‘Lesser-evil’ politics is a dead end for working class

BY TERRY EVANS

Many workers are looking for ways to change 10 years of declining real wages, worsening working conditions and the many abuses the bosses and their governments bring down on us. But Democrats and Republicans tussling for the White House — Bernie Sanders, Joe Biden and Donald Trump — offer only different ways to prolong the rule of the capitalist class responsible for creating these conditions.

Both parties encourage workers to vote for the lesser evil, offering the hope that the “least worst” might be better than the “most worst.” Both try to prevent workers from seeing themselves, fighting together, as a force to defend and advance class interests in the workplace, the streets and in politics.

Both Biden and Sanders say their chief selling point is they’re the best person to defeat President Donald Trump. The president built his victory in 2016 on appealing to workers whose needs Continued on page 8

Solidarity led Cuba’s fight to defeat Ebola in Africa

NY meeting counters US rulers’ slanders

INSET, March 7 New York meeting, featuring hook on Cuba’s role in fighting Ebola in West Africa. Above, from left, Martin Koppel and Mary-Alice Waters, co-editors of hook, and Ana Silvia Rodriguez, Cuban ambassador.

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK — “A people aiming to build a society based on solidarity” — that’s what Cuba’s socialist revolution represents, said Enrique Ubieta, author of Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa. He was addressing a March 7 program to celebrate publication of new editions of Red Zone in English and Spanish via video from Havana.

Ubieta led a Cuban reporting team to Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia in early 2015 during the Ebola epidemic there.

Also speaking at the meeting of 100 were Ana Silvia Rodriguez, Cuba’s Continued on page 7

Socialist Workers Party candidates tour Washington:

‘Workers need gov’t-funded cradle-to-grave health care’

FROM RIGHT, SWP candidates Malcolm Jarrett for vice president, and Rebecca Williamson for Congress, speak with Heidi Gomez and mother Susana, a farmworker, in Yakima March 3.

BY EDWIN FRUIT

SEATTLE — With the spread of coronavirus, working people are facing new problems caused by capitalism’s for-profit health system, growing economic dislocations and the rulers’ insistence that workers are on their own in finding ways to get food and supplies. This was part of many discussions Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett, the presidential and vice presidential candidates of the Socialist Workers Party, had while on a five-day campaign tour here.

Washington is the state with the most reported cases in the U.S.

The SWP platform calls for “health care for all. Fight for universal, government-guaranteed cradle-to-grave health care, and retirement income for all.” The disease is a social question, and workers and our unions need to fight to make sure our jobs, income and needed health care are assured.

Speaking at a March 6 campaign Continued on page 3

Copper strikers’ struggle against Asarco bosses needs solidarity

BY BERNIE SENTER

“We’re on the picket line standing up to violations and abuse of workers and the environment by Asarco,” Eduardo Placencio, recording secretary of striking United Steelworkers Local 937 at the Mission Mine south of Tucson, told the Militant by phone March 6. Over 1,700 copper miners have been on strike Continued on page 8

Coronavirus spread is result of capitalist social relations

BY ROY LANDERSEN

As the spread of coronavirus disease continues worldwide, stock prices have plunged more than any time since the 2008 global financial crisis, reflecting growing concerns among capitalist investors about the effect of the outbreak. World economic growth has begun to contract. And a price war over oil started by the ruling monarchy in Saudi Arabia is exacerbating the fall.

These external shocks highlight the way “globalization” of international production and trade has made the capitalists’ crisis worse, threatening to tip into a worldwide recession.

Unable to reach a deal with Moscow to cut oil production in the face of faltering world demand, the Saudi rulers instead boosted production to swamp the crude market, cutting prices and dealing blows to both Moscow and to the U.S. shale oil bosses.

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 have spread to over 120 countries, with more than 125,000 infected and Continued on page 6

Cancel Miranda: ‘Keep fighting for Puerto Rico’s independence!’

BY SETH GALINSKY

Thousands turned out for events in Puerto Rico over three days to honor independence fighter, part of the Cuban Revolution and uncompromising internationalist Rafael Cancel Miranda. He died March 2 at 89 at his home in San Juan. Cancel Miranda spent 28 years in prison for his actions against U.S. colonial rule in Puerto Rico. He was buried Continued on page 7

AN EXAMPLE OF REVOLUTIONARY COURAGE, DISCIPLINE, INTEGRITY

— SWP message page 4

In his hometown of Mayaguez March 8.

