

# THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 74/NO. 31 AUGUST 16, 2010

## Hundreds in Kabul protest Afghan war

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Hundreds of Afghans marched in Kabul August 1 to protest the war being waged by U.S. and NATO troops. They carried pictures of Afghan women and children killed in a NATO rocket attack a week earlier. The Afghan news agency Tolonews reported that “demonstrators called for the foreign forces to be pulled out of the country as soon as possible.”

One of the marchers’ banners, according to the *Washington Post*, labeled the U.S. government as the “guardian and master of [the] ruling Mafia in Afghanistan,” a reference to the government of President Hamid Karzai.

Two incidents led up to the protest. In the first, 52 civilians died in Sangin, Helmand Province, July 23 in what local residents say was a NATO rocket attack from a helicopter gunship. It was the largest number of civilian deaths in a single incident since last September, when more than 100

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## U.S. gov’t takes aim at one of Cuban Five

Gerardo Hernández in ‘hole’ for 13 days

BY SETH GALINSKY

Gerardo Hernández, one of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and imprisoned in U.S. jails for almost 12 years, was put in a punishment cell July 21, just one day after doctors said he needed medical treatment. He was returned to the general prison population August 2 after two weeks in abysmal conditions.

**FREE THE CUBAN 5!**  
 Editorial —p. 9

Cuba’s National Assembly of People’s Power issued a statement August 1 holding the U.S. government “responsible for the health and physical integrity” of Hernández.

Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba’s National Assembly, told the press that Hernández’s sister Isabel first learned that he had been put in the “hole,” as the punishment cells are called, when she went for a visit at the U.S. maximum security prison in Victorville, California, July 24. She was



Gerardo Hernández in U.S. prison in 2003.

only allowed to talk to him by phone, separated by a thick glass partition, while he was kept handcuffed.

Leonard Weinglass and Peter Schey, attorneys who are working on the Cuban revolutionary’s legal case, were able to visit him July 31.

Hernández had been asking to see a doctor since April. He was not given an appointment until July 20, when doctors

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## Thousands sign to put socialist on D.C. ballot

BY SUSAN LAMONT

WASHINGTON—The petitioning drive to secure a place on the November ballot for Omari Musa, Socialist Workers candidate for District of Columbia mayor, wrapped up August 1 with a final weekend push by 27 volunteers that brought the total signatures collected to 5,030, well over the legal requirement of 3,000.

The effort capped a busy week of campaigning that began July 28 when socialist workers participated in a protest by Black farmers outside the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The action was called to demand that the federal government pay Black farmers promised compensation for decades of discrimination.

“I’m here in solidarity with the struggle of Black and other farmers,” said Glova Scott, SWP candidate for non-voting delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives, speaking at the protest. “Struggles like this are part of building an independent working-class movement that can take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers, who exploit both farmers and workers, and profit from discrimination against Blacks.”

That afternoon, socialist campaign-

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## Unionists join action against Arizona anti-immigrant law

BY NAOMI CRAINE

PHOENIX, July 29—More than 500 trade unionists and others traveled here from Los Angeles in an 11-bus caravan to join protests against the anti-immigrant law scheduled to take effect today. The caravan was organized by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor and included members of more than two dozen unions, as well as several community organizations.

The caravan joined one of several marches and actions in Phoenix protesting Arizona Senate Bill 1070. There were also demonstrations in cities across the country, including New York, San Francisco, Miami, and Chicago.

Major sections of the law were blocked by a court injunction the day before, including the requirement that police check the immigration status

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Militant/Naomi Craine

July 29 demonstration in Phoenix to protest anti-immigrant law set to take effect that day

## Socialist candidates in Iowa present ‘a clear message’

BY ELLEN BRICKLEY  
 AND MARGARET TROWE

DES MOINES, Iowa, July 29—It was a busy day for the Iowa Socialist Workers campaign. SWP candidates David Rosenfeld for governor, Helen Meyers for lieutenant governor, and their supporters delivered petitions with 2,100 signatures, well over the 1,500 required, to the state elections office here to put the candidates on the November ballot. They also filed 450 signatures to place Rebecca Williamson in the running for U.S. Congress in the third congressional district.

The candidates held a news conference on the steps of the state capitol attended by reporters from Iowa Public Radio (IPR) and the Cedar Rapids *Gazette*. IPR ran coverage of the campaign, including an excerpt from an interview with Rosenfeld, that afternoon and the next morning. The *Gazette* ran an article titled “Socialist Party members have a clear message” in that day’s online edition, as well as in the Mason City *Globe Gazette*.

Reporter Rob Boshart asked David Rosenfeld why he is running for gov-

ernor. Rosenfeld responded, “We’re under attack in terms of the cutbacks in social services, in terms of long-term unemployment, the permanent state of war in this country, and unless working people begin to organize themselves as a movement that can exercise power as opposed to relying on politicians that represent the dictatorship of capital—those are Democrats and Republicans—we’re going

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# Thousands greet freed political prisoner Torres

BY SETH GALINSKY

Thousands of people turned out to welcome Carlos Alberto Torres on his return to Puerto Rico July 27 after spending 30 years in prison in the United States. Until his release on parole the day before, he was one of the longest held political prisoners in the world.

“Today we celebrate,” Torres told the crowd. “But tomorrow we have to put on our work boots because there are still two Puerto Rican political prisoners in federal jails in the United States.”

“We cannot rest until they are free,” Torres said. He was referring to Oscar López, who has been in prison for 29 years, and Avelino González Claudio, who was arrested in February 2008.

Torres was arrested in April 1980 along with 10 other supporters of Puerto Rican independence. The U.S. government accused them of being “terrorists” and members of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) of Puerto Rico. They were charged with “seditious conspiracy” and armed robbery.

Torres was gagged during part of his trial for speaking Spanish in court. In 1999 then-president William Clinton offered to pardon or commute the sentences of 14 Puerto Rican political prisoners, but not Torres, claiming that Torres was a leader of the group and was for “revolution against the United States.”

Before his arrest, Torres had lived in Chicago where he was politically ac-

tive in the Puerto Rican community. About 50 people, including his family members and lawyer, greeted him as he left Pekin Federal Prison July 26 and drove with him to Chicago’s Humboldt Park, where 500 people cheered his release.

Both in Chicago and on his arrival in San Juan, Torres said he would continue to fight for independence for Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico has been a U.S. colony since 1898, when U.S. troops wrested control from Spain. Puerto Ricans on the island are subject to U.S. laws, courts, and military service.

Noting the international support that he received in his struggle to be freed from prison, Torres told his supporters, “You are the ones that made this day possible.”

At least 15 former Puerto Rican political prisoners joined the enthusiastic crowd in San Juan to celebrate Torres’s release. *El Nuevo Día*, a daily paper in



Greg Boozell

From left, José López, brother of Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López, jailed in the United States; lawyer Jan Susler; and Carlos Alberto Torres, at Chicago rally to celebrate Torres’ release on parole after 30 years in jail for supporting fight for Puerto Rico’s independence.

Puerto Rico, pointed out that there also were many young people present “who had not yet been born when Torres was jailed in April 1980.”

