The current crisis is not only deeper and longer than any other in the last half century, but is not recovering as expected, based on extrapolated models of recent recessions. That’s the conclusion of a Feb. 11 talk by Janet Yellen, vice chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve at “A Trans-Atlantic Agenda for Shared Prosperity” conference.

In spite of the speech’s title—“A Painfully Slow Recovery for America’s Workers: Causes, Implications, and the Federal Reserve’s Response”—what comes through is the fact that the capitalist rulers and their economic experts can’t really explain the root causes of the crisis and have no control over the natural workings of capitalism that brought it about.

As for the Federal Reserve’s “response,” Yellen points out the Federal Reserve is the only government institution “assigned the job of pursuing” maximum employment and asserts that is what the Fed is working on.

Continued on page 4

The cubs Revolution strengthened by internationalist mission in Angola

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The U.S. government claims that constitutional protections do not apply at the border and that there is no limit to its right to interrogate and search travelers entering the country, including seizing and copying data from computers and phones.

In 2008, President George W. Bush announced border cops could rummage through travelers’ electronic devices at whim. Such invasions expanded under the Barack Obama administration, which adopted similar protocol.

This practice is now being challenged in a couple of lawsuits, where plaintiffs argue that searches and

Continued on page 4

Growing unrest, capitalist rivalries draw US military deeper into Africa

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

While maintaining its military attention on China and the Asia-Pacific region, Washington has also been stepping up its presence across Africa, with plans in the works to expand use of drone air bases and special operations forces there. The U.S. rulers’ rivalry with Beijing is also part of the picture driving their growing interest in Africa, where investment and trade from China has been rapidly expanding.

Since its inception in 2007, the U.S. Africa Command sought to maintain a light U.S. footprint on the continent, focusing on training local armies and providing logistics support. But over the past several years its intervention has expanded in response to developments on the continent that affect U.S. imperialist interests.

In a written statement presented to the Senate Armed Services

Continued on page 6

Winter ‘Militant’ subscription campaign

Feb. 9 - March 18 (week 2)

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Panel at launching of Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own, Havana book fair, Feb. 18. From right: Jorge Sutil, Union of Young Communists leader; Mary-Alice Waters, book’s editor; Martin Koppel, chair; Cuban generals Harry Villegas and Gustavo Chui.

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN AND RÓGER CALERO


‘CUBA AND ANGOLA’ LAUNCHED IN HAVANA

Harry Villegas at a Feb. 18 event here launching Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own.

The new book is published by

Continued on page 7

Also Inside:

Last ‘Jewish’ team in Israel brings on 2 Muslim players 2
Socialist Workers wins ballot slot in Omaha, Neb. 4
Mali: Class antagonisms grow with commodification of land 6
After strike, NY school bus workers fight firings 11

Crisis spurs interest in workers’ newspaper

BY LOUIS MARTIN

Last week 266 Militant subscriptions were sold to working people, mainly going door to door to homes and apartments in their neighborhoods, as part of a five-week international campaign to win 1,950 subscribers and sell hundreds of books on revolutionary work-

ing-class politics. The campaign runs through March 18.

At end of the second week we stand at 674, 5 percent behind schedule.

The weekly reports sent in by readers give a feel for the thinking and discussion going on today under the impact of capitalism’s deepening economic crisis and the relentless attacks on working people, mainly by the capitalist rulers and their economic experts can’t really explain the root causes of the crisis and have no control over the natural workings of capitalism that brought it about.

Continued on page 3
Last ‘Jewish team’ in Israel brings on 2 Muslim players

BY SETH GALINSKY

For the last two decades Beitar Jerusalem has been the only professional soccer team in Israel without a single Arab or Muslim player. But the reaction to bigoted thugs from the La Familia fan club who opposed the January hiring of two Chechen Muslim players—Zaur Sadayev, 23, and Dzhabrail Kadiyev, 19—shows that those days are over.

Members of La Familia, the Beitar Jerusalem fan club formed in 2005, have routinely chanted “Death to Arabs,” “Death to Mohammed” and “I hate all the Arabs” during matches.

In March 2012, some 300 La Familia supporters stormed a mall after a home game, attacking Palestinian workers in the food court. They rioted for 40 minutes before cops and mall security intervened. While arrests were made.

While government and sports officials mostly looked the other way, La Familia intimidated anyone, including players and team officials, who so much as suggested this should change.

Along with their usual anti-Arab chants at a Jan. 26 game against Bnei Yehuda Tel Aviv, La Familia showed its anger at the arrival of the Chechen players by holding a banner saying “Beitar will be pure forever.” On Feb. 8 an arson attack damaged Beitar Jerusalem’s offices.

But this time the actions of La Familia provoked widespread condemnation than any past outrages, forcing government leaders to speak out.

“The last thing we want, and which we absolutely reject, is violence, racism and boycotts,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Feb. 10.

That same day Beitar Jerusalem played mostly Arab Bnei Sakhnin. Hundreds of police and security guards protected the players and fans entering the stadium with La Familia shirts.

“Dzhabrail Kadiyev entered the game and created a rare moment of unity between Beitar fans and Sakhnin fans, who together welcomed him with applause,” reported Haaretz newspaper.

“Representatives of La Familia watched that very moment when the nail went into the coffin of what had been their team,” Beitar came from behind and tied the game.

