

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Acting on capitalist rulers' political crisis: Build young socialists and SWP
— PAGE 6-8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 81/NO. 26 JULY 17, 2017

UK elections reveal depth of rulers' parties political crisis

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — The results of the general parliamentary elections have thrown a spotlight on the political crisis of the propertied rulers in the U.K. and their parties.

The Conservatives — who had drooled over poll results promising a sweeping majority just weeks earlier — were punished, losing their majority. As the incumbent governing party, they were held most responsible by some workers and others for the devastating effects of the rulers' grinding assaults on working people and some middle-class layers, and the broader social crisis. Declining real wages, growing job insecurity, lack of affordable housing and a burgeoning health care crisis saw millions vote in protest or stay home.

Political developments — from the Brexit vote to this one — have caused

Continued on page 4

Calif. cannery strikers 'saw what we can do when we unite'

BY BETSEY STONE

HOLLISTER, Calif. — After a weeklong strike, workers at the San Benito Foods tomato cannery here won a \$1 an hour raise for all workers in the first year of a three-year contract. Before the strike the company was offering increases of only 18 cents, limited to lower paid workers. The raises will be 2.25 percent in the second and third years of the contract.

"The strike was a step forward," Augustín Sosa, a fork lift operator, told the *Militant*. "They saw what we can do when we unite."

The workers, members of Teamsters Local 890, went on strike June 23, on the heels of victories at two other vegetable processing plants in the area — Taylor Farms in Salinas, where a two-day walkout won an immediate \$1.50 an hour raise, and Earthbound Farms in San Juan Bau-

Continued on page 3

NY subway derailment shows crisis of capitalism



TWU Local 100

Transport Workers Union Local 100 members repairing track after June 27 train derailment. Government-run MTA has cut back on maintenance, safety, comfort throughout system.

Bondholders line pockets as mass transit crumbles

BY JIM BRADLEY

NEW YORK — The growing frustration and anger of working people with the dramatic increase in delays, breakdowns and daily abuse in the subway system here shifted to concern for passenger safety with the derailment of two cars on the A train during morning rush hour June 27 that injured 34 people, sending 17 to hospital.

Deteriorating conditions — cou-

Continued on page 9

Expand public transit, fight for workers power!

The following statement was issued July 5, by Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City mayor.

The mounting horrors that working people face as we use New York mass transit — from being trapped

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT

in packed, sweltering, stalled subway cars in dark tunnels, to risk of serious injury or death in derailments like the one that occurred on the A train in Manhattan June 27 — show the propertied rulers' disregard for our needs and safety. They show what is more and more in store for workers as a result of the normal workings of the dog-eat-dog capitalist system mired in a deepening economic, social and political crisis.

Transit workers face attacks on

Continued on page 9

Join new Socialist Workers Party branch campaigning in Albany



Militant

Margaret Trowe, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Albany, talks with Michael Grady, June 25. As part of party campaigning, SWP plans to put Trowe on November ballot.

BY JACOB PERASSO

ALBANY, N.Y. — "We're meeting workers every day who are affected by the bosses' deepening crisis, are fed up with the capitalist parties and are giving the Socialist Workers Party's communist program a hearing," Maggie Trowe, SWP candidate for mayor here, told supporters July 1 as they prepared to head out and talk to working people in the area. "We say workers must act on the rulers' crisis by building a movement that transforms millions of workers as we defend our class and become capable of ending the dictatorship of capital."

Trowe and supporters of the SWP

campaign knocked on doors in working-class neighborhoods over the weekend in Albany and a couple of nearby towns, winning several new subscribers to the *Militant*, and selling books like *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record*, *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* and *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

"On July 11 we will step up campaigning and begin collecting signatures to put the party on the Novem-

Continued on page 9

Canada tour builds support for Cuban Revolution

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Luis Morlote Rivas, first vice president of the Union of Cuban Writers and Artists (UNEAC) and a member of the Cuban National Assembly, and Sandra Ramírez and Yamil Martínez, both directors of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), spoke to several hundred people on a tour of Canada at the beginning of June. The Cuban revolutionaries spoke in Toronto, Niagara Falls, Winnipeg and Vancouver.

"Since Dec. 17, 2014, [when U.S. President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro moved to establish diplomatic relations] the U.S. government has imposed fines on 11 institutions — seven U.S. and four foreign — of over \$2.8 billion. There

Continued on page 3

Inside

Workers in Virgin Islands face brunt of US colonial rule 2

Chicago cops charged in cover-up of McDonald killing 3

Defend 'Militant' against Florida prison censorship 8

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Russian truckers continue strike, open political campaign

LA port truckers strike for Teamster recognition

Workers in Virgin Islands face brunt of US colonial rule

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The U.S. Virgin Islands, like nearby Puerto Rico, faces bankruptcy, wracked by both the worldwide capitalist economic crisis and their status as colonies of Washington, with working people hit the hardest.

With a population of some 103,000, the territory is composed of three large islands — St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas — and some 50 small islets and cays.

Mounting debts owed to wealthy bondholders have saddled working people there with a debt equivalent to \$19,000 per capita, on top of the effects of the 2012 shutdown of the colony’s largest employer, the Hovensa oil refinery. These have led to sharp cuts in basic services and workers’ living conditions. When investors didn’t buy into a new bond offering earlier this year, the government spent workers’ pensions instead to cover basic operations. At the same time fuel shipments for electricity on the island were halted for lack of payment.

In a country whose major industry now is tourism, Virgin Islands’ Gov. Kenneth Mapp imposed new “sin” taxes on alcohol, cigarettes and soft drinks.

The closing of the Hovensa refinery, jointly owned by the Hess Corporation and the state-owned Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A., one of the world’s largest, eliminated 2,200 jobs. The colonial government lost its main cash export and a key tax revenue source. The workers, represented by the United Steelworkers

union, lost their jobs with no ready alternatives.

The government of the Virgin Islands owes current and former employees over \$300 million in retroactive pay, dating back to 1989. The colonial regime tried to impose an 8 percent wage cut, but the move was overturned by the courts when the unions — the Steelworkers, St. Croix Federation of Teachers and others — challenged it.

Pension funds owed to some 18,000 workers have been gambled away on speculative investments by government authorities. One scheme put \$50 million into life viatrical insurance policies, which involve betting that a select group of elderly people will die quickly.

Other U.S.-occupied colonies are mired in similar economic crises. In American Samoa, a big tuna cannery closed after being required to pay the federal minimum wage. In Mariana Islands, retirees have been fighting against government attempts to cut pensions by 25 percent.

Government officials in the Virgin Islands are discussing a Promesa law like that imposed by former President Barack Obama on Puerto Rico. Washington would impose a U.S.-government fiscal control board with dictatorial powers over the other colonies’ finances, tasked with implementing layoffs, wage cuts and other attacks on workers to assure the wealthy bondholders get paid.

Attracted by its use for defensive purposes as the first imperialist world war loomed, Washington bought the

Protests oppose US moves to deport Kurds, Iraqis



Militant/Susan LaMont

ATLANTA — A spirited demonstration of some 75 people, mostly Kurds, marched here June 25 to protest moves by Immigration and Customs Enforcement to round up and deport refugees and other immigrants from Iraq, including from the Kurdish region. The following day, U.S. District Court Judge Mark Goldsmith in Michigan issued a 14-day stay of removal for 1,444 Iraqis nationwide who face immediate risk of deportation. His ruling extended an earlier order that had temporarily blocked deportation of 114 Iraqis in Michigan.

Muhammed Dezayee, Rebwar Hassan and Yahya Noroly were arrested by ICE here June 1. Eight Latino women from Conway, Arkansas, visiting family here, joined the action. “We wanted to show our solidarity with the Muslim community,” said Itzel Velasquez. “It’s not just Latinos who are being targeted.”

“I bring my solidarity with the Kurdish and Iraqi immigrants fighting deportation,” Lisa Potash, above center, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Atlanta mayor, told participants at the protest. “Working people must demand amnesty for all immigrant workers living here to strengthen and unify the working class and our fight against the growing attacks on our rights and wages.”

