

THE MILITANT

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Victory in bakery's lawsuit against 'racism' smear by Oberlin College
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83/NO. 24 JULY 8, 2019

Vote to erase Calif. mural is blow to art, political rights

BY BETSEY STONE AND JEFF POWERS

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. — In a blow to artistic and political rights in the name of “political correctness,” the San Francisco School Board voted to destroy the “Life of Washington” mural at George Washington High School here June 25.

The huge fresco was painted in 1936 by noted muralist Victor Arnautoff, a protégé of Mexican muralist Diego Rivera and member of the Communist Party. Commissioned by the government-funded Works Progress Administration, it has 13 panels and has been part of the lobby of the school for over eight decades.

The week before the vote, a special school board hearing was held where over 150 people debated the proposal to destroy the mural. Those demanding its destruction argued that some of the images make the mural racist and glorify slavery and the genocide of Native Americans.

“Censorship creates precedents
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Speak out against bans on ‘Militant’ in prisons!

BY SETH GALINSKY

Florida prison officials have banned at least eight of the last 12 issues of the *Militant*. We say “at least” because they don’t always inform us the paper has been banned, even though they are required by their own rules to do so.

Their latest “reason”? They say we can’t write about our efforts to overturn their censorship. The impoundment notice for the most recent issue, no. 23, says it is banned because of the article “Fight against new censorship of *Militant* in Florida prisons.” The ban on issue no. 22 says a front-page article “encourages protests against prison censorship.”

Several earlier issues of the paper were banned for writing about Albert Woodfox, who spent more than 40 years in solitary confinement in prison in Angola, Louisiana, framed up for a crime he did not commit.

Woodfox wrote a book titled *Solitary: My Story of Transformation and Hope*, an inspiring story of the
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US hands off Iran! End US economic war!



Militant/Carole Lesnick

June 24 protest action in Oakland, California, against U.S. threats, sanctions against Iran.

US sanctions hit hardest against working people

BY TERRY EVANS

The U.S. government is stepping up threats to use its military might against Iran and tightening economic sanctions whose consequences fall heaviest on the Iranian working people. Washington’s latest pretext for these steps to defend imperialist interests in the Middle East is the June 20 shooting down of a U.S. surveillance drone by a unit of Tehran’s Revolutionary Guard.

President Trump wrote June 21 that “we were cocked & loaded to retaliate.”
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Bring all US troops home from Middle East now!

The following statement was issued by David Rosenfeld, currently the Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in Minneapolis, June 21.

SWP STATEMENT

The Socialist Workers Party demands: U.S. hands off Iran! U.S. troops out of the Middle East! End the economic sanctions against the Iranian people now!

These calls take on added urgency
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Massive protests in Hong Kong push back hated extradition bill



Reuters/Thomas Peter

June 16 demonstration in Hong Kong drew some 2 million people, largest mobilization in history of former British colony. Beijing fears its impact on working people inside China.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

In a victory for democratic and political rights, the biggest mobilizations in Hong Kong’s history forced the city’s chief executive, Carrie Lam — after a meeting with top Chinese officials — to suspend moves to pass a hated bill authorizing extradition June 15. Some 2 million people out of a population of 7.4 million jammed

city streets the next day calling for the bill to be permanently withdrawn. Many demanded Lam resign.

Lam claimed the move was necessary because the former British colony’s laws don’t allow extraditions to mainland China or Taiwan. But working people and youth saw this as a pretext to allow the regime in Beijing
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‘We demand: End US colonial rule over people of Puerto Rico’

The following is the statement by Seth Galinsky given for the Socialist Workers Party to the U.N. Special Committee on Decolonization at its June 24 hearing on the colonial status of Puerto Rico.

Distinguished Madam Chairperson and committee members:

My name is Seth Galinsky. I am the Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City public advocate. I join with those here today to demand that Washington take its boot off Puerto Rico. The fight for Puerto Rico’s independence from colonial rule is in the interests not only of the people of that nation, but of working people everywhere, especially in the U.S.

If you were to believe the big-business press, you’d think the Puerto Rican people are living off the largesse of the U.S. government. But the opposite is the case. U.S. corporations and banks — finance capital — have been bleeding Puerto Rico for more than a

century. Are the big pharmaceutical companies there out of charity? No, they are there for cheap labor and superprofits.

The capitalists in the U.S. — with
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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Workers at Gate Gourmet, Sky Chefs fight for contract

Former 'wives,' children of IS fighters held in Mideast camps

BY STEVE PENNER

Thousands of displaced former "wives" of Islamic State fighters, together with tens of thousands of children, many of them orphans, are being held in squalid, disease-infested camps in Iraq and Syria. Their reintegration into society is an important challenge in charting a working-class road forward in the region.

Many of the women were teenagers forced to be "child brides" or sex slaves by IS. Some were shot and wounded as they fled territories held by the reactionary Islamist outfit.

Security forces refuse to allow most of the women and children from Iraq or Syria to return to their home cities. Others come from outside the Middle East. A handful of their home countries have taken back a tiny number of citizens, but most won't allow those who lived in areas under Islamic State control to return. They're trapped in a stateless void.

The Iraqi government in Baghdad, dominated by political parties based on sectarian Shiite-religious politics, encourages forces that denounce the women, the majority of whom are Sunnis. "They should all be prosecuted or killed!" insisted Sheikh Mohammed Nasser al-Bayati, a powerful Shiite militia commander.

The European Union's "anti-terrorism" chief, Gilles de Kerchove, justified the refusal of EU member states to repatriate them, claiming the children may become "the next generation of suicide bombers."

Most of these supposedly dangerous children are younger than 12 years

old. According to UNICEF, they are "among the world's most vulnerable children [living] in appalling conditions amid constant threats to their health, safety and well-being."

Cholera, tuberculosis, dysentery and typhoid are rife in the camps, and the children are malnourished. Many show symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, like vivid nightmares and the inability to speak.

Many of the women and even some of the children are being put on trial as Islamic State fighters. The women are often sentenced either to die by hanging or to life imprisonment after "trials" that often last no more than 10 minutes. The Iraqi government provides no information on the number of women who have been executed. However, *New York Times* reporters witnessed prosecution of 14 Turkish women accused of supporting IS that took a combined total of two hours. All 14 women were sentenced to death.

Women in the camps are targeted for sexual violence by militiamen and camp guards, including forced marriages. "These 'marriages' are just sex marriages, but you can't say no," Muntahar, a 16-year-old girl, told the *Washington Post*. "Then they take you for a week, or for a few months, before throwing you back into the camp."

An estimated 45,000 displaced children being held in camps in Iraq do not have recognized birth certificates, the Norwegian Refugee Council said. As a result, they face exclusion from Iraqi society, being barred from school, denied access to health care, and pre-



AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo

Thousands of women formerly "married" to Islamic State fighters and their children are being held in appalling conditions in al-Hol, above, and other detention camps in Syria and Iraq.

vented from working when they become adults. Without a valid birth certificate, newborns are unable to receive vaccinations in some areas.

Thousands more children, being held in camps in Syria, face the same fate. One of the largest of the Syrian camps, al-Hol, is surrounded by a chain-link fence and armed guards. Children make up at least two-thirds of its residents. Camp officials say they are too busy trying to provide tents and food to offer schooling and recreational activities, or deal with children's often severe psychological problems.

