SWP, ‘Militant’ expand reach deeper into the working class

BY DAN FEIN

The Militant extends a warm welcome to the 1,540 people who subscribed for the first time or renewed their subscriptions in the course of a just concluded eight-week campaign of the Socialist Workers Party to expand the paper’s readership, sell revolutionary books and raise money for the Militant Fighting Fund.

The fund campaign raised $119,904, nearly $8,000 over the goal! Some 1,360 copies of books by party leaders and other revolutionaries were snapped up by working people interested in learning more about the roots of today’s economic, political and moral crisis and the party’s revolutionary program.

Many of you came across the paper at demonstrations and strikes by teachers and other school workers that swept five states, demanding pay raises, dignity, more funding for public schools and pensions. Party national headquarters send thanks for the orders!

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW READERS!

Tens of thousands of Las Vegas casino workers prepare for strike

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

“It’s good if we have to strike. The union does everything for us, that’s why we fight,” said Wendy Almada, a guest room attendant in Las Vegas, in a phone interview May 25.

She and some 25,000 other members of UNITE HERE’s Culinary and Bartenders unions gathered May 22 at the Thomas and Mack Center at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, to vote overwhelmingly to authorize strike.

Ireland: Repeal of abortion ban shows shift on women’s rights

By Pamela Holmes and Catharina Tirsén

Determined to end severe restrictions on abortion rights, a large majority in Ireland voted to repeal the Eighth Amendment to the country’s constitution May 25. The amendment “acknowledges the right to life of the unborn” and prevents women’s access to abortion.

For decades thousands of women who could afford to do so traveled to have abortions abroad, while others were forced to choose between illegitimacy and buying abortion pills online or giving birth.

Celebrations broke out among the crowds waiting outside Dublin Castle May 26 as the final results were announced — 66.4 percent voted yes. The voter turnout was 64 percent. In the end 39 of 40 constituencies voted yes with clear majorities and the exception, Donegal in the northwest, only voted to keep the amendment by 52 percent.

Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar

US rulers, Pyongyang seek to reset denuclearization talks

By Seth Galinsky

The U.S. and North Korean governments are moving full steam ahead toward a summit meeting to negotiate an agreement on “denuclearization” of the Korean Peninsula. U.S., North Korean and South Korean officials have been meeting in the U.S., Singapore and in the demilitarized zone between North and South to discuss and work out the details of the meeting and parameters of the agreements to emerge from it.

After earlier negotiations broke down, President Donald Trump wrote May 24 to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, saying that their June 12 summit in Singapore was on hold. The liberal ruling-class press — which views almost all politics through their anti-Trump hysteria — proclaimed Trump had blown it and the negotiations were dead in the water. Trump blamed Pyongyang and Beijing for his decision to suspend the summit, saying that officials in the North had expressed “open hostility” to Washington and Beijing had encouraged them.

Nevertheless, the same day, the North Korean government used explosives to destroy the tunnels at its Punggye-ri nuclear testing site, inviting reporters from the U.S. and other countries to observe.

Working people in Korea and the U.S. — whatever their views of President Trump or the regimes in Korea — would welcome an agreement that would remove nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula and surrounding areas. Ending U.S. and U.N. sanctions, opening the door to economic growth in the North, and eliminating barriers to travel, communication and economic relations with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea would be a historic advance for workers and farmers in Korea, Asia and worldwide.

The liberal pundits went on a tirade.

Inside

Puerto Rico: Workers confront capitalist disaster after storm

– On the picket line — Teamsters strike Dr Pepper bottler, get solidarity

Ukraine rail workers refuse to work unsafe equipment

Los Angeles: Teachers protest, demand new contract
Puerto Rico: Workers confront capitalist disaster after storm

BY JOHN STUDER AND MARTIN KOPPEL

HUMACAO, Puerto Rico — “Af- ter Hurricane Maria hit the island, the government left us to fend for ourselves. But here we all joined together — to clear debris and reopen the roads and to help make sure people could survive,” said Raúl Laboy, a retired electrical worker. “Residents brought food and water to those who needed it the most, took care of the elderly and disabled, and helped each other repair homes. It was solidarity — solidarity among workers.”

Together with other family members and friends, Laboy was helping rebuild his brother’s house, whose roof was ripped off and windows blown out by the hurricane last September. Like a number of other workers in the hilly region here, he and Wilfredo Abreu took a break from their construction and carpentry work to talk with us, the editor and another reporter from the Militant, members of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. We were visiting the community of Mariana, outside Humacao, and other areas in southeastern Puer- to Rico that still have no electricity. The hurricane made landfill here. Puerto Rico was devastated by the storm, which left most of the island without power. Many areas had no water or other essential services. Now, more than eight months later, Puerto Rico’s electric company reports that 13,000 customers — some 52,000 people — still had no electricity. That is much worse than the natural one and began much earlier,” said Laboy. “That is the result of capitalism.”

