PG&E bosses cop a plea to manslaughter in fire deaths

BY JEFF POWERS

OAKLAND, Calif. — On March 23 Pacific Gas & Electric bosses struck a plea bargain with the Butte County District Attorney’s Office, saying they would admit guilt on felony counts stemming from the deadly 2018 Camp Fire and pay $4 million fine. The deal avoids jail time for company officers who plead guilty to 34 counts of manslaughter and one count of unlawfully causing the fire.

PG&E has already been convicted of felony in previous fires. In 2017 the company was found guilty on six felony charges after a pipeline explosion killed eight people and injured dozens more in the San Francisco suburb of San Bruno.

Have you ever heard of another case where someone skips prison after admitting to killing people, not once but twice?

Continued on page 5

Bangladesh: Workers fight moves to shut off jobs, pay

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Workers in the centers of garment production in Asia and elsewhere are taking heavy blows from decisions taken by the capitalist bosses in Europe and North America to shut down whole sections of their economies, including much of the clothing trade.

As retail giants in the imperialist countries cancel or postpone orders with their suppliers, thousands of factories are threatened with closure and tens of millions of workers and their families risk losing their livelihoods.

“It’s difficult to know how many factories are still running and how many are closed,” Nazma Akter, president of the labor union Sommilito Garments Sramik Federation, told the Militant by phone from Dhaka, Bangladesh, April 7. “They keep going until all their orders are produced. But many, many workers have been sent home.”

Continued on page 4

Join fights for jobs, higher wages, better conditions!

Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party 2020 candidate for U.S. president, issued the following statement April 8.

Malcolm Jarrett is the party’s 2020 vice presidential candidate.

Demand mass public works program to provide jobs!

Workers face an urgent need to defend themselves from the bosses’ assaults today. The only way the capitalists can defend their profits is to step up attacks on those still working, at the same time they throw others of us out on the street. Workers gain confidence when we organize to resist bosses’ ceaseless efforts to make us take a time out, a

Continued on page 9

Dairy farmers forced to dump milk while stores are running out

BY ZENA JASPER AND ROY LANDERSEN

RICHLAND CENTER, Wis. — Dairy farmers are being forced to dump fresh milk while millions face going short of dairy and food supplies due to government shutdowns and mass unemployment.

Stores like Walmart and Costco are limiting how much milk customers can buy due to shortages — a result of panic-buying induced by the bosses’ response to today’s social crisis. Despite this strong demand, dairy farmers in New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and elsewhere have been told by big processing plant bosses to dump tens of millions of gallons of milk.

Continued on page 7

As 2020 elections take a time out, Congress passes bailout for bosses

BY TERRY EVANS

The 2020 presidential campaign is taking a back seat following the shutdown of many of the bosses’ factories and other workplaces, as a deep-going social crisis confronts the working class.

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Strike against Asarco union busting continues

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SWP presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy, left, and Helen Meyers, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress, talk with laid-off worker Damario Armstrong in Plymouth, Minnesota.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Socialist Workers Party members and supporters are stepping up efforts to use the Militant to discuss what we face today with fellow working people and to join with them to fight the bosses’ attempts to make us pay for the crisis of the capitalist system.

Along with participating in struggles on the job for better working conditions, for union rights and for higher pay, this involves exchanging views with workers, farmers, owner-operators and self-employed storekeepers — all those exploited by capital in cities and towns and rural areas across the country.

That’s why the Militant has begun a six-week drive to win new readers and to get books by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and other revolutionaries into the hands of those who can use them, as well as win contributions to the $115,000 Militant Fighting Fund. The drive ends May 19.

The Militant tells the truth about why capitalism needs to be replaced.

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

INSIDE

US rulers deploy National Guard, target workers’ jobs, rights

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MILITANT DEC. 19

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Cuba vs US: Counterposed class approaches to human solidarity

BY SETH GALINSKY

Many working people in the United States are inspired when they learn how revolutionary Cuba confronts crises from hurricanes, droughts or today’s coronavirus outbreak, as opposed to the capitalist rulers in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Tens of thousands of members of Cuba’s mass organizations, including the trade unions, the Federation of Cuban Women, and the neighborhood Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, as well as medical students and others, have been organized to go door to door across this island-nation looking to find everyone who might be sick, infected or need help.

