

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Protests in Kurdistan demand unpaid wages, jobs, services
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 84/NO. 51 DECEMBER 28, 2020

India farmer protests grow in fight to stop gov’t assaults

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Tens of thousands of farmers continue their protest blockade around New Delhi, the Indian capital, demanding Prime Minister Narendra Modi withdraw new agricultural laws that will drive down the prices farmers receive for their crops. They’re fighting to defend their livelihoods and prevent more of them from being driven off the land.

Thousands of farmers arrive each day to swell their encampments. Talks between farm leaders and government ministers remain deadlocked.

“We will not allow the government to change the rules because they want to hurt farmers’ income by filling the pockets of big companies,” Gurwinder Singh, a 66-year-old farmer from Punjab told Reuters at a Dec. 8 protest.

Working farmers from the northern states, many of them Sikhs, have spearheaded the actions. On Dec. 13 hundreds from Rajasthan stalled traffic for hours on the Delhi-Jaipur national highway as police blocked their march

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New Rochelle nurses fight for more staff, new contract

BY SETH GALINSKY

After a spirited two-day strike by 200 nurses at Montefiore Health System’s hospital in New Rochelle Dec. 1 and 2, the New York State Nurses Association and the bosses are back at the negotiating table. Front and center is the nurses’ fight for more hiring and the safety of their patients and themselves.

Staffing shortages at hospitals are nothing new, but grew worse with the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been strikes and protests for more staff at hospitals and nursing homes across the country.

“If you can safely care for one or two patients, but you’re given four or five, you have to make some decisions about who you’re going to rescue,” Nurses Association President Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez told the London *Financial Times*. “That is just a horrible thing for health professionals to confront.”

Patient mortality rates jump 7% for
Continued on page 6

No layoffs! Cut workweek with *no* cut in weekly pay!



New York State Nurses Association

Nurses strike Dec. 1-2 at Montefiore hospital in New Rochelle, New York. Bosses refuse to hire more nurses, meaning there isn’t enough staff to provide needed health care during pandemic.

Workers and farmers need to chart our own road forward

Workers and our unions need to raise the banner of fighting to shorten the workweek to 30 hours without a single penny cut from take-home pay. This can prevent layoffs and keep

Spreading layoffs, shutdowns deepen crisis facing workers

BY TERRY EVANS

A spreading second wave of government-ordered lockdowns on production, retail, restaurants and other stores is worsening the crisis conditions inflicted on working people by the bosses and their governments.

Small shopkeepers are being crushed and mass unemployment is deepening competition among workers for jobs. Employers seek to use this to impose wage cuts and increasingly unsafe working conditions, as well as to stifle workers’ resistance.

Where workers do stand up and fight back against bosses’ attacks on our jobs, wages, safety and health, they provide an example to millions facing rising hardships.

“We don’t have enough staffing so we can’t take adequate care of the pa-
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EDITORIAL

millions of fellow workers on the job.

Winning 30 hours work for 40 hours pay in the mines, mills, factories, warehouses and retail outlets would sharply reduce the mounting competition among us for jobs. It would prevent bosses using the threat of furloughs or slashing working hours to press for cuts in wages. Most importantly, it would get more workers back to the one place where we can join together and act as a *class*

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Socialist Workers Party campaigns widely with ‘Militant,’ action program

BY SETH GALINSKY

Members of the Socialist Workers Party are talking to workers, farmers, small shopkeepers and others in big cities, small towns and rural areas about what we can do together to change the crisis conditions we face. This crisis is the result of capitalism in decline, made worse by the way the government and bosses are responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

Party members are joining protests against police brutality and the death penalty, car caravans in solidarity with farmers in India, and picket lines of workers on strike. They are finding widespread interest among working people looking for an effective
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Family leads protests for arrest of cop who killed Casey Goodson Jr.



WOSU/Paige Pfleger

Protest Dec. 11 demands arrest of cop who shot and killed Casey Goodson Jr., in Columbus, Ohio. Inset, Tamala Payne, Goodson’s mother, tells crowd, “We’ve all got to stand up!”

BY JANET POST

Demanding authorities prosecute a sheriff’s deputy who shot dead laid-off truck driver and Gap employee Casey Goodson Jr., hundreds took to the streets of Columbus, Ohio, Dec. 11 and 12. Goodson was gunned down on his grandmother’s doorstep in the Northland neighborhood of the city Dec. 4.

“He did nothing wrong that day be-

sides be a Black man who was a target of a racist cop,” Tamala Payne, Goodson’s mother, told protesters Dec. 11.

“Too many of us are dying,” she said. “We have to fight for justice. It’s us against them and they always win. But they’re not gonna win this one because this mother refuses to let it happen. We’ve all got to stand up!”

Goodson, 23, was returning home
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Bob Cantrick, communist cadre for over 5 decades 4

US executes 2 more federal inmates, 3 others scheduled 5

—On the picket line, p. 5—

UK: Rolls-Royce jet engine workers strike to defend jobs

Venezuelan elections deal blow to US rulers' attacks

BY RÓGER CALERO

The pro-imperialist opposition led by Juan Guaidó that's seeking to overthrow the government of Nicolás Maduro lost control of the legislature in elections held Dec. 6. Guaidó, with the backing of U.S. imperialism, had declared himself president in January 2019.

In one of the lowest electoral turn-outs in the 22 years since late President Hugo Chávez was elected and the United Socialist Party of Venezuela has been in government, its candidates won 189 out of the 277-seat assembly — 68% of the vote. Less than one-third of eligible voters participated. The opposition bloc split, with the faction led by Guaidó boycotting the election and other parties participating, winning 28% of the vote.

The outgoing National Assembly, elected in 2015, had been controlled by the opposition.

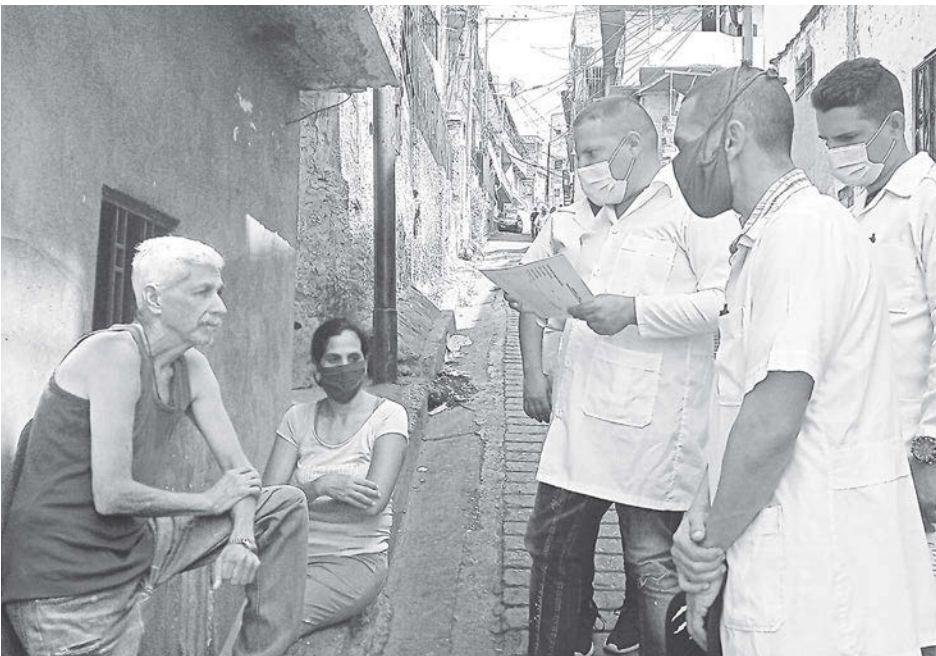
Trying to take the sting out of the blow to the drive to overthrow Maduro, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo claimed the government rigged the elections. British and other European imperialist governments joined Washington in refusing to recognize the vote. Guaidó announced he plans to continue his presidential “functions” beyond Jan. 5, when the old National Assembly’s term ends.

Both U.S. administrations of Barack Obama and Donald Trump have imposed harsh economic and trade sanctions against Venezuela, and have backed attempts to provoke a coup against Maduro. The failure of these efforts has split the opposition.

