

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

UK health workers beat back attack by hospital bosses

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 82/NO. 27 JULY 23, 2018

Workers' struggles are key, not who's on the Court

BY TERRY EVANS

When Anthony Kennedy announced he was retiring from the U.S. Supreme Court, the liberal press and middle-class left let out a howl — President Donald Trump is going to remake the court so deeply reactionary that our social rights will be irrevocably gutted. They desperately hope to step up their “resistance” to the president and his nomination of long-time Judge Brett Kavanaugh, or at least put off the confirmation vote until after this fall’s midterm election.

The Democrats dream of a sweep in November, though they’re enmeshed in a passionate debate over what type of candidates to field. Some have gone gaga over Democratic Socialists of America member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s Democratic Party primary win in New York. Others respond that candidates like her are a ticket

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SWP: Get US rulers' troops, planes, bombs out of Korea!

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Negotiations toward implementing the declaration signed by President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at their June 12 summit in Singapore on denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula are proceeding. This is despite public jockeying and a shrill chorus from liberal media moguls insisting Trump got bamboozled and steps toward relaxation of tensions are a sham.

The prospects opened by the Singapore summit are good for the working class, not just in the U.S. and Korea, but in Japan, China, across the Pacific and worldwide. The indefinite suspensions of U.S.-South Korea war games — which Trump admitted are “provocative” — the possibility of U.S. pulling some of its 28,500 troops out of Korea, and other steps toward ratcheting down war threats in the

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Unions rally in fight for gov't-funded pensions

All workers need pensions at union-scale pay



Charles Bertram/Lexington Herald-Leader via AP

United Mine Workers rally, Lexington, Kentucky, June 2016, protests cuts to pensions, health care.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Car caravans and busloads of active and retired union members from across the Midwest and beyond are gathering in their thousands at the Ohio state Capitol in Columbus July 12. They’re demanding that the government fund the pensions for hundreds of thousands of workers who depend on plans on the brink of bankruptcy.

The rally — set the day before a meeting there of Congress’ Joint Select Committee on Solvency of Multiemployer Pension Plans — underscored the need for the union movement to champion the fight for government-guaranteed pensions for all workers at union-scale pay. More than 600,000 retired and working members of several of the unions organizing the rally — the United Mine Workers, the Teamsters, and the Bak-

ery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers — belong to plans that face bankruptcy in the coming few years.

“If the pension fund goes insol-
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‘We need to tell the truth’ about US colonial rule in Puerto Rico



Eduardo Meléndez

San Juan protest Jan. 20. Sign carried by man in middle says, “Energize our town Torrecillas. Without light since Irma.” Sign at left says, “We can’t take any more abuses against the poor.”

BY SETH GALINSKY

On July 3 the government-owned electric company of Puerto Rico claimed electricity had been restored to 99.9 percent of its customers. That was little consolation to the over 2,000 mostly rural households still without power nearly 10 months after Hurricane Maria hit the island.

And the U.S. colony’s semi-repaired but still antiquated electric grid couldn’t stand up to a few inches of rain and up to 40 mph wind gusts from former Hurricane Beryl July 9. By the time the storm had passed

more than 15,000 households were without electricity — not a good omen for what working people face the next few months of hurricane season.

“We are in a better position with more personnel, materials and equipment” to rapidly restore power, Gov. Ricardo Rosselló claimed before Beryl landed.

Residents of Humacao and Yabucoa, part of the area hardest hit by Maria, were not impressed by promises. “It’s just words coming out of a mouth,” Luis “Cheverito” Velázquez,

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Pittsburgh protests continue in fight to convict cop who shot Antwon Rose

BY JOHN STUDER

Protests against the killing of 17-year-old African-American high school student Antwon Rose by East Pittsburgh cop Michael Rosfeld have continued since he was shot in the back June 19. Rosfeld was arrested and charged with criminal homicide, which could result in a conviction ranging from first degree murder to involuntary manslaughter.

Protests demanding he be convicted have spread around the Pittsburgh area and won wide support from

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Washington, Moscow seek new Mideast arrangement

BY TERRY EVANS

Washington seeks to use the July 16 summit in Helsinki, Finland, between President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin to open deeper collaboration with Moscow on future alignments in the Middle East. The U.S. rulers’ goal is to get acquiescence to driving Tehran’s military out of Syria, a goal they share with the rulers in Israel, Saudi Arabia and

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Strikers chase scabs from Ontario salt mine

Mass. natural gas workers fight National Grid lockout

Books by SWP leaders draw interest at Tehran book fair

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

TEHRAN, Iran — The 31st Tehran International Book Fair — held under the slogan “No to Not Reading Books” — took place here in May. The annual event was held at the Imam Khomeini Mosalla, an enormous mosque in the heart of the city.

Over 2,000 Iranian publishers and representatives of 300 foreign publishing houses had stands. Surrounding the book fair are food stands, loudspeakers with music, walkways and parks for the hundreds of thousands of visitors, giving the event a festival atmosphere.

For the 27th time Pathfinder Books in the United Kingdom participated. This year the booth featured three books on the conditions and struggles of working people in the United States: *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* *Class, Privilege and Learning under Capitalism* and *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People*, both by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S., as well as *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible? A Necessary Debate* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters. Visitors were interested in what working people face in the U.S. The three titles were the best sellers, with 85 copies sold altogether.

Is Biology Woman's Destiny? by Evelyn Reed drew a lot of attention from customers looking for an explanation of the origins of women's oppression. Reed explains that women's second-class status emerged historically with the rise of private property, and she presents a working-class road to emancipation.

“I never thought I'd be interested in anything political,” said a woman who had bought Reed's *Problems of Women's Liberation* two years ago. “But I learned so much from that book.” This year she got *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*

Pathfinder volunteers sold a total of 423 books at the stand.

Several stands carried Farsi translations of Pathfinder titles produced by Talaye Porsoo publishing house. (Farsi is the most widely spoken language in Iran.) These books were displayed by the Association of Women Publishers as well as at Talaye Porsoo's own booth. Staff from the Association of Women Publishers returned several times to replenish their Talaye Porsoo stock. Between the two stands, 807 of these books were sold.

One book newly published by Talaye Porsoo was *Lenin's Final Fight*, about the Bolshevik leader's battle against reversal of the revolution's working-class course by growing bureaucratic layers in the state appara-



Visitors browse books at May 2-12 Tehran International Book Fair, Iran's largest yearly cultural event. Pathfinder Press and Talaye Porsoo were among hundreds of exhibitors.

tus. Fifty-two copies were sold.

In April Talaye Porsoo volunteers also took their titles to a book fair at Kabul University in Afghanistan. (Farsi, often called Dari, is widely read in Afghanistan.) They sold out of several titles the first day, including *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Che Guevara and *How Far We Slaves Have Come!* which contains speeches by Nelson Mandela

and Fidel Castro about the impact of Cuba's internationalist course in bringing down the white supremacist regime in South Africa. As other titles got low in stock, among them books on the fight for women's emancipation, the Talaye Porsoo representatives had several reprinted right there in Kabul!

