

Welcome to our 1,315 new readers of the 'Militant'!

The *Militant* extends a warm welcome to the 1,315 readers who subscribed to the paper during the fall drive carried out by the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom! We had chosen higher quotas than before for this drive — as well as to sell an equal number of books by SWP and other revolutionary leaders — because of growing interest in a working-class road forward in today's economic, social and health crisis. And we went over the top everywhere.

SWP members also raised \$124,838 for the party's annual fund drive, surpassing a more ambitious goal by almost \$5,000. Every party branch met each of the quotas set during the drive in full and on time.

The drive coincided with the final months of the bold and effective Socialist Workers Party campaign of Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett

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Victory won in fight against curbs on right to worship

BY ROY LANDERSEN

An important victory for the constitutional right of freedom to worship was won Nov. 25 with the overturn of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's discriminatory lockdown limits on churches, synagogues and other places of worship. The U.S. Supreme Court granted an injunction requested by religious groups in New York City by a 5-4 majority.

It challenged the regulations, ostensibly imposed to slow the spread of COVID-19, as "singl[ing] out houses of worship for especially harsh treatment," finding they are unconstitutional and discriminatory compared to more expansive rules set by the governor for secular establishments.

The lawsuits were filed by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, New York, and two Orthodox Jewish synagogues, also in Brooklyn. Cuomo had issued, but then rescinded for now, restrictions in coronavirus "hot spots" designated as red and orange zones that limited indoor religious gatherings to 10 and 25 people respectively.

On behalf of the synagogues, Agudath Israel of America argued that the governor had specifically targeted Orthodox Jewish communities by gerrymandering the boundaries of these zones to include heavily Orthodox areas.

"Members of this court are not public

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Working people need our own party, a labor party



Workers United Local 1305

Workers at Owens Corning in Guelph, Ontario, on strike Nov. 20 against concession demands, an example of workers fighting boss attacks on jobs, wages, health and working conditions.

Key question for workers is the need to be on the job

Competition among workers, an integral part of capitalism, and the bosses' efforts to attack our wages and working conditions, intensifies in times of economic crisis like to-

EDITORIAL

day. Bosses are using spreading unemployment to try and pit workers against each other, to demand pay cuts, speedup and other concessions, and to further weaken our unions.

Continued on page 9

As economic, health crisis deepens, fight boss attacks

BY SETH GALINSKY

With tens of millions out of work, bosses are still laying workers off, cutting wages and benefits, and speeding up production. The employers hope the intensified competition among workers

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Key picks for Biden cabinet have long record advancing Washington's wars

BY TERRY EVANS

Drawing on nominees with long records advancing U.S. military interventions, Joe Biden appointed officials to his cabinet to defend the interests of the ruling capitalist families abroad.

Biden — who chaired the Foreign Relations Committee when he was in the Senate — championed the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2002. He helped win

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Fall Campaign to sell Militant subscriptions and books -- Final chart Sept. 26 - Nov. 24

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Albany	70	78	70	76
Atlanta	70	79	70	76
Chicago	110	112	110	110
Dallas	30	32	30	32
Lincoln	12	12	12	12
Los Angeles	90	97	90	100
Louisville	80	85	80	87
Miami	25	31	25	35
New Jersey	70	75	70	74
New York	85	91	85	90
Oakland *	85	88	95	98
Philadelphia	25	27	25	26
Pittsburgh	40	44	40	42
Seattle	85	93	85	95
Twin Cities *	30	33	25	28
Washington *	60	62	60	62
Total U.S.	967	1,039	972	1,043
Prisoners	25	44		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	40	41	40	42
Manchester	35	40	35	38
Total U.K.	75	81	75	80
Canada	85	94	85	98
New Zealand	25	29	25	25
Australia	25	28	25	25
Total	1,202	1,315	1,182	1,271
SHOULD BE	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
*Raised goal				

Nursing home workers in Illinois strike for more staff, pay and safety



Militant/Dean Hazlewood

Nov. 28 strike picket line at nursing home in Momence, Illinois, one of 11 owned by Infinity Healthcare. Issues include pay and serious understaffing endangering both workers and patients.

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CHICAGO — "We need more than \$13 or \$14 an hour to keep up with rising prices," Sam Brown told *Militant* worker-correspondents Nov. 23 on the picket line outside the City View Mul-

ticare Center in Cicero. Brown, who works in the kitchen, is one of nearly 700 members of the SEIU Healthcare union who walked out at 11 nursing homes throughout the region owned

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Moroccan gov't attack rekindles Polisario independence struggle 7

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Washington doctors, health care workers strike for patient safety

Coles warehouse workers in Australia fight lockout, closing



# Support fight to defend victory won by Ohio small-shop owners

BY JACOB PERASSO

ALBANY, New York — “The Gibson family, owners of a small bakery and store in Oberlin, Ohio, fought back against a billion-dollar institution and won a \$44 million award in a unanimous jury verdict after a six-week trial in 2019,” Socialist Workers Party leader Peter Thierjung told Militant Labor Forums here and in New York City. “The jury’s decision was a cease-and-desist order against the institution, Oberlin College, whose top administrators had engaged in a damaging smear campaign against the Gibsons, accusing them of being racist.”

“Since then, Oberlin’s trustees and administration have lawyered up,” Thierjung said, “and now 10 law firms are working to reverse the Gibson’s victory on appeal. Working people across the country should know about this case and the stakes involved, and support the family’s battle to defend their reputations and livelihood.”

During a 35-minute hearing Nov. 10 before a panel of Ohio’s Ninth District Court of Appeals, Oberlin attorney Ben Sasse argued the college cannot be held responsible for students exercising their First Amendment rights in calling the Gibson family racist and organizing a boycott of the store. The unanimous jury verdict should be overturned, he said.

Lee Plakas, attorney for the Gibsons, responded that the college is “desperate to turn this into a First Amendment case,” but no students were defendants in the Gibson’s lawsuit and none were called to take the stand. He defended

the jury’s verdict, which found Oberlin and Dean of Students Meredith Raimondo guilty of libeling the Gibson family and intentionally interfering with the bakery’s business.

The Gibsons’ attorneys called on the appeals court to reinstate the jury’s full judgment of \$33 million in punitive damages on top of the \$11 million in compensation awarded to the family. Following the trial, the judge had reduced the award to \$25 million. “Only meaningful punitive damages” can protect a small family business like Gibson’s against the might of Oberlin, they said, arguing the Ohio law capping jury awards is unconstitutional.

Three friend-of-the-court briefs supporting the college’s appeal were filed with the court, including one by the NAACP. While the court accepted the briefs, none of the judges at the Nov. 10 hearing addressed them. “That is not surprising because the briefs weren’t related to the facts,” Thierjung said. “They have more to do with the ‘narrative’ the college presents today to try and rewrite what actually happened.”

The appeals court has not yet issued a ruling.

### What happened at Gibson’s

An Oberlin College student attempted to buy wine with a fake ID on Nov. 9, 2016. When that failed, he tried to shoplift it. Allyn Gibson Jr., the grandson and son of the co-owners, followed him outside and stopped him. The student and two friends, also students at Oberlin, started beating Gibson. The police arrived and arrest-



Working people, students have been visiting Gibson’s store in Oberlin, Ohio, since 1885. Oberlin College is trying to use its wealth, power to reverse unanimous jury verdict in favor of the Gibsons.

ed the three, who happen to be Black.

Hundreds of students demonstrated outside the store the day after the shoplifting incident. Evidence at the trial showed that Dean Raimondo spoke with a bullhorn at the protest, orchestrating activities and passed out flyers saying “Don’t buy. This is a RACIST establishment with a LONG ACCOUNT of RACIAL PROFILING and DISCRIMINATION.” College administrators gave food, refreshments and gloves to the protesters and allowed them use of campus copiers to produce more flyers.

