

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Yazidis in Iraq still displaced two years after Islamic State's defeat
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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‘Amnesty for immigrants is in interest of all workers’

BY BETSEY STONE

“The capitalists need to keep millions of immigrant workers here who are undocumented, so they can superexploit them,” Alyson Kennedy, the Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate in 2016, told Richard Maya, a customer service worker as she was campaigning door to door in Salinas, California.

“This allows the bosses to drag down wages for everyone,” Kennedy explained. “So it’s in all workers’ interests to unite and to fight for amnesty” for those without what the government calls proper papers.

“I listened to the Democratic Party debate,” Maya told Kennedy, “and I’m concerned that if anyone who wants to can move to the U.S. from other countries, like some were saying, the U.S. will become like a Third World country,” he added.

Millions of workers in less-developed parts of the world, driven by the impact of the deepening crisis of capitalism, the imperialist powers plunder of their countries and the lack

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Airline, auto bosses target workers to boost profits

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

As competition for markets among bosses in airline, auto and other industries continues to sharpen, company chiefs say they are looking to “cut labor costs,” targeting workers for concessions and weakening union rights.

Contract talks opened in mid-July between the United Auto Workers and the “Big Three” — General Motors, Ford and Fiat Chrysler. The bosses are seeking to raise workers’ health care payments and increase use of temporary workers, among other issues. Contracts for the three companies, which employ nearly 150,000 UAW-represented workers, expire Sept. 14.

Bosses hope that with few strikes in the industry in recent years their assaults will be met with little union resistance. But convincing workers to accept more concessions may not be so easy for the auto bosses warns the *Wall Street Journal*.

It quotes Mike Daniels, a GM factory worker hired in 2013, who told the paper the union must fight for

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Colonial rule, capitalist crisis fueled Puerto Rico protests

‘Cancel the debt! It’s their debt, not ours!’



UTIER

July 25 march in San Juan after Ricardo Rosselló announced he would resign. U.S. and Puerto Rico rulers keep pressing to make working people pay for capitalist, colonial crisis.

BY SETH GALINSKY

No matter who takes the place of Ricardo Rosselló as governor of the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico at 5 p.m. Aug. 2, the political, social and economic crisis there will continue. And so will opposition to the colonial regime’s and the U.S. government’s measures that target working people.

The 15 days of massive protests demanding Rosselló’s resignation convinced the U.S. and Puerto Rican ruling classes that the governor had to go. But seven days after Rosselló announced his resignation and two days before it was to become effective, the ruling parties still had not found a replacement who they

hope will inspire enough confidence among working people and others to get things back to “normal.”

According to Puerto Rico’s constitution, next in line would have been

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‘Cuban people will resist US embargo and violations of our sovereignty’



Militant/Mike Shur

Ana Silvia Rodríguez, Cuban deputy UN ambassador, at New York celebration on beginning of revolution.

BY JANET POST

NEW YORK — “The Cuban people are determined to withstand the U.S. government’s policy of aggression,” said Ana Silvia Rodríguez Abascal, Cuban deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, at a July 27 meeting here to celebrate the Cuban Revolution.

The event marked the 66th anniversary of the July 26, 1953, attack

by revolutionary forces led by Fidel Castro on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba that opened the revolutionary war that brought down the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship. The objective of the action was “to put an end to the foreign domination, misery, unemployment, unsanitary conditions and illiteracy that our people suffered,” said Rodríguez. She paid tribute to those who fought at Moncada, who “offered their lives so that the name of Cuba will always be associated with freedom, justice and dignity.”

Washington’s anti-Cuba Helms-Burton law “violates and infringes on the self-determination of the Cuban people and of other peoples, freedom of trade, sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of states,” she said.

Rodríguez reported that the U.S. government just announced that it is going to stop granting visas to officials of Cuba’s international solidarity program that provides medical care to people around the world, based on the slander that the doctors are exploited.

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Democrats’ Mueller exposé falls flat as clashes in party sharpen

BY TERRY EVANS

The political crisis wracking the Democratic Party has continued to deepen since former special counsel Robert Mueller delivered testimony before the House Judiciary Committee July 24 that revealed nothing new. The likelihood of liberals being able to overturn the 2016 election by impeaching President Donald Trump — a possibility that ended months ago — was shown to be precluded once more.

Mueller, formerly head of the capitalist rulers’ political police, the FBI, was forced to answer questions about

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Florida prison officials’ ban on ‘Militant’ attacks Bill of Rights

BY SETH GALINSKY

With the impoundment of issue no. 26 of the *Militant*, Florida prison officials have now censored 10 of the last 12 issues of the paper. The last six were all banned for featuring articles about the authorities’ previous censorship! The prison system’s Literature Review Committee has upheld all but one of the seven bans it has reviewed so far.

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Black lung at highest rate in decades among miners

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Secretary of State Luis Rivera Marín, and after him the secretary of justice.

But Rivera was one of a dozen government officials and advisers in Rosselló's New Progressive Party involved in a "chat" scandal with the governor that sparked the protests — the release of more than 800 pages of abusive on-line comments by Rosselló and other officials showing the administration's scorn for working people.

Rivera resigned as have many other officials. The scandal was the straw that broke the camel's back, releasing pent-up anger following more than a decade of attacks on working people's standard of living, government negligence in the face of Hurricane Maria and widespread corruption. Underlying it all is a century of U.S. colonial rule that has meant working people not only face exploitation by domestic capitalists but subjugation at the hands of Washington.

At all the protests some participants demanded repeal of the U.S. law that imposed the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico. The junta, as it is called in Spanish, was appointed by then-President Barack Obama, with the power to override decisions of the local government to maximize payment of the colonial regime's \$74 billion debt. The government also owes \$55 billion to retiree pension funds.

sello's New Progressives and the opposition Popular Democratic Party — and the green of the Puerto Rican Independence Party.

Working people have not seen many results from federal aid nor the millions of dollars collected as donations. “The politicians and others got rich, but we didn’t see anything,” Rodríguez said.

"The highways have not been repaired, houses are still deteriorating and there are no jobs," he said. "The people have had enough." But Rodríguez still hopes that "someone better" will take Rosselló's place until elections next year.

There is no working-class alternative currently challenging the lesser-evil politics of the capitalist parties.

More than 100 years of U.S. colonial rule and imperialist plunder of the island's natural resources and labor has exacerbated the impact of the worldwide economic crisis of capitalism there.

Unlike the United States, where there has been a small “recovery” since the 2007-2008 financial collapse and recession, Puerto Rico — a U.S. colony since 1898 — has been in a steady decline.

Gross domestic product has dropped every year except one since 2009. Even before Hurricane Maria ravaged the island, tens of thousands of people were leaving to find work in the United States. The official unemployment rate is now 8.5%, double that of the U.S.

When Hurricane Maria hit, the island's already antiquated and deteriorated electric and water grid collapsed. It took a year to get it restored and even now some isolated rural areas are still without power.