Contrast with revolutionary Cuba

The contrast with how the children of the murdering and torturous cops and troops of the bloody dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, overthrown by Cuba's 1959 revolution, were treated could not be more stark.

Brigadier General Teté Puebla, the highest-ranking woman in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces in 1959, was asked by Fidel Castro, the revolution's central leader, to head up the Department of Assistance to War Victims and their Families after taking power.

The children of Batista henchmen "were provided for the same as the children of the rebels," Puebla says in her book, *Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon in Cuba's Revolu-*

tionary War 1956-58, published by Pathfinder. The new department's slogan was, "In the face of pain, the homeland makes no distinction. To save a child is to build the homeland."

"Working-class organizations in the Middle East and around the world need to denounce the brutal treatment of the wives and children of IS members," Alyson Kennedy, the 2016 presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party who was part of an SWP delegation to Iraq this year, said June 13. "We should demand their immediate release from the detention camps with all documents needed to freely live their lives and their repatriation to safe conditions where they can receive the medical care, education and social support they require."

In April, Kennedy participated in the Erbil International Book Fair in the Kurdish region. Along with other leaders of the SWP and Communist Leagues in the United Kingdom and Canada, she met with leaders of the Kurdish Communist Party and area trade unions.

"One of the key questions we discussed," Kennedy said, "is the necessity for working-class fighters to act as Russian revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin explained more than a century ago, as 'tribune[s] of the people ... able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects.'"

THE MILITANT

Defend a woman's right to choose abortion!

In recent weeks supporters of women's rights mounted the largest series of protests in a decade across the U.S. in defense of women's access to abortion. The *'Militant'* supports unrestricted access to family planning, including safe and secure abortion.



APPhoto/Rich Pedroncelli

Rally May 21, in Sacramento, Calif. protests attacks on women's right to choose.

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Vote on mural blow to rights

Continued from front page

that will always come down hardest on the working class, including African American, Latino, Native American and Asian American working people,” said Joel Britton, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of San Francisco, who spoke and passed out a statement at the meeting.

“Censorship hands a weapon to those who would target the strongest fighters for our class and artists who are our allies,” he said.

Those supporting each side of the debate were given 30 minutes to present their view, with each speaker strictly limited to one minute.

Among the first to speak was Lope Yap Jr., vice president of George Washington High School’s Alumni Association, a group with thousands of members that has fought to save the mural. He pointed to the artistic value of the work and the fact that the artist was an ally of oppressed peoples. “This is history,” he said. “We should learn from history, not cover it up.”

Speakers against censorship noted that the panels described as being racist and demeaning of Native Americans and Black people were precisely those that Arnautoff painted in order to condemn slavery and the U.S. government’s treatment of Native Americans, to puncture myths about Washington that were current in the 1930s.

One panel shows George Washington pointing west over the body of a dead Native American, representing his push for settlement of lands that led to the genocide of native people. Another portrays Black slaves working Washington’s large plantation in Mt. Vernon, Virginia.

Battles over proposed destruction of politically influenced art have marked San Francisco politics before. During the 1950s McCarthyite witch hunt, congressional hearings were held over demands to destroy an extensive series of murals painted in the 1940s by Anton Refregier in the Rincon Annex Post Office. One of those who had recommended Refregier as the artist was Arnautoff.

Refregier was castigated in Congress for painting panels depicting the historic 1934 longshore workers strike and for images that presented Native Americans as “vigorous and strong.” The California American Legion called for the mural’s destruction because they would expose school children who toured the facility to scenes that unfairly slandered “the true history of our state.”

Despite the censorship campaign, the mural was never destroyed.

Debate over Washington High mural

The proposal to destroy the Washington High mural was made by a “Reflection and Action Group” of 13 members that was convened by the Board of Education after several parents complained about the mural’s contents. One of the first to complain was Amy Anderson, a member of the Ahkaamay Mowin tribe, who spoke at the hearing.

“Everything in it is based on people who are white,” Anderson said. “Today is a good day for all of us who are abused in these panels.”

Paloma Flores, director of the San Francisco Unified School District’s Indian Education program and a leader of the campaign to paint over the mural, argued at the hearing that the panel showing the dead Native American should

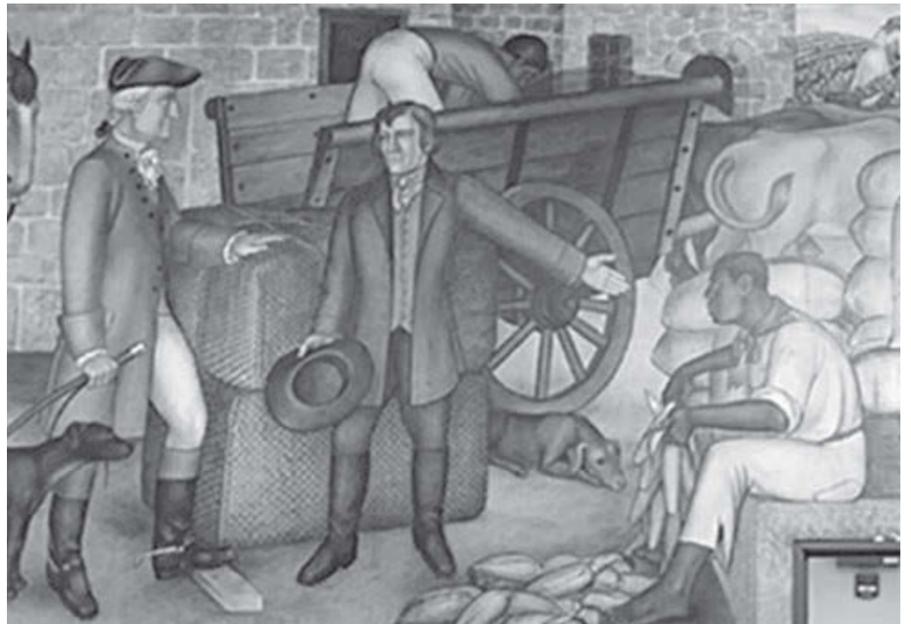
be erased because it causes trauma and pain for Native American students.

“No one has the right to tell us as native people or our young people who walk these halls every day how we feel,” Flores said. “You’re not in our shoes, you don’t feel what they feel unless you are living it.”

Other speakers repeated this, implying that only the views of Native Americans and Black people should be weighed in the decision. One speaker even discounted the views of all those who spoke against censorship, saying they had a “colonizers’ mentality.”

But not all Native Americans at the hearing called for destroying the mural. Robert Tamaka Bailey, an Oklahoma Choctaw and retired PG&E worker, spoke in defense of keeping the mural.

Andrea Morell of the Socialist Workers Party pointed to the broader trend among liberals, including some who call themselves socialists, to attack freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of artistic expression



Scene from Victor Arnautoff’s mural “Life of Washington” depicting George Washington as slave owner. In a blow to artistic, political rights, San Francisco School Board voted June 25 to destroy the mural, which has been in George Washington High School lobby for eight decades.

as a means of opposing what they call “cultural appropriation.”

“Shielding Native American and African American youth by effacing this mural has nothing to do with the fight to eradicate exploitation and racial oppression,” she said. “Instead it

undermines that fight.”

“Censorship makes it easier for that weapon to be used by reactionary forces and the government against movements for social change or against the unions, as it inevitably has been and will be again,” she said.