Raimondo suspended the bakery’s business with the college cafeteria, a business relationship that went back more than a century, because the Gibsons refused to drop the charges against the three students.

Months later the three charged students agreed to misdemeanor plea deals, stating in court that Gibson was within his legal rights to stop them and their arrests weren’t the result of racial profiling.

Several professors, college employees, alumni and townspeople told Raimondo and other college officials that the racism charges were false and urged the administration to change course. In response to a retired music professor who spoke out, Raimondo sent an email to another administrator: “F--- him. I’d say unleash the students.”

“Social class, wealth and privilege are important parts of what is involved

in this case,” Thierjung explained. In 2017, the *Grape*, a student publication, ran an article, “The Culture of Theft,” on rampant shoplifting by students. It described how students, acting out of a sense of entitlement, stole from struggling small-shop owners.

### Wealth and privilege

Students pay around \$75,000 a year to attend Oberlin, one of the 20 most expensive colleges in the nation. “Most students are upper-class and expect to get special treatment,” Thierjung said.

“But why wouldn’t Oberlin College come to a settlement with the Gibson family?” Thierjung asked. “Why not settle before a drawn out six-week trial that risked a judgment of tens of millions of dollars against the college and potentially years of appeals?”

“David Gibson asked college officials to issue a simple statement recognizing that his family and business weren’t racist, which the college refused to do.”

The college thought it would prevail in a town they dominate and they didn’t count on the jury from a largely working-class county finding in favor of the Gibsons,” Thierjung said. “But there is a bigger story here.”

Institutions of higher education have faced declining enrollments and an accelerating funding crisis, Thierjung said. Estimates are that up to 50% of U.S. universities will either close or go bankrupt

**Continued on page 5**

# THE MILITANT

## Protests in Thailand demand new elections

*As workers in Thailand face a deep economic and social crisis, thousands are calling for the ouster of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, new elections and for curbing the Thai monarchy’s power. The ‘Militant’ covers and supports this important fight.*



AP/Sakchai Lalit

10,000 people rally in Bangkok Nov. 18 to demand ouster of Thailand’s prime minister.

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Managing Editor: Terry Evans

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Martin Koppel, Roy Landersen, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams.

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Business Manager: Valerie Johnson

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.  
Telephone: (212) 244-4899  
Fax: (212) 244-4947  
E-mail: [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com)  
Website: [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)

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



Welcome to our new readers!

Continued from front page  
for president and vice president. SWP candidates and the *Militant* campaigned for an action program of immediate demands needed for workers to fight the effects of today’s economic, political, health and moral crisis of the capitalist system. They took the discussion on these demands door to door in workers’ neighborhoods, on strike picket lines and factory gates and in Walmart parking lots.

SWP campaigners built and took part in social protest actions against police brutality, the bosses’ disdain for the health of hospital, packinghouse and other workers; and in solidarity with political struggles in Hong Kong, Nigeria, Belarus, West Papua and more. They visited farmers and farmworkers in California, Washington state, Florida, Georgia and Vermont.

The Socialist Workers Party Action Program (available on the *Militant’s* website) continues to be a powerful tool to unite workers resisting the bosses’ efforts to solve the crisis of capitalism, exacerbated by the COVID pandemic, on workers’ backs.

We offer a special welcome to the 44 workers behind bars who got or renewed their subscription. The *Militant* defends the right of incarcerated workers to be treated like human beings, including having access to reading materials. The *Militant* gets around in prisons because it tells the truth about capitalist exploitation and the capacity of working people to recognize their worth as they build a movement capable of ending the dictatorship of capital.

“I’m writing to thank you for the subscription to your paper,” a prisoner recently wrote. “I enjoy reading it and when I’m finished, I make it available to others.” The *Militant* challenges every effort by prison authorities to try and bar the paper.

New readers hail from big and middle-size cities where SWP and Communist League branches are located, and from small towns such as Thomaston, Georgia; Madisonville, Kentucky; Rantoul, Illinois; and Lake Worth, Florida. Many learned about the *Militant* when SWP members knocked on their doors. Others subscribed on the picket lines of the Teamsters strike against DSI Tunneling in Louisville;

the United Food and Commercial Workers strike at the ReConserve animal feed plant in Chicago; the Confederation of National Trade Unions members locked out by Demix Beton in St-Hubert, Quebec, Canada; and other labor struggles. Some new readers are workmates of SWP members at Walmart stores, on the railroad and elsewhere.

Workers need a labor party

Today’s crisis of capitalism is causing many workers to want to learn about the roots of the attacks we face and the way forward. “It’s not a race thing, it’s a class thing,” Querry Howard, an African American package handler at UPS, told Zak Larrabee Nov. 21, as they discussed the fight against racism and police brutality at his door in Bardstown, Kentucky. “They use that to divide us, to keep the upper class in power.”

Workers often tell SWP members how much they appreciate the political discussions and the party’s program. “Nobody else is doing this,” highway construction worker Widmark Joseph told SWP campaigner Steve Warshell when he knocked on Joseph’s door in North Miami, Florida, in early November. “Certainly no other party is knocking on my door asking me what I think.” He gave \$10 to the SWP Party-Building Fund “to encourage you to keep on campaigning.”

Warshell assured Joseph the SWP will keep on campaigning, raising the need for workers to build our own fighting political party, a labor party,



Militant/Carole Lesnick  
Joel Britton, right, who was 2020 SWP candidate for U.S. Congress from California, talks to Forrest Gardens in Westwind Estates trailer park in West Sacramento Nov. 21. Gardens is helping organize fight by residents against being evicted for so-called “safety violations.”

and pointing to how the SWP sets an example with its own candidates. We say workers need to fight for workers control of production and safety on the job; for a massive government-funded public works jobs program to put millions to work at union-level pay; and for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to prevent layoffs. The SWP will field candidates for governor, mayor and other offices in the upcoming 2021 elections.

Its members will take part in working-class resistance on the job and build solidarity for every strike we learn about. This is the road to build a fighting labor movement.

We will build demonstrations in

December and beyond calling for an end to Washington’s brutal economic war against revolutionary Cuba. The *Militant* explains that workers and farmers in Cuba, and the revolutionary government they forged, are an example for working people to emulate worldwide.

You can join the fight to defend and unite working people and to reach out broadly to workers, farmers and small proprietors. Contact the SWP branch nearest you listed on page 8.

Welcome!

John Studer

Militant editor

Brazilians protest store guards beating black man to death



Reuters/Adriano Machado  
Rally in Brasilia, Brazil, Nov. 20 protests killing of Joao Alberto Silveira Freitas, a 40-year-old black man beaten to death by security guards at Carrefour supermarket in Porto Alegre.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Street protests erupted across Brazil after two security guards — one an off-duty military cop — beat to death Joao Alberto Silveira Freitas, a 40-year-old black man, outside a Carrefour supermarket in the southern city of Porto Alegre Nov. 19.

A cellphone video that circulated widely in the media shows one guard pinning him to the ground in the parking lot, while the other repeatedly punches Freitas, a welder, in the head. He died of asphyxiation.

The killing took place on the eve of Brazil’s Black Consciousness Day, a national holiday.

Milena Borges Alves, Freitas’ live-in girlfriend, told the media that he

was shopping with her at Carrefour, a French-owned supermarket chain, and he got into an argument with a cashier. Guards then escorted him out of the store. As they entered the parking lot area, videocam footage shows Freitas punching one of the guards. The guards then killed him in front of shoppers, employees and bystanders, some of whom tried to intervene to stop it.

“I just want justice,” Borges Alves told the media. “That’s all. I just want them to pay for what they did to him.” She said they had plans to marry in a few days.

