Beijing-led BRICS, US rulers stoke new conflicts

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The governments of the BRICS countries — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — set up as a coalition to challenge Washington’s economic and political supremacy, met in Johannesburg, South Africa, Aug. 22-24 to decide their next steps.

Their main decision was to invite the governments of Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to join the bloc.

Many of the new or aspiring BRICS members, like the government of Ethiopia, are deeply in debt to Beijing. Governments in Argentina and Egypt, weighed by debts to imperialist banks, see membership as a way of securing new loans.

BRICS was founded after the 2008 global financial crisis as a way for Beijing and Moscow to counter the G7, the U.S.-led club of the world’s richest governments. It includes the governments of the BRICS countries — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — set up as a coalition to challenge Washington’s economic and political supremacy, met in Johannesburg, South Africa, Aug. 22-24 to decide their next steps.

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BRICS was founded after the 2008 global financial crisis as a way for Beijing and Moscow to counter the G7, the U.S.-led club of the world’s richest capitalists. It includes the governments of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the U.K. The expanded coalition centered on the BRICS countries is a challenge to the old imperialist world order and preparations made for more wars.

The focus of the event was to try and whip up enthusiasm for campaigning to defeat former President Donald Trump and his supporters as “MAGA Republicans” and hailing the four indictments against his Republican opponent. Democrats, Never-Trump Republicans and the middle-class left are determined to drive Biden’s main opponent out of the race. Otherwise, they fear Trump will win in 2024.

As 2024 election looms, Socialist Workers Party is the alternative

BY TERRY EVANS

The centerpiece of President Joseph Biden’s reelection campaign is denouncing former President Donald Trump and his supporters as “MAGA Republicans” and hailing the four indictments against his Republican opponent. Democrats, Never-Trump Republicans and the middle-class left are determined to drive Biden’s main opponent out of the race. Otherwise, they fear Trump will win in 2024.

To accomplish their goal, the White House and its allies have targeted freedom of speech and other key constitutional protections. Working people and organizations that support Biden are fighting back.

As 2024 election looms, Socialist Workers Party is the alternative.

Defend right to free speech! Protest attacks by Democrats

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK — In several cities around the country the Socialist Workers Party has helped initiate panels hosted by the Militant Labor Forum to bring groups together to speak out in defense of free speech and other political rights and against government attacks and frame-ups.

“Drop the charges against the African People’s Socialist Party!” was one of the demands raised at all these meetings. The speakers at a New York Forum Aug. 26 were Orunde Shakur, from the APSP; Manuel Melerdez Lavandero, Comités de la Resistencia Boricua; John Studer, Militant editor and a leader of the SWP; and Milagros Rivera, president of the Cuba Solidarity Committee in Puerto Rico, who participated by zoom. Simi-

Inside

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A Militant reader in Argentina praises this book and other studies of Lenin’s role in building the Bolshevik party.

About 100 to 150 copies were sold during a presentation by John Trainor of the Militant’s editorial board at the October Revolution National Education Conference in Buenos Aires.

Tens of thousands of copies of ‘Militant’ books are in circulation in Argentina, and over 700,000 books are in circulation in the United States.

On the picket line, picketing in analysis

‘Working-class voice is missing’ in face of wildfire disaster

By Editors

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On the picket line, p. 5–

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Inside

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Atlanta rally backs actors, Writers Guild strikers
Marchers in Washington debate

Continued from front page

“…the dreamers are in Washington, D.C.,” Sharpton told the rally, “the schemers are being booked in Atlanta, Georgia, in the Fulton County Jail.” He was referring to the indictment of Trump and 18 others on more than three dozen Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act conspiracy charges.

The March for Jobs and Freedom in 1963 drew a quarter of a million people to Washington, reflecting the African American-led working-class movement fighting to overthrow Jim Crow segregation. While the central leaders of that march shared the same pro-Democratic Party political perspective as those here, that protest was marked by the unfolding movement for Black rights and the way it strengthened the unions.

It came on the heels of bloody conflicts. In June 1963 alone, Medgar Evers, a leader of the NAACP in Mississippi, was assassinated by the Ku Klux Klan; Alabama Gov. George Wallace tried to physically block the integration of the University of Alabama; and thousands of young marchers demanding an end to segregation in Birmingham faced fire hoses and police dogs and won. These developments fueled discussion of the militant speech prepared by censored SNCC President John Lewis, inset, as too violent.