He was first jailed in 1948, serving two years for refusing to register for the draft prior to the Korean War. “To me it didn’t make sense to be in the same army that invades your country and massacres your people,” he said in a 1998 Militant interview. “If you’re going to fight, you should fight them.”

Cancel Miranda is best known for participating in an armed protest in Continued on page 4

Inside

Chicago protests demand freedom for Gerald Reed 2
Oberlin students protest replacement of union workers 5
Editorial: A road forward for workers, our unions 8
— On the picket line, p. 5—

Minneapolis janitors strike one day in fight for new contracts

Indiana casino workers march for wage raise, health coverage

AUSTRALIA $1.50 · CANADA $1.50 · FRANCE 100 EURO · NEW ZEALAND $1.50 · UK £1.00 · U.S. $1.00
Chicago protests demand freedom for Gerald Reed

BY MARK CLEMENTS

CHICAGO — More than 40 people gathered outside the Daley Center here Feb. 25 to demand that Chief Judge Timothy Evans intervene in the case of Gerald Reed. Reed is in jail on “evidence” extracted though torture in 1990 by two Chicago police detectives. “What do we want? Free Gerald Reed,” protesters chanted.

Reed’s “confession” led to his being found guilty in 1991 on murder charges and subsequently sentenced to life without any possibility of parole. He was one of dozens of over 100 victims of the “Midnight Crew” run by Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge, who was later exposed, fired and convicted of lying about torturing people.

In 2012, more than two decades after his conviction, Reed won a hearing before the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission. This panel was established by the Illinois legislature in 2009 after widespread publicity on Burge-led cop torture. Cook County Judge Thomas Gainer ruled in December 2018 that Reed’s confession was most likely the result of the beating he suffered at the hands of cops and threw out his conviction. He ordered a new trial.

On Feb. 14, Judge Thomas Hennelly, who had been assigned to the case after Gainer retired, reversed Gainer’s order and sent Reed back to prison. In the days leading up to the protest, organizers of Reed’s defense circulated a letter to Judge Evans demanding he intervene. The letter, made public and released to the press, was signed by dozens of organizations and individuals.

“If they believe Gerald committed the crime they accuse him of, they have to prove it,” Reed’s mother, Armanda Shackelford, told the press and fellow protesters. “They have never proved it, and never will be able to prove it. We’re hopeful Evans will reverse this miscarriage of justice.”

“We have to keep mobilizing in Gerald’s defense,” Aislinn Pulley, co-director of the Chicago Torture Justice Center, told the crowd, “and demand the release of all survivors of cop torture.”

There are over 100 other torture survivors inside Illinois prisons who have not gotten a hearing on claims of torture. Ilona Gersh, a worker at an area Walmart, announced that at two Walmart stores close to 40 workers had signed a letter urging Evans to reverse Hennelly’s decision.

Mark Clements was a victim of Chicago police torture, railroaded to prison for 28 years on framed-up charges.

Vote Socialist Workers Party in 2020!

Alyson Kennedy for president
Malcolm Jarrett for vice president

SWP candidates coast to coast:

New York/New Jersey
Lea Sherman, US Senate, New Jersey
Willie Cotton, 9th CD, New York
Seth Galinsky, 10th CD, New York
Abby Tiller, 20th CD, Albany
Jacob Perasso, 21st CD, Albany
Candace Wagner, 8th CD, Union City, NJ

Mid-Atlantic Region
James Harris, delegate to Congress, D.C.
Oxombe Hart, 3rd CD, Philadelphia
Ruth Riskind, 14th CD, Washington, PA
Dave Ferguson, 18th CD, Pittsburgh

The South
Richard Frick, US Senate, Georgia
Anthony Dowrow, 27th CD, Miami

Midwest
Naomi Crain, US Senate, Illinois
Maggie Towe, US Senate, Kentucky
David Redmon, US Senate, Minnesota
Samantha Hamlin, 3rd CD, Chicago
Samir Hasham, 3rd CD, Louisville
Hein Meyers, 4th CD, St. Paul

Southwest and West Coast
Henry Metz, Governor, Washington
Rebecca Williamson, 9th CD, Seattle
Gerardo Sánchez, US Senate, Texas
Joel Britton, 13th CD, Oakland
Dennis Richter, 27th CD, Los Angeles
Deborah Liatsis, 40th CD, Los Angeles

See directory on page 5 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

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

Available from campaign offices listed on page 5

Defend women’s right to choose abortion!

