

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Capitalist rulers' for-profit health system is disaster for workers
 — PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 84/NO. 50 DECEMBER 21, 2020

NY Remington workers march for severance pay, new jobs

BY VED DOOKHUN

ILION, N.Y. — Some 30 people participated in an informational picket here Dec. 5 to show support for United Mine Workers Local 717 members demanding Remington Outdoor Co. honor their union contract. Remington bosses filed for bankruptcy in July, terminated 585 workers in October, and cut off their health care and access to other benefits. They also refused to give severance and accrued vacation pay. Local 717 has held rallies twice a week here since the layoffs, and plans to continue.

The company has run the plant since 1828. In bankruptcy it sold off its brands of shotguns, rifles and ammunition to seven different buyers. It sold the plant to Roundhill Group, whose boss says he wants to refit it to build guns sometime in the future. The union says it wants jobs and a union contract when the plant reopens. There are few other industrial employers in Ilion, a village of 8,000.

“We will not back down,” Jacquie Sweeney, recording secretary of UMW Local 717, said as she welcomed people to the march.

She announced that members of the New York State United Teachers

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Organize to fight for jobs, wages and health!



Remington arms workers march Dec. 5 in Ilion, New York, to demand severance pay, vacation pay, after bosses declared bankruptcy. Albany nurses fighting for contract joined in solidarity.

Militant/Ved Dookhun

Demand jobs, gov't-funded lifelong health care for all

From farmers in India to workers fighting Remington bosses in Ilion, New York, working people are find-

EDITORIAL

ing ways to stand up to the determined moves by the bosses to use government-imposed lockdowns to

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New gov't lockdowns make workers' jobs crisis worse

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

While the government claims unemployment is going down, tens of millions of working people have been out of work for many months and thousands more job cuts have been announced. And bosses are demanding bigger wage and benefit cuts and imposing unsafe conditions for those who remain in a job.

Nothing is more important than for workers to be on the job so we can unite to stand up to boss attacks on

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India farmers: 'End the gov't attack on our livelihoods!'

BY ROY LANDERSEN

A monthslong rebellion by Indian farmers, which has drawn solidarity actions from the Indian diaspora around the world, continues to intensify, shaking the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Hundreds of thousands of family farmers converged on the capital, New Delhi, at the end of November, demanding repeal of new agriculture laws that threaten their livelihoods.

Many more joined a nationwide strike Dec. 8, blocking highways, rail lines and food markets for Delhi and Mumbai, home to more than 50 million people.

Modi says the new measures are to “modernize” Indian agriculture by giving farmers greater market “flexibility,” but millions of toilers on the land know they will be the ones to lose out.

The laws are a product of growing pressure from the country's billionaire ruling families to extract greater profits from the massive agricultural workforce by ending decades-old state subsidies. Imperialist governments, including the U.S., Australia, Canada and Japan, all rival agricultural exporters, have attacked India's price support programs.

“Our already meager profits are in danger if the government lets big businesses control prices,” Kishan Kushwaha, one protesting farmer from Haryana state, told CBS News.

After the laws passed in September, Continued on page 2

Socialist Workers Party brings action program to working people

BY JANICE LYNN AND SAM MANUEL

CARROLLTON, Ga. — “I'm 100% for that,” Dylan Tapia told Rachele Fruit, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate, when she said working people need to break from the Democrats and Republicans and build their own party, a labor party. Fruit was campaigning at the Walmart parking lot here Dec. 5, ahead of the upcoming Jan. 5 special election.

Fruit's campaign is part of the SWP's ongoing effort to bring the *Militant* and the party's fighting action program to workers and farmers across the country.

“I've been talking to people where I work about the need for a union, but many are afraid,” said Tapia, who works for a medical information tech-



Walmart worker Kywaun Lewis talks with Rachele Fruit, SWP candidate for US Senate, in Carrollton, Georgia, Dec. 5.

Militant/Janice Lynn

nology company.

Fruit showed Tapia *Tribunes of the People* and the *Trade Unions*, which includes articles by revolutionary

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Shift in Middle East can lead to new opening for working people

BY TERRY EVANS

The most significant developments in the Middle East in years are the agreements reached by the rulers in Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain for mutual recognition, facilitated by the administration of President Donald Trump. These Sunni Arab rulers, and others in the region, are also increasing military and economic connections with the Israeli government.

This developing shift is grounded in efforts to build a common front against the capitalist rulers in Iran. They have entrenched their armed forces and allied militias in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen, as wars and civil strife shake the region, and continue to threaten the existence of Israel.

Since the Trump administration pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran, the regime there has resumed amassing enriched uranium and developed high-precision ballis-

tic missiles, which it used in destructive strikes against Saudi Arabia's oil fields and has shared with its allies.

The Iranian rulers fear any extension of opposition among working Continued on page 9

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New York nurses strike for safety, patient care, better wages

Airport workers challenge boss demands for 25% wage cut

India farmers: ‘End attacks!’

Continued from front page protests began uniting farmer organizations and agricultural laborers’ unions. The bills would end not only minimum price supports for working farmers but also prohibitions on hoarding, cheap government loans and subsidy payments when crops are destroyed by natural disasters.

The laws would remove government-regulated prices for crops such as rice, wheat and beans. Big corporate buyers could drive down prices of farm produce. Meanwhile, costs of farm inputs like machinery, seed and fertilizer continue to rise, crushing family farmers.

Despite police use of water cannons and barriers, some 300,000 farmers from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and other states set up camps for miles along five main roads to the capital, blocking traffic. Stocked with months of food, fuel and other supplies, the make-shift camps have a festive atmosphere.

Small farmers from Punjab, many of whom are Sikh, have led the way. Punjab is called the nation’s “breadbasket.” Mass protests and strikes spread to the southern states of Kerala and Karnataka as well as the northeast state of Assam and sugar farmers in Uttar Pradesh.

Family farmers, some 86% of the total in India, till plots of five acres or less. Many are being crushed by a mounting debt burden. In 2019 some 10,000 Indian farmers committed suicide.

“No farmers, no food!” is a slogan of the solidarity protests, largely by Indian immigrant workers, around the world. The largest in London drew thousands Dec. 6, reflecting the large Indian diaspora in the U.K., the former colonial power in the subcontinent. At an Oct. 4 demonstration of some 4,000 people in Southall, London — an area known as

Little Punjab — British Sikhs chanted, “Long live unity between farmers and laborers” and “Save farmers.” Hundreds have also taken to the streets in major cities across the U.S., Canada and Australia, protesting New Delhi’s attack on the farmers.

Farmers and workers solidarity

Over half of India’s 480-million strong workforce of farmers and farm laborers toil on 146 million farms passed down through generations. Half the total population of 1.35 billion depends on agriculture for a living.

India’s capitalist economy, partly due to drastic pandemic shutdowns, is in the worst recession since independence in 1947. But agricultural production grew by 3.4% in the past six months.

Tens of millions of workers, from both the private and public sector unions, held a general strike Nov. 26 against the Modi government’s new anti-union laws, which give bosses greater room to fire workers. The strike also extended support to the farmers’ march on Delhi.



Indian Express/Harmeet Sodhi; inset, Militant/Katy LeRougetel

Protesting farmers in India occupy rail bridge Nov. 27, part of “March on Delhi” against laws ending government price supports. Inset, part of solidarity demonstration in Montreal Dec. 6.

The All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee, a united front of over 250 farmers’ organizations, announced their support for the strikers.

Under the pressure of the protests, the government offered Dec. 5 to amend the law and keep the price support scheme

for farmers. But they wouldn’t give up. They want to scrap *all* the laws, drawn up without consulting them. “Future generations will remember us for the revolution we are leading,” Binod Kumar, a protesting farmer from Uttar Pradesh, told the media.

Farmworkers in Peru defeat gov’t anti-labor law

BY SETH GALINSKY

Thousands of farmworkers fighting for higher wages and better working conditions ended a six-day strike and blockade of highways across Peru Dec. 4, after the Peruvian Congress revoked the anti-labor “Agrarian Promotion Law.” This was a key demand of the workers.

