

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

‘The Kurdish people are one nation’

— PAGES 6-7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 81/NO. 35 SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

Join SWP in drive for ‘Militant,’ books, fund

BY MARY MARTIN

The Socialist Workers Party is launching its nine-week fall circulation and fund drives Sept. 16. The drives will aid party members and

DEEPER INTO THE WORKING CLASS

supporters across the country in expanding the readership of the *Militant* and books by SWP leaders. They’re also mapping out plans to raise \$100,000 for the ongoing work of the party. The next issue of the *Militant* will include charts with quotas taken by local party units.

In addition to branches of the SWP, members of the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom will be joining the circulation effort.

At the heart of these plans is knock-
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Political crisis of US rulers continues to unfold

BY SETH GALINSKY

President Donald Trump’s turn to collaboration with Democratic Party congressional leaders to pass a three-month extension of the U.S. government debt ceiling and \$15 billion for hurricane and flooding victims took many liberal political pundits — and leaders of the Republican Party — by surprise.

Liberals and the middle-class left have called Trump a fascist, a racist, an arch-reactionary Republican. They want to drum him out of office by any means necessary. Some even applauded the attempted assassination of Republican congressmen at a June softball practice by Bernie Sanders supporter James Hodgkinson.

Donald Trump is none of these things. He is neither a Republican nor a Democrat, though he has been registered in both parties. He won the election by winning the backing
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Capitalism makes storms social disaster for workers



Left/Roberto Garaycoa, above AP/Mike Stewart
Above, stuck in traffic fleeing Hurricane Irma. Florida governor told millions to evacuate, but they were left on their own. “Every man for himself” and defense of big-business profits marks response of capitalist governments. Left, electrical workers in Havana began repairs immediately after storm. Revolutionary government in Cuba organized with working people to ensure that “no one is left defenseless or on their own.”

Social catastrophe in US, colonies in the Caribbean

BY JIM BRADLEY

Both Hurricane Irma, which tore through the Caribbean Antilles, Cuba and Florida, and Hurricane Harvey, which slammed into Texas a little more than a week earlier, are described by capitalist politicians and the big-business media as unprecedented natural disasters. But what is *not* unprecedented is the way these natural events are transformed into social disasters for working people by the normal workings of the capitalist system, where the drive for profits by the propertied rulers takes precedence over the well-being and lives of workers, ranchers and farmers.

For working people — whether in
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Cuban Revolution mobilizes population to defend island

BY SETH GALINSKY

Hurricane Irma battered Cuba for more than 72 hours, slowly moving along the north coast, sending Category 5 winds, strong storm surges and substantial rainfall, causing severe damage to agriculture, the electrical grid, homes and factories. “We have one unmovable principle,” said Cuban President Raúl Castro in a call to action to the Cuban people. “The Revolution will not leave anyone defenseless and is already taking measures so that no Cuban family is left on its own.”

This is the polar opposite of the attitude of government authorities in the United States, epitomized by the
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Workers need our own party to unite our class, fight for power



Spectrum cable workers on strike for five months march in N.Y. Labor Day Parade. Bosses use their two parties — Democrats and Republicans — to keep workers tied to capitalist rule.

BY DAN FEIN

CHICAGO — Workers face an unprecedented economic, social and political crisis today as the bosses and

AS I SEE IT

their government seek to rebuild their profit rates on our backs.

As Karl Marx explained in the *Communist Manifesto*, the relentless

assaults of the bosses drive working people to come together, to form unions and to fight to defend themselves. As these struggles come together, he said, “every class struggle is a political struggle.”

This is a life and death question for the working class. What is the road to working-class political action that can win?

The trade unions in the U.S. are
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Riyadh-Tehran proxy war in Yemen part of broader Mideast conflicts

BY JIM BRADLEY

A cholera epidemic, famine and thousands of civilian wounded and deaths is the reality facing working people in Yemen after two years of civil war. The fighting pits Tehran-backed Houthi rebel fighters in the north, who have seized Sanaa, the capital, against military intervention by Saudi Arabia’s rulers and other Sunni Gulf monarchies — backed by Washington. The U.S.-backed alliance supports the return to power of former President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, who was deposed in 2015.

The murderous proxy war in Yemen is part of a broader battle between contending imperialist and
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Toronto airport strikers win solidarity in contract fight

Workers need our own party

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weak and membership has plummeted. Only 6.4 percent of workers in private industry are organized in unions today. The officials of our unions have tied the labor movement to the bosses’ political parties, especially to the Democratic Party. Instead of organizing workers to rely on ourselves and our allies to battle attacks from the employers and their government, they say we should rely on “friends of labor” in the Democratic Party to take care of us. The results are clear — disaster.

The problem is that the Democratic Party — like its twin, the Republicans — is a capitalist party that defends the interests of the boss class. The two parties trade places in power every few years, but, whichever is in office, the bosses are on top.

The Service Employees International Union officialdom announced on Labor Day they were going to use the union’s 2 million members and \$100 million for “an extensive campaign” to turn things around. How? A big drive to elect more Democrats in 2018.

The states the SEIU officials target include Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, where workers voted for change with Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012, but didn’t get it. So in 2016 they voted for Donald Trump, because they were sick of both parties, which do nothing to tackle the worsening conditions workers face. Workers tried to show their anger, to find a way to register a demand for change, to “drain the swamp.” Millions, disgusted, didn’t bother to vote.

Liberal Democrats, “socialist” Democrats, “friends of labor” Democrats — all do the same. Whatever they say, their goal is to keep the private profit,

dog-eat-dog capitalist system afloat. They balance the budget on the backs of the working class, prosecute the imperialist rulers’ seemingly unending wars, deprive workers access to medical care we need and can afford, and, like in Houston, tell working people when Hurricane Harvey approached, “You’re on your own.”

Scott Courtney, an executive vice president of SEIU, outlined their plan in a Sept. 4 opinion column in the *Washington Post* entitled, “The Democratic Party Needs to Become a Workers’ Party.”

“It’s not hard to understand why so many people say politics has nothing to offer them anymore,” Courtney admits.

“If the only choice at the voting booth is between the lesser of two evils,” he says, “you still end up with evil.”

Agreed. So shouldn’t workers rely on ourselves and use our fighting capacity to take on the bosses and their government? And shouldn’t we break forever from the bosses two-party shell game and build an independent working-class political party, a party with a revolutionary political perspective like the Socialist Workers Party?

Courtney never mentions one word about organizing to build the unions or strikes or social struggles to defend our interests. Union officials will use the millions they control to turn us right back into the Democratic Party. They hope to recruit “an army of tens of thousands of volunteers” from the working class. “For workers in this country to start moving forward, the labor movement needs to force Democratic candidates to support unions, the right to form unions, higher wages for workers and universal health care,” he says. This will “give voters a reason to stand in line

Rohingya flee military assaults in Myanmar



Reuters/Mohammad Ponir Hossain

Fleeing attacks from Myanmar’s military, over 300,000 Rohingya, a Muslim nationality, have crossed the border into Bangladesh since Aug. 25. Hundreds have been killed and tens of thousands are trapped without food or medicine. Soldiers have set hundreds of buildings on fire, leveling entire villages. The new refugees join some 500,000 Rohingyas in Bangladesh, where they face a hostile government and difficult living conditions.

Bangladeshi authorities have revived plans to relocate tens of thousands of Rohingya to Thengar Char, an uninhabited island in the Bay of Bengal, in the path of monsoons and flooding. There are no roads or buildings on Thengar Char, which only emerged from the sea 11 years ago.

