

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Montgomery bus boycott anniversary marks historic Black rights battle  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 85/NO. 47 DECEMBER 20, 2021

## Join ‘Militant’ renewal drive, help get paper out to workers

BY SETH GALINSKY

Readers of the *Militant*, including members of the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues in Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand, are gearing up for an ambitious drive to win subscription renewals, which begins Jan. 1 and runs through Feb. 15.

The *Militant* is unique in looking at all political questions from the standpoint of the working class, whether it’s reporting from union picket lines, explaining what’s at stake in the fight against antisemitism, fighting to win support for a woman’s right to choose to have an abortion or in defending rights crucial to the working class, such as the presumption of innocence, no matter who is in the defendant’s chair.

The paper explains why workers need to forge our own party, a labor party — a step toward organizing in our millions to end capitalist rule. It champions Cuba’s socialist revolution, an example for workers worldwide to emulate.

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## New Zealand farmers unite, demand end to gov’t attack

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — “Without farmers you will be hungry, naked and sober,” read a placard on a tractor heading a caravan through Christchurch Nov. 21. The convoy was one of 70 across New Zealand in which tens of thousands of farmers and their supporters said, “Enough is enough!”

They were protesting an accelerating onslaught of new regulations adopted by the Labour Party government in Wellington that impose costs and mountains of paperwork on rural producers, in the name of protecting the environment.

Organized by Groundswell, which was formed by farmers in Southland last year, the action built on an earlier round of nationwide protests in July. It opposed “unworkable rules that really hold the [farming] sector back,” co-founder and beef farmer Laurie Patterson told Radio NZ the morning after the protest.

Groundswell and other farm groups

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## Kellogg strikers vote No! Say ‘End two-tier wages’

Bosses threaten to hire ‘permanent replacements’



AP Photo/Josh Funk

Picket at Omaha, Nebraska, Kellogg’s plant Dec. 2. Strikers overwhelmingly rejected new contract, continue fight for “equal pay for equal work.” Join efforts to build solidarity!

BY SUSAN LAMONT

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Kellogg’s workers on strike at the company’s four cereal plants across the country overwhelmingly rejected the bosses’ latest contract offer in a vote Dec. 5. The key issue is the company’s demand to expand the number of “transitional” workers on its divisive two-tier wage and benefits system.

“The members have spoken. The strike continues,” Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union President Anthony Shelton told the press. “Solidarity is critical to this fight.” The company responded with threats.

“The prolonged work stoppage has left us no choice but to hire permanent replacement employees in positions vacated by striking workers.”

“Since 2015 the company has been promoting divisions among the workers and union members with the two-

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## Help build working-class support in fight for woman’s right to abortion



Presbyterian Historical Society

First national abortion rights march, Washington, D.C., Nov. 20, 1971. Supreme Court 1973 decision tied legalization of abortion to “fetal viability,” not constitutional protection of equal rights under the law, cutting short debate and growing movement for woman’s right to choose.

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

On Dec. 1, the U.S. Supreme Court began hearings on a case that challenges Roe v. Wade, its own 1973 ruling that decriminalized abortion during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy. A decision by the court isn’t expected until next year.

In Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization, the court will rule on a Mississippi law that bans abortions after 15 weeks, an arbitrary figure.

The state’s attorney general, Lynn Fitch, argues that a woman’s right to choose abortion should be tossed aside, saying “sweeping policy advances” allow women to “have it all,” a career and a family. For Fitch, a divorced mother of three, her “all” includes a nanny and the support of her wealthy family.

Of course, it’s much easier for someone who has family wealth to “have it

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## Texas ExxonMobil workers rally, win solidarity against oil bosses’ lockout

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

BEAUMONT, Texas — “Exxon, Exxon you can’t hide, we can see your greedy side” and “Stand up, fight back!” chanted dozens of members of United Steelworkers Local 13-243 and their supporters protesting outside the meeting of the World Petroleum Congress in Houston Dec. 6 where ExxonMobil

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## End US sanctions on North Korea! US troops out of Korean Peninsula!

BY SETH GALINSKY

Washington is committed to “utilizing the full range of U.S. defense capabilities, including nuclear” to “deter” North Korea, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin stated after his Dec. 2 meeting in Seoul with South Korean military officials to discuss “updating” military options against North Korea.

Washington — the only government to ever use nuclear weapons — paints the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea as a threat to world peace. But the U.S. rulers themselves keep some 28,500 troops in South Korea and carry out provocative joint war games with the South Korean

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

LA County bakery workers: ‘We fight for ourselves, our children’

Clarks strike strengthens union, pushes back wage cuts



# NZ farmers fight gov't attack

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are channeling long built-up frustration among rural communities at policies imposed on farmers by the government — policies that haven't met with serious opposition from Federated Farmers or other traditional capitalist agricultural organizations. Farmers are particularly angry at being framed up as villains in the degradation of the environment.

The farmers explain that they are on the frontlines of defending the land and waters, and their livelihoods depend on it.

Farming plays a central part in the capitalist economy here. Together with forestry, agricultural products make up more than half of all exports. Protesters gathered on the outskirts of Pukekohe in South Auckland — a major agricultural area — before driving into Auckland city center. Dairy farmer Ian Chitty told the *Militant* about the impact the government regulations are having. "I'm in the final stage of putting in irrigation on our farm," he said, with all the permits approved and costly bores drilled. Then "last September new regulations came in that meant we had to spend another \$35,000 [US\$23,800] to get a consultant's report, and will have to pay more for it to be peer-reviewed."

"We spend as much time on compliance as on trying to make a living," said John Burchill, who runs a company installing tanks, as he joined a 17-horse mounted protest in Pukekohe township.

Many protesting farmers said they object to government proposals to tax the purchase of "utes," as the small diesel- and gas-driven pickup trucks they use are called, to subsidize electric car sales.

Other oppressive rules and red tape that Groundswell's leaders describe in-

clude requirements for farmers to develop extensive environmental plans for their farms; expensive and time-consuming consent requirements for farm development; and rigid templates for protecting waterways and so-called Significant Natural Areas. These are large tracts of land designated by the government that farmers must fence off and take out of production.

"There's been no 'give' to farmers that were actually looking after wetlands," Marilyn Dalzell, who with her husband runs a sheep, beef and deer farm in Canterbury's Lees Valley, told Radio NZ. "All of the cost has gone onto the landowners." And one-fifth of their land has been designated a Significant Natural Area, she said.

Groundswell also opposes a Labour government scheme to take the provision of waste water, sewage, and other water services out of the hands of elected local councils. Farmers fear this will transfer resources and control away from the country and to the city.

### 'Carbon farming'

Another central government scam is what farmers call "carbon farming," part of the international trade in so-called carbon credits that let governments and bosses continue to pollute in exchange for certain investments. Landowners are being paid to convert land to forestry, Manawatu beef farmer Russell Johnson, who took part in the Whanganui protest, told the *Militant* Nov. 26.

A carbon farmer "has no intention of harvesting the trees," he said. Instead, he sells government-issued "carbon credits." This can be four times more profitable than sheep and beef farming on the same land. That makes land unaffordable for "would-be farmers."



Militant photos by Mike Tucker

**Tractor and "ute" farm vehicles caravan into Auckland, New Zealand, Nov. 21. Thousands across country protested Labour government regulations, taxes imposed in name of defense of the environment that attack working farmers' livelihoods and their care for the land.**

Many people turned out along roads and in towns to applaud the caravans. But not everybody was cheered by the large protest. On the eve of the event, Labour government Minister Stuart Nash smeared Groundswell as reactionary, "a mixture of racism, anti-vax, etc.," a charge firmly rejected by Groundswell co-founder Bryce McKenzie.

In Wellington, supporters of "Extinction Rebellion," an anti-working-class outfit that demands working people sacrifice to prevent imminent climate change catastrophe, tried to block the protesters. The group says "diets would have to change by drastically cutting back on meat and dairy."

Rising prices worldwide are starting

to have a significant impact on farmers. Statistics New Zealand reports farm input prices have risen by 7% in the last year. "Many, especially younger dairy farmers, are deeply in debt and fear the cost of the new regulatory regime," Johnson told the *Militant*. "Every farmer I know on my road has a wife or a husband working in town."

The protest concluded with the national radio broadcast of a statement by Groundswell promising another mass mobilization in February if the government continues to brush off farmers' concerns.

