

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
**‘Blood of Cuba nourished  
 tree of African freedom’**  
 — PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 15 APRIL 22, 2013

## Fidel Castro: ‘War on Korean Peninsula must be avoided’

BY EMMA JOHNSON

If a war breaks out on the Korean Peninsula, Cuban leader Fidel Castro said in an April 4 statement printed in the daily *Granma*, fault will be laid at the doorstep of U.S. President Barack Obama and the U.S. government. “[T]he peoples of both parts of the Peninsula will be terribly sacrificed, without benefit to all or either of them.”

After weeks of rising tensions, officials in Washington have toned down bellicose public statements about the current U.S.-South Korean military exercises aimed at the North and have publicly laid out a “counterprovocation” plan aimed at continuing to tighten the squeeze on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea while lessening the chances of armed conflict.

North Korea has responded to recent U.S. provocations with statements of its intentions to defend itself, and by declaring the 1953 cease-fire void, breaking off all military hot lines with South Korea, and pulling

**Continued on page 9**

## Hong Kong dockworkers’ strike ties up port traffic

Contract workers win solidarity in fight over pay



Striking longshore workers and supporters march through port of Hong Kong April 1. Truck drivers’ union called on all city truckers to take sick leave April 8 in support of dockworkers.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Hundreds of dockworkers demanding better pay and working conditions are on strike in Hong Kong, the world’s third busiest container port and a major transfer point for goods coming in and out of China. The strike and scope of solidarity it is winning have caught the bosses by

surprise.

The walkout began March 28 when about 200 workers employed by subcontractors at Hongkong International Terminals walked off the job, demanding a 20 percent pay raise above their average \$7 hourly pay. Contract companies have offered a 5 percent raise. Over the next few days the number of strikers grew to about 500.

On April 1 a Hong Kong court issued a temporary injunction barring

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## Pundits blame workers on disability for joblessness

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Articles in the big-business press on the U.S. employment situation often rely on the obfuscation of government figures to falsely paint a picture of declining joblessness. Another approach has been to blame workers themselves for the bosses’ disinclination to hire in face of a world crisis rooted in a slowdown of production and trade.

An article in the April 7 edition of the *Wall Street Journal* titled “Workers Stuck in Disability Stunt Economic Recovery” is an example of the latter. The front-page piece by Leslie Scism and Jon Hilsenrath presents a “theory” that amounts to little more than yet another pretext to go after social protections workers have won in struggle and an ideological assault on working-class solidarity.

“Signs of the problem surfaced Friday, in a dismal jobs report that showed the U.S. labor force participation rate falling last month to the lowest levels since 1979, the wrong direction for an economy that instead needs new legions of working men and women to drive growth,” the article said.

The labor force is the section of  
**Continued on page 3**

## Protests around US demand ‘legalize immigrants’



Militant/Deborah Liatos

JERSEY CITY, N.J. — Some 2,000 people demonstrated at Liberty State Park here April 6 as part of actions leading up to April 10 rallies in Washington, D.C., and other cities to demand legalization of 11 million undocumented immigrants. Many participants were members of unions, including Service Employees International Union 32BJ and the Laborers’ International Union.

“We need citizenship for all immigrants,” building maintenance worker and 32BJ shop steward Andrés Salcedo told the *Militant*.

The actions are being organized as Democratic and Republican legislators discuss “immigration reform” bills that include onerous requirements and long waiting periods on a path to legal status, expansion of guest worker programs to ensure bosses ample supply of superexploitable labor with precarious legal status, and measures to step up enforcement of immigration law.

The *Militant* will report on the April 10 actions in next week’s issue. May 1 protests to demand legalization of immigrant workers are planned for New York, Chicago, Seattle and other cities.

—CANDACE WAGNER AND DEBORAH LIATOS

## Students host event at Columbia U, help expand fight to free Cuban 5

BY RUTH ROBINETT

NEW YORK — “We can learn from the Five a lesson for our own struggle of how to stand tall and never bow,” said Randolph Carr, po-

litical chair of the Black Students Organization in opening remarks at a March 29 student-organized event of some 200 people at Columbia University on the fight to free the Cuban Five — Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González. (See “Who Are the Cuban Five?” box on page 6.)

“For me the story of the Five is one that is, unfortunately, similar to the  
**Continued on page 6**

## Mine workers build actions to confront Patriot Coal attack on retirees, union

BY SETH GALINSKY

The United Mine Workers union is stepping up its fight against Patriot Coal Corp.’s efforts to use bankruptcy to gut pensions and health care benefits for thousands of working and retired miners and to tear up union contracts.

The union is calling for miners and others to join in demonstrations in St. Louis on April 16 and again when bankruptcy hearings begin there April 29. More than 6,000 miners and supporters marched in Charleston,

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# UK gov’t cuts accelerate decay of national health care system

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—In recent months street demonstrations against government cuts here, some in the thousands, have helped draw attention to the declining quality of health care.

About 10 percent of emergency departments and maternity wards, and 6 percent of pediatric units have been shut or face closure, affecting up to one-fifth of National Health Service hospitals in England. Patients requiring immediate emergency care are waiting more than half a day for a bed, with 5 percent waiting 11 hours or more. Cataract eye surgery and hip and knee replacements — considered of “low clinical value” — are officially being rationed.

A recent government report on conditions at hospitals in Mid-Staffordshire, in the center of England, revealed that up to 1,200 patients died over a four-year period largely as a result of poor hygiene and other problems resulting from budget cuts.

According to 2011 figures from the Office for National Statistics:

—43 hospital patients starved to death and 111 died of thirst; a total of 558 health care patients died in a state of dehydration;

—78 hospital and 39 care home patients died as a result of bedsores, while a further 650 people had sores noted on their death certificates;

—21,696 were recorded as suffering from septicemia when they died, a condition most often associated with infected wounds.

The Health Service Ombudsman last year condemned the National Health

Service for “inhumane treatment.” His investigation found patients were left hungry, unwashed or given the wrong drugs. An inquest into the death of a young hospital patient last year revealed that he called 9-9-9 emergency to request police intervention because he was so thirsty.

Over the past 10 years, the number of preventable deaths at 14 of the country’s 140 hospital trusts is “a bit over 20,000,” according to findings published by Brian Jarman, a government adviser.

Government officials have launched a campaign to scapegoat nurses — claiming that hygiene problems stem from nurses who often consider themselves “too posh to wash.” At the same time, the government is slashing the number of nurses. Today there are 6,000 fewer than three years ago, according to the Royal College of Nursing.

### ‘Efficiency savings’

The financial constraints are consequences of a government program of so-called efficiency savings initiated by the last Labour government. The Tory-Liberal Democrat coalition is aiming to cut £20 billion (\$30.7 billion) by 2014-15, including through imposing a wage freeze on health care workers.

The attacks are being promoted under the pretense of protecting the health budget. “I’ll cut the deficit, not the NHS” announced Prime Minister David Cameron when standing for election in January 2010. Not only does this ignore the real cuts being carried out under the banner of efficiency savings, it also masks the fact that with



Thousands protest plans to slash services at Lewisham Hospital in London. Action was one of many in recent period against budget cuts, resulting in declining quality of care and layoffs.

rising health service costs, maintaining the same nominal spending level results in a *real terms decrease*. In 2011 the decrease amounted to £857 million (\$1,300 million), according to the Health Service Journal.

The national health care system, enacted by the Labour government of Clement Atlee in 1948, was a gain won in struggle by working people coming out of World War II.

Speaking in Parliament in 1943 in support of moves being considered by the wartime government of Winston Churchill to establish a range of social welfare protections, Conservative Party Member of Parliament Quintin Hogg told Tory MPs, “If you do not give the people social reform, they are going to give you social revolution.”

Millions have taken advantage of what they won to get access to health care, previously denied to them.

