

Revolution in Cuba opened door to today’s int’l solidarity

BY TERRY EVANS

“I will always say yes,” Cuban nurse Hugo César González López told *Juventud Rebelde*, “for whatever, whenever, wherever” our medical missions are needed. González is one of the country’s volunteers fighting the outbreak of coronavirus in Italy. Cuba’s government has mobilized over 1,000 health care workers to 18 countries worldwide since the outbreak of COVID-19.

González pointed with pride to the experience he gained previously as part of Cuba’s volunteer medical mission to eradicate the spread of Ebola in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Earlier this month the Cuban government sent 473 doctors and nurses to eight Caribbean countries — one of the largest and fastest deployments of health care workers it has ever organized.

“Even facing the challenge of containing COVID-19 in national territory, Cuba considers it essential to contribute to the necessary increase in solidarity,” José Carlos Rodríguez Ruiz, Cuban ambassador to Italy, said

Continued on page 5

Florida prison bans ‘Militant’ for photos of worker protests

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In an outrageous effort to ban photographs of workers raising their fists in labor and other battles, Florida prison authorities have banned issue no. 13 of the *Militant*. This is the first time in eight months the paper has been suppressed.

A letter received April 17 from officials at the Jefferson Correctional Institution in Monticello, Florida, informed the *Militant* that issue had been impounded.

The reason? “Gang signs: pgs. 1, 5, 14 and 16.” But what the photos show are workers organizing to defend their rights, safety, dignity on the job and to build unions. The only common element is workers raising their fists in the air as part of their protests.

One photo appears twice — on page 1 and on page 16, the first page of the Spanish-language section of the issue. It shows a worker at the Perdue chicken processing plant in Kathleen, Georgia, raising his fist in the air as he and his fellow workers walk off the job March 23 to protest work and safety conditions there.

Continued on page 3

Put workers back to work! Fight for jobs, no wage cuts!



UNITE HERE Local 355

Miami hotel, restaurant workers idled by government shutdown joined union car caravan April 19 to protest unemployment pay delays. “The system doesn’t work,” Ines Santiesteban said.

Demand massive gov’t public works program to provide jobs

Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party 2020 candidate for president, issued the following fighting program April 22. Malcolm Jarrett is the party’s vice presidential candidate.

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT

The Socialist Workers Party demands the federal government immediately fund a massive public works program to provide jobs at union wages for the millions tossed out of work.

Continued on page 9

Bosses seek to make workers pay for today’s capitalist crisis

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Growing numbers of workers and farmers are facing conditions that make it crystal clear our main problem today is the rulers’ deep shutdown of the economy and the massive loss of jobs it has caused. Tens of millions are thrown out of work, with no resources to get by for much longer. Those still working are facing a drive by the bosses — in a desperate effort to boost profits — to push them to work faster, less safely and for less pay.

Their actions are provoking pro-

Continued on page 6

Protest cop killing of Steven Taylor in Northern California Walmart



Inset, Courtesy of Lee Merritt

Cops stand over dying Steven Taylor after shooting and using Taser on him at San Leandro, California, Walmart April 18. Family has demanded cops be arrested and prosecuted. Inset, photo of Taylor.

BY ANDREA MORELL

SAN LEANDRO, Calif. — “It was disgusting,” Cynthia Pratt said of the April 18 cop slaying of Steven Taylor inside the Hesperian Blvd. Walmart here. She was talking to Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in the 13th District, outside the store days after the killing.

A widely viewed video shows cops shooting Taylor, who is Black, with both live ammunition and a Taser, including at least once while he was lying motionless, bleeding profusely, on the floor of the store. When cops confronted him he was holding a baseball bat. His family says the 33-year-old father of three chil-

Continued on page 3

SWP candidates campaign, win new readers to extend reach of ‘Militant’

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

WASHINGTON — “It shouldn’t take something like this. We were always ‘essential,’” Walmart worker Carlos Branch told the Socialist Workers Party candidates for president and vice president, Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett, in the store’s parking lot in Capital Plaza here.

“The working class is the essential class. It’s our labor that produces everything we use and all the wealth,” Kennedy told Branch. “The social crisis battering us today is caused by the capitalist rulers’ system, their for-profit system.”

The SWP candidates were in the area meeting workers, presenting the party’s 2020 platform and helping to win new readers to the *Militant* and of books by SWP and other revolutionary leaders. The party is on a six-week drive to expand the paper’s circulation, as well as win contributions to the \$115,000 Militant Fighting Fund.

Supporters of the *Militant* are talking to co-workers involved in standing up

to the bosses on the job, and to workers and farmers in small towns, rural areas and larger cities, as well as to workers in uniform currently deployed to help staff temporary hospitals in New York and

Continued on page 4

Inside

‘Lift US sanctions on North Korea, sign a peace treaty’ 2

Contribute ‘stimulus’ payout checks to build the SWP 2

Workers, vendors in Kurdish Iraq fight for right to work 7

Reply to a reader: Workers’ struggles don’t stop during virus 9

—On the picket line, p. 3—

Copper strikers ‘holding the line’ against Asarco union busting

‘Lift US sanctions on North Korea, sign a peace treaty’

BY JOHN STUDER

Over the last month President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un have reportedly exchanged “personal letters.” At stake are talks over eliminating nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula, an end to U.S. sanctions that fall heaviest on working people in North Korea, and a long overdue peace treaty the U.S. rulers have refused to sign since 1953.

Since Trump agreed to the first-ever U.S. government summit meeting with Kim in June 2018, the U.S. rulers have combined reducing military provocations — like large-scale joint military exercises with South Korean forces — with enforcing their punishing sanctions. Little concrete progress has been registered in talks since then, while contacts continue.

The 70-year-plus division of Korea into two separate countries was the result of the U.S. rulers’ occupation of the South at the end of the second imperialist world war. They aimed to deal blows to the revolutionary struggle waged by the Korean people for national rights, as well as land reform, women’s suffrage and the expropriation of the factories and other workplaces. During the subsequent Korean War the North Korean people successfully prevented Washington from reimposing the dictatorship of capital there. It was the first-ever military defeat for U.S. imperialism.

The U.S. rulers have over 28,000 troops stationed in South Korea, along with hundreds of tanks, artill-

ery and warplanes, including nuclear-capable jets.

“We champion the decades-long struggle to reunify Korea, which Washington, in collusion with Moscow, brutally partitioned,” Steve Clark wrote in a message on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party to the people of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on the occasion of their April 15 national holiday.

The party demands, Clark writes, that the U.S. government: “Lift all sanctions against the DPRK; Live up to its pledge to halt military exercises with Seoul; End its ‘nuclear umbrella’ over South Korea and Japan” and “Sign a peace treaty ending the bloody war the US rulers waged against the DPRK from 1950 to 1953.”

“These steps would advance talks by Washington and the DPRK to end the deployment of nuclear weapons in Korea and its air and waters by any government,” Clark said. “A world without massively destructive arms is the aspiration of working people in Asia and the world over.”

