

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

SWP meeting celebrates Cuba and the coming American revolution
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 85/NO. 18 MAY 10, 2021

Car caravans demand: 'End US embargo against Cuba!'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Opponents of Washington's over 60-year economic war against Cuba joined car caravans and rallies in at least 20 U.S. cities, and in Canada, the U.K. and other countries April 25. They demanded: End the U.S. embargo against Cuba! U.S. out of Guantánamo now! End U.S. travel restrictions against Cuba!

This month's caravans took place as supporters of the Cuban Revolution celebrated the 60th anniversary of two historic victories: the defeat in less than 72 hours of the U.S.-backed mercenary invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, and the yearlong campaign that eliminated illiteracy throughout the country that year.

In Cuba, some 3,000 people rode in caravans in two cities: Santa Clara and Las Tunas. "Many young people could be seen on bicycles, motorcycles, skateboards and light vehicles," reported *Granma*. A regatta of boats sailed along the Havana coastline to join the protests.

The U.S. monthly caravans, initiated
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Help expand the reach of the 'Militant,' SWP 2021 campaign!

BY SETH GALINSKY

The nine-week international drive to sell 1,400 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 1,400 books on working-class politics and raise \$145,000 for the Militant Fighting Fund has begun.

The drive will advance the campaigns of the 20 Socialist Workers Party candidates for state and local offices who are walking strike picket lines and building solidarity with labor struggles, talking to workers and farmers on their doorsteps, marching in actions against police brutality, joining protests against the military junta in Myanmar and building monthly car caravans that demand an end to the U.S. economic war against Cuba.

SWP candidates have spoken at many of these actions, pointing out the common interests of working people, from the U.S. to Myanmar and beyond. They act to bring together fighters from union and other struggles.

Indispensable to this work is getting the *Militant* and books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries into the hands of working people. These
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New hiring spurs workers struggles for jobs, unions

BY TERRY EVANS

U.S. bosses are hiring — from steel mills to construction sites to the restaurant business — as COVID-19 vaccinations spread, government lockouts are reduced and the ruling capitalist families see increased opportunities to profit. As production increases, and competition between capitalists surges, they are

2,900 AUTOWORKERS STRIKE AT VOLVO

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intensifying attacks on wages, working conditions and our unions.

More workers getting back on the job is crucial because only at work are we able to join together to take on the employers' drive to profit at our expense. That is why we should do everything we can to convince fellow workers to get vaccinated to join in the class struggle.

Recent hiring means bosses' ability to pit employed and unemployed workers against each other has begun to ease a
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Food delivery workers protest for decent wages, conditions, dignity



Delivery workers march in New York April 21. Sign at left says "Tips are not wages." Sign at right says "Justice for Francisco Villalva," murdered for trying to stop thieves stealing his bike.

BY RÓGER CALERO AND SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK — Over 1,000 food-delivery workers took to the streets of Manhattan April 21 to demand a livable wage and decent working conditions from restaurant owners and app companies that rely on their services.

Honking their bicycle horns they rode across the city, drawing sup-

Solidarity with workers resisting boss attacks!



Above, United Mine Workers of America; inset, Militant/Glen Swanson
April 21 rally in McCalla, Alabama, to support mineworkers on strike for higher wages, safety, pensions against Warrior Met Coal. Right, picket line same day at mine entrance in Brookwood.

Steelworkers refuse to give in to ATI bosses' threats

BY TONY LANE

BRACKENRIDGE, Pa. — "Don't try to strong-arm the steelworkers," said Todd Barbiaux, president of United Steelworkers Local 1196. He was responding to demands by bosses
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Warrior Met coal miners win support in 'battle of our lives'

BY SUSAN LAMONT

MCCALLA, Ala. — At a rally attended by 450 people here April 21, striking miners from the Brookwood coal mine were joined by union retirees, family members and contingents from other unions. The event was held at Tannehill State Park in the first union-organized rally to support the battle of United Mine Workers of America mem-
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Over 1,000 march to protest Chicago cop killing 13-year old Adam Toledo

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CHICAGO — More than 1,000 people marched through the streets of the mostly Latino neighborhood of Little Village here April 18 to protest the police killing of Adam Toledo. The action began next to the alley where the 13 year old was shot by Chicago police of-
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Quebec teachers strike again for better pay, conditions

port from construction and building-maintenance workers, UPS drivers and other bystanders. More delivery workers joined along the route.

Many of the protesters, who call themselves "deliveristas," work for app companies like DoorDash, GrubHub, UberEats, and Relay. These "gig economy" companies consider the
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‘501’ deportations by Australian gov’t are attack on working class

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY — Defending Canberra’s policy of stepping up deportations of “criminals,” Minister of Home Affairs Peter Dutton called it “taking the trash out” to “keep Australia safe.”

His comments coincided with a Channel 9 TV report titled, “Con Air: The secret flights sending foreign criminals packing.” Their reporter was allowed to film and curse out deportees as they boarded a plane bound for New Zealand. “Our country doesn’t want you,” he told one woman, adding, “How does it feel to be kicked out of Australia?”

Deportations from Australia have been rising since changes to the migration law in 2014 gave the government arbitrary powers to expel any noncitizen deemed to be “not of good character.” This includes mandatory cancellation of visas of anyone sentenced to a total of a year or more of imprisonment, regardless of when it occurred.

Dutton boasted that under the new rules the visas of about 6,300 “non-citizen criminals” have been canceled. While he and the media paint those deported as dangerous criminals, most have served prison terms for minor offenses. Some have no convictions at all.

More than a third of the deportations have been to New Zealand — 2,375 people between Jan. 1, 2015, and March 12, 2021. More than half of these are of Maori or Pacific Island descent.

Those caught up in this wave of expulsions call themselves “501 deportees,” after section 501 of the Australian Migration Act, which lists the “character traits” Canberra now uses to expel

people. They can be held in immigration prisons in Australia for up to two years waiting for their cases to be decided.

Last year the federal government reopened the infamous detention center on Christmas Island, a remote Australian territory in the Indian Ocean, to incarcerate section 501 detainees. In January protests broke out over conditions, especially lack of contact with families.

“Government attacks on the rights of immigrants target the working class as a whole, deepening divisions among workers and weakening our ability to organize,” Robert Aiken, Communist League candidate for Hurstville Ward, Georges River Council, said. “We reject the reactionary rhetoric of the bosses’ representatives in both countries who label 501 deportees as ‘trash.’ This reflects their class view of all working people.”

Human beings, not ‘trash’

“They are human beings. They’re not trash. They are children that have parents. They have families,” Moana Taverio, told the *Militant*. Her son, Tangaru Noere Turia, was killed by police in Auckland, New Zealand, Feb. 27. He was deported from Australia in 2017 despite having lived here with his family since he was just six months old. His three young children remain in Sydney.

Taverio said her son spent a year in Sydney’s Villawood immigration prison as the family fought for him to be allowed to stay in Australia.

“I want to know what happened to him” in New Zealand, Taverio said, adding she didn’t believe the police’s account of the shooting. Her son had men-



Above, immigration detention center on Christmas Island, remote Australian territory in Indian Ocean. Hundreds of “501 detainees” are imprisoned there, facing deportation under Canberra’s law using “character grounds” to cancel visas of long-term residents. The law especially targets workers from New Zealand. Left, a fire at compound Jan. 10 after several days of sit-in protesting indefinite detention without family visits or contact with anyone.

tal health problems and had “struggled to fit into New Zealand the whole time he was there.” As a 501 deportee he was watched by police since he arrived there.

“I do blame the Australian government, if they hadn’t deported him this wouldn’t have happened,” she said.

For four decades the Australian rulers have imposed growing restrictions

on the rights of New Zealanders moving to Australia. Since 2001, they no longer have an automatic right to permanent residency, curtailing access to unemployment payments and other benefits.

There are about 650,000 New Zealand-born Australian residents. Many have lived in the country for much of their lives, along with their families.

SWP ‘stimulus’ donations head toward \$150,000!

Over the past week 10 contributors donated \$12,740 to bring the contributions to the Socialist Workers Party from U.S. government \$1,400 “stimulus” payments to \$148,040 from 121 people.

The U.S. government continues to send out the stimulus payments. Make a contribution, as the appeal goes over \$150,000!

Michele Smith, from Seattle, wrote: “With joy I send this contribution to make the party strong.”

Susan LaMont, from Atlanta: “Don’t know why my ‘stimulus’ check was so delayed, but I’m happy to finally send along my contribution. It certainly is a great satisfaction to see the wonderful response to the fund.”

These and the many other notes from contributors around the country capture the political confidence in the working class and commitment to building a revolutionary working-class party in the U.S.

Each contribution makes a difference toward expanding the ability of the party to bring its program to many thousands of workers and exploited toilers, and to join with other fighters in labor and social struggles. To build on a course toward the working class taking political power in the U.S. and joining with toilers worldwide to end social relations based on exploitation — class vs. class — and build a socialist society based on human solidarity.

To contribute, make out your check to the Socialist Workers Party and send it to SWP, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. The *Militant* will report weekly on the progress of the appeal.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

Support app-based drivers fight for a union!

