

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Cuba helps push back
Washington's attacks on Venezuela**
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 79/NO. 25 JULY 20, 2015

Amid turmoil, Greek workers face ongoing social crisis

BY SETH GALINSKY

At the urging of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, 61 percent of voters in a July 5 referendum in Greece rejected a new European Union bailout plan coupled with demands for deeper cuts in pensions and higher sales taxes. Tsipras' Coalition of the Radical Left, known as Syriza, was elected in January based on its claim to be an anti-austerity party.

The troika — the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund — is demanding steeper pension cuts, a faster rise in the retirement age, higher sales taxes, more cuts in military spending, and a smaller tax increase for the rich than what Tsipras has proposed, in exchange for more loans. The troika rejected even discussing Tsipras' request to write off some of the country's \$360 billion debt.

The European Union — and the slightly smaller eurozone — was originally set up as a common market to bolster the ability of capitalists to compete against their rivals in the U.S., Japan and other parts of the world. In reality it works as a tool for the more powerful European imperialist countries, especially Germany, to advance their interests at the expense of the weaker capitalist nations.

Facing the troika's intransigence,
Continued on page 9

Emblem of racist assaults comes down in S. Carolina

Black rights fight has transformed millions



AP Photos: Top, David Goldman; inset, John Bazemore

Broad response against June 17 massacre by white supremacist terrorist in Charleston, S.C., spurred move to bring down Confederate battle flag. Above, June 18 vigil at Morris Brown AME Church in Charleston honors nine victims of racist assault. Inset, flag is removed from state Capitol July 10.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The Confederate battle flag, a rallying point for racist thugs and opponents of Black rights since it was unfurled over the Statehouse in 1961, was removed from the South Carolina state Capitol at 10 a.m. July 10.

A cheering crowd of thousands began gathering hours earlier. The flag will be put in the Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum. A few in the crowd carried the Confederate banner, without incident.

Millions around the world watched

as the historic event was televised live.

The decision to remove the flag, its rapidity, the overwhelming bipartisan

Continued on page 3

In victory for revolution, Cuba, US to open embassies

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Cuban President Raúl Castro and U.S. President Barack Obama exchanged letters July 1 confirming the agreement of the two governments to re-establish diplomatic relations and open embassies in their respective capitals on July 20.

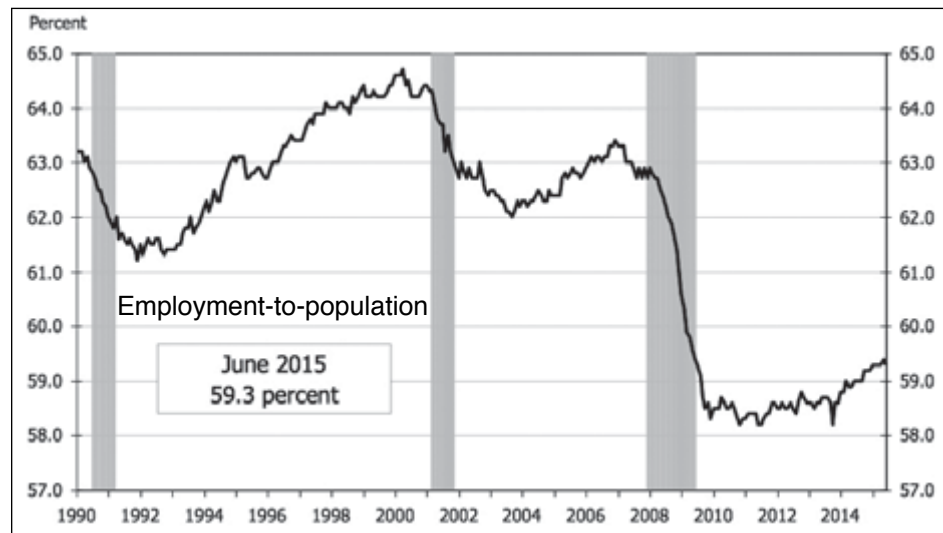
The opening of embassies “completes the first stage of what will be a long and complex process towards the normalization of bilateral relations,” said a statement issued by the Cuban government July 1.

This marks another victory for revolutionary Cuba in the process announced last December of moving toward normalization of relations between Washington and Havana, registering the failure of the U.S. rulers to overturn Cuba's socialist revolution despite more than five decades of economic and political warfare.

As long as Washington's “economic, commercial and financial blockade continues to be fully implemented”

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US says ‘close to full employment’ while millions don’t have a job



Percent of working-age population who are employed fell from 63.3 percent in January 2007 to 59.4 percent at end of recession in June 2009, and has not risen above that figure since.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that unemployment declined 0.2 percent last month, bringing the official rate to 5.3 percent. “The U.S. economy is now close to full employment,” Federal Reserve Vice Chairman Stanley Fischer said June 30.

But these statistics mask a harsh reality: six years into the recovery, millions of workers are jobless, especially in mining, steel, oil and other basic industries, and many of the new jobs that have come online are part time, temporary or relatively low paid.

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Puerto Rico gov’t targets workers to pay ‘unpayable’ debt of US colony

BY SETH GALINSKY

Admitting June 29 that Puerto Rico's \$72 billion public debt is “unpayable,” Alejandro García Padilla, the U.S. colony's governor, called on “unions, the government, the banks, the bondholders, the citizens” to “share the sacrifice.”

“The parallels between Greece's

full-blown debt crisis and Puerto Rico's burgeoning one are striking,” the *Economist* wrote June 30.

García urged bondholders to negotiate stretching out the amount of time to get paid back.

But the main target of the property-tying rulers is working people.

García repeatedly lauded a report his government commissioned by former International Monetary Fund official Anne Krueger titled “Puerto Rico: A Way Forward.” Released earlier that day, it prioritizes removing “disincentives for firms to hire workers and for workers to accept jobs.”

While the cost of living in Puerto Rico
Continued on page 9

Canadian gov’t adds new charges against unionist in 2013 rail disaster

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Almost two years after the Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, rail disaster, which killed 47 people and destroyed the downtown core of the community of 5,000, the federal government agency Transport Canada has filed criminal charges against locomotive engineer Tom Harding for allegedly violating the Railway Safety Act and the Fisheries Act. Charges were also filed against five officials of the now-bankrupt Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway, including CEO Robert Grindrod, as well as against

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Massachusetts home care workers win \$15 an hour

Wash. farmworkers strike on first day of blueberry season

Dominican gov’t threatens deportations of Haitians

BY STEVE WARSHELL

MIAMI — “Haitian lives matter,” chanted more than 300 participants in a June 25 march and rally here called by Haitian churches and community organizations to protest threats by the Dominican government to step up deportations of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent. The protest began in front of the Dominican Consulate and marched to the Haitian Consulate.

For decades bosses in the Dominican Republic have taken advantage of the immense poverty in neighboring Haiti to exploit Haitian workers as a source of cheap labor in agriculture, construction and other industries. Haitian immigrants and their descendants face widespread discrimination in housing, jobs, education and access to government services.

Current threats of mass deportations flow from two steps taken by Dominican authorities in the last couple years. A 2013 Dominican Constitutional Court ruling made previous laws retroactive to 1929 denying citizenship to those born in the Dominican Republic whose parents were not legal permanent residents. Following protests, a law was passed in 2014 offering a “path to citizenship.” It required those affected to register as foreigners and apply for residency.

By the Feb. 1 deadline, only about 8,000 people registered, out of as many as 200,000 potentially affected. Dominican officials routinely deny requests to issue birth certificates and other documents to those of Haitian descent.

The government also announced a program for undocumented immigrants to “regularize” their status. Immigrants

were told to register by June 17 and provide proof of identity and entry into the Dominican Republic before October 2011. But many Haitian immigrants say they were born at home without any official record.

“Even under the best of circumstances folks who are rural and poor would be incredibly hard pressed to meet any of the criteria [for citizenship],” Dominican-American author Junot Díaz said at a forum in Miami June 24. He spoke along with prominent Haitian-American writer Edwidge Danticat at a program attended by some 150 people.

