

THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 83/NO. 28 AUGUST 5, 2019

'I'd like to see the miners fighting back everywhere'

BY TONY LANE
AND PAUL MAILHOT

NEW HILL, W.Va. — Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president in 2016 and a former coal miner, and other SWP campaigners joined Judy Gillespie on her porch here July 20, discussing the SWP's program. Gillespie got into the mines in 1977, and worked underground for 12 years, much of that time as a roof bolter.

"The conditions have changed since we were miners," Gillespie said, pointing to how the unions have gotten weaker. She described a nearby nonunion mine where "the company has a room with cots. They put pressure on miners to work eight hours on and eight hours off and have you sleep at the mine between your shifts. It's like they think they own you."

Kennedy pointed to miners' struggles that have stopped coal bosses from imposing those types of conditions, including the 2003-04 strike

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Moonwalk 50 years on - what it shows about life on earth

BY JOHN STUDER

All the daily big-business press — and discussions by workers in bodegas, ball games and barbecues — this week have touched on the 50th anniversary of the U.S. 1969 moon launch and Buzz Aldrin's and Neil Armstrong's walks there.

Of course the capitalist politicians and media use the anniversary to promote the prestige of U.S. imperialism and the idea that "we" were — and therefore must also today be — great and noble. It's useful to remember that 1969 was a high point of U.S. imperialism's bloody war against the people of Vietnam. And today the U.S. rulers' capitalist system is in crisis and Washington is enmeshed in wars across the Middle East and in Afghanistan, and is threatening the people of Iran, Venezuela and Cuba.

And, by the way, there is no "we." There are two main social classes in the U.S., the small class of capitalist rulers, with their larger cohort of

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Huge Puerto Rico marches demand governor resign

Support the fight to end US colonial rule!



Reuters/Gabriella N. Baez

July 17 protest demanding resignation of Gov. Ricardo Rosselló in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Hundreds of thousands have marched. Question posed is what should working people do next.

BY SETH GALINSKY

The July 23 march of some half a million people in San Juan, Puerto Rico, made it clear that the daily actions there since July 13 won't stop until Ricardo Rosselló resigns as governor. And that his resignation won't put an end to the

decades against the will of the Puerto Rican people.

The immediate spark of the protests was the July 13 release of more than 800 pages of online "chats" between Rosselló and his closest officials and advisers in the New Progressive Party. They

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Hundreds protest gov't refusal to charge cop who killed Eric Garner



Associated Press/Bebeto Matthews

New York rally July 17 after federal government refused to press charges against cop who killed Eric Garner. Gwen Carr, Garner's mother, at center, vowed to continue to fight for cop's firing.

BY JANET POST

NEW YORK — "We are Eric Garner! We need justice and we need it now!" hundreds of demonstrators chanted July 17 as they marched to police headquarters here demanding the cop who killed Garner be fired. Five years earlier Garner, a 43-year-old worker, was brutally assaulted by cops on Staten Island. One of them, Daniel Pantaleo, was captured on video by bystanders putting a chokehold around Garner's neck, which caused his death.

The day before the rally the U.S. Justice Department had announced it would not bring civil rights charges against Pantaleo. This came as the five-year statute of limitations for any charges elapsed.

"If he doesn't get fired, we're going to do this every day," Emerald Snipes-Garner, his daughter, told protesters.

"We have to get those officers fired. The ones who were on the scene that day who murdered my son," Gwen Carr, Garner's mother, told the rally.

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SWP: Independence for Puerto Rico!

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deep political crisis in the U.S. colony.

Protesters came from all across the island. Some even flew from the United States to join in. It was several times larger than the historic Feb. 21, 2000, march demanding the U.S. Navy get out of Vieques. The Navy had used the small island as a live bombing range for

US rulers step up threats, sanctions against Iran - US hands off!

BY TERRY EVANS

Washington continues to increase its substantial military forces in the Middle East, amid deepening tensions with the bourgeois clerical rulers in Tehran, as Iranian Revolutionary Guards provocatively seized a British-flagged oil tanker and its crew of 23, July 19. The U.S. government has imposed debilitating economic sanctions on Iran, which worsen the conditions of life for working people and cripple the production and trade of the capitalist rulers there.

The tanker seizure comes after Brit-

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Florida prisons ban 'Militant' for reporting on prison censorship

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Florida prison officials informed the *Militant* they have impounded issues no. 24 and 25 of the paper, claiming articles reporting on the fight against prison censorship is "a threat to the security, good order, or discipline of the correctional system." As

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Fight to keep family planning clinics open that offer abortion 6

'Toilers of East awakening is part of world revolution' 8

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Indiana Machinists fight for health care, higher pay

Quebec workers strike senior residences for \$15 minimum pay

Hansen described the immediate gains in scientific knowledge from the successful landing, what scientists would be able to learn about the

“The men who decided on the space program are not primarily interested in science,” Hansen explains. “They are interested in the tie-up between the space program and the arms race.



Mumford pointed to the fact that the effort to bring off the moon landing coincided with government cuts in education, hospital services, libraries and museums, defilement of the environment, “to say nothing of many other evidences of gross social failure and human deterioration.”

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant's* views. These are expressed in editorials.

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia, A\$10 • United Kingdom, £3 • Canada, Can\$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £10 • France, 8 euros • New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, NZ\$7 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

‘Like to see miners fight back’

Continued from front page

for union recognition she was part of in Huntington, Utah. “It was led by young miners, many of them originally from Mexico. We put up stiff resistance to the bosses’ demands, got support far and wide, and pushed them back. We will see that kind of struggle again.”

“I’d like to see it happen everywhere,” said Gillespie.

She wanted to learn more about the party and its program, and got *Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions*, as well as *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?*; *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*; and *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, all by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, along with a *Militant* subscription.

More than a dozen campaigners joined Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett to knock on doors, July 18-21, in towns and coal areas in western Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and in Pittsburgh’s City Council District 1, where Jarrett is the SWP candidate. A dozen people signed up for subscriptions to the *Militant* and bought 11 books by leaders of the SWP. Some 90 people added their names to a petition to put Jarrett on the ballot.

‘Things have to change’

“Things have to change,” health worker Christy Cozby told Jarrett and Kennedy at her door in Pittsburgh. “Housing should be a public utility,” she suggested, “so working people

can afford decent places to live.”

“How is the SWP different from the Democratic Socialists of America?” Cozby asked.

“The DSA is part of the Democratic Party, which is a linchpin of the two-party system that helps to maintain the exploitation and oppression of working people,” Kennedy said. “The SWP presents the opposite course. We fight for independent working-class political action, and for working people to take power out of the hands of the war makers, the wealthy owners who cut wages and living conditions, who attack the rights of women and oppose equality for Blacks, who exploit immigrant workers and deny the rights of workers behind bars.”

The SWP draws on the rich history of the working-class movement in this country and around the world, Kennedy said. Cozby got a copy of *Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions*, by Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Farrell Dobbs and Jack Barnes, and subscribed to the *Militant*.

The SWP’s demand for U.S. rulers to keep their hands off Iran, as well as Venezuela and Cuba, got a good response from many workers SWP campaigners met. “They tell us we’re defending our country, but we’re defending oil,” Army veteran Eric Dunbar told Mike Galati in the Beltzhoover neighborhood of Pittsburgh. “They do us dirty while we’re fighting their wars.”