Hong Kong protests push back extradition bill

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legal cover to go after its political opponents in the semi-autonomous region. The people of Hong Kong continue to defend broad democratic and political rights they first wrested from the British rulers, rights which have been suppressed in mainland China.

Beijing has a history of secretly abducting people from Hong Kong for detention and “trial” on the mainland, as with five booksellers in 2015 who sold literature critical of top Beijing officials.

Even some major capitalists with close ties to the Chinese rulers opposed the law, worried they could be in danger if Chinese officials decided to go after them in one of their periodic crackdowns on “corruption.”

The British imperialists made Hong Kong a colony in 1841 after defeating China’s rulers in the First Opium War. Even after the victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949, Hong Kong remained under British rule. It was not until 1997 that the capitalist island was returned to China under a “one country, two systems” arrangement. It has special administrative region status meant to last for at least 50 years. Under the deal, Beijing controls Hong Kong’s military and foreign affairs.

Hong Kong, a deep-water port and tied to the world capitalist banking and financial markets, was especially important to the Stalinist regime in Beijing as it opened up China to foreign capitalist investment and promoted Chinese capital.

Working people and youth in Hong Kong have stood up to numerous attempts to close down democratic rights. In 2014, students, trade unions and other supporters of political rights took to the streets in what became known as the “umbrella revolution,” demanding the right to directly elect government officials and in opposition to Beijing’s intervention in Hong Kong affairs.

The year before, dockworkers went on strike demanding better pay and working conditions at what was then the world’s third busiest container port.

And unlike mainland China — where the regime bans commemorations of the massive 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-

tests in Beijing that China’s military drowned in blood — in Hong Kong nearly 200,000 demonstrated on the June 4 anniversary.

Frances Hui, a student from Hong Kong at Emerson College in Boston, helped organize a June 9 Boston action in solidarity with the Hong Kong protests and spoke at a June 16 action in New York. She told the *Militant* June 21 that thousands attended solidarity events in “29 cities in 12 countries.”

The protests were large, Hui said, because of Beijing’s encroachment on “human rights and freedoms.” The bill would have meant “people who fled to Hong Kong after the [Tiananmen] massacre wouldn’t be safe.” The city, she said, “would become much closer to how the rest of China is operated.”

Unions join Hong Kong protests

The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions encouraged its members to join the protests. “The extradition bill is very dangerous for Hong Kong people, especially workers,” Confederation Education Secretary Stanley Ho told Reuters June 12.

As opposition to the extradition bill mounted, Lam at first kept pushing to adopt it. But anger mounted after cops clashed with some protesters who had surrounded the Legislative Council Building, firing rubber bullets and

tear gas and making arrests.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi blamed “Western forces” for trying “to sabotage Hong Kong’s stability.” The *China Daily* condemned “foreign entities” for misleading youth.

As the protests mushroomed, Lam — and top Beijing officials — were forced to backpedal. This was the first major climbdown in Chinese President Xi Jinping’s career. The Chinese rulers acted to derail any impact on workers on the mainland and in Taiwan and any effect on Beijing’s trade dispute and longer-term rivalry with Washington.

In 1997 Hong Kong represented a fifth of total Chinese economic output, but after rapid capitalist expansion in China, it is less than 3% today. Shanghai is now the busiest port in the world.

But the island city still channels about two-thirds of overseas investment to the mainland. It is still a hub for southern China including the major cities of Shenzhen and Guangzhou.

The rulers in Beijing worried that the protests in Hong Kong could spur actions by workers in China resisting speedup, low wages and government repression. All the news in the capitalist press about developments in China and Beijing’s competition with Washington for economic supremacy avoid this, the real factor that will affect the future — the rise of the class struggle.

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'End US rule over Puerto Rico'

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their junior partners on the island — make billions by keeping wages in Puerto Rico down, by buying up the island's resources cheap and selling dear. By squeezing its people through a debt that is immoral and unpayable. We support the demand to open the books to the scrutiny of an elected committee of Puerto Rico's working people. And we join with others to say: Cancel the debt now! All of it!

What working people need is not dependency on demeaning welfare programs, but jobs. The governments in the U.S. and on the island keep cutting social necessities, while refusing to fund a massive public works program that would put people to work at union-scale wages, building the things we need: from decent, affordable housing to mass transit and hospitals.

Even the much-vaunted food stamps are used to enrich U.S. agribusiness at the expense of Puerto Rico's working farmers. When the people of Puerto Rico take power out of the hands of the capitalist class, kick out the fiscal board and make their country independent of U.S. imperialism, they will develop agriculture and grow enough food to feed the entire island.

The old imperialist world order is coming apart at the seams. The capitalist rulers of the U.S. and around the globe are in crisis. And they are taking it out on the backs of working people everywhere.

There are over 700,000 Puerto Ricans in New York City and 5 million in the U.S. — more than on the island itself. They are part of the working class in the U.S. and strengthen it with their experience and fighting capacity. Capitalism is creating its future gravediggers, here and in Puerto Rico.

Working people in the U.S. who faced the bureaucratic red tape and scorn of the capitalist rulers after Hurricanes Katrina, Sandy, and Michael can well

understand what was done to the Puerto Rican people, including the thousands still living in homes without roofs or adequate drinking water or electricity.

Here in the U.S., as in Puerto Rico, we face attacks by the bosses and their government on our jobs, wages, health care, and pensions, as well as unending imperialist wars abroad. What the U.S. rulers do to working people in Puerto Rico is the same they do to us here, only worse because of colonial rule.

Like our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico, we are not victims — we're looking for ways to stand up and fight. That's why I have joined numerous actions, from pickets by union nurses fighting for better health care, to protests defending women's right to choose abortion, demanding amnesty for immigrant workers, and saying: U.S. hands off Venezuela, Cuba, and Iran.

A successful struggle for Puerto Rico's independence will strengthen working people in the U.S. in the fight against our common exploiters.

Cuba's socialist revolution is living proof that it can be done. Working people in Cuba overthrew a U.S.-backed dictatorship, took state power, and established a workers and farmers government. In the process they won real independence.



UTIER
May 1 union protest in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Front placard says, "No more Promesa" — the U.S.-imposed law demanding Puerto Rico pay its foreign debt — and "No more lies."

Distinguished committee members, No one is asking you to liberate Puerto Rico. That will be done by the people of Puerto Rico themselves. And they will have the solidarity of their brothers and sisters in the U.S. and around the world. But you can publicize the truth presented here about U.S. colonial oppression and the fight for independence.

I will be traveling to Puerto Rico in the coming weeks, not only to see firsthand the devastation colonial rule

has caused — under Democrats and Republicans alike — but to speak with fellow working people and youth about their struggles and to bring solidarity. Not just in San Juan but in towns and rural areas. The Socialist Workers Party has remained true to our program going back to 1919, working side by side with all those who stand up and fight for the independence and freedom of Puerto Rico.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson and committee members.

Speak out against bans on 'Militant' in prisons!

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efforts he and other inmates made to defend their humanity, and has been speaking at meetings in the U.S. and around the world, calling for an end to solitary confinement, a form of "cruel and unusual punishment" barred by the U.S. Constitution. His tour and the book have been widely covered in the *New York Times* and other capitalist media.

They say appealing the bans — under the prison system's own regulations — somehow "encourages activities which may lead to the use of physical violence."

