

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Greek gov't orders subway workers to end strike under threat of jail
 — PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 5 FEBRUARY 11, 2013

New York forum: ‘Join effort to put Socialist Workers on Omaha ballot’

BY LOUIS MARTIN

NEW YORK—“The Socialist Workers campaign calls for a fight for a massive government-funded public works program to create jobs for millions of workers making things that workers need, from hospitals to schools to child care centers,” Maura DeLuca, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Omaha, Neb., told more than 60 people at a Militant Labor Forum here Jan. 25. She was joined by Norton Sandler, SWP candidate for mayor of Los Angeles.

“Socialist Workers campaigns explain why workers need to build a revolutionary movement of millions in order to take power in this country,” John Studer, a leader of the party in New York who chaired the meeting, said as he introduced the candidates.

“In Omaha, we are campaigning, showing people the *Militant*, the campaign paper, and petitioning to get the Socialist Workers Party on the ballot, reaching broadly into working-class areas,” said DeLuca, who is part of the party’s slate running in the April 2 primary election along with Jacob Perasso for City Council District 4.

Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman “is campaigning to replace income

Continued on page 4

‘We are not giving back what we won in struggle’

NYC school bus workers fight union busting



Militant/Seth Galinsky

Striking school bus workers picket New York City Board of Education Jan. 28. Bus companies and city officials want right to fire workers and cut wages every time bus routes are up for bid.

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK—Spirits were high at the picket line of striking school bus workers outside the New York Board of Education offices here Jan. 28. Some 8,800 drivers, attendants and mechanics who belong to Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1181 are staffing picket lines at bus depots around the city.

The strike began Jan. 16 after Mayor Michael Bloomberg and School Chancellor Dennis Walcott announced that Employee Protection

Provisions that have been in place for almost 50 years were now “illegal” and could not be part of future contracts.

Instead of hiring workers directly, the city contracts out some 7,700 routes to privately owned bus companies. About 1,100 routes are up for competitive bidding this year.

Continued on page 5

Appeals court rules Obama appointments unconstitutional

BY JOHN STUDER

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. District dealt a blow Jan. 25 to President Barack Obama’s increasingly blatant use of executive power, ruling that three appointments made by the president to the National Labor Relations Board last year during the U.S. Senate’s Christmas holiday break were unconstitutional.

**LIMITS ON EXECUTIVE POWER
 GOOD FOR WORKERS**

—editorial, p. 9

The decision not only overturned the appointments, but threatens to void the hundreds of NLRB decisions made since Jan. 4, 2012.

The ruling rejects the growing practice since the 1970s by presidents, including Ronald Reagan, William Clinton and George W. Bush, to unilaterally make such appointments when they have faced opposition to their nominations in Congress.

Continued on page 9

Israel vote reflects growing class tension, ‘Arab Spring’



Gerrit De Vynck

Aug. 6, 2011, protest in Tel Aviv, Israel, against high price of housing and cost of living.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Contrary to the predictions of political “experts” and opinion polls published in news media around the world, the Jan. 22 elections for the Knesset, Israel’s parliament, did not register a rightward shift in politics.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the elections nine

months early after members of his coalition government balked at approving new spending cuts and tax hikes. The result: his Likud-Beiteinu party lost 11 seats, dropping from 42 to 31, though still the largest single bloc.

The vote reflected growing dissatisfaction with the social consequences

Continued on page 9

No recovery for workers in UK as production drops, ‘austerity’ grinds

BY PETE CLIFFORD

MANCHESTER, England—In the opening weeks of 2013 three major retail chains here—Blockbusters, Jessops and HMV—announced they are going into bankruptcy, laying off

10,000 workers. Honda announced 800 layoffs at its Swindon auto plant, blaming falling car sales in Europe.

“The UK is stuck in a rut” reported the Jan. 26 *Wall Street Journal*. “The economy has contracted in four of the last five quarters” and output “is still 3.2% below its prerecession peak.”

According to a Dec. 7 *Financial Times* article, manufacturing output in October was 2.1 percent lower than the previous year. The paper also pointed out that “the trade deficit had widened from £2.5bn [\$3.95 billion] the previous month to £3.6bn [\$5.7

Continued on page 7

French military takes cities from Islamist forces in northern Mali

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Nearly three weeks into their military intervention in Mali, French forces, accompanied by Malian army troops, have driven Islamist forces out of the northern cities of Timbuktu and Gao, which they have held for the past 10 months.

Islamist combatants retreated into the vast desert areas as Paris, with 3,500 soldiers on the ground in Mali, has announced plans to hand over their pursuit to a hastily assembled force from several African nations.

Upon fleeing Timbuktu, Islamists

Continued on page 6

Also Inside:

- | | |
|--|---|
| Iowa gov’t concedes to driver’s licenses for immigrant youth | 2 |
| Bangladesh: Workers protest deaths in Jan. 27 fire | 3 |
| Sanitation workers in Georgia march for union | 5 |
| Cuban generals: Angola mission strengthened us | 8 |

Iowa gov’t concedes to driver’s licenses for immigrant youth

BY HELEN MEYERS

DES MOINES, Iowa—The Iowa Department of Transportation reversed its earlier decision to deny driver’s licenses to young people who have been granted legal status under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

Enacted by the Barack Obama administration June 15, 2012, the federal program offers temporary legal status to individuals who were brought to the U.S. before they were 16 years old, are not older than 30 today and met a series of other criteria.

The reversal came on the heels of a Jan. 21 protest of dozens of youth and their families outside the Iowa Department of Transportation. In subzero temperatures, the demonstrators chanted, ”Dreamers need wheels” and “What do we want? Driver’s licenses, When do we want them? NOW!” Cars honked in support as they drove by.

The youth who organized the protest are part of the “Dreamers Network.” The front page of the *Des Moines Register* ran an article titled, “DOT reverses license decision: Under pressure from activists, agency will let ‘dreamers’ drive in Iowa.”

“We have made the determination that based on what Homeland Security has outlined in its memorandum,” Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals does not constitute an authorized presence in the country, Paul Trombino, director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, told a Jan. 9 meeting of the state legisla-

ture’s Administrative Rules Review Committee, the *Register* reported.

Several had already received licenses, which Trombino said would be cancelled. The policy was supported by Gov. Terry Branstad.

It is estimated there are 5,000 immigrants living in Iowa that qualify for the program.

On Jan. 18, Homeland Security announced that “an individual who has received deferred action is authorized by the Department of Homeland Security to be present in the United States, and is therefore considered by DHS to be lawfully present during the period deferred action is in effect.”

On Jan. 23 Trombino announced that driver’s licenses will be issued to those who fall under the Deferred



Militant/Helen Meyers

Jan. 21 demonstration in Des Moines, Iowa, demands driver’s licenses for immigrant youth.

Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

“It means that the Latino community can be organized, that a new generation of Latino youth can be

mobilized and continue to fight for our rights,” Hector Salamanca, 19, one of the protest organizers, told the *Militant* at a celebration of the victory.

Montreal airport rally protests family’s deportation

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL—About 30 people responding to a call by Mexicans United for Regularization protested in front of the AeroMexico ticketing desk inside Trudeau International Airport Jan. 19 against the deportation that morning of the Reyes-Mendez family. For the last four years the family has been appealing for official refugee status.

“We are here to denounce the government’s dirty tricks,” Roberto Sanchez told the crowd. The previous night, Sanchez explained, Fernando Reyes, his wife Marisol Mendez and their two teenage children, Ingrid and Eduardo, received a call from the Canada Border

Services Agency to report immediately to the immigration office downtown to receive “good news.” When they got there they were arrested by immigration cops, taken to the airport and escorted to a plane. They bypassed the usual terminal building where their friends and supporters were waiting to say goodbye.

“These deportations are criminal and inhuman,” said Sanchez. “We are not criminals, we have a right to be here. We are honest, hard-working people.”

