Join May Day brigade to see Cuba’s revolution

BY JANET POST

Workers, farmers and young people from around the world have been invited by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) to join the 14th May Day International Volunteer Work Brigade in Solidarity with Cuba, set for April 21-May 5.

“It feels like a real learning opportunity,” Adam Faust, a home improvement worker and artist in Atlanta, told Samir Hazboun, a member of the Socialist Workers Party in Louisville, Kentucky. Faust and Hazboun have both signed up to go on the brigade.

“I want to share what reality is for people here in the U.S. to counter the stereotype of America being a place that’s paved in gold,” Faust said.

“I tell young people interested in the brigade to check out the new Pathfinder book, In Defense of the US Working Class,” said Hazboun. “It features a talk given by Mary-Alice Pathfierner, which is a key part of the mix, allowing the employers to sow division among workers, which they use to push down wages and attack the conditions of all.

Tactical differences in the ruling class over the pace of immigration, refracted through liberal Democrats’ never-ending “resistance” that is aimed at bringing down the Donald Trump presidency, have led to sharp divisions in Washington and a partial shutdown of the federal government. One thing they all agree on is that many government workers should have their GPS devices in the glove compartment of their cars and be prepared to respond to any situation and website of the

Amnesty for all immigrant workers, unite working class!

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The capitalist rulers in the U.S. and the Democratic and Republican parties that serve their interests agree that immigration policy should be built on the needs of the bosses. They turn the spigot on when the bosses need workers, and turn it down when production in factories and agriculture falls. The use of immigrant workers without paper is a key part of the mix, allowing the employers to sow division among workers, which they use to push down wages and attack the conditions of all.

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SWP takes working-class campaign all across Texas

BY ROY LANDERSEN

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Thousands turn out to support striking Los Angeles teachers

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

LOS ANGELES — More than 30,000 teachers, students, parents and other supporters joined a spirited march in driving rain here Jan. 14, the first day of a strike by 31,000 teachers. Thousands walked picket lines in front of schools where they work before and after the march. The teachers, members of United Teachers Los Angeles, have been working without a contract since the previous one expired in June 2017.

They are demanding the Los Angeles Unified School District reduce class sizes and hire more teachers and other school workers, including full-time librarians, nurses and counselors. They’re fighting for a pay increase of 6.5 percent retroactive to a year earlier. School district officials have offered 6 percent, spread out over the first two years of a three-year contract. Nearly 80 percent of the district’s

US rulers brag about how they’ll use their military in Middle East

BY TERRY EVANS

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo used a nine-nation tour of the Middle East to attempt to shore up the U.S. rulers’ alliances with a bloc of capitalist powers in the region, especially in targeting the regime in Tehran. He was seeking to protect U.S. imperialism’s economic, political and military interests in the region at a time of ongoing conflict and shifting relations. Pompeo defended the Donald Trump administration’s planned withdrawal of 2,000 plus ground troops Washington has stationed in Syria. To do so, the U.S. administration is seeking to organize the rulers in Turkey to move into Syria and join

Inside

SWP statement: Support Los Angeles teachers strike! 9

Ninth week of ‘yellow vest’ protests across France 2

Sudan protesters reject gov’t attacks, years of wars 3

–On the picket line, p. 5–

Virginia teachers to rally Jan. 28 for public education funding

Bangladesh garment workers: ‘Implement minimum wage raise’
US brags about using military
Continued from front page
in safeguarding areas still outside the control of the Bashar al-Assad regime and its allies.
It is also searching for a way to prevent a deepening conflict between the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG). Washington’s former ally on the ground, and those same Turkish forces. The Kurdish fighters were decisive for Washington in their war to push back Islamic State, while keeping Assad and his allies in Moscow and Tehran from reconquering the areas being liberated, roughly a quarter of Syria, including its main oil fields.

At home, liberal Democratic Party leaders and other political adherents of the “resistance” against the presidency of Donald Trump have cried bloody murder at the administration’s plan to withdraw. They insist on an indefinite and stepped-up U.S. military garrison in Syria.

War in Syria drags on
The effects of the war in Syria — which has cost the lives of 350,000 Syrians and driven over half the country’s population from their homes — drag on, as does the intervention of Washington, Moscow, Tehran, Ankara and other regional capitalist powers.