But common perceptions peddled by the “left” that the NHS provides universal free care at the point of need, or that the NHS is “ours,” are not accurate.

Not only are people charged for a range of things, including eyeglasses, dentistry and prescriptions. But all government-funded social services are “paid for” through wealth created by the labor of working people. In the case of the NHS, this takes the form of substantial sales and income taxes.

The NHS functions as a cash cow for drug companies, which are able to inflate prices given the understanding

relationship they have with their exchequer-funded customer. And senior doctors — consultants and surgeons — count on inflated incomes and use NHS facilities for their private practice. In addition, the bloated self-serving bureaucracy, which dominates the NHS and which grew massively under the latest Labour government, milks its share.

The increasing commodification of the government-funded health care system under the impact of the capitalist crisis is reflected in changing language itself — many hospitals routinely now refer to patients as “customers.”

At the center of the reorganization of the NHS are moves to deepen the influence of market mechanisms, for example, by expanding competition from private health companies and making local doctors responsible for the budget in their areas.


The changes are designed to increase pressure to make cost a decisive factor in decisions and priorities. General practitioners facing “efficiency savings” pressure are already making such choices.

As a result, an increasing number of workers often go to emergency rooms to avoid long waiting lists for an appointment, or because they anticipate they won’t otherwise get referrals for specialist treatment because of cost. Last year, one-quarter of cancer sufferers were refused referral to oncology specialists when they first visited a general practitioner.

# THE MILITANT

**Release Lynne Stewart, other political prisoners!**

*Framed-up lawyer Lynne Stewart, diagnosed with cancer, is fighting to win release from jail. The ‘Militant’ reports and backs fights to win freedom for political prisoners in the U.S., including the Cuban Five, Oscar López Rivera, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier and others.*



Lynne Stewart with media, April 2002.

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# Joblessness blamed on disabled

Continued from front page

the population that the government counts as either working or looking for work and is used by Labor Department statisticians to calculate the official unemployment rate. Each month the department's Bureau of Labor Statistics has been removing thousands of so-called discouraged workers from the official labor force figures. As a result, the unemployment rate has declined, while the percentage of the population with a job has remained at the same low level for nearly four years straight.

Forexample, in March the Department of Labor reported a drop in the unemployment rate from 7.7 to 7.6 percent. But this slight dip is not because more workers got jobs, but because the government excluded from the workforce count nearly half a million workers.

According to the Department of Labor, there are about 6.4 million workers not counted as part of the labor force "who currently want a job."

But according to Scism and Hilsenrath, the employment crisis results from too many workers declining to "participate" in the labor force. A substantial reason for this, we are to believe, is because of the laziness of millions who opt to receive federal disability benefits instead of looking for a job.

The article cites an "expert," Michael Feroli, chief U.S. economist for J.P. Morgan, who "estimates that since the recession, the worker flight to the Social Security Disability Insurance program accounts for as much as a quarter of the puzzling drop in participation rates, a labor exodus with far-reaching consequences."

High joblessness and large numbers of long-term unemployed over time do result in a smaller workforce. The "puz-

zling" problem, we are told, is not that bosses aren't hiring or the result of a worldwide slowdown in capitalist production and trade, but because of rising ranks of deadbeats. Increasing on-the-job injuries from speedup and other productivity schemes are not even mentioned as possible factors.

This idea is getting an echo in other capitalist papers. "It took a while, but a great many of those folks finally figured out there was another scam to be had — social security disability," wrote Joe Klein in a April 9 piece published in *Time* magazine.

Meanwhile, the labor participation rate of men age 20 and over was 72.7 percent in March, matching the low of August 2012, the lowest level since such records began being kept in 1948.

Workers under age 25 account for nearly half of those "dropped" from the workforce last month. The youth unemployment rate is actually 22.9 percent, stated the *Journal*, if you include the 1.8 million young workers removed from the official workforce since December 2007.

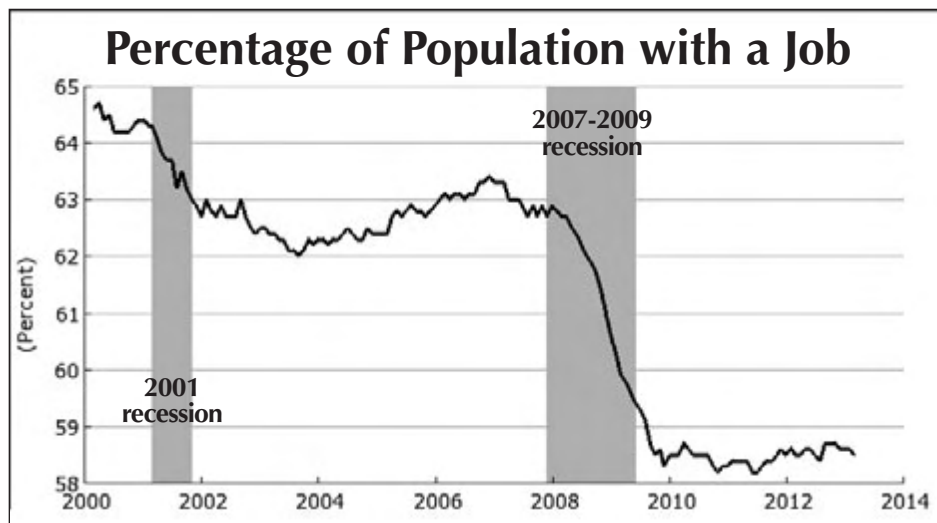
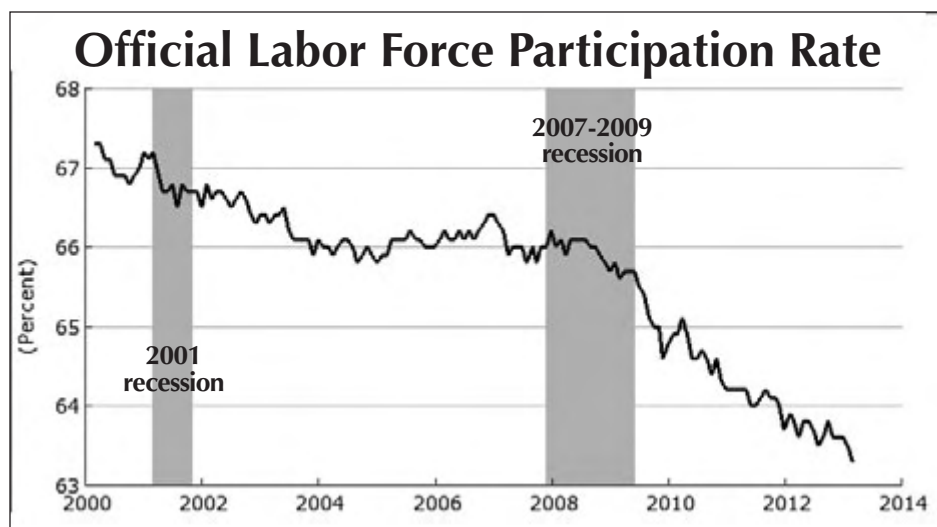
Nearly 40 percent of those unemployed have been out of work for six months or more, according to the Labor Department. And large numbers of workers getting jobs are forced into part-time hours or "temp" work at lower pay.

## Miners, dockworkers snap up socialist newsweekly

BY LOUIS MARTIN

Last week supporters of the *Militant* sold subscriptions going door to door in working-class neighborhoods in big cities and rural areas, outside mine portals and seaports, at union meetings and protest actions.

In the coal-mining region around



In recent years U.S. Labor Department has removed millions of workers who want a job from official labor force figure (top graph). This, not more jobs, accounts for decline in unemployment rate since end of last recession. Proof is fact that percentage of population with a job has remained at low level for nearly past four years (bottom). Some articles in big-business press have been pushing "theory" that declining "participation" in labor force is, at least in part, due to increasing numbers of workers who prefer instead to collect government disability benefits.

