

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Revolutionary war began liberation of women in Cuba'
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 82/NO. 28 JULY 30, 2018

'Militant' beats back prison censorship in Florida - again

BY SETH GALINSKY

The *Militant* has won another round against the seemingly unrelenting efforts of Florida prison officials to censor the paper and prevent it from reaching workers behind bars there. After the *Militant* appealed, the state-wide Literature Review Committee of the Department of Corrections reversed the impoundment of the May 28 and June 18 issues.

The May 28 paper was impounded by the assistant warden at Madison Correctional Institution, who falsely claimed that an article on the reversal of a ban on books in federal prisons gives "details on contraband entering a prison."

The June 18 issue was a special edition of the *Militant* featuring an eyewitness report from Puerto Rico reporting on how workers were organizing to respond to the capitalist social and economic crisis they faced in the wake of hurricanes Irma and Maria. Tomoka Correctional Institution
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1,000s of workers protest for gov't-funded pensions

'Our lives are worth more than a pound of coal'



Statehouse News Bureau/Karen Kasler

Miners, Teamsters, bakery workers, others protest pension cuts July 12 at Ohio Statehouse.

BY JANET POST

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Thousands of union members — coal miners, Teamsters, bakery workers and more — and their supporters rallied at the state Capitol here July 12 against any cuts in their pensions.

Members of the United Mine Workers, a majority retired and some still working, and their family members, were the largest contingent. Most wore their union's well-recognized camouflage T-shirts and many carried signs reading, "Are you next?"

Miners came from coalfields in West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio and other states, including from western mines. Nine buses drove 12 hours from Alabama. "We worked too long and too hard for the companies or the government."
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Ontario salt miners push back boss attacks in 12-week strike



Militant/Dan Fein

Striking salt miners discuss progress in negotiations on picket line in front of Compass Minerals salt mine in Goderich, Ontario, July 13, before new contract was won in militant strike.

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

GODERICH, Ontario — Striking salt miners returned to work here July 18 following their approval of a new contract two days earlier. Compass Minerals' bosses were forced to the bargaining table following determined mass actions by the strikers with the active support of local farmers, who blocked the company's deployment of scabs aimed at breaking

the strike.

Striking members of Unifor Local 16-O had massed outside the mine July 4 and built a barricade of wooden pallets across the road to block buses from transporting replacement workers in and out. The scabs had been flown in by the company.

When the court ordered them to remove the pallets, they complied.

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Death toll rises as Nicaraguan gov't continues attacks on protesters

BY RÓGER CALERO AND MAGGIE TROWE

The largely working-class and student protests that exploded against the government of President Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua in April continue nearly three months later with no sign of abating. Ortega has escalated deadly raids targeting opposition strongholds.

Demonstrations against Ortega began after supporters of the ruling capitalist party, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), and police attacked retired workers demonstrating against government measures to make workers increase their contributions to the country's social security pension fund and impose cuts on their benefits.

The government's brutal repression of a student protest April 19 — leaving one person dead and dozens

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Liberals' furor against Trump fuels voice of the 'war party'

BY TERRY EVANS

President Donald Trump's efforts to advance the U.S. capitalist rulers' interests in relation to their competitors — in Asia, Europe and the Middle East — have drawn a hysterical furor from the liberal media bosses, Democrats, some Republicans and the middle-class left. Most put their "resistance" campaign to oust Trump as the cornerstone of how they approach all politics.

As the administration continues to seek stability to promote Washington's economic and political interests — steps that involve ratcheting down the threat of more combat — his opponents have increasingly taken on the role of the war party. Regardless of their past criticism of the U.S.-rulers' assault on Vietnam, or rejection of the "excesses" of the J. Edgar Hoover FBI, today they call Trump a "treasonous traitor" for questioning any actions of U.S. intelligence agencies and demand he step up war threats against Moscow.

Meeting in Helsinki, Finland, July 16, President Trump and Russian
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DSA victory in NY primary deepens crisis of rulers' parties

BY SETH GALINSKY

The election of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in New York's 14th Congressional District primary is another sign of the sharpening rifts in the Democratic Party that were exposed in the course of the campaign bringing Don-

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

N.Y. hospital workers picket against pension, health cutbacks
British Columbia miners strike for union rights for temps

Ukraine miners' strikes, protests win back wages

BY EMMA JOHNSON

For the past year and a half miners in Ukraine's state-owned coal industry have carried out strikes with round-the-clock picketing, and blocking entrances to mine bosses' offices and roads leading toward the mines. They have rallied outside parliament and the government ministry responsible for the coal industry, demanding the government pay back wages owed to them. By July 1 the arrears added up to \$42 million.

Led by members of the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine, workers intensified their campaign leading up to the end of parliament's spring session. And their tenacity and resilience paid off. On the last day before summer recess, a bill passed allocating 1.4 billion hryvnia (\$53 million) to pay wages and upgrade the industry.

In a July 9 phone interview, Mykhailo Volynets, national chair of the union, and Viktor Tychynin, a leader at the Kurakhivska mine in Donetsk, told *Militant* editor John Studer about conditions miners face and their fight to get parliament and responsible ministers to act.

"I think about my co-workers and their families, who are under a lot of pressure," Tychynin said. "We haven't been paid for three months. It's hard to buy food and other things we need to live. We can't pay our utility bills. I don't know if the electricity is still on at home."

And miners who get sick don't get any pay, he said.

Tychynin and 11 co-workers traveled from Donetsk to take part in the protests in Kiev. Much of the arrears are owed

by companies in parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, part of the Donbass coal basin in eastern Ukraine still under the control of the Kiev government. Workers in mines there have led the fight. But miners in the western part have also joined the actions.

On July 5 the union set up a picket outside parliament. Workers and union officials from Luhansk and Donetsk took part. The chair of the Myrnodrag mine in Donetsk said that workers were ready to strike and set up roadblocks if their demands are not met.

The next day Volynets and the 12 Khurakhivska miners met with Igor Nasalik, the Ukrainian minister of energy and coal mines.

"He got frustrated with the meeting and suddenly called in the police, saying he thought the miners were drunk and insisting he would have them tested," Volynets said. "Cops came and demanded to know if the miners were drunk. We said we'll take tests if the minister and his staff are also tested."

"I called other unionists, journalists, lawyers and rights activists to come join us," he said. "The ministry wouldn't let them into the building."

Before giving the interview to the *Militant*, Tychynin and Volynets had been part of a press conference in the union office "to get the word out and win support, to put pressure on the government," he said, and to report about the insulting treatment they received at the minister's office.

During the interview Studer told Volynets and Tychynin about the July 12 rally in Columbus, Ohio, in defense

Books by SWP leaders perk interest at librarians' meet



Militant/Nick Castle

NEW ORLEANS — An attractive Pathfinder Books booth was a center for political discussion at the American Library Association conference here June 21-26. Sales were brisk on books by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and other leaders of revolutionary struggles from Cuba, Burkina Faso, Grenada and the U.S. class struggle. Over 170 librarians and others signed up for additional information and to be contacted by Pathfinder sales volunteers. Some 17,000 conference participants attended panels and presentations on new books, democratic rights, prison libraries, book clubs and library technology. Sixty-three Pathfinder books were sold, with the highest seller — 13 copies — being *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

— NICK CASTLE

of the pensions of U.S. miners and other unionists.

"There is a similar crisis here, management is not paying into the miners' pension fund," Volynets said. "Miners are supposed to get at least \$200 to \$300 a month when they retire. But the government says there isn't enough money in the fund, so now miners can't get their pension money. The only alternative for them is to keep working on and on for their family to survive."

"We support workers in struggle elsewhere as well, including the miners in the U.S.," Tychynin said. "We will fight for our rights to the end. We will never give in."

Miners take to the streets

Chanting, "Enough talks! It's time to act!" and "Pay us our wages!" miners from Donetsk, Luhansk, Volyn and Lviv regions took to the streets outside parliament July 10. Addressing the pickets, Volynets told them about the July 12

rally and the common fight miners had in Ukraine and the U.S. Some miners carried placards in English supporting the Ohio action.

Two days later miners moved their protest to the coal industry ministry, announcing they would picket round-the-clock. They demanded the right to set up tents.

That morning there were protests in Donetsk, Luhansk and Volyn regions in support of actions in Kiev. These strikes and protests reinforced the union delegations' demonstrations in the capital.