Some 1 million Rohingya, who had been living in Myanmar’s majority-Muslim Rakhine state in a country that is 90 percent Buddhist, have long faced government persecution. Since 1982 they’ve been denied citizenship. Hundreds of thousands are restricted to tented camps and prevented from moving freely.

Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar’s de facto leader and a Nobel Peace Prize winner for protesting military rule for which she spent 15 years under house arrest, has commended the army on its operations against the Rohingya.

The government blames the murders, arson and expulsion push on “terrorists,” referring to a small Rohingya guerrilla force that has attacked a few police posts and an army base. Protests against the treatment of the Rohingya have taken place in several countries, including Turkey, Indonesia, India and Iran.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

at the polls again.”

The SEIU officials made this the center of the Fight for \$15 protests in Chicago — where I work at Walmart — and elsewhere on Labor Day, featuring liberal Democrats running for office in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Florida and Michigan.

But this is exactly the class-collaborationist course that has led the labor movement to the disastrous place we are in today. We can’t tie our future to promises of a friendlier, more “progressive” Democratic Party.

Working people need to recognize what we know from bitter experience

— there are two classes under capitalism, the bosses and the workers, and the capitalists have two parties and we have none. Our unions need to break with the Democratic Party, to organize our own party that can mobilize the millions of nonunion workers and the unemployed, to rely on the power of our class and its allies — the vast majority — to strike and demonstrate in the streets to fight the carnage conditions we face.

Such a party can fight for a federally funded public works program to provide millions of union-scale jobs rebuilding Texas, Florida — and Caribbean

Continued on page 5

THE MILITANT

Amnesty for immigrants! No deportations!

Fighting for amnesty for immigrants and opposing deportations is essential for building unity of the working class. The ‘Militant’ covers the fight against criminalization of undocumented workers, used by bosses to super-exploit them, driving down wages for all workers.



Militant/Mike Shur

New York rally Sept. 5 protests restrictions placed by government on DACA program.

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

Join circulation, fund drives

Continued from front page

ing on workers' doors in cities, towns and rural areas. Party members will discuss the unprecedented political and economic crisis in the U.S., its origins and the only serious answer — for independent working-class political action to take political power out of the hands of the ruling rich and reorganize society in the interests of the toiling majority.

In Colorado, SWP member Alyson Kennedy says party members there are planning a team to Rifle, a ranching region several hours from Denver, where they will introduce the party to ranchers fighting to defend their livelihood and their right to stay on the land.

In Vancouver, British Columbia, members of the Communist League are organizing a team to Vancouver Island to talk to working people about the impact of layoffs that have hit production workers in the lumber industry there. They are also planning a return trip to the areas of the province that have been hard hit by wildfires and discuss with workers the refusal of the government to organize to defend their homes and jobs.

Party members and supporters in Seattle went to Central Washington to support apple workers on strike at Larson Orchards over abusive working conditions. After talking to strikers on the picket line, we went door to door in Quincy, discussing the issues in the strike and building solidarity with the apple workers, introducing the party and its books and papers.

One woman named Norma, who works in a corn-canning factory, was attracted to the "Amnesty for Immigrants" headline in the *Militant*. "I have a friend who is 80 years old and still has to work to live, because he wasn't born here and has no Social Security," she told me. "I also have a lot of friends in the apple picking work who I think would like to see this paper." We told her that the party fights for amnesty, to stop the deportations and to organize the unorganized — demands to unify the working class.

She got a copy and took a sub blank to send in. Party members plan to get back to this area, and take her up on her offer to help introduce us to more people who work in the orchards.

Seth Galinsky in New York reported how party members campaigned in defense of the Cuban Revolution last week at a concert in Central Park by Cuban musician Silvio Rodríguez. They held up signs that included "U.S. Out of Guantánamo" and "End the Embargo," speaking to hundreds of people queued up to get into the concert. They showed them the *Militant* and the five books on special with a subscription — *Are*

They Rich Because They're Smart?, *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record* and *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, all three by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes; *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters; and *"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*, as well as other books by leaders of the Cuban Revolution.

Some people said they were glad to see the SWP there, others said they came for the music but opposed the Cuban Revolution. Many wanted to talk politics. By the end of the evening, nine introductory subscriptions, 27 single copies of the paper and 12 books on working-class politics had been purchased by concert goers, who also donated \$32.

Lisa Potash, SWP candidate for Atlanta mayor, wrote that party members campaigned in downtown Decatur at a rally of more than 200 people opposing a Confederate monument there. Salihah Ife, a bartender at the rally with



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

Chris Kettle gets subscription to *Militant*, *Clinton's Anti-Working-Class Record* book from Diana Newberry in Denver, Colorado. SWP has launched nine-week subscription, book, fund drives.

her children, got a copy of the paper and said she would like to get *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *First and Second Declarations of Havana*. Deronte Austin, a landscaping worker, signed up for a subscription to the paper and

picked up *"It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System."*

If you would like to join in the party's drive to expand the reach of the *Militant* and books on revolutionary politics, contact the nearest SWP branch, listed on page 8.

Brigade to see Cuban response to hurricane firsthand

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

The solidarity that workers and youth participating in the Oct. 1-15 "In the Footsteps of Che" International Brigade bring to Cuba will be especially welcome after Hurricane Irma. Brigadistas will learn firsthand how the revolutionary Cuban government mobilized to meet the hurricane's threat, in sharp contrast to the capitalist rulers in the U.S., and to the rulers in the U.S., the U.K., France and the Netherlands towards their colonies in the Caribbean. No one is left on their own in Cuba.

They'll also learn how Cuban revolutionaries organized to deepen solidarity with toilers who faced destruction from Hurricane Irma elsewhere in the Caribbean, from Barbuda to Haiti. They'll explain how the U.S. rulers told working people "you're on your own." Under capitalism, profits always come first.

The Minnesota Cuba Committee is organizing a public meeting where participants will report back on the situation in Cuba. Similar meetings are being organized in other cities.

A fundraiser will be held Sept. 30 in San Pedro to support southern California participation in the brigade and in the 19th World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi, Russia, Oct. 14-22.

Some 20,000 delegates from 120 countries are expected to attend the Sochi gathering, which is sponsored by the World Federation of Democratic Youth. The over 100 delegates going from the U.S. have received official letters of invitation and are raising funds for airfare.

The festival's International Organizing Committee, led by organizations that are members of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, is in Sochi planning the festival's political program, aimed at building anti-imperialist activities worldwide.

Over 250 young revolutionaries from Cuba will be going to the festival. In addition to 200 delegates elected among students and young workers across the island, the Union of Young Communists announced that outstanding leaders in history, science, medicine and sports will be part of the Cuban delegation

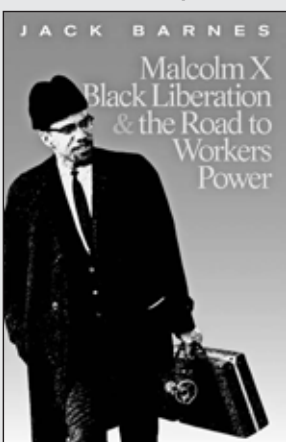
there. They include Fernando González Llort, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, the sponsor of the Che brigade. González was one of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up by the U.S. government and imprisoned in the U.S. for some 15 years for their actions in defense of the revolution.