In an interview with the paper, Tor-

res said he was pleased that students who recently concluded a two-month struggle against fee hikes at the University of Puerto Rico were part of the organization of the welcoming event.

## Judge approves \$7.15 million in Sean Bell case

BY SARAH KATZ

NEW YORK—On July 27 a Brooklyn federal magistrate approved a \$7.15 million settlement in the wrongful death civil suit filed on behalf of Sean Bell. The ruling ends a four-year legal battle launched by Bell’s fiancée, Nicole Paultre-Bell, and two of Sean Bell’s friends, Joseph Guzman and Trent Benefield.

Bell, a 23-year old African-American, was killed, and Guzman and Benefield were wounded, on Nov. 25, 2006. In a hail of 50 bullets, five plainclothes cops

fired on them in their car as they left a Jamaica, Queens, nightclub. A couple of weeks later, 10,000 people, led by Benefield from his wheelchair, marched down Manhattan’s Fifth Avenue to protest the killing of Bell.

At the time, police said they fired because they thought the men were armed, but witnesses contradicted these claims. In March 2007 three of the five officers were indicted on charges ranging from first-degree manslaughter to reckless endangerment but were acquitted a year later. In February 2010 the Department of Justice announced they would not file charges against the cops for civil rights violations.

Michael Cardozo, attorney for the New York City Law Department, told CNN.com he hopes “all parties can find some measure of closure by this settlement.” The deal worked out with the city awards the estate of Bell \$3.25 million. Guzman receives \$3 million and Benefield \$900,000.

Paultre-Bell told the *Daily News*, “I believe the settlement is fair.” But she went on to say “No amount of money can provide closure for losing Sean.”



Militant/Dan Fein

Joseph Guzman in Feb. 19, 2007, march.

Guzman, who was shot 17 times, still has four bullets lodged inside him, and wears a leg brace, told the press, “I don’t think a Black or Hispanic man’s life means much in this city.”

Lending unintended credence to Guzman’s view, Michael Palladino, president of the police detectives’ union, blasted the settlement calling it “an absolute joke.” The cops who killed Bell on his wedding day were “doing their lawful duty,” he told the *Daily News*.



Militant/Leah Morrison

Farmers protest outside U.S. Department of Agriculture July 28, demanding compensation for racist discrimination in loans.

### Support the fight of Black farmers!

Thousands of Black farmers are still waiting for compensation after a court ruled more than a decade ago that the U.S. Department of Agriculture discriminated against them in loans. Stay on top of their fight by reading the ‘Militant.’

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# Black oystermen fight discrimination in Gulf

BY ANGEL LARISCY

The worst oil spill in U.S. history, still developing in the Gulf of Mexico, has resulted in massive damage to the environment and is a huge blow to workers in the area. Eleven workers were killed in the April 20 explosion aboard the BP-leased Deepwater Horizon oil rig, where the company routinely ignored safety problems in pursuit of profits.

A little publicized aspect of this disaster is the disproportionate effect on oystermen and fishermen in Louisiana who are Black. Fifty miles south of New Orleans are the towns of Phoenix, Davant, and Pointe a la Hache, which comprise one of the state's largest stretches of Black fishing communities.

For decades the area has subsisted on oyster harvesting and shrimping. The residents have fought discrimination from the state and federal governments, as well as lending institutions. Now with almost a quarter of the Gulf of Mexico closed to fishing, Black oystermen and fishermen are finding it hard to get work on the BP cleanup operations.

"Through the years, due to unfair policies from both the state and federal governments, we've lost about 90% of our oyster farms, and probably the same amount of boats," Byron Encalade, president of the Louisiana Oystermen Association, told *Our Time Press*.

In the 1960s and 70s, Blacks began to purchase their own boats in spite of many discriminatory practices aimed at discouraging them. In the 1970s Blacks fought and overturned laws that prevented oystermen from hand dredging, a practice derogatorily called "coonin'." This procedure is used by oystermen who don't have the vessels or equipment to scoop oysters in bulk.

In 1963 when state officials built the White Ditch Siphon, to flush fresh water from the Mississippi River into the bays and bayous, it destroyed most of the oyster beds owned by Blacks, said Encalade. Oysters need a mix of salt and fresh water, but too much fresh water will harm them.

At the peak, Blacks owned almost 10,000 acres of oyster beds. Today that number is closer to 1,500. State officials have opened the siphon again in order to push oil out of the marsh, and oystermen fear this will deal even more blows to their already fragile existence.

Hurricane Katrina in 2005 caused major damage to Black oystermen and fishermen. Only 60 percent of the Blacks who lived in the area before Katrina returned following the storm.

Nearly all of the Black oystermen

have taken oil cleanup courses from BP but only a handful have been called to work, reports the *New York Times*. "They ain't hiring nobody from East Bank," said Orin Bentley. "The little guy loses again," said another oysterman.

In a recent radio interview Rev. Tyronne Edwards of the Fishermen and Concerned Citizens of Plaquemines Parish pointed to the class bias of the government's response. "We see the same dynamic taking place [as] with Katrina, where the emphasis is being placed on the large business community," Edwards said. "We think we deserve the same kind of treatment as big business and casinos."

Speaking in St. Bernard Parish in June before a Congressional subcommittee on the impact of the oil spill, Clarence Duplessis of Davant testified that Black oystermen are watching "our livelihoods and even an entire culture being washed away by crude oil and chemicals that no one knows the long term effects of."

"We're going to stay here and fight," says Encalade. "We'll never leave. That's just not in our vocabulary."

## Unionists join Phoenix immigrant rights rally

**Continued from front page**

of everyone they stop if they have "reasonable suspicion" the person is in the country illegally. State penalties for immigrants who do not carry their documents with them at all times were also struck down. Other parts of the law, including a ban on "harboring or transporting" undocumented workers, were allowed to stand. The bill echoes already existing federal laws, but adds state penalties.

One of the biggest California contingents in Phoenix was from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which included many African American workers. Brendloyn Hendrix, a home-care worker, said the trip to Phoenix was important. These types of laws are not just aimed at workers whose "skin is brown," she said. She also talked about the threat by California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to slash home health services. "We've been more than three years without a raise and without a contract," she pointed out.

"People shouldn't be looked at differently," said Karen Smith, a member of the executive board of her SEIU local and of the NAACP in Oakland, California. "Anyone should have the right to go wherever they please. I'm here to support that." Smith was talking to Eleanor García, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress from California District 33, who also took part in the caravan from Los Angeles.

García explained that her campaign joins the fight of immigrants for legalization and stresses the need for working people to build a labor party based on the trade unions, the most basic organizations workers have to organize solidarity and defend their interests. "The unions need to be a bigger part of fights like this," agreed Smith. She was interested in what the socialist candidate had to say about the unions acting independently of the Democrats and Republicans.

After arriving in Phoenix, the Los

## New York march condemns Arizona law



Militant/Tom Baumann

NEW YORK—"Arizona Senate Bill 1070 is an assault on immigrant workers and on the working class," said Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of New York, shown here, center, at a march of 200 in Jackson Heights, Queens, July 30. Addressing the protesters, Fein said if SB1070 is implemented "it would give cops one more weapon to selectively intimidate working people."

