‘Prisons exist in this country to take away our humanity’

BY ROY LANDERSEN

When Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Los Angeles City Council, knocked on the door of Lenin Mendoza Feb. 24, and explained some of the politics and perspectives his campaign is raising, Mendoza, a hospital worker, invited Richter to join him and his two friends, a machine operator and a car salesmen, in his garage. Richter and SWP campaign supporters were raising the SWP program with workers door to door in Reseda in the San Fernando Valley.

“We’ve just now been talking about this — how hard it’s getting for people to pay for basic necessities,” Mendoza said. “Sometimes I think prisoners are better off. At least they’ve got somewhere to sleep, three meals a day and medical care.”

Prisons are set up to take away workers’ humanity — to brutalize and destroy people. At Organisation of African Unity headquarters in Addis Ababa, Prime Minister MelesEZEBIY, a champion of the “agenda for change” in Africa, sits in a chair made of wood — in front of a painting of a long-silhouetted African man. MelesEZEBIY was formerly an attendant at St. William Hospital in Houston.

Winning access to books in NYC jails part of fight for prisoner rights

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — The nearly 9,000 working people imprisoned in New York City jails have little or no access to books or periodicals.

The fight to change this is part of a broader fight nationally for workers behind bars to be able to get books and periodicals of their choosing, to have access to culture and political literature.

A Feb. 26 City Council hearing brought to light some of the facts during a debate on a bill by Councilman Daniel Dromm that would allow greater jail library services. But not one newspaper, radio or television station bothered to report on it, except for the internet-based Gothamist.

Only two of the city’s 16 jails and hospitals wards have a permanent library — the first one opened only in 2016. They are open just one day a week and prisoners are only allowed

Celebrate US rulers’ decision to end Korea war exercises

BY TERRY EVANS

Washington announced March 1 the Pentagon is ending permanently the large-scale annual war “games” involving tens of thousands of troops it has organized in Korea for decades.

“The decision to permanently halt the Key Resolve and Foal Eagle war exercises should be celebrated by working people everywhere,” said Seth Galinsky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City Public Advocate, March 6. “They carried the constant threat of war on the Korean Peninsula and were a barrier to de-nuclearization.

“The SWP has campaigned for a halt to these military provocations from their start. The move to end them creates better conditions for workers and farmers in Korea, Asia and around the world to advance their struggles.”

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The strike came abruptly the day

Continued on page 7

Continued on page 11

Solidarity with workers on strike against Wabtec!

United Electrical workers fight against cuts

BY MALCOLM JARRETT AND CHRIS HOEPNPER

ERIE, Pa. — “We are fighting for the next generation,” Sam Hill, a striking United Electrical Workers member who’s worked at GE Transportation here for 14 years, told the Militant Feb. 26. “We don’t want to be known as the generation that sold the younger ones out. Under this contract new hires and our members called back as a forklift operator, told the Militant March 1. “We don’t want to be known as the generation that sold the younger ones out. Under this contract new hires and our members called back

Growing disaster for workers from Paradise wildfire is result of capitalism

BY JEFF POWERS

CHICO, Calif. — “I went back to Paradise a month ago. I had been living in a trailer park. My home was completely destroyed,” Julie Whited said when a team of Socialist Workers Party campaigners knocked on her door here Feb. 20. “There is nothing left. I knew that before I got there but it was traumatic when I saw it.

“You were here before and we talked,” she said. “I bought a subscription to your paper. It is a good read.”

The disastrous Camp Fire last November was describing killed at least 86 people and destroyed some 14,000 homes in Paradise and surrounding towns. It’s become crystal clear since that Pacific Gas and Electric

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Inside

Women’s right to abortion faces gov’t attack in Missouri

Despite ‘state of emergency’ thousands protest in Sudan

Volunteers rebuild homes after tornado hit Havana

–On the picket line, p. 5–

Ukraine rail workers fight dangerous work conditions

Walmart’s plan to eliminate greeters provokes outcry

Mexican workers get boost in fight for wage raise by strike victories

BY SETH GALINSKY

After 35,000 workers at 45 mostly foreign-owned parts factories in Matamoros, Mexico, won on strike and won a 20 percent wage increase and a $1,700 bonus Feb. 11, new strikes have erupted pressing bosses for raises and better conditions.

Workers at three steel fabrication

Continued on page 6

Ongoing disaster for workers from Paradise wildfire is result of capitalism

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Join the picket lines! — SWP statement p.11—

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Book cart at Rikers Island prison. At best, prisoners in New York City jails are only allowed access to books or periodicals.

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Continued on page 3
Women’s right to an abortion faces gov’t attack in Missouri

BY JANET POST

After years of bitter fighting in Mis-
ouri courts over the right of Planned Paren-
thood clinics there to provide abortions, a Feb. 22 federal district court upheld a state law making it illegal for doctors to perform abortions unless they have admitting privileges at a hospital nearby. This decision flies in the face of a 2016 Supreme Court ruling that over-
turned similar restrictions in Texas.

The Planned Parenthood clinic in Columbia, Missouri, had filed a motion in December asking for an exemption from the law. This was overturned by the federal court. District Judge Brian Wimes wrote that admitting privileges do not affect enough women to consti-
tute a “substantial obstacle,” reported the Columbia Daily Tribune.

In the 2016 Supreme Court ruling Justice Stephen Breyer wrote that ad-
mitting privileges provide “few, if any, health benefits for women” while pos-
ing “a substantial obstacle to women seeking abortions, and constitutes an ‘undue burden’ on their constitutional right to do so.”

In a news release, Mary Kogut, president of Reproductive Health Ser-
ices of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis region, said, “We will continue
our fight to expand access to care for anyone who needs it.”

With this decision, only one clinic in Missouri meets the requirements to provide abortions — the Planned Par-
enthood clinic in St. Louis. Planned Parenthood Great Plains is appealing the ruling, Kate Maxey, from the or-
ganization’s department of communica-
tions, told the Militant.

The ruling means a woman seeking to exercise her right to choose to have an abortion who lives in Springfield or other parts of the state face up to a 400-
mile round trip to the clinic in St. Louis. Due to the 72-hour mandatory waiting period required by the state between her first appointment and the medical proced-
ure, she either has to bear the extra ex-
 pense of housing or make the trip twice.