Capitalist social catastrophe

Today sanctions imposed by Washington and the United Nations are making it more difficult for the government in Pyongyang to import medicines and medical equipment to use in treatment of COVID-19.

In the midst of the “social calamity of unemployment and economic depression” in the U.S. today, Clark explained SWP candidates and their supporters “are campaigning — at work, in



Korea Times/Choi Won-suk

“We champion the struggle to reunify Korea,” SWP message said to North Korean people on occasion of country’s April 15 national holiday. Above, June 2019 protest in Seoul, South Korea.

workers’ neighborhoods, and in small towns and rural areas — for a massive public works program to provide jobs at union-scale wages.”

They “are engaged with coworkers in skirmishes and struggles in workplaces across North America, from Walmart to the railroads.

“Toilers engaged in such fights can

and will be won to opposing the brutal imperialist sanctions and wars of the employing class, its political parties, and its government, as well,” Clark said. “This includes championing the Korean people’s efforts to reunify their country.”

Clark ended with, “US military forces out of Korea! For a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula! Korea is one!”

Contribute ‘stimulus’ payout to build SWP

Congress voted March 25 to pass a so-called economic stabilization package in the midst of the deep and unstable social and economic crisis facing working people in the U.S. and worldwide. It includes a one-time special payout of \$1,200 to many people in the country, with some additional money if they have children.

“What about a special one-time fund for workers who are in a position to give their one-time federal payout” to the party? Greg McCartan, a supporter of the party and the Militant in Norway, proposed in a letter April 4. McCartan said he wasn’t sure he would get a check, but that if he did he wanted to contribute.

The party welcomes these contributions. They will be put to good use in advancing the long-term work of building a proletarian party. The SWP today is deeply involved in workers’ struggles against the bosses over wages and working conditions, and in broader fights for the rights and interests of working people.

Lisa Potash, a Walmart worker in Atlanta, wrote in to say, “Just letting you know ‘it’s on the way,’ whenever it comes.” A number of others have said they plan to do likewise. And the first checks have come in.

If you’d like to join in donating your government payout to the party, send a check to the Socialist Workers Party at 306 W. 37th Street, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018, marked “Special Fund.”

The *Militant* will report on the progress of the effort.

— EMMA JOHNSON

THE MILITANT

Condemn Jew-hatred, anti-Semitic attacks

Recent attempts to blame Jews for being responsible for the spread of COVID-19 is just one more example of how Jew-hatred is used in times of social crisis to divert the fight from the real enemy — the capitalist rulers. Working people need to speak out against all such attacks.



Residents in Huntsville, Alabama, clean up after recent Jew-hating attack on synagogue.

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

SWP: ‘Demand prosecution of cops for cold-blooded killing’

The following statement by Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in the 13th District in California, was issued April 20. Britton works at Walmart.

All working people should join with the family of Steven Taylor in demanding the arrest and prosecution of the San Leandro police officers who gunned Taylor down at the Hesperian Blvd. Walmart on April 18.

Video footage shows the cops tasing and shooting Taylor, 33, for refusing to obey their command to drop a baseball bat in the crowded store. His family said Taylor was suffering from a mental health crisis.

Family attorney S. Lee Merritt said in a press statement April 19 that the police are guilty of “unlawful use of deadly force.”

This is another example of cops in the service of the capitalist class acting as judge, jury and executioner. Such police violence is aimed at intimidating working people and falls disproportionately on African Americans such as Taylor. Speaking out against the killing of Taylor and demanding that these cops be prosecuted can help push back against cop brutality.

I hope that I and many other Walmart workers will be able to stand with Taylor’s family at any protests against the cop killing, and at his wake and funeral.

This cold-blooded killing comes as today’s deepening capitalist economic and social crisis has put tens of millions of workers out of work. Those of us still working face speedup, attacks on our wages and unsafe working conditions. A movement of millions of working people needs to be built that can fight to defend working people from the attacks of the bosses and their government. We need our own party, a labor party, that fights on the shop floor and in the streets 365 days a year. To oppose cop brutality, to revitalize and strengthen our unions, to demand an end to Washington’s wars abroad. And to fight to replace dog-eat-dog capitalist rule with a government of workers and farmers.



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Joel Britton, SWP candidate for Congress, pays respects to Steven Taylor at memorial site set up by his family near Walmart in San Leandro, Calif., Cops gunned him down in store April 18.

Protest cop killing of Steven Taylor in Calif. Walmart

Continued from front page

dren was going through a mental health crisis.

One witness can be heard on the video telling the cops, “Don’t shoot him no more.” The Alameda County coroner’s office said the preliminary cause of death was a gunshot wound to Taylor’s chest.

“It’s time to force accountability. Young Black men have targets on their backs,” Pratt told Britton. She described her own experience of cop harassment when she lived at Menlo Park and her fears that her three sons could be brutalized or worse at the hands of the police.

Britton and campaign supporters were talking with people in the Walmart parking lot April 21 near the memorial site the family has set up for Taylor. Campaigners distributed Britton’s statement demanding the arrest, prosecution

and conviction of the cops “for their cold-blooded killing” of Taylor. It says he and other Walmart workers look forward to joining protests against the killing.

Pratt expressed her appreciation for Britton’s stand and said she would like to help organize a protest at the police

department.

In a statement, Lee Merritt, the Taylor family lawyer, said the cops “intentional and repeated application of force despite the absence of a threat captured in these recordings is sufficient evidence for authorities to issue a warrant for the shooting officers.”

Copper strikers are ‘holding the line’ against Asarco union busting

BY BERNIE SENTER

“Everyone is still into the strike and holding the line,” copper miner Robert Perez told the *Militant* by phone April 19. “We’re going to keep it up and hang in there.” Perez has worked for Asarco for 40 years and has been on strike along with 1,700 others for

over six months. He is a crusher operator at the Ray Mine near Kearny, Arizona, and a member of United Steelworkers Local 915.

Steelworkers, Teamsters and five other unions are facing off against Asarco, which seeks to bust the unions. The company is owned by Grupo Mexico, one of the largest copper barons in the world.

With mines and production facilities in Arizona and Amarillo, Texas, Asarco is determined to extend a decadelong wage freeze for most workers, more than double health care costs, freeze pensions and restrict the unions’ right to protect workers on the job.

Nationwide the bosses and their government are taking advantage of the spread of coronavirus to atomize many workers and weaken their unions, telling them they have to stay home. But copper mining continues as an “essential” industry.

“Nothing’s changed for us. We’re still picketing,” Perez said. “Now with the virus thing we’re doing some social distancing.” Pickets are also up at the Hayden, Arizona, smelter but with less workers on the line.

While picket lines have been suspended for the time being at the Mission and Silver Bell mines and at Asarco’s refinery in Amarillo, “our guys are staying out on strike and the food pantry is open,” Alex Terrazas, president of Steelworkers Local 937 and a utility worker at the Mission Mine, told the *Militant* April 18. “Asarco is still hiring people right now, continuing to ramp up production.”

