

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Holiday greetings to workers behind bars

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Iran protests for rights, against executions stoke gov't divisions

BY SETH GALINSKY

More than three months of daily protests are widening rifts between rival factions among Iran's capitalist rulers. The execution of two protesters, death sentences for 11 others and charges that carry the death penalty against six more have expanded demonstrations across the country and internationally.

In the face of these actions, at least two of the executions have been put on hold.

More than 400 people have been killed and nearly 20,000 arrested by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, its Basij paramilitary thugs and the police since protests began in September.

On Dec. 8, 23-year-old Mohsen Shekari was hanged in Tehran after being convicted of "waging war on God" for having blocked a road and allegedly injuring a member of the Basij. On Dec. 12, Majid Reza Rahnavard was publicly hanged in Mashhad, accused of killing two Basij thugs.

Dozens of Sunni clerics in Balu-
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Defend Ukraine independence! Demand Putin get out now!

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The Ukrainian people are withstanding some of the heaviest aerial bombardment since Moscow's war began as they fight tenaciously to drive back its invasion. Russian President Vladimir Putin seeks to demoralize working people by crippling Ukraine's power supplies as winter begins, but this only encourages greater determination to resist.

The conflict is the largest ground war fought by two states in Europe since 1945. It has set in motion realignments among capitalist powers across the world, and exacerbated the global economic crisis. The Kremlin is banking on Russia's bigger military resources to wear Ukrainians and their supporters down and tip the scales in its favor.

In a sign Ukrainian forces are successfully holding the city of Bakhmut in the eastern Donbas region, President Volodymyr Zelensky made a surprise visit there Dec. 20. The city
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Rail workers protest as gov't imposes contract, bars strike

Rallies from Washington, DC, to Sparks, Nevada



Militant/Paul Swanson

Over 40 unionists at SMART-TD-organized rally Dec. 13 in Denver back rail workers' struggle over job conditions, for safer crew sizes and family-friendly work schedules.

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CHICAGO — In rail yards and on locomotives across the country discussion and debate continue among rail workers over how to respond to the ongoing attacks from the rail bosses and the government. These include grueling schedules, draconian attendance policies, unsafe conditions, a renewed push to run engineer-only trains and the anti-union Railway Labor Act.

On Dec. 2 President Joseph Biden signed legislation passed overwhelmingly by a bipartisan majority in Congress imposing a contract on 115,000 rail workers and proscribing union strike action. Members of four

unions — representing a majority of the workforce — had rejected the contract and set a strike deadline of Dec. 9. All 12 rail unions had pledged to honor the picket lines.

"If we'd wanted what they decided for us in Washington, we would have voted for it," Jesse Franklin, a con-
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Communist League: 'Down with Canadian rulers' Emergencies Act'



CBC/Evan Mitsui

Heavily armed Canadian police were mobilized under Emergencies Act to crush truckers' "Freedom Convoy" protest in Ottawa Feb. 19, a serious threat to the whole labor movement.

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Six weeks of mandatory public hearings on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government imposition of the never-before-used Emergencies Act concluded Nov. 25. The act aimed to crush the three-week-long truckers' "Freedom Convoy" protest in Ottawa and at border-crossing bridges with the U.S. last February. It was convened by the Public Order Emergency Commission to determine if the government's as-

sault against the rights of the truckers was legal under the law. Their report to Parliament is due by Feb. 20.

Over 75 witnesses appeared before the commission, including police, government ministers, leaders of the Freedom Convoy, other participants and more. Some 9,500 written submissions came from individuals and organizations, including the Communist League in Canada, whose statement was headed: "Defend democratic and political
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As political crisis of US rulers deepens, Socialist Workers Party speaks out

BY TERRY EVANS

Following the 2022 elections, working people face both a deepening crisis in the capitalist economy — a slowdown in hiring at the same time prices continue to rise — and attacks on living conditions and constitutional freedoms by the capitalist rulers and their two political parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

The Socialist Workers Party is organizing to build solidarity with workers in battle against boss and government attacks, from the rail yards nationwide to strikes by Case New Holland workers in Wisconsin and Iowa and miners at Warrior Met Coal in Alabama. The party fields candidates posing the need for workers to build our own party, a la-
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Case workers hold strike rallies in Wisconsin, Iowa

BY DAN FEIN

MOUNT PLEASANT, Wis. — Some 200 United Auto Workers Local 180 members and their supporters rallied in subfreezing weather here Dec. 17 to build support for their strike against the bosses at Case New Holland.

The 600 Case workers at the nearby Sturtevant plant, which makes tractors and farm equipment, have been on strike since May 1, alongside 430
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Washington state mushroom workers rally for union

Ohio workers at GM battery plant vote 710-16 to join UAW

Capitalist crisis fuels stagflation: prices rise as recession bites

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

With prices continuing to rise alongside growing numbers of layoffs, working people face the beginning of what could be an extended period of “stagflation” — a combination of increased prices and falling capitalist production, trade and jobs. The impact of today’s capitalist crisis is already having a devastating impact on workers and farmers. Similar conditions face working people in the European Union and other imperialist countries, as well as China, Russia and across the semicolonial world. This has led to more protests, from France to Mongolia.

Grocery prices, rents, child care costs and other necessities keep going up, squeezing working people. The White House and the capitalist media claim a slight decline in the Consumer Price Index over the past few months — it was at 7.1% in November — shows that inflation is now “getting under control.”

But what working people face at the store paints a different picture. Grocery prices rose 12% from a year ago, with eggs up 49.1%, butter up 27% and bread 16.3%.

Rents were 7.9% higher than a year earlier, forcing increasing numbers of residents to move in with their families or friends.

While gasoline prices have declined from record highs over the past few months, independent truck drivers are still paying over \$5 per gallon for diesel fuel, making it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. In addition, fuel oil, which is used to heat homes especially in New England, has risen

65.7% over the past year. Bosses react to the capitalist crisis by attacking workers’ wages and schedules, pushing speedup, worsening working conditions and with layoffs. U.S. workers haven’t seen a rise in real wages since the 1970s, while inflation eats away at what our pay buys. At the same time, increases in interest rates by the Federal Reserve this year, the steepest rise since the 1980s, have raised what workers owe on credit card debts, mortgages, rents and car loans. These conditions are rooted in U.S. and world capitalism’s deepening crises of production, trade and sharpening competition, exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic and Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

The employers claim the biggest danger is workers demanding higher pay. But it’s not workers’ wages that cause inflation — that’s a self-serving falsehood spread by the bosses and their politicians — but the workings of the capitalist system in crisis. Capitalist governments have been printing vast amounts of money — outstripping the output of commodities — to try to spur corporate borrowing and production and help their own country’s bosses compete with rivals. This leads to rising prices, and a disaster for working people. When they raised interest rates again Dec. 14, the Federal Reserve warned of more pain and growing unemployment to come.

The answer to soaring prices is for our unions to fight for cost-of-living escalator clauses in all union contracts, as well as for pensions, benefits and in government programs like Social Secu-



Reuters/Sumaya Hisham

South African public workers protest in Pretoria Nov. 22 on “National Day of Action,” demanding 10% wage raise to cover rising prices. Similar actions are taking place worldwide.

rity that cover millions. We need to demand a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to spread the available work around and prevent layoffs. These are demands the union movement has fought for and won before and are essential to forging a fighting union movement today.

Economic downturn and inflation

U.S. bosses are laying off workers. In October job cuts jumped 13% to 33,843, the highest in 20 months.

In spite of the Christmas holiday season — normally the strongest sales period of the year, including on Black Friday after Thanksgiving — retail sales fell sharply in November. Giants like Walmart and Amazon are laying off. Amazon alone is cutting 10,000 jobs.

At the Stellantis Jeep Cherokee plant in Belvidere, Illinois, bosses told some 1,350 workers Dec. 9 that they’ll be without a job starting in February as the company prepares to produce electric vehicles instead.

At the same time, the number of workers the government counts as being part of the workforce continues to decline. The labor force participation rate declined for the third straight month in November, to 62.1%. About one in nine men aged 25 to 54 aren’t part of the labor force, compared to one in 50 in the mid-1950s.

The International Monetary Fund’s October World Economic Outlook report predicts, “The worst is yet to

come and for many people, 2023 will feel like a recession.”

The unfolding economic crisis is combined with a deepening social crisis affecting working people. This is reflected in the decline in the birthrate to its lowest level since 1979; a drop in life expectancy to 76 years, also the lowest level since 1979; and a rise in suicides, particularly among young men. There’s also a record number of opiate overdoses, which is further boosted by the capitalist rulers’ profit-driven promotion of marijuana, and more.

Protests against rising prices and economic conditions have been taking place in every corner of the world. In mid-November tens of thousands of public sector workers in South Africa conducted a one-day nationwide strike for higher wages. Similar actions drew thousands more into the streets in Portugal, Albania, Mongolia and Hungary.

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THE MILITANT

FBI ‘spy’ frame-ups can be beaten back

In November three Chinese American scientists told the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas how they defeated FBI moves to frame them for espionage. The ‘Militant’ points to the importance of working-class solidarity against government attacks on our rights.

China Daily/Yian Ke
Sherry Chen in 2018 after court ruled espionage charges against her a “gross injustice.”

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US rulers' political crisis deepens

Continued from front page
bor party based on our unions.

Factional conflicts between — and within — the Democratic and Republican parties have been heating up since they both faced losses in the November elections. Republicans failed in an effort to retake the Senate and the Democrats lost the House, yielding a bitterly divided government with challenges adopting legislation.

Assault on constitutional freedoms

For years Democrats of all stripes have agreed on making Trump *the* issue in politics. This has dominated their action since Joseph Biden won the presidency. They've smeared the 74 million people who voted for Trump as "semi-fascists" who are "dangerous" and "a threat to the country." They believe working people are "deplorable," as Hillary Clinton famously called them, who must be kept by any means necessary from influencing politics.

