

Drive to far surpass 2,500 subscriptions in final week

BY EMMA JOHNSON

“We all met on Saturday to map out plans for the last week,” Mary Martin said over the phone from Seattle Dec. 10. “On Sunday we made our goal. We’ll keep going with the same pace as we’ve done in previous weeks and sign up 20 to 30 more readers.”

Having already surpassed the international goal of 2,500, *Militant* supporters in the U.S., Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are organizing to go way over.

“We’re doing sales every night,” Martin said. “A new subscriber last week signed up a friend. When she called to give her friend’s address, she said she thought going out selling the paper was something she’d like to do. So we’ll definitely take her up on that.”

“We just made our goal and now we’ll just go over as much as we can,”

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Fall ‘Militant’ subscription campaign

Oct. 12 - Dec. 17 (week 8)

Country	quota	sold	%	
UNITED STATES				2,634
Seattle	160	165	103%	2,500 goal
Philadelphia*	135	135	100%	
Boston	65	64	98%	
Los Angeles	160	157	98%	
Atlanta	160	156	98%	
Twin Cities*	145	140	97%	
San Francisco	180	173	96%	
Miami	95	91	96%	
Lincoln	22	21	95%	
New York*	420	378	90%	
Chicago	180	162	90%	
Des Moines	160	141	88%	
Houston	110	95	86%	
Washington	90	77	86%	
Omaha	220	128	58%	
Total U.S.	2302	2083	90%	
PRISONERS	15	20	133%	
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	150	149	99%	
Manchester	100	112	112%	
UK Total	250	261	104%	
CANADA	110	107	97%	
NEW ZEALAND	80	85	106%	
AUSTRALIA	75	78	104%	
Total	2832	2634	105%	
Should be	2500	2222	89%	
*Raised goal				

Detroit gov’t bankruptcy targets workers’ pensions

Protects interests of rulers and their bond market



Reuters/Joshua Lott

Purpose of Detroit government bankruptcy is to protect interests of capitalist class. Losses of propertied bondholders will be kept to a minimum, followed by debts to other capitalist creditors. Decline of Detroit, among eight U.S. municipalities that filed for bankruptcy since 2010, has accelerated with deepening of worldwide crisis of capitalism.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A federal judge Dec. 3 approved the Detroit city government’s bankruptcy filing, giving the go-ahead to impose severe cuts to public workers’ pensions as part of “restructuring” the city’s \$18 billion debt. Interest payments on most municipal bonds held by big capitalists and their financial institutions will take the smallest hit.

A few hours after the judge’s ruling, the Illinois state legislature, comprised overwhelmingly of Democratic Party politicians, passed a bill cutting future and current retirees’ pensions across the state. In Chicago, Mayor Rahm Emanuel, a Democrat, called

for implementing even stiffer cuts.

Detroit is the largest city to have ever filed for bankruptcy in the United States. It is also the eighth municipality to do so since 2010, amidst the financial consequences of the world-

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Ukraine conflict grows as Moscow vies for influence with US, ‘Europe’

BY JOHN STUDER

In one of a number of recent foreign policy setbacks for Washington, the Russian government, led by President and former KGB secret police leader Vladimir Putin, pressured the Ukraine government of President Viktor Yanukovich Nov. 21 into reversing its decision to sign a set of U.S.-backed political and trade agreements with the European Union.

This development follows Moscow’s success in shoring up the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria through a September agreement to dismantle his cache of chemical weapons. Putin has also gained advantage from ongoing leaks about U.S. spying by Edward Snowden, a former contractor at the U.S. National Security Agency who is now in Russia.

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What apartheid defeat opened for workers in SAfrica, world

BY SETH GALINSKY

Nelson Mandela was the central leader of the African National Congress and the democratic revolution that overturned white supremacist rule in South Africa and inspired working people across the globe.

On the occasion of his death Dec. 5

POLITICAL LEGACY OF NELSON MANDELA

at the age of 95, capitalist media around the world, including in South Africa, are using their tributes to falsify the history of that uncompromising struggle, how it was won, the role of the toiling majority and what it opened up for development and organization of the working class.

Often glossed over is the intransigent and bloody war waged against the revolution by the South African rulers backed by Washington until the bitter end. Buried is the role of the working people of socialist Cuba, who shed blood

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‘We beat back union busting,’ say garment workers in Cambodia



Phnom Penh Post/Hong Menea

Workers at massive SL Garment factory celebrate after winning back pay, reinstatement of fired union leaders and removal of military cops from plant in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Dec. 3.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

“We went back in with a union and no one left behind. We beat back this union busting,” Kong Athit, vice president of the Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers Democratic Union, said by phone from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Dec. 6.

Workers in that city at SL Garment Processing, one of Asia’s largest garment factories, returned to work Dec. 4 after a nearly four-month battle in which they confronted attacks by military police, riot cops and company thugs on union marches, rallies and

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# Miami Gardens residents sue over cop harassment

BY NAOMI CRAINE

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — Police here have been unconstitutionally stopping, searching and arresting people with no justifiable reason, according to a federal civil rights suit filed here Nov. 27.

The suit was filed by Alex Saleh, owner of the 207 Quickstop convenience store, as well as several of his employees and customers.

One of the plaintiffs is Earl Sampson, a 28-year-old worker at the store. He has been stopped and searched 288 times in the last five years, and arrested nearly 60 times on charges of “trespassing” while at the 207 Quickstop. Many of the arrests took place while he was working stocking shelves or taking out the trash.

“I started asking the officers why are they always stopping Earl,” Saleh told the *Militant* in a Dec. 1 interview at the store. “A cop told me, ‘He’s just a number. He’s the low fruit.’ When you do that it will reach a point when you’re violating people’s rights,” Saleh said.

The lawsuit alleges that the Miami Gardens Police Department maintains an illegal system of quotas for citations and arrests that cops must fill. It accuses the police and city officials with violating the Fourth Amendment protections against unjustified search and seizure, and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, for racial profiling. Sampson and most of the other plaintiffs are African-American.

Miami Gardens is a large, working-class suburb north of Miami. Most of the residents are Black. According to the

*Miami Herald*, it has the highest murder rate of any municipality in Miami-Dade County. Children have been shot in a number of recent incidents.

For the last several years the police have had a “zero tolerance” policy in the name of stopping crime. “If you break the law, you’re going to jail,” Mayor Oliver Gilbert told reporters Nov. 7 after recent shootings.

“We need the police to stop real criminals,” Saleh said, so he initially signed on to the policy, giving the police permission to charge people with trespass in his absence. But when the police started arresting his customers and employees, he tried to opt out. The harassment continued, so he installed video cameras to document what was happening. “Two of the videos show I’m here when they arrested Earl,” he said.

Among other allegations, the suit states that Toree Daniels, 35, was stopped, searched and arrested dozens of times at the Quickstop, despite having the owners’ full permission to be there. Cops seized a bag of Red Bull energy drinks from another customer, Omar Dean, threw them on the ground, and then gave them away to passersby. The incident is captured on video.

Saleh said that the police and state attorney’s office did not respond to his complaints. “When there’s a complaint about the police, the state attorney looks the other way,” he said. “If it’s against a poor Black, or white, or Hispanic person they charge them, and then give them a deal that’s not really a deal,” referring to plea bargains. “You get a record, and then can’t get a job.”