News reports said that Díaz had joined a call for a boycott of the Dominican Republic promoted by many opponents of the government’s anti-Haitian policies.

Díaz issued a statement correcting the record. “I did not call for a boycott of the Dominican Republic,” he said. “Those of us who are in solidarity with the denationalized must continue to pressure the Dominican government to return citizenship rights ... and to create a just, transparent process for protecting the rights of undocumented migrants.”

The British *Guardian* reported only 10,000 of the 250,000 who registered by the June 17 deadline met the requirements. Many more just didn’t register.

Dominican officials have made contradictory statements on when mass deportations may begin. They say some 25,000 immigrants have “voluntarily” returned to Haiti since June 18.

“There is a great deal of tension and panic among Haitians in the Dominican Republic, where violence against our people has a long history,” Jean-Rob-

Armenia: Electricity hike, cop attacks spark protests



Thousands rally in Yerevan, Armenia, June 26 against hike in electrical rates. Demonstrations began June 19 after the government approved a 17 percent increase. Protesters marched on the presidential palace June 22 but were stopped by riot police on Baghramyan Avenue. The marchers then staged a sit-in, known as the “No to Plunder” event. Police used water cannons to break up the protest, injuring dozens of people and arresting more than 200.

The crackdown back-fired. By the evening of June 23 some 15,000 people had joined the sit-in, protesting the cops’ heavy-handed treatment. In an effort to defuse the situation, President Serzh Sargsyan suspended the rate hike June 28 pending an audit of the electricity company. Since then the protests have dwindled, but not ended.

Armenia’s Electric Network has a monopoly on distribution and is owned by the Russian company Inter RAO. The government has close ties to Moscow.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said July 2 that the protests should not be used “to whip up anti-government sentiment although the root of these events is purely economic.” He compared the developments in Armenia to the start of the Maidan protests in Ukraine that led to the fall of the pro-Moscow government there in 2014.

— EMMA JOHNSON

ert Lafortune of the Haitian-American Grassroots Coalition told the *Militant* at the June 25 rally. “We have already had the first lynching in this crisis.”

Henry Claude Jean, a Haitian immigrant who worked shining shoes, was found hanged from a tree in the Dominican city of Santiago Feb. 11. Police said he was killed by other Haitians in a robbery; his family disputes that claim.

“The governments of the Americas should express their outrage about these crimes against humanity, but no one has said a word,” Lafortune said.

Many working people in the Dominican community of South Florida disagreed with the call for a boycott.

“I don’t like what the army does to workers from Haiti,” Diego Sandoval, a delivery driver, told the *Militant*, “but I

don’t think a boycott is right. The Dominican economy is very weak. Sure it’s stronger than Haiti, but we don’t have much either. Boycott will hurt Haitians and Dominican people, too.”

“The Haitian people are in a desperate situation,” said Radhamés Guilano, a Miami shopkeeper from the Dominican Republic. “With the earthquake they lost almost everything. Hundreds of thousands have no jobs, no place to live, no medical care, nothing. So they walk across the border to the Dominican Republic because as bad as we have it in our country, it’s better than Haiti.

“Our situation will only get worse until working people of both countries find our common voice to fight together against the bosses who exploit and abuse us all,” he said.

THE MILITANT

Back Kurds’ fight for a homeland

Kurds in Syria and Iraq have been the only effective force taking on the reactionary Islamic State. Their fight has inspired Kurds throughout the region in their battle against national oppression and for a homeland denied them by imperialist division of the Middle East over the past century.



Reuters/Rodi Said
Kurdish fighters parade near Tel Abyad, Syria, June 15 after defeating Islamic State there.

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Black rights battles ‘left us with a different world’

The Black-led movement to bring down Jim Crow, and its cumulative effects over decades, transformed political attitudes of the U.S. population. Below is an excerpt from Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. Copyright © 2009 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

The participation of Blacks in the mass social movement of the 1930s that built the industrial unions, and their fight against segregation in war-related industries and the armed forces during World War II, were the leavening that made possible the rise of the proletarian-led struggle for Black rights in the 1950s and 1960s. That struggle, moreover, was part of an advancing wave of revolutionary victories against imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation that swept from Asia and Africa through the Middle East, the Caribbean, and Latin America.

The social and political consciousness and attitudes of tens of millions of working people in this country were



Battle of Birmingham, Alabama, was turning point in mass struggle for Black rights. Left, cops attack young civil rights militants, May 1963. In September of that year, Ku Klux Klan bombed 16th Street Baptist Church, right, one of organizing centers of the movement, killing four girls during Sunday school.



transformed. The combativity demonstrated in those fights encouraged young people and others to build the movement against the Vietnam War in the 1960s, as well as to launch a new stage in the fight for women's emancipation.

All these battles have left us with a different world today, and with a different working class — one that's larger, substantially immigrant, with a much

weightier component that is Black. For that very reason, however, we're not going to see a *simple repeat* of any of these struggles. We'll build on what we've conquered: on our unions, on our victories over important aspects of racist and antiwoman bigotry and discrimination. Those triumphs raise the stakes in labor's battle against capital, in the revolutionary working-class struggle

for political power. The necessity of class conscious proletarian leadership becomes even greater — a leadership in which the social and political weight of workers who are Black, who are Latino, who are female will be greater than ever before.

Working people don't have to give up anything we've earned in struggle. But we can add to it. We must add to it. In that sense — even with the grave weakening of the labor movement as a result of the class-collaborationist, pro-imperialist course of the union officialdom — the working class is stronger than at any time in history, both in this country and worldwide.

That doesn't mean we're anywhere close to revolutionary class battles in the United States today.

It doesn't mean there won't be setbacks and defeats along the road to a victorious socialist revolution. But it does increase our odds of winning, *if* we succeed in building a strong-enough working-class leadership, tempered in class battles and schooled in the strategic and programmatic lessons from battles by those who came before us.

It all depends on *what we do*.

Emblem of racist assaults comes down

Continued from front page

political support for it — all are the product of the powerful struggle led by African-Americans in the 1950s and '60s that overthrew Jim Crow segregation and its social and political consequences over decades. Those battles transformed the consciousness of the U.S. population.

The demise of this racist emblem came three weeks after 21-year-old white supremacist terrorist Dylann Storm Roof shot dead nine African-Americans at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston during a prayer meeting. Those killed were Clementa Pinckney, the church pastor and a state senator, Sharonda Singleton, Daniel Simmons, Ethel Lee Lance, Cynthia Hurd, Myra Thompson, Susie Jackson, DePayne Middleton-Doctor and Tywanza Sanders.

The dignified response of the Black community in Charleston — their disciplined refusal to be provoked into vengeful retaliatory acts, as Roof hoped they would be — set the tone. There was a broad, sustained outpouring to remember the dead and denounce the slaughter, in vigils, memorials and Pinckney's funeral at the College of Charleston's TD Arena.

Black-led struggle changed millions

The battle flag, originally a wartime banner of the slave owners who seceded from the Union in 1861, became a symbol of Ku Klux Klan terror to overturn Reconstruction governments established after the defeat of the Confederacy, and then of terrorist defiance of the rising fight of African-Americans and their allies in the 1950s and '60s to end Jim Crow segregation.

But the Black-led fight to combat racist laws and terror prevailed, helping bring about a transformation in the social outlook of tens of millions of people.

Roof told friends he wanted to spark a race war. He posted photos of himself with the Confederate battle flag on a white supremacist website. Before kill-

ing his victims he told them, "You've raped our women and you are taking over our country."

He was arrested June 18. When he appeared on video at a court hearing the next day, family members of the people he killed one by one spoke with dignity and determination, expressing forgiveness not revenge.

In the days after the massacre, thousands came to pay their respects outside the Emanuel Church. The church reopened for services June 21. That evening more than 10,000 people walked hand in hand across Charleston's Ravenel Bridge.

