

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
**‘Prison paintings are good way to raise awareness of Cuban 5’**  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 78/NO. 28 AUGUST 4, 2014

## Calif. port drivers’ fight for union gains support

### 5-day strike demands end to ‘contractor’ scam



Slobodan Dimitrov

Hundreds of port drivers and supporters march at Terminal Island, Port of Los Angeles, July 11.

BY PHIL PRESSER

LONG BEACH, Calif. — Port truckers’ fight for a union is gaining strength and widening support. They are fighting to be recognized for what they are — workers — and to throw off the bosses’ “independent contractor” label that for three decades has been used to sow divisions and weaken their collective power.

Truck drivers at three companies that operate at the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles carried out a strike July 7-11, their fourth such action this year in their effort to join the

Teamsters. A rally at the Los Angeles port on the last day of the strike drew hundreds of drivers and supporters.

The more than 120 striking truckers are employed by Pacific 9 Transportation, Green Fleet Systems and Total Transportation Services Inc. They deliver containers offloaded from ships at the two ports to regional retail distributors, warehouses and other sites in the area. The port complex here is the largest in the country.

“The National Labor Relations Board concluded that we are employ-

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## Workers get ‘Militant’ at doorsteps, labor actions, protests, other events

BY SETH GALINSKY

Supporters of the *Militant* have no trouble finding working people attracted to the socialist paper’s fighting perspective, on doorsteps, at actions

## Obama calls for ‘border security surge’ as child crossings soar

BY SETH GALINSKY

President Barack Obama asked Congress for \$3.7 billion on July 8 to finance “a sustained border security surge” at the U.S.-Mexico border a week after pledging to “fix as much of our immigration system as I can on my own, without Congress.”

Obama called for the anti-immigrant measures in response to a steep increase in the number of children en-

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of labor resistance and social protest. The last week is a good example.

As part of a team going door to door in Montreal’s east end July 20, John Steele met Luc Godin. It turned out he had a subscription a couple of years ago but had let it lapse. “It’s good to get another point of view that’s not in the traditional media and the other side of the coin,” Godin, who works in a print shop, told Steele as he renewed. “I want to help the movement of people who are victims of the employers’ attacks and are fighting for more equality and justice.”

Godin also bought the French-language edition of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*, one of 11 books on special discount for subscribers (see ad on page 3).

Socialist workers from the West Coast participated in the July 19-23 NAACP convention in Las Vegas and took time to go door to door there. Bjorn Borg, a worker at a warehouse

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## Israeli army escalates air, ground war in Gaza

BY EMMA JOHNSON

As of July 23, more than 650 Palestinians have been killed and 4,200 injured in the Israeli air and ground assault on Gaza. Most of the reported casualties are civilians. More than 100,000 have fled their homes and taken refuge in United Nations shelters or wherever they can.

**END TEL AVIV’S MILITARY ASSAULT!**

Israeli officials say that 32 of its soldiers have died in the fighting so far.

“Last night was really the worst night ever since the war began,” Gaza journalist Abir Ayoub told Israel’s YNET TV July 22. “F16s, gunboats and tanks were shelling at the same time.”

The Israeli Defense Forces “keep asking people to evacuate to a specific

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## Separatists weaker after shutdown in Ukraine

BY JOHN STUDER

Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was blown out of the sky July 17 over territory controlled by Moscow-backed separatists in the eastern part of Ukraine. Overwhelming evidence points to the paramilitary forces of the so-called Donetsk People’s Republic as those responsible for the deaths of the 283 passengers and 15 crew members.

The incident has accelerated the separatists’ growing unpopularity among working people in Ukraine, Russia and beyond. And it has widened fissures among separatists themselves.

Before the shutdown made in-

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**Defend Ukraine sovereignty  
 No to US sanctions on Russia  
 — see editorial, page 9**

## Staten Island march protests police killing of Eric Garner



Militant/Deborah Liatos

Demonstration in Staten Island, N.Y., July 19 against chokehold killing of resident Eric Garner.

BY CANDACE WAGNER

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. — Some 400 people marched here July 19 to protest the killing of Eric Garner by New York City police two days earlier. The crime that provoked lethal brutality? Selling cigarettes on the street.

“Every time you see me, you want to mess with me. I’m tired of it,” Garner, 43, can be heard telling two undercover cops in a video filmed by witnesses. “I’m minding my own business. Please just leave me alone.” Undercover cop Daniel Pantaleo then

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# Boston school bus drivers fight frame-up of unionist

Bosses, cops employ trumped-up charges in labor dispute

BY TED LEONARD

BOSTON — School bus drivers, members of United Steelworkers Local 8751, and supporters picketed July 14 at the Dorchester Municipal Court here as the local’s Grievance Committee Chairman Steve Kirschbaum faced a preliminary hearing on frame-up charges of assault stemming from the workers’ contract fight. A rally and press conference of about 80 took place after the hearing.

“Alex Roman we say no, union busting has got to go,” chanted protesters. Alex Roman is the general manager of the Boston Division of Veolia Transportation, which Boston Public Schools contracts to transport 33,000 students. The union’s agreement with Veolia, covering 700 members of USW Local 8751, expired June 30.

On the last day of the contract, some 200 members and supporters of Local 8751 held a rally at the Dorchester school bus yard where Veolia has its main office. Afterward members of the local entered the drivers’ room in the company’s building to hear a report from union officers on contract negotiations. The drivers’ contract stipulates that they have “access to the property” for “union activity.”

Prosecutors charge that Kirschbaum forced open the drivers’ room door, which Manager Angela Griffin attempted to bar shut with a table in the room. Prosecutors say the opening of the door pushed the table into Grif-

fin, who claims she feared for her life.

Kirschbaum is charged with battery with a dangerous weapon (a table), trespassing, breaking and entering to commit a felony and malicious destruction of property.

“The charges are frivolous,” defense lawyer Barry Wilson told the court. “This is nothing more than a labor dispute.”

“If the office was closed, it was trespassing,” the judge said.

Kirschbaum pleaded not guilty to all charges. The judge ordered a pre-trial hearing for Sept. 15 and released Kirschbaum on his own recognizance.

“We gained entry to the room with no problem. The police were in the room,” driver Chyler Eliassaint told the *Militant*. “The lady was 12 feet away from the table.”

“When I went in, there was no table overturned,” said Georgia Scott, a 15-year driver, who said she entered the room shortly after the union meeting began. “It was peaceful, with people sitting in their seats. These charges are an insult to the union and the community.”

“Veolia should know they can’t bust this union — never in their lives. Our brother is not a criminal, Veolia is,” Andre Francois, the local’s recording secretary, told rally participants. “They wanted something to hold over the union during negotiations,” Francois told the *Militant*, pointing out that the charges were served four days after the alleged incident.