In the 1950s and ’60s there were just one or two Arab players on Israel’s top soccer teams. By the late ’70s there were still only 10. But over the last several decades the number of Palestinian citizens of Israel grew and their fight for equal rights has won broader support. Today Palestinians make up about 20 percent of Israel’s 7.8 million citizens.

“The dramatic change was in the 1980s, we can call it the renaissance of the Arab people,” well-known Israeli Palestinian sports writer Zouheir Bahloul told the Militant from Tel Aviv Feb. 21. “Now we have almost 60 Arab players in the first division.”

For the last eight years or so, La Familia fought to keep Beitar Jerusalem exclusively Jewish and a bastion of anti-Arab, anti-Muslim bigotry.

“Of course I’m proud of that,” La Familia President Guy Israeli, an accountant, told ESPN’s Jeremy Schaap when asked last November about there being no Arabs on the team.

“Beitar Jerusalem fan and Pelephone worker Haim Sahar told the Militant that La Familia is a tiny minority. “Beitar Jerusalem is the national team. There are something like 100,000 fans all over Israel,” Sahar, who is Jewish, said. “La Familia is only mentioning like 500 to 800 people, and the real militants only 80 to 100. They are damaging the team.”

“This is 2013, not 1920. We support Arabs and Jews living together. It’s not right to judge a player by his race. If he is an Arab and he is a good player, bring him to play at Beitar Jerusalem and pay him millions,” Sahar said.

“We still have issues as an Israeli Palestinian minority,” Bahloul said. “We still have a very big gap to reach equal rights. But on the sports stage it is better. There, Jews and Arabs are shoulder to shoulder and are integrated.

“Next year there should be an Arab player in Beitar Jerusalem,” Bahloul added.

Author photo: AP/Al Nejok, Jerusalem: Beitar Jerusalem soccer fans at match in Jerusalem Feb. 10 against mostly Arab Bnei Sakhnin team. Banner opposing La Familia fan club’s bigotry reads, “Your hatred burned our love.”

New York City Visit of Federation of Cuban Women

—FORUM ON NEW BOOKS—

Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution

Sun., March 10, reception 2 p.m., program 3 p.m.
Riverside Church, 91 Claremont Ave. (between 120th and 122nd), Room 9T

Panel features: Maritzi González, Federation of Cuban Women (FMC); Mary-Alice Waters, book’s editor and leader of Socialist Workers Party; Gail Walker, IFCO; and workers discussing how lessons from Cuban Revolution in the books set example for working people today.

Militant Labor Forum. For more information: (212) 629-6649.
Continued from front page

kids. I can’t see it getting any better. I need to understand more what’s going on,” Gemma Taylor, who is studying to become a teaching assistant, told two Militant supporters who knocked on her door Feb. 22 in Peckham, southeast London.

“You get a qualification, but they don’t give you a job unless you have experience. But how do you get experience if they won’t give you a job?” she said as she bought a subscription and two books offered at reduced prices: Women and Revolution: The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution and The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism. (See ad below.)

“This paper is something we could use at work,” Bobby Helm told Militant supporters when he signed up after they knocked on his door in the South Park section of Seattle.

“I work in a glass recycle facility. It’s dangerous. They take the guards off the work tonight,” he said, asking Militant for subscriptions.

“I came with the notion I was selling newspapers to door to door, which was a job I had once that I didn’t like. But as we started having discussions about politics, I liked it,” said Joshua Cabrera about his first experience joining the paper’s efforts.

But as we started having discussions about politics, I liked it,” said Joshua Cabrera about his first experience joining the Militant’s working-class readership in Los Angeles the weekend of Feb. 23-24. Cabrera, 19, subscribed during the fall subscription drive.

“I helped with Spanish. I said, ‘The Militant tells the truth about workers’ struggles,’ and that the Socialist Workers Party campaign isn’t like the Democrats and Republicans,” he added. The SWP is running Norton Sandler for mayor of Los Angeles and Eleanor Garcia for Los Angeles Unified School Board, District 2.

This is an example we invite all readers to emulate. Join the international campaign. Help increase the number of doors we can knock on and workers we can introduce to the paper. You can call distributors in your area (see directory on page 10). Or order a bundle at themilitant@mac.com or (212) 244-4899.

Fed didn’t create one job

Continued from front page

But, while she reviews the Fed’s interest rate manipulations and its monetary schemes, Yellen doesn’t attempt to show that this monetary-tweaking has created a single job or otherwise mitigated the conditions workers face. Nor does she make a case it has done anything to reverse the slowdown in production and trade at the heart of the crisis.

The truth is it has not, cannot and won’t. Nor, for that matter, can any financial regulations, fiscal fiddling with government budgets or other government economic policy.

The only thing that comes through is that the crisis is worse than any in living memory and the “recovery” is much weaker than the “experts” would have thought. “In the three years after the Great Recession ended,” Yellen said “growth in real gross domestic product averaged only 2.2 percent.” In the span of time following the previous 10 U.S. recessions, real GDP grew, on average, more than twice as fast.

Unemployment, government employment levels have not recovered. Long-term joblessness affects millions of workers. One-fourth of all officially unemployed workers have been out of work for one year or more, and larger number of workers have been laid off, not just temporarily but permanently, from their previous jobs.