Marchers discuss road forward

Among those participating in the rally this year were workers and youth interested in political discussions about what is needed to advance the fights by working people. Some stopped by campaign tables set up by the Socialist Workers Party members, picking up the Militant and books written by SWP leaders. Many were drawn by signs that read, “Defend constitutional rights. Drop the charges against Trump.” While many disagreed, many others wanted to discuss and debate these questions.

“I do think Trump is a real problem,” Levon Boxer, a 26-year-old warehouse worker from Nashville, Tennessee, told Roger Calero, SWP candidate for City Council in New York. “But you guys are making a good point here on dropping the charges against him. They will do the same thing to us. And we don’t have a billion dollars.”

“RICO laws are anti-union,” Adam Teller, a member of the International Longshoremen’s Association in Norfolk, Virginia, told SWP campaign supporters. “The ILA has a history of numerous investigations by the federal government, and it never did a thing to make the union stronger.”

“Trump just got charged with violating these laws, but I think about how they could be used against me and my union.”

“More workers are using their unions to fight. The decades-long retreat by the working class has come to an end,” Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for New Jersey State Senate, said. “The bosses and their government target the unions. That’s why it’s absolutely necessary to oppose the Democrats’ assault on constitutional freedoms, whoever is the target today. They’re crucial for the space we need to organize and fight.”

Teller signed up for a Militant subscription and got the book Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power written by SWP leaders Mary-Alice Waters and Steve Clark.

Rally participants included workers involved in union fights from around the country. “Last week, shipyard workers in Maine won a new contract,” Jason Ryder told Kuniansky. He was part of a group of members of Machinists Local S6 from Bath Iron Works, one of the largest military contractors in the country. In 2020, the union waged a hard-fought 63-day strike against boss efforts to bust their union. The company led in their drive to increase the number of nonunion contract workers in the shipyard and to pit veteran unionists against new hires.

“The union fought for one pay scale for all 4,000 workers,” he said, “and we won!”

“That’s an example to point to, how to win unity and strengthen the union,” Kuniansky said.

“When you fight you can win — may be not everything you want, but we got more experience,” Ryder said.

SWP’s revolutionary perspective

“The organizers of the rally today argue that white supremacy is on the rise, but that isn’t true,” Kuniansky told those who came to a Socialist Workers Party campaign meeting held after the march. “The Black-led working-class movement against Jim Crow segregation transformed the country and the working class.”

She pointed to how she and other campaign supporters joined actions with other unionists supporting the Screen Actors Guild-American Federal of Television and Radio Artists National Day of Solidarity four days earlier.

The candidate also participated in a spirited picket line by striking nurses in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

March on Washington of 250,000, Aug. 28, 1963, marked by growing fight to end Jim Crow. Organizers censored SNCC President John Lewis, inset, as too militant, too critical of John F. Kennedy’s White House.

Continued on page 3

“…we won!”

The Militant

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March in Washington spurs debate

Continued from page 2

BY BETSY FARLEY
LEXINGTON, Ky. — “Amy Belvin was passionate about the fight for a better world,” explained Socialist Workers Party member Amy Husk, one of many speaking at the Aug. 26 celebration of her life. Organized by Workers Party and throwing herself into the SWP’s fight for workers rights.

Amy Belvin spoke on the acceleration of women into ‘nontraditional’ industrial jobs that had previously been for men only. This influx of women strengthened the unions and helped inspire the rise of the working class struggle with determination. As a party member and a unionist in the Unitarian Universalist Church here, Belvin spoke of her life and work with the TWU and other workers on the picket line with other U.S. workers to visit Cuba and Nicaragua.

One of the messages to the meeting came from SWP leader Joel Britton. “During her years in the party, Amy helped organize opposition to Washington’s military interventions around the world and stood up to attacks on constitutional rights.” She was a part of the Cuban Revolution and “helped organize solidarity in the early 1980s with the then-workers and farmers government of Grenada and Nicaragua.”

“With her health no longer permitted working an industrial job,” Britton continued, “Amy taught school in Oakland and participated in a long strike by the teachers union in the late 1990s. With great enthusiasm, she rolled onto the strike picket lines in a wheelchair decorated with strike placards.”

Fran Belvin and her husband Richard King put together a lively slide show that included the two sisters growing up in the 1950s as well as Amy joining with other U.S. workers to visit Cuba and Nicaragua. One slide showed Amy and other workers on the picket line with striking copper miners in Arizona as they stood up to National Guard troops brought in to break the strike. The celebration included a reception with food and displays of artwork and poetry. Amy had made many party members look through a display of articles from the Militant that included articles she wrote and reflected working-class struggles she had been involved in.

