

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Bringing Cuban Revolution to life
for workers in US and worldwide
 — PAGES 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 9 MARCH 11, 2013

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-

EXPANDING READERSHIP DOOR TO DOOR

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 it fosters on workers.

"I'm worried about the future of my

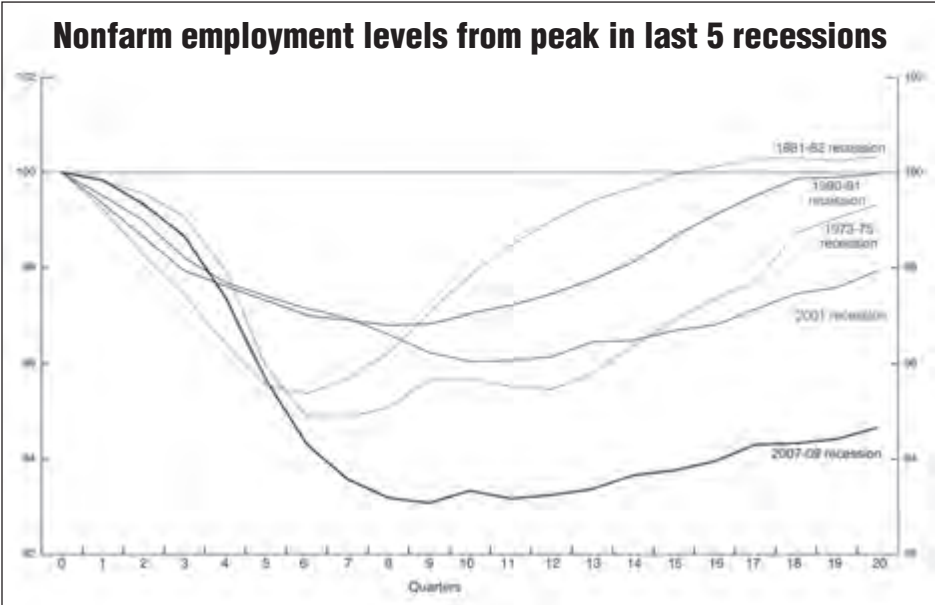
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Winter 'Militant' subscription campaign Feb. 9 - March 18 (week 2)

Country	quota	sold	%	1,950
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'Recovery' not going as gov't 'experts' expected

Fed's monetary schemes haven't created one job



BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

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.

US gov't asserts right to seize, search electronic devices at border

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 con-

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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.

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Growing unrest, capitalist rivalries draw US military deeper into Africa

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

While training 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

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'Cuban Revolution strengthened by internationalist mission in Angola'



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

HAVANA—The Cuban Revolution "came out victorious and strengthened" from the 1975-1991 internationalist mission in Angola, said Brig. Gen.

'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

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- After strike, NY school bus workers fight firings 11

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. No 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 wider 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 prevented fans from 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 *Haartez* 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 player,” 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.



AFP/Getty Images

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.”

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 something 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.

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: **Maritzel 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.

Welcome the Federation of Cuban Women delegation

Wed., March 13, reception 6 p.m., program 7 p.m.

Casa de las Américas, 182 E. 111th St.

Speakers: **Maritzel González** and other members of FMC delegation Casa de las Américas and July 26th Coalition. Suggested donation: \$5-10

THE MILITANT

Working class grows in Asia, worldwide

The ‘Militant’ reports on the expansion of the working class on a world scale and simultaneous integration of women into it. These historic trends will bring explosive struggles and strengthen prospects for forging proletarian leadership of a breadth hitherto unseen.



Reuters/Chor Sokunthea

Garment workers on strike in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Sept. 15, 2010.

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Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

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

Crisis spurs interest in 'Militant'

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 machines. We live in fear of machine malfunctions causing injuries with glass slivers.

"This paper shows we are not alone. It could help us a lot. I'll take this copy into work tonight," he said, asking *Militant* supporters to come back to continue the discussion, including on what communism is all about.

Prisoners subscribe, use *Militant*

One noteworthy feature of last week's effort was the eight subscriptions we received from workers behind bars—seven in the U.S. and one in New Zealand.

The letters printed on page 11 show how the *Militant* is a source of information and political education as well as

a tool to practice politics behind bars. Many have joined the effort to expand the readership of the paper, getting it around among their fellow inmates.