Birmingham, Ala., Rachele Fruit and Dave Ferguson from Atlanta sold four subscriptions and 20 single copies, along with two books offered at reduced prices with a subscription. (See ad below.)

One of the main topics of discussion was the fight waged by the

United Mine Workers against Patriot Coal's scheme to use bankruptcy proceedings to cut thousands off health and pensions plans and tear up union contracts.

"My daddy could lose his retirement," said Kevin English, a 34-year-old coal miner, as he bought a *Militant* subscription coming out of the Oak Grove mine. "I could. It could happen to anybody. Going to these rallies is definitely not a waste of time." English took part in a March 19 protest against Patriot in St. Louis.

"This fight at Patriot transcends coal mining," said Wilson Maxwell outside the Concord coal preparation plant. "It will reach out to all industries. This is a long-range thing here." Maxwell went to two protests and said he and others were discussing the upcoming April 16 UMWA action.

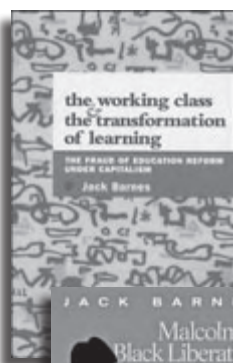
In addition to buying a subscription, Maxwell got *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own*.

Dan Fein and Ruth Robinett report that they sold 20 copies of the *Militant* to members of the International Longshoremen's Association at the entrance to the port at Newark, N.J., April 7, two days before ILA members were scheduled to vote on a new contract. (See article on page 5.)

From Auckland, New Zealand, Janet Roth reported that *Militant* supporters sold seven subscriptions and 30 books — including five copies of *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own* — at two events in late March organized by immigrants from Africa.

If you haven't already done so, join the effort to expand the readership of the socialist newsweekly. Call *Militant* distributors in your region. (See directory on page 8.) Or contact us at themilitant@mac.com or (212) 244-4899.

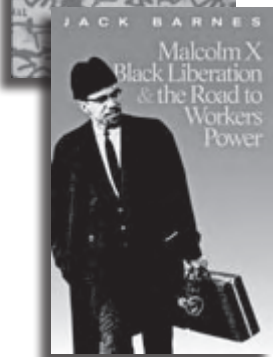
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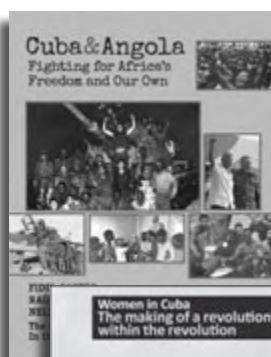
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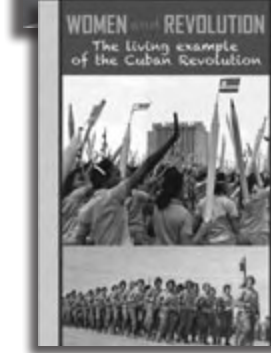


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See distributors on page 8



# Alabama Legislature passes new restrictions on abortion

BY SUSAN LAMONT

The Alabama Legislature adopted new restrictions April 2 for abortion clinics in the state aimed at further limiting women's access to the medical procedure. Gov. Robert Bentley has said he will sign the bill.

The new law would require doctors performing abortions to have admitting privileges at local hospitals. A similar law was passed in North Dakota in March. Tennessee, Mississippi, Kansas, Arizona and Utah already have such requirements. Several of Alabama's five abortion clinics rely on doctors who fly in from out of state and may be unable to get local hospital privileges.

Another requirement in the new law would force clinics to meet building, equipment and staffing standards of ambulatory surgery centers. Some clinics would have to spend millions on changes that serve no medical purpose.

"It requires clinics to be like a miniature hospital," said Dalton Johnson, administrator of Alabama Women's Center for Reproductive Alternatives in Huntsville, in an interview that appeared on al.com. The center is the only abortion clinic in north Alabama.

Meanwhile, the South Wind Women's Clinic opened in Wichita, Kan., April 4, making abortion available in the city of 640,000 for the first time since May

2009, when Dr. George Tiller's clinic was shut down after he was murdered by an anti-abortion rightist.

In another development, a federal judge ruled April 5 that the most common morning-after pill, Plan B One-Step and its generic versions, must be made available without a prescription for women of all ages. The ruling, which also applies to two other morning-after pills, voids a 2011 decision by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to require women 16 and younger to have a prescription for the pill — a decision backed by President Barack Obama.



AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta

Defenders and opponents of women's right to abortion rally outside U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., Jan. 25, marking 40-year anniversary of decision legalizing abortion. Recent bill in Alabama is latest in a series of legal attacks by state governments against women's rights.

## Mine workers fight Patriot Coal's attacks on union

Continued from front page

W.Va., April 1, the largest mobilization of miners in many years.

Peabody Energy Corp. — the largest privately owned coal company in the world — created Patriot Coal in 2007 by spinning off all its union operations east of the Mississippi.

Patriot took on 40 percent of Peabody's pension and health care liabilities, but just 13.3 percent of its coal reserves.

"Spin-off Creates Multiple Benefits for Peabody," reads a headline in one of the company's financial publications

in 2007, referring to the company's jettisoning responsibility for pension and health benefits for some 8,400 retired miners and their families.

In 2008 Patriot bought Magnum Coal, a spinoff from Arch Coal, the second-largest U.S. coal company. Now, more than 90 percent of "Patriot" retirees never worked for Patriot Coal.

In July 2012 Patriot filed for bankruptcy.

On March 14 Patriot filed motions with the federal bankruptcy court "To Reject Collective Bargaining Agreements and to Modify Retiree Benefits."

"'Modify' is their word," UMWA spokesperson Phil Smith said in an April 8 phone interview. "What it really means is 'eliminate.'"

Patriot, like other coal companies where the UMWA has contracts, pays into union-administered funds for retiree health and pension benefits. This multi-employer fund covers 93,000 miners and family members. Patriot has asked the court to allow it to withdraw from the funds.

For health care, Patriot has proposed putting \$15 million in a UMWA-run trust, with vague promises of later adding up to \$300 million based on projected profits.

"The \$300 million is a lot of 'buts,' 'ifs' and 'maybes,'" Smith said. "We will be asking the judge not to take

these steps. If there is going to be some sort of alternate way, it needs to be fully funded."

The *Charleston Daily Mail* reported April 3 that Patriot is also going after the benefits of its nonunion employees, including asking the court to allow it to halt all medical benefits for nonunion retirees.

The UMWA is working with other unions and community and religious groups to build the upcoming protests. "We're not going away," Smith said. "We'll be back and back again, until we get justice."

"It's just wrong the way Peabody has gone about making a new company Patriot Coal, then putting their pensioners in it, and now wanting to dump all their miners and retirees and health care by going bankrupt," Peggy Vondrasek, a retired miner member of UMWA Local 1740, said by phone from Corydon, Ky., April 9. "If Peabody and Patriot can get away with this, who's to say when the rest of the companies will stop paying into the funds?"

"The working people of this country have been messed with enough," she said. "It is time all blue-collar workers come together. Solidarity. An injury to one is an injury to all."

Alyson Kennedy in Chicago contributed to this article.

## Prison officials in Iowa forced to stop shackling pregnant inmates

BY HELEN MEYERS

DES MOINES, Iowa — The Iowa Department of Corrections revised its policy of physically restraining some pregnant prisoners after claims by women subjected to the practice became public. Statements by three women who had been shackled and handcuffed until being admitted for delivery and then again shortly after giving birth were filed with the American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa and reported by the *Des*

*Moines Register*.

Not only is the practice physically painful and degrading, but it poses a number of serious health risks for the woman and her unborn child, medical professionals point out.