In addition to winning funds to pay down on back wages, the fight has strengthened the union and brought new members into its ranks.

"My participation dates back to the days when I was a miner fighting for our rights when the Soviet Union still existed," Volynets said. "Viktor is part of a new generation of union fighters. With union people like him I can see the future."

THE MILITANT

Independence for Puerto Rico!

"We need to tell the truth about U.S. colonial rule in Puerto Rico," workers in Humacao and Yabucoa told the *Militant* last week.

Working people were hit hard by Hurricane Maria, but they're hit harder by the deepening social crisis imposed on them by the colonial government and its master in Washington.



Eduardo Meléndez

Jan. 20 action in San Juan demands electricity, end to abuses against working people.

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1,000s protest for pensions

Continued from front page
ment to take our money,” Mike Foster, a retired UMW rock duster mechanic from Birmingham, told the *Militant*.

The workers are demanding the government fund full pensions for hundreds of thousands whose pension plans are on the brink of bankruptcy. Roughly 1.3 million U.S. workers are in a pension plan headed toward insolvency.

The largest of these is the Teamsters Central States Pension Fund, with a liability of \$17.2 billion. Thousands of Teamsters came to the rally, with signs saying, “Save Our Pensions.”

Among the unions present were the UMW; Teamsters; Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers; American Federation of Musicians; United Steelworkers; Iron Workers; Communications Workers of America; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; United Food and Commercial Workers; Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way division of the Teamsters; and teachers from Atlanta; Buffalo, New York; and Raleigh, North Carolina.

Earlier this year tens of thousands of teachers went on strike and protested, pushing back government attacks on their wages, pensions, medical care and working conditions. Their spirited actions inspired workers everywhere.

“I came here to support the miners. If they take pensions away from one, they will take them from us all,” said Richard Griffin, a bread-line worker from Indianapolis.

The current average miner’s pension is only \$586 per month. The UMW 1974 Pension Plan is expected to go bust by 2022, sooner if the capitalist economy goes south. It covers 87,000 retired and 20,000 working miners. For plans that collapse, workers can possibly get some coverage under the federal government’s Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation plan — but it would slash their benefits and that fund is facing bankruptcy.

Jan Kachur, a retired Teamster from Deerfield, Michigan, said he had worked nine jobs to get the 28 years required for his pension. It took him 35 years, because not all the jobs were full time. “You’d get a job, it would go bankrupt — you followed the pension,” he said. His story illustrates the challenges of a retirement system based on the fortunes and profits of your bosses and kept alive on speculation in the stock market.

Over the last couple decades, as capitalist profit rates, production and trade declined, many mine and trucking bosses either went under or tried to break the unions, wreaking havoc with workers’ industry-based pension plans.

‘Retirement was a promise’

“When I was younger I always paid my money toward retirement because they said it was a promise, and I believed them,” said Glenn Hanson, a city bus driver in Duluth, Minnesota, who retired after 30 years. “My wife and I budgeted for the \$2,700 pension. If I get cut I don’t know what we’ll do.”

“Workers still have power in the U.S., we just don’t use it,” he added.

“After World War II and the giant miners’ strike, [then union president] John L. Lewis signed an agreement for retirement benefits for all miners, promised for all time,” said Joseph Hatfield, president of a UMW local near Matewan, West Virginia. “And that’s what we counted on every day we worked.”

This led to a discussion on why this is not only a fight to defend miners’ pensions, but a broad social crisis that workers face under capitalism. Why there must be government-funded union scale compensation for all workers who retire or lose their job, no matter why or at what age. This is a fight the unions must lead and that would draw millions in and point the road toward taking power out of the hands of the capitalist exploiters.



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Dennis Bugash, center, from central Pennsylvania with 25 years in coal mines, talks to musicians Dean Mahoney, left, and Harry D’Agostino, at Columbus, Ohio, pension rally July 12.

That’s what the bosses fear and why their attacks on wages, safety and working conditions are intertwined with assaults on social gains, such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, disability payments and pensions, inadequate as they are. They try to divide us by convincing young workers that they have no stake in the welfare of older workers.

“This is a fight for the younger generation so they won’t lose what we fought hard to gain,” Pete Lomonaco, a member of Teamsters Local 727 in Atlanta for 37 years, told Malcolm Jarrett, a cook from Pittsburgh who was showing him the *Militant*.

Bryant Taylor, a long-haul truck driver from Cleveland, discussed the health care crisis with 23-year-old musician Dean Mahoney, who took a break from his band’s touring schedule to attend the protest. “Whether you work at McDonald’s or Ford Motor you should have full health care,” Taylor told him. Mahoney said he has no health care benefits. He was shocked when he saw an ad pop up on his Facebook page urging him to

“donate your blood to make money.”

Jacquie Henderson, a Walmart worker and member of the Socialist Workers Party who came on a Teamsters bus from Duluth, carried a sign reading, “Minnesota Walmart workers support fight for retirement pensions for all workers!” It included 11 messages of solidarity from her co-workers. Seeing the sign, Sharon Wilson from Beaver Dam, Kentucky, greeted Henderson, “Do you work at Walmart? I do, too! We need a union!”

Wilson, who has worked at Walmart for 13 years, is the widow of a UMW miner with two sons who work in non-union mines. She got a subscription to the *Militant* and the two workers traded contact information to keep in touch.

“Human beings’ lives are worth more than a pound of coal,” John Snider, a retired union miner from St. Clairesville, Ohio, told the *Militant*. “We have to be together. It’s that or we are done.”

Malcolm Jarrett, Alyson Kennedy, Helen Myers, and Sarah Ullman contributed to this article.

Ontario salt miners push back bosses’ attacks

Continued from front page

But they turned for solidarity to local farmers, who brought in tractors to block the road, maintaining the barricade trapping the scabs inside. Many strikers are from farm families. When the union put out the call for help, the first tractor arrived within half an hour.

“The solidarity and support we have been shown by our own town and the hundreds of sisters and brothers in the labor movement has made all the difference,” Gary Lynch, president of Unifor Local 16-O, said after the vote.

“Thank you for teaching scabs a lesson and making the union movement relearn that the only way to get things done is to shut it down,” Canadian Union of Postal Workers National President Mike Palacek told striking salt miners and their supporters at an event for strikers’ children on the picket line in front of the mine July 13.

The strike began April 27 after the 348 miners rejected the bosses’ demand for deep concessions that could create unsafe and unsustainable working conditions and do damage to the quality of their lives after work.

“We’re on strike because the company wants to impose 12-hour shifts — four hours of mandatory overtime each day means 60 hours a week — and 72 hours every fourth week,” Mike Baer, a shaft worker with 30 years in the mine, told the *Militant*. “And they’re going af-

ter pensions and benefits.”

The company tried to get workers to cave in by offering an insulting \$10,000 signing bribe. One worker called it “a rotten carrot,” because payment was conditional on achieving virtually impossible production levels.

The three-year deal workers voted up includes a 2.5 percent wage increase in both 2018 and ’19 and 3 percent in 2020. It keeps pensions and benefits workers won in the past, defeating the bosses’ efforts to slash them. The company’s demand for mandatory overtime was dropped. At the same time, workers voted to give their consent to the company requesting from the Ontario government permission to impose a 60-hour workweek on some shifts. Some workers said they didn’t like the new contract. “I don’t say we agree on everything, but we will be back at work,” Lynch said.

A layer of the strikers have a long continuity of decades of union struggles to establish what the bosses tried to demolish, like load operator Bruce Uttley, whose 50th anniversary in the mine is July 26. Hired when the mine opened, he has been in 11 strikes and was determined to fight this one before retiring.

Support for strike ‘overwhelming’

“I support Unifor Goderich Mine Workers Local 16-O” read signs sprouting from lawns throughout this town of

8,000. Kay Edward, a member of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1427, had a sign in her yard. She said she “supports our brothers and sisters down there. They shouldn’t have to accept the company’s demands.”

School board worker Mandy Powell, whose husband and all his brothers work in the mine, said the support the unionists received was “overwhelming” and “every gesture is deeply appreciated.”

This reporter, a Walmart worker, received a warm reception to a solidarity card I delivered signed by 10 workers at two Montreal stores.

“We have gotten support from all across Canada, with donations of all kinds,” Baer said. “Last Saturday I met Unifor members from British Columbia and Newfoundland organized by their own locals to come here. We also had a busload of striking York University teaching assistants, CUPE members from Children’s Aid and nurses with us here on the line.”

