

‘I think every job should have a union. It’s what we need’

BY SETH GALINSKY

“I didn’t realize what was going on with the unions until I met the *Militant*,” Derrick McCrary told Susan LaMont Jan. 8 outside his home in west Atlanta. “I was surprised to read about the strike at Kellogg’s. Always thought they were a good company to work for. I was shocked!”

McCrary worked as a diesel mechanic at FedEx before he retired on disability a few years ago. “If you talked about a union there,” he said, “you could be out the door, but we talked about it anyway. They say that you have be on their ‘team’ or out you go.

“I think every job should have a union,” he said. “We shouldn’t be scared to have that discussion. It’s what we need.”

He subscribed to the *Militant* last year and had picked up two books by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes then. This time he renewed his subscription for six months.

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To fight effects of rising prices, fight for cost of living protection

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Rising prices — especially on food, gas, rent and other necessities — are wreaking havoc with the lives of millions of working people. Strikes and other struggles by workers and their unions today for wage raises include demands for cost-of-living adjustment clauses in contracts and benefits to counter the effects of rising prices on workers’ real wages.

The boss class is pushing to defend its markets and profits from competitors by worsening the conditions and wages of the working class.

The fight for COLA was one of the key demands in strikes waged by 10,000 members of the United Auto Workers at John Deere agricultural and construction equipment plants, and by 1,400 Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers unionists at Kellogg’s cereal plants last fall, where they made gains. At Kellogg’s the bosses agreed to regular cost-of-

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St. Vincent nurses score victory in 10-month strike

Win better conditions for workers and patients



Worcester Telegram & Gazette/Christine Peterson

March 6 rally by nurses at St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester, Mass., on eve of strike. Workers won more hiring and control over safety and job conditions, defended strikers’ seniority, jobs.

BY JACOB PERASSO

WORCESTER, Mass. —Nurses organized by the Massachusetts Nurses Association at St. Vincent Hospital struck the Tenet-owned facility here for 10 months.

On Jan. 3 they voted 487-9 to ratify a contract that provides for a limit of four patient assignments per nurse in several areas of the hospital where previously they were often required to oversee five patients. The nurses held out for as long as necessary to win more control over safety and working conditions on the job.

The nurses also won limits on the bosses’ ability to send nurses home mid-shift, better health insurance benefits

for part-time nurses, substantial wage increases, and the right for all striking nurses to return to positions they held prior to the walkout.

“This is an enormous victory for our

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Moscow leads military intervention to put down protests in Kazakhstan



Via Qazak Times

Tengiz oil field workers in western Kazakhstan walk off the job Jan. 2 at start of what became nationwide protests against gov’t attacks on workers, doubling of fuel prices, brutal repression.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Massive anti-government protests swept across Kazakhstan in Central Asia Jan. 2 reflecting deep anger among working people toward the regime that has ruled since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Claiming he faced an “attempted coup,” President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev declared a state of emergency and asked Moscow to intervene.

More than 2,000 Moscow-led forces from the Collective Security Treaty Or-

ganization poured into the country Jan. 6. They included troops from Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan, the first intervention by this alliance of some former Soviet republics. The pact was pulled together by Moscow to counter the expansion of the U.S.-led NATO forces in eastern Europe.

The next day, Tokayev announced that he had ordered security forces to “fire without warning” after over 160

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Cuba’s socialist revolution built on participation of workers, farmers

BY SETH GALINSKY

Sixty-three years ago, after the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista fled Cuba, Fidel Castro led the “Caravan of Freedom” from Santiago, in the east, to Havana, as part of the victorious rebel forces organizing workers and farmers to take political power into their own hands.

Hundreds of thousands greeted Castro and Rebel Army combatants in towns and villages across the island during the Jan. 1-8 caravan. The massive response to the revolution helps explain why every attempt by the U.S. rulers to turn back the Cuban Revolution has failed.

Just hours before Batista fled in the

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Democrats launch attack on rights, Constitution, claim to ‘save democracy’

BY TERRY EVANS

Since before Donald Trump was elected president in 2016, the Democrats have campaigned nonstop to paint him as a criminal, outside the pale of normal bourgeois political dispute, bar him from office and demonize his working-class supporters. This drive reached a fever pitch for the first anniversary of the Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol building.

The liberals’ witch hunt against Trump is at the heart of their election

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San Diego-area sanitation strikers fight for wages, safety

‘Every job should have a union’

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Supporters of the *Militant* are getting back in touch with new readers who subscribed in the fall. The international renewals campaign began Jan. 1 and runs to Feb. 15. We’re finding workers are interested in discussing what we can do together to fight bosses’ unrelenting attacks, and what lies behind developments in world politics like mass protests against the government in Kazakhstan, as well as the vital lessons for working people here and worldwide from the Cuban Revolution.

Discussion in person with subscribers is key to the success of the campaign. SWP members Dan Fein and Dean Hazlewood drove to St. Louis Jan. 8 to get together with subscriber Steve Coenen, who works at a pharmaceutical company. “The *Militant* is the only place to read about the important union strikes taking place not only in the U.S. but in other countries,” Coenen told them. “Solidarity is the only weapon the working class has.”

Hazlewood described the strikes and organizing drives by Teamsters in the Midwest that gave a powerful impulse to the industrial union movement in the 1930s, and the SWP’s participation and leadership of those battles.

“We need to rebuild the labor movement,” Coenen said.

Fein reports that “over dinner we discussed the history of the SWP and Cuba’s socialist revolution.”

Coenen renewed his subscription and bought four books, including *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Barnes. “The greatest obstacle to the line of march of the toilers,” Barnes writes, “is the tendency, promoted and perpetuated by the exploiting classes, for working people to underestimate ourselves, to underestimate what we can accomplish, to doubt our own worth.”

The Cuban Revolution shows that with class solidarity, political con-

sciousness and a revolutionary leadership like that forged in struggle there, it is possible to stand up to the capitalist class and seemingly insurmountable odds, and win.

While giving priority to convincing subscribers to renew and involving a growing number of readers in helping get it around, *Militant* supporters are continuing to win new readers to the socialist newsweekly.

“The biggest problem we face is job security,” Leon Lee told this worker-correspondent and Sarah Katz when we knocked on his door in the Bronx, New York, Jan. 9. “With the economic crisis and COVID-19 lockdowns, workers don’t know if they’ll have a job a week or a month from now.”

We showed him the *Militant*’s coverage of the devastating consequences of recent wild fires in Louisville, Colorado, pointing out that the capitalists build homes close together in areas known for wild fires — increasing the likelihood flames will spread — and without us-



David McCrary

“I didn’t realize what was going on with the unions until I met the *Militant*,” Derrick McCrary, a retired FedEx diesel mechanic, told Susan LaMont as he renewed his subscription in Atlanta.

ing sufficiently fire-resistant materials. Bosses and landlords, Lee said, “don’t care about us.” He subscribed to the *Militant* and got *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by Barnes.

Want to 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 reach the *Militant* at themilitant@mac.com.

Capitalist rulers blame workers for spread of COVID

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

Millions of workers worldwide bristled with anger when they heard that French President Emmanuel Macron — a multimillionaire former investment banker — told *Le Parisien* in a Jan. 4 interview that he intended to “piss off” all those who remain unvaccinated, calling them “irresponsible and unworthy of being considered citizens.”

