

## ‘No one had to die from the storm,’ SWP candidates say

BY TAMAR ROSENFELD

QUEENS, N.Y. — Socialist Workers Party candidates Róger Calero for mayor of New York City and Willie Cotton for public advocate, and campaign supporters on Sept. 12 extended solidarity to residents affected by destructive floods caused by heavy rain from remnants of Hurricane Ida. Some 13 people died in the city Sept. 1, most in flooded apartments.

In the Woodside neighborhood here, where a family of three died, the streets had quickly turned into rivers. Some residents got a “flash flood” warning on their cellphones around 10 p.m., as the flooding hit, several people told Calero. Others didn’t receive any notification. Even though city officials have maps showing which streets and houses are in the most danger from flooding, no one received a visit or call telling them they needed to evacuate.

Neighbors have been helping each

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## Strikers in five states take on Nabisco, win broad support

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO — Spirits were high on the picket line across the street from the Nabisco bakery here Sept. 11 as members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union Local 1 waved picket signs and gave thumbs-up to motorists who passed by honking their horns in support.

### As we go to press ...

The BCTGM announced Sept. 15 it had reached a tentative agreement with Nabisco. Union members will read, discuss and vote on the proposals in the coming days. Picketing at the six strike locations continues until a contract is approved.

“We have people from the neighborhood coming by, people from other unions coming by, showing their support,” Shirlon Selmer, a 37-year veteran in the bake shop, told the *Militant*. “We’re getting a steady stream of dona-

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## Back locked-out oil workers standing up to ExxonMobil

Bosses seek to bust union at Texas refinery



Houston Chronicle via AP/Michael Wyke

Locked-out unionists from ExxonMobil refinery in Beaumont, Texas, picket in Houston Aug. 18, getting out facts on oil bosses’ demands for concessions that gut seniority, divide workers.

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

BEAUMONT, Texas — Over 650 oil workers, members of United Steelworkers Local 13-243, have been locked out at the ExxonMobil Refinery and Lubricant Blending and Packaging plant here since bosses marched them out of the facility four months ago. They had rejected company demands that they give up long-standing seniority bidding rights and efforts to divide the workers by creating different contracts at the refinery and lubricant plant.

“Nothing’s changed,” Darrell Kyle, president of the local who has worked

there for 27 years, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent from Los Angeles and Alyson Kennedy, chair of the Texas Socialist Workers Party campaign from Dallas, at the union hall Sept. 10. “We give the company a

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## Using unions, building solidarity vital to defending working-class interests



Boston Herald/Chris Christo

Fighting for safe staffing levels for themselves and patients, nurses picket St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester, Massachusetts, Aug. 16. Six-month strike is longest nurses strike in 15 years.

BY TERRY EVANS

“Organizing to support unionists on strike to defend their wages and working conditions today is crucial for expanding and strengthening the labor movement,” Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for California governor, told the *Militant*. “Spread the word about struggles at Warrior Met Coal in Alabama, ExxonMobil in Texas, and Nabisco all across the country!

Win solidarity from your union, family, friends and co-workers.”

These union struggles are taking place during a protracted economic and social crisis, as workers look for ways to push back boss attempts to hold down wages, impose multiple wage tiers to divide workers, speed up production and extend the working day. An example was set by members of the Bakery, Con-

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## Interventions by US, Iranian rulers deepen crisis for toilers in Lebanon

BY ROY LANDERSEN

With Lebanon in the throes of an economic meltdown that has devastated working people and provoked massive protests, billionaire tycoon Najib Mikati was appointed prime minister Sept. 10. The formation of his administration comes after a 13-month deadlock among the country’s ruling capitalist factions.

Washington and Paris back Mikati’s government, hoping it can deflect anger among workers, farmers and others hit by the crisis, while imposing solutions to the benefit of finance capital.

The World Bank noted that Lebanon’s “brutal” depression is on a scale “usually associated with conflicts or wars.” Since a 2019 financial crash, the bank-

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## Texas inmate wins stay of execution over right to pray, feel pastor’s touch

BY JANET POST

On Sept. 8 the U.S. Supreme Court stayed the execution of John Henry Ramirez, a death-row prisoner in Texas, three hours before he was to be killed. He was waiting in a holding cell a few feet from the death chamber at the state penitentiary in Huntsville.

The court ruling overturned an ear-

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Indian sanitation workers strike for equal pay, permanent jobs



# Venezuela gov’t opens Mexico talks with opposition parties

BY RÓGER CALERO

Representatives of the Venezuelan government of Nicolás Maduro and the country’s main capitalist opposition parties met in Mexico City Sept. 3-6. They agreed to terms for further talks aimed at breaking a polarized political deadlock between both sides, and the opposition’s backers in Washington, over the last five years.

Talks beginning Sept. 24 will include discussion on steps to get credit from the International Monetary Fund and to expand access to coronavirus vaccines, a joint statement said.

In addition, the Venezuelan government is demanding the lifting of sanctions by Washington and governments in Europe, and control of the country’s assets held abroad — like the U.S. bank accounts of Venezuela’s state-owned PDVSA oil company and its subsidiary, Citgo, worth billions.

The imperialist rulers have blocked Caracas’ access to these funds, claiming the U.S.-groomed opposition leader, Juan Guaidó, is the real head of state. Guaidó proclaimed himself president in January 2019, saying Maduro’s reelection the year before was fraudulent.

With bipartisan support the Donald Trump administration backed Guaidó’s failed attempts to provoke a military coup and mobilize popular support to remove Maduro. It ratcheted up sanctions that fall hardest on working people. The Biden administration continues to recognize Guaidó as president, even after the opposition lost a majority in the legislature last December, and Guaidó was removed as head of parliament.

Guaidó’s “interim government” was

further weakened after opposition politicians had to resign from it as a condition to be included in the talks in Mexico. Unity Platform, a coalition of opposition parties participating in the talks, announced Aug. 31 that it would participate in the gubernatorial and mayoral elections in November.

In May, Venezuela’s National Assembly — currently with a majority from Maduro’s United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) and its allies — named two opposition figures to the five-person National Electoral Council, which oversees elections. This is the first time the opposition will have two seats in the body since 2005. Last month Venezuelan authorities released opposition leader Freddy Guevara from prison. He is now taking part in the talks.

The Biden administration “welcomed” the negotiations and reiterated its plan to continue using sanctions to squeeze the Maduro government.

The Cuban government has consistently defended the right of the people of Venezuela to make their own decisions without interference from U.S. imperialism or capitalist regimes in the region. Washington’s assaults on Venezuela’s sovereignty are tied to the U.S. rulers’ effort to overthrow Cuba’s socialist revolution.

It will be hard for the talks to “reach reasonable agreements while continuing to use the guillotine of the sanctions,” Cuban daily *Granma* said Aug. 18.

Current negotiations take place as a yearslong economic and social crisis continues to bear down on working people in Venezuela. Hyperinflation means food and medicine is often too expen-



AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos

**Venezuelans wait in line in Caracas for COVID vaccine Sept. 8. Washington’s punishing sanctions have disrupted vaccination, with only 11% of the population fully dosed. In the coming months, revolutionary Cuba is organizing to supply 12 million doses of its Abdala vaccine.**

sive for most people to obtain, and over 5 million — 15% of the population — have fled the country since 2015.

A recession in 2014 was aggravated by the drop of world oil prices the next year and stepped-up U.S. sanctions against the country’s oil and mining industries in 2017.

In the last three years Maduro’s government has carried out the privatization of dozens of state-owned enterprises, opened oil and mining industries to investment from foreign ventures, pushed through tax laws favorable to capitalist monopolies, backed evictions of peasants from land sought by big landowners, and enacted anti-labor measures.

## Disgruntlement over gov’t measures

A regulation issued by the Ministry of Labor in 2018, setting a new official minimum wage, has been the focus of widespread dissatisfaction. It guts existing clauses for wage and benefit increases in union contracts or other agreements with state and private employers.

Workers in Venezuela have also been subjected to bosses’ increasing use of bonuses and food bags instead of wage increases, not knowing when or if these will arrive.