The breadth and power of the response caught the ruling class and the politicians and media that represent them off guard.

Republican Gov. Nikki Haley had previously opposed demands to take down the flag and continued to do so in the first days after the killing. But on June 22 she held a press conference in the state Capitol — surrounded by the state's two U.S. senators, Republicans Tim Scott and Lindsey Graham, Democratic Congressman Jim Clyburn, Republican Congressman and former Gov. Mark Sanford and Charleston Mayor Joe Riley — to say the time had come to remove the flag from the Capitol.

Thousands stood in line to honor Pinckney as his body lay in state under the Capitol dome June 24. A horse-drawn caisson carried the coffin into the building as Haley presided.

Obama speaks at Pinckney's funeral

President Barack Obama delivered the eulogy at the June 26 funeral service for Pinckney and memorial for all nine people killed. It was attended by some 6,000 people, with hundreds more turned away. Republican House Speaker John Boehner, First Lady Michelle Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and his wife Dr. Jill Biden, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Gov. Haley and Mayor Riley all attended.

Obama, in what will likely be the most

remembered speech of his presidency, talked of the long history of the Black church as a center to organize resistance to slavery and Jim Crow. They "served as 'hush harbors' where slaves could worship in safety; praise houses where their free descendants could gather and shout hallelujah; rest stops for the weary along the Underground Railroad; bunkers for the foot soldiers of the Civil Rights Movement," he said.

To many in the audience who knew the history of the Black rights struggle — firsthand or from study of the battles in Montgomery, Birmingham and Selma, Alabama; Jackson, Mississippi; and elsewhere — that description rang true.

It was no surprise, Obama said, that Pinckney was targeted for being both a clergyman and a public figure in the Black rights fight, or that Mother Emanuel, as Pinckney's church is known, has a long history of struggle. It was "built by Blacks seeking liberty, burned to the ground because its founder sought



AP/John Bazemore

Crowd cheers as flag comes down at S. Carolina Statehouse July 10.

to end slavery, only to rise up again, a Phoenix from these ashes." Denmark Vesey, a carpenter and freed slave who was a founding member of the church, planned a failed slave uprising in 1822 for which he was executed. Mother Emanuel was destroyed in retaliation.

Removing the Confederate battle flag from the Capitol, Obama said, "would not be an act of political correctness; it would not be an insult to the valor of Confederate soldiers. It would simply be an acknowledgment that the cause for which they fought — the cause of slavery — was wrong — the imposition

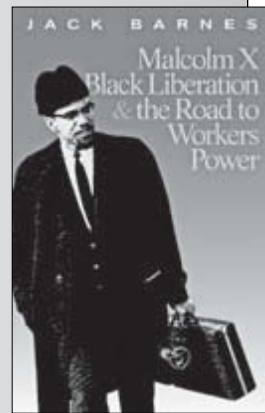
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Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes

"Don't start with Blacks as an oppressed nationality. Start with the vanguard place and weight of workers who are Black in the broad proletarian-led social and political struggles in the United States. From the Civil War to today, the record is mind-boggling. It's the strength and resilience, not the oppression, that bowls you over." **\$20**

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Quebec rail disaster frame-up

Continued from front page
the company itself.

The July 6, 2013, train derailment and explosion put a spotlight on how the rail bosses put profits ahead of safety, especially the company's insistence on operating with a one-person "crew," with government agreement.

Harding is already due in court Sept. 8 to set the date for his trial on frame-up charges of 47 counts of criminal negligence causing death levied by Quebec's crown prosecutor. Those charges could result in life imprisonment. The new charges could bring a \$50,000 fine and six months in prison.

Harding is a member of the United Steelworkers union. Train controller and USW member Richard Labrie faces the same charges in Quebec, as does manager of train operations Jean Demaitre. The USW in Quebec has been raising funds to defend the two union members.

Transport Canada says the accused failed to ensure that the train's hand brakes were properly set. The hand brakes were one of 18 factors that the report of the federal Transportation Safety Board said contributed to the disaster. Others included a "weak safety culture" on the railroad.

The company's former owner, Edward Burkhardt, has not been charged.

The fact the federal government as a cost-cutting measure allowed the rail company to operate the 72-car crude oil train without a two-person crew was considered but not included as a "factor" in the final published report.

As he had done for years, in keeping with company regulations, Harding parked the train on a grade about seven miles from Lac-Mégantic with the engine running and the air brakes on. He

set hand brakes on seven tanker cars and took a cab to a hotel to sleep.

During the night firemen were called to put out a small fire on the lead locomotive. When Harding asked his dispatcher if he should come because of the fire, he was told to go back to sleep because everything was OK. However, when the firemen shut down the engine they unknowingly turned off the air brake system. With no one on board, the train rolled down the grade, picking up speed, and derailed and exploded in downtown Lac-Mégantic.

In addition to the horrendous loss of life and destruction of 40 buildings, the explosion and fire released 1.5 million gallons of crude oil into the lake and contaminated 560,000 tons of soil. The charges under the Fisheries Act stem from the oil spill.

The explosion woke Harding, who rushed to the site, risking his life to help depressurize brakes on some of the cars that had not caught fire so they could be moved. For this reason, many in Lac-Mégantic consider him a hero.

Harding's lawyer, Thomas Walsh, questioned the timing of the new charges against the engineer, criticizing the federal government for trying to look proactive after years of allowing unsafe railway practices like understaffing. "Now they're coming out as if they're taking care of business ... by two years



Drive for profit led to 2013 disaster that killed 47, destroyed downtown Lac-Mégantic, above.

later accusing him [Harding] of something he's already been accused of," Walsh told the *Globe and Mail*. "What the hell is the point?"

"I agree there should be justice," businessman Raymond Lafontaine, who lost his son, two stepdaughters and an employee in the disaster, told the press. But "it feels like we're still looking for people to blame." There are people higher up in the company that need to be held accountable, he said.

Meanwhile, Canadian Pacific Railway, which hauled the oil from North Dakota to Montreal before handing it over to Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway, is refusing to contribute to a \$430 million settlement fund for vic-

tims' families. The Calgary-based company argued in a Quebec court recently that it wasn't involved. If Canadian Pacific is successful, compensation could be delayed for years.

The Steelworkers and fellow rail workers in Canada and the U.S. are raising defense funds for Harding and Labrie. To contribute in Canada, send checks to Syndicat des Métallos, 565 boulevard Crémazie Est, bureau 5100, Montreal, Quebec H2M 2V8, or go online to www.justice4USWrailworkers.org. In the United States, checks can be sent to Tom Harding Defense Fund, First Niagara Bank, 25 McClellan Dr., Nassau, NY 12123 or visit www.tomhardingdefensefund.com.

Millions of workers remain without jobs in US

Continued from front page

Orders for manufactured goods dropped 1 percent in May, the ninth decline over the last 10 months, reported the Commerce Department.

Mine bosses axed 4,000 jobs in June, bringing to 71,000 the number of mine jobs cuts since December. At the end of May, Murray Energy told 1,417 workers at five West Virginia mines their jobs were being eliminated. Almost 250 were cut in Ohio and 162 in Illinois. St. Louis-based Patriot Coal filed for bankruptcy for the second time in three years in May.

At the end of April, U.S. Steel issued layoff warnings to 9,000 of its 35,000 workers. The bosses have cut back operations at eight mills, idled the East Chicago Tin mill and permanently shut down the coke plant at Gary Works.

With oil prices plummeting, job cuts worldwide are estimated at some 150,000, energy recruiting firm Swift Worldwide Resources said in June, with the U.S. seeing "the fastest and steepest decline." Schlumberger, Halliburton, Baker Hughes and Weatherford, the world's four biggest oil-tool manufacturers, have announced plans to slash nearly 50,000 jobs.

BNSF Railway, the biggest carrier in the North Dakota Bakken shale region, hauling most of the more than 1.1 million barrels of oil that had been flowing out of the region daily, said in May it is planning to furlough workers because of falling demand.