Puerto Rican Teachers Federation

weather the storm and its aftermath. Teachers and parents cleaned up and repaired schools. Communal kitchens were organized.

Despite the storm damage, the junta insists that the colonial government accelerate the anti-working-class measures it had been implementing over the past decades. The next governor must “work with the federal control board,” demanded the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* July 25, to implement “reforms,” including job furloughs for public sector workers and ending annual Christmas bonuses.

the debt. It's not our debt, it's theirs," Rosa said. Calls to audit the debt have been part of many of the recent protests, he noted, but have not been a central theme.

“All the parties have marginalized working people,” said Mildred Laboy, a leader of the community group Arecma, in Humacao. “We’ve been abandoned by the government.”

“One party wins and defrauds us,” she said by phone July 30. “Then the other one wins and it’s the same.” No matter who is the new governor, she said, struggles against government measures that hit working people will continue.

The problem is U.S. colonialism

The FBI is carrying out investigations of corruption and has arrested several people, including two former officials the day before the release of the chats. “But we don’t want the FBI. When we are an independent country we will confront the corruption ourselves,” Rosa said.

“The problem is the system. There can be no democracy, no ‘transparency’ under colonialism,” Rosa added.

“Personally I am for cancelling

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THE MILITANT

Join the fight against cop brutality!

Family and supporters of Eric Garner have been demonstrating for the five years since Garner was killed by a New York City cop in a chokehold. The 'Militant' gives voice to workers and youth fighting against police brutality throughout the world.



Associated Press/Bebeto Matthews
July 17 rally in New York City after Justice Dept. refused to bring civil rights charges.

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SWP backs amnesty for immigrants

Continued from front page

of any working-class leadership that points towards working people taking power, decide their only hope is to emigrate.

“We should build solidarity with workers in other countries who are fighting against terrible hardships brought about by capitalism and U.S. domination,” Kennedy said, “and above all we should fight for amnesty for workers here who do not have papers. But we don’t call for open borders today,” a demand that would deepen the crisis facing working people.

SWP campaigners explain why pressing for amnesty is central to rebuilding a fighting union movement. Maya told Kennedy he favored an amnesty “for those that are already here.”

Kennedy had joined teams of SWP campaigners discussing the party’s program with working people on their doorsteps in Hayward, Salinas and Seaside, California, July 28. Seven subscriptions to the *Militant* and 10 books on revolutionary politics were sold during the effort.

The night before, she spoke alongside Joel Britton, SWP candidate for mayor of San Francisco, and Henry Dennison, the party’s candidate for City Council in Seattle at a Militant Labor Forum in San Leandro, California.

Dennison described a rally in Seattle he joined in solidarity with the mobilizations in Puerto Rico that forced the resignation of Gov. Ricardo Rosselló.

“Working people in Puerto Rico are angry over widespread corruption, decades of attacks on their standard of living, the capitalist politicians’ disregard for their lives in the wake of Hurricane Maria and U.S. colonial contempt,” Dennison said.

He pointed to the Cuban Revolution and what it shows about the capacities of working people to engage in revolutionary struggle. “There, they not only got rid of the dictator Batista, but went on to replace capitalist rule with a government of workers and farmers,” he said.

“What is needed here as well as Puerto Rico is independent working-class political action on a course toward workers taking political power into our own hands,” Kennedy added.

“In the U.S., the Democratic and Republican party politicians, whether

they call themselves socialists, liberals or conservatives, share a common defense of the capitalist profit system and the exploitation of the labor of working people,” Kennedy said.

“The SWP candidates say we need to organize independently of the bosses’ parties. We need our own working-class party with a program to organize and fight for our own interests, challenging the rule of the capitalist class.”

All three speakers at the forum addressed the deteriorating conditions working people face, including on the job. Dennison, a rail worker and member of the SMART-TD union, described the continuing attacks on rail safety. “The rail bosses have not given up their attempts to reduce crews to a single individual,” he said. “Very long trains, shorter training and cutting the workforce are the order of the day.”

“We need to use our unions to stand up to the bosses. And we need workers control over job conditions,” he said.

“In the 1960s and ’70s, union miners fought for job safety and the incidence of black lung plummeted,” Kennedy, a former miner and a leader of a 2003-04 strike by miners in Utah,

pointed out. “Now, with the weakening of the union, there is an epidemic of a new form of black lung, progressive massive fibrosis.”

Britton described the SWP’s opposition to the decision of the San Francisco School Board to destroy a mural about the life of George Washington at a high school in San Francisco. The decision was a blow to the constitutional right to free speech — a right indispensable for working people as we organize to act together to defend our interests against the deteriorating conditions of life we confront.

Britton pointed to the danger of censorship to the working class and of the race-baiting by the opponents of the George Washington mural who claimed that if you were not Native American or Black your opinion about whether it should be destroyed or not should be discounted.



Alyson Kennedy introduces Socialist Workers Party to farm-worker Raul Hurtada at his door in Salinas, California, July 28.

“We will continue to stand up against censorship, against race-baiting and false smears of racism that shut off the political debate that is needed,” Britton said.

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 farm-workers 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 gov-

ernment 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!

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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Next Steps in the Defense of the ‘Life of Washington’ Mural. Speakers: Lope Yap Jr., vice president of the George Washington H.S. Alumni Association; Robert Tamaka Bailey, member of the Choctaw Nation, retired PG&E worker; Jeff Powers, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Aug. 10. Refreshments, 6 p.m.; program, 6:30 p.m. *Richmond Public Library, 325 Civic Center Plaza. (510) 686-1351.*

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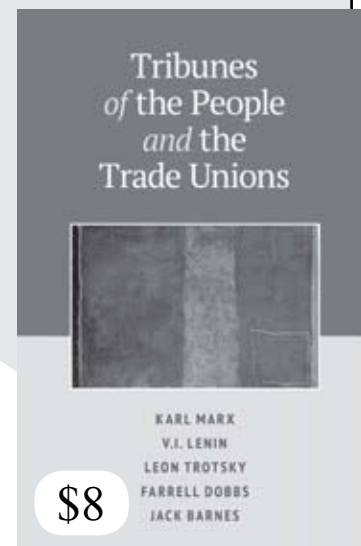
Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women’s Emancipation. Speaker: Olof Andra Proppe, Communist League. Fri., Aug. 9, 7 p.m. Donation: £2.50. *Progress Centre, Charlton Place. 0161 258 2569.*

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Joyce Meissenheimer was ‘on right side of history’

BY JOHN STEELE
AND JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL — “Joyce Meissenheimer had so much confidence that she and those she fought alongside were on the right side of history,” explained Communist League leader Beverly Bernardo at a July 20 celebration of the life of Meissenheimer, a 54-year cadre of the Communist League in Canada and a fighter for over two decades against the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Born in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1922, Meissenheimer died on June 7 at the age of 96 in Calgary, Alberta. The celebration was attended by over 40 people.

“Meissenheimer’s political activity began when her father took her to a rally against racial segregation in 1937 when she was 15 and to meetings where she began to study Marxist books,” Bernardo explained. Meissenheimer grew up under the authority of the Colored Affairs Department, one of the bodies used by the government to deprive non-Caucasians of political rights.