“I came here on one and a half hours’ notice,” said Cheryl Gignac, a member of Unifor Local 24 who works at Greenshield in Windsor. “At first I said no. But then I thought about the importance of what the miners are doing and the respect I have for the union rep who asked me to go. So, I changed my mind and came. I’ve never done anything like that in my life — and I’m glad I did.”

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Protests demand, 'Fire cop who killed Antwon Rose!'

BY MALCOLM JARRETT

PITTSBURGH — On July 12 Antwon Rose Jr. would have celebrated his 18th birthday. Would have, that is if he had not been killed in cold blood by East Pittsburgh cop Michael Rosfeld in a June 19 traffic stop. The shooting of Rose three times in the back was captured on a cellphone video that has been viewed hundreds of thousands of times. Rosfeld has been charged with criminal homicide.

Rather than mourn on this day, family, friends, supporters and hundreds of others gathered at Hawkins Village in Rankin to celebrate Antwon's life.

The "1st Annual Antwon Rose II Community Day" had everything any festival should have — balloons, vendors, live music, bouncy houses and face painting for kids, and hundreds of donated backpacks filled with school supplies to be given away. However, it had something most don't — a memorial to Rose, filled with his guitar, skateboard, writings and other personal belongings.

Donations were received from all over the country, event planner and IHood organizer Jolisa McDonald said, showing broad support among working people. While the celebration was not intended to be a political event, participants could not help but express their frustration and desire for justice in this case. "This is happening too many times," said Charlisa Nelson, who came from East Liberty. "The world is watching," to see what will happen in the county's prosecution of Rosfeld.

Some participants wore self-made T-shirts calling for Justice for Antwon, or emblazoned with the chant that has been prominent at area protests, "Three shots in the back, How you going to justify that?"

One special guest at the celebration was Samaria Rice, mother of Tamir

Rice, the 12-year-old African-American child shot dead by Cleveland police in 2014. She locked arms with Michelle Kenney, Rose's mother, and they posed for pictures together.

Other memorial celebrations are taking place. The Mattress Factory, a contemporary art museum, held a special showing of its civil rights exhibition July 8 dedicated to Rose.

Dozens of protesters filled the East Pittsburgh Borough Council meeting July 17 to demand the firing of Rosfeld. The exchanges between area residents on the one side and Mayor Louis Payne and council members on the other were sharp. Payne insisted they wouldn't do anything about Rosfeld until his trial was over. While nearly 60 percent of East Pittsburgh residents are Black, the mayor and all council members are Caucasian. And Police Chief Lori Fruncek is Payne's daughter.

Demonstrations have continued in and around Pittsburgh. A protest is planned for July 27 when Rosfeld will appear for his preliminary hearing at



Michael M. Santiago/Post-Gazette via AP

Samaria Rice, left, mother of Tamir Rice, killed by Cleveland cop in 2014, greets Michelle Kenney, Antwon Rose's mother, at celebration of what would have been Rose's 18th birthday.

the Allegheny County Courthouse. The courthouse is at 436 Grant St. in downtown Pittsburgh. "We are asking everyone to pack the courtroom so they know that we are here," the Alliance for Police Accountability, one of the groups backing the protest, said. The demonstration will begin at 11 a.m.

Protesters are also organizing a

"Schools Are Not Prison" rally July 18 at the Woodland Hills School Board meeting to demand they cancel contracts with the police to patrol the schools, including the high school where Rose was a senior. A lawsuit that documents brutal beatings and attacks by Tasers on Black students there has gotten widespread news coverage.

As hiring picks up, rail workers fight for job safety

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

With today's upturn in capitalist production and trade, rail bosses are trying to hire thousands of workers this year. But in their drive for profits, the bosses are also running longer and longer freight trains with smaller and smaller crews and assembling trains by remote control in rail yards, endangering the safety of both rail workers and those who live and work near the tracks. Derailments are becoming more common.

Union Pacific, which operates in 23 states in the western two-thirds of the country, plans to hire 2,100 engineers and conductors and 900 mechanical positions. It offers hiring bribes of \$10,000 and more to those who sign on, as well as retention bonuses for workers who agree to forego retirement and keep working.

BNSF Railway, which operates in 28 states, seeks to hire more than 3,500 workers, a spokesman said. And Norfolk Southern Railway in its 22-state network in eastern U.S. plans to hire 1,800. CSX, which operates in 23 eastern states and two Canadian provinces, has also begun to hire. The company has offered to buy personal leave and vacation time from trainmen this summer at a rate of 150 percent of normal pay for those who agree to work through their vacations and personal time.

Conductors and engineers at CSX, who didn't want to give their names for fear of company retribution, told the *Militant* the railroad is working crews long hours with only the minimal rest required by law, and in some cases prohibiting conductors from using personal leave time over the entire summer. "I have not seen crews this fatigued before," one worker said.

CSX recently fired some workers for taking time off for family medical responsibilities, intimidating others from marking off.

Shipments of consumer goods are rising. "We're seeing almost every month a new record in the amount of trailers and containers we're handling," John Gray, the Association of American Railroads

senior vice president, told the *Chicago Tribune*, "almost all of that is driven by consumer spending." The largest single rail customer, he said, is UPS, which is having trouble finding enough drivers.

The bosses' response to the jump in business has been assembling trains 2-to-3 miles long, which are more prone to derailments, oil spills and explosions from the flammable chemicals being transported. They've cut the number of workers on each train, and now are pushing for a one-worker "crew." The long trains introduce dangerous communication problems for crews, as radio transmissions from rear to front often cut out at those distances.

Bosses are also cutting the size of their workforce in rail yards where trains are assembled. Conductors on the ground increasingly work using a "belt pack" or RCO — a remote control device to operate engines with no engineer aboard. In a number of cases, this has resulted in runaway trains and other disasters.

In June 2017, in Canadian National's MacMillan Yard in Vaughan, Ontario, a foreman and his helper attempted to assemble a long train with a belt pack. "More and more cars rolled onto the downward slope of the outer edge of the yard," CBC News reported. "Once about two-thirds of them rolled onto the main track, the workers could no longer keep the train in control." The runaway train rolled over 3 miles at speeds up to 30 mph before stopping on an uphill stretch of track.

Among those responding to the new rail job openings are workers being drawn to re-enter the workforce — some 601,000 in June alone, according to the Labor Department. As a result, June's official unemployment rate rose from 3.8 to 4 percent, as "discouraged" workers start looking for work and get listed on official unemployed rolls. The new hiring offers opportunities to strengthen the rail unions, advance the fight against smaller crews, and to fight for safer working conditions on and around the job.

Ever since the mid-1950s, rail bosses

have been seeking to cut costs by reducing train crews. In the 1980s union contracts set the crew size at five, but bosses have been whittling this down to two, and in some cases one. In the early '90s bosses offered substantial blood money payments to bribe crews to agree to cuts in crew size.

Workers fight dangerous conditions

Rail workers and their unions have fought back against attempts to impose one-person crews over the road. SMART union members at BNSF Railway overwhelmingly rejected company demands for one-person crews on freight trains in 2014.

In Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, where federal government officials agreed to demands by Montreal, Maine and Atlantic rail bosses seeking to save money to run trains with a one-person crew, a 72-car train full of highly flammable oil derailed and exploded as it rolled into the town in July 2013, killing 47 people. At the time the one-person crew, Tom Harding, was signed off for sleep, having worked his 12 hours that day.

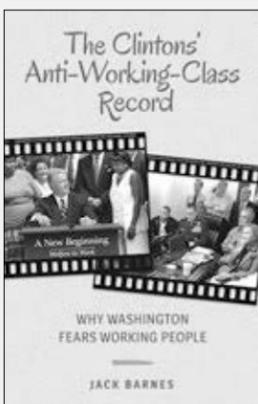
"In the last five years, the number of these uncontrolled movements has been on the rise" said Faye Ackerman, a Transportation Safety Board member in Canada, at a recent news conference in Toronto.

On July 13, 27 freight cars derailed on the outskirts of Tucson, Arizona. Some 230,000 gallons of oil spilled out of 14 of 32 derailed tanker cars in northwest Iowa June 22. In Princeton Indiana, a train derailed and exploded June 17, causing evacuation of the area. Two freight trains collided and derailed in Georgetown, Kentucky, March 18, injuring four and forcing evacuations. And 32 cars derailed on a CSX freight train carrying hazardous materials last August near Hyndman, Pennsylvania, and over 1,000 residents had to leave their homes.