Reyes says he fled Mexico with his family in 2008 after he had been kidnapped three times by the police. During their four years here, the family ran a printmaking shop and a taco business. Appeals to delay their deportation to let Eduardo finish his school year were rejected by the immigration authorities, who said the family should seek safety by moving to another region of Mexico.

“I came here to support the family,” truck driver Carlos Morales told the *Militant*.

“These deportations have to stop. Demonstrations like this tell the population what is happening,” said Noé

Arteaga Santos, who is fighting to win his job back with Les Serres du St-Laurent, which produces tomatoes.

Several years ago, Arteaga said, he was fired and deported to Guatemala after taking part in a work stoppage demanding medical aid for an injured coworker. After returning to Canada he launched a complaint, which is still before the Quebec Labor Board.

One sign held by a protester said that more than 21,000 Mexicans have been deported by Ottawa since 2006, an average of seven per day.

A new federal immigration law went into effect Dec. 15 that makes it easier for the government to reject refugee claims and speed up deportations.

Other speakers at the rally included Amir Khadir, member of the Quebec National Assembly for Quebec Solidaire; and New Democratic Party member of Parliament Rosane Doré Lefebvre.

For information, contact Mexicans United for Regularization at: mexicanx-sunidxs@gmail.com.

Michel Dugré contributed to this article.

THE MILITANT

Back fights by immigrant workers in Greece!

Immigrant workers worldwide are being scapegoated for the crisis of capitalism. In Greece they have been increasingly subject to violence by rightist thugs.

The ‘Militant’ reports on and champions their struggles.

Don’t miss an issue!

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

☐ \$5 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

☐ \$10 for 12 weeks

☐ \$20 for 6 months

☐ \$35 for 1 year

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,
306 W. 37TH ST., 10TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018.

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, A\$8 • United Kingdom, £3 • Canada, Can\$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £10 • France, 12 euros • New Zealand, NZ\$7 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

The Militant

Vol. 77/No. 5

Closing news date: January 30, 2013

Editor: Doug Nelson

Associate editor: John Studer

Circulation director: Louis Martin

Editorial volunteers: Tom Baumann, Róger Calero, Naomi Craine, Seth Galinsky, Eleanor García, Emma Johnson, Brian Williams, Rebecca Williamson.

Published weekly except for one week in January, two weeks in July, and two weeks in September.

Business manager: Lea Sherman

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: For one year send Canadian \$45 to the Militant, 7107 St. Denis #204, Montreal, Quebec H2S 2S5.

United Kingdom: Send £26 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green Road (Entrance in Brick Lane), London, E2 6DG, England.

Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: Send £85 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

France: Send 76 euros for one year to Diffusion du Militant, P.O. Box 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris.

New Zealand: Send NZ\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

Australia: Send A\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia.

Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

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.

Readers knock on doors, join picket lines, sell subscriptions

BY LOUIS MARTIN

“I just wanted to let you know, I really liked what you wrote. It was accurate about everything—the wages we make and what we face,” striking New York City school bus worker Noemia Topete told the *Militant* when she called our office Jan. 28.

Topete bought a subscription to the paper that morning at a picket line set up by her union, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1181, at the Board of Education in Manhattan.

Some 8,800 school bus workers have been fighting a concerted union-busting effort by the school transport bosses and the city administration. (See article on front page.)

Readers have been going door to door in working-class neighborhoods, reaching out to workers—be they involved in struggles or trying to figure out what’s happening in the world and what working people can do about it.

Walking the picket line outside the warehouse of United Natural Foods in Auburn, Wash., striker Jeremy Ray, 39, a truck driver for the company, told *Militant* distributor John Naubert that he likes to bring his copy of the paper down to the picket line, read it, and share it with others.

One hundred sixty-three warehouse workers and drivers at United Natural Foods are members of Teamsters Local 117. They walked off the job in December to protest the firing of 72 of their coworkers.

Ray bought *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*, one of six books offered at reduced prices with a *Militant* subscription. The book tells

the story of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and jailed in the U.S. for working to expose violent assaults being planned here against Cuba.

Greg Sanderhauf, a Local 117 official, signed up for a six-month renewal and picked up a copy of the Cuban Five book.

After visiting the picket line, Naubert and other *Militant* readers went door to door the area.

With the addition of two new titles, six books are now offered at reduced prices with a *Militant* subscription. (See ad below.)

Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own describes the key role the 16-year-long internationalist mission by Cuban volunteers in Angola played in driving South African troops out of that country, and through this experience deepening the Cuban Revolution at home.

Women and Revolution: The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution discusses how the fight for women’s equality in Cuba has been inseparably intertwined with the uncompromising battles through which Cuba’s toilers have defended their socialist revolution, transforming themselves in the process.

The *Militant* just published a special four-page supplement with the introduction to *Cuba and Angola* by Mary-Alice Waters to help promote the book. It is available for 25 cents—or 10 cents apiece for a bundle of 10 or more.

We urge all readers to join the effort to expand the readership of the paper.

You can order a bundle and subscription blanks at themilitant@mac.com or (212) 244-4899.

Framed-up lawyer Lynne Stewart fights for cancer care in prison

BY JOHN STUDER

Prison authorities have refused a request by Lynne Stewart for transfer to another facility for cancer treatment. Stewart, 73, was framed up and convicted in 2005 on federal charges of “conspiracy to provide material aid to terrorist activity.”

Before being convicted and sent to prison, she was a prominent defense attorney noted for taking on cases of people targeted by the government and others without financial means.

Stewart had been successfully treated for breast cancer earlier, but the disease has now returned and afflicted both her lungs and back.

Stewart’s condition is treatable, Ralph Poynter, Stewart’s husband and

a leader in the effort to win her release from prison, told the *Militant*. But prison officials won’t transfer her from the Federal Medical Center Carswell in Ft. Worth, Texas, to New York, where she was treated before.

Stewart was framed up for her service as an attorney for Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, a blind Muslim cleric found guilty in 1995 for allegedly plotting to blow up the United Nations headquarters and other buildings in New York.

After his conviction, Abdel-Rahman was placed under severe restrictions on his right to communicate with others.

The government’s main charge against Stewart was that she helped Abdel-Rahman get out a political message to his supporters in Egypt. She was originally sentenced to 28 months behind bars. But the government appealed the sentence on the basis of her apparent lack of remorse and it was increased to 10 years.

Stewart is collaborating with attorneys from the Center for Constitutional Rights and the National Lawyers Guild on an appeal of her conviction and resentencing to the U.S. Supreme Court, which is due to be filed Feb. 21.

Poynter asked that supporters send letters to Stewart: Lynne Stewart 53504-054, Federal Medical Center Carswell, P.O. Box 27137, Ft. Worth, TX 76127.

Bangladesh: Workers protest deaths in Jan. 27 fire



Courtesy National Trade Union Federation

Workers from different garment federations in Dhaka, Bangladesh, rallied Jan. 27 to protest the killing of seven workers in a fire at Smart Export Garment Ltd. the day before—two months after more than 120 workers were killed in a fire at the Tazreen Fashions factory north of the city. In both plants workers were trapped behind locked gates and left without fire exits.

Smart Export Garment was housed on the upper floor of a two-story building in the suburb of Mohammadpur. It employed 300 workers, mostly women.

Doctors said most of the workers died from suffocation. More than a dozen were injured. Many jumped from the second floor to escape the flames, according to local police. Workers who survived say they found the door on the first floor locked when they tried to get out. “There was no fire exit,” Mahbubur Rahman, the fire service and civil defense director, told reporters.

Workers’ demands included arrest of the factory owner, compensation for the victims’ families, safe workplaces and job security.

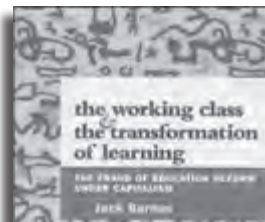
Bangladesh is the world’s second biggest exporter of clothing after China. It has 4,500 garment factories, employing 3.6 million workers.