The *Militant* Prisoners' Fund makes it possible for inmates, often with help from friends and family, to order subscriptions at a reduced rate of \$6 for six months. Half-year subscriptions are also offered free of charge for those who have no means to pay. (See box on page 11.)

"The *Militant* is like me," Carmen Rodriguez, a cleaner at a nursing home and a member of Service Employees International Union Local 1199, said when she subscribed. "The paper fights for the correct stuff, like opposition to stop and frisk," the New York City cops' massive harassing stops and unconstitutional searches that target young working-class Black and Latino men.

Rodriguez lives in Far Rockaway in Queens, where *Militant* supporters sold eight subscriptions Feb. 16 going door to door.

She also bought a copy of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*.

"In the first two weeks of this drive, we have sold more books going door to door than we did that way all of the last drive," Willie Cotton wrote from San Francisco, referring to the nine-week fall subscription effort for the *Militant*.

New readers join in

"I came with the notion I was selling newspapers 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 door-to-door effort to expand the *Militant's* working-class readership in



Top: *Militant*; Bottom: *Militant*/Dan Fein

Workers buying *Militant* subscriptions over Feb. 23-24 weekend. Top, Manuele Lasalo, right, shows welder Ryan Requierme book on Cuban Five on Requierme's porch in Sydney, Australia. Bottom, cleaner Carmen Rodriguez, left, in her home with Sara Lobman in New York.

Los Angeles the weekend of Feb. 23-24.

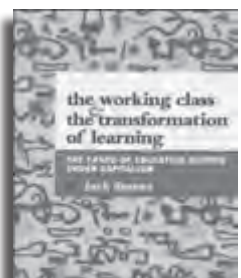
Cabrera, 19, subscribed during the fall subscription drive.

"I helped with Spanish. I said, 'The *Militant* tells the truth about workers' 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 García 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.

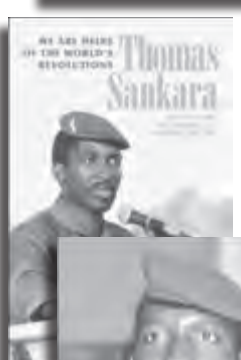
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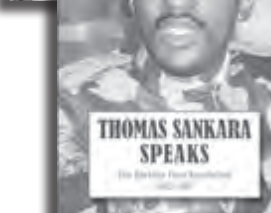
The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning
The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism
by Jack Barnes
\$2 with a subscription to the *Militant* (usually \$3)



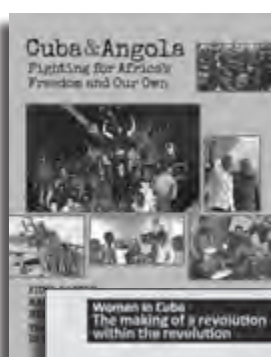
Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power
by Jack Barnes
\$10 with subscription (usually \$20)



We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions
Speeches from the Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87
by Thomas Sankara
\$5 with subscription (usually \$10)



Thomas Sankara Speaks
The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987
by Thomas Sankara
\$10 with subscription (usually \$24)



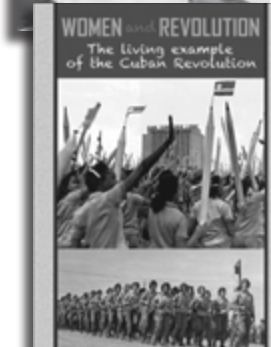
Cuba and Angola
Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own
by Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro; Cuban generals and combatants; Gabriel García Márquez
Publication offer: \$9 till March 31 \$6 with subscription (usually \$12)



Women in Cuba:
The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution
by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer
\$10 with subscription (usually \$20)



The Cuban Five
Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free
from pages of the *Militant*
\$3 with subscription (usually \$5)



Women and Revolution
The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution
by Asela de los Santos, Mary-Alice Waters and others
Publication offer: \$5 till March 31 \$3 with subscription (usually \$7)

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles
The Working-Class Alternative in the Los Angeles Elections. Speakers: Norton Sandler, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Los Angeles; Eleanor García, SWP candidate for Los Angeles School Board, District 2. Sat., March 2. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 4025 S. Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 295-2600.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis
Cuba and Angola: 25-Year Anniversary of Victory in Fighting for Africa's Freedom. Speaker: Tony Lane, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 8, 7:30 p.m. 416 E. Hennepin Ave., Suite 214. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

TEXAS

Houston
Women and Revolution: The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution. Speaker: Cindy Jaquith, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 8, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-50L. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland
The Fight for Jobs for All. Speaker: Annalucia Vermunt, Communist League. Fri., March 8, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Road. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester
No Recovery for Workers: The Fight for a Government-Funded Jobs Program. Speaker: Paul Davies, Communist League. Sat., March 9, 6 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St., M1 2EH. Tel.: (016) 1478-2496.