The figures sound impossible — on March 26, volunteers checked in on 4,782,231 people, including 521,364 senior citizens, who are most vulnerable to the disease. On March 30, they checked on 8,358,567. Many of these are the second or third visits.

They make sure that anyone who needs medical attention, gets it. The message — no one is left on their own.

That’s how working people and their government transformed by a social revolution, as well as medical students and others, have been organized to go door to door across this island-nation looking to find everyone who might be sick, infected or need help.

The right of women to determine to overturn their revolution. As well as medical students and others, have been organized to go door to door across this island-nation looking to find everyone who might be sick, infected or need help.

The Cuban government is not shutting down factories, it’s relying on working people to work together to increase production of the products the Cuban people need, whatever the difficulties. An article in Juventud Rebelde April 3 describes how vegetable farmers are looking for alternatives to scarce fuel, fertilizer and pesticides, including new ways to irrigate their fields. “We’re not stopping,” said Luis Pontón Ramírez, a farmer in Banao, Santiago. “We can’t leave people without their plate of food.”

In the U.S., where capitalists are looking for every way they can to profit off the epidemic, the price of eggs in many stores in New York City has more than tripled — $3.50 per dozen.

Continued on page 4

Workers say ‘Yes!’ to giving ‘blood money’ to build SWP

During the last week in March, Walmart workers from five cities sent in a total of $1,774 to help build the Socialist Workers Party’s MyShare bonuses — attempted bribes — they received from the bosses.

“I’m writing a check to the party with pride for the ‘blood money’ I received in my paycheck,” wrote Walmart worker Maggie Trover from Louisville, Kentucky. “We got a paltry 2% raise, 28 cents for me. We are told that a crew of two can do the work that requires three or four. We fight against unloading refrigerated trucks when there’s ice on the floor.” Trover, along with four other Walmart workers from the Louisville area, sent in $134.14.

“I have discussed how the bonuses are ‘blood money’ with many co-workers,” Samir Hazboun said. “Most detest the fact that Walmart punishes them for attention to health and safety issues, accidents and such. More now want to discuss why I choose to give it to the SWP and ardently that decision.”

Communists use the term “blood money” to describe production, attendance, safety and other so-called bonuses bosses offer, hoping to get workers to keep quiet about speedup, layoffs and unsafe working conditions.

Walmart workers from the San Francisco Bay Area sent in checks totaling $282.49. “The company has announced an extra bonus of $300 for full-time and $150 for part-time workers to get us to overlook the speedup in the stores today as they rake in extra profits from increased sales,” Betsey Stone wrote. “We’re looking forward to sending these checks in soon.”

“Other ‘blood money’ checks the party received include $719.64 from Atlanta, $218.10 from Chicago and $210 from Seattle. These contributions turn attempted bribes by the bosses into helping build a fighting working-class party!” — BRIAN WILLIAMS

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Cuba has 65 countries around the world. Some 30,000 Cuban health care workers are aiding others around the world.

The right of women to determine to overturn their revolution. As well as medical students and others, have been organized to go door to door across this island-nation looking to find everyone who might be sick, infected or need help.

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Use Militant to advance fights

Continued from front page

The SWP candidates for president and vice president, Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett, put a way forward to defend our wages and working conditions on the road to fighting to take political power. (See platform below.)

The bosses and their government want us to believe that what we face is caused by a virus,” Kennedy told campaign supporters in Minneapolis. “This is not a health crisis, but a social crisis caused by their capitalist system.

Struggle builds workers’ confidence

More than 10 million have been thrown out of work. “They want us to believe that all we can do is wait it out and stay home,” Kennedy said. “We say we need to be at work with fellow workers, in order to multiply resistance.

“Through fights on the job we gain more confidence in our ability to push the bosses back,” added Damario Armstrong, who is a young African American. “It’s money.”

Added Armstrong, who is a young African American, “They only talk about the virus, and don’t talk about the bosses taking our wages building roads, bridges, hospitals, and keeping our wages down,” Kennedy said. “The capitalist system is the problem. The working class needs to organize and build solidarity.” She showed Armstrong, who got an introductory subscription to the Militant, the book Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions, which explains that by fighting together workers gain confidence in ourselves. The book’s introduction describes how the mass struggles that brought down Jim Crow segregation in the South transformed those who participated in them and strengthened the whole working class.

