

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Garment workers in Cambodia demand double minimum wage  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 78/NO. 1 JANUARY 6, 2014

## SKorea gov't steps up attack on rail strikers

Raids union offices, arrests strike leaders



Corbis/Demotix/Ben Weller

Dec. 23 protest in Busan, South Korea, against government attack on rail workers. Union called strike after state-owned KORAIL refused to negotiate over plans to set up subsidiary company workers say is step toward privatization and assaults on wages, jobs and safety.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

In an escalation of its attempt to break a strike by workers at the state-owned rail company, the South Korean government raided the offices of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions Dec. 22. Some 8,000 members of the Korean Railway Workers Union walked off the job Dec. 9.

Five thousand cops surrounded the confederation offices in Seoul and then 600 riot police forced their way into the building. The Railway Workers Union belongs to the KCTU, one of the country's two main union federations with nearly 700,000 members, and affiliates in auto, rail, construction and education.

"There were 800 of us defending the offices," Mykyung Ryu, the KCTU's international director, said by phone from Seoul Dec. 23. "I was

among 150 union members sitting on the stairs to block police from going into the main office on the 14th floor. They came down by the roof. They used pepper spray against us to force their way through."

The cops had arrest warrants for rail union President Kim Myung-hwan and 24 other strike leaders. They searched through the building for nine hours, but failed to find any of the unionists on their list.

"They arrested 138 union members who were defending the building and detained them for 48 hours," Ryu said. "They were accused of 'obstruction of justice.' They released all except the teachers union president, who they claim was violent during the clash."

Workers went on strike after the Korean Railroad Corporation  
**Continued on page 7**

## Marches across Spain protest bill that would curb women's right to abortion

BY SETH GALINSKY

Tens of thousands of women and men took to the streets in 21 cities across Spain Dec. 21 to protest a bill proposed by the ruling Popular Party that would overturn a 2010 law that made it legal for women to have an abortion through the 14th week of pregnancy. Many carried signs saying "Abortion is not a crime," "The right to choose!" and "It's my body, I decide."

"It's unacceptable that abortion depends only on the will of the woman with no other factor taken into account," Justice Minister Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón said at a press conference in Madrid announcing the bill. He claimed that the law seeks to "recover a balance" between women's

rights and the rights of the unborn fetus.

Gábor Joya, spokesperson for the anti-woman group Right to Life, had her take on the meaning of balance. She told Spain's *El Mundo* the bill "is a step toward our aim of zero abortion."

"We totally refuse to accept a restriction on the freedom and autonomy of women in regards to sexuality and deciding on maternity," said a statement signed by 329 women's rights, medical and political organizations in Spain. "It is our right to decide about our bodies and our lives."

If approved by Parliament, the bill would ban abortion except in case of rape, "to avoid a grave threat to the

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## Welcome to readers who subscribed in fall drive!

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The *Militant* extends a warm welcome to the 2,975 readers who subscribed to the socialist newsweekly during the fall subscription and books campaign.

We welcome those of you, the vast majority of new subscribers, in cities, towns and rural areas across Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States who signed up when *Militant* supporters knocked on your door to introduce the paper. We thank you for taking the time to discuss how working people can organize to defend ourselves, reach out in solidarity with others and how, over time and through struggle,

**Continued on page 3**

**New Year's greetings to workers behind bars!**

— See editorial p. 9

## Rulers fiddle with monetary policy, as jobs crisis persists

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

As Ben Bernanke, chairman of the Federal Reserve, prepares to hand over the appointed post to Obama administration pick Janet Yellen, he announced Dec. 13 plans to taper the Fed's "quantitative easing" monetary scheme, whose stated purpose was to "stimulate" economic activity following the world financial crisis of 2008-2009. Meanwhile, working people continue to bear the brunt of a capitalist crisis for which the propertied rulers have no solution.

The announcement provided a new talking point in the sharp debates among capitalist economists over the Fed's policies, much of which reflects their difficulty in accepting that the world economic crisis is neither the result of any government policy nor can any such policy do anything to reverse it. It is rather the result of a

**Continued on page 6**

## Out of prison, Pussy Riot members vow to fight on, say 'Putin must go'



Reuters/Sergei Karpukhin

Pussy Riot members Maria Alyokhina, above, and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova won release from prison Dec. 23. "We didn't ask for any pardon," Alyokhina said in statement outside prison. "I would have sat here until the end of my sentence because I don't need mercy from Putin."

BY JOHN STUDER

Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina, two members of the punk protest band Pussy Riot, walked out of their respective prisons Dec. 23, nearly two years after they were arrested on trumped-up charges of "hooliganism motivated by religious hatred" after performing a "punk prayer" against the regime of President Vladimir Putin in Moscow's Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Christ.

Tolokonnikova and Alyokhina were released three months before

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Court's 'religious freedom' ruling blow to workers' rights 4

Chicago: Tortured, framed up, Wrice freed after 31 years 5

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# Rally opposes discriminatory Charter of Quebec Values

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

MONTREAL — A thousand people protested here Dec. 14 against the Parti Quebecois’ proposed Charter of Quebec Values in a rally organized by Bel Agir, a Muslim community organization.

If adopted, the charter would ban Quebec’s 700,000 government workers from wearing “ostentatious” religious symbols like the Muslim hijab, Sikh turban, or Jewish kippah.

“We oppose all forms of intolerance and exclusion, in particular of women, the most vulnerable to discrimination on the job market,” says Bel Agir on its website. “We support all efforts against racism, islamophobia, anti-Semitism and xenophobia in general.”

Stéphane Gendron, ex-mayor of the small Quebec town of Huntingdon, currently a journalist and radio host, described conditions faced by the growing population of immigrants from Northwest Africa called Maghrebians. In Montreal, Arabic is now the third language after French and English.

“The rate of unemployment among Maghrebians here is 30 percent,” said Gendron. Alluding to the recent killing of a taxi driver from Algeria, he said that “taxi drivers with university diplomas won’t get job interviews if their first name is Mohamed.” He ended his speech by saying that he recommends his children go to Ontario, “where they won’t have to face laws like the charter.”

“We came here to stay,” said the following speaker, Lamine Foura, also a journalist and radio host, originally from Algeria. “We’re Quebecois,” he said to applause. “There is an economic

crisis here. Instead of confronting this, the Quebec government is confronting imaginary problems.”

The vast majority of participants at the rally were Muslim working people.

Several polls indicate that a majority of Quebecois support the charter. But a majority also oppose firing someone for wearing a hijab.

So far the only trade union federation that has taken a clear stand against the charter is the Independent Federation of Teachers (FAE), with 32,000 members, mostly at primary and secondary schools in the Montreal area.

Three other government unions support the charter. As soon as Interprofessional Federation of the Health of Quebec (FIQ), which organizes 62,000 mostly in health care, announced its support for the charter, two big FIQ locals at the two university hospitals in Montreal took an opposite stand. “I have members who wear religious signs, and I don’t want to undermine their rights,” Line Larocque, president of one of the two locals told *La Presse*. “That’s why



Militant/Félix Vincent Ardea

Some 10,000 march in Montreal Sept. 14 against anti-working-class Charter of Quebec Values.

we oppose the position taken by the FIQ,” said .

The Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), with 300,000 members, including two-thirds in the public sector, opposes the ban on religious signs for most public sector workers, but supports it in primary and secondary schools, and in day care centers, “out of concerns for children, a captive audience.”