“Longtime friend Jim Altenberg sent a message describing their work together as members of the SWP. He said they also spent time traveling and enjoying cultural activities in the Bay Area.”

Amy Husk stressed Belvin’s lifelong commitment to the SWP and the fight for a world based on human needs, not profits. “In the 20 or so years she was actively part of this fight she lived more than many people live in a lifetime. When it comes to her life will be an inspiration to others.”

Amy Belvin: ‘Lifelong commitment to the SWP’

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Amy Belvin: ‘Lifelong commitment to the SWP’
Election in Argentina deepens crisis facing working people

By Claudia Kaiser-Leñor

Whichever candidate wins the presidential election in Argentina in October will only mean more hardships for working people. In the midst of the deep capitalist crisis shaking the country, the solutions offered by all the capitalist politicians foreshadow belt-tightening measures, continued inflation and more attacks on wages and pensions, as the Argentine rulers seek to satisfy the demands of foreign investors and creditors as well as of domestic capitalists.

Widespread frustration with worsening conditions and the absence of any working-class political leadership opened wide margins for presidential candidate Milei. In the Aug. 13 primary election for Javier Milei. His appeal is his claim to stand outside the traditional political coalitions. Milei took 30% of the vote, with Patricia Bullrich of the conservative Together for Change coming in second and the candidate of the ruling coalition of Peronists, President Alberto Fernandez, third. They will now face off in October.

A sidelong cut in social spending, Milei says he will meet the crisis by closing the central bank and abandoning the currency, the peso, in favor of the dollar.

The current president, Alberto Fernandez, has a 75% disapproval rating. In an attempt to boost support for his Peronist coalition, Fernandez announced a 23% increase in payments to retirees before the primary. The day after the vote, however, his government devalued the peso by 20%, wiping out almost all of the increase.

Inflation ran at a staggering 113% in July, while the peso in mid-morning, and resumed sales mid-afternoon, with prices adjusted to the dollar. Market in Buenos Aires, Aug 10, where customers can pay vendors in rapidly deflating cash or exchange goods through barter.

In July, steelworkers, members of Unión Obrera Metalúrgica, carried out a 48-hour strike. Unión Obrera Metalúrgica, carried out a 48-hour strike, part of a their fight for the reelection of Peronist politicians. Over decades, unions have been hog-tied by their long-standing political subordination to one or another wing of the Peronist party. Since the end of World War II these coalitions have been the main props of capitalist rule, at the same time they pose as the champions of working people.

Following the primary vote, working people also have faced an increase in violent crime. In Buenos Aires and other cities looting raids on supermarkets were reported, along with widespread mugging of pedestrians and passengers on public buses.

Roger Calero contributed to this article.

What is road forward for working people in Mideast?

Continued from front page

As part of the Sunni-based capitalist monarchy in Saudi Arabia wants Washington's help in developing nuclear power — which could also help them to nuclear weapons, as well as acquiring advanced weapons and a stronger commitment of U.S. military backing to counter threats from Tehran in Saudi Gulf waters.

While U.S. imperialism remains the most powerful military force intervening in the Middle East, U.S. purchases of its oil have declined while purchases by Japan, France and China have increased. The Saudi monarchy is seeking more long-term relations with Beijing, now its largest trading partner at some $100 billion a year.

The latest moves are taking place just five months after the Iranian and Saudi governments reestablished diplomatic relations — with the aid of Beijing — allowing a fragile lull in their decades-long antigonoms.

Netanyahu wants deal with Saudis

Liberal both in Israel and the U.S. claim Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition government is "the last right-wing in Israel's history," and say its goal is to annex the Palestinian West Bank. But Netanyahu is not about to let the minority of more extreme parties in his coalition deal with the Saudi rulers, nor let them take actions that would end up boosting the prospects of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and their backers in Tehran. The Israeli police forcibly evacuated Israeli settlers from the "illegal" Aria Shahar outpost in the Palestinian West Bank Aug. 14. Netanyahu also instructed that "there is no political obstacle" to making concessions to the Palestinian Authority, which rules over large sections of the West Bank, in a trade that would help seal a deal with Riyadh.

While a rapid agreement between the two governments is unlikely, the talks are a reflection of the regime relying on five imprisoned U.S. citizens. U.S. sanctions against Iran still allowed Iran to export a high price from the Iranian people.

