

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Wendy Lyons: 'A political leader of the working class'
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 82/NO. 29 AUGUST 6, 2018

Protests across south Iraq hit gov't neglect, Iran intrusion

BY SETH GALINSKY

Tens of thousands of workers and farmers have joined weeks of protests in southern Iraq against the government's failure to provide basic necessities and opposing Tehran's military, economic and political intervention in the country. The actions took place in the midst of a drought and a heat wave where temperatures reached 122 degrees.

This predominantly Shiite area of Iraq provided the bulk of the militia fighters who were used as cannon fodder in Baghdad's war against Islamic State in the north. With the end of the war seven months ago, working people are angry over government inaction in face of a lack of electricity, water and jobs.

An indication of the impact of the war runs along the road from Najaf to Karbala. Every 50 yards hangs a photo of a member of the Popular Mobilization Forces Shiite militias, some organized by Tehran, who died in the war.

A militia member who was wounded three times during the war spoke to Ru-

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Socialist Workers Party launches 2018 campaigns

—Meet the working-class candidates—



Militant photos

Clockwise from top left, Harry D'Agostino (holding paper), SWP candidate for N.Y. lieutenant governor, with West Virginia teachers celebrating strike victory March 6; SWP U.S. Senate candidate in Pennsylvania Osborne Hart, right, talking with worker in Queens, New York, last year; Alyson Kennedy, candidate for U.S. Senate in Texas, campaigns door to door in Brooklyn, New York, during 2016 presidential contest.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The Socialist Workers Party announced its slate of national candidates July 25, asking working people, farmers and youth to join them in campaigning for a working-class road

forward out of the crises-ridden capitalist system. Those joining will campaign from within the labor movement with workers who have decades of experience of union battles and social struggles.

The party released the accompanying statement explaining how the SWP campaign takes place as historic changes in capitalist rule are unfolding today. Below we give a picture of some of the party's candidates.

"We invite workers and youth to

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SWP statement

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaigning around the country to build the labor movement and fight for a working-class alternative to the dog-eat-dog, crisis-ridden capitalist system of war, racism and exploitation.

The SWP campaign explains why workers' defense of our class interests requires a course to unify millions of working people to fight to overturn the rule of the capitalist class, establish a workers and farmers government and reach out the hand of solidarity to workers fighting capitalist oppression around the world.

All the capitalist candidates — Democrats, Republicans and so-called independents — discount the capacities of working people to wage such a battle and transform ourselves along the way. Hillary Clinton and those leading the "resistance" against President Donald Trump view the working class as "deplorables" and aim to restrict our rights. But we can change the world and this perspective gets a greater hearing among working people today.

The SWP starts from the solidarity and common class interests of workers in the U.S. and around the world, against those who exploit and oppress us. We explain the crisis of the rulers' capitalist system is tearing their

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New openings for working class as imperialist 'world order' unravels



Jesco Denzel/German Federal Government

Donald Trump, Angela Merkel and other capitalist rulers stand off during G-7 summit June 9. Tensions are product of crisis of capitalism, which sharpens competition between rivals.

BY TERRY EVANS

The political, economic and military institutions put together by Washington after the U.S. capitalist rulers emerged victorious in the second imperialist world war — NATO, U.N. and others — were the instruments they used to impose their domination of the new "capitalist world order." Today these institutions are increasingly coming apart at the seams. And so are the ones

cobbled together in response by the U.S. rulers' imperialist allies — and competitors — like the European Union.

This situation is a product of the capitalist rulers deepening economic, political and moral crisis, which is sharpening competition between Washington and its capitalist rivals in Europe and Russia and from the rising power in Beijing. The U.S. rulers worsened their

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Protesters demand 'release video!' in cop shooting of Chicago barber

BY LAURA ANDERSON

CHICAGO — Harith Augustus — a 37-year-old African-American barber and father of a 5-year-old — known by friends as Snoop, was shot down and killed by cops on busy East 71st Street on Chicago's South Side after he left work July 14.

Almost immediately, people in the area began to protest. Nataki Rhodes, a waitress and organizer who lives a couple blocks from where Augustus was killed, told this correspondent that she got a call about the protest shortly after the shooting. When she got there, more than 100 people were demonstrating, demanding answers about what happened.

Some in the crowd threw things at the cops. They responded by hitting protesters with their nightsticks and pulling people down onto the street.

Nader Issa, a *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter, said he was hit by officers. "I have my press badge on and identified myself as a reporter," Issa tweeted. In a video Issa posted online you can see

him get shoved and the phone he was using to videotape the police assault is smacked out of his hand by a cop.

There is a long history of cop abuse in Chicago's Black communities. From the notorious Jon Burge who extracted false

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Locked-out National Grid utility workers rally in Boston
Striking silver miners rally at bosses' Idaho headquarters

Woman's right to abortion is debated in Northern Ireland

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

BELFAST, Northern Ireland — “What do we want? The right to choose! When do we want it? Now!” chanted hundreds demonstrating outside City Hall here July 7.

The youthful rally, organized by Alliance for Choice and Rally for Choice, was called to respond to an anti-abortion-rights “All-Ireland Rally for Life,” held at the same time at Stormont, the seat of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The rival rallies are part of a growing struggle over a woman's right to choose whether to have an abortion. On May 25 a decisive majority voted by referendum in the Republic of Ireland to repeal the Eighth Amendment to the constitution, which effectively prevented women's access to abortion.

Posed now is whether women's right to choose abortion, banned in Northern Ireland, will be legalized. According to *The Times*, the number of women traveling to other parts of the U.K. to obtain a termination rose from 624 in 2016 to 919 last year. Since June 2017 the U.K. government has covered the cost of abortions, though not travel costs.

“No more airfare, we want health care,” protesters chanted. Many signs showed an “airfare” ticket with a red cross over it.

Communist League members traveled from London and Manchester to join in the rally and discuss this issue with workers in Belfast. We knocked on doors in two working-class areas of the city — New Lodge Road and Falls Road — to tell people about the rally. We found great openness to discuss the question of a woman's right to choose

and what should be done next.

While some said they were opposed to abortion and didn't want to discuss it, a number said, “I'm pro-choice.” “My girlfriend and I are very pro-choice,” Francis Conlon, a young chef, told us. “It doesn't make sense that people are going across the water for a procedure that could be done here,” he said. “This corner of the U.K. — or of Ireland, whichever way you put it — has to be more forward-thinking.”

Conlon described how he had opposed groups that used to harass women coming in or out of the Belfast Mary Stopes clinic. For five years it provided advice for women, including on how to travel to England and pay for abortions there. The clinic closed in December 2017 after the government decided to grant abortions free of charge to women who came from Northern Ireland.

One woman, who didn't want her name used, said she was part of a group of midwives and midwifery students going to the pro-choice rally. After a discussion on the worldwide fight for women's rights and working-class resistance against attacks from the bosses today, she got a subscription to the *Militant*.

Chicago protests: ‘Release video!’ in cop killing of barber

Continued from front page confessions by torturing suspects from 1972 to 1991 to the 16 shots that killed 17-year-old Laquan McDonald in 2014, this history makes people suspicious about any cop shooting.

Because of the outcry and protest against the killing, the Chicago cops



Rally for women's right to abortion in Belfast July 7. “No airfare, we want health care!” chanted protesters. Because abortions are banned in Northern Ireland, unlike in the rest of the U.K., women seeking abortions are forced to fly abroad to have the procedure.

Some were still thinking about it. “As a Catholic, I'm opposed to abortion,” said Catherine McWilliams, who works in a care home, “unless there is something seriously wrong.” We raised that the right to choose abortion was a matter of advancing the unity and self-confidence of the working class.