Over 2,000 people rallied Nov. 20 by the Carrefour store where he was beaten. Actions spread to other Carrefour stores around the country, including in

Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. At a protest by a supermarket in the northeastern city of Recife, military police used pepper spray to disperse demonstrators.

Brazil has the largest population of black people outside Africa, with over half of the country’s 212 million people identifying themselves as black or of mixed race. Some 5 million Africans were taken to Brazil in the slave trade — over 10 times the number brought to North America. Slavery wasn’t abolished until 1888.

Many Brazilians who had considered themselves to be “pardo” — of mixed race — increasingly see themselves as black. There were protests across Brazil after U.S. cops killed George Floyd in Minneapolis earlier this year.

Over 75% of those killed by the government’s police forces last year were black.

In response to the spreading protests, the government arrested both guards Nov. 20. They face possible homicide charges. In addition, a public defender in southern Brazil filed a lawsuit against Carrefour for \$37.6 million in damages for its responsibility in the killing of Freitas on its property.

— CALENDAR —

CANADA

Montreal

Celebration of the Life of Bob Cantrick, a Communist Cadre for Five Decades. Speaker: Steve Penner, organizer of the Communist League; Susie Berman, leader of the supporters of the communist movement in Toronto. Sat., Dec. 5. Reception, 7 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 7107 rue St. Denis, Suite 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

**Socialist Workers Party Fund Drive**  
Sept. 26-Nov. 24 (Final chart)

Area	Quota	Collected
Albany*	\$7,700	\$8,068
Atlanta	\$11,000	\$11,028
Chicago	\$13,000	\$13,401
Dallas	\$2,750	\$3,006
Lincoln	\$325	\$325
Los Angeles	\$12,500	\$13,454
Louisville*	\$5,400	\$5,433
Miami	\$3,750	\$3,782
New York	\$15,500	\$16,005
N. New Jersey	\$6,000	\$6,286
Oakland	\$12,750	\$13,172
Philadelphia	\$3,500	\$3,635
Pittsburgh	\$3,000	\$3,050
Seattle	\$12,500	\$12,613
Twin Cities	\$4,250	\$4,300
Wash., DC	\$6,000	\$6,080
Other		\$1,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$119,925</b>	<b>\$124,838</b>
<b>Should Be</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>

\*raised quota



# Conflict continues as Ethiopian troops seize capital of Tigray

BY SETH GALINSKY

Ethiopian soldiers seized Mekelle, the capital of the Tigray region of northern Ethiopia, Nov. 28. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed claimed the central government had taken the entire province. That same day the ousted Tigray People’s Liberation Front fired long-range missiles into Asmara, Eritrea’s capital, charging the Eritrean government is backing the Ethiopian offensive.

TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael told The Associated Press Nov. 30 that the fighting would “continue until the invaders are out.” His forces fled to their mountain bases.

The conflict is over control of resources and power in this crucial area in the Horn of Africa, at the gateway to the Middle East. Washington, Beijing, Ankara and other capitalist powers have a major interest in the outcome.

Abiy launched the war Nov. 3 after charging that the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, which headed the regional government, had attacked a central government army base and was planning to secede from the country.

The Tigrayan forces are heavily outgunned. The Ethiopian army has at least 23 fighter jets and 20 helicopter gunships, many missile systems and hundreds of tanks and other armored vehicles.

Some 45,000 Tigrayans have fled to refugee camps in neighboring Sudan and tens of thousands have been displaced.

Ethiopia is the second most populous nation in Africa, with 116 million people and some 70 tribal groupings and 100 languages. The largest ethnic group is the Oromo, with 35% of the population.

Today’s conflict has roots that go back over a century. In 1974, Haile Selassie, the “emperor” of the country since 1930 and ally of U.S. imperialism, was overthrown by junior military officers, amid an uprising of peasants and workers.

At the time of Selassie’s overthrow, 90% of Ethiopians were engaged in small-scale agriculture or nomadic livestock raising. Half of the peasants were tenants or sharecroppers deeply indebted to their landlords. The Ethi-

opian Orthodox Church owned up to one-third of the land.

The new military government, known as the Dergue, adopted far-reaching reforms, confiscating land from the landlords, distributing it to peasants, and cancelling their debts. It also banned strikes and protests, arrested trade union leaders and maintained Selassie’s reactionary war against both the Tigrayan people and Eritrea, which had been annexed by Selassie in 1952. The Dergue rule became increasingly dictatorial.

In May 1991 a rebel coalition headed by the Tigray People’s Liberation Front entered the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, overthrew the Dergue, and recognized the right of independence of Eritrea. Though Tigrayans make up only 6% of Ethiopia’s population, the TPLF dominated the new government.

The now ruling TPLF and their former allies in Eritrea soon parted ways. Some 80,000 people died during a bloody Ethiopia-Eritrea border war from 1998 to 2000, and military clashes continued for two decades.

Chafing at the Tigray Front’s domination, as well as its jailing of political opponents, large protests forced the resignation of their government in 2018. Abiy was named the new prime minister, the first Oromo to hold that post. He rapidly reached a peace deal with the Eritrean government, sparking mass celebrations throughout both countries.

## Beijing-Washington rivalry

Abiy also increased the powers of the central government, pushed out Tigrayan military and government officials, and weakened the influence of other rival tribal-based capitalists in the country’s autonomous regions. He opened the door for greater foreign investment and trade, especially in developing significant natural gas reserves in the Ogaden region.

Ethiopia is a battle ground for eco-

## Protests in France hit racist cop attack, repressive law



PAP/EPA/Christophe Petit Tesson

ALES, France — Over 130,000 people took to the streets of Paris and cities across the country Nov. 28, protesting the cop beating of Michel Zecler, a music producer who is black, and a draft “security” law. The law would outlaw recording and distributing videos of the police if authorities deem the films could be used to “harm” the cops.

Days earlier a video was posted showing cops relentlessly beating Zecler. His “crime” — arriving at his music studio without wearing a face mask. As they beat him, cops shouted racist slurs. Zecler was arrested and accused of attacking the cops. Within hours, 11 million people had viewed the security camera video, later shown on national TV news. Charges against Zecler were dropped and the four cops have been charged, three with “racist violence.” Two of them were held behind bars over making false statements.

“We cannot let this pass,” protester Caroline Schatz told Reuters at the Paris march. “I have spent two years with the yellow vests and I have seen all the violence.” “Yellow vest” protests, initiated in small towns and rural areas in 2018, targeted the crushing effects of the capitalist economic crisis on working people and the disdain of President Emmanuel Macron. His government backed cop assaults on their actions.

Five days prior to the Nov. 28 protests, cops attacked a tent city of 450 immigrants from Afghanistan, set up in the Place de la Republique in Paris, confiscating their shelters.

On Nov. 30 Macron announced the withdrawal of the security law, stating he would submit a new version later.

— NAT LONDON

conomic and political influence between Beijing and Washington. Beijing loaned the Ethiopian government at least \$13.7 billion between 2000 and 2018, accounting for half of its foreign debt. The Export-Import Bank of China put up \$2.9 billion of the \$3.4 billion railway project connecting landlocked Ethiopia to Djibouti’s ports on the Red Sea.

Another sharp conflict in the region is Ethiopia’s construction of a \$4.6 billion dam on the Blue Nile. U.S. ally Cairo and the Sudanese government fear that the Ethiopian regime will use the dam to block water they depend on. When Abiy rejected a U.S.-crafted deal to resolve the dispute, Washington suspended millions of dollars in aid to Addis Ababa.

# Miami caravan: ‘End US economic war against Cuba!’

BY STEVE WARSHALL

MIAMI — A successful caravan of well over 100 participants in more than 80 cars and bikes took place here Nov. 29 demanding an end to the U.S. economic sanctions against Cuba.