Dr. Jorge González Pérez, who headed the Cuban team that found the remains of Ernesto Che Guevara in Bolivia, will join the delegation. So will Elián González. When he was 5 years old, Elián was picked up off the coast of Florida after his mother drowned trying to reach the United States. In violation of international conventions and Cuba's sovereignty, Washington refused for seven months to return Elián to his father in Cuba. Brigadier Gen. Arnaldo Tamayo Méndez, the only Latin American to go on a mission to space, is also part of the delegation.

For more information on the brigade and report-back meetings, contact the Chicago Cuba Coalition at (312) 952-2618 or ICanGoToCuba@gmail.com.

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Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism
by Jack Barnes


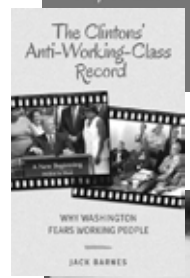

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Cuba mobilizes population

Continued from front page

pictures of tens of thousands stuck in traffic from Miami to Atlanta... if you could get gas.

As it became clear Cuba could be in the path of Hurricane Irma, the national and local Civil Defense sprung into action — working with the trade unions, other mass organizations, government ministries and directors of state-owned industries — to use all the resources of Cuba’s revolution to minimize harm to human life.

Each of the island’s 16 provinces and every municipality has a local defense committee. Civil Defense organizes drills and widely distributes guides for rural and urban areas, detailing what every household and workplace needs to do. The central leadership of the revolutionary government at all levels is directly involved.

Everybody knows in advance what shelter they are assigned to if they have to evacuate — or what friend, neighbor or relative plans to take them in — what they need to have in an emergency pack, what route the evacuation will take. Special measures are in place for the elderly, disabled, ill and pregnant women.

All these plans kicked in for Hurricane Irma.

Brigades were organized to harvest as much as possible crops in threatened areas to minimize losses and to have food available in shelters. *Juventud Rebelde* reported that some 40 tons of seeds for use in reconstruction efforts were identified and stored.

Livestock were moved to higher ground. Solar panels and parabolic dishes were dismantled to avoid damage during the storm.

More than 1,600 line workers were sent to stay in the areas expected to be hit hardest, so they would be in place to restore power. Teams of doctors and nurses organized to be ready to attend to those who had to evacuate. Hundreds of shelters around the country were double-checked to make sure they had the necessary supplies, from lanterns, stoves and radios to food and medicine.

Before the storm landed, more than a million people had been evacuated, calmly, with dignity, 70 percent of them hosted in others’ homes.

“Because of its immense size, for all practical purposes no area was free from the storm’s effects,” said President Castro. Agriculture was especially hard hit. A large part of the banana crop was wiped out — some

22,000 acres — as well as half of all vegetable crops. There were heavy losses to cattle, hog and chicken farms.

“No material resource is worth more than the life of any individual,” said Federico Hernández, president of the Granma province Defense Council, Sept. 7. Ten people died during the three days the storm battered the island. Unlike in the U.S. and the imperialist colonies in the Caribbean, Cuba’s revolutionary government knew — and printed — the names of each person who died, and the reason they weren’t able to survive.

‘Cuba will win battle to rebuild’

“No one should fool themselves,” Castro said. “The task we have in front of us is immense, but with a people like ours we will win the most important battle: the recovery.”

Cuba is also aiding other countries hard hit by the storm. Some 771 health care workers stationed in Antigua and Barbuda, San Cristóbal y Nieves, Santa Lucía, Bahamas, Dominica and



Granma/Ismael Batista

Cuban rescue brigade near Havana coastline during Hurricane Irma. Cuba’s revolutionary government, Civil Defense organizations ensured population was informed, involved.

Haiti when the hurricane hit hard continue to work.

Twelve Cuban volunteers, including linemen and an electrical engineer arrived in St. John’s, Antigua, Sept. 10 to travel to Barbuda and repair the electrical system wiped out in the storm there.

Almost all the homes on the island were damaged and everyone has been evacuated to Antigua with the help of the Venezuelan government.

The Cuban people are demonstrating once again that they “share what they have, not what’s left over.”

Capitalism makes storms social disasters for workers

Continued from front page

the U.S.; French, British or Dutch Caribbean island colonies; in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico; or in Mexico or Asia facing hurricanes, monsoons or earthquakes — the owners of capital and their governments have one message: “You’re on your own.” It’s up to you to keep yourself and your family out of harm’s way, bear the cost and pull your life together afterwards.

“You can’t tell millions upon millions of people to evacuate without giving them any real way to do so,” stay-at-home mother Darlena Cunha in Gainesville, Florida, told the *Washington Post* as Hurricane Irma approached.

“Meaningful evacuation would have meant public transport, safe shelters along the way, medical help and facilities throughout, and safe shelter, food, water and sanitary supplies on the other side of it all. For free,” she said.

“We know these storms come. We need a preventive plan set into motion before a storm hits to save lives,” Cunha stressed. “Sending in the cleanup crew to count the bodies and save the traumatized survivors is not enough.”

The only exception was the revolutionary government of Cuba, which mobilized and led the Cuban people to work together.

Capitalist rulers had no plan.

In both Florida and Houston, construction and other bosses got rich overbuilding roads, parking lots, malls, offices, houses and resorts — many at or below sea level — in search of profits. In doing so, they covered over grasslands and other natural run-offs for flood water.

In Houston “at least 4,000 residential and commercial structures have been built within the identified 100-year floodplain since 2010,” the *Post* said, and 30 percent of Harris County’s coastal prairie wetlands were paved over from 1992 to 2010.”

“Like many cities in Florida,” the *Wall Street Journal* reported, “parts of Tampa are built on filled-in marshland. Many homes, apartment build-

ings, and even a major trauma center are close to sea level. Tampa’s population has increased 12 percent since 2010. Roughly 50% of the population lives on ground less than 10 feet above sea level.”

In Estero, Florida, the lines of people waiting to get into the Germain Arena temporary shelter were close to two miles long. “If we can’t get in,” Gina Muñoz, who was in line with her two grandchildren, told NBC, “We don’t have anywhere to go.”

In some locations, cops did background checks on people seeking shelter to see if they owed fines or had outstanding warrants. Many immigrant workers avoided going to shelters for fear they would be deported.

The parasitic property insurance bosses are an integral part of the unfolding social disaster. Due to small print insurance rules widely put in place after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, those with property insurance will have to pay little-known additional “hurricane deductibles” that allow these companies to shift thousands of dollars in damage costs onto home owners.

The rulers were even more callous in their colonies. Hundreds of soldiers and police were dispatched by French, British and Dutch authorities to “restore order” and hunt down “looters.”

“After four days with no water, no electricity, no roof over our heads, two babies to take care of — they give us three bottles of water. And then they complain that people loot,” was a message posted on social media from the French Antilles. “This is not stealing, this is surviving.”

Even though Irma to a large extent bypassed Washington’s colony of Puerto Rico, the infrastructure there that the U.S. rulers have allowed to go to hell collapsed. Almost 70 percent of the population lost electricity.

Over years the cash-strapped U.S. Virgin Island’s colonial government, which owes \$2 billion to capitalist bondholders and creditors, swiped millions of dollars in funds supposedly set aside to cover disaster insurance claims to pay for other priorities.

The International Monetary Fund rejected a proposal for a moratorium on the \$3 million debt of the Caribbean island nation of Antigua and Barbuda, despite the fact that Hurricane Irma destroyed all of its infrastructure and 95 percent of homes.

The one exception to this picture was in the British Virgin Islands, home to many of the major capitalist firms involved with offshore corporations and other tools bosses use to disguise their wealth and avoid taxes. Executives and other employees in this niche business got special treatment.

