

‘Workers need our own party to back all our struggles’

BY MARY MARTIN

Socialist Workers Party members in a number of areas report that they have met or gone over their quotas in the party’s fall *Militant* and book drives. We can say with confidence that the effort to expand the reach of

SWP FALL ‘MILITANT,’ BOOK, FUND DRIVE

the party and its press to 1,500 new readers worldwide has been successful.

In addition, members say they’re poised to go over the top in the \$100,000 fund drive to finance the ongoing work of the party. Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, the *Militant* is being printed a day early — before the final results have all been tallied. A final account and evaluation of the drives will come in the next issue.

Initial reports on the last week’s experiences show that all areas finished the drive on a strong note. At the heart of the effort has been going door to

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SWP Fall Campaign (Final scoreboard coming next week) Sept. 16 - Nov 21 (Week 9)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Albany	95	90	95	77
Atlanta	85	94	85	79
Chicago	115	114	115	93
Colorado	30	20	30	29
Lincoln	30	26	30	23
Los Angeles	135	118	135	75
Miami	45	32	45	37
New York	180	174	180	150
Oakland	125	136	135	134
Philadelphia	70	68	70	54
Seattle	105	107	105	69
Twin Cities	75	77	75	75
Washington	80	77	80	51
Total U.S.	1,170	1,133	1,180	946
Prisoners	20	30		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	65	76	65	78
Manchester	60	67	60	62
Total U.K.	125	143	125	140
CANADA				
Montreal	60	53	60	71
Vancouver	45	43	45	43
Total Canada	105	96	105	114
New Zealand	50	56	50	50
Australia	45	44	45	37
Total	1,515	1,502	1,505	1,287
SHOULD BE	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500

March demands massive aid to rebuild Puerto Rico
Cancel the debt! Repeal colonial laws!



Militant/Seth Galinsky

Puerto Ricans and others marched in Washington, D.C., Nov. 19 to protest U.S. colonial treatment of island and refusal to provide adequate aid to rebuild after battering by hurricanes.

BY SETH GALINSKY

WASHINGTON — More than 2,000 people marched here Nov. 19 to demand that Washington provide massive aid for the reconstruction of hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico, the cancellation of the U.S. colony’s \$74 billion debt and the lifting of laws that reinforce U.S. domination of the island.

“Even before Hurricane Maria we were suffering from a humanitarian crisis,” Evelyn Mejil, central organizer of the Unity March for Puerto Rico, told the crowd. She was referring to high unemployment, low wages, cuts in social services and health care, and deteriorating infrastructure across the island.

New Florida prison censorship threatens broader ban on ‘Militant’

BY SETH GALINSKY

In a broader attack on the constitutional rights of the *Militant* and its subscribers behind bars, authorities at the Jefferson Correctional Institution in Monticello, Florida, impounded the Nov. 6 issue of the *Militant* on multiple charges, including that the “publication encourages protesting and group disruption.”

Unlike previous impoundments by Florida prison officials — often overturned on appeal by the prison system’s Literature Review Committee — the banning of this issue is not aimed at a specific article, but at a series of material in the issue. Censorship at one prison, according to Flori-

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rating infrastructure across the island. “Hurricane Maria just exposed what [the U.S. government] has been doing with Puerto Rico. It made the world a witness to the injustice that Puerto Rico has been suffering because of legislation that has been crippling our nation.”

“We are not demanding handouts,” Mejil added. “We’re asking them to eliminate the Jones Act, that they cancel the debt,” and that they provide the funds necessary to rebuild the country.

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Israeli, Saudi conflict with Tehran grows as war in Syria winds down

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In response to Tehran’s growing clout in the Mideast, Washington is seeking to bolster its long-term alliance with the Saudi Arabian monarchy and its allies as a counterweight. Similar concerns are driving growing contacts between Riyadh and the government of Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel.

Iran’s capitalist rulers made the most gains through years of fighting — alongside Tehran-backed Hezbollah forces and more recently Russian airstrikes — to shore up the once teetering Bashar al-Assad dictatorship against efforts by the Syrian people to bring it down.

Gains by Iranian-trained militias with officers from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard fighting alongside Iraqi troops strengthened Tehran’s influence over the government of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi in Iraq. They dealt a blow to the Kurds fight for independence, seizing Kirkuk

SWP: Deepen the party’s work in the working class

BY TERRY EVANS

NEW YORK — “There is an election for U.S. Senate, for governor or Congress — and sometimes all three — in 2018, every place where the Socialist Workers Party has a branch, and we plan to take advantage of this to deepen the party’s work in the working class,” John Studer, organizer of the SWP national campaign committee, said at the Militant Labor Forum here Nov. 18.

“The SWP explains why workers need to see every political question from a working-class point of view,” he said, “and why workers can organize to fight against the attacks the propertied rulers bring down on us because of the crisis of their capitalist system.”

“For decades, labor’s share of gross domestic product has shrunk,” Studer said, quoting the *Wall Street Journal*, “while the share that goes to capital like profits, interest and rent, has risen.”

Studer was joined on the platform by Margaret Trowe and Osborne Hart, the SWP candidates for mayor of Albany and New York, and by Paul Landry on behalf of the Communist League in Montreal, which ran Philippe Tessier for mayor this year. They encouraged participants to join in the parties’ 2018 campaigns,

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Cuban doctor: Why we went to West Africa to fight Ebola

Below is an interview with Dr. Enmanuel Vigil Fonseca, 34, one of the participants from Cuba at the 19th World Festival of Youth and Students held in Sochi, Russia, Oct. 14-22. It was conducted by Róger Calero, a delegate at the festival from the Young Socialists in the U.S.

BY RÓGER CALERO

Enmanuel Vigil Fonseca was one of 256 Cuban doctors and nurses who went to Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea-Conakry to fight the Ebola epidemic from 2014 to 2015.

All were members of the Henry Reeve International Contingent of Doc-

tors Specializing in Disasters and Serious Epidemics, created in 2005 by Fidel Castro. The Cuban leader that year offered to send 1,586 doctors and 36 tons of medical aid and diagnostic resources to help victims of Hurricane Katrina in the United States. Washington refused the offer. Reeve was a Brooklyn-born volunteer in Cuba’s war for independence from Spain, which began in 1868.

Over the last decade the contingent has provided emergency care in 19 countries, twice in Haiti and Chile. The mission in Sierra Leone was Vigil’s seventh. He had also volunteered in Venezuela, Western Sahara, Ecuador, Nepal, Haiti and Peru.

“When we arrived in Sierra Leone, what we found looked like a warehouse, not a hospital,” Vigil said, with bodies lying everywhere. He praised the work of international teams that set up the treatment center from scratch, and the collaboration with medical personnel from Sierra Leone and other countries.

“We found patients vomiting 20 to 30 times a day. They needed to be hydrated, and we began to give them as many IV lines as necessary,” he said. Other medical personnel in Sierra Leone didn’t do that — their instructions were to avoid direct contact with the patients.

“We made the decision to hydrate the patient, and the survival rate began to change,” Vigil said. When the Cuban volunteers got to Sierra Leone, the mortality rate was 80 percent. The Cuban’s treatment helped reduce it to 29 percent.

“The first thing we had to do was to break down the barriers between the patient and the doctor,” he told me. “Si-



Cuban doctor Enmanuel Vigil during medical brigade in Ecuador after 2016 earthquake. He is one of thousands of Cuban medical personnel who have volunteered in Africa and elsewhere.

erra Leone is a country that had been at war for years. And here you had a white man, with green eyes, covered completely in a body suit, about to stick you with a needle.