Since 2005 more than 500 workers in Bangladesh have died in garment factory fires. No owner has ever been prosecuted.

A government panel has concluded that the fire in the Tazreen factory was the result of sabotage, but no one has been charged and no further explanation given. Several middle managers have been arrested for barring the workers from escaping. Dozens of families have still not received their relatives’ last paychecks, let alone the compensation they were promised.

—EMMA JOHNSON

Special offers



The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism
by Jack Barnes

\$2 with a subscription to the *Militant* (usually \$3)



Cuba and Angola

Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own
Speeches and accounts by Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro; Cuban generals and combatants; Gabriel García Márquez

\$6 with subscription (usually \$12)



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

by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer

\$10 with subscription (usually \$20)



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

by Jack Barnes

\$10 with subscription (usually \$20)

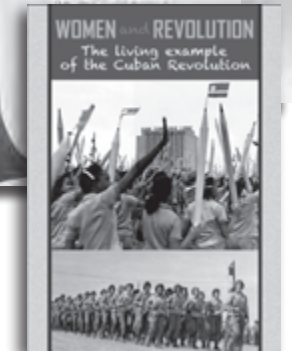


The Cuban Five

Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free

Articles, interviews from the *Militant*

\$3 with subscription (usually \$5)



Women and Revolution

The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution
by Asela de los Santos, Mary-Alice Waters and others

\$3 with subscription (usually \$7)

See distributors on page 8

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

India: Brutal Rape Ignites Protests for Women’s Rights. Speakers: Suman Ramavat, Shakti Community Council; Diksha Vohra, Jaagriti Women’s Support Group; Janet Roth, Communist League. Fri., Feb. 8, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Road. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

SWP candidates at NY forum

Continued from front page

tax with sales tax, claiming the rich will pay more this way,” DeLuca said. “His liberal opponents instead put forward what they call the Buffett rule. This is a reference to billionaire Warren Buffett, who has demagogically called for increased income taxes on the wealthy.

“They try to convince us that capitalism can be reformed. But one kind of tax or the other, working people will pay more,” DeLuca said.

She explained the party needs to collect 1,000 signatures of registered voters and 100 for Perasso to place both candidates on the ballot. “With each signature being checked by the election office, we want to double that amount,” she said.

In the first two weeks of petitioning, supporters of the campaign have collected 371 signatures for DeLuca and 70 for Perasso.

“We will be petitioning through the first two weeks of February. I invite you to join us!” DeLuca said.

‘Rulers’ disinterest in our reality’

“Getting on the ballot in Omaha is extremely important in establishing the socialist movement and defending the legality of the party, which is always under attack,” Sandler said. “It also gives us opportunities we don’t usually get to present our views to a wider layer of working people.

“Obama’s second inaugural talk last Monday was 20 minutes of empty platitudes,” he added. “He only mentioned jobs once. This was a reflection of the complete disinterest the capitalist rulers and the meritocratic layer Obama comes from have in dealing with the reality working people face.

“Some bourgeois commentators

say real wages will go down another 3 percent this year,” Sandler said. “The birth rate in the U.S. is the lowest since the 1920s under the pressure of the economic crisis. The number of 25 to 34 year olds living with their parents is the highest it has ever been. It takes 40 weeks to find a job if you’re laid off, and it’s worse for many workers.”

Sandler took up what workers and farmers face in Mali, West Africa, confronted by a corrupt and brutal government installed by the military, rightist Islamist thugs and French military forces landing in the country.

“Thinking workers must start with the conditions working people face there,” he said. “Mali is among the 25 poorest countries in the world by per capita income, with 80 percent of the labor force engaged in farming and fishing. The small amount of industrial activity is concentrated in processing farm commodities and mining.

“Mali is caught in the midst of competition for resources between imperialist France and the U.S., and with China, which is Mali’s main export market.

“The Tuaregs, a nomadic tribe, have been battling with the central government for years,” Sandler said. “The Islamist forces who took control of the northern half of the country last year are deadly reactionary. Working people hate them. That’s why they welcomed the French troops.

“Toilers there will have to go through their own experiences to find a road to take on all these obstacles and fight for a revolutionary government. It will take time.”

Sandler urged forum participants to study the speeches of Thomas



Militant/Helen Meyers

Victoria Thomas, center, a nurse, signs petition Jan. 19 for Jacob Perasso, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Omaha City Council, District 4, in April 2 primary election.

Sankara, the central leader of the 1983-87 revolution in Burkina Faso, on Mali’s southeastern border, as a way to learn how peasants and workers were transformed as they mobilized to use their revolutionary government to confront the challenges they faced at home and internationally.

Studer urged those present to join in using the *Militant* to build solidarity with two labor battles in the New York area. Some 14,500 members of the International Longshoremen’s Association have been resisting major concession demands in negotiations covering 14 ports along the East and Gulf coasts. And 8,800 school bus drivers, attendants and mechanics have been on strike since Jan. 16.

“The bosses and the city administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg are on a drive to overturn work rules, job protection and other gains these workers have won through years of battles,” he said.

“Next fall’s mayoral campaign is well under way in New York. We are looking forward to running a slate of Socialist Workers candidates for mayor and other offices.”

Women and U.S. ‘war machine’

In the discussion, one participant asked the candidates’ views on the recent government decision to place women in the military in combat positions.

“In Vietnam, women fought—but as part of a successful revolution to defeat Washington’s war in that country,” Sandler said. “Communists are against any form of discrimination, but there is nothing progressive in women joining the front ranks of the imperialist war machine in the U.S.”

“The media says the government of California is going from deficit to surplus. What does this mean for working people?” was another question.

“There have been massive cuts in California’s budget, including cuts on workers’ ability to get medical coverage or disability,” Sandler said. “They’ve eliminated all adult day care centers in the state. They’ve also raised sales tax and state college fees. One thing is sure—cuts will continue as taxes go up,” Sandler said.

The candidates were asked about their position on the so-called “gun debate.”

“Both sides in this debate are antithetical to the interests of the working class. The rulers use it to attack

the rights of working people—demanding the names of all gun owners, compiling lists of workers with mental problems, increased intrusion in working people’s privacy,” Sandler replied.

“Much of the debate centers on assault weapons. We agree with workers who say you don’t need such weapons to hunt deer,” Sandler said.

“Those who are for assault weapons are part of the ultraright,” he said. “They think being heavily armed is part of preparing to shoot it out with government agents or others they fear. They have nothing in common with the working class.”

“Why was there such a large demonstration by anti-abortion forces in Washington, D.C., on the 40th anniversary of the historic Roe v. Wade decision and none by those defending a woman’s right to choose?” a woman asked.

“The 1973 Supreme Court ruling was won as a result of deep changes in this country wrought by the mass proletarian movement for Black rights and the massive entry of women into the workforce,” Studer answered. “These events changed forever the way working people see ourselves, including a woman’s right to choose, a basic precondition for women’s emancipation.

“Despite relentless efforts to curb women’s access to abortion by the capitalist rulers, and the complete failure to mobilize a response by those who claim to speak in the interests of women, 70 percent support a woman’s right to abortion, a higher percentage than in 1973.”

During the course of the evening, Studer introduced from the floor James Harris, Socialist Workers 2012 candidate for president; David Rosenfeld and Margaret Trowe, SWP candidates for Des Moines City Council; and Jacquie Henderson, SWP candidate for the 6th Texas Senatorial District in Houston.

