

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Fellow prisoner: Getting to know
René González ‘changed my life’
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 20 MAY 27, 2013

‘Militant’ drive expands readership in coal regions

BY LOUIS MARTIN

Militant supporters sold 48 subscriptions and 60 single copies to coal miners and other workers in the coalfields of West Virginia, southern Illinois and western Kentucky over the May 11-12 weekend, building solidarity with the fight by the United Mine Workers of America to

**ACTIVE WORKERS
CONFERENCE, JULY 19-20**
— See article, p. 3

beat back bosses’ union-busting efforts under the cover of Patriot Coal’s bankruptcy proceedings. (See article on this page.)

“We’ve got nothing left to lose. No miner wants to go backwards. I believe in job security and having a say-so about safety,” said Ron Keeney when he bought a subscription outside

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SWP candidates in Seattle debate opponents, win workers’ support

BY EDWIN FRUIT

RENTON, Wash. — Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Seattle—along with running mates Edwin Fruit for Seattle City Council Position 6 and John Naubert for Port of Seattle Commissioner Position 2 — filed with the King County Elections Office here May 13 to be listed on the ballot in the August primary elections.

More than 75 people donated money to the campaign for the required filing fees, which totaled more than \$3,000. All contributions were under \$25, in order that the campaign would not be required to turn contributors’ names over to state authorities.

“We would like to thank the scores of workers from across the region who contributed to make it possible

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Miners fight Patriot Coal drive to ‘break our union’

‘Bosses united against workers, we must unite against them’



Militant/Laura Anderson

Mine Workers are preparing next rally in St. Louis for May 21, the ninth action since September, to protest Patriot Coal’s plans to use bankruptcy filing to tear up union contracts. Above, workers from a number of unions stand in solidarity with UMW miners at April 29 rally in St. Louis.

BY ALYSON KENNEDY
AND BETSY FARLEY

WAVERLY, Ky. — “We are fighting for our lives,” said Ed Baker, a coal miner at the Patriot-owned Highland No. 9 Mine and a member of United Mine Workers of America Local 1793. “They are doing this for the almighty dollar.”

Baker and other members of the UMW here and in West Virginia

spoke to the *Militant* recently about Patriot Coal’s drive to eliminate pensions and health benefits for more than 20,000 retired miners and their spouses, and rip up the union contract for some 2,000 working miners.

“Patriot was set up to go broke,”

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Feature inside
How socialists pushed back government effort to curb workers rights, and why bosses’ press can’t explain it
— page 7

Bangladesh bosses’ profit drive kills 1,127, sparks workers’ struggle for safety, unions



Munir Uz Zaman/AFP/Getty Images

Garment workers in Bangladesh have taken to streets since 1,127 were killed by landlord and boss actions that led to April 24 factory building collapse. Above, protest in Dhaka May 14.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Garment workers in Bangladesh have continued daily strikes and demonstrations pressing for safer working conditions and higher wages since a landlord’s “cost saving” measures and bosses’ pursuit of maximum profit killed more than 1,100 workers April 24.

The development of capitalism in the country and throughout Asia in recent decades has drawn hundreds of millions into the industrial working class, opening up possibilities for toilers to organize and fight on stronger foundations than ever before. The un-

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Join May 21 and June 4 actions!

The *Militant* calls on working people throughout the country to join coal miners in the fight against the bosses’ assault on their union and what it has won in safety, wages, pensions, health care and other gains achieved in past struggles. Demonstrations are planned for May 21 in St. Louis and June 4 in Henderson, Ky.

EDITORIAL

The United Mine Workers of America was organized and built without regard to race or country of birth, often against violent opposition by the coal bosses and the government. Through many struggles,

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- Texas: Worker killed, 3 injured in Exxon fire 6

Spring ‘Militant’ subscription campaign				
May 4 - June 25 (week 1)				
Country	quota	sold	%	2,800
UNITED STATES				
Des Moines	140	51	36%	
Los Angeles	175	58	33%	
Twin Cities	140	46	33%	
Seattle	160	51	32%	
Lincoln	25	7	28%	
San Francisco	180	50	28%	
Washington	90	23	26%	
Philadelphia	140	35	25%	
New York	425	104	24%	
Boston	65	15	23%	
Chicago	180	39	22%	
Miami	90	18	20%	
Atlanta	160	31	19%	
Omaha	90	17	19%	
Houston	140	21	15%	
Total US	2,200	566	26%	
PRISONERS	15	1	7%	
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	160	31	19%	
Manchester	100	26	26%	
UK Total	260	57	22%	
CANADA	120	21	18%	
NEW ZEALAND	70	13	19%	
AUSTRALIA	80	21	26%	
Total	2,745	679	24%	
Should be	2,800	392	14%	

679

Should be

Indonesia workers rally May Day for better wages, work conditions

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — May Day in Indonesia this year stood in stark contrast to a time not so long ago when workers of that country were weighed down by past bloody defeats and ongoing repression. Tens of thousands across the country rallied May 1 to demand improvements in wages and conditions of life and work. The day also saw demonstrations in West Papua by supporters of self-determination, who braved violent assaults by the military and police.

The largest union mobilization was in Jakarta, capital of the nation of more than 240 million people. “About 100,000 workers came together to make a protest to the government about low wages, working conditions, and outsourcing,” wrote Hegel Terome, organizational deputy of Kalyanamitra, a women’s rights center in Indonesia, in response to questions from the *Militant*. Outsourcing refers to the employers’ widespread practice of filling formerly permanent jobs with workers hired on short-term contracts.

“Workers rallied in front of the presidential place, the offices of the ministries of labor and immigration, and other department offices,” Terome said.

Among the unions leading the action was the Indonesian Confederation of Trade Unions. Also involved was the Confederation of Indonesian Workers Union (KSPI), which called a general strike Oct. 3 last year. The KSPI is involved in organizing a mass protest against planned fuel price increases this coming August.

Opposition to the price hikes was

one demand at the May Day actions, said Rini Kusnadi, head of the women’s department of the National Union Confederation (KSN), in a May 7 phone interview. “Many companies and bosses complained of the loss of income because their factory entrances were blocked by workers.”

Rena Herdiyani, Kalyanamitra’s executive director, told the *Militant* that a contingent of women had protested before the main rally to “raise issues about the discrimination that women face, like the fact that we don’t have equal pay.” The women called for day care centers to be set up in workplaces and for action against sexual harassment at work, she said. “We demonstrated for two or three hours, hearing speeches, and then joined in the labor demonstration.”

Among the most significant social changes in the country, women have been drawn into the workforce in unprecedented numbers to fill the bosses’ demand for labor. Industrial production and development have been expanding for years with the large influx of foreign capital attracted to relatively low wages and other conditions favorable for profit.

“As Indonesia’s trillion-dollar economy grows at a rate of 6% annually, many workers feel they aren’t getting a big enough cut of the country’s evidently rising fortunes,” stated the *Wall Street Journal* in a May 2 piece reporting on the mobilization in Jakarta.

Protests occurred in other cities as well. Some 50,000 workers gathered in Surabaya, Indonesia’s biggest city after Jakarta. In Yogyakarta, a city of nearly 400,000 people in Central Java, “150



Adek Berry/AFP/Getty Images

Some 100,000 workers marched in Jakarta, Indonesia, May 1, demanding wage raises and better work conditions and protesting “outsourcing” of permanent jobs to short-term contracts.

workers had raised demands on political issues and democratic reforms, including the right to organize their own independent unions,” said Mahendra, a worker for the Congress of Indonesian Unions Alliance (KASBI).

On the same day indigenous people in West Papua demanded self-determination for the region at demonstrations marking the 50th anniversary of the seizure of the territory by the Indonesian government.

The Free West Papua Campaign website reported that in the West Papua capital Jayapura, “Five hundred West Papuan activists ... sang, cried out ‘Free

Papua’ and carried banners denouncing fifty years of occupation by the Indonesian military.”

Police arrested six people in the Biak regency for raising the Morning Star flag of the pro-independence Free Papua Organization, reported the *Jakarta Post*. Protests were also staged in Fak-Fak, Paniai, and Timika, according to the West Papua Media.

In Sorong, Abner Malagawak and Thomas Blesia, both 22, were killed April 30 when Indonesian security forces opened fire on supporters of self-determination preparing for the demonstration the next day.

Australia actions oppose jailing refugees

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY — More than 100 people marched to the Villawood detention center here April 28 as part of a weekend of protests against the government’s incarceration of immigrants seeking political asylum. Some 300 others rallied outside the Yongah Hill prison in Northam near Perth, Western Australia.

Last year there were 17,202 arrivals by sea and 886 asylum seekers were deported. In the last four years more than 600 people have drowned on boats that sank on their way to Australia.

The Labour government of Julia Gillard “is committed to deterring people from taking dangerous journeys by boat,” said Immigration Minister Brendan O’Connor in April after 38 of

66 Sri Lankan refugees were deported following a 44-day arduous sea voyage.

There are 2,589 refugees detained on Christmas Island, an Australian territory nearly 1,000 miles from the mainland. Last year the Gillard government reopened detention centers on the Pacific island of Nauru and Papua New Guinea’s Manus Island.

Some 270 refugees are being held in Manus Island indefinitely until their claims are processed. According to an Immigration department report, the center “is cramped and recreation facilities are limited ... there is no reliable power supply [and] limited potable water.”