“You don’t ask the patient lying down on the floor to get up so you can examine him. You sit down on the floor with him,” Vigil said, describing the humanity and respect with which Cuban doctors and nurses treated each patient. “We asked them what kind of work they did. We asked them about their families.

“They began to recognize us through the face mask and body suit,” Vigil said, “and then you saw a smile on their faces, you saw hope.”

When it became known that the survival rate was higher at the center with the Cuban personnel, many afflicted with Ebola came, asking to be admitted there.

“We were full and told them there were no more beds,” said Vigil. “It doesn’t matter, we want to be with the Cuban doctors,” patients would say. “Then come on in,” we told them.

“To us, those lying on the floor were not sacks of potatoes,” Vigil said. “They were human beings.”

““Why are you still here treating me if you know I am going to die?”” one man asked. “I had to tell him, ‘Yes, you are likely to die, But if so, you are going to at least die with dignity!’”

The way Cuban volunteers treated patients was a frequent source of conflict with center administrators, Vigil noted.

They said it wasn’t “cost-effective” to use medication and IVs with patients who had very little chance of survival.

“‘It’s a lost cause,’ they would tell us. But we were going to do everything we could, even if they were dying,” Vigil said. “They are human beings! That’s what we are taught in Cuba.”

Every morning at shift change, we would review the discharges, how many had died, and the number of patients, he said. “We referred to the patients by their names. We found it disrespectful to call them ‘Patient 1’ or ‘Bed 1,’ as some did.

“And then we would all join in a prayer — Cuban, American and Sierra Leone personnel, as well as survivors of the disease who stayed in the center to help because they were immune to the disease, believers and nonbelievers,” said Vigil, who added that he’s a Catholic.

There is an outstanding book about the experiences and accomplishments of the Cuban medical brigade in West Africa, *Zona Roja: La experiencia cubana del ébola*, by Enrique Ubieta, who traveled with them.

“People have asked me why I write about the Cuban doctors,” Ubieta told a meeting in Havana in 2016. “I don’t write about the doctors. I write about the solidarity and internationalism that is at the heart of the revolution. I write about the seeds we are sowing inside and outside of ourselves. Every time a Cuban

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Red Zone: The Cuban Ebola Experience, available only in Spanish, tells story of the Cuban volunteers who led the fight against Ebola epidemic in West Africa 2014-15.

THE MILITANT

Oppose capitalist rulers’ mistreatment of refugees!

Refugees held on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea rallied Oct. 31 demanding right to come to Australia. Solidarity actions also took place in Sydney and Melbourne. The ‘Militant’ reports on protests in defense of refugees as part of efforts to build working-class unity.

Refugee Action Coalition
Refugees on Manus Island protest living conditions, demand right to go to Australia.

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‘Workers need our own party’

Continued from front page

door in working-class areas to discuss the carnage workers face at the hands of the capitalists’ economic and political crisis and introducing the party’s revolutionary working-class alternative.

SWP members who work in retail continue to help lead the effort.

“Party members organized two teams that went door to door in a neighborhood near a Walmart store in Compton,” Bill Arth writes from Los Angeles. “We sold three *Militant* subscriptions, two books on special, and got two contributions for the fund. And two of my co-workers gave a total of \$25. One of them came back to me later and said she wanted to make an additional \$5 donation.”

Workers’ contributions on their doorsteps and from co-workers have been important parts of the fund drive.

Isabella Graham from Chicago reports that one of her co-workers just paid off her final \$10 installment on a \$40 pledge. “Workers need a political party that supports their struggles and encourages them to organize themselves,” she told Graham. “You are very committed to this, so I know my contribution is going to a good cause.”

“Donald Freeman and I went to visit with people at another Walmart store, where we used to work,” Graham said. “We met a former co-worker, who had read the *Militant* back then.”

Cuban doctor

Continued from page 2

doctor takes part in a mission abroad, they renew themselves as revolutionaries.”

“One of the biggest accomplishments of the revolution in Cuba is the family doctor system,” Vigil said, the neighborhood-based clinics that provide primary care free and on demand.

Vigil normally works at the Nguyen Van Troi polyclinic in Havana, one of nearly 500 across the island. Together with the family doctor-and-nurses offices, they are the backbone of Cuba’s medical system. Everyone in the neighborhood knows his or her doctor, said Vigil, “the elderly neighbor who brings you a cup of coffee, the mother of a child you cared for, everyone.”

“Haiti was the hardest,” of his other internationalist missions, Vigil said, describing how he witnessed the devastation imperialism has imposed when he was part of a mission there after Hurricane Matthew in 2016.

“They have tried to replicate our system in other countries, but capitalism won’t allow it,” he said.

As Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara said, the only way to be a revolutionary doctor is to make a revolution.

Freeman talked about what he learned from participating in the recent “In the Footsteps of Che” brigade to Cuba, describing how workers there were transformed in the process and their revolution was an example for working people everywhere.

“We were expecting to help with cleanup after Hurricane Irma battered the island,” Freeman told her. “But they had already done so. So we did volunteer agricultural work instead.”

“I guess it’s time to re-up,” said another former co-worker and subscriber they met.

“One thing we’ve been doing here in Lincoln,” Joe Swanson writes from Nebraska, “is to follow up with subscribers to discuss what they think of the paper and to suggest they consider picking up some of the book offers. So far we’ve sold four books in the last week this way.”

“We also think about what other books by party leaders and other revolutionaries are most helpful on political questions tied to events taking place,” he said. “There was a protest here against the TransCanada Keystone XL pipeline, so we took the two issues of *New Internationalist* with “Our Politics Start With the World” and “The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class” and we sold three of them.”

SWP members from Albany and New York hooked up to campaign door to door in Kingston. An active-duty GI, an artist and a Puerto Rican customer service call center worker got books and subscriptions.

Alex Huinil and Ved Dookhun took part in a Nov. 18 rally against police brutality in Troy, New York, demanding the police who shot Dahmeek McDonald earlier this year be charged and disciplined. As they protested, they sold three subscriptions and four books. Some participants said they wanted to set up a meeting with Maggie Trowe, SWP candidate for Albany mayor in the recent election, who went on the solidarity brigade to Cuba.

A young worker Dookhun had met recently campaigning door to door in Ravena came to the rally, the first protest he had ever attended. He joined the two SWP members for dinner and

London protest: Support Kurdish independence!



Militant/Pamela Holmes

LONDON — Two dozen demonstrators took to the streets near the prime minister’s residence in Westminster here to support the Kurdish people’s struggle for a homeland. The Nov. 18 action condemned the British government’s support for the Iraqi government and its refusal to honor the Kurdish people’s vote for independence. Protesters opposed British Petroleum’s collaboration with Baghdad’s moves to exploit the Kirkuk oilfields, seized from the Kurdistan Regional Government last month.

— PAMELA HOLMES

discussion, getting a copy of “*It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System*”: *The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class*.

The book about the experiences of the Cuban Five along with *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* and *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*, all by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by party leader Mary-Alice Waters, were featured throughout the drive and are still available for purchase.

Two SWP members who work in an area chemical plant knocked on doors in the neighborhoods around the plant last week. A woman got a subscription and three of the books on special, and a Yemeni-born high school student subscribed.

Members of the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom joined in the international effort to increase readership of

the *Militant* and party books. Katy Le-Rougetel from Vancouver reports that Joe Young and Lynda Little knocked on the door of a member of the bakery workers union. “I remember that paper! You joined us on our picket lines,” he said. The *Militant* built solidarity with the fight at Canada Bread in Langley earlier this year. He and his wife decided to get a subscription.