An Amtrak train collided with a CSX freight train when it was mistakenly switched onto a siding in February in South Carolina, killing two workers on board the Amtrak engine.

The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People

by Jack Barnes



"For the first time in decades, the US rulers have begun to fear the working class. That, above all, is what the 2016 US elections revealed. Why the fear? Because millions of working people are starting to reject being made to bear the brunt of capitalism's global economic and social crisis and brutal wars." — Jack Barnes

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

This column gives a voice to those engaged in labor battles and building solidarity today — from teachers and school workers in across the country, to miners, rail and 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.

NY hospital workers picket against pension, health cutbacks

NEW YORK — “Everybody’s fighting back,” some two dozen workers chanted as they joined an informational picket line outside the Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center here July 12. “Nurses, fighting back. Housekeeping, fighting back. Food service, fighting back,” they continued chanting, with different workers yelling out their job.

More than 100 workers picketed outside Mt. Sinai Hospital a few blocks away. Their shouts of “union strong” could be heard a block away. Many workers came out and joined the protest during their lunch break.

Health care workers at more than 100 hospitals, nursing homes and medical centers throughout the greater New York area — including Long Island and the Hudson River Valley — also protested in front of their workplaces July 12. They’re fighting against demands by the League of Voluntary Hospitals and Homes of New York bosses to cut pensions, medical care, training and other things that affect both the workers and the people they care for.

The league is the umbrella industry organization. It negotiates a contract with Local 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East that is then used as a model in negotiations with other employers. So the bosses’ concession demands are a threat throughout the industry. In addition to the picket lines, the union has organized a series of “Purple Up” days, where workers wear their purple union T-shirts.

“The company wants to end the option to retire at age 62 for those with 10 years of service,” said Jennifer Tull, who works at Cardinal Terence Cooke nursing home. “I’ve already been here 18 years and I’m 53 years old. Everything’s already giving out,” she said, noting the toll the job took on her body. “They hope we die before they have to pay us our pension.”

“We provide quality care,” her co-

worker Toiyueco Baker-Fann, said. “But we don’t get quality care. They don’t care about the people who do the work.”

Vivian Boahene, who provides patient care at Mt. Sinai Hospital, explained the bosses are also demanding cuts to medical insurance. “They want us to pay \$80 for each doctor’s visit,” she said.

Local 1199SEIU announced July 16 that an agreement had been reached with the League of Voluntary Hospitals on a new three-year contract.

— Sara Lobman

British Columbia: Hard Rock Casino strikers win solidarity

COQUITLAM, British Columbia — Some 400 members of the British Columbia Government and Service Employees’ Union, who have been on strike since May 11, voted by a 55 percent margin July 4 to reject a new proposal by Hard Rock Casino bosses.

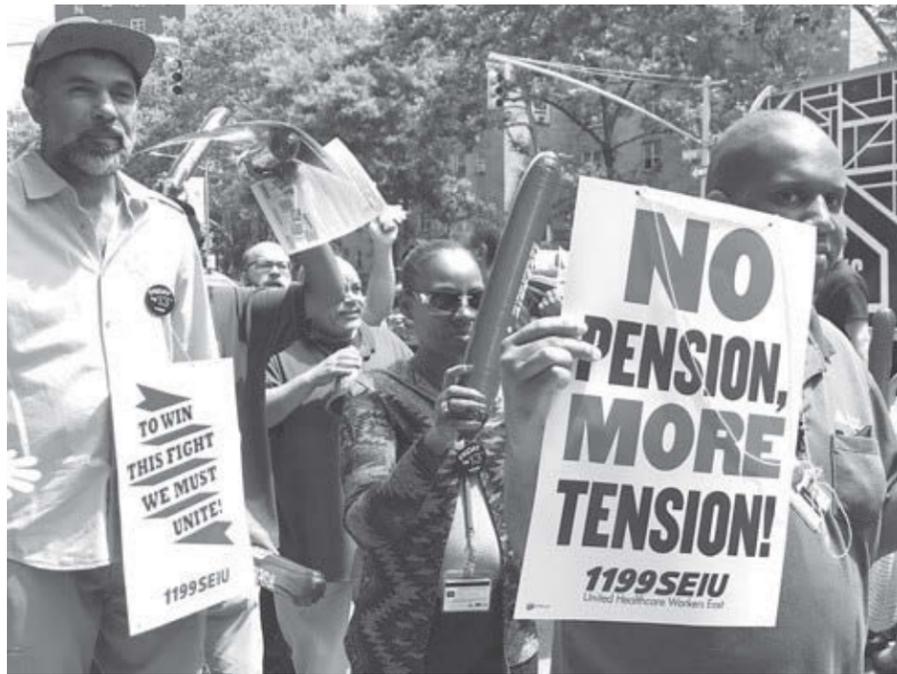
Dealers, kitchen and theater staff, security and other workers there voted to join the union in May 2016, and have been fighting for their first contract ever since. Picket lines are up 24/7.

This reporter and another Walmart cashier walked the line in solidarity July 3. Many strikers asked, “Do you have a union at Walmart? Are you going to get one?” We’re on your picket line to learn, we’re finding ways to stand up, we replied.

“You don’t have to be in a union to stand up,” Laarni de los Reyes, a union organizer, said. “Once you start to get together and feel what power is, then you feel what it means to be a union.”

“Gambling makes a lot of money. But they pay workers s---, like Walmart,” dealer Ying Li said. “I’ve worked here for 13 years. No raise for 10 years.” She has topped out at \$14 an hour.

Dealers make some money on tips, but those are not folded into the base rate and aren’t a stable source of income, workers on the picket line told us. Table games staff make up more than half the union membership.



Militant/Sara Lobman

Local 1199SEIU hospital workers picket Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York July 12, one of more than 100 actions statewide protesting bosses’ moves to cut pensions, medical care and training.

The casino bosses’ offer that the majority of workers rejected included up to 50 cents increase, subsequent yearly 2 percent raises, a signing bonus, benefits like those recently won at River Rock Casino, and eight-hour shifts, Mike Dove, bargaining committee chair, told the *Militant*. “But then the [management] took out the craps and poker games and that changed the wage grid entirely. Sixty people would take a pay cut. And there will be layoffs.”

Almost 700 more union members at four casinos in British Columbia’s Okanagan region went on strike June 29 around demands for higher wages and regular shifts.

On hearing the news during her picket shift here the next day, Vicky Burnell, a table games worker with 14 years on the job, said, “The more we are the stronger we are. That’s what I’ve learned. I’ve always stood up for myself, but now I’m standing up with a group. I’m having fun.”

— Katy LeRougetel

B.C.: Hard rock miners strike to demand union rights for temps

WILLIAMS LAKE, British Columbia — Some 210 hard rock miners are on strike in this province’s Cariboo region in a fight to strengthen and unify their union. The strike began May 23, three hours after Impe-

rial Metals Corporation, the mine’s owner, locked out members of United Steelworkers Local 1-2017 at the Mount Polley Mine. The miners mine copper and gold.

Under British Columbia law, after locking workers out the bosses can invite them to return to their jobs if they accept the company’s last contract offer.

The bosses insist on hiring groups of temporary workers who don’t get union protection or benefits. The union is demanding that any workers the company hires should automatically become full-time employees and union members after three months.

“We are fighting for the temporary workers who have no rights,” Tom Silvey, who has worked 40 years as a miner and drives a truck, told the *Militant* July 6 on the picket line. “Our fathers and our grandfathers fought for safety and wages for everybody. To give in to the company would be a slap in the face to them.”

Tim Guterson, the plant chair for the union at the mine and a mill operator, said the hiring of temporary workers expanded after the dam holding in the tailings pond at the mine gave way in 2014, sending millions of tons of toxic sludge and debris pouring down into the water system and two adjacent lakes.

The company-caused disaster led to a total water ban for residents in the area. The government demanded the mine owners repair the damage. Some temps have worked over two years. Imperial Metals has never been charged or fined for the disaster.

Mine bosses are also trying to undermine seniority provisions in choice of shifts. The miners work 12-hour shifts, seven days on, seven days off. About 30 are women.