Trinity Industries in Texas, which manufactures rail cars, has run through two rounds of layoffs, shedding 450 of its 1,150 workers.

According to the Labor Department, 223,000 jobs were added overall in June. But the department revised its figures for April and May downward, saying that 60,000 fewer jobs were created than previously reported.

At the same time, government statisti-

cians removed 432,000 people from the workforce, saying they were no longer looking for work. This brought "labor participation" — those working or classified as officially unemployed and actively looking for work — to a 38-year low of 62.6 percent of the civilian working-age population.

While official jobless rates have dropped from nearly 10 percent in 2010 to 5.3 percent today, some 6.5 million people who are only able to get part-time hours are counted as employed. On top of the 8.3 million workers classified as unemployed, there are 1.9 million more who have been out of work for less than 12 months, but haven't looked for work over the past four weeks, who the government doesn't include as part of the labor force. The millions who haven't looked for work in over a year don't count either.

The percentage of the working-age population with a job, a more objective way of viewing what is happening than

the unemployment rate, dropped from 63.3 percent in January 2007 to 59.4 percent in June 2009 when the recession officially ended. Over the past six years it has not risen above this figure. Last month it was 59.3 percent.

The Labor Department reported some 95,000 jobs were created last month in retail, health care and leisure and hospitality. The expanding fight for \$15 an hour has pressured some employers, including McDonald's, Walmart and Target, to raise pay rates for some workers, but overall real wages remain stagnant.

The crisis for workers' jobs and wages is part of the long-term worldwide decline in capitalist production and trade. Instead of investing in plants and production, bosses seek a higher rate of return through speculation on stocks, bonds, derivatives and other financial bets, a course they can't avoid but that inevitably leads to more economic instability, explosive bubbles and financial crisis.

Confederate battle flag comes down

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of Jim Crow after the Civil War, the resistance to civil rights for all people was wrong."

Several rallies organized by the NAACP or other groups supported the call to take down the flag.

"This rally, like the Black Lives Matter protests, shows that we can unite across the so-called racial lines that are used to divide us," fast-food worker John Hinton told the *Militant* at a July 4 rally.

The bill to remove the flag passed 36-3 in the Senate July 7 and moved to the House, where members adopted the bill 93-27 in the early hours of July 9.

"It's a beautiful sight," Michelle Felder, a home health worker in Charleston who helped organize a march and rally against the police killing of Walter

Scott in April, said of the crowd she was part of at the ceremony. "I never thought I would see this day. When I saw that flag come down, tears were rolling down my face."

"We're celebrating the flag coming down," Leonard Riley, a leader of International Longshoremens' Association Local 1422 in Charleston, by phone from the Capitol grounds. He came with a busload of ILA members. The union has long been part of the fight to remove the flag.

"At 10 a.m. this morning the ILA members on the Charleston docks stopped work for 15 minutes for a moment of silence to honor the Charleston Nine and reflect on the damage inflicted under the banner of the Confederate flag," he said.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Oakland

The Struggle Against Jim Crow Segregation — Lessons for Today. Fri., July 17, 7:30 p.m. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

NEW YORK

New York

Greece, Ukraine and Throughout Europe, the Capitalist Crisis Deepens: What Way Forward for the Working Class? Fri., July 17, Dinner, 6:45 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 939 8th Ave., Room 2A. Tel.: (646) 434-8117.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Pope Francis Fights to Restore Authority of Catholic Church. Speaker: John Staggs, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council. Fri., July 17, 7 p.m. 3701 Pulaski Ave. Tel.: (215) 225-1270.

CANADA

Calgary

In or Out of the European Union: Workers in Greece Will Face Steeper 'Austerity' Measures. Speaker: Katy LeRougetel, Communist League. Fri., July 17, 7:30 p.m. 4909 17th Ave., SE. Tel.: (403) 457-9044.

UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester

Why Pope Francis' Shift to Reverse Declining Influence of Catholic Church is Opening for the Working Class in World Wracked by Crisis. Speaker: Pete Clifford, Communist League. Sat., July 18, 6:30 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. M1 2EH. Tel.: (016) 1478 2496.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help the *Militant* cover steel, auto and other contract fights!

This column is dedicated to spreading the truth about the labor resistance that is unfolding today, to give voice to those engaged in battle and help build solidarity. National steel and auto contracts are expiring this summer and fall. I invite workers involved in fights against concessions 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

Minneapolis janitors fight retaliatory firings after strike

MINNEAPOLIS — Four janitors were fired in retaliation for striking for higher wages, medical benefits and paid sick leave. They were among some 50 who walked off the job June 9 and rallied in front of downtown Macy's here, in front of the Best Buy shareholders' meeting in Richfield and at other locations.

Alicia Yopihua, Romualdo Romero, Julio Romero and Demecio Romero — all related — worked for a subcontractor of ROC Commercial Cleaning and have eight years experience cleaning auto dealerships in nearby Wayzata. The day of the strike their employer told them it had lost its contract with ROC.

Demecio Romero had told a rally in St. Paul during the strike, "ROC is threatening to take retaliation against us when we go back to the dealerships that we clean. That's not OK."

The Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha (Center of Workers United in Struggle), the Twin Cities-based advocacy group that has been organizing retail cleaning workers, filed a complaint against ROC with the National Labor Relations Board, alleging unfair treatment. Supporters are asked to call Lexus of Wayzata at (952) 476-6111 and Village Chevrolet at (952) 473-5444 to protest the firings. Contributions can be made by going to www.bit.ly/Romerofamily.

Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha is organizing delegations of workers and their supporters to visit the dealerships and other companies that use ROC cleaners.

—Helen Meyers

Massachusetts home care workers win \$15 an hour

BOSTON — "When we fight, we win," chanted 150 home care workers and their supporters here June 30 on the steps of the state Capitol. The workers, members of Service Employees International Union Local 1199, were celebrating an agreement reached days earlier with the state that would raise their starting wage to \$15 an hour by

July 2018.

The 35,000 home care workers currently start at \$13.38 an hour. They will get an immediate 30-cent raise.

The attendants bathe, cook for, and run errands for elderly and disabled clients who qualify for Medicaid.

"We are coming for you McDonald's, Walmart, Massport and we are going to get \$15," Veronica Turner, an SEIU executive vice president, told the rally.

"I'm inspired to be in this fight" for \$15 an hour and a union, Kyle King, a fast-food worker at Burger King, said at the rally.

"We won the union!" Yan Mei Lei told those gathered. Earlier that day workers at Medical Resources Home Health Corp., who are home care workers, learned from the National Labor Relations Board that they had won the election recognizing 1199SEIU as their collective bargaining agent.

The Newton-based company has eight offices across the state and employs about 250 home care workers, the majority Chinese-born.

Speaking after the rally to the *Militant* through a translator, Yan Mei Lei, who has been working for four years at Medical Resources, said she had never been in a union before. She fought for the union because "I knew we needed to have unity to win."

—Ted Leonard

Washington farmworkers strike on first day of blueberry season

MT. VERNON, Wash. — On the first day of the blueberry harvest, farmworkers July 1 struck Sakuma Brothers Farms in the Skagit Valley of Washington, angry over a new pay scale and starting times staggered 15 minutes apart over a three-hour period.

"We think Sakuma is retaliating against us by separating us so we can't



Militant/Ted Leonard

Home care workers rally in front of state Capitol in Boston June 30 after winning wage raise. Yan Mei Lei, speaking, represented workers who won representation by SEIU1199 at Medical Resources Home Health Corp. Sign in Chinese says, "We won the union!"

communicate as a group about the new pay scale," farmworker Benito López Torrez said. Two years ago workers at Sakuma Farms formed Familias Unidas por la Justicia, an independent union, in the course of several strikes for better pay and working conditions.

"On Wednesday we all went on strike," farmworker Tomás Ramón told the *Militant* in an interview at the United Steelworkers hall here where Familias Unidas meets. "Nobody went to work. There were about 200 of us."