“These supplements don’t count toward retirement, social security benefits,” trade unionist Eduardo Sánchez told Venezuelanalysis April 16. “It’s a boon for employers since the bonuses come with no future obligations.”

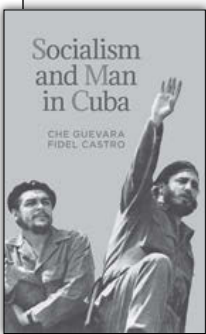
Disappointed supporters of former President Hugo Chávez say the mea-

sures taken by Maduro’s government are evidence that the PSUV is abandoning Chávez’s “socialist dream.” Chávez came to power over two decades ago amid mass mobilizations by workers and peasants. He used revenue from the country’s oil industry to fund a series of welfare programs.

The steps taken by Maduro are in continuity with Chávez’s attempt to manage a capitalist economy in which exploiters and exploited can supposedly coexist. At no point did Chávez or Maduro organize working people to deepen their own struggles against the country’s capitalist rulers on the road to taking political power into their own hands and making a socialist revolution, as Cuban workers and farmers did under the Marxist leadership of Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement.

The recent shifts in Venezuela reflect the government’s inability to grant concessions to working people due to the depth of the capitalist crisis.

## Socialism and Man in Cuba



by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro

Guevara explains why the revolutionary transformation of social relations necessarily involves the transformation of the working people organizing and leading that process. \$5

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## U.S. Afghanistan war led to devastation for toilers

*The tens of thousands killed and millions displaced in Afghanistan are a consequence of the U.S. rulers’ drive to dominate the region and extract profit. The ‘Militant’ is an indispensable source to follow political developments there from the perspective of the working people.*



Mukhtar wafayee

In attempt to flee conditions in their country, Afghans try to get on U.S. transport Aug. 16.

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# ‘No one had to die in storm’

Continued from front page

other clear damaged appliances and furniture from basements and ground-floor dwellings. Many were appreciative of the SWP campaign visit, in contrast with the stops by elected politicians — from President Joseph Biden to Mayor Bill de Blasio on down — which some described as self-serving “photo opportunities.”

“We’re a working-class party, independent of the Democrats and Republicans. They defend the interests of the capitalist rulers responsible for this disaster,” said Calero. “No one had to die!”

The ruling rich “take and they take,” Luis Rosas, a retired maintenance worker, told Calero, listing ways bosses squeeze working people. “I pay more for the dirty water than for the clean,” he said, referring to high sewer fees in his water bill. Motioning to the flood damage, he added, “And this is what we get in return.”

Rosas asked Calero, “Do you include immigrant workers in your campaign even if they can’t vote? They work here, live here, and pay taxes.” Calero pointed to the SWP campaign’s support for amnesty for all undocumented immigrants as a way to unite the working class. Rosas thought that was important, noting bosses use these divisions to “bring down the wages of all workers.”

“Thank god for the amnesty passed under Ronald Reagan,” he said, as he had been able to adjust his status in 1986. But, he added, “They did it because they needed us. They needed workers.”

Calero agreed, saying, “Both Democratic and Republican administrations regulate the flow of immigrant labor based on what the bosses need, or when they feel the pressure from massive struggles by working people. The fight

for amnesty is a life-and-death question for the union movement.”

Willie Cotton and his supporters visited the Hollis neighborhood where Phamatee Ramskriet and her son, Krishah, drowned in a basement apartment.

The area has flooded for decades. The city has spent more than \$24 million supposedly to fix the problem, but if anything, the “fix” has made it worse.

“I’ve sounded the alarm over and over to every government agency I can, and nothing happens,” Amrita Bhagwandin, who lives across the street from the Ramskriets, told Cotton. “There has to be accountability.” Bhagwandin’s basement and first floor flooded during the storm.

Many workers live in basement apartments because it is the only housing they can afford. And others rent out their basements because they need the income to be able to pay their mortgage.

“This is one of the many reasons why workers and our unions need to fight for a government-funded public works program to build decent, affordable housing and many other things we need,” Cotton said.

He said that in Cuba the government and mass organizations evacuate everyone who is in danger before hurricanes hit and then immediately organize volunteers to begin repairing any damage. That’s only possible because working people there “took power out of the hands of the capitalist class and made a socialist revolution.”

The SWP campaigners saw working people bringing cooked meals to those forced out of their homes, showing the power and potential for working-class solidarity. Many people here are originally from Guyana, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Colombia and other countries.

Brian Williams and Sarah Katz



Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

**Róger Calero, SWP candidate for New York mayor, discusses disaster for workers from tropical storm flooding with Luis Rosas, retired maintenance worker in Woodside, Queens, Sept. 12.**

knocked on the door of Andy Sarbadhik while campaigning in Hollis. Three feet of water rushed into Sarbadhik’s basement, destroying everything. Originally from Guyana, he is a highway construction engineer.

“Water got into the foundation of the house,” he said. His insurance company initially said it’s not a flood zone so there’s no coverage. “Now they say they’ll look into it.”

He remembered Hurricane Sandy that devastated parts of the New York area in 2012. “I was little then,” Sarbadhik said, adding some people have still not been compensated or gotten the assistance needed to recover from the damage.

Sarbadhik eagerly bought the book *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

## Campaigning in Beaumont, Texas

A team of SWP campaign supporters traveled to Beaumont in southeast Texas Sept. 10-11 to bring solidarity to the fight

by United Steelworkers union members against bosses who locked them out at the ExxonMobil oil refinery there. (See article on front page.)

During their visit they met working people who had evacuated from Louisiana and were staying in Beaumont hotels.

“I was in New Orleans when Hurricane Ida hit,” 88-year-old Patricia Ryan told SWP campaigner Deborah Liatos. “I lost the shingles on my roof and my insurance company says I have to pay the first \$8,000. I can’t afford that.”

Gabrielle Orcutt had left North Shore in Louisiana and was staying in Beaumont with her two children. “We rode out the storm but left three days later because we could not take the heat and lack of water and electricity,” she said.

Orcutt got a copy of the *Militant* from Liatos after seeing its coverage of the social catastrophe caused by the storm. It explains the disaster is a “result of the workings of capitalism and the class-divided realities it imposes on working people.” To join SWP or Communist League campaigning, or to subscribe to the *Militant*, contact distributors nearest you listed on page 8.

## Boss, gov’t let nursing home evacuees suffer in Louisiana

BY SETH GALINSKY

The Louisiana Department of Health shut down seven for-profit nursing homes and moved to revoke their licenses Sept. 7, after 850 senior citizens there were evacuated to a warehouse in Independence Aug. 27 and left in deplorable and degrading conditions during Hurricane Ida. Residents’ relatives weren’t notified where they were. Seven people died and 14 were hospitalized.

Owner and Baton Rouge real estate magnate Bob Dean Jr., shocked reporters when he told them, “We did really good with taking care of people” and dismissed the death of four of the residents, saying they were “hospice patients, which you know — those are people that are on their way out.”

Government negligence and disregard for working people was just as responsible as Dean. Louisiana Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser admitted that the inhumane conditions evacuated residents faced, and in other nursing homes, were a repeat of the neglect and abuse that happened during Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The Dean nursing home residents were forced to sleep on mattresses laid side by side on the warehouse floor, in their wheelchairs or directly on the concrete floor. The generator failed, leaving the facility without air conditioning amid extreme heat and humidity. The stench of urine and feces were so strong that some people vomited.



**Inhumane conditions in warehouse in Independence, Louisiana, where 850 nursing home residents were sent after hurricane. It took days for the state to intervene, while 7 people died.**

Starting Aug. 27 city officials say they received 911 calls over four days from 63 people, reporting medical emergencies and inhuman conditions. One was from a 66-year-old woman who said she thought she had been kidnapped. When EMTs responded, they were turned away and officials did nothing further.