By the end of the book fair Talaye Porsoo had sold 486 books.

New Zealand retail store workers fight bosses' attacks

BY MIKE TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Hundreds of Farmers department store workers across New Zealand, members of the First Union, went on strike for up to five hours July 5 to press demands for better wages and conditions.

“Performance pay’ is the main issue,” said Maureen Scott, one of 60 workers from company stores in west

Auckland who picketed St Lukes Mall. Pay scales start at the minimum wage of 16.50 New Zealand dollars (US\$11.20), with NZ\$17.50 being the top pay for most jobs. Any further increases depend on performance reviews conducted at the discretion of managers. The bosses try to use the lure of higher pay from these ‘performance assessments’ to divide workers and push them to work harder and compete to sell more.

Over 600 workers have submitted a petition to Farmers demanding an end to the performance pay system and for a minimum pay rate of NZ\$20.55 an hour. The union estimates 80 percent of the workforce earns below that rate.

Many workers are kept on part time, one of over 60 workers from stores in south Auckland who rallied at a busy intersection in Botany Town Centre told the *Militant*. “It's hard to get a good amount of hours to work” to make up

for the low pay, she said, “and it's not humanly possible to do what we're expected to do in those hours.”

Farmers is a nationwide chain of 59 stores that sell a wide variety of clothes, cosmetics, toys, homeware and electrical goods. Most workers are women.

Workers at the Botany rally described how they're pressured to garner donations from customers for company-sponsored charities. If they hit the day's target, managers give them a chocolate bar as a “reward.”

Pickets, rallies and marches took place in eight other cities and towns alongside the two in Auckland. The First Union said 93 percent of its members at Farmers had voted for the protest strike after rejecting the company's new contract offer. For most of those taking part it was their first time on strike.

As the Botany picket concluded, one worker called out, “When's the next one!?”

THE MILITANT

Driver's licenses for all! Unify the working class!

To be able to drive legally is crucial for immigrant workers to find and keep jobs. The 'Militant' backs this fight.

“Only through our labor power, joining with others, can we win,” said Carlos Rojas, who was part of an 11-day march in New Jersey, demanding driver's licenses.



Militant/Janet Post

Immigrant rights group Cosecha walks for driver's licenses in Camden, N.J., June 10.

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Unions rally for pensions

Continued from front page

vent, my pension will go from \$4,000 to \$1,200,” Sherman Liimatainen, vice president of the National United Committee to Protect Pensions, said by phone July 10. “I’m retired now, but I paid into it for 38 years. The plan affects 400,000 retired Teamsters. Our cuts would be anything between 50 and 70 percent.”

One bus from Duluth, Minnesota, where Liimatainen lives, traveled nine hours to attend the rally.

“Because of health issues many are not able to make it,” he said. “They can’t take such long trips and they can’t take the heat. We expect 10,000 Teamsters, but if all who wanted to could go, there’d be a lot more.”

Phil Smith, communications director with the United Mine Workers, told the *Militant* July 3 that the union had organized dozens of buses from West Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Alabama. Miners from as far away as Utah and Colorado are going. Like the Teamsters, the United Mine Workers 1974 Pension Plan is on the verge of insolvency, a move that will affect 87,000 retired and 20,000 working miners.

Retirement is not a ‘fringe benefit’

During the world capitalist economic expansion from the late 1940s through the early 1970s, labor officials steadily retreated from the fighting militancy of the rank and file that had built the industrial unions in the 1930s. The expanding economy of the U.S. rulers, based on Washington emerging as top dog out of the second imperialist war for markets and power, made it possible for workers to win modest, but real wage increases and “fringe benefits” from employers without sharp class battles.

More and more of these pension and health care plans become contingent on the competitive edge and

profitability of the bosses.

These benefits weren’t wrung from the government as social protections for the working class as a whole. They are based on the individual capitalist boss or, in the case of multiemployer plans, the union-organized companies in one industry. In good times — for workers who have these plans — they can seem eternal, something workers can count on. But when the capitalists’ profits and world system of exploitation started contracting in the 1970s, this all began to fall apart.

Bosses started to turn on the unions, going increasingly after workers’ wages and benefits. Mines and plants closed, or reopened nonunion. And in 2008 a big financial crisis dealt a blow to capitalist production and trade worldwide. As plants closed, pension plans had less and less workers paying in, and the speculation in stocks, bonds and hedge funds that fund administrators used to increase them took a nose dive.

This is the price paid for the union officialdom’s class-collaborationist policy of refusing to fight for the real needs of the working class — wages high enough to cover workers’ real living costs, federally funded retirement and health care, unemployment pay for as long as you’re out of work at union-scale pay. And all this backed by independent working-class action to take political power.

“We explain the need for the labor movement to fight for social rights such as health care and adequate pensions for all working people,” SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes writes



Militant/George Chalmers

Miners march in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, April 1, 2016, protesting coal bosses’ moves to gut pensions. UMW organized July 12 rally with Teamsters, bakery workers and other unions.

in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*. “The unions should take the lead in resisting the continual drive by the government and employers to make meeting these life-or-death needs the responsibility of individuals and their families.”

“Our fund was driven towards insolvency under the oversight of the federal government with investment management by Wall Street companies,” Liimatainen said. “Members of Congress knew funds were failing. But they didn’t offer any solution. Instead, they sucker-punched us with the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act.”

The act, passed by Congress in December 2014, allowed the managers of pension funds deemed to be in “critical and declining status” to get permission to slash retirees’ payments as much as needed to keep the fund “solvent.”

“As authorized by the act, the leadership of our fund proposed a ‘rescue plan,’ that would have slashed our pensions,” Liimatainen said. “But when they sought federal approval to ruin our lives, we did what we do best. We organized. We rallied. We proved that we have ‘power in the numbers.’ We stopped the plan. And now we demand a real solution that safeguards our pensions.”

Hundreds celebrate life of ILWU fighter Byron Jacobs

BY EDWIN FRUIT

LONGVIEW, Wash. — Some 500 people gathered at the Cowlitz County Event Center here July 6 to celebrate the life of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 member Byron Jacobs. Jacobs was killed June 28 when a line on a ship where he was working snapped and hit him. Several others were injured on the dock, and the ship’s first officer also died.

Many in the audience wore black shirts printed for the occasion saying, “Byron Jacobs (1983-2018).” An ILWU image on it said, “100% union strong” and “An injury to one is an injury to all.”

The meeting was chaired by Kelly Muller, a retired member of the Longview ILWU who along with Jacobs and many others in the audience was part of the 2011-12 struggle against EGT Development. EGT bosses had tried to break the ILWU’s control on West Coast docks by running its grain terminal with non-ILWU union labor.

Speakers included family members and union co-workers who explained Jacobs was a dedicated family man, a fighter who stood up for his union and someone proud of his North Carolina Lumbee Indian heritage.

