

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Cuban leader: Embargo, hostility toward Cuba is US state policy
 — PAGES 8-10

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 78/NO. 34 SEPTEMBER 29, 2014

'Paper inspires with news of workers' fights around world'

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The fall 2014 *Militant* subscription drive has begun and is on course, with 452 subscriptions! The first chart with quotas and progress from cities in the U.S. and around the world is printed below.

The drive is being led by trade unionists and others who are joining strikes, organizing drives and social protests. They're increasing the number of workers who read and use the *Militant* to strengthen their struggles and learn about and meet others who are part of resistance to attacks from

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Cuba sends doctors to combat Ebola in Africa

Calls on other countries to 'join the struggle'



Revolutionary Cuba is sending 165 volunteer doctors and nurses to Sierra Leone to combat Ebola. Some 4,000 Cuban health-care workers are in Africa. Above, Cuban doctor in Tanzania.

BY SETH GALINSKY

The revolutionary government of Cuba is sending a 165-member medical team to Sierra Leone to combat the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa. This is the largest number of medical personnel being sent to West Africa from anywhere in the world.

Like other internationalist aid from Cuba since working people took power following the 1959 revolution, the mission to combat Ebola "is carried

out under the principle that we don't give what we have left over; we share what we have," Cuba's Public Health Minister Roberto Morales said at a Sept. 12 press conference in Geneva.

Morales said that Cuba currently

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Washington escalates war moves in Iraq, Syria

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

With substantial sections of the U.S. ruling class demanding more aggressive action, President Barack Obama declared war against Islamic State forces, which control one-third of territory in both Iraq and Syria, in a nationwide speech Sept. 10.

OPPOSE US BOMBING, TROOPS IN IRAQ, SYRIA!
 — Editorial, p. 11

The president's plan focuses on increased airstrikes in Iraq — where more than 150 have already been carried out over the past month — and next in Syria, and assembling a "broad coalition" to back the assault. Obama insisted this will not include U.S. combat boots on the ground, but, he said, others will do so.

If this coalition approach fails, Gen. Martin Dempsey, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Senate

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Sign up 2,400 subscribers!
Sept. 6 - Oct. 28

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Omaha	150	27	18%
Houston	110	21	19%
Philadelphia	115	21	18%
Brooklyn	200	35	18%
Atlanta	150	26	17%
Miami	105	16	15%
New York	200	29	15%
Seattle	125	17	14%
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Calgary	50	10	20%
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Total sold	452	19%	
Should be	343	14%	

Meeting in DC marks 16 years in int'l fight to free Cuban 5

BY NED MEASEL

WASHINGTON, D.C. — More than 125 people attended a meeting here Sept. 13 to demand freedom for the Cuban Five. "Tonight's event is

CUBAN 5 EVENT IN HAVANA
 — See article, p. 7

part of activities taking place all over the world" to mark the 16th anniversary of their arrest on frame-up charges by the FBI, said Alicia Jrapko, U.S. coordinator of the International Com-

Continued on page 7

March in solidarity with municipal workers in Quebec!
 Protest gov't attacks on pensions
Sat. Sept 20 ♦ 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Montreal, Parc La Fontaine
 (Corner of Cherrier and rue Parc Lafontaine)

Rail workers defend safety, reject bosses' 1-person 'crew' proposal



Creston News Advertiser

Rail workers, supporters outside Aug. 25, Creston, Iowa, union meeting oppose one-man crew.

BY DENNIS RICHTER AND JACQUIE HENDERSON

CRESTON, Iowa — In a victory for rail workers and those who live along train routes, members of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART) who work for Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway across the western two-thirds of the U.S. voted by a clear majority Sept. 9 to reject the bosses' proposal to run freight trains with a "crew" of one.

The BNSF, owned by Omaha-based billionaire Warren Buffett, sought to

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Inside

Turkey construction workers resist deadly profit drive 2
 Moscow's war in Ukraine unpopular inside Russia 4

— On the picket line, p. 5 —

Illinois lamp workers win pay raise after 3-day strike
 Teachers in British Columbia on strike since June
 NY airport workers fight for union, wage raise, break room

Construction workers in Turkey resist bosses' deadly profit drive

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Some 1,000 workers and others rallied outside a construction site in Istanbul, Turkey, Sept. 7 to protest the deaths of 10 construction workers killed the previous day as a result of the bosses' profit-driven disregard for elementary safety procedures. Police attacked the demonstration with water cannons, rubber bullets and tear gas.

The deaths were just the latest incident of workers killed in the booming Turkish construction industry. In the last five years, 1,754 construction workers in Turkey died on the job and 1,940 were disabled.

The protest comes four months after a wave of mass demonstrations across Turkey against mining bosses and the government, sparked by the deaths of more than 300 coal miners in the western town of Soma.

The 10 construction workers died when an elevator they were riding in fell 32 floors as they worked overtime on a Saturday evening. They were among 1,500 workers building the Torun Center luxury high rise residential complex.

Emrah Acar, who worked on elevator maintenance at the site, told Turkish daily *Hurriyet* that for more than two months "the elevator was going off the rails, and whenever it derailed, we would press the 'emergency stop' button and slam the cabin into the walls to make it stop." Acar said he had been telling officials about the danger over this entire time.

Huseyin Yildiz, who works at the site, told *Hurriyet* he was in the elevator a month earlier when it fell 20 floors, but

a parachute mechanism kicked in and he survived. He reported the incident to company officials, but they did nothing.

The deaths came five months after Erdogan Polat, 19, died when he fell 19 floors in a hoist at the same site. According to the Turkish Labor Ministry, 1.6 million people work in construction, only 42,000 of whom have health care coverage or pensions.

The Sept. 7 protest was called by the Progressive Confederation of Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK), Public Workers Union, the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, the Turkish Doctors' Union, and several political parties, including the pro-Kurdish Peoples Democracy Party (HDP).

"The unions and political parties called the demonstration to expose the bosses' refusal to buy safety equipment like harnesses for the workers," HDP official Samil Altan said in a Sept. 15 phone interview. "The safety conditions are incredible. Workers are coming to the cities by the thousands from the rural villages. They get hired by contractors to work for the big companies' projects."

Altan said the majority of the construction workers are Kurds, who face discrimination and receive lower wages than Turkish workers.

Aziz Torun, CEO of the construction company, denied the elevator was defective and blamed the workers. Torun also denied he authorized overtime work. However, a municipal government agency had granted the company permission to operate 24 hours a day on the project because the posh residence was in the "public interest."



Some 1,000 people rallied in Istanbul, Turkey, Sept. 7, a day after 10 construction workers were killed when elevator they were in crashed to ground. Cops fired tear gas at demonstrators.

On Sept. 2 miner Metin Keskin, 36, was killed in Soma after being hit by a large chunk of coal that pushed him into a steel rod that punctured his chest. Some workers walked off the job in

protest. The Employee Health and Work Safety Council, a miners advocacy group, blamed Keskin's death on speedup of production by the Imbat company, which runs the mine.

Missouri women's rights supporters rally against new abortion restriction

BY MAGGIE TROWE

In the latest attack on abortion rights, the Missouri state legislature voted Sept. 10 to extend the waiting time for a woman seeking an abortion to 72 hours, becoming the third state with such a stringent requirement.

Several hundred supporters of women's rights rallied against the bill inside and outside the capitol in Jefferson City the day of the vote to override Gov. Jay Nixon's veto of the bill. A similar number of people were there to support the restriction.

Groups defending women's right to choose abortion included Planned Parenthood, the National Organization for Women, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Caucus of Jewish Women, Catholics for Choice, Missouri Women United and the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

Like 20 other states, Missouri already had a 24-hour waiting period for abortions. "The law was already burdensome," M'Evie Mead, director of statewide organizing for Planned Parenthood Advocates in Missouri,

said in a phone interview. "The new law is intended to shame or coerce the woman. There is only one licensed provider of abortions in Missouri — the Planned Parenthood Clinic in St. Louis. The average woman travels nearly 100 miles to that clinic, and one in 10 travels 300 miles."

"It means it will cost more to get an abortion," Jamie Tomek, president of Missouri NOW, said, "because you have to have two appointments, you have to make two trips, you have to take two days off work."

"This bill is further intrusion of politicians into Missourians' personal lives," said Laura McQuade, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Kansas and Mid-Missouri, in a Sept. 10 press statement.

"We all want women to have the information and support they need to make a carefully considered decision about a pregnancy," said the statement. "This law won't do that. It will block access to safe, legal abortion and target women who already have the least access to medical care."

THE MILITANT

Workers in struggle value and use 'Militant'

"I want to thank everyone on the 'Militant' team. It's a group of people you can trust and confide in. They always tell the truth and they do their job professionally. Thank you for all your support."

--Ramón Torres, president of Familias Unidas por la Justicia in Burlington, Wash.