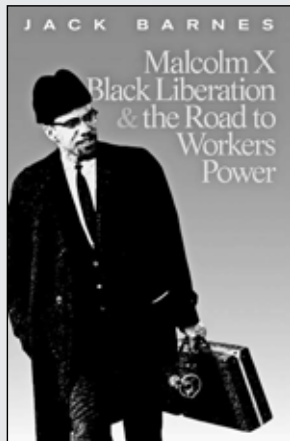
Be sure to check out the final results in the drive in the next issue! To help in the ongoing weekly work of the SWP and Communist Leagues in taking a revolutionary perspective to workers on doorsteps, strike pickets and social protests far and wide, contact the party in your area listed on page 8.

Correction

In the photobox “I’m Not Backing Off of Fight Against Cop Brutality” in the Nov. 20 issue, the individual the *Militant* was told is Gwen Carr is in fact Carol Gray, mother of Kimani Gray, who cops killed in 2013.

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To subscribe or purchase books at these prices, contact Socialist Workers Party or Communist League branches listed on page 8.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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Participants Report on World Festival of Youth and Students in Russia. Speakers: Ögmundur Jónsson and Hugo Wils of the Communist League. Sat., Dec. 2, 7 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. M1 2EH. Tel.: (0161) 478-2496.

Army overthrows Mugabe in Zimbabwe ruling party fight

BY TERRY EVANS

After years of economic crises, a faction fight between wings of the governing Zanu-PF party led to the resignation of President Robert Mugabe Nov. 21, days after the army placed him under house arrest. Tens of thousands took to the streets in Harare backing the army's actions Nov. 18.

Former Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa took over as party leader. Mnangagwa was fired by Mugabe Nov. 6, a step designed to pave the way for Mugabe's wife, Grace, to become the next president. A plan by Mugabe to arrest Mnangagwa's ally, army chief Gen. Constantino Chiwenge, on his return from visiting China was prevented by the army Nov. 12.

The *Zimbabwe Mail* reported Nov. 15 that Mnangagwa had planned to form a transitional government to replace Mugabe in collaboration with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change. It would be backed by the War Veterans Association, former fighters against British colonial rule, and by the Commercial Farmers Union — large capitalist farmers, including some looking to snatch back land taken from them during government-backed land seizures in the 2000s. The new government would seek the lifting of imperialist-imposed sanctions.

Mugabe has ruled Zimbabwe since 1980, when a hard-fought liberation struggle against colonial rule ended the white-minority regime that controlled the country, under colonial tutelage from London and with military backing from apartheid South Africa. The struggle for independence and to recover land stolen from the African majority by the settler-backed regime, was boosted in the mid-1970s when a South African invasion of Angola was pushed back. Angolan forces and hundreds of thousands of revolutionary Cuban volunteers successfully defended Angola's newly won independence from Pretoria's intervention.

The effects of the victory included the independence of Namibia and, later, the overthrow of apartheid.

After 1980 London sought to prevent millions of landless Zimbabweans from gaining access to land

owned largely by the country's former colonial masters. At the same time, Mugabe consolidated control of the country with a murderous assault on political opponents and others, particularly the minority Ndebele tribe. Twenty years after independence 4,000 capitalist farmers continued to own 80 percent of the arable land, while 6 million landless peasants eked out a living on the worst patches of ground.

Conditions for working people deteriorated sharply between 2000 and 2008, following land seizures carried out in the name of satisfying black peasants' deeply felt hunger for land, but that in fact transferred many formerly large capitalist farms into the hands of Zanu-PF party supporters.

The EU and Washington responded by placing sanctions on the Mugabe family and barring member states from trading weapons with Zimbabwe. These sanctions are still in place.

From 1998 to 2008 gross domestic product plummeted nearly in half. The resulting food shortages and rampant inflation were devastating for working people. Government officials gave up measuring inflation in 2008 when it reached nearly 80 billion percent, then abandoned the country's currency. Up to 3 million people are estimated to have left the country.



AP Photo/Ben Curtis

Following army detention of President Robert Mugabe thousands demonstrate demanding his resignation, Harare, Zimbabwe, Nov. 18. Mugabe, president since end of white-minority regime in 1980, resigned Nov. 21. Rival Emmerson Mnangagwa replaced him as Zanu-PF leader.

Like the toiling majority in many other African nations, working people in Zimbabwe have faced the devastating consequences of capitalist exploitation and imperialist-imposed debt bondage. In July the International Monetary Fund demanded Harare slash public sector wages, reduce payments to farmers and clear arrears on its foreign debt payments.

Still, Mugabe touted capitalism as the road forward. "We want to see our people turned into entrepreneurs," he told the press in February.

A wave of protests and a general strike hit the country last year. Government workers — the largest section of the formal workforce — went on strike and people in the townships built barricades.

Conditions facing working people are disastrous. Over a quarter of all children suffer from stunted growth, because of poor nutrition.

In September the British Embassy in Harare denied press reports that it was maneuvering to help install a government friendly to London's interests.

Russian truckers set strike, presidential campaign

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Long-haul truckers across Russia have called a third strike Dec. 15-25 to press their fight to scrap onerous highway taxes that threaten to bankrupt them. Their union, the Association of Carriers of Russia, picked the critical Christmas holiday period to maximize the impact of the work stoppage.

"In addition, the registration of presidential candidates should begin approximately at this time," Andrey Bazhutin, the union's leader, told the Russian *Independent* Nov. 15. In June, Bazhutin announced that he will run for president of the Russian Federation in the March 2018 elections to "represent the interests of working people."

For two years the truckers have been locked in a hard-fought battle with the government, which refuses to even meet with them. They have persisted through arrests and harassment from cops and National Guard troops, broken through

a government-imposed virtual media blackout, won solidarity and joined in other anti-government protests.

Their fight was triggered by the November 2015 establishment of the Platon system — "pay-per-ton." It imposes a per-mile toll on trucks weighing more than 12 tons.

The December work stoppage will involve drivers in 50 of Russia's 85 federal regions. The union organized national strikes in November 2015 and March this year. They have held rallies, set up informational pickets and organized protest camps and convoys touring different cities. Truckers hang their rigs with slogans and demands to spread the word about the fight as they make their runs. Over the two-year period, tens of thousands of drivers have been involved, affecting virtually all regions across the country.

During the summer Bazhutin led a road caravan of a few cars and a mini-

bus and held rallies in Murmansk, Vologda, Tver, Moscow and St. Petersburg. When they set up an informational picket in Yoshkar-Ola, 400 miles east of Moscow, several members of the local Popular Movement for Housing joined them, as well as local unionists and supporters of national opposition politician Alexei Navalny.

The previous summer Bazhutin led a convoy to Krasnodar in southern Russia in support of hundreds of farmers who had organized a tractor convoy heading to Moscow to protest the loss of land to large agricultural holding companies. Riot cops blockaded the convoy just outside Rostov, arresting some participants.

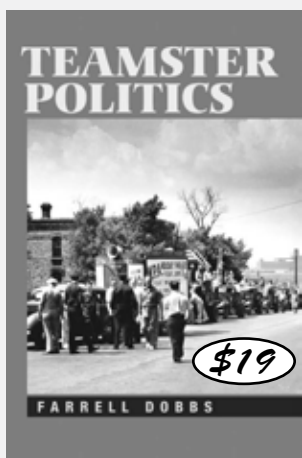
The truckers also made contact with miners on hunger strike in the Rostov region, where 2,200 workers were owed a-year-and-a-half's back wages.

During the March strike, Bazhutin was jailed for allegedly driving without a license and spent five days in jail. The cops then harassed his family and threatened to take his children into custody.

"Of course I was worried about the children. I was worried about my wife and her condition," Bazhutin told *Novaya Gazeta*, explaining his wife was seven months pregnant. "But I was immediately bombarded with text messages from all over the country. People were willing to help."

