

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Voices From Prison' shows reasons to admire Cuban Five
— PAGES 6-8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Join renewal drive to build long-term readership

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The *Militant* is launching an international drive to expand its long-term readership and we ask for your help. The goal is to win 575 people to renew or get a new subscription for six months or longer.

Nearly 3,000 subscriptions and more than 750 books on special offer were bought during the campaign last fall. Among those who signed up for the socialist press for the first time are many who should be long-term readers.

This weekly column will follow the progress of the drive.

The campaign will run for five weeks — Feb. 8 to March 16 — and coincides with efforts to win readers for several new books from Pathfinder Press. Last week the *Militant* began a series of features on the new titles with a centerspread from *I Will Die the Way I've Lived*, which contains 15 watercolor paintings from prison by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five. This week's issue features selections from *Voices from Prison* (see pages 6-8). Coming issues will feature other new titles, as well as coverage on book launchings at the Havana International Book Fair — one of many reasons not too miss an issue.

"We got a jump on things and have sold eight renewals over the past cou-

Continued on page 3

Moscow, Kiev fail to stem mobilizations in Ukraine

Protesters determined to throw off Russian boot



AP Photo/Darko Bandic

Feb. 2 protest in Kiev demands resignation of pro-Moscow Ukraine officials. Russian President Vladimir Putin has frozen loan to Ukraine in bid to push for crackdown on opposition.

BY SETH GALINSKY

More than 50,000 people demonstrated in Kiev Feb. 2 in the 10th week of protests demanding that Ukraine President Viktor Yanukovich resign and call new elections. At the heart of the protests are the national aspirations of the Ukrainian people to throw off the boot of Russian domination and widespread opposition to government thuggery by Moscow and Kiev.

The protests began in November when Yanukovich, in face of threats by Moscow, backed out of a deal for Ukraine to join a trade bloc with the

European Union. The Russian government of President Vladimir Putin tried to help Yanukovich defuse the demonstrations by offering \$15 billion in loans and lower prices on Russian gas.

Ukraine came under Russian con-

Continued on page 9

Egypt: workers discuss fight for unions, political rights

BY BETSY FARLEY
AND JOE YOUNG

MAHALLA, Egypt — Three years after the overthrow of the hated Hosni Mubarak dictatorship, working people here are discussing and debating how to advance the struggle for unions and workers' rights in face of sharply deteriorating economic conditions and government moves to narrow political space.

Workers here have been a prominent force in social struggles, from the strikes of textile workers in 2006, to the mobilizations in Tahrir Square that led to the ouster of the Mubarak regime in January 2011, through the toppling of the Muslim Brotherhood government of President Mohammed Morsi in June last year. As a result, working people throughout the country have gained more confidence to act politically, fight for unions and press their demands.

"There are more trade union rights on paper today than there were in 2011," Kamal Fayoumy, one of the

Continued on page 4

Workers face ruin as capitalists pull billions from semicolonial countries

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Recent currency devaluations in Argentina, Turkey and elsewhere in the world are among the latest manifestations of a deepening world capitalist crisis. They will mean declining real wages and rising prices for basic goods, devastating the lives of working people.

Finding it harder to maximize prof-

its through investing in expanded productive capacity, capitalists have turned to other avenues for the highest returns. This includes financial speculation in stocks, bonds and currency markets and other financial paper in so-called emerging markets, a term used to refer to less developed colonial and semicolonial nations.

Since 2008, U.S. capitalists have poured \$1.1 trillion into these countries, inflating a giant and increasingly unstable debt balloon.

Now the propertied holders of this debt are acting on fears over the growing risks, rapidly dialing back these "investments," not just in Argentina

Continued on page 9

Tens of thousands march in Spain to defend women's right to abortion



Reuters/Andrea Comas

Feb. 1 demonstration in Madrid against Spanish government plan to make abortion illegal.

BY SETH GALINSKY

In what the daily *El País* called "one of the largest mobilizations in memory in support of the right to abortion" in Spain, tens of thou-

sands demonstrated in Madrid Feb. 1. "Many women — young and old — but also many men" marched, the paper said, to protest plans by the ruling

Continued on page 4

Jury acquits Calif. cops who beat homeless man to death

BY ELLIE GARCÍA

LOS ANGELES — On Jan. 13 former police officers Manuel Ramos and Jay Cicinelli were acquitted in Fullerton, Calif., in the beating death of Kelly Thomas, who was homeless at the time and suffered from schizophrenia.

Ramos was found not guilty of second-degree murder and involuntary manslaughter, and Cicinelli was found not guilty of involuntary manslaughter and excessive use of force in

Continued on page 3

Also Inside

Golden Dawn attacks
anti-fascist memorial in Greece 2

Canada postal workers rally
against layoffs, service cuts 5

Australia interdicts refugees,
sparks row with Indonesia 5

Crimean Tatars join
anti-Putin actions in Ukraine 9

Rally in Texas protests new curbs on right to abortion

BY CINDY JAQUITH

AUSTIN, Texas — “Our bodies, our right to decide!” chanted 300 demonstrators, many of them young women, outside the state Capitol here Jan. 25 on the 41st anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion.

A Texas law that went into effect last October has further restricted availability of safe, legal abortions in the state. The legislation requires, among other things, that doctors have admitting rights at a hospital within 30 miles of an abortion facility. This has forced a third of abortion clinics in the state, servicing 20,000 women annually, to cease offering the procedure. The law also reduces the time window for an abortion from 24 weeks of pregnancy, as established by the Supreme Court in 1973, to 20 weeks. Planned Parenthood has ap-

pealed the law. The case is pending in the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans.

The abortion rights rally here began with a moment of silence in solidarity with the family of Marlise Muñoz. The day before, her family had finally won a court ruling against a hospital in Fort Worth that had insisted on keeping her on life support even though she was brain dead. Hospital authorities argued that because Marlise was carrying a fetus, they were bound to “protect the unborn child,” in disregard for the wishes of her and her family.

“We lost our Planned Parenthood clinics in 2011” as a result of earlier government restrictions,” said Bianca



Militant/Mike Fitzsimmons

Rally in Austin, Texas, defends women’s right to choose abortion Jan. 25, on 41st anniversary of Roe v. Wade. New restrictions on procedure were passed by state legislature in October.

Mason, who was among a number of protesters from Prochoice Aggies, a campus group at Texas A&M University in College Station. A contingent of 15 came from

Feminists United at Texas State University in San Marcos.

Some 2,000 opponents of women’s right to choose abortion rallied at the state Capitol the same day.

Golden Dawn attacks anti-fascist memorial in Greece

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Some 100 members of an “assault squad” organized by the Golden Dawn party attacked a memorial marking the site in the working-class neighborhood of Keratsini where Pavlos Fyssas, a 34-year-old shipyard worker and well-known anti-fascist hip-hop artist, was killed by a supporter of the ultrarightist organization last September. The fascist thugs tore up a banner and other items placed there to commemorate Fyssas.

“They were marching in military formation. Their aim was to show their strength again,” said Giorgos, a university student who has been active in anti-fascist demonstrations in

Keratsini and asked that his last name not be used.