The prison system's Literature Review Committee has so far overturned two of the bans, but upheld one, on issue no. 15, which reported on Woodfox's New York tour.

The *Militant's* efforts to overturn this assault on freedom of the press and of the right of workers behind bars to read news and political opinions they choose has been joined by other opponents of censorship.

"We protest the repeated, unjustified confiscations of the *Militant* by Florida prison officials. Dozens of issues have been impounded over the last two years — more than four times as many as have occurred in all the other prisons in the country over the last 10 years," Christopher Finan, executive director of the National Coalition Against Censorship, said in a letter to the Literature Review Committee June 7. The ban on issue no. 15 "creates the suspicion that it was blocked because prison officials were offended by the criticism that Mr. Woodfox and other former inmates quoted in the article made of the prison system."

The letter was co-signed by 11 other organizations, including American Booksellers for Free Expression, the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom, the Freedom to Read Foundation, PEN America and the Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library.

Amnesty International USA, the National Lawyers Guild and the American Civil Liberties Union in Florida have also written to the Literature Review Committee calling on it to overturn the bans.

Readers alert us to censorship

Florida prisoners often write the *Militant* to make sure we know an issue has been impounded. And they filed their own grievances demanding they receive the impounded issues. One prisoner just wrote the *Militant*, noting Florida prison rules "provide we are to have access to news to keep abreast of the outside world. They make the rules. Then they break their own rules! I guess that tells you something."

One Florida prisoner wrote that television news, radio news programs, and capitalist dailies like the *Miami Herald* are available to prisoners in Florida and "are not ever censored." Those media have carried news on prisoner hunger strikes, abuse of prisoners by prison guards in Florida and elsewhere, and censorship in the prisons.

It's clear that the *Militant* is being singled out by prison authorities in Florida because of its political viewpoint.

The *Militant* has 140 subscribers behind bars in 21 states and is rarely censored anywhere but in Florida.

One recent exception is Kansas, where prison officials confiscated almost every issue sent to a prisoner there, without informing the *Militant*.

The *Militant* learned about the censorship when *Newsweek* published an article that reported that more than 7,000 books and periodicals had been banned in state prisons there. The magazine's editors posted a complete list,

which included the *Militant*.

Kansas Department of Corrections Secretary Roger Werholtz told *Newsweek* that his office upheld all but 141 bans out of 1,622 that were challenged. But he admitted that "a quick perusal of the list does raise questions about the overzealousness" of their censors.

This week the *Militant* finally received official notification from Kansas authorities about the ban of three issues, alleging the entire paper "poses a threat to the safety and security of correctional facilities." The *Militant* is appealing.

"We are calling on supporters of political rights to join our efforts to overturn every ban and help win broader support to defend freedom of the press and the right of our subscribers behind bars to read the paper," said *Militant* editor John Studer. "Prisoners have the right to read literature of their choosing, to think for themselves, to know what is going on in the world and to speak out."

The Founding of the Socialist Workers Party

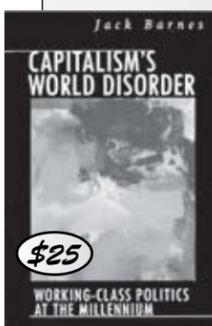
"United States imperialism, exploiting the masses within its boundaries, to an even greater degree exploits the peoples of Latin and Central America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Liberia, the Philippines. The SWP supports every progressive struggle of these peoples."



Capitalism's World Disorder

by Jack Barnes

"Starting with the Philippines, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Cuba — all either annexed or brought under Washington's heel during the Spanish-American War — the U.S. ruling class was determined to establish its predominance in the world imperialist system."



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For Kansas prisons email: Kansas Department of Corrections Acting Secretary Charles Simmons via hope.burns@ks.gov

Send copies to themilitant@mac.com

Send checks to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, for "Prisoners Rights Fight." **Or contribute online at themilitant.com**

Workers at Gate Gourmet, Sky Chefs fight for contract

BY JOEL BRITTON

SAN FRANCISCO — Scores of airline catering workers employed by LSG Sky Chefs and Gate Gourmet joined in a noisy and spirited informational picket line outside the airport's international terminal here June 21.

"United Airlines get up to snuff! One job should be enough!" and "Bad insurance, lousy pay! This is how your food gets made!" were among their chants.

Workers originally from China chanted in Cantonese — "Wage increase, yes! yes! yes! Health insurance, most important!"

"American Airlines, Delta and United made over \$50 billion in combined profits in the last five years," UNITE HERE Local 2 said in a statement. "Less than 50 percent of workers at the SFO airline catering kitchens where workers are taking strike-authorization votes had company health insurance in 2018, and only 10 percent had a child or family member covered."

Jennifer Ford, who has worked three years at Sky Chefs, told the *Militant*, "What the company is offering is only a 30 cents raise each year during the next three years. That's nothing!"

"I have to go to a free clinic because my company insurance is so expensive that I can't afford it," airport catering worker Roberto Alvarez told the media. "I voted to strike when released because one job should be enough." Many workers have to take on two or more jobs to get by, driving for Uber or Lyft or something else.

Rufina Cua, a housekeeping worker at the St. Regis Hotel downtown joined the picketing. She and her co-workers took part in a successful nine-week strike against Marriott last fall. "I learned we had to fight for our families," she said. "I learned about solidarity, so when my steward told me about this picket line, I came."

UNITE HERE represents 20,000 Sky Chefs and Gate Gourmet workers across the country whose contracts expire in August. The union has set plans for more informational picketing at San Francisco airport and

airline hubs in 20 other cities during July. In a June 20 news release, the union said it will "formally request release to strike from the National Mediation Board, which would be followed by a 30-day cooling off period if granted. UNITE HERE is prepared to strike whenever it becomes lawful." The union reports that virtually all workers voted to authorize a strike.

This worker-correspondent, a former airline catering worker and Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of San Francisco, joined the picketing. Airline workers — like rail workers — are enveloped by draconian anti-working-class legislation under the Railway Labor Act, that wraps the union in bureaucratic red tape designed to restrict workers' right to strike.

The leaders of both the flight attendants and pilots' unions have spoken out in support of the catering workers and their right to strike. This is a fight for the whole working class.



Militant/Betsy Stone

Airline catering workers at LSG Sky Chefs and Gate Gourmet mount informational picket demanding wage increase, better health coverage at San Francisco International Airport June 21.

Undocumented workers in NY win right to driver's licenses

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — After a long fight by supporters of the rights of immigrant workers, Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed a law June 17 that will allow over three-quarters of a million undocumented workers to apply for driver's licenses here. It goes into effect in December.

For immigrants without papers recognized by Washington, being able to drive without risking huge fines, detention by cops for minor infractions or the threat of deportation is not a small question, especially in towns and rural areas where there is little or no public transport.

Having a driver's license will be a boost to farmworkers seeking to organize unions and fight for higher wages and better working conditions. Many have been dependent on farm bosses for everything, from shopping to seeing a doctor.

The law allows New York residents

to use a foreign passport or driver's license or a consular ID to apply for a "standard" license that has stamped on it "not for federal use." The license cannot be used to sign up to vote or to get on an airplane.

Over the last year supporters of the fight for licenses for all organized dozens of meetings and marches that showed the growing support from working people.

They obtained the endorsement of some capitalist business interests, who hope that availability of licenses will help ease a serious labor shortage, especially in the region's dairies and fields.

