

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Bob Redrup: Built Socialist Workers Party for 7 decades

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83/NO. 34 SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

‘Militant’ wins again in battle against Florida prison bans

BY ROY LANDERSEN

As the campaign against suppression of the *Militant* by Florida prison wardens gathers momentum, the Department of Corrections Literature Review Committee overturned the latest impoundments of two more issues of the socialist newsweekly Aug. 28. And they did so before the paper had even filed an appeal.

“Both issues will be allowed into Florida correctional institutions,” committee chair Dean Peterson informed the *Militant*.

Coming after state prison officials lifted the ban on five previous issues of the paper Aug. 19, this is an important victory for the rights of workers behind bars and of the paper. It will give encouragement to the ongoing fight against efforts to keep the *Militant* out of the hands of its subscribers behind bars.

The paper continues to receive messages of support, including from two

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Disaster facing Bahamians is product of the capitalist system

BY SETH GALINSKY

“We are on our own,” Bahamian volunteer fireman Greg Johnson told the press Sept. 6 in Treasure Cay, explaining the inaction of the government of the Bahamas in the wake of Hurricane Dorian. “It’s deplorable.”

Working people were left to fend for themselves when the storm, with sustained winds up to 185 mph, devastated parts of the country after making landfall Sept. 1.

U.N. officials estimate that 70,000 people are homeless — mostly from Abaco and Grand Bahamas, the hardest-hit areas — out of a population of 400,000 on the archipelago, some 700 islands and cays, off the eastern coast of Florida.

More than a week after the storm, aid still had not reached many in desperate need of it. And crowds of survivors were still waiting at the airport in Abaco, hoping to catch a flight out. The government

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Join in building support for Kentucky coal miners’ fight!

Bosses demand court end Blackjewel miners’ protest



Blackjewel Employees Stand Together

Kentucky coal miners fighting for pay stolen from them when Blackjewel bosses declared bankruptcy. Chinese restaurant owner Joyce Cheng, at center, has raised over \$5,000 for them.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Blackjewel coal miners in Harlan County and their supporters have been camped out on the rail tracks outside the Cloverlick No. 3 mine since July 29, determined to keep their former bosses from moving about 100 rail cars of coal out until they are paid in full for wages stolen from them. The example these miners are setting by standing up to the mine bosses and their anti-worker laws and courts is inspiring a growing number of workers and others across the state and beyond.

The protests continue as a bankruptcy court in Charleston, West Virginia, is hearing a request from

the former owners to let them move the coal.

Some 300 coal miners were laid off by Blackjewel LLC coal company in eastern Kentucky July 1, along with

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‘Economic recovery is not how most workers would describe life today’



Militant/Edwin Fruit

Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate in 2016, talks to Markus Nalumu in Burien, Washington, Sept. 10. “I commend you for what you’re doing,” he said.

BY JANET POST

“For millions of working people in this country ‘economic recovery’ is not how they would describe their conditions of life over the past 10 years,” Paul Mailhot, a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, told the opening celebration of the party’s new headquarters in Miami Aug. 30.

Mailhot described the stagnant wages and dangerous working conditions growing numbers face and

the rising difficulties young workers have affording their own home. He recounted how Blackjewel coal bosses closed mines in Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia and Wyoming recently “robbing the pensions and wages of miners through a bankruptcy scam.”

“Direct assaults on workers will increase as economic conditions worsen,” he said. Most importantly, workers are beginning to resist. Miners in Harlan County are fighting to get

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UK out of the EU puts workers in better position to fight UK rulers

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — It’s been more than three years since millions of working people helped form the majority that voted for the U.K. to get out of the European Union. But an alliance of capitalist parties is stepping up efforts to continue to prevent this from ever happening.

A cross-party coalition, organized against the Conservative government of Prime Minister Boris Johnson, enacted legislation that will force another extension for Brexit — currently set to expire Oct. 31. Its aim is to secure a “Brexit-in-name-only” deal with Brussels that would keep the U.K.’s

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Gibson’s bakery scores another victory against Oberlin attacks

BY SETH GALINSKY

In a victory for the Gibson family and working people, Lorraine County, Ohio, Judge John Miraldi Sept. 9 denied motions by Oberlin College asking him to either grant them a new trial or overturn the jury verdict finding the college and Dean of Students Meredith Raimondo guilty of libel.

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Indiana Machinists end 2-month strike, vow to fight plant closure
Petrochemical workers strike in Quebec over wages, pensions

Hundreds protest gov’t seizure of Maori children in New Zealand

BY PATRICK BROWN

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — Demanding “Hands Off Our Tamariki [children],” upwards of 400 people rallied at Parliament here July 30 to condemn the seizure of Maori children from their mothers by the children’s ministry, Oranga Tamariki. Protests took place in a number of other centers, including Christchurch Dunedin, and Tauranga.

Calls for the actions were sparked by media exposure of attempts by Oranga Tamariki representatives to seize a 7-day-old baby from a young mother at Hawkes Bay Hospital June 10-11. The Family Court had issued a without-notice custody order to take the baby into the state’s care.

A video on the Newsroom website showed the mother — supported by her family, partner and two midwives — holding off repeated attempts to snatch the baby. The mother’s family disputes claims made in the court order that they have a record of domestic violence and drug use.

The two midwives involved, Ripeka Ormsby and Jean Te Huia, were among the speakers at the Wellington rally protesting the seizure, or the “uplift,” of Maori children. “How is it possible that in our country, in this day and age, there’s no voice for the mother?” asked Ormsby.

The video touched a chord with many women who have had first-hand experience with Oranga Tamariki. Amid the furor, inquiries were launched and protests were organized outside Oranga Tamariki offices in many places around the country.

Rachael Taylor, a leader of the pickets in south Auckland, told the *Militant* July 15 that her daughter had been taken after coming to the attention of authorities for missing school. Accusing the family of having drug and alcohol problems, a social worker had secured a court order to remove the child. “It took a lot of effort to find out my rights and win my daughter back,” said Taylor.

“I’m angry at the intimidation tactics used on our ladies to prevent them from having hope or believing they are worth more,” Taylor wrote on the Destiny Church website.

From 2015 to 2018 the total number of babies under 3 months old removed from their parents jumped by over a third. This coincided with a new law decreeing that once a mother has one child removed she must then prove she is capable of taking care of any new baby or they will take that child.

The number of Maori babies “taken by the state” increased “from 110 in 2015 to 172 in 2018” says an open letter signed by almost 17,000 people and presented to members of Parliament at the Wellington protest.

In 2018, 62% of the 281 babies under 3 months old removed from their parents were Maori, reported a Radio New Zealand “Insight” documentary July 21. Of the nearly 5 million people in New Zealand, 16% are Maori, an oppressed nationality with a long and ongoing record of struggle for national rights.

Speaking at an Indigenous Nurses Aotearoa Conference organized by the New Zealand Nurses Organisation in Auckland, Aug. 9, Jean Te



Militant/Patrick Brown

Some 400 people protest in Wellington, New Zealand, July 30 against state’s seizure of Maori children. They heard midwives explain why they had joined fight against seizure at hospital.

Huia pointed out that 86% of children in state care are Maori. She noted that parents seeking to reverse the seizure of their children are not entitled to legal aid, and so “have no financial

means of defending themselves so they can get their children back.”

Annalucia Vermunt contributed to this article.