From London to New York, Uber, Lyft and taxi bosses are in fierce competition. The app-based bosses profit by making drivers bear costs as “independent contractors.” The ‘Militant’ champions the fight for all drivers to be in a union together fighting for their collective interests.

Militant/Deborah Liatos
Uber, Lyft drivers picketed Los Angeles airport May 2019 demanding “living wages.”

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The Militant

Vol. 85/No. 18
Closing news date: April 29, 2021
Editor: John Studer
Managing Editor: Terry Evans
Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galsky, Emma Johnson, Martin Koppel, Roy Landersen, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams.
Published weekly except for one week in January.
Business Manager: Valerie Johnson
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.
Telephone: (212) 244-4899
Fax: (212) 244-4947
E-mail: themilitant@mac.com
Website: www.themilitant.com
Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.
Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.
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Help expand reach of the ‘Militant’!

Continued from front page
titles explain why the rule of the capitalist class lies behind the problems workers face and what can be done to build the party workers need. Among the books on special is *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, which explains why a socialist revolution is both possible and necessary in the United States.

SWP Northern California campaign
The SWP has just launched the campaign of Joel Britton for California State Assembly in the 18th District. Campaigners have a three-day window to collect 100 signatures to put him on the ballot, April 27-29.

Britton and supporters campaigned at a shift change at the Chevron refinery in Richmond April 22.
“We urged workers to support the locked-out Marathon oil workers in Minnesota as well as the strikes by ATI steelworkers and Warrior Met coal miners,” said Britton. Campaign supporter Jeff Powers noted that “many of the workers knew little or nothing about these important labor battles. Thirty workers who stopped to talk got copies of the *Militant*.”

Britton and SWP campaigner Carole Lesnick knocked on the door of Grace Manuwatao in Alameda a couple days later. Manuwatao, a former nurse, told Britton she was part of union fights that “won benefits and better pay for in-home supportive services workers.” She was also proud to have participated in protests for immigrant rights.

“Our party campaigns for amnesty for the 11 million immigrants here without ‘papers,’ as part of the fight to unite the working class,” Britton told her. “We’ve been waiting for an amnesty, but it has not happened since Ronald Reagan was president in the 1980s,” Manuwatao said.

“More working-class struggles are beginning to happen now that can open the road to revitalizing our unions,” said Britton. “That includes fighting for amnesty.”

Manuwatao subscribed to the *Militant* and said she will sign the petition

to get Britton on the ballot.
Susan LaMont reports that supporters of the Socialist Workers Party campaign of Rachele Fruit for Atlanta mayor and Sam Manuel for City Council president have already sold 14 subscriptions and six books. Campaigners joined a United Mine Workers unity rally in Brookwood, Alabama, April 21, getting a good response from workers attending.

“An autoworker at Mercedes Benz bought a copy of *Teamster Rebellion*,” LaMont said. “We talked about the recent union-organizing drive at Amazon in Bessemer. He wants to learn more about the experiences of workers in the 1930s, especially those that led to union victories.”

The book’s author, Farrell Dobbs, was a leader of the SWP and the strikes and organizing drives that transformed the Teamsters union in the Midwest into a fighting social movement and pointed the road toward independent political action by working people. The title is one of the eight books on special with a subscription during the drive. All other books published by Pathfinder Press are 20% off (see ad on page 8).

‘Looking for something like this’

Rebecca Williamson, Socialist Worker Party candidate for Seattle City Council, and campaign supporter Edwin Fruit spoke with James Lee on his doorstep in North Seattle April 20. Lee is an art student who works part time delivering pizzas.

“I’ve been looking for something like this,” Lee said, when they gave him campaign literature and showed him the *Militant*. “Sometimes I don’t see how change will be made as capitalism is entrenched all over the world.”

“Capitalism makes its own gravediggers,” Williamson said. She noted that farmers in India and working people in Myanmar “are fighting brutal governments. Their struggles are examples of what is possible and highlight the need for a revolutionary working-class leadership, like that forged by Fidel Castro in Cuba to make their revolution a success.”

“I don’t understand why Democrats call the Midwest ‘flyover states’ — like it is irrelevant,” said Lee, who grew up in Iowa. “Who do they think provides all the food or processes the pork or beef people consume if not in the Midwest?”

Williamson told Lee about her experience working in meatpacking in the Midwest where she was part of fights to strengthen unions and to improve conditions,



Militant photos: Left, Alex Huinil; above, Paul Mailhot
Far left, SWP candidate for mayor of New York, Róger Calero, marches with delivery worker Rogelio Martinez during April 21 “deliveristas” protest. Above, Candace Wagner, SWP candidate for N.J. lieutenant governor, introduces *Militant*, *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, *Road to Workers Power* to truck driver William Torres in Passaic, who subscribed, signed to put SWP on the ballot.

as well as in the labor battles going on today. SWP campaigners will be joining the May Day march in Seattle to call for amnesty for undocumented immigrants.

Lee subscribed to the *Militant*. Two days later he participated in a Militant Labor Forum celebrating the 60th anniversary of the victory of the Cuban people over U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary forces that sought to crush their socialist revolution in a failed invasion at Playa Girón.

Contribute: Militant Fighting Fund

The *Militant* is funded entirely from contributions by its readers and other working people who appreciate its accurate reporting on working-class struggles. No other paper explains that every political question workers face is a class question, or presents a way forward for our class, independent of the bosses’ twin Democratic and Republican parties. Send your fund contribution to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018 or donate online at www.themilitant.com.

The *Militant* will run a weekly

chart showing the progress getting subscriptions and books into the hands of working people and winning fund contributions, along with a weekly column.

You can help make this a lively read by reporting on discussions among workers, farmers and young people about the conditions we face and a way forward. Send in reports as well as photos to themilitant@mac.com.

Want to help expand the readership of communist literature? See page 10 for the distributors nearest you.

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Militant/Edwin Fruit
Rebecca Williamson, SWP Seattle City Council candidate, speaks with James Lee, in North Seattle April 20. “Capitalism makes its own gravediggers,” Williamson told him.

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
Kathie Fitzgerald, Common Council president

Atlanta

Rachele Fruit, mayor
Sam Manuel, City Council president

N. California

Joel Britton, State Assembly, District 18

Dallas

Gerardo Sánchez, City Council District 1

Los Angeles

Bernard Senter, State Assembly District 54

Lincoln, Nebraska

Joe Swanson, City Council at-large

Louisville, Kentucky

Maggie Trowe, mayor

Miami

Anthony Dutrow, mayor

Minneapolis

Doug Nelson, mayor

New Jersey

Joanne Kuniansky, governor
Candace Wagner, lieutenant governor

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 10 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

Miners in ‘battle of our lives’

Continued from front page

bers against Warrior Met Coal bosses. Some 1,100 UMWA miners have been on strike since April 1.

International UMWA District 20 Vice President Larry Spencer welcomed everyone to the rally. “We’re tired of the contract we’ve had to work under since 2016,” he said. “That’s what the strike is all about. The company has decided to take on the union. We appreciate the support from all of you. We’re in the battle of our lives.”

Retirees are helping to staff the picket line during the rally, so more miners could attend, Spencer said. “We have 12 picket lines set up now, but we really need 20 in place. We’re going to have to ramp up.”

“We’re here to stand up and fight with you,” Marianne Hayward, president of the Central Alabama American Federation of Teachers, told the crowd. She read a message of solidarity from AFT-West Virginia President Fred Albert.

“I want each and every one of you to know that the heart and soul of every West Virginia teacher, including myself, is on the picket line with you. During our back-to-back statewide teacher strikes in 2018 and 2019, the solidarity of my UMWA brothers and sisters was unlike anything I have ever experienced,” Albert wrote. “Our union will forever be grateful to yours.”

He was describing the powerful West Virginia teachers strikes and protests that won gains for teachers and other school employees and inspired a wave of teachers’ strikes across the country.

UMWA President Cecil Roberts was the featured speaker. “We’re going to continue this fight for as long as it takes to win a better contract,” he said, to cheers of “No contract, no coal!” He reported that the AFL-CIO had contributed \$25,000 to the UMWA’s strike fund.

“The airline companies, like the mine owners, have long used bankruptcy courts to take away our pensions and other gains the airline unions have won over years of struggle,” Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants, told the crowd to cheers. “Like you, they want fewer of us to work harder for less money. They use the courts to strip us of our rights.” The flight attendants’ union contributed \$10,000 to the miners.

Workers and officials from the United Steelworkers, United Auto Workers, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and railroad unions were among those present to back the miners.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

GEORGIA

Atlanta

The Working-Class Case for Amnesty for All Immigrants. Speaker: Marklyn Wilson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 7, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

TEXAS

Dallas

Socialist Workers Party Campaign: ‘Solidarity with Workers’ Struggles. Speakers: Róger Calero, SWP candidate for mayor of New York; Gerardo Sánchez, SWP candidate for Dallas City Council. Sat., May 1, Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: \$10, dinner, \$5, program. *Holiday Inn Express, 4321 Communications Dr.* Tel.: (469) 513-1051.