Some opposition forces now promote a negotiated political solution and reject Guaidó’s calls for even more sanctions. Two-time opposition presidential candidate Henrique Capriles called for an end to Guaidó’s supposed “interim government.” The incoming U.S. administration, he said, should “understand that this plan has been exhausted.”

Guaidó proclaimed himself president while he was head of the National Assembly, claiming Maduro’s reelection in 2018 was a fraud. Washington and European and Latin American governments were quick to recognize the new “legitimate” government. They used it as cover to further attack Venezuela’s sovereignty, seizing assets deposited in foreign banks, and those of Citgo, a U.S.-based subsidiary of Venezuela’s state-owned oil company, and by taking more far-reaching steps to block international trade.

The Guaidó-led opposition’s sup-



Sputnik/Marco Terruggi

Volunteer Cuban doctors treat working people for symptoms of COVID-19 in Caracas in April. Revolutionary Cuba defends Venezuelan sovereignty against U.S. sanctions, attacks.

port for imperialist economic sanctions — even during the COVID-19 pandemic — is not popular among working people in Venezuela, who are hit hardest by them.

“What do I get with Guaidó traveling around the world preaching? Guaidó can have good relations with the United States, but how does that benefit Venezuela?” Ajeieh Emghaoech told the *Militant* by phone Dec. 12. A resident of the Los Picapiedras neighborhood in Baruta, she said she didn’t vote in the elections because “nothing is going to change.”

Following the Dec. 6 vote, the weakened opposition forces around Guaidó organized a six-day online and smaller in-person “popular consultation.” They claim 6.5 million voters responded to their poll asking if they want a change of government and whether they reject the results of the elections. The online vote was open to the over 4 million Venezuelans who have fled the country in recent years. There is no way, however, to verify their turnout claim.

“No one could think that an internet consultation has legal value,” Maduro said Dec. 10.

Washington’s sanctions have deepened the economic and social crisis working people face. Shortages of medicine, food and other basic necessities — at prices working people can afford — are widespread.

U.S. sanctions that block Venezuela’s oil exports and imports — and

the collapse of production in local refineries, the country’s main industry — have created widespread gasoline shortages affecting public transportation, production and transport of crops. The government has limited distribution of gasoline at subsidized prices — about 10 cents a gallon — to roughly two tankfuls a month. Mileslong lines at gas stations in Caracas, even longer in other states, are a common sight.

“Luckily my day falls on Saturday,” Jeison Balderramo, a welder, told the *Militant*. “I can queue up Friday night and be there at sunrise before they start selling. Otherwise I would have to miss work!” As an alternative, if you can afford it, said Jason, you can go to what he called the “reliable route” (*vía confiable*), which is to pay a \$10 bribe to the policeman monitoring the line so you can jump ahead.

In wealthier neighborhoods, gas remains available at much higher market prices in dollars.

President-elect Joe Biden has said he will continue to back Guaidó and maintain sanctions against both Venezuela and Cuba. Elliot Abrams, the Trump administration’s special representative on Venezuela, says there is a strong bipartisan consensus in Washington over the need to keep pressure on the Maduro government.

Revolutionary Cuba has continued to call for U.S. hands off Venezuela and support the sovereignty of the Venezuelan people.

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution
by Jack Barnes

This is a book about the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary — it can be made.

Also in Spanish, French, Farsi

pathfinderpress.com

THE MILITANT

Cuban Revolution’s proud record on art, culture

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Volunteer teachers, peasant students during successful 1961 Cuban literacy campaign.

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Campaign with the ‘Militant’

Continued from front page

way to fight back in the party’s action program, the *Militant* and books by Socialist Workers Party leaders and other revolutionaries.

Samuel and Jamie Cates were glad that SWP members Hilda Cuzco, Gerardo Sánchez and George Chalmers knocked on their door in Kaufman, Texas, a small town east of Dallas, Dec. 10. Samuel has a tree-trimming business, but work has been slow, and Jamie is a laid-off warehouse worker.

When Sánchez showed them the *Militant* and explained that it tells the truth about what working people face, Samuel said, “It’s really hard to find a paper like this.”

The SWP campaigners made sure they got a copy of the party’s action program, reprinted in the *Militant*, which poses the fight for jobs as the central question. It says workers and our unions need to fight for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to stop layoffs, and for a government-funded public works program to create millions of jobs at union scale, building hospitals, schools, day care and replace crumbling infrastructure. “Working people need to understand our own worth and our capacities in order to win,” Chalmers said.

The Cates said they’ve been paying attention to demonstrations against police brutality and killings over the last year. They’ve had their own run-ins with the cops, who threw Jamie in jail. Then the police dropped the charges without explanation.

“One thing that surprises me,” Jamie said, “is that some people say everything is about race. Just because you are white you are accused of being a racist.”

“Blacks are disproportionately the victims of police brutality,” Sánchez said, “but police brutality is a class question. The cops brutalize workers to keep us in our place so we won’t have confidence to change things. A government controlled by the rich doesn’t have any solutions to what working people face.

“That’s what is different about Cuba, where workers and farmers made a revolution and took political power into their own hands. We need to learn about and emulate that example here in the U.S.,” Sánchez said.

Jamie Cates said she hadn’t heard much about the Cuban Revolution, but was interested in learning more. They subscribed to the *Militant*.

Oppose the death penalty!

At a protest against the execution of Brandon Bernard outside the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, Dec. 10 (see page 5), SWP member Samir Hazboun met Indiana University student Brian Hancock. The party’s action program calls the death penalty “an anti-working-class weapon in the hands of the rulers.”

“If a revolution were to succeed in the United States what would you propose doing with the capitalists?” Hancock asked.

Hazboun showed him the book *Socialism on Trial*, saying it takes up this question. He explained how on the eve of the Second World War, SWP and revolutionary-minded Teamster union leaders in Minneapolis were framed up by the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration and “sent to a federal prison like the one behind us.”

“The heart of the book is the testimony by party leader James P. Cannon, who explains that the capitalist rulers will try to hang onto power by brutal, violent and bloody means,” Hazboun said. “The working class will do everything it can to minimize that threat, as we fight to establish and defend our own government.”

“I’ve never heard that perspective before, that the ruling class are the ones who bring bloodshed when it comes to revolution,” Hancock said. He got a subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

Gabby Prosser, a 24-year-old barista, and Nick Neeser, a 22-year-old carpenter, drove from Minneapolis to join Hazboun and other SWP members at the protest. They went back with them to Louisville, Kentucky, where they brought solidarity to the picket line of striking Teamsters at DSI Tunneling and talked to workers on their doorsteps.

Neeser described the exchange he and SWP campaigner Jacquie Henderson had with a UPS worker they met. “I was struck by how he listened carefully to us explain our recent experience at the death penalty protest and

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/Hilda Cuzco

Gerardo Sánchez discusses *Militant*, SWP action program with Jamie Cates, in Kaufman, Texas, Dec. 10. Her husband, Samuel, said, “It’s hard to find a paper like this,” and they subscribed.

more broadly the party’s program,” he said. “Then he just said, ‘The death penalty is no good for working people and the rich are rich because they’re rich.’ He gave us a \$10 contribution. It gave me a boost in confidence to see how he responded to our program.”

Solidarity with farmers in India

In New York, SWP member Róger Calero said, “We got a great response from young Sikhs who organized a car caravan through the city Dec. 13 to bring attention to the fight by millions of farmers in India demanding a repeal of laws there that threaten their livelihoods.

“When they made a stop at Times

Square, some participants hopped out of their cars to take pictures with SWP members who were waiting for the caravan with party signs that said, ‘Workers and farmers in India and the U.S. fight together.’”

Some of the participants were surprised when we explained that working farmers in the U.S. also are losing their land. A number took copies of the party’s action program and got copies of the *Militant*.