The worldwide capitalist economic crisis has reduced demand for copper and depressed prices, forcing other mining companies to reduce operations and lay off workers. But Asarco’s push on production is based on its drive to bust the unions.

Continued on page 9

Florida prison bans ‘Militant’ for photos of protests

Continued from front page

Another is of nurses protesting at Kaiser Permanente in Richmond, California, March 24, demanding hospital bosses provide safe working conditions.

The fourth photo depicts members of United Steelworkers Local 8888 during their historic battle to organize a union at the Newport News, Virginia, shipyard in November 1979, a strike covered in hundreds of newspapers and other publications for decades.

Prison officials now claim these raised fists are all just gang signs, “a threat to the security, good order, or discipline of the correctional system or the safety of any person.”

Raised fists as part of public protests got its widest media coverage in 1968, when U.S. Olympic team sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their fists on the winners podium at the Summer Olympics in Mexico City to protest racist discrimination. “It was a cry for freedom and for human rights,” Smith told *Smithsonian* magazine in 2008.

The Smithsonian Institution has on exhibit the track suit Smith wore and a box he held on the podium, which contained an olive branch, as well as the shoes he raced in.

This iconic photo was splashed on front pages all across the country. Standing with them was silver medal winner Peter Norman, a racer from Australia from a working-class background.

Norman told the press he was familiar

with racism from his experiences with the Australian rulers’ “White Australia” policies and their discriminatory treatment of Aboriginal peoples. He wore the badge of the Olympic Project for Human Rights around his neck on the podium, a group Smith and Carlos had helped organize months before.

Would Florida prison authorities have banned all these papers?

Anytime authorities at any Florida prison seize a copy of the *Militant*, the issue is taken from all 48 subscribers in prisons across the state.

‘We will fight to reverse this’

The *Militant*’s attorney, David Goldstein, informed Florida’s Department of Corrections Literature Review Committee — which reviews all suppressions of newspapers and other literature — that the paper is preparing to appeal this impoundment, and that it is obviously improper. The *Militant* has appealed every instance when the paper has been banned, the vast majority successfully.

He was told the committee has already scheduled a review of the ban for April 23. If the committee refuses to overturn it, the paper will appeal.

Last year 14 out of 16 issues of the *Militant* were impounded over three months. Florida authorities, who

received dozens of protest letters from the Florida American Civil Liberties Union, American Library Association, PEN America and many other organizations and individuals, overturned most of these bans and stopped seizing further issues in mid-August — until now.

“The prison authorities’ ban is a clear violation of freedom of press and of the right of our subscribers behind bars to read the paper,” said *Militant* editor John Studer. “We will fight to reverse this.”

“If they think they can ban every symbol of workers’ struggles, they’re in for a surprise,” he said. “Workers behind bars are part of the world. They have the right to consider different views and form their own opinions. They have the right to read about workers’ actions to defend jobs, wages and working conditions, against racist discrimination and violence, and to defend their rights in the midst of today’s economic and social crisis caused by the capitalist system.”

Fight prison ban on the ‘Militant’

Get out the word. Distribute copies of *Militant* articles on this fight.

Get statements of support for the *Militant*’s appeal from unions, churches and defenders of workers rights and free speech. Send to: themilitant@mac.com

Send a check to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, earmarked “Prisoners Rights Fight.”

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Extend reach of the ‘Militant’

Continued from front page
elsewhere. The drive ends May 19.

“In face of the deep crisis the bosses have created, with millions thrown out of work and those of us still working facing determined efforts by the bosses to speed up work, sticking together on the job, backing each other up, refusing to allow them to pit us against each other is more important now,” Kennedy said.

“This is my first job,” Branch said. “With this kind of unemployment, you fear what could happen if you lost your job.”

The Socialist Workers Party campaign platform points out the need for workers everywhere to join together, Kennedy said, “to organize to defend themselves, to use union power on behalf of ourselves and all working people.”

“Workers face low wages,” Branch said, saying he had read that in some countries workers make “\$2 a day for making shoes that sell for \$100.”

“The bosses everywhere fight with everything they have to protect their profits,” said Jarrett. “We gain valuable experience as we resist the bosses’ attacks. We will learn that workers need our own party, a labor party. We have to rely on ourselves to fight for a workers and farmers government.”

Branch got a copy of the *Militant*, as did 32 other workers from both sides of the cash register that campaigners met at several Walmart store parking lots in the area, along with five new subscribers. They also kicked in \$10 to the Militant Fighting Fund.

Every contribution large and small makes a difference. Unlike capitalist

newspapers, which depend on advertising revenues, the *Militant* depends entirely on the support of its readers — workers, farmers, small proprietors and others who reject the “everyone for themselves” morality of capitalism.

Taxi drivers hard hit

At the Fort Totten metro station, taxi driver John Babannds rolled down his window to take the Socialist Workers Party’s “Call to Action to Meet Today’s Unfolding Crises.” He came back to talk, after underlining parts of the flier.

“I put a star here,” he said, pointing to the section that described how Walmart workers in Chicago refused to work in a tire and lube pit that was contaminated by raw sewage. “When these workers got confident and rebelled, that’s when the boss noticed them, and they won. That’s an example for today.”

Kennedy agreed. Socialist Workers Party members join their co-workers in defending their jobs and working conditions. They also point the way to overcoming the growing division facing workers today — between employed and unemployed.

“The Socialist Workers Party demands a massive government-funded public works program to put millions back to work at union-scale wages,” Kennedy said. “We cannot fight if we are not working. When the bosses open up the economy, they will try to make us pay as they push to rebuild their profits. They are going to try to lower our pay and make us work harder and faster.”

“This is something for my union to hear about,” said Babannds, a member of the D.C. Taxi Operators Association,



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

SWP candidates Malcolm Jarrett and Alyson Kennedy with Walmart worker Carlos Branch, center, in Washington, D.C. “Workers need to organize to defend themselves,” Kennedy said.

affiliated with Teamsters Local 922.

Because of the scope of the government shutdown, the line of cabs wasn’t moving. Lawrence Odubiyi told the SWP candidates he expected to make just \$30 that day, “if I’m lucky.” Trips are down by some 70% in the capital District, but bills for insurance, licensing and registration fees, car payments and gas still hang over the drivers.

“Now is the time for solidarity and for standing up against the bosses — against the panic and social isolation that’s pushed on us,” said Kennedy.

“Yes, we have to reach out to our neighbors. This is how working people think,” Odubiyi told Kennedy. “This is a capitalist country, you can’t always count on the government.”

Odubiyi said he has “been following

what Cuba is doing,” referring to the hundreds of Cuban doctors and nurses who have volunteered to join brigades to treat coronavirus patients around the world. “Their doctors are in Italy of their own free will,” he said. “That’s how they do it in Cuba.”

Babannds and Odubiyi, both originally from Nigeria, purchased *Militant* subscriptions.

‘How can we fight the system?’