"A lot of my friends and relatives are really happy," Jorge Marca said by phone from Lindenhurst, Long Island. This reporter met Marca when we both joined a protest in Riverhead in March. "Many are saving up to buy a car and studying to take the driver's test. Some hope they can take the CDL test to drive semis, like they did in Ecuador."

While the law passed by a wide margin in the state Assembly, it squeaked by in the Senate with 33 in favor and 29 against. Erie County Clerk Michael Kearns — who processes driver's licenses there — told the press he will refuse to carry out the law and plans to file a legal challenge. A few others have followed suit.

"Now is a good time to step up the fight for amnesty for the more than 11 million immigrants without papers in the U.S. and to reach out and explain the stakes for all workers, foreign and U.S.-born," said Ved Dookhun, Socialist Workers Party candidate of mayor of Troy. "That will strengthen the unity of the working class and put us in a better position to rebuild a fighting union movement."

"Now it's New Jersey's turn," said leaders of Cosecha, an immigrant group, as they organize a protest in Trenton June 27. With passage of the New York law, there are 13 states and the District of Columbia that allow undocumented immigrants licenses to drive.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 11, 1994

EAST PEORIA, Illinois — Members of the United Auto workers effectively shut down operations at Caterpillar Inc.'s plants in three states when they walked off the job June 20-21. The strike involves some 14,000 workers.

The outcome of this confrontation has big stakes for organized labor and all working people. It comes in the midst of increasing resistance by workers across the United States to employers' demands for concessions and union busting.

UAW members employed by the corporate giant are determined to turn back Caterpillar's almost three-year drive to break their union. Workers report that supervisors and salaried personnel are being shifted to plants across the country for periods of at least 45 days to bolster efforts to restart production. Pickets are up at Caterpillar plants in Illinois, Pennsylvania and Colorado.



July 11, 1969

A South Vietnamese colonel embarrassed U.S. military officials when he declared that the besieged Special Forces camp of 1,000 American and South Vietnamese soldiers in Benhet was "bait" for North Vietnamese operating nearby. A U.S. spokesman said, "We never use soldiers for bait."

The following day a convoy of South Vietnamese armored personnel carriers made its way over a road that had been closed by the siege. About 300 soldiers, a tenth of whom were Americans, had been killed in the seven weeks of combat around Benhet by this time.

The fact that Washington maintains a level of approximately 535,000 GIs in Vietnam, most of whom are there on a one-year rotational basis, means that the Pentagon has to send an even larger number of GIs over every year to keep at that 535,000-man level.



July 8, 1944

The pent-up storm in Europe burst last week in violent thunder-claps of insurrection over tiny Denmark, where more than 15,000 workers, spearheading the movement of the restless masses, defied the Nazi terror machine, and, despite savage repression, continued a general strike which paralyzed Copenhagen and compelled the Nazis to lay the city under siege.

Panic-stricken by this display of mass resistance, the Nazis surrounded Copenhagen with troops, cut off the city's water, electricity and gas services, and threatened to bomb the insurrectionary workers unless they returned to work.

Danish puppet officials, acting on Nazi orders, appealed to the workers to end the strike. Employers' associations joined in the appeal, together with tame trade union "leaders." But neither cajolery nor threats could deflect the workers.

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- For workers' solidarity in Israel, Palestine, the world over

Socialist Workers Party statement



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Victory in bakery's lawsuit against 'racism' smear by Oberlin College

BY TERRY EVANS

A Lorain County jury June 7 ruled in favor of a lawsuit by Gibson's, a family-owned and operated bakery, and its proprietors David and Allyn Gibson, against Oberlin College and Meredith Raimondo, the vice president and dean of students of the northern Ohio college.

The suit charged the college and Raimondo with libel, saying they had carried out a "malicious campaign to permanently harm and damage [Gibson's] through publishing false statements." These include smears that "the bakery is a racist establishment with a long account of racial profiling and discrimination" and that the Gibsons "commit hate crimes against minorities."

The case received widespread national press coverage. Articles and opinion pieces have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal* and *Forbes* magazine, as well as Ohio-area newspapers and TV stations. Much of the reporting in the liberal media echoed allegations by college officials that the verdict poses a danger to the First Amendment — that the college is being held accountable for the speech and actions of its students.

Oberlin is a company town of just over 8,000 people, dominated by the college, whose student body comes from largely upper-middle-class families, more than half from New York, California, Illinois, Ohio, Massachusetts and New Jersey. "In a small city like Oberlin, having the largest business and employer against you is more than enough to seal your fate," David Gibson wrote in an article in *USA Today* published after the verdict.

Smear campaign

The Gibson's complaint described how Raimondo and other Oberlin College authorities orchestrated a demonstration outside the bakery and distributed a libelous flyer saying its "owners racially profiled and discriminated against" three students. The students had been arrested after one of them tried to use a fake ID and shoplift two bottles of wine from the bakery on Nov. 9, 2016, and then pummeled a store employee

who pursued them.

The three students, who are Black, pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges, including theft, in 2017, and acknowledged that the shop owners' response had not been racially motivated.

Jason Hawk, editor of the *Oberlin News Tribune*, testified during the trial that Raimondo tried to block him from taking pictures of the protest, telling him he had no right to do so. Hawk also testified he saw Raimondo handing out flyers stating that Gibson's was "racist." The flyer urged a boycott of the bakery and informed people where else they could shop.

Emily Crawford, a worker in the college's communications department, wrote an email to her supervisor warning the administration not to pursue the slanders against the small store and its owners. "I have talked to 15 townie friends who are PoC [persons of color]," she said, "and they are disgusted and embarrassed by the protest. ... They do not believe the Gibsons are racist."

One of the witnesses who testified on behalf of the bakery was Clarence "Trey" James, an African American resident of Oberlin who has worked at the store since 2013. When asked if he had seen the Gibsons treat customers or employees in a racist way, he testified, "Never, not even a hint. ... Zero evidence of that." Over the past five years, 40 people have been caught shoplifting at Gibson's; six were Black.

Eric Gaines, a retired air-traffic controller in town who is African American, testified that he thought the charges of racism against Gibson's were "preposterous."

Administration leads charge

The protests began two days after the Nov. 8, 2016, elections in which Donald Trump had been elected. "This has been a difficult few days ... because of the fears and concerns that many are feeling in response to the outcome of the presidential elections," wrote Raimondo and then college President Marvin Krislov in a Nov. 11 letter to faculty and students — as if that somehow justified targeting a small business and



Top, Nov. 10, 2016, protest outside Gibson's bakery. College officials supplied protesters with refreshments, gloves and copies of leaflets defaming the small business. Above, local paper reports on people traveling from miles around to show support for Gibson's in face of attacks.

smearing its owners as "racists."

The Gibson's complaint, backed by trial testimony, described how Raimondo and other college officials, including Tita Reed, assistant to the president, shouted defamatory statements through a bullhorn at the Nov. 10 demonstration outside Gibson's.

Witnesses testified that college authorities helped reproduce the libelous flyer on college equipment. They supplied demonstrators with pizza, beverages and gloves to stay warm. "Providing refreshments and gloves, the college said, did not amount to aiding and abetting the protests," a June 14 *New York Times* article reported. (One can only ask what it did "amount to!")