See distributors on page 10

Fed didn't create one job

Continued from front page

But, while she reviews the Fed's interest rate manipulations and its money-printing 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 fact 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 one clear 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 per year. In the same span of time following the previous 10 U.S. recessions, real GDP grew, on average, more than twice as fast."

Unlike previous recessions, employment levels have not recovered. Long-term joblessness affects millions of workers. One-fourth of all officially unemployed workers have been looking for 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 crossing the lips of a single capitalist politician or economist. The only time they have taken such a measure—which ultimately is a drain on the propertied rulers' profits—was 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 acted to restrain the recovery."

Yellen said she "was relieved that the Congress and the Administration were able to reach agreement on avoiding the full force of the 'fiscal cliff' that was due to take effect on January 1."

What did the deal accomplish? It raised payroll taxes on working people, while putting off until March 1 spending cuts of \$110 billion.

Now as this new "sequester" deadline looms, new cuts in social expenditures will affect working people, and if anything, add pressures that lead to contraction.

"The Federal Reserve typically plays a large role in promoting recoveries by reducing the federal funds rate and keeping it low until the economy is again on solid footing," accord-

ing to Yellen. But in this "recovery," she noted, "lower interest rates may be doing less to increase spending."

Since December 2008 the board has maintained interest rates at effectively zero, on the premise that this would encourage borrowing by businesses to invest in expanded plant, equipment and labor. But with their industrial rates of profit under pressure, capitalists have instead been hoarding cash and investing in non-productive speculation, further destabilizing their financial system. In relation to the exploitation of living, productive labor, the bosses have focused on squeezing greater profits through speedup and increased "productivity" from fewer workers.

In a further move supposedly to spur investment, the Federal Reserve launched its "quantitative easing" program. This scheme, which amounts to printing money, involves purchasing mortgage-backed securities and Treasury bonds. Between 2008 and mid-2011, this operation transferred \$2.3 trillion into the Fed's coffers, Yellen said. Currently \$85 billion of this debt is being added to the Fed's balance sheet each month.

"Some worry," says Yellen, that the Fed's policies "will have little effect on unemployment and only serve to stroke 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

fiscation of electronic devices violate their First Amendment rights to free speech and Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure.

Between Oct. 1, 2008, and June 2, 2010, 6,600 travelers 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.

"We see a worrisome pattern that we're getting more into whether this is targeting political speech," Catherine Crump, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union, said in a Feb. 22 phone interview. "In the case of David House we're convinced he was targeted because of his work with the Manning Network."

In May 2011, the ACLU filed a suit against the government for violations of First and Fourth Amendment rights of David House, a computer programmer, U.S. citizen and co-founder of the Bradley Manning Support Network. Manning is a soldier arrested and imprisoned in May 2010 for allegedly leaking classified and damning information to whistleblowing website WikiLeaks about the conduct of U.S. personnel in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

House entered the U.S. at the Chicago O'Hare airport Nov. 3, 2010, after a vacation with his girlfriend in Mexico. He was questioned for 90 minutes, mainly about Manning and WikiLeaks. His laptop and camera were confiscated

Socialist Workers wins ballot slot in Omaha



Militant photos: Fredy Huinil (above) and Candace Wagner (inset)

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.

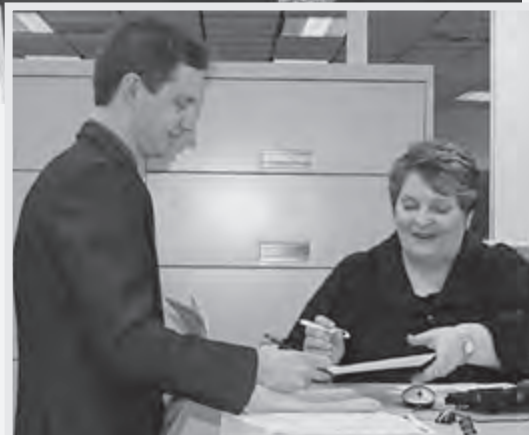
DeLuca met Debra Tomlin, who works part time as a nurse's assistant, when she, Perasso and supporters campaigned door to door Feb. 24. Above, Tomlin, left, and DeLuca in Tomlin's house. She bought a subscription to the *Militant* along with two books—*The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: 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 STUDER



and held for 49 days, with the government retrieving the complete Support Network mailing list, identity of donors and potential donors, financial records and communications between members of the steering committee.

