Interview with Gerardo Hernández

'Resistance by Cuba is the
participation of the entire people'

- PAGE 6

VOL. 85/NO. 2 JANUARY 18, 2021

# Join SWP 2021 campaign and the 'Militant' renewal drive

BY SETH GALINSKY

In the midst of 2020's capitalist economic, social and pandemic crisis, and government-ordered lockdowns, the Socialist Workers Party did not skip a beat.

Its members went to work to organize with co-workers to fight to defend their wages and working conditions. They continued introducing the party to working people on their doorsteps in cities and towns, large and small, and in farm areas. Many of those they met were looking for ways to stand up to the bosses' moves to shore up their profits on our backs and were keen to discuss what workers can do together.

They sold thousands of subscriptions to the *Militant* and introduced the SWP 2020 campaign and its fighting action program.

The response to the party's activity and program bodes well for its work in 2021. That begins with a two-month drive to win readers to renew their subscriptions to the *Militant*.

During 2020 SWP candidates and campaigners brought solidarity to picket lines of workers on strike — shipbuilders in Bath, Maine; fruit packinghouse workers in Washing-Continued on page 3

Workers need to build our own party, a labor party



Methodist Hospital nurses in Arcadia, California, demand more workers Jan. 2. "It eats at you morally when you can't give the best care" because of staffing shortages, said Kelly Coulston.

# Working people can chart a road to take political power

Cuba's revolutionary government is capable of standing up to the economic war waged against workers and farmers

# **EDITORIAL**

there by U.S. imperialism because it has "the participation of the entire people," Gerardo Hernández, national coordina-Continued on page 9

# Change in White House won't end boss attacks on workers

BY TERRY EVANS

As the transfer of the presidency from Donald Trump to Joe Biden draws near, and the fight over which capitalist party will control the Senate closes, the political crises within both the Democratic and Republican parties continue to unfold.

Whatever the outcome, working people will continue to face a govern-Continued on page 4

# Protests in LA, NY demand: 'End US economic war against Cuba!'

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

LOS ANGELES — A car caravan and protest opposing Washington's decadeslong economic war against Cuba and its revolution took place here Dec. 27 as part of a series of actions around the country.

Some 40 people in 18 cars drove from the Federal Building in West Los Angeles to Echo Park with taped signs and slogans written on their windows. The banner on the lead vehicle read, "U.S. Hands Off Cuba!" "End the Blockade!" and "U.S. Out of Guantánamo!" The caravan was sponsored by the Los Angeles U.S. Hands Off Cuba Committee.

The Dec. 27 actions, which took place here and in New York, were called by the National Network on Cuba as part of a series of protests and other activities over the next few months, including solidarity brigades to Cuba.

One 22-year-old participant in the L.A. caravan carried a hand-made sign saying, "Newsom — Call the Henry

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# Historic win in fight for right to abortion in Argentina

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In an important victory for working people, the right of women to choose to have an abortion was won in Argentina Dec. 30, when the Senate passed a bill making abortion free and legal up to the 14th week of pregnancy. As senators debated the bill into the night, tens of thousands of supporters of women's rights rallied outside the Congress in Buenos Aires.

The streets "were full of feminist organizations, political organizations, unions and lots of independent and very young activists," Victoria Tesoriero, a spokesperson for the National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe and Free Abortion, told the *Militant* by email Jan. 4. "We waited all night, some of us watching the debate others were just dancing. I had a wonderful 'murga' girls band near us playing. Everything was very exciting."

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# 'Militant' special 'stimulus' fund drive is off to a strong start!

BY JOHN STUDER

*Militant* readers have responded with a strong start to our special appeal!

Since Congress, in the midst of a deep social, economic and health crisis facing working people, voted for a second "stimulus" payout of \$600, with additional payouts to those with children, 19 supporters of the *Militant* have already sent in \$12,642 to help the paper expand its reach.

"My co-workers here at Walmart

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# **Support Alabama Constellium strike over seniority, conditions**

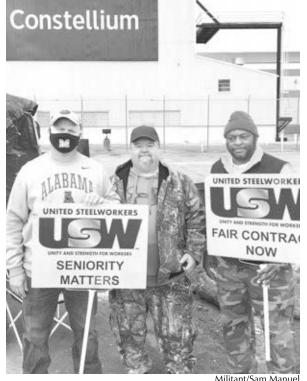
BY SAM MANUEL

MUSCLE SHOALS, Ala.

— Over 400 members of United Steelworkers Local 200 here have struck major aluminum beverage can recycle company Constellium since Dec. 15. Workers on the picket line said the company wants to gut seniority, giving bosses complete control over who works when and where.

They said they're determined to defend their union. "I'm the third generation in my family to work here. I come from a strong union family. If I crossed the line my daddy would kick my butt and my granddaddy would come back to haunt me," Kevin Clement said with a chuckle.

Workers said the strike isn't about wages. The company is offering a 15% increase over five years — larger than in past contracts. "They think they can buy what they want on our seniority and working conditions



Militant/Sam Manuel

Jan. 2 Constellium picket line in Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

by offering more money," said Kenney Greenhill. Union members voted down the company's concession contract three times before striking.

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Seattle rally backs farmers protests in India

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Protests hit cop killings of two men in Columbus

# -On the picket line, p. 5-

Quebec workers fight Gate Gourmet's union-busting lockout Liverpool DHL workers strike against low wages, harassment

# Argentina abortion rights win

### Continued from front page

Simultaneously, pro-choice vigils were organized in many other cities nationwide. "Because of the COVID-19 pandemic many activists couldn't come to the National Congress," said Tesoriero, so they organized actions in their local areas. "Our movement is present in every province of Argentina, from Jujuy to Tierra del Fuego. We are very proud of that." For years, increasingly large and broad protests have taken place across Argentina, where abortion was banned in most cases. Under this pressure, Argentine President Alberto Fernández introduced a bill to legalize the procedure last November.

It was passed by the lower house, the Chamber of Deputies, Dec. 11 in a 131-117 vote. The Senate then voted 38-29 in favor. In 2018 a similar bill had gone down to defeat in the Senate.

### 'We built a national campaign'

"We built a national campaign full of activists, with clear goals," said Tesoriero, "and a complete slogan — 'Sexual education to decide, contraception to not need an abortion, legal abortion to not die' — with a clear strategy: to mobilize in the streets for legal abortion.

"I think that in the history of this struggle," she said, "the Campaign, an alliance of more than 600 organizations, has the credit for expanding the demand of legal abortion, taking it from the feminist groups to other organizations."

There were also large mobilizations by opponents of the legislation across the country, including actions organized by the Catholic and evangelical churches and other organizations.

The previous law only allowed an

abortion when a pregnancy resulted from rape or endangered the life or health of the woman. In all other circumstances having an abortion was punishable by up to 15 years in jail.

This meant only women in the ruling class and upper middle classes could afford to end an unwanted pregnancy by going to costly doctors in the major cities illegally, or traveling outside the country. Working-class women and those living in rural areas were forced to turn to clandestine and illegal abortions.

Some 40,000 women each year showed up at Argentine hospitals seeking care after botched procedures. This had been the chief cause of maternal death in the country.