Many Syrian refugees in Lebanon were left to fend for themselves in flooded camps following severe winter storms Jan. 6, which left sewage seeping into homes and destroyed meager food supplies. The Syrian regime maintains a tight siege around the Al-Rukban refugee camp near Syria’s border with Jordan, where six people died from starvation and a lack of medicine late last year.

The capitalist rulers of rival powers intervening in Syria’s civil war remain indifferent to the deteriorating conditions inflicted on the country’s toiling population.

Washington seeks to withdraw forces
The U.S. government is pressing the Turkish rulers to back off from their threats to assault the YPG. Washington found it expedient to provide the YPG with arms to frighten Islamic State. Ankara fears Kurdish rule in YPG-controlled territory will inspire the 15 million Kurds living in Turkey, who have waged a decades-long struggle against national oppression. Trump has combined threats to “devastate” the Turkish economy if Ankara assaults the Syrian Kurds with negotiations with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan over the establishment of a 20-mile “safe zone” in northeast Syria. It would be patrolled by the Turkish army, leaving the YPG in political control over much of the rest of the area.

The bottom line is the administration’s effort to withdraw is on hold. Any move to do so, the Pentagon says, is subject to “ground realities.” Administration spokespersons stress a withdrawal won’t affect the ability of the U.S. to use military might in the Middle East if they choose to. “The absence of a couple thousand soldiers on the ground in Syria in no way materially diminishes the capacity of the United States of America and our amazing Armed Forces to deliver American power to accomplish our objectives anywhere in the world,” Pompeo said Jan. 13.

In a speech at American University in Cairo Jan. 10, Pompeo said Washing- ton and its allies are determined to “expel every last Iranian boot” from Syria. He said this remains Washington’s strategic mission, and the withdrawal from Syria is just a “tactical change.”

Washington’s deployment of warplanes, bombs, missiles, the navy’s Fifth Fleet, and tens of thousands of ground troops in bases around the Middle East is far and away the most powerful there. Pompeo said there will be no U.S. reconstruction aid to Syria as long as Assad allows Tehran’s forces to stay in the country. He added Washing- ton backs the Israeli rulers’ continual airstrikes on these forces. The U.S. government’s sanctions against Teh- ran continue to constrain the Iranian economy, weighing most heavily on working people there.

The U.S. rulers have intervened continuously in the Middle East over decades, convinced that the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 meant they had “won” the Cold War and could do as they pleased with no consequences. But they were wrong. They’ve been emmeshed for decades in wars in Iraq and Syria, as well as in Afghanistan, and conflicts elsewhere in the region, unable to either establish stability for their interests or to get out.

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

Amazon workers: ‘We’re workers, not robots’

Moves by bosses to speed up work at Amazon warehouse in Shakopee, Minnesota, were met with a fighting response by workers, including many Somali immigrants. ‘Militant’ reports on workers’ efforts to stand up for dignity and push back bosses’ attacks on conditions.

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Sudan toilers protest gov’t attacks, years of wars

BY TERRY EVANS

In response to a rise in the price of bread, tens of thousands of workers and intellectuals have joined protests since mid-December in cities across Sudan. The price increase came on top of years of grinding hardships, civil war and political repression.

The government, which controls the cost of some basic necessities, tripled bread prices Dec. 19, sparking the demonstrations. Protesters have taken to the streets daily, calling for an end to President Omar Hassan al-Bashir’s rule. "We’ve been living without dignity," said Aseel Abdo, a 25-year-old woman who participated in the protests, told the Washington Post Jan. 6.

The actions have drawn support from some trade unions and the country’s bourgeois opposition parties. Inflation has risen 70 percent over the past year. For months working people in Sudan have faced growing shortages of food, medicines and money, and long lines to get fuel. Bashir has moved with force against demonstrators. The army has been mobilized and security forces have fired on demonstrators. Khat and drug traffickers are closed. The government says 24 people have been killed since the actions began, but Amnesty International estimates over 40. Numbers arrested are between 800 and 2000. Bashir fired his health minister Jan. 5, blaming him for the rise in the price of medicine. But protests have continued, extending for the first time to El-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, Jan. 13.