The march was organized by a number of organizations and prominent individuals, including Carlos Lazo of Puentes de Amor, a teacher from Washington state who had organized a group that cycled across the country to protest the embargo; Code Pink; the U.S. Hands Off Cuba and Venezuela South Florida Coalition; Yadira Escobar; Angela Maria Callis Vicente (*La florecita cubana*); *El Invicto* (Roberto Garcia); *Mamboy* (Emilio Juarez Amoros); the Socialist Workers Party; and others.

Members of the Alianza Martiana — the most prominent group in Miami that defends revolutionary Cuba, calls for the U.S. to normalize relations and demands an end to the embargo — participated and helped organize the action.

Many riders on the over-an-hour-long caravan carried Cuban flags as well as posters and banners saying “No more blockade” and “End the embargo” in English and Spanish. The caravan passed through part of Miami’s Little Havana.

The monthly protests were initially called by Jorge Medina, known on YouTube as *El Protestón Cubano*, to take place on the last Sunday of every month.

“Democrats, Republicans, Cubans and non-Cubans, as well as people of diverse political views are united here to demand an end to U.S. sanctions against Cuba,” Lazo said at a rally shortly before the start of the caravan. “We ask that President-elect Joe Biden, when he takes office, repeal the economic sanctions that weigh so heavily upon the Cuban people. We are raising our voices to inaugurate a new era of ‘bridges of love’ between the peoples of Cuba and the United States.”

The caravan is part of a series of protest actions around the country announced during a Nov. 14-15 webinar on Normalization of Relations between Cuba and the United States, including one on the 17th of every month.

Actions on that date were also promoted during the program by Fernan-

do González, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples. Dec. 17, 2014, was the date the last of the Cuban Five were released from U.S. prisons and returned to Havana, and when Cuban President Raúl Castro and U.S. President Barack Obama announced they would hold talks aimed at restoring diplomatic relations between Washington and Havana.

A number of coalitions and groups around the country who oppose the U.S. rulers’ economic war against Cuba are making plans for Dec. 17 protests now. For further information, contact the National Network on Cuba at nnoc20012002@yahoo.com.



Militant/Chuck Guerra

Protesters rally in Miami Nov. 29 against U.S. embargo of Cuba.

—**MILITANT  
LABOR  
FORUMS**—

**CALIFORNIA**  
**Oakland**  
**Behind the War in Ethiopia.** Speaker: Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

**GEORGIA**  
**Atlanta**  
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# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles around the world! This column is dedicated to spreading the truth about workers struggles for a union movement in every workplace today. It gives a voice to those engaged in battle and helps build solidarity. We need your help to make it a success. If you are involved in a skirmish or strike or know other workers who are, please contact me at (212) 244-4899 or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story gets told.

—Roy Landersen

## Washington doctors, health care workers strike for patient safety

TACOMA, Wash. — Members of the Union of American Physicians and Dentists conducted a strike here Nov. 23-24 at Tacoma General Hospital and area clinics run by MultiCare Indigo Urgent Care.

The UAPD, an affiliate of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, won a union election in 2019 and is still bargaining for its first contract. The union represents doctors, dentists, physician assistants and nurse practitioners at some 20 urgent care facilities in the Puget Sound area.

“As doctors we are not trained in the direction of thinking about needing a labor union,” Dr. Brian Fox told the *Militant* Nov. 24 on the picket line at MultiCare Indigo in Burien. “What led us to strike is the safety of our patients and of the staff, which is endangered by the extended shifts we work without breaks and by the lack of personal protective equipment.

“The public has been very supportive,” he said. “Our patients offer to bring us masks. Our two-day strike is intended to get the company’s attention and to bring them back to the table for negotiations.”

“After a two-year fight for recognition of our union and one year of bargaining for a first contract,” the Union of American Physicians and Dentists bargaining team said in a letter to MultiCare, it has become clear to us that “management has not taken our concerns as providers seriously, especially when it comes to the most important issue: patient safety.”

“MultiCare is closing down a number of its clinics and laying off health care workers in the middle of a pandemic,” Dr. Jocelyn Devita said on the picket line in Tacoma. “As the company becomes more corporatized, profits are their main concern.

“Doctors are considered ‘exempt’ employees from labor standards because they are salaried,” she said. “We can’t take a rest break or even a lunch break and may see as many as 70 patients a day. And you have to stay until the last patient is seen, sometimes resulting in more than 12-hour days.”

“Even though N95 masks are available, the company won’t let doctors or staff wear them,” union organizer Gabrielle Hanley said. “The company claims these masks ‘scare’ patients, so doctors shouldn’t use them.”

Workers from the Washington State Nurses Association, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Firefighters and Teamsters union, as well as from Walmart, joined the picket lines in solidarity.

—Edwin Fruit

## Coles warehouse workers in Australia fight lockout, closing

SYDNEY — More than 350 workers at the Coles distribution center at Smeaton Grange in southwest Sydney are picketing daily, fighting a company lockout. Coles is one of the main supermarket chains in Australia, taking in almost 1 billion Australian dollars (\$719 million) in profit last year.

The workers, members of the United Workers Union, had begun a 24-hour walkout Nov. 19, as part of negotiations over a new contract, when the company announced they were locking them out until February.

Workers on the spirited picket line told *Militant* worker-correspondents Nov. 20 they plan to maintain their protest, turning up at the gates for their regular shifts, until Coles agrees to resume operations.

They said they were determined to stick together. They had continued working through the government-imposed lockdowns for the COVID-19 pandemic



Militant/Baskaran Appu

**Locked-out United Workers Union members picket Coles distribution center in Sydney, Australia, Nov. 20, in fight for pay raise, severance pay in warehouse closing, jobs at new facility.**

— as they were deemed “essential workers” — and also through thick smoke from nearby forest fires earlier this year.

The bosses have slated the Smeaton Grange warehouse for closure in 2023, when they plan to open a new, automated facility a few miles away. Workers are demanding a 5.5% pay raise, and a larger severance pay package with the closure. They want jobs and retraining at the new warehouse, which the picketers expect will have about 100 workers.

Picketers we spoke to said they are also fighting speedup and threats against workers who don’t “keep up.”

—Bob Aiken and  
Manuele Lasalo

## Sydney hospital walkout protests inadequate hospital staffing

SYDNEY — Over 100 nurses and midwives walked off the job at Blacktown Hospital in western Syd-

ney Nov. 19 to protest longstanding understaffing. Staff shortages at the public hospital have been an issue there for years as management aims to limit spending. Those working in the maternity department led the latest round of protests.

Births at the hospital have increased by 52.3% since 2015, while staffing levels have increased by only 11.5%. Nurses say this is unsafe for both patients and workers, with midwives being scheduled to work both day and night shifts for up to 64 hours a week, well over the maximum allowed.

The 24-hour protest strike was joined by nurses from other departments in the hospital that are also understaffed. The government Industrial Relations Commission ordered the workers to return to work at 10:30 p.m. that night.

—Bob Aiken

# Defend victory by small bakery

**Continued from page 2**

within 10 years. Oberlin College is no exception. The college’s enrollment has declined and the administration has had to dip into its \$880 million endowment for many years now.

In 2017 Oberlin College trustees brought on Carmen Twillie Ambar, the first African American president of the

college. Ambar was formerly president at Cedar Crest College in Pennsylvania, an institution that faced a major crisis she helped reverse with budget cuts, including layoffs of faculty and campus workers, and eliminating programs not deemed profitable.

## Stakes for working people

Ambar produced a “One Oberlin” report in 2019 that admits the college faces an “existential challenge” requiring wage and salary freezes and cuts, reductions and elimination of benefits, and layoffs. “We must foster a culture of managerial courage to make the key staffing and organizational changes necessary for Oberlin’s ongoing viability,” the report says.

