

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Forum at Howard University discusses fight to free Cuban Five
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 76/NO. 45 DECEMBER 10, 2012

Readers step up door-to-door effort to win new subscribers

BY LOUIS MARTIN

Readers of the *Militant* sold 274 subscriptions last week, our best since the beginning of the international campaign to win 3,500 subscribers to the socialist newsweekly by Dec. 16. This brings our total to 1,884.

With three weeks to go in the drive
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Fall 'Militant' subscription campaign Oct. 13 - Dec. 16 (week 6)

Country	quota	sold	%	3,500
UNITED STATES				
Claysville, PA*	10	11	110%	Should be 1,884
Redding, CA*	10	10	100%	
Yakima, WA*	15	12	80%	
Longview, WA†	8	6	75%	
Seattle	210	134	64%	
Twin Cities	175	110	63%	
Miami	120	73	61%	
Washington	110	62	56%	
Rio Grande V. TX†	25	14	56%	
New York	450	244	54%	
Des Moines	180	97	54%	
Los Angeles	200	107	54%	
Chicago	230	119	52%	
Houston	150	77	51%	
Boston	110	56	51%	
Omaha, NE†	80	40	50%	
San Francisco	225	102	45%	
Atlanta	185	79	43%	
Greensboro†	5	2	40%	
Lincoln, NE	35	14	40%	
New Orleans†	5	2	40%	
Philadelphia	150	53	35%	
Tampa†	15	5	33%	
Albuquerque	3	0	0%	
Denver	5	0	0%	
Drayton, ND†	3	0	0%	
Muscoda, WI	5	0	0%	
Total U.S.	2719	1429	53%	
Prisoners†*	13	10	77%	
UNITED KINGDOM				
Manchester	80	64	80%	
London	200	152	76%	
U.K. Total	280	216	77%	
CANADA				
NEW ZEALAND	130	71	55%	
AUSTRALIA	90	59	66%	
Total	3372	1884	54%	
Should be	3500	2333	67%	

*New to scoreboard *Raised goal

Bangladesh workers fight for safer work conditions

Bosses' profit drive kills 112 in garment plant fire



AP Photo/Ashraful Alam Tito

Nov. 27 protest in Dhaka, Bangladesh, after fire killed 112 workers in garment factory. Workers are demanding job safety, compensation for injured and killed, and prosecution of owners.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Thousands of garment workers protested on the outskirts of Dhaka, Bangladesh, Nov. 26, in response to the killing of 112 workers in a factory fire two days earlier. The protest—which shut down many factories in

back to work, reported Dhaka's *Daily Star*. According to the paper, windows had been bolted shut and there were only three staircases for the building's 1,700 workers, all leading to the same exit. And two of those staircases were

Continued on page 6

NO WORKER HAS TO DIE!
—See editorial, p. 9

the Ashulia industrial belt north of the city—demanded safer working conditions, arrest of the factory owners and compensation for the victims' families.

The fire at the Tazreen Fashions factory also injured scores of workers. After the fire started supervisors initially told workers trying to leave the building not to worry and to go

Obama's trip to Asia advances U.S. rulers' moves against China

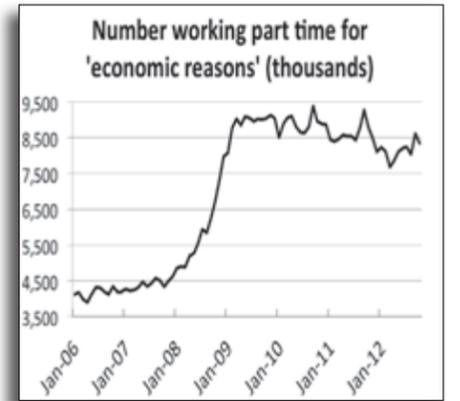
BY EMMA JOHNSON

President Barack Obama chose East Asia for his first international trip since winning re-election, underscoring Washington's increasing focus on strengthening and building new alliances in the region to counter Beijing's expanding economic and military power.

Washington is struggling to maintain its two-thirds-of-a-century-long military domination of the Pacific, conquered with U.S. imperialism's bloody triumph in World War II.

The U.S. Navy's supremacy over
Continued on page 8

Millions forced into part time as bosses cut costs, drive speedup



BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Millions of workers today are being forced to take part-time jobs or seeing their hours cut, as bosses push to boost profits and productivity.

At the same time, many companies are reducing workers' hours to avoid providing health care or having to pay fines for not giving full-time workers coverage under Obamacare, the Barack Obama administration's health care mandate.

Continued on page 9

Cease-fire ends 8-day Israeli assault, nothing resolved for workers of Gaza



Damage in Rafah, Gaza, from recent Israeli assault. Israeli military launched twice as many airstrikes than during 2008-2009 conflict. Israeli embargo makes it harder to rebuild.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The cease-fire between Hamas and Tel Aviv, announced in Cairo Nov. 21 by Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohamed Kamel Amr and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, halted the Israeli government's eight-day assault on Gaza and rocket fire into Israel from Hamas, the ruling party in Gaza.

While both governments claim to have come out on top, one thing is clear: Despite a couple limited and tenuous concessions by the Israeli government, nothing whatsoever has

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Malcolm X: Social progress not separate from status of women

Below is an excerpt from Malcolm X, *Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. The book is one of four being offered at reduced prices with a subscription to the *Militant* (see ad on facing page). Copyright © 2009 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

its moral weakness, is quickly measurable by the street attire and attitude of its women—especially its young women. Wherever the spiritual values have been submerged, if not destroyed, by an emphasis upon the material things, invariably, the women reflect it. Witness the women, both young and old, in America—where scarcely any moral values are left.

So that's how Malcolm still approached the question of women's social position a month or so after his break with the Nation. The emphasis remained on religious standards of modesty and sexual morality.

At roughly this same time, Malcolm was still an unequivocal opponent of what he called "intermarriage." In the *Autobiography*, once again, Malcolm writes: "In a world as color-hostile as this, man or woman, black or white, what do they want with a mate of the other race?" ...

By the end of Malcolm's second trip to Africa and the Middle East in 1964, between early July and late November, however, his views had undergone a striking change—one that paralleled the evolution of how he thought and acted on other social and political questions. At a news conference during a stopover in Paris following that trip, Malcolm said that one of the things he had noticed during his travels was that

in every country you go to, usually the degree of progress can never be separated from the woman. If you're in a country that's progressive, the woman is progressive. If you're in a country that reflects the consciousness toward



Militant/Pat Hunt

Women soldiers march in Burkina Faso, August 1985, in midst of popular revolution. "In every country that was progressive, the women were progressive," Malcolm X said in 1965.



SUBSCRIPTION SPECIALS

BY JACK BARNES

When Malcolm left the Nation [of Islam in March 1964], he didn't initially have much to say about the rights or social position of women. But in the *Autobiography [of Malcolm X]* ... Malcolm tells a story that sheds light on the speed and degree of his later evolution on this question. ...

Malcolm is describing his visit to Beirut, Lebanon, on the last day of April 1964. Going out for a walk, he says,

immediately my attention was struck by the mannerisms and attire of the Lebanese women. In the Holy Land [Saudi Arabia] there had been the very modest, very feminine Arabian women—and there was this sudden contrast of the half-French, half-Arab Lebanese women who projected in their dress and street manners more liberty, more boldness. I saw clearly the obvious European influence upon the Lebanese culture. It showed me how any country's moral strength, or

the importance of education, it's because the woman is aware of the importance of education.

