

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuban Revolution advances food production despite US embargo  
— PAGE 4

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 85/NO. 5 FEBRUARY 8, 2021

## ‘Help us put the Socialist Workers Party on the ballot!’

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

DALLAS — Socialist Workers Party campaigners have gotten off to a solid start in the fight to win ballot status for Gerardo Sánchez, the party’s candidate for City Council District 1. They are extending the party’s reach and finding interest in its program and activity as they knock on doors in working-class neighborhoods and talk to co-workers.

Sánchez, a tire and lube worker at Walmart who grew up in Cuernavaca, Mexico, has also worked as a meatpacker and an underground coal miner. He is part of today’s fights for job safety, improved wages and better working conditions and has taken part in protests against police brutality. He built solidarity with Asarco copper miners on strike for months against boss attacks.

Sánchez’s supporters are collecting signatures to put him on the ballot for the May 1 election. As of Jan. 25, 62

Continued on page 3

## Workers win wage hike in NY produce market strike

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — “I couldn’t be happier,” Marco Gonzalez told the *Militant* Jan. 23. “When you beat the owners it’s a victory. And my co-workers saw that we accomplish something when we stick together.” He was referring to the gains won in their one-week strike by 1,400 members of Teamsters Local 202 at the Hunts Point Terminal Produce Market here in the Bronx.

Workers went on strike Jan. 17 after the bosses’ association, representing 30 companies at the wholesale market, one of the largest in the world, refused to increase its offer of a measly 32-cents-an-hour raise in the first year, and similar raises in the final two years of a three-year contract.

“We didn’t get the \$1-an-hour raise each year that we wanted,” Gonzalez said. “But we got more than the bosses had offered.” Under the new contract, approved by over 97% Jan. 23,

Continued on page 5

## Fight for workers control of production, job safety



Teamsters Joint Council 16

More than 1,000 Teamsters union members at New York’s Hunts Point Produce Market vote overwhelmingly to approve new contract Jan. 23, after one-week strike won wage increase.

### In struggle, workers advance unity, class consciousness

Statement by Willie Cotton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City public advocate, released Jan 27.

### SWP STATEMENT

Socialist Workers Party candidates here in New York and across the country offer the only campaigns that are part of and champion struggles by workers for jobs, better wages, for increasing workers control of production and safety, and

Continued on page 9

### White House executive orders aim to hold workers in check

BY TERRY EVANS

President Joe Biden spent his first days in office churning out executive orders, avoiding debate or vote by Congress. He aims to put a stamp of “political correctness” on government agencies and much more. These measures are a danger to the working class.

At the same time, nothing has changed

Continued on page 7

## Hundreds of thousands of farmers in India protest against gov’t attack



AP Photo/Altaf Qadri

Farmers’ tractor convoys converge on New Delhi, India, Jan. 26, demanding repeal of farm “reform” bill that would eliminate price supports and drive family farmers off the land.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

NEW YORK — Hundreds of thousands of farmers on thousands of tractors, on horseback or on foot streamed into India’s capital, New Delhi, Jan. 26. The action was part of their monthslong protests demanding the overturn of new farm laws enacted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that threaten their livelihoods.

The protest overshadowed the government’s Republic Day celebrations. And their show of strength was backed

by solidarity actions elsewhere in India and around the world.

The laws — drawn up in the interests of large capitalist agricultural profiteers like Reliance Industries and Adani Enterprises — would eliminate government-subsidized crop price supports that benefit working farmers. Over 800 million people in India’s countryside rely on agriculture for a living.

Some farmers drove their tractors through police barricades to try to get to

Continued on page 9

## ‘Militant’ readies fight after officials in Pennsylvania prison bar paper

BY TERRY EVANS

On Jan. 25 the *Militant* received a letter from an inmate at the Camp Hill State Correctional Institution in Pennsylvania saying his subscription to the paper had been impounded. He sent a copy of the prison’s Notice of Incoming Publication Denial and said he planned to fight to overturn it.

“The *Militant* will fight this latest ban by prison officials, as we do every time they attack prisoners’ rights,” John Studer, the paper’s editor, said the next day. “He has a right to read the news he wants and we have a right to reach our subscribers without interference.”

The form doesn’t help understand prison officials’ reason for barring the *Militant*. It says something on page 2 of this year’s issue no. 1 could “create

Continued on page 3

## US gov’t pushes assault on rights, claims target is ‘domestic terror’

BY SETH GALINSKY

The new Democratic Party administration of Joe Biden is spearheading an assault on political rights, claiming that a few hundred conspiracy theorists and wannabe paramilitaries, followed by some supporters of Donald Trump, who entered the Capitol Jan. 6 represent a growing proliferation of “domestic terrorists” that must be stopped.

Continued on page 6

### Inside

‘Stimulus’ fund for ‘Militant’ over \$55,000! 2

Mass protests across Russia demand ‘Free Alexei Navalny’ 2

Biden directive is blow to fight for women’s rights 6

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Minnesota oil workers strike against subcontracting, for safety

# Mass protests across Russia demand 'Free Alexei Navalny'

BY ROY LANDERSON

Despite a brutal police crackdown, tens of thousands rallied in over 100 Russian cities across the country Jan. 23 demanding freedom for Alexei Navalny, the most prominent bourgeois opposition politician in the country, who was arrested days earlier. It was one of the biggest protests in years against the regime of President Vladimir Putin.

The actions also reflect deepening opposition to worsening living conditions, botched vaccination efforts against COVID-19, Russia's involvement in conflicts abroad and attacks on political rights.

Vladimir, 15, who was a member of a group of schoolboys at their first protest in Moscow, told the Jan. 23 *Moscow Times* that demonstrators were there because of "low salaries, low pensions, the fact that the government is stealing and then lying to us."