“The Democrats have 24 announced candidates for the party’s



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

Alyson Kennedy, SWP 2016 candidate for president, center, and Malcolm Jarrett, SWP candidate for Pittsburgh City Council, talk with Christy Cozby, a health care worker in Pittsburgh.

presidential nomination in 2020, and Donald Trump is also running,” Kennedy told participants at a Pittsburgh campaign meeting July 20. “None of these capitalist politicians will do anything for working people.”

And the Democrats are being torn apart by race-baiting each other, trying to intimidate and shut up those they have political disagreement with, Kennedy said. Race-baiting is a scourge for working people, who need to be able to discuss and debate a way forward out of a crisis caused by the capitalist system the Democrats of all stripes defend.

Bosses everywhere are gearing up to

“cut labor costs,” Jarrett said, because of increasing capitalist competition and because they sense our unions are weaker today. “The auto and airline bosses are talking openly about how much they plan to cut workers’ wages and living standards and undermine safety in upcoming contract negotiations.

Break with bosses’ two parties

“The SWP is running candidates across the country who are putting solidarity with the struggles of working people at the center of our campaigns,” he said. “To strengthen those fights the party demands amnesty for all 11-plus million undocumented immigrants in this country, so the labor movement can build unity to fight the bosses.”

Jarrett will be speaking out on the need to fight for workers control over production and safety at a public hearing held by the Allegheny County Health Department in Clairton, Pennsylvania, July 30. U.S. Steel was cited for fouling the air and soil from its coke works there. The hearing is to debate a draft settlement between steel bosses and the health department.

He will also campaign at a free dental clinic being held at the Pittsburgh hockey arena July 25-26, where thousands of working people, who find it hard to afford dental care for their families, are hoping to receive some otherwise unobtainable treatment.

“We say workers must have universal government-guaranteed health care they need,” Jarrett said. “The Democrats and Republicans only offer working people health insurance schemes — from Medicare-for-all to variants of Obamacare.”

“Workers and farmers showed what is possible in Cuba when they made a revolution in 1959. They showed how working people can transform their conditions as they transform themselves to reorder the priorities of society to provide for the vast majority of working people, not the tiny minority of profit takers,” he said. “We’ll be talking about that example when we campaign on the long lines everyone expects there.”

Next weekend Kennedy will join Joel Britton, SWP candidate for mayor of San Francisco, to campaign throughout Northern California. For more information about the SWP campaign nearest you, check the directory on page 8.

Arlene Rubinstein contributed to this article.

Socialist Workers Party 2019 campaign program

The Socialist Workers Party’s fighting program to confront the economic, social and moral crisis caused by capitalism:

UNIONS Support workers’ struggles to organize and strengthen unions, to use union power to defend ourselves and all working people. *One union for all drivers* — taxi, Uber, Lyft, other app-based and car service drivers! Support farmworkers in their fight to organize unions and for safe working conditions.

AMNESTY FOR ALL UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS in the US, a life-and-death question for the unions to unite workers and cut across divisions the bosses use to drive down wages. For access to driver’s licenses for all.

JOBS Fight for a federal government-financed public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages

building roads, bridges, hospitals, child care centers, mass transportation and quality affordable housing workers need. Set the minimum wage to allow workers to have a home and support a family.

OPPOSE WASHINGTON’S WARS US hands off Iran, Venezuela, and Cuba. US troops out of Afghanistan, Korea, the Middle East. End US colonial rule in Puerto Rico.

CUBA — AN EXAMPLE End the embargo against Cuba; US out of Guantánamo. The Cuban Revolution in 1959 showed it is possible for workers and farmers to transform themselves in struggle, to take political power and uproot capitalist exploitation.

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL Fight for universal, government-guaranteed health care and retirement income for all.

ABORTION Defend women’s right to unrestricted access to family planning services, including the right to safe, secure abortions.

ISRAEL & PALESTINE For the recognition of Israel and of a contiguous Palestinian state. For the right of Jews to return to Israel as a refuge in the face of capitalist crisis, Jew-hatred, and murderous violence.

LAND AND LABOR Capitalism’s profit drive is the despoiler of nature and cause of unsafe working conditions. Workers and our unions must fight for workers control over production and safety in the factories, mines, railroads and all energy monopolies to protect those on the job and in nearby communities, and to control emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases and prevent the poisoning of the air, water and soil. Workers control over production to prevent disasters like the Boeing 737 MAX.

“JUSTICE” SYSTEM Fight against police brutality, racist discrimination and the entire capitalist injustice system with its frame-ups, “plea bargains,” onerous bail, and outrageous prison sentences, all of which disproportionately hit workers who are Black. For the right to vote for ex-prisoners and all workers behind bars.

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS Defend democratic rights — the right to vote, to free speech and assembly, and to bear arms, under attack from Democrats and Republicans alike. Stop FBI and other government spying, harassment and disruption.

PRISONER RIGHTS End solitary confinement. End censorship of the *Militant*, books and newspapers by prison authorities. Abolish the death penalty, an anti-working-class weapon in the hands of the rulers.

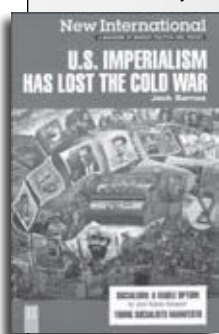
FARMERS — WORKERS ALLIES ON THE LAND To put a halt to farm foreclosures, bankruptcies and skyrocketing rural debt, we demand nationalization of the land. This puts the soil at the service of the farmers who till it, as opposed to control by the banks and landlords. We demand the government guarantee farmers their costs of production, including their living expenses.

Working people must organize and act independent of the ruling capitalists and break from their political parties — the Democrats and Republicans. A movement of millions can be built to fight for these demands along a course to replace the rule of the exploitative capitalist class with a workers and farmers government.

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign!

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

by Jack Barnes



U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War, the Socialist Workers Party concluded after the collapse of regimes and parties across Eastern Europe and the USSR that claimed to be communist. Contrary to imperialism’s hopes, the working class there has not been crushed.

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Six years after Lac-Megantic, how to fight for rail safety?

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

It has been six years since a driverless 72-car oil train rolled into downtown Lac-Megantic in Quebec at 65 mph, derailed and exploded, killing 47 people and leveling the city's downtown. But the conditions facing rail workers, and those living near rail tracks, remain as dangerous as ever, as profit-driven rail bosses press for longer trains at faster speeds with smaller crews.

"Not much has changed since that night in Lac-Megantic," wrote *New York Times* correspondent Ian Austen from a visit there for a July 16 article on the anniversary of the disaster. "The core of the town remains a wasteland, with much of the once-vibrant downtown a weed lot."

But the rail tracks were the first things rebuilt downtown and put back in operation, as area bosses depend upon them to profit off shipments to and from the town's factories. While the tracks are six years older, maintenance "remains largely unchanged from the time of the disaster," wrote the *Times*.

While there was much handwringing by authorities after the disaster, ongoing derailments and deaths — in both Canada and the U.S. — have continued. And 62 "runaway" trains in Canada took off on their own in 2017.

Lac-Megantic residents have demanded a rail bypass around the town be constructed for trains carrying hazardous materials, but the federal and Quebec governments have been slow to act. They finally agreed last year to fund such a project, but its completion date is four years away.

