

THE MILITANT

EXCERPT FROM NEW BOOK

How the Clintons cooked the books on prices, jobs
— PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Washington tells Puerto Rico: Bleed workers dry

BY SETH GALINSKY

U.S. imperialism has ordered the colonial regime in Puerto Rico to come up with a plan by Jan. 31 to bleed the U.S. colony dry and pay its \$70 billion debt to bondholders and hedge funds.

The bipartisan Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico,

END US COLONIAL RULE IN PUERTO RICO

— See editorial page 9

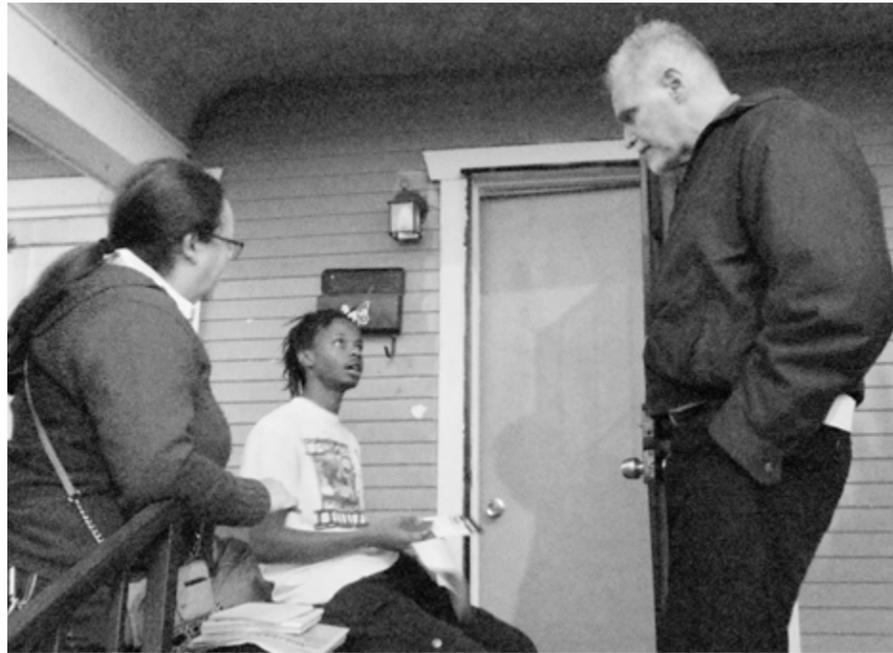
appointed by President Barack Obama, told incoming Gov. Ricardo Rosselló that the plan must include more layoffs of government employees, cuts in pensions, wage freezes, reduced medical coverage, slashed welfare rolls and the sell-off of government assets.

The board set up under the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act has the power to override any financial decisions of the government of Puerto Rico.

The law's stated purpose is to
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Socialist Workers Party: 'Prosecute killer cops!'

SWP takes LA mayor campaign to workers' doors



Militant/Jonathan Batres
Tatum O'Neill, center, talks with Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Los Angeles, Jan. 3 about police killing of his former classmate, 20-year-old Ryan Joseph.

BY LAURA GARZA

LOS ANGELES — “We call for charging the cop who killed Ryan Joseph,” said Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Los Angeles Jan. 3. He was speaking with grammar school teacher Arlene Washington on her doorstep here, a

few blocks from where police shot and killed 20-year-old Joseph Dec. 18. The cops said he ran from them as they were responding to a call about someone with a gun. They chased him near the apartment complex where he lived and shot him. They claim they recovered a gun at the scene.

A vigil of over 100 people was held in front of the apartment complex the next day.

Richter and other SWP campaigners were visiting with workers in the
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Obama's attacks on Israel boost Jew-hatred

BY EMMA JOHNSON AND JOHN STUDER

The decision by the lame-duck administration of President Barack Obama to allow passage of a Dec. 23 United Nations Security Council resolution condemning Israel weakens both the right of Israel to exist and the fight for the national interests of the Palestinian people. It gives the green light to anti-Semitic currents that call

COMMENTARY

for destruction of the Jewish state — including Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions forces — and to those like reactionary Hamas in the Palestinian Gaza Strip that organizes terror actions against Jews in Israel and in West Bank settlements. And it encourages aggressive anti-Arab currents in Israel.

The U.N. resolution, which Republican President-elect Donald Trump urged Obama to veto, states that “the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution.”

Secretary of State John Kerry
Continued on page 4

Mass march in Cuba demands US end embargo, return Guantánamo



Reuters/Desmond Boylan

Revolutionary Armed Forces Day march in Cuba Jan. 2 celebrates 58th anniversary of Cuban Revolution. It included replica of Granma yacht that brought Fidel Castro and other revolutionaries to Cuba in 1956, beginning struggle that overthrew U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Marking Revolutionary Armed Forces Day in Cuba, hundreds of thousands marched in Havana Jan. 2 in celebration of the 58th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution and in a disciplined display of fighting spirit to honor its central leader, Fidel Castro, who died Nov. 25.

“What will take place this morning is only possible when there exists a united people,” Jennifer Bello, president of the Federation of University Students and a member of the Council of State, told the crowd, “the highest expression of a revolution that counts on workers, peasants, soldiers — dig-
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Capitalist rulers in Mideast shift allies while toilers face catastrophe

BY NAOMI CRAINE

The Syrian cease-fire brokered by the Russian and Turkish governments marks a new stage in the shifting search by the capitalist rulers in Moscow, Ankara, Tehran, Tel Aviv and other regimes in the region for alliances that will allow them to defend their competing national interests. Washington, responsible for decades of war and devastation in the region, increasingly finds itself on the sidelines.

More broadly, these alliances tend to pit Tehran and allied Shiite-led forces in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen against Sunni-led regimes in Saudi Arabia, the other Gulf monarchies, Jordan and Turkey. Tel Aviv finds itself pushed toward the Sunni-led regimes. And everyone seeks backing from either Moscow or Washington, or both.

Workers and farmers in the region continue to face catastrophe.

The Syria truce, reached in the wake of the crushing of opposition forces

in the city of Aleppo, began Dec. 30. It is projected to lead to political negotiations sponsored by the Russian, Turkish and Iranian governments in Kazakhstan in January. Several of the main armed groups that have been fighting the Syrian regime, especially those aligned with the Turkish government, signed on. However, Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad's army,
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Seattle forum: Speak out against attacks on mosque

BY EDWIN FRUIT

SEATTLE — Describing incidents of anti-Muslim and Jew-hatred that have taken place across the country — including a number of recent attacks against the Muslim Association of Puget Sound she represents — Aneelah Afzali told those at a Dec. 30 Militant Labor Forum here that “all these must be answered.”

The forum was called after attacks on the group’s mosque and community center in Redmond Nov. 21 and Dec. 16. Attackers took a sledgehammer the first time and an axe the second to destroy the sign outside the center.

Speaking at the forum were Afzali, executive director of the American Muslim Empowerment Network; Jorge Quiroga of El Comite, the central immigrant rights group in Seattle; and Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Seattle.

The Muslim Association of Puget Sound serves some 5,000 families and is the largest Muslim center in the Pacific Northwest, Afzali said. She described the center’s community outreach activities, including to youth and programs to feed homeless people. She said they are working with police to catch a person filmed on security cameras at the mosque on the night of the second attack.

The mosque sponsored an open house after the first attack, Afzali said. Several hundred people came from all around the area, including from churches, synagogues, political organizations and community groups.

“Donald Trump has declared his

opposition to women, to Muslims, to Mexicans, to everybody,” Quiroga said. “This is why it is important to speak out today.”

He said El Comite and other groups will hold a march Jan. 20 — Trump’s Inauguration Day — with demands that include Stop the Deportations and Defend DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). He invited people to come.

“The SWP defends the right to worship for people of all religions — Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, everyone,” Martin said. “The labor-movement principle ‘an injury to one is an injury to all’ should be the watchword here, and all working people and our unions should join in speaking out against these attacks.”

