

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Che Guevara: A 'man of ideas and action combined'
 — PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 81/NO. 34 SEPTEMBER 18, 2017

SWP sets fall book, circulation, fund drives

BY MARY MARTIN

The Socialist Workers Party National Committee met over the Sept. 2-4 Labor Day weekend to discuss steps to take the party, its program, and its activities deeper into the working class. A nine-week fall drive to

DEEPER INTO THE WORKING CLASS

expand the circulation of the *Militant* newspaper and sales of books was set for Sept. 16 through Nov. 21 by party leaders.

The drive takes place in the midst of a deep political crisis in the Democratic and Republican parties, the result of a world crisis of the capitalist system and the mounting carnage facing working people. The *Militant* newspaper, and the books being promoted, are indispensable to understanding the roots of the capitalist assault on working people and what kind of party and movement are needed to fight for workers power to reverse the devastating situation millions are being driven into.

The unending imperialist wars abroad of the U.S. rulers are aimed at protecting their profits and making

Continued on page 3

Socialist Workers Party: Amnesty for immigrants!

No to deportations! Build unity of working class



Militant/Mike Shur

Sept. 5 actions across country, like in New York above, protest move by President Donald Trump to phase out DACA program that protected many young immigrants from deportation.

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

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT

The Socialist Workers Party encourages working people and youth to join us in actions around the country protesting the government's plan

to phase out the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. The SWP says "Stop the deportations! Amnesty for all immigrants who are here!" That's the road to uniting the working class.

Over the last several decades U.S.- and foreign-born working people have gotten to know each other. We work in the same factories and on the same construction sites. Our children go to the same schools. We have all been battered by the capitalist economic crisis and the bosses' push to

Continued on page 9

Workers face deepening social crisis after Harvey

BY SETH GALINSKY

The death toll from Hurricane Harvey is over 60, with more likely to be found. Tens of thousands of homes and farms in Texas are damaged or destroyed. Hundreds of thousands are still in shelters, relatives' homes or hotels, not knowing when, or if, they will be able to return home. Floodwaters are contaminated from chemical and oil leaks in area refineries and plants. This unfolding social crisis is not a "natural" disaster. It's man-made, caused by capitalism's unceasing drive for profits.

Most capitalist politicians and media mouthpieces try to dodge the question of responsibility for the social catastrophe, saying it was just a big storm no one could do anything about. But the truth is coming out.

For years government authorities knew that storms like this were coming, yet they continued to promote construction, even in known flood zones. In their search for profits they eagerly paved over wetlands and prairies that absorb floodwaters to put up the roads, homes, parking lots and

Continued on page 4

Washington seeks more sanctions after Pyongyang tests new bomb



AP/Ahn Young-joon

South Korean police hold "anti-terror" drill at Seoul subway during U.S.-South Korean military maneuvers Aug. 22. Washington seeks more sanctions on Pyongyang that hit workers hardest.

BY JIM BRADLEY

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea carried out an underground nuclear explosion of what it said was a hydrogen bomb Sept. 3, a move they say is essential to prevent Washington from attacking them. The test took

place a few days after Washington and Seoul concluded 11 days of bellicose war exercises on the peninsula.

Washington responded with heated rhetoric. But the Donald Trump administration has focused on further

Continued on page 6

French rulers take on unions, join Berlin to try to fix EU crisis

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

As he promised both during his campaign and after his election last May, French President Emmanuel Macron decreed Aug. 31 an overhaul of the country's Labor Code, targeting unions, job protections and working conditions. The move comes at the same time as the French rulers are pushing to solidify their bloc with German Chancellor Angela Merkel to hold together the European Union, which the worldwide capitalist economic crisis and conflicting national interests are tearing apart.

At the heart of Macron's proposed changes would be gutting legal protections workers have won in long-past labor upsurges against being fired or laid off. Collected in the government's 3,324-page Labor Code,

Continued on page 9

Liberal attacks, 'antifa' thugs threaten rights workers need

BY SETH GALINSKY

The propertied rulers in the U.S. face an unprecedented political crisis today, precipitated by the changes in class reality that were reflected in the election of Donald Trump as president and the deepening crisis of

Continued on page 9

Inside

Walmart, Amazon battle for top dog, workers pay the price 2

Utah nurse arrested for defending patient's rights 3

Tehran, Assad seek to advance interests against Washington 4

Solidarity marks workers' fight against BC wildfires 5

US board orders wage, pension cuts in its colony Puerto Rico 6

Walmart, Amazon battle for top dog, workers pay the price

BY JIM BRADLEY

Dog-eat-dog competition between retail giants Walmart and Amazon is sharpening and the rest of the retail market is facing a growing crisis, with competitors like Macy's closing stores across the country and mall owners finding fewer and fewer customers.

This process of continuing monopolization is built on employers who hate unions and fight to keep tight control over workers' wages and schedules to squeeze out maximum profit, while keeping prices low enough to punish rivals.

These developments unfold against the backdrop of the deepening economic crisis of U.S. and world capitalism.

The two behemoths are each trying to become more like the other to compete against each other better — Amazon buying up Whole Foods and opening brick-and-mortar bookstores while Walmart gobbled up Jet.com to help the bosses push deeper into e-tail.

At the same time, as an article in the March 21 *Business Insider* titled "The Retail Apocalypse Has Officially Descended on America" reports, "Thousands of mall-based stores are shutting down in what's fast becoming one of the biggest waves of retail closures in decades." JCPenney is shutting down 138 stores — 14 percent of its locations. Sears is closing 150 Sears and Kmart stores. More than 3,500 store closures are expected in the next couple of months.

One reason for Walmart's ability to clobber its rivals is its vast reach — it

boasts having stores within 10 miles of 90 percent of the U.S. population. Its strong grocery sales generate more than 50 percent of the company's income.

In the face of this, Kroger Co., the largest grocery-store conglomerate, reports sales have plummeted 35 percent this year, erasing more than \$7 billion in value.

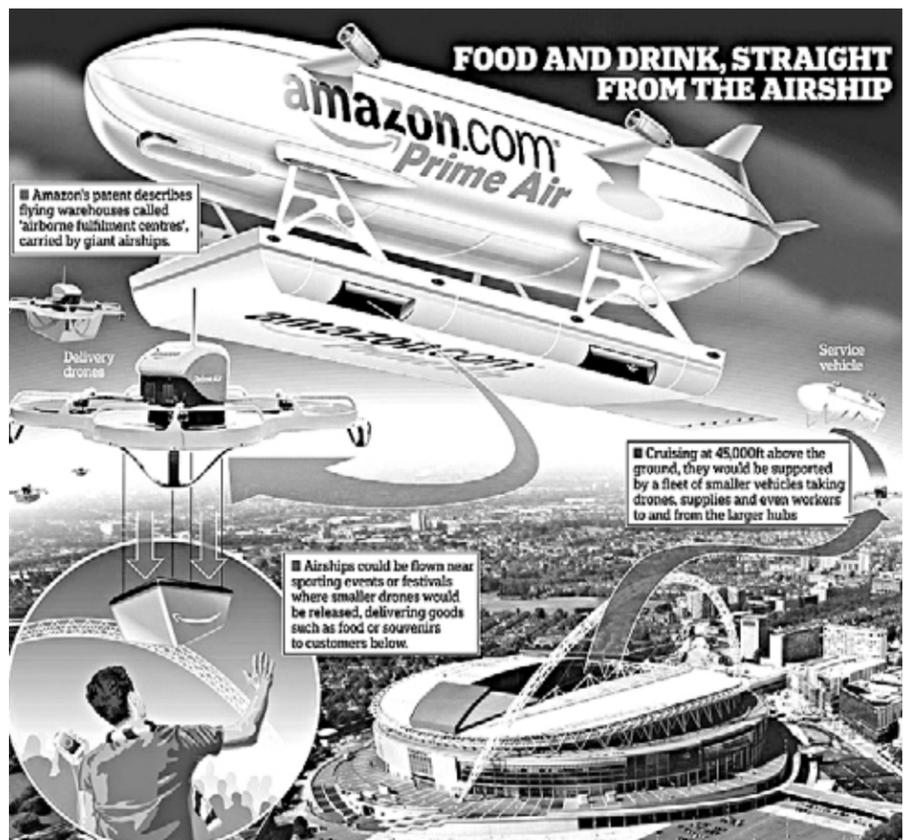
Amazon, the leader in e-commerce with 43 percent of all U.S. online retail sales, is trying to go head to head with Walmart. Run by Jeffrey Bezos, who also owns the *Washington Post*, Amazon is driving to expand its reach, eschewing efforts to make any substantial profit now in search of monopoly profits later. Amazon's second-quarter profits this year were down 77 percent compared with the previous year.