They've spent years organizing witch hunt hearings in Congress on the Jan. 6, 2021, riot, sending the FBI — the capitalist rulers' political police — on raids on Trump's home in Mar-a-Lago and the homes and offices of his political allies. They've sent informers into groups of Trump supporters and framed them up on "seditious conspiracy" charges. They've enlisted the help of allies at Twitter, Google and other social media outlets for wide-ranging spy operations on cellphone users.

Even if Trump isn't on the ballot in 2024, Democratic Party officials told NBC, they will tie Trump around the neck of whoever the Republican nominee is.

On Dec. 19 the Democrat-run Jan. 6 Committee recommended Biden's Justice Department charge Trump with "insurrection," conspiracy to "defraud" the United States and other crimes.

This has nothing to do with Trump's continuing claims the 2020 election was stolen, which have little basis. The Democrats' relentless campaign

is purely partisan, aimed at barring Trump from running again and, if possible, sending him to prison.

These assaults are a deadly danger to political liberties crucial for working people and our struggles. Defending and extending constitutional freedoms is at the center of the class struggle today.

No matter who the Democrats currently target, it is working people, our unions and the working-class vanguard that will be targeted tomorrow.

While they're united on witch hunting Trump — and on voting to impose a contract on rail workers and on denying them the right to strike — the Democrats remain deeply divided on what politics the party should advance. Socialist Democrats and associated left-liberals push radical reforms of capitalism. Nancy Pelosi, Clinton and traditional party leaders disagree with this course. Heading toward 2024 these differences will deepen, threatening to tear the party apart.

Republicans' crisis

A number of Republican leaders, from Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to the editors of the *Wall Street Journal*, are pressing for the party to break once and for all from Trump. They argue he was the reason the party didn't win a sweeping victory in 2022, despite Biden's unpopularity.

Several piled further disapproval on Trump after he chose to meet Nov. 24 with Kanye West, who had recently made a series of Jew-hating outbursts.

His antisemitic attacks undermine solidarity within the working class and have been met with revulsion from broad layers of working people and the oppressed.

Many Republican leaders claim they can win back the presidency by being a "Trump party," a champion of "the little person," but without the former president as their candidate. "We are the party of working men and women," Cruz claimed Dec. 5.

But far from presenting a road forward



Militant/Lisa Rottach

Ilona Gersh, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Chicago, discusses fight of rail workers and the need for solidarity with co-workers at Alpha Baking Company Dec. 18.

for the struggles of workers and farmers, Republicans seek to be the voice of the politics of resentment, turning real challenges workers face into tools to foment divisions in the working class.

They do sometimes touch a nerve when they speak out demagogically against one or another of the anti-working-class proposals of the Democrats, like claims parents have no right to a say on what their kids are taught.

But their real sentiments were captured by former Ronald Reagan speech writer Peggy Noonan, who said Republicans now include "a whole rising wave of scrappy, comparatively less sophisticated voters who felt they'd been ignored." This says a lot more about their contempt for working people — something they share with Democrats.

Socialist Workers Party campaign

While the faction-ridden Democrats and Republicans vie for who can best represent the interests of the capitalist ruling class, the Socialist Workers Party has launched the campaign of Ilona Gersh for mayor of Chicago, with more to come across the country.

Gersh explains that politics "is not liberal vs. conservative, but *class* vs. *class*. Workers face not only the eco-

nomie breakdowns of capitalism, but a growing social and moral crisis."

She advances a course for our unions to fight for jobs and against the scourge of soaring prices. "To combat unemployment, shorten the workweek with no cut in take-home pay. For cost-of-living raises to protect wages from inflation, as well as for pensions, unemployment benefits and Social Security. For workers control of conditions and safety on the job.

"Fight for conditions that allow young workers to begin families and provide for them, including jobs, medical care, child care, affordable housing and income supplements as needed to make it possible to keep a job and have enough time off to be part of union struggles," she says.

"Workers need our own foreign policy, one that starts from the interests of the toilers at home and internationally. Defend Ukraine's sovereignty! Support protests in Iran! Defend Cuba's socialist revolution!"

The SWP says we need a labor party, based on our unions. A labor party would be an instrument to advance working-class struggles, and point the road for working people to take political power into our own hands and establish a workers and farmers government.

Starbucks workers go on strike, advance fight for a union

BY CANDACE WAGNER

ROSS TOWNSHIP, Pa. — Strikers picketed the Starbucks here Dec. 16-18 as part of a three-day national work stoppage, organized by Starbucks Workers United at some 100 of the company's shops, demanding union recognition and negotiations for a contract. According to Workers United, over 1,000 baristas participated, forcing some of the stores to shut down.

"We just won a union election this September," striker Elm Hoover, a full-time worker with three years at this restaurant, told the *Militant* Dec. 17. "Because of short staffing and disrespect from management, we need the union. There are safety hazards and it's difficult for us to even keep up with the cleaning."

Striker Coriander Boyle works part time and is a senior at North Hills High School. "The strike is amazing," he said. "We deserve to be treated fairly. We are the labor. The company has nothing without us."

Workers at some 270 stores out of 9,000 nationwide have voted to unionize over the last year, after employees at

a Buffalo Starbucks store at the end of 2021 became the first in the country to join Workers United, part of the Service Employees International Union.

Gracie Nira, a Starbucks worker who is also on the National Bargaining Committee for Workers United, told a rally at one of the chain's stores in St. Paul, Minnesota, that "the company is stalling on negotiations and is refusing to meet the union to settle a contract."

Barista Lola Rubens said workers never know what their hours will be and often have their hours cut. In addition to Starbucks workers, Teamsters, and members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Miller union and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union came

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Nurses, rail, postal workers go on strike across the UK

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Rail workers, postal workers, ambulance drivers and nurses are joining in nationwide union work stoppages to fight declining real wages, job cuts and eroding conditions of work, and they're winning support from other workers.

Ten thousand members of the Royal College of Nursing stopped work for 12 hours Dec. 15 and 20, the first strike action in the union's 106-year history. They are demanding a raise matching inflation, plus 5%. Nurses' pay has fallen 20% behind the rise in prices over the last decade.

"We need the pay rise to make up for the last 10 years," Eleanor Kennedy, 27, told the *Militant* at a lively picket line at St. Thomas' Hospital here. She described the 13-hour alternating day and night shifts nurses work, sometimes with no breaks. Some 34,000 nurses quit their jobs over the last year.

"The strike is about having enough staff to be able to give safe care," said nurse Emily Mogg.

The Communication Workers Union, which organizes postal workers, held a national demonstration and rally outside Parliament here Dec. 9, participated in by 15,000 of its members. Some 115,000 CWU members struck that day.

"We need to stand up for ourselves," postal worker Andy Mason told ITV News. "It's everything from enforced Sunday working to removal of allowances. At the moment we start at 6:45 a.m. and we finish at about 2:45 p.m. They wish to change that to whatever

they need."

The Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union and the Communication Workers Union have held daylong stoppages for months, and are now stopping work for longer periods. Last week 40,000 RMT members at Network Rail and 14 different train operating companies struck for four days.

Government ministers intervened to prevent rail bosses from making an improved offer to the RMT. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak fears one union victory would open the door to others. He claims that wage raises are "unaffordable" and there is "fuel inflation," pitting striking workers against fellow working people, as he defends his policies of cutting government spending and raising taxes, and protecting profits. Periodic bouts of inflation are not caused by pay raises but are built into the way the capitalist economy works.

Sunak is threatening strengthened anti-union legislation and sending in troops as strikebreakers. The government is hoping that support for strike action will decline. But a recent opinion poll found 70% held the government and employers responsible for the recent strikes.

Millions know that union action is tackling crucial questions facing all workers. Inflation has soared to 14%, devastating living standards. Despite government claims that unemployment is at historic lows, its own figures show over 5 million on out-of-work benefits.

Alongside inflation and joblessness, workers face the declining provision of



AP/Kirsty Wigglesworth

Nurses picket Royal Marsden Hospital in London Dec. 15, one of a series of nationwide work stoppages aimed at beating back low wages, effects of inflation and eroding work conditions.

health care. The National Health Service is beset with a chronic shortage of hospital beds. More than 7 million are awaiting operations; accident and emergency patients wait for hours to receive care; and ambulances delivering patients to hospitals are stalled by hourslong traffic backups.

Government instability, with three prime ministers in four months, has fed its waning public support.

'Divide and rule'

The failure to push back union fights has contributed to fissures in ruling-class circles, with some calling on Sunak to change tack. "Beat the rail unions, then pay nurses more," wrote *Times* columnist Matthew Parris Dec. 16. "There are some causes more de-

serving than others," the paper's editors claimed the following day.

Labour Party leader Keir Starmer labeled the government's refusal to negotiate with nurses a "badge of shame," while he refuses to back strikes by unions for wages that would allow workers to provide for their families.

Despite efforts of Conservative and Labour leaders to undermine support for union struggles, workers are finding ways to express solidarity. The Unite union convener at Chep Pallets, Gary Walker, who led a successful 19-week strike earlier this year, joined the RMT strike picket line at Manchester Piccadilly Station.

"Every worker is essential," he told the *Militant*. "Right through 2020 Chep were telling us how important we were, but in 2021 they insulted us with their pay offer." Also on the rail workers' picket line were John Waddington from the General Municipal and Boilermakers union at the flooring factory Polyflor, in Whitefield, Greater Manchester, and University and College Union members who have recently taken strike action.

"We thank everyone who stopped by our picket to bring solidarity," Clayton Clive, a train conductor and Manchester South RMT union branch secretary, told the *Militant*. "And we extend our solidarity to other fighting workers."

Starbucks strike

Continued from page 3

to the rally there to show their support.

In a Dec. 16 news release announcing the three-day strike, the union reported that Starbucks has closed several stores that voted to unionize, which it calls a decision "to escalate their anti-union campaign," and has fired union activists.

