

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Politics in Bangladesh today
marked by battles for freedom
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 79/NO. 2 JANUARY 26, 2015

US forges imperialist alliance on war policy

BY MAGGIE TROWE

In the final years of his presidency, Barack Obama is charting a course on U.S. foreign policy that is increasingly in sync with that desired and needed by the country's propertied rulers. This doesn't mean they like Obama, his meritocratic pretenses of worldliness, intellect and empathy, or how he exercises his rule. But they largely concur on what Washington needs to do in today's world.

It is a road away from the "boots on

NEWS ANALYSIS

the ground" invasions, conquest and "nation-building" attempted by former President George W. Bush in Iraq and Afghanistan. That course failed to achieve stability, fueled new division and conflict and weakened relations with other imperialist powers.

From his pivot toward containment of China to his course of limited engagement in Syria and Iraq and with

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Terror attacks in France are blow to working class

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The cold-blooded execution of cartoonists and others at the French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* for publishing cartoons mocking the Muslim Prophet Muhammad by two men affiliated

**DEFEND FREE SPEECH,
FIGHT JEW-HATRED!**
— See editorial p. 9

with al-Qaeda in Yemen, and the related anti-Semitic attack and murder of four Jewish shoppers in a kosher grocery in Paris dealt a blow to the working-class movement and the fight for political space. It also exposed the hypocrisy of the French ruling class and its bourgeois Socialist Party government, whose laws restrict freedom of speech and who used the attacks as a pretext to put thousands of soldiers on the streets, step up government surveillance and tighten border controls.

The French rulers combine cover-
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Medical brigades in Haiti: 16 years of Cuban internationalist solidarity

BY RÓGER CALERO
AND PHILIPPE TESSIER

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Sixteen years ago Cuba established a medical mission here in response to a request by the Haitian government to provide care to the victims of Hurricane George. Since the initial contingent of 100 medical volunteers arrived here Dec. 4, 1998, the internationalist mission has grown, as Cuba

responded to the devastating earthquake that killed more than 300,000 Haitians in 2010 and repeated cholera outbreaks since. As they work to fight disease and injuries, Cuban doctors and other medical workers also collaborate to build a nationwide public health system.

The medical workers volunteer in revolutionary Cuba's tradition of in-

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Militant/Linda Joyce

Cuban health workers in Haiti have given 22 million checkups in 16 years. Above, Patricia Mendiondo, in lab coat, head of Cuban-run physical rehabilitation program at Renaissance Hospital in Port-au-Prince, and Militant correspondent Róger Calero, left, during Dec. 15 visit.

'Workers need to wage fight for political power'

Socialist candidate runs for DC City Council



Militant

Glova Scott (left), Socialist Workers Party candidate for DC City Council in Ward 4 and worker at Walmart, campaigns and petitions to put the working-class campaign on the ballot Jan. 11.

BY JOHN HAYS

WASHINGTON — "This is a good time to run a socialist campaign for office," Glova Scott, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in Ward 4 here, told supporters at a Militant Labor Forum Jan. 10. Scott is a Walmart worker active in the growing movement for a union, \$15 an hour and full-time work. She and socialist campaigners fanned out over the weekend in the working-class area in the northwest part of the city, knocking on doors, chatting in living rooms and talking with workers and shoppers at the Georgia Avenue Walmart. Over the last week 400 people signed

petitions to put Scott on the ballot for the April 28 election.

"There is a lot going on in politics and the world that workers need to discuss," Scott told the forum. "The fight at Walmart, the protests against police violence and the discussion on the attacks on journalists and Jewish people in France are only a few examples. They all point to the need to build a working-class leadership that can organize a fight for political power."

"Home health care workers are fighting for the same thing as workers at Walmart — \$15 an hour," Rose

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Debate flares in Israel over bill to set exclusive national rights for Jews

BY SETH GALINSKY

Whether Israel should, for the first time, give exclusive rights to those it declares to be Jewish citizens — as proposed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — is a central issue in the upcoming elections there. If adopted, the Jewish nation-state bill would be a blow not just to forging unity in the Israeli working class of all national origins and religions and to the fight for Palestinians' rights and creation of a Palestinian state, it would also be a blow to the right of return of Jews around the world.

The bill contradicts Israel's 1948 Declaration of Independence, which says that the Jewish state "will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; ... it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture."

The 1948 declaration also prom-

ised Arab residents "full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions." While Israel was created through the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, the rights

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Homelessness in New York at record high in 2014 5

—On the picket line, p. 5—

West Coast dockworkers win solidarity in fight for contract
Chicken butchers in Israel win pay raise, end to piece work

US uses rights abuse charge to step up squeeze on NKorea

BY SETH GALINSKY

Washington is using a United Nations Human Rights Council report that accuses the government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea of violations of human rights to step up pressure on North Korea and justify continued economic sanctions. In an unprecedented move, Washington, London, Seoul and seven other U.S. allies convinced the U.N. Security Council to take up the accusations at its Dec. 22 meeting.

Samantha Power, U.S. ambassador to the U.N., argued that the North Korean government should be brought up on charges before the International Criminal Court. She demanded that North Korea relinquish its national sovereignty and permit “unfettered access” to U.N. “observers.”

A Dec. 24 statement by the Permanent Mission of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to the United Nations noted that the U.S. government and its allies are themselves major violators of human rights, practicing “racial discrimination, maltreatment of indigenous peoples and refugees and tortures.” The statement called attention to recent revelations of “atrocities of CIA torture committed by the United States.”

The North Korean statement rejected the Security Council’s “double standard,” ignoring human rights violations by Washington and only discussing human rights in countries that face U.S. hostility.

Both the Chinese and Russian governments opposed the Security Council discussing the charges; the governments of Chad and Nigeria abstained. China’s

representative, Liu Jieyi, said the Security Council “was not the appropriate forum” for “politicization of human rights issues.” Russian Federation representative Evgeniy Zagaynov said that the council’s discussions would be an obstacle to “dialogue with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.”

The government of North Korea has refused to allow representatives of the U.N. Human Rights commission to visit the country, stating that the inquiry was a “product of political confrontation and conspiracy.”

The U.N. General Assembly Nov. 18 approved the findings of the Human Rights Council, which accused North Korea of possible “crimes against humanity” in its February 2014 report. The Cuban government spoke against the resolution.

The assembly voted down the Cuban representative’s proposal to amend the U.N. resolution to call for “a new cooperative approach to the consideration of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” and “the establishment of dialogues” and cooperation between U.N. bodies and the North Ko-



For over 60 years Washington has intervened on the Korean Peninsula, including occupation, Korean War and division into north and south. Above, city of Wonsan in North Korea destroyed during 1950-53 war. US-led forces bombed area for 41 days and siege lasted 861 days.

rean government.

Over the last several years, at Washington’s urging, the Security Council — with the votes of the Russian and Chinese governments — has tightened sanctions on North Korea, including placing travel bans on many officials, freezing assets, banning exports of weapons and calling for inspecting North Korean ships on the high seas.

Washington’s pushing of accusations of human rights violations against North Korea are especially hypocriti-

cal, given the U.S. government’s more than 60-year history of intervention and aggression in the Korean Peninsula, from the U.S. occupation and forced division of the country into North and South — with the agreement of Moscow — to U.S. backing of successive military dictatorships in the South that jailed or killed tens of thousands of workers and peasants, and continuing U.S. economic sanctions against Pyongyang, designed to starve the North into submission.

‘Militant’ announces new editor and staff writer

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

John Studer is now editor of the *Militant*, and Naomi Craine has joined the volunteer staff.

Studer, 68, has been a staff writer since November 2011. He moved to New York from Philadelphia, where he was a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and worked at a Hyundai-

Rotem rail car plant.

