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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 3 JANUARY 28, 2013

INSIDE

Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own

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9,000 NY school bus workers walk out to secure their jobs



Militant/Lea Sherman

School bus drivers, mechanics and matrons picket in Bronx, N.Y., Jan. 16, first day of strike.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

NEW YORK—Some 9,000 school bus drivers, matrons and mechanics here set up picket lines around the city Jan. 16. Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1181 members struck over the city's drive to eliminate Employee Protection Provisions in more than 1,100 school bus route contracts up for bid—provisions that have been on the books for more than 30 years.

The unionists face a propaganda firestorm from city politicians and media backers, attacking them for "striking against the children" and "holding children hostage" at the expense of city taxpayers.

Irma Burgos has worked as a driver for students with special needs for 13 years. "We need EPP, employee protection, to secure our jobs," she told the *Militant* as she picketed alongside more than 100 other unionists at the Atlantic Express bus terminal near Grand Concourse and 138th Street

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SOLIDARITY WITH NY SCHOOL BUS WORKERS

See editorial, p. 11

French troops land in Mali, launch offensive

Intervene against Islamists in former colony



Eric Feferberg/AFP/Getty Images

French troops head to battle zone in north Mali. French imperialists sent soldiers and bombers after Islamists took over most of former French colony, challenging control of military regime.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Socialist Party government of France has launched a military offensive in the West African state of Mali, one of its former colonies, aimed at pushing back Islamist forces that have wrested control of the northern part of the country.

As part of carrying out its objective, Paris, with some assistance from Washington and London, is buttressing a teetering government that came to power last March through a military coup.

The coup was led by soldiers who were trained by Washington as part of a military cooperation agreement with the previous government. The U.S. military was legally required to end training after the coup, according to several news sources.

At the same time key cities were seized in the north by two opposing forces: Tuareg rebels, who demand a secular independent state, and Islamist groups wanting to impose Sharia law. Months later Islamists pushed out the Tuareg group. The new government then requested military assistance from France as Islamist forces began heading further south.

French combat helicopters and fighter jets launched airstrikes in Mali Jan. 11, which were then expanded two days later into the northern

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In 'gun debate,' Obama decrees curbs on rights, more school cops

BY JOHN STUDER

President Barack Obama announced 23 executive orders Jan. 16 in response to the Dec. 14 mass killing in Newton, Conn.

The *Militant* ran an article in the Jan. 14 issue titled "Both Sides of Gun Debate Target Rights of Workers," which explained that proposals put forward by capitalist politicians and the media—from the "left" and "right"—were aimed against the working class.

Seizing on public outrage, these proposals included inroads on the Second Amendment's right to bear arms, more cops with greater powers, armed vigilantes and posses, restrictions and greater lockup of those deemed mentally ill, restrictions on movie and game content, and increased spying under the guise of predicting and preempting mass-murder outbursts.

Riding a wave of calls for tighter government restrictions on gun sales, led by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and liberal forces, Obama announced he would bypass the nuisance of congressional debate and vote-taking by issuing the first new laws by executive decree. The move is one of many that are part of a trend toward strengthening powers of the

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Farmworkers in S. Africa strike again over pay

BY SETH GALINSKY

Tens of thousands of farmworkers in South Africa's Western Cape went on strike Jan. 9, for the third time in two months, to demand that the minimum wage be doubled to 150 rand a day ($17.25).

The South African press has worked overtime to violence-bait the farmworkers, playing up the torching of a journalist's car on the first day of the strike and attempts to block the main highway through the region. Police dispersed strikers using stun grenades, water cannons, and rubber bullets. More than 167 farmworkers

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Trucker: 'Militant' articles helped motivate us during fight for union

BY LOUIS MARTIN

"Corporate newspapers are not the best way to get news. This society is about greed, short-sightedness, just making profits, not considering future generations," said Mia Duvall, 47, as she bought a subscription to the *Militant*.

Seattle supporters of the paper had knocked on her door in a working-class neighborhood of Tacoma, Wash., as part of an international effort to distribute the socialist newsweekly and books on working-class politics to working people through door-to-door sales.

"*Militant* distributors have been going door to door in areas of the city where we sold many subscriptions during the recent international campaign to expand the readership. We're also experimenting with new working-class areas as there are many here," Joanne Kuniansky wrote from Sydney, Australia.

"Last Wednesday," she added, "we went back to Redfern, a working-class suburb, with *Militant* subscriber Tim Gray, who has been selling the paper regularly. In an hour, the five of

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Seven workers injured in New York crane collapse

BY EMMA JOHNSON

NEW YORK—Seven workers were injured when a crane collapsed in the Long Island City neighborhood of Queens Jan. 9. The crane was owned by a company with a record of unsafe practices and deadly crashes.

Workers at the site said they heard cables snap before the collapse. It crashed into scaffolding and plywood on the second floor of a 25-story building under construction. Three workers were caught underneath and suffered a range of injuries, none of them life-threatening. There were some 70 workers at the site.

The crane was approved for use by the city last October. It has a 380-foot boom and jib similar to the model that collapsed and killed a worker last April at the site of a subway extension.

The Department of Buildings issued a stop work order and suspended the operator's license. "As a result of our preliminary investigation, it appears that the operator was attempting to lift a load … double the weight capacity for this particular crane," Buildings Commissioner Robert LiMandri said in a statement Jan. 10.

The crane belongs to New York Crane and Equipment Corp. The same company owned cranes that crashed at two different sites on Manhattan's East Side in March and May 2008, killing nine and injuring two dozen people.

The owner of New York Crane, James Lomma, was charged with two counts of manslaughter, two counts of criminally negligent homicide and one count each of assault and reckless endangerment for the May 2008 collapse, which killed Donald Leo, 30, and Ramadan Kurtaj, 27.

In April last year Lomma was cleared of all charges. His defense argued that operator Leo was trying to lift too heavy a load and that's why the cable snapped. After the acquittal Leo's family said that it gave Lomma a "license to kill."

New York Crane is one of the biggest operators in the Northeast with some 300 cranes. The company has not responded to requests for comment.

Bangladesh protest: 'Arrest garment boss for fire deaths'



Courtesy National Garment Workers Federation

Garment workers form a human chain outside the National Press Club in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Jan. 9 demanding the arrest of the owner of Tazreen Fashions Ltd. In a fire Nov. 24 in its Ashulia factory more than 120 workers were killed.

"A couple hundred workers took part in protests Jan. 9 and 10," said Kalpona Akter by phone from Dhaka. Akter is executive director of the Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity, one of several organizations participating in the actions.

"Three middle managers were arrested right after the fire and three more just a few days ago," she said. "But the owner has still not been apprehended."

Protesters also demanded compensation to each of the families of the killed workers, safe workplaces and trade union rights in the garment plants.

—EMMA JOHNSON

Actions across Canada protest gov't attacks on Aboriginal rights

BY ANNETTE KOURI AND KATY LEROUGETEL

CORNWALL, Ontario—Some 500 people blocked the International Bridge here linking Canada and the U.S. through Akwesasne First Nation territory Jan. 5.

The action was one of many across Canada to protest recently adopted federal Bill C-45 and other laws, which give Ottawa increased powers to dispose of Native reserve land, and weaken environmental protection for thousands of waterways.

Half of Canada's 1.2 million Aboriginal population—who identify themselves as North American Indian, Métis or Inuit—live in rural areas.

Protesters voiced support for Northern Ontario First Nation Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence, who has been on a hunger strike since Dec. 11, demanding that Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Gov. Gen. David Johnston meet with her to discuss Aboriginal demands.

Marchers included Mohawk ironworkers and youth, and the president of the Cornwall and District Labour Council.

"Canada now has seven different laws [in preparation] that attack our rights," Akwesasne resident Dana Leigh told the marchers. "This is only the beginning."

Since early December actions for Aboriginal rights under the banner "Idle No More" have been organized across Canada, including a 13-day blockade of a rail line in southwestern Ontario.