Bernardo described how in 1948 at the age of 26, Meissenheimer became the editor of the *Torch*, the weekly newsletter of the Non-European Unity Movement, which exposed the injustices of the apartheid regime.

The *Torch* campaigned against the banning of members of the African National Congress. Meissenheimer herself was “banned” in 1961 — meaning she could not legally meet with more than two people, other than family members.

Facing these restrictions, she moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, in

1965 with her husband and four children where she joined the League for Socialist Action, a forerunner of the Communist League.

Party building in Canada

As a cadre of the LSA, Meissenheimer helped advance the party’s work in defense of the Cuban Revolution, its participation in the movement against the war in Vietnam, the struggle to repeal Canada’s restrictive abortion law and the fight against the use of the War Measures Act by the federal government in 1970 to try to crush the mass movement for Quebecois national rights.

Meissenheimer helped lead the 1977 fusion of the LSA with the Revolutionary Marxist Group and Groupe marxiste révolutionnaire to form the Revolutionary Workers League, “a qualitative strengthening of communist forces in Canada,” Bernardo explained.

“The struggle Joyce was a part of in South Africa was a cause very important to both of our parties,” explained Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of San Francisco, who addressed the meeting on behalf of the SWP.

“The solidarity we extended to that fight was part of our duty as internationalists, and the support we enjoyed from South African revolutionists who were leading that struggle was a welcome contribution to the class struggle in North America,” he added.

“In the late 1970s, communists in the U.S. and Canada took steps to get the big majority of our parties’ members into jobs in basic industry where



Joyce Meissenheimer speaks at 1980 British Columbia New Democratic Party convention, wearing button defending Pratt Three, three women workers fired by Pratt & Whitney aerospace factory after Canadian rulers’ political police told bosses they were communists.

we could be members of industrial unions,” said Britton.

“Together with others we organized solidarity with revolutionary struggles in Iran, Grenada and Nicaragua,” he told the meeting. “And we helped mobilize support for the South African freedom fight from within our unions.”

Meissenheimer was fully supportive of the party’s turn to industry. “Joyce was a member of the Communist League branch in Montreal until 2001,” said Bernardo, when deteriorating health forced her to move to British Columbia.

‘A life worth living’

“Joyce embraced the life of a communist fighter to the fullest. It was her way to have a life worth living. I invite you to follow Joyce’s path and join the Communist League,” Bernardo concluded.

Pierre-Luc Filion, the Communist League candidate for the October federal election in the constituency of Longueuil-St.-Hubert, said that he never met Meissenheimer but he valued “the political legacy she left, that shows the kind of leadership needed to build the Communist League today.”

Filion described his campaign’s activities from extending the interest in the party and its program by campaigning door to door and introducing the *Militant* and revolutionary books to working people, to building solidarity with ongoing union struggles, like the weeklong strike for \$15 an hour by workers at residences for seniors.

Primary school teacher and union activist Jennifer Alves Nadeau attended the meeting and told the *Militant* that “what Joyce did with her whole life is very impressive and encourages us to keep fighting today.”

A collection to help fund the work of the Communist League raised \$1,740.

Messages from those who knew and worked with Meissenheimer from different countries were available to read in a bound volume at the meeting.

After the event many participants continued the celebration at a nearby restaurant in the spirit of Meissenheimer who often invited others to her place for a good meal, something to drink and a lively political exchange.

Cuban people will keep resisting US embargo

Continued from front page

“Our internationalist medical solidarity is one of the things we are most proud of,” she said.

“We practice solidarity,” Rodríguez told participants, describing the steadfastness and internationalism of the Cuban Revolution. “We share what we have, not what we have left over.”

She also spoke about the colonial exploitation of Puerto Rico, which was on the mind of many at the meeting. The Cuban Revolution will always support the fight of the Puerto Rican people for independence, she said to applause.

The meeting was sponsored by the New York-New Jersey Cuba Sí Coalition and held at the New York State Nurses Association hall. Some 150 in attendance were welcomed by nurses’ union President Judy Sheridan González.

Bob Guild, vice president of Marazul Tours, which organizes travel between the U.S. and Cuba described the passport restrictions first announced 58 years ago as part of Washington’s efforts to isolate the revolution. Today, he said, despite new travel restrictions enacted by the U.S. government there are still many legal ways to visit the island.

Other speakers included Gail Walker, director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace; Ed Ortiz of A Call to Action on Puerto Rico; Ben Ramos of the Venceremos Brigade; William Camacaro of the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle; and Lucy Pagoda-Quesada of the Honduran National

Popular Resistance Front.

“I came to learn why Cuba has been so successful in opposing such a massive power like the U.S. government,” Wilson Ng, a teacher from Hong Kong visiting the U.S., told the *Militant* after the meeting. “What the Cuban Revolution has accomplished is a good example for the people of Hong

Kong who are in struggle today,” he said, pointing to the recent victory for political rights after the biggest demonstrations in the city’s history forced Carrie Lam, its chief executive, to suspend an extradition bill.

Other events to celebrate the Cuban Revolution were held over the same weekend in Chicago and Miami.

US gov’t plans to restart death penalty, target workers

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Attorney General William Barr announced July 25 that the U.S. government will resume carrying out executions, reversing a de facto moratorium that has been in place for 16 years.

This takes place in the face of declining public support nationwide for this barbaric weapon in the hands of the capitalist state that’s meant to intimidate the working class. Workers have watched in horror as state prisons have experimented on those facing the death penalty by using untried mixtures of toxic substances that have caused agony and torture.

The move comes as the rulers’ political crisis deepens with factional rivalries growing more heated heading into the 2020 election. President Donald Trump has called for an extension of crimes covered by the death sentence. Former President Barack Obama called capital punishment “deeply troubling,” a posture echoed by most Democratic presidential candidates today, but his administration did nothing to abolish it.

During their occupancy of the White House from 1993 to 2001, Bill and Hillary Clinton brought in the largest expansion of crimes subject to judicial murder, “some 60 offenses overall,” wrote Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, in *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People*.

Bill Clinton signed into law the grotesquely-named “Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act.” This had a devastating impact on working-class families, especially those who are African American.

“Under administrations of both parties,” Barr said, federal prosecutors have “sought the death penalty against the worst criminals.” He said that “five murderers” will be put to death at the federal penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana, in December or January, adding there would be more to come.

The list of five, including a white supremacist, has been carefully chosen. All have been convicted of murdering children and the elderly, shocking

crimes that elicit maximum revulsion among working people.

In 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the death penalty was unconstitutional in violation of the Eighth and 14th Amendments in three cases, effectively placing a four-year moratorium on its use. But the black-robed justices reinstated it on the state level in 1976 and at the federal in 1988. Since then, there have only been three federal executions, one, in 2001, of Timothy McVeigh, the ultra-rightist Oklahoma City bomber.