They spray painted slogans around the area and attacked a nearby Resalto club where some neighborhood anti-fascist and anarchist youth gather. The Golden Dawn thugs smashed the windows with stones and bricks, injuring three people.

“During the attack, there were units of the police there but they did not intervene,” Giorgos said.

“I joined what turned out to be a spontaneous protest against these Golden Dawn thugs there,” Martha Pissanou, a 26-year-old laboratory technician and area resident, told the *Militant*. “Over 400 people had gathered within an hour after the attack.”

The attacks were timed to coincide with the announcement by Golden Dawn Parliament member Ilias Kasidiaris that he was running for mayor of Athens.



Militant/Georges Mehrbian

Close to 20,000 people gathered Sept. 18 in Athens, Greece, to protest killing of Pavlos Fyssas, at site where he was stabbed earlier that day by a member of Golden Dawn.



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Jai Grogan
Evelyn Reed

THE MILITANT

Follow workers’ struggles worldwide

The ‘Militant’ covers the struggles of workers worldwide, including fights for safety on the job, wage raises and union protections — from garment factories in Bangladesh and Cambodia to mines in South Africa and the U.S. to docks in Chile and New Zealand.

Reuters/Siphiwe Sibeko
Platinum miners in South Africa on strike for double minimum wage gather Jan. 27.

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Jury acquits Calif. cops

Continued from front page

the July 2011 beating of Thomas.

After the verdict, the Orange County District Attorney's Office dropped involuntary manslaughter charges against Joe Wolfe, a former cop who was also involved in the killing of Thomas.

This is the first time in Orange County that a cop has been charged with murder for an incident while on the clock.

A 33-minute surveillance video shows up to six cops repeatedly shocking Thomas with a Taser stun gun and beating him in the head.

Thomas never regained consciousness and died five days later.

Protests led to the recall of three Fullerton City Council members, the departure of the police chief and charges against the three cops.

At the trial the coroner said Thomas died from asphyxiation caused by police piling on his chest.

Defense attorneys said Thomas suffered from a weakened heart as a result of methamphetamine abuse and that he was a violent person who had abused drugs and alcohol since the 10th grade.

Prosecution witness Dr. Matthew Budoff, a cardiologist at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, testified that CT scans showed Thomas' heart was healthy and tests measuring the acidity levels in his blood indicated he had been deprived of oxygen.

"The system failed Kelly Thomas," said Steve Baxter. "They said, all things considered, they didn't violate any policy or procedure when they beat him with a Taser, when they left him for dead in the street, when they mocked him, when they escalated the situation. None of that was against policy?"

"These peace officers were doing

their jobs," said defense attorney John Barnett during the trial. "They did what they were trained to do."

"It's like the jury said 'go ahead, it's all right, we've got your back,'" Robert Russell, a worker at Triumph Vought Aerostructures, said. "They Taser you and beat you with a billy club and tell you to stop resisting, to stop moving. How are you going to do that?"

Cicinelli and Ramos were terminated close to 10 months after being criminally charged by District Attorney Tony Rackauckas.

A day after the "not guilty" verdict, Cicinelli told the *Orange County Register* that he intends to get back on the force.



Reuters/Alex Gallardo

Ron Thomas speaks to media at hearing May 7, 2012, of two cops who beat his son to death.

'Militant' launches five-week renewal drive

Continued from front page

ple weeks," David Rosenfeld from Des Moines, Iowa, told the *Militant* Feb. 3. "We've organized to systematically follow up with subscribers. We just go and knock on their doors. After that we visit others in the neighborhood to sign up new readers."

"Mike Kuhlbeck, a long-term reader, put together a list of art galleries he wants to visit with us to discuss organizing exhibits for Antonio's art," Rosenfeld said. "Having the new books will be a real help in this work."

On Feb. 1, Katy LeRougetel and John Steele from Montreal visited the picket line of hotel workers who have been on strike since October 2012 in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec. Strikers put up a poster in their picket shack to publicize a meeting Feb. 6 to launch an exhibit of Guerrero's paintings at the University of Montreal. The picket captain bought the

French edition of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free* to put in the trailer.

"As soon as Lee-ann Wightman opened her door, she said she wanted a subscription," said Janet Roth, reporting on door-to-door sales in the suburb of Onehunga, in Auckland, New Zealand. Wightman said a co-worker at the counseling service where she works had shown her the paper. He received it from a friend in Canada who sent it to him.

"I've also noticed attitudes are changing," Wightman said. More people are realizing that attempting to deal with growing economic difficulties are not just a personal matter, but "the personal is political," said Wightman, who also got a copy of *Women and Revolution: The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution*, one of the books on special.

"The work you are all doing is ap-

preciated," wrote a worker behind bars along with a subscription renewal request that arrived Feb. 4. He is incarcerated in Florida, where the *Militant* has beaten back attempts to censor the paper. A subscription request from another inmate in Florida came the same day.

Hundreds of subscriptions expire in the coming weeks. If yours is one, we urge you to renew. Join in efforts to build showings of Guerrero's paintings. Come to the weekly Militant Labor Forums in your area. Join us to sign up readers and get renewals to the paper.

To join in the renewal campaign or get a subscription, contact a distributor listed on page 8 or the *Militant* at (212) 244-4899.

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See distributors
on page 8

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by Jack Barnes
\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)

Cuba and Angola

Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own
by Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro; Cuban generals and combatants; Gabriel García Márquez
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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)

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Spreading Syrian Civil War and U.S. Foreign and Military Policy: Impact on Workers in the U.S. Speaker: Norton Sandler, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. 4025 S. Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 296-2600.

San Francisco

Why Workers Need a Jobs Program and Big Increase in Minimum Wage: How to Fight Back Against Deepening Economic Crisis. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. (415) 584-2135.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Books on Working-Class Revolution Spark Interest: A Reportback from Cairo International Book Fair. Speaker: Janice Lynn, volunteer at Pathfinder booth at book fair. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

NEBRASKA

Omaha

The Working Class and the War in Syria. Fri., Feb. 14., 7:30 p.m. 3302 Q St., 2nd Floor. Tel.: (402) 779-7697

CANADA

Montreal

National Aspirations of the Ukrainian People Fuel Anti-Government Protests. Speaker: Michel Dugré, Communist League. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Protests Spread in Ukraine, While Moscow Seeks to Continue Domination. Speaker: Patrick Brown, Communist League. Fri., Feb. 14, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Road. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

Workers' fights in Egypt

Continued from front page

central leaders of the independent union of textile workers at Mahalla Spinning and Weaving, told the *Militant*. “At the same time, the capitalists have become more savage, so our rights have to be constantly fought for.”

Since 2011 all the governments have sided with the bosses against the workers. “The Muslim Brotherhood were just as much a party of capitalism as Mubarak’s National Party — it’s two sides of the same coin,” said Fayoumy.

“Under Mubarak we had a union movement that was not defending the workers,” said Hisham El-Karim, president of the independent transport workers union for the Western Province, which includes the main industrial cities of Tanta and Mahalla. “Unions were just a tool in the hands of the rulers so the government could

advertise to the world ‘look, we have freedoms, we have labor organizations, invest here.’