Using crude language, he added, “We need to tell them from Jan. 15, you will no longer be able to go to the restaurant. You will no longer be able to go for a coffee, you will no longer be able to go to the theater. You will no longer be able to go to the cinema.” Some 4 million French adults are unvaccinated.

From the millions of French working-class yellow vest protesters who marched weekly in 2019, forcing a rise in the minimum wage and other concessions from the Macron government, to those in the U.S. who Hillary Clinton famously dismissed as a “basket of deplorables,” Macron’s disdain for working people and the challenges they face was all too familiar.

Under a new law proposed by Macron, approved by the National Assembly and expected to pass the Senate, negative COVID-19 tests will no longer be accepted to enter many public venues and to ride long-distance trains or buses. Everyone over 16 years old will now have to show that they are fully vaccinated, including a booster shot.

Government mandates, like those pushed by Macron and by President Joseph Biden, are an assault on basic democratic rights. The last thing workers need is more edicts from the capitalist rulers telling them what they can and cannot do.

Of course, that doesn’t mean working people don’t have an interest in maximum vaccination. It means we can’t trust the government to do it. Our unions need to take the lead in educating and winning workers to see the proven safety and effectiveness of the shots and get vaccinated and boosted, and to organize centers where this can be done.

The growing number of strikes that marked 2021 show the determination of working people to stand up to the bosses and fight for better wages, work sched-

ules, cost-of-living increases and more workers control over production and safety. We need to be at work, standing together to fight, including for health care that is accessible, affordable and good quality. Vaccinations are part of this fight.

In the U.S., the Supreme Court is weighing the legality of a regulation introduced by Biden that would require a vaccine mandate for companies with more than 100 workers. If upheld, it would affect 84 million workers. In the meantime, the Democrats and Republicans help private for-profit bosses make a killing off the COVID-19 business, while workers have to check to see if their children’s schools or child care are open, if their buses are running and stand in long lines in the cold for a COVID-19 test in order to go back to work.

The capitalist rulers testing racket

The capitalist rulers in Washington passed the \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act in 2020, which allows, with virtually no supervision, anyone to offer rapid antigen tests, the same kind you can buy over-the-counter in a pharmacy — if you can find them in stock. And Washington politicians also voted that insurance companies were compelled to pay whatever these outfits charged them.

Some of the biggest profit-hungry thieves in this racket are the nation’s hospitals. A 2021 study by the Peterson Center on Healthcare and Kaiser Family Foundation found hospitals charged from \$20 to \$1,419 for a test, not including additional fees for “specimen collection” — pushing a swab up your nose — that ranged from \$18 to \$240.

But the biggest scammers are the popup testing sites. GS Labs, which set up shop as a tester in October 2020 and now operates in seven Midwest and Northwest states, used to focus on car dealerships and car washes. They charge \$380 for a rapid antigen test made by CareStart that costs \$24 for a two-pack at RiteAid.

“Our healthcare system is well-acquainted with the concept of making a profit from diagnostic testing,” Joshua Sharfstein, vice dean for public health practice at Johns Hopkins told

Consumer Reports. “When tests are scarce, and their use is not directed by public health authorities, the price in the private sector is likely to rise.”

And even the big outfits have long delays in sending out results. CityMD, which runs for-profit urgent care centers in New York and New Jersey, admits it is averaging five to seven days to deliver the more accurate PCR test results.

There is an alternative

So while the Macrons and Bidens look down their nose at working people, and delight in ordering us around, they’ve helped whip up a COVID hysteria and unleashed a capitalist money machine that robs us blind.

And they’ve hoarded vaccine supplies for the imperialist powers, leaving the peoples of the semicolonial world to wait. According to the World Health Organization, only 10% of people in those countries have been vaccinated as of this month.

In Cuba — where workers and farmers drove out the capitalists 63 years ago, then carried out a socialist revolution — medical care is a human right, instead of a highly profitable business. Today Cuba has one of the highest vaccination rates, one of the lowest death rates from COVID-19 and there is no mandate, no one was forced to get a shot.

Instead, mass organizations, including the neighborhood-based Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, the Federation of Cuban Women, student groups and unions, organized to carry out millions of visits, every day for months, to make sure everyone knew what precautions to take and that everyone who needed medical care got it.

None of the highly effective vaccines developed by Cuba are produced for profit. The country has sent millions of doses to aid other countries and helped Iran begin its own production of the vaccine. Cuba is the only government in the world that has sent medical brigades to 40 countries, from Italy and the Persian Gulf to Latin America and Africa, to fight COVID-19.

This example shows what is possible when workers and farmers take political power into their own hands; it’s an example of the road forward for working people around the world.

‘Militant’ Renewal Drive		
Jan. 1 - Feb. 15, week 1		
Country	Quota	Sold
UNITED STATES		
Albany	16	7
Atlanta	16	4
Chicago	25	10
Cincinnati	10	5
Fort Worth*	15	7
Lincoln	3	1
Los Angeles	17	4
Miami	7	3
Minneapolis	12	7
N. New Jersey	16	5
New York	25	5
Oakland	18	7
Philadelphia	10	4
Pittsburgh	12	3
Seattle	13	1
Washington, DC	11	3
Total U.S.	226	76
Prisoners	10	8
UNITED KINGDOM		
London	8	5
Manchester	8	1
Total U.K.	16	6
Canada	30	7
New Zealand	5	1
Australia	10	2
Total	297	100
SHOULD BE	300	51
* Raised goal		

Minneapolis trial prosecution deals blows to workers' rights

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

MINNEAPOLIS — After a 24-day trial here, former Brooklyn Center police officer Kimberly Potter was found guilty Dec. 23 on charges of first- and second-degree manslaughter in the killing of 20-year-old African American Daunte Wright during a traffic stop last April. When Wright moved to drive off to avoid arrest on outstanding weapons charges, Potter mistakenly drew her Glock pistol and shot Wright, thinking she was firing her Taser.

The trial conduct of the prosecutors and judge violated key legal rights that protect working people against the state and are needed as our class battles to defend our interests.

Until recently, the charging and prosecution of a cop for killing someone, much less by accident as was the case with Potter, was extremely rare. Recent prosecutions of police like Derek Chauvin — who was convicted in the killing of George Floyd here — and Potter are a response to massive anti-police brutality protests in 2020 and a wide and growing belief that cops should be held accountable for unjustifiable and illegal acts of violence.

But in many of these cases, liberal prosecutors, politicians and leaders of Black Lives Matter groups have pushed to run roughshod over the rights of the defendants in a drive to get convictions and impose long and vindictive sentences. This poses a danger for all working people, who often get caught up in the capitalist criminal justice system, especially those active in the class struggle.

Wright was pulled over by Potter, a 26-year veteran, and a rookie cop who she was training, for an expired registration and an air freshener hanging from the rearview mirror. The two cops then attempted to arrest Wright after learning he had an outstanding warrant on a weapons possession charge. Wright broke free and tried to drive away in his car. Police body camera videos shown at the trial show Potter yelling, “Taser! Taser! Taser!” before firing her pistol. After realizing she shot her gun, not a Taser, Potter collapsed to the ground, inconsolable. She cried out, “I just shot him. I grabbed the wrong (expletive) gun. I’m going to go to prison. I killed a boy.”

The prosecution never disputed the

fact Potter thought she had a Taser in her hand when she shot Wright.

