Capitalist crisis breeds smoldering depression

By Brian Williams

Declining industrial production and slowing trade on a world scale are creating depression conditions that wreak havoc on the lives of workers and farmers. The capitalist rulers’ schemes to try to reverse this — the latest is negative interest rates — only exacerbate the crisis, which is rooted in the basic workings of capitalism.

The European Central Bank and several central banks in Europe have held key interest rates below zero for more than a year now. The Bank of Japan joined them Jan. 29. Essentially, this means commercial banks pay a fee to park funds in the central bank, which supposedly encourage productive investment.

But the reason the bosses don’t invest in expanding productive capacity and hire workers is because it’s not profitable to do so. Average industrial profit rates have been declining for decades. That’s why years of “stimulus measures” and “quantitative easing” haven’t produced a stable economic expansion.

Instead, the big capitalists hoard cash or speculate on stocks, bonds, derivatives and other paper values where the rate of return is much higher.

Woodfox is finally free after decades in solitary

Use victory to fight against prison barbarism!

The following statement was issued Feb. 23 by Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president.

Socialist Workers Party campaign statement

The Socialist Workers Party celebrates the release of Albert Woodfox, one of the Angola 3, after more than 40 years in solitary confinement, and calls on workers to use this victory to continue the struggle.

Cuba says, ‘Return Guantánamo!’ as Obama plays politics on prison

By Emma Johnson

When President Barack Obama visited Cuba March 21-22, the Cuban government will raise two “key outstanding matters,” Josefina Vidal, head of the North America Bureau of Cuba’s Foreign Ministry, told the press Feb. 18. “Lifting the embargo and the return to Cuba of the territory illegally occupied by the Naval Base at Guantánamo”.

At a Feb. 23 news conference President Barack Obama, in the name of offering “a plan” to close the notorious U.S. prison at Guantánamo Bay, in fact made clear he has no intention of shuttering it.

“I’ve been working for seven years now to get this thing closed,” the president complained. He blamed the Republican majority in Congress for blocking him from carrying out his 2008 campaign pledge to close the prison during his very first year in the White House.

“If we don’t do what’s required now,” Obama said, “I think future generations are going to look back and ask why we failed to act.”

The president neglected to mention that during his first two years in office the Democratic Party had wide majorities both in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Since January 2002, 780 alleged “enemy combatants” have been sent to Guantánamo, captured or kidnapped by U.S. allies, often in exchange for a U.S. bounty.

Obama’s “plan” would still keep at least 56 of the 91 remaining prisoners at Guantánamo languishing in U.S. bounty.

Join March 2 rally in DC to defend abortion access

Calif. cop who killed Andrew Thomas charged after protests

Washington, Beijing jockeying heats up in S. China Sea

–On the picket line, p. 5–

Steelworkers at Quebec cement plant strike to defend pensions

U.S. Steel contract freezes wages, ups health costs
Australia: Actions condemn ‘offshore’ refugee detention

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY — Thousands of people have joined a series of protests against the country in the wake of a Feb. 3 High Court ruling upholding Canberra’s indefinite “offshore” detention of refugees. The judgment cleared the way for 267 asylum-seekers who were in Australia for medical treatment to be returned to the Pacific island of Nauru.

Since 2012 the Australian government has detained refugees arriving here by boat at “processing” camps on Nauru or on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea. If they are granted asylum, they are forced to stay in those countries or resettled in Cambodia.

The refugees currently facing deportation, most of whom are from the Middle East and South Asia, include more than 90 infants and other children, several of whom were born in Australia.

“The High Court decision settled nothing,” Ian Rintoul, an organizer for the Refugee Action Coalition, told some protesters who rallied here Feb. 8 about dangerous conditions at the detention centers, including some reports of physical and sexual abuse. Refugees in Nauru have reported conditions can be even worse outside the camps. Following the High Court ruling, Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull declared he would proceed with the deportations in the name of discouraging “people-smugglers.”

