Almost half of all US workers live ‘paycheck to paycheck’

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS
According to government figures, the U.S. economy has been expanding for over a decade, the longest uptick in U.S. history, with the stock market at record levels and official unemployment at a 50-year low. But under the class realities of capitalism, most working people haven’t seen many real gains.

Four in 10 U.S. workers struggle to pay their bills, a recent USB bank survey showed, and would confront a crisis if faced with a $400 emergency expense. One quarter of U.S. residents skipped necessary medical care in 2018 because they couldn’t afford the cost.

“I keep hearing this is one of the best economies we’ve ever had and unemployment is down especially among African Americans, which I am,” Sommer Johnson, who lives in Douglasville, Georgia, told the Washington Post. “I’m looking around going, ‘Where is this boom?’ From where I sit, this doesn’t look like Continued on page 6

2020 election debates show crisis of bosses twin parties

BY ROY LANDERSEN
The televised debates unfolding between the two dozen Democrats jostling to become the party’s presidential candidate take place amid a yearslong political crisis unfolding among the parties of the U.S. capitalist ruling families. They fear that sooner or later their grinding assaults on working people will lead to far-reaching struggles. This is mirrored in their frenzied response to the 2016 election of Donald Trump. They blame the “deplorable” working class Continued on page 7

US hands off Iran! End sanctions now!

BY TERRY EVANS
British Royal Marines stormed and seized a tanker July 4 sailing near Gibraltar, a British colony jutting off the coast of Spain. The ship was carrying oil produced by Tehran bound for its ally, the Bashar al-Assad dictatorship in Syria. The capture of the tanker added Washington’s squeeze on Iran and added to military tensions in the Middle East. The U.S. government praised the act of piracy as it is enforcing biting sanctions on Iran that inflict growing hardship on working people there.

The U.K. government claimed the vessel was violating EU sanctions imposed on oil exports to Syria. The Spanish government said the seizure Continued on page 9

‘Working people need to break with Democrats, Republicans’

BY NANCY BOVASKO
UNION CITY, N.J. — “The 2020 presidential election campaign has been launched by the Republicans and Democrats. Over the next 16 months the Socialist Workers Party candidates and their supporters will present the need to break with the capitalist two-party system, in discussions with workers on their doorstep Continued on page 3

US rulers step up economic war against Cuba and Venezuela

BY JANET POST
The U.S. Treasury Department added Cuba’s state-owned Cubametales, which handles all Cuba’s imports of fuels and oil, including from Venezuela, to its growing blacklist July 3. It’s the latest move by Washington to tighten its decadeslong embargo against Cuba, part of its efforts to topple the government of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela.

The Associated Press noted that “while the new sanctions will likely have little direct impact on the state-run Cuban company,” given the already strict U.S. sanctions on Cuba, they tighten the pressure on workers and farmers there by intimidating shippers and other firms “from buying and selling oil from Cubametales Continued on page 9

‘Militant’ fights censorship by Florida, Kansas prison officials

BY SETH GALINSKY
The Militant is challenging the blanket ban on the socialist weekly imposed in Kansas state prisons. The Militant learned last month it is one of more than 7,000 books and publications banned by state prison officials there.

Militant attorney David Goldstein wrote Department of Corrections officials July 2 that the paper is appealing all issues that have been banned. Fighting the unconstitutional ban on books and periodicals in Kansas Continued on page 6

Inside
Protests mark 2 years since Grenfell fire disaster in UK

Sudan military lifts siege, asks opposition to join gov’t

Appeal to readers: Join fight against prison censorship!

— On the picket line, p. 5—

Airport, catering workers say, ‘One job should be enough’ Ramp workers protest working conditions at Miami airport

2
Protests mark 2 years since Grenfell fire disaster in UK

BY PAMELA HOLMES

LONDON — A Silent Walk and other events June 14 were joined by thousands, marking the second anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire here that killed 72 people. The deadly inferno was the result of the contempt of government officials and the building’s managers and owners towards its working-class residents. The 24-story tower was wrapped in highly flammable cladding, which went up in a fast-spreading fire, in a building with broken fire alarms and no sprinkler system.

Fourteen of the families who survived the blaze still haven’t been rehoused. Actions were held across the country. In London, Newcastle and Salford large lighted messages were projected across the walls of tower blocks by Grenfell United. “2 years after Grenfell and the fire doors in this building still aren’t fit for purpose,” read the message projected on the 25-story Cruddas Park House in Newcastle. “That’s what happened to residents in Grenfell before the fire.”

Natasha Elcock, chair of Grenfell United, said: “It’s been two years, and people are still going to bed at night worried that a fire like Grenfell could happen to them.”

Days earlier a fire ripped through an apartment block in Barking, in east London — a stark reminder of the devastating consequences for working people of the substandard safety measures tens of thousands still face. In this case wooden frames and balconies and faulty sprinklers and fire alarms were at fault. Luckily this time no one was killed.