And because of the cost of the ongoing tailings cleanup, mine bosses have threatened to lay off miners. Picket lines are staffed 24/7 at the two mine entrances. The union has produced a leaflet for distribution in town that says, “These 200 plus workers and their families are now into their 7th week on the picket lines and we ask that the public, local suppliers and contractors respect their picket lines.”

This correspondent gave the strikers a solidarity card signed by some 30 workers in the Vancouver area, including some on strike against the Hard Rock Casino, Walmart workers from two stores and some hospital workers. Solidarity messages can be sent to dan@usw1-2017.ca.

— Joe Young

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



August 9, 1993

PINCKNEYVILLE, Illinois — As the strike battle between the United Mine Workers and Bituminous Coal Operators Association expands, the miners are reaching out to win new support across the country. There are now 16,000 miners striking in seven states — Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

Five thousand camouflage-clad striking miners, their families and supporters joined an “international labor rally” here July 15 to support the strike. Two thousand had participated in a similar rally in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, a day earlier.

“When it comes to trade unionists, there is only one language — solidarity,” said UMW president Richard Trumka in his keynote address to the rallies.



August 2, 1968

The trial of Black Panther leader Huey P. Newton has been going on in Oakland, Calif., since July 15. Throughout this time, the Panthers and other Bay Area groups have organized a continuous series of rallies to “Free Huey.”

A large crowd came to a rally and picnic on the eve of the trial, and 3,500 people turned out for the big demonstration at the courthouse the day the trial began.

Newton is charged with murder stemming from an incident last October when Oakland cops stopped a car he was driving. The cops shot Newton in the stomach, wounding him seriously. In the struggle, one of the cops was killed.

At the trial, Newton’s attorney, Charles Garry, is demanding that Newton be tried by a jury of his peers. Newton’s trial is heavily guarded. Members of the press must obtain a different pass each day.



July 31, 1943

Great events are transpiring in Italy. The Italian masses are in revolt against the imperialist war. They want to get out of the war. They want to finish with the whole despicable crew of fascists and their supporters who inflicted on them for twenty years untold indignities, horrors, cruelties, and suffering.

The Italian masses want political liberty. They want economic security. They want the good things of life denied them under fascism and capitalism.

The question is: how are they going to get what they want?

The Italian workers and peasants can win peace, bread and freedom only by following the example of the Russian masses in the first World War. They must place confidence only in their own revolutionary Marxist party. They must go forward to create their own Workers and Peasants Government.

Death toll rises in Nicaragua

Continued from front page
wounded — ignited more protests. Students occupied university campuses, and workers, small farmers and others set up barricades and roadblocks in towns and cities across the country.

In an attempt to quell the unrest, Ortega withdrew the social security cuts April 22, but by then protesters were calling for his and Vice President Rosario Murillo's resignation, for an end to government repression, and prosecution of police and paramilitaries responsible for the killings.

Almost 300 people have been killed and over 2,000 wounded since the protests began, the vast majority government opponents. Hundreds have been arrested.

We were able to get a firsthand feel for the protests — and the brutal repression — from meeting and talking with protesters on our reporting trip to Nicaragua in June.

On July 13 a nationwide general strike emptied streets in Managua and much of the rest of the country, as businesses were shut down and public transportation stopped, heeding the call of a coalition of government opponents, including representatives of the demonstrating university students, workers, the main capitalist associations, small farmers groups and a variety of political formations.

Two days later car caravans of anti-government protesters drove to Masaya, a center of the uprising, as government paramilitary groups armed with assault rifles prepared to launch an attack there.

Gov't calls massacre a 'cleanup'

Ortega has moved to retain his grip on power using gangs of armed supporters, police dressed as civilians and former army officers to clear out barricades, campuses and roadblocks.

On July 10 Ortega's forces stormed the cities of Jinotepe, Diriamba and

Matagalpa, leaving 38 dead — 31 government opponents, four police and three paramilitaries — making it the bloodiest day so far since the protests began.

The government defended what they called a "cleanup operation," saying it had acted to protect Nicaraguan families from "terrorist violence." Vice President Murillo has cynically called these operations "Caravans of Peace."

"The government wants to impose itself with bullets," Francisca Ramirez told the press when we were there. She is a leader of small farmers and merchants who have protested against a 2013 law approving large-scale expropriation for a far-fetched plan to build a transcontinental canal through Nicaragua.

A "national dialogue" to attempt to mediate a solution to the political crisis was suspended May 23, when government representatives rejected demands for early presidential elections and walked out.

Ortega and Murillo have dismissed the massive popular discontent calling for their resignations. "The rules cannot be changed overnight because of the whim of a group of coup mongers," said Ortega July 7.

He was speaking at an event held instead of an annual march to commemorate El repliegue, a "tactical retreat" carried out by popular forces led by the FSLN during the 1979 insurrection in Managua against the former U.S.-backed dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza. After 17 days of street combat, the then revolution-minded FSLN forces were forced to retreat to nearby Masaya, where a population in rebellion against the dictatorship welcomed them.

This year the march was called off because Masaya and many of the towns along the route were occupied with protests and barricades. After forcibly clearing the roadblocks, Ortega drove to Masaya accompanied by armed supporters July 13, the day



Movement of Mothers of April lead march on Mother's Day, May 30, in Managua, Nicaragua, honoring those killed and wounded by government thugs during April demonstration. Banner reads "No more assassinations! No more massacres!" Nearly 300 people have been killed.

of the general strike.

In 1979 the FSLN led a popular insurrection that overthrew the hated Somoza dictatorship, and established a government that mobilized workers and peasants in defense of their economic and political interests, increasingly encroaching on the prerogatives of Nicaraguan capitalists and imperialist interests. In the late 1980s, however, the FSLN backed away from that revolutionary course and was voted out of office in 1990. Today it is indistinguishable from other bourgeois parties.

Dwindling support for government

In 2006, after 16 years as an opposition party, and amid an economic and political crisis for working people, Ortega was elected president. His administration has continued the FSLN's class-collaborationist policies of making alliances with sectors of the bourgeoisie and foreign investors. The capitalist development registered in Nicaragua has come at a real price for working people — the lowest minimum wage in the region; roughly 40 percent of the population lives in poverty; greater concentration of land in the hands of a few big landowners; encroachment on democratic and political rights; and

widespread corruption.

After his election, Ortega won the support of many of the country's poor, who benefited from social programs implemented by his government. But that backing has dwindled in the past few years as the government has imposed cuts. Support decreased even more after its brutal response to recent protests.

The opposition to Ortega comes largely from working-class and middle-class layers — including many that up until April considered themselves FSLN supporters — and from supporters of opposition parties, as well as workers who were part of the Sandinista revolution in the 1980s.

The main capitalist associations that had been allies of Ortega and his government as he implemented anti-working-class measures are now backing protests against him. While convinced it is not possible to go back to business-as-usual with Ortega remaining in power, these forces are divided on how fast he must go. Most are demanding elections be moved up to March 2019, a proposal backed by Washington, as well as Organization of American States Secretary General Luis Almagro. So far, Ortega refuses.

Concerned with foreign investors' interests in Nicaragua and general stability in the region, Washington favors Ortega's "orderly exit" from government. The deepening economic and social crisis the government's policies have created for workers, farmers and youth, and its violent suppression of the protests, create conditions for the imperialist rulers in Washington to take advantage of.

Fuel hike protests bring down Haiti prime minister

BY RÓGER CALERO

Haiti's Prime Minister Jack Guy Lafontant resigned July 14 after a two-day general strike and a week of protests sparked by the government's announcement of sharp price hikes for fuel. Demonstrators marched, barricaded roads, looted stores and burned cars and two police stations in Port-au-Prince — the

country's capital — in the northern city of Cap-Haitien and elsewhere.

The government announced July 6 that prices of gasoline, diesel, and kerosene would go up 38, 47, and 51 percent, respectively. The move would have boosted public transportation costs as well. In an attempt to quell the uprising, Lafontant the following day said the price hikes would be "temporarily suspended," but the announcement failed to halt the protests.

Many demonstrators chanted "Nou bouke" in Creole, "We are fed up!"

The increases come from the elimination of long-standing fuel subsidies. The move was one of the conditions imposed on the Haitian government by the International Monetary Fund in exchange for promises of access to \$96 million in loans and grants. The IMF claimed removing the subsidies would provide

the government with more funding for social services. This in a country whose rulers are renowned for their corruption! The Washington-based IMF sought to justify the measure by saying the richest 20 percent benefited the most from the subsidies, but the hikes were too much to bear for the poorest Haitians.