To compete, Walmart lost nearly a tenth of its \$200 billion value on the stock market two years ago after declaring that its investments in e-commerce and higher wages for employees would lower profits over the next few years.

The bosses at both companies are expert at using their market size to force manufacturers to offer steep discounts for the "privilege" of being carried.

And both are pushing for new ways to cut costs and poach into the markets of the other. In 2016 Walmart began a pilot program of paying workers overtime for delivering packages on their way home after their shift.

Bosses at both companies are looking into using drones for deliveries. The Walton clan, the main owners of Walmart, recently took out a patent on



Artist's rendition of flying warehouse Amazon patented last year. Floating 45,000 feet above ground, "airships" would release drones to deliver packages. Walmart has similar patent.

building a flotilla of blimp warehouses that would hover at 500 feet over cities and dispatch fleets of drones to get you your order. Amazon took out a similar patent last year, based on a mother ship flying at 45,000 feet.

At the beginning of August, Amazon held a hiring day nationwide for 50,000 full-time warehouse workers, and projects a workforce of 300,000 by the middle of next year. Walmart has 1.2 million U.S. employees in 4,500 stores.

In the face of this onslaught, the only other retail outlets still looking to expand are discount outlets, like Aldi in food and TJX — T.J. Maxx and Marshalls — and Ross Stores for clothing and other merchandise. The three largest "Dollar" store chains — Dollar General, Family Dollar and Dollar Tree — now sport a whopping 28,000 stores.

The bosses' cutthroat competition is based on keeping out unions at all costs, and keeping "associates" wages low and schedules tightly controlled. Walmart has a national network of training academies where supervisors and department heads are sent for special training to learn "leadership" —

i.e., how to manage the workforce and press the most out of them. The company says more than 140,000 middle and upper level employees go to an academy each year.

Starting rates for both Walmart and Amazon workers are currently above the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour, a reflection in part of the struggle by workers in fast food and other industries in recent years for a minimum wage of \$15 an hour.

What workers at Walmart and Amazon need more than anything else is unionization, to be able to organize to defend themselves and advance their interests against the boss.

Discount on books for prisoners

Pathfinder offers books and pamphlets at a 50% discount off the cover price.

There is a flat rate of \$2.75 for shipping and handling. Prisoners can mail their prepaid orders to Pathfinder Press
PO Box 162767
Atlanta GA 30321-2767

Link at pathfinderpress.com

THE MILITANT

Defend ranchers' grazing rights on federal lands

Facing government frame-up charges, ranchers and other supporters of 2014 protests backing Cliven Bundy's fight for right to graze his cattle on federal land in Bunkerville, Nevada, won acquittal. The *'Militant'* opposes the frame-ups and backs the ranchers' fight.



AP/Michael Quine
Jurors throw out frame-up charges against four supporters of ranchers' fight Aug. 22.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

\$5 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

\$10 for 12 weeks

\$20 for 6 months

\$35 for 1 year

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,
306 W. 37TH ST., 13TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018.

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, A\$10 • United Kingdom, £3 • Canada, Can\$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £10 • France, 8 euros • New Zealand, NZ\$7 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

The Militant

Vol. 81/No. 34

Closing news date: September 6, 2017

Editor: John Studer

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Jacob Perasso, Maggie Trowe, Brian Williams.

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

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

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

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

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

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

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

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: For one year send Canadian \$45 to the Militant, 7107 St. Denis #204, Montreal, Quebec H2S 2S5.

United Kingdom: Send £26 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, 2nd Floor, 83 Kingsland High St., Dalston, London, E8 2PB, England.

Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: Send £85 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

France: Send 120 euros for one year to Diffusion du Militant, BP 10130, 75723 Paris Cedex 15.

New Zealand: Send NZ\$55 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

Australia: Send A\$70 for one year to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia.

Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$55 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant's* views. These are expressed in editorials.

SWP circulation, fund drives

Continued from front page

workers and farmers pay for the crisis of their capitalist system. At home and abroad workers' living conditions are deteriorating through lower wages, speedup, and increasingly dangerous conditions on the job. Working-class families are confronting an epidemic of opioid addiction and deaths.

The *Militant's* circulation drive will promote five books on special that bring to life a revolutionary perspective for taking political power out of the capitalists' hands. Available at half price when purchased with an introductory \$5 *Militant* subscription, will be *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power, Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* and *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes; and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by party leader Mary-Alice Waters. In addition "It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System" by the Cuban Five, five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and jailed for more than a decade for actions in defense of the Cuban Revolution, can also be purchased for \$5 with a subscription.

Socialist Workers Party members and supporters in the United States and members of the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom will center the circulation drive door to door in working-class neighborhoods. They will take the paper and books to anti-racist actions, picket lines and demonstrations in support of women's rights.

Sales of the *Militant* and books by party leaders will also be an important aspect of socialists on the job advancing the perspective for organizing workers, unionization, and fighting for workers' rights.

Socialist workers will take the *Militant* and books by party leaders with them to show to fellow participants at the "In the Footsteps of Che" brigade in Cuba and at the World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi, Russia, both in October.

One important source of subscriptions and book sales will be from workers behind bars across the country. The *Militant* and Pathfinder Books have a growing readership among pris-

oners, who look to keep informed and involved in broader working-class political issues, as well as to keep up on the *Militant's* battles against efforts by prison authorities to censor the paper.

The SWP National Committee also launched a concurrent nine-week fund drive to raise \$100,000 to finance the Socialist Workers Party's activities over the coming year. The fund is essential to advancing the work of taking the party's program deeper into the working class.

The writer of this article, who is the party's candidate for mayor in Seattle, is the organizer of the circulation drive. Chris Hoepfner, organizer of the SWP in Philadelphia, was assigned as director for the fund.

Join us

Next week we'll announce the international goal for the subscription drive and book sales. We'll begin to report on the quotas taken by party branches and individuals in local areas.

Help to sign up others to subscribe to the *Militant* and purchase the books described above. You can join us and make a contribution to the work of the Socialist Workers Party by contacting the nearest party branch listed on page 8.

New International magazine from 1934 & Intercontinental Press from 1963 to 1986 Available online

Unique resources of use to working-class fighters to help advance struggles today. To access the online archives visit www.themilitant.com or www.pathfinderpress.com

SWP discusses social crisis after Hurricane Harvey



Militant/Chuck Guerra

Cynthia Jaquith, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami, shows *Militant* to sanitation worker Leonard Reese on his doorstep in North Miami Sept. 4. "If we could just all unite, we could shut this country down," he told Jaquith as they discussed the SWP's perspective of building a movement for the working class to take political power.

Jaquith showed Reese and other workers she visited her campaign statement on the social disaster unfolding in Houston from Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath that was printed in the *Militant*.

The statement said that the hurricane's impact "is a direct product of the natural workings of the capitalist system, the dictatorship of capital." The capitalist rulers "made no plans to mobilize the forces needed to safely and quickly evacuate the tens of thousands who knew they would face life-threatening conditions in an area that's a frequent target of hurricanes."

It also pointed to the sharp difference the socialist revolution in Cuba makes for working people in organizing to deal with the frequent hurricanes workers and farmers face there. In Cuba, "thousands of volunteers, backed by the resources of their government and its communist leadership, are in place to carry out any needed evacuation and begin immediate reconstruction of destroyed homes and public facilities," Jaquith says in the statement. "The capitalist property 'insurance' racket doesn't exist there, because it is not needed"

Party members across the country used the *Militant* and Jaquith's statement to discuss Cuba's revolution and the example it sets for working people everywhere. And to discuss the potential shown here in the U.S. by the human solidarity of workers and ranchers in Texas risking everything to help others escape the ravages of Harvey in the face of the government's lack of preparation.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

Utah nurse arrested for defending patient's rights

BY LEA SHERMAN

A body camera video that went viral has exposed the July 26 brutish arrest and mistreatment of University of Utah Hospital nurse Alex Wubbels by Jeff Payne, a Salt Lake City cop. The incident was captured on a video released by Wubbels and her lawyer Aug. 31.

A hundred protesters mounted a rally organized by Utah Against Police Bru-

tality outside the Salt Lake City Police Department Sept. 2 calling for Payne to be fired.

Wubbels, the charge nurse in the burn unit, told Payne repeatedly that she could not draw a sample of blood from her unconscious patient and give it to him. It was against hospital policy and nurses' ethics. The patient had to give consent or be under arrest, or the cop

had to have a warrant.

