

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Introduction to new book 'Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom' — PAGES 6-7

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Capitalist alliances shift amid Mideast wars, conflict

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim met with his Iraqi counterpart, Haider al-Abadi, in Baghdad Jan. 7. He then traveled to Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, for talks with Massoud Barzani, president of the regional government there. The result? Agreement by all three to drive the Kurdistan Workers Party of Turkey (PKK), which is banned in its home country, out of the Sinjar area in northwestern Iraq.

Iranian officials said Tehran, a major backer of the regime in Baghdad, welcomed the deal between the Turkish and Iraqi governments, because they also agreed to eventually end the presence of Turkish troops in northern Iraq. Yildirim told the press he and Abadi would resolve that dispute "in a friendly manner."

These moves are part of political shifts underway in the Middle East as the capitalist rulers in each country look for alliances and other initiatives to advance their competing interests. They highlight the growing influence of Tehran in the region, as well as the

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Panic grows on 'left' as Trump nears White House

BY MAGGIE TROWE

One capitalist party — the Republican Party being rebuilt around President-elect Donald Trump — pitches its appeal to working people as it prepares a traditional pro-big business administration. The other bourgeois party — the Democrats — are embroiled in crisis, with forces around Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders pushing to run candidates at every level in hopes of taking over the party. The only thing Democrats can agree on is an all-out effort to block Trump's cabinet nominees and projected legislation.

The Democrats, their liberal media mouthpieces like the *New York Times*, and the petty bourgeois left all blame Trump's victory on a turn to the right by workers, especially workers who are Caucasian, smeared by Hillary Clinton as "deplorables."

Liberal hue and cry became more shrill after the highly politicized "intelligence community" in Washington accused Moscow of supporting Trump's candidacy by organizing the release of hacked emails embarrass-

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'Workers need to unite in face of boss attacks'

SWP LA mayor candidate on doorsteps, picket lines



Militant photos: above, Laura Garza; inset, Jonathan Batres

Above, Jan. 6 Teamsters picket line at University of California Los Angeles. Dennis Richter, SWP candidate for Los Angeles mayor, joined strikers in solidarity with contract fight. Inset, Richter talks with teacher Arlene Washington at her doorstep Jan. 3.

BY LAURA GARZA

LOS ANGELES — "We haven't had a raise in four years, they've raised our health care costs, lowered what we get for disability, and new hires were switched to a 401(k)-style fund. They won't get the pension and retirement other workers get," Jon Kramer, a plumber at the UCLA medical plaza, told Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor here, as they marched on the picket line Jan. 6. Kramer, who has worked at UCLA for 15 years, is a member of Teamsters Local 2010 and on the negotiating committee fighting

for a new contract.

"You're facing what a lot of workers confront," said Richter. "Bosses delay and delay on contracts knowing that workers are losing every day." The strikers are the skilled trades workers — plumbers, carpenters, electricians, elevator repair people, and other facilities workers — who work at UCLA and UCLA's medical center. Local 2010 represents some 600 workers there, and 200 more at University of California at San Diego.

Kramer said they are asking for a graduated scale of payments, depend-

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Protests in US and Puerto Rico demand 'Free Oscar López now!'



El Nuevo Día/Akash Ghai

Protesters at White House Oct. 11 hold petitions with more than 100,000 signatures calling on Obama to free Oscar López Rivera. Second from left is Clarisa López, Oscar's daughter.

BY SETH GALINSKY

As supporters of his fight for freedom continue to press President Barack Obama to pardon Oscar López Rivera, the Puerto Rican *independentista* wrote a public letter pledging that whenever he is released he will dedicate himself to "the greatest issue we face. That's the issue of resolving Puerto Rico's colonial status."

"I have faith in us being able to eradicate colonialism," López said. "Let's dare to live and let's dare to struggle. Then we will live as a free people without any colonial chains."

The 74-year-old political activist has been in prison for more than 35 years — over 12 in solitary confinement — because of his activities in

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US gov't says SWP should have to turn over contributors' names

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The Socialist Workers Party received notice from the Federal Election Commission Jan. 5 that the agency intends to reject the party's application to extend its hard-fought exemption from having to file the names of contributors to their election campaign with the government. "The Commission concludes that the public interest would be served by disclosure of SWP's contributors and vendors," the FEC's draft opinion states, "and that the SWP has not demonstrated a reasonable probability that disclosing its contributors and vendors will subject those persons to threats, harassment, or reprisals."

The party won exemption in 1974 and has successfully won extension six times since.

The party's exemption fight is part of the broader class battle for workers and working-class organizations to engage in political activity — including election campaigns — free from

spying and disruption by government cops, the bosses and other enemies of the working class.

The commission has set a March 13 deadline for the party to respond.

The SWP's attorneys filed a request with the FEC Oct. 31 to renew the exemption from having to disclose the names, addresses and occupations of

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Attica censorship ‘a danger to all who care about freedom’

BY SETH GALINSKY

The New York State Department of Corrections has so far failed to answer any of the three appeals filed by the *Militant* seeking reversal of the unconstitutional impoundment of issues of the socialist newsweekly at Attica Correctional Facility. The first appeal was filed Nov. 3 after prison officials informed the *Militant* of its decision to bar subscriber Jalil Muntaqim from receiving the Oct. 3 issue of the paper, which had a front-page article on the 45th anniversary of the historic Attica prison rebellion.

According to Department of Corrections rules, its Central Office Media Review Committee must rule within three weeks of the receipt of an appeal. But they have not informed the *Militant* of any ruling and have not returned phone calls from the *Militant*’s attorney David Goldstein from the prominent civil liberties law firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman.

Prison officials also impounded two other issues sent to Muntaqim, a former Black Panther and co-founder of the Jericho Movement, a group that works to win amnesty for political prisoners in the United States. Those two issues ran articles on the appeals the *Militant* filed challenging the prison’s censorship. Goldstein appealed both those impoundments.

Muntaqim was placed in solitary confinement last year after Attica officials accused him of encouraging gang activity in comments he made during a Black history class he taught to fellow inmates. He is appealing those charges.

The *Militant* has received support for

its fight against censorship from a wide variety of organizations and individuals.

“The attempt to silence *The Militant*’s voice represents a danger to anyone who cares about freedom of thought, inquiry and expression,” wrote the Riverside Church Prison Ministry Jan. 7. “Censorship that is motivated by a belief that suppressing information allows for greater control and domination denies the fact that such censorship can also plant seeds of alienation and dissent.” Riverside Church is a well-known and respected institution in New York’s Harlem, with a long history of involvement in the fight for civil rights.

John Zippert, co-publisher and editor of the *Greene County Democrat* in Eutaw, Alabama, called on Attica and New York officials to “allow prisoners access to the *Militant* newspaper and other materials currently blocked.”

Zippert has a long history in the fight for civil rights, from when as head of the student government at City College of New York he joined the Selma to Montgomery protest battle in 1965 to the fight of small farmers to survive in the South. His paper, he writes, reaches “3,000 residents of Greene County and surrounding Black Belt areas.”

“We have numerous subscribers in jails and prisons in Alabama and other states that read our paper,” he wrote. “We strongly urge the Attica and New York prison officials to stop their unconstitutional and unacceptable actions, which violate our national standards of freedom of speech, freedom of the press and free access information for everyone, including the incarcerated.”

UK train drivers, London Tube workers hold strikes



National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers

LONDON — Train drivers here, members of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, began three days of strike action Jan. 10, protesting Southern Railway’s move to impose driver-only-operated trains, which undermines safety and eliminates jobs.

