SWP takes support for miners strike to workers
BY EDWIN FRUIT AND MICHELLE SMITH
KELLOGG, Idaho — Members of the Socialist Workers Party campaigned door to door to introduce the party to workers in the Silver Valley region of Idaho Aug. 3-4. We came to attend an Aug. 2 rally in Coeur d'Alene by silver miners, members of United Steelworkers Local 5114 who are on strike at the Hecla-owned Lucky Friday Mine in Mullan. We canvassed among workers here and in Osburn, and visited with some of the workers who had signed up for Militant subscriptions and bought books on the SWP program during previous visits.

During part of the trip we were joined by Pat Scott, a Walmart worker.

Striking Idaho silver miners gain backing from unions in Northwest
BY EDWIN FRUIT
COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho — Chanting “Hecla, Hecla, you can’t hide, we can see your greedy side,” and “One day longer, one day stronger!” up to 150 silver miners, their families and supporters rallied in front of Hecla corporate headquarters here Aug. 2.

Members of United Steelworkers Local 5114 have been on strike since March 13. Their contract had expired in May 2016. The company announced it was going to impose its “last and final” offer. After workers rejected this concession-filled deal, the union went on strike.

Changes demanded by the mine bosses include a dangerous loss of union control on the organization of workers. Workers need health care, not health insurance!

Workers discuss way out of capitalist health care disaster
BY SUSAN LAMONT
HAYESVILLE, N.C. — “Even if you have health insurance, it’s still overwhelming, when you have to pay $2,000 or $3,000 out of your pocket anyway,” Joyce Bryson told Lisa Potash and other members of the Socialist Workers Party outside the high school here Aug. 4, where a free medical clinic was underway. Potash is the SWP candidate for mayor of Atlanta.

The clinic was sponsored by the Clay County Health Department under the aegis of the Defense Department’s Innovative Readiness Training program, with most of the medical personnel provided by the military.

Similar clinics around the country are one of the ways some working people get medical care. This fair ran in long lines at the weeklong military-run free medical fair in Hayesville, North Carolina. It’s the only thing they can afford. But there are only 18 such fairs across the country this year.

And there’s no time for individualized treatment. If your tooth hurts, they pull it. If your tooth hurts, they pull it. You work, but you can’t get health coverage,” one worker told Militant.

Workers face health care crisis under capitalist rule

BY SETH GALINSKY
To understand Washington’s hatred for the Venezuelan government and the crisis and clashes there, it’s necessary to start in 1953 with Cuba and the July 26 assault led by Fidel Castro on the Moncada military base of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. That failed attack opened the Cuban Revolution, one of the two great revolutions of the 20th century, which changed Latin America and world politics forever.

The revolutionary struggle, and conquest of power in January 1959, transformed Cuban working people. They took charge of the country and their own destiny. Workers and farmers in Cuba began taking control of factories, tens of thousands were mobilized to teach peasants to read and write, landed estates were broken up and distributed to landless farmers.

The Second Declaration of Havana, read by Fidel Castro and adopted at the following statement was issued Aug. 9, by Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Atlanta.

Thousands turned out for free health clinic in Hayesville, North Carolina. Above, waiting after filling out paperwork. “We work, but we can’t get health coverage,” one worker told Militant.

Liberal Democrats and their allies in the mass media, consumed by hysteria over the presidency of Donald Trump, are campaigning to get him indicted, or at least impeached. Their real target is the workers who rallied and voted for him, seeking change and to “drain the swamp” in Washington. The purported rulers see — and fear — the threat of bigger class battles in the future. Getting rid of President Trump is a way to tell them to stand down.


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**Bosses’ drive to boost profits behind derailment, evacuation**

By Jim Bradley

Over 1,000 residents of the Pennsylvania town of Hyndman and surrounding area, 100 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, were evacuated after a two-mile-long 178-car CSX freight train moved through the town derailed in the early morning hours Aug. 2. One car loaded with molten sulfur and another with liquefied petroleum gas burst into flames, along with some carrying propane. CSX, one of the three largest U.S. railroads, is going through a massive cost-cutting reorganization to boost profits.