"We're demanding fair staffing, an end to store closures and that Starbucks bargain with us in good faith," Michelle Eisen, a worker at Starbucks' Elmwood location in Philadelphia, told the press.

Customers came to a Memphis, Tennessee, Starbucks to show their solidarity. One offered to bring Dunkin' Donuts coffee to the picket line. Another, Todd Strickland, said, "It's important for employees to know their value and to be paid properly."

Starbucks announced in November that its revenue rose 3% to a record \$8.41 billion last quarter.

Edwin Fruit in Minneapolis contributed to this article.

Volunteers win bookstore, library orders for Pathfinder books

BY JIM ALTENBERG

This fall's campaign to get Pathfinder books into bookstores, libraries and classrooms is well underway with volunteers on course to meet their goal of 115 orders by the end of January. So far, 81 orders have been won for books that explain the roots of the social, economic and moral crises bearing down on working people and point to a road out of it.

Volunteers aim to get 30 orders from stores that have not ordered Pathfinder books before. Already 24 have done so.

"I'll make an order for the *50 Years of Covert Operations in the US*, *Cointelpro* and *FBI on Trial* books," a New York public librarian wrote. "Thanks for bringing them to my attention!" Volunteers have been using a flyer promoting Pathfinder's titles addressing how to respond to the capitalist rulers' moves to deal blows to constitutional freedoms working people need. This includes books about the Socialist Workers Party's victorious political campaign and lawsuit against FBI spying and disruption operations against the party.

A shop in the Pacific Northwest added *Lenin's Final Fight* to its order after a sales volunteer described how the book explains what is behind Moscow's war against the people of Ukraine. The book brings together V.I. Lenin's writings, defending the political course that brought a workers and farmers government to power in Russia in 1917, including his fight against all expressions of Great Russian chauvinism and for the rights of oppressed nations, like Ukraine, to self-determination.

With today's capitalist crisis bearing down especially hard on women, new orders are being won for books on women's emancipation, including *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* and *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*.

Seattle volunteers traveled to northwest Washington, where they introduced Pathfinder to bookstore managers unfamiliar with the publisher's titles and got orders from two stores. North Carolina volunteers met with representatives of a civil rights museum, who ordered books for the first time in over a decade. And in Washington, D.C., over 10 years of persistence paid off when the biggest bookstore chain in the city placed a large order.

Until a couple of years ago, local outlets of the largest bookstore chain in the United States could not always place their own orders. Now they can.

Discussions at two of these stores in the San Francisco Bay Area led to orders that include titles by Malcolm X, Abram Leon's *The Jewish Question* and *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity* by Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, George Novack and Mary-Alice Waters. It charts the sweep of human history from our earliest ancestors, through the emergence of class society, up to capitalism today. And it points toward the working class as the only social force that will put an end to class divisions and the oppression of women once and for all.

Since its publication last January, volunteers have placed 86 orders for this book in English, Spanish and French,

with many more to come.

Last October marked the 60th anniversary of the "Cuban missile crisis," when the U.S. government under Democratic President John F. Kennedy threatened the world with nuclear war as it sought to crush the Cuban Revolution. Pathfinder put out a special 60th anniversary edition of *October 1962: The 'Missile' Crisis as Seen from Cuba*. Los Angeles volunteers rapidly contacted local bookstores and got five orders for the book.

Sales of books at academic conferences are an important part of volunteers' work. Along with selling hundreds of books at the American Library Association, Association for the Study of African American Life and History, and African Studies Association conferences, volunteers are following up with interested participants they met at these events. One New Jersey public library ordered a number of titles after meeting with volunteers following the library association conference.

Volunteers are also gearing up for February, which is Black History Month, a big opportunity to get more books into bookstores and libraries.

— CALENDAR —

NEW YORK

New York
U.S. Hands Off Cuba! End the Embargo Now! Christmas Eve Rally to End U.S. Government Blockade Against Cuba.
Sat., Dec. 24, 3 p.m. *Steps of New York Public Library, 5th Avenue between 41st and 42nd Streets.*

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Washington state mushroom workers rally for union

SEATTLE — “We’ve come very far and we are not going to stop. A lot of us want a union,” Joceline Castillo, a worker at Ostrom Mushroom Farms, told a rally of 60 other mushroom workers and supporters here Nov. 20. “We are fighting to stop the retaliation, harassment and intimidation.” Some 40 workers came from Sunnyside, where Ostrom is located. They’re seeking to organize into the United Farm Workers union.

The rally was held outside the Metropolitan Market. “We appreciate the support of those here and those who buy the mushrooms so we can win a union,” said Daniel Leon, an Ostrom worker and a leader of the union workers’ committee, which has led actions pushing back bosses’ demands for higher picking quotas and company harassment.

The Washington State attorney general filed a lawsuit against Ostrom in August after an investigation found the company had systematically fired 80% of its employees, mostly women, and replaced them with “guest workers” with H-2A visas.

“They say there are not enough workers locally, but this isn’t true,” José Martinez, a union committee member and worker at the plant, told the *Militant* earlier this year. The company is attempting to divide the workers, he said, adding that he “has nothing against the visa workers, they are just like us.”

— Jacob Perasso

Ohio workers at GM battery plant vote 710-16 to join UAW

Workers at an electric vehicle battery factory near Warren, Ohio, overwhelmingly voted to join the United Auto Workers. The 710-16 vote, announced by the National Labor Relations Board Dec. 9, marks the first time workers have won union representation in this burgeoning industry.

The plant is owned by Ultium Cells, a joint venture between General Motors and South Korean-owned LG Energy Solution. Ultium has announced plans to build two more battery factories, in

Lansing, Michigan, and Spring Hill, Tennessee. As part of the auto bosses’ competition to take the lead in electric car sales, Ford says it will build three battery factories in Kentucky and Tennessee, while Stellantis, formerly Fiat Chrysler, says it will put plants in Kokomo, Indiana, and in Canada.

So far bosses have succeeded in keeping the union from representing workers at billionaire Elon Musk’s Tesla plants.

In replacing production of internal combustion engines with electric vehicles, bosses aim to cut as many as 35,000 jobs, the UAW says. At Ultium, which is located close to where GM ran its now shuttered Lordstown plant, the company says wages range between \$15 and \$22 per hour. UAW-represented workers at other GM, Ford and Stellantis battery factories make up to \$30 an hour.

— Brian Williams

University of California teaching assistants strike for over a month

LOS ANGELES — As the strike of University of California workers reached its 31st day, hundreds of striking academic workers rallied at the U.C. campus here Dec. 14. They were joined by supporters, including fac-



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Some 60 Ostrom Mushroom workers and supporters rally at Metropolitan Market in Seattle Nov. 20 to win support for their fight for representation by the United Farm Workers union.

ulty, students and members of UNITE HERE and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3299. They marched around the campus, chanting and singing labor solidarity songs.

Nearly 48,000 University of California researchers, teaching assistants, graders and others went on strike Nov. 14 demanding higher wages, improved

benefits and better working conditions.

“When I was a student, I didn’t know how the workers got paid,” striker Hunter Pauker, a graduate student researcher, told the *Militant*. “Now I talk about the strike, especially to the undergrads.”

UAW and university officials announced a tentative agreement Dec. 16 that workers will vote on.

— Deborah Liatos

Canada school workers stood ground, won wage raise

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

TORONTO — Ontario school workers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, voted to approve a new contract, union President Laura Walton announced Dec. 5. The vote followed the victory won by CUPE members when they defied provincial Premier Douglas Ford’s attempt to ban them from striking. Backed by parents and other unions, they walked out for two days, winning support and leading union rallies across Ontario.

Ford was forced to repeal Bill 28 enacted to make it illegal for public workers to strike, and to scrap his efforts to punish workers by fining the union and individual strikers for each day they went out.

Under the new contract all school workers will receive a yearly 1 Canadian dollar an hour (74 cents) wage raise.

“We stood our ground,” Walton told the press. “We stared down this government. Our fight showed the power working people have, an example to be taken up in Canada and across the world.”

“Ford thought he could do anything, but we showed him he was wrong,” school bus driver Jamal Hajahmed told the *Militant*. Workers have faced a virtual pay freeze since 2019 when the Ford government passed Bill 124 capping pay hikes for 780,000 public workers at 1% a year. As prices soared, real wages were cut. A coalition of more than 40 unions had been fighting to overturn the law, including Ontario’s four teachers’ federa-

tions and its hospital workers.

In the wake of the school workers’ victory against Bill 28, the Ontario Superior Court ruled Bill 124 unconstitutional Nov. 29, saying it violated freedom of association protected in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by interfering with collective bargaining. The provincial government says it will appeal the ruling.

The school workers’ refusal to buckle to Ford’s drive to break their strike puts all unionists in a stronger position to stand up to boss and government attacks.

Their new contract was ratified by 73% voting for and 27% against, with 76% of the union’s 55,000 members casting a ballot. The union represents early childhood educators, custodians and maintenance workers, educational assistants, secretaries and other office staff, social workers, lunchroom supervisors and library technicians.

The contract “is the best deal we’ve had in years because we fought for it,” education assistant Michelle Campbell told a CUPE news conference.

Some workers thought more could have been won. The union had sought an increase of CA\$3.25 an hour in wages and increased staffing levels. The pay raise is “not enough,” Hajahmed said. “I never expected to see rent as high as it is today. I make \$3,000 and rent is \$2,500.

“They need to hire more education assistants and caretakers too. Having 30 students in a class is too many,” he said.

“I need more money. The price of cooking oil has gone up to \$13 from \$2.99 for a 3-liter bottle,” Theodora Asare, an education assistant for children with special needs, told the *Militant*. “To make ends meet, I work a second job at a group home for people with special needs during spring, summer and Christmas breaks.”

