

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Climate hysteria is obstacle to defense of land and labor
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83/NO. 36 OCTOBER 7, 2019

SWP national tour: Workers struggles point road forward

BY JANET POST

“When you stand up and fight, you are guaranteed to win a victory, even if you don’t accomplish all you set out to do. You set an example, you inspire others, you gain confidence in what we can do when we fight together,” Alyson Kennedy, the Socialist Workers Party 2016 candidate for president, told United Auto Workers union members on the strike picket line at the General Motors parts plant in Hudson, Wisconsin, Sept. 21.

“This strike is in the interest of all working people,” said Kennedy, a former coal miner and today a worker at Walmart. “We are all facing attacks from the bosses who, along with their media, government and political parties, try to make us pay for the crisis of their capitalist system. We campaign to tell the truth about your fight and to win support.”

Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett, SWP candidate for Pittsburgh City Council, are on a national speaking tour. They

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Imperialism is the arsonist in Brazil’s rainforest

BY RÓGER CALERO

Much liberal media space has been given to the fires currently burning in the Amazon in Brazil, with calls coming from “concerned” celebrities, bourgeois environmentalists and imperialist heads of state to “save the rainforest.”

In late August more than 93,000 fires were alight in the Brazilian Amazon, the highest number since 2010. But this is not a qualitative change from what came before.

Much of the blame from the liberals and middle-class left for the recent fires has been directed at President Jair Bolsonaro, who they compare to President Donald Trump. Bolsonaro’s policies and rhetoric have emboldened slash-and-burn deforestation by capitalist farmers and mining and logging operations.

But measures implemented by capitalist governments on both the left and right of the bourgeois spectrum have been equally responsible for the

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Support GM strikers, Blackjewel coal miners!



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Strikers at GM Corvette plant in Bowling Green, Kentucky, joined by solidarity caravan from Louisville, Sept. 23. “We have to stand up for everybody, or we can’t stand up for ourselves,” said retired Ford worker Renata McKenney. Strikers are demanding equal pay for same work.

Blackjewel miners keep up camp, say ‘No pay, we stay’

BY MAGGIE TROWE

CUMBERLAND, Ky. — Coal miners have been camped out for eight weeks just outside this town of 2,000 in Harlan County blocking Blackjewel bosses from moving trainloads of coal. Blackjewel LLC, the sixth largest coal company in the U.S., declared bankruptcy July 1, laying off 300 workers here and 1,400 more in Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming. The company clawed back paychecks deposited in the miners’ bank accounts.

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‘No more tiers!’ is demand at the center of GM strike

BY DAN FEIN

ROANOKE, Ind. — “I’ve been a temporary worker for three and a half years with no end in sight,” United Auto Workers union member Raymond Walker told the *Militant* on the General Motors strike picket line here as he joined some 40 UAW members Sept. 22. This was one of seven picket lines kept up 24/7 around the Fort Wayne GM assembly plant. Over 4,000 members of UAW Local 2209 work here.

Almost 50,000 UAW members have

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‘Cancel Puerto Rico debt,’ say protesters in NY, Philadelphia



Militant/John Staggs

Marches in Philadelphia, above, and New York Sept. 21 — two years after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico — called for canceling Puerto Rico’s \$74 billion debt, rescinding U.S. laws that increase shipping costs. New York action called for independence for Puerto Rico.

BY JOHN STAGGS

PHILADELPHIA — Marches here and in New York Sept. 21 marked the second anniversary of Hurricane Maria’s devastation of Puerto Rico, highlighting that the social catastrophe since the storm is not the result of a “natural” disaster, but a man-made one caused by capitalism and U.S. colonial rule.

In Philadelphia 200 people marched, calling for more U.S. gov-

ernment aid to repair storm damage and for repeal of the Jones Act, which requires that anything sent by sea to Puerto Rico from the U.S. be carried on U.S.-flagged ships — greatly increasing the cost.

Some 3,000 people died in the storm and its aftermath, most not directly from the hurricane itself, but from a lack of power, access to medical care, clean water and other basic necessities.

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US rulers step up sanctions, tell Tehran to pull back in Mideast

BY ROY LANDERSEN

After threatening military action against Iran, President Donald Trump announced Sept. 20 that the U.S. government was sending hundreds more troops to Saudi Arabia and tightening its sanctions on Tehran. It is increasing pressure on the Iranian rulers to enter talks to pull back their military forces stationed across the Middle East and end the possibility of Tehran acquiring nuclear weapons.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper said that the troop deployment and Washington’s decision to send more air defense missiles to both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were made after the governments there requested them. Pentagon officials also said that additional warplanes could be sent to Saudi Arabia.

Washington and the Saudi government blame Tehran’s forces for missile strikes on major Saudi oil installations Sept. 14, which interrupted

half of that country’s oil production. They say the attacks were carried out directly from Iran and not by Tehran-backed Houthis in Yemen who had

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Baltimore Symphony kept playing throughout lockout

Thousands of nurses strike 1-day over workload, patients’ safety

Lac-Mégantic: Profits before people's safety — once again

BY KATY LEROUGETEL
AND JOHN STEELE

LAC-MÉGANTIC, Quebec — “This is proof once more, that we are not safe in Lac-Mégantic,” Robert Bellefleur, spokesperson for Lac-Mégantic Citizens Coalition and Organizations for Rail Safety, told CBC News after two train derailments took place here Aug. 24. They occurred on a level crossing on the same route used by the runaway 72-car oil train that crashed and blew up, killing 47 people and destroying the town center in July 2013.

Bellefleur and others here have been fighting for the tracks to be relocated ever since that disaster.

Six years later the conditions for rail workers and the town's residents remain as dangerous as ever. In both August derailments, train cars were dragged some distances with wheels off the tracks. One train was transporting dangerous chemicals.

The incidents occurred on defective rails on the steep hill above the town that a Transport Canada report in May said carried a “heightened risk of derailment.” The report noted that the number of defective rails in that area alone had risen from 115 in 2015 to 253 last year.

Central Maine and Quebec Railway claimed it fixed the tracks Sept. 5 and Transport Canada says it is now inspecting the repairs. The government ordered a 10-mile-per-hour speed limit on stretches of the track until the inspection is completed.

The citizens coalition is seeking an

injunction to stop the movement of all dangerous goods in the region until all the rails have been repaired. The group “no longer trusts rail companies like CMQR,” Bellefleur said.

“The capitalists’ drive for profits lies behind the disaster and its aftermath in Lac-Mégantic,” Steve Penner, Communist League candidate for the federal riding of Papineau in Montreal, told the *Militant* in response to the recent developments. “This and the Aug. 15 death of a rail worker at the Canadian National yards in Toronto shows that it will take working-class struggle to win workers control of production and transportation,” he said.

Ongoing fight for a bypass

Despite a pledge by federal officials to build a railway bypass around the town, a route is still to be approved and chemical-laden cars using the unsafe tracks roll through Lac-Mégantic, generating profits for Central Maine and Quebec Railway shareholders.

“The authorities listen to Mr. Brassard, not the population,” retired masonite factory worker Giles Fluet told the *Militant*, referring to Louis Brassard, president of Tafisa, North America's largest particle board plant. The factory is located in Lac-Mégantic's industrial park. The company depends on the rail tracks, which were rebuilt through the center of town within weeks of the disaster.

After the 2013 disaster “the municipal council in league with developers decided to bulldoze dozens of buildings downtown,” even though they



July 6, 2013, day of train derailment in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, that killed 47 people. Upper left is Tafisa, largest particle board plant in North America. Plant depends on tracks that were rebuilt through center of town weeks after explosion and fire, while town center was razed.

were not contaminated by the crude oil from the train wreck, Citizens Coalition activist and retired highway worker Gilbert Carrette said.