Southern guards (conductors), members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union (RMT), have also walked out several times. The RMT and another union at the London Underground struck Jan. 9 against job cuts (above).

— PAMELA HOLMES

Among others who have called on Attica to reverse the censorship of the *Militant* are the American Friends Service Committee; the Gathering for Justice and Justice League NYC; Mothers and Families, New Market, Alabama; National Lawyers Guild; New York Civil Liberties Union; Pen America; Yusef Salaam, one of the Central Park Five; *San Francisco Bay View* monthly; and Heather Ann Thompson, author of *Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising of 1971 and Its Legacy*.

The reasons Attica censors have given for impounding the *Militant* are quite a reach. Prison authorities claimed that the pages in the Oct. 3 issue with articles on the 1971 Attica prison protests could “incite rebellion against government authority.” They banned the Oct. 31 issue on the pretext that reporting on the *Militant*’s plans to appeal the censorship decision “could incite disobedience.”

The Nov. 21 issue was banned because Attica claimed that a small image of the Oct. 3 front page used to illustrate the article on growing opposition to the censorship “could incite violence against prison staff.”

Goldstein in his appeal notes that “no reasonable, fair minded review” could conclude that any of the articles in the *Militant* advocate violence, rebellion or disobedience.

“The delaying tactics of the New York Department of Corrections just give us time to win broader support,” said *Militant* managing editor Naomi Craine. “We won’t stop until Attica rescinds its illegal, unconstitutional censorship and gives all of the impounded issues to Jalil.”

Fight prison censorship

Get out the word. Distribute copies of *Militant* articles on this fight.

Get statements of support for the *Militant*’s appeal from unions, churches and 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.”

THE MILITANT

Solidarity with Momentive strikers!

The ‘Militant’ champions workers’ fights against attacks by the bosses. “They thought we’d break going into the holidays, but we’ve only gotten stronger every day,” Kevin Alderman, one of 700 unionists on strike at Momentive in Waterford, New York, told the paper.



New York State AFL-CIO/Kevin Eitzmann
Momentive strikers, supporters rally Dec. 13

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Trump nears White House

Continued from front page
ing to Clinton.

“Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election,” the Jan. 6 National Intelligence report said. No one claims Putin tampered with ballot boxes or attempted to fix computer tallies of the vote. Russian hackers are charged with harming Clinton by making her own words public.

The leaked messages revealed Democratic Party leadership efforts to rig the Democratic nomination race against Sanders, as well as Clinton’s use of her cabinet position to raise money for her family foundation.

“Donald Trump’s victory and his imminent presidency are already tainted beyond redemption,” thundered *Times* columnist Charles Blow Jan. 9, claiming Trump “is as much Russia’s appointment as our elected executive.” Portraying those who voted for Trump as brainwashed dupes, Blow said, “The American people cast their ballots in the fog of fake news and under influence of stolen property weaponized as a tool of propaganda.”

Actress Meryl Streep got big applause when she mocked workers who are sports fans in her teary anti-Trump speech at the Jan. 8 Golden Globes ceremony. “The most vilified segments in American society right now” are “Hollywood, foreigners and the press,” she said. “Hollywood is crawling with outsiders and foreigners. And if we kick them all out you’ll have nothing to watch but football and mixed martial arts.”

When Trump points out that the record of the U.S. rulers’ intelligence agencies is unreliable, Democrats vigorously defend the government spies. “The quick support for the CIA may herald a new era in the agency’s relationship with Democrats,” *Politico* noted.

While crying “Russian interference!” liberals conveniently ignore Washington’s history of intervention in other countries’ affairs. President Barack Obama did everything he could to influence the Israeli election in 2015, hoping Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu would lose. Jeremy Bird, a leader of Obama’s 2012 election campaign, led a group called Victory15, which spent millions running anti-Netanyahu ads.

Democrats demonize Trump’s cabinet appointees, calling Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, Trump’s nominee for attorney general, a bigot. At his confirmation hearing this week, protesters against Sessions, some in mock Ku Klux Klan costumes, shouted, “No Trump, no KKK, no fascist USA!”

You’d have to look far and wide to find a U.S. attorney general who champions Black rights, but Sessions isn’t starkly different from the rest. “I abhor the Klan and what it represents, and its hateful ideology,” Sessions told the panel.

Democrats of all stripes are calling

for efforts to block ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson, Trump’s nominee for secretary of state. Some say he’s too chummy with Putin, because of the oil behemoth’s investments in Russia. Others say it’s unseemly for a corporate executive to serve as secretary of state. Few mention that former Secretary of State Clinton had been a Walmart board member, and notoriously silent on the company’s anti-worker labor policies.

And, after all, the rulers have always used their State Department to advance U.S. capital’s interests worldwide.

Obama, by repeatedly bypassing Congress and implementing policy by executive order, has handed Trump some easy early victories. “What can be done by the pen can be undone by the pen,” wrote William McGurn in the *Wall Street Journal* Jan. 3.

While Trump has promised to repeal and replace Obama’s Affordable Care Act — claiming he will increase competition and lower costs by lifting regulation on companies selling insurance across state lines — he has said he will maintain the popular provisions that prevent the insurance outfits from refusing coverage to people with pre-existing medical conditions and allow young people to be covered by their parents’ insurance until age 26.

“Working people and our unions have a vital stake not only in defending what we’ve fought for and won from the employing class, but above all in building a mass social and political movement of the working class to *extend these conquests as universal rights* — not means-tested charity — *for all*,” Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes explains in *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism*. “Through our labor, the working class, in this country and worldwide, produces more than enough wealth to provide education, health care, housing, and retirement to every human being on earth, for a lifetime.”

SWP in Los Angeles: ‘Workers need to unite’

Continued from front page

ing on years worked, to make up for lack of raises over four years — from \$7,000 for those with over four years on the job to \$1,000 for those with a year. “But management is offering only \$1,200 to \$1,500 for those with four years and more, and nothing for those with a year,” he said.

“They’ve delayed the negotiations and are retaliating against our members,” he said, citing examples of harsh disciplinary action being taken against unionists. “I had to defend two different workers, both misplaced their keys, both reported it immediately and said they would retrace their steps. In both cases the keys were found and turned in the same day. But instead of going through the different disciplinary steps, a warning first, etc., both were immediately suspended.”

“I’m here to give solidarity and to learn more about your fight so I can build support, and to explain how it will take more workers standing up for ourselves to take on the bosses’ attacks,” said Richter. Strikers plan to keep their picket line up for five days, and thousands of clerical workers at the university are organizing to join them Jan. 10 in a one-day solidarity strike. Richter said he would urge other workers to join

SWP, unionists show support after attack on synagogue



Inset: Militant/George Chalmers

PHILADELPHIA — For the second time in five weeks, the stained glass windows of Temple Menorah Keneseth Chai were shattered here Jan. 6.

“Rocks were thrown through the windows just before Friday night services were about to begin, scattering glass in the second-floor sanctuary,” Malcolm Adler (inset), president of the synagogue’s executive board, told the *Militant*. “No one was injured, but congregation members were very upset.” The synagogue, established in 1925, is the oldest in this Jewish community in northeast Philadelphia. The same windows were shattered with rocks Dec. 2.

Socialist Workers Party members visited the synagogue Jan. 9 to show solidarity. Mark Allendorf also came to offer support from Glaziers Union Local 252. “I live in the neighborhood,” Allendorf said. “My union called me and said to get down here and help out. We’ll provide volunteers from our local to put in the new windows.”