There are 62 people on federal death row today, 26 of whom are Black. Twenty-one states have abolished the death penalty, the latest was New Hampshire in May. Nationwide, 2,673 prisoners are on death row.

“Capital punishment is a weapon of terror in the hands of the capitalist rulers meant to intimidate the working class and its vanguard fighters,” Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president in 2016, said July 27. “The Socialist Workers Party fights for its total abolition.”

Black lung at highest rate in decades among miners

BY JANET POST

Coal miners in the U.S. are facing the biggest rise in the debilitating black lung disease in decades as mine bosses drive to speed up production and reduce the number of unionized mines to maximize their profits. In Appalachia, one in five miners working underground for 25 years or more has black lung, the highest rate in a quarter century.

“There is a Kentucky miner with the disease who is 30 years old waiting for a lung transplant,” Bethel Brock, president of United Mine Workers Local 1405, told the *Militant*. “For miners in their 40s and 50s the numbers increase massively because of the severity of the disease today.”

Brock, a retired miner, only won black lung benefits himself after a 14-year fight, which lasted through 10 court appeals. He is also president of the Norton chapter of Southwest Virginia Black Lung Association and works with miners, spouses and widows in Harlan and Whitesburg, Kentucky, two of the hot spots of the current epidemic. “The judges have open arms to declare bankruptcy, freeing the coal companies of any liability,” he said.

The most severe form of the incurable disease — progressive massive fibrosis — now inflicts 5% of all miners, the highest rate ever recorded. This is caused not only by coal dust, but silica dust that can damage the lungs faster than dust from coal.

As the big coal seams in Appalachia become depleted, workers are cutting through more waste rock, which is high in silica-bearing quartz and sandstone that lodges in the lungs permanently.

Miners are also working longer hours — the average workweek grew 11 hours in the last 30 years. Danny Smith, who was diagnosed with PMF in his 30s, worked underground for 12 years. For one eight-month stretch he worked six-day weeks, 16 hours a day. “It was just pure rock dust,” he told an NPR program, Jan. 22.

Miners wear respirators and dust masks but the very fine rock particles leak through. Massive amounts of dust are kicked up by continuous mining machines. Bosses refuse to slow down the machines, provide adequate ventilation and water sprays, or move miners to areas with less dust.

Mine and Safety Health Adminis-



Andre Teague/Bristol Herald Courier via AP

Former coal miners with black lung demonstrate in Abingdon, Virginia, December 2018. Longer hours, drop in unionized mines is fueling big increase in miners with the disease.

tration data showed bosses exceeded federal silica dust limits at surface mines alone nearly 4,000 times between 1988 and 2016.

The coal bosses resist every step to protect the health of workers, while attacking union organizing on all fronts. By 2017 only about 20 percent of miners worked in union mines. There is not one union mine left in Kentucky.

Brock along with some 150 other miners, many of whom are United Mine Workers members from Appalachia with black lung, attended a Congressional hearing on the disease, July 23. The UMW is demanding the government halt cuts it made to its tax on coal bosses that finances the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund. Some 12,000 miners rely on this fund for medical and cash assistance.

Coal companies going bankrupt claim they are no longer liable to pay into the fund at all. The government now admits that the fund is at risk of insolvency.

The only way to eliminate black lung is to emulate what coal miners did decades ago. Through mighty battles miners carried out a revolution that transformed the UMW in the late 1960s and '70s. They won a large measure of control over working conditions. Miners set up union safety committees with the power to shut down production — power they used — to enforce safety. Clinics were set up all over Appalachia. Incidents of black lung declined more than 90% from the 1970s to the mid-1990s.

Arlene Rubinstein in Washington, D.C., contributed to this article.

Auto, airline bosses target workers to boost profits

Continued from front page

base-wage increases to close a pay gap imposed on new hires under earlier contracts, as well as pensions and guaranteed work for plants the company plans to close. “I’m standing my ground, and I’m drawing the line,” he said.

Amid slumping sales, auto bosses seek to recoup their profits through laying off more workers. GM has shuttered its plant in Lordstown, Ohio, with plans to idle three more. Honda recently ended a shift at its plant in Marysville, Ohio. Nissan earlier this year eliminated a production shift at its truck plant in Mississippi. On July 25 the company announced plans to cut over 1,400 jobs in the U.S. — part of eliminating 12,500 jobs worldwide, 9% of its workforce.

While sales of new cars and trucks rose steadily from 2009 to 2016, sales to individuals are now falling. Some car dealers’ are cutting inventories and ordering fewer vehicles.

Meanwhile, auto finance companies have been pushing subprime loans with high interest rates, making it increasingly difficult for workers to cover these payments as well as the original cost of the vehicles. According to Bankrate, more than 50 percent of auto loans go to subprime borrowers.

Repossessions are up as the number of people “seriously delinquent” on car loan payments is at record levels.

Airline mechanics fight outsourcing

For nearly four years mechanics, members of the International Association of Machinists, have been pressing for a contract at American Airlines. One of the main issues in dispute is the company’s plan to outsource the jobs of 5,000 union maintenance and fleet service workers, union spokesman Joe Tiberi told the media.

As part of their drive against labor, the airline in May filed a lawsuit against the union claiming workers were slow-

ing operations by completing tasks more slowly and refusing to take overtime shifts, which union officials denied.

In May, after a seven-year fight some 2,500 mechanics represented by the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association approved a new contract at Southwest. Wages immediately increased by 20 percent with 3 percent annual raises. Bosses there also sued the union claiming it organized a slow-down forcing the airline bosses to cancel hundreds of flights.

The pilots’ union is beginning or preparing to negotiate with the four biggest U.S. airlines — American, United Airlines, Delta Air Lines, and Southwest Airlines. The results impact contract

talks with other groups employed by the airlines. Flight attendants at American are also negotiating their next contract.

At the O’Hare International Airport in Chicago workers employed by contract companies Scrub Inc. and Prospect Airport Services won their fight for union representation. Cabin cleaners, baggage handlers, cargo agents and wheelchair attendants joined airport protests over the past three years to press for wage raises. The actions were organized by Service Employees International Union Local 1. The union announced July 17 that it has now signed contracts with these companies that raise wages and benefits for these 2,200 workers.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 22, 1994

YORK, Pennsylvania — After 42 days on the picket line, members of the United Auto Workers on strike against Caterpillar pushed back a company-organized back-to-work campaign. Caterpillar is acting as the point man in the employers’ assault on working people.

As dawn broke over the Caterpillar plant in York, more than 500 members of UAW Local 786 on strike here and dozens of their supporters massed at the plant gates, successfully turning away scabs. Early pickets reported from 5:00 a.m. on, unionists successfully clogged the gates preventing any more cars from entering.

“If Cat can violate our rights it’s only a matter of time before other companies take on other unions,” said UAW Local 786 member Rose Lentz, who was illegally terminated for union activity. “This strike is not just important for our union, but all unions.”



August 12, 1969

“The base is not on the island; the island is on the base,” a resident of Okinawa observed in a conversation reported in the *New York Times*.