The day after his arrest, Navalny, who had just returned from Germany after a monthslong recovery from being poisoned with the nerve agent Novichok in Siberia, called on his followers and others to take to the streets. "Don't do it for me, do it for yourselves and for your future," he said. It is widely believed his poisoning was ordered by Putin.

More than 15,000 people joined rallies in Siberia and the Far East, including in Khabarovsk and Vladivostok, despite subfreezing temperatures and a heavy police presence. Khabarovsk has been the site of protests against the Kremlin's removal of a popular local politician there months ago.

The demonstrations — including in provincial cities where such ac-

tions are rare, such as Novosibirsk, Irkutsk and Perm — spread across Russia's 11 time zones.

More than 40,000 demonstrated in Pushkin Square in Moscow, reported Reuters. The action there and in St. Petersburg were the largest protests in about a decade. Over 3,000 people were arrested nationwide, including Maria Alekhina and two other members of the satirical performing group Pussy Riot.

Putin said Navalny was just a "pawn" in western attempts to "destabilize" Russia. In fact, Putin fears the restiveness of working people that Navalny appeals to.



Reuters/Anton Vaganov

Protesters in over 100 Russian cities Jan. 23, including St. Petersburg, above, demand freedom for opposition leader Alexei Navalny, protest growing repression by regime of Vladimir Putin.

## Tunisian youth protest lack of jobs, police brutality

BY JANET POST

"The people want the fall of the regime!" chanted hundreds of demonstrators at an anti-government protest in Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, Jan. 23. Discontent over massive unemployment, rising inflation, lack of social services and police brutality have led to protests for over a week across the country, mostly of young people.

The actions began Jan. 14, on the 10th anniversary of the uprising that overthrew the hated capitalist regime of former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

The youth and other working people are being crushed under brutal economic conditions in the country. Unemployment is officially at 18%, and 36% for youth. "Employment is a right, not a favor," read placards at the protests.

"People are hungry," Yassine, a shopworker in Ettadhamen, told the *Guardian*. "I won't lie about it, they want another revolution."

A slogan of the 2011 revolution — "Employment, freedom, dignity" — is chanted at the rallies today. "The only government we know is the police car coming to arrest people," Mohammed,

an unemployed youth, told the *Arab Weekly*. Some 1,000 people, most between the ages of 15 and 25, have been arrested at protests over the past week.

Mothers of some of those detained rallied Jan. 20 in Tunis. "The policeman shoved the door of my building and arrested my son," said garment worker Meriem Ben Salem.

### 'Stimulus' fund for 'Militant' over \$55,000!

The special "stimulus" fund appeal to readers by the *Militant* has taken another step upward. We're now at \$55,037 from 112 donations to the working-class newsweekly.

"It is with great pleasure I send this 'stimulus' money to the *Militant*," Helen Meyers wrote from St. Paul, Minnesota, "to be used in advancing the interests of the working class."

"Enclosed is my 'stimulus' donation to the *Militant*," John Cotman from Frederick, Maryland, wrote Jan. 18. "As a *Militant* reader since 1972, I know it will go to good use."

This fund helps make it possible for the *Militant* to respond to opportunities that develop in the class struggle, to be able to bring news on working-class fights against attacks by the bosses and their governments worldwide, and to advance solidarity with them.

It explains that the answer to all the main questions facing workers today is a class-against-class fighting course. It points to the example the revolution made by Cuba's workers and farmers, and the importance of its principled revolutionary leadership for 62 years, that shows a road forward 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 online at themilitant.com.

— JOHN STUDER

# THE MILITANT

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*Acts of anti-Semitic violence today show that Jew-hatred must be combated and eradicated by working people worldwide. The 'Militant' explains why Jew-hatred persists and why the only road to end anti-Semitism is the fight for the working class to overthrow capitalist rule.*



Striking textile workers in New York, 1913. Signs in Yiddish, Russian, English, Italian.

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**France:** Send 100 euros for one year to Diffusion du Militant, BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15.

**New Zealand and the Pacific Islands:** Send NZ\$55 for one year to P.O. Box 13857, Auckland 1643, New Zealand.

**Australia:** Send A\$70 for one year to P.O. Box 73 Campsie, NSW 2194 Australia.

Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

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

# Help put SWP on the ballot!

Continued from front page

workers and young people had signed petitions, including 18 co-workers of campaign supporters. The goal is to collect 200 signatures.

“Everywhere I go I explain the need to fight for a federal government-financed public works program to put millions to work,” Sánchez told the *Militant*. “We need to fight to cut the workweek with no cut in pay, and demand cost-of-living clauses in every contract that raise pay and retirement benefits to offset all increases in prices.”

The *Dallas Morning News* reported, “Texas is on pace to lose 680,000 jobs this year, the biggest annual decline on record.” Almost one in five adults in Dallas are in households that don’t have enough to eat, it said.

“Working people have no voice,” Sánchez told Maria Elena Alfaro while campaigning in the Lake Cliff neighborhood. “The Democrats and Republicans represent the rich. Workers need our own party, a labor party, to organize us to fight in the interest of all working people.”

Alfaro agreed, saying she quit her job at a book warehouse because bosses were not taking necessary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

“Workers need to be at work. This is what my campaign stands for,” Sánchez said, handing her a copy of the SWP action program. “We must organize to fight growing employer attacks on our jobs, wages and working conditions. We can fight for workers

control of production to ensure that we have health and safety on the job. The bosses care about profits, not the dangerous conditions we are forced to work under.”

“They told us to social distance, but there were not enough masks or sanitizers,” Alfaro said. “If there had been protests against these conditions at work, I would have joined them.”

