

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'History will absolve me' — program of Cuban Revolution — PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 80/NO. 31 AUGUST 22, 2016

Washington pressures Venezuela as crisis deepens

BY NAOMI CRAINE

As workers and farmers in Venezuela face a deepening economic crisis, the U.S. ruling class and pro-imperialist forces in Venezuela are ratcheting up pressure against the government of President Nicolás Maduro. Behind their feigned concern over food shortages and "human rights" is their desire to install a regime more to Washington's liking. They are moving deliberately with the aim, they hope, of doing so without provoking a social explosion. It's in the interests of working people throughout the Americas to oppose Washington's intervention.

Venezuela's economy is expected to contract by about 10 percent in 2016. Oil production, which accounts for 95 percent of export earnings, is at its lowest level in 13 years. Annual inflation is on course to hit 700 percent.

The food situation is especially

Continued on page 7

Zika epidemic spreads across US colony of Puerto Rico

BY SETH GALINSKY

Despite knowing at least six months ago that the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico was at risk of a Zika epidemic, the colonial regime on the island and the U.S. government took few measures to eliminate the mosquitoes that spread the disease.

The outbreak, the *Wall Street Journal* reported June 8, gives U.S. and Puerto Rican health authorities "a rare chance to better understand the disease." U.S. Centers for Disease Control official Steve Waterman told the paper that "we're going to be generating some good information."

Two months later, President Barack Obama in a video admonished the people of Puerto Rico to use mosquito repellent and eliminate standing water in their homes, but announced no actions to combat Zika's spread. Puerto Rican Gov. Alejandro García

Continued on page 2

Socialist Workers Party: Join Sept. 8 miners rally! SWP tells miners 'Our party is your party'



Militant/Ved Dookhun

"The working class needs its own party, the Socialist Workers Party," SWP presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy tells aluminum worker Dewey Mullins, second from left, in Shinnston, West Virginia, Aug. 3. Campaigners James Harris, left, and Dalton Roberts joined in.

Who should rule — capitalist bosses or the working class?

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The two crisis-racked parties of capitalism and war in the U.S. — the Democrats and Republicans — and their candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are tearing into each other, debating whether "America is great" or needs to be made "great again," while presenting no proposals to create jobs or meet other burning

Continued on page 4

SWP builds Sept. 8 protest in West Virginia, Kentucky

BY NED MEASEL

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — "We need a working-type person for president," Dewey Mullins, who works at an aluminum factory, told Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president in Shinnston. "Someone who knows how we live."

"The working class needs its own

Continued on page 4

Slow-burning capitalist depression wreaks havoc on working people



Labor force participation rate — percentage of population over 16 employed or actively seeking work. Shaded bars marks recessions. Despite claims by Hillary Clinton that economy is doing fine, the size of working class in U.S. has shrunk since 2009.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Democratic Party presidential nominee Hillary Clinton says the U.S. economy is doing just fine, pointing to the government's latest jobs report that claims unemployment has fallen below 5 percent. She says this shows the economic policies of the Barack Obama administration are succeeding and she'll give U.S. workers more of the same.

But this doesn't square with the facts. The ongoing worldwide capitalist economic crisis, rooted in declining production, trade and employment, has wreaked havoc upon millions of working people in the U.S. and around the world.

"Economic growth in advanced nations has been weaker for longer than it has been in the lifetime of most people on earth," the *New York Times* said Aug. 6.

The claim that unemployment has fallen simply reflects the fact that slow-burning depression conditions have shrunk the size of the working class in the U.S. with millions fewer workers in the labor force since 2009.

This is a crisis that no capitalist politician or the ruling class they represent have any solution for, except to try to force the working class to pay.

Millions more can't get full-time

Continued on page 9

Debate over Russia shows crisis in US foreign, military policy

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The increasing world disorder of capitalism and the growing crisis of Washington's foreign and military policy have deepened in the quarter of a century since the Soviet Union collapsed because the U.S. rulers erroneously concluded they had won the Cold War. They have reaped un-

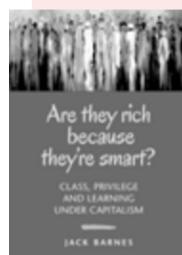
intended consequences as they've stepped up military intervention in the Middle East and beyond.

This reality has produced a caustic debate between Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton and Republican Donald Trump over relations with Moscow and its president, Vladimir Putin, and the extent to which Washington's war machine can be used from Iraq to

Continued on page 8

Are They Rich Because They're Smart?

Class, Privilege and Learning Under Capitalism
— by Jack Barnes



"In the coming battles forced upon us by the capitalist rulers workers will begin to transform ourselves and our attitudes toward life, work and each other. Only then will we discover our own worth and learn what we're capable of becoming."

\$7 for book, \$10 for book and 'Militant' subscription

Contact branches on page 8 to buy, campaign with this book.

Inside

Editorial: U.S. hands off Venezuela! 9

Working people in Utah welcome SWP campaign 3

Turkey: Erdogan cracks down, blames US, EU for failed coup 8

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Maryland Teamsters strike US Foods, win solidarity

Grocery workers rally for contract in Los Angeles

Zika spreads in Puerto Rico

Continued from front page

Padilla thanked Obama for calling on Puerto Ricans to “carry out their individual responsibility.”

By Aug. 6 there were 8,776 people confirmed with Zika infections on the island, including 901 pregnant women. Twenty-seven people have Zika-related Guillain-Barré syndrome, which can cause paralysis. The greatest danger is the risk of birth defects in children whose mothers are infected during pregnancy.

“The way they treat us — because of our situation as a U.S. colony — is infuriating,” Gerson Guzmán, president of General Workers Union Local 1199, told the *Militant* by phone Aug. 5. Dealing with this “is not an individual problem,” he said. “It can only be solved collectively.”

To pay the \$70 billion debt to bondholders, the colonial government over the last several years has laid off thousands of workers, “including those who fumigated in the communities,” Guzmán said.

The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that car-

ries Zika prefers to live near people and bite indoors and doesn’t travel far from its breeding spots. The same species spreads dengue, Chikungunya and yellow fever. Zika can also be transmitted through sexual contact.

One of the government’s few actions has been moving 1.6 million tires that could hold standing water away from residential areas. Puerto Rico imports millions of used tires, because many residents can’t afford new ones.

“But there are mountains of discarded tires and thousands more pile up every day,” said retired health worker Luis Espardo by phone from Aguadilla. “Used tires wear out quickly. We’re the dumping ground of the United States.”

And with tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans emigrating every year, a result of the island’s economic crisis exacerbated by its colonial status, thousands of houses are vacant — prime mosquito-breeding real estate.

“When a car won’t start, the first thing you check is the battery,” Ramón Figueroa, a retired Bacardi Rum worker, said from Aguadilla. “To fight Zika the



Protest in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in June against potentially damaging aerial fumigation. Sign at left says “We have the right to know!” Colonial regime hasn’t replied to union demand that government organize worker brigades to go door to door to eliminate mosquito breeding areas.

first thing you have to do is eliminate the breeding grounds. But the government has no plans.”

When the García government announced in July that it was going to carry out aerial fumigation with the pesticide naled, a coalition of union, community and religious groups organized several protests. García backed down and returned the naled to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, which had sent the chemical without even asking the island’s government if they wanted it.

“The aerial spraying would not only be ineffective, because this type of mosquito lives indoors, it would create more problems,” Pedro Irene Maymi, president of the Puerto Rican Workers’ Federation (CPT), said by phone Aug. 7. “It would kill bees and sea life, harming agriculture on the island. The cure could cause more damage than the disease.”

Union leaders proposed the government form “brigades of public workers” to go block by block to eliminate breeding grounds and to educate people on how to stamp out the mosquitoes.

The response of Gov. García to the union proposal? “He has not answered us,” Maymi said.

Cuba virtually eliminates Zika

Many in Puerto Rico have heard how revolutionary Cuba has fought Zika. An article in the July 6 *El Nuevo Día* noted that by going house to house, fumigating and eliminating breeding spots, Cuba has almost wiped out not only

Zika, but dengue and Chikungunya. But the article makes the Cuban effort sound like a police action, rather than the revolutionary effort it has been. Tens of thousands of volunteers, including medical students, community organizations and others, have carried out the successful campaign along with soldiers, educating the population as they go.

