

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Int'l fight to free Cuban Five wins support in Bangladesh

— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 78/NO. 42 NOVEMBER 24, 2014

## Chicago: Families fight cops' killings of relatives

'Not going to stop until they're held accountable'



Militant/Laura Anderson

Martinez Sutton, brother of Rekia Boyd, killed by officer Dante Servin in 2012, speaks at Nov. 5 press conference at Chicago Police headquarters demanding prosecution of killer cops.

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO — Flanked by more than 100 supporters, relatives of six Black men and women gunned down over the last three years by city cops announced to the press in front of the Chicago Police Department headquarters Nov. 5 their intent to press to fight for the prosecution of officers who killed their loved ones.

"The police are trained to kill," said Karen White, grandmother of Desean

Pittman, killed by Chicago cops Aug. 24. "My grandson was shot 11 times. That was an execution."

"Chicago police officers murdered  
Continued on page 9

## Moscow steps up separatist proxy war in Ukraine

BY JOHN STUDER

The shaky cease-fire reached in September between the Ukrainian government and separatist paramilitary forces backed by Moscow in

**DEFEND UKRAINE SOVEREIGNTY!  
NO TO SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA!**

the country's east is unraveling. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, tasked with monitoring the cease-fire, reported Nov. 11 that 43 unmarked military trucks from Russia were seen traveling to Donetsk towing howitzer artillery  
Continued on page 9

## Cuba response to Ebola shows moral values of revolution

BY SETH GALINSKY

"We have come here to help our Liberian brothers and sisters, but also to keep [Ebola] from becoming a global epidemic," epidemiologist Junior Diéguez, one of the Cuban volunteers in Monrovia, Liberia, said, according to the Nov. 10 Spanish newspaper *El País*.

Revolutionary Cuba has sent 256 health workers to Liberia, Guinea-Conakry and Sierra Leone — more than any other nation — to combat the deadly disease. Another 205 trained volunteers are ready to head to West Africa as soon as conditions permit. More than 15,000 Cubans offered to join the internationalist mission.

According to the World Health  
Continued on page 6

## Kurds in Kobani take ground from Islamic State

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Kurdish fighters in Kobani have been pushing back Islamic State's nearly two-month-long siege of that city in northern Syria. At the same time, Washington is increasing its troops in Iraq from 1,500 to nearly 3,000.

**No to US-led imperialist war in Iraq and Syria!**

Fighting along with the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) in Kobani are 155 Peshmerga soldiers with artillery from the semi-autonomous Kurdish areas of northern Iraq. They traveled through Turkish territory at the end of October with much

Continued on page 4

## Socialist campaign for Ill. governor calls for break with bosses' parties



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

Dan Fein, left, trade unionist and Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Illinois, talks with Nabil Karim, Algerian-born unemployed taxi driver, on campaign trail in Chicago Oct. 30.

BY ALYSON KENNEDY AND ILONA GERSH

CHICAGO — "Don't waste your vote on the Democrats or Republicans, the bosses' parties," Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Illinois, told Raphael Powell, who sells cellphones. Fein and supporters of the socialist ticket here were campaigning Oct. 30 at the 95th and State Street transit hub on Chicago's South Side as part of a week of daily campaigning at labor picket lines, protest actions, political meetings and workers' doorsteps.

"So you are independent?" asked Powell.

"No, I'm a candidate of the Social-  
Continued on page 3

### Revolution in Burkina Faso The Downfall of Blaise Compaoré: A Panel Discussion

**Speakers:** *Smokey* (by video hookup), founding member of Le Balai Citoyen; *Heather Benno*, Answer Coalition; *Bill Fletcher*, host of Global African; *Paul Sankara*, Committee Against Impunity in Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara's brother; *Gnaka Lagoke*, Revival of Panafricanism Forum; *Mary-Alice Waters*, Socialist Workers Party.

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### Donations roll in for SWP Party-Building Fund, new contributors give to revolutionary party

As this issue goes to press, the final contributions to go over the top on the SWP Party-Building Fund are being mailed in. The complete results for the fund to support the work of the Socialist Workers Party will be in next week's issue. All areas report they will make their quotas.

As of Nov. 12, a total of \$91,501 had been received, with many areas reporting success winning new contributors. Maggie Trowe from Brooklyn reports she raised \$100 from a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union she met at the Labor Day Parade more than a month earlier.

Another note from Anthony Dutrow in Miami read, "During a plant-gate sale at the Ft. Lauderdale port, one International Longshoremen's Association member renewed his subscription and kicked in \$40 to the fund; three others chipped in \$10, \$5 and \$5 respectively for a total of \$60. That brings donations from ILA members to \$128 during this drive."

— PAUL MAILHOT

### Inside

Gov't terror in Guerrero state sparks protests across Mexico 2

Hiring uptick not 'recovery' but boost to workers' combativity 9

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Washington, DC, taxi drivers: 'City destroys our business' NJ casino workers fight attack by bosses, bankruptcy court

Lockout of bus drivers in Saskatchewan ruled illegal

# Gov't terror in Guerrero state sparks protests across Mexico

BY STEVE WARSHHELL

HOUSTON — “They took them alive, we want them back alive” and “No more impunity” have been the central demands at protests taking place across Mexico after municipal police in the city of Iguala, Guerrero, killed six people and “disappeared” 43 students Sept. 26. At least 20 students and others were wounded.

Outrage over the attack has put a spotlight on widespread intimidation, torture, kidnappings and killings by the police, army and drug gangs, especially in rural areas.

On Nov. 7 Mexican Attorney General Jesús Murillo announced that officials had recovered what they believe are the remains of the 43, along with dozens of other bodies. Confirmation from DNA testing has not been released.

The disappeared youth are students at the all-male Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Teachers' College in Ayotzinapa. They had come to town to raise money in advance of an Oct. 2 demonstration in Mexico City to commemorate the 1968 massacre of student protesters in the capital on the orders of then-President Gustavo Diaz.

The Ayotzinapa students planned to raise money through a “boteo” — a roadblock or toll booth takeover commonly used by student groups seeking donations for education. Like previous years, they also convinced drivers to let them use some buses from companies in Iguala to go to the Mexico City protest.

On the night of Sept. 26 municipal police fired automatic weapons at three busloads of students as they headed out

of town, then took dozens away in police vehicles.

“Nobody died in this first attack,” Román Hernández, a spokesperson from the Mountain Human Rights Committee in Guerrero, said from Ayotzinapa Nov. 7. “But several were severely wounded.”

Police also fired on a bus carrying soccer players, thinking it carried Ayotzinapa students, killing two.

The students called classmates in Ayotzinapa, human rights groups and the press to denounce the attack. A couple hours later during an impromptu press conference at the site, masked men opened fire again killing two students and a bystander.

As the students fled, soldiers appeared and at first wouldn't allow them to leave, Omar García, one of the surviving students, told Telemundo. “They told us, ‘You asked for it, so shut up. You wanted to be little men. . . . Now just suck it up.’”

It wasn't until 10 days after the attack that President Enrique Peña Nieto sent federal police and prosecutors to investigate and search for the students.

The attacks and abductions provoked outrage and protests across the country from Guerrero to Monterrey and Veracruz. The largest demonstrations took place in Mexico City: thousands on Oct. 8, 50,000 on Oct. 29 and more than 100,000 Nov. 5.

On Nov. 4 federal authorities arrested Iguala Mayor José Luis Abarca and his wife Maria de los Angeles Pineda for ordering the assault and kidnappings. Abarca faces charges of murder, attempted murder and forced abduction.



March in Mexico City Oct. 22, one of dozens across country protesting Sept. 26 “disappearance” of 43 students in state of Guerrero at hands of government officials and cops.

Mexican Attorney General Murillo said the mayor and Pineda feared the students were going to protest at an event being held for Pineda, who was campaigning to take Abarca's place as mayor in the upcoming election.