William Gray, the patient, was a truck driver who had been in a head-on collision. The driver who hit him was fleeing the police and was killed in the crash.

Wubbels' defense of Gray's rights — and her professional dignity — so infuriated Payne that he manhandled her, pushing her through two sets of emergency room doors. He handcuffed her and forced her into an unmarked police car.

Wubbels cried out, "Somebody help me," and "you're hurting me," but several university hospital police refused to do anything. The University of Utah hospital has since barred police from patient care areas and from direct contact with nurses.

National Nurses United, the largest nurses' union nationwide, called a press conference Aug. 31. "The first job of a registered nurse is always to protect and advocate for her patient, period," Jean Ross, co-president of the union, said, calling the cop's actions "outrageous."

Thousands of complaints came into the police department's dispatch center blasting Payne and his strong-arm arrest. With this kind of outcry, the Salt Lake City district attorney launched a criminal investigation and the mayor and police chief apologized.

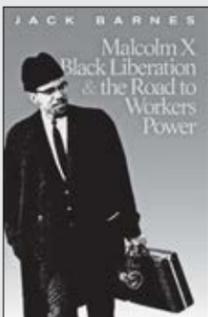
And finally, a month after the incident, Payne and another cop have been placed on administrative leave, but with pay.

"I stood my ground. I stood for what was right" Wubbels told CNN.

SPECIAL BOOK OFFERS

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes
\$15. With subscription: \$10



"It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System"
The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives
Within the US Working Class.
\$7. With subscription \$5

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY...

Available for \$5 each (half price) with *Militant* subscription (trial offer 12 weeks \$5)

Are They Rich Because They're Smart?

Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism
by Jack Barnes

The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record

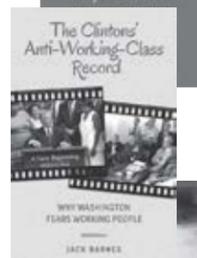
Why Washington Fears Working People
by Jack Barnes

Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?

A Necessary Debate Among Working People
by Mary-Alice Waters

\$7 EACH WITHOUT SUBSCRIPTION (NORMALLY \$10)

To subscribe or purchase books at these prices, contact Socialist Workers Party or Communist League branches listed on page 8.



Social crisis deepens in Texas

Continued from front page
businesses. And when government agencies learned that Hurricane Harvey was coming, they did little to get food, medicine and other basic necessities ready and in place.

The social crisis continues to unfold as the waters recede. The storm wrecked at least 300,000 cars and trucks, making getting to work, salvaging possessions from flooded homes and apartments, and obtaining aid even more of a challenge.

Thirteen toxic waste “superfund” sites were flooded and a half-dozen oil tanks or more were damaged. Dozens of broken sewage systems added fecal material to the floodwaters.

Texas officials say that more than 12,700 homes were destroyed, and some 200,000 more damaged.

Thousands of cattle were scattered by the storm and ranchers have scrambled to get them to safer ground. Ryan Ashcraft, a helicopter pilot who herds cattle from the air, told the *New York Times* that “if people lose all of their cattle they’d go broke and have to sell their land.”

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved \$114 million in

aid for 161,000 people, out of more than 507,000 applications. But this is just a drop in the bucket of what is needed.

The owners of the Linda Vista apartment complex in Houston told tenants that late fees would not be waived and anyone who didn’t pay their rent would be locked out of their apartments.

While the storm damaged the homes of rich and poor alike, its impact is not the same. The *Washington Post* reported that some of Houston’s worst flooding was in Greenspoint, a mostly Black and Latino neighborhood built “not only in floodplains but floodways,” specifically designed to channel floodwaters.

The wealthy and upper middle class whose homes were damaged are already hiring contractors and starting to rebuild. But for working people, the vast majority of whom have no flood or storm insurance, Houston and other communities devastated by the storm will never be the same.

The one thing that prevented even more deaths and devastation was the widespread human solidarity of working people.

For the first few days of the storm, workers used kayaks, canoes, fishing boats, high trucks, even jet skis to res-



Reuters/Carlo Allegri

Volunteers help a woman from a rescue boat during Hurricane Harvey west of Houston, Texas, Aug. 30. Working-class human solidarity prevented more deaths and devastation.

cue thousands who were stranded and abandoned by government authorities. Thousands of people showed solidarity to their fellow workers by donating supplies and time to the shelters. It wasn’t until three days after the storm hit that Texas Gov. Greg Abbott mo-

bilized the Texas National Guard’s 12,000 troops and asked the Defense Department to allow U.S. soldiers to join in rescue efforts.

Revolutionary Cuba shows the way

There is an example for how the threat from natural disasters can be met — revolutionary Cuba.

By Sept. 5, Category 5 Hurricane Irma was beginning to roll across the Caribbean. Almost everywhere workers are being told the same thing the people of Houston were — you’re on your own and you should find some way to get out of harm’s way.

It’s completely different in Cuba. Workers and farmers made a revolution there in 1959 and built their own government, which puts human needs before private profit. They were transformed through the revolutionary struggle and mobilizations since to confront the relentless attacks of Washington, which despises their example.

Days before Irma threatens to hit Cuba, the government had already mobilized its National Defense Council to marshal the resources needed to “prevent damage and the loss of human life.”

They will do as they have done in past storms — use the full strength of the army and a mobilized and disciplined population to prepare to withstand the storm, evacuate people to safety and rebuild immediately after.

In Santiago de Cuba, the government organized to transfer all dialysis patients out of threatened areas so there would be no danger of any interruption in their care. And they moved 1,031 pregnant women for the same reason.

As they work to keep people informed of preparations, the government says, “Ask for help whenever you need it.” And then they add, “Give help whenever you can.”

Tehran, Assad advance interests against Washington

BY JIM BRADLEY

Lebanon-based Hezbollah and affiliated Shiite militias — backed by Moscow, the armed forces of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad and Iranian officers — pushed into southeastern Syria Sept. 5, breaking through the Islamic State’s siege of the city of Deir el-Zour in the oil-rich Euphrates Valley. In so doing, they blocked the efforts of Washington and its Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces allies to extend their control further into the key region.

What is unfolding, the *Washington Post* said Sept. 5, is “a global race to control the rest of the desert province, also named Deir al-Zour, which the United States has also been preparing to liberate.”

U.S. bombers, special forces and the SDF are currently fighting to take Raqqa, which has served as the capital of the reactionary IS’s self-declared caliphate in Syria and Iraq, some 90 miles from Deir el-Zour.

The speed and size of the forces involved in the Tehran-Baghdad-Moscow offensive reflects the importance these regimes put on the area. For the Iranian rulers, the prize is opening a land route linking Tehran, areas in Iraq controlled by Shia militia, Assad-controlled land in Syria, and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The Assad advance was aided by cruise missile strikes against Islamic State positions from Russian warships positioned in the Mediterranean Sea.

Competing national interests

As the bloody Syrian civil war grinds on, all the imperialist and capitalist regimes involved are fighting to advance their own national economic, political and military interests in the area.

In 2014, as part of capturing large swaths of territory in Syria and Iraq, Islamic State took Deir el-Zour province and most of the capital city of the same name from anti-Assad rebels, laying siege to a military garrison and 93,000 civilians that remained under the Assad regime’s control. Deir el-Zour province is the last IS stronghold in Syria. It ends

at Iraq’s border.

The over six-years-long civil war erupted in 2011 after Assad — using his army, air force, imprisonment, torture and executions of his opponents — beat back countrywide mobilizations for democratic rights and the end to his regime. With the military intervention of Washington, Moscow, Tehran and Ankara, the war has turned what once was Syria into a cauldron of competing national capitalist interests. Over 400,000 people have been killed and half of Syria’s population of 22 million turned into refugees.

To defend its economic and political interests in the region, Washington’s military intervention aims to engineer some kind of political settlement of the war as part of its effort to reimpose imperialist stability in the Middle East. While initially calling for the removal of Assad in any settlement, Washington now accepts the reality of the regime’s survival. The U.S. rulers recently ended a covert yearslong CIA program that

supplied a number of anti-Assad rebel groups with weapons.

Speaking at an Aspen, Colorado, security forum in July, CIA Director Mike Pompeo said that Washington has two enemies in Syria — Islamic State and Iran. The latter is what the competition in Deir el-Zour is all about. And it is why reports of the fighting indicate Iranian officers, Hezbollah and Iraqi Shiite militias are centrally involved.

Assad’s advances in the Euphrates Valley were made possible by a deal reached by Moscow, Tehran and the Recep Tayyip Erdogan regime in Turkey last May to set up four so-called de-escalation zones based on cease-fire deals with rebel forces — in reality negotiated surrenders glibly dubbed “national reconciliation deals.” These allowed the rebels to relocate to Idlib, freeing up regime troops for the effort towards the east.