The ‘Militant’ backs women’s right to have an abortion. Women in Argentina are demanding legalization, and fights in Ireland, South Korea and elsewhere have won or beaten back attacks. The right to choose is a life-and-death question for working-class unity.

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Available from campaign offices listed on page 5

Rally in Chicago Jan. 10 demands freedom for Gerald Reed. Cops notorious for frame-ups tortured Reed to force him to confess to murder charges. He has been imprisoned since 1990.

The Militant
The Militant March 23, 2020

‘Workers need health care’

Continued from front page

Militant

the need for unions and for a labor par-

pointed to the Socialist Workers Party

unions must have the right to shut down

its leads to unsafe conditions on the job.

he had to move out.

his landlord renovate his apartment, and

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tral Washington.

paigned in Yakima March 3, knocking

tional campaign.

how the for-profit health system oper

would help workers see the truth about

tical giants and medical companies,

ing open the books of the pharmaceu-

tals, child care centers, mass transpor-

wages building roads, bridges, hospi-

ment-financed public works program

death question for the unions to unite

in the US, a life-and-

in their fight to organize unions and for

service drivers! Support farmworkers

labor party.

One
defend themselves, to use union power

port workers’ struggles to organize to

by capitalism:

nomic, social and moral crisis caused

-

ARMENIA FOR ALL UNDOCUMENT-

rymen in leading the fight against the

Ebola virus in West Africa several years

ago. “You cannot just transpire the Cu-

ba’s role in West Africa education onto

the capitalist United States,” he said.

“We need to make a revolution here,

like Cuban working people did, before

we build a new economy where workers and farmers
government and reorganize health care

to top-bottom.”

Kennedy added that “our campaign

toons that slogan has two captions that capture what

work means to workers and workers

control of production.”

“We need

our own party, she said, that can help or-

ganize and lead our battles against the

capitalist rulers and their efforts to force

us to pay for the crisis of their system.

Doing so will pose the need for working

people to fight to take political power into

our own hands.

Workers control, including demand-

ing open the books of the pharmaceu-

tical giants and medical companies,

would help workers see the truth about

how the for-profit health system oper-

ates and why working people need to

organize in their millions to wrest control

over the entire system of health.

Nearly $2,000 was raised for the na-

tional campaign.

Campaigning in Yakima Valley

Kennedy, Jarrett and supporters cam-

paigned in Yakima March 3, knocking

donors in this farming center in cen-

tral Washington.

“I bust my butt for a small amount of

money,” construction worker Derick Rivera, 29, told Jarrett. Rivera helped his brother

who had just been released from jail and

then the landlord raised the rent so high

he had to move out.

Rivera has worked on scaffolding
descriptions where the bosses

didn’t provide safety harnesses. They

discussed how the bosses’ drive for pro-

fits leads to unsafe conditions on the job.

The SWP says workers and unions

must have the right to shut down produc-

dion where there are unsafe cond-

itions until they are corrected. Jarrett

pointed to the Socialist Workers Party

2020 platform, which starts out with

the need for unions and for a labor par-

ty. He noted that the Militant frequently

covers the growing number of injuries in

construction and other sectors.

Contribute to Socialist Workers Party 2020
campaign $25,000 fund!

Make checks out to: Socialist Workers National Campaign.

365 W. 37th St., 15th Floor, New York, NY 10018

Socialist Workers Party 2020 campaign platform

This is the SWP’s fighting cam-
paign platform to confront the eco-

omic, social and moral crisis caused by capitalism:

UNIONS/FOR A LABOR PARTY
S

Support

workers’ struggles to organize to
defend themselves, to use union power
to raise the living standards of workers and all

people. Workers need their own party, a labor party.
One union for all drivers — taxi, Uber, Lyft, other app-based and
car services — Support farmworkers in their fight to organize unions and for

safe working conditions.

AMNESTY FOR ALL UNDOCUMENT-

ED IMMIGRANTS in the US, a life-and-

death question for the US to unite workers and cut across divisions the

bosses use to drive down wages. For

access to driver’s licenses for all.