The truckers point to the support they get from working people and insist they won't back down in face of government harassment and threats.

A documentary about the 2015 strike won a prize at the Saratov Sufferings film festival in September. The title — "Chronicles of a Revolution That Didn't Happen" — refers to the news blackout on the truckers' fight and the government's refusal to meet with them.



"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."

— Farrell Dobbs

pathfinderpress.com



Ramil Sitdikov/Sputnik via AP

Sergei Rudametkin, left, head of Moscow branch of Russian Association of Movers, at March 27 protest. Sign says "No Platon," demanding end to onerous tolls imposed on truckers.

Frame-up trial of Bundy ranchers begins in Nevada

‘Everything we’re charged with, gov’t is doing to us’

BY SETH GALINSKY

The trial of cattle rancher Cliven Bundy, his sons Ammon and Ryan Bundy, and supporter Ryan Payne, an electrician, opened in Las Vegas Nov. 14. The U.S. government is trying to railroad them to prison for protesting the Bureau of Land Management’s decades of harassment of the Bundy farm and seizure of some 400 of Cliven Bundy’s cows.

If convicted of the 15 conspiracy and other charges, they could face sentences of more than 170 years.

They have been confined in prison for over a year and a half while government prosecutors have tried to convict others charged in the protest. On the eve of the trial Ryan Bundy won release, but was ordered to wear a GPS tracking device. The judge has repeatedly refused to release Cliven or Ammon.

The charges stem from April 12, 2014, when 200 federal agents, — many of them heavily armed with long arms with telescopic sites — confronted a few hundred protesters in Bunkerville, Nevada, who were demanding release of the cattle and an end to the government’s harassment of the Bundys. The BLM claims Cliven Bundy owes more than \$1 million in grazing fees and fines. A small number of protesters were armed, but not any of the four on trial.

The protest ended after federal authorities agreed to leave and demonstrators freed the impounded cattle.

The indictment alleges that Bundy and supporters were “flooding the internet” with false statements “that law enforcement officers were abusing Bundy and stealing his cattle.” In his opening statement federal prosecutor Steven Myhre claimed the cops “were outnumbered. We were outgunned.”

This just isn’t true, Ryan Bundy, acting as his own lawyer, said in his opening statement. “You should have seen all the guns pointed at us,” he told the court. “Surveillance cameras on one hill. Snipers aiming at the house.”

In the days leading up to the April 12 protest a federal cop threw Ryan Bundy’s aunt and his brother David to the ground and stunned Ammon with a Taser three times.

“You want to talk about extortion? You want to talk about violence? You want to talk about pointing guns?” he asked. “Everything that we are charged with is what they are doing to us.”

“There was no conspiracy to impede, to injure, to harm,” Ryan Bundy said. “We’re just trying to protect our life, our liberty, the rights we do own, our livelihood, our heritage.”

Until 1990 there were some 50 cattle ranchers in Clark County, Nevada. Little by little they were all driven out, leaving only the Bundy ranch, as the government restricted grazing rights, supposedly to protect the “threatened,” but not endangered, desert tortoise.

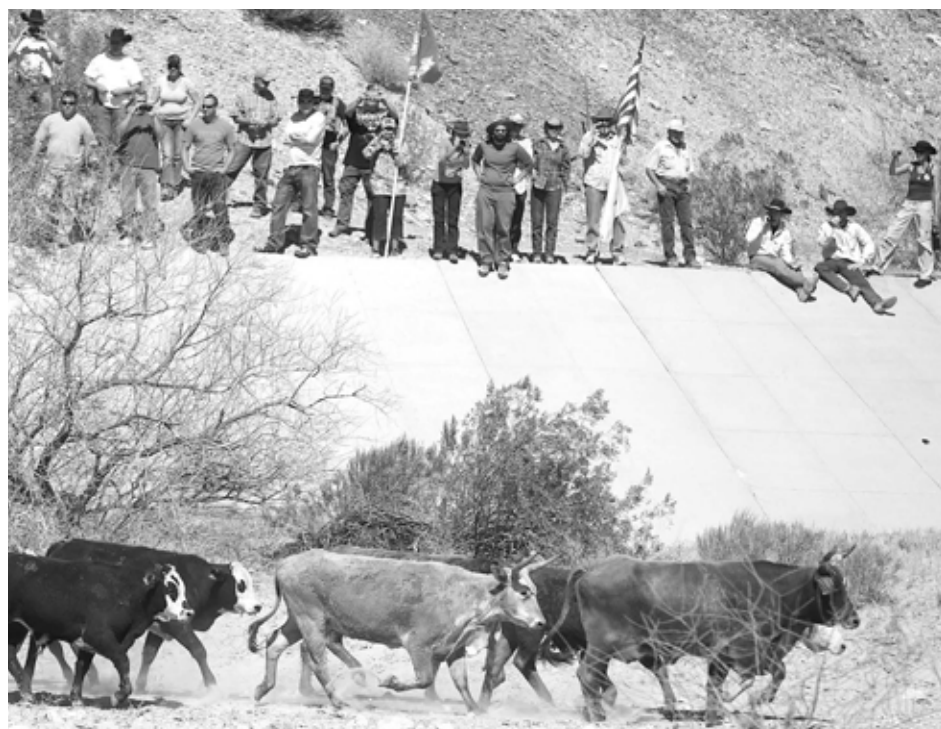
Some 87 percent of the land in Ne-

vada — and nearly 50 percent of all land west of the Mississippi River — is owned by the federal government. The only way many ranchers can survive is by grazing their cattle there.

Cliven Bundy did stop paying grazing fees to the U.S. government in 1993, his lawyer Bret Whipple told the court. But that was only after the BLM cut his grazing permit nearly in half, even though the family had been ranching there since 1877.

Ammon and Ryan Bundy were jailed Jan. 26, 2016, after being arrested for their role in the protest occupation of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge in Oregon, seeking to draw attention to the vengeful legal crusade by the government to imprison area ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond. After the Bundys’ acquittal on all charges in October that year, they were transferred to prison in Nevada.

Cliven Bundy, who is 71, was arrested in February 2016 after he flew to Or-



Reuters/Jim Urquhart

On April 12, 2014, hundreds of ranchers and others demanding release of Cliven Bundy’s cattle impounded by U.S. officials, near Bunkerville, Nevada, were confronted by heavily armed federal agents. After cops withdrew, demonstrators watched as cattle were released.

gon to visit his jailed sons. He has lost at least five teeth while in prison, since “dental care” there is pulling teeth.

Ammon Bundy has been strip searched every time he leaves the prison in Pahrump to go to court, and every

time he leaves solitary confinement. On Oct. 25, Judge Gloria Navarro ordered prison authorities to cease “routine strip searches or cavity searches” of Ammon and Ryan Bundy and Ryan Payne unless “there is a safety concern.”

Fla. prison threatens broader censorship of ‘Militant’

Continued from front page

da regulations, is extended to all state prisons there.

“This is a serious escalation by Florida prison officials attacking the *Militant*’s right to freedom of the press and the right of our readers behind bars,” *Militant* editor John Studer said after the paper received the notice of rejection Nov. 18. “If not overturned it could lead to authorities attempting to bar the *Militant* completely from Florida prisons.”

The Jefferson Correctional Institution officials also checked off boxes on the impoundment notice that claim the subject material in the issue “depicts, describes or encourages activities which may lead to the use of physical violence or group disruption” and that it “is dangerously inflammatory in that it advocates or encourages riot, insurrection, disruption of the institution, violation of department or institution rules.”

As justification for all their charges, prison authorities point to “Pg. 1 continued on Page 9, 5, 7.”