The strike, which began in the southern part of the country, rapidly spread to the north, paralyzing production of grapes, tangerines, blueberries, avocados and asparagus. Farmworkers’ road-

blocks kept hundreds of trucks from making it to Lima, the capital. “Getting rid of this discriminatory law is a big victory,” Nelson Huamán Roncal told the *Militant* by phone. Huamán, secretary for the defense of labor of the national Fentagro farmworkers union, works in the citrus orchards and is a leader of the union at the Camposol fruit and vegetable company in Chao, in the northern department of La Libertad. The agrarian law was passed in 2000 to benefit big agro-exporting landlords. Last year in December the Peruvian government extended it until 2031. Under this law farm bosses can keep workers as temporary employees indefinitely. This helps them avoid overtime pay requirements, and lets them pay less than the official minimum wage by counting annual bonuses as part of hourly pay. “We don’t get the benefits we should,” Huamán said. “Sometimes we have to work from 3 in the morning to 7 at night, but don’t get overtime.” The union is demanding that wages be doubled to a minimum of 2,000 sols a month (\$555),

with all workers given permanent jobs. “What exists is a whole bunch of contracts where a worker is hired for three or four months. There’s no stability,” Huamán said. “But here in this valley there is work all year round. There’s no reason not to hire workers permanently.” Nearly nine out of 10 workers are hired as temps, according to the government’s own figures, and get paid less than permanent workers. “There should be no differences among workers,” Huamán said. “We have to be united.” In the southern province of Ica, the big agro-export companies made \$6.6 billion in 2018, a 12% increase, a union statement said, while farmworkers were earning \$11 a day. “The supervisors, the experts and the owners can’t keep treating us however they want,” the union said. Jorge Muñoz, a 19-year-old farmworker at Camposol, was killed when cops shot at protesters. “We want justice,” Flor Jiménez, his mother, told the press, “so that this doesn’t happen to anyone else.”

THE MILITANT

‘Militant’ tells truth about conflict in Ethiopia

Behind the monthlong war in Ethiopia between the federal government and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front was a conflict over control of the riches of the rapidly expanding economy. Washington, Beijing and other capitalist powers have stakes in the outcome.

Militant/Mike Shur

Map shows strategic position of Ethiopia in Horn of Africa near Middle East.

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

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SWP gets action program out

Continued from front page

leaders Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Farrell Dobbs and SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. “A tribune of the people,” the back cover says, “uses every manifestation of capitalist oppression to explain why it’s workers and our allies who can and will — in the course of struggles by the unions and beyond — lay the foundations for a world based not on violence and competition, but on solidarity among working people worldwide.” Tapia got the book and subscribed to the *Militant*.

“A campaign outside of the Democrats and Republicans would be nice for a change,” Kywaun Lewis, 21, told Fruit just after finishing his job giving out samples at the Walmart. His work hours had been drastically cut. “With my unemployment benefits I bought this car so I could take a second job making deliveries for DoorDash,” he said.

“The key question today is the fight for jobs,” Fruit said. “We need to fight for a shorter workweek to spread around the available work, with no cut in pay.”

“They try to get us to think we can’t do anything to change our conditions,” Fruit said. “But as workers go through struggles, we will gain the confidence that we can unite to win.”

Lewis subscribed to the *Militant* and purchased *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Barnes.

Pandemic used as pretext to go after working people

BY NAOMI CRAINE

MAYWOOD, Ill. — “These companies use the pandemic as an excuse” to go after workers’ rights and conditions, truck driver Shishonie Perry told Socialist Workers Party member Leroy Watson and this worker-correspondent when we knocked on his door in this Chicago suburb Dec. 6. Perry owns his rig and works for a company that delivers containers for a major grocery chain.

In June the company tried to cut the pay rates for both independent truckers and those it hires directly.

At the beginning of one shift, he said, 45 truckers, both independent and company-hired drivers, told bosses they were quitting immediately over the pay cut. With hundreds of thousands of dollars in goods waiting to be delivered, the bosses backed down and left the old rates alone. It’s out of struggles like these that the union movement will be rebuilt and extended, we told him.

The federal government has raised the cap on how many hours truckers can drive, Perry reported. “Some people said they’d work the extra hours. But it took a fight to get that limit. It’s not safe to drive even longer.”

It’s similar on the railroads, where the government gave the bosses waivers on key safety regulations because of alleged “manpower shortages,” while thousands of workers, including myself,

were on furlough. It’s the bosses’ government not ours, I told him. The SWP’s action program says we need to fight for workers control of all aspects of production, including all aspects of safety.

Perry’s mother had worked in a nursing home and he had followed the just-ended strike by workers in 11 homes in the Chicago area. “They might have gotten a dollar raise,” Perry said, “but they haven’t really won because the company will be back for more.”

They increased their unity and self-confidence by standing up and fighting, we told him. All gains workers make through our struggles are temporary as long as the exploiting class holds power. But through our struggles, we explained, we open the road to building a movement that can lead millions to replace the dictatorship of capital we live under with a government of workers and farmers. Perry subscribed to the *Militant*.

Working people need our own party

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

ENNIS, Texas — “The problems we face are caused by the capitalist system that puts profits first,” Socialist Workers Party member George Chalmers told former Walmart worker Kay Honza, when we came to her doorstep in this small town south of Dallas Dec. 2.

“I agree,” Honza said. “We are footing the bill so that the rich can stuff their faces. I get only \$562 in Social Security after working all my life.”

Socialist Workers Party action program

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY PRESENTS A FIGHTING WORKING-CLASS PROGRAM. WE NEED TO ORGANIZE TO FIGHT GROWING EMPLOYER ATTACKS ON OUR JOBS, WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS. Build solidarity with workers’ struggles to organize and defend themselves. On this course, we can build and use union power on our own behalf, and for all those suffering blows by the bosses and their government. One union for all drivers — taxi, Uber, Lyft and other app-based and car service drivers!

MILLIONS NEED JOBS TODAY! Our unions need to fight for a federal government-financed public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages building hospitals, schools, housing, mass transportation and much more that workers need. Fight for a sliding scale of hours and wages to stop layoffs and the effects of runaway prices. Cut the workweek with no cut in pay! For cost-of-living clauses in every contract that raise pay and retirement benefits to offset every rise in prices!

Demand immediate national government unemployment benefits at union scale for *all* those thrown out of work as long as they need it.

WORKERS NEED THEIR OWN PARTY, A LABOR PARTY. For our unions to lead a class break from the parties of the bosses, the Democrats and Republicans. A labor party can organize workers in our millions to fight in our own interest and in the interests of all those exploited and oppressed by capital. It can chart a course to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and establish a workers and farmers government.

WORKERS CONTROL OF PRODUCTION. Workers need to fight to wrest



Militant/George Chalmers

“Everything in this country is about money,” said apprentice electrician Joshua Liska as he got *Militant* subscription from Alyson Kennedy in Ennis, Texas, Dec. 2. “We have to change things.”

Her son lost his job earlier this year.

“I get very angry about what is happening to us in this country,” Honza said. “We need a march on Washington to say we want our money.”

“And we need to be at work to fight together to defend the interests of working people,” I told her. “We need to demand that the government provide immediate relief for workers without a job for as long as they need it. The only thing that will change our conditions is when we fight for our interests.” Honza got a copy of the *Militant* and said she would get a subscription the next time we visit.

Joshua Liska, a 22-year-old apprentice electrician, is still working, “but

my wife got laid off from a small store with the first lockdown,” he said.

“The bosses pay those of us still working less wages,” I said, “they cut hours and force us to work in unsafe conditions.”

“Everything in this country is about money,” Liska said. “We have to change things.”

“Working people need our own party, a labor party based on fighting unions, that is not about getting votes, but organizing working people to fight,” Chalmers said. Liska subscribed to the *Militant* and purchased the book *Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa*.