JOBS Fight for a federal govern-

mentally financed and wage-based

to put millions to work at union-scale

wages building roads, bridges, hospita-
lts, child care centers, mass transpor-
tation and quality affordable housing

workers need. Set the minimum wage

to allow workers to have a home and

support a family.

OPPOSE WASHINGTON’S WAR US

hands off Iran, Venezuela and Cuba. US

troops out of Afghanistan, Korea, the

Middle East. End US colonial rule in

Puerto Rico.

CUBA’S REVOLUTION — an ex-

ample of a workers’ democratic

human struggle against war; US out of Guanta-
namo. The Cuban Revolution in 1959

showed it is possible for workers and

farmers to transform themselves in

struggle, to take political power and

unprecedented capitalist exploitation.

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

Fight for uni-

versal, government-guaranteed cradle-
to-grave 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 rec-

ognition of Israel and of a contiguous Palestinian state. For the right of Jews
to return to Israel as a refuge in the face of capitalist crisis, Jew-hatred and

murderous violence.

WORKERS CONTROL OVER PRO-

DUCTION The bosses and their govern-

ment lie to working people about their

production costs and profits, while they

insist they can’t afford to pay higher wages. Demand they open their books

for inspection by workers and consum-

ers. To prevent capitalist collusion and

thievery — and their production of

shoddy and dangerous goods like the

Boeing 737 MAX — workers in their

millions will need to fight for control of

production, a step towards taking political power and a school for run-

ning the economy for ourselves in the

interests of all.

JUSTICE SYSTEM Fight against po-

lice brutality, racist discrimination and

the entire capitalist injustice system

with its frame-ups, “plea bargains,”

onerous bail and outrageous prison sentences, all of which disproportion-

ately hit workers who are Black. For the

government to step in and help workers.

POLITICAL RIGHTS Defend demo-

cratic 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 con-

finement. End suppression of the Mil-

itant, 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 fore-

closures, 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 bankers and landlords.

We demand the government guarantee farmers their costs of production, includ-

ing their living expenses.

Working people must organize and act independent of the ruling capitalists and

break from their political parties — the Democrats and Republicans. For a

labor party and a movement of mil-

lion to fight for these demands along a
course to replace the rule of the exploit-

ative capitalist class with a workers and

farmers government.

Join the Socialist Workers Party

campaign!
Cancel Miranda: Keep fighting for Puerto Rico independence!

Continued from front page

Congress on March 1, 1954, along with Lolita Lebrón, Irving Flores and Andrés Figueroa Cordero. At 23, and a press operator at a shoe factory in New York City, he was the youngest of the group. They unfurled a Puerto Rican flag and shouted “Viva Puerto Rico libre!” before firing shots, most into the air. A few congressmen were wounded.

The island has been a U.S. colony since 1898, when U.S. troops wrested control from Spain. Opponents of U.S. imperialist occupation were brutally repressed. On March 1, 1937, Cancel Miranda’s father and mother, supporters of Albizu Campos’ Nationalist Party, attended a peaceful rally in the city of Ponce that was attacked by cops on or- ders of U.S. Gen. Blanton Winship, killing 21 people and wounding 200.

In 1948 Washington imposed Law 33, which prohibited flying the Puerto Rican flag, singing patriotic songs and gatherings in support of independence. Yet in 1953, the U.S. government had Puerto Rico removed from the United Nations’ list of colonies, claiming that Puerto Rico was a “self-governing” territory.

The four Nationalists “decided to carry out a demonstration that would draw the world’s attention to the question about Puerto Rico, that would tell the world that there were Puerto Ricans who were willing to die for our inde- pendence and that the U.S. government was fooling the United Nations and the world — including my people — with this so-called commonwealth,” Cancel Miranda told the Militant.

“Proven right by history”

“El Nuevo Dia, the largest circulation daily in Puerto Rico and no friend of the fight for independence, noted that Can- cel Miranda and others who rejected Washington’s claim that Puerto Rico was self-governing “were proven right by history.”

During those years behind bars, Ra- fael engaged in political activity together- with fellow workers of all national origins and skin colors. The experience reinforced his conviction that working people in the United States and Puerto Rico share a mutual enemy. We are al- lies in struggle, if we understand those common class interests and act intransi- tely towards them together.