The Iguala and Cocula police turned the students over to Guerreros Unidos, Murillo said, who then killed them and burned their bodies. According to Murillo, Abarca and Pineda were allied with Guerreros Unidos, a narco-traffic gang.

Federal authorities have arrested at least 53 others, including 36 cops and 17 alleged members of Guerreros Unidos. The locations of the bodies were provided by arrested gangsters, Murillo said.

The teachers college in Ayotzinapa has a long history of political activism, supporting peasants' and workers' struggles. The students are mostly from peasant families in Guerrero. Students from rural teacher colleges are eligible for jobs at \$500 a month, often in remote areas.

According to Mexican government figures, more than 22,000 people have been “disappeared” across the country in the last eight years.

The narcotics trade is a key source of revenue for a section of Mexico's capitalist class, a section that also has a substantial stake in legal business, as well as ties to politicians, police officials and private armies. At the same time, the drug cartels' competition and murderous violence are disruptive to other sections of the country's propertied families and their desire for stable governance.

The outrage over the killing and disappearances is sweeping up politicians in both the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), which controls much of Guerrero, and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the party of President Peña Nieto. Abarca and Pineda were both prominent in the PRD. Guerrero state Gov. Angel Aguirre, a close ally of Abarca, has resigned. Before switching to the PRD prior to the last elections, Aguirre was a PRI leader and a close ally of Peña Nieto.

On Oct. 30, more than a month after the attack on the Ayotzinapa students, Peña Nieto met in Mexico City with families of the missing students and promised more government action to find them.

“We are still demanding justice,” Martha Isela Echeverría, whose brother Gabriel was one of two Ayotzinapa students killed by federal and state police in 2011, told a press conference after the meeting with the president where family members said they had no confidence in the government. “Every year students are killed in Guerrero. We don't want any more deaths of students who are studying to be teachers and the next day they are killed for asking for sustenance for their schools.”

“The government has tolerated organized crime,” said Hernández of the Mountain Human Rights Committee, which has been working with the families of the disappeared. “You can't tell where one begins and the other ends.”

*Seth Galinsky contributed to this article.*

## THE MILITANT

### ‘Militant’ part of int’l fight to free Cuban 5

The campaign to build a jury of millions to force the U.S. rulers to free Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and Antonio Guerrero is an international struggle. Each week the ‘Militant’ covers the growing support for the Five from the U.S. to Europe to Bangladesh and beyond.



Militant/Ron Poulsen  
Workers sign up for Militant at Oct. 31 forum on Cuban Five in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

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# SWP election campaign

Continued from front page  
ist Workers Party,” explained Fein, who showed Powell the party’s campaign brochure.

“We must rely on workers’ collective power, solidarity and strength,” the SWP brochure says. It points to the need of working people to organize independently of the Democrats and Republicans and for the labor movement to build “its own political party, a labor party, to champion the interests of working people” as a step along the road of class struggle “towards the conquest of political power.”

Fein talked about some of the SWP’s political activity. “We demand the arrest and prosecution of officer Darren Wilson, who killed Michael Brown in Ferguson,” said Fein, who has traveled to Ferguson, Missouri, five times to join in solidarity actions there.

Powell agreed, saying he didn’t trust the investigation process. “How can the police investigate the police?” he said.

Fein, 69, a factory worker and long-time trade unionist, was running against incumbent Democrat Pat Quinn, Republican Bruce Rauner, Libertarian Chad Grimm and Green Party candidate Scott Summers.

“Are you for a labor party like in England?” Nabil Karim, an unemployed taxi cab driver originally from Algeria, asked Fein.

“No, I’m for a labor party that mobilizes the working class to fight,” Fein said. “Change doesn’t come through elections, but in the course of class battles against the bosses and their government, through which we can

transform our unions, ourselves and society.”

The day before, Fein joined a teachers’ strike picket in Waukegan, where 1,200 members of Illinois Federation of Teachers Lake County Local 504 went on strike Oct. 2 over wages and health care costs.

“How can we win this strike?” Willie Green, a sixth-grade social studies teacher, asked Fein.

“We’ve got to strengthen our unions and build solidarity,” Fein said. “Look at how the Chicago Teachers Union mobilized and won widespread working-class support for their strike in 2012. This can be repeated.”

“Maybe if we called them up, the CTU would send a busload here to our picket line,” Green said. “That would make us stronger.”

The next day the teachers voted overwhelmingly to approve a new three-year contract after the school board backed off concession demands.

That evening Fein attended a Protest and Counterculture in Contemporary Russia symposium at the University of Illinois here where *Winter Go Away!* a documentary film against the polices of Russian President Vladimir Putin, was shown. Fein spoke, saying he supports the fight of workers in Ukraine to defend their national sovereignty against Moscow’s military intervention backing separatist forces there.

On Oct. 31 Fein joined Teamsters Local 705’s strike picket in Skokie, where workers at Golan Moving and Storage have been on strike for more than three months, fighting for their first union contract.

## Rallies in Iran protest rightist attacks on women



Some 2,000 women and men demonstrated in Isfahan, Iran, Oct. 22 in front of the local judiciary office to denounce acid attacks on women for supposed immodest dress. A smaller protest took place three days later in Tehran.

“We do not want to propagate virtues by acid,” chanted some of the protesters. In recent weeks vigilantes splashed acid in the faces of least eight women with the aim of permanent disfigurement. Some lost vision as a result.

Days before the protests, Iran’s parliament passed a bill that would sanction certain actions by ordinary citizens to enforce what they consider Islamic standards of propriety and decency.

“People should be in no doubt that the government is doing everything to arrest those responsible for these crimes,” President Hassan Rouhani, who has criticized the bill, said Oct. 26.

— MAGGIE TROWE

“I supported Obama, but that has changed,” striker Deontay Davis, 24, told Fein. “Less police brutality? More jobs? Higher pay? Nothing has changed for the better for workers. I support what you are doing.”

The next day, Fein joined auto mechanics picketing at Al Piemonte Chevrolet in East Dundee, where nine

members of Machinists Local 701 have been on strike since July 9 fighting for their first union contract. Brian Kreger, a striker who subscribes to the *Militant*, told Fein he likes reading about other strikes in the paper. They discussed the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and how socialist Cuba can lead the fight to counter the virus because workers and farmers made a revolution and look at the world differently. “You got my vote,” said Kreger.

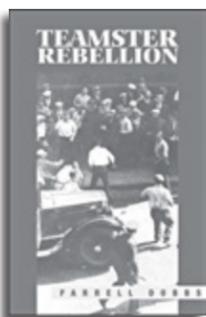
On Nov. 2, Fein joined campaign supporters knocking on doors in Chicago’s Beverley neighborhood. Laura Foley told Fein she sometimes votes for socialists or the Green Party, but this time she was considering voting for Quinn because the Republican Rauner seemed so bad.

“Lesser-evil politics is a trap for working people,” Fein said. “We need to organize against the capitalist Democratic, Republican and Green parties. A fighting Labor Party is needed.” Foley got a subscription to the *Militant* to follow the party’s activities.

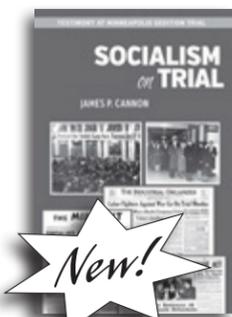
Fein campaigned on the North Side of Chicago Nov. 3, where many workers originally from Africa live. He spoke about the recent mobilizations in Burkina Faso that chased out hated President Blaise Compaoré and the revolutionary example of Thomas Sankara, the country’s president from 1983 to 1987 who was assassinated in a coup that brought Compaoré to power.

On election day Fein returned to join the Teamsters picket line in Skokie.