Studer participated in two *Militant* reporting teams to Ukraine in 2014, providing firsthand coverage after massive working-class mobilizations toppled the regime of Viktor Yanukovych in February and threw off Moscow’s long domination. Along with Frank Forrestal of Minneapolis, Studer covered struggles by working people defending Ukraine’s national sovereignty and combating attacks from that country’s propertied rulers on workers’ jobs, wages and social rights.

Doug Nelson served as the paper’s editor since 2012. He is taking on assignments to advance the SWP’s political work and strengthen the party’s participation in resistance by workers and unionists against the consequenc-

es of the capitalist crisis on employment, wages, job safety and social conditions of working people.

Craine, 44, moved to New York from Miami, where she was an SWP leader, worked most recently in a marine hardware factory, and has helped organize activities in defense of the Cuban Revolution and for freedom of the Cuban Five. She participated in the 2013 VII Continental Conference in Solidarity with Cuba in Caracas, Venezuela. As a participant, Craine covered for the *Militant* protests against the 2012 killing of Trayvon Martin by “neighborhood watch” vigilante George Zimmerman.

Craine has written for the socialist newsweekly for many years, including as a staff volunteer starting in

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THE MILITANT

Back fights of working farmers

Prices for corn and other crops have fallen below farmers’ cost of production, as cost of seed, fertilizer, agricultural implements and land rent have soared. The ‘Militant’ covers farmers’ fights to defend their livelihood and forge a worker-farmer alliance.



Price of corn dropped 23 percent in 2014 after falling 40 percent the year before.

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

Politics in Bangladesh today marked by battles for freedom

BY RON POULSEN

DHAKA, Bangladesh — When it won independence in 1971, Bangladesh was one of the most economically underdeveloped countries in the world — the legacy of more than two centuries of British colonial rule and decades under the oppressive boot of the Pakistani rulers.

But another side of Bangladesh is less known outside this South Asian nation: the history of mass battles for freedom, sometimes in face of overwhelming odds.

During a reporting trip to Bangladesh in October, a team of *Militant* reporters learned about the 1971 independence war and how the living memory of that massive struggle still marks politics here.

Bengal was the main center of resistance to British colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent. Today, visitors to the Liberation War Museum here see a display listing a dozen popular rebellions and movements in Bengal against colonial oppression between the late 1700s and the 1930s. India won independence from London in 1947, part of the post-World War II anti-colonial upsurge in Asia.

On the eve of their withdrawal, however, the British rulers acted to leave behind two separate and warring states, India and Pakistan. The partition, designed to maintain imperialist domination of the region by pitting Hindus against Muslims, was a blow against the revolutionary struggle for a united, secular Indian republic. The propertied rulers in both states fanned chauvinist violence along religious and ethnic lines to reinforce their domination. Millions of Muslims and Hindus migrated between India and

Pakistan, as religious riots led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands.

British partition India, Pakistan

The British rulers, backed by local bourgeois forces in the Muslim League, artificially created Pakistan as a “Muslim” state by joining two regions with wide differences in nationalities, cultures and languages, separated by 1,000 miles of Indian territory.

West Pakistan, made up of various nationalities, was dominated by the Punjabi elite. East Pakistan was created by partitioning Bengal, a Bengali-speaking region with its own rich literary and cultural heritage. Western Bengal was incorporated into India and the eastern part into Pakistan.

Pakistan’s Punjabi-dominated government treated East Pakistan as a virtual colony. After the 1947 partition, capitalist interests in the East were taken over by wealthy Punjabis. Three-quarters of the government revenue was spent in the West, though the East had two-thirds of the population. Some 85 percent of government jobs were held by West Pakistanis.

In 1948 the government proclaimed Urdu the sole national language. This sparked protests in the Bengali-speaking East, launching what became known as the Language Movement. On Feb. 21, 1952, police fatally shot dozens of student demonstrators, setting off a wave of opposition. The government eventually retreated, granting official status to the Bengali language in 1956. Today Feb. 21 is a national holiday in Bangladesh.

The Bengali nationalist movement continued to grow, leading to a 1969 popular upsurge. In December 1970, after 12 years of army rule, the first general elections in Pakistan were held under Gen. Yahya Khan.

When the Awami League, a capitalist party advocating greater rights for the Bengali-speaking region, won a majority of seats in the national assembly, the Pakistani rulers moved to block the new government from taking office. This was met by a general strike in East Pakistan. Khan extend-



1971 Bangladesh war for independence from Pakistan was a mass popular struggle. Above, women volunteers in Dhaka march with weapons as part of military training.

ed the martial law regime, but thousands poured into the streets, defying the curfew. Pro-independence sentiment grew explosively.

In March 1971, to terrorize the population into submission, the Pakistani army launched a carefully planned bloodbath in the East. The occupying troops, with the collaboration of local rightist Islamists, torched working-class neighborhoods in Dhaka, bombed rural villages and gunned down students, teachers and professionals. The Hindu minority was a special target.

At least 1 million people, perhaps many more, were slaughtered. Troops raped and killed hundreds of thousands of women. Millions fled across the border to West Bengal in India.

The Awami League had initially advocated only autonomy within Pakistan. Pressed by the mass popular upsurge, however, its leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed independence as the goal.

Toilers mobilize to win independence

Working people across the country joined a war of resistance, including guerrilla units that increasingly controlled the countryside. Strikes and “noncooperation” actions confronted the occupiers in the cities. Women were active in all aspects of the struggle, flocking to join popular militias. A new nation, Bangladesh, was born in the crucible of this struggle.

In December 1971, after nine months of civil war, India’s capitalist rulers intervened. They sought both to deal a blow to their Pakistani rivals and to end the war before the popular resistance escaped capitalist control. Indian troops poured into Bangladesh, and within 12 days the Pakistani army surrendered.

Washington, which faced rising protests over its own war against the Vietnamese people, feigned neutrality but quietly sent military aid to the Pakistani dictatorship. In China, the Stalinist regime of Mao Zedong openly supported its Pakistani ally’s murderous war.

The Bangladeshi liberation struggle won worldwide support. In August 1971, 40,000 people filled New York’s Madison Square Garden in a benefit “Concert for Bangladesh” organized by musicians Ravi Shankar and former Beatle George Harrison.

Today in Bangladesh, the Awami League government is organizing “war crimes” trials that have issued death sentences against several leaders of Islamist parties who headed anti-independence death squads during the Pakistani occupation. The government wants to use popular hatred for these figures to boost its own position against the rival Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its Islamist electoral allies.

None of that takes away from the real legacy of the Bangladeshi liberation war: the power of millions of working people fighting for their own interests and defeating a seemingly more powerful enemy.

‘Militant’ staff

Continued from page 2

1992 and its editor from 1996 through 1999.

Like other writers for the *Militant*, both staff volunteers and worker correspondents, Studer and Craine have run as Socialist Workers Party candidates for public office, presenting a working-class course in face of assaults by the employing class and explaining to working people the need for a revolutionary struggle to conquer power from the capitalist rulers and their political parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

Studer was Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of New York in 2014 and New York City comptroller in 2013. Craine was SWP candidate for governor of Florida this year and U.S. Senate in 2012.

Maggie Trowe, who joined the staff last summer, was the SWP’s vice-presidential candidate in 2000, and ran for Des Moines City Council in 2013 and Iowa state senate in 2012.

Staff writer Seth Galinsky was the SWP candidate for Queens borough president in 2013 and U.S. Congress from the 8th C.D. the previous year. Brian Williams was the party’s candidate for mayor of Houston in 2005. And business manager Lea Sherman ran for governor of California on the SWP ticket in 2010 and Congress from the 8th C.D. there in 2008.

US food aid threat forced Bangladesh to end Cuba trade

DHAKA, Bangladesh — The Pakistani army’s scorched-earth tactics in 1971, coupled with extreme underdevelopment, left newly independent Bangladesh economically devastated. Washington and its imperialist cohorts descended on the young nation like vultures, using “aid” as a weapon to reinforce their domination.