No government jobs program

The only thing under the circumstances the government could do—and has done before—to create jobs is to implement a massive government-funded jobs program that could put millions to work building and repairing the infrastructure, hospitals, schools and other things workers need. But not even mention of such a thing is on the horizon. Instead, it seems each new capitalist politician or economist. The only time they have taken such a measure—which ultimately is a drain on the working people’s profits—has been during the latter half of the 1930s and after World War II, under social and political pressure from a fighting workers’ movement.

Today the fiscal policy of the bosses’ government at the federal, state and local level, Yellen says, has been to cut spending and, in some cases, raise taxes. Unlike during past recessions when fiscal policies helped give a boost to recovery, Yellen surmises, “fiscal policy this time has actually slowed recovery and has little effect on unemployment and only serve to stoke inflation.” Indeed, over time, it will.

These moves, far from creating or “stimulating” the creation of jobs, ultimately serve to redistribute the surplus wealth created by working people to the advantage of the largest and strongest capitalists, who put the squeeze on weaker capitalists and above all target working people.

US gov’t seizes computers, phones at border

Continued from front page

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement seized electronic devices violate their First Amendment rights to free speech and to assemble and engage in First Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure.

During the three hours, agents were subjected to electronic device searches, according to government figures. Nearly half were U.S. citizens. Between Oct. 1, 2010, and Aug. 31, 2012, another 10,000 were searched.

“Some worry,” says Yellen, that the Fed’s policies have little effect on unemployment and only serve to stoke inflation.” Indeed, over time, it will.

These moves, far from creating or “stimulating” the creation of jobs, ultimately serve to redistribute the surplus wealth created by working people to the advantage of the largest and strongest capitalists, who put the squeeze on weaker capitalists and above all target working people.

Socialist Workers wins ballot slot in Omaha

On Feb. 26, the Omaha, Neb., Board of Elections informed Maura DeLuca, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor, and Jacob Perasso, candidate for City Council, that they are on the ballot. Inset, a week earlier, the socialist candidates submitted more than double the required number of signatures. At left is Perasso.

DeLuca met Debra Tomlin, who works part time as a nurse’s assistant, when she, Perasso and supporters campaigned door to door Feb. 24. Above, Tomlin, left, and DeLuca in Tomlin’s house. She bought a subscription to the Militant along with two books—The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism and Women and Revolution: The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution—and donated $3 to the campaign.

After talking with DeLuca, Tomlin said she supports the jobs program the candidates raise, which urges workers to come together to fight for a massive government-funded public jobs program to provide millions with work, building housing, hospitals, schools, child care centers and other things workers need.

“When we call the police they don’t come,” Tomlin said. “They call them heroes, but they aren’t. When they do come they harass people. They came to my home and told me I couldn’t smoke on my own property.”

Tomlin told DeLuca she hadn’t heard of the SWP before, but after hearing what the party has to say she wanted to do what she can to help.

JOHN STUDE
Public workers in Malawi strike, win wage increase

More than 100,000 public workers in the southeast African country of Malawi ended their two-week strike Feb. 21. They won a wage raise for the lowest paid workers of 61 percent and 5 percent for those with the highest pay. On Feb. 20, workers shut down the country’s two international airports.

“Workers were demanding wage raises because a 50 percent devaluation of” Malawi’s currency, the kwacha, last year “and a 30 percent inflation rate had cut into workers’ income,” Pontius KaliCheno, general secretary of the Civil Service Trade Union, told the Militant in a phone interview Feb. 25 from Lilongwe, the capital.

Teachers joined the walkout and all government offices were closed in the country, he said.

“...the government refused to put an offer on the table before the strike and refused to discuss the issues,” said KaliCheno. “That’s why we had to go on strike.”

Hundreds of students in Lilongwe and Blantyre took to the streets in support of the workers Feb. 21, hours before the strike settlement was announced. “Cops used tear gas at the main offices and paint factories, the Thriasio Neuros paper plant and the Elliniki Halivourgia steel plant that ended in July last year, continue their struggle and fight alongside other workers in the industrial area of Thriasio near Athens. The steelworkers were fighting cuts in their wages and hours and for reestablishment of 126 coworkers fired during the strike. Upon returning to work Feb. 12 following a three-month furlough, workers were informed by bosses at Elliniki Halivourgia that a two-month “job-sharing” scheme was being imposed. “On my first day back to work,” said Nikos Tzakis, “some people were saying we need to help the company ‘get on its feet’, I answer, when did the boss ever help you get on your feet? What about all your unpaid bills, the tax office running your unpaid bills, the tax office running its feet,’ I answer, when did the boss ever help us need to help the company ‘get on its feet’?”

Nikos Gkiolis, “some people were saying the scheme was being imposed. “Workers were demanding wage raises last year at the Halivourgiki steel mill next door assured workers they need not fear us also must coordinate our struggles to see that, no matter how hard, we also must coordinate our struggles to win.”

“We were on strike last year, bosses at the Halivourgiki steel mill next door assured workers they need not fear job or wage cuts,” said Katsaros. But last week the company laid off 170, slashed wages by 20 percent and switched to 12-hour shifts. “Some workers from there have now contacted our union,” Katsaros said.

At the Elefina shipyards workers have not been paid for a year, receiving only a small sum each month in back wages.

Tasos Konstantinidis, one of the fired strikers at Elliniki Halivourgia, who participated in solidarity actions at the shipyard since workers there struck Jan. 22. “If we had gotten real solidarity from the metal manufacturing and steel plants in our region, the outcome of our struggle would have been different,” he said. There is a lot of bitterness about this, but now that others are on strike, it’s our duty to support them.”