On the first night of campaigning for Sánchez, George Chalmers knocked on the door of Andrea Jenkins. “I supported Bernie Sanders and I saw how the election was rigged to keep him from winning,” she said.

They discussed the events at the Capitol Jan. 6 where conspiracy theorists, would-be paramilitaries and some supporters of Donald Trump briefly occupied the building. Since then more than 100 of those accused of being in the Capitol have been arrested and may have been fired from their jobs.

Under the guise of going after “domestic terrorists,” the U.S. government and the FBI are attacking political rights the working class needs to defend its interests.

“Jenkins signed to get the SWP on the ballot and got a six-month subscription to the *Militant* newspaper,” Chalmers said. “At the same time, another campaign supporter was talking to one of her neighbors across the street who signed, got a copy of the *Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa*, and gave a contribution to the campaign.”

Claudia Acosta, who had been laid



Militant/George Chalmers

Gerardo Sánchez, SWP candidate for Dallas City Council, talks with Valerie Pinales Jan. 20 on her doorstep about the party’s program. She signed the petition to put the party on the ballot.

off from a recycling plant, signed up at a Dallas grocery store to help put Sánchez on the ballot after hearing what he fights and stands for. “There have been many years of bad con-

ditions for us and violations of our rights,” she pointed out.

Hilda Cuzco contributed to this article.

## Fight ‘Militant’ ban in Penn. prison

Continued from front page

a danger within the context of the correctional facility.” But the only article on page 2 is “Workers in Scotland Speak Out Against Economic, Health Crisis,” a news report on political developments there, with no mention of prisons or the capitalist criminal “justice” system.

Later the notice lists a “brief description” that the problem is “Socialist Work-

ers Party Action, speaks on social unrest and standing against law enforcement.” This may be a reference to “The Socialist Workers Party action program,” the platform of the SWP candidates in both the 2020 presidential election and in 2021 races across the country.

It says, “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.”

This platform was printed in dozens of *Militant* issues over the last year, and mailed to over two dozen subscribers in Pennsylvania prisons without complaint. One section, entitled “Fight Police Brutality!” urges readers to join in demanding cops be held accountable for brutality they visit on working people and against racist discrimination. It says, “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.”

The subscriber at Camp Hill also writes that the same day he got notice of the ban of the *Militant* he was asked by a prison counselor about his political views “as a communist and anti-fascist.”

The *Militant* was banned by authorities at Camp Hill once before last July, involving a different subscriber. This ban was rapidly reversed after it was brought to the attention of state officials in the Department of Corrections.

The *Militant*’s attorney, David Goldstein, is in the process of contacting state prison officials to let them know the paper is going to appeal to overturn the impoundment, unless they reject the ban themselves.

“The *Militant* urges defenders of free speech and political rights to send letters to prison authorities urging them to reverse this ban,” Studer said. “And send copies to the *Militant*.”

**Send letters protesting Pennsylvania prison ban on the ‘Militant’ to:**

Diana Woodside, director of Policy, Grants and Legislative Affairs, Department of Corrections, 1920 Technology Parkway, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050.

## SWP campaign helps win long-term readers to ‘Militant’

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Socialist Workers Party candidates in the 2021 elections are discussing the party’s action program with working people coast to coast. As they do so they are visiting many of the 3,000 plus people who have subscribed to the *Militant* over the last year to discuss what they think of the paper, urge them to renew their subscriptions and encourage them to campaign to get the party’s candidates on the ballot.

Many subscribers will want to get books by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and other revolutionaries offered at reduced prices. They provide a deeper understanding of what workers face and the road toward organizing to replace the rule of the capitalist class with a government of workers and farmers.

Calvin Hogue wasn’t planning to renew his subscription to the *Militant* when SWP campaigners Terry Evans and Craig Honts called at his home in Rochelle Park, New Jersey, Jan. 24.

“I don’t need to know what the problem is, I want solutions,” the musician and former retail worker said. “Before the election, Democrats were ‘Stop Trump, stop Trump.’ Now they’re in office — what are they going to do?”

Evans pointed to the *Militant*’s coverage of the just-concluded strike by Teamsters at the Hunts Point Produce Market in New York. “Out of struggles like this, workers begin to gain confidence we can change our conditions,” he said. Hogue, who had been a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union for many years, said he had been following the strike.

“Working people need to build our own party,” Honts said, “to use to make a revolution and overturn capitalist rule.”

Hogue liked Honts’ forthright response and renewed his subscription for three months. Hogue also hosts a radio talk show. When he found out about the campaign of Joanne Kuniansky, the SWP candidate for New Jersey governor, he said he would like to interview her on his program and get her views on protecting the environment.

### SWP campaigns in New York

In Brooklyn, Jan. 24, Willie Cotton, SWP candidate for New York City public advocate, and campaigner Seth Galinsky knocked on the doors of a half-dozen subscribers.

One subscriber, an Uber driver, was not at home. But his brother was interested in talking with the SWP campaigners. He had just returned from Haiti.

Cotton pointed to the devastation inflicted on the Haitian people by the U.S. rulers under both Democratic and Republican presidencies. Former President Bill Clinton sent thousands of troops to the island to impose Washington’s will in 1994. When an earthquake struck years later, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton promised aid, houses and jobs. Little of what she pledged ever arrived.

The brother said he was well aware of what the Clintons had perpetrated against working people in Haiti and bought a copy of the *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People*.

# Cuban Revolution advances food production despite US embargo

BY RÓGER CALERO

Stepped-up measures imposed by the U.S. imperialist rulers as part of its economic war against the Cuban people and their socialist revolution are having a serious impact on the country's agricultural production.