But in every backward country you'll find the women are backward, and in every country where education is not stressed it's because the women don't have education. So one of the things I became thoroughly convinced of in my recent travels is the importance of giving freedom to the women, giving her education, and giving her the incentive to get out there and put the same spirit and understanding in her children. And I am frankly proud of the contributions that our women have made in the struggle for freedom and I'm one person who's for giving them all the leeway possible because they've made a greater contribution than many of us men. ...

This is a very advanced level of political understanding: that you can measure the degree of progress and development of a society by the place of women in its social, economic, and political life. ... [N]ow Malcolm was using *political* criteria. He overcame simple prejudice—which is what Malcolm's earlier views reflected, whether expressed by him or by anyone else—and began replacing them with facts about the social position of women. He began talking about what women can and do accomplish to advance human progress, to advance revolutionary change, if barriers erected against them begin to be torn down.

Malcolm also changed his mind on interracial marriage. Appearing on a

television talk show in Toronto, in mid-January 1965, Malcolm was asked by the host, Pierre Berton, whether he still held his earlier views on this question. Malcolm replied: "I believe in recognizing every human being as a human being—neither white, black, brown, or red; and when you are dealing with humanity as a family there's no question of integration or intermarriage. It's just one human being marrying another human being, or one human being living around and with another human being."

What needs to be attacked, Malcolm told Berton, is the racist society that produces attitudes "hostile toward integration and toward intermarriage and toward these other strides toward oneness" of human beings, not "the reaction that develops among the people who are the victims of that negative society." ...

Finally, Malcolm deepened his understanding of the importance of combating the oppression of women as he watched them help lead the fight for Black rights in this country. ...

I mentioned earlier Malcolm's insistence that the aim of the movement he was working to build was to awaken Blacks "to their humanity, to their own worth." During the final months of his life, Malcolm also deepened his understanding that the fight to liberate *half of humanity* from their oppression, and to assert in action *their* political worth, sharply increased the potential forces of revolution in this country and around the world.

THE MILITANT

Defend a woman's right to choose!

Thousands have protested in Ireland the recent death of Savita Halappanavar after she was denied an abortion.

Without the right to decide if or when to bear a child, women cannot join as equals in all aspects of life.

This fight is key for workers worldwide.



William Murphy

Nov. 17 march in Dublin, Ireland, protests death of woman who was denied abortion.

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Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

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

Subscription campaign

Continued from front page

and 13 percent behind schedule, distributors of the paper are stepping up door-to-door sales in working-class neighborhoods in order to reach the goal in full and on time.

Militant readers in Seattle sold 15 subscriptions this past week, including 10 going door to door.

Brendan Jansen, an auto mechanic student and artist, was among those who signed up. "People need to be more active," he said. "Everything is eroding around us like health care."

Jansen also bought a copy of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*, one of four books offered at reduced prices with a subscription. (See ad below.)

Barber shop owner Stalin Harrison turned in money for two subscriptions he sold at his shop near the *Militant* Labor Forum hall in Seattle. Last month he took a small bundle of papers to show to customers.

"The *Militant* sells itself," Harrison said. "It validates my customers' own experiences." They are always talking about politics, said Harrison, who also has been showing around *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, another one of the four books on special.

The *Militant* "is all over," Carla Romain said as she showed the paper going door to door in Montreal a couple of Sundays ago. "An issue talked about workers in Greece, South Africa. It recently ran an article on the Grenadian

Revolution."

Romain, originally from Grenada, is a customer service worker and among 60 employees locked out by Maritime Hotel since the end of August.

Romain subscribed to the *Militant* a few weeks ago. After walking the daily picket line in downtown Montreal with *Militant* distributor Katy LeRougetel, the two went door to door in Romain's former neighborhood, building solidarity with the hotel workers' fight and selling the paper. Supporters of the paper returned to the area the following week.

One of the new subscribers from that neighborhood, originally from Afghanistan, later attended a *Militant* Labor Forum opposing Israel's bombing of Gaza, where he bought a Farsi-language copy of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism*, one of the books on special.

Over the Nov. 17-18 weekend, three *Militant* readers from Houston and four from Edinburg, Texas, went door to door in working-class communities in Texas' Rio Grande Valley, selling 11 subscriptions and eight books.

Christy Mendoza, a student at University of Texas-Pan American and a member of the Revolutionary Student Alliance there, described how her team sold five subscriptions knocking on doors in Edinburg.

"We told people how our group wanted to learn more about workers in the community and share with them this paper with international news from a working-class point of view," Mendoza

Calif. postal workers protest privatization, layoffs, cuts



Militant/Kevin Cole

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—In the pouring rain, more than 60 postal workers and their supporters marched Nov. 17 from the state capitol to the California Air Resources Board to protest the privatization that day of postal truck fleet operations in California and related job losses and service cuts. The stormy weather dampened the signs, but not the spirits.

—KEVIN COLE

said. "We met all kind of workers, inviting them to our events on the campus, like our film showing this week on the Cuban Revolution."

Another team went door to door in Donna, Texas, a small town in the rich farmland of the valley, a few miles from the U.S. border with Mexico, selling three subscriptions.

One of the new subscribers was Ponciano Martinez. As a student in Texas in the 1970s, he was involved in the struggles for Chicano rights. "Because I knew the area, I would work at finding witnesses to testify in defense of the farmworkers," he said.

This week the "Prisoners" entry on

the chart increased by two, its goal by three, and was moved out of the U.S. section after Mike Tucker wrote from Auckland, New Zealand, that *Militant* distributors there had received two subscriptions from prisoners.

One is a renewal from an inmate in Auckland who circulates the paper among a dozen others. The second is from a first-time reader in another prison who got a copy of *The Cuban Five* book from a fellow prisoner and decided to subscribe. (See the Prisoners' Fund box on page 9.)

Make the campaign a success. Order a bundle and subscription blanks at themilitant@mac.com or (212) 244-4899.

Special offers

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning by Jack Barnes

"Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity."

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

Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer

"About the millions of working people—men and women, of all ages—who have made the socialist revolution, and how their actions transformed them as they fought to transform their world."

\$10 with subscription (usually \$20)

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power by Jack Barnes

Why the "revolutionary conquest of state power by a politically class-conscious and organized vanguard of the working class—millions strong—is necessary."

\$10 with subscription (usually \$20)

The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free

Articles, interviews from the *Militant*

"We know that right is on our side, but to win we need a jury of millions throughout the world to make our truth known."—Gerardo Hernández

\$3 with subscription (usually \$5)

See distributors
on page 8

I urge everyone to contribute to the SWP Party-Building Fund

BY SUSAN LAMONT

The Des Moines area is at the top of the Socialist Workers Party fund chart for the second week in a row. Fund supporters there also raised their goal from \$2,250 to \$2,400 and have already sent in \$1,463!

"This week, we adopted a goal of 15 first-time contributors," said Des Moines-area fund director Chuck Guerra, in a Nov. 26 phone interview. "As of today, we have four such contributors, all people who threw in an extra few dollars when we met them going door to door with the *Militant*."

In Los Angeles, two recent *Militant* subscribers who have begun to help distribute the paper also decided to contribute. Kevin Cole, a postal worker and an officer with the American Postal Workers Union Local 917 in Anaheim, Calif., delivered his \$200 contribution to a party member at the Nov. 23 "Black Friday" protest outside the Walmart store in Paramount, Calif.

"It's important to urge everyone to try to contribute to the party-building fund, to reach out broadly," Cole said.

High school student Jesus Landeros, 17, pledged \$10 to the fund. Since subscribing to the socialist newsweekly two months ago, Landeros has regularly helped sell subscriptions. "I don't have that much money, but a little amount will do something," he said.

