**US rulers’ crisis continues with liberals’ drive to oust Trump**

**BY SETH GALINSKY AND JOHN STUDER**

Much of the liberal media, Democratic Party politicians, some anti-President Donald Trump Republicans and the middle-class left refuse to accept that he is president and hope their relentless assault against members of his administration and family will lead to indictments, get him impeached or worse.

These forces are determined to take what are political differences with President Trump and turn them into criminal matters. That is the meaning of their endless “investigations.” Over the last few days, their focus has become some emails and a meeting between Donald Trump Jr., and Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya. Jared Kushner, the president’s advisor and son-in-law, and then Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort also attended some of the meeting. Kushner reportedly left 10 minutes after it began.

This is “disastrously close” to treason, New York Times columnist Charles Blow insisted July 13. He goes on to say Trump is “not only a disgrace but also an assault on the culture and the country.”

Continued on page 9

**Socialist Workers Party steps up campaigning across the country**

**Florida prisons reverse ban on three ‘Militants’, uphold it on two**

**BY SETH GALINSKY**

Florida prison officials have informed the Militant that they have reversed their censorship of three issues of the paper, after the Militant and at least three prisoners filed appeals. But they upheld the ban on two other issues, in violation of the constitutional right to free speech and freedom of the press.

The Militant first learned May 23 that Santa Rosa Correctional Institution had impounded three issues that reported on and publicized May Day actions called to protest deportations and urge amnesty for immigrants in the U.S. Prison censors falsely claimed that the articles encouraged “activities which may lead to the use of physical violence,” “riot, insurrection, disruption” or the “commission of criminal activity.”

All Florida prisons followed suit, per a Florida prisons followed suit, per

Continued on page 4

**Openings to join anti-imperialist fight**

‘Che brigade’ to Cuba, Youth Festival in Sochi

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

Young people and workers have two important opportunities to join with people from around the world to advance the fight against imperialism and war and express solidarity with revolutionary Cuba — the “in the footsteps of Che International Brigade” to Cuba Oct. 1-15 and the 19th World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi, Russia, Oct. 14-22.

The Cuba brigade, set for Oct. 1-15, is being organized by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). It is named for Ernesto Che Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution, of its revolutionary government, and of efforts to aid Cuba.

Continued on page 9

**Working class bears brunt of capitalist rulers’ crisis**

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

If you believe the capitalist rulers and their media, U.S. economic conditions are getting rosier. Official joblessness was 4.4 percent in June, nearly full employment, they say, and the “recovery” from the 2008 capitalist financial meltdown, now into its ninth year, is one of the longest on record. Federal Reserve Chairwoman Janet Yellen said June 27 that she now believes there won’t be another financial crisis “in our lifetime.”

But working people see their jobs, living conditions, health, families and future prospects under unprecedented economic and social attack because of the growing crisis of capitalist production and trade. Rising joblessness, stagnant wages, spreading opioid epidemic, increased homelessness.

Continued on page 7

**Hundreds protest cop killing of Charleena Lyles in Washington**

BY EDWIN FRUIT

SEATTLE — Hundreds of people attended a June 27 town hall meeting here sponsored by the Seattle City Council to address the June 18 killing of Charleena Lyles by two Seattle cops.

Lyles was shot dead by Seattle police in her apartment after she had called to report a burglary. The police said she had two knives in her hands and had refused to put them down. Three of her four children were in the apartment at the time.

According to her family, Lyles wrestled with significant mental health problems.

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Struggle for influence deepens as US-led forces gain in Iraq, Syria

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Lac-Mégantic group calls for rail bypass, backs rail workers

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Socialist Workers Party gets hearing at NOW conference

BY SUSAN LAMONT
ORLANDO, Fla. — “The discussion we had most often with the women and men who attended the National Organiza-
tion for Women conference here was about the meaning of President Donald Trump’s election,” said Rachelle Fruit, one of six Socialist Workers Party members from Atlanta and Miami who par-
ticipated in NOW’s Forward Feminism conference June 30-July 2.

“We explained the devastation work-
ing people face as a result of the long-
term crisis of the capitalist system; that workers who voted for Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 and then voted for Trump, helping get him elected, didn’t suddenly become racists,” Fruit said.

“They were looking for relief from un-
employment, lack of health care, low wages, the scourge of opioid addiction and more. Above all, they were looking to ‘drain the swamp’ in Washington that does nothing but makes things worse.”

“We pointed to the gains won by workers staged ‘lightning’ work stoppages. More than 10,000 of the plant’s 12,300 workers walked out after bosses rejected the union’s demand for a 16 percent raise. This is the first strike since the plant opened in 1992 and the first in a major Slovak factory since the country declared independence on Jan. 1, 1993. Workers build models like the Porsche Cayenne, the VW Touareg and Audi Q7. Slovakia joined the European Union in 2004. Auto capitalists have since invested big in the country in chase of cheap labor and high profits. Today Slovakia is the largest car producer per capita in Europe. The average wage at Volkswagen’s main plant in Germany is 2.5 times higher than at the plant in Bratislava, a gap workers are fighting to close.

Auto bosses at Kia in Slovakia, and Mercedes-Benz and VW in Hungary have also felt the pressure to give better pay raises to avoid strikes recently, often after workers staged ‘lightning’ work stoppages.”

— EMMA JOHNSON

Autoworkers in Slovakia strike, win pay raise

After six days on the picket line workers at Volkswagen’s plant in Bratislava, Slovakia, went back to work June 26 winning a 14 percent pay raise over two years, a €500 ($570) signing bonus and an extra day off. Signs above held by workers during strike tells the bosses: “Do not humiliate us.” They were transformed taking political power in their revolution, taking political power in their revolution, taking political power in their revolution, taking political power in their revolution, taking political power in their revolution, taking political power in their revolution, taking political power in their revolution, taking political power in their revolution, taking political power in their revolution, taking political power in their revolution, taking political power in their revolution, taking political power in their revolution. This is an example worth emulating here.