Harper and Johnston each met with a delegation of Aboriginal leaders Jan. 11. In an attempt to undermine support for indigenous peoples' mobilizations, Ottawa Jan. 7 released results of a federally commissioned audit of the Attawapiskat nation's finances, reporting inadequate accounting for the spending of millions of dollars of federal funding. Bad housing conditions brought Attawapiskat to national attention in 2011.

Brad West, communications staffer for United Steelworkers District 3, told the *Militant* about affirmative action programs the union participates in in Western Canada. "So far over 400 Aboriginals have been hired in the mines through this program, coming from 150 different First Nations. One-third are women," he said.

THE MILITANT

Capitalist crisis hits workers worldwide

The worldwide capitalist economic crisis drives bosses and their government to deepen attacks on the working class. The 'Militant' covers the unfolding social consequences and workers efforts to resist attacks by the bosses, landlords and their government from Spain to the U.S.



Reuters/Albert Gea

Woman on balcony of her home in Badalona, Spain, with supporters gathering outside to block her threatened eviction.

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

‘Militant’ helped motivate

Continued from front page

us sold four subscriptions, eight single copies and one *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*.”

The title is one of four offered at reduced prices with a subscription. (See ad below.)

“After selling 233 subscriptions and 42 books in the recent campaign,” Alyson Kennedy wrote from Chicago, “*Militant* supporters here are contacting subscribers and knocking on new doors.

“Three teams going door to door in Southeast Chicago and Bridgeport sold three subscriptions, each with a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes,” Kennedy reported. Supporters are also campaigning for John Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress in a special election in the 2nd C.D.

“Out of the 17 coworkers who subscribed to the *Militant* during the last drive, three decided to get their subscription hand-delivered at work,” Laura Anderson in Chicago wrote. She works at Electro Motive Diesel in LaGrange, Ill., and is a member of the United Auto Workers.

“One of these coworkers is Ken, a welder,” she said. “After receiving the recent issue discussing the weak state of our unions, he wanted to learn more about how the labor officialdom did not take on the Jim Crow South and why unions should take up social struggles today.” (See article “Right-to-Work Laws Can’t Stop Fight Ahead to Build Unions” in Dec. 31 issue.)

“In New York, 14 *Militant* supporters participated in door-to-door sales this past Sunday in six working-class neighborhoods,” Deborah Liatos reported. “Sunday is the main day supporters here can go out together because of work schedules. Seven teams went out, selling nine subscriptions, 20 single copies and three books offered at reduced prices.”

Jacqueline Warren in the Far Rockaway section of Queens got one of the books. She subscribed to the paper during the fall. Two *Militant* supporters went back to her place as they were going door to door in the area.

“I really look forward to getting the paper every week and read it cover to cover,” she said.

Supporters in Seattle went twice last week to the Teamsters Local 177 picket line at United Natural Foods Inc. in Auburn, Wash. Workers there have been on strike for a month, demanding the reinstatement of 72 of them who were fired by the company.

Striker Maria Domingo-Ojeda, 43, an order picker for six years, got a subscription following a discussion on the importance for working people of the fight for immigrant rights. “My whole family marches every May Day for immigrant rights,” she said.

John Naubert reports that so far UNFI strikers have bought 10 subscriptions and three books.

“The *Militant* helped us. Reports on the resistance going on around the world motivated us,” said Roger Ruiz as he signed up for a six-month renewal at a plant-gate sale at the Port of Los Angeles.

Ruiz is a port trucker at Toll Group. Workers there won a big victory last year when they beat back yearslong efforts by the company to deny them representation by Teamsters Local 848.

NY meeting demands ‘Free Oscar López Rivera!’



Marina Ortiz/VirtualBoricua.org

NEW YORK—Nearly 100 people attended a Jan. 10 meeting here at the union headquarters of 1199SEIU to demand freedom for Oscar López Rivera and celebrate the upcoming publication in English of López’s book *Between Resistance and Torture*. The Puerto Rican independence fighter, who recently turned 70, has been imprisoned in the U.S. for more than 31 years, 12 of them in solitary confinement. The parole board last year turned down his request for release.

Prior to his arrest in 1981 and subsequent conviction on charges of “seditious conspiracy,” López was well known in the Puerto Rican community in Chicago. He helped organize the Committee to Free the Five Puerto Rican Nationalists, who had been jailed in 1954 for carrying out an armed pro-independence demonstration in the U.S. Congress, and was active in other social struggles.

Maria Kercado, vice president of 1199SEIU, chaired the meeting. José López Rivera (inset, standing), executive director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Chicago and Oscar’s brother, was the featured speaker.

José López visited Cuba for the first time last November and said he was struck by the strong support there for the Puerto Rican independence struggle and fight to free Puerto Rican political prisoners.

“I would be remiss if I did not also call tonight for freedom for the Cuban Five,” he said to loud applause, referring to the five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in the United States since 1998. (See box on this page below.)

—SETH GALINSKY

“This past week, two workers involved in a fight with American Crystal Sugar mailed in renewals,” wrote Frank Forrestal from Minneapolis.

The company locked out 1,300 employees in August 2011 at plants in Minnesota, North Dakota and Iowa in a drive to impose a concession contract, which workers since have voted down four times.

Brad Nelson sent in one of the renewals, along with a holiday card thanking the *Militant* for sticking with their struggle.

“As we stand now,” Forrestal said, “we have 29 readers of the paper in the Red River Valley,” where the fight is centered.

You can join the effort to expand the readership of the paper. Order a bundle and subscription blanks at themilitant@mac.com or (212) 244-2899.

“*Militant* supporters here discussed how we all just get caught up in selling and talking, forgetting to write down quotes or take pictures. We really will work to get this done,” Joanne Kuniansky commented in her note.

This is a good New Year’s resolution to emulate.

Continue sending reports, comments and photos by Monday 9 a.m. EST.

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See distributors on page 10

Who are the Cuban Five

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the activities of Cuban-American counterrevolutionary groups operating in southern Florida. These paramilitary outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other deadly attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with “conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information.”

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shootdown of two aircraft flown by the counterrevolutionary group Brothers to the Rescue that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years.

All but René González remain in prison. Since October 2011 he has been serving a three-year “supervised release.” On the pretext of his dual citizenship, his request to return to Cuba has been denied. His wife, Olga Salanueva, is barred from entering the United States, as is Adriana Pérez, the wife of Hernández.

Wash. Teamsters vote down United Natural Foods 'offer'

Striker: 'They're trying to break the union'

BY EDWIN FRUIT

AUBURN, Wash.—In a 104-26 vote, members of Teamsters Local 117 rejected the company's latest contract offer to end the strike against United Natural Foods Inc., a distributor of organic foods to grocery stores here.

The previous agreement expired Feb. 29, 2012. An extension ended last August.

In face of the company's refusal to negotiate a contract, the workers went on strike for three days in December and then return to work in an offer of good faith bargaining. The company responded by firing 72 union members, prompting the union to resume its strike.

In a Jan. 11 media announcement, United Natural Foods spokeswoman Lisa Madsen said the company was disappointed workers rejected its offer. "After a bargaining session with the union last week and after several discussions with the union's leadership leading up to today's vote, UNFI was optimistic a contract would be ratified," she said.

The bosses' conditions were unacceptable to the overwhelming majority of the workers, union organizer Brenda Wiest said in a phone interview. "The company refused to bring back all of the fired workers. It also asked the union to withdraw all unfair labor practice charges as well as all grievances currently under review. They also asked us to agree to a termination of one of the union members who the company claimed had committed misconduct on the picket line."

"In addition," Wiest said, "they asked us to agree not to discipline any of our members who had crossed the picket line."

"I was one of the 72 who was not on the list to return," Berta Faaui told the *Militant*. "I appreciate it that those not on the list agreed to support their brothers and sisters until we all got our jobs back."