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — “Take a stand, save the land!” chanted 80 protesters outside an Auckland City Council hearing on a proposed housing development on Maori ancestral land at Ihumatao near Auckland Airport. The Feb. 3 rally was part of a campaign by Save Our Unique Landscape, a group initiated by Maori at Ihumatao, to incorporate the land into an adjacent historic public reserve instead of permitting Fletcher Residential to construct 480 houses on it. The area was polluted by sewage ponds until recently. The Maori village was among the last in the city to receive sewage, electricity and other government services. The cleanup of the sewage plant has now put the land in the sights of capitalist developers.

Protesters picketed the New South Wales Labor opposition’s state conference Feb. 13 protesting federal Labor’s support to the government’s course. The Manu and Nauru centers were set up by the former Labor government.

Teachers, students and others have rallied outside a school in Victoria where some refugees are studying. Staff and others kept up a vigil against the deportations at a Brisbane hospital where a baby born in Australia, known as Asha, is being treated. On Feb. 21, in an effort to defuse the protests, Immigration Minister Peter Dutton announced that Asha and her family would be released into temporary “community detention.”

New Zealand: Protect Maori land from developer!

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The fight to free Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López!

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Signatures by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant’s views. These are expressed in editorials.
When the news about Woodfox’s release broke, “although I was looking forward to proving my innocence at a new trial, concerns about my health and my age have caused me to resolve this case now and obtain my release with the least public cost to me,” he said in a statement.

The three men always maintained their innocence and pointed to the political nature of their frame-ups. “They pinned it on us, because we were militants, we were fighters, we were members of the Black Panther Party,” King said in an interview.

Peace and Justice in Paradise. “But we are not going to rest because we don’t want this to be swept under the rug.” Feaster shot Thomas, 26, in the neck as he emerged from a car wreck Nov. 25, almost completely severing his spine. Thomas died three weeks later. Feaster was charged with involuntary manslaughter while armed with a firearm and released on his own recognizance. Ramsey said the shooting was preventable.

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allies stepped up murderous assaults against opposition forces in Aleppo and Homs in the north, in Daraa in the south and in Kansabba in Assad’s home Latakia province. Russian military spokesman said they bombed 1,500 “terrorist” targets that week.

Russian jets hit hospitals in Idlib province operated by Doctors Without Borders, killing more than two dozen patients and medical personnel. Represen- tatives of the group and opposition spokespeople say hospitals, schools and bakeries have all become targets, with the Kremlin dismissing the criticism.

Speaking for the Assad regime, Bashar al-Hasawi said Doctors Without Borders was a branch of French intelli- gence to justify the attacks for the bombers because “they did not consult with the Syrian government.”

Washington will let this all pass if the result is a stronger government with control over more of the country.

The latest “cessation,” announced by Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, is set to go into effect Feb. 24, and Moscow would push for a new round of talks, but continue to attack “terrorists.” The opposition forces’ High Negotiations Council said Feb. 22 it accepted the deal. Washington pivoted its Mideast pol- icy to a bloc with Moscow and Tehran — turning away from traditional allies in Ankara, Riyadh and Tel Aviv — as the “old world order” in the region, put together by the imperialist victors in World Wars I and II, came apart.

Looking for ways to reassert their interests, the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Turkey have pushed for opening ground operations in Syria against the Assad re- gime. But they recognize they have little power without the backing of Washington. Bombs and shelling against IS targets began military exercises this week with Arab Gulf state allies, Egypt, Su- dan, Morocco, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan and Malaysia.

The price paid by the Syrian people for decades of brutality by the Assad regime and the recent maneuvers of imper- ialist Moscow and neonazis has been enormous. Nearly half a million Syrians have been killed. More than half the population has been uprooted from their homes.