Decades of war

The rising discontent comes on top of the deadly effects on working people of the Sudanese rulers’ wars. Bashir seized power in a 1989 coup, taking command in the bloody 1983-2005 civil war, which ended with the independence of South Sudan in 2011. As a result, the Sudanese rulers in the North lost control of most of the country’s oil fields, deepening the economic crisis for toilers there. Since the war ended, Bashir’s government has supported rebel groups in Darfur, and in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan regions.

Some 1.4 million people around the country are still unable to return to homes they fled during these conflicts. The regime is trying to make alliances in the region. The Sudanese government has entered into an agreement with the Saudi monarchy to deploy troops to the Saudi-led coalition fighting Tehran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. Bashir’s government recently sought collaboration with Washington and the removal of Sudan from the U.S. rulers’ list of terrorist governments, as it led talks with Washington to help police the Libyan border. Washington lifted economic sanctions against the regime in 2017.
José Ramón Fernández’s life reflects the strengths of the Cuban Revolution

BY SETH GALINSKY
Cuban revolutionary leader José Ramón Fernández died Jan. 6 at the age of 95. He commanded the main column of the revolutionary Cuban forces that repelled the CIA-organized invasion at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 and later held a wide variety of leadership positions.

His personal history of discipline, honesty, tact and dedication to the revolutionary movement from the moment he joined with those fighting to overturn the U.S.-backed dictator- ship of Fulgencio Batista speaks volumes about the strengths of the Cuban Revolution. And it helps explain why the U.S. capitalist rulers continue to fear its example.

Fernández, who rose to the rank of first lieutenant in the Cuban army before the revolution, was one of a number of army officials who rankled at the moment he joined with those fighting to overturn the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Batista.

Fernández recalls in a 1999 interview with the Cuban newspaper Trabajadores how he and others worked to convince fellow officers to join a conspiracy to overthrow Batista.

“We told them that the country was in ruins and all the hatred of the people falls on us, even though we were not the ones who initiated the March 10 [coup],” he said, “nor were we backing the force any type of actions in favor of illegal activities such as smuggling, gambling, prostitution, vices in general, fraud, theft, or the public treasury and all those plots on that society that were exacerbated with the coming to power of Batista.”

The April 19, 1956, revolt against Batista by los puros — the pure ones as Fernández and the other anti-Batista army officers were known — failed. He was arrested, court-martialed and tortured. Eventually he was sent to the Isle of Pines where he met members of Fidel Castro’s July 26 Movement and other opponents of the dictatorship.

He was won to the political perspectives of the July 26 Movement and helped them organize their own battalion within the prison, becoming their military instructor.

When news reached the prison that Batista had fled Cuba on Jan. 1, 1959, in the face of the advancing Rebel Army and revolutionary upsurge across the country, Fernández and other imprisoned July 26 Movement leaders took over the prison. They released the political prisoners and quickly assumed military and political command over the entire Isle of Pines.

Fernández flew to Havana the next day where Fidel Castro asked him to head up a school for cadets to train Cuba’s new revolutionary armed forces. Fernández at first said no. He told Castro he had already gotten a new job as a manager of a sugar mill.

Fernández describes what happened next. “Fidel, a lot of times while he’s thinking, he’s like a moving volcano. He took a few steps, he stroked his beard and then he pointed said, ‘You’re right, you go off to the sugar mill and I’ll go write a book about the Sierra and the revolution, and the revolution can go to hell,’ and he just looks at me and I thought about it for a few seconds and replied, ‘Where did you say you want me to go?’”

Fernández never looked back.

Castro then assigned him to lead the defense of the revolution at the Bay of Pigs. “Girón meant participating with my own hands in the defense of the revolution and socialism,” he said. “It reinforced my conviction that my destiny had been fused forever with the destiny of this heroic people.”

Fernández held many leadership positions over the years. He served as director of the Central Committee of the Communist Party from 1975, vice minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces from 1968 to 1970, minister of education from 1972 to 1981, and vice president of the Council of Ministers from 1978 until his death. He served as president of the Cuban Olympic Committee from 1997 until October 2018, when he was elected honorary life president.