Militant/Ted Leonard

School bus drivers rally outside Boston courthouse July 14 demanding frame-up charges against Steve Kirschbaum, grievance committee chairman for Steelworkers Local 8751, be dropped. Speaking on megaphone is Georgia Scott. Kirschbaum is at center with arms extended.

Vice President Steve Gillis told the rally company officials are pressing to eliminate long-term disability and sick days. About 60 percent of the drivers don’t work during the summer. Looking ahead to the coming school year, Gillis said the union’s stance will be: “No contract, no work.”

Last October Kirschbaum, Francois, Gillis and former local President Garry Murchison were fired for supposedly instigating an “illegal strike.” The company’s charge refers to events

on Oct. 8, 2013, when drivers tried to get top Veolia officials, who were visiting the bus yard, to discuss some 300 union grievances over pay shortages and other contract violations. After missing their morning departures, the drivers were escorted off company property by Boston Police officers and the company locked the gate. The union is challenging the firings.

*Sarah Ullman contributed to this article.*

## ‘Blood money’ bonus helps build communist movement

*Below is a note sent by Alyson Kennedy in Chicago along with a “blood money” check to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund. Production, safety and other “bonuses” — designed to bribe workers to accept concession contracts, speedup and wage cuts — are a bedrock of the fund, which finances long-range work of the party. Kennedy’s check is one of several recent “blood money” donations totaling more than \$1,000. To contribute, contact a Militant distributor near you, listed on page 8.*

This check for \$187.05 is a safety and attendance bonus I received from where I work, a large plant organized by the United Auto Workers. This time the company added a criteria of “housekeeping.” The department I work in got money knocked off for dirt found on top of handrails and the lockers. In a show of “concern” for our safety, some departments make workers stand during the safety talks because they say we don’t pay attention.

Carpal tunnel injuries are common. One worker who is still on pain medication after carpal tunnel surgeries in both wrists and who cannot lift over two pounds is back to work on “light duty.” As a new hire I am a “supplemental” worker with no vacation or holiday pay and no medical insurance. I pay union dues but the company says the union can’t represent me if I am fired.

I contribute this blood money to the Socialist Workers Party to help build a working-class movement that fights for the interests of the working class.

— EMMA JOHNSON

# THE MILITANT

## Support struggles of workers behind bars!

*From California to Texas to Washington state, workers behind bars in prisons and immigration jails have carried out hunger strikes against solitary confinement, as well as other abuses and indignities. The ‘Militant’ covers these fights. Don’t miss an issue!*

Militant/Wendy Lyons  
Rally in Los Angeles July 8 marks anniversary of California prisoners’ hunger strike.

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## The Militant

Vol. 78/No. 28

Closing news date: July 23, 2014

Editor: Doug Nelson

**Editorial volunteers:** Róger Calero, Naomi Craine, Frank Forrestal, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Paul Pederson, Gerardo Sánchez, John Studer, Brian Williams, Rebecca Williamson.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, and one week in August.

**Business manager:** Lea Sherman  
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. **Telephone:** (212) 244-4899 **Fax:** (212) 244-4947  
**E-mail:** themilitant@mac.com  
**Website:** www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

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# Sales of ‘Militant’ and books

**Continued from front page**  
that supplies the casinos, bought a subscription from Kevin Cole and Eric Simpson.

“Borg told us his health insurance had been switched on him, and wasn’t happy about it,” Simpson said. “He thought maybe I got better wages coming from San Francisco. But it isn’t true. Working people from coast to coast are being hit hard by downward pressure on wages.”

Construction worker Manuel Aguilar went with Mike Fitzsimmons, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Texas, to campaign door to door July 19 in a trailer park on the north side of Houston where Aguilar lives. Aguilar subscribed to the *Militant* in May and this was his first time selling the paper.

“We need more unity among workers,” said Griselda Bautista, a sewer in an upholstery and curtain factory who bought an introductory subscription.

“It’s the struggles of working people worldwide that you’ll be able to read about in the *Militant* every week,” Aguilar said.

Supporters of the paper in New York had a great week.

Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for lieutenant governor in New York, joined other supporters of the socialist weekly to talk with Long Island Rail Road workers attending July 16 union meetings in Massapequa, Long Island. Workers from eight unions had gathered to hear the status of negotiations with the Metropolitan Transport Authority. MTA

and union officials later announced they had agreed on a contract.

Seventy-one workers bought copies of the paper, four subscribed and two bought books on special: *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*.

Craig Honts reported that the next day several of his LIRR co-workers were passing the *Militant* around in the breakroom. “Several expressed amazement at the 200,000-strong metal workers strike in South Africa,” Honts said, referring to a main headline in that issue.

On July 20, two *Militant* supporters sold three subscriptions and five books in the Staten Island neighborhood where New York cops killed Eric Garner with a chokehold July 17.

That same day members of the Socialist Workers Party and other readers of the socialist paper set up a booth at the annual Grenada Day festival in Brooklyn. Nineteen signed up for subscriptions and 15 got single issues of the *Militant*. Twelve copies of *Maurice Bishop Speaks* and 11 of *New International* no. 6, which features the article “The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop” by Steve Clark, were sold along with 16 other books. Bishop was the central leader of the New Jewel Movement and the 1979-83 revolution in the Caribbean island of Grenada.

“I told members of the party about the festival last year but they weren’t able to get there,” said *Militant* subscriber Shirelynn George, who was active in the Grenada Revolution as a



Militant photos by Kevin Cole, top; Bernie Senter, bottom  
Above, warehouse worker Bjorn Borg, right, signs up for *Militant* subscription from Eric Simpson in Las Vegas July 20. Below, table at Grenada Day in Brooklyn, New York, July 20.

youth. “I knew we would get a good response. A lot of people bought the Bishop books for their children. They said they want them to know what happened with the revolution.”

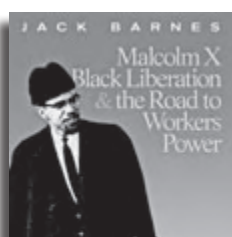
“I wasn’t expecting to see a booth displaying books on the international situation,” said Allison Mathlin, a roofer who subscribed to the *Militant* and bought the two Bishop books. “I was impressed to see books with a left, progressive and anti-imperialist outlook.”

“In Grenada you can’t find books of Maurice in the bookstores, only in the museums,” said Mathlin, who was a founding member of the New Jewel Movement. “You are keeping the movement alive.”

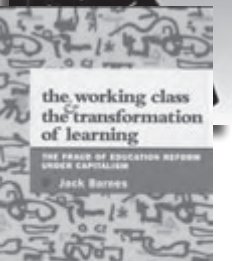
Members of the Socialist Workers Party joined demonstrations across the country protesting the Israeli assault on Gaza. Seventeen copies of the *Militant* were sold both at the July 18 action in Minneapolis and at a similar protest in New York the next day.

See page 8 to contact the distributor nearest you if you would like to help expand the readership of the *Militant* or contact the *Militant* directly at 212-244-4899 or via email at the-militant@mac.com.