“A US imperialist exploits the peoples of Latin America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Neither they nor the American workers can expect to win freedom except in joint combat against the common enemy. The SWP is opposed to any attempt by American imperialism, open or masked, to infringe upon the right of self-determination of any nation or people.”

— From Declaration of Principles of the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party adopted in 1938

Retired electrical worker Raúl Laboy, left, and Wilfredo Abreu, in Humacao, Puerto Rico, talk to Militant reporters. “Social hurricane” of capitalism is worse than natural one, Laboy said.

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Editor: John Studer

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Help fund ‘Militant’ reporting trips to Puerto Rico and Nicaragua!

Militant editor John Studer and correspondent Martin Koppel have just re- turned from their fact-finding and solidarity trip to the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico where they talked to workers in San Juan, Humacao and Yabucoa. Studer will speak for the Socialist Workers Party at the June 18 annual hearing of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization, explaining why the fight for revolutionary change and independence for Puerto Rico is in the interest of working people there in the U.S. and around the world.

Correspondents Maggie Trowe and Róger Calero have also returned from a reporting trip to Nicaragua where they spoke with working people and learned about fast-moving political developments there. Articles from both these reporting trips will appear in coming issues.

Help make trips like these possible! Send contributions, payable to the Militant.

$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address. Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send $85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

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Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: Send €85 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, 2nd Floor, 83 Kingsland High St., Dalston, London, E8 2PB, England.

New Zealand and the Pacific Islands: Send NZ$55 for one year to P.O. Box 13857, Auckland 1645, New Zealand.

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

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant’s views. These are expressed in editorials.
Continued from front page

members of the Socialist Workers Party in Jersey City, New Jersey, af-
ter they knocked on his door. He had
recently moved there from Egypt. He
picked up a subscription to the paper

Many party branches won new
to the annual Militant Fighting Fund.

Contributors to the annual Militant

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$114,875 $119,904
$4,000 $4,037
$8,700 $9,870
$16,700 $16,769
$13,000 $13,463
$3,600 $3,740
$9,700 $9,852
$15,000 $15,468
$1,900 $1,900
$300 $301
$10,500 $10,828
$900 $950
$1,050 $1,050
$950 $1,050
$7,500 $7,533
$300 $301
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$1,140

3,000 rail workers strike against Canadian Pacific

Continued from front page

We are striking for safety, dignity
and respect in the workplace, against
fatigue conditions and intense punitive
discipline,” locomotive engineer Chris
Yeandel told the Militant. Yeandel
is vice-president for the Teamsters
Local 505. The strike coincided with a
by-election for the
city council’s Maastricht district.

Mike Tucker from Auckland, New
Zealand, writes, “The campaign
by members of the Communist League
here to sell subscriptions and books
by SWP leaders for the $4,000 in 2013.

Adding insult to injury, Canadian Pa-
cific offered individual workers a bribe
of $1,000 if they dropped their griev-
ance.

At one picket line at the Port Co-
quiltam, British Columbia, rail yard
a majority of the pickets raised their hands
when asked by the picket captain how
many had the experience of going
to bed and being awakened by a phone
call ordering them to report to work.

As a result of layoffs and speedup
from Canadian Pacific’s productivity
and profit drive over a number of years,
3,000 engineers and conductors cur-
rently do the work previously done by
4,300 workers. In 2017 CP’s profits rose
sharply to 2.4 billion Canadian dollars,
up from Can$900,000 in 2013.

Just before the strike began an addi-
tional 360 signal workers, members
of the International Brotherhood of Elec-
trical Workers, reached a three-year ten-
tative agreement with Canadian Pacific
preventing a shutdown of commuter rail
service in Toronto, Vancouver and Mon-
real.

“Instead of negotiating, the company
is relying on the government to resolve
the dispute,” said Vancouver Teamsters
Canada Rail Conference Local Chair-
man Jasan Hnatuk. Bosses that ship
commodities and raw materials across
North America using Canadian Pacific
rail urged the government to intervene
to try to force the striking workers back
to work.

A two-day strike in February 2015,
when pickets carried placards that read,
“Fatigue kills,” ended under threat of
federal strikebreaking legislation when
union officials agreed to send the issues
to arbitration. A 2012 strike also ended
under threat of a back-to-work law.

Joe Young and Michel Dugré in Van-
cover, British Columbia, contrib-
ted to this article.
Las Vegas casino workers prepare for strike

continued from front page

ballots, 99 percent voted yes. “Workers are showing a spirit of solidarity and fight for what they deserve,” Bethany Khan, spokesperson for Culinary Workers Union Local 226, told the Militant. “Workers don’t want to strike but will do so to protect what we fought so hard for over all these years.”