—Maria Plexa and Natasha Telesis

BOSS’S CONTRACT-SIGNING BRIEZE TURNED OVER TO HELP BUILD WORKERS PARTY

Laura Anderson in Chicago recently sent in a blood money donation to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund, which finances long-range work of the party. Blood money is a term the Militant uses to describe bonuses and other benefits used by the bosses to press us to accept wage cuts, dangerous working conditions and speedups.

Anderson’s contribution is from a signing bonus for accepting a concession contract. Below is a note she sent in with her check:

I am very happy to put this bonus payment of $6070.20 to good use for the international working class. It is from our last UAW Local 719 union contract that was accepted at Caterpillar-owned Electro-Motive Diesel in Lagrange, Ill., in February 2012.

We voted to accept a union-busting contract after voting to strike twice, and then watching Caterpillar close the Toronto plant in January 2012 after our union brothers and sisters there put up a fight against a 50 percent wage cut. Caterpillar then moved production to a nonunion plant in Muncie, Ind., where the highest paid welder gets $14 an hour. We then watched 800 workers at the Caterpillar plant in Joliet, 30 minutes from our factory, go on a three-month strike, fighting many of the things the company has begun to implement at EMED. Since February, attacks on our conditions have increased.

Cat has hired hundreds of supplemental workers doing the same job as us, but without health care or union representation. We can be fired at will for at least the first two years of employment. Safety is often preached, but many are afraid to report an injury because of the threat to be fired. The highest paid have had wages cut by $11. Many have been fired based on the new attendance point system where doctor’s notes are not accepted and there is no such thing as a personal day off. Five times a year we are allowed to decline mandatory overtime. In my department we are often ordered to work a 58-hour week. Many work seven days since there is always a potential for layoffs.

If you want to make a blood money contribution, contact Militant distributors listed on page 10.

—Brian Williams

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

March 11, 1988
CAMDEN, Ark.—It was standing room only, as more than 400 unionists and people from the community packed into the paperworkers’ hall on February 23 for a labor solidarity rally. International Paper Co. is demanding sweeping concessions from the United Paperworkers International Union and International Association of Machinists locals that organize this mill. Claiming that the mill is old and worn out, IP is wanting a wage cut, “total flexibility from the front gate to the back gate” to move workers to any job, elimination of minimum pay for Sunday work, and more use of outside contractors.

These are similar to demands the company has been making at its mills around the country, including the four where 3,400 workers are on strike or locked out in Joliet, Maine; Mobile, Alabama; De Pere, Wisconsin; and Lock Haven, Pennsylvania.

March 11, 1963
GREENWOOD, Miss., March 1—James Travis, a 20-year-old field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, was gunned late night by three men and is in a hospital in critical condition.

Robert Moses, director of SNCC’s Mississippi voter registration project, and Randolph Blackwell, field director of the Atlanta-based Voter-Education Project, were riding with Travis on a highway outside of Greenwood. Three white men followed them in an untagged white Buick. The three whites opened fire on the Negroes with pistols. Bullets smashed both front windows. Travis, the driver of the car, shouted that he had been hit.

The shooting was a direct reprisal for SNCC’s voter-registration work. Moses said that 150 Negroes had attempted to register in Greenwood in the two days before the shooting, “the first real breakthrough in Mississippi.”

March 12, 1938
Mr. Alexander F. Kerensky has come to town for a speaking tour. The former Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of Russia before the Bolshevik Revolution, is very indignant and morally outraged over the last Moscow trial. Like so many other “democratic” hacks, he is trying to restore some of his woefully fading prestige by reference to the horrors of Bolshevik dictatorship. We are not, as is known, among those who believe that support of the Russian Revolution and the leadership of Lenin makes necessary an endorsement of the dreadful atrocities committed by the counter-revolutionary regime of Stalin and Co. Those who have not forgotten the history of the short-lived rule of Mr. Kerensky will hardly condemn Stalin only in order to exchange him for the man and the system that were kicked into oblivion by the revolutionary masses of Russia in November 1917.
Mali: Class antagonisms grow with commodification of land

BY JOHN STUDER

The unfolding war in Mali takes place against the backdrop of sharpening class antagonisms there, built on the development of capitalist economic and social relations, as well as ethnic and tribal clashes rooted in the contradiction between arbitrary borders drawn by colonialists and actual processes of national formation.

Within these conflicts—unresolvable outside revolutionary struggle by the toilers—competing imperialist powers, chiefly Paris, as well as Washington, are looking to pacify the destabilizing threats to their interests.

After driving Islamist forces out of the major northern cities in Mali, French troops, backed by units of the Malian army and troops from Chad, face ongoing guerilla attacks. In Gao and Timbuktu, both under French military and Malian government control, virtually all Arabs and Tuaregs, often identifiable by their lighter skin, face reprisals and have fled into the desert or refugee camps across the border. Kidal remains under control of Tuareg nationalist forces.

Meanwhile, disagreements, including a firefight in Bamako, the capital, have been there for generations, even centuries.”