Victor Brooks told Malcolm Jarrett and David Rosenfeld, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Minnesota, that with living costs so high, “How can I retire? I pay $1,300 for rent. I’d rather go back home to Liberia.” Brooks, an assembler at a medical equipment manufacturer, moved to the U.S. in the 1980s. “When you get old, you don’t get nothing.”

Jarrett said, “What they value is what you can produce for them, what profits they can make from you. When the capitalists think you are no longer of use to them, they throw you away.”

Rosenfeld said, “You are part of the working class in the U.S. The best way to prepare to return to your birth country is to join us in building the workers’ movement here today.”

Brooks subscribed to the Militant and bought Tribunes of the People and Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Power Workers, by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. Both titles along with The Turn to Industry: Forging a Socialist Workers Party 2020 campaign platform

This is the SWP’s fighting campaign platform to confront the economic, social and moral crisis caused by capitalism.

UNIONS FOR A LABOR PARTY
Support workers’ strikes to organize, defend themselves, to use union power on behalf of ourselves and all working people. Workers need their own party, a labor party.

Workers need their own party, a labor party. One union for all workers – tax-exempt, funded by dues, no membership fees. Give our service drivers! Support farmworkers in their fight to organize unions and for safe working conditions.

AMNESTY FOR ALL UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS in the US, a life-and-death question for the unions 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 government-financed public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages building roads, bridges, hospitals, child care centers, mass transportation and quality affordable housing workers need. Set the minimum wage that allows workers to have a home and support a family.


CUBA’S REVOLUTION — AN EXAMPLE End the US rulers’ economic war against Cuba; US out of Guantánamo. The Cuban Revolution in 1959 showed it is possible for workers and farmers to transform themselves in struggle, to take political power and uphold capitalist exploitation.

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

ABORTION Defend women’s right to unrestricted access to family planning, 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 Israel as a refuge in the face of capitalist crisis, Jewish hatred and murderous violence.

WORKERS CONTROL OVER PRODUCTION The bosses and their government 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 consumers. 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 running the economy for ourselves in the interests of all.

“JUSTICE” SYSTEM Fight against police brutality, racist discrimination and the entire capitalist injustice system with its frame-ups, “plea bargains,”

one-way and outrageous prisoner sentences, all of which disproportionately hit workers who are Black. For the right to vote for ex-prisoners and all workers behind bars.

POLITICAL 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 law enforcement spying, harassment and disruption.

PRISONER RIGHTS End solitary confinement. End suppression 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 break from their political parties — the Democrats and Republicans. For a labor party and a movement of millions to fight for these demands along a course to replace the rule of the exploitative capitalist class with a workers and farmers government.
Bangladesh fight for jobs, pay
Continued from front page
According to Rubana Huq, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufac-
turers and Exporters Association, orders cancelled so far risk unemployment for
2 million workers.
Citing concerns over the spread of coronavirus, the government institut-
ed a nationwide lockdown March 26 through April 4 and deployed military
and police to enforce it. Large gatherings are banned, but garment plants
that had outstanding orders were per-
mittted to operate.
"This was a disaster. All public trans-
port was closed down," Akter said. "Workers at factories that were still run-
ing had to spend forever walking to
and from work. Workers who had gone back to
their villages after the suspension of production had to walk back for the scheduled reopening."
On April 3, 1,000 workers started a 7- 
and 10-day lockdown, they
march that would take them from 18
to 28 hours. "The fear of losing my job
is bigger than the fear of coronavirus,"
Farzana Akhter, a worker at the mangle
bndsw24. She works in Dhaka, the
capital, but had returned to her home
village before the shutdown.
Workers rally to demand wages
Hundreds of workers showed up at
the gate outside Crown Wears fac-
tory in Bhaluka, north of Dhaka, at 7 a.m. on April 6 to start work. They were met with a notice that the
factory would be closed until April 14.
It said information about wages owed
would come later. It turns out the gov-
ernment had extended the lockdown
until at least April 11.
Incensed, workers organized a pro-
test blocking the highway outside the
gate, demanding payment of March's
wages. The industrial police raced to
the site, charged the workers with bat-
tons, and fired rubber bullets and tear
gas to disperse them. In the melee that
followed two workers who tried to run
away got stuck in front of a truck on the
highway, which hit them and killed them.
"There are many, many protests. Not
getting their wages is the main worry for
us," Nazma Akter said. "They are
bribing police to let them pass, and
losing their income puts thousands of
families in a very difficult position."
The Sommittio union succeeded in getting a保證
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"Some might be lucky to be in the right jobs,
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 guarantees we have are no good if the
government cancels orders.
Tens of thousands of garment work-
ers in Bangladesh have engaged in
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decade. They have pushed back some of
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Women's entry into the workforce and participation in leading these struggles has led to changing attitudes
towards women in society as a whole.
"If the crisis continues and leads to
corporations, we could see millions of
unemployed," Asad Sattar, director of
Utah Group, a knits and wovens manu-
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The Sommittio union succeeded in getting a guarantee from the government that some 8,200 workers at National Denims will receive full pay during the factory closure. “Some might be lucky to be in the right jobs, not be represented by unions,” Akter said. “So they have nothing at all guaranteed. And the guarantees we have are no good if the government cancels orders.”