The company said the staggered start times were for one day only, to make communication with the workers easier. The next day about half the workforce struck again.

"We left work because they didn't want to pay the price per pound we were asking for," said Ramón. "About 100 of us protested in the street. Then the vice president of Familias Unidas arrived, and we went with him to speak with the manager of Sakuma Farms about a union contract. They didn't want to talk with us about that. According to them everyone is making a lot of money, everyone is happy. They say people are making \$33 an hour. But that is not true." The company responded by calling the County Sheriff's office.

The union wants breaks, paid overtime and an end to piece rate. The com-

pany responded with a sliding hourly pay scale depending on how much a worker picks per hour.

"They are demanding a minimum of 35 pounds of blueberries per hour to make \$10 an hour. If you don't do that you get a warning. Not many can pick that. They fired four workers in the strawberries for not picking the minimum," said Ramón.

He added that the company demanded a minimum of 50 pounds per hour of the strawberry pickers. "To pick strawberries you work on your knees. In this heat it is very hard."

"The fruit was very small so it was hard to pick the amount they wanted," said Alfredo Juarez, a high school student who is on the union steering committee. "We don't want the new pay system. What we want is a union contract that we negotiate with them."

A union-organized "March for a Union Contract" is set for July 11.

—Clay Dennison

—CALENDAR—

WASHINGTON

Burlington

Farmworkers' March for a Contract. Sat., July 11, 10:30 a.m. Intersection of Cook Road and Old Highway 99. www.boycottsakumaberries.com.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 20, 1990

HAYDEN, Arizona — Protected from the 100 degree heat by a homemade canopy, 20 pickets spent July 4 outside the Asarco copper ore concentrator singing folk songs and talking about the conditions that led to their walkout three days before.

Over 700 workers from the mine and concentrator are on strike. The strike is the first walkout in Arizona's copper mines since 1983 when Phelps Dodge, with the aid of National Guard troops, defeated the unions in a violent two-year battle. After a 98 percent vote in favor of striking, the ranks are solid in support of the strike walkout. Asarco is asking for more givebacks in medical coverage and pensions and work rule changes.



July 26, 1965

GREENSBORO, Ala., July 18 — Two Negro churches were burned to the ground here today. The Rev. A. T. Days, pastor of the St Mathews AME Church and a civil rights leader, said the burned structures were the St. Mark AME Church in Greensboro and the Elmwood AME Zion Church north of town.

Two days before, over 100 Negro demonstrators picketed downtown white merchants in an effort to win voter registration, education and job opportunities. They were counter-picketed by local Klan members. When the demonstrators returned to their headquarters, the St. Mathews Church, they were surrounded by whites in cars and trucks, and attacked with bottles and bricks.



July 20, 1940

Warning that Stalin will undoubtedly make another attempt on Trotsky's life, the Trotsky Defense Fund has issued this week an appeal to all members and friends of the Socialist Workers Party for funds to complete the reorganizing of the defense arrangements at Trotsky's house.

Reorganizing of the defense was begun immediately after the May 24 attack, for it was realized that Stalin, already having the discredit for the attempt to murder Trotsky, would as soon as possible seek to wipe out the stigma of his failure.

An appeal for funds at that time secured a very generous response from S.W.P. members and friends.



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Cuba, US to open embassies

Continued from front page

against the Cuban people, and until “the territory illegally occupied by the Guantánamo Naval Base” is returned, there can’t be normal relations between the U.S. and Cuba, the Cuban government stressed. (The full text of the statement appears below.)

Washington has maintained a naval base at Guantánamo Bay since the Spanish-American War, in which the U.S. rulers occupied Cuba just as Cuban fighters were on the verge of winning independence from Spanish colonial rule. A U.S.-imposed treaty dating to 1903 gave Washington a “perpetual lease” on this part of Cuban territory. Since 2002, the base has been used to imprison indefinitely hundreds of men Washington claimed were “enemy combatants” in the so-called war on terror.

Since the 1959 revolution, the Cuban government has insisted that the U.S. occupation of Guantánamo and violation of Cuban sovereignty must end.

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter responded July 1, saying there is “no anticipation and no plan” to give up the base.

Cuba defends sovereignty, principles

Obama pressed to rapidly open embassies following the Dec. 17 announcement that Washington and Havana would seek to resume diplomatic relations. While he admitted that Washington’s harsh embargo and efforts to isolate Cuba had failed, he made clear the U.S. rulers’ goal of overturning Cuba’s socialist revolution and restoring capitalist relations there hadn’t changed. But he recognized Washington’s growing isolation in Latin America meant the imperialists’ tactics had to change. There is broad bipartisan support for this course within the U.S. ruling class.

The Cuban leadership’s response has been to take the time to work through each issue, defending Cuban sovereignty and principles at every stage. Cuban officials repeatedly explained the onus is on Washington to change. Washington broke diplomatic relations and has carried out decades of attacks against the Cuban Revolution. Cuba has no bases on U.S. soil, wages no embargo against the U.S. economy.

They insisted that embassies couldn’t be re-established as long as Cuba remained on Washington’s self-pro-

claimed list of “state sponsors of terrorism,” nor while Cuba’s diplomatic mission was denied access to banking services under the embargo. Washington has now met both of these conditions.

Throughout the talks, the Cuban government has continually reiterated its defense of Venezuela’s sovereignty, condemning U.S. threats and sanctions against that country, and spoken in support of other anti-imperialist struggles, such as the fight for Puerto Rican independence.

In his July 1 announcement of the agreement to reopen embassies, Obama said he has “called on Congress to take steps to lift the embargo that prevents Americans from traveling or doing business in Cuba.” Formal diplomatic relations will allow Washington to “substantially increase our contacts with the Cuban people,” he said. “We’ll have more personnel at our embassy. And our diplomats will have the ability to engage more broadly across the island.”

Castro’s July 1 letter to Obama stated that Cuba is guided by international law requiring, among other things, respect of “sovereign equality, the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, to refrain from the threat or use of force against



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais

Workers raise flagpole at Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., June 10. Cuba and U.S. will open embassies in each other’s countries for first time in more than 50 years July 20.

the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, non-interference in matters which are within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, the development of friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and cooperation in solving international problems.”

The letters from both Castro and Obama stated a commitment to abide by Vienna conventions on diplomatic and consular relations that date to the 1960s.

Relations require ‘respect for independence and sovereignty’

The following statement was issued by Cuba’s revolutionary government July 1.

On July 1, 2015, the President of the Councils of State and of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, and the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, exchanged letters through which they confirmed their decision to re-establish diplomatic relations between the two countries and as of July 20, 2015, open permanent diplomatic missions in the respective capitals.

On that same day, the official ceremony to open the Cuban Embassy in Washington will be held, which will be attended by a Cuban delegation presided over by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, and made up of outstanding representatives of Cuban society.

As Cuba and the United States take this formal step, they ratified their inten-

tion to develop respectful and cooperative relations between both peoples and governments, based on the principles and purposes enshrined in the United Nations Charter and International Law, particularly the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations.

The Government of Cuba has decided to re-establish diplomatic relations with the United States in the full exercise of its sovereignty and with an unwavering commitment to its ideals of independence and social justice, and of solidarity with the just causes of the world, reaffirming each and every one of the principles for which our people have shed their blood and run every risk under the leadership of the historic Leader of the Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz.

The re-establishment of diplomatic relations and the opening of embassies completes the first stage of what will be a long and complex process towards the normalization of bilateral relations, in which it will be necessary to solve a number of issues derived from policies that were implemented in the past that are still in force and affect the Cuban nation and its people.

There can be no normal relations between Cuba and the United States as long as the economic, commercial and financial blockade continues to be fully implemented, causing damage and scarcities for the Cuban people. The blockade is the main obstacle to the development of our economy; it is a violation of International Law and affects the interests of all countries, including those of the United States.