## Malaysia conference discusses socialism, world politics



Militant photos: Baskaran Appu

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — More than 100 people, including a layer of young students, attended the “Socialism 2013-Delinking from Global Capitalism” conference, organized by the Malaysian Socialist Party (PSM) here Nov. 30 – Dec 1. Speakers from a number of different political organizations and countries addressed political developments in Malaysia and the world.

The opening panel “Socialism as the Alternative Model and Political System” featured several presentations, including one about Venezuela led by Manuel Guzmán, the Venezuelan Ambassador to Malaysia; one on the impact of the capitalist crisis in Europe and Malaysia; and another about Islam and socialism.

A lively debate broke out at the panel on “Middle East in Turmoil,” above, about the record of ousted Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood, the mobilizations of workers and youth that helped bring down his regime and the role of women in the struggle.

Other panels took up the history and role of the Malaysian Communist Party in the struggle against British colonial rule, the 2013 election campaigns of the PSM and other parties in Malaysia and challenges in building a “coalition of the left.”

During breaks, participants browsed various book tables, including Malaysian publisher SIRD, PSM, Pathfinder Books and the Venezuelan Solidarity Group in Malaysia.

— LINDA HARRIS



*“Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers.”*

— Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

Written in 1848, the Communist Manifesto explains why communism is the line of march of the working class toward power, “springing from an existing class struggle, a historical movement going on under our very eyes.”

[www.pathfinderpress.com](http://www.pathfinderpress.com)

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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.

## THE MILITANT

### Capitalism responsible for Philippines social disaster

*The social catastrophe stemming from Typhoon Haiyan, which devastated the Philippines, was prepared and is being perpetuated by capitalism. The ‘Militant’ calls for massive aid with no strings attached from Washington and other powers that exploit that nation.*



AP Photo/Bullit Marquez

A month after typhoon more than 200,000 people remain in evacuation centers, many of which, like one above, were damaged.

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# Subscription campaign

Continued from front page

Katy LeRougetel from Montreal said as she called in Dec. 10. “On Saturday we’re going back to Saint-Hyacinthe with the *Militant* article on the strike at l’Hotel des Seigneurs.” (See page 5.)

At the picket line Dec. 4, striker Brigitte Malenfant exclaimed, “They won, they won,” referring to garment workers in Bangladesh who recently won a 77 percent raise in the minimum wage after six months of strikes and street mobilizations. She had just read about the victory in the French-language translation of the front page article in the Dec. 9 issue of the *Militant*.

Being just two subscriptions short of their goal, supporters in New York decided to go for at least another 40, becoming the third area to raise its goal.

A dozen members of Socialist Workers Party branches in Chicago; Des Moines, Iowa; New York; and Twin Cities, Minn., joined communist workers in Omaha, Neb., Dec. 6-9, to expand the subscription base there. Knocking on doors in working-class neighborhoods, they signed up 36 new readers.

“We met all kinds of workers — cleaners, casino workers, rail workers — who are attracted to fellow workers representing the building of a movement to challenge the rule of capital,” said Dennis Richter from Chicago.

Richter and Ellen Brickley from Des Moines sold a subscription to a rail worker in Omaha who had been fired and was fighting to get his job back. He liked the paper’s defense of the engineer, who the bosses blame for the disastrous derailment of a New York Metro-North train Dec. 1, and what the *Militant* said about only working people prioritize safety and can enforce it through union

power and the fight for control of conditions on the job.

“The winter storm with single digit temperatures, ice and snow kept many indoors,” reported Lea Sherman who traveled to Omaha from New York. “In many cases we were invited to come inside to discuss politics and warm up. We also invited people to the upcoming Militant Labor Forum on ‘Support the Rights of Workers Behind Bars.’”

In Houston subscribers Glenn and Patricia Williams help get the paper to new readers. When Patricia Williams renewed, she asked for additional subscription blanks so they could sign up friends “who should be reading this paper.”

Glenn Williams bought a subscription for a friend in jail. “I want him to be able to read something from people who understand where he is, how it’s not about dividing all the races but unifying working people,” he said.

This inmate was one of four new readers behind bars this week, adding to a steadily expanding readership among prisoners. At 20 subscriptions, the “prisoners” line on the scoreboard is already five over the goal.

Cindy Jaquith and Mike Fitzsimmons in Houston knocked on Lester Cruz’s door Dec. 7. Cruz, who is Afro-Cuban, moved to the United States a year ago and works in a waste treatment plant.

“He was blown away when we showed him the paper and the book *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*,” reported Jaquith. “He had no idea there was truthful reporting in the U.S. on the five Cuban revolutionaries. He asked us to come back when he had the money to buy the literature.”

*The Cuban Five* is one of nine books



Militant/Dan Fein

Patty Ramos, right, buys subscription from Deborah Liatos in Bronx, N.Y., Dec. 7. “I’m familiar with lack of safety on the job,” Ramos said, referring to recent train derailment in New York.

on special offer with a subscription (see ad below). Since the beginning of the drive supporters have sold nearly 500 copies of these titles.

When Jaquith and Fitzsimmons returned a week later, Cruz bought a subscription and the book. He pointed to the lead article “Rail Bosses’ Profit Drive Behind NY Train Disaster” and said, “This paper talks about what’s really going on. Here in America we live in the belly of the beast.”

When they showed him *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own*, he lit up and proudly said, “I served in Angola!”

“The door-to-door sales the last two weekends have been very good,” said Naomi Craine in Miami Dec. 10. “We went to Belle Glade and sold six subscriptions in a neighborhood where many work in the sugar and agricultural industry. This weekend we’re going back to Miami Gardens to go door to

door in the area around the Quick Stop convenience store, which has been harassed by cops.” (See article on page 2.)

Manchester, England, has been high up on the scoreboard during the whole drive with a very steady pace. Almost one-quarter of the subscriptions are renewals, laying the base for a growing long-term readership.

“This is our highest proportion of renewals in many years,” reported Paul Davies. “We have planned renewal work with every sale. We have persistently called and arranged to visit readers at times most convenient for them.”

As part of a door-to-door sale, supporters met a subscriber who told them of a demonstration in Manchester Nov. 30 against the attacks and deportation of Ethiopian workers living in Saudi Arabia. At the action of some 60 people, they bumped into N Tafesse, who decided to renew. She had previously declined when they called at her home.

“They should stop the violence against immigrant workers,” she told the *Militant*. “I’m glad people have turned out to demonstrate today — they’re not waiting for someone to do something, but organizing for themselves.”

## Special offers with ‘Militant’ subscription

### The Cuban Five

Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free  
**from pages of the ‘Militant’**  
\$3 with subscription (regular \$5)

### The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions  
**by Jack Barnes**  
\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

### The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism  
**by Jack Barnes**  
\$2 with subscription (regular \$3)

### We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions

**by Thomas Sankara**  
Speeches from the Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87  
\$5 with subscription (regular \$10)

### Thomas Sankara Speaks

The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987  
\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

**See distributors on page 8**

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

**by Jack Barnes**  
\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)

### 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**  
\$6 with subscription (regular \$12)

### Women in Cuba

The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution  
**by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer**  
\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)

### Women and Revolution

The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution  
**by Asela de los Santos, Mary-Alice Waters and others**  
\$3 with subscription (regular \$7)

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

**San Francisco**  
Revolutionary Legacy of Nelson Mandela: What Was Apartheid? How Was It Overthrown? What Is the Way Forward for South African Toilers Today? Speaker: Carole Lesnick, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 20. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

### GEORGIA

**Atlanta**  
Nelson Mandela’s Revolutionary Legacy: How South Africa’s Toilers Ended Apartheid. Speaker: Susan LaMont, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. 777 Cleveland Ave. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

### MASSACHUSETTS

**Boston**  
Nelson Mandela, the Freedom Charter, Cuba and the Fight Against Apartheid. Speaker: Kevin Dwire, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. 13 Bennington St., 2nd Floor. Tel.: (617) 569-9169.