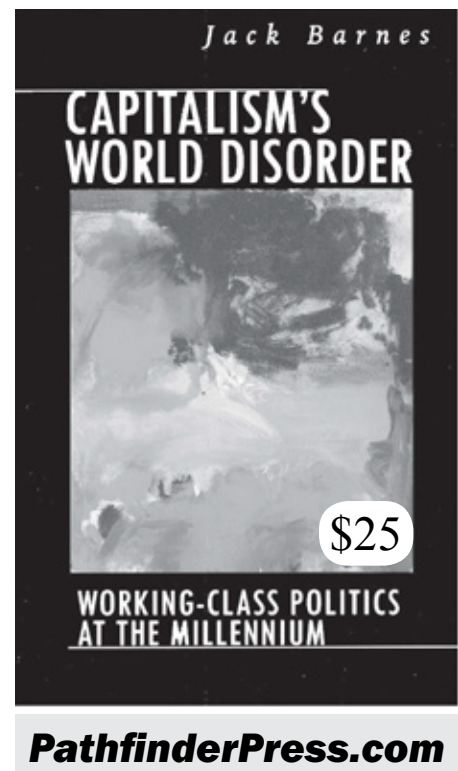
In 1974, floods wiped out much of the rice crop in Bangladesh and the resulting famine killed nearly 1 million people. The cash-strapped government could not afford the prices demanded by U.S. grain monopolies, which cancelled two large orders scheduled for delivery in September.

Washington callously threatened to cancel all credits under its “Food for Peace” program unless Bangladesh stopped exporting jute gunny sacks to Cuba — part of the U.S. rulers’ efforts to strangle the Cuban Revolution. Jute products were one of Bangladesh’s few exports. Local officials expressed “surprise and shock that the United States would actually insist that a destitute Bangladesh should restrict its exports,” economist Amartya Sen wrote in *Poverty and Famines* in 1981.

Faced with this blackmail, Bangladesh canceled its trade with Cuba. U.S. food shipments were resumed months later. By then they were too late to have any impact on the famine.

Trade relations between Bangladesh and Cuba were normalized in subsequent years. Bangladeshis did not forget that revolutionary Cuba backed the liberation war and was one of the first states to recognize their country’s independence in January 1972.

— RON POULSEN



Socialist candidate in DC

Continued from front page

Rogers told campaign supporters after inviting them into her house to warm up by the fireplace Jan. 10. “We finally got them up to \$13.60, but then some of the agencies try to pay less.”

When Rogers read Scott’s campaign flyer, she pointed to its call for workers to break from the Democrats and Republicans. “The workers movement needs to organize its own political party, a labor party to champion the interests of working people,” the flyer says.

“Not a bad idea!” Rogers said.

The petitioning drive will continue through Jan. 18. Scott asked all those who want to see a socialist alternative on the ballot to join in the effort to turn in 1,000 signatures, double the requirement.

Ethiopian-born Atnafu Munde said he was interested in the campaign when Scott knocked on his door, saying he liked its support for the Cuban Revolution. When Ethiopia was invaded by Somalia in 1977, Munde said, Cuba answered a call for help with troops and heavy artillery that helped defeat the invaders. “In a hard time for my country, Cuba came, and not just with soldiers, but teachers too.”

“At Walmart we are not just fighting for wages and hours,” Scott, who recently participated in a three-day strike during the busy Thanksgiving shopping weekend, told forum participants. “We are fighting for dignity on the job. We are fighting for all workers.

“The conditions we face are not unique,” she said. “They are what workers face across the country as the ruling rich bear down upon us to increase their profits. They want us to produce more and more as we are

paid less and less.”

“Every night on the news they say that there are a whole lot of jobs. But I ask myself why can’t I ever make it,” John Pimental told campaign volunteers when they knocked on his door Jan. 11. He noted the campaign program’s plank urging workers to fight “for a massive government-funded jobs program.”

“This demand for a jobs program is right,” Pimental said. “Especially the part that says it’s got to be massive.”

If you would like to get the socialist campaign flyer or join in campaigning, contact the SWP at (202) 536-5080 or swp.washingtondc@verizon.net.

— CALENDAR —

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Guest Gallery Exhibition: “I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived.” Work by Antonio Guerrero for the 16th anniversary of the imprisonment of the Cuban Five. Jan. 14 – Feb. 22.

Special Event: John Martinez, co-chair of the Human and Civil Rights Committee of AFT Local 1789, speaks about the exhibit and the case of the Cuban Five. Wed., Jan. 28, 6:30 p.m. *Both at Columbia City Gallery, 4864 Rainier Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 760-9483.*

UNITED KINGDOM

London

From Ferguson to Tottenham: No More Senseless Deaths, Cover-Ups or Injustices! Sun. Jan. 25, 5 p.m. *North London Community House, 22 Moorfield Road. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1571388373074015/>*

DC rally condemns Mexican students’ disappearance



Militant/Osborne Hart

WASHINGTON — More than 200 Mexican workers, students and their supporters demonstrated here near the White House Jan. 6 to protest a state visit by Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto and his government’s responsibility in the disappearance and presumed murder of 43 students from a rural teachers college.

Inside, Peña Nieto was discussing immigration, border control and Cuba with President Barack Obama. Similar protests were held at Mexican consulates in Houston, Los Angeles, Seattle, St. Louis and other cities.

Holding banners and 43 photo placards with the names of each student, protesters chanted, “Justicia por Ayotzinapa 43, ahora” (Justice for the Ayotzinapa 43, now) and “Fuera Peña!” (Peña get out!)

Local cops and masked gunmen carried out three attacks in Iguala, Mexico, Sept. 26, killing six people and forcing dozens into police vehicles. The Mexican government says the cops turned the 43 over to a drug gang.

The students, who had traveled from their Ayotzinapa campus to prepare for an Oct. 2 commemoration of the 1968 massacre in Mexico City of student protesters, have not been seen since. The attack struck a nerve in Mexico, where more than 22,000 people have been “disappeared” in the last eight years amid political repression and general lawlessness and corruption by the police, military and private armies of the narcotics industry.

“His wife was disappeared in June, driving a truck with a relative across the border,” Carmen Guerrero told the *Militant*, pointing to Jaime López, who came to the march with Guerrero from Norristown, Pennsylvania. “The truck has since been found registered under another name. But authorities are not giving out further information.”

— OSBORNE HART AND GEORGE CHALMERS

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CANADA

Montreal

Debate on Israeli Citizenship Poses Challenge for Working-Class Unity. Speaker: John Steele, Communist League. Fri., Jan. 23, 7:30 p.m. *7107 St-Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.*

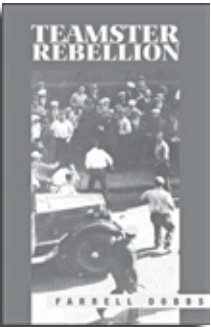
UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester

Communist League Launches 2015 Election Campaign. Hear Paul Davies, Communist League parliamentary candidate for Manchester Central. Fri., Jan. 23, 7 p.m. *Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. Tel.: (0161) 478-2496.*

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The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