His property was sent back to him a day after the ACLU sent a letter on Dec. 21, 2010, demanding its return.

The government moved to dismiss the suit in July 2011. In March 2012 Judge Denise Casper issued a written opinion allowing the case to go on, based on the length of time the government held the devices. She dismissed House's argument that the government had no right to search them at all, saying it was no different than a search of a suitcase.

Crump expects the case to go to trial this summer.

Crump also represents Pascal Abidor, 28, an Islamic Studies student at McGill University in Montreal, in a lawsuit against the government. Abidor has dual U.S.-French citizenship. His laptop and external hard drive were confiscated at a border point May 1, 2010, while traveling by train from Montreal to New York.

They took him off the train, frisking and handcuffing him, claiming this was standard procedure. He was placed in a detention cell for three hours and questioned about his parents, his girlfriend, his travels to Lebanon and Jordan, his research topics and perspectives on the Middle East. One of the cops identified himself as an FBI agent.

"Just because I traveled outside the U.S. shouldn't mean I leave my constitutional rights behind," Abidor said in a

July 2011 statement. "The government shouldn't be able to use border checks as an excuse to do an end run around the Bill of Rights."

After the lawyers wrote a letter requesting the return of his laptop, it was sent to Abidor after 11 days.

The Department of Homeland Security's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in early February wrote an executive summary claiming the practice does not violate First or Fourth Amendment protections. "We also conclude that imposing a requirement that officers have reasonable suspicion in order to conduct a border search of an electronic device would be operationally harmful without concomitant civil rights/liberties benefits," it said.

The government contends that the constitution-free search zone stretches 100 miles inland from the U.S. border.

Washington's 50-Year Domestic Contra Operation

Origins of the FBI's covert war against the Socialist Workers Party, Black rights groups, unions, and others and the importance of defending the right to organize free from government interference. —\$16

In New International no. 6 order from pathfinderpress.com



ON THE PICKET LINE

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 Elijah Kalichero, 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 Kalichero. "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 of Capitol Hill and at colleges against students," Kalichero said.

—Brian Williams

Greece: After 9-month strike, steelworkers continue fight

ATHENS, Greece—Several workers, veterans of the nine-month strike at 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 reinstatement 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 Gkiolis, "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 after you, the needs of your children?"

"In the steel mills, shipyards, refineries and paint factories, the Thriasio workers have come under a concerted attack by the bosses," said Panagiotis Katsaros, a steelworker and former strike leader. "The situation is pushing

workers to see that, no matter how hard, we also must coordinate our struggles to win."

"While 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 Elefsina 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, has 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 Plessa
and Natasha Telexis



Photos by Nyasa Times

Top: Public workers rally in Freedom Park in Lilongwe, Malawi, Feb. 20, demanding wage raises. Below: Students demonstrate in Blantyre Feb. 21 in support of striking workers.

Boss's contract-signing bribe 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 bribes used by the bosses to press us to accept wage cuts, dangerous working conditions and speedup.

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 \$607.02 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 EMD.

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. They 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.

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' union hall here 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 wants a wage cut, "total flexibility from the front gate to the back gate" to move workers to any job, elimination of premium 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 Jay, 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 last 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.

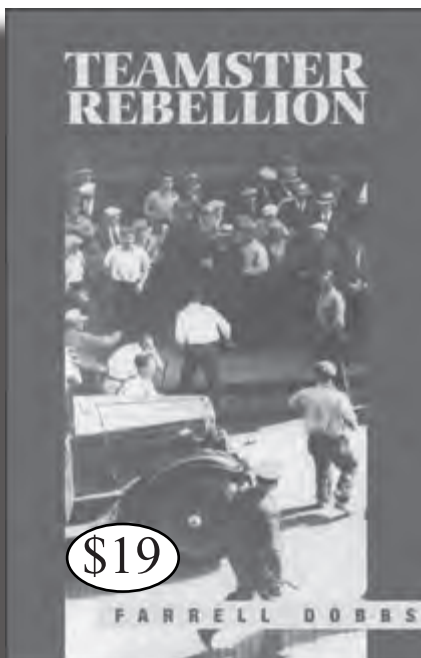
The shooting was a direct reprisal for SNCC's voter-registration work. Moses said that 150 Negroes had attempted to register in Greenwood in the two days before the shooting, "the first real breakthrough in Mississippi."