The several hundred picketers, guest room attendants, cocktail servers, food servers, porters, bellmen, cooks and kitchen workers. The workers are fighting for a safer work environment, decent wages, job security against the bosses’ drive to subcontract out jobs, protection against layoffs when the bosses introduce new technology, measures to protect workers from sexual harassment, and safeguards for immigrants with temporary status. The union contracts cover 50,000 workers at 34 casino resorts and hotels on the Las Vegas Strip, with MGM Resorts International and Caesars Entertainment Corp. operating more than half of these properties.

The union members gathered to vote May 22 at the large Thomas and Mack Center at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, some workers chant, “Hey Caesars, look around, Vegas is a union town and No contract, no peace.” “Some employees stopped by in their casino-resort uniforms on their way to work,” reported The Associated Press, “while others donned shirts emblazoned with ‘Vegas strong’ and the union logo.”

Oleg Stevert, a 58-year-old cook at Harrah’s told the Nevada Independent that he wanted to ensure that a younger generation has the same benefits he has had over his 20 years with the union. “You know because we have people that were here before us and I’m doing my part to keep it going for the ones that’s going to be after,” he said. “We’re proud to be here.”

Almada said that one of the main issues is countering sexual harassment at work. “We need to space our bodies and space because there is a lot of harassment,” she said. The union is demanding safety buttons for workers on the floors and to make sure radio and Wi-Fi work in the towers where guest room attendants work.

“The culinary union is the largest organization of immigrants” in Nevada, said Khan. Thousands marched on May Day demanding, “No deportations” to “show their fear and will keep fighting every day for their families and communities,” she said.

“A vote such as this is an expected part of the process,” MGM said in a statement after the results of the strike authorized by the union were announced.

The unions are appealing to individuals and groups not to stay at any of the 34 casinos and hotels affected by the labor dispute.

“The will be a wake-up call to let (the companies) know we are together, we are united, we are not separated,” said Lewis Thomas, a utility porter at the Tropicana casino hotel, told AP.

A group of nurses brought lunch for all of the pickets from a nearby restaurant after collecting donations at one of the hospital wards.

NHS Providers, which represents the bosses at hospital, mental health and ambulance trusts in the U.K., the union would withdraw that “deliver operational productivity improvements.”

“The 2006 Labour Party government decided hospital trusts could establish subsidiaries. Jillian Harrison, who joined the picket line with two co-workers from the hospital told the Inquirer she did not believe the bosses’ assurances that wages and conditions of the workers would not be changed. “They start with lowest and work their way up,” she said. Union has set another 48-hour strike for June 9-10, as negotiations continue.

— Dog Tiersen

Teamsters strike Dr Pepper bottler, get solidarity

Some 140 truck drivers, members of Teamsters Local 727, struck the American Bottling Company May 22, setting up picket lines at the Northlake and Harvey facilities outside Chicago, where some 800 workers are employed.

Drivers at the company, who produce soft drinks and have been working without a contract since May 1. Union members voted down the bosses’ final offer May 20 that pays drivers $2 an hour less than at Pepsi and Coca-Cola.

Similarly, workers told the Militant that drivers at American Bottling receive half of what their counterparts receive in power pay, safety hazards in yards, locomotives and cars. Because of the substandard condition of the rolling stock, working to rules has shut down locomotive maintenance and investment, illustrated and union leaders pointed to the lack of company have been working strictly to com-

Widespread support for 2-day U.K. hospital workers strike

WIGAN, England — “I am proud of what we have done. They thought we would fall,” said Norris. “Workers don’t want to strike but will do so to protect what we fought so hard for over all these years.”

“We are united, we are not separated,” said Norris. “This was my first picket experience,” said Norris. “I was surprised about how happy they were to see us with our signs. I appreciated the oppor-

Norris. “This was my first picket experience,” said Norris. “I was surprised about how happy they were to see us with our signs. I appreciated the oppor-

— John Hawkins

ON THE PICKET LINE— This column gives a voice to those engaged in labor battles and building solidarity today — from school workers in West Virginia, Okla-

homa, Arizona and Colorado, to retail and factory workers looking to stand up and fight. Send in articles, photos and letters with pertinent facts and other labor protests to themilitant@gmac.com or mail them to: 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018; or call us at (212) 244-4899.

Kansas: nurses are on strike against American Bottling Company on picket line in Northlake, Illinois, May 22, joined by Walmart and other workers, bringing solidarity with union fight.

— John Hawkins

Ukraine rail workers work-to-rule, refuse unsafe equipment

Members of the Free Trade Union of Railway Workers of Ukraine (VPUZ) employed at the state-owned rail company have been working strictly to com-

pany rules since May 14, refusing to op-

cerate dangerous equipment. The actions started at six depots and have spread across the country.