Wright’s death came in the middle of the trial of Chauvin in the killing of George Floyd.

Potter was initially charged with second-degree manslaughter, meaning she caused Wright’s death through an act of negligence. The charge of negligence means that the accused is not aware of the risk, but should have been.

However, after the case was taken over by Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, the questionable charge of first-degree manslaughter was added. This charge says that she caused Wright’s death by acting recklessly with her firearm. The maximum sentence for the first-degree charge is 15 years in prison, substantially longer than second-degree manslaughter. By standard legal definitions of recklessness, Potter would have had to knowingly disregard a risk of death or serious harm.

State pressure for longer sentence

Ellison hoped the pressure of liberal public opinion in the Twin Cities area would override the actual working of the law and pressure the jury to find Potter guilty on the more weighty charge.

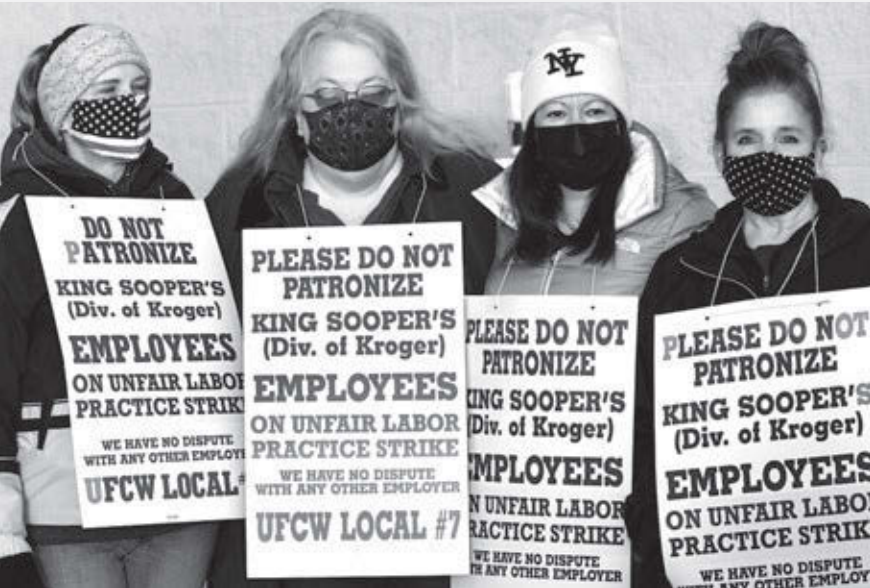
A number of Black Lives Matter figures spoke out, making it clear their desire for a conviction was more important than the facts in the case or the importance of the rights involved.

At a news conference Nov. 29, Courteney Ross, who said she was George Floyd’s girlfriend, said, “The fact that Kim Potter [brandished] a weapon for a routine traffic stop when the entire world was looking at racist cops under a microscope proved to me that Kim Potter was so brash and brazen that she murdered a Black man with no thought.”

Potter’s lawyers failed to center their case on the undisputed fact that Potter did not know she had a gun in her hand and could not have knowingly created the risk of killing Wright with a deadly weapon. Instead, they argued that even if she had intentionally drawn and fired her pistol, she would have been justified.

The prosecution, in its closing argument — which was not subject to defense rebuttal — falsely claimed that it didn’t matter if Potter thought she was holding the Taser to find her guilty of recklessness. And Judge Regina Chu

Thousands strike King Soopers groceries in Colorado



Militant/Karen Ray

ARVADA, Colo. — Some 8,400 grocery store workers, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7, went out on strike Jan. 12 at 87 stores in the region. They are fighting for better wages and working conditions, and against the two-tier divisions in the workforce imposed by the bosses, and other takeback demands.

At the Arvada King Soopers store here, over 20 strikers walked the picket line at dawn. Karrie Jaramillo, pictured above second from the right, told the *Militant* “We all do the same work, we should all get the same thing!” She has worked for the grocery store for six years and still is unable to get full-time status.

Workers voted overwhelming to strike. In Boulder and Broomfield, 100% voted to walk out. In the Denver metro area, over 95% voted to strike.

King Soopers is owned by Cincinnati-based Kroger, the country’s largest supermarket chain. Fifty-eight percent of the workers in Colorado are members of the union. U.S. grocery sales were up 11% in 2020, more than triple the year before, as more people shopped during pandemic-imposed government lockdowns that shuttered or restricted restaurants and bars. Kroger’s operating profits were \$4 billion.

Other issues in the strike include improved health care and pensions, an end to forced overtime, double-time pay on holidays, more full-time positions, and an end to company outsourcing jobs to third-party vendors. Workers hired after 2005 work under a two-tier system with fewer benefits.

The union is also fighting against company attempts to limit sick time leave to only 48 hours a year and eliminating overtime pay after working 8 hours. King Soopers had paid workers \$2 an hour in “hazard pay” early in the pandemic, but stopped in May 2020.

The company wage proposal for new hires is for \$16 per hour, “only 13 cents above minimum wage,” Kim Cordova, president of UFCW Local 7 in Colorado and Wyoming, told the press. In some stores workers are still working as contracts are still in negotiations, including in the Colorado Springs meat department where the contract expires Feb 22. Some struck stores have begun advertising for “temporary workers” — that is, strike-breakers — at \$18 an hour.

The bosses say they’re trying to “keep prices down for consumers,” hoping to pit shoppers against the workers.

According to Local 7, union members and supporters will be coming to Colorado from other states to join the strikers’ picket lines.

— KAREN RAY AND VALERIE JOHNSON

New from Pathfinder: Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity The Long View of History

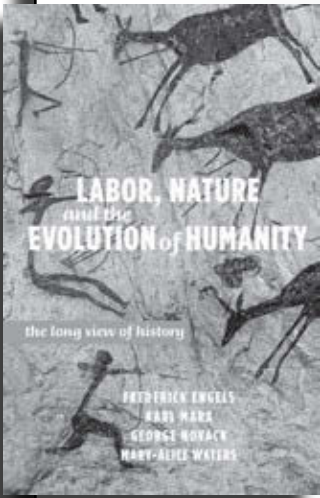
By Frederick Engels, George Novack,
Karl Marx, Mary-Alice Waters

Where did humanity come from? How did we arrive where we are today? Why is that even important?

Because without understanding how human society, since our remotest ancestors, has been created through social labor, working people remain prisoners of the capitalist epoch in which we live.

Special offer through March 15 — \$7
\$5 with a subscription to the *Militant*

www.pathfinderpress.com



failed to correct this and instruct the jury on what the law actually said.

After four days of deliberations, the jury returned guilty verdicts on both counts. They agreed relatively quickly to convict Potter on the lesser charge, but told the judge they were having difficulty reaching agreement on the first-degree charge. Two days later they found her guilty on both.

“Black Lives Matter activists,” columnist Paul Butler wrote in the Dec. 29 *Washington Post*, “should be wary, however, of the hardcore strategies deployed to win their case.”

Butler, who is African American, is a professor of law at Georgetown University. He writes on “issues at the convergence of criminal justice and race.”

“Prosecutors had to prove only that Potter committed a misdemeanor — recklessly handling a firearm,” he wrote. “This is the manslaughter version of the felony murder charge.” Felony murder is used by prosecutors to win long sentences — even executions — for people who happen to commit a crime in which someone else kills someone.