CUBA’S REVOLUTION — AN EXAMPLE.

The Cuban Revolution in 1959 showed it is possible for workers and farmers to transform themselves in struggle, to take political power and uproot capitalist exploitation. End the US rulers’ economic war against Cuba; US out of Guantánamo.

FIGHT POLICE BRUTALITY! Demand that cops who kill and brutalize people be prosecuted. Fight racist discrimination and the entire capitalist injustice system, with its frame-ups, “plea bargains,” onerous bail and “three strike” prison sentences, all of which disproportionately hit workers who are Black. For the right to vote for ex-prisoners and all workers behind bars.

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL. Fight for universal, government-guaranteed cradle-to-grave health care, and retirement income for all.

WOMEN’S RIGHT TO ABORTION. Defend women’s right to unrestricted access to family planning services, including the right to safe, secure abortions.

DEFEND POLITICAL RIGHTS. Defend the right to vote, to free speech and assembly and to bear arms, under attack from Democrats and Republicans alike. Defend freedom of worship. Stop FBI and other government spying, harassment and disruption. No to reactionary “cancel culture” and efforts to shut up people by public lynching through social media.

DEFEND RIGHTS OF PRISONERS. End solitary confinement. End suppression of the *Militant*, books and other newspapers by prison authorities. Abolish the death penalty, an anti-working-class weapon in the hands of the rulers.

‘Militant’ holiday schedule

The ‘Militant’ will be taking a break Dec. 25-Jan 2. Issue no. 1 in 2021 will be mailed out Dec. 24. The following issue will sent out Jan. 7.

Cuba exposes ‘San Isidro’ smear, defends record on art and culture

BY RÓGER CALERO

U.S. government officials and the big-business media are once again resorting to timeworn slanders that the Cuban government is a “dictatorship” following Cuban authorities stopping a Nov. 26 protest action in Havana by opponents of the Cuban Revolution who call themselves “independent artists.”

The fact is the Cuban Revolution has a proud 60-year record fostering development of book publishing, film, music, and artistic creation, expanding access to culture and education among millions of people in city and countryside.

Cuban authorities had evicted from their headquarters and briefly detained a group of 14 members of the so-called San Isidro Movement, an anti-government group. They had been on a hunger strike against the detention of Denis Solís, one of its members, who presents himself as a rap artist. He was found guilty by a Cuban court of contempt of authority for insulting and threatening bodily harm to a police officer in the line of duty and sentenced to eight months in prison.

On Nov. 27, some 200 artists, writers and students gathered outside the Ministry of Culture in Havana to voice concerns over the eviction, and to discuss freedom of expression. Vice Minister of Culture Fernando Rojas and representatives of cultural and artist organizations met for four hours with 30 of the demonstrators, including from the San Isidro group, and agreed to more discussions.

Most of the participants were “influenced by the atmosphere created on social networks. Few knew what actually happened at San Isidro or who was involved,” wrote Abel Prieto in the Cuban daily *Granma* Dec. 4. Prieto is director of Casa de las Américas, a renowned Cuban cultural institution and publisher. He had earlier served as president of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC), and was minister of culture for many years. “I think they honestly wanted to have a dialogue.”

‘An operation against the revolution’

“A minority participated with full awareness in an operation against the revolution,” Prieto said. “Their only interest in ‘dialogue’ was to turn it into news, into a show, and score it as a victory. Some needed to justify the money they are paid.”

“The cultural policy of the revolution has opened a wide and unprejudiced

space for creators to work in total freedom,” Prieto said, and Cuba’s cultural institutions, while having made some mistakes, “are open to frank discussion with artists and writers.”

As part of their decadeslong economic and political efforts to destroy the revolution in Cuba — under both Democratic and Republican administrations — the U.S. capitalist rulers have promoted and provided funds for individuals and groups that carry out anti-government activity under the banner of defending artistic and intellectual freedom.

Cuban television has shown documentary footage of participants in the protest being contacted by opponents of the Cuban Revolution in the U.S., inciting them to carry out acts of vandalism. It played videos of U.S. officials meeting with members of the San Isidro group.

On Nov. 28 Cuba’s foreign ministry called in U.S. Chargé d’Affairs Timothy Zúñiga-Brown, to protest Washington’s “grave interference in Cuba’s internal affairs.” In reply, Zúñiga-Brown said he would continue his contacts with opponents of the Cuban government and revolution.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo; Jake Sullivan, President-elect Joe Biden’s pick for National Security Adviser; and other Democratic and Republican politicians have joined to use this provocation to slander the Cuban Revolution.

Dozens of opponents of the Cuban Revolution held a rally in Miami Nov. 28 to support the San Isidro provocation. Small actions were also held that day in New York and five days later in Washington, D.C. Alex Otaola, a self-described YouTube “influencer” and main organizer of the action in Miami, calls on the U.S. government to further tighten economic sanctions against Cuba and for “free enterprise” there.

Dialogue within the revolution

Representatives of the Cuban Ministry of Culture, leaders of UNEAC, and the Saíz Brothers Association, a group



In Cuban 1961 literacy campaign 250,000 mostly young people taught workers and peasants to read and write, including in the remotest regions. “Although the aggressiveness of the U.S. began very early — through pressure and threats, attacks, bombings, financing armed gangs, and a fierce media campaign — the revolutionary government did not neglect to advance Cuban culture,” Abel Prieto, former Minister of Culture, wrote in *Granma* Dec. 4.

of young Cuban artists, held a follow-up meeting Dec. 5 with dozens of artists and writers, including participants in the Nov. 27 demonstration.

But in response to further provocative actions by the San Isidro group, the Cuban ministry announced the day before that it would not meet with individuals who have had direct contact and receive financial support from the U.S. government, or with media outlets that receive funds from U.S. government agencies.

Seeking to promote opposition to the Cuban Revolution, San Isidro group leaders have focused on Decree-Law 349, which would require a government-issued license for the sale of artwork and performances by self-employed artists and musicians. The law also bars art or music with pornographic, racist, “sexist, vulgar and obscene” content, as well as “using patriotic symbols in a way that is contrary to law.”

Cuba’s Council of State adopted the legislation as part of efforts to regulate the private art market in Cuba, which has grown over the past two decades.

Decree 349 generated widespread debate among Cuban artists, both for and against. Its critics, including supporters of the revolution, expressed concern that it would be applied too administratively and could lead to censorship over artistic

expression. Enforcement of the law has been postponed to allow further discussion and changes to address these concerns, and has not been implemented.

“The revolution created a massive and eager public for arts and letters,” Prieto wrote. “It also gave space to the most genuine and historically discriminated against expressions of popular traditions and to the most audacious efforts in various artistic genres.”

While some artists and performers have genuine concerns about how best to develop art in Cuba, and are engaged in discussion and debate as part of strengthening the gains of the revolution, groups like San Isidro seek to use these grievances to aid U.S. imperialism to undermine the revolution.

“It’s necessary to clearly separate the comic-strip actions of the marginal elements of San Isidro from what actually happened at the Ministry of Culture,” said Prieto, referring to the Nov. 27 action. “Among the latter, there were valuable young people who must be listened to.”

“Any artistic creator who approaches Cuban institutions with legitimate objectives will find representatives willing to listen and provide support,” he said. “With fakes and frauds there is no possible dialogue.”

Alabama Amazon warehouse workers fight for union

BY SUSAN LAMONT

BESSEMER, Ala. — “The managers talk to you like you’re a child,” Ray, a 31-year-old Amazon worker, told us when we met going door to door here Dec. 5. A former Walmart worker, he started working at the new Amazon fulfillment center when it opened in March. About two months ago a drive to win union recognition began, and since then hundreds of workers have signed authorization cards for the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union. “I signed a card,” Ray said.

Ray, and other Amazon workers we met, asked that we not use their last names for fear of retaliation by the bosses. Some 1,500 full-time and part-time workers are employed at the massive facility, not including the many managers and other company personnel.