The conference drew 558 NOW members and guests, many from chapters throughout Florida but also from as far away as Hawaii. Dozens stopped by the Socialist Workers Party table during the conference to talk and buy revolu-
tionary literature.

Some were drawn to a photo dis-
play showing the activities of SWP members throughout Florida but also from as far away as Hawaii. Dozens stopped by the Socialist Workers Party table during the conference to talk and buy revolu-
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**Socialist Workers Party**

Continued from front page

**Revolution in the US Possible?** by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters. And then the SWP's explanation of the Militant, the party's paper.

David Rosenfeld, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, and party supporters campaigned in the community of Osseo, northwest of the city, July 1.

The SWP's party-building campaign gets a boost from its election campaign since most workers today still look to the elections as a place to effect change. In addition to Minneapolis, the party is running for mayor in Seattle, Miami, Atlanta, New York City and Albany, New York, and the Communist League in Canada is running for mayor in Montreal.

Jed Fredrick told Rosenfeld that she was glad to meet him when he knocked on her door. “I worked drawing blood in a hospital in Texas, but I only made $8 an hour,” she said. “I need to make more money here because everything we need is so expensive.”

“Workers carry the burden of the capitalist crisis,” replied Rosenfeld. “This election results signal coming battles by working people against the attacks of the bosses and their government — that’s why they fear working people. And it’s fueling an accelerating political crisis in both capitalist political parties, the Democrats and Republicans.”

She invited to get *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record* along with a subscription to the *Militant*.

**FBI agent indicted for lying in killing of LaVoy Finicum**

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

An FBI agent involved in the cold-blooded killing of Robert “LaVoy” Finicum near the end of the ranchers’ occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Oregon on Jan. 26, 2016, was indicted on three counts of making false statements and two counts of obstruction of justice.

In a packed federal courtroom June 28, W. Joseph Astarita, a member of the elite FBI Hostage Rescue Team, pled not guilty to “knowingly and willfully” making false statements and “failing to disclose that he had fired two rounds” during the shooting.

Occupation leader Ammon Bundy, his brother Ryan, Finicum and others, were driving to speak at a community meeting in John Day, Oregon, about why they were protecting the imprisonment of cattle ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond and against federal land policies that have ruinous consequences for small ranchers and farmers. Based on a tip from undercover FBI informers, armed FBI and Oregon state cops set up a roadblock to intercept them, deploying snipers and surveillance planes.

The killing provoked condemnation by ranchers and others in the Pacific Northwest. “The truth will come out. LaVoy was just flat murdered,” Tad Houpt, who helped organize the meeting Finicum and the Bundys were on their way to, told the *Militant* shortly after the killing.

Astarita is accused of lying about firing two shots at Finicum’s truck, hitting the roof and missing on the second shot. Seconds later state troopers shot Finicum three times in the back, claiming he was reaching for a gun.

If convicted, Astarita faces up to 20 years in prison. After the court hearing he was released pending an Aug. 29 trial.

“I’m encouraged. I’m thrilled that the grand jury came back with this finding,” Jeanette Finicum, LaVoy’s wife, told the press, adding that there are four other FBI agents who took part in the ambush who have not yet been charged. She said she welcomed the same standard would apply to the Bundys and other rancher protesters. Ammon and Ryan Bundy and five others were jailed in Portland, Oregon, until they were found not guilty on conspiracy and other charges involved in the Malheur protest Oct. 27. The Bundys were immediately arrested again and are incarcerated in Nevada along with their father Cliven. They’re awaiting trial on charges resulting from protests against federal agents’ attempts to confiscate their father’s cattle in a fight over access to grazing on federal land in 2014.

Demonstrators have taken place outside the Nevada federal detention center where the Bundys are being held, against the abusive conditions they face in jail. Ryan Bundy has filed a civil lawsuit charging their constitutional rights are being violated by frequent strip searches and solitary confinement.

**PHOTOGRAPIH BY BEVERLY BERNARDO**

**Philippe Tessier, left, Communist League candidate for mayor of Montreal, being interviewed by Ghisi Serani July 10 on his early-morning “bon réveil” (good awakening) radio show.**

The prison protest continued for days in the streets of Minneapolis and Albany, calling out the Clinton administration for using the FBI and other law enforcement agencies to “terrorize” and “marginalize” their political opponents.

The Militant/Beverly Bernardo

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**Militant** July 24, 2017 3
‘Every attack on our revolution destined to fail,’ Cuban unionist says on US tour

BY ANDREA MORELL

BERKELEY, Calif. — Some 60 people heard Víctor Lemagne Sánchez, secretary-general of Cuba’s Havana Regional Troika, speak here June 29 at Communications Workers of America Local 9119 union hall. The meeting was part of a national tour, led by unionists with the Empires and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in Los Angeles, San Diego, Chicago, New York and Baltimore. This was the first time in 17 years that a Cuban union leader succeeded in getting a visa to tour the U.S.

The goal of the tour, Lemagne explained, is to develop links between workers and unions in the U.S. and Cuba. The Cuban Workers Federation (CTC) is working to make it easier for unionists from the U.S. to organize trips and meetings with their counterparts in Cuba.

Lemagne is a member of the executive committee of the National Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) and a delegate to Cuba’s National Assembly from the city of Trinidad, a popular tourist destination.