Portland police Photoshop mug shot to frame up man for robbery

BY JANET POST

When cops in Portland, Oregon, decided they wanted to nail Tyronne Allen for bank robbery, they used Photoshop on his mug shot to wipe out every one of the many tattoos covering his face to make his image “fit” that of the suspect witnesses had described.

The cops carried out their frame-up operation with the photo-editing program in 2017, knowing that surveillance video indicated the perpetrator had no tattoos. Then they put Allen’s “fixed” photo with five “filler photos” in the lineup and showed them to eyewitnesses of the robbery.

Two of the four eyewitnesses identified Allen as the suspect, one did not, and one was unsure. Mark Ahlemeyer, Allen’s attorney, filed a motion this August with the Oregon U.S. District Court to throw out the positive witness identifications based on the doctored picture.

“The revelations raise big questions about how many people may have

been falsely identified by eyewitnesses in recent years based on changes [to their photos],” said Mat dos Santos, legal director of the Oregon American Civil Liberties Union.

“If a witness reports that a perpetrator did not have any front teeth, can the government simply black out a suspect’s teeth?” Ahlemeyer said in an interview with the *Washington Post*.

Detective Brett Hawkinson ordered the manipulation of Allen’s mug shot. He told the court it’s “standard practice among investigators.”

The U.S. Justice Department provided cover for the cops doctoring of photos in a 2017 memo. “If the suspect’s distinctive feature cannot be readily duplicated on the filler photographs, then the suspect’s feature can be blacked out,” it said.

“Some of the nation’s largest police departments regularly use Photoshop and other editing tools in cases where suspects have a distinguishing tattoo, scar, bruise or other mark,” the Aug. 24 *New York Times* noted.

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THE MILITANT

Gov’t to give control of line-speed to packing bosses

The government threat to end limits on line speed in pork slaughtering plants will embolden the bosses to increase speed and put workers’ health and safety at greater risk. The ‘Militant’ explains why workers can resist the bosses’ attacks and win support of others.



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Dakota Premium meatpackers march in 2000, win union, right to monitor line speed.

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‘Economic recovery’ not felt by workers

Continued from front page

back pay they are owed and have occupied rail tracks to prevent the owners from moving coal. “The miners are setting an example and all working people should help them to fight,” Mailhot urged.

He noted the hall in Miami is the fourth new one the party has opened in the last month, following Albany, New York; Louisville, Kentucky; and Dallas.

He described the work SWP members do to organize workers to fight against the bosses’ assaults and to extend solidarity with labor struggles. And in the course of such work to increase knowledge about the party’s revolutionary program.

Anthony Dutrow, SWP candidate for Miami City Commission, welcomed participants to the gathering and pointed with pride to the work of volunteers, who got the hall painted and ready for use in less than a week. Dutrow explained that during most of the 40-plus years the SWP has had a branch in Miami, it has maintained a public headquarters there.

The new hall will be an organizing center from which party members

will reach to working people across Florida with Dutrow’s campaign, a venue for the regular Militant Labor Forum series, and a place where working people can find a wide range of revolutionary books.

It is centrally located near downtown Miami. In response to an appeal for funds to furnish the hall and maintain it in the coming months, participants donated \$1,290 on the spot. A total of \$2,340 has been pledged overall.

SWP national campaign tour

In Seattle, Alyson Kennedy, the SWP 2016 presidential candidate, and Malcolm Jarrett, SWP 2019 candidate for Pittsburgh City Council, kicked off four days of campaigning Sept. 10-13 as part of their current national tour.

Campaigning door to door in Burien, Washington, they met Markus Nalumu, originally from Fiji. They described the fights by coal miners in Kentucky, and working people in Puerto Rico against the impact of U.S. colonial rule of this island. “It is actions like these that begin to give confidence to working people that they can defend their interests,” Ken-

nedy told Nalumu, who bought a subscription to the *Militant*.

The SWP candidate for Atlanta School Board, Rachele Fruit, and campaign supporter John Benson traveled to Mississippi Aug. 29-30 to talk with working people in some of the towns where Immigration and Customs Enforcement conducted raids at six poultry processing plants and detained 680 workers Aug. 7.

“They shouldn’t have done it. I didn’t see that these people did anything wrong,” Lucretia Jackson, told the socialist campaigners. Jackson lives in Canton a few blocks from Peco Foods, one of the plants that was raided. “They are good workers, polite, their kids were born here,” she added.

Fruit explained that fighting for an amnesty for the 11 million plus undocumented workers in the U.S. is central to building the unity the workers movement needs to fight for better working and living conditions for all workers, native- and foreign-born. Jackson got a subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of the Pathfinder book, “*It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System.*”

Capitalists’ contempt for safety

SWP members Maggie Trowe and Karen Evans visited Junction City in central Kentucky Aug. 24, where the Texas Eastern Transmission natural gas pipeline ruptured and exploded Aug. 1, killing a 58-year-old truck driver, Lisa Derringer, and hospitalizing five. The explosion and fire destroyed railroad tracks and forced the evacuation of 75 residents from the Indian Camp trailer park. At least five homes and some cars were destroyed.

“No one tells us anything,” Junction City resident Haley Donner told Trowe and Evans. “No one warned us about any danger. Nobody around here knew the gas pipeline was under us,” added her husband, Bill Donner.

Flames from the fire reached 300 feet high and could be seen throughout the county. The pipeline, owned by Enbridge based in Calgary, Alberta, goes from the Gulf of Mexico to New York City. Following the explosion, a company official told the press the pipeline was “probably” inspected in the last four years.

“Now we find out these pipelines have been around for decades and haven’t been maintained,” Gypsy Lane, a relative of the Donners, told Evans and Trowe.

“The capitalists only care about profits. They don’t do basic mainte-



Militant/Cindy Jaquith

Paul Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party National Committee member, speaks at opening of new headquarters in Miami Aug. 30. Mailhot said miners fight for stolen wages should be “supported by all workers.”

nance to prevent explosions and spills that harm workers and despoil the land, air and water,” Trowe replied.

“And the government that represents the interests of billionaires has contempt for our health and safety,” she said. “It’s the opposite in revolutionary Cuba, where workers and farmers took power in 1959.” The government there acts to prevent natural catastrophes becoming social disasters.

“When hurricanes hit Cuba,” Trowe explained, “working people and their government mobilize those in the path of the storm to get out of harms way and begin recovery work immediately after the hurricane passes.”

Mitchell Lane, Gypsy Lane’s husband, purchased a subscription to the *Militant*.

Cindy Jaquith in Miami contributed to this article.

Moscow frees Sentsov who fought its seizure of Crimea



Volodymyr Petrov

After years of an international campaign demanding freedom for Ukrainian and Crimean political prisoners framed up and imprisoned in Russia, the regime of Vladimir Putin released filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, left, and Oleksandr Kolchenko, right, along with 33 others in a “prisoner swap” with the Ukrainian government, Sept. 7.

In addition to 11 political prisoners, the Putin regime released 24 Ukrainian sailors seized after a Russian naval attack on three Ukrainian ships in the Black Sea last November.

Sentsov, who had been held for more than five years, carried out a 145-day hunger strike demanding freedom for all Ukrainian political prisoners in Putin’s gulag last year.

This is a victory over the “special cruelty” despotic regimes “reserve for those who, through the power of writing and art can move others to resist as well,” PEN America’s Chief Executive Officer Suzanne Nossel said after Sentsov’s release.