Rafael Cancel Miranda was an un- courting internationalist. As he said in a letter to the Militant newspaper in 1978, while behind prison walls, “I think of myself as part of every struggle anywhere in the world in which people struggle for freedom, dignity, and a just socio-political-economic way of life.”

For Rafael, the Cuban Revolution was his own. He defended the socialist road of revolutionary class strug- gle, if we understand those common class interests and act intransi- tely towards them together.

Meeting set to celebrate political life, contributions of Larry Quinn

BY JACOBS PERASSO

ALBANY, N.Y. — Larry Quinn, a 20-year cadre of the Socialist Workers Party, died March 6 after a battle with cancer. He was a longtime participant and an active member of the SWP in the U.S. with the Irish freedom struggle. He joined the Socialist Workers Party in 2000 in Newark, New Jersey.

Quinn was a native of Bayonne, New Jersey, where he worked on state high- way maintenance crews and operated a drabhouse. He also worked as a meat- packer and coal miner, a member of the United Mine Workers union. He ran as SWP candidate for City Council in Troy in 2019, where he worked at Walmart and joined fights against police brutality and other working-class struggles.

A celebration of the life and political contributions of Quinn will be held Sun- day, March 14, at the Alternative Community Center, 250 North Pearl Street. A reception will begin at 2 p.m. with a program at 3 p.m.

and internationally to free the five Na- tionalists — the fifth being Oscar Col- lazo, arrested in 1950 after attacking the temporary residence of President Harry Truman. Téllez interpreted, and charged, the exploding opposition to the rulers’ war against the people of Vietnam, struggles for Black and Chicano liberation and for women’s equality.

Figueroa was freed in 1976. The re- maining four were freed by President Jimmy Carter in 1979. They were greet- ed as heroes by tens of thousands in Chi- cago, New York and Puerto Rico.

The Cuban Revolution began while they were in prison. Cancel Miranda re- alized it was not just a change in forms, “but a true social transformation. I in- ternalized it to the point that the Cuban revolution has become as important to me as the fight for the freedom of my people,” he said in the interview.

Don Rafa, as he was often called by those who loved and respected him, led a life that was an example of revolu- tionary courage, discipline, integrity, and integrity and dignity, and lifelong record of struggle for Puerto Rico’s indepen- dence — his closing words some eight years ago at a Washington, D.C., event to build the “jury of millions” that won the freedom of the Cuban Five. “I was twenty-three years old when I walked up the steps of the Capitol,” Rafael said.

“Today I’m eighty-two, and I haven’t changed the way I think about anything. Except that today perhaps I’m a little more revolutionary — because I know the enemy better.”

We honor the life of comrade Ra- fael Cancel Miranda by continuing to educate working people, as well as the youth who join them in battle, about the road of revolutionary class strug- gle, the only road to a free Puerto Rico and a socialist society.

With warmest fraternal greetings,

Larry Quinn, a 20-year cadre of the Socialist Workers Party, died March 6 after a battle with cancer. He was a longtime participant and an active member of the SWP in the U.S. with the Irish freedom struggle. He joined the Socialist Workers Party in 2000 in Newark, New Jersey.

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BY ROY LANDERSEN

Hundreds of students protested Feb. 18 less than 24 hours after Oberlin President Carmen Twillie Ambar announced that the university planned to fire 70 janitors and 42 contract cooks after 18 months of negotiations. Ambar and other janitors face the possibility of losing their jobs, but many students are standing up for their rights.

The layoffs occur after a lawsuit filed by the college and a settlement that could have prevented the layoffs. The settlement was reached before the college could be forced to open its books.

The college’s financial problems are the result of a new president and changes in the college’s budget. The new president, Eric K. Villar, has made significant changes to the college’s budget, including cuts to student aid and increased charges for room and board. The changes have been controversial and have led to protests by students and faculty.

The college is also facing a lawsuit over a contract between the college and a janitorial service. The service has been accused of not paying its workers or providing proper safety equipment. The college has denied the claims and is fighting the lawsuit.

Many students have expressed concern about the college’s budget and its impact on student life. They have called for the college to be more transparent and to better represent the needs of students.