Tens of thousands of garment workers in Bangladesh have engaged in strikes and street protests over the past decade. They have pushed back some of the worst conditions, including winning prohibition of child labor. They have won wage increases, restrictions on the length of the workday and workweek, union inspections of fire and safety standards in the factories, and legal easing of some obstacles to union organizing.

Women’s entry into the workforce and participation in leading these struggles has led to changing attitudes towards women in society as a whole. “If the crisis continues and leads to corporations, we could see millions of unemployed,” Asad Sattar, director of Utah Group, a knits and wovens manufacturer, told the online Sourcing Journal March 25. “There is growing fear that some 8,200 workers at Natural

Toilers face brutal attacks from governments in Africa

BY TERRY EVANS

"Imperialism is defined, it has no other meaning than no how else?" explained Thomas Sankara, the leader of the popular revolutionary government in Burkina Faso in 1985. "Fortunately the more we've heard through vari-
ous an enemy imperialism is, the more
determined we've become to fight and
defeat it. And each time we find fresh
forces that are willing to identify with us.

As the sharp capitalist econom-
ic and social crisis today spreads
everywhere, it's exacerbating already
worsening conditions inflicted on working people.

The expansion of capitalist
exploitation. The extension of capitalist
— are an inevitable consequence of
epidemics like Ebola or coronavirus
— triggered by famines, wars or
conditions inflicted on working people
across Africa as coronavirus spreads.

Disasters. Wealthy philanthropist Bill
Gates shed crocodile tears over the
prosperity of 10 million people dying across Africa from widespread swarms of locusts.

But in fact the devastating social
conditions inflicted on working people
there — triggered by famines, wars or epidemics like Ebola or coronavirus —
are an inevitable consequence of the
natural workings of capitalist explo-
ation. The expansion of capitalist
producers for the tourist trade... the continent's decades has drawn millions out of ru-
ral isolation, into the cities and towns,
beginning to create a modern capi-
talist class structure. That includes
a growing working class that responds
to artists on its conditions of life by
looking for ways to resist.

Several hundred working people
in Tunisia, the Tunisian capital, marched
on the government offices March 31 to
defend immediate relief and for
permission to work. The government had
imposed restrictions that prevent many
workers from going to their jobs. One
bricklayer spoke for the protesters when
he shouted out, "Let us work!" Thou-

sands joined similar actions across the
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For a continent that produces for
the tourist trade... the continent's decades has drawn millions out of rural isolation, into the cities and towns, beginning to create a modern capitalist class structure. That includes a growing working class that responds to artists on its conditions of life by looking for ways to resist.

Several hundred working people in Tunisia, the Tunisian capital, marched on the government offices March 31 to defend immediate relief and for permission to work. The government had imposed restrictions that prevent many workers from going to their jobs. One bricklayer spoke for the protesters when he shouted out, "Let us work!" Thousands joined similar actions across the country, where unemployment was 15% before the government edict.

Toilers confront imperialist plunder

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Cuba vs US: Counterposed approaches
Continued from page 2
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PG&E cops a plea in deaths

Continued from front page

The November 2018 Camp Fire was the most devastating fire in Californi-
a history. Before it was over, 154,000 acres had been burned, over
15,000 structures were destroyed, the town of Paradise had been leveled and
over 80 people were dead. The lights had failed. The safety of the victims lay in
the hands of the utility company.