Wimes ruled that “requiring women to drive farther to obtain an abortion was not enough of a burden to rule in Planned Parenthood’s favor.”

Two other Planned Parenthood clinics had been providing abortions in Mis-
ouri until recently, in Columbia and Kansas City. The Kansas City clinic stopped performing abortions in 2018 when its license expired. In 2015, the University of Missouri Health Care hos-
 pital, facing political pressure, denied admitting privileges for doctors from the clinic in Columbia, and it had to stop providing the procedure.

Maxey told the Militant the Columbia clinic was damaged on Feb. 10 by arson. Authorities said that a “Molotov cock-
tail-type device” was thrown through the clinic’s glass door. The clinic re-
opened Feb. 19.

Legislators push new restrictions

The Missouri state House of Rep-
 resentatives passed a new bill Feb. 27
“that would be the most restrictive abortion law in the country,” the Wash-
ington Times said.

The bill includes a provision barring abortions if a “fetal heartbeat” can be detected — making most abortions illegal six weeks into a woman’s pregnancy. It also bans abortion if fetal brainwaves are detected — which is usually possible around eight weeks.

There is also a “trigger clause” in the bill that would automatically ban abor-
tions except in medical emergencies if the Supreme Court should overturn its 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling.

A May 2018 Gallup poll showed the majority of women and of working peo-
ples in general support women’s right to choose to have an abortion, a right de-
 sive to women’s ability to make their own reproductive decisions.

Legislative-imposed restrictions, and the court battles they produce, are all tied to the argumentation the justices chose to use in Roe v. Wade.

Protesters at University of Missouri demonstrate in 2015 in support of women’s right to abor-
tion, demanding university hospital executives reverse decision to cut off admitting privileg-
es for doctors who perform abortions at Planned Parenthood clinic in Columbia, Missouri.

“Roe v. Wade was based not on a woman’s right ‘to equal protection of the laws’ guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, but on medical criteria instead,” Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Work-
 ers Party, wrote in The Clintons’ Anti-
 Working-Class Record: Why Washing-
ton Fears Working People. “During the first three months (‘trimester’), the court ruled, the decision to terminate a pregnancy ‘must be left to the medi-
cal judgment of a pregnant woman’s attending physician (not to the woman herself, but to a doctor).’

“At the same time, the court allowed state governments to ban most abortions after ‘viability,’” Barnes said, “some-
ting that medical advances inevitably make earlier and earlier in pregnancy.”

Yellow vests find ‘fraternity’ in protests

Thousands of workers, farmers and small business people throughout France are standing up to attacks by the government. The ‘Militant’ has supported the yellow vest protesters during the 16 weeks they have taken to the streets, helping give voice to their fight.

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Continued from front page

‘Prisons are set up to take away workers’ humanity’

“My party, the Socialist Workers Party, explains that you can’t pretend to reform education under this system,” Garza said. “I’m for a fight to raise conditions for the whole working class. I will join those who are standing up and fighting today. We need to fight for the rights of immigrants, for amnesty for all those in the U.S. without papers, and to join in battles for unionization and for a substantial raise for workers.”

“The only way working people can really learn something today is by becoming part of working-class struggles. Malcolm X never graduated from high school,” she said. “He learned to read in prison as he was preparing himself to fight for Black rights when he got out. He explained you need to learn to read, to think for yourself to fight against capitalist rule. He said the key thing wasn’t to learn you were oppressed, but to learn your own self-worth.”

The various candidates and their supporters had literature on a table at the back of the room, where Garza and her campaign supporters had lively discussions with people both before and after the forum. They sold five books, including three copies of Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism, by Mary-Alice Waters, as well as a subscription to the Militant.

Join SWP campaigning door to door

Andrea Morell and Carole Lesnick met Maria Aguilar, a supermarket worker, when they campaigned door to door in Gilroy, California, some 70 miles from Oakland. Morell explained the need for organizing solidarity with the Oakland teachers, who were on strike, and the importance of workers advancing the demand for amnesty for undocumented workers. This will strengthen the labor movement, she said.

Aguilar said she agreed all workers need a union to protect themselves in the workplace. “I’d like to get together again and discuss these ideas more,” she said, taking out a six-month subscription to the Militant.

Socialist Workers Party branches around the country, and sister Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.K., take their election campaigns to workers on their doorsteps in cities large and small, and rural areas, as the heart of their political activity. Because of the ongoing capitalist economic, political and moral crisis, they find great interest in what road forward for the working class and the proposals of the SWP. They expand the reach of the party and its publications and meet workers who want to join in their activities.

The SWP is running a national slate of candidates in 12 cities across the country and campaigning for them everywhere. They speak in the interests of all those exploited and oppressed by capitalist rule.

To join with the SWP in campaigning on doorsteps, and at union pickets and social protests, or to find out more, contact the SWP or Communist League branch nearest you. See directory on page 10.

Dennis Richter, center, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Los Angeles City Council, and campaign supporter, Barbara Bowman, speak to Lenin Mendoza in Reseda, San Fernando Valley Feb. 24. Mendoza said, "It's hard for people to pay for basic necessities now," as he bought subscription to the Militant and In Defense of the US Working Class.

At left: $15 or $10 with subscription.

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In Defense of the US Working Class
by Mary-Alice Waters

A GIANT HAS BEGUN TO STIR. Hillary Clinton calls them “deplorables” who inhabit “backward” regions. But tens of thousands of teachers and school employees from West Virginia, Oklahoma, and beyond set an example in 2018 with their victorious strikes. Working people across Florida mobilized and won restoration of voting rights to more than 1 million former prisoners.

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See directory on page 10 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

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‘Education’ under capitalism

Mendoza bought a copy of In Defense of the US Working Class by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters, as well as an introductory subscription to the Militant. He gave the SWP campaigners bottles of water and a promise to get together again soon to continue the discussion.

Richter’s running mate, Laura Garza, SWP candidate for Los Angeles School Board District 5, spoke out at a candidates’ forum Feb. 27. It was attended by over 200 students, parents and teachers at the Alliance Margaret M. Bloomfield High School. This is a charter school in Huntington Park southeast of Los Angeles. The election is in May.

