

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

GameStop, stock market frenzy  
shows crisis of capitalism

— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 85/NO. 7 FEBRUARY 22, 2021

## SWP files for Dallas ballot, looks to file in Nebraska

BY JOHN HAWKINS

LINCOLN, Neb. — Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party campaign launched a drive to get Joe Swanson, the party's candidate for City Council At-Large, on the ballot over the Feb. 6-7 weekend.

Amid snow and an arctic blast, campaigners talked to working people at their apartment doors about the party's program and activity. City officials informed Swanson Feb. 9 that 126 of the signatures the campaign turned in after the weekend out of the requirement of 150 are good. That means 24 to go!

Meanwhile, Gerardo Sánchez, SWP candidate for Dallas City Council filed to be on the ballot Feb. 10. (See page 3.)

Swanson "is a longtime fighter for the unions and a retired rail worker," Ilona Gersh told university student Tiffany Hall Feb. 7. "I'm from a union family," said Hall. "My father is a retired locomotive engineer. We hate the way the railroad treats its employees."

Continued on page 3

## As bosses go after workers, gov't attacks political rights

BY TERRY EVANS

The key political question in the U.S. today is the ongoing social and economic crisis facing working people, as bosses and their government shore up their profits by attacking workers' jobs, wages, working conditions and political rights.

At the same time, the Democrats, liberal media outlets and middle-class radicals are driving a show-trial impeachment effort for partisan political gain. They're not out to convict Donald Trump, which appears virtually impossible, but to crush him, his family and his allies. Most importantly, they want to restrict the ability of working people who they consider "deplorable" to ever affect politics again.

This is part and parcel of their efforts to reinvigorate the FBI — the capitalist rulers' political police — and attack rights workers sorely need to defend themselves.

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## Workers need to organize to defend wages, conditions



The Morning Call/April Gamiz

Thirty-five Teamster members went on strike Feb. 5 in South Whitehall Township, Pennsylvania, demanding bosses back off raise in their health insurance costs that would cut their wages.

### Workers must build our own party, a labor party

Statement by Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City mayor, Feb. 10.

### SWP STATEMENT

In the face of deepening boss attacks, government coronavirus lockdowns and with millions of us unemployed, workers are finding ways to stand up and fight back. These include the weeklong strike that won higher wages for produce workers at the Hunts Point market in the Bronx, to the strike for safer conditions by refinery workers in St. Paul Park, Minnesota, and the unionization

Continued on page 9

## Montreal meeting celebrates 62nd anniversary of the Cuban Revolution

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

MONTREAL — "Solidarity with Cuba is more necessary than ever," Mara Bilbao, Cuban consul general in Montreal, told two dozen participants in a celebration of the 62nd anniversary of the Cuban Revolution here Jan. 30, organized by the Communist League.

"Under the Trump administration, there has been a significant strengthening of the blockade against Cuba," Bilbao said. "Washington is trying to increase discontent and create an internal opposition in Cuba. But the opposition they create never wins support among the people."

"They do create serious damage to

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### Amazon workers start union recognition vote in Alabama

BY SUSAN LAMONT

BESSEMER, Ala. — Despite a cold, steady rain, more than 100 unionists and community supporters held a spirited solidarity rally here Feb. 6 not far from the huge Amazon fulfillment center where workers are fighting to win union recognition. The rally was very visible, in a muddy field next to the restaurants, hotels

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## Support fight to overturn prison ban on 'Militant' in Pennsylvania!

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

It has been over a week since David Goldstein, the lawyer for the *Militant*, emailed Pennsylvania state officials asking them to overturn the impoundment of the paper from an inmate-subscriber at the Camp Hill State Correctional Institution. So far there's been no response.

Prison authorities there banned the

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## Tens of thousands defy military, protest against coup in Myanmar



Federation of General Workers Myanmar

Garment workers inside factory in Myanmar raise three finger salute, a symbol of defiance against military coup, Feb. 5. Mass protests and strikes exploded in face of military crackdown.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets in protest across Myanmar since the Feb. 1 coup led by Gen. Min Aung Hlaing. The generals reimposed naked military rule, claiming the National League for Democracy landslide victory in the November 2020 elections was the result of fraud.

On the heels of the coup, the first actions were cautious. Nightly pot-banging protests got more boisterous as thousands gathered on their balconies,

in front of small shops, and in the streets. They bang on anything they can get their hands on, from pots and pans to plastic drums, garbage-can lids and railings, while drivers sound their car horns.

To show their opposition, health care workers, teachers and government employees are wearing red ribbons to work — red is the color of the National League for Democracy, which won more than 80% of the vote

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### Inside

India farmers broaden fight against Modi gov't attacks 2

'Stimulus' fund for 'Militant' goes over \$71,000! 2

Ohio cop charged with murder in killing of Andre Hill 9

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Minnesota Marathon oil workers fight for safety, no subcontracting



# India farmers broaden fight against Modi gov’t attacks

BY ROY LANDERSEN

“There were farmers from different communities — Haryanis, Punjabis, other states,” Jagtar Singh, a working farmer from Mandiani, a village of 2,000 in Punjab, India, told the *Militant* by phone Feb. 6. He was describing the encampments set up by tens of thousands of Indian farmers on the outskirts of New Delhi to protest Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s laws that threaten their livelihoods.

“I liked the whole atmosphere of how we were united,” he said. Singh, who grows wheat and rice on his 12 acres of land, has joined the Singhu protest camp on three occasions.

Farmers and their supporters are demanding the government rescind laws that would end state-backed minimum prices farmers receive for their produce.

The laws are a profit bonanza for big capitalist traders, allowing them to push down crop prices, driving thousands of farmers into greater indebtedness or off the land altogether. “They want the big companies to farm and let poor farmers work there on wages,” Singh’s son, Gursimran, told the *Militant* in the same interview.

“I am planning to go to the camps in a few days,” he said. “There are also lots of protests locally.” Over 10,000 roadblocks were put up by farmers for several hours across highways around the country Feb. 6. They used trucks, tractors and boulders to create barriers.

“Almost 40 people from our village went to the protest on Jan. 26,” in New Delhi on India’s Republic Day, Gursimran Singh said proudly. They joined over 200,000 farmers with 35,000 trac-

tors — driving and marching into the capital despite police attempts to restrict their movements. Cops used tear gas, water cannons and baton charges.

In the following days the government deployed thousands of security forces to construct barricades, trying to hem in the farmers’ three main protest camps.

“Police pushed long spikes into the roads,” Gursimran Singh said, “but the rods were pulled up by farmers.” The attempt “to scare farmers failed.”

“The government is blocking the internet for the protest camps,” he pointed out, because they don’t want farmers to communicate or hear about the support their actions are getting from other working people, in India and elsewhere.

The government and much of the media “claim the farmers’ movement is a separatist or religious movement,” and “not for the rights of people,” said Gursimran Singh. But the fact is “most of the protesting farmers are Sikh because they are the ones being targeted today.”

State-backed minimum support prices are most extensively used in Sikh-majority Punjab and neighboring Haryana. But Modi’s laws “will harm Hindus and other farmers as well,” he pointed out.

In the state of Bihar, where price supports were ended 15 years ago, many farmers have lost their land. Laborers working in Punjab today often come from Bihar, he said.

Some Sikh separatists did take part in the farmers’ Jan. 26 New Delhi protests.

“In 1984, a separatist Khalistan movement erupted over severe discrimination” faced by Sikhs, Gursimran Singh explained. Prime Minis-



Press Trust of India

Farmers block Jalandhar-New Delhi National Highway during “chakka jam” protest Feb. 6 against new government laws ending state-backed minimum prices guaranteed to farmers.

ter Indira Gandhi ordered a military operation, massacring thousands of Sikhs at the Golden Temple and other temples in Punjab. Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards, triggering a further wave of anti-Sikh pogroms by Hindu chauvinist gangs.