“Yes, women have gained a lot more equality,” McWilliams responded. “It used to be, if you got married, you would stay in the home, but now you

say, ‘it's my job, I decide if I keep it.’”

Mairtín Lavery, a self-employed car mechanic, had a similar response. “A new life is something precious, so I wouldn't be for women having abortions too easily,” he said. “But if it was rape, or the child would have no sort of life, that's different.”

When we raised that this was a matter for women themselves to decide, not the capitalist state, Lavery liked our working-class approach. “You think like people around here,” he said.

released a short video from one cop's videocam of the shooting. In it the cops confront Augustus, and question him over a “bulge around his waistband.” There is no audio track of what is said.

Talking calmly with police who accost him, Augustus takes out his wallet, and appears to be pulling out his Illinois Firearm Owners' ID card. Then three cops try to grab him, and he backs away into the street. His shirt goes up and you can see a holstered gun. He stumbles and his hand goes down by the holster. The cops shoot and he falls in the street. The medical examiner said later he died from “multiple gunshot wounds.”

The cops are refusing to release the “tons” of other videos and audio they say they have of the shooting, including some with audio. Protesters are demanding they be made public.

The cops have also refused to release the name of the officer who shot Augustus. Hundreds marched down Stony Island Avenue the next day, demanding the release of the other videos. A candlelight vigil and memorial for “Snoop” was held in front of the barbers where he worked, organized by co-workers and others in the community.

“We have heard the voices of many who have shared heartfelt and timely concerns in the form of protest, memorials and requests for accountability and full transparency,” Augustus' family said in a statement two days later. “We are grateful for the support you continue to show as we grieve the loss of our son and brother, Harith Liu Augustus.”

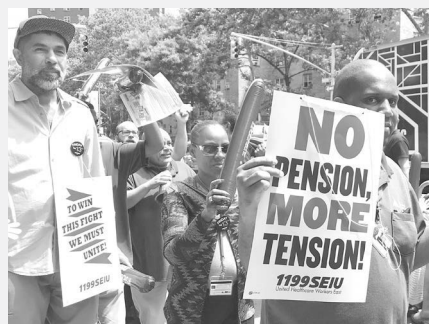
Augustus' killing was the third time in the last two weeks that a Chicago cop shot someone.

THE MILITANT

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Militant/Sara Lobman Picket outside Mt. Sinai Hospital, New York, July 12, protests proposed pension cuts.

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Meet the 2018 Socialist Workers Party candidates

Continued from front page
join us knocking on doors in cities, towns and farming areas, discussing how we can rebuild the labor movement and forge the unity that is necessary for us to fight effectively,” said Alyson Kennedy, candidate for U.S. Senate in Texas. “We will join workers’ picket lines, fights to defend abortion rights, actions demanding prosecution of killer cops and protests against deportations, calling for amnesty for undocumented immigrants.”

Kennedy was the party’s presidential candidate in the 2016 elections. She was among the first wave of women who broke the barriers that coal bosses used to exclude women from underground mining jobs. She has been part of numerous United Mine Workers union battles in the coalfields, from West Virginia to Alabama to Utah. From 2003 to 2006, she was among those in the front ranks of a union-organizing battle at the Co-Op coal mine outside Huntington, Utah. The miners there, a majority immigrants from Mexico, fought for UMW representation to win safe working conditions, an end to abuse by the bosses and improved wages.

Kennedy joined the teachers on strike in Oklahoma this spring — part of a wave of battles across the country —

and the July 12 rally in Columbus, Ohio, where more than 10,000 union miners, Teamsters, bakery workers and others rallied to demand that the government fund their pensions.

In April, Kennedy was one of the speakers at a conference in Havana, discussing the conditions for the working class in the U.S. and why the rulers have begun to fear working people for the first time in decades.

Osborne Hart, who works at Walmart in Philadelphia, was Kennedy’s running mate in 2016 and is the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Pennsylvania.

Hart got involved with the civil rights movement as a teenager and has since been a fighter for Black rights, joining struggles against school segregation and police brutality. He was active in the 1970s in the movement to end Washington’s war against the peoples of Vietnam.

Hart campaigned for the freedom of Oscar López, a Puerto Rican independence fighter framed up and jailed by the U.S. government for 36 years. He traveled to Puerto Rico in 2017 to extend solidarity to workers there fighting to end Washington’s colonial rule, and was in San Juan when López was released. Hart spoke along with him last year at the U.N. Commission for Decolonization, calling for Puerto Rico’s independence.

Hart has joined the fight for amnesty for undocumented workers, protests against deportations and backed efforts to organize the unorganized wherever they are from. Recently he joined demonstrations in New Brunswick and Trenton, New Jersey, demanding driver’s licenses for immigrants.

He joined the SWP in 1975 and has been part of helping to build and strengthen the labor movement since.

For working-class unity

In April, Laura Garza, a rail worker in Los Angeles running as the SWP candidate for California governor, went to the town of Barstow af-



Above, Militant/Diane Shur
Above, Rachele Fruit, right, candidate for Georgia governor from Atlanta, brings solidarity from fellow Walmart workers to June 7 teachers protest outside Guilford County Commission hearing in Greensboro, North Carolina. Inset, Dan Fein, candidate for governor of Illinois from Chicago, joins march and rally June 23 at Waters Elementary School protesting attacks on immigrant workers.

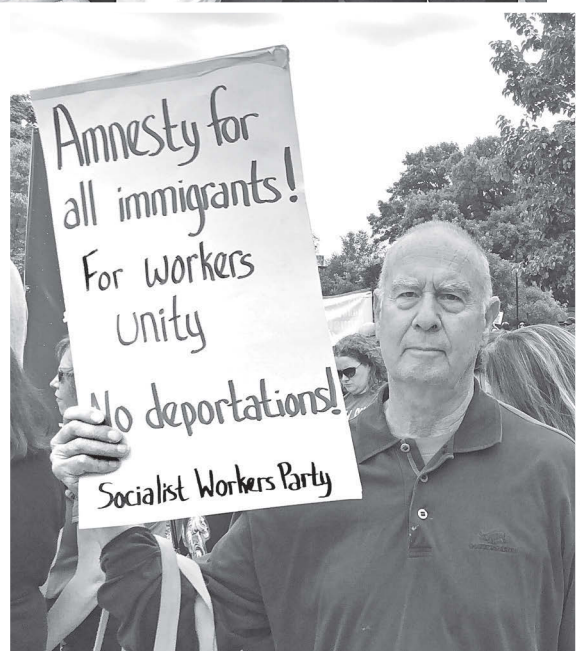
ter cops killed Diante Yarber, a 26-year-old African-American, firing some 30 shots into his car. Garza brought solidarity and support to the protests that young workers took the lead in organizing.

“The fight for Black rights and to overthrow Jim Crow segregation in the 1950s and ’60s transformed the working class in the U.S.,” Garza said. “It broke down barriers and advanced the solidarity and unity of all workers. There is less racism today than at any other time in U.S. history.

“The capitalist rulers try to break down that working-class solidarity. And they try to intimidate African-Americans with their cops, courts and prisons,” she said. “The fights against cop brutality and police killings across the country are a key fight for the working class.”

Garza is a veteran of union struggles and has run on Socialist Workers Party tickets several times. As candidate for U.S. vice president in 1996 she went on a fact-finding tour to Northern Ireland and joined actions against sectarian marches through predominantly Catholic neighborhoods.

Harry D’Agostino is a member of the Albany branch of the SWP and the party’s candidate for New York lieutenant



Militant/Dean Hazelwood

governor. He works as a musician and plays with the band Upstate. He is a strong supporter of women’s right to choose abortion and has done clinic defense regularly for many years.

In March D’Agostino joined a team to West Virginia where the teachers uprising started, walking the picket line there and taking their struggle door to door.