Militant/Clay Dennison
Ramón Torres, with bullhorn, at Sept. 2013 rally against Sakuma Farms in Washington.

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

Workers' fights worldwide

Continued from front page
the bosses and the government.

Protests against the Aug. 9 killing of Michael Brown by Ferguson, Missouri, cop Darren Wilson continued last week. Hundreds of angry residents attended a city council meeting there Sept. 9, demanding a halt to police harassment and the arrest of Wilson. Many held up both hands, a gesture widely used in protests to emphasize that Brown was unarmed when he was killed.

"A couple of us drove from Chicago to Ferguson to learn about the latest developments in the Michael Brown case and to show solidarity with those calling for charges against Wilson," wrote Dan Fein Sept. 15. "We visited the memorial area where Brown was killed, which continues to be a gathering point for those who want to see the arrest of Wilson."

"The *Militant*? I like the sound of that," Arlene Parker, a retired worker in Ferguson, told them. "I've always been a militant. The government is in the hands of the rich. Profits is all that counts for them." Parker was one of 21 people who subscribed to the paper over the weekend, and she bought a copy of *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions* by Thomas Sankara, one of nine books specially priced for *Militant* subscribers.

Quebec municipal workers are organizing a mass rally in Montreal Sept. 20 to protest the provincial Liberal Party government's proposal to slash pensions. Under the proposed law, the average city worker would pay in \$1,950 a year more and receive \$1,880 less. *Mili-*

tant readers have joined unionists and others publicizing the protest among co-workers and by knocking on doors in workers' districts. Next week's *Militant* will feature a report on the action.

In Half Moon Bay, California, unionists who help get the *Militant* around joined more than 100 people Sept. 6 in a protest against the June 3 police killing of Yanira Serrano, 18, in her home. Serrano suffered from schizophrenia. No charges have been brought against the cop who killed her, Deputy Menh Trieu.

Last weekend Gerardo Sánchez and other *Militant* readers from San Francisco visited the housing development where Serrano lived, and talked with neighbors. "It's good to get this information out," Jose Avila Garcia, an agricultural worker, told them as he subscribed. "People need to pay more attention to what's going on."

"I like the *Militant* because it is a bright spot which provides people with enlightened news on the struggles of people around the world," Rogelio Rigor told Edwin Fruit in Seattle when Fruit knocked on his door. Rigor, an activist in the U.S.-Philippine Solidarity Committee and a high school science teacher, has read the *Militant* for several years. He is one of a number of subscribers deciding to renew their subscriptions.

Rigor said he is involved with other teachers in efforts to oppose pressure from the school board to give standardized tests to the students.

Restaurant worker Shakari Williams and her friend Darren Brown in College Park, Georgia, regularly read and discuss the issues covered in the *Mili-*



Militant photos: Above, Eric Simpson; inset, Laura Anderson. Neighbors of Yanira Serrano, 18, victim of cop killing, talk to Gerardo Sánchez, above right, in Half Moon Bay, Calif., Sept. 13, where agricultural worker Jose Avila Garcia signs for *Militant* subscription. Inset, Dan Fein shows *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs to Arlene Parker Sept. 14 in Ferguson, Missouri, where cops killed unarmed Michael Brown in August.



tant and Pathfinder books. When Rachelle Fruit stopped by to chat, Williams re-upped for the paper and bought two books at the special rate — *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* and *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, both by Jack Barnes.

Candace Wagner, a factory worker in Brooklyn, said that she and other workers who read the *Militant* joined a "lunch-in" protest of Aviation Safeguards employees at company headquarters in Queens Sept. 10 demanding a decent break room.

Jacquie Henderson and Dennis Rich-

ter, two production workers in Omaha, Nebraska, drove to Creston, Iowa, to talk with rail workers about the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway's proposal to reduce crew size on freight trains to one person. (See article on front page.) Richter worked for many years as a union rail worker. One worker bought a subscription to the *Militant* and another got a single copy.

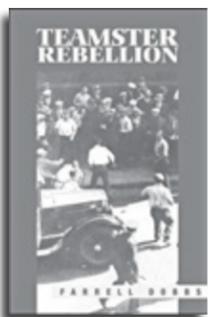
The scoreboard lists a quota of 20 subscriptions for prisoners. Eight prisoners have already subscribed or received subscriptions paid for by family or friends, bringing the total number of readers behind bars to 99.

Of the 99 subscribers behind bars, 36 are in Florida and 26 in California. At the Pelican Bay State Prison in Crescent City, Calif., where prisoners carried out a hunger strike last year, eight inmates subscribe to the *Militant*.

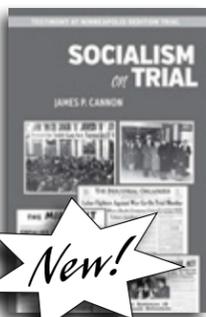
We encourage readers behind bars to help the paper build up its readership. The *Militant* Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced-rate subscriptions.

If you have a story to tell about an organizing drive, union struggle or protest effort, please send it in. And if you would like to help the *Militant* get around, look up distributors near you listed in the directory on page 6 and give them a call.

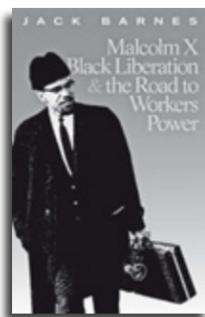
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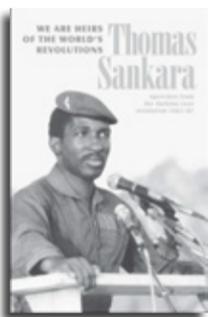
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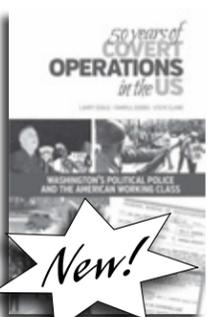
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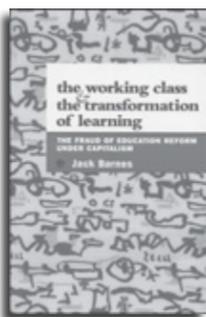
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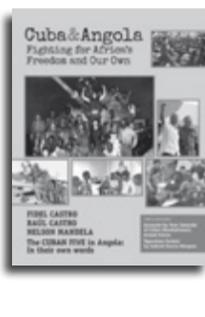
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If you have a subscription to the *Militant*, these special offers are for you. Contact a distributor listed on page 6.

Moscow's war in Ukraine unpopular inside Russia

BY JOHN STUDER

The Sept. 5 cease-fire between Kiev and Moscow in parts of eastern Ukraine occupied by Russian troops and separatist paramilitary units continues to hold. At the same time, some 1,000 Russian troops remain in eastern Ukraine and there has been sporadic fighting around both the Ukrainian-government held airport in Donetsk and approaches to the city of Mariupol.

Most people in Ukraine, including in the east, are staunchly opposed to the Russian government-backed separatists or a return to economic and political domination by Moscow.

Moscow's intervention in Ukraine is also unpopular in Russia. A recent poll by the pro-Kremlin Fund of Social Opinions reported that only 5 percent of people in Russia support Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Recently there has been an uptick in strikes and other labor actions in Russia. Miners, metal workers and municipal and state workers have launched spontaneous strikes, mainly seeking unpaid wages. Members of the Interregional Union of Health Workers in the city of Ufa declared a hunger strike Sept. 9 to protest low pay. "There are now slightly more than one new strike every working day," the Moscow Center for Social-Labor Rights reported Sept. 8.

Attempting to reinforce the shaky truce, the Ukrainian government voted to defer a trade pact with the European Union until the beginning of 2016. President Petro Poroshenko also introduced draft laws that would grant amnesty to most separatist combatants and special self-governance status for occupied districts in Donbass for a three-year period.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk told a conference in Kiev Sept. 13 that the government's most important achievement over the last six months was adoption of two "austerity" packages, cutting public spending by more than 10 percent, hiking housing bills and taxes, and looking to sell state-

owned coal mines to private interests.

Meanwhile, Washington and other imperialist governments have moved to impose more sanctions on Russian energy firms, cutting off aid to new oil and gas exploration. The imperialist sanctions are exacerbating an economic crisis that has come down hardest on working people. The ruble fell to an all-time low against the dollar Sept. 16. That day Opel car company, the European arm of General Motors, laid off 500 workers and cut production in its St. Petersburg plant from two shifts to one.



Members of Interregional Union of Health Care Workers in Ufa, Russia, declared hunger strike Sept. 9 against low pay. There has been uptick in strikes and labor actions in Russia recently.

Cuba sends doctors to fight Ebola in Africa

Continued from front page

has 50,731 volunteer health care workers in 66 countries, 4,000 of them in Africa. About 20 percent of Cuba's 75,000 doctors are currently engaged in volunteer internationalist missions.