Interested in joining efforts to advance the working-class movement? Contact the SWP or Communist League branch nearest you to find out how you can get involved. See the directory on page 8.

control of production out of the hands of the bosses. Employers care about profits, not the dangerous conditions we’re forced to work under. This is the only road to take control of and enforce safety and health on the job. Demand the bosses open their books for inspection by workers and consumers. Workers control of production is a school for learning to run the economy ourselves, in the interests of all producers, a crucial step alongside building a labor party to fight to take political power.

FARMERS — WORKERS’ ALLIES ON THE LAND. Fight for immediate government relief to fully cover farmers’ production costs, including living expenses for themselves and their families. No more foreclosures! Nationalize the land, guaranteeing its use by those who live on and till it, not “repo” seizures by absentee bankers, landowners, or capitalist farmers.

AMNESTY FOR ALL UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS in the US, a life-and-death question for the unions to unite workers and cut across divisions the bosses use to drive down wages. For access to driver’s licenses for all.

OPPOSE WASHINGTON’S WARS. US hands off Iran, Venezuela and Cuba. US troops out of Afghanistan, Korea, the Middle East. End US colonial rule in Puerto Rico.

FOR RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL AND OF A CONTIGUOUS PALESTINIAN STATE. The leaders of Arab states, of Israel and Palestinian leaders need to meet and recognize both the state of Israel and an independent Palestinian state. For the right of Jews to return to Israel as a refuge in the face of capitalist crisis, Jew-hatred and murderous violence.

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 LABOR FORUMS—

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Celebrate the 62nd Anniversary of the Cuban Socialist Revolution. Fri., Jan. 1. Reception, 7 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$10. 1858 W. Cermak Road, 2nd floor. Tel: (312) 792-6160.

Bob Cantrick, communist cadre for over 5 decades

BY AL CAPPE
AND ROSEMARY RAY

MONTREAL — Thirty-two people attended a Dec. 5 celebration here of the political life of Bob Cantrick, a member and supporter of the communist movement in three countries for more than 50 years. Participants came from Toronto, Hamilton and Montreal. Cantrick died Nov. 4 in Toronto from complications resulting from his treatment for throat cancer. He was 76.

“Bob dedicated himself to living a life centered on advancing the fight for a world where exploitation and oppression of every kind is ended,” Steve Penner, organizer of the Communist League in Canada, told participants.

Communist League member Philippe Tessier and Montreal supporter Sylvie Charbin co-chaired the meeting. Over 20 messages displayed in binders for participants to read were sent from the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

“Bob was won to the communist movement in the late 1960s under the impact of some of the most important struggles of the past six decades, in particular the Black rights, women’s liberation and anti-Vietnam War movements,” explained Penner. “And above all the Cuban Revolution, which points the way toward humanity’s socialist future.”

In 1967 Cantrick joined the Young Socialist Alliance, the youth group of the Socialist Workers Party, at Indiana University in Bloomington. He was active in the movement against the Vietnam War and in defense of GIs United Against the War, a group of U.S. Army soldiers who spoke out and faced victimization by the army brass. He joined the SWP in 1970 and became a member of its Chicago branch.

In his message to the meeting, Steve Clark, a National Committee member of the SWP, said he first met Cantrick in Chicago as a new member of the

YSA. Clark described how Cantrick understood the importance of educating and helping to integrate new members like himself into the party. “Bob quickly took me under his wing politically,” said Clark, recommending books to read and study. “It takes care and political attention to work with contacts and new members. In whatever he did, Bob gave the task political attention. And he cared.”

The turn to industry

Penner explained that beginning in 1978 the communist movement in the U.S., Canada and elsewhere “began an historic turn to place the overwhelming majority of its members in industry, to carry out union and political work alongside other workers in auto plants, steel mills, rail yards, coal mines, garment shops, packinghouses and other industrial workplaces.”

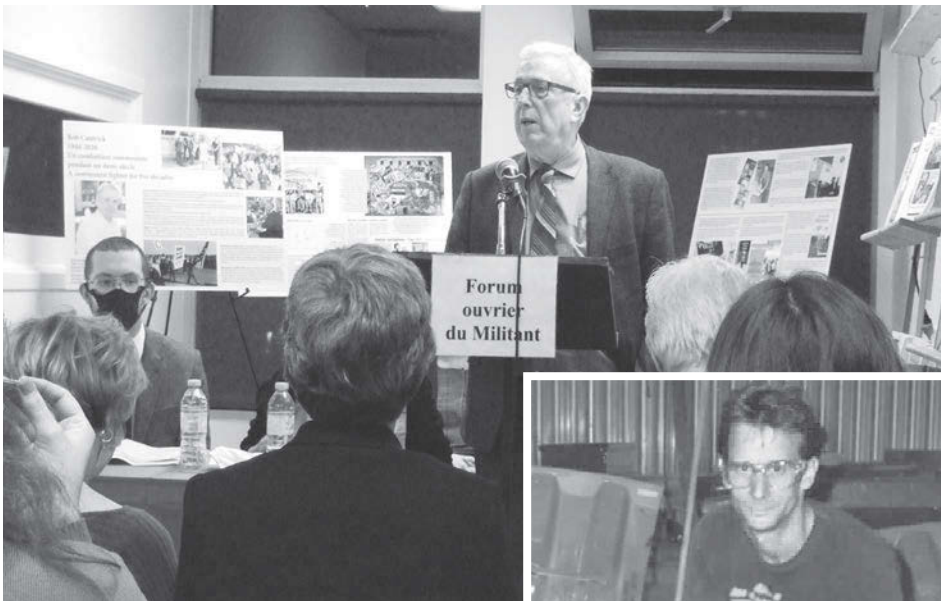
The goal of the “turn” was for the party to become “an inseparable part of the trade unions and their struggles,” said Penner, quoting from SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes’ introduction to *The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party*.

Charbin and Tessier each described union battles they had participated in as a result of the turn. Charbin, a garment worker in 2001, recounted the successful strikes of thousands of Montreal garment workers that she and other League members were part of in 1986-87 and 2001.

Tessier, a Teamsters union picket captain during last November’s eight-day “strike for safety” by Canadian National rail conductors, told how the determination and unity of the rail workers pushed back concession demands of the bosses, who “never thought we would go on strike, much less that we would win.”

“Bob worked in a number of industries, including auto, steel and garment,” Penner said.

Three large panels were on display at the meeting, chronicling Cantrick’s



Above, Militant/Dave Olson

Above, Steve Penner, organizer of Communist League in Canada, speaks at Dec. 5 celebration of political life of Bob Cantrick held in Montreal. “Bob was won to the communist movement in the late 1960s under the impact of the Black rights, women’s liberation, anti-Vietnam War movements, and the Cuban Revolution, which points the way forward toward humanity’s socialist future,” Penner said. Inset, Cantrick working at Marley Cooling Tower in Kansas City, Missouri in 1990.



political life.

One had a map showing the many cities in which he lived, worked and practiced revolutionary politics.

“Thanks to his mastering of the German language, Bob was asked to be part of the editing team in New York in the 1980s that produced the Pathfinder book series *The Communist International in Lenin’s Time*,” said Tessier. Cantrick assured the accuracy and quality of the documents by comparing the original German to the translations.

That series makes available the programmatic continuity of the worldwide communist movement led by V.I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks following the 1917 Russian Revolution.

In 1995 Cantrick and his companion Joanne Pritchard moved to Canada where they helped build the Communist League in both Montreal and Toronto.

In the early 2000s Cantrick became an organized supporter of the communist movement. For the past 20 years, up to just weeks before his death, he was a proofreader in the Print Project, an effort by over 240 supporters worldwide who work together helping design, produce and distribute Pathfinder books.

Language skills key to accuracy

“Bob Cantrick was passionate about words, grammar, proper punctuation and making Pathfinder books perfect,” wrote Ruth Nebbia from Virginia, who worked with Cantrick on a proofreading team.

This was in keeping with Pathfind-

er’s proletarian standards, Susie Ber- man, a supporter of the League from Toronto, said in her remarks, referring to a quote by SWP leader and president of Pathfinder Press, Mary-Alice Waters, in the pamphlet *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution*. Waters said communists “consider this to be a class question. If it is to prepare itself to be the ruling class, the working class must have access to truth, to culture, to clearly presented, accurate information.”