The students’ protests and the college’s financial problems reflect a broader trend in higher education. Many colleges and universities are facing budget cuts and increased charges for tuition and fees. Students are demanding more from their institutions and are fighting for a better education.

The story of Oberlin College and its battles with the janitors represents a struggle for justice and fairness. It is a story of the power of collective action and the importance of standing up for what is right.

— Helen Meyers
**Virus spread result of capitalism**

Continued from front page

4,600 deaths as of March 11. The bulk of those are still in Wuhan, China, where the outbreak began. The number of infections outside China tripled in the past week. The majority were in Italy, Iran and South Korea, but numbers are growing in the U.S. and across Europe.

In addition to the slump in trade with China and disruption to global supply chains, travel bans by bourgeois governments are impacting airline traffic and tourism.

What is unfolding is a social crisis, exacerbated by the collapse of so-called “liberal democracy” in Europe. In Italy, hospitals have almost run out of beds for patients. In Spain, nurses are marching through the streets as to improve the health care system. In Germany, protests against his moves to extend lockdown in New Rochelle March 10.

Giorgio Gori, mayor of Bergamo, talks of his presidency through 2036 as to improve the health care system. In Germany, protests against his moves to extend lockdown in New Rochelle March 10.

Almost run out of beds for patients. Everyone arriving by sea or air is checked for signs of the disease and a medical examination conducted if needed. Hospitalization or other treatments are ready. Special care is prepared for the most vulnerable. No one is left on their own.

Special efforts are being mobilized by the government, the country’s mass organizations and the unions to keep working people informed and involved. The neighborhood medical system is organized to make sure everyone gets personal attention, and it’s free.

**Impact on capitalist economy**

The dual-port complex of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the largest harbor in the U.S., has seen a fall this year of half a million containers, 15%, from the China trade, which accounts for half the volume of the port. Tens of thousands of jobs, from dockers to truck drivers and warehouse workers, are affected as production, trade and shipping falls. Shifts for permanent longshoremen in Los Angeles are down by a fifth and workers employed as “casuals” have lost 90% of their shifts.

The 13,000 truckers who transport containers from the port, 80% are “independent contractors,” paid by the load. Many are Latino immigrants, forced to pay for their “own” trucks, gas, etc. With no income and unable to meet mortgage payments, some are facing with having to sell their rigs. With broad erosion of trust in the capitalist governments’ abilities to cope with the social and health crisis, amplified by social media panic, there has been a rush to stock up on masks and hand sanitizer, food and toilet paper, and more, leaving shelves bare and frustrated customers angry.

The pressure is adding to the bosses’ speed-up imposed on retail workers across the U.S. And the big store owners like Walmart and Target, in addition to their low hourly rates, don’t pay sick leave.

Despite a sophisticated medical system with high levels of science and technology, under capitalist control the “health care” services in the U.S. are driven by pursuit of profits for insurance, pharmaceutical, hospital and medical-equipment corporations. Health care is a costly commodity beyond the reach of many working people.

More than 27.5 million people in the U.S. have no health insurance. Almost a third of the population were classified as “underinsured” in 2018, meaning they can’t afford the thousands of dollars in “co-pay” charges when they get sick.

A March 5 nationwide survey by the 150,000-member National Nurses United exposed glaring unpreparedness in many hospitals with no plans, isolation procedures or facilities for the coming surge in COVID-19 cases. There are meager stocks of personal protective equipment for medical staff and few have been trained to properly use what there is.

And — as in all capitalist countries worldwide — there is a critical short-age of kits to test if people have the disease, which facilitates the spread of the virus.

Workers and farmers across the world need to find ways to unite and organize to cope with this social crisis, which the capitalist rulers visit most sharply on the working class.

**By TERRY EVANS**

The Russian and Turkish governments signed a tentative cease-fire deal March 5 and with it a “de-escalation” deal between the rival Syrian forces they back that are fighting for control of Idlib province. Similar “de-escalation” deals between the same powers have failed to overcome their differences and paved the way for new conflicts, with the toll falling on working people.

“We call it the killer cease-fire,” Abdulkafi, a teacher and supporter of Assad’s opponents, said to The Financial Times March 8. “What’s happening after it is destruction.”