The borders of and peoples in Mali, like much of Africa, are the result not of the historical development of a nation, but of agreements reached by competing colonial powers in the 19th century. Paris took control over Mali, the capital, have broken out among factions in the Malian army. And the situation in the country isعمير غزير Invest investors of foreign capital, from South Africa and Canadian gold mining to Chinese garment production. The French “now risk being bogged down,” Reuters commented Feb. 21.

The most important thing for the country’s developing working class and other toilers is the fight for space to organize, discuss and assert their interests against both the emerging Malian bourgeoisie and international capital.

Barack Obama’s command, called for increasing U.S. military “intelligence-gathering and spying missions in Africa by nearly 15-fold,” reported the Washington Post.

Since 2007, the Pentagon has established about a dozen air bases in Africa, out of which surveillance flights are flown under direction of U.S. special operations forces, an unnamed senior U.S. commander told the Post last June.

The Pentagon is establishing a new drone air base in Niger, near the border with northern Mali where several Islamist groups are battling government, French and allied forces. U.S. officials “envision flying only unarmed surveillance drones from the base,” the New York Times reported, “though they have not ruled out conducting missile strikes.”

About 100 U.S. military personnel have already arrived in Niger, Obama told Congress Feb. 22.

The U.S. military has been conducting armed aerial drone attacks against purported members and supporters of the Islamist group al-Shabab in Somalia. Drones are flown out of the U.S. air base in Djibouti—where 3,500 U.S. military personnel are stationed—and air bases in southern Ethiopia and in the Seychelles Islands in the Indian Ocean.

In his statement, General Rodriguez also called for expanding the presence of special operations forces with an emphasis on 10 countries—Nigeria, Libya, Niger, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, Mali, Cameroon, South Sudan and Kenya—according to an article on the Global Research website.

The U.S. rulers aim to gain a competitive edge for markets and raw materials against rival powers from Europe to Beijing. “China is all over Africa—I mean all over Africa. … And we got to get in,” said John Kerry at his confirmation hearing Jan. 24, shortly before being sworn in as secretary of state.

This year the Pentagon has assigned groups of soldiers from an army brigade of some 3,500 troops to train militaries in 35 African countries.

Since October 2011, some 100 U.S. special operations forces have been participating in military actions in four countries in Central Africa—Uganda, South Sudan, Central African Republic, and Democratic Republic of the Congo—targeting the Lord’s Resistance Army, a group of armed bandits operating in the region.

People may not have legal titles, but they have been there for generations, even centuries.”

Most of these peasants backed the French troops’ offensive against the Islamist forces, in opposition to the brutal conditions they imposed. But they continue to confront the Malian government and its troops over rights to work the land.

An upcoming article will take up the developing working class in the country’s two export industries—cotton production and gold mining—as well as the roots of the country’s national, ethnic and religious conflicts.

Continued from front page

The U.S. military has been drawing into Africa

Above, peasants meet in Mali to protest government sale of land to foreign companies, April 17, 2012. Ibrahim Coulalby, president of the Malian National Confederation of Peasant Organizations of Mali, left, speaking Nov. 17, 2011, in Nyéléni: “These lands are not empty! People may not have legal titles, but they have been there for generations, even centuries.”

New International no. 12

‘Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun’

by Jack Barnes

Today’s accelerating global capitalist slump represents the most far-reaching shift in Washington’s military policy since the U.S. buildup toward World War II. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this turning point for imperialism, and chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

New International no. 13

‘Our Politics Start with the World’

by Jack Barnes

The economic and cultural inequalities between imperialist and semicolonial countries, and among classes within almost every country, are produced and accentuated by the workings of capitalism. For vanguard workers to build parties able to lead a revolutionary struggle for power, our activity must be guided by a strategy to close this gap.

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Pathfinder Press in English and Spanish. It tells the story of how Cuba’s working people and their revolutionary leadership responded to the request by the government of Angola, which had just won its independence from Portugal, for help in defeating a U.S.-backed invasion by South Africa’s white-supremacist regime. More than 425,000 Cuban volunteers took part in that nearly 16-year-long internationalist mission, whose victory assured Angola’s sovereignty, won Namibia’s independence, and hastened the collapse of apartheid in South Africa.

The event was one of dozens of book presentations, roundtable discussions, and literature and poetry readings related to Angola during the Havana International Book Fair here February 14-24. Angola was the country honored this year at this huge annual cultural festival.

Along with Villegas, other speakers at the Cuba and Angola event were Bríg. Gen. Gustavo Chui (both Villegas and Chui were frontline officers in the battles fought in Angola); Jorge Stutl, a member of the national leadership of the Union of Young Communists (UJC); and Mary-Alice Waters, the book’s editor and a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. The meeting was chaired by Martín Koppel, who was responsible for the preparation of the book in Spanish.

Among the 80 people attending were numerous other Cuban internationalists who had served in Angola or other African countries. One was Victor Dreke, second in command in the first column of Cuban combatants serving during 1975-76. He volunteered for multiple combat missions led by Che Guevara in the Congo in 1965 and Bolivia in 1966-67. He concluded by quoting a 1991 speech by Raúl Castro—then minister of the Cuban general staff of the mission initially “had doubts we’d be able to save Angola. Our commander-in-chief should always tell us not to be daunted, that we were going to win the war. And I thought to myself, ‘Oh my God! Our commander has gone mad!’"