The protest was organized by groups seeking to bring attention to the attacks on immigrant workers both in Arizona and in New York.

Following the initial rally, participants marched to Citi Field, where the New York Mets played the Arizona Diamondbacks. A number of workers along the march route, when they saw what the demonstration was about, joined in. Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign sold six copies of *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, six subscriptions to the *Militant*, and 26 single issues of the paper.

—TOM BAUMANN

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### IOWA

#### Des Moines

**World Capitalist Crisis, Israel, and the Roots of Jew Hatred.** Speaker: David Rosenfeld, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Iowa. Fri., August 13, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel: (515) 255-1707.

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

**U.S. Troops out of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq!** Speaker: representative, SWP. Fri., August 13, 8:00 p.m. 307 W. 36th St. 10th Floor. (near 8th Ave.). Tel: (212) 736-2540.

Angeles unionists took part in a community forum and then marched to the state capitol, where there has been an ongoing vigil organized by local religious organizations since SB1070 was signed. Early in the day, several hundred marched to the Maricopa County Jail and blocked the entrance. Twenty-three of those carrying out civil disobedience were arrested.

The day of the action Sheriff Joseph Arpaio launched his 17th immigration sweep in the Phoenix area. During such roundups, deputies and volunteer cops stop people for minor violations like jaywalking. They then check the immigration status of those questioned, which the cops are allowed to do under existing federal law.

"Nothing is going to deter this sheriff and my office, including rulings by the federal judge," Arpaio told reporters that day. "It's going to be business as usual."

The sections of the law that are on hold "would have been a nice little

extra twist if we could have locked them up instead of handing them over to ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement]," Arpaio said following the injunction.

Workers gathering at the capitol for the rally talked to García about what they face. Araceli Ramírez, who works as a nurses aide in Phoenix, said, "The law would affect all of us badly, because people look at you differently. It affects me on the job even though I'm a citizen. I've been caring for the elderly for 15 years. It doesn't matter our nationality—we're all human beings."

Cecilia Martínez, a young restaurant worker, explained how she's been devastated by the economic crisis. "I lost my job. My husband has two jobs, but he's getting less hours. We're going down and I don't see where the bottom is." Martínez said the government does nothing to turn around the problems workers face; instead it scapegoats immigrants.

## Demonstration at Chicago jail says no to anti-immigrant law

BY ILONA GERSH

CHICAGO—A youthful crowd of more than 250 marched to the Cook County Jail here July 29. The action was part of a national day of protests against Arizona's anti-immigrant law, Senate Bill 1070.

Marchers also protested the deportations of immigrant workers in Chicago. Three Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents are stationed at the jail every day to pick up immigrant workers being held at the facility.

Several organizations, including Immigrant Youth Justice League and a new group, the Coalition for Deportation Moratorium, sponsored the protest. Many marchers were at their first immigrant rights demonstration.

Among those participating were four immigrant workers from Ace Coffee

Bar, which caters the cafeteria for county jail employees. "We are being fired July 30," because of immigration status, said Juan Topete, who spoke at the rally. "We want you to support us in our fight."

Another speaker was Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Illinois. "Our campaign is here in solidarity with the fight for legalization for undocumented workers, and against SB1070," Kennedy said.

"We're in the middle of the worst economic crisis we've seen for decades," she added. "There will be resistance like the outpourings of workers on May Day demanding legalization, the protests against SB1070, and the fight by the workers at Ace Coffee Bar against their firings. Any time working people put up a fight, the Socialist Workers campaign will be there."



# Indictment set in shooting of Blacks after Katrina

BY ANGEL LARISCY

Three days after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, three Black men, attempting to escape the devastation, were set upon by a white racist gang and shot.

On July 15, Roland Bourgeois Jr. was indicted on five felony counts by a federal grand jury for attempting to kill the men with a deadly weapon because they were Black, intimidating witnesses, and making false statements to the FBI. Bourgeois faces a possible life sentence if convicted.

The charges were announced by Jim Letten, U.S. attorney for eastern Louisiana; Thomas Perez, head of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division; and David Welker, special agent in charge of the FBI in New Orleans. They came three days after Letten announced the indictment of five current and one former New Orleans police officers for shooting six unarmed civilians, killing two, and covering up the crime in the aftermath of Katrina.

According to an investigative report by A.C. Thompson that was published in *The Nation* in 2008, the "experience fits into a broader pattern of violence in which, evidence indicates, at least 11 people were shot. In each case the targets were African-American men, while the shooters, it appears, were all white." None of the cases were ever investigated by the New Orleans Police Department.

Bourgeois is alleged to be one of a group of 15–30 vigilantes that formed in the white enclave of Algiers Point after the hurricane. They set up barricades, stockpiled weapons, and patrolled the streets in pickup trucks and SUVs. Cox News Service released a story on the group Sept. 12, 2005, with the headline, "Armed militia protects its New Orleans neighborhood."

Donnell Herrington, along with his cousin and a friend, were walking through Algiers Point to a ferry terminal in hopes of making it to an evacuation bus. Herrington says they were attacked without warning and fired upon by three white men who yelled, "Get that nigger!"

Herrington was struck in the torso and neck with buckshot, suffering a hole in

his jugular vein. A Black couple drove him to the hospital where the doctor said if he hadn't gotten there he would have died. His cousin and friend were also shot and held briefly by the men before being let go on the condition they stay clear of the neighborhood.

After his release from the hospital, Herrington went to the police station to report the incident, but the cops never filed a report or investigated the shooting. "If the shoe was on the other foot, if a black guy was willing to go out shooting white guys, the police would be up there real quick," Herrington told reporter Thompson.

Herrington has given numerous interviews and spoken out about what happened. He was featured in the Spike Lee documentary *When the Levees Broke*.

One of Bourgeois's neighbors, Terri Benjamin, testified she heard him scream "I got one!" and boast to a group of men that he'd shot a "looter." Later Bourgeois pledged while holding a shotgun to shoot anyone with skin "darker than a brown paper bag." Benjamin says she was so traumatized by the events she moved out of the state, only coming back to help in the federal government's case.

Pam Pitre, Bourgeois's mother, said

## New Orleans book center features Pathfinder



Community Book Center

Community Book Center, located in the 7th Ward of New Orleans, has set up a prominent in-store display of Pathfinder's new book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, shown here at left with other titles by Pathfinder and promotional poster.

"This is a book that people want to read," store owner Vera Williams said. *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* has been selling well so far, another staff person commented, "but wait until the students get back." The Community Book Center is not far from Xavier, Tulane, New Orleans, Dillard, and Loyola universities.

The center features book signings, readings, and jazz performances. For more information go to <http://communitybookcenter.com>.

—THERESA KENDRICK

her son did shoot a Black man in Algiers Point, but claimed he "is not a racist."

Videos detailing militia members' accounts of shooting people were turned over to the FBI in 2009. In one, Nathan

Roper says the cops knew about the militia. "The police said, 'If they're breaking in your property, do what you gotta do and leave them [the bodies] on the side of the road.'"

## Socialist candidates file petitions in Iowa

Continued from front page

to continue to get hammered in this crisis," he said.