Thirty-two cars in the train derailed, shearing one house near the tracks, said the train was traveling from Chicago to New York, it went off the tracks. The toxic sulfur fire burned for half and setting a garage on fire. The screech and explosion. He immediately feared toxic chemicals. “I knocked on people’s doors and told them, ‘We need to get out of here,’” he told the press.

“I’m not suggesting that the length of the train caused the accident but it could have been a contributing factor,” said John Risch, speaking for the transportation division of the SMART union, which organizes CSX conductors. “It’s hard to keep track of where the train is, especially as it snakes behind you for more than two miles,” given the small size of the crew relative to the length of the train, he said.

“What are we doing with molten sulfur coming through town?” Caleb Shafer told the Militant. “Working-class folks are the ones affected. Seems like the people at the top are detached, except from their profits.”

They’re running ‘monster’ trains

“They cut some of our mixed freight trains off and combined them into longer trains,” said Josh Blankenship, a 35-year-old conductor with three years experience who worked the CSX yard in Cumberland, Maryland. Trains coming through town got much larger. The crossings are frequently blocked with enormous trains go through, meaning ambulances, fire trucks, people trying to get to work, have no way to get by. “The trains fly through town, 20 to 30 times a day,” Austin Sheetz, who just graduated from high school in Hyndman, told Arlene Rubinstein. “Some-thing was going to happen.” He said a friend of his was hit and killed by an Amtrak train there.

After being evacuated, Sheetz volunteered at the Tri-State Ministry, which became a hub of activity feeding people forced from their homes.

Construction worker Curtis Diehl, who lives near the tracks, said he heard a screech and explosion. He immediately feared toxic chemicals. “I knocked on people’s doors and told them, ‘We need to get out of here,’” he told the press.

Two members of the Russian political punk rock collective Pussy Riot were detained Aug. 7 for organizing a protest near the penitentiary in Yakutsk, East Siberia, where Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov is imprisoned. In what Russian authorities claimed was an “unauthorized rally,” Pussy Riot members Maria Alyokhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, who were arrested in 2012 on charges of hooliganism for “disrespecting a religious symbol,” were sentenced to two years in prison.

Filmmakers and other artists around the world have continued to protest and demand Sentsov’s freedom. His case, along with those related, is seen as a “key political issue” in Russia, Pussy Riot says on their Facebook page.

— Brian Williams

**Supporters of women’s right to choose abortion in Texas and many other states. State governments have adopted or promote restrictive anti-abortion laws that most heavily impact working-class and rural women. The ‘Militant’ reports on actions to defend women’s right to choose.**

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**Russia protest: ‘Free Ukrainian filmmaker Sentsov’**

Pussy Riot Facebook page
Mary Martin, right, speaks with Denise Angle, mother of a striking silver miner at Hecla mine, on her porch in Osburn, Idaho, Aug. 4. Martin is SWP candidate for mayor of Seattle.

Martin and Fruit knocked on the door of a man named Paul, who said, “I’m a retired city employee and a conservative Republican so probably we don’t have much in common.”

Martin explained her party was knocking on doors to discuss the crisis facing the working class and to defend the silver miners. “Neither the Democrats nor Republicans have any solutions for the catastrophe facing our class — from lack of jobs and health care to 25 years of young workers being killed and maimed in Washington’s imperialist wars to the exploding disaster of opioid addiction today. We explain that the witch hunt against Trump is directed at the working class.” Martin showed him the front-page articles in the latest Militant and the Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Class Record. “This book is the best book that explains last year’s election results,” she said.

“I never thought I would get anything from a socialist,” he said, thumbing through the book, “but I think I would like to read this.” He got it, along with the copy of the Militant.

“We are not all the same in this country. There are two classes,” striking miner and Militant subscriber Lewis Elam told us when we visited, saying this was the main point he got out of reading the two books by Jack Barnes he had bought. “We are the working class. The problem is we are not organized and working together.”