Margaret Chan, director general of the World Health Organization, told reporters at the press conference that there are only about 170 foreign health care workers — including doctors, nurses and disease control specialists — in Africa combating Ebola. The Cuban contingent of 62 doctors and 103 nurses, which will arrive at the beginning of October, will double the number of medical personnel working directly on treating those infected with the disease.

The Cuban volunteers are getting specialized training in Cuba to prepare to effectively deal with the deadly disease, which is spread mainly through contact with body fluids.

"We need at a minimum 500 to 600 doctors ... and more than 1,000 other health care workers," Chan said. "As of today 4,782 people have been infected and 2,400 have died."

Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Conakry have less than one or two doctors for every 100,000 people.

"The Cuban government, like we have always done during these 55 years of revolution, has decided to participate in this worldwide effort under the leadership of the World Health Organization," Morales said. "We call on the governments and health ministries of all countries to join the struggle against this disease."

"We are willing to work shoulder to shoulder with doctors from any country that decides to do so," he added, "including from the United States."

Reporters in Geneva asked Morales why Cuba was sending the brigade to Sierra Leone.

Cuba already has 23 health care workers in Sierra Leone, who have been there for years, and 16 in Guinea-Conakry. "That facilitates the work that can be done there," Morales said.

"We thought the initial effort that we could do is to concentrate in one country," he said, "and not disperse the human material that really could get overwhelmed and tired out."

"We are going to work with the public health authorities in Sierra Leone and the government to carry out a plan that prevents the disease and contribute in that way to stopping the

epidemic and keep it from expanding to other regions."

When the Ebola epidemic broke out, Cuba kept all of its medical workers in Africa.

At the same time, the U.S. government's Peace Corps evacuated all 340 of its personnel in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, including all health education workers. The Connecticut-based Heartt Foundation pulled out its four U.S. doctors from Liberia after the epidemic began. Boston-based Wellbody Alliance did the same.

The Pentagon announced Sept. 8 that it is sending a 25-bed field hospital for treatment of local medical workers in Liberia, not the general population. No U.S. doctors will staff it.

After Cuba's aid announcement received wide publicity, President Barack Obama said Washington would send U.S. military engineers and teachers to train health care workers in Liberia.

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TheMilitant.com

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

Protest Moscow's Attacks on Ukraine

Sunday, Sept. 21

Protests will take place across Russia. Solidarity actions are set for New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and other cities in the U.S., as well as Israel, Ukraine and other countries in Europe.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Capitalism Fuels Spread of Deadly Ebola in Africa. Fri., Sept. 26, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Capitalism Fuels Spread of Deadly Ebola in Africa. Speaker: Janet Post, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 19, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 3701 Pulaski Ave. Tel.: (215) 225-1270.

THE MILITANT

September 29, 1989

HARTFORD, Conn. — "We came out together and we'll go in together — that's our motto," said Sebastian "Chick" Faraci, one of the 850 striking workers at Colt Firearms here. Everyone around him agreed.

That day might not be too far off. After a three-and-a-half-year strike, an administrative law judge found Colt guilty of unfair labor practices on September 7. The company is ordered to rehire every striker with back pay, an amount the union estimates at \$40 million. "This is a big victory and we need it," said Faraci.

The strikers are members of United Automobile Workers Local 376. In February 1985 Colt and the union sat down to discuss a new contract. "They weren't serious at all about negotiating," one striker said, "and at the same time they were firing people for union activities." After working 10 months without a contract, the unionists decided to strike.

THE MILITANT

September 28, 1964

Sept. 22 — The home of Negro rights fighter Mrs. Aylene Quinn in McComb, Miss., was bombed Sunday night, Sept. 20. Mrs. Quinn, a 42-year-old cafe operator, and her two children — Jacklin, 9, and Anthony, 5 — were injured. The front part of the house was shattered but fortunately the children were in back of the house at the time and the injuries were not serious.

Between 150 and 200 Negro residents of the area gathered around the house after the blast. When the local racist police arrived, they arrested about 20 Negroes, claiming bricks were thrown at them. About an hour later, the Negro Society Hill Baptist Church, just south of McComb, was blasted into rubble by another racist bomb.

Despite appeals throughout the summer for federal protection in Mississippi, incidents of violence and harassment were the pattern for the summer and such incidents are on the increase.

SOCIALIST APPEAL

September 29, 1939

Once again American Stalinism has apparently changed its color. The bright yellow of recent years, which reflected the alliance, or attempted alliance, of Stalin and the imperialist democracies, has been suddenly transformed like the color of a chameleon on an autumn leaf, into the reddish-brown of the Stalin-Hitler pact.

Overnight the raucous demand for American participation in a holy war against German fascism in the name of democracy has given way to fervent appeals to "Keep America out of war" — against Germany. For good measure — and for the benefit of dupes — the Kremlin agents have even begun to mutter something about socialism and to threaten to "vote against war credits" in "all the belligerent countries," including, it is to be assumed, Hitler's Germany if and when the Communist party deputies are summoned from their concentration camps or resurrected from their graves to cast their votes in the Nazi Reichstag.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Illinois mechanics strike for union contract

EAST DUNDEE, Ill. — Some 25 union supporters joined an expanded picket line here Sept. 5 to back nine auto mechanics on strike at Al Piemonte Chevrolet. In March the mechanics voted 9-2 to join International Association of Machinists Local 701. They went on strike July 9.

“The company fired a senior mechanic for no other reason than he was earning top pay,” said striker Andrew Kuehl. “We did not want to be next, so we called the union to get some job security.”

The main issue in the strike, the mechanics said, is medical insurance and pensions. They want the same benefits as workers at Ford and Nissan dealerships, also owned by Piemonte. According to strikers, Piemonte Chevrolet refused to budge on the company’s proposal for a 50 percent health insurance co-pay and a substandard inadequate pension plan.

The dealership has kept the shop running with the two who voted not to join the union and several new hires.

“So far today we have turned away eight potential customers,” said striker Damian Iskra. “The company got a temporary restraining order, starting today, limiting us to two pickets in the entranceway.”

“I support workers in struggle every chance I get,” said Ed Hanson, vice president of the Elgin Association of Firefighters, one of several officials from other unions, including the Laborers’ International Union, at the picket.

Al Piemonte Chevrolet has not responded to a request to comment.

— Dan Fein

New York airport workers hold ‘lunch-in’ for union, wage raise

NEW YORK — Airport workers fighting for a union, higher wages and better work conditions held a “lunch-in” in the lobby of the building housing the offices of Aviation Safeguards in Kew Gardens, Queens, Sept. 10. Workers from JFK and LaGuardia airports, joined by other members and staff of Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ and other union supporters, followed the commands of “Move in. Keep exits clear. Sit down. Pull out your sandwich. Eat lunch.” Between bites protesters chanted their demands. The protest centered on the need for a decent break room for Aviation Safe-



Airport workers and supporters hold lunchtime sit-in in lobby at Aviation Safeguards near JFK airport in Queens, New York, Sept. 10, demanding company provide decent break room.

guards workers at JFK.

“It’s not just about pay,” said Sha-reeka Elliott, who works for Airway Cleaners at JFK. “Our humanity is being disrespected.”

The union is on a campaign to organize 12,000 airport workers who are employed by subcontractors at JFK and LaGuardia.

— Candace Wagner

Illinois lamp workers win pay raise after 3-day strike

DES PLAINES, Ill. — Workers at lamp manufacturer Juno Lighting here won pay raises and a new contract Sept. 6 after a three-day strike. The agreement includes wage increases of 45 cents per hour for each of the first two years and 50 cents in 2016. The company withdrew its demand to make workers pay higher health insurance premiums.

“We broke them in three days. In the end we got what we wanted,” said Gabriel Mendez, 25, who works in the shipping department. “The company tried to divide us by giving the shippers another 25 cent increase per hour. In the end we all got the same increase.” The walkout involved 360 of the plant’s 400 workers.

The workers, members of SEIU Workers United Local 2565, approved the contract by a secret ballot vote held at the picket line.

Strikers said the company’s first offer of 30 cents an hour was rejected overwhelmingly. Workers are paid anywhere from \$8.25 to \$20 an hour.

Before the vote more than 100 strikers and their families gathered at the picket line, grilling hot dogs and listening to Mexican music, while the union negotiating committee met with company representatives inside the plant.

“About 20 co-workers didn’t support the strike and stayed working. This plant is 95 percent Latino and 80 percent women,” Catalina Villaseñor, who has worked at the plant for more than 20 years, told the *Militant*. “We stuck together and stayed strong.”

— Alyson Kennedy

Canada teachers strike over wages and class size

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Some 41,000 teachers have been on strike across the province since mid-June, two weeks before the end of the school year. Public schools, which were scheduled to reopen Sept. 2, are



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

Workers on picket line during three-day strike at lamp manufacturer Juno Lighting in Des Plaines, Illinois, hear vote totals Sept. 6 approving new contract with wage raise.

still closed.