Asare said she appreciated “the solidarity the CUPE workers received from rail workers in the U.S. who are facing the same type of situation we were and sent our union a solidarity message.”

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 12, 1998

BOSTON — A meeting here Dec. 10 kicked off a year of activity in solidarity with the struggle of the Puerto Rican people. Puerto Rico is a U.S. colony in the Caribbean, one of the last official colonial possessions of any of the imperialist powers.

Rafael Cancel Miranda, a Puerto Rican Nationalist hero and independence fighter, described the role of U.S. imperialism. When he was six years old in 1937, he said, U.S. troops opened fire on a demonstration, killing 21 people and wounding some 200. His parents participated in the action and returned home covered with blood. When he was an 18-year-old high school student, he was imprisoned in Florida for two years for refusing to submit to the draft.

The U.S. government “wanted me to fight in the Korean War. I had never even seen a Korean before. Why would I go and kill them for the same government that gunned down my people?”



January 12, 1973

Jan. 2 — Faced with an unprecedented world outcry against U.S. war policies in Southeast Asia and the threat of a new upsurge of protest in the United States, President Nixon suspended at least temporarily the genocidal bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong begun Dec. 18.

This time there were few believers of the administration line that only military installations are being targeted. “Bach Mai, a 900-bed hospital where 300 people were undergoing treatment at the outset of the resumed raids on the city, was not only ‘damaged,’ but literally razed by several large bombs,” said Agence France-Presse.

Nixon’s goal remains to reimpose the capitalist regime of Saigon on the South Vietnamese people. The events of the last two weeks underscore how meaningless any “peace” in Southeast Asia will be that does not include the total withdrawal of the U. S. military armada.



January 5, 1948

Henry Wallace’s announcement that he will run as a third party candidate for president has exploded like a bombshell on the political arena. It splits the Democratic Party and deals the Truman candidacy a blow from which it may not recover.

Wallace will exploit the deep-going mass discontent with postwar conditions. But the Wallace movement is not a Labor Party. Such a party must be an expression of the organized working class, that is, of the trade union movement, and responsible to it. Regardless of the support it may pick up from individual workers, it does not have the character of a Labor party movement. It is a third capitalist party.

Now is the time for labor to take its rightful place on the political field by launching an independent Labor Party and by running its own candidates for national, state and local office!

Calif. farmer says ‘We need to stand with rail workers’ fight’

BY ELLIE GARCÍA

FRESNO, Calif. — This *Militant* correspondent joined farmer Will Scott and rail worker Laura Garza to discuss the stakes for working people in standing together with rail unions in their fight against attacks by the bosses and government. We visited Scott’s farm outside this city in the San Joaquin Valley Dec. 2.

Scott is president of the African American Farmers of California and produces hull beans, tomatoes and other vegetables on 45 acres. Garza is a rail conductor and member of the Socialist Workers Party.

“Rail workers have faced deteriorating and dangerous conditions for years,” Garza said. “Bosses try to divide workers and farmers, blaming rail workers if things shut down. The White House and Congress prevented a strike and imposed a contract that the majority of rail workers had voted down.”

“Workers and farmers have a relationship and they can’t drive us apart,” Scott replied. “We’re both producing something for the good of society. You have to fight. You have the right to strike.”

Rail workers face ever-smaller crews, increasingly dangerous working conditions, on-call schedules, harsh attendance policies and a lack of paid sick leave. Garza said the government’s attack on rail unions was part of broader assaults on constitutional freedoms. She pointed to recent FBI harassment of people who are supporters of the Cuban Revolution in Puerto Rico, in Los Angeles and other U.S. cities.

“I hold the Constitution up there with the Bible,” Scott said. He described the treatment meted out to African Americans by the courts and cops. “My people have been hit hard by arrests and imprisonment and then can’t vote. There are two things that have harmed my people: plea bargaining and welfare.”

Welfare dependency was the opposite of what working people need, Garza said. “We need a fight for jobs and a supplemental income if the wage is not enough to live on. A guaranteed income keeps people on the job where they can be part of union struggles. It makes the working class stronger.”

“There’s not much difference between Democrats and Republicans,” Scott added. “I hope Biden doesn’t run again. Maybe somebody will run who will work with people.”

“Workers and farmers are the only ones who can change things,” I said, “but we need experience and organization.”

“What we need is a society where people care for and help each other,” Scott replied. “I want to see how Cu-

ban farmers do things.”

He said he would like to join other farmers traveling to see Cuba for themselves. Garza described the fight to end the U.S. rulers’ brutal economic war against the Cuban people, aimed at overturning their socialist revolution.

If he visits Cuba, Scott said, maybe the FBI will target him, as it did when it harassed people from Puerto Rico who traveled to Cuba to bring solidarity to the fight against the U.S. embargo. “You have the right to refuse to speak to them and you should use it,” Garza said. That’s what Cuba solidarity activists did in Puerto Rico, she said, describing their years of experience with FBI frame-ups in the course of the fight to end U.S. colonial rule.

Rail workers protest as gov’t imposes contract, bars strike

Continued from front page

ductor at CSX, told the *Militant* at a Dec. 13 rally of 50 rail workers and supporters in Columbus, Ohio, part of a series of union protests across the country. “They decided to force it on us. That’s why we are out here today.”

Organized by the SMART-TD conductors’ union and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, the actions were called to protest the federal government’s interference that favored the bosses and to draw attention to the issues rail workers face.

Our fight is “about safety,” Tanner Dalrymple, another conductor, said at the Columbus rally. “And the chance to have a life with our families.”

In recent years the railroads have slashed jobs and imposed punitive attendance policies, and more and more train crews are on call 24/7. The same day that it voted to ban a strike, the Senate rejected a bill to mandate rail workers have access to seven paid sick days per year.

“One of my members had to take his wife to the hospital in an emergency because she needed a hysterectomy. That member is now facing disciplinary action by the company,” Jim Becker, chairman of SMART-TD Local 1043, told the *Militant* at the Dec. 13 action in Sparks, Nevada.

‘It wasn’t always like this’

“It was not always like this,” Vincent Verna, a national vice president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, told a rally of 100 outside the Capitol in Washington, D.C. “We used to be able to take time off because they had enough people.”

Several Democratic Party politicians spoke at the Capitol rally, calling on Biden to issue an executive order granting sick days for rail workers. These included Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who both had voted in favor of barring rail workers from striking, which could have inspired widespread labor solidarity, won sick days and pushed back many of the other attacks by the rail bosses.

“Everyone was hoping for the sick days,” locomotive engineer Matt Wright told the *Militant* in Galesburg, Illinois. He said that his local “just had 15 people up on investigation for attendance.” He works for a



Militant/Ellie García
Rail worker and SWP member Laura Garza with Will Scott on his farm near Fresno, California, Dec. 2. “Workers and farmers have a relationship and they can’t drive us apart,” Scott said.

short-line railroad owned by Union Pacific where “it’s all yard work,” he added. “There’s nothing in this contract for us.”

Yard workers in SMART-TD who assemble trains and service local industries made up one of the largest votes against the contract. They’ve faced some of the deepest job cuts in the industry. Many railroads have eliminated brakemen, utility workers and other positions. Some have even imposed single-person “crews,” running switching jobs on the ground with a remote control box.

The Dec. 13 protests drew workers from other unions expressing their solidarity. “We got support from other unions when the [Reno] bus drivers were on strike last year, so I’m here to support,” said Teamster shop steward and UPS driver Tommy Markussen at the Sparks rally. Their contract comes up next year. “UPS is trying to go after pensions for part-time workers. We want to eliminate the second tier of lower pay for our union drivers.”

Rail accidents, deaths on the rise

The latest rail fatality was Walter James Griffin III, a conductor trainee in Bessemer, Alabama. He was riding in the cab of a Norfolk Southern engine when a metal beam protruding from a passing train crashed through the window and killed him on the same day as the rallies.

The conditions rail workers face that have fueled their fight against the bosses was described in the Dec. 15 *Kansas City Star*. Workers told the paper that “railroads have reduced important employee training, cut back on safety in rail yards and in some cases skipped preventive maintenance measures on railroad equipment.”

It cites data from the Federal Railroad Administration showing that “the rate of accidents per million miles of train travel has increased over the last decade. Likewise, the rates of yard accidents have increased, even as the volume of yard work has declined.”

Participants in the Dec. 13 rallies denounced Precision Scheduled Railroading, which is the name given by many of the rail carriers to their drive to increase profits by cutting crews and running longer trains. “PSR has resulted in a 30% reduction in employment since 2010,” Carl Smith, Colorado State Legislative Director for SMART-

TD, told the rally in Denver.

“PSR is a form of management by stress,” Paul Swanson, a retired member of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees who took part in the Denver protest, told the *Militant*. “In an effort to maximize profits an industry keeps cutting back employment levels and investment in infrastructure until the system breaks. Then the industry will only add workers and investment in infrastructure to just above the breaking point.”

Bosses push for one-person ‘crew’

At a Federal Railroad Administration hearing in Washington the day after the rallies, the major freight carrier bosses renewed their push to implement engineer-only “crews” on long-distance trains. They were arguing against a proposed federal regulation that would require railroads to continue to operate with both a conductor and engineer in most cases. Norfolk Southern spokesman Tom Schautz cynically claimed that getting rid of the onboard conductor will improve workers’ “quality of life,” saying the change would mean more regular work schedules to those conductors who keep their jobs.

“I would not feel safe flying in a commercial airline with one pilot,” SMART-TD Legislative Director Greg Hynes told the hearing. “I would not feel safe with a three-mile-long freight train carrying the most dangerous hazardous material on the planet through my community with only one set of eyes.” A few days earlier, CBS News had reported that airline bosses are lobbying Congress to allow commercial flights with just one pilot!

Commenting on rail workers’ anger over Congress’ bipartisan imposition of the rail contract they had voted down, *Philadelphia Inquirer* columnist Will Bunch wrote Dec. 4, “Dems and GOP unite to sell out the American worker. Maybe we need a labor party.”