The law firm Conyers Dill and Pearman had its staff airlifted to Puerto Rico and then the Cayman Islands and Bermuda in private aircraft and helicopters.

Unlike undocumented workers in Florida threatened with deportation, “the Cayman authorities have been first class and good about relaxing the usual work permit restrictions,” a managing director at Grant Thornton, an upscale accounting firm, told the *Financial Times*.

Workers faced a different picture. By Sept. 8, more than 7,000 complaints about price gouging for water, gas and airline tickets were received by the Florida attorney general’s office.

Some Florida Pizza Hut and Walmart stores threatened workers with disciplinary measures if they left work early to prepare to evacuate.

One thing points to the capacity of working people to take control of their own destiny — time and again, the solidarity of working people has come into play to save lives, care for the injured and those whose lives have been turned upside down.

Puerto Ricans moved quickly to get help to people in nearby islands directly hit by Irma, donating water, clothing, first aid and other supplies and using their own boats to deliver them and evacuate people on the way back.

In Texas, the Cajun Navy, which expanded last year after a woefully inadequate government response to floods in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and other volunteers using their own boats, played a decisive role in rescuing people from flooded homes.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Oakland
Hurricanes Harvey and Irma: Social Disasters Wrought by the Workings of Capital. Speaker: Eric Simpson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 22, 7:30 p.m. 675 Hegenberger Rd., Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester
Social Catastrophes Following Hurricanes Highlight Need for Workers Power. Speaker, Hugo Wils, Communist League. Fri., Sept. 29, 7 p.m. Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. M1 2EH. Tel.: (0161) 478-2496.

SWP: US out of Korea! For a Pacific free of nuclear weapons!

On Sept. 8 Steve Clark sent a message of solidarity to the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists reprinted here. The party pledged to continue its decadeslong fight against Washington's threats and attacks against the DPRK and for reunification of Korea and a Korean Peninsula, Pacific and Asia free of nuclear weapons. On Sept. 11 Washington backed off of the harshest sanctions referred to in the message, winning UN Security Council approval for a less severe resolution.

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists send revolutionary greetings on the 69th anniversary of the 1948 founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We pledge our unconditional solidarity with the Korean people's struggle to reunify their country, partitioned by Washington in 1945. The US government then waged a murderous and losing war against the DPRK from 1950 to 1953, and *sixty-four years later* still refuses to withdraw its troops and weaponry, sit down for talks, and sign a peace treaty.

We condemn Washington's plan to press the UN Security Council to stiffen trade and banking sanctions against the people of the DPRK, as well as the US government's executive order prohibiting US citizens from visiting North Korea after September 1.

The tightened sanctions are set to include a ban on shipments of crude and refined petroleum and natural gas, and to authorize the US and other governments to commit piracy on the high seas by interdicting North Korean ships and taking "all necessary measures" to block the import of weapons or fuel. We join with Koreans on both side of the 38th parallel in opposing this month's expansion by Washington and Seoul of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile system and high-powered radar in South Korea.

The importance of the DPRK's long-standing call for a nuclear-free Pacific has been underlined in recent weeks by

the decision of the US and South Korean regimes to go ahead in August with the yearly provocative Ulchi Freedom Guardian war games; by their September 4 live-fire bombing drills over the Korean Peninsula; and by threatening language coming from the White House and Pentagon. The hypocrisy of Washington's scaremongering about a nuclear Pyongyang is placed in stark relief by the fact that US imperialism itself deploys the earth's largest and most deadly nuclear arsenal in the Pacific, including 60 percent of the US Navy's sixty-nine nuclear-armed submarines.

Working people the world over aspire to an earth that's free of these and other weapons of mass destruction. Such a world would open the most favorable conditions for struggles by workers and farmers against the ever-growing carnage produced by capital's global system of exploitation and oppression — from Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan, Syria, and Turkey; to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India; to factories, mines, and fields in the United States and other imperialist countries.

As members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party talk with workers at their doorsteps, workplaces, and union gatherings to discuss a working-class course in response to today's deepening capitalist political and social crisis, we speak out against Washington's ongoing wars and demand an end to US sanctions and embargos against the DPRK, Cuba, Iran, Russia, and Venezuela.

On this anniversary of the DPRK, the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists join with others across the world to demand: US troops, ships, planes, and THAAD missile and radar systems out of Korea! For a Korean Peninsula and Pacific and Asia free of nuclear weapons!

Korea is one!
Comradely,
Steve Clark
for the National Committee
Socialist Workers Party

—ON THE PICKET LINE—



Militant/Tony DiFelice

Striking airport workers, members of Teamsters Local 419, backed by other unionists, rally at Toronto's Pearson airport Sept. 3 for a contract, against company concession demands.

Toronto airport strikers win solidarity in contract fight

TORONTO — Unionists and other supporters joined hundreds of airport strikers in a spirited protest at Pearson airport here Sept. 3, shutting down traffic between Terminals 1 and 3 for several hours. The strikers, members of Teamsters Local 419 at Swissport, marched and danced between the two terminals, chanting, "Respect, benefits, wages; if can't have it, shut it down!"

The strike began July 27 after workers rejected a contract that included a three-year wage freeze, cuts in benefits, and the company asserting their prerogative to arbitrarily change work schedules with little notice.

"It's gone beyond issues of respect, wages, scheduling and benefits," striker Rajkumar Singh told the *Militant* on the picket line Sept. 2. "We are the only barrier standing between corporate greed and workers' rights. If we fall, they're going to move on to their next target."

Among unionists participating in the protest were members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, International Association of Machinists, Team-

sters and Unifor. The rally took aim at the Greater Toronto Airports Authority for allowing Swissport to use agency workers as strikebreakers. Daily picketing continues at employee parking lots.

— Susan Berman

Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs



The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as recounted by a central leader of that battle. First in a four-volume series.

The other books are: *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics*, and *Teamster Bureaucracy*.

Also available in Spanish, Swedish, Farsi.

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Workers party

Continued from page 2

nations, including the U.S. colonies of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands — crippled by the capitalist rulers' dog-eat-dog system that leaves working people open to the fury of hurricanes and other "natural disasters." We can fight for the expropriation of the pharmaceutical and hospital monopolies to turn health care into a human right, not a for-profit racket.

And we can fight to unify the working class, demonstrating for amnesty for undocumented immigrants, against racist cop assaults, in defense of a woman's right to abortion and opposing Washington's wars abroad.

This is the road toward building a revolutionary working-class party that can lead the fight to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers, put a workers and farmers government in place, and join the fight for a socialist world.

—25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO—



September 25, 1992

LOS ANGELES — More than 600 people came to hear Cuban youth leader Ibis Alvisa González, a researcher at the Center for Youth Studies of Havana, during her tour of Southern California August 24-31. She spoke at eight meetings, four on college campuses.

At the University of California in Los Angeles, Alvisa pointed to the importance of the direct participation of the Cuban people, youth in particular, in solving Cuba's economic problems. She reported that 100,000 university students used their summer vacations to work as volunteers in agriculture.

One questioner asked if Cuba would be forced to abandon its aid to other countries, given the economic hardships. "If we abandon the internationalism of the revolution, we would abandon the revolution," Alvisa replied.



September 25, 1967

The Pentagon has widened the air war in North Vietnam by deliberately bombing closer than ever to China, and bombing the port facilities at Hanoi and Haiphong for the first time.

The raids came only two weeks after Defense Secretary McNamara had told the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee that bombing of the port area was too risky because Soviet, Chinese and other communist bloc vessels might be hit. Attacks on such targets, he testified, run "the risk of direct confrontation with Communist China or the Soviet Union: and these dangers outweigh the military desirability of striking them."