*Annalucia Vermunt contributed to this article.*

## Jerry Ulman, longtime SWP supporter

BY STEVE WARSHELL

MUNCIE, Ind. — Jerry Ulman, a longtime member and supporter of the Socialist Workers Party, died here Nov. 22. Ulman was a member of the party branch in Indianapolis from 1978 to 1982. He remained a supporter of the party for almost four decades, while living in Muncie. His wife, Jean, is also a supporter of the SWP.

As a professor of special education at Ball State University here, Ulman developed the Applied Behavior Analysis program used to successfully treat people with autism. He was instrumental in establishing the Hoosier Association of Behavior Analysis.

Jerry was a staunch supporter of Cuba's socialist revolution and worked tirelessly to help distribute the writings of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and other Cuban revolutionary leaders. He traveled to Cuba three times and helped students to do so as well, overcoming travel restrictions imposed by Washington as part of its 60-year campaign of attacks on the revolution.

As a member of the American Federation of Teachers, he worked to bring union solidarity to workers fighting to defend their rights and living standards. He had unshakeable confidence in the working class and the capacities of

**Continued on page 3**

# THE MILITANT

**Support, emulate Cuba's socialist revolution!**

*Cuba's workers and farmers have withstood six decades of unrelenting efforts by the U.S. rulers to overthrow their socialist revolution. The 'Militant' says, "End Washington's economic war against Cuba!" The revolution is an example for working people everywhere.*

Caravana de la libertad  
Crowds welcome Fidel Castro in Cienfuegos Jan. 6, 1959, after revolution triumphed.

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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.



# Join ‘Militant’ renewal drive!

### Continued from front page

The goal of the renewal campaign is to get at least 20% of those who bought subscriptions during the fall propaganda and SWP fund drive to renew their subscriptions, while asking their help to reach out and win new readers for the socialist newsweekly and books by SWP and other revolutionary leaders.

Many new subscribers are workers who have been in strike battles over the last few months and appreciate that the *Militant* lets them speak in their own words about what they are fighting for, provides hard-to-get reports on other labor struggles and is a tool for organizing solidarity that is crucial to the outcome of these fights.

When Alyson Kennedy and two other SWP members from Dallas visited the picket line of locked-out oil workers at ExxonMobil in Beaumont, Texas, they spoke to Andre Frances, head trustee for United Steelworkers Local 13-243, at the union hall. Frances showed them every copy of the *Militant* the local has received that is displayed on a table in the lobby. “And these are read,” he said.

“Several workers we spoke to there knew about the recent strikes at John Deere and Nabisco and the current fight at Kellogg’s,” Kennedy reported.

Sue Little, a retired member of the local who is on the Sabine Area Central Labor Council, was also at the hall. She told Kennedy she had traveled to Washington, D.C., to join an Oct. 2 protest to defend abortion rights.

“The fight for family planning services, including birth control and safe and secure abortion, is a question for the unions,” Kennedy said. The *Militant* is part of the fight to educate, organize and mobilize to win a majority of working people to understand and defend this right, which is essential for winning women’s emancipation and to unite the working class.

When Susan LaMont from Atlanta visited the picket line of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union members at Kellogg’s in Memphis, Tennessee, Dec. 4, striker Scott Evans gave her a big hug and said he and his wife both read and liked the *Militant*. He later texted LaMont “to thank us for coming up again and for the support of the *Militant* and the SWP for the strike and for all the unions,” LaMont reports.

This isn’t unusual. *Militant* supporters Amy Husk and Jim Horn talked to steelworkers on their strike picket line at Special Metals in Huntington, West Virginia, Dec. 5. They met Michelle Tharpe at the USW Local 40 union hall. Tharpe is currently on leave from Special Metals where she has worked for 17 years.

After looking over the *Militant*, she

bought a six-month subscription and *Teamster Rebellion*, the first in a four-volume series on the Teamsters by Farrell Dobbs. The series tells the story of how the Teamsters in Minneapolis was transformed into a fighting union and social movement; the political questions workers confronted; and much more.

Dobbs was a young worker when he became a leader of the Teamsters in Minneapolis in the 1930s and architect of the drive that brought thousands of over-the-road truck drivers into the union. He also became a central leader of the Socialist Workers Party.

“I’m going to start reading this right away,” Tharpe said. “It’s important to learn about our history.”

SWP members and fellow *Militant* boosters in New York City have begun calling subscribers, making sure everyone is getting their papers, asking their opinion about what they’re reading, inviting them to weekly Militant Labor Forums, and offering to get back together to talk more.

Some subscribers will want to work together to spread the reach of the paper, help win solidarity for Kellogg’s, Warrior Met and other strikers or join protests against the U.S. embargo of Cuba. As a result of their initial work, two subscribers in New York got copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Fight for Workers Power* and *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* both by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

Want to learn more about how you can help introduce friends, co-workers, neighbors and relatives to the *Militant* and the Socialist Workers Party? See page 8 to contact the party branch nearest you or contact the *Militant* at themilitant@mac.com.

## Sudan protests continue fight to end military rule



AP/Marwan Ali

Defying tear gas attacks by Sudanese security forces, tens of thousands of people rallied in the capital, Khartoum, Nov. 30, above, as they continue to mobilize in opposition to military rule after an Oct. 25 coup. Neighborhood resistance committees called the demonstrations in spite of the military’s reinstatement of civilian Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok the previous week. The protests, which also took place in Port Sudan, Kassala, Nyala and Atbara, demanded “Soldiers, go back to the barracks!” and “The people want to bring down the regime.”

The Sudanese Professionals Association, an umbrella group including trade unions that has called most of the protests, denounced Hamdok’s deal with the military and vowed to continue demonstrating until “the corrupt military junta is brought down and persecuted for their crimes.” Dozens of demonstrators have been killed since the military took over.

The civilian-military coalition was established, supposedly to lead a transition to civilian rule, after a popular upheaval overthrew the three-decade-long autocratic rule of Omar al-Bashir in 2019.

Hamdok appeared on TV and signed a new power-sharing agreement with coup leader Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. The military hopes the arrangement will defuse international opposition to the coup, including the freeze on aid from Washington and the World Bank and suspension of Sudan from the African Union.

But the civilian coalition that nominated Hamdok as prime minister two years ago refused to go along with the deal. “The future of the country will be determined by the young people on the ground,” the group told BBC.

— ROY LANDERSEN

# Moscow moves to crush Memorial political rights group

BY JANET POST

As part of ongoing assaults on opposition political forces, Russian President Vladimir Putin is driving to shut down International Memorial, an organization that commemorates victims of repression by the Stalinist regime in the former Soviet Union and exposes attacks on political rights today.

Its database works to preserve the memory of the estimated 20 million people imprisoned in the Gulag, a system of forced labor camps set up after Joseph Stalin usurped political power in the mid-1920s that lasted until after his death in 1953. Its Moscow archives hold 75,000 documents, thousands of books and artwork by prisoners over many years.

Stalin headed a petty-bourgeois bureaucratic caste that carried out a counterrevolution against the policies fought for by Vladimir Lenin, the central leader of the 1917 socialist revolution. Under

Lenin, the Bolshevik Party led millions of workers and farmers to overturn capitalist rule and take power.

The revolutionary government nationalized industry under workers control, distributed land to peasants and granted self-determination to nations long oppressed by the former czarist rulers. The Bolsheviks founded the Communist International to build proletarian parties worldwide to emulate that example.

Putin blames Lenin for Russia’s problems today. In 2016, he said the Soviet revolutionary leader “planted an atomic bomb under the building that is called Russia,” pointing to the debate “between Stalin and Lenin regarding the creation of the new state.” Putin says the revolution itself was a disaster for “Mother Russia.”

On Nov. 25, Russia’s Prosecutor General called on the Supreme Court to ban the International Memorial Society, claiming the group failed to comply with government rulings that both it and the Memorial Human Rights Center in Moscow are “foreign agents” and must put that label on anything they publish.

At a Nov. 23 hearing in Moscow’s City Court, prosecutors also accused the Human Rights Center of making statements in support of “terrorists” and “extremists.”

### Stalin executes Bolshevik leadership

For the last 15 years, Memorial has organized an annual event in Lubyanka Square near the former KGB headquarters, called the “Returning

of Names.” It commemorates some 750,000 executed during the height of Stalin’s purges in 1937-38.