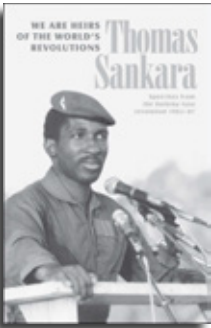


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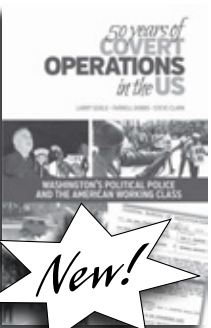
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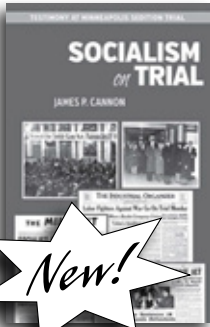
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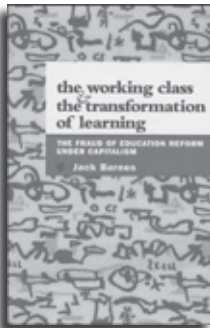
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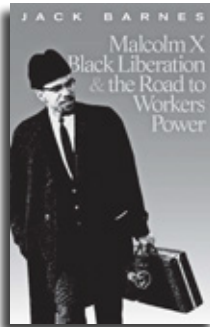
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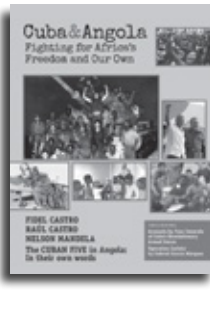
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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

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This column is dedicated to spreading the truth about the labor resistance that is unfolding today. It seeks to give voice to those engaged in battle and help build solidarity. Its success depends on input from readers. If you are involved in a labor struggle or have information on one, please contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

—Maggie Trowe

West Coast dockworkers win solidarity in fight for contract

LOS ANGELES — After months working without a contract, and now blamed by port and rail bosses for severe congestion at West Coast ports, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union received welcome solidarity from the 90,000-member International Dockworkers Council Dec. 17. IDC General Coordinator Jordi Aragunde led a support delegation here, which included International Longshoremen's Association Vice President Ken Riley, who offered solidarity from U.S. East Coast dockworkers.

Talks between representatives of 20,000 ILWU members and the Pacific Maritime Association began well before the contract expired July 1. The contract covers work at ports from San Diego to Seattle, which handled \$892 billion in imports and exports during 2013.

Port bosses have stepped up a propaganda campaign against the union in the big-business press, accusing workers of carrying out a slowdown, resulting in big backups at the ports. "Are West Coast longshoremen spoiling Christmas?" read a Dec. 8 headline in *Politico* magazine. Peter Friedmann, executive director of the Agriculture Transportation Coalition, said if the ILWU tries to keep "antiquated practices such as the hiring hall" and prevent automation of marine terminals, the union will succeed in "accelerating the diversion of cargo away from U.S. West Coast ports."

The ILWU has organized work at all West Coast terminals since it won hard-fought battles in the 1930s. The union won the right to use its own hiring halls to dispatch workers to fill bosses' job orders.

The union says the employers caused the backlog by instituting practices that have resulted in a shortage of chassis to haul containers, switching to giant ships that carry more cargo, shortages of rail cars and the companies' refusal to train enough crane operators. "The men and women of the ILWU will not make up

for the current supply chain failures at the expense of life and limb," ILWU spokesperson Craig Merrilees said in a statement last November.

The Pacific Maritime Association drastically cut the number of workers on night shift in the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach Dec. 31. "This is the second round of cuts made by the employer that is making the congestion at the port of L.A. and Long Beach worse," ILWU Local 13 President Bobby Olvera Jr. told the *Long Beach Press Telegram*. On Jan. 5 the ILWU called for federal mediation. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service immediately announced that it would enter the talks.

—Bill Arth

Chicken butchers in Israel win pay raise, end to piece work

After three weeks on strike, 65 kosher butchers and their helpers at the Milouoff slaughterhouse near Acre, Israel, won an initial victory Jan. 11.

"We won an immediate pay raise of 30 to 40 percent," Rafi Kimhi, coordinator in northern Israel of the Koach La Ovdim (Workers Power) trade union federation, said by phone Jan. 13. "And they are going back as direct employees of Milouoff, not of a contractor." The butchers went on strike after Milouoff fired the contractor they had worked for, but would not guarantee that everyone would be rehired by the new one.

"And instead of getting paid piece work for each chicken slaughtered, they are now getting paid by the hour, which is much better," he said.

"I don't want to exaggerate what was won," Kimhi added. "The contractor is going to court to challenge the preliminary six-month agreement, and we are still negotiating with Milouoff."

The contract applies to the butchers and helpers, but not some 400 other workers, mostly Arab citizens of Israel, who were not part of the strike. Koach



Longshore worker directs placement of container on chassis at port of Long Beach, California. Some 20,000 members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union at West Coast ports have worked without a contract since July 1. Unionists deny companies' charges that they are causing congestion at ports and blame bosses for crew cuts and shortage of chassis.

La Ovdim would like to organize all the workers into the union. Milouoff is a co-operative owned by 23 collective farms, or kibbutzim, and produces about 12 percent of the chickens sold in Israel.

The butchers are *Haredim* — ultra-

orthodox Jews — from North Africa.

"Three weeks on strike was not easy for them, because most have seven or eight children," Kimhi added. "But now we are starting in a good position."

—Seth Galinsky

Homelessness in New York at record high during 2014

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK — The number of homeless people in city shelters here during 2014, Bill de Blasio's first year as mayor, set a new record of more than 58,900.

The figure has been steadily rising as the bosses have carried out a relentless, grinding assault on working people here and across the country. Millions lack jobs, or face part-time or temporary work, and wages are stagnant. Over the last five years, during a so-called economic recovery, homelessness here has soared by 52 percent, reported the *New York Daily News*.

"For the one in five homeless parents who work full-time, a steady paycheck doesn't guarantee steady housing," wrote Ralph da Costa Nunez, president of the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, in the *Huffington Post*. "In 2013 they earned roughly \$24,000," he said, way below what's needed in New York to make ends meet. Some 40 percent of those residing in shelters are children.

De Blasio's plan, initiated four

months ago, is to offer landlords city-financed rental subsidies to move 4,000 families out of shelters by next September. Individuals will pay 30 percent of their income toward rent, and the city will cover the rest for a period of three to five years.

"The program got off to a slow start," a Dec. 29 article on WNYC.org reported. Because property owners' goal is to gouge as high a rent as possible, not to assure people housing, "homeless residents had a hard time convincing landlords to accept the subsidies. But the administration agreed to pay the landlords more."

De Blasio — a Democrat who ran as a progressive, promising big changes for the common man — is pursuing a program similar to one instituted by former Mayor Michael Bloomberg. "The problem is it didn't work," noted Nunez. "The number of families who returned to shelter, homeless again, more than doubled, from one in four in 2005 to nearly two in three in 2013, when 63 percent of families placed in apartments returned to city shelters."

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January 26, 1990

A final victory has been scored in a decade-long legal battle that threatened the constitutional rights to political association and to engage in political activities free of government interference.

On January 11 Alan Gelfand, the plaintiff in a 10-year disruption and harassment lawsuit against the Socialist Workers Party, announced that he would not appeal the "decision or the judgments and findings" issued against him by a Los Angeles federal judge in August. His statement was carried in the January 12 *Bulletin*, the newspaper of the Workers League, the antilabor outfit that prepared, financed, and organized the lawsuit.



January 25, 1965

While facing prospects of a catastrophic defeat in South Vietnam, the Johnson administration continues to invite a wider war with its shameless acts of aggression in Southeast Asia. The U.S. bombing raid in Laos on Jan. 13 was one more step toward such a war. There are also reports of continuing U.S. sea and air cover for South Vietnamese attacks on North Vietnam.

The raid on Laos is typical of the deceit and imperialist arrogance of U.S. policy in Southeast Asia. It was a flagrant violation of international law and of the 1962 Geneva agreements on the neutrality of Laos which the U.S. government signed.



January 27, 1940

"Mr. Mayor! We Want Jobs!" "Mr. Market Commissioner! We Want Jobs!"

Bearing these and other signs, pickets last week began to march up and down in front of the entrances to New York City Mayor LaGuardia's latest pride: the huge new Essex Street Retail Market, which stretches for three blocks from Broome to Stanton Streets on the Lower East Side. The pickets are members of Local 338 of the Retail Dairy Grocery and Fruit Clerks Union (CIO), which has 5,000 members in the city. They will continue to march until LaGuardia reverses the present scab labor policy of the market.