The discussions among rail workers over a road forward — and their determination to fight — will continue.

Naomi Craine is a member of SMART-TD Local 1494. Jacquie Henderson, Jacob Perasso and Glova Scott contributed to this article.

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Defend Ukraine independence!

Continued from front page

is in ruins from months of Russian bombardment, with few civilians remaining. Waves of assault by Wagner mercenaries deployed by Moscow, as well as the Kremlin's own armed forces, have resulted in heavy losses on both sides.

Scores of Russian missiles and drones targeted electrical infrastructure in eastern and southern Ukraine repeatedly in mid-December, plunging millions into darkness without heat or water. Rescue and utility workers raced to repair the damage. Local authorities are building neighborhood "invincibility centers" for people to gather to warm up, share news and recharge electronic devices.

Moscow's bombardment comes after the Ukrainian army, swelled by working-class volunteers, drove Russian government forces from the outskirts of Kyiv, then from around Kharkiv and more recently from occupied Kherson.

Putin flew to Belarus for the first time since the war began for talks with President Alexander Lukashenko Dec. 19 to pressure him to do more to back Moscow. Lukashenko has allowed Belarus to be used as a staging ground for the invasion. But he is wary of the depth of opposition he faces at home, which exploded two years ago when hundreds of thousands of working people fought to oust Lukashenko, who clung onto power with Moscow's support. He has kept Belarusian forces away from direct involvement in Moscow's war.

Calls continue to rise from bourgeois politicians from Washington to Paris to press the Ukrainian rulers to support "peace" talks, ceding territory to the regime in Moscow. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said Dec. 17 that Washington needs Moscow's help to maintain the imperialist world order. He called for a negotiated return to the "prewar dividing line," approving the Russian rul-

ers' 2014 seizure of Crimea and parts of eastern Donbas, where Moscow-led separatists grabbed control from Ukrainian authorities the same year.

Imperialist powers rearm

"Russia's invasion of Ukraine" has "shaken the foundations of the international order," the Japanese government said in a Dec. 16 announcement of its biggest military buildup since the second imperialist world war. It plans to double military spending by acquiring long-range missiles, more naval vessels and fighter aircraft, saying this is necessary to counter the "greatest strategic challenge posed by China."

The military budget of the Chinese government is now four times that of Japan's imperialist rulers. Fumio Kishida, prime minister of Japan, has warned in speeches about the possibility of Beijing attempting to capture Taiwan. Japanese capitalists see their interests threatened as the Chinese rulers warn they will use force to bring self-governing Taiwan under their control, along with vital sea lanes in the region.

Japan hosts 54,000 U.S. troops, the largest permanent contingent of U.S. armed forces anywhere overseas. The government there is scrapping constitutional restrictions on the use of its armed forces that were imposed by the U.S. rulers after their victory in World War II when Washington sought to assert its domination across the Pacific.

The German rulers are hastily reducing their decadeslong dependency on Russian energy. Putin had hoped to use this as leverage to reduce opposition in Germany and elsewhere in Europe to his invasion.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz opened the first of several floating terminals Dec. 17, linked to the country's gas pipelines. Imported liquid natural gas will be substituted for supplies of Russian gas cut by Moscow or blocked by U.S.-led sanctions. Three months ago, Berlin took control of three oil refineries owned by Russian oil giant Rosneft.

Putin's war is aimed at crushing



Reuters/Alentyn Ogirenko

Kyiv residents visit "invincibility center" Nov. 24 to warm up, share news, recharge phones. Ukrainian working people responded to Moscow's bombs with renewed determination.

Ukrainian independence and reestablishing the Great Russian Empire. The czarist rulers imposed Moscow's domination over vast areas and peoples in Eastern Europe and across Central Asia.

The conquest of power by workers and farmers during the 1917 Russian Revolution opened the door to freeing millions from the czarist prison house of nations. Led by V.I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the new workers and farmers government advanced the right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination, including for Ukraine. This made possible the flowering of their cultures, the founding of the Soviet Union as a voluntary federation and waging a fight to eradicate all expressions of Great Russian chauvinism.

But these conquests were overturned in a political counterrevolution under Joseph Stalin in the 1930s. Ukraine reestablished its independence only after the collapse of the Stalinist regime in 1991.

As Putin tries to reconquer Ukraine, his war is rousing working-class struggle at home.

Women were a majority of the thousands of protesters detained in national actions opposing Putin's Sept. 21 military callup. They spearheaded protests in Daghestan, Tyva, Bashkortostan, and other regions over the deployment

of draftees. In mid-November, women demonstrated outside offices of the Russian military, from St. Petersburg to Ulyanovsk over the treatment of conscripted relatives.

Olga Tsukanova, who joined the actions, is the mother of a 20-year-old draftee from the Astrakhan region. She is a co-founder of the Council of Soldiers' Mothers and Wives.

"We demand that councils of mothers and wives in every city be allowed to inspect military units where mobilization is being implemented to find out if they are being trained properly and if medical commissions have been established," Tsukanova told the press. "We are also demanding the beginning of peace talks."

The group sends Putin and the army hundreds of messages of complaint that are mostly ignored.

Tsukanova and two other council members were arrested Dec. 8 on "suspicion of drug smuggling" before one of them was investigated for distributing "extremist" material. All were released a few hours later.

"This system is afraid of popular unity," Tsukanova wrote. "They are afraid of us and they are targeting women who are trying to protect their boys."

Ukraine bosses, gov't attack health workers, care

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Nurses and other health care workers in Ukraine haven't been paid for months as the capitalist rulers there press their attacks on the wages and job security of the working class in the midst of Moscow's invasion. The government is using restrictions on strikes and protests imposed during the war to push a 2018 "reform" aimed at moving to privatization of the country's nationalized hospital system. These International Monetary Fund-backed measures have led to the closure of hospitals, staff cuts, speedups and lowered wages, which were started before Russian attacks began to ravage the economy, power supplies and health care facilities.

Ukrainian working people, in cooperation with the country's armed forces and territorial militia, continue to mount courageous resistance, pushing back Moscow's bloody attack. But they are hampered by the profit-driven actions of the Volodymyr Zelensky regime.

Ukraine's Ministry of Health began implementing reforms in July, where hospitals outside of conflict zones would be paid only by the number of services provided to patients. After the

Russian invasion hospitals had been assured regular monthly federal payments would continue. But this has been replaced by a new, decentralized "money follows the patient" scheme to tighten the screws on both the health service and the workers.

About 80 medical staff protested Nov. 7 at the Ivano-Frankivsk infectious diseases hospital to demand payment of back wages. As a result of the nurses' action, their August and September salaries were paid.

Successive governments in Kyiv have been driving to break up the health and education systems, which have been public and free since the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. This continued after the implosion of the Soviet Union and Ukraine's declaration of independence in 1991. But since then, the IMF, Washington and other imperialist governments have sponsored "restructuring" and the health system has been run down.

Kyiv's aim, by transferring "ownership" to local managers, is to advance toward privatization and make profitability the law of the health system. Under these capitalist market reforms, each hospital director is made fiscally

responsible for staff numbers and wages. This has meant 36 workers have lost their jobs at the Ivano-Frankivsk hospital this year.

Unpaid wages are a long-term problem in Ukraine. Between January and October, back wages owed to workers totaled 1 billion hryvnia (\$27.2 million), according to the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine. Less than half of this has since been paid. Working people also face widespread joblessness from Moscow's attacks on factories and infrastructure and inflation of 30%.

The new scheme is hitting hardest at specialized clinics, like that at Ivano-Frankivsk, as well as hospitals in small rural communities. This disdain for the needs of country people is common to capitalist rulers the world over.

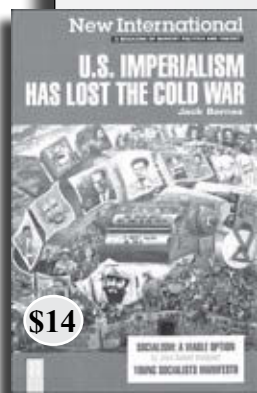
In the U.S., beginning Jan. 1 the Joseph Biden administration is offering cash incentives for rural health facilities, which service 46 million people, on the condition they end all inpatient care. Patients are meant to be kicked out within 24 hours or transferred to larger facilities. But for many, those hospitals deny them entry. Over 180 rural hospitals have closed since 2005.

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

New International no. 11

"Once Stalinism had transformed the Soviet Union into the opposite of a voluntary federation of workers and peasants republics, its break-up, its disintegration from within, was inevitable."

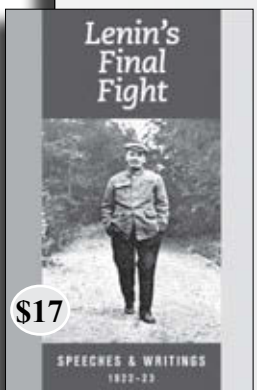
Jack Barnes



Lenin's Final Fight Speeches and Writings, 1922-23

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

V.I. Lenin,
1922



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Iran protests stoke gov't divisions

Continued from front page
chistan and Kurdistan and some Shia clerics have denounced the executions. Home to oppressed nationalities that face discrimination by the Shia-based bourgeois regime, both regions have been centers of some of the largest protests since Sept. 16. That's when a young Kurdish woman, Mahsa — named Gina in Kurdish — Amini, died after she was arrested by the hated "morality" police in Tehran. The cops claimed she had violated the dress code imposed by the Islamic Republic.

Thousands demonstrated Dec. 16 in the two regions, calling for an end to the death penalty and government attacks on protests. In Zahedan, the largest city in Sistan-Baluchistan, which is one of the poorest and most rural parts of Iran, marchers carried signs calling for unity among "Baluch, Kurds, Turks, Lur, Persians, Bakhtiari, and Azerbaijanis" and for freedom for all the political prisoners.