Adler thanked the visitors for their solidarity. He said he had contacted churches in the area and the media to get the word out on the attack.

This was just one of a number of recent anti-Semitic attacks. Jewish community centers were evacuated after receiving bomb threats Jan. 9 in Tenaflly, New Jersey; Rockville, Maryland; Jacksonville, Florida; Columbia, South Carolina; and Nashville, Tennessee, Reuters reported.

A few days earlier, the Jan. 5 *New York Times* reported other incidents of Jew-hatred, including attacks on menorahs — Hanukkah candelabras — in Brooklyn, New York, and Chandler and Sun City, Arizona. Nazi-like swastikas were painted on homes in Esperance and dug into a ball field in Levittown, both in New York, and painted on playground rides in Longmont, Colorado.

The FBI reported in November that attacks based on people’s religious affiliation rose in 2015, with attacks on Muslims rising some 67 percent. Acts of Jew-hatred made up 51 percent of the documented attacks, with attacks on Muslims comprising 22 percent and attacks on Catholics 4.5 percent.

In some cases Jews and Muslims are joining forces to protest these attacks. Jonathan Greenblatt, chief executive of the Anti-Defamation League, told the group’s conference to applause last November that if Muslims were forced to register in the U.S., “that is the day that this proud Jew will register as a Muslim.”

— CHRIS HOEPPNER

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

UNITED KINGDOM Manchester

UN Israel Vote Fuels Jew-Hatred, Blow to Palestinian Fight. Speaker: Andrés Mendoza, Communist League. Fri., Jan. 27, 7 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. M1 2EH. Tel.: (016) 1478-2496.

US gov't wants SWP names

Continued from front page

contributors giving more than \$200 to its candidates, as well as the names of the campaign's vendors.

The SWP has faced an "extraordinary history of government and private threats, violence and harassment," states the party's application for extension filed by Michael Krinsky and Lindsey Frank of the prominent civil liberties firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky and Lieberman.

For decades the FBI and other police agencies targeted the SWP, seeking to disrupt its activity in the labor movement, the fight for Black rights and the fight against imperialist war. The scope of the operation was revealed by a landmark 13-year legal battle against the government, won by the SWP in 1986.

The FBI was forced to admit in court that between 1960 and 1976 it carried out at least 204 "black bag jobs" — burglaries of party offices — deployed 1,300 undercover informers and collected over 8 million documents on the party and its members and supporters.

The FBI's Cointelpro Disruption Program, and similar operations targeting the Communist Party, Black Panther Party and other groups, were exposed and pushed back by the mass proletarian struggle to overthrow Jim Crow, the fight against Washington's war against the people of Vietnam and for the rights of women. The SWP lawsuit helped reveal the character of and deal blows to the government's political police.

In applying to extend the exemption over the last three decades, the SWP has documented how government spy agencies, local cops, bosses and rightist forces have continued to probe and attack the party. From 1990 to 2012, the FEC granted continued exemption from disclosure on those grounds.

However, both in 2009 and 2013 some FEC officials began to say the SWP exemption should be eliminated. They argued that socialist ideas were becoming more "mainstream" and the party's exemption — the only one granted by the agency — was no longer justified.

The FEC argues that the SWP no longer qualifies because "the documented instances of harassment have steadily decreased in both quantity and severity."

Continued gov't harassment, spying

"There is well-established evidence that the SWP has been subject to threats, harassment and reprisals from both government and private actors for more than 70 years — from at least 1941 to 2012," Krinsky and Frank wrote. This alone is more than sufficient evidence that the exemption is needed, they say, especially along with the continued evi-

dence of surveillance of political activity that the SWP supports and takes part in.

They then cite 33 specific examples of continued harassment, threats and reprisals over the last four years.

Among them is a break-in at the home of a well-known party candidate in Omaha, Nebraska, where nothing was stolen but a smart phone containing political contacts; smashing the window of party headquarters in Los Angeles after a public forum against Washington's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; a series of incidents of harassment by cops and threats by individuals aimed at supporters campaigning door to door across the country; examples of individuals who expressed support for the party but declined to sign petitions or subscribe to the *Militant* for fear of reprisal from bosses or the government; and ongoing attempts to ban workers behind bars from receiving the *Militant*, which editorially supports SWP candidates, because of its political content.

The application highlights the escalation of spy agencies targeting unions and political activity in recent years. While government spies and provocateurs no longer claim the "Communist menace" justifies their violations of constitutional rights, today they say the "war against terror" means they should continue the same assaults on political rights. FBI-run Fusion Centers, Joint Terrorism Task Forces, special state police units and city Muslim squads, have expanded across the country, as well as electronic surveillance by outfits like the National Security Agency.

"Indeed, this current surveillance is eerily similar to the extensive surveillance of the SWP by the FBI," the two



Militant/Laura Anderson

Recent escalation of spy agencies targeting unions and political activity is "eerily similar to extensive surveillance of the SWP by FBI." Above, Puerto Rican high school students take part in 2011 Chicago protest against FBI harassment of antiwar activists in the Midwest.

lawyers write, pointing to recent revelations of spying on protests against cop killings, strikes and lockouts, actions for \$15 and a union, and attacks on mosques and Muslim communities. The SWP champions all these fights and SWP members participate in them.

The FEC makes no attempt to counter or even discuss this documentation. It simply ignores it.

"In today's growing capitalist economic crisis, the rulers in Washington increasingly fear the working class, seeing larger class battles breaking out down the road," John Studer, SWP national campaign director, told the *Militant*. "That's why they seek to expand spy and disruption operations today."

FEC says SWP too successful

The commission draft claims that the SWP no longer qualifies as a "minor" party, which is one basis for an

exemption, because the party's 2016 presidential ticket of Alyson Kennedy and Osborne Hart received some 12,000 votes and working people contributed \$80,000 to their campaign. The SWP received more votes in a number of previous elections, but that was never a reason to deny the exemption.

No one can argue the SWP rivals the Democrats and Republicans today. Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump got more than 60 million votes each and raised and spent billions of dollars.

"It's true the SWP is getting a wide hearing on workers' doorsteps," Studer said. "We wish we were bigger and could organize the working class to challenge the propertied rulers for political power.

"But that's a ways down the road," he said, "and until then we deserve the protection of the exemption for our contributors."

Prisoners in UK protest inhuman conditions

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

LONDON — Recently inmates in England have exploded in anger over brutal conditions, briefly taking over several prison wings. Conditions have worsened as the prison population nearly doubled over the last two decades. This is spurring debate within the ruling class on "prison reform," and poses important questions for working people.

The biggest eruption took place at Her Majesty's Prison in Birmingham Dec. 16, involving some 600 inmates. Guards withdrew from four wings as prisoners took control for 12 hours. It reportedly started when a guard was overpowered and his keys seized, allowing inmates to move between wings.

Special "Tornado Teams" of guards and riot police were brought to suppress the protest. Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss said the prisoners would "face the full force of the law" and 550 inmates were sent to other prisons.

"They cancel gym all the time, the showers are cold, the food is crap, the heating is never on and we never get our mail on time," said a prisoner who called the *Birmingham Mail* during the incident.

Similar actions took place at Bedford prison Nov. 6 and Swaleside Dec. 23, with smaller incidents reported at other facilities over recent months.