“You’re exactly right,” Martin said. “Our most pressing need is to unify the working class to fight in our interests. What you and the miners are doing here gives an example to workers everywhere on how to stick together and fight for safety, for your union, for the future. But it will take a socialist revolution to remove the capitalists from control over our lives and our jobs once and for all.

“I’m going to Cuba in October where workers made and have defended their revolution for almost 60 years. Their unions do control the conditions of work and the wealth they produce goes back into society,” Martin said. Elam got the current copy of the Militant, saying he wanted to resubscribe when his finances improved. But he wanted this issue, to check out the coverage about the Cuban Revolution.

At the end of this three-day visit to Idaho, including door-to-door campaigning and joining in the USW rally and on their picket lines, SWP members had signed up 10 subscribers to the Militant, and sold three copies of The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Class Record and one of Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?

And we met and deepened relationships with strikers and others following politics in the area that we intend to build on.
Workers, religious figures hit bomb attack on Minn. mosque

BY KEVIN DWIRE

MINNEAPOLIS — An explosion rocked the Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center just after 5 a.m. Aug. 5. What authorities now say was an “improvised explosive device” was hurled through the mosque’s window into the imam’s office, blowing up and spreading smoke throughout the building. The explosion ripped large holes in the walls, ceiling and the imam’s work desk.

More than a dozen people were gathered in a room nearby for morning prayers. Luckily, none were harmed.

Mohamed Omar, the center’s executive director, said one person in the mosque saw a pickup truck speed away after the bomb went off.

The mosque primarily serves people from the Minneapolis area’s large Somali community. “We came to this country for the same reason everyone else came here: freedom to worship,” Yasir Abdalrahman, a worshipper at the mosque, told the press. “And that freedom is under threat. Every other American should be insulted by this.”

Many people in the neighborhood and across the region came to the mosque to express their opposition to the attack and show solidarity.

In the past some anti-Muslim forces, like John Guandolo, a former FBI agent who founded a group called Understanding the Threat, have charged the mosque with inciting supporters with Islamist terrorist views.

“This is an attack on one group that other workers are keeping us divided. If the rulers can understand the common attitude of most workers with Islamist terrorist views,” Zaman said the center is planning a community meeting Aug. 8. “We want to change the narrative that Muslims are terrorists,” he said. “We want people to know that this was an act of terrorism.”

“We will be talking to workers throughout the Twin Cities and showing them our campaign statement that says an injury to one is an injury to all. And we will encourage them to participate,” Rosenfeld said.

The SWP candidate was given a tour of the imam’s office. Light fixtures dangled from the ceiling and burn marks were visible on the carpet.

Mohamed Omar said the center, which opened in 2011, has received threatening phone calls in the past, but has good relations with law enforcement in the area. That was reflected in the number of neighbors who came to visit.

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“Young, CEO of the Minnesota Council of Churches, said at an interfaith news conference at the mosque. “So we stand with you.”

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakota extended “solidarity with the local Muslim community,” Steve Hunegs, the council’s executive director, told the press.


The following statement by David Rosenfeld, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, was delivered to Mohamed Omar, executive director of the Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center, the day after the mosque was bombed, and released to the press.

The visit came during a weekend of activity that saw campaign supporters from the Twin Cities, Chicago, southern Minnesota, and Washington, D.C., fan out across Minneapolis. They distribute this statement, sold 12 subscriptions in two weeks to 52 subscriptions, 57 books and 740 signatures — with 10 to go to reach their goal of 750, one and a half times the required number to get on the ballot.

The Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, was delivered to Mohamed Omar, executive director of the Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center, the day after the mosque was bombed, and released to the press.

