**Build, join workers’ protests, win solidarity!**

*BY DAN FEIN*

The explosion of strikes and protests by teachers across the country had a big impact on the Socialist Workers Party’s effort to expand the reach of the Militant and books by party leaders, and to raise at least $112,000 for the Militant Fighting party leaders, and to raise at least one fund. We’re poised to make our goals.

**Socialist Workers Party Spring Drives**

Hundreds of teachers and other participants — and those elsewhere looking to the example the school workers were setting — eagerly grabbed subscriptions to the Militant and revolutionary books. Many gave as a contribution to the fund. We’re poised to make our goals.

**Teachers’ protests point way forward for workers**

“We can change things,” say N. Carolina teachers

*BY SUSAN LAMONT*

RALEIGH, N.C. — “We did it! Who would have thought we could? But we can change things!” Jameel Williams, a teacher from Vance County who joined over 20,000 other teachers, school workers and their supporters to protest at the state Capitol here May 16, told the Militant. They were demanding increased funding for schools, pay raises, more staff and smaller class sizes at North Carolina’s biggest-ever action by teachers.

**Plans advance for US-NKorea summit on denuclearization**

*BY BRIAN WILLIAMS*

Plans for the summit meeting on denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un — a meeting with the potential to lead to historic openings for working people — continue to move forward for June 12 in Singapore.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in met with President Trump in Washington May 22 to discuss the talks. The next high-ranking diplomats from Japan and China, including Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, were in Washington to meet with U.S. officials to help facilitate an agreement.

A plan of U.S. and other international reporters flew to North Korea

**Judge rejects NYC goverment’s moves to overturn verdict against cops**

*BY SETH GALINSKY*

NEW YORK — Carrying out their vow to “take whatever legal steps are necessary” to defend the cops who killed Mohamed Bah, officials in the New York City Law Department are fighting to overturn the civil jury verdict that found two NYPD cops guilty of excessive force in the 2012 shooting. The jury that heard the federal civil suit brought by Bah’s family by Detective Edwin Mateo and Lt. Michael Licitra awarded them $2.21 million in compensation. Judge Kevin Castel announced his ruling May 21, saying he rejected the city’s demand for the award to be reversed.

“We have a victory,” Hawa Bah, Mohamed’s mother, told the Militant. “We need to hold every cop who murdered 20,000-strong protest May 16 in Raleigh, North Carolina, drew broad working-class solidarity.

**Right of Israel to exist is at the heart of Mideast fights**

*BY TERRY EVANS*

The recent barrage of Hamas-organized attacks on the Israel-Gaza border, alongside concerted efforts by the counterrevolutionary rulers of Iran to deploy their military forces and Hezbollah allies within striking range of Israel, reflect how the Jewish question is at the center of conflicts in the Mideast today. This involves Israel’s right to exist as a place of refuge in the midst of a worldwide capitalist economic and political crisis that has bred new frights and hatred.

Acting in the interests of the U.S. imperialist rulers, the Donald Trump administration is working with both Israel’s rulers and Sunni Arab regimes in the region to push back Tehran’s recent advances and broker a deal between the Israeli government and Palestinian officials.

Hamas mobilized its fighters and other Gaza residents to join provocative attacks against the well-fortified Israeli border. They consciously miss

**Venezuela toilers face deepening capitalist crisis, US rulers’ anger**

*BY SETH GALINSKY*

Middle-class professionals and workers have been abandoning Venezuela in droves — seeing no way forward in the face of the deepening political and capitalist economic crisis there. As many as 250,000 Venezuelan workers have crossed the border into Colombia since last August.

The crisis is exacerbated by the punishing economic and political measures taken by the U.S. rulers in their ongoing efforts to isolate and undermine the government of Nicolás Maduro.

Against this backdrop, early presidential elections called by the Maduro government had the lowest voter turnout in decades — just 46 percent.

**Eyewitness report: Protests against gov’t attacks spread in Nicaragua**

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New Zealand nurses protest low pay, understaffing

**Unnecessary**

Acting in the interests of the U.S. imperialist rulers, the Donald Trump administration is working with both Israel’s rulers and Sunni Arab regimes in the region to push back Tehran’s recent advances and broker a deal between the Israeli government and Palestinian officials.
Sentsov starts hunger strike, says ‘Free political prisoners!’

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Oleg Sentsov, an internationally known filmmaker and supporter of a Ukraine independent of Moscow’s control, was arrested in his home in Crimea shortly after the Russian government seized that province in 2014. This move came in response to the victory of the popular Maidan mass movement that brought down the pro-Moscow regime of Viktor Yanukovych in Ukraine a month earlier.

Sentsov was taken to Russia, framed up on false charges of terrorism and sentenced to 20 years in prison. He has maintained his support for Ukraine. On May 16 Sentsov’s lawyer, Dmitry Dinze, released a letter he got from Sentsov in the Siberian Polar Bear prison, announcing he had begun a hunger strike.