Teachers went on strike to demand higher wages and smaller class sizes. The British Columbia government says that teachers have no right to negotiate over class size.

Since 2002, nearly 2,500 special education teachers, counselors, teacher-librarians and other school workers have been cut. British Columbia schools have the fewest teachers per student in the country and they earn less than in Ontario and Alberta. The British Columbia Federation of Teachers is asking for an 8 percent increase over five years, while the government is offering 7 percent over six.

Thousands of teachers and their supporters, including parents, students and other unions, rallied here Sept. 5 and across the province days earlier to demand that the government accept the federation’s proposals for binding arbitration to end the strike, which the government has called “a nonstarter.”

Dave Gagnon, a support staff worker at Windsor House School, carried a sign that read, “We need to support teachers because breaking unions won’t stop with teachers.” He said that Canadian Union of Public Employees members who work as school support staff are respecting the teachers’ picket lines.

— Steve Penner, Ned Dmytryshyn and Mike Barker

Thousands in China strike Apple parts plant for bonus, cake

About 16,000 workers at two subsidiaries of Taiwanese Apple supplier Wintek in Dongguan city in south China’s Guangdong province went on strike Sept. 9-10 to protest cuts in holiday benefits.

Workers walked out at the Dongguan Masstop Liquid Crystal Display plant after bosses denied them a promised \$114 bonus and a box of mooncakes for the Mid-Autumn Festival holiday celebrated the day before. The company instead slashed the workers’ cash bonus to \$16 and gave them a chicken leg and a banana.

The plant is the world’s largest producer of LCD flat screens, including for Apple’s new iPhone 6 and Apple Watch.

“There are 10,000 of us in that factory, so when we stop work, nobody anywhere in the world gets their screen,” plant worker Cai Shen told reporters.

The strikers blocked roads outside the factory, reported Chinese news agency Xinhua. After a couple of hours cops forced them inside the plant, but they

didn’t resume work, reported Radio Free Asia, a U.S. government-funded news agency.

The following day the strike was joined by 8,000 workers at Wintek (China) Technology Ltd., another Apple subsidiary in Dongguan. The cops detained at least 11 strikers, according to Radio Free Asia.

“Workers may have misunderstood,” a Wintek representative told the *South China Morning Post* Sept. 10. “Masstop would only hand out bonuses if the company is making profit this year.”

The strikers returned to work Sept. 11 after company executives promised to cut their own salaries by 10 to 30 percent, according to Xinhua.

— Brian Williams

North London care workers strike against pay cut

BARNET, North London — Dozens of UNISON-organized care workers at the Flower Lane Autism Service and Rosa Morrison center, both run by Your Choice Barnet, have begun a series of two-day strikes and other actions to protest a 9.5 percent pay cut. Barnet Council, the local government that owns Your Choice, is on a drive to turn a profit on the centers, where workers care for people with physical or learning disabilities.

“In today’s climate, you can’t afford this pay cut,” said Flower Lane worker Sharon Harrison. “Just the rent means you would have to move out of London.”

“People with autism need consistency, daily plans, routine,” she said. “It shouldn’t be a business, but simply a service for people who need it.”

During the first walkout Sept. 8-9, workers outside Flower Lane handed out leaflets on their fight. Passing drivers honked in support. A woman whose son goes to Flower Lane brought tea and coffee for the strikers. A busload of striking care workers from Care UK in Doncaster, South Yorkshire, joined a solidarity rally Sept. 9.

Thirty workers have taken redundancy (voluntary layoff) since attacks on conditions began 18 months ago. Workers said that Your Choice has replaced them with temp workers, who are paid less and don’t have guaranteed hours.

“People have lost the concept of what a union is,” said Doug Lloyd, a Your Choice worker. “The union is the members. If we start using it, we can be strong.”

— Ögmundur Jónsson

Nelson Mandela: Only disciplined mass action will win

Below is an excerpt from Nelson Mandela Speaks: Forging a Democratic Nonracial South Africa by Nelson Mandela (1918-2013). Mandela, central leader of the African National Congress and president of South Africa from 1994 to 1999, was imprisoned for 27 years by the South African government for fighting to end white-supremacist apartheid rule. As a result of a powerful mass movement in South Africa — strengthened by the defeat of Pretoria's invasion of Angola by Angolan and Cuban troops — Mandela was released from prison on Feb. 11, 1990. That same day he spoke the following words to a mass rally in Cape Town. Copyright © 1993 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



"The sight of freedom looming on the horizon should encourage us to redouble our efforts. It is only through disciplined mass action that our victory can be assured," said Nelson Mandela, leader of African National Congress, the day he was freed from prison. Above, women workers demonstrate at City Council offices of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, August 1991.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY NELSON MANDELA

Today the majority of South Africans, black and white, recognize that apartheid has no future. It has to be ended by our own decisive mass action in order to build peace and security. The mass campaigns of defiance and other actions of our organization and people can only culminate in the establishment of democracy.

The apartheid destruction on our subcontinent is incalculable. The fabric of family life of millions of my people has been shattered. Millions

are homeless and unemployed. Our economy lies in ruins and our people are embroiled in political strife.

Our resort to the armed struggle in 1961 with the formation of the military wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe, was a purely defensive action against the violence of apartheid.

The factors which necessitated the armed struggle still exist today. We have no option but to continue. We express the hope that a climate conducive to a negotiated settlement will be created soon so that there may no longer be the need for the armed struggle.

I am a loyal and disciplined member of the African National Congress. I am therefore in full agreement with all of its objectives, strategies, and tactics.

The need to unite the people of our country is as important a task now as it always has been. No individual leader is able to take on this enormous task on his own. It is our task as leaders to place our views before our organization and to allow the democratic structures to decide on the way forward.

On the question of democratic practice, I feel duty-bound to make the

point that a leader of the movement is a person who has been democratically elected at a national conference. This is a principle which must be upheld without any exceptions.

Today, I wish to report to you that my talks with the government have been aimed at normalizing the political situation in the country. We have not as yet begun discussing the basic demands of the struggle. I wish to stress that I myself had at no time entered into negotiations about the future of our country, except to insist on a meeting between the ANC and the government.

Mr. de Klerk has gone further than any other Nationalist president in taking real steps to normalize the situation. However, there are further steps as outlined in the Harare Declaration that have to be met before negotiations on the basic demands of our people can begin.

I reiterate our call for, inter alia, the immediate ending of the state of emergency and the freeing of all, and not only some, political prisoners.

Only such a normalized situation which allows for free political activity can allow us to consult our people in order to obtain a mandate. The people

need to be consulted on who will negotiate and on the content of such negotiations.

Negotiations cannot take place above the heads or behind the backs of our people. It is our belief that the future of our country can only be determined by a body which is democratically elected on a nonracial basis.

Negotiations on the dismantling of apartheid will have to address the overwhelming demand of our people for a democratic, nonracial, and unitary South Africa. There must be an end to white monopoly on political power and a fundamental restructuring of our political and economic systems to ensure that the inequalities of apartheid are addressed and our society thoroughly democratized.

It must be added that Mr. de Klerk himself is a man of integrity who is acutely aware of the dangers of a public figure not honoring his undertakings. But as an organization, we base our policy and strategy on the harsh reality we are faced with, and this reality is that we are still suffering under the policy of the Nationalist government.

Our struggle has reached a decisive moment. We call on our people to seize this moment so that the process towards democracy is rapid and uninterrupted. We have waited too long for our freedom. We can no longer wait. Now is the time to intensify the struggle on all fronts.

To relax our efforts now would be a mistake which generations to come will not be able to forgive. The sight of freedom looming on the horizon should encourage us to redouble our efforts. It is only through disciplined mass action that our victory can be assured.

We call on our white compatriots to join us in the shaping of a new South Africa. The freedom movement is the political home for you too.

We call on the international community to continue the campaign to isolate the apartheid regime. To lift sanctions now would be to run the risk of aborting the process towards the complete eradication of apartheid.

Our march to freedom is irreversible. We must not allow fear to stand in our way.

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September BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Int'l conference in Havana calls actions to free Cuban 5

BY RÓGER CALERO

HAVANA — Nearly 300 delegates from 48 countries took part in the 10th International Colloquium for the Freedom of the Cuban Five and Against Terrorism held here Sept. 11-12. The event brought together representatives of solidarity organizations, trade unions, religious groups, political parties, parliamentary deputies from Latin America and other prominent figures involved in the campaign to win the release of Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, and Antonio Guerrero, Cuban revolutionaries who have been imprisoned by Washington for more than 16 years. Fernando González and René González, two of the Cuban Five, served their entire sentences in U.S. prisons and have returned to Cuba. (See “Who Are the Cuban Five?” on this page).