In Brazil, where thousands of pregnant women were infected, more than 1,700 babies were born with microcephaly — an abnormally small head.

“But it’s a mistake to focus just on microcephaly,” Dr. Alberto de la Vega, head of the high-risk pregnancy unit at San Juan’s University Hospital, told the *Militant* by phone Aug. 6. The hospital is treating 150 Zika-infected pregnant women.

“We already have twice the normal percentage of delayed growth in the fetuses of the women we are treating, more than 20 cases,” he said. “And many Zika-related problems can’t be detected until after birth, such as retinal damage and lesions.”

“There is a lot of distrust of the government and many people don’t believe anything it says,” de la Vega said about the government’s campaign to encourage using mosquito repellent and wearing long sleeves.

De la Vega is concerned that the worst is yet to come. Forty more pregnant women are infected every day, he said, most of whom won’t start giving birth until October.



Centers for Disease Control

July 7 map shows highest areas of concentrations of Zika cases in U.S. colony Puerto Rico.

THE MILITANT

End US embargo against Cuba!

‘It’s up to the U.S. to dismantle hostile unilateral policies,’ said Josefina Vidal, who leads Cuba’s negotiating team with Washington. The ‘Militant’ covers protests opposing U.S. embargo against Cuba and calls for Washington to return Guantánamo to Cuba.



Cubadebate/Ismael Francisco
Thousands of Cubans celebrate opening battle of Cuban Revolution July 26.

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Working people in Utah welcome SWP campaign

BY PAUL MAILHOT

SALT LAKE CITY — In this battleground state between Republican and Democratic presidential candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, five other capitalist parties have now joined the race. This includes the just announced campaign of Evan McMullin, a former CIA operative, backed by leaders of the anti-Trump wing of the Republican Party. On the working-class side, the campaign of Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy is getting a hearing among working people.

Kennedy, who worked as an underground miner in Utah, West Virginia and Alabama, was a leader of the widely known 2003-2004 Co-Op miners' strike in Huntington, Utah. She has campaigned here several times over the past month. Supporters of the SWP have been going door to door throughout the state engaging in discussions with working people about the deepening capitalist depression, the class conflicts on the horizon and why the working class needs to think socially and act politically.

"I'm glad to hear Alyson Kennedy will be on the ballot in Utah," said Bob Fivecoat, a retired miner from East Carbon. "She is very respected here and also she is very respectful. I am urging others to support her campaign."

"As a former co-worker of Alyson Kennedy at the Co-Op mine, I worked with her and many other underground coal miners in the struggle to win union representation with the UMWA back in 2003," wrote Bill Estrada Aug. 10. "Alyson played a central role in our efforts for better working conditions, dignity, respect and in building solidarity for our union fight."

"In July, I joined Alyson in knocking on doors in Carbon and Emery counties collecting signatures to get her on the ballot. There are many workers, including coal miners, that we talked to who remember our union fight and supported it."

"Neither Trump nor Clinton offer any proposals to address what working people are facing today — wars, high unemployment, deteriorating working conditions and declining wages," Kennedy said as she landed in Utah Aug. 9 for a press conference when state officials confirmed the SWP will be on the ballot. "We are getting a hearing when we explain there is another road through the fight for workers power and why we need to overthrow this rotten

capitalist system."

Campaigners have been making extensive use of the new book *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. More than 220 workers, young people and others throughout the state bought the book from door-to-door campaigners in the last five weeks.

Dissatisfaction with the choices the two major capitalist parties have put forward has spurred additional bourgeois candidates to enter the presidential race in Utah. The most recent is McMullin, who is backed by William Kristol, the anti-Trump editor of the *National Review* and a number of prominent Republican Party leaders. McMullin, who is a member of the Mormon church, says his candidacy is fueled by the widespread loss of faith "in the candidates of both major parties." He criticizes Trump's scapegoating of Muslims, saying it sets back the fight against terrorism.

Some two-thirds of Utahns are Mormons, who form the backbone of the Republican Party here. Trump's calls for a religious test for immigrants and a ban on Muslim immigration is a reminder to many Mormons of the fierce persecution the church faced in the 19th century.

Founded in western New York in 1830, the Mormons came under attack as heretics and were driven from the state. They moved to Missouri, where they were met with violence and a call from the governor for residents to ex-



Militant/Mary Martin

"What you're doing is needed," retired construction worker John Bell tells SWP campaigner Leslie Dork Aug. 6 as he signs to put party on ballot on his porch in Taylorsville, Utah.

terminate them. They fled to Illinois, where a lynch mob shot and killed Joseph Smith, the group's founder. They then moved to the Great Salt Lake Valley, which was not yet a state at the time.

Additionally, Trump's "America First" demagoguery does not sit well with many Mormon believers, who promote their religion worldwide. Every year thousands of youth go abroad on religious missions. The type of American nationalism fostered by Trump — equally promoted as a centerpiece of the Clinton campaign — flies in the face of the international experiences and contacts many Mormons have made over the years.

Thousands of refugees — many from Muslim countries like Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia — have made Utah their home.

With more and more working people here weighing alternatives to the Republican and Democratic parties, the Socialist Workers Party gets a good hearing posing a clear class alternative. "The capitalists have two parties," Alyson Kennedy said. "The SWP sees the working class not only as the class that is bearing the brunt of the capitalist crisis, but also as the only class with the power to end the dictatorship of the capitalist system and fight for a socialist world to end the exploitation of working people."

"I think that is about right," said John Bell, a retired construction worker who was talking with SWP members on his doorstep in Taylorsville about how none of the capitalist parties offer solutions for working people. "The work you are doing out here is needed."

SWP campaigns in Tennessee, condemns US wars abroad

BY SAM MANUEL

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — "Workers need their own party to lead the fight for working-class political power," Alyson Kennedy told the press after filing Aug. 8 to place the Socialist Workers Party on the ballot here. "We say to workers, 'Our party is your party.'"

The filing followed a weekend of campaigning here with SWP supporters talking to workers on their doorsteps. In an indication of the interest, nine people bought the book *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*, 10 subscribed to the *Militant* and 109 signed to put the party on the ballot. In all, they submitted 569 signatures from across the state, more

than double the 275 required.

The party calls for Washington to unilaterally eliminate its nuclear weaponry and to withdraw all its troops from the Middle East and elsewhere.

"The war against workers here and Washington's spreading wars against workers and farmers abroad will deepen," Kennedy said. "This is what happened in the last great depression in the 1930s. Capitalist governments fought ever more fiercely for markets and sources of raw material until the second imperialist world slaughter broke out, killing millions of workers. And these profit-hungry rulers have enough nuclear weapons to destroy all of humanity."

When SWP supporters went door to door to discuss the party program in South Pittsburg, a town of 3,000 just west of Chattanooga that was a center of coal mining prior to World War II, two dozen workers signed to place the SWP on the ballot in a couple of hours of campaigning. The loss of jobs in rail transportation and manufacturing, resulting from mine closings in recent years, still mark the town.

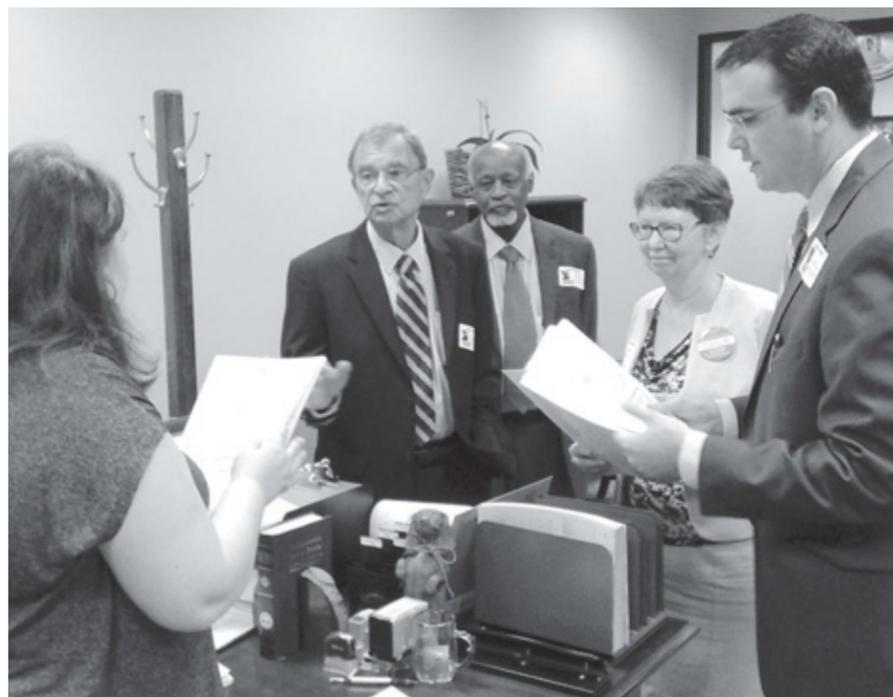
Hans MaDave, a candy factory worker in Nashville, liked the fighting nature of the Socialist Workers Party campaign. "Change can't come from just one person alone, but from many coming together," MaDave told campaigner Lisa Potash. He pointed to the civil rights battles of the 1960s and '70s as an example of how working people overcame divisions to fight more effectively.