After Lac-Megantic, the national regulatory agency Transport Canada ordered rail bosses to review their train routes to see if dangerous goods could be rerouted around urban areas. When the *Times* reporter asked the two main Canadian railroads — Canadian Pacific and Canadian National — what they had changed, they refused to answer, referring the paper to the Railway Association of Canada, their lobbying group. The association also refused to answer, citing supposed "security purposes."

The U.S. Federal Railroad Administration told the *Times* such cargo is

rarely rerouted because "alternatives may increase overall transit time" — i.e., cut profits.

'Blame the workers'

The rail bosses and Canadian government tried to blame the Lac-Megantic disaster on the workers. But the only "crew" on the train was engineer Tom Harding. To cut costs, the bosses had gotten special dispensation from the government to operate with a one-person crew running on 12-hour shifts.

In accord with company procedures, Harding had kept the lead engine running to engage the air brakes when he left the train for the night and also set hand brakes to prevent the train from rolling downhill. During the night, firefighters, who had been called to put out a small fire — caused by company neglect of maintenance — shut down the engine, which let the air brakes bleed out. Without air brakes the train rolled into Lac-Megantic and exploded.

After a three-month trial last year, the judge found Harding, train traffic controller Richard Labrie, both members of United Steelworkers Local 1976, and Jean Demaitre, a low-level former manager of now defunct Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway, "not guilty" on all counts in the deaths of 47 people.

"This verdict is a victory for workers," Gilbert Carrette, a member of the Citizens and Groups Coalition for Rail Safety in Lac-Megantic that has been fighting for a rail bypass, told the *Militant* after the trial. "This tragedy, caused by company negligence and government deregulation of the rail industry, was placed on the shoulders of innocent workers."

"One man crew should never exist," Montreal rail worker J.C., who asked that his full name not be used, said to the *Militant*. The government should not be "giving the free reins to a private company to organize and evaluate safety."

There has been an increase in derailments, injuries and deaths of rail



Paul Chiasson/The Canadian Press

Runaway oil tanker train derailment in Lac-Megantic, Quebec, July 6, 2013, killed 47 people. Rail bosses' push for more profits through long and fatiguing shift patterns, one-person crews, longer trains, and running dangerous freight through cities and towns threatens more disasters.

workers on North American railroads as the bosses push for more work assignments at a faster pace with less crew and inadequate track maintenance. This new operating scheme designed to boost profits is called "precision scheduled railroading." The system — first used in Canada and now spreading to most major railroads in the U.S. — centers on squeezing shippers to have loaded cars ready faster, assembling trains that contain 200-plus cars by one-person crews using a remote control, and fighting to reduce operating crews to one.

Over 1,300 derailments in 2018

There were more than 1,300 train derailments in the U.S. last year and 230 so far this year, according to the Federal Railroad Administration.

"Not knowing at what time we will work makes operations dangerous," Philippe Bourdon-Tremblay, a five-year rail worker in Quebec, told the *Militant*. "The same bosses who work 9 to 5 demand that we be on call 24 hours, 365 days a year, with most of the time only two hours' notice to be

on the job. The maintenance of equipment by the bosses is minimal, because investing in safety for employees isn't profitable."

Three rail workers were killed in February when a mile-long Canadian Pacific train with drained air brakes and 112 loaded grain hoppers rolled down a steep grade in British Columbia. In June a Union Pacific freight train carrying bombs and other military munitions derailed near Elko, Nevada.

And rail bosses are pushing to run even longer and heavier trains. Earlier this year a 278-car coal train — 2 1/2 miles long — was sent as a "test" from a Powder River Basin mine in Wyoming to a power plant in Wisconsin.

"We should fight for no trains over 50 cars in length, with four-person crews — with two engineers on the locomotive and two on the rear of the train," said Joe Swanson, a retired rail worker with 31 years' experience, who recently ran as Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Lincoln, Nebraska. "For a safe workplace we must use union power and fight for workers control."

Gov't refuses to charge cop who killed Eric Garner

Continued from front page

"So we're calling on the [Mayor Bill] de Blasio administration: Fire those cops. You have the power. Assert your power."

The order by Attorney General William Barr said the Justice Department couldn't prove Pantaleo "willfully used excessive force," the July 16 *New York Times* reported.

For five years, the Garner family has been speaking out, attending hearings and fighting in solidarity with families of other victims of police brutality. "My son's death is not going to be in vain," said Carr. "And I've got all of these supporters behind me."

The cops claim Garner was approached because he was selling loose, untaxed cigarettes outside a beauty supply store, even though the police admit they were 300 feet away when they saw this. The cops approached Garner, and Pantaleo grabbed him around the neck. He and three other cops threw Garner to the ground. Keeping him in a chokehold, Pantaleo pushed Garner's

head to the sidewalk and put his knee on Garner's back while other officers piled on and handcuffed him.

As he lay dying, Garner cried out, "I can't breathe" 11 times. This has since become a rallying cry for protests against police brutality across the country.

The autopsy report said the primary causes of Garner's death were "compression of neck, compression of chest and prone positioning during physical restraint by police." The medical examiner classified it a "homicide." Thousands took to the streets to protest when a Staten Island grand jury refused to indict Pantaleo in 2014.

NY police say cop may face discipline

A spokesman for Mayor de Blasio told the press the police commissioner is expected to decide by Aug. 31 whether Pantaleo will face any discipline.

The mayor has tried to deflect blame for the fact that he never made any effort to have Pantaleo fired. "In a million years, I could not have believed

that the Justice Department would act the way it did," he told the press after the decision. He said he "regretted" he didn't move to begin disciplinary hearings.

"Pantaleo has got to go!" Hawa Bah, whose son Mohamed Bah was killed by New York cops in 2012, told the *Militant*. "They are doing the same thing they did with the cops who killed my son, it took years before I won any justice. At the very least they should fire him."

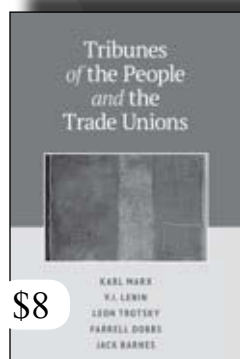
"People have got to keep on marching!" she added.

Snipes-Garner announced another rally for July 30 "to remember Eric Garner and continue to keep his memory alive while still fighting for justice." It's at 6 p.m. at the Canaan Baptist Church in Harlem at 132 W. 116 St.

"I urge people to join the gathering," Seth Galinsky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City public advocate, said July 21. "It's in the interest of all workers to unite and speak out against police violence. Join in demanding the city fire Pantaleo."

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Are you involved in a union organizing drive or strike? Brought solidarity to fellow workers on the picket line? Let us know! Send articles, photos and letters to themilitant@mac.com or through our website, or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Indiana Machinists strike for health care, higher pay

VALPARAISO, Ind. — Some 80 striking members of International Association of Machinists Local 2018 rallied here July 15 ahead of afternoon negotiations with Regal Beloit bosses. They were joined by family members and other area unionists in a lively protest outside the plant. One of the more popular chants was “Affordable health care now.”

The unionists have been on strike since June 30 for higher wages and against company demands that they pay more for health care, a monthly premium equal to a full week’s pay.

At first the bosses lied and told them company property extends way to the road, so they had to set up their 24-hour picket on the front lawn of a house owned by a member of the United Steelworkers union across from the plant. But Vernon Beck, president of the United Steelworkers local at the Northern Indiana Public Service Company, told the *Militant* that he found proof the company *doesn’t* own the property by the road. So now strikers picket at the plant entrance.