Join May Day brigade to see Cuba’s revolution

Continued from front page
Waters, a leader of the SWP, last year conducted an interview with Fernández as part of Pathfinder Press’ Making History: Interviews with four generals and political developments that changed the course of Cuba. Applications, which are open until March 15, are available at www.mnc.org.

Brigadistas will also participate in an international conference in solidarity with Cuba in Havana the day after the May Day march. A $500 fee covers all expenses in Cuba, including accommodation, meals and transportation. A $150 deposit is required with the application, with the balance due by March 22. The round-trip airfare to Cuba is extra. For more information contact ICAN-GoToCuba@mnc.org.

José Ramón Fernández, center, and Fidel Castro, to his left, at Playa Girón, April 1961. Fernández commanded main column that defeated U.S.-organized mercenary invasion there, marks the 60th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

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‘Cuban people know what they are defending’

The following excerpt is from testimony given by José Ramón Fernández before the People’s Court of Havana, July 12, 1999. It is taken from the chapter “The Cuban People, Rifles in Hand, Were Convinced of Their Cause” in Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington’s First Military Defeat in the Americas. Copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

“The men and women, the people who were in early January 1959 cheered Fidel Castro in his triumphant tour of the country and the discrimination against workers, farmers and members of mass organizations. The U.S. contingent is being organized by the Network on Cuba. Applications, which are open until March 15, are available at www.mnc.org.

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Virginia teachers to rally Jan. 28 for public education funding

Virginia teachers are standing up and saying “Enough is enough!” to the decades-long assault on public education by the state government. Virginia Educators United is building a statewide march and rally at the capitol in Richmond Jan. 28, to demand more state funds for the schools.

“The teachers don’t get enough help, not to mention they need more salary,” Moris Cordvart, a therapeutic counselor in the Wise County public schools in rural southwestern Virginia, told the Militant Jan. 13 by phone. “We see kids every day that need one-on-one attention. School is important in their lives, and the funds aren’t there.”

Virginia Educators United members joined “bridge brigade” rallies on overpasses along Interstate 95 and 64 Jan. 8, where teachers and their supporters held up foam board with Christmas lights spelling “Fund Our Schools.” “Walk-in” rallies are being organized at schools across the state Jan. 16 to reach out to students, parents and other school workers.

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam’s 2019 budget proposal promises a $268 million increase in education spending, including a 5 percent raise for teachers — which may or not be approved. Teachers pay in Virginia is 34 percent below the national average. The state government spends less per student than Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and West Virginia.

The teachers are demanding higher funding for public education, infrastructure, and pay for teachers in their support staff. Virginia law allows local school districts to raise funds to supplement state money, meaning schools in wealthier districts can get more and better paid school workers and supplies.

Virginia Legislators United members also joined Nov. 14 “October Rebellion” protests in D.C. against U.S. war on Afghanistan and the ongoing occupation of Iraq. Teachers and students spoke out for education funding every time they had the chance.

“Unions and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade-union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party.” — Farrell Dobbs

pathfinderpress.com

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —

January 31, 1994

Washington’s and London’s callous and calculated cover-up of the causes behind the bleeding gates, diarrhea and depression suffered by thousands of veterans of the U.S.-led war against Iraq shows the brutal disregard of capitalist politicians for the lives and well-being of working people.

The latest snow job by the White House is part and parcel of the monstrous slaughter Washington and its allies continue to commit in Iraq. At least 150,000 Iraqis were killed during the so-called Desert Storm. Tens of thousands more have died since as a result of the brutal embargo.

Now Washington tries to blame Baghdad for the scandal. But the fact is that thousands of Gulf War vets were exposed to toxic substances without their knowledge and then lied to and denied medical care for almost three years cannot be laid at the feet of the Iraqi regime.

January 31, 1969

WASHINGTON, D.C. — When Derrick Alexander was wounded in Vietnam Nov. 1968 he made up his mind to do whatever he could to end the war when he got back to the States, but he didn’t know just what to do.

A month later Alexander was shipped to Walter Reade Hospital in Washington. Listening to the news one night last week, he heard about the weekend anti-war mobilization. He decided to get out of his hospital bed to attend it.