“While we were picketing the workers were informed that the state had agreed to the unions’ demands so it turned out to be the last day of the strike,” he said. “The next day we went south to coal country and knocked on doors there. Workers were very proud of how the teachers stayed united and saw the fight through to the end. And I really saw how the experiences from the battles by coal miners helped the teachers in organizing their fight.”

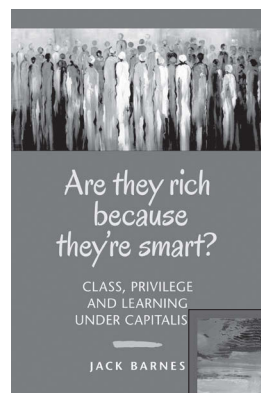
D’Agostino went to Cuba with this year’s May Day International Brigade. Along with some 300 participants from 31 countries, 74 of them from the U.S., he did voluntary agricultural work and joined hundreds of thousands of Cuban workers in the May 1 march in Havana celebrating the revolution.



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

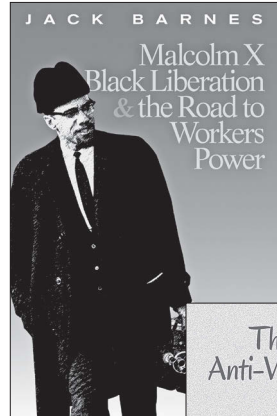
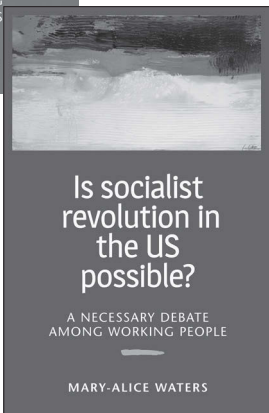
Helen Meyers, left, SWP U.S. Senate candidate in Minnesota, talks with workers going door to door in Maplewood May 12.

More reading....



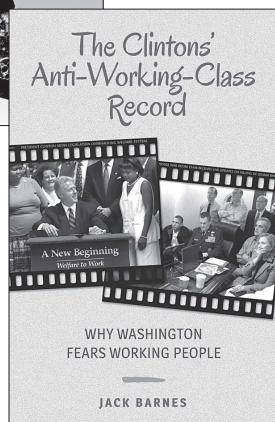
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Protests oppose Russian rulers' moves to raise age for pensions

BY EMMA JOHNSON

When the Russian government announced plans to raise the retirement age for workers on the eve of the World Cup, it hoped this would be drowned out by the football euphoria.

But the proposal provoked widespread anger and protests across the country. In face of this, the government of President Vladimir Putin told a compliant media and the ruling United Russia party to stop using the words “pension reform.” Putin’s popularity rating dropped by 10 percent in one month and in a July 8 poll only 49 percent said they’d vote for him. This is his lowest rating in years.

In 2005 Putin promised not to touch the retirement age “as long as I’m president.” He has declared that he has “not been taking part in that process,” hoping this gives him room to deny any personal responsibility.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev announced the proposal June 14. It would raise the retirement age by eight years to 63 for women in stages through 2034 and by five years to 65 by 2028 for men. The State Duma approved it in the first hearing of the required three on July 19. The deadline for amendments was extended to Sept. 24.

Deputies of Putin’s United Russia voted in favor, while deputies from the Duma’s other parties — the conservative Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, the Communist Party and Fair Russia — voted against.

“The deputies should go to the cemeteries and see how many men there are who died at the age of 61 or 62,” Sergei Shatsky, 50, told the *Moscow Times* as he protested with a couple hundred others outside parliament July 19. “Seven of my close friends have already died.”

Average life expectancy for women in Russia is 77 years, for men it’s 66. But the averages hide the class reality; workers and farmers die much younger. Many rural and urban working people will never live to retire. In over half of the country’s 83 regions, especially in the Asian east, male average life expectancy doesn’t reach 65.

More than 1,500 people came from the Kuzbass region, a coal-mining area, to a July 3 protest in Kemerovo, organized by the Federation of Trade Union Organizations in Kuzbass. “We are 80 people, representatives of the Sibirginskaya mine,” Sergei Balynin told Radio Svoboda. “The miners live approximately for 62 years, so no one will survive until retirement.”

Dozens of protests have taken place across Russia, most called by the opposition parties in the State Duma, followers of Alexei Navalny, smaller political groups and local coalitions.

These protests come alongside growing anger at the Russian capitalist rulers’ continuing wars — and workers’ deaths — in Syria and Ukraine. Jobs and wages, especially in small towns and rural areas, are hard to come by, driving youth to sign up for the military. Relatives hear thirdhand that they’ve been killed, especially when their employer is a “private” Russian army.

Signs at the protests are blunt. In Novokuznetsk, one sign read, “Born, worked, retired, died.” Others mocked the double-speak spread by government spokespeople, reading, “War is peace,” “Freedom is slavery,” and “Ignorance is power.” In Tomsk, one participant brought a poster saying, “Gift to Medvedev — did not live until retirement,” and in Yakutsk, “A short life — a pledge of prosperity of the pension fund.” And in Barnaul one read, “OK, Google! How to survive until retirement?”

Svetlana Yurievna turned out July 3 for a rally of 300 in Saratov. She told Svoboda she has never been in a pro-



TASS

“We oppose raising the retirement age,” say protest signs in Omsk, Russia. Government proposes to raise age for women from 55 to 63, reflected in signs, and from 60 to 65 for men.

test before.

“Now I’ll go to everything,” she said. “Because I’m against it. Against our government, against Medvedev, against this cannibalistic policy. Yes, I went to the polls and voted for Putin. And I supported Putin because he said, ‘As long as I am president, there will be no increase in the retirement age.’ And now those words have disappeared. But we still hope. He has not yet spoken, and we hope.”

Putin cultivates the image of a ruler standing aloof from domestic issues, leaving them to the “experts.” That

leaves room for him to maneuver if things go bad.

In the face of the protests, he spoke out July 20, saying no final decision has been made. “I do not like anything related to raising the retirement age, I assure you,” he told news agency TASS. “And in the government there are few people, if any, who like it.”

Most people keep working for as long as they can because the pensions are too meager to live on, averaging only \$210 a month. The idea of raising the age means you won’t ever get one at all and this is making people mad.

Openings for working class as ‘world order’ unravels

Continued from front page

position when they launched a series of wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere based on the illusion that they had won the Cold War. Above all the conflicts among the rulers are a product of their failure to impose lasting defeats on the working class, which today is looking for ways to take on the debilitating attacks of the rulers, who seek to place the burden of their crisis on the backs of workers and farmers.

The scribes in the U.S. liberal media, and some Republicans, insist on saying the problem is President Donald Trump. But the cause of their crisis — and the biggest changes in their “world order” in 70 years — lies in their capitalist system.

Trump, seeking to advance the interests of the U.S. capitalist rulers, is helping advance these changes and — unintentionally, to be sure — doing so in a way that opens political space that is good for the working class. That can be true in the Mideast, Korea and elsewhere.

“I think Trump may be one of those figures in history who appears from time to time to mark the end of an era and to force it to give up its old pretenses,” veteran political operative Henry Kissinger told the *Financial Times* July 16, the day after Trump met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki.

The US ‘world order’

NATO was formed in April 1949 to defend U.S. imperialist interests and as a bulwark against the spread of revolutionary struggles, especially in Europe. But in just a few months the U.S. rulers “lost” China, which they hoped to take over as a prize from their victory in World War II, when an uprising of millions ended the tyranny of the U.S.-backed landowners and warlords, unifying the nation and laying the basis to appropriate the capitalist class.