Kurds fight for a homeland

Syrian Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) have taken advantage of Russian air support to drive IS and al-Qaeda and other Islamist forces in northern Syria, advancing the Kurdish population. For the first time in history, the YPG are defending new countries under their domi- nation, consciously denied a homeland to the oppressed Kurdish people, who number some 30 million in Iraq, Syria and Turkey.

The Erdogan government has been waging an assault on the Kurds, in the hope of tightening its grip on Turkish Kurdish nationalism. The PKK-launched an armed struggle against the government in 1984. Its Stalinist-trained leadership carried out bombings and other attacks targeting ci- vilians, causing unnecessary casual- ties, weakening support for the group and giving a series of Turkish regimes the pretext to attack the broader Kur- dish population. Tens of thousands were killed over three decades. A 2013 PKK-initiated cease-fire ended in July. Ankara has since launched a “counterterrorist war on terror” in the country’s Kurdish southeast. Turkish forces have put cities under siege, killed hundreds, including many civilians, and displaced several thousand hundred.

Islamic State

As “Arab Spring” popular mobili- zations brought down Mubarak in Egypt to Tunisia in 2011 and opened the civil war in Syria, there was no revolutionary working-class leader- ship to chart a course to power. The ex- haustion of any capacity for leadership by Stalinist currents such as government backing for the group, has had room to seize large areas in Iraq and Syria.

Islamic State has been unable to wipe out all resistance in territory they con- trol. Opponents of Assad whose terri- tory has been occupied by Islamic State leadership by Stalinist currents such as the Syrian Communist Party, have left a vacuum of leadership. In this context, IS, a reactionary current that aims to establish a caliphate ruled by Sharia law, has had room to seize large areas in Iraq and Syria. In both states, U.S. forces that succeeded in pushing IS back, including retaking Ko- bani, Syria, in a bloody battle last year.

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Help the Militant cover labor struggles across the country!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including workers fighting for $15 and a union, locked-out AT&T Steelworkers; Verizon workers opposing concessions; construction workers demanding safe conditions. I invite those involved in workers’ battles to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-8499; or themilitant@macc.com. We’ll work together to ensure your story is told.

Maggie Trowe, Editor

Steelworkers at Quebec cement plant strike to defend pensions

ST. CONSTANT, Quebec — After twice voting down a contract gutting their pension plan, 68 members of United Steelworkers Local 6658 went on strike at the Lafarge cement plant here Feb. 6.

“They want to cut pensions by 25 percent and eliminate pensions after we turn 87,” shipping worker Julio Capilla told the Militant Feb. 18. “They want to penalize us for living longer.”

Lafarge produces construction materials in 61 countries.

The strike won a court injunction limiting the number of picketers and prohibiting them from blocking traffic.

Strikers told the Militant the plant is being run at about 60 percent capacity by management personnel. The union maintains 24-hour picket lines and is vigilant making sure Lafarge does not use strikebreakers.

— Beverly Bernardo

ON THE PICKET LINE

Militant/Beverly Bernardo

Minneapolis janitors, union and nonunion, hold protest strikes

MINNEAPOLIS — Janitors here held a one-day strike Feb 17, picketing office buildings across the metro area and at the airport. The strikers, members of SEIU Local 26, have been working without a contract since Dec. 31. The union is demanding an immediate $1 an hour increase for all workers.

United mechanics

Continued from front page

dent Rudy Gonzalez.

Workers say the main issue is the composition of the two-tier wage scale. The workers have not received a pay raise in four years, according to Teamsters business representative Mark Desangles, and the company is demanding deep increases in health costs.

Workers also want a defined pension. In January 2002 United bankrupted their pension was replaced with a $401(k) plan.

“Supporting the mechanics to win a good contract benefits all workers,” Patrick Hernández, a janitor and member of Service Employees International Union Local 87, told the Militant, “even though we’re in different plants.”

“Why 80 of us are here.” The rally also drew workers from the Amalgamated Transit Union, UNITE HERE Local 2, International Association of Machinists, flight attendants and others.