Okinawa has been under U.S. control ever since the end of World War II — a clear violation of what the U.S. calls Japan’s “residual sovereignty” over the island. There, within striking range of all countries of the Far East, the U.S. has build up its massive strategic military arsenal, the keystone for its imperialist military intervention in that part of the world.

Okinawan courts and police have no control over American soldiers or civilians. The U.S. even has direct control over the electric power and water corporations as well as the banks. And neither Okinawans nor the government of Japan have any voice in the military operations undertaken by the U.S. forces stationed in Okinawa.



August 12, 1944

Another graduation class has passed on its way from the portals of America’s universities, to the accompaniment of the trite speeches of university presidents, urging their erstwhile students to “go into the world” and “become good citizens.” By “good citizens” the professors mean loyal supporters of the capitalist class which has made it possible for the professors to lead their comfortable lives far removed from the privations and misery of the working class.

These speeches cannot be passed off as merely the mouthings of a few hypocrites who have found a soft berth for themselves as “leaders of education.” They express the philosophy and the point of departure of our whole educational system which is controlled from top to bottom by America’s Sixty families, and is designed to maintain their ruling position over every phase of American life.

Yazidis in Iraq still displaced two years after Islamic State's defeat

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

It is now five years since Islamic State seized large swaths of territory in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan and launched a genocidal campaign against the Yazidi people in Sinjar, Nineveh and elsewhere in northern Iraq. And two years since the reactionary group lost control of most of the area. Yet the majority of Yazidis — hundreds of thousands — remain dispersed, often living in miserable conditions in “refugee” camps or fleeing abroad.

Neither the government of Iraq nor of the Kurdistan region is acting to resolve this human crisis. Moreover, factional conflicts among bourgeois currents wrapping themselves up in sectarian religious garb, as well as intervention by both regional and imperialist powers, erect political and military obstacles to rebuilding the Yazidi communities. The latter is true above all of Washington and its local allies, on one side, and, on the other, the bourgeois clerical regime in Tehran seeking to rebuild the Persian Empire and its cohorts in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen.

On Aug. 3, 2014, Islamic State forces who had seized Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, invaded Sinjar province, the heartland of the Yazidi people, an ethnic and religious minority of over half a million living across northern Iraq.

“IS attacked at night,” Ghanim Ilyas Saleem, executive manager of Ghasin Al-Zaiton (Olive Branch) Organization for Youth, told *Militant* correspondents Steve Clark and myself in April in Erbil. “Some villagers resisted the invasion with light weapons, but by morning they ran out of bullets,” Ilyas Saleem said.

“In the village of Kocho, they forced people into a school, took their cell-phones, money and jewelry,” he said. “They separated women from men, took all the men and teenage boys and killed them nearby. Old women were also killed.” Only 19 people escaped the assault on Kocho, out of a population of 1,500. Some 1,300 were killed throughout the Yazidi region, many tossed into some 80 mass graves.

Up to 400,000 people managed to flee, mostly to the nearby autonomous Kurdistan region. Tens of thousands fled up the slopes of Mount Sinjar, the heart of the Yazidi area. Surrounded by IS forces, fighting to survive in the summer heat with little food or water, most were rescued when a coalition of Iraq- and Syria-based Kurdish mi-



Yazidis flee genocidal attacks by Islamic State forces in Sinjar province in northern Iraq, August 2014. Hundreds were killed, up to 400,000 managed to escape to nearby autonomous Kurdistan region. Since defeat of IS a big majority of those that fled remain dispersed, often in miserable conditions in refugee camps. Neither government of Iraq nor of the Kurdistan region seeks to resolve crisis.

Reuters/Rodi Said

leshmerga, along with Yazidi Protection Forces, clashed with a group of IS fighters in Sinjar July 24.

Those living in camps face squalid conditions. “Five years on, they are still in the same tents,” Ilyas Saleem told the *Militant*. “There was a lot of assistance from international agencies at first, but after the war against IS finished in 2017 and the spotlight went away, most of them stopped supporting us. There's little aid from the Kurdistan and Iraqi governments.” Some have moved into Kurdish towns, finding shelter in abandoned buildings and trying to earn money as street vendors.

“Education is difficult in the camps. In Bersave camp, for example, there are 600 to 700 pupils and only four teachers,” he told us. “Some Yazidi graduates volunteer to go into camps to teach.”

Rights of women, children

Part of what faces the Yazidis “is the displacement and division of families,” 25-year-old Shreen told Al-Jazeera. “The more we are closer, the more we feel we are alive.” Shreen endured two and a half years of Islamic State captivity before she escaped. She has now returned to Sinjar and works for the Yazidi Organization for Documentation exhuming mass graves of the victims of IS slaughter.

Women who were kept as sex slaves by IS and had children as a result face a special challenge. According to Yazidi tradition, a woman who has sexual relations with a non-Yazidi man — even by force — is excluded from the Yazidi community.

In a break with this tradition, Yazidi leaders announced that women who had been abducted would be welcomed back into the community. The Yazidi Spiritual Council issued a further proclamation April 24, calling for “the return of all the Daesh [Islamic

Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) rebuffed an attempt by IS to take the town of Kobani. In November that year, a coalition of YPG, Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga (under Kurdistan Regional Government command) and Yazidi Protection Forces retook the town of Sinjar. They were backed by U.S. air assaults, which destroyed large parts of the town, a preview of the 2017 battles in Mosul and Raqqa, which sealed the fate of the IS territory.

Yazidis face obstacles

Two years on, some Yazidis have returned to villages on the Nineveh plain and to parts of Sinjar. “South of the mountain, there are many mines and unexploded bombs, and the infrastructure is destroyed,” Ilyas Saleem said, describing the obstacles faced by those who return.

According to Iraqi authorities, 360,000 of the displaced Yazidis remain in the region, most of them in Iraqi Kurdistan, and 100,000 have left for Europe and elsewhere. Thousands live in camps on Mount Sinjar.

This summer widespread fires have destroyed tens of thousands of acres of farmland in Iraq, especially areas previously under IS control. Farmers who had returned to parts of Sinjar lost everything, just as crops were getting ready for harvest.

Many Yazidis fear returning to an area where contending forces vie for military control, including the YPG, peshmerga, the Tehran-backed Hashd al-Shaabi and the Iraqi army. Turkish military forces also intervene in the area.

Nadia Murad underscored this reality when she met with President Donald Trump in Washington July 17. “Now there is no ISIS [Islamic State] but we cannot go back because Kurdish government and the Iraqi government, they are fighting each other over who will control my area,” she said.

Iraqi government and Hashd al-Shaabi forces, backed by U.S. warplanes, have been battling remaining IS forces. Kurdish media report that

State] survivors as we consider what happened to them outside of their will.” Three days later the Spiritual Council made a U-turn, saying this did *not* apply to children fathered by Islamic State members.

This sparked a debate within the community. “This is something new and hard for our nation,” Nadia Murad said in a video. “I was in contact with many women and they told me they have been rescued but are living in camps, mountains, and [other] countries, afraid to return as they have been told that their children will not be accepted.