Sanctions on Venezuelan shipments of oil to Cuba, tighter restrictions on travel to the island from the U.S., limits on family remittances, and other obstacles to Cuba's access to hard currency have reduced the government's ability to import fuel, machinery parts, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs necessary for food production. The coronavirus pandemic has also sharply disrupted tourism, one of its top sources of hard currency.

"People could say that Cuba is an island with land, and has good weather, and can grow a lot of food," Gerardo Hernández, one of the Cuban Five revolutionaries who had been imprisoned in the U.S. and is currently the national coordinator of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, explained in an interview with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign in the U.K. in December.

"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."

Rice and bean production has plunged, causing shortages of these two main staples of the Cuban diet.

The rice harvest fell back to 246,700 tons in 2019 — from a record high of 300,000 tons the year before. The goal for 2020 had to be adjusted further down to 163,000 as use of airplanes for seeding and fumigation, harvesters, and irrigation systems was cut back due to shortages.

Cuba needs 700,000 tons of rice every year to meet the nation's needs. What they can't grow has to be imported at world market prices, and then is sold at subsidized prices.

Since 2010 the Cuban government has dedicated major economic resources to working with farmers through their organization — the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) — to increase rice production in order to reduce imports. But the sanctions imposed by the Donald Trump administration reversed the upward production trend in the country's rice industry.

These measures are likely to remain in place for the foreseeable future under the Democratic Party administration of Joe Biden, which is committed to continuing economic pressure against the revolution.

U.S. companies are prohibited from offering credit to Cuban entities. This means agricultural sales must be made on a cash-on-delivery basis, rather than

the normal terms of international trade.

Cuba is forced to purchase products and equipment at a much higher cost, often from sources far afield. For example, it takes 36 days for rice purchased from Vietnam to travel to Cuba, while it only takes 36 hours if purchased in the U.S. This means having to use much-needed foreign currency that could have been allocated to the country's development.

Bean production has also taken a serious blow. The Cuban press reported last August that only 58,000 acres were cultivated because of lack of fuel. There was enough fertilizer to cover only 8% of the total area sown, and only 16% was treated with chemical pesticides.

To make matters worse, a plague hit the bean fields last year, which did substantial damage. The country's yearly consumption is 70,000 tons. Average production in the last three years had been around 51,000 tons.

## Power of Cuban peoples' revolution

The U.S. economic war against Cuba has no parallel. It began in 1960, less than a year after the Cuban people, led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. They mobilized millions of workers and peasants to take political power and build a new society based on the needs of the producing classes.

Before working people took power in Cuba, an enormous percentage of the Cuban economy was under the control of U.S. corporations. This was broken when the revolution nationalized the land and workers and farmers carried out an agrarian reform. U.S. companies had controlled a significant portion of the country's natural resources, including sugar, cattle, tobacco, timber, oil, mining and farm industries.

The nationalization guaranteed the

## Minneapolis protest: 'Defend the Cuban Revolution!'



Franklin Curbelo

MINNEAPOLIS — More than two dozen people joined a picket here Jan. 17 in defense of the Cuban Revolution, an emergency response to the U.S. government's decision a few days earlier to once again place Cuba on its "state sponsors of terrorism" sanctions list. The protest was called by the Minnesota Cuba Committee and Women Against Military Madness.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo cited Cuba's support for the Venezuelan government of Nicolás Maduro and its refusal to extradite people granted political asylum, like former Black Panther Assata Shakur, as justification.

"Placing Cuba on the list is yet another attack against the 62-year-old victorious revolution of the workers and peasants," Socialist Workers Party leader Helen Meyers said at the event.

— KEVIN DWIRE

land to the tillers and the land reform guaranteed jobs for hundreds of thousands of agricultural workers. The crushing debt slavery that farmers suffered under capitalism was abolished by the revolution. This meant farmers can't be subject to foreclosure.

Since then ANAP and other Cuban mass organizations like the CDRs have played a key role in opening possibilities for farmers to increase production. As with all questions Cuba's revolutionary government looks to the country's workers and farmers for solutions to the challenges they face.

Simultaneously with the efforts to increase national food production, working people and youth in Cuba are

organizing a campaign for neighborhoods and work centers to grow their own food.

"If the U.S. imperialists have been trying to kill us of hunger for more than 60 years — without a pandemic — well, now they are going to try to do it even more," CDR leader Hernández explained on Cuban television last June.

"So we're asking everyone to grow food everywhere possible, to make the most of every little plot of land," he said. "So that everyone can contribute not only to their own consumption but also everyone's consumption."

Hernández reported five months later, "I am happy to tell you the initiative is very popular."

# New Zealand home workers protest boss attacks

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Dozens of home-care workers and their supporters picketed Lifewise services here Jan. 23 against the employer's attacks on hours and wages and in support of the workers' demand for a union contract.

The E Tu union action helped kick off a three-day strike. The workers are protesting the bosses' notice of a two-week February lockout, targeting the 78 union members who took part in six days of strike action in December and earlier this month.

Lifewise services, a division of the Methodist Church, employs 100 workers who provide care for the elderly and

disabled in their homes.

The lockout threat is an attempt to "stop us from being in the union," Anita Apa told this *Militant* worker-correspondent. Like many on the picket line, Apa has worked for the company for over a decade.

The workers are fighting to restore full-time working hours, which they say the company took an ax to after being forced to increase their pay in 2017. This followed the victory of the union's national "pay equity" claim that compelled the government to increase wages by 15% to 49% for 55,000 care workers, depending on a worker's skill and experience.