In addition to PEN, many organizations worldwide backed the fight for Sentsov’s freedom, including Amnesty International, the *Militant* and the European Film Academy.

Sentsov and Kolchenko were framed up on charges of terrorism for opposing Moscow’s seizure of Crimea in 2014. They held a press conference in Kiev Sept. 10 after their release. Sentsov made it clear he intends to continue to fight for the release of dozens of Ukrainian political prisoners still interned in Russia and Russian citizens who have been imprisoned for protesting against Putin’s government. “They are our real brothers, and they are also prisoners of the Kremlin,” he said.

Sentsov said he continued to work no matter what the conditions were in his Siberian prisons. “I brought back with me 22 kilograms of letters, books and notebooks,” he said. “Fifteen notebooks of finished scripts, collections of stories.”

He also said he plans to publish a day-by-day diary he kept during his hunger strike.

In addition to continuing to speak out for the freedom of political prisoners in Russia, Sentsov said he was looking forward to “the best things in life — making films and living.”

— JOHN STUDER

Hear the SWP candidates

Come meet and hear Alyson Kennedy, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president in 2016, and Malcolm Jarrett, SWP 2019 candidate for Pittsburgh City Council, who are speaking and campaigning across the country.

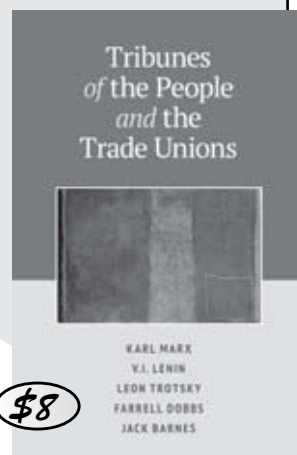
Sept. 14-18 Chicago
Sept. 20-22 Twin Cities
Sept. 27-29 Dallas

To help fund the tour, send your contributions to the SWP National Campaign Committee, 306 W. 37th St., 13th fl., New York, NY 10018.

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Troy protest: Prosecute cop who killed Edson Thevenin!

BY JACOB PERASSO

TROY, New York — Carrying signs and chanting “Justice for Edson” and “Prosecute killer cops,” some 60 people demonstrated Aug. 22 outside a council meeting to protest the city’s cover-up of the cop killing of Edson Thevenin in 2016.

City officials refused to act on an internal affairs investigation that found officer Randall French carried out an “unjustifiable act of deadly force” and then lied to investigators after he killed Thevenin at a traffic stop.

“We can’t let the city of Troy get away with it,” Pastor Tre Stanton, speaking for Thevenin’s family, told protesters. “We are letting the community know we won’t stop until we get justice.” Gertha Depas, Thevenin’s mother, and James Thevenin, his brother, attended the action.

“This could happen to anyone,” retired carpenter Paul Banks told the *Militant*. Banks had joined the action when he heard protesters, saying, “My son has been arrested by cops four times this summer for jaywalking and riding his bike on the sidewalk,” he pointed out.

Troy police officials claim that French was pinned between Thevenin’s revving car and his police cruiser when he killed Thevenin.

Four days after the killing Rensselaer County District Attorney Joel Abelow presented the case to a grand jury, which exonerated French and gave him immunity from prosecution. Two civilian witnesses to the shooting were not called to testify.

Since then, the state Supreme Court in June 2018 dismissed charges against Abelow, including that he lied to the grand jury that acquitted French.

An attorney general’s report issued in January last year disputed French’s account of the killing, noting that Troy cops failed to interview witnesses and that the cops’ claim that French was pinned between the two vehicles was “inaccurate.”

Instead of acting on the internal investigation that French had lied, Mayor Patrick Madden hired a law enforcement expert to refute the investigation’s findings in a second yet-to-be-released report.

Thevenin’s family has filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the city.

French “should be in jail,” Betty Rockenshire, a retired machinist who lives close to where the Aug. 22 protest

took place, told the *Militant*. Cops “think they can do whatever they want,” she noted.

James Cooper, who helped organize the protests, has demanded that all those involved in the police department and local government be held accountable for Thevenin’s death, as well as the shooting of his nephew, Dahmeek McDonald, who a cop wounded in August last year. In both instances cops claim that a car was being used to run them over to justify the shooting of two Black men.

Several people at the action called for creation of a civilian review board that “has teeth” to oversee the city police

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Pastor Tre Stanton speaks at Aug. 22 rally in Troy, New York, demanding firing, prosecution of cop Randall French, who killed Edson Thevenin in 2016. City officials tried to cover up killing.

Build support for Kentucky coal miners fight

Continued from front page

1,400 other Blackjewel workers in West Virginia, Virginia and Wyoming, when the company declared bankruptcy.

Money the laid-off miners had already deposited in their bank accounts was clawed back days later without notice. The miners and their families found out as debit cards were declined when they tried to make purchases and other payments bounced.

“I was the first one there,” laid-off Blackjewel miner Chris Sexton told the *Militant* Sept. 7. “I started calling miners. Dalton Lewis and his daddy, Chris Lewis, came to the tracks. Then Chris Rowe and Blake Watts arrived.”

Soon other miners, their families, retired United Mine Workers veterans and supporters from Cumberland County and elsewhere joined them. They brought tents and canopies and set up a kitchen and portable toilets. People started bringing food to the encampment and donating money.

Members of the rail workers union SMART, which represents the CSX train engineers who backed off the trains when they saw miners blocking the tracks, stopped by to offer solidarity. There are currently no UMW-organized coal mines in Kentucky.

‘Hot goods’

The court hearing is over the former bosses’ efforts to overturn a decision of the court and the Department of Labor that the coal is “hot goods” whose future is yet to be determined.

The miners’ struggle and the solidarity it is gaining shines a light on the actions of capitalists — coal bosses and others — who don’t make payroll or otherwise stiff the workers they lay off, and try to use the boss-friendly courts to back them up.

Because of protests by workers victimized in this way, a law was passed in the 1980s in Kentucky requiring construction and mining companies in business for less than five years to post bond adequate to pay workers if the company folds. But it turns out that some 30 companies — including Blackjewel — never put up a bond and are in violation of the law.

The coal bosses, trying to get the “hot goods” order lifted, have called “expert” witnesses who claim the coal is oxidizing and losing value.

The miners say the company’s argument about coal deterioration is false.

“That coal, after you wash it, it can sit up there for a year and nothing happen to it,” William Stanton, a former Blackjewel miner, told WYMT TV reporter Connor James as miners listened to the bankruptcy court hearing under a canopy on the tracks Sept. 5. “It ain’t milk, it’s coal, it ain’t gonna go bad.”

Growing solidarity

“We’re gaining support,” said Sexton. “People have come from all over. A farmer and his wife from Missouri came to visit us and a couple from California stayed for a few days.”

Sexton was talking about Missouri farmer Wayne Cryts. An Aug. 31 *Washington Post* article reported on the visit by Cryts, who told the miners about his fight to get back over 30,000 bushels of soybeans when the silo where they were stored went belly up in 1981. Backed by 600 other farmers and supporters, Cryts took back his beans. He was put on trial. Even though a jury of area workers and farmers — over the sharp objection of the judge — found him innocent, he still ended up serving some time. The *Militant* covered his fight.

Cryts told the miners he would come back again whenever they needed him.

While Blackjewel’s request to move the Kentucky coal awaits decision, the court allowed the company to cut off health insurance for all 1,700 laid-off employees at the end of August.

