

Help make Militant Fighting Fund goal!

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Get involved in the effort to raise \$115,000 for the Militant Fighting Fund! Reach out and convince those you know who see the socialist news-weekly as important to their political activity to contribute now.

The fund lets those who appreciate and respect the paper join in financially backing it. It's instrumental in making possible the generous introductory offer to new subscribers — 12 weeks for \$5. The fund gained \$1,760 in new pledges from Houston and Montreal last week, but we are still short of quotas that add up to the international goal.

The growing interest in the *Militant* among working-class fighters today reflected in the response to our spring subscription drive, which remains ahead of schedule, means we can win more readers to contribute. Where the response to the paper has

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Militant Fighting Fund

April 11- June 2 (Week 4)

Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
Philadelphia	\$3,200	\$2,140	67%
Twin Cities	\$3,600	\$2,360	66%
NEBRASKA	\$3,500	\$1,566	45%
Lincoln*	\$200	\$100	50%
Omaha	\$3,300	\$1,466	44%
Washington	\$8,000	\$3,394	42%
Chicago	\$10,000	\$4,030	40%
Los Angeles*	\$8,000	\$3,150	39%
Oakland	\$13,500	\$5,160	38%
Atlanta	\$8,600	\$3,130	36%
Boston	\$3,750	\$1,300	35%
Seattle	\$8,600	\$2,805	33%
New York	\$20,000	\$5,869	29%
Miami	\$2,000	\$210	11%
Houston	\$1,000	\$100	10%
Total U.S.	\$93,750	\$35,214	38%
CANADA			
Calgary	\$2,900	\$1,510	52%
Montreal*	\$5,160	\$2,672	52%
Total Canada	\$8,060	\$4,182	52%
NEW ZEALAND			
	\$4,400	\$2,060	47%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	\$2,000	\$500	25%
Manchester	\$600	\$90	15%
Total U.K.	\$2,600	\$590	23%
AUSTRALIA	\$1,350	\$910	67%
FRANCE	\$300	\$120	40%
Total	\$110,460	\$43,076	37%
Should be	\$115,000	\$65,714	57%
*Raised goal			

'Push for profits before safety' leads to derailments

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A 109-car train loaded with highly flammable light crude oil derailed and caught fire in central North Dakota May 6. This is the latest in a series of oil train derailments that included the explosion killing 47 people in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, July 6, 2013. In their drive for profit, rail bosses in North America have boosted shipments of crude under unsafe conditions that endanger the lives of rail workers and surrounding communities.

The latest derailment near Heimdahl, North Dakota, located about 115 miles northeast of Bismarck, was on a train run by BNSF Railway Co. Ten tanker cars caught fire, emitting

Continued on page 6

Int'l conference in Cuba: 'Step up fight to end US embargo'

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

HAVANA — More than 1,000 delegates from 70 countries participated in this year's international conference in solidarity with Cuba here May 2. The gathering called for stepping up worldwide actions to protest the continued U.S. economic, financial and commercial embargo of Cuba. Many delegates had joined in the million-strong International Workers Day march on May 1.

A high point of the gathering was the closing remarks given by Gerardo Hernández, which are reprinted on page 7.

Ulises Guilarte, general secretary of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), which sponsored the

Continued on page 7



Ismael Francisco/Cubadebate
Gerardo Hernández addresses international solidarity conference in Havana, May 2.

Chicago City Council votes to pay cop torture victims

Battle continues for others still in prison



Chicago Torture Justice Memorials

Darrell Cannon, tortured and framed up by Chicago cops in 1983, talks to press in January. Chicago City Council voted May 6 to pay reparations to some of the roughly 120 victims of police commander Jon Burge and his "Midnight Crew" gang from 1972 to 1991.

BY ILONA GERSH

CHICAGO — In front of a packed chamber May 6, the City Council here unanimously approved a reparations ordinance allocating \$5.5 million for many of those tortured and framed up by police commander Jon Burge and his notorious "Midnight Crew" from 1972 to 1991.

As the names of the torture victims and their families present in the City Hall chambers were read, the crowd of 100 jammed into a glass-walled balcony cheered. Leaving the bal-

cony after the ordinance passed, they chanted, "Reparations won!"

Burge and his "crew" extracted false confessions to win convictions of at least 120 people, mostly Black men, using electric shocks, mock executions, suffocation and beatings.

The determined refusal over years of those tortured and framed up to remain silent, their protests and legal challenges, along with mounting outrage, especially in Chicago's Black neighborhoods, led to the exposure of

Continued on page 9

Coal miners in Ukraine block roads, fight for back pay, jobs

BY NAOMI CRAINE AND JOHN STUDER

Coal miners from the state-owned Novovolynsk no. 10 mine in western Ukraine blockaded a highway bridge May 7 demanding back pay and defending their jobs. Workers at the nearby Lviv Coal Company processing plant followed suit May 13.