Muller recalled how he and Jacobs had tried to protect members of the union’s women’s auxiliary who had held a protest to try and block a train from entering EGT property. Railroad cops attacked the women and, as Muller and Jacobs tried to intervene, both were maced, beaten and arrested. Later, both spent time in the county jail. This was not the

only time Jacobs was assaulted by the cops during the battle.

“I can tell you that there was no better fighter for the union than Byron,” said Dan Coffman, who was president of the union during the EGT fight and had known Byron since childhood. Coffman also was Jacobs’ Little League coach, and he explained how even as a young baseball player Jacobs would lean in and crowd the plate to get hit by a pitch to get on base and help his team score.

A few other participants spoke when the mic was opened up. Mary Martin of the Socialist Workers Party offered solidarity to the family and union. She explained how party members had met Jacobs during the EGT fight and how she and other party members had interviewed Coffman and Jacobs weekly for the *Militant* to counter EGT bosses’ lies and win solidarity for the union fight. Party members took the paper door to door in surrounding working-class communities as part of the effort and, by the end of the lockout, over 100 workers there had subscribed.

Martin said Byron’s conviction and dignity never wavered in face of the cops who beat him or the courts that jailed him. “We in the Socialist Workers Party are convinced that future generations who strive to strengthen their union and build the labor movement will look to and learn from Byron’s example as an outstanding fighter and working-class leader,” she concluded. “We were proud to know him.”

Jacobs continued to read the *Militant* for several years and helped get his union to support other hard-fought

workers’ struggles, like the sugar beet workers locked out by American Crystal Sugar bosses in Minnesota and the Dakotas in 2011-12 and the silver miners in Idaho, organized by the United Steelworkers, who have been on strike since March 2017. Local 21 has made financial contributions to both these fights.

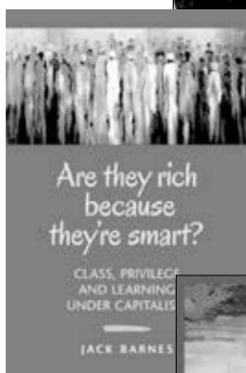
On one of Jacobs’ trips back to the Carolinas to visit his relatives in the Lumbee Indian community, he went to meet with International Longshore Association union members in Charleston. They had also waged a sharp battle against shipping bosses there and later were part of the struggle to bring down the Confederate flag from the statehouse in Columbia, South Carolina. Several ILA members had visited Longview as a show of solidarity during the EGT fight.

Jacobs’ family members thanked the union for all its help and for living up to its credo that “an injury to one is an injury to all.” His wife, Megan Jacobs, has filed a \$16 million wrongful death lawsuit against the company that owns the ship on which he was killed.

More reading

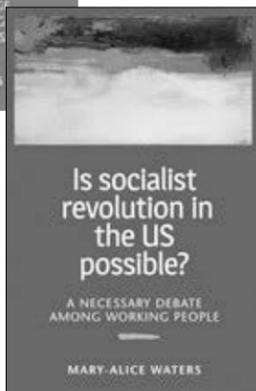


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—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

This column gives a voice to those engaged in labor battles and building solidarity today — from school workers in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Arizona and Colorado, to miners, factory and retail workers looking to stand and fight. Send in articles, photos and letters on picket lines and other labor protests to themilitant@mac.com, post them directly on our website, or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Strikers chase scabs from Ontario salt mine

Chanting “solidarity” and “don’t come back,” striking Compass Minerals salt miners in Goderich, Ontario, lined the entrance to the mine July 6 as about 30 scabs filed out of the mine with their faces covered.

The replacement workers had been trapped in the mine along with a number of company officials since July 4 when the strikers, members of Unifor Local 16-0, built a barricade of wooden pallets and blocked buses from bringing scabs into the mine. They did so in defiance of a court injunction limiting to four minutes the time vehicles entering the mine could be held up. When the court told them to remove the pallets, they complied, but replaced them with tractors, keeping up the barricade.

“There’s nothing better than seeing those scabs do the walk of shame,” Unifor National President Jerry Dias told the media. “We managed to get all of the scabs out of this facility.”

The 348 miners walked out and put up picket lines April 27 after the bosses demanded concessions that would wipe out working conditions won in hard-fought struggles over almost 60 years.

The bosses want to impose 12-hour shifts with up to four hours of mandatory overtime each day. They are demanding the workers agree to a workweek of up to 60 hours, with a rotated 72-hour week every fourth week, plus 20 Saturday overtime shifts a year. The bosses also demanded cuts in medical, dental and life insurance benefits for those who retire after 2021 and gutting seniority in job assignments. The company offered each worker a \$10,000 signing bribe if they accepted these unsafe and humiliating conditions.

The strikers have won wide support throughout the community of 8,000. Some 500 Unifor members and supporters, including members of the teachers’

union, attended a solidarity barbecue near the mine June 28. More than 1,000 supporters turned out to join strikers’ pickets over the July 7-8 weekend.

The salt mine, which extends 549 meters — over one-third of a mile — under Lake Huron, is the largest in the world. The workers produce road salt used in Canada and the United States.

Send solidarity messages and financial support to the strikers at Unifor 16-0, P.O. Box 161, Goderich, Ontario, Canada N7A 3Z2.

— Beverly Bernardo and Bob Carter

Massachusetts natural gas workers fight National Grid lockout

BOSTON — When 1,200 natural gas workers, members of United Steelworkers Locals 12003 and 12012, showed up for work across Massachusetts June 25, they discovered they had been locked out by National Grid company bosses.

In spite of the unions’ offer to keep working when their contract expired, the workers were replaced with 633 scabs supplied by contractors and 699 National Grid management personnel. National Grid is a major international energy company, with operations in Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island.

The bosses are demanding concessions from current workers and harsher conditions to be imposed on future hires. Workers would face sweeping cuts to wages and health care benefits, the union said in a fact sheet, and medical care for retirees would be drastically reduced. “Hoping older employees will sacrifice the benefits of new hires,” the unions said, the bosses are attempting “to drive a wedge between employees.”

The bosses are also demanding the right to replace union workers with non-union subcontractors to perform jobs like swapping out meters.

National Grid supplies electric and gas services to over 1.9 million homes,



Striking salt miners in Goderich, Ontario, members of Unifor Local 16-0, put up barricades beginning July 4, forcing bosses to remove scab replacement workers from the mine.

schools and businesses in 85 communities across Massachusetts.

The bosses say they won’t end the lockout until the union approves the contract and agrees to a no-strike pledge.

The morning of the lockout picket lines were put up at five National Grid facilities and have since expanded to new locations, including where scab crews go out for repairs.

“Gas workers are merely asking to continue the same working conditions and benefits they have previously received,” the union fact sheet says, “even as National Grid sees tremendous profits and benefits from recent tax cuts.”

On July 1 the bosses stopped payment to locked-out workers’ health care plans. National Grid bosses are challenging the locked-out union members’ claims for unemployment benefits.