Prison officials denied requests from the *Register* to interview the three women, but allowed the paper to interview two others they selected. Tabatha Jo Fortune, one of the two, said her wrists were kept immobile for five hours in a device known as a "black box" just prior to going into labor in December.

Three hours after the interviews, Iowa prison officials contacted the *Register* to announce the policy had been revised to prohibit inmates who are at least 22 weeks pregnant from being restrained unless they posed an "immediate security risk." Prisoners will remain unrestrained after giving birth until they return to prison.

The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in 2009 that prison authorities in Arkansas violated the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution barring cruel and unusual punishment when they shackled a woman during labor and right after delivery.

A bill scheduled to be introduced in the Iowa State Senate to restrict the use of restraints for pregnant inmates was suppressed last week after Sen. Kent Sorenson introduced an amendment that would prohibit the use of state money to "perform or facilitate" abortions for prisoners. Sen. Janet Peterson, the bill's manager, withdrew the bill, she said, because she didn't want to "spark a contentious floor debate on the abortion issue."

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### IOWA

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**Thomas Sankara and the Struggles of African Toilers Today.** Speaker: Helen Meyers, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 19, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 707-1779.

### AUSTRALIA

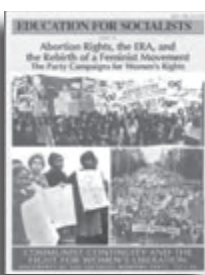
#### Sydney

**End Military Threats and Sanctions Against North Korea. Korea Is One!** Speaker: Linda Harris, Communist League election campaign. Fri., April 19, 7 p.m. Donation: \$4 waged, \$2 unwaged. *Upstairs*, 281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Tel.: (02) 9718-9698.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

**Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own.** Speaker: Joanne Kuniansky, Communist League, Australia, volunteer at Pathfinder stall, Havana International Book Fair. Sat., April 27, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Road. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.



### Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women's Liberation

What social forces have the power to end the second-class status of women? Why is defense of a woman's right to choose abortion a pressing issue for the labor movement? This three-part series helps politically equip the generation of women and men joining battles in defense of women's rights today.

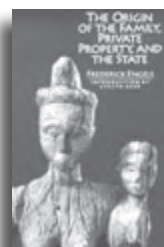
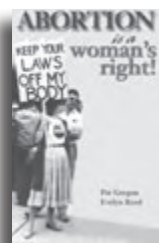
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## ON THE PICKET LINE

### NY fast-food workers strike for '\$15 and a union'

NEW YORK — “We can’t survive on \$7.25!” could be heard for blocks from Marcus Garvey Park in Harlem where some 300 fast-food workers and supporters rallied April 4 for higher wages and union representation. Following the rally, they marched to a nearby McDonald’s.

The action was the culmination of a one-day strike by some 400 workers at dozens of the city’s fast-food chains, including McDonald’s, Wendy’s, KFC and Domino’s.

“I make \$7.25 an hour, I get 30 hours a week,” Kenya Osborne, 20, told the *Militant* at the rally. She has worked at a McDonald’s outlet in Brooklyn for a year. “Six of us went out on strike, but it’s a big place so we didn’t shut it down.”

More than 50,000 people work in the city’s fast-food industry, which is almost entirely nonunion. The average pay is \$8.90 an hour, but many are paid the minimum wage of \$7.25, and a large proportion work less than 40 hours a week.

Osborne participated in the first strike by 200 fast food workers in New York in November. She said she was a bit nervous then, but not this time.

“I really support the demands for \$15 and a union,” Osborne said. “They’ve talked about raising us 75 cents, but nothing has happened.”

The day of actions kicked off in Times Square at 6 a.m. Prior to the afternoon rally, pickets were held outside a McDonald’s and a Wendy’s in midtown Manhattan.

The strike was organized by Fast Food Forward, a community organization. Sponsors include the Service Employees International Union, the Black Institute and UnitedNY.org.

—Emma Johnson

### East and Gulf coast longshore workers to vote on 6-year pact

Some 14,500 members of the International Longshoremen’s Association at 14 ports on the East and Gulf coasts are scheduled to vote April 9 on both a six-year master contract and local agreements covering work schedules and conditions at each port.

The contract negotiations have been lengthy and heated. The port bosses, organized into the United States Maritime Alliance, have been demanding extensive concessions and have made it clear “they were willing to endure a strike if necessary to lower costs and improve productivity,” the *Journal of Commerce* reported.

The New York local agreement would abolish “continuous operation.” This means instead of crews unloading

container vessels until the job is done, they would work regular shifts, ending a practice in which workers get paid for more hours and, as a safety measure, get a two-hour paid break for every four hours worked. The New York contract also sets new productivity standards — 30 moves per gang per hour, to rise to 35 moves per hour by the end of the contract.

—John Studer

### Machinists at United Airlines reject concession contract

SAN FRANCISCO — Members of the International Association of Machinists at United Airlines voted March 30 to reject tentative agreements on contracts for some 32,500 baggage handlers, customer service agents, and storekeeper employees.

Union officials had urged a “yes” vote. United Continental Holdings bosses and IAM officials have asked federal mediators to intervene.

Workers told the *Militant* that concessions demanded by the new company that spurred the “no” vote included an increase in the use of part-timers and contracting out work; separate contracts for the first time for ramp workers, customer service, and stores; and big increases in the cost of medical insurance.

## Hong Kong dockworkers strike, win support

Continued from front page

strikers from entering any of the four container terminals involved in the dispute. The workers then regrouped their picketing outside the port.

“Some 1,000 people marched in support of the striking workers that day,” Elaine Hui, a student living in Hong Kong and spokesperson for Left21, a group organizing support for the walk-out, said in a phone interview.

Four days later the court revised its injunction to allow 80 workers to protest inside the terminal.

“These workers’ wages are lower than in 1997,” said Hui. “They’re asking not just for a wage increase, but want to have bargaining each year.”

During the height of the season, dockworkers often work shifts of up to 72 consecutive hours, Chan Chiu-wai of the Hong Kong Confederation



Militant/Emma Johnson

Rally in Marcus Garvey Park, above, was final action in April 4 one-day protest strike by some 400 fast-food workers in New York demanding \$15 an hour and union representation.

“It’s time to retrieve what we have lost,” Robert Rubio, a forklift driver at United’s maintenance base here, told the *Militant*. “We gave a lot back on wages and took concessions on working conditions and benefits for more than a decade. They are filling the planes again and making money, but we have never recovered most of what we gave up.” The tentative agreement included lump-sum bonuses instead of retroactive pay to make up for lost wages.

“After having to pay 80 percent/20

percent medical, I will be making less money than I am now,” said Mary Murphy, a United storekeeper at the San Francisco airport who said she voted “no.”

“We believe these tentative agreements are in the best interests of our co-workers and the company,” United announced March 30 on its website. “We will work with the IAM and National Mediation Board to determine our next steps.”

—Joel Britton

of Trade Unions, told CNN. The workers are also demanding reinstatement of overtime pay.

Workers operating the cranes moving containers on and off the ships are forced at times to stay in operator cabins high above ground for 24 hours at a time.

On April 8 thousands in Hong Kong marched in support of the strikers, reported the *South China Morning Post*. Several days earlier more than 200 Hongkong International Terminals crane operators began working to rule — doing the minimum required in their contracts and descending to the ground for bathroom breaks.

The Logistics Industry and Container Truck Drivers Union has called on its 1,200 members and the rest of the city’s 20,000 truck drivers to go on collective sick leave April

8 to support the strike. The union is also demanding a 10 percent raise. Hongkong International Terminals is a subsidiary of Hutchison Port Holdings Trust, owned by billionaire Li Ka-shing. Hutchison directly employs 1,800 workers in Hong Kong and an additional 3,000 as contract workers on the docks.