“I’m running to talk about the reality of the system we live in today, the capitalist system—with the rich at the top and working people at the bottom,” said Garza. “I walked the picket lines with the teachers during their strike in L.A. The rulers of this country, whether governed by a Republican or Democratic administration, don’t care whether we get an education. They only want to teach working people to be obedient. The only way this will change is when working people organize independently and take action to overthrow capitalist rule.

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The Militant March 18, 2019
New tensions erupt between rulers in India and Pakistan

BY ROY LANDERSEN

A potentially serious military clash between the rival nuclear-armed capitalist governments in India and Pakistan was defused after a captured Indian pilot was returned by Islamabad March 1. His jet had been downed on Pakistani territory during retaliatory cross-border air raids Feb. 27. In seven decades, there have been four wars between the rulers in India and Pakistan, chiefly over the disputed Kashmir province. These ongoing conflicts are all directly attributable to the way the defeated British colonial rulers engineered a bloody partition of the Indian subcontinent.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said the pilot’s release was a “peace gesture,” intended to “open negotiations” with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi to reduce tensions. While no talks have been set, tensions have tempered.

This was the first aerial clash between the rival South Asian powers since 1971. Washington and Beijing, London and Moscow all applied pressure on both sides to de-escalate the conflict. The various rival capitalist rulers were all alarmed at how steps towards all-out war in South Asia would deepen the fragility of the imperialist world order and destabilize their place in it.

For a century prior to independence from Britain, unification of struggles by workers and peasants for Indian independence had gained strength. They grew in the face of severe British repression and irrespective of different nationalities and religions. These culminated in a powerful, united anti-colonial upsurge after the second world imperialist slaughter had greatly weakened the British Empire.

British rulers divide South Asia

London’s partition of the subcontinent in 1947, following a brief war between Hindus and Muslims, was designed to give each religion its own state. While the British rulers had never claimed sovereignty over any part of the subcontinent, the partition led to a wave of mass emigration and religious riots as Muslims and Hindus fled across borders arbitrarily drawn by the colonial officials. Hundreds of thousands were killed and many million displaced. Working people, saddled with divisions long fermented under British tutelage, were made more vulnerable to demagogic incitements by the newly created rival governments.

Pakistan was a “Muslim state” of two territories separated by 1,000 miles and different languages and cultures and the strength of the union, built a new, nonunion locomotive plant in Fort Worth, Texas, and began shifting work there in 2013, laying off workers in Erie. Like the rest of GE’s Transportation works, that plant is now owned by Wabtec. GE Transportation has been the largest producer of diesel-electric locomotives for freight applications in North America, as well as other parts of the world. “This fight was imposed on us,” said Radu Bogdan, an assembler at GE for 12 years. “We don’t want their two-tier system and 20 percent of the workers becoming temporary. It’s wrong.” A popular sign in the union hall says, “One union, one tier.” The workers on the picket line are getting donations of food, water and other supplies. Pickup truck after pickup truck kept coming by bringing wooden pallets for the burn barrels on the line. They asked if they would need the huge mound of wood pallets there, he said, “You kidding? We’re here 24 hours, all through the night and we’re not going anywhere soon. It’s cold, but we plan to stay warm.”

Socialist Workers Party member Malcolm Jarrett, the party’s candidate for Pittsburgh City Council, came with a caravan of high school and middle school students to show solidarity from Pittsburgh, some two hours away. The students took a day off of their weekend to get a real education at the picket lines. We brought a carload of water, sodas and pizzas, middle schooler Codie Castro told the picketers. “This is the kind of support everybody fighting needs.”

Rob Hodgson jumped out of his station wagon with a bunch of food for the strikers’ commissary tent. “My wife and I cooked some up,” he said. Hodgson is a chemistry teacher and member of the Erie Education Association.

The association organized a rally on the line March 2, where dozens of members and their families joined the picket. Groups of workers from the Machinists union, Erie Crawford Central Labor Council, electricians and others came by and joined. You can get a sense of the widespread support for the workers here, honking horns and waves from those driving by were constant. And people from local businesses kept coming by with contributions of pizza, donuts, sandwiches, food and coffee, in addition to plenty more pallets.

The union members have organized mass picketing outside the plant. The company sought an injunction, claiming strikers have been intimidating those trying to go in. The union denounces this, but agreed to restrict the number of picketers at the gates.

“What’s going on in this fight is not just here. It’s the whole country, the world, things are bad,” Greg August told us on the picket line. “A workers’ rebellion is going to have to happen. Look at the number of shutdown plants all over Erie and everywhere.”

Messages of solidarity can be sent to United Electrical Workers, 3923 Main St., Lawrence Park, Pa. 16111, or by phone at (814) 899-3108.

Solidarity with workers on strike against Wabtec!

Pakistan proper and East Pakistan, which would later gain independence as Bangladesh.

The first India-Pakistan war erupted after independence in 1947 over rival claims to Kashmir. Pakistan ended up occupying one-third and India the major portion. A further war was fought over the region in 1965. In 1999, the two governments waged another brief border conflict.

The other major war between Islamabad and New Delhi was in 1971. The Pakistani military dictatorship had launched a bloody attempt to suppress an uprising of the Bangladeshi independence struggle. After nine months of carnage, the Indian rulers launched a brief war to defeat the Pakistani forces. The Indian rulers acted to ensure the creation of the new country while cutting short popular mobilizations in Bangladesh that could have developed into a social revolution.

The current confrontation over Kashmir began after a suicide bombing by a Muslim Kashmiri rebel in the area controlled by New Delhi killed four Indian paramilitary personnel Feb. 14. The Indian government blamed Pakistani-backed terrorists and launched retaliatory raids.

The fact is the Indian army has carried out widespread abuses against the local population in Kashmir, fueling popular opposition to New Delhi’s rule there. At different times recently, the capitalist rulers in both Islamabad and New Delhi have sought talks to ease tensions. But so far they’ve gone nowhere.

Continued from front page

Wabtec — Westinghouse Air Brake Technologies Corp. over the plant, and the rest of General Electric’s locomotive holdings Feb. 25. The company implemented deep concession cuts on the 1,700 workers at the Erie plant, including a two-tier wage scale that slices the $33 an hour starting wage for new hires by 38 percent. It also allows the bosses to hire temporary workers to fill 20 percent of the jobs.

While the Wabtec bosses have gone after the workers, the company rewarded CEO Raymond Betler and 19 other executives with bonuses for taking over GE Transportation. Betler gets $16 million.