The provocative pro-separatists who used the New Delhi action to push their agenda weaken the farmers’ movement. Today’s protests “are not related to religion,” Gursimran Singh said, but are “for the whole country.”

India is home to people from many

nationalities and religions. Half the country’s 1.3 billion people live in the countryside as farmers or landless laborers. Its ruling capitalist families foster divisions, like the British colonial rulers did before them, to prop up their domination. The farm movement begins to cut across these rifts, Gursimran Singh said. “Farmers are more united,” because of the action they’ve taken.

Katy LeRougetel in Montreal contributed to this article.

## ‘Stimulus’ fund for ‘Militant’ goes over \$71,000!

The *Militant’s* special “stimulus” appeal has brought in \$71,742 in contributions from 155 readers!

There is nothing else like the *Militant* today. No other paper presents and explains the class truth about politics — the interests of the tens of millions of workers, farmers and others oppressed, against exploitation by the capitalist class. That’s why the efforts of workers to join together to defend ourselves against the bosses’ attacks on our jobs, wages, working conditions and safety, and health are decisive.

The *Militant* speaks in the interests of the working class worldwide. It explains what is behind the heroic battles being waged by working people in Myanmar against the military coup there, by farmers protesting the Indian government’s assault on their livelihoods, by Amazon workers in Alabama fighting to win a union.

Its coverage of the Socialist Workers Party 2021 campaigns and fighting action program, and in-depth features on the history and hard-earned lessons of earlier class-struggle battles, is crucial today. The paper presents and promotes a course for workers to defend themselves and a road toward workers taking political power.

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

— JOHN STUDER

# THE MILITANT

## Defend a woman’s right to choose abortion

Across Poland tens of thousands of supporters of women’s rights protested a government ban on abortion. In Argentina, sustained mobilizations won right to choose for women. ‘Militant’ champions women’s rights as key part of uniting working class along road to political power.



Reuters/Aleksandra Szmigiel  
Tens of thousands protested across Poland Jan. 29 against government ban on abortion.

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



# SWP campaigns in Nebraska

Continued from front page

“The bosses want to produce more with less people,” Gersh said. “At the same time, there are millions of unemployed workers. The Socialist Workers Party calls for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, to spread the work around.

“I work one full- and two part-time jobs just to pay my tuition and living expenses,” Hall said. “College students who are listed as dependents don’t even qualify for the stimulus checks.”

“The stimulus checks come and go,” Gersh said. “But they don’t change our fundamental living conditions.

“The working class and our unions need to fight for a massive, federally funded public works program to put millions to work at union-scale pay, to produce what the working class needs,” Gersh added. The only way to get these things is for working people to stand up and defend each other from the bosses’ attacks.

Hall signed to put Swanson on the ballot.

### Workers control of production

“Working people are growing more aware of the dead end of capitalist politics, the to-and-fro between the bosses’ two parties, the Democrats and Republicans,” Swanson said at the campaign’s first public meeting Feb. 6. “They are more open to hearing about the road forward that our action program presents.

“It begins with the understanding that the need to strengthen our unity and solidarity on the job, with organizing the union of the workers.

“And we need to fight for workers to take control of production,” Swanson said.

“I got my first taste of what workers control can mean when I hired in on the railroad,” he said. “The yardmaster tried to assign me — with three days on the job — and two guys who had just hired in that day to work a train by ourselves.

“A veteran worker stepped in to tell the boss that if he wanted to get anything done that day he had best assign the actual work to experienced crews and let the new guys practice somewhere safe. The boss backed down. That made a big impression on me.”

Swanson added, “A good example of why we have to fight for workers control of production is the fight to stop the AltEn plant in nearby Mead from polluting the land and water in surrounding communities.”

AltEn converts pesticide-contaminated corn seed into ethanol. It has discharged thousands of pounds of toxic waste into overfilled lagoons, and distributed some as a “soil conditioner,” posing a threat to people in the town of 500 and to nearby wildlife. After an outcry from Mead residents, the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy ordered the plant closed Feb. 4.

Among the speakers at the meeting was Lance Anton, a freight conductor and member of the SMART-TD union.

Anton described the conditions bosses on the railroads impose on workers. “They run two-and-a-half-mile-long trains that can block vital roadways for 45 minutes or more, placing entire communities in danger,” he said. He described his experiences on the job standing up to the bosses’ attempts to press new hires to work in unsafe conditions.

“That’s why I go to bat for Joe. We need more like him.” Over the previous week, Anton collected 39 signa-

tures from co-workers and others to help put Swanson on the ballot.

### An alliance of workers and farmers

“Increasing numbers of working farmers are losing their land under crushing debts,” Swanson noted, “while Microsoft founder Bill Gates has become the largest owner of farmland in the country, including 20,000 acres in Nebraska.”

“We need a fighting alliance of workers and farmers and ultimately the formation of a workers and farmers government to take political power out of the hands of the ruling capitalist families,” Swanson said. It would “nationalize the land, guaranteeing its use by those who live on and till it, not ‘repo’ foreclosures by absentee bankers, landowners, or capitalist farmers.”

This is an international fight, Swanson said, pointing to the monthslong protests by farmers in India to defend their livelihoods, that deserves solidarity from working people around the world.

Swanson described the example set by working people in Cuba who made a socialist revolution in 1959. Since then “the revolutionary leadership in Cuba has relied on the mobilization of workers and farmers to meet every social and economic challenge they have confronted,” Swanson said, “and they’re doing the same in face of the pandemic today.”

Nick Neeser, a campaign supporter from Minneapolis, described discussions with workers about the party program at their doorsteps, building sup-

## Socialist Workers Party files for ballot in Dallas



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

DALLAS — Gerardo Sánchez, left, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council here, submits petitions signed by 222 people — seven times more than the 30 signatures required — to city election manager Parris Long Feb. 10 to be on the ballot for the May 1 election.

“This is important to ensure that working people have a voice in the election,” Sánchez said. “The SWP campaign backs workers’ struggles and calls for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to spread around the available work to overcome the divisions between workers with jobs and those without.

“Workers are capable of changing our conditions and fighting for a society that represents the interests of working people, not the tiny minority of the capitalist rulers. We will be taking our working-class program far and wide throughout Dallas and the southwest region. Join us!”

— ALYSON KENNEDY

port for striking Marathon Petroleum refinery workers in St. Paul Park, Minnesota, and joining protests against the death penalty in Terre Haute, Indiana.

A second weekend of campaigning

to go well over the top and win support for the SWP campaign will take place Feb. 20-21. To help, contact the Socialist Workers Party in Chicago, Lincoln or Twin Cities, listed on page 8.

## ‘The ‘Militant’ lets me know what workers are doing’

BY MAGGIE TROWE

CINCINNATI — “I want to keep getting the *Militant*. I generally don’t read newspapers, but the *Militant* is different — the articles let me know what workers are doing all over,” Rubeisha Gaines, a nursing student, told this worker-correspondent as she renewed her subscription Feb. 6.

I had stopped by her home along with Dave Perry, a supporter of the *Militant* and unionist here, when we were campaigning in the Bond Hill neighborhood. Perry, a member of Teamsters Local 100, is a production worker at a factory run by the Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. He is blind and listens to the audio files of the *Militant* every week.

Perry and campaigner Ned Measel met a worker in the same neighborhood who said she doesn’t think workers are able to do anything to change the conditions we face. After Perry told her about the struggle

against layoffs and for safer working conditions he’s been part of where he works, she subscribed to the *Militant*.