Janet Fox, who has worked at the company for 43 years, said that in the last contract the bosses froze their pensions. Then they junked the pensions, replacing them with a 401(k), into which the company contributed a paltry 6%. Now, he said, they’re not even doing that. She also said the company tried to bribe them into agreeing to the concession with a signing “bonus” of \$650.

“The spirit of the strike is good,” maintenance worker Russell Bramlet said.

—Dean Hazlewood

Moonshot

Continued from page 2

Apollo 11 triumph may yet be the impact it has on bringing man, the tool-making animal, to realize that he has become sufficiently skilled with tools, and that now he must master his social and economic relations if he is not to perish from what the tool has become.”

Today some of the richest of the rich — off our backs and our labor — have raked in enough profits to launch their own for-profit rocket businesses. The world’s richest person, Amazon owner Jeff Bezos, has his Blue Origin space tourism company, and tech guru Elon Musk his SpaceX venture. Richard Branson’s Virgin Galactic, which has yet to successfully put a rocket in the air, has 680 people with money to burn signed up on its travel list, having paid a deposit of \$200,000 each.

But, as Joe Hansen indicates, working people increasingly see that it will only be when we conquer what we are capable of — of uniting working people together and fighting for a new world, transforming ourselves in the process — that we can conquer political power, a workers and farmers government.

And, as we use that power to transform the planet and eliminate want, we’ll also reconquer science and begin reaching to the stars.

Quebec workers strike senior residences for \$15 minimum pay

MONTREAL — Some 950 workers in 10 private senior residences went on strike here, in Quebec City and six other towns in Quebec. The walkout, a weeklong in most places, continued through July 20. “Our main demand is for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage,” Meki Mnasek, a representative of Quebec Service Employees Union Local 298, told the *Militant* on the picket line at the Elogia retirement home July 15.

The average pay now is 13.50 Canadian dollars an hour (\$10.30). They are demanding CA\$1 more in each of a three-year contract. The workers include orderlies, kitchen workers, housekeepers, maintenance workers and auxiliary nurses.

“It is impossible to live with the low wages,” Mnasek said. “Many of the workers are single mothers.” Workers are overworked because the residences are understaffed. And this has a serious impact on the seniors who live there, he said.

Many workers driving by honk as they pass the animated picket line where strikers chant and ring bells. Some of the seniors in the residence are wearing union T-shirts and have brought pizzas to picketers, Mnasek said.

The workers had walked out for three days in May and are planning further strike action if they don’t get their demands.

This correspondent told the strikers that I work at Walmart, where many workers also earn less than CA\$15 an hour. I told them I’d get the word out about their fight to my co-workers.

—Joe Young

Baltimore Symphony musicians protest lockout, moves to cut pay

BALTIMORE — Chanting “Step up, step down, Baltimore’s a union town,” and “If we can’t make the mu-



Militant/Salm Kolis

IAM Local 2018 members, on strike against Regal Beloit in Valparaiso, Indiana, and supporters rally July 15 for higher wages, against bosses’ demand that workers pay more for health care.

sic, we can make some noise,” Baltimore Symphony Orchestra musicians, members of Local 40-543 of the American Federation of Musicians, and their supporters picketed outside the Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, July 11.

Claiming they were broke, management canceled the summer concert series May 30, locked the musicians out June 16, and is proposing a 20% wage cut.

The union members had intended to wrap up picketing in June, but “we are having too much fun banging on buckets and metal bowls, yelling chants, and asking people to honk their horns,” said Mary Plaine, the local’s secretary-treasurer, on the Metro Washington Council AFL-CIO website.

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra members played in a public protest when the police killing of Freddie Gray sparked outrage here and around the country in 2015. After some protesters and youth exploded in anger, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan declared a state of emergency and called in 2,000 National Guard troops to help Baltimore’s 3,000-strong police force to enforce a nighttime curfew.

The musicians responded by playing music downtown. “A city under a curfew like that reminded me of when the U.S. descended on Iraq. So many times we think, ‘We should have done something.’ So I called everybody, and we organized it,” oboist Michael Lisicky told the *Militant* at the picket.

The free performance was an important act in defense of the right to protest.

—Arlene Rubinstein

Read about the battles that forged the US labor movement



See distributors on page 8, or order at www.pathfinderpress.com

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 8, 1994

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — Some 1,200 United Transportation Union members, joined by more than 3,000 fellow rail unionists honoring picket lines, have shut down the ninth-largest U.S. rail carrier — Canadian Pacific. Workers struck July 13 when four years of negotiations finally collapsed after a 30-day “cooling off” period ended.

Up to 95 percent of the CP’s rail traffic was initially halted on more than 5,000 miles of track in 11 Midwestern states. Teamster-organized truck drivers refused to deliver batteries and other parts when they were approached by union pickets, who urged them to honor their lines here.

At stake in the strike are the jobs of hundreds of UTU members that will disappear if the rail barons are successful in reducing current two-person road freight and yard switching crews to a single worker, along with an engineer.



August 8, 1969

There are currently 3,500 more troops in Vietnam than there were when Johnson left office seven months ago. The figures make clear, “President Nixon’s plans to withdraw troops from Vietnam aren’t getting anywhere at the moment.”

A July 27 *Chicago News* dispatch noted, “There are now 535,500 uniformed U.S. military personnel in Vietnam. Pentagon officials explain that the routine troop replacement program for Vietnam sent as many men over as have been removed in seven weeks. It has been hard to make adjustments to bring the total drop in the number they say.”

The reduction in the last seven weeks is approximately equal to the number of American soldiers killed in the same period. Perhaps the Nixon administration does have a plan for reducing troop strength in Vietnam, even if it isn’t the one they announced to the American people.



August 5, 1944

German imperialism’s uninterrupted military successes during the first period of the war have now been turned into a nightmare of defeats, retreats, and catastrophes. Hitler set about to conquer the Soviet Union for German and world capitalism. He now sees the borders of East Prussia invaded by the Red Army. Despite the degenerating influence of Stalin’s counter-revolutionary policies, the Red Army has found sufficient resources within the economy nationalized by the October Revolution and in devotion and sacrifices of the Soviet toilers to drive the Nazis from Soviet territory and to deal blows to their military machine.

The Nazi gang is showing extreme concern over the rebellious mood of the workers. The Nazi Labor Front has been dragooning workers into mass meetings where functionaries are exhorting them to squeeze out more production.

Fight to keep family planning clinics open that offer abortion

BY JANET POST

In St. Louis, abortion rights supporters are fighting to keep open Missouri's one remaining Planned Parenthood clinic, which provides family planning help, including abortion. Across the Mississippi River, Hope Clinic for Women in Granite City, Illinois, reports that 50% of all patients require financial assistance.

"One 30-year-old woman came to Hope because the wait at the Missouri clinic was so long that it would have put her past the 10-week mark, the latest point at which she could get her preferred method of care: a medication abortion, which involves pills, not surgery," wrote the *New York Times* July 9. Five other states have only one clinic that provides abortions — Kentucky, Mississippi, North Dakota, South Dakota and West Virginia.

"Whenever states enact restrictions, the people who are most affected are the ones with the fewest resources," Rachel Jones, a researcher at the Guttmacher Institute, which tracks statistics on women's right to choose abortion, told the *Times*. The number of women obtaining abortions who are classified as living in poverty has doubled — from 25% in 1994 to 50% in 2014, Guttmacher reports.