At a May 22 news conference workers and union leaders pointed to the lack of maintenance and investment, illustrated with paragraphs of safety hazards in yards, locomotives and cars. Because of the substandard condition of the rolling stock, working to rules has shut down locomotive maintenance and investment, illustrated and union leaders pointed to the lack of company have been working strictly to com-

— Emma Johnson
In defense of the US working class

SWP leader at Havana event answers question: ‘Can working people in US make a socialist revolution?’

The following is the talk by Mary-Alice Waters to a conference organized by the Cuban Institute of History and the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) in Havana, Cuba. Waters is a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press. The talk, given April 26, opened a two-part program on the class struggle in the United States that was a major feature of the three-day 12th International May Day Scientific Conference.

Waters' presentation was followed by a panel of four workers and a farmer from the US who described their own work experiences in different industries, as well as the union and social battles they've been part of (see biographies on next page). An article reporting on the conference appeared in the May 21 edition of the Militant. Copyright © 2018 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

Waters was introduced by René González Barrios, president of the Cuban Institute of History.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Thank you René for your generous introduction.

On behalf of all of us presenting this morning's program on the class struggle in the United States, I want to thank the computer scientists of the Cuban Institute of History, the Central Organization of Cuban Workers, and our hosts here at the Cigar Workers Palace for the privilege and responsibility you have extended us.

Six months ago, when René first asked us to prepare this session of the 12th International May Day Scientific Conference, I was skeptical. "We're neither professional historians nor academic researchers," I told him. "We're workers, trade unionists, farmers, communists, members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists. Will our presentation be appropriate?"

Each of you has a copy of the brief biographies we prepared on the members of our panel. I won't repeat what's in those notes, except to say that those who you hear from today will not be what you regularly hear, see, or read in either the "mass media," or on what is now known as "social media" — although I prefer "bourgeois media" as the more accurate label for both.

I can assure you in advance that what you hear from us today will not be what you regularly hear, see, or read in either the "mass media," or on what is now known as "social media" — although I prefer "bourgeois media" as the more accurate label for both.

Focus on two questions

I will focus my remarks on two questions.

First. Did the 2016 electoral victory of Donald Trump register a rise in racism, xenophobia, misogyny, and every other form of ideological reaction among working people in the US? Is that why tens of millions of workers of all races voted for him?

Second. Is a socialist revolution in the US really possible? Or are those like ourselves, who answer with an unhesitating "Yes," a new variety of utopian socialist fools, however well meaning?

The clearest and most demonstrative answer to the first question is being given right now from West Virginia to Oklahoma, from Kentucky to Arizona and beyond by tens of thousands of teachers and other public workers in states Trump carried by a large margin in 2016. Less than two months ago in the state of West Virginia, one of the most significant labor battles in several decades exploded onto the national scene. Some 35,000 teachers, janitors, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and other public school employees walked off the job together, defying past court rulings denying public employees the right to strike. With overwhelming support from their communities, they closed down the schools in every single county in the state. Yes, every single one. Fifty-five counties in all. It was a surprise even for the fighting teachers.

The action came after years of ruling-class budget cuts that slashed funding for students' meals, textbooks, school supplies, building maintenance, salaries of teachers and other employees, and so-called extracurricular activities like sports, art, music, and other programs indispensable for a child's growth and learning.

Coal companies have closed hundreds of mines across the Appalachian region, as they've shifted capital to oil, natural gas, and other fossil-fuel energy sources, including their vast open-pit and mountain-top surface coal mines in western regions of the United States. Their only concern is to increase their rate of profit as they employ fewer miners.

Some fifty years ago the UMWA, long the most powerful union in the country, represented 70 percent of coal miners. That figure today stands at 21 percent.

We don't have time to tell the story of how the owners have closed health clinics won by the union in prior battles. Or why black lung disease, the deadly scourge of miners, driven back in the 1970s and 1980s, has once again exploded across the region, now hitting younger miners in an even more virulent form thanks to "new mining technology."

Nor can we describe how the mining companies have used bankruptcy proceedings, court rulings, and corporate "restructurings" to cease recognizing union contracts, dump pension obligations, and eliminate UMWA-controlled union battles in US history. One of the most economically ravaged areas of the country, and even more so today.

Over the last three decades, the coal bosses and their government, determined to drive down their labor costs and break the back of the United Mine Workers union (UMWA), have waged a concerted assault on the lives and living standards of all working people.
Continued from page 5. In this climate of Carrie underneath the banner of union busters and the courts that were fought for and conquered in previous battles. Through those union commit- tees, women themselves asserted their power to shut down work on any shift in a way that resulted in any small concessions.

You will hear more about these ques- tions — for the proper context — in our pulpits, Alyson Kennedy, who worked fourteen years as an under- ground miner.

The consequences of this decades- long assault are all too clear in the sta- tistics. Measured by official US government figures, the number of "disenrolled work- ers" — those who have not been able to find a job for so long that they’ve temporarily given up — unem- ployment in West Virginia is one of the highest in the country. More than 14 percent in 2017. That’s a center of the drug ad- diction crisis in the US — it has the highest opioid overdose rate in the country. And the drug crisis is accelerating, registering most force- fully in a very fact: life expectancy in the United States actually dropped for the first time in 2015-16.