The two local unions at the plant UE 506 and UE 618 — walked out and have been picketing 24 hours a day since. This means that Erie has become a focal point in the defense of the U.S. working class.

Strike wins broad support

The union’s fight has drawn broad support from workers in the area. While these worker-correspondents were on the line, members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Erie Education Association, Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties and others joined in the picketing.

The UE called for a solidarity rally March 6 outside Wabtec’s national headquarters in Wilmerding, near Pittsburgh. Andy Pushchak, a professor at Edinboro University, walked the line March 1, saying he was there to offer his support. He said he’d come for a second reason, to honor the memory of his late grandfather, who walked the picket line the last time UE went on strike in 1969.

The plant has been a mainstay of the labor movement here for decades. It was opened by GE in 1911, had its first strike in 1918, and after a series of battles was unionized in 1937 by UE.

This plant used to employ thousands more workers, but GE bosses, facing challenges in its manufacturing empire and the strength of the union, built a new, nonunion locomotive plant in Fort Worth, Texas, and began shifting work there in 2013, laying off workers in Erie. Like the rest of GE’s Transportation works, that plant is now owned by Wabtec. GE Transportation has been the largest producer of diesel-electric locomotives for freight applications in North America, as well as other parts of the world. “This fight was imposed on us,” said Radu Bogdan, an assembler at GE for 12 years. “We don’t want their two-tier system and 20 percent of the workers becoming temporary. It’s wrong.” A popular sign in the union hall says, “One union, one tier.”

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The association organized a rally on the line March 2, where dozens of members and their families joined the picket. Groups of workers from the Machinists union, Erie Crawford Central Labor Council, electricians and others came by and joined. You can get a sense of the widespread support for the workers here, honking horns and waves from those driving by were constant. And people from local businesses kept coming by with contributions of pizza, donuts, sandwiches, food and coffee, in addition to plenty more pallets.

The union members have organized mass picketing outside the plant. The company sought an injunction, claiming strikers have been intimidating those trying to go in. The union denounces this, but agreed to restrict the number of picketers at the gates.

“What’s going on in this fight is not just here. It’s the whole country, the world, things are bad,” Greg August told us on the picket line. “A workers’ rebellion is going to have to happen. Look at the number of shutdown plants all over Erie and everywhere.”

Messages of solidarity can be sent to United Electrical Workers, 3923 Main St., Lawrence Park, Pa. 16111, or by phone at (814) 899-3108.

Solidarity with workers on strike against Wabtec!

The Militant March 18, 2019

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by Farrell Dobbs

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4 The Militant March 18, 2019
Ukraine rail workers fight dangerous work conditions

BY JANET POST

Rail workers on Ukrainian Railways began a work-to-rule protest last May and continue to speak out against their low wages, deteriorating working conditions and the dangerous state of the trains. The state-owned company is the 12th largest railroad system in the world, with some 263,000 workers running both freight and passenger service.

Freight traffic, which accounts for 80 percent of the company’s income, has been significantly disrupted by the attacks against Ukraine by Russia’s capitalist rulers since the popular Maidan mobilizations in 2014 brought down the pro-Moscow regime of Viktor Yanukovych. Freight shipments have fallen by more than 25 percent.

Mechanical breakdowns; lack of radio transmissions; no heat; air-conditioning in the cabs; broken windows, seats; and doors; and instruments that leak oil that can catch fire are just some of the problems employees face. Many repair shops have no parts, and workers on meager wages are buying parts and tools with their own money.

Ukrainian rail workers receive low wages, with the majority on minimum wage, 3,723 hryvnya per month ($317). Many work overtime to keep up with the traffic. Since 2014 the number of workers has fallen by 30 percent.

“A tired driver team can make mistakes which can lead to serious accidents,” assistant engineer Oleksandr Skiba, head of Darnytsya depot’s Free Trade Union of Rail Workers (VPZU), told opendemocracy.net reporter Alexxey Aromyn. (The VPZU is the oldest trade union of flammable freight or chemicals — nuclear fuel, petrol, gas, ammonia or chloride. An accident with this kind of freight can lead to serious environmental consequences.)

Last May’s work-to-rule action ran on and off at many depots and the union has grown. They faced threats from company bosses, cops and other government functionaries — including some workers called in by military recruiters and functionaries, including some work-pany bosses, cops and other government grown. They faced threats from com-

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many are fighting mad.

Walmart’s plan to eliminate greeters provokes outcry

BY DAN FEIN

Walmart styles itself as a philanthropic, community-minded and caring company. On occasion, the company assigns greeters to staff tables in the stores collecting money for local hospitals. The bosses direct cashiers to ask customers if they want to make a donation to the hospital. The bosses then answer questions such as “why me?" and “is it tax deductible?” and “won’t be in the store long.”

Many workers were outraged at what was being done to their co-workers. “Those with handicaps need jobs too,” one said. Another said, “What Walmart is doing is discrimination against those with disabilities.”

In Vancouver, Washington, John Combs, 42, who has cerebral palsy, was doing exactly what his job as a Walmart greeter was designed to do: help customers if they want to make a donation to the hospital. The bosses don’t want to hear about it. He got the same job offer as Catlin. The bosses are fighting out of fear for their future under continued capitalist restrictions as over 100,000 striking coal miners enter the second week of their militant struggle, the greatest demonstration of British working class power since the 1926 General Strike. The majority of the South Wales miners, who represent the heart of the strike movement, at rank and file level have seen a wave of support wash over them. They have been able to hold the line and push back the bosses. But they are in the fight of their lives and the bosses are not about to give up without a fight.

The bosses are doing everything they can to break the strike. They are working overtime to keep up with the demand. They are threatening to take action if the miners do not return to work. The bosses are trying to break the spirit of the miners and make them give up.

The miners are fighting out of fear for their future under continued capitalist control of the mines.

March 21, 1944

British ruling class stands panic-stricken as over 100,000 striking coal miners enter the second week of their militant struggle, the greatest demonstration of British working class power since the 1926 General Strike. The majority of the South Wales miners, who represent the heart of the strike movement, at rank and file level have seen a wave of support wash over them. They have been able to hold the line and push back the bosses. But they are in the fight of their lives and the bosses are not about to give up without a fight.