The opening of the Amazon warehouse, which pays \$15 an hour for many positions, was big news in the area and the union-organizing drive is widely known. Bessemer and nearby Birmingham have long been a center for union-organized steel production, pipe mills, foundries and other basic industry, and are close to the coal mining areas of

Alabama. Despite the contraction of the steel and mining industries in recent decades, many new Amazon workers have family who are union members and veterans of important labor and civil rights struggles that have taken place here.

The pace of work is extremely fast in the warehouse, Ray and his friend Jerry, who was visiting, said, and the turnover of workers is high. “You have a maximum of nine seconds to handle an item and get it into the ‘pod.’ They want you to do it in five seconds and they track everything. But if you have a larger item, like a TV, you can’t handle it in nine seconds.”

“We’re working 12-hour shifts now and get only two 30-minute breaks,” said Jerry, who used to work at the Dollar General distribution center here. “If you want to smoke or eat outside, it takes practically your whole break just to get out and back. And overtime isn’t voluntary.” Jerry decided to subscribe to the *Militant* to learn more about other workers’ struggles in the U.S. and around the world.

Both said workers get written up for little things all the time. “If you get written up, you get bumped back to a lower

position,” Ray said. Too many write-ups and you’re fired.

Workers notified the National Labor Relations Board Nov. 20 that they want to hold a union election. The company immediately tried to get the hearing pushed back. The NLRB ruled Dec. 2 that the determination hearing will be Dec. 18. Union leaflets explain workers should be prepared for the company to step up their anti-union campaign.

Union supporters have a website at www.BAmazonUnion.org where information on the drive is posted and where workers can sign union cards. Union staffers distribute the cards 24/7 at every entrance to Amazon’s parking lot.

When this worker-correspondent knocked on his apartment door, Frank Jones, who retired from Steelworkers-organized U.S. Pipe in Bessemer four years ago, invited me in to talk about what’s happening at Amazon. His son, who recently got out of the military, works there. “They do need a union in there,” Jones said.

John Benson and Markie Wilson contributed to this article.

—**MILITANT
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End U.S. Economic War Against Cuba.
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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

New York nurses strike for safety, patient care, better wages

ALBANY, N.Y. — Hundreds of nurses organized by the New York State Nurses Association struck Albany Medical Center here Dec. 1. Many picketed the entire day, dressed in red and carrying signs reading, “On strike for safety” and “Fair contract for patients and nurses.” Hospital bosses, who had hired replacement workers, prevented nurses from returning to work for three days after the 24-hour strike.

“This strike is about respect and safety and it’s about time that AMC stop treating us like thugs and thieves,” Lenore Granich, a striking nurse who is a member of the union negotiating committee, told a midday solidarity rally.

Also speaking were local elected officials and representatives of the American Postal Workers Union; Local 81359 of the International Union of Electrical Workers-Communications Workers of America, which represents Momentive workers; Albany County Central Labor Council; Laborers Local 190; New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; and Albany Teachers Association.

Many workers from throughout the region joined the picket line, including five rail conductors from two locals organized by SMART-TD, electricians from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and several Walmart workers.

“AMC puts safety and patients’ lives in jeopardy,” Jennifer Bejo, an intensive care unit nurse, told the rally. “We are fighting for a contract for all nurses, whether in the union or not. We need to be heard and we will do this again if we have to.”

“I have been up for 24 hours,” said Olive Ayaho, a clinical support nurse who picketed after having worked night shift. “But it’s important to be part of history. We are in the streets fighting for all nurses.”

The over 2,000 nurses at the hospital voted in September to authorize a strike, more than two years after voting

1,161 to 582 to be represented by the New York State Nurses Association. They are fighting for a contract that guarantees a reduction in the nurse-to-patient ratio, adequate on-the-job training, lower medical insurance premiums, and higher wages.

The nurses are also demanding a series of measures to increase safety for both nurses and patients. These include providing N95 masks for all points of patient contact, no rationing or reusing of PPE, for separate units with a higher standard of safety for COVID patients, safer ventilation systems, and a full 14-day sick time for nurses infected with COVID-19 with no pressure to return to work early.

So far Albany Med bosses have refused to make any concessions. Instead, they retaliated by trying unsuccessfully to decertify the union and are victimizing nurses leading the union’s efforts.

“When the company writes up one of the nurse leaders, we gather in front of the office at the time of the disciplinary meeting to defend that nurse,” said nurse Mike Fitzsimmons, a member of the negotiating committee.

The union last week filed an unfair labor practice charge against the hospital, claiming managers illegally tried to coerce nurses to quit the union.

When hospital bosses hired 700 replacement nurses to fill staffing shortages during the strike, “they demanded N95 masks,” Granich said. “When management stated that they didn’t need them, they refused to work until they were provided the masks.

“The replacement workers went on strike,” she said.

— Jacob Perasso

Chicago nursing home workers win pay raise after 12-day strike

CHICAGO — After nearly two weeks on strike, 700 members of Service Employees International Union Healthcare Illinois ratified a contract with Infinity Healthcare Management that includes an immediate raise of at least \$1 an hour. The strike involved certified nursing assistants, housekeepers, kitchen workers and others at 11 nursing homes in



Militant/Ved Dookhun

Members of New York State Nurses Association picket Albany Medical Center during Dec. 1 strike demanding more staff to ensure safety and for the health of patients, higher pay.

Chicago and the region.

“The main issue is the short staffing. We also need a pay raise,” Donna Hundley, a striker at the Momence Meadows Nursing Center, an hour south of here, told *Militant* correspondents on the picket line Nov. 28. “We come to work every day and risk our health.” Strikers demanded additional protective gear and hazard pay. Like nursing homes across the country, most of Infinity’s facilities have had COVID-19 outbreaks.

“We have been getting a lot of support from other workers in the area,” Hundley said.

According to a summary issued by the union, the contract includes new pay scales that start at a minimum of \$15.50 an hour for certified nursing assistants at all of the homes. The minimum rates for other job classifications vary, to as little as \$11.10 an hour in some nursing homes outside the city. All strikers will get a raise of \$1 an hour, or to the new scale, whichever is greater.

There is also a ratification bonus of \$500 for full-time and \$200 for part-time workers, and an additional 60 cents an hour in raises over the 2 1/2 year contract.

Those working in areas where residents have, or are suspected of having, COVID-19 will receive an extra \$2.50

an hour in hazard pay. The strikers also won an additional five paid sick days for COVID-related illness.

“I was happy everyone came together and did it together,” Diamond Wright, who works at the South Point Nursing Center here, said in a phone interview Dec. 6. “Unfortunately, I just get the \$1, and I’ve been there seven years. And I’m not too happy with the \$500 bonus.

“I talked with a supervisor about going back to work and I can feel there’s tension,” she said. “I think they’ll be stricter. It looks like we’ll be continuing this fight.”

— Naomi Craine

Airport workers challenge boss demands for 25% wage cut

LONDON — Engineers, firefighters and security workers employed by Heathrow Airport Ltd and members of the Unite union took part in a 24-hour walkout at Heathrow Airport Dec. 1 to protest wage cuts and threatened job cuts by the bosses. Some 4,000 workers have already been forced to sign new contracts that include pay cuts of up to 25%. The alternative — lose your job.

This follows the loss of thousands of jobs at British Airways and wage reductions for those left there.

“The airport is using the pandemic as cover to force through plans they’ve had for a long time to cut pay. In negotiations the union offered temporary pay cuts, but that wasn’t enough. They want to be a low-wage employer,” Unite regional officer Russ Ball told *Militant* worker-correspondents.

Following an 84% vote in favor of industrial action, workers set up picket lines to resist the bosses’ demands. Further stoppages are planned for Dec. 14 and 17-18.

At the same time, some 850 British Airways cargo workers are balloting for strike action against boss demands for 20% to 25% wage cuts and outsourcing their work to a subcontractor.