The 1936-37 Moscow show trials paved the way for Stalin to murder the remaining living central leaders of the Russian Revolution. An international commission of inquiry headed by John Dewey, a well-known Columbia University professor, irrefutably disproved frame-up charges against the chief defendant, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky. Supporters of Trotsky’s and Lenin’s policies remained politically active in Moscow’s prison camps into the 1960s.

Memorial activists also make the entire archive of the clandestine *samizdat* journal “The Chronicle of Current Events,” published between 1968 and 1983, available online. Excerpts from its early years are also printed in *Samizdat: Voices of Soviet Opposition* published by Pathfinder Press.

The organization is also subject to re-

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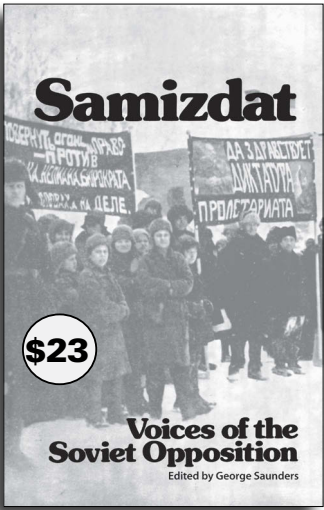
# Jerry Ulman

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working people to transform themselves and the world in the interests of humanity.

Family, friends, colleagues and comrades hosted a celebration of his life Nov. 27 attended by 40 people in the nearby community of Yorktown, including participants from Chicago, Miami, and Louisville, Kentucky.

Contributions in Ulman’s memory can be sent to the SWP at 306 W. 37th Street, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.



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## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA  
Oakland

**A Woman’s Right to Choose Abortion: Key to Women’s Equality and Working-Class Unity.** Speaker: Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.



# Washington fights for military superiority in space over rivals

BY TERRY EVANS

The U.S. capitalist rulers foresee a future of wars and revolutions, and have been taking bipartisan steps to prepare to defend and advance their weakened, but still dominant, place at the top of the imperialist world pecking order. Just in the last few days, Washington has warned of potential new military conflicts over Ukraine and Taiwan.

One new arena of competition is efforts by Washington, Moscow, Beijing and other powers to gain the advantage in the militarization of space.

The guardians of U.S. imperialist power try to portray their efforts as in the interest of everybody. “From space, all of humanity is one, and through our work in space, we have the opportunity to benefit not only the American people, but all of humanity,” proclaimed Vice President Kamala Harris at the Dec. 1 meeting of the government’s National Space Council.

But far from harnessing scientific developments to help “humanity,” the satellite and other space programs she touts are an inseparable part of the rulers’ bloody military operations. They are used for surveillance of their rivals, and in the future will be used for more direct military action, including augmenting their ability to attack rebellions by working people.

Central to their aims is curbing competition from the Chinese rulers and the growing reach of Beijing’s armed forces, as well as Moscow’s.

“Military doctrines of competitor nations identify space as critical to modern warfare,” says the U.S. Space Priorities Framework document. Its release was announced by Harris at the meeting. Washington’s rivals “view the use of counterspace capabilities as a means both to reduce U.S. military effectiveness and to win future wars,” it warns. The government “will accelerate its transition to a more resilient national security space posture.”

Talk of military use of satellites and future bases in space is decades old. In 2019, then President Donald Trump formed the first new U.S. military branch in 73 years, the U.S. Space Force, proclaiming “space is a war-fighting domain.” Two years earlier he revived the Space Council.

The new military branch has been expanded by the Joseph Biden administration, as part of the Air Force. It currently counts 6,490 military space personnel that it calls “guardians” on its roster.

Two weeks before the National Space Council meeting, U.S. officials reacted with outrage when Moscow carried out an anti-satellite missile test, blowing up one of its own now-defunct satellite stations and spreading debris into orbit. Washington, as well as Beijing and Moscow, have the capability to destroy satellites from the ground.

Both Beijing and Moscow use lasers, radio frequency jammers and cyberattacks to obstruct U.S. satellite spying operations every day, Gen. David Thompson told the *Washington Post*.

U.S. spy satellites disclosed in July that Beijing was constructing over 100 nuclear missile silos in Gansu province.

The U.S. capitalist ruling families are the only ones ever to use nuclear weapons, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan in 1945. Hundreds of thousands

were incinerated or subjected to excruciating deaths from burns or radiation sickness. Washington and Moscow today hold 90% of the world’s stockpile of nuclear warheads.

## Washington, Beijing, Moscow rivalry

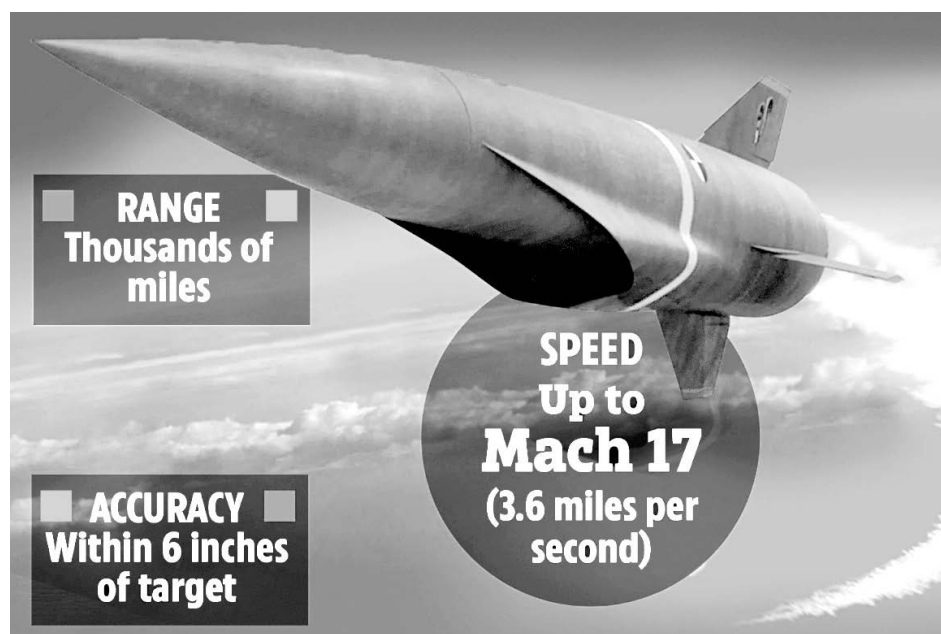
With the massive expansion of capitalist production and trade in China in recent decades, the rulers in Beijing have increasingly challenged Washington’s domination of markets and investments worldwide, especially in Asia.

To protect their advances, the Chinese rulers have poured massive resources into expanding their military. Though still far short of the military armament and capabilities of the U.S. Navy, Beijing is building its own blue water fleet, and will add a third aircraft carrier next year.

To counter the Chinese rulers’ military reach, Washington in September signed the AUKUS pact with the governments of Australia and the U.K., to provide the Australian rulers with nuclear-powered submarines. The U.S. government is determined to hold onto its supremacy in the Pacific, its “prize” for coming out on top of the imperialist slaughter in World War II.

U.S. capitalists’ development of space travel is completely bound up with advancing the destructive and deadly capacities of their armed forces.

Like its rivals in Beijing and Moscow, Washington is developing hyper-



The Sun

U.S. rulers are developing hypersonic missiles, high speed maneuverable weapons, in arms race with Beijing and Moscow, who are testing similar weaponry. Washington is pushing to gain the upper hand in the militarization of space as U.S. rulers prepare for future wars.

sonic weapons that are launched into space. Unlike ballistic missiles, they are maneuverable and can more easily evade detection. In August the Chinese military tested a nuclear-capable hypersonic missile.

Earlier this year Elon Musk’s SpaceX company got a \$149 million Department of Defense contract to make satellites that can track down missiles launched into orbit by Moscow or Beijing. Instead of circling the earth on an easily traceable fixed orbit, the new generation of satellites use refuelable engines to maneuver to prevent interference with their spying function.

Writing in the *Militant* in 1969, Socialist Workers Party leader Joe Hansen laid bare the real motives behind the U.S. space program after its first moon

landing with Apollo 11. Science, Hansen pointed out, has been diverted “to profit-making at the expense of human needs, to mass murder, to the construction of fiendish weapons of exterminating mankind.”

“The most important feature of the Apollo 11 triumph,” Hansen wrote, “may yet be the impact it has on bringing man, the tool-making animal, to realize that he has become sufficiently skilled with tools, and that now he must master his social and economic relations if he is not to perish from what the tool has become.”