But Fidel was right, Chui said. They did win. And Castro’s strategic vision, confidence in the combatants and the Cuban and Angolan people, and day-to-day involvement directing troop operations made a decisive difference. The main speaker at the Cuba and Angola event was Bríg. Gen. Villegas, who like Chui was a Rebel Army combatant in the revolutionary war that brought down Cuba’s U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in 1959. Known here as Pombo, his nom de guerre, Villegas served in internationalist combat missions led by Che Guevara in the Congo in 1965 and Bolivia in 1966-67. He volunteered for multiple missions in Angola, serving during the war’s decisive final period as liaison with the high command in Cuba. (Major excerpts from Villegas’ and Chui’s talks will be featured in a coming issue.)

Decisive role of Cuban leadership

Cuba’s combat mission in Angola, Villegas said, drew on previous internationalist actions in Africa. It began in early 1963 with aid to the national liberation movement against French colonialism in Algeria, “where we sent doctors before we sent soldiers,” he said. “Our cooperation in Africa really began in Algeria.”

Villegas pointed to the Cuban volunteers who had fought together with anti-imperialist forces in the Congo and then in Guinea-Bissau’s independence war against Portuguese colonialism. The anti-colonial victory in Guinea-Bissau in September 1974 helped accelerate the end of the Portuguese empire in Cape Verde, Mozambique, and finally in Angola, Pombo noted. He outlined the political-military strategy of Cuba’s revolutionary leadership that led to victory in Angola—13 years after the beginning of the mission—when the South African army launched a second major invasion. That assault ended in March 1988 with the crushing defeat of Pretoria’s military forces in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale.

“We weren’t going to let Angolan forces be defeated at the hands of the South Africans,” said Villegas. The Cuban leadership was determined never to risk a single life needlessly, Villegas emphasized—never to initiate a combat in which they didn’t have the forces necessary to win. He concluded by quoting a 1991 speech by Raúl Castro—then minister of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces and today Cuba’s president—that appears in Cuba and Angola. When the Cuban people “face new and unexpected challenges,” Castro said, “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.”

Over the course of the book fair and related events, more than 500 copies of Cuba and Angola were sold or distributed.
BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

I want to speak primarily about the importance of this book—Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own—for the political work today of communists in the United States and other countries outside of Cuba.

Today’s spreading international capitalist crisis of production and trade imploded first in the financial sphere with great force more than five years ago. It is still in its earliest stages. This ongoing world contraction in the output of human labor was not exceptional in capitalist history, nor was it unanticipated, even if its timing was not predictable.

It is not the product of “mistaken” fiscal or monetary policies by one or another capitalist government, as some would like us to believe. Nor of “excesses” and “greed.” No, it is the product of the lawful workings of capitalist itself—including its inevitable “excesses” and “greed.” What still lies ahead of us as their crisis deepens are decades of economic and social convulsions, deepening interpenetrations, and expanding “open-ended” colonial wars. That is not something we can prevent.

Much more important for us, however, we are also at the very beginning of what will soon become decades of growing, sharpening resistance by working people the world over to the consequences of this crisis imposed on us.

And we need those decades, because it is only in the course of such battles that the working class can acquire the experience and consciousness necessary to transform itself and produce the communist leadership that does not exist today—a leadership capable of doing what the working people of Cuba opened for our hemisphere more than half a century ago.

Link in proletarian continuity

It is the Cuban Revolution that today provides the living link in the continuity of the working class back to the early years of the victorious 1917 October Revolution—back to the 1871 Paris Commune, to the revolutions of 1848, the Communist Manifesto and the birth of the modern workers movements.

And that is why Cuba and Angola, the book we are discussing today, is so important.

It tells the example of the Cuban Revolution to life for working people, for youth, whose eyes are becoming more open to seeing that example in all its rich detail than at any time in the last sixty years. More open because of their own experiences.

And please, let me say that again. It is the most important thing I want to say. We know from experiences as part of the working class that working people in the United States are more open to learning about and considering the example of the Cuban Revolution than at any time since the opening shots at Moncada. That is not ahead of us. It has already happened.

Cuba’s volunteer internationalist mission in Angola

Cuba’s volunteer internationalist mission in Angola not only changed history of southern Africa but strengthened Cuban Revolution and prospects for revolutionary-minded workers in U.S. and beyond. Below, workers in volunteer minibrigade build housing in Havana, February 1990. Rebirth of voluntary labor was key to rectification process in Cuba in 1980s. Right, supporters of Militant sell subscriptions and books door to door in working-class neighborhood in Houston, February 2013. Books like Cuba and Angola help workers “see what a socialist revolution truly is, why it is necessary, and how ordinary human beings are transformed as we fight not only for ourselves but for others,” Waters said.

In the most widely cited statistics. The majority of those who have found work again took cuts in pay, often drastic ones.

Millions of working-class families have lost their homes, their life savings, and access to health care (a loss that the “reforms” of the current administration will magnify, not diminish).

Most important, perhaps, a substantial majority, more than sixty percent—and rising—no longer believe their financial condition will improve in coming years.

Economic and social blows of this magnitude—an actual contraction in the size of the labor force—do not go unregistered in the consciousness of millions. And that is where real policies begin, as Lenin reminded us. With the actions of millions.

Response in working class

I cite a few of these statistics to underscore one simple point. Many people ask us, “Why is nothing happening in face of this crisis and its consequences?” Our answer is that a
great deal is happening, and in fact has already happened.