Lemagne began with a slide show that documents the damage done to the Cuban people by Washington’s economic embargo. “Every attack against our revolution by the Empires is destined to fail,” he said. “Our response is to continue with the economic development of our country, our revolutionary process.”

Workers in Cuba’s tourist industry see themselves as on the front lines of the struggle, Lemagne said. The industry has expanded rapidly, including a growing sector of self-employed nonstate workers. In 2012, he said, his union had only 345 members outside the state sector. Today they have 27,000.

The situation in Cuba is different than in the U.S. and other capitalist countries because workers and farmers have political power. “They have nothing to fight for contracts but for bosses, Lemagne said, because workers’ rights and job conditions — in state-owned and private companies — are written into the country’s laws. His union makes sure that nonstate workers get the same rights and protections as state workers.

A record 3.52 million people visited Cuba last year. Even though the U.S. government maintains restrictions on visits to the island, Lemagne said, travel from the United States has soared. People coming from the U.S. now make up the second largest number next to Canada.

Many of the larger hotels are joint ventures, 51 percent owned by Cuba and 49 percent by foreign companies. Managers from abroad have to abide by Cuban labor law, he said, or they’re removed.

As tourism has mushroomed, with union membership rising alongside it, the union has fought to reduce workers’ workload to protect their bodies, he said. They work to limit the number of rooms cleaners in the hotels have to work per shift, to keep hours down, and for members to monitor safety on the job.

Unions are strong in other Cuban industries, Lemagne noted. Ninety percent of Cuba’s workers belong to a union, and membership is “voluntary and conscious.”

Lemagne noted, with a smile, that tourism workers in Cuba have guaranteed vacations, sick pay, social security and other benefits that hotel workers in the U.S. are fighting to get into their contracts.

He also said with pride that Cuban tourism workers donate whatever tips they get to cancer research and treatment, a total of $23 million to date.

Alicia Jrapko of the International Committee for Peace, Justice, and Dignity, a sponsor of the meeting, urged from the chair that participants step up efforts to demand that Washington lift its punishing embargo, as well as return the territory of Guantánamo to Cuba. The U.S. rulers occupy Cuban territory there against the will of the Cuban people, maintaining a prison notorious for its physical and legal abuses.

Clarence Thomas, retired secretary-treasurer of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, joined Lemagne on the platform. “International labor solidarity is sound union policy,” Thomas said, noting Local 10’s participation in the campaign to free the Cuban Five, Cuban revolutionaries framed up by Washington and imprisoned for years in U.S. jails until a growing international campaign finally won their freedom and return to Cuba.

Cuba’s Eastern Army to the youth festival

In speeches before the UN, Che Guevara called for anti-imperialist young people to join the struggle. “For peace, solidarity, and social justice, we struggle against imperialism. Honoring our past, we build the future.” Guevara dedicated himself to the cause of internationalism and to the struggle against the Yankee imperialists.

Join ‘Che’ brigade to Cuba, Sochi youth festival

Continued from front page

Workers and farmers worldwide to follow its example. He was killed 50 years ago helping to lead a guerrilla struggle against the military dictatorship of René Barrientos in Bolivia.

“We have seen people signed up so far to the Che Guevara Brigade national co-coordinator, told the Militant July 9.

Eckhardt explained that the brigade will meet with members of Che’s family and combatants he fought with during the Cuban Revolution and in Bolivia, and participate in a national mobilization of workers and students to commemorate 50th anniversary of his death.

Brigade members will visit a number of Cuban provinces where Che led combat units during the 1956-59 revolutionary war. They will tour Santa Clara, Cuba’s third-largest city, where Che’s column defeated the army of Fulgencio Batista, sealing the fate of the U.S.-backed dictatorship.

They will have the opportunity to meet with members of the Federation of Cuban Workers (FMC), the Cuban Workers Federation (CTC) and the Union of Young Communists (UJC). Joe Kapner, 31, a warehouse worker at a valve manufacturing plant in Minneapolis, will be making his first trip to Cuba on the brigade. “The working class in the U.S. is getting the crap kicked out of it,” Kapner told the Militant.

Cuba is the one place where that is not happening. We need to bring Cuba and its socialist revolution into the discussion that is going on in the working class. To go to Cuba and bring that experience back will help me do that.”

The World Federation of Democratic Youth has been organizing festivals in different countries around the world since 1947, providing an opportunity for anti-imperialist young people to come together, debate politics and plan common actions against war, exploitation and oppression.

World Festival

Some 20,000 delegates from over 120 countries are expected for this year’s festival. The motto for the gathering is “For peace, solidarity, and social justice, we struggle against imperialism. Honoring our past, we build the future.” It is dedicated to Fidel Castro, the central leader of the Cuban Revolution, who died Nov. 25.

All across Cuba, many young-minded workers, soldiers and students have been meeting to discuss resolutions for the festival and elect delegates. Overall, Cuba is organizing to send 250 young revolutionaries to the gathering.

“It’s a high honor for me and a deserved recognition of the work of the youth in the Border Brigade,” Yaisis Licianao, a delegate from Cienfuegos, who died Nov. 25.

The deadline for registration to attend the festival in Sochi is July 20. For more information and to get an application, contact the U.S. National Preparatory Committee at usanpc2017@gmail.com. No money is required to apply. The deadline for the In the Footsteps of Che Cuba brigades is Sept. 10, but since space is limited, those interested in participating are urged to sign up as early as possible. The cost is $650, which includes housing, food and transportation within Cuba. Travel costs to Cuba are separate.