The three front-page articles from the Nov. 6 issue that continue on page 9 are, “Protest US Economic War Against Cuban Revolution!” “GIs Come Back From Horrors of Imperialist War to Carnage at Home,” and “Working-Class Solidarity Got Many Out of Harm’s Way in Calif. Wildfire.”

There are no articles on page 1 that jump to 5 or 7. The articles on page 5 are about the effect on workers of competition between Walmart and Amazon, and about miners on strike to get back wages in Ukraine. Page 7 has two articles, “Brigadistas Learn About Cuba, Organize to Defend Revolution” and “Oscar López: ‘Cuba Gives Us Best Example of Resistance.’”

These pages also feature ads asking readers to consider joining a “Rally and

March for silver miners on strike” in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, and a “Rally to defend Cuban Revolution at the United Nations” in New York.

“Perhaps prison authorities now plan to bar any issue that publicizes public events,” Studer said. “That would be virtually every issue of the *Militant*.”

The Florida Department of Prisons also impounded the Oct. 30 issue, citing the article “Florida Prison Officials Step Up Censorship Against ‘Militant.’”

The *Militant* has won broad support for its fight against censorship. Among those who have written letters in the last year to urge prison authorities to reverse censorship of the paper are the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, the New York Civil Liberties Union, PEN America, the National Lawyers Guild, Amnesty International USA, Riverside Church Prison Ministry and American Friends Service Committee.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 4, 1992

The decision by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Western European Union to implement a full naval blockade of Yugoslavia is a major step toward military intervention by Washington, Bonn, Paris and London. Warships belonging to these military alliances are now authorized to halt and search all merchant vessels accused of violating the United Nations trade embargo against the Yugoslav federation of Serbia and Montenegro.

Naval blockades are an act of war. The U.S.-led slaughter in Iraq in 1991 was preceded by several months of blockade similar to the one imposed on Yugoslavia today. An oil embargo against Japan, enforced by U.S. warships, prepared the ground for the direct entry of Washington into World War II.

What is needed is real solidarity with the Yugoslav people.



December 4, 1967

There was an important side to the story of Pfc. John W. Guinn that received sparse coverage in the American press. Guinn is the GI mistakenly reported killed in Vietnam. He was allowed to go home to Tennessee for Thanksgiving after the Army had sent his family the body of another GI, which was buried in his place.

Scenes of Guinn’s mother, tearfully greeting her son as he stepped off the plane from Vietnam were broadcast across the nation. Guinn declared: “When my three years are up I’m coming out and I’m not going to re-enlist. All the United States boys should be brought out. It’s no war of ours.”

This typical GI, chosen by accident and given an unexpected chance to speak to the American people, said one more thing that was left out of most press reports. He said most of the GIs he knew in Vietnam agreed with him.



December 5, 1942

Responsibility for the defeat of the anti-poll tax bill in the Senate lies not only on the poll taxers, but also on the Roosevelt administration, the Republican Party and the “liberal” Senators, said A. Philip Randolph, director of the Negro-March-on-Washington Movement.

“The most disgraceful spectacle of democracy in action witnessed in America in contemporary times was the bi-partisan conspiracy of Republican and Democrats to defeat the anti-poll tax bill,” said Randolph. “It served definitely to disillusion the Negro masses, North, South, East and West, with respect to the Republican Party constituting the ship for their salvation, or the Democratic Party representing any hope whatsoever. It served to make Negroes completely aware that the New Deal, is bankrupt so far as providing any answer to the problem of the Negro masses.”

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Discussion and debate mark world youth festival in Russia

BY JACOB PERASSO
AND NAOMI CRAINE

SOCHI, Russia — The 19th Festival of Youth and Students, held here at Olympic Park Oct. 15-21, was organized by the government of Russia with the aim of winning youth in this country and around the world to see Moscow as a progressive force in world politics — a global power holding Washington’s hegemony at bay.

The World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) agreed two years ago to a proposal from the Russian government to host the festival with the perspective of organizing activities around a range of political questions similar to those at previous youth festivals, most recently in Ecuador in 2013 and South Africa in 2010.

To a much greater degree than those in recent decades, however, this festival was dominated by programs organized by the host government. Events promoted economic, political and cultural interests of the Russian government, as well as sporting competitions and art programs, academic and scientific seminars, a film festival and numerous exhibit halls. The opening and closing ceremonies pointed to festivals held in Russia in 1957 and 1985, which Putin supporters promoted as a source of Russian national pride.

Festival organizers reported 30,000 participants from 185 countries. This included more than 12,000 delegates from across Russia, as well as 5,000 volunteers to facilitate the event. Thousands more came from countries and territories in Moscow’s “near abroad” surrounding Russia, as well as delegations from Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe.

A few thousand delegates were brought by member organizations of WFDY. Many of them organized and attended some dozen parallel sessions of their own each day, featuring discussion of revolutionary Cuba, solidarity with anti-colonial struggles in Puerto Rico and Western Sahara, and other topics. Delegates from the Americas organized a “Casa America” room where solidarity forums and presentations on books by revolutionary leaders such as Che Guevara and Fidel Castro were organized.

Broad-ranging discussion

While Moscow used the event to advance its world standing, the most striking feature of the gathering was the openness and breadth of political debate and discussion.

Top Moscow figures spoke and fielded questions at well-attended meetings. These included President Vladimir Putin, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Vladimir Zhirinovsky, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party and vice chairman of the State Duma, the parliament. Participants, both from Russia and elsewhere, were able to challenge these speakers on issues from military intervention in Ukraine to the Syrian civil war and more — something uncommon in Russia, to say the least.

During informal discussions, many Russian delegates described how they and millions of others here are affected by the world crisis of capitalism. Most supported the Putin government, but

many said they didn’t agree with various of its policies and methods. “We have elections but we know beforehand who’s going to win,” one Russian delegate told us, a view echoed by others.

Communist workers and youth found a thirst to hear more about life and politics in the U.S. and interest in discussing a working-class perspective to confront the economic devastation and wars that capitalism produces.

The Russian government organized a five-day program on “Global Politics, Their Agenda and How to Protect International Peace.” It was opened by two panels where Foreign Minister Lavrov spoke.

“We hope that the objective tendency for multipolarity will grow stronger, with new economic and financial powers rising on various continents and translating their power into political influence,” Lavrov said. “Russia will

Festival goers show thirst for political literature

BY LINDA HARRIS
SOCHI, Russia — “Why are you interested in Cuba, Che and Fidel?” Andrés Mendoza asked Ani Rafaelian, a young worker from Sochi.

Mendoza was staffing the table of the Young Socialists from the U.K. at the 19th World Festival of Youth and Students here, and Rafaelian had just bought a copy of *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington’s ‘Cold War’ Against Cuba Doesn’t End* by the two Cuban revolutionary leaders.

“Politics in Russia is very dark and full of lies,” Rafaelian replied. “But Che Guevara and Fidel Castro were different. We need more people like that today.”

Participants at the festival here snatched up over 800 books by communist and other revolutionary leaders.

Yaroslav Markelov, a 24-year-old engineer from Nizhni Archiz in Karachayevo-Cherkesiya, Russia, talked to Ólof Andra Proppé, also from the U.K. “Wages are low there,” Markelov said, “Many people are unemployed, and those working are paid as little as 7,000 rubles [\$210] per month.”

“The capitalist crisis is affecting workers around the world. The bosses seek to make us pay for their crisis,”



Participants from Russia and elsewhere debated politics at World Youth Festival, attended by 30,000 people. Above, hands in air during session with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

undoubtedly become one of the poles.” “Russia’s influence has increased,” he said.