PG&E bosses had consciously failed to maintain their equipment or to clear combustible dry brush near their transmission lines to save mon-
ney. When one 100-year-old line came
down in a dry spell, the resulting fire raced out of control.

Last December, PG&E agreed to a $3.5 billion settlement for victims of the Camp Fire, the 2015 Butte Fire and a number of other fires the company has been held responsible for over the past several years. PG&E declared bankruptcy in January 2019, saying it faced potential liabilities of $30 bil-
lion. Management hopes that the settle-
ment will improve its prospects for emerging from bankruptcy before a court-imposed deadline in June.

Half of the $3.5 billion is to come from PG&E stock, which has lost 75 percent of its value since February. The PG&E bankruptcy court plans to make a final ruling on the proposal by the end of May, and the deal can still unravel. Already three members of the court-appointed 11-member panel

Frank Gorton: Over five decades building the communist movement

BY STEVE PENNER

MONTREAL — Frank Gorton, a member and supporter of the com-

munist movement in three different countries for over five decades, died March 30 at the age of 79. He had

been hospitalized for pneumonia fol-

lowing a period of declining health.

Gorton joined the League for So-

cialist Action in Toronto in the mid-

1960s, after emigrating from the United Kingdom. He moved back to the U.K. in 1967 with his companion Toni, and was a member of the Inter-

national Marxist Group and then its

successor, the Communist League, for over two decades. He helped wage a successful fight to win the party to

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national Marxist Group and then its

rallies at suburban stations.

Despite an injunction limiting to four

settlement will improve its prospects for

funding for wages, pensions and

was forced to reach a settlement in a

the number of pickets, hundreds of

illegal strike that the party needs to be replaced.

Their criminal negligence was the

cause of the catastrophe.

“The settlement doesn’t do anything to

address the main question at hand,” Britton said. “Workers know what is safe and what is dangerously unsafe. We need to organize ourselves to

fight when the bosses create a prob-

lem. Out of these battles our unions will be transformed. PG&E should be

nationalized under workers control.

...for years that the power line that

started the fire needed to be replaced. 

The PG&E bosses and the Cali-

fornia and federal governments lie to

working people about their pro-

duction costs and profits,” Britton said. “We should demand they open their books for inspection by workers and consumers. We need to organize in our millions to fight for workers control of production, which will be a school for learning how to run the economy for ourselves in the inter-
est of all, and a step toward taking political power into our own hands.”

The Militant April 20, 2020
Social crisis is product of capitalist rule

Continued from front page

The Militant April 20, 2020

The bosses don't care what is pro -

Bryan Williams

The Militant April 20, 2020

US rulers deploy the National Guard, target workers’ jobs, rights

Revised: 2020-10-04

Crisis in the workplace is sharpening. Conditions that the bosses are using to break us, to put us in a situation where we can’t support our own families are becoming more and more dangerous and more extreme. The bosses are pushing us further and further down the path to the point where us workers have had enough and we’re ready to go on the offensive.

So what does that mean? It means that we need to organize. We need to build a revolutionary party in the country that will lead the working class in this new offensive, this new struggle to build a future where all workers have a say in how society is run, and workers can decide the direction of their lives.

This is what the Militant Party is all about. Join the Militant Party today. Become revolutionary, become militant. The only way we can build a future that we can control is if we organize and fight together. Join the Militant Party and help us build a future where all workers can have a say in how society is run.

Workers forced to drink milk

Forced to drink milk is one of the many examples of how the bosses are using the crisis to break us, to put us in a situation where we can’t support our own families.

The bosses are using the crisis to push us further and further down the path to the point where we have no choice but to fight back. We need to organize and build a revolutionary party to lead the working class in this new struggle.

Join the Militant Party today and help us build a future where all workers can have a say in how society is run.