"The law that we won to legalize abortion was more than simple 'decriminalization,'" Nicole Aranovich, a high school teacher who joined the protest Dec. 29 by City Hall in Mar del Plata, told the *Militant* by email. "With simple 'decriminalization' of abortion, the state wouldn't assume any responsibility of guaranteeing a safe and equal practice throughout the country."

This bill, she said, gives all women "the right to interrupt their pregnancy until week 14, so the state is in charge of guaranteeing that everyone may fulfill that right if they wish to." Because Ar-



Tens of thousands of supporters of women's rights rally on the streets in Buenos Aires, Argentina, early in the morning Dec. 30 as senators debated, voted up bill legalizing abortion.

gentina's health care system is government funded, the procedure will be free.

In the vast majority of countries in Latin America women's right to choose abortion is severely restricted. In some, including El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Suriname, the procedure is banned in nearly all circumstances.

"I am sure this victory will impact other countries in Latin America," said Tesoriero. "The national campaign for legal abortion, and our symbol, the green bandana, has gone around the world. And it has had an impact in the region with women in many countries launching their own campaigns. We are unstoppable!"

Only in Cuba, where workers and peasants made a revolution, and in Uruguay, Guyana and in Mexico City and the Mexican state of Oaxaca — and now Argentina — can women freely choose to have an abortion today.

# 'Militant' special 'stimulus' fund off to a strong start!

### Continued from front page

often ask what I'm going to do with my stimulus check," Samir Hazboun wrote from Louisville, Kentucky, after Congress voted. "I always say I'm going to give it back to the working class since it's from our backs that the wealth is created in the first place. Many co-workers know this is true and have great respect for that decision."

The *Militant*'s weekly coverage of the unfolding working-class struggles today — from farmers protesting in their hundreds of thousands in India to the aluminum workers on strike at Constellium in Alabama — and its coverage of the Socialist Workers Party's campaigns and fighting action program, to articles and features to educate on the history and hardearned lessons of the class struggle, are crucial for workers. They advance a road for workers to defend themselves and advance our class interests,

a road toward workers taking power to end the dictatorship of capital and its brutal consequences.

This special fund appeal will help the *Militant* meet our expenses until the annual spring Militant Fighting Fund is launched in late March, along with the spring subscription drive. Our only source of income is our readers. The contributions will strengthen the paper's capacity to respond in a timely way to unfolding developments in the class struggle today in the U.S. and worldwide.

Please give as generously as you can. Send your contribution to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018, or you can donate online at themilitant.com.

# THE MILITANT

# Protest US executions, prison conditions!

Since July, 10 federal death row prisoners have been executed, and three more are scheduled shortly. At the same time, 1,700 prisoners have died from COVID-19. The 'Militant' gives voice to all who are willing to speak out against these injustices.



Rally near San Quentin Prison in California in July protesting prison's health conditions.

# **SUBSCRIBE TODAY!**

### 

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia, A\$10 • United Kingdom, £4 • Canada, Can\$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £8 • France, 8 euros • New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, NZ\$7 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

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

# Join SWP, 'Militant' campaigns

### Continued from front page

ton state; sanitation workers in New Orleans; and more. They marched in protests against police brutality and carried out election campaigns, boldly presenting the party's program.

The SWP's steadfast activity defending working-class interests strengthened the party and won respect from many working people.

The SWP stood up to the threat of the Washington state government disclosing the names and personal information of the SWP's presidential electors, winning broad support and beating back this attack on political rights. More than \$20,000 was raised to help conduct this campaign, including \$1,000 from the American Federation of Teachers in Washington. Its members had successfully waged a fight against an anti-labor group that sought to use the state's disclosure laws to gain personal information about campus workers.

Party members were part of winning support for the *Militant*'s fight to overturn attempts by prison authorities in Florida and Indiana to suppress the paper.

Alongside the drive to win renewals, members of the SWP in the U.S. and the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are extending offers on books by party leaders and other revolutionaries throughout the renewal campaign. (See ad on page 7.)

A retired nurse renewed her subscription when SWP members Joel Britton and Eric Simpson visited at her home in East Oakland, California, Dec. 30. She had subscribed earlier and gotten *Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa* by Enrique Ubieta. It describes how Cuba's revolutionary government provided what was most needed during that epidemic — 250 volunteer workers offering hands-on medical care, helping to virtually eradicate the disease.

She pointed to the disastrous consequences of the U.S. government's handling of COVID-19, citing "the scandalous transferring of sick patients into nursing homes where no one had tested positive for the virus," Simpson said.

# **Example of Cuban Revolution**

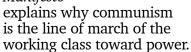
Simpson pointed to what the conquest of power by working people in Cuba made possible. "That is why they set such an outstanding example in the fight against Ebola in Africa and in the fight in Cuba and numerous other countries against the current pandemic."

Readers behind bars are also show-

The COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

Written in 1848, the Communist Manifesto



pathfinderpress.com

ing the paper to fellow inmates who then request their own subscriptions. "It means a lot to have news come in to see what is going on in the world," a federal prisoner in California wrote to the *Militant* last week.

Tens of thousands of workers and farmers took copies of the party's action program. It was distributed as part of the election campaign of Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett, the SWP's candidates for president and vice president, and local candidates. Thousands learned about the party from articles in local newspapers.

SWP candidates raised proposals that workers and our unions can fight for. They explained the rule of the capitalist class was the root of the problems workers face and why workers need their own party, a labor party, to take political power.

The SWP's campaign set an example of what such a labor party would do to fight for what workers need, in contrast to the Democrats and Republicans who subordinate workers' interests to those of the bosses. As workers fight together we gain confidence in our own capacities and deepen class consciousness.

In Washington, D.C., Omari Musa, the SWP's candidate for delegate to the House of Representatives, received 6,702 votes, just short of the 7,500 needed to qualify the party for permanent ballot status there. Party branches will soon announce candidates for 2021 elections.



Factory worker Daniela Veloz subscribed to *Militant* after Alyson Kennedy, left, knocked on her door in Ennis, Texas, Jan. 4. Socialist Workers Party is building on success of its work last year to continue campaigning among working people in cities, towns and farm areas.

Higher financial contributions to the party's work is another reflection of its advances over the last year. Working people who met campaigners often kicked in an extra \$5, \$10 or more, saying, "Here's something for the cause."

Many readers will want to kick in to the *Militant*'s special fund appeal, contributing their government "stimulus" payments to the paper. As of Jan. 5 the *Militant* had already received over \$12,400 in contributions!

There will be further opportunities to join struggles in the year ahead.

Already SWP and CL members

have joined demonstrations in the U.S, Canada and the U.K. in solidarity with farmers in India fighting to overturn attacks by the Indian government. The *Militant* was welcomed at actions in San Francisco Dec. 31 and nearby Union City, Jan. 3. "Person after person told us that they really liked our paper's coverage of the farmers' struggle and were interested in the articles on fights working people in the U.S. are waging," reported Jeff Powers.

The *Militant* is your paper! Join us in getting it around! See page 8 for the SWP or CL branch nearest you.

# Socialist Workers Party fighting 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

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 exprisoners 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.

# Change in the White House

Continued from front page

ment driving to make us bear the burden of the economic crisis.

As its presidential ticket did in 2020, the only party acting on the capacities of workers and farmers to fight against the attacks of the employers and their government will be the Socialist Workers Party and its candidates in 2021.