Among the administration’s first budget cuts were dining hall and custodial workers organized by the United Auto Workers. The college tore up the union contract last February and outsourced 108 union jobs.

“The anti-labor, budget-cutting drive Ambar and college trustees are now leading extends to small businesses in town that the college exploits,” Thierjung said. “The Gibson family’s stand is a challenge to Oberlin College’s plans, opposition the administration and trustees refuse to accept. They are warning anyone who opposes them what they will face. But the Gibson family is standing up to the college. What does that mean for the labor movement and the rest of the town? It’s an example for working people everywhere that it’s better to fight.”

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



**December 18, 1995**

U.S. president Bill Clinton is moving at full steam to implement Washington’s decision to send 20,000 troops to Bosnia. The White House is deploying such a massive force in a workers state for the first time in decades. The State Department’s official goal is to enforce the partition of Bosnia.

The masters of the U.S. empire are trying to boost their military and economic domination of the region, get one up on their European competitors and take a stab at re-establishing capitalism in the former Yugoslavia.

Overall, 32,000 U.S. military personnel will be involved in the action, including the 20,000 GIs in Bosnia, 5,000 in Croatia, and 7,000 support troops in Hungary and Italy. The U.S. government is the dominant political and military force in western Europe.

Some 250,000 people have died in the military conflict that began in 1991.



**December 18, 1970**

DEC. 10 — Railroad workers shattered another tradition when they walked out in defiance of Congress and the courts. The rail workers’ resistance to government union-busting shows again the rising militancy of the working class, following the GE strike one year ago and the postal strike last winter.

These actions are signals to the ruling class and to the government that the workers — despite the weakness of their union leaders — are determined to use the organizational structure of their unions to defend their basic economic rights. They are resisting job attrition and an absolutely inadequate wage offer.

The resulting crisis is one more expression of the deepgoing economic and social crisis of a decaying capitalist order. The militant action contributes to the fight against the Vietnam war and the social system responsible for it.



**December 15, 1945**

SAN FRANCISCO — More than 1,000 anti-fascist workers picketed the first meeting here of Fascist Gerald L. K. Smith. Another 1,500 sympathetic on-lookers lined the streets in support of the demonstrators. Approximately 500 policemen, plain clothesmen and deputized “reserves” were on hand to protect America’s No. 1 Fascist.

Largely because of Stalinist influence, minimum steps were taken by the CIO to notify interested organizations of the picketing. In major local unions, no mention of the picket line was made at regular meetings.

The Socialist Workers Party distributed 10,000 leaflets at key points in the city, at trade union halls and on the waterfront, announcing the call to picket Smith’s meeting. The Trotskyists plan to popularize in every section of the Bay Area the slogan that “the fight against fascism is the fight of all labor.”



# Economic, health crisis deepens

**Continued from front page**  
for jobs will create better conditions to deepen these attacks and allow them to shore up their profits on the backs of working people.

But workers are finding ways to stand up to the bosses' assaults. Some 700 workers are on strike at 11 nursing homes owned by Infinity Healthcare in Illinois. Nurses held a one-day strike Dec. 1 in Albany, New York. Dozens of other strikes for better wages and conditions, including access to protection from coronavirus, have taken place over the last several months.

Alma Bonilla, one of the striking workers at an Infinity nursing center in Chicago, told the *Militant* that prior to their strike one supervisor told workers, "Go ahead and strike. There's 35,000 people who want your job."

The biggest division working people face is between those with a job and those without. Some 20.5 million people are collecting some form of unemployment benefits.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. Millions who were laid off in January or earlier have already exhausted all government jobless pay. Despite an eviction moratorium imposed by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, thousands have already been evicted. That moratorium expires Dec. 31 at the same time that all the special pandemic payouts run out, unless Congress extends them.

The official unemployment rate of 6.9% excludes millions of part-time workers who want to work full time, and those considered "discouraged" or "marginally attached" because they did not actively look for work over the last month. When they're included the unemployment rate is 12.1%.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, bosses added 638,000 jobs in October, including 84,000 in construction, 63,000 in warehousing, 109,000 temporary workers and 226,000 restaurant and hotel jobs. But as new government pandemic lockdowns are imposed, many of these jobs will go up in smoke.

One big winner in today's crisis are the bosses at Amazon. They're hiring an average of 1,400 a day worldwide, seek-

ing to cash in on profits from soaring online sales. At the same time, governments have let thousands of stores and other small businesses go to the wall.

Amazon reports a 53% rise in profits this year. Also rising are on-the-job injuries at their warehouses, as bosses use automation to drive workers to work faster to maximize the turnover of goods during the holiday shopping season.

Walmart bosses posted a 45% rise in profits, but only increased wages 63 cents an hour on average since March. More workers in different industries face a widening gap between take home pay and rising prices of basic necessities.

Delta Air Lines announced Nov. 25 that it got the pilots union to agree to a 5% cut in their guaranteed monthly work hours, in exchange for a "promise" to not furlough more pilots before 2022. Delta has already cut ground workers' hours and monthly pay by 25%. More bosses will follow Delta's example.

### Health care crisis

Combined with bosses' efforts to put the burden of the economic crisis on the backs of workers and farmers, is the disastrous response to COVID-19 by government at all levels and health industry bosses. They have done next to nothing to ensure adequate treatment is available for all those who are ill with COVID-19, 10 months after the pandemic began.

In many hospitals, personal protective equipment is still in short supply. The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists says 29 of 40 drugs that are critical for treating coronavirus patients face shortages.

National Public Radio reported Nov. 25 that some hospitals are so overwhelmed they are "rationing care," a euphemism for denying adequate attention to some patients on the bottom of the triage list. Providing political cover to hospital bosses in Colorado, Gov. Jared Polis issued an executive order Nov. 23 allowing them to turn patients away. Hospital bosses are also increasing the number of patients per nurse, who are already overloaded. In Tennessee authorities have built two field hospitals but they worry there won't be enough medical workers to staff them.

The Socialist Workers Party's action



Daily Mail/Adam Gray

**People wait in long lines at food bank in Bushwick in Brooklyn, N.Y., Nov. 26, for Thanksgiving dinner food. Many workers are forced to turn to food banks today for first time in their lives.**

platform raises demands that workers and our unions need to fight for today to get workers back to the one place where we can organize together to change the conditions we face — at work.

### Job is a basic right of workers

This includes fighting for a government-financed public works program to put the unemployed to work at union-scale wages building and repairing infrastructure to improve the lives of millions. Instead of bosses closing hospitals not "profitable" enough, workers can be put to work building more medical centers, including in rural areas. Our unions need to fight for unemployment pay for all those out of work — both U.S.- and foreign-born — as long as they need it.

The SWP platform explains that when bosses threaten more layoffs, we should fight for a cut in the workweek without any cut in our weekly take-home pay.

Some of the industries hardest hit by layoffs have been restaurants and hotels, where many of the workers are women. And "remote" schooling has forced many women to quit jobs or cut their hours to stay home with their children.

Many workers are getting by only with the help of area food banks. Pictures in newspapers across the country showed tens of thousands of families

waiting in long lines to get a turkey for Thanksgiving.

The Island Harvest Food Bank and Harry Chapin Regional Food Bank on Long Island in New York reported they had requests for 26,000 turkeys, 6,000 chickens and other food, many by people who've never been to a food bank before.

In New York City, hundreds of workers protested demanding the city issue more street vendor permits so they can make a living without fear of fines and police harassment. Hundreds of mostly immigrant food delivery workers also marched for improved conditions.

A Nov. 30 article in the *New York Times* described the conditions bosses inflict on delivery workers, from restaurants refusing to let them use the bathrooms to app companies ripping off tips. Several of those interviewed bought bicycles to work for app-based companies after losing restaurant and construction jobs because of the pandemic.

