

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Celebrate International Women's Day!

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 85/NO. 11 MARCH 22, 2021

Help SWP get on NJ ballot: 'Give workers their own voice'

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

UNION CITY, N.J. — Over two dozen supporters of the Socialist Workers Party campaigns of Joanne Kuniansky and Candace Wagner, for New Jersey governor and lieutenant governor, began a spirited six-week effort March 6 to place the party's ticket on the ballot. By the following evening 307 signatures were in hand, a solid start toward the goal of 1,500, nearly double the 800 the state requires.

Campaign teams talked to workers on their doorsteps in nine cities and towns across New Jersey. Kuniansky, a Walmart deli worker, knocked on the door of David Roldan in Carteret, who is on medical leave from his job at an Amazon warehouse. Amazon bosses don't provide sufficient training to forklift drivers. "So, of course, there's accidents all the time. They always come up with ways to blame the worker," Roldan said.

"Workers need to control production in the factories and the warehouses where we work," Kuniansky said. "We're the only ones who will prioritize our safety and the safety of the

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Unions call general strike against coup in Myanmar

'We will never be slaves to a military junta'



Mizzima

March 10 protest in Katha, farm town of 27,000 on border of Kachin and Shan ethnic regions, part of Myanmar-wide strikes and protests demanding end to military junta's seizure of power.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Working people in Myanmar began a general strike across the country March 8, seeking to topple the military junta that seized power Feb. 1. The strike comes alongside massive protests, in spite of more deadly repression by the regime.

"We are not slaves to the military junta now and we never shall be," 18

trade unions, union federations and organizations of farmers and farmworkers said in a joint statement, calling on "all workers nationwide, union and nonunion alike" to join the strike.

The call to action comes after more than a month of daily protests in big cities and rural towns against the coup. Cops and soldiers have increasingly used live ammunition and vicious beatings against peaceful demonstrators. They were caught on video beating emergency medical workers with rifle butts for treating wounded protesters.

Despite over 2,000 arrests, more than 60 deaths, hundreds injured, the use of torture, and untold numbers

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Working people in Texas left on their own as capitalist catastrophe unfolds



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Julio Moreno, right, tells Socialist Workers Party campaigners George Chalmers and Alyson Kennedy how electricity bosses' drive for profits led to widespread outages in wake of storm.

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

DALLAS — Thousands of working people throughout Texas and neighboring states hit by a powerful snow and ice storm four weeks ago continue to face serious problems with lack of water, bankrupting-high utility bills, shortages of materials to repair broken water pipes, and food shortages at the grocery store.

The storm froze almost every source of energy in Texas, leading to widespread power and water outages for millions. Eighty people were counted as dead from the effects of the storm, but the full number won't be known for weeks.

This social catastrophe was a product of the capitalist ruling families

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One year since pandemic began, millions of workers need jobs, unions

BY TERRY EVANS

Millions of workers remain out of work a year after government-ordered pandemic shutdowns slashed jobs in factories, restaurants, hotels, retail, schools and much more. Huge numbers found themselves driven out of the working class and isolated in their homes.

The bosses and their government have grabbed this opportunity to defend their profits by attacking our jobs, wages and working conditions. You can see this vividly today with the Marathon lockout of refinery workers in Minnesota and concessions demanded by the bosses at ATI

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Support fight to win a union at Amazon in Alabama!

BY SUSAN LAMONT

BESSEMER, Ala. — The drive by hundreds of workers at the large Amazon warehouse and distribution center here to bring in the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union to repre-

EYEWITNESS REPORT

sent them is going strong.

They face a concerted effort by Amazon bosses to use all their resources to keep the union out, from mandatory anti-union meetings in the warehouse to anti-union signs in the bathrooms. The National Labor Relations Board-run election by mail is set to end March 29. Some 5,800 workers at the distribution center are eligible to vote.

There are important stakes for workers all across the country in this fight. Workers need unions to organize themselves to meet the attacks of the employers against our jobs, wages and working conditions. This battle in Bessemer is

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'Militant' special appeal goes over \$82,000 — a fantastic success!

BY JOHN STUDER

Over the last two months, 191 readers have contributed \$82,176 to the *Militant's* special "stimulus" appeal — a fantastic response! This second "stimulus" government payout is now over.

We explained when we launched the appeal in January that the funds would help the *Militant* meet expenses until the annual spring *Militant* Fighting Fund is launched in late March,

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—On the picket line—

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Report blames Aurora cops in killing of Elijah McClain

BY JANET POST

A 157-page independent investigative report on the 2019 cop killing of Elijah McClain commissioned by the Aurora, Colorado, City Council was released to the public Feb. 22. "This report confirms what we have been saying from the start. The Aurora police and medics who murdered my son must be held accountable," La-Wayne Mosley, McClain's father, said after the report was made public.

"Aurora police were in the wrong from the first moment they contacted 23-year-old Elijah McClain until the man's limp body was loaded onto a gurney and taken to the hospital where he died days later," the *Denver Post* editorialized the day after the report. The independent report sharply criticizes the cover-up engineered by city police and prosecutors and their version of events published in October 2019.

"It was overwhelming knowing my son was innocent the entire time and just waiting on the facts and proof of it," McClain's mother, Sheneen McClain, told CNN. "My son's name is cleared now. He's no longer labeled a suspect. He is actually a victim."

McClain, an African American, was a massage therapist and musician. He often played his violin for the animals at local shelters to help soothe them.

On Aug. 24, 2019, McClain was walking home after buying iced tea. Three cops in the area who received a 911 complaint about a young Black man who "looked sketchy," stopped him.

The report then graphically describes

how the police threw McClain to the ground. Cops Jason Rosenblatt and Randy Roedema pin him down, and Roedema puts a hammerlock to his arm, causing his shoulder to "pop about three times." Rosenblatt and Nathan Woodyard both apply carotid control holds, which deprive the brain of oxygen, all the while kneeling or sitting on McClain and handcuffing him.

The report states that the cops' body camera video shows McClain's "words were apologetic and confused, not angry or threatening. He became increasingly plaintive and desperate as he struggled to breathe. ... He said, 'It's just that I can't breathe correctly because...' as his voice trailed off."

Without examining McClain, paramedics from Aurora Fire Rescue gave him a shot of the sedative ketamine, even though McClain hadn't moved for a minute. And the dose they gave was for a 190-pound person although McClain weighed 140.

Just 18 minutes after being stopped by the cops, McClain had a heart attack. He was brain dead within three days and was taken off life support six days after being brutalized.

In November 2019, Adams County District Attorney Dave Young announced no criminal charges would be filed, claiming prosecutors lacked evidence. Their autopsy concluded McClain died of "undetermined" causes.

McClain's family has continued to fight for charges to be filed against the cops who killed their son, and they also filed a civil lawsuit. In June 2020,



Above, Militant/Karen Ray; inset, Reuters/Kevin Mohatt

Above, July 3, 2020, protest in Aurora, Colorado, against cop killing of Elijah McClain a year earlier. Inset, June 27, 2020, protest included musicians who came to Aurora to play violin to honor McClain, who himself played the violin, often making music to calm animals in local shelters. As police confronted protesters with pepper spray, violinists kept playing. "Elijah believed in humanity," his mother, Sheneen McClain, said at release of new report holding cops responsible for the killing.



Colorado Gov. Jared Polis appointed Attorney General Phil Weisner as a special prosecutor and in January Weisner opened a grand jury investigation.