Both Hongkong International Terminals and the contracting companies have refused to negotiate with the Union of Hong Kong Dockers, which represents about 500 workers at the terminal.

The striking workers account for some 30 to 40 percent of dockworkers at Hutchison’s terminals in Hong Kong, reported the *Wall Street Journal*. They are having a big impact in tying up port traffic in the waters of the South China Sea surrounding Hong Kong.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 22, 1988

MIAMI — A spirited march of 150 people took place here April 2 to protest the dumping of toxic waste in Haiti. The demonstrators, mainly from the Haitian community, marched through downtown Miami to the Federal Building and past the Haitian consulate.

Members of Committee Veye-Yo (“Watch Them”), which organized the action, handed out fliers in English and Spanish that explained that more than 3,000 tons of hazardous toxic incinerator ash from Philadelphia had been dumped in Gonaïves, Haiti. The waste poses a severe health threat to humans and animals in the area.

When it was discovered that the ash being unloaded in Gonaïves was not fertilizer, the ship was ordered to leave.



April 22, 1963

PARIS — The nationalization of big properties of both European and Algerian landholders and the announcement of decrees definitively establishing Workers’ Management Committees, Workers’ Councils and Workers’ Assemblies have been received with enormous enthusiasm throughout Algeria.

In a nation-wide tour following announcement of the new measures, Ben Bella was greeted with celebrations reminiscent of those when independence was won last July. Entire populations of towns and villages turned out to hail the head of government.

“We will never agree to letting our country serve as an arena for the testing of bombs. The French government has been warned.”



April 23, 1938

LOS ANGELES — The Venice local of the Mexican Union of Agricultural workers in Southern California voted unanimously to strike if their demands for closed shop and a wage increase were not met by the Palm-Venice Growers Association within eight days.

The union meeting was attended by 150 workers who represented a large section of the harvesters of the local lettuce crop.

No agreement has been reached, but negotiations are continuing.

Because of the permanent poverty of these workers, the use of race prejudice against them, the extreme brutality of police action in all of their strike struggles, it is necessary to ask workers everywhere to be prepared to come to their assistance.



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# Cuban 5 meeting in NY

Continued from front page

story of the many unseen and forgotten that sit, waiting and waiting, behind the wall of America's dungeons," said Carr, who is also a leader of Students Against Mass Incarceration. "Similar to the Five, people are swept into the system of incarceration by whatever means and forced to bow down to the weight of that machine. The Five have been swept into that system, and to this day remain unbowed." He then posed the question: "What do we have to learn about how to live free from those forced to live in cages because of their politics?"

Sponsored by eight campus organizations, the event was attended by dozens of Columbia students. Speakers included representatives from the Caribbean Students Association and the Chicano Caucus of Columbia University; Martin Garbus, lead attorney for the Five; Rodolfo Reyes, Cuban ambassador to the United Nations; Julio Escalona, Venezuelan deputy ambassador to the U.N.; and Luis Rosa, a Puerto Rican independence fighter and former political prisoner who spent 19 years behind bars in the U.S. It was chaired by Nancy Cabrero, president of Casa de las Américas, and civil rights attorney Michael Warren, who provided an extensive overview of the U.S. government's frame-up.

## 'Cuba gives meaning to solidarity'

Imani Brown speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Students Association, talked about why the group decided to "stand in solidarity with the Cuban Five and what they stand for."

Brown pointed to the role and example of Cuba in the Caribbean and beyond. "In the history of independence struggles and movements to end the reign of colonialism and neocolonialism worldwide, Cuba has not hesitated to lend its support and strategic partnership to what it has seen as its Caribbean and African family," Brown said, "ranging from sending freedom fighters to Angola — fighters who include three of the Cuban Five, I should note — in order to end South African apartheid, to providing scholarships to Cuban medical schools to the rest of the Caribbean. Cuba has given new meaning to ideals of solidarity, unity, and support within its community."

Hernández, Fernando González and René González all took part in Cuba's

internationalist combat mission to defend Angola from the invading white supremacist army of apartheid South Africa (see article on page 7). Like Hernández and Fernando González, Cuban Ambassador Reyes served during the later years of the 1975-91 mission, after graduating from Cuba's Institute for Advanced Study of International Relations, where they were studying to be diplomats.

"We were not professional soldiers," Reyes said. "We volunteered to go to Angola to fight apartheid and help defend the sovereignty of the Angolan people."

"Fernando and Gerardo could have been in my place," said Reyes. "But they agreed to take on responsibility for a mission to defend the dignity, sovereignty and life of the Cuban people."

When Fernando and Gerardo returned from Angola, Reyes noted, counterrevolutionary paramilitary groups operating with impunity from southern Florida were stepping up a campaign of bombings in Cuba, targeting the island's tourist industry and carrying out other provocations designed to draw Washington into a military confrontation with Havana. The Five's mission, Reyes said, was to protect the revolution by gathering information on the activities and plans of these rightist groups.

In the days leading up to the event, students organized a successful free-speech campaign to prevent the university administration from limiting participation from outside the campus to 15 people on the pretext of "public safety." Most who wanted to were able to attend as a result of the students' victory. But dozens who were not on an RSVP list were turned away by university officials.

"We have run into some difficulties, as events like this centered around things others deem controversial often do," said Brown. "But that's not going to stop us when it comes to our voices being heard about this important topic."

## 'Fight to free 5 is fight for ourselves'

"I would not be here today if not for your voices," former political prisoner Rosa told the meeting, urging everyone to keep speaking out to free the Five and other U.S. political prisoners, because it helps the prisoners to resist and helps protect them.

"When we speak of supporting ... political prisoners, we do this not just



Photos by Roberto Mercado

Above: Participants in March 29 Columbia University meeting on Cuban Five. "Fernando and Gerardo could have been in my place," said Cuban Ambassador to U.N. Rodolfo Reyes (inset). "But they agreed to take on a mission to defend the dignity, sovereignty and life of Cuban people."



for them," Rosa said. "We fight to free ourselves in the process."

He quoted Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera, who wrote that the U.S. government denies it has political prisoners in order to "hoodwink its own citizens into believing it doesn't criminalize dissenters ... and to perpetuate the lie that it's the ultimate defender of freedom, justice, democracy and human rights in the world." May 29 will mark López's 32nd year in prison in the U.S., Rosa pointed out.

Rosa encouraged participants to join a June 1 rally at the White House in Washington, D.C., to demand freedom for the Five.

"The Chicano Caucus of Columbia University stands in solidarity with the Cuban Five and stands against any manifestation of the United States' corrupt justice system," said a statement read by David Luna and Gerardo Romo. "The Chicano Caucus says no to a system that labels some politics, cultures, skin colors — entire human lives and their survival — as illegal. The freedom of the Cuban Five would not just be a blow against the severe human rights violations done to those men. It would also strike a blow against a system that profits off the violence and dehumanization suffered by immigrants and people of color every day in this country."

Attorney Garbus talked about several aspects of the case, including the role of

the media, which carried out a campaign of prejudicial reporting and helped fuel an environment of intimidation, including by capturing jurors' faces and licenses plates on camera.

This stage of the legal defense, Garbus said, is centered around one aspect of the frame-up unknown at the time of the trial: evidence that dozens of journalists writing or broadcasting about the case were on the U.S. government's payroll. A court response to the defense's appeal on these grounds is due in April, he said.

Venezuelan Deputy Ambassador Escalona closed the program saying that through the frame-up the U.S. government is "trying to put the Cuban Revolution on trial."

"But the Cuban Revolution is alive and its example is an inspiration for the peoples of the world," Escalona said, "Cuba remains an example of dignity in the world."