"Unlike most political candidates, Helen Meyers, 65, an industrial worker and unionist from Des Moines who is running with Rosenfeld as his lieutenant governor, said SWP members are willing to take unambiguous stands on the issues," Boshart reported. "We stand four-square on the right for women to have an abortion. We think you can never have equality . . . until women have a right to control their own bodies," the article quoted Meyers saying.

Later the candidates and supporters returned to the Capitol to participate in a march and rally of 100 people protesting Arizona's anti-immigrant law.

In the evening the Des Moines Social Club showed the film *Food, Inc.*, a

documentary about food production under the capitalist profit system. Meyers and Margaret Trowe, SWP candidate for secretary of agriculture, attended, as did one of Trowe's opponents, independent candidate Francis Thicke. Several farmers were present, including George Naylor, former president of the National Family Farm Coalition, who spoke on a panel after the film ended.

Some of the participants in the discussion called for "trust busting" the giant agricultural companies, arguing that monopoly of food production was to blame for the dire situation facing farmers and the crisis of food production.

Trowe said, "The problem isn't the size of agricultural enterprises. The problem is that the power of government and the social wealth produced by working people are in the hands of a tiny minority of capitalists who profit off of the

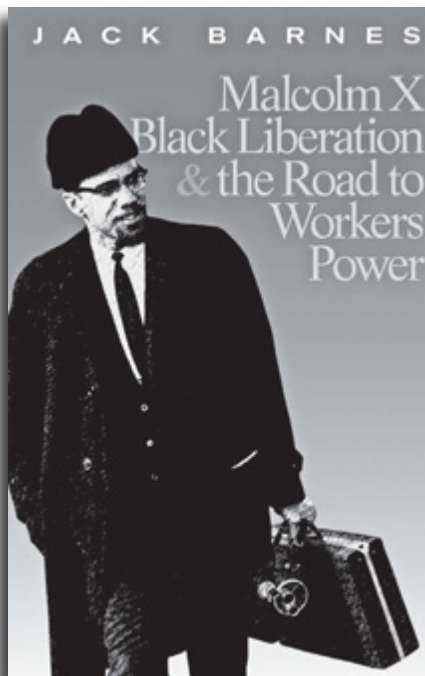
ruin of small farmers and workers. That is why we need a powerful union movement in alliance with working farmers that can break from the Democrats and Republicans and form a labor party. A labor party puts working people on a course toward a government that would halt farm foreclosures and guarantee working farmers income to cover their production costs. We need to take power away from the dictatorship of capital."

On Sunday, August 1, Meyers and supporters joined a gay rights rally of 150 people protesting a smaller gathering nearby of those who want to ban same-sex marriage, which a 2009 Iowa Supreme Court decision legalized.

Williamson traveled to Washington, D.C., on July 31 to join the final weekend of campaigning to put Omari Musa on the ballot for mayor of the District of Columbia.

## Special offer

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Available for only \$15 or for \$10 with *Militant* subscription from one of the distributors listed on page 8.

**PathfinderPress.com**



Militant/Lisa Rottach

David Rosenfeld, Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Iowa, speaks to reporters at campaign press conference announcing filing of ballot petitions July 29.



# Australia: Socialist candidates launch campaign

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—"The working class has only one road forward—toward taking political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers," said Ronald Poulsen July 17 at a meeting launching the Communist League's election campaign. Campaign supporters successfully petitioned to put Poulsen on the ballot for the House of Representatives in the Blaxland Division. He is one of two CL candidates standing in federal elections to be held August 21.

Manuele Lasalo is the CL candidate for the House of Representatives in Chifley. A permanent resident of Australia who has worked in the country for 21 years, Lasalo is barred from being on the ballot by undemocratic electoral laws.

"We present a revolutionary working-class alternative to Liberal and Labor, the parties of big business. They have no solution to the capitalist crisis except to intensify the assaults on workers and farmers," Poulsen said.

Poulsen introduced the Communist League campaign to workers attending a memorial meeting held during a 24-hour work stoppage on the wharves July 23. The memorial was for Stephen Piper, a 41-year-old worker, who was crushed

to death at Appleton dock in Melbourne 10 days earlier. It was the third death on the wharves in Australia this year.

Poulsen explained to workers at the meeting that the Communist League campaign calls for workers' control over safety on the job as the only way to save lives and prevent injuries.

Lasalo marched with thousands of construction workers July 20 in an action organized by the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union. They were protesting charges laid against Ark Tribe for refusing to provide information to the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) about a union meeting over safety.

The ABCC is a national government body set up in 2005 with draconian power to police building workers and their union. "We call for the ABCC to be abolished and the charges against Tribe to be dropped," Lasalo said.

The candidates have joined the union picket line at the Tahmoor Colliery several times, introducing the communist campaign to miners there. (See article on this page.)

One of the discussions Poulsen had with miners was about immigration, a key issue in the election. A front-page July 24 *Daily Telegraph* article headlined "Invasion," claimed an "armada" of refugee boats was heading



Militant/Joanne Kuniarsky

Communist League candidate Manuele Lasalo, in foreground with light jacket, marches July 20 with construction workers defending union member against government charges.

for Australia's shores.

"We support opening the borders to refugees and other immigrants," Poulsen said. "We call for closing all detention centers where these fellow workers are imprisoned."

The Communist League election campaign also calls for getting Australian and allied troops out of Afghanistan and an end to federal government inter-

vention in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territories.

The trial date for a couple charged with procuring an illegal abortion in Cairns, a city in northeast Australia, has just been set for October 12. "We will be joining other supporters of abortion rights on the national day of action October 9 to demand the charges be dropped," Lasalo said.



Militant/Doug Cooper

Parliamentary candidate Ronald Poulsen, left, discusses fight for safety with worker at July 23 memorial for dock worker killed on job.

## Coal miners in Australia strike

BY LINDA HARRIS

TAHMOOR, Australia—Coal miners at the Tahmoor Colliery are waging a determined fight to defend their union and working conditions. More than 230 members of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) set up a picket camp outside the underground mine entrance July 9.

Workers are taking strike action to win a new contract with international mining company Xstrata. Negotiations have been going on for 20 months.

"Our fight is about safety conditions and job security," said Tahmoor Lodge president Chris Cumming. Xstrata wants to reduce crew sizes, be able to change workers' shifts, and extend the workday as they see fit, said Cumming.

"They want total control over us," said Ian Timbs, who has worked at the mine in southeast Australia near Sydney for 23 years. In February, when miners rejected the company's proposal, they locked out workers for a week.

Wives and families of miners have helped staff the picket line. The workers have received support from CFMEU mines in the district and the South Coast Labour Council. Members of the fire brigade union and a busload of Maritime Union members from nearby Port Kembla have visited the picket line.

## Ontario miners continue fight to defend union

BY JOHN STEELE  
AND JOE YOUNG

SUDBURY, Ontario—Following the conclusion of an almost one-year strike, the fight by thousands of nickel workers to defend United Steelworkers Local 6500 has moved from the picket line to the day-to-day struggle on the job. Local 6500 represents nickel miners and refinery and smelter workers at Vale S.A., the second largest mining company in the world.