Rayhan El Kares, a biology professor in a community college in Montreal,

proposed that his union local, which is affiliated with the CSN, organize a discussion on the charter. The proposal was accepted. The discussion took place during a regular union meeting, with 21 members present. “I was the only Muslim,” El Kares told the *Militant*. “The discussion was hot. But in the end 19 professors voted for a resolution condemning the charter’s prohibition on wearing religious signs, two voted for the charter.”

## Unionists locked out since May by Silicium Québec win support

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

BECANCOUR, Quebec — “I’d prefer to eat baloney at home rather than go back to work on my knees,” said a worker at a picket shack outside the Silicium Québec plant in this town 90 miles northeast of Montreal. Some 145 workers have been locked out by the company since May 3.

The workers are members of UNI-

FOR, which was recently formed through the merger of the Canadian Auto Workers and the Communications, Energy and Paper Workers Union of Canada. Silicium Québec, a subsidiary of U.S.-based Global Specialty Metals, is the only silicon metal production facility in Canada.

“We didn’t want a work stoppage. But the employer’s demands were extreme,” UNIFOR Local 184 President Jean Simoneau said by phone Dec. 12. “No one wanted to see our income drop by 40 percent.”

Silicium Québec is pushing cuts to the pension plan, wages and benefits, as well as the elimination of up to 30 jobs through the use of subcontractors.

After union members presented their fight at the November convention of the Quebec Federation of Labour, delegates pledged a total of \$95,000 in donations from various union locals. Delegates at

UNIFOR’s founding convention on the Labor Day weekend collected \$38,000 on the convention floor.

“I’m impressed by the support from other union locals, impressed by the solidarity,” said locked-out worker Christian Laliberté. “Some people just stop and talk to us when they see the picket line, people who work in the area. I’ve become a lot more of a union guy than I was before.”

“The work can be quite dangerous: fire, liquid metal,” said Laliberté. Carcinogenic black dust is a common hazard. The plant operates continuously, 365 days a year, on a mixture of 12- and eight-hour rotating shifts. The average wage is \$28 an hour.

Talks have resumed, with meetings scheduled in December. Picket lines are up around the clock at the crossroads of Arthur Sicard and Yvon Trudeau roads in Becancour’s industrial park.

# THE MILITANT

## Back fight for big minimum wage raise!

*Fast-food workers have conducted one-day strikes in a number of cities demanding a minimum wage raise to \$15 an hour and the right to form unions. The ‘Militant’ covers this fight, pointing to how it strengthens working-class unity as wages under capitalism are set from the bottom up.*



Reuters/Eduardo Munoz  
Protest outside McDonald’s in New York Dec. 5 demanding \$15 an hour and union.

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



# Welcome, new readers!

## Continued from front page

build a revolutionary party capable of leading workers and their allies in taking political power.

We welcome those of you on the picket lines who decided to take out a subscription — from Kellogg in Memphis, Tenn., to l'Hotel des Seigneurs in Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec; from Sakuma Brothers Farms in Burlington, Wash., to Belshaw Adamatic in Auburn, Wash. — those we met at rallies by school bus workers in Boston; cab drivers and grocery store workers in Washington, D.C.; and members of the Machinists union at Boeing in Seattle.

We welcome those who decided to

subscribe at rallies in defense of a woman's right to choose abortion, against cop killings, against deportations of immigrant workers, at events to win support and demand freedom for the Cuban Five and Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera; at book fairs in Montreal and Miami; at the World Festival of Youth and Students in Quito, Ecuador; and at the Malaysian Socialist Party conference in Kuala Lumpur.

We welcome those of you who met a Socialist Workers Party or Communist League candidate and were convinced to try out a working-class paper.

During the drive the *Militant* fought against attempts by prison officials to stop the paper from getting to inmates in U.S. jails. We are proud of our expanding subscription base among fellow workers behind bars, from Florida to Australia. We welcome the 25 new and renewing prisoner subscribers, the highest number in any drive in years.

We especially welcome those who have joined in the effort to win new readers for the first time. The *Militant* promotes the perspective of workers finding a *class* course to take on the attacks of the propertied rulers, not an *individual* one. It points to fights where we have successfully mobilized to defend and advance the political space needed to discuss, organize and expand the workers' movement.

“Real politics ... originates in what goes on every day in the clash of class forces in the factories, in the fields, in the streets and on the battlefields of war. That is where the basic relationship of class forces is decided. ...

“Taking political power out of the



Militant/Mary Martin

Going door to door in working-class areas across Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States was backbone of fall subscription and books campaign. Vast majority of subscribers signed up on their doorstep. Above, *Militant* supporter Cecelia Moriarity in Seattle shows nursing assistant Darralita Taylor paper and books on special.

hands of the exploiters is the only way to halt once and for all the escalating attacks against the unions and against every struggle by working people and the oppressed. It is the only way to end the use of government power to advance the class interests of the exploiters at the expense of working people. It is the only way to end imperialist war, racial oppression, and discrimination against women.”

The above is quoted from *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, one of nine books on special offer with a subscription (see ad below). In the course of the drive some 750 copies of these titles were sold. These books contain lessons drawn from decades of working class battles — from the U.S. class struggle to Africa and revolutionary Cuba. The special offers are still valid and we urge you to take advantage of them.

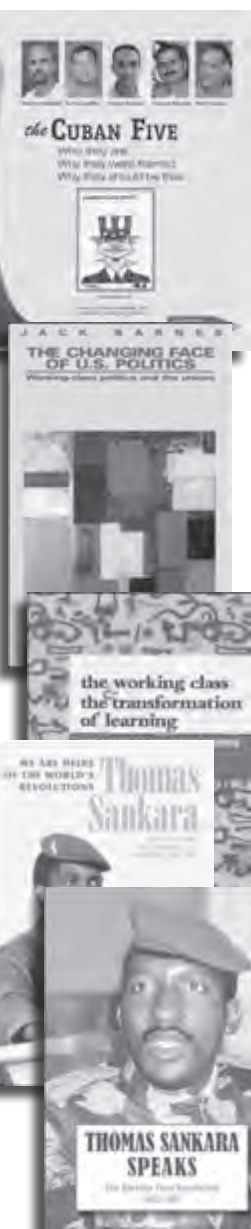
“During the last week of the drive, we

met two workers who invited us to come back when they would have money,” reported Chuck Guerra from Des Moines, Iowa, Dec. 22. “We went back the week after the drive ended. Both signed up to get the *Militant*. One worker from Sierra Leone bought *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions*. The other works in a tractor factory here and is from Guinea-Conakry. He got *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own*.”

Over the past few years the *Militant* has steadily expanded its long-term readership. The effort to reach new readers continues and we welcome anybody who wishes to join in. Introduce the paper to friends, relatives and fellow workers. To help, call distributors in your area listed on page 8, contact us at (212) 244-4899 or at themilitant@mac.com.

And be sure to renew your subscription before it runs out!

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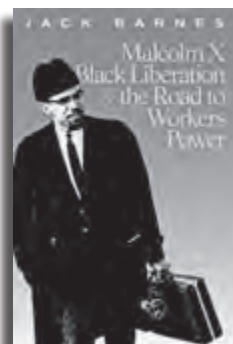
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*by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer*  
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### Women and Revolution

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



## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

#### San Francisco

**The Example of the Cuban Revolution and the Class Struggle in Latin America Today.** Speakers: Panel featuring participants in World Festival of Youth and Students in Quito, Ecuador. Sat., Jan. 4. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**Conflict in the Ukraine as Moscow Vies for Influence with U.S. and Europe.** Speaker: Ilona Gersh, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 3, 7:30 p.m.  
**The Citizens' Revolution in Ecuador, Peace Talks in Colombia and Cuba's Proletarian Revolution: The Class Struggle in Latin America.** Speakers: Panel of participants in World Festival of Youth and Students. Fri., Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 806 W. Washington Blvd., Room 202. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.