In early August the New York Times reported that the Biden administration had agreed to release $6 billion in Iranian assets, in exchange for the regime freeing five imprisoned U.S. citizens. U.S. sanctions against Iran still allowed Iran to export a high price from the Iranian people.

Market in Buenos Aires, Aug. 10, where customers can pay vendors in rapidly deflating cash or exchange goods through barter. Inflation has gone over 100% annually, one of world's highest.

Bubbling resistance

In the face of the sky-high prices, pressure on the government has grown from workers demanding wage hikes. In July, steelworkers, members of Unión Obrera Metalúrgica, carried out a 48-hour strike, part of their fight for a contract. Teachers and health care workers held large protests in the northwest province of Salta in May and June.

Large protests were held in Jujuy, another province in northwest Argentina, in June, demanding better wages, repeal of anti-strike and anti-protest clauses added to the province's constitution, and an end to expansion of mining in the province. Markets have been the main props of capitalist rule, at the same time they pose as the champions of working people.

What is road forward for working people in Mideast?

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What is road forward for working people in Mideast?
A militant article from September 14, 1998

September 14, 1998
DURBAN, South Africa — The 12th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, which includes 113 governments, most by imperialist friendly governments, has opened here Aug. 29.
Cuban President Fidel Castro arrived Sept. 1 to participate in the summit, which is expected to denounce the U.S. embargo against the Caribbean island. Following the meeting, the revolutionary leader will begin a state visit hosted by the Socialist Workers Party's leader, Farrell Dobbs, who led the union's over-the-road organizing drive in the 1930s. Castro welcomed the opportunity to meet with Cuban troops and other unionists.

September 14, 1973
THE MILITANT

September 13, 1948
THE MILITANT

Atlanta rally backs actors, Writers Guild strikers

ATLANTA — More than 800 unionists rallied here Aug. 22 as part of the National Day of Solidarity with striking members of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the Writers Guild of America. SAG-AFTRA members have been on strike since July 13, and WGA members since May 2. Similar actions took place in Los Angeles, New York and other cities.

As long as it tookes was one of the cheers at the spirited rally held at the Teamsters Local 728 union hall. Speakers included AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler and a number of film and TV actors and writers. Workers involved in union organizing efforts at Delta Air Lines, as well as Teamsters union members who drive the large movie vans, participated in the protest. Georgia has become an increasingly attractive center for TV and film production.

“We're not on strike, but we're honoring the actors’ and writers’ picket lines,” Teamsters member Paul Yates told the Militant. “Their fight for a fair contract is our fight too,” noting that some 2,400 Teamsters work in the Georgia film industry.

“I definitely think there's a concerted effort by the employers to go against the unions, to break us down. What the Biden administration and Congress last fall did to the rail workers is like being enslaved to the rail companies,” he said. Teamsters in movie and TV production face some of the same conditions as rail workers, including inhospitable schedules and no family time. “When we work, it's 16-18 hours a day,” he pointed out.

Yates got a year's subscription to the Militant and Teamster Rebeldon by Socialists Workers Party leader Farrell Dobbs, who led the union's over-the-road organizing drive in the 1930s. Yates was interested in learning more about the past history of his union, and what's happening in the labor movement today.

— JANICE LYNN AND SUSAN LAMONT

The Militant September 11, 2023
BY SETH GALINSKY

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel's recent trip to Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa highlighted the Cuban Revolution’s decades of solidarity with — and participation in — the fight against colonial rule and imperialist exploitation in Africa.

Carolina Cerqueira, president of Angola’s National Assembly, introduced the Cuban president at a special session to welcome him Aug. 21 in Luanda, the capital. The Cuban people’s unconditional support was decisive in winning Angolan independence from Portugal and consolidating it, she said. “Our Cuban brothers and sisters crossed the ocean to support the African people in their struggle,” Cerqueira said. “The Cuban troops were a fundamental support was decisive in winning Angolan independence from Portugal and consolidating it. That’s how it was during the war and now during peace.”

During an Aug. 20 meeting between Díaz-Canel and Cuban volunteers in Luanda, construction engineer Wilfredo Ferrer took the floor. “The Cuban collaboration in Angola,” he said, “isn’t restricted to economic contracts. Nearly 1,200 health care workers, six hundred of the Cuban medical personnel are helping to train 3,000 Angolans as doctors. ‘Angola is the African country where we have the most diverse and most numerous collaboration,’ the Cuban president said.