In his message, Pathfinder editorial volunteer Martín Koppel said, “Bob made a significant contribution to the new Pathfinder edition of *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* by Abram Leon. He worked with enthusiasm on the extensive footnotes and bibliography, much of it in German, checking every detail from the accuracy of historical names, dates and book titles to punctuation and spelling.”

Several messages commented on Cantrick’s wide range of interests and skills — from music and tennis to his proficiency as a magician. The quality of meals he and Pritchard served for those they hosted in Toronto was noted in several messages.

“This was a great event,” Walmart worker Yvan Mouyokono told the *Militant*. “I learned that Bob was a real fighter. He showed that you have to fight not just for yourself, but with others to change society as a whole.”

Following an appeal, the participants donated 1,494 Canadian dollars (\$1,170) in a special collection taken to strengthen the work of the Communist League.

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Walmart workers give 'blood money' bribes to build SWP

“With great satisfaction I put the \$141 in ‘blood money’ from Walmart bosses toward building the Socialist Workers Party, the vanguard party of the working class,” wrote Maggie Trowe from Louisville, Kentucky. “The billionaire owners made record profits from exploiting our labor. Our paychecks are small and conditions unsafe.”

A total of \$622.96 was received from seven Walmart workers in the Louisville area. And from Albany, New York, several others who work at Walmart sent in \$276.

Communists use the term “blood money” to describe production, attendance, safety and other so-called bonuses that bosses offer, hoping to get workers to keep quiet about speedup, low pay and unsafe conditions. Making these contributions to the SWP turns attempted bribery by the bosses into helping to build a fighting working-class movement.

You too can make the best use of your end-of-year holiday bonuses from the boss by contributing them to the SWP. Send your contribution to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

4 The Militant December 28, 2020

US executes two more federal inmates, three others scheduled

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. — Rallying across the street from the federal prison here Dec. 10, 40 people protested the execution of Brandon Bernard before the U.S. government put him to death. The following day federal inmate Alfred Bourgeois was also executed, the 10th carried out since the Donald Trump administration resumed use of capital punishment in July after a 17-year hiatus.

Prisoners on death row “are human beings who are capable of many things, of changing,” retired Unitarian minister Bill Breeden told the rally, “but with this terrible threat hanging over them, often for decades.”

Bernard, an African American, was convicted for his role in the 1999 murder of two youth ministers, Todd and Stacie Bagley, in Texas when he was just 18 years old. He was the youngest person to be executed in nearly 70 years.

Prior to Bernard’s execution by lethal injection, over 500,000 people signed petitions urging President Trump to commute his sentence. This included a high-profile appeal from Kim Kardashian West asking the president to spare his life.

Five of the nine jurors who had sentenced Bernard to die, and Angela Moore, who in one of his appeals had been the prosecutor who defended the order to execute, said they had changed their minds, now calling for clemency. “Having seen Brandon grow into a humble, remorseful adult fully capable of living peacefully in prison,” Moore wrote in an op-ed in the *Indianapolis Star* Nov. 18, “how can we say he is among the tiny group of offenders who must be put to death?”

Despite all this, the U.S. Supreme Court denied a motion to stay his execution.

In sober remarks right before he was put to death, Bernard said, “I’m sorry. That’s the only words that I can say that completely capture how I feel now and how I felt that day.”

Demonstrators participating in the Dec. 10 vigil came from several cities in Indiana; Chicago and Winnetka, Illinois; Louisville, Kentucky; and Minneapolis.

Commenting on her experiences protesting capital punishment, Audria Hettinger, a student at Indiana University in Bloomington, told the *Militant*, “We partnered with Yvette Allen, sister of Billie Allen who is on death row in Terre Haute. Together we organized protests last weekend in Bloomington, Indianapolis and Terre Haute. Then seven students carpooled to the vigil here today against the killing of Brandon Bernard.” Indiana University student Brian Hancock added, “We are against all these executions. Some of us will stay to protest tomorrow against the scheduled execution of Alfred Bourgeois and we’ll be back protesting others.”

Samir Hazboun gave greetings to the rally from the Socialist Workers Party. “The administration has escalated these



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Dec. 10 protest outside federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, where U.S. gov’t carries out executions. Socialist Workers Party member Samir Hazboun, second from left, talks with Indiana University students. “Use of death penalty is a bipartisan attack on the working class,” he said.

federal executions now, but the use of the death penalty is truly a bipartisan attack on the working class,” Hazboun said. “We are for abolishing the death penalty. We are against all these brutal federal executions and those done by state governments as well.”

The U.S. rulers use capital punishment to intimidate working people, by showing them the brutal tools they have — and will use — against workers who mount resistance to boss and government assaults.

Bourgeois, a former truck driver in Louisiana, was executed the next day.

He had been convicted in 2002 of murdering his 2-year-old daughter. The Justice Department had scheduled his execution for last January but a federal court put a stay on this because of Bourgeois’ severe mental disabilities. Then the Supreme Court refused to delay the execution any further.

The U.S. government has scheduled execution for three more federal inmates next month — Jan. 12 for Lisa Montgomery, who would be the first woman on federal death row to be put to death in nearly 70 years; Jan. 14 for Cory Johnson; and Jan. 15 for Dustin Higgs.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Rolls-Royce jet engine workers strike to defend their jobs

BARNOLDSWICK, England — “They have given us no choice but to fight,” Dennis Constable said Dec. 5 at the end of a rally and car caravan organized by Rolls-Royce jet engine workers and their union, Unite, in support of their strike here to stop job cuts. Constable is a shop floor worker at the factory here and Unite branch secretary.

People came from across Northwest England. Hundreds gathered in the

parking lot of a shopping center to join the action. The cars went through the towns of Burnley, Nelson and Colne, ending with a rally near the factory.

The strike began Nov. 6 with a section of the workforce the union considered key for production. The company then placed the remaining workers on a furlough. Rolls-Royce has announced the layoff of 140 workers, in addition to cutting 350 jobs, which triggered the strike action.

Mark Porter, the Unite union convenor at the factory, told the *Militant* that strikers had received a number of messages of solidarity, including from IG Metall union in Germany and unions in Australia and the U.S.

“This is my first time visiting a picket line,” Jake Wyatt, a rail worker and member of the RMT trade union, told strikers. He came with some co-workers. “It’s good to see workers take a stand like this, to see what the union can do.”

Garry Gallagher, an ambulance support worker in Wigan who has visited the picket line a number of times, pointed out how important it is to let the striking workers “know there are people out there that do support their struggle, that their fight is for all of us and for our future.”

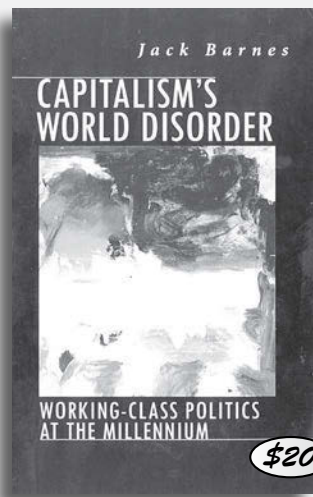
Some 314,000 people in the country lost their jobs from July to September. A government scheme to pay 80% of furloughed workers’ wages has been extended through March 2021, partly masking the scope of the crisis.

“We say to the community: Today this is our struggle, tomorrow it’s yours,” Porter said.

Messages of solidarity can be sent to ross.quinn@unitetheunion.org.

— Ölöf Andra Proppé
and Hugo Wils

Capitalism’s World Disorder by Jack Barnes



“The purpose of the cops is to *punish*, not patrol, to keep workers in line, to make an example of you if you come from the wrong class — and more so if you happen to be the wrong color or the wrong nationality.”

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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 25, 1995

Washington has launched an aggressive propaganda campaign to justify the drive toward war in Yugoslavia. President Bill Clinton set the tone in a December 2 address to thousands of U.S. troops, who were headed for Bosnia.

“There could be incidents with people who have still not given up their hatred,” the president emphasized. “Everyone should know that when America comes to help make the peace, America will still look after its own.”