To sign up or get more information, contact the Chicago Cuba Coalition at (312) 952-2618 or visit: chicagocuba-coalition.com/2017/06/01/in-the-footsteps-of-che-international-brigade-2/

Recommended reading

To Speak the Truth: Why Washington’s ‘Cold War’ Against Cuba Doesn’t End

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Struggle for influence deepens as US-led forces gain in Iraq, Syria

BY JIM BRADLEY

As U.S.-led forces drive towards military victory over Islamic State in its former strongholds of Mosul, Iraq, and Raqqa, Syria, the political and military maneuvering for influence and territory between Washington and Moscow and Tehran is intensifying. Syria’s bloody civil war, which has devastated the population, driving more than half from their homes, is now in its seventh year.

Washington’s continuing military role in Syria and Iraq is rooted in efforts by Democratic and Republican administrations alike, under cover of defeating Islamic State, to reimpose stability in the region and defend their imperialist interests.

Preparations for a Sept. 25 binding referendum by the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq, because of the organizational weakness of the Kurdish forces. President Donald Trump has been the success of Kurdish forces in Syria, as well as with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey, which has been blocked in a bloody struggle with Ankara for Kurdish national rights for over three decades.

YPG forces in Afrin, a Kurdish canton in western Syria, have been facing daily bombardment by Turkish-led forces. Ankara has sent troops, tanks and other heavy weapons into the Afrin area with the announced intention of clearing the YPG “terrorists” out of the territory, which is near the Syria-Turkey border. Thousands of Kurds marched in the streets of Afrin July 5 to protest the bombings and the Turkish military buildup.

Endogan has repeatedly stated that Ankara will not permit the establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Syria, home to 2 million Kurds. The YPG seeks to link up the larger autonomous Kurdish cantons in the east with their canton in Afrin in the west.

Ankara fears that the consolidation of a Kurdish ministate in Syria would embolden the struggle of the 15 million Kurds within Turkey for their national rights. For the same reason, Erdogan is staunchly opposed to the KRG’s Sept. 25 independence referendum.

Mobilization in Istanbul

Hundreds of thousands of people gathered for a mass “Justice Rally” organized by the bourgeoisie opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) in Istanbul July 9. The action culminated a 25-day march from Ankara to Istanbul.

The protests mark growing opposition to a broad anti-democratic crackdown by the Erdogan government. His government used a failed coup attempt last July to establish a state of emergency that has led to firings and arrests of tens of thousands across the country. The attacks have hit all opposition to Erdogan, including the CHP, but the_CALLS FOR KURDISH INDEPENDENCE__The HDP, along with a wide range of unions, including the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions and Confederation of Public Sector Trade Unions, mobilized for the demonstration.

At a certain point the cops blocked tens of thousands more from entering the rally, saying the area was full.

Fight for Kurdish independence

One unintended consequence of Washington’s wars in the region and the civil war that has splintered Syria has been the success of Kurdish forces in the autonomous regions in both northern Iraq and Syria.

The U.S.-led coalition forged a tactical alliance with the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) in August 2014 to carve out autonomous Kurdish cantons in the east with their base near Ras al-Ain in Syria, as a terrorieder organization linked to the Taliban and other heavy weapons into the Afrin area with the announced intention of clearing the YPG “terrorists” out of the territory, which is near the Syria-Turkey border. Thousands of Kurds marched in the streets of Afrin July 5 to protest the bombings and the Turkish military buildup.

Endogan has repeatedly stated that Ankara will not permit the establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Syria, home to 2 million Kurds. The YPG seeks to link up the larger autonomous Kurdish cantons in the east with their canton in Afrin in the west.

Ankara fears that the consolidation of a Kurdish ministate in Syria would embolden the struggle of the 15 million Kurds within Turkey for their national rights. For the same reason, Erdogan is staunchly opposed to the KRG’s Sept. 25 independence referendum.

July 31, 1992

Under the guise of “supporting human rights and liberation struggles” for the Muslim, Serbian, and Croatian populations under siege in Sarajevo, the world’s major imperialist powers have been marching with the Adrian Sea of Yugoslavia.

[President George] Bush, President Francois Mitterrand of France, Prime Minister John Major of Britain, and the other leaders of the major industrial powers hope to gain acceptance for greater military action due to the revitalization of people around the world at the slaughterhouse taking place in Bosnia.

Muslim Slavs, who make up more than 40 percent of the country’s population, continue to put up resistance along with Serbs and Croats, and successfully repel the militarily superior Serbian forces which have been relentlessly shelling Sarajevo and other towns.

July 24, 1967

NEWARK “A City’s Shame”

That was the heading on a Newark News editorial. But black people aren’t buying that line. There’s a feeling of elation at having struck back at the criminal, hypocritical power structure that has ground us down for so long.

I was about six blocks away from where it all started. A black cab driver was arrested over some trivial business of following too close behind a squad car. The police were seen to brutally beat him and drag him to the Fourth Precinct a few blocks away.

It was the climax of a long series of insanely brutal acts by the cops. The “riot” was on.

A middle-aged woman said: “With all the Toms in soft political jobs and thousands of kids have nothing except to go to Vietnam and come back in boxes, what do you expect?”

Militant Miami car caravan protest: ‘Yes to travel to Cuba!’

CARLOS RODRIGUEZ

More than 50 cars joined a caravan July 8 protesting the announcement by Washington of steps to reverse some measures taken by then-President Barack Obama after Washington re-established diplomatic relations with Havana in 2015.

The caravane drove through Miami’s Cuban neighborhoods for some 15 miles, carrying signs demandimg an end to the embargo against Cuba, complete freedom of travel to the island and the immediate return of Guantanamo to Cuba. Inset, signs say, “Down with the blockade” and “Yes to travel to Cuba.”