Material support for the miners’ action has included more than \$87,000 in monetary contributions to the Miners Relief Fund, organized by With Love from Harlan, a community organization; 16 food boxes and 400 bags of groceries from Catholic Charities in Lexington; donations of 5,500 diapers; and prepared food delivered from local restaurants. The Food City grocery store has sent boxes of water.

“My brother Pedro and I have sent food to the miners on the railroad several times,” Angelica Román, co-owner of El Sazón Mexican restaurant in Cumberland, told the *Militant*. “What is happening to them hurts us, because we’re all human beings.”

Joyce Cheng, owner of Panda Garden restaurant in Harlan, who hails from Fuzhou, China, has raised thousands of dollars and contributed a large quantity of food to the miners. “The majority of my customers are miners,” Cheng said in a phone interview Sept. 7. “I raised my kids here and they’re

the ones who have supported me. When they told me 300 miners and their families need help, I asked myself, ‘What can I do?’ I’m a cook and runner, so I did it around that.”

Cheng ran 50 miles, asking for pledges for each mile and for contributions from those she passed on her run, and raised some \$5,000. “In a small town, everyone helps each other,” Cheng said.

Contributions to the Blackjewel miners in Kentucky can be made by sending checks payable to the community organization “With Love From Harlan,” with “Coal Miner Fund” on the check’s memo line, to With Love from Harlan, P.O. Box 1621, Harlan, KY 40831.

While there’s no similar protest outside Blackjewel’s shuttered mines in West Virginia, Virginia and Wyoming — because the former bosses’ aren’t trying to move any coal out there, area workers and small businesses are raising funds to help former miners who also had their pay stolen.

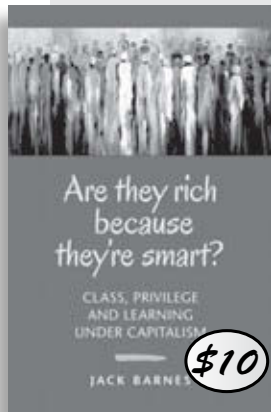
About 600 workers were put on the street in Wyoming’s Powder River Basin when Blackjewel’s two mines there shut down without any notice. Workers say only a quarter of the miners have found other jobs so far. Blackjewel is the third coal company in Wyoming to declare bankruptcy this year.

The Families of Energy Relief Fund, set up during earlier bankruptcies in the area, has stepped up to help organize aid. The group is raising donations and selling T-shirts to provide funds to Blackjewel miners’ families. Contact familiesofenergyrelieffund@gmail.com or (307) 228-0353.

The effect of Blackjewel bosses’ shutdown will have broader effects on workers in areas around the mines. The company owes \$37 million in taxes to Campbell County in Wyoming, \$6 million to the state of Kentucky, \$1.6 million to Virginia and well over \$100 million to equipment makers, local vendors and others. This means it’s likely other jobs and social programs will end up being shut down.

Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?

Class, Privilege and Learning Under Capitalism
by Jack Barnes



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Bosses' profit drive leads to deaths of two more rail workers

The rail bosses' drive for profit claimed the lives of two more union brothers and rail workers in North America in August.

On Aug. 15, in Vaughn, Ontario, 27-year-old train conductor and Teamsters union member Imraan Qamar was killed in Canadian National's MacMillan yard. News reports say a rail car derailed and overturned, crushing him to death. Qamar had qualified as a conductor last December.

On Aug. 20, 39-year-old Travis Andrepont, a rail worker with 16 years experience at Union Pacific, was killed on the job in Beaumont, Texas. Andrepont, who was secretary treasurer of SMART Local 1947, died when he became trapped between two tanker cars.

Another train derailed in Nantes, Quebec, Aug. 24, just 8 miles uphill from Lac-Mégantic, where a train operated by the notorious Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway had derailed and exploded six years ago, killing 47 people and destroying the downtown area. The Central Maine & Quebec Railway — which bought up MMA after it declared bankruptcy — had recently been notified by Transport Canada that the rail was in bad condition.

So far 11 rail workers in North America have been killed on the job in 2019,

seven in the U.S. and four in Canada.

These deaths and derailments, and others like them, were and are preventable. They occur because of the relentless profit drive of the rail bosses. They will not stop until rail workers organize to use union power and broad public support from working people to fight for and win control over safety and working conditions on the job.

Negotiations for a new contract are underway by the Teamsters union at Canadian National Railway. The company is reportedly demanding concessions on rest period, time-off and for running their trains with "one-person crews," like the one that derailed in Lac-Mégantic. This means a single worker has to perform all the functions of train operation — those of the conductor, engineer and brakeman.

Rail bosses all across North America are pushing for longer trains and the one-worker crew. We rail workers need to raise the demand that trains be limited to no more than 50 cars in length with a mandatory four-person crew, two on each end of the train.

No worker has to die on the job. Organizing ourselves and utilizing our unions to defend our lives and the lives of people living along the rail lines, we can win a lot of support from working people, farmers and others.

— A rail worker in Montreal

Petrochemical workers strike in Quebec over wages, pensions

MONTREAL — About 30 petrochemical workers employed by Royal Vopak Co. have been on strike since July 2 here and in Quebec City. They are members of Unifor Local 175C. Unifor is the biggest private-sector union in Canada.

The workers are fighting for better wages, pensions, overtime and back pay. They had voted 100% in favor of the strike after two years of negotiations.

The strikers have received support from seven other Unifor locals and are



Militant/John Steele

March for rail safety, 2015, in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, two years after Montreal, Maine and Atlantic train derailed and exploded, killing 47 people. Sign reads, "Never again!" On Aug. 24 a train derailed in Lac-Mégantic on tracks now owned by Central Maine and Atlantic Railway.

reaching out to other locals and unions.

Vopak is a Dutch company with terminals in 25 countries. Workers in Quebec move petroleum products, chemicals and vegetable oils. Many are from Morocco, Gabon, Haiti, Lebanon and other countries.

Dangers on the job include chemical fumes, burns, long-term chronic diseases and injuries related to outside physical work all year long, according to workers on the picket line.

— Amélie Lanteigne and Philippe Tessier

Indiana Machinists end 2-month strike, vow to fight plant closure

VALPARAISO, Ind. — "I am glad we went on strike. It brought us closer together. We learned solidarity," Kelley Wilson, an inspector at the Regal Beloit plant, told the *Militant* Sept. 4, the day after members of International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Local 2018 returned to work after a strike that began June 30.

Some 110 union members had walked out demanding 75 cents per hour raises and a \$15,000 out-of-pocket family health care maximum. The facility makes bearings for helicopters and airplanes.

On Aug. 27 the company announced it was closing the plant and moving production to its nonunion facility downstate in Monticello.

No date has been set for the plant closure. The union agreed to take down its picket lines a few days after the announcement and returned to work under the old contract. The union will try to negotiate to keep the plant open, or if not successful, to get severance pay for the workers.

"I feel proud of what we did. It is better to fight and lose than not to fight at all," said Dora Smith, a CNC operator, as she was leaving the plant after working day shift Sept. 4.

Three rallies were held over the course of the strike where other local unions and supporters marched in solidarity with IAM Local 2018 members.

"The strike caused all of our members to come together like I have never seen before," Joey Jessen emailed this reporter. "I hope it will give other unions in this country the courage to fight back and stand up. Regal Beloit is a spineless, greedy company that cares about their profits, not their people, but we won at the end of the day."