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Díaz-Canel told the National Assembly that Fidel Castro said in 1988, “To be internationalist is to pay our debt to humanity and that whoever is not able to fight for others will never be able to fight adequately for themselves.”

There are at least 2,000 Cuban internationalists in the country, including nearly 1,200 health care workers. Six hundred of the Cuban medical personnel are helping to train 3,000 Angolans as doctors. “Angola is the African country where we have the most diverse and most numerous collaboration,” the Cuban president said.

The!Beijing-led BRICS, US rulers stroke new conflicts

Continued from front page

BRICS bloc will now cover close to half the world’s population and over a third of its economic output.

The main movers of the BRICS alliance are Argentina, Brazil, China, India and South Africa, all of which are challenging the U.S. for influence in their region. The other members of the BRICS bloc, Brazil, China, India and South Africa, are all of which are challenging the U.S. for influence in their region.

The bloc is a response to the new world financial architecture that emerged after the global financial crisis of 2008. The crisis saw the establishment of the BRICS bloc as a counterweight to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which were seen as dominated by the interests of the developed world.

The bloc has been driven by a desire to increase the voices of the emerging economies in global decision-making. The BRICS countries have sought to build a new, more democratic system of global governance that recognizes the interests of all nations, not just the wealthiest.

The bloc has also sought to create a new financial architecture that is more inclusive and representative. The BRICS countries have supported the creation of new international financial institutions, such as the New Development Bank (NDB), which is backed by a group of BRICS countries.

The bloc’s members have also sought to increase their influence in international forums, such as the United Nations. The BRICS have been active in pushing for reforms in the UN, including changes to the Security Council, which they see as too dominated by the interests of the developed world.

The bloc has also sought to expand its influence beyond the economic sphere. The BRICS countries have worked to increase their influence in areas such as trade, investment, and cultural exchange.

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Continued from front page

pne ple these freedoms to speak out about and organize against the attacks of bosses and their two political parties. And to fight against the rising threat of more wars as capitalist com-

U.S. Air Force bombers and South Korean warplanes in drills, South Korea, March 19. As ten-

The Militant   September 11, 2023            7

them for the future and stopped in the war.

The Gulf war held

paths to unity and joint action. The

squeamishness about wartime tactics.”

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the Militant

While there is some government aid

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trying to prevent ruthless real es-

the Militant

All the U.S. bosses take aim at work-

The government's negligence includ-

the demand for cost-of-liv-

"Those most directly impacted are the

they will say they would like
to join a union.

Biden and Trump, and all the other Demo-

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Could the crash of ’87 happen again?


... is diminishing not sharpening. …

“Most important, you would have to believe that capitalism’s profit rates, which have been on a long downward curve since the mid-1970s, are now going to begin to rise for several decades at an accelerated pace.”

In other words, you would have to think that the imperialist epoch with its inevitable conflicts, described by Lenin nearly a century ago, has been super-sized by something new.

A year ago when we were discussing these questions here in Caracas, the main US stock market index, just a few months earlier, had closed at its all-time high of a little over 14,000. Yesterday it swung wildly by almost a thousand points, from under 8,000 — more than 40 percent below that peak — to close at almost 9,000. These market fluctuations have become so much a daily occurrence as to become commonplace. And everyone knows they simply announce another plunge.

Trillions of dollars of what Marx called “fictitious capital” have been “lost” in the last year — and so have the non-fictional homes and savings of millions of working people. Yet the bottom is not in sight, the financial panic of banking capital is the symptom, however, not the disease. What seemingly started as a capitalist crisis centered in credit and banking has now shown itself to be something of a different dimension. Its roots lie in the extended decline of the rate of accumulation of capital, in the increasing need for extraction of new investment in plant, equipment, and hiring. As the de facto bankruptcy of General Motors bears witness, the whole capitalist world and their economic wizards have been thrown into work in the US since the beginning of this year — already the greatest annual loss since the end of World War II. This inevitability of such a contraction has underlaid this worldwide crisis from the beginning.

It is worth reminding ourselves that the global crisis of 1929 was not the consequence of the stock market crash of 1929 and subsequent banking crises alone. Its deeper origins are found in the violently intensifying competition among capitalist powers in the years leading up to World War I — competition for colonial possessions, access to markets and raw materials, and especially, the competition to exploit — and the economic and social breakdowns and financial catastrophes that accompanied that first inter-Imperialist War.