Join with United Mine Workers at Rally at U.S. Capitol

Protest attack on health care and pensions for 22,000 retired union members, spouses and dependents.

**Thurs., Sept. 8
11 a.m.
Washington, DC**

For bus info, visit www.umwa.org



Militant/Rachele Fruit

SWP presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy, second from right, files to put party on ballot in Tennessee Aug. 8, along with (left to right) John Benson, who organized Tennessee effort; Sam Manuel, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Georgia; and SWP attorney Daniel Horwitz.

Contribute to Socialist Workers Party's \$30,000 campaign fund!

The Socialist Workers Party 2016 campaign has launched a \$30,000 Fund Drive running through Sept. 20 so the party can campaign as widely as possible — across the country and internationally, from Puerto Rico to the United Kingdom — presenting the only working-class alternative to the two capitalist parties, the Democrats and Republicans, and win workers to the party. Send a generous contribution today to: Socialist Workers Party 2016 Campaign, 227 W. 29th St., 6th Floor, New York, NY 10001.

Which class should rule?

Continued from front page
needs of working people.

At the same time, Socialist Workers Party members and supporters are campaigning on workers' doorsteps and in their living rooms, discussing how the deepening capitalist depression is an unfolding catastrophe for workers and farmers and how we can unite to defend our class interests. Members of Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are doing the same.

Addressing the faltering U.S. economy Aug. 8, Trump noted that the number of workers the government counts as members of the labor force is at the lowest point in four decades and proposed a package of pro-business tax cuts that would boost profits, claiming this would increase production and jobs. The previous week Clinton promised "millions of jobs with rising incomes."

But many capitalist pundits — in articles such as Robert Gordon's *New York Times* Aug. 8 op-ed "Can Clinton or Trump Recapture Robust American Growth?" and Neil Irwin's Aug. 6 *Times* article "We're In a Low-Growth World. How Did We Get Here?" — acknowledge that no policy can solve the worldwide contraction of capitalism. "It increasingly looks as if something fundamental is broken in the global growth machine," Irwin writes.

Both capitalist candidates say they are dedicated to assuring the military and political supremacy of U.S. imperialism. While President Barack Obama and Clinton argue that Trump is too unstable to be trusted with Washington's foreign policy, Trump hammers away at Obama's legacy of eight years in office with the U.S. government at war somewhere in the world every day of his administration. Many workers say they're dismayed by both capitalist candidates.

David Rosenfeld, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in Minnesota, and supporter Rose Engstrom met Jose Rosas, a call center worker, at his trailer home in Owatonna, Minnesota, July 24. Rosas liked what they had to say. Two weeks later he attended an Aug. 6 public campaign meeting in Minneapolis to hear Osborne Hart, the party's vice-presi-

dential candidate.

Rosas, 24, agreed things need to be changed. He said he was disturbed by the dog-eat-dog values of capitalism. "There must be a better way for people to live," he said. "They talk as if we are all in a bucket and have to step on each other to get out, to get ahead."

While touring Minnesota, Hart was interviewed Aug. 7 by Jeremy Jones, a reporter for the *Hutchinson Leader*. Jones talked with Hart for two hours at the Happy Hour Cafe in Glencoe, an hour west of Minneapolis.

Hart explained that the Socialist Workers Party campaigns going door to door in working-class areas, in towns large and small, in city and countryside, and gets a good response in all of them. When Jones expressed doubts about the kind of response the Socialist Workers Party is receiving, Hart and supporters started talking with June and Marlen Wichelman, who were having coffee at a table nearby.

"Socialism? Hadn't considered that," Marlen Wichelman said. "Well, there has to be something better than those two running for president!" June Wichelman replied. They wished Hart luck in the campaign.

Later Hart spoke with farmer John Worm, who was selling corn at a stand in Glencoe. "I'm a Trump supporter," Worm told Hart, adding that he didn't like the word "socialism."

SWP: Build Sept. 8 mine workers' rally!

Continued from front page
party to lead the fight for political power, to produce the energy we need and defend our health and environment," Kennedy replied. "The SWP is that party."

Kennedy and SWP campaigners visited 13 towns around Morgantown and Fairmont dotted with coal mines over four days, knocking on doors to introduce the party to workers there. While a few "Trump" signs were visible, and one "Hillary" sign, they were far outnumbered by "Proud Union Family" and "We Support United Mine Workers" placards.

SWP supporters were also helping to build the United Mine Workers Sept. 8 rally in Washington, D.C., called to defend miners' pensions and retiree health benefits. Many people in Wana and Blacksville near the Monongalia mine, formerly Consol-owned Blacksville No. 2, knew about the march. In 2013, coal boss Robert Murray bought five Consol mines in West Virginia. The UMW District 31 office in Fairmont said they are sending six buses to Washington.

Coal miners, workers in factories that service the industry and working people who live in mining regions like this have been especially hard hit by the contraction in capitalist production and trade. Since September 2014, more than 170,000 workers in coal-related jobs have been thrown out of work, from Wyoming to Alabama.

Coal bosses are seeking to shift the burden onto the back of miners and their families. Five major coal employers — Peabody Energy Corp., Walter Energy Inc., Alpha Natural Resources Inc., Patriot Coal and Arch Coal — have declared bankruptcy in the last year, joining more than 50 others.

"Trump says what he does about coal jobs to get votes, he doesn't care about coal miners," Mullins told Kennedy,



Militant/Jacquie Henderson
"Now I have something to think about," farmer John Worm, left, said after a discussion with SWP vice-presidential candidate Osborne Hart, outside Glencoe, Minnesota, Aug. 7.

When Hart said the Socialist Workers Party is a working-class party, Worm pointed out that Trump's rallies are big because working people come out for them.

"Yes," Hart replied, "because he talks about unemployment and some of the problems workers and farmers face. But he doesn't raise answers to those problems."

"You're right about that," Worm said, and listened when Hart spoke of his discussions about the capitalist crisis and the example of the Cuban Revolution with small farmers in south Georgia. Worm took a campaign flyer and got a

copy of the *Militant*, saying, "Now I have something to read and think about."

Before going to Minnesota, Hart toured in Nebraska, speaking at campaign meetings at Meadowlark Coffee and Espresso in Lincoln and at the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation in Omaha. Eleven people who had never heard of the Socialist Workers Party came, discussing the need to build the party to help lead workers and working farmers to take political power.

Jacquie Henderson in Minnesota and Joe Swanson in Nebraska contributed to this article.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA Oakland

Oppose U.S. Imperialist War Drive! From Afghanistan to the Middle East. Speaker: Eric Simpson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Aug. 19, 7:30 p.m. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

CANADA

Montreal

Lessons of U.S. Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Why the Working Class Does Not Need Nuclear Weapons. Speaker: John Steele, Communist League. Fri., Aug. 19, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St. Denis, Suite 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester

For Unilateral U.K. Nuclear Disarmament! Lessons of Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Speaker: Andrés Mendoza, Communist League. Sat., Aug. 20, 6:30 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Room 301, 26-28 Hilton House, Hilton St., M1 2EH. Tel.: (0161) 478-2496.

adding that he has no confidence in Clinton either.