### NEW YORK

**Manhattan**  
Nelson Mandela and the Democratic Revolution in South Africa. Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. 307 W. 36th St., 10th Floor. (212) 629-6649.



# Rail bosses’ profit drive is behind NY train disaster

BY JOHN STUDER

The big-business media has backed away from its campaign to pillory the engineer of the Metro-North passenger train that derailed Dec. 1, as more and more information has come out highlighting the company’s disregard for the safety of passengers, crew and area residents in its pursuit of maximum profits.

One aspect of this that has gotten the most attention is the rail bosses’ refusal to spend money on basic safety measures.

“The New York commuter train that derailed,” Reuters reported Dec. 4, “had a safety system designed to keep its engineer alert but it was not installed in the car from which he was controlling the train.”

Like most U.S. commuter rail companies, Metro-North runs its trains in a push-pull configuration, with the engine in the front pulling the train on the trip out of the terminal and in the back pushing the train on the way back. When the engine is in the rear, the engineer drives the train from a specially equipped cab in the front passenger car.

Metro-North installed an alerter system in the engine cab, which sounds an alert if there is no movement of the throttle over a 25-second period and applies the brakes if the engineer doesn’t respond. But there was no alerter on the engineer’s cab on the other end.

Very few Metro-North trains are run with alerter-equipped cabs for engine-pushed trips, Reuters reported.

“My co-workers were shocked when they learned that Metro-North was running its passenger trains without alerters in the cab cars,” Amtrak conductor Mindy Brudno told the *Militant*. “A number of engineers I talked to, seasoned people with experience in both passenger and freight operation, said from personal experience they knew

alserter prevent serious accidents.”

More and more information has come to light about safety incidents and violations this year. On May 17, a Metro-North train derailed as a result of joint failure at the same location where inspectors found problems two days earlier and where a similar break had to be repaired a month earlier. The derailed train was struck by another train on an adjacent track and more than 50 people were hospitalized. Later that same month, a Metro-North passenger train struck and killed a track worker after it was misdirected onto the wrong track. In July, a freight train running on Metro-North’s track derailed at the same curve as the Dec. 1 derailment.

In face of the recent disaster, the Federal Railway Administration issued an emergency order Dec. 6 ordering changes. Two days later, Metro-North put sensors in the track at the sharp curve where the derailment took place. The sensors sound an alarm if a train approaches too fast and apply brakes if it is not slowed down.

The railway administration also ordered Metro-North to make similar changes wherever there are speed reductions of 20 miles per hour or more on their tracks.

Until all the changes are completed, Metro-North must place two qualified



Metropolitan Transportation Authority/J.P. Chan

**Metro-North Signal Department workers make changes Dec. 8 at curve where commuter train derailed Dec. 1 to enable track sensors to send speed alarms to drivers of trains approaching turn. Changes could have been installed at any time and would have prevented recent derailment, and others before it, but company bosses decided not to spend money on them.**

train personnel in the cab of every train whenever they approach one of these locations.

Under a federal law passed in 2008 on the heels of a deadly derailment in California, all major freight and passenger rail companies are required to implement a more extensive automated safety system — Positive Train Control — by 2015. Many say they won’t meet the deadline. Metro-North says the earliest it can get the system on track is 2019.

Meanwhile, rail workers and others have organized to support the engineer, who has been suspended from work without pay and could face criminal charges.

“Workers set up a Facebook page called ‘William Rockefeller Support Page,’” Wendy Banen, a retired Metro-North engineer, told the *Militant*. “More than 1,800 messages have been posted there from workers on many freight and passenger lines, including Metro-North, Long Island Rail Road and New Jersey Transit, from rail workers in Scotland and Canada, as well as from some passengers.”

“People know how exhausting the job is. Some engineers have six trains a day, with only 10 minutes between trips,” Banen said. “The bosses demand ‘on-time’ performance and other pressures that push you and tire you out.”

## Cambodia garment workers push back union busting

**Continued from front page**

The strike began Aug. 12 over eight demands, including a raise in the minimum wage from \$80 to \$150 a month, a \$3 lunch stipend, removal of military police from the plant and that the company dismiss and sever ties with adviser

and shareholder Meas Sotha, whom the workers identify with the use of military cops in the plant.

Workers won their demands for removal of military police from the plant and dismissal of Sotha, 50 percent back pay for the time on strike and reinstatement of 19 union leaders SL Garment fired in September.

“It’s a real victory for all workers and it took a real fight to get there,” said Athit. “The 19 members of the union committee are back and working. Without their reinstatement, we never would have signed any agreement.”

The Singapore-owned SL Garment plant employs nearly 6,000 workers, producing for H&M, Gap and Levi’s. About 2,500 are members of the Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers Democratic Union, which organized the strike. Two other smaller unions exist in the plant. Many unaffiliated workers took part in the walkout.

The union has organized numerous actions during the 16-week battle. Demonstrations of thousands marched to Phnom Penh City Hall, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the residence of Prime Minister Hun Sen to demand government intervention.

On Oct. 31 and Nov. 1 violent clashes with police against strike demonstrators outside the plant left 10 workers injured.

On Nov. 12, hundreds of riot police attacked a demonstration of some 1,000 workers with water cannons, tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition. A woman selling rice on the roadside was killed and 20 others rushed to the hospital with gunshot wounds. Three days later the government of Hun Sen gave SL Garment 15 days to reinstate all workers.

The back pay due former strikers amounts to \$1 million.

“This still has to be paid out,” Athit said. “The company says it doesn’t have the funds and has requested the government and international retailers provide them. We’ll follow this closely to make sure it happens. The workers who were the backbone of the strike haven’t had any money coming in for months, so this is very important.

“In the course of the strike, we dropped five of our demands and kept pushing for the most important ones,” said Athit. “The demand for higher wages and a lunch stipend we have lifted to the national level. We will work with other industrial unions to press for this. It’s really necessary, there have been some very big price increases recently and we need higher wages to keep up.”

During November prices of meat, fish, vegetables and oil rose by 10 to as much as 30 percent.

Unions gathered in Phnom Penh Nov. 24 pressing for the raise in the monthly minimum wage, saying they would launch strikes and demonstrations if the demand is not met.

“We want the demands to be made through statements or requests. We don’t want to see anything affect production,” Garment Manufacturers Association representative Cheath Khemara said to Radio Free Asia Nov. 26.

The government has said it will raise the minimum wage in January, but didn’t say by how much. After a meeting among representatives of the government, unions and garment bosses Nov. 28, Labor Minister Ith Sam Heng appealed to “all workers to calm down” because of a coming raise.

More than 90 percent of the 500,000 workers in more than 500 garment and shoe factories are women. The industry accounts for 80 percent of Cambodia’s total exports.