The discussion and debate took up developments in Catalonia, Ukraine and

Crimea, Syria and the Middle East, Korea, and the government of Myanmar’s brutal assaults on the Rohingya people.

This and other panels promoted Mos-

Continued on page 7

Proppé responded. Markelov was intrigued by the title of *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. He got the book to learn more about the SWP.

The hallways of the festival venue were thronged by young people looking at tables organized by youth organizations throughout the world, including four staffed by members of the Young Socialists.

The brisk sales reflected the interest in debating politics and a road forward. Half the books from Young Socialists tables were sold to youth from Russia. The top seller was *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, with 78 copies purchased in different languages. This was followed by 73 copies of *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* and 60 of *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*, also by Barnes. Eighteen participants got subscriptions to the *Militant*.

Some 70 titles on the fight for women’s liberation were sold, reflecting deep interest in this struggle among young women worldwide.

Artem Lepeshkin, who is active in the Committee for Friendship with Cuba in Russia, subscribed to the *Militant* and

bought several books in Spanish. These included *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* and *New International* magazine with the article “U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War.”

“Cuba is an internationalist country,” he told Proppé. “It’s a small country, but it has the weight of a big country.”

Nearly 1,000 participants got copies of a 2016 interview with Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president last year, published in the Russian language news outlet Gazeta.ru.

“The roots of today’s crisis lie in the capitalist system,” Kennedy said in the interview. She described conditions facing workers in the U.S., and the need for a revolution to “take political power from the rich, from those who control the government.”

On the last day of the festival, Anthony Yuzon, a graduate student from Manila, Philippines, stopped by the table of the Young Socialists from New Zealand. He was looking for *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* but it had sold out. He got a copy of *The First and Second Declarations of Havana* instead.

“The festival has been a big opportunity to meet people from around the world,” he told me. “These books give us an opportunity to discover politics that is not available in the Philippines. Cuba is inspirational to us as an example of working-class struggle.”

Many people wanted to discuss the legacy of the Bolshevik Revolution, and how the world’s first workers and peasants government was betrayed in the political counterrevolution headed by Joseph Stalin. Nine copies of *Lenin’s Final Fight* were sold, as well as four of Leon Trotsky’s *History of the Russian Revolution* — two in Russian — and two copies of Trotsky’s *The Revolution Betrayed*.

“I’m interested in Trotsky but it’s very hard to find anything by him in Russia,” said Maxim Sikach, an international law student from Khabarovsk Territory, as he bought *History of the Russian Revolution*. He also got *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!* containing documents of the 1920 Second Congress of the Communist International.

SWP: Deepen party’s work

Continued from front page

to present a revolutionary course for workers to take power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers.

Studer said the axis of the work of the SWP today is knocking on workers’ doors to discuss the origins of the capitalist crisis and how workers can organize independently of the bosses and their parties to move forward.

He drew attention to how record-low official unemployment rates actually mask the fact that the size of the active working class in the U.S. has been shrinking. In Tennessee, where large numbers of workers face a deep social crisis, the government reports the unemployment rate is a historic low of 3 percent. But the percentage of the population participating in the workforce has continued to fall.

The reason? The best explanation, the *Journal* says, is “the opioid epidemic and educational attainment.” They think workers are just too stupid and prone to addiction.

The speakers described how the two SWP branches and Communist League in Montreal used their 2017 campaigns in widespread discussions among workers on the crisis they face, and found many interested in learning more about the program and activities of a party that speaks uncompromisingly for the working class.

Workers in stronger position today

Workers are in a stronger position today to confront the bosses’ efforts to intensify competition among us, Studer said. This is a result of important victories won in the Black-led working-class fight that overthrew Jim Crow segregation, the fight for women’s emancipation, and the fact that workers who are native-born and immigrant have confronted the same depression conditions together for years. The party advances proposals to combat the bosses’ efforts to pit workers against one another, as workers seek to build unions to defend themselves in the struggles ahead.

“Many of our 2018 campaigns will challenge prominent capitalist political figures — like Andrew Cuomo in New York and U.S. senators Ted Cruz in Texas and Dianne Feinstein in California,” Studer said. These races give the SWP the opportunity to sharply counterpose our working-class course to their proposals to try and shore up capitalist exploitation, oppression and war.

“The explosive revelations in Hollywood and Washington over allegations of sexual harassment partly come out of advances made in the fight for women’s rights,” Trowe explained. “Women’s oppression grew out of the development of class society and when workers take power from the capitalist class we’ll have the tool we need — a government of our own — to wage a fight to eliminate it.”

At the same time, she said, “the rulers are using charges of sexual harassment to justify chipping away at rights workers need, including the presumption of innocence and the statute of limitations.”

The party’s door-to-door campaigning will be advanced by the work of members of its trade union fractions, Studer said, as they meet with co-workers, their families and

friends, introduce them to the party, and work with them to campaign in areas near where they live and work.

Osborne Hart described how party members and campaign supporters as they go door to door meet GLs, veterans, or those with a relative or neighbor in the army who want to discuss the SWP’s explanation that Washington’s imperialist wars are not in workers’ interests. From Iraq to Afghanistan, the boss class uses workers as cannon fodder in their wars against competitors for markets and investments, and then throws them aside when they’re finished.

More ‘independents,’ ‘socialists’

“More election candidates will claim to be ‘independent’ of the Democrats and Republicans — or even ‘socialist,’ because millions of workers are disgusted with the Democrats and Republicans,” Trowe said, pointing to the election of an “independent” candidate as mayor of Syracuse, New York. But these candidates, like Bernie Sanders, aim to drag workers back into the politics of capitalist reforms.

Real politics, she said, is decided in the streets, not annual trips to the ballot box.

In the lively discussion period,

Discussion, debate mark world youth festival in Russia

Continued from page 6
cow-dominated international economic forums such as the Eurasian Union and Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a counterweight to Washington and the European Union.

Two “Global Politics” events featured Liberal Democratic Party leader Zhirinovsky. Prominent in Russian politics since the 1990s, Zhirinovsky is a xenophobic backer of using Moscow’s military power against peoples asserting their national rights, from Chechnya to Ukraine. Some participants objected to his glorification of the czarist monarchy that ruled the Russian empire until 1917. “When will you leave power?” another asked.

Delegates challenged Zhirinovsky on Moscow’s intervention in Ukraine. Lenin and the Bolsheviks “created Ukraine,” he complained. “It was dangerous and nothing good came from it.” He also opposed allowing neighboring nations to voluntarily disassociate from Russia, saying the only way to keep humanity working together is “through force and violence.”

Discussion also took place on the rights of women and environmental destruction in Russia.

Capitalism or socialist revolution?

Delegates also debated whether capitalism or socialist revolution like in Cuba is the road forward for humanity.

“The solution is to increase economic growth, and that will increase jobs,” argued Xu Beining from China, speaking on unemployment at a WFDY-organized panel. “Steady growth in China has given a platform for employment stability for the last 40 years.”

“The capitalist system is in crisis, and the only way out is for workers to build a leadership capable of taking power,” responded Pierre-Luc Filion, a member of the Young Socialists in Canada. “Workers produce all the wealth, but it’s not or-



Maggie Trowe, SWP 2017 candidate for Albany mayor, speaks at New York forum Nov. 18.

Landry was asked whether health care for working people in Canada was better than the health insurance available in the U.S. He described how more and more workers in Montreal wait hours in emergency department lobbies before they’re seen, and months to get an appointment with a specialist.

“Everything under capitalism is a commodity, including health care,” she said. “The only way to have health care that starts from human need and not profit is for workers to take power.”

Trowe encouraged meeting par-

ticipants to join the international May Day brigade to Cuba in 2018, describing her experiences on similar brigades this year.