The caravan was organized after President Donald Trump visited Miami’s Little Havana neighborhood June 16 to announce his new executive order. Flanked by veterans of the failed 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, Trump stated some of the most notorious benchmarks of Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista, overthrown by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement in 1959.

Speaking to participants before the protest, Alianza Martiana leader Andres Gomez noted that the caravan reflects what polls have shown — the majority of Cuban-Americans oppose the U.S. embargo.

— STEVE WARSELL

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

July 25, 1942

In recent weeks German armies have added thousands of square miles to their previous conquests in the first year of the war, which amount to half a million square miles of Soviet territory.

By overcoming the Donets basin, the Nazis have deprived the Soviet Union of its coal, iron and steel base. The bankruptcy of Stalinist leadership and of the Stalinist policy of depending on the imperialist “democracies” should now be clear even to the blind.

There is still time to issue the Bolshevist call of international solidarity and to summon the workers, above all the workers of Germany, to struggle side by side with the Red Army and the Soviet masses against the fascist, whether fascist or “democratic,” and for the establishment of the Socialist United States of Europe.

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Capitalist economic crisis wears on working people

BY SETH GALINSKY
The U.S.-backed opposition Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) in Venezuela is escalating protests aimed at blocking a July 30 vote for delegates to a new constituent assembly and at bringing down the government of President Nicolás Maduro.

For the last three months, these opposition forces have stepped up protests across the country designed to provoke violent clashes with the police and National Guard. They seek to open divisions among the Venezuelan armed forces and government officials in the hopes of fomenting a coup.

Their actions are encouraged by the financial and travel sanctions imposed on some Venezuelan officials by the U.S. government.

Washington has sought to replace the Venezuelan government since 1998 when Hugo Chávez was elected president. While both Chávez and Maduro, who he chose to succeed him as president, left most industry and agriculture in the hands of the capitalist class in Venezuela, Washington saw what Venezuelans called the Bolivarian Revolution as an obstacle to imperialist domination of the region.

The U.S. rulers especially hated the Venezuelan government’s close ties to revolutionary Cuba, the oil it provided Cuba and other Caribbean nations at preferential prices, and the use of oil profits to subsidize social welfare programs. Tens of thousands of Cuban internationalist doctors, nurses and teachers have volunteered to provide low-cost medical care and literacy programs, often in the poorest and hardest to reach parts of the Venezuelan countryside.

Washington — and many of the leaders of the opposition Roundtable — backed a military coup in 2002 and a “strike” by oil bosses in 2003, both of which were defeated by massive popular uprisings.

Over the last few years, opposition groups have been able to take advantage of the deepening capitalist economic crisis — including their own sabotage of government measures — to bolster their position. Runaway inflation and constant shortages of food and other goods have made life increasingly difficult for Venezuelan working people. Many pay less attention to politics, day, consumed by the struggle to survive.

MUD candidates won a majority in the December 2015 legislative elections bringing the National Assembly under their control.

Opposition plans provocations
In April, after the Supreme Court backed off on its attempt to take away the National Assembly’s legislative powers, the Roundtable launched a campaign of anti-government demonstrations that have resulted in more than 70 deaths, including both supporters and opponents of the government as well as bystanders.

On May 1 Maduro announced July 30 elections to a 54-member Constituent Assembly — with delegates elected both by region and by “sector,” including slots for students, retirees, peasants and fishermen, workers and bosses — which will have the power to revamp the constitution and laws, bypassing the opposition-controlled legislature. MUD calls for a boycott, saying the election is unconstitutional and rigged.

The group has set its own unofficial referendum on July 16, in which voters will be asked for their opinion on whether they reject Maduro’s call for a Constituent Assembly, and on the opposition’s demand that government and armed forces officials defend the 1999 Constitution and back the decisions of the National Assembly.

The political polarization has continued to deepen as both sides engage in violent confrontations. Opposition demonstrators with their faces covered routinely throw Molotov cocktails and fire homemade mortars at police and National Guard sent to break up the protests.

The Roundtable is also taking advantage of a dispute between the Maduro government and Attorney General Luisa Ortega Díaz. Government officials began an investigation June 20 that could lead to her removal from office. Previously a supporter of the Maduro government, Ortega has spoken out against some of his measures over the last several months, including the call for the Constituent Assembly and against brutality by the police and National Guard.

A violent attack by pro-Maduro forces on Roundtable legislators inside the National Assembly in Caracas July 5 left several of them bleeding and bated. The attack handed Washington and the opposition a weapon to use against the government at home and abroad. Maduro said he “absolutely condemns” the assault.

Meanwhile, the Maduro government surprised many by unilaterally commuting the sentence of opposition leader Leopoldo López, transferring him from a military prison to house arrest. López had been imprisoned for almost two years.

“Now is the time for sustained pressure on Maduro,” López’s U.S. lawyer Jared Genser said after the release. “Relentless pressure is working.”

Working people bear brunt of crisis
It’s workers and farmers in Venezuela who are paying the price of the capitalist crisis.

The gross national product has fallen an estimated 30 percent over the last four years. The worldwide drop in oil prices and a drop in Venezuelan oil production, which accounts for more than 70 percent of the country’s hard currency, has made it harder to fund welfare programs.

The crisis is worsened by pressure from Washington, rampant inflation, hoarding of basic goods by capitalist companies, and anti-social problems bred by the crisis, including one of the highest violent crime rates in the world.

Nonetheless foreign speculators see Venezuelan bonds as a good investment because of the government’s commitment to make every payment, despite the crisis.

In addition to shortages of food at government-set prices, there is a drastic shortage in medicines, from basic antibiotics to drugs for AIDS.