The original town center remains a vacant field to this day. Many working people these worker-correspondents spoke with complained about the unaffordable rents for apartments in the handful of new downtown buildings that have sprung up.

The government and rail bosses tried to frame up rail worker engineer Tom Harding and train dispatcher Richard Labrie, both members of United Steelworkers Local 1976, for the Lac-Mégantic disaster. A 12-member jury found them not

guilty in 2018. In a statement for the citizens coalition after the verdict, Bellefleur told the press that those responsible for the deaths and destruction were bosses “at high management levels to ensure maximum benefits for top company officials and shareholders of the oil and railway companies involved.”

In fact, no charges were ever brought against Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway bosses.

“The government was quick to prosecute workers,” Pierre Arseneau, regional coordinator of the United Steelworkers, said after the verdict. “But it’s an entirely different story when it comes to corporate leaders.”

THE MILITANT

Retail bosses’ drive for profit means speedup

In race for profits, Amazon and Walmart compete to speed up delivery by squeezing more out of workers. The ‘Militant’ gives voice to retail workers as they take action against conditions in the stores and warehouses, and discuss the need for solidarity, and for a union.



Dan Strickland/Chattanooga Times Free Press via AP Amazon warehouse workers, Tennessee, 2017.

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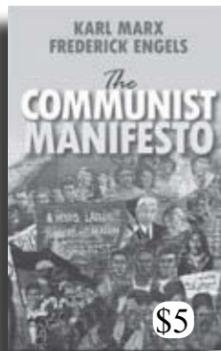
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“Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers.”

—Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

Written in 1848, the Communist Manifesto explains why communism is the line of march of the working class toward power, “springing from an existing class struggle, a historical movement going on under our very eyes.”

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The Militant

Vol. 83/No. 36

Closing news date: September 25, 2019

Editor: John Studer

Managing Editor: Terry Evans

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Martín Koppel, Roy Landersen, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in September.

Business Manager: Valerie Johnson

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Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

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SWP: Fights show road forward

Continued from front page

have been organizing solidarity for the GM strikers, and spreading the word about miners in Cumberland, Kentucky, who are fighting for back pay stolen after Blackjewel coal bosses declared bankruptcy and left them on the street.

The central issue in the GM strike is the divisive setting against each other of different “tiers” of autoworkers — “legacy” workers, lower-paid full-time workers hired after 2007 and a growing number of temps. Tyler Rentz, 25, told Kennedy about his experience starting as a temp worker at Hudson before becoming full time. “I got paid way less than everyone else, and the benefits were bad,” he said, and temps don’t get a pension.

This is Rentz’s first union job. The UAW took on the bosses when they tried to force temps to work more than 10 hours. “I clocked out and went home,” Rentz said, and “the union stood up for the temps.”

Fights in the coal fields

The SWP campaigners spoke about the importance of the autoworkers strike and the Kentucky coal miners fight at a Militant Labor Forum in St. Paul, Minnesota, that evening. “The biggest discussion on the GM picket line is that the ‘person next to me’ is not making enough wages,” Jarrett said. “Workers are fighting to win the same conditions for all, for unity.

“The Blackjewel miners have shown leadership, shown discipline,” he said. “Their fight is about making the working class the center of politics again.

“The SWP campaign is looking for fighters,” he added, to join the SWP in labor solidarity, social struggles and to advance its campaign for independent working-class political action.

And as we talk to strikers and other workers, he said, we find real interest in the big political questions of the day — from the fight for amnesty for all immigrant workers to unify the working class to the demand for U.S. hands off Iran.

On Sept. 16, Kennedy, Jarrett and campaign supporter Samantha Hamlin joined the UAW picket line at GM’s 700-worker Castings Operations in Bedford, Indiana.

Steve Brown, a driver, said that a year and a half ago GM sold off some of its Bedford work assembling transmissions. Eighty jobs went to a nonunion company directly behind the factory. “The conditions in that plant are horrible,” said Brown. “They make \$10 an hour on day shift.” He said a co-worker has a daughter who works there. When she wore a UAW shirt to work one day, the bosses told her she had to turn it inside out.

Kennedy and SWP supporters in Chicago talked with UAW members outside the Ford assembly plant of 5,000 there during the evening shift change Sept. 15. She described the fight of the Blackjewel miners. “It’s an example for all of us,” she said. “That’s why their fight gets so much support in the area, and they need the support of other workers around the country.”

“I’ve heard about what they’re doing,” contract maintenance worker Melvin Jennings told Kennedy. “I support them with all my heart. They are right in what



Militant/Dan Fein

UAW member Melvin Jennings speaks with Alyson Kennedy, SWP 2016 candidate for president, at Ford assembly plant gate in Chicago. Discussing Blackjewel coal miners fighting for pay stolen from them in Kentucky, Jennings said, “They are right in what they are doing.”

they are doing, they should be paid.”

Jennings was one of 27 workers who bought a copy of the *Militant*.

SWP candidates build solidarity

SWP candidates and members build strike solidarity on the job, at union and other political meetings and events, and campaigning door to door in working-class neighborhoods far and wide. Knocking on doors on Chicago’s South Side, Kennedy and campaign supporter Dan Fein met Bogar and Juanita Rivera. Bogar works at an auto parts plant near Ford, and Juanita is one of 1,000 workers who were laid off from a potato chip factory, losing their jobs, health insurance and vacation pay.

They told Kennedy about their work with Centro de Trabajadores Unidos, a group that fights for the rights of immigrants, inviting Kennedy and Fein to a dinner and dance it is having in October.

Samir Hazboun, SWP candidate for Kentucky lieutenant governor, joined the UAW picket line at the GM Corvette assembly plant in Bowling Green, Kentucky, Sept. 20. He was told that the majority of workers there had transferred from other plants GM bosses closed down.

“We’re not doing this for us, we’re doing it for everyone in the country,” said Dennis Wyatt, a pipefitter for 35 years. “If we can get a little something, then maybe other workers will say, ‘Hey, maybe we need a union.’”

Jack Bowers, president of UAW Local 2164 there, bought a *Militant* subscription for the local. He invited Hazboun and SWP campaign supporters to join in eating some pizza. “Longshore union members in Los Angeles just sent us a dozen pizzas,” he said. Amy Husk, the party’s candidate for Kentucky governor, went to Bowling Green three days later, on a bus arranged by UAW Local 862, which organizes thousands of Ford Motor Co. workers in Louisville.

“I’ve been an autoworker for 32 years,” said Renata McKenney, a retired Ford worker on the bus. “I started in Dearborn, Michigan, then worked in Lorain, Ohio, before in Louisville,” McKenney said. “We have to stand up for everybody or we can’t stand up for ourselves.”

“We campaign to win support for your fight among fellow workers and for the Blackjewel miners as well,” Husk said. “We must use these examples to strengthen the unions we have and organize to fight where we don’t have them.”

A dozen strikers got copies of the *Militant*, three subscribed and a number exchanged email and phone numbers to talk more.

If you’re interested in joining with the SWP to organize working-class solidarity and spread the reach of the party and the *Militant*, contact the party branch nearest you listed on page 8.

David Rosenfeld from Minneapolis contributed to this article.



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Amy Husk, second from right, SWP candidate for governor of Kentucky, joins UAW picket at GM in Bowling Green, Kentucky, Sept. 23. The strike is an example for all workers, she said.

Campaign with the Socialist Workers Party candidates!