Union workers at Lifewise have seen their clients and hours decline, as the company "hires newer workers at a lower rate," Rose Fusimalohi told the *Militant*. Shop steward Helen Taufua said, "They hire people at a starting rate of \$19 an hour" (\$13.57). Then they strip hours from workers who are entitled to NZ\$25.90. Some members of the all-women workforce, which is made up largely of Pacific Islanders, are "only guaranteed 10 hours a week," she said. Union fighters only found out about this through discussions with new hires during the current dispute.

"And whoever was hired after pay

equity gets 50 cents per kilometer petrol money [58 cents a mile], when those of us hired before are paid 70."

"I signed up for a full-time job, but that's not what I am getting now," said Christine Faga. "It's hard to manage your bills like that."

"There is no time to spend with the clients as human beings, and we are not allowed to have a cup of tea or lunch with them," Debbie Savage said. "I have to sit on the side of the road and have lunch while I'm waiting to see if I get called to another job."

"I feel good about striking," she said.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

PENNSYLVANIA  
Philadelphia

Abolish the Death Penalty: A Tool of Capitalist Oppression. Speaker: Janet Post, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 12, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 2824 Cottman Ave., Suite no. 16. Tel.: (215) 708-1270.

## —CALENDAR—

NEW YORK  
New York

End U.S. Blockade of Cuba! Solidarity rally and car caravan. Sun., Jan. 31, 12 p.m. Meet in front of José Martí statue at Central Park, 59th St. and 6th Ave.

WASHINGTON  
Seattle

End U.S. Blockade Against Cuba. Sun., Jan. 31. Picket line at Ballard Farmers Market, 11 a.m.; car caravan, 12 p.m. 22nd Ave. NW and Market Street. Information: [seattlecuba@gmail.com](mailto:seattlecuba@gmail.com).

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# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## Oil workers strike against subcontracting, for safety

ST. PAUL PARK, Minn. — Two hundred members of Teamsters Local 120 went on strike against the Marathon Petroleum refinery here Jan. 21 over subcontracting their jobs and unsafe working conditions.

Marathon bosses own the majority of oil refineries in the U.S.

“The company only offered us an economic package. We refused and told them the issues were subcontracting and safety, not money,” Scott Kroona, business agent for the Teamsters, told the *Militant* two days later. “We had no choice but to strike after we went through 22 meetings trying to get them to negotiate a contract we could agree to.”

He explained that the St. Paul Park refinery “utilizes hydrofluoric acid, the same chemical which necessitated the evacuation of Superior, Wisconsin, after the explosion at the Husky refinery there in 2018. Hydrofluoric acid is deadly, plain and simple.”

Several dozen union members and their supporters were picketing at six entrances to the refinery. Workers told the *Militant* that since Jan. 1 when the contract expired the company had assigned planned replacement workers to shadow them and watch them work. Many had been brought in from Marathon refineries elsewhere.

Father and son Max and Jason Lundusky, who live close to the refinery, came to show solidarity. “We’re here to support these workers for better conditions and safety for them and for the neighborhood,” Max said.

Also joining the striking pickets were members of the St. Paul Federation of Teachers; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Minnesota Nurses Association; Socialist Workers Party; and Democratic Socialists of America.

—Nick Neeser

## Rolls-Royce bosses back off plan to cut jobs at Barnoldswick plant

BARNOLDSWICK, England — After nine weeks on the picket line, the Unite union Jan. 8 suspended strike ac-

tion by Rolls-Royce workers here after the company backed off threatened job cuts. Mark Porter, Unite union convener at the plant, told the *Militant* that the bosses have agreed to keep at least 350 jobs at the factory here and pledged there will be no compulsory redundancies for two years.

“Through hard work and determination we have saved jobs,” Porter said. Their fight gained needed solidarity when a union delegation from Rolls-Royce’s main U.K. plant in Derby joined more than 70 strikers on the picket line Dec. 16. “If there is no progress,” Mahf Khan, deputy union convener from the Derby plant, said, “this fight will become a national issue for all Rolls-Royce workers.”

—Pete Clifford



Militant/Nick Neeser

Teamsters Local 120 members and supporters picket road to Marathon Petroleum refinery Jan. 23 in St. Paul Park, Minnesota. The union struck over unsafe conditions, subcontracting jobs.

# Workers win wage hike in NY produce market strike

Continued from front page

all workers get a 70-cent raise the first year and 50 cents the second. In the final year of the contract the lowest-paid workers get a 65-cent increase and the highest-paid get a \$1,300 bonus instead. Most workers are currently paid an average of between \$18 and \$21 an hour. Under the new contract, new hires start at \$16.75.

The agreement narrows a little the gap between the highest- and lowest-paid workers. “I wished we had never accepted the two tiers about 10 years ago,” Gonzalez said. “The economy wasn’t doing good then and the bosses said they needed some concessions.”

Gonzalez, who has worked more than 20 years at the market, said he was surprised by the solidarity the strike won. “I couldn’t believe it. I thought we were going to be all alone.”

At the picket line Jan. 21, Local 202 President Dan Kane Jr. told strikers and supporters, “We got all kinds of support — including more food than we could possibly eat.” Members of other Teamsters locals and several United Food and Commercial Workers locals came to the picket line, as well as many students and some area politicians.

The bosses tried to maintain production despite the strike, hiring strike-

breakers. And some union members crossed the line. “The company offered workers \$200 extra a day or more to cross the picket line,” said striker José Lora. But even with that the owners were feeling the impact of the strike. “At one company there were trailers full of produce that was going bad they could not unload,” he said.

## Solidarity from workers, farmers

Solidarity increased after cops, some dressed in riot gear, arrested six strikers Jan. 18, charging them with blocking trucks trying to enter the market. Later in the week, workers succeeded without cop interference in slowing down the entry of trucks for 15 minutes to half an hour at a time.