A group from the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union also attended, including a few of those involved in the recent RWDSU organizing drive at the Amazon warehouse in nearby Bessemer. The union drive, while unsuccessful, drew attention and support from many other unorganized workers and union members, here and around the country, including many miners.

The Warrior Met mine bosses got a court injunction against the union limiting the number of pickets at the No. 4 and No. 7 mine portals, central shop, preparation plant and railroad tracks. The company is trying to mine coal at No. 7, using managers and strikebreakers, some of whom were contract workers before the strike. A few union members have crossed the picket line.

Build solidarity for miners’ strike!

Warrior Met Coal was formed in 2016 after previous mine owner Jim Walter Resources went bankrupt. Like many other coal operators around the country, the “new” mine owners — unpaid creditors — were able to use the capitalist bankruptcy courts to force major concessions on the union.

The previous five-year contract expired April 1. Miners are now fighting to regain some of the ground they lost in wages, benefits and working conditions. Union members voted overwhelmingly April 9 to reject a company offer of a measly \$1.50 an hour wage increase over five years and to continue the strike.

“The jobs we do are the same type that other miners do, but their benefits are far greater,” UMWA representative Moses Moore said, referring to union contracts at other unionized mines in Alabama. “We just want things to be balanced out to where everything is equal. That’s what being a union is all about.”

The union is planning solidarity rallies every Wednesday night at Tannehill Park at 6 p.m., as long as the strike lasts.

Retiree William Lee says he plans to

Blackjewel miner joins strike of Warrior Met ‘brothers’



Militant/Susan LaMont

MCCALLA, Ala. — I hooked up with Chris and Wendy Lewis and their son Dalton, left, at the April 21 rally here. Chris and Dalton are veterans of the 2019 fight against the Blackjewel coal bosses. Backed by their families and the community in Harlan County, Kentucky, miners forced Blackjewel, which had declared bankruptcy, to turn over the wages they were owed.

“We were two of the ‘original five,’ as they called us,” Dalton Lewis told the *Militant*. In addition to Dalton and Chris, miners Jeff Willig, Blake Watts and Chris Sexton decided to sit down on the railroad tracks leading into the mine that July when they learned the company

planned to bring out a train filled with coal produced by their unpaid labor.

The five were soon joined by other miners, family members, independent truckers and others, who occupied the rail tracks for several months. They won broad solidarity, and at the end of October their protest succeeded in winning the unpaid wages.

Together with his father and mother, Dalton Lewis moved to Brookwood in August 2019 to get a job at Warrior Met. A few weeks after starting underground at the No. 4 mine, he was crushed between two manbuses. These vehicles run on tracks carrying miners from the elevator cages to the coal face where they are working.

Still undergoing medical treatment, Dalton Lewis, now 21, has made a remarkable recovery and his spirits are strong.

“I liked seeing all my brothers at the union rally,” Lewis said. “I’m going to fight with them: No contract, no coal!” He said he joins the picket lines whenever he can.

— SUSAN LAMONT

be on the picket line until they win. He worked at the Brookwood mine for 33 years before retiring, he told the University of Alabama TV station WVUA. “I will be there with bells and whistles,” he said. “I have stood on the picket lines once and I will stand on it again if that’s what it takes.”

Bring your co-workers and fellow unionists to join the rallies! Send contributions and messages of support to UMWA District 20, 21922 Hwy. 216 (Miners’ Memorial Parkway), McCalla, AL 35111. Email: umwadistrict20@bellsouth.net. Tel.: (205) 477-7500. Fax: (205) 477-0004.

UK gov’t halts effort to open coal mine, create jobs

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

WHITEHAVEN, England — “People from outside the area say Sellafield is unsafe and coal is bad for the environment, but it’s an issue of jobs,” Patrick Stamper, a former scaffolder at the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing site, told Peter Clifford, the Communist League candidate for Manchester mayor, in a supermarket parking lot here.

Clifford visited the area after the government of Prime Minister Boris Johnson put on hold plans by West Cumbria Mining to open a coal mine here, claiming concerns about greenhouse gas emissions. The opening of the Woodhouse Colliery, the first underground mine in the U.K. in 30 years, is now subject to a public inquiry.

Over 11,000 people work at the nearby Sellafield nuclear fuel reprocessing site, which dates back to the beginning of the British rulers’ nuclear weapons and energy program in the 1950s. It’s a major employer in the area.

“Without Sellafield there would be nothing here,” Stamper, now a social worker, said.

“The working class needs to be at work where we can organize together with fellow workers,” Clifford responded. “Without that we have no power as a class. But we can’t depend on whether bosses open a coal mine or keep a nu-

clear facility running. We need a fight by the unions for a government-funded program of public works to put millions back to work at union-scale pay to build the things working people need.”

In the face of the government’s refusal to do anything to reverse unemployment, many workers told Clifford they supported opening the mine. Coal bosses say it would directly provide 500 jobs.

Rail worker Gillian Halcrow said there were plans for the transportation of coal from the mine to steel plants elsewhere. “There would be jobs upgrading the rail line and trains would run 24/7, creating more jobs,” she said.

“The government’s decision has nothing to do with caring about the environment,” Clifford said. “It’s just posturing ahead of the U.N. conference on climate change that it’s hosting later this year.”

The government’s March 11 move to shelve plans for the mine came after objections from environment groups and the opposition Labour Party. Among liberals speaking out against the opening of the mine was Greta Thunberg, renowned worldwide for shaming people who use air travel.

National Union of Mineworkers General Secretary Chris Kitchen backed the mine opening.

“This area needs jobs,” Stephen Ward, a former van driver now caring for his

ill wife, told Hugo Wils, the Communist League’s candidate for Manchester City Council. The coal from the Woodhouse Colliery “wouldn’t even be for burning, but for steelmaking.” Coking coal, along with iron ore, is used as an ingredient to manufacture steel. A decision not to open this mine wouldn’t mean less coal being mined in the world because steel manufacturers will continue to find coking coal they require elsewhere.

“I agree with the mine opening, provided it’s done safely, not just for the workers, but also for the environment,” Michael Morgan, an unemployed landscape gardener, told Wils. “There are ways of cleaning the pollutants out of the air from coal fires, but many of these technologies are patented and costly.”

“To make workplaces safe, workers and our unions need to fight to take control of production from the bosses,” Wils responded. “If workers decide how production is carried out we would find ways to protect the environment.”

Clifford told former Sellafield worker Stamper he would like to return to Whitehaven soon to discuss the CL’s campaign with him and others. Stamper responded enthusiastically. They agreed to do it when pubs reopen after the government eases its lockdown. “After 58 years I’ve finally met communists!” Stamper said.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

UK refuse workers vote to extend industrial action

WEST THURROCK, England — Refuse workers here held a mass meeting on their picket line April 21 and voted to extend their strike actions. The Unite union members work for the city, east of London. They’ve been striking daily for five hours since April 13. “If necessary, we’ll extend it for the other three hours,” said union organizer Willie Howard.

They gave special applause to 10 workers on agency contracts who decided to join the strike after crossing the line the first week.

The workers face significant cuts in wages and attacks on their working conditions. Up to 50 workers take part in the daily pickets.

“Each time we’ve been forced to take action, we’ve come out on top,” Natalie Garwood told visitors to the picket line, pointing to previous strike actions. Garwood, who has worked at the Thurrock depot for 27 years, was the first woman refuse collector in the U.K. She and Christy Vaughan, a driver for 14 years, speak proudly of what women workers have achieved.

Garwood brought out newspaper clippings about her breakthrough employment and of a 1999 union dispute and she shared them with Pamela Holmes, Communist League candidate for the London Assembly. They were joined by Billy Spencer, a former union leader at the depot, now retired, one of dozens who have visited the picket in support.

“A union delegation came from the nearby Co-op warehouse,” Vaughan said, as trucks passing by sounded their horns in solidarity.

Spencer spoke of a battle with management in 2010 when workers were ordered to go out in dangerous conditions of snow and icy roads. Another striker showed a video of the dispute that’s on YouTube when the workers drove their trucks to snarl up the town center.

Martin “Snapper” Snackbull told the *Militant* about solidarity he and others had brought to miners and print workers on strike in the 1980s.

“It’s through actions like these that

we’ve established the wages and conditions now under attack,” said striker Steve Lindsay. “We owe it to ourselves, to the newer workers and to future generations to stand up for what we’ve fought for and believe in.”

—Jonathan Silberman

Quebec teachers strike again for better pay, conditions

CHAMBLY, Quebec — Some 73,000 primary and secondary school teachers across Quebec, who have been without a contract for over a year, are planning to walk out for the second time in two weeks to increase the pressure on Premier François Legault to negotiate. The one-day strike is set for April 27, from 2:45 to 5 p.m.

Government officials says teachers must accept their terms, and worse conditions, blaming the economic effects of the pandemic. They are offering a 5% wage increase over three years. We’re demanding an 8% increase now, to meet the Canadian average salary for teachers, and 3% more every year for the next three years.

Spirits were high when we walked out the first time April 14 at the Madeleine-Brousseau school here, where I’ve been a third grade teacher for five years. Parents came by to encourage us to continue fighting, saying we deserve better. Many drivers passing by honked in solidarity.