In February asylum seekers on Nauru sewed their lips together to protest conditions and their indefinite detentions.

THE MILITANT

Defend women’s right to choose abortion

The fight to defend a woman’s right to choose abortion is central to the struggle for women’s rights and the entire working class. The ‘Militant’ covers protests against the drive by capitalist politicians and rightists to restrict this right. Don’t miss an issue.



Demonstrators in Richmond, Va., protest anti-abortion bills, February 2012.

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Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

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

Subscription campaign

Continued from front page

the portal of Highland No. 9, a coal mine owned by Patriot in Waverly, Ky. Keeney was one of 14 miners who signed up for a subscription during a shift change at the mine. Twenty-eight others bought single copies of the paper.

“I like the door to door,” retired UMWA miner Peggy Vondrasek from Corydon, Ky., said after she joined *Militant* supporters for the afternoon May 12 in Union, Ky. “I had the opportunity to meet people around the neighborhood who had worked in the mine, who I had heard of before and never met. It was fun.”

A total of 679 subscriptions have been sold by the end of the first week of a seven-week international campaign to win 2,800 *Militant* subscribers and sell hundreds of books on revolutionary working-class politics.

“We sold 22 subscriptions and 15 single copies door to door in the towns of Madison, Danville, Alkol and Van,” wrote Janet Post, on her way back to Philadelphia from the West Virginia coalfields. “I think my father would appreciate knowing what this paper fights for, and that I am going to buy it,” said Viola Hawley when she bought a subscription in Madison. Her father, Roy Lee Grass, died in 1979 from black lung, a disease caused by exposure to coal dust. “He fought the whole time to get black lung benefits.”

“We found a near unanimous response of solidarity with the hundreds of garment workers killed by the bosses’ greed in Bangladesh described in the May 13 issue,” Post said. “Miners and others saw it as an attack on fellow workers, not some faraway tragic event.”

“The *Militant* is the only newspaper around that gives the views and is devoted to the working class,” said Jeremy Ray from Tacoma, Wash., when he renewed his subscription for six months. Ray, a member of Teamsters Local 117, was part of a nine-week strike earlier this year at United Natural Foods Inc. in Auburn, Wash.

“In many working-class areas of Miami,” Anthony Dutrow wrote, “we have met more workers who have heard about the case of the Cuban Five.” (See article on page 8.)

“One new subscriber today,” Dutrow added, “saw the *Militant* coverage and the book *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free* as a way to follow the international campaign to free the Five and become part of it.” The book is one of nine books on special with a subscription. (See ad on this page.)

As in the past couple of drives, the *Militant* has the goal of selling 15 subscriptions to workers behind



Militant/Janet Post

Jason Hager, left, laid-off contract miner, bought *Militant* subscription when Osborne Hart knocked on his door in Danville, W.Va. Hager said miners want to fight for not only themselves, but for the rights of other workers. “They like to stand up and people notice,” he said.

bars. The number of prisoners with subscriptions has more than doubled in the last few years, now reaching 72 across the U.S.

To join the effort to expand cir-

culatation of the working-class press, call *Militant* distributors in your region listed on page 10 or contact the *Militant* at (212) 244-4899 or themilitant@mac.com.

Active workers conference set for July 19-20

BY LOUIS MARTIN

Workers who read and distribute the *Militant* are reaching out broadly to working people engaged in labor struggles and political activity, discussing with them participating in an active workers conference Friday and Saturday, July 19-20.

The two-day gathering in Oberlin, Ohio, will feature talks by Socialist Workers Party leaders on world capitalism’s deepening economic crisis, social and political upheavals, wars and military conflicts, and other questions that fill the *Militant*’s pages each week. Workers at the gathering will discuss re-

sistance by coal miners, school bus drivers, and others to assaults by the bosses and their government on working people, our unions and political rights. There will be classes on lessons from revolutionary working-class struggles the world over.

Central to conference events will be charting a political course to build a mass social movement of the working class and its allies that can wage a revolutionary fight for workers power.

Organized by the Socialist Workers Party, the conference is an opportunity for participants to share experiences and discuss how to advance our common

efforts. It will be attended by workers involved in labor and political struggles here and abroad, as well as supporters of the communist movement who help produce the books used in political work, many of whom have decades of experience in working-class politics.

Activity to build the July conference is underway by members of the SWP and by Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Participants in the *Militant* subscription campaign are discussing the gathering with workers and others interested in the paper, including how to get time off work, organize transportation and raise money to cover costs.

Chuck Guerra and Helen Meyers of Des Moines, Iowa, for example, met over coffee recently with coworker and subscriber Kyle Young to talk about the conference. All three work in a printing plant there. Discussing the *Militant*’s coverage of fights by coal miners from West Virginia to Utah, Young asked, “Why would anyone fight before their backs are against the wall?” That opened an exchange on the need for solidarity with each other’s fights, why many workers don’t yet see our power to change the world, and how the active workers conference is a chance to deepen such discussions.

The gathering will assess accomplishments of the spring subscription campaign and ongoing efforts to expand circulation of the *Militant* among workers and farmers and to get books and pamphlets on working-class politics into their hands. There will be tables of books published or distributed by Pathfinder Press in English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Farsi, Greek, Swedish and other languages, as well as displays of photos and charts showing how revolutionary literature is being used by socialist workers around the world.

On Sunday July 21, supporters of the communist movement will meet to discuss their work helping produce Pathfinder books and sell them to bookstores and libraries across the globe — from New York to Paris, from Sydney, Australia, to Bamako, Mali.

To learn more, call *Militant* distributors in your area (see directory on page 10) or contact us at (212) 244-4899 or themilitant@mac.com.

Special offers with ‘Militant’ subscription



The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

by Jack Barnes

\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

The Cuban Five

Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free

from pages of the ‘Militant’

\$3 with subscription (regular \$5)

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism

by Jack Barnes

\$2 with subscription (regular \$3)

We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions

by Thomas Sankara

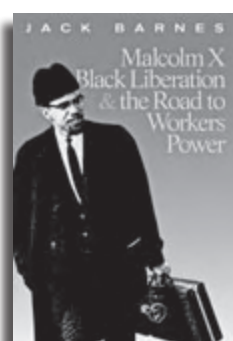
Speeches from the Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87

\$5 with subscription (regular \$10)

Thomas Sankara Speaks

The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987

\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)



Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes

\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)

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Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own

by Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro; Cuban generals and combatants; Gabriel García Márquez

\$6 with subscription (regular \$12)

Women in Cuba

The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution

by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer

\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)

Women and Revolution

The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution

by Asela de los Santos, Mary-Alice Waters and others

\$3 with subscription (regular \$7)



See distributors
on page 10

Socialist debates opponents

Continued from front page
for the working class to have a voice in the elections,” Martin said.

“We are running to provide an alternative to the candidates of the twin parties of capitalism, the Democrats and Republicans,” Martin told some 200 people in her opening statement at a candidates’ forum in Seattle April 29. “Working people are living through the worst economic crisis since the 1930s with long-term unemployment and attacks on our unions and democratic rights.

“We call for a massive government-funded jobs program to put millions to work building infrastructure, schools, hospitals, recreation centers and other things working people need.” Fighting for and wresting such a concession from the capitalists’ government, the candidates explain, would deal a blow to the competition among workers fostered by high joblessness, strengthening the confidence, unity and combativity of the working class.

“Our campaign doesn’t start with Seattle but speaks to the interests of the international working class,” Martin said. “My running mates John Naubert for port commissioner and Edwin Fruit for city council and I stand with the striking and locked-out dockworkers from Vancouver, Wash., to Hong Kong.”

Candidates at the forum were asked to write “yes” or “no” on placards in response to several questions.

“Is the Seattle Police Department better than it was four years ago?” was one of the questions asked in the context of recent investigations into the SPD by the Department of Justice for

using “excessive force.” The *Seattle Times* ran a photo of the responses. The bourgeois candidates each held up signs with “yes” and “no” answers. Martin’s placard read: “Prosecute and jail cops who kill and brutalize working people.”

After seeing the photo, two workers from the Boeing aircraft plant in Seattle sent in contributions to her campaign.

“I campaign face-to-face with the *Militant* newspaper, going door to door to engage in discussions with working people,” she said. “I point to the example of the Cuban Revolution as a place where capitalism was overturned and society is being built based on human needs, not profit.”

“Capitalism’s dog-eat-dog values teach that the highest form of living is to amass wealth and to take care of number one,” Martin said when asked what “her greatest career regret” was. “We are talking about building a movement to fight for working class interests on the road to overturning capitalism and workers taking power.

“Ask the Seattle port truck drivers what *their* greatest ‘career regret’ is,” she said. “They are fighting for union representation and bathrooms with soap and running water where they can wash their hands prior to meals and prayers. I stand with them.”

At the end of the forum people came up to Martin and thanked her



SWP candidate for Seattle mayor Mary Martin debated Democratic and Republican opponents at April 29 forum widely covered by local media, including *Seattle Times* (above). After reading coverage and seeing photo of Martin holding sign saying “prosecute and jail cops who kill and brutalize working people,” two Boeing aircraft workers sent in contributions to campaign.

for speaking to the issues of concern to working people. A union bus driver explained he has to work 11-hour shifts and is not allowed to take bathroom breaks. A member of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union in Seattle said he appreciated the *Militant*’s ongoing coverage of longshore battles.