Then the U.S. rulers were defeated in their effort to impose their will in the 1950-53 Korean War and French imperialist forces were beaten in Vietnam. Washington founded the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization in 1954, a military pact that included the governments of Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and the U.K. It was unceremoniously dissolved in 1977, two years after the Vietnamese toilers kicked Washington out, reunified the country and opened the door to toppling capitalist rule there.

The Central Treaty Organization was established at the urging of London and Washington to bolster imperialist interests in the Mideast in 1955. It was composed of the governments of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, the U.K. and from 1959 the United States. Following the 1979 Iranian Revolution — which overturned the tyrannical rule of the U.S.-backed shah and opened political space for millions of working people, women and the oppressed — CENTO too was dissolved by Washington.

Since the implosion of the Soviet Union in 1989 successive U.S. administrations have acted on the illusion that they won the Cold War. This has included incorporating 12 eastern and central European countries into NATO membership. Then the Washington-led organization in 2016 provocatively violated a NATO 1997 agreement with Russia, stationing 4,000 troops in permanent rotation near the Russian border, paving the way for new conflicts with its rising capitalist class.

The U.S. imperialists have waged a series of ongoing wars in the Mideast and Afghanistan that have undercut rather than restored stabil-

ity for the capitalist rulers.

The current White House maintains and seeks to embellish Washington’s massive military might, but is seeking an alternative to acting as if it can use that power to impose its will through military conflicts. Instead, it seeks to negotiate ways out in Korea and the Mideast, looking for Moscow’s help.

The rulers of Germany, France and the U.K. refuse to pay their way in NATO, in the futile belief they can continue as world capitalist players and depend on Washington’s military power. And Washington is increasingly unwilling to pay for them. For the U.S. rulers the military “alliance” is subordinate to their direct relations with the rulers of other nations.

Washington’s EU foe splinters

When Trump accurately described the EU as a “trade foe,” the *Financial Times* and other liberal and globalist media slammed him. But Washington’s weaker competitors created the EU as a protectionist bloc to compete with the U.S. bosses, including the use of tariffs against them. And the German rulers use their domination of the bloc to squeeze working people in the weaker capitalist nations in southern Europe.

With no end in sight to capitalism’s social and economic crisis, working people there — as in the U.S. — have sought ways at the ballot box to express

Continued on page 9

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Amnesty Now for Undocumented Workers — The Fight for Immigrant Rights Today. Speaker: Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Aug. 3, 7:30 p.m. 1858 W. Cermak Road, 2nd floor. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.

CANADA

Montreal

Behind the Trump, Putin Summit and the Liberal Hysteria Against It. Speaker: Michel Prairie, Communist League. Sat., Aug. 4, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 7107 St-Denis, room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

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Socialist Workers Party statement

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

This column gives a voice to those engaged in labor battles and building solidarity today — from teachers and school workers across the country, to miners, rail and factory and retail workers looking to stand and fight. Send in articles, photos and letters on picket lines and other labor protests to themilitant@mac.com, post them directly on our website, or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Locked-out National Grid utility workers rally in Boston

BOSTON — “If we stay strong we will get what we want,” United Steelworkers Local 12003 President Joe Kurylo told 1,500 locked-out Steelworkers and their supporters who marched from City Hall to a spirited rally at the Massachusetts Statehouse here July 18. Three weeks earlier National Grid, a giant utility company, locked out its 1,200 natural gas workers organized by USW Locals 12003 and 12012 when their contract expired June 24.

One of the key reasons the workers refused the bosses’ concession contract offer was their demand for big cuts in the pension plan for new hires.

“This lockout is about two things — public safety and the next generation of workers,” USW Local 12012 President John Buonopane told the rally.

National Grid also wants to cut all workers’ medical coverage and replace union workers with nonunion subcontractors for jobs like swapping out meters.

A week after National Grid locked out its workers, the bosses ended their insurance coverage.

The Greater Boston Labor Council called the action, which was endorsed by over 40 area unions from the building trades to the teachers.

“It’s important to support the National Grid workers,” Doris Reina-Landaverde, a Salvadoran-born Harvard University janitor and Service Employees International Union member, told the *Militant* at the rally.

Protest participants were interested in the *Militant*’s labor and working-class political news, picking up 23 copies and 10 subscriptions.

— Ted Leonard

Striking silver miners rally at bosses’ Idaho headquarters

COEUR D’ALENE, Idaho — Some 100 silver miners and their supporters gathered outside the Hecla bosses’ corporate headquarters here July 20 to show support for the ongoing strike by United Steelworkers Local 5114. The workers have been on strike at the Lucky Friday mine in Mullan, Idaho, since March 2017.

The mine bosses said they would impose their “final offer,” increase miners’ medical insurance payments, cut a key part of miners’ weekly pay by slashing the silver premium and bonus pay, and gut safety protections. A key sticking point was the bosses’ insistence on doing away with a team bidding system based on seniority that lets workers choose their crews, which helps protect safety on the job.

“We want to show the company that we are still here standing strong and that we have the support of the community and many other unions as well,” Dave Roose, chief negotiator and newly elected president of the union, told the *Militant*.

In addition to the thousands of dollars that other unions have contributed to their hardship fund, he said the USW has donated \$2.8 million to help union members and their families.

Rick Norman, a continuing stalwart

on the picket line, said close to 50 percent of the 250 strikers now work out of state, and another 35 percent are working other jobs in northern Idaho. Norman is part of a “Road Warriors” team that has traveled around the U.S. and Canada to confront Hecla bosses at meetings they attend.

Among those joining the protest were members of the Teamsters; Laborers’ International Union; International Longshore and Warehouse Union members from Tacoma and Aberdeen, Washington; United Food and Commercial Workers; representatives from several USW locals from Spokane, Washington, Utah and Arizona; and members of the Democratic Socialists of America and Socialist Workers Party.

Donations and messages of support can be sent to USW 5114, P.O. Box 427, Mullan, ID 83846.

— Edwin Fruit

New Zealand nurses strike for increased pay, staffing

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — “When nurses’ rights are under attack, stand up, fight back!” several thousand nurses, other health care workers and supporters chanted as they marched through the central city here July 12. The demonstration was one of many around the country, part of a 24-hour strike by more than 29,000 members of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation.

The health care workers and their union are demanding better pay and more staff. “For too long we’ve been underpaid and undervalued,” Auckland hospital nurse Megan Ashton told the *Militant*.

Staff shortfalls and resulting forced overtime are key issues. “We’re on strike not just for money,” said Ashton. “It’s for the good of people. We can’t provide the care we want to for our patients.”

Strikers began picketing outside hospitals at 7 a.m. Workers had voted to reject the latest contract proposal by the government-funded district



Militant

Members of United Steelworkers union, locked out by utility company National Grid, and their supporters march in Boston July 18 against bosses’ demands for cuts to health care, pensions.

health boards.

“I help out in the emergency department on overtime because of staff shortages, otherwise patients’ care will be compromised,” Rateesh Kumar said. “We cope with immense stress, because we like our job, but when you reach a point where you can’t handle it, people leave.”

“You have situations where there is only one nurse for 10 patients at night,” said Helen Polley, a nurse with 30 years’ experience, on the picket at Middlemore Hospital in south Auckland. “You only need one patient to deteriorate and they can’t look after the others.” Polley said she’s for legislation to enforce a ratio of five patients to one nurse.

— Baskaran Appu

Striking Vermont nurses win widespread solidarity

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Union nurses mounted spirited picket lines, several rallies and a march through the city as part of a two-day strike against University of Vermont Medical Center bosses here July 12-13.

The nurses, members of Vermont Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals Local 5221, which represents 1,800 workers at the teaching hospital, are demanding higher pay and better staffing levels to ensure adequate care for patients. They are also demanding a \$15 an hour minimum wage for all other hospital workers.