The overriding of McNamara's arguments indicates that the President is now bent on maximizing the air war. Behind and beyond this decision to press ahead regardless of consequences looms the specter of the nuclear mushroom cloud.



September 26, 1942

The War Labor Board on September 17 rejected the demand of the CIO United Auto Workers for a dollar-a-day wage increase in General Motors, and granted an increase of only 4 cents an hour, less than one-third of the union's original demand.

In a decision affecting over 225,000 GM workers, the WLB flatly rejected the recommendations of the panel on the case.

The GM panel had proposed that in line with the WLB's "Little Steel" formula a raise of 1.5 cents an hour be given to cover the difference between the 15% rise in living costs since January 1941, and increases won by GM workers since that time.

The Chrysler and Ford workers' demands for dollar-a-day wage increases are still pending. It can be seen from the GM decision that these workers will be turned down by the WLB, and will be given very small increases, if any.

‘The Kurdish people are one nation’

Baghdad’s 1988 Anfal extermination campaign and the 1991 Kurdistan uprising

BY STEVE CLARK AND CATHARINA TIRSÉN
SULAYMANIYAH, Kurdistan Region, Iraq — “What happens in any part of Kurdistan has an impact on other parts. Because emotionally, historically, and linguistically, we’re one nation.”

Hazhar Majeed, owner of the Endese bookshop and publishing house in this southeastern Kurdistan city, was talking with us July 24 about the Kurdish people’s resistance to former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein’s assaults between 1986 and 1991. The more than 40 million Kurds in the Middle East are the world’s largest people without a nation-state — something that was denied them at the end of World War I and ever since by the victors in that colossal slaughter. They remain carved up to this day by arbitrary borders, largely between Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria.

“The division that exists is a political division *imposed* on us,” Hazhar said. “Otherwise the Kurds would never have been separated. Even with the division, Kurds still have very close cultural, social and political ties.”

During our three-day stay in Sulaymaniyah, Hazhar arranged for us to visit the former regional headquarters, prison and torture chamber of Saddam’s secret police — the Amna Suraka (Red Security). Now a museum, it focuses on two chapters from that regime’s quarter-century-long reign of terror.

The first is Saddam’s 1988 Anfal Campaign of extermination and forced removal of Kurds, during the closing stages of Baghdad’s eight-year-long war against Iran. Visitors to the Amna Suraka enter through a corridor lined with a mosaic of 182,000 shards of shattered mirror, recalling the number of Kurds slaughtered in the most horrible ways during the Anfal. The passageway is dimly lit by 4,500 small bulbs marking Kurdish villages destroyed in the operation.

The second theme is the March 1991 uprising in Kurdistan against that hated regime, captured in part by the still bullet- and shell-pocked walls of the garrison, liberated by Kurds March 7 that

year. The museum also recounts the subsequent mass exodus from cities, towns, and villages, as the regime’s helicopter gunships sought to drown the rebellion in blood.

The Anfal

Hazhar Majeed was born and raised in the Kurdistan region of Iran, before moving to Sulaymaniyah in Iraq as a young man in 1998. “Even though the border was tight during the Saddam years, and it was hard physically to move from one side to the other, there was still a lot of contact among Kurds,” Hazhar said. “In many families, the father might be Iraqi, the son Iranian. The same with uncles, aunts, cousins and so on. The political subdivisions weren’t able to separate Kurds from each other.”

That was already true “before mass media came into being,” he said. “Now, with so many means of communication, solidarity among Kurds in all four countries — Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria — has become even more cemented. Right now, Kurds from Iran and Iraq are fighting ISIS in Syria alongside Kurds from there. Solidarity is growing.”

As for Saddam’s Anfal atrocities, Hazhar said, “I was still in my early teens at that time, so I don’t remember a lot. But I’ll tell you what I do remember, as well as what I’ve read and heard from family members, friends and others.”

During Anfal, some 100,000 Kurds from Iraq took refuge in Iran, in addition to the same number or more driven from their homes by various Baghdad regimes over the previous decade or so. “Kurds in Iran considered them brothers and sisters, not refugees,” Hazhar said.

“When they came to Iran,” he said, “many just divided up among families in Kurdistan, or local mosques and schools.” Then came Baghdad’s shelling of the town of Halabja with chemical weapons on March 16, 1988, during



Left: Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images/Laurent Van Der Stockt
Following 1991 U.S. invasion of Iraq, Kurds revolted against Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in March. But Washington had lifted its no-fly zone over much of Iraq, allowing Saddam to launch murderous air assault on Kurds. Above, mass uprising in Duhok, a city in northwest Kurdistan. Left, Kurdish refugees fleeing Iraq arrive in Piranshahr, Iran, April 13, 1991, where they were welcomed by fellow Kurds and others.

Union of Kurdistan (PUK) — “initiated the Kurdish uprising in March 1991,” Hazhar said. Under the blows of the Anfal in 1988, these organizations “had unraveled, and most of their leaders were living in Tehran or elsewhere.”

So the Kurds who rose up weren’t under the command of any organization, he said. “The rebellion began on the fifth of March, in Ranya, a town about two hours north of Sulaymaniyah. Of course, fighters from the peshmerga” — the military units of the KDP and PUK — “are always in the cities, towns and villages, living undercover. So when the people rebelled, the peshmerga joined in with their rifles, handguns, whatever they had.

“And many other Kurds were armed, too, not only those in the peshmerga. Many Kurds had weapons at home and were using them to attack Saddam’s forces and defend themselves and their families,” Hazhar said. “More recently, you recall Kobani, don’t you? Old men and women, teenagers and others were armed and resisted the brutal occupation by Daesh, by the so-called Islamic State, of that Kurdish town in northern Syria. They helped fight off Daesh in Kirkuk too, right here in Iraq.

“That’s what began happening in

H.W. Bush publicly called on “the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands to force Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside.”

The Kurds revolted across Iraqi Kurdistan in early March, driving out Baghdad’s forces. The Shiite population across southern Iraq also took the streets. But Washington had lifted its air cover over Iraq, enabling Saddam’s regime to unleash its helicopter gunships and troops against the rebel population. Thousands were killed. By the end of March, there was another massive exodus of Kurds fleeing their homes in search of refuge in Iran or Turkey.

The U.S. government wanted to do nothing that would break up Iraq and begin undoing the borders and social relations imposed on the peoples of the region in the aftermath of two world wars. And the U.S. rulers had pledged to Turkey’s brutal regime — which itself oppresses millions of Kurds — that it would oppose an independent Kurdistan in Iraq.

Neither of the two main Kurdish liberation organizations — the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) or Patriotic

1991 Kurdish uprising

In August 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, on Iraq’s southern border. Ever since 1979, when the shah of Iran had been toppled by a revolution, the U.S. government had been looking for a pretext to unleash its military might in the Middle East to defend its interests in the oil-rich and strategically important region. The Iraqi regime handed it the chance.

After Washington defeated Saddam’s forces in Kuwait and southern Iraq in early 1991, the U.S. rulers chose to sidestep the risks of pushing north to overturn the government in Baghdad. Instead, on the eve of the U.S. ground assault in late February, President George

Ranya on March 5, 1991. And in 16 days, all of Kurdistan had been liberated,” he said.

“Those we refer to here as the jash also took part in the rebellion,” he added. “That literally means ‘donkey’ in the Kurdish language. It’s the term we use for Kurds who joined armed units subservient to Saddam and earlier repressive regimes. They were mercenaries. They did much of the government’s dirty work, including during the Anfal and the gassing of Halabja and other towns.

