

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuba reaffirms 'strongest solidarity' with Venezuela
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 80/NO. 25 JULY 11, 2016

Victory in striking down anti-abortion law



Militant/Ellen Brickley

WASHINGTON — Hundreds celebrated the victory for defenders of women's right to choose abortion June 27 as the Supreme Court struck down key parts of a Texas law that sharply limited access to the procedure. "I plan to go back to Texas and be an abortion provider," Corrine McCleod, 26, a member of Medical Students for Choice, told the *Militant*. "Many clinics have been shut down and it will take a while for there to be broad access, especially for working-class women."

In its 5-3 decision, the court rejected as groundless the Texas government's claim that to protect women's health, doctors performing abortions must have admitting privileges to local hospitals and abortion clinics must meet hospital-like standards. The next day, the Supreme Court declined to review court orders blocking similar laws in Alabama, Mississippi and Wisconsin.

— ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

'US colonial exploitation of Puerto Rico has not changed'

BY SETH GALINSKY

UNITED NATIONS — As working people in Puerto Rico are battered by a deepening crisis, and moves by Washington lay bare its denial of Puerto Rican sovereignty, supporters of independence took their fight to the U.N. Special Committee on Decolonization. Almost all of the nearly 60 people who addressed the annual hearing on the status of the island na-

tion demanded freedom for long-time independence fighter Oscar López, including those opposed to the independence movement.

In 1950, Washington claimed that Puerto Rico was becoming a "self-governing territory." But speaker after speaker at the June 20 hearing stated that, in fact, Puerto Rico has never ceased being a U.S. colony.

"Recent developments leave no room for the illusions, facades and deceptions which have prevailed regarding the political status of Puerto Rico," said Olga Sanabria for the Committee for Puerto Rico at the United Na-

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State Dept. rift shows US imperialism's Syria quandary

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A rift within the U.S. government became public in mid-June when an internal State Department "dissent channel" memo disagreeing with President Barack Obama's course in Syria was leaked to the press. Signed by 51 diplomats, the memo calls for using missiles and airstrikes against the Bashar al-Assad regime.

The Obama administration's course has been to direct U.S. airstrikes against Islamic State, give limited aid to Kurdish forces in northern Syria

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'Leave' vote in UK puts nail in coffin of 'unified' Europe illusion

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON — Millions of workers in the United Kingdom voted June 23 in their large majority to leave the European Union. The vote was another nail in the coffin of the myth of a united Europe.

Some prominent politicians and

Continued on page 4

'Socialist Workers Party is your party'



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Osborne Hart, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice president, with retired machinist David Hojohm, in Winooski, Vermont, June 29. Campaigners are knocking on doors coast to coast telling workers, "Our party is your party." Hojohm purchased a subscription to the *Militant* newspaper and a copy of the new book *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*

A book about the capacity of workers

Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege and Learning Under Capitalism, by Jack Barnes, 111 pages. Pathfinder Press, 2016.

Actively introducing the party to thousands

BY NAOMI CRAINE

The Socialist Workers Party is organizing to sell thousands of copies of *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege and Learning Under Capitalism* over the coming months, while campaigning among working people coast to coast. Communist Leagues around the world will do likewise. The new book by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes (see adjacent review) is a key part of the program of the Socialist Workers Party. SWP candidates around the country will encourage everyone they meet to get, read and help distribute the book as a central part of their campaign.

We will use the book to introduce working people and youth to the party

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IN REVIEW

BY MARK THOMPSON

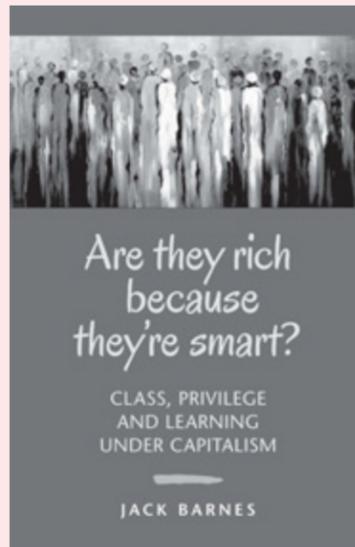
This is a book about us — working people — and our capacity to organize and to learn, to transform ourselves and all social and human relations as we fight to end capitalist rule and establish workers power.

It is also a book about them — those who rule and the millions of privileged, well-paid professionals who administer their state power and

Continued on page 7

Are they rich because they're smart? Class, privilege and learning under capitalism

by Jack Barnes



In the coming battles forced upon us by the capitalist rulers, says Barnes, workers will begin to transform ourselves and our attitudes toward life, work and each other. Only then will we discover our own worth and learn what we're capable of becoming.

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West Papua: 'We demand our dignity and our rights'

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Large protests against Indonesian rule took place in May and June across West Papua, the western half of the island of New Guinea. "We want to be free — not inside Indonesia. We are a Melanesian, Pacific community," Socrates Yoman, a veteran fighter for West Papua's self-determination and president of the Fellowship of Baptist Churches in West Papua, told a meeting here May 20. "We demand our dignity and rights."

"There is no freedom of speech and assembly in West Papua," Yoman said, describing the detention of some 1,000 demonstrators by Indonesian police May 2 in Jayapura, the largest city. Defending the suppression of the protests, Police Chief Insp. Gen. Paulus Water-

paw told the *Jakarta Post* June 15, "We have never permitted them ... because their ultimate goal is to separate."

These are "the biggest demonstrations yet," chair Maire Leadbeater of West Papua Action Auckland told the audience of 80 people. The ongoing protests are intended to show support for the bid by the United Liberation Movement for West Papua to be admitted as a full member of the Melanesian Spearhead Group when it meets in July. The Spearhead Group is made up of the governments of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the pro-independence Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front of New Caledonia. Currently the Liberation Movement has observer status while the Indonesian government is an associate member.

West Papuans have resisted since Jakarta seized the territory in 1963 after the Netherlands government was forced to cede this last piece of its Asian empire. Indonesian control was formalized in a United Nations-endorsed referendum in 1969 with only 1,026 hand-picked voters. Since then the Indonesian military and police have killed, detained and tortured thousands in a drive to enforce Jakarta's rule.

As it has opened West Papua to exploitation of the island's rich natural resources, Jakarta has encouraged the "transmigration" of workers, farmers and businesspeople from Indonesia. As a result, said Yoman, "West Papuans are becoming a minority in our own country. We have become marginalized, powerless and landless.

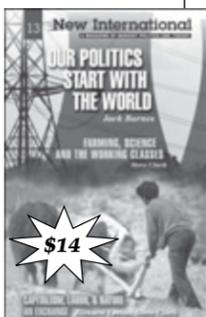
in New International #13

Our Politics Start With the World

"We need to recognize that we are part of an international class — the working class — and to act always as though we are part of an international alliance with exploited and oppressed toilers throughout the world."

— Jack Barnes

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Hong Kong rally protests political kidnapping



TMHK/Jason Leung

Denouncing his eight-month detention by Beijing, Lam Wing-kee, center in cap, leads thousands of demonstrators, chanting "Protest political kidnappings," to the Chinese government's liaison office in Hong Kong June 18. Two days earlier he had made the story of his abduction public at a press conference.

Lam was employed by Mighty Current Media and distributed books critical of the Chinese leaders to customers from China. The books are banned by Beijing. Lam told reporters that he was kidnapped, blindfolded and handcuffed while crossing the border to Shenzhen, China, Oct. 24. The next day he was taken on a 13-hour train ride to Ningbo near Shanghai, where he was held in solitary confinement for five months before being transferred to Shaoguan to work in a library.