Martin said that she worked side by side with workers who are Muslim in many factories, from garment shops to meatpacking plants to Walmart. Muslims are part of the working class in this country, she said, and have joined in protests against the bosses and their attacks on workers’ rights.

“My campaign calls for the arrest, prosecution and jailing of those who carried out these attacks,” she said.

“The U.S. government and other imperialist regimes take advantage of the fear and revulsion among working people at terror attacks carried out by anti-working-class, reactionary groups such as Islamic State,” Martin said, “to scapegoat all Muslims and go after the democratic rights of working people.”

Martin said the French government used pro-IS murderous terror attacks there to declare a state of emergency

Newark protest says, ‘Stop cops killing our children’



Militant/Sara Lobman

NEWARK, N.J. — Shelia Reid, fourth from right, mother of Jerame Reid, killed by two cops in Bridgeton during a traffic stop in December 2014, organized a spirited march here Dec. 30 to coincide with her son’s birthday. Jerame Reid was videotaped by the cops’ dashcam as he got out of the car, unarmed with his hands in the air. Cops Braheme Days and Roger Worley fired eight shots, killing him.

A number of mothers of children killed by police joined Reid. “I need all the mothers to stand together,” she told marchers. “We have to stop the police killing our children.”

“My son, Jahqui Graham, was beaten to death in 2009 by the East Orange Police Department,” Tawanna Graham, right, said. “Then they told me he died of an asthma attack. Those officers didn’t go to jail.”

Juanita Young, left, Andree Penix-Smith, third from left, and Hawa Bah, center, joined the protest from New York. Young and Bah’s sons were killed by New York City cops and Penix-Smith’s by police in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

— CANDACE WAGNER

and to slash workers’ rights. French unionists are prevented from organizing street protests against boss attacks on their wages and working conditions.

“But I don’t think the attacks on working people today come from Trump’s election,” she said. “Under the Obama administration last year we saw the biggest number of attacks on Muslim people in decades.

“The U.S. imperialist rulers — under Democratic and Republican administrations alike — bear responsibility for the consequences of 25 years of Washington’s wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and across the Middle East,” she said. “These wars have led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of workers and farmers and a refugee crisis like nothing we’ve seen since the end of the second imperialist world war.”

ing we’ve seen since the end of the second imperialist world war.”

Martin also described how the rulers used their “war on terror” to frame up Somali youth in Minneapolis through FBI entrapment operations. Government agents and informers convince young Somalis to sign up for overseas terror groups or discuss organizing actions in the U.S., and then arrest them. Many have been convicted, and sentenced to long jail terms, she said, even though they never actually did anything.

Afzali thanked those at the forum who attended their open house, like Martin and other SWP members had. She invited forum-goers to visit the community center.

THE MILITANT

Back the fight to stop prison censorship!

The ‘Militant’ covers fights against prison censorship, including efforts by prison officials to keep the ‘Militant’ out of Attica prison in New York and others around the country. Workers behind bars have the constitutional right to read different views and think for themselves.



Attica state prison, New York

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US: Let Puerto Ricans bleed

Continued from front page

“bring lawful order to chaos.” In reality “it’s just a collection agency” for wealthy bondholders, Héctor Pesquera, co-president of the Hostosian National Independence Movement, told the *Militant* by phone from San Juan Dec. 30.

The board, or junta as it is called in Spanish, rejected the fiscal plan proposed by outgoing Gov. Alejandro García Padilla in November. García didn’t propose deep enough cuts, what junta President José Carrión euphemistically called “policy adjustment” and “structural reforms.” Carrión also said that García’s plan was mistaken in expecting additional funds from Washington for Medicaid.

Some 60 percent of the island’s population receives Medicare or Medicaid. Unlike the 50 U.S. states, federal spending on Medicaid is capped, generally covering less than 20 percent. As a result, the government of Puerto Rico makes up the shortfall, an estimated \$1.4 billion a year.

The Puerto Rican economy has been in recession since 2006. The island’s gross national product has contracted by 18 percent since then. More than a dozen hospitals have closed floors and curtailed services. A nearly 70 percent cut in infrastructure spending by the government and government-owned utilities has left roads and the electrical grid in bad shape.

Official unemployment in November was 11.9 percent, more than twice the U.S. average, and labor force participation is barely 40 percent, compared to 63 percent in the U.S. Median household income is less than \$19,000, one-third

the U.S., while the cost of living is comparable, if not higher.

Successive regimes in Puerto Rico have already cut government spending by 12 percent since 2006, laid off nearly one-quarter of the government workforce — the largest source of jobs on the island — increased sales taxes by \$1.4 billion a year and slashed pensions.

Measures will ‘worsen death spiral’

In a Nov. 29 reply to Carrión, García expressed the fears of Puerto Rican capitalists that a deeper attack on the standard of living of the island’s workers and farmers would “worsen the death spiral” and present “a serious risk to the social stability of Puerto Rico.”

In a 10-page letter to García and Rosselló, Carrión gave the governor’s office a deadline of Jan. 31 to come up with a revised plan and the Puerto Rican legislature a Feb. 15 deadline to approve laws to carry it out.

More than one-third of Puerto Rico’s budget goes to paying interest on the debt, but Carrión said that stopping payment on the debt is “legally and equitably not an option.” After all, he wrote, even if the debt were cancelled there would be a shortfall of more than \$3.2 billion a year. The best they can hope for, he said, is that negotiations with creditors will lead to a “restructuring” of the debt.

In the meantime, the junta demands “comprehensive labor and welfare reform,” including reducing or eliminating severance pay, paid vacations, pensions and “non-essential” services, as well as cutting the welfare rolls. Education and health care “two of the largest areas of expenditure,” Carrión added,



Militant/Naomi Craine

September 2016 protest outside Wall Street meeting of financial board appointed by Washington to restructure Puerto Rico’s economy and repay debt to bondholders on workers’ backs.

must be “reduced substantially” and tuition increased.

He also demanded “energy reform” to lower electricity costs.

Workers hit the hardest

What that really means “is they want to privatize the electrical company,” Pedro Irene Maymí, president of the CPT union federation, said by phone from Morovis, Puerto Rico, Jan. 1. “In all these measures it is the workers who are hit the hardest.”

Under the impact of the economic and social crisis on the island, Puerto Ricans are leaving for the U.S. in droves. Since 2004 more than 350,000 have emigrated, 9.2 percent of the population. By the end of 2015, some 3.5 million people lived in Puerto Rico, and 5.4 million Puerto Ricans lived in the U.S., including 1.7 million who were born on the island.

One-third of the island’s doctors have left. When her son had a seizure in February 2016, Karen García was told he couldn’t get an appointment with a pediatric neurologist until July 2017, Reuters reported Oct. 11. Family doctors suggested she should move to the U.S.

This is not an exception, Yazmín López, a registered nurse in Mayaguez, said by phone Dec. 30. “So many doctors have moved to the U.S.” At first some people thought the junta would bring some order to the economy, López said. “But many people now realize it’s just to pay the debt and that we are just a colony.”

The pro-independence weekly *Claridad* said in a Dec. 29 editorial that “the Junta is bringing bitter medicine. It remains to be seen if our people will drink it without resisting.”

Who is Oscar López? Why should he be free?

The National Hispanic Leadership Agenda — a coalition of 40 Latino organizations, including the U.S.-Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the League of United Latin American Citizens and the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement — added its voice to the fight to win the release of Oscar López Rivera Dec. 16.

The coalition wrote President Barack Obama to urge him to commute López’s sentence “to release him from custody.”

López has been imprisoned in the United States for 35 years. His crime? Fighting for independence for the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico. Born in Puerto Rico, the son of a small farmer, López moved to Chicago when he was 14. He was drafted into the U.S. Army and sent to Vietnam in 1966.

Upon his return to Chicago — impacted by the Cuban Revolution, the rise of the Black struggle and his own experience in Vietnam — López joined struggles for bilingual education, against police brutality, to oppose hiring discrimination at construction and utility sites, as well as the fight to free Lolita Lebrón, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irving Flores, Andrés Figueroa Cordero and Oscar Collazo, Puerto Rican political prisoners jailed in the U.S. since the 1950s. By 1979 all five had been released.