## ‘Militant’ readers help to boost SWP Party-Building Fund

BY TONY LANE

The SWP Party-Building Fund stands just ahead of schedule. Chicago’s second raise brings the sum of local quotas to \$2,850 over the \$100,000 goal.

Party-Building Fund Week 7 of 9			
Area	Quota	Collected	%
Lincoln	\$200	\$200	100%
Seattle	\$8,800	\$8,200	93%
San Francisco*	\$14,000	\$12,353	88%
Chicago*	\$10,400	\$8,544	82%
Atlanta	\$8,800	\$7,104	81%
Des Moines*	\$3,000	\$2,411	80%
New York	\$20,000	\$15,209	76%
Twin Cities	\$5,750	\$4,292	75%
Boston	\$3,500	\$2,570	73%
Los Angeles	\$8,200	\$5,703	70%
Houston	\$3,000	\$2,041	68%
Miami	\$3,000	\$1,703	57%
Philadelphia	\$4,200	\$2,379	57%
Omaha	\$2,500	\$1,357	54%
Washington, DC	\$7,500	\$3,570	48%
Other		\$1,350	
Total	\$102,850	\$78,987	79%
Should Be	\$100,000	\$77,777	78%
* Raised goal			

Supporters of the fund in local areas are working to close the gap in pledges and payments collected. Clay Dennison reported from Seattle that a contributor mailed in an additional contribution, putting pledges there several hundred dollars over their goal.

In New York, a *Militant* reader sent in a check with a note saying “Thanks for the continuing coverage in the *Militant* newspaper — Awesome.” In Chicago and Seattle, fund organizers won contributions in response to mailings sent out to long-term subscribers.

Local areas have won new contributors as they expand the readership to the *Militant*. Jacquie Henderson reports from Omaha that four workers they met this past weekend going door to door gave contributions, bringing the number of first-time contributors there to 21.

The final chart will include all payments received by Dec. 23.

Readers of the *Militant* can send contributions to the SWP office nearest you (see directory on page 8) or directly to the SWP National Office at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.



## ON THE PICKET LINE

### Fast-food workers press for wage raise to \$15 per hour

NEW YORK — “One-third of my co-workers were on strike today and walked the picket line,” Miguel Rivera, who has worked at Burger King for seven months for \$7.25 per hour, told the *Militant* at a rally of hundreds in downtown Manhattan Dec. 5. The action was part of a one-day protest by fast-food workers in some 100 cities nationwide demanding a wage raise to \$15 per hour and unionization.

“No one gets more than 30 hours a week,” said Rivera, who took part in a similar one-day protest walkout four months ago.

“I work hard, doing maintenance, mopping, cooking and whatever else they need,” said Jose Marim, who makes \$7.25 an hour after working at Burger King for eight years.

Fast Food Forward, which is backed by the Service Employees International Union, was part of organizing the actions. They organized pickets outside restaurants in Atlanta; Boston; Chicago; Detroit; Los Angeles; Oakland, Calif.; Phoenix; Pittsburgh; Washington, D.C.; and Charlotte, N.C.

In addition to fast-food workers, participants in the New York rally included “Occupy Wall Street” activists; union members from SEIU Local 32BJ, Communications Workers of America and United Federation of Teachers; and staff from non-governmental organizations. Many celebrated the election of Mayor Bill de Blasio as “a new day” — a perspective promoted by the pro-Democratic Party union officialdom.

Also in New York, about 100 protesters “blew whistles and beat drums while marching into a McDonald’s at around 6:30 a.m.,” reported Associated Press, chanting, “We can’t survive on \$7.25!”

— Dan Fein

### Bosses lock out nurses, techs at hospital in Connecticut

NEW LONDON, Conn. — More than 400 striking nurses and medical technicians and their supporters rallied Nov. 29 in front of Lawrence and Memorial Hospital here during a four-day strike over the Thanksgiving holiday. The workers, whose contracts expired Nov. 16, are represented by American Federation of Teachers locals 5049 and 5051.

Hospital management plans to outsource jobs to a contractor. “We have asked for guarantees that when the work is outsourced we have the right to follow the job with the same pay and benefits, but management has refused to discuss this with the union,” said Natalie Dyer, an emergency department nurse.

The company resumed contract negotiations several hours after the rally. But the next day bosses announced they were locking out the nurses until the contract was settled.

Attending the protest were union members from the Teamsters, United Auto Workers, SEIU, and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. The rally was addressed by American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten, U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal and Mayor Daryl Justin Finizio.

— Tim Craine

### Striking hotel workers in Quebec continue fight

SAINT-HYACINTHE, Quebec, Dec. 4 — Today marks the 402nd day of the strike by 180 hotel workers, members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), at the Hotel des Seigneurs and convention center.

“We are not just on the picket line for ourselves,” Brigitte Malenfant said to nods of agreement from other strikers on the picket line. “We are doing this for all those who are fighting to stop the abuse by the capitalists. We are doing this for future generations.”

In the spring of 2012 contracts at 35 hotels in Quebec organized by the CSN expired. Workers at a number of hotels went on strike and new agreements were signed, most with an increase in wages and better job conditions.

The Hotel des Seigneurs workers are not only fighting for a settlement similar to the other hotels, but to keep their jobs and union. The strikers are appealing to workers throughout the region for support to block plans by Vancouver-based Silver Birch



Militant/John Steele

“We are doing this for future generations,” said Brigitte Malenfant, right, one of 180 workers on strike against Hotel des Seigneurs since October 2012.



Reuters/Eduardo Munoz

Protest outside McDonald’s in New York was part of strikes and other actions in some 100 cities across the country Dec. 5 demanding \$15 an hour and a union for fast-food workers.

Hotels and Resorts to permanently close the Hotel des Seigneurs and its conference center on Dec. 22.

On Nov. 28 they distributed 20,000 leaflets demanding the city government buy the convention center as the city council had promised before the municipal elections took place Nov. 3. The newly elected council, which is slated to vote on the matter Dec. 16, has threatened to reverse that decision and allow the hotel and center to be sold off.

— John Steele

### County gov’t workers in Illinois approve contract, end strike

CHICAGO — After 16 days on the picket line members of the American

Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1028 went back to work Dec. 5. In a vote that day more than 95 percent ratified a tentative agreement between the union and the government of Will County, 45 miles west of Chicago.

The strike began Nov. 18 after 15 months of negotiations. It involved some 1,200 union members, ranging from workers at the county-run Sunny Hill Nursing Home and departments of health and transportation to civilian employees in the county’s police and court apparatus. Picket lines were put up at 26 worksites.

“They [were] trying to increase employees’ contribution to health insurance by 75 percent,” Kendra Coleman, an HIV/STD worker in the health department, told the *Militant* on the picket line Nov. 19. “We haven’t had a raise in four years and no cost of living increase since 2009.”

The agreement applies retroactively to Dec. 1, 2012, and extends through Nov. 30, 2016. A Dec. 5 statement from Local 1028 says the contract includes cost-of-living wage increases totaling 4.5 percent and “ensures that increased costs for health care are shared equitably based on employees’ ability to pay.”

— Alyson Kennedy

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 23, 1988

The government of Angola, Cuba, South Africa, and the United States have signed an agreement that represents a substantial step toward ending the 13-year-old U.S.- and South African-run war against the people of Angola. It also opens the way to implementing a United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia, which has been militarily occupied by South Africa since 1915.