Last week, contributors sent in

\$11,205 to the fund, representing a much-needed increase in the pace of contributions. Let's get more areas on schedule next week.

Contributions can be sent to the SWP address nearest you (see page 8) or directly to the SWP National Office at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, NY, NY 10018.

Susan LaMont is the director of the 2012 SWP Party-Building Fund.

Party-Building Fund Week 4 of 9

Area	Quota	Collected	%
Des Moines*	\$2,400	\$1,463	61%
Miami	\$3,000	\$1,500	50%
Seattle	\$8,500	\$4,165	49%
San Francisco	\$13,500	\$5,084	38%
Twin Cities	\$6,000	\$1,915	32%
Chicago	\$9,500	\$2,949	31%
Atlanta	\$8,600	\$2,480	29%
New York	\$20,000	\$5,266	26%
Lincoln	\$250	\$50	20%
Washington	\$7,500	\$1,345	18%
Los Angeles	\$8,500	\$1,500	18%
Houston	\$3,500	\$520	15%
Philadelphia	\$4,200	\$475	11%
Boston	\$4,000	\$340	9%
Omaha	\$600		0%
Other			
Total	\$100,050	\$29,052	29%
Should Be	\$100,000	\$44,444	44%

* Raised goal

Socialist candidates in LA: 'Put millions to work now!'

BY BARBARA BOWMAN

PARAMOUNT, Calif.—Socialist Workers Party candidates Norton Sandler and Eleanor García and supporters of the SWP ticket campaigned door to door in working-class neighborhoods, petitioned to get on the ballot, and participated in workers' actions over the last week.

Sandler, an electrical assembler, is running for mayor of Los Angeles and García, an aerospace worker, is running for L.A. School Board in District 2.

"We are here to support the Walmart workers in their struggle for decent pay, working conditions, and dignity on the job," Sandler told participants in the Nov. 23 Walmart protest here. "Our campaign calls for a massive government-funded public works program to build schools, hospitals, day care centers, roads and bridges. Tens of thousands of unemployed in California and millions across the country without jobs could be put to work immediately."

"Several workers participating in the protest signed a petition to help my campaign get on the ballot," Sandler said. Forty-three copies of the *Militant* were sold during the day, along with 12 subscriptions.

Earlier both SWP candidates visited

picket lines being staffed by members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union on strike at Hostess Brands bakeries before the company, which had declared bankruptcy and demanded deep concessions from the workers, decided to shutter its plants.

"I was impressed by the decision the workers made not to let the company roll over them," García told the *Militant*. "They were telling the bosses that it stops here, we're not going to give any more back."

"They have frozen our wages, doubled what we pay in health care benefits—all of it implemented through the bankruptcy court," Hostess striker Diane Kimberley told Sandler. "Now they want more."

In 2009, the company emerged from a previous bankruptcy with the workers having granted significant concessions.

"The company said it was going to invest in new technology and modernize the plants. I gave back \$10 a week like other workers did," said Trolange Carr, who lost two fingers, he said, in a damaged machine the company refused to properly repair in 2004. "The only thing they put in here were new sinks."

The primary election in Los Angeles is March 5.

UK: Communist League candidate debates opponents



Militant/Catharina Tirsén

MANCHESTER, England—Peter Clifford, at microphone, Communist League candidate for U.K. Parliament in the Nov. 15 Manchester Central constituency election, debates 10 of 11 opponents at a Nov. 6 meeting. The event was hosted by Greater Manchester 4 Greater Democracy and Friends of the Earth.

"Which of the parties over the last 40 years is most responsible for poverty?" was asked of each candidate from the floor.

"The Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition has been wrong, they are unfair," Labour candidate Lucy Powell, at Clifford's left on photo, answered. Conservative candidate Matthew Sephton laid the blame at "the one party state in Manchester," referring to Labour's control of the city council.

"The root of the crisis is not who is in government," said Clifford. "We face a worldwide crisis of capitalist production for which working people are being made to pay." In response to a question on taxes and social programs, Clifford said working people need to fight for a massive government-funded public works program to create jobs.

An Oct. 29 article in the Manchester Evening News featured Clifford's jobs program, as did a statement posted on the Public and Commercial Services union website and circulated to their members in the constituency. Clifford had two radio interviews on Peace FM, and coverage in the Guardian, Mancunian Matters and Manchester Gazette.

—CAROLINE BELLAMY

WFDY projects 2013 anti-imperialist world youth festival in Ecuador

BY ALEX XEZONAKIS
AND JACOB PERASSO

QUITO, Ecuador—At a Nov. 8-10 meeting here, the General Council of the World Federation of Democratic Youth decided to recommend the 18th World Festival of Youth and Students be held in this city at the close of 2013.

The World Festival of Youth and Students, generally held every four years, is an international gathering that brings together thousands of youth from around the world under the banner of the fight against imperialism. It provides an opportunity to discuss, share experiences and learn about social struggles

around the world.

In endorsing a proposal from youth organizations in Ecuador to host the festival, a number of WFDY delegates pointed to the impact of the world crisis of capitalism and the opening it creates to attract broad participation of youth worldwide.

The last World Festival of Youth and Students, held in South Africa in 2010, drew 15,000 people and featured workshops, rallies, panels, film showings, as well as music, dance and sports.

Other festivals have been held in Venezuela (2005), Algeria (2001), and Cuba (1997). Between 1947 and 1989,

the festivals were generally held in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. After an eight-year gap following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the festivals were revived by those responding to initiatives from the revolutionary government in Cuba. At recent festivals, many organizations have sought to involve a wider spectrum of anti-imperialist organizations from across the globe.

Of the 38 WFDY member organizations who met to debate and decide on the proposal to host the next festival here, most came from Central and South America. Others came from the three

countries of North America; throughout Europe, from Portugal to Greece; nations spanning the Asian continent from India to Vietnam; and across the Middle East and Africa, including oppressed nations from Palestine to Western Sahara. Representatives of the Continental Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Students (OCLAE) also participated.

An International Preparatory Meeting, projected for the beginning of 2013, will draw together all interested organizations to issue a call for the festival and open discussion on its slogan and themes.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis

Amidst the Wars, Threats of War and Conflict in the Middle East—Which Way Forward for Working People? Speaker: Tom Fiske, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 7, 7:30 p.m. 416 E. Hennepin Ave., room 214. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

NEBRASKA

Omaha

Capitalist Crisis and the Road Forward for Working People. Sat., Dec. 8. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. For location call (402) 217-4906.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

No Miner Has to Die! Waihi 1912 to Pike River 2012: The Fight for Safety in the Mines. Speakers: Patrick Brown and Felicity Coggan, Communist League. Fri., Nov. 30, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Road. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

NY workers face long-term effects of storm

BY EMMA JOHNSON

NEW YORK—Working people in the areas hardest hit by Hurricane Sandy here now face the long-term effects of the class-based priorities of the city's capitalist rulers, who left them alone to deal with the storm.

It's impossible to know how many people have become sick from what Sandy left behind: mold from damp drywall, spills from oil tanks, sewage from flood water and toilets, tons of debris and dust.

These toxic substances cause allergies, asthma and are potentially deadly for people with weak immune systems. Thousands of homes and apartments need to be cleaned, most have still not even been touched.

In the Rockaways the air is so full of particles that the traffic police wear masks. The "Rockaway cough" is a common symptom that comes from mold, dust or demolition, health officials told the *New York Times*. "I've been coughing," Gabriel McAuley,

46, told the *Times*. "I've never felt a cough like this before. It's deeper down." McAuley has been working 16-hour shifts gutting homes and hauling debris.