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March 21, 1969

The decision to devalue the African franc brought millions of working people closer to the knife’s edge of survival. Their governments, guided by the Berlin, London and Washington taproot of the international capitalist system, had the choice. But in reality the deed was done at the urging of the former colonial master — Paris — which dominates much of the economic and political life in the 14 countries in the franc zone.

Working people throughout Africa confronted colonial and economic conditions — from famines brought on by imperialist oppression, to the deaths of half a million people annually from preventable diseases. The debt is a vehicle for the transfer of wealth created by the labor of workers and peasants into the coffers of the bosses in North America, Europe, and Japan.

Working people have an obligation to demand that this burden be lifted and that the debt be completely cancelled.

March 21, 1989

Current revelations about why the Johnson administration switched on Vietnam provide a powerful confirmation of the thesis that the transition from the two-class system of capital to the two-class anti-war movement and the mass demonstrations it has staged. The antiwar movement was a major factor in compelling Johnson to decide to negotiate with Hanoi, give up the presidency and halt the bombing of North Vietnam. Gen. Westmoreland had requested 206,000 reinforcements in March to make up for ground lost to the Vietnamese during the Tet offensive.

But “it would tear the country apart, destroy the gains of the past year, block the way to compete with Amazon.”

Workers at the Walmart store where I worked, who were once assigned to just the meat department, are now required to work the bakery, the deli and fresh department, in addition to the meat department, as the bosses see fit.

Walmart bosses are fighting out of fear for their future under continued capitalist control of the mines.

Many workers were outraged at what was being done to their co-workers. “Those with handicaps need jobs too,” one said. Another said, “What Walmart is doing is discrimination against those with disabilities.”

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The miners are fighting out of fear for their future under continued capitalist control of the mines.
Despite ‘state of emergency’ thousands protest in Sudan

BY TERRY EVANS

Thousands took to the streets of Khartoum and other Sudanese cities to protest the rule of President Omar Hassan al-Bashir Feb. 28, days after the country’s declaration of a state of emergency. The actions are fueled by years of hardship confronting millions of working people across the war-ravaged country.

The protests began in opposition to Bashir’s decision to triple bread prices in mid-December and have since spread to some 35 cities. Inflation, felt most sharply by working people, hit 70 percent at the end of last year. One of the Sustainour chain of stores sent a message to Bashir to “fall, that is all!”

“Their day is the day we deliver our voices to the regime of corruption and tyranny, that the will of the people will not be broken before any measure,” stated the Sudanese Professionals Association, one of the organizers of the protests.

Bashir decreed a yearlong state of emergency Feb. 22, disbanding the federal government and banning public protests and strikes. It gives the regime sweeping powers to search properties, detain people and prevent those arrested from having access to a lawyer. Emergency courts and pros- ecutors established by the decree can sentence people to 10 years in prison. But the sweeping measures to repress the movement against Bashir’s rule have failed to crush the unrest.

Bashir sacked the country’s 18 pro- vincial governors, appointing officers from the army and the hated National Intelligence and Security Service to act in their place. His restrictions include tighter press censorship and constraints on political parties.

Some 1,000 students at the Ahdaf University for Women in Omdurman faced a cop assault on a campus-orga- nized anti-government protest Feb. 25.

Decades of wars, poverty

Bashir seized power in a coup in 1989, backed by the military and Islam- ist forces. In office he has enforced a stringent state of emergency that has seen the flogging of women accused of breaching sharia law and shut down most of the country’s cinemas.

Sudanese students, workers and Bashir’s rule follows the deadly effects on working people of the Sudanese rulers’ years of war. A decades-long civil war ended with the independence of South Sudan in 2011. Bashir has also used his troops, as well as bloodthirsty paramilitary gangs, to try to crush the rebel movements in the South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur regions. Tens of thousands have been killed in the three conflicts and millions forced from their homes.

Before Sudanese independence, the former British colonial rulers solidi- fied their power by fostering divisions among the Sudanese people based on language, religion and national origin—divisions that every government since has perpetuated to bolster its own rule. In Darfur, Bashir’s repression targeted non-Arabic peoples and non-Muslims among the population there.

Many of the current generation of young protesters say they will no lon- ger be divided and defeated by appeals to national and racial differences. Res- idents of the Zam-Zam refugee camp who have fled the fighting in Darfur organized an anti-government protest Feb. 28. “We want to build a new Su- dan that does not differentiate between a person born in Khartoum and an Arab. Hassan Adam, a resident of the camp, told the press.

Bashir claims the widespread pro- tests are incited by people from Dar- fur. In response, demonstrators have chanted, “You arrogant racists, we are all Darfuris.”

Workers in Mexico get boost from strike victories

Continued from front page

“People should consider the compa- nies’ situation, there should be balance,” he added. “We have to preserve jobs.”

Strikebreaking attempt fails

The bosses have tried to take advan- tage of divisions and competing unions among the maquiladora workers and widened their already strong union power since the end of last year. The union at Walmart México, which represents 8,000 workers in 10 states, is also threatening to go on strike if they don’t get an adequate pay hike.
Ongoing disaster from Paradise fire is result of capitalism

Continued from front page

Company bosses are responsible, as they have been for thousands of other fires in recent years. State au-
torities say PG&E equipment was the cause of 1,550 fires in 2017—
that’s an average of more than four a
day. The company president quit and
the remaining bosses declared bank-
ruptcy Jan. 29.

“I think the only thing PG&E cares about is getting out of paying for the
damages,” White said. “When I first got to this house, I had a hard time sleeping
through the night. I would wake up with
every little noise.”

After we showed her some of the
literature we had brought, White got a
copy of In Defense of the US Work-
ing Class, a book featuring a talk
given in Cuba by SWP leader Mary-
Alice Waters.

Another worker we met was Stephen
Eddy, a member of the stage hands’
union who lives in Chico and works in
San Francisco. He described how many
people from Paradise are getting by with
help and solidarity from workers here.

“If you drive through Chico you can
see RVs and mobile homes parked next
to houses,” he said. “People who live
here have let others they never knew
stay with them and they have let people
park in front of their house and plug into
their electricity.”

“My landlord told me he is going
to sell this house. I have lived here six years
and pay the rent ahead,” Eddy said. “My
landlord told me the demand for housing
is so high he could get $250,000 for this
small place. That’s Bay Area prices.”