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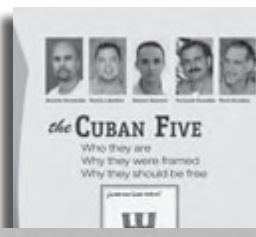


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*See distributors on page 8*



**The Cuban Five**  
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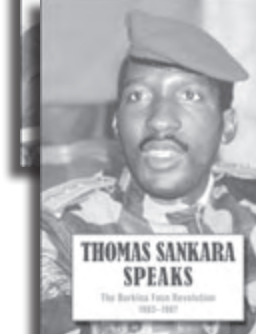
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## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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**San Francisco**  
Kurds Advance Fight for National Rights in Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Fri., Aug. 1, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

### CANADA

**Montreal**  
Oppose All Deportations and Other Attacks on Immigrant Workers by Ottawa and Washington. Speaker: Annette Kouri, Communist League. Fri., Aug. 1, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St. Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.



# Israel escalates Gaza assault

**Continued from front page**  
area, then they change the area,” she said, referring to text messages and leaflets dropped by the Israeli forces prior to their attacks on populated areas. “Forty-three percent of the places in Gaza are under their no-go zone.” People “fled with no food, no clothing,” she said.

The Israeli government launched sea and air attacks July 8 and then invaded Gaza July 17. The assault began in retaliation for the firing of dozens of rockets by Hamas and other Islamist groups into Israel, after hundreds of Palestinians were arrested by Israeli police following the lynching of three Jewish youth in the West Bank in late June.

On July 2, Mohammed Abu Khdeir, a 16-year-old Palestinian, was lynched. The Israeli police arrested six Israeli Jews for his murder.

Hamas’ rocket attacks on civilians and its support for the killing of the three Jewish boys made it politically easier for Tel Aviv to launch its murderous assault, and was clearly designed to provoke it. At the same time Hamas uses Gaza’s population as human shields, placing missile launchers and other arms in mosques, schools, and U.N. centers and trying to keep residents in targeted areas. Its strategy is to maximize the number of civilians killed by Tel Aviv to gain world sympathy.

From July 8 to 23 the Israeli military carried out 3,250 airstrikes. Hamas and its allies have lobbed more than 2,100 rockets and mortars. Most of the wildly inaccurate, low-grade projectiles are destroyed by Israel’s Iron Dome anti-missile system. Hamas missiles have killed three civilians in Israel — Ouda Lafi al-Waj, a Bedouin Arab who lived in the Negev; a Thai migrant farmworker in Ashkelon; and Dror Chanin, an Israeli Jew.

The Israeli government says it will continue the assault until it has wiped out Hamas’ military capacity and destroyed its tunnel network.

Gaza, 25 miles long and just a few miles wide, is one of the most densely populated areas in the world.

Israeli forces occupied Gaza for 38 years, after capturing it in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. They withdrew in September 2005 but retained control of its borders and airspace. Thousands of Gaza residents were no longer able to work in Israel. After Hamas wrested control of Gaza from Fatah in 2007, Israeli authorities imposed even greater restrictions on trade and travel. The population is heavily dependent on aid from the U.N.

Successive Egyptian governments,

including under the previous Muslim Brotherhood-led regime, have cooperated with Tel Aviv’s crackdown on the Egypt-Israel border. Cairo has only opened its border crossing into Gaza at Rafah for 17 days this year.

Hamas has become increasingly isolated since it took control of Gaza in 2007. It has less backing than ever from Arab governments in the region, and its repression of political dissent, attempts to ban “un-Islamic” behavior, and corruption and destructive course under the pretense of “armed struggle” has cost it support among working people.

### Declining support for Hamas

According to a recent survey by the Pew Research Center, in 2007, 62 percent of residents in Gaza and the West Bank had favorable views of Hamas. Another survey conducted in April-May this year indicated views of 53 percent were negative, and in Gaza, 63 percent.

“Thousands and thousands identify with the struggle of Palestinians in Gaza, it’s a legitimate struggle,” Salah Mohsen, media director for Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, said by phone from Haifa July 21. “A demonstration here July 19 was attacked by pro-invasion counterdemonstrators with stones and empty bottles, injuring several people.”

The military conflict has stoked tension between Jewish and Arab workers in Israel.

“In factories with both Jewish and Palestinian workers, arguments and divisions exacerbate along nationalistic lines,” Shay Cohen, organization secretary of Koach La Ovdim (Democratic Workers’ Organization), said by phone from Haifa July 21. “Some of the feeling of solidarity has been eroded. The large majority of the Jewish population is behind the campaign. Among the Palestinians here there are those who protest and there are those who keep their heads low in face of the nationalistic campaigns.”

In the West Bank, which is run by Fatah, demonstrations in solidarity with the people of Gaza have been blocked and demonstrators arrested by the Palestinian Authority police.

## Staten Island march protests killing of Garner

**Continued from front page**  
grabbed Garner around the neck from behind and with the help of three other cops threw him to the ground and kept him in a chokehold.

After releasing the chokehold, Pantaleo slammed Garner’s head to the sidewalk while other cops handcuffed him. “I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe,” Garner said.

Garner started foaming at the mouth. The cops called an ambulance and emergency medical personnel checked his pulse but gave him no medical treatment before tossing him on a gurney. He was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

The Police Department announced July 19 that Pantaleo was stripped of his gun and badge and placed on desk duty. Another cop was also placed on desk duty. Two EMTs and two paramedics employed by Richmond University Medical Center have been suspended without pay.

“These cops need to go to prison, not desk duty with pay,” said Herman

### NY protest: ‘End Israeli assault on Gaza’



Militant/Seth Galinsky

NEW YORK — More than 800 people demonstrated here July 19 to protest Israel’s attack on Gaza.

“We want Israel to stop the killing,” said Lena Hmidan, 27, who works as a receptionist and has family in the Palestinian West Bank. “They’re killing civilians and babies.”

“Instead of attacking Gaza, Israel and Egypt should open the borders. Let people travel freely, get jobs,” said Maha Barakat, 35, of Palestinian descent.

Protesters who spoke with the *Militant* held a wide range of views. “Israel has its own country,” said Tahira Lakhani, 27, who was born in Pakistan. “Palestinians should have their own country. It should be like India and Pakistan. They don’t always get along but they don’t fight like this.”

“There should be just one state for Jews and Palestinians and democracy,” said Barbara Raza, 33. Her family is from India but moved to Palestine in the 1930s. “We have to speak out against the killing of innocent civilians on all sides. With the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe and other parts of the world today, Israelis need to realize they need close friends, not to create enemies.”

— SETH GALINSKY

“Almost all the protests have been inside Israel,” Wehbe Badarne, director of the Arab Workers Union in Israel, said by phone from Nazareth July 19. More than 410 Palestinian citizens of Israel have been arrested since July 5 for protesting the assault on Gaza, according to Adalah. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas “has stopped them from happening in the West Bank,” Badarne said.

