from the Oderland region
Cuba and the Coming American Revolution by James P. Cannon

This is the world in which the example of the Cuban people remains as important as it was the day they took power, demonstrating in practice what it takes to break the stranglehold of imperialist capitalism. Their example is not only compelling and necessary to the future transformation of the working class itself. As the Cuban people proudly say of their aid to the peoples of Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and elsewhere around the world, “Those who are not ready to fight for the freedom of others will never be ready to fight for their own.”

Shortly before Cuba and the Coming American Revolution came off the press in 2001, Colin Powell, the new secretary of state, explained Washington’s uncompromising stance toward Cuba’s revolutionary government. He did so more accurately than he perhaps did so more accurately than he perhaps intended. Testifying April 26, 2001, before a congressional committee, he responded to the question of why the U.S. government refuses to alter its decades-long policy toward Cuba. Powell replied that in China, Russia, and Vietnam “you can see leaders who the world is changing.” But in Cuba, he said, Castro “hasn’t changed his views in any way.”

The secretary of state got it only partially right, of course. As with each of his predecessors, his inability to fathom the Cuban people’s determination and revolutionary defiance of Washington’s policies was a testament to their profound understanding of the great power’s character.

When Fidel Castro defiantly an act of working-class solidarity, in quite unexpected ways is not simply an act of working-class solidarity, however important that may be. It is a proletarian necessity, essential to the international political education and transformation of the working class itself. As the Cuban people proudly say of their aid to the peoples of Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and elsewhere around the world, “Those who are not ready to fight for the freedom of others will never be ready to fight for their own.”

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Iraq upsurge continues, prime minister to resign

By ROY LANDERSEN

Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi announced his resignation Nov. 29 after nearly two months of mass anti-government protests have shaken the country. The youthful demonstrators are demanding an end to the effects of the economic crisis — joblessness, lack of electricity, lack of fresh water and end to interference in Iraq by Tehran and Washington.

The Iraqi protests are but a broader uprising shaking Iran and Lebanon, as working people seek to assure their interests against the capitalist class in the region and the battle for sway between the capitalist rulers in the U.S. and Iran.

Mahdi’s resignation followed the brutal slaughter of over 25 protesters by Iranian-backed militia, capital of Dhi Qar province. When protests began there Nov. 27, Mahdi told army brass to establish military-led “crisis cells” to quell the uprising. Staff Gen. Jimed al-Shammari, notorious for leading murderous attacks on protesters in Basra last year — was assigned to this area.

Shammari’s forces opened fire on protesters, killing and wounding dozens. They were joined in the at- tack by Shiite militias beholden to Tehran. Amnesty International described the scene as like “a warzone,” where “Iraqi security forces meted out appalling violence against largely peaceful protesters.” Large crowds gathered to offer support.

As word spread, protests took place across the coun- try. Previously the demonstrations had been centered in Shiite areas in Basra, Baghdad and southern Iraq. After the killings in Nasiriyah, they spread across the country, in areas where there is little Iranian presence and influence. Protesters vowed to stay in the streets. “We want to change everything,” 28-year-old protest Ali Dablab told the Washington Post in Baghdad. “This resigna- tion is only the first step, it’s not what we came for. We want our country back.”

Iraq’s Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani called for Mahdi to step down. Mahdi’s resignation was ac- cepted by Iraqi President Barham Saleh, who took office during efforts to form a new government. This can take weeks, as the government structure is built around three top posts assigned to representatives of Shiites, Sunnis and theish groups.

Iraq’s judiciary announced Dec. 1 a travel ban and arrest warrant against Shammari.

Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, who has given sup- port to the demonstrations, challenged the efforts to form a new government, saying the next candidate for prime minister should be chosen by popular referendum, he said.

Protesters say these steps will not satisfy their de- mands — for an end to all forms of the corrupt capitalist “political class” that has dominated Iraq since Washington over- threw the rule of Saddam Hussein 16 years ago.

Broadening up risings in Iraq Iraq continues to be a flashpoint in the breakdown of the war-torn imperialist-imposed disorder in the Mid- dle East. The Iraqi people have undergone long years of military conflicts and repression, from the U.S.-led assault in 1991 and Washington’s invasion in 2003, to the brutal occupation of Sunni areas by reactionaries Is- lamic State forces. Tehran has taken advantage of this to extend its political and military influence.

Since the start of October, over 400 people have been killed in attacks on the protesters. In one of his regular visits to Baghdad, Iranian Rev- olutionary Guard Force Chief Qasem Soleimani, head of the Iranian rulers’ counterrevolutionary interventions abroad, boasted to Iraqi military leaders Oct. 30, “We in Iran know how to deal with protests.”

Iraq itself has been convulsed by hundreds of thou- sands of protesting workers against high prices, and high price hikes. But the actions rapidly challenged the di- vision of much of the country’s revenue to the clerical regime’s funding of its counterrevolutionary Guard and proxy military forces from Iraq and Lebanon to Syria, Gaza and Yemen. The economic crisis in Iraq has been intensified as oil exports have been choked off through Washington’s latest economic sanctions.

The Iraqi Interior Ministry admitted that over 200,000 working people, often from poorer areas with higher unemployment, took part in these nationwide demonstrations, the biggest in years.

Iraq upsurge continues, prime minister to resign

Continued from front page

Iraq upsurge continues, despite 22 dead and 2,200 in- jured, including 330 people who lost part or all of their eyesight after cops shot them in the face with “rubber” bullets and tear gas canisters. Conces- sions by Piñera haven’t stopped the daily protests. Chile’s richest man, Nelson de la Rua, is the country’s highest in Latin America. And Chile is also the Latin American country with the greatest class disparities. The official minimum wage is about $400 a month. Some 50% of retired workers get less than $300 a month. By law, 10% of workers wages are taken from them and de- posited into accounts run by the private Retire- ment Fund Administrators (AFP), who put them in stocks and bonds.

In 2008 the government instituted a so-called Solidarity Pillar pension for those — including farmers and street vendors — who never had a for- mal wage or retirement deductions. They get all of $400 a month. Some 50% of retired workers get pensioned into accounts run by the private Retire- ment Fund Administrators (AFP), who put them in stocks and bonds.

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