On June 14, Lam was allowed to go to Hong Kong for one day on condition he retrieve the names of his customers and come back to China. But Lam decided to stay and go public. Beijing disputes his version of events surrounding his disappearance and that of four other booksellers.

Protesters argue that the trampling of Lam's democratic rights also violates the autonomy guaranteed to Hong Kong at its reunification with China in 1997.

— EMMA JOHNSON

Only Indonesian history is taught." Native Papuans account for around half the population of 3.6 million.

Tribal peoples have been forced from their traditional lands to make way for forestry ventures and huge gold and copper mines run by multinational companies under agreements with the Indonesian government.

The Grasberg mine, the largest, is owned by Freeport-McMoran and Rio Tinto, based in the United States and Australia respectively. A majority of its 20,000 workers are unionized. Around one-third are indigenous Papuans. A three-month strike in 2011 won wage increases of 40 percent.

Freeport-McMoran holds concessions on almost 6 percent of the total land in West Papua.

The indigenous people of the territory are divided into hundreds of tribes speaking more than 250 languages. "We can't speak to each other so we use the Indonesian language," Yoman said. "It is good for us."

Jakarta's attempts to foster divisions between the newer arrivals, who are Malay in nationality and predominantly Muslim, and the indigenous Melanesian people, who are predominantly Christian, have met with only limited success. Many support the fight for independence, Yoman said.

THE MILITANT

Demand truth about cop killing of rancher!

Supporters of rancher Jack Yantis, killed by Idaho sheriff deputies Nov. 1, are campaigning to get a report on his shooting released. They plan to rally every month until the truth is told. The 'Militant' champions struggles of workers and farmers, fights against cop killings.



May 20 protest in Boise, Idaho, demands release of report on shooting of Jack Yantis.

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The Militant

Vol. 80/No. 25

Closing news date: June 29, 2016

Editor: John Studer
Managing Editor: Naomi Craine

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Jacob Perasso, Maggie Trowe, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in August and one week in September.

Business manager: Lea Sherman
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899
Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com
Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

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

'Our party is your party'

Continued from front page

while going door to door in towns small and large, on the picket lines of workers standing up to capitalist greed, at demonstrations to defend women's right to choose abortion, and at protests against deportations of immigrant workers.

Growing numbers of workers, in the United States and beyond, are looking for answers to the economic crises, unending wars, attacks on political rights and other effects of world capitalism.

The most important answer the working class needs is to see *who we are*: the creative, producing class that in the course of fighting for solidarity and against every form of exploitation and oppression will change ourselves and each other and open the road to overturn the dictatorship of capital we live under.

"I think workers sooner or later will come together and make a revolution. It will either be epic or it will be chaos," said Chantel Berard, a maintenance worker, when SWP campaigners knocked on her door in Winooski, Vermont, June 28.

SWP supporter Dale Torberg responded that a revolution needs leadership. "The Cuban Revolution was led by people who were few in the beginning but they had a clear program and perspective," he said. "That is what the Socialist Workers Party is building in this country."

Berard got a copy of *Are They Rich, Because They're Smart?*, a *Militant* subscription, and took a petition sheet to help put the SWP ticket of Alyson Kennedy for president and Osborne Hart for vice president on the ballot in Vermont.

Two dozen other workers bought copies of the book in four days of campaigning in Vermont, including Mark Cherrier, a truck driver in Saint Albans. Cherrier said he was pleased to hear that the SWP is getting a good response in talking to working people across the United States, "It's about time people started getting fed up," he said.

Kelsey Brooks lives in South Burlington and works at a gas station. She asked to take some extra leaflets for the Socialist Workers Party campaign. "I know a bunch of disgruntled co-workers who will want to support this," she

said.

This is just scratching the surface of what's possible. If campaigners act boldly, workers who are attracted to the party's revolutionary perspective will want to help get *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* around as well.

Defend women's right to abortion

SWP presidential candidate Kennedy took part in the June 24-26 50th anniversary conference of the National Organization for Women in Washington, D.C. She joined hundreds of supporters of the right to choose abortion who celebrated outside the Supreme Court June 27, as the court issued a ruling overturning a Texas law aimed at drastically restricting women's access to abortion.

Sabrina Larez, a student at Diablo Valley College in California who met Kennedy at the NOW conference, joined her at the rally sporting an SWP campaign button reading "It's not who you're against, it's what you're for."

Larez described how her campus Women's Empowerment club had mobilized 30 students to counter a handful of anti-abortion protesters who showed up with big signs "with the school administration's permission and in the name of science."

"That sounds like a good experience," Kennedy said. "Countermobilizations have been an important part of how abortion was won and how it can be defended — and give us confidence in ourselves."

At the conference, Kennedy, accompanied by James Harris, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president in 2012, campaigned and introduced the party to many of the almost 500 participants.

The party's table in the exhibit room was a center for discussion on a broad range of questions from the vote in the United Kingdom to leave the European Union to the roots of the war in Syria. Several people commented on the eye-catching cover and title of *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* Thirteen bought copies, including a student whose parents are farmworkers and a woman whose father was a United Auto Workers member and millwright in Detroit.



Militant photos: Top, Ved Dookhun, Bottom, Jacquie Henderson
Top, SWP presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy, center, and James Harris met Sabrina Larez at June 24-26 conference of National Organization for Women. She later joined Kennedy at abortion rights rally outside Supreme Court. Below, Rose Engstrom and Terri Binkerd, right, in Bountiful, Utah, discuss transformation of learning, society and ourselves June 28.

Rose Garrity, a long-time activist in the fight against domestic violence, visited the table four times, picking up books each time. "We are so brainwashed to identify with the wealthy ruling class, and what good has that done us?" she said. "I'd like to get a copy of *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* for everyone I know. You should come to a conference I'm organizing in October."

'They call us stupid when we resist'

"It seems we are always called stupid when we stand up for ourselves," Terri Binkerd told SWP campaigners who knocked on her door in Bountiful, Utah, June 28. At least workers in the U.K. "did something about the crisis they face," she said.

When Rose Engstrom showed her *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* Binkerd commented, "I'm a teacher and I see that every day. 'Education' is not about learning, it's more about belittling. We need to start over with the whole thing. It can't stay this way." She asked them to come back in two days so she can get the book, a *Militant* subscription and continue the discussion.

"For the last 10 years I've been an example of what you're talking about," said Chuck Lawrence in his front yard in Orem when campaigners raised how workers have been hit by capitalism's worldwide economic crisis. After being laid off from RR Donnelley, he finally found work at another printing company. His new job conditions were bad, "So we got together and organized into the Teamsters union," he said.

"I'm not voting," Lawrence said. "I don't like any of them, Democrats or Republicans. Others at work think like this."

"We need to build a mass movement of millions of workers that fights to end the dictatorship of capital," SWP campaigner, Maggie Trowe responded. "As we defend ourselves from the effects of the depression we will gain more confi-

dence that we can organize society. The SWP candidates are campaigning to raise this." After more discussion, Lawrence subscribed to the *Militant* and bought *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* and *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* "I'm going to take these to work to read them," he said.

In Utah, where the Socialist Workers Party has a long history of participating in working-class struggles, campaigners are also organizing to put the party on the ballot. Karen Stockert, a home health care worker who drove from Heber City to join the campaigning, remarked, "We met workers at three different houses who remembered the struggle of miners at the Co-Op mine in Huntington that Alyson Kennedy was a part of. They were glad to hear she was the party's candidate."