“There is no military victory to be found here,” Badarne continued. “The Israeli government has to talk to Hamas as the elected representative of the people of Gaza, it cannot rout

it. It is in the interest of everyone to find a political solution.”

The *Militant* also tried to reach Sameer Mahal, a carpenter in Gaza who the paper spoke with in 2012. But Badarne said Mahal had been killed the week before when an Israeli airstrike hit his family’s house.

A cease-fire proposal by the Egyptian government July 14 was accepted by Tel Aviv, but rejected by Hamas on grounds that they weren’t consulted and it didn’t meet their demands for release of imprisoned members of the group and opening border checkpoints.

Perrilo, a city worker attending the demonstration. “It was wrong what they did to this man. I knew the man, his family. I spoke to him every day.”

“It touches your heart,” said Ethelene Jemmott, who lives in the neighborhood. “We should do something about it.” Like many others, this was the first protest she attended.

“I’m a first account witness to what happened,” Joseph Evans, an auto mechanic, told the *Militant*. “I think it was police brutality across the board. Some people say police brutality is a purely racial thing, but I have been beat up by the police too,” said Evans, who is Caucasian.

Among the speakers at the protest were Rev. Al Sharpton, president of the National Action Network; several family members of Garner; City Councilwoman Debi Rose; and New York City Public Advocate Letitia James.

Chokeholds are prohibited, according to New York Police Department regulations. More than 1,000 com-

plaints of chokeholds have been filed with the Civilian Complaint Review Board from 2009 to 2013, the *New York Times* reports. The board has said that only nine of those complaints have been “substantiated.”

Mayor Bill de Blasio delayed a scheduled vacation to Italy by one day to talk to Police Commissioner William Bratton and other city officials about the killing of Garner. At a press conference in Italy July 21 de Blasio was asked if he thought the cops involved should be fired. “I leave the specific actions within the police department to Commissioner Bratton,” he said. “I have absolute faith in his judgment.”

Before de Blasio left for Italy, Bratton said that the police department would implement “retraining, if appropriate” but at a minimum would issue “a reminder of the department’s policies” on chokeholds.

*Deborah Liatos contributed to this article.*



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## ON THE PICKET LINE

### Railcar workers walk off job in Thunder Bay, Ontario

THUNDER BAY, Ontario — Some 900 workers at the Bombardier railcar plant here walked off the job July 14 over wages and pensions.

After a month of negotiations between the workers' union Unifor and Bombardier, bosses on July 12 presented a "take it or leave it offer." The company's three-year contract proposal, according to Ron Frost, union bargaining chairman, includes no wage increase during the first year, followed by 5 cents the second year and 10 cents the third year, and would replace the current pension plan for new hires with an inferior "defined contribution plan."

"They want us older workers to turn on the newer ones, but we won't do that," said Frost.

Dozens of workers were at the picket line July 15, slowing down cars coming in and out of the plant.

Union local President Dominic Pasqualino said company officials told them they intend to keep the plant running with scabs. "I know they're not going to get anybody from the other plant in La Pocatière, Québec," said Pasqualino. "We supported them when they were on strike recently."

Bombardier workers in La Pocatière, organized by the Confederation of National Trade Unions, went on strike in 2012 over pensions and union-busting job cuts. The company had reduced the unionized workforce from 1,000 employees in 2006 to 330 by 2012, largely through the use of subcontracting.

"They have been trying to pit us against each another," said Pasqualino. "It won't work. When we went to their strike they were happy to see us and treated us like family."

— *Félix Vincent Ardea and Joe Young*

### Illinois Steelworkers, on strike since May, picket Sloan Valve

FRANKLIN PARK, Ill., July 9 — Members of Steelworkers Local 7999 here have been picketing Sloan Valve around the clock since 350 workers walked off the job at midnight May 18. They had been working without a contract at the plant, which manufactures plumbing fixtures and valves, since Sept. 30.

"There are many reasons to strike. The main issues are the rising cost of health care and the 'no excuse' attendance policy," said Vicky Hopp, who has worked at the factory for 37 years.

"My regular visits to the doctor have to be paid in cash and they want us to take a \$9,000 deductible," said Isaac Taylor, a lathe set-up man. "They knew we wouldn't accept this. They want to make this a nonunion shop."

Otto Hopp, a retired welding coordinator at the Ford Motor stamping plant, was at the picket in solidarity. "When Ford went on strike in the early 2000s the boss said, 'Hopp you have to cross the picket line.' I said I don't have to do nothing! I would never cross a picket line."

About 60 workers in all have crossed the picket line, according to strikers. A few retirees are among the scabs.

In Chicago, about 40 minutes south of Sloan Valve, production workers and drivers have been on strike since June 23 at the Hinckley Springs bottled water plant over pay and other issues. Members of Teamsters Local 710 have been without a contract for two years.

Negotiations had been scheduled for June 25, but on that day bosses instead brought in scabs and have since refused to talk.

"We're boycotting Hinckley," said Sloan Valve striker Gloria Espana, whose husband and son are also striking members of Steelworkers Local 7999.

— *Laura Anderson*

### UK public workers carry out one-day strike over pay, pensions

LIVERPOOL, England — Some 2,500 people joined a rally here July 10 organized by six unions as part of a one-day protest strike by hundreds of thousands of public sector workers across the U.K. against government cuts targeting workers' jobs, pay and pensions.

Pay raises for public sector workers have been frozen or capped at 1 percent over the last four years. Average wages have gone down roughly 12 percent since 2008, according to a recent study by the Resolution Foundation.

"The 1 percent doesn't even cover inflation," said Josie Birch, a care worker and member of the Unison union. "We



Militant/Félix Vincent Ardea

**Unionists on strike against Bombardier walk picket line by railcar plant in Thunder Bay, Ontario, July 15. Workers rejected company offer for inferior pension plan for new hires.**

need to strike in order to stand up and be counted."

"Two cooks in my school will lose their jobs, one is a man with four kids," said Sheila Windsor, a teaching assistant. "First they cut their hours and then sacked them because the budget is going down."

"I am here to protest 'performance pay' for teachers, it is a bad idea," said

Roz Morton, a teacher and member of the National Union of Teachers. "This will lead to divisions. We have been talking to parents about this issue in shopping areas."

Pickets and rallies were held in boroughs throughout London. Several thousand marched to a rally in Trafalgar Square.

— *Hugo Wils*

## Port truck drivers in Calif.: 'We're workers'

### Continued from front page

ees, but these companies continue to treat us as contractors," said Douglas Herrera, who has been a driver for Pacific 9 Transportation for four years.

Bosses have used the contractor classification to avoid paying minimum wage, workers' compensation and payroll taxes and to foist operating expenses and risks onto the workers — from fuel and maintenance, to truck leases, parking and insurance. The workers are doubly taxed as so-called business owners, paying both the workers' and bosses' portions. After Pacific 9 workers challenged harassment and retaliation for their efforts to join the Teamsters, the NLRB ruled March 20 that they have the same rights to organize as other workers.