Thousands joined demonstrations around the country after the killing, demanding the cops who killed Elijah McClain be prosecuted. A number

of actions included violinists playing music in tribute to him. "Elijah believed in humanity and that humanity mattered," his mother said after the report was released.

The report is a damning indictment of both the cops who killed McClain and the Aurora officials who covered it up.

'Militant' fund: Fantastic response!

Continued from front page

along with a spring subscription drive to expand our readership. Our only source of income is our readers, and the contributions will also strengthen the paper's capacity to respond in a timely way to unfolding developments in the class struggle today in the U.S. and worldwide.

Our readers met this goal and more!

The paper, published in the interests of the working class, is irreplaceable for its weekly coverage on working-class and social struggles worldwide. For organizing solidarity; for coverage of the Socialist Workers Party campaigns explaining working-class policy on all questions; and to explain all political questions from the point of view of the working class against

the exploiting class.

It runs in-depth features on the hard-won lessons of past class-struggle battles. The *Militant* advances a course for working people to defend our class interests, to open the road toward building our own party, a labor party, to organize all those oppressed and exploited by capital in the fight to bring a workers and farmers government to power.

We now look forward to successful spring drives to continue financing the paper and expand the *Militant's* readership! Join the effort!

Thanks again for the contributions. As we go to press the government is deciding a third "stimulus" payout. If signed, the *Militant* will carry an announcement of the best way to use it to advance the working-class movement!

THE MILITANT

US troops, planes, warships out of Middle East!

In the Biden administration's first military strike, U.S. warplanes killed 17 Iranian-backed forces in Syria Feb. 25. The 'Militant' calls for Washington to get out of the Mideast and opposes all U.S. capitalist rulers' wars abroad, an extension of their attacks on workers at home.



USAF/Airman Daniel Snider
Biden ordered airstrikes by U.S. warplanes on Iranian-backed militia in Syria, Feb. 25.

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

Give workers their voice in NJ

Continued from front page

communities nearby, over the profits of the bosses.”

Roldan had heard about the efforts of workers at the Amazon distribution center in Bessemer, Alabama, to establish a union. “I used to work at a grocery store with a union,” he said. “So I know how much better that can be, even if the union isn’t perfect.”

When Kuniansky said that it would boost the union drive in Bessemer to get support from Amazon workers in New Jersey, Roldan said he would talk to some of his co-workers about sending support. He bought a copy of the *Militant* and signed to get Kuniansky on the ballot.

Schoolteacher Miguel Fernandez told SWP campaigner Terry Evans that “safety should be the number one concern for all workers” and that “schools should not be reopened,” when Evans knocked on his door in Belleville.

“The only way to fight effectively for safer working conditions in schools or any workplace is by organizing together with fellow workers to stand up to the bosses,” Evans replied. “To do that workers need to be at work.” Fernandez didn’t agree, but signed the petition.

A highlight of the weekend was a March 6 campaign rally attended by 39 people. John Studer, the party’s national campaign director, introduced Kuniansky, Wagner and the party’s candidates in New York City: Róger Calero for mayor, Willie Cotton for public advocate and Sara Lobman for Manhattan Borough president.

“Our candidates take our campaign to struggles by working people, building support for them,” Studer said. “We explain the stakes in the Amazon union drive, the lockout at Marathon Petroleum in Minnesota and the fight by Steelworkers for a new contract with Allegheny Technologies.” Workers were locked out by ATI for seven months in 2015-16 as they fought boss attacks on wages and working conditions. Now they’re fighting for another agreement, in the midst of company moves to shut down some union-organized plants and expand nonunion plants in North Carolina.

“The party has run in every presidential race since 1948 and fights to be on the ballot everywhere we can,” Studer said. “We’ve already been certified for the ballot this year for City Council elections in Dallas and Lin-

coln, Nebraska. Getting on the ballot helps to get the party known among larger numbers of workers, as well as winning some protection against government interference.”

Studer pointed to the ruling in the SWP’s successful lawsuit in the 1970s against FBI spying and disruption of the party. “Federal Judge Thomas Griesa noted the serious efforts the party makes to get on the ballot,” Studer said.

The launching of the New Jersey campaign has already received coverage in *Insider NJ* and the New Jersey *Globe* news websites.

Kuniansky read a message that Terri Boodhoo, one of her Walmart co-workers, sent to Amazon workers in Bessemer.

“We work at Walmart in Secaucus, New Jersey, and are with you all the way,” Boodhoo wrote. “From my husband, who works at Amazon here, I hear they treat you like a robot. He works 10-hour shifts with only 30 minutes for lunch and two 15-minute breaks. We also need a union at Walmart. That is why I want to say with all my heart that I want you to win!”

Profit drive causes Texas disaster

Kuniansky was an oil worker in Houston in 1987 when there was a leak of hydrofluoric acid at the Marathon oil refinery in Texas City, Texas. Thousands were evacuated and over 800 treated at local hospitals. This is a key safety issue in the Marathon bosses’ lockout of refinery workers in Minnesota today. It was members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union at the refinery who spoke out against the bosses’ lies.

“That experience stuck with me,” Kuniansky said. “It showed why workers need to fight to wrest control of production out of the hands of the bosses.”

SWP protests attacks on LA Buddhist temple, Asians

BY NORTON SANDLER

LOS ANGELES — One of a series of attacks across the country targeting Asians took place in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo Feb. 25, where the Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple was broken into and desecrated.

An unknown attacker climbed the temple’s fence, set fire to two wooden lantern stands, ripped metallic lanterns from their concrete bases and shattered



Militant/Mike Shur

Joanne Kuniansky, above, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey governor, and running mate Candace Wagner, inset, address March 6 campaign rally in Union City.

“No one can deny that the catastrophe facing working people in Texas and nearby states today is man-made,” Wagner told the rally, referring to the refusal of power companies to sacrifice profits to install protection against subfreezing temperatures.

“While the politicians on different sides of the climate-change debate point fingers at each other, the truth is that wind and solar or coal, gas and nuclear power are produced under capitalism with one thing in mind — the profits of big business.”

The SWP calls for workers and our unions to “fight for an immediate massive public works program,” she said, to put millions back to work at union-scale wages, repairing damaged houses and replacing worn-out power systems and other infrastructure. We also need to fight to nationalize the energy industry under workers control, Wagner said. “Such a course

points toward the kind of struggles necessary to lead millions to replace capitalist rule with a workers and farmers government.”

“Nine days ago President Joseph Biden bombed Syria,” New York mayoral candidate Róger Calero told the meeting. “Biden’s objective was the same as Donald Trump’s, to defend the U.S. capitalist ruling families. The Democrats and Republicans both say their policies are for *our* country,” Calero said, “but countries don’t have foreign policies, classes do.”

Workers need our own policies on every question, at home and abroad, Calero said, based on support for the struggles of working people.

Some \$2,000 was raised in contributions at the rally for the campaign. To join campaign teams in New Jersey or other states where the party campaigns, contact the nearest SWP branch listed on page 8.

a 12-foot foyer glass panel with a rock. Rev. Mas Fujii, who was in the temple at the time, was able to put out the fires.

“This feels like an attack on our culture, our history, our community,” Rev. Noriaki Ito, the temple’s head minister, said in a statement.

“The Socialist Workers Party campaign extends solidarity with the Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple,” wrote Bernie Senter, the party’s candidate in the just-concluded election for State Senate District 30, and Dennis Richter, the party’s Southern California campaign chair. They called on the labor movement to condemn this and other attacks aimed at Asians in the U.S. “Those responsible should be prosecuted,” the SWP statement said.