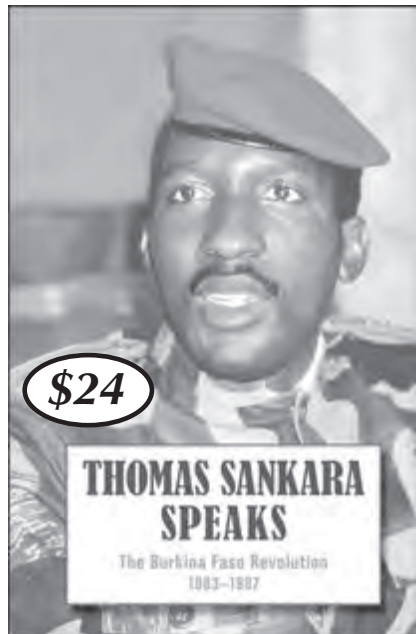
He also pointed to the publication of two new books by Pathfinder Press received that day: *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own*; and *Women and Revolution: The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution*.

“The party will be campaigning to get these new books out, along with four others,” Studer said, “going door to door in working-class areas along with the campaign and the *Militant*.” (See ad on page 3.)



Militant photos/Larry Lukehart

Maura DeLuca, left, and Norton Sandler, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Omaha, Neb., and Los Angeles respectively, speaking at a Jan. 25 Militant Labor Forum in New York.



Under Thomas Sankara’s leadership, the revolutionary government of Burkina Faso in West Africa mobilized peasants, workers, craftsmen, women and youth to carry out literacy and immunization drives; sink wells; plant trees; build dams; erect housing; combat the oppression of women and transform exploitative relations on the land; free themselves from the imperialist yoke and solidarize with others engaged in that fight internationally.

pathfinderpress.com

Sanitation workers in Ga. march for union

BY JANICE LYNN

ATLANTA—Sanitation workers in DeKalb County have been organizing to be represented by the Teamsters union. Several hundred of these workers, along with family and other supporters, marched in a contingent at the Martin Luther King Day Parade here Jan. 21 behind large banners reading, “Justice for Sanitation Workers.”

“We need more money and better benefits,” sanitation worker Dannie Wellons told the *Militant*. “We’ve had no raise in more than four years. The supervisors talk to you and treat you any kind of way.”

James Mullens has worked on sanitation trucks for two years. “I’m for the union because by sticking together we’ll be better off. You can’t do it alone.”

More than 85 percent of the county’s 150 sanitation workers who work from the garbage trucks have petitioned to be represented by Teamsters Local 728. County commissioners have to vote to recognize the union.

Thomas Moore, a sanitation truck driver for 10 years, described routes that have 1,800 to 2,000 stops, working in rain and snow or scorching heat, jumping on and off the trucks, and handling refuse from broken glass to dead animals.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that garbage workers do the fourth most dangerous job in the country.

Joining the DeKalb County workers were sanitation workers from Alabama, Florida and Tennessee who work for Republic Services/Allied Waste. Workers are facing attacks from this company in cities throughout the country.

“I’m a fighter. We need to get things better,” Lavon Lindsey, from Mobile, Ala., told the *Militant*. “We especially need better medical care given the job conditions we work under.” Two sanitation workers from Memphis who were part of the 1968 strike that King supported addressed the crowd at the end of the march. “They’re doing the same thing to you now as they did to us in ’68,” said Baxter Leach. “It’s the same fight and we have to do for ourselves.”



Sanitation workers and supporters from DeKalb County, Ga., march Jan. 21 in Atlanta, demanding wage increases and union representation.

New York City school bus workers’ strike

Continued from front page

Under the protection provisions, companies that win bids must first hire workers laid off from other companies through a master pick list in order of seniority. And they must pay the same wages and benefits each worker had before being laid off.

Without the protections, workers explain, their union would be gutted and their wages driven down, as nothing would prevent bus companies from hiring new workers at lower pay and tossing higher-paid workers out on the street.

“We’re not fighting for higher wages or better benefits,” Richie Perrone, 58, told the *Militant*. “But we’re not looking to give anything back either.” Perrone has been driving school buses for 35 years and was part of the 14-week strike in 1979 that extended the protection provisions.

Drivers start out at \$14 an hour and top out at less than \$30 after six years on the job. Attendants start at \$11 and top out at \$15.31.

“Bloomberg says we make too much,” John Barone, a driver for 12 years, said on the picket line. “We work 10 hours a day, 50 hours a week, but only get paid for 40. And then we only work 44 weeks a year. The other eight we file for unemployment. When you add it all up, the \$29 an hour I make is really \$18.25.”

“When we drive in Manhattan you

can’t even go to the bathroom,” added Maria Filgueira, a driver for 15 years. “A lot of times you can’t find a place to park. If we get ticketed, we have to pay out of our pocket.”

“We’re not the ones making too much money,” she said. “It’s the companies that are making millions.”

“I’ve spoken to some of the workers who were in the strike in 1979,” said Noemia Topete, who has worked as an attendant for three years. “During that strike, nobody got through the picket lines, no buses got out of the bases.”

According to the Department of Education, as of Jan. 25 some 2,689 out of 7,700 bus routes are operating—369 more than at the start of the strike. Some are nonunion companies. Two so-called independent unions, United Craft and Industrial Workers Union Local 91, which organizes some workers at Logan Bus Co., and United Service Workers Union Local 355, which is providing temporary workers for Staten Island Bus Company, are crossing the picket lines. Calls requesting comment from officials at both locals were not returned.

Two replacement workers walk out

According to the *New York Daily News*, two replacement drivers who showed up at the Staten Island depot changed their mind when they saw the

picket line “and were greeted with applause as they departed.”

The *New York Times* reported that one obstacle to the bus companies hiring more scabs is that it usually takes six months to get a Class B commercial license with special endorsements for driving a school bus.

Parents to Improve School Transportation is organizing a Solidarity Car Caravan Feb. 2 to support the strike. United Steelworkers Local 8751, which organizes school bus drivers in Boston, announced it will have a contingent in the caravan.

Representatives of Local 1181 and the New York School Bus Contractors Association met Jan. 28 to discuss the strike. Bloomberg refused to join the negotiations.

“We urge Mayor Bloomberg to join us at the table to work towards ending this strike,” said Local 1181 President Michael Cordiello in a Jan. 28 press statement. “Until that happens, the strike goes on.”

“We live paycheck to paycheck,” said Topete. “We couldn’t set any money aside before the strike. But we’ll be out here for weeks if we need to be.”

Local 1181 is asking strike supporters to join the picket line in front of the Board of Education, 52 Chambers St., Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 12, 1988

SEATTLE—On January 13, dockworkers here shut down all major ports in Washington and Oregon. They were protesting a union-busting probe by ITT-Rayonier, a major forest products corporation and exporter that is a subsidiary of ITT Corp.

The 38-hour shutdown was the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union’s answer to ITT-Rayonier’s proposal to use non-union labor to load logs onto ships in Port Angeles, Washington. The ILWU has long had a strong position in all major loading and unloading work up and down the West Coast.

Longshoremen on the West Coast have watched closely developments on the East Coast and Gulf ports. There, nonunion operators and operators who negotiate contracts for lower wages and benefits with unions other than the International Longshoremen’s Union have made big inroads.



February 11, 1963

President Kennedy’s attempt to jam nuclear warheads down Canada’s throat has caused the downfall of Prime Minister Diefenbaker’s government. National elections scheduled for April will center around two issues: acceptance or rejection of nuclear arms and Canada’s right to govern itself without U.S. interference.

Because of the rapid takeover of the Canadian economy in the past two decades by U.S. big business, there is wide popular opposition to U.S. attempts to run Canada’s political life. Consequently all four major parties in the country denounce (at least for the record) U.S. interference. But all three capitalist parties are committed or compromised on accepting nuclear arms—Diefenbaker’s position was not that of rejecting but delaying on acceptance. Only the New Democratic Party, the labor party, is opposed to nuclear armament and to testing.



February 12, 1938

JERSEY CITY, N.J.—Organized Labor gained its biggest victory against the anti-union policies of “I am the Law” Frank Hague, boss of Jersey City, when the Crucible Steel strikers won the majority of their demands after one week’s shut-down of the plant.