To this picture you have to add the net-socialist sell of Washington’s economic policies — always, always, always, mostly, mostly on health- care reform, education reform, immigration reform, environmental reform, reg- ional policy. Among veterans of the Great Depression, the Persian Gulf, Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere, the suicide rate is twenty a day. Yes, you heard that right. Twenty a day.

We could add more to this picture, but for the moment I want to focus on the point that is without doubt the most important of the working-class families in regions like West Virginia (and there are many more) — without understanding the realities to compañeros and friends here in Cuba (and elsewhere), they ask, “Why have- we temporarily given up — unem- ployed workers” — those who haven’t been able to find a job, those who have been told that our five Cuba brothers lived and carried out their political work for so many years. All these questions are explained and ruled out in the TUCANs, the \textit{Continuo} series, and in other works on class struggle in different countries.

The better class of people who en- gaged in this struggle not only got every- thing they fought for, they were able to get it. That is what is happening in the United States.

What is happening in West Virginia is a living reflection of the portrait of working-class dignity and 
the 2004 presidential election, West Virginia voted for George W. Bush.

Alyson Kennedy is a fourteen-year veteran union coal miner. She was among the first wave of women who broke through the male-dominated coal jobs used to be left to men. Alyson was part of a group of women from West Virginia and Alabama who walked out of the mines in 2010 and organized a union, the United Mine Workers, and the CWU, a major labor union in the US, to represent them.

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Working-class leadership develops through struggle

Continued from page 7 are all part of our basic education.

The rise of the CIO in the Congress of Industrial Organizations, is told in rich detail in one of the books you’ll find on the Pathfinder table at the back, Labor’s Giant Step by Art Preis, one of the Militant’s principal labor reporters for many years.

What I want to call special attention to here today, however, is the most far-reaching and politically significant of the labor battles of the 1930s — the union-organizing drive of the Teamsters, the truck drivers union. It was an organizing campaign that began in the North Central city of Minneapolis in 1934 and, by its high point in 1938-39, had been spread across an area nearly the size of the Indian subcontinent. Yes, the Indian subcontinent!

The rich history and lessons of this campaign are recorded in four remarkable books — Teamster Rebellion, Teamster Power, Teamster Politics, and Teamster Bureaucracy. And it is with great pleasure that today, because this conference all four volumes are available for the first time ever in Spanish.

Farrell Dobbs, the author of the Teamster series, was in his twenties shoveling coal in a Minneapolis depot when he emerged as a leader of the 1934 strikes that turned that city into a union town. He was the central organizer of the campaign that brought tens of thousands of over-the-road truckers into the union — from Tennessee to North Dakota, from Texas to Michigan. He resigned as general organizer of the Teamsters union national staff in 1940 to become labor secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, and he was sent to prison during World War II along with seventeen other leaders of Teamsters Local 544-CIO and the Socialist Workers Party for organizing labor opposition to the imperialist war aims of the US government. He later served as national secretary of the SWP for twenty years.

More than any other labor experience, it is the Teamsters organizing drive that taught us what the US working class is capable of as it awakens in struggle. It taught us how quickly the working class can learn the meaning of class political independence, proletarian internationalism, and begin to transform the union movement into an instrument of revolutionary struggle for the entire class and its allies.

These experiences involved organizing the unemployed, farmers, and independent truckers as allies. They included launching and training a disciplined Union Defense Guard that stopped in its tracks a fascist recruitment effort promoted by the bosses. These experiences included broadening international horizons, as union militants followed events in Germany, China, and Spain and took on gangs of anti-Jewish thugs. There was growing awareness of the need quickly to enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party.

That rapid advance came to an end in 1939-40 as Washington’s intensifying imperialist war drive came down on the labor movement. But as Dobbs writes in his “Afterword” to Teamster Bureaucracy, “The principal lesson for labor militants to derive from the Minneapolis experience is not that, under an adverse relationship of forces, the workers can be overcome, but that, with proper leadership, they can overcome.”

That is one of the same lessons taught us by the political cadres who under Fidel led the Cuban Revolution to victory.

Battle to bring down Jim Crow

None of us on this panel today lived through the great labor battles of the ’30s. But several of us were part of the generations transformed by our experiences as part of another profoundly revolutionary, working-class struggle — the mass movement of the 1950s and ’60s that brought down the Jim Crow system of institutionalized race segregation in the US South. That successful battle forever changed social relations, both North and South, including within the working class and unions.

And that is my second example. The roots of that struggle are to be found in the century of resistance to the counterrevolutionary violence and terror against African Americans that reigned throughout the South following the abolition of slavery in the Civil War — the Second American Revolution. The betrayal of post-Civil War Radical Reconstruction by the rising slavocracy were the greatest defeat ever suffered by African Americans that reigned throughout the South following the abolition of slavery in the Civil War — the Second American Revolution.