1 million people have fled Idlib

Since December 1 million people have fled their homes in Idlib after a scorched-earth offensive by Syrian forces, backed by Moscow’s air power and Istanbul’s military aid. Many of those driven from their homes are living in makeshift camps near the Turkish border in freezing conditions, while others hide between houses and in bomb-damaged buildings that are a month old. The Syrian government aims to extend its control over the entire area of the country beyond government control. The Syrian government aims to capture the entire province, the last area of the country beyond government control with the exception of the area of the Euphrates River held by U.S.-backed Kurdish forces.

“Who pays the price of the cease-fire if people can’t come home?” farmer Abu Ali told Reuters after fleeing to a refugee camp in northwestern Syria earlier this year. The province has long been the last holdout of different opposition groups that took up arms and seized territory across Syria in response to Assad’s brutal suppression of a popular uprising for political rights in 2011. In the course of the civil war that followed, the Turkish government armed some of Assad’s opponents, including the Free Syrian Army. The price for that support was their agreement to join the Turkish rulers’ invasion of Afrin, a Kurdish-held area in northwestern Syria.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan is determined to push back the autonomous areas Syria Kurds have secured control over. Some 30 million Kurds, divided across Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey, have fought against government assaults on their struggle for national sovereignty for decades. The deal between the Russian and Turkish governments registers territorial gains made by the Assad regime and Moscow since December, including control of the M5 highway connecting Aleppo, Syria’s second-largest city, and Damascu, the capital.

“In even if he [Assad] goes, some — as in all capitalist countries worldwide — there is a critical short-age of kits to test if people have the disease, which facilitates the spread of the virus.

Workers and farmers across the world need to find ways to unite and organize to cope with this social crisis, which the capitalist rulers visit most sharply on the working class.

The capitalist rulers in the U.S. maintain far and away the largest armada of air, naval and ground forces in the region. Washington refused to provide the Turkish government, its NATO “ally,” with either air support or the missile defense systems it requested to battle Assad’s forces. The U.S. government is trying to pressure the Turkish rulers to back off the closer relations they have forged with the rulers in Moscow.

Large parts of Idlib remain under control of the Islamist group Hayat Tahirir al-Sham (HTS). Syrian government forces continue to shell areas held by HTS since the cease-fire was signed.
Cuba’s fight to defeat Ebola

Continued from front page

Cuba’s army of white coats. “That’s why it’s such an effective weapon to defend Cuba’s medical system is geared to enrich a few, not safeguard human lives,” Ubieta said. In contrast, Cuba’s medical missions show the world “what’s possible for a revolutionary state to do.”

“The Cubans who take part in these missions return as better people, better revolutionaries,” Ubieta said. “The revolution strengthens the dignity of men and women. It strengthens their capacities for social participation.”

Ambassador Rodríguez noted that Cuba’s first medical mission was to Algeria in 1963, just a few years after the Cuban Revolution. Cuba didn’t yet have enough doctors at home, she said, “but we’ve always shared what we have, not what we have left over.”

Since then, more than 400,000 Cuban medical workers have served in 164 countries, treating over 1.8 billion people. Today, almost 30,000 health workers are serving in 65 countries.

“Our doctors and nurses are all volunteers. No one is forced to go. They serve in remote and poverty-stricken areas where a doctor is considered a luxury, not a necessity,” she said.

The ambassador urged everyone to read Red Zone. “It’s exciting and moving,” she said. “It made me very proud of my country.” Drawing on her own experience, she pointed to the relations of human solidarity underlying how the revolution organizes medical care, at home and abroad. (See accompanying box.)

Don’t act ‘like doctors’

“This book will help people learn the facts about Cuba’s medical missions,” Professor Samad-Matas said. She recalled her own experiences talking with people who’d been treated by Cuban health workers in countries she’s visited, including Tanzania, Grenada, Guyana and Surinam.

In Grenada, she was told how, unlike most private doctors who only serve those who come to the capital city, St. Georges, “the Cuban specialists visit rural areas, treat you right there if possible, or offer free transportation to the hospital, if necessary.”

“The Cubans don’t act like doctors,” she said. “They treat patients like normal, not like they’re superior.”