"Billions of people worldwide desperately need energy," Kennedy said. "Miners and working people need to fight to strengthen and organize unions, to put miners back to work and to meet the energy needs of workers around the world — a basic requirement for reading, culture and political struggle."

"As more struggles rise, as more workers fight, we will gain confidence and build a movement to overthrow capitalist exploitation and rule," Kennedy said. "Along this road, miners will help lead the transition to nuclear and other sources of power that are cleaner. The working class in power would guarantee every miner a socially useful job and a rewarding place in the process."

Mullins has also worked in construction. He was making \$18 an hour and immigrant workers beside him were getting \$11. "Why don't you pay the man the same wage?" he told the bosses.

Mullins got the new Pathfinder Press book *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege and Learning Under Capitalism* and subscribed to the *Militant*.

In Maudsville, Kennedy knocked on the door of Byron Forman, a miner operator at Consol's Bailey Mine. He said bosses there try to bribe workers into getting support for Trump by giving them a day off if they sign up 10 people to back him.

Forman was concerned that the U.S. has been continuously at war for the last 25 years. "Hillary Clinton is running as a war candidate, and the root cause of Washington's wars is the increased competition for markets built into the capitalist system," Kennedy said. Forcing the U.S. rulers to bring the troops home from Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, like all changes in the interest of workers, are not accomplished by pull-

ing a lever on election day, but by workers' struggles, she said.

In Fairmont, this campaigner met Aaron and Tracy Drago at the door to their trailer. Tracy is a registered nurse and Aaron a construction welder who also traps foxes to supplement their income.

We discussed the crisis in health care and how the lure of commodities under capitalism mires the working class in debt. I explained how workers and farmers in Cuba made a revolution to overthrow capitalism and its degradation of working people.

The Cuban Revolution is based on qualitatively different values, I said, "You are what you *do*, not what you have. And the Cuban people have expressed these values for over 55 years in Cuba and in internationalist solidarity from Angola to Venezuela." They got *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* and a *Militant* subscription.

"There aren't enough jobs and people feel hopeless," a young woman in Farmington told us. Many people she knows get caught up with drugs. She was familiar with cases of abuse by police and frame-ups too. Describing what happened to a classmate who never learned to read, she said, "The police just talked circles around him until they got him to sign a confession. Now he's in prison for something he didn't do."

She agreed working people need to take political power.

Ved Dookhun contributed to this article.



BY JOHN HAWKINS

MORGANFIELD, Ky. — "There's three buses going from Morganfield alone," retired miner David Aker told Dan Fein and Betsy Farley, Socialist Workers Party candidates for U.S. Sen-

Continued on page 9

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles around the world!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including unionists striking US Foods, workers locked out by Honeywell and construction workers demanding safe conditions. I invite those involved in workers' battles to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

— Maggie Trowe

Maryland Teamsters strike US Foods, win solidarity

SEVERN, Md. — Members of Teamsters Locals 355 and 570, on strike against US Foods here, have won solidarity across the country. Wherever they have shown up early in the morning with “US Foods Serves Misery” signs to picket the company’s distribution centers, their union brothers and sisters have honored the picket lines with one-day job actions. Close to 3,000 Teamsters at US Foods facilities in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and elsewhere have carried out such actions.

The strike began April 27 when the 200 warehouse workers and truck drivers walked out. The company had refused to bargain with the union about its decision to shut the warehouse until the Teamsters members agreed to major concessions. When the company started to move its inventory out of state, the union members decided to strike.

“US Foods is threatening to close our facility because we refuse to let the company slash our wages, abolish our retirement plan and destroy our quality, affordable family health care,” driver Joe Schwabline and warehouse worker Chris Price say in a Teamster fact sheet. “If we all stand together, we can stand up to US Foods and its Wall Street owners and stop their bullying.”

On June 8, Local 570 warehouse workers won an agreement that included health care and severance pay. Local 355 truck drivers are still striking, and job actions around the country continue.

— Arlene Rubinstein

Calif. unionists tell packing boss: ‘Bathroom break is the law!’

VERNON, Calif. — Around 200 people — members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 770 at the Farmer John pork processing plant and supporters — held a rally and picket here July 27, four days before the meat-packers’ contract expired. In a spirited picket, workers bore the heat and got lots of honks from passersby.

“We are demanding respect and dignity, access to the restroom, wage increases, and no cuts to our health insurance,” shop steward Pedro Albarran said.

— Rebecca Williamson

Grocery workers rally for contract in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES — Over 400 grocery store workers marched and rallied here Aug. 2 demanding a new contract. The United Food and Commercial Workers organizes roughly 50,000 supermarket workers from central and southern California. The pact with Albertsons, Vons and Ralphs stores expired in March. Two days later a tentative agreement was announced and will be voted on Aug. 8.

At the rally union member Rob O’Connell told the *Militant* workers are

sending the grocery bosses the message, “Do what’s right. Give us a fair contract. You make billions of dollars, help us provide for our families. Don’t touch our pensions and our retirement.” O’Connell has been working at the Glendora Vons for 24 years in the dairy, deli, and as a cashier, and was part of the grocery workers’ 141-day strike in 2003-2004.

— Bernie Senter



Militant/Bernie Senter

United Food and Commercial Workers members march in Los Angeles Aug. 2 in contract fight for southern and central California grocery workers. Tentative agreement was reached Aug. 4.

New facts forced out in NY cop killing of Mohamed Bah

BY CANDACE WAGNER

NEW YORK — On Sept. 25, 2012, Hawa Bah called an ambulance for her son. The college student and taxi driver, originally from Guinea, was suffering from a mental breakdown. Instead of the medical personnel Bah was expecting, New York City police arrived. In short order they broke down the apartment door, twice fired a Taser and then shot Mohamed Bah dead.

The *New York Daily News* reported July 6 that two years after Bah’s death the commanding officer on the scene that day, Michael Licitra, was given a police department “Letter of Instruction.” His misdeed? He broke the chain of command in ordering the breakdown of Bah’s door. Licitra “failed to await authorization from the duty captain prior to taking additional action against an armed emotionally disturbed person who was contained, and posed no immediate threat of danger to any person,” the reprimand reads. His punishment? He was required to review a section of the Patrol Guide.

The original account by a police spokesperson claimed Bah had plunged a 13-inch knife into two officers, slicing

their protective vests and prompting Detective Edwin Mateo to yell, “He’s stabbing me, shoot him.”

Later the story changed. Mateo, the cop who is also believed to have fired the fatal shot to Bah’s head, testified that he had been grazed by a police Taser. He acknowledged that no one, in fact, was stabbed.

The knife was never tested for fingerprints. Officials say it and other evidence in the case is now “lost” or “contaminated.” Three official photographs from the scene show first no knife, then the knife in one position and again the knife in a different position.

In November 2013 a grand jury ruled that the “use of deadly physical force was not unlawful” in Bah’s killing.

Hawa Bah, who has become a stalwart protesting other cases of police brutality in New York, has filed a civil lawsuit against the city. In a recent encounter with Mayor Bill de Blasio, she questioned him about her son’s death. “He told me that he admired me for what I am doing for my son,” Bah told the *Militant* Aug. 2. “I told him I wanted justice. I don’t want another mother to suffer how I have.”

The de Blasio administration has asked a judge to toss out Bah’s suit, as well as a motion filed by her lawyers for sanctions against the city for destruction of key evidence, citing the grand jury ruling that the shooting was justified.

Bah has also called for federal civil rights charges to be filed against the New York Police Department for her son’s killing. This year the Department of Justice declined to bring charges against the NYPD for the 2012 shooting death of 18-year-old Ramarley Graham in his own home. A decision is still pending in the 2014 choking death of Eric Garner.

“We will be mobilizing on the anniversary of my son’s killing in September,” Bah said. Details will be coming shortly.

New International
A magazine of Marxist politics
and theory, 1934-present
Intercontinental Press
International news magazine
1963-86
Online at themilitant.com
& pathfinderpress.com

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 30, 1991

Encouraged by the U.S. government, right-wing antiabortion forces throughout the United States have mobilized in Wichita, Kansas, to deal a setback to women’s right to abortion by physically blocking access to abortion clinics in that city. Every working person, youth, supporter of women’s rights, and supporter of democratic rights has a stake in beating back this challenge.