“There were a lot of IAM guys out there” said Robert Rubio, a forklift driver at the United maintenance base and member of the Machinists. “Our contract is also up. And a lot of IAM people are looking at the Teamster action as an example.”

Another important day of action will occur Feb. 26 at eight U.S. airports.

Eric Simpson contributed to the article.

U.S. Steel contract freezes wages, ups health costs

BY BETSY FARLEY

GARY, Ind. — Members of the United Steelworkers Local 10170 on Feb. 17 approved a three-year concession contract with U.S. Steel covering 18,000 workers. Although full details have not been released by the union and company officials have said the contract freezes wages at the current level and raises health care costs for active and retired workers.

Claiming losses of $1.5 billion in 2015, U.S. Steel, the largest steel producer in the United States, put thousands out of work, closing mills in Granite City, Illinois, and Fairfield, Alabama, and cut taxes on steel to maintain the three-tiered pension structure for new hires and increased health care costs.

Steelworkers at steel producer ArcelorMittal and iron ore miners at Cliffs Natural Resources face similar concessions demands and continue to work day to day under expired contracts.

The USW contract with U.S. Steel expired Sept. 1. Union officials organized several large protest rallies in Pittsburgh, Gary and Burns Harbor, Indiana; and on the Minnesota Iron Range. Thousands of Steelworkers and their supporters showed their determination to light the companies’ attacks on these and other steel actions. But no large protests have been organized recently.

Locked out for six months, Steelworkers at Allegheny Technologies Inc. maintain picket lines and continue to reject company demands for two-tier wages and benefits, mandatory 12-hour shifts, and steep cuts in medical benefits. There are some 2,200 ATI workers at 12 plants in six states.

Talking with workers at the Gary Works plant there Feb 15, some agreed with USW officials’ Feb. 3 statement that the contract “was by far the best agreement we could hope for in this environment.” Others explained why they voted against it.

“No raise for three years? This contract didn’t do anything for us,” said Michael Ames, a steel pooner. “They say we’ll get profit sharing, but that depends on what they report.”

The economic crisis means there are many more retired workers than active ones, and companies seek to cut costs at the expense of retired workers’ benefits.

“You can’t do that to people who worked for 30 years and broke their backs for these companies,” Ames said. “All this wasn’t built yesterday.”

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

March 8, 1991

Working people and defenders of women’s rights should oppose attempts by numerous state governments to push back and curtail a woman’s right to choose abortion.

Participants at the recent Young Feminist Conference registered the scope of this assault and pointed to the need to defend abortion rights through visible protests.

The tactic that more than 700 people, most of them young, attended the conference is one reflection of the potential shift to fight the attacks and push them back.

Gains made in limiting access to abortion not only constitute a setback for women, but the working class as a whole.

March 7, 1966

The purge launched by Indonesia’s reactionary generals in their efforts to crush the Indonesian Communist Party has virtually drenched the country in blood. Consider the report in the Jan. 29 London Economist.

“Estimates of the number of killings since October range from 875,000 — officially admitted by the president — to a gross of 350,000. Ghoulous rumours of log-jams of bodies in the rivers of Solo and Malan have reached Jakarta but there is no official confirmation or den-

Militant strike action has brought victory for the workers at the huge Lackawanna plant of Bethlehem Steel. It shows that the workers, through militant action, can defend their rights against the whole caboodle of bosses.

This victory, as well as the Allis-Chalmers strike, the International Harvester strike, and many other battles now going on in the war industries, show that the workers have not been overly impressed by the patriotic ballyhoo of the bosses. These strikes show that millions of workers have already grasped the fundamental idea that the government’s war preparations are no reason why the workers should forego their right to strike to improve their conditions.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

March 8, 1941

Militant/Beverly Bernardo

Militant/Beverly Bernardo

Militant/Beverly Bernardo

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— Maggie Trowe

United Steelworkers members picket Lafarge cement plant Feb. 18 in St. Constant, Quebec. They are striking against company proposal to cut pensions 25 percent and end them at age 87. “They want to penalize us for living longer,” said striker Julio Capilla.