His presence expressed the developing unity of GI and civilian antiwar activists, who was strongly reflected at the “Support Our Soldiers” march Jan. 19. Along with other active-duty GIs, Alexander led that march of 12,000 down Pennsylvania Ave. to the Capitol area.

January 29, 1944

Anti-Semetic attacks are on the increase. From New York, Boston, Baltimore and elsewhere come reports of beatings and kidnappings of Jews by Chris- tian Frontiers and other hoodlums. Instead of protecting the victims of these assaults, the police shield their attackers or remain indifferent to them.

The Los Angeles labor movement has provided an example of working class action against anti-Semitism, which is worth more than a thousand appeals to capitalist politicians. When a Jew- baiting gang in Douglas Aircraft Co’s Santa Monica plant circulated a filthy anti-Semitic leaflet, the IAW-CIO lo- cal immediately set to work to stop this poisonous propaganda. It drew up and distributed among its members a counter petition pointing out the evils of racial hatred and calling for unity of all union members against anti-Jewish and anti-Negro attacks.

Thousand of Bay Area teachers rally for school funds

OAKLAND, Calif. — Thousands of union teachers, parents and students from the Bay Area and beyond rallied here Jan. 12 demanding more money for education, pay increases for teachers and smaller class sizes.

Many of the teachers were members of the Oakland Education Association, which has been in negotiations with school district officials that have dragged on for over 18 months. Many carried signs saying, “Ready to strike.”

“There is little or no money in Oakland for school supplies and other neces- sities,” said Karl Daku, who taught English here, but now teaches in Berkeley. “It breaks my heart to see the discrepancy between the districts.”

Teachers from Fremont, who are also in contract negotiations, picketed schools there Jan. 11 then drove to the Oakland rally the next day. “We want higher pay and better medical coverage,” Fremont English teacher Tiffany Steile told the Militant.

“I think the majority of teachers in Fremont have two jobs now to make ends meet, just like I do,” said Malea Ferreira, a school librarian there.

— BETSEY STONE

— CALENDAR —

CONNECTICUT

Hartford Puerto Rico and Cuba: Two Different Responses to Natural Disaster. Tues., Jan. 29, Reception 5:30 p.m.; Program 6 p.m. Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church, 79 New Park Ave. Tel. (860) 794-7834. Sponsored by Connecticut Puerto Rican Agenda, CIDOC, Puerto Rican Parade Committee and Greater Hartford Coalition on Cuba.

ILLINOIS


Continued from front page

Robinson, noted that she had been the SWP candidate for the governor of the United States in 2016. “When Kennedy offered her the nomination, she was getting major mayoral platform, the threads of her national campaign would still present," he wrote. “She called for amnesty for the millions of undocumented workers in the country — something over which City Hall has little influence while arguing that their status drives down wages for all working people. To address Dallas’ infrastructure needs, a massive government-financed jobs program “at union-scale wages” would be needed, she said. Such a program “would provide sufficient benefits to address affordable-housing needs,” Kennedy said.

“Kennedy was part of the first wave of female coal miner- 
ners in the U.S., joining the United Mine Workers in 1981 and working in mines in Kentucky and Alabama. She “helped organize miners — many of them immigrants from Mexico — to fight for improved wages and safer working conditions.”

Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party from other states have come to Dallas to speak out for workers across Texas who, like other working people in cities, town and on farms in the U.S., face worsening economic and social conditions. They are increasingly organizing to take on the capitalist class taking power and replacing the dying capitalist system.

“We agree the rich control the sys-

Continued from front page

1,000s turn out to support LA teachers strike

Continued from front page

2016 presidential candidate is running for National Commit- tee of the SWP

Campaign with the Socialist Workers Party candidates!

Continued from front page

In Defense of the US Working Class, a new book by Mary-Alice Waters, is now available.