The IMF is still pressing for the price hikes to be imposed — through a series of gradual increases.

The government sought to blame the protests not on the decades of imperialist plunder that has resulted in 59 percent of Haitian toilers living in poverty, along with a massive lack of jobs, housing, infrastructure and being ravaged by a high cost of living, but "on others trying to lead the population astray."

Haiti is one of the world's poorest countries. Half the population is malnourished. On top of capitalist exploitation, workers and farmers there have borne the brunt of a series of deadly earthquakes and hurricanes.

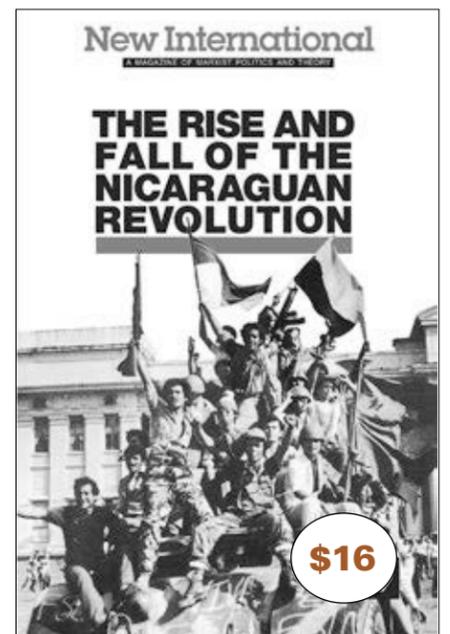
"It's not just a question of changing the prime minister, because day by day, the people are still suffering from more misery, unemployment, insecurity, hunger," Fleurette Pierre, one of the demonstrators, told Agence France-Presse.



AP Photo/Dieu Nalio Chery

Demonstration July 8 in Port-au-Prince during week of general strike and protests that forced government to suspend fuel hike.

More reading



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'Revolutionary war began liberation of women in Cuba'

BY CLAUDIA KAISER-LENOIR

HAVANA — One of the high points for participants in the International May Day Brigade to Cuba this spring was having the opportunity to hear from some of the combatants who took part in the revolutionary war there. Led by Fidel Castro, the revolution overturned the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959 and brought Cuba's workers and farmers to power.

We heard from Teté Puebla, Pérsida Chibás Ponce, Rogelio Acevedo and others, who told us how and why they joined the fight for a revolution that won against seemingly impossible odds, and about how they themselves — then in their teens — were deeply transformed as human beings through their experience in that struggle.

Pérsida Chibás Ponce was one of the scores of women who joined the Rebel Army. As a black, 15-year-old girl, Chibás told us, she was already aware that women's oppression was tied to class and race. She described how the Rebel Army even before ousting the dictatorship began transforming relations in the areas under its control, including measures to overcome divisions among working people. Under Raúl Castro's leadership in the Second Front in Eastern Oriente province, she helped establish schools for the growing number of peasants — many of them illiterate — joining the rebel fight.

After she had been in the Sierra for some time, and had several promotions as a fighter, someone asked her how it felt to be the only black woman combatant with her high rank. "I suddenly realized then that I had stopped being aware of those differences," Chibás said, "and that made me conscious of how the divisions of class and race had been transcended, for me, in the process of the struggle."

With the 1959 triumph of the revolution, the new government led the fight that eradicated all forms of legal racial



Scott Hagaman
Above, participants in International May Day Brigade to Cuba hear from combatants in Cuba's revolutionary war. Inset, Teté Puebla, left, and Pérsida Chibás Ponce joined Rebel Army in their teens, were transformed in revolutionary struggle.

discrimination, which from the start had been an integral part of the July 26 Movement's program. The revolutionary changes in Cuba guaranteed equal access for blacks to education, work, health, culture and sports, as well as representation in the country's political and legislative structures, she said.

"But we have to remain fully conscious that discrimination can't be eliminated by decree alone," said Chibás. "Struggle against it must never cease."

After the victory over Batista's forces, Chibás left the Rebel Army and became active in the volunteer militias and other tasks of the revolution. In 1971 she joined the Revolutionary Armed Forces, eventually achieving the rank of lieutenant colonel. In 1986 she was part of Cuba's internationalist mission in Ethiopia and later was one of more than 420,000 Cubans who went to Angola as volunteer combatants to help defeat the invasions by the South African apartheid army.

Chibás told us that revolutionary lead-

ers Fidel Castro and Vilma Espín led the fight for full participation of women, which included the establishment of the Federation of Cuban Women one year after the revolution came to power.

Cuban women fight for revolution

Cuban women have won election to all levels of government, the passage of laws guaranteeing equality with men, the right to abortion and have gained more control over all aspects of their lives.

"The revolutionary war was the beginning of the liberation of women," said Teté Puebla, who joined the rebels in Sierra in 1957 at age 16. She said she claimed to be a year older, "so I would be allowed to stay." Puebla explained she came from a peasant family in Granma province.

Puebla is now a brigadier general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces — the highest-ranking woman in Cuba's army — and a deputy to Cuba's Na-

tional Assembly. She recounted how despite sharing a common cause, facing a common enemy and living under the same harsh conditions in the Sierra, it was still a fight to overcome the prejudices ingrained even in some of the best of the male fighters.

Because of the resistance from some men in the rebel forces to women's insistence that they shoulder the same responsibilities, Puebla said, Fidel Castro decided that not only were the women to become active combatants, but he organized the special Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon. He appointed Puebla as second in command.

When men complained that the scarce weapons were being "wasted" on women, Castro replied they were given guns because "the women will prove to be better fighters than all of you." She said Fidel later told the women, "You better not make me look bad, after this!" and then assigned himself to give them intensive training in weapons use.

The full story is told in *Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla & the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon in Cuba's Revolutionary War 1956-58* written by Puebla and published by Pathfinder Press.

They didn't make Castro look bad. The exemplary courage and discipline the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon displayed in battle proved right Castro's full confidence in the women. They, in turn, went on "from that platoon in the Sierra Maestra to today's full participation of women in all tasks related to defense," Puebla said. "We are the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba."

Today Cuban women make up 60 percent of all university graduates, and 78 percent of health professionals. "Without the revolution, women would never have reached the conditions we enjoy today," Chibás said.

After the revolutionary victory, Puebla helped recruit peasant women to attend the Ana Betancourt School in Havana. There they went through all the regular school curriculum, and also received training in various vocational trades.

After hearing these presentations, some brigade members asked what advice the veteran combatants had for their efforts to make changes back home in their own countries, including how to fight racist and sexist oppression. There has to be a fight, and there has to be a revolution, Chibás said, there is no other way.

"But there are no recipes," she added. "Do your own revolution. It has to come from you."

'Militant' beats back Florida prison censorship - again

Continued from front page

officials claimed that the entire paper "showed organized protests around the state and seeks to organize inmates to strike" and "presents a threat to the security, good order, or discipline" of the prison.

The Literature Review Committee gave no reason for overturning the impoundments.

Over the last several years Florida prisons have impounded nearly two dozen issues of the paper. All but a few

were reversed on appeal by the *Militant* and its lawyer, David Goldstein of the prominent civil liberties law firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman.

"Every time the *Militant* has been forced to wage a public fight against the impoundments, we win new support for our right to send our paper to workers behind bars. And for their right to read the political news they want and need. It helps them be part of the world and working-class struggles today," *Militant* editor John Studer said.

Among the organizations and individuals that have spoken out against censorship of the *Militant* and in defense of freedom of the press and free speech are Amnesty International USA, PEN America, National Lawyers Guild, New York Civil Liberties Union, American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, *Prison Legal News*, New York's Riverside Church Prison Ministry, American Friends Service Committee, Seattle-Cuba Friendship Committee, *San Francisco Bay View* and many more.

Nonetheless, officials in Florida prisons seem determined to keep looking for pretexts to hold up the paper. And in some cases they violate their own rules

by deciding not to send either the *Militant* or the inmate-subscriber the notice that they've impounded the paper. That makes it harder for the paper to fight it.

The Literature Review Committee told Goldstein that when a prisoner stops getting the paper, they should "make use of the grievance process."