Center of Workers United in Struggle held a one-day strike the next day, kicked off with an early morning rally and march in downtown Minneapo- lis that tied up rush hour traffic. Earlier in the week the group announced a $450,000 settlement for several hundred workers in a 2015 federal lawsuit against Capital Building Services Group for underpaying workers.

— Kevin Dworé

Militant/Beverly Bernardo

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO
BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN
AND OSBORNE HART

Havana — Amid heightened interest here in politics in the United States, one of the presentations at this year’s Havana International Book Fair featured the new Pathfinder Press book, published simultaneously in English and Spanish, 50 Years of Covert Operations in the US: Washington’s Political Police and the American Working Class.

Speaking at the Feb. 13 event were long-time Cuban revolutionary leader Ramón Sánchez-Parodi and Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder and a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. Sánchez-Parodi headed the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., for 12 years from its opening in 1977. He writes often in the Cuban press on U.S.-Cuban relations.

50 Years of Covert Operations in the US, by Larry Seigel, Farrell Dobbs and Steve Clark, traces the expansion of the U.S. rulers’ political police and the struggle against it. It focuses especially on the period from the 1930s labor battles and Washington’s operations to enter World War II through the Watergate crisis, which exploded in 1973, and the Socialist Workers Party’s successful lawsuit against the FBI and other political police agencies.

Sánchez-Parodi said 50 Years of Covert Operations in the US contains “many lessons, many explanations of the political situation in the United States.”

He emphasized the significance of the 1973 SWP lawsuit against FBI spying and harassment. “The Socialist Workers Party wasn’t defending itself against government charges,” which is more often the situation confronted by the workers’ movement. In this case, a communist workers organization “was accusing the government — accusing it of violating the U.S. Constitution.”

“Even more interesting,” Sánchez-Parodi added, is the fact that, “after more than 12 years, the [federal court] judge ruled in favor of the Socialist Workers Party.”

Fight for political space

Sánchez-Parodi said “this is a good lesson of what can be done — of the battle that must be waged to win space and protect yourself against political repression by the dominant sectors in the United States.”

In 1987, he noted, the federal court with jurisdiction over the case issued an injunction that “prohibited any use of documents and other information obtained surreptitiously and unconstitutionally by the FBI and other U.S. police agencies. It declared unconstitutional [the use of agents] infiltrating the party, spying on it, and burglarizing its headquarters and the homes of its members.”

Judge Thomas Griesa “also ordered the government to pay financial compensation for damages caused and costs incurred, setting a precedent that has been followed in many other cases.”

Sánchez-Parodi said that despite Washington’s claims to be a champion of liberty and equality, the U.S. rulers have always sought to protect their class interests by attacking the rights of working people.

50 Years of Covert Operations in the US describes how, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Franklin Roosevelt administration “took steps to suppress the growing influence of the workers’ movement and unions,” he said. “As inter-imperialist contradictions sharpened and [the second world] war was imminent, the Roosevelt administration only sought to crack down on any movement of social protest by workers.”

The Cuban leader highlighted the federal government’s first use of the infamous 1940 Smith “fascist” Act to frame up and imprison leaders of the Teamsters union and the Socialist Workers Party. Washington’s goal was to silence the labor vanguard in the workers’ movement that opposed the goals of U.S.-imperialism in World War II.

During the postwar witch-hunt, Sánchez-Parodi added, the Smith Act was also used to frame up leaders of the U.S. Communist Party from 1949. As the U.S. government waged an anti-labor offensive at home, it used its military to defend imperialist interests around the world, from backing Fulgencio Batista’s 1952 military coup in Cuba to its wars against the Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese revolutions.

He noted that for several weeks in 1952 Washington did not recognize the Batista regime, until it publicly announced it had broken its ties with the pro-Moscow Popular Socialist Party and with the Soviet government.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the subsequent U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Washington has used the Patriot Act and other measures to vastly expand the use of its political police.