Picket lines were maintained throughout the strike, although Hague has often threatened “drastic action” against any C.I.O. union which organized in his bailiwick.

The morale of the Crucible unionists had been low in some departments when the strike began. The workers today are the most spirited in the state. Every one of them understands the great chances they had taken when a strike was called in Hague’s anti-labor territory.

Already, in other steel plants, organizing is proceeding more rapidly. Five union men were reinstated in one big steel plant.



pathfinderpress.com

Unfolding war in Mali

Continued from front page

burned a library housing thousands of ancient manuscripts. While in control of the city they had destroyed centuries-old sites revered by Sufis, a branch of Islam the sectarian reactionary groups seek to stamp out. Shrines, graves and mausoleums were attacked with pick-axes, shovels and even bulldozers, according to Reuters.

With a population of 15.5 million, Mali is among the 25 poorest countries in the world by per capita income. Life expectancy is 53 years, with just eight doctors available per 100,000 people.

Eighty percent of the population is engaged in largely subsistence agriculture, fishing and herding. Capitalist development is very uneven and relatively new. Commercial gold mining, for example, based in southern Mali—Africa’s third-largest gold producer today—began operations just 20 years ago.

The forging of a modern working class, still in its initial stages, and the growth of cities are laying the basis for a fighting alliance of toilers that could advance the interests of the majority.

Huge land areas in the north are sparsely inhabited by nomadic Tuareg tribes, who herd goats and sheep in the Sahara desert spanning the borders of Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

The formation of a nation, or nations, within the Malian borders inherited from European colonialism remains an incomplete process. Tuaregs have fought the government based in Bamako for control of territories in the north since Mali became an independent country five decades ago.

Several years ago, areas of the Sahara desert in northeastern Mali were discovered to harbor vast quantities of oil and uranium, the latter of which an Australian-based company Oklo Resources Ltd. began to explore before Islamist groups took over the area.

Unintended consequence

The current crisis in Mali is an unintended consequence of the imperialist-backed overthrow of the Moammar Gadhafi regime in Libya.

Thousands of Tuareg mercenaries who served the Gadhafi regime were among African people from lands to the south of Libya who were forced to flee pogroms by government opposition forces and had limited places to go. Four days before Gadhafi’s assassi-

nation, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) was formed in Mali, with reinforcements from the returning heavily armed Tuareg mercenaries.

In January 2012, they launched a rebellion aimed at forming an independent state in northern Mali. About 1,600 Malian army troops then defected to the Tuareg’s side, creating a crisis within the already weakened Malian military, much of which had been trained by U.S. special forces. On March 21, 2012, a section of the U.S.-trained officers, led by Capt. Amadou Sanogo, carried out a military coup in Bamako.

A couple weeks after the coup, Tuareg fighters took control of Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu, the capital cities of three northern provinces. In early April, the MNLA announced a cease-fire.

Meanwhile, combatants from three Islamist groups—al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, the Movement for Jihad and Unity in West Africa, and Ansar Dine, a predominantly Malian Tuareg and Moor group—moved to displace the MNLA. The Islamists took Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal in the north, imposing strict sharia laws. All of the estimated 300 Christians living in Timbuktu fled.

The city of Timbuktu in northern Mali was known for its diverse music and culture until the Islamists took over.

After encountering AQIM leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar in April 2012, city hotel owner Aberhamane Alpha Maiga closed the facility and fled with his family south, the *Financial Times* reported.

Upon returning to the city for a visit in September, he found, “there was no music, no television, no football and no smoking. Women’s freedom of movement had been curtailed. Suspected thieves had had their hands chopped off. Shrines had been destroyed. The secular Tuaregs who started the rebellion were nowhere to be seen,” the paper said.

AQIM is a mostly Algerian and Mauritanian group that has been present in northern Mali since 2003. It was an ally of deposed Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure who, according to al-Jazeera, gave AQIM “free rein in Tuareg areas, with a wink and a nod from the Malian army.” The Movement for Jihad and Unity in West Africa, a split off from AQIM, has



Eric Feferberg/AFP/Getty Images

Ahmed Baba Centre for Documentation and Research in Timbuktu, Mali, Jan. 29: Trying to salvage remaining scraps of ancient manuscripts burned by Islamist forces fleeing city.

made the MNLA one of its main targets.

Shortly after the French offensive got under way, a faction split from Ansar Dine, forming the Islamic Movement for Azawad. Taking its distance from AQIM, the group calls for negotiations with the Malian government and autonomy for northern Mali.

Malian army executes ‘light skins’

The Malian army, which accompanies French forces in their drive north, has executed at least 30 people in the central town of Sevare and surrounding areas in January, according to the International Federation of Human Rights.

“The group said the victims were people accused of working with the Islamists, of carrying weapons, of lacking identification cards, or simply being ‘light skins’—Arabs or Tuaregs,” reported the *Times*.

Among those arrayed against Tuaregs and Moors are Fulani and Songhai ethnic militias Ganda Koy and Ganda Izo, which have fought alongside the Malian army, as well as compiling “kill” lists and “allegedly committed massacres against Tuareg civilians,” reported al-Jazeera.

Paris’ intervention in Mali is aimed at securing French interests throughout the region vis-à-vis those of their imperialist rivals from the U.S. to Europe, as well as Beijing. Important resources for French industry include uranium in Niger, manganese in Senegal, and oil and gas in Algeria, Libya, Gabon and Cameroon.

French companies face some of the stiffest competition from China. Paris’ share of overall imports into Africa fell to 8.9 percent in 2010 from 16.2 percent in 2000, while China’s rose to 12.5 percent from 3.4 percent in that period,” reported the *Wall Street Journal*.

The Barack Obama administration, which has initially been holding back in providing military assistance requested by Paris, has now decided to provide three air tankers to refuel French warplanes over Mali as well as cargo planes to transport French troops and equipment to the country.

Washington has also reached agreement with the West African country of Niger, which borders northern Mali, for stepped-up U.S. military presence there, with preparations under way—subject to White House approval—to fly unarmed surveillance drones out of bases there.

Paris had already announced it is sending special forces to Niger’s two main uranium sites, mined by the French nuclear company Areva. Some 2,700 workers are employed there with another mine scheduled to open next year. But the bosses have had to confront workers fighting for better conditions. Last July some 1,200 workers at one of these mines conducted a 72-hour strike demanding higher wages, reported Uranium Investing News.

In another development, MNLA fighters said Jan. 29 they had taken control of Kidal, a northern Malian city by the Algerian border that Islamist forces had seized 10 months ago, reported the *Financial Times*.



Eric Feferberg/AFP/Getty Images

Malian army soldier in Timbuktu, Mali, Jan. 29, attempts to disperse people allegedly looting shops belonging to Arabs, who fled city when French and Malian troops arrived.

Greek gov't orders workers to end subway strike under threat of jail

BY JOHN STUDER

The Greek government invoked a decades-old anti-labor law to conscript striking subway workers in the capital back to work under threat of five-year jail terms.

For nine days, 2,500 Metro workers in Athens had shut down the city subway system, which carries more than 1 million people daily. The strike was in response to government plans to cut their wages by some 25 percent on top of previous attacks.

The Civil Mobilization Act dates back to the 1967-74 military dictatorship in Greece. It was amended in 2007 to give the government the power to force strikers back to work in "peacetime emergencies." It has been used three other times to break anti-austerity strikes over the past two years—against seamen, truckers and garbage collectors.

"The unionists decided to take the path of blind confrontation," Transport Minister Kostis Hatzidakis told the media Jan. 24. "There's nothing we can do but to requisition workers."

"Since 2009 our average take-home pay has gone down by some 45 percent," said one of several Metro workers at the control center of the Omonia station who spoke to the *Militant* Jan. 26. "By forcing us back to work they want to terrorize everyone into accepting whatever wages they decide for public workers."