California

Joel Britton, Mayor of San Francisco

Florida

Anthony Dutrow, Miami City Commission

Kentucky

Amy Husk, Governor
Samir Hazboun, Lieutenant Governor

Minnesota

Helen Meyers, St. Paul City Council

New Jersey

Lea Sherman, State Assembly
Candace Wagner, State Assembly

New York

Seth Galinsky, New York City Public Advocate
Ved Dookhun, Mayor of Troy
Lawrence Quinn, Troy City Council
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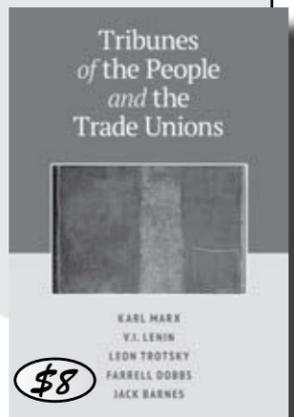
Henry Clay Dennison, Seattle City Council

See directory on page 8 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions

A tribune of the people uses every manifestation of capitalist oppression to explain why it’s workers and our allies who can and will — in the course of struggles by the unions and beyond — lay the foundations for a world based not on violence and competition but on solidarity among working people worldwide.

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Imperialism is arsonist in Brazil

Continued from front page

deforestation of the Amazon. The biggest difference is Bolsonaro doesn't pay lip service to environmental concerns and the indigenous peoples living in these areas, as his predecessors in Brazil did.

More than 300 people, including many members of indigenous communities and local small farmers, have been killed during the last decade, mostly by paid thugs hired by big landowners and logging operations, Human Rights Watch reports.

During the Workers Party government of Dilma Rousseff — praised by the left — forestry law was reformed to reduce the number of protected areas in the jungle and the savanna.

What are the facts?

A closer look puts Brazil's history and policies toward the Amazon into perspective.

While some figures indicate there has been an increase in the number of fires since 2018 — those that occur naturally, including from drought conditions, and those caused by slash-and-burn methods to clear the land — 2019 is simply not the worst year for fires in recent history.

NASA, which has recorded data on these fires since 1998 from space, indicated 2019 has had the most fire activity in almost a decade. But the worst was in 2005, with more than 142,000 fires in the first eight months, reported BBC News.

Deforestation of the Amazon rainforest to expand capitalist agriculture, livestock farming, legal and illegal logging and mining, and building of roads and dams, has been going on for decades.

It became more widespread in the 1960s, after the U.S.-backed Brazilian military overthrew the government of João Goulart and imposed a brutal dictatorship that ruled from 1964 to 1985. It pushed the use of fires to expand large-scale cattle ranching in a period of high world beef prices, with much hope for the country's economic growth and development and to pay off its international debt. Eight million hectares of previously uncut forest were burned in 1987, an area double the size of Switzerland.

The destruction is not confined to the Brazilian Amazon. In Bolivia, President Evo Morales this year authorized "controlled" clearing and burning of forests in that country's Amazon region, which has currently set ablaze 3,800 square miles near its border with Brazil and

Paraguay. In Peru and Venezuela legal and illegal mining of gold and other minerals has uprooted hundreds of thousands of acres of the Amazon rainforest.

Imperialism breeds dependence

Despite its abundance of natural resources — cultivable high-yield soil, oil and natural gas, hydroelectric power, and metals essential to world industrial production — Latin America has been exploited and kept underdeveloped by U.S. and other imperialist powers.

This is what was behind the 1964 coup in Brazil, prepared and carried out with the full participation of U.S. rulers under Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson.

These two liberal Democrats were determined to keep Washington's control over Brazil's resources and to prevent a repetition of the Cuban Revolution. The dictatorship they nurtured and armed eliminated all political rights in Brazil.

The latest export commodity boom started in 2003 and lasted for a decade to the benefit of both foreign and domestic capital before commodity prices collapsed. It drove the expansion of agricultural production in Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina and other South American countries to meet the global demand. U.S. food production monopolies like Archer Daniels Midland, Bunge and Cargill are among the prime imperialist looters of profits extracted from agricultural goods produced by Brazilian toilers, helping proliferate the fires.

Economic and technological control exercised by the imperialist monopolies and financial institutions ensures the perpetual dependence of Latin America, Asia and Africa within the imperialist order. Their methods include price manipulation of export products, high interest "development" loans, continuing overvaluation of the dollar, protectionist barriers, and when it is profit-



Reuters/Nacho Doce

Deforestation of Amazon rainforest in Brazil, above, caused by illegal gold mining, as well as expansion of capitalist agriculture, logging. "The struggle to defend the forests is above all a struggle against imperialism," Burkina Faso revolutionary leader Thomas Sankara said.

able, the dumping of excess products.

Protectionist measures are currently being pressed by the European Union powers in negotiations with the Mercosur trading bloc, which includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

A working-class alternative

Since the rise of the world capitalist order, humanity has faced questions of life or death in stemming capital's accelerated destruction of labor and nature and its effects on hundreds of millions of toilers, says the 2007 Socialist Workers Party statement, "The Stewardship of Nature also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor."

These observations by the SWP leadership are important in finding the course to make progress on these questions, including the question of the Amazon forests and the fires.

The statement warns of the dead-end course of "green" politics and "environmentalism." This course leads away from the working class fighting to resolve the contradictions bred by capitalist exploitation. The only road to end

imperialist exploitation and to promote effective defense of labor and the earth's land, waters and atmosphere is through the struggle for workers power. It's only along that course that "the creative and productive potential of humanity's transformation of nature will be set free."

A good example are the mobilizations by peasants and workers in Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987, led by a revolutionary government with Thomas Sankara as its central leader. From its position as one of the world's poorest countries — a result of French colonial rule — working people in this West African nation took on agricultural development at the same time that they planted millions of trees and built irrigation projects to stop the advance of the desert. They did this as they carried out massive vaccination and literacy campaigns and other efforts to advance the interests of the toilers.

The "struggle to defend the trees and forests is above all a struggle against imperialism," Sankara said in 1986 at a conference in Paris, "because imperialism is the arsonist setting fire to our forests and our savannas."

Washington tightens squeeze on Cuba's revolution

BY SETH GALINSKY

"Cuba will not give in to slanders and blackmail," from the U.S. government said Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Sept. 20 at a press conference in Havana in response to Washington's latest measures aimed at blocking Cuba's supplies of oil and other products.

U.S. government officials who think that tightening the screws on Cuba will force a change in the principled politics of the Cuban Revolution are mistaken, said Rodríguez.

"They will not wrest any concession from our people nor any political concession from our government," Rodríguez said. "This policy against our government has failed for six decades and it will keep failing."

The foreign minister denounced Washington's campaign to pressure fuel suppliers and shippers in South America, Europe, and North Africa from delivering oil, marking an escalation of its economic embargo against the island.

In the midst of these latest round of anti-Cuba moves, the State Department announced Sept. 19 that it had ordered the expulsion of two diplomats from Cuba's Mission to the United Nations for allegedly conducting "influence operations."

When asked by a reporter about the expulsions, State Department official

Carrie Filipetti refused to "get into specifics on exactly what that means" but added the additional slander that the "Cuban regime violates the sovereignty of every country that it operates in."

The State Department also announced that Cuba's U.N. personnel will no longer be allowed to travel outside the island of Manhattan.

The Cuban Mission called the charges a "vulgar slander." A Sept. 19 statement noted that when U.S. officials first raised the accusations, they gave Cuba 48 hours to respond. The Cuban Mission answered, but U.S. officials "in flagrant violation of basic principles of diplomatic protocol" rejected the Cuban reply in a tweet. The travel restrictions also violate U.N. agreements.

Harder times in Cuba

On Oct. 9, a previously announced \$1,000 cap on money Cuban-Americans can send to their families in Cuba every three months goes into effect. Washington is also reinstating a ban on sending money to nonrelatives unless it is to be used to support a capitalist business venture in Cuba. In April, the Donald Trump administration announced it was reimposing some obstacles to U.S. travel to Cuba.

The new financial measures will make life more difficult for working people in Cuba already affected by a

significant drop in lower-priced oil from Venezuela over the last three years.

In mid-September Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel announced cutbacks in bus and other transportation services aimed at confronting the fuel shortages. *Granma's* Sept. 20 issue featured an article on farmers in Granma province, in the east of the island, who are switching from tractors to oxen to reduce the amount of fuel used. There has also been intermittent shortages of basic products due to lack of hard currency to buy imported goods.