Migrant workers fight unsafe, abusive conditions in Malaysia

BY LINDA HARRIS
AND BASKARAN APPU

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Protests by electronic manufacturing workers in recent months and the deaths of four coal miners in a Nov. 22 explosion highlight the dangerous and abusive conditions faced by millions of immigrant workers here. As some begin to resist, the government is stepping up arrests and deportations of undocumented migrants, helping the bosses maintain control over this layer of superexploited workers.

Malaysia, with a population of about 30 million, has some 5.8 million migrant workers, but only half of them are documented and legally allowed to work. The vast majority are forced to pay high fees to recruitment agents, who regularly hold their passports. Often they end up getting paid less than they are promised and, in some cases, not at all.

Militant correspondents Nov. 21 spoke with Florida Sandanasamy, coordinator of the Migrant Project, at the offices of the Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC) here, about a recent fight by workers at JCY factories in the southern state of Johor.

JCY is a Malaysian firm that specializes in manufacturing parts for hard disk drives for major international electronic companies. At the end of August workers, the majority from Nepal, carried out a protest strike at the Tebrau JCY plant after one of the Nepalese workers died. “They were angry that the company had done nothing to help him get medical treatment,” Sandanasamy said. This added to their grievances about working conditions, poor hostel facilities, lack of leave and unfair pay deductions. The company had just posted a turnaround profit prior to the protest.

A statement by the MTUC said that they were also protesting the way the bosses treated them without “dignity or respect.” Workers are routinely beaten for minor mistakes.

The company responded by transferring 20 of the strike leaders to another JCY plant at Kulaijaya. There the bosses tried to force them to throw stones at each other as a form of punishment for taking part in the strike. This sparked a protest Aug. 26 by more than 1,000 JCY workers, mostly Nepalese, during which parts of the factory caught fire. Riot cops were called in and 55 workers were arrested.

In a phone interview with the *Militant* Dec. 11, Mohd Salleh Ahmad, coordinator of the Migrant Resource Centre in Johor, said that most of the workers arrested were sent back to Nepal but 15 are still being held. The permits of five of these workers expired while they were in prison, and they are now being charged under the Immigration Act. The MTUC is appealing the court’s decision.

More than 200,000 immigrants work in the electronics industry, which today accounts for one-third of Malaysia’s exports. “Companies like JCY are making millions, but they don’t want to pay workers more,” Sandanasamy said. Migrant workers (excluding domestic workers) are supposed to receive a minimum wage of MYR900 (\$260) per month, but very few do.

Meanwhile, four workers were killed and 30 injured in an explosion Nov. 22 at the Silantek coal mine in Sarawak province, in eastern Malaysia. Pang Ching Nyok, 29, from North Korea; Tun Tun Min, 36, from Myanmar; and Kardan-to, 38, from Indonesia were suffocated in the mine. Acmad Zidin, 27, also from Indonesia, died three days later. Government authorities shut the mine down following the fire, which was reported to have been caused by a faulty extractor fan leaking gas.

The mine, operated by Lucky Power Strategies, employed 119 miners, all migrants. Forty-six workers came from North Korea under a special agreement between Pyongyang and Sarawak state authorities. Twenty-nine were from Myanmar and others from Indonesia, China and Bangladesh.

Coal mining jobs are “very dangerous and tough,” Deputy Home Minister Wan Junaidi told reporters Nov. 25. “No



Electronic workers, the majority migrants from Nepal, confront cops during August protests sparked by denial of medical care, other abuse at JCY factory in Kulaijaya, Malaysia.

local or Sarawakian will dare to take up such jobs —that is why [we] need foreign workers.”

At the same time, cops backed by army personnel were carrying out a major operation against migrant workers in the Cameron Highlands, to the north of Kuala Lumpur. The government claims migrant workers are working illegally clearing land. In night raids Nov. 22, 39

migrants from Bangladesh, India and Myanmar were detained.

The Malaysian government issued an amnesty through 2014 for any company employing workers without permits if they turn them over to authorities. Tens of thousands of workers were detained last year. “You see foreign workers being harassed all the time,” Sandanasamy said.

US forges imperialist alliance on war policy

Continued from front page

Ukraine and Russia, Obama is seeking to build a new coalition to defend imperialist rule and exploitation with minimal use of combat troops.

A significant wing of conservative politicians in the Republican Party share this view. And their presidential candidate in 2016 will advance this course or have little chance of victory.

Short- or long-lived alliances are the norm, not the exception, for Washington. The alliance with the Soviet Union was necessary to defeat Germany in World War II, even though it flew apart at the war’s end. The U.S. rulers engineered an alliance with other imperialist powers during the Cold War that came apart with the implosion of the Soviet Union in 1991. U.S. capitalists today see no enemies that pose an immediate threat to imperialist rule requiring substantial military intervention.

Obama is pursuing military and political alliances with governments representing the propertied rulers in Europe, Japan, Australia and a growing number of semicolonial countries, aimed over time at bringing more stability in the Mideast, more investment in Latin America and the containment of China. At the same time, the rulers count on no rising working-class revolts against the grinding effects of today’s crisis of world capitalist production and trade and no revolutionary explosions against imperialist control worldwide.

Sanctions and bombs, not troops

In Syria and Iraq, Washington and its allies have mobilized no significant troop presence, correctly assuming time is on their side to destroy Islamic State. The U.S. can focus on targeted bombings, drones and occasional shipments of arms to allies, while troops from Iraq, those battling the dictatorial rule of the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria, as well as Kurdish forces throughout the region push forward on the ground, taking many casualties along the way in a drawn-out conflict.

Islamic State’s decision to establish a dictatorial caliphate, an Islamist state

run by Sharia law, has no future in the 21st century and is losing support, not rising. No amount of beheadings and oppression can force adherence from the millions of toilers in the region.

And while the U.S. rulers and their capitalist allies in the area are not pleased to see the Kurdish independence movement getting wind in its sails, that is a minor downside to dealing blows to Islamic State.

The Obama administration is also having results in containing Russian President Vladimir Putin’s military aggressions against Ukraine without engaging in combat. Many Republicans, from Arizona Sen. John McCain to Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, criticized Obama for not reacting with stronger unilateral threats after the Russian government occupied Crimea and engineered its absorption into the Russian Federation through a sham referendum in March 2014.

But Obama’s success in winning German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other European leaders to join the U.S. in imposing economic sanctions against Russia, aided by the impact of plummeting oil prices on a country that depends on fuel exports, has had a slow but devastating impact on the Russian economy — especially on workers, who are hit hardest. Washington seeks to force Russian capitalists to press Putin — who ultimately has to do their bidding — to pull back. The sanctions are making the occupation of Crimea a disaster for the Putin regime.

In the longer term, Washington offers Moscow a “reset” as a U.S.-European Union ally against a common enemy — Chinese expansion and competition.

One big economic development is helping Washington along this course. The massive production of oil by fracking changes the relationship of forces between the U.S. and the rulers in the Middle East, Russia and elsewhere, driving down the revenues that these governments depend on.

In the Americas, the Obama administration’s decision to free the Cuban Five in exchange for Cuba’s release of U.S.

spies and to reestablish diplomatic relations and begin negotiations between the two countries has the backing of the propertied rulers here. It removes a major obstacle to the ability of U.S. capitalists to maneuver in Latin America, in a way they haven’t had for decades.

Embargo has taken toll on Cuba

For more than 50 years, the crippling U.S. economic embargo against Cuba has hammered away on Cuban workers and farmers. It has created economic hardship and, in the absence of rising revolutionary struggles in the world, has opened the way to the erosion of revolutionary consciousness in a layer of the toilers. Washington’s move to win openings for U.S. business and propaganda in Cuba aims to take advantage of the success of the embargo to intervene more directly in class relations on the island, to undermine Cuba’s socialist revolution.