The workers asked that their names not be used for fear of company reprisal.

Over the past several years successive governments in Greece have imposed repeated rounds of cutbacks on public workers' wages and pensions. The attacks are part of a series of austerity measures demanded by the International Monetary Fund, European Commission and European Central Bank as preconditions for loans so the heavily indebted Greek government could maintain payments to government bondholders.

Household disposable income in Greece dropped 10.6 percent in the third-quarter of 2012 compared to the previous year, according to figures released by the government Jan. 25. Wages fell 11.3 percent and social benefits decreased 10.2 percent, while

income taxes increased 17.7 percent. Official unemployment hit 26.8 percent earlier this month.

"We have a contract, it is signed, and it should be in force until April," a second worker at Omonia station said. "Keeping a union contract was our central demand. We had made it clear to the government that we were willing to go back to work, as long as negotiations could start on a new contract."

"But the government just wants to tear up our collective agreement," he said. "They are doing this to all public workers, one sector at a time."

"As we got the 'civil mobilization' papers we had to go back to work or face trials and jail," a third added. "It's not just that we have to go back to work. We are prohibited from striking again, even for one day, around the same demand."

After the government's decree, hundreds of riot police stormed a train depot and broke up a sit-in by striking workers.

No recovery for workers in UK, despite jobless decline

Continued from front page

billion] in October, damping hopes that a rise in exports could boost the UK economy."

At the same time, the big-business press has lauded a Jan. 23 report by the Office for National Statistics that the number of unemployed had fallen by 37,000 between September and November, bringing the jobless rate down to 7.7 percent from 7.8 percent the previous quarter. This most recent figure registers a 10-month decline in the official rate.

According to the ONS, 2.49 million people were jobless in November, a figure roughly similar to the period between mid-2009 and early 2010, before it spiked up and then declined for 10 months. But this means the number of officially jobless remains more than 800,000 higher than it was in May 2008, before its one-year steep rise.

While official figures point to a downward trend in joblessness over the last 10 months to November, they are calculated to mask the real scope of the employment crisis workers face. The government stats, for ex-



AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis

Subway workers outside Aghios Antonios station in Athens, Jan. 25, burn "mobilization papers" that order them to go back to work or face jail time, ending nine-day strike.

Two of the three parties in the governing coalition—New Democratic Party and PASOK, the Greek Socialist party—backed the decree. The smaller party in the coalition, the Democratic Left, along with the largest opposition party, Syriza, a radical social-democratic coalition, both opposed the conscription order.

Hours after the government's move, unions representing all of Athens' transit companies—buses, trolley, tram and urban rail—announced rolling 24-hour strikes over the next four days in solidarity.

Natasha Terlexis in Athens, Greece, contributed to this article.

NEW INTERNATIONAL A MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY

"Of all capitalism's evils, the most fundamental one is how that system of exploitation reproduces its social relations as a condition of producing its profits. How its workings, its blind methods of functioning, keep grinding toiling humanity into the ground."

— Jack Barnes

Imperialism's March to Fascism and War
in New International No. 10 — \$16

Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun
by Jack Barnes
in New International No. 12 — \$16

Our Politics Start With the World
by Jack Barnes
in New International No. 13 — \$14



ample, disregard the rising number of those classified as underemployed, which has increased by 50 percent since 2008. More than 3 million workers—10 percent of the workforce—are in this category. The majority of them want to work full time, but work 30 hours or less. Many of these workers are employed on a temporary basis by agencies.

While many papers extol the jobless figures as evidence of an improving economic situation, commentators in the economic press reflect bosses' concerns that a little job recovery under current circumstances is bad for their profits. (The fact that higher unemployment provides better conditions to drive on workers' wages and working conditions is left unspoken.)

"Despite this good news there is a big problem," writes Stephen King, HSBC chief economist in the *Times*, published in London. "A rapid increase in jobs combined with no increase in output means a decline in productivity. It suggests a significant and sustained loss of competitiveness."

The most recent government report also shows a decline in real wages, which nominally rose by an average of 1.5 percent over one year, while official inflation rose 2.7 percent. Meanwhile, government officials have been moving to cut back the welfare benefit system. On Jan. 8 the government announced a 1 percent cap on annual increases in working-age benefits and tax credits. Primarily tar-

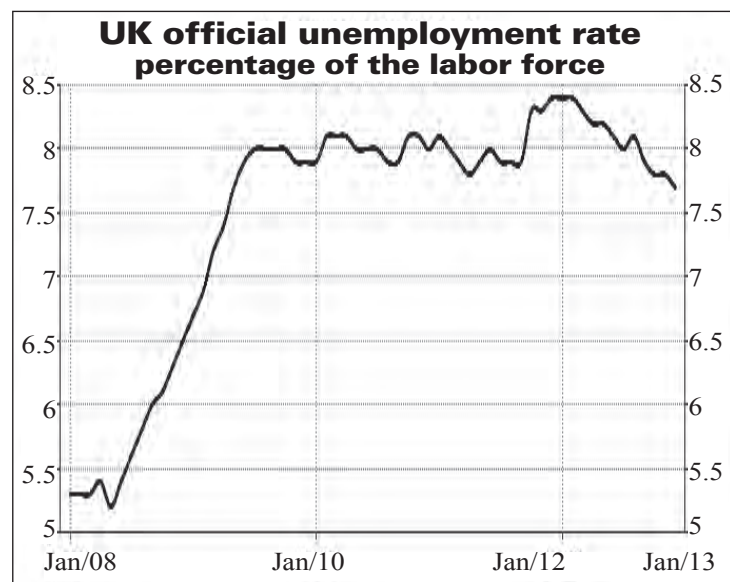
geting unemployment payments, it also affects other benefits, including maternity allowances, sick pay and child tax credits.

This assault has gone hand-in-hand with efforts to scapegoat unemployed workers, aimed at eroding solidarity and garnering support for the cuts.

"It's unfair that when that person leaves their home early in the morning, they pull the door behind them, they're going off to do their job, they're looking at their next-door neighbor, the blinds are down, and that family is living a life on benefits," Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne said at a Conservative Party conference in October.

Osborne pledged Jan. 25 to continue a course of government budget cuts, despite pressure to slow the pace of "austerity" and its potentially economic contracting consequences in face of falling gross domestic product.

While criticizing the government for "cutting too far and too fast," Edward Balls, Labour's shadow chancellor, said in a September interview with the *Daily Telegraph* that if his party wins the next election it would be "ruthless and disciplined" in implementing government spending cuts.



See list of distributors on page 8 or visit pathfinderpress.com

Cuban generals: Angolan internationalist mission strengthened us

Below is an excerpt from Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. It contains interviews with Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong—who joined the 1956-58 revolutionary war that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship and later became generals in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. Mary-Alice Waters, who conducted the interview, is president of Pathfinder Press.

This selection is from the chapter "Cuba's internationalist mission

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

to Angola, 1975-91," when more than 375,000 Cuban volunteers responded to a request for assistance from the government of Angola to defeat invasions by the white-supremacist South African regime. This March will be the 25th anniversary of the battle of Cuito Cuanavale, a turning point in the war. Copyright ©2005 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission. Footnote is by the Militant.

WATERS: What was the impact on Cuba itself? Not everyone agreed with expending such resources, with staying the course for so many years. How did the anti-imperialist struggle in Africa



Pastor Batista Valdés/Granma

Cuban combatant (right) teaching Angolan combatants to read and write. More than 375,000 Cuban volunteers helped defeat invasions by white-supremacist South African regime.

strengthen the Cuban Revolution?

CHOY: Well, it really strengthened us from an ideological standpoint. All of us who went had studied slavery, the exploitation of man by man, the exploitation of the countries in southern Africa. We had studied the evils that colonialism had wrought and was still creating. But we'd merely read about it in books.