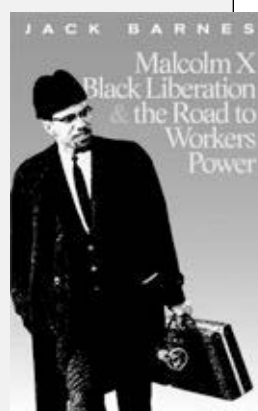
Workers at the warehouse reported the horrendous conditions to the Louisiana Department of Health. Health agency workers finally got around to visiting the warehouse Aug. 31, but Dean wouldn’t let them inside. It wasn’t until the next day that officials returned with state police, gained entry and began relocating people! The warehouse wasn’t completely vacated until Sept. 2.

Hundreds of other elderly tenants at so-called independent living facilities, private and “nonprofit” alike, also faced loss of electricity in New Orleans after the hurricane. Many were stuck on higher floors and unable to leave their apartments. As a condition of admission residents at some of the facilities had to prove they had set up their own personal evacuation plan in case of emergency. Management took no responsibility.

Neither the home owners nor the government did anything to get these residents to shelters. At least five were found dead over the Sept. 4-5 weekend. The owners of the facilities and local government officials blame each other for the deaths.

## Malcolm X, Black Liberation & the Road to Workers Power

“This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States



... and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution.” — Jack Barnes

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# Miners mark 100 years since union battle at Blair Mountain

BY JOHN HAWKINS

Over Labor Day weekend in West Virginia, dozens of commemorations, including rallies, presentations, and re-enactments, marked the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Blair Mountain. This was one of the biggest armed conflicts ever fought between unionists and the bosses' thugs backed by state forces.

Among the commemorations was a 45-mile march Sept. 3-5 led by United Mine Workers of America President Cecil Roberts that retraced the route thousands of miners took in 1921 from Marmet, West Virginia, to Blair Mountain in Logan County.

Since the late 1800s, coal bosses in Mingo, Logan and McDowell counties in West Virginia had enforced a repressive company-town setup on miners and their families.

Miners work using leased tools and were paid low wages in "scrip," which could only be used at company stores. Safety conditions were deplorable. And the mine operators had kept unions out of the region through intimidation and violence.

Companies compelled workers to sign "yellow dog contracts," pledging not to organize, and they used armies of private detectives to harass striking miners.

On May 19, 1920, Baldwin-Felts detectives arrived in the town of Matewan to evict union miners from houses owned by the Stone Mountain Coal Company. They were met by Matewan Mayor Cabell Testerman and a pro-union sheriff, Sid Hatfield, who had raised a small posse to block them.

A gunfight ensued with casualties on both sides. Seven Baldwin-Felts agents were killed along with Testerman and two local miners.

This helped fuel a UMWA organizing drive that expanded rapidly, winning thousands of new members. The miners struck in the summer of 1920. The coal operators responded with violent attacks on union miners, arresting and jailing hundreds of union supporters. This company offensive culminated in the Aug. 1, 1921, assassination of Sid Hatfield as he entered the McDowell County Courthouse to face charges stemming from the Matewan battle.

Within days thousands of union supporters — Black, Caucasian, citizen, and immigrant — converged on Marmet, a small town near Charleston. With UMWA organizers Frank Keeney and Fred Mooney in the front ranks, the miners, armed with rifles and shotguns, began their march Aug. 24 to Mingo County to free imprisoned unionists.

The marchers passed through

Kanawha and Boone counties without incident. But once they reached Logan County they met stiff company resistance, organized by Logan County Sheriff Don Chafin, who entrenched his thugs along the side of the 2,000-foot-high Blair Mountain backed up by machine-gun nests.

The miners wore red bandanas around their necks to distinguish themselves from the enemy, earning the name Red Neck Army. They fought fiercely to break through Chafin's defenses, defying withering machine-gun fire and aerial bombardment from three biplanes that dropped tear gas and pipe bombs on them.

The battle ended only when federal troops arrived, swelling to 2,100 army infantry Sept. 2. Fighting between miners and Chafin's thugs ended three days later as the miners — many of whom were veterans of the first imperialist world war — didn't want to take on the army troops. The numbers killed remain unknown. UMWA members in Mingo continued their strike for another year, camped out in tents along the Tug River.

Although the miners didn't achieve



Above, West Virginia Mine Wars Museum; inset, AP/Chris Dorst  
**Above, West Virginia coal miners after 1921 battle at Blair Mountain. Fierce struggle by miners laid groundwork for growth of United Mine Workers union. Inset, West Virginia teachers in 2018 strike wore red bandanas in tribute to those miners.**



their goal and many were framed up and jailed on treason charges, their actions inspired hundreds of thousands and helped lay the groundwork for the organization of miners by the UMWA in Logan, Mingo, and McDowell counties a decade and a half later, amid the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations — a fighting social movement. The West Virginia Mine Wars Museum opened in Matewan in 2015, presenting exhibits about this and other UMWA

battles. One thing it shows is "how women were critical to the story," museum director Mackenzie New-Walker told the *Charleston Gazette-Mail*. "They helped break up railroad tracks, they helped fight off scab workers."

Some 100 years later the red bandana worn by miners marching to Blair Mountain "has reemerged as a symbol of solidarity," New-Walker noted. "We saw teachers wearing it during the teachers' strike" in West Virginia in 2018.

## SWP: 'US forces out of Korea! Lift economic sanctions!'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

"We stand in solidarity with the Korean people's struggle to reunify the country and restore Korea's national sovereignty," Steve Clark wrote for the Socialist Workers Party in a Sept. 9 letter to the North Korean government on the 73rd anniversary of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Since assuming the presidency, Democrat Joseph Biden has reversed openings begun under the Donald Trump administration for a breakthrough toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Trump held three face-to-face meetings with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in 2018 and 2019 that resulted in the government there dismantling some of its nuclear facilities and cease testing intercontinental missiles. But the talks stalled over Washington's refusal to ease crippling economic sanctions.

In a news conference last May, Biden rejected holding such meetings with Kim. For years, Washington has imposed far-reaching trade and banking sanctions against North Korea that hit working people the hardest.

This month the White House decided to continue a 2017 ban on travel to the DPRK. And in mid-August the Biden administration stepped up joint military exercises with the South Korean government that Trump had suspended in 2019. This nine-day operation involved computer-simulated military maneuvers targeting North Korea.

"In addition to calling for an end to these anti-working-class policies imposed by the imperialist Democratic and Republican parties," the letter said, "we demand that the US government immediately and unconditionally:

- Lift all economic and banking sanctions against the DPRK.
- End its 'nuclear umbrella' over South Korea and Japan.
- Sign a peace treaty ending the bloody war the US rulers

waged against the DPRK from 1950 to 1953, during which US imperialism suffered its first military defeat in history."

Korea was divided into North and South, against the will of the Korean people who rose up in revolutionary struggle following World War II. With the agreement of the Stalinist regime in Moscow, U.S. troops occupied the South, installed the dictatorship of Syngman Rhee and crushed the uprising there. In the North, workers and farmers carried out a revolution that put an end to the rule of the capitalist and landlord classes.

The U.S. rulers attempted to reverse these gains, invading the North in 1950 and bombing much of the country to rubble, killing over 4 million people, including at least 2 million civilians. When Washington's forces neared the Chinese border, volunteers there joined North Korean troops and drove the U.S.-led army back. The fighting ended in a stalemate in 1953.

Washington continues to maintain 28,500 troops in the South, as well as hundreds of fighter jets and bombers, including nuclear-capable ones.

"Supporters of the 2021 Socialist

Workers Party local and state election campaigns advance a working-class foreign policy," Clark said, "as we mobilize solidarity with strikes against attacks on working and living conditions by United Mine Workers members at Warrior Met Coal in Alabama, workers in the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers, and Grain Millers International Union at Nabisco," and others.

The SWP calls on the unions, Clark says, "to lead a massive campaign to get the population fully vaccinated against COVID-19, so working people can get back on the job and fight alongside each other *as a class*."

"We join in every struggle with an eye to advancing the revolutionary course toward workers power — toward a socialist revolution in the US."

"Working people engaged in such fights can and will be won to opposing brutal imperialist sanctions and wars," Clark writes, including "championing the Korean people's efforts to reunify their country."

The SWP, Clark says, joins with others today in saying:

"US military forces out of Korea!  
For a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula!  
Korea is one!"