The Pentagon and U.S. officer corps in their big majority concur with Obama’s course of coalition building and limited military engagement, agreeing that the Iraq and Afghan wars failed, producing unintended and unwelcome consequences.

Similarly, while his administration orchestrated a congressional report sharply critical of CIA secret prisons and torture under his predecessor, Obama has made clear there will be no change in the mission, leadership or funding of the rulers’ key foreign espionage agency.

Obama didn’t come into office with a plan for taking these steps. But he has grown into the office of chief executive of the capitalist rulers. Forswearing troops on the ground to rely on broader alliances, economic muscle, drones, targeted bombings and occasional special forces expeditions is what the dominant class needs.

While the rulers take this path in their class interests, the working class can take advantage of the time it gives to organize resistance to the bosses’ efforts to make workers pay for the crisis of their capitalist system, to gain experience, confidence and learn class politics.

Cuban solidarity in Haiti

Continued from front page

ternational solidarity, ranging from combatants in Bolivia and Angola in the 1960s and '70s to medical workers helping lead the fight against the Ebola virus in West Africa today.

Currently, some 600 doctors and other medical personnel provide free health care in Haiti. More than 6,000 Cuban volunteers have served in Haiti's health care system since 1998. There are also 300 Cuban volunteers helping in agriculture, sports, environmental projects and a national literacy campaign.

The Cuban medical teams work in community hospitals, clinics and rehabilitation centers throughout the country. Through mobile clinics and improvised medical posts they reach some of the poorest neighborhoods and hard-to-reach rural areas. The Cubans work together with Haitian doctors, many of whom are graduates from the Latin America School of Medicine (ELAM) in Cuba, set up to train students from all over the world — including the United States — free of charge. The only requirement is that graduates agree to return to their native countries and practice.

Hundreds of Haitians have graduated from the ELAM. With Cuba's collaboration the governments of Brazil and Venezuela have financed the construction of three new hospitals and the remodeling of 30 others to help build Haiti's public health system.

On Dec. 15 *Militant* reporters visited the Renaissance Hospital, the main complex where the Cuban medical brigade in Port-au-Prince runs ophthalmology and physical rehabilitation programs.

'A big turnout of patients'

"Every day there is a big turnout of patients, and it's like this everywhere the Cuban doctors practice," said Dr. Fernando Fernández Tascón, head of

the medical team at Renaissance.

The eye treatment program — known internationally as Operation Miracle — provides an average of 10 to 15 operations daily to patients suffering from cataracts, glaucoma and other forms of blindness. Cuban doctors have restored or improved eyesight for more than 53,000 Haitians through the program. Many of the patients at Renaissance also receive treatment for hypertension, diabetes and other illnesses that need to be stabilized before undergoing surgery. The average waiting period for treatment is seven to 10 days.

The Cuban medical brigade in Haiti has achieved an impressive record over 16 years, providing 22 million medical checkups — 680,000 of them visiting people in their homes — and carried out more than 400,000 surgical procedures.

Over the years Cuba's internationalist solidarity has won the appreciation and trust of millions of Haitians. *Bon bagay!* (Great work!) is the greeting many Haitians give when they meet a Cuban doctor on the street.

"The Cuban doctors have a humane way of treating and caring for people," said Lifette Ociel, 76, who was at the Renaissance hospital for a displaced bone. "We go to the Cuban doctors because they treat you well and they don't charge," said Mariu Carmel, another patient.

When asked how much a regular doctor in Haiti charges for services, Antoine, 36, who was waiting outside the hospital while his wife's eyes were being examined, said he had no idea because his family had never seen a doctor before. Other patients told us the same thing.

Cuba increases medical mission

When the January 2010 earthquake hit, Cuba had hundreds of volunteer medical personnel already on hand in



Militant/Linda Joyce

Cuban physician performs exam on patient in preparation for eye surgery at Renaissance Hospital, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Dec. 15. Operation Miracle — as the Cuban eye treatment program is known — has restored or improved eyesight for more than 53,000 Haitians.

Haiti. Cuba immediately increased its medical mission to more than 1,400 volunteers and treated more than 95,000 people, performing 4,500 surgeries over the next two months. Among the volunteers who came after the earthquake were members of the Henry Reeve International Contingent, which includes ELAM graduates from 21 countries, Fernández explained.

"In the aftermath of the earthquake limb amputations were common," said Patricia Menciondo Ramos, a physician currently heading the physical rehabilitation program at Renaissance. The program provides physical therapy and prosthetics to thousands of Haitians. It has distributed — free of charge — medicines, wheel chairs, walkers, canes and orthopedic equipment. A team of Cuban specialists also works at the newly built National Rehabilitation Institute providing services to people with disabilities and training Haitian medical workers.

The long-term costs of prostheses rehabilitation are very expensive, ex-

plained Menciondo, because they need to be adjusted as the person changes physically. This is certainly the case wherever medicine is practiced for profit. But Cuba provides the services at the institute completely free of charge.

Like other members of the Cuban medical brigade in Haiti, Fernández has participated in medical missions in other countries. This is Menciondo's second stint in Haiti, and she has served in Honduras and Venezuela. She volunteered to come to Haiti immediately after the earthquake.

"Our mission is to provide help to the Haitian people," Fernández said. "As we do it we grow as human beings."

"This is why we are proud of Félix Báez Sarria, the Cuban doctor in Sierra Leone who volunteered to go back to fight the Ebola epidemic after he himself had to be treated when he got infected with the disease." Báez is one of the several hundred Cuban doctors and nurses currently treating Ebola patients in West Africa. "His example strengthens us."

Garment workers press fight for higher wages in Cambodia

BY LINDA HARRIS

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — "Women workers in Cambodia still face bad working conditions. The union is the place where they can have their say," stated Rong Panha, an organizer for garment workers with the Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU). Panha was one of several speakers on a panel on workers' struggles at the Socialism 2014 forum attended by some 100 people here Nov. 23.

Garment workers in Cambodia, up to 90 percent of whom are women, waged a campaign of strikes and protest actions this year to raise the monthly minimum wage from \$100 to \$177.

The government announced an increase in mid-November, setting the new rate at \$128, to be implemented by January 2015.

"Members of the garment workers union were disappointed by the decision, but they will continue the fight," said Panha. CATU, one of the union federations campaigning for \$177, was formed at the end of 2011, but only gained government recognition in early 2014. Yaying Sophorn, president of CATU, is one of the six union leaders accused of crim-

inal activity during a series of nationwide strikes and demonstrations for an increased minimum wage that began at the end of 2013. Five people were killed and dozens injured when military police opened fire on the protests Jan. 3, 2014.

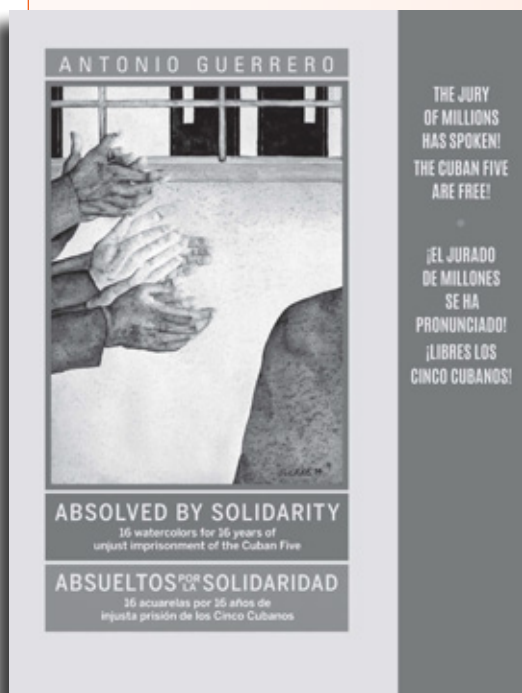
Sophorn and four others are now under "judicial supervision," banned from meeting with other union leaders or joining public gatherings until they are put on trial.