Suffering the effects of today's capitalist economic crisis, more working-class women are postponing marriage and child-rearing. The average age women in the U.S. have their first baby is climbing — at 26.3 years old in 2016 compared to 22.7 in 1980.

Regardless of the increasingly onerous restrictions on women's right to choose to have an abortion — including closing down of clinics, "waiting periods" that require multiple visits, and legal bans on abortion at earlier points in a woman's pregnancy — many working-class women fight their way to get the procedure.

Debate cut short prematurely

"Four decades ago, in the years following the 1973 Supreme Court decision Roe v. Wade, access to abortion looked very different," the *Times* said. "Clinics opened, and within a decade an abortion was rarely over an hour's drive away, other than in America's more remote corners."

Some 300,000 women annually applied for federal funds to have an abortion until 1976, when Congress passed the Hyde Amendment barring Medicaid funding. Since then, 76 independent groups, recognized by the National Network of Abortion Funds provide some aid, including for travel. But the "funds will never meet the actual need of people who need help," Yamani Hernandez, the group's executive director, told the media.

The 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling that legalized abortion was based on medical criteria — not on equal protection of the law guaranteed under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This has facilitated efforts of anti-abortion campaigners to pass hundreds of increasingly strict restrictions.

The court's ruling also prematurely cut off the debate that was unfolding over abortion and women's rights. This has led to confusion on the part of many people over why women need the unconditional right to family planning, including safe and secure birth control and abortion. Defending the right to choose is fundamental to a woman's control of her own life, and to winning full social, economic and political equality, opening the door to strengthening the unity and fighting



Crowd greets May 31 restraining order against closing of Missouri's only family planning clinic providing abortion. In foreground, Missouri Planned Parenthood officer M'Evie Mead.

capacity of the working class.

This is reflected in the fact that today the majority of adults support the right to choose, but those who *unconditionally* support abortion rights are not the majority. In a Gallup poll in May, only 25% said it should be legal "under any circumstances."

A federal appeals court ruled July 11 the White House could impose a "gag rule" for abortion referrals by family planning clinics that receive federal Title X funding. The program

serves about 4 million women yearly, some 40% in clinics affiliated with Planned Parenthood.

While clinic workers could discuss abortion as an option, they could no longer provide a referral for the procedure. And starting next year family planning clinics would not be allowed to share physical space with abortion providers. The Health and Human Services Department announced July 20 that clinics would have two months to comply with the regulation.

Florida prisons ban 'Militant' for articles on censorship

Continued from front page
it has with dozens of previous bans, the *Militant* will appeal.

Since 2013, prison wardens have impounded 37 issues. Through 2016 it was only one issue per year, all overturned on appeal. The censorship has expanded since then. Still, until April this year, the overwhelming majority of bans were overturned by the prison system's Literature Review Committee — after the *Militant* protested — and given to the paper's subscribers behind bars.

Over the last three months prison wardens have impounded nine issues. The review committee has only overturned two of these bans while upholding seven, though nothing has changed in the *Militant's* political views or coverage, including on prison censorship.

Many of the *Militant's* 55 readers in Florida prisons also appeal when they don't get an issue. One sent the paper a copy of his grievance against the banning of issues no. 20, 22 and 23. He said the reason given by the warden was "a poor excuse and also a violation of freedom of speech and freedom of thought."

In protesting prison censorship, "I am neither threatening nor endangering anyone, but simply doing what's right," he wrote.

The bans aren't consistent. In 2016 the *Militant* ran a front-page article on the 45th anniversary of the Attica prison rebellion. It wasn't banned.

Nor was the issue in 2013 with an article on a hunger strike by 30,000 California prisoners. Nor did Florida officials impound any of the issues of the *Miami Herald* in 2015 and beyond that ran a series of articles exposing extensive abuse inside the Florida prison system.

Why does the Literature Review Committee uphold the ban on some issues for covering the fight against censorship, but reverse those on other issues, banned under the same pretext?

Despite repeated requests from the *Militant's* lawyer, David Goldstein, the committee has never explained a single decision or its criteria. What is clear is that Florida prison officials have stepped up their censorship of the *Militant*, in violation of the constitutional rights of both the paper and its subscribers.

On July 16 the Human Rights Defense Center released a 279-page list maintained by the Florida Department of Corrections of thousands of

books and publications impounded since 2012 as "a threat to security" and the results of reviews by the Literature Review Committee. The list includes coloring books and a Klingon dictionary. It shows that in all these years only one issue of the *Miami Herald* was impounded, in 2014. The list is available at prison-legalnews.org.

Join the fight

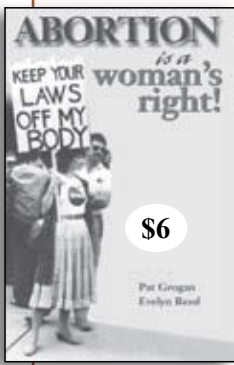
WeCount! a community organization in south Miami-Dade County that promotes the interests and welfare of immigrants, sent a letter to the Literature Review Committee July 19 calling the *Militant* ban "unwarranted and arbitrary."

"None of the articles are a threat to order or incite violence in the prison system," the group's executive director, Jonathan Fried, said. "Prisoners should have access to information and different points of view."

Seth Galinsky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City public advocate, spoke at the Harlem Book Fair July 20 to win support for the fight against censorship of the *Militant*. "We are fighting for the right of prisoners to read a wide variety of material, to consider different viewpoints, to think for themselves, to be part of the world," he said. "Prisoners are fellow workers, brothers and sisters, behind bars."

He urged people to join the National Coalition Against Censorship, the Florida American Civil Liberties Union, Amnesty International USA, National Lawyers Guild and others in sending letters to the Literature Review Committee urging them to stop censorship of the *Militant*.

Abortion Is a Woman's Right!



by Pat Grogan
Evelyn Reed

Why abortion rights are central not only to the fight for the full emancipation of women, but to forging a united and fighting labor movement.

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Fight prison censorship!

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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

In new victory Gibsons win \$6.5 million in attorney fee award

BY SETH GALINSKY

On July 17, Ohio Judge John Miraldi awarded \$6.5 million in legal fees to the lawyers representing Gibson's Bakery in its suit against Oberlin College. College officials had helped organize a malicious slander campaign accusing the bakery of racism. The fees come on top of the \$25 million in compensatory and punitive damages for putting the bakery and its owners through hell.

The Gibson family's lead attorney, Lee Plakas, correctly called the college's slander campaign "a declaration of war." The judge's ruling sends a message that it is possible to "withstand the power and resources" of large institutions, like Oberlin College, Plakas said after the latest ruling.