“I, Oleg Sentsov, Ukrainian citizen, sentenced illegally by a Russian court and held in a prison in Labytangi, declare a hunger strike, beginning 14 May 2018,” he wrote. “My sole demand is the release of all Ukrainian political prisoners,” Sentsov told his lawyer.

Sentsov demands the release of 64 Ukrainian political prisoners. Dinze said Sentsov had prepared for the hunger strike for a month and a half, eating smaller amounts of food, adjusting his body to starving.

The timing is no coincidence. The soccer World Cup, one of the largest sporting events in the world, is due to begin in Russia in a month. “If I die before or during the World Cup, there will be publicity that will help other political prisoners,” Sentsov told his lawyer.

The state’s frame-up case was based on written statements from Afanasiev and Chirny. But at the trial, Afanasiev retracted his “confession,” saying it had been gotten through torture. Chirny wasn’t put on the stand because he refused to testify.

Sentsov denounced the frame-up. “A court of occupiers by definition cannot be just,” he told the court.

He is sent to prison in Rostov-on-Don in August 2018, one week in June, one week in January, one week in September, one week in December.

The Militant


by Pathfinder Press, with several big stacks of Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power. Thirty copies were sold, along with a number of copies of the other titles on special, The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record, Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible? Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? and It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System.

"We sold copies of The Communist Manifesto, On the Jewish Question by Leon Trotsky, Final Speeches by Malcolm X, Our History Is Still Being Written, by three Chinese-Cuban generals in Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces, and We Talk to Young People as well as 12 subscriptions," Kennedy said.

Hundreds of people came to the SWP booth, which had signs in solidarity with the teacher mobilizations and the Cuban Revolution. Many people got a copy of the SWP statement, “For recognition of a Palestinian state and of Israel” and wanted to discuss the road forward for workers and tollers in the Midwest today. "I’ve always wanted to go to Cuba, because of what I’ve learned about the ties between the Black struggle in the U.S. and the Cuban Revolution," LaKatheryn Shaw told Kennedy when she looked at the books. "The Cubans knew about the Black struggle."

She got a copy of Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power, “It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System” and The Communist Manifesto. They’re signed up for information on future Cuba brigades.

Kristen Baker-Fletcher, a Southern Methodist University student, also met SWP members at the festival. She said she wants to set up a meeting for them with students she knows on the campus. She picked up a subscription and four of the campaign booklets.

“We have to fight against U.S. colonial policy in Puerto Rico. It’s criminal,” Faustino Perez, a former Walmart worker, told Kennedy at the SWP booth, which had signs in solidarity with students she wants to set up a meeting with for their work against U.S. colonial policy in Puerto Rico. He said he is shocked by the truth out about why working men and women there.” He gave $5 to the Militant fund to help pay for the trip. His wife, who also reads the Militant, pitched in another $5. The trip to Puerto Rico was reported to over 50 people attending a May 19 Militant Labor Forum in Oakland, California. Participants raised more than $700 towards funding it.

If you’d like to go with SWP members and supporters joining in teachers’ and other workers’ battles, contact the party branch nearest you listed on page 8.

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Workers give ‘blood money’ to Socialist Workers Party

“Enclosed please find ‘blood money’ checks of $20 each for the Socialist Workers Party from several retail workers in Philadelphia,” writes Janet Post.

“The company ‘awarded’ the workers at a number of stores based on how many customers signed up for online delivery there. The bosses are trying to bribe workers to do more to help them deal blows against their competitors and increase profits,” Post says. “There should be more to come by the end of May.”

Some retail workers in Atlanta received similar bribes from their managers because “workers who shop in the store decided to download the company’s app,” writes Janice Lynn. She forwarded their “blood money” to help build the revolutionary movement.

In Oakland, California, Jeff Powers sent in $1,846.61, a bonus he had received from his former employer, Amtrak.

Communists use the term “blood money” to describe production, attendance, and safety and other so-called bonuses the bosses “give” in an effort to bribe workers to help their other workers turn those bribes into their opponent — funds to build the working-class movement and strengthen the party’s long-term work.

If you would like to donate some “blood money” your boss tries to bribe you with, contact the Socialist Workers Party branch nearest you, listed in the directory on page 8.

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BRIAN WILLIAMS
Continued from front page

The protest was marked by determination, growing self-confidence and a good bit of humor, captured on the thousands of homemade signs.

In the days before the rally, growing numbers of school districts announced they would have to close, as thousands of teachers called in to say they’d be taking a “personal day” off.

At least 42 districts, including the state’s six largest, canceled classes, affecting nearly 1 million public school students. Teachers, parents and other volunteers organized to try to make sure the students had a place to go and food to eat during the rally. Teachers who came from districts that stayed open were each fined $50 for taking off.