Unions have turned to a pressure campaign on the international apparel capitalists who contract Cambodian bosses to produce their name-brand clothing lines, urging them to tell their suppliers to pay workers more than the mandated \$128. CATU is planning actions outside some of the factories that produce for companies such as Abercrombie and Fitch, the Gap, American Eagle and Walmart. "The bigger the brand — the harder the job," Panha said.

Some 2,000 workers from the Ghim Li garment factory demonstrated in Phnom Penh Nov. 24, blocking traffic for more than an hour. They were demanding that the Singaporean-owned factory reinstate a worker who had been sacked and raise their bonuses.

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Cuban toilers' victory at Bay of Pigs shows power of revolution

Below is an excerpt from Cuba and the Coming American Revolution, based on two talks given by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes in March 2001, commemorating the 40th anniversary of Cuba's victory over Washington's mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs. The piece here is from the chapter titled, "There Will Be a Victorious Revolution in the United States Before a Victorious Counterrevolution in Cuba," a point made by Fidel Castro in a March 1961 speech. Copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JACK BARNES

The most common rationalization in bourgeois circles for the U.S. defeat at the Bay of Pigs is that [President John] Kennedy vacillated on the eve of the invasion by canceling a second round of air strikes on the morning of April 17. At the time, [CIA official Richard] Bissell had been among the most fervent advocates of these "D-Day" strikes, which were supposed to take out Cuba's remaining combat planes. But in his memoirs, published shortly after his death in the mid-1990s, Bissell dismisses critics who "blame the whole thing on the president's last-minute decision to cancel the air strike." That decision alone "would not have ensured success," he says. "No one could say it



Granma

Victorious Cuban combatants at Bay of Pigs, 1961. Unlike mercenaries, revolutionaries "were fighting to defend what they had accomplished through two and a half years of a deeply popular revolution, and the ways they were changing themselves in the process," said Jack Barnes.

would have."

Yes, "no one could." Especially since even the initial air strikes — when the U.S.-instigated forces held the element of surprise — succeeded in destroying only two of Cuba's twelve combat planes. By the time the April 17 raids were to have been attempted, the Revolutionary Air Force was already on maximum combat alert, its planes had been further dispersed, and anti-aircraft batteries and other defensive measures had been reinforced around all Cuban airfields.

Fidel Castro made the right strategic decision on the first morning of the invasion ordering the air force to focus on sinking the mercenaries' ammunition and supply ships, a mission the pilots carried out with stunning success. It's a myth, however, that by the final day of the battle the *gusanos* had nothing left to fight with but their fingers and fists. They certainly had more weapons and ammo than the Rebel Army ever had during the revolutionary war against Batista!

"What was our ammunition reserve?" during those years, Fidel asked in his April 23 report on the victory at Playa Girón. "The peasants used to go along the country roads picking up the stuff dropped by the enemy forces, and

then brought the ammunition to us to fight with."

By comparison, Fidel said, all the Cuban people had to do was go down to Havana's Civic Plaza to look at the captured "antitank guns, mortars of all kinds, bazookas, automatic weapons, ammunition, communications equipment, all in enormous quantities."

As the foreword to *Playa Girón [Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas]* concludes, "The invading forces lost the will to fight before they ran out of bullets. During three days of battle, they could never even get off the beaches, and additional U.S. air or naval support would have made no difference to the ultimate outcome." The great bulk of the brigade's cadres and officers had individually scattered into the woods three hours or more before the final surrender late in the afternoon.

It was the class character of the forces and of their cause that made the difference at Playa Girón, not air strikes or ammunition. Some of the mercenaries may have convinced themselves they had enlisted in a noble crusade, and many used high-sounding words to drape their goal of taking back "their" factories, plantations, casinos, exclusive schools, country clubs, beaches,

and servants. But in the last analysis, as Che pointed out, modern armies don't fight selflessly and to the death over the restoration of capitalist property.

The cadres of the people's militias, the Revolutionary National Police, the Rebel Army, and the Revolutionary Air Force, on the other hand, were fighting for something worth giving everything for at Playa Girón — something that was transforming the *life* of the great majority. They were fighting to defend what they had accomplished through two and a half years of a deeply popular revolution, and the ways they were changing themselves in the process. They were fighting to defend the redemption of Cuba's national sovereignty and dignity from U.S. imperialism and its exploiting factory owners, landlords, and brothel and casino operators. To defend the land reform; the literacy campaign and universal public education; the enforcement of laws against racial discrimination; the slashing of housing rents and utility rates; the steps to draw women and youth, together with the workers and peasants, more deeply into all aspects of economic, social, political, and military life; the internationalist solidarity with struggles by toilers throughout Latin America and the world.

That is the kind of army that can withstand big sacrifices and fight to the death. That is the kind of army that won't develop self-destructive doubts about what it is fighting for. That is the kind of army the enemy slowly but surely comes to realize won't stop doing battle, no matter what.

That's what's so telling about Fidel's story, in the 1961 May Day speech, about meeting with captured mercenaries a few days after the battle and asking if any of them had ever worked cutting sugarcane. Only one raised his hand.

Under certain circumstances, of course, overwhelming force with an unjust cause can overrun a small force with a just cause. The point is not to dismiss material realities. But not under conditions of a strengthening and consolidating socialist revolution, based among a toiling population that is armed and ready. *That's* why the invaders "lost" the will to fight. It was beaten out of them.

January

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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(Thomas Sankara Speaks)

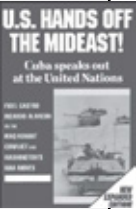
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Defend free speech, fight Jew-hatred!

The execution of the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoonists and the murder of Jewish shoppers at a kosher market in Paris by self-proclaimed Islamists are attacks on all working people. The working class needs to answer these reactionary acts, fighting to defend and expand political space and against Jew-hatred. The assassinations set back the fight against anti-Muslim prejudices used by the capitalists to divide working people and deal further blows to political rights.

Working people must vigorously reject the argument made by some on the left that the vulgar or provocative nature of the cartoonists’ drawings in some way justifies the attacks.

Rejecting Jew-hatred and anti-Semitic violence is a life-or-death question for the working-class movement in Europe, the U.S., the Middle East and everywhere. Those who remain silent in the face of anti-Semitic attacks, or say they “understand” them as defense against scapegoating Muslims or the Palestinian struggle, deal blows to the fight to end the dictatorship of capital. No revolutionary proletarian movement can be built if the fight against anti-Semitism is not blood and bone of its program and practice.

Terror attacks in France blow to working class

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ing up the real history of Jew-hatred and assaults on Jews fostered and reproduced by social relations in France for well over half a century with efforts to use the recent attacks to fan the flames of anti-Muslim prejudice.

Two brothers, Cherif and Said Kouachi, French citizens of Algerian descent, cold-bloodedly shot down those at *Charlie Hebdo*, well-known for its vulgar cartoons mocking the Prophet Muhammad, the Catholic Pope and other religious figures. The two self-proclaimed Islamists fled, taking refuge and a hostage at a printing plant near Charles de Gaulle Airport.

A Jan. 14 statement by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, based in Yemen, said it organized the killings, as “revenge for the honor” of the Prophet Muhammad and called the assassins “two heroes of Islam.”

Amedy Coulibaly, a French citizen of Senegalese descent, who knew the Kouachis, took 15 people hostage at the kosher grocery in a Jewish neighborhood in Paris Jan. 9. When a journalist he contacted asked why he attacked that supermarket, he said he wanted to target “some Jews.” During the siege, Coulibaly made a video of himself before a poster of the Islamic State flag, pledging his allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the group’s leader, and the caliphate he has declared in parts of Iraq and Syria.