About two-thirds of the 75,000 port drivers in the U.S. are misclassified as contractors.

"I'm on strike because of all the pressure they put on us to take care of all these expenses," Hererra said. After working 80 hours the previous week he netted about \$800 after

the company deducted \$1,300 in gas, maintenance, parking and other expenses. "They own the vehicles, but we have to pay to park them at the company facility."

Hererra said sometimes their paychecks come out negative after the deductions. One of the leaflets drivers and their supporters have been using to gain support for their fight shows one of these negative paychecks.

The strike had an impact on the port, briefly shutting down four terminals on the second day when hundreds of dockworkers, members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, walked off the job to honor the picket lines. They returned to work after a couple hours following an arbitrator's back-to-work order. A similar ruling was issued after the dockworkers refused to cross the drivers' picket line during a 48-hour strike in April.

Preston Richie III, business agent for Teamsters Local 848, said the union is making progress in the fight to win reclassification. One firm, Shippers Transport, has agreed to ne-

gotiate with the union to reclassify its drivers as employees, he said, which is why that company was not struck.

In addition to support from the Longshoremen, Teamsters from area locals, Service Employee International Union members and other unions, a number of community groups have joined the truckers' 24-hour pickets at the facilities of the three targeted firms and at the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. Well-known musician Tom Morello, an original member of rock band Rage Against the Machine, joined the picket line July 9 with his guitar.

Pickets would stop each truck or car from entering a facility for several minutes, creating long backups at terminal entrances and gates to the facilities.

"I want all the port drivers out there — and not just those in Los Angeles but nationwide — to see that when you stand together and fight you can accomplish things," driver Alex Paz told Press TV on the picket line in Los Angeles July 9. "It's time to come out of the shadows and fight."

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



### August 4, 1989

Faced with a new stage in Eastern Airlines' plans to restart operations, striking Machinists, flight attendants, and pilots are looking for ways to broaden labor support in an effort to maintain the impact of their strike.

Responding to Eastern's start-up of additional flights August 1, strikers in some cities have won backing from other unions and central labor bodies for rallies and expanded pickets.

The resumption of flights — with enough passengers on them to make money — is central to Eastern's plan to break the strike and resume flying as a smaller, nonunion carrier.



### July 27, 1964

Mrs. Barbara Barksdale, a 23-year-old Negro mother, on her way home from a relative's apartment in Harlem the night of July 18-19, found herself near the fighting at the corner of Lenox Ave. and 128th St.

Not wishing to become involved, she looked for a cop to help her flag a taxi. A cop came at her with a drawn gun, took careful aim and shot her in the groin.

"You shot me, you shot me," she cried. The cop looked at her and said: "Well, lay down and die then."

"That cop shot me intentionally," she told reporters, "I think he was hating all of us Negroes when he did it."



### August 1, 1939

The campaign for a people's referendum on war is launched. The Party Convention decided that we must transform ourselves into a CAMPAIGN PARTY OF ACTION AND AGITATION.

Just as a lens concentrates the sun's rays into a burning shaft of heat, so we must focus the resources of our organization into a mass campaign around the slogan: "LET THE PEOPLE VOTE ON WAR!"

Between August 1 and September 15 — the duration of the campaign — we want to carry the slogan, and with it the anti-war message of the party, to at least 200,000 workers.



# Working people of Ga. town: ‘Sack cop who brutalizes us’

BY SUSAN LAMONT

THOMASTON, Ga. — “We’re here to make sure Tobin doesn’t hurt anyone else in our city,” said Rhondalynn Traylor, speaking before some 150 people at the city council meeting here on the evening of July 17 to demand police officer Phillip Tobin be fired.

Protesters gathered several blocks away and marched to the council meeting, many with handwritten signs and wearing T-shirts saying, “Fire Tobin — ‘glove man’ — now.” “Glove man” is the nickname given to Tobin by residents in reference to the leather gloves he would put on when he was getting ready to brutalize someone.

More than a dozen people spoke before the city council. Mayor Hays Arnold sat at a table on the stage with a six-foot-high portrait of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee gazing down on all those assembled in the auditorium. Thomaston Police Chief Dan Greathouse was also present. Thomaston, a city of some 9,000, is about 65 miles south of Atlanta.

“Intimidation is Tobin’s main weapon,” Traylor said. “But there have been broken eye sockets, broken arms, wrongful evictions, taserings and more. He has drawn his gun on people. He has gone after people because they were the children of someone he victimized earlier. The mayor and police chief have allowed him to do this for too many years.”

Traylor is president of the Thomaston Improvement Association, formed after the cops used a Taser on 25-year-old Kelsey Rockemore at the Handy Mart convenience store June 11. The attack sparked a month of protests against police brutality and meetings to demand Tobin’s dismissal. Tobin, who is named in dozens of complaints of police misconduct, is currently suspended with pay. More than 400 people have signed a petition circulated by the Thomaston Improvement Association calling for Tobin’s firing, Traylor said.

The meeting was packed with working people, the majority African-American, with stories of police brutality. Tobin is Black.

“I was beaten and pepper-sprayed by Tobin and other cops,” said Dale Alsbrooks, a young Black man. “I ended up in the hospital for my injuries, but they

claimed that I ‘fell in the shower.’”

“I was cuffed, pushed into the bushes, arrested and taken to jail for asking for another officer to come after Tobin started harassing me and my family. They were just sitting in my car and talking,” said Paula Dawson, a 47-year-old Black woman. “I was targeted for living in a certain part of town. That was in January 2008. Now it’s 2014, and he’s still on the job.”

“I’m here from Atlanta to extend a hand of solidarity to those of you who are standing up and fighting,” John Benson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Georgia, told the audience, to applause. “I support your demand that Tobin must go. If he is fired, it would be a victory for working people — and we need some victories! We must remember that history is made by those who fight, not by those who are elected.”

Tony Clark, 34, a sanitation worker who is Caucasian, got choked up when he tried to speak. Many in the audience who were familiar with his story gave him words of encouragement, but he finally had to sit down. After the meeting, Clark told the *Militant* that in 2010 Tobin stopped him for driving without a tag on his car. He drew a gun on Clark,



Militant/Susan LaMont

Residents of Thomaston, Georgia, march into city council meeting July 17 to demand firing of cop Phillip “glove man” Tobin, known for his brazen acts of brutality against working people.

who had his young daughter in the car, and used a Taser on him, and put him in jail for three days before filing charges, which were later dropped.

Before the meeting started, Mayor Arnold told the protesters that neither he nor any city council member could comment on incidents involving Tobin because the Georgia Department of Investigation is reviewing it. He also said city officials were discussing calling in the Department of Justice.