To accomplish that, working people will need to organize revolutionary battles to strip the capitalist warmakers of their military arsenals and take political power into our own hands.

# ExxonMobil workers rally, win solidarity in lockout

Continued from front page

CEO Darren Woods was speaking.

Some 650 members of the USW local at the company’s oil refinery and blending and packaging plant here have been locked out since May 1 for refusing to accept a union-busting contract.

“A lot of people support us now, even more than we realize,” Teria Howard, one of the locked-out local members, told the *Militant* at the protest. “We were sent donations of school supplies and school clothes and now there is a Christmas toy drive being organized. Already bikes and iPads have been received to be given as presents at a Christmas party we’re organizing.”

Ricky Brooks, president of USW Local 13-2001 at the Baytown Exxon oil refinery, said, “This fight against the lockout is about Exxon trying to take away job security and seniority at all its facilities. Look at the strikes at John Deere, by health care workers and others that refute the ways of thinking that we don’t need unions anymore. Unions will come back and in a big way.”

Also at the action were several members of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees who had worked at the Beaumont refinery, and representatives of the Houston Central Labor Council and the Transport Workers Union. “I came to show my support for my brothers and sisters. That’s what you do!” TWU Local 260 member Fernando Dacosta said.

USW staff representative Bryan Gross told the *Militant*, “We haven’t met with the company since Nov. 1. There is a company-backed decertification vote against the union underway, so they’re stalling. The ballots have to be received by the NLRB by Dec. 22. The labor

board will either count the votes or they may impound them until the charges we filed against the company are resolved.”

## Spirits high on picket line

Following the protest this reporter and two other members of the Socialist Workers Party drove an hour and half southeast of Houston to Beaumont. We met Zachery Simons and Tonya Singer on picket duty at the Exxon Blending and Packaging plant.

Simons, a warehouse operator, who has worked here for eight years, said he has been following the union battles in other parts of the country.

“I was glad to hear that the United Auto Workers union members at John Deere won their strike. John Deere makes a lot of money. Farm equipment is expensive,” he said. “My Dad is a rice farmer near Lake Charles, Louisiana. Farmers there can’t afford to buy this equipment so they have to lease it. They are hit with high prices for farm equipment, fuel and, if you have government subsidies, they tell you how much land you can farm.”

Simons lives in Louisiana. Because of the foot-dragging by the state of Texas, he just started getting unemployment pay. But for most of the locked-out unionists, including Singer, their unemployment has run out.

Singer has worked for Exxon for six years. She proudly said, “I am the only woman A-operator in the Blending and Packaging plant.” When her unemployment ran out she had to pull funds from her retirement from International Paper where she had worked until the plant shut down. “The union is doing all it can to help us,” she said. “We have a food pantry and we get help paying our

bills. In extreme health situations, like I face, the union is paying the COBRA for health insurance. I have to have knee replacement surgery.”

“We are out here to get what we deserve,” Simons said. “We kept Exxon going in rain, sleet, hurricanes and last year’s winter freeze, but they don’t want to acknowledge us. They called us ‘world class’ in February and locked us out in May.”

“Yeah, we were ‘essential’ then, why aren’t we essential now?” Singer added. “This is a huge slap in the face by Exxon.”

At the union hall, Andre Francis, who is African American and head trustee for the USW local, said, “I’m a fourth generation Exxon oil refinery worker. My great-grandfather worked here when there were separate locals for Black and white workers.” He showed me the certificate uniting the two locals into one in 1943, displayed in a glass case in the union hall.

Francis said that much of the food pantry is donated, or “union members who work the pantry go out and find deals on food and purchase it with the donations we receive.”

“We buy meat from a local farmer and had 30,000 pounds processed locally,” he said. The food pantry has big freezers stocked with meat, poultry and fish. One local company donated 250 pounds of rice. Rice farming began in Southeast Texas, where Beaumont is located, in the 1850s.

Despite six months on lockout, strikers are upbeat about their fight and appreciate solidarity they get. Keep it coming! Donations and letters of support can be sent to USW Local 13-243, 2490 South 11th St., Beaumont, TX 77701.

# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

## LA County bakery workers: ‘We fight for ourselves, our children’

SANTA FE SPRINGS, Calif. — “Don’t let them tell you we are doing something wrong. We are doing something right, we are fighting for ourselves and our children,” striker Elvia Castillo, told a rally of 90 outside Rich’s Jon Donaire Bakery here Dec. 3. The strike by 175 members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union Local 37 began a month earlier. Most of the strikers are women.

As part of the spirited rally, workers gathered outside the plant entrance chanting in English and Spanish, “One day longer, one day stronger!” Strikers were joined by representatives of several area unions. The rally was chaired by striker Miguel Perez.

Walking the picket line with strikers earlier, they told the *Militant* about the conditions they face on the job and why line speed and treatment by the bosses are the big issues in this battle.

Rudy Pinales makes, pours and freezes ice cream molds that are then put into cakes. “One of the major reasons we’re on strike is speedup,” he said. “We work with cakes that are frozen — sometimes frozen together. The bosses expect us to separate them perfectly, but they can easily get broken or fall on the floor and become a safety danger because we have no time to clean them up. The line is so fast at least half of us have had to have surgeries to our hands.”

Strikers were proud to introduce us to 83-year-old Fernando Jimenez, who has worked at Rich’s since it opened in 2003. Some of the young workers explained they had learned a lot from him, from how to conduct themselves inside the plant, to discussions on the picket line. Jimenez told us, “I’m here to support and back up my workmates, so the next generation can benefit.” He agreed the lines are too fast. “I unmold 13 frozen cakes per minute. If one of the cakes breaks or gets ruined, the bosses are all over us. It’s cold, hard work, my hands and shoulders are always in pain.”

Roxana Rosales, a cake decorator, started at the plant three years ago. “At that time negotiations around the last contract were underway, and the com-

pany wanted to get rid of the union,” she said. “They offered us a 45 cent raise each year. This time they offered us 50 cents. The workers, especially the young workers, said, ‘No way!’

“We saw how many of us are incapacitated due to repetitive injuries; how they play favorites; how they give us points, even when we’re sick,” she added. “We said, if we don’t stand up now it’s only going to be worse three years from now. That’s why we’re on strike.”

Marta Montez, another cake decorator, said, “The company thought the new people would be too scared to go on strike. I thought being on strike would be sad, but with each day that we’re here, we gain more strength. We get stronger each day.”

— *Ellie García and Barbara Bowman*

## Clarks strike strengthens union, pushes back wage cuts

LONDON — After eight weeks on strike, workers at Clarks Shoes distribution warehouse returned to work Nov. 30, having succeeded in pushing back the company’s demand to cut their basic wage by 15%. “It shows what can be done if we stick together,” striker Nathan Pritchard told the *Militant* by phone. “It sends a message to others in similar situations. What hit me the most was us working together and the solidarity.”

Citing economic challenges incurred during the pandemic, Clarks had announced new contracts, cutting hourly wages to 9.50 pounds (\$12.57) for over 100 workers on “legacy” contracts, a cut of 1.66 pounds per hour. For the workers previously employed on the National Minimum Wage, which stands at 8.91 pounds per hour, their contract included a raise of 79 pence (\$1.05). The company had threatened that workers refusing to sign the new contracts would lose their jobs — an increasingly used employer tactic here known as “fire and rehire.”

“We stood firm for eight weeks and won solidarity, including visits to our picket line, financial donations and the great march and rally we held,” shop steward Trevor Stephenson told the *Militant*. The solidarity march attracted hundreds of trade unionists and others from



Militant/Pedro Vasquez

Elvia Castillo, striker at Jon Donaire Desserts plant in Los Angeles County, California, speaks at rally Dec. 3. Strikers’ union is Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers.

the area and further afield. The village of Street, where Clarks has been based for nearly 200 years, was lined by local residents and shop workers applauding the strikers.

The solid strike action — taken both by workers facing the wage cut and a good number of those getting a raise — led to a final settlement that protects the 11.16 pounds hourly rate for “legacy” workers and raises the rate for the rest to 10.03 pounds.

Not everything went the strikers’ way. Workers will lose daily half-hour paid lunch breaks. Overtime will be paid at straight time — down from time and a half — and sick pay has been weakened.

“The cut in paid breaks will cost me 25-30 pounds per week, so perhaps we could have stayed out longer,” Mark Hill said. “But keeping the 11.16 pounds was key. The strike strengthened the union. Back to work, we’ve got a good camaraderie.”