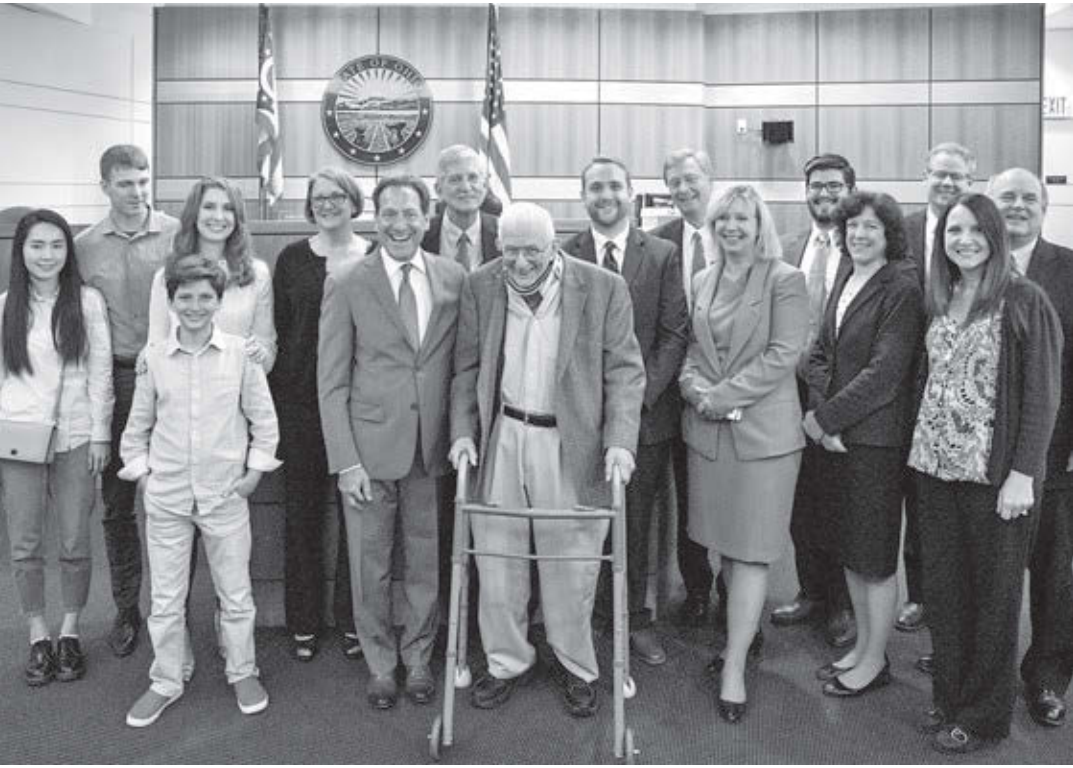
"The unanimous verdict and the awarding of legal fees is a victory for working people," Socialist Workers Party member Peter Thierjung told a Militant Labor Forum in New York July 20. "And the size of the award for legal fees is punishment for the college's scorched-earth policy in conducting their smear campaign against Gibson's."

Despite admitting to having \$59 million on hand, as well as numerous other assets, the college says it will appeal, pleading poverty.

Gibson's lawyers have asked the court to require the college to post a bond guaranteeing they will be paid if the award is delayed during an appeal. "This is the next stage in the fight to hold the college responsible for its assault against the small bakery," Thierjung said.

Oberlin College tried to financially drain the Gibsons and force them to give up by dragging out the trial with all manner of legal maneuvers, he said. They conducted 32 depositions, including with every member of the Oberlin town police force. They deposed 90-year-old Allyn Gibson Sr. for five days of grilling.

The judge said in his ruling the legal battle "presented extraordinary challenges for the plaintiffs."



Four generations of Gibson family and their legal team celebrate June 13 after Lorain County jury awarded them punitive damages for effects from Oberlin College's "racism" smears. School now falsely claims students' "free speech" was involved, seeking to overturn court order to pay \$31.5 million.

In response to the slanders by college administrators, Thierjung said, the Gibsons' lawyers issued a 56-page "FAQ," which devastatingly answered them with quotes from trial testimony and depositions. Copies are available at: <http://www.kwgd.com/uploads/faqs-re-gibson-s-bakery-v.pdf>

What happened at Gibson's

Thierjung walked through the facts of the case. How three Oberlin College students who are Black, a man and two women, used a fake ID to try to buy a bottle of wine in November 2016. The ID was rejected and Allyn Gibson Jr. confronted the young man about two bottles of wine hidden under his shirt. Gibson followed him out. When cops arrived they found Gibson on the ground being beaten by the three.

The three later pled guilty to misdemeanor charges, paid restitution, and each made a statement that "the employees of Gibson's actions were not racially motivated. They were merely trying to prevent an underage sale."

Nonetheless, for the next two days hundreds of students, organized, en-

couraged and accompanied by Meredith Raimondo, dean of students and college vice president, and other college officials protested outside Gibson's denouncing the arrests, claiming it had a long history of racial profiling and calling for a boycott of the small business.

Students were given permission to use college copiers to print flyers accusing the store of racism, gave students refreshments and pizza, and even cancelled classes and gave students credit to participate in the actions. Raimondo spoke at the protest, helping to orchestrate it. Later on the college terminated Gibson's contract to provide baked goods to the dining service on Raimondo's instructions.

University-authorized guides, giving tours of the campus to prospective students and their families, encouraged them to boycott the bakery.

Workers in solidarity with Gibsons

Working people in the area were repulsed by the slander campaign, Thierjung said. To the surprise of college officials, people came from all over the region to shop at Gibson's in a show of solidarity.

"At the heart of the issues in the case are questions of class and class privilege," Thierjung said.

He pointed out that like most students at Oberlin, the shoplifters were not "wanting" economically. The young man graduated in 2015 from Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, a boarding school with a billion dollar endowment, which is larger than Oberlin's, and tuition of \$58,000 a year. Oberlin itself is one of the top 20 most expensive colleges in the U.S.

The 2,800 students at Oberlin are mostly upper-middle-class, Thierjung said, being groomed for a career in academia, the government bureaucracy, nonprofits, think tanks, etc., as part of the privileged meritocratic layers that help defend capitalist rule.

Oberlin is a company town, where "the college dictates to small businesses what they will pay, how much, when," Thierjung said. And its officials look at the small businesses and "townies" with scorn.

A year after the boycott started, *The*

Grape, a student newspaper, ran an article titled "The Culture of Theft." Editor-in-Chief Jake Bernstein, no friend of the Gibsons', interviewed fellow students and wrote, "We uncovered a sad truth: That the majority of shoplifting in Oberlin is carried out by students." Most of the students could easily pay for what they stole, he admitted. Why shoplift? Bernstein said a common answer was "I felt like it." He said he had shoplifted at Gibson's.

The financial consequences for the small businesses — struggling in the face of stiff competition from big box stores like Walmart — is substantial. One Oberlin store estimated an annual loss of over \$10,000.

The Gibsons tried to get the university administration to change course and issue a statement saying that the bakery and its owners are not racists and don't engage in racial profiling.

The college refused.

College administrators demanded that Gibson's agree to call the college, not the cops, when it catches a student shoplifting, a privilege other town residents wouldn't have. If Gibson's would go along, the college would stop boycotting the store.

When the Gibsons said no, Vice President for Communications Ben Jones wrote, "All these idiots complaining about the college hurting a 'small local business.' ...

"F--- 'em."

Oberlin's slanders continue

Despite the conclusion of the court case — with Judge Miraldi writing "case closed" at the end of his last ruling — college officials have launched a counter-campaign, falsely claiming the jury's verdict as an attack on students' free speech. College President Carmen Twillie Ambar has traveled the country seeking coverage in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and other media making this claim.

But the Gibsons and their attorneys never sued any student or questioned anyone's right to protest. Instead, they sued the college and its administrators for their *actions* slandering the family and deliberately harming their business.