The Militant April 20, 2020
Fidel: ‘Voluntary work was one of best things Che left us’

Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism by Carlos Tablada is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for April. It was originally published in Cuba in 1987 as part of the rectification process initiated by Fidel Castro. This involved the mobilization of workers, tradespeople and others with no political affiliation to fight against reverse damage from years of bureaucratic economic planning Cuba adopted in the early 1970s modeled on those of the Eastern European Regime. Fidel led this fight, calling for a revival of the political and economic course championed by Ernesto Che Guevara, which is outlined in the book. Excerpts from the introduction are reprinted below. Copyright © 1998. Reprinted by permission of Pathfinder Press.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

By MARY-ALICE WATERS

In the 1987 speech that serves as a prologue for this month’s book, Fidel Castro reminds that “at a given moment some of Che’s ideas were incorrectly interpreted and, what’s more, incorrectly applied and, what’s more, incorrectly interpreted and, what’s more, incorrectly applied. The day was ever made to put them into practice, and there came a time when ideas diematically opposed to Che’s economic program were more fashionable.

By the early 1980s, however, the devastating political consequences of the conclusions that had been copied and imported were becoming increasingly clear as capitalist political consciousness among Cuba’s working people faltered, demoralization spread, and corruption grew. … By 1986 Cuba’s communist leadership, with Fidel Castro in the lead, had launched the revolutionary political counteroffensive on questions of economic policy that became known as the rectification process. Corruption and privilege were strategically addressed and substantially reduced. Living and working conditions of agricultural workers and others in the lowest-paid categories were improved. Child care and other needs of women workers were given new priority.

From the outset of the rectification process, volunteer labor was essential to the collective leadership as a form of struggle, that is, to address the most pressing social needs such as housing, nursery, clinics, and schools. For some fifteen years, Castro said, such efforts had been steadily on the decline because of “the bureaucrat’s view, the technocrat’s view of the Cuban revolution,” said Castro — was revived in Cuba. It was promoted by the leadership as a lever of revolutionary action to take steps forward, through the collective efforts, to address the most pressing social needs such as housing, nursery, clinics, and schools.

Living and working conditions of agricultural workers and others in the lowest-paid categories were improved. Child care and other needs of women workers were given new priority. From the outset of the rectification process, volunteer labor was one of the best things that had been copied and imported. It was never made to put them into practice, and there came a time when ideas diametrically opposed to Che’s economic program were more fashionable.

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Strike against Asarco union busting continues

BY BERNIE SENTER AND DEBORAH LIATOS

We’re still standing strong and have no trouble hitting the picket lines. The Asarco strikers cop miner Lyle Murphy told the Militant by phone April 7. Murphy is president of United Steelworkers Local 5232 in Kearny, Arizona, and has worked at the site May 1980 to present.

Six months into a bitter strike against copper mining giant Asarco, 1,700 miners in Arizona and Amarillo, Texas, members of the Steelworkers, Teamsters and five other unions, have been fighting the company’s drive to bust their unions.

The bosses have demanded extending the decadelong wage freeze for most workers, hiking up health care costs and enticing the unions’ right to protect workers on the job.

Despite government-imposed restrictions in response to the coronavirus, “everyone’s doing a hell of a job,” Murphy said. “There’s not a line down in the six people now. No kids. No pets. The union provides everything strikers need — food, water, deflectants,” Murphy said the company is still operating the Ray Mine, which the government told bosses they consider an “essential” business.

Pickets also remain up at the Hayden smelter. It’s “a constitutionally protected” activity, USW Local 886 President Glenn Ronza told the Militant April 31.

That same day at the Mission and Silver Bell mines outside of Tucson, “we decided to shut down the picket lines for now,” USW Local 937 recording secretary and working miner Eduardo Plascencia told the Militant April 23. “We’re on strike. We still have the food pantry going Monday through Friday,” and union benefits continue.

A similar decision was made to temporarily cut back picketing at the Asarco refinery in Amarillo for at least two weeks.

“Two picket captains staff the shift Tuesday through Friday, and it’s working. It’s like a mini-corp for this course,” Murphy said.

Since the day the walkout started in October, solidarity has come in for the strikers from workers in the area and beyond, and visits to the picket lines by retirees, former Asarco miners, family members and other working people. Messages of support have come in, as well as food, financial and other donations.

The company keeps some production going, with workers who have crossed the picket lines, replace workers, nonunion contractors and supervisors. Send solidarity messages and donations to USW Local 915 Strike Assistance, P.O. Box 550, Kearny, AZ 85298; or phone (928) 637-2642, Texas P.O. Box 896, Kearny, AZ 85537; USW Local 5613, 4230 Texas Hwy 136, Amarillo, TX 79108; or via paypal: me@pacificalliancetact.org for Tucson-area strikers. Solidarity strategies can be sent to illegalsup@fulfillhope.com. Contribute to the food pantries at: USW 915 and 886, 557 Hammond Dr., Kearny; IBEW Local 750, 750 S. Tucson Blvd., Tucson; USW Local 5613, 4230 Texas Hwy 136, Amarillo, Texas.