Damascus also threatens that down the road it will take military action to reclaim the Kurdish-controlled autonomous region on the Turkish-Syrian border.

‘Fabric of society destroyed’

Despite the agreements, the Assad regime continues to shell opponents and civilians in the “de-escalation zones” with barrel bombs and so-called elephant rockets — inaccurate improvised munitions made from gas canisters that maim and kill indiscriminately.

“Life is nonexistent. Permanent terror, and people are not coming out of their basements,” Abdullah al-Khatib, a former electrician living with his eight-member family in Ain Terma near Damascus, told Reuters.

Conditions for toilers in territories controlled by Assad are disastrous. Over 85 percent of the population live in poverty. Sixty percent don’t have money to buy food or other essentials. Inflation is out of control. Foreign relief is the only way most survive.

“The fabric of society has been destroyed,” said Jihad Yazigi, editor of *The Syria Report*.

Celebrate the political life of Gary Cohen



50 years building the Socialist Workers Party

Boston
Sunday, September 17
2 p.m. reception
3 p.m. program
73 Hemenway St.,
Community Room

For more info: (518) 545-9754.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS— UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester
Support Self-Determination for the Kurds. Speaker: Catharina Tirsén, Communist League, recently returned from visit to Kurdish region in Iraq. Fri., Sept. 15, 7 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. M1 2EH. Tel.: (0161) 478-2496.

Solidarity marks workers' fight against wildfires in Canada

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ
AND LYNDA LITTLE

CACHE CREEK, British Columbia — This year's forest wildfire season in British Columbia is the worst ever recorded, with almost a million acres burned down so far.

While some fires break out in the forests every summer, from lightning strikes in dry, hot weather conditions, the current ones are far more extensive. The British Columbia government took the unprecedented step in July of extending a state of emergency after ordering the evacuation of 45,000 people from their homes.

The fires shut down the province's timber mills, copper mines and other industries. And they forced the evacuation of ranchers from their homes here and in other areas.

Forestry and related industries are the backbone of production in the province, accounting for over 145,000 jobs, nearly a quarter of all manufacturing employment here.

During a recent trip by supporters of the Communist League to talk politics with working people near the fire zone, we knocked on doors in working-class neighborhoods and discussed what could be done to better fight the fires and defend working people from their impact.

We found powerful examples of solidarity among workers, who stopped fires and minimized their effects, but also a high level of anger at the bureaucratic way the British Columbia rulers are responding.

"When I saw how fast the fire was moving," said Christine O'Brien, a waitress at the Husky restaurant in Cache Creek, "I got ready to go with my three children in my truck. But I also made sure that my neighbors could leave safely, giving them an old car that we rapidly put back in service."

"While the firefighters were ordered to retreat, I jumped on my backhoe and was able to save two houses from the flames," Geronimo Adams told us as we stood outside his home, viewing the charred landscape of the Ashcroft Indian Reserve. "Instead of reaching out to people of the region, or at least consulting us, the government just kept sending us orders."

He pointed to the government's decision to prevent asparagus farmers from doing controlled burns on their fields, as they normally do each year. "The result is that these fields ended up feeding the wildfire, instead of becoming a natural fire break."

At Clinton, a British Columbia Wildfire Service-controlled burn that was set in shifting winds got out of control and caused unnecessary damage, evacuations and killed livestock. "Many of the animals have suffered burns," Greg Nyman, a rancher with over 120 head, told CBC News, "and many may die from their injuries." He and many others in the area organized to demand compensation from the government, as well as an apology.

In mid-July, some 300 members of the Tl'etinqox First Nation in Alexis Creek decided to ignore evacuation orders and stay to fight the fires. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police responded by threatening to have the

Ministry of Children and Family Services "remove all the children." Tribal Chief Joe Alphonse said that they would set up roadblocks and prevent anything like that from happening. The RCMP backed down.

Well-equipped and experienced members of the Nation prevented the fire from devastating the village, and no one was hurt.

"Threatening to take Native children away from their parents is a reminder of the residential schools," one Caucasian forestry worker told us. From the 1870s to 1996, more than 150,000 Native children were forcibly taken from their homes by the Canadian government and made to attend "Indian residential schools" that the federal government in Ottawa now admits were designed to "kill the Indian in the child."

A 2014 Supreme Court decision here upheld the Tsihqot'in Nation's claim for Aboriginal title to over 4,000 square kilometers (1,550 square miles) of land in central British Columbia, with uncharted implications for the forestry industry.

The provincial government claims ownership over some 95 percent of the forests in British Columbia, while Native people control 0.1 percent.

Creating fire protection zones around communities is the key to protecting working people. But that's not the capitalist rulers' priority. "It seems that governments are willing to protect the annual allowable cut at the expense of community hazard reduction," fire ecologist Robert Gray wrote in a *Vancouver Sun* op-ed last summer after the disaster that burned through 1.5 million acres of forest and caused the evacuation of almost 100,000 people in Fort McMurray, Alberta.

"The management focus adjacent to communities is still maximizing timber production instead of hazard reduction," Gray said in a July 30 *Sun* op-ed about this summer's fires in British Columbia.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 18, 1992

MIAMI — Two weeks after Hurricane Andrew hit, the people of southern Florida continue to suffer from the combined effects of the natural disaster and an unnatural disaster: the negligent and inadequate response of the government. Tens of thousands are camped out in their crumbling homes; an estimated 350,000 remain without electricity; 57,000 have no phone service; 250,000 are homeless. The death toll from the hurricane and its aftermath stands at 38.

A health crisis is emerging in southern Dade County, with diseases ranging from dehydration due to intense heat and lack of water to salmonella and dysentery from contaminated food and water.

Meanwhile, politicians and businessmen are debating what and how much to rebuild, and who will profit, and who will foot the bill.

Cuba: Example for toilers facing monsoons in South Asia



The death toll in South Asia has surpassed 1,400 in the aftermath of weeks of torrential monsoon rains across Bangladesh, India and Nepal this summer. Over 41 million people are affected by the flooding and landslides that have destroyed homes and shattered lives. It's the workings of capitalism and the callous indifference of Washington and other imperialist powers that are behind the acuteness of this catastrophe.

In India, where an estimated 30 million people have been hit, the infrastructure of Mumbai — the country's Wall Street and home to the Bollywood movie industry — collapsed under the relentless monsoon rainfall, see above. Like Houston, Mumbai has experienced explosive growth, doubling in population to 22 million over the last 25 years, and capitalist profiteers have systematically covered water drainage land with housing, streets and factories. Over 1 million people are crammed into the Dharavi slum, with 15,000 single-room factories. The city's storm water drainage system, originally designed in the 1860s when the British ruled India, cannot begin to handle the monsoons.

Comparing the situation in South Asia to Texas, Jono Anzalone of the Red Cross told NPR that unlike in the U.S., the governments in India or Bangladesh "simply don't have the resources."

But the problem isn't "resources." India and Bangladesh have vastly larger populations and gross domestic product than Cuba, another regular victim of dangerous hurricanes. But unlike the capitalist countries in South Asia, the working people of Cuba overthrew capitalism and U.S. colonial rule and use their control of state power to mobilize the country to meet hurricanes and any other threat they face, including the unremitting hatred of Washington. Cuba's working people — armed with their revolution and human solidarity — are the "resources" workers of the world need to emulate.

— ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

In our discussions, we said the government represents the interests of the big capitalist corporations, not those of working people in the fire zone. The only force capable of resolving the crises produced by capitalism is the working class advancing to unite all working people and fighting to defend our interests on the

road to taking political power away from the capitalists.

Then we — the vast majority whose labor creates all the wealth — can make decisions based on human needs, not private profit.

Opening our discussions this way helped people focus on the way forward in defending working people.



September 18, 1967

DETROIT — In a new display of unity engendered by the Detroit uprising, the Black People's Tribunal, sponsored by the legal committee of the Citywide Citizens Action Committee, conducted a peoples trial of a national guardsman Theodore Thomas; two Detroit policemen, Ronald August and Robert Paille; and a Negro private guard, Melvin Dismukes. The four were found guilty by the Tribunal of conspiracy to maliciously murder three unarmed Black youths in the Algiers Motel during the July rebellion here.

Over 2,000 Black people attended the Tribunal, held on Aug. 30, and an equal number were turned away because of lack of room. The integrated jury included the well-known Black writer, John O. Killens, and Rosa Parks, whose courageous stand against discrimination on buses led to the 1955-56 Montgomery, Ala., Bus Boycott.