"Any prisoner that isn't getting their paper, should let us know," Studer said. "We'll back them up, like we always do."

Cuban Revolution: Example for workers

Marianas in Combat

by Teté Puebla

Puebla joined the revolutionary struggle in Cuba at the age of 15. She was a member of the victorious Rebel Army's first all-women's unit — the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon.

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes

"There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba." — Fidel Castro 1961

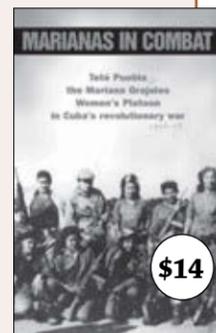
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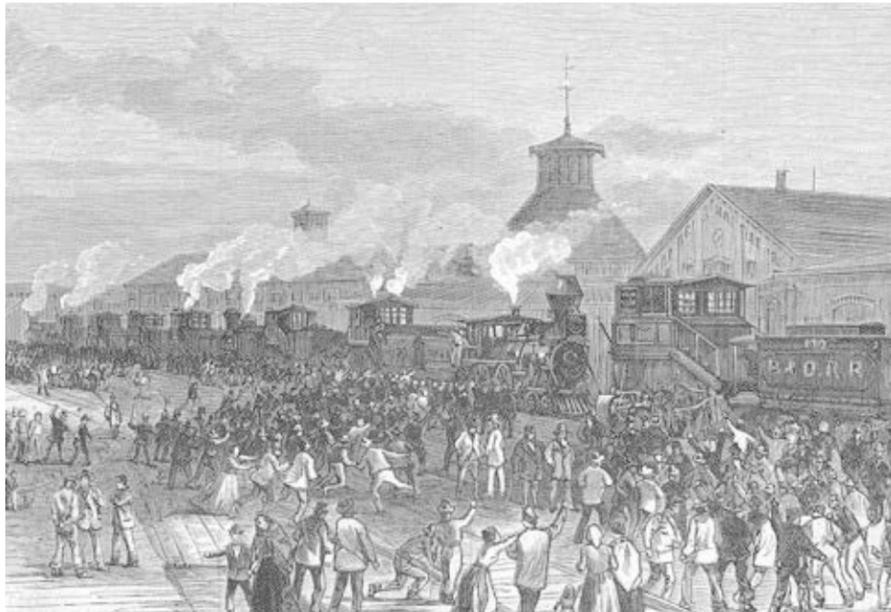
Cuba Sí Coalition

Great 1877 Strike showed class-struggle road for US workers

The "Great Strike" of 1877 started among rail workers and then drew in more than half a million overall. Karl Marx wrote that the strike "could very well be the point of origin for the creation of a serious workers' party." It was sparked by starvation wages and brutal working conditions. It struck fear in the rulers, who denounced "mob rule" and blamed a communist conspiracy.

Federal, state and city governments unleashed troops, armed cops and gangs of thugs on the strikers, cheered on by the bourgeois press. In the course of this mighty class battle, more than 100 workers were killed.

Below are excerpts from Philip S. Foner's *The Great Labor Uprising of 1877*, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month for July*. Copyright © 1977 by Philip S. Foner, Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Blockade of engines at Martinsburg, West Virginia, during 1877 rail strike. "The first eruption against the oligarchy of capital which had developed since the Civil War," wrote Karl Marx, showed one key component of the class forces — the working class, oppressed toilers who are Black and exploited farmers — that would come together to lead the revolution in the U.S.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY PHILIP S. FONER

The Great Strike of 1877 occurred six years after the Paris Commune — the working class-led revolution which took power in that city on March 18, 1871, and, for the seventy-two days of its existence, established a new type of state. The news of the "Revolution of March 18" produced a wave of fear throughout the established circles in both Europe and the United States. It

soon became the practice to blame the social tensions in the United States on foreign influence, and this technique was employed with increasing frequency during the economic crisis of the 1870s. During the troubles on the railroads in 1873-74, there were some references to the fact that the strikers were determined to establish a Commune in the United States. But it was in the Great Strike of 1877 that a large portion of the press came to view the outbreaks as the "long-matured concerted assertion of Communism throughout the United States." ...

The speed with which the Great Strike moved across the country was positively breathtaking. On July 18 the strike, which had begun in West Virginia, spread to Ohio; one day later, it reached Pennsylvania, and a day after that, New York. On Sunday and Monday, July 22 and 23, thousands of workers throughout the eastern and midwestern sections of the country went on strike. By noon on Tuesday, July 24, the Great Strike had ripped through West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, and even Iowa. The *New York World* estimated that day that it involved more than eighty thousand railroad workers and over five hundred thousand workers in other occupations. Aside from the walkouts of workers in sympathy with the railroad men, thousands of

businesses that were dependent upon the railroads for their supplies — factories, mills, coal mines, and oil refineries — were forced to shut down. In Cleveland, for example, the effects of the stoppage on the Pennsylvania Railroad system were felt as early as Monday morning, July 22, and the *Cleveland Leader* noted that the closing down of the Cleveland & Pittsburgh line (a subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Railroad) by "rioters" had cut off an "important source of supply for fuel":

As a direct consequence of this, all the mills and furnaces of the Cleveland Rolling Mill Company and the Northern Ohio Iron Company are shut down. The Standard Oil Company, with its legion of employees, will stop work this morning for lack of transportation. No less than six foundries in this city will be forced to suspend operations today.

By Wednesday, July 25, all the main railway lines were affected, and employees of some Canadian roads were also joining the strike. By this time, it was a thoroughly national event. Business in many cities was feeling the effect of the freight blockade; for example, New York's supply of western grain and cattle had been completely cut off. There were strike reports from such scattered points as Kansas City, Chicago, Indianapolis, Terre Haute, Columbus, Cincinnati, Louisville, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, East St. Louis, and St. Lou-

is. Illinois Central trains were stopped at Effingham, Maltown, Decatur, and Carbondale, Illinois. Governor Cullom of that state declared in his 1879 biennial message that "the railway trains and machine shops and factories in Chicago, Peoria, Galesburg, Decatur, and East St. Louis were in the hands of the mob, as well as the mines at Bradwood, La Salle, and some other places." ...

The Great Strike, which was described in the WPUS [Workingmen's Party of the United States] journal, *Labor Standard*, as "The Second American Revolution," became the springboard for political and trade union action by the American working class. It was able to assume this character because it was more than a strike movement against wage cuts. It was a social rebellion, the first assertion by a national working class of a common anger against a variety of grievances — years of brutal exploitation, and a system of industrialization which viewed the worker as little more than part of the machine, who could be discarded the moment he was no longer needed, and which required him to adjust to a deadening routine of work that made him practically part of the machine. It was the first real evidence of working class collective power capable of imposing its own will upon future social developments. Workers from New York to San Francisco understood, for the first time, their potential power. ...

Writing to Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx called the Great Strike "the first uprising against the oligarchy of capital which had developed since the Civil War," and predicted that while it would be suppressed, it "could very well be the point of origin for the creation of a serious workers' party in the United States." Other contemporaries also understood the broader implications of the vast labor upheaval, but the *Washington Capital* probably put it best just a month after it ended:

Capitalists may stuff cotton in their ears, the subsidized press may write with apparent indifference, as boys whistle when passing a graveyard, but those who understand the forces at work in society know already that America will never be the same again. For decades, yes centuries to come, our nation will feel the effects of the tidal wave that swept over it for two weeks in July.

July BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Build fighting unions! Pensions for all!

With 1.3 million workers holding pension plans that are heading toward insolvency and millions more dependent on Social Security payments you can't live on, there is a pressing need for labor to lead a fight for government-guaranteed pensions at union scale. The Socialist Workers Party says pensions shouldn't be tied to the bosses' profits or the health of any capitalist industry, but cover all workers and farmers.

For the employing class it's a problem that workers live long after we're deemed fit enough to sell our labor power. Alongside their drive to hold down wages and intensify work, the bosses seek ways to shift the cost of looking after the young, sick or elderly onto workers and our families. They oppose the government picking up the tab, since that means taxes on their profits.

Social Security dwindles as costs for things workers need rise. But working people's labor produces all the wealth, far more than enough to provide child care, education, health care, housing and retirement for all.

Under capitalism human potential is wasted. The capacities of millions of workers to do something useful — including those who are retired or those the rulers classify as “discouraged workers” — are dis-

regarded. The fact that they use up and then discard millions of workers is an indictment of the immoral class values that underlie their rule, underscoring the need for the working class to overthrow and replace them with our own government.