In order to normalize relations, it will also be indispensable for the United States Government to return to Cuba the territory illegally occupied by the Guantánamo Naval Base; cease the radio and television broadcasts, which violate international regulations and are harmful to our sovereignty; stop the implementation of programs aimed at promoting internal subversion and de-

“I am pleased to confirm the understanding of the United States that these agreements will apply to diplomatic and consular relations between our two countries,” Obama wrote.

Cuba has insisted Washington break from its long history of using diplomatic personnel to interfere in the internal affairs of Cuba and many other nations, as well as financing covert operations aimed at destabilizing the Cuban government and fomenting “dissident” groups within the country.

stabilization and compensate the Cuban people for the human and economic damages caused by the United States policies.

In recalling the issues that are still to be resolved between the two countries, the Cuban government recognizes the decisions adopted so far by President Obama making use of his executive powers, to remove Cuba from the list of State sponsors of international terrorism; to encourage the Congress of his country to lift the blockade and to begin taking steps to modify the implementation of aspects of this policy.

Likewise, as part of the process towards the normalization of relations, it will be necessary to build the foundations of a relationship that has never in history existed between our countries, particularly since the military intervention of the United States, 117 years ago, during the independence war that Cuba waged for almost three decades against Spanish colonialism.

These relations should be based on absolute respect of our independence and sovereignty; the inalienable right of every State to choose its political, economic, social and cultural system, without any form of interference; and sovereign equality and reciprocity, which are principles of International Law that cannot be relinquished.

The Government of Cuba reiterates its willingness to maintain a respectful dialogue with the Government of the United States and develop relations of civilized coexistence, based on respect for the differences that exist between both governments and cooperation on issues of mutual benefit.

Cuba shall continue to advance the process of updating its economic and social model in order to build a prosperous and sustainable socialism, to move towards the development of the country and to consolidate the achievements of the Revolution.

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Cuban 5 in South Africa: ‘We are soldiers of revolution’

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The Cuban Five got a hero’s welcome when they landed in Johannesburg June 21 for a 13-day visit in South Africa. Jubilant crowds greeted them as they entered the arrivals hall of the O.R. Tambo International Airport.

The Five — Cuban revolutionaries who spent many years unjustly imprisoned in the United States — were invited by the governing African National Congress, which organized their program together with the South African Communist Party, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the Society of Friendship with Cuba in South Africa and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers.

They paid tribute to Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, historic leaders of the revolutionary movement that brought down the white supremacist system of apartheid, and visited Robben Island where Mandela and other leaders of the freedom struggle spent many years in prison.

“We feel a deep admiration for the freedom fighters in South Africa,” Gerardo Hernández said, speaking to hundreds at Tambo’s grave site, where they went directly after their arrival. “We spent many months in solitary confinement. The example of your warriors inspired us all the way through. We want to thank you for all your support for the Cuban Five and the Cuban people. And we want to let you know that the same way we were able to count on you, the people of South Africa, you can count on us, the Cuban Five and the Cuban people.”

Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González were jailed in Florida in 1998. Framed up on charges, including conspiracy to commit espionage, their sentences ranged from 15 years to double life imprisonment.

René and Fernando González served their sentences in full before returning to Cuba. In December the remaining three were released as part of the agreement to move toward re-establishing diplomatic relations between Washington and Havana, and the Five were reunited on Cuban soil. This victory for the people of Cuba, their government and the international campaign demanding their freedom was possible because of the Five’s dignity, courage, discipline and firm refusal to break under harsh prison conditions.



Crowd welcomes Cuban Five to South Africa June 21. “The example of your warriors inspired us” throughout years in U.S. prisons, Cuban revolutionary Gerardo Hernández said.

The visit to South Africa coincided with the 60-year anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom Charter, the programmatic platform for the revolutionary struggle that brought down the apartheid regime. Before taking part in the ceremony in Kliptown June 26 they met with President Jacob Zuma, the featured speaker at the event.

They visited five of the country’s nine provinces, attending a session in Parliament, speaking at several universities and meeting with national and provincial political leaders and diplomats from neighboring countries.

“What is it with the Cuban people that make them extend solidarity and volunteer for internationalist missions

as doctors, technicians, soldiers?” asked a participant in a “Cuban Five Answer Questions” program on national TV.

“We had a real revolution,” René González responded. “When you have a real revolution and you defend that revolution, you change, you have to grow. We learned that our fate is linked to everyone else in the world. An injustice to anyone is an injustice to us.”

Their last stop was in South Africa’s northernmost province Limpopo, where they met Cuban medical volunteers. Hernández told them that many people had asked where the Five will work in the future. “We always say that we are soldiers of the revolution and we are waiting for the next order to serve wherever we are needed,” he said.

From South Africa the Five continued to Namibia and Angola. Hernández, Fernando González and René González were among the 375,000 Cuban volunteers who fought against South African military interventions in Angola from 1975 to 1991 along with Namibian and Angolan forces. Their victory helped bring about the independence of Namibia and the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa.

Cuba helps push back Washington’s attacks on Venezuela

BY MAGGIE TROWE

By standing with Venezuela and galvanizing opposition throughout Latin America to Washington’s sanctions and threats against the government of President Nicolás Maduro there, the leadership of the Cuban Revolution has forced the Obama administration to back off its belligerent stance and take some steps to increase communication with Caracas.

A July 1 Reuters article reported that U.S. and Venezuelan officials “have embarked on their most extensive dialogue in years in an attempt to improve their acrimonious relations, according to a senior U.S. administration official.”

Working people in Cuba won a historic victory Dec. 17 when Washington admitted their decades-long economic embargo and assaults against the revolution had been a failure, leading to isolation in Latin America and the Caribbean. New steps toward re-establishing diplomatic relations for the first time in more than 50 years were announced. As part of the package, Cuban leaders made it clear that Washington’s moves against the Venezuelan government would be a deal-breaker.

The U.S. ruling class has a long history of intervening in politics in Venezuela, the fourth largest supplier of crude petroleum to U.S. refineries.

Washington backed the military coup that overthrew President Hugo Chávez in 2002, which was reversed by a mass mobilization of working people in Caracas. It supported and instigated other attempts to undermine the rule of Chávez and later Maduro, who took over leadership of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela and was elected president after Chávez died in 2013.

Among other measures that provoked Washington’s ire, the Chávez government in 2005 launched PetroCaribe, a program that has provided oil to Cuba at preferential prices, crucial aid in the face of Washington’s economic embargo against the Cuban Revolution. Thirteen other Caribbean countries also

benefit from the program, which lessens their dependence on profit-hungry U.S. oil barons. Cuban President Raúl Castro called the program “an extraordinary, generous and humanistic contribution.”

The fall of oil prices over the past year has had a big impact on Venezuela’s already battered economy, giving Washington hope that a government could be elected there that will do its bidding.

In the first half of 2014, U.S. capitalist dailies were full of articles on protests in Venezuela calling for Maduro’s resignation, some of which were met by riot police. More than two dozen people, both opponents and supporters of the government, died in clashes. A number of people were arrested, including opposition leader Leopoldo López, charged with inciting violence. Venezuelan officials pointed to Washington’s history of financing and backing the opposition.

At a Feb. 20, 2014, meeting with the heads of state of Mexico and Canada, Obama said the Maduro government should stop “trying to distract from its own failings by making up false accusations against diplomats from the United States,” address the “legitimate grievances” of the opposition and free those arrested during protests.

With strong support from Cuba, the Maduro administration repudiated Obama’s comments and accused Washington of “continuing to attack a free and sovereign Latin American and Caribbean country.”

Last December the Obama administration pushed bipartisan legislation through Congress imposing sanctions on a number of Venezuelan government officials. Obama ratcheted up the attack with an executive order March 9 “declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the situation in Venezuela.”

The order slapped sanctions on seven military and police officials for alleged

corruption and human rights violations against opposition figures.

Raúl Castro, addressing the Third Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, or CELAC, in Costa Rica Jan. 28, condemned “the unacceptable and unjustified unilateral sanctions against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.”