“The mayor and chief of police have signed off on Tobin’s actions all this

time, because his citations bring in revenue to the city,” Edward Raines said July 13, when *Militant* supporters from Atlanta met him going door to door here. Raines, 50, who works remodeling houses, has attended all the meetings and rallies. “Hundreds of people have been involved in the protests since June 11. Most of Tobin’s victims are Black, but whites have been hurt too. To tell the truth, if you’re a white worker, an average person, they view you as Black. But it’s not a Black-white issue, it’s a question of what’s right.”

## Protests against Chicago cop torture ‘keep up pressure’

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO — Seventy-five people, mostly college and high school students, rallied here June 26 outside the Thompson Center across from City Hall to mark the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture and focus attention on the ongoing fight against police torture in Chicago.

“I’m here because police brutality and police torture affects all of us even if we’re not directly the victims of it,” 17-year-old Madison Moore, one of the speakers at the rally, told the *Militant*. Moore, a senior at St. Ignatius High School, came along with half a dozen other members of the Amnesty International chapter she recently helped organize at her school.

Amnesty chapters at several area schools organized the rally, which drew support from survivors of police torture and family members of prisoners who are incarcerated based on “confessions” extracted through torture and are fighting for new hearings.

Mark Clements and Darryl Cannon, both survivors of police torture under Lt. Jon Burge and his subordinates in the 1970s and ’80s, participated in the rally, as did Jeanette Plummer and Anabel Perez, the mothers of Johnnie Plummer and Jaime Hauad, both of whom are still fighting for new hearings on their claims of torture.

Burge, convicted in June 2010 on federal perjury and obstruction of justice charges for lying during a civil lawsuit about torturing suspects, was sentenced to four and a half years in prison. He began serving his sentence in March 2011.

“It takes two things to change society,” Cannon told the crowd, “persistence and the power of people in the streets. Too many times officials have turned a blind eye to cop torture in this city. This city

needs to be held accountable.”

“More than 110 men, mostly African-Americans, were tortured by Burge or men under his command, Joey Mogul, one of the attorneys representing Plummer, told the rally. “They used torture to secure ... false confessions in order to frame these men and secure their wrongful convictions, sending 11 to death row. Now 40 years later we are still fighting to undo this injustice.”

Mogul urged support for legislation pending before Chicago’s City Council that would grant reparations to survivors of police torture and their families — including financial payments, a public memorial, an official apology and free admission to city colleges.

“We have to show support for all efforts against police torture,” Anabel Perez told the *Militant*. “Police torture in Chicago did not begin with Burge and it did not end with him either.”

Framed on murder charges, Hauad was convicted in 1999 based on a confession elicited through torture and sentenced to life in prison without parole. Hauad was 19 years old.

At its June 18 meeting, the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission approved the recommendation of Commission Executive Director Barry Miller to decline to rule on Hauad’s claim of torture based on a jurisdictional technicality. It referred the matter to the office of Cook County State’s Attorney Anita Alvarez. The commission had ruled in May 2013 that Hauad’s claim of torture was credible and was entitled to a new hearing.

Miller noted in his report to the commission that Hauad and his legal team had presented a compelling case that he was tortured into confessing. That claim, Miller noted, was buttressed not only by the evidence presented but also

by the fact that one of the alleged cop torturers was Joseph Miedzianowski, a notorious Chicago cop sentenced in 2003 to life without parole for organizing an interstate drug ring and arming his street gang affiliates.

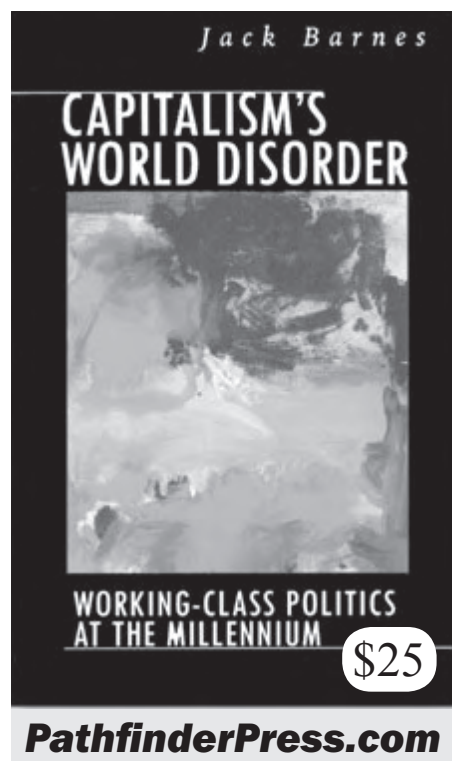
“About 130 of the alleged torture cases, including Hauad’s, are not connected to Burge,” according to an editorial in the June 25 *Chicago Sun-Times*.

“If we have to, we’re prepared to fight this all the way to the state Supreme Court. Police torture is police torture, whether it was under Burge or not,” Perez told the *Militant*.

Most recently two more men, Lewis Gardner and Paul Phillips, framed and wrongfully convicted along with Daniel Taylor for a November 1992 double homicide, were exonerated on the recommendation of Alvarez’s State’s Attorney’s Office. Taylor was cleared in June 2013 after prosecutors finally acknowledged his claim that he could not have committed the murders because he was in jail at the time. Like Taylor both men spent close to 15 years in prison while prosecuting attorneys sat on exculpatory evidence.

In a related development, the same day that Gardner and Phillips were exonerated, Illinois Gov. Patrick Quinn announced that the state would pay \$40 million to the Dixmoor 5 — Jonathan Barr, James Harden, Shainnie Sharp, Robert Taylor and Robert Veal — wrongfully imprisoned for the November 1991 rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl.

“It could be that Cook County will do the right thing by Jaime [Hauad], or it could be just another delaying tactic,” Mark Clements told the *Militant*. “But one thing is for sure, they won’t do the right thing unless we keep the pressure up.”





# ‘Prison paintings are good way to raise awareness of Cuban 5’

## London event concludes monthlong watercolor exhibit

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

LONDON — “The Cuban Five have written one of the most heroic chapters of the Cuban Revolution,” Ricardo Lamas, cultural attaché at the Cuban Embassy here, told a meeting in Tottenham, north London July 12.

Fifty people attended the meeting, held at the busy Bernie Grant Arts Centre, to mark the conclusion of a month-long showing of “I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived,” a collection of 15 watercolors by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Five, depicting the first 17 months of the Five’s imprisonment spent in isolation cells commonly referred to as the “hole.”

Among those who came to the event were 10 residents from the surrounding working-class neighborhood who recently learned about the fight to free the Five when supporters of the *Militant* came to their door selling the paper. As part of building the exhibition, organizers also spoke to some 150 people at local churches — St. Paul the Apostle and Springs of Joy.