Fighting for amnesty for all workers without papers — which would eliminate the threat of deportation — would put immigrant and U.S.-born workers in the best position to join together to fight for unions, better wages and working conditions for all workers and strengthen the working class as a whole.

# Illinois nurses strike for staff, pay

### Continued from front page

by Infinity Healthcare Management.

The union is demanding a raise of at least \$2 an hour for all its members, who include certified nursing assistants, housekeepers and kitchen staff. They also call for equal pay at two of the struck facilities outside the greater Chicago area. The Infinity workers have been without a contract since June.

"The owner says he cares about us, but he's offering a 20-cent raise. That's not a slap in the face, it's a punch," Jackie Abulebdeh said outside the South Point Nursing and Rehabilitation Center on Chicago's South Side. For a while the company was giving them a pandemic bonus, "but if you called off one day you lost the COVID pay." The union says the pandemic pay was cut off in July, even though Infinity got \$12.7 million in federal aid to keep workers on the job.

Nursing assistant Amy Poole went straight from working night shift to the picket line when the strike started at 6 a.m. "I'm tired!" she said. "Try being responsible for 64 people all night for \$14! I was by myself on the floor."

"Every day we're working short," said

CNA Tope Oladele. "We're risking our lives, and we have to beg for supplies. We have to use the same mask working with COVID patients and with others."

"We're not asking too much to want proper PPE," said Diamond Wright. "They complain we use too many gloves! A lot of people buy our own PPE. And they're laying off workers!"

Asia Bulley said the company gave her a layoff date of Dec. 2.

"The residents depend on us coming in," said Reco Hicks, who's worked in housekeeping for six years and makes \$14 an hour, the Chicago minimum wage. "If they could be out here with us they would."

"This has been too much, for too long," said nursing aide Hashim Bellay at Infinity's Ambassador Nursing Center on the North Side. "We're on the front lines risking our lives for them to make profits."

Kitchen worker Alma Bonilla said one manager "threatened us, saying, 'Go ahead and strike. There's 35,000 people who want your job.'"

In one window, a resident had put up a sign reading, "Pay the people."

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# Moroccan gov't attack rekindles Polisario independence struggle

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Moroccan government forces attacked Sahrawi civilians in Western Sahara who were peacefully protesting against the monarchical regime extending its wall dividing their country. This has rekindled the national liberation struggle there.

For decades the people of Western Sahara have been fighting for independence and self-determination against Moroccan-government occupation, which has been backed by the imperialist powers of Washington, Paris and Madrid.

Moroccan armed forces entered a United Nations-patrolled demilitarized “buffer zone” in Guerguerat, in violation of a U.N.-brokered cease-fire that was put in place 29 years ago. Guerguerat is located in the southwest corner of Western Sahara close to its border with Mauritania.

Moroccan troops then crossed past the massive sand wall, known as the “berm,” which was built by the Moroccan regime to separate areas of Western Sahara controlled by the pro-independence Polisario Front from that occupied by the Moroccan regime — some 80% of the country. Polisario stands for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro, the two main populated regions that make up Western Sahara.

The Sahrawi protests in the Guerguerat strip that Moroccan troops fired on were organized in response to the Moroccan government building a road through the buffer zone to the Mauritanian border.

In response, Polisario Front leader Brahim Ghali announced Nov. 14 that attacks by the Sahrawi People’s Liberation Army against Royal Moroccan Army forces occupying Western Sahara will resume.

## Solidarity statement

The World Federation of Democratic Youth, which includes the Young Socialists in the U.S., expressed its solidarity with the Sahrawi people’s struggle in a Nov. 15 statement: “We denounce the illegal actions of the Moroccan army. We urge the resolution of this conflict,

which cannot culminate in any other way than with the end of the occupation and with the exercise of the right of self-determination of the Sahrawi people, which has been denied to them for so many years.”

The statement calls for efforts to get out the word about “the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara, the complicity of the ruling classes with this occupation, and about the necessity of supporting the Sahrawi cause and struggles.”

The U.S. government is the largest supplier of arms to the Moroccan monarchy. Rabat also hosts the annual “African Lion” U.S. military exercise in North Africa. Last year Washington approved up to \$10 billion in new arms sales to the Moroccan government, including F-16 jets and Apache attack helicopters.

Washington and other imperialist powers have their eyes on the vast phosphate reserves in Western Sahara and rich fishing grounds off its coast, now in the hands of the Moroccan regime, as well as untapped offshore oil deposits.

## Sahrawi fight for self-determination

As with many nations in Africa, the borders of Western Sahara were imposed by the main imperial powers of Europe at the Berlin Conference of 1885, a division of the continent for exploitation. Spain’s claim to Western Sahara was codified there.

In the late 1960s, under the impact of the post-World War II anti-colonial struggles that swept through Africa and Asia, Sahrawi nationalists launched a struggle for independence from Madrid.

The Polisario Front, founded in 1973, launched armed battles that forced Madrid to relinquish control over Western Sahara in 1975. But the Moroccan regime then annexed two-thirds of the country and the government of Mauritania took the rest.

The Polisario fighters continued their struggle, and established the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic with a government-in-exile in Algeria. It is currently recognized by some 40 countries, a decline from a highpoint of 84.

By 1979 Polisario had defeated Mauritania’s forces. As they pulled out, Moroccan forces moved in to occupy all of Western Sahara.

## Protests, regime’s repression continue in Belarus



lut.by

The authoritarian quarter-century-old regime of Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus is trying to ride out widespread and sizable anti-government protests by intensifying a police crackdown. Lukashenko is also under pressure from his prime backer, the Vladimir Putin government in Moscow, to carry out promised “constitutional reforms” to try to defuse the crisis now that many of his opponents — rival capitalist politicians as well as protest and workers’ leaders — have been jailed or exiled.

Thousands attended a memorial service in Minsk, the capital, Nov. 20, above, for Roman Bondarenko, a 31-year-old protester whose brutal murder at the hands of masked cops had been videoed and widely circulated.

“It was obvious that very soon the authorities would make a mistake,” protester Hanna Varsotskaya wrote the *Militant* from Minsk the day of the funeral, causing “a new wave of indignation.” This helped strengthen people’s determination “not to give up and to continue our pressure on the regime,” she said. “Our movement will never stop completely, until we achieve our aims.”

Thousands joined at least 20 “marches of neighbors” in Minsk Nov. 29, as part of more decentralized protests across the country to avoid mass detentions. Still, some 300 were arrested. Over 30,000 people have been detained at one time or another, with many badly beaten. Workers have been fired, including at least 49 at the huge Belaruskali potash mine, and students expelled.

Protests broke out across the country when the regime spread the lie that Bondarenko had been killed in a drunken brawl. A doctor and a reporter were arrested after the medical report on the killing was leaked, which showed Bondarenko’s blood alcohol level was zero. Scores of workers at the Minsk Motor works came out of the plant holding up signs reading “0%.”

During a visit to the Belarusian capital Nov. 26, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told Lukashenko that Moscow wants him to act now on the “constitutional reforms,” including closer integration with Russia. The next day the Belarusian president talked of stepping down once this was done and a revised constitution adopted to allow new elections. These maneuvers just convinced many protesters the regime is in trouble.

— ROY LANDERSEN

roccean forces moved in to occupy all of Western Sahara.

The liberation struggle continued. Some 9,000 people were killed over 16 years of war and many Sahrawis were forced to flee to refugee camps in southwestern Algeria. Currently 180,000 people live in these camps.

Despite much more advanced weaponry supplied by imperialist powers, the Moroccan forces have been unable to militarily defeat the Polisario Front. In 1991 both sides agreed to a U.N.-brokered cease-fire. The agreement called for holding a referendum where Sahrawis could choose independence.