Miguel Alarcon Morales and his family of five are among 20,000 Mexicans in Staten Island. They are still living in their damaged, moldy and unheated home, because they have nowhere else to go. "My son has asthma and now he is worse. The house has this smell of humidity and sea water," he told the Associated Press.

Morales' children were born in the U.S., so he can apply for Federal Emergency Management Agency help. But he has been hesitant to do it because he is undocumented.

At first the city housed many evacuees in open dormitories in city armories. Faced with widespread complaints about chaotic, unsanitary conditions, the city has shut them down, except for two on Staten Island. Hundreds

were moved to \$300 hotel rooms scattered around the city. FEMA will stop paying the hotels Dec. 1.

New York City Housing Authority has informed residents who lost power, heat and water that they will get a credit towards the January rent, but have to pay in full for December.

On Nov. 19 some 100 furious tenants from the Red Hook area of Brooklyn challenged NYCHA officials at a meeting held at a community center. They explained that they would not be able to pay their December rent after having lost food and not being able to cook at home for weeks, in addition to all sorts of extra expenses.

Long Island Power Authority has billed customers for the weeks they couldn't live in their houses, as if the outages never happened. Con Edison has filed with the Public Service Commission to refund customers who lost power—\$3 for those in Manhattan and \$6 for those in the outer boroughs.

ON THE PICKET LINE

S. Africa: farmworkers back at work, gov't reviews wage rate

Thousands of farmworkers in South Africa's Western Cape are back at work, following a call by some union and government officials to suspend their strike for two weeks while the Labour Ministry reviews demands to double the minimum wage. Meanwhile, capitalist farmers are preparing for the possibility of a renewed battle.

The strike began in De Doorns Nov. 5 and rapidly spread to grape vineyards and peach and other orchards across the province. Farmworkers say the minimum wage of 69 rand a day (\$7.80) must be raised to at least 150 rand.

Police fired rubber bullets at striking farmworkers, killing Michael Daniels, in Wolseley Nov. 14. Farmworker Bongile Ndeni was killed in Ceres by private security guards hired by the farm owners, who charge that strikers burned down some vineyards.

As part of convincing farmworkers to suspend the strike, officials of the African National Congress-led government promised to negotiate with union officials and farm owners for revisions to the minimum wage by Dec. 4. But according to the *Post*, a Western Cape daily, "officials deny ever having committed to such a date and Agriculture Minister Tina Joemat-Pettersson's office has distanced itself from the two-week deadline."

Capitalist farmers "are gearing up" for "labour unrest, forking out money for heavily-armed private security guards, who use helicopters and wear bullet-proof vests, and buying fire engines," the *Post* reported.

Farm owners are trying to foster tensions between immigrant and native-born farmworkers and revive divisions from the apartheid era between blacks and those of mixed race by selectively refusing to allow one or another group to return to work on their land, according to statements from People Against Suffering, Oppression and Poverty, a group that works with immigrant workers and the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

Workers are resisting attempts at divide and rule. At the Royal Mushrooms farm, the group reports, when police arrested immigrants who were part of a recent strike "a large crowd gathered to protest against their arrest and the crowd was comprised mostly of South African workers."

"If nothing happens with the review of wages by Dec. 4, I must say the workers are going back on strike," Sandile Keni, an organizer for the Food and Allied Workers Union in the Western Cape, told the *Militant* Nov. 26.

According to *Business Day Live*, some union officials and representatives of farmers are open to a deal raising wages at the more profitable farms while keeping them lower on less profitable ones.

—Seth Galinsky

Coal miners in South Africa end four-week strike

Some 900 workers at Forbes and Manhattan Coal Corp. mining operations in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province went back to work Nov. 19 after more than four weeks on strike for higher wages and benefits.

The strike included members of two different unions—the government-allied National Union of Mineworkers and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union—as well as miners who did not belong to either. The coal miners demanded a doubling of their wages, which ranged from 3,400 to 4,200 rand a month (\$400 to \$480).

"Workers accepted a 1,000 rand a month wage increase," National Union of Mineworkers regional coordinator Bhekani Ngcobo said in a phone interview.

While workers did not win the six-month maternity leave they had demanded, "the company agreed to pay 25 percent of the wage of women workers for four months," Warton Mdaduli, organizer of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union, told the *Militant*. Women will receive 75 percent of their wages from the government labor department during that time, he said.

Two workers were killed during the strike by a private security guard contracted by Forbes.

"The guard who assaulted our members has been suspended pending the police investigation," Mdaduli said.

The end of the strike at Forbes fol-



AP Photo/Schalk van Zuydam

Farmworkers in Stellenbosch, South Africa, demand wage increases from 69 to 150 rand (\$13) per day Nov. 15. Thousands suspended strike as government reviews minimum wage.

lows the settlement of a wave of strikes by more than 100,000 platinum, gold and chrome miners that shook South Africa from August to November. Some 28,000 miners returned to work at Anglo American Platinum Nov. 15 after a two-month strike. Most striking gold miners were back on the job by the end of October. Some 2,500 miners are still on strike at Atlatza Resources Corp.'s Bokoni Platinum mine in Limpopo province.

—Seth Galinsky

Anti-Walmart 'Black Friday' protests take place across U.S.

PARAMOUNT, Calif.—Hundreds protested outside the Walmart store here Nov. 23, Black Friday, the busiest shopping day of the year. Some 65 Walmart workers took part from half a dozen stores in the region. The action was part of others across the country pressing for higher wages and better health care coverage for hourly Walmart employees.

The campaign is supported by the United Food and Commercial Workers. Representatives of the UFCW, several other labor unions, religious groups and other organizations took part in the protest.

Accounts from the two sides on the size and scope of the actions across the country vary widely. Walmart said protests took place outside 26 stores

nationwide and that "less than 50 associates participated." OUR Walmart, a group backed by the UFCW, said protests were organized at stores throughout 46 states. Dan Schlademan, director of Making Change at Walmart, told Reuters Nov. 23 that hundreds of Walmart workers participated.

According to Reuters, Walmart said five of the 250 workers at the store here took off work to protest. OUR Walmart said the figure was 18.

María, a worker from the store in La Quinta in the Coachella Valley two hours east of Los Angeles, said 12 workers drove from the store that morning to take part in the action here. She did not want to give her last name. "I heard of this action 22 days ago when people first started talking to us about organizing," she said. "The supervisor discriminates against Latinos, we don't get promoted. He times people when we go to the bathroom. He said there would be consequences if anyone came."

Nine people, including three Walmart employees and a number of clergy, were arrested for blocking the street outside the store.

In a statement posted on its website, Walmart said its stores processed 10 million register transactions on "its best ever Black Friday events" with larger crowds than last year.

—Ellie García

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 11, 1987

BARNESLEY, England—Three hundred Yorkshire coal miners crowded into the West Gawber Miners Welfare social center here October 25 to protest the British Coal Board's announcement that it is going to close the Woolley and Redbrook mines.

If the Coal Board goes ahead with the closings, it will cost 1,300 miners their jobs and have a devastating impact on the small communities nearby.

Some 80,000 mining jobs have been lost through government mine closures since the end of the 1984-85 British coal strike. Over this past year, under pressure from the Coal Board and faced with the threat of permanent job loss, 34,000 miners have taken buyout offers and left the industry.

But the unceasing attacks on the union have sparked resistance from the ranks of Britain's National Union of Mineworkers. This was reflected in the mood of the meeting.



December 10, 1962

The Kennedy administration, having failed to get its foot into Cuba's door through unilateral UN inspection of that island's defenses, is now talking about a step-by-step "solution" of the "Cuban crisis." Reports from Washington make clear that by this is meant a process of removing more weapons from Cuba—including those admitted by the U.S. to be "defensive"—until the revolutionary government is more vulnerable to attack.