The day after Obama’s executive order in March, Fidel Castro sent a letter to Maduro denouncing “the brutal plans of the United States government.”

Raúl Castro led a Cuban delegation at an emergency March 17 meeting in Caracas of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, or ALBA, to stand with Venezuela against U.S. threats.

‘Venezuela is not alone’

“Today Venezuela is not alone, nor is our region the same as it was 20 years ago,” Castro told the meeting. “We will not tolerate the violation of sovereignty or allow peace in the region to be broken with impunity.”

“The United States must understand once and for all that it is impossible to seduce or buy Cuba, or intimidate Venezuela,” Castro said. “Our unity is indestructible.”

The day before, the third round of talks between U.S. and Cuban diplomats on restoring diplomatic ties between the countries ended abruptly.

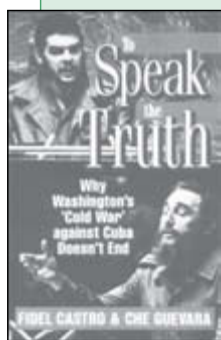
The ALBA meeting also backed Caracas’ call for Washington to open up diplomatic channels of communications. In addition, the Union of South American Nations and CELAC called for Washington to rescind the March executive order.

By the time the Seventh Summit of the Americas convened in Panama April 10-11, Obama had changed his tune from the executive order. “Venezuela is not a threat to the U.S. and the U.S. is not a threat to Venezuela,” he told the Spanish news agency EFE on the eve of the summit.

Recommended reading

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Fight for unions free from control by the capitalist state

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay by Leon Trotsky is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for July. Trotsky was a central leader of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Beginning in the late 1920s he also led the fight to rebuild a world communist movement in face of a counterrevolution in the Soviet Union led by Joseph Stalin. Printed below are excerpts from the lead article with the same name as the book, which was found unfinished in Trotsky's desk after his assassination in August 1940. Copyright © 1969 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

There is one common feature in the development, or more correctly the degeneration, of modern trade union organizations throughout the world: it is their drawing close to and growing together with the state power. This process is equally characteristic of the neutral, the Social Democratic, the Communist, and "anarchist" trade unions. This fact alone shows that the tendency toward "growing together" is intrinsic not in this or that doctrine as such but derives from social conditions common for all unions.

Monopoly capitalism does not rest on competition and free private initiative but on centralized command. The



"The primary goal for struggle is: complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state," wrote Trotsky in 1940. Above, coal miners in Bellaire, Ohio, read newspaper headline saying United Mine Workers President John L. Lewis rejects no-strike pledge during 1943 strike. Workers told government, "You can't mine coal with bayonets."

capitalist cliques at the head of mighty trusts, syndicates, banking consortiums, and so on, view economic life from the very same heights as does state power; and they require at every step the collaboration of the latter. In their turn the trade unions in the most important branches of industry find themselves deprived of the possibility of profiting from the competition among the different enterprises. They have to confront a centralized capitalist adversary, intimately bound up with state power. Hence flows the need of the trade unions — insofar as they remain on reformist positions, that is, on positions of adapting themselves to private property — to adapt themselves to the capitalist state and to contend for its co-operation.

In the eyes of the bureaucracy of the trade union movement, the chief task lies in "freeing" the state from the embrace of capitalism, in weakening its dependence on trusts, in pulling it over to their side. This position is in complete harmony with the social position of the labor aristocracy and the labor bureaucracy, who fight for a crumb in the share of superprofits of imperialist capitalism. The labor bureaucrats do their level best in words and deeds to demonstrate to the "democratic" state how reliable and indispensable they are in peacetime and especially in time of

war. By transforming the trade unions into organs of the state, fascism invents nothing new; it merely draws to their ultimate conclusion the tendencies inherent in imperialism.

Colonial and semicolonial countries are under the sway not of native capitalism but of foreign imperialism. However, this does not weaken but, on the contrary, strengthens the need of direct, daily, practical ties between the magnates of capitalism and the governments that are in essence subject to them: the governments of colonial or semicolonial countries. Inasmuch as imperialist capitalism creates both in colonies and semicolonies a stratum of labor aristocracy and bureaucracy, the latter requires the support of colonial and semicolonial governments as protectors, patrons, and sometimes as arbitrators. This constitutes the most important social basis for the Bonapartist and semi-Bonapartist character of governments in the colonies and in backward countries generally.* This likewise constitutes the basis for the dependence of reformist unions upon the state. ...

It is necessary to adapt ourselves to the concrete conditions existing in the trade unions of every given country in order to mobilize the masses, not only against the bourgeoisie, but also against the totalitarian regime within the trade unions themselves and against the lead-

ers enforcing this regime. The primary slogan for this struggle is: complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state. This means a struggle to turn the trade unions into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labor aristocracy...

Inasmuch as the chief role in backward countries is played not by national but by foreign capitalism, the national bourgeoisie occupies, in the sense of its social position, a much more minor position than corresponds with the development of industry. Inasmuch as foreign capital does not import workers but proletarianizes the native population, the national proletariat soon begins playing the most important role in the life of the country. In these conditions the national government, to the extent that it tries to show resistance to foreign capital, is compelled to a greater or lesser degree to lean on the proletariat. On the other hand, the governments of those backward countries that consider it inescapable or more profitable for themselves to march shoulder to shoulder with foreign capital destroy the labor organizations and institute a more or less totalitarian regime.

Thus, the feebleness of the national bourgeoisie, the absence of traditions of municipal self-government, the pressure of foreign capitalism, and the relatively rapid growth of the proletariat cut the ground from under any kind of stable democratic regime. The governments of backward, that is, colonial and semicolonial countries by and large assume a Bonapartist or semi-Bonapartist character; they differ from one another in that some try to orient in a democratic direction, seeking support among workers and peasants, while others install a form close to military-police dictatorship.

* Bonapartism refers to a type of class rule that is dictatorial in form and is usually headed by an individual appearing as a "strong man." Originating in a period of social crisis or stalemate of contending class forces, a Bonapartist regime tends to elevate itself above the country's classes and acquire a certain independence of action. The term originates from the regime of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte in France, 1852-70.

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8 The Militant July 20, 2015

Build on revolutionary Cuba’s victory

When Cuban President Raúl Castro and President Barack Obama announced talks toward normalizing relations last December and the remaining three of the Cuban Five were released, it represented one of the most important victories for the international working class in decades. It registered what had been won by the resilience and principled positions of the Cuban revolutionaries — in Cuba, Latin America and Africa.

The response in Cuba was joy, confidence and pride. One expression was the May Day celebrations with 1 million people in the streets of Havana.

Working people in Cuba haven’t scored a victory like this since the defeat of South Africa’s apartheid army in Angola at the end of the 1980s that opened the door for the independence of Namibia and the dismantling of the racist regime in South Africa. The Cuban Revolution comes out stronger, with the possibility to loosen the noose of Washington’s economic warfare for the first time in decades.

The Cuban leadership is determined to continue the struggle, to assure the sovereignty, independence and continued defense of the socialist revolution. Cuba doesn’t negotiate principles. No process would start with any of the Cuban Five in jail. No talks would continue with Washington threatening sanctions on Venezuela. Obama blinked and backed off.

“We never felt alone,” Gerardo Hernández of the

Cuban Five said during their recent visit to South Africa. “We know that the Cuban Revolution never leaves a soldier behind.”

The victory reaches far beyond Cuba’s shores. It’s a victory that strengthens new generations of revolutionary leadership.

It’s a victory for the anti-imperialist struggle in Latin America and the Caribbean against Washington’s domination, especially in Venezuela.

It’s a victory for those fighting to free framed-up Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López and end Washington’s colonial rule.

It’s a victory for the working class in the U.S. and beyond — getting working-class revolutionary fighters out of prison by building the “jury of millions.”

President Obama recognized the failure of the U.S. rulers’ course over the last 50 years and said something else has to be tried to overthrow Cuba’s socialist revolution.