“I believe this should be determined by the mothers of the children and their families,” she said.

Murad Ismail, executive director of the Yazda Organization, a U.S.-based group of Yazidis closely linked with Nadia Murad, said, “The magnitude of IS's crimes makes it extremely difficult for many people to accept raising children linked to the group. I still believe the best way is to retrieve these women and children and relocate them to a country which will provide safety for these victims.”

The Kurdish Communist Party also



Above, Ögmundur Jónsson; right, Alessio Mamo/Al Jazeera
Above, Ghanim Ilyas Saleem, executive manager of Ghasin Al-Zaiton (Olive Branch) Organization for Youth. Right, Nadia Murad, center, who escaped from Islamic State captivity, in discussion at event marking opening of first mass grave of Yazidis in Kocho. Hundreds of thousands of Yazidis remain displaced.



weighed in, calling for “observance of the right of motherhood and the rights of the child and not leaving them in the orphanage but raising them within the family.”

A number of women have described their plight publicly. Barfe Farho returned to her family with her two sons, aged 4 and 5, but was forced to leave her 11-month-old daughter in an orphanage in the Kurdish region of Syria. “I wish the third one was here,”

she told the London *Telegraph* July 6. “She is part of me and what happened was not my fault, I never chose this.”

Hundreds of Yazidis are among the tens of thousands of women and children, including IS “wives,” still living in refugee camps such as the hellish al-Hol camp in Syria. Some 70,000 people are trying to survive there, including 30,000 from Iraq.

Yazidi leaders point out that the problem is compounded by Iraqi law,

which states that if the father is a Muslim, the child is Muslim. According to Rudaw, one woman who insisted on returning with her infant was told the child couldn't get Iraqi identification papers because the father was absent. She gave the child up for adoption.

Ghanim Ilyas Saleem condemned the Iraqi government's reactionary policies. “I tell them, you are doing the work of Islamic State. What they do by force, you do by law.”

Ohio college pays bond over ‘racism’ smear of bakery owners

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Oberlin College has complied with an order to post a \$36 million bond by July 31, while it appeals a guilty verdict against it for slandering Gibson's Bakery and the Gibson family in Oberlin, Ohio. This represents the total amount of judgments against the college, plus interest, awarded in June.

Following a six-week trial a Lorain County jury found the college and Meredith Raimondo, college vice president and dean of students, guilty of slandering the Gibsons and their family-run bakery and convenience store as “racist,” intentionally and maliciously damaging the business.

The jury's verdict is a victory for working people, striking a blow against

race-baiting and the arrogant exercise of class privilege by the Oberlin College administration.

The jury awarded the Gibsons \$44 million, the largest civil judgment for defamation by libel in Ohio history. Judge John Miraldi later reduced the damages to a still substantial \$25 million citing Ohio law, which limits civil judgments. He awarded a further \$6.5 million to the Gibsons' attorneys for their fees and expenses.

The college opposed having to post a bond at all. But noting that the appeal process could take up to three years, the judge added some \$4.5 million to the bond total to cover interest. The bond ensures that if the college decides to appeal but fails, it won't be able to claim it doesn't have the money to pay up.

The bond was necessary because of “the College's own statements about its dire financial straits,” including “\$190 million of existing debt” and a “significant operating deficit,” the Gibsons' attorneys said in their motion to the court.

The college had to post the \$36 million bond or face paying the Gibsons and their lawyers immediately. Meanwhile, the college is attempting to raise \$82 million in bonds to pay off other debts.

In November 2016 college officials, led by Raimondo, orchestrated protests outside Gibson's Bakery for two days after three students who are Black were caught shoplifting after trying to buy wine with a fake ID.

As part of a plea bargain that allowed them to avoid jail time, the three students stated that the actions of Gibson employees “were not racially motivated. They were merely trying to prevent an underage sale.” Of 40 shoplifters arrested for stealing from the bakery in a five-year period, only six were Black.

But the facts were of little interest to the Oberlin administration. Falsely claiming that the 134-year-old store had

a long history of racial-profiling, the college canceled its long-term contract with Gibson's for purchasing baked goods and continued to slander the store.

At one point Oberlin officials offered to cut a deal, if the Gibsons would agree in the future to call the college and not the cops, when students are caught shoplifting for the first time. The Gibsons refused to treat students differently than others from the town.

In November 2017, David and Allyn Gibson Sr. sued the college and Raimondo for their false accusations of racism and for damaging the business. Numerous townspeople, including several African Americans, testified against the “racism” smear during the libel case.

At the heart of the case is social class and class privilege. Would the law apply equally to students from upper-middle-class families who could afford \$58,000 a year tuition at Oberlin College, or would students get preferred treatment over others as the college insisted? Can the liberal meritocrats and “social justice warriors” who run the college with their attitudes of entitlement utilize race-baiting to crush a small business?

The unanimous decision in favor of the Gibsons by the eight-person Lorain County jury reflects that working people were fed up with the actions of Oberlin College officials. When the protests against Gibson's began, workers from all over the area went out of their way to shop at the store and show their support, repulsed by the school's slander campaign.

Crisis affects Lorain County workers

The college's lawyers tried and failed to get the trial moved out of Lorain County where Oberlin is located to somewhere they hoped would be more favorable to the university. They claimed the jury pool in Lorain was poisoned and had a “lack of balanced views.” That's just a reflection of their

contempt for working people.

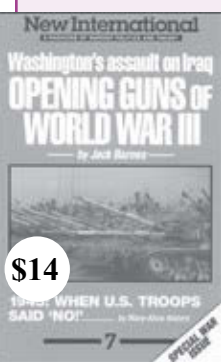
Workers in Lorain have experienced years of capitalist decline, job cuts and a broader social crisis, including the impact of opioid addiction that has wreaked devastation across counties in northern Ohio and around the country. As working people look for ways to struggle together against the impact of this carnage on their lives, they are boosted by the verdict against the college, the biggest business in town, which thought it could libel the Gibson family as “racist” and get away with it.

Peter Thierjung contributed to this article.

Revolution, Counterrevolution and War in Iran

Social and political roots of workers' protests that swept 90 cities and small towns last year.
by Steve Clark

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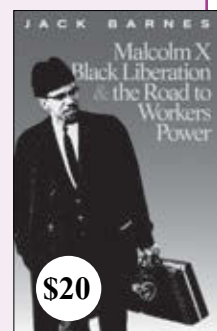
The Jewish Question

by Abram Leon

As he wrote this classic Marxist account of the origins of Jew-hatred and the fight against it, Leon was also a communist active in distributing internationalist flyers to German occupation troops. He paid with his life in the gas chambers at Auschwitz.