“We are also striking to have smaller class sizes and for more financing to help students with special needs,” fellow teacher Émilie Lefrançois told the *Militant* on the picket line at the Gerard-Filion school in Longueuil, just south of Montreal.

The strike started just after midnight and the teachers began picketing at 7 a.m., then went back in for classes at 9:31 a.m. We wanted to make our point but didn’t want students to miss too many school hours because the pandemic has deprived them of so many over the last year.

The strike affected 58 school boards and school administrative service centers in Quebec organized by our unions, Federation of Education



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Natalie Garwood with Billy Spencer, a retired union delegate, at refuse workers’ picket in West Thurrock April 21. Garwood, the first woman refuse collector in U.K., has worked there 27 years. “Each time we’re forced to take action, we’ve come out on top,” she said.

Unions (CSQ) and Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT). School officials tried to get the Quebec Superior Court to issue an injunction banning the strike, but failed.

Last January teachers voted in favor of five days of strikes during the spring. The 49,000 teachers centered in Montreal, who are members of the FAE (Federation autonome de l’enseignement), voted to go on an unlimited strike beginning May 31 if no agreement is reached.

—Josette Hurtubise

Autoworkers strike Prysmian plant in Texas over pay, hours

SCOTTSDALE, Texas — “Strike until it’s right!” members of United Auto Workers Local 3057 chant on the picket line in front of the gate of Prysmian Group in East Texas. Over 200 UAW members went on strike March 26 after 98% voted to reject an insulting contract the bosses tried to push on them.

“This is our first strike,” Local President Chris Hodge told this *Militant* worker-correspondent on the picket line April 8. “They don’t take into consideration that we are human. If we don’t stand up now this won’t be a decent job for the generations to come.

“Negotiations began a year ago before the beginning of COVID-19,” he said. “But when the pandemic began

the union offered to extend the contract a year.”

Earl Roberts, the local chairman, told the *Marshall News Messenger* that when negotiations started again about six weeks ago, the company initially offered to raise wages by just a nickel while increasing the cost of workers’ health and other benefits.

Prysmian Group, an Italian company that makes cables for power lines and telecommunication systems, bought the plant two years ago. “They took away most of the holidays. This year they wanted us to work Christmas, but we said no,” Hodge said. “If we don’t stand up now we will continue to face unsafe conditions.

“We work 12-hour shifts. If you get seven points in a year, then you’re terminated. They have a zero-tolerance attendance policy,” he explained. “They regularly force you to work overtime and if you call off you get two points.”

Gordon Thomas has worked in the plant for 11 years. “This is the worst it has ever been. The main issue is the working conditions. You can only refuse overtime five times a year,” said Thomas. “They schedule us to work overtime if they think some people won’t show up. During the snow and ice storm they wouldn’t cancel work until 30 minutes before the shift. We have to beg for a day off.”

“We have a lot of support. Several locals sent donations and letters,” Hodge told me in a phone interview, adding that some UAW locals in the Dallas area, including UAW Local 276 from the big General Motors plant in Arlington, sent a bus full of unionists to show solidarity April 12. “They walked the picket line for almost six hours. Retired unionists from Shreveport, Louisiana, visited us.” Nearby cafes and restaurants bring lunch to the pickets.

Forklift driver Martevia Clough told us, “I started last September. You are supposed to get a raise after probation, but I’m still getting training pay of \$14.33 an hour.”

Anita Copeland said, “I started a year and a half ago. I was the only woman working on the shipping dock with 12 men, but I was treated with respect. I make \$18.25 an hour. Everyone here is fighting for more wages. Pinching pennies isn’t working.

“I was all for the strike,” she said. “I will fight this to the end.”

The pickets are up 24/7, join them if you can! Messages and contributions can be sent to UAW Local 3057, 607 Martha St., Marshall, TX 75670.

—Alyson Kennedy

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 13, 1996

HAVANA — More than one million workers, students, members of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces, and others marched here on May Day. Actions took place in every provincial capital and other cities. Pedro Ross, general secretary of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), reported that 5.5 million demonstrated throughout the island.

The 1,900 delegates from the congress of the CTC, which had concluded its working sessions the night before, led the Havana march. “This day is ours. It belongs to the proletariat around the world,” said Grisela Feyové, a production worker. “We are here to show the Yankee imperialists we’ll defend our revolution to the last drop of blood.”

“We want to protest all the attacks against us,” said Elsa Tavares, a student. “We want the world to know that we are for the revolution and for socialism.”



May 14, 1971

One of the most barbaric decisions made by the U.S. Supreme Court in recent months was its ruling that juries have the power to impose a sentence of death in the 38 states where the death penalty is still on the books. Since 1967, officials have been awaiting the Supreme Court ruling on these issues and no executions have taken place. There are now 648 men and women on death row.

Almost without exception, those given capital punishment are poor men and women from the working class. The apologists for capital punishment hope it will serve as a means of terrorizing and intimidating the most oppressed sectors of society to respect capitalist property rights and “law and order.”

The biggest criminals go free while the prisons and death chambers are reserved for the victims of capitalist society. The death penalty must be abolished!



May 11, 1946

On the first “peacetime” May Day after six years of war horrors, millions of workers throughout the world demonstrated their determination to fight for a decent life. Stricken by famine and disease, they marched through their ruined cities, or met in rallies to voice protests against the intolerable conditions of life under capitalist rule.

In Japan, under the menacing watch of Wall Street’s occupation army, two million workers jammed the streets. Across the world in Germany, hundreds of thousands of Berlin workers flooded Unter Den Linden for a march. French workers shut down virtually everything in Paris except the subways and basic utilities.

In Cuba, throughout the republic work stopped, while thousands of toilers presented their May Day demands. Sixty thousand workers thronged through Mexico City carrying banners attacking the high cost of living.

Democrats push for ‘statehood’ in DC is scam to control Senate

BY JAMES HARRIS

WASHINGTON — The current push for statehood for the District of Columbia, purportedly in the name of increasing its residents’ representation and fighting racism, is a fraud. It is aimed at gaining seats in the Senate for one of the capitalist rulers’ twin parties, the Democrats, at the expense of their Republican rivals and is an attempt to bolster Democrats’ grip on the federal government.

With the backing of President Joseph Biden, in a 100% partisan vote, the House adopted a bill to make the District of Columbia the 51st state April 22. The new state would give the Democrats at least one representative to Congress and two senators. In the last four presidential elections, the district has voted Democratic by more than 90%.

A fight for home rule for the district, then an overwhelmingly Black-majority city, developed in the 1950s and ’60s. It was part of the rise of the fight against Jim Crow segregation. For decades the city was ruled over by a three-person committee appointed by Congress.

The 1963 March for Jobs and Freedom here, along with the 1956 Montgomery bus boycott, 1963 Battle of Birmingham, the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery march, and other proletarian battles were highpoints of that struggle for civil rights that changed relations and attitudes among working people.

Demands for home rule in the district were also fueled by the substandard housing and schools and low wages prevalent for working people across the city.

In 1973 home rule laws were passed allowing District of Columbia residents to elect a mayor and City Council. However, Congress reserved the right to interfere with the council’s legislation and budget.

At that time the Socialist Workers Party pointed out that demands for statehood could only advance the fight for Black rights and working-class interests if they were tied to a course of independent working-class political action. That entailed breaking from the Democratic and Republican parties.

Demands for statehood in today’s conditions have nothing to do with expanding democracy. They are part

of a broad partisan move to try and ensure Democratic control of the government and strengthen working-class reliance on the bosses’ parties. These include proposals to expand the number of judges on the U.S. Supreme Court so they can pack it with liberal justices, ending the filibuster so Democrats no longer need Republican votes to push legislation through the Senate, and abolishing the Electoral College.

Deepening class inequality marks the district today. It has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the industrialized world. Life expectancy for Black males is 17 years less than for white males. For women the gap is 12 years.

But the city has also changed since the 1970s. Blacks are no longer a majority and there are almost as many Caucasian residents as Blacks. In 2019 the District of Columbia had a higher median income than any state in the U.S., and is home to a growing middle-class meritocracy that staffs government departments, nongovernmental organizations and universities. It also has the highest poverty level of any of the other richest areas of the country.

NY food delivery workers rally for wages, dignity

Continued from front page

workers “independent contractors,” not employees.

While each company works a little differently, these workers are shut out of benefits, including a minimum wage, overtime pay and paid sick leave. They take all the risks while the companies rake in the profits. They must supply their own electric bikes, at a cost of around \$1,500, insulated backpacks for the food, and can pay hundreds of dollars for parking and charging their bikes. When the bikes break down or are stolen, which happens often, the workers are responsible for replacing them.

A delegation from Local 32BJ of the Service Employees International Union, which has been lending support to the delivery workers’ fight, participated in the protest. Relatives of Francisco Villalva Vitinio, a delivery worker killed March 29 after refusing to give up his electric bike during an armed robbery, also joined the protest.

At a rally at the end of the march, the names of a dozen delivery workers who had died on the job were read, to resounding cries of “Presente!”