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Idaho miners gain support from unions in Northwest

Continued from front page

Jobs and crews by a seniority-based bid system are one of the key to their yearly income; recall rights from layoffs and mine closures slashed from three years to three months; and the company bears responsibility for dozens of deaths in the mines of the nation have done this new system we propose to them. When a company gets tenure, they can stop the system protects miners’ lives by ensuring that experienced miners teach the new hires the ropes, Epler said. “Otherwise the boss can put a new hire in a position where he can endanger himself and others.”

In the last century there have been hundreds of deaths in the mines of the Silver Valley. The Hecla Mining Company bears responsibility for dozens of these, he said. “We owe it to all those who lost their lives to fight for this.”

The company’s letter was aimed at the workers, families and businesses in the communities in the Silver Valley.” Bruce Babey, a miner at Hecla for 40 years, told the Militant at a picket line of the Mullan City Hall where company and union negotiators were set to meet. “They said their contract of fer was great, that it was just the senior miners who were holding out against the settlement, which they claim the younger members want. It’s not true. The company is trying to split the families, and it’s not working.”

“The support we have gotten is unbelievable,” said Dave Roose, the union chairman and chair of the negotiating committee. “When this is over we look forward to supporting in any way we can other unions that may go through labor fights.”

Messages and donations can be sent to: USW Local 5114, P.O. Box 427, Mullan, Idaho 83846. More information can be found on the local’s Facebook page.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

August 21, 2019

On August 16 work in U.S. coal mines will become a little more dangerous, and miners’ fight for health and safety on the job a little more difficult.

On that date, revised regulations governing ventilation in coal mines are scheduled to go into effect. Miners and their union, the United Mine Workers of America, have opposed such proposed changes for the past seven years.

Coal miners explain that the revised rules on balance favor mine owners. They will encourage practices that could lead to more tragedies like the 1984 Wilberg Mine fire in Huntington, Utah, which left 27 miners dead.

A huge fire climbed up the cladding-covered exterior of the unfortunately named Torch Tower, one of the world’s tallest residential skyscrapers in Dubai Aug. 4, raining flaming debris on the streets below. The building was still being renovated from a similar fire in 2015. Authorities acknowledged that at least 30,000 buildings across the United Arab Emirates are built with similar cladding.

The Aug. 4 editorial in the London Times described cladding as “driven contempt on working people. The closer interconnection between the Latin-American revolution and the struggle of Black people in the United States is being politicised, heated up by the rhetoric of class warfare.”


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Marxist books presented in Sulaimani, Kurdistan

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

SULAIMANI, Kurdistan Region, Iraq — “If you read these two books, you’ll have a better understanding of the deepening crisis in capitalist politics in the U.S. today,” Clark said.

Clark was holding up The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People and Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism — two new books by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States.

At the invitation of Endese owner and manager Hazhar Majeed, who chaired the program, Clark was speaking at a book-signing event to introduce some 100 of Pathfinder’s Marxist titles the store in downtown Sulaimani has recently begun selling. The books are displayed on a large bookshelf in the store.

Noting that this year is the 100th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, Clark said that Pathfinder traces its origins to that victory in October 1917. More specifically, he said, it began with the founding two years later of the Communist Party in the U.S., part of a world organization of parties — the Communist International — that was forged by revolutionary-minded workers seeking to end what workers and farmers had done in the former Russian empire.

“There are no recipes, no templates, to bring about revolutionary change. But it’s necessary to understand experiences and lessons from other struggles the world over,” Clark said. Pathfinder publishes writings and speeches by communist and other revolutionaries in their own words,” Clark said. He pointed to works by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Vladimir Lenin, and Leon Trotsky; by Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters, James P. Cannon, Farrell Dobbs, Evelyn Reed, and other communist leaders in the U.S., current and past; by Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Malcolm X, West African revolutionary leader Thomas Sankara, and others.

Over the coming year, Clark said, Endese will also be translating 10 titles produced by Pathfinder into Kurdish and publishing them.