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 faded 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.



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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 colonialism 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 broken out among factions in the Malian army. And the situation in the country is unnerving 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.

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 West Africa, including what are now Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Libya, Niger, Algeria and Cameroon. Mali, which appeared to French bosses to have limited resources, received little attention. When mass struggles against imperialist domination rocked Africa and much of the colonial world following World War II, Mali became independent in 1960.

The French left behind one of the least developed and poorest countries in the

world.

Some 80 percent of the population is on the land, and more than 90 percent in subsistence farming with no relation to the market. The land is considered to belong to the family and there is no tradition of private property on the land.

The average life expectancy is 53 years. Nearly half of the population is under 15 years old. Because of the need for labor on the land, women on average have seven children. In farming areas, 144 out of every 1,000 die before they reach the age of one.

The overwhelming majority of farms, even in the rich Niger River Valley, are completely dependent on rainfall. Droughts, like struck in 1973 and 1982, are devastating.

Firewood serves as the sole source of energy for cooking and heating in more than 90 percent of households. In rural areas, electricity, outside occasional use of batteries and generators, is all but nonexistent and literacy is some 20 percent.

Under the impact of imperialist pressure, Bamako has been pressing to expand private ownership of land, most of which remains legally in government hands.

Many government land sales are to foreign investors. By December 2010, land officials in Bamako had negotiated the lease of more than 2 million acres to some 22 foreign investment firms, mainly from China, Libya and South Africa.

This process, which the U.S. Agency for International Development says is part of the “growing commoditization of land” in Mali, has spawned a growing peasant movement and public protests. In 2009, the Malian business group GDCM got a government land lease for 30 years to plant wheat and, with the support of the police, moved to push the peasants off the land. Many were injured. In November 2010, a coalition of newly organized peasant groups held a national meeting to protest land grabbing.

In November 2011, peasants joined the National Confederation of Peasant Organizations in the southern village of Nyéléni to protest land sales to foreign interests. They were joined by members of peasant groups from 30 countries to discuss how to fight such moves.

“We have seen an increase in land grabbing,” Ibrahim Coulibaly of the Malian peasant group told the gathering. “But these lands are not empty!



Above, peasants meet in Mali to protest government sale of land to foreign companies, April 17, 2012. Ibrahim Coulibaly, president of the 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.”

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.

US military drawn into Africa

Continued from front page
Committee Feb. 14, Gen. David Rodriguez, President Barack Obama’s nominee to command the U.S. Africa 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 confirma-

tion 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.

New International no. 12 ‘Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun’ by Jack Barnes



Today’s accelerating global capitalist slump accompanies 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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‘Mission strengthened revolution’

Continued from front page

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 Brig. Gen. Gustavo Chui (both Villegas and Chui were frontline officers in the battles fought in Angola); Jorge Sutil, 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 Víctor Dreke, second in command in the 1965 mission led by Che Guevara in the Congo. The next year Dreke led the first column of Cuban combatants who joined those battling Portuguese colonial rule in Guinea-Bissau. He is today executive vice president of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution.

Also participating were leadership delegations from the Union of Young Communists and of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, including its president, Kenia Serrano. The audience also included a number of young people, some whose parents served in Angola.

Cuba and Angola, Waters said, brings the example of the Cuban Revolution to life for working people and youth around the world. Today, in face of the spreading international capitalist crisis of production and trade, she said, workers and farmers in the U.S. and elsewhere “are becoming more open to seeing that example in all its rich detail than at any time in the last 60 years. More open because of their own experiences.” (See Waters’ remarks on page 8.)

The contribution made by Cuban internationalists in Angola “was not a favor to others,” said UJC National Bureau member Sutil, citing the book’s introduction. “Also at stake was the Cuban Revolution itself and the strength of its proletarian core.” Sutil is responsible for the communist youth organization’s work among young workers, farmers and soldiers.