— Ted Leonard

Illinois Teamsters end strike at American Bottling, make gains

NORTHLAKE, Ill. — “We won a victory. The new contract is good for us,” Mike Gnagni, one of some 140 truck drivers who just ended their 40-day strike against American Bottling Company, told the *Militant*. American Bottling is a subsidiary of the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group. The strikers are members of Teamsters Local 727 who walked the picket lines here and at the Harvey facility.

The contract was ratified at a union meeting July 1. “We got a \$3.40 raise over four years — we wanted a three-year contract, but settled for four,” said Gnagni, 61, who has been a union truck driver for 40 years. “We now earn close to what the Coke and Pepsi drivers make. And the pension plan was doubled in benefits.

“The new contract keeps the health insurance plan the same,” he said. “The company wanted higher premium payments from us and less coverage, but we blocked that. We also got six sick days per year, up from four.”

“Thank you to all those in the community, our local representatives, and fellow Teamsters that supported the Union in this long hard-fought victory,” John Coli, secretary-treasurer of Local 727, said on the union website. This correspondent helped organize delegations of Walmart workers from the Villa Park and Darian stores to bring solidarity to the picketers many times.

— Dan Fein

Vermont nurses call strike for wages, staffing

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Nurses at the University of Vermont Medical Center are holding a two-day work stoppage July 12-13 to demand a 24 percent wage increase, fuller staffing to assure patients’ health and safety and a \$15 minimum wage for all other hospital workers. The Vermont Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals Local 5221 represents 1,800 workers at the teaching hospital. Their contract expired July 9.

“Nurses are angry,” Local 5221 President Laurie Aunchman, a working nurse, told the *Militant* at a solidarity meeting at the Vermont Workers Center June 24. “We need a better nurse-to-patient staffing ratio and we need more pay. We make \$2 an hour less than nurses at the Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital in Plattsburgh.

“Negotiations are going badly,” she said. Nearly three-quarters of the membership in mid-June voted 94 percent to authorize a strike.

Signs reading, “Patients before profits, support the nurses!” dot yards here and on farms along roads into town.

Nurses in New England, upstate New York and elsewhere have carried out several recent struggles. Aunchman said her union supported the successful organizing drive at Albany Medical Center. Nurses voted 1,161-582 in mid-April to be represented by the New York State Nurses Association, in spite of the bosses’ anti-union campaign, which included threats to have nurses from the Philippines deported.

— Maggie Trowe

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 26, 1993

Working people should demand Congress reverse its June 30 vote upholding the Hyde amendment, which bans federal funds for abortions. It denies millions of women — mainly working-class women — their right to decide when and whether to have children.

The right to choose abortion became legal in the early 1970s through the struggles of women and men who took to the streets in protest. It was the by-product of the massive influx of women into the work force following World War II, as well as of the civil rights and the anti-Vietnam War movement. Affirmative action, abortion rights, and increased access to birth control won through these massive social movements helped to unify and strengthen the working class.

The battle over abortion rights and the fight to keep clinics open will continue to be decided in the streets and in front of the clinics themselves.



July 26, 1968

The Soviet bureaucracy has greatly stepped up its pressure to halt and, if possible, reverse the liberalization of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party and administration.

A note from Moscow and four East European governments siding with the Kremlin bureaucrats delivered to Prague July 16 stated, “This call represents a serious danger to the party, the national front and the socialist state ... [the document’s purpose] is to legalize the platform of counterrevolution and hoodwink the vigilance of the party, the working class and all the working folk.”

But the real targets of “hoodwinking” are not the Czechoslovak people at all, who have been enthusiastic supporters of government reform, steadily pushing it to go further and further. By claiming that there is a big danger of counterrevolution in Czechoslovakia, the Kremlin bureaucrats are above all attempting to hoodwink the Soviet people themselves.



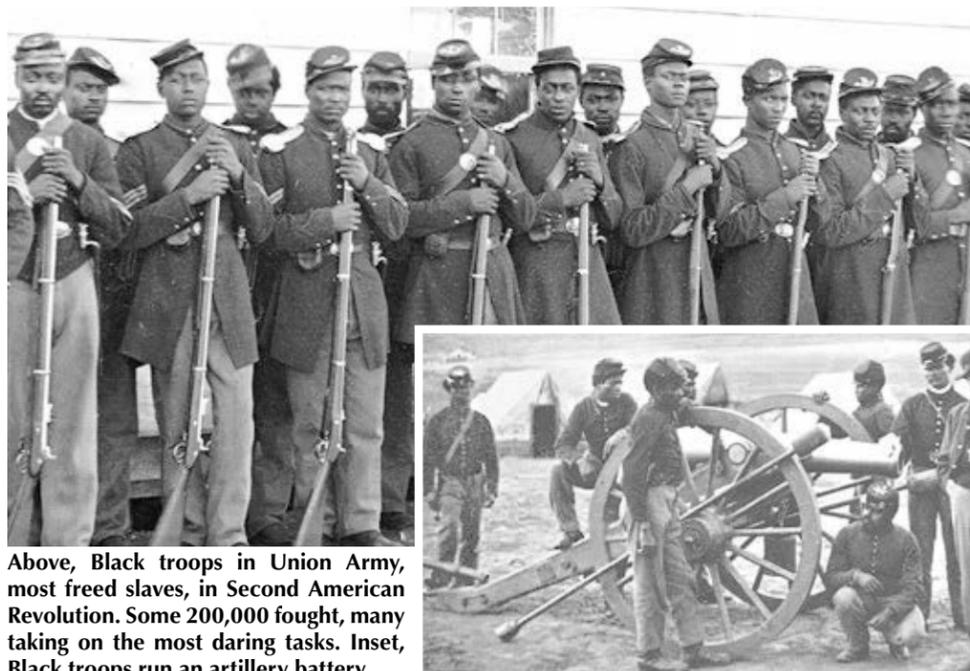
July 24, 1943

A greatly ballyhooed political campaign was initiated by the national leaders of the CIO last week. The CIO bureaucrats paint this campaign as an effort to mobilize labor’s ranks on the political field to beat back the growing anti-labor offensive in Washington. But its primary purpose is actually to head off and prevent the creation of an independent labor party through which the workers can successfully challenge the political agents of Big Business.

More and more workers have learned since Pearl Harbor that the economic problems of the labor movement can no longer be solved in the “normal” trade union manner. Price rises authorized and tolerated in Washington have more than nullified the wage raises won by the unions. Wage freezing and compulsory arbitration have put an end to collective bargaining as it was known and practiced before the war.