“The leadership of the Cuban Revolution knew what was needed to overthrow the Batista dictatorship and had confidence that working people could go on to overturn capitalist rule,” she said. “As we campaign we explain that the Cuban Revolution — and the way Cuban working people were transformed in the process — are an example to emulate here and around the world.”

to literature tables set up by youth organizations from around the world in the sprawling Media Center, the main venue for programs, where participants in all aspects of the festival programs met and talked. Exchanges continued day and night in dining halls and housing dorms.

At tables set up by delegates from the Young Socialists in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand, participants bought more than 800 books in English, Spanish, French, Farsi, Arabic and Russian by V.I. Lenin, Fidel Castro, Leon Trotsky, Thomas Sankara, Nelson Mandela and other revolutionaries, including leaders of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S.

The Cuban delegation of more than 200 had a large display of books and other items for sale.

Media Center hallways were also lined with booths promoting Russian banks and other companies, showing off the latest robotics and advertising gimmicks. Russian festival hosts provided each delegate with a smart phone with a Russian phone number.

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Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun

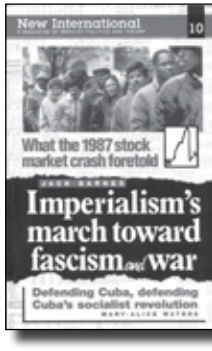
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How Cuba's revolution transformed workers' lives

Below is an excerpt from Fidel Castro's Sept. 26, 1960, address to the United Nations General Assembly. The speech is reprinted in *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' Against Cuba Doesn't End* by Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. Tens of thousands of working people in Cuba were taking steps toward control of their own destiny, occupying fields and factories and mobilizing in the streets as property of the imperialist-owned banks and industries along with the largest holdings of Cuba's capitalist owners were nationalized. Copyright © 1992 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FIDEL CASTRO

When the revolution came to power, what did it find? ... First of all, the revolution found that 600,000 Cubans, able and ready to work, were unemployed — as many, proportionally, as were jobless in the United States during the Great Depression that shook this country, and which almost produced a catastrophe here. This is what we confronted in my country — permanent unemployment.



Bohemia

August 1960 Havana rally backs nationalizing imperialist-owned companies and banks. Banner says, "Our homeland will be like a graveyard before it would ever return to foreign hands."

Three million out of a population of a little more than six million had no electricity, possessing none of its advantages and comforts. Three and a half million out of a total population of a little more than six million lived in huts, in shacks, and in slums, without the most minimal sanitary facilities. In the cities, rents took almost one-third of family income. Electricity rates and rents were among the highest in the world.

Some 37.5 percent of our population were illiterate; 70 percent of the rural children lacked teachers; 2 percent of our population suffered from tuberculosis — that is to say, 100,000 persons out of a little more than six million. Ninety-five percent of the children in rural areas suffered from parasites. Infant mortality was astronomical. Life expectancy was very low. On the other hand, 85 percent of the small farmers were paying rent on their land of up to 30 percent of their gross income, while 1.5 percent of the landowners controlled 46 percent of the total area of the country. Of course, the proportion of hospital beds to the number of inhabitants was ridiculously low compared with countries that have even halfway decent medical services.

Public services, the electricity and telephone companies, all belonged to U.S. monopolies. A major portion of banking, importing, and oil refining; the majority of sugar production; the best land; and the most important industries in all fields in Cuba belonged to U.S.

companies.

The balance of payments in the last ten years, from 1950 to 1960, has been favorable to the United States vis-à-vis Cuba to the extent of \$1 billion. This is without taking into account the hundreds of millions of dollars extracted from the public treasury by the corrupt officials of the dictatorship and later deposited in U.S. or European banks. One billion dollars in ten years! This poor and underdeveloped Caribbean country with 600,000 unemployed was contributing to the economic development of the most economically developed country in the world!

This was the situation that confronted us. Yet it should not surprise many of the countries represented in this assembly. For what we have said about Cuba is but an X-ray view that could be applied to many of the countries represented here.

What alternative was there for the revolutionary government? To betray the people? As far as the president of the United States is concerned, of course, what we have done is a betrayal of our people. And he surely would not have considered it a betrayal if, rather than being true to its people, the revolutionary government had instead been true to the monopolies that were exploiting Cuba. ...

The revolutionary government began to take its first steps. The first was a 50 percent reduction in rents paid by families. This was a very just measure since,

as I said earlier, there were families paying up to one-third of their income for rent. The people had been the victims of housing speculation; urban real estate had also been subject to speculation, to the detriment of the entire Cuban people. But when the revolutionary government reduced rents by 50 percent, there were those who were considerably upset; yes, a few who owned the buildings and apartment houses were upset. But the people rushed into the streets rejoicing, as they would in any country — even here in New York — if rents were reduced by 50 percent for all families. But it caused no problems with the monopolies. Some of the U.S. companies owned large buildings, but they were relatively few in number.

Then another law was passed, a law cancelling the concessions that had been granted by the Batista dictatorship to the telephone company, which was a U.S. monopoly. Aided by having a population without means to defend itself, valuable concessions had been obtained. The revolutionary government cancelled those concessions and reestablished the prices for telephone services that had existed previously. This was the first conflict with the U.S. monopolies.

The third measure was the reduction of electricity rates, which had been among the highest in the world. This led to the second conflict with the U.S. monopolies. Already they were beginning to paint us as Reds, simply because we had clashed with the interests of the U.S. monopolies.

Then came another law, an essential law, an inevitable law — inevitable for the Cuban people and inevitable, sooner or later, for all the peoples of the world, at least those who have not done so. This was the Agrarian Reform Law [adopted May 17, 1959]. ...

In our country it was indispensable. More than 200,000 peasant families lived in the countryside without land with which to plant essential foodstuffs. Without agrarian reform our country could not have taken the first step toward development. And we took that step. We instituted an agrarian reform. Was it radical? Yes, it was a radical agrarian reform. Was it very radical? No, it was not a very radical agrarian reform. We carried out an agrarian reform adjusted to the needs of our development, to the possibilities of agricultural development.

November

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Join fight against prison censorship!

The latest seizure of the *Militant* by Florida prison authorities threatens the *Militant* with a broader ban. It is an attack not just on the constitutional rights of the *Militant* and our readers behind bars, but the rights of any publication the jailers don't like.

Everyone who supports the Bill of Rights should join in demanding the censorship be reversed.

What material on the pages do prison officials cite to back their ban and the slander that the *Militant* "advocates or encourages riot, insurrection" and "physical violence?" They don't say.

The three pages feature articles and ads calling on readers to join protests in New York opposing the U.S. economic war on Cuba and to join a rally of striking silver miners in Idaho.

If reporting on marches and rallies is barred in Florida prisons, then just about every paper in the country would have to be banned.

Not a single word in the *Militant* advocates physical violence, rioting or disrupting the prisons. On the contrary, the *Militant* advocates the right of prisoners to be part of the world, to think for themselves, to consider a wide range of views. And we defend the right of all those behind bars to be free from abusive and demeaning conditions, like rancher Cliven Bun-

dy and other prisoners in Nevada who get no dental care except having their teeth yanked out.

The *Militant* is not the only paper that has been censored. *Prison Legal News*, *The San Francisco Bay View*, *Workers World*, other publications and thousands of books by a wide variety of authors have faced censorship by prison officials around the country.

Join us in this fight. Talk to your union, your church group, your tenants' organization, groups that oppose deportations of immigrants, neighbors and co-workers. Ask them to write letters calling on the Florida prison authorities to reverse this attack on the rights of the *Militant* and workers behind bars.

How you can help:

Distribute *Militant* articles on this fight.