Jeremy Ray said the bosses wanted to eliminate the 10 percent cap on medical insurance, which was in the expired contract. "They want to be able to raise the amount we pay any time they feel like it," he said.

"The company said it would take back all of the fired workers except for 15 of us, and that they could get back in three months," said Ray. "We can't accept that."

"They're trying to break the union," said Tyrone Elliott. "We do all the work, but we don't reap any of the fruits of the profits they make."

Picket lines are up 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Donations for the strikers can be made at the Teamsters 117 website: www.teamsters117.org. Go to the "hardship fund" link.

A 10 a.m. community meeting to support the strike has been called for Jan. 19 at the Teamsters hall in Tukwila.



Militant/John Naubert

Teamsters on strike against United Natural Foods picket plant in Auburn, Wash., Jan. 11.

NY school bus workers strike to secure jobs

Continued from front page

in the Bronx. "Otherwise if the company got sold, we could lose everything—our seniority, all our years of work. Once they get us, they can go after other workers."

The Employee Protection Provisions require any bus company that wins a new contract with the city to hire employees from companies that lose their contracts in order of seniority, at the same rate of pay and with pension benefits intact.

The union won the provisions, which some workers call the master list, after a 13-week strike in 1979. Since then, the city has tried numerous times to target workers' job security. In 1995 Mayor Rudolph Giuliani made clear he wanted to break the lifetime job guarantees for school bus drivers and campaigned for the school board to take on the union.

The New York Department of Education contracts school bus service to private companies. Since the unions' strike victory in 1979, contract bids have required company bosses to live by the EPP.

Opponents of the workers argue that since they don't work for the city, they can't go on strike. Bloomberg and his media boosters claim a state Appeals Court ruling last year bars the city from continuing to include EPP in its bids.

The union says the ruling did not cover the routes the city is putting up for bid.

"For me, having the master list made all the difference," said Cathy Roberti, a driver for six years, as she walked the picket line with some 50 other workers at the bus barn at Hermany Avenue in the Bronx.

"I worked for one company for six years," she explained. "Last April, they lost my run. I was laid off until October. Then my name came to the top of the seniority list and I started work here. I kept the same pay, my seniority, my benefits. Without the master pick, it's like you'd never have a permanent job."

"They are just trying to get rid of the master pick so they can keep starting new people at minimum wage," Julie Sanchez added. She has worked as a matron for 13 years. Her job is to escort the kids and guarantee their safety.

More than 150,000 public and parochial school students get yellow bus service daily. City officials and the capitalist media have pinned blame on the unionists for inconveniences that many parents will face during the dispute and play up the 54,000 school bus riders who are disabled with special needs.

"The union drivers are striking against our children, plain and simple," schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott said, according to the *Wall Street Journal* Jan 16. The *New York Post* editorial the same day smeared the strike as mafia-related, arguing the workers' fight to protect their jobs was "but another form of extortion."

In another edit the day before, the *Post* race-baited the strike, arguing that the union and its supporters "continually work against the best interests of students of color."

On the morning the strike started, Bloomberg said on Fox 5 TV that the city won't back down. "There's only a certain amount of money. I'm not going to move money away from police and worry about safety in the streets to pay bus drivers."

In an article in *New York Sun* Jan. 14, Ira Stoll hailed Bloomberg as another Scott Walker, the Wisconsin governor who took on the public employees' unions in that state.

"He tries to make it sound like we're making so much money," said Daniel Colón, a driver for 11 years, speaking with the *Militant* outside the bus barn at Hunts Point in the Bronx. "We're guaranteed pay for 40 hours a week. But when we do field trips [to a museum or a recreation center], we can work 10 hours a day. We still just get paid for eight."

Workers on the picket lines say the city is going after the 40-hour week and want more part-time workers. "They want to have people work just four hours a day," Julie Sanchez said.

The school bus companies in a statement called the strike unlawful and said they will immediately file unfair labor practice charges and civil lawsuits.

"We have begun hiring replacement workers, but getting drivers certified is a lengthy process. We don't have anybody for tomorrow," Carolyn Daly, spokesperson for the New York City Bus Company Coalition, told the *Wall Street Journal* Jan. 15.

Dan Fein, Deborah Liatos, Sara Lobman and Lea Sherman contributed to this article.



Militant/Sara Lobman

Members of ATU Local 1181 on picket line at bus barn at Hermany Ave. in Bronx Jan. 16.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

FLORIDA

Miami

U.S. and France Out of Africa! Speaker: Tom Baumann, Socialist Workers Party. Thurs., Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m. *7100 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 306A. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.*

—CALENDAR—

CANADA

Montreal

Humor From My Pen, exhibition of cartoons by Gerardo Hernández, one of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and jailed in the U.S. for more than 14 years. Speakers: Alain González, Cuban consulate; Arnold August, Fabio Di Celmo Committee for the Cuban Five. Thurs., Jan. 24, 6:30 p.m. *1601 De Lorimier, basement room A & B. Tel.: (514) 598-2005. Sponsor: Montreal Metropolitan Council, Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN).*

LA port drivers: 'Union victory was about respect'

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

WILMINGTON, Calif.—"To win a contract from such a powerful company sets an example," said Orlando Ayala, a port trucker who was part of a two-year fight for a union contract at Toll Group. "The victory is for us, most of us are immigrants. I am proud of that, but it is also for everybody who supported us and for all port workers."

In a 54-0 vote Dec. 30, port truckers, members of Teamsters Local 848, ratified an agreement with Toll Group, an Australia-based shipping and warehousing company that handles brand-name fashion imports at the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports.

Contract provisions include: a more than $6 increase in hourly wages plus 50 cents an hour yearly raise during the three-year contract; overtime pay after 40 hours (trucking companies are exempt from U.S. overtime law and an average workweek is about 60 hours); lower health care costs with no change in coverage; paid holidays, sick days, personal days and vacation time; and enrollment in the Teamsters Western Conference Pension Trust Fund. The provisions go into effect immediately.

"To me, it's not about the money, it's about respect," said Roger Ruiz, a driver with three years at Toll and over 30 years' trucking.

The union drive here was spurred in part by poor working conditions in the yard—portable toilets instead of bathrooms, no separate toilets for women, no place to eat lunch, and no water to wash up. "Those days are over, now and forever, because we wouldn't give up—we fought for our rights," Ruiz said.

According to Teamsters Local 848, the last new contract by port truckers in the U.S. was won in the late 1980s. With the deregulation of the trucking industry that decade, a majority of trucking companies classified their employees as contractors or owner-operators as a way to lower their labor costs and get workers to bear the burden of paying for fuel, repairs and wait time. In addition, the bosses say these workers are not entitled to union membership.

Most of the drivers at the port here are also labeled "independent" operators. But at Toll Group drivers are hired by the company directly. "Our victory is historic," said Toll driver Luis Alay. "It will inspire other drivers to go union, and it opens the door for them to do so."

"When we first initiated the fight two years ago we were two or three people, but we made connections with each other and little by little we built a union," said Remberto Martinez, a Toll driver and long-time port trucker.



Tom Politeo

Toll Group workers celebrate in front of Wilmington, Calif., plant gate last April after Teamsters won union recognition vote. Workers won first union contract in December.

"With every fight that is a win, there are also losses. The employer can be counted on to do their part—to divide and repress the workers, to make you worry, 'if I do this will I still be able to feed my family.' But you win when you make each fight your own."

The union drive reached out and won support from the Transport Workers Union of Australia, which represents 12,000 Toll Group workers there. Last March, four Australian TWU members visited Los Angeles on a fact-finding and solidarity trip.

Teamster delegations also went to Australia in October 2011 and again in 2012 to protest together with the TWU at the annual stockholders' meeting of Toll Group in Melbourne.

"All Toll workers, no matter where they are in the world or what their accent is, should have the same workplace standards and conditions," said Sydney-based Toll Group worker Steve Newton, in an article posted to the TWU Australia website.