— *Jonathan Silberman and Andrés Mendoza*

## Steel scaffolders strike continues in UK over wages, scabs, safety

SCUNTHORPE, England — “We’re staying out for a result,” striker Dave Birchall told the *Militant* on the picket line outside the massive British Steel plant here. Sixty scaffolders organized by the Unite union are now into their third month of strike action.

Sharon Graham, Unite union general secretary, joined the pickets Dec. 1. They’re demanding contractor Actavo pay them the national rate for their job of 17 pounds an hour (\$22.50), as opposed to their current wages of some 2 pounds less.

In a picket line interview with the BBC, Graham said, “British Steel is blaming Actavo. Actavo is blaming British Steel. In the middle are workers fighting for their livelihoods.”

Strikers report that a strikebreaking outfit, ironically calling itself Rope Access Trade Solutions — RATS — has been called in to work on scaffolding there.

Support for the strikers is growing. Oil refinery workers from Stanlow near Liverpool sent 2,500 pounds from a shop floor collection, and Unite union construction workers from the Republic of Ireland sent 1,000 euros (\$1,125). This reporter met Michael Kermenglou on the picket line, from the ‘Scaffolders Club’ of the 3F union in Denmark.

Send your support to [unitedscaffs@gmail.com](mailto:unitedscaffs@gmail.com) or Scaffolders strike, c/o Unite union, 55 Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BW, England.

— *Pete Clifford*

## New Zealand warehouse strikers win raises to cover inflation

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — “All we are asking for is enough to pay our bills and feed our kids,” Tetini Rangi told the *Militant* as he picketed outside Countdown’s distribution center in Mangere Nov. 25. “The prices for rent, food, power, everything has gone up.”

Over 700 First Union members rejected a company offer of a 3% pay raise. They struck for three days, stopping production at two warehouses here, asking for 4.9% in line with the rise in the government’s consumer price index.

Jaskaran Singh explained his rent had gone up 50 New Zealand dollars (\$34) per week from last year, but “the company pay offer would only give me another NZ\$14 a week in take home pay. It’s not enough.”

The company increased its pay offer Nov. 26. The union agreed to the new contract, including a 5% wage raise for the next year and 3.9% for a nine-month term the following year.

“Very happy with the outcome!” wrote Steve Phillips to the *Militant*. “It was a three-day journey, fight and struggle to get what we all work so very hard for day in and day out.”

“We’re doing this for the younger generations,” Rangi said.

— *Janet Roth and Annalucia Vermunt*

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



### December 23, 1996

Now is the time for working people to protest the wealthy rulers’ probes to privatize Social Security and gut other social entitlements. This is a crucial question for the labor movement. These gains are the fruits of the blood and sweat from decades of struggle — of the mighty class battles in the 1930s and the gigantic civil rights movement in the 1950s and ’60s.

In order to reverse the long-term decline in their average rate of profit, the employers need to increase the portion of value created by workers’ labor that goes into their pockets, not ours. As part of this they need to get rid of “welfare as we know it,” Social Security “as we know it,” unemployment compensation, student grants, Medicare, Medicaid, and all other entitlements.

The bosses can only accomplish their aims by waging a direct assault on the industrial working class.



### December 24, 1971

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Over 1,200 Chicanos marched here Nov. 20 to protest the almost daily beatings Chicanos have been suffering at the hands of police. The march also protested the fact that 10 Chicanos have been murdered by police in 1971 alone. The marchers gathered strength as they marched five miles through the predominantly Chicano West Side of San Antonio to the Alamo.

The demonstration had a great impact on Chicano by-standers. Hundreds joined as the march progressed, including a number of GIs, who heard the shouts of “Raza Si, Guerra No!” and “Raza Si, Gringo No!” and joined the rally at the Alamo.

Chicanos were not the only ones affected by the march. G. L. Duarte, writing in El Sol de Texas, observed that an “Anglo lady was overheard to shout as the marchers arrived: ‘Good heavens! They’re coming to take the Alamo!’”



### December 21, 1946

SAN JUAN — During the past few weeks hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans have been protesting against President Truman’s veto of a bill twice approved by the Island Legislature, establishing Spanish instead of English as the official language in Puerto Rico’s schools.

The Teachers Association is now fighting to have the presidential veto on the Spanish language nullified.

We ask our friends in the United States to support our fight for a prompt solution of our political status. We appeal to the American working class to take action in the United States in behalf of Puerto Rican independence. Long live free Puerto Rico! We demand immediate evacuation of American troops from our territory! Join our fight for freedom from the imperialist yoke!

s/Pedro Gonzalez Lopez, Julio Martinez Nunez, Jose Sanchez Berrios



Strikers say ‘End two-tier’

Continued from front page

tier system,” Bobby Burriss, a 14-year veteran of Kellogg’s cereal plant, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent on the picket line Dec. 4. “We’re on strike to try to overcome that.”

“When we took the strike authorization vote this time, there was strong support in favor of going out,” Burriss said. “Between the current labor shortage and the company’s product shortage, we felt like we had more leverage.” This is the first contract strike at Kellogg’s in decades.

The 274 members of BCTGM union Local 252G here went on strike Oct. 5, along with 1,100 other workers at Kellogg’s cereal plants in Omaha, Nebraska; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Battle Creek, Michigan.

‘Equal pay for equal work’

The divisive two-tier system is the single biggest issue in the strike. That’s why “Equal pay for equal work” signs are among the most popular on the picket line here and at the other plants.

A tentative agreement on a new five-year master contract was announced Dec. 2, a month after the BCTGM International Union negotiating committee had voted down the company’s “last, best and final” offer Nov. 4, continuing the strike.

Voting on the new proposal took place Dec. 5 at Local 252G’s union hall, following a meeting the day before for all union members to learn about and debate the new proposal.

“We’ve had a lot of support from other unions in Memphis in the last two months,” Burriss said. “And union members from the other striking Kellogg’s plants have visited us and we’ve visited them.” Contributions to a GoFundMe account have added to the \$105 a week strike pay from the union, he added. Nonstop honking by motorists and truck drivers passing the picket line is another indication of how many working peo-

ple know about and support the strike.

The two-tier setup, pushed through by the company in 2015 under threat of closing two of the cereal plants, allows the company to employ up to 30% “transitional” workers at the plants. These workers do the same jobs as longtime employees, but are paid much lower wages, have no pension, and pay much higher health care costs. These “transitional” workers were supposed to be promoted over time to the top tier, but few have made it, pickets said.

In discussing the contract rejected by strikers, BCTGM Local 50G President Dan Osborn said, “My biggest concern is that they lifted the amount of lower-tier employees they can employ.”

Other issues in the current contract fight include defending union members’ much needed cost-of-living clauses, retirement benefits and holiday and vacation pay.

One of the places where workers are angriest at the bosses is in Battle Creek, where the company was founded in 1906. Bosses there say they plan to lay off at least 174 workers by the end of 2023, on top of layoffs of 223 in 2018 and 67 more in 2019. In their September announcement of the cutbacks, they said that “some locations are more cost-effective and better performing” and steps are needed to “drive increased productivity,” that is speedup.

Kellogg’s strikers were among the unionists, Black rights and community activists, students and others who turned out at the Blues City Brewery here Nov. 8 to back workers fighting for their first union contract. The brewery workers had voted to join the BCTGM in December 2020. This November, they voted unanimously to approve a three-year contract, including defeating bosses’ demands for a two-tiered wage system the company tried to impose on the newly organized union local.

Special Metals strike in West Virginia wins support



HUNTINGTON, W.Va. — “We want a fair contract,” said workers on the picket line in front of Special Metals here Dec. 5. Some 450 members of United Steelworkers Local 40 have been on strike since Oct. 1. Special Metals Corp., which is owned by Warren Buffett’s massive Berkshire Hathaway worldwide operation, is demanding workers take more concessions. “My health care premiums would go from about \$285 a month to \$1,000,” striker Jack Johnson told the *Militant*. “And the company is offering no pay raise at all.”

“I’ve worked in the plant for 17 years. I’m out on disability now but I’m helping out at the union office since I can’t walk the picket line,” Michelle Tharpe said. “We’ve gotten so much support from other unions and the community. Members of United Steelworkers Local 14581 have come up every two weeks from Elkhorn City, Kentucky, with a truckload of donations.”