Actions against detentions of both Kurds and Chaldean Christians from Iraq took place in Nashville, Tennessee, and Detroit.

The threatened deportations were the result of a recent deal between Washington and Baghdad, where the Iraqi government dropped its long-standing opposition to accepting deported Iraqi nationals who face orders of removal. In exchange, Washington agreed to remove Iraq from the Donald Trump administration’s ban on travel from a number of majority Muslim countries.

— SUSAN LAMONT

Virgin Islands from Denmark in 1917. But it wasn’t until 1970 that residents there were allowed by Congress to elect a governor. In 1976 the islands were given the right to draft a constitution, but it requires approval by the U.S. Congress and the president to go into effect. Despite five constitutional conventions making proposals to the U.S. Congress, they were all rejected. The latest was turned down by President Barack Obama in 2009.

“The Caribbean’s main problem is its unsustainable level of accumulated debt,” Rafael Zamora Rodriguez,

Cuban Foreign Ministry interim director general for Latin America and the Caribbean, said Feb. 28, just prior to the opening of the First Association of Caribbean States Cooperation Conference. Revolutionary Cuba is spearheading the fight against colonial exploitation and oppression.

Cuba is also a member of the U.N. Special Committee on Decolonization, which met in Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, May 16-18 to discuss decolonization in the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories — including the U.S. Virgin Islands.

THE MILITANT

Justice for UK Grenfell fire victims!

The ‘Militant’ explains fire deaths in 24-floor working-class Grenfell apartment block were not a tragic ‘accident’ but a direct product of capitalist rule. To cut costs, management and capitalist politicians ignored known safety hazards, laying basis for a social catastrophe.



AP photo/Tim Ireland
Residents march on local gov’t June 16 to protest fire deaths of at least 79 people.

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Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

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Calif. cannery strikers

Continued from front page

tista where workers walked out and quickly won \$2.

Unlike the other walkouts, where the bosses conceded without a big fight, San Benito Foods responded by attacking the workers. They brought in replacement workers, threatened the strikers with termination if they didn't come back to work and said they were going to cut off workers' medical insurance.

Despite all this, not one worker crossed the picket line. Some of the replacement workers were convinced by strikers they shouldn't take the jobs.

They got solidarity from other workers. Railroad workers sent to pick up eight box cars of canned product wouldn't cross the picket line and left the cars behind.

"I was home when I got the call," said Isabel Alvidrez, one of the strikers. "I rushed with others to meet the train. We held up our signs and the workers told us they would not cross." Later that week the workers met the train again and again nothing moved.

Work at the plant is seasonal. The strike was initiated by the some 100 year-round workers preparing the plant for the busy season. Many of the seasonal workers joined them. In mid-July when the tomatoes begin to pour in, the number of workers will grow to over 400. All the workers, both full time and seasonal, are members of the union.

The workers have seen cutback after cutback in their wages and working conditions over the years. This is especially true of the seasonal workers who lost their medical insurance and pensions.

"Every contract has been take, take, take," said Raymundo Fregoso, who has worked at the plant for 16 years as a fork lift operator. Like many of the year-round workers, he said he was fighting for the seasonal workers, many of them women who work

in areas where it's over 100 degrees. "They work really hard seven days a week and when someone doesn't show up they have to work mandatory overtime for 12 hours," he said. "They're on their feet all day."

"It's good we went on strike and won something," said Maria Castañeda, a picket captain and seasonal worker for 33 years. "But I think we should have gotten more."

Like many seasonal workers, she will now make \$12.96 an hour. In the last two years of the contract, since the raises are based on percentages, those in higher-paid brackets will receive more. Castañeda said that for her and many seasonal workers the raises will be about 30 cents per year. "This is just the beginning of our fight," she said.

The strikers got support from the community, with people bringing water and food. Steven Hatch, a warehouse worker who is part of a Teamster organizing drive at Cal Cartage, drove up from Los Angeles with Socialist Workers Party member Ellie



Militant/Joel Britton

Striker Raymundo Fregoso, a fork lift driver, speaking at street gathering of workers June 30, during weeklong strike at San Benito Foods tomato cannery in Hollister, California.

Garcia to extend solidarity. "You've done a brave thing here. You deserve credit," Hatch told San Benito workers when they arrived in Hollister and found the strike had just ended. "The

workers at Cal Cartage will benefit by hearing about the victories won here."

Nora Danielson contributed to this article.

Canada tour builds support for Cuban Revolution

Continued from front page

is an economic war against our country," Ramírez told a public meeting of over 60 here June 10. The U.S. government continues to routinely sanction businesses maintaining even remote relations with Cuba.

Referring to Guantánamo, the U.S.-occupied Cuban territory where the U.S. runs a notorious prison for people Washington accuses of supporting terrorism, she said, "Guantánamo is more than a prison. It's a province in Cuba. The best part of the harbor belongs to the U.S. Cuban fishermen dream of being able to fish there." The Canadian Network on Cuba conference attended by the Cuban repre-

sentatives June 3-4 in Toronto voted to demand Washington's immediate withdrawal from Guantánamo and an end to the economic blockade.

Urging participants to organize actions across the continent in October to coincide with the annual United Nations vote on the continuing U.S. assault on the Cuban Revolution, Ramírez said, "I don't know what Trump will do but I know what Cuba will continue to do — building socialism, defending our social conquests."

"Cuba is showing how to build a new society, a better society," said Martínez, from the Canada desk of ICAP, "where the workers are heard, where the interests of the working

class are put at stake.

"Cuba must do what's possible to be self-sufficient in food. We need to increase exports and decrease imports. We remember the Special Period when the Soviet Union collapsed and the challenges and difficult times our people faced," he said. "But nothing shook the people's political support for the government. As long as there is a socialist revolution in Cuba, these conquests will remain."

Morlote Rivas was the featured speaker at a public meeting June 3 in Toronto, held during the 8th convention of the Canadian Network on Cuba.

One participant in the meeting expressed concern for the effects of the constant barrage of U.S. propaganda aimed at the Cuban people. "We don't censor anything coming from the U.S.," Morlote said. "The way forward is to deepen the revolution."

Those interested in learning firsthand about the Cuban Revolution can sign up for the volunteer "In Che's Footsteps" international brigade October 1-15. Contacting ICAP at alatina.csur@icap.cu, or call (778) 879-2759 in Vancouver or the Chicago Cuba Coalition at (312) 952-2618 in the U.S.

Chicago cops charged in cover-up of McDonald killing

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO — Chicago cops who witnessed fellow officer Jason Van Dyke shoot Laquan McDonald 16 times in October 2014 were charged June 27 with deliberately lying in police reports to help cover up the killing. David March, the lead detective assigned to investigate the shooting immediately after it occurred; Van Dyke's partner Joseph Walsh; and patrolman Thomas Gaffney were indicted for conspiracy, official misconduct and obstruction of justice. Special prosecutor Patricia Brown-Holmes left open the possibility that more cops will be charged.

"This indictment alleges that these defendants lied about what occurred during a police-involved shooting in order to prevent criminal investigators from learning the truth," Holmes said at a news conference. "The indictment makes clear that it is unacceptable to obey an unofficial code of silence." She added, "We will follow all roads where they lead and we will seek the truth."

The three cops face up to 10 years in prison if convicted. They are scheduled to turn themselves in for arraignment July 10.

After refusing for 14 months to release the cops' dashcam video of the killing, Chicago authorities finally

did so on Nov. 24, 2015, in response to a court order. Van Dyke was charged with first-degree murder hours before the video was made public.

The tape clearly showed McDonald walking away from police as Van Dyke shot him 16 times — 14 after the young man was on the ground. The video contradicts the accounts Van Dyke and other cops gave at the scene, claiming that McDonald lunged at them.