On the ballot in Minnesota

On June 14, Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon certified that Kennedy and Hart will appear on the November ballot. In May and June, SWP supporters campaigned door to door in every corner of the state, in big cities and small towns — 48 in all. They introduced their party and its program to a broad cross section of workers, speaking with supporters of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders as well as many who did not support any of the capitalist politicians.

In three weeks, 161 workers subscribed to the *Militant*, more than 2,400 signed to put the party on the ballot, and 42 books on the party's perspective and program were sold. Now is the opportunity to go back and continue the discussions, using *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*

Chris Hoepfner in Vermont, Jacquie Henderson in Utah, David Rosenfeld in Minnesota and Arlene Rubinstein in Washington, D.C. contributed to this article.

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaigning with *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*

- Contact me so I can join in campaigning for the working-class alternative with the new book *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*
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Download campaign literature and presentations of Socialist Workers Party candidates Alyson Kennedy for president and Osborne Hart for vice president at www.themilitant.com

Myth of a united Europe

Continued from front page

sections of the bourgeois media in the U.K., the EU and the U.S. immediately slandered working people who had the audacity to vote to leave, saying they were noncosmopolitan, racist, stupid, uneducated, anti-immigrant lowlifes. They charged that older workers and retirees were destroying the future of the youth.

But far from a rise in racist, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment, the vote showed workers' determination to oppose being forced to pay for the capitalist economic crisis.

The fear campaign for a Remain vote directed by the capitalist rulers and large sections of both the Conservative and Labour parties — predicting doom in the event of an exit — backfired. In the U.K. as a whole Leave won 52 percent of the vote — with large majorities in England and Wales — while Remain got 48 percent. In both Scotland and Northern Ireland, a majority voted for Remain. This is the first time a member state has voted to leave the European Union, a shifting alliance of rival states dominated by German imperialism.

Real wages in the U.K. have fallen since 2010. The number of workers forced into so-called zero hour contracts, with no guaranteed level of work hours and income, has risen 15 percent in the past two years. None of the capitalist parties from Britain to continental Europe have any solution to the crisis.

Some workers interviewed on TV and radio said that the vote represented “two fingers to the establishment.” Forklift operator Michael Wake, in the working-class town of Sunderland, England, told the *New York Times* the vote to leave was an opportunity to “poke the eye” of the London establishment.

Ricky Dobson, a factory worker from Basildon in Essex, told the *Militant* he was angered by the threat by Chancellor George Osborne (the British equivalent of finance minister) to

impose a “punishment budget” that included tax hikes on workers' income if the vote to leave carried.

Rulers blame working people

The capitalist rulers in the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States were taken by surprise by the result, blaming working people for the post-referendum plunge in stock market prices around the world. But stocks rapidly recovered. The volatility is nothing new given the wild speculation that marks the market in the midst of the world capitalist economic crisis.

“I don't have any money in the stock market,” Ken Walker, a retired construction worker in Sunderland, said to the *Times*. “So what's it to me?”

“It can't get worse than what's been going on already,” Maria Taylor, a florist in Sunderland, told the paper. “The working class is completely hammered. They've sold us down the river.”

Workers who voted to Remain face the same conditions. Felicia Hypolite, a care worker from London, said she voted Remain because she thought “the EU would help defend human rights. But the main issue in the U.K. is the low wages companies pay.”

The referendum changes nothing immediately in the U.K.'s legal relations with other EU member states. The U.K. government will eventually open negotiations with the EU that will take years.

Leave campaigner Conservative Boris Johnson raised the banner of “British sovereignty” seeking to convince workers that British bosses are better than foreign bosses. Another section of the Leave campaign, led by Nigel Farage, campaigned in opposition to the EU's free movement of labor, scapegoating mass immigration from EU member states and refugees entering the UK as the problem.

United capitalist Europe impossible

German Chancellor Angela Merkel described the vote as “a blow to Europe

'Pull the US troops out of Okinawa!'



Kyodo/Reuters

More than 50,000 people carrying signs saying “Our anger is over the limit” and “Pull out the U.S. Marines” demonstrate June 19 in Naha, capital of Okinawa, Japan. The protest followed the arrest of a former U.S. Marine employed as a civilian contractor who was arrested in connection with the rape and killing of a local woman in April.

U.S. military forces are dispersed among 85 bases and smaller facilities in Japan, 75 percent of them on Okinawa, home to some 30,000 U.S. military personnel and civilian employees. The bases date back to the end of World War II when U.S. forces occupied Japan. The occupation of Okinawa lasted until 1972 and one-fifth of it is still under U.S. military control.

In 1995 two U.S. Marines and a Navy sailor were arrested over the rape of a 12-year-old girl, which led to protests numbering tens of thousands.

Washington and Tokyo agreed in 1996 to close the Futenma Marine Corps air station near Ginowan City and replace it with a base off the island's northern coast. Twenty years later Futenma is still in operation and construction of the new base has gone nowhere in face of sustained local resistance.

— EMMA JOHNSON

and to the European unification process.” The German rulers as well as rulers in France and elsewhere, promoted the EU as the beginning of a United States of Europe, an impossible dream under capitalism with each nation competing for markets with its rivals. Today, in the face of economic stagnation and the refugee crisis, far from moves to “an ever closer union,” borders are being reinforced across the continent.

The German government, the strongest imperialist power in Europe, has used its domination of the EU and control of the euro to pillage the resources of weaker capitalist competitors from

Greece to Spain. They also hoped to use the EU and the euro as a common currency to compete more effectively against their main rival, U.S. imperialism.

In or out of the EU, workers in the U.K. will face a boss class that is determined to off-load the crisis onto their shoulders, as the competition, rivalries and tensions intensify between competing capitalist nations in Europe and around the world.

Paul Davies is a worker at Ford Dagenham and a member of the Unite union and the Communist League.

Oppose attacks on Muslims after Orlando terror assault

BY ANTHONY DUTROW

MIAMI — U.S. Muslim groups are on guard against attacks in the wake of the June 12 terrorist assault at a gay nightclub in Orlando. The assailant, Omar Mateen, called police to pledge allegiance to Islamic State shortly after he opened fire at the club Pulse, leaving 49 dead and 53 wounded.

In later phone calls with police negotiators, Mateen, who was born in New York to parents from Afghanistan, called for an end to U.S. bombing strikes in Syria and Iraq and threatened to detonate a car bomb. Police shot him dead when they stormed the club three hours after the assault began.

Since the attack, many mosques around Florida report threats. The Hussein Islamic Center in Sanford was vandalized June 13 by someone who spray-painted “#stopthehate” on the building. At the Islamic Foundation of South Florida in Sunrise, Irina Bihary was arrested June 19 on charges of entering a prayer room and threatening to blow it up with what turned out to be a hoax bomb.

Numerous Islamic groups have issued statements condemning the Orlando slaughter. The Islamic Society of North America “sends its condolences and prayers to the families of the vic-

tims,” said ISNA President Azhar Azeez in a June 12 statement. “We urge the community to stand united against all acts of violence. We encourage our members to donate to help with the immediate, short-term needs of the grieving families and our members in Florida to visit a blood center today to donate blood to help the victims of the shooting.”