The action was one in a series of protests organized over the last year by Los Deliveristas Unidos and the Worker’s Justice Project. A surge in violent robberies of e-bikes and money has sparked broad indignation about the conditions delivery drivers are forced to work in.

“It’s too much injustice, too much arbitrariness. The apps are abusing people and that has to stop,” Gustavo Ajche, a leader of Deliveristas Unidos, told the *Militant* during the march. “Thanks to our union we’re raising our voice because we deserve to be treated with respect.”

80,000 deliveristas in New York

Many drivers went to work for the app companies after they lost jobs when government-mandated shutdowns closed restaurants and other workplaces at the start of the coronavirus pandemic.



Militant/Glova Scott

CWA strike picket at AT&T mobile phone center, Washington, D.C., May 19, 2017. Road to gains for working people will grow out of increasing reliance on independent working-class political action, not Democratic Party maneuvers to monopolize politics and keep us in tow.

Conditions of class and racial inequality will continue whether or not Democrats’ statehood legislation makes it through the Senate. As my party — the Socialist Workers Party — pointed out in the 1970s, the only road forward is to break with the two bosses’ parties, the Democrats and Republicans, and fight for our own class interests. That is the road to fight the ruling capitalist families who exploit us.

To do that the working class in this city needs to fight for our own party, a labor party, part of a national party based on the unions. It would lead all those exploited and oppressed by the capitalist rulers to fight in our millions to establish a workers and farmers government; take control of the factories, fields, mines and banks; and use our power to deepen the struggle to end racism and all forms of oppression.

Over the last year the number of deliveristas grew to an estimated 80,000 in New York City alone. The majority of these workers are originally from countries in Latin America. Others include Asian- and African-born workers.

“The app companies say working for them is a ‘big opportunity,’ but we are barely surviving. And the bills are piling up,” said Rogelio Martínez, who worked as a line cook at a hotel before the shutdowns.

Protesters say they often don’t receive timely payment from the app companies or the tips that customers include on their credit-card payments, and can be arbitrarily blocked from the app entirely.

“I was blocked without an explanation, and I am still waiting for an answer,” said delivery worker Lucy Villano, at a press conference the day before the march. “We are sometimes blocked for just using the wrong entrance at a restaurant.”

“Some companies keep the tips, and pay per order, no matter how far we have to travel to deliver it,” Carmelo Jiménez, originally from Mexico, told the *Militant*.

The workers are demanding the city pass laws requiring that the restaurants they service allow them to use their bathrooms, and that the city establish protected public rest areas. The workers are rarely allowed into the restaurants and are forced to wait outside in rain, snow or whatever until an order is ready.

Workers explained that the app companies often assign them oversized loads, including boxes of food donations from city agencies, making their jobs unsafe. These boxes should be delivered by car, several protesters said. “If we get in an accident nobody pays for our injuries or the damage to our bikes,” Velásquez Ramírez added.

“The delivery-workers community is big and speaks different languages,” said Ligia Gualpa, Worker’s Justice Project director. As part of building the action, leaflets and videos were produced in English, Spanish, French and Bengali.

Gualpa invited Mamadou Kokrina, a delivery worker from Mali, to speak, “because our brothers from West Africa also faced the same conditions.”

“Today is a manifestation of anger,” Kokrina said, as he pressed their demands for better conditions and to be treated with respect, and thanked everyone for coming.

“We did something good today,” Gualpa said at the end of the rally, as people gathered around for tamales and hot cocoa, because “like the compañeros here have said, ‘We work to be able to live, not to die.’”

Róger Calero is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York. Sara Lobman is the party’s candidate for Manhattan Borough president.

— LETTERS —

Kitty Cone obituary

The *New York Times* published what it called an “Overlooked obituary” of Kitty Cone March 26. These are obits of individuals who the *Times* did not mention at the time of their passing. Kitty Cone died in 2015.

Cone was a member and leader of the Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party in the 1960s and early ’70s, active in the fight against the imperialist war in Vietnam, in defense of the Cuban Revolution and a party builder.

She was also an early champion of the rights of the disabled. She wasn’t “confined” to a wheelchair, she rode one and fought from it. Cone set an example that countered the wretched treatment, expectations and perceptions by the ruling capitalist class of those who by injury, illness or birth they couldn’t exploit. Cone’s *Times* obituary can be found online, as can a documentary, *Crip Camp*, in which she appears.

Raul Gonzalez

Redwood City, California

Teamster Series

Lessons from U.S. labor battles of the 1930s

by Farrell Dobbs

“Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade-union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party.”

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March hits Chicago cop killing

Continued from front page
ficer Eric Stillman in the early hours of March 29. Protests have grown since the Civilian Office of Police Accountability, under growing pressure, released videos of the shooting.

Police had repeatedly asserted that Toledo was killed in an “armed confrontation.” The video from Stillman’s body camera shows him chasing Toledo down the alley yelling, “Hands! Hands! Show me your f---ing hands!” and then, “Drop it.” The youth stops, appears to toss a gun away, and then turns toward the officer while raising his empty hands. Stillman shoots him in the chest.

City officials have tried to deflect blame from the cops. “An adult put a gun in a child’s hand,” Mayor Lori Lightfoot told the press. “A weapon that could and did irreparably change the course of his life.” Police arrested Ruben Roman, 21, whom they say was with Toledo and fired a gun several times just before the police pursuit began. He is charged with reckless discharge of a firearm, unlawful use of a weapon by a felon and endangerment of a child.

At first city officials refused to release videos of the shooting. But under pressure from the teen’s family, and protests, they allowed the family to see them April 13 and released the mate-

rial publicly two days later. “We appreciate the community support and are grateful that events so far have remained peaceful,” said a statement from Toledo’s family prior to the video going public. They asked protesters to “remain peaceful to honor Adam’s memory and work constructively to promote reform.” Overwhelmingly that is what has happened.

The largest protests so far were an April 16 rally and march of over 1,000 in the Logan Square neighborhood, where Mayor Lightfoot lives, and the Little Village march two days later.

“It’s important for the protests to be peaceful,” Vicente Guadalupe, 27, who lives in Little Village, told Ilona Gersh of the Socialist Workers Party as they marched April 18. The downtown stores were boarded up “to scare people away from participating in peaceful marches like this one,” he said. “If people are afraid there will be violence, they won’t bring their families and kids. Look at all the kids here!”

Gersh showed him a photo in the *Militant* of a truck brought by Teamsters Local 120, the union of 200 locked-out workers at Marathon Petroleum, to a protest in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota, demanding the cop who killed Daunte Wright be charged and prosecuted.



Militant/Ilona Gersh

Over 1,000 people march April 18 against Chicago cop shooting of 13-year-old Adam Toledo. Protest began by alley where he was killed and marched through Little Village neighborhood.

“That’s what we need here, too,” she said. “A broad and united response that’s disciplined and reaches out for popular support from churches, community groups and people of all nationalities. Because this is not just a problem for African Americans and Latinos.”

Maria Moreno, who works in a laundry and is also a school crossing guard, came with her 13-year-old daughter and younger son. “I told my four chil-

dren that they have to stay home after dark. The cops regularly chase children through our streets,” said Moreno. “I pray my son will grow up to be 13.”

“The immediate response was important,” Gersh told her.

“Now we have to keep it up,” said Moreno. “I’m impressed by the number of Blacks, Asians, and whites who came out today. That’s important. There’s a rainbow of support.”

Celebration of life of Steven Taylor, killed by cop in Walmart

SAN LEANDRO, Calif. — Two hundred people joined a rally here April 18 to commemorate the life of Steven Taylor one year after he was killed by San Leandro police. He was shot inside the Walmart store on Hesperian Boulevard here. The event was organized by Social Justice Academy of the San Leandro High School. Many of those who came were students from the area. Some workers from the Walmart also took part.

Taylor was killed by cop Jason Fletcher while Taylor was having a mental illness crisis in the store. The shooting was captured on a police video, which has been widely viewed. It shows Taylor, holding a baseball bat, backing away as Fletcher shoots him. In September 2020 the Alameda County district attorney charged Fletcher with felony voluntary manslaughter. Stefan Overton, another cop who was there, has not been disciplined or indicted.

Speakers included students, area politicians and members of the families of Sean Monterossa, Oscar Grant and Miles Hall, all of whom had been killed by cops in the Bay Area. Addie Kitchen, Taylor’s grandmother, thanked everyone for coming.

Fletcher’s trial date hasn’t been set.

— JEFF POWERS

‘We will not back down,’ 2,900 striking autoworkers tell Volvo

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

DUBLIN, Va. — “Beep, beep. Volvo’s cheap!” chanted striking autoworkers picketing Volvo Truck North America’s New River Valley assembly plant here April 27. Some 2,900 members of United Auto Workers Local 2069 voted by 96.8% to go on strike April 17. At the union hall across the street from the plant, volunteers serve up snacks, coffee, a cold drink and a hot meal to strikers and supporters, who keep up the picket lines 24/7.

The strike is about wages, health and safety, benefits and job security. Now in its second week, it has shut down the

1.6 million square foot plant — Volvo’s largest truck manufacturing plant in the world — near Virginia’s borders with West Virginia, Tennessee and North Carolina.