“Prosecutors often rely on these kinds of charges when they want the most severe punishment for people who have

killed accidentally,” he said.

Butler concludes, “These kinds of prosecutorial power grabs will only come back to haunt people of color because ‘bad apple’ cops will not be their primary targets.”

This points to the importance for working people of rights violated in this trial.

Prosecutors said they weren’t satisfied with just winning the harsher sentence, but plan to seek a prison term longer than recommended guidelines at Potter’s Feb. 18 sentencing hearing. They argue she should spend even more time in prison because she abused her authority and endangered others.

— CALENDAR —

ILLINOIS Chicago

Celebration of the Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. Speakers and musical performances. Thurs., Jan. 20, 6 p.m. Lincoln United Methodist Church, 2242 S. Damen Ave., Tel.: (630) 915-0654. Masks and proof of vaccination required. Sponsored by Chicago Cuba Coalition, Southsiders for Peace, Socialist Workers Party, and Party for Socialism and Liberation.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles around the world!

If you are involved in a skirmish or strike or know other workers who are, please contact the *Militant* at (212) 244-4899 or themilitant@mac.com.

San Diego-area sanitation strikers fight for wages, safety

SAN DIEGO — Sanitation workers on strike at Republic Services in the San Diego area remain on the picket lines after voting down a new offer by the company Jan. 6. Workers are demanding higher wages, on a par with other Republic Services workers, and safer working conditions from a company that is the second-largest landfill and trash collection corporation in the country.

Members of Teamsters Local 542 voted 136 to 86 to reject the offer.

“One of the bigger issues,” Cesar Silva, a worker who voted no, told CBS8-TV at the union hall, is “our pension and our wages. And the discomfort we have as drivers now in our equipment.” The strike began Dec. 17.

Republic settled a contract recently in Orange County with raises of over \$2 an hour the first year and \$1 for each succeeding year of the contract, but they have refused to match that offer to the workers in San Diego. The bosses claim that the area’s closeness to Mexico means the cost of living is lower there.

Drivers also say unsafe conditions on the trucks and the frequent refusal of the company to fix them has to change.

“In 2020, Republic Services earned over \$10 billion, with \$1.2 billion in net profit, while its CEO’s total compensation totaled over \$12 million,” the Teamsters said in a press statement. “Republic’s largest shareholder is Microsoft founder Bill Gates, and Gates’ investment advisor sits on Republic’s board of directors.”

As uncollected garbage piles up, Republic said they’re bringing in scabs to replace workers on strike. They are using a special group called the “Blue Crew,” which is used specifically to act as strikebreakers when there is a labor dispute. But piles of

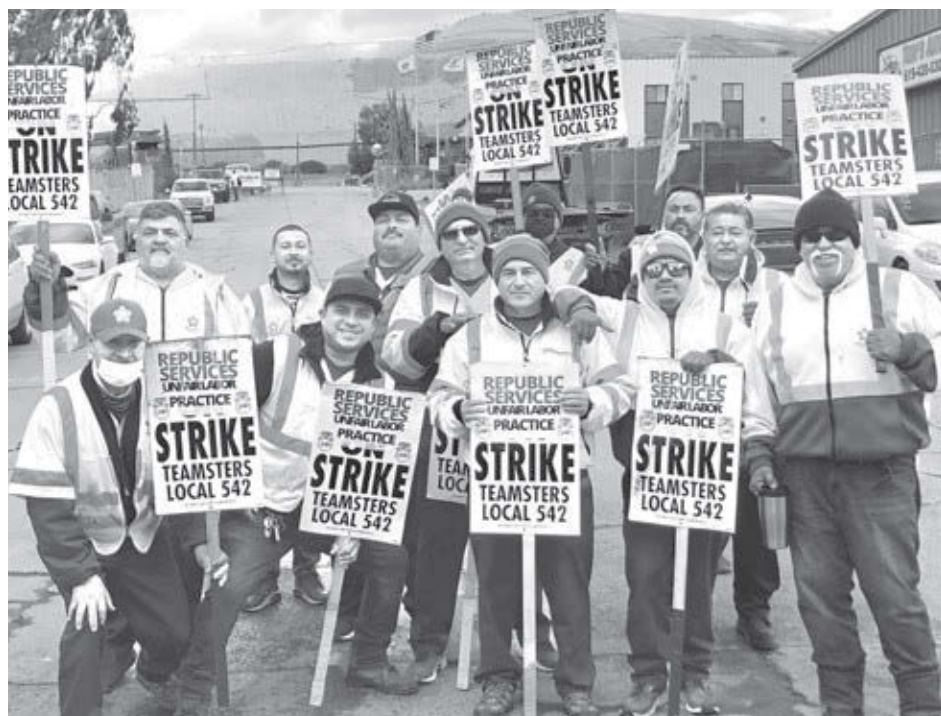
trash still abound in the area, stinking and attracting rats.

Mary Salas, the mayor of Chula Vista, where Republic has its largest San Diego-area facility, has come out in favor of the strike. “Our trash collectors, many of whom are Chula Vista residents, deserve a fair contract,” she told KGTV.

Salas also spoke with CBS8, noting the company’s move to use strikebreakers. “I have full support for the sanitation workers,” she said. “They are striking and rightly so.” She added that the next time the city negotiates with Republic over their services, she intends to push for greater protection for the workers.

Officials have set a City Council meeting on the strike Jan. 11, and the union plans to attend and hold a rally outside City Hall.

“Our members have been working nonstop throughout the pandemic to keep San Diego communities clean and safe” Jaime Vasquez, secretary-treasurer of Local 542, said in a union press release. “They have been pushed to the brink by exces-



Militant/Laura Garza

Sanitation workers in Teamsters Local 542 stand firm in nearly four-week strike against Republic Services in the San Diego area demanding wages on par with company’s workers elsewhere.

sive working hours and harassment by company management.”

“It’s no surprise that our members voted down Republic’s current contract proposal,” Vasquez said. “In addition, it was a slap in the face to learn that Republic gave its board members hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash and stock this week.”

“The only way the City of Chula Vista is going to get cleaned up is for us to go back to work,” Laderer

Hampton, a striker and driver who’s been with Republic Services for 16 years, told CBS8. “Not the Blue Crew, us. The drivers right here, that’s picketing.”

In addition to the San Diego area, Teamster members at Republic Services are in negotiations for contracts that expired in 2021 in San Francisco; Seattle; New Orleans; and San Jose, Stockton, and Richmond, California.

— Sylvia Hansen and Laura Garza

Australia refugees fight detention, rotten conditions

BY BOB AIKEN

SYDNEY — Australia’s ruling capitalist families have a long history of harsh border control measures against refugees trying to land by boat. Beginning in 2012, Canberra began paying the governments of Papua New Guinea and Nauru to run detention centers for such people seeking asylum in Australia.

Successive Australian governments refused entry to more than 4,000 asylum-seekers from a wide range of Asian and African countries. Canberra declared none would ever be allowed to settle permanently in Australia.

The policy has come under international pressure, as well as hunger strikes and riots in the detention camps. In 2017, Canberra was forced to pay a 70 million Australian dollar settlement (\$50 million) after a lawsuit by over 1,900 detainees who had been harmed in the centers.

The Australian rulers announced in October they would stop sending detainees to Papua New Guinea and close the center there, while keeping the Nauru center running. “Anyone who attempts to enter Australia illegally by boat will be returned, or sent to Nauru,” Home Affairs Minis-

ter Karen Andrews said.