In these and other skirmishes, workers in Ukraine are up against a government and employers that not only seek to make them pay for a deep economic crisis, but are carrying out a slander campaign to smear them as tools of the mine owners, and falsely accuse them of aiding the Moscow-backed separatist war that threatens to flare up again.

Workers at the Novovolynsk mines have organized new locals of the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine (NPGU) since the start of the year. They have been protesting the government's plans to close the mines and its purchase of cheaper coal for

electrical generation from Russia and elsewhere, instead of making the investments necessary to maintain Ukrainian mines and jobs. "In January the miners received what they had

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Families of victims of police brutality march in DC 9

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Saskatoon bus drivers fight for compensation in illegal lockout

NetJets pilots, flight attendants protest concession demands

May 1 rallies in Quebec protest social benefit cuts

BY JIM STANTON

MONTREAL — Tens of thousands of unionists, students and others put up picket lines at schools, hospitals and government buildings and marched in demonstrations across Quebec May 1, protesting the provincial government’s March 26 budget cuts to medical care, education and other government services. The Liberal Party government claims the cuts are the only way to balance Quebec’s budget.

The province-wide mobilization was organized by the Quebec Federation of Labor, Confederation of

National Trade Unions and Confederation of Quebec Unions, Quebec’s three main union federations, in collaboration with a coalition of more than 856 community organizations affected by the cuts.

“We are doing this for the future of our children,” technician Natalie Lapierre told the *Militant* on a boisterous lunch-hour picket line of members of the SFPQ (Quebec government professional workers union) in front of the Revenue Quebec building in Montreal where she works. Union member Josée Dandurand said she saw the protest as part of a broader social movement. “We have to be in solidarity with people everywhere — like the Africans crossing the Mediterranean,” she said.

They were joined by a chanting crowd of 75 students from the École Marguerite de la Jemmerais, a public school for young women across the street, who walked out of classes to participate in the protest. They carried “Reject austerity” placards.

Thousands of CEGEP (pre-university college) teachers had voted to join in a one-day “social strike.” A court ruled the strike illegal. But students put up their own picket lines and many colleges were shut down.

A hundred students and teachers picketed outside Rosemont CEGEP. “It’s important for the students to give our support to the teachers,” said Student Association President Émilie Bélanger, explaining that the government had cut \$900,000 from the college budget. “Here this means cuts in



Militant

Students from École Marguerite de la Jemmerais public school walk out of classes in Montreal May 1 to join unionists protesting layoffs and government cuts to health care, education.

the hours for the library, the elimination of outdoor soccer and a possible increase in student fees.”

“About 1,000 teachers rallied at four places along highway 30 south of Montreal,” secondary school teacher Josette Hurtubise said. “We were protesting \$300 million in education cuts, which will mean higher student teacher ratios, cuts in school services and \$50 less in investment per student in the coming year.”

Unifor, Canada’s largest private sector union, organized a protest in front of Air Canada’s offices in Montreal, and also in Halifax, Nova Scotia; St. John’s, Newfoundland; and Saint John, New Brunswick, supporting the fight by special assistance workers against the contracting out of 130 jobs in Toronto.

Prior to the May 1 mobilization, 60,000 university and college students, mostly in Montreal, carried out strikes against the cuts in March and April. At the high point April 2, more than 30,000 students and supporters marched in Montreal against the provincial government’s budget.

“We are completely in solidarity with all those who today are mobilizing,” Alexis Tremblay, president of the Federation of Pre-University College Students, told *La Presse* May 1.

The 2015-16 budget that went into effect April 1 contains \$729 million in new cuts. Area school boards will receive \$45 million less. The universities will lose \$10 million and the CEGEP system, \$21 million.

The budget is balanced on the assumption that the three union’s Common Front, representing some 550,000 government workers, will take wage concessions in negotiations that have begun for a new contract. The government is offering a two-year wage freeze followed by three years of 1 percent wage increases. The public sector unions are demanding an increase of 4.5 percent over each of the next three years. Their contracts expired March 31.

“Will there be changes to the balanced budget, debt relief, or fiscal burden? No. There will be no changes,” Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard said in response to the mobilizations.