For my generation, and several others of us here this morning, the years of mass struggle that overturned the American prototype of apartheid were a school of popular revolutionary action, our school. That’s when we learned discipline. When we learned the power we had, not as individuals, but in our numbers and, above all, our organization. When we learned how to engage within the movement in heated, yet civil debate. When we learned to political, not naive, as we joined in political battles raging within the movement for Black rights.

One of the myths of the battle to bring down Jim Crow is that it was a pacifist
Los Angeles teachers rally for contract, win support

BY BERNIE SENTER

LOS ANGELES — “Arm me with a fair contract!” read placards held by several thousand members of United Teachers Los Angeles and their supporters in a union-organized rally of 4,000 here May 24. The L.A. teachers fight for a contract is impacted by the struggles of school workers that have swept West Virginia, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arizona, Colorado, North Carolina and elsewhere over the last few months.

The action is a sign that the end of the school year may bring an end to the uprising by school workers across the country and that strikes and teacher protests may continue in the fall.

Union and nonunion teachers alike have said, “Enough is enough!” and organized to maximize the weight of the rank and file, finding ways to unite workers, move forward and make gains.

They have learned to forge unity over professional and union lines and beat back attempts by the government to pit them against each other. They have won solidarity and transformed their fight into a broader social movement. As the strikes and protests have moved from one state to another, they have inspired and learned from each other.

United Teachers Los Angeles represents 35,000 teachers, health and human resource workers in the Los Angeles Unified School District and in charter schools. Union members have been without a contract for a year. Their demands mirror the current battles: increased funding for schools and supplies, pay raises, smaller class sizes, more support staff and less test-driven curriculum.

District funding for the 640,000 students there is among the lowest per student in the country. Class sizes are bulging — one kindergarten class this last year had 47 students.

UTLA President Alex Caputo-Pearl told the rally that if there is no progress in talks during the summer, a strike vote will be taken in September and a strike organized for later in the fall.

Marsha Doss, an 11th-grader and leader in the Student Devise coalition, and parent organizer Eloisa Galindo also spoke. Speakers repeatedly exhorted the crowd to focus on voting, pointing to liberal big-business politician Democrat Gavin Newsom. Newsom, the state’s current lieutenant governor, is the front runner in the upcoming California gubernatorial primary.

Rebecca Garcell, a middle school teacher, told the crowd: “There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counter-revolution in Cuba.”

His words were not empty bravado. Fidel never ever stooped to demagogy. Nor was he gazing in a crystal ball, pretending to divine the future. We, and the revolutionary people of Cuba, understood him well. He was speaking as a leader offering — advancing — a line of struggle, a line of march, for our lifetimes. He was, as always, addressing Lenin’s question, “What is to be done?”

In the United States, the power to wage war out of the hands of the imperialists rulers. The Militant/Bernie Senter

In defense of the working class in the United States

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movement. That all those involved were opposed, in principle, to taking up arms, to self-defense against the violence of the Ku Klux Klan, White Citizens Council, and other vigilante outfits deeply interconnected with the Democratic Party and police departments across the South and parts of the border states.

The record shows otherwise. It was workers with mass movement and combat experience in Korea who organized themselves as the Deacons for Defense and Justice in Louisiana, and a chapter of the NAACP in Monroe, North Carolina, to protect their communities and their kids who were marching. Martin Luther King was protected by well-organized security.

Above all, we identified with and learned from Malcolm X, as he more and more consciously charted a revolutionary, an internationalist, and then, yes, a working-class course. As he charted a course to join forces with those who went over whatever their skin color, who were waging a worldwide battle “between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation.”

For many of us, it was that mass, Black, proletarian movement in the United States, combined at the same time with the mobilization of the workers and farmers of Cuba and their advancing revolution, that gave our generation unshakable confidence in the revolutionary capacities of workers and farmers of Cuba and their revolutionary potential of workers and farmers of Cuba.

That story is told in one of the most important books we have brought with us, Cuba and the Coming American Revolution by Jack Barnes.

“Beginning in 1961, which is the line to the March of the toilers,” Jack says in those pages, “is the tendency, promoted and perpetuated by the exploiting classes, for workers to take things into our own hands, to understand ourselves, to underestimate what we can accomplish, to doubt our own worth.”

What the workers and farmers of Cuba did and continue to do, is to advance the idea of solidarity, political consciousness, courage, focused and persistent efforts at education, and a revolutionary leadership of a caliber like that in Cuba — a leadership tested and forged in battle, in sacrifice, over years — it is possible to stand up to enormous might and numbers that initially seem to pose insurmountable odds — and win. And then to accelerate the building of a truly new society led by the only class capable of doing so.

That was the foundation of the political education of our generation.