Following the release of the tape, opponents of police brutality mounted sustained protests for months demanding justice and condemning both the cops and city administration for the cover-up. The public protests led to the firing of Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy, as Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel sought to contain political damage caused by the shooting and cover-up.

A few days after the video's release, the U.S. Department of Justice announced it was investigating whether the Chicago Police Department had systematically violated citizens' civil rights. In January 2017, more than a year after launching the probe, the Department of Justice issued a scathing report on the Chicago cops. "Among the most egregious uses of deadly force," the report said, "were incidents in which CPD officers shot

at suspects who presented no immediate threat."

"The indictment may not go high enough as it stands right now," G. Flint Taylor of the People's Law Office, a civil rights attorney who has pushed to keep the case in the public eye, told the press June 27. "But it certainly is a historic and significant event in terms of criminally charging police officers who engage in a code of silence."

"It's good these three were indicted," Black Lives Matter spokesperson Kofi Ademola told the *Militant*. "But what we want to see is their conviction and Van Dyke's conviction. That would begin to set a precedent that police cannot get away with killing and abusing people then lying about it to cover it up."

"This kind of thing goes on every day against working people, especially Black working people — from police beatings to cop killings — and they always use the excuse that they were attacked or feared for their lives," he said. "At the end of the day it's not going to stop until the entire system of policing and prisons is abolished and replaced by a system that puts human needs before profits. Winning convictions of Van Dyke and the others is a step in that direction. So people need to keep the pressure on."

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

by Jack Barnes



U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War, the Socialist Workers Party concluded after the collapse of regimes and parties across Eastern Europe and the USSR that claimed to be communist. Contrary to imperialism's hopes, the working class there

has not been crushed.

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UK rulers' political crisis

Continued from front page

a deepening crisis for all political parties in the U.K. And they raise fears in the British ruling class, who see behind the votes growing working-class anger and labor battles to come.

Prime Minister Theresa May's authority is shattered. Former Conservative Chancellor George Osborne called her a "dead woman walking." Events since the vote, most notably the social catastrophe resulting from the Grenfell Tower fire and the start of Brexit negotiations, deepen the factional divisions between and within the rulers' parties.

The new Conservative government is proposing just eight substantive laws — all focused on Brexit — stretched out over two years, so as to avoid a vote next year on what would surely be a "no confidence" motion. May has secured an arrangement with the Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland for their support in such votes. But while the DUP deal allows the Conservatives to form a government, it threatens to add to the political crisis by undermining Northern Ireland devolution — the ongoing transfer of powers from London to the assembly in Belfast — to which the Conservative Party is committed. By associating the U.K. government with a Unionist party, they endanger alienating Republicans upon whose willing consent the Northern Ireland executive depends.

May clings to office

To cling to office, May says she will try to work "with anyone in any party." One proposal is to bind Labour into the Brexit negotiations by offering Keir Starmer, their shadow Brexit minister, a Privy Council place. Starmer would be drawn into government discussions on negotiations with the European Union, but bound to secrecy.

The government will also look for cross-party agreement on new "anti-terror" measures. Already — with bipartisan support — armed police in Manchester have started routinely stopping and searching cars, claiming to act as a "deterrent and reassurance." The Labour Party campaign was marked by leader Jeremy Corbyn's call for adding 10,000 new cops to Britain's forces.

The Scottish National Party, the governing party in the Scottish Parliament, was also punished in the poll, losing 21 of its 56 Members of Parliament. The Scottish Conservatives won 14 seats, up from one before the election. But this is a potential Trojan horse for instability. Scottish Conservatives have their own agenda, and leader Ruth Davidson is touted by some as a replacement for May.

The UK Independence Party saw

its electoral support hammered. Its vote collapsed from 13 percent in the 2015 election to 2 percent. With the Brexit vote, UKIP lost its central demand, and with May leading the negotiations, the party switched to a crude anti-Muslim agenda, resulting in hemorrhaging of its working-class support.

Political crisis deepens

The Corbyn-led Labour Party received 41 percent, just two points behind the Conservatives. Corbyn campaigned around the slogan "for the many, not the few," presenting himself as a radical outsider — both anti-Tory and outside the Labour Party old guard.

The Conservative Party leadership and much of the media ran an anti-Corbyn campaign, accusing him of being a "Marxist" for advocating some nationalizations and tax increases on those with higher incomes and being "soft on terrorism." His prospects improved with each attack.

The "soft on terrorism" allegation especially backfired. Corbyn turned the tables, condemning the government for cutting police and competing with May in a bidding war over curtailing political rights, glorifying the rulers' cops and spy agencies. He called for expanding "Prevent," a central pillar of the government's anti-terrorism strategy, that obliges civil servants, teachers and others to inform on anyone they think voices "extremist views."

The Corbyn leadership tastes blood and is demanding a new election. But Labour's own factional crisis, which last year saw mass resignations from the shadow cabinet, remains.

The shift to Corbyn was strongest among middle class layers, and especially among student youth whose aspirations for well-paying jobs in the U.K. and Europe are being dashed by the capitalist economic crisis and declining university standards. Corbyn made campaign pledges to end tuition fees and relieve the financial burdens on indebted students.

A layer of younger workers also voted for Labour. On average they are earning £8,000 (\$10,350) less in their 20s than their parents did, while the number living with their folks has sky-rocketed.

Overall, working-class votes were evenly divided between Conservatives and Labour. May competed for working-class support, with a parallel pledge to govern for the majority, not the privileged few. Conservative MP Robert Halfon proposed renaming the party the "Conservative Workers Party." Workers who favor Brexit and don't trust Labour to deliver it also voted Conservative.

The election registered that party loyalty, especially along class lines, is over. The Labour Party is today more like the Democratic Party in the U.S., no longer a social democratic party looked to by working people as theirs — whatever misgivings they may have had about its program and leadership.

"Voter volatility" is the expression of the deep-seated anger among workers and sections of the middle class. It is beginning to scare the rulers. Theresa May called it a "quiet revolution."

The anger contributed to the suc-

Marchers at London rally protest Grenfell catastrophe



Militant photos by Jonathan Silberman

LONDON — Grenfell Tower residents and supporters marched in a "Justice for Grenfell" contingent here July 1 in a protest against the Conservative government of Theresa May.

Many marchers were outraged by the Grenfell Tower catastrophe — a product of profit-driven bosses and their government backers from all bourgeois parties. They carried signs demanding justice for those victimized by the fire. Daniel Scott, a contractor who has installed sprinklers in council blocks in London told Communist League member Ogmundur Jónsson, inset, of the council leaderships' reluctance to install sprinklers. "They always say it costs too much. It makes no sense — all new blocks have to have them. And the luxury blocks have all the safety measures. They just don't care about ordinary workers," Scott said. "If there had been sprinklers in Grenfell Tower that fire would never have made it out of the kitchen and would never have caught the cladding."

Scott was among many protesters to get the *Militant* with the Communist League statement on the social disaster. CL members sold dozens of copies and 16 *Militant* subscriptions. Protesters snapped up 77 books by Socialist Workers Party leaders, including 18 copies of *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* and 14 of *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record*, both by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, and 15 of *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

The protest was called by the People's Assembly Against Austerity and backed by trade union leaderships and others. Their goal was to rally those angry over the conditions imposed on working people and youth under today's economic and political crisis of capitalist rule and to channel that anger into backing for the Corbyn-led Labour Party. Many protesters wore T-shirts supporting Jeremy Corbyn, the party leader, and carried placards calling for "Tories out." At the end-of-march rally in Parliament Square, Corbyn said he's determined to force another election.

— JONATHAN SILBERMAN

cessful campaign for the Communist League. "Workers are open to discussing a communist perspective — whether they ended up voting Conservative, Labour or not voting," said Peter Clifford, the League's candidate in Manchester Gorton.