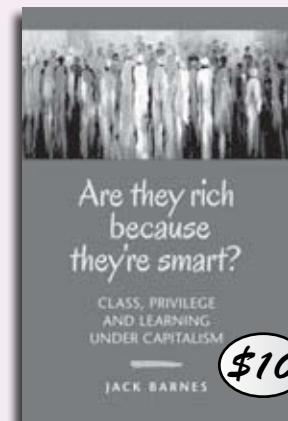
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Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism

by Jack Barnes



“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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How capitalism is revolutionizing parts of Africa

The selection below is from Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa: Reports from Equatorial Guinea by Mary-Alice Waters and Martín Koppel. The title is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for August. The two authors visited the country in 2005 and 2008, seeing firsthand both the accelerating changes and the impact of revolutionary Cuba's internationalist volunteers there. The book draws on their interview with President Teodoro Obiang Nguema in 2008. Excerpts are from the chapter "Transformation of Production and Class Relations Highlights Realities Facing Millions in Africa." Copyright © 2009 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Equatorial Guinea, a former colony of Spain, is one of the smallest countries in Africa, both geographically and in population. Until a decade and a half ago, it was also what President Obiang called "the poorest of the poor"—one of the least economically developed regions on this continent. There were few paved roads, electrification was largely a dream, there was virtually no industry — even light manufacturing — and land cultivation was subsistence agriculture. There was no modern bourgeois class structure — no rising class of risk-



Militant/Martín Koppel

Workers in Equatorial Guinea at Chinese-run construction project march at Oct. 12, 2005, independence day parade in Evinayong. Growth of oil industry has expanded the capitalist class and above all, a working class that has growing self-confidence, pride and a widening scope.

taking merchants, factory owners, and landowners, no wage workers or peasantry. The legacy of centuries of colonial and imperialist domination maximized the hobbling and great unevenness of the country's social relations and economic structure.

Then, in the mid-1990s, vast reserves of oil and natural gas were discovered deep beneath the country's offshore waters in the Gulf of Guinea. ...

Within a few years' time, one of the world's most capital-intensive, technologically complex, and highly monopolized industries has been superimposed on a foundation in which the existing productivity of labor is a product of millennia of hunting, fishing, and subsistence agriculture, distorted by centuries of slave trading and colonial domination. ...

Returning to Equatorial Guinea after several years, we noted four striking developments above all: the changing class relations and composition of the working class here, with workers drawn from around the world; the resources going into development of the economic infrastructure; the expansion of the system of higher education; and the spread of these developments throughout all parts of the country.

These changes and the contradictions they engender — revolutionizing conditions of life for many — underscore realities facing millions in large parts of Africa today. ...

[I]n less than fifteen years the exploitation of oil and natural gas reserves has turned Equatorial Guinea into the third-largest oil exporter in sub-Saharan Africa, after Nigeria and Angola. "It is U.S. companies that are operating the offshore extraction operations, including ExxonMobil, Marathon, and Hess," Obiang noted in the interview. Marathon also owns the liquid natural gas and methanol plants. In recent years, he added, "a number of other companies have signed agreements with [state-owned] Gepetrol, including Malaysian, South African, and Nigerian oil companies," for joint exploration and development projects. China is the largest purchaser of the country's oil.

Exploitation of Equatorial Guinea's oil resources has accelerated the development of a modern class structure here in the urban areas. While tribal and clan ties continue to dominate social relations in the countryside, these preclass formations dissolve more and more with the increased penetration of the world market and capitalist relations of production.

As has happened in other parts of the world over the past five centuries, capital accumulation is today consolidating a capitalist class in Equatorial Guinea, with expanding private holdings in land, hotels, construction, transport, and other businesses. Through the purchase and exploitation of labor power, this rising class is extracting surplus value and expanding its wealth.

There are growing numbers of small traders, merchants, lawyers, and other petty-bourgeois layers. Drawn by the oil boom, this includes increasing numbers from West Africa, the Middle East, China, and other parts of the world.

A class of wage workers is being born in Equatorial Guinea, too. As the Communist Manifesto noted about Europe and North America more than 150 years ago, "In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed — a class of laborers, who live only so long as they find work and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital."

Capitalist expansion inexorably draws growing parts of the world into its orbit, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels noted. Today capital is exerting its pull on Equatorial Guinea. Increasing numbers of Guineans are becoming wage workers for the first time ever, as laborers on road and other construction projects especially. Nearly half the country's population lives in Bata and Malabo, which are being swelled by stepped-up migration from the countryside of toilers seeking jobs.

The demand for labor has also led to a large influx of workers from abroad, especially from other parts of Central and West Africa — including Cameroon, Gabon, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Nigeria. Workers from Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, and elsewhere in Latin America have come to work in hotels, restaurants, and at other jobs. On all the construction sites we visited, most of the skilled workers and technicians are migrants from French-speaking African countries or contract employees from China, North Africa, Lebanon, Iran, and elsewhere.

As Obiang said in an August 5, 2008, speech to an audience that included many Guinean construction workers, "Equatorial Guinea used to be a country that was held in contempt." Now, he said, "many are coming here in search of prosperity. We have more immigrants than other countries in Africa. It's like bees who are coming to taste our honey."

The growth of the working class and its increasingly international character—as workers bring their skills and experiences from other parts of the world—has increased the pride and confidence of working people here. It is widening their scope.

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Cuban Revolution shows workers can win

Sixty-six years ago on July 26, workers and youth, led by Fidel Castro, attacked the Moncada military barracks in Santiago, Cuba. The brutal regime of Fulgencio Batista had seized power, cancelled elections and arrested or murdered those who challenged his rule. The attack — aimed at galvanizing popular opposition to the dictatorship — was defeated and many of the combatants, captured alive, were tortured and murdered by the regime’s thugs. But it signaled the opening of the Cuban Revolution and the forging of a revolutionary leadership.

Five and a half years after the attack, the July 26th Movement led working people to overthrow Batista, deepen their struggles and go on to establish their own government, beginning the transformation of society.

U.S. imperialism was shocked that the program of the revolutionary movement — put forward by Fidel during his trial for the assault on Moncada and widely promoted throughout the island — was not just pretty words, it was carried out.

The large agricultural estates were nationalized and put under workers control or distributed to landless peasants. Factories were taken over by workers. A massive literacy campaign was launched to teach workers and farmers to read and write. Working peo-

ple became masters of their own destinies. Hundreds of thousands have volunteered for internationalist missions to advance the struggles of workers and farmers elsewhere around the world, acting on Castro’s explanation that “those not willing to fight for the freedom of others will never be able to fight for their own.”

The U.S. rulers have never forgiven working people for not just changing the faces of those in power but transgressing against capitalist property and profits — especially of U.S. bosses. And they have never given up on their dream of restoring U.S. domination of the island. That’s why Washington’s economic war on Cuba never ends.

What working people from the U.S. to Puerto Rico and across the globe can learn from the experience of the Cuban Revolution is as important today as the day workers and farmers in Cuba took power.