"Every trucker here in Australia is delighted that our brothers and sisters in Los Angeles will finally have a fair go," Newton said.

Cellphone workers in Israel win union recognition

BY SETH GALINSKY

Workers at Pelephone, one of the three largest cellphone companies in Israel, won union recognition Jan. 6 after a monthlong strike.

"This is a breakthrough," Haim Sahar, a worker in the sales department and a leader of the Histadrut union organizing drive, said in a phone interview from near Tel Aviv. "This is the first union at a cellphone company. Workers at other cellphone companies want us to help them get a union." The Histadrut General Federation of Labor is the largest union federation in Israel.

"We started out with 300 strikers on the first day, by the end we were 1,000 across the country," Sahar said.

According to Israeli law, once one-third of the workers at a company sign, the owners must recognize the union, but Pelephone refused. "The company had said there were 4,500 workers, but now they admit there are 3,835 employees. So with our 1,905 signatures we are half."

During the strike, the company threatened to shut down the Umm al-Fahm call center where 100 percent were on strike. Workers there are Palestinian citizens of Israel. "The company now acts like they never made the threat" of closure, Sahar said.

The strikers also won a legal victory when the National Labor Court ruled Jan. 2 that employers do not have the right to interfere in organizing drives. The Histadrut had filed suit in response to complaints that Pelephone management was harassing union supporters.

When strikers went back to work, "everyone was laughing and hugging," Sahar said. "We are stronger now." Negotiations on a contract are scheduled to begin Jan. 20.

The Changing Face of U.S Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

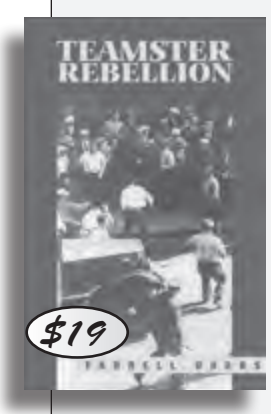
by Jack Barnes



A handbook about building the party working people need for coming class battles through which they will revolutionize themselves, their unions and all society.

Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs



The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as told by a central leader.

PathfinderPress.com

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

January 29, 1988

Washington and the military rulers of South Korea are using the Olympic Games, scheduled to be held this summer in Seoul, as part of an aggressive campaign to isolate the regime in North Korea. In 1981, the International Olympic Committee selected the South Korean capital as the site for the 1988 games. This was a provocative move, directed particularly at the government of North Korea.

Korea has been a divided country since the end of World War II, when Japanese colonial rule collapsed and U.S. military forces occupied the southern part of the country. After military conflict began in 1950, the U.S. government launched a full-scale war to support the capitalist regime in the south and reestablish capitalist rule in the north. Despite bombing raids that devastated the entire country the U.S. aggression failed.

THE Mmilitant

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

January 28, 1963

As East Coast longshoremen go back to work after a monthlong strike they have temporarily staved off an employer offensive against the size of their work gangs and won a 24-cents-an hour wage increase. But on the basic problem of job security no progress was made. This is an acute problem because there are more longshoremen than jobs—a situation which is steadily getting worse.

The strike began over demands by the New York Shipping Association, representing firms from Maine to Virginia, for a reduction of work gangs from 20 to 17 men and other work-rule changes connected with machines replacing men.

Under the weak "seniority" system prevailing on the East Coast and with the already adverse man-job ratio in the industry, such changes would cut off thousands of longshoremen from a livelihood and impoverish others.

SOCIALIST APPEAL

January 29, 1938

There has been much talk about the current economic decline being a temporary recession. If this is indeed a recession, it is deeper than any depression America has had during the present generation, excepting only the depression of 1929-1933. It is also the best evidence of the bankruptcy and decline of American capitalism.

The severity of the current decline can best be seen by comparing it with that of 1929. Within the past four months, the *New York Times* index of business activity has fallen twenty-seven points. This drop is far worse than the one that followed the stock market crash of 1929, when it took five months for business activity to drop only one-third so far. The ten-point drop of 1929 was followed by a slight upward movement which broke the steepness of decline. The present fall is straight down, without the slightest sign of any pause.

S. Africa farmworkers

Continued from front page

were arrested and charged with "public violence" in the first week of the strike.

But most of the nearly dozen farmworkers, union officials, and farmworker organizers who spoke to the *Militant* by phone from all over the Western Cape put the blame for the violence on the cops and capitalist farmers.

"The police act like mad dogs," farmworker Sera, 40, said in a phone interview from De Doorns, where some of the more violent clashes have taken place. "They shoot rubber bullets with no warning. They say, 'I am not here to talk. I am here to shoot.' They have the guns. We just have stones." Sera, who asked that the *Militant* not use her real name, works on a grape farm that employs about 80 workers.

The government of the Western Cape, which is led by the Democratic Alliance, the African National Congress' main bourgeois competitor, called on the ANC-led national government to intervene to end the strike.

ANC Western Cape leader Marius Fransman urged unions to suspend the action Jan. 11, claiming that "unruly elements" were "hijacking the present strike."

"It is difficult to call off a strike when we have nothing to present to the workers," Nosey Pieterse, general secretary of the Bawsi Agricultural Workers Union, one of several unions that have joined together to negotiate for the striking workers, told the *Militant* while traveling between towns in the Western Cape. "They talk about the farmworkers intimidating others who are trying to go to work, but no one talks about the intimidation by the farmers, how they have threatened workers with dismissals and evictions of those that live on the farms."

Porchia Adams, spokesperson for Agri Wes-Cape, the main organization of capitalist farmers, told the *Militant* Jan. 15 that farm owners "where unions are represented are most willing to negotiate with union representatives."

But Pieterse said this is not true. "Individual farmers who talk to us have been threatened physically, and have been advised to refrain from negotiations with us," he said.

"The head of Agri Wes threatened the farmers will mechanize or move their operations to other African countries if workers keep fighting for higher wages," said Karel Swartz, assistant general secretary of the Commercial, Stevedoring, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union (CSAAWU), after participating in a protest in Robertson. "It is statements like these that fuel violence."

A December report by the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy, a "think tank" at the University of Pretoria, claimed that if wages were increased by more than 20 rand a day many farmers would go under. But the report admitted that even with a minimum wage of 150 rand most workers' households would not be able to "provide the nutrition that is needed."

Permanent and seasonal workers

Capitalist farmers have tried to divide permanent workers from seasonal workers to undermine the strike. Many permanent workers live on the farms, while seasonal workers—including native South Africans and immigrant workers from Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Lesotho—usually live in nearby towns. Immigrants especially are often hired through labor brokers who take a cut of their wages.

"I get 83 rand a day," said Hernanus Shiren, 28, a seasonal worker who picks grapes in the Robertson area. "The owner has seven farms. He has his own winery. He cannot claim he will go bankrupt."

"Highly productive workers can easily earn more than 150 rand during peak harvest periods," said Adams, speaking for the farm owners' group Agri Wes-Cape.

"That's modern-day slavery," said Ryno Filander, 29, a worker at the Wonderfontein wine grape farm near Robertson and a member of CSAAWU. Only some crops and jobs are paid piece rate, he said, and then only during harvest season. "What about the rest of the year?"

At Wonderfontein, Filander said, some permanent workers "only get 81 rand a day." Filander drives a tractor and is paid 109 rand.

"I live on the farm," he said. "Although I don't pay rent, there's no toilet and I pay 50 rand for electricity every two weeks. After last year's strike the farmer penalized us by refusing to pay the usual Christmas bonuses."

"Last November was the first time in South African history that farmworkers went on strike," said Simon Jacobs, 53, a permanent worker at a farm that grows grapes, apricots and peaches. Mechanization of the farms is nothing new, he said. "About 12 years back they started mechanizing the vineyards."



Associated Press

Farmworkers at protest Jan. 9 in Cape Town, South Africa. Thousands participated in third strike in two months for wage increase, facing police violence and farmers' refusal to negotiate.