He recalled how, as a child growing up in a sugar-mill town in Camagüey province, the activities sending off internationalist volunteers to Angola and welcoming them home had a deep impact on him.

Among the young Cubans “whose lives were transformed as they fought shoulder to shoulder with the people of Angola,” Sutil said, were Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, and René González—“three of our five heroes and brothers who are unjustly locked up in the prisons of the empire.”

Sutil singled out an observation by Fidel Castro from a 1975 speech in the book: “A man’s attitude to war depends on his cultural level and political development.” That statement, Sutil told the meeting, underscores the importance of the UJC’s work to advance the political understanding of young combatants in Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces today.

Fighting for Angola’s independence

Brig. Gen. Chui spoke about Fidel Castro’s leadership as commander-in-chief of the Cuban troops during the initial battles in Angola in late 1975. South African and other pro-imperialist forces were rapidly advancing on Luanda, the capital, seeking to install Angolan groups beholden to them as the government before Portugal’s rulers surrendered their nearly 500-year-long colonial domination on Nov. 11,



Militant photos by Tom Baumann

Top, Cuban generals Gustavo Chui and Harry Villegas at launching of *Cuba and Angola* in Havana, Feb. 18. Bottom, audience at event. In front row at far left is Víctor Dreke, vice president of Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. At far right, is Kenia Serrano, president of Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples.

1975, and Angola became independent.

In response, explained Chui, hundreds and later thousands of Cuban volunteers crossed the Atlantic Ocean, in old *Britannia* turboprops and converted passenger and cargo ships. An interview with Chui is contained in the new book.

Chui said he and other officers in the Havana headquarters of the Cuban general staff of the mission initially “had doubts we’d be able to save Angola. Our commander-in-chief would 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 Brig. 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.

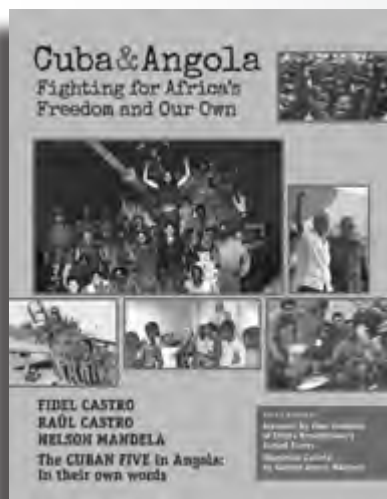
“We weren’t going to let Angolan forces be defeated at the hands of the South Africans,” said Villegas.

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.

Cuba and Angola Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own



**FIDEL CASTRO
RAÚL CASTRO
NELSON MANDELA
The CUBAN FIVE in Angola:
In their own words**

*Including accounts by four generals of
Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces*

**Armando Choy ✶ Gustavo Chui
Moisés Sío Wong ✶ Luis Alfonso Zayas
and**

**Gabriel García Márquez
on Operation Carlota**

From PathfinderPress.com, \$9 until March 31 (cover price \$12)

Special: \$6 with Militant subscription (see p. 3)

Bringing Cuban Revolution to life for 'Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own'

Below are remarks made by Mary-Alice Waters during a panel discussion of *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own* at the 2013 Havana International Book Fair. An article on the Feb. 18 meeting starts on the front page. Waters is the editor of the new Pathfinder Press title and a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party.

The panel included Gustavo Chui and Harry Villegas (widely known by his nom de guerre, "Pombo"), both brigadier generals in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR), and Jorge Sutil, a member of the National Bureau of the Union of Young Communists (UJC). Martín Koppel, who was responsible for the preparation of the book in Spanish, chaired the meeting.

Waters' remarks are © 2013 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

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 capital 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 interimperialist conflicts, and expanding "open-

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.



Militant/Cindy Jaquith



in the most widely cited statistics. The majority of those who have found work again took cuts in

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 victori-

ous 1917 October Revolution—back to the 1871 Paris Commune, to the revolutions of 1848, the Communist Manifesto and the birth of the modern workers movement.

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

It brings 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.¹

That is not ahead of us. It has already happened.

Crisis for working people

According to one recent survey, nearly 25 percent of workers in the United States have found themselves unemployed at some point since the capitalist crisis accelerated five years ago. Four out of five—80 percent!—know someone in their circle of family and friends who lost a job.