In 1980, 10 people were arrested and accused of belonging to the Armed Forces of National Liberation of Puerto Rico, which in the mid-1970s took credit for bombing businesses with investments in Puerto Rico. López, accused of being a leader of the group, was arrested the next year.

The frame-up charges included “seditious conspiracy,” as well as possession of unregistered firearms. López was not accused of involvement in a single act of violence.

He was convicted and sentenced to 55 years in prison. An additional 15 years were added in 1988 after he was framed up on charges of conspiracy to escape. He was kept in solitary confinement for more than 12 years.

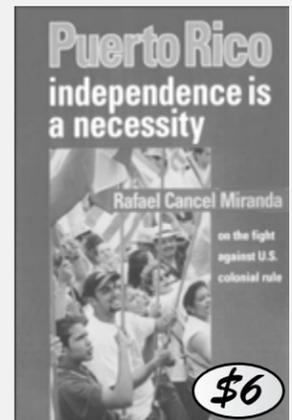
“His sentences for seditious conspiracy and conspiracy to escape are patently disproportionate,” the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda wrote. Join the fight to win freedom for Oscar López.

Write him at: Oscar López Rivera, #87651-024, FCI Terre Haute, P.O. Box 33, Terre Haute, IN 47808. Call the White House every Friday at (202) 456-1111 to tell Obama to release López.

On Jan. 8, the Human Rights Committee of Puerto Rico is hosting an event in Ponce, Puerto Rico, to celebrate López’s 74th birthday. The featured speaker will be Cancel Miranda.

On Jan. 11 East Coast supporters of his fight for freedom will be protesting in front of the White House in Washington. For more information visit: www.boricuahumanrights.org.

— SETH GALINSKY



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Gov’t attorney urges Obama to grant Leonard Peltier clemency

BY MAGGIE TROWE

James Reynolds, the retired U.S. attorney whose office put Native American leader Leonard Peltier in prison for more than 40 years on frame-up charges of killing two FBI agents, has written to President Barack Obama urging him to free the political prisoner.

In a Dec. 21 letter, Reynolds told Obama that clemency for Peltier, now 71 and suffering from a heart condition and other health problems, is “in the best interest of justice.”

“I think it’s time,” Reynolds told the *New York Daily News* in a phone interview.

Reynolds told the *News* he’s not convinced Peltier is guilty. The agents died during a shootout when more than 100 federal cops surrounded a camp on the Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation where Peltier, a leader of the American Indian Movement, and others were defending themselves in 1975. In spite of the lack of any physical evidence, Peltier was railroaded to jail with two consecutive life sentences. Washing-

ton had declared war on the American Indian Movement, launching a Counterintelligence Program after Native American actions took place across the country in the late 1960s and ’70s protesting oppressive conditions.

When asked if the wrong man was convicted, Reynolds replied, “I don’t know. Who knows?” He noted that Peltier “would not be the first” to be wrongfully convicted.

“When you stand at the bottom and you look at the naked underbelly of our system, it has got flaws,” he said. Referring to Peltier’s trial and appeal, which he was successful in blocking, Reynolds admitted that “we might have shaved a few corners here and there.”

Peltier’s defense committee asks people to write to Obama and urge him to grant clemency. Call (202) 456-1111 or go to www.whitehouse.gov/contact to send an email.

You can also write to Leonard Peltier, #89637-132, USP Coleman I, P.O. Box 1033, Coleman FL 33521.

Fidel Castro: Israel has the right to exist as Jewish state

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Since the beginning of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro and the Cuban Communist Party have made sharp distinctions between the policies of the capitalist government of Israel, the right of the Jewish state to exist, and the rights of the Jewish people, both there and in Cuba.

"I don't think anyone has been slandered more than the Jews," Fidel Castro told Jeffrey Goldberg, a national correspondent for the *Atlantic* magazine, in a September 2010 interview. "The Jews have lived an existence that is much harder than ours. There is nothing that compares to the Holocaust."

In the interview, Goldberg wrote, Castro criticized Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, then-president of Iran, for denying the Holocaust and "explained why the Iranian government would better serve the cause of peace by acknowledging the 'unique' history of anti-Semitism and trying to understand why Israelis fear for their existence."

"Over 2,000 years they were subjected to terrible persecution and then to the pogroms," Castro said, referring to waves of bloody anti-Jewish riots in Russia and eastern Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. "One might have assumed that they would have disappeared; I think their culture and religion kept them together as a nation."

Cuba's revolutionary government has strongly opposed Tel Aviv's assaults and discrimination against Palestinians. But Castro responded, "Yes, without a doubt," when Goldberg asked if he thought Israel has a right to exist as a Jewish state.

A few days after the interview appeared, Castro spoke at a presentation of his book *The Strategic Counteroffensive* at the University of Havana. The Cuban leader responded to criticism he had received for meeting with Goldberg, praising Goldberg's journalism and reconfirming his statements condemning Jew-hatred.

Castro's position stands on the continuity of Cuba's revolutionary leadership. In June 1967, Ricardo Alarcón, Cuba's ambassador to the United Nations, condemned Israel's military capture of the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, Old City of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights at a special General Assembly session. Alarcón opened his remarks by saying that Cuba "objects to any political proclamation which advocates the

destruction of any people or state. This principle is applicable to the Palestinian people ... unjustly deprived of its territory, as well as the Jewish people, which for 2,000 years have suffered racial prejudice and persecution, and during the recent Nazi period, one of the most cruel attempts at mass extermination."

"True revolutionaries never threaten to exterminate a whole country," Castro said a few months later, referring to statements by the Arab regimes in the 1967 war. "This kind of propaganda ... helped the Israeli leadership to mobilize the patriotism of their people," he said in an interview with the French newspaper *Le Monde*.

Obama's attacks on Israel boost Jew-hatred

Continued from front page

added insult to injury in a 70-minute lecture Dec. 28 blaming Tel Aviv for sinking the prospect of a negotiated peace settlement and calling the coalition government led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "the most right wing in Israeli history, with an agenda driven by the most extreme elements."

Kerry's critique excoriated Tel Aviv for robbing Obama of his "legacy," ignoring his advice and instructions for what they should do. Like the liberals and those on the petty-bourgeois left who are aghast at U.S. workers who rejected Hillary Clinton and voted for Donald Trump, Obama and his meritocratic brethren find it unfathomable that Netanyahu doesn't jump to follow their proscriptions for Israeli policy.

The key question here is the Jewish question, the right of Israel to exist as a homeland for Jews, and the right to return to Israel for Jews everywhere in a world where Jew-hatred is on the rise. As the crisis of capitalism and the class struggle deepen, history teaches, the capitalists lose confidence that "normal" methods will defend their rule, and they turn to fascist terror against the working class. Key to this is fanning Jew-hatred and pogroms to divert the toilers from fighting for power.

The need for a refuge for the Jews was etched in the consciousness of workers around the world during the second imperialist world slaughter when the Nazis marched across Europe, annihilating 6 million Jews — two-thirds of the Jewish population in Europe. The capitalist rulers in Washington and across Europe closed their borders to Jews who tried to flee the Holocaust.

Out of this catastrophe Israel was established. The world Jewish population has still not reached its prewar level. In 1939 there were almost 17 million Jews worldwide, largely in Europe. Today the number is just over 14 million.

"Over 2,000 years they were subjected to terrible persecution and then to the pogroms," Fidel Castro, the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, said of the Jewish people in 2010. "I think their culture and religion kept them together as a nation."

The fight between Israeli authorities and the lame-duck Obama administration takes place as political alliances among capitalist regimes in



Juventud Rebelde/Juan Moreno

Fidel Castro at Sept. 10, 2010, presentation of his new book *The Strategic Counteroffensive* at University of Havana. Castro responded to criticism for granting interview to Jeffrey Goldberg of *Atlantic* magazine and confirmed his statements backing Israel's right to exist.

the Middle East are undergoing tectonic shifts. Tehran has increased its military presence and political influence from Afghanistan to Lebanon. Shiite and Sunni-led regimes are lining up against each other. As Washington's influence declines, Moscow attempts to move in.