Vietnam and the antiwar struggle

As the mass proletarian struggle against Jim Crow triumphed, our confidence in the revolutionary capacities of the US working class deepened with the third example I’ll point to. That was the battle to put an end to the US rulers’ war against, and oppression of, Vietnam. We never doubted that the Vietnamese people — and those of us determined to defend their fight for national sovereignty and unification — would win.

In the course of that battle, as the mobilizations against the war grew to involve millions, the widening fissures in US antiwar movements and the US military’s defeat and departure from Vietnam struck fear in the hearts of the US rulers.

• Massive revolts exploded in the Black ghettos of major cities in the North, culminating in those that spread to virtually every US city in 1968 following the assassination of Martin Luther King in Memphis, Tennessee, and the bloody political assassination in the midst of a strike by sanitation workers there for whom King had gone to rally support.

• As an effort to infiltrate and quiet protests, the US rulers increasingly resorted to the mobilization of National Guard troops, culminating in May 1970 in the fatal shooting of two Kent State University students, a massacre that inspired and validated the student workers and youth preparatory movements everywhere to push to the wall by the capitalists’ peace and prosperity. To think otherwise you’d have to believe that the ruling families of the imperialist world and their financial wizards have found a way to “manage” capitalism in crisis. That they’ve discovered the means to preclude shredding financial collapses and breakdowns of production, trade, and employment.

You’d have to believe that the credit crisis that exploded as recently as 2007-08 was an aberration and won’t happen again, with even more devastating consequences for working people.

The opposite is the truth.

The crisis of finance capital is not a short-term cyclical adjustment. World capitalism’s profit rates have been on a long downward curve for more than four decades, since the mid-1970s. Do any of us believe, under the domination of breakdown-ridden financial and banking capital, that world capitalism is entering a sustained period of increased investment in the expansion of industrial capacity and massive hiring of workers? All evidence points in the other direction.

We have entered what will be decades of economic, financial, and social contraction and class battles. Decades of bloody wars like those in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and more.

We are coming toward the end in World War III — inevitably — if the only class capable of doing so, the working class, fails to take state power. If we fail to take
Ireland abortion ban repealed

Continued from front page
says his government will introduce a law to allow abortion, but will impose a time limit of up to 12 weeks of preg-
nancy and an up to 24 weeks in “excep-
tional” circumstances.

The vote is a reflection of the deep-
going changes in the outlook of women
and men to the fight for women’s rights coming out of the integration of
women into the workforce. This has
occurred in Ireland as it has in many
other parts of the capitalist world.

The number of working women in
Ireland jumped 20 percent since
1993. Restrictions on the sale of con-
traceptives were dropped in 1995, di-
vorce was legalized in 1996, votes in
1992 and 2002 altered the law to per-
mit abortion if a woman was deemed
a suicide risk, and same sex marriage
was legalized by a 62 percent vote in
2015.

Broad campaign
“This result is bigger than Ireland. We
know the world watches us as
abortion access is being eroded in
other places,” said Linda Kavanagh, a
spokesperson for the Abortion Rights
Campaign, part of the coalition that
led the efforts to repeal the amend-
ments.

The fight heated up after Savita
Halappanavar, a 31-year-old dentist,
died on Oct. 28, 2012, after Uni-
versity Galway Hospital authorities re-
fused to give her an abortion. She
went to the hospital in extreme pain
as she was having a miscarriage. She
got septicemia, several organs began
to fail, but hospital authorities refused
to save her life.

Within weeks protests were mount-
ed in towns across Ireland. Some
10,000 people marched in Dublin,
protesting her death and the constitu-
tion’s onerous restrictions on access to
abortion.

In September and October 2017
demonstrations in Dublin, Belfast and
London mobilized growing support for
the campaign. Over 30,000 marched in
Dublin.

Responding to the growing support
for the campaign for abortion rights,
Varadkar announced the referendum
Jan 25. Since then, thousands of
women and men have been involved in
street campaigning from tables in
town centers and door to door.

Aisling McMahon who works in
Belfast, traveled with others from
Northern Ireland to the Irish Repub-
llic to campaign in Droughda with “To-
gether for Yes” for two weekends.
“We did not quite know what to ex-
pect canvassing door to door, and in
rural and working-class areas,” she
told the Militant in a phone interview
May 27. “But we were welcome, we
never encountered a hard ‘No’ with
no possibility to have a discussion.
On the contrary, women would come out
tell us their personal stories.”

After the referendum results were
announced, John McGuirk, a spokes-
man for Save the 8th campaign, said that
his group would continue to fight
against women’s access to abortion “if
and when abortion clinics are opened in
Ireland.”

‘The North is next’
“The pressure is on for the North
now,” McMahon said. “When I walked
through the center of Belfast last
night with my ‘Repeal’ hoodie on, I
was greeted by all kinds of people, and
a lot of young guys especially
we were giving me high fives.”