### MINNESOTA

#### Minneapolis

**Conflict in the Ukraine as Moscow Vies for Influence with U.S. and Europe.** Speaker: Tom Fiske, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 3, 7:30 p.m. 3302 Q St., 2nd Floor. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

### NEBRASKA

#### Omaha

**Defend Cuba's Socialist Revolution.** Speaker: Jacob Perasso, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 3, 7:30 p.m. 3302 Q St., 2nd Floor. Tel.: (402) 779-7697.

See distributors  
on page 8



# Abortion protests in Spain

**Continued from front page**  
life” of the pregnant woman or fetal deformity. Even in those cases, the right to abortion would be severely restricted.

In case of rape, abortion would be permitted only in the first 14 weeks of pregnancy after a seven-day waiting period, and would require the signature of two doctors in addition to the attending physician. Minors would need their parents’ consent. Similar red tape applies in case of risk to the woman’s life and fetal deformity.

Doctors who perform banned abortions would face up to three years in prison and loss of their medical license for up to six years. Even “inducing” a woman to have an abortion or convincing someone else to perform one could be punished with prison time.

Restrictions on the right to choose were relaxed in 2010, when the Socialist Party-led government passed a law allowing abortion in the first 14 weeks of pregnancy, although it imposed a three-day waiting period. After 14 weeks and up to 22 weeks, abortion is allowed only in case of risk to the woman’s life or severe fetal deformities and requires the approval of a third-party doctor.

The 2010 law allows medical personnel “directly involved” — the attending doctor, midwife, anesthesiologist — who object to abortion to refuse to carry out the medical procedure. Under the Popular Party bill “conscientious objection” would be expanded to include all medical personnel.

In 2006, before abortion was decriminalized, there were 101,000 abortions in Spain, in 2011 there were 118,359 and in 2012, 112,390, according to *El País*.

The Popular Party, a bloc of centrist and rightist forces led by Mariano Ra-

joy, defeated the Socialist Party by a large margin in the November 2011 election, built on opposition to the SP’s attacks on the working class in response to a collapse of the economy spurred by the worldwide crisis of capitalist production and trade.

The party gained 186 out of 350 seats in Parliament. Promises to restrict abortion were a central part of their platform. The Catholic Church is one of the main backers of the moves to undercut women’s right to choose. A church-backed anti-choice demonstration Nov. 17 drew tens of thousands of opponents of women’s rights.

“The law that is proposed would make it impossible for women with scarce resources to terminate their pregnancy,” Socialist Deputy Elena Valenciano said in an open letter to women Popular Party members in Parliament. Better off women “will be able to travel to any European country to get this procedure. You know it because it’s always been like that.”

Abortion in the first trimester is legal in most of Western Europe except for Malta, Ireland and Andorra, although often with required waiting periods.

The Popular Party faces a sharp de-



Associated Press

**Supporters of women’s rights protest Dec. 20 in Madrid against Spanish government move to outlaw abortion in most cases. Legislation is part of growing attacks on workers’ rights.**

cline in public support, as it has deepened attacks on workers’ jobs, wages and working conditions begun under the Socialist Party government. Under pressure from the right, Rajoy’s government is straining to regain backing by stepping up efforts around social questions like opposition to abortion, attacks on Catalanian separatism and moves against education ‘reforms’ passed by the SP. It recently increased

penalties for those who participate in unauthorized street protests and authorized private security guards to make arrests.

The anti-choice bill is expected to come to a vote in the summer. Many Popular Party deputies refrained from applauding after the bill was presented in Parliament, but the conservative party leaders denied that the party is divided over the law.

## Court ‘religious freedom’ ruling is blow to workers’ rights

**BY BRIAN WILLIAMS**

Should bosses be able to deny employee health insurance coverage for certain drugs and medical procedures based on employers’ religious beliefs? A recent federal court ruling said yes.

The case involves a suit filed by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York and several other Catholic organizations against implementing federal regulations put in place under the Affordable Care Act. It requires com-

pany health insurance policies to include contraceptive care, or authorize another group to voluntarily provide the coverage, or pay steep fines. The plaintiffs argued that even facilitating their employees’ access to coverage would violate their beliefs and that they should be exempt from the provision.

On Dec. 13, Federal District Judge Brian Cogan backed the Catholic groups’ claim and issued a permanent injunction barring the Department of Health and Human Services from implementing the regulation.

“While religious liberty is fundamental, it does not give employers the right to impose their beliefs on employees by denying contraceptive coverage and discriminating against their women employees,” said American Civil Liberties Union attorney Jennifer Lee in a statement emailed to the *Militant* Dec. 20. The ACLU had filed a brief in the case opposing the Catholic organizations’ lawsuit.

Other plaintiffs included the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre, the Catholic Health Care System, Catholic Health Services of Long Island, Cardinal Spellman High School in the Bronx and Monsignor Farrell High School in Staten Island.

Together these institutions employ tens of thousands of workers. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York, for example, employs almost 10,000 people, nearly 8,000 of whom are lay people. The Catholic Health Services of Long Island, which includes six hospitals and three nursing homes, has a health plan covering 25,000 people. Among those it employs at St. Joseph Hospital are members of the New York State Nurses Association, who have their own union health plan. Catholic Health Services has been pressuring the union to accept health coverage that “would be consistent with Catholic teachings on abortion, contraception, and sterilization,” according to a court document issued in the case.

The Barack Obama administration had previously exempted as “religious employers” churches like the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre from providing contraception coverage.

According to the ACLU, 88 similar cases have been filed nationwide, including one in early December by the University of Notre Dame. Eighty-five percent of these are still pending in the courts.

The cases are the latest example of the Catholic Church’s efforts to impose church doctrine in public life under the misleading rubric of “freedom of religion.” In soliciting public acceptance, the church hierarchy seeks to conflate its campaign for greater influence in politics with the right to freedom of worship — the right of individuals to worship as they choose, free from government interference. Freedom of worship, a conquest of bourgeois revolutionary struggles against feudal absolutism, will forever remain an indispensable right for the working class. The religious hierarchy’s “freedom of religion” campaign, on the other hand, is a form of its opposite.

## SWP Party-Building Fund pushes over the top, every area hits quota!

**BY TONY LANE**

The fall \$100,000 Socialist Workers Party Building Fund has gone over the top, bringing in \$107,294. We want to thank the hundreds of workers and others from coast to coast

who contributed to the fund. Supporters from every area met or went over their quotas, with more than \$11,000 received in the last week.

The success of the nine-week effort was driven by readers of the *Militant* — from long-time subscribers to workers who had just been introduced to the paper, who chipped in to help the work of the party. Every dollar counts.

In the months ahead, the party will reach out to get an expanded hearing among working people on the roots of the world economic crisis and a fighting road forward for our class; take advantage of possibilities to advance the campaign to free the Cuban Five and defend the Cuban Revolution; and opportunities to join strikes and social struggles of workers against attacks by the rulers and their government.

Party members will take socialist propaganda door to door in working-class neighborhoods, in cities and rural towns, and to book fairs, conferences and other opportunities to get revolutionary propaganda into the hands of toilers across the globe.