Sponsoring organizations from Columbia University and Barnard College were the Caribbean Students Association, the African Students Organization, Black Organization of Soul Sisters, Black Students Organization, Chicano Caucus, Haitian Students Association, LUCHA and Students Against Mass Incarceration. The meeting was endorsed by Casa de las Américas, Popular Educational Project to Free the Cuban Five, and the July 26 Coalition, a group in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution.

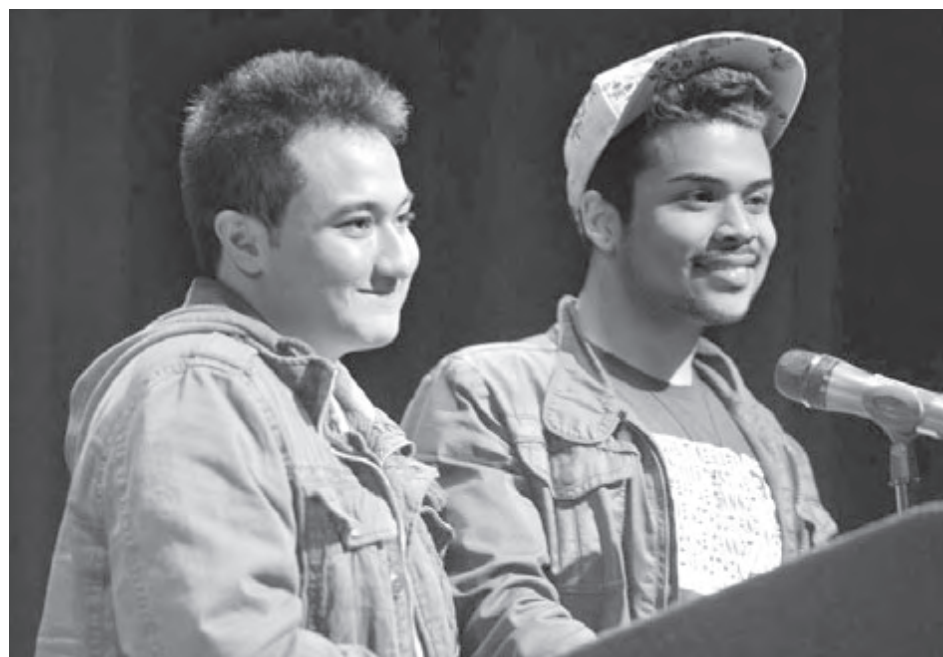
## Who are the Cuban Five?

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 shoot-down 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.



Roberto Mercado

"Winning freedom for the Cuban Five would strike a blow against a system that profits off the violence and dehumanization suffered by immigrants and people of color every day in this country," said David Luna and Gerardo Romo of the Chicano Caucus of Columbia University.



# ‘Blood of Cuba nourished tree of African freedom’

Internationalist aid decisive in defeat of South African invasion of Angola, changed course of history

Between 1975 and 1991 more than 375,000 Cuban combatants volunteered to go to Angola in response to a request from the Angolan government to help defend the country against a military invasion by the white supremacist regime of South Africa.

The first Cuban troops arrived only days before Angola was to become independent from Portugal on Nov. 11, 1975, and just in time to play a decisive role in repelling the invaders as they closed in on the capital Luanda. In late 1987 Angola was threatened again by a new South African offensive centered on the town of Cuito Cuanavale.

## 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF BATTLE OF CUITO CUANAVALÉ

Piero Gleijeses, professor of American foreign policy at the School of Advanced International Studies at John Hopkins University, published this article in 2007 on the 20th anniversary of the Cuban-Angolan victory in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale.

Since the article was written, “I have conducted an exhaustive research on the South African archives, and the South African documents support what my article says,” Gleijeses wrote to the *Militant*. This previously unavailable information will be included in Gleijeses’ forthcoming book *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991*, scheduled for release in September. Gleijeses is also author of *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976*.

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### BY PIERO GLEIJESES

Cuito Cuanavale is not just a small town in southeastern Angola. It is also the symbol of a campaign that twenty years ago pitted the armed forces of Apartheid South Africa against the Cuban army from late 1987 through August 1988. This campaign was a

great victory for the South African army, General Magnus Malan tells us in his memoirs. Nelson Mandela could not disagree more: Cuito Cuanavale, he asserted, “was the turning point for the liberation of our continent — and of my people — from the scourge of apartheid.”<sup>1</sup>

This debate about the significance of Cuito Cuanavale has been fueled by the fact that the South African documents about the campaign remain classified. I have been able to study, however, the relevant documents from the closed Cuban archives, as well as many US documents. Despite the ideological divide that separates them, the Cuban and American documents tell a remarkably similar story.

Let me review the facts, briefly. In July 1987 the Angolan army (FAPLA) launched a major offensive in southeastern Angola against Jonas Savimbi’s forces. When the offensive started to succeed, the South African armed forces (SADF), who controlled the lower reaches of southwestern Angola, intervened in the southeast. By early November, the SADF had cornered the elite Angolan units in Cuito Cuanavale and was poised to destroy them.

The United Nations Security Council demanded that SADF unconditionally withdraw from Angola, but the Reagan administration had ensured that the demand had no teeth.

US Assistant Secretary for Africa Chester Crocker reassured Pretoria’s ambassador, “The resolution did not contain a call for comprehensive sanctions, and did not provide for any assistance to Angola. That was no accident, but a consequence of our own efforts to keep the resolution within bounds.”<sup>2</sup> This gave the SADF time to annihilate the best units of the FAPLA.

### Cuba sends reinforcements

By early 1988, South African military sources and western diplomats were confident that the fall of Cuito was imminent. This would have dealt a devastating blow to the Angolan government.

But on November 15, 1987, Fidel



Pascal Guyot/AFP/Getty Images

**Cuban volunteer combatants with Angolan troops on patrol near Cuito Cuanavale, Feb. 29, 1988. One month later Cuban and Angolan forces blocked South African military’s last major assault. Nelson Mandela, leader of liberation struggle in South Africa, called battle for Cuito Cuanavale “the turning point for the liberation of our continent from the scourge of apartheid.”**

Castro had decided to send more troops and weapons to Angola — his best planes with his best pilots, his most sophisticated anti-aircraft weapons and his most modern tanks. Castro wanted to do more than save Cuito Cuanavale: he wanted to force the SADF out of Angola, once and for all. He later described his strategy to Joe Slovo, the head of the South African Communist Party: Cuba would halt the South African onslaught against Cuito Cuanavale and then attack from another direction, “like a boxer who with his left hand blocks the blow and with his right — strikes.”<sup>3</sup>

Cuban planes and 1,500 Cuban soldiers reinforced the Angolans at Cuito. Cuito did not fall.

On March 23, 1988, the SADF launched its last major attack on the town. As Colonel Jan Breytenbach writes, the South African assault “was brought to a grinding and definite halt” by the combined Cuban and Angolan forces.<sup>4</sup>

Now Fidel’s right hand prepared to strike. Powerful Cuban columns were marching through southwestern Angola toward the Namibian border. The South African documents telling us what the South African leaders thought about this sudden threat are still classified. But we know what the SADF did: it gave ground. US intelligence explained that the South Africans withdrew because they were impressed by the suddenness and scale of the Cuban advance and because they believed that a major battle “involved serious risks.”<sup>5</sup>

As a child, in Italy, I heard my father talk about the hope he and his friends had felt in December 1941 as they had listened to the radio reports of the German troops vacating the city of Rostov on the Don. It was the first time in two years of war that the German superman had been forced to retreat. I remembered his words — and the profound sense of relief they conveyed — as I read the South African and Namibian press from these months in early 1988.