It features the talk by Waters at an April 2013 event in Havanar organized by the Cuban History Institute and the Center for Cuban Studies, the country’s union federation. The book includes interviews by SWP national Commit- tee Workers Party National Commit- tee President of Pathfinder Press publisher of the book. Her talk was first printed in June 11 issue of the January 14 with her presen-

New book discusses how US working people are fighting back against bosses’ anti-labor offensive

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Sankara: ‘The future demands that women be liberated’

The excerpt below is from Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle by Thomas Sankara, one of Pathfinder Press’ Books of the Month for January. Sankara led an uprising in 1983 to establish a popular revolution-ary government in Burkina Faso, in West Africa. He had been won to the revolutionary cause by Leon Trotsky’s Writings on Literature, Politics, Art and Revolution.

The leader of 1983-87 revolution in West Africa, Thomas Sankara, speaks on the problem of the commodification of women.

Sankara: ‘The future demands that women be liberated’

Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle

BY THOMAS SANKARA

We undoubtedly owe a debt to di-alectical materialism for having shed the greatest light on the problem of the com-modification of women.

The patriarchal family made its appear-ance in times of crisis. It was for eight millennia. Relations of ownership were summoned.

In slave society, the male slave was looked upon as an animal, a means of production of goods and services. The woman, who bore the social burden, was crushed within her own class and outside of that class. This was the case even for women who belonged to the exploiting classes. In feudal society, women, although in a state of absolute dependence on men, justified by their supposed physical and psychological weakness. Often seen as a delimited object and a primary agent of indiscretion, women, with a few rare exceptions, were kept out of places of worship. In capitalist soci-ety, where women, already morally and socially persecuted, is also subjugat-ed economically. Kept by the man if she does not work, she remains under a class and outside of that class. This is how the fight to liberate women we will have lost all right to hope for a positive and superior transformation of our society. Our revolution will then no longer have any meaning. It is to wage this noble struggle that all of us, men and women, are summoned.
The following statement was issued Jan. 16 by Socialist Workers Party candidates Dennis Richter for City Council District 12 and Laura Garza for School Board in Los Angeles.

The strike by 31,000 teachers in Los Angeles is a battle being waged on behalf of all working people. The Socialist Workers Party will help get the truth out about this fight and urges much-needed solidarity with the union’s struggle.

Join this union battle! Get to the picket lines and strike rallies, stand together with the teachers. Get messages of support from your co-workers and unions. Contribute to the strike fund.

The teachers are fighting to change deteriorating conditions that have sent tens of millions around the country — oversized classes, few supplies, no librar-
ies, cut-down gym and art programs, along with no full-time nurses or counselors. These conditions epit-
oize the class-based “education” system the capitalist rulers think workers deserve.

“In the US today, under capitalism, the only future we can count on is one in which education will worsen — in which education will fail rather than retread social differentiation,” Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, explains in _Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learn-
ing Under Capitalization._ “There will only be ‘education’ to which curried elites are granting the vast major-
ity of youth, and to encourage escape.”

The ruling rich are only interested in a learning sys-
tem that inculcates discipline and rewards following orders. They have no interest in a working class that learns how to think, gains appreciation for culture and has a thirst for lifelong learning.

Fights by teachers are part of broader struggles of working people to take on the attacks on our wages and working conditions by the bosses and their gov-
ernment today. They aim to make us pay for the deep crisis of their capitalist system.

Organizing solidarity for all those who fight against the exploitation and attacks of the bosses and their government helps us learn who we really are and to start on conquering the road to our emancipation.

The rulers and those in the upper reaches of the middle class who run the government have the same old system school. The purpose of their education is to give “the educated” a stake in thinking they’re differ-
ent, better than those who work all their lives. They learn the continued need to keep working people in line, constantly reminding us we are “deplorables,” as Hill-
ary Clinton called us.

The ruling capitalist class doesn’t need workers to be educated. That’s why funding for schools, includ-
ing the hiring of more teachers and other needed school personnel, is low on their priorities.

There is an alternative — the living example of the Cuban Revolution shows what is possible. Workers and farmers, with class values and priorities opposite to those taught by the dog-eat-dog capitalist system, took political power in 1959 and began using it to molten the toiling majority to meet their needs. In 1961 their revolutionary government organized some 100,000 young volunteers in literacy brigades to wipe out widespread illiteracy in a single year. This opened the way to widespread control of political and educational affairs, a step that was crucial for strengthen-
ing the revolution.