Uprising against decades of attacks

North Carolina teachers were following in the footsteps of a movement that kicked off in West Virginia in late February, moving to Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arizona and Colorado. Tens of thousands have joined strikes, walkouts, picket lines and marches, saying “Enough is enough!”

Union and nonunion teachers have organized with imagination, a distrust of legislators of all stripes and a search for ways to maximize the weight of the rank and file. They have won solidarity from other workers and transformed their fight into a broader social movement. They forged unity among different school workers in the face of attempts by state governments to pit them against each other.

“Tens for the teachers getting more pay,” Wake County school bus driver Spencer Jenkins said at the rally. “But don’t forget the bus drivers, mechanics, custodians and cafeteria workers.” Like teachers, he said, many bus drivers also work a second job, some even a third.

“The fact that everyone is not a teacher, that means we’re bringing a community together,” Lindsay Harris, a Johnston County teacher, told ABC News. “We’re making changes together. We can’t do it alone.”

Diana Niemann, a science teacher from South Mecklenburg High School in Charlotte, told the Militant that a parent offered to pay for gas money so teachers could make the trip to Raleigh to join the action.

Many participants scoffed at the figures widely reported in the bourgeois media that claim teachers in the state make an average of $50,000 a year. Withpaltry or no raises year after year, inflation has pushed real wages down 9 percent since 2009.

Over the past years the state legislature has chipped away at teachers’ tenure, which protects those with seniority. The politicians have pushed “merit based” pay schemes, aimed at giving administrators arbitrary power over jobs and pay. Legislators are also moving to replace pensions with a 401(k) plan for all future state employees and eliminate health coverage when they retire.

Budgets for supplies, textbooks and school technology have been slashed in half since 2009. “We have a library, but no librarian,” said Rachel Holdridge, a special education teacher at Washington’s Alderman Elementary School. “The library is for storage and meetings. The books are on the floor.”

“I’m concerned about the inequities, where some counties have more resources than others, like supplies, technical equipment, teaching assistants, especially in classes for students with special needs,” said Lauren Abraham, a second-grade teacher in Garner, a Raleigh suburb. Those who live in more working-class or rural areas have less access to local money to supplement inadequate state funding.

Hard to get genie back in the bottle

Thousands of teachers crowded into the legislative building May 16, chanting and waving signs. Much of the coverage in the capitalist media emphasized this side of the day, underscoring the union officials’ perspective that lobbying and campaigning for Democrats they claim are “friends” to public education is the main job for school workers between now and the November elections.

But the fact is the capitalist rulers and their politicians are not really interested in public education. For them it’s only a way to impose obedience, not open learning. They use it to create a workforce that’s easier to control and exploit.

Legislators in Raleigh seemed most interested in getting the teachers out of the building. Mario Black, a middle school social studies teacher, told the May 17 Charlotte Observer he was one of some 30 teachers who took part in a rally in Charlotte’s Marshall Park the day after the Raleigh protest to continue pressing their demands.

“When I got home from the rally I had tons of messages from teachers wondering what was next,” Greensboro middle school teacher Susan Skinner said by phone May 20.

“We decided to wear red to school the next morning and many of us did, including teachers who weren’t able to attend the march. After school a dozen of us met to discuss all kinds of ideas to continue our fight.”

Even though the legislature is done for the year, several hundred teachers and other state workers rallied outside the Statehouse in Columbia, South Carolina, May 19, demanding more funds for schools and better pay.

“Our actions helped inspire them,” Skinner said.

In cities and towns across the country, other teachers are joining the uprising. In National City, California, teachers voted May 22 to authorize a strike if the school board refuses to meet their demands for higher pay and more teaching supplies.

Help fund ‘Militant’ reporting trip to Puerto Rico!

The Militant is sending editor John Studer and correspondent Martín Koppel on a fact-finding and solidarity trip to the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico May 25-28. A few weeks later Studer will speak for the Socialist Workers Party at the June 18 annual meeting of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization, explaining why the fight for revolution and change and independence for Puerto Rico is in the interest of working people there, in the U.S. and around the world.

Studer and Koppel will meet with unionists and with students at the University of Puerto Rico in San Juan. They will visit some of the smaller towns outside San Juan that are still without electricity and talk with working people there who have been part of the recent protests.

Help make this trip possible! Send contributions, payable to the Militant, to 306 W. 17th St, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10012.

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Union and nonunion teachers have organized with imagination, a distrust of legislators of all stripes and a search for ways to maximize the weight of the rank and file. Thousands of homemade signs. Bottom, teachers and students at sign painting party in Raleigh on day before march.