Available at [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)

## Three-part Militant series on Korea

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**US out of Korea! An unknown history**  
*History of Washington's intervention in Korea*  
BY STEVE CLARK  
The following article was originally published in three parts in the Militant in 2013 on September 23, September 30, and October 7.

**Part 1: How Korean workers and farmers began resistance to U.S. domination, forced partition of nation**  
This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Korean peo-

well, the vast majority of homes, hospitals, schools, factories and other structures were leveled. Only three major buildings were left standing in Pyongyang, and 18 of the 22 largest cities in the North were 50 to 100 percent destroyed.

After Chinese troops joined the DPRK's fight against Washington's war of conquest on the peninsula in October 1950, Gen. Douglas MacArthur ordered destruction of every "installation, factory, city and village" in the North up to the Yalu River. Gen. Curtis LeMay, head of the U.S. Strategic Air Command at the time, later wrote, "We eventually burned



# Back locked-out oil workers

Continued from front page

proposal, they go out for 30 minutes, come back and say they aren't interested. Since they locked us out in May we've made over 20 proposals. They rejected all of them.

"This is all about control for them, control over union rights and human rights," he said. "At one meeting in June every time one of us spoke, the company negotiating committee members just laughed at us. They're trying to decertify the union."

Texas is a "right to work" state where workers don't have to join the union even if the plant is organized and they get the benefit of union representation. The company is trying to keep operations going, using managers and replacement workers.

"They're trying to get signatures in the plant and through social media to sign workers up to get rid of the union," Kyle said. "The company tried decertification efforts in Baton Rouge and Baytown, Louisiana. They were unsuccessful."

There is a national oil contract that expires in February, but this Exxon-Mobil plant isn't covered by it. When the Steelworkers union went on the first nationwide oil strike in 35 years in 2015, ExxonMobil here and some other bosses refused to sign the national agreement.

## 'The union is essential'

On Sept. 11 we were joined by other supporters of the *Militant* bringing solidarity to workers on the picket line and knocking on doors in nearby Port Arthur to help get the truth out about the oil workers' battle.

"We work during hurricanes, everything," John Porter, an A operator in the blending and packaging plant for 23 years, told us. "Two days before they locked us out, they said we were world class, 'essential,' then they locked us out."

"In my opinion it's all about trying to break the union," he said.

"I know how important bidding and seniority rights are. No union, no seniority," locked-out USW member

Lance LaSrape told us at another gate. "They want to take away the A operator, which deletes the person with experience. It's a safety issue.

"Trusting the company to do the right thing is like writing a blank check," he said. "We didn't walk out, we were put out. Southeast Texas is like a big industrial town. You have to know that everyone else, all other refineries are paying attention to what happens here.

"When they take away bidding, it opens the door to favoritism, nepotism. The racial question is involved also," LaSrape, who is African American, said. "Most of the workers in my department and most supervisors are white. The B and P, which is an entry level job, is more highly African American."

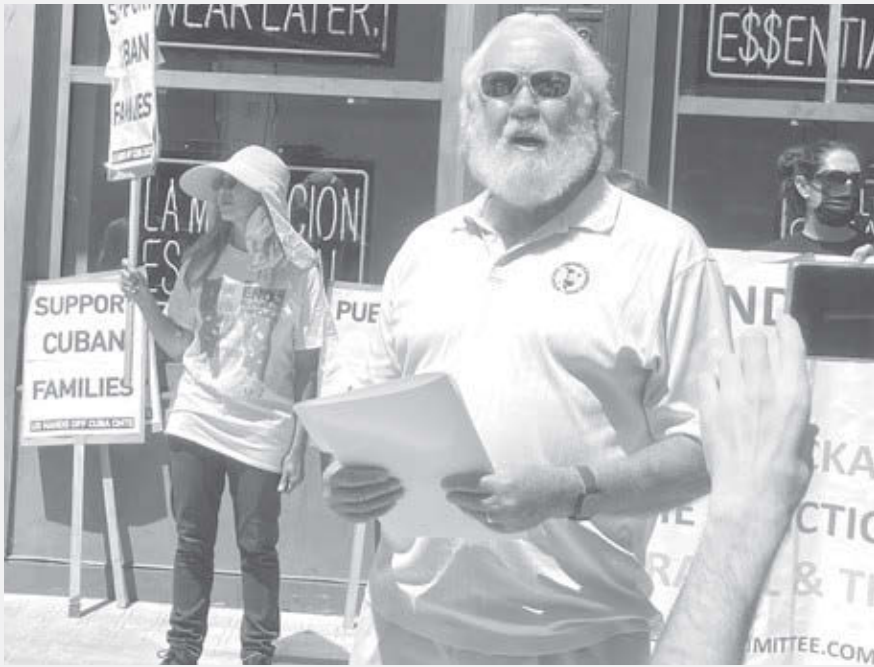
## Solidarity is critical

Workers said the support they're getting is crucial in the long fight. "Sometimes we get five to six checks a day from unions and others to support us," Karla Conning, secretary-treasurer of the local and refinery worker, told us. "Strikers can come by on Tuesdays and Thursdays to get supplies from the food bank."

The local renewed its subscription to the *Militant*. Issues are laid out in the lobby of the union hall, where we were told many workers read them.

One of the people we met on a doorstep later that day was Nyoka Stewart, a retired surgery technician. "I'm from a union family. My father worked in the

## Longshore union in LA: 'End US embargo of Cuba!'



Militant/Norton Sandler

LOS ANGELES — Floyd Bryan, president of the Southern California District Council of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, reads the resolution passed by the union at its June convention demanding an end to the U.S. government's embargo against Cuba. He was speaking at an Aug. 29 press conference organized by the Los Angeles U.S. Hands Off Cuba Committee.

Bryan said he personally has traveled to Cuba and admires the Cuban people. He also said the union had donated \$10,000 to help purchase syringes to be used by the Cuban government to vaccinate the Cuban people.

The press conference took place following a car caravan against the U.S. government's economic war against Cuba that went from East Los Angeles to downtown L.A.

— NORTON SANDLER

longshore union and my husband was a seafarer," she said after we described what the locked-out workers face. "I will definitely send a contribution to the

locked-out workers at ExxonMobil."

Donations and letters of support can be sent to USW Local 13-243, 2490 South 11th St., Beaumont, TX 77701.

# — ON THE PICKET LINE —

## Indian sanitation workers strike for equal pay, permanent jobs

Over 400 sanitation workers staged a sit-in outside the Patna Municipal Corporation's headquarters in Patna, India, Sept. 12, part of a strike by sanitation and some maintenance workers that began Sept. 6. The strike is the latest in a series of work stoppages over the past year.

Last August, 4,700 day laborers and

2,300 contract workers went on strike. At that time workers on a day contract got \$122 a month and contract workers \$95, while a permanent worker got \$408, plus benefits.

The strikers' 12-point charter of demands includes "equal pay for equal work" as they fight to close that huge gap. They're also fighting for pensions and the right to take leaves for personal emergencies, as well as for temporary

jobs to be made permanent.

Media reports say the streets in Patna, a city of over 2 million and the capital of Bihar state in northeast India, reek from 6,000 tons of garbage, as talks between local officials and union representatives have broken down. Efforts by the bosses to use strikebreakers haven't had much impact on either the piles nor the stench.

Pintu Kumar, a sanitation worker, told the Sept. 13 *Times of India*, "We do not like to make people's lives miserable by protesting like this. However, we must raise our voice for our rights."

Chandra Prakash Singh, president of the Patna Municipal Corporation Staff Union, told the same paper the bosses had said they would settle the issues, but "we need written assurances."

— Roy Landersen

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 30, 1996

The "Defense of Marriage Act" advances the reactionary, antilabor goals of the U.S. rulers. The law bars federal recognition of marriages among gays and lesbians.

The bill is part of the employers assault on the social wage of working people. It makes use of reactionary and divisive prejudices against gays and lesbians to single out a layer of working people and others and deny them federal entitlements. These include the right of a surviving spouse to continue receiving a portion of Social Security, veterans, or other benefits of a deceased partner.