Adjusted for the cost of living, Vermont registered nurses’ pay ranks 47th of the 50 states.

The nurses’ contract expired July 9. “They showed disrespect for us in negotiations,” David Smith, 27, a nurse in the intensive care unit, told the *Militant* July 13. “There is a chronic staffing shortage, which is why management is always bringing in ‘travel nurses,’ who are hired on temporary contracts and aren’t members of the union.

Teachers, construction workers and other unionists joined in picketing. Firefighters brought bagels and cream cheese. A Ben and Jerry’s truck driver pulled up and gave out cups of ice cream. Red yard signs supporting the nurses dot the lawns of houses and farms in the area.

Hospital management brought in some 600 strike breakers, and on July 13 the hospital’s president, Eileen Whalen, claimed the scab nurses were “providing safe, high-quality care for patients and their families.” But many strikers told us they dispute that claim, saying discussions they had with staff still working inside made it clear it wasn’t true.

“This is the first strike for all of us,” Sandy Michaud, 62, a critical care nurse with 35 years at the hospital, said on the picket line.

Nurses returned to work after the strike as negotiations were set to resume.

— Maggie Trowe

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 9, 1993

ST. LOUIS — The flood now affecting the Midwestern section of the United States has already wreaked tremendous damage and will continue to devastate additional areas in the coming weeks. The inaction of the U.S. government in addressing this crisis will intensify the effects of the flood on working people, farmers, and small businesspeople.

The extent of the devastation is massive. Parts of eight farm-belt states are so wet that 16 million acres weren’t planted this spring or are under water.

Mike Galati and Nell Wheeler, Socialist Workers Party candidates for Des Moines City Council, explained in a statement: “The flood of 1993 was brought on by too much rain. But the catastrophe it has produced was caused by the system of private profit — capitalism — which puts profit before human need.”



August 9, 1968

SEATTLE — Fifteen Seattle cops burst into the Black Panther Party headquarters here July 29 with a search warrant for two stolen typewriters. After rifling through desk drawers and searching cabinets and corners of the small storefront office, they examined the two typewriters in plain view on the desks. Then they put handcuffs on Black Panther captain Aaron Dixon and on Curtis Harris, Panther co-captain and Black Panther candidate for state representative. They were jailed without charges.

Word of the arrests spread quickly, and Black Panther supporters began gathering at the Panther Party headquarters. Elmer Dixon, Aaron’s brother, addressed a press conference.

While Elmer Dixon addressed a rally of over 200 Blacks at Garfield Park, an ever-expanding picket line of militant whites began forming downtown.



August 7, 1943

Italy is now in the throes of revolution. The Italian revolution is only ten days old. But already the workers there are displaying all the imagination, boldness, and heroism that the working class always displays in time of revolution. They are taking their place at the head of all the oppressed masses in the country. And their example is already inspiring the workers of all Europe, especially those of Germany.

It was the Italian masses that toppled Mussolini from power. They stormed the houses of the fascist leaders. They sacked the leading fascist newspapers. They forced open the prisons and freed the political prisoners. The Italian workers seek to obliterate and destroy every symbol and vestige of the fascist regime.

The Italian workers want an end of the war. They want bread. They want to regain their political rights and freedom.

Protests across Nicaragua in making for over a decade

BY RÓGER CALERO
AND MAGGIE TROWE

Conditions leading to widespread protests against the government of President Daniel Ortega this year have been in the making for more than a decade.

It was an explosion of pent-up grievances against what many working people and middle-class layers in Nicaragua see as a corrupt and authoritarian government. The worldwide capitalist crisis and the collaboration of Ortega's ruling party — the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) — with the Nicaraguan capitalist class added to the tensions.

The wave of protests began April 19, following the attack by police and government-organized thugs on retirees protesting anti-working-class "reforms" in social security.

The government's repression of the protests — resulting so far in over 300 killed, 2,000 injured and hundreds arrested — shattered the false image Ortega promotes that his government is a continuation of the popular revolution led by the FSLN in the 1980s.

Once a revolutionary party with a working-class program, the FSLN since the late 1980s has turned its back on defending the interests of working people and sought open collaboration with the country's wealthy ruling families.

1979 Sandinista Revolution

In 1979 the FSLN led an insurrection that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza and inspired working people around the world.

Workers and farmers in Nicaragua and the Caribbean island of Grenada in 1979 "did more than oust corrupt and brutal tyrants who had sold these nations' patrimony to Washington," says the introduction to the "The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution," in issue no. 9 of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. "They displaced from political power the entire class of exploiting landowners and big businessmen, ushering in popular revolutionary governments."

At that time the FSLN leadership pursued a course that promoted the organization and mobilization of workers and peasants to confront capitalist economic relations that deprive working people of the social wealth our class creates. The revolutionary government encouraged the formation of unions and peasant organizations. Women fighting for equality got support from the government. Indigenous people and Afro-Nicaraguans on the Atlantic Coast opened a struggle against racial discrimination and underdevelopment, and to wrest control of resources in the region, long plundered by U.S. and other foreign bosses.

The 1969 historic program of the FSLN is also available in *New Internationalist* no. 9. It guided the political work led by Carlos Fonseca and the nucleus of Nicaraguan youth of his generation who, inspired to emulate the Cuban Revolution, formed the FSLN in the early 1960s.

That program called for distributing land to the peasants, "taking what was stolen by the big landlords and giving it back to small producers who labor on

it," and for toilers to mobilize to "create a Nicaragua that is free of exploitation, oppression, and backwardness."

The confidence and anti-imperialist mobilizations by working people in Nicaragua during the opening years of the revolution incurred the wrath of the U.S. rulers, who organized a murderous mercenary war to destroy the revolution. Nicaraguan workers in city and countryside fought arms in hand and defeated the counterrevolution.

Gradually, however, FSLN leaders turned their back on their program. Instead of mobilizing workers and peasants to take control of production and the land, they sought "more pragmatic" alliances with Nicaragua's capitalists, calling them "patriotic producers." By the late 1980s the revolution had been lost. The regime that was defeated in the February 1990 election had ceased to be a workers and farmers government.

Ortega and the entire top leadership of the FSLN now defended reliance on capitalist market relations and integration into the world capitalist system as



May Day rally 1984 in Chinandega, Nicaragua. Revolution in 1979 gave birth to workers and farmers government, but Sandinista National Liberation Front began to reverse course, and in 1990 formed bloc with bosses and pushed working people out of power.

the way forward. They rejected the example set by the Cuban Revolution and its leadership of building a communist party rooted in the working class, to overthrow capitalist rule and advance a socialist course.

A path 'back to power'

Out of power for 16 years, Ortega used social protests and strikes, and blocs with layers of the capitalist class, to press for concessions from Liberal Constitutional Party (PLC) governments.

In 1999 the PLC agreed to enter a power-sharing pact with the FSLN, dividing up appointees to the Supreme Electoral Council that oversees elections. The law was changed to allow a presidential candidate to win with as little as 35 percent of the votes. Ortega won the 2006 election with 38 percent.

One demand raised by participants in recent protests is to change the composition of the FSLN-controlled courts and electoral council as part of any agreement to hold early presidential elections. Otherwise, they say, Ortega will steal the elections.



Pro-Ortega gang with mortars and other weapons prepares to attack anti-government protest in Managua April 21. Repression has deepened working-class opposition to the government.

By 2006 Ortega had convinced many capitalist and imperialist investors that he was a "new Daniel" and the FSLN's revolutionary road was a thing of the past. His election that year "marked a new course," Ortega told the Iberoamerican Association of Chambers of Commerce in April 2017. "Here, we have a single government: workers, businessmen, and the state," he said, pretending that a government can serve the interests of both exploiting and exploited classes.