The government announced a 50 percent increase in the price of basic goods.

Continued on page 7

Florida prison ban on ‘Militant’

Continued from front page

The Militant fought and won reversal of previous impoundments of the paper by Florida prisons in 2013, 2015 and 2016.

Prison authorities “do their best to pass the buck to another source for the cause of potential trouble when most of the blame is truly generated from within the prisons,” one Florida prisoner wrote June 7 after his paper was banned. “It’s almost never from what we see on TV or read in books and newspapers.”

The charge that the Militant presents any threat to the security of the prison or encourages disruption is just not true, he wrote. These are “fabricated and vague excuses just because they don’t agree with the political position this newspaper has.”

Roger Burger, a worker behind bars in Florida State Prison in Raiford who said we should use his name, wrote, “I and my paper are being targeted!”

He also filed an appeal.

A few weeks after the Militant’s lawyer David Goldstein, of the civil liberties firm Robinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman, filed the paper’s appeal, the Florida prisons impounded issues 23 and 24, targeting articles covering the censorship fight.

Supporters of political rights, including the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, Pen America, and Stop Prison Abuse Now, sent statements supporting the Militant’s appeal of the unconstitutional censorship.

On June 29 Florida prison systems’ Literature and Review Committee member Charles Huber informed Goldstein that the ban on issue no. 16 had been reversed, and on July 7 he reported that issues 23 and 24 had been cleared as well. The committee gave no explanation for their decisions.

That leaves issues 15 and 18 still barred from the Militant’s 48 readers in Florida prisons.

“The Militant will continue to fight for the right of prisoners to read the literature of their choosing, so they can be part of the world and make up their own minds about issues of importance for them and the working class,” Militant editor John Studer said. “We can expect to see and to fight against more arbitrary censorship as the crisis of capitalism and the rulers’ fear of the working class — deepens in the months and years ahead.”

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by Jack Barnes

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Monthly distribution of basic necessities in working-class neighborhood of Caracas, like one above March 26, 2016, are not enough to overcome shortages of products at government-set prices. Capitalist economic crisis, hoarding by bosses and government corruption have caused widespread discontent among workers, who still distrust pro-imperialist opposition forces.
Continued from front page

Declining birth rates and devastating conditions are the “new normal” for workers and farmers.

The bosses and their government have no solution for the depression-like conditions this crisis forces upon working people. And, while it is impossible to predict when the next deep downturn will hit — it will come.

The closure of steel, auto, coal mining and other industries in many cities and towns across the U.S. have shattered the lives of millions of workers, leading to rising death tolls in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, where Bethlehem Steel once employed thousands, those who remained in towns now industrialized.

“Rural America is the New ‘Inner City,’” headlined a May 26 Wall Street Journal article. It pointed out that in 2013 more people died in less populated U.S. counties than were born — the first time since records began being kept in the 1930s.

There’s also a growing gap between what employers pay workers in rural and urban areas. The average wage, the Journal noted, is now one-third less in towns with 250,000 or fewer people.

Birth rates are falling as growing numbers of young people find it harder and harder to find steady jobs and company-funded health care. Growing numbers of workers put off starting families until a later age, if at all. In 2016 the “fertility rate” in the U.S. was the lowest it has ever been — 62 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44.

Nearly 10 percent of babies born today in the U.S. are premature. The U.S. has the worst rates of infant mortality, preterm birth and low birth weight babies of all industrialized capitalist countries. In fact the U.S. has the highest rate of babies who die the same day they are born — the first time since records began being kept in the 1930s.

At the same time, the gap in workers’ life expectancy has widened by 20 years, depending on where you live. It’s lowest on Native American reservations and counties in the lower half of the Mississippi and in coal country in eastern Kentucky and southwestern West Virginia.

Meanwhile, homelessness rates are on the rise, with many workers just a paycheck away from losing their apartment. Others face mental problems that sharply increase the cost of health care and the suicide toll. “There’s tremendous discontent among working people,” Barrios said. Nonetheless a significant section of the working class still sees the Maduro government as their government — at least a lesser evil to the U.S.-backed opposition. Barrios said she supports the Constituent Assembly, “but it won’t solve Venezuela’s problems.”

Cuba protests U.S. interference

The revolutionary government of Cuba has condemned the violent protests and outside interference in Venezuela. Cuba’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs June 28 expressed “its strongest solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution and its leaders.”

The crisis for working people is worldwide. Lower-wage temporary contracts for workers — leaving them to fend for themselves for health care and retirement — is the norm in the European Union. “The jobs crisis has gone on for so long that many would-be workers have given up and left the labor market for good,” the Financial Times reported July 5.

US-backed opposition seeks to oust Venezuela gov’t

Continued from page 6

percent increase in the minimum wage for government employees July 1, the third increase this year, but it isn’t nearly enough to keep up with inflation — estimated at 720 percent this year.

CubaDebate, a Cuban website, ran an article June 30 highlighting some of the challenges in Venezuela. It noted that the government, first under Chávez and continuing today, set up a low, parallel exchange rate for dollars for companies that import goods. But many companies instead sell the dollars on the black market, fueling inflation and worsening the scarcity of basic necessities. Corruption in the government is also a problem that alienates working people, CubaDebate said.

Government tries to combat scarcity

In March last year the government launched Local Food and Production Committees (CLAP) to combat scarcity and high prices.

“In every neighborhood, especially the poorer ones, local committees distribute a monthly bag of basic, subsidized products,” Ana Gracelia Barrios, who works with a community group in the San Agustín del Cole neighborhood, told Militant by phone from Caracas June 30. “It helps, but it only lasts a week. And not all the committees work as well.”