The London Fire Brigade’s union says that just 32 out of 837 council tower buildings over 30 meters tall (98 feet) have sprinklers. The BBC reports that Grenfell-type cladding remains on high rise council properties in 62 places across England. The government has admitted that cladding had been removed from just 56 of the 159 social sector buildings, and 13 out of 146 private high-rises.

A 20-story block adjacent to the burned-out remains of Grenfell Tower still has no sprinklers.

Last month the government announced a £200 ($250) million fund to remove combustible cladding from the private towers — but it only covers buildings with aluminum composite material, and not the other forms of flammable cladding used to coat some 1,700 additional buildings.

More pressure needed

“Many people are still living in dangerous buildings not covered by the removal fund, the Manchester Claritators group told Architects’ Journal, “and facing the bills for correction, life-changing bills of up to £80k each.”

Under the pressure of the outcry and protests after the Grenfell disaster, the government set up an inquiry into the fire, the first phase of which concluded at the end of 2018. A second phase is set to begin next year. No report has been published. The Metropolitan Police have announced that they will not consider whether to lodge any criminal charges before 2021.

“We don’t need the fraud of long inquiries and ‘better’ regulations or ‘feel your pain’ visits by party leaders, and the Royals,” says a widely circulated statement the CL issued days after the fire. France got a copy. “We should join with the survivors of Grenfell Tower in their fight for immediate quality re-housing in the local area and serious compensation. The trade unions should engage in a mass campaign — working together with tenants around the country demanding the immediate dismantling of cladding, installation of sprinklers and other protective measures nationwide.”

“Protests are the only way to make safety under capitalism,” Communist League member Jonathan Silberman said. “Workers and our unions must fight for worker control over construction and building work to prevent further Grenfell Towers.”

Campaign with the Socialist Workers Party candidates!

California
Dennis Richter, Los Angeles City Council
Jost Britton, Mayor of San Francisco

Florida
Anthony Dutrey, Miami City Commission

Georgia
Rachelle Fruit, Atlanta School Board

Kentucky
Amy Hark, Governor
Samir Habibun, Lieutenant Governor

Minnesota
David Rosenfield, St. Paul City Council

New Jersey
Lia Sherman, State Assembly
Candace Wagner, State Assembly

New York
Seth Galinsky, New York City Public Advocate

Pennsylvania
Osborne Hart, Mayor of Philadelphia
John Stags, Philadelphia City Council
Malcolm Jarrett, Pittsburgh City Council

Washington
Henry Clay Denison, Seattle City Council

Protests beamed onto Frinstead House in west London, left, and Cruddas Park House in Newcastle, two years after Grenfell Tower inferno killed 72 people. Thousands joined protests on second anniversary of disaster against government indifference to dangers workers face.
Continued from front page

sate of candidates throughout the country advancing a fighting program for working people to confront the economic, social, and moral crisis capitalism has created. The New Jersey forum featured three of these candidates. Lea Sherzman, the SWP candidate for New Jersey General Assembly and Seth Galinsky, its candidate for New York City public advocate.

There is widespread interest in finding a road forward among working people, Studer said, a break from the crisis-ridden economy, with its wars, economic crises and the carnage it inflicts on our class. In this context, he said, the party is organizing Alyson Kennedy, the SWP candidate for president in 2016 and its candidate for New York City public advocate. Malcom Jarrett, SWP candidate for Pittsburgh City Council, on a series of anti-war tours to campaign across the country. They will campaign in Kentucky July 19-22 and the following weekend in Pittsburgh, helping put the party on the ballot.

“They will join the party candidates Amy Husk and Samir Hazboun for Kentucky governor and lieutenant governor, campaigning for Kentucky governor and lieutenant governor,” Studer said, “and bring solidarity to striking miners in coal-mining areas in both eastern and western Kentucky.”

Studer also addressed the meeting, describing 737 MAX.

Participating at the forum kicked in over $1,000,000 towards the refurbishment of the new hall and the expansion of the stock of revolutionary books SWP campaigners will use to introduce the party’s program. If you’d like to find out more about the SWP campaign, contact the branch nearest you, listed on page 8.

‘Break with two-party system’

Amy Husk, SWP candidate for Kentucky governor, talks with factory worker Jason McCray in Evansville, Indiana, July 6, campaigning in support of Teamsters on strike against Irving Materials there. Buses are pushing to cut dental and other benefits in new contract.

Amnesty for undocumented workers

Erika Remegio from the immigrant rights group Cosecha, which has been leading the fight in New Jersey to win access to driver’s licenses for undocumented workers, also addressed the meeting, describing the fight that group is waging. “Drivers without licenses face steep fines, jail and even deportation. She invited those at the meeting to come to Cosecha Family Day in Matawan, New Jersey, July 14.