The debate was covered by the *Seattle Times*, online news outlets, *Crosscut.com*, *Seattlemet.com* and

The Stranger newspaper.

Over the past couple weeks, the three SWP candidates have walked the picket lines of locked-out ILWU members in Portland, Ore., and Vancouver, Wash., to help build solidarity with their fights, and Martin spoke to a class at Tacoma Community College.

“We say organize and unionize all workers. No deportations!” Naubert said, addressing participants at a May Day march and rally in Yakima.

New contributors donate to Militant Fighting Fund

BY LEA SHERMAN

“Capitalism can be very ugly and this is capitalism at its ugliest,” Gray Woods, a 52-year-old miner who works for Patriot Coal in southern West Virginia, told *Militant* supporter Janet Post as he gave her \$10 for the Militant Fighting Fund and bought a single copy of the paper. Like thousands of other miners, Woods worked for Peabody Energy before it spun off most of its union mines to create Patriot, which filed for bankruptcy in 2012 as part of a scheme to gut union contracts and get out from under pension and health care obligations.

“Use this donation for the fund in whatever way you think best,” said Woods, who was taking off his mine boots when *Militant* supporters came to his door as they were selling the socialist newsweekly in mining communities of West Virginia.

Unlike the big-business press, the *Militant* covers labor struggles, world developments and big political questions from the point of view of the in-

terests of the working class. Readers of the *Militant* around the world have pledged to raise more than \$115,000 to help keep the paper coming out and to expand its circulation.

The team also sold the paper at a portal of Hobet Mining, a Patriot-owned mine. A couple that lives close to the mine drove by and stopped when they saw the team’s sign “The *Militant* supports miners at Patriot.” They bought a paper and added an extra \$4 when told about the fund.

Each area is working to win new contributors to the fund as they organize to meet their local quotas. “Ten dollars came from nurse Felecia Buckhanan, when she renewed her subscription for six months during a home visit,” reported Lisa Potash from Atlanta. “She has also given an issue to a coworker she plans to talk with about signing up for a subscription.”

An autoworker and a teacher, while not ready to subscribe, each donated several dollars during discussions with

Militant campaigners who knocked on their doors in Atlanta. “Their response was ‘I like what you’re doing. Good luck!’” said Potash. While selling the paper outside a Kraft Foods plant, a team netted a \$4 contribution from a worker who picked up a copy of the paper.

To contribute, contact distributors listed on page 10, or send a check or money order made out to the *Militant* to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

<i>Militant Fighting Fund</i>	
May 4 - June 25 \$115,000	
Country	Quota
UNITED STATES	
Atlanta	\$9,000
Boston	\$3,500
Chicago	\$9,500
Des Moines	\$2,600
Houston	\$4,000
Lincoln	\$200
Los Angeles	\$8,500
Miami	\$3,000
New York	\$20,000
Omaha	
Philadelphia	\$4,300
San Francisco	\$13,500
Seattle	\$8,500
Twin Cities	\$5,500
Washington	\$7,800
Total U.S.	\$96,900
CANADA	\$7,000
NEW ZEALAND	\$5,500
AUSTRALIA	\$1,500
UNITED KINGDOM	
London	\$2,000
Manchester	\$600
Total UK	\$2,600
Total	\$116,500

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

No Worker Has to Die! The Fight for Safety on the Job. Speaker: Sarah Ullman, Socialist Workers Party, member UNITE HERE. Fri., May 24, 7:30 p.m. 13 Bennington St. Tel.: (617) 569-9169.

TEXAS

Houston

Free the Cuban Five! Celebrate Release of René González. Fri., May 24, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-50L. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Utah Miners Stand Up to Bosses’ Attack. Report from *Militant* team to Utah coalfields. Speaker: Clay Dennison, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 24, 7:30 p.m. 5418 Rainier Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

CANADA

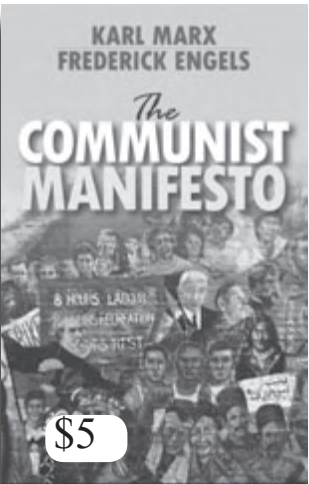
Montreal

Steelworkers in Southern Ontario and U.S. Coal Miners Fight to Defend Unions. Speaker: Annette Kouri, participant in *Militant* reporting team to U.S. Steel picket line, Nanticoke, Ontario. Fri., May 24, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Christchurch Earthquake Two Years On: ‘Rebuild’ Deepens Impact of Capitalist Crisis on Working People. Speakers: Baskaran Appu and Patrick Brown, participants in *Militant* reporting team to Christchurch. Fri., May 24, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Road. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.



“Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of the workers.”

—Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

Written in 1848, the Communist Manifesto explains why communism is the line of march of the working class toward power, “springing from an existing class struggle, a historical movement going on under our very eyes.”

www.pathfinderpress.com

ON THE PICKET LINE

Oregon: Locked-out longshore workers plan June 1 rally

PORTLAND, Ore. — Some two dozen members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 8 set up picket lines here May 4 after Columbia Grain locked them out that morning, joining the fight launched when United Grain locked out 50 members of Local 4 at its terminal across the Columbia River in Vancouver, Wash., Feb. 27.

In December longshore workers voted 94 percent to reject concession contracts offered by the Pacific Northwest Grain Handlers Association, which includes United Grain, Columbia Grain, Temco Elevator, and Louis Dreyfus Commodities. Only Temco has signed a new agreement with the union.

“The picketers in Portland are getting community support because people realize that company greed is hurting workers,” ILWU spokesperson Jennifer Sargent said in a phone interview.

On May 7 union supporters in nine boats temporarily blocked a grain ship trying to dock at the Port of Kalama, just up the Columbia River. Nonunion workers had loaded grain onto the ship at United Grain’s Port of Vancouver terminal.

According to the *Columbian*, the U.S. Coast Guard cited the owner of one of the boats for allegedly violating a 200-yard safety zone at the port.

“Members of Local 21 felt that they had a reputation to uphold. That’s why they took it upon themselves to block a ship that was loaded with scab labor at United Grain,” Kyle Mackey, secretary-treasurer of ILWU Local 21 in Longview, Wash., told the *Militant* by phone May 9. He said that Local 8 is planning a community rally for June 1 at Kelley Point Park in Portland.

Columbia Grain did not respond to requests for comment.

—Edwin Fruit

Washington Machinists strike, demand new hires be union

AUBURN, Wash. — Sixty-two members of Machinists Local 79 have been standing strong in the seventh week of their strike against Belshaw Adamatic, a manufacturer of bakery equipment. The workers set up picket lines here March 25. On April 1 the company cut off medical benefits.

“The company wants the right to change health care plans during the life of the contract,” chief shop steward Cliff LaPlant said at the picket line May 6. “The union wants no changes while the contract is in effect.”

Bosses also want the right to outsource work and hire temporary workers for 90

days, LaPlant said. “The union wants all new hires to be in the union. There are also differences in wage increases and pension contributions that have not been resolved.”

LaPlant said that three union members have crossed the picket line, but one came back out after a short time. Striker Hari Shankar was badly bruised when a scab hit him with his car May 3, LaPlant said.

Lance Kondo, who works at Vigor Shipyards, which is also organized by Local 79, was at the picket line May 6. “As a member of the executive board of the local, I feel it is important to show support to my brothers and sisters,” he said.

“I try to get down to the picket line at least once a week,” Syd Coe, a member of Teamsters Local 117 on strike at Davis Wire last summer, said by phone. “When we were on strike we had a lot of solidarity from other union people.”

Workers were voting on a new contract proposal May 10. Belshaw Adamatic has not returned calls requesting comment.

—Edwin Fruit

Hong Kong dockworkers win breaks, pay raise

Some 500 dockworkers in Hong Kong ended a 40-day strike against Hongkong International Terminals May 6 after voting by 80 percent to accept a 9.8 percent pay raise and agreement by the four contracting companies that employ them to provide meal and bathroom breaks.

The workers, who were making less than they earned in 1995, demanded a 20 percent pay raise above their average \$7 hourly pay in response to the bosses’ offer of a 5 percent increase.

“It was not just a fight for a wage increase, it was a fight for dignity and respect,” striking dockworker Ng Siu-keung, employed by contractor Everbest Port Services, told the *South China Morning Post*.

“Stevedores are often asked to work three eight-hour shifts in one go, and they even have to work up to 72 hours continuously during peak season,” wrote Lee Cheuk-yan, general secretary of the Hong Kong Confederation of



Australian maritime workers march in Hong Kong with striking dockworkers in mid-April.

Trade Unions, in a May 3 column in the paper. “Crane operators work 12-hour shifts, and sometimes 24-hour shifts, in cabins 80 feet above the ground. They are not given proper meal and toilet breaks.”

A week after the walkout began about 300 other port crane workers started a work-to-rule action to support the strike, leading their bosses to offer them more pay.