*Tony Lane is director of the 2013 SWP Party-Building Fund.*

Party-Building Fund Final Chart			
Area	Quota	Collected	%
Houston	\$3,000	\$3,384	113%
Seattle	\$8,800	\$9,265	105%
Lincoln	\$200	\$209	105%
New York	\$20,000	\$20,847	104%
San Francisco*	\$14,000	\$14,444	103%
Philadelphia	\$4,200	\$4,301	102%
Atlanta	\$8,800	\$8,966	102%
Chicago*	\$10,400	\$10,569	102%
Washington,	\$7,500	\$7,620	102%
Twin Cities	\$5,750	\$5,812	101%
Omaha	\$2,500	\$2,525	101%
Los Angeles	\$8,200	\$8,250	101%
Miami	\$3,000	\$3,002	100%
Boston	\$3,500	\$3,500	100%
Des Moines*	\$3,000	\$3,000	100%
Other		\$1,600	
Total	\$102,850	\$107,294	107%
Should Be	\$100,000	\$100,000	100%
* Raised goal			

**Abortion is a Woman’s Right!**  
*by Pat Grogan, Evelyn Reed*

Why abortion rights are central not only to the fight for the full emancipation of women, but to forging a united and fighting labor movement.— \$6

*PathfinderPress.com*



# Tortured, framed up, Chicago man freed after 31 years in jail

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO — After 31 years behind bars, convicted of a crime he did not commit based on a confession extracted through torture, Stanley Wrice emerged from prison Dec. 11, the day after Cook County Judge Richard Walsh threw out Wrice's 1983 conviction.

Special Prosecutor Rafael Bombino, who handles Chicago police torture cases, dropped all charges against Wrice Dec. 12.

"I am very happy that Stanley Wrice has been released and is now working with the Innocence Project to help others win release also," Mark Clements, a leader of the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, told the *Militant*. Clements spent 28 years in jail from a forced confession tortured out of him before winning release.

"What happened to Wrice was pure legal lynching by a system that permitted it openly and freely until it was boxed in and forced to do what it should have done for decades," Clements said.

After two unsuccessful appeals, Wrice appealed a third time in October 2007, following a 2006 Special Prosecutor's report detailing systematic torture in the Chicago Police department.

That report set in motion the chain of events that led to the June 2010 conviction of Chicago Police Lt. Jon Burge on federal charges of perjury and obstruction of justice for lying about the torture

in a civil lawsuit. In January 2011 Burge was sentenced to four and a half years in prison.

In February 2012, the Illinois Supreme Court ordered a new trial for Wrice. In January of this year, after granting prosecutors' numerous continuances, Judge Evelyn Clay, a former Cook County prosecutor herself, scheduled Wrice's hearing for Sept. 23.

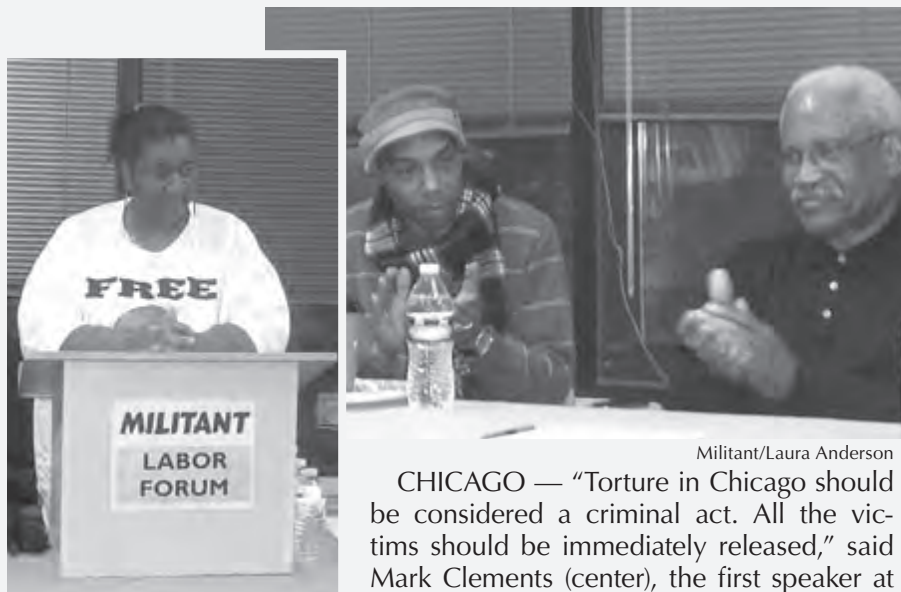
In July Wrice's attorneys sought to subpoena former Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, Cook County State's Attorney at the time of Wrice's frame-up, and Illinois Appellate Justice Bertina Lampkin, who was then Daley's subordinate and handled Wrice's case, to testify about their knowledge of torture under Burge.

Judge Clay recused herself, citing her relationship with the two potential witnesses. Cook County Criminal Court officials assigned the case to Walsh, a juvenile court judge. Walsh ruled prior to throwing out Wrice's conviction that Daley would not have to testify. Lampkin, however, did take the stand.

In a related development, Judge Paul Biebel heard oral arguments Dec. 16 on a petition filed in October 2012 seeking a class-action trial on behalf of more than 100 Illinois inmates whose convictions are based on confessions extracted under cop torture.

Biebel said he would announce his decision in March.

## 'Release all those tortured by Chicago cops'



Militant/Laura Anderson

CHICAGO — "Torture in Chicago should be considered a criminal act. All the victims should be immediately released," said Mark Clements (center), the first speaker at the Militant Labor Forum here Dec. 20 titled

"Support the Fight to Free All Those Framed Up and Tortured by Chicago Cops Under the Command of Jon Burge."

Clements is a leader of the Jail Jon Burge Coalition, the Committee against the Death Penalty, and the Chicago Alliance against Racist and Political Repression.

Also speaking were Jeannette Plummer (left), mother of Johnny Plummer, one of many incarcerated men who were tortured and framed up under command of Chicago detective Burge during the 1970s and '80s; Wallace "Gator" Bradley, a leader of the fight against police torture; and John Hawkins (right) of the Socialist Workers Party.

The panel discussed the many working people brutalized by the "Midnight Crew," a gang of detectives headed by Burge that terrorized Chicago's South Side, using torture to extract confessions mainly from Black men in their custody. Burge was convicted in June 2010 on federal charges of perjury and obstruction of justice for lying about the torture in a civil lawsuit.

— ILONA GERSH

## Chicago cop hit with manslaughter charge for killing Rekia Boyd, 22

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO — Opponents of police brutality here won a victory Nov. 25 when the Cook County State's Attorney office filed charges against Chicago police detective Dante Servin for the March 21, 2012, killing of 22-year-old Rekia Boyd.

Servin was charged with involuntary manslaughter, reckless discharge of a firearm and reckless conduct, and was stripped of his police powers through at least the conclusion of legal proceedings against him.

Servin, who was off duty, was in his car when he got into a verbal altercation with a group of youths near his home and one of the young men allegedly walked toward Servin's vehicle holding a cellphone. Servin pulled his gun and fired five shots.

One of the shots struck Antonio Cross, who was holding the cellphone, in the hand. Another struck Boyd in the back of the head. She died the next day.

Servin is only the second Chicago cop to be charged with a crime for shooting someone in the last 17 years. Cop Gregory Becker was sentenced to 15 years in prison in 1997 for killing a homeless man when his gun discharged as he beat the man with it two years before. Becker was off-duty at the time.

City officials sought to sweep the killing of Boyd under the rug. The State's Attorney's Office charged Cross with aggravated assault, but filed no charges against Servin.

But Boyd's family refused to back down. They filed suit against the city, publicly demanded action against Servin and spoke out at news conferences and Chicago Police Board meetings.

On March 13, the Chicago City Council approved paying \$4.5 million to settle a wrongful death suit filed on behalf of Boyd's estate. That same day the State's Attorney dropped charges against Cross.