Such legislation targets certain individuals as less than fully equal before the law.

All working people have a stake in joining those already opposed to this reactionary legislation, explaining its far-reaching antilabor implications and demanding civil rights for gays and lesbians now!



October 1, 1971

SAN JUAN — The largest and most militant demonstration in the history of Puerto Rico's independence movement took place here Sept. 12, to protest the annual U.S. governors' conference. The demonstration also commemorated the anniversary of the birth of Don Pedro Albizu Campos, leading Puerto Rican nationalist, who died in 1965 after spending most of his active life in prison for his activities on behalf of independence.

Independence leaders estimated that 80,000 to 100,000 participated. Thousands more were unable to attend because of lack of transportation.

The [Luis] Ferré government pleaded with the leaders not to carry slogans or shout "Yanqui Go Home!" According to the governor, such behavior would injure the Puerto Rican tradition of hospitality. To the surprise of no one, "Yanqui Go Home!" became the main theme of the demonstration.



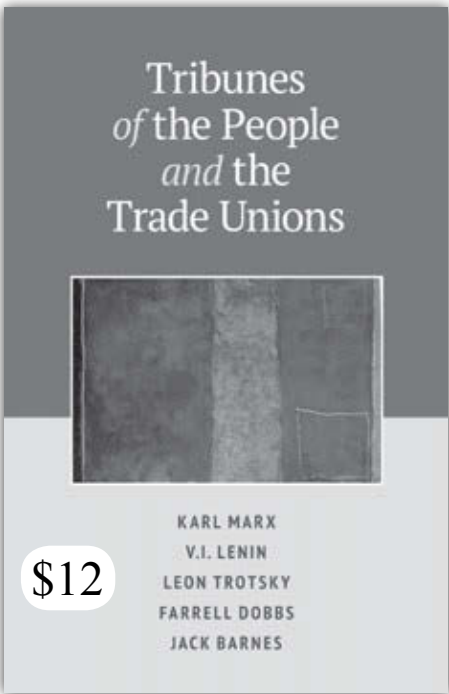
September 28, 1946

The victory of the striking Japanese seamen over the [U.S.-military-run] puppet government last week was a triumph for the entire Japanese labor movement. The 10-day-old strike, involving more than 100,000 workers, was settled only after the seamen won all of their major demands.

According to a dispatch in the Sept. 17 *Christian Science Monitor*, "American crews aboard Liberty ships in Yokohama are sympathizing with Japanese strikers and in some cases have shown a willingness to join in the strike."

The seamen's strike spread rapidly to include almost 1,000,000 workers, a third of the organized labor force, and included the major affiliates of the Japanese CIO and the organized farmhands.

Defying General MacArthur's recent dictatorial decree against strikes, the workers demonstrated their refusal to be driven back to semi-feudal conditions of servitude.



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# Use unions, build solidarity

Continued from front page

fectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union at Frito-Lay in Kansas, who pushed back bosses' use of "suicide shift schedules" during their recently concluded strike.

Some of these struggles have lasted for months. The strike by hundreds of nurses at St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester, Massachusetts, who have been fighting for safer nurse/patient ratios and better pay, became the longest strike in the state's history Aug. 31. The hospital, part of the large Tenet Healthcare system, is trying to break the union by replacing nurses with strikebreakers.

"Big corporations are just trying to run wild these days. The little man doesn't matter," Christopher Edwards, one of the locked-out oil workers at ExxonMobil, told 12NewsNow-TV.

Food catering workers at five United Airline hubs — Denver, Houston, Cleveland, Honolulu and Newark — voted to unionize in 2018. At the end of July, United bosses announced they were shutting down these operations and contracting their jobs out to Gate Gourmet. Two of those kitchens, in Cleveland and Houston, will now be run nonunion.

What's driving the bosses' attacks is their dog-eat-dog fight against their competitors for market share. They seek the advantage by increasing productivity and cutting costs at our expense. Pressure on bosses to intensify these attacks is mounting during today's pandemic-exacerbated crisis of supply lines, production and trade. Tesla CEO Elon Musk emailed all the company's autoworkers Sept. 8, instructing them to "go super hardcore" to hit production quotas bosses demand, to help the company recoup earlier profit losses.

There are some winners among the bosses today, including the biggest online retailers like Amazon, which has faced organizing efforts while intensifying the pace of labor at its expanding empire of distribution centers. UPS bosses announced their second-quarter profits jumped almost 50% from a year ago, to \$3.3 billion.

The pace of hiring plummeted last month, especially in restaurants and hospitality. Plans to reopen long-shuttered businesses are being put off, auto bosses are scaling back production and forecasts about the rapid revival of the capitalist economy are being cast aside. The monthly "Consumer Confidence Index" fell in August to its lowest level since February amid persistent inflation.

For decades, capitalists have been throwing money into speculative binges on the stock exchange and elsewhere, because they don't see high enough profit

margins in production. Net inflow into the stock market hit an all-time high in July. Markets for new species of digital currencies and speculation on just about anything are more lucrative to capitalist high-rollers than making things working people need.

## Vaccination in interest of all workers

Organizing, strengthening and *using* our unions is crucial for fighting for protection against employers' attacks and to advance the interests of all working people.

"Our unions should organize and run vaccination programs in plants, cities, towns and rural areas everywhere," Richter said. "And campaign to convince as many as possible why it is in all workers' interests to get vaccinated, so more of us can get back to work to stand up and fight against the brutal effects of the capitalist crisis."

The opposite course, using government compulsion, is advanced by President Joseph Biden, who shows nothing but disdain for workers who haven't yet been vaccinated. His Democratic Party administration has ordered mandatory vaccination programs by the bosses for all federal workers and for workers at private companies with more than 100 employees.

Biden's move is "a major expansion of employers' power over their workers," noted the pro-business journal *Barron's*.

Knowing he can't get a majority to pass the mandate in Congress, Biden is trying to impose it through a temporary emergency regulation enforced by the Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The White House calls this unconstitutional move a "workaround." Some 100 million workers are affected by the ruling.

"Our patience is wearing thin," Biden complained, pointing his finger at the millions of us Hillary Clinton famously called "deplorables." He says workers who are unvaccinated are dangerous, and have "cost all of us."

The well-remunerated editors at the *New York Times* doubled down on this anti-working-class rancor Sept. 10, saying there is "growing rage at those recalcitrant Americans unwilling to do their small part to end this pestilence. The anger is justified."

# Texas inmate wins stay of execution over right to pastor

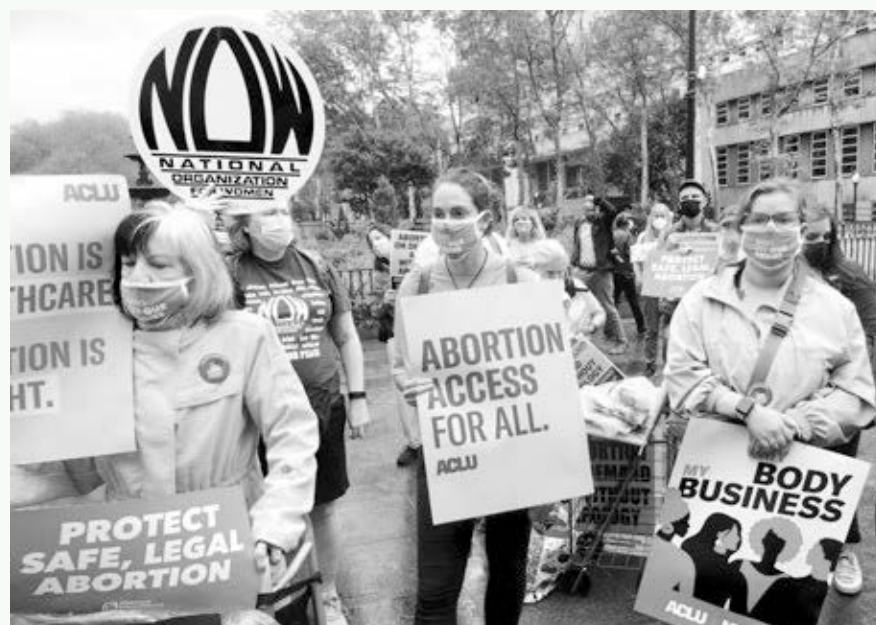
Continued from front page

lier federal appeals court decision denying Ramirez's right to have his pastor in the death chamber, praying with and laying hands on him. Ramirez had sued prison authorities Aug. 10 for violating his religious freedom.