But unless you are part of the working class—and a particularly alert part—you won’t see it yet. You’re outside the class—or outside their gestating class consciousness—so you don’t hear about what’s happening from workers discussing among themselves. And it doesn’t get reported in the bourgeois media; they are tone deaf to it.

But the broader manifestations in the streets of these changes in consciousness will come—as they did in the 1930s—with the beginning of a cyclical economic recovery, even if short-lived, that gives workers more leverage to put up a fight. One of the ways we know what has already changed is the response we get from fellow workers as we go door to door in working-class neighborhoods, talking with whoever comes to the door about how their lives have been affected the last few years. A measure of the thirst for explanations of what’s happening, of the desire to talk about what history teaches us and what working people can do to fight back effectively, is the nearly 3,500 subscriptions to our newspaper, the Militant, sold over several weeks last fall, going house to house, apartment to apartment in working-class neighborhoods.

But the level of response by the arrested workers hasn’t gotten in decades. And those subscriptions were combined with workers buying hundreds of books, serious books like those you find at Pathfinder’s—Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power by Jack Barnes, Teamster Rebellion by Farrell Dobbs, and The Cuban Five, Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free.

And now we are selling Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own in the same way—yes, door to door in working-class neighborhoods. And workers are buying it with interest.

We know from our own concrete experiences there is no better way to introduce working people and youth in the US to Cuba’s October Revolution. Books like Cuba and Angola and The Cuban Five help them see what a socialist revolution truly is, why it is necessary, and how ordinary human beings are transformed as we fight not only for ourselves but for others as well. René González expressed this eloquently in the first-hand account of his internationalist mission in Angola in 1977-79, included in full in these pages when he wrote, “The Angolan experience taught me that the most beautiful works are accomplished by imperfect men, each one of us a brief burst of energy in history.”

Book on Cuban Revolution

Martín has already described how Cuba and Angola brings together in a single book many different levels of experience and looks at the same historic events from multiple perspectives—from the heaviest leadership responsibilities and broadest historical sweep provided by Fidel [Castro], Raúl [Castro], and Nelson Mandela; to the insights of four generals of the FAR who were frontline officers of Cuba’s “revolutionary army of the people,” as Raúl called it, leading the battle here and in Africa (that includes Gen. Chui, who is on the platform here today); to the young volunteers like Gerardo [Hernández], Fernando [González], and René [González], who vividly describe how their lives were transformed by what Raúl referred to as Angola’s “school of life and struggle.”

I want to stress only two points. Cuba and Angola is not a book about Angola. We don’t pretend to write in any detailed way about the heroic struggle of the Angolan people during the first liberation war against Portugal. Nor of the second liberation war waged to push back and defeat the invasion by South Africa and its imperialist backers in Washington.

This is a book about Cuba and the Cuban Revolution, as told by Cubans who were on the front lines of “Cuba’s greatest internationalist feat ever,” to use Fidel’s words.

It is a book about the ways in which the proletarian internationalism of the Cuban people—both those who served in Angola and those who were on the front lines here, including their families and loved ones—strengthened the alliance of workers and small farmers that has always been the bedrock of the revolution, and made possible the advances consolidated in the 1980s through the rectification process.

2. Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, and René González are three of the five Cuban revolutionaries serving draconian sentences in the US federal prison system on trumped-up espionage and murder conspiracy charges. The worldwide fight for their freedom has been covered extensively by the Militant for more than 14 years.

3. The rectification process was the political course initiated by the Cuban revolutionary leadership in 1986. It marked a turn away from copying the stilting anti-working-class political and economic policies long entrenched in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The disintegration of these regimes in 1991 led to the rapid loss of 85 percent of Cuba’s foreign trade and precipitated a deep economic, social and political crisis referred to in Cuba as the Special Period.

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**... Want to read more?**

Mary-Alice Waters at Feb. 18 book panel.

Raúl expressed it well in May 1991 on the day the victorious battle flag of Operation Carlota was returned to Cuba: “When we face new and unexpected challenges,” he said, “we will continue on page 11

**Raúl referred to as Angola’s ‘Red Cross’ when he led the revolution in 1974-75.**

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Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa

By Ernesto Che Guevara

The world's most capital-intensive, second-class status and social contradictions. …

The Militant March 11, 2013

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa
Mary-Alice Waters

Capitalism—The commencement of a struggle, where in Latin America have come to

Capitalist expansion inexorably draws growing parts of the world into its orbit, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels noted. Today capital is exerting its pull on Equatorial Guinea. Increasing numbers of Guineans are becoming wageworkers for the first time ever, as laborers on road and other construction projects especially. Nearly half the country’s population lives in the cities of Bata and Malabo, which are being swollen by stepped-up migration from the countryside to seek work.

Toward a New World

Capitalism, the modern working class, developed—a class of laborers, who live only so long as they find work and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital.
After strike, school bus workers in New York City fight firings

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK—School bus workers here have beat back at-
ttempts by some bus companies to fire workers returning after a one-month strike, but “a few employers are keeping some of our members from going back to their jobs,” says a statement on the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1181 website. “Our union will defeat the remaining employers and get all our members back to work,” the statement continues.

Local 1181 officials ended the strike by work-
ers Feb. 15 without defeating Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s decision to eliminate Employee Protection Provision contracts with private bus companies for 1,100 routes that expire this year. Bus companies are suing to get rid of the protections for the remaining 6,600 routes.