The North Yorkshire police told strikers at the Optare bus factory in Sherburn Nov. 5 to desist from picketing because of the new government coronavirus lockdown regulations. The Unite union filed for urgent judicial review and won Nov. 13. The government was forced to issue guidance to all police forces saying that workers can undertake socially distanced picketing, as it is covered by the right to go to work during the lockdown.

— Pamela Holmes and
Andrés Mendoza

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 25, 1995

PARIS — Sixteen days into the national rail strike nothing is moving. Hundreds of thousands of phone and power workers, subway and bus workers, municipal workers, teachers, hospital and other government workers, as well as students, have joined rail workers in a nationwide social protest movement against government plans to drastically reduce social security benefits.

“The strike was prompted by two things,” said Jean-Paul Danard, an engineer at the Montparnasse station. “The plan to cut social security payments and raise the minimum retirement age from 50 to 55, and the plan to privatize the railroads with the possible layoff of as many as 30,000 workers.”

“What we are fighting for is a different kind of society,” Dominique Larchet said. “A job is not a privilege, a wage is not a privilege.”



December 25, 1970

NEW YORK, Dec. 12 — Six hundred women braved freezing rain today to march for an end to all restrictions on abortion. On the eve of the march, it was expanded to include a defense of feminist Kate Millett.

The Dec. 14 issue of *Time* singled out Millett, author of *Sexual Politics*, for attack. Millett has recently acknowledged that she is bisexual. “This disclosure,” *Time* concludes, “is bound to discredit her as a spokeswoman for her cause, cast further doubts on her theories, and reinforce the views of those who routinely dismiss all liberationists as lesbians.”

The march established the Women’s Strike Coalition, a united front of close to 100 organizations, as a group that is prepared to respond to every form of oppression women face, be it from *Time* magazine or the city government.



December 22, 1945

General Motors has been howling “illegal” at the CIO auto workers’ picket lines. It began to call in the “law.” General Motors is paving the way for strike-breaking through injunctions. Sheriffs and federal marshals will be waving court orders before every picket line.

It’s been tried in at least two important auto strikes before. Toledo and Flint. The first, the birthplace of the fighting traditions of the UAW-CIO in the Toledo Auto-Lite Strike of 1934. The second, the center of the “sit-down” strike of 1937 that first humbled the General Motors empire. In each struggle, the strike boiled down to one question: How would the strikers meet the challenge of injunctions issued through the collusion of big money and compliant judges? In both cases, the answer was: “We will defy them!” And by successful defiance, the workers won.

Lockdowns make crisis worse

Continued from front page wages and working conditions and build and strengthen unions to counter their assaults.

The economic, social and health crisis working people face is rooted in a worldwide long-term decline of capitalist production and trade driven by the profit crisis of the bosses, intertwined with the coronavirus pandemic.

A new spate of lockdowns is being imposed by state governors whose only answer to the rising number of overloaded hospitals is to inflict greater hardship on working people and threaten more job losses. Some 27 million people in Southern California are affected by Gov. Gavin Newsom's latest stay-at-home order, which includes forcing thousands of workers to forego going to work.

Like lockdowns enforced earlier this year, these steps will have a devastating impact on small businesses.

But workers are finding ways to stand up to the bosses' attacks. Nurses have organized strike actions in New Rochelle and Albany, New York, along with 700 nursing home workers in Illinois. They're demanding more staff for safety, more pay and to put the health of patients and workers first.

Laid-off workers at the Remington firearms plant in Ilion, New York, have been rallying at the plant demanding severance pay after bosses filed for bankruptcy, slashing 585 jobs.

At Southwest Airlines, pilots, flight attendants, machinists and ramp workers are refusing to accept bosses' demands to "trade" a 10% wage cut in "exchange" for the promise of no layoffs next year. The company announced Dec. 3 it is sending furlough warnings to 6,828 of these workers, and threatening another 402 mechanics and other workers with layoffs in January. Since March, airline companies have eliminated 82,000 jobs.

In early December the White Stal-lion Energy LLC and Lighthouse Re-sources Inc. filed for bankruptcy, elim-inating over 330 miners' jobs. These

coal companies own mines in Illinois, Indiana, Montana and Wyoming.

Bosses at meatpacking giants JBS, Tyson Foods, Cargill and Smithfield Foods adopted measures they claim will prevent a repeat of the coronavi-rus deaths at their plants earlier this year. Workers were crammed into con-fined spaces to maximize line speeds and company profits. Their new steps include sending some workers home, instructing those still on the job to sit farther apart in canteens, but not spreading out work stations. That would entail building bigger facilities or slowing down line speed, something bosses consider intolerable.

More than 1 million new state and federal unemployment claims were filed for the week ending Nov. 28. Not since the pandemic began has this weekly figure been any lower.

While the official unemployment rate was 6.7% for November, 20.1 mil-lion people were receiving some form of jobless benefits as of midmonth. And this doesn't include millions of immigrant workers without papers and part-time workers who aren't eligible.

At the same time, those unemployed long-term continues to rise. Thirty-seven percent have been out of work for at least six months or more, accord-ing to government figures. Millions have already exhausted all jobless pay.

The number of workers with jobs in November is 9.8 million less than in February. Government statisticians consider many of these workers to have "dropped out" of the workforce. The labor-force participation rate, which measures those employed and actively seeking work, was 61.7% in October, near its lowest level since the 1970s.

Some 7 million adults, most of them women, said they weren't working be-cause they were stuck home caring for children as a result of school closures.

Impact of job cuts on Black workers

Job cuts by state and local govern-ments in schools, transit systems, and libraries, and of office workers, are



Hundreds of airline and airport workers joined to protest on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Ontario, Oct. 20, calling on Canadian government to restart airline industry, ensure safety.

having a disproportionate impact on African American workers, 11.2% of whom were unemployed in Novem-ber. Nearly one in six Blacks had jobs in the public sector in 2019, includ-ing jobs in public transit, sanitation, schools and in government offices. Since February, jobs of almost 1.4 million state and government workers have been eliminated.

Brandon Summers, 33, a Black resi-dent of Nevada who is a teacher and musician, lost both jobs in March. "When one month turned into six months of no income, no employ-ment," he told the *Financial Times*, "I was reaching out for help and saying, 'I need food . . . I can't pay my rent.'"

Right now bosses are doing little to expand hiring. When they do and unemployment does drop, workers will gain more confidence, increasing possibilities for renewed and more widespread labor battles.

The Socialist Workers Party ex-

plains that workers and farmers are the only productive classes and puts forward an action program to organize against government and boss attacks.

Today, we need to fight to get work-ers back to work and not leave this vi-tal question in the hands of the bosses and their government. Workers and our unions should fight for a govern-ment-financed public works program to put workers back to work at union-scale wages building and expanding schools, hospitals, day care centers and the infrastructure.

When bosses threaten more layoffs, we should demand: cut the workweek without any reduction in our weekly take-home pay. For 30 hours work at 40 hours pay!

And we need our own party, a labor party based on fighting unions that can chart a course to take political power out of the hands of the capital-ist rulers and establish a workers and farmers government.

COVID-19 poses deadly crisis for workers behind bars

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

As the coronavirus pandemic contin-ues to sweep its way through the U.S., those facing some of the worst condi-tions are working people behind bars. Inmates have been infected at a rate that is more than four times higher than that of the general population and death rates are over twice as high, especially among those who are older.

Prisoners have been crammed into overcrowded facilities, many of which are old and poorly ventilated. Prisons and jails across the country are notorious for inadequate health care. Guards and other prison person-nel who came down with the disease facilitated its spread.

With plans now being put in place for a COVID-19 vaccination, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ad-visory committee has prioritized prison guards for the first phase of immuniza-tions, but not prisoners.

There are 2.3 million people in pris-ons, jails and other detention centers, such as immigrant and juvenile facilities — more per capita than any other na-tion. This includes nearly half a million people who have not been convicted of a crime but are awaiting trial.