The high court took control over Ramirez's case, to discuss it in the fall.

The court has heard a number of recent cases concerning the religious rights of death-row prisoners. In Texas, state officials now allow prisoners' own religious advisers into the death chamber, but deny them the right to pray together out loud or have any physical contact. For four years, Dana Moore of the Second Baptist Church in Corpus Christi, Ramirez's pastor, has driven 300 miles to visit him at the death-row unit of the state prison in Livingston. They speak through handsets on either side of a plexiglass

## New York rally protests Texas anti-abortion law



Militant/Seth Galinsky

NEWYORK — More than 125 supporters of women's rights joined a protest called by the National Organization for Women, and Planned Parenthood, at Brooklyn Borough Hall Sept. 9 opposing an anti-abortion Texas law that went into effect Sept. 1. The law prohibits abortions after a doctor detects a "fetal heartbeat," around six weeks in most cases, before many women even know they're pregnant. The only exception is if the woman's health is in danger.

The law encourages civil, not criminal, charges. It places enforcement of the law in the hands of private citizens, who are urged to sue the woman's doctors, clinic workers, friends, family, insurance providers and even Uber drivers who they say "abetted" the abortion. But not the woman having the procedure. If the accusers prevail, the defendants have to pay them a minimum of \$10,000, plus court costs.

"It's an attack especially on poor people," Jennifer Burns told the *Militant* at the rally. "Rich women have always been able to get an abortion, they can afford to fly to another state."

This is a working-class question, Sara Lobman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Manhattan Borough president, told protesters at the action. "We've been losing ground ever since the Supreme Court decriminalized abortion in 1973," she said. That's largely because the main women's groups haven't led a fight, instead telling women to rely on electing Democratic Party politicians.

"This is a dead end," said Lobman. "Only a mass movement can educate and mobilize the power needed to defend a woman's right to unrestricted family planning services, including the right to safe and secure abortions." Nationwide protests in defense of a woman's right to choose are planned for Oct. 2.

— SETH GALINSKY

The government vaccination mandate has nothing to do with organizing working people to lead the production, distribution and application of vaccines to minimize deaths from the virus.

"It's a class question," Richter said. "We shouldn't cheer the capitalist government's ability to 'mandate' us to do things — a power it will use against us and our struggles in the future."

The simple fact is millions of working people don't trust the capitalist rulers and their government, and for good

reason. "That's why our unions need to mobilize to convince fellow workers we need to get vaccinated," Richter said.

"As we use our unions to defend ourselves we begin to recognize our self-worth, deepen class consciousness, strengthen our fighting capacities and attract allies," Richter said. "Workers begin to see that we can be the makers of history, not the objects of policies foisted on us by the Democratic and Republican parties to serve the bosses' drive for profits."



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# Fair Play for Cuba Committee built defense for socialist revolution

BY SETH GALINSKY

On Sept. 7 President Joseph Biden signed off on extending the U.S. embargo of Cuba for another year under the capitalist rulers' Trading With the Enemy Act. This is no surprise since every president — Democrat and Republican alike — has done the same since 1962. Biden, like his predecessors, views Cuba's socialist revolution as the most serious challenge to U.S. imperialism in the world.

All those who oppose U.S. aggression against Cuba today can learn valuable lessons from the work of chapters of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee organized across the country during the early years of the revolution.

Soon after working people in Cuba, led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959, the U.S. government put their revolution in its gun-sights.

Washington organized counterrevolutionaries to sabotage industry and assassinate literacy volunteers, spread lies about the revolution and prepared an invasion. What the U.S. capitalist rulers most feared was that working people in Latin America and elsewhere would emulate the Cuban Revolution.

But working people, participants in the rapidly expanding fight against



Fair Play for Cuba Committee published, distributed inexpensive pamphlets of speeches by leaders of Cuba's socialist revolution, eyewitness accounts of steps forward by working people.

riety of political views, but united in opposition to Washington's attacks. This included members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Party. Within six months the Fair Play for Cuba Committee had 7,000 members in 27 chapters and student councils on 40 college campuses.

The committees organized picket lines, rallies, debates and forums to get out the truth about the revolution unfolding in Cuba and protest U.S. aggression. A rally in New York City Oct. 20, 1960, drew 1,500 people to demand "U.S. Hands Off Cuba."

The next month 400 people attended a Fair Play-sponsored meeting in Harlem where they heard two recent visitors to Cuba — William Worthy, an Afro-American journalist at the *New York Post*, and Robert F. Williams, well known for leading a fight to free two Black youth, 7 and 9 years old, who had been jailed for kissing a white girl in North Carolina. Top NAACP leaders later removed Williams as president of its chapter in Monroe, North Carolina, for organiz-

ing fellow Black veterans into armed self-defense of their community against racist thugs.

"The same people who are our oppressors in the South," Williams told the crowd, "are the first to say 'overthrow Castro.' They try to make us believe that when Castro takes over the big corporations he has taken something from us." Can you imagine, he said, a Black woman working in a kitchen for \$10 a week being worried that Castro is "taking property from us."

In 1961 Williams, who earlier had worked in the auto factories in Detroit, and Ed Shaw, Midwest organizer of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, as well as a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and a union typesetter, went on a nationwide speaking tour talking about the Cuban Revolution and the struggle for Black rights.

The committee published dozens of inexpensive pamphlets, both eye-

witness accounts of the unfolding socialist revolution and speeches by its central leaders.

Among the titles: *Cuba's Agrarian Reform: A Speech by Dr. Fidel Castro*; *Against Bureaucracy and Sectarianism* by Castro; *The Revolution Must Be a School of Unfettered Thought* by Castro; *The Second Declaration of Havana*; and *Socialism and Man* by Che Guevara. Committee members sold thousands of copies of the pamphlets.

The Fair Play for Cuba Committee was open to anyone who opposed U.S. aggression against Cuba. Its members were convinced the best way to counter the U.S. rulers' assaults was to tell the truth about the revolution.

## Solidarity with socialist revolution

When working people and youth in the U.S. learned about the banning of racist discrimination in Cuba, the confiscation of the huge estates of capitalist landlords and the guaranteeing of access to the land for landless peasants, workers control of oil refineries, factories and sugar plantations that were being nationalized, the participation of women in all aspects of society, and more, it solidified their support for the revolution.

Jack Barnes, today national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, was a student at Carleton College in Minnesota and helped establish a chapter of Fair Play there after visiting Cuba. In *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* he describes the impact the committee had on students, workers and instructors on the eve of the U.S.-backed mercenary invasion of Cuba at Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) in April 1961.

As news came out on April 17 on the beginning of the U.S.-backed as-

sault, right-wingers in the campus cafeteria started chanting "War! War! War!" But when the Cubans defeated the invaders in less than 72 hours the atmosphere rapidly changed.

"Committed builders of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee at Carleton in early 1961 had been fewer than half a dozen. But now came the payoff for the weeks of education, propaganda work, writing, talking, pushing for and organizing open political debate, and taking up the challenges of every opponent on every issue," Barnes wrote. "As the workers and peasants of Cuba inflicted a crushing defeat on U.S. imperialism, support for the political positions we had been defending exploded overnight. But only because we were there, we were known, and we were prepared to respond."

At a 1996 meeting to celebrate the political life of Shaw, Barnes explained how the SWP approached its participation in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. Like revolutionaries they worked with in Cuba, party leaders were committed to the perspective that defense of the Cuban Revolution should be organized without factional bias or exclusion, he said. "No one party should control this work."

"Surely one of the greatest tests of any political organization is the capacity of its members to participate in mass work with others," Barnes said, "regardless of diverse points of view, to carry out agreed-on tasks."