Throughout the last year SWP candidates earned respect for their unwavering opposition to every assault bosses and their governments waged on workers' jobs, wages, safety and our rights, refusing to accept the government's insistence that the pandemic requires workers to make "sacrifices."

They found interest in discussing the *Militant* and its coverage of the struggles of working people worldwide, and in the SWP's campaign platform, which explains what workers can do today to build a movement to lead millions to replace capitalist rule with a workers and farmers government.

President-elect Joe Biden perpetuates the deception that his new administration will act for all Americans, just as all his predecessors have claimed to do. "We're going to get through this," Biden told the press Dec 29. But there is no "we." The interests of working people and the capitalist rulers are fundamentally counterposed. The capitalist class depends on maximizing their profits by intensifying the exploitation of workers and farmers. This is the cause of the far-reaching layoffs, wage cuts, eviction threats, farm bankruptcies and overflowing hospitals we face.

While liberals are excited about Democrats taking the presidency, barely, they're already worried about someone like President Trump — or Trump himself — getting elected in 2024.

The Biden presidency will reproduce similar conditions to those created under the Barack Obama-Biden administration through its efforts to regulate our lives and by its inherent scorn for those Hillary Clinton called "deplorable." These conditions led millions to vote for Trump.

The Washington Post editors urged Biden Jan. 2 to take steps now to avoid this happening: to get rid of the Electoral College, to allow Democrats to win the presidency with support from only a few heavily populated areas; to vastly expand mail-in ballots; and to eliminate "third party spoilers throwing elections to candidates most voters dislike." Such a move is aimed at targeting the SWP and other workingclass parties.

With Biden in the White House, Democrats will no longer have Trump to blame for the calamitous conditions the capitalist crisis inflicts on working people. The capitalist rulers will rely on the Biden administration to defend their state power and protect U.S. imperialist interests abroad. Biden also faces growing demands from the liberal wing of his own party, who seek either to capture the party or else form

On Jan. 4, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, one of the "squad" of radical Democrats, said she is considering running against fellow party incumbent Sen. Chuck Schumer in 2022.

Behind liberals' feigned empathy for those hardest hit by the crisis is a program of reforms that would reinforce workers' dependency on the capitalist rulers' state. This is the opposite of what we need and what the SWP raises — that working people need to rely on ourselves, to join together to fight for our class interests.

Some 10 million more people are without a job than a year ago, according to government figures, which are jury-rigged to hide the real depth of the crisis. The Democrats — like the Republicans — have no serious proposals to end joblessness, other than to tell us to rely on the capitalist "market."

### Workers face broader social crisis

In addition, workers face a broader social crisis. The rulers' only answer to rising coronavirus infections and overflowing hospitals is stepped-up government lockdowns on production and small shopkeepers. Officials heap blame on working people for being so-called superspreaders. They try to get us to turn on each other, to deflect responsibility from the disastrous consequences of "health care" under the rule of the capitalist class. On New Year's Eve the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department unleashed a "Superspreader Task Force," hundreds of cops and deputies charged with breaking up social events.

Meanwhile, officials in the same state told hospital authorities to prepare for "crisis-care," their code word for leaving medical workers in overflowing hospitals to decide who gets treatment and who is left to die.

"Despite the massive resources at their disposal the class that holds power is incapable of providing jobs, safe working conditions and adequate health care for working people," Rachele Fruit, the SWP's candidate in a just-concluded Senate race in Georgia, told the Militant. "That's why my campaign explained workers and our unions need to wrest control of all aspects of production from the bosses. As we do so, we will discover our own worth and see it is possible for our class and its allies to take command of the entire economy."

"We are inches from one another, knocking into each other through the plastic sheets," poultry production line worker Juana Hernandez at the George's plant in Springdale, Arkansas, told the Washington Post, describing the conditions she's forced to work in. The Trump administration has al-

# Seattle rally backs farmers protests in India



KENT, Wash. — In the third such rally this month in the Seattle area, hundreds gathered here Dec. 26 to show support for the tens of thousands of working farmers camped out on the main roads outside New Delhi, India's capital. They've been protesting since November in a fight to overturn new laws that threaten their livelihoods.

At the rally, a semi-truck covered with posters backing the farmers and denouncing Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi provided a speakers' stage before a caravan of cars and trucks set off for Seattle. One of the speakers, inset, was Henry Dennison, representing the Socialist Workers Party.

Similar rallies took place in other cities across the country and around the world. On New Year's Eve, over 200 people held a vigil outside the Indian Consulate in San Francisco.

The Modi government claims to be promoting "free market choice," the Sikh Student Association at the University of Washington said in a statement. But in fact the government "privileges the interests of large corporations over farmers who struggle to support their families."

"For many of us, farming is our history," Jasmit Singh, a leader of the Sikh Coalition, a nationwide organization, said in an op-ed in the Dec. 24 Seattle Times. "The earliest Sikh immigrants to the United States came to the West Coast specifically to make a living by growing food. Many of us have family and friends still in Punjab, who are now leading on the front lines of this movement."

— EDWIN FRUIT

lowed 15 pilot poultry plants to jack up line speeds, up to 175 birds per minute, despite the pandemic, and plans to extend that in the next few days.

That is the line speed fought for by former Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack during the Obama administration, at the insistence of profithungry poultry plant bosses. Vilsack has now been nominated by Biden to head up the Department of Agriculture again.

As conditions like this continue to take their toll, workers will look for ways to defend themselves and to act independently of the bosses' Democratic and Republican parties.

"The SWP's 2020 candidates set an example of what is possible, and raised the kind of fighting action program that working people and our unions need to advance. It lays out the road for workers to form our own political party, speak out in the interests of all those exploited and oppressed by capital, and fight to take political power," John Studer, the party's national campaign director, told the Militant.

"In the coming days the party will be launching 2021 campaigns for Senate, Congress, mayors and more all across the country to advance this

# Betsy Ramos case shows real face of capitalist 'justice'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The case of Betsy Ramos shows the real workings of the capitalist "justice" system. Ramos, 56, is terminally ill with cancer and not expected to live much more than a year. She has been incarcerated for 22 years after being convicted on second-degree manslaughter charges for her then boyfriend Jose Serrano's killing of New York police officer Anthony Mosomillo.

Federal Judge Nicholas Garaufis last month denied Ramos' request for compassionate release. Ramos had won parole on Dec. 9, 2019, but Garaufis threw her back in prison days later. The judge was fully aware of Ramos' grave medical condition, but chose to ignore the fact she might die behind bars when he resentenced her.

On the morning of May 26, 1998, cops Mosomillo and Miriam Sanchez-Torres went to Ramos' apartment in

Brooklyn looking for Serrano, who was back in prison for another two years. wanted for failing to appear in court. Ramos said he wasn't there, but the cops ignored her and searched the apartment. They found Serrano hiding in a closet and a fight ensued. Serrano, picking up Sanchez-Torres's gun off the floor, shot Mosomillo, who shot back, killing Serrano before dying of wounds.

A jury found Ramos guilty of causing Sanchez-Torres to drop her gun. She received 15 years to life for manslaughter, the harshest possible sentence allowed by law.