The agreement was signed December 13 in Brazzaville, Congo, and is known as the Brazzaville Protocol. A formal signing ceremony of the protocol will take place at the United Nations on December 22.

Angolan and Cuban troops dealt a decisive military defeat to South African troops and their Angolan ally, UNITA (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), in March of this year at the Angolan town of Cuito Cuanavale. The Angolan and Cuban forces were joined by fighters from the South West Africa People’s Organisation.



December 23, 1963

The State Department’s “long-held but rarely articulated” China policy was recently made public in a speech by Roger Hilsman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. Though his reference to an “open door” policy for normalization of relations was greeted with fanfare, there is nothing new in the statement.

It is still aggressive and imperialist. It is a policy of military intervention and threats, of embargo and non-recognition.

All this is justified by the claim of China’s hostility toward the U.S. But the true origin of present relations with China lies in U.S. attempts to smash the Chinese Revolution. In the course of its intervention in China’s civil war, the U.S. backed Chiang Kai-shek and his reactionary clique, later installed him on Formosa with the U.S. Navy to guard him, and armed his forces for counter-revolutionary forays and a hoped-for invasion of the mainland.



December 24, 1938

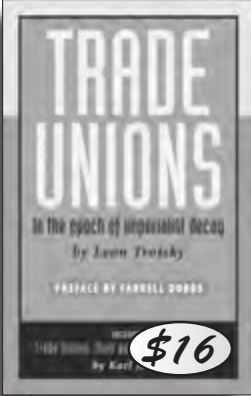
The failure of the capitalist system to supply even the most elementary needs of the workers is no more glaringly illustrated than in the persistent phenomenon of mass unemployment in the richest country on earth.

It becomes increasingly clear, particularly in the mass production industries, that the organized labor movement and the employed workers in general, face chronic mass unemployment, the most devastating menace to their interests.

Despite all the tremendous gains of the past few years, particularly in the field of industrial unionism, constantly recurring economic declines heaping up new and more extensive strata of unemployed have cut wide swathes in the union ranks and hold the terror of insecurity over every employed worker. The knowledge that there are thousands of jobless men, desperate for any opportunity to earn a livelihood waiting just outside the plant gates cannot help but breed caution in the average worker.

### TRADE UNIONS in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

by Leon Trotsky



“More food for thought (and action) than will be found in any book on the union question.”

—FARRELL DOBBS

**INCLUDES: “Trade Unions: Their Past, Present and Future” by Karl Marx**

*PathfinderPress.com*



# Apartheid defeat in SAfrica

**Continued from front page**  
for the cause of African liberation and were decisive in hastening the downfall of the apartheid regime — a major defeat for U.S. and world imperialism.

“The country’s peaceful transition owes a huge debt to the apartheid era’s last white president, F.W. de Klerk, who in 1990 ordered an end to Mr. Mandela’s 27-year imprisonment,” wrote the *New York Times* in a typical example of attempts to depreciate the struggle under the pretense of supporting it.

Mandela joined the African National Congress in 1944 and together with Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and others, helped form the ANC Youth League. They pushed for the ANC to organize more militant opposition to the segregation and racial discrimination that was well underway in South Africa.

In 1948 the National Party won the elections to the South African government and began to consolidate the apartheid state based on the complete expropriation of the African people and control of virtually every aspect of their lives. Every individual was assigned to a race category: White, Indian (many of them descendants of indentured servants brought to the country), Colored (of mixed race), Black, each with a different status and rights.

Apartheid denied Africans — the overwhelming majority of the country’s inhabitants — the most basic rights: where to live, who they could live with, the right to change jobs, to own land, to farm, to vote, to protest. Even the right to stay in a city after sundown depended on the shading of your skin, as defined by the country’s laws and regulations.

“The apartheid system had one central and overriding purpose: to organize and perpetuate the superexploitation of African labor by capital,” wrote Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, in a 1985 article titled, “The Coming Revolution in South Africa.” (See excerpt on page 7.)

One especially hated aspect of apartheid was the pass system — a system of internal passports that Africans had to have with them at all times. And any cop could demand to inspect it day or night. “It is truthfully said that it is im-

possible for Africans to walk from one side of town to the other without ‘breaking the law,’” wrote Barnes.

When Mandela first joined the struggle he considered himself an Africanist, skeptical of whether or not Indians and Coloureds “could truly embrace our cause” and was “firmly opposed to allowing Communists or whites to join” the ANC. But through experiences in the struggle, Mandela changed his views and organized to overthrow apartheid by helping to mobilize a mass movement of all those who opposed it.

In 1952 the ANC and the South African Indian Congress launched the Defiance Campaign, the first large-scale, multiracial mobilization against the apartheid laws imposed by the National Party. Mandela was its central organizer. More than 8,000 were thrown in jail.

The new laws were not overturned “but the Defiance Campaign marked a new chapter in the struggle,” Mandela wrote. “Our membership swelled to 100,000. The ANC emerged as a truly mass-based organization with an impressive corps of experienced activists who had braved the police, the courts, and the jails.”

## The Freedom Charter

In 1954, the ANC together with the Indian Congress, the recently formed South African Coloured Peoples Organization and the Congress of Democrats, made up of white opponents of apartheid, issued a call for a Congress of the People, which met June 25-26, 1955, attended by more than 3,000 delegates. “Although the overwhelming numbers of delegates were black, there were more than three hundred Indians, two hundred Coloureds, and one hundred whites,” Mandela said.

Before the police broke up the gathering, participants approved the Freedom Charter. “South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white,” the charter said. It put forward a series of demands. The first four headings were: “The people shall govern! All national groups shall have equal rights! The people shall share in the country’s wealth! The land shall be shared among those



Militant/Margrethe Siem

“South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white,” proclaimed **Freedom Charter**, adopted as program of South African revolutionary movement in 1955. Democratic revolution opened door to establishment of South African nation. **Above**, March 1990 celebration in Johannesburg celebrates release of Nelson Mandela a month earlier, after 27 years in prison.

who work it!” The charter called for the nationalization of the banks and mines.

The Freedom Charter triggered a sharp debate, including in the ANC itself where a minority, which soon split from the organization, backed the view that “South Africa was for Africans, and no one else” and considered whites and Indians “foreign minority groups.”

In 1962 Mandela was arrested after returning to South Africa from a tour of African countries where he sought financing and military training for the newly formed armed wing of the ANC, Spear of the Nation. The next year Mandela and seven others were convicted on charges of sabotage and conspiracy and sentenced to life in prison.

In October 1975 the South African army invaded Angola, hoping to crush the liberation movement against Portuguese rule there, deal a blow to the anti-colonial revolution on the continent and thereby strengthen apartheid rule at home.

At the request of the newly independent Angolan government, thousands of Cuban volunteer combatants went to Angola and in less than six months stopped the South African invasion in its tracks. The myth of the invincibility of the apartheid regime was punctured.

In June 1976, high school students in the Soweto township of Johannesburg initiated protests against the apartheid government’s decision to impose compulsory teaching in Afrikaans, seen as the language of the oppressor. Growing youth demonstrations were met with a bloody crackdown by the regime in which more than 700 were killed. The rebellion, known as the Soweto Uprising, became a turning point that brought new young forces into the struggle.