The workers voted by a 75 percent majority July 8 to accept a contract that is similar in a number of ways to the one they initially rejected. New hires will have an inferior "defined contribution" pension, which ties workers' retirement income to the performance of company investments. Bonuses tied to company profits have also been reduced.

"We made some concessions, but not as much as Vale wanted," said Seppo Vataja, a miner for 18 years. Vataja explained that under the new contract, workers can no longer file reports on safety concerns themselves. Instead, foremen will decide whether or not the worker's concerns merit a report.

"We didn't get much after a whole year out," said 36-year veteran John Landry, who helped organize protest actions in May that blocked roads to the mine in defiance of police orders. "But they didn't break us and we are in good enough shape for the next part of the fight," he said.

Landry was one of the nine union activists fired by Vale during the strike for allegedly violating its undisclosed "code of conduct." He is now retiring from the

company. The cases of the other eight are now before the Ontario Labour Relations Board. Three of the them still face criminal charges in relation to the May protests.

"This was my first strike," said Rene Duguay, who has three years' seniority. "It was a real eye-opener to see how they lie. I learned that the company doesn't care about you. They can throw you out like a piece of trash."

"The May blockades got their attention—who knows what we could have done if we had kept that going," said Mike Lacelle, a third-generation miner with four years on the job. "We didn't lose horribly. We are at the regrouping stage after a hard battle. In five years there will be more demands for concessions. The only way to stop a bully is by fighting back."

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 16, 1985

MANAGUA, Nicaragua—Nicaragua is a country at war. It is fighting an army of mercenaries—known as the *contras*—who are armed, organized and financed by the U.S. government.

The people of Nicaragua, led by their workers' and peasants' government, are organizing both to confront the ongoing attacks by the *contras* and to prepare for the possibility of a direct military assault by U.S. troops in the future. They are confident they can defeat both.

The Nicaraguans opened a major offensive against the mercenaries at the beginning of this year. Brigadier Commander Hugo Torres told reporters July 18 that in the first six months of 1985, 2,300 *contras* had been killed.



August 15, 1960

Premier Patrice Lumumba has labeled the independence granted the Congo by Belgium June 30 as "fictitious." Openly defying the Lumumba government, Belgian imperialists have retained over 10,000 troops in the month-old republic while they plot to split Katanga province from the Congo in a determined effort to protect their multi-billion dollar mining interests in Union Minière.

With this perspective in view, America's big-business press has been grinding out the most pernicious kind of racist slander against the Congolese. The demand of the Africans for a united independent Congo has been ridiculed and they have been alternately maligned as bloodthirsty barbarians and as children who are "unprepared" to take their place in the civilized world.



August 10, 1935

Several thousand skilled workers struck on New York City Works Project Administration jobs this week demanding the prevailing union rate of wages. Flying squadrons, which have proved such a popular and effective weapon in recent labor struggles set to work immediately to spread the strike throughout the city, and indications are at the time of this writing, that it will become general, affecting all of the WPA jobs.

This is not the first example of a strike on relief project works; but it is the first real sign of the determination of the workers to maintain the union standard of wages gained after decades of bitter struggle. This is the issue involved, and the trade unionists made no mistake in putting it bluntly.



# ‘12 men and 2 cats’: With Gerardo H

## Interview with Cuban combatant highlights leadership qualities of

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

When Gerardo Hernández Nordelo graduated from Cuba’s Institute for Advanced Study of International Relations (ISRI) in 1989, like hundreds of thousands of other Cubans had done, he volunteered for duty in Angola. The Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) of Cuba was then engaged in the final stages of a nearly 16-year internationalist mission, fighting alongside the People’s Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA), to defend the government of that former Portuguese colony against the invading forces of the apartheid regime of South Africa and its imperialist-backed allies based in Zaire.

In 1989–90, Lieutenant Hernández led the Cuban-Angolan Scouting Platoon of 12 men attached to the 11th Tactical Group of the 10th Tank Brigade, stationed in the Angolan province of Cabinda.

The following account of those years is by José Luis Palacio, a mechanic by trade and one of the men who served under Hernández in Cabinda. It was originally published under the title “12 men and 2 cats” in March 2006 in *Guerrillero*, the provincial newspaper of Pinar del Río in western Cuba.

Palacio’s tribute to the leadership qualities of Hernández—or simply “Gerardo” as he is known to millions around the world fighting for his freedom—goes far to explain why the U.S. government has singled him out for the brutal and vindictive treatment reported in the accompanying front-page story. Among the Cuban Five, Hernández was given the most draconian penalty of all—two life sentences plus 15 years. He has been denied the right to receive visits from his wife, Adriana Pérez, for the past 12 years.

Hernández sent a photocopy of the *Guerrillero* article to me as one of the editors of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, published by Pathfinder Press. That book, which Hernández had received earlier this year, includes one of the photos on these pages—the picture of Hernández together with other members of his platoon around a cooking fire. The other two photos of the platoon printed here were mailed by



Cuban-Angolan platoon attached to 11th Tactical Group, 10th Tank Brigade, Cabinda, Angola, under command of Lt. Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, 1989–90. Starting with front row from left to right, as Hernández wrote, are: “Wilfredo Pérez Corcho (with a cat), Fidel Martell (with the other cat), Palacio, Bouza, and Adolfo. (Bouza is from the Zapata Swamp area, and the last that I heard of him, he was an official of the municipal Cuban Communist Party in Soplillar.) I’m in the middle, and behind are Gabriel Basquito (Angolan), Henry, Manuel (who also gradu-

ated from the ISRI [Institute for Advanced Study of International Relations] and may now be a diplomat), José Ramón Zamora, two compañeros whose names unfortunately I cannot remember now, Nelson Abreu, another compañero (with the sunglasses) whose name I cannot recall, and Carlos Amores, with the camera, our current ambassador to Malaysia. For most of those whose names I cannot recall, it’s because they were in the platoon for only a short time after I arrived because they completed their missions and returned to Cuba.”

Gerardo from the maximum security penitentiary in Victorville, California, where he is being held.

In accompanying letters, Hernández commented:

It’s been twenty years, but I remember as if it were today the moment when we took that photo around the fire in Angola. We were making a *dulce de coco* [a coconut dessert]. I remember everyone’s names, including the two Angolan combatants in the picture, who were part of our scouting team.

Several Cuban combatants from my platoon often write to me, including three members of what they called my “Matancera squad,” since all of them were from Matanzas—José Ramón Zamora, Fidel Martell, and Wilfredo Pérez Corcho. All three are peasants, very modest people, and very revolutionary. They sent me these two photos, which I am now sharing with you.

The quality of the originals is not very good due to the passage of time and the conditions under which they were developed and printed. . . .

In the photo with the tank . . . standing on the ground is José Luis Palacio, from Pinar del Río. For some years I have kept an interview that Palacio gave to the newspaper in his province, which moved me very much when I read it. I’ll look for it among my pa-

pers and send you a copy.

I have great admiration for all those compañeros who volunteered for such a mission. At that time they were practically youngsters. I had been asked to give them classes in certain subjects, that is, I was supposed to teach them, but I was the one who wound up learning a lot from them. Angola was a great school for everyone.

The identifications in the captions were provided by Hernández. The comments in brackets in the interview below are his also.