"I doubt it. They can't find any cheaper labor," he said. Nicaragua has the lowest minimum wage in Central America, about \$180 a month.

The minimum wage for rural workers is set at \$125 a month. "When you have a basket of basic food items that costs \$440, you can only cover a quarter of it," admitted Yolanda Arias, a leader of the FSLN-led Rural Workers Association.

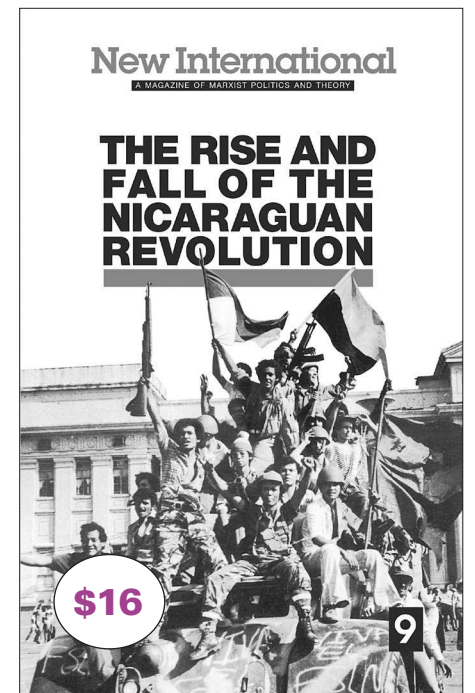
Ortega has been able to temper the impact of capitalist and imperialist plunder with social programs financed through Venezuela oil assistance, including distribution of bags of food to poor families, loans to small farmers and to workers starting cooperatives, subsidies for electric bills and public transportation. The government also increased spending on education and health care.

This helped Ortega retain a base among the peasantry and urban poor. But, it's a base that is dwindling under the blows of the capitalist world economic crisis and the FSLN's repression.

Many workers we spoke with expressed hatred of the patronage practices that demand political loyalty to Ortega — attendance at pro-government rallies, for example — in exchange for jobs and benefits. "I give you this in return for your family's support," they demand of us," said Raymundo González, a worker we met in Masaya in May.

The accumulated indignation, countless humiliations, arbitrariness, nepotism, abuses of authority by government officials and FSLN functionaries have all contributed to the discontent that blew up in April and continues against government attacks.

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Wendy Lyons: ‘A political leader of the working class’

BY BERNIE SENTER

LOS ANGELES — “Wendy Lyons was a central leader of the Socialist Workers Party for many years. She was a political leader of the working-class movement in this country,” Norton Sandler, speaking on behalf of the SWP National Committee, told a meeting celebrating Lyons’ life and political contributions here July 15. One hundred and six people attended the meeting. Lyons, a member of the party for 55 years, died a month earlier at 73.

The meeting was held at the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 770 Workers’ Center, the union Lyons was a member of when she worked on the production line at Farmer John’s meatpacking plant. Pedro Albarran, a shop steward for the UFCW at Farmer John, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Lyons had been his co-worker.

“Wendy was both a leader of the party’s practical work,” Sandler said, “and took important responsibilities in the theoretical and programmatic debates that steered the course of the party in the world at a decisive time.”

SWP members and supporters, co-workers from factories where she worked, and many who she joined with in working-class struggles over the years came to the meeting. Her companion Al Duncan, her two brothers and sister, and numerous other family members attended. Dennis Richter, organizer of the Los Angeles SWP branch, chaired.

“At a young age Wendy gained a hatred of capitalism — its racism, its wars, its day-to-day indignities, cultural and political, directed at the working class,” Sandler said. “She became convinced that building the Socialist Workers Party was decisive in the working class’s battle to overthrow capitalism.”

Sandler said the SWP is striving to build the working-class vanguard necessary to face and defeat the U.S. ruling class, the most brutal in history. “Leadership is a decisive question,” he said.”

Leader of leaders

“Two big events won Wendy to a life-long course of building the revolutionary party in the U.S.,” Betsey Stone, a member of the SWP in Oakland who had worked with Lyons for decades, told the meeting. “The Cuban Revolution in 1959 and the mass working-class struggle that tore down the system of Jim Crow segregation in the South.”

“I have been part of the fight for justice for working people since I was a teenager,” Lyons told a reporter when she ran for mayor of Los Angeles in 2005. “The civil rights movement taught me a determined fight by working people could change history. The Cuban Revolution showed me that if workers and farmers take political power they can begin to solve things that seem unsolvable under the capitalist system we live under.”

Lyons had a thirst for Marxist education and played a role in organizing and leading party classes. Stone said she and Lyons attended a 1981-82 session of the party’s leadership school, where comrades took a six-month sabbatical from daily leadership assignments to collectively study the revolutionary activities and writings of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, the founders of the commu-

nist movement.

Students at the school also studied Spanish. Lyons conquered enough, Stone said, that she could carry on political discussions with co-workers in Spanish for the rest of her life.

“Wendy didn’t have a self-serving bone in her body,” Sandler said. “She was a leader of leaders, one of a dozen or so younger cadres of her generation who shouldered greater and greater responsibilities in the party. By the time she was 28, she served as the party’s representative on national anti-Vietnam War coalitions and had been organizer of the party’s two largest branches, in New York and Los Angeles.

“She was a leader in the party’s participation in the women’s liberation movement and in theoretical battles for clarity in the debates in our party and world movement,” he said.

Lyons was elected to the SWP National Committee in 1973, as part of a key leadership transition in the party. She was one of a number of younger leaders elected, he said, as several veteran leaders with decades of class-struggle experience and shouldering substantial party responsibilities stepped down. Lyons served on the NC for 25 years, and for many years on its Political Committee.

Leader of party trade-union work

As capitalism began its long downward spiral in the 1970s, a spiral still unfolding today, a series of significant labor battles broke out. The SWP responded by organizing its members and leaders to get union jobs in basic industry — rail, coal, auto, steel and others.

Lyons worked on the production line in meatpacking plants and in garment factories. She was elected the national organizer of party members’ trade-union work in those industries for periods in the 1980s and ’90s.

This was also when women were breaking into industrial production jobs previously off-limits. Many became among the most conscious unionists, knowing that without using their unions and fighting alongside male co-workers, they wouldn’t stand a chance against boss attempts to divide the workforce and turn other workers against them.

“The bosses do not accept the fact that women are here to stay in industrial



Militant photos: Above, Al Duncan; inset, Frank Forrester
Above, Wendy Lyons, left, joins picket line of UNITE strikers at Hollander Home Fashions in Los Angeles, March 2001. Inset, Lyons being interviewed by Chinese-language TV, December 2004, during her campaign as Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Los Angeles.



jobs,” Lyons said in a report she gave to a meeting of women comrades working in industry at the party’s convention in 1979. “They want to maintain our status as second-class citizens, as part of the reserve army of the unemployed that can be shunted in and out of the workforce. This is the root of sexist harassment on the job.”

Women’s oppression is based on the ascendancy of private property — today enforced by the capitalist rulers.

Her remarks remain a model of how to address the challenges facing women from discrimination and prejudices on the job. This working-class approach is the opposite of the individual shaming of men and the score-settling that is the course of today’s #MeToo movement.

Joe Swanson, a party member in Nebraska, was a railroad switchman when he met the party in the late 1970s. In a letter he described meeting Lyons.

“Wendy was especially interested when I shared a recent experience of my rail union local taking a stand in support of women recently hired and being treated as equals on the job,” Swanson said. “I explained that the local voted that if a woman, a union sister, could not throw a switch, then you as a man, a union brother, cannot either, and the switch crew better call out the track workers to fix the switch.”