When Ramos was paroled in 2019, the cops' Patrolmen's Benevolent Association raised a hue and cry. Federal prosecutors then charged Ramos with violating parole on a previous drug-related conviction decades earlier. When Serrano killed Mosomillo in her apartment, they claimed, she violated her parole. This was why Ramos was thrown

Ramos had had a rough life. She was abused and abandoned by her mother, then by her father. She began using heroin and was imprisoned on a federal heroin trafficking charge for three years, the charge she was on parole for in 1998.

In court testimony, Ramos said Serrano abused her as well.

"I hid my abuser from the police when they came to serve a warrant," Ramos said in a court statement before being resentenced to prison. "My actions that day set in motion a situation where a police officer died. But I did not kill the police officer."

"Ramos has done more time than anyone else has ever served for a similar offense," Ron Kuby, her attorney, told the media after the hearing. The system is "piling on torture and punishment because her dead boyfriend's victim was a police officer."

# -ON THE PICKET LINE—

### **Quebec workers fight Gate** Gourmet's union-busting lockout

MONTREAL — After almost eight weeks on the picket line, locked-out Gate Gourmet workers here organized a march from their picket line in front of the airline-catering plant where they work to the Montreal-Trudeau international airport Dec. 31. Chanting "So, so, so, solidarity!" 30 workers marched with union flags protesting the bosses locking them out and moves to gut their contract.

"After eight weeks on lockout we are solid. We are fighting to keep what we have won over the course of 40 years," Nathalie Calbral, Gate Gourmet unit president of Unifor amalgamated Local 698, told this Militant worker-correspondent on the line earlier that week. Calbral, with 23 years on the job, works preparing airline meals.

There are about 300 workers in the bargaining unit, but at the time of the lockout only about 20 were working. The rest had been laid off, the bosses' reaction to the impact of coronavirus on the airlines and the company's loss of contracts.

During their lunch break Nov. 10 the workers were ordered to gather their belongings and leave. Earlier, the bosses demanded 145 contract concessions, including a five-year wage freeze and reducing all positions to part time.

Solidarity messages can be sent to Marie-Andrée L'Heureux, Unifor Quebec communications representative at marie-andree.lheureux@unifor.org. Tel: (514) 916-7373.

— John Steele

### Liverpool DHL workers strike against low wages, harassment

LIVERPOOL, England — With four days of effective strike action in December, 120 DHL warehouse distribution workers and drivers here are having an impact. They are determined to win a pay raise and push back company harassment and victimizations.

On Dec. 21, the third day of strike action, workers lined their cars up on the main road leading from the distribution depot, delaying trucks leaving it for hours. Workers have been speaking to truck drivers, urging them to turn their trucks around. Company complaints have led to police interference. Unite union organizer Kenny Rowe told this Militant worker-correspondent he was threatened with arrest, saying they face a "strong arm" reaction from the cops.

DHL here services the Buston Biscuits and AB World Foods warehouses, which supply supermarkets.

"This is an incredibly profitable contract," Rowe told the media. "DHL have to stop dodging its responsibility to pay a decent rate."

The strikers are seeking to broaden support for their fight. "We had a delegation to meet DHL workers at the nearby Jaguar car plant, seeking their support. We got a good reception," striker Gerard Taylor said. The strikers got a "Stay strong" message of solidarity from Mark Porter, the union convener for striking Rolls-Royce jet engine workers fighting job cuts at the Barnoldswick plant in Lancashire.

DHL bosses offered the workers an insulting pay raise, which would take them to just 2 1/2 pence (3 1/2 cents) above the government-set minimum wage. At the same time, several pickets said the bosses are demanding forklift drivers work faster, demanding they meet a target of 20 lifts per hour.

"Workers here can't take any more," Rowe said.

—Pete Clifford

### Uranium, iron ore miners in Ukraine strike over jobs, back pay

Some 5,000 uranium miners at three mines in the Eastern Mining and Processing Plant in the Kirovograd region of Ukraine went on strike Dec. 16, organizing protests that blocked traffic on the main roads around the mines. The workers, members of the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine, demanded months of back pay amounting to \$3 million.

They also organized a delegation of miners Dec. 9 to protest outside the Cabinet of Ministers and Office of the President of Ukraine in Kyiv, the capital.

The miners suspended their actions Dec. 24, after funds for paying their November wages were transferred to



Airline catering workers organized by Unifor Local 698 protest eight-week lockout by Gate Gourmet at airport in Montreal Dec. 31. Placard on right says, "If we are on the outside, something is wrong on the inside." One on left says, "You don't get rich on our earnings."

the enterprise's account by the government, with a promise December wages would be paid by the end of the month. The company, idled since Dec. 7, was to restart production Jan. 4. If work doesn't resume then "miners will continue their protests," said Dmytro Bondariev, head of the independent miners union at the plant.

In September over 400 miners at four mines in the Kryvyi Rih Iron Ore Plant stayed underground, some for up to 43 days. They were fighting to restore minimum hourly pay rates, safety conditions and benefits, all driven down by the mine owners' attacks in recent years. The complex is the largest iron ore processing facility in Ukraine.

The union ended its occupation after an agreement appeared to have been reached with mine management. But the bosses reneged, instead filing a lawsuit calling the miners' protests an "illegal" strike, seeking to victimize them.

The next hearing in the boss frame-up suit is scheduled for Jan. 29.

- Roy Landersen

### **New Zealand home-care workers** strike for a union contract

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Fifty home-care workers and their supporters mounted a picket line here Dec. 18 outside the office of Lifewise social services. They are fighting for a union contract.

The workers travel to provide care and assistance to elderly people living at home. Of the 100 or so employed by Lifewise, a division of the Methodist Church, 87 are organized, say leaders of the E tu union. Dozens came to the picket lines, as all but a handful of union members carried out the three half-day strikes, of which this was the third.

Pickets told the *Militant* the company reneged on a pledge to sign an agreement last year. A key grievance is the irregular workweek. "Some of the girls are not getting guaranteed hours," said Katrina Peart, who has worked for Lifewise for 19 years. Others, she said, are forced to "work from seven in the morning to seven at night, five, six, or even seven days a week."

Kelly Davis, an 11-year veteran, explained that some workers who are supposed to be on 40-hour weeks "are getting maybe 20."

The union is also demanding "more bereavement leave," she said. The three days paid leave on the death of a loved one is especially inadequate for workers who have to travel to Pacific nations like Tonga and Samoa — the case for many Lifewise workers — for a family member's funeral.

The work is demanding, said union delegate Susan Kaio, who led the chants and singing on the line. Time with clients sometimes has to be cut off because of scheduling the next appointment, she said. "Travel time is paid for, but at a lower rate" than home care. And sometimes workers end up sitting in their cars, unpaid, because too much time is scheduled between clients.

The company hired agency workers to keep up work during the strikes, unionists said. They are planning to step up strike actions if the company bosses continue to ignore their demands.

— Patrick Brown

# -25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

# THEMILITANT

# **January 22, 1996**

STOCKHOLM — "We want to fight increase production, whether at workplaces, the university, or in the army, and win youth to the revolution," said Jonathan Quirós Santos, a leader of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba, during a five-week tour of Sweden, Iceland, Norway and Denmark.