“We are never going to accept that Antonio, Ramón and Gerardo remain in prison — and I know that you will never accept it either,” said Fernando

González, addressing the closing session of the conference. “I also know that you will help us win their release and bring them home.”

Fernando González, now vice president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), which organized the event, and René González have been leading the international defense effort since their return.

One of the highlights of the two-day event was an exhibition inaugurating “Absolved by Solidarity,” a new series of 16 watercolors by Antonio Guerrero. The paintings depict some of the most memorable moments in the 2000-2001 frame-up trial of the five Cuban revolutionaries and the dignity and humor with which they confronted their accusers.

“These paintings were inspired by the 15 watercolors I painted in 2013 that depicted the 17 months we spent in the punishment cells” of the Federal Detention Center in Miami, writes Guerrero in his introduction to the collection. “This



Militant

Exhibit of Guerrero's paintings was inaugurated during International Colloquium for the Freedom of the Cuban Five, above, in Havana, Sept. 11-12. Inset, exhibit. From right, Andrii Metlov, Ukrainian National Committee for the Freedom of the Five; Tamara Takova, Bulgaria-Cuba Friendship Association; Maria Eugenia Guerrero, Antonio's sister; and Mary-Alice Waters, Pathfinder Press.



work is a continuation of that story.”

Delegates to the conference called for coordinated activities around the world in September 2015, including the next “5 Days for the Cuban 5” in Washington, D.C., and support to an international

solidarity action in South Africa in early 2015 that will highlight the role of the Cuban Five in Cuba's nearly 16-year-long internationalist mission in Angola that helped bring down the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Events in DC mark 16th anniversary of fight to free Cuban 5

Continued from front page
mittee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5. (See box below.)

The meeting, sponsored by the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 and held at the headquarters of the Service Employees International Union, featured the first U.S. showing of 16 new prison paintings by Antonio Guerrero, titled “Absolved by Solidarity.”

The watercolors tell the story of the Miami frame-up trial — from the denial of 11 motions for a change of venue to the long sentences and the sending of the revolutionaries to five distant prisons. The event included music, poetry, a short video, and a panel of speakers.

“It is an impossible task to show the entire trial through just 16 images,” Guerrero said in a statement displayed along with the exhibit. “We knew that we could not receive a fair trial. But nevertheless in that place, we achieved an invaluable victory and that was to de-

nounce terrorism against our people in its own lair.”

Cheryl LaBash, an activist with the International Committee; Maria Naranjo, assistant district leader of SEIU Local 32BJ in Washington, D.C.; and Valarie Long, executive vice president of the Service Employees International Union, made brief remarks to kick off the program.

José Ramón Cabañas, chief of the Cuban Interests Section, was the featured speaker. The U.S. government “called it a trial,” he said, “but we called it a political vendetta” aimed at punishing the Cuban Revolution. Cabañas took time to walk through and comment on Guerrero's paintings.

Each of the watercolors were accompanied by an explanatory note from Guerrero.

“When we arrived at the dormitory unit, to our great surprise, we were greeted with loud applause by the vast majority of the prison population with

which we had lived together during those months of trial,” wrote Guerrero about the painting “The Decision of the Jury.” It portrays fellow prisoners clapping for the Five after they were declared guilty. “We received that gesture of respect, admiration, and support from the other inmates, which could be called the first act of solidarity with our cause.”

After Cabañas spoke, Jrapko introduced the panel of Piero Gleijeses, author of *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa, 1959-1976* and *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991*; Yeidckol Polevnsky, former vice president of the Mexican Senate; and Stephen Kimber, author of *What Lies Across the Water: The Real Story of the Cuban Five*.

Gleijeses noted that three of the Cuban Five, Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González and René González were among the hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteers who helped the Angolan people defeat invasions by the white supremacist regime in South Africa. “Cuba changed the course of history in southern Africa despite the best efforts of the United States to prevent it,” he said.

The U.S. government “protects the real terrorists and punishes the real heroes,” said Polevnsky.

Kimber said that the Five were arrested and framed as a result of pressure from Cuban exile groups in Miami, who were upset that Cuba didn't fall like the Soviet Union and disrupted growing co-

operation between the U.S. administration of President William Clinton and Havana.

“What Cuba does around the world is mind boggling,” Siona Walldeslassie, 19, a journalism student at Northern Virginia Community College, said after the event. “I wasn't surprised by the case of the Cuban Five, but I saw how unjust it is.”

Juan Acosta, 22, whose family is from Cuba, liked Guerrero's “Five Distant Prisons” painting. “It represents the level of cruelty of the U.S. government in separating the Five,” he said.

The meeting was the culmination of three days of activities in the area that included a house meeting of 35 in Takoma Park, Maryland, a reception, lobbying visits to congressional offices and a picket line at the White House.

“In the beginning of our incarceration, when we were being held in isolation in Miami in 1998, no one knew about our case or even knew that we existed at all,” wrote Gerardo Hernández in a message to the meeting on behalf of the Five. “How far we have come! There are now committees in support of the Cuban Five in many countries and dozens of U.S. consulates around the globe now have to endure regular protests at their doors calling for our freedom.”

“On this 16th anniversary of our imprisonment you can count on the three of us who remain in prison to keep resisting,” he said. “You can also count on René and Fernando to keep going forward, leading our struggle for justice.”

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 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 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, on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government's 1996 shootdown of two Brothers to the Rescue planes 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.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013 and Fernando González on Feb. 28 this year.



Bill Hackwell

“Absolved by Solidarity,” 16 new paintings by Antonio Guerrero, on display Sept. 13 at meeting at SEIU union hall in Washington, D.C., marking 16th anniversary of frame-up of Cuban Five.

Washington's trade embargo, hostility to

Cuban leader says normalization of relations no more likely under a Democratic than a Rep

Given the importance for working people in the United States, Cuba and worldwide of reversing Washington's decades-long economic embargo and hostile state policy toward Cuba, the *Militant* is reprinting a 2013 interview with Ramón Sánchez-Parodi, a longtime leader of the revolution. The interview first appeared in the Dec. 13, 2013, issue of the Cuban daily *Granma*.

In 1975 Sánchez-Parodi represented the Cuban government in negotiations with the Republican administration of President Gerald Ford that had been proposed by the White House in June 1974, shortly before the resignation of President Richard Nixon.

The 1975 talks led to the reciprocal establishment of Interests Sections in Havana and Washington, D.C. Sánchez-Parodi then headed the Cuban Interests Section in Washington from its opening in 1977 until 1989.

The U.S. administration of Dwight Eisenhower broke diplomatic relations with Cuba in January 1961, two years after the Rebel Army and July 26 Revolutionary Movement, under Fidel Castro's leadership, led a massive popular insurrection that overturned the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista and brought workers and farmers to power.

In October 1960 the Eisenhower administration had imposed a partial trade embargo against Cuba. In



Ramón Sánchez-Parodi Montoto.

February 1962 Democratic Party President John Kennedy issued an executive order imposing a near-total embargo, which remains in place to this day. Since then the U.S. rulers have rejected repeated proposals by Cuba's revolutionary government to end the embargo and normalize relations.

The interview was conducted by *Granma* journalist Dalia González Delgado. The *Militant* has translated it into English and provided footnotes on facts many readers in the U.S. and elsewhere may not be familiar with.

Born in 1938, Sánchez-Parodi was active in the urban underground during the revolutionary struggle. In 1957 he and others were arrested at a residence in Havana where they had

planned to meet with Faustino Pérez, head of the July 26 Revolutionary Movement in the capital. They escaped from prison a few weeks later.

Since the revolution's triumph in January 1959, Sánchez-Parodi has shouldered leadership responsibilities in the Communist Party of Cuba, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of the Interior before taking diplomatic assignments in the United States. He is currently an aide to Ramiro Valdés, vice president of the Council of State and Council of Ministers, as well as a writer and journalist.



BY DALIA GONZÁLEZ DELGADO

Although he is reluctant to talk about himself, he has been a participant in historic events. Author of the book *Cuba-USA: Diez tiempos de una relación* [Cuba-USA: Ten Moments in a Relationship],¹ he has studied the relations between the two countries not only from theoretical work but from real-life experience.

Ramón Sánchez-Parodi Montoto took part in the 1975 secret talks between the two governments aimed at a possible normalization of relations, and then in the negotiations that led to the opening of the Interests Sections in each country. He headed our Interests Section in Washington from 1977 to 1989. He also served as deputy foreign minister until 1994, and then as ambassador to Brazil until 2000.

U.S. relations with Cuba, whether through domination or hostility, have helped shape the country we are today. As we now dream of an even better country, the Cuban government has reiterated its willingness to move toward the normalization of bilateral relations and the establishment of a constructive, serious dialogue, on an equal footing and based on respect for our sovereignty.