Washington's accusations that Cuba is violating U.S. sovereignty are especially cynical in light of the U.S. government's repeated violations of the sovereignty of Cuba. This includes its decadeslong economic war against Cuba and sponsorship of groups that have carried out numerous terrorist attacks against the island — and of dozens of other countries around the world.

The U.S. government's aim is both to punish the Cuban people for overthrowing the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959 and to undermine the revolution in the hope of someday overturning it.

In November the U.N. General Assembly will once again vote on a resolution calling for an end to the embargo on Cuba. The resolution has passed by wide margins for 27 years in a row.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

GEORGIA

Atlanta

The Socialist Workers Party Campaign Helps Win Support for Workers Organizing to Fight. Speakers: Alyson Kennedy, SWP 2016 candidate for president; Malcolm Jarrett, SWP 2019 candidate for Pittsburgh City Council. Fri., Oct. 4. Refreshments, 7 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave., SW, Suite 103. Tel: (678) 528-7828.

NEW JERSEY

Union City

'Something's Changed — Workers Are Beginning to Stand Up!' Speakers: Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett. Sun., Oct. 6. Reception, 5 p.m.; program, 5:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 3600 Bergenline Ave., Suite 205B. Tel: (551) 257-5753.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

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

Baltimore Symphony kept playing music throughout lockout

BALTIMORE — “The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra produced this entire concert, everybody volunteered their time,” percussionist Brian Precht told 2,000 people at a free public concert at New Shiloh Baptist Church Sept. 14. The turnout showed the widespread support Local 40-543 of the American Federation of Musicians has won since management unilaterally cancelled the summer season and locked them out June 16, demanding they agree to 20% in wage and benefit cuts.

The musicians approved a one-year contract Sept. 23. “Our battles are not over,” Mary Plaine, the local’s secretary-treasurer, said in a message to supporters. “Maybe we will have some time to catch our breaths.”

“Being on the picket line has been kind of tough, but we know we’re fighting for something worthwhile, so we’re going to make sure we stand our ground for what’s right,” said Precht, a co-chair of the union negotiating committee. In the evening’s final selection, a gospel makeover of Handel’s “Messiah,” Baltimore Symphony conductor Marin Alsop and the orchestra jammed with the rhythm section of the historic Black church, along with the Carter Legacy Singers and members of Baltimore’s choral community.

The trade unionists kept making music throughout the lockout. In addition to picketing several days a week at the Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, they performed three summer subway rush-hour concerts. In August they played classical music of Bach, Handel and Mozart for motorists on Charles Street near the entrance to the JFX Expressway and performed free concerts on Maryland’s Eastern Shore.

They have also performed and joined in solidarity with other workers’ actions and social protests.

James Harris, Socialist Workers Party candidate to delegate for U.S. Congress in Washington, D.C., and campaign sup-

porters brought solidarity to the church concert. “It falls to the working class to defend culture and those that provide it for us,” said Harris. “The capitalist economic crisis threatens the lives of all workers as well as our humanity. The working class must unite behind the musicians and defend our class interests.”

The SWP candidate walked the musicians’ picket line and joined them Sept. 6 at the strike picket of UNITE HERE Local 7 workers, who are fighting for their first union contract at the Marriott Baltimore Waterfront hotel.

—Arlene Rubinstein

Thousands of nurses strike 1-day over workload, patients’ safety

HIALEAH, Fla. — Some 6,500 members of National Nurses United conducted a one-day strike Sept. 20 at 12 Tenet hospitals in Florida, California and Arizona to protest the harsh work conditions they face created by the high nurse-to-patient ratios imposed by the bosses. Nurses at two Tenet hospitals in El Paso, Texas, held public actions the same day.

“The worst thing for me is the harassment due to problems created by the



BRO Facebook

Baltimore Symphony musicians, who were locked out for over three months, joined United Auto Workers strike picket line at GM’s transmission plant in White Marsh, Maryland, Sept. 18.

lack of staffing,” Robin Velasquez, a nurse for 46 years, told the *Militant* on the picket line at Palmetto General hospital here. This is the nurses first strike since they won union recognition in 2013, Velasquez said proudly, and the first nurses’ strike ever in Florida.

Verla Bidon, a nurse for 25 years at Palmetto General, said that in critical care units “nurses are assigned three patients at a time. No other hospital does this, not the VA [Veterans Administra-

tion], none of them.” This denies patients the special care they require, she said.

In Florida, Texas and Arizona, National Nurses United members have been working without a contract or under one that has expired.

In Chicago, more than 2,000 nurses walked off the job Sept. 20 after contract negotiations between the union and the University of Chicago Medical Center broke down.

—Anthony Dutrow

NY construction workers protest deaths, nonunion sites

BY WILLIE COTTON

NEW YORK — More than 200 construction workers, most coming straight from nearby job sites, rallied outside the offices of New Line Structures in midtown Manhattan Sept. 17. New Line, one of the top 10 construction firms in the city, has been at the forefront of using nonunion contractors. The action was sponsored by a number of construction unions.

Over the last 10 years New York City construction bosses have pushed the unions out of growing numbers of worksites in their drive to increase profits. Barely 30% of construction sites are union today, compared to 90% in the 1970s. As a result deaths and injuries on the job are rising. Last year 761

construction workers were injured and a dozen killed here.

Several workers in the crowd pointed out to *Militant* correspondents the nonunion crew perched on scaffolding above a busy sidewalk next to the rally. “Look at that, people are walking right under them, there’s no flagman, what if they drop a hammer?” one worker said. “None of the workers are tied down” with safety harnesses that would prevent them from falling.

“Workers’ deaths are unacceptable,” Joe Scopo, organizing director for the Cement & Concrete Workers District Council of the Laborers International Union, told the rally. Scopo noted that most of the injuries and deaths on the job were at nonunion sites. He called for

a minute of silence for workers who died on the job.

Scopo introduced “our immigrant brother” Juan Carlos Diaz, a nonunion electrical worker, who spoke about conditions at the these worksites. Diaz is a leader of New Immigrant Community Empowerment, based in Queens.

“We worked for a subcontractor who does work for New Line,” said Diaz. “We worked hard for six months. They only paid us for three.” Rally participants chanted, “No wage theft!”

Workers know that the union is being pushed back and are discussing what to do about it. Many know that addressing the question of solidarity with workers without papers is a key part of that.

Electrician Anthony Alvarez told the *Militant* that the bosses at union sites have been stepping up the pressure on workers. “They want you to work up to the last second, even if there is nothing more you can do,” Alvarez said. “I look out the window and I see more and more nonunion sites.”

Seth Galinsky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City public advocate, and supporters passed out his campaign statement headlined, “No Worker Has to Die on the Job! Organize the Unorganized! Amnesty for All Undocumented Immigrants in the U.S.!”

One worker told Galinsky he disagreed, saying the problem is “illegal workers taking our jobs.”

“We can’t let the bosses pit us against each other,” Galinsky said, “that’s why we have to fight for amnesty and to organize them into the unions.”

Galinsky was the final speaker at the rally. “Workers must have the right to stop work if there are unsafe conditions and to say nothing moves until they are fixed,” Galinsky said to applause. “We need to say to fellow workers who are not in the union: ‘We don’t care where you were born, what language you speak, we want you in the union so we can fight together.’”

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



October 10, 1994

FLINT, Michigan — Nearly 12,000 members of United Auto Workers Local 599, the largest General Motors local in North America, walked out of the 25 plants that make up GM’s Buick City complex September 27.

The strikers are protesting the company’s refusal to hire more workers while they impose massive overtime and speedup that is resulting in increased stress, exhaustion, and injuries.