Greetings were sent to the event by Rupert Sylvester, whose son Roger Sylvester died in the custody of Tottenham police in 1999, and from Sidi Breika, local representative of Polisario Front, which for decades has led the fight of Saharawi people of Western Sahara against Moroccan occupation. The meeting was chaired by Larry Herman, a photographer active in the National Union of Journalists and a member the national executive committee of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign.

“These paintings and their expression of life in prison are familiar to many working people in the U.K.,” Ólöf Andra Proppé of the Communist League told participants. “They also show how the Five and others resist with creativity and humor.” The Five are in prison, she said, “because they represent the women and men of Cuba who insist on defending their revolution in face of everything

U.S. imperialism has thrown at them.”

Proppé quoted remarks by René González, one of two of the Five who have been released, made at the Havana International Book Fair last February: “I’m realizing it’s hard for us to think about that period without recalling those little details, those creative schemes we came up with ... that even in those conditions helped make life brighter and prevented the prosecutors from achieving what they wanted, which was to break us, to make us bitter, to damage us.”

“U.S. authorities refused to prevent terrorist attacks by groups in Miami such as the F4 Commandos, Brothers to the Rescue and the Cuban American National Foundation,” said Lamas. “They’re trying to reverse everything the revolution has achieved.”

“The case of the Cuban Five is a political case, and they are political prisoners,” Lamas said. “Their freedom cannot depend only on their legal defense. Even more crucial is the mass support they get.”

“The Cuban Revolution has been seen as an example by people engaged in anti-imperialist struggle around the world, including Kenya,” Shiraz Durrani, a retired librarian and political exile from Kenya, said during the discussion period. He presented Lamas with three books on the struggle against British rule in Kenya and the history of struggles by toilers there. Durrani had been following the case of the Cuban Five through the *Militant* and had heard about the event when supporters knocked on his door earlier that day.

Yuri Betancourt, a member of the Chilean band Lokandes, opened the meeting with a song by Cuban singer Silvio Rodríguez and closed with one by Victor Jara, who was murdered in the 1973 U.S.-backed military coup in Chile.

Herman urged participants to find

## Omaha barbecue builds support for ‘our 5 brothers’



Militant/Jacque Henderson

Inset, Militant/Jacob Perasso

OMAHA, Neb. — Eighteen people attended a barbecue here July 13 to build support and raise money

for the fight to free the Cuban Five. Mariloliz Perez, 28, a teaching assistant who learned about the Five in May, hosted the event and displayed copies of prison paintings by Antonio Guerrero along the front of her house. “These are our brothers,” she told participants, six of whom were learning about the Five for the first time. “Three of them are still in jail, including the man who painted this beautiful art. We have to get them out, and you need to help.” Participants contributed \$119 to help cover expenses of recent exhibits of Guerrero’s paintings.

— JACQUIE HENDERSON

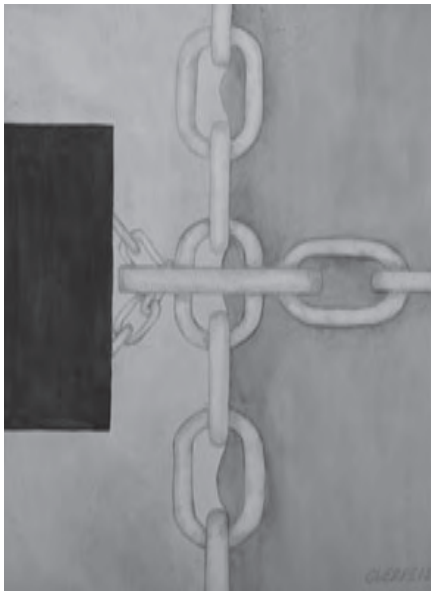
more ways of building support for the Cuban Five. “We are not unique in this room, there are many others who will be ready to join the fight.” Several wanted to be contacted about future activities.

“The Chains is my favorite,” said Debbie Dawkins, occupational therapist who recently learned about the case. “You can relate that to yourself. How much freedom do we really have?” At the same time, she said, “the paintings

could have ended up being so dark, but they’re actually not. The Five drew strength from each other.”

“I think it strikes everyone that they were put in jail without proper evidence of any crime,” said Ales Majchrak, an electrical assembly worker who heard about the Cuban Five from a co-worker. “These paintings are a good way to raise awareness. Now they need to be shown elsewhere.”

## ‘I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived’ 15 watercolors by Antonio Guerrero on the 15th anniversary of the imprisonment of the Cuban Five



Text by Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino

### The Chains

“Whenever they took you from your cell — to see your lawyer, for a court appearance, for whatever reason — they handcuffed your wrists and chained your ankles for the entire trip. After we were sentenced during the long trip to our designated prisons, they put the black box on us, covering the links between the cuffs — an unforgettable experience.”

Also in Spanish.  
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## 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, based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shoot-down of two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013. Fernando González returned Feb. 28.

## Exhibit of paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*

Liverpool, England  
August 2

Exhibit hours: 11AM-2PM. Public meeting 12PM. The Casa Bar and Venue, 29 Hope St., L1 9BQ. Tel.: (0151) 709-2148.

## Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five

The Cuban Five have won the respect of thousands around the world as well as fellow prisoners. Here three who have known them behind bars speak out. Includes accounts of prison life and resistance by Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Elizabeth Palmeiro and Rafael Cancel Miranda. Also in Spanish.

\$7. Special publication offer \$5

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# Defend sovereignty of Ukraine!

Working people worldwide should stand with workers and farmers of Ukraine and their fellow toilers in Russia against the provocations and assaults on Ukrainian sovereignty by the capitalist regime in Moscow.

The “strongman” actions of the government of President Vladimir Putin betray its weakness. Behind Moscow’s nationalist demagogy and media fabrications is fear of the popular mobilizations in Ukraine that overthrew President Viktor Yanukovich in February and the inspiration they provide for workers and their allies in Russia.

At the same time it’s important that working people — from the U.S. to Ukraine — condemn financial sanctions imposed on Russian businesses and individuals by Washington and other imperialist governments, which aim to impose hardship on workers and farmers.

Washington claims to stand with Ukraine, but the goal of the U.S. rulers and their imperialist allies in Europe is to squeeze maximum profit from the labor of working people there. Behind the banner of “democracy” lies more assaults on the living standards

and dignity of the masses.

The propaganda barrage from the Moscow-controlled media labeled the massive street protest movement in Kiev’s Maidan Square as “fascist” and called the ouster of the thuggish Yanukovich regime a “fascist coup.” It was nothing of the sort. Far from crushing the spirit, rights and organization of the working class, the battles to defeat Yanukovich have given working people and their allies greater self-confidence and helped open political space for them to discuss politics and act in their class interests.

Neither is the Ukrainian government fascist. It is a government of the exploiting capitalist ruling class, which has come together since the fall of the Soviet Union and other Stalinist regimes of Eastern and Central Europe nearly a quarter century ago. The challenges, concerns and struggles of workers and farmers in that region mirror those of fellow toilers throughout the world today — the long, hard road ahead toward the fight for the conquest of political power by the working class.