Get statements of support from unions, churches and defenders of workers rights and free speech. Send to: themilitant@mac.com

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

Tel Aviv, Saudi conflict with Tehran grows

Continued from front page

dating a land route to move weapons and combatants from Iran through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon, where Hezbollah is based.

Riyadh's concerns about developments in Lebanon led them to press their ally, Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri, to resign, and he did so Nov. 4. Other Lebanese officials and Hezbollah have charged Riyadh was holding Hariri in Saudi Arabia and forced him to step down.

Hariri traveled to Paris Nov. 18 to meet with French President Emmanuel Macron. Hariri announced he will return to Lebanon in a few days to "make known my position on all the issues."

To counter Tehran's growing influence in the Mideast, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has taken steps to open the kingdom to more modern social development and consolidate the nation's financial capital. The regime arrested over 200 people, including royal family members, current and former government ministers and oil-monopoly billionaires, for "corruption." The detainees are now being offered plea-bargain deals, where they can pay their way to freedom by putting large amounts of their wealth into government coffers.

The regime is also promoting foreign investment in the government-run Saudi Aramco oil company and moving to wean the economy off over-dependency on oil resources through construction of industrial zones and resorts.

Shifts in the Middle East

The consolidation of the Assad regime and recapture of virtually all territory from Islamic State in all but a few isolated areas in Syria, raises new concerns in Tel Aviv and Washington about what Israel will now face on its borders. "A lesser enemy is being supplanted by a far more dangerous one — Iran and its allies," writes the *Wall Street Journal*.

Tehran has stepped up verbal threats against Israel, including the slander that Tel Aviv and Washington were responsible for the Kurds' efforts to win independence.

In recent talks with Moscow and Washington, Tel Aviv has sought to win agreement to establish a "buffer zone" of some 25 miles inside Syria from its border. But a new "deconfliction" agreement between U.S. and Russian forces would allow Hezbollah or other pro-Tehran forces to remain just three miles away, reports the *Jerusalem Post*.

In response to these developments, the Israeli government admits it has begun to share intelligence with the Saudi regime.

Moscow, with five military bases in Syria, plans to maintain its presence there as an ally of Assad.

Washington with some 13 military bases across Syria has supported Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in beating back Islamic State, while also seeking to counter Tehran's efforts to open a land route to Lebanon.

In the changed landscape in the Middle East, Washington, Moscow and all the capitalist regimes in the area are maneuvering to protect their economic and political interests.

In Iraq, U.S. forces have operated out of nearly a dozen regular and temporary bases, with at least 5,000 troops in the country, according to official Pentagon figures. Over the past three years U.S.-led coalition forces have conducted over 24,500 airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, targeting Islamic State but leading to "collateral damage" killing thousands of civilians.

"The Uncounted," an article in the Nov. 19 *New York Times* magazine, reports that deaths of civilians from U.S.-led airstrikes in Iraq occurred at a rate 31 times higher than authorities acknowledged, causing some 2,800 deaths in the last 18 months in Iraq. The Pentagon claims just 89 were killed.

Kurds face threats across the region

The governments of Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria all bitterly oppose any move toward Kurdish independence or autonomy. The over 30 million Kurdish people are divided between the four countries, where they've faced decades of persecution and national oppression — the world's largest nationality without their own state.

As part of a "de-escalation" agreement with Moscow and Tehran, Ankara has been setting up "observation posts" in Idlib province in northern Syria, ostensibly to keep the peace. But the location of what are in fact Turkish military bases — and recent belligerent threats by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan — make it clear their goal is to prepare to attack the adjacent Kurdish-controlled Afrin canton. Turkish and Kurdish forces exchanged artillery fire across the Afrin-Idlib border Nov. 20.

"There is a growing assessment that the US is using both Daesh [Islamic State] and the YPG [Kurdish People's Protection Units] as an excuse to stay in eastern Syria," Ibrahim Kalin, a special adviser to Erdogan, wrote in *Daily Sabah*, "as a potential counter-weighting force against the Russian-Iranian presence."

The Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq said Nov. 14 that it would retreat from the Sept. 25 Kurdistan independence referendum, approved by over 92 percent, and respect the Iraqi Supreme Federal Court ruling declaring that no Iraqi province could secede.

March for Puerto Rico

Continued from front page

The Jones Act, which requires that maritime cargo between Puerto Rico and the United States be carried on U.S.-owned vessels, increases shipping costs and the price of basic necessities and everything else.

Other speakers, including Congressman Luis Gutiérrez and well-known actor and playwright Lin-Manuel Miranda, noted that the U.S. government and the Federal Emergency Management Agency had provided faster, more efficient aid to victims of the recent hurricanes in Florida and Texas, than they have to Puerto Rico.

Participants in the demonstration came from across the Eastern Seaboard and as far away as Chicago; Lorain, Ohio; and Florida. Many said it was the first time they ever joined a protest.

Angelita Berrios, 56, a truck driver from Philadelphia, told the *Militant* that two months after Puerto Rico was devastated by Hurricane Maria most of her family there is still without electricity. "We're a colony and we're part of the United States," she said. "We've been forced to fight in their wars and pay the taxes they impose on us. But now that we need aid, it's not enough and it's too slow."

More than half of Puerto Rico's residents are still without electricity, a fifth have no running water, thousands of homes are without roofs and large parts of the island have no phone service. Even those with running water are told to boil it first to avoid getting sick.

Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Buchanan, who headed up work in Puerto Rico by the U.S. National Guard and Army, clearing many roads, restoring electricity and distributing some food and water, announced Nov. 17 that Washington is winding down this operation.

'Should be treated as human beings'

Sol Nadal, 22, from Bayamón, Puerto Rico, was visiting relatives in the U.S. when she heard about the demonstration. "We have no electricity, except for what we get from our own generator," said Nadal, a student at the University of Puerto Rico. "The gasoline to run the generator just eight hours a day costs \$600 a month. It doesn't matter if we are U.S. citizens or not. We should be treated as human beings."

In mid-November Puerto Rican officials admitted that although the official death toll is 55, in September this year 472 more people died than in that month last year. Deaths as a result of lack of refrigeration for insulin, cutbacks in dialysis because of electricity shortages, closed hospitals and doctors offices, contaminated water, and lack of air conditioning for people who were already ill when the storm hit are not included in the official figures.

Even before the hurricanes hit, so many people have been leaving — some 1,200 every week — that more Puerto Ricans live in the U.S. than in Puerto Rico. The *New York Times* reported Nov. 17 that at least 168,000 people have fled the island in the last two months, most heading to Florida.

Prior to the storms, the U.S.-imposed Financial Oversight and Management Board — set up to tighten Washington's control of Puerto Rico's government finances to maximize payment on the debt to bondholders — had ordered the Puerto Rican government to make steep cuts in the pensions and the workweek of public employees and to the budget of the University of Puerto Rico. Bondholders continue to press for payment of the debt.

Participants in the march had a variety of views on what to do about Puerto Rico's colonial status.

"We need something new," said Maria Franco, who moved from Santa Isabel, Puerto Rico, to New Haven, Connecticut, after the hurricane. "I don't like Commonwealth, what we are right now. With statehood, we would have a clear designation with the USA."

"I want the whole system to change, for independence," said Milly Guzman-Young, who helped organize participation from Hartford, Connecticut, in the march. "Look at what happened in the last 100 years in the hands of the U.S. — debt, laws against our economy."

Anger is growing on the island over the continuing social crisis. Residents of the Puerto Nuevo neighborhood in San Juan marched Nov. 19 to protest the lack of electricity in their community and health centers.

Jacob Perasso in Albany, New York, contributed to this article.