Senter delivered the message to the temple March 2. Other messages condemning the attack were sent to the temple from across the country, as well as from Japan.

“Workers of all nationalities, and especially our trade unions as well as church and temple groups, and organizations that fight racism,” Richter and Senter wrote, “need to be won to acting on the importance of standing up to attacks like these on the Asian community no matter who perpetrates them.”

“Anti-Asian attacks are fueled by bourgeois politicians,” they pointed out, “who blame Chinese for spreading COVID-19 worldwide or promote trade

wars and other conflicts to convince U.S. workers that their counterparts in Asia from Korea, to Japan, to the Philippines, to China are our enemies.”

Last month a security guard at the temple was assaulted, Ito told the *Los Angeles Times*.

Attacks against Asians more than doubled in Los Angeles last year, and increased in cities across the country. In New York a record number of attacks against Asians were reported during the same period.

The Asian American Federation in New York organized a “Rise Up Against Asian Hate” protest of 300 Feb. 27. In addition to the jump in physical attacks, the federation reported that Asian workers have faced a significant rise in unemployment.

Working-class protests against racist discrimination and scapegoating have had an impact in the U.S. “The successful working-class battles waged by Blacks against Jim Crow segregation laid the basis for undermining anti-Asian prejudices as well,” Richter and Senter said in their message.

“Among working people today of all national and cultural backgrounds, there is less prejudice than ever before. This bodes well for the unity workers need to fight against the class oppression of the bosses and their government.”

Some \$83,000 has been raised by volunteers for the temple’s repair.

2021 Socialist Workers Party candidates Fight in the interests of the working class Workers need our own party, a labor party

Albany, New York

Ved Dookhun, mayor
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Joanne Kuniansky, governor
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New York City

Róger Calero, mayor
Willie Cotton, public advocate
Sara Lobman, Manhattan Borough president

Philadelphia

Osborne Hart, district attorney

Pittsburgh

Malcolm Jarrett, mayor

Seattle

Henry Dennison, mayor
Rebecca Williamson, City Council

See directory on page 8 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

Strike against Myanmar coup

Continued from front page

“disappeared,” protesters keep pouring into the streets.

If anything, the attacks by the police and army have brought workers, farmers and youth; Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian religious leaders; and ethnic minorities closer together.

The demonstrators are not naive about what they face. Kyal Sin, 19, shot dead during a March 3 protest in Mandalay with a bullet behind her ear, had posted on Facebook that if she were killed she wanted her organs donated to save other lives.

The depth of the protests has surprised even longtime opponents of the military high command. Kyaw Zwa Moe — a veteran of the 1988 uprising that was crushed in blood by the generals — wrote in *Irrawaddy*, a Yangon-based news service that supports the protests, that two days after the killing of Kyal Sin, “we were amazed to see photos of still bigger crowds of protesters taking to the streets in Mandalay.”

After the strike call, police and soldiers began occupying hospitals, universities and schools to use as base camps. According to *Irrawaddy*, they fired guns throughout the night in Yangon in an attempt to intimidate people. The repressive forces also are stopping cars and pedestrians and arresting those who have anti-regime literature.

Decades of military rule

Under Myanmar’s 2008 constitution, imposed by the generals as part of allowing a controlled “democratic” opening after decades of military rule, 25% of the seats of parliament are appointed directly by the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, giving him veto power over any changes to the constitution. Key ministries are also appointed by the military.

In 2016, Aung San Suu Kyi, head of the bourgeois National League for Democracy, became de facto head of government after her party won a landslide electoral victory the year before, the first contested election in decades.

Suu Kyi’s standing flows from the reputation of her father, Aung San, who was killed during the struggle for independence from British colonial rule, as well as her years of imprisonment by the military.

Despite her earlier reputation as an opponent of the military rulers, she has become the main public defender of the army’s repression of the Rohingya minority in Rakine province.

Suu Kyi is also widely mistrusted by many from ethnic minorities mistreated by the military and the government. Di-

visions between the ethnic minorities — more than 30% of the population — and the ruling Bamar majority are a legacy of British colonial rule and its strategy of divide and rule. After Myanmar won its independence in 1948, the post-independence regimes continued to foster those divisions, including the military regimes waging war against their struggles for autonomy.

After 2016, the National League for Democracy overturned some laws that restricted democratic rights and passed legislation weakening the generals’ control of lucrative businesses, like their trade in jade. The generals feared that there would be more pressure to limit their economic and political power after the National League for Democracy won an even bigger margin in the November 2020 elections.

Burmese ‘socialism’

The military high command played a key role in capitalist development in Myanmar in 1963, the year after Gen. Ne Win deposed the civilian government. Claiming they were organizing “the Burmese Way to Socialism,” the junta nationalized foreign banks and many businesses.

These nationalizations without a revolution — like similar expropriations carried out by the military castes in Egypt and Syria — had nothing to do with eliminating capitalism or advancing the interest of working people. Instead, they served as an incubator for a native capitalist class, primarily from the Bamar ethnic majority, especially those with ties to the military.

Tensions grow between rulers in Australia, Beijing

BY BOB AIKEN

SYDNEY — Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison is refusing to retreat from confrontations with the Chinese government over trade, investment and Beijing’s influence in Australia.

The Australian rulers are caught between their major trading partner, China, and their main military ally, Washington. The U.S. rulers are determined to maintain their dominance over trade and investment in the region and restrict Beijing’s economic and military influence. None of these competitors care about the consequences of their disputes for the working class, who they all seek to exploit and oppress.

Last November the Chinese Embassy in Canberra released a dossier of 14 “complaints” against the Australian government. “If you make China the enemy, China will be the enemy,” it threatened. To back that up, Beijing imposed tariffs and bans on a number of Australian exports.

The Chinese government accuses Canberra of blocking Chinese corporations from efforts to take over Australian companies, organizing police raids on Chinese living in Australia and imposing visa restrictions on Chinese journalists and academics.

“The foreign policies of the Australian government defend the interests of the country’s bosses, who are imposing worsening conditions on Australian workers,” Linda Harris, Communist League candidate for the Canterbury-Bankstown Council in Sydney, told the *Militant*.

“The working class needs its own foreign policy, starting from soli-



Militant/Deborah Liatos

Protest in Los Angeles Feb. 27 backs strikes, mass protests by working people in Myanmar fighting to overturn Feb. 1 military coup, part of solidarity actions around the world.

Senior military officers and their families gained control of the most lucrative businesses and industries. This accelerated in 2011 when state-owned businesses were sold off, often to military officials and their cronies. This was coupled with a major expansion of foreign investment from companies based in China, Singapore, Japan, the United Kingdom and the U.S.

The influx of capital and expanded production meant a growth in the size of the working class along with union organization and struggles. Myanmar has become a major center for world garment production, with some 600,000 workers who earn even less than their counterparts in Vietnam and Cambodia.

Hundreds of thousands of farmers — many of them members of ethnic minorities from the outer provinces

— are being driven off the land and into the factories in Yangon and Mandalay. One unintended consequence of this migration has been that many workers from different ethnic minorities find themselves side by side in garment and other factories, fighting together against exploitation by the bosses and their military cronies. This solidarity finds its way back to their villages.

Some 2,500 residents from 34 farm villages in Mu Traw District, an area that is predominantly settled by the Karen minority, issued a statement March 2 pledging “our solidarity and support with all the protesters rising up against the military dictatorship. We will continue to fight for our rights until we achieve the establishment of a genuine democratic federal union with ethnic equality and self-determination.”

arity with fellow working people — from those fighting military rule in Myanmar to working people and youth in Hong Kong facing assaults by Beijing,” she added.