Israel is a Mideast nation. Today Tel Aviv is forced to take another look at who are its allies and its enemies. While most governments in the Mideast do not recognize Israel, many Sunni-led regimes, including Saudi Arabia and Jordan, are looking to work with Tel Aviv, sharing common interests in blocking Tehran.

Last year the Israeli government resumed diplomatic relations with Turkey after a six-year freeze following a deadly Israeli raid on a Turkish ship delivering aid to Gaza.

Tel Aviv is warming up to Moscow and looking to closer relations with the incoming U.S. administration of Donald Trump.

Jew-hatred on the rise

Jew-hatred and anti-Semitic attacks are on the rise in many parts of the world. That's why the right of Israel to exist and of Jews anywhere to live there is even more important today. And such a view is the only road to rebuild a movement capable of winning recognition of a Palestinian state today, opening the door to fight for a

contiguous, viable homeland for the Palestinian people.

The U.N. resolution encourages the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign, which has growing support in U.S. and European liberal, academic and governmental milieus. BDS supporters seek to make an international pariah of Israel, treating its Jewish population as one reactionary mass and labeling it an "apartheid state." They demand boycotting Israeli goods and shutting down artistic, musical and academic exchanges with Israel.

But Israel today bears no resemblance to apartheid South Africa, and the position of Jews there and worldwide has no comparison to the murderous Boer overlords who ruled Pretoria before Nelson Mandela.

Hamas and Palestinian Authority leaders welcomed the U.N. resolution and Kerry's speech. This is in line with the course they have followed for decades, including using terror attacks to try to get the attention of Washington and other imperialist powers to pressure Tel Aviv. This course relies on turning the Palestinian masses into passive bystanders.

To defend Jews both in Israel and worldwide, and the only road that can open the door to mobilizing Palestinian workers and farmers to fight for their rights, requires recognition of the state of Israel.

Changes in Jewish population of select countries since 1933		
	1933	2014
Israel*	175,000	6,103,200
United States	4,229,400	5,700,000
Poland	3,000,000	3,200
Ukraine	1,574,400	63,000
Romania	756,000	9,400
Russia	589,800	186,000
Germany	500,000	118,000
Hungary	445,000	47,900
Belarus	407,199	11,000
Czechoslovakia**	357,000	6,500
Austria	191,000	9,000
Lithuania	155,000	2,900
Bulgaria	48,500	2,000

* 1933 figure is for Palestine
** 2014 figure is for Czech Republic and Slovakia

Recommended reading

The Jewish Question
A Marxist Interpretation
by Abram Leon

Traces the historical rationalizations of anti-Semitism and explains why the propertied rulers incite renewed Jew-hatred in the epoch of capitalism's decline. \$25

The Founding of the Socialist Workers Party
Minutes and Resolutions, 1938-39
by James P. Cannon

At founding gatherings of the Socialist Workers Party in 1938-39, revolutionists in the U.S. codified two decades of experience in building a communist party. They charted a working-class course in resisting the coming imperialist war, fighting fascism and Jew-hatred, the struggle for Black rights, forging an alliance with exploited farmers, and the battle to transform the unions into revolutionary instruments of struggle by working people. \$26

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Ukrainian workers protest while social crisis spreads

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Transit workers, miners and teachers in Ukraine have carried out protest actions recently against union busting, deteriorating living conditions and unpaid wages. Their unions were born in struggles during the coming apart of the Stalinist Soviet Union over 25 years ago and during the Maidan — three months of working-class mobilizations and pitched street battles that led to the overthrow of pro-Moscow President Viktor Yanukovich in February 2014.

Bus and trolley drivers in Kiev, members of the Free Trade Union of Railway Workers of Ukraine (VZPU), which formed a couple years ago, rallied Dec. 21 protesting attacks by management at the city transport company Kyivpastrans. *Militant* correspondents had a chance to talk with a number of VZPU members on a trip to Ukraine in 2015.

Bosses have refused to recognize the union, pressured workers to resign from it, suspended two leaders, evicted some workers from their housing and carried out physical assaults. The unionists demand that the acting director cease harassment and threats against them and their families, Andrei Samko, union chairman at the Karabchuka depot, said at the protest.

The unionists are soliciting protest letters to Kiev Mayor Vitali Klitschko demanding a halt to “discrimination, bullying and intimidation of trade union members,” recognition of the VZPU and dismissal of the abusive manager.

Coal miners at state-owned mine

no. 10 in Novovolynsk, near the Polish border in western Ukraine, carried out a hunger strike Nov. 7-14 demanding three months’ back pay. They ended the strike after authorities promised to pay what they owed.

Some 15,000 teachers picketed the Cabinet of Ministers and parliament in Kiev Nov. 1, protesting the soaring cost of housing and utilities and the fact that while the government recently increased the minimum wage, pay rates for teachers remain frozen. The action was called by the Union of Education and Science Workers of Ukraine, formed in 1990 and affiliated to the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine.



Members and supporters of Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine at Novovolynsk No. 10 mine near Polish border, during Nov. 7-14 hunger strike demanding back pay.

SWP mayoral candidate: ‘Prosecute killer cops!’

Continued from front page

area, talking about how to fight police brutality, to introduce the SWP and discuss the importance of building a working-class alternative to the two bosses’ parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

“The politicians always say they are going to do an investigation, but they just want us to forget and not protest to keep the pressure on,” said Richter.

“There has to be a fundamental change,” Washington said. “They give the cops too much power. The state, the courts, the judges all work together.”

“We do need fundamental change,” Richter agreed. “The cops operate as part of a system that defends private property and the bosses. They’re not here to defend the working class. The capitalist rulers work to keep us divided — through unemployment, racism, paying women less, treating immigrants worse. They use these divisions to drive us all down, because they make millions off of us that way.”

To learn more about the party, Washington got a copy of *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working Peo-*

ple by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes and purchased a *Militant*.

‘We need to read and study’

“We are building a movement of working people to fight for our class,” Richter said. “I’ve joined marches to raise the minimum wage, and protest police brutality and deportations. At the same time, I think we need to read and study together along with others we meet who want to build a movement. That’s why we introduce the books on working-class politics today and the *Militant* as we knock on workers’ doors.”

Richter and supporters have campaigned in the neighborhood over the past few weeks, meeting several people who knew Joseph.

“I don’t think they had to kill him,” said Tatum O’Neill, 19, who had gone to school with the slain youth. “But the cops always have an excuse.”

“Cops say they felt threatened, and use that to justify whatever brutality they dish out. The courts, the big business media and the city government back them up — unless we take to the streets,” Richter said. “All political questions are ultimately settled

on the streets.

“Even if Joseph did have a gun, the cops don’t have the right to execute people on the spot,” he said.

Join the campaign

“I want to help reach out to youth,” Jonathan Batres, who was campaigning door to door with Richter for the second time, told the *Militant*. “I want to get young people to read more. We’re oversaturated with distractions, like apps or videos on our phones.”

Batres, a tattoo artist, previously worked at Office Depot. “Sometimes they would call me in for just a four-hour shift so they didn’t have to give me a lunch break,” he said.

Recently he joined a protest here in solidarity with Native Americans at Standing Rock in North Dakota fighting for sovereignty over tribal land and against the Dakota Access Pipeline. “It inspired me to see these people standing up, and I thought, ‘I can’t just stand by and do nothing,’” Batres said. He heard Richter speak at the protest and decided to join in activities with the SWP candidate afterward.

“It’s vital to talk face to face with workers about what’s going on, hear the problems they have, the solutions they see,” he said about campaigning door to door. “People don’t get ideas out of thin air. They have to discuss them. They have so many things to talk about, and they like being asked what they think.”

Batres said he is reading up on the Cuban Revolution. “In school I only heard bad stuff about Cuba,” he said. “But working with the Socialist Workers Party, I’ve learned different things, including about when they distributed land to people — a monumental thing!”