Other workers report that products designated for CLAP distribution all too often end up on the black market instead.

Shortages of medicine hit workers the hardest, Barrios said. Cuban-staffed medical missions, like Cuba’s other internationalist aid, continue and are popular among working people. But they have difficulty getting needed medicines and supplies.

“Of all capitalism’s evils, the most fundamental one is how that system of exploitation reproduces its social relations as a condition of producing its profits. How its workings, its blind methods of functioning, keep grinding toiling humanity into the ground.”

— Jack Barnes

Imperialism’s March Toward Fascism and War

by Jack Barnes

in New International No. 10 — $16

Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun

by Jack Barnes

in New International No. 12 — $16

Our Politics

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US workers

Continued from front page

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Lac-Mégantic group calls for rail bypass, backs rail workers

The following article was submitted by Robert Bellefleur, spokesperson for the Citizens and Groups Coalition for Rail Safety in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, to the Militant on July 6, 2017. It describes the heighten danger of a second derailment in downtown Lac-Mégantic, at the very place where the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic train derailed in 2013.

The coalition conveyed to journalists its deep concern about the dangerous curve of the new tracks through the town center that were rebuilt in the fall of 2013 following the tragedy. The tracks were built at a sharper 8-degree angle, creating a greater risk of derailment than the original 4-degree curve in place at the time of the disaster.

The fears of the coalition have been heightened. Since January 2014, the Central, Maine and Quebec railway — which replaced the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic — has been running around 10 trains a week through this curve, regularly transporting dangerous Harding quickly ran to the site of the disaster. He asked firemen for protective clothing in order to risk the inferno that threatened to destroy the northwestern part of the town.

Harding showed exceptional courage against all odds. Harding does not deserve to be treated as a common criminal, nor does Richard Labrie and Jean Demaire. They all carried out their responsibilities as best they could under unacceptable work conditions imposed by an irresponsible company guilty of many breaches of the most elementary rules of railway safety. For the citizens coalition, the public inquiry into the Lac-Mégantic catastrophe, which political authorities have so far refused to hold, has only been postponed. We hope the criminal trial before a jury in Sherbrooke that begins in September will exonerate the workers and shine a spotlight on the responsibility of senior Montreal, Maine and Atlantic managers, politicians and high officials from Canada's previous government for this tragedy.

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Dc fundraiser backs framed up Quebec rail workers

WASHINGTON — Some 70 rail workers, union activists and others attended a benefit for locomotive engineer Tom Harding and dispatcher Richard Labrie held in September.

They’re charged with responsibility for the deaths of 47 people when an unmanned train carrying highly flammable shale oil rolled into Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, derailed and exploded in 2013. Participants heard remarks on the stakes of their fight and enjoyed an evening of “Music for Safe Rails and Sustainable Communities,” featuring the U-Liners, at the Dew Drop Inn here July 9.

“The funds we raise are important, but second to the political defense we must wage. Harding and Labrie did not cause what happened. The charges against them should be dropped,” said Fritz Edler, who organized the benefit. He is a retired Washington, D.C., Amtrak locomotive engineer and member of Rail Workers United. “The Canadian government and rail road owners are fighting to have history regard them as well in control of rail safety, justly disciplining the bad apples that cause all accidents. We can’t accept that.”

Jean Demaire, manager of train operations for the now-bankrupt Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway, faces similar charges.

“What’s at stake in their case is the fight over crew sizes,” Bill Broadus, 52, an Amtrak engineer with 34 years of service, told the Militant. The Canadian government had given the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic dispensation to operate with only one crew member, cutting costs. “If one man crew was a standard, it would be devastating to rail safety,” Broadus said.

The benefit was marked by three deaths in rail incidents nearly two weeks earlier. On June 27, CSX freight conductor Jake Lafave, 25, and Steven Deal, 20, a conductor trainee, were struck and killed by an Amtrak train while they stopped to inspect a malfunction in their train’s wheels. The next day, Amtrak train engineer Dean Langan, 48, was killed when she was hit by a Virginia Railway Express commuter train while walking across the Bull Run Creek trestle in Manassas, Virginia. The trains run there through a populated area, near a popular swimming and fishing hole, but they aren’t fenced off and there are no walkways. Her cousin and brother managed to jump to safety.

— ARLEN RUBINSTEIN
Editorial

Sign up for Cuba brigade, youth festival

Working people and youth have two unique opportunities to be part of the international fight against the capitalists and havoc unleashed on us by the worldwide crisis of capitalism: the “In the Footsteps of Che International Brigade” to Cuba Oct. 1-15 and the World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi, Russia, Oct. 14-22.

More and more working people and youth in the U.S. see through the hypocrisy and greed of the proportioned rulers, who increasingly fear the explosion of class struggle to come as workers seek ways to fight against the ravages of capitalism.

The “smarts” who speak for the capitalists tell us that we’re at “near full employment,” when millions have no work or are forced to work part time. They point to the need to maintain huge nuclear arsenals, while claiming they are for peace. And they try to convince us that “our” America is great, or can be great again. But that we’re at “near full employment,” when millions

The “In the Footsteps of Che International Brigade” is a unique opportunity to see what the Cuban Revolution has accomplished, to exchange views with Cuban workers and youth and with fellow international brigadistas. To see that it’s not just talk when Cuban revolutionaries say they don’t share their leftovers, they share all that they have, a centerpiece of their internationalism.

At the World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi you will also find a revolutionary-minded young workers and students looking for a way forward out of the deepening crisis. At the festival you can work shoulder to shoulder with members of the Socialists Party and Youths Socialists, and Cuban and other youth who want to build a world-wide movement that can stand up to imperialism. By participating in the Cuba brigade or the World Festival you can come back better prepared to fight the carnage capitalism sows and more convinced that we can make a socialist revolution right here in the U.S.