One educational step you can take this spring is to sign up for the May Day brigade to visit Cuba and meet and talk with workers, farmers and others there to learn about the revolution and how it has trans-
formed their country and their lives.

“Explaining the communist approach to learning is part of preparing the working class for the great-
est of all battles in the years ahead,” SWP leader Jack Barnes wrote, “the battle to throw off the self-image the rulers teach us, and to recognize that we are ca-
pable of taking power and organizing society.”

Dennis Richter, SWP candidate for Los Angeles City Council District 12, joins picket line of California Cartage workers who are fighting for a union, Nov. 5, 2018.

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**LETTERS**

**Homelessness is ‘deplorable’**

I really appreciated the article on homeless people in the Jan. 21 issue. I work part time with home-
less folks in a day shelter. Several have jobs in fast food or as cooks, yet cannot afford a place to live.

Some work on resumes that in-
clusively reflect the oppression of Na-
tive people. This is one of the most strin-
gent restrictions on immigration were enacted under the Democrats. In 1996 then President Wil-
liam Clinton signed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. It expanded the powers of the immigration cops to round up and deport those charged with being “illegal” and au-
thorized construction of the border wall. The hated law was backed because it was the largest federal cop ag-
ency. Deportations rose to an all-time high in Clinton’s last year in office.

Factory raids exploded under George W. Bush, but were brought to a halt after millions of im-
migrant workers went on strike and protested on May 1, 2006.

The first parts of a border wall were built near San Diego in 2005. Under Clinton, it was expanded under George W. Bush and again under Barack Obama, covering more than 650 miles. “We have gone above and beyond what was requested,” Obama bragged in 2011. His efforts were backed back 100 percent by the current Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi.

Obama dramatically expanded the “forced remov-
ais” of immigrants, which steeply increased the penal-
ities of “illegal re-entry” into the US. And during his presidency the number of felony prosecutions on this charge averaged over 35,000 every year.

The government ‘shutdown’

Millions of workers wouldn’t miss the rulers’ cops and jails as well as the legions of federal regulators who every day apply for with red tape if much of the federal gov-
ernment shuts down forever. But that isn’t going to happen.

Such shutdowns are carefully selective. They come into play when tactical divisions between the ruling parties allow federal budget allocations to run out with no new ones in place.

Exempt are all the repressive bodies of capitalist — the Internal Revenue Service, border po-
lice, federal prison guards and the like. The boss class won’t let these pillars of their rule lapse for even a minute.

Some federal mandates continue, including Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. But no one who be-
comes eligible can register for these programs.

What “shuts down” are many agencies and jobs that workers and others who need welfare benefits, food stamp, disaster relief and similar programs. Farmers can no longer get federal loans.

So far roughly 380,000 of the 2.1 million fed-
eral employees have been furloughed, and another 420,000 have been told to report to work but they won’t get paid.

Democratic and Republicans blame each other for the shutdown, but they’re both responsible. It’s another example of the rulers’ crimes for the crises working people face today.

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**Fight for amnesty!**

Continued from front page

keep on working with no pay. Working people have no interest in backing ei-
ther side of this skirmish over the rulers’ need for cheap labor. Our focus should be fighting for am-
nesty for all those in the US without papers the government calls “illegal re-entries” that the road to unifying the working class, organizing workers into unions and fighting against the attacks of the bosses and their government.

All workers have an interest in defending the rights of those from abroad who seek to apply for refugee status here because of fear of violence or persecution.

Calls by a layer of liberals and middle-class radicals to “open the borders” are nothing but uto-
pian posturing meant to score points against their opponents in bourgeois politics, like Trump, but aren’t intended to be implemented.

The Trump administration favors stronger con-
trols on immigration and has been demanding Congress fund a bigger wall along the Mexican border to lower the number of people who come across without being processed. The Democrats shed crocodile tears for immigrants and use their majority in the House of Representatives to join in keeping the shutdown in effect.

As of this writing there are about 800,000 of the most stringent restrictions on immigration were enacted under the Democrats. In 1996 then President Wil-
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**Letters column is open for all viewpoints of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.**

**``Militant' Prisoners'' Fund**

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**The Militant** January 28, 2019 9