Lyons won many to back the party

“She deeply cared about the plight of the working people. That was her life,” Mike Isley wrote, saying he met Lyons when she visited him and other copper miners on strike in Arizona in 2005. She stayed in touch with him after he re-

tired to his ranch in Idaho, making sure he kept his *Militant* subscription up and garnering contributions for the party.

The Communist Leagues in Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Australia, sister organizations of the SWP, also sent messages.

Lyons battled with cancer off and on for nearly two decades. It slowed her down, but never stopped her. Jim Herrera, a leader of the party in Los Angeles, explained how Lyons insisted on continuing to work and do politics on the job, putting in a couple hours a day at Home Depot.

“Many, many times she would find a way to go campaigning door to door for the party in working-class communities,” he said. “She followed politics closely and loved to discuss what was happening with workers. And Wendy was a good listener too.”

Herrera and a number of others recounted working with Lyons to prepare party educational programs. She studied with discipline and a contagious excitement throughout her life.

“Wendy was one of the most cool-headed, solid proletarian fighters I had the pleasure to work with,” Becca Williamson from Seattle wrote. “If the branch was getting twisted up trying to figure out what to do about something, she would join the discussion with a clear political intervention that would cut through to what would help advance the working-class struggle, and make it clear what should be done.”

People stayed for a wonderful selection of food and refreshments, and to study a display capturing events during Lyons’ life. They responded to an appeal for funds to help advance the work of her party, donating \$7,100.

“It’s fascinating,” Shanique Irby, one of Lyons’ granddaughters, said while looking at the display panels on her life. “I knew she spent her life doing this but not all these things. It inspires me to do a lot more with my life.”

Rachel Bruhnke remembered meeting the Socialist Workers Party when Lyons came knocking on her door in San Pedro. “She put the *Militant* in my hand and I said, ‘Are you kidding? This is great,’” Bruhnke said. “I learned today about how much she was involved in the leadership. I wouldn’t have guessed that about this unpretentious woman who sat in my living room and discussed politics with me.”



Militant/Carole Lesnick
Pedro Albarran, inset, UFCW union Local 770 shop steward, welcomes participants to the union hall for July 15 meeting honoring political life of Wendy Lyons, above. Lyons had been his co-worker when she worked at Farmer John’s meatpacking plant.

1979 Nicaraguan Revolution posed road for workers power

Below is an excerpt from a speech by Tomás Borge, one of the leaders of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), before a crowd of half a million people in Managua July 19, 1981, celebrating the second anniversary of the Nicaraguan Revolution. It appears in *Sandinistas Speak*, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for July. At the time the FSLN stood at the head of a workers and farmers government established after their revolutionary triumph in 1979. Copyright © 1982 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY TOMÁS BORGE

[W]hen we talk about the FSLN, we are not talking about something that is just a political party. We're not talking simply about an armed organization. We are talking about a historic response. We are talking about the indivisible reality of the FSLN and the Nicaraguan people.

As long as this people is militant and proud, as long as this people is made up of heroic workers, as long as the workers and peasants and all revolutionaries are ready to defend the national sovereignty arms in hand, as long as there are Nicaraguans who love the land where they were born, as long as this people exists, the FSLN will continue to exist.

For this reason, all the efforts of those who were born in Nicaragua but now



Militant/Fred Murphy

Establishment of workers and farmers government in 1979 gave impulse to struggles by the toilers. Above, 30,000 peasants and agricultural workers led by Association of Rural Workers rallied in Managua in February 1980, for radical land reform and improved conditions.

want to go back to the past, of the bootlickers of the Yankees, will fail. They will never be able to separate the people from their vanguard.

For the same reason, when the masses express their desires — and also their dissatisfactions — the FSLN, which is their highest form of organization, makes these desires and dissatisfactions its own, makes them part of its revolutionary action. ...

And when we talk about the masses, we are not talking about some vague accumulation of individuals, but rather of a consciously organized population. It is impossible to build up your revolutionary power without both the quantitative and qualitative development of the popular organizations. Unless the working class generates and carries through these changes, the revolution will stagnate and rot. In other words, it will stop being a revolution.

The masses themselves must always — now and in the future — speak up in a loud, clear voice on their own behalf. They must develop ways of participating and taking initiatives. The FSLN knows that the Nicaraguan people fortunately are not the mindless herd that the enemies of the revolution have tried to portray them as.

The sons and daughters of this country are not robots, not mannequins. This is a population every day more conscious, more audacious, and more creative. With this heroic population, we

will make it to our goal, we will go all the way. With this heroic population that understands the world around it more clearly every day, it will be easier to come up with the right answers to the questions the revolution poses.

If the leaders of this revolution want to resolve the enormous and complicated economic problems that Daniel [Ortega] talked about, the problems of defense, of health, of education, then we will have to turn to the masses, to make ourselves one with the masses. There are no mathematical formulas or brilliant theories we can use to solve the problems that present themselves as the revolution unfolds. There is only one answer, only one response — the impressive power of the masses, free from bureaucratic shackles, devoting themselves to the daily tasks of rebuilding the country.

And the whole world, both our friends and our enemies, knows what this heroic people is capable of. Sandino was the one who showed the way in defending our national honor. And who were Sandino's followers? The same people who made this revolution, who are now making concessions to the classes that were finally thrown out of power in Nicaragua, after ruling for centuries.

And these are real concessions besides. For example, the businessmen have been given incentives to produce, and it was correct for this to be done. They were given all kinds of help and

access to financial credit, and they will continue to get help in order to produce. But everybody should know that as of July 19, the day of our victory, their access to political credit is closed off. That road is closed to them, because power is now in the hands of all the descendants of Sandino's ragtag army, of the barefoot soldiers, of the revolutionaries, of those who hunger and thirst for a justice that has been denied them since the beginning of our history.

And we are going to defend this power with the slingshot of David, except that in this slingshot we have, not a pebble, but rifle and cannon rounds. ...

It is not strange that we are internationalists, because this is something we got from Sandino. All the revolutionaries and all the peoples of Latin America especially know that our people's heart is with them, beats alongside theirs. Our heart goes out to Latin America, and we also know that Latin America's heart goes out to the Nicaraguan revolution. This does not mean that we export our revolution. It is enough — and we couldn't do otherwise — for us to export our example, the example of the courage, sensitivity, and determination of our people. ...

Carrying forward the revolutionary process is harder, much harder, than the war itself. Because it involves a war against the misery of the exploited classes, a war against the misery that the exploiting classes have converted into a fact of life.

So we see that while we're in the process of dealing with one problem, ten new ones come up. Sometimes we lose battles and sometimes we win battles in rebuilding the country. But of course what is important is the direction we are moving in, the meaning of what we are doing, and the things we accomplish. Our errors can be corrected, but what is lasting are the revolutionary transformations.

We are creating a new society in which an individual is not a piece of merchandise, a society in which there are no wolves and lambs, where men do not live off the exploitation of other men. We are struggling to create a society in which the workers are the fundamental power driving things forward, but in which other social sectors also play a role, always insofar as they identify with the interests of the country, with the interests of the great majority.

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SWP 2018 campaign statement

Continued from front page

“world order” apart today and this opens political space for our struggles.

The ruling capitalist families use Washington’s economic and military power to protect their interests against their capitalist rivals and against struggles by working people fighting for a better life. These assaults abroad are an extension of their attacks on working people at home.

In face of the capitalist-imposed social disaster devastating the lives of working people in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico, the party calls for cancellation of the island’s debt. Independence for Puerto Rico! And we stand with fellow workers there and across the globe confronting the incapacity of the capitalist class to provide the most basic necessities of life — electrification, medical care, literacy to millions.