Clinton claimed that this time the U.S. military is being mobilized “not with a call to war, but a call to peace.” Their purpose, he said, is to enforce a U.S.-brokered “peace” deal signed in Dayton, Ohio, which calls for the partition of Bosnia.

Capitalist politicians and commentators have been stepping up the pro-war propaganda, directed particularly against Muslim “zealots” and Serbs.



December 25, 1970

CHICAGO — Following the 18-hour national rail strike, which was outlawed by a special act of Congress, an emergency meeting was called by leaders of eight locals of the United Transportation Union in the Chicago area.

The meeting set up a committee to publicize the plight of railway workers and win the support of unions and other sections of the American public for the right of railroad workers to strike.

A guest speaker was Wayne Kennedy, cochairman of the Chicago Joint Council of the American Federation of Government Employees, who said, “Not only must the railroad unions take militant strike action to secure justice for their membership, but that the American public should take the railroads away from the few corrupt multimillionaires and turn the management of this vital industry over to the real experts — the railroad workers.”



December 29, 1945

LOS ANGELES — Two weeks after a vigilante threat to O’Day H. Short if he didn’t vacate his property at Fontana, 50 miles from here, a fire of unexplained origin destroyed his home and burned his wife and two children to death.

Short, a Los Angeles man prevented by race restrictions from finding a home in Los Angeles, bought property in Fontana. After he had moved his family into the partially completed house, local real estate dealer J. Sutherland delivered the threat from the vigilante committee. “If I were you, I’d get my family off of this property at once,” he said.

Attorney Thomas L. Griffith, president of the Los Angeles Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, called a meeting of all interested parties December 20, to collect information and plan further action.

India farmer protests grow

Continued from front page
into the capital. The next day, farm leaders held a daylong hunger strike, while others staged sit-ins outside government offices.

The governing Bharatiya Janata Party pushed the bills through parliament in September, anticipating that strict COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns it imposed would limit opposition to these moves.

The legislation is to end the decades-old system of state purchases of farmers' wheat and rice at fixed rates, food that is distributed to millions of people at subsidized prices. The new laws would lift restrictions on big capitalists stockpiling food to manipulate prices and allow them to more easily buy up land from debt-laden small farmers.

"Our students are going to many villages across Punjab to educate farmers about this new farm bill and its negative effects," Sukhripir Kaur, 22, of the Punjab Students Union, told Al-Jazeera Dec. 14. "Our parents work in the fields and they are the backbone of our economy. What will they do if our land will be controlled by the government and corporate sectors?"

Convoys of tractors with covered trailers set up as makeshift shelters stretch for miles outside of New Delhi. Large community kitchens prepare free meals all day for those joining the protests. The kitchen at Singhu feeds nearly 30,000 farmers and others.

Temporary medical centers staffed by volunteer doctors and nurses dot the camps. Everything from impromptu libraries and bookstalls to laundries have sprung up. Farmers are in for the long haul, building up their stockpiles of supplies. Separate facilities are being erected so more women can stay in the camps.

Modi said Dec. 12 that the farm laws are part of his "modernizing" drive,

backed by the ruling capitalist families. His assertion that this would "make farmers more prosperous" is actually aimed at boosting big capitalist farm owners at the expense of millions of small farmers.

The vast majority of India's farmers, already struggling to make a living on inherited family plots of less than five acres, know they will be worse off. Burdened by growing indebtedness, India's rural poor have one of the highest suicide rates in the world.

Under pressure of the protests, Modi made a belated offer to retain some of the price supports, but leaders of about 30 farmers' unions at the head of the actions say it's not enough.

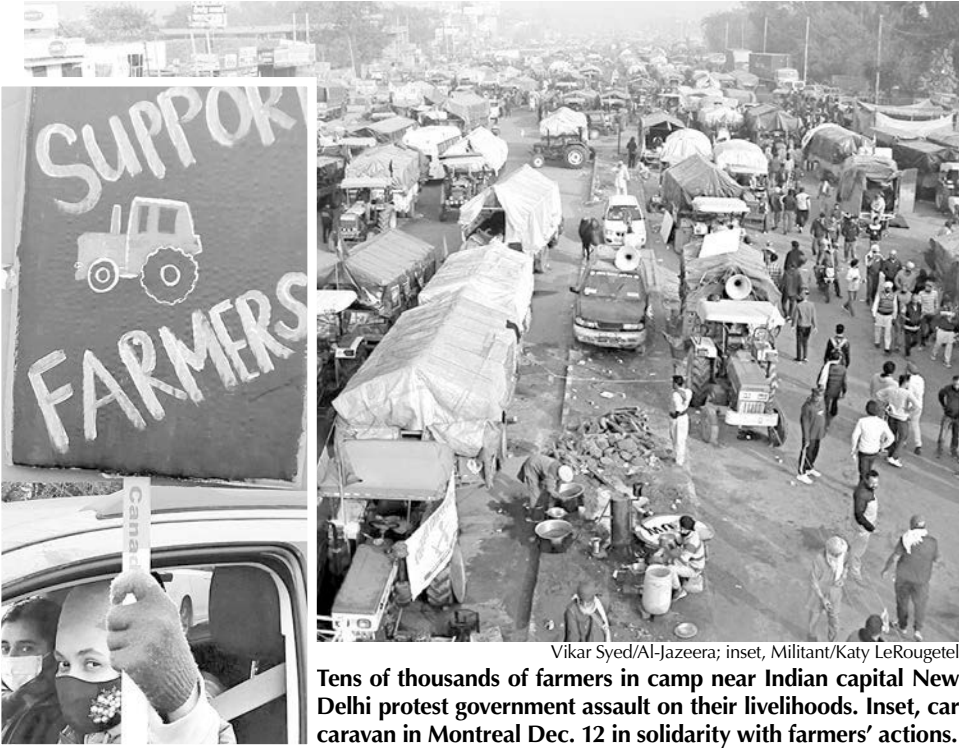
"If the government wants to hold talks we are ready, but our main demand will remain the scrapping of the three new farm laws," farm leader Kanwalpreet Singh Pannu told the press.

The opposition Indian National Congress party backs the protests. Some of Modi's ministers have denounced the actions, claiming they are instigated by the rulers of neighboring China or Pakistan. Others have rebaited farmers alleging their actions are infiltrated by "leftist and Maoist elements."

"This government wants to give control of Indian farming to big corporates," Balram Singh, 25, son of a farming family from Punjab state, told *The Times of London* at the Singhu border encampment Dec. 14. "Farmers will not survive. People will die."

Big capital has long demanded the Indian economy function as a single market. Modi aims to boost investment from foreign and domestic capitalists to enhance his "Make in India" campaign. In 2017 his government eradicated a multitude of varying tax regulations across the country's different states for the same reason.

India has the world's fifth largest



Vikar Syed/Al-Jazeera; inset, Militant/Katy LeRougetel

Tens of thousands of farmers in camp near Indian capital New Delhi protest government assault on their livelihoods. Inset, car caravan in Montreal Dec. 12 in solidarity with farmers' actions.

economy. Despite the acceleration of urbanization and industrialization in recent years, more than half of the country's population of 1.35 billion remains dependent on farming.

The capitalist rulers hope to drive more ruined farmers into the cities to work in India's expanding industry.

Since the 1960s the use of higher yielding crop varieties has helped farmers increase production and reduce widespread food shortages in decades past. Today India is the world's second largest producer of such crops as wheat and rice, as well as fruits and vegetables. But working farmers have paid the price for this development, increasingly burdened down by loans to buy the necessary seeds, pesticides, fertilizers and machinery.

Workers protest unpaid wages

The farmers' actions have given new confidence to workers to fight the bosses' attacks. Thousands of workers at the Wistron manufacturing plant in Bangalore gathered to protest outside the plant Dec. 13, demanding unpaid wages and a reduction in working hours. The com-

pany makes iPhones for Apple. When the cops arrived some of the workers ransacked the plant, forcing bosses to suspend production.

Cops detained about 160 of the workers. A minister for the state of Karnataka where the plant is located said its labor department would investigate any underpayment of wages.