“This strike is far-reaching and it’s not a small fight. It impacts multiple towns and counties in the region,” restaurant worker Marlena Rorrer told the *Militant* at a restaurant near the plant. Her husband has worked at Volvo for 22 years. She expressed what many workers on the picket lines told this worker-correspondent: “We are not backing down.”

Volvo has made record profits off truck sales over the last few years. Its profits rose by 89% to \$1 billion in the first quarter of 2021. Sales are surging so fast that Volvo can’t keep up with orders and is still working through the backlog.

This past year alone, Volvo has hired several hundred workers to meet demand for its heavy-duty trucks. At one plant gate all 11 pickets had been hired in the past three months.

The Sweden-based Volvo Group, which also owns Mack Trucks, boasts that Mack and Volvo manufacture all their trucks in the U.S. In 2019 more than 3,600 autoworkers went on strike against Mack.

The strike is winning solidarity from working people across the region. Communications Workers of America Local 2204 President Chuck Simpson drove 50 miles from Roanoke to walk the picket line. “They are union brothers and sisters,” he told the *Militant*. “I walked the line with them when they struck in 2008 and they supported us during the 2016 Verizon strike.” On April 23 Northern Virginia Labor Council President Virginia Diamond brought a union delegation to deliver a \$1,500 check, saying, “UAW 2069 needs our solidarity.”

Send messages of solidarity to: UAW Local 2069 P.O. Box 306 Dublin, VA 24084 UAWLocal2069@gmail.com.

Steelworkers refuse to give in to ATI bosses’ threats

Continued from front page
at Allegheny Technologies Inc. that the union accepts the company’s latest offer by 5 p.m., April 26, or bosses would pull it off the table. Barbiaux spoke to the *Militant* as some 1,300 steelworkers continue the strike they began March 30.

The bosses’ ultimatum followed two days of talks between the union and ATI management. Union negotiators rejected the threats.

Workers on the picket lines outside the mill here agreed with Barbiaux. Bosses use “bullying tactics,” Tom Ladie, a mechanical technician told the *Militant*.

“They’re treating us like children, if you don’t do this, time out,” electrician Don Smith added.

The steelworkers struck to fight the bosses’ moves to make them pay more for health insurance, cut retirees’ benefits and accept the expansion of divisive lower wage and benefit tiers for new hires. Bosses also plan to shut down plants in Louisville, Ohio; Waterbury, Connecticut; and the No. 3 Finishing Department here.

Smith pointed out that the company

backed off some of its demands to cut overtime rates and contract out work during recent talks. But “they’ll just start adding that stuff back on,” he said.

“We don’t have a job” if the company goes ahead with the contracting-out, Ladie added.

The bosses’ ultimatum came as they continue efforts to get production running. Solidarity for the striking workers remains crucial.

Barbiaux described visits to the picket lines and union hall by other nearby steelworkers, members of the painters and glazers unions, electrical workers and schoolteachers. The local held a family night social April 27.

The central issue remains health care costs and the company’s efforts to break the union, Barbiaux said. The company’s proposed wage increases “are only going to cover the increasing costs of health care.”

“This is our livelihood. They’re coming after all of us,” he said. But at all nine locations where workers are striking, “we’re solid, we know each other.”

He pointed out that the company hasn’t said what health care costs will be

in the fourth year of the contract in 2024. “They want us to sign an open check.”

The company’s proposal would maintain current premium-free health coverage until the beginning of 2024. But it only includes estimates of premium costs after that, according to the Pittsburgh *Tribune-Review*. In that fourth year, Barbiaux added, new hires will also be treated differently, paying higher premiums.

“They haven’t backed off from that,” he said. “They want to create a two-tier system on health care. We have to protect the retirees and we want the steelworkers of the future to protect the retirees.”

Workers on the picket lines pointed out that the bosses’ proposed wage increases are contingent on workers accepting all their other demands, including job cuts and the closure of three plants.

Help win solidarity! Join the picket lines. Send your support or contributions to USW Local 1196 at 1080 Brackenridge Ave., Brackenridge, PA 15014 or USW Local 1046, 925 W. St. Louis Ct., Louisville, OH 44641.

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

Socialist Workers Party meeting discusses road to building revolutionary party in the US

BY NAOMI CRAINE
CHICAGO — “Cuba and the Coming American Revolution: The 60th Anniversary of Two Historic Victories of the Cuban Revolution and Their Significance for Building a Revolutionary Party in the United States — Then and Now” was the featured talk at the Socialist Workers Party’s Midwest conference held here April 24, presented by SWP National Committee member Mary-Alice Waters. She is also the editor of Pathfinder Press’s more than 30-book series on the Cuban Revolution, and author of a number of them.

Waters focused on how Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and other leaders of the revolution led workers and farmers in Cuba to take political power, mobilize to make deeper and deeper inroads against capitalist property relations, and transform themselves in the process. Through these mass proletarian mobilizations, the Cuban toilers carried through the first socialist revolution in our hemisphere.

She also focused on the impact that powerful revolutionary upsurge had on winning revolutionary-minded youth in the U.S. who were active in the mass proletarian Black-led battle to overturn Jim Crow segregation to join and build the Socialist Workers Party of today.

Drawing on the lessons of the Cuban Revolution, Waters also addressed the stakes for working people in the blow to our rights registered in how the capitalist rulers organized the trial of Minneapolis cop Derek Chauvin, convicted of killing George Floyd in 2020.

Some 60 people attended, including party members, supporters, co-workers and youth from Chicago, Minneapolis, Detroit, Cincinnati and Louisville, Kentucky. Also present were Joe Swanson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in Lincoln, Nebraska, and SWP candidates for mayor in Minneapolis and Louisville, Doug Nelson and Maggie Trowe.

The evening program began with a dinner, followed by the program and a rich hourlong discussion period. It ended with a social for relaxed, informal political discussion.

A fund appeal by Trowe to help advance the SWP’s national campaign raised \$3,600.

The meeting was co-chaired by Dan Fein, SWP state campaign chairperson in Illinois, and Mary Martin, chairperson of the Twin Cities branch.

Revolutionary course of action

The program opened with a video preview of *Maestros voluntarios* (Voluntary teachers), a short documentary-in-progress about the 1961 Cuban literacy campaign. The film was provided by director Catherine Murphy.

“There is no better way to begin our program tonight than with this video,” Waters said, noting it captures the mass, working-class character of the literacy mobilizations.

“It’s great to talk to live human beings,” Waters said to applause. “The working class has paid a big price over the last year for our isolation and inability to use our numbers to put a stamp on unfolding political developments.”

This 60th anniversary celebration of the victories of Cuban workers and farmers at Playa Girón and in the literacy mobilization, Waters said, is most importantly an opportunity to educate ourselves, to become better prepared to help lead a socialist revolution here in the U.S.

On April 16, 1961 — the day after the mercenary forces organized and financed by Washington bombed Cuban airbases in an attempt to wipe out the revolutionary air force in preparation for the invasion at the Bay of Pigs — Fidel Castro gave a speech preparing Cuban workers and farmers for the battle to



Militant/Zena McFadden
SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters points to Diego Rivera mural of solitary teacher during bourgeois revolution in Mexico on cover of Leon Trotsky’s *Art and Revolution*. She contrasted this to Cuban Revolution’s mass literacy campaign, which mobilized 100,000 youth and transformed their class consciousness.

come. “Compañero workers and peasants, this is the socialist and democratic revolution of the working people, by the working people, and for the working people. And for this revolution,” he said, “we are prepared to give our lives.”

This was not an ideological statement, or a “proclamation” of the socialist character of the revolution, as it’s often described, Waters said. It was an affirmation of what Cuban toilers had already accomplished in the year and a half since the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship. “What they cannot forgive is that we have made a socialist revolution right under the very nose of the United States,” Castro said.

“The moment had come to make that statement, and put ‘case closed’ to what was not an ideological debate, but a political battle within the leadership of the revolution that had been raging since the beginning of the Cuban Revolution,” Waters said.

From the Jan. 1, 1959, victory over the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship, the pro-Moscow Stalinist party in Cuba — the Popular Socialist Party — and Stalinist parties around the world had argued that socialist revolution was impossible in Cuba, or elsewhere in Latin America, that the time wasn’t right. Only a bourgeois democratic revolution was possible. They sought to take political leadership out of the hands of Castro and his July 26 co-combatants, and to hold back the revolutionary momentum of Cuban workers and farmers. And to advance the interests of Moscow in maintaining “peaceful co-existence” with Washington.

The SWP championed the revolutionary course advanced by Castro. “We were part of this debate, defending the Cuban Revolution and what it was accomplishing,” said Waters. She explained how Jack Barnes, today national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, was in Cuba in the summer of 1960, along with thousands of other young people from across the Americas and beyond, taking part as workers and farmers deepened their mobilizations, nationalizing the factories, banks and the land, and making inroads against capitalist social relations. Barnes took part in the First Latin

American Youth Congress in Havana, where the opening session was addressed by Che Guevara. “Is this revolution communist?” Che asked.