It took the global carnage of the Second World War, which included massive physical destruction across Europe and Asia from 1939 to 1945 — and, above all, the postwar military, economic, and financial dominance of US imperialism — to lay the basis for the exploiting classes to pull out of that crisis. They did so first in the US and Canada, and then slowly across devastated Europe. That is important. As Lenin stressed, there is no hope for salvation for capitalism. The two decades from 1930 to 1950 showed once again that the doses of finance capital, if they are not replaced beforehand by the workers and rural toilers, can dig themselves out of any crisis — by inflicting enough bloody defeats on the working classes and savagely reducing the industrial capacity of any crisis — by inflicting enough bloody defeats on the working classes and savagely reducing the industrial capacity of any crisis — by inflicting enough bloody defeats on the working classes and savagely reducing the industrial capacity of any crisis — by inflicting enough bloody defeats on the working classes and savagely reducing the industrial capacity of any crisis — by inflicting enough bloody defeats on the working classes and savagely reducing the industrial capacity of any crisis — by inflicting enough bloody defeats on the working classes and savagely reducing the industrial capacity of any crisis — by inflicting enough bloody defeats on the working classes and savagely reducing the industrial capacity of any crisis — by inflicting enough bloody defeats on the working classes and savagely reducing the industrial capacity of any crisis — by inflicting enough bloody defeats on the working classes and savagely reducing the industrial capacity of any crisis — by inflicting enough bloody defeats on the working classes and savagely reducing the industrial capacity of any crisis — by inflicting enough bloody defeats on the working classes and savagely reducing the industrial capacity of any crisis — by inflicting enough bloody defeats on the working classes and savagely reducing the industrial capacity of any crisis — by inflicting enough bloody defeats on the working classes and savagely reducing the industrial capacity.
Defend the right to free speech! Protest attacks by the Democrats

Continued from front page

MILITANT LABOR

Panellists at New York forum, Aug. 26. From left, John Studer, Socialist Workers Party; Manuel Melendez Lacandero, Comité de La Resistencia; Berta Morisou; Orondo Shakan, African People’s Socialist Party; Infant, Michelle Rivera, Cuba Solidarity Committee in Puerto Rico, participating via video link.

The Militant and other progressive groups are calling for solidarity with the African People’s Socialist Party to Donald Trump. “We informed our people not to talk with the FBI,” she said, so we raised, “We’re Puerto Rican and we’re going to Cuba.” And that is what the bridge did against this past July. “Solidarity from everybody is the most effective thing to do.”

BY BETSY FARLEY

CINCINNATI — A panel organized by the Militant Labor Forum here Aug. 20 featured Perry Porter of the UHURU Solidarity Movement, John Hawkins of the Socialist Workers Party, and civil rights fighter Ruby Shutttlesworth. All spoke on the importance of protesting any attack on free speech — from the African People’s Socialist Party to Donald Trump.

“She was eight years old when our family moved to Birmingham,” said Harvard professor Michael Eric Dyson. “In the Alabama, became known because of the racist violence and bombings carried out against Black people fighting for our rights there.” Ruby Shutttlesworth explained.

Her father, Rev. Fred Shutttlesworth, then the pas- tor of Bethel Baptist Church, was the central leader in Birmingham of the mass working-class movement for Black rights that the Kennedy administration and Alabama civil rights leaders attempted to suppress in order to prevent a black challenger to segregation and permanently strengthened the fighting capacity and unity of the working class in the U.S.

In those days just like today, “the FBI was always trying to stop you, stop the forward movement of Black people,” Bester said.

“My father and others joined the NAACP to orga- nize against racist discrimination,” she said. In 1956 the Alabama attorney general ordered them to turn over their membership list to the state, and they refused and were forced to shut down. “My daddy reorganized it as the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, and they set about desegregating the buses and schools.”

Bester and the rest of her family were home on Christmas night in 1956 when a bomb exploded there. Shuttlesworth and other fighters put out a call for Blacks to desegregate the city buses the next day. “My father refused to be intimidated, and the next morning he got on the bus.” Shuttlesworth and 21 other people were arrested.

“When I was 12 years old,” she recalled, “my fa- ther and mother took three of us kids to enroll us at the all-white Phillips High School. Brown v. Board of Education was the law, but Birmingham schools were still segregated.” She described how her father was brutally beaten and her mother stabbed in the hip by a crowd of racist thugs.

A lively discussion followed the presentations.

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