The farmers' actions have attracted support internationally, including from Indian immigrant workers in imperialist countries from North America to western Europe. Solidarity car caravans were staged in New York, New Jersey and Montreal Dec. 13. These came after a larger protest in Washington, D.C., the previous day.

The most popular signs say, "No farmers, no food!"

Spreading layoffs, shutdowns deepen crisis facing working people

Continued from front page

tients," striking nurse Melissa Rickets told CBS News at the picket line at Montefiore Hospital in New Rochelle in New York during a Dec. 1-2 strike. As the number of people needing treatment for COVID-19 surged, hospital bosses pushed already understaffed nurses there to care for more and more patients, as they are doing around the country.

The Montefiore nurses — and hundreds more at Albany Medical Center — are setting an example, fighting for a new contract with more jobs and more safety equipment, to defend the health of both hospital workers and patients (see article on front page).

While many workers are discussing how to stand up to the bosses' attacks, millions are laid off and hiring has ground to its slowest rate since April. These conditions have a dampening effect on struggles. It will take a rise in employment to create more favor-

Protests across Kurdistan demand unpaid wages, jobs, services

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

Teachers and other public employees, fed up with working for months without being paid, protested demanding back wages Dec. 2 in the city of Sulaymaniyah in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. When they tried to march again the next day, the police attacked them with tear gas, rubber bullets, water cannon and live ammunition.

The protests rapidly spread to other villages and towns. Workers and youth — angry over a lack of jobs and services, such as water, electricity and health care, and over corruption and a political system that benefits a handful of wealthy families — took to the streets for more than a week across Sulaymaniyah and Halabja provinces.

"There have been protests over unpaid wages from time to time over years, but it's on another level this time," journalist Rebaz Majeed told the *Militant* by phone from Sulaymaniyah Dec. 13.

In a number of towns protesters torched government and political parties' offices, including those of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) — the two main ruling parties in the Kurdistan Regional Government historically linked to the fight for Kurdish rights — and of smaller parties like Gorran, the change movement. In Said Sadiq, the offices of the Communist Party were attacked.

Protesters "are against the whole system, they're tired of all parties," Majeed said. "They blame the ruling parties, but



Reuters/Ako Rasheed

Public sector workers protest in Sulaymaniyah, demanding unpaid wages from Kurdistan Regional Government Dec. 11. Actions expanded across the region, fueled by lack of jobs and services.

also the opposition for not doing anything meaningful."

"These are mostly young people, students and unemployed workers," Sangar Youssif Salih, a university lecturer and executive director of the Peace and Freedom Organization, a human rights group, said by phone from Erbil, capital of the Kurdistan Regional Government. "They have nothing to lose."

As of Dec. 11, at least seven protesters, mostly young men and teenagers, had been killed by police or security forces affiliated with the KDP or PUK. One hundred have been injured and hundreds detained. In Erbil and Dohuk,

controlled by the KDP, authorities have prevented protests.

Several members of parliament from the Gorran party were stopped by the police from joining the protests in Sulaymaniyah Dec. 11. Members of the Kurdistan Communist Party have been arrested for joining as well. "Our comrades in the entire KRG are participating in the protests," Hiwa Omar, a member of the Political Bureau of the Kurdistan Communist Party, told the *Militant* Dec. 12.

NRT-TV, linked to the opposition New Generation Party, had its broadcast license suspended after the recent

New Rochelle nurses fight for more staff, new contract

Continued from front page

each additional patient a nurse is assigned, the *Financial Times* reported Dec. 10.

"This is bad commentary on how U.S. hospitals are trying to manage staffing even in normal circumstances," Linda Aiken, a nursing professor at the University of Pennsylvania, told the paper. "They're very much in love with this idea of just-in-time staffing and just-in-time supplies. It is a manufacturing idea that doesn't work out in hospitals."

Claiming the hospital chain had offered the nurses "a good deal," Montefiore spokesman Marcos Crespo charged the day before the strike began that the union "is striking because they want the power to dictate staffing assignments and hand out plum positions to their friends."

The nurses, who voted 98.4% in favor of going on strike, view it differently. High turnover and the loss of one nurse who died from COVID means that "we have even less staff now than we had in March and April," emergency room nurse Sharon Matthews told *Labor Notes*. "The bottom line is we need more staffing, and we need it before everything starts to get bad, before it gets more dangerous for staff and for the patients."

"We haven't had a contract for two years," said nurse Kathy Santoiemma, who has worked at the hospital for 43 years. "The basic ask that we have is for staffing."

Montefiore New Rochelle Executive Director Anthony Alfano sent a letter to nurses Oct. 26 claiming the hospital has been facing "significant financial challenges" for years and has lost more than \$50 million in the last few months — not counting government subsidies.

But the nurses note that Montefiore reported \$291 million in profits during the first nine months of 2020 and received \$768.3 million in federal stimulus funds. In addition it recently announced a \$272 million expansion of its White Plains hospital and finalized its purchase of St. John's Hospital in nearby Yonkers.

'Two worlds'

Montefiore bosses operate a large network of hospitals, specialty facilities, clinics and a medical school in the Bronx and New York City suburbs in Westchester County and the Hudson Valley. Some of these areas are largely working class, and others much more prosperous.

The New Rochelle hospital "is not in a very affluent area," said Santoiemma. "Our patients are mainly Medicare,

Medicaid patients." That's why the company has millions to spend on other locations, but doesn't want to shell out in New Rochelle, she said. "Our patients deserve the same care that everybody else deserves."

Sheridan-Gonzalez notes that this is not unique to New Rochelle. When she compares where she works to more affluent hospitals, she told the *Financial Times*, she is reminded of the Matt Damon movie "Elysium." "It's like you see the rich people in the sky and the poor people in the ground," she said. "It's two worlds."

While Montefiore bosses have refused for over two years to reach a new contract at New Rochelle, nurses point to the \$3.4 million spent on billboards and other advertising to "thank" the staff for confronting the pandemic. During the strike, Montefiore sent a bus painted like a mobile billboard from the ad campaign to circle the picket line, what one nurse called "rubbing salt in the wound." The bus was soon stopped in its tracks by pickets. Nurses have launched a countercampaign with stickers that say, "Nurses Over Billboards."

When the walkout ended Montefiore locked out 35 of the striking nurses, and didn't bring all the strikers back until Dec. 12.

Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq

by Jack Barnes

In New International no. 7

"The Kurdish people have come to the center stage in world politics as never before, not primarily as victims, but as courageous and determined fighters for national rights." —Jack Barnes

\$14. Also in Farsi, French, Spanish, Swedish

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protests. And Rudaw Media Network, the main news agency in the region, was warned by the government to refrain from broadcasting "violent scenes" or material that incites "disturbing of social cohesion."

Savan Abdulrahman, editor of a cultural website from Sulaymaniyah, said authorities are now breaking up "any gathering of more than five people." Nevertheless, 1,000 people attempted to protest there Dec. 11, she said.

Working people also face the consequences of government-imposed lockdowns in response to the COVID-19 epidemic.

"We were under lockdown from mid-March to the end of April. You could only go out to buy food," Halwest Karim said from Erbil. "People said it was not for protecting us but controlling us." Many shops never reopened when the lockdown ended.

"The lockdown was terrible," university teacher Kanyaw Ebubekir said from Sulaymaniyah Dec. 13. "People working in the bazaar had no income. After one month they started to demonstrate, saying 'it's better to die from the virus' than to die of starvation. 'I work for a private university, so I've been paid every month. But I've had a 30% pay cut,' he said. 'And prices of food are the same or even higher.'"

Baghdad seeks to reassert control

The crisis is exacerbated by the national oppression of the Kurdish people at the hands of the regime in Baghdad and by the legacy of imperialist domination.

The Kurdish people have faced national oppression since the founding of the modern Iraqi state in the aftermath of World War I. A powerful Kurdish uprising in the wake of the 1990-91 Gulf War and U.S. intervention won significant autonomy.

"The Kurdish people have come to the center stage in world politics as never before, not primarily as victims, but as courageous and determined fighters for national rights," SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes wrote at the time in *New International* no. 7.