Black troops had key role in revolutionary victory over slavocracy

Below is an excerpt from *Blacks in America's Wars* by Robert W. Mullen. It is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for July. This piece covers the role of Black troops in the Civil War, the Second American Revolution. The Lincoln administration at first opposed Blacks joining the war against the Confederacy. But this was reversed with the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, when the war took on a more revolutionary character. Black soldiers then played a decisive role in the Union overthrowing the slavocracy. Copyright © 1973 by Robert W. Mullen, Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Above, Black troops in Union Army, most freed slaves, in Second American Revolution. Some 200,000 fought, many taking on the most daring tasks. Inset, Black troops run an artillery battery.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ROBERT W. MULLEN

In a war fought between Northern industrialists and slaveowners to determine who would have hegemony over the federal government and who would be able to expand into the new territories of the West, the question of maintaining slavery where it already existed was not in contention when the war began.

Despite the fact that the war would eventually end the system of slavery, Black men were not even allowed to fight in the Union army when the war began. Because Lincoln was anxious to maintain the loyalty of the border states, in which slavery existed, he was adamant in refusing to consider using Black troops since their use "would support

the view that it was an abolitionist war."

For almost two years after the beginning of the war, the Lincoln administration continued to refuse to accept Black soldiers, contending the war was between white men and had nothing to do with Blacks, slave or free.

Among the arguments used to exclude Blacks from military service in the Civil War were some that were completely contradictory. On the one hand, it was argued that Blacks were unwilling to fight, especially against white Southerners. On the other hand, it was argued that if Blacks were given arms they might engage in a crusade to end slavery in the South and end up massacring the slaveowners. As Frederick Douglass, the Black abolitionist, explained to a Cooper Institute audience in New York in February 1863, whites claimed in one breath that Blacks would not fight and in the next that if they were armed they would become dangerous.

Federal policy regarding slaves who ran away from their masters and came to the Union army was contradictory and confused in the first years of the war. Union officers often ordered fugitive slaves returned to their owners, and General Winfield Scott, writing in the name of President Lincoln in June 1861, even wrote Brigadier General McDowell asking him to allow owners of fugitive slaves in Virginia to cross the Potomac River in order to recover slaves who had escaped to Union territory.

Despite the official coolness to runaway slaves, whenever the Union army

appeared in an area there was an immediate flood of runaway slaves who made their way to Union lines. In fact, the magnitude of the movement was such that it is not quite fitting to call the process running away in the sense that the term was used before the outbreak of the war. Rather, it was a mass exodus. Often all the slaves in an area just picked up and went to the Union army, and in such numbers that they couldn't be returned.

The federal government and Union army only began to adopt a policy of allowing and even encouraging the recruitment of Blacks when it became clear that the war would be a long and drawn-out conflict in which it was essential to mobilize all the resources possible, and to weaken the enemy as much as possible.

In the early days of the war, in April 1861 when President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers, Northern Blacks responded in great numbers, foreseeing that in the war against the Southern slaveholders, the abolition of slavery would eventually have to be used as a weapon against that class. Black companies and regiments were formed and ready to serve.

But neither Lincoln nor the governors of the Northern states had any intention of making use of Black troops. Negroes who presented themselves to recruiters were thanked for their troubles and sent home. ...

The Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, which freed all slaves in the rebel states and stipulated that

freed slaves should be received into the armed forces of the United States, indicated that Lincoln had accepted the proposition that the North could only win the war by destroying the slave base of the Confederate States. ...

Once the decision was made to permit the enlistment of Blacks in the army, Black abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and Martin Delany began to act as recruiting agents for the Union army in the North, holding rallies to enlist Afro-Americans. Douglass urged his fellow Blacks to "fly to arms, and smite with death the power that would bury the government and your liberty in the same hopeless grave." It was better to die free than to live as slaves, he said. ...

Douglass saw that the freed slaves would have a powerful argument in their future demands for full rights of citizenship if they played a conspicuous role in the army. In his words, "Once let the Black man get upon his person the brass letters, U.S.; let him get an eagle on his button ... bullets in his pocket, and there is no power on earth ... which can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship in the United States." ...

After the Emancipation Proclamation, however, the War Department moved rapidly to begin enlisting Blacks. In January 1863 it authorized Massachusetts to raise two Black regiments, the first officially authorized Black units. Eventually nearly 200,000 Black troops were to serve in the Union army, and another 300,000 served as army laborers, spies, servants, and helpers. Lincoln admitted that their participation was essential to the victory in the war.

Eventually there were 154 Black regiments in the army, including 140 infantry units. They saw action in 198 battles and skirmishes and suffered 68,178 fatalities on the battlefield in the course of the war.

Of the nearly 200,000 Black troops to take part, 93,000 came from the slave states that had seceded, about 40,000 came from the border slave states, and the remainder from the North.

By the end of the war there was scarcely a battle in which Black troops had not participated.

July BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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SWP: US out of Korea!

Continued from front page
region are welcome. These steps and more from Washington and reciprocal moves toward denuclearization in Korea can lead toward elimination of barriers to travel and communication, and for economic and political relations in the region that would be a historic advance.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Pyongyang July 6-7 for talks with Kim Yong Chol, vice chairman of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. Pompeo told the media the talks were "very productive," and that some progress was made "on almost all the central issues."

Representatives of the Pentagon and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will meet again around July 12 in Panmunjom, in the "demilitarized zone" separating the two Koreas, to discuss returning remains of U.S. soldiers from the 1950-53 Korean War, something the North Korean government has agreed to do. The two governments also agreed to set up working groups, overseen by Sung Kim, the U.S. ambassador to the Philippines, to prepare future meetings. Pyongyang also confirmed, Pompeo said, plans for destroying a testing facility for intercontinental ballistic missiles. In May the North Korean government destroyed the tunnels at its Punggye-ri nuclear testing site.

Pompeo asserted that the sanctions imposed by the U.N. and U.S. over the past decade will remain in place and be pursued "with vigor" until the U.S. rulers are fully satisfied that denuclearization in the North is well underway. These sanctions, imposed under Democratic and Republican administrations alike, have increasingly tightened the squeeze on working people there.

Hours after Pompeo left Pyongyang, a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman issued a statement describing the secretary of state's visit as "regrettable." The unnamed official's key complaint was that "the U.S. side came up only with its unilateral and gangster-like demand for denuclearization," without offering significant steps to aid and defend North Korea itself.

The heart of the back-and-forth, whatever the verbiage, is jockeying for who will give up what as a series of concessions are pursued.

The liberal pundits, who view all politics through their anti-Trump hysteria, grabbed onto the statements to step up allegations that Trump had been conned and North Korea is instead upgrading its nuclear threat.

"I have confidence that Kim Jong Un will honor the contract we signed,"

Trump said in a tweet July 9. "We agreed to denuclearization of North Korea."

Trump added that one factor influencing the pace of the talks is the ongoing trade dispute between Washington and Beijing. Beijing "may be exerting negative pressure on a deal because of our posture on Chinese Trade — Hope Not!" he said.

U.S. rulers' bloody war on Korea

Another key issue in dispute is Washington's refusal to sign a permanent peace treaty with Pyongyang formally ending the 1950-53 Korean War. The South Korean government says it is eager to sign on. The history of Washington's aggression in Korea gives people there good reason to be concerned about the U.S. rulers' intentions.