Sherman described her participation in several of Cosecha’s actions for driver’s licenses, and how the Socialist Workers Party calls for the unions to fight for amnesty for all workers in the U.S. without papers. “This is the road to overcome divisions imposed by the ruling class and to build the labor movement and unions,” she said.

“The capitalists rake in massive profits by keeping us divided.”

Participants at the forum kicked in over $1,000,000 towards the refurbishment of the new hall and the expansion of the stock of revolutionary books SWP campaigners will use to introduce the party’s program. If you’d like to find out more about the SWP campaign, contact the branch nearest you, listed on page 8.

The Militant July 22, 2019            3

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL Fight for universal, government guaranteed health care and retirement income for all.

ABORTION Defend women’s right to unrestricted access to family planning services, including the right to safe, secure abortions.

ISRAEL & PALESTINE For the recognition of Israel and of a contiguous Palestinian state. For the right of Jews to return to their ancestral homes and for restored Palestinian rights.

LAND AND LABOR Capitalism’s profit drive is the despoiler of nature and enemy of working conditions. Workers and our unions must fight for workers control over production and safety in the factories, mines, railroads and all energy monopolies to protect those on the job and in nearby communities, and to control emissions of CO2 and other greenhouse gases and prevent the poisoning of air, water and soil. Workers control over production to prevent disasters like the Boeing 737 MAX.

JUSTICE System Fight against police brutality, racist discrimination and the entire capitalist injustice system with its frame-ups, “plea bargains,” execrable bail, and outrageous prison sentences, all of which disproportionately hit workers who are Black. For the right to vote for ex-prisoners and all workers behind bars.

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS Defend democratic rights — the right to vote, to free speech and assembly, and to bear arms, under attack from Democrats and Republicans alike. Stop FBI and other government spying, harassment and disruption.

PRISONER RIGHTS End solitary confinement. End censorship of the Militant, books and newspapers by prison authorities. Abolish the death penalty, an anti-working-class weapon in the hands of the rulers.

FARMERS — WORKERS ALLIES ON THE LAND To put a halt to farm foreclosures, bankruptcies and skyrocketing rural debt, we demand nationalization of the land. This puts the soil at the service of the farmers who till it, as opposed to control by the banks and landlords. We demand the government guarantee farmers their costs of production, including their living expenses.

Working people must organize and act independent of the ruling capitalists and the workers are the basis of any socialist revolution in the United States. We will fight for an end to US colonial rule in Puerto Rico.

The Socialist Workers Party’s fight to organize and strengthen unions, to pour concrete at Irving Materials and bring solidarity to striking miners in coal-mining areas in both eastern and western Kentucky,” Studer said, “and bring solidarity to striking miners in coal-mining areas in both eastern and western Kentucky.”

Studer also addressed the meeting, describing 737 MAX.

Participating at the forum kicked in over $1,000,000 towards the refurbishment of the new hall and the expansion of the stock of revolutionary books SWP campaigners will use to introduce the party’s program. If you’d like to find out more about the SWP campaign, contact the branch nearest you, listed on page 8.

Now available ...

Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions

A tribute of the people uses every manifestation of capitalist oppression to explain why it’s workers and our allies who can and will — in the course of struggles by the unions and beyond — lay the foundations for a world based not on violence and competition but on solidarity among working people worldwide.

www.pathfinderpress.com
Ethiopian Israelis fight police brutality, racism

BY SETH GALINSKY

Thousands of Ethiopian Israelis have taken to the streets across Israel since June 30, when an off-duty cop shot and killed an unarmed 19-year-old Solomon Tekah in Haifa.

“Since I’m 13, I’ve been beaten by cops,” Aviel, 19, told Haaretz at a July 2 rush-hour protest in Tel Aviv, one of many that blocked traffic across the country. He described being harassed by cops just because he is black. Another young protester added that some cops “think they can do anything, like they are God.”

By July 3, 136 protesters had been arrested. Police say 47 cops and 26 protesters were injured during the clashes over several days.

“This is not the first incident of a young Ethiopian being treated brutally,” Efrat Yerday, a leader of the Association of Ethiopian Jews, told the press July 2. In response to police saying that they arrested more Ethiopian cops to better understand “their culture,” she said, “It’s not about culture; it’s about police violence, it’s about racism and [racial] profiling.”

Tekah was killed in January after cops killed 24-year-old Ethiopian Yehuda Biadga, who was suffering from psychological problems. Thousands took to the streets in 2015 after a video showed police beating Dumas Pakada, an Ethiopian Jewish soldier who was wearing his Israeli army uniform.

Little has changed, Yerday said.

The cop said he feared for his life and fired one shot, which ricocheted off the ground and killed Tekah, after rocks were thrown at the cop who then tried to break up a fight. “We don’t believe the police,” Yerday said. Even if there was a fight, she said, “You don’t take out your anger on children.”