The KRG has been hit by a drop in the price of oil and an ongoing dispute with the federal government in Baghdad over control of oil and customs revenues. In April, Baghdad stopped sending the KRG its agreed-upon 12% share of the federal budget, accusing KRG officials of violating an agreement to hand over 250,000 barrels of oil per day. In face of the protests, Erbil has agreed to send the oil in return for its budget share.

"Some public employees want their wages paid direct from Baghdad, because the Iraqi government doesn't delay it," Abdulrahman said. "That may be good for those who need money now, but it erases 30 years of what the Kurdish people gained."

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi has feigned sympathy with the protests, seeking to take advantage of anger directed at the Kurdish authorities to take steps to reassert Baghdad's control over the region.

Over the past year, working people in Arab-majority parts of Iraq have also staged determined protests over similar economic conditions, as well as against the intervention by Tehran and Washington into the country's politics.

Teamsters show ‘with proper leadership, workers can overcome’

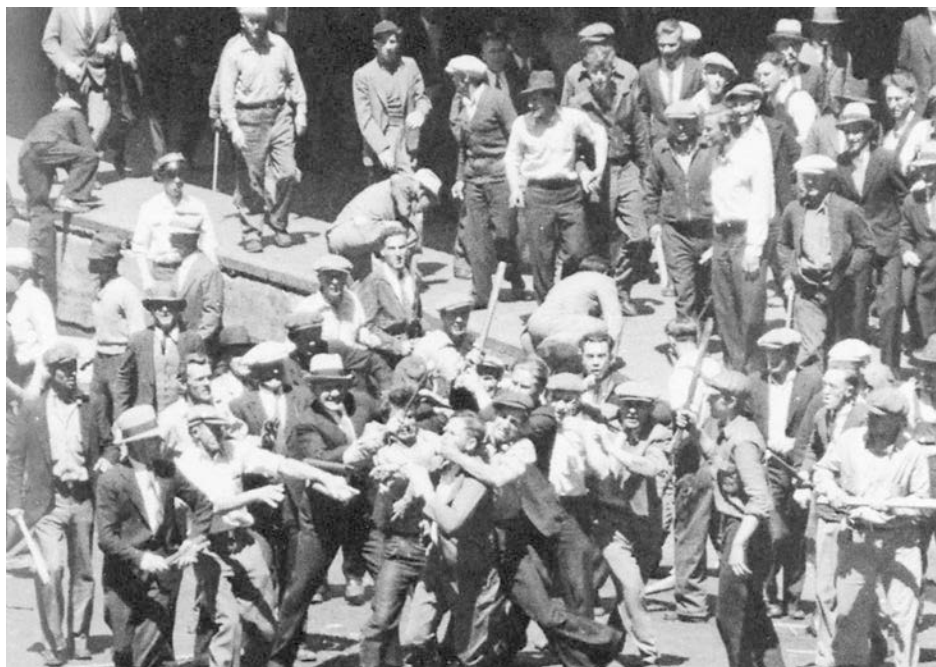
Teamster Bureaucracy, by Farrell Dobbs, is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. It is the last in a four-volume series on how a class-struggle union was forged in Minneapolis and across the Midwest trucking industry in the 1930s. Dobbs, a central leader of these battles, was national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party from 1953 to 1972. The book also tells how Teamsters and SWP leaders were railroaded to prison for helping lead labor opposition to the U.S. rulers' drive to enter World War II. The excerpt is from the Afterword. Copyright © 2018 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FARRELL DOBBS

The relevant elements of the class-struggle program needed by the trade unions should be introduced realistically on a transitional basis. In that way the unfolding labor radicalization can be guided from its present stage toward higher forms of development along the following lines:

Proposals for immediate action should center on problems involving the workers' urgent material needs and the defense of their democratic rights. It is also important that the fight around those issues be attuned to the existing levels of conscious-



Minnesota Historical Society

In May 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters rout cops, special deputies from bosses' Citizens Alliance that were sent to break their strike. Class-conscious leaders organized workers defense to win.

ness in the union membership. Then, as significant forces are set into motion through that approach, several things take place. Rank-and-file militancy rises. Increasingly sharp clashes with the bosses result, during which the workers begin to shed class-collaborationist illusions and acquire class-struggle concepts. Lessons thus learned during industrial conflicts can prepare the union ranks for an advance toward action on a political plane. In short, a foundation is laid from which to initiate transformation of the trade unions themselves into instruments capable of developing far-reaching revolutionary perspectives.

As the transitional process from where they are to where they should be continues, the workers' attention can be focused on broad questions which go far beyond day-to-day issues on the job. They will learn in that way to generalize their thinking in class terms, and the development of a conscious anticapitalist outlook will follow.

If, during the course of their experiences in struggle, the labor militants are helped to analyze the causes of the social and economic ills facing them; if they are aided in perceiving the essence of an outlived capitalism — they will learn that the existing problems are not incidental and episodic at all, but the consequence of a deep structural crisis of the system. They will then see why governmental control must be taken away from the capitalists by labor and its allies.

Basic to such a rise in the workers' class consciousness is understanding that a fundamental change must take place in the role of the trade unions, which constitute the existing form of mass organization among the workers in this country. These broad instruments of struggle must be turned away from reliance upon so-called friends among the capitalist politicians. They must break off the self-defeating collaboration with the bosses' government, that has been imposed by bureaucratic misleaders. The unions must be transformed into mechanisms for independent and militant action by the workers all along the line. Restrictions on the right to strike must be vigorously opposed and freedom to exercise that right firmly asserted. Internal union democracy must be established so that all questions can be decided on the basis of majority rule. Then, and only then, will organized labor manage to bring its full weight to bear in confrontations with the employers at the industrial level.

Whenever conflicts of significant magnitude erupt within industry today, the government intervenes on the employers' side; and this interference is bound to intensify as capitalist decay gets worse. From this it follows that trade union action alone will prove less and less capable of resolving the workers' problems, even on a limited basis. Objectively, industrial conflicts will assume more and more a political charac-

ter, and even the most powerfully organized workers will be faced with an increasingly urgent need to act on the new and higher plane of politics.

Therefore, efforts to build an effective left wing in the trade unions will run into insurmountable obstacles unless the workers move toward resolving the problem of political action. A vigorous campaign must be conducted to break the labor movement from subordination to capitalist politics and to launch an independent labor political organization. This campaign will have to focus initially on educational propaganda for a change in labor's political course, but it should not be conducted in an abstract, routine manner. Ample opportunity will be found to concretize the propaganda by drawing the lessons of setbacks caused by the misuse of labor's inherent political strength. ...

In the process of creating their own mass party, based upon and controlled by the trade unions, the organized workers can draw unorganized, unemployed, and undocumented sections of their class into a broad political alliance. Labor will then be in a position to act both in a more unified manner and through advanced forms of struggle.

The workers will learn to generalize their needs, as a class, and to address their demands on a political basis to the capitalists, as a class. ...

As Leon Trotsky insisted in discussions during the 1930s, the American workers must learn to act politically and to think socially if they are to attain the class consciousness and solidarity needed to defeat the exploiters. ...

At every juncture in the unfolding social conflicts, the workers and their allies need guidance from a revolutionary socialist party. That is the reason for the existence of the Socialist Workers Party. Its scientific analysis of the class struggle provides in fullest measure the political consciousness and program that the anticapitalist movement must have. Therefore, it is uniquely qualified to shape the basic proposals, broad strategy, and tactical steps required for the most effective mass action. ...

As the Teamster story demonstrates, the principal lesson for labor militants to derive from the Minneapolis experience is not that, under an adverse relationship of forces, the workers can be overcome; but that, with proper leadership, they can overcome.

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December

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The Militant December 28, 2020

Holiday greetings to workers behind bars

The *Militant* sends holiday greetings to fellow workers behind bars! We will continue to tell the truth about the conditions you face and to fight to ensure you can receive our paper and news about the struggles of working people worldwide.