By the 1980s protests were sweeping townships in South Africa. Actions against apartheid and demanding freedom for Mandela were spreading around the world, including demonstrations of tens of thousands in the United States. Within South Africa the United Democratic Front brought together hundreds of groups organized around support to the Freedom Charter. And in 1985 the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the first nonracial trade union federation in the country, was

formed.

Based on the rise in the struggle, the ANC took a step forward in building a multiracial organization, expanding its leadership council and bringing Indians, Coloreds and white South Africans on to it for the first time.

In 1987 South Africa invaded Angola again. And again Cuba responded with even larger numbers of internationalist volunteers. Together with Angolan combatants, they decisively defeated the South African forces at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in March 1988.

As the struggle advanced on the heels of the victory at Cuito Cuanavale, Mandela was released from prison on Feb. 11, 1990.

“The combined struggles of our  
**Continued on page 7**



Apartheid reserved basic rights of citizenship for whites alone and determined where other racial categories could live and work. Africans were required to carry internal passport at all times. **Above**, women demonstrate against implementation of pass laws for women, Dec. 9, 1956. **Inset**, more than 20,000 high school students in Soweto township protest June 16, 1976, against compulsory teaching in Afrikaans. Cops opened fire, but protests continued and spread, opening new stage in struggle.



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# South Africa revolution: Historic victory for working class

*Below is an excerpt from a speech given in 1985 by Jack Barnes national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, to a meeting of the SWP's National Committee. It was published under the title, "The Coming Revolution in South Africa," in issue number 5 of New International, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. It walks through the class character and leading social forces of the revolution, the vanguard political role of the African National Congress, and the place of the revolution in the class struggle in southern Africa, the U.S. and the world. Its purpose was to arm party members to expand work, especially in the labor movement, in the fight for a free South Africa. Copyright © 1985 by New International. Reprinted with permission.*

## BY JACK BARNES

What is the historic character of the revolution in South Africa?

It is a revolution to overthrow the apartheid state and tear apart the apartheid system.

It is a revolution to open the door to forging, for the first time, a nonracial South African nation-state.

This new nation will incorporate the African people from various tribal backgrounds, the descendants of those who lived there and worked the land before the white colonizers arrived, and who are the vast majority of the population of South Africa today. It will incorporate those the apartheid system classifies as Coloureds and Indians, who, together with the Africans, constitute the oppressed Black population. And it will incorporate those whites who will accept living and working as citizens with equal rights — no more, no less — in a democratic South Africa.

It is a revolution to conquer the right of the Black majority to own, work, and develop the land from which they have



Militant/Laura Flicker

Fighting workers and their allies worldwide were attracted to the growing fight against apartheid. Mural on UFCW Local P-9 union hall in Austin, Minn., was dedicated to Nelson Mandela in 1986. Local P-9 organized meatpackers' strike against union-busting drive by Hormel.

been expelled by the apartheid regime. To win the right of Africans to become free farmers, producing cash crops for an expanding home market. To carry out a real Homestead Act, opening the land to those who want to work it.

It is a revolution to abolish all restrictions on the rights of Black South Africans to live, labor, and travel where they choose. To establish full equality in the job market. To guarantee full trade union and labor rights.

It is a revolution aimed at replacing the state of the white minority with a democratic republic based on one person, one vote. Its goal — in the words used by the African National Congress — is a single, united, nonracial, and democratic South Africa.

It is a revolution in which the toilers are seeking to replace minority apartheid rule with rule by the working people, the great majority. They will then use that new revolutionary power to ensure that not a single brick of the

apartheid system is left intact and that the democratic program of the revolution is put into practice.

From the historical standpoint, the South African revolution today is a bourgeois-democratic revolution for these goals. It is a democratic revolution, a national revolution. The working people are striving to lead it to victory and to create for the first time a true South African nation-state.

The South African revolution today is not an anticapitalist revolution. It will open the road to the transition to an anticapitalist revolution, but no one can predict how long, or short, that road will be. That will be determined by the relationship of class forces in South Africa and internationally that will emerge from the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid state. ...

The working class is striding forward to lead the national, democratic revolution to overthrow the apartheid state and replace it with a democratic dictatorship

of the South African workers and peasants. This democratic revolution cannot be carried through to victory under the leadership of any wing of the South African capitalist class or liberal political forces.

This leadership role has been thrust upon the working class by the development of South African capitalism itself. As a result of the special oppressive forms through which the apartheid system mobilizes labor power, South African and foreign capitalists have squeezed superprofits from the labor of Black workers. But in the process they have brought into being a large and powerful South African working class, the vanguard of the gravediggers of apartheid. ...

The ANC has conquered, in struggle, its place as the vanguard organization of the democratic revolution in South Africa. Revolutionists in the United States and around the world must act on the basis of this fact in participating in the fight against apartheid. ...

The national, democratic struggle unfolding in South Africa is also decisive for the forging of a communist leadership there. The ANC is not a communist organization, and it does not strive to become one. It is a revolutionary democratic organization, the political vanguard of the national, democratic revolution in South Africa.

Out of the revolutionary struggle that is being led by the ANC, however, a growing South African communist vanguard will be forged and tested. This will occur as younger forces come forward in this struggle, as more and more leaders emerge from the ranks of the working class. And with this strengthening of a communist leadership in South Africa will come a strengthening of its convergence with communist forces on a world scale.

The advance of the South African revolution and its leadership marks a further objective shift in what is possible and what is necessary in the construction of a vanguard of the world revolution. It registers yet another step away from what Lenin — pointing to the bankrupt Second International — referred to as an International of the white race. It moves another step toward the kind of truly world revolutionary leadership that the Communist International sought to build in Lenin's time. And that has an important impact on the decisive question of building communist leaderships in every country where the construction of a multinational proletarian combat party is essential — from Brazil to Canada, from New Zealand to Britain, and of course, here in the United States.

## Defeat of apartheid in SAfrica

Continued from page 6

people within the country as well as the mounting international struggle against apartheid during the 1980s raised the possibility of a negotiated resolution of the apartheid conflict," Mandela said in a speech in Matanzas, Cuba, on July 26, 1991. "The decisive defeat at Cuito Cuanavale altered the balance of forces within the region and substantially reduced the capacity of the Pretoria regime to destabilize its neighbors. This, in combination with our people's struggles within the country, was crucial in bringing Pretoria to realize that it would have to talk."

"Everywhere that workers are fighting for their own rights, they will be attracted to the freedom battle that is being waged today by the toilers in South Africa," wrote Barnes. Demonstrations worldwide demanded Washington and other backers of the regime impose sanctions and end all aid to apartheid.

Although forced to negotiate, South African President de Klerk did whatever he could to preserve the apartheid state. His government took part in or encouraged a reign of murderous violence that killed 2,000 ANC supporters in the first half of 1991 alone and another 8,000 in the preceding seven years, Mandela pointed out in Cuba.

### Obstacle of the Communist Party

The struggle also faced political obstacles from the South African Communist Party, a mass, multinational

party with thousands of dedicated members who were part of the anti-apartheid struggle. Like other Stalinist parties, it veered between ultraleft actions that put working people at risk and class-collaborationist politics that took pressure off the racist government. Its bureaucratic and heavy-handed role in Spear of the Nation, including agent-baiting, torture and worse, was in large part responsible for the marginalization of the armed wing from the growing popular movement in the 1980s.