Translation from the original Spanish is by the *Militant*. It will be printed in Spanish in next week’s issue.



BY ZENIA REGALADO

*A Pinar del Río native was in Angola with Lt. Gerardo Hernández Nordelo. He remembers him as lively and jocular, always drawing cartoons of the soldiers in his reconnaissance platoon; reading Che’s diary. The first to get up in the morning and the last to go to bed. Always very concerned with the health of the men under his command.*

When a group of 12 men have to sleep two and a half meters underground, shake off the homesickness that slowly eats at them with each delayed letter, march through snake-infested terrain, that’s when friendship soars to its greatest heights.

So one can understand why José Luis Palacio Cuní would feel out of sorts when he returned from Angola in 1991 and why he would miss the down-to-

earth camaraderie and kidding around by those platoon mates of the 10th Tank Brigade in Cabinda.

At night they killed time playing seven-piece dominoes or playing cards. The latter was the favorite entertainment of Lt. Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, [Actually it was dominoes. —GH] who was good-humored and always roused them at 5:00 a.m. with that characteristic expression of his: “Stand up, soldiers! As straight as Cuba’s palm trees!”

At that time nobody imagined that Gerardo—who shared the same hole with them—would become a hero, and that he would have to withstand even greater tests—nothing less than imprisonment in the United States.

None of Palacio’s friends wanted to believe him that afternoon when they were watching television and, in the middle of a little party, this dark-skinned man who lives in the new 12-story building at “Hermanos Cruz” told them, “Damn! That man in the photo was my leader in Angola. It’s Lt. Nordelo!”

**Two cats in the platoon**

Palacio was in Angola, in Cabinda, for two years and three months. He had been working at the Machinery and Equipment Repair Enterprise, what was then the EREA, when he was called to fulfill his duty as a reservist. It was 1989, and he left behind a daughter who was just a little over three years old.

**How did you all adjust to sleeping in the dugout?** was one of the first questions we asked in our interview.

“The dugouts were six meters long



José Luis Palacio Cuní during interview. “Angola has been the greatest school of my life,” he told *Guerrillero*.



# Hernández and his platoon in Angola

## of one of Cuban Five prisoners that make him a target of U.S. rulers

and two or three meters wide. It wasn't easy getting used to sleeping there, but when you know it's safer than having your body out in the open, you have to do it.

"I was the only Pinar del Río native among those 12 men. The majority were from Matanzas, and we also had some *orientales* [from eastern Cuba] and some from Havana. At night when we were down there, someone would start telling the others that the most beautiful place in Cuba was Viñales; then someone else would jump in talking about his province, and so on. . . .

"A young guy from Matanzas, as soon as he arrived, began to take care of two cats. Those little animals really were internationalist soldiers too, because there were mice underground, and while we slept we often heard the cats hunting. They were very attached to us.

"Our lieutenant completed his mission, and then Gerardo arrived, a graduate of the Institute for Advanced Study of International Relations. The head of the 11th Tactical Group told us, 'This is your new commander.' I remember very well Nordelo's first words:

"'I'm going to share the happiness, the sadness, and all other emotions with you. I'll just be one of you, like a brother, simply another human being.' We liked him a lot from the start.

"At night he would talk about when he was at the university, about his life as a student, about his cartoons, about his mother and his wife.

"He was very funny and knew how to tell jokes. In class he would give us a six-minute break, and during that time he would draw cartoons of us and say, 'That's what you were like in class.'

"When he saw someone was sad, Gerardo would even show him his own letters. When you're so far away, nothing is worth more than someone writing you.

"We played baseball in our free time. Was he good? To tell the truth, no, he wasn't. He was a pitcher, and since we were playing for fun, it didn't matter much. . . .

"He set up a radio; he always had to be doing something. He wrote the communiqués and jokes that were read by a soldier."

### El Corcho

The tall, slender, dark-skinned man recalled that in the platoon there was a very thin young man named Pérez Corcho, who they nicknamed "El Corcho" [The Cork].

"Everyone would call to him, 'El Corcho, come here' and 'El Corcho, go there.' When his birthday came along, Gerardo got the idea that we should celebrate it. He asked for permission, and it was granted.

"For the occasion we made wine from  
**Continued on page 8**



Hernández with Cuban and Angolan combatants in Angola making *dulce de coco* (a coconut dessert). "First row, from left to right: Adolfo, Pembele (Angolan), Nelson Abreu, and Gabriel Basquito (Angolan). Behind them are Yoel and myself." —GH

## U.S. gov't takes aim at one of Cuban 5

### Continued from front page

ordered blood tests to see if he had been infected by a bacteria that has sickened many prisoners. Instead of facilitating the tests, prison authorities put Hernández in the hole the next day.

On July 21 they put the entire prison on lockdown. "They put Gerardo in the 'cage' and then told him some people wanted to talk to him," Weinglass said in a phone interview August 3. "They took him to an office where he was interviewed by two FBI agents."

"They claimed that a package was sent to Gerardo from Santa Clara, Cuba, with a suspicious substance, which was never revealed," Weinglass said.

"The conditions in the hole were abominable," Weinglass reports.

"It's a tiny cell that he had to share with another prisoner," he said. "They had him in a cell down a hall where the air conditioning did not reach, even though there were empty cells nearer the air conditioning unit."

The temperature in the area surrounding the prison reached over 100 degrees during the time Hernández was in the cell.

"To get enough air he had to lie on the floor and suck air from the space under the door," Weinglass said. "He could not use the shower in the cell because it only had scalding hot water."

"Gerardo said these were the worst conditions he's faced since he was jailed," Weinglass said.

Weinglass and Schey sent letters to the prison authorities protesting the violation of the prison's own rules in putting Hernández in the hole. "They did not inform him of the charges against him. They did not grant him a hearing within seven days," Weinglass said.

### Obstructing legal appeal

Being in the hole also obstructed Hernández from consulting with his lawyers as they prepare his habeas corpus appeal, which was filed June 14, requesting a new trial. Weinglass and Schey were told by prison officials that they would only be allowed to visit with a glass partition separating them from Hernández. They were also told they could not carry pencils, pens, paper, or legal documents during the visit.

After the attorneys protested, "they finally let us take in one notebook that had nothing written on it," Weinglass said."

"They wouldn't let us give Gerardo the legal documents we brought with us. I'm going to have to mail them. But mail to Gerardo has been a constant problem."

Hernández, Ramón Labañino, René González, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González were arrested in September 1998 on frame-up charges of "conspiracy to commit espionage" or "conspiracy to act as non-registered foreign agents" and given stiff sentences.

Hernández was also charged with "conspiracy to commit murder" and handed a double-life sentence plus 15 years.

Known internationally as the Cuban Five, they had been gathering information on right-wing Cuban exile groups in Florida that have a history of carrying out violent attacks against Cuba.

### False allegations

The murder charge against Hernández is based on the false allegation by U.S. prosecutors that he knew in advance that Cuban air force pilots would shoot down planes flown by Brothers to the Rescue.

Led by CIA-trained José Basulto, Brothers to the Rescue had been making provocative flights into Cuban airspace and over Havana, in spite of numerous warnings. Havana had protested several times to Washington and demanded that the flights be halted. On Feb. 24, 1996, Cuban fighter pilots shot down two of the planes in Cuban airspace, after they refused warnings to turn around.