“I hate working from home. It’s work, sleep, work, sleep. I’d much rather be with co-workers,” Patricia Rivera, a customer service worker, told me at her doorstep. Rivera has worked from home since COVID hit.

“Workers need to be working together, so we can talk to each other and act together for better conditions and higher wages,” I said. I described fights by Walmart workers against speedup and unsafe conditions and said we need to win higher pay. She subscribed to the *Militant*.

A dozen Socialist Workers Party candidates in this year’s elections and campaign supporters are continuing to introduce the *Militant* and books by revolutionary leaders to working people in small towns and big cities on their doorsteps, at plant gates and picket lines. We discuss with them the way forward to

defend our interests in the midst of the capitalist economic and social crisis.

Party members are also getting back in touch with those who subscribed to the *Militant* over the last year, to exchange views, win them to renew their subscriptions and find those who want to join together to build the workers’ movement.

Bernie Senter, SWP candidate for California State Senate in District 30 in Los Angeles, campaigned outside a busy Food 4 Less grocery store in that city Feb. 8.

In nearby Long Beach, the United Food and Commercial Workers union has protested the announcement by Kroger, the stores’ parent company, that it was closing a Food 4 Less and a Ralphs grocery store. Kroger’s proposal to cut some 200 jobs came in response to a Long Beach city government mandate that grocery store workers receive a \$4 an hour pandemic “hazard” pay hike for at least the next four months.

The company blames the City Council for the job cuts. The city exempted Target and Walmart from the pay increase.

“Employers fight pay increases because they can cut into their profits,” Senter told Eric Alberto Martinez, who was shopping at the store. “Wages have been stagnant for decades but prices continue to rise,” Senter said.

“I’m with you guys,” Martinez told Senter. “We need unity. Alone we can’t do anything.”

To join a campaigning team, meet the candidates or make a donation, contact a party branch near you. See the directory on page 8.

Norton Sandler and Deborah Liatos in Los Angeles contributed to this article.

### 2021 Socialist Workers Party candidates Fight in the interests of the working class Workers need our own party, a labor party

#### Atlanta

Rachele Fruit, mayor

#### Dallas

Gerardo Sánchez, City Council Dist. 1

#### Los Angeles

Bernie Senter, California State Senate Dist. 30

#### Lincoln, Nebraska

Joe Swanson, City Council At-Large

#### Miami

Anthony Dutrow, mayor

#### New Jersey

Joanne Kuniandy, governor  
Candace Wagner, lieutenant governor

#### New York

Róger Calero, mayor  
Willie Cotton, public advocate

#### Philadelphia

Osborne Hart, district attorney

#### Seattle

Henry Dennison, mayor  
Rebecca Williamson, City Council

See directory on page 8 to contact party campaign office nearest you.



# Celebrate Cuban Revolution

Continued from front page

the Cuban economy,” she said. “But we continue mobilizing to increase production under these difficult conditions.

“Meanwhile, we are planning to produce 100 million anti-COVID-19 vaccines this year, a lot more than what we need in Cuba,” Bilbao said, pointing out they intended not only to organize to vaccinate everyone on the island, but also to make it available to people around the world. “This is part of confronting the imperialists, who make access to the vaccines more difficult for oppressed countries.

“I want to thank you for organizing this celebration, and for organizing the ‘physical’ picket in front of the U.S. Consulate two weeks ago,” she said.

Monthly pickets are being organized on the 17th of each month here and elsewhere in North America by opponents of the U.S. government’s economic war against the Cuban people and their revolution. The actions demand an end to Washington’s embargo, and its new sanctions and provocations, and for the return of Guantánamo to Cuba.

Yvan Abossolego, a Walmart worker and student originally from Cameroon, was the second speaker. “It was only here in Canada, working part time at Walmart, that I met people who introduced me to the Cuban Revolution,” he said. “For me, this is a magnificent revolution, marked by human solidarity, the fight against social inequality, and internationalism. It gives me confidence.

“It shows that we need to continue fighting against social injustice everywhere,” he said.

## Washington fears Cuba’s revolution

Michel Prairie, a leader of the Communist League, opened his talk quoting from The Second Declaration of Havana, which Fidel Castro presented in front of 1 million Cuban workers and farmers in 1962. “What is it that is hidden behind the Yankees’ hatred of the Cuban Revolution?” Castro asked. “What explains it is fear. Not fear of

the Cuban Revolution, but fear of the Latin American revolution.”

“Today, 59 years later, we would add, fear of the world revolution,” Prairie said.

“Today capitalism is sinking ever more deeply into a social and economic crisis,” he said. “They fear the example Cuba sets for the oppressed and exploited all around the world. Cuba proves that a revolution is not just possible, but can be made, and in doing so working people can transform ourselves. That’s why the Communist League gives so much weight to explaining and defending the Cuban Revolution. We think that workers and farmers here can and will follow the example of our brothers and sisters in Cuba.

“This will be a big part of our election campaign this year,” Prairie said. The Communist League is running Beverly Bernardo for mayor of Montreal and Philippe Tessier for mayor of Ville Saint-Laurent. “Join us in this campaign — talking to people door to door in working-class neighborhoods,



Militant/Philippe Tessier

“Solidarity with Cuba is more necessary than ever,” Mara Bilbao, Cuban consul general in Montreal, at mic, told Jan. 30 celebration of 62nd anniversary of Cuban Revolution organized by Communist League. From left, Michel Prairie, CL, and Yvan Abossolego, Walmart worker.

on picket lines, at actions in the interests of working people.

“And join us in front of the U.S. Consulate on Feb. 17 and every month afterward to defend the Cuban people

and their revolution,” Prairie said.

Participants stayed around long after the short program was concluded, talking and discussing how to build the Feb. 17 picket.

## Fight against ban on ‘Militant’ in Pennsylvania prison

Continued from front page

Jan. 4 issue of the paper. The *Militant* only found out about this when the inmate sent the editor a letter with a copy of the denial form. He said he planned to file an appeal of the ban and asked the paper to challenge it as well. The *Militant* did so.

“I understand that you will notify me if the Denial is reversed,” Goldstein wrote Diana Woodside, director of the Department of Corrections’ office of Policy, Grants and Legislative Affairs, Feb. 1, “or if your office requires a substantive appeal.”

The denial form claims an article on page 2 could “create a danger within the context of the correctional facility.” The only article on that page is “Workers in Scotland Speak Out Against Economic, Health Crisis.”

Then, in a “Brief Description” of the problem with the issue, the form

says, “Socialist Workers Party Action, speaks on social unrest and standing against law enforcement.” Prison authorities are most likely referring to the “Socialist Workers Party Action Program” that appears on page 3, the election campaign platform of the SWP that the paper has run dozens of times over the past year for its candidates in both 2020 and 2021.

“We urge supporters of prisoners’ rights to join in urging the Department of Corrections to overturn this impoundment of the *Militant*,” said John Studer, the paper’s editor. “At issue are the rights of freedom of speech and of the press and the right of subscribers behind bars to have access to news and opinions that allow them to form and advocate political opinions.”

Some *Militant* readers and supporters of political rights have already written to Woodside. A letter from a prisoner-subscriber from Illinois said he had read the SWP Action Program in the paper and saw no problems with how it “spoke out against police brutality and social unrest within the country.”

“It would seem to me that your penal system would encourage your prisoners to engage in intellectual discourse relative to the proper function of government,” he wrote. “It should be the goal of every person — incarcerated or free — to see that the police are not killing unarmed citizens, and when they do, they should be held responsible for their crimes.”

The debate on these questions has been an important part of politics and

media coverage across the country over the last year.