The Gibsons' lawyers put Raimondo on the stand as a hostile witness. She was asked about an email she wrote after college professor Roger Copeland emailed administrators urging them to stop their slander campaign.

In the email Raimondo said "F--- him. I'd say unleash the students if I wasn't convinced this needs to be put behind us."

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‘Toilers of the East awakening is part of world revolution’

The selection below is from *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, vol. 1 by Leon Trotsky. It is one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month for July*. The Communist International was founded in 1919 by new parties seeking to emulate the 1917 Russian Revolution headed by the Bolshevik Party under V.I. Lenin's leadership. Trotsky, a central leader of the Comintern while Lenin was alive, led the fight to continue Lenin's proletarian internationalist course against the rising counterrevolutionary bureaucratic caste headed by Joseph Stalin. The excerpts are from a 1921 speech delivered at the Second World Conference of Communist Women. Copyright © 1945, 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

Our enemies and our opponents are even saying that we have been completely and utterly mistaken in our calculations. We Communists had supposed and hoped, so say our opponents, that the world proletarian revolution would break out either during the war or immediately afterwards. But now the third year since the war is already ending, and while during this interval many revolutionary movements have taken place, it is only within one country, namely, in our own economically, polit-



“Two basic classes are locked in struggle — the bourgeoisie and the proletariat,” Russian Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky said. Above, delegates at 1920 Congress of Peoples of the East.

ically and culturally backward Russia, that the revolutionary movement has led to the dictatorship of the proletariat — a dictatorship which has been able to maintain itself to the present day and which I hope will continue to maintain itself for a long time to come. In other countries the revolutionary movements have led only to the replacement of the Hohenzollern and Habsburg regimes by bourgeois regimes, in the form of bourgeois republics. Finally, in a whole number of countries the movement ebbed away in strikes, demonstrations and isolated uprisings which were crushed. In general, the mainstays of the capitalist regime have been preserved throughout the whole world, with the sole exception of Russia.

From this our enemies have drawn the conclusion that since capitalism hasn't collapsed as a result of the World War in the course of the first two to three postwar years when the balance sheets were being drawn, it follows that the world proletariat has demonstrated its incapacity, while, conversely, world capitalism has demonstrated its capacity and power to retain its positions, to reestablish its equilibrium.

And at this very moment the International is discussing the question: Will the period immediately ahead, the next few years, entail the reestablishment of capitalist rule on new and higher founda-

tions? or will it entail a mounting assault by the proletariat upon capitalism, an assault which will bring about the dictatorship of the working class? This is the fundamental question for the world proletariat and, consequently, also for its women's section. ... [O]ne thing, I believe, is completely clear to us, to Communists, to Marxists. We know that history and its movement are determined by objective causes but we also know that history is accomplished by human beings and through human beings. The revolution is accomplished through the working class. Essentially history thus poses the question before us in the following way: Capitalism prepared the World War; the World War erupted and destroyed millions of lives and billions of dollars' worth of national wealth. It has shaken everything. And here on this half-ruined foundation, two basic classes are locked in struggle — the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie seeks to restore capitalist equilibrium and its class rule; the proletariat seeks to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie.

It is impossible to settle this matter with pencil in hand, like adding up a list of groceries. It is impossible to say: History has taken a turn toward the reestablishment of capitalism. It is only possible to say that if the lessons of the entire preceding development — the

lessons of the war, the lessons of the Russian Revolution, the lessons of the semi-revolutions in Germany, Austria and elsewhere — if these lessons go for nought, if the working class once again agrees to keep its neck within the capitalist yoke, then, perhaps, the bourgeoisie will be able to restore its equilibrium, by destroying the civilization of Western Europe and by transferring the center of world development to America, to Japan, to Asia. Entire generations would have to be destroyed in order to create this new equilibrium. To this end the diplomats, the military men, the strategists, the economists, the brokers of the bourgeoisie are now directing all their efforts. They know that while history has its profound causes, it is nonetheless made through human beings, through their organizations and through their parties; and, consequently, our Congress and your Women's Conference have gathered here precisely in order to introduce into this unsettled historical situation the certainty of the consciousness and the will of the revolutionary class. This is the gist of the moment through which we are living and herein is the gist of its tasks as well. ...

In the progress of the world labor movement, women proletarians play a colossal role. I say this not because I am addressing a women's conference but because sheer numbers indicate what an important part the woman worker plays in the mechanism of the capitalist world — in France, in Germany, in America, in Japan, in every capitalist country. ... And just because of this, in the years of the colossal world revolution this section of the proletariat can and must become the most active, the most revolutionary, and the most initiative section of the working class. ...

Consciousness lags tardily behind the objective events. We see this before our very eyes. Nevertheless the logic of history will cut its way through to the consciousness of the woman toiler both in the capitalist world and in the Asiatic East. And once again it will be the task of our Congress not only to reaffirm anew but also to formulate factually and precisely that the awakening of the toiling masses in the East is today an integral part of the world revolution, just as much so as the rising of the proletarians in the West.

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Independence for Puerto Rico!

Seth Galinsky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City public advocate, issued the following statement July 24.

Angry over capitalist politicians’ disregard for their lives in the wake of Hurricane Maria, decades of government attacks on their standard of living, widespread corruption and U.S. colonial contempt, working people in Puerto Rico have said, “Enough!”

In the face of the massive protests, the U.S. rulers and their junior partners on the island have come to the conclusion that Gov. Ricardo Rosselló must go — whether by resigning, impeachment or in handcuffs.

Protesters chant “Ricky, resign, and take the board with you,” reflecting their hatred for the U.S.-imposed fiscal board that has inflicted deeper anti-working-class measures. The capitalist rulers hope that by replacing Rosselló, they can keep squeezing working people to pay the \$74 billion debt to wealthy bondholders and raking in superprofits off Puerto Rico’s cheap labor and natural resources.

But working people in Puerto Rico know that it will take more than changing the face in La Fortaleza — the governor’s house — to resolve the problems they face. They are beginning to see their own power. Many ask: Is it possible to stand up to the U.S. government? Can we be an independent nation?

The Cuban Revolution shows it can be done. In 1959

working people overturned the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship. At the time the corporations, utilities and best land were owned by U.S. capitalists.

Cuban revolutionaries, led by Fidel Castro, knew they could never achieve the far-reaching political and economic changes working people needed simply by removing Batista. They’d just end up with a “kinder, gentler” U.S. puppet. For any lasting change, capitalist rule had to be replaced by a government of workers and farmers. The recent protests in Puerto Rico prove that working people there are entirely capable of a similar transformation.

The interests of workers in the U.S. and Puerto Rico are intertwined. We have the same enemy — the big capitalist corporations and their governments in Washington and San Juan who push the deepening crisis of their system onto our backs. The U.S. working class is made stronger by the millions of Puerto Ricans here.

The U.S. government has no right to tell the people of Puerto Rico how to run their own affairs. Every advance by working people in defending their interests there strengthens the fight of working people in the U.S., and vice versa.

The Socialist Workers Party and our candidates join in solidarity with this struggle. We join with workers in Puerto Rico and the U.S. who say, Cancel the debt! Dissolve the fiscal board! Independence for Puerto Rico!

Puerto Rico marches demand governor resign

Continued from front page

oozed with contempt for working people as well as his bourgeois political opponents.

The crass comments “were the drop of water that overflowed the cup,” retired electrician Raúl “Ruly” Laboy, told the *Militant* by phone from Humacao on the eve of the march. Humacao was one of the areas hardest hit by Hurricane Maria.