“How can we fight? The rich people own and control this system,” Anderson Simon, a long-haul trucker, asked Jarrett at a truck stop in Millersville, Maryland.

“Look at what our class has accomplished,” Jarrett said. “The struggle that toppled Jim Crow was led by Black workers. And look at the revolution by workers and peasants in Cuba that opened the road to socialism in this hemisphere.”

“We know the Cubans,” said Simon,
Continued on page 5

Socialist Workers Party 2020 campaign platform

UNIONS/FOR A LABOR PARTY Support workers’ struggles to organize to defend themselves, to use union power on behalf of ourselves and all working people. Workers need their own party, a labor party. *One* union for *all* drivers — taxi, Uber, Lyft, other app-based and car 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 to allow workers to have a home and support a family.

OPPOSE WASHINGTON’S WARS 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 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 uproot capitalist exploitation.

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL Fight for universal, 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 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, Jew-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,” onerous 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.

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 other government 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.

Campaign to expand reach of ‘Militant,’ books, fund						
April 4 - May 19 (week two)						
Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	received
UNITED STATES						
Albany	45	9	45	5	\$5,600	\$1,245
Atlanta	45	11	45	7	\$9,750	\$2,456
Chicago	60	42	60	30	\$11,400	\$4,202
Dallas	20	15	20	1	\$2,500	\$1,100
Lincoln	10	2	10	3	\$250	\$100
Los Angeles	60	19	60	8	\$10,800	\$875
Louisville	40	11	40	8	\$3,200	\$75
Miami	20	5	20	1	\$3,500	\$1,352
N. New Jersey	35	17	40	8	\$3,500	\$1,907
New York	50	18	50	16	\$13,500	\$4,727
Oakland	50	21	65	15	\$12,000	\$2,850
Philadelphia	20	7	20	7	\$3,000	\$0
Pittsburgh	20	8	20	1	\$2,250	\$0
Seattle	40	7	40	10	\$10,000	\$1,100
Twin Cities	20	13	20	4	\$3,500	\$390
Washington	30	19	30	10	\$5,000	\$1,425
Other		1				
Total U.S.	565	225	585	134	\$99,750	\$23,804
Prisoners	25	9				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	30	7	30	8	\$3,000	\$100
Manchester	20	7	20	16	\$1,380	
Total U.K.	50	14	50	24	4380	\$100
Canada	50	15	65	8	\$9,000	\$594
New Zealand	10	5	10	5	\$3,000	\$1,980
Australia	15	2	15	4	\$800	\$350
Total	715	270	725	175	\$116,930	\$26,828
SHOULD BE	700	231	700	231	\$115,000	\$37,950

Cuban Revolution's solidarity

Continued from front page

as a second contingent of Cuban volunteers arrived there April 13. "We provide what we can and have, not what we have left over."

These volunteers build on decades of internationalist work by Cuba's medical missions. "They are going to a place where they will enrich that history," Jorge Juan Delgado, director of the Central Unit for Medical Cooperation, said at a farewell for 20 volunteers heading to Honduras April 19.

The 30,000 Cuban medical workers on missions in 65 countries are a source of confidence and pride for the country's working people.

Unlike anywhere else in the world, the Cuban government and people are the product of a socialist revolution, carried out by millions of workers and peasants in 1959. That struggle transformed Cuba's people — the moral values and class needs of the country's toiling majority shape the government's priorities. Led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, working people ousted the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship and went on to overturn capitalist rule.

Working people shouldered the responsibility of running society themselves — something we are lectured is "impossible" by capitalist rulers everywhere — deepening their self-confidence, and defending themselves, arms in hand, from Washing-

ton's unceasing efforts to restore capitalist rule.

Workers, students mobilized

The government mobilizes medical students and members of the neighborhood-based Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and of other mass organizations to systematically knock on people's doors across the island to check if they have symptoms of coronavirus or need any help. As of April 19 they have visited 9 million of the country's 11.2 million people. Many are visited daily. If they have symptoms, they are referred to a doctor.

"It is the duty of young people to assume responsibilities, as Cuban revolutionaries and citizens," Indira Guevara told *Juventud Rebelde*. She is one of the members of the Union of Young Communists who have volunteered to prevent overcrowding in stores and markets in the Abel Santamaria neighborhood of Nueva Gerona, on the Isle of Youth. All generations in Cuba continue to be marked by the "we never leave anyone on their own" social relations established by the revolution. Young volunteers today act in line with the long record of such efforts organized by the revolution's leadership.

Like in Nueva Gerona, the government set up a quarantine in Camilo Cienfuegos, a small town in Pinar del



Gretel Díaz Montalvo

Work brigade initiated by trade union leaders in Camagüey province. With May Day parade called off, volunteers seeking to defend their revolution named contingent May 1st Brigade.

Rio, after cases of coronavirus were confirmed.

Initiatives to support people there include building-by-building delivery of the basic subsidized food basket provided by the government, and taking prepared meals to elderly residents. The work of regularly sanitizing the town's streets and squares that was being carried out by workers who came from outside the area is now taken on by volunteers in the town. Laborers from nearby are covering the work of the town's farmworkers to ensure food production continues.

In face of the spreading worldwide capitalist social crisis — met by capi-

talist rulers everywhere with shutdowns and mass layoffs — the revolutionary government has turned to working people to prevent an increase in shortages of basic necessities. As the planting season approaches in Camagüey province, trade union leaders initiated a voluntary work brigade for sowing cassava. With the government decision to suspend this year's May Day parade, where hundreds of thousands march to express their determination to defend their revolution, the Camagüey unionists named their contingent the May 1st Brigade.

The U.S. rulers' ongoing economic war against Cuba continues to challenge the government's ability to import much-needed supplies. In March a shipment, including coronavirus testing kits and ventilators donated by Chinese businessman Jack Ma, was blocked from reaching Cuba. The Colombian airline that transported the shipment refused to deliver it, citing fear of retaliatory action from Washington.

The U.S. capitalist rulers will never stop their efforts to overthrow the revolutionary government. Cuba provides a mighty example to working people worldwide of the unlimited capacities of our class to meet whatever challenges we face — when we chart a course to take political power.

SWP wins new readers to extend reach of 'Militant'

Continued from page 4

who is originally from Haiti. "They sent doctors to our country during the earthquake in 2010. They brought young people back to Cuba who wanted to train to become doctors and come back to Haiti to serve the community. The Cubans are in Haiti today, right now, helping out."

Simon subscribed to the *Militant* and got *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* both by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, and *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions* by Thomas Sankara, who led a revolution in Burkina Faso in the 1980s. (See ad on page 7 for special offers during the drive.)

Socialist Workers Party campaigners have met many workers in both Wisconsin and Illinois who have recently been laid off or seen their hours slashed.

"I'm still working, but I know others who aren't," Andrea Gordon, a personal care worker, told SWP campaigner Dan Fein in Milwaukee. "We need jobs that pay good." Gordon was one of five people that day who subscribed to the *Militant*. She also bought a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

In West Chicago, a small town near Aurora, Illinois, SWP member Naomi Craine met several workers who had been laid off from Jel Sert, a plant that makes desserts and drink mixes. The plant closed after some workers got sick.