“More letters are needed,” said Studer. “Wherever the *Militant* has been banned by prison officials, the paper and supporters of political rights have fought back,” he said. “We’ve been successful in forcing the authorities to back off in most cases.”

Among those who have spoken out against previous efforts by prison authorities to bar the *Militant* are Amnesty International USA, National Lawyers Guild, PEN America, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, Florida Press Association, American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, union officials and many others.

Letters urging the ban be reversed can be sent to Diana Woodside, 1920 Technology Parkway, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050. Email: dwoodside@pa.gov. Please send copies to the *Militant*.

## For further reading

**The Cuban Five talk about their lives within the US working class**  
**“It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System.”**

by Mary-Alice Waters, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, René González, Fernando González

## Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

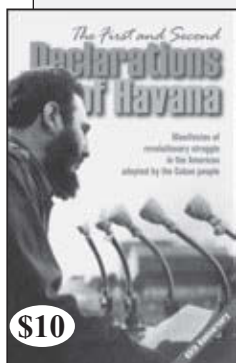
by Jack Barnes

This is a book about the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary — it can be made. It’s about the class struggle in the U.S., where the capacities of workers and farmers are today as utterly discounted by the ruling powers as were those of the Cuban toilers. And just as wrongly.

**The First and Second Declarations of Havana**  
**Manifestos of revolutionary struggle in the Americas adopted by the Cuban people**

See distributors on page 8 or visit:

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## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CANADA

#### Montreal

**Workers Need Our Own Party, a Labor Party, to Defend Ourselves in Face of the Crisis.** Speakers: Beverly Bernardo, Communist League candidate for mayor of Montreal; Philippe Tessier, CL candidate for mayor of Ville Saint-Laurent. Sun., Feb. 21, 3 p.m. 7107 Rue St-Denis, Suite 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

### GEORGIA

#### Atlanta

**As Arab Governments Recognize Israel, Space Opens for Workers: Will Biden Unravel Openings for Toilers in Mideast?** Speaker: John Benson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**Join the 2021 Socialist Workers Campaign! Fight in the Interests of the Working Class!** Speaker: Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for New Jersey governor. Fri., Feb. 19. Reception, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: \$10. 7603 Georgia Ave, Suite 300. Tel.: (202) 536-5080.



# Amazon workers union vote

**Continued from front page**  
and gas stations that are clustered by the Interstate 20 exit to Bessemer.  
“We can make a difference, a change in the conditions at Amazon, if we get organized into a union,” Darryl Richardson, a picker at the Amazon fulfillment center, told the crowd. Voting by the over 5,000 workers at the warehouse on union recognition, conducted by mail, began Feb. 8. Efforts by Amazon bosses to have the election put off had been rejected by the National Labor Relations Board three days earlier.

**‘Workers need to organize’**  
“Before I started at Amazon 10 months ago,” Richardson told the *Militant*, “I worked for nine years at a plant that made parts for the Mercedes-Benz assembly plant near Tuscaloosa, where I live. We were in the United Auto Workers and it made a difference in how we were treated. That plant closed in 2018, so when Amazon opened last March, I came here.”

Richardson said he could see right away that workers at Amazon needed to organize. “My family has been union going way back.”

Fellow Amazon worker Jennifer Bates joined Richardson to speak at the rally, along with labor officials and others. Workers at the fulfillment center are trying to win union recognition for the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

Many of the workers who originally signed union cards at Amazon are relatives of union members, Joshua Brewer, an organizing director for the RWDSU, said at the rally. “This is a union town. It’s long been a union town, and it’s going to continue to be a union town.”

The union organized the rally, with support from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Teamsters and Communications Workers of America. Officials from the United Steelworkers, United Mine Workers, UAW and several other unions in Alabama were also on hand, along with representatives of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists from Atlanta.

“It’s our time, not just here in Alabama, in the city of Bessemer, but in all of the United States,” Bates told the

rally. “It’s time for us to take a stand and it’s time for us to speak out against unfair wages and for our dignity.”  
Randy Hadley, president of the RWD-SU Mid-South Council, told the rally that the union vote, which runs through March 29, is important because it can set a precedent for organizing other Amazon facilities and at other large tech companies. “Let’s make a difference in our future,” he said.  
Other speakers included Bren Riley, president of the Alabama AFL-CIO, and Eric Richardson from the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

John Anari and Julian Howay, originally from West Papua, came to the rally from Atlanta with members of the Socialist Workers Party who work at Walmart. Anari and Howay, both warehouse workers, talked with rally participants about West Papua’s struggle for independence from Indonesia.

“This was a great experience,” said Anari, “to be part of a labor demon-



Militant/Samir Hazboun  
**Over 100 Amazon workers, unionists and supporters rallied Feb. 6 to back their fight for a union at the company’s huge fulfillment center in Bessemer, Alabama. “It’s our time” for a union, Amazon worker Jennifer Bates told crowd, “not just here, but in all the United States.”**

stration and to bring solidarity to the Amazon workers.”

Some SWP members from Louisville, Kentucky, drove down to take part. One of them — Samir Hazboun

— brought a solidarity video he got from Todd Dunn, president of UAW Local 862. The local organizes workers at the two Ford plants in Louisville.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

### Minn. Marathon oil workers fight for safety, no subcontracting

ST. PAUL PARK, Minn.— Over 200 workers and supporters attended a rally Feb. 4 in solidarity with members of Teamsters Local 120 on strike at the Marathon refinery here. They are fighting for safe working conditions and an end to subcontracting.

The workers walked out on strike Jan. 21. After they offered to return to work the next day while negotiations continued, Marathon locked them out. Marathon owns 16 refineries in the U.S.

“Both Amazon and Marathon find ways to cut corners in a way that jeopardizes our safety for their bottom line,” Amazon worker Tyler Hamilton told the crowd.

“I believe in what our union is fighting for. It’s safety. It’s safety for our children. Safety for our community. It’s safety for each other,” said Rhiannon Sklavenitis, whose husband was seriously burned while working at the refinery.

Workers say that Marathon is risking their lives on the job and in the surrounding community by keeping it run-

ning during the lockout. The plant utilizes anhydrous hydrofluoric acid — a dangerous chemical if not handled properly — to refine higher octane gasoline.

Several speakers pointed to a 2018 explosion with the same chemical at the Husky Energy oil refinery in Superior, Wisconsin, that injured three dozen workers and forced evacuations in the city. Other speakers included Kera Peterson from the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation, strikers, and Minnesota Gov. Tim Waltz.

According to Local 120 Business Manager Scott Kroona, drivers at unionized carriers Barton Oil and Praxair have refused to cross the picket lines.

Teamsters Local 120 has set up food distribution for strikers at the local American Legion and received new financial pledges of \$10,000 from the Minnesota Nurses Union, \$5,000 from Laborers Union Local 563 and \$5,000 from SEIU Healthcare Minnesota as well as firewood to keep the pickets warm.

Send messages of support and contributions to the strike fund to Team-

sters Local 120, 9422 Ulysses St. NE Blaine, MN 55434.

— Nick Neeser

### Ohio auto-parts workers fight for union, against bosses’ disdain

NORWALK, Ohio — Auto-parts workers at the Borgers plant here carried out a 10-day strike beginning Jan. 21, part of a fight to win a union and improve wages and conditions. The strike was a response to the bosses’ refusal to recognize their union, the Chicago and Regional Midwest Joint Board of Workers United. Some 170 workers have signed union cards.

When this *Militant* worker-correspondent showed up on the picket line Jan. 30, I was greeted with smiles, handshakes and a tour of the strikers’ picket tent. “This fight is about more than the poverty wages we face,” 27-year-old forklift operator Jacob Gonzales told me. “It is also about the discrimination, sexism, unsafe working conditions and favoritism we face in the plant.”