A rail crew on a CSX train pulling cars loaded with produce refused to cross the picket line Jan. 20 and turned back. And a group of farmers from Massachusetts and Rhode Island — whose produce shipments to the market were disrupted by the strike — brought food to the picket line, Lora said.

The Hunts Point Produce Market Cooperative Association issued a statement at the start of the strike implying that union members would lose their jobs. “The Bronx has seen an unemployment rate of 40%,” the bosses said,

and argued business was down due to the coronavirus pandemic. They claimed to have spent \$3 million on virus protection, although workers say they don’t even give out masks.

The statement made many workers more determined. “I don’t believe the bosses,” Miguel Mejia said on the picket line Jan. 21. “Before the pandemic I was working eight hours a day. Just before the strike I was working 10 hours a day. The bosses can talk about 40% unemployment, but there’s plenty of work in the market.”

Diego Castro, who works at A&J Produce, said, “The strike was 90% effective where I work.” But the number of workers who crossed the picket line at some other companies had an impact, he said. “If we had been more united, we would have won even more.”

Some workers are discussing what they’ve learned in the course of the strike. “It’s unjust that the owners can bring in people to work during the strike, but the police don’t let workers block the trucks,” said Benito Cohato. “The bosses can do what they want, but not us.”

“I think a lot of people are getting tired of the politicians and the way the country is being governed,” he said. “They want to see changes.”

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 12, 1996

RAÚL CASTRO: The first literacy brigade carried out in the Second Front was a mass campaign involving both Rebel Army fighters and local men and women who until then had lived in complete ignorance.

The rebel leaders played a vitally important role, not just in improving the education of the fighters and peasantry but also in helping them understand more clearly why we were fighting and the urgent need for deep-going political, economic, and social changes.

Many teachers participated in military operations after school. The image of the future conveyed by our fighting teachers, with a rifle in one hand and textbooks in the other, proved highly encouraging for our peasants. This large-scale political and social work showed very graphically what the triumph of the revolution would signify.



February 12, 1971

LOS ANGELES — A Chicano demonstration and rally of over 10,000 here Jan. 31 was followed by brutal police attacks on the Chicano community. It was a legal, orderly protest against the policies of the government — in this case the policy of systematic police brutality practiced upon the barrio to stop independent organization and mobilization.

The ruling powers of Los Angeles made it clear that they do not want the Chicano community to exercise its right to assemble. By the end of the day, Gustav Montag, 24, an East Los Angeles resident, was dead and many more were injured victims of the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department.

The ruling class is using its police to attempt to beat Chicanos into submission. This attack on the right to organize, demonstrate, march, and rally must be exposed and vigorously fought by all.

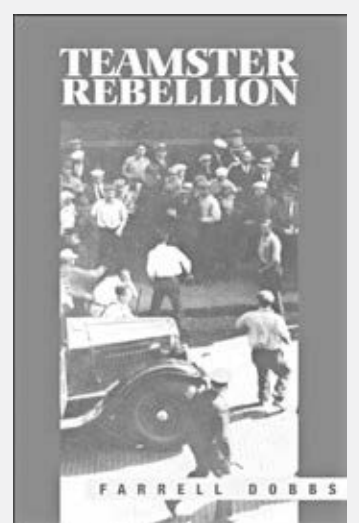


February 9, 1946

The gigantic strike struggles being waged by America’s industrial workers have demonstrated that the organized labor movement is capable of rallying the overwhelming portion of the population behind it and of providing leadership to every oppressed layer of the people.

The struggle has also disclosed dangerous weaknesses and shortcomings. In every instance where the struggle has had to be waged on the political plane, the unions have been helpless.

A new and different kind of labor leadership is required if the workers are to triumph in the stormy conflicts that lie ahead. With such a leadership and program, and with their own party, the workers will then have the major requisites for success in the struggle for real labor political power against the rule of Big Business and its Democratic and Republican machines.



The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as recounted by Farrell Dobbs, a central leader of that battle.

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# 'Building a new society is the work of creative human beings'

One of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for January is *In Defense of Socialism: Four Speeches on the 30th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution by Fidel Castro, its central leader. The triumph of the Cuban people on Jan. 1, 1959, opened the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas. Castro discussed the "tremendous historical challenge," both inside Cuba and internationally, to defend socialism against the "selfish, chaotic and inhumane capitalist system." He responded to use of bureaucratic methods copied from the USSR by initiating the rectification process, to mobilize working people to strengthen their revolution. The excerpt is from the introduction by Mary-Alice Waters. Copyright © 1989 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Our battle is the battle to improve, develop, and defend socialism, [Fidel Castro] told them, "and perhaps the greatest challenge is that this is a battle to improve socialism without resorting to the mechanisms and style of capitalism, without playing at capitalism." That, he insisted, is "what we are trying to do in the process of rectification."

The rectification process, begun in 1986, is the context for much of what is discussed in these pages. As Castro has

explained in numerous other speeches and interviews over the last three years, the rectification process is a fundamental political reorientation. It was initiated by the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba in response to evidence of a growing political demobilization and demoralization among Cuba's working people. These dangerous trends were registered by increasing instances of bureaucratic mismanagement, indifference, abuse, declining productivity and work morale, the growth of corruption and fraud, and frustration over attempts to deal with such problems piecemeal. More and more, Cubans began to see money as the solution to all problems — whether providing incentives to work, or juggling the books of a state enterprise to make it appear efficient and productive. ...