Many press reports referred to the protests as "rioting" and "rampaging." Three Birmingham prisoners were reportedly taken to the hospital, including one with a fractured jaw and broken eye socket, but there were no reports of injured guards. Prisoners there lit fires

and destroyed some files, reported the *Guardian*.

Lockdowns were an issue at all three prisons. The Swaleside protest started after guards seized some inmates' possessions, following objections by prisoners who would be locked in their cells at Christmas, the BBC reported.

A government survey found 38 percent of young adult prisoners are locked up for more than 22 hours a day. "If you are telling people they will spend 23 out of 24 hours a day locked in basically a toilet, then you're breeding a lot of boredom and frustration," Andrew Neilson, a spokesperson of the Howard League for Penal Reform, told the BBC Nov. 7. Bedford prison is overcrowded. It was built for 322 prisoners, but houses 495. Another sign of deteriorating conditions is the inmate suicide rate, which is more than 10 times higher than the general population. Suicides reached a new high in 2016, 102 as of Nov. 28.

Drug use is widespread. A Birmingham prisoner told the *Mail* there had been two deaths from a potent form of synthetic marijuana in the two weeks before the protest.

From April 2015 to March 2016 there were 22,195 assaults by prisoners on fellow inmates, reported the Ministry of Justice, an increase of 31 percent over the previous year.

Nearly 12,000 prisoners work at prison jobs, earning an average of £10 (\$12) a week, and as little as £4.

On Nov. 3, Truss announced plans to hire 2,500 guards and build two new prisons, increasing capacity by 10,000. Some 7,000 guard positions were elimi-

nated in budget cuts in recent years. The Prison Officers Association uses the rise in violence to campaign for more guards. It staged a walkout Nov. 15.

Richard Burgon, the Labour Party shadow justice secretary, has backed the guards." So did the *Morning Star*, which reflects the views of the Communist Party. "Securing the necessary level of well trained, well treated and well paid staff is [an] urgent requirement," the paper editorialized Dec. 24. "Prison officers will need and deserve our support and solidarity in 2017."

Three former ministers — Kenneth Clarke (Conservative), Jacqui Smith (Labour) and Nicholas Clegg (Liberal Democrat) — had a different approach. In a joint letter to the *London Times* Dec. 22 they said that "to restore order, security and purpose to our jails," prisoner numbers need to be cut by half.

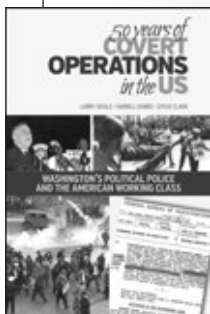
They traced the rise in the prison population to 1993, when Conservative Home Secretary Michael Howard coined the phrase "prison works." Numbers in England and Wales increased on his watch from under 45,000 to more than 61,000 in 1997. The subsequent Labour government outdid the Conservatives, adding another 23,000.

The prison population peaked in 2012 and has since declined slightly. Today, over 85,000 are imprisoned in England and Wales, and an additional 7,500 in Scotland and 1,600 in Northern Ireland.

While fights can be waged to break down barriers between inmates and the outside world, the capitalist prison system can't be reformed in the interests of working people.

50 Years of Covert Operations in the US

by Larry Seigle, Farrell Dobbs, Steve Clark



The 13-year political campaign of the Socialist Workers Party to expose decades of spying and disruption by the FBI and other federal cop agencies targeting working-class organizations and other opponents of government policies.

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Mumia Abu-Jamal wins fight for medical care behind bars

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Mumia Abu-Jamal scored an important victory in his fight to get treatment for hepatitis C, strengthening the fight for thousands of working people behind bars to receive this life-saving medical care. U.S. District Judge Robert Mariani ruled Jan. 3 that Pennsylvania prison authorities must begin treating Abu-Jamal with direct-acting antiviral drugs.

Abu-Jamal is a radio journalist and former Black Panther imprisoned for the last 35 years on frame-up charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer. He was on death row for 29 years, until the U.S. Court of Appeals, under pressure of a growing international campaign, changed his sentence in 2011 to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

After falling severely ill in 2015, Abu-Jamal was diagnosed with chronic hepatitis C, an often fatal viral infection that causes progressive scarring of the liver and related conditions. The disease is especially prevalent in prisons, with an average infection rate of more than 17 percent among inmates nationwide.

Since 2013, several new drugs have made it possible to cure hepatitis C in more than 90 percent of cases, with far fewer side effects. But the pharmaceutical monopolies charge up to \$1,000 a pill. A 12-week course of these medicines can sell for more than \$80,000, though the manufacturing cost is more like \$200. Prison officials across the country deny treatment to the overwhelming majority of infected prisoners.

Pennsylvania prison doctors said Abu-Jamal wasn't sick enough to receive the new drugs, so he sued for the right to treatment. Judge Mariani ruled Aug. 31 that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections protocol for approving the medicines "presents deliberate indifference to the known risks which follow from untreated chronic hepatitis C." Its effect is to "prolong the suffering" of patients and "allow the progression of the disease to accelerate." But the judge denied Abu-Jamal's request for relief on a technicality, saying he'd named the wrong defendants.

Abu-Jamal filed a new suit, leading to the Jan. 3 ruling. Mariani found state officials' actions violated the Eighth Amendment, which prohibits cruel and unusual punishment. Mariani noted that although prison officials had tweaked their protocol for hepatitis C treatment,

it still "presents a conscious disregard of a known risk that inmates with fibrosis, like Plaintiff, will suffer from hepatitis C related complications." He ordered that Abu-Jamal be seen by a doctor who can prescribe the life-saving drugs and begin treatment within three weeks.

"Spread the word, because this is not what the Commonwealth [of Pennsylvania] wants people to know about — that they are engaged in unconstitutional medical practices," Abu-Jamal told Prison Radio in a phone call Jan. 4. "Here we have a cure, and the government of Pennsylvania refused to give it to thousands of people for years, until they got to the brink of death."

The judge found that as of June 6, only 50 of the more than 5,400 inmates with chronic hepatitis C in Pennsylvania state prisons had been treated with direct-acting antiviral drugs.

The victory in Abu-Jamal's suit comes at the same time a separate class-action lawsuit is making its way through the courts demanding the right to treatment for all Pennsylvania prisoners with hepatitis C. Similar suits have been filed in Massachusetts, Min-



Above, Medecins Sans Frontieres
Above, protesters in New Delhi, India, Feb. 26 oppose granting patent to U.S. pharmaceutical company Gilead for new hepatitis C drug that would cost \$1,000 a pill. Inset, Mumia Abu-Jamal waged successful fight in prison to get access to such drugs, strengthening fight for medical care for all those behind bars.

nesota and Tennessee.

"This is the first case in the country in which a federal court has ordered prison officials to provide an incarcerated patient with the new medications," Bret Grote of the Abolitionist Law Center, one of Abu-Jamal's attorneys, told the press Jan. 4.

"We're asking people to call John Wetzel, secretary of the Department of Corrections, and demand they don't appeal" the judge's order, Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and

Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal told the *Militant* by phone Jan. 9. "This fight has been going on for two years already. Often by the time prisoners do get the pill their liver is destroyed."

There will be a demonstration outside Gov. Tom Wolf's office in Philadelphia Jan. 13. "Our immediate fight is to stop any appeal," Africa said. "And we're fighting for them to lower the price so people can get this medicine. It's not just prisoners, but people on the street can't afford it either."