“But these unions undermined what the labor movement is about, the defense of all workers. They instead concentrated power in the hands of a few individuals.”

Battle for ‘independent’ unions

The battle for what are called “independent” unions is a big part of what workers are fighting for throughout Egypt. Most workplaces remain saddled, at least officially, with the old Mubarak-installed union structure. All kinds of benefits are tied up with a worker being a member of those unions — pensions, health care, unemployment insurance.

At the Mahalla mill workers have been trying to get their union recognized by the government since 2007. Meanwhile, they have led numerous strikes and demonstrated that most of the factory workers are with them.

“One of the main things independent unions are challenging is the government’s plans to privatize state-owned enterprises and the layoffs that come with that,” Fayoumy said. “The general economic situation has gotten far worse since 2011 as a number of plants have been sold off by the government and then shut down by the new owners.

“The new bosses have consolidated and shut factories to make more profit. Workers have pressed to renationalize these factories and even won some court cases, but the government does nothing to change the situation.”

Independent unions are also being fought for among construction workers. Unlike factory workers, “construction workers are employed by many bosses on a casual basis,” said Mahmod Salameh, a leader of the independent construction union from Ismailiya, in an interview in Cairo. “Work can be slow for weeks, so workers will travel to other areas and it will be hard to organize.”

While laid off factory workers receive some health care and other benefits and are eligible for unemployment insurance, this is not the case for construction workers, according to Mohammed Mowafy, a carpenter from the Maadi neighborhood in Cairo.

Mowafy is for unions setting up funds that workers contribute to, and that they can use to claim unemployment benefits or pensions. He also sees a role for unions in running hospitals that can provide care for construction workers, who have no rights to work-



Above, Kamal Fayoumy, left, leader of independent union of textile workers at Mahalla Spinning and Weaving plant, and Hisham El-Karim, president of independent transport workers union for Western Province, discuss fight for trade union rights with *Militant* reporter Betsy Farley Jan. 30 in Malhalla, Egypt. Inset, Mohammed Mowafy, left, a carpenter in Cairo, and Mahmod Salameh, center, independent construction union leader from Ismailiya, meet with *Militant* correspondent Georges Mehrabian in Cairo Feb. 1.



Showings of paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five *I Will Die the Way I've Lived*



Exhibits

Minneapolis, Minn. February 4-28

Opening reception: Fri., Feb. 7, 6 p.m. Regla de Oro — Art Gallery and Fair Trade Gifts, 2743 Lyndale Ave. S. Tel.: (612) 866-1247; (612) 378-7134. Exhibition schedule: Tues.-Fri., 12PM-7PM; Sat., 11AM-7PM.; Sun., 11AM-4PM

Philadelphia Fri., March 21

Reception: 7 p.m. Exhibit: 7-9 p.m. Imperfect Gallery, 5601 Greene St. (Germantown) Tel.: (917) 957-4504 imperfectgallery.com

Manchester, England Sat., February 15

Exhibition of paintings 1 p.m.-5 p.m., part of meeting to support International Commission of Inquiry into the Case of Cuban Five. Central Hall, Oldham Street. Sponsored by Manchester Cuba Solidarity Campaign.

ers compensation from employers if they are hurt on the job.

“There are two concepts on how to build construction unions,” said Salameh. “Some of us are organizing *along* craft lines while others are organizing *across* craft lines. Our federation is trying both. In the unions we are a part of, we are organizing members across craft lines. Anyone in construction, in any of the trades can join. This, we think, makes us stronger.”

Central role of textile workers

Both Salameh and Mowafy spoke about the central role of the textile workers in broader social struggles, including the overthrow of Mubarak. “Mahalla has been like a citadel for the working class in Egypt, an example to others about uncompromising struggle against the bosses and against dictators,” Mowafy said.

“This has also made the Mahalla workers a target for those in power,” added Salameh. “They would like to wear down the workers there. The textile bosses are not hiring, not replacing old machinery or making other investments in plant equipment.”

In January 2014 the interim government held a vote on a new constitution, which paves the way for new elections for president and a legislative body. The government and the military that stands behind it are promoting army chief Gen. Abdel-Fatah

el-Sissi for president.

“Today in Egypt many people hope that things can be sorted out by an individual like Sissi,” Mowafy said.

“A minority voted in the recent constitutional referendum, which shows many workers are not taken in by the false promises of the government,” said Fayoumy.

“We are confident that if workers don’t see progress there will be more struggle, no matter who is elected president. The workers will be more decisive in the next round, and there can be more connections with the youth who have been in the streets over the past three years.

“This can happen if the young people turn to the workers and see the power of the working-class struggle, and begin connecting their aspirations with the demands of working people,” Fayoumy said.

“We want to learn about the struggles of workers in other countries,” said Fayoumy, who added that the last time socialist workers from the U.S. were in Mahalla in 2011 he spoke with one who was also a textile worker.

“I still remember her. She destroyed my image of workers in the United States. She explained that textile workers suffer similar exploitation like we do here, and that workers there are hurt on the job. Capitalism is the enemy of working people worldwide. It is not just an Egyptian problem.”

March in Madrid defends right to abortion

Continued from front page

People’s Party to overturn a 2010 law that decriminalized abortion.

Participants came from across Spain as well as Portugal, France and other parts of Europe. Spain’s two main union federations organized large contingents.

A law passed in 2010 legalized abortions during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy, with a three-day waiting period.

In 1985 abortion was made legal in cases of “grave risk” to the physical or mental health of the woman; in cases of rape for the first 12 weeks of pregnancy; and when fetal defects are found up through the 22nd week. Before 1985 it

was illegal except when necessary to save a woman’s life.

The current People’s Party-backed bill would permit abortion only in cases of rape or grave health risk. For rapes the procedure would be allowed only during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy and would require a seven-day waiting period and approval from three doctors.

“The proposed law is worse than the 1985 one,” Maria Jesús Girona Magraner, president of the Federation of Young Women, said by phone from Madrid Feb. 3. “It doesn’t allow abortion even if the fetus is deformed.”

Even some People’s Party politicians

have taken their distance from the proposed anti-abortion bill. It “interferes with personal boundaries and doesn’t solve anything,” said Madrid deputy Isabel Díaz Ayuso.

“When abortion was illegal women who had the means went to London,” Magraner said. “Other women went to illegal clinics with precarious unsanitary conditions. We’re not going to stop fighting until we defeat this bill. The right to choose is a human right.”

The leaflet for a pro-choice demonstration of thousands in Valladolid Jan. 31 called for “the complete decriminalization of elective abortions.”

Canada postal workers rally against layoffs, service cuts

BY ANNETTE KOURI
AND JOHN STEELE

OTTAWA, Ontario — More than 2,000 postal workers, members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and supporters marched in sub-freezing weather Jan. 26 to protest cutbacks by Canada Post Corporation designed to make the government-owned company “profitable.”

Over a five-year period starting later this year the cuts would replace door-to-door delivery with so-called community mail boxes and lay off 6,000 to 8,000 workers. On March 1, the cost of a first class stamp will rise from 63 to 85 cents.