Quirós spoke of the efforts by the Cuban people to overcome the effects of the deep economic crisis in his country. "We have had to do many things we did not like to do that have increased inequalities in Cuba."

Quirós described the debate on proposals to tax the workers' income as one way to deal with the financial crisis.

"The discussion was taken into every workplace," he said, referring to the "workers parliaments" held in 80,000 factories and offices. "There was a broad consensus among the workers that they [working people] should not be taxed."

# January 22, 1971

LOS ANGELES — On Jan. 9, around 1,500 young Chicanos demonstrated their anger at continued police brutality in East Los Angeles.

The Chicano Moratorium Committee called the demonstration to protest the arrest on false charges of 52 members within a month. A leaflet calling for the demonstration said, "We have been attacked, harassed and beaten day after day by the Los Angeles Police Department, the Metro Squad, and the Hollenbeck division of the LAPD. We have dared to speak out against the police brutality. If they attack one of us, they attack all of us."

There were thousands of cases of police brutality since Aug. 29, when police attacks brought the deaths of three Chicanos. Threats by police "to arrest anyone seen coming out of Chicano Moratorium offices" forced the closing of the bungalow office in December.

# THE MILITANT

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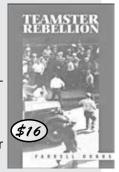
Who denies these just demands of the workers and the soldier ranks? A vicious gang of monopolists, who control the American economy, who dominate the big banks and corporations, who dictate the policies of the government and its armed forces.

United, the workers and the soldiers have the power to defeat Wall Street's plot to degrade American labor and subjugate the world.

## Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built an industrial union movement in Minneapolis, helping to pave the way for the CIO, told by a central leader of that battle.



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# 'Resistance by Cuba is the participation of the entire people'

Interview with Gerardo Hernández, leader of Cuba's Committees for the Defense of the Revolution

Below are major excerpts from remarks made by Gerardo Hernández during a program sponsored by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign in the United Kingdom. It was streamed live on Dec. 14, to mark the sixth anniversary of the release of the Cuban Five from U.S. prisons.

On Dec. 17, 2014, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and Antonio Guerrero were freed, joining René González and Fernando González in Cuba — ending more than 16 years of imprisonment of the Cuban Five on frame-up charges in the U.S.

Hernández was elected last September as national coordinator of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, Cuba's largest mass organization, with more than 8 million members in neighborhoods in cities and countryside. On Dec. 17 he became a member of Cuba's Council of State, elected by the National Assembly of People's Power.

The program was moderated by Rob Miller, director of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign. Also participating were Richard Burgon, a Member of Parliament of the U.K., and Bárbara Moltalvo Alvarez, Cuba's ambassador to the U.K.

Among topics addressed were the organized efforts by working people in every neighborhood across Cuba to confront the COVID-19 epidemic, the impact of the stepped-up measures by Washington against the Cuban Revolution, and Cuba's internationalist solidarity around the world. This includes Cuba's volunteer military mission in Angola, which between 1975 and 1991 helped defend the newly independent country against multiple invasions by the South African apartheid regime and its backers in Washington and other imperialist governments.

The entire program is available on YouTube.

ROB MILLER: Gerardo, it's really wonderful that you can join us. I'd like to start by asking, how are things in Cuba today?

Gerardo Hernández: In a couple of days it will be Dec. 17, and I want to thank everybody for making possible that the Five are in Cuba today.

Cuba is doing well. We're still coping with the COVID-19, and most of all, we're still coping with the U.S. blockade, which makes everything very difficult. Some would expect that in these hard times with a pandemic like COVand that there would be a timeout with the blockade. To the contrary, just in the last few months around 200 new measures by the Trump administration were set in place against Cuba.

So coping with the COVID-19 for us has been even more difficult. But the Cuban people have proven once again to be a great people. A people ready to resist everything.

The numbers keep improving. There are some new cases related to tourism. But in general we have it under control.

A major role in this, together with our health care system, of course, is the participation of the people, and our mass organizations, including the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

We have this neighborhood organization in every community, on every street, and that has helped a lot. We have people going to every house, knocking on doors. They know the families that need special help, special care, people with disabilities, the elderly, families in need. If needed, neighbors go to the pharmacy to get their medicines so they don't have to go out in the streets, or go buy food for them. Once again it has been demonstrated how important it is for the country to have an organization like the CDRs.

Our government and health care system have made an enormous effort to guarantee the same care to everybody. As you know, in Cuba health care is free. But, it's not free. The government pays for the tests, for the drugs, for the equipment and everything.

The blockade makes it even more difficult for us to have artificial ventilators for people that need them. So Cuban scientists have been working very hard to make our own ventilators, and to discover vaccines. Right now we have four vaccine candidates that we're working with. We'll vaccinate our population.

When you compare the numbers with other Latin American countries, and with the rest of the world, we're doing well. This is only possible with the participation of our entire population.

### Freedom of the Cuban Five

MILLER: Can you remind our viewers of the events of Dec. 17 when you returned to Cuba?

HERNÁNDEZ: As you know, of the Cuban Five, René and Fernando had already served their sentences and were back in Cuba. Three of us remained in prison. Ramón and Antonio had beaten the life sentences on appeal but they were serving long sentences. In my case, ID-19, there would be a little humanity, I was serving two life sentences plus 15 years. That means I'd have to die twice

For further reading

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that revolution is not only necessary — it can be made.



Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, together with other mass organizations, are organizing working people to increase food production through "From your neighborhood, plant your little plot" program. Third from right, Gerardo Hernández, CDR national coordinator.

and still have to serve 15 more years.

The three of us were in different prisons. We arrived separately on Dec. 15 at a prison in North Carolina, and stayed there not knowing that all of us were there. But my story had started 11 days before, on Dec. 4.

They moved me to a prison in Oklahoma and put me there for 11 days. In what prisoners called the "hole," which was a punishment in itself, an

I spent 11 days there without knowing

why I was there, or where I was going.

On the 15th, we were moved to a prison hospital in North Carolina. The next morning each of us were told, "Get dressed, someone wants to talk to you."

They said, "You're going to have a video conference with Havana." At that moment I saw Antonio and Ramón coming. We hadn't seen each other for 12 years. We sat in the room and had a video conference with somebody in Cuba.

That person said, "After a long pro-

Cuba's victorious volunteer internationalist forces, above, join newly independent Angolans to celebrate in 1975. For 15 years, Cuban, Angolan and Namibian fighters battled to defeat U.S.-backed South African invasions. Gerardo Hernández led a Cuban-Angolan platoon there as a lieutenant in 1989-90.

cess of negotiation between the two countries we have reached an agreement and you're going to be freed, and you're going to be back in Cuba on Dec. 17."

But since I was coming from being 11 days in a punishment cell, I didn't even know what day it was. I remember asking Ramón, "What day is today?" and he said, "the 16th."

I said, "Wow, tomorrow we're going to be in Cuba!"

So it was a very happy moment.

So, when we were sure that we were coming to Cuba we felt a huge debt of gratitude to all our friends who had worked so hard for our freedom.

MILLER: Tell us a little about the

work you've been doing. Hernández: As you mentioned, a

few months ago I was elected national coordinator of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

I mentioned the important role the CDRs are playing against COVID-19. Historically the CDRs have had some very important missions. Every time there is a vaccination campaign in Cuba the CDRs play a very important role in organizing the people, organizing the neighbors. We organize campaigns for blood donations for the health care system. And of course, we keep watch in our neighborhoods against people who want to attack, often in violent ways, the revolution.