With a small domestic market, the bulk of Australian mining and farm production is exported. In recent decades the country’s billionaire families have profited handsomely from booming exports of mostly raw materials to the expanding Chinese economy. Over decades the development of capitalist production in China has led to the huge growth of the working class there.

Rulers face rising competition

Since the second imperialist world war the Australian rulers have depended on a close alliance with Washington, the world’s dominant imperialist power, to defend their interests. Canberra has stepped up cooperation with the U.S. rulers in response to the rise of Beijing as a regional power.

Successive Australian governments have expanded Canberra’s armed forces and linked them more closely with the U.S. military. Following Washington’s lead, Canberra has also deepened its military ties with the Japanese and Indian governments as counterweights to Beijing’s increasing clout.

The Australian navy joins military exercises led by the U.S. Navy in the South China Sea. Shipping lanes there carry more than half of Australian exports — to Japan and South Korea as well as China. The Chinese rulers claim most of the South China Sea and have constructed artificial islands there, including military bases.

The rift between Canberra and Beijing deepened last April when the Australian government called for an international inquiry into the Wuhan, China, origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. With imperial arrogance, Prime Minister Morrison said the inquiry should wield the powers of “weapons inspectors.”

Beijing complains Canberra is interfering with the Chinese government’s oppressive treatment of the Uighur nationality in Xinjiang as well as its policies in Hong Kong and its relations with Taiwan. It accuses the Australian federal government of laws “aimed to torpedo” the Australian state of Victoria’s participation in Beijing’s Belt and Road program, designed to facilitate exports by Chinese companies.

Beijing has retaliated with tariffs that block 20 billion Australian dollars’ worth of exports to China (\$15.5 billion). Barley, beef, wine, lobsters, wheat, timber and coal have been hit with taxes or bans. Beijing suspended coal imports worth over AU\$14 billion in November.

But the two biggest exports by Australian mining and energy firms to China, iron ore and natural gas, have continued unrestricted.

Canberra has long had duties on some Chinese exports.

China-based corporations and banks in the South Pacific are now the main rivals of Australian capitalists, who have long dominated and plundered the region. Canberra opposes plans by Chinese companies to build a fisheries factory and a port on Daru Island. This is one of the poorest regions of Papua New Guinea, Canberra’s former colony, just to Australia’s north.

MILITANT

LABOR FORUMS

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Malcolm X: Leader of Working People of All Colors and Creeds. Speaker: Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Atlanta City Council president. Fri., March 19, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

TEXAS

Dallas

Malcolm X: Leader of Working People of All Colors and Creeds. Speaker: George Chalmers, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., March 20, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 1005 W. Jefferson Blvd., Suite 207. Tel: (469) 513-1051.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Locked-out Marathon Petroleum workers win growing support

ST. PAUL PARK, Minn. — The 200 locked-out members of Teamsters Local 120 continue to win support and solidarity in their fight for safety against Marathon Petroleum refinery bosses here. Marathon is the largest oil refining company in the U.S.

Several area unions organized to join the picket line in a show of solidarity March 6, including Iron Workers Local 512, United Steelworkers District 11, Steamfitters Pipefitters Local 455, and Laborers Local 563. They carried banners of support, lining the road that truckers take into and out of the refinery.

After a one-day protest strike Jan. 21, Marathon has locked out the refinery workers ever since. The company is trying to keep production going, using management and contract workers.

The key issue is the bosses' insistence on replacing some union workers with contract labor, a move that increases the danger of a disaster because of the use of hazardous chemicals — like hydrofluoric acid — in the refining process.

Strikers picketed outside Metro Transit's headquarters and bus garage March 1 to protest their continued use of Marathon-produced gas. Metro Transit runs buses and trains throughout the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area.

"These workers are protesting Metro Transit's decision to cross the picket line with their dollars by purchasing fuel from Marathon during an ongoing strike," Ryan Timlin, president of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005, said in a statement. "ATU Local 1005 stands in solidarity with the members of Teamsters 120."

He said that this strikebreaking act was "part of a pattern of anti-union behavior in the agency," noting Local 1005 members have been working without a contract for seven months.

"The Twin Cities has a progressive reputation, but the reality for working-class people is quite the opposite," Timlin added, pointing to how elected officials there appointed the Metro Transit board. "Those Democrats who claim to stand with workers are responsible for putting these anti-union individuals in

positions of power."

Messages and donations to the strike fund can be sent to Teamsters Local 120, 9422 Ulysses St. NE, Blaine, MN 55434.

—Nick Neeser

Manchester bus drivers strike over longer hours, no raise in pay

MANCHESTER, England — Some 400 bus drivers at Go North West are winning support during their first week on strike, after bosses tried to impose a new contract with longer hours but no pay increase.

Unite, their union, says bosses' demands would leave workers out of pocket by 2,500 pounds (\$3,450) a year. Workers are especially angry over bosses' threats to fire drivers who refused to sign the new contract.

Mark Porter, Unite union convener at Rolls-Royce in Barnoldswick, brought a 500 pound strike fund donation and gave a brazier (burn barrel) to the Queen's Road picket line March 5. The brazier displays two messages, "Stop fire and rehire" and "Solidarity from Rolls-Royce Barnoldswick." Unite members there fought a nine-week strike recently, stopping the company from cutting hundreds of jobs.

Dozens of drivers had showed up for picket line duty when Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for mayor of Greater Manchester, visited that day. Some were deployed to bus stops across the city, talking to passengers and drivers at other companies about their fight. Go North West has attempted to break the strike by outsourcing routes to smaller bus and coach companies.

Some drivers told Clifford they were angry that Labour Party Mayor Andrew Burnham refused to back the strike and instead pushed for state-organized arbitration. "The working-class doesn't have a party of its own," Clifford said. "Workers and our unions need to build a party of labor."

Clifford and Hugo Wils, the CL's candidate for Manchester City Council, talked about the strike with Guilherme Leme, an Amazon delivery driver, at his home in Moston.

"Since the pandemic, Amazon is



Militant/Nick Neeser

Iron Workers Local 512 members hold banner at union solidarity rally March 6 in support of Teamsters Local 120 oil workers locked out Jan. 22 by Marathon Petroleum in Minnesota.

making us do more deliveries for the same amount of money," Leme said. "We need to fight for a union too."

Leme subscribed to the *Militant* after he saw the coverage of the fight for a union at Amazon's Bessemer, Alabama, warehouse. When Wils met him a week later, Leme said he had stopped by the bus drivers' picket line to offer solidarity on his way to work.

—Ögmundur Jónsson

Medical workers in Oregon strike for first union contract

BEND, Ore. — The first strike in 40 years at St. Charles Medical Center began here March 4 when 150 therapists, technicians and technologists walked out to fight for higher pay. St. Charles is the only hospital in this city.

The workers had voted to join the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals union in 2019, which has been negotiating for a union contract for over a year. Bosses have refused to talk since last December.

Up to 100 union members line the street in front of the hospital every day and are getting support from passing motorists at the busy intersection. Teamsters and members of nurses' unions are joining the picket line and small-shop owners are dropping off food for the strikers.

Contract workers at other St. Charles

facilities get higher pay, striker Rachel Maida, a respiratory therapist, told Al-Jazeera. "Why are we not getting paid the same amount when we put our lives in danger every single day?" she asked.

The hospital here takes the majority of COVID-19 patients in the eastern part of the state. Because of this, bosses claim they have no money as they had to cancel more profitable elective surgeries.