Reyes Flores, a member of Service Employees International Union Local 1 at the plant, laughed when asked if the company was paying wages during the shutdown. "No. I had to file for unemployment," he said.

Flores liked the party's call for workers to build their own party, a labor

party, independent of the Democrats and Republicans. "It's like in Mexico," he said, "where all the political parties represent the rich."

Flores bought *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* and the Spanish edition of *In Defense of the US Working Class* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

To join efforts to expand the reach of the SWP and the *Militant*, or to contribute to the Militant Fighting Fund, contact distributors nearest you listed on page 8.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 8, 1995

The United States government is using the bombing that killed more than 100 people at the Oklahoma City Federal Building to test the waters for squeezing democratic rights and expanding the use of the death penalty.

The government's proposals to expand powers for spies and snoopers, legalize broader authority to deport "undesirables," and pry into and disrupt the lives of organizations and individuals are trial balloons.

Since those accused in the bombing are home-grown right-wingers, capitalist politicians insist the political police need new powers to stem the threat from the right. But anti-democratic measures are always used a hundred times more against organizations of the working class when it goes into struggle.

Trade unions, student organizations, and others should demand: Stop the anti-Arab, anti-Islamic crusade! Hands off democratic rights!



May 8, 1970

In dozens of American cities emergency demonstrations have been called as the immediate response to the major new escalation of U.S. aggression in Southeast Asia.

Even before millions of Americans sat and listened in horror as [President Richard] Nixon ordered the brutal slaughter of thousands of innocent Vietnamese, Cambodians and American GIs, the reaction to the first news of the qualitative new escalation of the war was decisive.

The Nixon program is revealed in all its clarity as the exact same program for which [Lyndon] Johnson was run out of office more than two years ago.

The ever deepening antiwar sentiment of the American people must be mobilized in massive actions demanding immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Southeast Asia. It must be mobilized in the streets where it cannot be ignored.



May 5, 1945

In a mighty demonstration of power the masses in northern Italy last week rose in insurrection and wiped out the remnants of the Fascist regime in its last stronghold. The workers seized control of the great industrial cities in the Lombardy plain. Mussolini and his Fascist sides were met with the end deserved by all hated tyrants. After a summary trial they were put to death by a firing squad.

The great industrial centers of Lombardy are the heart and core of revolutionary Italy, with great and glorious traditions of working-class struggle.

The destruction of the Fascists by the armed people has ended the artificial division of the country produced by the Allied invasion and the expulsion of the Fascist regime from southern Italy. The proletarian north is now united with the more rural and petty-bourgeois south.

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Put workers back to work! Fight for jobs for all, no wage cuts, safe working conditions!

Continued from front page
tests by workers on the job and off.

The boss class also faces growing pressures to reopen production. Much of their plants, mines, air transport, retail stores, rental property and other profit-seeking ventures are sitting largely idle. Competitors elsewhere are pushing to open up. And skyrocketing debt permeates the capitalist system.

Both the bosses and their government are swimming in trillions of dollars of fast-expanding debt as they try to keep going, with no plan for how to deal with it. Bourgeois economists like Paul Krugman advise them to do more, writing that for any problem they face just throw money at it. “Where would the money come from?” he wrote April 16. “Just borrow it.”

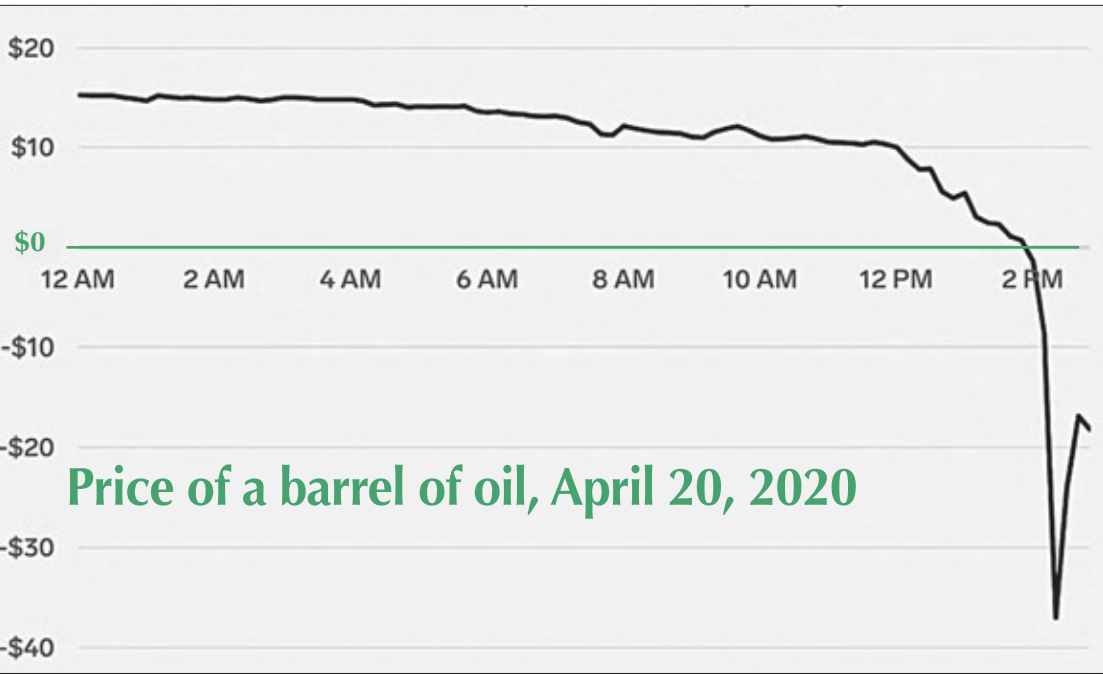
But if the capitalist crisis deepens, that debt can lead to run-away inflation, making things much worse. And millions of workers already face a crisis, saddled with car, college, credit card, home and other debts.

To try and convince workers they

need to sacrifice today, the bosses and their governments at all levels have been hammering away at the false idea that “we are all in this together.” But they have no intention of sacrificing, and never have in the history of capitalism.

The bosses’ push to reverse the shut-down draws bipartisan but not unanimous political support. The most vituperative against reopening the economy are the liberals whose political line always begins and ends with how best to try to end Donald Trump’s presidency — regardless of the consequences for working people, and, in this case, the bosses as well.

Big business groups are fervently lobbying Congress for bailouts, elimination of regulations that tie their hands, and for protection against lawsuits over outbreaks of disease in their establishments. Reuters reported April 21 that bosses are seeking protection against litigation over “disruptions to issues like wages and hours, leave and travel.” They want assurances — public and private — their companies won’t have



U.S. price for crude oil hits record negative low April 20. Buyers were paid to take supplies as storage filled up. Market-share war among main oil producers amid sharp fall in demand deepens capitalist crisis.

to face new shutdowns.