Beneath the political crisis is the U.K.'s weakness in the face of world capitalism's growing disorder, and London's disproportionate decline in

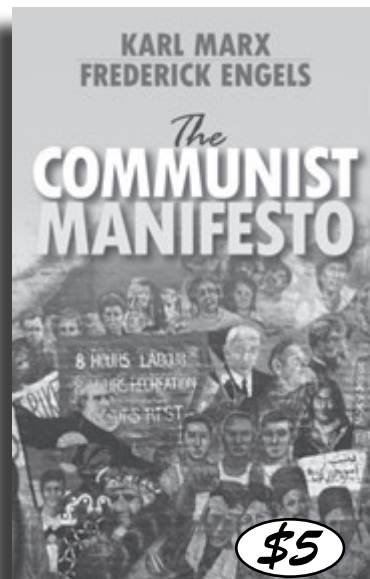
relation to its imperialist rivals. British capital is stagnant, trailing its rivals in productive business investment and labor productivity. The British rulers' army has been reduced to 78,000, and plans are afoot to cut it to 65,000, making impossible the sort of commitment of 46,000 soldiers London sent to back Washington at the peak of the Iraq war.

The political crisis isn't going away.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

UNITED KINGDOM Manchester

From the U.K. to the U.S.: Act on the Rulers' Deepening Political Crisis. Speaker: Peter Clifford, Communist League. Fri., July 14, 7 p.m. 301 Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. M1 2EH. Tel.: (016) 1478-2496.



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

—Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

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

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

New Jersey AT&T workers rally for a contract

PARAMUS, N.J. — “Every job a union job! What do we want? A contract!” chanted Communications Workers of America Local 1101 members and supporters outside the AT&T store here June 24. Car and truck drivers passing by honked in support.

The union organized the protest to press for a new contract for CWA union members who work in the AT&T wireless sector. In May, 37,000 CWA members held a three-day strike across the country demanding higher wages, against company demands to increase workers’ health insurance payments and for protection against the bosses outsourcing work to nonunion contractors. AT&T also has set up call centers in other countries where it pays workers substantially less.

Nikki Watson told the *Militant* that five years ago there were 1,400 union workers in the call center where she works. Now there are only 400. “The days we went on strike felt good,” she said. “We felt like we were being heard.”

— Candace Wagner

L.A. port drivers strike for Teamster representation

LOS ANGELES — Port truck drivers and warehouse workers carried out their 15th strike in the last four years June 19-23. The walkout began at XPO Logistics and quickly spread to California Cartage, Intermodal Bridge Transport and their subsidiaries. The drivers are demanding they be classified as employees — not “independent contractors” — so they can join the Teamsters union. About 100 workers participated in the strikes.

The bosses classify the workers as independent contractors so they can pay them by the load, rather than the hour, and to exempt the companies from labor regulations governing minimum wage, meal breaks and other protections workers have won over years.

The strike included protests at City Hall in both Long Beach and Los Angeles. Recently, L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti and Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia announced that zero emission trucks will be required at the ports by 2035. “We want clean air too, but they need to raise the wages,” port driver Domingo Avalos told the *Militant*. “These companies are abusing us. They act like we aren’t employees and we are.”

Prior to 2008, many of the 16,000 trucks used by 800 companies that do short hauls from the ports were older trucks nearing the end of their service. When these trucks were banned from the ports, companies forced drivers who could no longer afford their own truck into leasing agreements. Drivers turned in their old trucks as a down payment for a new one, and suddenly found themselves deeply in debt.

In the last six years, port truck drivers have filed 875 claims with the state Department of Labor Standards Enforcement, according to the Teamsters.

In 376 cases, drivers were found to be employees and the bosses owed them some \$40 million in stolen wages and penalties. More than 100 other cases are still pending.

Where the bosses can’t use the “independent contractor” con game, like for California Cartage warehouse workers, they try to find other ways to keep the union out. The Teamsters were defeated in a union election last December. “When we had the vote, the owner said that if we voted in the union, he was going to file for bankruptcy and shut down the warehouse,” one worker who requested anonymity told the *Militant*. The Teamsters have challenged the results of the vote.

— Bill Arth



Militant/Rebecca Williamson

Port truck drivers rally at Los Angeles City Hall June 23 during strike demanding bosses recognize them as employees, not “independent contractors.” They seek to join Teamsters union.

Russian truckers continue strike, open political campaign

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Long-haul truckers in Russia are into their fourth month of a hard-fought battle to force the government to scrap onerous highway taxes that threaten to bankrupt them. They have fought cops and National Guard troops, broken through a national media blackout, won solidarity and joined in other anti-government protests. Nationwide demonstrations June 12 against government corruption and actions in Moscow opposing tearing 4,500 apartment buildings down have helped boost support for the truckers.

The Carriers Union of Russia, the truckers’ organization, recently announced that Andrey Bazhutin, the union’s leader, will run for president of the Russian Federation in the March 2018 elections. The union says this will give a real choice to the working class, the part of society that “now is suffering most of all and is most tired of all about the critical situation” in the trucking industry and the industries it works with.

Bazhutin was interviewed by Open Russia after his campaign was announced June 14. They wanted to know how the union would finance it. “We have huge human resources,” he answered, “our co-workers, our friends and family, our comrades.”

There haven’t been any parties speak-

ing for the working class in Russia for decades, he said. “Therefore we decided to act on our own.” We will speak not just for the truckers, he said, but for workers in education, in medicine and other industries, as well as farmers.

The long-haul truckers began their protests at the end of 2015, when the government established what’s called the Plato system. It imposes a toll equivalent to 4 cents per mile on trucks weighing more than 12 tons. Following protests by thousands of drivers, the government postponed implementing the toll until last March. When it did go into effect, truckers responded with a national strike. Since then more than 30,000 workers in 60 cities have joined the walkout for periods of time.

Strikers forced to return to work to feed their families have spread the word about the fight along their routes.

In the city of Engelsk in the southern Saratov region, truckers beat back a June 5 attempt by cops to break up a strike encampment they had set up.

President Vladimir Putin has refused to comment on the truckers’ demands. The transportation minister has refused to meet with them. Government-controlled media blacked out any coverage of the actions for the first three months, and now claims it has been a failure.

But their fight has become well-

known. At the end of May, the governor of Astrakhan region met with strikers and agreed to take steps to meet their demands. A two-hour rally by 20 drivers June 3 on the Yekaterinburg ring road was covered by the media.

On Russia’s June 12 national holiday, protests against the government occurred in over 150 cities with tens of thousands participating. Called by anti-corruption campaigner Alexei Navalny, the actions became a rallying point for broader anger, as many workers face stagnating and unpaid wages, rising prices, and increasingly feel that politicians are not listening to ordinary people. Long-haul truckers joined in a number of cities. Of the more than 800 arrested in Moscow, 30 were drivers.

The truckers’ actions coincide with protests in the capital demanding an end to city government plans to tear down 4,500 apartment buildings, home to roughly 1.6 million people who would be moved elsewhere. The land occupied by these buildings, called Kruschevki, after the Soviet premier when they were built in the 1960s, has soared in value, and politically connected, profit-hungry housing developers now hope to cash in.

The largest protest to date — marked by the slogan “Renovation=Deportation” — took place June 18, with truckers participating.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 17, 1992

Facing government intransigence at the negotiating table and a campaign of intimidation involving assassinations and massacres, workers, youth, and rural toilers across South Africa are joining in a sustained series of mass rallies, protest marches and strikes called by the African National Congress.

The country was shut down June 29 as millions observed a day of mourning for some 40 residents of Boipatong township killed in an attack organized by the regime’s security forces.

“We are determined that the minority in this country is not going to dictate to the majority,” [Nelson] Mandela said in response to the South African regime’s insistence that minority veto rights be codified in any new government. The ANC has long fought for majority rule, based on one person, one vote.



July 10, 1967

CLEVELAND — Over 53,000 striking rubber workers across the country are now in their third month of picketing Firestone, Uniroyal, Goodrich and General Tire. Strikers said they were “in too deep now to settle for less than we want.” The companies want a three-year contract while the workers want a one- or two-year contract; and the companies are offering wage increases of a few cents while the workers want a substantial increase of \$2 or more.