More than \$1.1 million was raised in contributions for the workers’ strike fund. In the U.S. both the International Longshoremen’s Association and International Longshore and Warehouse Union issued calls for solidarity with the Hong Kong dockworkers. Port workers from the Netherlands to Australia took part in demonstrations in Hong Kong to support the strike.

—Brian Williams

Locked-out Ontario Steelworkers reject boss attacks on seniority

NANTICOKE, Ontario — Members of United Steelworkers Local 8782 at Lake Erie Works have been picketing here 24/7 since April 28, when United States Steel Corp. locked out nearly 1,000 workers. The unionists had voted 70 percent to reject the company’s proposed concessions.

During a visit to the picket lines April 4 and 5, workers told the *Militant* one of the main issues is seniority. The company proposal says “existing seniority

provisions and local working conditions will be eliminated or modified as appropriate” to restructure the company “to have maximum efficiency and have employees perform a broader range of duties.” U.S. Steel intends to reduce job classifications from 28 to just eight, which workers say would mean a pay cut for many.

“The vagueness of the company’s proposal is enough to reject the contract,” said Luke McCannon, a production worker, adding that weakening seniority would increase competition among workers.

The company also wants to introduce co-payments on health benefits, place a cap on vacation time, and modify the way cost-of-living allowances are determined so workers would get virtually no pay increase.

Workers are gearing up for what could be a long fight. “My father worked here for 30 years and I don’t want to lose what he fought for, for so long,” said Dean Lacy, a production worker on the picket line.

“All we want is to keep what we have,” added Henry Dickson.

“I will not give back a penny,” said Lap Nguyen, a millwright with eight years in the plant.

Send messages of solidarity to Bill Ferguson, Local 8782 president, at billferguson@uswa8782.com or by mail at P.O. Box 220, Jarvis, Ontario N0J 1J0.

—Michel Dugré and Annette Kouri

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 27, 1988

In a reactionary blow to the constitutional right to privacy, the Supreme Court ruled May 16 that once you put your garbage out for collection, the cops have free reign to root through it.

According to the court majority, such intrusive actions do not violate your Fourth Amendment right not to be subjected to illegal search.

“Trash covers” — as the cops call their investigations of garbage — are standard operating procedures in attempts to disrupt the political activities of individuals and organizations that the government doesn’t agree with.

The decision to sanction “trash covers” is a blow to the right of working people to be left alone free from government interference. And it’s a reminder that unless we fight to extend, strengthen, and defend our rights, we will lose them.



May 27, 1963

May 22 — The events in Birmingham have precipitated a new wave of mass demonstrations in cities across the South, including Knoxville and Nashville, Tenn., Greensboro and Durham, N.C., and Cambridge, Maryland. In addition, the well organized, militant boycott movement in Jackson, Miss., is preparing “intense direct action” if desegregation is not begun “forthwith” in Mississippi’s biggest city.

In Cambridge, Maryland, a fighting leadership and a militant local rank and file, aided by student demonstrators from several states, have won a significant victory. The latest round of demonstrations began six weeks ago and were stepped up May 13. The jails were bulging as a result of the “jail until victory” policy of demonstrators led by Miss Gloria Richardson, chairman of the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee.



May 28, 1938

Memorial Day marks the first anniversary of the police-murder of ten workers and the wounding of many others in South Chicago during the strike against the Republic Steel Company.

The dramatic newsreel of the events gave a shocking and all-too-familiar picture of a peaceful picketing demonstration of striking workers being attacked with guns and tear gas bombs by a bestial police force. The private and public thugs of capital, those in civilian clothes and those in uniform, are a direct and brutal threat not only to the rights of the workers, but to their very lives.

The only defense of the workers and their rights is self-defense. The only one labor can rely upon is itself! The only shield that labor can create against strikebreaking thugs, strikebreaking police—the assassins of the workers—is a WORKERS’ DEFENSE GUARD, organized by the masses themselves.

Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as recounted by a central leader of that battle.

First in a four-volume series. The other books are *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics* and *Teamster Bureaucracy*.

Also in Spanish, Swedish, Farsi, French.

Pathfinder Press.com



Bangladesh garment workers

Continued from front page

folding events in Bangladesh demonstrate that wherever world capitalism creates new industrial centers in pursuit of cheap labor, the class struggle follows.

A total of 1,127 workers were reported dead when rescue efforts ended May 13 at Rana Plaza in Savar, 12 miles north of the capital Dhaka. More than 3,000 workers were inside when the eight-story shoddy building — which housed five garment factories, shops and a bank — caved in 19 days earlier.

The building was evacuated April 23 because of cracks in the outer wall. The shops and the bank told their employees to stay away the following day. But garment bosses pressed workers under false assurances and threats of loss of pay. One hour after work started, the building collapsed.

Tens of thousands of workers immediately took to the streets, shutting down 60 percent of the country's garment industry. Strikes and protests have since continued, demanding arrest of the owners, compensation to families of workers killed, four months wages and safe workplaces. Over the past week the demand for wage raises have come to the fore.

Under mounting social pressure, the government announced May 12 it would set up a board of factory owners and labor groups to propose a new minimum wage. The following day owners announced they would close down hundreds of factories indefinitely in response to "labor unrest."

The government moves to raise the minimum wage "come because of the strikes and protests," Nazma Akter, leader of the Bangladesh Combined Garment Workers Federation, said in a phone interview from Dhaka May 13. "And they continue. We demand a raise from 3,000 to 8,000 takas" (\$37 to \$102 per month).

Reaz Bin Mahmood Sumon, vice president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said at a press conference May 13 that garment bosses had shut down all factories in Ashulia industrial park on the outskirts of Dhaka indefinitely due to continued labor unrest. The park is home to 500 factories employing half a

million workers.

According to the *Daily Star*, Sumon said workers had not gone to work over the past 12 days and staged street demonstrations "without any reason" and "vandalized some factories ... even after the announcement of a fresh wage board for the workers."

The government also announced that it would amend the labor law so that workers wouldn't need permission of factory owners to form unions.

"The issue is not really about making a new law or amending the old one," Kalpona Akter of Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity told Associated Press May 13. "In the past whenever workers tried to form associations they were subjected to beatings and harassment."

In the midst of a strike wave in 2010, the government set up a 2,900-strong industrial police force to spy on workers, subvert union organizations and protect the interests and property of the bosses.

Bangladesh's 5,000 garment factories generate 80 percent of the country's export income. The country is today the second biggest exporter of garments after China. Over the last two decades the garment workforce has grown from 1 million to 4 million. Most are women from rural villages, thrown into large production centers in burgeoning cities like Dhaka, with 14 million people, and Chittagong, with 5 million.

Capitalists feign concern for workers

After the mass killings on the altar of profit at Rana Plaza, the bourgeois media in the imperialist countries where much of the clothing is exported have raised that leading brands should consider moving production out of Bangladesh because of working conditions — as capitalist investors closely watch the workers' struggles there and its effect on wages, conditions and profit margins.

Texas: Worker killed, 3 injured in Exxon plant fire

BY CINDY JAQUITH

BEAUMONT, Texas — Dustin Creekmore, 24, was killed as a result of unsafe conditions imposed on workers at the ExxonMobil refin-



From Bangladesh to Myanmar, capitalist development taking place in Asia and elsewhere is expanding ranks of proletariat and laying foundation for new stage of class struggle. Above, garment workers in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, march May 1 for increase in minimum wage. Inset, more than 1,000 garment workers from Myanmar on strike in Jordan for higher wages, safety and against anti-immigrant discrimination.



Wages in Bangladesh are the lowest of major garment producing countries, followed by Cambodia, another rapidly growing center of garment production. Cambodia had no garment industry until the mid-1990s. In 2010 it made up 70 to 80 percent of the country's manufacturing exports and employed 50 percent of the manufacturing workforce. Today the industry has 500,000 workers. Some 90 percent are women from rural villages.

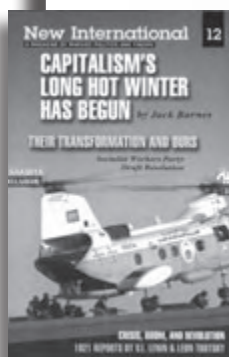
Cambodia stands as another example of the social transformation and class struggle resulting from capitalist development. In recent years workers have staged a number of strikes and other labor actions. In July 2010 the government raised the monthly minimum wage from \$50 to \$61. Two months later 200,000 workers went on strike demanding \$93. In March this year it

was raised to \$80. On May Day thousands of garment workers demonstrated in Phnom Penh, demanding a raise to \$150.

Big retailers in the U.S. and elsewhere are now eyeing a reemerging Myanmar as a new possibility, where the lifting of a U.S. ban on imports and wages around \$33 per month have begun to draw capitalist investment in garment production.

Workers in Myanmar from some 70 garment factories held a series of strikes between May and July last year demanding higher wages and better conditions.

Meanwhile, more than 1,000 garment workers from Myanmar are on strike at a factory in Jordan, demanding increased pay, better food and improved working conditions. The factory produces for Ralph Lauren Canada and U.S.-based Eddie Bauer and Bon Ton.