Last year's strike by tens of thousands of platinum, gold, chrome and coal miners "opened our eyes," Jacobs said. "We saw that we must get up for our rights."

Need for land reform

Some farmworkers and union activists say the conflict poses the need for land reform. The overwhelming majority of the capitalist farmers in the Western Cape benefited under the white supremacist apartheid system. A few thousand black Africans got land after 1994, but most own smaller farms.

"The richest farmers own 80 percent of the land in the Western Cape," said Jacobs. "Why don't they give the farmworkers 15 to 20 percent? They should give us land so we can grow crops too."

Adams said that no more than 70 percent of the Western Cape's 108,000 seasonal workers are on strike, and that less than 20 percent of the 85,000 permanent workers have joined.

"The farmers want to create the impression that the strike is not successful," said John Michels, chairperson of the Grabouw Elgin Civic Organisation. "How can what they say be true when 80 percent of the people who work on the farms are staying in town and not going to work?"

Some individual farmers have said they are willing to negotiate, said Sandile Keni, an organizer for the Food and Allied Workers Union. "We have a meeting set up with a group of them for Jan. 17."

French troops land in Mali, launch offensive

Continued from front page

Malian city of Gao, and along border areas with Mauritania and Algeria.

Paris has flown 400 French troops into Bamako, the capital city, and has another 150 special forces operating out of Mopti, a port city in the central part of the country. The French government said it plans to deploy 2,500 soldiers.

Among those being deployed are troops from the French Foreign Legion—paramilitary soldiers the majority of whom are foreign nationals who serve for the pay and a chance to gain French citizenship.

With economic and mining interests in the region, the French rulers have troops available for rapid deployment in the nearby countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon and Senegal.



Map of Mali, in white, and surrounding countries.

Ground fighting has intensified as Islamist forces seized from the Malian army control of the town of Diabaly, 30 miles within government-held territory near the Mauritania border, three days after the French airstrikes began.

Military commander in chief Adm. Edouard Guillaud announced that French ground operations began Jan. 15, the *Financial Times* reported.

This operation will last "as long as necessary," French President François Hollande told the media.

"Senior US and British officials expressed concern," the *Financial Times* wrote Jan. 16, "that France's military deployment in Mali could be challenged by jihadist fighters."

Paris has asked Washington for military assistance, including aircraft that could be used to refuel French fighter planes in the air, logistical support and reconnaissance.

"The Obama administration moved [Jan. 13] toward approving a limited show of support for France's military campaign in Mali," reported the *Journal*, "readying surveillance drones and other air-intelligence assets for possible deployment within days."

"Small numbers of U.S. troops might be sent to Mali and surrounding countries," unnamed Defense officials told the *Los Angeles Times,* but "they would be limited to a support role." Paris has asked Washington for help in moving another 500 to 600 French troops and equipment into Mali and the surrounding region, the paper reported.

British Prime Minister David Cameron has agreed to send two transport aircraft to help move French equipment into the region.

In December the U.N. Security Council had voted to authorize military action against Islamist groups in northern Mali. The Economic Community of West African States then agreed to send 3,300 troops there, but ground operations were not scheduled to begin until September. Now these forces are being rapidly assembled.

On Jan. 12 the president of the Economic Community of West African States commission, Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo, said the group had authorized an immediate deployment of troops, according to news reports.

Nigeria has already sent several hundred troops to Mali's capital. The governments of Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal have also announced plans to send 500 soldiers, reported Reuters. The government of Algeria is allowing French combat aircraft to fly through its airspace to bomb targets in Mali.

Mali's interim President Dioncounda Traoré declared a state of emergency across the country Jan. 11.

According to the U.N., 30,000 people have fled the fighting over the past week, in addition to more than 200,000 displaced over the past year.

‘Cuba’s greatest internationalist feat ever’

Introduction to ‘Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own’

Below is the introduction by Mary-Alice Waters to *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own*.

The new book by Pathfinder Press features speeches by Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro and Nelson Mandela; interviews with Cuban generals Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, Moisés Sío Wong and Luis Alfonso Zayas; accounts by Cuban revolutionaries Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González and René González; and a report by Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez.

Waters, a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, is the editor of the book.

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Cuban and Angolan soldiers on captured South African tank, March 1988, at Cuito Cuanavale, southern Angola. Invading forces of white supremacist regime were dealt decisive defeat there that opened door to independence of Namibia and overthrow of apartheid a few years later.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Cuban internationalists have made a contribution to African independence, freedom, and justice, unparalleled for its principled and selfless character.

NELSON MANDELA
Matanzas, Cuba, July 1991

When we face new and unexpected challenges 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.

RAÚL CASTRO
Havana, Cuba, May 1991

Between 1975 and 1991, some 425,000 Cubans volunteered for duty in Angola in response to requests from the government of that country, which had just wrested freedom from Portugal after nearly five centuries of brutal exploitation and colonial domination. The mission: helping to defend Angola against what stretched into thirteen years of military aggression, including two major invasions, by the armed forces of the apartheid regime of South Africa and its African and imperialist allies.

The stakes were enormous.

In April 1974 the fifty-year-old, deeply decayed fascist dictatorship in Portugal was overthrown by a military coup that unleashed a powerful revolutionary upsurge of Portuguese workers and farmers. The confidence of Europe’s capitalist rulers was shaken.

In April 1975 US imperialism was literally driven out of Indochina. The whole world watched—in joy or horror, depending on your class perspective—as helicopters scrambled to rescue thousands of desperate American officials and their Vietnamese lackeys from the rooftop of Washington’s embassy in what had just become Ho Chi Minh City.

Anti-imperialist struggles of a more and more popular character were deepening in Iran, Grenada, Nicaragua, and elsewhere in Central America.

Not losing control of southern Africa was rising in the priorities of the imperialist powers. For years they had been maneuvering to salvage what they could as the Portuguese empire crumbled. With Angolan independence day approaching in November 1975, they accelerated their efforts to install what they hoped would be a compliant puppet regime in the largest and richest of Portugal’s former African territories. For Pretoria—backhandedly encouraged and supplied by Washington—the future of all southern Africa, including the survival of the apartheid regime itself, was on the table.

The first major invasion of Angola by South African troops began in October 1975 as armored columns crossed the border from their de facto colony of South-West Africa (Namibia) and swept north. Simultaneously a military offensive moved south from Zaire (Congo). The pro-imperialist Mobutu dictatorship there hoped to annex the oil-rich Angolan province of Cabinda and take whatever other territory they could. The objective was to conquer Luanda, the capital city, before November 11 to prevent the installation of a government headed by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the strongest of the independence movements, with the broadest popular base.

“Those not willing to fight for the freedom of others will never be able to fight for their own.”
—FIDEL CASTRO, JULY 1976

It was only the eleventh-hour intervention of some six hundred fifty Cuban internationalist volunteers, responding to the urgent request of Angola’s provisional government for aid, that prevented the South African objectives from being realized. Less than five months later, with thirty-six thousand Cuban volunteers by then on the ground, the military forces of both the South African apartheid regime and the Zairean dictatorship had been driven out of Angola. But they had not given up.

More than a decade of what was euphemistically known as “low intensity warfare” against the Angolan regime ensued. Then, in late 1987, South African troops began their second major invasion, which ended with the crushing defeat of Pretoria’s military forces in March 1988 in the now-famous battle of Cuito Cuanavale.

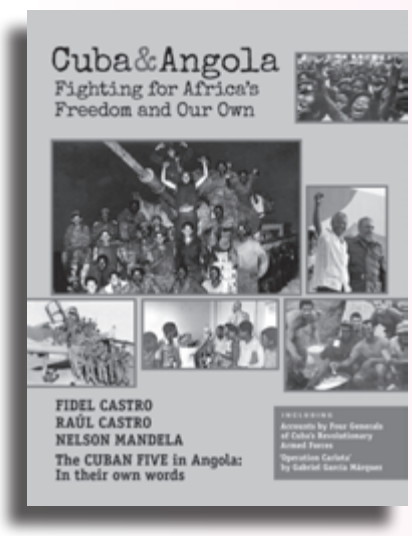
As South African anti-apartheid struggle leader Nelson Mandela told the world three years later, “Cuito Cuanavale was a milestone in the history of the struggle for southern African liberation! . . . A turning point in the struggle to free the continent and our country from the scourge of apartheid!”