Operation Rescue, the organization spearheading the rightist assault, has announced it sees Wichita as a test; it plans to mobilize its supporters to launch similar attacks in other cities.

The labor movement has a responsibility to respond to the challenge in Wichita and the Justice Department’s complicity with it. Labor should throw its weight and numbers behind any protest actions to support the right of women to choose and to organize a counter-mobilization to Operation Rescue.



August 22, 1966

Thirty-five thousand fighting airline mechanics have demonstrated that despite government strike-breaking efforts, determined, militant workers can win at least a share of what they are justly entitled to.

The striking members of the International Association of Machinists have clearly made a point that the rest of the labor movement should give careful thought to. As the Vietnam war presses the inflationary drive, the employers and government are determined to put the cost of the war on the backs of the working people. This determination is expressed in Johnson’s loaded wage guideline policy intended to freeze and roll back real wages by limiting pay raises to increases in productivity.

To force this kind of a wage freeze on the workers, the administration has been pushing for new legislation to curb the unions.



August 23, 1941

Roosevelt and Churchill’s conference was the first Supreme War Council of Anglo-American imperialism. Who is deceived by the ridiculous attempt to pass off the meeting as a “Peace Conference”? The presence of the Commanders-in-Chief and military staff heads, Generals and Admirals of both powers, as well as the secrecy enveloping the conference, its deliberations and decisions, unmistakably establish its war-like character.

What hypocrisy and impudence for the rulers of the British Empire to proclaim “the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they shall live,” while refusing 350,000,000 inhabitants of India the least democratic rights! Nor will Roosevelt, who failed to abolish “fear and want” in the U.S. during nine years of peace, eliminate “fear and want” from the world by as many years of war.

'History will absolve me': program of Cuban Revolution

Excerpt from Fidel Castro's defense speech at trial after 1953 Moncada attack

Below is an excerpt from Fidel Castro's famous defense speech "History Will Absolve Me," delivered at the close of the trial where he and 31 others were sentenced to prison for the July 26, 1953, assault on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba. The speech was printed clandestinely and distributed all across the island, helping to assemble the cadres that overthrew the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in 1959, bringing Cuba's workers and farmers to power.

Thousands rallied in Sancti Spiritus, Cuba, July 26 — and many more across the island and worldwide — to celebrate the 63rd anniversary of that action, and the Cuban Revolution, which stands as a powerful example for working people worldwide. Other events are being organized in Cuba and elsewhere to mark Castro's 90th birthday Aug. 13.

The excerpts are from a new translation prepared by Pathfinder Press. Sub-headings are by the Militant.

The indictment for this trial should have included five revolutionary laws — the laws that we planned to proclaim immediately after the capture of the Moncada garrison and broadcast to the nation by radio. ...

The first revolutionary law would have returned sovereign rule to the people. The 1940 constitution would have been proclaimed the supreme law of the land until such time as the people decided to modify or change it. It's a fact that no popularly elected bodies exist at present to implement the constitution and punish those who betray it. Therefore, the revolutionary movement — the living incarnation of this sovereignty, the only source of legitimate power — would have assumed all powers inherent within the constitution, except that of modifying the basic law itself. That is, the revolutionary movement would have assumed legislative, executive and judicial powers.

This approach could not be more transparent or free of sterile absurdities and fakery. A government proclaimed by the mass of combatants would be vested with all necessary powers to implement the will of the people and bring about true justice. ...

The second revolutionary law would have given ownership of the land — under the condition that it couldn't be mortgaged or transferred — to all small



H. Maza/Revolución

Fidel Castro delivers defense speech at close of trial for attack on Moncada barracks. Goals and values proclaimed in that speech became founding program of revolutionary struggle that in 1959 defeated U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship and opened door to Cuba's socialist revolution.

farmers, tenant farmers, sharecroppers, and squatters who work five *caballerías* [165 acres] of land or less. ...

The third revolutionary law would have granted workers and employees the right to share 30 percent of the profits of all large industrial, commercial, and mining enterprises, including sugar mills. ...

The fourth revolutionary law would have granted all small sugar farmers a 55 percent share of the sugar their cane yields. ...

The fifth revolutionary law would have ordered the confiscation of the holdings of those who had embezzled money from any previous regime. ...

Solidarity with peoples of continent

Furthermore, it was to be declared that Cuba's policy in the Americas would be one of close solidarity with the democratic peoples of the continent, and that all those politically persecuted by bloody tyrannies oppressing sister nations would find generous asylum, brotherhood, and sustenance in the land of Martí. ...

These laws would have been proclaimed immediately. ... They would have been followed by another series of fundamental laws and measures. These would have included agrarian reform, a complete overhaul of the educational system, nationalization of the electric and telephone monopolies, refund to the people of the illegal and excessive rates

these companies charged in the past, and payment to the treasury of all taxes they brazenly evaded in the past.

All these laws and others would have been based on strict compliance with two essential new articles of our constitution.

The first article would ban large landed estates. To end them, the maximum area of land any one person or entity might own for each type of agricultural enterprise would be stipulated by law. Measures would be adopted to return land to the people of Cuba.

The second article would categorically order the state to use all means at its disposal to provide employment for all who lack it and to ensure a decent livelihood to each manual or intellectual worker.

None of these laws could be called unconstitutional. The first popularly elected government that came to power after these decrees would have to respect them, not only because of moral obligations to the nation but because when people achieve something they have yearned for over generations, no force in the world is capable of taking it away.

Land, industrialization, housing, unemployment, education, and public health: these are the six problems we would have taken resolute steps to solve, along with restoring civil liberties and political democracy. ...

Eighty-five percent of small farmers in Cuba pay rent and live under the constant threat of being evicted from their plots of land.

More than half of our best farmland is in the hands of foreign owners.

In Oriente, our biggest province, the holdings of the United Fruit Company and the West Indian Company extend coast to coast from north to south.

Some 200,000 peasant families don't have a square meter of land to till to provide food for their starving children.

On the other hand, nearly 300,000 *caballerías* [10 million acres] of productive land owned by powerful interests remain uncultivated. ...

Except for a few food processing plants, lumber mills, and textile factories, Cuba continues to be primarily a producer of raw materials. We export sugar to import candy. We export hides to import shoes. We export iron ore to

import plows. ...

Just as serious or even worse is the tragedy in housing. There are 200,000 huts and hovels in Cuba. Some 400,000 families in the countryside and in cities are crowded into barracks-style housing and shacks that lack even the most elementary sanitary facilities.

Some 2.2 million of our urban population pay rents that absorb between one-fifth and one-third of their incomes.

Some 2.8 million of our rural population and those who live on the outskirts of our cities lack electricity. ...

Death is the only liberation from such poverty and here, yes, the state is most helpful. Ninety percent of children in the countryside are devoured by parasites that enter under the nails of their bare feet. ...

Crime of unemployment

When the father of a family works only four months a year, how can he buy clothing and medicine for his children? They will grow up with rickets. At age thirty they won't have a single healthy tooth in their mouths. They will have heard ten million speeches and will finally die of poverty and deception. Public hospitals, which are always full, accept only patients recommended by some powerful politician who demands in return the vote of the unfortunate person and his entire family so that Cuba may continue forever in the same or worse condition.

In face of these facts, is it not understandable that from May to December over a million people are jobless? ...

When you try a defendant for robbery, honorable judges, you don't ask him how long he has been unemployed. How many children he has. Which days of the week he ate, which he didn't. You aren't concerned at all with the social conditions he faces. You send him to jail without further thought. But the rich man who burns warehouses and stores to collect insurance doesn't go to jail — even though a few human beings may have gone up in flames as well — because he has more than enough money to hire lawyers and bribe judges.

You imprison the poor wretch who steals because he is hungry. Yet not one of the hundreds of thieves who steal millions from the government has ever spent a night behind bars. You dine with them at the end of the year in an aristocratic club and they enjoy your respect.