As of Dec. 3, 1,555 prisoners have died from COVID-19. Of inmates test-ed nationwide, over 17% were infected with the disease. The two states with the highest deaths were Texas with 218

and Florida with 189, the COVID Prison Project reports.

More inmates have been infected by the coronavirus than these figures indicate, as at least a million prison-ers have never been tested. In Florida, for example, there are 176,000 people behind bars, but only 84,500 of them have been tested. Of these over 20% tested positive.

In New York state, Release Aging People in Prison — a group that advo-cates the rights of elderly inmates — has been organizing regular protests seeking clemency for these prisoners. Since 2016, over 6,400 people in New York prisons have submitted clem-ency applications, with thousands un-answered for years, RAPP says. And New York's Gov. Andrew Cuomo — who puts himself forward as a pro-gressive — has granted just three for those convicted of violent behavior, and only 21 other clemencies.

"The New York Department of Corrections medical standard is inad-equate," Jose Hamza Saldaña, director of RAPP, who had been incarcerated in New York for 38 years, told the *Mili-tant* Dec. 5. "From the beginning au-thorities have not taken any measures except to suspend all visitation. Con-di-tions have not changed much."

In response to a rapidly spreading out-break of COVID-19 at the San Quentin prison in California, about 20 inmates,

Capitalist rulers' health 'care' system is disaster for workers

BY JANET POST

Little better prepared for the surge in coronavirus infections than in the spring, the capitalist rulers organize their health care industry on the basis of what's profitable, what best puts them in a position to compete with their ri-val, as opposed to how to provide ac-tual health. Current rising fatalities are a product of the normal operation of the for-profit health industry.

Some 1.5 million people have died from the coronavirus worldwide and 281,199 in the U.S. as of Dec. 6.

Over decades thousands of hospitals and medical clinics have been closed. Prescribed medicines, marketed as commodities instead of being used as life-saving tools, are sold at prohibi-tively high prices. Tens of thousands of young people willing to train as doctors and nurses are turned away from uni-versities. The disastrous conditions in nursing homes that resulted in 40% of all deaths from the virus in the U.S. have changed little in eight months.

A record 101,000 seriously ill COVID patients are in hospitals. In New York City retired nurses are being offered as much as \$100 an hour to return to work.

Even though there are more medically tested ways to treat and ameliorate CO-VID-19 after almost a year of the pan-demic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and all hospitals tell peo-ple who are getting sick to go home, see what happens and only come in if they can no longer breathe properly.

As hospitals and intensive care units get close to full capacity in several states, bosses are readying "crisis-care standards," another term for triage —

deciding who will get treatment and who will be left to die. In North Dakota the authorities' "plan" involves no resus-citation for patients in cardiac arrest in hospitals or by paramedics in the field. If overrun, the Florida Hospital Associa-tion has a scoreboard for deciding which patients to admit. It includes checking the conditions of their organs, whether they have dementia, or other conditions. If "scores" are still tied, the patient's age is a "tiebreaker" for determining who gets turned away.

"I can't deal with those patients that need me when they come in with acute heart failure," Dr. Shane Wilson of the Scotland County Hospital in Missouri told ABC-News Dec. 3. "We don't have the staff for it."

Meanwhile, capitalist politicians and the media broadcast endless ex-amples blaming working people for the spread of the virus — from going to see family to not wearing masks or not being six feet apart, taking the heat off the government and hospital and health insurance bosses.

They make no pretense of following these guidelines themselves. California Gov. Gavin Newsom told working peo-ple to stop using restaurants and then went out to eat at the upscale French Laundry eatery in Napa.

In a frenzy of competition, pharma-ceutical companies are scrambling to beat each other in winning approval for their vaccine. Many of them were advanced billions of dollars by govern-ments to cushion any financial losses. Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZen-eca-University of Oxford and others will reap billions in profits. CVS and Walgreens pharmacies are guaranteed big profits after they were chosen by the government to administer shots.

While the giant pharmaceuticals claim the vaccines are public domain and government controlled, AstraZen-eca doses are already headed to private market as soon as March in India. Those with cash can buy life-saving medicine and those without will go without.

If Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for emergency use, inoculations could begin within 24 hours. But estimates of vaccine deliv-ery under the government's Operation Warp Speed were downsized after problems with the pipeline of raw ma-terials and vaccine impurities.

The Associated Press reported that the Russian government began inocula-tions on teachers and doctors Dec. 5 after the Sputnik V vaccine was "tested in only a few dozen people."

The government of the U.K. began its immunization program Dec. 8, but has only ordered enough of the vac-cine for 20 million people so far, in a country of 68 million.

In the U.S., state governments will decide the "order" of vaccinations, with guidelines from the CDC, which has yet to make recommendations. Its direc-tor, Robert Redfield, urged the CDC to "prioritize the elderly," who are most vulnerable. But other officials disagree, arguing that "essential work-ers" should get the first shots. For the government, the highest priority is the Defense Department to ensure the mil-

Thai protests continue fight for political rights



Reuters/Soc Zeya Tun

Seven young leaders of protests in Thailand were charged Nov. 30 with insulting the king which, if they are found guilty, could mean up to 15 years in prison. Tens of thousands of mostly student-led protesters have been demand-ing political rights, the resignation of the prime minister and, more recently, constitutional restrictions on the power of the monarchy. Above, Dec. 2 protest in Bangkok.

"This won't stop our movement," political science student Parit Chiwarak told reporters in Bangkok. "On the contrary, it will make more people join us." Parit and the other leaders were questioned and charged at the police station, but not arrested — a rarity for accusations about challenging the monarchy.

The protest wave broke out in February after a court dissolved the Future Forward Party, an opposition party headed by a billionaire auto parts magnate. The new party came in third with 17% of the vote in last year's election to the National Assembly on a platform of fighting corruption and abusive govern-ment policies.

The protests tapered off after the government imposed pandemic-justified lockdowns, but regained momentum in June, becoming more openly critical of the monarchy. King Maha Vajiralongkorn's ostentatious displays of wealth — spending most of his time in Germany with his harem, making use of his estimated \$40 billion fortune in the midst of the deepening crisis facing work-ing people and youth in Thailand — have helped fuel the protests.

Worried that the military could crack down — it has carried out a doz-en coups since 1932, the latest in 2014 — protesters held "coup preven-tion" rallies Nov. 27.

While cops attacked some protests with water cannons and tear gas, the government has proceeded cautiously, worried it could provoke even more powerful actions by workers and peasants.

— SETH GALINSKY

itary doesn't skip a beat in defending the interests of U.S. imperialism. The expected first shipment of 3.2 million doses will fall far short of inoculating 21 million medical workers.

Example of Cuban Revolution

Health care is addressed very dif-ferently in Cuba, where working people made a popular revolution in 1959, establishing a workers and farmers government.

They rebuilt health care after thou-sands of doctors whose main motiva-tion was lining their own pockets fled to the U.S. They organized the train-ing of large numbers of medical work-ers who operated out of facilities lo-cated in working-class neighborhoods where they lived. The treatment they provide is not a commodity to be sold at a profit but a right available to all who need it, free of charge.

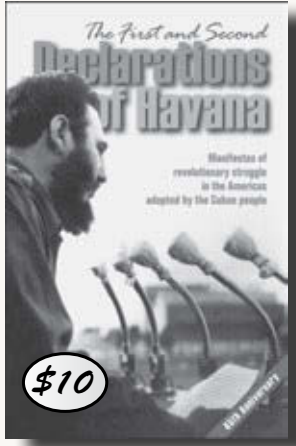
Since the beginning of the COV-ID-19 pandemic medical students and other volunteers have mobilized to visit every resident on the island to check if they have symptoms, and if so ensure they rapidly get treatment. As of Dec. 7 the government says only 136 people in a country of 11.3 million have died from contracting the virus, one of the lowest rates in the world.