Tharpe explained she and other workers have a lot of anger against the bosses because of the way they’re treated. When her only son died unexpectedly while she was at work, her supervisor told her she had to stay on the job until the end of her shift.

“We’re not going to let them push us around or divide us,” picket Barry Gibson, a 27-year veteran in the plant, told us. “No one has crossed the picket line.” The bosses are trying to use scabs to get production going.

Messages and contributions to the strike fund can be sent to Chad Thompson, president, USW Local 40, 421 Cherry Ridge Road, Thurman, OH 45685.

— AMY HUSK AND JIM HORN

Montgomery bus boycott anniversary marks historic battle that paved the way for overturn of Jim Crow segregation

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

On Dec. 1, 1955 — 66 years ago — Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama, beginning a yearlong bus boycott. The yearlong fight inspired millions and helped spur the mass Black-led proletarian civil rights struggle that over more than a decade overturned Jim Crow segregation.

This victory transformed attitudes and social relations across the country, and strengthened the unity and fighting capacities of the working class. Nothing short of a social counterrevolution can reverse this mighty demonstration of the power of working people.

Parks, a 42-year-old seamstress, was riding the bus home from her job at a local department store. She was seated in the front row of the “colored section.” By city law, there was an arbitrary movable line that separated the races on the bus, and the drivers were supposed to adjust it to assure all Caucasian passengers got a seat. As the bus filled up, the driver told Parks to give up her seat and stand. She refused and was arrested.

“I was not tired physically. No more tired than I usually was at the end of the working day,” she wrote in her biography. “The only tired I was, was tired of giving in.”

In fact, Parks’ act was a conscious political decision planned out in close collaboration with longtime union and Black rights fighter E.D. Nixon. Nixon was president of the Montgomery di-



Rosa Parks, E.D. Nixon, left, in Montgomery court March 1956. “I have seen nothing like the rank and file outpouring of grievances here since my days in the rising union movement of the ‘30s,” SWP leader Farrell Dobbs wrote in the *Militant*.

vision of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters union and had served as president of both the Montgomery and statewide NAACP. Parks joined the local NAACP chapter in 1943 and worked with Nixon as the group’s secretary. After her arrest, Nixon bailed her out of jail and brought in an attorney.

Nixon got on the phone and appealed to church officials and others to come to a meeting to discuss launching a citywide boycott. One of them, Martin Luther King Jr., initially was hesitant, but then agreed to participate. Thousands of flyers were circulated throughout the community calling for a one-day boycott Dec. 5, the day Parks was scheduled to go to trial.

The protest exploded. Some 40,000 Black bus riders joined the boycott. That evening a mass meeting called by Nixon and other Black leaders voted to extend the boycott indefinitely and formed the

Montgomery Improvement Association to organize it. King was elected president and Nixon the treasurer.

A determined and heroic fight was organized. Over the next year, both Nixon’s and King’s homes would be bombed. Court indictments were handed down against 90 leaders of the boycott, including several drivers in the car pool formed to provide transportation for those boycotting the segregated buses. Groups of veterans were organized to defend the cars.

**Appeal to unions**

The Montgomery Improvement Association appealed to unions and other organizations to donate vehicles to the car pool. Providing transportation was crucial to let boycott participants get to work and to shop. Socialist Workers Party members across the country joined in working within their unions to get station wagons donated. One of the first cars delivered was driven down by Farrell Dobbs, a leader of the mighty Teamsters organizing battles in the Midwest in the 1930s, and the party’s candidate for president in 1956.

After going to Montgomery, Dobbs wrote in the April 2, 1956, *Militant*, “If the Negro people are to win their democratic rights, if the firm alliance of the unions and the Negro movement so imperative for the unionization of the South is to be forged, then the freedom fighters of Montgomery must be supported to the hilt and all the way to their final victory.”

Dobbs recognized the Montgomery fighters from his own experiences. “I have seen nothing like the rank and file outpouring of grievances here since my days in the rising union movement of

the Thirties,” he said. “Now as then, a deep well of resentment has been tapped. A burning desire to seek redress has arisen. A growing determination to get action has taken hold.”

As support for the boycott mounted, a Montgomery federal court ruled June 5, 1956, that the law requiring racially segregated seating on city buses violated the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. That amendment, adopted during Reconstruction after the overthrow of slavery through the Civil War, the Second American Revolution, guarantees all citizens equal rights and equal protection under the law.

When the city appealed, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the ruling Nov. 13. Desegregation of the buses was ordered Dec. 20. The boycott ended the following day. It had won after 381 days.

The impact of this powerful, united struggle conducted by tens of thousands of working people in Montgomery roused the interest and support of millions more throughout the country and helped propel the mass civil rights movement forward. Rosa Parks and other leaders became known across the country.

But when a celebration was organized in Montgomery on the 10th anniversary of the bus boycott, organizers didn’t invite Nixon to be part of the program. The Militant Labor Forum in New York invited Nixon and his wife Arlette to come and take part in a dinner and celebration there to honor E.D. Nixon’s leadership role. They joined Dobbs at the head table.

“So you see, the Montgomery Improvement Association was not started just because someone came to town or someone felt it was the proper thing to do at this time,” Nixon told those at the meeting. “It started because there had been a struggle of people for long years.”

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End US sanctions on North Korea! US troops out now!

Continued from front page

military. They frequently send nuclear-weapons capable planes and ships to the region, and maintain control of South Korean troops in case of war.

Backed by the U.N. Security Council, Washington began imposing draconian trade and banking sanctions in 2006 aimed at forcing the North Korean government to bow to U.S. demands to end its nuclear programs. The sanctions ban North Korea from selling coal, its key export, or importing natural gas. Oil imports are severely restricted.

As a result, millions of workers and farmers face severe hardships, including food shortages. These have been exacerbated following the decision of the North Korean government to close its borders in January 2020 to protect the country from the spread of COVID-19. In the last few months trade with China has resumed, although still not near pre-pandemic levels.

In 2018 then President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un held a series of talks that opened the possibility of an accord that could lead eventually to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The North Korean government dismantled some nuclear facilities and ceased testing intercontinental ballistic missiles. Washington and South Korea suspended or scaled back their annual joint war games. But the U.S. government never eased the sanctions and the talks ended without an agreement.

President Joseph Biden’s adminis-

tration has not attempted to push for more talks. It stepped up military exercises on the peninsula in August that Trump had previously suspended.

The government of North Korea has stated it would end its nuclear weapons program if Washington signs a peace treaty to formally end the 1950-53 Korean War and pledges not to attack in the future. More than 4 million people died in that war, including at least 2 million Korean civilians, more than a half million Korean combatants, hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops, and more than 36,000 U.S. soldiers.

The war began after Washington and the Stalinist regime in Moscow joined in dividing the country in two, against the will of the Korean people. U.S. troops occupied the South and imposed the bloody dictatorship of Syngman Rhee in an attempt to halt a revolutionary struggle sweeping the peninsula. In the North workers and farmers began taking over factories and land from wealthy families and overturned capitalist rule.

In response to these advances by working people, U.S.-led forces dropped massive amounts of napalm and other bombs, leveling the North and large parts of the South. The Rhee dictatorship killed tens of thousands of political prisoners, and peasants were imprisoned for demanding land. But the regime was unable to crush the resistance of workers and peasants.

In the first ever military defeat for U.S. imperialism, the Korean people,

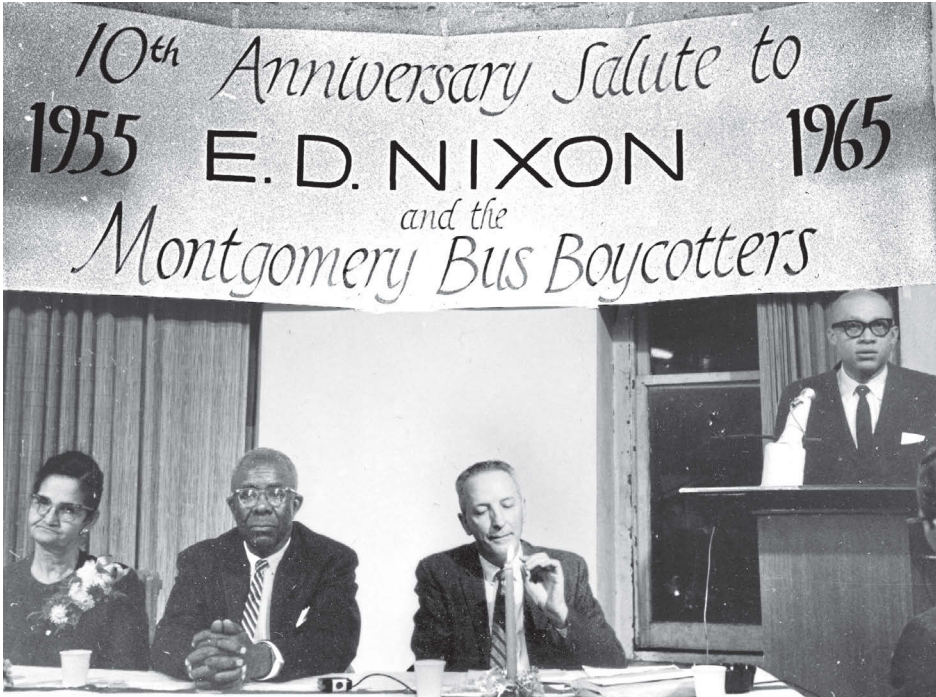
with the aid of Chinese volunteers, fought U.S. invading forces to a stalemate. An armistice was signed in 1953, but Washington refuses to sign a peace treaty to this day.