In the midst of negotiations in 1992 between the ANC and the de Klerk government, Joe Slovo, a member of the ANC National Executive Committee and a leader of the CP, published a document titled "Negotiations: What Room for Compromise?" proposing that the ANC make a series of concessions. "We were clearly not dealing with a defeated enemy and an early revolutionary seizure of power by the liberation movement could not be realistically posed," he said.

Mandela on the other hand called for an intensification of the struggle on all fronts that forced the de Klerk government to cave in and agree to dismantle all apartheid laws and hold elections based on one person one vote. An interim constitution was approved in 1993 and Mandela was elected president in 1994.

The overturn of apartheid was a huge advance for the people of South Africa

Continued on page 9

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# ‘Cuito Cuanavale was milestone in struggle for African liberation’

*Below are excerpts from a speech Nelson Mandela gave at a rally in Matanzas, Cuba, on July 26, 1991, marking the 38th anniversary of the opening of the Cuban Revolution. Mandela, who was released from prison in February 1990, shared the platform with Cuban President Fidel Castro. Among other topics, the two spoke about Cuba's internationalist combat mission in Angola, which was decisive in defeating the invading army of apartheid South Africa and forcing its retreat from Angola and Namibia. Between November 1975 and May 1991, some 375,000 Cubans volunteered in Angola. Both Mandela's and Castro's speeches are included in How Far We Slaves Have Come! published by Pathfinder Press and available in English, Spanish and Farsi.*

## BY NELSON MANDELA

The Cuban people hold a special place in the hearts of the people of Africa. The Cuban internationalists have made a contribution to African independence, freedom, and justice, unparalleled for its principled and selfless character.

From its earliest days the Cuban revolution has itself been a source of inspiration to all freedom-loving people.

We admire the sacrifices of the Cuban people in maintaining their independence and sovereignty in the face of a vicious imperialist-orchestrated campaign to destroy the impressive gains made in the Cuban revolution.

We too want to control our own destiny. We are determined that the people of South Africa will make their future and



**“The Cuban internationalists have made a contribution to African independence and freedom, unparalleled for its principled and selfless character,” Nelson Mandela said at July 26, 1991, rally in Matanzas, Cuba. “Defeat of the racist army made it possible for me to be here today!”**

that they will continue to exercise their full democratic rights after liberation from apartheid. We do not want popular participation to cease at the moment when apartheid goes. We want to have the moment of liberation open the way to ever-deepening democracy. ...

We come here with great humility. We come here with great emotion. We come here with a sense of a great debt that is owed to the people of Cuba. What other country can point to a record of greater selflessness than Cuba has displayed in its relations with Africa?

How many countries of the world benefit from Cuban health workers or educationists? How many of these are in Africa?

Where is the country that has sought Cuban help and has had it refused?

How many countries under threat from imperialism or struggling for national liberation have been able to count on Cuban support?

It was in prison when I first heard of the massive assistance that the Cuban internationalist forces provided to the people of Angola, on such a scale that one hesitated to believe, when the Angolans came under combined attack of South African, CIA-financed FNLA, mercenary, UNITA, and Zairean troops in 1975.

We in Africa are used to being victims of countries wanting to carve up

our territory or subvert our sovereignty. It is unparalleled in African history to have another people rise to the defense of one of us.

We know also that this was a popular action in Cuba. We are aware that those who fought and died in Angola were only a small proportion of those who volunteered. For the Cuban people internationalism is not merely a word but something that we have seen practiced to the benefit of large sections of humankind.

We know that the Cuban forces were willing to withdraw shortly after repelling the 1975 invasion, but the continued aggression from Pretoria made this impossible.

Your presence and the reinforcement of your forces in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale was of truly historic significance.

The crushing defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale was a victory for the whole of Africa!

The overwhelming defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale provided the possibility for Angola to enjoy peace and consolidate its own sovereignty!

The defeat of the racist army allowed the struggling people of Namibia to finally win their independence!

The decisive defeat of the apartheid aggressors broke the myth of the invincibility of the white oppressors!

The defeat of the apartheid army was an inspiration to the struggling people inside South Africa!

Without the defeat of Cuito Cuanavale our organizations would not have been unbanned!

The defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale has made it possible for me to be here today!

Cuito Cuanavale was a milestone in the history of the struggle for southern African liberation! ...

When you, Comrade Fidel, yesterday said that our cause is your cause, I know that that sentiment came from the bottom of your heart and that that is the feeling of all the people of revolutionary Cuba.

You are with us because both of our organizations, the Communist Party of Cuba and the ANC, are fighting for the oppressed masses, to ensure that those who make the wealth enjoy its fruits. Your great apostle José Martí said: “With the poor people of this earth I want to share my fate.”

We in the ANC will always stand with the poor and rightless. Not only do we stand with them. We will ensure sooner rather than later that they rule the land of their birth, that in the words of the Freedom Charter, “the people shall govern.” And when that moment arrives, it will have been made possible not only by our efforts but through the solidarity, support, and encouragement of the great Cuban people.

I must close my remarks by referring to an event which you have all witnessed. Comrade Fidel Castro conferred upon me the highest honor this country can award. I am very much humbled by this award, because I do not think I deserve it. It is an award that should be given to those who have already won the freedom of their peoples. But it is a source of strength and hope that this award is given for the recognition that the people of South Africa stand on their feet and are fighting for their freedom.

We sincerely hope that in these days that lie ahead we will prove worthy of the confidence which is expressed in this award.

Long live the Cuban revolution!

Long live Comrade Fidel Castro!

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# Detroit bankruptcy targets workers

Continued from front page

wide slowdown in growth of production and trade. Among the other seven bankruptcy filings, five were approved: Stockton, Mammoth Lakes and San Bernardino, Calif.; Jefferson County, Ala.; and Central Falls, R.I. Rejected were Harrisburg, Pa. and Boise, Idaho.

The function of bankruptcy courts is to “restructure” unpayable debts in a way that protects the interests of the capitalist class. In these cases, the overriding concern is maintaining confidence that propertied holders of local government bonds can continue to count on being paid in full and on time. This guides judges’ decisions on whether filings are accepted, and if so how they are implemented. Losses to bondholders, particularly of the strongest capitalists among them, is minimized, while maximum burden is foisted on working people.

The city of Detroit, like all U.S. government bodies, finances operations in large part through selling municipal bonds. Nationwide, the total amount of such bonds has mushroomed in recent years to some \$4 trillion today. This is one aspect of an expansion of various forms of debt that have mounted, as capitalists seek avenues of greatest profit during a period of growing economic crisis.

Detroit, with some \$18 billion in long-term debt outstanding, is among the weakest strands in a web of indebted city governments around the country. More than \$3.5 billion is owed to the Detroit pension fund for 10,000 current employees and 20,000 retirees, along with about \$6 billion for retirees’ health care.

## Financial manager appointed

Last March, Mich. Gov. Rick Snyder, a Republican, appointed Kevyn Orr, a Democrat, to be Detroit’s emergency financial manager with broad powers above those of elected legislative bodies. In July the city filed for bankruptcy, with plans to pay only a fraction of the \$3.5 billion owed to pension funds.

Some \$7 billion in secured municipal bonds are untouchable, while some “general-obligation” bondholders holding \$530 million in debt may have to take substantial “haircuts.”

Working people in Detroit have been hit hard under the capitalist economic crisis. Its employed population numbers less than half of what it was in 2000. The official unemployment rate in August was 17.7 percent, more than double the national rate, and 60 percent of children live below the official poverty line.