Since the opening of the revolution, the island's medical workers have vol-unteered around the world to bring care to others who need it. Today they are working in some 40 countries, saving

lives and slowing down the spread of the virus. Last month, when the Italian gov-ernment asked the Cuban government to send more medical volunteers, as was done in the spring, Havana responded rapidly sending a further 60 health care workers. Cuba's medical volunteers are willing to go wherever they are needed, regardless of the politics of the govern-ment of their destination.

Despite rising shortages and other hardships confronting the people of Cuba as a result of Washington's de-cadeslong economic war, the country's own COVID-19 vaccines will be dis-tributed to the entire population through the same mobilizations that have been the foundation of health care throughout the revolution since 1959.

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‘Decisive battles for future of humanity will be fought in the US’

The Struggle for Socialism in the “American Century”: Writings and Speeches, 1945-47 by *James P. Cannon* is one of *Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for December*. In the face of the U.S. rulers’ swaggering claim to global domination following their victory in the second imperialist world war, Cannon, then national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, lays out the prospects for working-class revolutionary struggle with total confidence in its victory. The excerpt is from the SWP’s 1946 basic programmatic document, “Theses on the American Revolution.” Copyright © 1977 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

The United States, the most powerful capitalist country in history, is a component part of the world capitalist system and is subject to the same general laws. It suffers from the same incurable diseases and is destined to share the same fate. The overwhelming preponderance of American imperialism does not exempt it from the decay of world capitalism, but on the contrary acts to involve it ever more deeply, inextricably, and hopelessly. U.S. capitalism can no more escape from the revolutionary consequences of world capitalist decay

than the older European capitalist powers. The blind alley in which world capitalism has arrived, and the U.S. with it, excludes a new organic era of capitalist stabilization. The dominant world position of American imperialism now accentuates and aggravates the death agony of capitalism as a whole.

American imperialism emerged victorious from the Second World War, not merely over its German and Japanese rivals, but also over its “democratic” allies, especially Great Britain. Today Wall Street unquestionably is the dominant world imperialist center. Precisely because it has issued from the war vastly strengthened in relation to all its capitalist rivals, U.S. imperialism seems indomitable. So overpowering in all fields — diplomatic, military, commercial, financial, and industrial — is Wall Street’s preponderance that consolidation of its world hegemony seems to be within easy reach. Wall Street hopes to inaugurate the so-called American Century.

In reality, the American ruling class faces more insurmountable obstacles in “organizing the world” than confronted the German bourgeoisie in its repeated and abortive attempts to attain a much more modest goal, namely: “organizing Europe.”

The meteoric rise of U.S. imperialism to world supremacy comes too late. Moreover, American imperialism rests increasingly on the foundations of world economy, in sharp contrast to the situation prevailing before the First World War, when it rested primarily on the internal market — the source of its previous successes and equilibrium. But the world foundation is today shot through with insoluble contradictions; it suffers from chronic dislocations and is mined with revolutionary powder kegs. ...

The economic prerequisites for the socialist revolution are fully matured in the U.S. The political premises are likewise far more advanced than might appear on the surface. ...

The issue of socialism or capitalism



Teamsters leader explains terms of victory in Minneapolis truck drivers strike May 1934, which helped spur building of CIO industrial union movement. Cannon said this showed historic potential of working class in U.S.

will not be finally decided until it is decided in the U.S. Another retardation of the proletarian revolution in one country or another, or even one continent or another, will not save American imperialism from its proletarian nemesis at home. The decisive battles for the communist future of mankind will be fought in the U.S. ...

Much has been said about the “backwardness” of the American working class as a justification for a pessimistic outlook, the postponement of the socialist revolution to a remote future, and withdrawal from the struggle. This is a very superficial view of the American workers and their prospects.

It is true that this class, in many respects the most advanced and progressive in the world, has not yet taken the road of independent political action on a mass scale. But this weakness can be swiftly overcome. Under the compulsion of objective necessity not only backward peoples but backward classes in advanced countries find themselves driven to clear great distances in single leaps. As a matter of fact, the American working class has already made one such leap which has advanced it far ahead of its old positions.

The workers entered the 1929 crisis

as an unorganized, atomized mass imbued with illusions concerning “rugged individualism,” “private initiative,” “free enterprise,” “the American Way,” etc., etc. Less than 10 percent of the class as a whole was organized on the trade union field (fewer than 3 million out of 33 million in 1929). Moreover, this thin layer embraced primarily the highly skilled and privileged workers, organized in antiquated craft unions. The main and most decisive section of the workers knew unionism only as “company unionism,” remaining without the benefit, the experience, and even the understanding of the most elementary form of workers’ organization — the trade union. They were regarded and treated as mere raw material for capitalist exploitation, without rights or protection or any security of employment.

As a consequence, the 1929 crisis found the working class helpless and impotent. For three years the masses remained stunned and disoriented by the disaster. Their resistance was extremely limited and sporadic. But their anger and resentment accumulated. The next five years (1933-37), coincident with a partial revival of industry, witnessed a series of gigantic clashes, street fights, and sit-down strikes — an embryonic civil war — the end result of which was a leap, a giant leap, for millions of workers from nonexistence as an organized force to trade union consciousness and organization. Once fairly started, the movement for unionism snowballed, embracing today almost 15 million in all the basic industries.

In one leap — in a brief decade — the American workers attained trade union consciousness on a higher plane and with mightier organizations than in any other advanced country. ... Under the impact of great events and pressing necessities the American workers will advance beyond the limits of trade unionism and acquire political class consciousness and organization in a similar sweeping movement.

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NEW JERSEY: 3600 Bergenline, Suite 205B, Union City. Zip: 07087. Tel: (551) 240-1512. swpnewjersey@gmail.com

NEW YORK: **New York:** 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (646) 434-8117. Email: newyorkswp@gmail.com **Albany:** 285 Washington Ave. #1R. Zip: 12206. Tel: (518) 810-1586. Email: albanyswp@gmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA: **Philadelphia:** 2824 Cottman Ave., Suite 16. Zip: 19149. Tel: (215) 708-1270. Email: philaswp@verizon.net **Pittsburgh:** 5907 Penn Ave., Suite 313. Zip: 15206. Tel: (412) 610-2402. Email: swppittsburgh@gmail.com

TEXAS: **Dallas:** 1005 W. Jefferson Blvd., Suite 207. Zip: 75208. Tel: (469) 513-1051. Email: dallasswp@gmail.com

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 7603 Georgia Ave. NW, Suite 300. Zip: 20012. Tel: (202) 536-5080. Email: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

WASHINGTON: **Seattle:** 650 S. Orcas St., #120 Zip: 98108. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Email: swpseattle@gmail.com

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: Suite 103, 124-128 Beamish St. Campsie. Postal Address: P.O. Box 73 Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 8677 0108. Email: cl_australia@optusnet.com.au

CANADA

QUEBEC: **Montreal:** 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. Email: clcmontreal@fastmail.com

FRANCE

Paris: BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15. Email: militant.paris@gmail.com

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: 188a Onehunga Mall, Onehunga. Postal address: P.O. Box 13857, Auckland 1643. Tel: (09) 636-3231. Email: clauack@xtra.co.nz

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: **London:** 5 Norman Road (first floor). Seven Sisters. Post code: N15 4ND. Tel: 020-3538 8900. Email: clondon@fastmail.fm **Manchester:** 329, Royal Exchange Buildings, 3 Old Bank St. Post code: M2 7PE. Tel: (0161) 312-8119. Email: clmanchr@gmail.com

December

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OFFER GOOD UNTIL DECEMBER 31

Demand jobs, gov’t-funded cradle-to-grave health care for all

Continued from front page
slash jobs and push more of the crisis of their capitalist system on our backs. We need to be on the job to join with our fellow workers to fight back. As the deadly coronavirus continues to spread, it’s clearer than ever that working people cannot depend on the bosses and their government to provide health care.