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New Zealand nurses protest low pay, understaffing

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — More than 700 nurses, other hospital workers and supporters marched here May 12 to protest low pay, understaffing and deteriorating conditions in public health care. We need more on the floor,” read one hand-written placard, highlighting a near unanimous complaint about inadequate staffing. Marchers told the Militant that tiredness caused by overtime and piled-up responsibilities endanger the quality of care they can provide. “Two percent won’t pay the rent,” announced a nurse across the country May 12. Union members delivered a petition signed by 47,000 people supporting the nurses’ fight to Parliament in Wellington.

Fight to win voting rights for ex-prisoners picks up

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Workers who’ve been released from prison after serving time on felony charges are fighting for legal rights in Florida and other states over regaining the right to vote. Since the capitalist rulers’ crimi nal “justice” system is racist, Blacks are disproportionately affected by the undemocratic restrictions on voting rights for workers released from prison. Laws vary by state. The government in New York and New Jersey paid for a court order to release those on parole in 2018.

These anti-working-class restrictions on voting are being challenged in Florida, New York, New Jersey and Mississippi. “We have no say,” New Jersey construction worker Dameon Stackhouse, who is on parole and has been unable to vote since his release after a decade in prison, told the Wall Street Journal May 10.

Nationwide, some 6.1 million people who have been behind bars are disenfranchised, a more than fourfold increase since 1976. The vast majority — over 97 percent — were pressured to plea bargain, with few actually convicted on felony charges. A disproportionate number are African-Americans. In New Jersey 60 percent of state prisoners are Black, while African-Americans only make up 13 percent of the state’s population, reports the Sentencing Project.

A bill backed by members of the Black Caucus in the New Jersey legislature that would restore voting rights to prisoners and to people who are on parole or probation has made little progress.

In Florida, over 1 million people have signed petitions to place an amendment to the state constitution on the November ballot reinstating voting rights to those who have gone to prison on felony charges. Some 1.5 million people — more than 10 percent of the state’s population — are barred from voting. For African-Americans the figure is 23 percent. In February, federal Judge Mark Walker ruled Florida’s lifetime ban on voting for those sent to prison on felony charges — part of the Florida constitution since 1901 — to be unconstitutional.

Anyone who loses their right to vote in Mississippi can only get it reinstated through a gubernatorial pardon or a special bill passed by the legislature. This rarely happens. Only 335 of 166,494 persons who completed their sentences between 2000 and 2015 had their rights restored, according to the Sentencing Project.

In New York people who did time on felony charges and are now out on probation can vote, but not those who are on parole. Gov. Andrew Cuomo, hoping to boost his chances for winning re-election in November, signed an executive order April 18 that would grant conditional parole to those on parole, allowing them to vote.

New York State Senate Republican leader John Flanagan protested the change, complaining that Cuomo using an executive order, rather than going to the state house for a vote, is “a radical departure from the way legislation should be enacted.” “No one should be denied the right to vote because they are in jail or on probation,” said John Studer, chairman of the Socialist legislators’ Committee. “From beginning to end, the capitalist rulers’ cops, courts, prisons and parole system exist to harass and intimidate working people. I join those fighting to win back the right to vote for all workers who have been thrown behind bars.”
Protests against government attacks spread in Nicaragua

BY RÓGER CALERO AND MAGGIE TROWE
MASAYA, Nicaragua — Thousands rallied here and in cities across the country May 19 to demand the resignation of President Daniel Ortega and Vice President Rosario Murillo. In Managua, workers and middle-class layers gathered in peaceful protests on street corners and drove in caravans around the city. They stopped and visited university campuses occupied by students since protests erupted a month ago to express solidarity.

Thousands of others gathered in León, Matagalpa, and Esteli, marching in city streets where paving-stone barricades erected since April by residents in working-class neighborhoods to defend themselves from attacks by police and pro-government thugs remain in place. Some were the sites of pitched battles that have left more than 70 dead and hundreds wounded.

Widespread protests exploded April 19, the day after goons organized by the Sandinista Youth, an organization led by the ruling party, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), attacked some residents in León and students protesting against government proposals to increase workers’ contributions to the country’s pension fund and cut benefits.

Universities and students rallying on campuses in support of the pensioners were attacked by riot police and government-organized paramilitaries. To defend themselves, protesters erected barricades at the Polytechnic, Agrarian, and Engineering universities occupied campus buildings and barricaded themselves inside.

The crisis has worsened as the students — and Ortega and Murillo’s denial of brutality repression by police and paramilitary thugs and their dismissal of protesters as miniscule groups of looters, right-wing gangs and youth manipulated by opposition forces — have generated greater confidence in what they can accomplish in struggle, as was done by the July 26 Movement in Cuba.

After the collapse of oil prices and production, the government just printed money to make up for the drop in hard currency and inflation has soared.

But these policies only exacerbated the toilers’ anger and its hostility to Maduro or his predecessor Hugo Chávez and their relations with revolutionary Cuba, called the vote “sham elections.”