Gonzales described the disdain workers get from management. When one of his co-workers had the tip of his finger cut off in the plant, he said, “The bosses stood there cracking jokes while we waited for the ambulance. They said things like ‘he’ll never pick his nose with that finger again.’” Gonzales said bosses told him and his fiancé they were going to be fired for striking.

Strikers said they got widespread community support with a constant stream of donations of water, food and wood to keep the burn barrels going. Support came from United Auto Workers members, Cement Masons, and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, they said. Norwalk Mayor David Light and other area politicians also visited them. Borgers makes parts for General Motors.

The workers ended their strike and took their fight back into the plant Feb. 1. They intend to file with the National Labor Relations Board to order a union-authorization election.

“We all became true brothers and sisters out on that picket line in the January cold,” striker Larry Peeples said in a statement issued by the union.

— Malcolm Jarrett

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



**February 26, 1996**  
LOS ANGELES — José Luis Ponce, one of Cuba’s principal diplomatic spokespeople in the United States, conducted a speaking tour of southern California in early February.

Ponce sketched the social gains of the Cuban revolution — in education, health care, the fight to eradicate racism and women’s oppression, and the internationalism of the workers and farmers in Cuba. It took a revolution to achieve these gains, he explained, because of the legacy of unemployment, absence of health care for millions especially in the countryside, illiteracy, racism and the superexploitation of women.

Ponce described the difficulties since the collapse of the former Soviet Union. We’re simply trying to regroup our forces so after a while we can continue our socialist development,” Ponce said.



**February 26, 1971**  
In separate court battles this month, three GIs victimized by the brass for their antiwar activity — Howard Petrick, Sp/4 David Cortright and Seaman Roger Priest — won legal victories.

These are due to the direct support the cases received from the antiwar movement. Today there is a widespread awareness among GIs of the rights they have. This has contributed to the growth of a real antiwar movement within the military forces of U.S. imperialism.

The GI antiwar movement, a key factor limiting [President] Nixon’s ability to expand U.S. aggression in Southeast Asia, shows no signs of abating.

The battle to defend and extend GI rights will continue. Getting the word out on them can help assure that GI participation in the April 24 mass actions will be the biggest ever.



**February 23, 1946**  
Wave after wave of mass protests has swept India since last November. The cause of the demonstrations lies in the unbearable conditions of poverty, disease and near starvation. Each new outburst against British rule has exhibited the mounting fury of the Indian masses.

The oppressed masses are strengthening their unity in the anti-British demonstrations. On February 13, the Associated Press reported that Hindus and Moslems were jointly protesting a seven-year sentence imposed on an Indian National Army officer by the British.

The immediate cause of the demonstrations was the imprisonment and court-martial of soldiers of the Indian National Army. The INA was uncompromisingly anti-British. The Indians regard its soldiers and officers as heroes in their struggle for independence.



# Protests in Myanmar hit coup

**Continued from front page**  
in November. Red balloons decorate stalls at public markets. Raising a three-finger salute, a gesture inspired by “The Hunger Games” movies that became a symbol of defiance during protests in neighboring Thailand, is widespread.

The military responded by shutting down the internet and cellphone service. But the protest actions keep growing.

Gaining confidence, tens of thousands of students, government employees, shop owners, garment workers and others took to the streets of Yangon, Mandalay and Naypyitaw, the capital, Feb. 6, including workers from 14 unions. Among the chants: “Let the military dictatorship fall!” “Restore democracy!” and “Abolish the 2008 Constitution.”

That constitution was adopted under previous military rule. It allocates 25% of the seats in parliament to appointment by the generals, gives them control over the key ministries of defense, home affairs and border control, and assures defense of their widespread business interests.

Protesters are demanding the release of all those arrested, including Aung San Suu Kyi, de facto head of the government before the coup and the central leader of the National League for Democracy.

## Miners protest coup

*Irrawaddy*, a newspaper based in Yangon, the country’s largest city, reports that 300 of the 2,000 miners at the Kyisintaung copper mines in the Sagaing Region of northern Myanmar stopped work Feb. 5 to protest the coup. The rest of the miners are wearing red ribbons. The mine is a joint venture between the military-owned Myanmar Economic Holding Public Co. and Chinese-owned Myanmar Yang Tse Copper.

The regime in Beijing is the military’s biggest business partner and international backer.

By Feb. 8 the numbers of protesters had grown to hundreds of thousands

from big cities to small towns, including the southern city of Dawei and in Myitkyina, capital of the Kachin State in northern Myanmar. Garment boss Aung Myo Hein told the *Wall Street Journal* that two-thirds of the 1,200 workers at his factory skipped work, many joining the protests.

The police used water cannons to disperse a protest in Naypyitaw, where the military headquarters is based.

## National League for Democracy

The National League for Democracy, a bourgeois party, won elections in 2015, five years after Suu Kyi was released from seven years of house arrest. While a special provision in the 2008 Constitution bars her from running for president, she has been the central government leader since.

Despite tense relations, she and her party have collaborated with the military high command. She left in place colonial-era laws used to prosecute opponents. Despite her campaign pledge to hold peace talks with some 20 armed groups of ethnic insurgents, little progress has resulted. More than 40% of the country’s population belong to ethnic minorities.

Suu Kyi not only refused to criticize the army’s attacks on the Rohingya, a Muslim minority, she has been the regime’s main spokesperson in denying the massacres, abuse and expulsions of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya that began in 2017. The government falsely claims the Rohingya are “illegal” Bangladeshi immigrants, not a minority.

“We used to pray for her success and used to treat her like our queen. But after 2017, we realized her real character,” Mohammad Yunus Arman, a coup opponent and leader of Rohingya refugees at a camp in Bangladesh, told Al Jazeera. “She didn’t even utter the word ‘Rohingya.’”

Since the National League for Democracy took power, the military’s budget has risen by \$100 million yearly and its business interests have boomed.

The attacks on minority groups

## New Zealand rally: ‘No to military takeover in Myanmar’



Militant/Felicity Coggan

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — “Military rule, down, down!” chanted 200 Burmese refugees, students and others here Feb. 5, protesting the Myanmar military’s ousting of the elected government and reimposition of direct rule four days earlier.

Many wore the red shirts of the National League for Democracy. This party, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won the election by a landslide last year, as it did in 2015 when the first elected parliament in more than 50 years was established.

“Myanmar communities in New Zealand strongly condemn the illegal actions of the army’s seizure,” Tinmama Oo, with microphone, said on behalf of the organizing groups, the Burma Campaign in New Zealand and the Anti-Myanmar Military Coup Movement.

Some 6,000 people from Myanmar live in New Zealand. “Most of the first wave of refugees were victims” of the military’s crackdown against a widespread rebellion in 1987-88, said Oo.

“We all are in this together,” said Kyaw Hla, who spoke as a representative of Rohingya, a Muslim nationality in Myanmar. A number have settled here, driven from their homes in Rakhine state by brutal military-led assaults.

Some Rohingya had hesitated to join the protest, participants told the *Militant*, because Suu Kyi and her party have refused to oppose the military offensive. Shamsul Saa Yu, secretary of the Burmese Rohingya Welfare Organisation, said the Feb. 1 coup “places Rohingya in a very vulnerable position.” Under the National League for Democracy, he said, “things were a bit more open than under the military regime.”

Speakers from Amnesty International and the Communist League were given warm receptions. Speaking for the CL, this author said working people in New Zealand and around the world should speak out against the coup: “The military acted because it fears working people, and the likelihood that they will take the elections as encouragement to push their own interests forward.”