The cop is under house arrest after the shooting, but hasn’t been charged.

In an attempt to undercut the protests, the media has focused on the family of the 19-year-old, who had once been convicted of theft. “When the police are briefing the media about Solomon’s criminal past,” a member of his family told the Jerusalem Post, “for us they murder him again. Let’s assume his family told the police are briefing the media about him. Let’s assume his family told the police are briefing the media about him. Let’s assume his family told the police are briefing the media about him.”

“Sometimes we call on the phone and they say they have an open position,” Michal Avera Samuel, executive director of the Association for Ethiopian Jews, told the Militant July 10 from Lod. “But then when we arrive for the job interview, they tell us the position has been filled.”

There was no notification behind these protests, she said. “It was young people who are not willing to be quiet. They said enough!”

This is part of the reality of the class struggle in Israel, where Jews from Africa and Arab citizens of Israel face racial discrimination, which bosses use to try and weaken the working class.

“We support any demonstration against racism,” Yaniv Bar Ilan, a spokesperson for the trade union Federation Kach LaOvdim, which includes many Ethiopian members, told the Militant by phone from Tel Aviv July 5.

There are 15 private bus companies that, he said, “for the bosses have been driving down wages and working conditions. “As a result, workers from the lower income levels have taken the place of European-origin drivers. Half the bus drivers in Israel are now Arabs,” Bar Ilan said. “And a growing number are Ethiopian Jews. They are exposed to racism on a daily basis.”

“We saw a lot of understanding from the Arab bus drivers,” he said about the highway protests. “In many cases they didn’t stay on the bus, but got off to show they supported the protests.”

Jerusalem Post writer Dov Lipman described similar solidarity from other Jews, when he was stuck on a bus for five and a half hours at one of the roadblocks.

“Tens of thousands of people sat in traffic — missing weddings, memorial services, army ceremonies, work, evening classes — for five and a half hours at one of the roadblocks to show their anger for hours because they identified with the demonstrators,” he wrote.

Sudan military lifts siege, agrees to rule with opposition

BY JANET POOL

The military rulers in Sudan agreed July 5 to form a joint military-civilian government set to last three years and three months with opposition leaders whom they’ve been mounting mass protests for weeks. After this “transition” to civilian rule, the agreement says, elections will be held and the military will return to its barracks.

Under the agreement, brokered by the African Union and Ethiopian rulers, with help from the rulers in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, a military general will head the transitional government for 21 months, then a civilian leader for the final 18 months.

Five seats will be held by the military, five by representatives chosen by the opposition Forces for Freedom and Change umbrella group, and an 11th by another civilian agreed upon by both sides. Workers, professionals and youth have taken part in huge protests for months in Sudan, backed by solidarity actions around the world demanding an end to military rule. The military has agreed to transfer power from President Omar al-Bashir in April. Bashir came to power in a coup 30 years ago.

While there remains widespread distrust of the military, many workers and youth are hopeful the agreement can work. “The people remain on standby; the revolution is still alive, and it is not over until we get a full civilian government,” Amir Bashir, president of the Sudanese Association in New Zealand, told Alnoualicia Verbum, Communist League candidate for mayor of Auckland, July 6.

“We should protect the people who murdered peaceful protesters to be brought to justice,” he added. “We have no illusion in the Transitional Military Council — it is on us to keep them honest.”

The Umma, Islamists and other countries where “Arab Spring” protests brought down hated governments, there is no tested revolutionary working-class leadership in Sudan.

Months of protests and solidarity

After Bashir was ousted the protests continued, demanding the military, which seized power, step aside. Army troops, joined by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, moved to attack en-campments of thousands of protesters outside army headquarters in the capital city of Khartoum June 3. Over several days 140 people were reportedly massacred, with many more shot, raped and beaten.

Thousands of heavily armed troops still occupy the streets of Khartoum. Rapid Support Forces patrol the area in trucks with mounted machine guns and bundles of rocket-propelled grenades. In the wake of the June 3 attack, hundreds of thousands took to the streets June 30, demanding a civilian government.

Demonstrations took place all over the world. Over 100 people rallied June 30 in Auckland, in a protest called to “Stand with Sudan.” In Albany, New York, a group of high school and college students organized a solidarity demonstration June 28 that drew more than 250 people, overwhelmingly Sudanese.

“I am so proud and inspired by the protesters in Sudan and their strength and courage to stand in the face of their oppressor and demand their freedom despite all the injustices they face,” Esra, a Sudanese student who helped organize the protest action, told the Militant.

“I want to say, ‘Shame!’ to the major powers in the U.N. like the U.S., Russia, China, Britain and France,” proponent Abdalkhadir Ahmart told the rally. They have failed to support the Sudanese in their own interests,” he added.