The Venezuelan government was hard hit by the steep drop in the price of oil — its main source of hard currency — to $50 a barrel last year. Even though oil is back up to $80, it has done little to refill the government’s coffers. Production has plummeted at the state-owned oil company, because of breakdowns in production facilities, corruption and bureaucratic mismanagement. Thousands of oil workers have quit and creditors have begun seizing company assets in other countries.

Many workers are taking action to try and combat the effect of the crisis. According to VPI-TVE there were 927 protests against bosses or the government in April, 25 percent more than in the same period last year.

Thirty-five office workers at the Social Security Institute in Táchira, near the Colombian border, walked off the job May 2. “This is our first time ever on strike,” one worker told the press. “Our wages aren’t enough to take the bus to work.” Some 35 of the 70 workers have quit and left the country, she said. “If we can’t get a raise, I might leave too, even though I don’t want to.”

Workers at Masisa, a Chilean-based company in Anzoátegui that makes wood products for export, held a two-week strike in April to demand higher wages and investment to increase production. “What we earn is not even enough to feed our children,” union Secretary General Oniel Mendoza told VPI. Some 400 workers have quit.

Leading up to the election, Maduro appealed to bosses to help him. “To the business class, who want to work together,” he said, “I am ready.”

More reading

Venezuela toilers face capitalist crisis, US rulers’ anger

Continued from front page

Maduro was re-elected, getting 68 percent of the vote. The U.S. rulers hope the economic hardships will open up rifts in Venezuela’s armed forces, leading to a coup and a government more to their liking. But they have no intention of invading, and are not likely to impose a ban on U.S. imports of Venezuelan oil. They fear these steps would throw the country into complete chaos. Instead, they have banned U.S. capitalists from buying new Venezuelan bonds and freezing the assets and bank accounts, if any, in the U.S. of members of the government.

Washington, which has never masked its hostility to Maduro or his predecessor Hugo Chávez and their relations with revolutionary Cuba, called the vote “sham elections.”

April 16 protest at Caracas Health Ministry in Venezuela against shortage of medicine, part of rising unrest. Strikes for higher wages, actions against water shortages have also taken place. Continued on page 7

Continued from front page

Maduro, like Chávez before him, has attempted to “manage” capitalist social and political relations. They funded “welfare” programs that foster a corrupting dependence on government largesse. These steps were consciously counterposed to leading a working-class revolution, giving workers and farmers greater confidence in what they can accomplish in struggle, as was done by the July 26 Movement in Cuba.

The main rally here was held at La Placita, the main plaza and heart of Managua’s old colonial quarter. Protesters came from all sections of Nicaraguan society and from a wide range of viewpoints, including supporters of opposition parties, long-time opponents of the Sandinista Front, as well as workers who were part of the revolution in the 1980s.

Calero and Trowe are in Nicaragua reporting for the Militant. We will carry further coverage next week.
Israel’s right to exist key in figh

Continued from front page

led participants to think they could do so without Israeli reprisal. But Hamas Prime Minister Yahya Sinwar described the real aims of their actions: “We will take down the border and we will tear out their hearts from their bodies.” Since March 30, some 116 Palestinians have been killed, mostly by Israeli army gunfire. Much of the U.S. liberal press falsely blamed the Trump administration’s decision to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem for the confrontation and prettied up the inflammatory character of the Hamas-organized actions. “Battle Weary, Hamas Gives Peaceful Protests a Chance,” headlined an April 16 New York Times article.

Since Hamas took control of Gaza in 2007, thousands have died as the result of its strategy of sacrificing Palestinian lives in provocations that draw brutal reprisal from Tel Aviv. Hamas’ strategy is to win sympathy and support from the international community and to force the reactionary Hamas group to negotiate with Tel Aviv. The Egyptian government has deepened its links with Tel Aviv, opening its airspace for Israeli air strikes on Islamist forces operating in the country’s Sinai desert and against weapons smugglers in Gaza.

Washington presses peace deal

The Trump administration is pushing Cairo, the Saudi monarchs and its other allies in the region to press Palestinian authorities to agree to talks with Tel Aviv.

Speculation is rife among Israeli capitalist politicians about the Trump administration’s coming peace plan proposal and the possible location of a Palestinian capital in east Jerusalem. Yair Lapid, leader of the Israeli Yesh Atid opposition party, claimed the U.S. plan, due to be announced in June, would include the neighborhood of Abu Dis as the site of a Palestinian state’s capital.

An emergency May 17 meeting of the Arab League heard a call from Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Malki for all league member states to withdraw their ambassadors from the United States following the opening of the new U.S. Embassy. So far none of the bloc’s 22 members have done so.

For many years these governments as well as the rulers in Iran have postured as defenders of the Palestinians. They use their demagogic “support” for the Palestinians to point away from class exploitation at home and bolster the rule of the capitalist class.