Some 235 members of trade unions, the Iranian Writers' Association, teachers, artists, poets and others signed a statement calling for an end to the death penalty. They noted that executions were used by the dictatorship of the shah of Iran prior to the 1979 revolution.

Thirteen political prisoners at the infamous Evin prison in Tehran issued a statement saying officials of the Islamic Republic live under the "delusion" that "the protests can be extinguished by re-

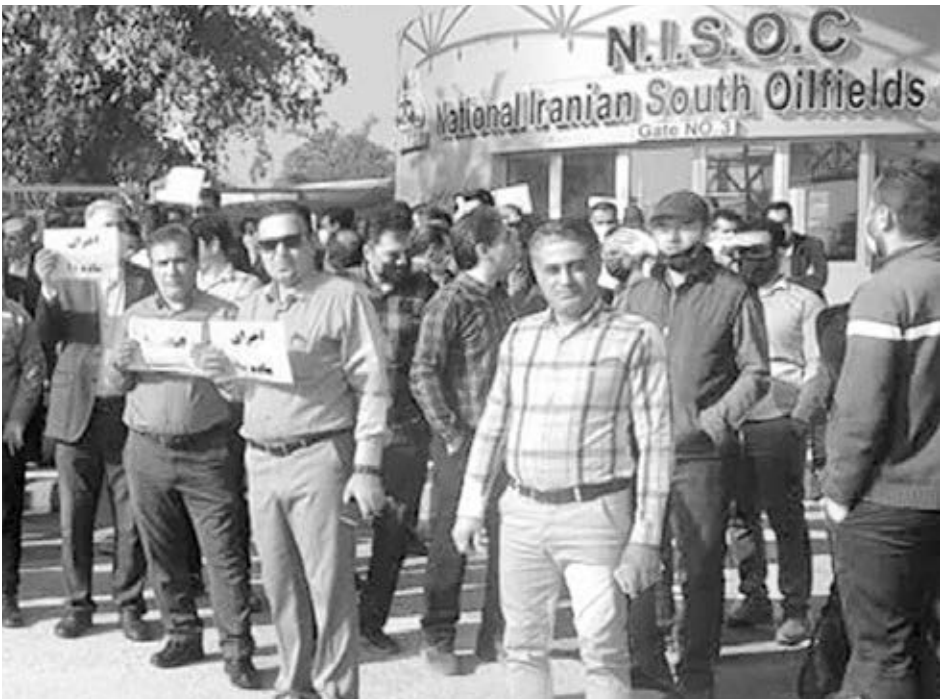
sorting to naked violence." Three days of protests against the executions starting Dec. 19 included small businesses that closed up shop in many cities, especially in the Kurdish region in the northwest, and a strike by port workers at the Qeshm oil terminal in the south. According to a statement by the striking oil workers, they joined the action to raise their own economic demands and "to protest against the repression, executions and killings."

Unions oppose death penalty
The Organizing Council of Oil Contract Workers reported that permanent workers held strikes Dec. 17 in at least seven oil complexes, focusing on wages, pensions and health care. The union noted this was the first nationwide oil workers strike in decades.

The Oil Contract Workers union also called on temporary and permanent oil workers to join the protests against the executions, including by striking. In an earlier statement the union noted that the executions are "so heinous that even within the government itself there are quarrels."

The government-financed Iranian Labour News Agency has almost no reports on strikes by oil workers, autoworkers, truck drivers and others over the last three months, but it ran two articles questioning the use of the death penalty.

While the most hard-line backers of



Organizing Council of Oil Contract Workers of Iran
Workers in Ahvaz, in Iran's Khuzestan province, join Dec. 17 strike at seven oil complexes for higher wages, pensions, health care. Some unions have condemned gov't use of death penalty.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei have called for accelerating the crack-down, the Labour News Agency ran an interview with Masoumeh Ebtekar, who was Iran's first woman vice president in 1997. She said, "Harsh treatment cannot be the answer for young people who only want a better life."

Ebtekar quoted former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, a prominent representative of the "reformist" faction of the capitalist class, saying that overthrow of the Islamic Republic, demanded by some protesters, "is neither possible nor desirable."

'With or without hijab'
Differentiating herself from the hardliners who say that if women don't conform to the mandatory dress code they are walking around "naked," Ebtekar notes that mothers love their daughters "with and without hijab."

The Labour News Agency also published criticisms of the government's violation of constitutional rights, including an interview with Ismail Beigi, the lawyer for Samin Yasin, a Kurdish rap artist who could face the death penalty. He sings about

economic hardships, inequality, corruption and the morality police.

Even though the Iranian Constitution guarantees defendants the right to an attorney of their choosing, the court would not allow Beigi to represent Yasin. Beigi noted that the main "evidence" against Yasin is "a blurred video" allegedly of someone setting a garbage bin on fire and shooting a gun in the air.

Truck drivers strike
The protests take place amid the deepening capitalist economic crisis, exacerbated by the deadly cost of the bourgeois clerical regime's decadeslong military adventures in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and beyond. The crisis is intensified by U.S. and allied sanctions imposed to put pressure on Tehran for its nuclear weapons program.

The National Union of Retirees reports that the annual rate of inflation for food hit 63.4% in November, which it says was never reached before, "not even during the occupation of the country in World War II" by British and Allied forces that led to 4 million deaths.

Independent owner-operator truck drivers waged a nearly two-week strike demanding fuel subsidies and rate increases in the face of the rising cost of fuel, tires and repairs.

"Look how you shook the lives of these thieves with a strike that was only in 19 provinces," the Truckers and Drivers Union said. The government should watch out for "the day when we will all be together and go on strike in all 31 provinces."

Meanwhile, a joint statement issued by the Chinese and Saudi Arabian governments Dec. 9 reflected Tehran's diplomatic isolation. It followed a three-day visit to Saudi Arabia by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Beijing is one of Iran's main trading partners and Saudi Arabia is a key rival that works with Washington to try to block Tehran's influence in the region. Their declaration put forward demands that contradict Iranian government positions. It called for negotiations over the status of three islands in the Strait of Hormuz, claimed by both the United Arab Emirates and Tehran, and for ensuring that Iran's nuclear program doesn't lead to the government developing nuclear weapons. The declaration reiterated support for both an Israeli and a Palestinian state, countering Tehran's call for the destruction of Israel.

Revolution, Counterrevolution and War in Iran

Social and political roots of workers' protests that swept 90 cities and small towns 2017-18.

by Steve Clark

Read online or download file for printing at themilitant.com

Thousands protest inflation, corruption in Mongolia

BY VIVIAN SAHNER
For more than a week thousands of demonstrators, most of them young, have braved subzero temperatures to protest corruption in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia. The demonstrations began Dec. 4 as prices for necessities have soared. This included a 40% jump in the price of coal used for heating, and after media reports said 385,000 tons of state-owned coal, worth an estimated \$120 million, was unaccounted for between 2013 and 2019. The discrepancy was uncovered when Mongolian export data was compared with import data provided by China.

The protesters clashed with police Dec. 5 in front of the Government Palace at Genghis Khan Square where large crowds demanded officials come out and face the people.

"They seem to forget what they promised us," a student who gave her name as Bayarmaa told the press, referring to government pledges after protests last April. "But they aren't doing anything, taking our money, filling their own bellies."

Two herders told the press they had traveled to the capital to join the protests. "Doing nothing is not right. I think

it is right that young people are angry," said Enkh Amidral, a father of three, who wants the government to "punish the thieves." Some 60% of Mongolians — including thousands of herders — live in traditional tents, heated by coal-powered stoves.

"Come out, come out!" people shouted at the government building. "If the citizens rise up," one sign said, "the feast is over!"

Demonstrators say they are determined to stay in the streets even after Erdenes Tavan Tolgoi, one of the country's largest state-owned coal-mining firms, was put under government supervision and a handful of officials arrested. On Dec. 13 the government said it planned to list the mine for public sale, claiming this will drive out graft.

"We want the big fish," Bayaraa Damiran said at one rally. "They arrested seven or eight officials who were on the bottom. We want to know the big fish at the top."

For many the theft was the final straw. The country's economy has been battered by rising fuel costs following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and the disruption of trade with China whose government closed its borders during

the pandemic. These developments exacerbated the crippling inflation.

How could government officials "just be so calm when the citizens are buying bread by (the) slice, not by the loaf?" one protester told TenGer TV.

Wedge between Russia and China, Mongolia depended heavily on the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991. Russia is still the sole source of electricity to Mongolia's western region and the country gets 60% of its gasoline, liquid petroleum and diesel from Russia. So far the government has refused to take a definitive position on Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, an issue that became more pressing as thousands of Russian men migrated there in October to avoid conscription.

Beijing, meanwhile, dominates Mongolia's trade, with 86% of its exports going to China. Coal, which generates half of Mongolia's export revenue, sells at about \$70 per ton in Mongolia but brings \$140 per ton in China. Capitalist social relations, unequal trade terms and lack of direct access to the sea, along with widespread corruption, mean one-third of the 3.5 million Mongolians live in poverty despite the country's vast mineral wealth and coal deposits.

Communist League: ‘Down with Canadian rulers’ Emergencies Act’

Continued from front page
rights! Repeal the Emergencies Act!” The last person to testify was Trudeau, who defended his government’s attack on the truckers and on political rights.

The truckers’ actions clogged Ottawa streets around Parliament Hill with semis, vans and cars 24/7 along with daily protests. Their aim was to press the government to end federal anti-COVID government vaccine mandates that threatened their jobs and livelihoods, along with other government policies they disagreed with.

To win support for his decision to invoke the Emergencies Act, voiding basic political rights, Trudeau waged a slander campaign against the truckers, who he falsely smeared as “white supremacist, swastika-waving, war memorial desecrators.”