David Gibson, writing in *USA Today*, described how he became convinced, in face of big odds, to press the fight against the wealthy college's false accusations. He said his 90-year-old father, Allyn, had told him, "In my life, I've done everything I could to treat people with dignity and respect. And now, nearing the end of my life, I'm going to die being labeled a racist."

Support from working people

"Without community support, we wouldn't have won," Allyn Gibson Jr. told the *Militant* June 22. "People from the area, from surrounding districts, traveled in to offer their support."

Solidarity with Gibson's by working people in the area began two days after the student picket, when large numbers

from near and far crowded the store to offer their support by shopping there. An article in the student-run *Oberlin Review* noted the numbers of "Support Gibson's" lawn signs sprouting up around Lorain County.

Attorneys for the college failed to get the trial moved out of Lorain County, where Oberlin is located. They claimed "the jury pool has been poisoned," by local media coverage of the case and it had a "lack of balanced views."

Working people in that part of Ohio, like others across large parts of the country, have faced a deep economic crisis, with job cuts in auto, steel and other industries. In 2017 *USA Today* listed Lorain County as one of the areas that "never recovered from the Great Recession."

An Oberlin College Student Senate Resolution was carried Nov. 10, 2016, the day of the protests, calling for a boycott of Gibson's. The Gibson's complaint states that on or before Nov. 14, Raimondo instructed the director of dining services to tell Bon Appetit Management Company, which supplied the dining hall, to cancel its contract with the bakery. The suspension of the college's business lasted for two months and began again when the lawsuit was filed. Sales dropped sharply, some 50% since 2016.

When Roger Copeland, a retired Oberlin College professor of theater and dance, wrote a letter to the campus

Continued on next page

Sudan military attacks protests demanding civilian government

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Military forces and paramilitary thugs assaulted an encampment of thousands of protesters outside army headquarters in Sudan's capital Khartoum in early June, killing over 120 people, wounding hundreds more and brutally dispersing the rest. The attack comes in response to ongoing mass actions throughout the country demanding the generals who took power after demonstrations ousted President Omar al-Bashir in April cede power to a civilian government.

"A description will never give you the whole truth," Solomon Osama, a 27-year-old orthopedic surgeon who has been involved in the Sudanese protests for months, told the *Financial Times*. "It was a massacre." Volunteers at medical tents stationed throughout the sit-in site told the media that when they tried to assist wounded protesters troops fired on them. Protesters captured by the military-backed thugs were severely beaten.

The deadly assault in Khartoum was led by the Rapid Support Forces, which was made an official part of the country's armed forces in 2013. This paramilitary outfit, led by Lt. Gen. Mohamed Hamdan, was infamous for conducting genocidal killings to try and put down a popular rebellion in Sudan's Darfur region in the 2000s. He is now second in command in Sudan's new Transitional Military Council.

Sustained protests against the Bashir regime began in December in response to the tripling of bread prices, on top of years of hardships confronting millions of working people across this impoverished, war-ravaged country. Bashir, who had seized power in a coup 30 years earlier, sought to maintain his rule by brutal force coupled with promoting racial, national and religious differences to keep toilers divided.

As the current round of protests spread to dozens of cities nationwide,

demonstrators chanted, "We are all Darfur," meaning they would no longer allow the regime to divide them. When the army officer corps took control of the government April 11, they claimed it be "transitional" — for "just" two to three years.

Since the military assault protests have continued, led largely by the Sudanese Professionals Association. Actions include a rally June 13 in Omdurman, located on the opposite bank of the Nile to Khartoum, where protesters chanted slogans demanding a civilian government, pledging "a revolution forever." There were also protests in the eastern city of Port Sudan.

At the same time the government's crackdown continued. One attack in mid-June killed 17 people and burned more than 100 houses in the Deleij village in Darfur, the United Nations reported.

The military rulers in Egypt and the monarchies in Saudi Arabia and the United Emirates are backing the Sudan military council's moves to consolidate power, pledging to provide them with \$3 billion. Emirati-made armored vehicles patrol the streets of Khartoum. Washington sheds crocodile tears over the killing, but maintains cordial relations with the new "transitional" government.

Impact of neighborhood committees

After the Rapid Support Forces dismantled the protesters' encampments in Khartoum June 3, the government imposed an internet blackout for "national security." But neighborhood committees have sprung up in major cities, seeking to continue protests and solidarity actions.

As Rapid Support Forces soldiers patrolled central Khartoum June 8, some 300 protesters gathered in a neighborhood in Omdurman. Organized into four committees of 50 to 60 households, the community groups

Celebrating 100 years 'on right side of history'



Militant photos: Above, Mike Shur; inset, Arthur Hughes

OBERLIN, Ohio — More than 300 workers and young people from the U.S. and around the world attended the 2019 International Active Workers Conference sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party June 13-15 here. A large banner above the stage at the main sessions read, "Celebrating 100 Years 'On the Right Side of History,'" stressing the party's revolutionary continuity with the 1919 founding of the Communist Party after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

In the opening political report SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, inset, explained, "Communism is not a doctrine, but a movement; it proceeds not from principles, but from facts." This is a quote from an 1847 polemic by Frederick Engels, one of the founders of the modern revolutionary working-class movement along with Karl Marx.

For the first time in human history, Barnes said, there is a social class — the working class — who can find the road to fight for independent political action, take political power and end class exploitation and oppression once and for all.

A second banner above the stage read, "Advancing Along the Line of March of the Working Class; Act on Imperialism's Deepening Political Crisis; Build the Labor Movement; Build the Socialist Workers Party."

"This conference gives confidence to do more work organizing, discussing the road forward with workers on their doorsteps and at labor and social battles," Nicholas Eddington from Seattle, told the *Militant* at the conference. Eddington had met the SWP, gone with party members to Cuba this year on the May Day Brigade, and joined the party.

He spent five years in the U.S. Army, and while stationed in Afghanistan read *The Communist Manifesto* and some books on the Cuban Revolution. "I wanted to find a party that would fit with what I had read," he said.

Full coverage from the conference will appear in coming issues of the *Militant*.

— JANET POST

Bakery's victory against 'racism' smear by college

Continued from previous page

the Lorain County jury on June 7 found the college and Raimondo liable for defamation. It also found the college liable for inflicting intentional emotional distress on the Gibsons, and Raimondo for intentional interference in a business relationship. The jury awarded the bakery owners \$44 million in compensatory and punitive damages.

During the trial, the college's attorney called an "expert" who sought to minimize any possible financial harm to the bakery by dismissing it as being worth only \$35,000 — a statement that must have seemed particularly arrogant and galling to those in the courtroom who

knew that was less than half the annual tuition, room, board and fees of an Oberlin College student.

The college also sought to poor mouth to the jury, complaining it faces financial difficulties and that a large monetary award to Gibson's would be hard to meet. Jurors evidently didn't find this convincing from an institution with a \$1 billion endowment, 18 administrators taking home more than \$100,000 a year, and salaries of half a million for its president and chief financial officer.

Not a 'free speech' issue

Since the verdict, the college administration has sought to counter the decision. Current Oberlin President Carmen Twillie Ambar claims "this is a First Amendment case about whether an institution can be held liable for the speech of its students." In fact, the Gibson's complaint targeted not the students or their right to speak and protest, but the defamatory actions of the college and Raimondo, its vice president. And the jury held the college accountable for what its own represen-

are working to sustain the resistance by passing information, providing financial support to those families in most need and building barricades on

neighborhood streets," the *Financial Times* reported.