US gov’t target: labor movement

Waters noted that 50 Years of Covert Operations in the US was one of three books Pathfinder was presenting at the Havana book fair. Each of them about the class struggle in the United States. The other two were the Spanish translation of Teamster Politics by Farrell Dobbs and a new title in both English and Spanish, The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class. (The full text of Waters’ remarks is printed on the facing page.)

Discussing 50 Years, Waters said the book explains in the late 1940s in Washington targeted the Minneapolis Teamsters union and the Socialist Workers Party because they were helping lead “the expanding strength and rising political consciousness of a component of the industrial union movement centered in the upper Midwest.” Within a few years the union had organized a quarter million truck drivers and warehouse workers across an 11-state region. The ruling class was alarmed about this development and the success of the working-class vanguard in organizing political opposition with-in the labor movement to Washington’s imperialist war aims.

Like Sánchez-Parodi, Waters underscored why the questions taken up in this book are important for today.

“The U.S. national security apparatus generated a massive state repression over the 15 years since 9/11” and its intrusion into every aspect of our lives “is hated by the working class,” said Waters. “And there’s nothing reactionary about that.”

In fact, she noted, that is “one of the elements driving support for the presidential candidacy of Donald Trump.” He plays on “the anxiety and fear generated by the smoldering depression conditions U.S. workers have known for almost a decade,” the insecurity generated by the unraveling of the imperialist world order, and the policies of the Obama administration that serve the interests of the giant insurance companies and other capitalist financial institutions.

Waters concluded that communist workers in the United States and other countries welcome the opportunity — “in the streets, in the factories, and on the picket lines” — to join in the growing debate and search for answers. Workers in face of this capitalist crisis.

Sánchez-Parodi agreed, saying, “The struggle continues. And this book offers many ideas and experiences that need to be studied, discussed and applied in today’s context.”

For further reading ...

50 Years of Covert Operations in the US: Washington’s Political Police and the American Working Class by Larry Seigel, Steve Clark, Farrell Dobbs
Includes “Imperialist War and the Working Class” by Farrell Dobbs $12

Teamster Politics by Farrell Dobbs
Dobbs, a central leader of the labor battles and debates recorded here, tells how in the 1930s the leadership of Teamsters Local 544 in Minneapolis fought to lead workers across the Midwest onto an independent working-class political course. $19

A Packinghouse Worker’s Fight for Justice: The Mark Curtis Story by Naomi Craine
The story of the victorious eight-year battle to defeat the political frame-up of Mark Curtis, a union activist and socialist sentenced in 1988 to 25 years in prison on trumped-up charges of attempted rape and burglary. $8

FBI on Trial: The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit Against Government Spying
Edited by Margaret Jayko $20

www.pathfinderpress.com

Feb. 13 presentation at Havana International Book Fair. From left, Roger Calero, who chaired; Ramón Sánchez Parodi, head of Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., from 1977 to 1989; and Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and member of Socialist Workers Party National Committee.

Militant/Miguel Pendas
The following talk was presented Feb. 13 at the Havana International Book Fair. Copyright © 2016 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission. Sub-headings are by the Militant.

**BY MARY-ALICE WATERS**

Thank you, Roger [Calero]. And a special thank-you to compañero [Ramón] Sánchez-Parodi for joining us today to present 50 Years of Covert Operations in the US: Washington’s Political Police and the American Working Class. It is an honor to hear from a comrade with his depth of experience on the front lines of battle against Washington. As we are all aware, it’s a battle that has taken on new and even more challenging forms in the last year. The objectives of the imperialist power to the north remain unchanged, while the historical stakes are as great as ever.

Speaking for myself I can say that I have more than once benefited from Ramón’s thoughtful insights into class politics in the US and adjusted my thinking as a result.

**Books on US class struggle**

Pathfinder Press is presenting three new titles at the Havana book fair this year, each of them about the class struggle in the US.