Boeing is bringing 27,000 people back to work in some of its largest aircraft factories in Washington state and elsewhere. Most auto plants in China are already up and running. In Europe, car-makers from Toyota and Hyundai to Volkswagen, Renault and Volvo are restarting. U.S. auto bosses don’t want to fall behind. But without broader resumption of production and trade, who can buy their stuff? Workers locked down without jobs aren’t going to jump into action over auto bosses’ announcements that they’re selling vehicles online.

Bosses target workers

The bosses main goal is to boost profitability as they reopen production, and are planning to use fewer workers, paid less, working faster, harder and longer in less safe

conditions. They intend to use the long lines of the unemployed to pit workers against each other.

Big retailers like Walmart and Amazon that are still open are hiring tens of thousands of temporary workers, throwing them on the floor with virtually no training, and using them to break down work norms fought for and established in past skirmishes. New fights are taking place.

The White House acceded to agribusiness demands to reduce minimum wage rates for immigrant farmworkers on H-2A temporary guest worker visas. This would affect some 10% of the 2.5 million farmworkers in the U.S. These immigrant workers also face dangerous conditions, forced to live crammed in close quarters with few sanitary facilities.

In the meantime, millions of workers whose bosses count them as self-employed — like Uber drivers, many truck drivers, and millions of contract workers who’ve seen their work disappear — don’t get counted in unemployment statistics.

Most workers, unlike many meritocratic white-collar employees, don’t

ville and Moultrie are closed down.

“That means the farmer has to hold onto his cattle, still pay for feed, and then when things finally open back up, he won’t get top dollar because they’re now over the weight limit set by feed-lot buyers.”

In late March, Head and about 15 other farmers attended a U.S. Department of Agriculture presentation in nearby Quitman for small and minority farmers.

“They offer advice and information on operating loans, taxes and other things,” Head, who is African American, said. “But when the small farmers apply for loans, especially Black farmers, they often don’t qualify. It’s already mid-April and many Black farmers haven’t received their loans yet. They can’t lease land and plant without that money and the loan may be denied,

have the option to “work from home.” And farmers, small proprietors and others, potential allies of the working class, are being devastated.

Workers need to work. If they’re laid off and the government forces them to hunker down at home, they begin to lose what makes them workers. It doesn’t change the fact they have to sell their labor power to survive, but it blocks the collective, common activity with fellow workers that opens the door to self-confidence, fighting capacity and class consciousness.

Protests hit gov’t isolation moves

From more than a dozen state capitals across the U.S. to the Kurdistan region of Iraq, there have been protests against governments’ insistence on continuing lockdowns and joblessness. More workers and small-business people want these onerous restrictions lifted so they can get to work.

From Michigan to Montana, Arizona and Washington state, demonstrations have hit at lockdown strictures, mostly under Democratic Party state governments. These have been organized mainly by conservative political groups, but some working people, desperate to see restrictions lifted, have been drawn to and sympathize with the protests. “Let us work!” was a common slogan.

The crisis is harsher in small towns and rural areas, where local governments are planning deeper cuts and layoffs as their budgets evaporate. “If this goes on too long, we won’t survive,” Brad Tonner, a gift shop owner in Bristol, New Hampshire, told the *New York Times* April 14. “This is going to kill small-town America.”

The layoffs and imposed joblessness hits harder on workers who are Black, Latino and Native American, who make up a disproportionate number of those struck down by the coronavirus.

Many who thought their jobs were safe doing computer work at home now face layoffs, as more and longer closures drag on. Walt Disney theme park

bosses announced they will stop paying more than 100,000 employees. More than half its workforce is on furlough. Others, like teachers, are being pushed to work more hours while at home by city and school authorities trying to justify keeping schools shut.

There are cases of people being stopped, cited, harassed or fined by cops for holding low-key garage sales or going for a drive. In many places city authorities have closed playgrounds and parks, saying working people looking to get outside for a walk or some air can’t be trusted, even in the healthy outdoors.

Laid-off hospitality workers, members of UNITE HERE Local 355 in South Florida, organized a car caravan April 19 with signs taped to their vehicles and horn’s blaring to protest the state’s slow response to their unemployment claims.

Mustaf Alijaj, a former hotel doorman in Miami Beach, told a union-organized press conference that a month after being laid off he still doesn’t know if his claim has even been received. “April’s rent already came and went. May’s rent is coming up and I have no money coming in,” he said.

“I was taken aback by the number of people who turned out for the caravan,” Wendi Walsh, secretary-treasurer of UNITE HERE Local 355, told the *Militant* in a phone interview. “We’d never done anything like this before, but 200 workers came and more would have liked to.”

Puerto Rico gov’t uses virus pretext to attack rights

BY SETH GALINSKY

Working people in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico are being kept under lockdown orders stricter than anywhere in the U.S. These include a 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew; rules that those not working in “essential” businesses must stay at home, unless they’re going to the grocery store or pharmacy; and threats against freedom of the press, all imposed by executive orders from Gov. Wanda Vázquez. Mandated plant, store and other closings have thrown more than 130,000 people out of work.

Supermarkets and pharmacies can’t open on Sundays. At first, tire repair and auto mechanic shops were ordered to shut down except on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon.

“The people who make these rules have never gotten their hands dirty. They have no idea what it takes to fix a car,” José Figueroa, president of the Yabucoa Fishermen’s Association, told the *Militant* April 16 from Puerto Nuevo. After an outcry, Governor Vázquez modified her diktat to allow the car and tire shops to open for eight hours on those two days.

During the Easter weekend the governor ordered all stores closed for three days and even banned commercial fishing during that time. “A lot of commercial fishermen don’t have any other income,” Figueroa noted. “Often they go out in their boat alone. The rule made no sense.”

If the shutdown of the economy and the curfew continues, “it’s going to be a serious problem,” he said. “Small businessmen employ a lot of people. The hotels are shut down. People need to work.”

Workers, vendors in Kurdish Iraq fight for right to work



Mechanics and vendors held protests in Erbil, above, and Duhok April 18 against a government lockdown across the Kurdistan region of Iraq. They called on the government to allow them to reopen their garages and shops after a month of closures.

“How can I make money if I don’t come to work?” one of the mechanics in Duhok said to Kurdish news agency Rudaw.

The Kurdistan Regional Government locked down the country March 14, forcing workers to stay in their homes, saying it would contain the spread of coronavirus. This lockdown has been extended several times.

Other provinces — Sulaymaniyah and Halabja — have allowed premises in the industrial zones, including garages, to reopen. But in Erbil and Duhok only garages providing emergency services are allowed.

The government hasn’t provided any financial support to those who have lost their livelihoods as a result of the shutdown. Thousands of families have survived from donations distributed by charity organizations.

Teachers and other public sector workers protested the government’s failure to pay their salaries outside the education directorate office in Sulaymaniyah April 22.