“We’ll do this at our pace,” Castro said. There is no normalization without the ending of the embargo and the return to Cuba of the Guantánamo base.

Working people in Cuba and worldwide can build on this victory and living record of internationalism.

End the embargo on Cuba! U.S. imperialism — Out of Guantánamo!

Free Oscar López! Independence for Puerto Rico!

Amid turmoil, Greek workers face crisis

Continued from front page

Tsipras called the referendum, arguing that a strong “no” vote would allow him to negotiate a deal with fewer concessions. EU leaders warned that voting “no” would mean the exit of Greece from the European Union and plunge the country into chaos.

After the referendum was called and Athens defaulted on a \$1.8 billion payment owed to the IMF June 30, the troika tightened the screws, increasing turmoil throughout the country. The European Central Bank set a cap on how much it would loan Greek banks to cover deposits. With just \$2.2 billion on hand to cover \$161 billion in deposits Greek banks are dependent on these daily loans.

The government ordered the banks closed and imposed a maximum daily withdrawal from ATM machines of \$66.

The cash shortage has made the economic crisis for workers even worse. Workers and farmers have difficulty getting paid, meeting their rent and other bills and buying necessities. Official unemployment stands at 26.5 percent, the highest in the EU; one-fifth of the population does not have enough money for food.

Ekathimerini reported July 7 that 520,000 olive growers, half of them small family farmers, have been refusing to accept checks or electronic transfers, paralyzing olive oil production. “They want it in cash or they prefer to keep their olive oil in their tanks,” Chris Dimizas, a supervisor at olive oil company Greeksol, told the paper.

‘National unity’ for negotiations

Three bourgeois opposition parties in the Greek parliament backed a “yes” vote in the referendum to accept the troika’s demands: New Democracy, To Potami, and Pasok — the Panhellenic Socialist Movement, which was defeated by Syriza in January. After the “no” vote won, they signed a unity statement with Syriza, backing further negotiations on the debt.

The Communist Party of Greece, a Stalinist organization, called on voters to spoil their ballots, saying that “both the yes and the no mean the acceptance of a new memorandum of anti-people measures.” The party reports that 310,000 did so. But the party offered no alternative road for action.

Golden Dawn, an incipient fascist party, backed the “no” vote. One of its members, Ilias Panagiotaris, told *Der Spiegel* that the group’s “no” vote is different from Syriza’s, because after the vote Golden Dawn’s “people go into battle with a smile on their faces.” Tsipras and other politicians, he said, say “no” with their lips, “but deep inside they just want to go on shopping and have their cash machines.”

While EU officials considered the referendum a populist gimmick and Tsipras an untrustworthy negotiator, the vote bolstered his popularity and maneuvering room at home.

Tsipras promptly fired Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis, viewed by the troika as too radical and an obstacle to a deal, and named Euclid Tsakalotos to take his place.

In a July 8 loan request, Tsakalotos affirmed that “Greece is committed to honor its financial obligations to all of its creditors in a full and timely manner.”

As a July 7 European summit to deal with the crisis got underway in Brussels, President Barack Obama called both German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Tsipras to push for “a mutually acceptable agreement.”

So far the German rulers have not moved an inch. “We have only a few days left to find a solution,” Merkel told reporters at the end of the summit, adding that she is “not especially optimistic.”

EU rulers fear things coming apart

The EU can’t accept “an unconditional haircut,” German Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel said prior to the summit, touching on Berlin’s biggest fears. “How could we then refuse it to other member states?” Italy, Portugal and Spain all have even bigger foreign debts than Greece. And the possibility of their exit from the eurozone and the common currency worries them even more.

Both the EU plan and proposals from Athens will require a new round of attacks on working people.

Another Greek payment of \$3.9 billion is due to the European Central Bank July 20. If no deal is reached and Athens does not pay up, the country could be forced out of the eurozone and to bring back its own currency, the drachma.

While this would allow the propertied rulers in Greece the ability to devalue their currency, making it easier to boost exports, it would leave them with little access to financial markets, compounding the crisis for working people.

“We have a Grexit scenario, prepared in detail,” European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said at the summit, adding that he would prefer that Athens meet the EU demands.

The loans “given to Greece never went to the people,” Tsipras told the European Parliament the next day, receiving both boos and applause. “The money was given to save Greek and European banks.”

He pleaded with the EU representatives to back a “compromise” that would show there is “light at the end of the tunnel.” But under his plan, all new loans would go to pay the debt as well.

Puerto Rico’s debt

Continued from front page

Rico is on average 14 percent higher than in the U.S. and per capita income is half that of Mississippi — the poorest of the 50 states — the report says the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour “is too high relative to local incomes and regional competitors.”

The report argues that “generous” welfare benefits can exceed what a minimum wage earner receives, taking away incentives to work.

The solution? Eliminate the minimum wage, or at least slash it by two-thirds. Eliminate year-end bonuses. Reduce paid vacation days. Only pay overtime after 40 hours, like in most of the U.S., instead of after an eight-hour day. Extend probation for new employees from three months to one-to-two years. Make it easier to lay people off. And reduce welfare benefits.

The report also calls for privatizing much of the island’s electrical generation. It calls for exempting the island from the federal Jones Act that requires all maritime cargo between Puerto Rico and the U.S. be carried on ships under U.S. flag, doubling shipping costs.

García said that he supported most of the report’s proposals but opposed reducing the minimum wage.

“We cannot pretend to pull Puerto Rico out of its stagnant economic growth by sunbathing on the beach,” he said a few days later, attacking the 12 paid sick days and 15 vacation days many workers on the island receive by law.

Crisis magnified by colonialism

Decades of exploitation as a U.S. colony have magnified the impact of the worldwide capitalist production and trade crisis in Puerto Rico.

For 25 years Puerto Rico has been mired in economic stagnation, fueling reliance by successive colonial governments on loan after loan and growing indebtedness to U.S. investors. Today interest payments alone are the equivalent of \$200 per island resident a month.

Things have gotten worse since the 2008-2009 recession. Puerto Rico’s gross national product has dropped 14 percent since 2006. Commercial bank assets have fallen by 30 percent since 2005. The labor participation rate — those working or actively looking for work — dropped from just under 50 percent in 2006 to 40 percent. Some 40 percent of the population is dependent on government aid, from food stamps to disability payments and Medicaid.

Over the last five years the government has laid off some 30,000 workers, slashed pensions, raised the retirement age and cut social spending.

“Before the layoffs there were 6,500 workers at the electrical company,” Angel Figueroa Jaramillo, president of the Union of Electrical Workers (UTIER), told the *Militant* by phone from San Juan July 2. “Now there’s 3,700. What is the result? The number of injuries on the job has gone up dramatically. Last year three compañeros died on the job.”

“The government wants to privatize energy, water, roads and the ports,” he said. “This would impoverish the country even more and subject it to the greed of the private sector.”

“They offer all kinds of incentives to so-called investors who are really just usurers,” William Hernández, a pharmaceutical worker in Guayama, said by phone July 6, pointing to the tax breaks the government gives to capitalists who move to Puerto Rico. “Then they impose austerity on working people.”

In the latest move to make workers pay for the crisis, the government hiked the sales tax to 11.5 percent, making it higher than any U.S. state.

Puerto Ricans are leaving the island for the U.S. in droves. From 2010 to 2014 the population dropped 5 percent to 3.5 million.

As a U.S. colony, Puerto Rico, unlike U.S. municipalities, is barred from declaring bankruptcy. So far efforts by Puerto Rican officials, backed by the *New York Times* and others, to change federal law to allow government-owned enterprises on the island to use Chapter 9 bankruptcy to restructure debts have gone nowhere.

Capitalist speculators so far don’t seem too worried about García’s request to negotiate debt terms. The government-owned Electric Power Authority made a \$415 million debt payment July 1. In return, capitalist lenders agreed to buy \$128 million in new bonds to be paid in full by December and extended another payment deadline to Sept. 15.