Both of the new books I’m focusing on, Clark said, help explain the subtitle of The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record — that is, why the U.S. capitalist-rulers fear working people. Under mounting blows to the living standards, job conditions, and human dignity of tens of millions, more and more workers are open to discussing radical changes, including explanations by communist workers of the roots of today’s world capitalist crisis — and revolutionary solutions to it. Down the road, the rulers know, working-class discontent will lead to rising battles in the factories and on the streets.

That fear explains the contempt in the liberal media and among upper middle class and professional layers in the U.S. toward working people, millions of whom voted for Donald Trump in 2016, hoping he’d act on his pledge “to drain the swamp” of capitalist politicians and government bureaucrats. These workers want a change from past administrations, Democratic and Republican, under whom workers’ conditions have grown increasingly intolerable.

The working class, Clark said, is the real target of today’s crusade by big sections of the U.S. rulers to invalidate the 2016 election and indict, convict, or impeach President Trump or those close to him. This includes looking to the political police, the FBI, to criminalize what are really political disputes.

The closing chapter of Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? — “Capitalism, the Working Class, and the Transformation of Learning” — presents a course toward overcoming what’s faced by workers and the oppressed today. It explains the communist approach to education — to learning as a lifetime activity, Clark said. To get there, Barnes explains, requires preparing working people “for the battle to throw off the self-image the rulers teach us, and to recognize that we are capable of taking power and organizing society.”

During the discussion, a young woman asked, “Are you saying, in face of governments that have enormous wealth and big armies, that education is the solution to the problems we face? How can that be?”

“That’s not what I’m saying,” Clark responded. “There can only be education worthy of working, creating humanity when working people have made a revolution and taken power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers.”

That’s what workers and farmers did in Cuba nearly 60 years ago, he said, and that’s how education began being transformed there, too. “After taking political power, the July 26 Movement began in 1961 by mobilizing hundreds of thousands of young volunteers to take off the better part of a year to go out to the countryside to teach farmers and rural laborers, the majority women, how to read and write,” Clark said.

After the discussion, participants crowded around a table where Pathfinder books were on sale. Top sellers were Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Che Guevara Talks to Young People and The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record.

The brigade is opportunity for youth, workers to ‘see Cuba for yourselves’

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

As of Aug. 7, 66 people have signed up to go on the “In the Footsteps of Che International Brigade” to Cuba, and 10 others are in the works. Brigade organizers say it’s filling up and anyone who wants to go should get their applications in as soon as possible.

Delegations from around the world will arrive in Cuba Oct. 1 for the two-week brigade. Initiated by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), the brigade is a tribute to the legacy of Ernesto Che Guevara.

Guevara, originally from Argentina, was one of the outstanding revolutionary leaders of the 20th century. The brigade takes place the same month as tens of thousands of young people will gather for the 19th World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi, Russia. The Oct. 14-22 festival is another opportunity for revolutionary-minded youth to learn more about the fight against Washington’s wars and imperi-alist exploitation worldwide. It is being organized under the banner: “For peace, solidarity and social justice, we struggle against imperialism. Honoring our past, we build our future!”

The brigade will commemorate the 50th anniversary of Guevara’s death in combat. He was killed in October 1967 by the CIA and troops of the Bolivian military dictatorship. Guevara had led Cuba in 1966 for Bolivia, where he led revolutionaries there who fought to overthrow the U.S.-backed regime.

As Fidel Castro explained to the Cuban people 10 days later, Washington and the Bolivian rulers feared putting Guevara on trial, because it would give a platform to one of the world’s most powerful spokespersons for the political and moral duty of working-class revolutionary struggle.

Brigadistas will start out in the Julio Antonio Mella International Camp near Havana, meeting with leaders of Cuban groups and spending time doing volunteer agricultural work.

Brigadistas will meet with members of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), the Cuban Workers Federation (CTC), visit provinces where Che fought during the 1956-58 revolutionary war and meet some of Che’s co-combatants from both Bolivia and the Congo.