— Dan Fein

Indict Troy cops

Continued from page 4

department. Ved Dookhun, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Troy, attended the protest and demanded that French be prosecuted. "A civilian review board created by the same powers that covered up this killing will not advance the fight. We need more protests like this that draw in other working people who are outraged by the cops' actions," Dookhun told the *Militant*. "Protest actions have won some firings, prosecutions and even jail time for cops who act as judge, jury and executioner in recent years. These are victories we can build on."

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Socialist Workers Party Campaigns on Workers' Doorsteps: Urges Break with Bosses' Parties, Solidarity with Workers' Struggles. Speaker: Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Atlanta School Board, District 2. Fri., Sept. 20, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave., SW, Suite 103. Tel: (678) 528-7828.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Independence for Puerto Rico! Ending the Crisis Workers Face Under Colonial Rule. Speakers: Charito Morales, independence activist with Philly Boricuas; John Staggs, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Philadelphia City Council, at-large. Fri., Sept. 20. Reception, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 2824 Cottman Ave., Suite 16. (215) 708-1270.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 26, 1994

Working people the world over have a responsibility to demand Washington halt all plans for a military invasion of Haiti. Clinton's order to put 20,000 U.S. troops into battle to supposedly defend democracy is sheer hypocrisy. Far from any humanitarian concern for the people of that country, the White House wants to assert Washington's prerogative to police the Caribbean, and all of Latin America, increase U.S. economic and military domination, and keep it safe for big-business interests.

The treatment of thousands of Haitian refugees fleeing the military thugs in Port-au-Prince — returning many of them to the hands of the Haitian military, or locking them up at the Krome detention camp in Florida and the Guantánamo prison camp at the U.S. naval base in Cuba — is the real testament to Washington's regard for the human rights of the Haitian people.



September 26, 1969

After eight years of exile in Cuba, China and Tanzania, Robert F. Williams is home. The Black revolutionary, originally from Monroe, North Carolina, arrived in Detroit on a special Trans World Airlines flight in which he and his lawyer were the only passengers.

Williams' return from exile received wide publicity when TWA and other air companies refused to honor his ticket as he sought to change planes for the U.S. in London. For seven days, Williams was barred by the airlines from returning to the U.S. and held in custody in a British prison. As protests began to mount, the U.S. government finally made a formal request that a special flight for Williams be arranged.

Williams was forced to flee the country after Monroe, N.C. authorities sought to frame him up on a kidnapping charge growing out of his role in a local protest movement.



September 23, 1944

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The more than 2,300 delegates to the CIO United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers Ninth Annual Convention adjourned the stormiest national gathering of the union's history.

They are returning to their locals with the key convention issue, the no-strike pledge, placed for final decision in the hands of the entire membership through a referendum to be held within the next 90 days. This was voted overwhelmingly by the militant rank and file delegates in opposition to most of the top leadership, after a precedent-shattering four-day bitter conflict.

Most decisive was the rise of a new, militant force led by the recently established Rank and File Caucus, which in its first struggle rolled up a vote of 36 percent for outright scrapping of the no-strike pledge.

Bob Redrup: Built Socialist Workers Party for 7 decades

BY BERNIE SENTER

LOS ANGELES — Bob Redrup spent “seven decades building the Socialist Workers Party. His was a life lived on the right side of history,” Norton Sandler, a member of the SWP National Committee, told 50 people at a meeting to celebrate Redrup’s life here Sept. 2. Redrup died Aug. 15 at age 91, after a short illness. Family members from Seattle and some of his neighbors joined party members and supporters at the program, hosted by the SWP.

Redrup joined the Merchant Marine at 16 years of age, transporting war matériel and troops during World War II. He would recount the horror of walking the streets of Yokohama, Japan, after the U.S. military had obliterated the city in a firebombing that killed thousands. Redrup took part in the 17-day national maritime strike in 1946, part of the largest strike wave in U.S. history.

The government responded to the postwar working-class upsurge with a witch hunt, hounding thousands of militant unionists and communists from their jobs. Redrup received a letter from the Coast Guard at the end of 1952 withdrawing his paperwork required to ship out to sea.

By then he had joined the SWP, having met and worked with party members who were also sailors. Members of the party’s faction in the maritime unions joined fights to strengthen the unions; explained to other sailors that Washington’s wars defended the interests of the capitalist class; and recruited sailors to the communist movement.

Redrup got books written by Leon Trotsky — *The Revolution Betrayed*, *In Defense of Marxism* and *The Stalin School of Falsification* — from SWP members who convinced him of the counterrevolutionary course of the Stalinist leadership in the Soviet Union. As a result, he rejected attempts by members of the Communist Party to recruit him.

“Years prior to the rise of the civil rights movement, Bob and Henry, a Black shipmate, went ashore for drinks in Shreveport, Louisiana, at what turned out to be a whites-only bar,” Sandler told the meeting. “The cops arrested and jailed them. When the skipper came to bail them out Bob refused to leave until Henry was also released and both were reinstated on the ship.”

After the government prevented him from working at sea, Redrup worked on the assembly line at General Motors in Linden, New Jersey, until he was fired for union activity in 1960.

SWP’s turn to industry

Bob and his wife Ann transferred to the Los Angeles SWP branch in 1976. He worked as a factory electrician at Continental Can, organized by the United Steelworkers union.

While there, he was in the party’s USWA fraction during the Steelworkers Fight Back movement, Joel Britton, a member of the SWP from Oakland, told the meeting. Fight Back, led by Chicago-area unionist Ed Sadlowski, demanded union democracy, the right to strike, fought for a union that stood up to the bosses and for the union to take up broader

social questions.

This and other union battles and the impact of the fight for Black rights on working people convinced the SWP leadership to organize a turn to industry. Party members got jobs in factories, mines and mills — organizing to mobilize the working class to build fighting trade unions and advance towards socialist revolution. The party membership today has a large majority in retail and industry, advancing the organization of workers against the bosses and their government.

“In 1979, workers took power in Grenada and in Nicaragua,” Britton explained. “These were *our* revolutions and we did everything we could to defend them in the unions, and strengthen and extend them.” Redrup was part of this work.

Lifelong party builder

When Los Angeles cops were acquitted of the 1991 brutal beating of Rodney King, an anti-police riot followed in which “5,000 buildings were destroyed or damaged,” Britton recounted, “including our headquarters.” The SWP demanded the government



Above, Socialist Workers Party member Joel Britton addresses Sept. 2 meeting in Los Angeles to celebrate life of Bob Redrup, who died Aug. 15. Inset, Redrup in 1970s. He had spent seven decades building the SWP, including in party’s union fractions in maritime and steel industries.

charge the cops who beat King.

Redrup and many others reopened another bookstore within days while rebuilding the headquarters, which opened seven months later. He also volunteered on several other construction projects for the party nationally and locally.

“Bob had the proletarian habits of a party cadre,” Rebecca Williamson, from Seattle, told the meeting. She described what she had learned from Redrup about the party’s his-

tory when she lived in Los Angeles, and the serious attitude he took about everything he did from punctuality at meetings to party finances. He moved to Seattle to be with his family in the last couple months.

Daniel Garcia, a longshoreman, attended the meeting and said, “I didn’t know him but everything I learned about him today was a tribute to working-class people.” Over \$2,900 was contributed at the meeting to continue the work of the SWP.