I like the work I am doing because I have to be in contact with the people all the time in neighborhoods around the country. It's work that I really love.

Currently the CDRs are organizing a campaign for neighborhoods to grow their own food. Cuba is under a blockade. It has been for many years. Actually, I hadn't been born when the blockade was [imposed], and I am 55 years old now. So, I don't know what it's like to live in a country without a blockade. Many Cuban generations have had to suffer from the U.S. blockade.

One of the things the blockade makes very difficult for Cuba is access to food. People could say that Cuba is an island with land, and has good weather, and can grow a lot of food. But remember, to grow food you need a lot of chemicals, fuel, machinery, and all of that is very hard for Cuba to get because of the U.S. blockade. So it's been very difficult for us to meet all the necessities to produce our food.

We are encouraging people to grow their own food in their neighborhoods. There are many places in our neighborhoods — small areas, spaces between buildings, backyards, even common areas that have been used to dispose of garbage and that draw rats. We are encouraging neighbors to get together, clean out those lots and turn them into places where they grow their own food.

I am happy to tell you the initiative is very popular, and every day there are more people that get together to clean a space in their neighborhoods. Even in pots, in balconies, people get old containers, pots, and put them in balconies and grow their seasonings, tomatoes and vegetables.

They donate food to schools, senior centers, hospitals in the neighborhoods. That makes people feel that they are contributing to the needs of the country.

Of course, also in solving some of our own problems, in terms of access to vegetables and other products.

It's a movement that has been growing around the country and the CDRs are proud to be supporting "Cultiva tu pedacito" [Cultivate your little plot], which is the name of it.

### U.S. elections

MILLER: Can you say a little about the recent election of Joe Biden? How that news has been received by the people in Cuba?

HERNÁNDEZ: The news of the election of Joe Biden as president of the U.S. has been received in Cuba with cautious optimism. He is supposed to return to some of the measures of the [Barack] Obama administration, which let both people, both countries to get a little closer. There were more trips allowed to Cuba. Embassies in both countries were established. No doubt there were improvements in the relations between the two countries. Even the Cuban Americans living in the U.S. were able to have more exchange with their families.

So, on one side, people here say, well, it has to be better than the Trump administration which has been awful in terms of relations with Cuba. But on the other side that optimism is cautious because the system is the system. Joe Biden is a person and he has to act within the system's rules. We don't believe that because Joe Biden was elected the imperialists will desist in their idea of undermining and defeating the Cuban Revolution.

The Trump administration in regards to Cuba has been one of the worst ever. We expect the next administration to

be better. But Cuba is something they are not ready to tolerate. They are not ready to find solutions on our disagreements, and to live with respect for our sovereignty. Let's see what happens.

# **Cuba's internationalism**

RICHARD BURGON: The question I wanted to ask you was in relation to your involvement in Angola. What inspired you to go to Angola?

HERNÁNDEZ: For the thousands of Cubans that participated in the struggle

against the apartheid regime in Africa, the same with the Cuban doctors today that go serve in other countries, it's a matter of honor. Because we know that we are helping our own country but we also know that we are helping our broad homeland, as Martí said, which is humanity.

When I was growing up I wanted to be one of those people who fought in the Bay of Pigs — Playa Girón — during the U.S. invasion. I always wanted to be like those who went to the Sierra Maestra to fight with Fidel. Like the people who attacked the Moncada Barracks. So when we had the opportunity to go to Africa to help maintain the independence of those countries, we didn't even think twice.

Fidel says that being internationalist is paying our debt to humanity. Cuba has received a lot of solidarity and continues to receive solidarity from around the world. So that is our debt, our duty is to pay back that solidarity.

As you mentioned, here in Cuba we have a huge mixture of races. Even myself, who used to be blonde and have light color eyes, I have black blood in my veins. So we were just fighting for our people. That's how we felt.



In a few days it's going to be the sixth anniversary of the return of the remaining three of the Cuban Five to Cuba. I would like to say that there is not one single day in our lives that we don't remember and thank the people that made possible the freedom of the Cuban Five. There is not a single day that we don't feel grateful for the work that you did.

We would like to keep counting on you and your efforts and your solidarity to get rid of the U.S. blockade against Cuba, which affects not only. as they would like to say, the Cuban government, but every single Cuban - kids, elderly people, women. We were able to achieve the freedom of the Cuban Five. And one day we are going to celebrate the end of the U.S. blockade against Cuba. And it is going to be thanks to the solidarity of friends like you. So thank you very much.

# LA, NY protests demand: 'End US economic war on Cuba!'

Continued from front page

Reeve Brigade," a reference to the brigade of volunteer doctors Cuba has organized who go wherever they're invited around the world to help combat Ebola, coronavirus and other medical catastrophes. It also highlights the fact that California Gov. Gavin Newsom has proven incapable of halting the widespread pandemic of cases in the state.

"My son Cassio told me about this caravan to normalize relations with Cuba," the sign carrier's father, Antonio Mendoza, told the Militant. He was born in Cuba and works for the UNITE HERE union. "The U.S. embargo has been in existence as long as I have been alive, and it should be ended."

The protest was covered by Telemundo/channel 52 and the Santa Monica Observer. Brenda Lopez, a leader of the committee, told Telemundo that the U.S. government should end its attacks on Cuba. She also called for medical collaboration between Washington and Cuba in fighting COVID-19.

"Before I went to Cuba, I was scared at first because they said it was dangerous, but that isn't true," protest participant Johanna Cervantes told Telemundo. She is a student at the University of California at Berkeley and works as an intern at a Walgreens pharmacy for eight hours a day without pay. "They don't have a lot of resources, but Cubans are very giving. The U.S. lies."

At the end of the caravan, Mark Friedman, a leader of the committee, told participants that the next protest against Washington's efforts to bring down the Cuban government will be held Jan. 20 in downtown Los Angeles. A couple dozen protesters in 10 cars

took part in the caravan in New York, driving through the city and ending up at the statue of Cuban hero José Martí on Central Park South. They were festooned with banners and signs demanding an end to Washington's embargo and for normalization of Cuba-U.S. relations. It was one of the first public actions in defense of Cuba and its revolution in many months. Participants included members of the Socialist Workers Party, Workers World Party, the Universal Zulu Nation, Venceremos Brigade and other defenders of Cuban sovereignty.

Caravan participants parked their cars decorated with signs along 59th Street and held a brief rally at the Martí statue. The Columbus Circle area where the statue is located is also a parking area for yellow cab and pedicab drivers looking for fares. Many gave protest participants a thumbs up. Ike Nahem, coordinator of the Cuba Sí Coalition, thanked everyone for coming and announced another caravan will be held Jan. 31.

In addition to ongoing monthly actions, the National Network on Cuba is projecting:

• Activities to mark the 60th anniversary of two milestones in the Cuban Revolution — the decisive defeat of the U.S.-backed mercenary invasion at Playa Gíron (Bay of Pigs) April 19, 1961, and the beginning of the national literacy campaign. Hundreds of thousands of Cuban youth mobilized to spread across the island and wipe out illiteracy, which greatly strengthened the revolution.