Richter said when people hear he is a candidate, they take more seriously what he has to say. “Yes, and we have to use that to our advantage,” Batres said, “and talk to more people.”

Join in campaigning for the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues!

Contact the party branch nearest you, listed on page 8.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 17, 1992

Prices of food, clothing and other basic necessities skyrocketed in Russia as state controls and subsidies were lifted January 2.

The republics of the former Soviet Union are heading for greater instability and an accelerated economic crisis. The bureaucratic rulers who govern these territories pillage resources in order to maintain their privileged way of life, just as they did throughout the previous six and a half decades, when they posed as “communists.” They hope that greater use of market forces will solve problems of plummeting production, attract capitalist investment, and integrate these economies into world capitalism.

Most working people in Russia were spending 80 percent of their income on basic subsistence items before the latest price increases. Long lines in front of virtually empty state stores have become a feature of daily life.



January 16, 1967

The barring of Adam Clayton Powell from his committee chairmanship by the Democratic Party caucus, and from his seat in Congress has been met with an almost unanimous outcry of opposition in the black community.

Black people have drawn the obvious conclusion that the attack on Powell is an attack on all Negroes. As one Harlem resident put it, “A hell of a lot of people in Washington do a hell of a lot worse and nobody says anything about it.”

The offenses that he is accused of are nothing compared to those of the racist Mississippi congressmen who were seated after the 1964 elections in spite of the fact that they were challenged by disenfranchised Negroes.

The funds allegedly misappropriated by Powell are chicken feed next to the billions of dollars his colleagues channel into coffers of private companies from lush government cost-plus contracts.



January 17, 1942

Hundreds of thousands of jobless auto workers today are asking why in the midst of the war the greatest manufacturing industry in the world is shutting down.

For a year the UAW and CIO have been proposing a plan to pool auto productive forces to prevent mass unemployment during the transition from automobile to military production. This was to be carried out by an industry-labor council. This proposal was shelved as “impractical” and “socialistic” by the OPM [Office of Production and Management] and the employers. They were busy figuring out the more “practical” problem of operating the auto industry to maintain maximum profits. When the bosses raise a hue and cry about the loss of production due to strikes, they are trying to cover up the real disrupters of production, themselves.

How the Clintons cooked the books on prices, jobs

Below is an excerpt from *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People*, by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. It is from the chapter "How the Clintons Cooked the Books," written in May 2008. It explains how the Bill Clinton administration further undercounted workers' real cost of living and the toll of unemployment. Copyright © 2016 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

Faking the cost of living . . .

The Clinton administration also granted a profit bonanza to the employing class by rejiggering the basis on which annual cost-of-living adjustments are calculated in wage payments and Social Security and other benefits to tens of millions of workers and working-class families in the United States. This is a decisive question for working people, as shown by the fact that real wages in this country in 2008 — even by government

FROM THE PAGES OF THE CLINTONS' ANTI- WORKING-CLASS RECORD

statistics — are some 10 percent lower than they were thirty-five years ago in 1973.

In 1997 the Clinton administration, acting on proposals by a Senate-appointed bipartisan commission, ordered that the government's main yardstick of inflation — the Consumer Price Index (CPI) — henceforth be figured in a way that substantially reduced official price figures. This magic was produced by two tricks in particular.

First, the commission claimed to have unearthed an astounding oversight in the way inflation figures had been figured ever since such statistics had begun being kept decades earlier. In the past, if the price of steak went up, for example, that increase had been reflected in CPI figures. But it suddenly dawned on the

commissioners that when steak gets too pricey, "people" simply start buying hamburger instead. So the cost of hamburger should replace the price of steak in the CPI. Shazam! No inflation in meat costs!

In reporting changes in the cost of living, the White House also introduced what it called "hedonics" (a word from the same root as "hedonism"). Lo these many decades, Clinton's commissioners discovered, statisticians had been overlooking the fact that the "pleasure" working people and others derive from the goods we buy increases as new models are introduced. Cars may become more expensive, but now we can lock or unlock them as we walk across the parking lot. And as we're sending off the next payment for that new computer, we should keep in mind that its speed and memory have expanded — so it's actually getting more and more fun, and thus also "costs" less and less!

What's the bottom line? Whereas the US government's official annual inflation figure in late 2007 was deduced to be 3.2 percent, it would have been 7 percent — more than double — calculated by the methods used by every administration since the 1930s. And that means hundreds of billions of dollars in extra profits for the employing class — who are now paying much less in cost-of-living adjustments to workers in wage agreements, as well as Social Security, health, workers comp, and other benefits.

What does that mean in the everyday life of the working majority in the United States? In early 2008, less than half a year after the official inflation figure just cited, the US government announced that its so-called Consumer Price Index was now running a bit higher, at a 4 percent annual rate. But a closer look at that very same price data (even using the government's own crooked methods) reveals that the costs of necessities such as groceries, gasoline, and health care had risen by an average of more than 9 percent over a year earlier.

Yet the Social Security administra-



"To help mask the rising social toll of the profit system," said Jack Barnes, "the Clinton White House simply erased millions of jobless workers from the government's monthly unemployment figures." The administration just stopped counting "discouraged" workers who were out of a job for over a year. Above, workers in North Carolina seek unemployment benefits, 2014.

tion announced that in 2008 the roughly 50 million people receiving retirement benefits will get a "cost of living" increase of 2.3 percent in their monthly checks — a measly \$24 a month for the average recipient. And tens of millions of other working people will be lucky to get an inflation adjustment of any kind in their take-home pay.

. . . and faking jobless figures too

To help mask the rising social toll of the profit system, the Clinton White House simply erased millions of jobless workers from the government's monthly unemployment figures.

The Clintons learned this disappearing act from a previous Democratic Party role model of morality. During John F. Kennedy's first year in office in 1961, he had worried about the political kick-

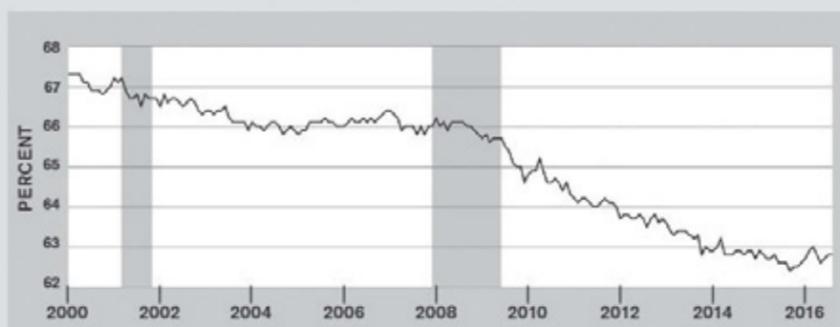
back from a sharp rise in joblessness that year. So he appointed a committee to look for a solution — not a solution to put people back to work, but to do better at keeping up appearances. A few years later the federal government slapped a label on workers who had been unable to find jobs for so long that they had stopped looking. Calling them "discouraged workers," it no longer counted them as being unemployed. Voilà! The "unemployment rate" dropped overnight!

Clinton, who also confronted high joblessness at the opening of his first term, took things a step further. Although since the 1960s "discouraged workers" had no longer been counted as unemployed, they were nonetheless included as part of the overall labor force.