September 19, 1942

More than any other people, the Jews have become the burning symbol of capitalism in decay, of a civilization that threatens to fall back completely into barbarism. The Nazis have made the Jewish people the scapegoat of their system of rule by terror.

The inhuman treatment of the Jews by the Nazis has served also to test the pretensions to humanity of the democratic capitalist lands.

We know how England refused permission to boatloads of Jewish refugees to land in Palestine, even when already in sight of its shores. The sinking of several such boats with the loss of hundreds of lives became international scandals.

The United States has shown the same hypocritical attitude as the British. The whole machinery of government from State Department to foreign consular officials, was set into motion for but a single purpose: to keep the Jews out.

US board orders wage, pension cuts in its colony Puerto Rico

BY SETH GALINSKY

The U.S. ruling families and their colonial regime in Puerto Rico are stepping up attacks on the wages, pensions and living conditions of workers on the island.

To maximize payment of some \$74 billion in government debt to wealthy bondholders, they aim to “right-size” the colonial regime — a euphemism for laying off public workers and cutting social services. Over the next three years they plan to slash the budget of the U.S. colony by 30 percent.

All pretenses that Puerto Ricans and the colonial government there call any of the shots were torn apart when then President Barack Obama appointed a Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico in 2016 and gave it dictatorial control over the island’s government finances. When Gov. Ricardo Rosselló chafes at the speed they want him to move in making working people pay for the crisis, they just push harder.

In an Aug. 4 letter, José Carrión, chair of the junta — as people in Puerto Rico call the board — praised Rosselló for the new budget he approved, which includes \$662 million in deep cuts for the coming year. But it’s not enough, Carrión complained. The junta wants \$218 million more right away.

He ordered Rosselló to furlough government employees two days a month and to make mandatory an additional 10 percent cut in public pension payments. Rosselló worried that going that far might provoke big protests, so the junta sued the Puerto Rican government Aug. 28 to get its way.

“The governor always says he’s not going to give in to the junta’s demands, but in the end he always does,” Verónica Figueroa, 23, told the *Militant* in a phone interview from Caguas. She was part of the two-month-long student strike this year against government plans to slash the University of Puerto Rico’s budget and graduated in August. “He wants to give the impression that the government is trying to defend some of the rights of the people.”

The school’s budget was cut \$202 million for the coming year, she said, and tuition and other fees are being more than doubled.

Even though they weren’t successful, Figueroa said that she was inspired by participating in the movement. Now that she has graduated, she’s looking for ways to stay involved in the fight against the attacks on workers and youth.

Imperialist plunder

The effects of the worldwide capitalist economic crisis are magnified in Puerto Rico because of its status as a U.S. colony. U.S. imperialism has plundered its resources and the wealth created by the island’s workers to fill the coffers of U.S. capitalists since wresting control of the island from Spain in 1898. As a result the average annual income in Puerto Rico is less than half that of Mississippi, the poorest U.S. state.

Puerto Rico’s gross national product has declined 18 percent since 2006. A nearly 70 percent cut in infrastructure spending by the government and government-owned utilities

has left roads and the electrical grid in bad shape. Power outages are becoming more frequent.

Since 2006 the government cut spending by 12 percent, laid off nearly one-quarter of the government workforce, jacked up sales taxes, closed schools and reduced pensions.

With a population of 3.35 million, official unemployment stood at 9.8 percent in July, down from 12 percent in February. But in fact there is no “decline” in unemployment. Workers and youth are fleeing the island in droves, skewing the figures. As many as 1,700 people a week move to the U.S. to escape the deepening crisis.

“Everyone knows someone who has moved,” said Figueroa. “A friend of mine moved to Boston. She got a job, but she still has to work overtime every day to make ends meet. The cost of living and rent are so high, there’s not much left over.”

Attack on pensions

Rosselló signed a law Aug. 23 that eliminated the pension funds for government and judiciary workers and teachers, and ordered fund managers to sell all their “assets” and turn the money over to the government’s general fund. Whatever workers get in the future will depend on the state of this fund.

Any remaining “defined benefit” plans — which are supposed to guarantee a pension amount — are being replaced with “defined contributions plans,” where money is deducted from each workers paycheck and “invested” in stocks and bonds.

“They’ve changed the rules of the game,” Iván Vargas, a worker at the Wa-



MINH/Victor Birriel

Aug. 30 march in San Juan protested cuts in workweek and pensions for government workers ordered by the U.S.-imposed Financial Oversight and Management Board.

ter and Sewage Authority and a member of the independent union there, told the *Militant* from Mayagüez Sept. 3, but workers have no idea who will run this operation or how it will work.

“The health care crisis is getting worse,” Yazmín López, a nurse in Mayagüez, told the *Militant*. “The cost of medicines are very high. So many doctors have left the country that you can wait six months to see a specialist.” An even bigger crisis is looming in March 2018, when a one-time fund to shore up the island’s Medicaid program will run out.

Workers have a wide variety of opinions on whether Puerto Rico becoming independent or a U.S. state would help them fight the crisis. Or whether the answer lies in emulating the example of the Cuban Revolution, wresting freedom from Washington by overthrowing capitalist rule.

Vargas noted that Rosselló supports statehood. “They make it sound like

statehood would be a magic wand to solve our problems,” he said. “But it’s not like that, Washington’s not going to just start sending us dollars.”

Figueroa says she’s a supporter of independence. “And it should be a socialist project,” she said. “It’s a question of Puerto Rico for whom. Are the rich people going to keep making the decisions with more problems for the poor, the working class and the middle class? Or will it mean a different road for the country?”

Protests against the attacks from Washington and the colonial regime continue, as well as the debate on how to move forward. Hundreds of unionists demonstrated in San Juan Aug. 30 against the furloughs, pension cuts, new taxes and increases in utility bills. “They’re taking advantage of us poor workers. We did not steal. We are not corrupt,” read the sign carried by 70-year-old retired government worker Eva Feliciano.

Washington seeks new sanctions against Pyongyang

Continued from front page

sanctions and international pressure to get the DPRK to back down.

Washington demands the U.N. Security Council bar the DPRK’s airline from international airports, stop supplies of oil to the government and military, and add more government officials to a blacklist imposing asset freezes and travel bans — steps that hit hardest on workers and farmers. The U.S. rulers are pressing Beijing, which accounts for 92 percent of Pyongyang’s foreign trade, to take harsher economic measures.

The Ulchi Freedom Guardian war “games” involved 17,500 U.S. and 50,000 South Korean soldiers. These drills began in the 1970s. Last March exercises included practicing plans to “decapitate” the North Korean leadership.

On Sept. 4 Seoul’s F-15 fighter jets and ballistic missiles were used to simulate an attack on Pyongyang’s nuclear test site.

The North Korean leadership views the war exercises as acts of aggression by Washington rooted in the decades-long effort by Washington to overturn the DPRK and re-establish U.S. control over the entire peninsula.

Washington seized southern Korea after the second imperialist world war. After workers and farmers in the north won independence through revolution-

ary struggle, U.S. troops invaded in 1950. Using massive carpet bombing, the U.S. rulers laid waste to the north, but were unable to crush the country. With the aid of tens of thousands of Chinese troops, the Koreans pushed Washington’s forces and those of its U.N.-sponsored allies back to the 38th parallel, ending the war. Washington has never forgiven them.

Pyongyang has repeatedly called for an end to Washington’s massive military exercises, a peace treaty officially ending the existing formal state of war, the withdrawal of U.S. troops and reunification of the country.

Speaking at a conference in China Sept. 5, Russian President Vladimir Putin condemned the nuclear test but said sanctions would be “useless and ineffective” because North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is convinced the survival of his regime depends on development of nuclear weapons.

“The DPRK will, under no circumstances, never flinch an inch from the road of bolstering up the national nuclear force,” the North Korean U.N. Mission said in an Aug. 30 statement.

The Socialist Workers Party has fought against Washington’s assaults and threats against the DPRK and the Korean people for decades. The party spoke out against the U.S. rulers’ seizure of Korea and its brutal and bloody war

there against the struggle of the Korean people for independence and revolutionary change. It demands the immediate withdrawal of the 28,000 U.S. troops and all its weaponry from South Korea and that Washington keep its bloody hands off Korea.

The SWP supports the struggle of the Korean people for reunification. Korea will be one!

And the SWP demands the unilateral nuclear disarmament of Washington.

If the DPRK destroyed all its nuclear weapons it would win wide support from workers and farmers worldwide and put enormous pressure on Washington to back off from their threats and economic war against the Korean people.