Among the consequences of the economic slowdown has been a contraction in the U.S. auto industry, which accelerated the crisis in Detroit, the historic center of auto production. Between 2000 and 2010, the city’s population decreased by 25 percent, following a half century of steady decline. Today the population stands at 700,000, down from 2 million in 1950.

Property tax revenue for the city government has shrunk when real estate values took a second dive

starting in 2005, following a decades-long decline that lasted into the mid-1990s. In 2005-2006 the government issued \$1.44 billion in debt as part of a complex financial transaction that essentially amounted to betting workers’ pensions on rising interest rates. Sharply falling interest rates added to mounting debt. More debt was issued and ever larger proportions of revenue spent just to meet rising bond payments.

Shortly after the bankruptcy filing the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees filed a lawsuit challenging it, saying a state constitution provision guarantees public workers’ pension funds. A state county judge agreed, but this was subsequently overruled by federal Bankruptcy Judge Steven Rhodes several months later.

In their drive to make workers pay for their budget crises around the country, the propertied rulers have yet to encounter formidable resistance from the organized labor movement and the working class.

The one place in recent years where government workers put up a fight that was strong enough to show the possibilities of inspiring a fighting social movement based in the working class was the seven-day strike by 26,000 public school teachers in Chicago in September 2012. In its anti-union drive, the city administration’s demands included pension cuts, lengthening the workday, school closures and layoffs without recall rights. Strike support rallies in downtown Chicago drew thousands of workers from a wide range of unions.

Under pressure from the courts and city government officials, union representatives voted to suspend the strike, as Mayor Emanuel threatened to impose a court injunction against the teachers’ union.

In a growing number of cities and states the lack of an adequate response has brought into focus the consequences of a decades-long course of the top labor officialdom of collaboration with the bosses and their government. In the case of public workers, it has taken the distinct form of direct political and financial support to politicians, usually from the Democratic Party, in hopes of reciprocation in union contracts. Today the reciprocation is absent and a large proportion of anti-union offensives are in fact being led by Democratic city administrations from New York to Chicago.

In Illinois, Gov. Pat Quinn, a Democrat, signed into law Dec. 5 a comprehensive bill passed by the legislature two days earlier cutting future and current retirees’ benefits. It raises retirement ages for workers aged 45 or under by up to five years to age 60, shrinks cost-of-living increases for retirees and caps the size of pensions. Illinois’ state pension system covers about 200,000 retirees and more than 350,000 current government employees.

“The next challenge for lawmakers in the state will be to address the woes of Chicago,” wrote the *Financial Times* Dec. 4. It faces “its own nearly \$20 billion unfunded pension liability” the “worst funded system of any major U.S. city.”

# What apartheid defeat opened for workers

Continued from page 7

and the world. South Africa was no longer a bastion for the most reactionary forces bent on maintaining the imperialist domination of Africa.

Blacks no longer needed passes. They could go where they pleased, live wherever they could afford, sell their labor power to the highest bidder. They could buy land, if they could pay for it. The African Farmers Association of South Africa says it now has some 12,000 members.

The South African revolution took place following the defeats of revolutions in Nicaragua, Grenada and Burkina Faso. And it faced the counterrevolutionary role of Stalinism in the world. In 1991 the Soviet Union shattered after decades of rule by a privileged bureaucracy. The regimes established in Russia, Eastern Europe and Asia out of its dissolution moved rapidly to accelerate the introduction of capitalist market methods. Similar developments marked Stalinist-led governments in China and Vietnam, which urged South African revolutionaries to stick with capitalism.

The African National Congress was transformed from a national liberation movement into a bour-

geois electoral party and then the party of the capitalist government. And many leaders of the ANC and the South African Communist Party are big capitalists today.

Cyril Ramaphosa, for example, a former leader of the National Union of Mineworkers and of the ANC, is part owner of Lonmin, a platinum mining corporation, and one of the richest men in Africa. In August 2012, 34 Lonmin miners were mowed down by police during a strike that ended in workers winning a substantial wage hike. Former CP chair Gwede Mantashe is a director of the mining company Samancor. Jacob Zuma, current president of South Africa and the ANC, has extensive business interests.

The strike wave by tens of thousands of miners and farmworkers in South Africa at the end of 2012 and beginning of 2013, challenging the miserable conditions millions of workers face in South Africa today, would have been inconceivable during the apartheid era. This highlights both what was gained by overthrowing apartheid and the opportunities for building a revolutionary workers party made possible by that victory.

# Conflict in Ukraine

Continued from front page

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the subsequent breakaway of former Soviet republics in eastern Europe and Asia, Washington and the EU have sought to turn them away from Russia.

Out of 28 regimes in the former Soviet bloc, 10 joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, including the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia.

Russia has threatened to cut off the flow of oil and gas through some of these former republics. Skirmishes with Moscow have broken out in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Belarus and Georgia.

## Putin forces Ukraine into bloc

The biggest prize Washington and European imperialist powers are sparring with Moscow over is Ukraine. The largest of the former Soviet republics with 46 million people, Ukraine is the historic breadbasket for Russia and a key source of steel, coal and access to warm-water ports on the Black Sea.

With Washington’s backing, the EU in 2009 set up what it called the Eastern Partnership program to court the governments of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Ukraine to integrate into the EU market, with removal of tariffs on imports and exports.

The deal required the four governments to rewrite their laws to incorporate “large chunks of EU legislation,” including “increased participation of the private sector.” The regimes would have to “risk economic pain until they complete reforms” — attacks on their working class — the *Financial Times* said Nov. 29.

Ukraine faces severe economic difficulties. Following the 2008 world financial crisis the country’s industrial output fell 34 percent. Ukraine needs \$18 billion by March 2014 to roll over government debt and pay Russia for outstanding gas and oil bills.

In 1995, figures in the former government bureaucracy in Ukraine launched a “Mass Privatization Program,” seizing big hunks of it for themselves.

Conflicts between different factions exploded around the 2004 presidential election. Yanukovich, who emerged from the government-run eastern coal industry that had strong ties to Russia, claimed victory. Those around Viktor Yushchenko, who came out of the state banking apparatus and oriented toward Washington, protested.

Hundreds of thousands of people — mainly from the western part of the country — took to the streets, backing Yushchenko and a break with Russia, the so-called orange revolution.

The rule of the oligarchs around Yushchenko lasted six years. Growing disgust with their thievery and corruption lay the basis for Yanukovich and his gang to take the election in 2010.

Yanukovich tried to play Moscow and Washington against each other. Last year he announced he would sign the Eastern Partnership, hoping to parlay it into desperately needed aid and leverage. But Putin’s threats to shut off Russian gas and promises of cheaper gas prices and aid scuttled the deal.

Protests against the sudden shift mushroomed after police attacks on a small group of student demonstrators. Hundreds of thousands marched against the Yanukovich government in Kiev Dec. 1.

## Correction to last week’s article on Ramón Labañino, one of the Cuban Five

The *Militant* apologizes for an error in the photo caption that accompanied the article “Proud to Know Ramón Labañino, a Person of Values and Principles” in the Dec. 16 issue. That article incorrectly identified one of the relatives of the Cuban Five. In the photo, the person second from the left is Yadira Pérez, niece of Gerardo Hernández.