Tribute to Rafael Cancel Miranda

Waters opened the event with a salutation to Puerto Rican revolutionary and internationalist figure Rafael Cancel Miranda, who died March 2. The last time she had heard him speak, Waters said, was at a 2012 meeting in Washington, D.C., demanding freedom for five Cuban revolutionaries then serving long sentences in U.S. prisons. In fighting for the Cuban Five, “we’re not doing them a favor,” Cancel Miranda said in closing. “Except that today maybe I’m a little more revolutionary, because I know the enemy better.”

Koppel also paid tribute to Cancel Miranda. The Puerto Rican revolutionary was one of the most effective defenders of the Cuban Revolution, he said.

“Revolution is a powerful living example for us here in the U.S.,” Koppel said, “where there’s no system of health care, just medical insurance for the profit of the wealthy.”

In contrast to Cuba, “we know the U.S. government and medical establishment are not going to respond to the coronavirus in a way that really protects people.”

“Clearly the road the working class here needs to take,” he said. “We’re told by our exploiters that the brutal values bred by capitalism — ‘everyone for yourself’ — is just human nature and can’t be changed.”

“Red Zone refutes that lie. It gives a vivid picture of how millions in Cuba have been transformed through a deep-going socialist revolution.”

Koppel said he hoped the successful New York event would spur similar programs across the U.S., Canada and elsewhere.

A discussion period followed the presentations. And a reception hosted by the Socialist Workers Party at their nearby headquarters and book center drew dozens of participants to continue the exchange.

Calendar

Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa

“Just as the Cuban combatants in Angola set an example that can never be erased, the heroic actions of Cuba’s army of white coats will occupy a place of honor.”

— Fidel Castro, October 2014

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The Militant March 23, 2020

For us, prevention is key,” says Cuban ambassador

NEW YORK — “In Cuba, the neighborhood doctors are the heart of health care,” Ana Silvia Rodríguez, Cuba’s ambassador to the United Nations, said during the discussion at the March 7 meeting here on Red Zone: Cuba and the Battle Against Ebola in West Africa. She was answering a question about Cuba’s response to coronavirus.

Cuba has a doctor for every 150 people, the ambassador said. They live in the community and know the people they care for. She described what happened when she and her husband recently returned to Cuba for a visit.

“We both had the flu,” she said. After filling out the standard health form, they each examined carefully by one of the medical workers stationed at the airport. By the time they got home, their family doctor already had been informed and was waiting for them.

“She checked on us daily until we were well,” Rodríguez said.

The same attention and human solidarity mark Cuba’s missions abroad, the ambassador said. She recalled when she and her husband were assigned to Cuba’s embassy in the Caribbean island of Grenada some years ago.

Among her responsibilities there was Operation Miracle, a program established by Cuba in 2004 that has restored vision, free of charge, to more than a million people who’ve been suffering from cataracts, cataract-induced blindness and other eye problems treatable by laser surgery.

“I got a call from Havana one night,” Rodríguez recalled. “We’re sending a plane the day after tomorrow to bring people here for the operation,” a government official told her.

“I panicked,” she said. “Who’s going to jump on a plane to go to a foreign country with so little notice? I called the first person on my list, a young woman. As soon as I explained she could restore her sight, she said yes!”

“Of course, all that plane was full. And it was only the first.”

— SARA LOBMAN
Asarco miners strike

The Militant March 23, 2020

Workers today need to organize together to protect ourselves from the assaults of the bosses and their government backers. Capitalism’s economic and social breakdowns are undermining our ability to live in solidarity with others fighting today. And how can we strengthen the position of our class by building our own party, a labor party, as our struggles grow. Such struggles are an inevitable result of the deepening crisis of capitalism today. The leaderless, ever-more-radical working class ourselves can become when we organize and fight together in our own class interests. It is only through working-class struggles — on the job and beyond — that workers gain self-confidence, become more battle-ready and see more clearly we are a class with common interests that are separate from the bosses and bankers that exploit us.

Can we advance working-class struggle?
The real question workers face is how can we advance the struggles we wage, big or small, against what the bosses need to live in solidarity with others fighting today. And how can we strengthen the position of our class by building our own party, a labor party, as our struggles grow. Such struggles are an inevitable result of the deepening crisis of capitalism today. The leaderless, ever-more-radical working class ourselves can become when we organize and fight together in our own class interests. It is only through working-class struggles — on the job and beyond — that workers gain self-confidence, become more battle-ready and see more clearly we are a class with common interests that are separate from the bosses and bankers that exploit us.

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