“So as Saddam’s forces retreated in face of the uprising, the jash had to do something to try to exonerate themselves in the eyes of the people and the eyes of the Kurdish leaderships. So these armed units joined in the rebellion, too,” Hazhar said. “I should add that many of them have continued functioning as jash for the current Kurdistan Regional Government, for both the KDP and PUK leaderships, to this day.”

Kurdistan Regional Government

“Kurds on both sides of the border, in Iraq as well as in Iran, welcomed the blows to Saddam’s regime in 1991. We had nothing to lose,” Hazhar said. “It was the inevitable course of history unfolding, and we enjoyed it and took advantage of it. Baghdad’s defeat opened a wedge for our uprising, and then in 1992 for the establishment and survival of the Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq.”

Washington, London, Paris and other powers sought to cover their own tracks regarding the Kurds’ unrelenting struggles for their national rights. These governments seasawed between tactically arming Kurdish organizations to a tiny degree, followed by cynical betrayals, depending on their shifting interests and relations with successive regimes in Iraq, Iran, Turkey and across the Middle East. Newspaper, radio, and television outlets largely taped shut their eyes and mouths in deference to the governments they serve and promote. The silence during and after Baghdad’s Anfal campaign was deafening.

“But there have been two events in the Middle East over the past quarter century that finally caused the world

press to pay attention to the Kurdish question,” Hazhar said.

“One was the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, the Kurdish uprising, and Baghdad’s initial repression of it, which caused the world to despise Saddam Hussein.

“The second, still very much in the eyes of the world since 2014, is the war against Daesh. Kobani, Sinjar, the wars in northern Iraq and Syria — the place of Kurdish fighters in liberating people from Daesh is showing the world another face of the Kurds.”

The exodus

During the 1991 war, Hazhar said, “Saddam pulled his forces out of much of the north, leaving a power vacuum that Kurds began to fill during the uprising. We even took back Kirkuk, which has always been a red line for Kurds, and also a red line for the central Iraqi government, for Ankara and for Tehran.”

Then came Baghdad’s brutal counter-offensive, beginning March 28. Among the most powerful exhibits at the Amna Suraka museum is a large hall whose four walls and ceiling are covered with photographs of Kurds driven from their homes in flight toward Turkey and Iran. The photos were taken by a young Kurd from Iran who crossed the border to document the exodus.

Turkey closed its borders to the refugees, fearing their impact on its own large Kurdish population. Thousands died from the bitter cold, starvation or disease.

“But there has always been movement back and forth between Iraq and Iran as part of these flights, as I described from the Anfal,” Hazhar said. “Refugees were met with solidarity from Kurds in Iran, who consider Sulaymaniyah and its surroundings their backyard.”

With its long war with Baghdad only a few years in the past, the Iranian government had its own reasons for accepting the refugees. Among others, Hazhar said, “Millions of dollars in cash poured into Iran from international organizations, and the regime and businesses

there were selling food and other products for the refugee camps. It was profitable for Iran, which was still recovering from the economic consequences of the war with Iraq.”

The Iranian government and international agencies also arranged for refugees to resettle in Europe, Australia and the United States, where many are still living today, Hazhar said.

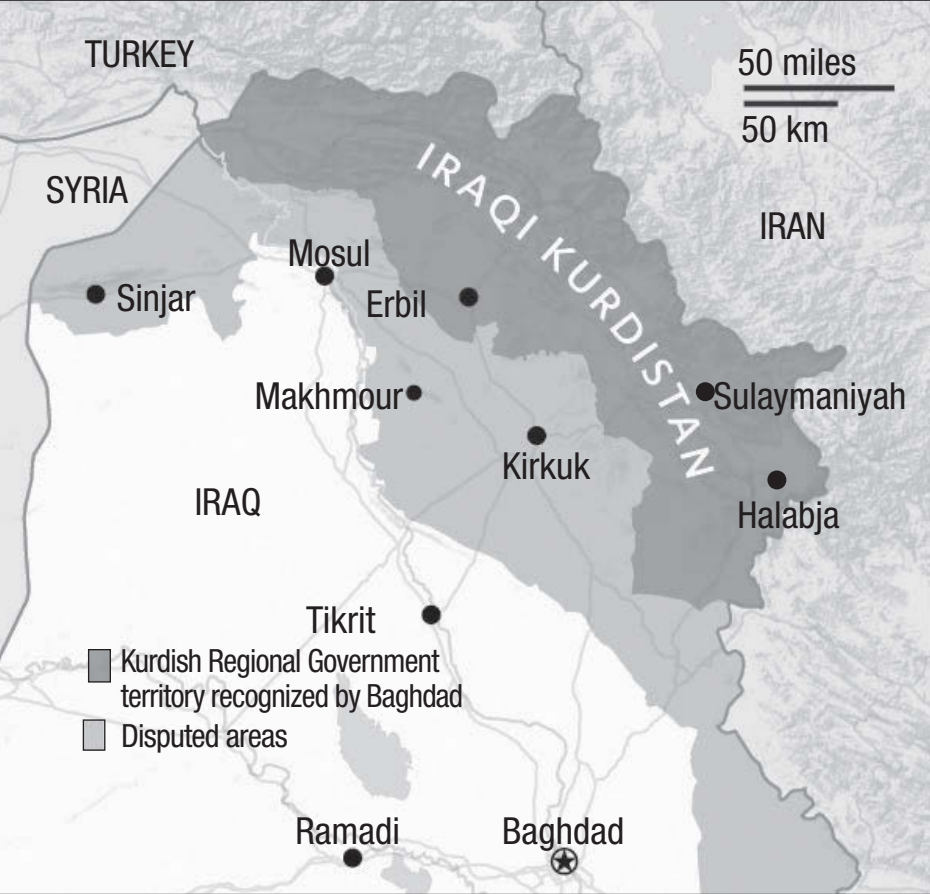
“And many returned to Kurdistan in 1992, including refugees from the Anfal and Halabja attacks in 1988,” he said. “This included children who had been separated from their families and raised by Iranian families for several years — both Kurdish and Persian families, it didn’t matter. Many were able to reunite with their families here, either on the basis of DNA records or other ways.

“Mass evacuations have happened often in Kurdish history,” Hazhar told us. “Walk around Sulaymaniyah, and you won’t find a house that hasn’t been burned twice, or a family that hasn’t been refugees several times and had two or three martyrs. The same for other cities and villages. It’s part of growing up as a Kurd.”

Yet the people of Kurdistan remain determined to win their right to national self-determination and a nation-state. They’ve made big strides in Iraq since 1991.

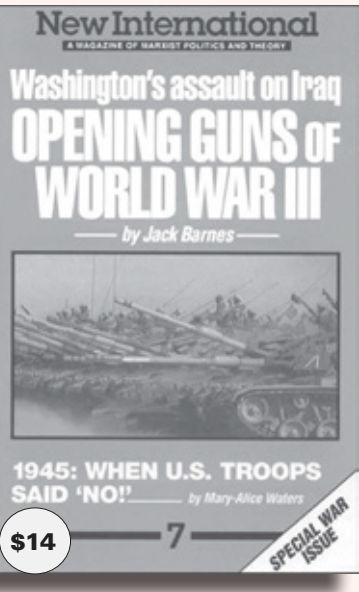
Recalling an earlier visit to Amna Suraka a few months ago with one of the authors of this article, Hazhar recited lyrics by the Kurdish singer and songwriter Adnan Karim: “Don’t tell me I’m a refugee. I’m merely roaming in my own land.”