That decisive victory not only secured the sovereignty of Angola. It also allowed the people of Namibia to achieve their independence from South African apartheid rule and gave a powerful boost to the rising mass revolutionary struggle against white supremacist rule in South

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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

$12 New from Pathfinder Press

Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own





"The struggle by the patriots of Guinea-Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique led Portuguese colonialism to a crisis," said Cuban President Fidel Castro in September 1975. *Right,* crowds in Lisbon, April 1974, celebrate overthrow of dictatorship, in power for more than 45 years. By November, all of Portuguese colonies in Africa had won independence. *Below,* celebrating independence in Luanda, Angola, November 1975.

Continued from page 7

Africa itself. Less than two years after the victory at Cuito Cuanavale, Nelson Mandela, imprisoned for more than twenty-seven years, was free. Four years later the apartheid regime was no more, and Nelson Mandela was president of South Africa.

In the pages that follow, this history is told by those who lived it and made it.

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The contribution made by hundreds of thousands of Cuban internationalists, military and civilian alike, to the independence struggles in southern Africa was not a "favor" to others, however. The Cuban Revolution, the strength of its proletarian core, was also at stake. As Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces Raúl Castro told the Cuban people in May 1991 as he welcomed home the last contingent of volunteers, "If our people know themselves better, if all of us know much better what we are capable of achieving—veterans as well as our young people, the new generations—that, too, is thanks to Angola!"

Among the "new generations" whose lives were transformed as they fought side by side with the people of Angola were three young Cubans, still in their twenties, whose names are today known around the world: Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, and René González. They are three of the five Cubans who, a few years after their experiences in Angola, volunteered for another internationalist assignment, this time in the United States. Their mission: monitoring the activities of Cuban American counterrevolutionary organizations operating with impunity from bases in the US, groups that organize to carry out violent actions against supporters of the revolution inside Cuba, the US, Puerto Rico, and elsewhere, and whose actions always contain a threat of precipitating a confrontation between Washington and Cuba. Arrested by the FBI in 1998, and framed up on more than thirty charges, the Cuban Five have been imprisoned in the US for more than fourteen years.

As Fernando González writes in the account published in these pages, the lessons he learned in Angola are ones he has continued to draw on ever since, "including here, withstanding conditions of prolonged imprisonment."

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The final and decisive battles waged in 1988 in Angola by more than fifty thousand Cuban volunteers coincided with, and in turn advanced, what was known in Cuba as the rectification process, one of the most important chapters in the history of the revolution.

In April 1986, speaking on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the victory at Playa Girón that crushed the US-organized invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, Cuban president Fidel Castro announced the leadership's decision to initiate a profound correction in the course of the revolution. He likened it to a ship altering its compass headings in order to sail on a different path. For more than a decade, as policies associated with an Economic Planning and Management System copied from the Soviet Union had been introduced, proletarian initiatives and collective efforts by Cuba's workers and small farmers had become progressively weaker.

Fidel summed up the error with great insight many years later in November 2005 when he told an audience of young leaders of the revolution that "among the many errors we all have committed, the most important was to believe that someone knew something about socialism, or knew how to build socialism. As if it were an exact science, as well known as an electrical system conceived by those who considered themselves experts in electrical systems. When they said, 'Here is the formula,' we thought they knew."

As the rectification process unfolded, encouraging the creativity and imagination of Cuba's toilers again became the driving force of the revolution, combating the economic, social, and political weight of what had become an increasingly bloated, and relatively privileged, administrative layer in the mills, factories, ministries, offices, and mass organizations.

Wages for agricultural workers, among the lowest paid in the country, were raised by 40 percent. Special clinics, stores, restaurants, and recreational facilities established by the Ministry of the Interior for its personnel were turned over to general use by the population. Privileged access to state cars, gas rations, and special entertainment budgets were curtailed.

Volunteer full-time minibrigades involving tens of thousands of workers were established in workplaces across the country mobilizing almost overnight a workforce eager to help accomplish the most urgently needed social priorities—housing, child care centers, clinics, schools, recreational facilities, and more. Larger volunteer construction contingents—in which wages, hours, and work rules were decided and implemented by the workers themselves—took on the building of roads, dams, hospitals, airports, and other major infrastructure projects.





"For Cuito Cuanavale, a truly powerful force was b logistical caravan heading to Cuito Cuanavale, site o González, right seated, one of five Cuban revoluti *Bottom right,* Angolan and Cuban troops celebrat *left,* anatomy class at Luanda Hospital nursing sch

Volunteer labor—the centerpiece of proletarian action in the early years of the revolution, which "took refuge in defense activities" during what Fidel in 1987 called that "shameful period in the building of socialism"—was reborn "like a phoenix." As the minibrigades took on the character of a mass social movement, "The bureaucrat's view, the technocrat's view that voluntary work was neither basic nor essential" lost ground.

This was the revolutionary course advancing in Cuba as the final great battles of the Angola war were joined. It was the spirit that marked the forty thousand Cuban volunteers on the Southern Front in Angola who together with their Angolan and Namibian comrades-in-arms fought their way east and south in the opening months of 1988, building a forward airfield in seventy days as they raised the siege at Cuito Cuanavale, cleared minefields and roads, and took control of the air.

It was all over. The apartheid regime was forced to withdraw from Namibia as well as Angola and sue for peace.

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The victory represented by Cuito Cuanavale, together with the deepening proletarian course in Cuba itself, also allowed the revolution to confront and emerge strengthened from one of the bitterest moments it had faced in thirty

From Pathfinder Press



Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution
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by Mary-Alice Waters $10
From 'New International' no. 8, with articles by Che Guevara, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Carlos Tablada, Jack Barnes, Steve Clark, Mary-Alice Waters



The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free
From the pages of the 'Militant' $5 (See special offer on page 3)

Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own









Top right: Courtesy Fernando González. Bottom left: Bohemia

rought together," said Fidel Castro. "We did not give the enemy a single opportunity." *Top left,* f decisive battle in 1987-88 against invasion by South Africa's military forces. *Top right,* Fernando ionaries jailed in the U.S. since 1998, in moment of rest during his 1987-89 mission in Angola. te victory over U.S.-backed Zairean and Angolan counterrevolutionary forces, April 1976. *Bottom* ool in 1976, with Cuban teacher. More than 50,000 Cuban civilian volunteers served in Angola.

years.

In June and July 1989, evidence was uncovered by the military high command that Division General Arnaldo Ochoa, Hero of the Republic of Cuba, who headed the Angolan mission in 1987–88, had been supervising sugar sales on the black market in Angola as well as amateur trafficking in diamonds and ivory as the lives of thousands of Cuban and Angolan combatants hung in the balance at Cuito Cuanavale.

As Fidel expressed it with unflinching clarity, "At the same time that the most glorious page was being written, the most shameful one was being written, in large measure by the head of the Cuban military mission in Angola."

The *Granma* editorial announcing Ochoa's arrest pointedly made clear, however, that it was Division General Leopoldo Cintra Frías, not Ochoa, who had been given command of the Southern Front "to ensure the complete success of our troops' operations in Angola." That was where "the bulk of the Cuban personnel, tanks, artillery, antiaircraft forces, and air force units were stationed." Ochoa, the editorial noted, was "involved in other tasks for the Cuban military mission," tasks that were removed from "the course of military events."