Four days later some 100 Myanmar protesters from around the country rallied at Parliament to oppose the military takeover.

— PATRICK BROWN

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and the decades of military rule is a legacy of British colonialism and the imperialist plunder of the people of Myanmar, long known as Burma, and its resources.

## British rulers fostered divisions

In 1886, British forces completed their conquest and annexed Burma to British-ruled India. They expanded rice production, mining and logging, distorting the economy for foreign trade to enrich the British capitalist rulers at the expense of workers and peasants. The British rulers fostered ethnic and religious divisions in a nation where over 100 languages are spoken.

During World War II, the country was conquered by Tokyo and then reconquered by the British, with supporters of independence allying themselves first with the Japanese military and then switching over to the British-backed colonial army.

In the midst of the worldwide rise in anti-colonial struggles after the war, the British rulers agreed to Burmese independence. But instead of working to overcome the divisive legacy of British colonial rule, the independence leadership favored the ethnic Burman majority.

From 1962 until 2011 Myanmar was ruled by a series of military juntas. A 1988 uprising against military

rule was crushed in blood with 3,000 killed and thousands imprisoned. Protests initiated by Buddhist monks in 2007 were brutally suppressed.

Over the last decade, Myanmar became a major center for world garment production with more than 600,000 workers. The minimum wage in Myanmar is roughly half that of Cambodia and Vietnam, boosting profit margins for bosses who set up operations there. Over half of the garment shops have been owned by Chinese bosses.

Chinese firms also have stakes in at least 34 major projects from gold mines to hydropower, including joint ventures with Myanmar military-owned companies. Beijing had also courted Suu Kyi and her allies.

**New International**  
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**Intercontinental Press**  
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# As bosses go after workers, gov't attacks political rights

Continued from front page

In the U.S., as well as worldwide, millions of workers have been thrown out of work. Only 57.5% of working-age people in the U.S. have a job today. At least 7 million people aren't even counted as unemployed because the government says they've been out of work too long! They haven't looked for work over the past four weeks. Bosses at American and United Airlines just sent furlough warnings to 13,000 and 14,000 workers respectively. And Heineken announced Feb. 10 it is slashing another 8,000 jobs.

The government's response under both Trump and Joseph Biden focuses on short-term relief measures. What workers need is *jobs*, to be at work, to organize alongside fellow workers as a class to fight to defend themselves.

Biden's \$1.9 trillion package passed the Senate Feb. 5. It offers bailouts to many bosses and to indebted state and local governments, more one-time handouts to some of those thrown out of work, and measures to prevent undocumented workers from getting any "stimulus" payments.

Meanwhile, millions of workers face bosses using the jobs crisis to push wage cuts and slash hours of work, as prices for food and other necessities are rising. Housing prices rose 8% over the past year. Many new jobs bosses offered in January were temporary.

Under these conditions working families face growing debt. Some \$53 billion is now owed by tenants for rent and utility bill arrears, according to Moody's Analytics. Despite a moratorium on evictions, landlords have found ways to throw 250,000 people out of their homes.

"A road out of these conditions requires a course of working-class struggle, not government handouts," Willie Cotton, Socialist Workers Party



Members of Teamsters Local 120 locked out by Marathon oil refinery bosses in St. Paul Park, Minnesota, since Jan. 22, are fighting for safe working conditions and an end to subcontracting. Local members, above, provide food donations Jan. 30-31 in solidarity with area families.

ty candidate for New York City public advocate, told the *Militant*.

## Class struggle, not handouts

"Workers and our unions need to fight for a big federally funded public works program to put millions back to work at union-scale pay to build hospitals, houses, schools and other things we need," he said.

When former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers warned that Biden's "stimulus" package can eat away the funds needed for substantial government infrastructure spending to create jobs, other Democrats turned on him. People who listen to Summers are "nuts," Hawaii Sen. Brian Schatz snapped.

Cotton and Socialist Workers Party candidates around the country explain workers need to rely on our own class to force changes. They point to the example set by workers engaged

in union fights like the produce workers in New York's Hunts Point market that struck and won wage gains, and Marathon refinery workers on strike in St. Paul Park, Minnesota, fighting for safer working conditions.

Any upturn in the capitalist economy — which is likely as more workers are vaccinated against COVID-19 and government lockdowns wind down — will open hiring, giving workers more confidence and willingness to fight boss attacks.

"Refusing to accept the bosses' dictates and fighting for what we need today requires workers and farmers defending our political rights to discuss, debate and organize free of interference from the government, its spy agencies and cops," Cotton said.

The capitalist rulers, Biden administration and some Never-Trump Republicans have seized upon the actions

## GameStop, stock market frenzy shows crisis of capitalism

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The rapid rise, steep fall and continuing oscillation of the stock price of GameStop, a chain of video-game stores, is motivated by the same greed-driven speculative mania that has gripped the stock market periodically over decades.

Initially some smaller-scale capitalist investors gathered on Reddit's WallStreetBets forum and bought up GameStop shares through fee-free online brokers such as Robinhood, driving up prices in a frenzied rally. Some investors claimed they were "punishing" hedge-fund bosses who specialize in short selling — betting on stock price plunges when weak companies face collapse.

The fortunes of GameStop owners have been languishing for years. After closing more than 300 of its 5,000-plus stores in 2019 bosses announced a further 300 store closures at the start of the pandemic, throwing hundreds more workers onto the streets.

The company's stock traded at around \$17 at the start of this year. Following the recent orgy of stock purchases it peaked at \$513 on Jan. 28. Those engaged in such frenzied speculation share the delusion that there will always be a greater fool willing to pay more for what they have just purchased. Over three days GameStop shares changed

hands 554 million times, more than 11 times the number of total shares.

GameStop's share prices then plunged to \$53.50 the following week.

Billionaire Tesla CEO Elon Musk lauded the price rises as well as the hedge-fund losses of those betting against GameStop, claiming that somehow what hedge-fund owners do is less moral than other capitalists.

In contrast, hedge-fund manager Michael Burry, who famously bet against the market in subprime mortgages prior to the 2008 financial crash, slammed investors for working together to drive GameStop prices up. Burry insisted federal regulators probe Reddit investors, labeling them "dangerous."

Melvin Capital hedge fund faced huge losses as a result of the trading in GameStop, with its funds dropping 53%. Chicago-based Citadel Securities, one of the largest U.S. hedge funds, and Point72 quickly came to its rescue, sending almost \$3 billion to keep the fund afloat.

These speculative market gyrations are rooted in a much deeper long-term profit crisis facing the capitalist rulers. Instead of investing in plant and equipment that would expand production and provide jobs, some investors plow funds into speculation in stocks, bonds,

derivatives and bets on other various paper securities. They seek a higher rate of return through exchanging these worthless pieces of paper.

The speculative mania is driving stock market prices way above the value of companies' actual earnings. The market is "more overvalued than at any time in recent U.S. history," reported MarketWatch Dec. 28. At some point this bubble is bound to burst, with devastating impact on working people.

## Origins of stock market

In an addendum to Karl Marx's *Capital*, Frederick Engels, a founder of the communist movement, wrote that capitalist development "tends to concentrate all production, industrial as well as agricultural, and all commerce, the means of communication as well as the functions of exchange, in the hands of stock exchange operators, so that the stock exchange becomes the most prominent representative of capitalist production itself."

It plays a crucial role providing finance for capitalist owners.

But Engels writes, "All nations characterized by the capitalist mode of production are periodically seized by fits of giddiness in which they try to accom-

Continued on page 9

of a few wannabe paramilitaries and conspiracy theorists who temporarily disrupted Congress Jan. 6 to call for repressive legislation and new leeway for the FBI and other cop agencies to go after "domestic terrorism."