Eddy bought an introductory sub-
scription to the Militant and his friend,
Randy Turley, who joined in the conver-
sation, got a copy of Are They Rich
Because They’re Smart? by SWP National
Secretary Jack Barnes.

Paradise housing destroyed

While we were in the area, we
drove into Paradise, which reminded me of
photos I’ve seen of the devastation of
towns in Europe that had been bombed
during the second imperialist world war.
Ninety percent of the buildings in the
city that once housed 26,000 people were
destroyed. The signs for both the Burger King
and McDonald’s are still standing, but
there’s nothing else there but ruins.

Scores of completely burned-out cars
remain on the side of the roads where
people left them as they fled the fire.

A few hundred former town residents
have begun to return to Paradise. Most
who have come back have an RV or a
camper. Residents aren’t allowed to live
in any house where there’s any fire dam-
age. This means there are virtually no
homes here legally habitable.

Assuming the company survives the
bankruptcy, scads of lawsuits from
victims of the fire, and avoids new
criminal charges, PG&E bosses say
they intend to pass all costs they incur
onto their customers.

Books for NYC jails part of fight for prisoner rights

Continued from front page

in the new jail is allowing
them to keep their books.

They’re the lucky ones. For the
rest, New York Public Library
staff in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens
collaborate to present books to former
inmates who are often worked by volunteers. Prison-
ers are only allowed to check out two
books at a time.

It’s worse for those in solitary con-
finement. Depending on the whim of
doing time, some in the so-called Spe-
cial Housing Units are allowed to put in a written request regarding books that
they can’t request a specific book, just
the genre they would like. Then they
may or may not get something.

When asked about this, one prison
official callously replied that the pris-
ioners could get books if family mem-
bers buy and send them. “And if they
don’t have family members?” a coun-
icel asked her. The officials just
shrugged their shoulders.

There are still more restrictions. Books
must not take up more than 1 cubic foot in inmate’s cells.

Dromm’s bill would require
that corrections’ officials
grant inmates
daily access to a library from
9 a.m. to 9 p.m., except when they’re on “lock-
down.” But it includes no funding
for books or librarians and no penalties if
jail officials don’t comply.

Even this is too much for jail offi-
cials. A statement from Department
of Correction officials Becky Scott
and L. Patrick Dail read at the hearing
cynically claimed that the jailers are
“open to expanding current efforts,”
but oppose the bill.

Books Through Bars, New York
Public Library representatives and
other groups testified in favor of the
bill, arguing any broader access
to books would be a step forward.

Becena Ahmad from Books
Through Bars said the bill allows
jail authorities to censor any publi-
cations they claim “may compromise
the safety and security of the facili-
ty.” This “can be a catchall that can
be applied arbitrarily,” Ahmad said,
and be “used to bar political books
from entering prisons, such as those
discussing civil rights or criticizing
the government.”

The Gothamist interviewed a for-
er prisoner, Camilla, who
didn’t want her last name used. Since
she was only allowed two books
every two weeks, “I went through
those books pretty quickly,” she said.

Camilla’s family sent her books.
But when guards found her mini-
library, they said it was too big and
made her mail the books home.

And newspapers? Camilla said
staff allowed the women in her build-
ing just one newspaper. “It was often
nearly shredded with news about ar-
rests, charges and Rikers Island liter-
ally cut out,” the Gothamist said.

Nili Ness, a Queens Library’s
first and only correctional services li-
brarian, was one of those who spoke
in favor of the bill during the hearing.

Three times a week she brings books
to the 10-jail Rikers Island complex.

“When you work at Rikers Island,
you realize how large the need is,”
she told the media last year. “There
are still large areas of the jail complex
don’t receive any type of library
service, outside of perhaps, access
to the law library.”

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Volunteers rebuild homes after tornado hit Havana

BY RÓGER CALERO
HAVANA — A tornado ripped through five city districts here Jan. 27, wrecking hundreds of homes and buildings. Today new apartments are being turned over to residents who lost their homes, and repairs are underway for hundreds of others.

A week after the storm, Militant reporters who were in Cuba joined Cuban volunteers in the Luyano neighborhood in the Díez de Octubre district for a day of reconstruction labor. (See Militant article in Feb. 18 issue.) We went back Feb. 23 to talk with workers we met during our first visit about how things were going.

We walked up and down the block looking for the house of Barbara Borrego, a retired hospital worker whose home was destroyed by the tornado. She had shown us the destruction during our first visit.

Next to the place of the three unsainted walls of wood barely standing with no roof, a brigade of construction workers has already built her a new house out of concrete blocks and was finishing up the plumbing and flooring. Along her other street brigades were working intensively on other damaged homes.

The tornado damaged some 3,500 homes, along with hospitals, clinics, schools and other facilities. Cuba’s mass organizations, supported by the government and guided by the work of hundreds of residents and other volunteers who went into action immediately. They cleared the debris, preparing the way for specialized brigades that restored electricitity, telephone lines and the water supply and then began reconstruction.

We asked Borrego how the construction was being paid for. “No one has said anything to me about that,” she said. “They just came and began building.”

Ongoing reconstruction

“It’s a beeche!” Carlos Antonio de Dios Oquendo, general secretary of the National Construction Workers Union (SNTC), told Trabajadores, referring to the work of hundreds of residents and other volunteers who participated in reconstruction. Crews start very early and work until late into the night.

In addition to the work of the construction brigades, residents are doing their own repairs using materials purchased at steeply discounted prices through low-interest government loans and grants. To respond to the dire need for housing — both as a result of the tornado and of a chronic shortage in Havana — government departments have been asked to turn over unused or little-used facilities to be rebuilt into housing.

“We have a big housing problem,” said Alexander Ochoa, 40, a physical therapist at the Luyano Polyclinic. The clinic suffered major damage from the tornado and is being rebuilt virtually from the ground up. Ochoa was helping load removed roofing panels onto a truck. The panels were headed for use at a housing project in Arroyo Naranjo, another Havana district, one that wasn’t hit by the tornado.

Many of the residents we spoke to were aware of the social disaster faced by working people in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria devastated the island a year and a half ago. In contrast to the reaction of Cuba’s revolutionary government to the tornado, Washington and the colonial government in Puerto Rico left working people there without electricity and water for months and thousands are unable to rebuild their homes.