Alex Huinil spoke for the Social- ist Workers campaign. “We call for the United Nations and all foreign powers to get out of Sudan. The United States, England — which colonized Sudan — and other imperialist powers only act in the interests of the capitalist class in their own countries,” he said to an enthusiastic response.

“It is the Sudanese people who are fighting for their rights,” he said. “We can help by building a powerful revolu tionary working-class movement in the United States.”

At the protest Huinil’s co-worker, Susan Mohamed, said, “Our kids die in the war in Yemen. We don’t agree with this government that sends them to this war. We have been fighting for seven months now but we will keep our spirit. That is why my daughter and I came to the rally.”

Paramilitaries from war in Darfur

Every present in the minds of the told- ers is the genocide carried out by the Su- danese government in Darfur. The para- military force there, then known as the Janjaweed, was led by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan. Today he is second in command in the Transitional Military Council and runs the Rapid Support Forces. The government tried to divide and weaken the protesters by stirring up na- tional and religious antagonisms among them. But it failed. Protestors stuck to- gether, chanting, “We are all Darfuris.”

Today’s protesters are determined to unite Sudanese — Arabic or English speaking, Muslim or Christian or tribal religions — across all nationalities.

Kathie Fitzgerald from Albany, New York, contributed to this article.
ON THE PICKET LINE —

Are you involved in a union organizing drive or strike? Brought solidarity to fellow workers on the picket line? Let us know! Send articles, photos and letters to themilitant@mac.com or through our website, or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Airport, catering workers say, ‘One job should be enough!’

SAN FRANCISCO — Airport workers who are members of United Service Workers West, part of the Service Employees International Union Local 250, began a two-day strike here July 23 to protest working conditions at Eulen America, which provides food service at San Francisco International Airport, and working conditions at Sky Chef and Gate Gourmet, which provides catering services at San Francisco International Airport and at other airports.

Several other Miami airport workers also went on strike this week, as did a couple of area Walmart workers. The rally was organized by Service Employees International Union Local 2280, which seeks to organize workers at Eulen.

Cindy Jaquith

Chanting “One job should be enough!” airport workers as well as Sky Chef and Gate Gourmet workers picketed together at San Francisco International Airport for higher wages, new contracts.

Sometimes, a single worker can make a difference, as did a couple of Walmart workers at a couple of area Walmart stores.

Read about the battles that built the U.S. labor movement

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

IRISH WORKERS ON STRIKE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — 1,800 Irish workers, including UAW auto workers, went on strike here July 22, 1944, against the Irish government and its military forces in Ireland, demanding equal rights for Irish workers.

The Irish workers, who are members of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU), are demanding that all workers be treated equally.

The strike is expected to continue until the Irish government agrees to meet the workers’ demands.

July 25, 1944

The Irish workers have been on strike for two days, and the strike continues.

July 25, 1969

The Irish workers continue their strike, demanding equal rights for Irish workers.

The Militant July 22, 2019

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**Living ‘paycheck to paycheck’**

Continued from front page

The best economy ever.”

U.S. workers have faced stagnant wages for decades, and got slammed during what the capitalist pundits call the 2008 “Great Recession.” At the same time they’ve been hit with rising expenses for housing, health care and education—and now record levels of personal debt.

After adjusting for inflation, 50 percent of U.S. households have less income today than they did 30 years ago, the Federal Reserve Bank reports. While more jobs are available today, increasing numbers of workers are forced to work two or even three jobs to make ends meet. Wages are less than $18.58 an hour for half of all U.S. jobs, and more than a third pay less than $15. Some 4.3 million workers seeking full-time jobs are forced to accept part-time hours, the government admits.

Speed up and longer hours

At the same time, many bosses push those who do have jobs to work faster and for longer hours. Nurses, for example, are being overworked to the detriment of their own health and care for patients. With daily workshifts of 12 hours or more, 31 percent of nurses say they have to rely on medication to keep them awake. Simultaneous conditions affect railroad workers, who say fatigue is a constant threat.

Other employers are trying to use technology to squeeze superhuman productivity by ramping up the pace of work. Robotic storage cubicles that swarm around the 2,500-worker Amazon warehouse on Staten Island in New York bring goods for pickers to pack at breakneck speed, raising the rate from 100 items an hour to between 300 to 400.

"We try to eliminate any wasted motion," one picker-trainer told the New York Times. "If you have one second that’s adding to the process, it doesn’t seem like a lot. But if you do that 1,000 times a day, that’s when it starts adding up."

Debt explosion

Under these conditions, more and more workers face mounting debts.

There’s a lot of press about student loan debt, and the 24 competing Democratic presidential candidates argue about whether they can cancel student debts, but the fact is there’s a steadily mounting debt burden of all kinds facing workers and farmers today.