UK out of EU puts workers in a better position to fight UK rulers

tary candidate in Manchester. “They want to block the vote of millions of working people and others in the 2016 referendum. As for ‘our’ democracy, there is no ‘we’ that unites working people and the propertied rulers.”

“Getting the U.K. out of the EU would put workers in a better position to fight for their class interests against their main enemy — the capitalist rulers at home,” Bellamy said.

Concerned about what’s brewing among working people — who have been hammered by years of cuts to their living standards, by job insecurity and a broader capitalist social crisis in the U.K. — Johnson claims his government will carry through the 2016 referendum as well as ending the austerity programs imposed by previous governments. He also began a raft of new government spending Sept. 4.

In fact, Johnson wants to reach a deal with Brussels. He has held meetings with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron in pursuit of this. The bulk of his cabinet voted to remain in the EU and joined with Johnson in favor of the agreement negotiated by his predecessor, Prime Minister Theresa May, that was rejected by Parliament.

This would include a “transition period” that keeps the U.K. in the EU single market and customs union for at least two more years. Negotiations with the EU’s 27 member states on a longer-term agreement would continue.

Johnson proposes just one change to May’s agreement — removing what is called the “Irish backstop.” This would give Brussels decision-making over the border between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland should the “transition period” end. “The border between the North and South of Ireland, imposed by London, is a matter for the Irish to

resolve,” explained CL candidate Bellamy. “Britain should get out of Ireland — just as the U.K. should leave the EU — *now!*”

EU rules were written to make it as hard as possible for any member nation to get out of the protectionist trading bloc. And the rival capitalist rulers in Berlin and Paris who dominate the EU want to make an example of London — to deter any other government from trying to leave. In the same way they have punished the capitalist rulers — and the workers and farmers — in Greece and Italy when they protested against EU-imposed austerity measures.

As conflicts sharpen between the rival powers that make up the bloc, the EU is tearing apart at the seams. The utopia of a “European superstate” can

Gibson’s bakery wins again

Continued from front page

ing the family and the bakery they own. College officials had promoted destructive slanders, protests and a boycott of the store claiming that the small business and its owners are racists.

A Lorain County jury ruled in favor of the Gibsons June 7. They were awarded \$44 million in damages, a reflection of the injustice the jury concluded was done to the Gibsons by the college’s smear campaign. It was the largest libel award in Ohio history. Because of an unjust Ohio law limiting punitive damages, Miraldi, who presided over the trial, reduced the award to a total of \$31.5 million, which included lawyers’ fees.

Oberlin College administrators continue to refuse to issue a simple, factual statement that the Gibsons are not racist and have never carried out racial profiling and that there is no reason to boycott the store.

The college administration has made it clear that it plans to appeal the verdict and monetary award. Dragging out the litigation — having orchestrated a boycott of the store and ended the bakery’s contract to provide bagels and pastries to the campus — is aimed at driving Gib-

son’s out of business.

The college’s lawyers submitted some 100 pages for their two post-trial motions along with 542 further pages of documentation in their efforts to nullify the Lorain County jury verdict. Miraldi responded with just one page for each of the college’s demands, ruling that the verdict and judgment against the college would stand and denied the college a new trial.

The college’s slander campaign against the bakery owners began in November 2016, after three students who are Black attempted to steal from the Gibson’s store.

When the cops arrived these students had Allyn Gibson on the ground and were beating him. All three later pled guilty to misdemeanor charges and made statements that there was no racism involved in the incident.

Over the next two days, Raimondo organized and accompanied hundreds of students to protest outside the bakery and called on students and others to boycott the store.

Outraged at the slandering of the Gibsons, working people from the region came by to shop at the bakery as a show of solidarity.

Oberlin College is one of the top 20 most expensive universities in the country and its administration prides itself on being “progressive.” The college home webpage states, “Think one person can change the world? So do we.” Its self-righteous promotion of “social justice” alongside its race-baiting are aimed at defending its class privilege. It is the largest capitalist company in the small town of Oberlin and acts on the assumption that it will get its way.

Is slander free speech?

During the trial and in their motions Oberlin College officials have portrayed the lawsuit and verdict as an attack on “free speech,” both of university administrators and the students. That argument will be at the center of any appeal. But the lawsuit was not directed against the students at all. It was aimed at the college administration for its actions and slanders.

In one of its filings challenging the verdict, the college states that the flyer distributed during the protests contains “no false statements of fact directed at Plaintiffs” and that the allegations of racism “are constitutionally protected opinions that cannot be proven false.”

But throughout the trial and to this day the college has not provided a shred of evidence to justify the smear of the Gibsons on the protest flyer, which stated that the bakery is a “RACIST establishment with a LONG ACCOUNT OF RACIAL PROFILING and DISCRIMINATION.”

Showing its disdain for working people in the area, Oberlin College claimed it couldn’t get a fair trial because media coverage of the dispute “would necessarily poison any Lorain County jury pool.”

Passion or prejudice

The college lawyers also claimed the damages awarded were excessive because of “passion or prejudice.”

Hong Kong protests continue to demand rights



AP Photo/Kin Cheung

Fourteen weeks of protests in Hong Kong, some drawing a million people or more, forced Hong Kong’s chief executive, Carrie Lam, to withdraw her hated bill Sept. 4 that would have legalized extradition to the Chinese mainland. The bill would have tightened the Chinese rulers’ grip on the semiautonomous city, a former British colony. The withdrawal of the bill did not prevent thousands from protesting against Lam and Beijing days later.

A statement Sept. 4 by the Civil Human Rights Front, which mobilized over a million people twice in June and again in August, said, “We will continue to struggle until the five core demands are wholly fulfilled.” Above, Aug 16 protest.

The other demands are: the extension of universal suffrage with direct election of the city administration instead of appointment by a body dominated by pro-Beijing forces; an independent investigation into cop brutality; amnesty for more than a thousand arrested protesters; and that the protests not be classified as “riots” by authorities.

Lam’s backdown, agreed to by Beijing, came after a tape was leaked of her lamenting that as chief executive she was the servant of “two masters by constitution” — Hong Kong and Beijing. This is under the “one country, two systems” arrangement agreed to when London returned the territory to Chinese sovereignty in 1997.

— ROY LANDERSEN

They think working people aren’t smart enough to rule the right way.

College lawyers claimed that a Gibsons’ attorney was certain to “inflamm the passions of any religious juror,” when they quoted one of the college’s own administrators who referenced the bible when she texted that she hoped the college would “rain fire and brimstone on that store.”

Miraldi’s ruling denying the motion for a new trial states that “the amount awarded is not manifestly excessive nor does it appear to be influenced by passion or prejudice.”

An administration in crisis

Meanwhile, the Oberlin administration is in a crisis. A Sept. 6 article in the *Oberlin Review*, a student-run newspaper that has been part of promoting the administration’s anti-Gibson’s campaign, reports on the search to hire replacements for the deans of Arts & Sciences and of the prestigious music Conservatory, both of whom resigned over the last year. Numerous other college officials have been replaced over the last two years.

“I’ve been here for 17 years, and I’ve never seen as much turnover in senior staff ever,” psychology professor Cindy Frantz told the *Review*.

In another sign of the college’s decline, the renowned Cleveland Orchestra won’t be playing a concert at the campuses’ Finney Chapel, “for the first time in 100 years,” because of the school’s “budgetary concerns.”

One of the reasons college officials gave for arguing against having to post a bond for the damage award while the case is appealed is the col-

lege’s financial straits.