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin ordered the entire U.S. military to "stand down" over a 60-day period as the military brass conducts a witch hunt to ferret out those in the ranks they judge to have "extremist" views.

## Democrats push assault on rights

The real aim of these moves is to target people for their political views. The history of the class struggle teaches that when the rulers and their political parties advance probes like this, they always turn them into attacks on the working class and its vanguard.

Justice Department officials say they're now considering filing charges against those they claim conspired to disrupt Congress under RICO racketeering laws. These laws, which carry sentences of up to 20 years imprisonment, have often been used to target the unions.

All these moves, and the new impeachment trial of Trump, even though he's out of office, are really aimed at the over 140 million working people who either voted for the former president or decided neither capitalist candidate was worth casting a ballot for.

*Washington Post* columnist Jennifer Rubin Feb. 4 called Trump's supporters "a social pathology" that infects growing parts of the country.

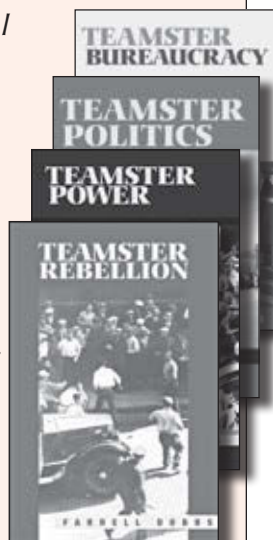
The capitalist rulers increasingly fear the working class, as they see the crisis of their system breeding new explosions of labor battles.

The Democrats' decision to push their second impeachment effort is part of their attack on the rights working people need.

They cynically pronounce plans to hold the fastest trial ever, less than a week, without any witnesses. Their goal has nothing to do with the Constitution. The whole operation is dangerous for working people.

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# Why Lenin declared war on ‘Great Russian chauvinism’

*The Spanish edition of Lenin’s Final Fight: Speeches and Writings 1922-23 is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for February. In the final months of his active life, Vladimir Lenin, the central leader of the world’s first socialist revolution, led a political battle within the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. At stake was the continuation of the internationalist proletarian course that brought the Bolshevik-led workers and peasants to power in October 1917. This was threatened by a rising bureaucracy within the state and party led by Joseph Stalin that resulted in a political counterrevolution after Lenin’s death. Part of this fight was over integration as equals into the Soviet Union of former oppressed peoples of the “prison house of nations” under the regime of the czar. The excerpts are from a letter to the party congress and an earlier memo to the political bureau. Copyright © 1995 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY V.I. LENIN

December 30, 1922

I suppose I have been very remiss with respect to the workers of Russia for not having intervened energetically and decisively enough in the notorious question of autonomization, which, it appears, is officially called the question of the union of Soviet socialist republics.



Communist Party of Great Britain Archives

V.I. Lenin, leader of 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, front left, during Second Congress of Communist International, July 19, 1920, led fight for right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination.

When this question arose last summer, I was ill; and then in the autumn I placed too much hope on my recovery ... giving me an opportunity of intervening in this question. However, I did not manage to attend the October plenary meeting (when this question came up) or the one in December, and so the question passed me by almost completely. ...

It is said that a united apparatus was needed. Where did that assurance come from? Did it not come from that same Russian apparatus which, as I pointed out in one of the preceding sections of my diary, we took over from tsarism and slightly anointed with Soviet oil?

There is no doubt that that measure should have been delayed somewhat until we could say that we vouched for our apparatus as our own. But now we must, in all conscience, admit the contrary; the apparatus we call ours is, in fact, still quite alien to us. It is a bourgeois and tsarist hodgepodge. There has been no possibility of getting rid of it in the course of the past five years, given the lack of help of other countries and given that we have been “busy” most of the time with military engagements and the fight against famine.

It is quite natural that in such circumstances the “freedom to secede from the union” by which we justify ourselves will be a mere scrap of paper, unable to defend the non-Russians from the onslaught of that really Russian man, the Great Russian chauvinist, in substance a rascal and a tyrant, such as the typical

Russian bureaucrat is. There is no doubt that the infinitesimal percentage of Soviet and sovietized workers will drown in that tide of chauvinistic Great Russian riffraff like a fly in milk.



December 31, 1922

In my writings on the national question I have already said that an abstract presentation of the question of nationalism in general is of no use at all. A distinction must necessarily be made between the nationalism of an oppressor nation and that of an oppressed nation, the nationalism of a big nation and that of a small nation.

In respect of the second kind of nationalism we, nationals of a big nation, have nearly always been guilty, in historic practice, of an infinite number of cases of violence; furthermore, we commit violence and insult an infinite number of times without noticing it. It is sufficient to recall my Volga reminiscences of how non-Russians are treated; how the Poles are not called by any other name than Polyachishka, how the Tatar is nicknamed Prince, how the Ukrainians are always Khokhols and the Georgians and other Caucasian nationals always Kapkasians. ...

That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or “great” nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as Derzhimordas!), must consist not only in the observance of the formal equal-

ity of nations but even in an inequality, through which the oppressor nation, the great nation, would compensate for the inequality which obtains in real life. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question; he is still essentially petty bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view.

What is important for the proletarian? For the proletarian it is not only important, it is absolutely essential that he should be assured that the non-Russians place the greatest possible trust in the proletarian class struggle. What is needed to ensure this? Not merely formal equality. In one way or another, by one’s attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russians for the lack of trust, for the suspicion and the insults to which the government of the “dominant” nation subjected them in the past. ...

[N]othing holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity so much as national injustice. “Offended” nationals are not sensitive to anything so much as to the feeling of equality and the violation of this equality, if only through negligence or jest to the violation of that equality by their proletarian comrades. That is why in this case it is better to overdo rather than underdo the concessions and leniency towards the national minorities. That is [in] the fundamental interest of proletarian solidarity and consequently of the proletarian class struggle.



Memo to the political bureau  
October 6, 1922

I declare war to the death on Great Russian chauvinism. I shall eat it with all my healthy teeth as soon as I get rid of this accursed bad tooth. It must be *absolutely* insisted that the union Central Executive Committee should be *presided over* in turn by a Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, etc.

*Absolutely!*  
Yours,  
Lenin

1. Derzhimorda, a policeman in the play *The Government Inspector* by Russian writer Nikolay Gogol, personified the rude, arrogant state functionary.

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# Workers need our own party, a labor party

Continued from front page

drive by workers at the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama.

These fights remain sporadic. But anywhere workers join together to struggle for jobs, wages, more control over production and union rights, they deserve solidarity from other workers and our unions. Their example wins sympathy and inspiration from others.

The employers’ drive to boost profits off our backs and the disdain their government shows to working people, who they consider to be human trash, ensures that fights for jobs, union rights and dignity will continue to take place. If hiring picks up in the months ahead more and more workers will gain confidence that we can fight for what we need and deserve.

Such struggles will be a school for rebuilding the labor movement, demonstrating the courageous, disciplined and united action workers are capable of organizing.

Out of such struggles a battle-hardened cadre and class-struggle leadership of the working class can be forged. There is no better way to learn about this than to read and study the four-volume Pathfinder series on the rise of the class-struggle Teamsters union in the Midwest in the 1930s, written by SWP leader Farrell Dobbs, starting with *Teamster Rebellion*.

To be effective in any struggle, workers and farmers need our constitutional rights to discuss, debate and organize free of harassment from the cops, FBI spies and the government. President Joseph Biden’s administration, cheered on by the liberal media, is attacking these rights. They claim Donald Trump and his supporters stirred up an uprising of “domestic terrorists” who have to be hunted down and made to pay. Their target is the working class, whose potential power they fear.