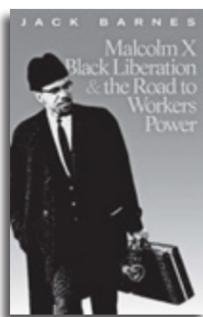
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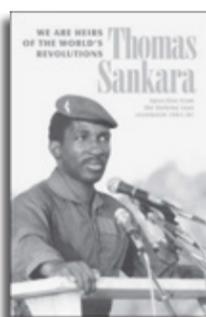
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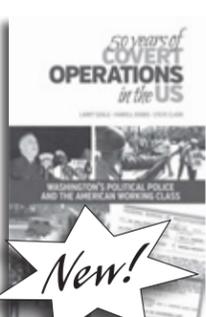
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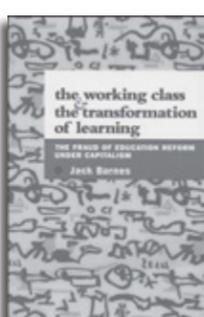
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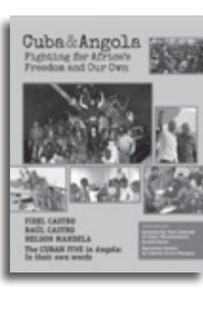
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# Kurds gain ground in Kobani

Continued from front page

needed heavy weaponry to counter the bigger and better armed Islamic State forces.

Until then, Ankara had blocked any fighters or weapons from getting into Kobani. But pressure mounted on the Turkish government as week after week millions in Turkey and around the world watched courageous men and women in Kobani holding off Islamic State forces in spite of a fatalistic expectation of the city's imminent fall by the big-business media and government officials of Ankara and Washington. The Turkish government has relented to allow some Peshmerga from Iraq through, but still prevents Kurds from Turkey from joining the battle.

Under the same pressures, Washington, did a one-time airdrop of light ammunition and medicine over Kobani. The U.S. rulers' relationship with the Kurds is marked by a dilemma. On one hand they want to see the defeat of Islamic State, and the Kurds in Iraq and Syria have proved to be the most formidable force in the war against the reactionaries. But Washington also fears the "destabilizing" impact of the rising Kurdish fight for national rights and sovereignty. Over decades, Washington has sought to use Kurdish fighters at critical points in fights against shared enemies, followed by "betrayals" that reveal their consistent goal of undermining the Kurdish struggle.

"There is a revolution taking place in Kobani" said YPG fighter Deniz in a Nov. 8 interview by Kurdish news agency Firatnews. "The struggle here is for the oppressed."

"In the last four days they [Islamic State] suffered heavy blows," added YPG fighter Sinan. "If necessary a thousand of us will fall, but we will not abandon Kobani. Our comradeship is very strong. No one can break it. Our morale is high, despite all the brutality and hardship."

There are 1,000 women fighters on the front lines helping to lead the battle, YPG commander Dijwar Xebat told Firatnews. About 2,000 YPG fighters and 1,500 Kurdish civilians are in the city, as well as Peshmerga forces and opposition units affiliated to the Free Syrian Army, who recently joined the battle for Kobani, according to BasNews, a news agency in Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan. The Free Syrian Army is a coalition of armed groups that came together in 2011 following a bloody crackdown by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on popular protests against his regime.

On Nov. 9 the YPG captured Islamic State's headquarters in Kobani. As the reactionaries retreated they blew up their command center, the Haci Reshar Mosque, reported kurdishquestion.com.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, since the fighting began in mid-September through



Fighters from Kurdish Women's Protection Units in Kobani, Syria, near Turkish border.

## Iran miners strike over job cuts, privatization

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Over the past several months miners in central Iran have conducted strikes involving some 5,000 workers against government steps to privatize the Bafgh Iron Ore Mines, seen by workers as a prelude to jobs cuts and assaults on wages and working conditions.

Miners struck for 39 days beginning May 17 demanding a halt to transferring 28 percent of the mine's ownership to the Khuzestan Steel Company and that the previous transfer of 72 percent of the mine's stock be reversed.

The strike ended after the government promised to reconsider its position over the next two months. But as the end of two months approached, two miners — Ali Sabri and Amir Hossein Kargar — were arrested and warrants issued to detain 16 others, including Mohammad Hassan Tashakori, head of the Bafgh city council.

Thousands of miners struck Aug. 19 to protest the arrests. Police special forces were deployed to intimidate strikers, but backed off as workers stood their

ground. A few days later several more workers were arrested along with Tashakori. The miners resumed production Sept. 3 after the arrested workers were released and "state and security officials declared that privatization had been struck down," according to the Iranian Labour News Agency.

Employment and living standards in Iran are under pressure as a result of the world capitalist crisis and Washington's trade and financial embargo on the country designed to force Tehran to abandon its nuclear program.

"Privatization decreases the government's costs and forces them onto workers," Davoud Razavi, a member of the governing council of the Municipal Transportation Company Workers in Iran, told al-Monitor. "In many cases, after the privatization of factories, the new owner has sold it and cuts the plants into smaller ones, using the land to build residential units. [This] has generally led to closure and the loss of jobs for workers."

Meanwhile, coal miners from the

## San Francisco postal workers protest cuts



Militant/Eric Simpson

SAN FRANCISCO — Chanting "The U.S. mail is not for sale!" and "Restore our work," dozens of postal workers and their supporters picketed the main post office here Nov. 7 where Deputy Postmaster General Ronald Stroman was scheduled to address the Postal Customer Council. The U.S. Postal Service is slashing jobs, facilities and services nationwide, including outsourcing postal work to Staples. Protests by postal workers and other unionists has frustrated some of these attacks. Workers from the station on lunch break and others from around the Bay Area joined the picket line. Postal clerk Kieu Luong came with co-workers before their shift in Oakland. Maryann Medina, president of the American Postal Workers Union retirees chapter in San Francisco, told the Militant, "We are trying to save the postal service, not for profit, but to keep it for the American people." Protest organizers encouraged pickets to take part in the Nov. 14 National Day of Action called by the four postal unions.

— ANDREA MORELL

Nov. 9, more than 1,000 have been killed in Kobani, including 609 Islamic State combatants and 363 from the YPG. The YPG reports the numbers of Islamic State forces killed as far higher.

Peshmerga is sending additional reinforcements to Kobani. Nine military vehicles loaded with weapons and other equipment left Erbil traveling through Turkish territory Nov. 3, Peshmerga Gen. Azzedin Temmo told reporters in Kobani.

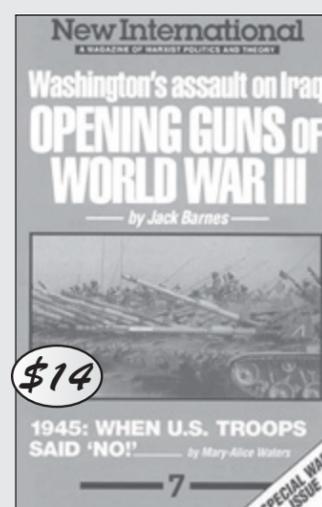
### U.S. sends 1,500 more troops to Iraq

President Barack Obama authorized the deployment of up to 1,500 additional troops to Iraq Nov. 7, adding to the 1,400 already stationed there as "advisers" and "trainers" for the Iraqi army. "What it signals is a new phase," Obama said Nov. 9 on CBS's "Face the Nation."

The move comes as Islamic State continues to consolidate its control over most of the predominantly Sunni Arab areas in western Iraq, about one-third of the country. The U.S. troops' presence will be expanded beyond its headquarters in Baghdad and Erbil to two additional command sites, including in Anbar province, where some of the heaviest fighting has taken place, and four or five new sites, reported the *Financial Times*.

Over the course of the three-month-long war, Washington has been conducting airstrikes in both Iraq and Syria, risking civilian lives. "Commanders fear such casualties could alienate Sunni tribesmen, whose support is critical to ousting the militants as well as Sunni Arab countries," said the *New York Times* Nov. 10. The air campaign has averaged five strikes per day, far less than those carried out in previous U.S. wars in Libya, Afghanistan and Iraq.

In another development, President Obama in mid-October wrote a secret letter to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that described a "shared interest in fighting Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria," reported the *Wall Street Journal*.



## Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq

by Jack Barnes

"The Kurdish people have come to the center stage in world politics as never before, not primarily as victims, but as courageous and determined fighters for national rights. ... The U.S. rulers have alternately doled out aid with an eyedropper to Kurdish nationalist groups, and then abruptly cut off this backing, depending on Washington's shifting relations with regimes in the area."

— Jack Barnes.

In issue no. 7 of *New International*  
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# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

## Help cover labor fights, Nov. 14 postal workers actions

This column of workers' resistance depends on input from readers. As we go to press, support is building across the country for the Nov. 14 National Day of Action called by the postal workers' unions. Readers are encouraged to join these rallies and help cover them for the paper. Send any short articles, notes, quotes and photos to me at the *Militant* by email: themilitant@mac.com; or mail: 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or call me directly at 212-244-4899.

—Maggie Trowe

## Washington, DC, taxi drivers: 'City destroys our business'

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Hundreds of union taxi drivers circled Freedom Plaza here, then parked and protested in front of the Wilson Building, where the D.C. Council was meeting Oct. 28 to vote on an ordinance to allow rapidly growing web-based "ride-share" companies such as Uber and Lyft to operate under different regulations than traditional taxi companies, increasing competition among drivers and driving down their income. The move follows a trend in other major U.S. cities.

"If I have to be licensed, all other drivers should have to follow the same rules," said Eartha Clark, a member of the Washington, D.C. Taxi Operators Association, an affiliate of Teamsters Local 922.

"We're abused by the police because we're Black, because we support the union, because we won't bow down," said Charlie Harrison, 79, waving a handful of tickets given by taxi inspectors.

"They have the machinery of the city and the cab industry to harass us, and they use it," said Omoshola Kintunde of the Taxi Operators Association. "They destroy our business and treat us like cash cows."

After the council passed the ordinance that night, Kintunde told fellow drivers they had to "come together, stay strong and be ready to fight."

—Arlene Rubinstein

## Lockout of bus drivers in Saskatchewan ruled illegal

CALGARY, Alberta — Transit workers here returned to work Oct. 17 when the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board ruled the city's 29-day lockout of the workers illegal.

"The public is very happy to have us back," bus driver Daryl Strugnell said in a phone interview Oct. 28. "They were hugging us."

Some 330 members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 615 were locked out Sept. 20 in a conflict over wages and pensions. "We're solid on the need to bring wages to more Western Canadian standards," said Jim Yakubowski, the local's president. Saskatoon bus drivers' top wage is \$8 per hour less than what drivers in Edmonton, Alberta, earn.

"The lockout was a tough four weeks, but most of us feel very positive," said apprentice mechanic Andrew Yuzwa. "My father was involved in the strike in 1994, and he says not even then were we so unified."

The union is demanding compensation for wages lost during the lockout. Negotiations on the contract have not resumed.

—Katy LeRougetel

## Washington farmworkers push back bosses' union-busting rules

SEATTLE — Berry pickers in Bur-

lington, Washington, pushed back an attack on freedom of speech and association. On Oct. 28 Skagit County Superior Court Judge Susan Cook ruled that Sakuma Brother Farms could not ban visitors from workers' cabins nor prevent the distribution of literature in company-owned work camps. The court upheld the bosses' requirement that visitors register with company guards.

Bosses pressed the new rules in the midst of an ongoing struggle by workers for better wages and conditions. Last year the pickers formed a union, Familias Unidas por la Justicia (United Families for Justice) and the ban on visitors, many of whom are part of the union struggle, is seen as an attempt to impede their organizing efforts.

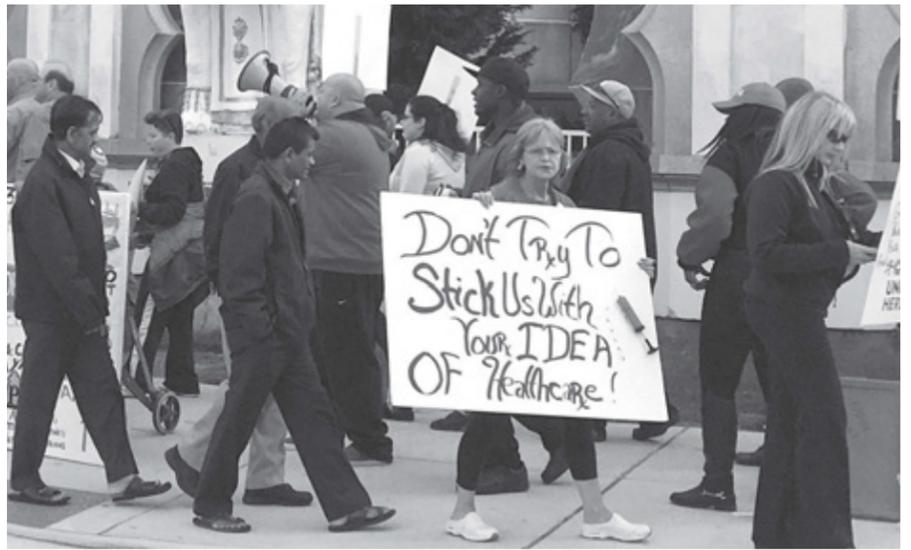
Some 30 unionists and supporters picketed in front of the courthouse the day before the ruling.

Earlier this year when Sakuma Farms imposed the new rules, they set up a "visitors center" — a trailer controlled



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

Taxi drivers protest, Washington, D.C., Oct. 28.



Militant/Janet Post

Hundreds of Trump Taj Mahal casino workers picket Oct. 24 in Atlantic City, N.J., against union-busting moves by bosses and bankruptcy court to tear up UNITE HERE union contract.

by company guards next to the guard shack. "They were treating the workers as prisoners," union President Ramón Torres told the *Militant*.

"We want a contract. We want a health care plan. We want \$15 an hour," Torres told 60 University of Washington students forming a group called Boycott Sakuma UW here Oct. 30.

"Our goal is to win a contract at Sakuma Farms and then fight for farmworkers at other farms."

For information on how to support and contribute to the farmworkers' fight go to [www.boycottsakumaberries.com](http://www.boycottsakumaberries.com).

—Clay Dennison

## NJ casino workers fight attack by bosses, bankruptcy court

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — "This is union territory!" chanted some 800 casino workers, members of UNITE HERE Local 54, as passing drivers horns in support. The workers were picketing the Trump Taj Mahal casino Oct. 24 protesting union-busting moves by the bosses and bankruptcy court.

The unionists were responding to the ruling a week earlier by U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Kevin Gross voiding the casino's contract with 1,100 workers in favor of a takeover by billionaire finance capitalist Carl Icahn. The ruling gives casino owners \$14.6 million in contract concessions, which include replacing pensions with a 401(k) pay-in program, ditching employer-provided health care

insurance for a \$2,000 per worker stipend to buy "Obamacare" insurance and eliminating paid lunch breaks.

"They want everything put on the workers. It's like robbery," said Kaushik Vashi, who makes \$11.25 per hour as a housekeeper.

"They want to bust all unions," said James Roberts, a 22-year cleaner. "We have to keep fighting."

Four of 12 casinos here have closed since January, eliminating 8,000 jobs. If the Taj Mahal closes, it will put 3,000 out of work. The jobless rate in Atlantic County is 11.4 percent.

—Osborne Hart

## NY academic union march: 'CUNY needs a raise!'

NEW YORK — Hundreds of college professors and other members of the Professional Staff Congress-American Federation of Teachers Local 2334 held a rally here Oct. 21 to demand a salary increase, reduction of teaching load and job security for adjunct professors. Some 1,000 had demonstrated at the CUNY Board of Trustees meeting Sept. 30.

The union represents more than 25,000 professors, adjuncts, counselors, registrars and others at 24 campuses in New York City. The PSC-CUNY contract expired in 2010.