Later this afternoon, together with compañeros from the World Federation of Trade Unions and the CTC [Cuba’s trade union federation], we will be talking about **Política Teamster** [Teamster Politics] by Farrell Dobbs, drawing lessons for today from the most advanced, interconnected battles of the US working class organized and fought during the decade of the Great Depression.

Next Thursday we will be presenting a very special book, **The Cuban Five: Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class**. The cover — with a painting by Antonio Guerrero — features the words of Ramón Labalbi-no, **It’s the poor who face the savagery of the US “justice” system**.

In this book-length interview, given to Pathfinder last August, the Five Heroes of the Republic [Ramón’s terms] tell of their experiences during the sixteen years they were part of the seven million working people in the US who are either throughout bars or living under some form of police-supervised release such as René [González] faced even after serving every single minute of his fifteen-year prison sentence. Their account is a powerful indictment of the capitalist system and the ways in which it destroys human beings, as Ramón so correctly emphasizes.

**50 Years of Covert Operations in the US**

The third book in this trilogy, focuses on the class struggle in the US from a different angle. It traces the expansion of Washington’s political police starting in the years following the first imperialist World War and the victory of the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, when the rulers targeted the newly formed communist movement as well as the anarcho-syndicalists. The book concentrates, however, on the years between the mid-1930s, when the FBI was created by the Democratic Party administration of President Franklin Roosevelt, and the 1970s, when the “Watergate” crisis exploded, leading to the 1974 resignation of President Richard Nixon.

In the closing years of the 1930s, one of the great concerns of the US capitalist class was the expanding strength and rising political consciousness of a component of the industrial union movement, centered in the upper Midwest, and led by the truck drivers union in Minneapolis, known as the Teamsters. “The biggest problem for the rulers was the effectiveness with which they were expanding unionization of drivers and warehouse workers throughout an enormous industrial region of the country, setting an example and helping other fighting unions.

On that solid foundation of struggles, they were organizing political opposition within the labor movement to the imperialist war aims of Washington.

The Militant March 7, 2016 7

**Government’s expanding ‘security state’ is hated by workers**

In filing 1973 lawsuit against FBI, Socialist Workers Party “was accusing the government of violating the U.S. Constitution,” said Ramón Sánchez-Parodi. Victory in case is “a good lesson of the battle that must be waged to win space and protect yourself against political repression.” Inset, FBI document released during court fight. Above, speakers at June 1981 New York rally of 700 to back suit. From left, SWP attorney Margaret Winter; Leon Sobel; co-defendant of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg during witch hunt; literary critic Annette Rubinstein.
Continued from page 7

trated wiretapping, burglaries, and other illegal measures against its domestic ri-

The roots of the Watergate crisis lay elsewhere, however.

Above all, the conflict revealed the deep divisions in the US ruling class in face of an imperialist world.

and manipulations of the political “es-

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and camouflaged size of the scourge

The ancient mandarin curse, “May

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Step up fight to end barbaric solitary!

Continued from front page
tory to redouble our efforts to win freedom for Os-
car López Rivera, Piriápolis; Mumia Abu-Jamal; Mondo ve Langa and Ed Pintoexter, known as the Omaha 2; Oregon cattle ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond; and others thrown behind bars by the imperialist forces of capitalism. While Woodfox was in prison Feb. 19 unbreakable, vowing to step up his efforts “to ending this barbarous use of solitary confinement.” This is a victory for the working class.

Socialist Workers Party candidates across the U.S. will join in stepping up the fight against cop brutality, frame-ups and solitary confinement, to tell the truth about prison conditions and to win solidarity from all our brothers and sisters behind bars. While Woodfox may have spent more time in solitary confinement than any other prisoner in the U.S., his case is not unique. There are an estimated 80,000 federal and state prisoners in solitary. And this doesn’t include those in local jails and immi-

Despite the efforts of the imperialist forces of capitalism, Cuba’s workers and farmers to end the dictatorship of the capitalist “justice” system, and to emulate the example of the American workers and farmers to end the dictatorship of capital right here in the United States.