Al-Qaeda and Islamic State are reactionary, anti-working-class groups that seek to establish theocracies and impose Islamic Sharia law on society. Falsely claiming to act in the interest of the Muslim religion, they rely on terrorist actions and brutality against those they consider enemies to instill fear, divisions and submissiveness among working people.

Islamic State has its origins in a split from al-Qaeda of Iraq. Its brutal forces, led by al-Baghdadi, have declared an Islamist caliphate and drawn recruits from the Mideast, North Africa, Europe and the U.S.

The only reason they have any influence today is because of the vacuum of working-class leadership in the Middle East, a result of decades of betrayals and defeats engendered by Stalinist forces and the exhaustion of bourgeois and petty bourgeois nationalist currents there.

Police and French special forces stormed the hide-outs, killing the Kouachi brothers and Coulibaly, and wounding four of the hostages in the grocery.

Charlie Hebdo is a left-leaning weekly that features cartoons mocking political and religious figures with heavy-handed and lewd humor. Its readership had been in decline before the massacre.

Free speech, fight against Jew-hatred

Defense of political space and free speech and the fight against Jew-hatred are burning questions for working people everywhere.

The French government of President François Hol-

At the Jan. 11 Paris “unity” march in support of French imperialism, French President François Hollande and other leaders of imperialist powers in Europe hypocritically portrayed themselves as defenders of democratic rights.

But the French ruling class champions the use of “hate speech” laws to restrict freedom of expression and divide the working class. It fines and makes pariahs of women who wear the Islamic veil in public. Permitting the capitalist rulers and their government to silence “offensive” journalists or artists or to ban veils or other religious garb gives them a tool to divide and attack the working class, especially as resistance to the bosses’ assaults increases.

Hollande’s mobilization of 10,000 troops on the streets in the wake of the attacks is aimed at setting a precedent for military deployment against workers’ struggles in the future.

The labor movement needs the widest political space possible to protest, strike, and debate the road forward and unite with others in common struggles on the way to ending forever the dictatorship of capital.

lande organized a cross-class “unity” rally of more than 1 million in Paris Jan. 11, joined by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and other capitalist rulers.

While Hollande denounced the attack on free expression, France has some of the toughest “hate-speech” laws restricting free speech on the continent.

French law makes it a crime punishable by up to a year in prison and a fine of \$38,000 to use speech that insults, defames or incites hatred, discrimination or violence on the basis of religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sex or sexual orientation. These laws have been used against a broad spectrum of targets, including *Charlie Hebdo*. In another act of repression and social-engineering, French authorities in 2011 banned women from wearing the Muslim veil in public, with a \$217 penalty for the “offense.”

European governments wasted no time using the attacks to justify new curbs on political rights. French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian announced Jan. 12 that 10,000 soldiers would be deployed in the country. The day before European officials called for tighter controls of borders and greater surveillance of airline passengers. The bourgeois media focused on calls for greater surveillance in Muslim areas and restrictions on travel from countries in the Middle East.

Increased attacks on Jews

There has been an increase in attacks on Jews in France and elsewhere in Europe. France has the third largest Jewish population worldwide, after Israel and the United States. Fear of anti-Semitic violence has spurred increasing emigration from France to Israel and elsewhere in Europe.

Many on the left in Europe and the U.S. claim, as in the words of *Liberation*, the online paper of the Party for Socialism and Liberation, that “vile cartoons deliberately intended to offend the Muslim community” exhibit “extreme racism” that fuels working-class prejudice against Muslim immigrants and aids the rise of “fascist demagogues.” But they say nothing about the blatant Jew-hatred that marked the killings in Paris.

Liberal bourgeois politicians promoted hysteria over rising vote totals for right-wing French National Front party leader Marine Le Pen. In fact, she has shifted the party toward the bourgeois center, distanced herself from anti-Semitic comments by her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, and taken positions on immigration similar to those of the Hollande administration and his center-right challenger, former President Nicolas Sarkozy.

When the National Front was excluded by Hollande from participating in the Paris “unity” event, Le Pen organized a gathering in Beaucaire, where National Front supporters rallied under a banner reading “I am Charlie — Homage to the victims of terrorism.”

Israel debate flares

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enshrined in the country’s Basic Laws are widely used today by Arab citizens to fight discrimination in jobs, housing and government services, and for the exercise of political rights.

Netanyahu fired two cabinet ministers on Dec. 2 after they opposed the proposal, broke up his alliance with Yesh Atid, the second largest party in the Knesset, Israel’s parliament, and called new elections for March 17. An opposition coalition headed by Tzipi Livni, the ousted justice minister who heads the Hatnua Party, and the Labor Party’s Isaac Herzog is challenging Netanyahu in the election.

The bill is backed by Netanyahu’s Likud Party and another coalition partner, the Jewish Home Party. Defining Israel as “the nation-state of the Jewish people,” it says the “right to self-determination” would be “unique to the Jewish people.”

The Jewish-state bill says, “Jewish law shall serve as a source of inspiration for the Knesset.” One version would demote Arabic from an official language alongside Hebrew to one having only a “special status.”

The bill has provoked opposition across the political spectrum. Ruvi Rivlin, a Likud member and president of Israel, a largely ceremonial post, opposed it. “Does this bill not in fact play into the hands of those who seek to slander us?” he said in a Nov. 25 speech. “Into the very hands of those who wish to show, that even within us, there are those who see contradiction between our being a free people in our land, and the freedoms of the non-Jewish communities amongst us.”

Livni first supported the proposal, but then reversed her position, posting part of the independence declaration on Facebook with all mentions of “all her citizens,” “justice and peace” and “equality” crossed out.

Israel: multinational, secular

Israel today is a multinational country with a vibrant class struggle and the most secular country in the Middle East. About 20 percent of the population are Arab citizens of Israel; 10 percent are *Haredim*, ultra-orthodox Jews; and 15 percent are Russian immigrants. There are also tens of thousands of immigrant workers from Thailand, the Philippines and other countries, and more than 100,000 Ethiopian Jews. It is not unusual for Jewish, Palestinian and immigrant workers to walk picket lines together.

The question of who is a Jew is itself controversial in Israel. Under the Law of Return, anyone who has a Jewish parent, grandparent or spouse can move to Israel. But once there, only those with a Jewish mother or who are recognized by the Chief Rabbinate, which oversees Orthodox rabbinical courts, are officially considered Jewish. If all laws are to be based on Jewish religious law, would those the Rabbinate does not recognize as Jews still be allowed to become citizens?

Since there is no civil marriage in Israel, non-Jews, non-Muslims, or couples of different religions must either convert or go abroad to marry. Most of the more than 1 million Russian immigrants in Israel are not recognized as Jewish by the rabbinical courts.

Russian immigrants find conversion offensive, Israeli journalist Lily Galili told National Public Radio in January 2013. “They once suffered for being Jewish in the Soviet Union. Now they suffer for being Russians in Israel.”

In fact, most Jewish Israelis are nonpracticing Jews. The point of the Law of Return, a key aspect of Israeli law since its founding, is not to foster religion, but to guarantee a safe haven for those facing Jew-hatred around the world.

While at the beginning of the last decade the number of Jews leaving Israel outpaced the number arriving, that has begun to shift. According to the online Times of Israel, “Jewish immigration to Israel hit a ten-year high in 2014, with over 26,500 people,” a 32 percent rise compared to 2013. Most of those arriving are not recognized as Jews by the Chief Rabbinate.

The increase in immigration is due largely to a rise in expressions of Jew-hatred in Europe. More than 7,000 French Jews emigrated to Israel in 2014, the highest number ever. France has the largest Jewish population in Europe. In July last year, some demonstrators against Israel’s war on Gaza targeted synagogues in Paris and its suburbs, chanting “death to the Jews.”

Immigration from Ukraine has also nearly tripled from 2,020 in 2013 to 5,840 in 2014, mostly from the war-torn eastern part of the country.