"We haven't had a cost-of-living raise since 2010," said Kris Burrell, assistant professor of history at Hostos Community College.

—Nancy Boyasko

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 24, 1989

Washington, D.C. — Supporters of a woman's right to choose abortion numbering in the hundreds of thousands filled streets and rally sites across the United States on November 12. In a simultaneous show of force, the prochoice demonstrators held more than 1,000 actions in 150 cities, from Kennebunkport, Maine, to Los Angeles in defense of abortion rights.

Buses from all over the eastern and Midwestern parts of the country began rolling into Washington, D.C., at dawn — along with prochoice supporters in car caravans, trains and planes — for what was the largest action of the day. By noon some 150,000 protesters filled the lawn facing the Lincoln Memorial and surrounded the Reflecting Pool.

"Today is historic," said National Organization for Women President Molly Yard, as she welcomed the protesters. "It marks for all of us — no turning back."



November 23, 1964

Pedro Albizu Campos, the ailing 73-year-old Puerto Rican nationalist leader who has been in prison since 1950, was pardoned Nov. 15 by Puerto Rican Governor Luis Munoz Marin.

Albizu was sentenced to 50 years imprisonment after a revolt broke out in Puerto Rico and after world attention was focused on an assassination attempt against President Truman on Nov. 1, 1950.

The Nationalist Party, which Albizu led, was the principal organization for Puerto Rican independence at the time. It issued a statement that the revolt was an action of self-defense against a Washington move to eliminate the Nationalist Party leaders.

After the revolt was crushed, an estimated 1,000 to 2,500 Puerto Ricans were arrested. Though most were released, many were given long jail terms.



November 24, 1939

CAIRO, Ill., Nov. 17 — Cairo, "the town that has never been flooded," is up to its neck in a strike wave involving the major industrial plants.

More than two hundred business men have been deputized as special police officers to break the strike movement. Attempts to foment race riots against the strikers, a majority of whom are Negroes, are constantly made.

But where the vigilante bosses were successful in smashing the strike of unemployed workers three years ago and framing their leader, Eddie Parker, they have been unable to make a dent in the present strike ranks.

The strike movement began with the walkout of the workers at the Roberts Cotton Seed Products Co. With the exception of three or four, this 100 percent organized AFL Federal Local is composed of Negro workers.

# Fall of Burkina Faso gov't spurs discussion on Sankara

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Mass protests throughout Burkina Faso, initially called to prevent President Blaise Compaoré from amending the constitution to extend his 27-year rule, drew hundreds of thousands into the streets, forcing Compaoré to flee to Ivory Coast Oct. 31. Celebrations took place in several African cities, as well as Paris, Montreal and New York.

Gen. Honoré Traoré, army chief of staff, declared himself head of state. But after another round of popular protests, a group of junior officers led by Army Lt. Col. Isaac Zida took over Nov. 1, promising to hand over power to a civil government. Street mobilizations ebbed.

On Nov. 9 opposition party representatives, religious leaders and others called on Zida to form a 90-member transitional parliament with 10 military representatives, 40 from opposition parties, 30 from “civil society” and 10 from other parties, including Compaoré’s.

Burkina Faso, a landlocked country in West Africa where 72 percent of the population lives on less than \$2 per day, is the second-largest cotton producer in sub-Saharan Africa and fifth-largest in gold mining. The mining industry has exploded in the last 30 years, with nine industrial-scale gold mines, owned by British, Canadian, Australian and other companies, employing more than 6,000 workers.

The mobilizations that ousted Compaoré opened the door for a fight for political space by peasants, workers, craftsmen and their allies. They stimulated renewed interest in the 1983-87 Burkinabè Revolution led by Thomas Sankara, a communist leader of the highest caliber. What marked him most was his confidence in the revolutionary capacities of workers and peasants to overthrow imperialist exploitation, transforming themselves in the process, and take control of their own destiny.

Sankara was assassinated in a coup organized by Compaoré in the interests of those — in Burkina Faso and abroad — whose property and class domination were threatened by the revolutionary mobilization, solidarity and internationalism of the popular masses.

The Sankara-led revolution captured the attention of revolutionary-minded workers and young people around the world. The recent overthrow of Compaoré has opened a discussion of Sankara’s political legacy and how to build

a revolutionary party capable of taking power, in Burkina Faso and elsewhere.

The World Federation of Democratic Youth, an international anti-imperialist youth organization, issued a statement of solidarity with the citizens of Burkina Faso Nov. 3. “WFDY adds its voice to those of the youth organizations in West Africa and calls on our comrades in Burkina Faso to stand firm in defense of peace, freedom, and constitutional protections embodied in the universal declaration of human rights. We stand with you side by side as brothers in the struggle.”

## Cuba’s revolutionary response to Ebola crisis

Continued from front page

Organization, more than 14,000 people have been infected with the virus and as of Nov. 9 about 5,160 have died.

The capitalist press has taken note of the unparalleled response by Cuba. “Cuban Doctors at the Forefront of Ebola Battle in Africa” the front-page headline in the Oct. 9 *Wall Street Journal* said.

The Cuban brigades have become part of the debate in the U.S. capitalist class on whether or not Washington should adjust its more than 50-year state policy of using a punishing economic embargo as the centerpiece of its efforts to crush the Cuban Revolution.

The *New York Times*, representing a minority view in the ruling class, argues that the embargo of Cuba is ineffective. An Oct. 19 editorial said the Cuban mission against Ebola should be “lauded and emulated.” A Nov. 10 editorial entitled “In Cuba, Misadventures in Regime Change” argued that to “loosen the grip” of what the editors call “one of the most repressive governments in the world” — the goal of both sides in the propertied rulers’ debate — can be better accomplished “through stronger diplomatic relations than subterfuge.”

The dominant wing of the ruling class however, has no intention of letting up the pressure on Cuba.

“Cuba is winning accolades for its international ‘doctor diplomacy,’” anti-Cuban op-ed columnist Mary Anastasia O’Grady wrote in “Cuba’s Slave Trade in Doctors” in the Nov. 9 *Journal*. She calls Cuba’s internationalist mission “the perfect crime,” saying that “by shipping its subjects abroad to help poor people, the regime earns the image of a selfless contributor to the global community even while it exploits workers and gets rich off their backs.”

O’Grady is unable to fathom that Cuban health workers — who don’t get the princely salaries that U.S. doctors expect as a right — are volunteering not for money but out of solidarity.

She says nothing about Washington’s relatively meager aid to the fight against Ebola. As of Nov. 10 there were some 2,000 U.S. troops in West Africa, building 17 medical clinics. Military.com reported that the first of the centers, which is only for health care workers who get Ebola — and the only one that will be staffed by U.S. government personnel — “has yet to take in any patients.”



Arouna Saniwidi

Participants in New York march Oct. 30 celebrate news that mass demonstrations in Burkina Faso forced out Blaise Compaoré, president since he led 1987 counterrevolutionary coup.

Like other capitalist governments, Washington is unable to adopt the kind of social measures Cuba is using to prevent Ebola from spreading to the island or elsewhere.

### Cuba fights Ebola’s spread

All the Cuban volunteers agreed to be part of the mission for at least six months. To ensure that the disease does not spread, any Cuban volunteer who contracts Ebola will be treated in West Africa, and will not return to Cuba until they are cured. The Cuban health workers, and anyone else passing through the nations hard-hit by Ebola, must spend 21 days in quarantine when they arrive in Cuba.

These measures are similar to what Cuba did in fighting the AIDS epidemic. In the 1980s and early ’90s, Cuba combined widespread testing, education, distribution of condoms and high quality medical care with a quarantine on everyone who tested positive. Today Cuba has one-sixth the AIDS rate of the U.S.

Washington has refused to quarantine medical workers returning to the U.S. after treating Ebola patients, although some state governments have. Instead, it recommends “self-monitoring” for symptoms.