EDITORIAL

Our labor produces more than enough wealth to provide treatment for anyone affected with coronavirus — or any other health issue — as well as the speedy mass production and distribution of a vaccine. But under capitalism, health care is a commodity for profit for the owners of the hospitals, nursing homes, insurance, pharmaceutical and related health-industry outfits.

The propertied ruling families don’t wait in line for treatment, and don’t care if we live or die, as long as they can put enough of us to work to guarantee a profit. Capitalist politicians can’t and won’t solve this problem. It falls to the working class.

Like education and retirement, health care is a *social* question that must be fought for by the working class and our unions. We need to organize to fight for universal government-guaranteed cradle-to-grave health care, not woefully inadequate employer-based insurance plans tied to the bosses’ profits, or any other insurance schemes.

Giant pharmaceutical companies should be nationalized and run under workers control to ensure production of a safe, effective vaccine in sufficient quantity to provide protection to all, here and worldwide. Only the working class is capable of making decisions based on the needs of all humanity.

Working people in Cuba *do* use the fruits of their

labor to guarantee care and preventative medicine to everyone on the island. Medical workers there start with saving lives, not deciding whose “comorbidities” put them at the bottom of some triage list. This is not the product of organizing a better health care system, but a conquest of Cuba’s socialist revolution.

Workers and farmers rose up and threw off the boot of U.S. imperialism and replaced the dictatorship of the Cuban capitalist class with *their own* government, which led the toilers to take control of the land, factories and banks into their own hands.

Through revolutionary struggle they deepened working-class solidarity, transforming themselves in the process. As disciplined, courageous and international combatants they proudly put their revolution at the service of toiling humanity. And provide a powerful example to working people in the U.S. and worldwide.

Shift in Middle East can lead to new opening for working people

Continued from front page
people at home to the deadly costs of Tehran’s military moves abroad. Facing worsening living and working conditions and the mounting toll of the rulers’ wars, hundreds of thousands joined protests over the last few years that were put down with brutal repression.

Following the Israeli government’s establishment of diplomatic relations with the rulers in the UAE and Bahrain this fall, Tel Aviv struck a deal with the government of Sudan Oct. 23 to take steps in the same direction. The first known visit by an Israeli top official to Saudi Arabia took place Nov. 22, when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Talks are underway to end the three-year embargo imposed on Qatar by the rulers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain and the UAE, who say the government there was too close to Tehran. Washington sees the rift in relations between the Saudi and Qatari governments as a barrier to isolating Tehran.

These steps register the exhaustion of the decades-long efforts by Arab rulers to treat Israel as a pariah government. Even though the governments of Jordan and Egypt signed peace treaties with the Israeli rulers in recent years, other Arab governments and leaders of the Palestinian National Authority sought to rally support from within the United Nations and the European Union for a continuing policy of no peace, no negotiations and no recognition of Israel.

The recent shifts deliver shattering blows to the efforts of Palestinian misleaders — both the PLO and Hamas — who have used these international ties to justify military provocations against Israel that have led to punishing retaliation from Israeli forces, a continual cycle of bloodshed and devastation.

Saudi Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz, a prominent member of the ruling Saudi monarchy, criticized Palestinian spokespeople for refusing to see the pacts between Israel, the UAE and Bahrain as openings to pursue establishing a Palestinian homeland.

Addressing Palestinian officials for the first time Dec. 4, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz urged them to resume talks with the Israeli government, promising aid and investments.

‘For recognition of Palestine and Israel’

These developments have the potential to open the door to transforming class relations in the region in the interests of the toiling masses.

A December 2017 statement by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes points to “the political necessity for the Israeli and Arab governments and leaderships of Palestinian organizations to begin immediate talks to recognize both Israel and an independent Palestinian state.

“Negotiations to reach such an agreement must recognize the right of Jews everywhere to take refuge in Israel in face of the global rise of Jew-hatred and anti-Semitic violence, as well as the unconditional right of the dispossessed Palestinian people to a contiguous, sovereign homeland on territory — including East

Jerusalem — conquered and occupied by the Israeli government during the 1967 war.”

This statement retains full force today. “It is along this road that working people of all national backgrounds, religious beliefs and political allegiances in Israel and Palestine can use and defend their space to speak, organize and begin redressing the blood-drenched legacy of imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation,” it says. The statement in full is available on the *Militant* website.

What comes next?

President-elect Joe Biden says he wants to overturn Trump’s decisions to pull the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal and to opt back in, as long as the Iranian rulers agree to return to full compliance with its restrictions. The rulers in Tehran say this may be possible, if the U.S. ends all its sanctions.

Writing in the Nov. 29 *New York Times*, liberal columnist Thomas Friedman warned Biden not to relinquish “the leverage of extreme economic sanctions on Iran” imposed by the Trump administration, unless Washington can force Tehran to halt its export of precision-guided missiles. These sanctions have disastrous consequences for the working people of Iran.

Friedman — who, like almost all pundits for the *Times*, has spewed venom against the Trump administration for the last four years — also had to acknowledge that his administration’s role in the agreements between Israel and a growing number of Arab states deserves Biden’s support. It was “Trump’s most significant foreign policy achievement,” Friedman said.

Within Biden’s Democratic Party there are forces

calling for the destruction of Israel. On Nov. 29 Rep. Rashida Tlaib — a member of Democratic Socialists of America along with fellow Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez — posted, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” a slogan used by Palestinian misleaders who advocate the destruction of the Jewish state. Under pressure, Tlaib later deleted the posting.

“In the United States and other imperialist countries, organizations of middle class radicals claiming to be communist or socialist,” Barnes said in the 2017 SWP statement, “explicitly disavow any course to advance class solidarity among Palestinian, Jewish and other working people, often raising the reactionary cry, ‘From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!’ This course to drive Jews out of the region disqualifies such groups from any moral or political legitimacy to speak as what Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin more than a century ago called ‘tribune[s] of the people.’”

“We are *for* whatever renews our class solidarity and self-confidence, advancing us along a revolutionary course toward a united struggle for workers power,” Barnes said.

For recognition of a Palestinian state and of Israel

Socialist Workers Party statement

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Remington workers march for severance, jobs

Continued from front page
union were holding a solidarity picket at the same time in New Hartford. The UMW has encouraged unions to organize informational pickets throughout the area. Sweeney also welcomed a delegation of five Albany Medical Center nurses who came in solidarity after organizing their own strike earlier in the week.

Lenore Granich, a leader of the nurses fight at Albany Med and a member of the New York State Nurses Association, described how they went on strike for more staff, safety and higher pay.

“We are here to give you support and to let you know that we stand with you shoulder to shoulder,” she said. “It might seem like it’s David vs. Goliath, but in unity there is strength.”

“Remington has got to do right by you,” Granich said.

Five Remington workers had joined in a press conference and rally called by Albany Med nurses a week earlier. “We know what the fight is like. Little by little they are waking a sleeping giant. We support your right to a contract,” Sweeney told the nurses when she spoke at their rally.

At an earlier rally Nov. 10, Remington workers in Ilion were supported by local unions, including the

Teamsters, Carpenters, Building Trades, Plumbers and the Laborers. UMW national President Cecil Roberts addressed the rally. “If you are prepared to fight, the UMW will be beside you,” he said.

“We are getting a lot of support. They may seem like small things to some, but they’re big to us. I’ve been involved in the union for five years, but this is the most union I’ve ever felt,” Sweeney told the *Militant*. “So many people in the community are behind us.”

Solidarity picket lines

Teachers in Rome, New York, organized their own informational picket Dec. 5 to let people know about the Remington workers’ fight, Sweeney said, and that protest gave the unionists the idea of calling on other workers to organize informational actions about the Remington fight in their own areas.

“What we want is our jobs back and what we are owed,” Sweeney said. “And we don’t want this to happen to anyone else.”

Solidarity is important in this struggle. The Central New York Labor Council organized with Gerelick Farms to donate 300 gallons of milk.

Join in building solidarity. Organize your union to hold informational activity. Send checks and donations to UMW Local 717, 49 1st Street, Ilion, NY 13357.