In Cuba, when a government official becomes a millionaire overnight and enters the fraternity of the rich, he could very well be greeted with the words of that wealthy character in Balzac — Taillefer — who in his toast to the young heir to an enormous fortune, says:

Gentlemen, let us drink to the power of gold. M. de Valentin, who has become a millionaire six times over, has become a power. He is a king, he can do anything; he is above everyone, as are all who are rich. For him from now on, the statement that "All Frenchmen are equal before the law" is a lie inscribed at the opening of the legal code. He is not going to obey the law; the law is going to obey him. There are neither scaffolds nor executioners for millionaires.*

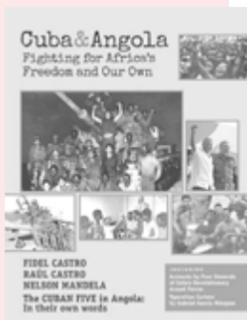
* From 1831 novel by Honoré de Balzac *La peau de chagrin* (The wild ass's skin).

More reading on Cuban Revolution ...

"Those not willing to fight for the freedom of others will never be able to fight for their own" — Fidel Castro



Cuba & Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own
The story of Cuban internationalism in Angola that dealt a blow to South Africa's apartheid regime. \$12



To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' Against Cuba Doesn't End
by Fidel Castro & Che Guevara \$18



In Defense of Socialism: Four Speeches on the 30th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution
by Fidel Castro \$15

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US gov't pressures Venezuela

Continued from front page

sharp, with long lines for basic staples, such as milk, corn flour, sugar and cooking oil that are sold cheaply at government-regulated prices. "When oil was \$100 a barrel, these items were abundant," said Carolina Alvarez, a writer and editor who lives in the city of Cagua, west of Caracas, in a phone interview Aug. 6. "Other foods, such as meat, are readily available but the prices have soared," she said.

"Many people are changing their habits, though they're not happy about it," Alvarez added. "We're eating a lot of vegetables and fruit, but not much bread. I used to eat meat every day, now it's maybe once a week."

The collapse in world oil prices over the last two years has had a deep impact in a country that has the world's largest proven oil reserves. The government of President Hugo Chávez, first elected in 1998, used oil revenue to fund a range of social programs and price controls that improved conditions for working people. It also sold oil at preferential prices to Cuba and other countries in the Caribbean — one reason for Washington's implacable hostility. These policies have continued under Maduro, who took office following Chávez's death in 2013.

At the same time, most industry and agriculture remain in the hands of the capitalist class. Many of these bosses claim the government's policies prevent them from buying raw materials and producing at a profit.

The U.S.-based company Kimberly-Clark closed its Venezuelan factory July 9, claiming it lacked raw materials, and laid off more than 900 workers. The government took over the plant, which produces toilet paper, diapers and sanitary pads, and says workers have resumed production.

Many government-subsidized goods are bought up by speculators, who resell them at 10 times the price or more. "This has become a way of life for some people," said Ana Barrios by phone from Caracas Aug. 9. Barrios is a member of the Colectivo Surgentes, a community organization that functions in the working-class San Agustín del Sur area of the city.

Besides the drop in oil prices and "economic war" by the bosses, "there's undoubtedly corruption in the distribution of food and other goods, like soap," Barrios said. To deal with the situation, some neighborhood groups are taking initiatives to contact rural cooperatives to sell produce directly to the residents, without middlemen, she said.

A year ago the Venezuelan government closed its border with Colombia, in an attempt to block the smuggling out of subsidized food and gasoline. Facing growing shortages, officials temporarily reopened the border to foot traffic in July, and tens of thousands crossed to shop. "But the prices in Colombia are too high for most people to afford," Alvarez said.

The squeeze on working people is exacerbated by Venezuela's \$120 billion foreign debt. Another \$4.7 billion in debt payments are coming due this fall. The government's cash reserves have fallen from \$30 billion in 2011 to

\$12 billion today, making it harder to import food, medicine and other necessities.

Opposition push recall vote

In face of these worsening conditions, Maduro's United Socialist Party of Venezuela lost its majority in the National Assembly in December elections. Since then the opposition coalition Democratic Unity Roundtable has campaigned to hold a referendum to recall Maduro. On Aug. 1 the National Election Council approved the first of two petitions needed to hold such a vote. Opposition groups want a referendum to happen this year, which could force new presidential elections. If Maduro were recalled after Jan. 10, the vice president would finish his term, which runs to April 2019.

During a visit to Argentina Aug. 4, Secretary of State John Kerry demanded the Venezuelan government "embrace the recall referendum, not in a delayed way that pushes it into next year."

As part of ramping up the pressure, U.S. prosecutors announced Aug. 1 the indictment of Venezuelan Gen. Néstor Reverol on U.S. charges of drug smuggling. The next day, Maduro appointed Reverol minister of interior and justice.

In July, Citibank said it would close the accounts of the Venezuela Central Bank and Bank of Venezuela within 30 days — a move Maduro denounced as a "financial blockade."

'Protest US threats, intervention'

"The Socialist Workers Party stands in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Venezuela," Alyson Kennedy, the SWP's candidate for U.S. president, told the *Militant* Aug. 9. "Working people all over the world should protest Washington's threats and intervention there."

In one example of solidarity, the Jamaican government announced July 29 it will send food, medicine and fertilizer to Venezuela, as payment

Migrant workers in Saudi Arabia face mass layoffs

BY SETH GALINSKY

The plight of tens of thousands of Pakistani, Indian, Filipino and other migrant workers stranded in Saudi Arabia is a microcosm of the impact of the worldwide capitalist economic depression on working people. Construction companies stopped paying their wages seven months ago and near the end of July cut off food, water and electricity to many of the camps where they live.

After the drop in oil prices from more than \$100 a barrel in July 2014 to less than \$45 a barrel today, the Saudi monarchy continued to maintain high production levels at a loss, determined to deal blows to competition from the increased flow of U.S. oil produced by fracking and from expanded production in Russia.

The government delayed payments to construction contractors and slashed spending on construction by some 50 percent.

The Saudi Binladin Group — the country's largest construction outfit

New Zealand action defends access to abortion



Militant/Baskaran Appu

THAMES, New Zealand — A picket to counter harassment of women who use the local hospital here to receive abortions drew 25 people in this small town an hour and a half drive south of Auckland Aug. 5. The protest was the first in a series of activities planned to counter anti-abortion protesters who gather outside Thames Hospital every Friday.

"It's a small community and lots of people drive past this spectacle of fear and intimidation," said Scott Summerfield, who, with members of the Abortion Law Reform Association of New Zealand, helped organize the picket and public meeting. "It's fundamental to support women on this issue."

Abortion is illegal in New Zealand except in cases of serious danger to the life or to the physical or mental health of a woman, risk of "serious handicap" to the fetus, incest or a woman's "severe mental incapacity." Rape is not considered legal grounds. After 20 weeks of pregnancy, the restrictions are tighter.

Many drivers honked their horns in support as they passed the picket.

Thames Hospital also provides abortions for women from the neighboring Bay of Plenty region, including the city of Tauranga with 111,000 people, because the District Health Board there does not provide surgical abortion.

Women often are forced to undergo ultrasound scans, meaning delays that average 25 days, and may have to see up to five different counselors or doctors before they can get an abortion, Green Party Member of Parliament Jan Logie told the public meeting.

— FELICITY COGGAN

for oil received at preferential rates through PetroCaribe. That initiative, taken by the Chávez government in 2005, has been a lifeline for Cuba, and many other Caribbean countries.

The crisis in Venezuela has reduced petroleum shipments to Cuba by about 20 percent so far this year. But Cuba's solidarity with Venezuela "will not be weakened in the slightest," said President Raúl Castro, speaking to the National Assembly July 8 about the challenges confronting the revolution.

Some 46,000 Cuban volunteers are working in Venezuela today. Best known internationally is Cuba's medical cooperation, which has made health care available to millions of workers and farmers in Venezuela, but the internationalist solidarity is much broader. On July 31, a celebration in Caracas marked the 12th anniversary of collaboration in sports and recreation, which more than 3,000 Cubans are helping promote in Venezuela today.

— reportedly laid off 50,000 workers. Thousands more were thrown out of work by competitor Saudi Oger, a company that received an award from *Forbes* magazine as one of the Top Companies in the Arab World in 2015.

Three million Indians, 1.8 million Pakistanis and 1.2 million Filipinos are among the 30 percent of the country's population who are migrants. These workers comprise three-quarters of the workforce for private companies.