In 1945, Washington joined with the Stalinist rulers in Moscow to partition Korea and U.S. troops poured into the South. Washington proceeded to crush revolutionary mobilizations there, while workers and farmers in the North ousted capitalist rule and took power. After the Korean War broke out in 1950, the U.S. rulers used massive bombing and napalm to level virtually every building in North Korea. More than 4 million people were killed, half of them civilians.

Workers' struggles are key, not who's on the Court

Continued from front page
to disaster in November. Either way, NOW President Toni Van Pelt claimed July 10, "We are on the threshold of the most consequential Congressional elections in modern times."

The working class has no horse in the race for which judges sit on the Supreme Court, or, for that matter, on which bourgeois political party comes out ahead in the election. The court exists to protect the interests of the propertied owners. Changes to its composition will not offer us significantly better or worse conditions. Our starting point has to be relying on independent working-class mobilizations to fight for our rights along the road to overthrowing capitalist rule and putting workers and farmers in power.

The Supreme Court is used by the ruling class as an arbiter of conflicts over how it rules. But it faces restrictions, written into the Constitution that was marked by the impact of the revolutionary war that overthrew the British Crown and subsequent class struggles that led to the Bill of Rights and the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments, adopted out of the second American Revolution that



AP Photo/Yonhap, Lim Byung-shik

South Korean soldiers at "demilitarized" zone separating divided Korea. Washington and Moscow partitioned country in 1945. Steps to reduce war threats are good for working people.

President Harry Truman had nuclear weapons transported to the region and threatened to use them.

When U.S. forces marched almost to the border with China, Korean fighters, backed by hundreds of thousands of Chinese volunteers, drove them back, fighting them to a stalemate at the 38th parallel — the first military defeat for U.S. imperialism. In 1953 the U.S. government signed a cease-fire agreement with Pyongyang, but has refused to sign a peace agreement for the past 65 years.

The division of Korea is the only re-

maintaining unresolved national separation that emerged out of the second imperialist world war.

A statement issued recently by the Socialist Workers Party points to the importance of the Washington-DPRK talks. "The stakes have never been higher in ensuring a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and Japan," the statement says, "including an end to Washington's nuclear 'umbrella' and deployment of nuclear-armed warships and submarines in the surrounding seas and skies.

"Korea is one!"

overthrew slavery.

These codify protections against government attacks that working people have used, need today and will use again in the years ahead as class battles intensify in response to the deepening crisis of capitalist rule. These include the right to freedom of speech and association, to bear arms, against denial of due process of law, against unreasonable search and seizure, and for equal protection of the law for all. Class conscious workers demand these rights are upheld and we rely on our own capacity to organize and struggle to ensure they can be used.

This question was addressed by Socialist Workers Party leader James P. Cannon in 1937, when President Franklin Roosevelt tried to expand and pack the Supreme Court with judges who agreed with him. It is through the development of working-class struggles, Cannon argued, that we take steps forward. "A 'liberal' Supreme Court can't and won't aid these struggles," he said. "And a 'reactionary' Supreme Court can't stop them."

Rights are won in the streets

It took disciplined mass struggle by millions to overturn Jim Crow segregation, not some ruling by the Supreme Court. It will be workers' capacity to organize, to overcome the divisions the rulers impose on us, and to develop our fighting capabilities and class consciousness that will put us in the best position to defend ourselves.

Before his death in 2016, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia accurately pointed to the narrow social composition of the Supreme Court. But *no* change to the court's composition will alter which class it serves. The court will make all its decisions in accordance with the rulers' reading of what the relationship of class forces permits. This is why justices have shifted their rulings on questions of Black and women's rights and on the

right of gay people to marry.

The *New York Times* editorialized June 27 that women's right to abortion was preserved "solely on the strength of Justice Kennedy's vote," and would face a severe threat from whoever Trump replaced him with. But abortion rights are under attack in state after state today and have been for years, under Democratic and Republican governments alike.

These assaults are made easier by the character of the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling. The court didn't base its verdict on a woman's unequivocal 14th Amendment right "to equal protection of the laws," but on medical criteria. It allowed state governments to restrict abortion after "viability," which advances in medical science make earlier during pregnancy.

It is the liberals on the Supreme Court — and in general — who are the most strident opponents of free speech and association. They fear the working class, who they see — falsely — as increasingly bigoted and racist, and want to restrict our rights.

A June 30 *Times* article quotes University of Michigan law professor Catharine MacKinnon, who complains that the First Amendment "has become a sword for authoritarians, racists and misogynists, Nazis and Klansmen, pornographers and corporations buying elections."

"Free speech reinforces and amplifies injustice," the *Times* says.

Blows against freedom of association are being struck by those acting on the call of Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters to drive government officials from public life by harassing them. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell was hounded by government opponents chanting, "We know where you live," as he left a restaurant in Louisville, Kentucky, July 7.

Far from being reactionary obstacles, we need hard-won political rights.

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Three-part Militant series on Korea

THE MILITANT Supplement
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US out of Korea! An unknown history

History of Washington's intervention in Korea

BY STEVE CLARK
The following article was originally published in three parts in the Militant in 2013 on September 23, September 30, and October 7.

Part 1: How Korean workers and farmers began resistance to U.S. domination, forced partition of nation
This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Korean peo-

well, the vast majority of homes, hospitals, schools, factories and other structures were leveled. Only three major buildings were left standing in Pyongyang, and 18 of the 22 largest cities in the North were 50 to 100 percent destroyed.

After Chinese troops joined the DPRK's fight against Washington's war of conquest on the peninsula in October 1950, Gen. Douglas MacArthur ordered destruction of every "installation, factory, city and village" in the North up to the Yalu River. Gen. Curtis LeMay, head of the U.S. Strategic Air Command at the time, later wrote, "We eventually burned

UK health workers beat back attack by hospital bosses

BY HUGO WILS

WIGAN, England — “We’re so proud, everyone’s walking around work with massive smiles, because we’ve won,” hospital porter Stuart Horrigan told the *Militant* after members of the Unite and UNISON unions gained an important victory here.

In face of escalating strike action and broadening solidarity, National Health Service bosses backed off July 6 from moves to transfer workers from the state-run NHS to a new private company. This would have paved the way for an assault on workers’ wages and job conditions, as well as health care.

Hospital bosses had previously met June 27 and set August 1 for transferring almost 900 domestics, porters, carers and other workers in the estates and facilities department to a private company set up and owned by the NHS hospital trust, called WWL Solutions.

In response, workers organized a five-day strike June 28-July 2, determined to defend their wages, conditions and dignity. They had previously walked out twice for two days each. They report union membership has doubled — from 300 to 600 — in the course of the dispute



Contingent of striking hospital workers from Wigan, England, march in London June 30 on 70th anniversary of National Health Service. Their strike beat back bosses moves to privatize their NHS jobs and open attack on wages, working conditions and against health care.

and hundreds joined the stoppages, including a number of nonunion workers, as well as the picket lines. To broaden support, strikers organized two marches into the center of Wigan and other pub-

lic activities. A further seven-day strike was planned to start July 17.