Cuban President Fidel Castro explained this in a 2005 speech, saying revolutionary Cuba never contemplated producing or using nuclear weapons to defend itself and has always called for the destruction of *all* nuclear weapons.

“What sense would it make producing a nuclear weapon in the face of an enemy who has thousands of nuclear weapons? It would mean joining the game of nuclear confrontation. We possess a weapon as powerful as nuclear ones and it is the magnitude of the justice we are fighting for,” Castro said. “Our nuclear weapon is the invincible power of moral weapons.”

Che Guevara: A ‘man of ideas and action combined’

Che believed in man. And if we don't believe in man, if we think that man is an incorrigible little animal, capable of advancing only if you feed him grass or tempt him with a carrot or whip him with a stick — anybody who believes this, anybody convinced of this will never be a revolutionary, never be a socialist, never be a communist.

— Fidel Castro
Havana, October 1987

Below is an excerpt from Socialist Workers Party leader Mary-Alice Waters' preface to Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism by Carlos Tablada. Copyright © 1989 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

The questions that Ernesto Che Guevara, acting as part of the central leadership of the Cuban revolution, sought to help the vanguard of the working class answer more than three decades ago remain the most pressing of our epoch. Guevara charted a course to rid the world of the capitalist system, with all its horrors, and open the way for working men and women to begin a transition toward a more just and human socialist society, transforming themselves in the process. That course determined his every deed as a conscious political person.

Like the young founders of the modern communist movement, Che deeply believed, and acted on his conviction, that “revolution is necessary . . . not only because the *ruling* class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fit to found society anew.” . . .

After Fidel Castro — the historic leader of the Cuban revolutionary forces from 1953 to today — Ernesto Che Guevara was the best-known leader of the revolution during its early years, when “we were used to making the impossible possible,” as Castro said in paying tribute to Guevara in October 1987.

Guevara was Argentine by birth. Having graduated from medical school in Buenos Aires in 1953, he met Fidel Castro in Mexico in July 1955 and immediately agreed to join the July 26 Movement and to sign on to the expeditionary force Castro was organizing to launch a revolutionary war against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in Cuba. Guevara — soon nicknamed “Che” (a popular form of address in Argentina) by his Cuban comrades — was initially recruited as troop doctor, but he rapidly proved himself to be an outstanding combat leader and educator. In 1957 he became the first combatant promoted by Fidel to command a separate column of the Rebel Army. Guevara led the December 1958 campaign that culminated in the capture of the city of Santa Clara in central Cuba, effectively sealing the fate of the Batista dictatorship.

But Guevara's most important contributions to the Cuban revolution were not military. In paying tribute to Che in October 1967, a few days after his death, Castro called attention to this fact, saying:

Che was an extraordinarily able military leader. But when we remember



Che Guevara, center, with young people. “During opening years of the revolution, Guevara took on some of the most challenging, and heaviest, responsibilities,” writes Mary-Alice Waters.

Che, when we think of Che, we do not think fundamentally of his military virtues. No! Warfare is a means and not an end. Warfare is a tool of revolutionaries. The important thing is the revolution. The important thing is the revolutionary cause, revolutionary ideas, revolutionary objectives, revolutionary sentiments, revolutionary virtues!

And it is in that field, in the field of ideas, in the field of sentiments, in the field of revolutionary virtues, in the field of intelligence, that — apart from his military virtues — we feel the tremendous loss that his death means to the revolutionary movement. . . .

Che was not only an unsurpassed man of action — he was a man of visionary intelligence and broad culture, a profound thinker. That is, in his person the man of ideas and the man of action were combined.

During the opening years of the

revolution, Guevara took on some of the most challenging, and heaviest, responsibilities. He helped draft the 1959 agrarian reform law, the measure that, in Castro's words, more than any other single act, “defined the Cuban Revolution.” Che headed the department of industrialization established by INRA, the National Institute of Agrarian Reform. He was president of the National Bank during the tumultuous year 1960, before the end of which virtually all foreign and domestic-owned banks and major industries were nationalized, and the economic foundations were laid for socialized production and planning. He became minister of industry in 1961, assuming responsibility for reorganizing on new working-class foundations some 70 percent of industry in Cuba, while maintaining production as former owners and most management personnel,

‘In footsteps of Che’ Cuba brigade kicks off Oct. 1

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

As of now, some 70 workers and youth from the U.S. will join with others from around the world on the “In the Footsteps of Che” International Brigade to Cuba Oct. 1. Like a number of other brigades earlier this year, including one that involved more than 50 people from the U.S., the Che Guevara brigade was initiated by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP).

Participants from the U.S. will be going from a number of cities. One of the larger delegations will be coming from New York. “Going to Cuba means a lot to me,” Shirelynn George, from Brooklyn, told the *Militant* Sept. 4. George was born in Grenada, and in her 20s she was one of the tens of thousands of working people there who joined in a revolution led by Maurice Bishop and the New Jewel Movement in 1979. They overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Eric Gairy, took political power, and began to take control of their country's destiny. They looked to the Cuban Revolution as their example.

“When the revolution came, the Cubans came,” George, a nurses aide and member of Service Employees International Union Local 1199, said. “They set up health clinics, helped us with agriculture and education. I met many Cubans then, but this is the first time I have been able to go there myself. The relationship Grenada had with Cuba made us proud of our nation and our revolution.”

In 1983, a Stalinist-minded faction led by Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard overthrew the workers and farmers government, opened fire on thousands of workers who fought to restore it, and murdered Bishop and other revolutionaries who fought with them. This opened the door for a U.S. invasion.

The “In the Footsteps of Che” brigade will mark the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Ernesto Che Guevara, who was killed by the CIA and troops of the Bolivian military dictatorship in October 1967 while he was helping lead a revolutionary war against the dictatorship.

Guevara, originally from Argentina, met Fidel Castro in Mexico and became a leader of the July 26th Movement, organizing one of the columns that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959. He held many leading posts in the Cuban government and represented the Cuban Revolution around the world (see accompanying article).

“The objectives of the brigade are to contribute to a greater understanding of the Cuban reality,” ICAP said in its letter inviting people to join. “Voluntary work will be carried out in support of agricultural development and the country's productive sphere. Visits will be made to important centers linked to Che in the provinces of Havana, Pinar del Río, Santa Clara and Sancti Spiritus.”

“I'm going to visit Cuba so I can bet-

both foreign and Cuban, left the country. He represented the revolutionary government of Cuba on trips to dozens of countries, and spoke with a memorable and clarion communist voice at important international forums and conferences, from the United Nations General Assembly to the Organization of American States. He worked with revolutionists from around the world who were drawn to the example of the Cuban revolution and sought guidance in learning and applying the lessons of that struggle in their own countries. He helped bring about the revolutionary regroupment within Cuba that led in 1965 to the formation of the Communist Party of Cuba.

Amid all this intense practical work helping lay the foundations of a new society, Guevara also organized time to write a prodigious number of articles and letters. He made hundreds of speeches, many of which were published in Cuba and translated and distributed by supporters of the revolution around the world. He gave countless interviews.

In April 1965 Che left Cuba to lead a mission of internationalist Cuban fighters aiding the anti-imperialist struggle in the Congo. His longer-term aim was to return to Latin America to help advance revolutionary struggles that were building from Tierra del Fuego to the Río Bravo. Resigning his leadership posts and responsibilities in the Cuban government, party, and armed forces in order to take on these new revolutionary duties, Guevara left behind a rich written legacy of his political and theoretical contributions to the economics and politics of the transition to socialism.

ter defend the revolution there,” Charlyze Trana, another brigadista from New York, told the *Militant*. “I want to learn how they have been able to maintain the revolution for so long, under such difficult conditions, like Washington's decadeslong embargo.”

Trana, 39, was born in Nicaragua, and is an office worker. “I'm especially looking forward to participating in the voluntary work and learning how they organize that,” she said. “I'm not sure if people in the U.S. can do what they did in Cuba. People seem too selfish here. I want to learn more.”

U.S. participants are organizing fundraising to cover travel costs and doing classes together about the Cuban Revolution to make it possible to get the most from going on the brigade. And they are discussing the importance of planning now to organize meetings when they get back. They want to be able to explain to others what they learned about the Cuban Revolution and why they should join in the fight to end the U.S. embargo and Washington's occupation of Guantánamo.

If you are interested in going on the brigade or making a contribution, contact the Chicago Cuba Coalition at (312) 952-2618 or ICanGoToCuba@gmail.com. There is a waiting list to fill any openings in case someone who already signed up has to forgo the trip.