New International no. 12 'Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun'

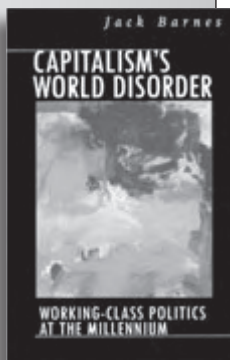
by Jack Barnes

"The size of the hereditary working class, both in absolute terms and in relation to other classes, continues to expand on a world scale. This increases the possibilities for proletarian participation in, and leadership of, revolutionary struggles for national liberation and socialism in the Middle East and worldwide. As new layers of toilers are proletarianized, the class struggle in Asia will intensify in a qualitatively new way from China to Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Russia and beyond." \$16

Capitalism's World Disorder Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

by Jack Barnes

"Labor must convince broad layers of the population as a whole that it is the working-class movement above all that cares about safety. We must be able to assert with complete confidence and integrity that the stronger and more militant the union, the safer the operations of the industry. It's a question of the working class taking the moral high ground in the battle against the exploiting class and for human solidarity." \$25



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ery and chemical plant here. He died April 27 from severe burns suffered when a fire broke out at the facility 10 days earlier.

Creekmore, a boilermaker, was a contract worker at the facility, employed by Signature Industrial Services. Eleven other contract workers were injured in the fire. As of May 1, two remained in critical condition and the condition of a third had been upgraded to serious, according to the *Beaumont Enterprise*.

On the morning of April 17, Norris Johnson, who lives a few blocks from the main gate, saw ambulances and other emergency vehicles racing to the plant.

"But it wasn't until the news came on that night that we learned about the fire," he told the *Militant*. "ExxonMobil sent no representative to the community to tell us what had happened."

"The companies don't care about anyone else's life, as long as they make that dollar," added Johnson, a former foundry worker and oil rigger. Talking about the garment bosses' culpability for the April 24 building collapse in Bangladesh that killed hundreds of workers, he said, "They just wanted to get their production out."

Dorothy West, who works at a

nearby barbecue spot, said she used to visit her grandmother's house near the plant. "I didn't like to go there. If I stayed overnight, I woke up with a headache. A plant like that shouldn't be in a neighborhood so close to people."

United Steelworkers Local 13-243 represents many workers at the Beaumont complex.

The USW issued a statement April 29 reporting that from February 2009 to January 2012, "ExxonMobil had 185 process safety events at its facilities, 57 of them occurred at the Baytown, Texas, complex. Twenty-one leaks or spills also occurred during that time at Baytown. There were numerous emissions events."

USW Local 13-2001, which represents 850 workers at the Baytown facility near Houston, had threatened April 29 to strike after ExxonMobil rejected improved safety measures in the new contract under negotiation.

In a phone interview May 8, USW spokeswoman Lynne Hancock said that union and company negotiators subsequently reached agreement on safety language and that Baytown Steelworkers will vote on a contract May 14 and 15.

Neither ExxonMobil nor Signature Industrial Services returned calls from the *Militant*.

How socialists pushed back government effort to curb workers rights, and why bosses’ press can’t explain it

BY JOHN STUDER

“Socialist Workers Get Break on Donor List” was the headline of an article in the *Wall Street Journal* April 26. “For American Socialists, there’s good news and bad news,” the *Washington Post* reported the same day. Related accounts were run by NPR and *Politico*. The articles reported the Socialist Workers Party’s victory a day earlier in getting the Federal Election Commission to extend through 2016 an exemption from “campaign reform” laws requiring candidates for federal office to make public names of financial contributors. Had the FEC rejected the exemption, which the party first won in 1974, SWP campaign supporters would have been opened to stepped-up spying,

SWP VICTORY IN CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE BATTLE

harassment and attacks by government agents, local cops and right-wing thugs. The FEC extension was the “good news” referred to in the *Post*’s cynical headline. These capitalist-owned media were keeping an eye out for what the FEC would do and were surprised when it neither overturned nor weakened the socialists’ exemption. Prior to the hearing, in fact, the FEC had publicly issued both a draft opinion granting an extension and one rejecting it. Even the draft approval said that while the SWP met requirements, it did so “barely” — a proviso dropped in the ruling itself. None of the bourgeois press articles could explain how or why the exemption had nonetheless been won. Their only explanation was some variant of the “bad news” in the *Post*’s headline — that the SWP, as the reporter put it, is “largely irrelevant to the modern political process.” So the FEC cut the party a break. But if the SWP is politically “irrelevant,” how was it able to win “a crucial decision” from the FEC, as the *Journal* recognized in its lead sentence on the ruling? The *Post*, too, acknowledged the significance of the victory, saying: “Plenty of campaign experts were watching the case to see if it has broader implications for what other groups have to disclose about their donors ...”

As mouthpieces for the wealthy ruling families that control both the Democratic and Republican parties and politicians, none of these media outlets was able to recognize what was really at stake in the FEC ruling. That is, that amid the unremitting capitalist assault on workers’ wages, job conditions, unions and political rights, the SWP victory is the first successful push-back by working-class forces against the bosses, their government and political parties. It’s a victory not just for the SWP but above all for the working class and unions. It’s a victory for our right to organize independent working-class political action free from interference by the class who accumulates its fortunes off exploiting our labor and whose government enforces its rule. Why has the SWP been able to fight effectively for this exemption and win it for some 40 years? For the same reason the government and cop agencies have targeted this workers party from its origins. Both are explained by the party’s decades-long engagement in social, political and union struggles by the working class, whose strategic line of march poses the ultimate threat to the capitalist rulers — the revolutionary capacity to conquer power from them and establish a workers and farmers government.

Mass workers movement in 1930s

From the SWP’s earliest years, as it forged a proletarian organization seeking to emulate the victorious Bolshevik-led October 1917 revolution in Russia, the party’s participation in working-class struggles has met police attacks and disruption by the rulers. The story of the fierce assaults on the young communist movement in the years after World War I — and how party cadres fought to establish the right to function publicly and take part in labor and political struggles — was recounted last week. With the rise in the 1930s of a mass working-class social movement that built the industrial unions, leaders of the Communist League of America, a predecessor of the SWP, joined in labor battles nationwide. They helped lead strikes and organizing drives that made the Teamsters in Minneapolis and across the Midwest one of the strongest unions in the U.S. The party grew in size, experience in class combat and political effectiveness. It won to its ranks militant workers like Farrell Dobbs, who became a central



Militant/Jacque Henderson

SWP victory in keeping campaign disclosure exemption is part and parcel of decades-long record joining workers’ battles and presenting revolutionary working-class course. Above, Steve Warshell, SWP candidate for Congress in 18th CD in Texas, campaigns at April 2012 rally of Teamster-organized workers on one-year anniversary of strike against Pioneer Flour Mills.

leader of the Teamsters’ successful drive to organize over-the-road truck drivers from the Dakotas to Kentucky, from Michigan to Texas. In the late 1930s, as World War II spread across Europe and Asia, Democratic President Franklin Roosevelt pressed for Washington to jump into the bloody conflict to maximize U.S. capital’s share of global markets and profits. The Socialist Workers Party and class-struggle leaders of the Midwest Teamsters took the lead in educating, organizing and mobilizing working-class opposition to the interimperialist slaughter.

In response, the White House in September 1939 issued two secret Executive Orders declaring a “national emergency” and directing the FBI to combat “subversive activities.” Roosevelt’s political police went after unionists, communists and others based on what they thought and to curtail their political activities. The FBI wiretapped John L. Lewis — president of the United Mine Workers and a founding CIO leader — and Harry Bridges, president of the West Coast longshore union. The U.S. rulers entered the war in December 1941. Within a year nearly 24,000 FBI stool pigeons were reporting on union and political activities in almost 4,000 factories, mines and mills. In June 1941 FBI agents and U.S. marshals raided SWP headquarters in Minneapolis and St. Paul, seizing books and other literature. Washington indicted 28 SWP members and Teamster leaders under the thought-control Smith

Act, adopted by Congress the prior year. In early December, 18 defendants were convicted of “conspiracy to advocate the overthrow of the U.S. government” and sentenced to federal prison. Among the party’s responses to the indictments was to nominate James P. Cannon — SWP national secretary and one of those facing trial — for mayor of New York. “His campaign will mobilize the advanced workers against the brazen attempts of Roosevelt and his War Party to intimidate the anti-war forces in America,” the *Militant* reported. To fight the anti-labor indictments and then campaign to free the framed-up workers, the Civil Rights Defense Committee was launched in 1941. The CRDC won support nationwide from working-class militants, union locals, central labor bodies, Black rights leaders and groups, and prominent individuals. In 1943 the Postmaster General canceled second-class mailing rights for several Black newspapers. He also yanked the *Militant*’s mailing permit for “stimulation of race issues” among other political reasons. The paper waged a yearlong fight, backed by Black groups and unions, winning back its postal rights. In face of these assaults, the SWP stepped up its political activity. It distributed the *Militant* to workers as widely as possible, along with pamphlets and books. Party cadres were active in union fights, joined protests against lynchings and racist discrimination (including in the armed forces and war industries), and stood for office as independent working-class candidates on the SWP ticket.

This short history of how the SWP helped build the unions and resisted assaults on the working class during the 1930s and World War II sheds light on why it has remained a target of government and cop harassment ever since. More important, it shows why the SWP is the kind of party able to chart a revolutionary political course to strengthen working-class independence from the employing class, their government, and their political parties — including waging an effective, decades-long fight against disclosing the names of its supporters to the cops and other enemies of the workers movement. The next article will bring that fighting record up to today.