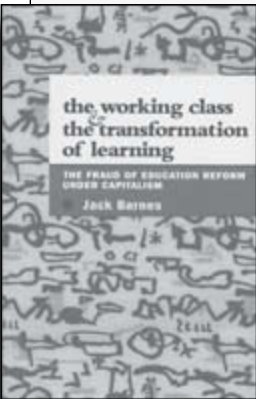
“Today, the concerns of workers are the same concerns as everyone. The struggles of others are our struggles ... because we are all affected by the austerity measures,” Daniel Boyer, president of the 600,000-member Quebec Federation of Labor, told the press.

Al Cappe and Philippe Tessier contributed to this article.

The Working Class & the Transformation of Learning

The fraud of education reform under capitalism

by Jack Barnes



“Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity. That is the historical truth.”

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THE MILITANT

Join struggles against cop brutality

Chanting “Black Lives Matter,” thousands of working people from the U.S. to Israel are joining the fight against cop killings and brutality. These actions point to the importance of building a powerful, disciplined working-class movement to stay the hand of killer cops.



Active Stills/Keren Manor

Thousands rally in Tel Aviv May 3 to protest cop beating of Ethiopian Jewish soldier.

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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.

‘Militant’ fund, subscriptions

Continued from front page
been the strongest, supporters can consider ways to increase and go over local quotas.
Stalin Harrison in Seattle has read the paper for several years. He recently renewed and made a contribution to the fund. He displays the *Militant* and Pathfinder books in his barbershop near the Militant Labor Forum hall and has signed up new subscribers.
“I like the *Militant* because it keeps people’s minds open,” he said. “It reports not on only struggles in the U.S. but around the world. I also like the reviews and articles about past struggles so we can see what people like Malcolm X said as they fought in their day.”
Harrison said that his customers are continually talking about the fights breaking out nationwide against police

brutality and he appreciates and shares the *Militant*’s coverage.
Members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party, and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, introduce people to the *Militant* as they participate in strike picket lines, social protests and engage in discussions on workers’ doorsteps in big cities, small towns and rural areas.
Visiting Stocksbridge 30 miles east of Manchester, England, supporters met Mary Clancy May 9. She helps her brother on the family farm near this town of 17,000 people. Clancy said they had been forced to end milk production and now rely solely on cattle raising.
“Farmers are paid less for milk than the price of water,” she said. The owner of the land recently raised the rent, but they’ll never give up farming, she said. “There are so many unknown chemicals in the food today. But when you grow it yourself you know what you eat.”
Andrés Mendoza showed her *New International* no. 13, “Our Politics Start With the World,” which contains the articles “Farming, Science and the Working Classes” by Socialist Workers Party leader Steve Clark and “Capitalism, Labor, and the Transformation of Nature: an Exchange,” by Clark and Richard Levins, professor and researcher at the Harvard School of Public Health.
“The articles explain that the environment is not safe and the food we eat won’t



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Hugh Robertson and Celia Pugh, center, take *Militant* door to door in Dagenham in East London, May 10, discussing politics and building support for refuse truck drivers on strike.



Militant/Glova Scott

Arrin Hawkins shows *Militant* to participant in Million Moms March against cop brutality in Washington May 9.

be safe until workers and farmers take control over food production,” Mendoza said.
Clancy subscribed to the paper and got the magazine.
Everyone who gets a subscription can buy books published by Pathfinder Press and issues of *New International* at half price.
Four more people signed up on their doorsteps in Stocksbridge and one took advantage of the half-price offer to get the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*.

L.A. port truck drivers’ pickets

Militant supporters have been marching on picket lines with Los Angeles port truck drivers fighting for Teamster union representation. They struck four companies for five days ending May 2 in their sixth walkout over the past 20 months. Over the last couple weeks 11 strikers signed up for the paper and two of them also got *Teamster Rebellion*.
“We’re striking because we’re misclassified as owner-operators instead of employees,” José Antonio Portillo said while picketing outside Intermodal Bridge Transport April 27.

Supporters in London have responded to a series of strikes by refuse truck drivers in Dagenham in the east of the city. They ended an eight-day walkout May 8 and have announced new strike actions on May 13 for 13 days and May 30 for nine days. (See article page 5.)
“We are known on their picket line for going door to door in the area building support for their struggle as we discuss politics and show people the paper,” Ögmundur Jónsson reported May 11. “Over the weekend we signed up four new readers.”

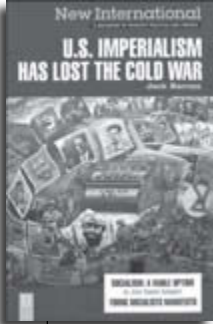
On May 9, Maggie Trowe got on a bus with others in New York going to the Million Moms March in Washington. (See article page 9.)

“I joined the march and rally with some of my bus mates and Glova Scott, a Walmart workers and Socialist Workers Party leader in D.C. We met people from Milwaukee, St. Louis, Washington, from all over the country,” Trowe said. “We learned about a number of fights against cops killing unarmed men we hadn’t known about.”