Since the Cubans' tit-for-tat statement of Nov. 25, demanding inspection of bases from which Washington is preparing aggression against them, Kennedy has not emphasized his inspection demand. That statement was so effective in exposing Kennedy's position that it was suppressed in this country to an even greater degree than usual. It was omitted from the daily transcript of foreign broadcasts made available by the CIA to U.S. newspapers.

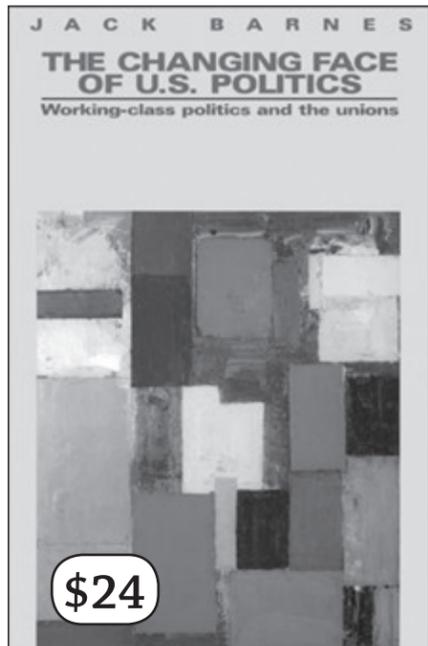


December 11, 1937

The ominous sweep of the lay-off campaign is matched by the equally disastrous sky-rocketing of the cost of living.

Laid-off workers met the onrush of the great crisis of 1929 with a wave of militancy and struggle that will long be an inspiration for American labor and for the working class throughout the world. It was precisely this vigorous determination of the disemployed wage slaves to stand up and fight that forced the concessions upon that system of inhumanity called capitalism, resulting in the setting up of the federal relief and W.P.A. agencies.

Once more, and even more acutely than before, the spectre of starvation hovers over working class households. No one will drive it off this time except the workers themselves, organized in fighting demonstrations, rallied to solidarity by militant organizations.



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Report: Bosses at fault in deaths of 29 New Zealand miners in 2010

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—The report of the official Royal Commission into the Pike River Tragedy “puts the nail in the coffin” of any idea that the disaster was an accident, Bernie Monk told the *Militant* Nov. 8. Monk’s son Michael was one of 29 miners killed Nov. 19, 2010, in a methane gas explosion at the mine, located 30 miles northeast of Greymouth on the west coast of the South Island.

Monk is a spokesperson for a number of families of the dead men, who ranged in ages from 17 to 62. Family members have played a leading part in forcing truth about the disaster into the open.

The three-person royal commission was established by the government in December 2010. The commission’s report—which incorporates testimony of workers, union representatives, mine managers and mining experts—shows how Pike River Coal bosses rode roughshod over workers’ safety in pursuit of profits, and how Labour Department officials looked the other way.

The Pike River mine was dug into the Paparoa ranges to exploit seams of high quality coking coal, which capitalist owners anticipated would fetch premium prices from steel manufacturers in Asia.

According to the report, the mine was developed with “insufficient geological information.” Only one access road was built. An alternative exit, required by law, turned out to involve a 360 feet ladder climb.

The main ventilation fan was placed inside the mine—described in the report as highly unusual and risky for a mine with high levels of methane gas.

The company’s forecast production of more than 1 million tons of coal by 2008 “proved illusory,” says the commission. “Ventilation and methane drainage systems could not cope.” When hydro mining began in September 2010, the company prodded workers with a \$13,000 (US\$10,700) production bonus.

On occasion workers bypassed “safety devices on mining machinery so work could continue regardless of the presence of methane.”

Months of warnings of excess meth-

ane by workers and underground management personnel were ignored. In the 48 hours before the explosion, “there were 21 reports of methane levels reaching explosive volumes, and 27 reports of lesser, but potentially dangerous volumes,” says the commission.

The report speculates that a roof fall may have expelled methane gas into the mine’s roadways, where it mixed with oxygen and became explosive.

Legislation and other changes in the 1990s abolished not only the government mines inspectorate, but also union-elected inspectors. Initiated by a National Party government, the changes were maintained under Labour Party administrations.

The commission proposes setting up a new government work safety agency and endorses the demand of the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union for the reinstatement of union-appointed inspectors. These would have the power to stop

Worker killed on job at Peabody mine in Illinois

BY BETSY FARLEY

CHICAGO—Coal miner Chad Meyers, 30, was killed on the job in the early morning of Nov. 17 at Peabody Energy’s Willow Lake Mine in Equality, Ill. Meyers, the 34th miner killed in the U.S. this year, was crushed between a continuous mining machine he was operating and the coal rib.

Workers at the mine, members of United Mine Workers Local 5929, have been fighting for a contract since they voted for the union in May 2011. The question of safety, and in particular the right to a union safety committee, is among the top concerns driving their union struggle.

Peabody kept fighting to keep the union out of the mine through several court challenges, firings and threats. It took 15 months for the National Labor Relations Board to certify the union’s victory in the 2011 vote.

The company announced Nov. 27 it would permanently close the mine.

“The mine has failed to meet acceptable standards for safety, compliance



Militant/Ruth Gray

April 30, 2011, memorial in Pike River, New Zealand, for 29 coal miners killed in November 2010 methane explosion. Months of warnings were ignored by mine bosses, government.

operations “if workers are in immediate danger.”

“The reintroduction of check inspectors ... should be undertaken immediately,” Valma McGowan said in a Nov. 6 email from Greymouth. McGowan’s husband Robert was killed in the Black Reef mine in 2006.

The union has worked with families to fly in three mining experts from the United Kingdom to look at the feasibility of entering the sealed mine. This would help establish the cause of the disaster, said Monk. Victims’ families are campaigning for the mine owners to recover the 29 bodies.

and operating performance,” Peabody said in a press release, “and these ongoing issues make the operations unsustainable.”

The Willow Lake Mine, which opened in 2002, produced 2.2 million tons of coal with 460 workers last year. It has a long record of safety violations. Since 2008, Peabody has been fined hundreds of thousands of dollars for dangerous conditions there, including inadequate roof support and excessive coal dust.

In June 2010, two months after the disaster at A.T. Massey’s Upper Big Branch Mine in West Virginia, where 29 miners were killed, the Mine Safety and Health Administration threatened legal action against Big Ridge Inc., which operates the Willow Lake Mine, and Peabody, the mine’s owner, for numerous safety violations. Peabody responded it was addressing the problems.

A month later, in July 2010, a supervisor at the mine was killed when a shuttle car hauling coal struck him. In November 2011, MSHA issued another

notice to the operators of the Willow Lake Mine for “a pattern of violations” and requested a “corrective action plan.”

“Members of UMWA Local 5929 went underground Nov. 17 with the MSHA inspectors to investigate the cause of the accident,” said UMWA District 12 Vice President Steve Earle in a phone interview the following day. MSHA had ordered the mine to close during the investigation.

3 die, 18 injured in Quebec plant explosion: ‘There was no safety’

BY JOE YOUNG

SHERBROOKE, Quebec—Three workers were killed by an explosion of acetone at Neptune Technologies here Nov. 8. Eighteen were injured, some very seriously burned.

The plant, about 100 miles east of Montreal, produces krill oil, which is rich in omega-3 and used for health products.

The explosion and subsequent fire destroyed a major part of the factory. The dead are Hernan Guerrero, a lead hand for four years; and Abel Regalado and Marc Couture, operator’s helpers for one month and six months respectively. According to his wife, Mélanie Audet, Couture acted to guide several people to a safe exit.