“After the usual explanations of what communism is (I leave aside the hackneyed accusations by imperialism and the colonial powers, who confuse everything), I would answer that if this revolution is Marxist — and listen well that I say ‘Marxist’ — it is because it discovered, by its own methods, the road pointed out by Marx. ... The Cuban Revolution was moving forward, not worrying about labels, not checking what others said about it, but constantly scrutinizing what the Cuban people wanted of it.”

In April 1961, “Fidel knew the moment had come to put an end to the debate. He knew that the combatants of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, the National Revolutionary Police and the Revolutionary Militias would fight with ever greater courage and determination, understanding what they had already accomplished, what they were fighting to defend,” Waters said. “No socialist revolution is possible without deepening class consciousness, without socialist consciousness. Working people have to be conscious of what we are doing, or we will be defeated.”

Socialist literacy mobilization

The mass literacy campaign — with its roots going back to what was done by the Rebel Army as it conquered territory and took responsibility for organizing life there — was not only about education and culture, she said. It was first and foremost a battle to transform class relations in Cuba. The 100,000 youth from the cities, the majority women and mostly still in their teens, who mobilized to go to the countryside got an education themselves from the rural workers and peasants they were teaching to read and write. “It instilled in that generation a class consciousness that transformed them for life,” Waters said.

In the process, they also made inroads against long-standing prejudices against blacks and women.

Waters contrasted this effort, led as a conscious course to transform social relations, to the important literacy efforts that accompanied many bourgeois revolutions. She pointed to a beautiful painting by Diego Rivera of a solitary teacher educating peasants following the Mexican Revolution of 1910, which is on the front cover of Leon Trotsky’s *Art and Revolution* published by Pathfinder Press, and compared it to the photos of the mass celebration of tens of thousands of literacy brigadistas in Havana after accomplishing their mission at the end of 1961.

“This was a proletarian campaign,” she stressed.

“The first defeat of U.S. imperialism in this hemisphere took place at the Bay of Pigs. This wasn’t because the U.S. rulers had a bad plan, or chickened out, as the common narrative goes in the U.S.,” Waters said. “It’s because the Cuban workers and farmers won.”

The U.S.-backed forces went down to defeat because “they failed to measure the moral relationship of forces,” Che Guevara said in a speech to electrical



Wisconsin Historical Society
Opening years of Cuban Revolution coincided with mass battle to bring down Jim Crow segregation in U.S. Above, three civil rights protesters assaulted by racists while sitting at Woolworths’ lunch counter in Jackson, Mississippi, May 28, 1963. Many revolutionary-minded youth began to identify with Cuban Revolution’s political and moral class stance.

workers after the victory. They were “wrong in measuring the fighting capacity of the opposing sides.”

Celebrating three important victories

These *three* victories we’re celebrating — Cuba’s *socialist* revolution, Playa Girón and the social conquests registered through the literacy mobilizations — were crucial to forging a working-class vanguard in the United States, then and now. “We in the Socialist Workers Party would not be here without the men and women who did this,” Waters said. “Not because of a *thing* called the Cuban Revolution, but because of the conscious work of living human beings.”

The opening years of the Cuban Revolution coincided with a new wave unfolding in the mass, proletarian-led battle to bring down the apartheid-like system of Jim Crow segregation in the U.S., she said. Building on the victory of the Montgomery bus boycott, the new wave included the Woolworth lunch counter sit-ins, the Freedom Rides, the Freedom Summer, the Selma-Montgomery march, the right-to-vote battles, and much, much more, she said, including the ever clearer revolutionary, international outlook of Malcolm X.

“We saw a mass movement that was advancing in the United States, not proclaiming victimhood but humanity. We identified with Conrado Benitez,” a literacy volunteer murdered by counter-revolutionary forces in Cuba. He was like civil rights fighters who were being brutally murdered here. “We saw the lengths the capitalist rulers would go to maintain their power and property, and more importantly we saw the transformation of ourselves that was needed. The kind of disciplined mass proletarian party that must be built.”

“We were won to the SWP,” she said.

Rights workers have won in struggle

“We learned and continue to learn from the political and moral class stance of the Cuban Revolution,” Waters said. One timely example she pointed to relates to the trial of former Minneapolis cop Derek Chauvin who stands convicted of murdering George Floyd. It was clear from the beginning the ruling class had made a decision to convict Chauvin in hopes of diverting the rising anger against this and so many other cases of police brutality, reflected in the mass protests that broke out across the country last summer. For the rulers, it was the lesser evil.

Prominent attorneys from big pri-

vate legal firms donated their services to the huge prosecution team arrayed against Chauvin. One police official after another, including the chief of police, testified against him. Chauvin had one attorney. His brother and sister cops didn’t mobilize to stuff the courtroom, as they often do when one of their “blue brothers” has faced trial.

Meanwhile, Democratic Party politicians like Maxine Waters sought to whip up the emotional crowds watching every minute of televised trial and threatened violence if the jurors did not bring in a unanimous murder conviction. Others, including President Joseph Biden, worked to channel the anger into Democratic Party electoral politics and demands to reform the police. One protester captured the lynch mob mentality, saying Chauvin had no right to a trial. “The video is all we need.” It was a mass public spectacle that assaulted rights the working class has won with its blood over centuries — the right to be tried by a jury of your peers, the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, that guilt must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt, and that jury decisions must be unanimous.

“That’s why we don’t join in celebrating this as a wonderful trial and verdict,” Waters said.

In relation to this she said it’s useful to look at one of the more controversial chapters in the opening months of the Cuban Revolution, the trial by revolutionary tribunals of many of Batista’s most notoriously brutal henchmen and the execution of quite a few.

In a book-length interview with French journalist Ignacio Ramonet published in English in 2008 under the title *My Life*, Castro looked back on these trials. It was an error “that those trials were conducted using public places and allowing the proceedings to be attended by a great number of our countrymen who were justly outraged by the thousands of crimes that had been committed,” Castro said. That “was in conflict with our own ideas of justice. And it was very much exploited by the United States. We lost no time in rectifying what was unquestionably a mistake.”

“We don’t regret having done it,” he said, referring to the establishment of the revolutionary tribunals and holding the trials, “although I do feel pity when I remember how bitter it must have been for [the accused] to experience the hatred that the people quite rightly felt for them because of their repugnant crimes.”

During the revolutionary war the



Granma
Above, workers rally in Havana, 1960, to push for nationalization of imperialist-owned properties in Cuba. Left, Che Guevara, addressing first Latin American Youth Congress in Havana, July 28, 1960. “If this revolution is Marxist,” Guevara said, “it is because it discovered, by its own methods, the road pointed out by Marx.”

July 26 Movement had explained over and over that when the Batista regime was defeated they “did not want to see people dragged through the streets, or personal vengeance, because justice would be done,” Castro said. “Throughout the entire war, thinking about the mass violence that can accompany the victory of the people, we warned our country about that.”

“This may have been the only revolution in which the main war criminals were tried and brought to justice, the only revolution that didn’t rob or steal, didn’t drag people through the streets, didn’t take revenge, didn’t take justice into its own hands.”

“If there were no lynchings, no bloodbaths it was because of our insistence and our promise: ‘War criminals will be brought to justice and punished.’”

“Cops exist to protect the prerogatives of capital,” Waters said. “They cannot be transformed. Our demand is not ‘reform.’ It’s control and *replace*.”

When the Batista regime was over-

thrown, Cuban workers and farmers took over every police station, she said. They disarmed and disbanded Batista’s cops. Some went to trial. The rest were sent home for a month then offered productive jobs. A new national police force was built on a qualitatively different class foundation, drawn from revolutionary combatants.

These police units took the highest casualties fighting at the Bay of Pigs.

Cuban Revolution: our revolution too

“We celebrate and learn from the triumphs — and errors — of the Cuban Revolution,” Waters said. “It’s our revolution too. But for us the challenge is right here.”

In his book *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, Jack Barnes describes how in that summer of 1960 everyone knew the invasion was coming. It was only a question of when. He told a Cuban militia commander he knew and respected that he wanted

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Chauvin trial dealt blows to rights workers need

The following are excerpts from remarks by Doug Nelson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, addressing how a working-class movement against cop brutality can be built and the recent blows against constitutional rights registered in the trial and conviction of Derek Chauvin, the cop charged with killing George Floyd.



Days before he was killed, Malcolm X explained in a speech that he was for any tactic “as long as it’s going to get some results ... as long as it’s intelligent, as long as it’s disciplined.”

Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the military commander of the Red Army, said, “All methods are good which raise the class consciousness of the workers, their trust in their own forces, their readiness for self-sacrifice in the struggle.

“The impermissible methods are those which implant fear and submissiveness in the oppressed before their oppressors, which crush the spirit of protest and indignation or substitute for the will of the masses — the will of the leaders; for conviction — compulsion; for an analysis of reality — demagoguery and frame-up.”

Compulsion and demagoguery has been the stock in trade of liberals and left radicals in service of the U.S. ruling class as they scramble to recoup the blows dealt by the mass, popular character of the protests — to deflect the moral outrage of the brutality of their police, which goes hand in glove with the anti-working-class contempt and cynicism of cop mentality.