In my own case ... I got there and could see with my own eyes what the colonial system really was. A complete differentiation between the whites, the Europeans—in this case the Portuguese—and the native population. We saw how these countries were exploited. We saw a country that was so rich, yet Angolans were living in what we saw as subhuman conditions. Because their country's riches were being stolen. Because the colonialists had not preserved the forests or the land.

Sometimes we'd be traveling in vehicles, and people walking along the road would run when they heard us coming. We learned why. Under Portuguese rule, if the native inhabitants didn't get out of the way, the colonialists would sometimes run them over. This went on for generations. So whenever they heard a vehicle coming, they'd run. And not just off to the shoulder of the road either. They ran because they'd been mistreated like this for years, for centuries.

The main lesson I learned from this

mission was to fully appreciate colonialism's cruelty toward the native population, and the naked theft of their natural resources. To see a country with great natural wealth like Angola, yet with a population facing needs of the most basic type!

That's why I say that knowing the truth strengthened us from an ideological standpoint. The same thing happens whenever we see how a layer of the population in capitalist countries lacks the most basic necessities. The first time I went to Madrid, for instance, it was December. It's cold there that time of year. In the Gran Vía, the main street of that large city, I saw people sleeping on the sidewalk near a heating vent, with bags and newspapers over them.

You read about things like that in books, and you believe they're true. But until you see them for yourself, you can't fully understand the reality Karl Marx wrote about. That, I believe, is one of the lessons we all learned from internationalist missions.

These are the same lessons our doctors have learned, our athletic trainers, and other specialists who to go many countries. This includes countries that have natural riches, yet suffer tremendous backwardness and have great contrasts. The resources aren't used to help the masses of the people. And such backwardness isn't only in Africa. It's in

the Americas too.

Bolivia, for example, has many tin mines. It has oil and natural gas. Nonetheless, it's tremendously backward. Ecuador the same, even though it's one of the principal exporters of oil. There are permanent social problems, because much of the population lives in virtually subhuman conditions. Until you see these realities, you don't understand how deep the problem goes. You don't understand what the people need. Direct contact with these problems strengthens our understanding. ...

CHUI: As Choy was saying, this experience helped all of us develop politically and ideologically. But the biggest impact was among the soldiers. In Angola and other countries of Africa, they could fully grasp the illiteracy, the misery, the lack of education, the lack of sanitary conditions and health care. ...

Our internationalist combatants observed what people in these countries lack, things we don't lack in Cuba. They learned, in general, a whole series of lessons, and acquired valuable experiences about the inequalities and injustices of today's world.

There are many in the world who denigrate our stance of helping the peoples of other countries who are fighting imperialist oppression. But within Cuba it enabled us to consolidate the political and ideological development of the young people who went to fight and to assist other peoples, who understood the justice of their cause and were later proud of their mission. You couldn't find a better example of this than the Five Heroes* being held prisoner by the empire because of the internationalist mission they were carrying out to defend the people of Cuba against terrorist attacks. They are part of this generation and three of them served in Angola.

* Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, René González, Fernando González and Gerardo Hernández—each of whom has been named "Hero of the Republic of Cuba"—had accepted assignments to monitor counterrevolutionary groups in southern Florida and keep the Cuban government informed about violent attacks being planned against Cuba. They were arrested on frame-up charges in 1998.

February BOOKS OF THE MONTH

PATHFINDER READERS CLUB SPECIALS

25% DISCOUNT

Our History Is Still Being Written

The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution
by Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, Moisés Sío Wong, Mary-Alice Waters
\$20. **Special price: \$15**

Black Music, White Business

by Frank Kofsky
\$17. **Special price: \$12.75**

February 1965: The Final Speeches

by Malcolm X
Speeches from last three weeks of the life of this outstanding leader of the oppressed Black nationality in the U.S.
\$19. **Special price: \$14.25**

Revolutionary Continuity: The Early Years, 1848-1917

by Farrell Dobbs
How successive generations of fighters joined the struggles that shaped the U.S. labor movement, seeking to build a class-conscious revolutionary leadership. \$20. **Special price: \$15**

My Life

by Leon Trotsky
\$35. **Special price: \$26.25**

Rebelión Teamster (Teamster Rebellion)

by Farrell Dobbs
\$19. **Special price: \$14.25**

Join Pathfinder Readers Club for \$10 and receive discounts all year long

**ORDER ONLINE AT
WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM
OFFER GOOD UNTIL FEBRUARY 28**

IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find distributors of the Militant, New International, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 4025 S. Western Ave. Zip: 90062. Tel: (323) 295-2600. E-mail: laswp@sbcglobal.net
San Francisco: 5482 Mission St. Zip: 94112-1015. Tel: (415) 584-2135. E-mail: swpsf@sbcglobal.net

FLORIDA: Miami: 7100 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 306A. Zip: 33138. Tel: (305) 757-8869. E-mail: swpmiami@att.net

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 777 Cleveland Ave. SW Suite 103. Zip: 30315. Tel: (678) 528-7828. E-mail: swpatlanta@bellsouth.net

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 806 W. Washington Blvd. Suite 202. Zip: 60607. Tel: (312) 455-0111. E-mail: Chicagoswp@att.net

IOWA: Des Moines: 3707 Douglas Ave. Zip: 50310. Tel: (515) 707-1779. E-mail: swpdesmoines@fastmail.fm

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 13 Bennington St., 2nd Floor, East Boston. Zip: 02128. Tel: (617) 569-9169. E-mail: swpboston@verizon.net

MINNESOTA: Minneapolis: 416 E. Hennepin Ave., Suite 214. Zip: 55414. Tel: (612) 729-1205. E-mail: tcswp@qwestoffice.net

NEBRASKA, Lincoln: Tel: (402) 217-4906. E-mail: swplincn@windstream.net
Omaha: P.O. Box 7908. Zip: 68107. Tel.: (402) 779-7697. E-mail: swpomaha@fastmail.net

NEW YORK: Manhattan: 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 629-6649. E-mail: newyorkswp@mac.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 3701 Pulaski Ave. Zip: 19140. Tel: (215) 225-1270. E-mail: philaswp@verizon.net

TEXAS: Houston: 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-50L. Zip: 77092. Tel: (713) 688-4919. E-mail: swp.houston@att.net

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 143 Kennedy St. NW, Suite 15. Zip: 20011. Tel: (202) 536-5080. E-mail: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 5418 Rainier Ave. South. Zip: 98118-2439. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: seattleswp@qwestoffice.net

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. E-mail: cl_australia@optusnet.com.au

CANADA

QUEBEC: Montreal: 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. E-mail: clc_can@bellnet.ca

FRANCE

Paris: P.O. 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 40-10-28-37. E-mail: milpath.paris@laposte.net

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: 4/125 Grafton Rd., Grafton. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140. Tel: (09) 369-1223. E-mail: clauack@xtra.co.nz

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: London: First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green Road (Entrance in Brick Lane). Postal code: E2 6DG. Tel: (020) 7613-2466. E-mail: cllondon@fastmail.fm
Manchester: Room 301, 3rd floor, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. Postal code: M1 2EH. Tel: (016) 1478-2496. E-mail: clmanchr@gmail.com

Limits on executive power good for workers

The ruling by the D.C. District Court of Appeals holding unconstitutional U.S. President Barack Obama’s unilateral appointments to the National Labor Relations Board is good for us.

While the *Militant* sides with Teamsters Local 760 against Noel Canning in the labor dispute between them, there are important questions posed for the working class by the lawsuit it gave rise to. Working people should care if the president can act as if Congress does not exist. We should recognize and be concerned about moves that strengthen the powers of the executive branch of the bosses’ government—and no less so when it is done with a veneer of doing “good things” for the people.

Obama’s NLRB appointments and other executive decrees represent an acceleration of a dangerous trend toward elements of Bonapartism, a trend that gained some momentum with executive actions under the presidencies of George W. Bush and William Clinton.