The action took place on the eve of the opening of the next session of Canada’s Parliament. The Conservative Party government fully backs the decision of Canada Post officials.

Workers arrived in buses from across Quebec and Ontario. “In defense of the public postal service” was the main demand displayed on placards and buttons.

“Demonstrating is the only way we have to show the whole population that we won’t go backwards,” Jean Maxime Dugat, a Montreal letter carrier and CUPW shop steward with 14 years on the job, told the *Militant*. “If we don’t stand up and say ‘no’ our kids won’t have what we fought for and won.”

Delegations from the United Steelworkers, Unifor, and the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario carried the flags of their unions. Municipal workers from Montreal lent their sound truck to head the one-mile march to Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s office near Parliament.

Speakers at the rally included CUPW officials, the president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, New Democratic Party members of Parliament, leaders of seniors’ organizations and others.

“There is so much opposition to the government on this, I don’t think they can get away with it,” veteran Montreal letter carrier Yves Delva told the *Militant*.

The attacks against the postal workers and the postal service are part of an overall assault on workers employed by government-run corporations, including Crown, Via Rail, Canada Post and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, as well as federal government

workers whose union contracts expire in 2015.

“We know what it’s like to be under attack and are here to support the postal workers under attack from the federal government,” Peter Giuliani, president of the Ottawa Local of the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, told the *Militant*.

In June 2011, Parliament passed a law that made it illegal for postal workers to strike and imposed a four-year contract, ordering 48,000 workers back to work after CUPW carried out two weeks of rotating strikes against concession demands and a retaliatory lockout.

Following Ottawa’s strikebreaking action, Canada Post imposed changes, boosting “productivity.” “There are more parcels so the workload is heavier, the work is more physical,” said letter carrier Andre Daoust. “The workday is longer, often 10 hours. When you finish in the dark, you’re tired. The risks of an accident are a lot higher.”

Canada Post CEO Deepak Chopra said at a Dec. 18 meeting of a Parliament committee that forcing people to go to a central location to get their mail



Militant/John Steele

Protest in Ottawa, Ontario, Jan. 26 by 2,000 postal workers and supporters against planned layoffs of 6,000 to 8,000 workers, elimination of door-to-door delivery and increased rates.

would be good for the elderly by giving them more exercise. “The seniors are telling me, ‘I want to be healthy. I want to be active in my life,’” he said.

Rallies, town hall meetings, forums, petitions and other activities against the cuts have been taking place in many communities.

“The end of home delivery will have a big impact on older people,” Montreal mail clerk Ivan Contreras told the *Militant* in answer to Chopra. “At the postal

outlet where I work some are coming in really worried, almost crying saying they don’t know what they will do.”

“This demonstration is just the beginning of a campaign that will last for months,” letter carrier Claude Mercier with 30 years on the job told the *Militant*. “We hope to involve others in this fight because it affects millions.”

The next day CUPW organized on-the-job and community protests across Canada.

Australia interdicts refugees, sparks row with Indonesia

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY — Australian navy warships turning back asylum seekers breached Indonesia’s territorial waters several times recently without permission, heightening tensions between Canberra and Jakarta.

Many hundreds of refugees seeking asylum in Australia have perished in perilous sea voyages, fleeing government repression and hardship in Sri Lanka, Iran, Afghanistan and other countries.

As part of its military-led “Operation Sovereign Borders,” the government of Liberal Prime Minister Anthony Abbott has stepped up naval presence near Indonesia. In response, Indonesian government official Agus Barnas announced Jan. 17 that its military was

deploying patrol boats and a frigate to protect “its sovereignty and territorial integrity.”

Jakarta had already criticized the actions of Australian ships in towing several asylum-seeker boats back to the Indonesian 12-mile maritime border.

The Abbott government has suppressed information about boat arrivals and refused to comment. But Canberra did apologize to the Indonesian government for its navy’s “inadvertent incursions.”

Relations between Jakarta and its imperialist neighbor were already strained last November by revelations that Australian spy agencies tapped phone calls of Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, as well as those of his wife and ministers.

At the same time, Washington and Canberra are trying to strengthen alliances with Jakarta as part of the imperialist campaign to counter Beijing’s growing military capabilities and economic and political influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

Protests by asylum-seekers in the remote prison compounds on Christmas Island, an Australian territory in the Indian Ocean close to Java, have erupted again recently over their indefinite detention.

By decision of the previous Labor government, asylum-seekers who reached Australia in the months before the federal election Sept. 7 are held indefinitely on Christmas Island, where 2,000 refugees are detained, 78 of whom are on hunger strike.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 17, 1989

MIAMI — A walkout by 1,700 union members protesting unjust disciplinary action against three workers hit the huge Eastern Airlines maintenance base facility at Miami International Airport February 7.

The walkout by members of the International Association of Machinists began at 2:30 p.m. Although managers and foremen stationed themselves in hallways and told workers they would be fired if they left, the overwhelming majority of workers downed their tools and walked off the job.

The unionists streamed out of the base facility and gathered behind one of the large maintenance buildings. Three mechanics from the components shop were told to work overtime Friday. They refused. The company told them to come to work Sunday. They refused. When they reported for work on Monday, they were suspended for three days.



February 17, 1964

NEW YORK — The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a suit challenging the constitutionality of a law under which the Post Office acts as censor of unsealed mail from 26 counties.

The suit was filed in federal court here on behalf of David McReynolds, a prominent figure in the peace movement and in the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation.

Under the law being challenged, the Post Office does not deliver mail which it deems to be “Communist political propaganda.” Instead, it sends a card to the addressee asking whether he wants the “Communist political propaganda” delivered to him. Unless the addressee sends back a written, affirmative reply within 60 days, the mail is destroyed.

The ACLU complaint states that a copy of *The Crusader*, Robert F. Williams’ newsletter, now published in Cuba, was not delivered to McReynolds.



February 17, 1939

On February 20, under the guise of “George Washington Birthday Exercises,” the allied Fascist-Nazi organizations are planning to hold a mass mobilization in the Madison Square Garden. The mobilization is backed by Hitler’s German-American Bund, the notorious Pelley’s Silver Shirts, the “Social Justice” gang of Father Coughlin, the Hague gangsters from Jersey City, and a further assortment of anti-Semites, labor-haters, Red-baiters and similar scum.

New York City has one of the strongest and best organized trade union movements in the world. The Garden meeting is aimed at it.

New York City has the largest Jewish population of any city in the world. The Garden meeting is aimed at it.

Organize a militant, mass counter-demonstration at the Madison Square Garden on February 20!

Teamster Rebellion by Farrell Dobbs

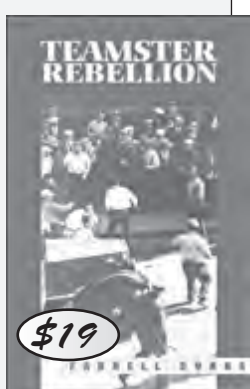
The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as recounted by a central leader of that battle.

First in a four-volume series.

The other books are: *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics*, and *Teamster Bureaucracy*.