If the official unemployment figures have declined a few percentage points, it is in part because millions of what the bosses' government calls "discouraged workers" have simply stopped looking for work and are no longer counted

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 politics 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



AP Photo/J Pat Carter

Job fair in Sunrise, Fla., Jan. 22. Nearly 25 percent of workers in U.S. have been jobless at some point in last five years. "Economic and social blows of this magnitude don't go unregistered in the consciousness of millions," said Waters. "Working people in the U.S. are more open to learning about and considering the example of the Cuban Revolution" than in decades.



Cuba's internationalist mission helped produce "general Cuban Five stand as an example to the world," Waters said. Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, and René G. up charges in U.S. prisons since 1998. **Above**, Hernández

For workers in the US and worldwide

' presented by editor at international book fair event in Havana



Militant/Michael Fitzsimmons

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 ourselves. 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 confidence that the relationship of forces has shifted in our favor, that we have 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.

It is a level of response we haven't gotten in decades. And those subscriptions were combined with workers buying hundreds of books, serious books like those you find at Pathfinder's stand here at the Havana book fair—*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 the Cuban 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 youngest 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."²

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 the apartheid regime of 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.³

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.



Militant/Tom Baumann

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

Continued on page 11

3. The rectification process was the political course initiated by the Cuban revolutionary leadership in 1986. It marked a turn away from copying the stifling 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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...ation of leaders of the revolution among whom the
ers said. New book recounts experiences in Angola by
González, three of five revolutionaries jailed on frame-
andez, front right, during 1989-90 mission in Angola.

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‘Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa’

Below is an excerpt from Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. The following selection includes facts authors Martín Koppel and Mary-Alice Waters learned from reporting trips to Equatorial Guinea in 2005 and 2008. Copyright © 2009 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

[I]n the mid-1990s, vast reserves of oil and natural gas were discovered deep beneath the country's offshore waters in the Gulf of Guinea. This increased the ability to substantially ex-

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

pand production and trade, and at the same time deepened economic and social contradictions. ...

Within a few years' time, one of the world's most capital-intensive, technologically complex, and highly monopolized industries has been superimposed on a foundation in which the existing productivity of labor is a product of millennia of hunting, fishing, and subsistence agriculture, distorted by centuries of slave trading and colonial domination. ...

Equatorial Guinea remains a country with virtually no manufacturing. There is a brewery, a water bottling plant, and a cement factory crippled by



Militant/Martín Koppel

Oil workers employed by ExxonMobil in Oct. 12, 2005, parade celebrating independence day.

shortages of imported primary goods. Furniture-making shops and sawmilling operations that produce lumber for construction remain small-scale handicraft operations. With land cultivation beyond subsistence farming largely nonexistent and more than half the population now living in urban centers, almost all food is imported from Cameroon, Spain, and elsewhere. Transportation costs magnify the impact of rising world food prices. The chicken we ate one day came from Brazil. Eggs were from Cameroon.

Those living in rural areas, largely still outside the market, get food from hunting small forest animals or fishing, and from plantains, cassava, malanga, and other plants that grow easily on small pieces of cleared land at the forest's edge. Most of these foodstuffs are directly consumed, not bought or sold. Along rural roads and in sprawling town markets, many people sell small quantities of remaining food products as well as other goods to scrape by.

At the same time, in less than fifteen years the exploitation of oil and natural gas reserves has turned Equatorial Guinea into the third-largest oil exporter in sub-Saharan Africa, after Nigeria and Angola. "It is U.S. companies that are operating the offshore extraction operations, including ExxonMobil, Marathon, and Hess," [President Teodoro] Obiang noted in the interview.

Marathon also owns the liquid natural gas and methanol plants. In recent years, he added, "a number of other companies have signed agreements with [state-owned] Gepetrol, including Malaysian, South African, and Nigerian oil companies," for joint exploration and development projects. China is the largest purchaser of the country's oil.

Exploitation of Equatorial Guinea's oil resources has accelerated the development of a modern class structure here in the urban areas. While tribal and clan ties continue to dominate social relations in the countryside, these preclass formations dissolve more and more with the increased penetration of the world market and capitalist relations of production.

As has happened in other parts of the world over the past five centuries, capital accumulation is today consolidating a capitalist class in Equatorial Guinea, with expanding private holdings in land, hotels, construction, transport, and other businesses. Through the purchase and exploitation of labor power, this rising class is extracting surplus value and expanding its wealth.

There are growing numbers of small traders, merchants, lawyers, and other petty-bourgeois layers. Drawn by the oil boom, this includes increasing numbers from West Africa, the Middle East, China, and other parts of the world.