The provisions, in place for 34 years, require bosses to hire from the pool of all laid-off work-
ers by seniority, before taking on new employees. Without the protections, any time a company loses a bid or closes down, laid-off workers would start as new hires, if hired at all.

“To be glad to be back at work, but we can’t just go back in as crooks,” said Maria Cangello, a driver and mem-
er of Local 1181. “Our jobs are at stake.” She was one of dozens of workers who spoke briefly to the Militant at a bus yard near JFK airport Feb. 25.

Workers say they aren’t defeated or demoralized. Many are following efforts by the union to win back the jobs of those fired when the strike ended. The strike was weakened when some 3,000 workers organized by Teamsters Local 854 and United Crawford Industrial Workers Union Local 71 crossed the picket lines. Two members of Local 71 at the yard told this reporter that they thought their union should have joined the strike.

When strikers returned to Reliant Transportation in the Bronx, the bus bosses said they weren’t go-
ing to take everyone back. “We all stayed outside,” driver Dionisio Peña told the Militant. “It seems the union’s strength was called at. In the end, no one was fired.”

The same day Jofaz Transportation boss Joseph Fazzia turned away more than 100 attendants in Brooklyn. “[I’ve] lost hundreds of thousands of dollars,” he shouted, according to the New York Post. “This union thinks they can tell me what to do. They can go F— themselves.”

The attendants were back on the job after negoti-
tiations between Fazzia and Local 1181, the Post reported Feb. 26. “Workers at Jofaz are back at work,” driver Horace Madhoo said at the yard near JFK. “But not those fired at Rainbow. We have to get every-
one back to work.”

Despite a barrage of articles from the city’s big-
business dailies during the strike that tried to paint the workers as selfishly holding students “hostage,” the majority of workers in the city backed the strik-

“Dispute between the city and the union is clearly not over,” said a Feb. 21 New York Times editorial that scolded five Democratic Party can-
didates for mayor, who had written to the union asking officials to end the strike, for claiming they would each “revise” the job protections if elected in the fall.

The editorial also backed Bloomberg’s attack on the bus workers and denounced union officials for saying they will seek legislation to restore the protec-
tions.

“It is time to let the market decide how this in-
dustry works,” the Times said.

School bus workers have a different view.

“We learned that only workers care about other workers,” said Madhoo.

‘Cuba and Angola’

Continued from page 9

always be able to recall the epic of Angola with grat-
itude, because without Angola we would not be as
strong as we are today.”

Nor would any of us, anywhere.

Without the years of the internationalist effort in Angola, with its political attention campaign by the Cuban people, the daunting weight of the “new and unexpected challenges” of the Special Period that had already begun by the time the last Cuban troops returned from Angola in 1991, would have been infinitely greater. The creative energies and endur-
ance of Cuba’s toilers would have been even more harshly tested.

The victorious battle of Cuito Cuanavale, to use that symbolic milepost singled out by Nelson Mandela, not only changed the history of southern Africa. It changed the history of Cuba as well.

And, without fear of perjury, we can testify that the future for revolutionaries in North America too.

Twenty-five years have passed since that historic moment, however, and much of this great epic is now unknown to new generations that have come, and will be coming, onto the front lines of battle from the United States, to Cuba, to Africa.

Martin and I saw this firsthand a few years ago in the internationalist mission to Angola, where the leadership of the University of National Equatorial Guinea and then Cuban ambassador there, Victor Drake—who is also with us today—we took part in the first ever book fair through which every book was by Nelson Mandela and every book by Thomas Sankara, leaders not only of the people of Africa but of working people the world over, flew off the tables at a fast and furious rate, and were gone by the end.

To many young people there, most not even yet born when the apartheid regime fell to the revolu-
tionary upsurge of the South African people, this was the first time they knew little of but longed to make their history known.

Cuba and Angola aims to be a small contribu-
tion to filling the void of books that tell this story and encourage those who made those battles in those epic battles to make that history known.

Five Cuban revolutionaries

Finally, I want to draw attention to sections of Cuba and Angola that tell the stories of the inter-
nationalist missions of Gerardo, Fernando, and René. In their own words they describe how they were born, how they were molded by that combat experience and trans-
formed for life. We see how they became the men they are today, the finest products of the Cuban Revolution.

Their accounts show how decisive Cuba’s in-
nationalist mission in Angola was in producing an entire generation of leaders of the revolution among whom the Cuban Five stand as an example to the world.

Fernando’s account is available here in Cuba and Angola for the first time. And while the accounts by and about Gerardo and René have been published here in Cuba before, they are little known abroad.

The inclusion of their stories means that for us this book becomes one more weapon we can wield in the battle to win freedom for the Five. There is no better way to introduce Ramón, Antonio, René, Fernando, and the others to the world, to make work-
ing people young and old who are themselves be-
ginning to be transformed by the initial skirmishes of the class battles that are on the horizon.

There is no better way to answer, “Who are the Cuban Five?”

There is no better way to show that “yes, there is an alternative,” there is a way forward for working people in today’s crisis-ridden world.

The Cuban Revolution has given us that example. And for that we thank you.

LETTERS

Blown away by Cuba

I am extremely grateful to the Militant for opening my eyes to the struggles going on around our globe between workers and capital-

ists. Reading it has had a pro-

We see how they became the men
tive effect on me. Each time I read this paper. I will continue to do-

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