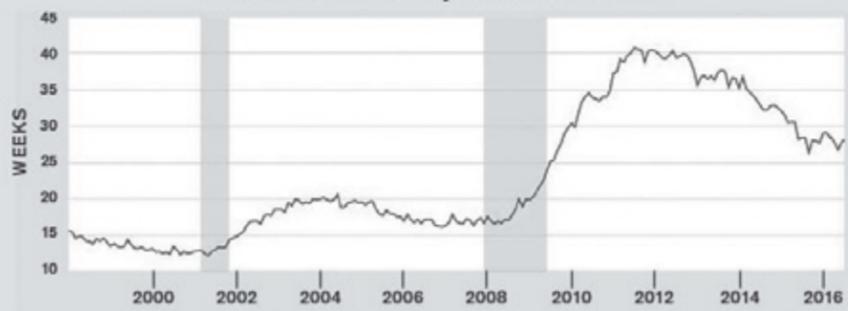
Continued on page 7

The US working class is getting smaller

Labor participation rate 2000–2016



Duration out of a job 2000–2016



SOURCE: FEDERAL RESERVE ECONOMIC RESEARCH, US BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

One way the government pretties up its monthly unemployment rate is to keep reducing the percentage of workers (age sixteen and above) it counts as part of the labor force. Since the sharpening of the capitalist crisis in recent years, that share has fallen from more than 66 percent in 2008 to 62.8 percent in August 2016.

That's the lowest since 1977, when the overall rate (for both men and women, that is) was lower, since fewer than half of women sixteen and above were then in the workforce. As fights by women and other working people pushed back sex discrimination in employment, the female labor participation rate rose to more than 60 percent by the mid-1990s and remained roughly at that level until the 2008 crisis, falling below 57 percent since 2014.

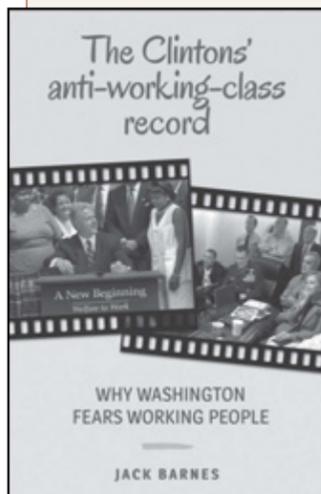
The decline in the labor participation rate for men has been particularly sharp, falling from 87 percent in 1950, to 73 percent in 2008, to 69 percent in 2016. As for the stretches of time workers go with no job of any kind — an experience burned into the memories of working-class families — the duration averaged 13.5 weeks over the entire six decades between 1948 and 2008. Since then, the average has jumped two and half times, to nearly eight months.

— from *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record*

For the first time in decades, the US rulers have begun to fear the working class

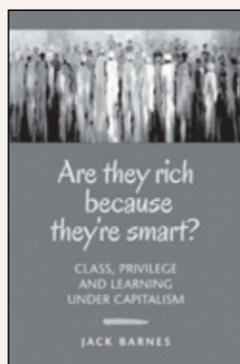
Books for the deepening debate among workers seeking a way forward in face of capitalism's global economic crisis, social calamity and spreading wars.

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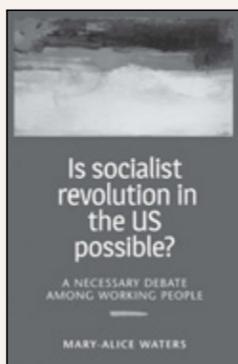


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Also in Spanish, French



Also in Spanish

Are They Rich Because They're Smart? and Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible? \$7 each or \$5 each with a subscription to the Militant.

Massive march in Cuba

Continued from front page

nified men and women who live proud of their society.”

The mass mobilization included both a military display and an outpouring of the population. It also marked the 60th anniversary of the landing of the Granma, which opened the revolutionary struggle that toppled the Washington-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959. Several thousand Young Pioneers, primary school students, marched surrounding a replica of the boat, which brought Fidel Castro and other combatants from Mexico to Cuba.

“Cuba will not stop demanding the lifting of Washington’s blockade, which causes damage and privation for our people,” Bello said. “Nor will it stop demanding the return of the territory occupied by the U.S. Naval Base in Guantánamo, against the will of the Cuban people and government.”

Cuban President and Army General Raúl Castro presided over the mass mobilization.

“The people of Havana, representing all of Cuba, will fill the Plaza of the Revolution with their responsibility to

continue to fight for our sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable nation,” Bello said.

The mobilization took place days after the conclusion of a session of the National Assembly of People’s Power where Raúl Castro spoke about the economic challenges facing Cuba. In the second half of 2016, decreases in oil supplies and other factors resulted in a 0.9 percent decline in the country’s gross domestic product, Castro said Dec. 27.

The capitalist crisis wracking Venezuela has led to significant reductions in crude oil shipped to Cuba at subsidized prices. Those shipments dropped from 90,000 barrels daily in recent years to 40,000 in the past few months.

Nonetheless, “free social services, such as education and public health for the entire population, were preserved,” Castro said.

We must not forget “the negative effects generated by the United States economic, commercial, financial blockade, which remain in effect,” Castro said. For example, Washington continues to prevent Cuba from conducting interna-



Above, Ladyrene Pérez/Cubadebate

Part of women’s military contingent in march of hundreds of thousands in Havana Jan. 2 to mark 58th anniversary of Cuban Revolution. “Cuba will not stop demanding the lifting of Washington’s blockade” and return of Guantánamo, Jennifer Bello, inset, president of Federation of University Students, told marchers.



tional transactions using the U.S. dollar.

The Cuban president projected modest growth in 2017, if the Cuban people increase productivity and limit waste.

“We must rid ourselves of unfounded fears of foreign capital,” Castro said. “We are not heading toward, nor will we

head toward capitalism. This is totally ruled out.”

As Fidel Castro requested, the assembly adopted a law prohibiting the construction of monuments to the revolutionary leader or use of his name in designating streets or public squares.

Raúl Castro: ‘Make principles of revolution a reality every day’

Below is an excerpt from the speech presented by Cuban President Raúl Castro at the closing session of the National Assembly of People’s Power in Havana Dec. 27. He discusses the Cuban Assembly’s unanimous decision to enshrine into law Fidel Castro’s wish not to have statues, streets or other public sites named after him. Translation is by the Militant.

Compañeras and compañeros:

In my remarks on Dec. 3 in General Antonio Maceo Grajales Plaza of the Revolution in Santiago de Cuba, I announced the desire of Fidel Castro

Ruz, the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, that his name and likeness never be used to denote institutions, plazas, parks, avenues, streets or other public sites and that no busts, statues or other similar forms of tribute be erected in his memory.

Today our parliament has enshrined compañero Fidel’s last request in law.

The historic leader of the Cuban Revolution bequeathed us his enduring example and his unwavering optimism and confidence in victory.

In my opinion, and compañero Lazo made a similar point at the opening of this session, the best monument to his ideals and work is to make the outstanding definition of the concept of revolution that he publicly presented on May 1, 2000, a reality every day. These principles have been ratified by millions of Cubans as part of the activities organized to pay well-deserved

tribute to someone who never let his people down.

[Castro is referring to the opening section of Fidel’s 2000 speech that concludes the Cuban Revolution “means fighting for our dreams of justice for Cuba and the world, which is the foundation of our patriotism, our socialism, and our internationalism.” It was signed as a reaffirmation of revolutionary commitment by millions of Cubans after Fidel’s death. That pledge is printed in full in the Dec. 12, 2016, Militant. — Editor]

The speech he gave on Jan. 8, 1959 — on arriving in the capital, at the military camp formerly known as Columbia, now the City of Freedom — was prescient. It was almost 58 years ago today that the Caravan of Liberty triumphantly entered Havana — having left me in charge of the eastern province in Santiago de Cuba, at that time

the capital of what are today the five eastern provinces.

I watched his speech on television that evening. Those who are older will remember what it was like, very moving; with the white doves perched on his shoulders, etcetera. I don’t remember well what I am going to read to you, but I do remember how it began: “The joy is immense, but there still is a lot to be done. ... We don’t expect that everything will be easier from now on, perhaps it will be more difficult.”

I didn’t remember quite as clearly, however, this other quote that I am going to read, and before saying it here, I looked for the recording, besides what had been written down, and this is how it goes.