Media coverage of the Orlando massacre initially focused on the reactionary character of the attack on gay people, while downplaying the obvious Islamic State connection. The FBI initially deleted all references to the reactionary group in transcripts they released of Mateen's calls to the cops. After protests they reluctantly released more complete versions.

Republican presidential contender Donald Trump called for suspending immigration to the U.S. from countries with “a proven history of terrorism.”

Democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton called for stepping up Washington's military drive against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, an “intelligence surge” to give police more powers, and stiffer gun control laws.

“The Socialist Workers Party calls on working people to oppose all attempts to widen government spying, tighten

immigration laws, or infringe on the right to worship,” said Cynthia Jaquith, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate in Florida. “We condemn any and all attacks on Muslims. We call for the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and the rest of the Middle East.”

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

NEW YORK

New York

The Brexit Vote. Puncturing the Illusion of a United Europe. New Book by Jack Barnes: *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* — Workers Transforming Ourselves and Each Other on the Road to Workers Power. Speaker: Emma Johnson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., July 1.

Stand with Venezuelan Working People Against Economic Sabotage and Attempts to Overthrow the Maduro Government! Speaker: Norton Sandler, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., July 8.

On the Eve of the Democratic and Republican Conventions: Accelerating Crisis of Bourgeois Politics and the Socialist Workers Party's Response. Fri., July 15. For all events: dinner, 6:45 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 227 W. 29 St., 6th floor. Tel.: (646) 964-4793.

Cuban Five 'Freedom Tour' in United Kingdom

Hear René González and Gerardo Hernández, Cuban revolutionaries who were framed-up and jailed in U.S. for 16 years.

Sat., July 9, 1 p.m. Durham Miners Gala, Racecourse.

Tues., July 12 Unite Policy Conference, Brighton.

Wed., July 13, 7 p.m. Glasgow public meeting, STUC, 333 Woodlands Road

Thurs., July 14, 6:30 p.m. Manchester public meeting, Town Hall, Albert Square

Fri., July 15, 12 p.m. Cardiff public meeting, City Hall, Gorsedd Gardens Road.

6:30 p.m. London public meeting, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place.

Sun., July 17, 2 p.m. Dorset

Organized by Cuba Solidarity Campaign. For info: www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles around the world!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including unionists striking US Foods, workers locked out by Honeywell, construction workers demanding safe conditions and workers fighting for \$15 an hour and a union. I invite those involved in workers' battles to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

— Maggie Trowe

New Zealand call center workers strike for pay and against abuse

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Some 50 call center workers, members of the E tu union, carried out a three-hour strike here June 7 for higher pay and against abusive treatment. Most work for insurance giant IAG through the Sitel job agency. E tu means “stand tall” in Maori.

Negotiations began last November but the company has not offered any pay increase, union organizer Anita Rosentreter told the *Militant*.

Workers are angry that Sitel times toilet breaks and bullies sick employees to get them back to work. “This company takes invasions of employees' privacy to new levels,”

Rosentreter said in a union press release.

“Managers say things to workers like, ‘You should go on a diet and start exercising more to avoid getting sick again,’” she told the *Militant*. “We are out here to make management come back to the table with a pay raise and rules around how the company conducts itself when people take sick leave.”

— Baskaran Appu

Food workers in South Wales strike against new contracts

NEWPORT, South Wales — “We're fighting for the minimum wage plus shift allowance,” said Jinny Baker, who has worked at the RF Brookes food plant here over 30 years. “We are just more and more exploited.” Around 80 workers picketed the plant June 2-3. Members of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, which represents half of the 800 shop floor workers, are refusing to sign Brookes' contract proposal.

In the name of introducing the most recent national minimum wage increase — to £7.20 per hour (\$10) for workers over 25 — the company would eliminate the night shift allowance; require work on more holidays, including Christmas and New Year's Day; and lower overtime rates. Young workers' pay would remain at £6.70. “Some workers are going to lose



Militant/Anne Howie

Members of Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union block gate of RF Brookes food plant in Newport, South Wales, June 2 during two-day strike against concession contract.

20 to 25 percent of their wages,” said John James, union regional organizer.

Despite efforts by bosses and security guards to stop pickets talking with drivers, several trucks and a few workers turned around at the gate.

“It's been brilliant, the young people, everyone's been brilliant,” said Dai Mort, union branch secretary at the plant. He said there has been an increase in union members in the run-up to the strike, and that while some union members had crossed the picket line, some nonunion members had joined it.

Several pickets, including Mort, said immigrant workers, many of them Polish, had been bullied by bosses to sign the new contract. In response, the union has issued material in Polish as well as English.

RF Brookes is owned by the 2 Sisters Food Group, which is also facing union action at two other sites — Pennine Foods in Sheffield and Pizza Factory in Nottingham.

— Anne Howie

French unionists rally against anti-labor bill, defeat protest ban

PARIS — Longshoremen from Le Havre in northern France joined a march here June 14 to protest an anti-labor bill promoted by the gov-

ernment of French President François Hollande, leader of the Socialist Party. It was the 10th national action since late March. Tens of thousands of workers demonstrated again throughout France June 23. The proposed changes to the labor code make it easier for bosses to lay off workers, reduce pay and alter the 35-hour workweek.

The day before the June 23 action — called by several union federations including the CGT, the largest — the government announced the protest would be banned, claiming likely violence. This would have been the first banning of a labor demonstration since 1962 at the end of the Algerian war for independence from France.

A widespread outcry, including from the CFDT union federation, which backs the proposed law, forced the government to back down and authorize a one-mile march from the Bastille and back. Some 20,000 participated, watched by 2,000 riot police.

A final vote on the legislation will take place in the National Assembly in mid-July.

— Derek Jeffers



Militant/Baskaran Appu

E tu unionists picket in Auckland, New Zealand, June 7. Most work for insurance giant IAG through Sitel job agency. E tu means “stand tall” in Maori.

—25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO—



July 5, 1991

SHEFFIELD, Britain — The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) won a big victory here June 19 against a slander campaign aimed at discrediting the union, its leadership, and the example it set through its 1984-85 strike.

Charges by the government against NUM President Arthur Scargill and General Secretary Peter Heathfield were dismissed. The miners' leaders and the union had been accused of failure to account for funds donated during the 1984-85 strike.

The NUM led the miners out on strike against the threat that up to 75 mines would be closed. Tens of thousands of miners mobilized daily. Women in the coalfield communities organized and solidarity was widespread among working people. The strike became an example of how to respond to employer attacks in Britain and internationally.



July 11, 1966

The Johnson administration's criminal bombings of oil storage depots in Hanoi and Haiphong give added urgency to building the Aug. 6-9 International Protests against the war in Vietnam.

There can be no doubt about the seriousness of the U.S. attack. In spite of Washington's denial that heavily populated areas had been bombed, the only Western correspondent in Hanoi reported heavy civilian casualties.

From the beginning, Washington has been conducting a war of destruction in Vietnam — aimed at the revolutionary people both north and south. Each step of the U.S. escalation has been carefully measured in the Pentagon war rooms. Thus the U.S. has gone from the role of “adviser” with only a few thousand soldiers, by stages to become a mighty aggressor with over 280,000 combat troops in the space of less than two years.



July 5, 1941

The Negro March on Washington, scheduled for July 1, has been called off. Thousands of Negroes, preparing to leave for the demonstration, at the last minute heard A. Philip Randolph over the radio Saturday night declare that “the March is unnecessary at this time.”