Granma spoke with Sánchez-Parodi so he could tell us, from his vantage point, what a possible normalization of relations would mean, and when we've been closest to achieving this in the past.

When the Interests Sections were opened, what was the state of relations between Cuba and the U.S.?

After the break in diplomatic ties in January 1961, there was always some kind of communication — first informally and then formally — between both governments concerning our relations.

In 1974 Henry Kissinger, secretary of state and national security advisor, taking advantage of a visit by a group of Americans who came to interview Fidel, sent a message to him. The essence of the letter was the following: *Cuba and the United States are countries with different political, economic and social systems; they disagree on the majority of fundamental inter-*

national issues, but that is not a reason to maintain perpetual hostility.

A recognition that there are differences and that this does not mean there cannot be a relationship is, as the Godfather would say, an offer you can't refuse. The Cuban government responded positively to the possibility of starting direct contacts, which had not existed until then.

The first meeting lasted half an hour or 40 minutes, in a cafeteria at LaGuardia Airport in New York City in January 1975.

What topics were discussed at that first meeting?

I was appointed to represent Cuba, and Lawrence Eagleburger, Kissinger's personal assistant secretary, represented the United States. We discussed general issues related to the interest in normalizing relations. The most concrete thing on the part of the U.S. was the announcement of some measures including authorization for U.S. subsidiaries in third countries, such as Argentina and Canada, to sell goods to Cuba.²

And did that happen?

Yes. From Argentina we began to import cars such as Fords. In the case of Canada, a number of companies had contracts to sell us office supplies. Another measure was the removal of restrictions on the movements of Cuban personnel at the U.N., who had been limited to a 25-mile radius.³

In those talks what did the U.S. ask of Cuba?

Just to talk. The measures were done as a symbolic gesture, and also to resolve problems with the governments of Argentina and Canada.

A subsequent exchange took place in July 1975 at a hotel in New York. Present were Eagleburger and William Rogers, undersecretary of state for inter-American affairs; on the Cuban side, Néstor García Iturbe, counselor at Cuba's U.N. mission, and I.

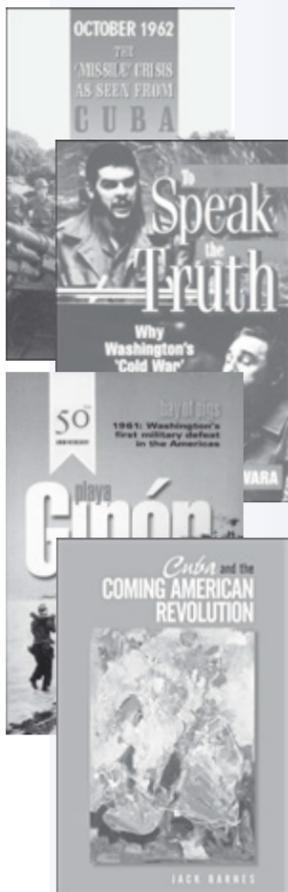
At that meeting we continued to make progress. The main topic was that the United States would favor adoption by the OAS of a resolution eliminating the multilateral nature of sanctions against Cuba. OAS sanctions against Cuba were multilateral, meaning that all member countries had to comply. Apparently the Unit-

2. During the 1975 talks Washington relaxed some penalties against U.S. companies in third countries trading with Cuba, but these were later reimposed and made even harsher.

3. In 1975 Ford reduced travel limits by Cuban diplomats at the U.N. from a 25-mile to a 250-mile radius. The 25-mile limit was reinstated by President Ronald Reagan in 1983.

1. *Cuba-USA: Diez tiempos de una relación* by Ramón Sánchez-Parodi (Ocean Sur, 2011).

For further reading ...



**October 1962:
The 'Missile' Crisis as Seen from Cuba**
by Tomás Diez Acosta

How the political resolve and combat readiness of Cuba's working people pushed back Washington's nuclear threats and plans for invasion. \$25

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Toward Cuba is matter of US state policy

Republican administration; 'Cuban-American lobby' doesn't influence US decisions on Cuba



Washington's and Havana's "conflicting interests" in Africa and the Middle East was a key factor in decision of U.S. rulers to halt negotiations with South Africa. **Left**, Cuban and Angolan troops in Cuito Cuanavale, Angola,



in 1988 repel invasion by white supremacist army of apartheid South Africa. **Right**, Sandinista rally in Managua, Nicaragua, September 1979, two months after revolution ousted U.S.-backed dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza.

Militant/Amibal Yanez

ed States did not want to violate the agreement by having bilateral talks with Cuba, so it was also a way to avoid a problem. From that moment on, every country had the right to carry out its own bilateral relations with Cuba.⁴ We talked about other issues, but that was the most important one.

We agreed to have a new round of talks in August. But later the U.S. government said it was not possible to continue the negotiations because of Cuba's support for the independence of Puerto Rico. They used that argument.

Was it an excuse?

I believe so, because then they began to link that issue with the presence of Cuban troops in Africa. And things then came to a stop.

In my opinion, the real reason was the electoral campaign (the general elections would be in 1976). There was a confrontation within the Republican Party between Ronald Reagan and Ford, and Ford didn't want to give Reagan ammunition to attack him. So the decision was to stop talking to Cuba.

But later, near the end of the campaign the following year, both presidential candidates, Ford and James Carter,⁵ sent us messages indicating that if they won the elections, they would resume talks. Carter said he didn't want the talks to be secret but rather public. After his victory came his executive order on the process of normalizing relations with Cuba, in-

cluding the opening of the Interests Sections.

At the time the Interests Sections were opened, was it expected that the dialogue would progress further and the Interests Sections would become embassies?

Yes, by both the U.S. and us. But the circumstances were always very complex, and there were many opposing interests.

Reagan himself was active in promoting agreements with Cuba, such as the migration accords in 1984, which had been previously suspended.⁶ He not only promoted these agreements, but when we signed a memorandum of understanding, the announcement was made by the White House, not the State Department, which gave the accord an authority it had not had before.

This shows there has always been an interest on their part. Even Carter's presidential statement of March 1977 said clearly: "to normalize relations with Cuba."⁷

Why wasn't normalization achieved?

Among other things, there were differences within the Carter administration over foreign policy. These involved not only Cuba but Iran and the Soviet Union. At the same time, there was the issue of Africa, where we had conflicting interests, and also the processes of armed insurrection in Latin America, particularly in Nicaragua.⁸

Were we closest to normalizing relations under Carter?

6. In June 1985 the migration accords were again suspended, this time by Havana in response to the U.S. government's provocative broadcasting of propaganda in Cuba over Radio Martí.
7. Carter's March 1977 executive order lifted the bans on U.S. citizens traveling and spending dollars in Cuba. The bans were reimposed in April 1982.

Obama has never, in any way, been on a course of seeking to normalize relations. His is a version of George W. Bush's policy "light." It has not changed. This is also tied to other complications that affect U.S. policy toward Latin America in particular. At this point the foundations, the instruments of U.S. policy in the region, reflected in the idea of the Inter-American system, have been blown to pieces.⁹ They need to rethink what their policy toward Latin America will be.

During the years you headed the Cuban Interests Section in the U.S. [1977-89], what were the tensest moments in the relation between the two countries?

In terms of hostility, certainly the tensest moments occurred at the beginning of the Reagan administration. Among other things, because rolling back the process of normalization was part of his foreign policy blueprint, and everything that followed from the ideas expressed by the New Right.

In particular, a very clear position by Alexander Haig (secretary of state), who even advocated a military strike against Cuba. He made this proposal to Reagan.

Has a military attack always remained an option?

Yes. U.S. policy toward Cuba is state policy.

Reagan acted more sensibly and rejected Haig's proposal. I would say that was the tensest moment. Fidel has told me that perhaps one of the things that saved us from a military confrontation then was the attempt that was made on Reagan's life.¹⁰

There were also moments of ten-

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Of course, because he was the one who made the decision to normalize relations.

There has never been a similar moment after that?

I don't think so. We thought maybe with Barack Obama, but once his nomination as the Democratic candidate in 2008 was assured, he began to move to the center and adopt more conservative positions.

8. In late 1975 the apartheid regime in South Africa invaded Angola following the victory of its independence struggle. Washington backed Pretoria.

At the Angolan government's request, Cuba sent tens of thousands of volunteer combatants to help defeat the invaders. In December 1975 Ford declared that the action "destroys any opportunity for improvement of relations."

The triumph of the Nicaraguan Revolution in July 1979 gave impetus to revolutionary struggles in El Salvador and elsewhere in Central America.



Claim that U.S. policy toward Cuba is run by so-called Cuban-American lobby goes "against all logic and reality," says Ramón Sánchez-Parodi. American politicians of Cuban descent "have no power," he said. "They are simply being used." **Above**, opponents of Cuban Revolution protest in 2009 against Miami conference that discussed business opportunities in Cuba.