This has included calls to impose harsher punishments on officer Derek Chauvin than the evidence and standards of due process would normally allow. The prosecution over-charged the case, bringing the capitalist state power down like a ton of bricks, while dealing blows to the presumption of innocence until proven guilty and the standard of proven “beyond a reasonable doubt.”

Ultimately their blows to constitutional protections are aimed at the working class.

Cuba and Coming American Revolution

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to stay and help defeat it.

“No. We’ll be ready, and we’ll win,” the commander told Barnes. “Your job is to go back home. To find people like yourself and make a revolution in the U.S. And join a party you’re convinced is on this course.”

“And that’s exactly what he did,” Waters said.

A working discussion

During an hourlong discussion period, participants exchanged recent experiences participating in labor struggles and other working-class fights, talked about some of the political questions posed in the program, and the openings to build a proletarian party today.

Some had just returned from a visit to Brookwood, Alabama, to support the coal miners strike against Warrior Met Coal.

Maggie Trowe, SWP candidate for mayor of Louisville, was part of the visit to Brookwood. She encouraged people to join in building solidarity with the miners’ fight, and to join in campaigning with the Socialist Workers Party. “It’s a real way to engage in discussion, including on the strike and on the example of what working people did in Cuba,” she said. “And what they are doing today, setting an example of international solidarity” in response to the pandemic.

“I got to know the party six months ago and am glad to be here,” said Dave Perry from Cincinnati. He described the fight for safer conditions and dignity on the job at the factory where he works. Like many workers there he is blind. “It doesn’t matter if you’re blind or sighted, no matter what your disability, race or background, it’s going to take a fight to change anything,” he said.

Ilona Gersh from Chicago said that campaigning in both Minneapolis and Chicago, she had met workers who equated mass protests with the looting and violence in the wake of the killing of George Floyd. She said she responded by pointing to the need to broaden working-class mobilizations, including fighting to involve our unions, to counter these anti-working-class actions and bring to bear the strength and class clarity of working people.

Experiences in Minneapolis

“Our experiences in Minneapolis over the last year have opened possibilities for strengthening the communist movement, for gaining new recruits, contacts and co-fighters,” said SWP mayoral candidate Doug Nelson. “This includes participation in mass protests against police brutality and, more recently, solidarity with the Marathon oil workers and health care workers organizing to resist attacks on their wages and working conditions.”

He described the mass outpouring last year in response to the killing of Floyd, the moral outrage that had been brewing for years, and the discussions he took part in as the protests unfolded about how to contend with the anarchists, some misleaders of Black Lives Matter, and others who looted and burned stores, demobilizing the mass protests.

Following the recent police killing of Daunte



Cuban militia members celebrate defeat of invasion at Playa Girón. Everyone knew invasion was coming, I wanted to help, said Jack Barnes, who was in Cuba in 1960. “Your job is to go back home,” militia commander told him, “to find people like yourself and make a revolution in the U.S.” Barnes is national secretary of the SWP.

Wright in Brooklyn Center, near Minneapolis, Nelson said, City Manager Curt Boganey was fired simply for saying, all city employees “are entitled to due process.” (See accompanying excerpt from Nelson’s remarks.)

Nelson said the participation of Teamsters Local 120 and a statement by the Minnesota Nurses Association in solidarity with protests against the killing of Wright “is a good development,” one that points to the class forces needed to advance.

The involvement of the unions in this kind of social struggle is also an important step toward beginning to transform them into instruments that fight broadly for the interests of the working class as a whole, Waters pointed out.

Joe Swanson spoke about the experiences during his campaign for Lincoln City Council. He explained how he worked on the railroad for decades and was active in his union, “but I didn’t find the kind of leadership that was needed until I met the party.”

“Our next project is to try to organize a car caravan in Lincoln against the U.S. economic war on Cuba,” Swanson added. Many of those at the meeting have been involved in building the growing number of monthly car and bike caravans demanding an end to the U.S. rulers’ economic war against Cuba. Dan Fein urged everyone to attend the caravan taking place the following day in Chicago. “This is a way to have a public demonstration, not a Zoom meeting,” he said.

Waters and a number of meeting participants joined the Chicago caravan, and Waters said a few words at its opening.

‘Our job is to prepare’

“We know that big class struggles are coming, but we have no control over when and how they’re going to start,” Waters said in her summary remarks. “That is determined by social and economic factors on the broadest level. Our job is to be prepared — to understand and be able to draw on the real history of the class struggle, in the United States and internationally.

“The experiences comrades described, in many different places, are all part of that preparation,” she said. “This includes reading and *studying*, collectively, discussing and debating and clarifying our understanding.”

We know that only the working class as an organized force can change the course of these struggles, Waters said. “That’s why the example of the class forces that actually brought down Jim Crow are so important. It is a history that’s not known, it’s not taught in school.” What communists bring into the skirmishes today is that understanding of a class perspective, contributing to the development of leadership as workers go through class-struggle experiences.

“We’re very aware of the social and economic crisis of capitalism and the way that has been accelerated over the last year by the rulers’ response to the COVID pandemic,” she said. The attempt to simply lock down huge sections of society is a factor in some of the struggles that break out today, as workers resist all the pressures that have come down on our class.

Participants left the meeting with plans to join up and campaign for Swanson the following weekend in Lincoln, before the May 4 City Council election there. And join campaign supporters in Minneapolis to put Nelson on the ballot for mayor.

New hiring spurs workers struggles for jobs, unions

Continued from front page

little. Bosses use these divisions to try to dampen down working peoples’ struggles against attacks on wages and conditions. Though still calamitous for countless workers, official unemployment fell from 19.7 million in early March to 17.4 million April 3, down from 23.1 million at the height of the crisis a year ago.

In March manufacturing production was growing and restaurants, bars, hotels, local shops and many other stores were reopening.

Many employers are acting on the expectation that new hires and workers they’re calling back after months of unemployment or temp jobs will be easier to push around. They’re moving to lower wages, speed up work pace and cut benefits. But some bosses are finding their assumptions are wrong.

Workers fight back

ATI steel bosses gave 1,300 striking steelworkers an ultimatum to accept onerous contract demands within four days or face an even worse contract offer April 26. United Steelworkers members categorically rejected the threats. Strikers’ picket lines remain up and the fight continues.

Many of these fights involve workers striving to redress concessions granted in earlier contracts. In Jefferson City and Columbia, Missouri, truck drivers at Scheppers Distributing Co., a beverage delivery company, struck April 19 for higher wages. Workers had earlier taken a pay “freeze for four years to live to fight another day,” Teamsters Local 833 representative Mark Bruemmer told KRCG-TV News. Now, “that day has come.”

Some 2,900 United Auto Workers struck Volvo Trucks New River Valley plant in Dublin, Virginia, April 17. Bosses there seek to boost profits as they upgrade the plant to start building electric-powered rigs.

“Each of these strikes, as well as fights by coal miners at Warrior Met in Alabama and Marathon oil refinery workers in Minnesota, can win widespread support from fellow working people, if workers everywhere and our unions spread the word and build support,” Rebecca Williamson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Seattle City Council, told the *Militant*. Williamson brought solidarity to the Marathon workers in Minnesota and joined them on their picket line.

“To strengthen our struggles, workers and our unions need to fight to reverse the widespread unemployment we still face,” she pointed out. “That’s why

the SWP campaigns for workers and our unions to fight to cut the workweek — with no cut in pay — to make the bosses pay to keep our fellow workers on the job. We demand a government-funded public works program to provide jobs, run under workers control, at union pay for all who want them.”

Especially hard hit are women workers. Some 6.3 million people, mainly women, are out of work caring for children because there is no affordable child care, or schools are still shut down.

In total, the government reports there are 17,405,094 people on one or another kind of unemployment dole today. Millions more aren’t counted. And these figures don’t take into account at least 6.8 million workers who have had their hours cut, along with their wages.

As workers look for ways to survive these conditions, many have been forced into debt. Largely unreported is the way the government’s moratorium on evictions is riddled with loopholes, enabling judges to back landlords who throw tenants onto the streets. In just seven states some 70,000 people have been evicted in the past year. Millions more face debts for loans they took out in order to keep a roof over their heads.

Despite its name, President Joseph Biden’s “American Jobs Plan” doesn’t create a single job. It funnels government investment to company owners producing energy sources and transportation that don’t use fossil fuels. The administration promises that these bosses will then hire workers sometime in the future.

Liberals continue to paint a picture of a world where jobs in mines, mills and factories are disappearing and the only future for workers is in the “gig” economy. *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman praised the United Mine Workers union for backing Biden’s plan April 22, but warned “promoting job creation in West Virginia or eastern Kentucky ... may be impossible.” His message is let the communities these workers live in die out. Future hiring will be concentrated among the “highly educated” in big cities, Krugman claims.

But in New York City food delivery workers, including many recently hired, are marching in the streets against wage-theft and conditions imposed on them by bosses who look at them with disdain.

“The fight for jobs remains central to binding employed and unemployed workers together and putting us all in a better position to resist the bosses,” Williamson said. “As hiring grows, more struggles are breaking out. Through these fights we gain class consciousness and learn what we are really capable of.”