The Randolph-White leadership was willing to “compromise” and call it off if they were offered something they could use to save face before the thousands who insisted on the March going through. Roosevelt finally granted them this face-saving device in his “executive order” of June 25.

The leaders of the March were being subjected to all kinds of pressure from their “friends” in the administration, but they were forced to resist it because nothing concrete had been offered them. Then Randolph and Walter White were called to Washington.



Militant/Claude Bleton

Longshoremen from Le Havre join June 14 protest in Paris against anti-labor bill.

New International

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UN hearing on Puerto Rico

Continued from front page

tions. The continued imprisonment of López, she added, symbolizes “the brutal imperial domination the people of Puerto Rico have been subjected to for more than 118 years,” as well as their resistance. (See box on page 6.)

López called from the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, and spoke with members of the U.N. committee during the hearing. The committee chair announced plans to visit him in prison later this year.

His daughter Clarisa López told the committee that her father’s “love for equality, justice and independence for Puerto Rico are intact.”

Many of those testifying referred to two U.S. Supreme Court decisions that highlight the colonial status of Puerto Rico. On June 13 the court ruled that the island’s government is barred from adopting its own bankruptcy laws. The week before the court held that the government of Puerto Rico is not “sovereign” and derives all its power from the U.S. Congress.

Speakers also denounced a federal bill backed by the Democratic and Republican parties and President Barack Obama that would give control of the finances and budget of the island’s colonial government to a seven-member board appointed by the U.S. president, to ensure that Puerto Rico’s \$70 billion public debt is paid on the backs of working people.

The bondholders and hedge funds want to “use the debt as a guillotine against the rights of our people,” Pedro Irene Maymí, representing the CPT union federation, told the hearing. “It is unpayable.”

Supporters of the two main colonial parties in Puerto Rico — Gov. Alejandro García Padilla of the ruling Popular Democratic Party, which wants to keep the island as a U.S. “commonwealth,” and Ricardo Rosselló, head of the New Progressive Party, which says it should become the 51st U.S. state — denounced the recent U.S. moves at the hearing.

Both parties have been fighting for the

right of the Puerto Rican government to declare bankruptcy and are chafing at Washington’s arrogance. Their goal is little different from that of the fiscal control board, but they want to ensure a greater say in the “restructuring” of Puerto Rico’s debt by the island’s capitalist class.

And both parties have been responsible for layoffs of more than 30,000 government workers, cuts in pensions, closing schools, hikes in taxes paid by working people and other measures undertaken to pay the burgeoning debt.

The Supreme Court decisions and the bill before Congress creating a fiscal board have made it “clear that nothing has changed in the U.S. colonial relation to Puerto Rico,” said Iris Colón Dipini on behalf of the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico. “Our crisis is deeply rooted in Puerto Rico’s exploitation as a colony.”

Who owes whom?

Héctor Pesquera, co-chair of the National Hostosiano Independence Movement, noted that after Washington invaded Puerto Rico in 1898 small farmers were forced to sell their land to U.S. agribusiness.

“Then they imposed U.S. citizenship on us to recruit our youth for the First World War. Since then we have been cannon fodder for the invading army,” he said. In addition, the U.S. military “caused billions of dollars of damage to the environment and health of the residents of the islands of Culebra and Vieques,” using them as a bombing range for more than six decades until forced out by mass protests.

Pesquera noted that U.S. companies take billions of dollars of profits out of Puerto Rico every year, while driving small stores and farmers out of business.

“So who owes whom?” he said.

Workers the hardest hit

“Workers have been the hardest hit, we are the ones who have been more harshly weighed down by the consequences” of the crisis, said Irene



Militant/Seth Galinsky

Demonstrators demand freedom for Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López in front of U.N. June 20 while Special Committee on Decolonization hearing was taking place there.

Maymí. “Hundreds of thousands of our brothers and sisters have lost their jobs, many have been forced to emigrate, principally to the United States, making up what is now the largest migration in our history.”

“The fight for Puerto Rico’s independence is also in the interests of the vast majority of the people of the United States,” said Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president. “The people of Puerto Rico and working people in the U.S. have common interests, a common enemy, a common struggle.”

The crisis in Puerto Rico is opening new opportunities, said Manuel Meléndez Lavandero, speaking for A Call to Action on Puerto Rico, based in New York. “Today there is a people that is beginning to look with curiosity at the possibility of an independent Puerto Rico.”

The U.N. Special Committee approved by consensus a resolution presented by Cuban Ambassador Humberto Rivero Rosario calling for the

General Assembly to schedule a discussion on the status of Puerto Rico and for the committee to facilitate dialogue between Washington and Puerto Rico on self-determination and independence.

“The people of Puerto Rico continue to be unable to exercise their legitimate right to genuine self-determination,” Rivero said. “Despite U.S. economic, political and social domination, this sister nation has maintained its deep-rooted and unwavering vocation for independence,” a cause always supported by revolutionary Cuba.

The U.N. testimony capped a weekend of activity that began with a meeting to back the fight for independence of more than 200 at the 1199SEIU union hall in New York, organized by A Call to Action on Puerto Rico.

Several of the speakers at the hearing joined a late afternoon protest outside the United Nations calling for freedom for Oscar López as part of an international day of action.

‘Independence for Puerto Rico is in interest of workers in US’



Militant/Seth Galinsky

Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, speaks at rally by U.N. for freedom of Oscar López.

Below is the statement presented June 20 by Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, to the U.N. Special Committee on Decolonization.

The Socialist Workers Party stands shoulder to shoulder with all those fighting for an end to U.S. colonial domination and for the independence of Puerto Rico.

Across the United States, we have

been urging working people to join the campaign to tell the U.S. government: *Free Oscar López now!* In Chicago, where I live, and in New York I have participated in protests demanding freedom for Oscar — now imprisoned for more than 35 years because of his actions in favor of a free Puerto Rico.

My sisters and brothers here have described, with an abundance of facts, the consequences of U.S. colonial rule for the people of Puerto Rico. They have explained why independence is a necessity if the people of that nation are to freely determine their future.

I would like to add that the fight for Puerto Rico’s independence is also in the interests of the vast majority of the people of the United States. From its founding nearly eight decades ago, my party has championed this struggle.

I and my campaign supporters have been knocking on doors in working-class neighborhoods across the U.S. We have been discussing with fellow workers the way forward in face of the worldwide capitalist economic and social crisis. We discuss the need to organize a working-class move-

Continued on page 9

Who is Oscar López Rivera?

Oscar López Rivera 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 1966-67 as an infantryman.

Upon his return to Chicago — impacted by the 1959 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,” defined as opposing “by force the authority” of the U.S. government as well as possession of unregistered firearms. López was not accused of involvement in a single bombing or act of violence. All the independentistas demanded to be recognized as prisoners of war and refused to participate in the court proceedings.

López 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 his first 12 years in prison, but prison authorities could not break him.

“Oscar López should not be in prison,” Cancel Miranda has said. Those who have used violence to maintain Puerto Rico as a colony should be in prison, “not those who have fought for it to be liberated.”

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

Cuba reaffirms ‘strongest solidarity’ with Venezuela

BY MARK THOMPSON

“I reaffirm our strongest and unconditional solidarity with the fraternal people of Venezuela, with the legitimate government of President Nicolás Maduro,” Cuban President Raúl Castro told the Seventh Summit of the Association of Caribbean States meeting in Havana June 4. “They are firmly resisting the destabilizing thrust, and the economic and media warfare undertaken by those who intend to sweep away the political, economic and social conquests that have brought benefits to millions of people.”