US prison population drops to 10-year low

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The United States prison population in 2015 declined to its lowest level in a decade, the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics reported last month. There were 35,500 fewer workers held behind bars, 2.3 percent less than 2014. The drop reflected the impact of inmate protests and growing outrage over severe overcrowding and decrepit living conditions for those behind bars as the numbers caught up in the web of the capitalist "justice" system has skyrocketed over the past several decades.

The U.S. has the world's highest incarceration rate. Some 1.5 million people were held in federal or state prisons in 2015, up from about 200,000 in 1970; another 750,000 are incarcerated in local jails; and 4.8 million are on parole or

probation. A disproportionate number are African-American, some 40 percent of those behind bars.

The number of workers thrown into prison had soared over the past 25 years. During the eight years of the Bill Clinton presidency, between 1993 and 2001, the number of people locked behind bars jumped by nearly 60 percent. Clinton expanded funds for cops and their armaments, crack cocaine possession sentences, established mandatory minimum sentences and other steps that filled the prisons, signing the "Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act" and the grotesquely named "Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act."

Use of the death penalty fell last year, as well as public support for the anti-

working-class practice. Thirty death sentences were handed down in 2016, a 40 percent drop from the previous year and fewer than at any time since the Supreme Court reinstated capital punishment in 1976. Only five states carried out executions in 2016.

The biggest decline of prisoners in 2015 — 40 percent of the total — was in federal penitentiaries. State facilities, which hold more than 85 percent of the country's prisoners, also saw cuts, including in Alaska, Colorado, Kentucky, Maryland and South Carolina. In California, tens of thousands of inmates have been freed over the past few years, since a 2009 U.S. Supreme Court ruling ordered the state to reduce its prison population to 137.5 percent of institutional capacity.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 24, 1992

SEATTLE — The Washington Association of Churches (WAC) has initiated a Refugee Defense Committee to counter a government attack upon Central American refugees and church-sponsored refugee assistance programs here.

On August 14, heavily armed INS agents burst into the WAC Immigration and Refugee Program (IRP) offices in Seattle. They ordered staffers to leave and spent hours searching the premises before removing computers, files, rolodexes, even a Christmas party guest list.

The government then convened a federal grand jury and subpoenaed several IRP staffers and more than a dozen Salvadoran immigrants. At the same time, the court kept secret the INS affidavits justifying the investigation.

The August raid came amidst a growing number of INS roundups directed at immigrant workers in industry and working in the fields in Washington.



January 23, 1967

The savage character of the Pentagon's war plans for south Vietnam is being vividly revealed in a series of *New York Times* dispatches on "Operation Cedar Falls," the most massive U.S. campaign in the history of the war. "Operation Cedar Falls" began Jan. 8 and it involves over 16,000 combat troops, mainly from the First Infantry Division.

The campaign is designed to demolish every single hut, including four villages, in a 60 square mile area 30 miles northwest of Saigon known as the "Iron Triangle." The area has been a "sanctuary" for the "enemy" for "more than 20(!) years," according to the Jan. 13 *Times*.

The area has been bombarded by B-52s and it is saturation shelled by ground artillery. Troops murdered most of the men, removed the women and children to refugee concentration camps, and burned the villages to the ground.



January 24, 1942

The Jim Crow treatment of Negro soldiers in Southern training camps led to open riots last week in Alexandria, Louisiana. Ever since Negro draftees, mainly from the North, were sent into the heart of the deep South, where they faced insult, segregation and terrorism on a scale far greater than above the Mason and Dixon line, all indications have pointed to inevitable and bloody outbreaks.

Violence broke out in the heart of the local colored section, allegedly when a white M.P. arrested a Negro soldier on charges of not paying admission to a theatre. It is claimed that the M.P. started to beat the soldier, when several colored soldiers who were passing by, jumped into the fight.

State police were summoned by the M.P.'s and civilians of both races joined in the fighting. Guns, bricks, rocks, and finally tear gas were used in the battle.

"It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System"

The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class \$15



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Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom

Firsthand account by Harry Villegas (‘Pombo’) on Cuba’s internationalist missions

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Those unwilling to fight for the freedom of others will never be able to fight for their own.

FIDEL CASTRO
Pinar del Río, July 1976

If our people know themselves better, if all of us know much better what we are capable of achieving, that too is thanks to Angola!

RAÚL CASTRO
Havana, May 1991

Between 1975 and 1991, some 425,000 Cuban volunteers, organized by Cuba’s revolutionary leadership, served in Angola. In various deployments, they

INTRODUCTION TO NEW BOOK

went there in response to a call for assistance from the Angolan government. In 1975 the people of that African country had just wrested freedom from Portugal after nearly five centuries of brutal colonial exploitation and domination. Now they were under attack by the white-supremacist regime of South Africa and its African and international allies.

The purpose of the Cuban mission, which stretched over sixteen years, was to help Angola defend itself and decisively repel this military aggression backed by Washington. The mission ended only after the armed forces of the apartheid regime had been dealt a decisive defeat in March 1988 at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola while, at the same time, a formidable force of Cuban, Angolan, and Namibian combatants swept south, toward the bases of the South African regime in its colony, Namibia.

Simultaneously fearful of the exploding mass antiapartheid struggle within South Africa itself, Pretoria sued for peace. A tripartite agreement between Angola, South Africa, and Cuba, ne-



Cuban and Angolan soldiers celebrate August 1983 after withstanding weeklong assault on village of Cangamba, despite being outnumbered by U.S.- and South African-backed UNITA. Between 1975 and 1991 more than 425,000 Cuban internationalists aided Angola in face of attacks by white supremacist South African regime and its allies. Inset, wounded Cuban combatants being evacuated from Cangamba.

gotiated over five months, was signed at United Nations headquarters in New York in December 1988. It recognized not only the legitimacy and sovereignty of the Angolan government in Luanda but also the independence of Namibia. It gave further confidence to workers and youth in South Africa fighting the apartheid state.

As Nelson Mandela, the central leader of the struggle to bring down the racist regime, told the people of Cuba and the world in July 1991, the defeat of the South African army at Cuito Cuanavale was made possible by Cuba’s “unparalleled” contribution. It was “a victory for all of Africa,” he said, “a turning point in the struggle to free the continent and our country from the scourge of apartheid!”

Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom is a firsthand account of that historic internationalist mission in Angola, as told by Harry Villegas, a brigadier general of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed

Forces (FAR), who is better known around the world as “Pombo.” That was the Swahili nom de guerre given to Villegas by Ernesto Che Guevara. Pombo fought at Che’s side for a decade — first in the revolutionary war on Cuban soil that brought down the US-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in January 1959, and then in internationalist missions in the Congo and Bolivia.

After Guevara fell in battle in Bolivia in October 1967, Villegas led the five surviving combatants of Che’s guerrilla front — two Bolivians and three Cubans — who evaded capture by the Bolivian army and US intelligence forces for four months. Villegas and the two other Cubans eventually escaped across the border into Chile, and in March 1968 they returned to Havana.

In April 1974 the fifty-year-old, deeply decayed fascist dictatorship in Portugal was overthrown in a military coup led by young officers. A revolutionary upsurge of Portuguese workers and farmers erupted. The old regime had faced rising opposition at home, as well as advancing national liberation struggles in each of its African colonies, especially Guinea-Bissau. The new government in Lisbon was forced to recognize the independence of all its African territories.

As Portugal’s brutal colonial hold over its African empire was being broken, other imperialist powers had for years been maneuvering to grab what they could. With independence day for Angola — Portugal’s largest and richest colony — approaching on November 11, 1975, they accelerated their efforts.