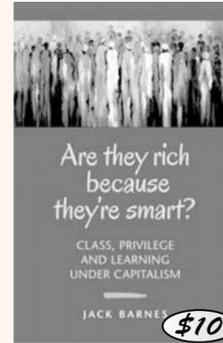
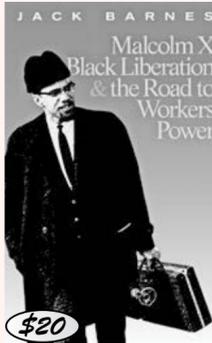
"During the protests you find safety in somebody's house, you meet people from your neighborhood you never knew," mental health worker Sulaima Ishaq Sharif told the paper.

The leader of the military council, Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, called for protest leaders to re-enter negotiations, saying he now projects holding presidential elections in no more than nine months. Protesters have refused, saying there will be no talks as long as the military refuses to give up power.

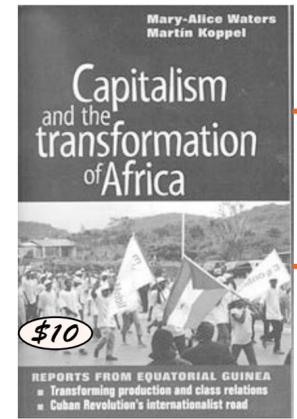
The entire case was about the Oberlin College administration's attitudes of class privilege and entitlement, not freedom of speech. They thought they could defame a small business as racist, with impunity. They never anticipated the Gibson's determination to fight for the truth and dignity, nor the support they would get from working people and others repelled by the college's smear campaign. They were wrong on all counts.

Recommended reading

"The purpose of education in class society is not to educate. The purpose of education is to give 'the educated' a stake in thinking they are going to be different — better off, more 'white collar' — than other people who work all their lives. It is not education. It is confusion and corruption." —Jack Barnes



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Building a party capable of leading workers to power

This excerpt is from *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon. It is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for July. It records the struggle to build a party, proletarian in program and composition, that can lead working people to topple capitalist rule. It is a companion volume to *In Defense of Marxism* by Leon Trotsky. Both were written as part of the political battle led by Trotsky against a petty-bourgeois opposition in the Socialist Workers Party that recoiled from the party's proletarian course under patriotic pressure on the eve of the Second World War. Cannon was a founder of the communist movement in the U.S. and national secretary of the SWP from 1938 to 1953. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



James P. Cannon, second from left, and other convicted members of Socialist Workers Party and Teamsters union march in Minneapolis, 1943, to begin prison sentences for organizing opposition to U.S. entry into WWII. Cannon led fight to lead SWP deeper into industrial unions.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

The present crisis in the party is no mere episode. It is not to be explained by simple differences of opinion such as have occurred at times in the past, and will always occur in a free and democratic party. The crisis is the direct reflection of alien class pressure upon the party. Under this pressure the bulk of the petty-bourgeois elements, and the petty-bourgeois leaders, lost their heads completely, while the proletarian sections of

the party stand firm and rally around the program with a virtual unanimity.

From this we can and must draw certain conclusions:

1. It is not sufficient for the party to have a proletarian program; it also requires a proletarian composition. Otherwise the program can be turned into a scrap of paper overnight.

2. This crisis cannot be resolved simply by taking a vote at the convention and reaffirming the program by majority vote. The party must proceed from there to a real proletarianization of its ranks. ...

Burnham is concerned first of all with "democratic guarantees" against degeneration of the party after the revolution. We are concerned first of all with building a party that will be capable of leading the revolution. Burnham's conception of party democracy is that of a perpetual talking shop in which discussions go on forever and nothing is ever firmly decided. ...

Our conception of the party is radically different. For us the party must be a combat organization which leads a determined struggle for power. The Bolshevik party which leads the struggle for power needs not only internal democracy. It also requires an imperious centralism and an iron discipline in action. It requires a proletarian composition conforming to its proletarian program. The Bolshevik party cannot be led by dilettantes whose real interests and real

lives are in another and alien world. It requires an active professional leadership, composed of individuals democratically selected and democratically controlled, who devote their entire lives to the party, and who find in the party and in its multifarious activities in a proletarian environment, complete personal satisfaction.

For the proletarian revolutionist the party is the concentrated expression of his life purpose, and he is bound to it for life and death. He preaches and practices party patriotism, because he knows that his socialist ideal cannot be realized without the party. In his eyes the crime of crimes is disloyalty or irresponsibility toward the party. The proletarian revolutionist is proud of his party. He defends it before the world on all occasions. The proletarian revolutionist is a disciplined man, since the party cannot exist as a combat organization without discipline. When he finds himself in the minority, he loyally submits to the decision of the party and carries out its decisions, while he awaits new events to verify the disputes or new opportunities to discuss them again. ...

Organization questions and organizational methods are not independent of political lines, but subordinate to them. As a rule, the organizational methods flow from the political line. Indeed, the whole significance of organization is to realize a political program. ...

Our movement, the movement of sci-

entific socialism, judges things and people from a class point of view. Our aim is the organization of a vanguard party to lead the proletarian struggle for power and the reconstitution of society on socialist foundations. That is our "science." We judge all people coming to us from another class by the extent of their real identification with our class, and the contributions they can make which aid the proletariat in its struggle against the capitalist class. That is the framework within which we objectively consider the problem of the intellectuals in the movement. If at least 99 out of every 100 intellectuals — to speak with the utmost "conservatism" — who approach the revolutionary labor movement turn out to be more of a problem than an asset it is not at all because of our prejudices against them, or because we do not treat them with the proper consideration, but because they do not comply with the requirements which alone can make them useful to us in our struggle.

In the *Communist Manifesto*, in which the theory and program of scientific socialism was first formally promulgated, it was already pointed out that the disintegration of the ruling capitalist class precipitates sections of that class into the proletariat; and that others — a smaller section to be sure, and mainly individuals — cut themselves adrift from the decaying capitalist class and supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress. Marx and Engels themselves, the founders of the movement of scientific socialism, came to the proletariat from another class. The same thing is true of all the other great teachers of our movement, without exception.

[V.I.] Lenin, [Leon] Trotsky, [Georgi] Plekhanov, [Rosa] Luxemburg — none of them were proletarians in their social origin, but they came over to the proletariat and became the greatest of proletarian leaders. In order to do that, however, they had to desert their own class and join "the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands." They made this transfer of class allegiance unconditionally and without any reservations. Only so could they become genuine representatives of their adopted class, and merge themselves completely with it, and eliminate every shadow of conflict between them and revolutionists of proletarian origin.

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— SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT — US hands off Iran! End sanctions!

Continued from front page

following Washington's moves June 17 to send 1,000 more troops to the Mideast — on top of forces already deployed there rivaling the entire military of most nations on earth. The U.S. capitalist rulers are also imposing punishing new economic sanctions on Iran in the wake of the June 20 shoot-down of an unmanned U.S. drone by Tehran.

The U.S. government seeks to use its unmatched military and economic might to impose its will on rivals worldwide. The goal of the U.S. capitalist rulers is to defend and advance their economic and political sway.

Every action the U.S. rulers take abroad — and at home! — is aimed at maximizing their profits by extending and intensifying the exploitation of workers and farmers.