When asked what they thought about the United Rubber Workers not striking Goodyear Rubber, one man said, “A union means unity, and we should all strike together.”

One striker said he was working on the same machine he had in 1945, but then he had to produce five-and-one-half tires a day, while today he has to put out 13 tires a day.



July 18, 1942

Puerto Rico, U.S. island colony in the Caribbean, came into the lime-light July 5 with the report that President Roosevelt had approved a plan under which the island could elect its own governor in 1944 or thereafter.

The promise of the right to elect a governor — remote as it leaves the Puerto Rican people from actual freedom from American imperialism — reflects the growing disturbance of the administration. Roosevelt’s promise is not a sudden spasm of generosity. It does not signify any intention to give up control over Puerto Rico.

Even as Roosevelt made his promise, leaders of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party languished in the Atlanta federal penitentiary with ten year sentences on charges of “sedition” for having advocated independence.

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Acting on capitalist rulers’ political crisis to build the young socialists and Socialist Workers Party

**TERRY EVANS
AND JOHN STUDER**

“Developments over the last 72 hours make it easier than ever to see the unfolding politics at the center of our discussions and debate here,” Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, told the 340 participants in the 2017 SWP Active Workers Conference, held June 15-17 in Oberlin, Ohio. “As the banner behind me says — ‘Act on the rulers’ deepening *political* crisis’ by taking the party and young socialists ‘deeper into the working class.’”

The day before the gathering opened, the unrelenting, monthslong crusade by liberals in the Democratic Party, the middle-class left and the media to invalidate or reverse the outcome of the 2016 election had spawned an attempt to assassinate Republican members of Congress.

James Hodgkinson, a Bernie Sanders supporter, had fired a semi-automatic rifle and handgun into a group of Republican representatives practicing for an annual congressional baseball game. The shooter’s goal was to kill as many Republican congressmen on the ballfield as possible, Barnes said. Only return fire from the security team assigned to House Republican Whip Steve Scalise prevented the bloodshed from being worse than one person seriously wounded — Scalise — and four others injured. Hodgkinson was killed.

Self-proclaimed Democratic Party “progressives,” backed by currents in the Republican Party and even many would-be “revolutionaries,” were deeply shaken by the 2016 election results.

Above all, Barnes said, they fear the workers who voted for Donald Trump, hoping he marked a change both from what they’d faced under George W. Bush and Barack Obama and what they knew they could expect from the gamut of business-as-usual Republican primary candidates.

Many had previously voted for Obama, seeking change, but Democratic Party liberalism had failed them. Barnes pointed to a map of the United States on display in the conference hall

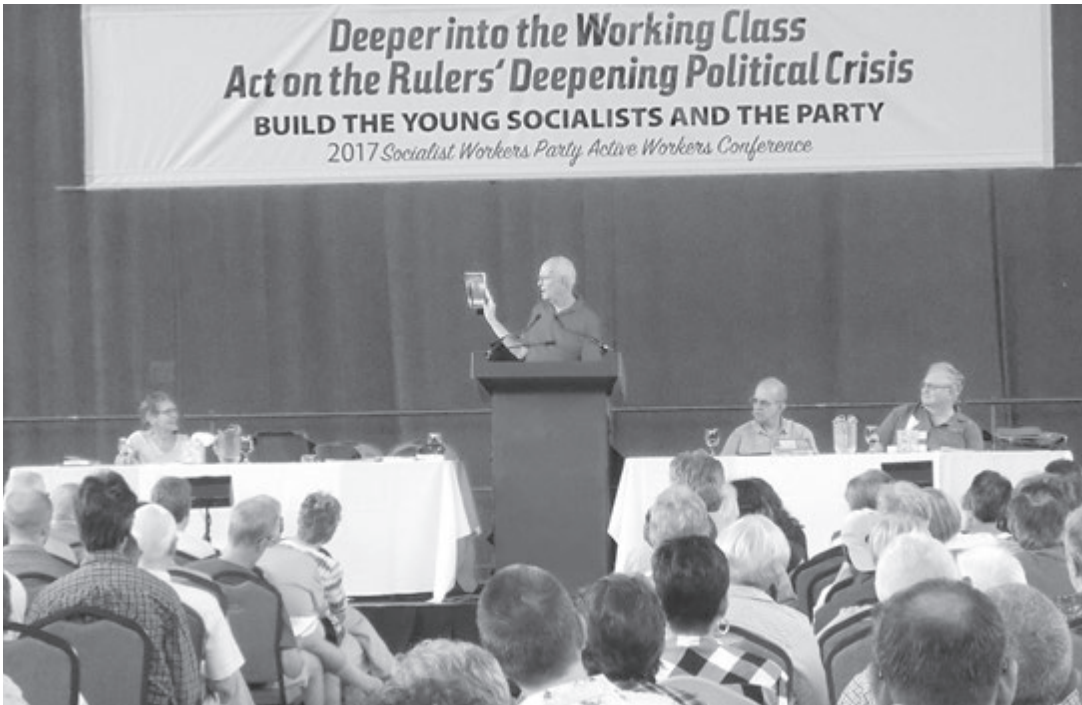
illustrating in bright orange the more than 200 counties — most in the Upper Midwest and Northeast — won by Obama in 2008 and 2012 that had Trump majorities last November.

These working people voted for Donald Trump, *not* for “the Republican Party nominee.” They wanted him to act on his pledge to “drain the swamp” in Washington. Growing numbers of workers no longer consider themselves either Democrats or Republicans, posing a crisis for the capitalists’ long-standing two-party system, Barnes said.

Both parties face deepening divisions that are changing how they’ve functioned for decades to maintain capitalist exploitation and political rule. Playing on mounting losses in recent years by Democrats associated with party “regulars” such as the Clintons and Obama, those looking to Bernie Sanders as well as other disgruntled “progressive” Democrats are determined to take over and shape what they misleadingly portray as a “working-class party,” even if the price is further electoral losses for the time being.

Political crises with similar roots, Barnes added, are destabilizing the rulers’ governments and parties in the United Kingdom, France and elsewhere.

Bourgeois liberals and others fear the 2016 U.S. election results portend a coming rise of struggles by working people, whose living and job conditions and basic dignity are being hard hit by the cumulative impact of more than a decade of accelerated capitalist economic and social breakdowns. There’s never been a sharper contrast between what communists present as *the road toward a solution*, Barnes said, and what growing numbers in the propertied ruling families and their political hangers-on see as *the problem* — the beginnings of the working class coming toward center



Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, speaking at Active Workers Conference, with party leaders Mary-Alice Waters, Steve Clark, Norton Sandler. Economic, social and human calamity facing workers underlies capitalists’ political crisis in U.S., SWP leader said. Barnes holds up book containing 1960 speech where Che Guevara said Cuban Revolution “discovered, by its own methods, the road pointed out by Marx.”

stage in politics today.

In fact, many liberals, radicals and conservatives alike among the professional middle classes see workers who voted for Trump, as well as other working people — Caucasian, Black, and Latino — as “ignorant,” “lacking in culture,” and “insensitive.” They see us as the source of today’s crisis.

Workers face capitalist carnage

For millions of working people, Barnes pointed out, life expectancy has started to decline. The size of the active working class is shrinking — while the government and media crow about the country being on the verge of “full employment” — as take-home pay stagnates. Birth rates are falling, as hard-pressed workers start families at a later age and women put off bearing children and face more maternal health problems. Banking and financial capital rakes in an ever greater share of profits, while what the rulers call “economic growth” and investment in capacity-expanding plant, equipment, and employment remain at post-World War II lows.

Barnes called attention to soaring deaths from opioid use in the Ohio county where the socialist conference was taking place, especially in devastated former centers of steel, auto and other industries like Lorain and Elyria, and similar towns and cities across the U.S. In face of such carnage, Barnes said, the SWP finds greater interest among working people in talking with fellow workers campaigning for socialism in their neighborhoods, on the job, and during strikes and other labor skirmishes.