He said at that time, and I quote, “I know that never again in our lives will we witness such an outpouring” — he’s referring to his welcome here in Havana and throughout the entire journey — “except on one other occasion. I am sure that there will be multitudes again and that is the day we die, because when they must take us to our graves, that day, as many people will come together as today, because we will never let our people down!” End of quote. (Applause)

Fidel, undefeated, has left us, but his spirit of struggle will remain in the conscience of all Cuban revolutionaries, today, tomorrow and forever, and we will show this in the military parade and march of the combative people on Jan. 2 to mark the 60th anniversary of the heroic uprising in Santiago de Cuba and the landing of the Granma expeditionaries, Revolutionary Armed Forces Day, in honor of the Commander in Chief of the Cuban Revolution and of our youth.

I only have left to say that in a few days we will celebrate one more anniversary of the triumph of the revolution and the advent of the New Year. We extend to our dear Cuban people our warm congratulations.

That is all. (Applause)

Clintons’ record

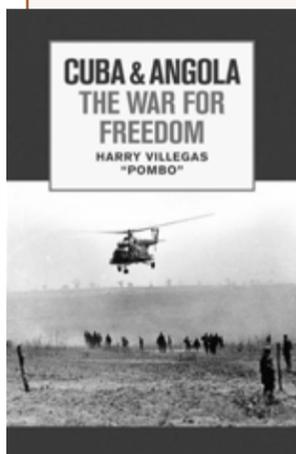
Continued from page 6

Evidently that still revealed too much of the actual situation facing working people. So in 1994 the Clinton administration decided that only workers who had been looking for a job within the last year would be counted as part of the workforce. That’s how Clinton, with the wave of a statistical wand, disappeared millions more jobless workers!

Despite Washington’s deceptive “official” unemployment figures, the labor force participation rate has actually been going down from its post-World War II high point of a little over 67 percent in 2001. That’s the best measure available in government records of the percentage of workers actually holding down a job or looking for one, and who are thus counted in estimating the “official” unemployment rate. What’s more, even among those listed as unemployed in April 2008, almost 20 percent had been jobless for more than six months.

So while government jobless figures are a statistical fiction, the growing millions of workers who’ve been “disappeared” from the labor force since 2000 are not. They are real men and women who’ve been unable to get a steady job, often for years.

Further reading on the Cuban Revolution & the world



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U.S. rulers saw Grenada's Revolution as dangerous

Maurice Bishop Speaks: The Grenada Revolution and Its Overthrow 1979-83 is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for January. It contains speeches and interviews given by Bishop, the central leader of the Grenada Revolution. In March 1979 workers and farmers led by Bishop and the New Jewel Movement toppled the Eric Gairy dictatorship and took power. Bishop served as prime minister until October 1983, when what Cuban leader Fidel Castro called a "Pol Pot group," led by Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard, overthrew the revolution and murdered Bishop, opening the door to U.S. military invasion. The excerpt below is from a speech given to an audience of over 2,500 at Hunter College in New York City in June 1983. Copyright © 1983 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



"We certainly place a great deal of importance on the activity, the potential, and the possibilities for the American working-class movement," said Maurice Bishop, center. U.S. rulers fear Grenada's Revolution because it was "predominantly Black" and would appeal to U.S. Blacks.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MAURICE BISHOP

The revolution in Grenada started from a base under Gairy of 49 percent unemployment — one in every two people who wanted to work couldn't get a job. And among women, 70 percent unemployment, seven out of every ten could not get a job. Therefore at the dawn of the revolution over 22,000 people who wanted to work could not find work. When we did a census last year, April 1982, the unemployment rate had

dropped from 49 percent to 14.2 percent. [Applause]

In the days of Hurricane Gairy — those twenty-nine years of economic, political, social, and spiritual devastation of our country and of our people — there was no such thing as a plan. There was no such thing as a capital investment program, partly because Gairy was a mystic and therefore he didn't have to plan. But also partly because he was so corrupt that nobody was willing in any event to put even ten cents in his hand unless they sent down ten police to check what's happening to their ten cents. So in those days we had nothing called a public investment program. And when it got going it was on the basis of very small, feeble advances. The last year of Gairy, 1978, the capital investment program was \$8 million. The first year of the revolution that figure was doubled to \$16 million. The second year of the revolution it was more than doubled again to \$39.9 million.

The experts were saying that this is impossible — you don't have the resources, you don't have the management, you don't have enough tractors, you don't have any trucks, you don't have enough engineers, you cannot possibly do it. You are only lucky in 1979 when you doubled Gairy's. And you are only lucky in 1980 again when you doubled your own. And then when we went to 1981 and we doubled it again, they said, we know you have the luck, but something is wrong.

And last year in 1982 it went up to over \$100 million, and then we gave

them the secret: we told them that in a revolution things operate differently than in the normal situation. [Applause] We have been able to make these accomplishments because in Grenada, consistent with our three pillars of the revolution — where the first pillar is our people who are always at the center and heart and focus of all our activities — we are able to mobilize and organize people to cut out waste, to cut corruption, to stamp out inefficiency, to move to planning, to look out for production, to check on productivity, to make sure that state enterprises are not set up to be subsidized but that state enterprises, too, must become viable, must make a profit, and therefore the state sector will have the surplus to bring the benefits.

Our people have gladly been pulled into the economic process because our people see the benefits which the revolution has brought them. They understand that when thirty-seven cents out of every dollar is spent on health and education that means something. ...

But the point I'm making, sisters and brothers, is the nature of the struggle that we have undergone, not only to raise production and productivity, but to instill new values in our people. As we struggle on the road towards creating a new man and a new woman, living a new life, in what we know will become a new civilization, the old culture, the old habits, the old prejudices are always there struggling against the shoots of the new. That is a struggle that we have to resolutely wage every single day of our lives.

But it is much easier for our people to make those sacrifices. It is much easier for them to accept the importance of doing these things which they have not been in the habit of doing, because now they know that for the first time material benefits are coming. Our people now understand that what they put out will come back, whether through free health care or free education or the number of jobs created. ...

Our people, therefore, have a greater and deeper understanding of what the revolution means and what it has brought to them. They certainly understand very, very clearly that when some people attack us on the grounds of human rights, when some people attack us on the grounds of constituting a threat to the national security of other countries, our people understand that is foolishness. They know the real reason has to do with the fact of the revolution and the benefits that the revolution is bringing to the people of our country. The real reason for all of this hostility is because some perceive that what is happening in Grenada can lay the basis for a new socioeconomic and political path of development.

They give all kinds of reasons and excuses — some of them credible, some utter rubbish. We saw an interesting one recently in a secret report to the State Department. I want to tell you about that one, so you can reflect on it. That secret report made this point: that the Grenada revolution is in one sense even worse — I'm using their language — than the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions because the people of Grenada and the leadership of Grenada speak English, and therefore can communicate directly with the people of the United States. [Applause]

I can see from your applause, sisters and brothers, that you agree with the report. But I want to tell you what that same report said that also made us very dangerous. That is that the people of Grenada and the leadership of Grenada are predominantly Black. [Applause] They said that 95 percent of our population is Black — and they had the correct statistic — and if we have 95 percent of predominantly African origin in our country, then we can have a dangerous appeal to 30 million Black people in the United States. [Applause] Now that aspect of the report, clearly, is one of the most sensible.

January BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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End US colonial rule in Puerto Rico!

For decades Washington has claimed Puerto Rico is a “self-governing” territory, not a colony. This lie was exposed once again by Washington’s “fiscal board,” when it ordered the island’s colonial government to squeeze working people to the max to pay the \$70 billion debt to bondholders and hedge funds. Lay off more public workers; push people off welfare; privatize the ports (i.e., sell them cheap to U.S. capitalists); slash wages, pensions, health care — those were its demands.

It is crucial for workers in the U.S. to stand with our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico against these attacks, and demand an end to the colonial superexploitation of Puerto Rico. That has been the position of the Socialist Workers Party since its founding. The SWP “stands for the immediate and unconditional independence of all the territories, colonies, and dependencies of the U.S. and for the withdrawal of all troops from them,” says the party’s 1938 Declaration of Principles. “The revolutions in the colonies, semicolonies, and spheres of influence of United States imperialism are integrally and reciprocally related to the revolutionary struggle against that imperialism at home.”