Pierre Paquin, director of the environmental ministry in Sherbrooke, confirmed Nov. 25 that agency investigators found the plant had acetone reservoirs on site beyond those authorized since 2002, reported *La Tribune de Sherbrooke*.

“Often we hear talk about laws to protect the environment, but there is a lack of government resources to carry out inspections,” Valérie Carrier, a student at the University of Sherbrooke, told the *Militant*.

“They went beyond the norms,” said Harry Chavannes, a nursing aide. “There was no safety.”

Bangladesh garment workers protest factory fire deaths

Continued from front page

locked.

Firefighters trying to reach the blaze were slowed because the narrow road leading to the factory made it difficult to get to the site and there was no source of water nearby, the paper said.

Tazreen is a subsidiary of the Tuba Group, which exports clothes to Walmart, Carrefour, and Ikea, among others. Walmart claims that a supplier subcontracted work “in direct violation of our policies.” In a Nov. 26 statement Walmart announced they “terminated the relationship with that supplier.”

Bangladesh is rapidly becoming a center of world garment production. The garment industry there ranks second after China, employs 3.6 million workers, mostly women, and accounts for 80 percent of the country’s exports. Since 2006 more than 500 workers there have died in factory fires.

“They are the lowest paid garment

workers in the world, their minimum wage is \$37 a month. They only get overtime pay after they work 208 hours in a month,” Kalpona Akhter, a leader of the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity, said in a Nov. 27 phone interview from Dhaka.

Akhter visited the Tazreen factory after the fire. “Many of the emergency exits were locked,” she said. “There was cloth and yarn in the exits. That’s one reason the death numbers are so high.”

“There was no union in the factory,” Akhter noted. “Out of more than 4,000 factories only 20 to 25 have unions. A union would negotiate with management to demand fire drills and proper emergency exits.”

Union organizing in Bangladesh is challenging, she said “because whenever workers organize, they are harassed by the police, security, and the companies’ hired goons and even can get killed like my colleague.”

Howard University forum discusses case of Cuban 5

BY PAUL PEDERSON

WASHINGTON—Some 150 people, about half of whom were students, turned out Nov. 13 at the Howard University School of Law, a historically African-American university here, for a forum on the case of the Cuban Five.

“Both Democrats and Republicans have been committed to this prosecution. It starts under Clinton and continues under Bush,” said Martin Garbus, an attorney for Gerardo Hernández, one of the five, who is serving two life terms plus 15 years.

Garbus talked about court documents submitted Nov. 16 backing a habeas corpus motion previously filed by Hernández that his sentence be vacated on the basis that the U.S. government “secretly and illegally paid hundreds of journalists to publish propaganda—through writing, speeches, television and radio broadcasts that violated the integrity of the trial and the Constitution of the United States—in an attempt to persuade the jury to wrongly convict” the Cuban Five.

The new motions, Garbus pointed out, will be considered by the same judge who convicted the five and has rejected numerous other arguments on other aspects of the government’s frame-up.

“Tens of millions of dollars were used to pay probably hundreds of journalists,” Garbus said. “We’ve uncovered

70 thus far, who were writing for the *Miami Herald* and other newspapers, were on television and/or on talk radio.”

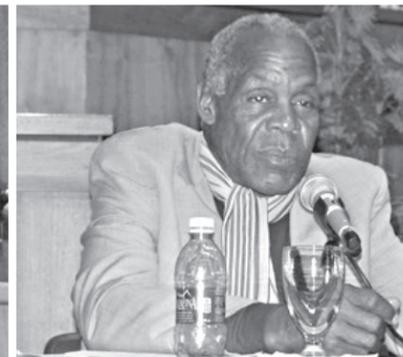
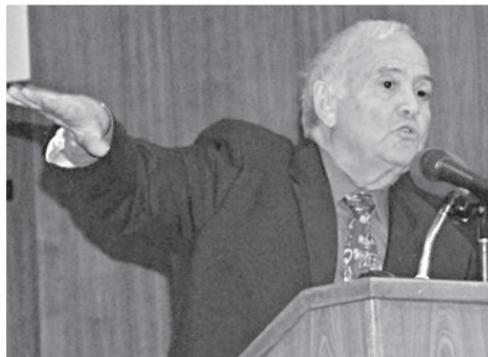
The featured speaker was film and television actor Danny Glover, an outspoken supporter of the fight to free the five for nearly a decade.

Glover, who has visited Hernández in prison on several occasions, noted that the case is part of Cuba’s “relentless fight for its own sovereignty and independence.” He compared the 50-year U.S. embargo against Cuba to the 60-year embargo the U.S. government imposed on Haiti more than 200 years ago when the island was liberated from French colonial rule through a massive slave rebellion.

“We have an opportunity to use this moment to really center on this case,” Glover said, raising the view that the re-election of President Barack Obama created favorable conditions to fight for the freedom of the five.

During its first four-year term, the Obama administration opposed every single move to release the five.

“This was a grievous injustice on the change of venue issue alone,” said Col. Lawrence Wilkerson, former chief of staff for Secretary of State Colin Powell during the George W. Bush administration. He was referring to the repeated attempts by the defense to move the 2001 trial out of Miami-Dade County on grounds that the accused could not receive an impartial trial



Top, participants in Nov. 13 meeting at Howard University in Washington, D.C., on case of Cuban Five. Bottom from left, Martin Garbus, attorney for Gerardo Hernández, addresses meeting; Actor Danny Glover, long-time supporter of fight to free the five, answers questions.

there. The motions were rejected despite widespread publicity surrounding the arrests and trial, and intimidating actions organized by Cuban-American counterrevolutionary forces there.

Lamenting about what he sees as Washington’s waning influence in Latin America, Wilkerson argued the Obama administration should negotiate freedom for the five in exchange for the release of convicted U.S. agent Alan Gross from Cuba in order to burnish the U.S. government’s image in the world.

Gross, a so-called contractor paid some \$500,000 through the U.S. State Department, was sentenced in March 2011 to 15 years in prison in Cuba for distributing sophisticated satellite communications equipment to select individuals and groups on the island as part of a clandestine program to undermine the Cuban Revolution and its government.

Kurt Schmoke, former dean of Howard University School of Law and former mayor of Baltimore, said that a trade for Gross was one possible way the U.S. government could resolve the issue, but that “the politics of that are bad.” It would be better, he said, “for President Obama to simply commute the sentence, say time served, and go home.”

Schmoke characterized the frame-up of the Cuban Five as a “violation not only of civil rights, but of human

rights,” and urged students to get out the word about the case and fight to free the five among their peers.

Gloria La Riva, coordinator of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five, spoke about how the five were monitoring U.S.-backed Cuban-American counterrevolutionary “organizations, such as Alpha 66, Omega 7, the armed wing of the Cuban National Foundation, Brothers to the Rescue and many others that have bombed, assassinated and used biological warfare against the people of Cuba to try to destabilize the Cuban Revolution.”

The other panelists included Aderson Francois, an associate professor at Howard University School of Law and director of the school’s Civil Rights Clinic; and Mara Verheyden-Hilliard of the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund.

Okianer Christian Dark, the interim dean of the law school, moderated the panel. She closed the meeting by reading a message to the gathering from Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five:

“Whoever reads the documents of our trial could see ... that we never committed nor conspired to commit espionage. ... They will see we were absolutely justified to act clandestinely against the counterrevolutionary groups that organized and still organize terrorist acts against Cuba from this country.”