Some 1,200 former detainees from Papua New Guinea are now in Australia on “final departure” visas, while they make arrangements to leave the country. The U.S. government has accepted some 1,000, with hundreds of others forced to return to the countries they fled from. There are still more than 200 refugees in Papua New Guinea and Nauru.

In 2019 Canberra was forced to bring 192 asylum-seekers to Australia for medical treatment. Hotels refitted as immigration detention centers to house them in both Melbourne and Brisbane have become the focus of protests by the refugees and their supporters.

Most of these refugees never received the medical care they needed and are being held under indefinite detention. They are confined to their room and adjacent corridor, with no outdoor access, severely restricted visiting rights, and also face additional isolation imposed under the pretext of coronavirus quarantine.

More than 100 people have recently been released from this harsh “hotel” detention on final departure visas, but some 75 are still being held.

Fresh attention was brought to this issue when tennis star Novak Djokovic was detained Jan. 5 for failing to meet strict vaccination requirements on his visa. Until his release Jan. 10 he was being put up in the same Melbourne hotel where some 30 asylum-seekers are held.

Earlier some of the Serbian player’s tennis fans chanting, “Free Novak!” mingled outside the hotel with refugee activists shouting, “Free the refugees!”

Hossein Latifi, an Iranian refugee detained for nine years, told Al Jazeera Jan. 6 that he wished Djokovic well, but noted the sportsman had been sequestered for “just a few days” pending his legal appeal.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 27, 1997

January 15 was the biggest day yet as protest strikes in south Korea entered their fourth week. Union officials say 630,000 workers participated in the strike that day, and tens of thousands flooded the streets of Seoul and other cities demanding the repeal of antilabor laws.

The measures make it easier to lay off workers and replace strikers. They maintain a ban on the Federation of Democratic Unions, the second largest labor federation in the country. Another provision grants expanded powers to Seoul’s political police.

The unions had set a deadline of January 14 for the government to rescind the laws, or see an expanded strike. As the deadline approached, thousands of strikers, students, and others took part in street protests. Some 20,000 workers at Hyundai defied a company lockout and held a rally inside the plant.



January 28, 1972

SAN FRANCISCO — After negotiations between the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union and the shipowners were broken off, ILWU pickets closed down the waterfront here. One of the most important issues is the guaranteed annual wage, which would provide payment for 40 hours work every week whether or not work is available.

Curtis Counts, director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, told the press that if the longshoremen walked out again, the Nixon administration would ask Congress to pass a law that would “either settle the terms of the contract, or establish a mechanism for handling those terms.”

Even after 100 days on the picket line from July to October, an 80-day Taft-Hartley injunction that expired Christmas day, plus a 22-day contract extension, the morale of the ranks remains high.



January 25, 1947

NEW YORK — Eight lives were snuffed out in Harlem a week ago, and a few weeks before that, 37 men and women and children perished in an explosion.

The people in the slums live in the constant dread of who — because of bad conditions, over-crowding, inadequate garbage disposal, faulty electrical connections — will make the first mistake and start the fire. New Yorkers are condemned by the tens and hundreds to die in these disasters. If you want to find out who was guilty of murder, you will find them in the same banks and insurance companies that force people to live in rat-traps and death holes.

In the last three years Harlem’s population increased by 120,000, but no new buildings have been erected for 40 years. Only a militant fight based on an effective housing program will save the people from fire and disaster.

Kazakh protests put down

Continued from front page

people were killed, a majority in the country's largest city, Almaty. Almost 10,000 had been detained. As Tokayev consolidated his grip on power he announced Jan. 11 that foreign forces will begin withdrawing.

Governments under former President Nursultan Nazarbayev, and his hand-picked successor Tokayev, trampled on rights to free speech and assembly, crushed opponents and banned their parties. Nazarbayev stepped aside for Tokayev in 2019, after three decades in power. Under both, social inequalities and joblessness rose.

On Jan. 8 Tokayev arrested Karim Massimov, Nazarbayev's handpicked successor as the country's intelligence chief, charging him and other security officials with "treason" for disobeying orders.

Solidarity action in U.S.

In New York's Times Square Jan. 8 some 60 people, many of them young Kazakh immigrants, gathered behind a banner reading, "Stop dictatorship in Kazakhstan." A group of Armenians joined with placards opposing the Armenian government's part in the intervention.

"All foreign troops out of Kazakhstan! We can solve the problems ourselves," Gani Stambek from Free Kazakhs said as he convened the rally.

Russian President Vladimir Putin "wants to control the region," Sherkan Suleimen, 24, from Los Angeles and also a leader of Free Kazakhs, told the *Militant*. "He's worried if one post-Soviet regime falls then others will too."

Protests in Kazakhstan began peacefully Jan. 2 in Zhanaozen, in the oil-rich western region of the country after the government doubled the price of liquefied petroleum gas overnight. An eight-month oil workers' strike took place there in 2011. Workers continue to demand retribution for the deadly suppression of the strike by the Nazarbayev regime.

Despite the government rapidly rescinding the price increase, demonstrations continued to spread. As banned opposition parties joined in, actions reached a peak Jan. 5 in Almaty.

"Some police and soldiers refused to shoot and started joining the protests" prior to violence by provocative elements and police attacks, followed by Moscow's intervention, Stambek told the *Militant*.

"The Nazarbayev family owns all the oil companies," Suleimen told the *Mi-*

tant. Their grab for the country's patrimony began following the privatizations of state enterprises after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

The two largest U.S. oil corporations, Chevron and Exxon-Mobil, have multibillion dollar investments in Kazakh oil and gas drilling companies — and close relations with the Nazarbayev family.

Oppressed by czars, Stalin

Kazakhs are a Muslim, Turkic-speaking people that for centuries were nomadic herders. They became subjected to national oppression by the Russian czars. Shortly after the triumph of the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution in 1917, the region was ravaged by a civil war. The propertied classes, which tried to reimpose their rule, opposed Kazakh independence.

In 1920 Kazakhstan became an autonomous republic. Under V.I. Lenin, the revolutionary government championed the self-determination of oppressed peoples that made up the former czarist empire. For the first time Kazakhs had their own territory.

In the early 1920s, the revolutionary government worked with the nomadic people there. In the cities, Kazakh institutions of learning and culture were founded.

Kazakh Soviet leaders launched the Red Caravan expedition in 1922. It followed nomadic tribes across the steppes, establishing mobile outstations to educate about hygiene, domestic relations, labor efficiency, literacy and appreciation of culture. It offered medical aid, including vaccinations, as well as veterinary advice and better livestock breeding techniques.

Nomads who attended classes became voluntary emissaries for the Soviet system.

But a bloody counterrevolution carried out by petty-bourgeois bureaucratic layers headed by Joseph Stalin reversed these accomplishments in the late 1920s and '30s. In Kazakhstan national leaders were brutally liquidated by Stalin's henchmen.

From 1928 Stalin began the forced collectivization of peasant land, shattering the worker-peasant alliance on which the revolution was founded, and causing the deaths of millions across the Soviet Union. In Kazakhstan this involved the seizure of the nomads' collectively owned herds, suppos-



edly to end "nomadic feudalism," and ending their migratory existence. Kazakhs slaughtered their animals rather than submit to Stalin's dictates. In the famine of 1930-33, some 1.3 million Kazakhs died, a quarter of the republic's population.