The nonpayment of wages has a huge impact in the workers' native countries. Indian workers sent \$11 billion in remittances home last year. Remittances make up 29 percent of Nepal's gross domestic product.

Migrant workers have few rights in Saudi Arabia. They can't change jobs without permission of their employer. They can't get exit visas without a "no objection" permit from the boss. Nor can they legally remain in the country without an *iqama* — a resident permit — from their employer. The layoffs left thousands in no-man's land.

"We can't even leave our rooms," Adam Ali, 26, a plumber from India living in Jeddah, told the *Wall Street Journal*. If caught without an *iqama* the workers face fines or jail.

After word got out in the media that food was cut off at some camps where Indian workers live, the Indian government intervened. Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said the Saudi regime has now agreed to provide free medical attention and food to the stranded workers, to allow some to seek employment with other companies, to issue exit visas and provide plane fare home for those who want to leave, India's NDTV reported Aug. 4. The workers would be allowed to register their claims of unpaid wages and bonuses with the Labour Office of Saudi Arabia.

"They promised to send us back home, but didn't give any assurance of our wages," a former worker for Saudi Oger told Scroll, an Indian news website. "How can we go home without a penny in our pocket?"

Turkey: Erdogan cracks down, blames US, EU for failed coup

BY EMMA JOHNSON

In the aftermath of the failed July 15 coup by a section of the military against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, his government has deepened a crackdown on political rights and those it considers political opponents.

Erdogan and others in his government have accused Washington and imperialist powers in Europe of siding with the military faction behind the coup, and have praised Moscow for its “unconditional” support. Meanwhile, the deal between Ankara and the European Union to reduce the flow of Syrian refugees to Europe in exchange for travel rights for Turks in Europe is coming apart.

Once envisioning themselves as a Middle East power, the capitalist rulers in Turkey were pushed to the sidelines when Washington signed a nuclear agreement with Tehran in July 2015 as part of a deal to get the Iranian government’s help to stabilize the Middle East.

Since then, Erdogan has sought ways to maintain Turkish influence in the changing relationship of forces.

As the coup was going down to defeat, President Barack Obama issued a state-

ment supporting “the democratically elected Government of Turkey.” Ankara claims the U.S. government’s refusal to extradite Fethullah Gulen — a Sunni Muslim cleric and former Erdogan ally who the Turkish government says was behind the coup — shows Washington’s sympathy with the plotters.

Erdogan declared a three-month state of emergency and has dismissed close to one-half of the 325 generals and admirals in the army, navy and air force. More than 10,000 soldiers have been detained and 3,000 discharged.

The government has fired close to 2,700 judicial staff, including two judges on Turkey’s highest court, and 9,000 cops. More than 21,000 teachers have been fired or suspended. All university deans in the country were forced out and more than 100 media outlets have been closed.

On Aug. 9 Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks in St. Petersburg, Russia. Putin said Moscow would gradually lift economic sanctions imposed after the Turkish military shot down a Russian jet near Turkey’s border with Syria last November. Erdogan



Reuters/Sertac Kayar

Tens of thousands rally July 31 in majority Kurdish city of Diyarbakir, Turkey, to denounce attempted coup and call for talks to end Turkish government’s war against Kurdish people.

apologized for the shutdown June 27.

Agreement between Moscow and Ankara on Syria is less likely. The Turkish regime has pushed for the removal of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad and has aided Islamist groups fighting his regime. “It’s well known that we are far from agreeing on the issue of Syria,” Putin told the press, “but we have a common goal: that this crisis needs to be resolved.”

Washington worries about the effects

on the Turkish armed forces of Erdogan’s crackdown. Ankara has the second largest military of any NATO state. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Joseph Dunford visited Ankara Aug. 1 and met with his Turkish counterpart. Dunford said he was assured that Ankara will “continue to provide access” to military facilities in Turkey, including the Incirlik Air Base.

The base is crucial to the U.S. war against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. It also houses dozens of U.S. nuclear bombs, guarded by U.S. troops.

All opposition political parties in Turkey condemned the coup attempt. Erdogan invited those parties, except for the Kurdish-based Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP), to join a million-strong rally in Istanbul Aug. 7 to celebrate the coup’s defeat. Erdogan pledged there to reinstate the death penalty, a warning to any who would oppose his rule.

The HDP organized its own rallies denouncing the coup beginning in Istanbul July 23 and continuing in the Kurdish-majority southeast, where tens of thousands took to the streets in Diyarbakir July 31. HDP leaders called for talks to resolve the Kurdish conflict and an end to the ban on visits to Abdullah Ocalan, the imprisoned leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Representatives for imperialist governments in Europe have used the crackdown to call for ending all talks with Ankara on joining the European Union and to deny visas to Turkish citizens.

“We have to face reality: the membership negotiations are currently no more than fiction,” Austrian Chancellor Christian Kern told the media Aug. 3.

Debate on Russia shows crisis of US foreign policy

Continued from front page

Afghanistan to the South China Sea.

The debate takes place as the Barack Obama administration moves provocatively to deploy battalions from the U.S.-dominated NATO alliance around the Russian border in the Baltics.

When leaked email correspondence revealed Democratic Party officials in Clinton’s camp had planned to discredit Bernie Sanders by calling him an atheist and a Jew, implicated Democratic leaders tried to deflect attention from their coarse and anti-Semitic actions by blaming Russia and Trump.

“It was the Russians who perpetrated this leak for the purpose of helping Donald Trump and hurting Hillary Clinton,” Clinton’s campaign manager, Robby Mook, said July 25. Democrats’ charges that Trump is soft on Moscow are not new. In March Clinton said that if Trump is elected, “it will be like Christmas in the Kremlin.”

After Trump jokingly suggested that Putin might dredge up missing Clinton emails sought in a congressional probe of her conduct as secretary of state, Michael Morell, former acting director of the CIA, said that Putin had “recruited Mr. Trump as an unwitting agent of the Russian Federation.”

US imperialism lost the Cold War

Following the fall of the murderous Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union in 1991, the U.S. rulers crowed they had won the Cold War and acted accordingly on the world stage. But Washington had depended on the help of Moscow’s repressive apparatus and counterrevolutionary Stalinist parties around the world to derail and tamp down working-class struggles.

Washington’s false assumptions led Democratic and Republican administrations alike to intervene abroad when the capitalist rulers saw instability or threats to U.S. interests.

Far from resulting in stability for U.S. imperialist exploitation, decades of war in Iraq and Afghanistan have torn up

the Middle East, left in their wake widespread death and destruction, resulted in the emergence of the reactionary Islamic State — led by former military commanders from Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq — and sent millions of workers from Syria and elsewhere to seek refuge in Europe.

Weakened and battered by a string of military disasters, Washington acts in contradictory ways. Sensing their impotence in the Mideast, the propertied U.S. rulers “pivot” to enlist Moscow’s help, along with that of Tehran, to try to end the war in Syria and defeat Islamic State. At the same time the Obama administration has moved provocatively to strengthen its military presence in eastern Europe — what Moscow regards as its “near abroad” buffer zone. The Kremlin considers this a direct threat. As well, Washington is “modernizing” its nuclear weapons arsenal in a \$1 trillion 30-year upgrade.

Top Pentagon officials warn of Russian “revanchist” moves to regain lost territory. But if there is a power trying

to regain lost hegemony and prestige, it’s Washington.

There is no new Cold War. Russia is no superpower. The collapse of oil and gas prices with the world contraction of production and trade have put the Russian economy in deep crisis and generated widespread discontent with the Putin government. The Russian economy contracted by 4 percent in 2015. Some 19 million Russians were living below the poverty level of \$139 a month. Earlier this year truckers protested for weeks against a new road tax.

However, Putin’s moves in Syria and the “near abroad,” and his efforts to strengthen military and economic ties with China and Turkey, show he senses U.S. imperialism’s post-Cold War weakness.

The wealthy U.S. rulers, feeling the pressure of the grinding depression they can’t solve and unable to impose a new imperialist order, will continue to veer on a vacillating and dangerous course no matter which capitalist politician wins the White House in November.

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US hands off Venezuela!