The growing impact of Fair Play did not go unnoticed by the U.S. government and its cop agencies. The committees were accused of being "controlled" by the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Party. A subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, headed by notorious segregationist Democratic Sen. James Eastland and liberal Democratic Sen. Thomas Dodd, launched a red-baiting witch hunt against the group, attacks that expanded widely after the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Shaw was one of those subpoenaed, and like many others, refused to testify about the activities of Fair Play. Despite hours of bullying by Dodd on June 14, 1961, Shaw wouldn't budge. Near-apoplectic Dodd shouted, "You're the worst witness I have had in 30 years."

The Fair Play for Cuba Committee, which dissolved at the end of 1963, told the truth about Cuba's socialist revolution and widely publicized the words of its historic leaders, winning support among working people and others to end the U.S. economic and political war on Cuba.



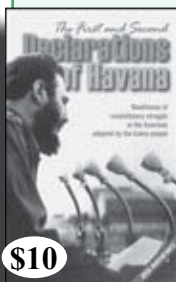
Ed Shaw, right, Midwest organizer of Fair Play for Cuba Committee and a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, and Robert F. Williams, inset, Black rights leader and former auto-worker, did 1961 nationwide speaking tour to build movement to defend Cuba's socialist revolution from Washington's attacks.

Jim Crow segregation, young people, journalists and others went to Cuba to see the revolution for themselves. Inspired by what Cuba's workers and farmers were doing and becoming, many were determined to get out their story on return to the U.S.

## Rapid growth of Fair Play for Cuba

On April 6, 1960, the *New York Times* printed a full-page ad, initiated by journalist Robert Taber, who visited Cuba after the overthrow of Batista, calling for the creation of committees to promote a fair hearing for the Cuban Revolution. The ad was signed by prominent artists and writers, including Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre, Norman Mailer, Truman Capote and James Baldwin, as well as Black rights fighters like Robert F. Williams.

Before long chapters were being organized across the country, bringing together people from a wide va-



## For further reading

### Socialism and Man in Cuba

by Ernesto Che Guevara, Fidel Castro

### Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes

### The First and Second Declarations of Havana

Manifestos of revolutionary struggle in the Americas adopted by the Cuban people

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# Che Guevara: ‘Other nations summon my assistance’

Below is an excerpt from The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. The diary recounts the political and military campaign Argentine-born Guevara, a leader of Cuba's socialist revolution, led in 1966-67 to forge a fighting movement of workers and peasants in Bolivia. The aim was to join the battle for land and national sovereignty there and open the road to socialist revolution on the South American continent.

Reprinted below is Guevara's April 1, 1965, parting letter to Cuban President Fidel Castro. He explains his decision to resign all his government posts and

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

responsibilities in Cuba in order to pursue internationalist missions abroad. Shortly afterwards he departed for the Congo (today Democratic Republic of the Congo), where he spent six months leading volunteers from Cuba fighting beside combatants of the anti-imperialist movement founded by murdered independence leader Patrice Lumumba.

Che's letter was read aloud by Fidel on Oct. 3, 1965, during a televised speech at the close of the founding meeting of the Communist Party of Cuba. Copyright © 1994 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Militant/Joseph Hansen

Delegates from revolutionary organizations in the Americas clap as Cuban President Fidel Castro addresses August 1967 conference of Organization of Latin American Solidarity in Havana. The slogan beside the image of Che is from the Second Declaration of Havana. It reads, “The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution.”

Havana  
Year of Agriculture

Fidel:

At this moment I remember many things — when I met you in María Antonia's house, when you proposed I come along, all the tensions involved in the preparations.<sup>1</sup> One day they came by and asked who should be notified in case of death, and the real possibility of it struck us all. Later we knew it was true, that in a revolution one wins or dies (if it is a real one). Many comrades fell along the way to victory.

Today everything has a less dramatic tone, because we are more mature, but the event repeats itself. I feel that I have fulfilled the part of my duty that tied me to the Cuban revolution in its territory, and I say farewell to you, to the comrades, to your people, who now are mine.

I formally resign my positions in the leadership of the party, my post as minister, my rank of commander, and my Cuban citizenship. Nothing legal binds me to Cuba. The only ties are of another nature — those that cannot be broken as can appointments to posts.

Reviewing my past life, I believe I have worked with sufficient integrity and dedication to consolidate the revolutionary triumph. My only serious failing was not having had more confidence in you from the first moments in the Sierra Maestra, and not having

understood quickly enough your qualities as a leader and a revolutionary.

I have lived magnificent days, and at your side I felt the pride of belonging to our people in the brilliant yet sad days of the Caribbean crisis.<sup>2</sup> Seldom has a statesman been more brilliant than you were in those days. I am also proud of having followed you without hesitation, of having identified with your way of thinking and of seeing and appraising dangers and principles.

Other nations of the world summon my modest efforts of assistance. I can do that which is denied you owing to your responsibility at the head of Cuba, and the time has come for us to part.

You should know that I do so with a mixture of joy and sorrow. I leave here the purest of my hopes as a builder and the dearest of those I hold dear. And I leave a people who received me as a son. That wounds a part of my spirit. I carry to new battlefronts the faith that you taught me, the revolutionary spirit of my people, the feeling of fulfilling the most sacred of duties: to fight against imperialism wherever one may be. This is a source of strength, and more than heals the deepest of wounds.

I state once more that I free Cuba from all responsibility, except that which stems from its example. If my final hour finds me under other skies, my last thought will be of this people

and especially of you. I am grateful for your teaching and your example, to which I shall try to be faithful up to the final consequences of my acts.

I have always been identified with the foreign policy of our revolution, and I continue to be. Wherever I am, I will feel the responsibility of being a Cuban revolutionary, and I shall behave as such. I am not sorry that I leave nothing material to my wife and children; I am happy it is that way. I ask nothing for them, as the state will provide them with enough to live on and receive an education.

I would have many things to say to you and to our people, but I feel they are unnecessary. Words cannot express what I would like them to, and there is no point in scribbling pages.

*Hasta la victoria siempre!* [Ever onward to victory!]

*Patria o muerte!* [Homeland or death!]

I embrace you with all my revolutionary fervor.

Che

1. Guevara and Castro met in Mexico in July-August 1955, at the home of Cuban revolutionary María Antonia González. Guevara became one of the first recruits to the revolutionary expedition Castro was planning, which sailed for Cuba in November 1956 aboard the *Granma*.

2. A reference to the October 1962 crisis when President John F. Kennedy demanded removal of Soviet nuclear missiles installed in Cuba following the signing of a mutual defense agreement between the Soviet and Cuban governments. Washington ordered a total naval blockade of Cuba, stepped up preparations for its coming invasion of the island, and placed U.S. armed forces on nuclear alert. Cuban workers and farmers responded by mobilizing massively in defense of the revolution. Following an exchange of communications between Moscow and Washington, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev decided to remove the missiles, without consulting the Cuban government.

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8 The Militant September 27, 2021



# **SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT**

## **In Defense of Land and Labor**

*The following excerpt is from the opening section of “The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor,” a Socialist Workers Party resolution published in New International no. 14. Copyright © 2008 by New International. Reprinted by permission.*

Labor’s transformation of nature is the source of all wealth, all advances in social productivity, culture, and conservation. It is the very foundation for the ongoing existence of our species.

At the same time, from the earliest stages of class-divided society, the propertied classes have organized labor to advance their private gain. They have done so with no concern for the social consequences of their methods. The exploiters use labor as an expendable beast of burden, while they simultaneously deplete the soil, destroy forests through slash-and-burn or other farming methods, wipe out animal life through overhunting and overfishing, and poison streams, ponds, and other bodies of water.

Thus, over the thousands of years since the rise of private property, the relationship between social labor and the natural environment has been marked by the mutually contradictory poles of transformation and destruction. It has been, and remains, a relationship determined by social contradictions, not by natural laws.

Since the rise of industrial capitalism in the mid-1700s, the productivity of social labor has increased

at a quickening pace, and with the consolidation of the imperialist world order at the opening of the twentieth century, the degree of labor’s alienation from nature and from its own fruits has become greater than ever before in history. The stakes for the earth’s toilers in eradicating that separation by putting an end to the dictatorship of capital increase daily.