"I still have the same feelings I had before," Boyd's brother Martinez Sutton told the *Chicago Sun Times* at the time the settlement was announced. "I still want this guy in jail. No amount of money can bring my sister back."

"Better sex offenders programs, better substance abuse programs, better job training programs for prisoners — these reforms are all designed to do the same thing as gangs in the prison yard and corruption in the cell blocks. Everything is organized to turn cons against one another, to reinforce the worst, dog-eat-dog values of bourgeois society, to differentiate the incarcerated. The fight of the working class is the opposite."

— Jack Barnes from *Capitalism's World Disorder*

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## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 13, 1989

UNITED NATIONS, New York — Diplomats from nearly 100 countries were present here Dec. 22, 1988, for the ceremonial signing of a trilateral pact between Angola, Cuba and South Africa; and a bilateral agreement between Angola and Cuba.

"After 13 years of aggression and violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of Angola by the South African army; and after a cruel war imposed mainly by South Africa and for several years now by the United States — which has caused enormous destruction, tens of thousands of deaths, particularly among the civilian population, and thousands of maimed — the invading and aggressive South African army has had to withdraw from Angolan territory," said Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca.



January 6, 1964

In a message to Fidel Castro, the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party sent fraternal greetings to the Cuban people on the fifth anniversary of their revolution which came to power January 1, 1959. Signed by Farrell Dobbs, SWP national secretary, the message declared:

The National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, meeting in a plenary session in New York City, salutes the Cuban people for their heroic efforts on this fifth anniversary of their great revolution. Were it not for the illegal and unjust ban on travel to Cuba imposed by the U.S. government a great many citizens of our country would be in Havana to participate in celebrating this historic event. Long live the first revolution in the Americas to proclaim socialism as its guide and goal.



January 7, 1939

NEW YORK CITY — A battle between 11,000 taxi-drivers and the big fleet companies began this week when the C.I.O. Transport Workers Union called a strike.

Within two hours, 8,500 drivers and 1,000 maintenance men responded to the call, leaving 7,000 cabs idle in the garages. The addition of the night men will bring the cabs laid up to 8,500.

[Mayor] La Guardia's 19,000 cops were fully mobilized in a show of strength to curb the militancy of the strikers.

The immediate union demands contained in the contract proposals include: the closed shop, job security, hiring through the union halls on a rotation basis, elimination of the "shape-up" system under which drivers are picked each day by the shop foremen; an end to racial discrimination.



# Trotsky on the curve of capitalist development

Reprinted below is an excerpt from “The Curve of Capitalist Development,” a letter by communist leader Leon Trotsky that was published in the Soviet Union in 1923. The letter addresses the practical implications for class-conscious workers of discerning the difference between the periodic ups and downs of the business cycle and the long-term ascent or decline in the curve of capitalist development. This question was discussed by the international communist movement in the half decade after the 1917 Russian Revolution. Trotsky’s letter is printed in New International no. 10. Copyright © 1994 by New International. Reprinted by permission.

BY LEON TROTSKY

Oscillations of the economic conjuncture (boom-depression-crisis) already signify in and of themselves periodic impulses that give rise now to quantitative, now to qualitative changes, and to new formations in the field of politics. The revenues of possessing classes, the state budget, wages, unemployment, proportions of foreign trade, etc., are intimately bound up with the economic conjuncture, and in their turn exert the most direct influence on politics. This alone is enough to make one understand how important and fruitful it is to follow step by step the history of political parties, state institutions, etc., in relation to the cycles of capitalist development. By this we do not at all mean to say that these cycles explain everything: this is excluded, if only for the reason that cycles themselves are not fundamental but derivative economic phenomena. They unfold on the basis of the development of productive forces through the medium of market relations. But cycles explain a great deal, forming as they do through automatic pulsation an indispensable dialectical spring in the mechanism of capitalist society. The breaking points of the trade-industrial conjuncture bring us into a greater proximity with the critical knots in the web of the development of political tendencies, legislation, and all forms of ideology.

But capitalism is not characterized

solely by the periodic recurrence of cycles — otherwise what would occur would be a complex repetition and not dynamic development. Trade industrial cycles are of different character in different periods. The chief difference between them is determined by quantitative interrelations between the crisis and the boom period within each given cycle. If the boom restores with a surplus the destruction or constriction

Continued on page 7

## Rulers fiddle with monetary policy, crisis persists

Continued from front page  
decades-long trend rooted in a slow-down in growth of world capitalist production and trade.

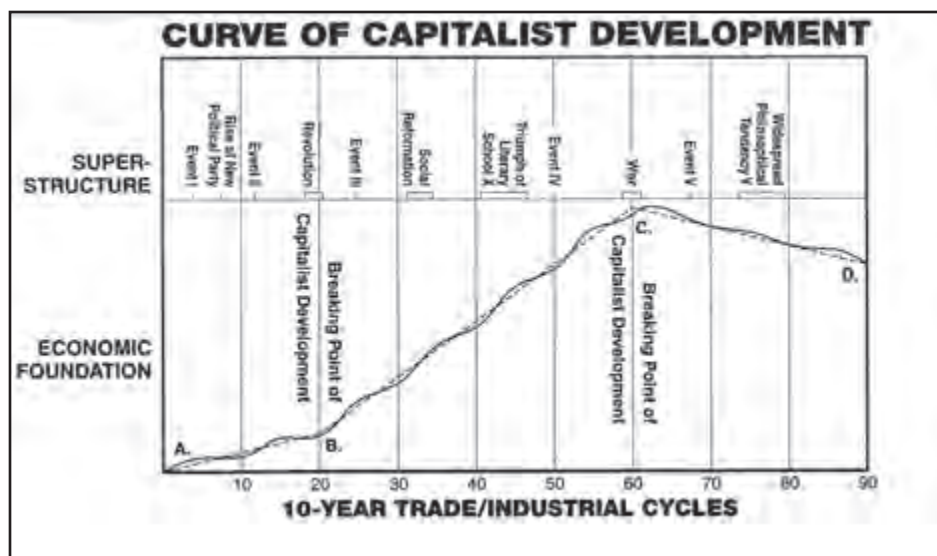
Nevertheless, U.S. news media presented the tapering plan as connected to an upturn in the U.S. economy. “U.S. Economy Begins to Hit Growth Stride,” headlined a Dec. 20 *Wall Street Journal* article that said the recovery that “chugged along in fits and starts builds up a head of steam going into the new year.”

“Growth is picking up,” International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde told NBC’s “Meet the Press” news program. “And unemployment is going down. So all of that gives us a much stronger outlook for 2014, which brings us to raising our forecast.”

Stock prices surged in response, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average rising 157 points the day of the tapering announcement.

But more than five years since the so-called recovery from the 2008-2009 recession began, there’s been no recovery for working people. The proportion of the population with a job remains at record-low numbers, production has only recently pre-recession levels and living standards for working people continue to decline. To the degree the bosses are reaping profits despite the world economic crisis, it’s off our backs.

Despite short-term fluctuations in business cycle indicators — consumer spending rose 2 percent this summer but is the weakest over the December holiday season in four years and the output



Schematic chart used by Trotsky to illustrate curve of capitalist development, juxtaposing major political and historical events with shifting economic growth and decline.

of goods and services for the third-quarter topped 4 percent for only the second time since 2009.

Under quantitative easing, the Federal Reserve has been buying mortgage-backed securities from banks and \$85 billion of government bonds monthly. Bernanke’s announcement was to begin tapering this amount by \$10 billion starting in January.

This small step toward weaning the capitalists off quantitative easing — what is often characterized as a giant money-printing operation — comes amid growing concern within the U.S. ruling class over its long-term effects on the value of the dollar.