The 1967 Abortion Act made abor-
tion widely available in Britain under
the National Health Service. But the
law does not apply in Northern Ire-
land, where women seeking abortions
can face life in prison, and doctors
who perform them face five years. As
a result hundreds of women travel to
Britain each year.

Since the referendum result be-
came known, there have been calls for
a change of legislation in North-
ern Ireland by the Alliance Party, the
Social Democratic and Labour Party
and Sinn Fein, while the Democratic
Unionist Party remains opposed. In

US rulers, Pyongyang reset denuclearization talks

Continued from front page
raged against the White House. Trump
should never have agreed to the meet-
ing in the first place, they said. Trump
was “unprepared,” “hotheaded,” had “excessive expectations,” and
would give away the farm at any
meeting.

The next day President Trump
made a statement in which he was all-
thing ahead for the summit and that
sometimes sharp exchanges between
Washington and Pyongyang were all
part of negotiations. Former Demo-

cratic President Jimmy Carter joined
those urging Trump be considered for
the Nobel Peace Prize.

Trump, like his predecessors in the
White House, defends the inter-
est of U.S. imperialism. The mea-
sures he has implemented, including
tightening the squeeze on working
to North Korea, are nothing
new. But unlike previous U.S. admin-
istrations, the Trump White House
gives the impression of wanting the

coment of China to significantly step up
its implementation of sanctions and
the resulting hardships on working
to North Korea. So, 90 percent
of North Korea’s trade is with China.

Kim has made ending North Ko-
rea’s economic isolation a priority.

On May 28, he announced Workers’ Party had adopted a “new
strategic line,”retreating from invest-
ment in armaments to focus on re-
building the country.

US rulers leveled Korea
The 1950-53 Korean War was a re-
sult of the division of Korea by
Washington, along with Moscow, after
the second imperialist world war ended
with the defeat of Japan’s capitalist
rulers. They did so against the will of
the Korean people. Washington pushed
socialist revolution.

Washington crushed revolution-
ary mobilizations in the South and,
after the war broke out, used massive
bombings and blockades aimed to level
on every building in North Korea and
only on a slightly lesser scale — in
the South.

Preparations for the summit
On May 26 South Korean President
Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader
Kim met in Panmunjom. According
to press reports, Moon hopes to travel
to Singapore during the summit for
what would be the announcement of a
formal peace treaty.

On May 29, a delegation of Sung
Kim, U.S. ambassador to the Philip-
pines; Allison Hooker, director of Ko-
rea for the National Security Council;
and other U.S. officials met with a
North Korean delegation in the de-
militarized zone to discuss meeting
arrangements.

On May 29, the White House said
it was holding off beginning tighter
economic sanctions planned against
North Korea.

After consulting with Chinese offi-
cials in Beijing, Gen. Kim Yong Chol,
a high-ranking official in North Ko-
rea, arrived in Washington May 30.
He will meet with Secretary of State
Mike Pompeo, reportedly to discuss
what steps toward denuclearization can
be decided.

Discussions also concern the mas-
sive arsenal of nonnuclear weapons
the North has amassed on the demili-
tarized zone aimed at Seoul 30 miles
away, as well as withdrawal of some
U.S. forces from the South.

Once Washington-North Korea
agreements are signed, Trump says
Washington will work to ensure that
other governments will join South
and Japan to help finance eco-
nomic development in the North, and
assure the protection of the North
Korean government.

“We welcome recent steps that
have opened the road to agreement by
Seoul, Beijing and Washington to sit
down at the table with the DPRK
and other governments will join in
meeting the North Korean leaders last
month.”

“The stakes have never been high-
er in ensuring a nuclear-free Korean
Peninsula and Japan, including an
end to Washington’s nuclear ‘umbrella’
and deployment of nuclear-armed
warships and submarines in the sur-
rounding seas and skies,” the SWP
said.

“Korea is one!”

LA teachers rally
Continued from page 9
teacher from Arizona and a leader of
Arizonans United, told the rally,
“Striking was the only way we could
show our collective power.” The AEU
joined with the Arizona Education As-
sociation to lead a sustained campaign
of rallies, “Red for Ed” walk-ins and fi-
nally a strike that won new funding and
substantial wage increases.

Members of Service Employees In-
national Union Local 99, who work as
the school district’s bus drivers, caf-
eteria workers, custodians and other
nonteaching staff, joined the rally wear-
ing their union shirts. Their local got
a tentative new contract May 8, subject
to vote by members, after 16 months of
fruitless negotiations.

The union—which represents 30,000
workers—got the new proposal after
they called a one-day strike for May 15
and the UTLA announced its members
wouldn’t cross their picket lines. Within
hours a new offer was made.

Local 99 posted a picture on its web-
site of its contingent in the teachers’
rally, captioned, “You were there for us,
we are here for you!”