— ROY LANDERSEN



Strike meeting of 1,800 immigrant fruit pickers in Bakersfield, California, last year over pay cuts. With White House OK, big farmers are planning wage cuts to those on temporary guest visas, an attack on all workers.

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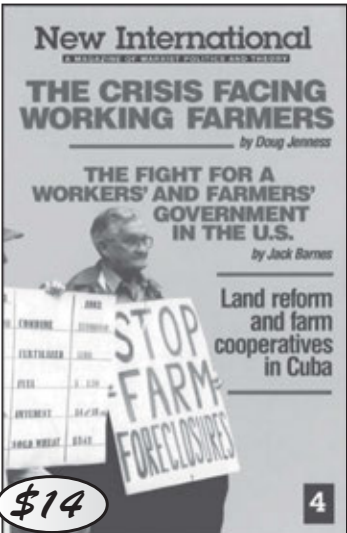
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Che: ‘Cuban Revolution’s first great battle was land reform’

Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War 1956-58 by Ernesto Che Guevara is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. Argentinian-born Guevara joined and fought alongside Fidel Castro, becoming an outstanding leader of the Cuban Revolution that defeated the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959. In this book Che gives a firsthand account of the military battles and political advances that he participated in with the Rebel Army and explains how “the war revolutionized us.” It is one of the best accounts of how Cuba's workers and farmers made their revolution, which is an example for working people throughout the world. The excerpts below are “From Batista's Final Offensive to the Battle of Santa Clara,” and “Military Order No. 1.” Copyright © 1996 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

The news reports were contradictory and extraordinary: Batista had fled that day, leaving the armed forces high command in a shambles. Our two delegates established radio contact with [Gen. Eulogio] Cantillo, telling him of the surrender offer. But he refused to go along because this constituted an ultimatum, and he had taken over command of the army in strict accordance with instruc-



Council of State Office of Historical Affairs

In address to congress of peasants near Rebel Army's Second Front headquarters in eastern Cuba, Sept. 21, 1958, Raúl Castro explains July 26 Movement's revolutionary program — taking land out of hands of big landholders and distributing to all those who work it.

tions from the leader Fidel Castro. We immediately contacted Fidel, telling him the news, but giving our opinion of Cantillo's treacherous attitude, an opinion he absolutely agreed with. (In those decisive hours, Cantillo let all the main figures in Batista's government flee. His attitude was even worse, if one considers that he was an officer who had made contact with us and whom we had trusted as a military man of honor.)

The results that followed are known to everyone: Castro's refusal to recognize Cantillo's authority; Fidel's order to march on the city of Havana [accompanied by his call for a nationwide general strike]; Colonel Barquín's taking over command of the army after leaving the Isle of Pines prison; the seizure of Camp Columbia by Camilo Cienfuegos and of La Cabaña fortress by our Column no. 8; and finally, a number of days later, the installing of Fidel Castro as prime minister of the provisional government. All that belongs to the country's present political history.

We are now in a position in which we are much more than simple factors of one nation. We are now the hope of the unredeemed Americas. All eyes — those of the great oppressors and those of the hopeful — are firmly on us. In great measure, the development of the popular movements in Latin America depends on the future stance that we take, on our capacity to resolve many

problems. And every step we take is being observed by the ever-watchful eyes of the big creditor [U.S. imperialism] and by the optimistic eyes of our brothers and sisters in Latin America.

With our feet planted firmly on the ground, we are beginning to labor and produce our first revolutionary works, confronting the first difficulties. But what is Cuba's main problem if not the same as of all Latin America, the same as even enormous Brazil with its millions of square kilometers and with its land of marvels that is a whole continent? The one-crop economy. In Cuba, we are slaves to sugarcane, the umbilical cord that binds us to the large northern market. We must diversify our agricultural production, stimulate industry. And we must ensure that our minerals and agricultural products, and — in the near future — our industrial products go to the markets that are best suited for us and by means of our own transport lines.

The government's first great battle will be the agrarian reform, which will be audacious, thorough, but flexible: it will destroy the landed estates in Cuba, although not Cuba's means of production. It will be a battle that will absorb a great part of the strength of the people and the government during the coming years. The land will be given to the peasant free of charge. Landowners who prove that they came by their holdings

honestly will be compensated with long-term bonds. But the peasantry will also be given technical assistance; there will be guaranteed markets for the products of the soil. And production will be channeled with a broad national sense of development in conjunction with the great battle for agrarian reform, so that within a short time the infant Cuban industries can compete with the monstrous ones of the countries where capitalism has reached its highest level of development. Simultaneously with the creation of the new domestic market that the agrarian reform will bring about, and the distribution of new products to satisfy a growing market, there will arise the need to export some products and to have the adequate instrument to take them to this or that part of the world. ...

With those elementary weapons, we Cubans will begin the struggle for our territory's total freedom. We all know it will not be easy, but we are all aware of the enormous historic responsibility of the July 26 Movement, of the Cuban revolution, of the nation in general, to be an example for all peoples of Latin America, whom we must not disappoint.

Our friends of the indomitable continent can be sure that, if need be, we will struggle no matter what the economic consequence of our acts may be.



In this territory an official land register will immediately be undertaken in order to begin the distribution of land to the peasantry of the region. As of this moment, all property, both fixed and movable, belonging to servants of the dictatorship is declared confiscated, regardless of how it may have been obtained. The sole exception will be those small proprietors who are able to demonstrate that they have family responsibilities and hold no other possessions in any part of the republic. All properties greater than 30 caballerias [1,000 acres] that are not devoted to intensive agricultural cultivation or animal husbandry are to be subject to investigation by the Agrarian Reform Commission of our Revolutionary Army. Every peasant who for at least two years has been paying rent, either in cash or in kind, for working a parcel of land in the territory covered by this military order is hereby declared free of all payment obligations and is invited to claim his rights over the land he works.

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— SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT —

Demand massive program to provide jobs

Continued from front page

This is the road to protect the working class from the blows the crisis of capitalism is inflicting on us. They can build hospitals, housing, schools and day care centers, and replace crumbling infrastructure, things workers need.

Workers and our unions urgently need to fight for such a program to undercut the competition workers face for scarce jobs today—an antagonism that bosses use to press us to accept lower wages and dangerous working conditions. To try and get us to acquiesce to these conditions, the capitalist rulers bombard us daily with “We’re all in this together.” It’s a lie! Their attacks on working people will accelerate as they move to re-start production and rake in profits.

The bosses also try to divide working people by scapegoating immigrant workers while they exploit them. My campaign demands amnesty for all undocumented workers in the U.S.

Workers need to work! It is only at work that we can act together, utilize our power and stand up to the bosses — the foundation for all progress for our class. Only there do we go through struggles that bolster our confidence and strengthen our trust in each other and our capacities to fight. This is already happening among workers at Walmart, the railroads and other places where a section of our class is still on the job.

The longer we are laid off and isolated from one another, unable to sell our labor power to the bosses, the more demoralization will fester.