 Building the May Day Brigade to Cuba, sponsored by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples. It's an invaluable opportunity to learn about the revolution firsthand.

 Protests and other activities on May 21, when the U.N. General Assembly will debate and vote on a resolution demanding the U.S. government end its brutal economic embargo against Cuba.

For more information, contact NNOC20012002@yahoo.com.

Róger Calero from New York contributed to this article.



Protesters gather in New York at statue of José Martí Dec. 27 demanding end to U.S. economic war on Cuba.

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The Militant January 18, 2021 The Militant January 18, 2021

# How the Teamsters union organized their 1934 strike to win

Teamster Rebellion by Farrell Dobbs, a Pathfinder Book of the Month in Spanish for January, is the story of the 1934 Teamster organizing drive in Minneapolis. Through hard-fought strikes, rank-and-file workers defeated strikebreaking efforts by the trucking bosses and the employers' "Citizens Alliance," aided by city, state and federal governments. Dobbs, who emerged as part of the class-struggle leadership and became a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, describes how a fighting industrial union movement was built there, helping pave the way for the rise of the CIO. Below is an excerpt from chapter 6, "Organizing the Strike." Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

# **BOOKS OF** THE MONTH

### BY FARRELL DOBBS

Local 574's combat leaders, acting through the organizing committee, had no illusions about the gravity of the impending conflict. They were fully aware that the bosses would try to smash the strike. If the union was to win, a tremendous battle would be necessary. Under the pressures of such a fierce struggle, maneuvers detrimental to the union could be expected from the Labor Board and from Governor Olson. We could also anticipate weakness on the part of the city's AFL officialdom,

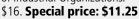


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Teamsters Local 574 Women's Auxiliary volunteers serve meals during 1934 Minneapolis strike. They also treated wounded picketers in strike hospital, spoke widely in region to win support.

which was bound to be squeamish about physical combat and prone to urge the workers to rely completely on Olson. In the last analysis the outcome of the strike would hinge on the fighting capacity of the union ranks.

Seeking to impart this understanding to the membership, the combat leaders prepared to teach the workers the ins and outs of fighting for their rights. This circumstance made the strike quite exceptional. Fighting spirit in the ranks was usually restrained and dampened by the AFL officials, while in this case a militant struggle was being organized by what had become the key section of the top union leadership.

Seldom anywhere, in fact, had there been such a well-prepared strike. When the sun rose on May 16, 1934, the headquarters at 1900 Chicago Avenue was a beehive of activity. Union carpenters and plumbers were installing gas stoves, sinks, and serving counters in the commissary. The Cooks and Waiters Union sent experts on mass cooking and serving to help organize things and train the volunteer help. Working in two twelvehour shifts, over 100 volunteers served 4,000 to 5,000 people daily. Sandwiches and coffee were always available and a hot meal was served whenever the commissary's resources and the circumstances of the strike permitted. In addition, arrangements were made so that key personnel could sleep in or near the headquarters for the duration.

Committees were set up to promote material aid. They solicited friendly grocers for staples to be used in the commissary and to help out the needy families of strikers. Similar donations were also received from sympathetic farmers. The committees fought city hall to get public relief for union members and the facts of life were explained to landlords who pressed the workers for rent payments. Money donations from other unions helped to stock the commissary, as well as to buy gasoline for the cruising picket squads and medical supplies for the union's emergency hospital. ...

Three trained nurses headed up a larger volunteer staff that provided such efficient care that, despite the many open wounds treated, not one bad infection developed. The hospital was supervised by Mrs. Vera McCormack, a skilled technician whom everyone fondly called "Mac." To avoid air pollution in the hospital and commissary, picket cars were pushed into and out of the headquarters.

About a score of skilled auto mechanics had turned to, bringing their tools with them, to keep the strikers' cars in working order. The former tool crib and supply room in the big garage was turned into a general office where volunteers did the typing and mimeographing and signed up new members pouring into the union. An organized guard was maintained in and around the headquarters to watch for police intrusions, prevent drinking, cool down temper flareups, and keep order. Except at critical times, when everyone worked to the point of exhaustion, the various assignments were rotated.

Special attention was given to keeping the workers informed about the strike's progress and helping them to answer lies peddled by the bosses. Each evening a general assembly was held at the headquarters for this purpose. Reports were made by the strike leaders, guest speakers were invited from other unions to help morale through expressions of solidarity, and some form of entertainment usually followed. A loudspeaker system was installed so that packed meetings could hear what was said, as could the overflow crowds outside, which often numbered two to three thousand.

There were also regular meetings of the strike committee of seventy-five, which had been elected by the union membership. This body ... made the general decisions about strike policy. ...

Assembling the mass forces for such extensive picketing proved to be no problem at all. As soon as the strike was called, new members poured into Local 574 from all sections of the trucking industry. In no time at all the union almost doubled its mid-April strength, reaching a figure of nearly 6,000. The union's approach to the unemployed workers brought spectacular results. Hundreds upon hundreds of jobless poured into the strike headquarters, volunteering their services; and they fought like tigers in the battles that followed. Unorganized workers from other industries came forward. Together with women and men from other unions, they came to the strike headquarters at the end of their day's work, ready to help in whatever way they could. Deep in the night they would finally stretch out wherever they found a place to get a little sleep before returning to their jobs. A significant number of college students pitched in to help the union. All in all, pickets were on hand by the thousands. ...

As matters now stood, the union had its strategy worked out, the necessary forces had been mobilized and picketing operations were planned with military precision. The next step was to begin the big push against the employers. Trucking operations had to remain tied up, despite all attempts to use scabs working under police protection, until the employers agreed to deal with the union.

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# Workers need our own party, a labor party

### Continued from front page

tor of the country's Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, explains in an interview in this issue of the *Militant*.

That is possible because Cuba is the only country in the world where the working class exercises political power. Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement led workers and peasants to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista 62 years ago this month in 1959. They established their own government, leading millions to take over the land, factories and banks, and reorganize production in the interests of the vast majority. As they did so they were transformed, becoming "new men and women," as Che Guevara put it, more self-confident and class conscious. They learned to rely on themselves and recognized their fight is part of winning a new future for working people worldwide.

The same capacities for uncompromising and disciplined struggle, and carving out a mass working-class movement capable of taking political power, exist among working people here. This has been shown in the mighty battles to build industrial unions and successfully tear down Jim Crow segregation that have been waged by working people in the U.S.

Today the rulers' capitalist system is in crisis. Millions have been thrown out of work in the midst of a pandemic. Those still working face wage cuts, speedup and worsening conditions. Production of vaccines for coronavirus is *restricted* by the owners of the pharmaceutical monopolies to keep prices high. Their central

concern — like all capitalist bosses — is to maximize profits, regardless of the deadly consequences.

The Socialist Workers Party is fielding candidates in 2021 across the country, fighting to build a mass movement that can bring an end these attacks. The *Militant* is stepping up efforts to spread the word. Join us!

SWP campaign supporters join and build solidarity with union fights, like that by Steelworkers at Constellium in Alabama, with the struggle by farmers in India against government assaults on their livelihoods, with the just-won battle for the right of women to choose abortion in Argentina — a gain for women's emancipation that advances the unity of all working people.