'We can say our revolution is so great and humane'

Below is an excerpt from Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon in Cuba's Revolutionary War 1956-58, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. Brigadier Gen. Puebla, the highest-ranking woman in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, joined the struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1956 when she was 15 years old. She was assigned by Fidel Castro to help lead the first all-women's platoon in the revolutionary war. Ever since, her life has been intertwined with the fight to transform the social and economic status of women and to defend and advance Cuba's socialist revolution. This interview by Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, and Luis Madrid is from the chapter "Social Solidarity: the Moral Foundation of the Revolution." Copyright © 2003 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Roberto Suárez
Brigadier Gen. Teté Puebla, right, meets with Young Pioneers in 2011. When Fidel Castro assigned Puebla to help command the revolution's first all-women's platoon, some men asked why they were getting arms. "Because they are better soldiers than you are," Fidel replied.

social relations from top to bottom, and to defend the revolution from attack by the U.S. ruling class and its government.

What new tasks did you find yourself responsible for after the revolution's triumph?

PUEBLA: On January 8, 1959, as we were heading to our homes, thinking of catching a few days' rest, the commander said to me: "You're going to tend to Oriente province," to head up the Department of Assistance to War Victims and Their Families, which was led by the Rebel Army in the area. We had to deal with all those affected by all the dictatorship's crimes, the burned-down houses, the destruction from the offensives waged in the eastern region. The new department's slogan was, "In the face of pain, the homeland makes no distinction. To save a child is to build the homeland."

So in early 1959 I went to Oriente province, to see to the victims of the war and their families. We worked very closely with Celia [Sanchez] and Fidel on this. The work began on February 4 that year.

This was very satisfying work. Of all the things I've done in my life, this is one I'm proudest of: helping all these people.

Taking care of the victims of war was a tradition of ours going back to the days of the Sierra Maestra.

An example is the case of Eutimio Guerra, a peasant who joined the struggle and helped in the early days. But he turned traitor and sold out to the

dictatorship's army for money. His assignment was to kill Fidel, but he was discovered and executed. Afterward we took care of his family. They were given 50 pesos a month, even though our guerrilla column had no money. And we gave them a cow, so his children would be fed. His widow and four children became fully incorporated into the revolutionary process.

So in Oriente our starting point was to take care of all the victims of the war. We addressed everything the Batista government had destroyed.

Sometimes you'd care for a peasant child whose mother and father had been murdered, whose house had been burned down. And since our army is an army of the people, we rebuilt all those houses that Batista's army had burned down. We took in all these families because they'd had their land taken away, they'd lost their jobs, they'd suffered every kind of abuse.

The Masferreristas — the ones I referred to earlier who would put people in a sack, pour gasoline on them, and burn them alive — those perverted assassins were in all the eastern zones, and they devastated towns.

But the families of these murderers were provided for. Their children were provided for the same as the children of the rebels. That's why with all truthfulness we can say our revolution is so great and humane. Although we had no money, we provided their children with the same care and the same schools that we provided to the rebels' children.

The children, the mothers, the widows weren't to blame for the murders the army of the dictatorship committed. So we looked after them in the same way. Batista soldiers' widows along with rebel fighters' widows attended schools for adults.

MADRID: Were there some who didn't want to do this?

PUEBLA: We all accepted these instructions. We said: "If the commander says this is how a real revolution acts, that's how it must be." One of the things we did in Oriente was build schools for the orphans, as well as foster homes. We named these after martyrs of our revolution, those who had fallen in battle. This was a tradition of ours going back to the Sierra Maestra. In the village of Santo Domingo where I was during the war, for example, we named our little school after Pastor Palomares, a compañero who had been killed in combat.

Among the people there was a great deal of hatred for the murderers of Batista's army, and everyone knew who the killers were. So whenever we set up a school with a group of children, we didn't say who their parents were. Only those of us in charge of them knew. We protected these children in this way. At present those boys and girls are doctors, engineers, university graduates. They're part of the revolution. There are eighteen war orphans that are like my own children to me, and their children are like my grandchildren.

The widows and mothers of members of the Batista army collect a pension, and that's been true throughout the 43 years of our revolutionary process.

This is a characteristic of the revolution. It's called humanity. Love for one's fellow human being. Love for the family, for the people, for countries that suffer injustice. We identify with all peoples of the world who fight against misery and hunger. We feel the same way for the hundreds of millions of abandoned children in the world who live in the streets looking for the means to subsist on. There are no such children here in Cuba. Because even back then in those penniless times, this revolution was capable of sheltering everyone, of taking these children off the streets. If the revolution didn't have these qualities, it would no longer exist. This began with Fidel. These principles of the revolution are the moral foundation of our struggle.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY TETÉ PUEBLA

WATERS: Fidel [Castro] has often said that as difficult as it was to overthrow the Batista regime, the much bigger challenges began after January 1, 1959. The Rebel Army and July 26 Movement had to lead working people to take the political power they had won, to transform

September BOOKS OF THE MONTH

PATHFINDER READERS CLUB SPECIALS

25% DISCOUNT

Marianas in Combat
by Teté Puebla
The highest-ranking woman in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces tells her story, totally intertwined with Cuba's socialist revolution. \$14. **Special price: \$10.50**

Cuba's Internationalist Foreign Policy
by Fidel Castro
\$23. **Special price: \$17.25**

The First Five Years of the Communist International Vol. 1
by Leon Trotsky
\$28. **Special price: \$21**

Poder Teamster (Teamster Power)
by Farrell Dobbs
The story of the 1930s strikes, organizing drives, and campaigns that transformed the Teamsters in much of the Midwest into a fighting union movement. \$19. **Special price: \$14.25**

John Coltrane and the Jazz Revolution of the 1960s
by Frank Kofsky
\$30. **Special price: \$22.50**

The Assassination of Malcolm X
by Baxter Smith, George Breitman, Herman Porter
\$17. **Special price: \$12.75**

Join Pathfinder Readers Club for \$10 and receive discounts all year long

ORDER ONLINE AT WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM OFFER GOOD UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30

IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find distributors of the *Militant*, *New International*, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: Oakland: 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Zip: 94621. Tel: (510) 686-1351. Email: swpoak@sbcglobal.net **Los Angeles:** 2826 S. Vermont. Suite 1. Zip: 90007. Tel: (323) 643-4968. Email: swpla@att.net

FLORIDA: Miami: P.O. Box 380641. Zip: 33238. Tel: (305) 420-5928. Email: swpmiami@icloud.com

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 777 Cleveland Ave. SW Suite 103. Zip: 30315. Tel: (678) 528-7828. Email: swpatlanta@bellsouth.net

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 3224 S. Morgan St. Zip: 60608. Tel: (312) 455-0111. Email: SWPChicago@fastmail.fm

MINNESOTA: Minneapolis: P.O. Box 6092. Zip: 55406. Tel: (612) 757-4122. Email: twincities.swp@gmail.com

NEBRASKA: Lincoln: P.O. Box 6811.

Zip: 68506. Tel: (402) 217-4906. Email: swplincoln@windstream.net

NEW YORK: New York: 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (646) 964-4793. Email: newyorkswp@gmail.com **Albany:** P.O. Box 8304. Zip: 12208. Tel: (518) 903-0781. Email: albanyswp@gmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 2824 Cottman Ave., Suite 16. Zip: 19149. Tel: (215) 708-1270. Email: philaswp@verizon.net

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 7603 Georgia Ave. NW, Suite 300. Zip: 20012. Tel: (202) 536-5080. Email: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 5418 Rainier Ave. South. Zip: 98118-2439. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Email: seattleswp@qwestoffice.net

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: Suite 22, 10 Bridge St., Granville, NSW 2142. Mailing address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: 0422 062 821. Email: cl_australia@optusnet.com.au

CANADA

QUEBEC: Montreal: 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. Email: cllcmontreal@fastmail.com **BRITISH COLUMBIA: Vancouver:** Email: cllcVancouver@fastmail.fm

FRANCE

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

NEW ZEALAND

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

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: London: 2nd Floor, 83 Kingsland High St., Dalston. Postal code: E8 2PB. Tel: (020) 3583-3553. Email: cllondon@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

No deportations! Amnesty now!

Continued from front page

make us pay to prop up their dog-eat-dog for-profit system. We face speedup on the job, unsafe working conditions and high unemployment.

They seek to “divide and conquer,” pitting Black against Caucasian, immigrant against native-born, employed against unemployed. We all have a common enemy — the capitalist system of exploitation, war and racial oppression. We need to unite and fight together.