They are hiring replacement workers to try to break the strike. A federal judge rejected a bosses' request for a court injunction aimed at blocking the strike.

The union has set up the OFNHP Cares — Member Hardship Relief Fund to support the strikers. To contribute go to <https://www.gofundme.com/f/ofnhp-cares-member-hardship-relief-fund>.

—Louise Goodman

Brewery workers fight lockout over Molson concession demands

TORONTO — Molson Coors Beverage Co. Feb. 20 locked out the 300 workers at its brewery here after they rejected the company's "best and final" offer by a vote of 208 to 69. The unionists, members of Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers Local 325, had been working without a contract since Dec. 31. The Toronto brewery is one of Molson's biggest in Canada, churning out about 880 million bottles of beer a year.

Local 325 President Gaurav Sharma told the *Toronto Star* that the union is fighting to end the two-tier wage structure, in effect since 2010, which caps new-hire wages at 84% of those hired earlier. "We were trying to bring everyone into the same wage scale," he said.

The bosses also want changes to the pension system and new 12-hour weekend shifts with no overtime pay. They hoped to sell the concessions with raises each year of the contract and a 1,000 Canadian dollar (\$795) ratification bonus.

Pickets at one gate this *Militant* correspondent talked to were all opposed to the new shift. Marko Rodman, a 20-year veteran at the plant, said he's divorced and has his kids every second week. He doesn't see how he'd be able to handle such shifts. The proposed changes to the pension system also mean he would have to work 10 years longer to qualify.

Three weeks before the lockout the company posted help-wanted ads for temporary workers. A company spokesperson claimed it was a routine posting for summer help, not related to contract negotiations. Workers say they'll see what happens.

—Tony Di Felice

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 25, 1996

President Bill Clinton signed the Helms-Burton bill into law March 12, in Washington's latest attempt to squeeze Cuba economically and undermine its socialist revolution. The legislation tightens the U.S. trade embargo by penalizing businessmen in other countries who invest in the Caribbean nation.

Surrounded by Democratic and Republican politicians, Clinton declared, "We're here today around a common commitment to bring democracy to Cuba," referring to Washington's goal of overthrowing the revolution.

Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, said the law was a prime example of U.S. "arrogance, haughtiness, and desperation in the face of a failed policy." "No pressure will succeed in making Cuba give up its right to fight for independence and national sovereignty," declared a statement issued by the National Assembly.



March 26, 1971

More than a year after the first congressional rumblings were heard about the need for investigations into mushrooming government surveillance, such an inquiry was finally undertaken when the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights opened public hearings Feb. 23.

The Pentagon alone keeps files on 25 million Americans. These include persons it considers a "threat to security and defense." The Pentagon's data bank, Assistant Secretary of Defense Robert Froehlke testified, keeps files on 760,000 organizations and processes an average of 12,000 "requests" per day. Not only have people been refused jobs, insurance or loans as a result, but some have been blackmailed or defamed.

Neither the Pentagon nor the executive branch has any intention of eliminating the practice of spying on the American people. This has been going on for decades.



March 23, 1946

DETROIT — After 113 days on the picket lines, the heroic 175,000 General Motors strikers on March 13 finally forced the multi-billion dollar corporation to terms.

The agreement both with respect to wages and other concessions must be viewed as a significant even though partial victory. Especially heartening is the fact that the workers were able to hold out solidly and have emerged with their ranks intact, united and full of fight.

Membership meetings of the 80 GM locals will vote on ratification of the contract. No locals are authorized to return to work until a majority of the locals have voted acceptance of the terms.

The lessons of this strike have been imbedded deeply in the consciousness of the GM and other auto workers. We may be sure that they will not rest on their gains, but will stand in the forefront of the new struggles that loom ahead.

Millions of workers need jobs

Continued from front page
steel in Pennsylvania.

While some lockdowns have been relaxed recently, the fight to reverse crippling joblessness remains vital for working people. It's crucial to our ability to unite and to organize the battles needed to defend our working and living conditions, and strengthen our unions.

The "stimulus" bill being pushed by Democrats contains nothing to reverse vast unemployment, certainly not the kind of massive government-funded public works program that could provide millions of jobs at union scale to build and repair infrastructure, hospitals, schools, public transit and other things working people need today. Instead, it contains some one-time handouts and billions in subsidies for a wide variety of bosses and local governments.

There are over 9.5 million more workers out of a job today than a year ago. In 15 states the employment-to-population ratio — the percentage of working-age people who have a job — fell last year to the lowest levels ever recorded.

Unemployed workers face upheaval and uncertainty on their own, conditions that breed demoralization over time. Only at work can we join together, stand up to the bosses and exercise our power as a class. Through struggles on the job we discover what we are capable of doing and our self-confidence and class consciousness grows.

Last month Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell admitted the real level of unemployment was double official government figures. For lowest-paid workers, the Federal Reserve estimates, unemployment is closer to 20%.

But even in the best of times, unemployment is integral to the workings of capitalist exploitation. It provides bosses with a ready-made reserve army of labor that they hire when it's profitable and throw back out of work when it's not. They aim to use divisions among

those in and out of work as a lever to pit workers against each other, to boost profits by slashing wages and benefits, speeding up our work and disregarding our safety and health.

Workers finding ways to stand tall

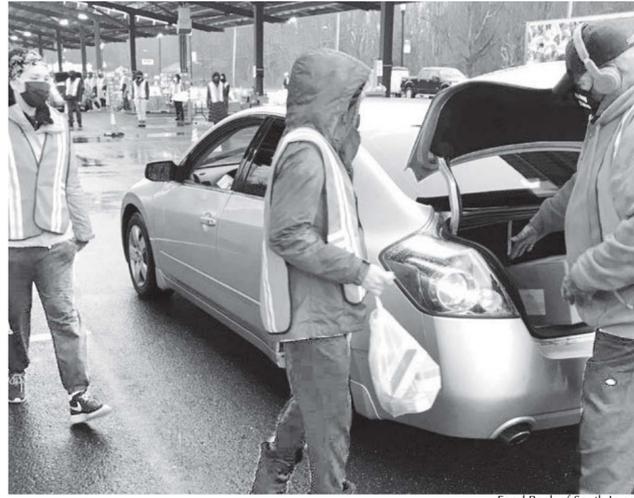
Workers are looking for ways to stand up to these attacks. Some are organizing strikes and other fights. Voting for a union is underway at the Amazon fulfillment center in Bessemer, Alabama, a fight being watched closely by workers elsewhere and that merits solidarity from all workers and farmers and our unions.

"Central to strengthening struggles workers are involved in today is the need to get more of us back to work," Joe Swanson, retired rail worker and Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in Lincoln, Nebraska, told the *Militant*. "The SWP campaign calls on unions to mobilize workers to fight for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, to share the available work around."

The government says that there is no problem with inflation today, and maybe that's true for the things the boss class loads up on. But working people are being hit by rising prices for our basic necessities. Food inflation was up by 3.9% in 2020, its highest increase in nine years. Meat prices shot up 5.5%.

"Workers need to fight for cost-of-living clauses in every union contract that force the bosses to raise our wages and retirement pay every time prices go up, regardless of the effect on their profits," Swanson said. "Only by fighting for our class interests against the class that exploits us can workers defend ourselves."

Long before the pandemic, millions of workers faced an uphill struggle to cover monthly expenses for rent, health insurance and utilities. Now three times more people are behind in their rent, the Census Bureau reports. The government claims evictions are temporarily on hold, but some workers who rent are still being thrown out



Volunteers give groceries to jobless workers at food bank in Lindenwold, New Jersey. In 15 states last year the percentage of working-age people with jobs fell to the lowest levels ever.

on the street and others are on the hook for spiraling rent arrears, adding to the burden of all kinds of debts that weigh on working people.