A class of wagedworkers is being

born in Equatorial Guinea, too. As the Communist Manifesto noted about Europe and North America more than 150 years ago, "In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, 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."

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 wagedworkers 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 swelled by stepped-up migration from the countryside of toilers seeking jobs.

The demand for labor has also led to a large influx of workers from abroad, especially from other parts of Central and West Africa—including Cameroon, Gabon, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Nigeria. Workers from Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, and elsewhere in Latin America have come to work in hotels, restaurants, and at other jobs. On all the construction sites we visited, most of the skilled workers and technicians are migrants from French-speaking African countries or contract employees from China, North Africa, Lebanon, Iran, and elsewhere.

As Obiang said in an August 5, 2008, speech to an audience that included many Guinean construction workers, "Equatorial Guinea used to be a country that was held in contempt." Now, he said, "many are coming here in search of prosperity. We have more immigrants than other countries in Africa. It's like bees who are coming to taste our honey."

The growth of the working class and its increasingly international character—as workers bring their skills and experiences from other parts of the world—has increased the pride and confidence of working people here. It is widening their scope.

March

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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10

The Militant March 11, 2013

After strike, school bus workers in New York City fight firings

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK—School bus workers here have beat back attempts 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 8,800 workers Feb. 15 without defeating Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s decision to eliminate Employee Protection Provisions in 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 workers 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.

“I’m glad to be back at work, but we can’t just give up,” said Laura Cangelosi, a driver and member 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 or United Craft and 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 Feb. 20, bosses said they weren’t going to take everyone back. “We all stayed outside,” driver Dionisio Peña told the *Militant*. “It seems the union steward was called. In the end, no one was fired.”

The same day Jofaz Transportation boss Joseph Fazzia turned away more than 100 attendants in



School bus workers during strike outside Reliant Transportation in Bronx, N.Y., Feb. 5.

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 negotiations 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 everyone 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 strikers.

“The dispute between the city and the union is clearly not over,” said a Feb. 21 *New York Times* editorial that scolded five Democratic Party candidates for mayor, who had written to the union asking officials to end the strike, for claiming they would each “revisit” 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 protections.

“It is time to let the market decide how this industry 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 gratitude, 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, without the rectification 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 endurance 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 it changed 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.

Martín and I saw this firsthand a few years ago in Equatorial Guinea when, at the invitation of the National University of Equatorial Guinea and then Cuban ambassador there, Victor Dreke—who is also with us today—we took part in the first ever book fair in that country. Every book we had 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 table as fast as they could be taken out of the boxes. To many young people there, most not even yet born when the apartheid regime fell to the revolutionary upsurge of the South African people, this was history they knew little of but longed to make their own.

Cuba and Angola aims to be a small contribution to filling the void of books that tell this story and encouraging those who took part 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 internationalist missions of Gerardo, Fernando, and René. In their own words they describe how they were molded by that combat experience and transformed 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 internationalist 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 Gerardo to new generations of working people young and old who are themselves beginning 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 increasingly crisis-ridden world.

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

Correction

The article “How Views on Women’s Status Changed, Abortion Rights Won,” in issue no. 4 said that the largest march ever for abortion rights occurred in Washington, D.C., in April 1992. But it took place on April 25, 2004.

— LETTERS —

Blown away by Cuba

I am extremely grateful to the *Militant* for opening my eyes to struggles going on around our globe between workers and capitalists. Reading it has had a profound impact on me, and now I wonder what can I do to make a change.

I now know that these are not just Maori or Pacific issues, or race issues, these are global issues that affect black and white, young and old.

I would be very grateful if you are able to continue sending me this paper. I will continue to donate to the *Militant* whenever I can.

I was blown away to read about the Cuban Revolution and the positive effect it had on its people. How would I go about receiving any titles you have about the Cuban Revolution?

A prisoner
New Zealand

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books are being shipped to a prison address.

Mass protest in Tunisia

Thank you for sending me a copy of your article “Assassination in Tunisia Spurs Mass Protests, Unhinges Gov’t Coalition” in the Feb. 25 issue.

I would like to clarify a fact about the number of participants in the funerals of martyr Chokri Belaid. According to observers, it exceeded 1.5 million people—of which more than half were in the capital Tunis.

Kacem Afaya
International Secretary
Tunisian General Union of Labor

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