Just months earlier, in April 1975, the victorious national liberation forces of Vietnam had driven US troops and personnel out of Saigon, soon renamed Ho Chi Minh City. Now, on top of that blow to the imperialist world order, the future of all southern Africa was at stake, from the Congo and what was then Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), down to the Cape of Good Hope. For Pretoria — encouraged and backhandedly supplied by Washington — survival of the apartheid regime itself was on the table.

The first invasion of Angola by South African and Zairean troops began in October 1975 as armored columns crossed the border from their bases in South-West Africa (Namibia) and drove north. A military offensive simultaneously swept south from Zaire (Congo). Zaire’s proimperialist Mobutu dictatorship hoped to annex the oil-rich province of Cabinda and take whatever other Angolan territory it could.

The objective of these combined operations was to conquer Luanda, the capital city, before November 11, to prevent the installation of a government headed by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the strongest of the anticolonial movements, with the broadest popular base. With planned celebrations barely a week away, Luanda was in danger of falling.

The response of the leadership of the Cuban government and people to the urgent request for aid from Angola’s MPLA-led provisional government was immediate and decisive. Within hours Operation Carlota was launched — named in tribute to the African woman who had led two rebellions against slavery and colonial oppression in Cuba before being captured and brutally executed in 1843.

The day before the independence ceremony in Luanda, some 200 just-landed Cuban internationalist volunteers joined the Angolan defenders. Together they turned back the column moving south from Zaire that was poised on the door-



After fall of fascist regime in Portugal in April 1974, new government was forced to recognize independence of all its African colonies. Cuba responded to newly independent Angola’s request to help it repel South African invaders.



Fidel Castro and Harry Villegas in 1988. Villegas served three tours of duty in Angola and from 1981 to 1988 he was the liaison between the Cuban command headquarters in Angola and the special command post in Cuba of the Revolutionary Armed Forces headed by Fidel Castro.

steps of the capital. The immediate objective of South Africa and its imperialist allies had been stymied.

Less than five months later, with thirty-six thousand Cuban volunteers by then on the ground, allied with Angolan troops, the military forces of both the South African apartheid regime and Mobutu dictatorship had been driven out of Angola.

But that was only the beginning. More than a decade of what was euphemistically called “low intensity warfare” against the Angolan regime ensued. South African forces regularly operated deep in Angolan territory in support of UNITA, Pretoria’s Angolan ally, led by Jonas Savimbi. The brutality of the war was enormous, with Angolan casualties eventually rising to hundreds of thousands. Nearly 2,100 Cubans also lost their lives on Angolan soil before their mission was completed.

Then, in late 1987, South African troops began their second major invasion in hopes of inflicting a crushing defeat on Angolan forces. But the apartheid regime had once again miscalculated — the crushing defeat was theirs.

The Cuban and Angolan leaderships had come to agreement, as Cuban leader Fidel Castro put it, that the time was ripe to “cut off the hands” of South Africa in Angola, and that is what they did. The March 1988 victory at a village in southern Angola known as Cuito Cuanavale echoed around the world — and across South Africa above all. In Nelson Mandela’s words, that victory “broke the myth of the invincibility of the white oppressors.”

Less than two years later, Mandela, imprisoned for more than twenty-seven years by the apartheid state, walked free. By 1994 the racist regime was no more, and Mandela was president of South Africa.

In May 1991 Cuban Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces Raúl Castro welcomed home the last unit of



December 1991 African National Congress rally, Soweto, South Africa. Defeat of South African invasion of Angola at Cuito Cuanavale in March 1988 “broke the myth of the invincibility of the white oppressors,” said Nelson Mandela. Less than two years later he was free. By 1994 white supremacist apartheid regime was gone and Mandela was president of South Africa.

internationalist volunteers returning from Angola. “When we face new and unexpected challenges,” he told the Cuban people, “we will always be able to recall the epic of Angola with gratitude, because without Angola we would not be as strong as we are today.”

The truth of those words was soon put to the test. As the Soviet Union and its allied regimes in Eastern and Central Europe shattered between 1989 and 1991, some 85 percent of Cuba’s foreign trade disappeared, almost overnight, crippling agricultural and industrial production, transportation, electrical generation, and much more. The Cuban Revolution confronted the most severe economic, and political, crisis in its history. Enemies of the revolution around the world started packing their bags in anticipation of what they believed would be a triumphal return to Havana.

Instead, it was the creativity and steadfastness of Cuba’s working people that triumphed, as they organized against all odds to produce and to defend their socialist revolution. One element underpinning that victory was the proletarian confidence gained over the years of the Angolan mission — and, in the late 1980s, the simultaneous rebirth in Cuba of a mass social movement of volunteer labor to build housing, schools, clinics, child care centers, and other social necessities.

The hundreds of thousands of Cubans who over the years had taken part in the epic feat in Africa returned knowing much better the true face of capitalist exploitation and imperialist domination. And in Raúl’s words, Cuban working people knew “much better what we are capable of achieving.”

The political education and combat leadership experience gained by new generations of Cubans during the Angola mission was nowhere better revealed than in the example set by the Cuban revolutionaries who became known around the world as the Cuban Five.

Arrested in Florida in 1998, where they were monitoring the activities of Cuban counterrevolutionary organizations planning

attacks on Cuban and US targets, the five were railroaded to prison by the Clinton administration on fabricated charges that included conspiracy to commit espionage and even murder. They each served draconian sentences of up to sixteen years behind bars. Their freedom and return home to Cuba, including the release of the final three on December 17, 2014, was won only through their own steadfastness and the relentless work of the Cuban government together with a hard-fought international solidarity campaign.

Three of the five — Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, and René González — had served in Angola. Their stories told firsthand can be found in Pathfinder’s *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own*. For each of them, as they have explained many times over, their time as part of this internationalist military mission was an experience that transformed their lives and on which they drew continuously for strength throughout their long years of incarceration.

Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom by Harry Villegas is not a military memoir. It does contain powerful eyewitness accounts of moments of combat and decisive battles in Cangamba and Cuito Cuanavale among others. Its greatest value, however, lies in the political lessons it conveys — lessons, as Pombo makes clear, that were impressed on him above all by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro, with whom he

worked on this mission for more than half a decade.

General Harry Villegas served three tours of duty in Angola, one from 1977 to 1979 at the head of the Motorized Infantry Regiment in the northern region. The Cuban unit collaborated with the Angolan army in mop-up operations against the Zairian-backed forces of Holden Roberto’s FNLA.

From 1981 to 1988 Villegas served as liaison between the Cuban command headquarters in Angola and the special command post in Cuba of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, headed by Fidel Castro. In that capacity, as Pombo describes in these pages, he was the eyes and ears of the central command in Havana. He traveled constantly between the two countries, responsible for keeping the general staff in Havana objectively and accurately informed of all important developments in Angola and conveying precise instructions back to the head of the mission on the battlefield.

After the accords were signed in December 1988, Villegas remained in Angola as head of operations for the Cuban mission, helping to plan the withdrawal of the Cuban forces. On returning to Cuba in 1990, he led the Political Section of Cuba’s Western Army, and served as a member of the Operations Directorate of the General Staff of the Revolutionary Armed Forces until his retirement from active duty.

It is on this experience that Villegas bases his rich account, aimed first and

Continued on page 8



More than a million working people march in Havana on May Day 2015, in show of support for Cuba’s socialist revolution. March was led by medical volunteers returned from battling Ebola in West Africa. Internationalist mission in Angola strengthened self-confidence of Cuban working people to confront challenges today.