Chicago meeting links Puerto Rican political prisoners’ fight with Cuban 5

BY LAURA ANDERSON

CHICAGO—More than 60 people attended a forum sponsored by the Chicago Cuba Coalition and the National Boricua Human Rights Network at DePaul University here Nov. 15 on the Cuban Five and Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera.

Clarisa López, daughter of López Rivera, spoke about the fight to free her father, who has spent 31 years in prison in the U.S. John Hawkins spoke for the Chicago Cuba Coalition on the fight to free the Cuban Five.

López Rivera, 69, was arrested in 1981 and sentenced to 55 years on

trumped-up charges of “seditious conspiracy.” He is among the longest held political prisoners in U.S. history and one of three Puerto Rican political prisoners in U.S. jails today. The other two are Avelino González Claudio and Norberto González Claudio.

“This meeting is building a bridge between the case of the Cuban Five and the imprisonment of Oscar López,” said Alejandro Luis Molina, coordinator of the National Boricua Human Rights Network, who chaired the event.

Molina pointed out that Fernando González, one of the Cuban Five, was in the same prison as López in Terre Haute, Ind., between September 2007 and May 2012. Before that González was incarcerated for five years in Oxford, Wis., together with Carlos Alberto Torres, a Puerto Rican independence fighter. Torres was released on parole in July 2010 after serving 30 years for “seditious conspiracy” and other frame-up charges.

“Washington hates the Cuban Five because they hate the example of the Cuban Revolution,” Hawkins told participants. He said their frame-up was similar to how workers are framed up every day in the U.S.

When asked, “Why is Oscar still in prison while others got out?” Clarisa López explained that when President Clinton offered to commute López Rivera’s sentence along with 11 others in 1999, López declined because it did not include all Puerto Rican political prisoners, among other reasons.

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.

The Cuban Five

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

\$3 with *Militant* subscription (normally \$5)

Puerto Rico Independence Is a Necessity

by Rafael Cancel Miranda \$6

Pathfinderpress.com

Obama trip to East Asia

Continued from front page

the South China Sea—with its vital trade routes, large oil and gas deposits, and proximity to major U.S. allies and rivals—was among Washington's most cherished spoils of the war.

Obama's Nov. 17-20 tour was his fourth visit to East Asia in as many years. He began in Myanmar, the first trip there by a U.S. president. Washington had maintained sanctions against Myanmar, also known as Burma, since 1988.

As part of Washington's moves to counter China, Hillary Clinton visited Myanmar in December last year. The White House pointed to the release of some political prisoners, relaxation of political repression and moves toward putting a civilian face on the military junta as reasons to improve relations.

Since then more political prisoners have been released, including bourgeois opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who had been held under house arrest for 15 years. Washington has eased some of its sanctions and appointed an ambassador to the country.

Obama said this visit was an "acknowledgement that there is a process under way inside that country that even a year and half, two years ago, nobody foresaw." He met with President Thein Sein and Suu Kyi.

"The United States of America is a Pacific nation and we see our future as bound to those nations and peoples to our West," Obama said in a Nov. 19 speech at the University of Yangon.

"And as our economy recovers this is where we believe we will find enormous economic growth."

Myanmar is rich in mineral resources, including petroleum, natural gas, timber, tin, zinc and copper.

In Thailand, a long-term U.S. ally, Obama met with Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra to press Bangkok to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade bloc Washington is trying to cobble together against China. It's comprised of Asian nations Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei, as well as Chile, Peru, Mexico and Canada.

Obama's last stop was Cambodia, where he attended a sharply contentious meeting of the East Asia Summit, along with Wen Jiabao, China's premier, and representatives of Japan, Russia, South Korea, India and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. ASEAN includes Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and others.

The summit was marked by sharp exchanges over counterposed territorial claims, as well as conflicts between the U.S. and China over efforts to put together competing trade blocs.

Washington has exploited territorial disputes in the South China Sea between China and ASEAN member states, pressing for stronger ties with those arrayed against Beijing and to deepen its own military presence in the region.

China claims sovereignty over all land inside the South China Sea, including more than 40 islands. In June, Beijing set up a new national prefecture headquartered in the Paracel Islands. In July, China's Central Military Commission announced that it would deploy a garrison of soldiers to guard the islands in the area.

More than half the world's supertanker traffic passes through these waters, which are believed to hold vast reserves of oil and gas.

Over the last year Washington has expanded its military and political cooperation with traditional allies like Japan, Australia and the Philippines.

The U.S. Navy plans to place 60 percent of its warships in the Pacific



Christophe Archambault/AFP/Getty Images

Participants in the 7th East Asia Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Nov. 20. The summit was marked by sharp exchanges over territorial claims and conflicts over competing trade blocs.

over the next eight years, up from 50 percent now.

In April the first 250 U.S. Marines out of a deployment of 2,500 arrived in Darwin, Australia.

Washington deepens ties with Manila

Washington has deepened its ties with Manila. As of October this year 70 U.S. warships had passed through the former U.S. base at Subic Bay, up from 55 in 2011. The Pentagon says more than 100 warplanes stop over each month at Clark, another former U.S. base.

In September, Tokyo and Washington reached an agreement to deploy a second major advanced missile defense radar on Japanese territory. A third radar would be positioned in the Philippines, creating an arc that would make it possible to track ballistic missiles launched from North Korea and large parts of China.

In August, the U.S. and Japanese governments signed an agreement to deploy unmanned drones to monitor Chinese activity in waters surrounding Diaoyu Islands—called Senkaku by Tokyo—in the East China Sea, claimed by China, Japan and Taiwan.

In a provocative

move against Beijing, the Japanese government in September bought the islands from their private owner. According to the Burmese online news agency Irrawaddy, one of the exercises planned later this year is a joint Japan/U.S. maneuver that take a remote island back from a foreign intruder.

"Obama's tour seemingly has a menacing manner, but it cannot change the reality that Southeast Asia is economically tied to China," *Global Times*, a voice for the Chinese government, said in a Nov. 19 commentary on Obama's trip. "There may be some political and military implications in providing encouragement to some countries, but Southeast Asian countries have seen this kind of tempt many times over the past four years, and its effectiveness is increasingly fading."



Japanese patrol vessels stop Chinese fishing boat in August near disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in East China Sea.

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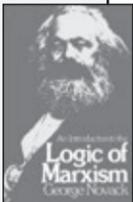
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No worker has to die on the job!

No worker has to die or be maimed on the job!

But nonetheless, our lives and limbs *are* sacrificed day in and day out on the altar of sharpening competition for markets among capitalists worldwide—from garment and textile plants in Bangladesh to chemical factories in Quebec to coal mines in New Zealand and the U.S. The bosses never value our lives more than the monetary cost of replacement.

Garment bosses in Bangladesh forced workers to remain in a burning building rather than lose a minute of profit squeezing. Like the New Zealand mine explosion that killed 29 workers in 2010, it was a large-scale disaster waiting to happen and a direct result of the bosses' relentless drive for production. And in both cases, corners were cut that turned the workplace into a death trap from which many would not be able to escape.

The New Zealand mine bosses were pressing to meet impossible production quotas in hopes of super-profits during a period of high coal prices. Garment bosses in Bangladesh have captured a substantial share of production worldwide by pushing workers who today are the lowest paid in the industry.

The same question is posed everywhere. Only workers themselves have an interest in safe working conditions. Only their organization and use of union power—including the ability to shut down production—can enforce it.

Safety inspectors, whether from capitalist government agencies or from so-called nonprofit NGOs, have neither the same interest nor power. They end up serving as cover for the bosses unless and until the fighting union of workers is brought to bear.

Workers at the Illinois mine where Chad Meyers was killed were fighting for a union and a union safety committee. The National Labor Relations Board took 15 months to recognize their democratically elected union. And the company has made clear it would rather shut down the mine than recognize a union that would put workers in a stronger position to enforce safety.