‘Take the board with you’

Laboy was referring to the pent-up anger over the negligence of the Puerto Rican and U.S. governments in the face of Maria; widespread government corruption; and decades of attacks on the standard of living of working people. And anger over the imposition by the Barack Obama administration of the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico. The Wall Street-based board has the power to override decisions of the colonial regime, slash government programs and force working people to pay for the “Commonwealth’s” \$74 billion debt to bondholders.

One popular chant at the actions was “Ricky, resign, and take the board with you.”

On July 10 the FBI arrested six people on charges of corruption, including former Education Secretary Julia Keleher and Ángela Ávila Marrero, former executive director of the Puerto Rico Health Insurance Administration. The two were accused of steering \$15.5 million in federal contracts to their friends.

“The government closed four out of five schools here since the hurricane,” Laboy said. “Many roads are still closed. Others have only been reopened by the actions of working people ourselves.”

In the chats released by the Center for Investigative Reporting, Rosselló and his cohorts call New York City Puerto Rican politician Melissa Mark-Viverito a “whore” and complain that San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz, from the Popular Democratic Party, the main bourgeois opposition, is either “off her meds” or a “son-of-a-bitch.” They insult rivals in their own party. They discuss how to throw government contracts to their cronies and joke about those who died from the hurricane.

Handmade signs dotted the march. Many simply said, “4,645,” one estimate of the number who died from the effects of Maria, or the name of a loved one who died. For nearly a year, Rosselló’s colonial government claimed only 64 people died from the storm. Finally, after he could deny the truth no more, he admitted at least 3,000 had perished.

Most deaths were not from the storm itself, but from the social catastrophe in its wake — due to govern-

ment inaction both in Puerto Rico and in Washington and the dog-eat-dog workings of capitalism.

Storm shelters didn’t have enough food or water. Hospitals and health clinics shut down or couldn’t provide adequate care because power went out. Electricity wasn’t restored in large parts of the island for a year. The one hospital on Vieques still isn’t open.

Reconstruction aid has been dispensed with an eyedropper and the Federal Emergency Management Agency denied aid to thousands because they had never been able to get a title to their homes.

Adding insult to injury was the widespread corruption, while the government and the fiscal board keep cutting pensions and health care and closing schools.

‘Completely indignant’

“We’re completely indignant,” Rufino Carrión, a pastor who organized protests against the slow pace of power restoration last year, said by phone from Gurabo. “It is always the most vulnerable, the poor who pay for the broken plates. Nearly two years after the storm there are still 15,000 homes with only a blue tarp as a roof — and these corrupt politicians of both parties are stealing millions and millions of dollars.”

Leaders of Rosselló’s party have joined the clamor demanding his resignation, including former Gov. Luis Fortuño; nonvoting representative to Congress Jenniffer González; and the mayor of Bayamón. Many of Rosselló’s aides have quit.

According to the island’s colonial constitution, if Rosselló resigns, the next in line is the secretary of state. But that post went vacant after Luis Rivera Marín resigned due to his participation in the chat scandal. Next in line is the secretary of justice.

Worried that they can’t put in place new faces that will carry out the needs of the U.S. rulers, the *Washington Post* demanded in a July 19 editorial that “Congress should take steps to strengthen the [fiscal] board” and impose more “rigorous oversight,” over Puerto Rico.

“Both parties are the same,” Laboy said. “But the left is not strong enough to govern.”

He hits at a real problem. Struggle by working people here has yet to develop a working-class leadership capable of taking political power, like Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement did in Cuba. When Rosselló goes, he’ll be replaced with another crooked stooge of Uncle Sam.

Laboy’s sister, Mildred, a leader of the community group Arecma, told the *Militant*, “If Rosselló resigns and things continue to be the same, then the people will have learned something.”

US hands off Iran!

Continued from front page

ish Royal Marines, stationed on the U.K.’s colony Gibraltar, stormed and commandeered a tanker carrying Iranian oil that London says was bound for Syria in violation of EU sanctions, and after a U.S. warship shot down an Iranian drone over the Strait of Hormuz. Washington sailed a flotilla of warships through the Strait the same day. The waterway is 20 miles wide and runs between Iran and Oman, a key passageway for oil shipments from Gulf countries to the Arabian Sea and beyond. The Iranian rulers have repeatedly threatened to shut down the channel.

Washington also announced July 19 it was sending 500 troops to Saudi Arabia, the first U.S. troop deployment there since Washington’s 2003 war against Iraq. The Saudi rulers are a key ally of the U.S. imperialists’ political and military maneuvering in the Middle East. With Washington’s backing, they are waging a brutal war in Yemen against Houthi forces backed by Tehran. The Houthis have stepped up missile attacks on oil pipelines and airports in Saudi Arabia.

The U.S. troop deployment to Saudi Arabia follows the dispatch of a squadron of B-52 bombers to Qatar and an aircraft carrier-led battle group to the region. This is on top of thousands of troops, warplanes, missiles and naval forces already deployed in the area.

Hours after the seizure of the British tanker, Washington repeated its calls for the governments of allied forces to join a planned U.S.-led naval operation to escort vessels in the Gulf.

‘U.S. hands off Iran!’

“The U.S. capitalist ruling families’ claim to wield military power to defend ‘freedom of navigation’ in the Gulf is a pretext to step up its threats on Iran,” Amy Husk, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Kentucky, said July 23. “Their government defends the interests of the bosses against working people both at home and abroad. The SWP demands U.S. hands off Iran, get all U.S. troops and armaments out of the Middle East and end all sanctions on the people of Iran.”

Since pulling out of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal — signed by former President Barack Obama and the Iranian government, along with the rulers in Germany, France, the U.K., Russia and China — the administration of Donald Trump has intensified pressure on Tehran. Washington aims to force the capitalist rulers in Iran into negotiations to permanently halt development of a nuclear weapons program and to pull back from their involvement in numerous conflicts unfolding across the Middle East, from Syria to Iraq to Yemen and the Gaza Strip.

Washington’s imperial arsenal

Washington, of course, defends unconditionally its imperial right to a vast nuclear arsenal. And the U.S. rulers are the only ones to ever *use* nuclear weapons, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The U.S. rulers have imposed ever more stringent sanctions since November to drive Tehran’s oil exports to zero, aiming to force the Iranian government into talks. But the steps also increase the risk of military confrontation that neither ruling class really wants.

The impact of the sanctions fall hardest on Iranian working people, who face shortages of medicine, high unemployment and skyrocketing inflation. A growing number of workers from Iran, mostly Kurds, now cross the border to seek work in construction and other jobs in the Kurdish region of Iraq, where there are jobs and wages are higher, reported the Kurdish news agency Rudaw.

The steep drop in Iran’s oil exports also increases tensions within the different factions of the ruling clerical regime, as they look for ways to counter Washington’s squeeze. These political divisions, and the far-reaching independent operations of the Revolutionary Guard, add to the danger of unintended conflict.

The rulers in Tehran are determined not to relinquish the political and military sway they have established and their enhanced ability to threaten Israel.

They aim to maintain and extend beyond Iran’s borders the nearly four-decade-old political, clerical counterrevolution that pushed back the workers, farmers, oppressed nationalities and women who carried out the historic revolution that overthrew the hated shah there in 1979.