Bonapartism is a term coined by founders of the communist movement out of experiences with Louis Napoleon Bonaparte’s regime in France from 1852 to 1870. It refers to a form of capitalist rule resorted to during times of sharpening class struggle characterized by a strong executive power that demagogically appeals to “the people” and seeks to appear to stand above class conflicts. While this is not posed today, the Obama administration’s drive to strengthen its powers over those of Congress and the courts greases the skids for reactionary forces who in the future will look to give growing Bonapartist trends more backbone.

Obama and the bourgeois-minded professional lawyer he belongs to are not property-owning capitalists.

While useful to the ruling class in maintaining the *social relations* of capitalist production, they have no direct hand in production or capital accumulation itself. This self-styled meritocracy exists at the behest of and is beholden to the ruling families in power, making them both insecure in their social status and fearful of the working class. They display some of the strongest tendencies toward Bonapartist powers in politics today. But when their penchant for executive power runs into conflict with the interests of the capitalist rulers, the meritocracy’s illusion that they wield some independent power in politics gets slapped down.

The separation of powers and curbs on the executive branch of government drafted into the U.S. Constitution slow down and sometimes “gridlock” the ability of the capitalist rulers to make and carry out decisions. This is good for the working class; it affords us more space to organize and act in our separate interests.

The meritocracy has disdain for both the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, which for them are passé documents that get in the way of carrying out their “progressive agenda” for the people, who would be more “grateful” if they weren’t so dumb and backward. “Our founders designed a system that makes it more difficult to bring about change than I would like sometimes,” Obama complained in a Feb. 6, 2012, interview with NBC’s Today Show.

What the ruling class and its meritocratic lackeys fear above all is a confident working-class movement that fights for its own independent interests. Defending constitutional and democratic protections is part of carving out political space to organize and build such a movement.

Court rules appointments unconstitutional

Continued from front page

Obama took it further than any previous White House. Under Bush, Senate Democrats found a way to block some of his recess appointments. During holidays and other breaks, the party leadership would have a senator or two gavel a session open for a few minutes every three days to keep Bush from making any appointments.

Under Obama, Republicans returned the favor and continued this practice. Obama decided he had the power to ignore what they were doing, announced he considered the Senate to be in recess, and made his NLRB appointments anyway.

The president was claiming “free rein to appoint his desired nominees at any time he pleases, whether that time be a weekend, lunch, or even when the Senate is in session and he is merely displeased with its inaction,” Chief Judge David Sentelle wrote in a unanimous decision.

The ruling was attacked by the White House, which called it “novel and unprecedented.”

In a Jan. 25 statement, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka called the decision “nothing less than shocking” and said the court interpreted the Constitution in a way that would deprive presidents of a “critical tool ... to keep agencies functioning and make the government work.”

The case was filed by Noel Canning, a Washington state Pepsi-Cola bottling company, against a labor board ruling in favor of the union

at the plant, Teamsters Local 760. The company argued the ruling should be thrown out because the three Obama appointments were unconstitutional and therefore the board acted without a legitimate quorum.

The court agreed.

Besides calling into question all the board’s decisions over the last year, the court ruling could have broader ramifications. “The decision may affect New York, too,” the *New York Post* editorialized Jan. 26. “The NLRB is expected to rule on the legality of the city school-bus strike next week, but its decisions appear to lack teeth now.”

The ruling could also affect the actions of other presidential “recess” appointments, including the decisions of criminal court judges sending people to prison.

“You know there are people sitting in prisons around the country who will become very excited when they learn of this ruling,” John Elwood, who handled “recess” appointments for George W. Bush’s Justice Department, told the Jan. 26 *New York Times*.

Based on the clear wording of the Recess Clause of the U.S. Constitution, the court held that no president has the right to make his own appointments, without agreement of the Senate, except during the recess between sessions, and only for “Vacancies that may happen during the Recess.”

When the Constitution was written, congressional sessions were much shorter and the recesses between them lasted many months. For this reason, the authors of the Constitution included the Recess Clause to allow the president to fill appointments that might become open during long periods when the Senate was unable to act.

“The manipulation of official appointments had long been one of the American revolutionary generation’s greatest grievances against executive power,” the court quoted from a 1991 Supreme Court decision, “because the power of appointment to offices was deemed the most insidious and powerful weapon of eighteenth century despotism.”

The White House is expected to appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court.

Elections in Israel

Continued from front page

of the deepening capitalist crisis: assaults by bosses on workers’ wages and the expansion of temporary jobs, along with rising prices, tax increases and cuts to social spending, affecting working people and layers of the middle classes.

Contrary to the common radical-liberal view of Israel as a special, isolated island of growing reaction in a sea of Arab revolt, the elections provide additional proof that Israel is part of the Middle East and the unfolding social changes set in motion by the Arab Spring—which has created new openings in the entire region for working-class struggles and a fighting alliance of workers and farmers.

For months leading up to the election, Netanyahu beat the drums on the need to strike Iran before the government there obtained a nuclear weapon, banking he would get his third term on the “existential threat.” It got little traction, showing that most Israelis don’t feel threatened.

In a television ad, Yair Lapid, leader of the Yesh Atid party, poked fun at Netanyahu’s speech at the United Nations last fall in which the prime minister held up a cartoonish drawing of a bomb, and harped on the impending danger from Iran’s nuclear program. Lapid held up a similar drawing depicting the middle class as the bomb and the high cost of living as the fuse.

Yesh Atid (There is a Future)—a capitalist party formed shortly after unprecedented protests against rising prices and housing costs swept Israel in 2011—came in second with 19 seats. Lapid, a former TV news anchor, campaigned on the issues of affordable housing, ending exemptions from military service for the ultra-Orthodox *haredim* and urging a resumption of talks with leaders of the Palestinian territories.

An article by David Remnick in the liberal weekly *New Yorker* on the eve of the election was typical of the pundits. He predicted that openly anti-Arab and racist Habayit Hayehudi, Jewish Home party, would come in third, adding that “second place is not inconceivable.”

Instead, Jewish Home, which calls for annexing to Israel Jewish settlements in the West Bank, squeaked by into fourth place, even though it increased its seats to 12.

The Labor Party, a bourgeois social-democratic party, came in third, jumping from 8 to 17 seats. It campaigned mostly around the high cost of living.

Under Israel’s parliamentary system, the party that wins the most seats has the first opportunity to try to form a new government. Netanyahu has already invited Lapid to join his coalition.

Worried that Palestinian citizens of Israel would boycott the contest, *Haaretz* prior to the election printed an editorial in Hebrew and Arabic, an unusual move for the Hebrew-language daily. “Massive Arab turnout in this election would serve all those who aspire to democracy in this country, Jews and Arabs alike,” the paper said. Palestinian Arabs make up 20 percent of Israel’s population.

Voter turnout among Israeli Jews was 66.6 percent, the highest since 1999. While initial reports said Arab turnout was “lower than ever,” in the end it reached 56 percent, slightly less than in 2006, but more than the 53.4 percent turnout in 2009.

The three main parties based mostly among Israeli Palestinians—the United Arab List, Hadash, and Balad—won a total of 11 seats. “Each of the three parties enjoyed an increase of several thousand voices,” reported *Haaretz*, “thanks to Jewish voters.”

“Netanyahu will probably be able to forge a ruling coalition with Lapid’s party, but it is likely to be a coalition less driven by the ambitions of ideological West Bank settlers or the burgeoning Israeli far right,” writes Scott McConnell in the *American Conservative*.

None of the main Israeli parties consider inviting the Arab-based parties to join their bloc in the Knesset. The exclusion of Palestinian parties from the ruling coalition “is more or less an axiom of Israeli political life,” McConnell writes. But, he said, “that can change, as it has in America ... something like that could happen sometime down the road.”

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.