The capitalist rulers in the U.S. keep the highest proportion of people behind bars compared to any other country in the world. The criminal “justice” system here holds 2.3 million people in 1,833 state prisons, 110 federal prisons, 3,134 local jails, 1,772 juvenile correctional institutions, 218 immigration detention facilities, and 80 jails on Native American reservations. Others are held in military prisons, civil commitment centers, state psychiatric hospitals and prisons in U.S.-controlled territories worldwide.

The capitalist rulers’ bail, plea-bargain, court, cop and prison system — especially the barbaric use of the death penalty — is aimed at breaking and demoralizing workers and to serve as a warning to millions of working people to submit to the demands of the bosses and their government.

Prisoners face inhumane solitary confinement, lack of health care, and brutality. And 33% of those in prison are Black, even though African Americans are just 12% of the country’s population.

All these facts take on greater significance under today’s conditions of massive unemployment intertwined with pandemic-justified government lockdowns and the disaster of the U.S. for-profit health system.

On any given day nearly 600,000 people are in local jails across the country. Some two-thirds of them are awaiting trial, because they can’t make bail. Using the pandemic as an excuse, many judicial authorities have suspended both grand juries and trials indefinitely. Despite the constitutional right to a speedy trial and to be considered innocent until proven guilty, the accused are kept in jail, increasing the pressure to accept so-called plea bargains.

Well over 10% of those incarcerated in the U.S. are 55 years or older. They are among those at highest risk for contracting coronavirus. At some prisons 75% or more of the inmates have tested positive for the disease, yet government authorities say that prison guards will get priority for the new vaccine while prisoners

will be at the bottom of the list! What more graphic illustration of the bankruptcy of the capitalist system.

In addition to the number of workers behind bars, another 4.5 million people are under court supervision — 3.6 million on probation and 900,000 on parole. The vast majority of people sent back to prison from parole are because of technical — often minor — violations, not because they have been found guilty of an offense.

We celebrate the release from prison on parole earlier this year of former Black Panther Jalil Muntaqim, 69, after nearly 50 years in prison. And of Red Fawn Fallis, an Oglala Sioux framed up for her participation in protests against the Dakota Access pipeline. She was released to a halfway house in September.

We demand the release of all remaining imprisoned Black Panthers, including Edward Poindexter of Nebraska, in for more than 50 years; of Native American activist Leonard Peltier; and Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was railroaded to prison in Pennsylvania in 1982 and has had to lead a fight to get needed medical care for himself and other inmates.

We join in demanding the release of political and class-war prisoners around the world, including thousands tortured and thrown in jail by the brutal regime of Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus and the growing number of leaders of the fight for democratic rights in Hong Kong. And the dropping of all charges against those in Thailand accused of “insulting” the king.

Over the last year the *Militant* has beaten back attempts by prison authorities in Florida and Indiana to suppress the paper. These have backfired, sparking more interest in the paper and the working-class road forward we promote, for working people to take political power into our own hands.

That’s reflected in the 44 prisoners who subscribed for the first time or renewed during our just-concluded eight-week subscription drive.

We encourage workers behind bars to subscribe to the *Militant* and read books by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and other revolutionaries published by Pathfinder Press. We ask readers of the paper to contribute to the *Militant*’s prisoners fund that makes it possible for us to offer reduced-price or free subscriptions to prisoners.

Workers, farmers need to chart road forward

Continued from front page

to fight the bosses’ efforts to force us to pay for the crisis of their capitalist system.

The struggles we wage on the job over hours, wages, working conditions and our health are the only road forward. Nurses at the Montefiore hospital in New Rochelle, New York, organized a two-day strike for more hiring to make desperately needed medical care safely available, and to ease the unbearable workloads they face. Tens of thousands of farmers in India and toilers in Kurdistan are mobilizing to defend their livelihoods. These fights occur amid mass unemployment and government lockdowns.

Broader struggles by workers for better wages and safer working conditions, and for cradle-to-grave health care as a *right* will grow faster when hiring picks up and workers sense there is more room to fight.

Through these battles working people learn the full measure of our own worth and our capacities for disciplined action and to win solidarity. In action we gain class consciousness and we see more clearly there is no common interest between workers and bosses.



Hundreds of vehicles lined up outside Roadrunner Food Bank in Albuquerque Nov. 24 to get food for Thanksgiving.

Today the government shows its disdain for the life and limb of working people by refusing to use the centralized resources of the country to produce, distribute and deliver the vaccine to *everyone*. Instead, this is all organized in ways geared to advance the profits of private bosses. It’s in the hands of bosses at FedEx and UPS, Walgreens and CVS and for-profit hospitals who insist on short staffing.

In their hands the vaccine or any medical care will always be a commodity to be bought and sold. They act to prevent competitors from acquiring it, ensuring millions in other countries and throughout the semi-colonial world will be left without immunization for months, if not years.

Their actions reflect the values of a class whose morality is whatever turns the highest profit. Their Democratic and Republican parties, their cops, courts, prisons and death penalty are organized to defend that dog-eat-dog system.

Working people must build our own political party, a labor party that defends all those oppressed and exploited by capital. With a labor party we can chart a course to take political power out of the hands of the bosses and bankers and replace their bankrupt system with a workers and farmers government.

The revolution made by working people in Cuba in 1959 showed that when workers and farmers take political power, and establish control over the land, factories and banks, they control their own future. It is a powerful example for working people everywhere.

Learning how Cuban workers and farmers made their revolution, joining activities to celebrate its 62nd anniversary on Jan. 1, and organizing public actions to defend the Cuban Revolution against Washington’s brutal embargo can help point the road forward.

Family leads protests

Continued from front page

around noon from a dentist appointment after picking up Subway sandwiches for his grandmother and 5-year-old brother when he was killed by Franklin County sheriff’s SWAT deputy Jason Meade. “My grandson just got shot in the back when he come in the house,” Goodson’s grandmother reported to a 911 operator.

“Goodson had put his keys into his door before he was shot, and fell into the kitchen,” the family’s lawyer, Sean Walton, told CNN. He said Goodson had been carrying the sandwiches, a coronavirus mask and the keys.

Hours after the killing, U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of Ohio Peter Tobin told reporters that the shooting was justified because Goodson had been “seen driving down the street waving a gun” by Meade and then refused Meade’s commands to drop the firearm. Tobin later retracted this, saying his remarks were “premature.” Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther criticized Tobin’s remarks as “uninformed.”

So far, no witnesses to the killing have come forward. Meade was not wearing a body camera. He has been put on administrative leave.

Payne told ABC News that she was at work when her 5-year-old called her, crying and screaming, “Casey just got shot.”

Meade is part of a police fugitive task force that includes marshals and SWAT team members that had been searching the area. But that day Meade, by himself, confronted Goodson, who was not part of any investigation. The family says no gun was found near Goodson. Police say a gun was found at the scene. Ohio is an open-carry state and Goodson had a current license to carry a firearm.

“I want Jason Meade charged. I want his badge taken,” Payne said at a press conference the day before the protests. “And that is what Casey’s protests and Casey’s rallies are about.”

Attorney Walton said Meade also pointed a gun at Goodson’s uncle, who was carrying his 3-year-old daughter, and told him to “get out of the house before I shoot you, too.” Payne says she was called a bitch by a deputy when she arrived at the scene of the killing and officers refused to provide her with information about her son’s condition after he was shot.

The family has posted pictures of Goodson’s keys hanging in the door and the sandwiches laying on the floor where he dropped them as he died. At the protests, demonstrators symbolically held up keys and sandwiches.

“I want this process to be done in order and in peace and in unity. My son was a peaceful man,” Payne said at the Dec. 11 protest. “Everything done in Casey’s name will be done in that way or you are not welcome.”

The marches were organized in a disciplined way as Payne had urged, in contrast to some actions in recent months, called in the name of fighting cop brutality but actually organized to shame and abuse passersby, burn down local businesses and encourage looting.

A preliminary autopsy ruled Goodson’s death a homicide, with “multiple gunshots to the torso.” The official police autopsy report will take up to 14 weeks. The family has also ordered an independent report and says he was shot at least three times in the back.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office in Southern Ohio has opened a civil rights investigation. Evidence will be given to the Franklin County Prosecutor’s Office to present the findings to a grand jury.

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