Sign up today!

Rulers’ crisis continues with drive to oust Trump

Continued from front page

“Take comfort in this eternal truth,” Blow concludes, “for all things, there comes an end.”

The hysterical anti-Trump witch hunt continues to grow. It shows an absolute determination to do whatever it takes to drive him out of office. The real target is the working class the rulers see behind Trump, who are growing in numbers.

In a previous week’s column, Blow called Trump, “a madman” who “is himself the offense,” as is anyone who supports him.

The rulers fear the working class because they see the anger and wide-ranging discussion by working people on the bruising effects of today’s capitalist economic crisis, leading to the class struggle to come. They grow. It shows an absolute determination to do whatever it takes to drive him out of office.

The targets of the shooting were reactionary Republicans,” Workers World says. “The person carrying out the shooting was threatened by the Republicans’ attacks on the poor.”

But it is the liberal, left hysteria against Trump that spawned Hodgkinson’s attempt to reduce the number of Republican representatives in Congress. And it’s responsible for the threats of more attacks from Mark Pritchard, who was arrested after he broke into the Arizona office of Republican Sen. Jeff Flake. “You know how liberals are going to solve the Republican problem?” Pritchard told Flake’s staff. “They are going to get better aim. That last guy tried, but he needed better aim.”

Flake was on the ball field when Hodgkinson opened fire.

Workers World says “revolutionaries need to get better organized, to get more militant, to find means of mass resistance and self-defense that will make it impossible for the ruling class to continue its deadly assault on the poor.”

But backedhand support to the Democratic Party and rationalization of violence against alleged rightists only strengthens the hands of the ruling class. They present a handle for government attacks on workers’ political rights.

The political obstacles to workers being able to discuss and debate the road forward in the face of today’s capitalist economic crisis. Working people need to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist class and its two crisis-ridden parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

Protest Lyles’ killing

Continued from front page

health issues. The cops were well aware of her history with mental health problems. She had previously been called to her residence more than 20 times before.

A few weeks before her death, police reported an incident in her apartment where Lyles refused to put down a pair of scissors, but said they had been able to de-escalate the situation.

“There have been too many unnecessary police killings across the United States over the past few years,” Charles Lyles, her son and granddaughter, told the crowd. “Something has to be done.”

Some speakers called for better training of the police. The Seattle Times reports that both cops had already gone through the police academy’s Crisis Intervention Training, prior to the shooting and one had previously taken a course in “de-escalation” and mental-health intervention.

“We live in a progressive city, a sanctuary city, where in actuality, we live in the Deep North,” said Natasha Thornton. “We like to give ourselves a pat on the back, when in actuality, a pregnant Black woman was killed don’t even bother to check her out.”

Some City Council members are calling for an independent inquiry outside of the police internal investigations.

Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Seattle, attended the forum holding a sign that read, “Prosecute and jail cops who killed Charleena Lyles.” Many gave Martin a thumbs up gesture.

Martin was not called upon to speak but told those who visited the SWP campaign table afterwards that “under capitalism the role of the police is to keep the working class in line, especially those who resist. Special punishment is meted out to those accused of not following police orders and those who are Black.”

Ebany Tura, a student at Franklin High School in Seattle, told communist campaigners, “I don’t think there is a way to make cops better.”

A June 20 rally and march in the housing complex where Lyles was killed also drew hundreds.

“I just want to grieve right now, but I can’t even do that because I’m so angry,” Tiffany Rogers, Charleena Lyles’ long-time friend told James Bible, the lawyer for the Lyles family, said that he had listened to audio of the shooting, and the police weren’t in imminent danger because they had time to debate whether to use a Taser or a gun.

“We have a serious problem on our hands, and no amount of training, or protocol is going to fix it,” said the Seattle King County NAACP in a June 20 statement. “It’s time to actually start holding officers accountable when they kill innocent victims.”

In Washington state alone, just the month before Lyles was killed, police shot and killed individuals in Vancouver, Auburn and Everett.

The killing of Lyles also highlights the deterioration in health care. Under the guise of “deinstitutionalization,” the number of beds in government institutions for mental health care was cut from 413,000 in 1970 to less than 40,000 today.

Little was done to provide alternate treatment while funding for mental health care has been cut by billions of dollars over the last decade.

Instead of getting the help they need, many with psychological issues end up in prison. According to USA Today, in 2014 there were more than 350,000 mentally ill people behind bars.

A 2015 report by the Treatment Advocacy Center said, “The risk of being killed while being approached or stopped by law enforcement in the community is 16 times higher for individuals with untreated serious mental illness than for others who come into contact with the police.”

John Nauahr contributed to this article.

Letters

Teeth decay under capitalism

The Militant article “Deep class divide means some pay for brighter smiles, others lost all their teeth” deeply with me. One of my grand-

As a public health nurse I frequently encounter working-class families who struggle to find affordable dental care. Low wage earners go to cost dental clinics for them, but the need always outstrips the available resources.

Recently I participated in a tour of a facility where the Cuban health care system.

I try to locate lower cost dental clinics for them, but the available dental care. I try to locate lower cost dental clinics for them, but the available dental care. I try to locate lower cost dental clinics for them, but the available dental care. I try to locate lower cost dental clinics for them, but the available dental care. I try to locate lower cost dental clinics for them, but the available dental care. I try to locate lower cost dental clinics for them, but the available dental care. I try to locate lower cost dental clinics for them, but the available dental care. I try to locate lower cost dental clinics for them, but the available dental care.

The Militant July 24, 2017

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