After imposing the act Feb. 14, Ottawa unleashed “one of the largest acts of police repression in modern Canadian history,” the Communist League wrote to the Public Order Emergency Commission. Over 200 were arrested, including the Freedom Convoy’s main organizers, who still face criminal charges.

In his testimony, army veteran Chris Deering told the commission that he felt it was his duty to participate in the protest. As a policeman ar-



Truckers protest in Canada’s capital Feb. 8, demanding an end to vaccine mandates that threaten their livelihoods. Trudeau gov’t invoked Emergencies Act to crush protest, imprison leaders.

rested him, “he kneed me in my side and kicked me in my back,” Deering said. “I had my hands completely up. I’m saying, ‘I’m peaceful. I’m peaceful. I’m not resisting.’”

Tamara Lich, one of the most prominent spokespersons for the Freedom Convoy, and a leader of the Alberta separatist Maverick Party, spent a total of 49 days in jail after being arrested without having been tried or convicted. As

a result of onerous bail conditions, she said, “My trial is not till next year and I have to live under these conditions.”

Lich is forbidden from using social media for any reason, contacting any of the other leaders of the convoy, or doing anything in connection with movements opposing vaccine mandates, among other restrictions.

The Communist League calls for dropping all charges against Lich and other convoy leaders and participants. “The continued violation of their rights by Ottawa, police and the courts constitute a threat to the democratic and political rights of all,” it said.

In their testimony, Trudeau and other government officials argued that using the Emergencies Act was legally justified because they considered it a “national public order emergency.”

Trudeau claimed there was a “potential” for violence in the convoy, though he admitted no “serious violence” took place.

Trudeau argued that the Ottawa protest was illegitimate. “It wasn’t that [protesters] just wanted to be heard,” he said. “They wanted us to change public health policy.” Such arguments could be used against anyone protesting government policies.

He said smugly he was “absolutely serene and confident that I made the right choice.”

Capitalist rulers target workers

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland told the commission that she had met with the CEOs of Canada’s key banks who convinced her the convoy was “profoundly jeopardizing” the country’s economy. She claimed this “threat to economic security” endangered “national security,” a rationale for using the Emergencies Act.

Much of the debate before the commission was focused on whether the protest met the “threshold” for invoking the act’s draconian restrictions on basic rights. The Communist League explained the entire

law, as well as “the premise of the commission,” should be thrown out.

A poll taken following the end of the hearings showed a majority opposed the use of the Emergencies Act against the truckers. Many said they had originally supported Trudeau’s action, but changed their minds after seeing some of the live-streamed hearings.

A dramatic example of the growing use of anti-working-class legislation took place during the hearings when the Ontario Provincial Government of Premier Douglas Ford invoked one of the most draconian anti-labor laws in years, Bill 28, in an effort to crush the November strike by 55,000 school support workers, member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees. The workers defied the law and with the support of the labor movement nationwide forced Ford to repeal the law.

After the Emergencies Act was used the 180,000-member Ontario Public Employees Union pointed to the way such laws could be utilized against workers in a Feb. 17 statement. “Historically the labor movement has often been the target of legislation aimed at suppressing anti-government dissent, including times when workers have demanded better living conditions through strike actions.”

“The OPSEU statement got it right. In the context of the deepening economic, social, and political crisis of the capitalist system, the use of the Emergencies Act against the truckers was a calculated precedent-setting pre-emptive blow against rising working-class resistance and the use of union power to defend our interests,” Beverly Bernardo, Communist League candidate in the upcoming Quebec by-election in the Montreal Saint Henri-Sainte Anne constituency, told the *Militant*.

“Strikebreaking laws are being used more and more by the billionaire ruling-class families. In South Korea truck drivers were recently forced to defy back-to-work legislation, and in the U.S., Democrats and Republicans in Congress united to pass a law banning a Dec. 9 strike by rail workers, forcing them to accept contract terms the majority had voted against.

“OPSEU’s warning should be taken to heart by the entire union movement and all fighting workers,” said Bernardo. “The Emergencies Act is aimed squarely at the working class as a whole and our unions.”

Case workers hold strike rallies



Militant/Dan Fein

Striking United Auto Workers Local 180 members at Case New Holland rally in Mount Pleasant, Wisconsin, Dec. 17 to build support in fight for higher wages, affordable health care.

Continued from front page
UAW Local 807 members at the company’s plant in Burlington, Iowa. They held a rally the next day.

“The rally is awesome,” Dave Pederson, a valve machinist at the Wisconsin plant, told the *Militant*, pointing to donations by strike supporters. Bags of children’s toys, food items, gift cards and hand and foot warmers filled the basement of the union hall here. Workers are fighting for “wage increases that keep up with inflation and affordable health benefits,” he said.

Members of the United Food and Commercial Workers, International Association of Machinists, other UAW locals, and community organizations joined the action. “We want to show the company we are still strong,” UAW Local 180 member Corey Gray said. “The company has been lying to the public about our demands.”

A few union members have crossed the picket line, but “the majority are willing to hold out,” said Robert Starks. “The company is losing business.” It’s running some production with scabs and management employees. “This

fight is not just for us,” said Jeff Varsh, a retiree and former Local 180 president. “It affects the community.”

“We won’t go back without a good contract,” Nick Guernsey, president of UAW Local 807 in Iowa, told the strikers and supporters. Also speaking were Stephanie Bloomingdale, president of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO, and Christine Neumann-Ortiz from Voces de la Frontera, a pro-labor immigrant rights organization.

“We stand in solidarity with you,” said a statement from Family Farm Defenders read to the rally. “Working together, we both can win.”

After the rally, demonstrators piled into cars and trucks to caravan the few miles to the plant and join pickets there. Large signs mounted on top of the cars included “Solidarity with UAW Strike” and “Railroad Workers Support UAW Strike.”

Contributions, messages of support and checks can be dropped off or mailed to UAW Local 180, 3323 Kearney Ave, Mount Pleasant, WI 53403 and to UAW Local 807 at 9313 Koestner St., Burlington, IA 52601.



CUPE Ontario Facebook

Canadian Union of Public Employees march in Ontario Nov. 4 wins support in strike that defeated provincial government anti-union law.

‘Cuba’s revolution grew in extraordinary school of experience’

Che Guevara Talks to Young People is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. Ernesto Che Guevara was an Argentine-born revolutionary who joined Fidel Castro and his Rebel Army, becoming an outstanding leader of the Cuban Revolution. They led workers and peasants to take power in 1959, opening the road to socialist revolution in the Americas. The Marxist example of leaders like Castro and Guevara initiated a renewal of communism, inspiring a new generation of revolutionary-minded youth worldwide. The excerpt is from "Something New in the Americas," the speech given by Guevara to the First Latin American Youth Congress, held in Havana, July 28, 1960. Copyright © 2000 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

Many of you, from diverse political tendencies, will ask yourselves, as you did yesterday and as perhaps you will also do tomorrow: What is the Cuban Revolution? What is its ideology? And immediately a question will arise, as it always does in these cases, among both adherents and adversaries: Is the Cuban Revolution communist? Some say yes, hoping the answer is yes, or that it is heading in that direction. Others, disappointed perhaps, will also think the answer is yes. There will be



Perfecto Romero

Che Guevara, left, with Fidel Castro in Cuba in 1962. They led workers and peasants to take political power in 1959, and use it to make a socialist revolution. The Cuban Revolution "discovered Marxism by its own methods," Guevara said, "in living contact with the people."

those disappointed people who think the answer is no, as well as those who hope the answer is no.

I might be asked whether this revolution before your eyes is a communist revolution. After the usual explanations as to what communism is (I leave aside the hackneyed accusations by imperialism and the colonial powers, who confuse everything), I would answer that if this revolution is Marxist — and listen well that I say "Marxist" — it is because it discovered, by its own methods, the road pointed out by Marx. [Applause] ...

The Cuban Revolution was moving forward, not worrying about labels, not checking what others said about it, but constantly scrutinizing what the Cuban people wanted of it. And it quickly found that not only had it achieved, or was on the way to achieving, the happiness of its people; it had also become the object of inquisitive looks from friend and foe alike — hopeful looks from an entire continent, and furious looks from the king of monopolies. ...

[E]ven though there is certainly continuity, the Cuban Revolution you see today is not the Cuban Revolution of yesterday, even after the victory. Much less is it the Cuban insurrection prior to the victory, at the time when those eighty-two youths made the difficult crossing of the Gulf of Mexico in a leaky boat, to reach the shores of the Sierra Maestra.

Between those youths and the representatives of Cuba today there is a distance that cannot be measured in years — or at least not accurately measured in years, with twenty-four-hour days and sixty-minute hours.

All the members of the Cuban government — young in age, young in character, and young in the illusions they held — have nevertheless matured in the extraordinary school of experience; in living contact with the people, with their needs and aspirations. ...

The peasants taught us their know-how and we taught the peasants our sense of rebellion. And from that moment until today, and forever, the peasants of Cuba and the rebel forces of Cuba — today the Cuban revolutionary government — have marched united as one.

The revolution continued progressing, and we drove the troops of the dictatorship from the steep slopes of the Sierra Maestra. We then came face-to-face with another reality of Cuba: the worker — both agricultural and in the industrial centers. We learned from him too. ... We learned the value of organization, while again we taught the value of rebellion. And out of this, organized rebellion arose throughout the entire territory of Cuba. ...

What I am saying to you, young people from throughout the Americas

who are diligent and eager to learn, is that if today we are putting into practice what is called Marxism, it is because we discovered it here. ...

For the first time in Latin America, this revolution carried out an agrarian reform that attacked property relations other than feudal ones. There were feudal remnants in tobacco and coffee, and in these areas land was turned over to individuals who had been working small plots and wanted their land. But given how sugarcane, rice, and cattle were worked in Cuba, the land involved was seized as a unit and worked as a unit by workers who were given joint ownership. They are not owners of a single parcel of land, but of the whole great joint enterprise called a cooperative. This has enabled our deep-going agrarian reform to move rapidly. ...