GM has cut its U.S. workforce in order to be more competitive with Ford and Chrysler. One study showed that it takes about four GM workers per day to build one car, but only about three at Ford or Chrysler.

Many workers on the picket line said they were working six to seven days a week and nine to 12 hours a day. They said the speed on one line increased recently from 65 to 77 cars per hour.



October 10, 1969

While the Nixon administration is making a pretense of de-escalating the war in South Vietnam, it has been intensifying the U.S. attack on neighboring Laos.

Northern Laos has been murderously bombed since the beginning of the war in Vietnam. On Aug. 30, 1966, Senator J.W. Fulbright, Foreign Relations Committee chairman, told the Senate, “More than 1,500 bombing and reconnaissance missions are made each week from bases in Thailand into North Vietnam and the Communist-controlled corridor in Laos.”

Washington’s real objective in Laos is to devastate the region long held by the Pathet Lao. But the Pathet Lao isn’t a new enemy. Washington’s hostility to it goes back to the early 1950s and the crumbling of French colonial rule in Indochina.



October 7, 1944

Events in France today, where a rapidly reviving working-class is moving toward the battle-lines of the socialist revolution, are testimony both to the explosive state of class relations and the revolutionary tradition of the French workers. The movement of the workers may still be rather halting, but its direction is unmistakable. The establishment of workers’ committees, which have taken charge of many large industrial enterprises in the Paris area, is the clearest indication of the revolutionary trend.

The French workers’ struggles are a continuation of the revolutionary upsurge which began with the anti-fascist general strike of February 12, 1934, and the sit-ins and strikes of 1936-38.

The workers sought a solution on the field of revolutionary battle, but were sidetracked and betrayed by their “Socialist” and Stalinist leaders.

GM strikers: 'No more tiers!'

Continued from front page

been on strike at 33 GM factories and 22 parts warehouses across the country since Sept. 16. It's the longest GM strike since 1970.

The most popular T-shirt worn by strikers and the most common chant on the picket line was, "No more tiers." This is the central issue — the division between temps, long-time GM workers, and those who have been hired since the bosses declared bankruptcy in 2009.

"I make \$19 per hour doing the same job on the assembly line as my co-worker, who is a regular GM employee making \$29 to \$32 per hour," Walker said. "That's why we're on strike. It's not fair."

Robin Nolley, who has 24 years on the GM assembly line, was picketing next to Walker. "There is also a tier system even if you're a regular employee of GM," she said. "It takes eight years to reach top pay even though you're all doing the same job. All this causes divisions in the workforce."

Kim Evans started out as a temp worker, but is now a regular GM employee. "I know one worker who has been a temp for five years," she said. "Not only do they get paid less, their health care insurance is inferior and they get no vacation, no eye care or dental insurance. They get all of three unpaid days off per year!"

"All temps should be made perma-

nent and no more temp workers in the future," striker Ester Clay said. "That's what we're all fighting for."

Many of the workers here used to work at other GM plants that the company closed to shore up profits. They were given the option of transferring to the Roanoke plant. "We are a workforce of exiles," is how one striker put it.

This is another key issue in the strike. In the last year, GM bosses have closed three big plants — in Baltimore; Lordstown, Ohio; and in Warren, Michigan — and announced they will close the plant in Hamtramck, Michigan, in January. The union is demanding the bosses assign new production at these plants and bring the workers back.

The strike is having a ripple effect on other plants that supply parts to the company. Some 1,400 workers at GM's St. Catharines Propulsion Plant and its Oshawa Assembly plant in Ontario have been laid off.

GM also told the 525 workers at the DMax Ltd. Plant in Moraine, Ohio, that there isn't any more work as long as the strike goes on.

Widespread solidarity

The strike has been met with growing support among working people, with other workers volunteering to join in picketing and bringing supplies, food and other donations to the strikers.



Striking autoworkers, other unionists picket GM parts plant in Rochester, New York, Sept. 18. Militant/Jacob Perasso

"The Teamsters brought their big rig to the line," Dan Maloney, president of 750-member UAW Local 1097 in Rochester, New York, told the *Militant* Sept. 18. Strikers' spirits were high and the union hall was a buzz of activity. "We've also been visited by and received donations from dozens of unions. They see that if we lose today, it will be them tomorrow."

The first "Solidarity Sunday" was held Sept. 22, where the UAW asked people to come out and show support. Picket lines across the country swelled.

Workers from the nearby 7,000-mem-

ber Ford Claycomo plant, other autoworkers, strikers' relatives and neighbors turned out to picket and show solidarity with UAW Local 31 members at GM's Fairfax assembly plant in Kansas City, Kansas.

One Teamster told the *Militant* they were refusing to haul any GM cars. Teamsters Joint Council 56 and Local 41 are conducting a food drive for strikers.

"The picket shifts are four hours a week, but lots of local members are coming down at all different times to make sure the line is strong," said Chet Hale, a 31-year veteran at GM and a picket captain at GM's plant in Spring Hill, Tennessee.

A serious class battle

GM bosses' efforts to push back against the strike are serious. They admit they've been raking in big profits since their carefully planned bankruptcy and generous government bailout. But they say they still need to bring more concessions out of workers to prepare for rough competition ahead.

The auto bosses are plowing capital into development of electric vehicles and driverless cars. They intend to make the workers pay for the transition. They say everyone needs to sacrifice to save the environment.

Workers know this will cost jobs. Electric cars mean the elimination of internal combustion engines, replaced with an electric powertrain with far fewer parts. The Chevy Bolt powertrain today, for instance, has 80% fewer moving parts than a regular GM car.

Ford Motors announced they are now running live tests of driverless cars in Washington, D.C., and Miami, and will begin doing so in Austin, Texas, in November. The UAW extended its contracts with Ford and Fiat Chrysler, intending to press them for new contracts after settling with GM.

The bosses are also getting help against the workers from the government and its political police. Just before the strike began, FBI and federal pros-

Continued on next page

Climate hysteria is obstacle to defense of land and labor

BY TERRY EVANS

"If we translate everything commonly thought of as an environmental issue into how to advance the protection of the working class, and how the working class can extend that protection to all, then we can hardly ever go wrong," explains Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes in the book *Capitalism's World Disorder*. "With that approach, we will increase the possibilities for concrete solidarity in fighting against ecological abuses and outrages."

For liberal capitalist politicians and the middle-class left the opposite is true. They whip up dreaded predictions of the planet's imminent destruction, claiming the crisis is so immense it overrides the class divisions that exist. They seek to prevent working people from understanding that the capitalist system is the source of environmental destruction and that the working class is the only force capable of waging a successful struggle to end the rulers' pollution of the earth and its atmosphere.

Their views were ballyhooed when over a million schoolchildren from more than 150 countries took off school — aided greatly by their teachers, parents and local liberal governments — to express opposition to "climate change" Sept. 20.

The actions were organized to lobby the United Nations Summit on Climate Change taking place in New York three days later, where some governments echoed the claims of disaster and made



New York construction workers protest deaths on the job Sept. 17. Workers need to fight for workers control of production to prevent injuries and deaths on the job and stop broader threats to land and labor. That includes fighting to prevent fouling of air, water and soil. Count Me In

empty calls for cuts in carbon emissions. The event had nothing to do with addressing the damage done to the environment by the capitalist classes' profit drive and their plunder of the sources of all wealth — land and labor.

Heads of state from over 60 countries attended the summit to advertise steps they have made to implement nonbinding pledges trumpeted at the 2015 Paris summit. The meeting was also a forum for rival powers to vie for business advantage.

Teenage "climate activist" Greta Thunberg — who is being touted for the Nobel Peace Prize — claimed, "We are at the beginning of a mass extinction." Those who failed to act on her prophecies were "evil" people, she said. Her remarks echoed those she made earlier this year at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where she said, "I want you to panic."