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‘Voices From Prison’ shows who Cuban 5

Accounts of inmates and others in *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five* will strike a chord with working people in the U.S. and around the world, explains Mary-Alice Waters in the preface to the book printed below. Millions can identify with the fight against the U.S. government’s frame-up and incarceration of the five revolutionaries because “they have had similar experiences with the system of capitalist ‘justice.’”

On the facing page is a 2009 interview printed in the book with Gerardo Hernández, one of the Five, describing his arrest and the futile “strategies designed to get me to be a turncoat.” Also from the book is “The Cuban Five: Who they are” at the bottom of this spread.

Last week the *Militant* ran excerpts from *I Will Die The Way I’ve Lived*, which contains a collection of watercolors of the same name by Antonio Guerrero that reflect on the Five’s first 17 months in jail. The two new books have been produced as a contribution to get out the truth about who the Five are and help build the international campaign to win their freedom.

The preface and “The Cuban Five: Who They Are” are reprinted by permission, copyright © 2014 by Pathfinder Press.

Prisoners’ accounts reflect on revolutionary integrity of Five

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

“When the history of humanity is written, there will have to be a page for the five Cuban heroes. They’re internationalist heroes, world heroes.”

José Luis Palacio
Havana, February 2013

José Luis Palacio’s words give voice to the verdict of millions in Cuba and around the world who are fighting for the freedom of Gerardo Hernández,

PREFACE TO NEW BOOK

Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González — known internationally as the Cuban Five.

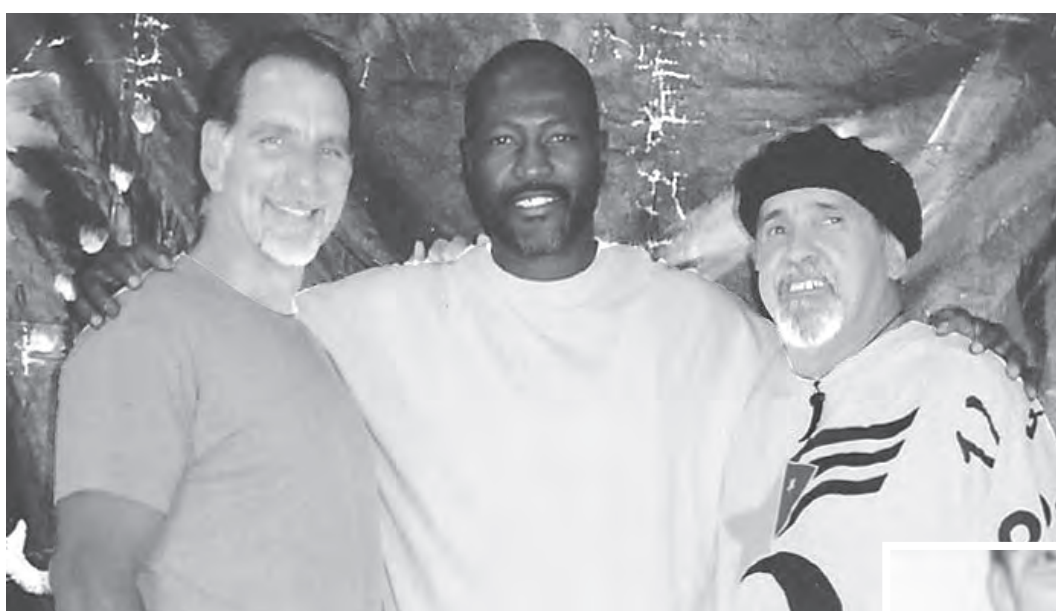
Palacio, today a refrigeration systems mechanic in Pinar del Río, was one of the young Cuban volunteers who fought as part of the scouting platoon led by Lieutenant Gerardo Hernández Nordelo in the north An-

golan province of Cabinda a quarter century ago. The platoon was engaged in mop-up operations following the 1988 defeat of the military forces of the white-supremacist regime of South Africa at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola.

In 1991 Nelson Mandela told the people of Cuba and the world, the “crushing defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale,” won by the combined forces of Cuba’s internationalist volunteers and Angolan and Namibian troops, all under Cuban command, not only “broke the myth of the invincibility of the white oppressors.” It was “a turning point in the struggle to free the continent and our country from the scourge of apartheid!”

Three of the Cuban Five — René González and Fernando González, as well as Gerardo Hernández — were among the more than 425,000 Cuban volunteers who made that victory possible.

Today, Gerardo Hernández is incarcerated in the Victorville, California, maximum-security penitentiary.



Framed up on charges of conspiracy to engage in espionage and conspiracy to commit murder, he is serving two concurrent sentences of life without parole.

Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González have now spent more than fifteen years in US federal prisons. René González, who served his entire sentence — fourteen and a half years in US custody — returned to Cuba in May 2013. His tireless efforts since then have brought renewed energy to the worldwide fight to win freedom for the Five.

The 1998 arrest and frame-up of the Cuban Five; their trial in Miami, Florida, and summary conviction on all counts, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary; the exorbitant sentences they were given; the vindictive punishments and inhuman conditions they have faced, especially during the first year and a half of pretrial detention; the respect they have won from fellow inmates for their principled conduct, and the helping hand they have extended to others — all touch a deep chord with millions of working people in the United States. Because millions themselves have had similar experiences with the system of capitalist “justice,” or know of the ordeals faced by family members, friends,

and fellow workers.

With more than 2.2 million men and women behind bars today, the United States has the highest incarceration rate of any country in the world. Moreover, according to the US Supreme Court itself, 97 percent of those held in federal prisons have never gone to trial. Instead — threatened with life in prison or worse if they insist on their innocence and their right to the trial guaranteed by the US Constitution — they have been blackmailed into coping a plea to crimes they never com-

New from Pathfinder

Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five



The unbending dignity and integrity of the Cuban Five has won them the respect of thousands around the world as well as fellow prisoners. Here three who have known them behind bars speak out. Also accounts of prison life and resistance by Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Elizabeth Palmeiro and Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda. Also in Spanish. \$7

‘I Will Die The Way I’ve Lived’

Fifteen watercolors by Antonio Guerrero for the 15th anniversary of the imprisonment of the Cuban Five. With text by Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino. Also in Spanish. \$7

The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free

Articles from the *Militant* with the truth about the worldwide fight to win freedom for the Cuban Five. Now with a supplement on René González’s return to Cuba. Also in Spanish and French. \$5

pathfinderpress.com

The Cu

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González are known worldwide as the Cuban Five. In 1998, they were working in southern Florida when each of them was arrested by US federal police in coordinated predawn raids.

What were their allegedly criminal activities?

They were gathering information on the plot of the counterrevolutionary Cuban American organized crime groups and the individuals who belong to them. These groups and the individuals who belong to them have a more than half-century-long record of carrying out assassinations, and other assaults on Cubans and supporters of the Cuban Revolution — within the United States, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Panama, and elsewhere, as well as in other countries.

Since 1959, nearly 3,500 men, women, and children have been killed in such attacks, most originating in the United States. The task of the Five was to keep the Cuban people informed of deadly operations being planned and to prevent as many as possible from coming to the United States.