Only a proletarian party with decades of political continuity with the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and Cuban Revolution in 1959 can explain the world capitalist crisis unfolding before workers’ eyes. Only such a workers’ organization can present and carry out a party-building course to organize the working class in a revolutionary political struggle to take state power out of the hands of the employing class, their government and the Democratic, Republican and other bosses’ parties.

“It made an impression on me that so many workers are interested in the SWP’s perspectives,” Jonathan Batres from Los Angeles told the *Militant* after Barnes’ talk. Batres, who was attending his first socialist conference, described his experience campaigning with the SWP in working-class neighborhoods. He was one of more than a dozen young people who came to the gathering after working with party members and young socialists on a May Day brigade to Cuba, as well as in political activities where they lived and taking the *Militant* and books by party leaders to workers on their doorsteps.

The young socialists met together daily to discuss the politics of the conference and projections for common work.

In addition to the presentation by Barnes, the conference featured talks by SWP leaders Mary-Alice Waters on “Without Internationalism We Wouldn’t Be Communists: Reaching Out in Africa, Asia and Beyond” and Steve Clark on “New Avenues for Extending the Communist Movement in the Middle East.”

On the final day, Barnes, Waters and



Some 40 display panels in the meeting room illustrated conference themes with photos, cartoons, charts, book covers and pages from the *Militant*. They highlighted Socialist Workers Party’s working-class decades-long continuity, internationalism and lessons from struggles the world over.

Clark presented summary remarks addressing political questions and debates that had come up at several classes or during informal discussions at the conference. SWP leader Norton Sandler reported on meetings of socialist workers carrying out union and political activity in industry and prospects to expand this work, including the distribution of communist literature at plant gates and other workplaces.

Nearly 40 display panels around the gym where talks were held illustrated conference themes with photos, cartoons, charts, book covers and pages from the *Militant* over the years. A closing rally presented what party members, supporters, and young socialists will be doing over the summer, fall and beyond.

Calling out the political police

The employing class doesn’t see any “quick fix” to their deepening political crisis. But a substantial section of them are determined to undermine the legitimacy of the Donald Trump presidency, in a desperate attempt to re-establish some stability in their government and political parties.

To achieve this, Barnes said, they’ve now turned to the rulers’ political police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation. They’re seeking to criminalize political conflicts, using methods employed over decades against working-class militants, fighters for Black liberation, and the Socialist Workers Party.

In fact, Barnes said, efforts to bring the Department of Justice and FBI to bear to put Hillary Clinton in the White House go back to the 2016 election itself, involving the Obama administration, then Attorney General Loretta Lynch, Bill Clinton, FBI Director James Comey and others. Failing that, Democrats launched their post-inaugural offensive. After being fired in early May by President Trump, Comey leaked memos he’d written, with the aim — he told Congress — of getting a special prosecutor appointed.

The Justice Department quickly obliged, appointing another former FBI director (and Comey friend), Robert Mueller, as “special counsel.” As federal prosecutors always operate, Barnes said, Mueller is not starting with a crime and looking for an alleged perpetrator. To the contrary, he is starting with a target and working to cobble together whatever he can on Trump or those close to him.

All the while, the liberals and their media are happy to help along this intra-

ruling-class vendetta. It is a lesson of class history, Barnes said, that it is the liberals who first lead the charge against political rights when the capitalist rulers need to do so. That’s been true from Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, to John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, to the extraordinary hysteria we’re witnessing right now.

Deeper into the working class

To strengthen efforts by SWP members and young socialists to explain the rulers’ political crisis and the stakes for working people, Barnes said, the party must focus its activity among workers where they live, work and are engaged in struggles. Party branches need to adjust priorities to make more time to campaign among fellow workers — to show “revolutionary energy and zeal in propaganda,” as Karl Marx and Frederick Engels put it the rules they drafted for the world’s first communist workers party in 1847.

SWP members need to involve more political supporters of the party in this activity, as well as workers and young people who like what the party says and want to help expand the reach in the working class of the *Militant*, books by party leaders, and SWP election campaigns. This is the road to expanding the political influence of the Socialist Workers Party and recruiting new members.

Organizing solidarity with every union fight, small or large, is important today. Barnes pointed to striking silver miners in Idaho and the successful battle by berry pickers in Washington state who just won a union contract. The SWP has helped broaden support for these fights in the labor movement, as well as winning new readers of the party press and books such as *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People*.

It is along this working-class course, Barnes said, that the SWP takes part in struggles across the United States against anti-Black racism, police brutality, and assaults on Muslims and Jews, as well as fights for amnesty and against deportations of immigrant workers, in defense of a woman’s right to choose abortion, to end U.S. colonial domination of Puerto Rico, and to support and defend Cuba’s socialist revolution.

Barnes said the U.S. ruling class mistakenly believed they’d won the Cold War when the Soviet Union imploded some quarter century ago. They launched wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and

elsewhere in the Middle East and Central Asia. These wars have dragged on for years and remain unresolved, with untold death and destruction for millions of toilers. Washington’s course has also brought casualties and ruined lives for tens of thousands of U.S. workers and farmers deployed to fight and die for the interests of the capitalist ruling families.

The U.S. rulers pushed to expand NATO across eastern Europe to the borders of Russia, forcing new conflicts in the region and beyond. Class-conscious workers oppose all such imperialist military pacts, Barnes said.

NATO is less “an alliance,” he added, than a lopsided balance of forces among imperialist powers, totally dependent on Washington’s massive military might and capacity to project that dominance worldwide. It’s not “presidential” to say so, however. That’s why there was such a hue and cry in ruling-class circles in the United States and Europe when President Trump publicly pointed out this reality at a recent NATO summit meeting.

Party-building activity worldwide

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists, Barnes said, have growing opportunities to join in conferences, book fairs and political events around the world, to meet revolutionary-minded workers and youth, and to expand collaboration in building support for Cuba’s socialist revolution. That living revolution is an example for work-

ing people the world over of how we are transformed in revolutionary struggle, becoming capable of overthrowing capitalist rule, taking control of our own destiny, and offering solidarity to workers and farmers fighting in other lands.

Just in the coming few months, Barnes said, socialist workers and youth will participate in the World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi, Russia, in October; a brigade in Cuba marking the 50th anniversary of the death in combat of Che Guevara earlier that month; book fairs in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, the Philippines, and Cuba; and other gatherings from Nicaragua to Japan.

Perspectives for such activity from Turkey, Palestine and Israel, to Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan were the focus of a talk on “New Avenues for Extending the Communist Movement in the Middle East” by SWP leader Steve Clark. This includes new openings to reach working people and youth throughout this politically tumultuous region with books — in English, as well as translations into Kurdish, Arabic, and Farsi (spoken and read in Iran and Afghanistan) — by Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters, James P. Cannon, Farrell Dobbs, Evelyn Reed and other SWP leaders, by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, and by other communist and revolutionary leaders from Malcolm X and Thomas Sankara, to Marx, Engels, V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky.

Clark pointed out that the Trump administration has broken with the course of the Obama White House, which had looked to the capitalist regime in Tehran rather than those in Saudi Arabia and other Arab states to maintain stability in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere in the interests of U.S. imperialism. At the same time, President Trump hasn’t acted on his demagogic campaign pledge to “tear up” the 2015 nuclear pact with Iran, and is unlikely to do so.

Clark also discussed the accelerating fight for independence in the Kurdistan region of Iraq; prospects to build proletarian leadership of the Kurdish, Arab, Jewish, Iranian and other working people in the region; and a communist course to advance the fight for national liberation and workers power in Israel and Palestine.

Internationalism and communism

“The Cuban Revolution could not have survived without proletarian internationalism,” SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters said in her talk. She had recently

Continued on page 8



Several dozen conference participants signed up to join campaigning in Albany area to help build new branch of the Socialist Workers Party there and put Margaret Trowe on ballot for mayor. From left, Jonathan Batres, Jacob Perasso and Rebecca Williamson.