President Donald Trump’s administration says they are passing the ball to Congress, and will phase out DACA over the next two years unless

the Democrats and Republicans pass an immigration reform bill that “puts American jobs and American security first.” But there are two Americas — the America of the wealthy, propertied rulers, and the America of the workers and farmers who create all the wealth. Workers and our unions need to say, “We don’t care where you were born, let’s stand up and fight against the bosses together.”

We need to fight to rebuild our unions, to organize the unorganized, to fight for a government-funded public works program that would put the millions of unemployed to work at union-scale wages. A program that would rebuild crumbling infrastructure — from New York’s subways to the dams and water supplies



Militant/Mike Shur
Osborne Hart, speaks to press Sept. 5 at NY protest against phasing out DACA.

of the West, to the homes destroyed by Hurricane Harvey.

But no fight in the interests of the working class can be won if we are divided. That’s why the fight for amnesty for immigrant workers is a life or death question for the working class.

The DACA program — granting work permits and temporary protection from deportation to some 800,000 people who came to the U.S. as children — was put in place by then-President Barack Obama through an executive order. At the same time, his administration deported hundreds of thousands of undocumented workers. Obama jailed more workers on so-called immigration violations than any other president in U.S. history.

As we fight against the propertied rulers’ attacks on our class, working people need our own party, a party like the SWP, to organize to take political power out of their hands.

Deportations are not popular with working people. There is less anti-immigrant sentiment and less racism among working people than at any time in U.S. history.

That means we are in a stronger position to advance the interests of the working class. Join us in this fight! No deportations! Amnesty now!

French rulers attack unions, join Berlin on EU

Continued from front page

the *New York Times* said Aug. 4, the laws hinder the bosses’ ability to do as they wish with the workers, “making it expensive to hire new workers and difficult — and even more costly — to fire them.”

Because of these legal impediments, French bosses have been replacing jobs that last a lifetime with a workforce largely comprised of temps — at lower pay, benefits and lacking union rights. Over 16 percent of workers in France are on temporary contracts today, including 85 percent of those hired in the second-quarter this year. Today’s class collaborationist French union leaderships focus on protecting workers already hired and do little to organize or fight for temporary contract workers.

“Every such fundamental economic reform in France for at least the last quarter-century has foun-dered in the streets of Paris,” the *Times* said, pointing to the labor movement’s past strength. But officials of the three major unions are divided on whether to oppose the new code. The General Confederation of Labor (CGT) has called for a strike Sept. 12. Two larger unions, the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT) and Force Ouvrière are not participating.

Macron and the bosses are fighting to cripple industry-wide union bargaining and replace it with factory-by-factory bargaining further dividing the workforce.

Small companies with fewer than 50 workers comprise 95 percent of all French companies. They would be allowed to negotiate directly with nonunionized workers, who previously received the same benefits won in contracts by unionized workers in their sector.

Twenty years ago the capitalist rulers in Germany dealt similar blows to the working class there, which also lacked a class-struggle leadership. Most contracts applied to entire industry sectors, but today the number of company-level contracts has risen sharply, and bosses can’t be forced into collective bargaining.

Steps like these meant that over the last 25 years, German bosses have sped up workers’ productivity by some 40 percent, while real wages have stagnated.

The bosses’ gains have helped Berlin maintain its supremacy in the European Union, which functions to siphon profits to the German ruling class at the expense of its weaker competitors in southern Europe.

At the same time, the eurozone functions as a bloc between German and French bosses, the more so now that London is on the way to “Brexit.”

Macron’s attacks on the labor movement are aimed

at strengthening French capital in competition in the EU, as well as at convincing Germany’s rulers, who reap the biggest profits from the 28-nation EU capitalist trade bloc, that Paris is a partner to be listened to.

Macron, Merkel look to bloc

Macron has challenged the German rulers to agree to steps to strengthen the European Union in the face of the competing interests of the ruling capitalist families in each European nation-state that pull the EU apart. He has called for appointing an EU financial minister to oversee a single eurozone budget that would make funds available to capitalist rulers facing deeper economic challenges, like Greece, Italy and others.

German Chancellor Merkel, who is up for election this month, said she backs these proposals by Macron, “so that we get a higher degree of united competitiveness.” But she says the focus should be a fund that can make “small contributions” to reward challenged countries for carrying out structural reforms.

While Berlin needs Paris, and vice versa, if the EU is going to advance, what’s really posed here is whether the German capitalists are willing to sacrifice some of the profits they make to shore up their competitors.

One country where the rulers face some real problems today is Italy, which has the third largest economy in Europe after Berlin and Paris. Rome’s annual growth rate has been stuck at zero since they adopted the European currency when it was launched in 1999.

As a result Rome’s sovereign debt is over 133 percent of its gross domestic product, the second worst in Europe, behind only Greece. Its banking system is close to collapse. Youth unemployment is 35 percent, and more and more workers are being driven below Italy’s official poverty line.

This crisis has led former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi — who says he will run to take over the government in Italy’s next election — to back a measure that would severely undermine the EU. He proposes a “parallel currency” alongside the euro.

This new lira would do what sovereign currencies normally do when they face capitalist trade inequities like Rome does in relation to Germany — sharply devalue against the euro. Real wages would plummet and Italy’s boss class would be more competitive.

But why wouldn’t every other European ruling class that suffers from its unequal union with the stronger, more profitable German bosses — that is all of them — do the same? What would happen to the EU?

Liberals, antifa

Continued from front page

their capitalist system that stand behind that vote. Both of their political parties — the Democrats and Republicans — are wracked by deep divisions.

A facet of this crisis is the relentless resistance of liberal Democrats and media, some Republicans and the middle-class left against Trump’s presidency. All tactics are fair game in their effort to get him indicted or impeached. And against those they label as racists and fascists they say have been unleashed by Trump.

As part of this effort, liberal Democratic politicians and self-proclaimed antifa thugs are mounting attacks on freedom of speech and assembly. Their attempts to shut down conservatives and alleged white supremacist speakers and rallies give a handle to the government to go after the working class and its political rights.

Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin — who calls himself a “real progressive” — is pushing the University of California there to cancel “Free Speech Week” Sept. 24-27, organized by the conservative student group Berkeley Patriot.

Arreguin said the presence of rightist Milo Yiannopoulos and conservative Ann Coulter, who the group has invited to participate, could provoke antifa thugs to “create mayhem” and cost “the city hundreds of thousands of dollars fixing the windows of businesses,” adding that “there is a line between freedom of speech and then posing a risk to public safety.”

The university administration is charging the College Republicans \$15,000 for security costs for a Sept. 14 speech by Ben Shapiro, a former Breitbart News editor. Speech is “free” — if you can pay for it.

House Democratic Party Leader Nancy Pelosi called on the National Park Service to deny a permit to a conservative “Liberty Weekend” in San Francisco Aug. 26, saying it was a “white-supremacist rally.”

Acting as enforcers for the liberal politicians, the next day antifa thugs beat up Trump supporters and others they claimed were white supremacists, as well as reporters, during an anti-racist protest in Berkeley.

An anonymous anarchist replied to criticism of antifa thuggery with a post on itsgoingdown.org titled “Eternal Liberal Handwringing: Response to Antifa Smears.” The essay is marked by the group’s glorification of violence, its anarchistic elevation of small-group actions over politics, and its alienation from the working class — all features that point toward the transformation of its members from “anti-fascist” to fascist.

In the history of the workers’ movement, others have travelled this road, including left Socialist Benito Mussolini, who ended up leading the fascist forces to power in Italy in 1922.

Attacks on workers rights

The *New York Times* published an opinion piece Aug. 29 calling on the Internal Revenue Service to take away the tax exemption of white supremacists and others with viewpoints that are “fundamentally untethered from American values.” The liberals believe those they disagree with should be “nudged” off the playing field — or knocked off, if antifa is at hand.

Calls for the IRS to decide who is eligible for tax exemption based on political criteria opens the door the rulers will gladly use to go after working-class organizations

The American Civil Liberties Union has come under attack for filing a suit supporting the right of organizers of “Unite the Right” to hold its Aug. 11 rally in a downtown park in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Within the week, the ACLU caved. ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero told the *Wall Street Journal* that “if a protest group insists, ‘No, we want to be able to carry loaded firearms,’ well we don’t have to represent them.”

I guess they don’t think the Black Panther Party should have gotten legal help from civil libertarians, or the Deacons for Defense and Justice in the fight for Black rights in the 1960s.

The biggest danger to the political rights of the working class today comes from the liberal Democratic politicians, radical groups and antifa-style forces that cut off political discussion and debate. Allegedly aimed at stopping racist and rightist groups, their thug attacks and efforts to restrict the rights of those they target will increasingly be turned against the working class as the class struggle heats up.