They were shocked to hear about the scores of people — ill, elderly, and disabled, as well as the homeless — who have died in the U.S. from the cold this winter because of government neglect. This is simply the way the capitalist system functions, we explained. If something doesn’t generate a profit for the capitalist rulers, those in power turn their backs on the people.

Such immorality is extremely difficult for workers and farmers raised in revolutionary Cuba to grasp.

BY SETHY GALINSKY
The U.S. government March 4 opened the door to lawsuits against a restricted list of Cuban companies using land or properties that were nationalized under workers control in Cuba in the early years of the revolution. The Washington Post notes that the measure, which takes effect March 19, for the time being is limited. The State Department announcement confines the companies that can be sued to those on the State Department’s “List of Restricted Entities and Subentities Associated with Cuba.”

The lawsuits are allowed under “Title III” of the so-called Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act, also known as the Helms-Burton Act, signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1996. Since the law was passed, every president — Democrat or Republican — has repeatedly suspended Title III, usually for six months at a time, because of the economic chaos it could produce. But the March 5 announcement renewed it for just 30 more days, while lifting it for the companies on the restricted list.

Few, if any, of the 200 or so hotels, stores, tourist companies and other entities on the list have any links to the U.S. legal or financial system. The U.S. government already “forbids U.S. citizens from engaging in direct financial transactions” with the companies on the restricted list, which the Post calls “the hard core of the freedom fighters” or “bricklayers” of the anti-Cuba movement.

The U.S. government has repeatedly suspended Title III. The move is part of broader threats by the Donald Trump administration to tighten the nearly 60-year embargo of Cuba, including false claims that Cuba is responsible for the economic and social crisis in Venezuela today.

The State Department announcement claims that the “entities” on the list are “under the control of Cuban military, intelligence, or security services” and repeats the slander that these are “directly responsible for the repression of the Cuban people.”

The Cuban people’s real crime is their revolution itself. The nationalizations of U.S.-owned oil refineries, the electric and telephone companies, and large agricultural estates in 1959 and 1960 were part of mobilizations of working people in Cuba to gain ever greater control over conditions on the job and the management and priorities of production. This was a central part of deepening their social revolution.

These moves were backed up by the new revolutionary workers and farmers government led by Fidel Castro.

The nationalizations “were not confiscating land,” Castro explained in a Sept. 26, 1960, speech to the U.N. General Assembly. “We simply propose to pay for it ... in the only way we could — by bonds that would mature in 20 years.”

Washington refused. Instead, it launched the economic, financial and commercial blockade against Cuba, which it has maintained — at times tighter, at times looser — to this day.

“The United States will keep on failing to achieve its main purpose of submitting by force the sovereign will of Cubans and our determination to build socialism,” the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs said March 4.
Wisconsin dairy farmers discuss ongoing crisis they face

BY ILONA GERSH

MUSCODA, Wis. — In the past year dairy farmers in Wisconsin have lost over 714 farms. That’s 8.2 percent, dropping the total number of dairy farms here to 8,046. That is roughly half the number of 16 years ago.

It’s the smaller, family farms, that are being forced out. While the number of dairy cows has remained the same, the average number of cows per farm has doubled. The number of larger farms, known as CAFOs — Concentrated Feeding Operations, farms with over 700 cows — has risen to 272, an increase of almost 550 percent since 2000. The average farm has 155.

I visited four dairy farms in the Muscoda-Richland area of Wisconsin at their farms Feb. 21 with Randy Jasper, a former dairy farmer who now runs a farm equipment repair shop there, and Dean Hans, another Socialist Workers Party member from Chicago. The farmers all said they’ve caught between rising production costs and lower prices for their milk today.

Kenneth and Starlyn Miller, who own a dairy with 135 milking cows, cited their kids as the catalyst for a discussion. “We paid off our debt a few years ago. But now we have debt again,” Kenneth Miller said. “Everything is up but prices to produce more milk to stay in business. But the government says there’s too much milk on the market. How can there be too much milk when the market can hold 72 million gallons of people who go hungry.”

In 1933, the average Wisconsin cow produced 5,140 pounds of milk per year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. By 1978, that had more than doubled to 11,735 pounds. And in 2017, it had doubled again to 23,725 pounds — soaring nearly 23 percent in just the last decade.

Is there too much milk?

“The key to the glut of milk on the U.S. market — milk working people worldwide would love to get their hands on — drives down the price dairy farmers receive on the market.”

Kenneth Miller said. U.S. government agencies report that for the past four years the price farmers have gotten has been below $21, which was the average break-even price in 2017.

“To help make ends meet, I used to sell 12 to 15 cows for meat at $1 a pound around harvest time. Now I don’t get enough to make it worthwhile because of cow auctions, where the packing companies buy up cows sold by farmers who are shutting down,” he said. “I just sold an older cow for 20 cents a pound. If you go to the store you pay $3 a pound for ground beef!”

Farmers’ costs are up. “It costs $150 for a vet just to come to your door,” said Starlyn Miller. The price of hay has gone up since the drought of 2012. They used to rent additional farmland to grow crops for feed and for sale. “But land rents are just too high,” Kenneth Miller said.

And dairy farmers don’t get any help from government payouts to provide relief from the effects of international tariff battles today. We asked about the impact of the tariffs on exports of farm products. “It doesn’t pay to apply for government relief for tariff losses,” he said. “We get only one penny a bushel for corn losses.” The market price for corn is $3.66 per bushel.

The Wisconsin Farmers Union reports that for a 55-cow dairy farm would receive a one-time government payment of $725 from the bailout, but stood to lose between $36,000 and $48,000 in income last year from low milk prices.

“I think about selling out,” said Kenneth Miller with a smile. “There are only two reasons to keep going. First, I don’t know if I would like factory work. And second, I’m hoping for a miracle.”

“We need to be that after a couple of bad years, we’d have a good one that made up the difference, and then a few years when we could do OK. Where are the good years now?” he asked.

After our discussion, the Millers signed up for a 12-week introductory subscription to the Militant and bought a copy of In Defense of the US Working Class, by Mary-Alice Waters.

“I love milking.”

“We’re surviving, but it’s hard work,” said Steve Armbuster, who runs a 300-cow dairy with his two brothers. “It takes me six to seven hours to milk the herd,” he said. “I get up, milk them, try to get three hours of sleep, and then milk them again.”