But the kingdom has blocked all attempts to hold such a vote. Rabat relocated some 350,000 Moroccans there and insisted they be included in any referendum. Because of this, and the forced flight of refugees, Moroccans make up two-thirds of the country’s half million population.

After Muhammad VI ascended to the throne in 2001, the regime dropped all talk of a referendum, unless it guaranteed continued Moroccan sovereignty.

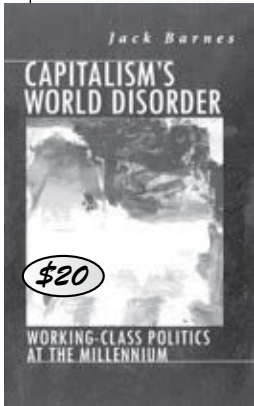
In the 1980s Moroccan forces also built over 1,500 miles of a massive earthen wall, the berm, to keep the Polisario Front out of Moroccan-occupied territory.

The Sahrawi people have kept up

their struggle to win independence, gaining solidarity and international support. This has included active participation in the World Federation of Democratic Youth and in the World Festivals of Youth and Students it organizes, sending representatives from both the occupied zones and the refugee camps to get the truth out about the harsh conditions they face and their fight for self-determination.

## Capitalism’s World Disorder

by Jack Barnes



“A new pattern is being woven in struggle today as working people emerge from a period of retreat. The emerging pattern is taking shape, defined by the actions of a vanguard whose ranks increase with every single

worker or farmer who reaches out to others with the hand of solidarity and offers to fight together.”

**pathfinderpress.com**



Militant/Mike Shur



# ‘Cuban Revolution is sustained in power by working people’

Fidel Castro: Nothing Can Stop the Course of History, *one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December, is a wide-ranging interview given by the central leader of the Cuban Revolution in 1985. His interviewers were Jeffrey M. Elliot, a U.S. journalist, and Mervyn M. Dymally, a U.S. congressman. The excerpts are from the section where Castro explains that the revolution — from the battles in the mountains in the 1950s to today — has never engaged in repression or reprisals against those with different views, but relies entirely on a people “who had ideals, thoughts, revolutionary fervor, and strong ideological motivations for supporting the revolution.” This enabled Cuba's workers and farmers to take political power into their own hands and defend it over decades from Washington's implacable hostility. Copyright © 1986. Reprinted by permission of Pathfinder Press.*



Fidel Castro presents Second Declaration of Havana to million-strong assembly, Feb. 4, 1962. Cuban working people transformed themselves through the fight to take political power, making first socialist revolution in the Americas and defending it from U.S. aggression ever since.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

JEFFREY M. ELLIOT: The U.S. press has reported, on numerous occasions, that Cuba's prisons are filled with a large number of political prisoners — men and women who dared to criticize your regime. And many in the U.S. believe this to be true. Do you deny this charge?

FIDEL CASTRO: There was a time, naturally, when there were a lot of counter-revolutionary prisoners. But there were

reasons for that. During the first few years after the triumph of the revolution, when U.S. hostility against our country began — when the CIA began infiltrating weapons, explosives, saboteurs, and established armed gangs in all provinces and dozens of counterrevolutionary organizations, giving them not only material aid but also political and moral support — how could we help having a lot of prisoners? For instance, we captured over 1,200 invaders immediately after the Playa Girón mercenary invasion. Ask those invaders — whom we later returned to the United States in a ship loaded with “heroes” — if any of them were beaten, if any of them were tortured, if any of them were ill-treated. ...

Our courts hand down verdicts based on laws to punish counterrevolutionary actions. The idea that anyone is punished in our country for professing belief other than those of the revolution is absolutely ridiculous. There are tens of thousands of people whose political and religious concepts and beliefs differ from those of the revolution. They have full legal guarantees. ...

[N]o matter what our enemies may say, or how much they may lie and slander us, the history of the revolution is free of cases of physical abuse or torture. All the citizens in this country, without exception, know this. We waged a hard campaign against these practices throughout the underground struggle and the war. Our cadres, our soldiers,

and our people became very aware of and opposed to these methods. I might ask whether any other revolution has maintained the serenity, coolheadedness, firmness, and consistent respect for laws and ethical principles that has typified the Cuban revolution. Not even in the most difficult moments during the war did we depart from those principles!

Why did we triumph in our struggle against the counterrevolution, against the CIA with all its experience? Because our people knew more than the CIA. The CIA worked on the basis of mercenaries, high pay, and accounts in U.S. banks. We worked on the basis of people who had ideals, thoughts, revolutionary fervor, and strong ideological motivations for supporting the revolution and for infiltrating the counterrevolutionary organizations both inside the country and abroad. Our police couldn't use torture, so they developed their intelligence and became very effective in the struggle against elements which lacked sound moral convictions. We often knew more about what they were doing than they did. They might not remember what they had done seven months earlier on a specific day, but we did, because it was on record.

We have defended ourselves with the support of the people and the cooperation of the masses. We've never had to resort to anything illegal — to force, torture, or crime. Throughout the entire history of the revolution, no

one can point to a single case of torture, murder, or disappearance, which are common, everyday occurrences in the rest of Latin America.

Another thing: never has a demonstration been broken up by the police! Never in twenty-six years has a policeman used tear gas, beaten a citizen during a demonstration, or used trained dogs against the people. Never has a demonstration here been repressed by the army or the police — something that happens every day everywhere else in Latin America and in the United States itself. ...

[W]e have never told a lie. Never! This tradition dates back to the war. Throughout the war, all the information we released on the fighting — the number of casualties, the munitions captured — was all strictly accurate. We didn't add one single bullet or rifle. That same tradition, initiated by the first rebel column, was followed by the rest. These columns would arrive at the central part of the island, or the northern part of Oriente Province, and establish a radio station. We knew that when they reported an action, that report was accurate. That is, not even war justifies a lie or the exaggeration of a victory. This has been a very important element in our revolution. Whenever surrender conditions were negotiated, the enemy soldiers and officers of any encircled unit were absolutely confident that those conditions would be strictly observed.

Then there is another objective element which explains our relationship with the people. Who forms the immense majority of our population? First and foremost, the working people. The workers and the peasants, the manual and intellectual workers, have many reasons to support the revolution. Women, who constitute half of the population — be they workers or housewives — the country's black population, and the students and young people in general also have many reasons to support the revolution. ...

The phenomenon of the revolution cannot be understood if you don't realize that it is sustained in power by the support of the people and not by force.

I repeat, if one day the revolution did not have the support of the overwhelming majority of the people, it could not endure. This revolution cannot be sustained in power by force.

December

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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# Biden picks record advancing US wars

**Continued from front page**

passage of the resolution that allowed President George Bush to organize the bloody invasion and overturn the government. This has led to years of war, disorder and crisis in the region.

Like President Donald Trump, Biden confronts the challenge of shoring up the authority of the world’s dominant capitalist ruling class against its rivals, as competition for markets and turf sharpen amid an economic crisis for working people.

Biden named long-time aide Antony Blinken, a former Obama administration official, as secretary of state. Blinken had backed Biden’s support for the U.S. rulers’ occupation of Iraq, denounced Obama for not intervening more aggressively in Syria’s civil war, and championed Washington’s airstrikes on Libya.

Biden named former Obama officials Avril Haines, Jake Sullivan and Linda Thomas-Greenfield as director of national intelligence, national security adviser, and ambassador to the United Nations respectively. Haines was the architect of Washington’s use of drone strikes under Obama, strikes that killed thousands in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

“Biden brings back the establishment,” cheered a headline in the *Washington Post*. Biden says his administration represents “the return of American exceptionalism,” as the *Financial Times* puts it. That is, they will fight to keep the U.S. rulers’ place as top dog in the imperialist world.