The day of the protests, the *New York Times* ran a lengthy op-ed by former Democratic Vice President Al Gore rife with similar catastrophism. He said the human race can only "avoid truly catastrophic, civilization-ending consequences if we act quickly."

Do workers have to sacrifice?

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the only world leaders who would be permitted to speak would be those ready to present significant new initiatives by their government to cut carbon emissions. But the speakers' list put the lie to that claim as not a single obligatory measure was adopted at the event.

Almost all the proposals bandied about amounted to one thing — working people have to sacrifice to save the world. Give up your car, no more air travel, only plant-based food at McDonald's, and the like.

Guterres demanded no new coal plants be built worldwide after 2020. Another U.N. official told countries in Africa "not to get into coal."

Calls to restrict which kinds of energy sources can be built by governments in the semicolonial world, countries whose development was stunted and distorted by colonial exploitation, amount to a demand that the 840 million people who live without electricity continue to go without. Close to 600 million of those live in rural Africa.

sumption on the earth are "too high."

These forces utterly disregard the possibility of scientific advance. For decades those who promoted the fallacy of overpopulation — which denied any road to increase food production — used it to deflect responsibility for hunger, malnutrition, unemployment and poverty from the system of capitalist exploitation onto the world's toiling majority, who the rulers deem to "create too rapidly."

"Science and technology," Barnes says in the SWP statement, "has established the knowledge and means to lessen the burdens and dangers of work, to advance the quality of life, and to conserve and improve the earth's patrimony."

"But under capitalism," he points out, "this liberating potential is turned into its opposite." The propertied rulers' pollution of the earth's atmosphere "is part of the price the toilers pay for the inevitably increasing world disorder of imperialism."

A working-class road forward

As SWP candidates join workers' picket lines and other protests, they say workers and their allies can map out a class-struggle road against the capitalist rulers despoliation of land and labor. They urge workers to break with the twin parties of capital — the Democrats and Republicans — and form their own party to speak and act in the interests of working people here and abroad.

Workers need to organize and fight, to build unions to fight for workers control of production in factories, mines and energy monopolies, to protect those on the job and more broadly from the ravages produced by the dog-eat-dog capitalist system. This includes the fight to control emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases and other steps to prevent the fouling of the air, water and soil.

Such a course points in the opposite direction to middle-class hysteria and dependence on the capitalist rulers and their institutions, like the U.N. It advances the fight to put an end to the rule of the capitalist class — the source of all environmental destruction.

'No more tiers!'

Continued from previous page

ecutors carried out raids at union offices. They've brought charges against a number of union officials, charging them with corruption.

The pro-boss press makes the absurd charge that the union officers called the strike to divert workers' attention from the charges. In a Sept. 17 opinion piece entitled "Behind the Auto Workers Strike," *Wall Street Journal* editors claim, "UAW leaders are honking their horns to distract members from a federal corruption probe."

But, as strikers tell anyone who asks, they're on the picket lines to protect their jobs and to end the divisive tier and temp system imposed by GM. They're winning widespread support from other workers, who are inspired by someone fighting back against the attacks of the bosses, who seek to force the working class to pay for the ongoing crisis of the capitalist system.

Any problems inside the union are the workers' business. Against the bosses, they stand united.

GM workers need solidarity from other workers in this strike. Sandra Ellis, who has worked at the Bowling Green, Kentucky, GM Corvette plant for 32 years, told *Militant* worker-correspondents who joined the line there Sept. 23 to ask its readers to "send your well-wishes, walk the line with us."

Jacob Perasso in Albany, New York; Jim Kendrick in Kansas City, Missouri; Jacquie Henderson in Louisville, Kentucky; and Susan LaMont in Atlanta contributed to this article.

Blackjewel miners keep up camp: 'No pay, we stay!'

Continued from front page

Upon hearing the bankrupt company was about to haul out the coal that miners had mined for no pay, Chris Sexton had had enough.

"Sexton saw the train was moving and decided to go stand on the tracks," laid-off Blackjewel roof bolter Chris Rowe told the *Militant* at the encampment Sept. 17. "He went on Facebook Messenger and started messaging everyone that he could to come down to the tracks. Ended up being 200 people. The state police came but just stood there, and ended up leaving."

Later the Department of Labor declared the coal "hot goods" and got a court order to keep the company from moving it. The bosses contested that ruling in court. The bankruptcy judge in Charleston, West Virginia, set a mid-October deadline for the company and miners to reach a settlement.

"Miners have been treated rough around here for a long time," Rowe said. "But this was the end. We got to take it back." The protest has struck a chord with workers and others who learned about it.

Moral and material support has flowed in from across this coal-mining region, from all over Kentucky, from across the United States and from other countries.

"Yesterday the Harlan County Community Action Agency had a food drive and brought a lot of food out. I'm going to make food boxes," Stacy Rowe, Chris' wife, and, like him, a stalwart at the blockade, told the *Militant* Sept. 22. "A class of third graders from Lexington sent letters with a picture of a wallet filled with money for us. Kids from a middle school and grade school stopped by to give support," she said. "One older couple came from Liberty

with 100 watermelons, 30 cartons of eggs and 20 pounds of bacon. Connor James, the reporter from WYMT-TV in Hazard, stayed with us at the camp for three days."

Six weeks ago a group of United Mine Workers of America retirees and officials came and spoke at the camp, Chris Rowe said. About 60 people were there. Rowe sports a UMW cap. "They came from all over, trying to bring the union back to Harlan. Some people are against the union, but as long as the company is made to do right, I'm for it."

Chris and Stacy Rowe said it's become difficult to maintain a really large presence at the camp, as miners get other mine jobs, some out of state. Some, like Chris Sexton, are studying full time to get their CDL commercial truck driver's license. Others have gone to school.

But that doesn't deter Chris and Stacy Rowe or the others who are staying. "You got to stay until the job gets done," Chris Rowe said. They have been thinking about the importance of what they are doing as an example for other workers. "If you're being treated the way we were, stand up for what's right. Nothing will change until we get the working class to come out and shut down production."

C'mon down to the camp!

It's possible the negotiations ordered by the judge will result in an acceptable settlement, Chris Rowe said by phone Sept. 23. "But in the meantime, anyone who wants to come out and join us on the tracks is welcome. You'll see the tents and canopies at the tracks next to Route 119 about a mile west of Cumberland at Sandhill Bottom Road."

Former Blackjewel miners at the Pax Mine in West Virginia got their final paychecks last week, Christina

Burgess, wife of one of the miners there, told WKU public radio Sept. 19. This was because the mine has been bought by Contura Energy, which guaranteed the pay out.

Burgess is one of the administrators of the Blackjewel Employees Stand Together Facebook page, a key site for communication between miners and for getting information on their fight. She said she had appealed to dozens of state legislators for help, but felt that the miners had been abandoned. "Nothing," she said, "We didn't receive anything."

Over 1,000 miners in Wyoming, Virginia and in Kentucky still haven't been paid.

Joyce Cheng, owner of Panda Garden Chinese restaurant in Harlan, has a special place in her heart for the Blackjewel miners, many of whom regularly ate there with their families before they were laid off. She has raised more than \$20,000 for the Miners Relief Fund by getting pledges for a 50-mile run and by contributing the proceeds of specially priced mini-buffet meals at the restaurant.

"I tell people, 'Every time you get a chance, go out and stay, even for an hour, at the miners' camp,'" Cheng told this worker-correspondent Sept. 23. "They need our support."

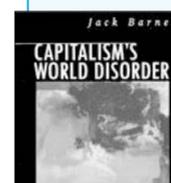
Messages of solidarity, money and other contributions to the fighting miners can be sent to With Love from Harlan, P.O. Box 1621, Harlan, KY 40831. Checks should be payable to the community organization "With Love From Harlan," with "Coal Miner Fund" on the check's memo line.

And, as Chris Rowe says, "C'mon down."

Samantha Hamlin contributed to this article.