Once Stalin transformed the Soviet Union from a voluntary federation into its opposite, its breakup became inevitable. The police-state regime collapsed in 1991 and Kazakhstan became independent shortly afterwards. Nazarbayev then built his regime, enriching his family and supporters from the country's patrimony on the backs of the toilers.

Lenin's Final Fight
Speeches and Writings 1922-23

"I declare war to the death on Great Russian chauvinism."

"A distinction must be made between the nationalism of an oppressor nation and the nationalism of an oppressed nation, of a big nation and that of a small nation."

— V.I. Lenin, 1922

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Democrats launch attack on rights, Constitution, claim they need to 'save democracy'

Continued from front page

campaign strategy in 2022 as they desperately try to hold onto control of at least the House of Representatives as the Joseph Biden presidency becomes less and less popular. And they dream of barring Trump from ever running for president again, fearing he would likely win.

Their drive against him is one part of the liberals' broader effort to deal blows to the Constitution and longstanding norms of capitalist politics in order to gain control of Congress and advance their program.

Whenever rival capitalist parties treat their policy differences with each other as crimes, they set a precedent that threatens political space and rights working people need.

The capitalist rulers and their liberal politicians have become more openly contemptuous of working people and more fearful about what is building up among the workers, farmers and small shopkeepers who are being hit harder and harder by the unfolding crisis of the capitalist system today. Their growing concern about rising working-class struggles fuels their hatred towards those Hillary Clinton famously called "deplorables" and branded as "irredeemable."

The liberals are determined to stifle workers' ability to support Trump, or capitalist rivals of a similar ilk, who campaign for "change" from business as usual in Washington, saying they'll provide jobs, halt Washington's endless wars abroad and stand up to the "woke" crusade enforced by liberals who believe they must dictate what working people can say and how we behave.

Most importantly, they fear workers will break from the capitalist rulers' two-party shell game and form their

own party, a labor party, to fight to take political power into their own hands. That's why the Democratic Party-run legislature in New York cut the ballot requirements for the two big bosses' parties while *tripling* the signatures needed by working-class parties like the Socialist Workers Party.

Typical of the liberals' anti-working-class scorn was singer and comedian Bette Midler's Dec. 20 outburst against working people from West Virginia. She erupted in anger at West Virginia's Democratic Party Senator Joseph Manchin's resistance to some of Biden's legislative program. Echoing Clinton, Midler called the working people who elected Manchin "poor, illiterate and strung out."

The liberals' anti-working class angst leads them to target any part of the Constitution that provides an avenue for workers to put their stamp

Cuba's socialist revolution

Continued from front page

early morning of Jan. 1, 1959, State Department officials sent a telegram to Washington's Embassy in Havana, complaining that their dictator hadn't taken "active measures to eliminate Castro" earlier, when the Cuban government "possessed ample military equipment to deal with it."

The U.S. rulers tried one last desperate attempt to block the rebel forces taking power.

They orchestrated a coup by Gen. Eulogio Cantillo, head of Batista's joint chiefs of staff. A few days earlier Cantillo had assured Castro he would not allow Batista to flee nor ask the U.S. Embassy to "mediate." Breaking his word, he personally escorted Batista to the plane that took the dictator into exile and appointed a new government beholden to Washington.

In response, Castro issued a call to the people of Cuba — "especially to all working people" — to launch a general strike under the banner, "Revolution yes, military coup no!" Soon workers paralyzed production across the island. Within three days the revolutionary forces controlled virtually every city.

Cantillo didn't last a day in power. A crowd of 200,000 greeted Castro and the Rebel Army when it entered Santiago on Jan. 1. Castro assured the crowd the overthrow of Batista would

not be just a change of faces, with capitalist politicians continuing to feed at the government trough. "It is the people who have conquered their freedom, nobody else but the people," he said. He repeated this message at every stop.

In areas under rebel control, the revolutionary leadership had set an example for the country — organizing conferences of peasants, opening schools and health care centers and setting up literacy classes.

Justice, not revenge

Castro made it clear that while top officials in Batista's army responsible for bloody crimes against the people would be detained and put on trial, rank-and-file soldiers "are not to blame for the horrors of the tyranny." Even for the war criminals, he said, "There is justice, there will not be revenge."

The revolutionary leader also explained that the Cuban Revolution set an example for all of Latin America. "They all have their eyes on us," he said. "The happiness of today is not just in Cuba, but in all of the Americas. Just like how we are glad when a dictator falls in Latin America."

Castro had originally planned on heading straight to Havana, less than a day away by road, But it took a week as workers and farmers insisted Castro stop and address them in town after



Fidel Castro's Caravan of Freedom arrives in Havana Jan. 8, 1959, after victorious procession across Cuba. "You can win power only with the support of the people, by mobilizing the masses," he said. Cuban Revolution opened road to socialist revolution in the Americas.

town. They wanted to see and hear from the combatants who had defeated Batista. He also held meetings with local leaders of the Castro-led July 26 Movement; disarmed and spoke with soldiers from the old Batista army; and asked the workers and peasants what their biggest problems are and what they wanted the new government to do.

At each stop, Castro appealed to working people and former soldiers, now won to the revolution, to join the rebel forces marching to Havana. Across the country the former police were disbanded.

In speech after speech to huge crowds along the way, Castro direct-

ed his message to working people and to the combatants who brought down the dictatorship.

In a speech broadcast on television two years later, Castro explained he had considered himself a Marxist when the Rebel Army defeated Batista. He was convinced of the need for working people to take political power into their own hands. "We knew that you can win power only with the support of the people, by mobilizing the masses," he said.

In Camagüey Jan. 4, Castro said that the triumphant revolution would carry out the program proposed by the July 26 Movement, a program that had been distributed in the tens of thousands across the island beginning in 1954.

Power to workers and peasants

"We can't be denied the right to something for our peasants, for those men who for years shared our ups and downs and our hopes," Castro told the crowd in Camagüey. "We will never forget our most basic obligations" to improve life in the most isolated regions, not just in the big cities. The revolution would ensure that there are roads, schools and hospitals in the countryside, he said.

The revolutionary leader's emphasis was on working people seeing themselves as the primary actors in the coming battles to advance the revolution, not bourgeois politicians or anyone else.

"How did the Rebel Army win the war? By telling the truth," he told the massive crowd in Havana Jan. 8. "How did the tyranny lose the war? By deceiving the soldiers."

"I'm going to continue with the same system," Castro said. "Always telling the people the truth."

"We should not fool ourselves believing that from now on everything will be easy," he said. "Maybe from now on it will be more difficult." He was pointing to the far-reaching revolutionary changes that the people of Cuba needed to carry through.

Inspired by their contact with Castro and his fellow revolutionaries, working people went into action, enthusiastically putting their stamp on the unfolding struggle. Over the next few months they carried out a thoroughgoing land reform, nationalized U.S. and other big capitalist corporations, placing them under the control of the workers, and offered selfless solidarity to working people and oppressed nations around the world. They had begun the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

For that, U.S. imperialism will never forgive the working people of Cuba and their Marxist leadership.