Aiming to crush working-class opposition to U.S. entry into interimperialist slaughter of World War II, Roosevelt administration targeted SWP and class-struggle Teamster union leaders. Above, papers headlined FBI raids on SWP offices and charges against party leaders, June 1941.



FBI ON TRIAL
Documents from the 15-year legal battle by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance against decades of spying, harassment and disruption by the FBI and the victory won in 1988. —\$20

‘The 50-Year Domestic Contra Operation’

By Larry Seigle

Goes over five decades of government spying and disruption, starting with raids against Teamster militants in the Midwest in 1939. In *New International* no. 6 —\$16

Pathfinderpress.com

Getting to know René González, ‘an experienced

Fellow prisoner Roddy Rodríguez recounts friendship with 1 of ‘Cuban 5’ re

René González, one of five Cuban revolutionaries arrested by the U.S. government in 1998 on trumped-up charges, returned home to Cuba at the beginning of May, having served 14 and a half years in the custody of the U.S. “justice” system. This victory has given a powerful boost to the fight to free Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero and Fernando González, the four who remain in prison (see box on this page).

Rodolfo “Roddy” Rodríguez served time alongside René González in the Federal Correctional Institute in Marianna, Fla. In the following interview he describes the friendship they shared, giving us a glimpse of the respect and support González — and his four comrades-in-arms — have won among fellow inmates, and even some of the prison guards, through their unwavering integrity and dignity.

Rodríguez was speaking on Edmundo García’s popular call-in radio program *La tarde se mueve* (Afternoon on the Move), broadcast June 13, 2012, on Radio Progreso, a Spanish-language station in Miami.

As he mentions here, Rodríguez was among the 128,000 Cubans who came to the United States in April 1980 as part of what was popularly known as the Mariel boatlift. At that time, the U.S. government was stepping up aggressive actions throughout the Caribbean and Central America in response to the 1979 revolutionary victories in Nicaragua and Grenada and sharpening class battles in El Salvador, Guatemala and elsewhere in the region. Part of the political propaganda of the administration of U.S. President James Carter was the claim that Havana prevented Cubans from leaving the island. The revolutionary government called Washington’s bluff, opening the port of Mariel to private boats coming from the United States to pick up anyone who wanted to emigrate. More than 100,000 did before the U.S. government demanded that the Cuban government halt the operation.



Photos, Prensa Latina/Miguel Guzmán Ruiz

“Seeing how all of Cuba supported the cause of the Five had a deep impact on me,” said Roddy Rodríguez, who got to know René González in prison. Above, meeting in Marianao neighborhood of Havana discusses international fight to free “Five Heroes,” as they are known in Cuba. From far left, Magali Llor, mother of Fernando González; Irma Schwerert, mother of René González; and Mirta Rodríguez, mother of Antonio Guerrero. Right, González talks to press May 6 in Havana after filing paperwork to renounce his U.S. citizenship as part of agreement with U.S. government to remain in Cuba, halfway through his three-year supervised release from prison.

In celebration of the release of René González, and in tribute to each and every one of the Five, below are major excerpts from the hourlong interview. The translation from Spanish is by the *Militant*.



EDMUNDO GARCÍA: Today’s program is one we’ve been looking forward to all week. My guest is Rodolfo Rodríguez. He’s 55 years old and everyone calls him Roddy.

Roddy, you came to the U.S. from Mariel.

RODOLFO RODRÍGUEZ: That’s right. My odyssey in the United States began in 1980.

GARCÍA: Roddy was in the same prison with the Cuban anti-terrorist fighter and Hero of the Republic of Cuba, René González. For several

years, between 2004 and René’s release in 2011, Roddy got to know René, and this left an imprint on his life.

How did you meet René?

RODRÍGUEZ: I arrived at the Marianna prison in 2002. In 2004 a hurricane destroyed the place and the National Guard took us out. After two months, I was part of the first group that went back. The next day a group was brought in from another prison, and René González was among them.

I was introduced to him by a fellow Cuban who said, “Hey, man, let me introduce you to the spy.” Everyone there called them “spies” — that’s the way it was and they accepted that. It’s what they were accused of, even though they were never involved in espionage.

That’s how I met René, and I can truly tell you it has been one of the friendships that changed my life the most.

I was raised in a home where there was a lot of hostility toward the government of our country. Today I thank God that my thinking is completely different.

I believe in God, and in prison I was seen as the one who brought in religion. I have to tell you that so you’ll understand what follows.

When I first met René, right off the bat I told him that I believe in God. I expected René to take me on, to start arguing with me.

What happened? He replied, “That’s great. I don’t. But I believe that a true Christian will want the best for humanity, and if my friendship with you helps you become a better Christian, I’ll feel very happy.” That had a tremendous impact on me.

So that’s how our friendship began. We lived two cells apart. We weren’t cellmates because we each had too

many things — especially books — to fit in the same cell. We would see each other whenever the doors were opened, except when René went running. It wasn’t easy to keep up with him — he ran a lot.

‘Free the Cuban Five’ R Saturday, Ju

Join protest and other ‘5 Da Washington, D.C

Thursday, May 30

9 a.m. **Press Conference.** National Press Club, 529 14th St. NW.
5 p.m. **Orientation.** Howard University Hospital, 2041 G St. NW.
7 p.m. **Role of Cuba in Africa and the Cuban 5 in Africa.** National Press Club, 529 14th St. NW. Speakers: Ramón Cabañas; representative of Namibian Embassy; Eric Foner, author of *Slavery’s Children*; Pathfinder Press; Glen Ford, Black Agenda Report. Howard University.

Saturday, June 1

6 p.m. **Ecumenical-Cultural Event.** Special Guests: Archbishop of Havana, Cardinal José Luis Rodríguez Carballo; Cruz, Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba; Yeidckol Polanco Torres, member of Venezuelan National Assembly. St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 1000 15th St. NW.

Sunday, June 2

1 p.m. **Chilean Music Event.** Casa Rutilio, 102 Park Ave., Takoma Park, Md.
2:30 p.m. **Hip Hop Cultural Event** with Head Roc and the Black Agenda Report. 5301 North Capitol St., NE.

Monday, June 3

11 a.m. **Meeting of Attorneys and Jurists.** Convened by the Cuban American Bar Association. Georgetown Legal Center, 600 New Jersey Ave. NW.
6 p.m. **Meeting of Union Members from U.S. and Canada.** Dennis Lemelin, national president of Canadian Union of Public Employees. Local 372, NYC Board of Education Employees. Postal Workers Union. 7 p.m. **Opening of Exhibit of 15 New Watercolor Paintings.** Spanish writer Ignacio Ramonet; Jane Franklin, author and publisher of *The Last Soldiers of the Cold War*; National Union of Artists and Writers of Cuba (UNEAC). E. 14th St. and M St. NW.

Tuesday, June 4

6 p.m. **Book Presentations about Democracy in Cuba.** *The Last Soldiers of the Cold War*, Stephen Kimber, *What We Do for the Money*, Stephen Kimber, *Neighbours: Democracy in Motion*. Busboys and Poets, 2001 14th St. NW.

Wednesday, June 5

5 p.m. **Closing event:** Actor Danny Glover and ambassador to the U.S. Bolivarian Hall, 2443 Massachusetts Ave. NW.

For complete schedule and more information, visit www.freecubanfive.org.

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 activities of Cuban-American counterrevolutionary groups operating in southern Florida. These paramilitary outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other deadly 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 aircraft flown by the counterrevolutionary group Brothers to the Rescue 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.

All but René González remain in prison. In October 2011 he was paroled with a three-year term of “supervised release.” On the pretext of his dual citizenship, González was forced to remain in the United States until May 3, when the U.S. government and Judge Joan Lenard accepted his request to return to Cuba in exchange for renouncing his U.S. citizenship.

ce that changed my life'

evolutionaries framed up by US gov't

It was my relationship with René that began changing the way I thought. I began to see things for myself, and eventually I was convinced.

In prison I met people from different countries — out of respect, I don't want to mention which ones — and it pained me to notice that some couldn't read or write. Then I thought about the Cuban people — even those who are here — and I told myself: "Wow, there's not a single one who doesn't know how to read! I come from a country that's been blessed."

Now I understand all the positive sides of Cuba that I didn't see before. And all that I began to understand thanks to René.

René is a man of principles, like all of the Five. He would tell me, "Principles have no price, because whoever has them won't sell them, and whoever sells himself doesn't have principles." I believe their principles have helped make them popular and respected in the prisons they've been in.

I'll never forget the time René got me a book of Bible stories from the library. He asked me, "Would you like to read this book together?" It was in English — I can read English but he reads it well — and he began to translate it into Spanish. We read the whole book — the story of Abraham, everything.

Things like that made me realize René was not some fanatic, that he was true to his principles. He lives up to what he says. You can tell him what you think, without upsetting him. He

respects your ideas. "You have the right to say what you think," he'd always say. "Just as I have the right to think as I do."

GARCÍA: Did other prisoners have the same respect for him?

RODRÍGUEZ: I think everyone did. I'll never forget this young Black guy, his cellmate, who composed a rap song with a political theme about the U.S. and sang it for everyone in the yard where we held events on special occasions like July 4 or Christmas Eve. I can't tell you exactly what his political ideas were, but I think perhaps he was inspired by his relationship with René, by coming to understand the cause of the Five. Many people didn't know what was happening around the Five and when they learned they were surprised. We even had a T-shirt made with the symbol of the Five and the star from the Cuban flag.