Members of the Socialist Workers Party in Minneapolis are spreading the word about the brigade as they campaign door to door. Jacque Henderson and David Rosenfeld, SWP candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, met with Joseph Sullivan, a young worker who found out about the brigade from SWP campaigners the previous weekend. He decided to join the brigade and sent in his application. “I want to see Cuba for myself and join in telling the truth about it when I come back,” he said.

To sign up, contact the Chicago Cuba Coalition at (312) 952-2618 or ICanGoToCuba@gmail.com.

Participants browse Pathfinder titles at meeting at Endese bookstore in Kurdish region of Iraq July 20. Over coming year Endese will translate and publish 10 Pathfinder titles into Kurdish.
Cuban Revolution shows road

Continued from front page

an assembly of more than a million on Feb. 4, 1962, asked, “What is it that is hidden behind the Yankees’ hatred of the Cuban Revolution?”

“But unifies them and incites them is fear,” it says. “Not fear of the Cuban Revolution, but fear of the Latin American revolution that prevented the plumed people of the continent will seize the arms from their oppressors and, like Cuba, declare themselves free peoples of the Americas.”

Just like the period after the Russian Revolution in 1917, when revolutionary-minded workers worldwide formed communist parties, looking to emulate the example of Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the Cuban Revolution won a mandate to stage a revolutionary action in Latin America and around the world. That included the United States, where many joined the Socialist Worker’s Party and Young Socialist Alliance.

Three giants rising up

For more than two decades, workers and farmers of the Americas have sought to follow the example of the Cuban Revolution. Che Guevara, who fell in combat leading revolutionaries in Bolivia,Peru, and the New Jewel Movement in Grenada, became an inspiration for millions.

In March 1979 workers and farmers in the predominately black, English-speaking country of Grenada, led by Maurice Bishop and the New Jewel Movement. It was the first revolution in a predominantly black, English-speaking country.

It was during the Sandinista National Liberation Front led to the victory of the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship.

Inspired by what Castro called the “three giants” — Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada — “rising up to defend their rights to independence, sovereignty, and justice on the very threshold of imperialism,” new forces joined the fight. But this rising movement was short-circuited.

In Grenada, a Stalinist clique headed the government. The U.S. and British marines backed Bishop and other New Jewel Movement leaders in October 1983, put the entire population under house arrest, and destroyed the revolution that had taken place.

In Nicaragua, the leadership of the FSLN, after winning the war against U.S.-backed contras by 1988, threw away the historic opportunity and gave up the fight to overturn capitalist exploitation and oppression, instead turning the country over to an alliance with “patriotic producers.”

“The opportunity to extend the socialist revolution, the opportunity to join in the great movement to overthrow imperialism, is being lost,” SWP leader Larry Seigle said in a report to a 1989 party conference.

These defeats, coupled with the murder of Thomas Sankara and fall of his popular revolutionary government in Burkina Faso in 1987, and the counterrevolution that prevented the workers and farmers of Iran from coming to power after their mighty overthrow of the U.S.-backed shah in 1979, marked a turning point.

The more than two decades of revolutionary-minded workers and youth seeking to emulate Cuba came to a close — not because workers and farmers were incapable of defeating imperialism, but because of a lack of revolutionary leaderships seeking to do what the Cubans have done.

Hugo Chávez and Venezuela

It’s within this retreat that Hugo Chávez won election as president of Venezuela in December 1998, gaining support of workers looking for an alternative to the swamp of the main bourgeois parties. Chávez was explicit in rejecting the road of the Cuban Revolution and workers power, saying he was “neither for savage capitalism, nor socialism, nor communism.” He talked of a Bolivarian Revolution or 21st Century Socialism, an alternative to Cuba.

Chávez — and after his death his successor Nicolás Maduro — used the profits from the oil industry to fund social programs and to try to administer and regulate capitalism to lessen its negative impact on the people.

And he gained the undying hatred of U.S. imperialism by providing Cuba with low-priced oil and collaborating with the United States in building anti-imperialist alliances in Latin America and the Caribbean. These moves increasingly isolated Washington, ultimately leading the U.S. rulers to renew diplomatic relations with Cuba in 2015 and seek new tactics in their unending effort to overthrow the revolution.