It’s the U.S. capitalists who benefit from maintaining Puerto Rico as a colony. Pharmaceutical and other companies have made massive profits off low wages and special tax breaks. Shipping companies make billions because Washington bans non-U.S. ships from

Puerto Rico’s ports. Because of the workings of colonial domination, a once-self-sufficient island is forced to import food from U.S. agribusinesses.

Under the impact of the deepening crisis, many Puerto Ricans are leaving the island and becoming part of the U.S. working class. The capitalists don’t realize they are creating their own gravediggers.

Workers in the U.S. and Puerto Rico face the same enemy: the U.S. capitalist class, which is forcing working people to pay for the capitalist crisis.

Newly elected Gov. Ricardo Rosselló claims the solution is for Puerto Rico to become the 51st U.S. state. The U.S. rulers would only consider this if they feared a rising struggle for independence that threatened their lucrative domination of the island.

Oscar López, the Puerto Rican political prisoner jailed in the U.S. for more than 35 years, points to a different course. “Revolutionary Cuba has been able to set an example of the importance of the development of the human resource, of solidarity, and of the need to defend justice and noble causes,” he wrote in 2015. Just a few weeks ago he told a reporter that Puerto Rico “needs a government that represents the interests of Puerto Ricans, of working people.”

That will take a fight, a fight that is in the interest of the working class in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. We say free Oscar López now! Cancel the debt! End U.S. colonial rule!

Capitalist rulers in Mideast shift alliances

Continued from front page

Iranian-led forces and Russian warplanes have renewed attacks near Damascus, in Idlib province and elsewhere. A number of the opposition groups now say they will not participate in talks.

Other groups are excluded from the cease-fire, including Islamic State and Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, formerly the al-Qaeda-linked Nusra Front. So is the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG).

Washington is not a party to the agreement, registering the relative weakening of U.S. imperialism in the region. The Barack Obama administration had engaged in round after round of futile talks with Moscow attempting to reach a deal to rein in Assad in exchange for military cooperation against Islamic State and the Nusra Front. But Washington could neither decide to intervene directly, nor find substantial opposition groups it was willing to back in order to have leverage in the Syrian civil war.

Instead, the Russian and Iranian governments acted decisively to prop up the Assad government, which initiated the civil war when it brutally crushed mass protests for democratic rights in 2011.

The estimated death toll from nearly six years of fighting is approaching half a million. At least 11 million people — half of Syria’s prewar population — have been forced from their homes. Major sections of Aleppo and other cities have been leveled. The regime has made indiscriminate bombing and starvation sieges against civilian populations one of its trademarks.

Turkish rulers focus on war on Kurds

Over the last six months, the Turkish government shifted its priorities from seeking Assad’s overthrow to blocking efforts by Kurdish nationalist forces to establish an autonomous region in Syria. Ankara’s rapprochement with Moscow aims to advance that goal.

Turkish officials say Russian warplanes carried out airstrikes around the city of al-Bab for the first time Dec. 28, backing the Turkish-led drive to take that northern Syrian city from Islamic State. At the same time, Ankara complained that Washington has refused to give air support to its operation.

Turkish troops and the Ankara-backed Free Syrian Army are trying to take al-Bab, northeast of Aleppo, before the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces can do so. From there they plan to head east to Manbij, and drive Kurdish forces across the Euphrates River.

The direct Turkish military intervention in northern Syria began in August, coinciding with an escalation of Ankara’s war against the Kurds in southeastern Turkey. It has recently been bolstered by 500 Turkish

commandoes and some 1,400 Turkish-backed Syrian rebels who pulled out of Aleppo when it fell.

The Kurdish people number some 30 million, divided between Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. They have fought for decades for a homeland and against national oppression by all of the capitalist regimes in the region.

Over the last two years the YPG and other Kurdish-led militias have been the most effective force in pushing back the reactionary Islamic State, while strengthening the consolidation of a Kurdish region and inspiring support among Kurds in Turkey in the process. They are the leading force on the ground in the current U.S.-backed campaign to drive Islamic State out of Raqqa, Syria.

The Democratic Union Party (PYD) — the party associated with the YPG militia — and other Kurdish and non-Kurdish parties announced Dec. 28 they had drafted a blueprint for a “Democratic Federal System of Northern Syria.”

The Syrian, Turkish and U.S. governments all oppose a separate Kurdish region in Syria.

Tehran extends its influence

The battle in Aleppo underscored how the capitalist rulers in Iran are consolidating their dominant role and military presence across a wide swath of the Middle East, from the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan in the east through Iraq and Syria to large sections of Lebanon and in Yemen.

The decisive ground force in the battle for Aleppo was not Assad’s army, but rather Iranian troops and Tehran-backed Shiite militias, especially Hezbollah from Lebanon as well as fighters from Iraq and Afghanistan. Qasem Soleimani, commander of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards Quds Force, was recently photographed giving orders to combatants in Aleppo.

Iranian-trained Shiite militias are also playing a major role in the campaign to retake Mosul, Iraq, from Islamic State, alongside the Iraqi army and forces of the Kurdish regional government there.

These developments reflect sharpening divisions between Shiite-dominated forces and Sunni-led regimes in the region. In a press conference in Tehran Jan. 4, former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki pointed to these divisions, attacking Iraqi Kurds, Saudi Arabia and Israel.

He described the Saudi regime as the main source of terrorism in the Middle East, saying they will live to regret it, and thanked Tehran for all its help.

“I tell you of the threat that surpasses terrorism which is the Zionist enemy,” al-Maliki said. “And we should all stand on one front against this threat.”

Is Trump ‘qualified’?

In response to Maggie Trowe’s wonderful article on liberal hysteria in the Jan. 2 *Militant*, I would like to add the liberal “talking point” that Trump is “not qualified!” The world imperialist system of exploitation, war, and torture, centered in Washington, D.C., just needs the right sort — a smooth, well-spoken master or mistress of mayhem to make all the pieces of the system work well. Crude demagogues and hucksters like Trump are an affront to the refined sensibilities of leading liberals everywhere. For them, a well-spoken style glosses over many a shameful crime.

J.R. Ford

Seattle, Washington

What a socialist is

One prisoner wrote declaring their love for the paper, but then stated “but I am not a socialist, I am a Christian.” That statement made me smile and shake my head at the same time. While capitalism represents greed and wealth for a few, socialism represents equality, equity and fair dealing. Not only for a few, but the entire planet, whether Black, brown, red, yellow or white. In my humble opinion, a true Christian is a socialist and a true Muslim is a socialist.

A prisoner

Pennsylvania

Enjoys audio ‘Militant’

Before embarking on a long car journey, we downloaded the whole audio edition of the first *Militant* from 2017 from the website, saved it as an album and played it through the car radio. This was our first experience listening to the whole paper. It was wonderful. We discussed each article and replayed when we wanted clarification. The six hours went quickly and very productively in political discussion. Can’t wait to get the hard copy. I will use this method again to get more than ever out of the *Militant*.

Ann Fiander

Manchester, England

Editor’s note: Each new issue of the *Militant* is now available in audio format. Go to www.themilitant.com and click on “Audio issues” in the left-hand side bar.

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

Book discount for prisoners

Pathfinder offers books and pamphlets at a 50 percent discount off the cover price. There is a flat rate of \$2.75 for shipping and handling.

Prisoners can mail their prepaid orders to Pathfinder Press
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Join fight against censorship of ‘Militant’ at Attica prison

The *Militant* is appealing the impoundment of the paper by New York State prison authorities at the Attica Correctional Facility who falsely claim that articles on the 1971 Attica rebellion and current actions by prisoners “incite rebellion against government authorities.” You can help.

Since mid-October the prison’s Media Review Committee has censored three issues of the *Militant* in violation of the Bill of Rights and New York State Department of Corrections own rules and regulations.

Get statements of support for the *Militant’s* appeal from defenders of workers rights and free speech. Send to themilitant@mac.com

Send a check to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. Earmarked “Prisoners’ Rights Fight” for fight against censorship or “Prisoners’ Fund” to subsidize prisoner subscriptions.