The SWP is advancing a fighting action program. When bosses threaten more layoffs, SWP campaigners urge a fight to cut the workweek with no cut in pay to spread the work available around. The party starts from what working people *need* and explains how a successful struggle to meet that will require taking control over all aspects of production ourselves, and fighting for workers and farmers to take political power.

We need a party of our own — a labor party, built out of our struggles over jobs, wages, working conditions and social rights, a party that speaks out for all those exploited and oppressed by capital.

On this course, workers and farmers here will have the opportunity to emulate the powerful example provided by working people in Cuba. Join SWP candidates around the country campaigning to make that possible!

# Support Alabama strike over seniority, conditions

### **Continued from front page**

Paris-based Constellium bought the plant from Wise Alloys and Reynolds Aluminum in 2015. Bosses say they can process 20 billion used cans a year and the aluminum can sheet they make out of them is in heavy demand.

"This company claims to be 'pro-family," Greenhill said. "We get seven holidays every year. You know where I was on those holidays? Working in there!" The company would rather lay out holiday pay than shut down for a day, he said.

"Without our seniority we don't have a union," said Greenhill. The company's demands include moving workers from eight-hour to 12-hour shifts. Several workers said bosses want to be able to have workers start on one machine and in the middle of the shift send them to another area.

"It's the way they treat us," added Willie Coffey. "They have got people in there telling us what to do who have never done the work." Several workers said the company has been using overtime to produce a surplus in preparation for the strike.

Bosses have been chipping away at the union over years, the workers said. Much of the maintenance is now done by contractors. Some contractors have honored the pickets; others have crossed.

The bosses' handling of the coronavirus pandemic is also an issue among workers. Nearly 250 people in the plant have been infected with the virus. Bosses ran

the plant at 50% capacity claiming they were trying to lessen the spread of the infections. But then "they had us working overtime to make up the difference," Clement explained.

The strike is getting support from other workers in this town of 14,000. Many honked as they drove by.

"The media has really been attacking us, saying we make too much and telling us go back to work," said Greenhill. In contrast, workers say their picket line is kept stocked with snacks, coffee, sodas, wood for the burn barrels and other supplies from strike supporters.

"We've had people from the post office and UPS come by," said Greenhill. "The train crews that pick up shipments refused to cross the picket," added Coffey.

The union has also received support from the Metalworkers' Federation of France. In a Dec. 22 letter to the USW members the French unionists said, "You can count on the full support of the FTM-CGT and the CGT Constellium in your struggle."

The union has begun to hold rallies outside the plant every Monday at 6 a.m. "We hold them just across the street from the main office so they can see us. Everyone is welcome to join," said Clement.

Donations and messages of support can be sent to the union at: United Steelworkers Local 200, 2601 Avalon Ave., Muscle Shoals, AL 35661.

Lisa Potash in Atlanta contributed to this article.

# Workers give bosses 'blood money' bribes to SWP

### **BY JOHN STUDER**

"Enclosed is a check for \$132, the amount after taxes of a COVID-19 lump sum bonus I recently received from the store where I work. This is supposed to be for working a 'hazardous' job, working in a place where we come into contact with large numbers of people," Walmart worker Chuck Guerra wrote to the Socialist Workers Party from Miami in December.

"Meanwhile, many workers were exposed to unsanitary conditions, having to handle garbage for extended periods of time, and massive piles of garbage accumulating when the garbage compactor at the store broke down and the company failed to provide an alternative way to dispose of garbage.

"I refuse to accept this bribe," he said, "and instead contribute it to building a party that encourages work-

ers to fight."

During the Christmas holiday season many bosses dispense bribes to their workers, hoping to buy their loyalty. Communists call this "blood money" — production, attendance, safety, holiday and other "bonuses" that bosses offer, seeking to get workers to keep quiet about speedup, rotten pay and unsafe conditions. Turning these attempted bribes into contributions to the Socialist Workers Party transforms them into helping to build a fighting working-class movement.

In addition to Guerra, over 50 workers at Walmart and other companies contributed over \$6,000 in "blood money" to the SWP. You too can make the best use of your holiday bonus from the boss by donating it to the Socialist Workers Party. Send your contribution to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

# Protests hit cop killings of 2 men in Columbus

BY MAGGIE TROWE

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Working people have organized a series of protests here since the police killed two unarmed African American men in December.

Casey Goodson Jr., 23, a laid-off truck driver who was working at the Gap, was gunned down on his family's steps Dec. 4 as he returned from a dentist appointment. He was holding sandwiches he bought for his grandmother and younger brother.

He was shot by Franklin County sheriff's deputy Jason Meade, who claims he saw Goodson wave a gun while he was driving. There is no evidence that Meade, who is on paid leave, has yet to be interrogated by the authorities. Goodson was licensed to carry a firearm, but family members who were in the house say he had no weapon on him.

"This is by far the hardest day of my life," Goodson's mother, Tamala Payne, said at his funeral service Dec. 23. "But I will stand strong in your name, and in your honor, and we will receive justice."

The day before Goodson's funeral, 47-year-old Andre Hill, a chef and construction worker, was shot and killed by Columbus cop Adam Coy. Hill was visiting a friend on the city's east side when Coy and another cop, who were investigating a non-emergency call from a neighbor, saw Hill in the garage. Coy shot him dead within seconds as Hill walked out holding up his illuminated cellphone to show the cop. He had no weapon.

Footage from body cameras document the shooting, and show Hill lying still alive on the floor of the garage. The cops provide no medical assistance at all for more than 10 minutes, instead cuffing the dying Hill. A woman inside the house can be heard shouting to the police, "He was bringing me Christmas money. He didn't do anything."

Coy was fired from the police force Dec. 28, and is under criminal investigation. Since 2001, some 90 "citizen complaints" have been filed against him, and 16 of those were sustained.

"I think it's a small step," Sierra Mason told WSYX-TV at a protest against the killing of Hill the day Coy was fired. "My next hope is, you know, to at least have the charges of murder, homicide."

"It is just disgusting how they did my dad," Hill's daughter, Karissa, said at a Dec. 31 press conference, where she was joined by other relatives and well-known attorney Ben Crump. "These pictures that I got to look at, I got to memorize my dad on the floor for the rest of my life and how nobody helped him.

"How there's 22 officers on the scene with body footage and not one of them helped my dad. It's unbearable," she said.

Hill's sister, Michelle Hairston, also spoke. "The way that my brother was treated, to me, it's like an animal. He was preyed upon. He wasn't given any kind of chances," she said.

### Call for justice

"I heard about the killings," Mexican American construction worker Efrain Bustamante, shaking his head, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent Dec. 26 outside his trailer in Columbus. "They do it to us, too."

"It was bad," Trammel Price, an auto dealership worker, told me in the living room of his house down the street. "People are angry, and they're going to keep pushing. But I'm worried nothing will happen to the police who did it. The prosecutors always find ways to let the cops get off, or they get little or no time in jail."

More than 100 people, mostly from the Cranbrook neighborhood where Hill was killed, held a vigil there Christmas Eve. The event outside the house where Hill was shot was organized by Shawn Finley, a neighbor. "I had to do something because we can't look away anymore," she said.

# 'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the 'Militant' and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at www.themilitant.com