Thousands of garment workers in Bangladesh are demonstrating out of necessity to protect their very lives after the killing of 112 fellow workers. They represent a union in becoming.

In every corner of the globe where capitalism holds sway, working people must fight today to protect each other from the growing ravages of private profit. This fight is a necessary struggle along the road through which the working class can become strong enough to wrest political power from the capitalist exploiters.

When the working class is in power, as it is in Cuba, production is organized to meet the needs of humanity. Under workers power, safety on the job is an essential aspect of production, not a contradiction.

Cease-fire ends Israeli assault on Gaza

Continued from front page

been gained for Palestinian working people.

The Israeli government said it carried out its assault in response to stepped-up missile attacks by Hamas and other Islamist groups targeting civilian areas in southern Israel.

In more than 1,500 Israeli airstrikes, 160 Palestinians were killed, 105 of whom were civilians, according to the Palestinian Center for Human Rights. Another 1,000 were wounded, including 971 civilians, the center reported. Some 10,000 Palestinians were displaced, according to the U.N.

Hundreds of rocket attacks by Hamas killed six Israelis, four of them civilians. Dozens were injured.

After the cease-fire took effect, thousands took to the streets across Gaza to celebrate after being cooped up for a week in their homes with limited access to food and other supplies. Now Palestinian working people, who bore the brunt of the assault, once again face the task of rebuilding destroyed homes and infrastructure.

Workers in Gaza "are thinking about how to live in dignity. They feel that they are victims of this war," Wehbe Badarne, director of the Arab Workers Union in Israel, told the *Militant* in a phone interview Nov. 26. "The winner is the political parties and the government in Gaza and in Israel. The workers don't get any kind of benefits."

"Palestinians hope that Israel will allow construction materials to reach them. This is what they need," he said, "as well as medical aid."

Since 2007 Tel Aviv has maintained an economic embargo of Gaza, including a ban on the import of most construction materials. It prevents most of those living in Gaza from entering Israel. It's also "very difficult for Palestinians living in Israel to visit Gaza," Badarne said. "If you go to Gaza through Egypt and then return to Israel, you could be jailed."

For factory workers "the situation here has been very difficult since the closing of the Erez industrial zone," Sameer Mahal, 32, a carpenter in Gaza, said in a phone interview. "Today, many jobs are just temporary." The zone, which employed about 5,000 Gazans, was shut down in 2005 after Tel Aviv withdrew its troops from Gaza.

The agreement states that opening crossings and the issue of residents in border areas "shall be dealt with after 24 hours from the start of [the] cease-fire." But no steps have yet been taken to implement this. The Egyptian government is the guarantor of the deal, an unnamed Palestinian official told Ynetnews, the web-site of Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronoth*.

To divert sympathy away from the Palestinian people under attack by Tel Aviv, U.S. and Israeli media prominently covered Hamas' Nov. 20 execution of six men accused of being Israeli collaborators and then dragging the corpse of Ribhi Badawi, 37, through the streets of Gaza City. His wife Kholoud Badawi told the British *Daily Mail* he was a member of another Islamist group, Jaljalat, and would never give information to the Israelis. "His enemies used the war as an excuse to kill him," she told the paper.

The incident showed how Hamas used the Israeli assault to clamp down on political space for working people and send warnings to any who might criticize their rule.

Since the cease-fire Tel Aviv has eased some restrictions, allowing Palestinian farmers to visit land near the border with Israel and letting fishermen go further out to sea, reported al-Jazeera.

At a news conference in Cairo Nov. 21, Hamas leader Khaled Meshal claimed the eight-day assault "is a point on the way to a great defeat for Israel," which "failed in all its objectives."

Israeli military gains

Yet Israel succeeded in assassinating Hamas' top military commander along with dozens of other Hamas combatants, destroyed many of Hamas' rocket launching sites and weaponry, including nearly wiping out the group's capacity to launch longer-range rockets beyond southern Israel, and deployed the Iron Dome anti-missile system, which Israeli Defense Force officials say was 84 percent effective in knocking out rockets headed for populated areas.

Israeli officials say that "better intelligence" and more precise bombs allowed them to hit Hamas with twice as many airstrikes and fewer civilian casualties than during its last assault on Gaza in 2008-2009.

Israel's five Iron Dome anti-missile batteries, which came on line in early 2011 with funding from Washington, have cost a total of \$250 million. The Barack Obama administration has promised to fund Tel Aviv's plans to more than double its battery sites and other missile-defense programs, according to a Nov. 21 White House news release.

Meanwhile, as the cease-fire was taking effect, tens of thousands rallied against a decree by Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi making his decisions above review by the judiciary. On the third day of street demonstrations, a 15-year-old boy was killed Nov. 25 and 40 people wounded when protesters tried to storm a Muslim Brotherhood office in the Nile Delta city of Damanhur.

Forced into part time

Continued from front page

In October there were 8.3 million "involuntary" part-time workers, whose hours vary anywhere from one to 34 hours a week, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This figure has risen by nearly one-third of a million over the past couple of months.

The government counts all those working part-time as being employed. Otherwise, the 7.9 percent official unemployment rate in October would be above 14 percent, and even higher if millions of "discouraged" workers were counted.

Since September 2007, "the number of Americans working full time has declined by 5.9 million," reported the *Wall Street Journal*, "while the number working part time has jumped by 2.6 million."

One area where workers have been hard hit is retail sales. "Over the past two decades many major retailers went from a quotient of 70 to 80 percent full-time to at least 70 percent part-time across the industry," Burt Flickinger III, managing director of the Strategic Resource Group, told the *New York Times*.

Increasing numbers of stores have been using more sophisticated technology like "scheduling software" to reduce hours to periods of peak sales. This includes keeping workers on call-by status, forcing them to be ready to come into work at the last minute.

"Many employers now schedule shifts as short as two or three hours while historically they may have scheduled eight-hour shifts," David Ossip, founder of Dayforce, which produces scheduling software, told the *Times*.

Work less, work harder

At Jamba Juice shops, with 770 outlets, the company's focus is to speed up work in less hours. "You don't want to work your team members for eight-hour shifts," Nicole Rosser, Jamba Juice New York district manager, told the *Times*. "By the time they get to the second half of their shift, they don't have the same energy and enthusiasm. We like to schedule people around four- to five-hour shifts so you can get the best out of them during that time."

The number of temporary or contract workers has also been rising rapidly, up 6 percent in the first quarter of 2012 over last year, according to the American Staffing Association. Over 40 percent more people hold temp jobs now than in 2009.

Some major restaurants, hotels and retailers have started to cut work hours below 30 a week to avoid paying penalties under Obama's Affordable Care Act. Under this law, starting in January 2014 any company with 50 or more full-time workers must offer government-approved health care or face fines of at least \$2,000 for every worker after the first 30.

Pillar Hotels & Resorts, which runs 210 hotels for Sheraton, Fairfield Inns, Hampton Inns and Holiday Inns, "this summer began to focus more on hiring part-time workers among its 5,500 employees," after the Supreme Court upheld the administration's health care law, reported the *Journal*. Others, like owners of fast food burger chains Carl's Jr. and Hardee's, are replacing full-time employees who left with part-time workers.

Similarly, Anna's Linens Inc., "is considering cutting hours for some full-time employees to avoid the insurance mandate," CEO Alan Gladstone told the paper.

And where bosses are planning to offer health care, many insurance plans they are putting in place come with high deductibles, where a worker would have to pay as much as several thousand dollars a year before coverage kicks in.

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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