US rulers groomed Bill Clinton to lead Democrats to ‘center’

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 “Roots of the 2008 World Financial Crisis,” written in May of that year. Barnes describes the grooming of Bill Clinton as a “new” Democrat to shift the party to the “center.” Copyright © 2016 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

Prior to Clinton’s election to the presidency in 1992, dominant sectors of the US ruling class had molded him to lead Democratic Party liberals rightward, to the “center.”

Since the mid-1970s, when capital-

FROM THE PAGES OF **THE CLINTONS’ ANTI- WORKING-CLASS RECORD**

ism was hit with its first worldwide recession since World War II, the employing class has had diminishing room for substantial economic and social concessions to working people. Clinton’s job was to distance the Democratic Party from the “New Deal”-style social welfare programs many workers identified with that party. It had claimed credit for them ever since rising labor battles in the 1930s wrenched concessions from Franklin D. Roosevelt’s administration during the Great Depression. From the New Deal through Lyndon Johnson’s “Great Society” in the mid-1960s, those programs had been



AP/J. Scott Applewhite

President Bill Clinton signs law to “end welfare as we know it,” eliminating Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Aug. 22, 1996. Lillie Harden, left, introduced Clinton at ceremony. In 2002, after suffering a stroke, she was denied Medicaid, which she’d gotten while receiving AFDC payments, and couldn’t afford a monthly \$450 prescription. She died in 2014 at age 59.

the glue that held together the diverse Democratic Party coalition.

While draping itself in the Democrats’ “progressive” mantle, the Clinton administration set out to change the party’s complexion to such a degree that what had previously been its “moderate center” would become its broad majority and redefine what a liberal Democrat is. His apprenticeship included officiating twelve years as governor of Arkansas, as well as chairing the National Governors Association in 1986-87 and then, in 1991, the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), which had

been founded six years earlier to help push the party in that direction.

Two years into Clinton’s presidency, in November 1994, a Republican majority was elected in the House

of Representatives, and a bipartisan convergence quickened. In 1996 alone “welfare as we know it” was wiped off the books; the “Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act” was adopted; and the “Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act” was enacted, the biggest assault on the rights of the foreign-born since the end of World War II.

The Clinton administration also accelerated steps by the US rulers to try to counteract the declining rate of profit and the employers’ “inadequate” returns on capital expenditures. The goal was to “encourage” the capitalists to expand industrial plant and equipment and employ growing numbers of workers in production. To that end, the administration and Congress adopted legislation that, along with other White House measures, helped the employing class erect the enormous edifice of household, real estate, corporate, and government debt, and its accompanying array of derivatives, that began to unravel with the first signs of a world financial crisis in 2007 and its acceleration early this year.

Cuba, Angola: War for Freedom

Continued from page 7

foremost at the political education of new generations of revolutionary combatants.



Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom is the product of multiple interviews with Harry Villegas between 2009 and 2016. Each round amplified and clarified details of previous discussions. In addition, during those years dozens of memoirs of the Angola mission appeared in Cuba, published by Verde Olivo, Editora Política, and others.

Firsthand accounts by those who served in Angola include books by General Ramón Espinosa, vice minister of the FAR; General Raúl Tomashevich, who twice headed the military mission in Angola; his adjutant Lt. Colonel José Gárciga; and Lt. Colonel Jorge Martín Blandino. These and other accounts too numerous to mention proved indispensable for understanding political and military events and verifying names, dates, and other facts.

Published in the US in 2013, and in Cuba in 2015, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976–1991* by Piero Gleijeses, became an additional source of valuable information.

The Pathfinder editors who interviewed Pombo and worked with him to bring his account to completion — Martín Koppel, Róger Calero, and I — are grateful for the generous help we received from so many, starting with Pombo himself. Special appreciation is also owed Iraida Aguirrechu and José

Gárciga for their editorial assistance throughout, as well as to Verde Olivo publishing house, Casa Editora Abril and *Granma* newspaper for making available many of the photos that appear in this book.

It is to revolutionary combatants of the present and future that *Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom* is addressed. We are confident it will serve them well in the battles ahead.

December 2016

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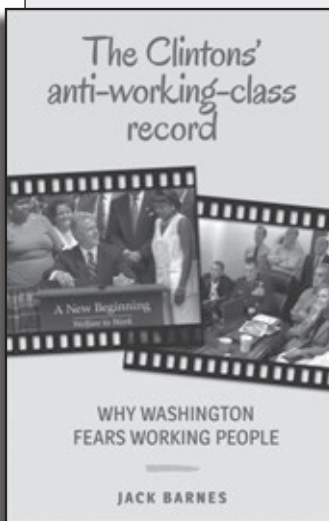
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For the first time in decades, the US rulers have begun to fear the working class

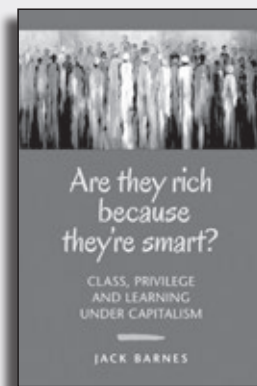
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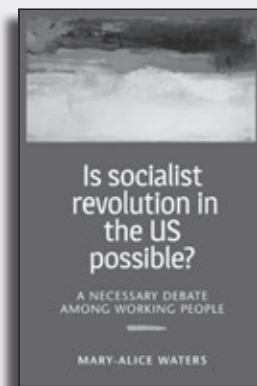


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Oppose rulers’ use of death penalty!

The Obama Justice Department’s successful effort to secure the death penalty for white supremacist Dylann Storm Roof is part of the rulers’ attempt to divide the working class, to erode democratic rights and to prepare the way for more attacks on working people here and in other countries.

“A death verdict for Roof strengthens the repressive powers of the state, and gives it the false aura of justice,” said Mumia Abu-Jamal Dec. 22 on Prison Radio. “My opposition is unequivocal.” Abu-Jamal, whose own death sentence on frame-up charges was overturned in 2011 as a result of an international defense campaign, couldn’t be more right.

Opposing the capitalist government’s use of the death penalty is a class question. The propertied rulers took advantage of the abhorrence workers feel for Roof’s 2015 cold-blooded terrorist massacre of nine African-American parishioners in Charleston, South Carolina, to try to give a facelift to one of their weapons against the working class.

Roof, whose middle name evokes the memory of Adolf Hitler’s Nazi storm troopers, is clearly a true believer. He openly states his support for the Ku Klux Klan, calls Hitler “a saint,” and believes “Jews are indeed our enemy.”

But the rulers’ target in imposing the death penalty is neither Roof nor white supremacy, it’s the revolutionary fighting potential of the working class.

“The U.S. rulers and their government have begun to *fear* the working class,” Socialist Workers Party leader Steve Clark explained in the introduction to *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. They “recognize that more and more working people are beginning to see that the bosses and their political parties have no ‘solutions’ that don’t further load the costs — monetary and human — of the crisis of *their* system on *us*.” The capitalist rulers and well-paid professionals who serve them “sense that mounting struggle — *class struggle* — lies ahead.

The capitalists and their government use the death penalty to intimidate political activists and working people. They want to put a damper on growing opposition to the death penalty, increased protests against police killings and opposition to the mass incarceration that has mushroomed under Democratic and Republican administrations alike. Working people should oppose every move that strengthens their hand, including the death sentence for Roof.