“We watch what every dollar goes,” Armbuster said. “I can’t imagine doing anything else. I love milking.”

“There’s a lot of hidden expenses most people don’t talk about,” he said. “For instance, it takes two years for a heifer to grow into a milking cow. All that time, you have to feed them, take care of their health and medical expenses, and pay for their overhead expenses.”

Steve Schmitz, who has been dairying since 1974, has hens and 135 cows.

“Nobody in the government looks out for farmers. All they care about is how the big corporations are doing,” Steve Schmitz said.

He asked about the impact of the tariffs on farmers, and bought a copy of In Defense of the US Working Class for his wife, who understands that if farmers can sell for a subscription to the Militant and bought a copy of In Defense of the US Working Class, by Mary-Alice Waters.

“It seems like workers and farmers are facing more problems solving than ever before,” he said. “We need to sell for a miracle.”

Workers and family farmers both face exploitation by capital and the social class that wields it. Building an alliance between workers and farmers to fight that exploitation is crucial.

What faces farmers today is result of workings of capitalism

Below is an excerpt from “The Crisis Facing Working Farmers” by Doug Jenness. It helps shine a light on how the workings of capitalism weigh on the ability of farmers and their families to get by today. It appears in New International no. 4. Copyright © 1985 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

Working farmers are victims of conditions over which they have no control. But these are not primarily natural conditions — bad weather, insect infestations, and so on. They are social conditions, the results of the workings of capitalism — exorbitant interest rates, monopoly control over marketing, and reducing the earnings of farm machinery, fertilizer, seeds, and fuel.

Working farmers have never faced easier conditions. Their situation took a major new turn for the worse in the mid-1970s. Farmers who borrowed heavily to purchase land as prices were rising in the 1960s and 1970s have seen the market price of their land — and thus their equity and collateral — plummet over the past five years. With production costs closing in on farm incomes throughout the past decade, farmers have fallen deeper and deeper into debt to finance more modern equipment needed to produce ever more commodities.

One of the biggest indictments farmers goes to cover use of the land. As a result of the system of rents and mortgages that prevails in U.S. agriculture, the overwhelming majority of independent commodity producers must pay rent or make mortgage payments to use the land they work. Elimination of these payments would mean an immediate and substantial reduction in their production costs. Farmers are painfully learning that holding an ownership deed to the land where they raise their crops and live-stock is no guarantee whatsoever of the use of that land. Under intense financial pressure, farmers have been forced to sell at the first offer, which is frequently much lower than they could have received had they had more time. Other farmers have been forced to sell out of desperation by the parasites who collect the interest on their mortgages.

Whether or not farm families hold on to their land, their social and economic position has to do with how much they produce or how well they maintain their land. In fact, working farmers are frequently ended worse conditions when they and other farmers bring in a large crop, since their prices and income plummet. There are few more powerful indicators of the system than what Marx called “the disastrous effect of good seasons for this mode of production.”

“Private” ownership of farm and ranch land, despite the capitalist-propagated mythology, does not go hand in hand with financial independence, self-reliance, and security. On the contrary, the noose by which working farmers can be hanged...
FBI is capitalist rulers’ political police against the working class

The excerpt below is from the chapter “Origins of FBI Assault on Socialist Workers Party” by Larry Sege in 30 Years of Covert Operations in the US published by Pathfinder Press.

...and state cops with well-established “bomb squads” and “radical units” and on state national guard units in the event of extreme necessity. These local and state agencies had intimate connections with antiunion “citizens” organizations, unionbusting employers and their hated private detective agencies, such as the Pinkertons, with long experience in union busting. At the forefront of these was a vast social movement was on the rise, with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) being the major new anti–capitalist and anti-imperialist political organizations. The White House and Justice Department gave Hoover free rein to use the FBI against this movement and the labor movement and Black organizations.

The fact is that the FBI operations began on the eve of the Second World War. They were central to preparations and state cop-covert actions in the nation into another carnage to prop­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­…
The following statement was released March 6 by Osbornie Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Philadelphia, and Malcolm Jarrett, SWP candidate for Pittsburgh City Council, as they joined solidarity actions with members of the United Electrical Workers union on strike at Wabtec in Erie, Pennsylvania.

Working people everywhere should come to the aid of the 1,700 workers on strike at Westinghouse Air Brake Technologies in Erie, Pennsylvania. The members of United Electrical Workers Locals 506 and 618 aren’t fighting just for themselves. Their fight to defend their jobs, wages and working conditions — especially against Wabtec’s efforts to impose a deep and divisive two-tier wage — is a battle for all of us.

Working people have been taking it on the chin for decades as the bosses press to make workers and farmers pay for the crisis of U.S. imperialism around the world.

Successive U.S. administrations, Democratic and Republican, have maintained Washington’s political and military domination of South Korea. They’ve deployed nuclear weapons in South Korea for 33 years, from 1958 until 1991, and deploy nuclear-capable ships and planes in the region.

Since 2006, when Pyongyang tested its first nuclear weapon, Washington has orchestrated 11 rounds of sanctions on North Korea, including through the United Nations.

After the Hanoi summit the South Korean government said it would take direction from the U.S. on its requests to continue talks with DPRK officials. They are on board with Washington’s decision to end the massive annual war exercises.

To advance their discussions with the DPRK, the South Korean government is urging Seoul to promote a joint industrial complex with North Korea with Washington’s approval, despite continuing U.S. sanctions. Seoul has discussed continuing this work with the North and would like to reopen a joint industrial park in Kaesong, North Korea.

Ending the sanctions would accelerate progress further and open more opportunities for workers and farmers to fight to end the division of Korea.

U.S. workers and farmers everywhere should support the demands of Pyongyang by supporting its peace talks with DPRK officials. They are on board with Washington’s decision to end the massive annual war exercises.

Three-part series on Korea

Algeria, Che and Fidel

The Militant’s articles on the collaboration between the Cuban and Algerian revolutions in the early 1960s reminded me of a comment my landlord made when he noticed a book about Cuba on my kitchen table. He said that when he was growing up in Algeria, it was rare to visit a home in his neighborhood and not see a photo of either Fidel or Che on the wall.

Montreal, Quebec:

The letters column is for all views—point of interest and polemic alike. When necessary letters will be abridged. Indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.