My campaign points to what is possible and needed — deepening our struggles towards wresting workers control of production. As we fight we

will need to set up committees of workers and consumers to combat the bosses’ production of shoddy goods, counter their refusal to make what workers need, open their accounts to show everyone how they waste resources, and fight to control the pace of production and hiring to establish safer working conditions and protect the environment.

Making inroads for workers control of production will show the working class as a whole we are capable of organizing society in our own interests. It will pose more sharply the need to overturn the class dictatorship of the propertied families.

Workers need our own party — a labor party — to fight to take political power out of the hands of the bosses and bankers and to establish a workers and farmers government.

A labor party would give voice to each and every struggle we are conducting — from union strikes like that of copper workers against Asarco bosses; to the fight for the arrest of cops who killed Walmart customer Steven Taylor in California; to working farmers struggling to assure the right to their land and a living; to workers organizing together on the job today against the attacks of the bosses.

A fighting labor party would attract and help lead all others who face oppression and exploitation under the lash of capitalist rule.

SWP candidates and supporters are meeting workers interested in joining us in fighting for this program: in Walmart parking lots, at truck stops, taxi and Uber stands, and on workers’ doorsteps in cities, small towns and rural areas far and wide. Join the Socialist Workers Party’s 2020 campaign!

Workers’ struggles don’t stop during coronavirus

BY TERRY EVANS

Reader Byron Johnson-Blanchard writes that the article “Morality of Capitalist Rulers Reflected in Shutdown of AA” in the April 13 issue of the *Militant* presents views he considers “ridiculous and reckless” for counterposing “face-to-face human interactions and neighborliness” to the atomization of the working class imposed by the capitalist rulers using the COVID-19 epidemic as a pretext.

The article by Róger Calero describes the brutal impact the shutdown of 12-step meetings by government “shelter-in-place” orders has on the workers and others

REPLY TO A READER

who depend on them. For many struggling with addiction, maintaining healthy social connections is key for staying sober. Isolation increases the risk of relapsing, which can have deadly consequences.

The article also rejects isolating senior citizens in need of assisted living through government mandates that deny company and vital care provided by relatives. The profit-driven health business in the U.S. all too often leads to neglect of the elderly, disabled and other “unseen” sections of the producing classes. Many workers only get adequate care in nursing homes because of insistent intervention by their relatives.

This is one of the reasons more workers are open to discussing why the capitalist class is unfit to rule and needs to be replaced.

Citing the number of deaths from COVID-19, Johnson-Blanchard says every worker should “stay home safe.” But jobs are the only source of income and sustenance for workers and their families and more can see that it’s jobs, not the virus, that’s the main problem.

Most important, it is only by being at work that workers have the opportunity to organize together against the cause of the growing social crisis imposed by the bosses and their government. This crisis existed before the epidemic, is growing during it, and will continue afterwards. It is at work where workers are able to exercise our social power against the bosses.

Instead, Johnson-Blanchard urges workers to abandon the one place where we have any power as a class, and submit to government isolation measures. Over time workers who are cut adrift without a job and left to face desperate conditions alone at home are not only less likely to see themselves as part of a fighting class, but are more likely to become declassed, demoralized and susceptible to reactionary demagogues.

Bosses and industrial trusts have already gotten or are insisting their government let them take steps that shortcut safety, cut wages and speed up production. They have not and will not put their profit-driven assaults on workers and our allies on hold. “Essential workers” already face escalating job combinations, pressure to not take breaks and more.

The class struggle isn’t on hold

The “viral-centric” propaganda bombardment by government figures at all levels and in the capitalist media obscures the reality that the class conflicts that underlie all social relations do not dissipate in times of crisis. They try to convince working people that “we’re all in this together.” But there is no “we” between workers and bosses.

It is only through collective struggle that workers get to practice the solidarity that ties our class together and acquire the values that make the working class what it is — a class that out of necessity must combine together and fight tenaciously to ensure the survival of ourselves and of all culture.

None of this means workers have to be oblivious to the disease. Keeping a safe distance or wearing a mask if you want to is not the same thing as government-imposed social isolation.

The bosses have slashed jobs to try to defend their capital. The *Militant* will continue to urge workers to fight for a federally funded public works program to put millions back to work at union-scale pay. And to promote fights on the job to defend wages and working conditions. That is the course to put our class in a stronger position to resist the bosses’ assaults, not staying at home in dread of the virus.

Strikers ‘hold line’ against Asarco union busting

Continued from page 3

Freeport-McMoRan — the world’s largest copper miner — shut its Chino Mine in southwestern New Mexico. This “may be just the tip of a looming iceberg of layoffs and furloughs throughout the company’s Arizona and New Mexico mining operations,” the *Silver City Daily Press* reported April 17.

Freeport’s mine in Morenci, Arizona, which it acquired from Phelps Dodge after bosses busted the unions there in a bitter strike in the early 1980s, is still operating. But the company says it’s preparing further “headcount changes.” It calls for workers to accept part-time hours, or unpaid leaves for up to a year.

Send solidarity messages and much needed donations to USW Local 915 Strike Assistance, P.O. Box 550, Kearny, AZ 85137; USW Local 5252 Strike Assistance, P.O. Box 896, Kearny, AZ 85137; USW Local 5613, 4230 Texas Hwy 136, Amarillo, TX 79108; or via paypal.me/palfcommunityservice for Tucson-area strikers. Solidarity messages can be

sent to palfchair@gmail.com. Contribute to the food pantries at: USW 915 and 886 hall, 107 Hammond Dr., Kearny; IBEW Local 570 hall, 750 S. Tucson Blvd., Tucson; USW Local 5613, 4230 Texas Hwy 136, Amarillo, Texas.



Militant/Betsey Stone

Striking copper miners picket Asarco’s Ray Mine in Arizona.

— LETTERS —

On party’s view of pandemic

I’ve been reading the *Militant* for over 15 years. Over those years I’ve disagreed with almost nothing in its pages, but I am not so sure that I’m on board with the views that are being shared regarding COVID-19. This paragraph in Róger Calero’s article on the shutdown of AA really bothered me, and made me question the SWP’s views on the pandemic:

“For working people struggling to keep working, producing everything from food to medical equipment, our morality is built on community solidarity, and joint actions in defense of fellow workers. We far prefer face-to-face human interactions and neighborliness.”

At a time when a brand new unknown disease is spreading to and

killing workers at a speed and at numbers that many of us have never seen in our lifetimes, when nurses and health care professionals are pleading for people to stay home because of the lack of protective equipment and supplies like ventilators and drugs necessary to fight the disease, I think that calling for “face-to-face interactions and neighborliness” is ridiculous and reckless.

Implying that workers should fight against staying home is like asking workers to fight against traffic lights and seatbelts. I agree, however, that the government would love to use orders like these to curb the rights of workers in the future, so I have no issue with the *Militant* addressing that.

What are the party’s official views on the pandemic? Do Róger’s views reflect the party’s official stance?

*Byron Johnson-Blanchard
by email*

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the ‘Militant’, earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund,” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate at www.themilitant.com

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.