Science and technology — which are developed and *used* by social labor — have established the knowledge and the means to lessen the burdens and dangers of work, to advance the quality of life, and to conserve and improve the earth’s patrimony.

It is possible today to end once and for all the material, social, and political conditions that have ravaged the lives of countless generations of slaves, serfs, bonded labor of all varieties, peasants, and rural and urban workers and their families.

It is possible to end the treatment of toilers past their prime laboring years as used-up tools, whose demands for food, clothing, shelter, and health care are a regrettable deduction from profits.

It is possible to end the unsustainable *private* obligations imposed on individual families for the welfare of the young, the elderly, the ill — all of which are *social* responsibilities that pay tribute to human solidarity.

It is possible to end deaths, maimings, and disease from overwork, hunger, and lack of sanitation.

It is possible to end the slaughter of untold hundreds of millions due to wars of conquest, enrichment, and domination by the ruling classes.

It is possible to end capital’s ever-extending exploitation of nature and labor, with its devastating toll on the constantly growing numbers of working people in the semicolonial world who are being drawn into the capitalist mode of production.

Yet under capitalism — the last of the world’s exploitative property systems — this liberating potential is turned into its opposite. So long as labor remains an inextricable component of the ruthlessly acquisitive, unplanned, and violent operations of the market system, increased productivity simultaneously reproduces *the social relations* of production specific to capitalism — social relations that perpetuate workers’ own exploitation and oppression. As a result of the unceasing competition among capitalists to maximize profits, the product of labor’s exertion ends up *worsening* the perils to workers’ life and limb; *polluting* the soil, waters, and skies; and *endangering* civilization’s very survival from the use of massive arsenals of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

### **The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor**



“The international working class, whose ranks are growing on every continent and in every country, remains the only force capable of resolving the crises produced by capitalism’s degradation of nature and labor.”  
Socialist Workers Party statement —  
New International no. 14

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## **Strikers take on Nabisco, win broad support**

**Continued from front page**

tions of food, water and other beverages.”

Strike supporters from at least 11 other unions joined a recent rally organized by Local 1, which is an amalgamated local representing workers in the Chicago area, Central Illinois, Iowa and Indiana.

Bakery Workers union members at six plants and distribution centers in five states are determined to push back attacks on work schedules, seniority and overtime pay, rising health insurance costs and cuts to pensions. Bosses are demanding 12-hour or longer shifts, with no overtime pay until after a 40-hour week, instead of after eight hours a day. They want to eliminate time-and-a-half pay for Saturdays and double time for Sundays, and use more temporary workers.

In 2018 Nabisco announced they were ending payments to the unionists’ pension plan.

After BCTGM members at the company’s factory in Portland, Oregon, walked out Aug. 10, they were followed over the next few days by fellow unionists at Nabisco’s bakeries in Richmond, Virginia, and Chicago, and at distribution centers in Norcross, Georgia; Addison, Illinois; and Aurora, Colorado. Nabisco is owned by international snack giant Mondelez.

Tanya Jenkins, a unionist in the bake shop for 27 years, explained that key to winning the strike is gaining more solidarity. “It’s hard being on strike,” she said. “People have bills to pay, medical expenses, mortgages. That’s why it hurts when some people

cross the picket line and go back in there.”

Mondelez CEO Dirk Van de Put announced Sept. 9 that the company would resume negotiations with the union the following week.

Despite Van de Put bragging that Mondelez had increased inventories in preparation for the strike, the rate of undelivered orders has climbed to 7.1% from 5.3% prior to the walkout.

“What Van de Put didn’t say is that the company called *us* and asked to talk,” said Daniel Carpowicz, a 15-year veteran and chief shop steward.

Carpowicz explained that all of Nabisco’s BCTGM-organized plants work under the same contract. Representatives of all the locals will participate in the negotiations for a national agreement.

“We’re not coming into these negotiations with a bunch of wants,” Mike Burlingham, BCTGM Local 364 vice president and a worker at the Portland plant, told *Forbes* magazine. “We’re asking to maintain those benefits and Mondelez, their stance on it is, ‘Well, we weren’t there for that, we know nothing about it, this is what we want.’”

“I just read a quote from the striking coal miners in Alabama,” he said, referring to the strike by members of the United Mine Workers at the Warrior Met mine, “that applies to us. They said, ‘This isn’t just about us, that this is a fight for America’s working class.’”

Send messages of support and contributions to the strike fund to BCTGM Local 1, 7310 W. 39th St., Lyons, IL 60534.

## **Lebanon toilers crisis**

**Continued from front page**

ing system has collapsed and the value of the currency has fallen by 90%.

Unemployment and inflation have soared. Working people struggle to afford food or find medicines and wait in long lines to fuel up their cars. Over two-thirds of households can’t access clean water. The state electricity service provides barely two hours of power a day. Many small businesses have been forced to close.

After months of shortages of vital drugs, cancer patients and health care workers joined a Beirut protest Aug. 26 to demand the government ensure access to medicine and treatments.

Mikati is pushing the rulers’ “solution” — to end government subsidies on imported food, medicine and fuel. The International Monetary Fund has demanded savage cuts like this as the price to resume talks about new loans the government seeks.

Despite their rivalries for influence in the region, Washington and Paris joined with Tehran in backing Mikati’s government. Hezbollah, organized in predominantly Shiite neighborhoods, has a powerful militia armed by Tehran. Hezbollah and its allies dominate the government and hold the main ministries.

Two years ago working people and youth in Lebanon joined mass anti-government protests demanding jobs, a halt to government corruption and an end to Tehran’s interference.

Many protesters sought to get rid of the sectarian political setup imposed in 1990 at the end of a civil war there in which parties organized along religious lines — Shiites, Sunnis and Maronite Christians are allocated government posts and disperse political patronage. For example, the prime minister has to be a Sunni Muslim.

The aftermath of a huge explosion at a port warehouse Aug. 4, 2020, which killed over 200 people, injured thousands and leveled much of the Beirut waterfront, has become an additional focus of widespread anger toward ruling parties that covered up their responsibility for the disaster. Hezbollah uses Beirut’s ports and other civilian areas to store munitions it receives from Tehran.

Hezbollah fighters have been used by the Iranian rulers in their intervention in Syria, where their militias provided decisive military backing to the Bashar al-Assad regime after a popular uprising and civil war threatened to overturn his rule. One result is that over a million Syrian refugees are in Lebanon today.

Tehran seeks to extend its power against rival bourgeois Arab regimes and threatens to use its military clout to destroy Israel.

### **Druze villagers protest Hezbollah**

After a Hezbollah rocket barrage against Israel drew retaliatory artillery fire Aug. 6, angry Druze villagers in Chouya, in southern Lebanon, stopped a Hezbollah truck mounted with rocket launch tubes, many empty after firing. They detained its crew, turning them over to the Lebanese army. Some protesters were heard on a video explaining, “Hezbollah is firing rockets from between homes so that Israel hits us back.”

Two days later Bechara Boutros al-Rahi, head of Lebanon’s Maronite Christians, called on the Lebanese army “to prevent the launching of missiles from Lebanese territory” for “the safety of Lebanon.”

Hassan Nasrallah, head of Hezbollah, announced Sept. 14 that to ease Lebanon’s crippling fuel shortages the first of several Iranian tankers had docked in Syria with oil en route for Lebanon. U.S. officials threatened to enforce sanctions against the Lebanese government and ship owners if they allowed tankers with oil from Iran to dock in Beirut. The U.S. government is counterposing a plan to transport Egyptian gas from Jordan through Syria to Lebanon.

Washington announced Sept. 7 it would funnel \$47 million to prop up the Lebanese army. The U.S. rulers fear its collapse would create a void Hezbollah forces would rapidly fill, providing Tehran with even more openings to interfere in the country.

President Joseph Biden is seeking to reopen talks with the Iranian government over reviving a defunct agreement aimed at slowing down Tehran’s acquisition of nuclear weapons in exchange for lifting some of Washington’s sanctions. However, Tehran is pushing ahead with uranium enrichment, edging towards weapons-grade levels.