A revolutionary government is one that carries out an agrarian reform that transforms the system of property relations on the land — not just giving the peasants land that was not in use, but primarily giving the peasants land that *was* in use, land that belonged to the large landowners, the best land, with the greatest yield, land that moreover had been stolen from the peasants in past epochs. [Applause]

That is agrarian reform, and that is how all revolutionary governments must begin. On the basis of an agrarian reform the great battle for the industrialization of a country can be waged, a battle that is not so simple, that is very complicated, and where one must fight against very big things. ...

[W]e will not tolerate anyone telling us what to do. Because we were here on our own up to the last moment, awaiting the direct aggression of the mightiest power in the capitalist world, and we did not ask help from anyone. We were prepared, together with our people, to resist up to the final consequences of our rebel spirit.

That is why we can speak with our head held high, and with a very clear voice, in all the congresses and councils where our brothers of the world meet. When the Cuban Revolution speaks, it may make a mistake, but it will never tell a lie. From every tribune from which it speaks, the Cuban Revolution expresses the truth that its sons and daughters have learned, and it always does so openly to its friends and its enemies alike.

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BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

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Holiday greetings to workers behind bars

New Year greetings to our readers behind bars!

The *Militant* will continue to tell the truth about the conditions you face and keep getting news about the struggles of working people worldwide into your hands. 2022 was quite a year! Millions took to the streets to defend themselves.

From the Ukrainian people's courageous defense of their nation's sovereignty against Moscow's invasion, to working people inside Russia who are protesting the war. From working people and youth in Iran standing up to assaults by government thugs, to thousands of workers here who are using unions to strike for better wages and conditions. From truck drivers in South Korea demanding rates that make it possible to work safely, to working people in Mongolia protesting runaway prices and government theft.

This bodes well for forging a movement and a party capable of leading our class to replace capitalist rule with a government of workers and farmers.

There are still almost 2 million people locked up in 1,566 state prisons, 102 federal prisons, 2,850 local jails, 1,510 juvenile "correctional" facilities, 186 detention centers, and 82 jails on Native American reservations. In addition, there are military prisons and prisons in U.S. colonies like Puerto Rico. An increasing number of women are behind bars, many for drug offenses, another sign of the decay of capitalism.

U.S. prisons are the true face of the capitalist criminal "justice" system, organized to intimidate working people and demoralize the incarcerated.

New mail rules allow prisoners to receive only scanned (often poorly) copies of letters from their loved ones. Authorities often prevent prisoners from getting literature of their choosing.

Some 8% of prisons are now privately run, where the drive to maximize profits gives the bosses an even greater incentive to impose inhuman conditions.

"The jailers want to destroy you. They want to break your physical, moral and mental integrity," explained René González, one of five Cuban revolutionaries who spent over a decade in U.S. prisons on FBI frame-up charges.

In the face of growing opposition to solitary confinement — a blatant violation of the constitutional pro-

hibition on cruel and unusual punishment — some states have begun to restrict its use. But many are still kept in cells the size of parking spaces, 22 hours a day on average. Almost 1,000 prisoners have been in solitary for a decade or more!

The use of the death penalty has dropped from a peak of 98 executions in 1999 to 17 in 2022. The fight to end these inhuman practices continues.

As the class struggle heats up, the ruling class will increasingly turn to barbarous methods. Its message to working people: Stay in your place or face the consequences!

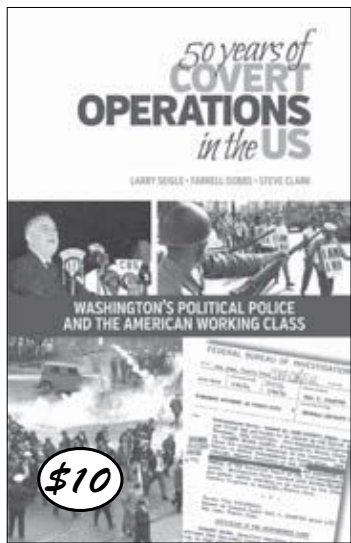
Mariia Shemiagina and Boris Shevchuk got a firsthand taste of U.S. capitalist "justice." Fleeing Russia to avoid imprisonment for opposing Moscow's murderous assaults on Ukraine, they requested asylum here. Instead, immigration cops shackled them and sent them to isolated detention centers where they were locked up for months, mistreated by guards and denied adequate medical care until they were finally released on bail.

The U.S. government doesn't care about the presumption of innocence. More than 97% of those charged with federal criminal offenses are strong-armed into plea bargains, making a mockery of their constitutional right to a trial with a jury of their peers. Defense of these basic freedoms is at the center of the class struggle today.

To the U.S. rulers all working people are part of a "criminal" class. Capitalist morality is the law of the jungle: every man for himself — values that are alien to working people. Every *Militant* reader, no matter what side of the prison walls we are on, can join in increasing the self-confidence, discipline, solidarity, fighting spirit and class consciousness of the working classes.

Our success is measured by what we accomplish together. That starts with educating ourselves. The *Militant* is proud to offer reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners. Books by revolutionary working-class leaders published by Pathfinder Press can be ordered at the special prisoner rate of 50% off. You can also urge the prison librarian to order them.

Introduce the *Militant* and books to your family and friends. Encourage them to bring solidarity to union picket lines and join protests to support the people of Ukraine and Iran.



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South Korea truckers end 16-day-long strike



Thousands of South Korean owner-operators went on strike.

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER

Striking South Korean owner-operator truck drivers, members of the Korean Federation of Public Service and Transport Workers' Union, Truckers Solidarity Division, voted Dec. 9 to end their 16-day walkout.

Thousands of truckers had gone on strike Nov. 24, seeking financial protections as fuel prices soared. The government issued onerous back-to-work orders and mobilized military vehicles to break their strike.

About 3,600 of the Cargo Truckers Solidarity union's 26,000 members participated in the vote, with some 62% voting to end the strike. The union said it will continue to fight. The central issue is truckers' demand that the government make permanent minimum Safe Trucking Freight Rates, established during the pandemic and due to expire at the end of the year.

The Safe Rates system sets minimum pay rates for truck drivers who own their own trucks, ensuring that they can cover the costs of operating their vehicles and make a decent living. It relieves pressures on them to speed, overload vehicles and drive long hours.

Safe Rates applies only to shipping containers and cement. Strikers called for expanding the benefits to other cargo, including oil and chemical tankers, steel and automobile carriers and package delivery trucks.

The government offered to extend the current system for three more years but has so far rejected calls to widen the application of minimum rates.

The vote came a day after the government expanded its back-to-work orders to cover 10,000 drivers transporting steel and petrochemicals, claiming a continuing strike would wreck the economy. The order had first been issued against 2,500 cement truck drivers.

The back-to-work orders marked the first time any South Korean government has exercised a law revised in 2004 that says failure to comply is punishable by up to three years in jail or a maximum fine of 30 million won (\$23,000), as well as loss of your driver's license. The truckers say the orders infringe on their basic right of collective action and freedom of association.

LETTERS

Ken Evenhuis

Ken Evenhuis, a nearly six-decades-long member and supporter of the Socialist Workers Party, died in Los Angeles Dec. 1. He was 77.

Ken and his wife, Donna, joined the Young Socialist Alliance in 1964, attracted by the SWP presidential campaign of Clifton DeBerry and Ed Shaw. They joined the party a few years later. Donna died in 2020.

In 1969, Ken applied for a job as an air traffic controller but was denied because of his membership in the SWP, with the government charging the SWP intended to overthrow the U.S. government by force and violence. The SWP at that time was on the notorious witch hunt-era U.S. Attorney General's list of subversive organizations. Later that year he was hired as a substitute mail carrier. But in July 1971, he was fired from this job too, with the government making the same charge.

Duncan Gordon, another SWP member, had been fired from the post office on the same grounds. Gordon sued and was reinstated with the Civil Service Commission saying it made a "mis-

take." This allowed the court to duck having to rule on the constitutionality of the Attorney General's list.

The Evenhuis case came up in the Duncan case, and Ken's firing was also found to have been a "mistake" and he was reinstated. Ken delivered mail and was active in his union, the National Association of Letter Carriers, for over 30 years. He was well known and respected by his co-workers and served as a union shop steward for years. Ken enjoyed relaxing with co-workers, often with a fishing pole or golf club in his hand.

On several occasions when a sizable venue was needed for SWP-sponsored meetings, he was able to secure the National Association of Letter Carriers union hall.

Over the years the Evenhuises took pride in being able to open their home

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

to SWP leaders who visited Los Angeles, making sure you were well fed and comfortable. Several international guests also benefited from their hospitality, including Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda and Cuban and South African youth on tour in the Los Angeles area.

Until his health declined, Ken was a regular at Militant Labor Forums. He and Donna were generous contributors to party funds. Ken was a careful reader of the *Militant*, following closely developments in the U.S. and world class struggle. Always eager for political discussion, Ken never wavered in his confidence in the political work of the SWP and in the socialist future.

Norton Sandler
Los Angeles, California

Bigotry against Catholics

Thank you so much for standing up to bigotry against Catholics as you did in your outstanding recent article Dec. 12 "Democrats, antifa push anti-Catholic attacks, bigotry." We cannot allow the Associated Press, nor this state senator from Illinois, Sara Feigenholtz, to stir up this pernicious hatred and prejudice.

Many liberals these days, I've noticed, have no understanding of the historical context for these sorts of verbal attacks against Catholics. If any state legislator tries to defend their constituents' children from older men, masquerading as "transgender women," then the liberal media and commentators will blow it up. And I think they're happy about such stories, because it gives them something to distort and to turn into a huge issue.

As a working class Irish-American Catholic and socialist I am happy to read your coverage of these issues. There is nowhere else to turn, it seems to me, for your kind coverage.

Jake McNeil
Chicago, Illinois

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