# Obama calls for ‘border security surge’

Continued from front page

tering the U.S. Republican congressmen demanded harsher measures.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection says it detained 47,017 unaccompanied children from October 2013 through May 2014, a 92 percent increase from the same period the previous year. Most of the increase is children from three countries: 9,850 from El Salvador, a 415 percent jump; 11,479 from Guatemala, up 656 percent; and 13,282 from Honduras, up 1,205 percent.

The increase in children crossing the border is in part a consequence of a 2008 law signed by President George W. Bush. The law, aimed at combating “sex trafficking,” gave protections to children entering the U.S. (excluding those from Mexico or Canada). It required that they be granted immigration hearings. Many are allowed to live with family members or are placed in a shelter while they await a hearing.

Over the last decade the U.S. government has doubled the number of cops on the southern border to 20,000, deployed six surveillance drones and built hundreds of miles of fencing.

The combination of tighter border control, anti-immigrant worker legislation and fewer jobs in the U.S. has led to a decline in the number of workers without papers entering the U.S. and in the number of deportations to a 40-year low.

While the total number of those expelled annually over the last two decades has dropped by nearly 40 percent, the numbers deported by official “removal order” — which means possible felony charges for those who return — has increased more than eightfold: from some 50,000 in 1995 to more than 400,000 in 2012.

The objective of the government’s deportations, workplace audits and expanding E-Verify program

is not to stop immigration. It’s to increase control over the flow of immigrant labor while maintaining its lower-wage second-class status, which the bosses use to push down the living standards of all working people.

That’s why organizing immigrants with or without “legal” papers into unions is a life and death question for the labor movement. And why unions must oppose firings, deportations, criminalization and other measures that aim to maintain a pariah section of the working class.

The government crackdown has put wind in the sails of some rightists, who seek to scapegoat immigrant workers for the economic and social crisis of capitalism.

On July 1 dozens of protesters, chanting “go home” and carrying signs proclaiming “return to sender,” blocked buses bringing immigrant children from overcrowded facilities in Texas to a Border Patrol detention center in Murrieta, California, near San Diego.

On July 4 the rightists, including the Minutemen, held another protest outside the Border Patrol station. But this time dozens of counterprotesters, including local residents, stood in solidarity with the immigrants. Many joined a march from a nearby Walmart to the detention center.

“These people are just trying to make a better life for themselves,” said Ali Segura, 19, a student who helped initiate the pro-immigrant march.

After meeting with Texas Gov. Rick Perry in Dallas July 9, Obama said he was considering Perry’s request to send 1,000 National Guardsmen to the border. Perry began deploying them on his own July 21.

*Ellie García from Los Angeles contributed to this article.*

# Ukraine shootdown

Continued from front page

ternational headlines, Igor Strelkov, Russian operative and self-proclaimed military commander of the Donetsk People’s Republic, posted a message on Vkontakte, a popular Russian Internet site, bragging that separatists had shot down a Ukrainian government plane. “We warned them not to fly in our skies.”

Surveillance photos released by the Ukrainian government show paramilitary forces driving a Russian BUK surface-to-air missile launcher July 17 into the area where the plane was shot down. Similar photos show it being driven back to Russia the next day, with one less missile.

For the next four days, separatists occupied the crash site, restricting the movements of Ukrainian emergency workers and seizing everything they could, from victims’ bodies to the plane’s black box.

Denis Pushilin, “chairman” of the Donetsk People’s Republic, announced July 18 in Moscow that he was resigning.

The same day Sara Firth, a reporter for the Moscow-controlled Russia Today TV network, quit in protest over the station’s efforts to blame the Ukrainian government for the shootdown. “I couldn’t do it anymore,” she said. “Every day we’re lying.”

Ilya Bogdanov, a senior lieutenant in the Federal Security Service of Russia, announced his defection to Ukraine July 18. “I couldn’t take it anymore, because a decent person’s conscience can’t be silent when lies are being spewed 24/7 from TV, radio, the papers and Internet,” he said in a statement reported by Ukrainian TV’s Channel 5. “I’m ready to fight in the Ukrainian army as a common volunteer because I want this war to end, for our fraternal peoples to stop fighting.”

## Putin government backpedals

Russia’s capitalist rulers, concerned about political stability and profits, are pressing for a change of direction. “I think there is a growing feeling that it has gone too far,” Olga Kryshnanovskaya, a Russian sociologist, told the *New York Times* July 22.

President Barack Obama levied a new round of financial sanctions after the plane was shot down, restricting access to U.S. capital markets of Rosneft oil company and Gazprombank, the international banking company associated with Gazprom, the state-controlled natural gas monopoly, and others.

Meanwhile, President Vladimir Putin is moving to rein in the uncontrollable forces his government set in motion. “We are being urged to use our influence with the militias in southeastern Ukraine,” he told Russia’s Security Council July 22, in a speech broadcast repeatedly on state-run television. “We of course will do everything in our power.”

Armed separatists have recently left Metalist, Oleksandrivsk, Bile and Rozkishne, the Interfax-Ukraine news agency reported July 15. But paramilitaries still control government buildings in Donetsk, Luhansk and some nearby towns.

Paramilitary gangs still make attempts to attack workers and shut down production. They fired missiles July 12 at a working mine near Kurakhovo.

“The council meeting of the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine decided July 3 to organize workers in the Donbass region into labor guards,” Mikhailo Volynets, chair of the union, told the *Militant* July 22. “The purpose is to protect miners and their families as well as workplaces from pro-Russian separatists’ attacks and aggression.

“In mining areas where the separatists are being driven out, plants are reopening,” Volynets said. “Miners are receiving their wages, pensions and other payments, which were broken off under the control of the paramilitaries. They have resumed trade union activities, organizing themselves to defend the sovereignty and unity of Ukraine.”

Workers are returning to Slovyansk, which was the separatists’ military center until two weeks ago.

Maryna, a 52-year-old mother of two, told the *Financial Times* July 13 that she had initially supported the separatist forces, but has since changed her mind. “Looking back, it seems Strelkov and the others used us and our city, doing everything possible to ensure maximum destruction, so that Putin would send the Russian army in,” she said.

# LETTERS

## ‘A world class paper’

I find your paper to be very educational as it informs the reader of revolutionary history. The fact that it tracks the struggles of the oppressed the world over makes it a world-class paper. Keep up the good work. If your goal is to raise awareness, you achieve this end graciously with each issue. I’ll do my part as well and continue to circulate your material.  
*A prisoner  
Florida*

## Due process for inmates

I had problems once in receiving the *Militant* while incarcerated

ated and the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland represented me in a case won against the Maryland Department of Corrections back in the late 1980s. The ACLU won because

prison authorities did not allow due process for inmates and First Amendment rights. A new set of due process regulations were written that are still in effect for Maryland prisoners.

*John Bowles  
by email*

## ‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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

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