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Act on capitalist rulers' crisis

Continued from page 7

returned from the Fifth Continental Conference on Solidarity with Cuba hosted by the Namibian government in Windhoek, its capital city, June 5-7. Participation in events like this, in Africa and the world over, is an indispensable part of building a proletarian party in the United States, she said.

Prior to her talk, Waters introduced a video of remarks by Fernando González, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, given during the Namibia event. González was one of the five Cuban revolutionaries who spent up to 16 years in U.S. prisons for their work here defending Cuba's socialist revolution.

González described the deep impact of fighting as an internationalist volunteer in Angola alongside other Cubans, Namibians and Angolans to repel apartheid South Africa's invasion of Angola and secure Namibia's independence from the white supremacist regime. "No matter how many books I had read about colonialism," he said, "that was the real experience — seeing the effects of colonialism in that continent, but seeing also the peoples fighting the consequences of colonialism and fighting to overcome it."

Along with the substantial Cuban delegation to the conference, the three SWP delegates were the only participants from outside Africa. Internationalism is blood and bone of the Socialist Workers Party, Waters said. It is impossible to build a communist party in the United States without common work with revolutionary-minded workers and youth the world over.

A conference display recorded the trips in recent years by members of the SWP, Young Socialists and sister Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom to take part in political activity and to report on and bring solidarity to working people in struggle the world over.

A rally at the close of the socialist gathering presented a course of action for the rest of 2017 and beyond. It featured efforts by the SWP and young socialists coming right out of the June conference to help the new party branch in Albany campaign for Socialist Workers Party mayoral candidate Margaret Trowe, including

gathering signatures to put her on the ballot there.

Speakers also described plans by SWP and Communist League members, party supporters and young socialists to take communist politics more deeply into the working class, as well as to join in political events worldwide. More than \$37,000 was raised for the work of the Socialist Workers Party.

Preparing party's 100th anniversary

In his talk and summary presentation, Jack Barnes noted that in 2019 the Socialist Workers Party will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the communist party in the United States. That party was founded to emulate the Bolshevik Party, which in 1917 had led workers and peasants to take power from the capitalists and landlords in czarist Russia.

The SWP's unbroken continuity since then, incorporating the lessons of the 1959 Cuban Revolution and its communist leadership, is an irreplaceable source of strength, as the party responds to the rulers' political crisis today, prepares for the working-class combat



USW Local 5114

Striking miners at Hecla Lucky Friday mine in Mullan, Idaho, in March. Strikers won solidarity and financial support from fellow workers and unionists. Organizing solidarity with union fights is a key question for working class, said SWP leader Jack Barnes.

that's coming and builds the party workers need to lead the fight to overturn the dictatorship of capital in the world's wealthiest and most militarily powerful imperialist country.

On Sunday following the conference, a meeting of organized supporters of the communist movement discussed ongoing work to help design, prepare, print,

and promote and sell books on communist politics. The meeting also discussed how to advance efforts to raise monthly financial contributions to help the party expand its political work at home and abroad.

The SWP National Committee then met for two days to discuss implementing conference perspectives.

Defend 'Militant' against Florida prison censorship

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Prison authorities in Florida censored two more issues of the *Militant* in June, targeting front-page articles that reported on the paper's efforts to reverse the impoundment by officials there of three earlier issues of the socialist newsweekly in April and May.

The offending articles were titled "'Militant' files appeal against prison censorship in Florida" and "'Militant' fights to reverse censorship in Florida prison."

In the "Notice of Rejection" received by the *Militant* June 27, officials at the Avon Park Correctional Institution falsely claim that both the June 12 and 19 *Militant* "encourages activities which may lead to the use of physical violence or group disruption," "advocates or encourages riot, insurrection, disruption of the institution" and "presents a threat to the security, good order, or discipline of the correctional system."

David Goldstein, the *Militant's* attorney with the civil liberties firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky and Lieberman, has appealed all five im-

poundments to the Florida Department of Corrections' Literature Review Committee. Pending review, copies of the materials are impounded in all Florida prisons.

The previous issues that were impounded contained articles on the Socialist Workers Party's efforts to build this year's May Day actions, calling for amnesty for immigrant workers in the U.S. and an end to deportations.

"Rejection of these issues violates the free speech rights of both the author and the inmate recipients," wrote Benjamin Stevenson from the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, in a June 29 letter to the Literature Review Committee. "No penological reason justifies excluding inmates from reading about how undocumented workers are treated in the United States and how others plan to rally in favor of more progressive treatment."

"More alarmingly, Avon Park CI censored two recent issues of the *Militant* that reported Santa Rosa CI's impoundment, the newspaper's appeal, and characterized the Florida prison's response

as censorship of political speech," Stevenson writes. "This amounts to censorship of reports of censorship that could not possibly present a concrete risk to the safe operations of the prison."

"The banning of the specified issues of the *Militant* is an undue restriction on the freedom of the press and prisoners' rights," Karin Deutsch Karlekar, director of Free Expression at Risk Programs for PEN America, wrote. "The Literature Review Committee's claim that this material encourages physical violence or institutional disruption is without basis and their decision to censor the *Militant* should be overturned."

"We have a problem here in Baker Correctional Facility," a Florida inmate subscriber wrote to the *Militant* June 24. "Please do something so I can read my newspaper in peace. The *Militant* keeps us in tune on jobs, strikes and numerous other issues other newspapers can't and will not ink about."

The reader reported he has filed a grievance against the impoundment to go along with the *Militant's* appeal.

The *Militant* has 48 readers in Florida prisons across the state.

"We will challenge prison censorship anywhere authorities infringe on the political rights of the *Militant* and our subscribers," said *Militant* editor John Studer. "Workers behind bars need access to a wide range of viewpoints, including the political opinions of the Socialist Workers Party."

Stop Prison Abuse Now, a Miami-based group working with prisoners, also sent a letter protesting the censorship.

To join the fight, send a letter of support to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

'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,' earmarked "Prisoners' Fund," to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

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Paris: BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15. Email: militant.paris@gmail.com

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Auckland: 188a Onehunga Mall, Onehunga. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140. Tel: (09) 636-3231. Email: clauk@xtra.co.nz

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: London: 2nd Floor, 83 Kingsland High St., Dalston. Postal code: E8 2PB. Tel: (020) 3583-3553. Email: clondon@fastmail.fm **Manchester:** Room 301, 3rd floor, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. Postal code: M1 2EH. Tel: (016) 1478-2496. Email: clmanchr@gmail.com

Fight for mass transit, workers power!

Continued from front page

their safety, wages, health care and pensions, and riders see mounting fares while never knowing what they'll face each day

The deteriorating conditions in the New York transit system reflect the catastrophic impact of this decades-long capitalist crisis on our lives, from long-term joblessness for millions, to increasing deaths from opioid drugs, and the impact on working people at home and abroad of Washington's unending wars in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Paying the interest on the MTA's skyrocketing \$37.5 billion debt to wealthy bondholders comes first under capitalism, and the bosses and their government demand that workers foot the bills.

Workers in Puerto Rico — as well as the Virgin Islands and other U.S. territories — who live under the boot of Washington's colonial domination, know through their own bitter experience how the capitalist system of debt bondage works. Under the dictates of a U.S.-imposed fiscal board, the Puerto Rican government has slashed pensions, wages for government workers, and closed schools and hospitals to pay bondholders on Puerto Rico's \$74 billion debt.

Working people in the U.S. are looking for a way to end the social devastation they face and to "drain the swamp" of bourgeois politics. They no longer have confidence in the two capitalist party shell game and are looking for a road to act politically in their own

interests.

The Socialist Workers Party says unequivocally that low cost, safe, efficient, comfortable, mass public transit is a basic necessity for working people, here and around the country.

And transit workers must win workers control over conditions on the job to protect themselves and transit riders alike.