The Israeli rulers, their ally Hezbollah and the leaders of Hamas all falsely claim the conflicts in the region stem from Israel’s existence. In reality these clashes are fueled by imperialist competition and intervention alongside the region’s capitalist rulers vying for profits and influence.

U.S. to expand Iran sanctions

U.S. President Donald Trump announced May 21 that the administration plans to expand sanctions on the Iranian rulers, part of the White House’s efforts to force Tehran to accept new, more long-lasting restrictions. Above all the U.S. imperialists want to end the Iranian rulers’ expanding reach in the region. A result of its intervention in the wars in Syria and Iraq.

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Venezuela toilers face capitalist crisis

Continued from page 6

The May 20 elections did nothing to solve the economic crisis centered on replacing the country’s currency with the U.S. dollar to try to stem runaway inflation, halting subsidized shipments of oil to Cuba and other Caribbean and Latin American nations to “save money,” and asking for international food aid.

One most prominent figures, Leopoldo López and Henrique Capriles, ran on a reformist platform. Months earlier they had organized a series of provocative and violent anti-Maduro actions, but virtually nothing leading up to the polls.

Two candidates did challenge Maduro, Henri Falcón and Javier Bertucci. Falcón, a former Maduro ally, launched his candidacy over the objections of the Venezuelan rulers’ wars.

Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun

“The Iranian Revolution of 1979 was a profound political and social upheaval, not a religious jihad. It was a deep-going, modern, populist social revolution.”

— Jack Barnes

in New International no. 12’ 16

pathfinderpress.com

Protests against school closures in Puerto Rico

Students, parents and teachers protest May 3 against the closing of the Clavelita Ramirez de Arellano school in Manati, Puerto Rico. Many of the signs say, “Enough already.”

The closing, one of nearly 300 planned by the island’s colonial government, is part of deepening anti-working-class measures being carried out to free up funds to maximize payment to wealthy bondholders on the government’s $74 billion debt.

On May 22 Puerto Rico’s legislature approved slashing the government budget 22 percent. The Financial Oversight and Management Board imposed by the U.S. government — known in Puerto Rico as the junta — is demanding deeper cuts to social services, pensions and labor rights.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of workers and farmers still have no electricity or reliable drinking water or are living in storm-damaged homes, eight months after Hurricane Maria devastated the island. Protests against the school closings, cut to the University of Puerto Rico, the slow pace of restoring electricity and other attacks on workers and their unions are frequent in towns large and small.

— SETH GALINSKY

For recognition of a Palestinian state and of Israel

• For repeal of U.S. Jerusalem Embassy Act
• For workers’ solidarity in Israel, Palestine, the world over

Socialist Workers Party statement

Download and print flyer at www.themilitant.com

The Militant June 4, 2018
‘Cuba’s revolutionary armed forces are the people in uniform’

Below is an excerpt from Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for May. “The Revolutionary Armed Forces are the people in uniform,” Cuba’s revolutionary armed forces are the people in uniform,’ José Ramón Fernández said in a 1997 interview in Havana. Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the SWP and president of Pathfinder Press, asked the questions. Fernández was the chief commander of the Falangaz in 1941 to 1945, where the Popular militia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces defeated the U.S.-organized Bay of Pigs invasion force in 1961. On April 4, 1956, a military move ment, which the people referred to as “los puritos”—“the pure ones”—tried to topple Batista. It failed and a large number of those involved were sent to prison; others went into exile, retired, left the army, or were transferred to distant commands.

When the revolution triumphed, I joined the Rebel Army as a first lieutenant, the same rank I held previously. Since I was a trained professional (and I say this with no vanity), I was given the task of helping to train the Rebel Army more than to train it actually, to help transform the Rebel Army and the Revolutionary Armed Forces in general. I was aateur, the same rank I held previously. To me, the attitudes that exist in the U.S. Marine Corps and among its instructors are often bestial; they’re often criminal, inhuman, and unworthy. They are truly contemptible in a military institution. I’m not talking about the young people who have drowned in the swamps. I’m talking about the dehumanizing and denigrating methods of treating young people. That is unacceptable. That is an example of the difference between the two types of armies.

When someone who exercises authority or enforces discipline must do so, this often rankles those who are the objects of the command. You have to remember, however, that in our armed forces there are the National Police, where there are units of the UJC [Union of Young Communists]. These organizations strive for discipline and at the same time defend and guarantee the rights of individuals. There are places where one may speak frankly and say everything, regardless of rank. That looks a little better.

We are sometimes accused of violating human rights. As our foreign minister has pointed out, this is part of a selection campaign carried out by our adversaries to create hostility against Cuba and undermine our prestige. As far as I am concerned, the first human right is the right to live, to work, to have the possibility of always receiving health care, to job, to hold a place in society based on knowledge, technical training, talent, and desires. And to have a right to a country that exists with dignity, as a sovereign nation.