As Castro illustrated the problem ... in November 1987, "those who advocated reactionary ideas within the revolution argued that building a day-care center was a social expense. Social expenses were no good, investing in production was good; as if those who work in the factories were bulls and cows, horses and mares, male and female mules and not human beings, not men and women with their problems, especially women with their problems. ... Whenever they say no day-care center, you can be sure there is a technocratic, bureaucratic, reactionary concept at work. ... It didn't enter the technocrat's head that day-care centers were essential to production and the services, and that housing and day boarding schools were also essential to production and the services, and that housing and day boarding schools were also essential to socioeconomic development." ...

[T]he "construction of socialism and communism," Castro insisted, "is essentially a political task and a revolutionary task, it must be fundamentally the fruit of the development of consciousness and educating people for socialism and communism." Building a new society, based on new property forms, new social relations, and new values cannot be



Federation of Cuban Women  
Cuban women in construction minibrigade in 1988, part of rectification process, as workers from workplaces and communities took part in voluntary labor. They built 100 child care centers in Havana in two years instead of a bureaucratic plan for less than one year. Rectification ended as tighter U.S. embargo exacerbated shortages.

accomplished by administrative measures overseen by a growing (and relatively privileged) bureaucracy. It is the work of creative and productive human beings, women and men who are conscious of what they are doing, communists who are organizing themselves and leading their fellow workers to discover what they are capable of achieving, transforming themselves in the process.

Two political measures have been central to the steps taken during the first three years of the rectification process, and references to both run through these speeches.

First, the Communist Party of Cuba has led a conscious effort to incorporate a new and younger leadership on all levels and in all organizations and institutions. Under the watchword of "renewal or death," the first session of the third party congress in February 1986 made sweeping changes in the composition of its leadership bodies. Forty percent of those elected to the Central Committee and 50 percent of those elected to the Political Bureau were new members.

Just as important were the guidelines under which the renewal took place,

with the conscious promotion of more workers, more Afro-Cubans, more women, more internationalist fighters, and more young communists. The result was a more working-class leadership, one closer in composition and experience to that of Cuba's working people today, and one more capable of leading the profoundly revolutionary changes posed by the rectification process.

The leadership renewal begun by the party congress has been pressed forward since that time. It was deepened by the discussions around, and response to, the congress of the Union of Young Communists in 1987. It has been advanced by the demonstrated capacities of the Cuban troops and other internationalist Cuban volunteers in Africa, who in their big majority represent Cuba's young generation. It has taken form in the volunteer youth construction contingents and work brigades that have been part of the rectification process.

The second measure central to rectification has been relaunching what in Cuba is called the minibrigade movement. ... Since 1986 these Cuban working people have already put in millions of hours of volunteer labor. This genuine mass response to the minibrigade movement has made it possible to begin making inroads on problems such as the housing crisis and child-care shortage, which had been worsening at an accelerating pace for more than a decade.

In two years' time, for example, more than 100 child-care centers were built in the city of Havana alone — more than would have been built in a century had the previous policies not been changed.

Similarly with regard to housing, progress is not being made by appealing to people to work longer and harder to make more money to meet their own personal needs while others go without decent shelter. Instead, the shortage is being addressed through mass, revolutionary, working-class action. ... As Castro told a rally on July 26, 1987, the minibrigade movement has the capacity to build a new Havana. It could even build a new London or Paris, he said.

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## For workers control of production, safety

Continued from front page

by farmers defending their livelihoods. Joining strike picket lines, protests against cop brutality, actions to defend a woman's right to choose abortion, and other battles by working people, SWP candidates set an example of what workers can do together to defend ourselves and present a program that offers a way forward.

Driven by the crisis of their capitalist system, bosses are cutting jobs, speeding up production lines and cramming workers into confined spaces, where coronavirus spreads, to try and boost sagging profits. Under capitalist rule production is organized with no concern for our lives or limbs; for the safety of those who live near factories, refineries and other workplaces; or the soil, air and water, which is being contaminated.

Changing administrations in Washington, D.C., has done nothing to halt this. The Democrats and Republicans are both parties of the capitalist rulers committed to protecting the bosses' profits at the expense of workers and farmers, regardless of the consequences to the world we live in.

All work can be performed safely. No worker has to die on the job. But for that to become a reality workers must organize together to take control of production from the bosses.

Our labor produces all wealth and we are the only force capable of organizing work safely. Fighting for this is the road to end the bosses' production of goods that self-destruct, often with catastrophic consequences, like Boeing's 737 Max, and their waste of precious resources. By taking control of all aspects of production, we can use the full potential of our labor to make food, shelter, vaccines and many other things humanity needs. And we can do so safely.

Under capitalism, moves to confront the COVID-19 pandemic are left to Big Pharma and other

medical industry bosses. Their goal is to make profits, not make people healthy. Workers taking control over production and distribution would have sharply different priorities.

Previous working-class struggles show what we are capable of. In the late 1960s coal miners transformed the United Mine Workers union and led a social movement, including strikes and protests, to push back the scourge of black lung, an incurable and often fatal disease. Their determined struggle led to establishing community health clinics throughout mining areas and union safety committees with the power to shut down production in the mine over health and safety issues. Black lung cases plummeted.

These gains were intolerable to the coal bosses, who shifted production to the mostly nonunion Powder River Basin in the West, and the UMW weakened. But the fight miners waged remains a powerful example of what our class can and must do today.

As workers deepen our struggles and take increasing control over production, we begin to see our real capacities, to learn our worth. And we become class conscious. The capitalists try to pound into us the idea we aren't smart enough to do anything important, leave the big questions to them. But the fact is they increasingly fear us. Working people can take control and run the entire economy.

That's what working people of Cuba did when they made a revolution in 1959 and have defended it against Washington's ceaseless attacks for 62 years. It's an example to study and emulate.