Venezuela’s oil shipments played an important role in helping Cuba overcome the “special period” that began with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the country lost some 85 percent of its trade virtually overnight.

Tens of thousands of Cuban volunteers joined international missions in Venezuela that continue today to provide health care, carry out literacy campaigns and other popular social programs.

Workers and farmers took advantage of the revolution to advance their own demands, including struggles for land, for greater workers control over safety and conditions of work, for access to education, health care, water, electricity, and housing.

None of this was to the liking of Washington says Washington fears not just Cuban Revolution, but revolution across Latin America.


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cas on “The United States: A Possible Revolution,” to which Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Worker’s Party in the United States, was invited to kick off the discussion.

Many questions came up during the five-day rolling exchange, including whether a socialist revolution is necessary, or is there a way to make capitalism serve the interest of the working class; and whether the Cuban Revolution has succeeded by a “thorn road” between socialist revolution and capitalist rule. Waters noted that Cuba was “the only free territory of the Americas.” It was indisputable, she said, that “Venezuela’s equivalent of the mass insurrection of the toilers of Cuba that culminated in the Jan. 1, 1959, revolution lies ahead of us, not behind.”

That remains the case today.

Capitalist contradictions

But the contradictions of trying to administer capitalism became starkly exposed as the worldwide capitalist crisis broke in 2008 and further when the price of oil dropped from $100 a barrel to less than $50. Attempts by the Maduro government to impose price controls and stamp out the black market have backfired. Inflation skyrocketed, now estimated at more than 70 percent a year. Food and medicine shortages are at crisis levels. Corruption is rampant.

Many workers have become demoralized, or backed away from politics because of the lack of perspective offered by the government coupled with the all-consuming need to find ways to survive in the crisis conditions.

The pro-imperialist opposition, grouped in the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) — which won the majority in the Legislative Assembly in December 2015 — has taken advantage of the crisis to accelerate efforts to oust Maduro and his United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV).

Since April MUD has stepped up provocative dem-onstrations that have included protests met by tear gas and rubber bullets by the police and National Guard. More than 120 people have been killed, including opponents and supporters of the government. But the opposition remains divided. It has no program in the face of the impact of the economic crisis that wouldn’t make working people in Venezuela pay the price.

Maduro has responded by using presidential decrees and the Supreme Court, which was appointed by Chávez, to bypass the legislature. And despite a torrent by the Constituent Assembly. It went ahead with the July 30 vote for a 545-member Constituent Assembly. It held its first meeting Aug. 4, electing Foreign Minister Delcy Rodríguez as its president.

None of these moves point a road forward for workers to take power and do away with capitalist exploitation and oppression.

“There is no hunger in Venezuela,” Rodríguez told the new assembly, de-nying a reality every worker knows.

“There is no humanitarian crisis.” What Venezuela faces, she said “is an economic war” at the hands of the oppo-sition-dominated legislature, promising that “justice will come to them.”

The next day the Constituent Assembly ordered the dismissal of Attorney General Luisa Ortega, who was ap-pointed by Chávez. Ortega opposed the election for the assembly, denouncing it as a violation of the Constitution, and has begun collaborating with Roundtable representa-tives.

Rodríguez says the opposition legis-lature has to go.

Meanwhile, the Roundtable has man-aged to split a handful of legislators from the ruling party to their side, in-cluding Ortega’s husband who was a member of the PSUV.

Small groups of ex-military officers have mounted attacks on government outposts, but the army remains loyal to Maduro.

Washington has imposed sanctions on more than a dozen high-ranking government, military and state-owned oil company officials, and, after his government carried through the Constituent Assembly election, on Maduro.

The Socialist Worker’s Party opposes Washington’s interference with the sover-eignty of the Venezuelan people. We say: U.S. hands off Venezuela!