For decades profit rates of the ruling capitalist families have tended to decline. As a consequence they have shied away from investing in new factories and capacity-expanding equipment that would provide jobs. Instead, they've engaged in an ongoing orgy of speculative investment in bonds, stocks, Bitcoin, derivatives and all kinds of paper. A stark example of this frenzy was the recent war between manipulators of GameStop stock prices and competing hedge-fund

tycoons. At some point this bubble will burst with devastating consequences for working people.

"If efforts to control the pandemic make headway and the capitalist economy improves," Swanson said, "the job openings created will give our class more confidence to fight."

"Every question we face today has to be answered from the standpoint of the interests of working people," he said. "Democrats and Republicans do everything possible to hide that reality, by claiming to speak for 'all Americans.' But that's a lie. Workers need to build our own party, a labor party."

Support fight to win a union at Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama!

Continued from front page

one front in an ongoing national class struggle.

"An important and far-ranging discussion is going on among working people in Alabama — and beyond — about the union-organizing drive now underway here," Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Atlanta mayor, told the *Militant* in Bessemer March 6. "The SWP campaign across the country has thrown itself behind this fight, and we're doing all we can to build support."

"That's why I'm here this weekend, along with Margaret Trowe, SWP candidate for mayor of Louisville, Kentucky, and campaign supporters from both places," she said. "Workers involved in the organizing drive need solidarity."

"We've met workers of all backgrounds, from young to retirees, from grocery store workers to coal miners, and many are hoping for a union victory," she said. "Some are talking to family members who work at Amazon about the difference a union can make and why they should vote 'yes.'"

"I voted 'yes' on my union ballot," Julia Vanderlinden told Fruit, when Louisville SWP campaigner Jacquie Henderson spoke with her March 6 in nearby Hueytown, where many steelworkers and coal miners live. One thing going for the organizing drive is the long history of union organizing and struggles in the area. "I learned about unions from my father, who worked in the coal mines for years. My husband is a miner," she said.

JaMiracle Howard, who lives in the same complex as Vanderlinden and also works at Amazon, told the socialist campaigners that she had decided not to vote in favor of the union. "Ama-

zon is a much better company than the one I worked for before, where I was fired for being pregnant," Howard said. "Amazon appreciates me."

"That's what all the companies tell us," said SWP campaigner Ned Measel, who works at Walmart. "But what if something happens? Or a manager doesn't like you? Or we need to fight against speedup? A worker alone can't confront a giant company as an individual. We need to combine our forces as workers. It takes solidarity and using the power that only comes when we act together, that's what a union is."

"And we have to see ourselves as part of an international class of workers, the only class that can make a fundamental change to end this capitalist system, which is the source of the crisis working people face," he said.

Howard decided to get an introductory subscription to the *Militant* and bought *In Defense of the US Working Class*. "I want to read that part in there about the miners and the teachers," she said, referring to the series of militant teachers strikes that swept the country in 2018.

Example of Black Jewel miners

In Hueytown, Shea Harper invited Trowe and this worker-correspondent onto her porch to talk. "I'm so glad you said you weren't for the Democrats or Republicans," she said with a laugh. Her son, Stephen, who works as a belt repairman at Warrior Met no. 7 mine in Brookwood, came out and joined us. "I think the union is good, but that doesn't mean there aren't problems," he said. "The company will do anything to get the coal out, no matter what it takes. They've

Workers in Texas left on their own amid capitalist catastrophe

Continued from front page

and their drive for profit above all else. They made sure that the energy industry in Texas would operate on this priority only.

Many are still impacted by the disaster. Clara Mendoza, who lives in the Vickery Meadow neighborhood in Northeast Dallas, told the *Dallas Morning News* that she was exhausted from the fight to find water. "Now we have water, but not hot water," she said. She heats water for her family on the stove so they can wash and worries about how high her electricity bills will go.

Maria Magarin, who lives in the same complex, said her apartment is full of soggy carpet, the smell of mold and walls bulging from burst water pipes. Magarin, who has four children, said she went to the leasing office every day and they did nothing. After she threatened to call the police, they moved her family to another apartment.

When supporters of Gerardo Sanchez, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council here, visited the Vickery Meadow neighborhood March 9 to express solidarity and discuss what workers can do, the apartment buildings still lacked water. Francisco Aben, a cleaner who lives in a nearby apartment complex, said that he and his wife were recovering from COVID-19 when the storm hit. With no income, they went 15 days without water. "When our rent bill came," he said, "there was a charge on



Cattle are fed hay on snow-covered farm in Waxahachie, Texas, in February. Working farmers in beef, dairy and vegetables have been hit hard with losses in the millions of dollars.

for water, even though we had none."

"We need our own party — a labor party based on the unions — to champion and lead a fight for the nationalization of the energy industry under workers control," Sanchez said in a statement campaigners showed those they met. "Working people and our unions need to fight for a federally funded public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages repairing broken pipes, damaged homes and apartment buildings, and replacing the worn-out power

systems and other infrastructure in Texas and around the U.S."

The majority of working people in Dallas rent in apartment complexes, where many are still recovering from broken pipes and storm damage. Dallas has the lowest homeownership rate of the top five most populous U.S. cities.

Rural areas were also hit extremely hard. Texas farmers and ranchers produce \$25 billion in beef, dairy and vegetable products per year. Texas cabbages — 30% of the total U.S. supply — sweet onions, Valencia oranges, lemons and limes and other crops were either destroyed or severely damaged.

The livestock industry was hit by the storm with \$228 million in losses. Water tanks froze, feedlots and dairies ran out of feed. Dairies and dairy farmers had to dump some 14 million gallons of milk.

These losses have pushed many farmers to the edge and led to food shortages at the grocery stores.

Working-class solidarity

There are many examples of working people coming to the aid of fellow workers as state and local officials left millions to fend for themselves. In Leander, small farmers gave away produce, meat and baked goods to their neighbors.

A coffee shop in Roanoke that lost electricity gave away milk to local families instead of throwing it out.

"My four children were overjoyed," one customer said. "We celebrated with cereal for dinner."

"A lot of small towns are just destroyed right now. It's bad. One grocery store supporting three or four towns. And without that, there's just nothing," Alyssa Young told KVUE-TV in Austin. Young, a dessert caterer, made sandwich kits and organized to have them taken to people in San Antonio.

"I lost power and my water meter froze," Julio Moreno told SWP campaigners when they went knocking on doors in Dallas. He subscribed to the *Militant* newspaper.

"My next door neighbor helped me get the ice out of the frozen water meter and also gave me water," he said. "My power came on but many houses on the block didn't get it back, including my neighbor's. We ran an extension cord from my house to his. He offered to help with the bill, but I said, you gave me water so we're even."

Moreno, an independent owner truck driver for short-haul deliveries for the printing industry, pointed to a transformer on the electrical line near his house. "They're building more and more houses in the area and the transformers are too small for the neighborhood," he said. "The companies don't replace them and do the maintenance because they don't want to spend the money."

"This crisis was not a natural disaster, but was caused by the capitalist system that puts profits before human needs," Sanchez said. "What working people did to aid each other is a small example of what we are capable of."

"The SWP campaign puts forward the perspective that working people can organize to come together and completely transform this society to meet the needs of humanity," he said. "But this is only possible when we begin to fight and then realize what we are capable of. Then we can begin to build a powerful working-class movement to defend all those who are exploited and oppressed by the capitalist ruling families and organize in our millions to take political power into our own hands and establish a government of workers and farmers."