Castro’s declaration comes as Washington continues meddling in Venezuela, amid increasing economic and political instability and efforts by pro-imperialist opposition parties to oust the government.

At a meeting of the Organization of American States June 14, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry declared his support for the opposition demand for a referendum that could force Maduro from office. At the same time, he said Washington would hold high-level talks with the Venezuelan government, including on moves to restore ambassadors.

Since Hugo Chávez was elected president in 1998, the U.S. government has backed efforts to overturn the Venezuelan government, including a coup that was defeated by mobilizations of working people in 2002. Maduro replaced Chávez on his death in 2013. Washington and Caracas have not exchanged ambassadors since 2010.

The Chávez and Maduro governments, while maintaining capitalist relations, used oil profits to fund so-

cial programs that expanded access to education, health and housing; boosted employment and raised living standards for many workers and peasants. They welcomed thousands of Cuban internationalist volunteers who set up health clinics and schools in working-class barrios and rural areas. Venezuela initiated PetroCaribe, providing Cuba and 13 other Caribbean countries with oil at well below world market prices and took other measures that encroached on the prerogatives of U.S. imperialism. All this has earned the hatred of Washington and much of Venezuela’s capitalist class.

While wanting to see Maduro and his United Socialist Party out, Washington fears the consequences of sharpening political clashes and economic breakdown in Venezuela. Thomas Shannon, undersecretary of State for Political Affairs visited Caracas June 21-23 and met with both government and opposition leaders. The U.S. is “engaging bilaterally to help avert the most dire scenario,” Shannon told reporters in Caracas June 22. It also lacks confidence in the pro-imperialist opposition, which is riven by factional conflicts. Washington wants “to be able to talk to all parties” and “exercise our influence,” Shannon said June 24.

The opposition Democratic Unity Roundtable, which won a parliamentary majority in the December elections, has mounted protests throughout the year demanding a referendum to recall Maduro and force new presidential elections. On May 30, Luis Almagro from Uruguay, who is the general secretary

Youth meet denounces US intervention in Venezuela



World Federation of Democratic Youth

CARACAS, Venezuela — Some 65 youth from 32 countries, gathered here June 3-8 for the first International Preparatory Meeting for 19th World Festival of Youth and Students, denounced U.S. imperialism’s attacks on Venezuela. “We demand the U.S. government repeal its infamous and interventionist declaration that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is ‘an unusual and extraordinary threat to its interests,’” said a declaration issued by the meeting. “We demand respect for the right of the Venezuelan people to exercise their sovereignty and self-determination without any kind of meddling or pressure.” The world youth festival is set to take place in Russia in October 2017, on the 100th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution.

— JACOB PERASSO

of the 34-nation Organization of American States, issued a 132-page denunciation of Maduro’s government and initiated proceedings that could have led to Venezuela’s suspension from the OAS. The representatives of Nicaragua and Bolivia responded by demanding Almagro’s resignation. Washington did not back suspension and meetings of the U.S.-dominated OAS during June ended without a decision.

The devastating capitalist economic and social crisis in Venezuela is taking

a heavy toll on working people, with severe shortages of food, medicines and basic goods, and reports of food riots and looting. Water and electricity are being rationed, causing blackouts. Inflation is running at 500 percent while unemployment stands at 17 percent. Government departments and schools are operating on reduced hours, and some plants have stopped production for lack of materials. Several major airlines have suspended flights to the country.

Venezuela’s economy, which depends on oil for 95 percent of its export earnings, has been hit hard by the world capitalist crisis. Oil prices plunged from over \$100 a barrel in mid-2014 to under \$30 earlier this year, before rising to around \$50 in June. There has also been a big drop in the amount of oil produced. The Maduro government is prioritizing interest payments on its \$120 billion foreign debt, with a payment of nearly \$7 billion due this year, by cutting back on imports in order to preserve hard currency. Most of the country’s food and medicine is imported.

Some 46,000 volunteer Cuban health workers, teachers and others are working in Venezuela, often in the most impoverished districts. In March, the Cuban and Venezuelan governments signed a “Cooperation Plan” to continue this collaboration until at least 2030.

A book about capacities of working people

Continued from front page

its institutions over us — and why they continually discount our abilities and worth.

As the author, Jack Barnes, explains, that’s “the greatest of all battles in the years ahead” for the working class — the battle to throw off this image of ourselves that the rulers teach us.

Numbering just over 100 pages this book is highly accessible. It contains three articles by Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, taken from talks and reports he gave to large public audiences between 1993 and 2009. More recent information has been incorporated into the text to make the articles more up-to-date and useful.

The reader will find a wealth of material that helps better understand the world we live in and the political and economic conflicts and battles we are living through. More importantly, it offers a perspective for how to act as part of a fighting working-class movement.

Outbursts portraying working people as “uneducated trash” have been a feature of numerous articles in the media over recent months. What underlies this, explains Steve Clark in the book’s introduction, is “fear that exists at the highest levels of government ... about what’s building up among working people” in response to capitalism’s “slow-burning global depression.”

Barnes notes that the bosses also see

“the potentially explosive consequences of what is happening in the world capitalist economy, including the effects of the employers’ ‘successes’ in downsizing and cost cutting.”

Barnes explains that the problems we face are rooted in the capitalist system. Far from working people being worthless, it is our “social labor that makes possible all civilization and the advance of culture,” he says. “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.”

Not only that, but “we’re capable of taking power and reorganizing society,” Barnes says. To do that we need to come to see our own worth and to “begin to transform ourselves and strengthen bonds of human solidarity” as we build a working-class movement to confront capitalist rule.

The book looks at the sharpening class inequalities in the United States and the rise of a high-earning, “self-designated ‘enlightened meritocracy,’” a “social layer of middle-class professionals, technocrats, managers and academics” numbering in the “millions, if not tens of millions.”

This is a bourgeois layer “in its class interests, its values, its world outlook — in who it serves. But it’s not a section of the capitalist class,” nor is it on the road to become that, Barnes explains. It is

“largely divorced from the production process” and has “a parasitic existence.”

To rationalize their privileged status and wealth, the meritocracy has become a leading voice in support of capitalism and its values and its demonization of the working class.

This layer holds that their “brightness” and “quickness,” Barnes says, “give them the right to make decisions, to administer and ‘regulate’ society for the bourgeoisie.” As the concentration of powers in the executive branch of the imperialist state has increased, they have become an ever-greater weight in centralized government bureaucracies, with ever-more invasive powers over our daily lives.

Barnes also looks at the function of education under capitalism. Its purpose is not to educate, he explains, but to give “certain privileged social layers a license to a higher income” while for workers it teaches “us to be obedient,” to “become units of production.” For learning to be a lifetime experience requires that society is reorganized, first “to get rid of the capitalist state and use the workers state to begin transforming humanity, to begin building human solidarity,” he says. “I cannot think of a better reason to make a socialist revolution,” emphasizes Barnes.

This is a book that all workers should buy and read, and then help to get copies into the hands of friends, co-workers and others.

Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

A Necessary Debate

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Waters explains why revolutionary struggles by working people are inevitable, initiated not by the toilers, but forced upon us by the employing class’s crisis-driven assaults on our living standards and job conditions — on our very humanity. \$7

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'Capitalism breeds war, unemployment and fascism'

Teamster Bureaucracy is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for July. It is the last of a four-volume series, including Teamster Rebellion, Teamster Power and Teamster Politics. The book describes the fight in the labor movement led by Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544 to oppose Washington's entry into World War II, and how the capitalist rulers, backed by the top labor officialdom, attempted to silence class-struggle-minded workers. Eighteen leaders of Local 544 and of the Socialist Workers Party, including the book's author Farrell Dobbs, were charged with sedition in a 1941 trial, culminating in their imprisonment. The excerpt below from the chapter "If that is treason..." summarizes SWP leader James P. Cannon's testimony on the witness stand. Copyright © 1977 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FARRELL DOBBS

The government had turned reality upside down in charging the Socialist Workers Party with a plot to undermine the existing system. A social crisis was developing in the United States not because of any revolutionary conspiracy, but through the operation of two internal laws of capitalism, which make inevitable its decline and its replacement by socialism.

One of those laws involves private ownership of the means of production, he explained, and employment of wage labor at less than the value of the products produced by wage laborers. ... The remaining value created by labor becomes surplus value, for which the capitalist appropriators must find fields of exploitation at home and abroad. The resulting contradictions of the capitalist system inexorably lead to periodic crises.

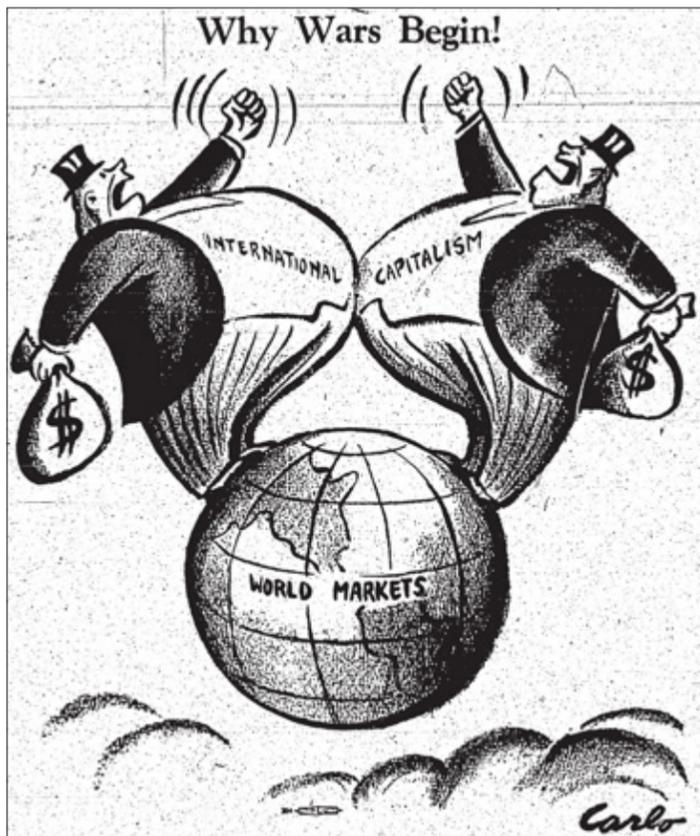
The post-1929 economic depression, which resulted from one such crisis of what political science terms overproduction, was an unmistakable sign of the unhealthiness of the social organism called capitalism. It brought upon the working class a scourge of unemployment that operated on a world scale. ...

Social relations are further aggravated by competition between capitalists, a trend that leads inevitably to the bigger ones freezing out the smaller fry. More and more wealth becomes concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer monopolists. ...

Fundamental structural factors of the foregoing nature, not socialist propaganda, are the cause of the unending class struggle under capitalism. ...

Trade unions appeared in this country as the basic organizations through which the workers struggle to defend their interests from day to day. The Socialist Workers Party supports the trade union movement, so as to help the workers resist oppression and strive for improved conditions of life. In doing so we advocate democratic practices through which the unions can be controlled by the rank and file. The party does not seek dictatorial control over those mass organizations, as the government wrongly charges. We strive for leading influence in the trade unions by demonstrating ability to fight for the workers' interests. ...

In talking about perspectives for organized labor we place special emphasis on the need for the working masses to take over the leadership of the country.



Cartoon from Northwest Organizer, newspaper of Minneapolis Teamsters, July 7, 1937. U.S. government charged that Socialist Workers Party leaders were plotting to undermine system. But SWP leader James P. Cannon explained that it is capitalism itself that creates periodic crises.

As the first step toward that end, we urge the workers to make a clean break with the capitalist parties, develop an independent party of their own, and adopt a political program that will genuinely serve the interests of labor and its allies.

The second internal law of capitalism, Cannon continued, involves a conflict between the further development of productive forces and the confinement of those forces within national barriers. In their efforts to solve crises of overproduction, the capitalists look for foreign markets in which to sell their products and in which to invest their excess capital. ... They tend to become imperialist powers, which means they seek to exploit other peoples.

But when capitalism enters some new territory, the world sphere open for exploitation begins to narrow down, because the laws of capitalist competition follow like a shadow. The rival imperialists have less and less room for expansion of their spheres of influence, and as a result they come into conflict over redivision of the territorial spoils.

Global clashes of that nature became so intensified early in the twentieth century that they led to the war of 1914-18. The outbreak of bloody struggle on such

an immense scale was a signal that the capitalist world system had run up against a profound crisis of historical development. Since then the capitalist nations had continued to be either in a state of war or in the process of preparing for war, and it took only two decades for another world holocaust to begin. ...

Roosevelt's claim that he was leading the United States into a war of democracy against fascism was a subterfuge, Cannon warned. The conflict would be imperialist in character. Although fought at the expense of the working class, its purpose would be to advance the world ambitions of this country's capitalists, who stood among the greatest enemies of democracy. ... War could be prevented, unemployment abolished, and dangers of repressive rule overcome only by doing away with the capitalist system which breeds war,

unemployment, and fascism.

The Socialist Workers Party stands unalterably opposed to imperialist war, he declared from the witness stand. We speak against it, write against it, try to create mass sentiment against it. ... What is more, we shall remain opposed to involvement in an imperialist war even while this country is engaged in such a conflict. We will express that opposition on a political plane, seeking to exercise our constitutional right to call for a different foreign policy. ...

The imperialist war, for which workers were being conscripted, was in itself an expression of a terrible social crisis, and that crisis would not be solved by war. ... Deep-seated unrest would result, as bitter experiences caused the masses to yearn for a fundamental change in social conditions.

By definition, that is what the term social revolution means, Cannon stressed — a basic political and economic transformation of society. An example from U.S. history is the Civil War of 1861-65. That was a social revolution because it destroyed the system of slave labor and property in slaves, replacing it by the complete domination of capitalist enterprise and wage labor.

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July BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Independence for Puerto Rico

Continued from page 6

ment — independent of all the capitalist parties — to fight to defend our interests, and eventually to take political power.

We get a good hearing for this perspective because working people are angry about the worsening conditions in the U.S. and around the world. Two weeks ago I joined the picket lines of Machinists in Spokane, Washington, who are fighting to end the divisive two-tier wage scale and the bosses' attempt to eliminate pensions and gut health insurance. I recently joined with workers in Montreal, on strike to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

The people of Puerto Rico and working people in the U.S. have common interests, a common enemy, a common struggle. It's the U.S. government and the capitalist system it defends that are responsible for the deepening crisis both here and in Puerto Rico. We are stronger when we fight together.