GARCÍA: What did you do on a typical day in those years?

RODRÍGUEZ: René ran a lot, as I said. And when he wasn't running he was reading. You could see the solidarity he got from around the world by the mail he received. It was a moment we all looked forward to every day — seeing tons of letters come in, and all to one address, René's: from Australia, Russia, China, from all over. Some inmates would say to him, "Listen, save me the stamps." In fact, I have a lot of them myself.

He would get a lot of letters from Cuba — from people in the churches, even from prison inmates. At a prison in Granma province, some inmates organized a group to support the cause of the Five. It even included two prison officials, a captain and a lieutenant.

GARCÍA: Were some of the Cubans in Marianna hostile to René?

RODRÍGUEZ: You might say they weren't so much hostile to René as they were to themselves, because they said things in his presence that could hurt, or shock. For example, someone, I don't remember who, said one day, "My mother went to Havana for cataract surgery and she had to bring her own towel and sheets."

Well, like Peter in the Bible, who marched forward sword in hand, I always spoke first. "Really," I said. "And how much did she have to pay for the operation?"

"She had to bring her own sheets. It would have been an outrage if they had charged her," he replied.

"You're right," I said. "When we took my father to the Beraja Medical Institute in Miami for cataract surgery, we didn't have to take towels or sheets. But they charged him \$1,200 for each eye. I don't know how many boxes of sheets you could buy with that. Would you rather bring sheets or pay \$2,400?"

Then they would tell me all kinds of nonsense.

GARCÍA: What would René do in those discussions?

RODRÍGUEZ: He'd laugh. But then he would make a comment I like a lot — and I've used it myself in conversations since then. "Look," he said, "the



René González, left, with Rodolfo Rodríguez, right, and another inmate in Marianna, Fla., prison. Rodríguez painted "Free the Cuban Five" logo on T-shirt. "René was true to his principles and lives up to what he says," Rodríguez said. At the same time, "he respects your ideas."

problem is you base your discussions on things you've heard, not on what you've seen. Look at reality, look at the entire process, follow it through to the end.

"Just think of this: How does Cuba compare with other countries? Everyone wants to compare Cuba with the North," he would say.

And it's true, you can't make such a comparison. I was in an immigration office and I saw Canadians, Australians, Chinese there — they all wanted to come to the U.S., because

that's where all the money is that was taken from the whole world. I've never seen a rafter head south, toward Guatemala. They all want to come here. Their goal isn't to leave Cuba. It's to come here.

GARCÍA: Tell us a little about what you and René did in your idle time.

RODRÍGUEZ: There was no idle time. It bothered René when someone would say, "I'm killing time." He was never killing time. He would sit in a chair with his feet on the bed — I

Continued on page 11

ally at the White House

une 1, 1 p.m.

ys for the Cuban 5' activities

, May 30-June 5

th St. NW, 13th Floor, Bloomberg Room.
Georgia Ave NW, Towers Bldg, Auditorium, 1st Floor.
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'A little more free, we continue to be the Five'

Gerardo Hernández, who received the harshest sentence of the Cuban Five — double life plus 15 years — sent the following statement from the U.S. prison in Victorville, Calif., May 3 after learning that René González won his fight to return to Cuba. Translation is by the Militant.

He could have used the same pretexts as those who rapidly decided to plead guilty and cooperate with the authorities. After long years of separation, he finally had Olga and Irmita here with him, and had been able to enjoy the newborn Ivette for just four months. What to do? Stick to his principles, leaving the three of them alone in a strange country and face again years of separation? Or "negotiate" and give them what they asked for in exchange for a pardon and a new life? In his mind there was never a doubt, nor was there a moment of hesitation in his conduct.

Prosecutors knew they had very little against him, and tried to get him out of the way with offers. It bothered them that he sang "El Necio"* and they were enraged. No one saw him cry when they separated Olga from the girls and threw her into a cell. He must have done that in silence, as we all did because of the indignation and pain we felt when we heard the news, but we never noticed that he showed the slightest sign of discouragement. He served every day of his sentence with dignity, and came out with his head held as high as when he went in, but yet he still had to suffer the loss of his brother and his father in solitude.

Today we learned that René is in Cuba to stay. Today each one of the Five is a little more free. Part of us is walking through the streets of that island with him, and we can almost breathe the air, and get tan under its sun.

Someone asked me if we will now say that we are not five, but four; that would be a mistake! We are five and we will continue to be five! If today we have to continue the fight it is not only for the other four, but for René as well, because we know him, and we know that he will never be really free until we're all back in the homeland. The difference now is that this battle, which for the Five will continue until the end, from this day on has a new standard-bearer.

Congratulations René! Your four brothers celebrate with you, proud!
HLVS [Hasta la victoria siempre! — Ever onward to victory!]

* "El Necio" (The Stubborn Fool) is a 1992 song written by Cuban musician Silvio Rodríguez about remaining steadfast in support of Cuba's socialist revolution in face of the deep economic, social and political crisis precipitated by the abrupt loss of foreign trade after the collapse of the USSR. It was seen as a defiant response to those, particularly outside the island, who were warning that the revolution was on its last legs and that its supporters should give up the fight and accept a capitalist future in Cuba.

Interests of privileged bureaucracy at root of Stalinism

Below is an excerpt from *The Case of Leon Trotsky, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May*. The book contains the transcript of the April 10-17, 1937, hearings held by the Preliminary Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials. Held in Mexico, the commission was chaired by John Dewey, professor emeritus of philosophy at Columbia University. It investigated the charges brought against Trotsky, a central leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, by Josef Stalin and his henchmen. Leaders of the revolution were executed on trumped-up charges including terrorism, sabotage and collaboration with fascists. Trotsky, who led the worldwide fight to continue Lenin's internationalist course, exposed these frame-ups and explains that Stalin's regime was the product of a political counterrevolution by a privileged social caste. Copyright © 1965. Reprinted by permission of Pathfinder Press.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

An American writer complained to me in a conversation: "It is difficult for me to believe," he said, "that you entered into an alliance with fascism; but it is equally difficult for me to believe that Stalin carried out such horrible frame-ups." I can only pity the author of this remark. It is, in fact, difficult to



Sketch of 1937 Dewey Commission hearings into false charges against Leon Trotsky, standing.

find a solution if one approaches the question exclusively from an individual psychological and not political viewpoint. I do not wish to deny by this the importance of the individual element in history. Neither Stalin nor I find ourselves in our present positions by accident. But we did not create these positions. Each of us is drawn into this drama as the representative of definite ideas and principles. In their turn, the ideas and principles do not fall from the sky, but have profound social roots. That is why one must take, not the psychological abstraction of Stalin as a "man," but his concrete, historical personality as leader of the Soviet bureaucracy. One can understand the acts of Stalin only by starting from the conditions of existence of the new privileged stratum, greedy for power, greedy for material comforts, apprehensive for its positions, fearing the masses, and mortally hating all opposition.

The position of a privileged bureaucracy in a society which that bureaucracy itself calls Socialist is not only contradictory, but also false. ...

The formulas of Marxism, expressing the interests of the masses, more and more inconvenienced the bureaucracy, in so far as they were inevitably directed against its in-

terests. From the time that I entered into opposition to the bureaucracy, its courtier-theoreticians began to call the revolutionary essence of Marxism—"Trotskyism." At the same time, the official conception of *Leninism* changed from year to year, becoming more and more adapted to the needs of the ruling caste. Books devoted to Party history, to the October Revolution, or to the theory of Leninism, were revised annually. I have adduced an example from the literary activity of Stalin himself. In 1918 he wrote that the victory of the October insurrection was "principally and above all" assured by Trotsky's leadership. In 1924 Stalin wrote that Trotsky could not have played any special role in the October Revolution. To this tune the whole historiography was adjusted. This signifies in practice that hundreds of young scholars and thousands of journalists were systematically trained in the spirit of falsification. Whoever resisted was stifled. This applies in a still greater measure to the propagandists, functionaries, judges, not to speak of the examining magistrates of the G.P.U. [Soviet secret police]. The incessant Party purges were directed above all toward the uprooting of "Trotskyism," and during these purges not only discontented workers were called "Trotsky-

ites," but also all writers who honestly presented historical facts or citations which contradicted the latest official standardization. Novelists and artists were subject to the same régime. The spiritual atmosphere of the country became completely impregnated with the poison of conventionalities, lies and direct frame-ups. ...

My exile from the U.S.S.R. was officially motivated by the allegation that I had prepared an "armed insurrection." However, the accusation launched against me was not even published in the press. Today it may seem incredible, but already in 1929 we were confronted with accusations against the Trotskyites of "sabotage," "espionage," "preparation of railroad wrecks," etc., in the Soviet press. However, there was not a single trial involving these accusations. ...

They do not lack money. What does it mean to the ruling clique to spend twenty or fifty millions of dollars more or less, to sustain its authority and its power? These gentlemen buy human consciences like sacks of potatoes. We shall see this in many instances.

Fortunately, not everybody can be bought. Otherwise humanity would have rotted away a long time ago. Here, in the person of the Commission, we have a precious cell of unmarketable public conscience. All those who thirst for purification of the social atmosphere will turn instinctively toward the Commission. In spite of intrigues, bribes and calumny, it will be rapidly protected by the armor of the sympathy of broad, popular masses. ...