The Five were brought to trial and convicted in court in Miami on frame-up charges that included espionage and, in the case of Gerardo Hernández, conspiracy to commit murder. The latter charge, after his arrest, was based on the allegation that

are, gives workers reason to admire them



That each of the Five refused to even consider copping a plea in exchange for freedom or a lighter sentence won them enormous respect among fellow prisoners, says Waters. **At Left**, René González, left, with Rodolfo Rodríguez, right, and another inmate. “Why do we fight for the Five?” asked former Puerto Rican political prisoner Rafael Cancel Miranda at Sept. 14, 2012, meeting in Washington, D.C., **below right**. “Because we are fighting for ourselves. We’re not doing anyone a favor. We are fighting for our own freedom.” **Below left**, Miranda teaches Spanish to fellow workers behind bars at Marion Federal prison in Illinois, 1975.



mitted. That each of the Five refused to even consider such a course has gained them enormous respect among fellow prisoners.

The fifteen-year battle waged by the Cuban Five to win their freedom, and most importantly *who they are*, come to life in the accounts that follow.

This is a companion volume to the graphic eloquence of Antonio Guerrero’s fifteen watercolor paintings for fifteen years, *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*. It builds on two other titles —

Continued on page 8

“They offered ‘Whatever you want’ if I’d be a traitor”

The following excerpt from an interview Gerardo Hernández gave filmmaker Saul Landau on April 1, 2009, appeared in the Miami-based online magazine *Progreso Semanal/Weekly*. The translation is by the *Militant*, where it was published in the June 8, 2009, issue.



SAUL LANDAU: Can you describe in detail what happened the day the FBI arrested you?

GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ: It was a Saturday [September 12, 1998]. I was sleeping. It was about 6:00 a.m. I lived in a small, one-room apartment. My bed was pretty close to the door because the apartment was small. I remember hearing in my sleep someone trying to force open the lock. I barely

GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ

had time to react because I heard a loud sound as they knocked the door down. It was a SWAT team. They didn’t even give me time to sit up in bed.

I was surrounded by people with machine guns and helmets, like you see in the movies. They arrested me, lifted me out of bed, handcuffed me, and looked in my mouth. I guess they had seen a lot of James Bond movies and thought I might have cyanide in my mouth. So, they checked to make sure that I wouldn’t poison myself. I asked why I was being arrested. They said, “You know why.”

They put me in a car and took me to the main headquarters of the FBI in south Florida, on 163rd Avenue in Miami. There, the interrogation began. But the arrest is the way I described.

LANDAU: They put you in the “box”?

HERNÁNDEZ: At the FBI headquarters we were each put in separate offices. They sat me in an office, hand-



Gerardo Hernández in Federal Correctional Institution in Victorville, Calif.

cuffed me to the wall, and interrogated me.

I had the “honor” of having Héctor Pesquera come to see me. He was the director of the FBI in south Florida, and he was Puerto Rican. My assumed identity, Manuel Viramontes, was Puerto Rican, too. I told him I was from Puerto Rico and so he started to ask me questions about Puerto Rico. All kinds of questions. Who was the governor that year? Where did I live? What bus did I take to get to school? Where did I catch it?

When he saw that I was able to answer these questions, he got really upset. He slammed his fist into the table and said, “I know you’re Cuban. You’re going to rot in prison, because Cuba isn’t going to do anything for you.”

Then, not him specifically, but the others who took part in the interrogation started to make all kinds of offers. They said, “You know how this business works. You know that you’re an illegal agent. And what they say is that Cuba isn’t going to admit that they sent you here with a fake passport. Cuba won’t do that, so you’ll rot in prison. The best thing you can do is to cooperate with us. We’ll give you whatever you want. We’ll change your identity, give you bank accounts.”

Whatever I wanted, if I became a traitor.

“Here’s the phone,” they said. “Call your consulate.” Strategies designed to get me to be a turncoat. This is what happened to all five of us separately. Later, they took us to the prison, the Federal Detention Center in Miami, and put us in what is called “the hole.”

LANDAU: For how long?

HERNÁNDEZ: Seventeen months. The first five months were hard for the five, of course. Those of us with false identities didn’t have anyone to write to, no one to write to us, nor anyone to phone. Every so often it was our turn to make a phone call. The guards would open the little window in the door, and put the phone there. “Aren’t you going to call anyone? Your family in Puerto Rico?”

“No,” I would say, “I’m not going to call anyone.”

“But why don’t you make a call?” they’d say to annoy me, because they knew I wasn’t Puerto Rican and wouldn’t use the phone. Those were difficult months.

LANDAU: Describe “the hole.”

HERNÁNDEZ: It’s an area that every prison has, for disciplining prisoners, or for protective purposes if they can’t be with the rest of the population. In Miami it was a floor, the twelfth floor. The cells are for two people, but there are some people there by themselves.

For the first six months, we were alone, each in an individual cell — with no contact. Later, our lawyers took legal measures so that we could meet in pairs. But the first six months we were in “solitary confinement,” with a shower inside the cell so you can bathe whenever you want. But that way you get everything in the cell wet when you take a shower.

You’re in the cell twenty-three hours a day. And there’s one hour a day of recreation when they take you out to another place. In Miami, it was basically just another cell, but a little bigger, with a grate that let you see a little piece of the sky. You could tell if it was day or night and fresh air would come through. That was what they called “recreation.” But often we didn’t go because they’d take too long, handcuffing you, searching you, your cell, taking you and bringing you back. Sometimes, they’d put us all together in the same cell and we could talk.

The regimen was very strict. It’s used to discipline prisoners, as punishment for having committed a serious infraction. We were inside those four quite small walls twenty-three, sometimes twenty-four, hours a day, with nothing to do. It’s very difficult from the human point of view. And many people couldn’t take it. You would see them lose their minds, screaming.

LANDAU: Had you done something bad?

HERNÁNDEZ: No, we were sent there from the beginning. They told us it was to protect us from the general population. But in my opinion, it had to do with their attempt to get us to change

Continued on page 8

ban Five: Who they are

Antonio Guerrero, known to millions, were living and was arrested by

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advance knowledge of the Cuban government’s February 1996 shutdown over Cuban waters of two planes whose Miami-based sponsors had rebuffed Havana’s repeated warnings to cease recurring provocations within Cuban airspace.

Each of the Five proudly acknowledged before the court and to the world that they were working for the Cuban government to prevent future murderous acts from taking place — and they would gladly do so again if asked. On their unbowed heads, the judge imposed maximum sentences, ranging from fifteen years for René González, to life without parole for Guerrero and Labañino, and a double life sentence for Hernández, who led the effort.

Conceding the blatantly prejudiced atmosphere surrounding the trial, a three-judge federal appeals court panel unanimously overturned the convictions in 2005. Following a government appeal, the full court reinstated the convictions a year later.