* Kirkuk is a historically Kurdish province with large Turkmen, Christian and Arab populations, located at the center of Iraq’s richest oilfields. Long considered by Iraqi Kurds to be their capital, the city of Kirkuk was excluded from the Kurdistan Regional Government in 1992 due to Saddam Hussein’s insistence on monopolizing and plundering Iraq’s oil revenues. Labeled a “disputed territory” in the post-Saddam Iraqi constitution, Kirkuk’s status was to be determined by a 2007 referendum that Baghdad refused to organize. Since 2014, when Iraqi armed forces abandoned the city in face of advancing Islamic State troops, it has been governed by a majority Kurdish administration, defended by the peshmerga. Its population will participate in the referendum on Kurdistan’s independence set by the KDP, PUK and other KRG parties for Sept. 25, 2017.



Hazhar Majeed, center, owner of Endese bookshop and publishing house in Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan Region, Iraq, during July 24, 2017, interview for the *Militant* by Catharina Tirsén, left, and Steve Clark.

Recommended reading . . .



“The Kurdish people have come to the center stage in world politics as never before, not primarily as victims, but as courageous and determined fighters for national rights. The U.S. rulers have alternately doled out aid with an eyedropper to Kurdish nationalist groups, and then abruptly cut off this backing, depending on Washington’s shifting relations with regimes in the area.”

— Jack Barnes

Also in issue # 7 of *New International* magazine

Communism, the Working Class, and Anti-Imperialist Struggle: Lessons from the Iran-Iraq War, two documents with an introduction by Samad Sharif.

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1917 Russian Revolution: Example for workers of the world

Below is an excerpt from the first volume of *The First Five Years of the Communist International* by Leon Trotsky, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for September. Drawing on the experiences of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the attraction of its example to tens of thousands of revolutionary-minded workers and youth worldwide, the Communist International was founded in 1919. During its first five years, the new International, guided by V. I. Lenin, Trotsky and other central leaders of the Bolshevik Party, sought to build a world movement of parties capable of leading toilers to overthrow capitalist exploitation and colonial oppression. The two volumes of speeches and writings by Trotsky were part of the discussions and debates among com-



Delegates to the First Congress of the Communist International convened in Moscow March 1919, with 51 delegates representing parties in some 33 countries. Included were V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky and other Bolshevik Party leaders, whose revolution the delegates hoped to emulate. These “heirs to the spirit of Marxism, set the creation of a new International as their task — the International of irreconcilable struggle against capitalist society,” wrote Trotsky.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

munist internationalists grappling with concrete questions of the fight for workers power.

Trotsky wrote this article, titled “Great Days,” for the first issue of Communist International, the organ of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, which published the movement’s key documents in Russian, German, French and English. Copyright © 1945, 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

September

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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OFFER GOOD UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30

BY LEON TROTSKY

The czars and the priests — ancient rulers of the Moscow Kremlin — we must assume, never had a premonition that within its gray walls would one day gather the representatives of the most revolutionary section of modern mankind. However, it did happen. In one of the halls of a former juridical institution, where weary ghosts of criminal statutes from Czarist codices still wander, today the delegates of the Third International sit in session. Assuredly, the mole of history did not excavate poorly beneath the Kremlin walls. . . .

This material setting of the Communist Congress is only an external expression, and affixes its seal upon the enormous changes which have occurred in the last ten or twelve years in the entire world situation.

In the era not only of the First International but also the Second, Czarist Russia was the chief bulwark of world reaction. At international Socialist Congresses the Russian revolution was represented by émigrés upon whom the majority of the opportunist leaders of European Socialism looked down with ironic condescension. These parliamentarian and trade union functionaries were filled with an unconquerable conviction that it was the lot of semi-Asiatic Russia to suffer the evils of revolution, while Europe remained

assured of a gradual, painless, tranquil evolution from capitalism to socialism.

But in August 1914 the accumulated imperialist contradictions ripped to shreds the “peaceful” integument of capitalism with its parliamentarianism, with its legislated “freedoms” and its legalized prostitution, political and otherwise. From the heights of civilization mankind was cast into the abyss of shocking barbarism and sanguinary brutalization.

Despite the fact that Marxist theory had foreseen and forecast the bloody catastrophe, the social reformist parties were caught unawares. Perspectives of peaceful development turned into lowering smoke and reeking rubbish. The opportunist leaders were able to find no other task for themselves than to summon the working masses to the defense of the bourgeois national state. On August 4, 1914, the Second International ignobly perished.

From that moment all genuine revolutionists, heirs to the spirit of Marxism, set the creation of a new International as their task — the International of irreconcilable revolutionary struggle against capitalist society. The war unleashed by imperialism knocked the entire capitalist world out of its equilibrium. All questions were starkly revealed as questions of the revolution. The old revolutionary patch-sewers brought into play all their skill in or-

der to preserve a semblance of former hopes, old deceits, and old organization. In vain. War — not for the first time in history — turned out to be the mother of revolution. The imperialist war was the mother of the proletarian revolution.

To the Russian working class and its battle-tempered Communist Party belongs the honor of making the beginning. By its October Revolution the Russian proletariat not only swung open the Kremlin doors for the representatives of the international proletariat but also lodged the cornerstone in the edifice of the Third International.

The revolutions in Germany, Austria, Hungary, the tempestuous sweep of the Soviet movement and of civil war, sealed by the martyrdom of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg and many thousands of nameless heroes, have demonstrated that Europe has no roads different from Russia’s. The unity of methods in the struggle for socialism, disclosed in action, guaranteed ideologically the creation of the Communist International, and at the same time rendered the convocation of the Communist Congress unpostponable.

Today this Congress convenes within the Kremlin walls. We are witnesses of and participants in one of the greatest events of world history.

The working class of the world has seized from its enemies the most impregnable fortress — the former Czarist empire. With this stronghold as its base, it is uniting its forces for the final and decisive battle.

What a joy it is to live and to fight in such times!

First published in *Communist International*, May 1919

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8 The Militant September 25, 2017

Political crisis of US rulers unfolds

Continued from front page

of millions of working people, including millions who voted for Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012. He condemned the “carnage” being visited on working people and castigated the Democratic and Republican “establishments” in Washington.

Trump’s election is a reflection of the coming apart of the two capitalist parties that have alternated in power for decades.

Millions of workers are fed up with the depression-like conditions ravaging cities and countryside alike because of the decline of capitalism, and with the leaders of the two capitalist parties who live in a different world than they do. Faced with the choice of Hillary Clinton or Trump, many stayed home.

Millions of workers voted for Trump because he said he would “drain the swamp.”

Trump’s election sent paroxysms of fear through the heart of the meritocracy — millions, even tens of millions, of well-paid staffers for so-called nonprofit foundations, charities, community organizations and nongovernmental organizations, as well as professors, opinion writers and apparatchiks for government regulatory agencies, who believe their “smarts,” sophistication and liberal ethos are essential for the smooth running of capitalism.

They’re useful to the ruling class. They bolster the illusion that if you are talented, there are no limits to how far you can go. But their livelihoods are unconnected to the production of goods, crops or anything of value to humanity. Their position is precarious and to the rulers they are ultimately expendable, especially in times of deepening economic crisis. They fear the working class today and what they sense are class battles to come.

A Sept. 11 opinion piece in the *New York Times* by columnist Charles Blow captures their hysteria and fear. Blow says the “vast majority of America” — that is, the people he knows — believe “this administration and this man are abominations and they will not sit silently by.”