At the same time, these concerns are tempered by their worry that capitalists might dial back investments in response to an end of the monetary prodding — investments that have overwhelmingly been directed toward financial speculation.

The capitalists’ dilemma over quantitative easing was summed up by Stanley Fischer, the leading candidate to become vice chairman of the Federal Reserve. The Fed’s bond-buying campaign is “dangerous” but “necessary,” he told the *Wall Street Journal* CEO Council meeting in November.

### Bosses not expanding production

Quantitative easing was put in place after the Federal Reserve in December 2008 lowered interest rates to nearly zero. The combined aim of these two measures was to make borrowing cheaper for companies, which supposedly would encourage them to boost production and hire workers. But under conditions of an economic slowdown, it has not been profitable for the great majority of bosses to do so. Instead, they have tended to sit on hoards of cash reserves or seek higher returns through investing it in stocks or other forms of speculative bets, such as on the rise or fall of various kinds of commercial paper.

These profits have been based not on economic growth, but speculative hopes of such growth in the future, along with expectations of continued monetary stimulus and fears of missing out on the moment.

As a result, speculative bubbles are being reinflated and leveraged loans are at all-time highs. For example, the \$3.8 trillion in the Federal Reserve’s coffers in October — the vast majority of which are mortgage-backed securities and Treasury bonds — is leveraged 70 times over the actual deposits and circulation notes it has on hand.

Stock prices, which have risen 40 per-

cent in 18 months, have little correlation to corporate earnings. They’re overvalued and overbought based on investors “hoping for substantial growth to eventually resume,” writes investment manager Sheraz Mian.

Within the broad spectrum of the bourgeois debate over the Fed’s monetary schemes are some analysts who argue that their effects on capitalists’ behavior have been more psychological than anything else.

“We’re faced with a speculative advance that seems unstoppable, despite the absence of any reliable mechanistic link between quantitative easing and stock prices — only a combination of superstition and yield-seeking that has repeatedly ended badly,” wrote financial analyst John Hussman in early December. “The bubble expands not on facts, but on untethered imagination.” It “advances as long as the adherents it gains are more eager than those it loses. What stops the bubble is not the concept itself hitting a brick wall, but the pool of new adherents being exhausted.”

### ‘Secular stagnation’

Noting the different characteristics of the period before and following the most recent 2008-2009 recession, compared with those following previous recessions, former U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers referred to the current crisis in the U.S. as not simply a dip in the business cycle, but as “secular stagnation,” borrowing a phrase used by many to describe the decline of the Japanese economy over the last two decades.

Speaking Nov. 8 at an International Monetary Fund forum in Washington, D.C., titled “Policy Responses to Crises,” Summers’ primary audience was the U.S. propertied rulers. His key message was to plan for a protracted period of stagnating production, trade and employment. Among other things, he argued that the Federal Reserve’s monetary tinkering was an unprecedented but necessary measure to avert a world financial meltdown in face of a crisis unprecedented in its scope and worldwide character.

The size of the U.S. workforce has been shrinking, he noted. “The share of men or women or adults in the United States who are working today is essentially the same as it was four years ago,” Summers told the conference. You’d “kind of expect that once things normalized you’d get more GDP [gross domestic product] than you otherwise would have had, not that four years later you’d still be having substantially less than you had before.”

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# Rail strike in SKorea

**Continued from front page**  
(KORAIL) refused to negotiate over plans to set up a subsidiary company to run a planned high-speed passenger train between Seoul and Busan in the south. The union sees this as a step toward privatization that would lead to job and wage cuts and unsafe working conditions.

KORAIL denies it plans to privatize the subsidiary. The company says the move is designed to make the company more efficient and reduce its debt, which stands at more than 17 trillion won (\$16 billion).

On Dec. 17, police raided the head offices of the Railway Workers Union in Seoul, taking documents and computer hard drives, and two days later raided another four offices across the country.

The arrest warrants for the union leaders accuse them of “obstruction of business.” In South Korea workers can only strike over wages and working conditions and the government says that the strike against privatization is an illegal political strike.

“We say that privatization will affect working conditions,” Ryu said. “Obstruction of business” is often used to suppress unions today. Especially in the public sector there are restrictions on the right to strike. The law says we have to keep up ‘minimal service,’ but this is vaguely written and the government uses it arbitrarily to declare strikes illegal.”

### Striking workers win solidarity

Ryu said the KCTU is organizing daily protests and will begin a nationwide strike Dec. 28. The striking workers have won solidarity from workers, students and others in South Korea and other countries. A rally Dec. 14 in front of Seoul Station drew 12,000 participants.

“We had another rally on Dec. 19, which was much bigger,” Wol-san Liem, international affairs director of Korean Federation of Public Services and Transportation Workers’ Union, said to the *Militant* Dec. 23. “We estimate that 30,000 participated, the police gives the figure of 6,000. The Federation of Korean Trade Unions has also come out

in support and this is important.” The Federation of Korean Trade Unions, which has ties to the governing party, decided Dec. 20 to boycott discussions in a joint committee with the government and the bosses, protesting the raids on union headquarters.

“Students, churches and human rights organizations have protested the police attack on the KCTU office,” Liem said. “Right now I’m working on an appeal calling for unions around the world to organize protests outside Korean embassies and consulates. I know protests have taken place in Turkey, Hong Kong and France.”

The company hired scabs to replace the strikers and in a Dec. 20 press release KORAIL chief Choi Yeon-hye said the company plans to hire an additional 500 temporary workers.

The strike has hit freight the hardest, operating at 55 percent of its normal level; passenger services are down to 66 percent.

According to the *JoongAng Daily*, 876 workers have crossed the picket lines and gone back to work.

“This won’t have a big effect because these are not locomotive engineers, train crew or maintenance workers,” Liem said. “Among them the strike is solid.”

President Park Geun-hye, who was elected president last year, has ruled out any compromise with the unions.

The union-busting drive against the rail workers is the latest in a series of moves by Park to restrict trade union and political rights. In October, the Ministry of Employment and Labor stripped the Korean Teachers and Education Workers’ Union of its legal status. A Seoul court has granted a temporary injunction blocking the move.

The government is also trying to ban the opposition Unified Progressive Party. Five party officials were arrested in August and September and charged with “conspiracy to commit a rebellion and violating the National Security Law.”

Park’s administration has been mired in controversy over the last several months over revelations that the National Intelligence Service orches-

## Cambodia garment workers: Double minimum wage!



Garment workers in Cambodia demonstrate in late December, demanding a doubling of the minimum wage from \$80 to \$160 a month. Union leaders say more than 300,000 workers in 120 factories across the country went on strike this week in response to the Dec. 24 announcement by the government’s Labor Advisory Council that the minimum wage will be raised to \$95 in April 2014 and with annual increases to \$160 in 2018. Union federations are demanding an immediate raise to \$160.

Workers have staged a record number of strikes this year, most of them centered on demands for higher wages. According to the Garment Manufacturers Association, there were 131 strikes from January through November, up from 121 for all of last year. Adjusted for inflation, wages today are at the same level as 2000.

The Manufacturers Association issued a call to owners of 453 garment and 48 footwear factories to close until Dec. 30 “because of the current chaotic issue,” the group’s Secretary General Ken Loo told the *Cambodia Herald* Dec. 26. The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training declared that actions protesting the new minimum wage are illegal.

The opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party, which narrowly lost in the general election in July, called on the government of Prime Minister Hun Sen to raise the minimum wage to \$160 or step down. The party called for “workers, farmers and all people” to come together in a demonstration Dec. 29.