Attacks on hospital workers and health care like the one NHS bosses tried in Wigan are a growing crisis for

‘Need to tell truth’ about US colony Puerto Rico

Continued from front page

a school janitor and fisherman in Humacao, said by phone July 10. *Militant* editor John Studer and correspondent Martín Koppel met Velázquez when they visited Humacao and Yabucoa at the end of May. More homes have electricity now, Lenis Rodríguez, a leader of the Yabucoa Support Group, told the *Militant* by phone. “But there are still pockets without electricity. There’s blackouts. There are hundreds of homes here that only have a tarp as a roof. The highways are full of potholes. And we are still fighting against school closings. There’s a lot of uncertainty.”

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers installed 50,000 blue tarps within a few months after Hurricane Maria, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency distributed 125,000 smaller ones to people whose homes had been damaged. But FEMA spokesperson Deliris Aquino told the press July 9 that those tarps are only designed to last 30 days.

“In my neighborhood most of the homes are made of concrete,” said Mildred Laboy, a leader of the Recreational and Educational Community Association of Mariana Neighborhood (ARECMA) in Humacao, and many were severely damaged by the hurricane. “Imagine what happened to the houses in other parts of the island that were made of wood.”

“A lot of those people don’t have property titles and FEMA wouldn’t give them aid,” she said. “It’s very common to build here without a formal property title. People believed in each other’s word. I’m in the same situation. The lawyer says my title can be confirmed, but it’s going to cost.”

Laboy reports that her electricity was restored about a month ago. Then three days later she got a bill for more than \$200. “It makes no sense,” she said.

Velázquez said that lots of people received bills like that or for more. Since the electric company closed its Huma-

cao office, people have to drive 45 minutes or more to the nearest office. “You have to get there at 5 a.m.,” he said. “And then when your turn comes they just tell you, ‘You have to pay or we’ll cut your power off.’ They’re very good at cutting you off, but not at restoring electricity.”

According to CityLab, a research group, some 360,000 out of the 407,000 people who left the island in face of the social crisis after the storm, have returned home. Part of what’s involved is Puerto Rican nationalism, which is also reflected by the thousands of Puerto Rican flags that fly outside homes and apartments across the island.

Those returning and those who stayed still face many challenges. Rebuilding with or without government aid is costly. Supplies from drywall to windows are in short supply or have had their prices jacked up by greedy capitalists. Many small businesses have not reopened since the storm.

And employment and social conditions for working people are worse. While they were hit by the storm, they were hit harder by cuts in jobs, wages, social aid and schools ordered by the colonial government and its master in Washington. Under both Barack Obama and Donald Trump, the U.S. government-appointed fiscal board — known as the junta on the island — set up to maximize payments to bondholders sitting on pieces of Puerto Rico’s \$74 billion debt, is pushing deeper cuts.

Vieques

It’s even harder for the 10,000 or so residents of the islands of Vieques and Culebra off Puerto Rico’s eastern coast. The poorly maintained state-run ferryboats often break down. There is no system for reservations. “You have to get in line to buy your ticket at 1 in the morning,” Velázquez said. He often fishes off the shore there. “Imagine if you have a medical appointment.” Plane tickets are \$180 each way, outside most workers budget. Tourism, the two islands’ main

source of income, is down 70 percent.

“We have to denounce and tell the truth about what’s happening,” Velázquez said.

Mildred’s brother Raúl “Rudy” Laboy, a retired electrician, spoke with the *Militant* July 10 after returning from a meeting in Guanica in solidarity with working people in Haiti, where the government just reversed a steep hike in the price of fuel, after widespread protests. The meeting raised funds to continue building a school in Haiti.

“Like Fidel Castro says, we don’t just help with our leftovers, we share what we have,” Laboy said.

Working people like Laboy, Rodríguez and Velázquez are proud of what they accomplished after the storm in the face of the U.S. and colonial governments’ neglect and inaction. School workers and parents joined together to clean up and repair the local schools. They joined protests demanding electricity and opposing the school closings. ARECMA with the help of volunteers is still providing meals once a day for those in need.

Oregon ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond freed!

In a victory for working people, President Donald Trump pardoned and freed Dwight Hammond, 76, and his son Steven Hammond July 10. The two Oregon ranchers had been imprisoned on frame-up charges of arson. “I’m so glad they are coming home,” retired ranch hand Merlin Rupp told the *Militant* by phone from Burns, Oregon. “They should never have been in prison for five minutes.”

The Hammonds had been defending their cattle ranch from government encroachment for decades. In June 2010 federal prosecutors filed charges against them under the 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act for setting two backfires on their ranch in 2001 and 2006.

Ranchers and government land agencies frequently use controlled burns to protect land from wildfires and invasive plants. The trial judge rejected imposing the Bill Clinton-era law’s five-year minimum sentence, saying it would be grossly disproportionate. He sentenced Steven Hammond to a year in prison and Dwight to three months. But federal prosecutors appealed, demanding the full five years, and in January 2016 the two were sent back to prison.

The Bureau of Land Management later revoked the Hammond’s grazing permits, undermining the family’s ability to keep their ranch. “The Hammonds are good people,” neighbor Ruth Danielson said by phone July 10. “Now we need to get back their grazing rights.” A hearing on the permits is set for July 27.

— SETH GALINSKY

Pittsburgh protests continue

Continued from front page

working people. The Pittsburgh Gentlemen Motorcycle Club led 100 people in a march through Homewood June 30, demanding justice for Rose. Homewood is 98 percent Caucasian.

Dozens of protesters gathered outside the home of East Pittsburgh Mayor Louis Payne July 8 and then marched to the corner of Grandview Avenue and Howard Street for a moment of silence where Rose was shot down.

Then they marched into the outbound lanes of Route 30. Cops and volunteer firefighters from nearby cities routed traffic around the protest.

“Just everybody coming together and seeing all races — it’s going to take everybody to see a revival, to see something happen, see change, no matter the colors,” 24-year-old Isaiah Jefferson from Monroeville told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

Then one driver drove into the crowd, hitting a 21-year-old demonstrator. Cops arrested 69-year-old Ronald Hinerman, charging him with reckless endangerment.

Supporters of justice for Rose also spread out to Arnold July 8 after Democratic Mayor Karen Peconi went on social media to say that those who protest against the killing of Rose should be met with water cannons.

Her racist posts were met with a response from the city’s firemen. Speaking for both city firehouses, Arnold No. 2 Fire Chief Chris O’Leath said they “do not support or condone” the mayor’s statements. “We do not answer to her or whoever the mayor happens to be,” he added. He was seconded by Arnold No. 1 Chief Walter Gouza, who said, “We would never go and turn our hoses on the public.”

Volunteers spread out across the town collecting signatures calling for the resignation of the mayor. Before Hannah McBean and Stephanie Lowry even got to knock on one door, they were flagged down by Melissa Charlton who said she wanted to sign. “Nobody should be in government if that’s the opinion they have of their residents,” she said.