Esteemed Commissioners! The experience of my life, in which there has been no lack either of successes or of failures, has not only not destroyed my faith in the clear, bright future of mankind, but, on the contrary, has given it an indestructible temper. This faith in reason, in truth, in human solidarity, which at the age of eighteen I took with me into the workers' quarters of the provincial Russian town of Nikolaiev—this faith I have preserved fully and completely. It has become more mature, but not less ardent.

May

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Join May 21, June 4 demonstrations

Continued from front page

miners won better pay, lifetime health care and some control over safety conditions — crucial in an industry where the bosses’ profit drive results in explosions, collapses, and countless injuries and deaths, including a slow death for many from crippling black lung disease.

The current fight of coal miners is about the present and future struggles of working people in this country and around the world.

The employers react to the worldwide crisis of capitalist production and trade by driving against the working class, targeting our jobs, wages, safety and our rights. In this offensive, bosses count on the backing of their government, from the local cops and courts to federal agencies in Washington.

To maintain their profits, Patriot Coal and the boss-

es they front for at Peabody and Arch Coal are using the bankruptcy court to tear up union contracts and throw retirees and their dependents under the bus. The owners of Deer Creek Mine in Huntington, Utah, aim to eliminate the union safety committee.

These conditions are compelling more and more workers to fight — from coal miners in Kentucky, West Virginia, and Utah; to school bus drivers in New York City; to dockworkers in Portland, Ore., and Vancouver, Wash.; and many others.

Build and join the rallies the United Mine Workers union has called for May 21 in St. Louis and June 4 in Henderson, Ky. Help get the *Militant* newspaper around in the coalfields and among working people broadly. The miners’ fights are at the forefront of efforts today by working people to resist the bosses’ offensive against all of us.

Miners fight Patriot Coal attacks on union

Continued from front page

Baker said, reflecting the views of many workers in this western Kentucky coal mining area.

Patriot Coal was founded in 2007, when Peabody Energy spun off some of its mining operations in West Virginia and Kentucky, including all its union mines east of the Mississippi. A year later Patriot bought Magnum Coal, a company created in 2005 as a spinoff of all the union mines owned by Arch Coal. Patriot employs about 4,000 miners, the majority of whom are represented by the UMWA. In July 2012 Patriot filed for bankruptcy, seeking court sanction for its assault against retired and working miners and the union.

During the past several months thousands of coal miners and their supporters have demonstrated in St. Louis and Charleston, W.Va., against these attacks.

“They are trying to break the union,” said Terry Wilson, a ram car operator at the mine. “They want to throw us by the side of the ditch.”

“I believe job security and having a say-so about safety is at stake,” said Ron Keeney on his way into Patriot’s Highland Mine, which is organized by the UMWA. “I have worked in nonunion mines and seen a couple of explosions and I know what it’s like to stand up for safety and be told to shut up or go home.”

Building for May 21 march

UMWA Local 1793 is sending two buses to the upcoming May 21 rally in St. Louis, Terry Miller told the *Militant*. Miller is the local’s president and just returned from a Mine Workers protest at the Arch and Peabody shareholders meetings in Wyoming some 1,400 miles away. “Eighteen of us went and they were sure surprised to see us.”

The May 21 rally takes place just before the May 29 deadline for U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Kathy Surratt-States to issue her ruling on Patriot’s petition.

Patriot CEO Ben Hatfield told the court either the company is allowed to implement \$150 million in cuts or they will be forced to liquidate. Hatfield was the CEO of International Coal Group when its Sago Mine in West Virginia blew up in 2006, killing 12 miners.

UMWA attorney Fred Perillo said during the court proceedings that the union “may be forced to strike” if

its contract with the company is voided.

Solidarity from other workers

“It seems like the corporations are uniting against the workers. Unless we begin to unite we won’t have a chance against what they are doing to us,” said Christian Musselman, recording secretary of Steelworkers Local 7-669. Musselman, who was a leader of the fight against a 14-month lockout during 2010-2011 by Honeywell in Metropolis, Ill., told the *Militant* that they are organizing to get a van full of members to the May 21 rally.

Bentley Kirk, 49, who is from Danville, W.Va., told the *Militant* that the fight against Patriot requires “us sticking together when they try to divide us.” Kirk, who has worked at the Alpha Natural Resources Progress mine for 18 years, was a surface miner at the Upper Big Branch Mine when it exploded in 2010, killing 29 miners. He works with former Upper Big Branch miners, many of whom face years of medical rehabilitation. “We work with mining equipment so huge and potentially dangerous. There is no ‘small’ accident, now,” he said.

Dennis Kuhn, also from Danville and a disabled UMWA miner, expressed the sentiment of many miners and other workers when he said, “If Patriot gets away with it, others will follow.”

The UMWA is organizing more protests in the coalfields and is urging workers to come. In addition to the May 21 action in St. Louis, there will be a vigil May 23 at the Capitol Building in Charleston, W.Va., and a rally June 4 in Henderson, Ky.

In Huntington, Utah, miners at the Deer Creek Mine are resisting the drive by the bosses to eliminate the union safety committee and impose cuts in wages, health care and pensions. The miners’ contract expired Jan. 2. Deer Creek is the only UMWA-organized mine in Utah.

“All I have to say to the Deer Creek miners is keep your head up,” said Kentucky miner Baker, “keep fighting and stick together.”

Janet Post, writing from southern West Virginia, and David Rosenfeld contributed to this article.

Roddy Rodríguez

Continued from page 9

don’t know how he could read like that — and he devoured books. I thought I was a reader. But when I saw the way he read ... and I’m talking about tough books, too.

GARCÍA: Did you get to know René’s family?

RODRÍGUEZ: Yes, it was a blessing to meet his family. I met Irma, René’s mother. That woman’s principles are incredible. She inspires those who meet her.

I’ve met all of the family except [René’s wife] Olguita, although she and I corresponded a lot by email when I was in prison. I still communicate with them, although I’m restricted.

GARCÍA: Let me explain to our listeners: Roddy and René, as former prisoners, aren’t allowed to communicate with each other under the conditions of supervised release they both face. But there’s no problem with Roddy being here to talk with me and our audience.

When the family visited, did you see their love for René?

RODRÍGUEZ: Yes, and it was incredible seeing him with his daughters, Irmita and Ivette. But you’ve touched on something that was a key part of what I call my mental metamorphosis. It wasn’t just because of the family. It was also seeing how all of Cuba supported René’s cause, the cause of the Five. That had a deep impact on me.

GARCÍA: How did the guards treat René?

RODRÍGUEZ: I think everyone respected him. Except for one officer we called the “pain in the butt,” but he was like that with pretty much everyone.

I’ll tell you a story. I can tell it now because the person involved is no longer there. Among the prison officers there was a lieutenant, a Black man, who came to our table in the lunchroom. In front of everyone, the guard shook René’s hand and said, “We support your cause.” I think in private life he was a Muslim. But in uniform, in front of everyone, he came and shook René’s hand.

GARCÍA: What did René tell you he wanted to do when he returned to Cuba?

RODRÍGUEZ: Well, one thing we agreed is that he and I are going to climb Mount Turquino [Cuba’s highest peak]. Together with Olguita and Sandra, my wife. Sandra hasn’t been to Cuba — she left when she was five and hasn’t been back. But we’re making plans, and she has her Cuban passport.

GARCÍA: You haven’t returned to Cuba either, Roddy.

RODRÍGUEZ: Unfortunately not. But eventually I will, and when I get there I won’t leave again.

GARCÍA: Did René ever seem sad or depressed?

RODRÍGUEZ: No, never. Angry, yes — on rare occasions, because he doesn’t easily get mad. He said he’d never give those people the privilege of seeing him get upset or whine.

From what I’ve seen of their letters, I’m sure each of the Five shares that principle. There is a total fraternity among them. There is a saying that “doing is the best way of saying,” and the Five truly live according to what they advocate.

GARCÍA: Were other non-Cubans interested in the issue René was involved in?

RODRÍGUEZ: Some. Many people would sit down with him and he’d talk with them.

Many inmates often came to René for help. He was always ready to translate something to English, help fill out legal forms, or get something from the library.

GARCÍA: At a certain point, before René was released on parole, you were transferred to another prison.

RODRÍGUEZ: That’s right. Saying good-bye was a big moment. I have many brothers in the church — today I’m an Evangelical teacher, and soon I’ll be ordained as a minister — and I love them very much, and there are many people I’ve learned from. But for me one of the greatest experiences in my life was getting to know René. I’ve said this to my family, to my wife, to my parents, who, incidentally, no longer think as they once did. They began to understand reality, because the truth is too big to hide.

GARCÍA: René is listening to this program. Do you have a message you want him to hear?

RODRÍGUEZ: I just want him to know that I’m still the same person. He’s in my prayers. And I thank him for having been my friend.

LETTERS

Why is production slowing?

The *Militant* has repeatedly explained that “the financial instability unfolding ... is a symptom, not a cause of a deeper economic crisis rooted in the worldwide slowdown of production and trade endemic to the normal workings of capitalism”

It would be good if the *Militant* could also explain why worldwide production and trade are slowing down, and why this is endemic to the normal workings of capitalism.

Robert Dees

Houston, Texas

Promotes ‘Militant’ in prison

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