Trying to bolster his party’s image before presidential elections in March, South Korean President Moon Jae-In has been working with Washington and Beijing to agree on a declaration that the war has ended. But according to *Korea Times*, the plan includes a clause that would make the declaration purely symbolic, “thus allowing the United Nations Command in South Korea and U.S. Forces Korea to remain as they are today.”

“The U.S. is touting ‘diplomatic engagement’ and ‘dialogue without preconditions,’” noted Kim Jong Un in a speech to the North Korean legislature in September, “but it is no more than a petty trick for deceiving the international community and hiding its hostile acts.”

Working people in the U.S. “can and will be won to opposing brutal imperialist sanctions and wars,” Steve Clark wrote for the Socialist Workers Party in a Sept. 9 letter to the North Korean government. “We stand in solidarity with the Korean people’s struggle to reunify the country and restore Korea’s national sovereignty.”

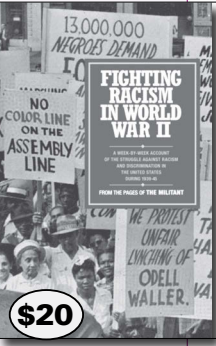
“We demand that the U.S. government immediately and unconditionally: lift all economic and banking sanctions against the DPRK” and “End its ‘nuclear umbrella’ over South Korea and Japan.”



E.D. Nixon, second from left, central organizer of Montgomery bus boycott, at tribute to him in New York hosted by Militant Labor Forum on boycott’s 10th anniversary, December 1965. On either side of him are Farrell Dobbs, SWP national secretary, and Arlette Nixon, boycott activist and E.D. Nixon’s wife. Speaking is Clifton DeBerry, SWP candidate for president in 1964.

Fighting Racism in World War II

A week-by-week account from 1939 to 1945 of efforts to advance the Black rights struggle in face of patriotic appeals to postpone resistance to lynch-mob terror and racist discrimination until after U.S. “victory” in World War II.



February 1965: The Final Speeches by Malcolm X

Speeches from the last three weeks of the life of this outstanding leader of the oppressed Black nationality and of the working class in the U.S.



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# Fight for women’s rights crucial for the class struggle today

Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women by Evelyn Reed, Joseph Hansen, and Mary-Alice Waters is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for December. Below are excerpts from the preface by Waters to the Cuban edition of the book. The Cuban publishing house Ciencias Sociales launched its Spanish-language edition at the Havana International Book Fair in February 2011. The preface is copyright © 2010 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Two questions asked by thoughtful readers since the initial publication of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* are useful to consider.

First, are questions addressed in a debate over cosmetics and fashions more than fifty years ago still relevant? Aren’t they long bypassed?

Second, isn’t Reed’s article on “Anthropology: Marxist or Bourgeois?” outdated? Hasn’t knowledge of the earliest human societies moved far beyond what was known in the mid-1950s?

The response to the first question is underscored by Hansen’s rhetorical question in “The Fetish of Cosmetics.” In the whole history of capitalism, he asks, “has the bourgeoisie ever gone about cultivating the fetish of com-



Bakery Workers union picket at Nabisco plant in Richmond, Virginia, Sept. 10, helped win nationwide battle for new contract. Women are in front ranks of struggles to strengthen union movement.

modities more cold-bloodedly than American big business?”

The resources devoted by capitalist enterprises to advertising and the creation of markets, far from being a thing of the past, have expanded astronomically in the last half century as the working class has been pushed into “needing” everything from must-have cell phones, to the latest model automobiles, \$500 torn blue jeans, an exploding array of “cosmetic” surgeries, designer handbags, and cosmetics-designed-to-make-you-look-like-you’re-not-using-cosmetics. All these and more are pushed on hapless “consumers” without truce. The pressure to be “fashionable” — that is, to be “employable,” and attractive to a potential spouse — has penetrated even more deeply into the working class. Television and the internet greatly intensify the all-pervasive intrusions.

The manufactured compulsion to “shop,” playing on the emotional insecurities of women and adolescents above all, has only deepened and spread. The “marketing” Hansen pokes such fun at in the 1950s seems amateur by comparison to the sales techniques employed today. “Shop until you drop” has gone from being a humorous exaggeration to a description of an actual social condition pushing increasing numbers of working-class families into more and more debt at usurious rates.

The impact of the twenty-first century capitalist advertising “industry” is, if anything, even more insidious as

it spreads into areas of the globe previously buffered to some extent from the imperialist world market. In large areas of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, marked by imperialist-enforced agricultural and industrial underdevelopment, as well as in countries previously part of the now-defunct economic and trading bloc once dominated by the Soviet Union, the siren song of the commodity fetish is an imperialist weapon like none other.

In the eloquent words of the Communist Manifesto, “the cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which [the bourgeoisie] batters down all Chinese walls. ... It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.”

As the not-so-outdated polemic of the 1950s makes clear, in periods of working-class retreat such as we have lived through the last quarter century — a period of retreat far longer and more devastating than the relatively brief post-World War II interlude — the “heavy artillery” of capitalism takes its greatest toll, including among the most politically conscious layers.

The answer to the second question is equally important.

The articles by Evelyn Reed — “The Woman Question and the Marxist Method” and “Anthropology: Marxist

or Bourgeois?” — are two of the earliest she wrote on these subjects. ...

The focus of the sharp polemic in *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* is what Reed often referred to as the “Hundred-Year War in Anthropology.” Here, as elsewhere, Reed defends the historical materialism of nineteenth-century anthropologist Lewis Morgan, whose work Karl Marx and Frederick Engels drew on extensively in their writings on the subject, and Morgan’s twentieth-century continuator Robert Briffault.

As Reed points out, one of the major battle lines in this century-plus war over historical materialism has been the question, does something akin to the modern bourgeois “patriarchal system of marriage and family relations [go] all the way back to the animal kingdom”? Or did what is often referred to as “patriarchy,” and the second-class status of women, arise in relatively recent times, on the scale of evolution, as a cornerstone of class-divided societies? As private rather than communal property came to dominate all social relations, including those between men and women, didn’t a small handful of men emerge for the first time as a ruling class, subjugating other men — and, in the process, women as well?

“Concealed behind the debate,” Reed explains, is “a question of class struggle and class ideology.”

If class society and the accompanying subordinate status of women is only a stage of human history, one that arose at a certain historical juncture for specific reasons, then it can be eliminated at another historical juncture for other specific reasons.

If there has been an evolution of social relations through distinct stages of the prehistory and history of human society, determined by increasing levels of labor productivity and changing property relations — and accompanied by enormous, and extended, conflict and violence — *then capitalism is no more permanent than the property and social relations that preceded it. ...*

Today the fight to eradicate women’s subordinate status is not reducible to simply a “woman question,” Reed explained. It is an integral part of the working-class struggle for power, the battle for socialism.

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8 The Militant December 20, 2021



# Working people need our own party to fight for political power

Working people confront a choice. Either organize to take power into our own hands by making a socialist revolution, or face a future of calamity — economic crises, with ruinous inflation and mass unemployment, along with social upheavals and devastating imperialist wars. The capitalist system runs by and for bosses driven to maximize profits by seizing resources and markets in ruthless conflicts with their rivals and deepening their exploitation of our labor with utter disregard for the consequences.

The working class and our unions have no common interests with them, their wars abroad, their cops and courts, or their Democratic and Republican parties.