France-based Doctors Without

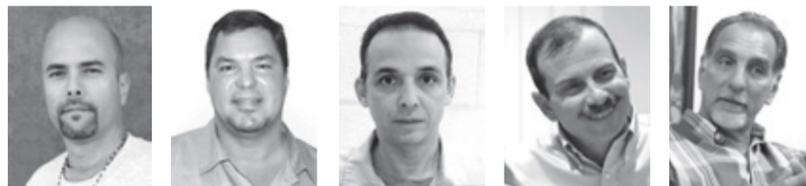
Borders, the largest nongovernmental organization treating Ebola patients, is also opposed to the quarantine. “Excessive strictures could deter would-be field staff from going to West Africa,” to volunteer for four- to six-week stints, the group said in a statement on its website.

The U.S. Defense Department began placing U.S. soldiers returning from West Africa in quarantine Oct. 29. President Barack Obama backs the military command’s quarantine decision, saying the soldiers are “not treating patients. They are not there voluntarily.” But he is opposed to this approach for civilian doctors and nurses who treat Ebola victims.

For Cubans, steeped in the revolution’s tradition of internationalism since the overthrow of the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in 1959, supporting a quarantine and other social measures that can prevent the spread of the disease are second nature.

“With pride and without looking back, we’ve entered the battle with courage, altruism and straightforwardness,” José Eduardo Díaz Gómez, a Cuban volunteer in Guinea, recently wrote to family and friends in Cuba. “This brigade of titans will only return to the homeland when our mission has been completed.”

### Who are the Cuban Five?

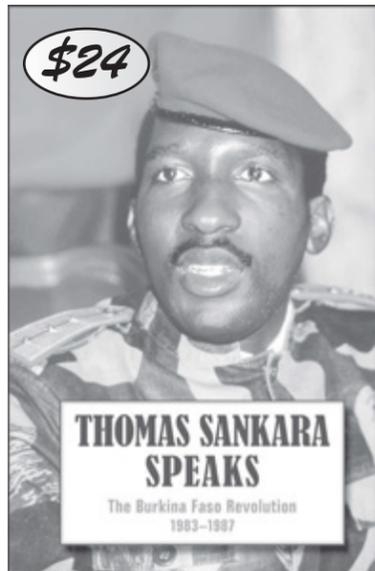


Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These 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 shoot-down 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.



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# Fight to free Cuban 5 wins supporters in Bangladesh

BY RON POULSEN

DHAKA, Bangladesh — A rally of several hundred youth in the rural district of Barisal and other events in this South Asian country have helped spread the international campaign to free Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, and Antonio Guerrero, held in U.S. prisons on trumped-up charges for more than 16 years. Garment workers fighting to organize unions, farmers and other working people have readily identified with the framed-up Cuban revolutionaries and the effort to win their release.

A rally demanding freedom for the Cuban Five was held Oct. 25 on the grounds of a school near Barisal, a river port city in southern Bangladesh. About 600 high school students from five schools along with their teachers took part with local political figures and other residents.

The main organizer of the event was Jahangir Khan, chairperson of Free the Cuban Five Bangladesh, who is originally from a nearby farming town. An English-language broadsheet was distributed to all the participants. On the front page it reprinted the preface by Pathfinder Press President Mary-Alice

Waters to the book *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five*.

## 10,000 sign petitions

Khan reported that 10,000 people, including students from more than 20 schools in Barisal and Dhaka, had signed a petition demanding the release of the Five. The Free the Cuban Five Bangladesh committee also sent more than 300 endorsements from students, farmers, journalists, attorneys, writers and others to the International Commission of Inquiry into the Case of the Cuban Five, held in London in March.

The rally, conducted in both Bengali and English, featured an international panel of speakers. Surendra Raj Gosai, president of the Cuba Solidarity Committee Nepal, pointed to the recent “protest rallies, talk programs, book publishing, sports events, and cultural activities” on behalf of the Cuban Five carried out in Nepal. On Sept. 25, he said, hundreds marched in a “Solidarity Journey” in the capital Katmandu.

Narayan Man Bijukchhe (Rohit), chairman of the Nepal Workers and Peasants Party, told the rally that “the five Cuban heroes are exemplary products of the Cuban Revolution” and an inspiration for millions in Nepal and worldwide.

The Nepalese delegation brought copies of their new magazine, *Solidarity*, which carries biographies of each of the Five, a timeline of the case, and a report on the International Colloquium for the Freedom of the Cuban Five, held in Havana in September.

Martin Koppel, from New York City, told the audience that “the fight to free the Cuban Five finds resonance especially among working people resisting attacks by the U.S. employers and their government on



Militant/Ron Poulsen

High school students, teachers, local political figures and others from area joined Oct. 25 Cuban Five rally in rural district of Barisal, Bangladesh. Right, Jahangir Khan, main organizer of event and chair of Free the Cuban Five Bangladesh.



our rights, wages and living standards.” Koppel is a co-author and co-editor of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*, published by Pathfinder.

Koppel pointed to how the Cuban volunteer medical brigades, in leading the fight against Ebola in West Africa, “are showing the world what is possible when workers hold state power. Cuba’s internationalist ‘army of white coats’ is striking the most powerful blow yet for the freedom of Gerardo, Ramón, and Antonio.”

Ron Poulsen, from the Australia Cuba Friendship Society in Sydney, Australia, and a member of the Communist League, noted that three of the Cuban Five, Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González and René González, are themselves examples of Cuba’s proletarian internationalism. They were among the 425,000 Cuban volunteer combatants in Angola who helped defeat invasions by the South African apartheid regime in the 1970s and ‘80s.

Miqdhad Ismail spoke for the People’s United Front of Sri Lanka, which is part of the Cuba-Sri Lanka Friendship Association. That organization hosted a 2012 Asia-Pacific conference in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Several of the speakers at the Barisal rally had taken part in that conference.

Also speaking were Sheikh Tipu Sultan, member of parliament for the Workers Party of Bangladesh, and Kazi Emdadul Haque, a local district president of the Awami League, the main party in Bangladesh’s coalition government. The Workers Party is active in the Bangladesh-Cuba Friendship Association.

Some of the speakers also took up the importance of defending North Korea in face of U.S. trade and financial sanctions and constant military threats. Among them was Raymond Ferguson from Brisbane, Australia, representing the Asia-Pacific Solidarity Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea.

## Workers eager to learn about Five

In Dhaka, the capital city, “Free the Cuban Five right now!” was the chant of some three dozen people at an Oct. 28 picket line and march. Held in front of the National Press Club, a popular focus of protests here, it was called by the New Way Bangladesh Party (NDB). Many of the participants were members of two

peasant organizations that endorsed the action.

NDB leaders Shanta Farjana and Momin Mahadi spoke at the picket line, as did Abdul Mannan Azad, a veteran of the 1971 liberation war that won independence from Pakistan. Three speakers from the Barisal rally — Ismail, Koppel, and Poulsen — also briefly addressed the demonstrators.

Three days later Koppel and Poulsen were invited to speak at a forum on Cuba and the Cuban Five sponsored by the NDB. The event, held in a local restaurant, drew about 40 people, mostly factory workers, students, and farmers.

Shipra Rani Mistri, president of the Kishani Sabha peasant women’s organization, spoke about struggles by rural women for land and thanked the other speakers for talking about the Cuban Five.

“Thanks to you we’re learning about the Cuban Five,” one audience member said. “We need to go to other areas of Bangladesh to make this fight known.” Afterward, several people subscribed to the *Militant* and bought *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free* and other books published by Pathfinder Press about the Cuban Revolution and class struggle in the U.S. and worldwide.

A similar response came from garment workers who invited a team of *Militant* reporters to the headquarters of the National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF) to learn about their ongoing battles to organize unions and fight for higher wages, benefits, safer conditions and dignity on the job.

Hira, an NGWF member who purchased *Voices From Prison*, looked at a photo in the book showing Fidel Castro next to Nelson Mandela during the South African leader’s 1991 visit to Cuba. She commented that she knew about Mandela but not about Castro or the Cuban Revolution.