For decades the course of the union bureaucracy has been to blunt “the fighting potential of the unions,” Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, explains in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics; Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*. “Good times made it possible for workers to win modest but real wage increases and ‘fringe benefits’ without increasing conflicts with employers.” The officials, he says “ignored the needs of unorganized workers ... as well as the political fight for health care and other social programs for the entire working class.”

It will take a powerful working-class-led social struggle to win government-funded pensions that cover our needs and are available for all. Such a battle can help forge the class solidarity and unity working people need and undercut the dog-eat-dog competition fostered by the capitalist system, which pits young against old, as it pits native born against foreign born.

Liberals' furor fuels voice of the 'war party'

Continued from front page

President Vladimir Putin addressed key world questions. Trump told the press that they agreed on efforts to press for steps to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. The day before the summit the administration resumed negotiations with the North Korean government to search for remains of U.S. soldiers killed during the 1950-53 Korean War. Pyongyang is pushing Washington for a joint declaration to end that war.

Both Putin and Trump said they would try to work for cooperation in Syria. Trump said he stressed the importance of putting pressure on Tehran to pull its forces back from there.

But none of this got any coverage in the liberal press. Instead, Trump was attacked for not trying to focus the meeting on demands that Putin take responsibility for meddling in the 2016 election. “Donald Trump's press conference performance in Helsinki rises to and exceeds the threshold of ‘high crimes and misdemeanors,’” former CIA Director John Brennan said July 16.

The day before the summit, liberal *New York Times* pundit Charles Blow wrote a column titled “Trump, Treasonous Traitor,” saying the U.S. president was “committing an unbelievable and unforgivable crime against this country.” The editors of the *Washington Post* accused him of “openly colluding with the criminal leader of a hostile power.”

For the liberal press, Trump casting doubt on U.S. spy agencies is verboten, proof of foreign control of the U.S. government. But the FBI and CIA are the deadly enemies of the working class, at home and abroad. They spy, lie, disrupt and kill.

Even the *Times* has had to admit U.S. spooks do bad things. A “news analysis” column in February titled “Russia Isn't the Only One Meddling in Elections. We Do It, Too,” quotes Loch Johnson, who they call “the dean of American intelligence scholars.” Referring to Washington's spy agencies, he said, “We've been doing this kind of thing since the C.I.A. was created in 1947. We've used posters, pamphlets, mailers, banners — you name it.” He added, “We've used what the British call ‘King George's cavalry’: suitcases of cash.”

The article's author, Scott Shane, tells more: “The C.I.A. helped overthrow elected leaders in Iran and Guatemala in the 1950s and backed violent coups in

several other countries in the 1960s. It plotted assassinations and supported brutal anti-Communist governments in Latin America, Africa and Asia.”

The Socialist Workers Party has decades of experience with FBI spying, wiretaps, “dirty tricks” and its Cointelpro disruption program. As do unionists, anti-war fighters, Black rights protesters and other opponents of the U.S. rulers.

But for the “resistance,” those who attack Trump are heroes, like Brennan and former FBI heads Robert Mueller — special prosecutor appointed to run the witch hunt against Trump — and James Comey, who tried to win the 2016 election for Hillary Clinton and now calls for everyone to vote Democrat in 2018.

None of these liberal scribes can acknowledge that it wasn't “Russian interference” but the anger of tens of millions of working people in the U.S. — determined to find a way to say “no” to the impact of the capitalist crisis on their lives and to “drain the swamp” of capitalist politicians — that led to Trump's election.

They increasingly write about the danger of Trump's “base.” They argue about different ways to limit the influence of angry workers on U.S. politics, to chip away at political rights working people have won.

Trump is a real estate magnate seeking to rule in the interests of the U.S. ruling class against the working class here and around the world. But he believes the policies, outlook and wars pushed by the last few administrations have weakened the U.S. rulers. On July 15 his administration proposed direct talks with the Taliban in Afghanistan, which has been fighting to overturn the government there since the U.S.-led imperialist invasion of that country ousted them from power. The 17-year war there continues to have a devastating impact on the toiling population.

Before Helsinki, President Trump worked to advance the U.S. rulers' interests against Washington's competitors in the NATO military alliance at its Brussels summit. Trump described NATO — which has been a key structure in the U.S. rulers' domination over the world capitalist order for decades — as “obsolete” shortly after his 2016 election. He has steadily upped pressure on the rulers of other countries in the alliance to increase their military outlay since then. While U.S. world power is in decline, he has highlighted the much sharper declining weight of the French, German and U.K. rulers, and their utter dependence on Washington's armed might. He lambasted the German government during the get-together and got increased spending commitments from it by the meeting's end.

This too brought howls from the liberals, who claimed he was dissing “our allies.”

These developments reflect far-reaching changes in the institutions and relations that have marked U.S. dominance since its victory in the second imperialist world war.

Crisis of rulers' parties

Continued from front page

ald Trump to the presidency. In fact, both capitalist parties are in crisis.

Ocasio-Cortez, 28, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America who campaigned for Bernie Sanders in 2016, defeated 10-time incumbent Joseph Crowley, who was considered a possible replacement for House of Representatives Democratic Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi.

Crowley is not a conservative Democrat. He was backed by the AFL-CIO. But Ocasio-Cortez portrayed him as beholden to corporate money and being out of touch with a district that has become more Black, Latino and immigrant over the years.

The party “establishment” was shocked, including many liberals who backed Hillary Clinton for president. They argue that Donald Trump must be stopped at all costs and that the way to do it is to put forward “centrist” candidates. To them, anyone who calls themselves a socialist hurts their chances of winning.

Others in the party, like Maxine Waters, say, “We can't wait” and urge mob harassment of Trump officials, threatening free speech and freedom of association.

The Sanders' wing of the party says Trump won the 2016 election by talking about the crisis facing working people and falsely claiming he was on their side. Sanders says moves to impeach Trump today are “premature.” He focuses on calling for campaign “reform” to prevent the influence of “big corporate” money, and organizing to take over the party, even if that means selecting candidates he says might lose elections.

Ocasio-Cortez barely mentioned Trump during her campaign. And when asked what she means by democratic socialism she offered the platitude that “no person in America should be too poor to live.”

The first plank of Ocasio-Cortez's program is “Medicare for All,” a demand for health insurance, not health care. Like other kindred candidates she championed the slogan of “Abolish ICE” (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and she sent out at least one tweet denouncing what she called the “genocidal” policy of Israel toward Hamas-inspired protesters in Gaza.

Trying to save the Democrats

In an interview with *Jacobin*, the magazine of a wing of the DSA, Ocasio-Cortez said that before the election her campaign focused on unaffiliated voters who she told “the only way we can win this election is if folks like you decide to register as a Democrat so we can count on your vote next year.”

That was the “hardest canvassing of the entire campaign,” Ocasio-Cortez said. “That was the most slammed doors I got. And I said, ‘Listen, I get it. I get why you don't want to be a Democrat.’”

At a time when more and more working people are disillusioned with both capitalist parties, Ocasio-Cortez tries to draw them back into the Democratic fold. She offers a course that is the opposite of what working people need, relying on our own strength and fighting together to defend our class interests.

Instead, she lays out the goal of the Sanders' wing of the party, getting other, younger, fresher “socialist” and “progressive” candidates elected to take over and rebuild the Democratic Party.

More mainstream party officials downplayed the District 14 upset. “Let's not get yourself carried away,” Pelosi told the press. “They made the choice in one district.” The left is in nirvana over the Ocasio-Cortez victory. The DSA called the vote an “earthquake.” The International Socialist Organization called it “a stunning upset.”

But Ocasio-Cortez won the primary with just 15,897 votes in a district of 700,000 people of whom 214,750 are registered Democrats. Some earthquake!

The Republican Party is also in crisis as pro-Trump and anti-Trump forces jockey for position. Anti-Trump Republican “strategist” Alex Castellanos calls the Republicans a “broken party.” Trump has risen because “a broad slice of working-class voters fear the American dream has become the American game,” he wrote in *Politico* magazine.

The truth is that the crisis in both parties will continue because no wing of the capitalist class has — or can have — a solution to the unfolding crisis of their system today.

For recognition of a Palestinian state and of Israel



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