“We are in hell,” he concludes.

Blow is not referring to the hell faced by working people — unaffordable health care, millions of workers without jobs, ongoing police brutality, the opioid epidemic, the workers in uniform sent to die in never-ending imperialist wars in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq.

People like Blow are consumed by fear and disdain of those they view as the “deplorables” — the workers who voted for Trump or skipped the election entirely.

Blow says the biggest problem are those who refused to vote for Clinton. “The lesser-of-two-evils argument is poppycock,” he says, claiming

that there is no comparison between Clinton and Trump.

His argument is aimed at anyone — like the Socialist Workers Party — who urges working people to break from capitalist “lesser evil” politics and to organize independent working-class political action.

“Progressive” Democrats like Charles Schumer in New York and Nancy Pelosi in California have outflanked Sanders’ efforts to build “resistance” to Trump.

In Berkeley, California, Pelosi encouraged and abetted antifa goons to attack those they called “fascists” who wanted to protest there Aug. 27. In fact, the Patriot Prayer group they targeted is composed mainly of supporters of Donald Trump who wanted to defend free speech and who denounce white supremacists and racists. The goons beat anyone they thought had the wrong demeanor.

So far, the only places these antifa forces have been able to carry out their attacks is where liberal Democrats have enabled them by instructing the cops to pull back.

Democrats, Republicans splinter

The fractures in the Democratic and Republican parties became clear during the 2016 campaign.

“Progressive” Democrats rail against those in the party — like Bernie Sanders and his “Revolution” movement — who they believe threaten the party establishment and its chances in 2018. In her new book *What Happened*, Hillary Clinton turns her guns on Sanders, saying he “didn’t get into the race to make sure a Democrat won the White House, he got in to disrupt the Democratic Party.”

A similar fracturing is taking place in the Republican Party. Trump won the nomination by defeating 16 of the party’s “best and brightest.” He has backed “insurgent” candidates for 2018, including the challenger to incumbent Sen. Jeffry Flake in Arizona. Trump charges that Republican Party congressional leaders are unable to deliver legislation he supports. They’re just another part of the swamp.

He says he’s open to more deals with Democrats to try and get some of his proposals adopted into law.

While Trump was not the favored candidate of the U.S. ruling families, they can live with him as president. Underneath all the demagoguery and bluster, he’s a rich capitalist businessman like they are. The policies and actions he has taken in defense of U.S. imperialism at home and abroad — from prosecuting Washington’s wars in Afghanistan and the Middle East to stepping up deportations of immigrants convicted of crimes — are in continuity with previous administrations.

Proxy war in Yemen

Continued from front page

capitalist powers — Washington, Tehran, Ankara and Moscow — seeking to defend their economic and strategic interests in Syria, Iraq, the Gulf and throughout the Middle East.

The unfolding human catastrophe in Yemen is compounded by the presence of the reactionary terrorist organization al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which controls territory in central and southern Yemen. As part of its so-called war on terror, Washington has been battling al-Qaeda there since 2009, employing drone strikes, special operations forces, and more recently, U.S. troops.

At the same time, Washington — still the pre-eminent imperialist power in the world — is weaker today. Since Washington lost the Cold War, it finds itself unable to score a decisive military victory anywhere, bogged down in seemingly endless wars from Afghanistan to Iraq. This has opened the door for the rulers in countries like Iran and Pakistan to play larger roles in capitalist world politics.

Two-thirds of Yemen’s 28 million people lack access to food and water. The U.N. reports that 7 million face famine and 462,000 children under five are “acutely malnourished.” The cholera epidemic has infected well over half a million, killing more than 2,000 people since April.

Bullets and bombs have killed more than 5,000 civilians. U.S. and Saudi bombers have targeted weddings and other public gatherings, claiming they are cover for Houthi forces. More than 3 million people have been forced from their homes.

“I have a bachelors degree in mathematics and a diploma in English, but certificates cannot provide me with food,” former teacher Mohammed Hasan, 26, an ice cream street vendor, told the *Financial Times*.

Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East. At the same time, it’s strategically located for the imperialist powers and Mideast capitalist regimes because it sits on the Bab al-Mandab Strait, a narrow waterway linking the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden. Much of the world’s oil shipments go through this strait.

Since March 2015 Washington has authorized more than \$22 billion in weapons sales to Saudi Arabia. The U.K. government approved the sale of billions of dollars worth of jets, bombs and missiles to the Saudis over the past several years.

Imperialism, sectarian conflicts

The horrendous situation Yemen’s working people are living through is the product of decades of imperialist intervention and heightened sectarian conflicts in the region.

North Yemen won independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1918 at the end of the first imperialist World War, coming under control of a Shia Muslim-related imamate. Southern Yemen, which had been under the boot of British colonial rule since 1839, won independence in 1967 through armed struggle led by the National Liberation Front, part of broader anti-imperialist struggles in the colonial world.

The forces that came to power in the south oriented to the Stalinist rulers in Moscow, establishing what they called the Yemeni Socialist Party. The ousting of British colonial rule led to certain social, economic and political gains by working people, but counterrevolutionary Stalinist misleadership and factional struggles tore the Yemeni Socialist Party apart, spurring armed conflict. Then the Soviet Union came apart in 1990.

Under pressure from Riyadh and Washington, the ruling political currents in both north and south unified the country. But conflicting interests ate away at the agreement, breaking out repeatedly in divisions and fighting. As Middle East politics shifted over the next 20 years, Tehran gained influence over Houthi forces in the north, who took up arms in 2004 against the increasingly autocratic and corrupt regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh, which was backed by Riyadh.

“Arab Spring” protests for democratic rights and against the Saleh regime broke out in 2011. He stepped down and Hadi became president.

Saleh re-emerged as an ally of the Tehran-backed Houthi rebellion. After Houthi forces captured Sanaa, Hadi’s government fled to Saudi Arabia. With Washington’s approval and practical support, the Saudi’s formed a military coalition with other Gulf regimes that has carried out a bloody campaign against the Houthi rebels since 2015, with no resolution in sight.

— LETTERS —

Blanca Nebbia

For the past nine years Blanca Nebbia, who was suffering from dementia, was in a nursing home in Jersey City, New Jersey. She was a longtime collaborator with the SWP, Pathfinder, the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, translating articles and books. As a young woman in Argentina, she was part of the anarchist movement. When she settled in the U.S. in the 1970s, she wanted to get involved in politics. My sister told the story how they opened up the Yellow Pages in Brooklyn. The Communist Party’s line was busy, and they called the Socialist Workers Party and attended some forums. She never joined, but often helped with housing of comrades and international guests.

Blanca was inspired translating the Thomas Sankara speech to African women, “The Revolution Cannot Triumph Without the Emancipation of Women,” printed

in *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987*; and by the chapter in *Teamster Rebellion* on how strikers organized their field hospital. Even in the nursing home, when she could not access a computer, I would bring her printed copies of translations I had done, and she’d pour intensely over them to correct my Spanish. Until a few years ago, Blanca always asked me how the party was doing. She died peacefully Sept. 7.

Ruth Nebbia
Spotsylvania, Virginia

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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

Appreciates ‘Militant’

Thank you for the paper. I very much appreciate it. I was a Teamster for 24 years and enjoy the updates about union workers’ issues! I have five years left here.

A prisoner
Nebraska

A ‘great paper’

Thank you so much for sending me such a great newspaper. I’m sorry that I can’t send any money now. I’ve been in prison for nine years, have a life sentence, I’ve been in since I was 16.

A prisoner
Florida

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