Working people across the United States need to stand with our brothers and sisters in Venezuela, speaking out against Washington's pressures, threats and provocations. The propertied rulers of the world's preeminent imperialist power see the deep economic crisis battering workers and farmers of Venezuela as an opportunity to bring down the government of Nicolás Maduro and install a regime that will be more subservient to the interests of the capitalist masters.

The toilers of Venezuela haven't forgotten how in 2002 Washington backed the attempted coup against the government of President Hugo Chávez, which was thwarted by working people who took to the streets. Nor the U.S. government's support for the failed bosses' "strike" that followed, an attempt to overturn the government and strangle workers' struggles by crippling production. Nor how, in a display of cynical arrogance, President Barack Obama has twice signed a "national emergency" executive order declaring the Venezuelan government "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States."

The Chávez government, and that of Maduro since, have sought to manage the capitalist mar-

ket, to use oil profits to fund social programs. They have collaborated with the revolutionary government of Cuba and taken initiatives throughout the Americas that encroached on Washington's imperialist prerogatives. This is what's earned them the undying hatred of the U.S. and Venezuelan capitalist rulers.

The target of Washington, and of the pro-imperialist parties seeking to recall Maduro, is the workers and farmers of Venezuela. They rightly fear working people as the force that is capable of ending their class rule, as the toilers in Cuba did in 1959.

The revolutionary government and working class of Cuba are setting an example of proletarian internationalism, making clear they will stand firm at the side of working people in Venezuela. "Cubans will never forget the support we received from the Venezuelan people when we were confronting great difficulties," Raúl Castro told Cuba's National Assembly July 8.

Now is the time to organize meetings and solidarity actions to demand: End all U.S. sanctions against Venezuela! Repeal the "national emergency" executive order and all other meddling in Venezuela's internal affairs! U.S. hands off!

SWP: Join Sept. 8 mine workers' protest!

Continued from page 4

ate and Congress in Illinois campaigning here. "Buses are going from Madisonville, Henderson and other towns here and in southern Illinois too."

Aker was talking about the Sept. 8 rally called by the United Mine Workers union to demand passage of the Miners Protection Act to prevent the cutting off of health care and pension benefits for retired coal miners and their spouses and dependents.

In 1946, after a national strike of 400,000 miners, the UMWA won the promise of lifetime health care from the federal government. A health and welfare fund for miners was set up, paid for by a coal tax, and run by the union and the government.

"They already told us that as of the first of next year we won't have medical coverage unless the bill is passed in D.C.," Aker said. "My wife's arthritis is treated with some of the same chemicals used to treat cancer. It would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars without the medical coverage."

"A clean coal-fired power plant was supposed to go up in central Illinois," Aker said, "but the companies building it backed out when the Obama administration withdrew funding for it."

Mine bankruptcies and shutdowns are not just affecting retirees, Aker pointed out. Younger miners who are laid off have to get by on unemployment or

jobs that pay far less.

In Sturgis, Lawrence Brown and Derrick Utley were preparing to fry some fish they'd caught. Brown had three years in the mines and Utley six before being laid off. Both now work at Liberty Tire rubber recycling for \$10 an hour.

"Not having the job in the mine has meant a real struggle," Brown said.

"I started out working for nonunion West Kentucky Coal, hand loading for 44 cents a ton," 90-year-old Charles Dixon, whose father had also been a miner, told Fein and Farley. "I mined coal for 40 years, the last 22 at Peabody."

"I wasn't part of the 1946 strike because I was working at a nonunion mine," he said. "My dad warned me against union talk. But I wanted a union. I left to work in a union mine."

"These were company towns all around here. The movies, drug store, clothing store, furniture store, houses, doctor — they had it all sewed up," he said. "If they caught you shopping anywhere else, they fired you. You paid for everything with company flicker [scrip]."

"President Truman made us a promise in 1946 and the government should live up to it," Dixon said. "I told my father when he retired, 'That's what saved you, the union and the pension and health care we won.'"

LETTERS

Addressing unemployment

In an otherwise excellent Reply To A Reader Aug. 15 entitled, "On coal, jobs: start with working class" by Maggie Trowe, I thought a piece was missing: the SWP's position on addressing unemployment now, a big part of the world capitalist economic crisis.

To those unemployed coal miners who have been laid off and the millions of others without work, one of the SWP's national campaign leaflets says:

"We are part of the fight for a government-funded public works program to create jobs at union-scale pay to replace crumbling infrastructure and build schools, medical, child care and recreation centers, and other things working people need."

Dan Fein

Chicago, Illinois

Prison censorship

I, too, had some trouble getting the May 30 issue of the *Militant* at this prison. I didn't think to question the decision, instead I had them send it to my mom (she enjoyed reading it). Interestingly, the employee chose to deliver part of the issue, removing only the pages she thought objectionable.

The *Militant* often provides news that we do not get from other sources (like CNN or the *Detroit Free Press*). I try to pass on

every issue to other inmates, and sometimes we end up having conversations about the plight of workers or the role of government.

I have a friend here who is from Eritrea. He can relate to many of the stories in the *Militant* because workers and the government in Eritrea are oppressed by U.S. capitalists, government officials and representatives of the U.N. It seems like stories about the Eritrean people would fit well in the *Militant*.

A prisoner
Michigan

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the *Militant* and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

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

Slow-burning depression

Continued from front page

jobs. They're either forced to accept part-time hours, a figure that increased from the previous month, temp jobs or some spot in what the business press calls the "gig" economy.

The so-called labor force participation rate — the percentage of workers who are employed or on the unemployment rolls "actively" looking for work — has dropped since 2000 from more than 67 percent to below 63 percent, a 40-year low.

For men ages 25-54, the number with jobs dropped from 97.9 percent in the 1960s to 88.4 percent in July this year. And for those without any college classes the rate was 83 percent.

"While the number of people who are unemployed fell by about 7 million between June 2009 and today," *Investor's Business Daily* said Aug. 1, "the number who are no longer in the labor force — either because they've quit looking for work or retired — climbed an astonishing 14 million."

Between 2009 and 2014 household incomes for workers in the bottom 20 percent declined by 8.4 percent. Over this same time frame 3.1 million people were added to government statistics as living in poverty.

This is the reality of what Clinton says is all good. Republican nominee Donald Trump, on the other hand, says workers do face problems. But his only answer is to promise that he alone can solve them. Everything else is demagoguery, or rightist threats against immigrants, Muslims and others.

Because their profit rates have been declining for decades, the capitalists have been holding back on investing in capacity-expanding plant and production. Instead, they've been speculating on stocks, bonds, derivatives and other forms of commercial paper, or hoarding their cash, and attacking the jobs, safety conditions and social and political rights of working people.

Workers employed in manufacturing are particularly hard hit. Durable goods orders in June declined 4 percent, its biggest drop in almost two years. Caterpillar Inc., which laid off thousands of workers in 2015, recently announced that additional job cuts are coming. Coal, oil and gas industry bosses have eliminated 220,000 jobs in the U.S. since September 2014.

Coal mining regions like Appalachia have been devastated as the coal bosses close mines and step up attacks on health care, working conditions and the United Mine Workers union.

Falling crop prices mean more and more farmers can't meet the cost of production. In the Upper Midwest, farmers lost \$58 per acre on corn and almost \$3 per acre on soybeans last year. As farmers' debts mount, banks are applying more pressure to pay up, with the threat of foreclosures.

While hunger and malnutrition continue to mark much of the world, the press says dairy farmers are overproducing and there is a "glut" of milk. From upstate New York to Wisconsin to Canada, Ireland and New Zealand, plummeting milk prices are forcing a deep crisis for these farmers, driving growing numbers off the land.

Plunging prices for raw materials have had their harshest impact on working people in semicolonial countries throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America. Oil prices have dropped from \$100 per barrel in 2014 to about \$40 today.

In Angola, where 45 percent of the gross domestic product comes from the oil and gas sector, the government has slashed funds for vital social needs.

"Thousands of people are dying of preventable illnesses and the nation's hospitals are out of medicine," reported the *Washington Post* Aug. 2. Last year the government "did not purchase a single dose of malaria medication," the *Post* said. "In the first three months of 2016, Angola had roughly 1.3 million cases of the disease. At least 3,000 people have died, according to the World Health Organization."

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