Under the federal habeas corpus motion, the legal team is presenting new evidence that Hernández is innocent and the U.S. government attorneys committed violations in the handling and falsifying of evidence during the trial.

Washington has denied visas to Hernández's wife Adriana Pérez 10 times, preventing her from visiting him in prison since his arrest. Olga Salanueva, who is married to René González, has also been blocked from entering the United States.

Messages demanding that Hernández get the medical attention he needs, that he be allowed to work with his lawyers to prepare his appeal, and that he be allowed visits by his wife Adriana Pérez can be sent to:

Federal Bureau of Prisons, Director Harley G. Lappin, 320 First St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20534, tel: (202) 307-3198, e-mail: info@bop.gov; and to U.S. State Department, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, 2201 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20520, tel: (202) 647-4000; fax: (202) 647-2283.

### Message from Gerardo after release from 'hole'

August 3, 2010

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

I am dictating these words via telephone, which is why I must be brief and I will not be able to say everything I would have liked. Yesterday afternoon I was removed from "the hole" with the same speed with which I was thrown in. I had been taken there supposedly because I was under investigation. These investigations can take up to three months, sometimes more, but I was there 13 days. As a well-known Cuban journalist would say: you can draw your own conclusions. . . .

I want to express to all of you my deep gratitude. You know that they were particularly difficult days due to the excessive heat and the lack of air, but you all were my oxygen. I can't find a better way to summarize the enormous importance of your solidarity efforts.

Many thanks to all the compañeras and compañeros from Cuba and around the world who joined their voices to condemn my situation. Thanks to the institutions, organizations and individuals of goodwill that in one way or another worked to bring an end to this injustice.

To our President Raúl, who so honors us with his support. To the Cuban National Assembly and its President Ricardo Alarcón, a tireless fighter for the cause of the Five. To my four brothers, who sent me messages of encouragement, and who have also suffered and lived under constant risk of suffering similar abuses. And of course, to our dear Commander in Chief: Thank you for so much honor! (I don't know if I should say it, but just the privilege of hearing my name in Fidel's voice makes me feel like thanking those who put me in "the hole". . . )

Thank you Comandante, for the joy of hearing you and seeing you as great as ever!

Thanks to everyone for having demonstrated again the power of solidarity which, without a doubt, will one day make us free.

The struggle continues!  
A big embrace,  
Gerardo Hernández Nordelo  
U.S. Penitentiary, Victorville, California



# ‘12 men and 2 cats’: With Gerardo in Angola

Continued from page 7

rice and from pineapples, which were very abundant in the area. That day we didn’t go to the unit’s main mess hall.” [It wasn’t wine but a kind of fruit drink, because alcohol was prohibited. —GH]

Many of those in the group of 12 had no idea how to cook, but they invented things. Gerardo wrote some jokes for the occasion and a communiqué. He always combined happy themes with patriotic ones, says his former subordinate.

## And did you have a strategy for dealing with the snakes?

“There were lots of cobras there. We had orders to sleep with mosquito netting and to put one boot inside the other so as not to leave them a space they could slide into, since they always seek body warmth.

“Gerardo would be the last to go to bed and always told us, ‘Stuff your boots together the way you now know how to.’ He always paid attention to those details, even though he was very young.

“Every third or fourth day we marched 40 or 50 kilometers [25 or 30 miles] through the jungle on our reconnaissance missions. We went together in a platoon made up of Angolans from FAPLA and the Cubans.

“Once one of the Angolans discovered a six-meter-long boa and killed it. They had a lot of respect for boas and said that we Cubans didn’t fear even those beasts, since we didn’t kill them.

“Lieutenant Nordelo always alerted us to everything, and one of the things he stressed most was the need to respect our own families and the families that lived there.

“I had previously seen on television Angola’s poverty and what the UNITA troops<sup>1</sup> were doing, but none of that could compare with what I saw afterward. Children living in very bad conditions, living in those huts, skinny, emaciated, and I couldn’t help comparing them to ours and thinking that sometimes we weren’t really conscious of what we had.

“For me, Angola was a school. I

learned to value life and internationalism more, and to give a little of myself.

“One of Gerardo’s many good ideas was about the children of the place where we were. He asked people to make homemade toys for the children, even rag dolls. It was very nice.”

## When you saw Gerardo on TV, what did you feel?

“At first I was very sad, thinking of a man who was such a revolutionary, such a good comrade, who had been so concerned for all of us, and who was today imprisoned—in the United States.

“But now I see it differently. It makes me happy to remember that the lieutenant at whose side I spent so much time is today a symbol of patriotism, that he has not given in. He has withstood so much; they haven’t even allowed him to see his wife. That man, who was taking care of all of us, has not been able to have children!

“At the same time, I feel more revolutionary and committed. I also hope he will return and that those 12 Cubans will be able to meet again to recall the times we lived through in Angola.”

Palacio, a modest man, a party member, a refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic in a cold storage plant, has not written Gerardo because he didn’t have



“We are, from left to right, Pembele (Angolan), Adolfo (in front), Henry (in back), and me. Standing below is José Luis Palacio, from Pinar del Río.” —GH

the address of the prison. Nor does he seek the limelight in recounting his days together with that lieutenant who liked to read so much.

It was Palacio’s friend Félix Peña, an official of the provincial committee of the party, who encouraged him to speak with a reporter—to share with many more people his experiences with that genuine Cuban, whose ideals support him as straight as the Cuban palms he talked about to his men, as if to remind them they were born in a small island accustomed to nobleness.

Hernández’s scouting platoon was part of a tactical group belonging to the 10th Tank Brigade in Cabinda, which took part in reconnaissance missions to protect Cuban units and troops.

When he gave classes to his soldiers, Palacio reports, Gerardo would stress to them the importance of sharpening their skills for observing the enemy in order to track them.

A scout looks for signs on the ground indicating where the adversary might be. He must study the makeup of the opposing army, its weaponry.

All members of that 12-man platoon—a symbolic number in the history of Cuba—have a photo of the group. Gerardo himself took it. In different ways this patriot has things in common

with Ignacio Agramonte,<sup>2</sup> that fierce attorney, that man of letters and also of action in the fields of Cuba, capable of wielding a machete but also of writing tender lines to his wife.

And this Cuban hero, who has grown while locked up in a U.S. prison cell, left for his wife Adriana, along with the song “Dulce abismo” [sweet abyss] by Silvio Rodríguez, this poem by Roberto Fernández Retamar entitled “Filin”:<sup>3</sup>

If they tell me you have gone away  
And will not come back  
I won’t believe it  
I will wait for you and wait for you.  
If they tell you I have gone  
And will not return  
Don’t believe it  
Wait for me  
Always.

2. Ignacio Agramonte (1841–73) one of the most outstanding political and military leaders of Cuba’s first independence war against Spain. Division commander of the Liberation Army in Camagüey Province. He rose to the rank of major general. He was killed in battle.

3. Filin (feeling) was a genre of popular Cuban music that developed in Havana during a period of growing social unrest in the 1940s and ’50s, incorporating elements of both jazz and Cuban bolero.