As a widening investigation by the Cuban government soon revealed, the small-scale illegal operations in Angola were the least of Ochoa's offenses. He had also been supervising the activities of one of his aides, whom Ochoa had authorized to meet with Pablo Escobar of the Medellín drug cartel and other narcotics dealers to explore options for trafficking operations using Cuban air and sea lanes and possible cocaine laboratories in Africa. The motivation, Ochoa claimed, was a desire to raise money—big money, $4 billion was the sum he used—to buy military equipment for Angola and Cuba and speed development of a tourist industry in Cuba.

Ochoa and his subordinate were court-martialed and executed, together with two high-ranking officers of the Ministry of the Interior who, the investigation revealed, had already been engaged in their own drug-trafficking operations, in addition to facilitating Ochoa's schemes.

It was a traumatic moment in Cuba.

Division General Enrique Carreras gave eloquent voice to the popular outrage a few years later when he commented in an interview, "Imagine sullying our uniform for money, to get out of an economic bind! That's what Ochoa did. And this in an army as honorable as the Rebel Army! If we have to die of hunger we'll die of hunger, but we won't disgrace what the people have fought for so hard and so long. We won't disgrace what so many people have died for over the years. … That's why we fought for socialism—to eliminate such evils."

Extensive excerpts of the proceedings of the Military Court of Honor, the court martial testimony, and the review of the death sentences by the Council of State were published in the daily paper *Granma*, broadcast on TV and radio, and followed closely by millions of Cubans. By the end of what became known in Cuba as Case No. 1 in 1989, there was broad, though far from unanimous, agreement among Cuban working people with the justice of the sentences—and their necessity.

"Who would ever believe in the revolution again," Fidel asked, "if we did not actually apply the most severe sentences established by our legislation for crimes of this gravity?"

"Who would ever speak of rectification again?"

A July 9 meeting of the Council of State reviewed and then ratified the sentences for Ochoa and the other three. At the conclusion of his remarks, Raúl Castro reminded everyone that as the commander of the military mission in Angola, Ochoa had signed death sentences for three young Cuban soldiers who had been convicted of rape and murder of Angolan women. As minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, Raúl

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Top: Bohemia. Right: Militant/Lüko Willms

The rectification process in Cuba in late 1980s—which revived voluntary work brigades to build housing, schools, child care centers and other facilities needed by working people—drew strength from volunteer internationalist mission of Cubans serving in Angola. *Above,* rally to inaugurate child care center built by voluntary work brigades, Havana, December 1987. *Right,* voluntary minibrigade on construction project in Havana, February 1988.



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Fernando González (December 2012)

Angola taught me that the most beautiful works are accomplished by imperfect men
René González (June 2005)

V. Operation Carlota

Operation Carlota
Gabriel García Márquez (1977)

Glossary of individuals, organizations, and events

Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own

Continued from page 9

had been responsible for ratifying those orders, which he had done.

"I didn't hesitate," Raúl said, "because the decision was just. Nor will I hesitate when I sign the sentence requested by the court in these four cases considered by the Council of State. The mothers of those three young men might have asked for clemency. If we don't carry out this sentence, we will have to beg them for forgiveness."

❖

By the time the last units of internationalist volunteers returned from Angola in 1991, Cuba was already confronting the greatest political and economic crisis in its history. With the implosion of the bureaucratized regime in the Soviet Union came an abrupt loss of 85 percent of Cuba's foreign trade. As virtually all imports evaporated, agricultural and industrial production collapsed. It was "as if one day the sun didn't rise," Fidel said.

As the crisis deepened, Cuba's enemies, blindly convinced of their own myths of dwindling support for the revolution, were once again predicting (hoping for) its imminent demise. And in fact, no other government in the world could have survived such a crisis. But Cuba had never been a tropical version of what the Soviet Union had become, or the countries of Eastern Europe had always been. In class terms, it was their political and moral negation. And the confidence of Cuba's toilers in themselves and their government, "in what we are capable of achieving," to use Raúl's words, was in no small measure due to the conquests registered in the Angolan internationalist mission and the rectification process.

The fifty thousand Cubans who volunteered for duty in Angola in 1988 to assure the crushing defeat of the apartheid army in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale would have been equivalent at the time, in population terms, to the United States fielding 1.2 million troops in a theater of operations. That's just one measure of the enormity of the internationalist commitment made by the men and women of the Cuban Revolution. Yet to new generations of revolutionists and militant, thinking working people around the world, all this is virtually a hidden history.

A handful of memoirs have been published in Cuba by those who fought on one or another front during the nearly sixteen-year mission. Virtually none have been translated or published outside Cuba. Moreover, no comprehensive account yet exists, although this may change with the scheduled publication in September 2013 of *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, and Pretoria in Southern Africa, 1976–1991* by Piero Gleijeses, author of the excellent study *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–76*, which covers the opening months of the mission.

Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own aims to make a small contribution to filling the void and encouraging those who took part in what Fidel called "Cuba's greatest internationalist feat ever" to make that history known.

Readers will find its strength in the multiple perspectives it offers on many of the same events.



Militant photos: top, Margrethe Siem; inset, Mary-Alice Waters

Above, **concert in Johannesburg, March 1990, greets Nelson Mandela shortly after his release from prison. *Inset,* "Cuban internationalists have made an unparalleled contribution to African independence," said Mandela, left, at 1991 rally with Fidel Castro in Matancas, Cuba.**

Through the speeches of Fidel Castro, commander in chief of the Angola internationalist mission and historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, and those of Raúl Castro, then minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba, we are given the broadest political, strategic, and military view. Why the Cuban leadership took the decisions it did at important junctures. How these decisions were implemented and led. And the consequences for the revolution and its relations with other world powers and national liberation forces in Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere.

Nelson Mandela, the historic leader of the struggle to rid his country, his continent, and the world of the scourge of apartheid, explains the unprecedented political character of Cuba's actions in Africa, their weight and place in world history.

Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, Moisés Sío Wong, and Alfonso Zayas, four historic combatants of the struggle to overthrow the Batista dictatorship, give us the perspective of four generals of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba. Each of them was among the seasoned frontline officers, leading in different capacities on the battlefields of Angola and in Cuba.

Through the accounts of Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, and René González, we see the Angolan internationalist mission as it was lived by the then youngest generations of revolutionaries—how they were molded by that combat experience and transformed for life.

And in Gabriel García Márquez's "Operation Carlota," one of the greatest contemporary Latin American authors documents the opening of the Angola campaign and its first great victories. Through his eyes we see the impact that those events had on the fighting determination of Cuban working people—from the new beats in their music to the added bounce in their steps and broader smiles on their faces.

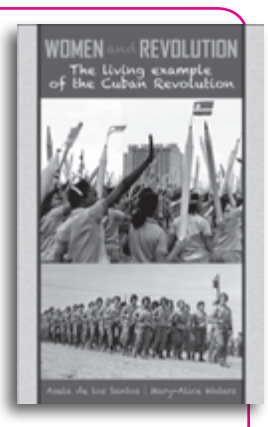
Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own is dedicated to the men and women of Cuba who wrote this epic chapter in the history of their revolution—and to those then too young to have participated, who will learn from it and from each other as they march into the class battles whose initial flares are already burning.

January 2013

New!

Women and Revolution: The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution

Asela de los Santos
Mary-Alice Waters





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

Vilma Espín
Asela de los Santos
Yolanda Ferrer

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(See ad on page 3 for special offer.)

Women and Revolution: The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution contains talks about *The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution* at the 2012 Havana International Book Fair by a panel of speakers from Cuba and the U.S. **$7**

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EDITORIAL

Solidarity with NY bus workers!

The *Militant* stands shoulder-to-shoulder with thousands of New York school bus drivers, matrons and mechanics on strike. They face a furious offensive by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, city politicians and their media cheerleaders, seeking to turn working-class sentiment against them.

At the heart of their propaganda offensive is blaming the strikers for inconveniences and hardships working-class parents may incur over the course of this fight city authorities instigated. The aim is to obfuscate on which side of this dispute our interests lie, particularly in the context of the broader offensive against the working class.