The SWP stands with fellow working people confronting the ruinous consequences of Washington’s wars, demanding the U.S. rulers get their warships, troops and bombs out of Korea, the Mideast and Afghanistan. Washington should end its sanctions on Korea and Iran and dismantle its entire arsenal of nuclear weapons unilaterally. The party’s candidates distribute the SWP’s statement “For Recognition of a Palestinian State and of Israel” that defends “the right of Jews everywhere to take refuge in Israel in face of the global rise of Jew-hatred” and “the unconditional right of the dispossessed Palestinian people to a contiguous, sovereign homeland on territory ... conquered and occupied by the Israeli gov-

ernment during the 1967 war.”

The heart of our campaign is knocking on workers’ doors in cities and farming communities to discuss capitalism’s crisis and the burning need for independent working-class political action.

Each of the SWP’s candidates is a participant in labor struggles and social protests. We join union picket lines, protests against attacks on abortion rights, actions to prevent farmers from being driven off the land and marches against cop killings. We fight to build the labor movement as the powerful force for working-class solidarity it can be, by championing the struggles of *all* workers. And we explain why workers should control safety conditions and fight for workers control over job conditions.

SWP candidates are at the forefront of advancing unity among working people in face of the bosses’ relentless efforts to deepen divisions among us. In their drive to attack workers’ wages and lengthen the workday, the bosses pit native-born against foreign-born workers. We campaign for the unions to champion the demand for an amnesty for all immigrants in the U.S., putting them in a better position to fight alongside workers born here.

In the course of revolutionary struggle workers in the U.S. *are* capable of developing the courage, self-confidence and class consciousness necessary to do what fellow working people did in Cuba in 1959 — overturning capitalist rule and bringing workers and farmers to power.

If the fight for this kind of future sounds good to you, the SWP is *your* party! Join our campaign!

‘World order’ unravels

Continued from page 4

opposition to what they face and to those they hold responsible, most recently electing a coalition of anti-EU parties in Italy. President Trump’s liberal opponents have utilized these disputes and conflicts with NATO “allies” to paint him as a “traitor” and the destroyer of a “rules-based international order.” Writing in the *New York Times* Steven Erlanger and Jane Perlez say Washington’s “traditional allies” are “buttressing a global system that President Trump seems prepared to tear down.”

He does, believing direct talks between the U.S. rulers and other powers, whether in the declining capitalist nations in Europe or elsewhere, are far more effective today than being encased in blocs from the past.

As Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes describes in the article “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun” in *New International* no. 12, those who defend “transnational” institutions “ascribe *power* to the capitalist world order that it does not have — embellish it with fetishes that make it appear more and more impregnable.”

“Every tendency toward the dissolution of state boundaries of the great imperialist powers in our epoch has been, and remains, an illusion,” he explains. “Each seeming success in stemming a crisis postpones and increases the magnitude next time around, sharpening the contradictions.”

The post-World War II “world order” is coming apart. Workers today are looking for ways to confront the effects of the capitalist rulers crisis. Through these battles they’ll find a road to tear that capitalist “world order” down once and for all.

Protests across south Iraq hit gov’t neglect, Iran intrusion

Continued from front page

daw news agency at the protest in Baghdad July 20. “It has been seven months since they cut my salary,” he said. “Is this how they reward those who defend the country?”

The protests began in the midst of negotiations to form a new government in Baghdad following the May elections. Disillusioned with the capitalist parties, voter turnout was the lowest in years, just 44.5 percent.

Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr — who once led a militia that fought U.S. troops following the second Iraq war in 2003 — led a coalition that included the Stalinist Communist Party, Sunni organizations and others. It came in first place with 54 seats in the 329 seat parliament.

Al-Sadr says he opposes both the presence of U.S. troops in the country as well as interference from Tehran. His coalition’s campaign centered on promises to fight corruption.

The Tehran-allied Shiite alliance Fatah came in second with 47 seats, and the bloc led by current Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi came in third with 42, but no party won anywhere near enough seats to govern alone.

Tehran’s counterrevolutionary meddling

The arrival of foreign “mediators” — in reality representatives of the counterrevolutionary politics of Tehran — including Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps leader Qasem Soleimani from Iran as well as Hezbollah representatives from Lebanon to help put together a new ruling coalition is widely resented.

The Iranian rulers seek to dominate Iraq, its longtime rival, and consolidate a land route to Lebanon to aid its ally Hezbollah. Tehran has used the Shiite militias it controls in Iraq to recruit Iraqis to fight alongside its forces in Syria where it has also entrenched its military.

Many protests focused anger on offices of Shiite militias and parties with close ties to Iran. Protesters in Najaf July 13 called the Tehran-backed militias and parties “Safavids,” a reference to the dynasty that ruled the Persian Empire starting in the 1500s and imposed Shiite Islam as the state religion.

The protests began July 8 in Basra, in the heart of the predominantly Shiite southern provinces and Iraq’s main oil fields, and rapidly spread to eight



Reuters/Essam al-Sudani

July 19 protest in Basra, one of many across southern Iraq.

other provinces and to Baghdad, Iraq’s capital. Demonstrators blocked roads, protested outside oil facilities and stormed government and Tehran-backed militia offices.

Iraq’s electric grid at best provides 13,000 megawatts of power per hour, far short of demand that can reach 21,000 megawatts. The power outages worsened after the Iranian government, facing the possibility of stepped-up U.S. sanctions and a dispute over Iraqi payments, stopped selling 1,200 megawatts to Iraq.

After two weeks of protests, the Kuwaiti government began sending daily shipments of fuel for Iraqi generating stations and the Saudi government also pledged support, seeing the crisis as an opportunity to counter Tehran’s influence in Baghdad.

‘Fed up’ with Iraqi, Iranian rulers

“We are fed up with this situation,” Um Faten, whose son was shot at one of the protests, told CNN in the city of Amara in mid-July. “Our sons had no other solution but to go out and protest. I want my children to live a normal life.”

In the city of Nasriyya in Dhi Qar province thousands marched, singing, “Iran, Iran, we don’t want you anymore, Dhi Qar will not shut up anymore.”

In a failed attempt to stop the protests, the government suspended flights to and from the city of Najaf. Specialized police and counterterrorism units were sent to intimidate protesters. As of July 21 at least four persons had been killed, many wounded and hundreds arrested.

Prime Minister Abadi, al-Sadr and other bourgeois leaders offered to meet with the protest organizers, but were refused. At some of the July 20 protests, people chanted, “The people want the downfall of political parties.”

Abadi promised that he would increase funds for electricity and water projects in Basra, where tap water is often brown because of dirt, and immediately create 10,000 jobs.

“The promises they make are all lies,” Khaled Hassan, 42, a health care worker in Basra, told Reuters July 20.

Protests continue in Iran

Meanwhile, protests continue in Iran. At the end of June three days of protests rocked Tehran, including its Grand Bazaar, as well as other towns and cities around the country, including Bandar Abbas, Tabriz, Mashhad and Isfahan.

In early July protests erupted in Abadan and Khorramshahr over the shortage of drinking water. Police arrested hundreds of participants.

Khorramshahr is in the mostly Arab province of Khuzestan, just across the border from Basra. In October 1980, during the Iran-Iraq war, the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq succeeded in capturing the city after bloody fighting. The Iranian army retook the city in May 1982, suffering heavy casualties.

The Iranian rial has fallen drastically against the U.S. dollar in recent months sparking renewed inflation, making life more difficult for working people.

Like the protests that swept Iran at the end of last year, the demonstrations were marked by opposition to Tehran’s counterrevolutionary intervention in the war in Syria and its financing and backing of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Along with slogans of “Death to high prices,” some protesters chanted, “Let go of Syria, think about us,” “Our enemy is right here, but they falsely claim [our enemy] is the U.S.” “No to Gaza, no to Lebanon,” “Death to Palestine” and “We don’t want the ayatollahs.”

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