George Chalmers contributed to this article.

Hong Kong protest hits Beijing crackdown, blows to autonomy

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Hundreds of demonstrators gathered outside a Hong Kong courthouse March 1 holding banners and shouting slogans in defiance of Beijing's tightening crackdown on political space for working people. Forty-seven prominent protest leaders and opposition politicians faced charges filed under draconian "national security" laws imposed last June.

Signs read, "Release all political prisoners!" and "Regain HK, revolution of our times!" Police charged all 47 with "conspiracy to commit subversion."

The arrests followed mass demonstrations against assaults on political rights, as the government in Beijing has bolstered its domination over Hong Kong. The former British colony was returned to China in 1997, and Beijing had promised "gradual and orderly progress" to-

ward direct elections for the territory's legislature and chief executive.

Xia Baolong, Beijing's Hong Kong overseer, called for "severe punishment" for Joshua Wong, a former student leader, and two other protesters. Under the security law imposed by Chinese authorities, sentences include life in prison.

The 47 were charged with organizing a primary selection of candidates with the best chance of winning in the district council elections.

Candidates backing Beijing were soundly defeated in those elections, alarming the ruling party. Only half of the 70 seats are popularly elected, the rest are chosen by top business and professional groups that overwhelmingly support the Chinese government.

China's annual National People's Congress is set to open in Beijing. **Continued on page 9**

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Lessons of Cuba's revolution can help us emulate its example

One of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March is *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952-58, a Participant's Account* by Armando Hart. He was a central organizer of the urban underground and one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution. After overthrowing the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in 1959, Cuba's toilers, led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, established a workers and farmers government and the first socialist revolution in the Americas. As minister of education, Hart helped lead the mass literacy campaign in 1961, which taught a million Cubans to read and write. He was minister of culture from 1976 to 1997. The excerpts are from the preface by editor Mary-Alice Waters. Copyright © 2004 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Bohemia/Constantino Arias

University students march in Havana against Fulgencio Batista's U.S.-backed dictatorship, April 6, 1952, a month after he overthrew the elected government in a coup. Armando Hart is sixth from left, looking at the camera. Behind, waving Cuban flag, is Raúl Castro.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

More than five decades ago, Armando Hart emerged as a leader of the young generation of students and working people who burst into history as they took to the streets in opposition to the 1952 military coup d'état in Cuba that installed one of the most brutal dictatorships Latin America had yet experienced. The Centennial Generation, as they became known, refused to accept or compromise with the tyranny and corruption that marked

political life in Cuba. They asserted not only the right but the obligation of the Cuban people to rise in armed insurrection if need be to bring down a bloody, illegitimate regime that had usurped power by force. And they set out to forge a revolutionary movement capable of achieving their aims.

Aldabonazo — which in Spanish means a sharp, warning knock on the door — became a rallying cry of that generation of youth who risked their lives in defiance of the military regime. What distinguished them from the various bourgeois political parties and associations that opposed the Batista dictatorship was not primarily words, but deeds. Without fear of consequences for themselves, or political hesitation over where the struggle might lead, they fought for what they believed was right and refused to settle for less.

Fewer than seven years later, under the leadership of Fidel Castro, the July 26 Revolutionary Movement and its Rebel Army led the workers, peasants, and revolutionary-minded youth of Cuba to victory. Some 20,000 had paid with their lives by the time Batista and his henchmen fled the country on January 1, 1959. A new revolutionary government was installed with the jubilant support of the overwhelming majority of the Cuban people. Armando Hart was the first minister of education in that government.

Aldabonazo takes us into this history

from the perspective of the cadres who with courage and audacity led the struggle waged by the urban underground. ...

Through Hart's account we begin to understand more fully and accurately the day-by-day political struggle waged by the forces that came together in 1955 under the leadership of Fidel Castro to form the July 26 Revolutionary Movement, named for the date of the 1953 assault on the Moncada military garrison in Santiago de Cuba that marked the opening of the popular insurrection against the dictatorship. We follow the men and women of the July 26 Movement as they work to develop their political program; as they struggle, through action and debate, to win the leadership of the revolutionary vanguard; as they take advantage of every opening to intervene in the broad political ferment, exposing the empty posturing and pretensions of the traditional bourgeois opposition parties; and as they clarify questions of strategy and tactics debated not only among the revolutionary cadres ... but throughout the anti-Batista opposition.

Above all we come to appreciate the leadership capacities of Fidel Castro as he pulls together and politically orients the revolutionary cadres coming from diverse origins and experiences — exemplified by men and women like Armando Hart and his brother Enrique, Celia Sánchez, Frank País, Haydée Santamaría, Níco López, Vilma Espín,

and Faustino Pérez — to name but a few of those whom we meet and begin to know in these pages. We watch the core of the national leadership of the July 26 Movement in the Llano emerge, grow and recover from the blows of repression, and transform themselves in the course of the struggle. ...

We see how the men and women of the July 26 Movement fought to forge a disciplined organization of cadres whose goal — as explained in the leadership's 1957 "Circular No. 1 to the membership," printed here — was "a) To overthrow Batista through popular action, [which] is not the same as just overthrowing him," and "b) To consolidate the revolutionary instrument to ensure the fulfillment of the revolution's program, also through popular action, [which] is not the same as simply creating a new party."

Along this course the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army not only led the working people of Cuba to bring down the dictatorship and establish the first "free territory of the Americas." They opened the road to the first socialist revolution in our hemisphere as well. For the first time since the Bolsheviks under Lenin led the workers, peasants, and soldiers of the tsarist empire to power in October 1917, a leadership of the toilers unpoisoned by the degeneration of the Russian Revolution emerged on the world stage, bypassing obstacles and creating new possibilities for struggle. A quarter century of revolution in the Americas ensued — from the Southern Cone through the Andes, to Central America and the Caribbean. The liberation of southern Africa became a reality.

Therein lies the root of the implacable hatred of the U.S. rulers for the Cuban Revolution and for those who led — and lead — it. Therein lie the reasons why for more than forty years Washington has never for an instant ceased attempting to punish the Cuban people for their audacity, to force them into submission. And why imperialism has failed. ...

The Cuban Revolution in all its rich complexity is a vital, living part of the present and future struggles of Our America, and the world. The better we understand how that revolution was led to victory, the better prepared we will be to emulate its example and meet the challenges posed by the social and political explosions that will shape the twenty-first century.

March **BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

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Celebrate International Women's Day!

Statement by Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey governor, March 8.

The fight for women's emancipation is in the interest of all working people and is key to unifying the working class in the face of capitalist exploitation and oppression. Fewer questions are more important to building a working-class party and a movement of millions to advance the liberation of all humanity.

Defending a woman's right to unrestricted family planning, including the right to safe and secure abortion, is fundamental to women controlling their own lives and to winning full social, economic and political equality. Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets in Poland, Ireland, Argentina and elsewhere to demand the right for women to choose to have an abortion. In Ireland and Argentina gains have been made that set an example for working people everywhere.

Decades of attacks by opponents of women's rights and of working people have made serious inroads on women's access to abortion in the U.S., hitting working-class women and those in rural areas especially hard. These assaults must be answered, with unqualified support for the right of women to make this crucial decision about their own lives and with protests in the streets led by unions and women's rights organizations.