New spy, disruption outfits

In an ominous threat to political rights, Matthew G. Olsen, head of the Justice Department's National Security Division, told the Senate Judiciary Committee Jan. 11 that the Capitol riot showed the FBI hadn't been aggressive enough in fighting "domestic extremists." He said his department is forming a new "domestic terrorism unit" to spy on and target political groups. He said it would "augment" the FBI and other already existing political police outfits.

Jill Sanborn, head of the FBI's national security branch, said the spy agency has "elevated" its targeting of anti-government extremism.

These steps underscore how the liberals are facilitating the extension of the capitalist rulers political police. As the experience of the Socialist Workers Party, unionists, Black rights fighters, opponents of Washington's wars and others with FBI spying and disruption shows, these outfits will be used to target working people and our struggles against capitalist oppression and exploitation.



Rally in New York Jan. 8 protests against Kazakhstan regime repression, Moscow intervention.

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‘As long as the capitalist system exists, wars will be inevitable’

The French edition of *Socialism on Trial: Testimony at Minneapolis Sedition Trial* is one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for January. It contains the testimony of James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the Socialist Workers Party, at the 1941 trial of 18 leaders of the SWP and the Minneapolis Teamsters union. Under the thought-control Smith Act, they were found guilty and jailed on charges of “conspiring to advocate the overthrow of the U.S. government.” The U.S. rulers’ aim was to prevent the building of working-class opposition to their entry into World War II and to block development of class-struggle leadership in the labor movement. In the excerpt below, Albert Goldman, the attorney for the defendants, questions Cannon about the SWP’s views. Copyright © 2015 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

JAMES P. CANNON: The party is internationalist to the very core.

ALBERT GOLDMAN: And what do you mean by that?

A: We believe that the modern world is an economic unit.

No country is self-sufficient. It is impossible to solve the accumulated problems of the present day, except on a world scale; no nation is self-suffi-



Militant
Meeting of 800 demanding release of 18 members of SWP and Minneapolis Teamsters union, who were framed up and imprisoned in 1944-45 for opposing imperialist rulers’ war drive.

cient, and no nation can stand alone.

The economy of the world now is all tied together in one unit, and because we think that the solution of the problem of the day — the establishment of socialism — is a world problem, we believe that the advanced workers in every country must collaborate in working toward that goal. We have, from the very beginning of our movement, collaborated with like-minded people in all other countries in trying to promote the socialist movement on a world scale. We have advocated the international organization of the workers, and their cooperation in all respects, and mutual assistance in all respects possible.

Q: Does the party have any attitude on the question of racial or national differences?

A: Yes, the party is opposed to all forms of national chauvinism, race prejudice, discrimination, denigration of races — I mean by that, this hateful theory of the fascists about inferior races. We believe in and we stand for the full equality of all races, nationalities, creeds. It is written in our program that we fight against anti-Semitism and that we demand full and unconditional equality for the Negro in all avenues of life. We are friends of the colonial people, the Chinese, of all those that are victimized and treated as inferiors.

Q: What is the position of the party on socialism as a world system?

A: We not only stand for an international socialist movement, but we believe that the socialist order will be a world order, not a national autarchy which is carried to its absurd extreme by the fascists, who have tried to set up a theory that Germany could be a completely self-sufficient nation in an economic sense, that Italy can be, and so forth. We believe that the wealth of the world, the raw materials of the world, and the natural resources of the world are so distributed over the earth that every country contributes something and lacks something for a rounded and harmonious development of the productive forces of mankind.

We visualize the future society of mankind as a socialist world order which will have a division of labor between the various countries according to their resources, a comradely collaboration between them, and production eventually of the necessities and luxuries of mankind according to a single universal world plan. ...

Q: Mr. Cannon, will you tell us the position of the Socialist Workers Party on the causes of modern war?

A: Modern wars, in the opinion of our party, are caused by the conflict of imperialist nations for markets, colonies, sources of raw material, fields for investment, and spheres of influence.

Q: What do you mean by “imperialist,” Mr. Cannon?

A: Those capitalist nations which directly or indirectly exploit other countries.

Q: What is the party’s position on the inevitability of wars under the capitalist system?

A: As long as the capitalist system remains, and with it those conditions which I have mentioned, which flow automatically from the operation of the capitalist and imperialist system, wars, recurring wars, are inevitable.

Q: And can anybody’s opposition, including the opposition of the Socialist Workers Party to war, prevent wars under the capitalist system?

A: No. Our party has always stated that it is impossible to prevent wars without abolishing the capitalist system which breeds war. It may be possible to delay a war for a while, but eventually it is impossible to prevent wars while this system, and its conflicts of imperialist nations, remains.

Q: Then is it true that the party is of the opinion that wars are caused by international economic conflicts, and not by the good will or bad will of some people?

A: Yes. That does not eliminate the possibility of incidental attacks being caused by the acts of this or that ruling group of one country or another; but fundamentally wars are caused by the efforts of all the capitalist powers to expand into other fields. The only way they can get them is by taking them away from some other power, because the whole world has been divided up among a small group of imperialist powers. That is what leads to war, regardless of the will of the people. ...

Our party is unalterably opposed to all imperialist wars.

Q: And what is meant by opposition to imperialist wars?

A: By that we mean that we do not give any support to any imperialist war. We do not vote for it; we do not vote for any person that promotes it; we do not speak for it; we do not write for it. We are in opposition to it.

Q: How does the Socialist Workers Party oppose the idea of the United States entering into the war?

A: We do it as every other political party promotes its ideas on any foreign policy. We write against it in the paper; we speak against it; we try to create sentiment in any organization we can approach, to adopt resolutions against the war.

January
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Oppose rulers' attacks on political rights!

For decades the capitalist rulers in Washington have used the FBI — their political police — to spy on, disrupt and frame up militant workers, Black rights fighters, opponents of its wars, and communists, and to make a mockery of the U.S. Constitution's protections against attacks on our rights by their state. Now the Justice Department is organizing yet another outfit, to snoop on so-called domestic terrorists. It will join in trampling on rights that are crucial to working people.

Today, Democrats are screaming that "American democracy" is under frontal assault by the Republicans and the only way to save it is to strengthen their control over the capitalist government, make far-reaching changes to the Senate, Supreme Court and other state institutions, and to bolster their repressive apparatus.

From the U.S. to France and elsewhere, the rulers pour scorn on working people. French President Emmanuel Macron says he wants to "piss off" the unvaccinated who are "unworthy of being considered citizens" because they do not comply with his mandates.

The capitalists' contempt for working people is rooted in their fear of our class. More workers are willing to fight to defend ourselves from bosses' attempts to impose two-tier wages, unsafe conditions, grueling schedules and wages that don't match price raises.

Regardless of who the rulers' spies target today, every extra weapon in their arsenal will be used against workers and our unions to attack our rights, weaken our struggles, and attack any initiatives we take to organize independently of them and their parties.

The hidden scope of government spy operations was brought into the open during the 13-year political fight and lawsuit brought by the Socialist Workers Party against the FBI.

For the first time, in 1986 a court ruled that the use of FBI informers to infiltrate the SWP and spy on its members and those they work with violates constitutional guarantees of privacy and freedom of association. It ruled burglaries by cops to steal documents or plant microphones violates constitutional protections against "unreasonable search and seizure." And it ruled that the FBI's disruption of the SWP's activity and the lives of its members was unlawful.

By scoring an unprecedented victory, the party exposed the true face of the capitalist state and defended the rights of all working people. It created a weapon we can use today to fight against government interference in our lives and the organizations we belong to.