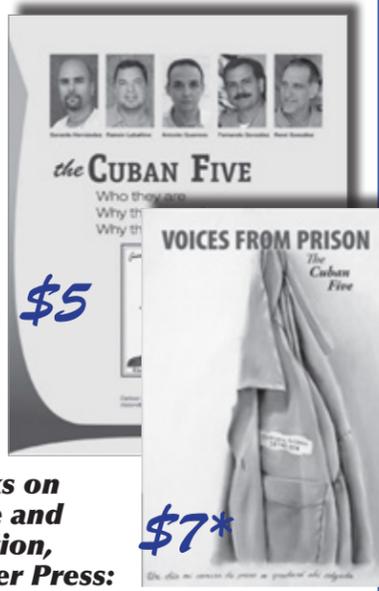
Several workers from the Ha-Meem Sportswear factory who are fighting a union-busting plant closure were eager to receive books on the Cuban Five and Cuban Revolution, including *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*. Despite their limited English, they studied the books’ photo pages. Lopa, a fellow unionist who is fluent in English, volunteered to read with them and sight-translate the material.

## Learn about the Cuban Five ...

“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

For more books on the Cuban Five and Cuban Revolution, go to Pathfinder Press:

[pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com)



\* See page 3 for special offer



Militant/Martin Koppel

Rally for Cuban Five in Dhaka Oct. 28 included members of peasant organizations.

# Sankara: 'Future of our revolution depends on women'

Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle by Thomas Sankara is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month. Sankara was the central leader of the popular democratic revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987. The piece excerpted here is from a speech to a rally of several thousand women in the capital Ouagadougou on International Women's Day, March 8, 1987. On Oct. 15 that year Sankara was assassinated in a coup organized by Blaise Compaoré, who recently fled to Ivory Coast, forced out of power by mass demonstrations. Copyright © 1990 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Women in Burkina Faso march on second anniversary of revolution, August 4, 1985.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY THOMAS SANKARA

Comrades, the night of August 4 gave birth to an achievement that was most beneficial for the Burkinabè people. It gave our people a name and our country new horizons. Imbued with the invigorating sap of freedom, the men of Burkina, the humiliated and outlawed of yesterday, received the stamp of what is most precious in the world: honor and dignity. From this moment on, happiness became accessible. Every day we advance toward it, heady with the first fruits of our struggles, themselves proof of the great

strides we have already taken. But this selfish happiness is an illusion. There is something crucial missing: women. They have been excluded from this joyful procession.

Though our men have already reached the edges of this great garden that is the revolution, our women are still confined to a depersonalizing darkness. Among themselves, in voices loud or soft, they talk of the experiences that have enveloped Burkina — experiences that are, for them, for the moment, merely a rumble in the distance. The revolution's promises are already a reality for men. But for women, they are still merely a rumor. And yet the authenticity and the future of our revolution depend on women.

These are vital and essential questions, because nothing whole, nothing definitive or lasting can be accomplished in our country as long as a crucial part of ourselves is kept in this condition of subjugation — a condition imposed over the course of centuries by various systems of exploitation.

Starting now, the men and women of Burkina Faso should profoundly change their image of themselves. For they are part of a society that is not only establishing new social relations but is also provoking a cultural transformation, upsetting the relations

of authority between men and women and forcing both to rethink the nature of each.

This task is formidable but necessary. It will determine our ability to bring our revolution to its full stature, unleash its full potential, and show its true meaning for the direct, natural, and necessary relations between men and women, the most natural of all relations between one human being and another. This will show to what extent the natural behavior of man has become human and to what extent he has realized his human nature.

This human being, this vast and complex combination of pain and joy; solitary and forsaken, yet creator of all humanity; suffering, frustrated, and humiliated, and yet endless source of happiness for each one of us; this source of affection beyond compare, inspiring the most unexpected courage; this being called weak, but possessing untold ability to inspire us to take the road of honor; this being of flesh and blood and of spiritual conviction — this being, women, is you! You are our source of comfort and life companions, our comrades in struggle who, because of this fact, should by rights assert yourselves as equal partners in the joyful victory feasts of the revolution.

It is in this light that all of us, men

and women, must define and assert the role and place of women in society. Therefore, we must restore to man his true image by making the reign of freedom prevail over differentiations imposed by nature and by eliminating all systems of hypocrisy that reinforce the shameless exploitation of women.

In other words, posing the question of women in Burkinabè society today means posing the abolition of the system of slavery to which they have been subjected for millennia. The first step is to try to understand how this system functions, to grasp its real nature in all its subtlety, in order then to work out a line of action that can lead to women's total emancipation.

In other words, in order to win this battle common to men and women, we must be familiar with all aspects of the woman question on a world as well as a national scale. We must understand how the struggle of Burkinabè women today is part of the worldwide struggle of all women and, beyond that, part of the struggle for the full rehabilitation of our continent. The condition of the question of humanity itself, here, there, and everywhere. The question is thus universal in character.

We undoubtedly owe a debt to dialectical materialism for having shed the greatest light on the problem of the conditions women face, allowing us to understand the exploitation of women as part of a general system of exploitation. Dialectical materialism defines human society not as a natural, unchanging fact, but as the exact opposite.

Humankind does not submit passively to the power of nature. It takes control over this power. This process is not an internal or subjective one. It takes place objectively in practice, once women cease to be viewed as mere sexual beings, once we look beyond their biological functions and become conscious of their weight as an active social force. What's more, woman's consciousness of herself is not only a product of her sexuality. It reflects her position as determined by the economic structure of society, which in turn expresses the level reached by humankind in technological development and the relations between classes.

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**San Francisco:** 5482 Mission St. Zip: 94112-1015. Tel: (415) 584-2135. E-mail: swpsf@sbcglobal.net

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**ILLINOIS: Chicago:** 2018 S. Ashland Ave. Zip: 60608. Tel: (312) 455-0111. E-mail: SWPChicago@fastmail.fm

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### CANADA

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# Uptick in hiring is not ‘recovery,’ but boost to workers’ combativity

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Major dailies shouted from the rooftops when the Labor Department released its October unemployment rate figures — down 0.1 percent to 5.8 percent. “The U.S. labor market [is] on track for its best annual performance since 1999,” said *Time* magazine. This is the “longest stretch of job creation since at least World War II,” reported the *Wall Street Journal*. Underlying such exaggerated claims, however, is a growing unease among the U.S. rulers about the continued slowdown of capitalist production and trade on a world scale and a declining living standard for the vast majority of working people.

The uptick in hiring in the U.S. over the last year is real, but more modest than most headlines would have you believe. And the increase comes after a precipitous drop in 2009, followed by an unprecedented five years of no real recovery.

The official unemployment rate gives a false picture of the jobs recovery, in part because millions of jobless workers who have become too discouraged to look for work are not counted by government statisticians. The percentage of the population with a job — a more objective measure — dropped from 63.3 percent in January 2007 to below 59 percent by September 2009, where it remained until last month. Between October 2013 and October 2014, it climbed one percentage point to 59.2 percent, a tangible increase, but still far below pre-recession levels.

The hiring does not signal an end to the world capitalist crisis, for which the employing class has no solution. But it has given a little boost of confidence to working people, helping lay the basis for the current uptick in working-class resistance to the bosses’ assaults on wages, working conditions and benefits.

Meanwhile, average wages have increased only 2 percent over the past year. For working people this has been more than offset by rising food costs, which officially are projected to rise between 2.5 and 3.5 percent this year. Many consider this estimate inaccurate. Craig Johnson, head of consultancy Customer Growth Partners, told Reuters Nov. 10 he believes the figure to be around 5 percent.

In an effort to “stimulate” the economy, the Federal Reserve in December 2008 lowered interest rates to nearly zero. It then began a “quantitative easing” money-printing scheme, in which the government regularly bought government bonds and largely worthless mortgage-backed securities to the tune of \$3 trillion over six years to pump money into the financial system. While quantitative easing was ended in October, the zero interest rate remains in effect.