Workers need to organize and fight for a massive, government-funded public works program to expand mass public transit nationwide; rebuild aging infrastructure such as roads and bridges; and bring the New York and other subway, bus and commuter rail systems to safe, reliable and comfortable operation — a program that would put millions of unemployed workers to work at union rates of pay.

Working people need their own political party, the Socialist Workers Party. This means fighting to build a movement millions strong with the power and leadership capable of replacing the political power of the capitalist rulers with workers power. Along this road we can begin to reverse the social catastrophe our class faces and force concessions from the propertied ruling families.

Join the Socialist Workers Party in backing workers wherever they take up the fight against the bosses' attacks, from Spectrum and AT&T workers here to food processing workers in California and striking silver miners in Idaho. Join the Socialist Workers Party!

Subway derailment reflects crisis of capitalism

Continued from front page

pled with increasing fares — in one of the largest subway systems in the world, has reached crisis proportions, reflecting the disregard of the bosses and their politicians for the lives of working people.

"I'm not going to use the MTA again," 31-year-old Harlem resident Sheena Tucker, a homemaker with two children who suffered a back injury in the derailment, said at a June 29 press conference.

"This was a serious derailment, with quite a bit of damage to signals and some structural damage to the walls," said Tony Utano, vice president of Local 100 of the Transport Workers Union. "Our members worked as fast and safely as possible to bring the system back to normal."

The problem for working people is that the daily "normal" in the subway and commuter transit system, managed by highly paid Metropolitan Transportation Authority officials and their Democratic and Republican political masters in the state and city governments, is the crisis conditions.

The MTA, a state-run agency that operates the city subways and buses, the Long Island and Metro-North railroads and area bridges and tunnels, carries one-third of all mass transit users in the country. The 112-year-old system has been deteriorating for decades. Worsening service and safety problems are accompanied by countless other indignities — lack of adequate seating on station platforms, no escalators at most stations, oppressive heat and lack of air, and near constant unannounced changes in routes and schedules.

As the transit bosses try to keep up with aging cars, signals and tracks, capitalist politicians in Washington, Albany and New York have cut funding. The burden — directly and indirectly — falls more and more squarely on working people.

The system's capital budget is hermetically sealed from its operating budget, which covers the wages, health care and pensions for 67,000 workers and, increasingly, the cost of the soaring bond debt to Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase and other banks and profiteers. This accounting scheme lets the bosses claim that the debt can only be paid for by cuts to workers' jobs and wages, and fare increases.

The alternatives they propose all hike costs for workers — from a "congestion fee" on drivers who come to Manhattan and tolls on East River bridges to increased taxes on gas.

The MTA bond debt load is now greater than that of 30 countries — a whopping \$35.7 billion. Inter-

est payments to the bondholders eat up 16 percent of the operating budget, and the percentage is growing. Meanwhile, the system degrades daily.

"What is needed today, immediately, is more financial resources for regular, ongoing maintenance to ensure that the system can handle today's record ridership," Local 100 President John Samuelsen said.

In 1990 ridership was 4 million a day, today it's 6 million. But in that period the fleet of subway cars has only increased by 27. Total track mileage has been *reduced* by five miles. On-time performance for almost all 24 lines has fallen dramatically. Today there are more than 70,000 delays a month, up from 28,000 in 2012.

The horse-and-buggy signal system that keeps the trains running was installed in the 1930s. Ten years ago the signals were checked every month, management has now cut signal checks to four times a year.

Over the past 25 years capitalist politicians have diverted billions of dollars from maintenance of the system into unnecessary and costly pet megaprojects, such as a \$10.8 billion tunnel to connect Long Island Rail Road trains to the Grand Central Terminal in Manhattan that will serve as few as 162,000 riders a day. A much ballyhooed extension of the No. 7 line from Times Square a handful of blocks to the west costs \$2.4 billion and carries less than 25 percent of the projected 32,000 daily riders.

State and city officials are battling to shift blame for the indignities and dangers back and forth, and each claims the other should pay more. Two days after the June 27 derailment, in response to the rising anger of working people, Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who is unofficially campaigning to be the Democratic Party's 2020 presidential candidate, suddenly declared the subways face a state of emergency and need billions in new funding. New York Mayor Bill de Blasio took a well publicized subway ride June 15, his first in two months, saying if Cuomo's MTA can't fix the problem, "I'd rather have the city of New York run it."

In contrast to these capitalist politicians, Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York mayor, explains that low cost, safe, efficient public transit is a necessity for working people. Hart says workers need to fight for a massive, nationwide government-funded public works program to expand mass transit, rebuild aging infrastructure such as roads and bridges, and bring the New York and other subway systems to safe and comfortable operation — a program that would put millions of unemployed workers to work at union rates of pay.

Campaign in Albany

Continued from front page

ber ballot as we knock on workers' doors all over the city, sell dozens of books and *Militant* subscriptions and win new campaigners," the candidate said. "We're inviting anyone who wants to help get out the ideas of the Socialist Workers Party to come and join in."

Trowe joined retired railroad unionist Jon Flanders to speak at a June 26 meeting organized by Albany Cuba Solidarity, describing their recent experiences in Cuba marching with hundreds of thousands of workers on May Day. Trowe also took part in the 12th May Day International Brigade of 300 workers and youth from 29 countries, did voluntary labor on Cuban farms, and participated in a seminar in Guantánamo, Cuba, calling for Washington to end its over 100-year illegal occupation of Cuban territory there.

Flanders explained the historic ties between revolutionary Cuba and the fight against U.S. colonial domination of Puerto Rico. "The Cuban and Puerto Rican people are like two wings of the same bird," Flanders said. He contrasted the conditions working people face in the two countries. "The Zika virus is rampant in Puerto Rico, while there have been only a few cases in Cuba," where the revolutionary government organized house-by-house spraying that has kept incidents of the disease to a handful, he said.

"I went to Cuba for two reasons," Trowe said, "to show solidarity with the Cuban Revolution and get ammunition to better defend it, and because I believe a socialist revolution in the U.S. is possible and I want to deepen my understanding of how workers and farmers made a revolution and have maintained it since 1959. Then I can use this as an example for working people here to emulate."

Both speakers and participants in the discussion spoke against recent moves by the administration of President Donald Trump to make travel to Cuba more difficult.

"This is the 12th consecutive administration in Washington seeking a way to overthrow the Cuban Revolution," Trowe said. "Remember how President Barack Obama explained, when diplomatic relations were re-established in 2014, that new tactics to overthrow the Cuban Revolution were required after 'doing the same thing for over five decades' had failed."

"I like what you say about the working class and I'd like to learn more about the Cuban Revolution," Adonist Barber, who works in a foster care home, told Trowe when she knocked on his door in nearby Scotia July 1. Trowe said she would send him information about the October Footsteps of Che Guevara Brigade going to Cuba Oct. 1-15.

Albany campaigners, joined by volunteers from New York and Philadelphia, campaigned throughout the region July 1-2 and enjoyed a potluck dinner and party Saturday evening.

As campaigners gathered at a McDonald's before spreading out to talk about the capitalist social and political crisis today, one person eating there called out to Young Socialist Sergio Zambrana, "Hey, Sergio, it's good to see you!"

C.J. Turner, a worker from a sharecropper family in Mississippi, had talked with Zambrana on his porch steps the week before and said he liked the SWP program and wanted to meet the candidate. "I'll talk to my wife Lori and set a time for you to come over."

Workers and young people from Albany and beyond are invited to join young socialists and the SWP in the campaign and ballot drive July 11-Aug. 15, Trowe said. The campaign will hold a public rally at 5:30 p.m. Sat., July 15, at 405 Washington Ave. in Albany, followed by a dinner and social. Call (518) 903-0781 or email albanyswp@gmail.com to join the campaign.

Correction

The article in issue no. 25 titled "Shooter's Bullets Driven by Liberal Fury, Capitalist Political Crisis" incorrectly referred to the Republican winner in Georgia's 6th Congressional District special election June 20 as the incumbent. Karen Handel was not an incumbent.