The integration of women into the workforce strengthens the working class and increases the centrality of the fight for women's equality. Hundreds of thousands of women have joined protests by farmers in India on International Women's Day, demanding the overturn of new laws that threaten to sacrifice farmers' livelihoods to the profits of agricultural conglomerates. Women garment workers in Yangon, Myanmar, were among the first to orga-

nize strikes against the military coup there.

Blows are being dealt to the fight for women's rights today by middle-class liberals, who claim that human beings are not born male or female, but can choose to be whatever sex they like. They deny the fact that in class society women are an oppressed sex, and they seek to erase the history of hard-fought battles for women's emancipation. And they harass and try to silence anyone who speaks out against their anti-scientific views.

The fact is anti-women prejudices are declining among working people. This increases prospects that efforts by the bosses to pit women and men against each other, the better to exploit both, can be defeated in unified struggle. The historic fight to end the oppression of women — rooted in class society — and all forms of discrimination can only be carried through to the end by the working class taking political power.

The clearest example of what is possible is Cuba's socialist revolution. By overturning capitalist rule, Cuban working people ended domination by the exploiting class that profits from the second-class status of women.

Led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, they built a workers and farmers government and used it to take over the factories and banks; to nationalize the land and place it in the hands of those who wanted to farm it; to mobilize 250,000 young volunteers to eradicate illiteracy; to outlaw racial segregation; and to draw millions of women into social and political life for the first time. Their conquest of power established the indispensable foundations for advancing the fight to eradicate the subjugation of women and much more.

The SWP is building a working-class party in the U.S. to emulate that example. Join us!

Steelworkers at ATI vote to authorize strike

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

Some 1,300 workers at nine Allegheny Technologies Inc. steel mills held a strike authorization vote March 5 with 95% backing a walkout. "It's time to take a stand, and stop the bleeding," Todd Barbiaux, a crane operator and president of United Steelworkers Local 1196 in Brackenridge, Pennsylvania, told the *Militant* by phone after the local's over 400 members voted.

If a strike comes, he told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, "we're prepared. We have the signs, the barrels, the sheds that can all be up within two hours."

The overwhelming strike vote reflected workers' rising anger and frustration with the steel bosses' demands that seek to divide the workforce and weaken the union: a contract without a pay raise, deeper two-tier divisions, elimination of overtime after eight hours, cuts in health care and retirement, and increased contracting out. The Steelworkers have been working through a one-year contract extension, which expired Feb. 28.

"We haven't had a raise in six years," Ben McCain, a railroad engineer who moves molten slag and other steel waste byproducts in the Brackenridge mill, told the *Militant*. "We need higher wages because food and other costs are going up. The company wants us to work longer hours for less. They don't care."

The last time their union contract ran out in 2015, the company locked out the workers for seven months. The day after the lockout began, the bosses restarted production with strikebreakers brought in by the notorious scab-herding firm Strom Engineering. After the National Labor Relations Board ruled the lockout was illegal, a settlement was reached.

Workers went back into the plants with their heads held high, having won some of their demands, but they were also forced to accept a series of concessions, including the wage freeze.

At that time the union organized 2,200 workers at 12 plants. Today they represent 1,300. The bosses are shuttering union mills and shifting products and resources to nonunion plants in North Carolina.

"We are taking decisive action to become a more profitable company," Robert Wetherbee, ATI president and CEO, told Berkshire Hathaway's Business Wire last December, "by shedding a low-margin product line," production of stainless steel, and "re-deploying resources to an aerospace and defense-centered portfolio" to "generate significant value for our shareholders." More union-organized plants are slated for closure.

"Here we are again, with a contract that forgets actual workers with real families," Angie McCain told the *Militant*, referring to the 2015-16 lockout. "The lockout made people stick together in the plant.

"The spouses have started to talk with other spouses now," she said. "If there's a strike, we are here to fight."

A former contract worker at ATI, McCain was active in Wives of Steel, which organized to get solidarity, food, funds and Christmas presents during the lockout.

Dave Varsho, a garage worker and unit chair of USW Local 7139-05 in Washington, Pennsylvania, was a probationary worker during the lockout who stuck with the union. "There are negotiations back and forth, but the items on the company side that separate union members, and create a two-tier situation, that's the problem," he said. "Solidarity is our strength."

Messages of solidarity can be sent to: union-hall1196@gmail.com.

Indian farmers' fight to defend livelihood grows

BY ROY LANDERSEN

"Now the farmers in India are doing 'maha-panchayats' — really big gatherings in different villages for discussions on what they're going to do now," Gurcharan Singh, a construction worker in Montreal, told the *Militant* Feb. 28. His father, Kuldeep Singh, farms 18 acres in Ropar, Punjab. The goal of the mass meetings is to broaden and build the farmer protest movement.

Tens of thousands have camped in protest for the last three months around New Delhi, the capital, demanding the revoking of three laws imposed by the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that threaten family farmers' livelihoods.

These "black laws" would eliminate government price supports and undercut state-organized wholesale produce markets that help ensure farmers' income. This would benefit the country's big agribusiness firms by allowing them to dictate prices to small farmers, increasing their debt burdens and forcing many off the land.

Farmers instead want to extend state-backed minimum prices, which currently cover some staple crops in just a few states, to all farm produce. This would help cover their costs of production — including their family living costs — against rising expenses for diesel, fertilizers and other farm inputs.

At the end of December, Kuldeep Singh went to the Singhu protest outside New Delhi, a trip of about 170 miles. "Because of all the protesters on the road [the drive] took him 10 hours," Gurcharan Singh said. And then he had to walk 6 miles through the camp.

Begun by largely Sikh farmers from Punjab, the movement has spread across the country's northern

and western farm belts to Hindu and now Muslim farmers. Sugar cane farmers from Uttar Pradesh state, facing lengthy delays in crop payments, have joined the protests. Village assemblies are being organized across Madhya Pradesh in central India this month.

In an action marking 100 days of mass protests, farmers in cars, tractors and trucks blocked an expressway outside New Delhi for several hours March 6.

Gurcharan Singh said the village assemblies are drawing in landless farm laborers as well. Many of the farmworkers are Dalits, the so-called untouchable caste. "And now it's not only farmers and farmworkers," he said. "It's other workers and labor protests too, because 80% of labor in India is directly linked to farming."

The farm protest movement in India is inspiring fellow farmers to take action around similar demands across the border in Pakistan. "We are launching an India-like movement in March against this anti-farmer government," Pakistan Farmers' Unity President Zulfikar Awan told the Feb. 25 *Diplomat*.

Hong Kong protest

Continued from page 7

Congress began March 5. Vice Chairman Wang Chen announced it would adopt a new electoral system for Hong Kong that would further limit direct elections, ensuring only true Chinese "patriots" would serve.

Pro-Beijing Hong Kong legislator Martin Liao unwittingly spoke the truth March 6 — that Beijing's "reforms" are to prevent a "dictatorship of the majority."

The last time so many protesters were charged with subversion in China was in the wake of Beijing's brutal crushing of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests.

In the past two years, over 10,000 people have been detained, while others have fled overseas. Many public sector workers have been dismissed or forced to swear loyalty oaths to Beijing.

The regime in Beijing also fears the effects of the Hong Kong protests on the massive working class and peasantry on the mainland.

Correction

In the article "Books by Revolutionary Leaders Sell Well at Tehran Fair" in the *Militant* dated March 15, the wrong name of the main sponsor of the cultural event was garbled in a copyediting error by the *Militant*. The sponsor was the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

Tells story of how the class-struggle leadership of the Teamsters union in Minneapolis in 1934 showed how to fight — and win — strike battles in midst of depression. \$16

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