A rally is set for outside the next City Council meeting July 10 before protesters deliver their petitions.

Cop beatings at Rose’s high school

A lawsuit filed in Pittsburgh last year puts a spotlight on racist brutality in the Woodland Hills High School, where Rose was a senior. The suit was filed by parents and guardians on behalf of five students, identified only by initials, who describe how they were cursed at and beaten by cops assigned to patrol inside the school and a former principal.

In March 2015, the suit says, Churchill Borough cop Stephen Shaulis carried out an unprovoked assault on A.W., choking him and slamming his head into the floor. The cop punched him and then, while the principal held A.W. on the floor, Shaulis used a Taser

on him three times. Then he handcuffed him and dragged him into a room called the “Resource Office,” where there is no camera to record what happens, and continued to beat him.

Then Shaulis concocted false charges of resisting arrest and disorderly conduct. A.W. was acquitted.

The same pattern runs through the attacks on other children in the suit.

Summer Lee, who graduated from Woodland Hills in 2005, told the Huffington Post that she was planning to join a June 20 protest about the cops in the school. After Rose was killed she joined those demonstrations.

Rosfeld’s lawyer and other defenders of the cops have said the fact that Rose ran from the cops shows he must have been guilty of something.

“When you think about where Antwon went to school,” Lee said. “He saw his friends getting beat up by these cops and how the justice system works against their abusers. Would that not inform your interaction with police officers?”

Rosfeld’s preliminary court hearing is set for July 27.

Malcolm Jarrett contributed to this article from Pittsburgh.

Twin Cities rally: ‘File charges against killer cop’



Militant/Kevin Dwire

MINNEAPOLIS — Some 60 people turned out in front of the 4th Police Precinct July 1 together with Melinda Blevins, speaking, in demanding charges be filed against the two Minneapolis cops who shot her cousin, Thurman Blevins Jr., and that body camera footage be released.

Blevins was killed June 23 after cops responded to calls saying that someone was firing a gun into the air and the ground. Officers Justin Schmidt and Ryan Kelly chased Blevins and shot him in a

nearby alley, claiming that he had a pistol. Witnesses said that Blevins was holding a bottle, not a gun.

“He didn’t ever get the chance to even say, ‘Look, I don’t have anything,’” his sister Darlynn Blevins told the media. “Nothing. They just killed him with multiple shots.”

Another of Blevins’ relatives told the rally that they “want to see results from all of this. He didn’t deserve to be shot down like that.” The rally was called by Twin Cities Coalition for Justice for Jamar, formed after the 2015 killing of Jamar Clark by cops from the 4th Precinct.

Protesters are also demanding an independent investigation. Currently police shootings are investigated by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

— KEVIN DWIRE

Washington, Moscow seek Mideast arrangement

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other Sunni-led regimes in the area.

The U.S. president will also take part in the NATO summit in Brussels, where he is pressing the capitalist rulers in Europe to stop freeloading on Washington’s back and kick in a higher share of the military alliance’s budget.

The Washington/Moscow summit takes place on the heels of airstrikes July 8 by the Israeli rulers in Homs, Syria, targeting Tehran’s military and allied forces there. This was the third time in a year Tel Aviv has bombed the Homs base with no complaints from Moscow. Since 2015 the Russian rulers have increased their sway in the Mideast, using air power against Syrian opposition forces to restore Bashar al-Assad’s tyranny over much of the country.

While the Russian rulers sit atop a significantly weaker military and economic power, Moscow’s role in the region is reflected in those coming to meet with Putin this week. In addition to Trump, he will sit down with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; Ali Akbar Velayati, senior adviser to Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini; and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. The Iranian rulers have deployed ground forces alongside allied Hezbollah militias across Syria. They aim to entrench themselves there, extending their counterrevolutionary influence across the region while also strengthening their position against Tel Aviv. Iran’s cleric-led capitalist government — which calls for Israel’s destruction

and for driving the Jews into the sea — now faces growing pressure to pull back due to Washington’s decision to renew sanctions and to Israeli airstrikes.

A new onslaught by Moscow and the Assad regime against opposition-held areas

in southwestern Syria has driven an estimated 189,000 people to flee towards the Israeli border. In response, the Israeli rulers have reinforced their military positions in the Golan Heights. They are wary that as the Syrian army advances it could bring Tehran-backed forces allied with Assad closer to the Israeli border.

Washington still maintains formidable military forces in the Mideast, but has not deployed them in the kind of bloody wars waged by previous administrations. But it wants Moscow’s consent as it moves against Tehran. The capitalist rulers in Russia are seeking to defend their strategic interests, particularly their military base and warm-water naval port in Syria.

NATO’s inter-imperialist tensions

None of Washington’s NATO allies are centrally involved in the steps the U.S. rulers are taking in the Mideast. The declining powers in Germany, France and the United Kingdom have concentrated on defending their interests through the protectionist European Union trading bloc, seeking to compete with U.S. capitalists and those from other countries with tariffs. They do so while relying on the U.S. rulers’ military umbrella through NATO, while contributing relatively few funds or weaponry to maintain it.

They don’t attempt to deploy the kind of armed might capitalist classes have historically needed to defend their interests and to deter competitors from any threat of turning trade wars into shooting wars.

The German navy had to withdraw its only two tankers, both built in 1974, from NATO operations earlier this year for repairs. The British navy — declining steeply from one of the world’s largest decades ago — increasingly relies on “cannibalized” parts removed from other equipment to operate.

Washington established NATO in 1949 in Europe as part of exercising its domination over the world capitalist or-

der, building on the victory over its rivals in the second imperialist world war. It has since grown to encompass the conflicting ruling classes of 29 countries across Europe. With the EU increasingly coming apart, as the international crisis and competition of capital pushes each member nation’s rulers to look out more and more for themselves, NATO means less and less. No one believes today that NATO’s Article 5 commitment to mutual self-defense is still binding. Just ask NATO “partners” Georgia and Ukraine when they were invaded by Moscow without any NATO response.

On his way to Brussels, President Trump stepped up his attacks on his European “allies.” He excoriated the EU’s \$151 billion trade surplus against U.S. capitalists, saying he “cannot guarantee” it won’t affect relations with NATO.

He singled out the German rulers, the main beneficiary of the EU setup. He said Angela Merkel’s government was “a captive of Russia” for allowing the Moscow-owned Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline to run directly to Germany, bypassing eastern Europe. “How can you be together when a country is getting its energy from the country you want protection against?” he told Berlin’s European allies. “They’re just making Russia richer.”

At the same time as the U.S. rulers’ summit negotiations with Moscow near, administration officials say Washington continues to oppose Moscow’s 2014 annexation of Crimea and will maintain sanctions on Russia. But when asked if Washington’s position on sanctions could soften, both Trump and National Security Adviser John Bolton said, “We’ll see.”

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

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