Many workers in the U.S. can see how the \$70 billion debt crisis in Puerto Rico is used as a club to benefit banks and bondholders while working people are squeezed dry — a glaring example of how colonial domination works. Because of their own struggles and experiences with the capitalist “justice” system, many in the United States can identify with Oscar López and his fight for freedom.

Today 5 million Puerto Rican women and men live in the United States. We embrace the tens of thousands of fellow workers who are being forced to migrate here because of the devastating crisis on the island. We will find ourselves fighting side by

side, and they will help strengthen the solidarity between workers in both countries.

I recently visited Cuba as part of a delegation of workers from the U.S. who have had sons killed by the cops and who have helped lead protests against police brutality. We learned firsthand about a society that, as a result of a deep-going social revolution, is rooted in solidarity, not the dog-eat-dog relations of capitalism. On May 1, International Workers Day, we marched with hundreds of thousands of workers and youth in a massive expression of pride, confidence and support for the revolution. It was the first time we had seen workers marching through the streets without being surrounded by police in riot gear!

The U.S. rulers try to convince the Puerto Rican people that they cannot survive without dependence on Washington — just as they try to convince working people here that we need them in order to run society. That's a lie.

Cuba's socialist revolution is living proof that when workers and farmers take political power out of the hands of the capitalist minority, we can use it to win genuine independence and begin to reorganize society in the interests of the vast majority. The Cuban Revolution is an example for working people worldwide — including in Puerto Rico and right here in the United States.

Mr. Chairman, this committee's condemnation of U.S. colonial rule over Puerto Rico will serve the interests of those everywhere who fight for self-determination and against oppression.

US gov't rift on Syria

Continued from front page

— who have been the most effective force against Islamic State — and to rely on cooperation from Moscow to rein in the Assad regime.

Obama's 2012 declaration of a “red line” in Syria if the regime used chemical weapons, turned out to be a bluff. Instead, viewing Assad as the lesser evil to Islamic State, Washington under Obama has collaborated with Moscow and Tehran, which back Assad, to try to bring some stability to the country.

The memo says, “A more muscular military posture under U.S. leadership would underpin and propel a new and reinvigorated diplomatic initiative” and that Washington should take measures to ensure that the Syrian “regime's warplanes are grounded.”

The release of the memo, the number of diplomats who have signed and its criticism of the course of the commander in chief of U.S. imperialism in the midst of a shooting war is unprecedented. Washington's has more than 4,000 U.S. troops on the ground in Iraq and 300 special forces in Syria.

Secretary of State John Kerry, former CIA Director David Petraeus and former Secretary of State and Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton all argued for a similar approach presented in the memo.

In an interview with CBS June 20, Vice President Joe Biden reiterated the administration's line that Assad's rule is the lesser evil. Pointing to the ouster of Libya's President Muammar Gadhafi through military operations by U.S. and other imperialist powers that has led to chaos there, Biden drew the analogy to Syria. “He's gone. What happens? Doesn't the country disintegrate?” ... “Tell me what we're going to do.”

The next day Kerry met with eight of the 51 dissenting diplomats. The *New York Times* description that “the session was an unusual one,” is accurate both for Kerry's personal views and that the meeting took place at all. Paraphrasing the conversation, the *Times* reported that Kerry told the diplomats, “What would happen if American forces came into an accidental confrontation with the Russian Air Force, which has defended Mr. Assad? What if American pilots were shot down?”

The State Department split comes from the inability of U.S. imperialism to put in power an alternative to the Assad regime no matter what tactics are tried.

The more than five-year-long civil war began after the Assad regime — based on a narrow layer of capitalist families, mostly from the Alawite minority, a branch of Shiite Islam — attacked massive protests demanding political rights and the end of his dictatorial rule. In the absence of any working-class leadership, Islamist and secular groups — based among the Sunni Muslims who make up 75 percent of the country — began competing for territory and fighting government forces. At the same time Kurdish fighters have taken advantage of the conflict to establish an autonomous region in the north.

Nearly half a million people have been killed. More than half of Syria's 23 million people are displaced, with millions in refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, and hundreds of thousands seeking refuge in Europe.

According to the Syrian Network for Human Rights, the Assad government has killed many times more civilians than has the reactionary Islamic State.

As part of a Washington-Moscow brokered ceasefire agreed to in February that rapidly fell apart, the Assad government agreed to allow food deliveries to some areas besieged by Syrian government forces. Food was delivered for the first time in four years to Daraya, a rebel-held town outside of Damascus June 10, but the same day Syrian military aircraft bombed the town, hampering distribution of the aid.

U.S. forces expand role in Afghanistan

The Obama administration in early June approved a more aggressive use of U.S. troops and airstrikes in Afghanistan in battles against the Taliban, who now control more areas of the country than at any time since the 2001 U.S. invasion.

There are about 9,800 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, the majority of whom function as part of NATO operations there. The White House had previously announced plans to reduce its forces by nearly half this year, but is now reconsidering this, according to Reuters. In mid-June NATO decided not to go through with a troop reduction and closure of bases there.

COMMUNIST CONTINUITY

A ‘united Europe’ is blowing apart

Following is an excerpt from a 1992 article by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes in which he explains the inability of rival national capitalist classes and governments to put together a new and united Europe. The excerpt is from a section titled “Interimperialist conflict and the myth of a united Europe” in the book *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

These conflicts between rival national capitalist classes and governments are blowing apart the myth of a “united Europe” at an accelerating pace. Since the end of the so-called Cold War, bourgeois politicians and commentators have had trouble coming up with phrases to describe the world balance of power. They talked about a New World Order for awhile, but that did not seem to fit so well in light of the outcome of the Gulf War, the permanent crises in Eastern Europe and the former USSR, and the onset of depression conditions. So some of them began talking about “the tripolar world” — the United States, Europe, and Japan were the three poles. But that description of power relationships in today's world has already bumped up against a big problem — *there is*

no Europe pole.

How long ago was it that many ruling-class figures in Europe (especially in Bonn, and to a lesser degree Paris) were insisting that the European imperialist powers — whatever their problems and frictions — were on the road toward political unity? Members of the European Community would pool their funds — so the story went — and give some money to Ireland, to Portugal, to Greece, and even a little bit to Spain, so these countries could catch up and narrow the economic and social gap with the rest of capitalist Europe. They would adopt common social welfare rules, labor standards, and pollution controls. Eventually they would converge toward a common foreign and military policy. They would smooth out differences in productivity and eventually all agree to use the same tokens as a common currency. And then, this new and united Europe — with class differences slowly but surely disappearing for all practical purposes — would emerge big, powerful, and competitive with the United States and Japan.

The opposite has actually happened over the last decade, however. Despite all the talk about unity, the evolution of world capitalism has increased uneven development across Europe and made its character more explosive.

LETTERS

Challenge ahead

I enjoy reading every subscription because it gives me a heads up on what I have to challenge in the world upon my release.

*A prisoner
Florida*

Clinton's legacy

I noticed several references to ex-U.S. president “Bill” Clinton in the article on the 1994 crime bill debate (May 9 issue). Can *The Militant* return to the practice of using the actual formal names of ruling-class figures instead of familiar nicknames?

Besides the three pieces of legislation that Clinton signed that are cited in the article, the 1997 National Defense Authorization Act authorized the Department of Defense to donate

“excess military equipment” to local cop agencies for any purpose — to date, the Pentagon has transferred more than \$5.4 billion worth of weapons and vehicles to local police, according to the Defense Logistics Agency.

*Bill Kalman
Vallejo, California*

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