A 2008 federal court decision ruled that the sentences imposed on three of the five — Guerrero, Labañino, and Fernando González — exceeded federal guidelines. Labañino’s time was reduced from life without parole to thirty years, Guerrero’s from life without parole to twenty-one years and ten months. Fernando González’s sentence was shortened only slightly, from nineteen years to seventeen years and nine months. The court refused even to consider reducing Hernández’s sentence on the

Continued on page 8

Integrity of Cuban Five

Continued from page 7
The Cuban Five: Who They Are; Why They Were Framed; Why They Should Be Free, and Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own.



The interviews, articles, poems, paintings, photographs, and speeches in the pages of *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five* have one thing in common. Through them we come to know the revolutionary integrity, resilience, stature, and humanity of each of the Cuban Five. We're offered a revealing insight into their lives these last fifteen years as revolutionary fighters within a large segment of the working class in the United States — those behind bars.

Who the Five are emerges in sharp relief.

Some of the words published here are tributes by fellow inmates whose lives were transformed by friendship with one or another of the Five during their time together in prison.

Some are articles, poems, and messages written by one or another of the Cuban Five themselves. Some are interviews with them, spreading the truth about their prison experiences the world over.

Hernández

Continued from page 7
“sides” and become traitors.

After fear and intimidation didn't work they thought, “Well let's put them in solitary for a few months and see if they change their minds.”

The only thing to read was the Bible, and you had to submit a written request to the chaplain. I made the request. To have something to read, I asked for a Bible.

When they brought it to me — I don't know if it was a big coincidence or what — it had some cards inside, including ones with the telephone numbers of the FBI. Just in case I had forgotten, right? As if, “Well, this communist guy is asking for the Bible . . . he must be about to turn.” I imagine that's what was going through their minds, given their way of thinking, their prejudices.

An interview with Elizabeth Palmeiro, who is married to Ramón Labañino, takes us inside the lives of the families of the Five and the ways in which prison officials routinely use visiting privileges as a weapon to try to break both prisoners and their loved ones. And, more important, not only how the authorities have failed to accomplish this but how the Five and their families have fought back.



Three *Voices* here deserve to be singled out. They are by or about others who have themselves known many years of imprisonment for their actions in defense of the sovereignty and independence of their own people.

Nelson Mandela, leader of the decades-long revolutionary struggle that brought down the white supremacist regime of South Africa, and the first popularly elected president of that country, served more than twenty-seven years in the prisons of apartheid between 1962 and 1990, many of them under conditions of hard labor.

Mandela's example of resistance and strength has been a lodestar for Gerardo Hernández. He managed to keep with him a photo of Mandela throughout the many months of pretrial isolation in the punishment cells of the Miami Federal Detention Center. His salute to Nelson Mandela reproduced here was written upon learning of the South African leader's death on December 5, 2013, and phoned out to friends during a brief window of opportunity between two extended lockdowns at the Victorville penitentiary.

“The Cuban Five will continue facing every day our unjust imprisonment, until the end, inspired by his example of unwavering loyalty and resistance.” No more deeply felt tribute — no more deserving tribute — could be paid to Nelson Mandela.



Two other *Voices* are those of fighters for the independence of Puerto Rico who, like the Five, have known decades in the prisons of Puerto Rico's colonial master. Carlos Alberto Torres, released after thirty years in US prisons, pays tribute to the Fernando González he



Liborio Noval/Granma

Defeat of South African army in Angola, “marked a milestone in the history of the struggle for southern African liberation,” said Nelson Mandela, left, at rally with Fidel Castro in Matanzas, Cuba, July 26, 1991. René González, Fernando González and Gerardo Hernández were among some 425,000 Cubans who volunteered to help beat back invasions by racist apartheid regime.

came to know and deeply respect during the five years they shared at the federal prison in Oxford, Wisconsin.

And Rafael Cancel Miranda, who likewise spent twenty-seven and a half years in Washington's prisons for his pro-independence actions, closes these pages with the most profound revolu-

tionary truth for the toiling mass of humanity worldwide:

“Why do we fight for the Five? Because we are fighting for ourselves. We're not doing them a favor. We're doing ourselves a favor. We are fighting for our own freedom.”

January 2014

The Cuban Five: Who they are

Continued from page 7
grounds that he is serving not one but two life terms, so it would make no difference!

In May 2013 René González, after completing every day of his sentence — more than fourteen and a half years in US custody — became the first of the Five to return to Cuba. Also having served his entire sentence, Fernando González is scheduled for release on February 27, 2014. Were they to serve their full time, Guerrero would not be released until September 2017, and Labañino in October 2024.

For Hernández there is no release date. Moreover, as an additional, intensely cruel punishment throughout his entire imprisonment, Washington has denied his wife, Adriana Pérez, a visa to enter the United States to visit him.

The 2009 sentence reductions, however, registered the pressure on the US from growing international

condemnation of the trial and the unconscionable length of the prison terms imposed on the Cuban Five. At the court hearing where Guerrero was resentenced, federal prosecutors acknowledged they were seeking to “quiet the waters of contentiousness” and “noise” swirling around the case worldwide.

Since then, moreover, evidence has come to light that a number of journalists writing about the trial in the Miami press were simultaneously receiving payments from the US government's Office of Cuban Broadcasting. This further proof of the corruption of the trial process has become part of the habeas corpus appeals filed on behalf of Hernández, Labañino, and Guerrero.

Why are the Cuban Five in prison for even a day?

Because they are exemplary sons of the Cuban Revolution, of the men and women who brought into being and defend “the first free territory of the Americas.” They are held hostage not only as punishment for the audacity of the Cuban toilers who dared to defend Angola's sovereignty, to help free Namibia, and to fight and die to liberate Africa from the scourge of apartheid. They are being punished for the determination of Cuba's workers and farmers to make and defend a socialist revolution in what was once a virtual US colonial protectorate. They are in prison because they represent the men and women of Cuba who to this day refuse to submit to the dictates of Washington.

It was for these deeds the Five were arrested, framed up, and locked away through three US administrations of William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama.

The unbending integrity, dignity, courage, truthfulness — and humor — of each of the Five, and growing knowledge of the consistency of their revolutionary conduct from Cuba and Angola to US prison cells, is winning them ever-increasing support.

As long as even one of them remains behind bars, however, none of us is “free.”

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AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. E-mail: cl_australia@optusnet.com.au

CANADA

QUEBEC: Montreal: 7107 St. Denis #204 H2S 2S5. Tel: (514) 272-5840. E-mail: clc_can@bellnet.ca

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Mobilizations in Ukraine

Continued from front page

trol in the 17th century. In the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks led by V.I. Lenin led the workers and farmers to power. They backed the right of self-determination of peoples subjugated by the czarist empire.

After Lenin's death, this revolutionary course was reversed when a growing privileged layer centered in the state bureaucracy led by Josef Stalin carried out a bloody counterrevolution, including trampling on the national rights of the people of Ukraine. They brought back with a vengeance the policies of subjugation and Russification begun by the czars.

Putin maintains Russian boot

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine declared its formal independence, but still remained a political and economic vassal of Russia. While Ukrainian is the principal language for two-thirds of the country, Russian predominates in large parts of the eastern and southern parts, which are also the more industrially developed regions.