Total U.S. household debt in the first quarter of this year reached a record level of $13.7 trillion, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York says. A rising component of this is car loans, with auto finance companies pushing subprime loans, which involve low down payments and high interest rates that many working people can’t keep up with.

The number of people “seriously delinquent” on car loan payments rose to the highest level on record in 2018 — 7 million people, a million above the previous peak in 2010.

Dairy farmers are facing unprecedented processing and packaging, as their income has been squeezed to below zero by the seed and fertilizer monopolies, processors and banks.

This spiral debt by this time spawned one seriously expanding capitalist job category — the repo man.

The number of debt collection houses exploding and lawsuits by these agencies are boosting their profits on workers’ misery. Debt-claim suits rose 29 percent in Texas last year to 24,104 cases. In New York City court filings rose 32% in 2018 and 61% in 2017.

And today’s laws allow the leeches to garnish your wages — often without even you out even knowing they’re coming — and to slap liens on any property you’ve managed to acquire.

These collection outfits purchase packages of consumer debts, paying few pennies on the dollar, and then pursue borrowers with fervent gusto for the face value of the debt plus interest, which may have accumulated for over 20 years.

One example of how this works was described in a July 5 Wall Street Journal article titled “Debt Collectors Wage Comeback.” Debt-buying company AM Solutions LLC sued Philadelphia couple Adolph and Doris Muir in 2017 to foreclose on the couple’s home just because they had more than $83,000 for what the company claimed was defaulting on a $6,500 mortgage in 1983.

\[ \text{But, as the Muirs tried to explain,} \]

the fact was they paid $4,500 cash for the house in 1978 and never took out a mortgage on it. The debt thieves got the story wrong. But for 15 months the Muirs faced the threat of eviction, and faced the expense of hiring lawyers, while the courts pondered over the case. Eventually the court said they were right.

Others aren’t so lucky. Many cab drivers in New York took out loans to pay hundreds of thousands on medalions to own and operate cabs, promised lifetime returns and a happy retirement. But with the steep increase in competition that has exploded from Uber and other app-based for-hire cars, the medallions today are virtually worthless. And the competition means Uber drivers find it very hard to get by as well. The resulting debts have led to a rash of driver suicides.

‘Militant’ fights Florida, Kansas prison censorship

Continued from front page

will strengthen the fight against prison censorship around the country, including in Florida where the Militant is appealing bans on at least five issues of the paper listed are Bloomberg’s Businessweek, and Bon Appetit magazine.

Kansas also apparently bans any books with maps — even imaginary one — “because, you know, somehow it could lead to a prisoner escaping to Wisconsin or an imaginary country in Game of Thrones,” Michelle Dillon, who works with Books to Prisoners and the Human Rights Defense Center, told Newsweek.

Over the last 15 years the censorship of 1,622 books and periodicals have been appealed, but only 141 were overturned.

In the face of the public outcry, then Kansas Department of Corrections Secretary Roger Werhelz said, “A quick perusal of the list does raise questions about the overzealousness” of the censors.

“But it’s not a question of ‘overzealousness,’” Militant editor John Studer said July 10. “It’s a question of the Bill of Rights, the right to freedom of the press, the right of workers behind bars to read material of their choosing, to think for themselves, to be part of the world. The Kansas Department of Corrections should abolish their list of banned publications and stop interfering with the rights of inmates.”

“Some bans are just arbitrary, a way for prison officials to try to demoralize and beat down prisoners,” Studer noted. “Other bans are aimed at denying prisoners material that can help them protect their own rights.”

Meanwhile, the Militant is campaigning to convince the Florida prison systems’ Literature Review Committee to lift the ban there on five issues of the Militant. Those issues were banned either for covering a speaking tour by Albert Woodfox, who spent more than 40 years in solitary confinement in the notorious Angola state penitentiary in Louisiana, or for reporting on the fight to overturn their censorship of the Militant. Join the fight!

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Recommended reading...

*Are they rich because they're smart?*

$10

Jack Barnes

www.pathfinderpress.com

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Join the fight against prison censorship!

Get out the word: Download, print and distribute Militant articles on this fight.

Get support statements from co-workers, unions, church groups and defenders of political rights.

For Florida prisons email to: Dean Peterson, Literature Review Committee, Allen Peterson@fıc.myflorida.com.

For Kansas prisons email: Kansas Department of Corrections Acting Secretary Jez Zmuda via hope.burns@ks.gov.

Send checks to the Militant, 306 W. 4th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, for “Prisoners Rights Fight.”

Or contribute online at themilitant.com
Continued from front page
to discuss an alternative to the anti-
working-class course of successive Democratic and Republican adminis-
trations.
In the face of this, the liberals work 
feverishly to corral working people back 
to the rulers' fold. They want to 
convince us we absolutely have to 
back the “lesser-evil” among the bosses’ 
parties or disaster beckons.
Most union officials join in pushing 
workers to rely on the bosses’ parties.
United Mine Workers of America Presi-
dent Cecil Roberts has appealed to all 
of the Democratic presidential contenders 
to tour a coal mine and get to know 
the concerns of the miners.