1. Originally founded to fight Portuguese colonial rule, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), led by Jonas Savimbi, allied itself in 1975 with the racist apartheid regime in South Africa and U.S. imperialism in an effort to overthrow the newly independent Angolan government. Some 375,000 Cuban combatants fought in Angola alongside FAPLA against pro-imperialist forces, including UNITA. Cuba ended its internationalist combat mission there in 1991 after the South African military was defeated and forced to withdraw from Angola and grant independence to nearby Namibia.

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# Join fight to free Cuban Five!

Now is the time to intensify the campaign to free the Cuban Five, who have been serving hard time in U.S. prisons for nearly 12 years. The recent actions by the U.S. government to single out Gerardo Hernández, one of the five, for brutal punishment by placing him in the prison “hole” exposes the hypocrisy of the U.S. rulers, who rail about alleged human rights violations in Cuba, while every day they trample on the rights of workers in the United States and around the world.

Known as the Cuban Five, Hernández along with Ramón Labañino, René González, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González were framed up on charges ranging from “conspiracy to act as unregistered foreign agents” to “conspiracy to commit espionage” and, in the case of Hernández, “conspiracy to commit murder.” The five had been monitoring the activities of right-wing Cuban exile groups in Florida with a long history of violent attacks against the Cuban Revolution with Washington’s complicity.

Hernández was given the most draconian sentence of the five—two life sentences plus 15 years. His wife has been denied the right to visit him for nearly 12 years. His lawyers have been restricted from working with him to help prepare the appeal of his conviction.

And then just one day after a doctor ordered tests on his health, Hernández is thrown into a tiny, sweltering cell for 13 days and denied medical treatment, in a further attempt to break his spirit. The abuse of Hernández verifies what tens of thousands of working people know from personal experience on the way prison authorities brutalize those behind bars.

Working people should join the campaign to demand that Hernández receive the medical attention he needs, that he be allowed full access to his attorneys, and that his wife be granted a visa to enter the United States and be able to visit him. Unions and other organizations should get behind this fight, and help spread the word. Free the Cuban Five!

## Afghans protest civilian war deaths



Associated Press/Musadeq Sadeq

Afghan women in Kabul August 1 chant slogans against NATO and U.S. forces and condemn killings of civilians.

### Continued from front page

died from a NATO airstrike in Kunduz Province.

An investigation by the National Directorate of Security, Afghanistan’s intelligence agency, determined that a NATO rocket hit a house where women and children were seeking shelter from fighting between foreign troops and the Taliban. Karzai confirmed the attack and deaths.

One man, Mohammed Usman, said he pulled 24 bodies of women and children from the rubble. A farmer, Haji Abdul Ghafar, showed a reporter for the *Guardian* newspaper his son and nephew, who were recovering in the hospital. He said he lost three sisters, three daughters, and another son.

The U.S. command in Kabul issued a statement July 26 that its joint investigation with Afghan forces of the Sangin incident “has thus far revealed no evidence of civilians injured or killed.”

Anger at the toll on Afghan civilians boiled over in Kabul July 30 after an SUV carrying U.S. mercenaries from DynCorp International collided with a car transporting Afghans. The crash resulted in four Afghan deaths, the *Post* reported.

Hundreds of Afghans surrounded the U.S. vehi-

cle and another that came to assist it. The two cars were torched. The contractors, and both Afghan and NATO security forces that arrived, were pelted with rocks. The Afghan news agency Pajhwok reported that other Afghans joined the protest, chanting slogans against foreign troops and Karzai.

“We poor people are not just here to be killed,” an Afghan woman named Rabia told the *Post*. She said she saw the July 30 protest against the U.S. contractors and decided to join the August 1 march.

“Many times NATO troops and these cars have killed our innocent people,” a young marcher named Samia told the *Post*. “They never care whether we are Afghans or animals.”

“We want NATO troops and American troops to leave Afghanistan,” she continued. “Even with their huge army, they couldn’t do anything in the past 10 years. And in the future they won’t be able to do anything. The result will be just death and casualties.”

The Afghan Interior Ministry announced that 270 civilians died in the war in July, an increase from the previous month. July ended as the deadliest month for U.S. troops since the war began in 2001, with 66 soldiers killed.

U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates underscored the very narrow nature of any U.S. troop reduction next July, the original deadline announced by the White House to begin troop departures. “We are not leaving Afghanistan in July of 2011,” Gates said August 1. “We are beginning a transition process and a thinning of our ranks.”

“My personal opinion is that drawdowns early on will be of fairly limited numbers.”

## D.C. campaign



Militant/Leah Morrison

Omari Musa, SWP candidate for Washington, D.C., mayor, petitioning to get on ballot. Above he talks with Rasa Massey, an organizer for American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees union.

### Continued from front page

ers met a young woman at a supermarket who, after signing the petition, said, “You’re coming to the candidates’ forum at UDC [University of the District of Columbia] tomorrow night, aren’t you?”

Musa and Paul Pederson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for D.C. Council Chair, went to the July 29 UDC forum with a team of supporters. Organizers of the “conversation with the leading candidates for mayor and council chair” told the socialist candidates only those leading candidates in the Democratic Party primary would be allowed to speak. Despite being kept out of the forum, 20 people signed the socialists’ petition, including several individuals from the American Civil Liberties Union and NAACP, which were among the sponsoring groups.

On July 30, socialist campaigners went to two Department of Motor Vehicles offices to gather signatures. “At the DMV, there is almost always a long, slow-moving line,” said Pederson. “People listened with interest when we told them about our campaign and often signed in groups. One young woman, who at first refused to sign, came back after overhearing our discussion with someone else. She had worked at UPS and thought the demand for workers’ control of safety on the job was important.” By the end of the day, the team had gathered 120 signatures.

On July 31, the campaign hall was filled with volunteers for a dinner and rally to celebrate the success of the mayoral petition drive, the first for the Socialist Workers Party in Washington, D.C., since 2002. The petitions will be filed later in August.

The heart of the petitioning drive was in the areas east of the Anacostia River, in the southeastern part of the city. This majority Black working-class area is being hammered by the capitalist economic crisis.

During the 12-day petition drive, socialist campaigners talked to several thousand workers, many of whom welcomed the news that there is a working-class candidate for mayor, one who believes that people like themselves are capable, if organized and united, of waging a revolutionary struggle that can get rid of capitalism and its horrors once and for all.

Every petitioner recalled meeting people who at first refused to sign because they were so disgusted by capitalist “politics and politicians” and then changed their minds after more discussion. The petitioners found that if they could talk to them even briefly about a revolutionary, working-class program—especially the need for a workers party independent of the Democrats and Republicans—many, if not most, would decide they wanted to see the socialist candidate on the ballot.

During the drive, workers and young people bought 12 copies of the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, 12 subscriptions to the *Militant*, and 108 copies of the socialist newsweekly.

### Correction

The front-page photo of Black farmers in the August 9 issue gave the wrong name for the farmer at the far left. He is Robert Binion.

The photobox headlined “Cubans commemorate July 26 assault” misspelled the name of the U.S.-backed Cuban dictator overthrown in 1959. He was Fulgencio Batista.