These measures made borrowing cheaper for companies, which supposedly would encourage them to

boost production and hire workers. But it has not been profitable for the great majority of bosses to do so. Instead, they accumulated hoards of cash or invested in stocks or other forms of speculative bets where they can turn a profit — as long as the price of such paper “assets” continues to inflate beyond the wealth created through the exploitation of living labor.

“Subprime” auto and mortgage loans are back in fashion this season, scarcely a few years after they were blamed for helping trigger the 2007-2008 world financial crisis. With high and “adjustable” interest rates, these loans are geared in general toward low-income working-class families, many of whom have no way to keep up with onerous payments.

The rulers’ fiscal and monetary schemes and financial speculation can’t lead to increased production. Rather, they affect the circulation and division of wealth among competing capitalists. Among the net results is the further concentration of capital. The “share of wealth held by the country’s richest 0.01 percent — a group of roughly 16,000 families with an average net worth of \$371 million — is the largest share they’ve had since 1916, the highest on record,” the *Christian Science Monitor* wrote Nov. 10. “The top 0.01 percent wealth share is about as large as the top 1 percent income share in 2012.”

## Worldwide crisis

The scope of the crisis is more worldwide than at any time in history.

Eurozone countries face “an increasing risk of stagnation,” Catherine Mann, chief economist of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, told the media. Working people are not the only ones laden with debt as capitalists seek avenues for profit. The rulers’ own governments face rising bond payments to the biggest propertied families, prompting moves to cut expenses — starting with higher taxes and cuts to jobs and services that above all affect working people. In Brussels, for example, more than 100,000 took to the streets Nov. 6 to protest plans to raise the pension age to 67 and delay promised wage increases. In Budapest, Hungary, tens of thousands rallied Oct. 26 and Oct. 28 against government plans to tax Internet use, a decision authorities revoked a few days later.

The economy of China — looked to in recent years by capitalists around the globe as a “miracle” engine of world economic growth — continues to show signs of running low on gas. China’s economic expansion slowed to 7.3 percent in the third-quarter, the slowest pace in five years. The housing market also plunged, as indebted property developers “could default on a large scale,” reported *Businessweek*.

# Families fight killings by Chicago cops

Continued from front page

my son two years ago,” said Panzy Edwards, mother of the youngest victim, 15-year-old Dakota Bright. “The first shots they fired knocked him to the ground, then they shot him in the back of the head.”

When Bright was killed Nov. 8, 2012, neighborhood residents took to the streets in spontaneous protests.

Recent protests against the Aug. 9 killing of Michael Brown by officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri, has focused nationwide attention on the fight against police brutality and spurred renewed actions here.

“Today is Rekia’s birthday,” said Martinez Sutton, brother of Rekia Boyd, who was killed March 21, 2012 by off-duty officer Dante Servin. The cop has been charged with involuntary manslaughter, reckless discharge of a firearm and reckless conduct, and is stripped of police powers during ongoing legal proceedings.

“Rekia’s killer is walking the streets,” said Sutton. “If I had done what he did, I’d be locked up. But because he’s a cop, he’s allowed to go free and he’s still getting paid. It’s almost like a promotion.”

Servin is only the second Chicago cop in the last 17 years indicted for shooting someone.

“We’re not going to stop fighting until Sierra is held accountable for what he did to my son,” said Emmett

Farmer, father of Flint Farmer, killed by Chicago cop Gildardo Sierra June 7, 2011. “Sierra murdered my son on camera. The cop claims he was in fear of his life — that’s the standard excuse for murder now. The video clearly shows how he shot my son, how Flint fell to the ground, then how Sierra circled him while he was lying there and fired three more bullets into his back.”

The families of Boyd and Farmer were awarded damages of \$4.5 million and \$4.1 million, respectively. But these settlements have done nothing to quiet their voices or discourage them from joining other victims of police brutality in struggle.

Among the speakers was Gloria Pinex, mother of Darius Pinex, who was killed by officer Sierra on Jan. 7, 2011 — five months before Sierra killed Farmer. “If the city had heeded our demands that they do something about Sierra he never would have killed Flint Farmer, because he would have been off the streets,” Pinex said.

Also speaking at the news conference was Bonnette Jernigan, another grandmother of Desean Pittman, and Dorothy Holmes, the mother of Ronald Johnson, killed by cops Oct. 12. Holmes filed suit in federal court Oct. 29.

A demonstration of similar size demanding prosecution of killer cops took place Oct. 22 at Area 7 police headquarters on the city’s West Side.

# Ukraine sovereignty

Continued from front page

and multi-launch rocket systems.

Working people in Ukraine, the vast majority of whom oppose separatist attacks on the country’s sovereignty, face growing unemployment and boss attacks driven by a sharp economic crisis. The Ukrainian government is pressing to slash mining jobs by selling off or shutting down state-owned mines, cutting social benefits and carrying out other “austerity” measures to shore up profits of Ukrainian capitalists and meet loan conditions imposed by the International Monetary Fund.

The Russian economy, heavily dependent on oil and gas exports, is being squeezed by expanding oil production from the U.S. and Washington’s allies in the Gulf kingdoms. As a result, world oil prices have tumbled 21 percent from a high of \$101 per barrel in June to \$79 on Oct. 14. Moscow’s 2015 budget is based on selling oil for \$100 a barrel. Capital has been flowing out of Russia and the ruble has fallen 8 percent in the last week alone.

Moscow also faces the bite of U.S. and European Union economic sanctions on Russian individuals, banks and corporations.

Workers have borne the brunt of the imperialists’ economic squeeze. Food prices, for example, have skyrocketed, with meat and poultry rising nearly 17 percent a year.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has responded to the imperialist moves by challenging Washington’s “unipolar domination,” ordering Russian military aircraft to probe European and U.S. air defenses on a scale not seen in a decade and sending a new wave of troops, tanks and artillery into eastern Ukraine.

In a widely reported Oct. 24 speech at the Valdai Club conference in Russia, Putin said the Cold War “world order” and the understanding between Washington and Moscow that defined it are no more. He blamed Washington for seeking global hegemony and said shifts of this magnitude “usually have been accompanied by if not global war and conflict, then by chains of intensive local level conflicts.”

Putin claimed Washington instigated the popular mobilizations in Ukraine that toppled the Moscow-backed regime of Viktor Yanukovich in February. “If Ukraine wants to keep its territorial integrity,” Putin said, “they need to understand there is no sense in holding onto some village or another.”

Moscow has also announced major expansion of propaganda outlets worldwide, including RT television and Sputnik radio. To push Moscow’s spin on events, the RIA Novosti news bureau office in Kiev will have a staff of 100.

The cease-fire agreement in Ukraine included a common election for representatives across the entire country. The vote was set for Oct. 27. But armed separatist in parts of the eastern provinces blocked Ukrainian elections, instead organizing their own on Nov. 2. In the so-called People Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, residents were told they had to vote to receive “social cards,” which would be necessary in the future to receive pensions and other government benefits. Moscow delivered hundreds of tons of potatoes, cabbage and other vegetables that armed units sold at low prices at voting stations. Balloting was overseen by armed militia.

“There are elections where you choose between A and B, and then there are the more difficult ones where you choose between A and A,” Aleksandr Prokhanov, a Russian who said he advises Donetsk Premier Aleksandr Zakharchenko, told the *New York Times*.

No elections were held in Crimea, which has been under Russian occupation since February.

The big losers in the Ukraine vote were rightist parties as well as groups that backed Moscow’s intervention. Right Sector received 1.6 percent of the vote, not enough to be represented in government. For the first time in decades, not a single candidate was elected from the pro-Moscow Communist Party.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian government figures released Oct. 30 report a 5.1 percent contraction in gross domestic product during the third-quarter. And much of the country’s industrial heartland in the east has been brought to a halt by fighting and destruction.