Not a single prisoner has been tortured. From the pages of the Militant a single person has disappeared — not one, in thirty-eight years. Who among those who accuse us of human rights violations, who claim as a proof to condemn us, could raise their hand and say the same thing? We do not permit anyone to be mistreated for reasons of sex, religion, or the color of one’s skin. I’d like to know how the human rights of Hispanic immigrants or Blacks are observed in the United States. Look at California, Florida, New York. Could they say what I have just said? They can exert pressure and muster votes to condemn us, but they are following a policy of appeasement, and we do not feel guilty.

Few places guarantee human rights as Cuba does — not just in word but in deed. Very few, if anyone, among those who condemn us on the basis of human rights has any moral standing whatsoever to do so. That’s almost like saying to be aware that we have experienced 30 years of struggle, of speaking about the consequences of our poverty, of ethics, and of morality.

We are poor, but we have dignity. We are not ashamed of our poverty. We would be ashamed to be rich as a result of theft, of exploitation, of cor ruption. We would be ashamed to become rich that way.

José Ramón Fernández, center, field commander of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces, dur ing counterattack that defeated U.S.-organized invasion force at Bay of Pigs in July 1961.
Join workers’ struggles, build unions!

Working people — who bear the brunt of the social, economic and moral crisis of capitalism today — are the answer. As the previous edition of the Militant made clear, workers must organize solidarity when we confront the bosses’ assaults. The social movement teachers have drawn around their union battle shows the potential power of labor.

Montreal, Sunday, April 28
Help spread the word about the teachers and other union fights and other protests the working class organizes, organize with your co-workers to join their protests and picket lines.

Minneapolis, Minnesota, Sunday
Waiting for you where you’re from. Our workers together and send messages of support from yourselves and your union, if you have one. Talk the battles up if you don’t, it will lay the groundwork to fight to organize.

These actions can reinforce the courage and confidence of those on the frontline. Those bringing solidarity gain a greater sense themselves what workers are capable of and become better able to fight.

Above all we gain confidence that workers have the numbers and the power — if we can unite — to change the daily indignities and unacceptable conditions we confront. Retail workers and others face part-time hours and low pay that make life harder. Workers who knew the disdain and opprobrium of those like Hillary Clinton and others confront the bosses’ political parties and fighting for independent working-class political action — the struggle to take political power into our own hands and join the fight for a socialist world. Join Socialist Workers Party members and growing numbers of others on the picket line!

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**Plans advance for US-NKorea nuclear summit**

Continued from front page

May 22 to observe the promised dismantling of the North’s Punggye-ri nuclear testing site, scheduled to begin the next day. The back-and-forth of positive and negative statements about the dismantling by the two governments involved has led some in the U.S. liberal press — whose line is filtered through their hatred for the Donald Trump presidency and for the workers who voted for him — to speculate the meeting won’t happen. They have alternated between saying Trump’s belligerency will lead to war and claiming his alleged erratic incompetence will lead to the U.S. rulers being flaunted.

White House officials said work on the summit is continuing, and a crew has been sent to Singapore to set up for the meeting.

“People are squabbling. We’ll see what happens,” Trump told the press before his meeting with Moon at the White House. “There are certain conditions we want. I think we’ll get those conditions.” If not, the meeting might be postponed, he said. This is a normal part of negotiations, the president said.

*“Trust-building” measures* 

Both Washington and leaders of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea have continued what they call “trust-building” measures. And they continue to trade complaints and demands seeking concessions heading into the meeting.

After the DPRK complained about the provocative nature of Max Thun, an annual joint-JuS-Korean air exercises with U.S. F-22 fighter planes, Washington has canceled them, saying the military exercises are “insulting” it so at Seoul’s request.

DPRK officials also complained when White House National Security Adviser John Bolton said Libya was a “template” for the demilitarization of North Korea. Trump denied it.

For the sake of peace, saying its voluntary disarmament in 2002 did not have protections for President Muammar Qaddafi, who was deposed and killed in an uprising eight years later.

Trump said that the U.S. rulers would guarantee Kim’s position. “He will be safe. He will be happy. His country will be rich,” Trump said.

At the White House press conference with Moon, Trump said the U.S.-North Korea and U.S.-Japanese governments would channel billions of dollars to North Korea for economic development.

The Chinese government is a key player. Some 90 percent of North Korea’s trade is with China. After Beijing over the last year began strictly enforcing U.N. economic sanctions pushed by Washington, thousands of workers were laid off in North Korea, deepening pressure on the regime.

President Donald Trump has pressed Beijing to keep exerting pressure on the North to come through on the summit. He told the press May 22 he was concerned that Chinese President Xi had started encouraging North Korea’s leaders to push against Washington in preparation for negotiations — and to help Chinese capitalists in their sharpening trade talks with the U.S. rulers.