On May 26, 1988, the chief of the SADF announced that “heavily armed Cuban and SWAPO forces, integrated for the first time, have moved south within sixty kilometers of the Namibian border.” The South African Administrator

General in Namibia acknowledged on June 26 that Cuban MIG-23s were flying over Namibia, a dramatic reversal from earlier times when the skies had belonged to the SADF. He added that “the presence of the Cubans had caused a flutter of anxiety throughout the R[epublic of] S[outh] A[frica].”<sup>6</sup>

Among whites, that is. For the blacks of Namibia and of South Africa the advance of the Cuban columns toward the border, pushing back the troops of apartheid, was a clarion of hope.

While Castro’s troops advanced toward Namibia, Cubans, Angolans, South Africans, and Americans were sparring at the negotiating table. Two issues were paramount: whether South Africa would finally accept the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435, which prescribed Namibia’s independence, and whether the parties could agree on a timetable for the withdrawal of the Cuban troops from Angola.

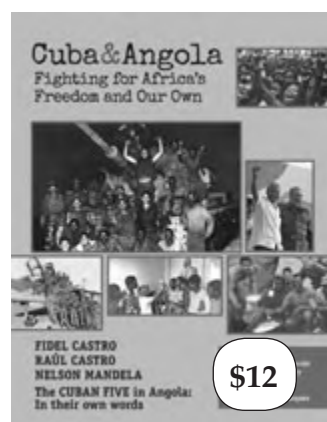
### Pretoria’s hopes dashed

The South Africans had arrived at the negotiations with high hopes: Foreign Minister Pik Botha expected that Resolution 435 would be modified; Defense Minister Malan and President P.W. Botha asserted that South Africa would withdraw from Angola only “if Russia and its proxies did the same.” They did not mention withdrawing from Namibia. On March 16, 1988, *Business Day* reported that Pretoria was “offering to withdraw into Namibia — not from Namibia — in return for the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola. The implication is that South Africa has no real intention of giving up the territory any time soon.”<sup>7</sup>

But the Cubans had reversed the situation on the ground, and when Pik Botha voiced the South African demands, Jorge Risquet, who headed the Cuban delegation at the June round of talks, fell on him like a ton of bricks: “The time for your military adventures, for the acts of aggression that you have pursued with impunity, for your massacres of refugees ... is over.” South Africa, he said, was acting as though it was “a victorious army, rather than what it re-

**Continued on page 9**

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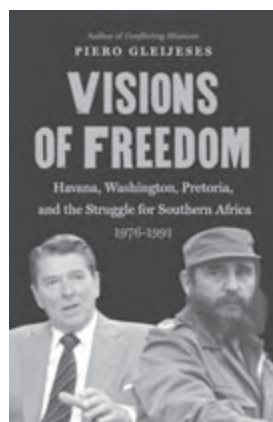
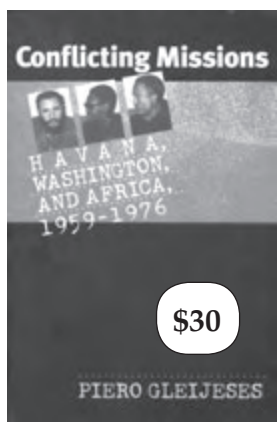
Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, Nelson Mandela, the Cuban Five in Angola

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# Trotsky: ‘Abortion is key civic, political, cultural right of women’

Below is an excerpt from *Problems of Everyday Life*, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for April. The book by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky includes articles on social and cultural issues facing the toilers in the Soviet Union coming out of the first successful proletarian revolution, which took place in Russia in October 1917. The excerpt is from a piece Trotsky wrote in 1936, seven years after he was exiled by a bureaucratic caste led by Josef Stalin that had usurped political power and reversed the gains of the revolution. Copyright © 1973 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

The October Revolution honestly fulfilled its obligations in relation to woman. The young government not only gave her all political and legal rights in equality with man, but, what is more important, did all that it could, and in any case incomparably more than any other government ever did, actually to secure her access to all forms of economic and cultural work. However, the boldest revolution, like the “all-powerful” British Parliament, cannot convert a woman into a man—or rather cannot divide equally between them the burden of pregnancy, birth, nursing, and the rearing of children.



Women rail workers in Russia hold training class, December 1923. The working class, oppressed nationalities and women won major gains through revolution, which opened door for their entry into making history. After death of V.I. Lenin, central leader of Bolshevik Party, a counterrevolutionary bureaucratic caste began to make inroads against gains of 1917 revolution, including on rights of women, among them their right to safe and legal abortion.

The revolution made a heroic effort to destroy the so-called family hearth—that archaic, stuffy, and stagnant institution in which the woman of the toiling classes performs galley labor from childhood to death. The place of the family as a shut-in petty enterprise was to be occupied, according to the plans, by a finished system of social care and accommodation: maternity houses, child-care centers, kindergartens, schools, social dining rooms, social laundries, first-aid stations, hospitals, sanatoria, athletic organizations, moving-picture theaters, etc. The complete absorption of the housekeeping functions of the family by institutions of the socialist society, uniting all generations in solidarity and mutual aid, was to bring to woman, and thereby to the loving couple, a real liberation from the thousand-year-old fetters.

Up to now this problem of problems has not been solved. The forty million Soviet families remain in their overwhelming majority nests of medievalism, female slavery and hysteria, daily humiliation of children, feminine and childish superstition. We must permit ourselves no illusions on this account. For that very reason, the consecutive

changes in the approach to the problem of the family in the Soviet Union best of all characterize the actual nature of Soviet society and the evolution of its ruling stratum. ...

The mass homelessness of children is undoubtedly the most unmistakable and most tragic symptom of the difficult situation of the mother. On this subject even the optimistic *Pravda* is sometimes compelled to make a bitter confession: “The birth of a child is for many women a serious menace to their position.” It is just for this reason that the revolutionary power gave women the right to abortion, which in conditions of want and family distress, whatever may be said upon this subject by the eunuchs and old maids of both sexes, is one of her most important civil, political, and cultural rights. However, this right of women too, gloomy enough in itself, is under the existing social inequality being converted into a privilege. ...

Having revealed its inability to serve women who are compelled to resort to abortion with the necessary medical aid and sanitation, the state makes a sharp change of course and takes the road of prohibition. And just as in other situations, the bureaucracy makes a virtue

of necessity. One of the members of the highest Soviet court, Soltz, a specialist on matrimonial questions, bases the forthcoming prohibition of abortion on the fact that in a socialist society where there are no unemployed, etc., etc., a woman has no right to decline “the joys of motherhood.” The philosophy of a priest endowed also with the powers of a gendarme. We just heard from the central organ of the ruling party that the birth of a child is for many women, and it would be truer to say for the overwhelming majority, “a menace to their position.” We just heard from the highest Soviet institution that “the liquidation of homeless and uncared-for children is being weakly carried out,” which undoubtedly means a new increase of homelessness. But here the highest Soviet judge informs us that in a country where “life is happy” abortion should be punished with imprisonment just exactly as in capitalist countries where life is grievous. ...

The lyric, academic, and other “friends of the Soviet Union” have eyes in order to see nothing. The marriage and family laws established by the October Revolution, once the object of its legitimate pride, are being made over and mutilated by vast borrowings from the law treasuries of the bourgeois countries. And as though on purpose to stamp treachery with ridicule, the same arguments which were earlier advanced in favor of unconditional freedom of divorce and abortion—“the liberation of women,” “defense of the rights of personality,” “protection of motherhood”—are repeated now in favor of their limitation and complete prohibition. ...

How man enslaved woman, how the exploiter subjected them both, how the toilers have attempted at the price of blood to free themselves from slavery and have only exchanged one chain for another—history tells us much about all this. In essence, it tells us nothing else. But how in reality to free the child, the woman, and the human being? For that we have as yet no reliable models. All past historical experience, wholly negative, demands of the toilers at least and first of all an implacable distrust of all privileged and uncontrolled guardians.