4. In 1962 the Kennedy administration engineered Cuba's expulsion from the Organization of American States. In 1964 the OAS voted that all member states cut diplomatic and trade ties with Cuba. By 1975, however, most OAS members had established economic and political relations with Cuba and the organization dropped its ban.

5. Carter was president from January 1977 to January 1981.

US-Cuba relations

Continued from page 9

sion during the Mariel events, but that was mostly political tension, and we had a capacity for action.¹¹

You have insisted on more than one occasion that U.S. policy toward Cuba is state policy. So do you disagree with those who claim the policy toward Cuba is directed by the Cuban-American lobby in Florida?

That has nothing to do with U.S. policy. We've given it a lot of publicity. But that goes against all logic and reality.

First of all, using the term "Cuban-American" is one of those things we do when we use U.S. terms and take them as absolute truths. It's a term used in the census, and it refers to social groups. A Cuban-American is anyone who writes in the census form that he or she is Cuban-American. But what do Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio¹² have to do with Cuba?

But even if we accept the term, what weight do they have in the elections? In counties in Florida where there are Cuban-Americans, the Democrats have always won since 1992, and almost always since 1960.

Some of them, like Ileana Ros-Lehtinen,¹³ are powerful. ...

But what did she do against Cuba during the time she headed the House Foreign Relations Committee? Zero.

When those Cubans who used to control Cuban society — politics, the economy, business, everything in Cuba — were here, all they could do was what they were told by the Yankees. And now that they have nothing in Cuba — and they know it — what do they do? We often fall into the trap of accepting arguments and explanations by the United States as true, when they are false.

This does not mean the issue of Cubans who have emigrated to the U.S. is not important to us; we have to solve it according to our interests.

When Scarabeo (an oil drilling rig) was approaching, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Mario and Lincoln Diaz-Balart¹⁴ sent an open letter to Obama, arguing that this went against the blockade and U.S. interests, and demanding that the president do something about it. Obama ignored them.

They have no power. They are used.

To maintain state policy...

And the state policy is clear. The executive order establishing the blockade, the Helms-Burton law,¹⁵ the decision to codify it as federal law, OFAC (Office of Foreign Assets Control), and all other actions against Cuba are state policy. Changing this would require political will by the government and other institutions, and that is lacking.

Why do they need to change it?

How can the United States resolve its policy toward Latin America without resolving its relations with Cuba?

11. In 1980, in response to stepped-up U.S. military moves to crush the Nicaraguan and Grenada revolutions of 1979 and deal blows to revolutionary Cuba, Havana for several months had opened the port of Mariel for private boats from the U.S. to pick up Cubans who wanted to emigrate. As part of the propaganda rationalization for its military moves, Washington had been claiming that Havana was preventing Cubans from leaving the island.

In November 1987 when the U.S. and Cuban governments reinstated migration accords, Havana agreed to repatriate more than 2,500 of the 250,000 Cubans who had come to the U.S. in 1980.

12. Republicans Rafael Edward "Ted" Cruz (Texas) and Marco Rubio (Florida), both of Cuban descent, have been U.S. senators since 2013 and 2011, respectively.

13. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen has been a Republican member of the U.S. House of Representative from Florida since 1989. She immigrated to the U.S. from Cuba as a child.

14. Mario Diaz-Balart has been a member of the U.S. House of Representative from Florida since 2003. His brother Lincoln was in Congress until 2011. They are of Cuban descent.

15. The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996 — known as the Helms-Burton Act — was signed into law by President William Clinton. Among other things, it increased the financial burdens to Cuba of foreign trade and further restricted access to medicine and medical equipment.



Associated Press/Ismael Francisco

"Obama has never been on a course to normalize relations," said Sánchez-Parodi. At the same time, the foundations of U.S. control over Latin American governments' relations with Cuba "have been blown to pieces." Above, Cuban President Raúl Castro in Havana Jan. 28 opens summit of Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), launched in 2010 to counter U.S.-dominated Organization of American States. From 1964 to 1975 OAS banned member states from having diplomatic or trade relations with Cuba. At OAS meeting in 2012, all government officials except those from U.S. and Canada supported Cuba's inclusion at next OAS summit in 2015.

We have full relations with all Latin American and Caribbean countries, and even with the United States we have diplomatic links.

This was the region where the United States advanced the most in its isolation policy against us. Those countries are not going to change their policy toward Cuba. They already said there will be no Summit of the Americas¹⁶ (to be held in Panama in 2015) if Cuba does not participate. What will the United States do?

Do you believe the moment for normalization of relations is near?

It doesn't work like that. The lifting of the blockade does not occur by decree; it is a process that could take many years. There are things that can be done, such as the ongoing talks on the postal mail issue.

But even if they say "the blockade is lifted," relations in the world are governed by a series of bilateral and multilateral agreements that would have to be negotiated between Cuba and the U.S. For example, air communications, the future of Radio Martí, visas, consular fees. All that has to be negotiated; and all that takes a long time, based on our interests and theirs.

Of course, the day the United States says, "The Torricelli¹⁷ and the Helms-Burton laws are eliminated, Kennedy's executive order is revoked," it will have a big impact, a tremendous impact.

I believe this is not going to happen under Obama; it might happen in a future presidential term, whether Republican or Democrat. In fact, another one of our mistakes is to think it will be done by the Democrats. Direct talks began with none other than Nixon and Kissinger.

I think conditions are ripe, because they can't hold much longer.

16. Since 1994 OAS-organized "Summit of the Americas" meetings of foreign ministers have excluded Cuba. At the most recent summit in 2012, all government representatives except those from the U.S. and Canada supported inviting Cuba to the next summit, set for 2015.

17. In 1992, President George H.W. Bush signed into law the Cuban Democracy Act, introduced by U.S. Rep. Robert Torricelli. It reimposed embargo provisions, lifted in 1975, barring trade by U.S. subsidiaries abroad and denied access to U.S. ports for ships engaging in commerce with Cuba.

So if it does not happen under Obama, do you think there will be progress toward an approach afterward?

In fact, some progress is being made. And the political climate favors the lifting of the blockade. The U.S. is in a crisis and, as I said, they have to redesign their policy toward Latin America. This policy cannot be based on the Inter-American system. Besides, 188 countries voting for the lifting of the blockade means total isolation.¹⁸

The goal of U.S. policy towards Cuba is to restore its domination over the island. They do not settle for less.

I do think that, if not under the next administration, perhaps under the following one,¹⁹ there will have to be a substantial decision to head toward normalization of relations with Cuba. The easiest thing — and what above all would force change — is for the United States to lift the ban on U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba. That would necessarily force changes in other aspects of the blockade.

The United States and Cuba have never had an entirely normal relationship. There was a long period of dependence, then hostile relations or no relations at all. What would normal relations be like?

They are not normal relations. It would be a beneficial relationship for both countries, but it has to be free from any attempt at domination, like the kind of relations we have with lots of countries. This does not mean there won't be any conflicts. Our political and economic system is not an obstacle to having normal relations with anyone.

And do you think that at some point they will give up their intention of domination?

If they don't renounce that, there won't be normal relations. We have demonstrated to them for more than half a century that every attempt to restore that domination has failed.

18. For 22 years in a row, the U.N. General Assembly has voted overwhelmingly for a resolution condemning the U.S. embargo. In 2013 only the U.S. and Israel voted against, with the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau — effectively U.S. colonies — abstaining.

19. Following Barack Obama's final term, the next U.S. president will take office in January 2017. The one after that will presumably assume office either in 2021 or 2025.



Militant/Paul Mailhot

"Our political and economic system is not an obstacle to having normal relations with anyone," said Sánchez-Parodi. But, he said, Washington would have to renounce its intention to dominate Cuba. Above, demonstration in Washington, Sept. 13, 2008, demanding government release Cuban Five on 10th anniversary of their arrest on trumped-up conspiracy charges.

Oppose US war moves in Iraq, Syria!

Working people in the U.S. and around the world should protest Washington's escalating military intervention in Iraq and Syria.

U.S. war moves in response to the advance of reactionary Islamic State forces are not designed to aid the toiling majority who live there, contrary to Washington's pretenses. Like all previous military actions in the region, Washington's current campaign is designed to defend the economic and political interests of the U.S. rulers and the local oppressors beholden to them.

At the same time, orking people the world over should back the oppressed Kurdish people's fight to repel Islamic State forces and their struggle for a sovereign nation in Iraqi Kurdistan.

When the victorious powers of London and Paris carved up the Middle East following World War I, they denied the Kurds a homeland. Standing against their struggle today are the imperialist powers of America and Europe, as well as the Turkish, Arab and Persian rulers of the Middle East.

The Kurdish Peshmerga is the most formidable army engaged in battle against Islamic State forces, but lacks adequate weaponry. The Kurdish fighters need to obtain weapons from wherever they can, including the paltry quantities Washington gives them.