The biggest danger for working people in Venezuela today is not an im-minent U.S. invasion, but that the battle between the Maduro government and the pro-imperialist opposition could spiral out of control causing an even bloodier conflict.
‘Only the working class can resolve crisis of capitalism’

Below are excerpts from Capitalism’s World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. It is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for August. Written in the midst of fast-breaking events that marked the opening of the 21st century, the bulk of the book is comprised of four talks by Barnes that discuss the economic, social and political underpinnings of the significant changes that swept world politics between the 1987 near meltdown of the world’s stock markets, and the so-called Mexican “peso crisis” that hit in December 1994. The selection is from “Capitalism’s Deadly World Disorder,” presented in April 1993 to participants in a regional socialist educational conference in Greensboro, North Carolina. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JACK BARNES

Workers should never present today’s crisis of the propertied classes and their social system as primarily an economic crisis. No, it is the great political and moral crisis of our time. It is proof that only the working class has a chance to restore this crisis and begin transforming society in a truly human way. Because only the working class, the propertyless class, has no interest in turning like dogs on any of the victims of the crisis-ridden capitalist system.

That is why the battle for jobs, the battle for solidarity, the battle against racism and the oppression of women, the battle against immigrant-bashing, the battle for social protection — why all these are a battle for the life and death of the labor movement. They are the battle for the time and space to prepare a socialist revolution! That is what is at stake in pulling the working class together.

Working-class leaders, not utopians

The biggest lie supporters of capitalism tell about socialists is that we are trying to create a utopia, mess with people’s lives, and engineer a massive social experiment. You want to play God with the lives of other human beings, they charge. Big governments and bureaucracy are proven enemies of common people — why can’t you socialists ever learn? That is the lie of the truth. In fact, communists are less inclined in that direction than any group of people on the face of the earth.

As Marx put it, when writing about the Paris Commune of 1871, revolutionary-minded workers “have no ready-made utopias to introduce. . . . They know that in order to work out their own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending by its own economic workings, they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men.”

Communists are materialists, dialectical materialists. We start with facts, with social realities, and how they develop and change over history — how they are shaped by shifting productive relations, social labor, and revolutionary activity. We know that our class and its toiling allies, who make up the majority of humanity, cannot organize the world on new foundations as we are. And a state bureaucracy cannot do it for us, either. We must change ourselves.

“To build communism it is necessary, simultaneously with the new material foundations, to build the new man,” Che Guevara wrote in his 1965 article “Socialism and Man in Cuba.” We agree. Workers can and will change ourselves as we go about changing the material foundations of our relations to each other. But this cannot be done without tearing down the brutal class divisions that underlie all social relations today and that will lead through war and fascism to a culmination too horrible to even imagine unless our class organizes to take power out of the hands of the capitalists.

There is only one real equality possible in today’s class-divided world political system. And it only becomes possible in the working-class workers movement. It only becomes possible as those who make up a fighting working-vanguard collectively prepare ourselves for the battles to rid society of every vestige of exploitation, oppression, and discrimination.

The socialist revolution is not the end of recorded history, as Stalinist ideologues have idealistically presented it. In order to rationalize the counterrevolutionary course of the parasitic caste and its claim to have established so-called socialism in a single country, No, the workers revolution is the beginning of truly human history.

What is most important about the workers revolution is not the particu- lar property changes that will sweep society directly in its wake although without them, nothing further would be possible — but the fact that its victory opens other possibilities, such as the historic revolution for women’s emancipation. That will not be settled just by overthrowing the capitalist state, and declaring the class struggle over. The new possibilities opened by a revolutionary victory, however, will lay the material foundations for world liberation. Revolution can be achieved and precipitate an explosion in the fight for real econom- ic and social equality by the million- nes. Similarly, all the manifold forms of class oppression bequeathed by thousands of years of property systems will for the first time be open to being vanquished.

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The Militant August 21, 2017
Workers discuss way out of health care crisis

Continued from front page

Several weeks ago a co-worker and several family members. She decided to get a copy of...