As Jack Barnes put it in *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, working people of Cuba showed us “that with class solidarity, political consciousness, courage, focused and persistent efforts at education, and a revolutionary leadership of a caliber like that in Cuba — a leadership tested and forged in battle over years — it is possible to stand up to enormous might and seemingly insurmountable odds *and win.*”

Democrats’ Mueller exposé falls flat

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his unrestricted probe into alleged collusion by Trump’s 2016 campaign. The special counsel issued 2,800 subpoenas, nearly 500 search warrants, organized highly publicized armed raids on many of the president’s former associates and found nothing on Trump.

Mueller refused to answer questions at the House hearing about former British spy Christopher Steele, who provided Fusion GPS, a “research group” hired by Hillary Clinton’s 2016 campaign, with false claims and innuendos against Trump. This “evidence” was used by the FBI to get a warrant to spy on Carter Page, a 2016 Trump campaign worker. Another former FBI chief, James Comey, used these same claims to get the witch hunt against Trump rolling.

After Trump won the election — because wide swaths of working people were fed up with what they faced and the disdain they got from politicians of both parties in Washington — he fired Comey for trying to swing the election for Clinton. The Justice Department was then pressed into setting up Mueller’s special counsel probe.

The Democrats’ use of the FBI today to try and criminalize their political differences with Republican Party politician Trump is dangerous for working people. It emboldens the rulers to use their political police against their more serious enemy, the working class. For decades the FBI has spied on members of the Socialist Workers Party, other working-class militants and Black rights fighters, with the backing of both Democrats and Republicans.

“There is not a single public official doing more to protect Mr. Trump than” House Leader Nancy Pelosi, complained Cenk Uygur, one of Pelosi’s Democratic Party opponents, in a July 21 *Wall Street Journal* column. Recognizing impeachment’s unpopularity and believing it could endanger the Democrats’ chance of winning in 2020, Pelosi opposes pushing it to a vote.

The failure of the Mueller testimony to provide any new dirt on Trump strengthened Pelosi’s hand.

She was able to secure the backing of a number of Democrats, including some on the left in her party, to join Trump and the Republicans to push a budget through the House July 25. This included the votes of Democratic Socialists of America members Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib, who recently clashed with Pelosi and race-baited her, claiming she was targeting them as “people of color.” The Democratic Party-backed budget that Ocasio-Cortez and Tlaib voted for includes \$733 billion for the Pentagon to defend the interests of

the capitalist rulers in their wars around the world.

New York Times columnist Charles Blow complained that the Democratic Party leadership feared impeaching the president because it “might upset the white people who voted for Trump’s racism but might be open to considering a Democrat.” Blow considers Trump voters — many of whom voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012, seeking change — as bigoted people who need to be contained.

What drives liberals’ disdainful attitudes towards workers is the hope “of finding ways to disenfranchise larger numbers of working people, whom they’re convinced are unqualified to have a decisive voice in ‘important’ government decisions or even to recognize what’s in our own best interests,” explains Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, in his introduction to *Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions*.

Liberals turn to race-baiting

Times writer Farhad Manjoo, one of those who refuses to give up on impeachment, urges Democrats to forget Mueller and instead impeach Trump because of his “racism.” Anyone who disagrees with the course liberals and the middle-class left push is targeted as “racist” to shut them down and derail discussion and debate.

Pelosi got in on the act, accusing Trump of a “racist attack” July 27, when the president scolded Democratic Congressman Elijah Cummings as a “brutal bully,” after Cummings criticized miserable conditions in detention centers at the southern border. Trump made a degrading claim that Cummings should “clean up” Baltimore, the Maryland district he represents, saying it is a “rodent infested mess.”

The president, like his Democratic and Republican predecessors, defends the interests of the propertied capitalist class. They maintain their rule by fostering divisions among working people — Black and Caucasian, foreign and native born, men and women — to press their assaults on workers’ living standards and conditions and try to push back our struggles.

The liberals and left claim the problem is Trump’s “base” of racist, xenophobic workers. But there is less racism among working people today, a consequence of the revolution in social relations forged in struggle by the Black-led mass movement that overthrew Jim Crow segregation.

“Working people need to break with all capitalist politicians and the bosses’ twin parties, the Democrats and Republicans, and rely on our own capacities to struggle,” said Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey General Assembly.

Prison censorship

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All of the impoundment notices falsely assert that the articles present “a threat to the security, good order or discipline of the correctional system.”

The *Militant* has sent the paper to its subscribers behind bars in Florida for decades. From 2012 to 2016, prison wardens only impounded four issues of the paper. *All* of those bans were overturned by the Literature Review Committee.

From 2017 to 2018 some 21 issues of the paper were impounded; almost all the bans were overturned.

“Nothing in our political viewpoint or coverage can justify violating our rights and the rights of our subscribers,” *Militant* editor John Studer said in a July 30 interview. “Whatever side of the prison walls workers find themselves, they have the same need to read books and newspapers of their choosing, to educate themselves, to know what’s going on in the world, to think for themselves.”

The first ban this year upheld by the Literature Review Committee featured an article on Albert Woodfox, who spent over 40 years in solitary confinement at Angola state penitentiary in Louisiana. The banned issue covered Woodfox’s New York tour, including a speech at the Brooklyn Public Library and one at the Fortune Society, a government-funded program that aids former prisoners getting jobs and housing.

In his appeal of the bans on issues no. 24 and 25, the *Militant*’s lawyer, David Goldstein, notes that “it has become obvious” that the Florida Department of Corrections is “redoubling its efforts to ban the *Militant* from its subscribers” behind bars in Florida.

Goldstein points out that Kansas prison officials had banned the *Militant* along with 7,000 other publications. After reviewing all of the banned issues of the paper, including many of the same ones that have been banned in Florida, the Kansas Department of Corrections concluded that not one of the papers presented “a direct threat” to the prison system and lifted *all* the bans.

The *Militant* is not the only paper that includes coverage on prison abuse, solitary confinement and related issues. Goldstein notes that the *Miami Herald* ran a whole series on abuse in Florida prisons from 2012 to June 2019. But only one issue was banned, and it was not one of the issues with the articles on prison abuse.

“Absolutely nothing in these [*Militant*] articles could rationally be found to depict, describe or encourage activities which may lead to the use of physical violence or that otherwise presents a threat to the security” of the prison system or any individual, Goldstein notes.

The only conclusion, he says, is that Florida prison officials “ban the *Militant*” because of “its political views.”

Amnesty International USA, the National Coalition Against Censorship, the National Lawyers Guild, the American Civil Liberties Union - Florida, WeCount! the Prison Ministry at the Riverside Church in New York and others have sent letters to the Florida Literature Review Committee, calling on it to overturn bans on the *Militant*.

In its letter the Prison Ministry of the Riverside Church writes, “Each confiscation represents an assault on the United States Constitution and on all those who care about freedom of thought, inquiry and expression.” More letters are needed! See the box below for how you can strengthen the fight against prison censorship.

Fight prison censorship!

Get out the word: Download, print and distribute *Militant* articles on this fight.

Get support statements from co-workers, unions, churches and defenders of political rights. Mail to: Literature Review Committee Att: Dean Peterson, 501 South Calhoun St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-2500; Email to: Allen.Peterson@fdc.myflorida.com 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