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the 'Militant' and earmarked “Prisoners' Fund” to 308 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at www.themilitant.com

Bailout for the bosses

Continued from front page

Both the Democrats and Republicans — the twin parties of the American ruling class who have stored up wealth as they took hold of power — have continued to pander to the working people. But the fight over who should occupy the White House continues to simmer.

President Donald Trump’s numbers have risen, increasing many Democrats’ fear that they have little chance of defeating him with Joe Biden as their candidate. While Biden tries to get press coverage from his Democratic establishment, Trump, the president gets widespread coverage daily touting his hands-on management of the crisis. Editors of liberal newspapers continue to spout venom at Trump, claiming he is responsible for the spread of coronavirus. In fact, both parties and the capitalist bosses they speak for bear that responsibility. Their drive for profits means they give no attention to adequate preparations for hurricanes, drought or disease, and working people pay for it.

Democrats’ shining knight emerges

Some liberals have gone gaga over New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, hoping to find a way to get him in as the Democrats’ presidential candidate. Like Trump, Cuomo’s elected position means he has daily access to widespread media coverage. Cuomo’s “sermonettes” gushed: “Our challenge in the April 3 Financial Times, are like “Franklin D. Roo-

sevelt’s fireside chats during the Depression.” These “chats” in the 1930s were aimed at convincing workers to abandon hard-fought union struggles. Today’s furloughs deepen our isolation and exacerbate our collective powerlessness to defend ourselves against the bosses.

Socialist Workers Party members are involved in skirmishes and struggles being waged on the shop floor in workplaces around the country — from Walmart to the railroads, taking initiatives with co-workers to push back the bosses’ attacks, organizing solidarity and looking for ways to extend these fights.

To strengthen our struggles the Socialist Workers Party urges workers to fight for a massive government-funded public works program to put millions back to work now at union-scale wages, to build the hospitals, housing, schools and other working people need. Above all, such a fight will strengthen and unite us for bigger struggles that are coming.

In contrast, the government says to hunker down at home to wait for a “recovery” which won’t lift the bosses dump the burden of the crisis on our backs. Workers have everything to gain and nothing to lose by fighting for jobs and going to work.

Workers should learn from the government put laid-off construction workers to work instead of the National Guard to build field hospitals. Let the workers who have the skills and knowledge to work safely construct vital medical facilities, with union protection.

Capitalist politicians and the bosses’ media, and sometimes our union officials, urge workers to subordinate everything to “combat the virus” — a call to subordinate our interests to their profit-driven system. The bosses will never put their profit drive “on hold.” Neither should workers abandon efforts to defend our interests from the bosses to the bitter end.

To try to get us to turn over fellow workers they encourage us to point fingers at each other for “spreading” the virus. They fine and threaten to jail us if we fail to cooperate with them. They hope that will deter us from waging determined struggles against the conditions we face — conditions created by the crisis of their system.

If working people worldwide can discover our own capacities through common class-struggle action against those who exploit us. As workers gain such experiences we become battle-tested and more open to recognizing our common conditions, to organize and fight to end the exploitative social relations dog-eat-dog capitalism depends on.

The SWP 2020 campaign has a button that features two slogans: “Build a labor party” and “For workers control of production.”

To prevent the bosses from producing shoddy and dangerous goods, or refusing to make what workers need, and lying about their costs, workers need to wrest more and more control of production. This is the only road to control the pace of production and safety on the shop floor and in our cities as workers are given the freedom and power to work.

And organizing production will be a school for workers to learn how to run the whole economy in the interests of the vast majority.

To effectively fight to build the rank and file of our labor movement and in the interests of the working class, we need to organize a labor party. We need an alternative to the parties of the capitalist system itself, a labor party that joins the working people’s struggle and fights for workers against the bosses. A labor party can be a “vanguard” of the working class that provides a program to build a revolutionary road to control the pace of production and to put millions back to work.

A labor party that joins the working class in its struggles is the only way to construct the alternative society that workers will need.

To participate in the Militant’s subscription campaign.

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