The White House and top Democratic and Republican leaders in Congress say “we” are threatened by Iran. But there is no “we.” The class interests of working people and the wealthy ruling families are the polar opposite. *Their* profits come from *our* labor, and from the labor of our fellow working people *worldwide*. When the U.S. rulers

act to protect their top-dog status anywhere — in the Middle East, Central Asia, Vietnam, you name it — working people here are the cannon fodder they send to fight, to die, or to come home maimed with our futures shattered for a lifetime.

They call on us to sacrifice to defend their profits. That's been true in every one of U.S. imperialism's modern wars.

It is the U.S. rulers and their twin political parties who have invaded Iraq twice. It is they who have sent hundreds of thousands of U.S. GIs to Afghanistan in Washington's longest war, with no end in sight. It is they who threaten workers and farmers across the Mideast with massive military power.

The crushing economic sanctions they impose — against Tehran, and against Cuba, Venezuela and North Korea — devastate the living conditions of working people first and foremost.

Socialist Workers Party branches in the Bay Area and Seattle in recent weeks have helped organize street actions against Washington's moves against Iran. Working people and youth here and the world over should stand ready to organize public protests against further U.S. government escalations.

Washington steps up threats, squeeze on Iran

Continued from front page

ate last night on 3 different sites” inside Iran, but called it off with 10 minutes to spare. He said he was told by the Pentagon these strikes would “kill 150 Iranians,” and that he had decided such an attack was “disproportionate” to the downing of a pilotless drone.

Hours later the president told NBC, “I'm not looking for war,” but then threatened, “If there is, it'll be obliteration [of Iran] like you've never seen before.”

The shutdown came three days after Washington announced the deployment of another 1,000 U.S. troops to the region. This comes on top of the more than 20,000 soldiers and an arsenal of warships, bombers and land and seaborne missiles it already stations across the Middle East to defend the U.S. rulers' profitable oil properties and other economic and political interests.

At the same time as Washington tightens its noose on Iran, squeezing workers and farmers there, it is demanding that the Iranian government agree to new negotiations.

The Pentagon sent additional troops after two oil tankers, one Norwegian-owned and the other Japanese-owned, were attacked June 13 in the Gulf of Oman. Washington says the attacks, which damaged the ships without seriously injuring anyone, were orchestrated by Tehran. The attacks came as Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was meeting with leaders in Tehran in an attempt to “mediate” in the conflict on behalf of Washington.

Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan said the 1,000 troops were needed to counter the “hostile behavior of Iranian forces and their proxy groups,” referring to militias that Tehran arms and trains in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen to advance its counterrevolutionary course in the region.

The Trump administration hopes its military threats and economic punishment can force Iran's rulers to rein in the militias and end programs enabling the development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles.

Divisions among Iran rulers

There are divisions within both the Iranian regime and the Revolutionary Guard, including about the wisdom of shooting down the U.S. drone. The *New York Times* said that at least one Revolutionary

Guard senior commander and other government leaders were “frustrated or furious with the tactical commander who made the decision to shoot down the American drone.”

The Revolutionary Guard, which operates separately from the government armed forces, has been at the forefront of efforts to extend the bourgeois clerical regime's influence across the region. Its elite Quds Force, officially responsible to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, contains factions that operate to advance their own rival interests within the clerical hierarchy and state bureaucracy. Some are itching for an armed conflict with Washington.

The Guard Corps has 100,000 soldiers, controls a militia of another 600,000, and has its own air force and navy, which is larger than Iran's regular navy. It controls its own business empire, which includes construction and running the national airport.

The U.S. government designated the Revolutionary Guard a “terrorist organization” in April, imposing sanctions on its officials.

New economic pounding

More sanctions targeting Khamenei, government officials and eight commanders of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard were imposed by Washington June 24, with bipartisan support in Congress.

The punishing economic strictures worsen the deteriorating conditions working people in Iran face. The annual inflation rate topped 50% last month, its highest level since 1980. Over a quarter of all young people are unemployed.

Working people also bear the toll from the destructive wars Iran's capitalist rulers are waging abroad. Tehran presses workers and farmers in Iran, as well as from Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere into “volunteering” to join militias, which it uses to intervene in the region's conflicts.

Politicians and commentators across the bourgeois spectrum in U.S. politics seek to draw an equal sign between today's reactionary Iranian clerical regime and the 1979 Iranian Revolution — in which millions of working people overthrew the hated U.S.-backed shah of Iran. But this regime is in fact a product of a bloody counterrevolution in the early 1980s that pushed back many gains working people had made over the first few years following the 1979 popular upsurge.

As the U.S. rulers ratchet up their pressure, the Iranian rulers continue to advance their counterrevolutionary foreign military operations. Iranian military commanders proposed June 24 to the Iraqi government new joint military exercises between Tehran-organized forces there and the Iraqi army, which also carries out joint operations with the more than 5,000 U.S. troops stationed in Iraq.

Joyce Meissenheimer: Communist fighter



Militant/John Steele

Joyce Meissenheimer in Toronto in December 2007.

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL — Joyce Meissenheimer, 96, a member and cadre of the Communist League in Canada for almost 50 years, died in Calgary June 7 of heart failure. Before coming to Canada, Meissenheimer was a fighter against the apartheid regime in South Africa for more than two decades. For the last 20 years of her life, deteriorating health prevented her from active participation in political life.

Born in 1922 in Capetown, South Africa, Joyce grew up under the jurisdiction of the Coloured Affairs Department, one of the apartheid government institutions depriving non-Caucasians of political rights. In 1937, at the age of 15, her father took her to her first demonstration against racial segregation.

She married George Meissenheimer and they had four children — Martin, Richard, Linda, and Laura. She became head of a parent-teacher organization that campaigned against the Coloured Affairs Department.

From 1948 to 1961 Meissenheimer was the editor of the *Torch*, the publication of the Non-European Unity Movement. Because the paper exposed the injustices and brutalities rampant under the apartheid system, supporters of the paper lived under constant police surveillance.

In 1961, Meissenheimer was “banned” — meaning she could not participate in meetings of more than two people. Because of this stifling restriction on her political activity, and that her husband was ill with a heart condition, they decided to move to Vancouver in 1965.

She joined the League for Socialist Action, one of the predecessor organizations of the CL. She threw herself into building the group's weekly Friday night forum series and took part in rising actions opposing Washington's war against the people of Vietnam and the Canadian capitalist rulers' complicity with it.

In 1969 Meissenheimer joined the fight to repeal Canada's restrictive abortion laws, leading to the Canadian Supreme Court's ruling repealing them in 1988. She continued to fight to extend access to family-planning services for women, including abortion.

In 1977, Meissenheimer helped lead the successful political fight to fuse the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere with two other revolutionary organizations — the Revolutionary Marxist Group and Groupe Marxiste Revolutionnaire. This led to the formation of the Revolutionary Workers League, which changed its name to the Communist League in 1989. She was a strong supporter of the CL's efforts to get the overwhelming majority of its membership into industry and the trade unions.

She was a member of CL branches in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal until 2001, when poor health forced her to move to live with her son Richard.

She remained in contact with the League, following its political work and supporting its activities, for the rest of her life.

Celebrate Joyce Meissenheimer's political life

Montreal, Saturday, July 20

Reception, 2 p.m.; program, 3 p.m.

Centre St. Pierre, room 203 — Roger Poirer,
1212 Panet. For more info: (514) 272-5840

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