While upholding the verdict, the judge denied one motion by the Gibsons, which asked for “prejudgment interest,” an additional financial penalty if the college appeals. The Gibsons argued that the college was unnecessarily drawing out the litigation to harm the bakery.

The Oberlin administration’s next step is to try to take its crusade against the small business owners to an appeals court.

The courts are not favorable terrain for working people and small businesses fighting to defend their rights. That the Gibsons have won out so far is a tribute to the widespread support they have received and the strength of their fight against the race-baiting slanders promoted by the college administration.

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Working-class party needs an international program

The Third International After Lenin by Leon Trotsky is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. It contains the Russian revolutionary leader's defense of the proletarian internationalist course of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution led by V.I. Lenin and of the Communist International in its early years. It was written as a criticism of the 1928 draft program of the Communist International, which was then controlled by Joseph Stalin at the head of a rising privileged bureaucracy in the Soviet state apparatus and Communist Party. Copyright © 1996 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

In our epoch, which is the epoch of imperialism, i.e., of world economy and world politics under the hegemony of finance capital, not a single communist party can establish its program by proceeding solely or mainly from conditions and tendencies of developments in its own country. This also holds entirely for the party that wields the state power within the boundaries of the USSR. On August 4, 1914, the death knell sounded for national programs for all time. The revolutionary party of the proletariat can base itself only upon an international program corresponding to the character of the present epoch, the epoch of the highest development and collapse of



Detroit Public Library/Associated Press

Workers fit cars at Packard plant in Detroit in 1920s. Trotsky says the expansion of U.S. imperialism transformed it "into the basic counterrevolutionary force of the modern epoch," and "prepares the ground for a gigantic revolutionary explosion in this already dominant" power.

capitalism. An international communist program is in no case the sum total of national programs or an amalgam of their common features. The international program must proceed directly from an analysis of the conditions and tendencies of world economy and of the world political system taken as a whole in all its connections and contradictions, that is, with the mutually antagonistic interdependence of its separate parts. In the present epoch, to a much larger extent than in the past, the national orientation of the proletariat must and can flow only from a world orientation and not vice versa. Herein lies the basic and primary difference between communist internationalism and all varieties of national socialism. ...

Linking up countries and continents that stand on different levels of development into a system of mutual dependence and antagonism, leveling out the various stages of their development and at the same time immediately enhancing the differences between them, and ruthlessly counterposing one country to another, world economy has become a mighty reality which holds sway over the economic life of individual countries and continents. This basic fact alone invests the idea of a world communist party with a supreme reality. Bringing world economy as a whole to the highest phase of development generally attainable on the basis of private property, imperialism, as the draft states quite

correctly in its introduction, "aggravates to an extreme tension the contradiction between the growth of the productive forces of world economy and the national state barriers."

Without grasping the meaning of this proposition, which was vividly revealed to mankind for the first time during the last imperialist war, we cannot take a single step towards the solution of the major problems of world politics and revolutionary struggle. ...

[T]he new draft — and this, of course, is a serious step forward — now speaks of "*the shift of the economic center of the world to the United States of America*"; and of "*the transformation of the 'Dollar Republic' into a world exploiter*"; and finally, that the rivalry (the draft loosely says "conflict") between North American and European capitalism, primarily British capitalism, "*is becoming the axis of the world conflicts*." It is already quite obvious today that a program which did not contain a clear and precise definition of these basic facts and factors of the world situation would have nothing in common with the program of the international revolutionary party. ...

[I]t is precisely the international strength of the United States and her irresistible expansion arising from it, that compels her to include the powder magazines of the whole world into the foundations of her structure, i.e., all the antagonisms between the East

and the West, the class struggle in Old Europe, the uprisings of the colonial masses, and all wars and revolutions. On the one hand, this transforms North American capitalism into the basic counterrevolutionary force of the modern epoch, constantly more interested in the maintenance of "order" in every corner of the terrestrial globe; and on the other hand, this prepares the ground for a gigantic revolutionary explosion in this already dominant and still expanding world imperialist power. The logic of world relations indicates that the time of this explosion cannot lag very far behind that of the proletarian revolution in Europe. ...

The United States will seek to overcome and extricate herself from her difficulties and maladies primarily at the expense of Europe, regardless of whether this occurs in Asia, Canada, South America, Australia, or Europe itself, or whether this takes place peacefully or through war.

We must clearly understand that if the first period of American intervention had the effect of stabilization and pacification on Europe, which to a considerable extent still remains in force today, and may even recur episodically and become stronger (particularly in the event of new defeats of the proletariat), the general line of American policy, particularly in time of its own economic difficulties and crisis, will engender the deepest convulsions in Europe as well as over the entire world.

From this we draw the not unimportant conclusion that there will be no more lack of revolutionary situations in the next decade than in the past decade. That is why it is of utmost importance to understand correctly the mainsprings of development so that we may not be caught unawares by their action. If in the past decade the main source of revolutionary situations lay in the direct consequences of the imperialist war, in the second postwar decade the most important source of revolutionary upheavals will be the interrelations of Europe and America. A major crisis in the United States will strike the tocsin for new wars and revolutions. We repeat: there will be no lack of revolutionary situations. The entire question hinges upon the international party of the proletariat, the maturity and fighting ability of the Comintern, and the correctness of its strategic position and tactical methods.

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Workers show power, need to organize to win

Working people around the world have demonstrated their capacities to engage in sustained struggle, courageously facing down repressive regimes and even toppling governments in Sudan, Algeria, Puerto Rico and elsewhere in recent months. In the course of organizing massive mobilizations they have won solidarity from far and wide and provided an example of the potential power of working people to others facing intolerable living and working conditions.

The hated regimes of Omar al-Bashir in Sudan and Abdelaziz Bouteflika in Algeria have been forced out of office by protests involving millions, but governments that defend the rule of the exploiters remain in place in both nations.

Fifteen days of massive demonstrations in Puerto Rico forced the resignation of Gov. Ricardo Roselló in July. His replacement is as dedicated to maintaining U.S. colonial rule and imperialist plunder as he was.

In recent years we have seen other mass working-class mobilizations that toppled despotic regimes, like in Egypt and Ukraine. They share the same lesson.

What is in front of working people involved in these battles and workers elsewhere is forging a revolutionary leadership. One that explains that workers *can* throw off the self-image we are taught by the capitalist rulers and recognize we *are* capable of taking power into our own hands.

A leadership that explains that the problem workers face isn't simply a few corrupt politicians, a particularly ruthless boss, foreign interference, but the rule of an exploitative and oppressive social class. The

propertied capitalist rulers — who own the factories, the land, the banks, the mines and mills — hold state power and use it to defend *their* interests. To reverse the long-term decline of their system they have no choice but to launch assaults on workers' jobs, living and working standards, our political rights, and to unleash wars abroad in search of markets and resources.

We need to build our own party — one that can lead working people to overthrow the capitalist class's dictatorship. In the course of revolutionary struggle workers gain a sense of our own self-worth, and we begin to generalize our needs as a class with common interests that are irreconcilable with those of the exploiters.

Such a course is not only necessary but is possible, as the conquest of power by workers and farmers in Cuba shows. Under the leadership of Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement millions fought to oust the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship and established their own workers and farmers government. They used state power to expropriate the land, factories and other bourgeois property of both U.S. and Cuban capitalists; transforming social relations to meet the needs of the vast majority and joining struggles by working people worldwide for a socialist future.