“I can’t say what he is worrying about,” Trump said. “It’s clear that North Korea’s massive conventional missile arsenal, thousands of missiles bunkered near the South Korean border and aimed at Seoul 30 miles away, will be prepared for any attack. And Trump has ordered the Pentagon to prepare to draw down the number of U.S. troops deployed in the South.

**Forced division of Korea**

North and South Korea have been divided since 1945 when Washington and Moscow split control of the country following the defeat of Japan’s capitaliat rulers in the second imperialist world war. They did so against the will of the Korean people, who had spent decades fighting to throw of Japanese occupation. The U.S. rulers placed the South under military rule and then imposed a puppet government, crush- ing a revolutionary uprising by workers and farm- ers. When the 1950-53 Korean War erupted, U.S.-led forces drove deep into the North, almost all the way to the Chinese border. By the time the combatants began to back, and, with the help of hundreds of thousands of Chinese volunteers, were able to push Washington back to a stalemate at the 38th parallel, the first defeat ever for U.S. imperialism.

The U.S.-led forces agreed to a cease-fire, but has refused to sign a peace treaty. That some 4 million people died in the war.

If Washington and Pyongyang reach an agreement that scales back the weapons in the border and takes steps toward removal of nuclear weapons from the peninsula, it would open the door to gains for working people. Coupled with ending the draconian economic sanctions on the North, and increasing trade and travel across the border and the rest of the world, it would give a renewed impulse to the fight for reunification of the country.

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**Verdict against NY cop**

Continued from front page

ders anyone accountable. The true fight is to get justice for no other mother faces this. I hope this victory helps.”

Some 50 supporters of the Bah family packed the courtroom May 17 to oppose the city’s attempt to overturn the verdict they won.

“This is one of the few cases of killings at the hands of the cops that has gone to any kind of trial and the cops were found guilty,” Randolph McLaughlin, one of the Bah family’s lawyers, told supporters outside the courthouse after the hearing. “The cops who killed Eric Garner, Ramarley Graham and others never went to trial. Trying to get the ruling thrown out is nothing short of an outrage.”

He added, he was eight when his mother, Guadalupe Mateo, was shot in the back on Sept. 25, 2012. His mother had flown from her native Guinea to see Mohamed and found him depressed and acting strangely. She called 911, asking for an ambulance to take him to a hospital. Instead, a group of heavily armed cops showed up. They refused her repeated requests to talk to him and get him to come out. The cops made her stay outside the building while they went in and demanded Mohamed Bah open the door. When he told them he was fine and go away, they removed a peephole in the door and tossed a chemical light through it tostupefy him. They used a hydraulic jack to crack open the door and inserted a camera on a pole.

The cops claimed that once the door was open, Mohamed Bah pulled a knife on the cops. The police killed him. But they never presented a knife as evidence, claiming it was lost. Then later they said they found it, but it had been contaminated in storage. Now inside the apartment the cops shot him at an anti-riot gun and used a Taser stun gun twice.

According to testimony at the trial, Detective Mateo was hired to investigate a domestic violence case aimed at Bah and fell to the ground. “He’s stabbing me. Shoot him,” Mateo yelled twice. Mateo and other two cops shot at Bah, hitting him at least eight times.

Then Mateo changed his story. He was when questioned by Bah family attorneys in a deposition, he admitted that the youth never stabbed him. The cops also had the clothes worn by Mohamed Bah when he was killed had been destroyed. All the missing evidence played a role in the decision of both federal and Manhattan prosecutors to decline to indict the cops.

Then a few days into the civil trial they admitted they had the clothes all along.

“It is unforgivable to me that, either through malpractice or incompetence, this would not have been discovered,” Judge Castel said in the civil trial.

The jury found Mateo guilty of excessive use of force, and Lt. Licitra, Mateo’s supervisor, guilt of failure to properly supervise the cops.

In ruling on the city’s appeal, Judge Castel vacated his decision against Licitra.

At the May 17 hearing City Attorney Joshua Lax told Castel that there was “no evidence that dispute that Mr. Bah posed a threat of death or serious injury at the time Mr. Mateo fired.” This means that Mateo is entitled to “qualified immunity,” he claimed, based on the way he “believed” he was on the south side if they think they’re in bodily danger.

The judge challenged that assertion. He noted that Mateo has changed his story several times and that his fellow officers all claimed they didn’t see what happened before the shooting started. “It was perfectly plausible for this jury to conclude Mateo told an untrue story,” Castel said.

Despite the ruling against Mateo, a rep- resentative of the city Law Department said, “We are reviewing the decision to determine what further action we take.”

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**‘Millitant’ Prisoners’ Fund**

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 360 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.