The Socialist Workers Party and its 2022 campaigns will battle against all moves to attack our rights from all wings of the capitalist rulers.

Fight for cost of living protection against rising prices

Continued from front page

living adjustments of up to \$3 an hour through 2026.

"The Return of the Wage COLA" lamented a Dec. 24 *Wall Street Journal* editorial, begrudgingly acknowledging the gains made by these strikers. The Kellogg's agreement "is another sign that the 2021 inflation surge will have damaging economic consequences," the editors wrote. That is, damaging for the boss class they speak for, as workers wrest wage gains out of bosses' profits.

More workers are using union power — from United Mine Workers on strike in Alabama to United Steelworkers locked out by ExxonMobil in Texas — to fight boss attacks and prevent real wages plummeting. This points a road forward for all working people.

Inflation figure at 39-year high

Government inflation figures rose to 6.8% for the 12 months ending in November, the largest yearly increase in 39 years. But the consumer price index downplays the much larger increase in basic goods and services that working people use the most. Meat, poultry, fish and eggs, key sources of protein, are up by 13%, and gas prices jumped 58%.

Average wages rose by 4.7% last year, but rising prices meant real wages fell. In November wages declined 2.3% from last year.

There's more. If inflation was "measured by the model economists were actually using in June 1982, inflation is actually at a 74-year high," says an article in the *New York Sun* — 14.9%!

A number of additional changes were made under the Democratic Party administration of Bill Clinton in 1997 that substantially reduced official inflation figures. One was to fiddle with the real world. As the price of steaks rose, government number crunchers would assume workers would switch to cheaper cuts. So they replaced steak prices from computing the CPI and substituted lower hamburger prices. Voila!

Clinton's White House also introduced something called "hedonics" to their calculations. This scheme claims to measure the satisfaction workers and others get when they buy something new, like a computer or a car. If you buy something that gives you "more pleasure," the cost is calculated down.

These were all ways to try to mask the reality facing working people that we see every time we shop.

The government ballyhooed that they raised Social Security benefits starting in January by 5.9%. But that's still below rising prices. At the same time they jacked up the Medicare premium by 14.55%, which is deducted from your monthly Social Security, so recipients will in fact be getting less.

Food and energy prices are rising worldwide, to

their highest level in a decade, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

"We spent almost two years risking our lives on the front line," Julieta Irueta, a 27-year-old nurse from Buenos Aires, Argentina, told the *Journal*, "and now, on our wages, it's getting harder to eat." From Brazil to Turkey, millions face the same conditions.

For workers in the 19 EU member states that have adopted the euro as their currency, consumer prices rose by a record 5% last year. In Turkey, the government's consumer price index soared by 36%.

Raises don't mean higher prices

The bosses and the capitalist media falsely contend that rising wages and COLA protection automatically lead to higher prices. But that isn't true. Rising wages simply mean a greater share of the wealth produced by workers' labor power — the source of all wealth under capitalism — goes to the working class instead of into the bosses' pockets. It means the relationship of class forces has shifted in our favor, so we can boost our wages at the expense of the bosses' profits.

Karl Marx, a founder of the modern working-class movement, explained this in *Value, Price, and Profit*. "If wages fall, profits will rise; and if wages rise, profits will fall," he wrote, "but all these variations will not affect the value of the commodity."

Of course, this doesn't mean the bosses aren't always looking for ways to chisel out an extra buck — from cutting the size of your cereal box to filling a bigger box with less cereal.

Inflation appears when "governments and banks crank out money in various paper forms, eventually far outstripping the output of commodities that could be purchased with that money," wrote Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, in *New International* no. 10. "Under such conditions, competing capitalist commercial interests bid prices up and up and up and up in an ultimately self-defeating effort to reap surplus profits."

Because of the decadeslong downward trend of profit rates today, the ruling capitalists more and more use their accumulated riches to speculate on fictitious capital, like stocks and bonds and bets on bitcoins, other cryptocurrencies, and now made-up NFTs, "non-fungible tokens," instead of expanding manufacturing plants, stepping up production and creating new jobs.

The road forward for working people is to organize and use our unions to take action to defend our class interests. This includes fighting for cost-of-living protection in our contracts and for all those living on government programs, from Social Security to food stamps. And we have to act to extend solidarity with all of today's labor struggles, to increase the chance of victory.

Nurses score victory

Continued from front page

patients and our members, and it is a testament to the grit and determination of every nurse who walked that line, day in and day out," Marlena Pellegrino told the press. She is a 35-year registered nurse at the hospital and co-chair of the nurses local bargaining unit, which represents over 700 nurses. "We felt the weight of the entire labor movement on our shoulders. The strike was not about us, it was about all the fights."

"We had one common issue that united the nurses — the patients were not being taken care of," she told the *Militant*. "We stayed out until we could all walk in together on our own terms."

The union thought they had finally reached a settlement in mid-August that would have improved staffing levels. But Tenet bosses announced they would refuse to allow over 100 of the most experienced nurses to return to their jobs because they intended to keep all the scabs. They said they would offer senior nurses who went on strike less desirable positions.

"It was almost like a separate war after that to stay out the last few months," said Pellegrino. "The hospital was continuing to try to break the union."

Because of the length of the strike battle, nurses lost unemployment income and medical benefits. Pellegrino said the union organized to work with every nurse to do whatever was necessary for them not cross the picket line. "If someone was having trouble, we reached out to help," she said. "We had nurses who had not looked for another job in 35 years. We worked together on their resumes to get hired. Some of us live a few minutes from the hospital but took jobs an hour's drive away."

"Many nurses didn't know each other before the strike. Now we are more united and we know each other's families. We grew in character and fortitude," she said. "The corporation waged psychological warfare against us. It tested our humanity. It wasn't about the contract but our own decency and moral core. Would you sell out? The majority said 'No!'"

"No matter what we needed we could always go to the picket line. We fed off one another to find fight and energy. It's a beautiful thing." The union maintained the picket line 18 hours a day for the duration of the strike and kept open a strike headquarters that welcomed solidarity and donations. Delegations from a wide variety of unions and groups of workers visited the picket line and came to rallies called by the union.

"We never felt alone. The community and so many understood," said Dominique Muldoon, another RN and strike leader at the hospital. "We used to wait for the train that travels under the hospital at 9 or 10 p.m. because the crew always blew the horn to let us know they were on our side. This strike shows that when you are resolved you can win."

Fight to implement the contract

"The fight isn't over," said Bill Lahey, a nurse for 40 years at St. Vincent and member of the bargaining committee, noting the nurses now face having to fight to implement the contract as they return to work. Hospital CEO Carolyn Jackson says all nurses that choose to do so need to return to work by Jan. 22. She claimed only about 400 of 600 still on strike would return, because many now have other jobs. Union leaders said about 140 nurses had crossed the picket line by the end of the strike.

"They are trying to get replacement nurses to hate us," Teresa Brouillet, a nurse for 12 years at the hospital, told the *Militant*. "One of them is anti-union and circulated a petition to decertify the Massachusetts Nurses Association as the union representing the nursing staff at the hospital."

"Many of the replacements are new graduates," said Brouillet. "All the replacements will stay, but have to move to new positions. We haven't bullied anybody. We are going to talk to them one on one and explain the staffing ratios we won. They should compare the six patients you get where I work now to the four we have under the new contract."

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