Washington supported the Iraqi government of President Saddam Hussein and its bloody war against the Iranian Revolution in the 1980s. Then in 1991, when the Hussein regime's actions ran into conflict with the U.S. rulers, Washington slaughtered more than 150,000 Iraqis. It claimed "victory" and the triumph of a "new world order."

Today, however, we can see this was the beginning of a new world disorder, a disorder accelerated by the U.S. "war on terror" in Iraq that began in 2003.

Washington's second Iraq war overthrew the Sunni-dominated Hussein dictatorship, but brought more death and dislocation. It also brought unintended consequences — both setbacks and openings for working

people.

When Washington pulled out in 2011, it left behind a shaky, Shiite-dominated capitalist regime. This accelerated the disintegration of the imperialist order imposed a century earlier, including the nation-states of Iraq and Syria themselves.

While Shiite Arabs in Iraq were freed from the oppression of Saddam Hussein's Baath Socialist Party, the Shiite-dominated government marginalized the Sunni Arabs, fueling a sectarian war. Iran's influence in Baghdad and over sectarian Shiite militias grew. Reactionary al-Qaeda offshoots gained a growing foothold in the Sunni-Arab regions.

As these forces fought each other, the Kurds had space to advance in Iraq, as well as in Turkey. Mass protest movements erupted in the region, overthrowing tyrannies in Egypt and Tunisia.

In Syria, a popular uprising was brutally crushed by the Bashar al-Assad regime. The U.S. rulers feared the rebellion of the masses more than they opposed Assad, and the Barack Obama administration cut a deal with Moscow that strengthened Assad and let secular opposition forces bleed. The devastation and chaos provided fertile ground for Islamic State to grow and prepare its offensive.

Islamic State is not at heart a religious movement, despite its call for an Islamist Caliphate. It is a sectarian political movement whose goal is to take advantage of capitalist disorder to seize territory and economic control.

Islamic State's brutality, oppression of women and contempt for human dignity close down political space for working people to organize and fight.

What is most important for working people is not who or what we are against; it's what we're *for*. In the fight against the Islamic State that means backing all efforts by the Kurdish fighters to defeat them and establish an independent nation in Iraqi Kurdistan. And supporting all struggles by workers and farmers, including against imperialist war.

Washington escalates bombing, troops

Continued from front page

Armed Services Committee, Sept. 16, he would "make a recommendation that may include the use of U.S. military ground forces."

The president sent an additional 475 military personnel to Iraq, bringing the number of U.S. troops stationed there, primarily in Erbil and Baghdad, to more than 1,700. "U.S. advisory teams consisting of 12 or so men are preparing to join Iraqi divisions and brigades, moving out of operations centers to begin a more hands-on approach," noted the *Wall Street Journal*.

Expanded airstrikes following Obama's speech hit near Baghdad, Iraq's capital, Sept. 15. Paris announced three days earlier it would undertake airstrikes against Islamic State forces in Iraq "if necessary." The Australian government said it would contribute 600 troops and up to 10 military aircraft.

Expanding executive branch powers

The president asserted he has executive authority to undertake military action in Iraq and Syria, based on the nearly 12-year-old Authority to Use Military Force law, passed by Congress after al-Qaeda's attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. In a May 2013 speech at the National Defense University, Obama had called for repealing this law, saying "al-Qaeda is a shell of its former self."

The *New York Times*, and some liberal Democrats and libertarian Republicans, have criticized Obama's reliance on executive power. The president is "putting forward unjustifiable interpretations of the executive branch's authority to use military force without explicit approval from Congress," the *Times* said in a Sept. 12 editorial.

While many Republican officials have criticized Obama for refusing to intervene in Iraq and Syria earlier and more forcibly, the White House said it was "pleasantly surprised" by the nonpartisan support his war speech got.

The CIA in a September report projects the num-

ber of Islamic State fighters to be between 20,000 and 31,500, including more than 15,000 foreign fighters.

Openings to advance Kurds' fight

The Kurds, an oppressed nationality living in Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria, have stepped forward to take on Islamic State and to advance their struggle for a Kurdish homeland in Iraq. Washington, which has relentlessly opposed Kurdish independence, wants to reimpose a centralized Iraqi government with powers over the Kurds' autonomous region.

Peshmerga, the army of the Kurdish Regional Government in northern Iraq, seeks the weapons necessary to further this struggle. Washington and other imperialist powers, fearing the dynamic toward Kurdish sovereignty, are not providing needed arms and other materiel.

Peshmerga, backed by fighters from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) from Turkey, recaptured six villages on the outskirts of Mosul from Islamic State forces.

Members of the Committees for the Protection of the Kurdish People (YPG) in Syria are also fighting alongside Peshmerga to retake Shingal, the city that Islamic State forces overran last month, driving tens of thousands of the Kurdish-speaking Yazidi religious group from their homes and threatening to kill those who did not convert to Sunni Islam.

The struggles in Syria began as a massive popular revolt in March 2011 against President Bashar al-Assad's brutal rule. His regime responded with bombings and sieges, targeting civilians, killing more than 190,000 people and displacing 10.5 million, according to the U.N. In the face of this assault — and refusal by Washington to provide arms to counter the slaughter — the opposition weakened and fractured, and Islamic State forces pushed them aside and filled the vacuum.

In his war speech Obama called for a "political solution" in Syria, while Assad, backed by Moscow and Tehran, remains in power.

Rail workers

Continued from front page

eliminate on-board conductors on 60 percent of its freight trains operating across the Pacific Northwest, the Midwest and parts of the South early next year. Instead of having a conductor working with an engineer, the proposal called for a "master conductor" to work multiple trains from a distant control center.

Last July the general committee of the SMART union's Transportation Division accepted the one-person crew proposal. But the rest of the union — which organizes a variety of workers from metal roofers and bus drivers to welders — is opposed, as is the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, which represents most engineers.

The plan was championed by *Railway Age*, the bosses' industry press, which called it "a gutsy, proactive and farsighted collaboration between BNSF and a general committee of its largest labor union."

"No evidence has surfaced that a second person in the locomotive cab contributes to a more-safe operation while evidence exists that the second person in the cab can cause a safety hazard," the magazine said July 17.

This claim not only defies common sense, but clashes with the record of recent train derailments where only one worker was on the engine, including in Lac-Mégantic in Canada in July 2013, where 47 people were killed, and in the Bronx, New York, where four died when a Metro North commuter trail derailed last December.

The proposed contract was packed with enticements to sell the profit-motivated attack on safety, including a \$5,000 signing bonus. The bosses promised that those laid off would continue to receive some pay.

Campaign against proposal

Leading up to the vote, officials of SMART's Transportation Division organized more than 70 special local meetings in dozens of cities to show a Powerpoint presentation pushing the deal. "Many workers attended these meetings, turning them into 'vote no' rallies. That's what happened at the meeting I attended," Chris Rayson, a 20-year BNSF worker currently serving as a yard switchman at the railroad's South Seattle Intermodal yard, told the *Militant*.

"We plastered up stickers against cutting the crew size at Balmer, Seattle's biggest rail yard. Management mobilized to get them down, threatening workers with discipline," Rayson said. "But workers wore the stickers, and they turned up on engines and other places management doesn't go."

About 70 percent of union members voted, reported the Creston, Iowa, *News Advertiser*. To defeat the agreement, more than 50 percent of each craft — conductors, trainmen and switchmen — had to vote no. The contract proposal applied to 3,000 workers.

"I don't actually know anyone here in Creston or anywhere else who says they voted for the one-man crew," Nancy Reed, a BNSF conductor, told the *Militant* Sept. 14. "I'm glad that it didn't pass. It wasn't in the interests of anyone."

More than 40 union members, joined by family and friends, protested with signs reading, "Vote No! to 1 Man Crew" and "Protect our community" in an Aug. 25 rally outside the union meeting to discuss the deal in Creston.

Similar protests were organized in Galesburg, Illinois; Alliance, Nebraska; Seattle and Spokane, Washington; and other cities.

BNSF is planning to implement Congress-mandated Positive Train Control system technology, which adds some automatic speed controls. Company officials argue that this system and other planned upgrades mean conductors are no longer necessary.

"Rail workers are not against technology that can make train handling safer," a BNSF engineer in Kansas City with 20 years experience, who asked that his name not be used, told the *Militant*. "But each new 'advance' has a side that is used to cut jobs at the expense of safety, instead of as an additional aid to safety."

Over the last 25 to 30 years, rail bosses' profit drive has reduced crew sizes. Forty years ago a train crew was four to five workers. In recent decades, the ca-boose was eliminated and crew size shrunk to two.

"With the amount of hours we are on the job, you can't get around the need for human beings — eyes and minds on the job," the engineer told the *Militant*.