During the campaign Biden castigated Trump as a threat to the liberal world order for damaging alliances he says are key to upholding the U.S. rulers’ dominant position. “Multilateralism is back,” Thomas-Greenfield gloated on her appointment.

But under the impact of declining profit rates and mounting capitalist competition, “multilateral” institutions meant to regulate the imperialist world order — like the European Union, NATO and the World Trade Organization — are increasingly coming apart.

Trump’s administration relied instead on unilateral sanctions to inflict damage on governments that got in Washington’s way. Those who bore the brunt of the punishing measures were working people in Cuba, Iran, Venezuela and elsewhere.

# Victory won in fight against restrictions on freedom to worship

**Continued from front page**

health experts, and we should respect the judgment of those with special expertise,” the unsigned majority decision says. “But even in a pandemic, the Constitution cannot be put away and forgotten.”

“While the pandemic poses many grave challenges,” Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote in a separate concurring opinion, “there is no world in which the Constitution tolerates color-coded executive edicts that reopen liquor stores and bike shops but shutter churches, synagogues and mosques.”

“The only explanation for treating religious places differently,” Gorsuch said, “seems to be a judgment that what happens there just isn’t as ‘essential’ as what happens in secular spaces.”

“*That* is exactly the kind of discrimination the First Amendment forbids,” he concluded.

## Earlier discriminatory rulings

The Supreme Court had ruled earlier this year against challenges to similar double standards set by the state governments in Nevada and California. This was before the recent appointment of Amy Coney Barrett by President Donald Trump.

Her appointment was decried by many liberals because she is Catholic. Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein had lectured Coney Barrett during her previous confirmation hearing to an appeals court judgeship, telling her “the dogma lives loudly within you.”

In a Nov. 12 talk to the Federalist Society, Justice Samuel Alito commented on the earlier Supreme Court ruling backing discriminatory limits on religious gatherings set by the governor of Nevada. Alito pointed to the danger of the rights to worship and free speech being demoted to “second class” rights. “A church, a synagogue or mosque, regardless of its size, may not admit more than 50 persons, but casinos and certain other favored facilities may admit 50% of their maximum occupancy,” he said, “and in the case of gigantic Las Vegas casinos, this means that thousands of

Liberals always claim Republicans are the party of war and tools of the “military-industrial complex.” But it was Democrat Harry Truman who prosecuted the U.S. rulers’ war against the working people of North Korea; and John F. Kennedy who organized the defeated Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and, along with his successor Lyndon Johnson, massively escalated Washington’s murderous war in Vietnam.

It was Barack Obama who said the Afghanistan war was the “right war” and sent tens of thousands more troops there as cannon fodder in a conflict that still rages today.

Also in front of the Biden team is the same intractable challenge faced by successive previous administrations — how to counter the rising power of Beijing. Blinken claims the new Biden team will be more effective in pushing back the Chinese rulers’ growing economic and military clout.

One example of the bellicose rhetoric employed by Democrats was a statement by Michele Flourney, one of the front runners to be Biden’s secretary of defense. To be able to deter Beijing, she wrote in June, Washington has to be able to “threaten to sink all of China’s military vessels, submarines and merchant ships in the South China Sea within 72 hours.”

## Recognition of Israel, a Palestinian state

Despite their hatred and contempt for Trump and his policies, some liberal commentators are urging Biden not to reverse the initiatives Trump has taken that led to the mutual recognition of Israel by the governments of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, nor upend the prospects of Saudi Arabia and other Arab governments doing the same.

The rulers in Bahrain, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, as well as in the U.S. and Israel, share a common interest in pushing back the Iranian rulers’ growing use of their military forces to intervene in the region and its continuing wars.

These pacts create better conditions for talks between the government of Israel and Palestinian organizations that could lead to the mutual recognition of Israel and of a Palestinian state. Steps in

patrons are allowed.”

Donna Lieberman, director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, and Daniel Mach, director of the American Civil Liberties Union’s Program of Freedom of Religion and Belief, attacked the ruling. “The freedom to worship is one of our most cherished fundamental rights,” Mach said, “but it does not include a

# Key question for workers is need to be on the job

**Continued from front page**

This is the central challenge facing working people. When workers are out of work, or confined to their homes under government lockdowns, they can lose their sense of belonging to a working class, a participant in fighting to defend ourselves.

The capitalist rulers use their schools, media and political parties to tell us we’re incapable of uniting to

## EDITORIAL

wage effective struggles against the conditions their crisis-ridden system perpetuates. Instead, they tell us to look out for number one, rely on the government and wait the crisis out, hoping you’ll scrape through regardless of what happens to the rest of our class.

But from on-the-job actions at workplaces around the country, to strikes by retail, hospital and other workers, working people are finding ways to come together and stand up to the employers’ unrelenting drive to increase profits at our expense. We are fighting for jobs, better wages, and protection from the pandemic. The strike by workers at 11 Chicago care homes demanding more staff, a wage raise, a contract and equal pay is only the most recent instance.

The discipline, courage and unity workers develop when we resist sets an example to millions of others who face similar conditions. We begin to learn what



Official White House Photo by Pete Souza  
**Joe Biden, left, with Barack Obama and other officials, including Secretary of State nominee Antony Blinken, back right, in White House war room during 2011 U.S.-organized assassination of Osama bin Laden.**

this direction would be good for working people, breaking the cycle of bloody conflicts and opening space for common struggle by workers and farmers in Israel, Palestine and beyond.

Tehran reacted to the assassination of top Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrazadeh in Absard, Iran, Nov. 27, with anger, but no military retaliation. Hoping the incoming Biden team might be pressured to reduce sanctions in exchange for a renewed nuclear pact, the Iranian rulers said they would wait before giving any response. The regime accused the Israeli government of organizing a hit squad to carry out the attack.

Former Obama foreign policy aide Ben Rhodes called the attack “an outrageous action aimed at undermining diplomacy between an incoming U.S. administration and Iran.” He wasn’t outraged that an Iranian scientist was murdered on the soil of his native country, but that it might mess with Biden’s ability to scuttle Trump’s policies.

“Iranian leaders would be wise to wait for the return of responsible American leadership on the global stage,” former CIA director and Biden supporter John Brennan said.

Consistent with the CIA’s record over decades, Brennan’s “responsible leadership” included targeting people, including U.S. citizens, for assassination in drone strikes and managing the agency’s “enhanced interrogation” programs, a code-word for torture.

license to harm others or endanger public health.”

Left unanswered, however, was the discriminatory difference in Cuomo’s restrictions on religious services as opposed to grocery stores, political meetings and other gathering locations. As Alito pointed out, “even a public health emergency does not absolve” the court of its “duty to defend the Constitution.”

we are capable of becoming.

The Socialist Workers Party is campaigning for workers and our unions to mount an uncompromising struggle to compel the government to fund a public-works program to put millions back to work at union-scale wages, building the hospitals, houses, schools, day care centers and other things working people need. Whenever bosses threaten more layoffs, we need to fight for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, 30 hours work for 40 hours pay!

As workers fight together, it opens the door to building our unions and our own political party, a labor party. Without a party of our own, workers see no other road than the dead end of trying to choose a “lesser evil” in the bosses’ Democratic and Republican parties. With our own party, we can champion the struggles of all those exploited and oppressed by capital and build an alliance with farmers under attack from the same class that exploits us. As we advance our struggle, we become different people, with self-confidence and grounded in social solidarity. We draw upon the lessons of past working-class battles — from the U.S. class struggle to the example of the 1959 revolution made by Cuban workers and farmers.

With our own party, working people will chart a course to take political power into our own hands and establish a workers and farmers government and lay the basis for a future based on the creativity and self-worth of every individual.