UK prime minister courts Gulf monarchs

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

The Gulf Cooperation Council — composed of leaders of the Sunni-led Gulf monarchies in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — met Dec. 6-7 in Bahrain. Central to the agenda was how to confront the growing strength and reach of Shiite-led Tehran. Discussion ranged from the war in Yemen, where a Tehran-backed insurgency is fighting Saudi forces, to Iraq and Syria, where Shiite militias and Iranian troops are active.

British Prime Minister Theresa May attended and addressed the conference. All the Gulf autocracies are former British colonies.

She offered the services of British imperialist forces in boosting “security” for the rulers in the Gulf, and pledged London would help “push back against Iran’s aggressive regional actions, whether in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Syria or in the Gulf itself.”

Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei responded to May’s trip, accusing Britain and the United States of seeking to provoke conflicts among the main Sunni and Shiite branches of Islam. “The old British policy

of ‘divide and conquer’ is seriously on the agenda of Islam’s enemies,” he said.

For London, the meeting also provided an opportunity to advance the fortunes of U.K. capital. “As the U.K. leaves the EU, we should seize the opportunity to forge a new trade arrangement between the U.K. and the Gulf,” May said. British exports to the Gulf states were £22 billion (\$27 billion) in 2015, higher than U.K. exports to China and more than double those to India. The BBC reported London hopes to boost trade to \$38 billion over the next five years.

“Gulf security is our security, your prosperity is our prosperity,” she told the monarchs.

At the same time, Anglo-Dutch oil giant Royal Dutch Shell signed an agreement with Tehran to cooperate in developing Iranian oil and gas fields.

The U.K. was a party to the 2015 deal forged by Washington and Tehran to limit Iran’s nuclear development. Shortly afterwards London and Tehran reopened embassies in their respective countries. They had been shuttered after violent protests outside the British Embassy in Tehran in 2011.

Protests demand ‘Free Oscar López!’

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support of independence for Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony.

Support for López’s freedom extends far beyond those who demand independence. Leaders of all the main religious denominations in Puerto Rico, as well as the local affiliates of the Democratic and Republican parties, all call for his release.

“I am asking the voices that are clamoring for his freedom in the public arena to continue,” said Archbishop Roberto González Nieves at the end of Christmas mass in San Juan last month.

Newly elected Gov. Ricardo Rosselló, a leader of the Republican Party affiliate on the island, sent a letter to Obama Nov. 30 asking him to grant López clemency. Former President Jimmy Carter wrote Obama Dec. 13, encouraging him to release López.

In 1981 López was arrested and accused of being a leader of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN), which took credit for several bombings in the U.S. of businesses with investments in Puerto Rico.

But U.S. prosecutors never presented any evidence that López was involved in the bombings or any other act of violence. Instead, the main charge against him was “seditious conspiracy.” Others arrested the year before on similar charges have all been released.

A birthday celebration in San Juan for López Jan. 6, attended by about 100 supporters and family members, was widely covered in the press in Puerto Rico.

López’s daughter Clarisa read his letter at the event.

Rafael Cancel Miranda, who spent more than 25 years in jail in the U.S. for his activities in support of independence for the island, was the featured speaker at a similar event in Ponce.

The Three Kings Day Parade in Chicago was dedicated to López. Many lining the route chanted along with the members of a contingent in the New York Three Kings Day Parade carrying a banner that said “Free Oscar López.” Others gave thumbs up or raised clenched fists as it passed by.

López has received widespread union support, both in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Richard Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO union federation, sent a letter to Obama in December, reiterating the federation’s support for his release.

Because of the depth of the capitalist economic crisis, made worse because of its colonial exploitation, thousands of Puerto Ricans leave the island every month. There are now more Puerto Ricans living in the U.S. than in Puerto Rico.

“We can be 8 million strong,” López said in his letter, “uniting the Puerto Ricans of the diaspora with the Puerto Ricans in our small archipelago.”

Supporters of López’s fight are asking people to call the White House every Friday at (202) 456-1111 to press for his release.

Write López at: Oscar López Rivera #87651-024, FCI Terre Haute, P.O. Box 33, Terre Haute, IN 47808.

Mideast shifts

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hostility of the ruling classes in Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey to the Kurdish national struggle.

Washington is deeply involved with both Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government in organizing the military campaign to defeat Islamic State in Mosul, just 50 miles west of Erbil. In addition to its massive air power, Washington boosted its troops on the ground in Iraq to around 6,000, the highest number in years.

In addition to the Iraqi army and Kurdish peshmerga fighters, militias organized and trained by both Tehran and Ankara are fighting around Mosul. The Iranian-backed Shiite militias are part of the extension of the Iranian ruling class’s reach in a region extending from the Pakistan-Afghanistan border through Iraq and Syria to the coast of Lebanon.

The agreements on moves against the PKK in Sinjar, 80 miles west of Mosul, are part of competition for control in the areas being liberated from Islamic State. In November 2015, Kurdish forces drove Islamic State out of Sinjar, ending 15 months of brutal rule, especially directed against the Yazidi religious minority. That victory was won by combined forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government peshmerga, the Turkish PKK and the Syrian Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG).

The Turkish government, which is carrying out a war against the PKK and the Kurdish population inside Turkey, is demanding the group vacate Sinjar. The ruling Kurdistan Democratic Party in Erbil, whose government has diplomatic and trade ties with Ankara, also opposes the PKK’s presence there. PKK leaders have said they will withdraw once a Yazidi force capable of defending the area is in place.

At the same time Ankara is pressing its military campaign inside Syria, directed especially against the YPG, which it claims is part of the PKK. As part of growing relations between Ankara and Moscow, Russian warplanes carried out a week of airstrikes in support of the Turkish-led push to take al-Bab, Syria, from Islamic State. Ankara’s offensive is aimed at keeping the YPG from uniting the two regions they control.

Tearing up Iran deal ‘not going to happen’

The de facto collaboration of Washington and Tehran in the battle for Mosul is an example of what the U.S. imperialist rulers hoped to gain from the nuclear accord the Barack Obama administration reached with the Iranian government in 2015. President-elect Donald Trump has criticized “the horrible Iran deal,” but any sudden shift in U.S. policy is unlikely.

“Tearing it up at the front end, in my opinion, is not going to happen,” Bob Corker, the Republican chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told reporters Jan. 6. Doing so would “create a crisis” at a time when Washington has “lots of challenges to deal with around the world.”

Uncertainty over the course of the incoming Trump administration comes in the lead up to Iran’s May elections, where President Hassan Rouhani is seeking a second term. The death of former President Hashemi Rafsanjani Jan. 8 is potentially a destabilizing factor.

Rafsanjani was a prominent figure in the government that came to power following the overthrow of the hated U.S.-backed shah in a massive popular revolution in 1979. The capitalist rulers carried out a counterrevolution through a government dominated by Islamic clerics to tame the rebellion of workers, peasants, oppressed nationalities and women. Over the next decade they imposed strict curbs on free speech, used military force to suppress the Kurdish people and persecuted communist and opposition organizations.

Rafsanjani later concluded that restrictions they imposed on democratic rights went too far and could backfire. He spoke out against the police crackdown on a wave of protests accusing then-President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of stealing the election in 2009 and backed Rouhani over Ahmadinejad in 2013.

Rafsanjani played a significant role in pushing through the 2015 deal with Washington.

At the massive funeral for Rafsanjani, some people chanted for an end to the house arrest of leaders of the 2009 protests.

So far Rouhani faces no substantial challenger in the elections. Ahmedinejad had floated the idea of running, but was told not to by top cleric Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.