Former Soviet bureaucrats used their positions to assemble fortunes for themselves and their cronies as chunks of the Russian economy were privatized. Former KGB political police lieutenant-colonel Putin took the presidency on behalf of these new capitalist layers. His regime is the true heir of the Stalinist police apparatus and murder machine.

Moscow still has close ties to Ukraine's police apparatus and the armies of both countries have held joint exercises since Yanukovich took office.

Yanukovich attempted to quell the demonstrations with police violence and pushed through a law restricting the right to protest. The move backfired. The protests widened, including to the southern and eastern parts of the country, which have been Yanukovich's main base of support.

As the protests spread, Yanukovich offered concessions, while his police forces continued to selectively go after leading activists in the opposition. His prime minister and cabinet resigned Jan. 28, and Yanukovich invited opposition leaders to join the government. He signed a repeal of the anti-protest law Jan. 31 and approved an amnesty for jailed protesters, on condition they evacuate government buildings they have occupied in Kiev and other cities.

The main opposition parties rejected the concessions. They demanded the immediate release of more than 100 people arrested in recent weeks. At least six people have been killed by cops and pro-government thugs and many others kidnapped and beaten since the protests began.

The protests in Ukraine have begun to win support from other opponents of Putin's autocratic rule, including in Russia itself. At a Feb. 1 protest of several thousand in Moscow calling for freeing 20 people arrested at an anti-Putin demonstration in May 2012, some participants carried Ukrainian flags in solidarity with the protests there.

In addition to suffering under Russian tyranny, Ukraine has been especially hard hit by the worldwide capitalist economic crisis. Its economy

contracted by nearly 15 percent in 2009, among the biggest declines in the world.

The Ukraine government owes \$5.5 billion in loans due in 2014, \$3 billion of it to the International Monetary Fund, but its foreign currency reserves have dropped by about one-third over the past year. Another \$10 billion is due next year.

The IMF, prior to the latest crisis, has been urging Kiev to cut fuel subsidies and other government spending as a condition for more loans, steps that would fall heavily on working people.

President Putin has sought to take advantage of Ukraine's precarious economic crisis to strengthen Moscow's hand and to press Yanukovich to take a harder line on the protests.

Russian government freezes loans

While \$3 billion of the promised loan was previously released, Putin put a hold on the rest Jan. 29. And Moscow has begun implementing stepped-up border checks on rail and truck traffic from Ukraine and demanded increased duties on food and machinery cargos. According to *Time* magazine, "Customs agents forced the Ukrainian trucks to stop, unload their cargo and wait in the freezing cold while the cargo was inspected piece by piece."

This is not the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union that Moscow has tightened the screws to keep Ukraine in line. Numerous times Moscow has threatened to halt supplies of natural gas — and followed through — to press Ukraine to pay outstanding bills and kowtow to Moscow's demands.

Currency devaluations in Argentina, Turkey

Continued from front page

and Turkey, but Hungary, Brazil, India, South Africa, Indonesia and other places.

This fear, according to the prevailing view among financial commentators, was stoked by two developments. One, growing signs of a slowdown in Chinese manufacturing, which many capitalists hoped would drive a world economic recovery. And two, the decision of the Federal Reserve Bank to begin tapering back its money printing schemes, which, according to its proponents, help buoy capital investment.

The Argentine government devalued the peso Jan. 23, as international currency traders started dumping it. The peso's value against the dollar slid 15 percent in two hours until the central bank stepped in and sold \$1.25 billion of its dwindling foreign currency reserves over the next few days to stem the tide. Argentina's reserves have fallen to \$28.3 billion from a peak of \$52.6 billion in January 2011.

The credit rating agency Moody's is betting the peso will lose another 50 percent of its value this year, reported the *Financial Times*, as Argentina's inflation rate, an estimated 28 percent in 2013, continues to rise.

The Turkish lira fell 20 percent against the dollar over the past month. In response, the country's central bank raised interest rates Jan. 28, starting with the seven-day repurchase rate, which it more than doubled from 4.5 to 10 percent. While this slowed the lira's slide, it "arrived too late to convince foreign in-

Crimean Tatars join anti-Putin actions in Ukraine



Reuters

Supporters of the national rights of the Crimean Tatar people joined thousands in Simferopol, the capital of the Crimean province of Ukraine, Jan. 28, demanding resignation of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich.

With the exception of the early years of the Russian Revolution, the Crimean Tatars have been subjected to more than two centuries of Russian domination.

The Bolshevik Party, which brought workers and farmers to power in 1917, backed the national rights and self-determination of the Crimean Tatars and other oppressed people. Crimea joined the voluntary Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as an autonomous region in 1921.

But in 1927 — as part of a bloody counterrevolution led by Josef Stalin — the leaders of the Crimean Tatar republic were branded "bourgeois nationalists" and executed. Thousands of the largely peasant population were deported over the next decade and the land repopulated with Russians. The Tatars were placed in settlement camps and faced systematic discrimination by Moscow, which, for example, unilaterally changed their alphabet twice — in 1928 from Arabic script to Latin, and in 1938 to Russian Cyrillic.

During World War II, Stalin had the entire Tatar population rounded up and exiled to Uzbekistan, the Urals and Siberia, slandering an entire people as German agents. More than 46 percent of the population perished as a result.

In the 1960s Tatars began returning to the Crimea, where they found themselves landless and oppressed in their own homeland.

They returned in greater numbers following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. But the Russian regime of President Vladimir Putin — which grew out of the old secret-police apparatus put together under the Stalinist regime before it — has continued the same Great Russian domination over the Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians and many other nationalities.

— JOHN STUDER

vestors to treat Turkey as the promising investment it was for them until recently," said a *Marketwatch* opinion column. The move is, however, expected to bring an end to a construction boom fueled by massive real estate speculation.

Not one of the countries that capitalists refer to as "emerging" or "developing" nations has ever emerged or developed into an advanced capitalist power, or ever will. This has been true since the rise of imperialism in the early 1900s, a scientific conclusion explained by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin nearly 100 years ago in *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

Workers and peasants in the colonial and semicolonial world are exploited by domestic and foreign capitalists while at the same time held in debt bondage to international finance capital through the agencies of the national bourgeoisies in

their countries. Vast quantities of wealth produced by the toilers are siphoned into banks in the U.S. and other imperialist centers to cover interest payments on the debt. Turkey's foreign debt is \$373 billion; Argentina's, \$141 billion.

"Since the consolidation of imperialism," wrote Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, in *Capitalism's World Disorder*, "every action by finance capital in relation to the more economically backward countries ends up further warping the economies of the colonial or semicolonial countries. That is the effect of every bank loan to their ruling classes; every investment in landed, industrial, and commercial capital; every purchase of bonds issued by a semicolonial administration; every trade pact; every scheme to peg the value of weaker currencies to stronger ones."

"Those who lend vast amounts of money to reap enormous interest payments, those who seek to take over whole parts of the Third World to squeeze profits from superexploitation of workers and peasants — those same barons of finance capital simultaneously put their tentacles in every powder keg all over the world and add to its instability. They are ultimately held hostage by their own rapaciousness and by their own successes."

— Jack Barnes from *Capitalism's World Disorder*

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