Courageous uprisings by working people for political rights in Sudan, Myanmar and Belarus have been met by deadly government-organized assaults — an indication of what *all* ruling capitalist classes will do when their backs are against the wall. The brutality they mete out against working people at home, as we see in strikes and lockout battles today, is extended in wars against their rivals abroad.

“Great power competition,” a U.S. government report said Nov. 17, determines its foreign policy and lies behind the bipartisan congressional vote Dec. 7

to raise the rulers’ war budget to \$768 billion. Washington’s conflicts today with the rulers of China and Russia for influence, markets and resources are sharpening. Each of these powers, especially Beijing, is following Washington’s lead in expanding its military arsenals, stockpiling nuclear weaponry and developing hypersonic missiles.

Washington claims that acquiring ever more destructive arms enables “America” to deter “aggressors” and ensure peace. There is not one, united “America,” but two distinct social classes — the capitalist exploiters and the working class — with sharply opposed interests. The U.S. imperialists have shown they will use every weapon at their disposal, including leveling Korea with carpet bombing in the 1950s, the use of napalm in Vietnam, and nuclear destruction they unleashed against Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Socialist Workers Party demands Washington unilaterally and unconditionally destroy its nuclear armory and immediately withdraw its forces from the Korean Peninsula, the Mideast and elsewhere.

Only by organizing to break from the two capitalist parties, the Democrats and Republicans, and take power into our own hands, can workers and farmers

defend ourselves from what the rulers will inevitably inflict, and prevent them from turning to fascist forces to try and crush our unions and rising working-class struggles when they feel their rule is threatened.

“All talk to the effect that historical conditions have not yet ‘ripened’ for socialism is the product of ignorance or conscious deception,” Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the Bolshevik Revolution, wrote in a resolution adopted by the SWP in 1938. “Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period,” he said, “a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind.”

The only class capable of charting a course to prevent this is the working class. With communist leadership, workers have shown we can win all those exploited and oppressed by capital to a mighty movement of millions to take power into our own hands. This is the lesson of the two great revolutions of the 20th century — in Russia in 1917 and Cuba’s socialist revolution in 1959.

Emulating their example requires building our own party, a labor party, led by the most self-sacrificing, disciplined and class-conscious working-class fighters. Join the Socialist Workers Party to build such a party today!

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## Help build working-class support in fight for women’s right to abortion

**Continued from front page**

all,” and anyone who chooses to have a family should be able to do so. But women must also have the unalienable right to determine whether or when to have a child, and abortion needs to be a legal option.

Who should decide — other than the woman involved — what to do when faced with an unwanted or unexpected pregnancy? Certainly not the government. Workers need to discuss and debate this issue all the way through, to win an overwhelming majority for the right involved, something that was cut short when the 1973 ruling was handed down.

The backlash against Roe v. Wade has been at the center of assaults on the social and economic gains of women ever since. It’s part of the broader attack on the rights and living conditions of working people.

These attacks on women’s rights were made easier by the character and content of the Roe v. Wade decision. It wasn’t based on the 14th Amendment, adopted after the Civil War overturned slavery, that says no state can “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

In 1971 the Supreme Court affirmed that women were included in the amendment’s “equal protection.” That ruling was a product of victories won in the streets in the 1950s and ’60s by millions of fighters for Black rights, which spurred a new wave of activity in the fight for women’s emancipation.

But the Roe v. Wade ruling did not take that 14th Amendment as its starting point. Instead, it issued what one former U.S. solicitor general called “a set of hospital rules and regulations” on abortion, tied to fetal viability. And it assigned the decision not to the woman herself, but to her doctor. By forcing that ruling through before the raging debate that was taking place on this question was decisively settled, the justices ensured it would be followed by a relentless assault on women’s right to choose abortion.

*New York Times* columnist Ross Douhat hit the nail on the head in a discussion with other op-ed writers the paper printed Dec. 2. He said “successful” rulings by the Supreme Court “seem — as with same-sex marriage, so far — to follow dramatic and unlikely-to-reverse shifts in public opinion rather than trying to end arguments that are extremely live and ongoing.”

The character of Roe v. Wade gave an opening for immediate and continual attack, no matter whether Democrats or Republicans were in

the White House. Within three years of the Roe v. Wade ruling, Congress passed the Hyde amendment in 1976 barring Medicaid funds for abortions.

State governments have loaded on more than 1,300 restrictions, continually cutting back on women’s ability to exercise their constitutional rights. These anti-abortion measures have taken a heavy toll. By 2017 there was not a single medical facility providing abortions in nearly 90 percent of U.S. counties.

The women who pay the highest price for this are those who can’t afford to travel greater and greater distances to find a location to get the procedure. Women in the upper classes can find willing doctors or fly to where the medical procedure is legal.

Before abortion was decriminalized, for most women who sought to end their pregnancies their only choice was an illegal, often life-threatening attempt to end a pregnancy. In the 1960s, thousands were maimed and hundreds died as a result of botched abortions. In 1969 in New York 210,000 women were admitted to hospitals for complications of illegal abortions.

Since this onslaught by opponents of women’s rights began in 1973, liberal-led women’s organizations have refused to organize a fight, arguing that women should instead elect Democrats to take care of everything, keeping workers within the trap of lesser-evil politics.

In the *Times* op-ed writers’ discussion, Michelle Goldberg says the best possible result of the court upholding the Mississippi law will be to rekindle “the anti-Trump resistance” she hopes will reverse

Democrats’ declining electoral fortunes.

For women, the right to choose whether or when to have a child is theirs alone, a precondition for deciding what to do with their lives.

Women can’t rely on the flawed Roe v. Wade decision to defend their rights. Instead, working people and our unions should lead and win millions to back the need for women’s right to family planning services, including birth control and safe and secure abortion. It’s a right that’s fundamental to winning full social, economic and political equality, to unite and strengthen the working class.

Working people need the discussion that was cut short by the passage of Roe v. Wade. We can’t leave this question in the hands of the bosses, their parties, or their court. We need to launch a nationwide battle to lead a thoroughgoing discussion about the rights of women and the political stakes involved for our class — and carry that discussion through to the end.

Where fights like this are being organized worldwide — like in Argentina, Ireland and elsewhere — millions are being won over and gains are being made.

Such a fight here, including public meetings and demonstrations, can win a substantial majority to recognize abortion as a right all workers have an interest in defending. Our unions need to speak out on this question, just as today they take up fights against discrimination against women on the job. And this is the road to forging the unity our class needs to take on the bigger battles that lie ahead.

## Moscow moves to crush Memorial rights group

**Continued from page 3**

pression because of its defense of opposition politician Aleksei Navalny, who was poisoned by government thugs, and the punk band Pussy Riot, whose members were jailed for their criticism of Putin and speaking out against his regime’s invasion of Crimea in 2014.

Memorial monitors Moscow’s attacks on political rights in Ukraine, Crimea, North Ossetia, Chechnya and Ingushetia. It exposed atrocities perpetrated during the Russian rulers’ two Chechen wars in the mid-1990s and early 2000s.

The attempt to shut down Memorial “is an attack on historical memory [of the Stalinist Gulag], but also on a highly respected organization which has had the courage to speak out, including over Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, its crimes in Chechnya and much more,” Halya Coynash, a member of the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, Memorial’s chapter in Ukraine, told the *Militant*.

Moscow claims Memorial is “justifying terrorism and extremism,” when it defends political prisoners, she said. “This has a very direct impact for occupied

Crimea, and particularly the persecution of Crimean Tatars.” Putin’s forces closed down the Mejlis, the Tatar assembly in Crimea, and jailed opponents of Russian rule on trumped-up terrorism charges.

Memorial was established in the late 1980s. Soviet dissident and physicist Andrei Sakharov served as its first chair until his death in 1989.

Assaults against the organization go back years. Memorial board member Natalya Estemirova was killed in 2009 while working to expose Moscow’s abuses in Chechnya. Two years later board member Oleg Orlov was kidnapped and beaten in Ingushetia. On Oct. 14 Memorial’s Moscow offices were raided while a film about the 1930 famine in Ukraine was being screened. That disaster, which took the lives of millions, was a product of Stalin’s policies of forced collectivization of peasants’ land.

“Liquidating us won’t mean that everything will stop,” Orlov told the BBC. “We’ll work from our apartments until they jail us all.” The trial on the banning of the International Memorial Society resumes Dec. 14.

### ‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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