The rulers use the debates to try 
to shift their best alternative to lead 
that party today, the one most successful in 
conning working people. Then they’ll 
use whomever wins the 2020 elections to 
control the parliamentary system and 
their interests at home and abroad, as 
Democratic and Republican presidents 
have always done.

All the Democratic candidates speak 
of “we Americans” — a class-
less blob that includes both workers 
and bosses. But more workers today 
see that the only “we” is working peo-
ples and their allies on the farm, here 
and across the world, who share com-
mon class interests. We have nothing 
in common with the bosses and their 
meritocratic enablers who profit from 
exploiting and oppressing us.

Do workers need more regulations?

President Trump says he has “cut 
more regulations … than any other ad-
mistration,” part of the Republicans’ 
claims to be partisans of “small gov-
ernment.” He boasts that this and his 
claims to be partisans of “small gov-
ernment,” part of the Republicans’ 
more regulations … than any other ad-
ministration. “We need a strong State Department.”

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The Democrats try the same tack. They 
offer “green” and “socialist” solutions to today’s 
problems. But it’s the same old tricks.

The New Deal evolved naturally 
into the war deal, as the U.S. recovery 
exceeded the liberal hope for a quick 
return to normal. Yes, workers 
struck in record numbers in 1934, 
produced gains for unionized workers. But 
the “strong State” doesn’t do this.

The ruler’s state functionaries 
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Mandela pays tribute to Cuba’s internationalist fighters

This excerpt by Castro, commander in National Congress — the revolutionary leader of the African National Congress (ANC) - said that the battle of Cuito Cuanavale changed the balance of forces and opened up new possibilities.

As Mandela was telling you, in this action the revolution staked everything, it staked its own existence, it risked a huge battle against one of the strongest powers located within the Third World, against one of the richest powers, with significant industrial and technological development, armed to the teeth, at such a great distance from our small country and with our own resources, our own arms. We even ran the risk of weakening our defenses, and we did so. We used our ships and ours alone, and we used our equipment to change the relationship of forces, which made success possible in that battle. I’m not aware of any other time when a war broke out at such a distance between such a small a country and such a great power as that possessed by the South African racists.

We put all our chips on the table in that action, and it was not the only time. I believe we did the same in 1975, when we took an enormous gamble sending our troops to fight the South African invasion of Angola.

The truly critical situation occurred in Cuito Cuanavale, where there were no Cubans at the time because the closest Cuban unit was about two hundred kilometers to the west. This brought us to the decision to employ the troops and the weapons necessary on our lines at our own risk — and to send whatever was necessary, even if it meant taking it from here.

Cuito Cuanavale is the site that became historic, but the operations extended along a line hundreds of kilometers long, and out of these operations a miracle of great democratic movement that overturned apartheid in South Africa — had been released from prison the year before. This excerpt by Castro, commander in chief of the Cuban Revolution, is entitled “The Most Profound Tribute Ever Paid to Our Internationalist Fighters.” Copyright © 2013 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

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Join fight against prison censorship!

The Militant is fighting for the right of workers behind bars to read the Militant and other books and publications under the prison censorship in two of the 21 states where we have prison subscribers — Florida and Kansas. We’re asking our readers to help us push back the censors!

Write and get others to write — co-workers, your union and other unions, local and state officials, and others — to tell prison authorities there urging them to reverse their censorship of the Militant.

And it’s not just the Militant that faces the un-constitutional and arbitrary restrictions by prison officials. Kansas censors have barred some 7,000 books and periodicals. Prison authorities from coast to coast keep looking for ways to shut down access to news, information and culture.

Sometimes what they choose can seem so absurd you have to laugh. They tend to censor material that they fear will increase the class consciousness, understanding, discipline and sense of self-worth of inmates. Censorship, arbitrary or not, is one of the tools they use to try to break the spirit of those behind bars, to dehumanize and demoralize them, to keep them from discussing what workers face today and do so.

But the prison officials have a problem when ever the censorship becomes public, they meet opposition and often are forced to back down. That’s what happened last month in two states when federal and state prison officials slapped back censors with censorship lawsuits.

Cuba, Venezuela

Continued from front page

Cuba was carried out at Washington’s request. Iranian Revolutionary Guard commander Mohsen Rezaei responded by threatening to com mander a British ship if the U.K. military doesn’t remove the tanker. Washington has not cut the threat out of the picture. The British Heritage, a tanker loaded with oil bound for Iraq, turned around over the weekend to avoid Tehran’s threats and is shel tering in place off the coast of Saudi Arabia.