We need to build a fighting union movement of millions and a leadership capable of charting a course to overturn the rule of the exploiting capitalist class and bring to power a workers and farmers government.

Join the SWP campaign to further this course. Help us get on the ballot. This is a life truly worth living.

## Farmers in India protest against gov't attack

Continued from front page

the heart of the capital. Thousands of others occupied the famous 17th century Red Fort. Riot police fired water cannons and tear gas at demonstrators. Cops used bamboo sticks to beat back angry farmers. One farmer died and many were wounded.

Most of the farmers came from nearby states — Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Hundreds of women learned how to drive tractors for the mass protest. Indian women now run 12% of the country's farms.

Hundreds of thousands of farmers and family members have camped on highways on the outskirts of New Delhi for two months. This is the biggest confrontation Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party government has faced in its six years in office.

### Solidarity protests around the world

Thousands of farmers marched into Mumbai, India's largest city, Jan. 25 to stage a sit-in protest. "We are here to support farmers in Delhi, to highlight that farmers across the country are against the farm laws," Ashok Dhawale, a protest leader, told the press.

Here in New York over 100 supporters of the farmers marched from Times Square to a rally outside the United Nations. A rally in Chicago drew 200.

Hundreds rallied in front of Indian consulates in Vancouver, British Columbia, and San Francisco. Protests took place in Seattle and Los Angeles. A car rally was organized in Auckland, New Zealand, after 300 had protested there nine days earlier under the banner, "Repeal anti-farmer laws!" In London, Montreal, and Ottawa, Ontario, actions were cancelled because of government COVID-19 restrictions on the right to protest.

"The Indian government calls farmers uneducated. But look at how over 30 farmer unions are collaborating," Jasvir Kaur Singh from the Sikh Religious Society in Palatine, Illinois, told the *Militant* at the Chicago action. "I've never seen this level of organization — tents, security, entertainment, so much food that farmers are actually feeding the homeless in New Delhi."

"My uncle has six acres," said Gurpreet Singh.

"This new bill takes away the minimum price farmers get. It will lead to a big consolidation of land."

"They say with the new law you'll be able to sell anywhere, but small farmers can't," Hardeep Singh added. "They don't have the transportation or the storage, and will be forced to sell their land. The corporations are pushing the government to pass this law, so they can take over."

"The unions are important," Abinash Kaur told this reporter at the New York action. She described the solidarity action by millions of Indian workers, whose conditions and rights are also under attack.

"It's a life-or-death question. Farmers will be devastated," she added. "The suicide rates will get worse." Over 16,000 farmers took their own lives in Punjab between 2000 and 2015, mostly over unpayable debts.

Farmers' representatives rejected Modi's recent offer to defer imposition of the laws for 18 months, demanding their complete revocation. The government rammed them through last September under cover of the pandemic, completely underestimating the strength of the farmers' response.

Working farmers of Punjab, a majority Sikhs, and of Haryana, in India's northern "breadbasket," have somewhat larger, more productive, plots and more tractors than farmers elsewhere. They stand to lose more from the elimination of state-backed minimum prices and have led the widening rebellion.

Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party's candidate for mayor of New York, spoke at the rally here, bringing solidarity to the farmers' struggle. He said they "are demonstrating that the only way working people can defend ourselves is by using our organized strength, not depending on capitalist politicians."

"The only way to get rid of the system of capitalist exploitation that robs workers and farmers of their livelihoods," Calero said, "is to fight to bring to power our own workers and farmers government."

Farmers' unions have announced their next big action will be marches on India's parliament Feb. 1, when the government presents its annual budget.

*Naomi Crane in Chicago contributed to this article.*

## California protesters: 'Free Carlos Harris!'



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Rally at City Hall in San Jose, California, demands freedom for Carlos Harris, framed up and jailed on murder charges.

BY JOEL BRITTON

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Several dozen protesters gathered at City Hall here on Martin Luther King Day Jan. 18 to demand "Free Carlos Harris!" and others who have been wrongfully convicted. The march and rally included members of his family. Harris, 50, has served 16 years of an over 28-year sentence on trumped-up attempted murder and other charges.

Harris' cousin, Aisha Hampton, and his mother, Rachel Hampton, are calling on California Gov. Gavin Newsom to pardon or exonerate Harris and release him from the Sierra Conservation Center state prison in Jamestown, 120 miles east of here.

Family members spoke of the many injustices Harris suffered as he was railroaded to prison. He didn't fit the description of the victim's attacker, nor was he picked out in a police lineup. Prosecutors pressed his co-defendants to give perjured testimony to help frame him, offering deals to receive light sentences. Harris refused a plea deal, insisting he wasn't guilty.

He was denied the lawyer of his choice and his court-appointed attorney "withheld evidence that would have proved Carlos' innocence and kept several witnesses from testifying on Carlos' behalf," Aisha Hampton said.

His 14-year sentence was doubled by the judge under the notorious "three strikes" law. So his family points out he's already served more time than the original sentence.

"As we honor Martin Luther King, we want our loved ones to be able to live the dream," said Hampton. She showed a letter that Harris had recently sent her highlighting that 500 of his over 4,000 fellow prisoners have tested positive for COVID-19. He wrote that prisoners who have tested positive are mixed in with the rest of the population and that the virus is spreading. No masks are provided and there is no social distancing.

"Carlos like many, many other people who are incarcerated in this country are incarcerated unfairly in a system that has not brought justice for working people. Never has, never will," Socialist Workers Party member Carole Lesnick said in an interview at the protest broadcast by KRON4-TV.

Readers can learn more and join the effort to win freedom for Harris at [FreeCarlosHarris.Wixsite.com/2020](http://FreeCarlosHarris.Wixsite.com/2020).

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