— EMMA JOHNSON

trated a campaign to smear Park’s opponents as agents of North Korea during the presidential elections.

“What the people want is solving the issue through reasonable dialogue, not oppressing the union,” Railway Workers Union leader Kim Jae-gil stated at a

Dec. 23 press conference. “We demand again that President Park Geun-hye try to end the walkout through talks.”

“This started as a strike against the privatization of a rail line,” Liem said. “But now it has escalated to an attack on the entire Korean labor movement.”

## Curve of capitalist development

### Continued from page 6

tion during the preceding crisis, then capitalist development moves upward. If the crisis, which signals destruction, or at all events contraction of productive forces, surpasses in its intensity the corresponding boom, then we get as a result a decline in economy. Finally, if the crisis and boom approximate each other in force, then we get a temporary and stagnating equilibrium in economy. This is the schema in the rough.

We observe in history that homogeneous cycles are grouped in a series. Entire epochs of capitalist development exist when a number of cycles are characterized by sharply delineated booms and weak, short-lived crises. As a result we have a sharply rising movement of the basic curve of capitalist development. There are epochs of stagnation when this curve, while passing through partial cyclical oscillations, remains on approximately the same level for decades. And finally, during certain historical periods the basic curve, while passing as always through cyclical oscillations, dips downward as a whole, signaling the decline of productive forces. ...

At the risk of incurring the theoretical ire of opponents of “economism” (and partly with the intention of pro-

voking their indignation) we present here a schematic chart which depicts arbitrarily a curve of capitalist development for a period of ninety years along the above-mentioned lines. The general direction of the basic curve is determined by the character of the partial conjunctural curves of which it is composed. In our schema three periods are sharply demarcated: twenty years of very gradual capitalist development (segment A-B); forty years of energetic upswing (segment B-C); and thirty years of protracted crisis and decline (segment C-D). If we introduce into this diagram the most important historical events for the corresponding period, then the pictorial juxtaposition of major political events with the variations of the curve is alone sufficient to provide the idea of the invaluable starting points for historical materialist investigations. The parallelism of political events and economic changes is of course very relative. As a general rule, the “superstructure” registers and rejects new formations in the economic sphere only after considerable delay. But this law must be laid bare through a concrete investigation of those complex interrelationships of which we here present a pictorial hint.

### Free the Cuban Five!



Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These rightist 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 Brothers to the Rescue aircraft that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

All but René González remain in prison. He was allowed to return to Cuba in May this year, halfway through a three-year term of supervised release.



# Gains by women in Cuba strengthened revolution

*Below is an excerpt from Women and the Cuban Revolution, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. The book contains speeches and documents by Fidel Castro, Vilma Espín and others. The piece is from the closing speech given by Castro on March 8, 1980, to the Third Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women. The FMC was forged in the heat of popular mobilizations in the opening months of the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and grew out of women's determination to participate in the revolution. A leader of the underground and Rebel Army combatants against the Batista tyranny, Espín was president of the FMC from its founding in 1960 until her death in 2007. Copyright © 1981 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

### BY FIDEL CASTRO

It wouldn't be possible to write the history of our revolution in the last twenty years without mentioning the Federation of Cuban Women. There is virtually no activity in which it has not participated in one way or the other; no activity, even those which are viewed as the almost exclusive domain of men: war and national defense, for example. Here, as in Nicaragua, Namibia, El Salvador, or Grenada, women are playing an active role. It



Bohemia/Inset, FMC

Above, Cuban women changing tires, learning jobs that were reserved for men before victory of 1959 revolution. Women in workforce strengthen revolution, break down prejudices and increase their self-confidence. Inset, from left, Cuban revolutionary leaders Raúl Castro, Vilma Espín and Fidel Castro participating in Third Congress of Federation of Cuban Women, March 1980.



is enough to mention some of those tasks, many of which were mentioned here and which are very important. For example, raising women's educational level, going from the literacy drive in 1961, in which Cuban women played such an outstanding role, and the first schools for peasant women which were organized by the federation and from which hundreds of thousands of women graduated. The change in peasant women was evident — in their spirit, in their way of thinking and way of life, even in the most remote regions of the country. Even the way they dressed changed with the clothes they learned to make in the schools, a program that has continued over twenty years now. Then there are the struggle, the efforts, and the gains in the battle for the sixth grade and beyond, for intermediate and university studies. In this connection it is interesting to note that 31 percent of working women are studying, while only 25 percent of men are. [Applause] ...

[O]ne of the things that most concerns us has to do with the participation of women in the economy of the country. I want to discuss this and some of the concerns I know have

cropped up on this subject.

There is no doubt that we have made great progress in this respect in the past years. This is shown, for example, by the fact that prior to the revolution there were 262,000 working women — I think that's the 1953 figure — and now there are 800,600. As Vilma explained in the report, it's not just a matter of numbers, but a change in the composition since formerly many of those jobs were as servants, in bars, and jobs of that sort to which women were relegated under capitalism. That is in contrast to the many skilled women now working: teachers, doctors, architects, nurses, intermediate technicians; 78,000 skilled women have joined the work force in the last few years. That alone shows the true nature of the change.

In the last five years some 200,000 women have started working, that is, women have joined the work force at a faster rate than men; that is logical because employment levels for men were higher. Now 30 percent of the work force consists of women.

In coming years it won't be easy for our country, for our revolution, to keep up that pace; for an underdeveloped

country 30 percent is a high rate; of every 100, 30 women.

This comes at a time when the young people who made up the population boom are coming of work age. The boom made itself felt at the schools, in the efforts required to build elementary schools to cope, and then in the intermediate schools where we now have an enrollment of 1,100,000. ...

Now, we can't say that we are in a position to ensure — just as we guaranteed schools and medical care — increased jobs to keep pace with that growth, because it requires investments and new job opportunities. Therefore we will have some job problems as this enormous number of young people come of work age.

We feel that the revolution has the duty, the party and state have as their first duty doing all they can to come up with answers, with solutions to the employment problem.

This may also coincide with the quest for economic efficiency and productivity. It means savings in human resources, because efficiency in part means economizing on human resources. We are seeking greater efficiency. It is not a case of solving the problem by creating jobs per se, jobs which do not mean a service or benefit; putting fifty in an office to do work that can be done by twenty-five or thirty, for example. You understand what I mean. That wouldn't be the right solution and to create jobs based on inefficiency would be anti-economical.

We've been making an effort to raise productivity and have been achieving this; we've been making an effort for efficiency and have been achieving this; but we still have a lot to do, a lot to accomplish in this field. ...

But neither the party nor the government can give up — they can't give up for a second — the struggle on behalf of the advancement of women. I am absolutely convinced that society stands to gain insofar as it is able to develop and make use of the moral, human, and intellectual qualities and capabilities of women. I'm absolutely convinced of this. And this is precisely what sets a just society, a socialist society, apart from a capitalist one.

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# Greetings to workers behind bars

The *Militant* sends New Year’s greetings to the almost 2.3 million workers behind bars in U.S. prisons, jails, immigration detention centers, juvenile facilities, Bureau of Indian Affairs jails and military lockup.

The conditions imposed on workers behind bars, including tens of thousands in solitary confinement, has won more attention as a result of political action by prisoners over the past year, especially the hunger strike by some 30,000 inmates in California.

With only 5 percent of the world’s population, the U.S. is home to 25 percent of the world’s prisoners. With 2.3 million incarcerated, no other nation comes anywhere close in relative or absolute terms. The total number caught up in the U.S. criminal “justice” system, which includes those on probation or parole, stands at 7 million.