Iranian Revolutionary Guard leader Hossein Salami, who commands the Basij, said July 9. “We call on Washington to keep its hands off Cuba and Venezuela,” Anthony Dutrow, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey General Assembly, told a forum in Union City, New Jersey, July 6. “Working people in the U.S. have no interest in interfering with the sovereignty of the people of Cuba and Venezuela and the imposition of sanctions and get all U.S. troops out of the Middle East.”

The capture of the ship as the administration of President Donald Trump has imposed crippling sanctions on Tehran aimed at driving its oil exports to zero. It hopes the punishing measures will compel the Iranian rulers to engage in talks aimed at reining in militias they deploy in Syria and Iraq and ending any possibility Tehran could ever develop nuclear weapons.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced Tehran would begin enrichment of its uraniu m stockpile beginning July 7, to “any amount that we want.” This breaches the conditions of the 2015 pact the Iranian government signed with former President Barack Obama, along with the governments of Germany, France, the U.K., Russia and China. The maintenance of the deal, which had placed limits on the Iranian rulers’ nuclear weapons program in exchange for an easing of sanc tions on Iran. He said it wasn’t stringent enough. The European Unionist powers oppose the U.S. rulers’ reimposition of sanctions, but their efforts to sabotage the 2015 pact have failed.

In a reflection of their differences with Washington, Carl Bildt, co-chair of the European Council on Foreign Relations, questioned the legality of the tanker seizure. “One refers to EU sanctions against Syria,” he said, “but Iran is not a member of the EU.” Imposing sanctions on others, he said, is “what the U.S. does.”

Mohammad Javad Zarif, Tehran’s foreign min ister, jumped on the statement with just one word and newspapers. In each case, when word got out, the restrictions were rolled back.

Virtually all prisons follow workers who happen to be behind bars. More than 90 percent never went to trial, never had a chance to make a case to a jury of their peers. They were pressured into signing plea agreements to avoid the long prison sentences if they refused. The purpose of the capitalist rulers’ so-called criminal justice system is to dehumanize and intimidate working people.

Iranian authorities removed PB Tankers from their blacklist, which face strict sanctions by Washington.

“Maduro is clining to Cuba to stay in power, buy ing military and intelligence operations in exchange for oil,” Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin announced July 3. This is the same lie that Washington has peddled for years, falsely claiming that the more than 20,000 Cuban internationalist volunteer doctors, nurses and teachers in Venezuela are in fact soldiers and spies.

The initial contract for oil between Cuba and Venezuela was signed Oct. 30, 2000, for “53,000 barrels per day for a five-year period” to Cuba amounting to “33 percent of the country’s con sumption,” Grunow noted in 2002.

While the oil is sold at lower than the world market price, the Cuban government has paid millions of dollars for it, Grunow said. “For our part, we have not spared any effort to provide humanitarian aid co-operate with that sister nation and we will continue doing so,” Grunow said, including with Cuban vol unteer medical workers.

Sanctions hit Petrocaribe countries

In 2005 Venezuela initiated the Petrocaribe program. It grew to sell oil to some 18 Caribbean and Latin American nations with favorable prices and payment terms. But with the precipitous drop of Venezuelan oil production over the last several years, caused by a growing social and economic crisis in the country combined with the impact of the U.S. sanctions, those nations have received almost no oil in months.

Haiti, one of these countries, now can only provide electricity, because it can’t afford to buy fuel for the country. Some hospitals run on backup generators and gasoline sells for as much $12 a gallon on the black market. The U.S. rulers have done nothing to offer any aid.

The Treasury Department imposed sanctions on Venezuela’s state-owned oil company PDVSA in January aimed at preventing all crude oil exports, espe cially targeting Cuba. In April it placed full sanctions on 34 ships owned or operated by PDVSA, including a Greek tanker. A week later, Washington extended the sanctions to four shipping companies and nine oil tankers from Iran.

Nonetheless, some shipping companies seeing opportunities to make profits — are defying Wash ington’s violation of Venezuelan and Cuban sover eign rights. Washington demands that the new measure will bring more of them to heel.

In a speech to the Cuba’s National Assembly April 10, Raúl Castro, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, said revolutionary Cuba will remain resolute in the face of the U.S. sanctions.

“We will never abandon the duty to act in solidar ity with Venezuela. We have told the North American administration with the greatest clarity, firmness and seriousness, throughout our diplomatic relations with publicly, that Cuba does not fear the threats,” he said.

“It is in the interest of working people everywhere to oppose U.S. imperialism’s aggressive moves, which are aimed at punishing the workers and people of Venezuela and Cuba,” Anthony Dutrow, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Miami City Commission said July 9. “We call on Washington to keep its hands off Cuba and Venezuela, to stop their imperialist sanctions, end U.S. imperialism’s economic warfare, and stop violating the sovereignty of those peoples.”

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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