Capitalist depression

Continued from front page
er — blowing up bubbles like the one in the U.S. housing market whose collapse helped trigger the 2008 recession.

The Federal Reserve isn’t planning to try nega-
tive interest rates, Fed chair Janet Yellen told Con-
gress Feb. 11, but it might look at future. For seven years the Fed has kept interest rates near zero, until it raised them slightly in De-
cember.

Industrial production continues to contract worldwide. In January factory output dropped for the fourth consecutive month in the U.S. and for the sixth month in China. Durable goods produc-
tion in the U.S. fell 1.5 percent for the second month in a row. In China exports, upon which the economy is based, declined 11.2 percent over the past year.

“Three-Third of Oil Companies Could Go Bank-
rupt this Year,” headlined a Feb. 16 article in Fortune magazine, reporting on prospects facing some 500 oil and natural gas exploration and production companies worldwide. With overproduction and the nearly three-quarters drop in oil prices since mid-2014, oil and mining companies have cut hundreds of thousands of jobs worldwide. A total of 75,000 layoffs were announced in the U.S. in January, the most since 2009. Layoffs in 2015 rose 41 percent over the previous year.

Daimler, which manufactures Freightliner trucks, an-
nounced Feb. 15 the layoff of 1,200 workers at its North Carolina plants. Procter & Gamble, the world’s largest consumer goods maker, announced plans to eliminate 5,700 jobs over the next four years. Walmart, the world’s largest retailer, which recently closed 269 stores worldwide, announced its first sales decline in 35 years.

With declining agricultural commodity prices,
many U.S. farmers are unable to meet their costs of production. Costs for producing corn are around $5 a bushel, but the price farmers get on the market is only about $3.65.

Declining world trade

The economic crisis is also reflected in a grow-
ing decline in global trade. Some 690 dry bulk ships
that carry coal and other bulk commodities are idled worldwide, reported the Wall Street Journal, and there’s an estimated 30 percent overcapacity of container ships that transport manufactured goods to and from China. Daimler, which makes Freightliner trucks, an-
other huge manufacturer, also announced layoffs.

Declining world trade and unemployment has slowed the use of protectionist measures has risen
with the governments of India, Russia and the U.S. implementing the most. The largest number of trade restrictions imposed over the past seven years have been directed against Beijing — the opposite of what you’d think listening to the hype from politicians ranging from Bernie Sanders to Donald Trump, as well as many trade union of-
ficials.

In January the Labor Department reported an unemployment rate of 4.9 percent, but this figure masks the real scope of joblessness. The employ-
ment-population ratio, the percentage of those over 16 years old who have a job — plun-
ished from 63 percent in June 2007 to below 59 percent at the end of 2009. It has remained below 50 percent for nearly seven years. In 1999, 44.6 percent of workers aged 25 to 54 were working; today it’s down to 81.1 percent.

In Japan, the official unemployment rate is 3.3 percent, but the government’s “underemployment” population that is employed is only 57.6 percent, lower than in the U.S. in the countries that make up the European Union, the official unemploy-
ment rate is as high as 23 percent. It’s far higher in the countries hardest hit by the capitalist crisis, such as Greece and Spain. About half of youth under 25 in Greece don’t have a job.

Continued from front page

Cuba says, ‘Return Guantánamo!’

Continued from front page

Thank you for efforts

Thanks for efforts to express my sin-
cere appreciation to the Militant for
bringing worldwide news of inter-
est to the working class all over the
world as well as revolutionary con-
sciousness to those standing against
the imperialist forces of capitalism.
I was recently transferred to a new
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J.M.
Norfolk, Nebraska

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B.C.
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The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on sub-
jects of interest to working peo-
ple. Please keep your letters brief.
If you receive a letter you think
we should abridge. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.