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"Environmental pollution is a social and class question. Workers must not fall into accepting the common view that the environment — any more than 'education' — is a 'scientific' question above the class struggle."

— Jack Barnes in *Capitalism's World Disorder*



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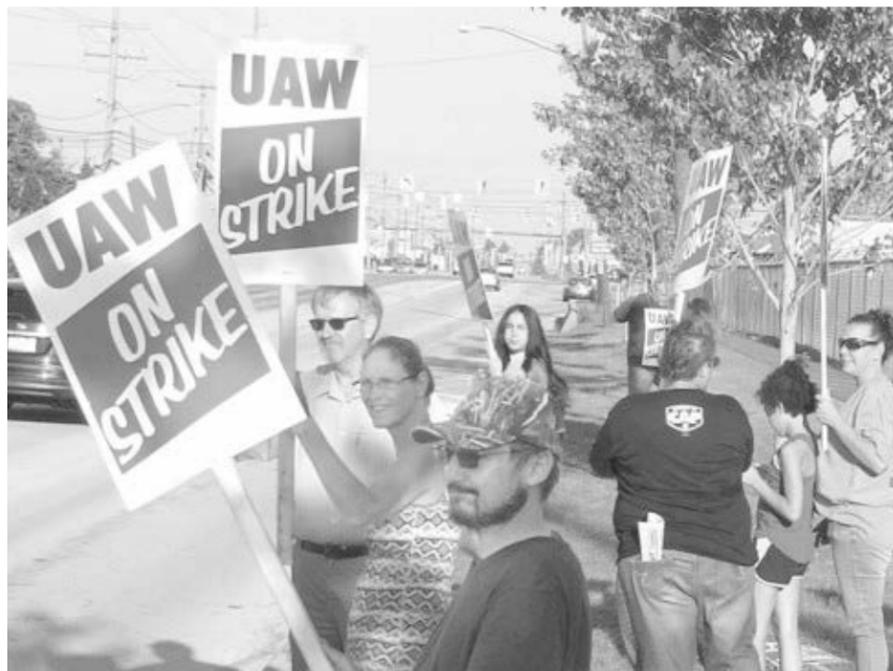


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'FBI disruption violates constitutional rights of SWP'

FBI on Trial: The Victory of the Socialist Workers Party Suit Against Government Spying is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for October. In July 1973 the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance filed a lawsuit against the FBI — the U.S. rulers' political police — and other government agencies charging them with decades of illegal spying, harassment and disruption. After a 15-year battle, the SWP and YSA won. This was a victory for the whole working class. The excerpts below are from the introduction by Margaret Jayko. Copyright © 1988 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Militant/Tony Lane

SWP suit against FBI proved government spying and disruption is unconstitutional. Above, GM and Aramark strikers picket GM Parma plant near Cleveland Sept. 16. Recent FBI "corruption" raids on UAW union officials are aimed at weakening strike and the union.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MARGARET JAYKO

[O]n August 25, 1986, U.S. District Judge Thomas Griesa ruled in favor of the plaintiffs.

The judge found the FBI guilty of violations of the constitutional rights of the SWP and YSA and of their members and supporters. ...

An unprecedented victory for constitutional rights had been won.

Judge Griesa's decision, reprinted in this book, represents a victory for the basic right to engage in political activity free from government interference.

The FBI investigation of the SWP started, wrote Griesa, "with a series

of directives issued by President Roosevelt to J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the FBI. Roosevelt met with Hoover on August 24, 1936, and this meeting was recorded in a memorandum written by Hoover. According to the memorandum, Roosevelt 'was desirous of discussing the question of the subversive activities in the United States, particularly fascism and communism.' ...

"In 1941 Director Hoover wrote the New York office of the FBI complaining about the lack of information regarding the SWP and requesting that every effort be made 'to obtain from book shops, informants and other sources' whatever written materials existed about the SWP." Ever since then, the SWP was a target of the FBI.

Judge Griesa found that "the FBI's disruption activities, surreptitious entries and use of informants" were "violations of the constitutional rights of the SWP and lacked legislative or regulatory authority."

The court ruling provides a compelling summary of the government's illegal operations against the SWP and YSA as revealed in the case. Judge Griesa dealt extensively with the FBI's use of informants to spy on and seek to disrupt the SWP and YSA.

His decision details several of the fifty-seven disruption operations conducted by the FBI. These include poison-pen letters, malicious articles

planted in the press, instances of harassment and victimization, covert attempts to get SWP members fired from their jobs, and efforts to disrupt collaboration between the SWP and Black rights and anti-Vietnam war groups.

It enumerates 20,000 days of wiretaps and 12,000 days of listening "bugs" between 1943 and 1963. It documents 208 FBI burglaries of offices and homes of the SWP and its members, resulting in the theft or photographing of 9,864 private documents.

Judge Griesa concluded that these government operations were illegal and a violation of the Bill of Rights. ...

The decision in this case codifies significant advances for political rights. Important new ground has been conquered in extending the right to privacy of political organizations and individual activists. This, more than any other single issue, was at the heart of the case. ...

For the first time a federal court has ruled that the very presence of government informers in a political organization is a violation of the constitutional rights of free speech and association and the right to privacy. "The FBI's use of informants clearly constituted invasion of privacy," wrote Griesa.

After reviewing the record of more than four decades of FBI spying and disruption, Judge Griesa concluded that "there is no evidence that any FBI

informant ever reported an instance of planned or actual espionage, violence, [or] terrorism." Instead, the informers helped the FBI amass "thousands of reports recording peaceful, lawful activity by the SWP and YSA." They also carried out FBI orders to "suppress recruiting activities," to "frustrate the growth of the organizations," and "to attempt to disrupt them."

Without the right to conduct their affairs in private, the decision states, the freedom of association of those whose views are opposed by the government is violated. This decision reinforces and extends important previous victories by the civil rights movement and women's rights struggles in establishing a constitutional right to privacy.

The court decision also recognizes that the government cannot ignore Fourth Amendment protections against arbitrary searches and seizure by justifying measures such as burglaries, "bugs," and wiretaps on grounds of "national security" interests.

The FBI burglaries were "obvious violations of the Fourth Amendment," wrote Judge Griesa. "The FBI knew this full well. There was no statutory or regulatory authorization for such operations."

The decision also marks the first time a federal court has ruled on the constitutional issues posed by covert government disruption operations aimed at fomenting internal divisions and making it more difficult for a political organization to collaborate with others and win new members. ...

Judge Griesa ruled, "There can be no doubt that these disruption operations were patently unconstitutional and violated the SWP's First Amendment rights of free speech and assembly. Moreover, there was no statutory or regulatory authority for the FBI to disrupt the SWP's lawful political activities."

Government lawyers argued throughout the course of the suit that the FBI operations were legally justified because of the SWP's Marxist views and communist activities. This was rejected by the court.

The ruling makes clear that protection of the right to be free from unconstitutional government activities applies to communist organizations such as the SWP and YSA, as well as to non-communist groups.

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Support GM strikers, Ky. coal miners!

At the heart of the strike by United Auto Workers at General Motors is workers' determination to push back the concessions the bosses have imposed on workers with "two tiers" of wages and on growing numbers of temp workers with even lower pay, all of whom are doing the same jobs. GM's two-tier wage system means every worker hired since 2007 starts on half the pay of more senior workers and takes eight years to reach near the same pay levels; while "temporary" workers stay in that position for years and years. The strikers are demanding, "No more tiers!"

GM bosses continue to shutter plants — like those in Lordstown and Baltimore — forcing workers to transfer far from home for other GM jobs or to quit.

Worldwide, bosses and the governments that serve them do everything they can to deepen divisions among workers. This is the way for the capitalist class — a tiny minority — to impose its will on the vast majority, working people, whose labor, along with nature, is the source of all the world's wealth, in the factories and on the land. This is the only way they can boost their profits on our backs.