The number of prisoners has grown fivefold over the past three decades. Driven in large part by plea-bargain frame-ups, some 95 percent of all those behind bars never had a trial. The vast majority are working-class and disproportionately African-American. The number of workers serving life sentences has exploded from 34,000 in 1984 to 159,000 today, 47 percent of whom are Black.

Upon release, millions are branded as “felons,” putting them at the back of the line for jobs and often denying them rights of other citizens: voting, getting food stamps, eligibility for student loans, etc. Far from rehabilitation, the U.S. prison system is organized to demoralize and degrade working people who get caught in its web. It’s not a blight on American democracy, but its true face — a microcosm of social relations under the dictatorship of capital and the callous dog-eat-dog values at its rotten core.

A large proportion of working people today have a relative, a co-worker or a friend who is or has been behind bars. One of every 18 men is either in jail, probation or parole.

That is one reason why communists taking the *Militant* door to door in working-class neighborhoods find interest and support for the Cuban Five — Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, René González and Fernando González — five exemplary working-class revolutionaries framed up and imprisoned by the U.S. government for their defense of the Cuban Revolution. (See “Free the Cuban Five!” box on page 7.)

We extend our solidarity to all political prisoners, including Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera, held 32 years, 12 in solitary; Native American activist Leonard Peltier; Mumia Abu-Jamal; the Omaha Two, Mondo we Langa and Ed Poindexter, who were railroaded to prison 43 years ago as young members of the Black Panther Party; and Lynne Stewart, framed up for providing legal service to many facing government attack, who is ill with cancer and seeking compassionate release.

We celebrate the release of Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina, two members of the punk protest band Pussy Riot in Russia.

Over the past few months, the *Militant* has fought and won a series of battles against prison censorship of the paper for reporting on the California hunger strike against solitary confinement and other abuses. We are proud of the paper’s record, speaking up for the rights of fellow workers behind bars. We extend solidarity to fellow papers like the *San Francisco Bay View*, *Prison Legal News* and *Prison Focus* that give a voice to prisoners organizing to fight the barbaric conditions they face daily.

The number of readers of the paper behind bars continues to rise. Many make sure each issue gets around to scores of others. Some use it as the basis for study groups on politics today.

The *Militant* is proud to offer complimentary or reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners. Contribute to the Militant Prisoners’ Fund to help us continue this working-class tradition.

## LETTERS

### Keep fighting for the Five

Enclosed are two checks, one is for a new batch of newspapers, the other is a donation toward the annual SWP Party-Building Fund in appreciation for your steadfast service to working people, small farmers and those of us who are being jailed or subjected to house arrest. Your truth might some day set us free. Keep fighting for the Five!

Gary Striker  
Montpelier, Vt.

### Solidarity with socialist creed

I am a federal prisoner currently incarcerated in USP Victorville. I am a proud worker who stands in solidarity with your socialist creed, who only recently came across your

informative paper here in the Hole being circulated among us inmates. I don’t know who gets the paper, but I am thankful it and other issues are being passed my way. By any chance is there any possibility for me, being literally broke with a prison slave-wage job when on the yard, to receive your great paper?

A prisoner  
California

### Print more on Cuba

We should point out the way Cuba has gotten what we poor in the U.S. should be working for: free health, free education, no homeless, no hungry, no illiterate, no medical needy, no billionaires, no millionaires, no trillion dollar

war budget. Cubans aren’t carrying out their social revolution for themselves — they’re showing the rest of the world what’s possible! I guess the *Militant* does kinda point that out. Great newspaper. Thanks.

Dan the Oakman  
Minneapolis, Minn.

### Prisoner seeks subscription

Excuse this small interruption, but just the other day I stumbled across one of your old issues and enjoyed reading this wonderful newspaper. I’m a prisoner at a California prison, in the Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit. I’m always interested in good literature. I would greatly appreciate if I can receive your paper.

A prisoner  
California

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

#### ‘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.

# Pussy Riot released

## Continued from front page

their two-year sentences were up, as part of a public amnesty campaign by the Putin government for “invalids, veterans, minors, pregnant women, and women with young children.” At the last minute the original bill approved by Parliament was amended to allow amnesty for those convicted of “hooliganism.”

Tolokonnikova emerged from a prison near Krasnoyarsk, central Siberia, shouting “Russia without Putin!” She told Russia’s TV Rain that the two planned to help put together a human rights organization to fight for prisoners.

“I saw this little totalitarian machine,” she said of her time in prison, “what it is like from inside. Russia is really built on the model of the [penal] colony. Therefore it is so important to change the colony now, so as to change Russia along with the colony. The colony and the prison are the face of the country.”

Putin, a former agent of the KGB and head of its successor secret police agency in Russia after the Soviet Union disintegrated, has led the consolidation of a government in Russia based on a rising layer of capitalists with close ties to the state and its lucrative enterprises.

The amnesty follows a series of gains by Moscow in foreign relations relative to Washington and its imperialist allies. Putin secured an agreement with Washington on Syrian chemical weapons that has helped shore up the Moscow-allied regime of Bashar al-Assad. Using a combination of threats and substantial economic incentives, Moscow prevented the Ukrainian government from taking a step toward close economic and political ties with the European Union. And Putin has wielded embarrassing security leaks against Washington, gained through asylum provided to former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden.

The release of Pussy Riot members and other prisoners also takes place ahead of the Winter Olympics, scheduled for February in Sochi, Russia. “I think this is an attempt to improve the image of the current government, a little, before the Sochi Olympics — particularly for the Western Europeans,” Alyokhina told the *New York Times* Dec. 23.

And the deal also comes shortly after the Russian Supreme Court ordered a review of the convictions of Tolokonnikova and Alyokhina, holding the lower court had not proved they were motivated by hatred and ignored the fact that neither had previous convictions and are both mothers of young children.

One human rights group in Russia reported that the amnesty order would cover fewer than 1,500 of the country’s 564,000 prisoners, Reuters reported. Another 114,000 are in pretrial detention.

“We didn’t ask for any pardon,” Alyokhina told the *Times* outside the prison in Nizhny Novgorod where she had been held. “I would have sat here until the end of my sentence because I don’t need mercy from Putin.”

Both carried out hunger strikes while in prison to protest abusive treatment.

“My brigade in the sewing shop works 16 to 17 hours a day,” Tolokonnikova wrote in a five-page open letter in September about the penal colony in Mordova, Russia. “At best we get four hours of sleep a night. We have a day off once every month and a half.”

“I demand that we be treated like human beings,” Tolokonnikova said. She was hospitalized as a result of the hunger strike and soon afterwards transferred to a prison in Siberia.

A third Pussy Riot member, Yekaterina Samutsevich, who was convicted with them, was released in October 2012 on appeal because she had never entered the cathedral.

On Dec. 20, bourgeois opposition figure Mikhail Khodorkovsky was pardoned by Putin after 10 years in prison. Khodorkovsky, like other new big capitalists in Russia, used his position in the Soviet bureaucracy to amass a fortune through personal expropriation of state property. But he sought to challenge rather than work with the Putin government. After his release Khodorkovsky immediately left for Germany, telling the press he had enough money stashed overseas to never need to work and planned to no longer engage in business or politics in Russia.

## This is a two-week issue — the ‘Militant’ is moving

Like many others, the *Militant* was hit this year by the Manhattan real estate bubble. When our lease came up, the increase was too steep. We looked around and found a space we could afford, and supporters of the paper have been helping us set up our new offices. We won’t print next week as we move. We’re confident you will be able to put this issue to good use over the next couple weeks. Meanwhile, we won’t skip a beat in the kind of working-class journalism you have come to expect.

Our new address is 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. The phone number and email remain the same.