As Socialist Workers Party members organize other workers to join union fights and social protests, they explain that working people can unite and fight, and win. The SWP campaigns for workers to break with the capitalist rulers, their political parties and their government, to organize to take power into our own hands. Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign!

Bahamas disaster product of capitalist system

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continued to say Sept. 10 that deaths stood at 50, but everyone knows the true total is far higher. Decomposing bodies were still visible on the streets.

The class bias of the government was evident from the first evacuation order. Two days before the storm hit, Prime Minister Hubert Minnis told residents of Abaco and Grand Bahamas that those who “are able to do so financially should seek shelter among family members.” Flights to more protected islands were increased — for those who could afford a ticket.

Distrust of the government, especially in areas that are predominantly Haitian immigrants and those of Haitian descent, kept many from going to shelters.

In recent years, the Bahamian government has deported hundreds of Haitians, many of whom have lived in the Bahamas for decades. Even their Bahamas-born children aren't granted citizenship. One in 10 Bahamians are of Haitian descent. Many other Bahamians are descendants of African slaves brought there by U.S. colonists fleeing the American Revolution and pro-slavery English settlers.

Working people who got to a shelter had to bring their own food and personal hygiene supplies. And anyone who showed up with a pet was turned away.

While the storm was a natural disaster, working people were the victims of a social catastrophe caused by capitalism.

Working people take action

Facing government inaction, working people and small businessmen took initiatives. Glen Rolle, a resident of Mayfield Park in Grand Bahamas, told the *Nassau Guardian* how he and others borrowed tractors, Jet Skis and boats to rescue 200 people.

“One of my personal friends, his mother passed. So we brought her in,” Rolle told the *Guardian*. “After that, the police finally reached the scene. So they told us not to bring any more dead bodies.”

Bahamas Minister of Health Duane Sands said the final toll will be “significant and unimaginable.”

One group of recovery workers led by Joseph Hillhouse, an assistant fire chief from Gainesville, Florida, found five bodies in just a few areas in The Mudd and Pigeon Peas neighborhoods of Marsh Harbour on Great Abaco Sept. 9. These mostly Haitian areas of makeshift homes — many without indoor plumbing — were flattened by the storm.

According to *Washington Post* reporters accom-

panying the team, “there were a few dozen workers, not nearly enough to conduct an effective search of the comprehensive destruction.”

The storm struck a blow to Bahamas' tourist industry, the country's main source of income, although the main tourist area around Nassau was largely spared. Before the storm, the government's foreign debt was above \$8 billion, 64.6% of its gross domestic product.

The former British colony didn't gain formal independence until 1973. Though still part of the British Commonwealth, today the Bahamas is largely a semi-colony of U.S. imperialism. Before the storm a majority of its 5.5 million tourists came from the U.S., as well as nearly all its food and manufactured goods.

The country is also home to a large number of offshore financial institutions, many suspected of money laundering. There are great disparities of wealth on the islands — from some who've grown rich to the large majority of workers and Haitian immigrants on the other end of the pay scale.

Lack of food, water, and health care, and the possibility of waterborne diseases are a significant problem for those in the hardest hit areas. Some 5,000 evacuees are now in shelters around the capital city of Nassau.

Thousands of hurricane survivors fleeing the disaster have sought to go to the U.S., at least temporarily, taking advantage of cruise companies that offered to take them to Florida. But Balearia Caribbean ordered more than 100 Bahamians off of a ship departing Freeport Sept. 8 because they didn't have visas. Many Bahamians lost all their papers in the storm.

Meanwhile, some 60 internationalist volunteers from revolutionary Cuba who had been working in the Bahamas — including teachers, pharmacists and specialists in medical devices — joined the efforts to rebuild the country side by side with people in the communities. “Every volunteer is characterized by being the first to arrive and the last to leave,” José Reinel García, a Cuban education ministry representative in the Bahamas, told Prensa Latina. *Juventud Rebelde* reported Sept. 4 that volunteer medical workers were on their way to the Bahamas to provide medical care.

The Cuban people made a deep-going revolution in 1959, transforming themselves in the process. They've stood up to the threats and attacks by Washington ever since. Unlike the “everyone for themselves” morality of capitalism, in Cuba everything is based on human solidarity. In the words of Communist Party leader Raúl Castro, “No one is left on their own.”

Battle prison bans

Continued from front page

prisoners incarcerated in Florida who wrote to thank the paper for its fight, along with requests that their subscriptions be extended.

One thanked the paper's staff for the “support and sacrifice that you all make to ensure that I always receive the paper. God bless you.” Another wrote in Spanish, “a million thanks for the help for the freedom of literature and the press and for the articles on our suffering Cuba.”

Pat Scott and 33 of her Walmart coworkers in Federal Way, Washington, in their letter to the review committee, pointed to the U.S. Constitution's protection giving “people the right to read whatever they choose.”

In a joint letter, 14 workers at the Capital Plaza Walmart in Maryland requested “that prison officials in Florida end their practice of impounding the *Militant* newspaper.” Four retail workers in Montreal wrote letters to protest Florida officials “preventing prisoners from reading the publications of their choice.”

William G. Warrick, a retired construction worker and member of the Teamsters union, wrote to protest the “unjust confiscations of the *Militant*.” He said, “Working people have the right to consider a wide range of views, whether or not they are behind bars.” He sent a \$100 donation to help the paper's fight.

On behalf of the Chicago Torture Justice Centre, former prisoner Mark A. Clements, a victim of cop torture and frame-up, wrote “to voice opposition” to the “repeated attacks upon the *Militant* publication.” He noted that the paper “has existed for decades” and provides “reading material that teaches history and provides a different perspective, however it does not promote violence or disrespect.”

The Militant ‘exposes systemic injustice’

The *Militant* tries to “expose systematic injustice,” Clements said. “Individuals that are incarcerated must be afforded with opportunity to know what is affecting them while behind the wall.”

Bill Montross, a reader of the paper in Maryland for many years, wrote to protest the “quite arbitrary and capricious” actions of Florida prison institutions “to bar the *Militant* newspaper from those inmates who have chosen to subscribe to it.”

“Impounding the *Militant*” wrote Rogelio Rigor, a retired Seattle school teacher and member of the Ethnic Studies Task Force Committee there, “runs against the democratic right and freedom of the press.” And, he said, it is based on “false claims against” the paper.

“Working people — in or out of prison — need to prepare to rule society for the benefit of all Humanity and in transition to a society that no longer needs rulers (or prisons),” wrote Erek Slater, a bus driver from Chicago and a shop steward and executive board member of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 241. “That means having access to current information and culture from around the world.”

“This latest victory reversing the ban on two more issues of the *Militant* will be a boost,” said *Militant* editor John Studer. “It will inspire supporters of the rights of workers behind bars and of freedom of the press to keep up their pressure on Florida prison officials.

“Dean Peterson has admitted that these ‘impoundments are made at the institutional level.’ That is, they are a sign of political prejudice against the *Militant* by prison authorities,” Studer said. “Public attention is crucial in this battle for workers behind bars to have unfettered access to literature of their choosing.

“Keep up the pressure!”

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 others. Send to: Literature Review Committee Att: Dean Peterson, 501 South Calhoun St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-2500; or Email to: Allen.Peterson@fdc.myflorida.com. Send copies to themilitant@mac.com

Make a contribution to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, for “Prisoners Rights Fight.” Or contribute online at themilitant.com