For decades the U.S. rulers have used their spies, cops and courts to go after workers and our unions, hamstringing our organizations and frame up our best fighters. In the same way they’ve gone after opponents of their imperialist wars abroad, fighters for Black rights and vanguard political groups like my party, the Socialist Workers Party.

Fearing the bigger struggles of workers and farmers to come, the capitalist rulers seek to limit our rights and sharpen their repressive weapons to use against us. Speaking out against every assault on political rights by the government and its political police is essential in preparing for the battles ahead.

Growing working-class struggles pose the need for workers to break with the twin parties of the bosses, the Democrats and Republicans, and build our own political party, a labor party. Such a party would speak and fight in the interests of all those exploited and oppressed by capital, from family farmers, small shopkeepers and the millions of workers without government-approved papers.

The only road forward today is fighting for the needs of working people against the capitalist rulers — one class, ours, against the opposing class, theirs. A labor party would strengthen this course, and advance working people’s self-confidence and class consciousness. It would draw together a movement of tens of millions to overturn capitalist rule and bring to power our own workers and farmers government. Such a government is the strongest weapon we can wield to carry through the fight against all forms of exploitation and oppression bred by the capitalist system.

The Socialist Workers Party is running a national slate of candidates to set an example of what a working-class party speaking and fighting for our class can do. Join us!

## Montreal cops brutalize Mamadi Camara

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Following a public outcry, Montreal Police Chief Sylvain Caron was forced to issue a public apology Feb. 5 to Mamadi III Fara Camara, a 31-year-old Black graduate student and Uber driver. He was brutalized in his apartment here Jan. 28 by cops and falsely accused of attacking a cop earlier in the day.

After Camara had been stopped by Constable Sanjay Vig on suspicion of using a cellphone while driving near where he lives, the cop was attacked, disarmed and shot. Camara was arrested and beaten that night, and spent six days in jail facing charges of attempting to murder a police officer.

When he was brought to court Feb. 3 the charges were suddenly dropped by the Quebec prosecutor, and he was immediately set free. Surveillance cameras, the prosecutors said, showed that a completely different person had carried out the attack.

Political reaction to the embarrassing prosecution announcement was swift. Montreal Mayor Valerie Plante said Camara was obviously innocent and called for an independent investigation into the actions of the

cops and prosecutors. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said what happened was “disturbing.”

Caron made his “apology” at a Feb. 5 press conference, saying the new evidence “allowed us to exonerate Mr. Camara.”

At the same time, a “Justice for Camara” rally of 100 was taking place close to the spot where he had been stopped. Many protesters accused the cops of racial profiling.

Beverly Bernardo, Communist League candidate for mayor of Montreal, joined the action. “We have to hold the police accountable for actions like this,” she said in an interview with CBC television. “They should be charged.”

Some participants carried signs calling for “Justice for Bony Jean-Pierre,” a young Black man who had been shot and killed by the police during a drug raid in 2016. The previous day a judge dismissed manslaughter charges against the cop who killed him.

La Ligue des Noirs Nouvelle Generation, a Black rights group, has called a second rally to protest the police victimization of Camara for Feb. 13 at Place d’Armes downtown here.

## Stock market frenzy reflects crisis of capitalism

Continued from page 7

plish the money-making without the mediation of the production process.”

That has accelerated in the decades since Engels wrote. Over the past half century especially investors of all stripes have built up huge debts, borrowing larger and larger amounts to buy and sell various forms of paper securities at a profit.

New money and the old

In response to feverish trading in GameStop’s stock, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said she would look into it. She’s had a lucrative relationship with hedge fund Citadel, which paid her some \$810,000 in speaking fees for a trio of talks over the past 14 months.

Media commentators routinely describe Robinhood and other traders who led the purchase of GameStop

shares as “the little guy.” In fact giant older financial institutions like Citadel are also putting huge amounts of funds into so-called upstart online traders like Robinhood and are making money doing so.

“Wall Street trading firms paid almost \$3 billion to retail brokers such as Robinhood to handle their trades last year,” reported the *Financial Times*. These firms buy stocks at prices slightly higher than is available on the public exchanges, betting on their continued price rise.

Not every hedge fund bet against GameStop stock prices. Senvest Management raked in \$700 million in January by buying GameStop shares as they skyrocketed.

“There are huge players playing both sides of GameStop,” Thomas Peterffy, chairman of Interactive Brokers Group Inc., told the *Wall Street Journal*.

## Ohio cop charged with murder of Andre Hill

BY JANET POST

Adam Coy, the 19-year veteran Columbus, Ohio, cop who shot and killed Andre Maurice Hill in December, was arrested and arraigned on charges of felony murder Feb. 3.

The night of the Dec. 22 killing Coy and another cop were in the area investigating an unrelated call. Hill was on the same street in the garage of the house where he was visiting. When he saw the police walking up the driveway, Hill held his brightly illuminated cellphone up in the air and started walking out of the garage. All this is clearly seen on the cop’s body camera recording. But within seconds Coy shot him, claiming later he thought the cellphone was a gun.

Several other cops arrived as Hill, a 47-year-old African American chef and construction worker, lay dying on the garage floor. But 10 minutes went by without any of them providing medical assistance. Instead, cops rolled Hill’s body over to handcuff him, hands behind his back.

“Those 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,” Karissa Hill told the media after her father’s death. “There’s 22 officers on the scene and not one of them helped my dad.”

Family presses for justice

“His family is not backing down. And we are going to make sure all four convictions happen,” Karissa Hill said the day after Coy was indicted.

In addition to murder, Coy is charged with two counts of dereliction of duty and one count of felonious assault. The four charges carry a maximum sentence of life in prison.

“We don’t want [Coy] to be charged and let go, as has been the past cases we’ve seen,” Shawna Barnett, Hill’s sister, told the press. “We want him incarcerated.”

“I am just wishing that everybody — Black and white citizens — bring this tragedy home with you,” Hill’s brother, Alvin Williams, said. “This is a people issue, and it takes all of us to actually dissect the problems. There’s always a discrepancy when it comes to Black lives.”

The cold-blooded killing has turned a public spotlight on the Columbus cops. Coy was fired six days after the shooting. It’s come to light that some 90 “citizen complaints” had been filed against him since 2001. Columbus Chief of Police Thomas Quinlan was demoted to deputy chief Jan. 28.

Coy pled not guilty to murdering Hill. He was released from detention Feb. 9 after posting bail and his bond had been lowered to \$1 million.

Joining a protest outside Coy’s arraignment alongside Hill’s family was Tamala Payne, the mother of Casey Goodson Jr. He was shot and killed in Columbus Dec. 4 by Franklin County Sheriff’s Deputy Jason Meade. Meade is under investigation, but has not been charged.

Goodson, a 23-year-old African American laid-off truck driver, was gunned down by the deputy on the steps of his family’s home and died in front of his grandmother and 5-year-old brother.

“We have suffered through the holidays with our loved ones being murdered senselessly,” Payne said. “I think each one of the cowards should sit and be haunted with the murders of Casey and Andre for the rest of their lives.”

About 150 family members, neighbors and supporters of Goodson held a rally in Goodale Park Jan. 30, on what would have been his 24th birthday.

### Correction

The article “California Protesters: ‘Free Carlos Harris!’” printed in issue no. 5, says Harris’ “14-year sentence was doubled by the judge under the notorious ‘three strikes’ law.” More accurately, the sentence was *illegally* doubled. The 1994 law provided for doubling a sentence if a defendant had been convicted of a “serious felony” earlier. It was invoked in this case because of a misdemeanor conviction in 1991, three years before that law went into effect.