And they seek to intensify competition among workers — unemployed against employed, native-against foreign-born, Black against Caucasian, men against women. They want us to see each other as the problem, not as fellow workers with common interests. Especially not to see ourselves as fellow fighters capable of uniting to resist their assaults on our wages, social rights and working and living conditions.

In fact they count on the corroding effects of this competition their system breeds to instill their dog-eat-dog values. They and their meritocratic enablers

— from the editorial boardrooms to college administrations to the innumerable nongovernment organizations and other social-engineering outfits — work overtime to spread the lie that workers are stupid, reactionary and need to be corralled. They say workers are racist and hate immigrants.

They are surprised when workers with very different wage rates, benefits and conditions stand side by side on union picket lines.

The way to counter their continual efforts to pit workers against each other is on the basis that *an injury to one is an injury to all*. Make the struggle by UAW members your own! Join their picket lines! Solidarity in struggle is the first step along the path to unifying working people and building class consciousness.

Today millions of workers are looking for ways to organize together to fight what has been done to us by the bosses. There is an uptick in workers organizing, helped by greater employment. Every step to organize workers and to back their struggles is an advance.

The Socialist Workers Party and its candidates present a fighting program aimed at strengthening the consciousness, self-confidence and unity workers need.

If we think of every social and political question — from the environment, to amnesty for immigrant workers, to the fight against cop brutality, to the UAW strike — as a class question, we'll get on the right track. That's the road toward construction of a powerful independent working-class political movement fighting to replace the profit-driven capitalist system with workers power.

Join in! Support the UAW strike! Back the Black-jewel coal miners in Kentucky!

'Cancel Puerto Rico debt,' protesters demand

Continued from front page

A poem by Eleazar David Melendez, read at the Philadelphia rally, highlighted what this meant for working people.

"They did not die in the hurricane. They died in pain, at home, of kidney failure unable to access the dialysis clinic for weeks," the poem begins. "They died in the dark and the heat of unsanitary ICU units. ... They died of diseases of antiquity, in a crisis of neglect."

"I came because we need to rebuild Puerto Rico," temp worker Ray Quan, 21, who came from New York to join the action, told the *Militant*. "We need land to farm, I'm not sure how, but we have to fight to get it."

Democratic Party elected officials who addressed the rally put the blame for the ongoing crisis in Puerto Rico on the Donald Trump administration. But Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony since 1898, has been a source of plunder by U.S. imperialism under Democratic and Republican administrations alike.

One contingent marched with a large balloon depicting Trump in baby diapers.

"I can't identify with that, it covers up Obama's role in setting up the Financial Oversight and Management Board that is bleeding the people of Puerto Rico to pay off the bondholders," Fermin Morales, a member of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 98, said at the march. "Schools were closed, pensions cut and the electrical system bankrupted all under Obama's watch."

In New York City some 300 people marched to the United Nations demanding independence for Puerto

Rico and cancellation of the debt. The march was sponsored by the Frente Independentista Boricua, a coalition of pro-independence groups in New York.

To maximize payment on the country's \$74 billion debt — enforced by a financial oversight board imposed by Washington — the colonial government continues to make cuts in basic services.

Cancel the debt! End colonial rule!

The featured speaker was Oscar López, who spent 35 years in prison in the U.S. for his actions in support of ending U.S. colonial rule. Along with calling for independence, López called for an end to the U.S. embargo of Cuba and to U.S. meddling in Venezuela. He said that the Cuban Revolution shows that it is possible to stand up to U.S. imperialism and win. Several other former Puerto Rican political prisoners also spoke.

"Working people in the U.S. and Puerto Rico are not victims — we're looking for ways to fight," Seth Galinsky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City public advocate, told the rally. He pointed to the strike of the United Auto Workers members at General Motors who are fighting against two-tier wages and to make temporary workers permanent.

"When I was in Puerto Rico last month I found the same thing. Thousands of temporary workers at pharmaceutical companies and at hotels making \$7.25 an hour," he said. "Who can raise a family on that?"

"The fight for Puerto Rico's independence from U.S. colonial rule is in the interests of working people in the U.S.," Galinsky said.

US rulers press Tehran

Continued from front page

claimed responsibility for the strikes. Tehran denies it was behind the attacks.

Washington and Tehran back opposing sides in Yemen's four-year-long civil war, which has left 100,000 dead and millions facing famine. After the latest bombing of Saudi Arabia, Houthi leaders called for a cease-fire, offering to halt the military conflict in which Saudi air forces are bombing north Yemen while Houthi rockets target Saudi Arabia. Houthi leaders also demanded that the Saudi-led forces lift their blockade of the strategic port of Hodeida and Sana'a, the country's capital.

The toll of the wars waged by the rulers in Iran and Saudi Arabia fall most heavily on working people. Tehran offers citizenship to the families of Afghan refugees who "volunteer" to fight in the militias it organizes in Iraq and Syria, while the Saudi government pays Sudanese families to send their sons to fight on the frontlines of battles it is waging in Yemen.

The U.S. troop deployment adds to the 500 troops sent to Saudi Arabia earlier this year, and another 1,500 deployed elsewhere in the Middle East since June as a show of force against Tehran. At that time, Washington cited attacks on oil tankers in the Arab-Persian Gulf and the downing of a U.S. surveillance drone, all of which Tehran denied responsibility for.

A fifth of the world's petroleum supplies, which pass through the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Arab-Persian Gulf, would be disrupted by any heightened conflict there.

The Trump administration is seeking to avoid escalating wars that involve U.S. soldiers. At the same time, it issues threats to use its military might and intensifies crippling sanctions on Tehran.

"As long as Tehran's menacing behavior continues," Trump warned the Iranian government Sept 24, "sanctions will not be lifted, they will be tightened."

U.S. hands off Iran

"The U.S. government's sanctions on Iran are an extension of the assaults the bosses and their government wage on workers and farmers at home," explained Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of San Francisco. "Working people should demand an end to the sanctions and the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Mideast."

Washington, the only power to ever use nuclear weapons, is demanding the Iranian rulers relinquish their nuclear and ballistic missile program. As well as end their backing for Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen; withdraw the forces they command in Syria; and disarm the militias they organize in Iraq.

The Iranian rulers are determined to maintain their regional military and political clout but Washington's economic squeeze is crippling the production and trade of the country's capitalist rulers and worsening the conditions of life for working people. Iran's oil exports have been choked off, depleting its reserves and causing its currency to devalue. On top of an existing economic crisis, this has caused inflation to surge.

Many workers are no longer able to afford meat, milk or diapers, and rents are skyrocketing, reported France 24. The U.S. National Security Council estimates that Iran's pension fund system is close to collapse. The sharp decline in revenue from oil sales increases pressure on the government to cut its spending, including on subsidies it provides for basic necessities that millions of workers depend on.

The new U.S. sanctions target the Central Bank of Iran, the National Development Fund and other entities linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, especially its Quds Force, that Tehran uses to extend its power abroad. All their property is to be frozen and secondary sanctions leveled at other governments allowing transactions with them.

'Militant' Prisoners Fund

The fund makes possible reduced rate subscriptions for prisoners. Send check or money order payable to the 'Militant', marked Prisoners Fund, to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at themilitant.com

LETTERS

Wake up Puerto Rico, it's time!

It brings tears to my eyes to sit in prison locked down and to read about how my island is being destroyed. Its own government is selling our own people out. We don't need the U.S. interfering in our affairs.

We need to depend on each other and help each other and stop depending on the U.S. as our saviors.

No one can do for us, what we can manage to do for ourselves.

Wake up Puerto Rico, the time

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

has come!

Struggle by working people here has yet to develop a working-class leadership capable of taking political power.

I support the Socialist Workers Party 2019 campaign program. You forgot one thing: "Prisoner voting rights."

A prisoner
Florida