As employees of private bus companies that contract with the city—and who can be tossed aside if a different company wins the next contract by bidding cheaper—their jobs and livelihoods are dependent on the Employee Protection Provisions they won in past struggle. The EPPs require whichever boss wins the bid to hire from a master list, highest seniority first, with basic job and pay protections that are fundamental to the existence of any union.

The city government and the bosses hate it. It stands as a barrier to their austerity drive against workers, from the schools to the transit barns. They are determined to roll back past gains and are using every anti-labor slander in the book to break down working-class solidarity in order to isolate the school bus workers and deal major blows to their union.

They daydream about a "flexible" part-time workforce, on split shift—on the clock for the ride to school in the morning and come back to work at the end of classes, working near minimum wage.

The bosses' media mouthpieces have called the strikers mafia-tools, racists and extortionists. They say the workers don't care about the students they transport, only about their high-paying job trust.

City officials declare they have a court order that nullifies the EPP. But their courts don't decide. The existence of the protections will be decided the same way they were established—in the course of struggle.

Join the strikers' picket lines, bring coworkers and friends to any support rallies that are called. Get out the truth and build solidarity. The *Militant*, a socialist newsweekly published in the interests of working people, will answer the lies of the boss press.

Obama picks reflect plans for military pullback

BY JOHN STUDER

President Barack Obama sent Congress a block of nominations to fill openings in his cabinet—for Defense, the State Department and the head of the CIA—as his second term begins this month. The proposals lay the groundwork for a pullback in military involvement abroad—boots on the ground—and deeper cuts in war spending.

This shift is based on Obama's view that "U.S. interests"—the interests of the propertied rulers' in the United States to which he is beholden—can be better advanced by a combination of persuasive speeches, and whenever "necessary" killer drones and special forces assassins.

COMMENTARY

Obama nominated John Kerry, Democratic senator from Massachusetts, as secretary of state, Chuck Hagel, former Republican senator from Nebraska, as secretary of defense, and his White House counterterrorism adviser John Brennan to head the Central Intelligence Agency. Kerry and Hagel are both veterans and critics of U.S. conduct in the Vietnam War.

Brennan has helped lead the White House campaign of drone bombings and assassinations aimed at alleged terrorists, including U.S. citizens. He served in a similar capacity under the George W. Bush administration.

The three nominees fit the White House's course well. Like Obama, they are uncomfortable with Washington as the preeminent world imperialist power and use of U.S. military might, apologetic for U.S. "excesses" from Vietnam to Iraq to the Middle East and inclined toward "leading from behind."

Obama is pulling together "a new national security team deeply suspicious of the wisdom of American military interventions around the world," the *New York Times* commented Jan. 9. Washington's moves in the world will be characterized by "caution, covert action and a modest American military footprint around the world," specializing in "drones, cyberattacks and Special Operations forces."

"We've got to understand great-power limitations," Hagel told *Foreign Policy* magazine in May 2012, commenting on U.S. policy in Syria. "You work through the multilateral institutions that are available, the U.N., the Arab League. The last thing you want is an American-led or Western-led invasion into Syria."

Hagel has called the war budget "bloated."

"Fewer boots on the ground," Ross Douthat, conservative Op-ed writer for the *Times*, summed it up, "but lots of drones in the air."

The nominations came as the White House is planning to slash the number of troops in Afghanistan in preparation for the removal of all combat forces no later than 2014. The administration has said it is considering "an option to leave behind no American troops," the *New York Times* reported Jan. 11.

The administration's outlook reflects the meritocratic social layer of bourgeois-minded professionals that Obama comes from and looks to around the world. They believe they can hash out the world's problems if they can just get in a room to work on them with like-minded diplomats, professors, nongovernmental organization staffers and other "brights" around the globe.

While the propertied rulers don't share this naïve outlook on the world, a section of the ruling class agrees with cutting back on military intervention and spending at this time.

Leading the charge against Hagel's nomination are a bevy of so-called "neocons," writers at the *Weekly Standard*, editorial board members at the *Washington Post*, staffers at the American Enterprise Institute and their comrades-in-arms.

Dozens of their articles have filled the bourgeois press in recent days criticizing Hagel's skittishness about military action against Iran, comments he made marking some distance between his views and those of Israeli government figures and his unwillingness to promote U.S. military action in Syria.

This opposition reflects a wing of the capitalist rulers who think U.S. imperialist interests would be better served by a larger, stronger military force and greater willingness to deploy it.

Among the critics of Hagel are the "three amigos"—Republican senators Lindsey Graham and John McCain, joined by "independent" Joseph Lieberman, who have been traveling the world together urging a bigger, more robust U.S. military.

Other political figures in the Republican Party have called for confirming Hagel. "I think he's ultimately superbly qualified," Colin Powell, former secretary of state under George W. Bush, said on NBC News "Meet the Press."

On the other hand, ultrarightists like writers for the *American Conservative* and former presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan, have their own reasons to favor restraining for now U.S. military action abroad. They oppose the anti-Hagel outcry, forming part of the pink-brown anti-war alliance of left liberalism and ultranationalist rightist politics.

Hagel's past statements expressing distance from the actions of the Israeli government is one area where questions about his nomination have come from both neocons and Democrats alike.

After his nomination, Charles Schumer and Barbara Boxer, influential Democratic senators from New York and California who are Jewish, both indicated they were not sure they could vote for Hagel. After talking with Hagel, both announced they would back his nomination.

Obama gun decree

Continued from front page

executive branch of government.

The orders are directed at expanding background checks and the data they contain for guns purchased; narrowing the pool of people eligible to own guns; strengthen cops ability to go after "gun crime"; and expanding deployment of cops in high schools. Obama presented a number of other proposals for Congress to discuss.

The announced measures come out of a presidential-appointed task force headed by Vice President Joseph Biden, which included Attorney General Eric Holder and the top officials of the departments of Homeland Security, Education, and Health and Human Services.

The task force met first with opponents of Second Amendment rights and then with proponents, including the National Rifle Association and the owners of Walmart. It also met with video game manufacturers and movie executives in order to consider new restrictions on violent media content.

"Friends of Mr. Bloomberg said he came to view guns, like tobacco and unhealthy food, as a dangerous consumer product," the *New York Times* reported Dec. 21.

Obama has long bemoaned workers' alleged "fixation" on guns, viewing it as a symptom of their lower intelligence and prejudice.

"It's not surprising then they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy toward people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment," Obama told a San Francisco fundraiser in April 2008.

"The president should not be able to act unilaterally when it comes to our constitutional rights," Congressman Jeff Duncan, Republican from South Carolina, said. "Executive orders were meant as a way for the president to implement legislatively passed laws, not to make law."

Republican Mitch McConnell, the Senate minority leader, has said Congress will put off dealing with gun control legislation for at least three months because of fiscal policy deadlines he claims will consume all the legislature's time.

Unilateral executive action has been a feature of Democratic and Republican presidents alike over many decades, especially in areas of spying and "national security." Obama has been taking it a few steps further, from secret executive approval of warrantless Internet spying to presidential orders for assassination of those the government labels "terrorists."

Like the new laws being floated for gun restrictions, these decrees are peddled to working people as necessary concessions for the sake of our "security."

Obama is considering taking similar executive action around the issue of the so-called debt ceiling.

Meanwhile, Bloomberg and his cops in New York announced Dec. 20 they are taking steps to use "precrime" spying to find and neutralize "lone gunmen" who can become mass killers.

They intend to copy National Security Agency measures, authorized by executive orders from both George W. Bush and Obama, to spy on people's Internet and phone communications.

"The goal would be to identify the shooter in cyberspace, engage him there and intervene, possibly using an undercover to get close, and take him into custody or otherwise disrupt his plans," New York Police Commissioner Ray Kelly said in a statement reported in the *New York Times*.

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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