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# ‘War in Korea must be avoided’

**Continued from front page**

North Korea workers out of the joint Kaesong industrial park in the North and barring entry to the facilities from the South. Pyongyang also announced it was moving to strengthen its nuclear weapons capacity, but would work to further reduce nuclear proliferation if there were an “improvement of relations with hostile nuclear weapons states.”

The new U.S. counterprovocation plan with South Korea calls for a forceful, but “proportional,” retaliation to any response from North Korea.

“In 1950, a war was unleashed there which took millions of lives,” said Fidel Castro in a statement titled, “The duty to avoid a war in Korea.”

“It came barely five years after two atomic bombs were exploded over the defenseless cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which killed and irradiated hundreds of thousands of people.

“General Douglas MacArthur wanted to utilize atomic weapons against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea [North Korea]. Not even Harry Truman allowed that,” Castro said. “The People’s Republic of China lost one million valiant soldiers in order to prevent the installation of an enemy army on that country’s border with its homeland.”

## Crisis rooted in division of Korea

The current crisis is rooted in the 1945 division of the Korean nation, imposed against the will of its people by U.S. imperialism, with the agreement of the Stalinist leadership in the Soviet Union. After imposing a brutal puppet dictatorship in the South, Washington carried out a bloody war, but failed to overthrow the government in the North. To this day, Washington refuses to sign a peace treaty with North Korea and maintains some 28,000 troops in the South. The U.S. military has long-range strategic missiles aimed at North Korea.

“The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea was always friendly with Cuba,” Castro says, “as Cuba has always been, and will continue to be with her.

“Now that the country has demonstrated its technical and scientific achievements,” Castro said, referring to Pyongyang’s nuclear and ballistic missile technology, “we remind her of her duties to the countries which have been her great friends, and it would be unfair to forget that such a war would particularly affect more than 70 percent of the population of the planet.”

Seoul, the sixth most populated city in the world, would face immediate and massive devastation if war broke out on the peninsula, Pyongyang has said in public statements.

“If a conflict of that nature should break out there, the government of Barack Obama in his second term would be buried in a deluge of images which would present him as the most sinister character in the history of the United States,” said Castro. “The duty of avoiding war is also his and that of the people of the United States.”

Unlike in the past, the new U.S. counterprovocation plan was publicly disclosed.

“How we carry out a proportional retaliation without triggering a general conflict, or an assault on Seoul, is the hardest part of the problem,” Gary

Samore, who until recently served as Obama’s top nuclear adviser, told the *New York Times* April 7.

David Maxwell, associate director of the Center for Security Studies at Georgetown University and a retired army colonel who served five tours in South Korea, said in the same article that the responses “have to be delivered decisively, at the time and at the point of provocation.”

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has postponed tests of an intercontinental ballistic missile, concerned that they might “exacerbate the crisis with North Korea,” the *Times* reported.

The U.S. is pressing China, its main rival in Asia, to exert pressure on North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons. Officials in the Obama administration told the *Times* that “Beijing faces a choice between cracking down on North Korea or facing a larger American military presence in East Asia.” Beijing has no interest in a war on the peninsula that could lead to U.S. troops being stationed at its border.

Secretary of State John Kerry will start an Asian tour in Beijing April 13 and travel on to South Korea and Japan.

A week later, Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will spend four days in China for consultations with the Chinese military.

# ‘Cuban blood nourished tree of African freedom’

**Continued from page 7**

ally is: a defeated aggressor that is withdrawing. ... South Africa must face the fact that it will not obtain at the negotiating table what it could not achieve on the battlefield.”<sup>8</sup>

As the talks ended, Crocker cabled Secretary of State George Shultz that they had taken place “against the backdrop of increasing military tension surrounding the large build-up of heavily armed Cuban troops in southwest Angola in close proximity to the Namibian border. ... The Cuban build-up in southwest Angola has created an unpredictable military dynamic.”<sup>9</sup>

The burning question for the South Africans and Americans was: Would the Cubans stop at the border? To answer this question, Crocker sought out Risquet: “Does Cuba intend to halt its troops at the border between Namibia and Angola?” Risquet replied, “If I told you that the troops will not stop, it would be a threat. If I told you that they will stop, I would be giving you a Meprobamato [a Cuban tranquilizer]. ... and I want to neither threaten nor reassure you. ... What I can say is that the only way to guarantee [that our troops stop at the border] would be to reach an agreement [on the independence of Namibia].”<sup>10</sup>

The next day, June 27, 1988, Cuban

## Antonio Guerrero’s ‘Mariposas of Cuba’ opens in US



Militant/Eric Simpson

SAN FRANCISCO — Some 80 people gathered at the Eric Quezada Center here March 29 for the premier exhibit in the U.S. of “The Mariposas of Cuba” by Antonio Guerrero, one of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and jailed by the U.S. government for nearly 15 years. The collection is comprised of watercolor paintings of the 25 butterflies indigenous to Cuba.

Exhibits of Guerrero’s works, as well as political cartoons by Gerardo Hernández, have helped win support for the Five. The event featured a reading by San Francisco poet laureate Alejandro Murguía (speaking). Music was provided by Chilean singer Maria Loreto. Filmmaker Saul Landau and Alicia Jrapko of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5, which organized the event, spoke on the fight to free the Five.

“Your support gives us enormous strength and brotherhood after 15 years of our unjust imprisonment,” Guerrero said in a message to the event.

—BETSEY STONE

MIGs attacked the SADF positions near the Calueque dam, eleven kilometers north of the Namibian border. The CIA reported that “Cuba’s successful use of air power and the apparent weakness of Pretoria’s air defenses” highlighted the fact that Havana had achieved air superiority in southern Angola and northern Namibia. A few hours after the Cubans’ successful strike, the SADF destroyed a nearby bridge over the Cunene river. They did so, the CIA surmised, “to deny Cuban and Angolan ground forces easy passage to the Namibia border and to reduce the number of positions they must defend.”<sup>11</sup>

Never had the danger of a Cuban advance into Namibia seemed more real.

On August 30, the last South African soldiers left Angola. They left before the negotiators had even begun to discuss the timetable of the Cuban withdrawal from Angola — as Havana had demanded, these discussions could begin only after the SADF had left Angola.

Despite Washington’s best efforts to stop it, Cuba changed the course of southern African history. Even Assistant Secretary Crocker acknowledged Cuba’s role when he cabled Shultz, on August 25, 1988, “Reading the Cubans is yet another art form. They are prepared for both war and

peace. We witness considerable tactical finesse and genuinely creative moves at the table. This occurs against the backdrop of Castro’s grandiose bluster and his army’s unprecedented projection of power on the ground.”<sup>12</sup>

The Cubans’ prowess on the battlefield and skill at the negotiating table were instrumental in forcing South Africa to accept Namibia’s independence. Their successful defense of Cuito was the prelude for their campaign in the southwest that forced the SADF out of Angola. This victory reverberated beyond Namibia.

Many authors — General Malan is just the most recent example — have sought to rewrite the history of what happened in that memorable year of 1988, but the US and Cuban documents tell another story. It was expressed eloquently by Thenjiw e Mtintso, the South African ambassador to Cuba, in December 2005: “Today, South Africa has many new friends. Yesterday, these same friends called our leaders ‘terrorists’ and supported the South Africa of Apartheid. ... Now they ask us to denounce and isolate Cuba. Our response is very simple: it is the blood of Cuban martyrs — not that of these new friends — that runs deep in the soil of Africa and has nourished the tree of freedom of our motherland.”<sup>13</sup>

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- Alberton, 2002, p. 308.
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11. CIA, “South Africa - Angola - Cuba,” June 29, 1988, FOIA; CIA, “South Africa - Angola - Namibia,” July 1, 1988, FOIA.
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13. Dec. 2, 2005, speech, courtesy of Thenjiwe Mtintso.