“During the trip down, we got to know each other,” Trowe said. “On the way back we used the bus PA system to discuss what we thought of the day. Nearly everyone spoke. Then we watched ‘Justifiable Homicide,’ a video about Margarita Rosario’s fight to get charges brought against the New York cops who killed her son and nephew in 1995.”

“As part of the day’s activities, four people at the march and two on the bus I talked to decided they wanted to take advantage of the introductory subscription offer,” she said.
Take the *Militant* with you to protests against police brutality, rallies demanding \$15 and a union and other labor actions. Join other readers knocking on doors in working-class neighborhoods, telling people about political activities in their area and worldwide, and winning new readers. And please make a generous contribution to the fund. Contact a distributor listed on page 8.
Send in reports on your experiences we can share with other readers.

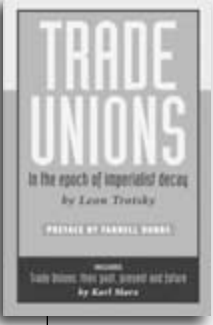
Book specials for subscribers



U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War by Jack Barnes

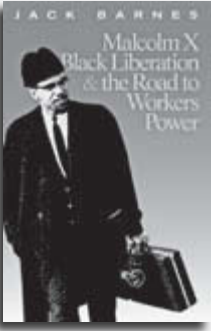
in *New International* no. 11 \$8 with subscription (regular \$16)
Also in Spanish, French, Farsi, Swedish, Greek, Icelandic

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War. ... That’s what the Socialist Workers Party concluded in the wake of the collapse of regimes and parties across Eastern Europe and the USSR that claimed to be Communist. Contrary to imperialism’s hopes, the working class in those countries has not been crushed.



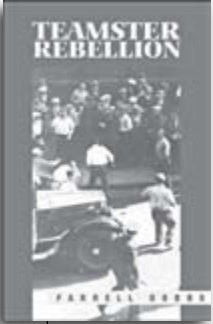
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Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun by Jack Barnes

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50 percent off any Pathfinder book
Contact a distributor listed on page 8

Sign up 2,000 subscribers!			
April 11 - June 2 (week 4)			
Country	quota	sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Houston	10	11	110%
Seattle	125	106	85%
Nebraska*	181	119	66%
Omaha*	170	112	66%
Lincoln*	11	7	64%
Washington	100	64	64%
Chicago	155	99	64%
Los Angeles*	110	70	64%
New York	355	223	63%
Twin Cities	65	39	60%
Philadelphia	115	68	59%
Oakland*	180	99	55%
Boston	63	32	51%
Miami	45	21	47%
Atlanta	150	69	46%
Total U.S.	1654	1020	62%
PRISONERS	15	15	100%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Manchester	100	66	66%
London	105	67	64%
UK Total	205	133	65%
CANADA			
Calgary	50	32	64%
Montreal	75	43	57%
Canada Total	125	75	60%
AUSTRALIA			
	70	38	54%
NEW ZEALAND			
	60	35	58%
Total	2129	1316	66%
Should be	2000	1143	57%
*Raised goal			

Coal miners in Ukraine

Continued from front page
earned in December 2014,” noted the union’s announcement on the May 7 action, and since then they haven’t been paid a cent.

At the Lviv Coal processing plant, jointly owned by three private companies and the state, workers have faced chronic delays in being paid. On April 27 they voted to set a May 12 deadline to be paid in full. When the deadline wasn’t met, they blocked an international highway and then entered negotiations with company and government officials.

“We call upon the Government not to neglect elementary aspirations of working people to have the right to work and get paid for their work,” said NPGU President Mikhailo Volynets in a May 8 open letter to Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and state officials. The letter denounced government and media attempts to “manipulate, persecute and discredit both the miners and trade union activists.”

“The government is shameless in its attacks,” Alexei Simvolokov, a leader of the NPGU in Dnepropetrovsk, told the *Militant* in a May 8 phone interview.

“They not only accuse miners of being paid by mine owner Rinat Akhmetov, but accuse anyone who protests the government of helping [Russian President Vladimir] Putin and the separatists, even when they’re just asking for their own wages they earned.”

“The miners went to Kiev because they’re angry,” Simvolokov said, referring to the April 21-22 national miners congress attended by some 800 delegates from across the country and protests there at the same time. “This was a real protest, by real miners, with real demands.”

‘It was worth it to protest’

“When we had our first protest at the rocket plant Jan. 21 they accused us of being separatists,” added Evgenyi Derkach, a leader of the Independent Trade Union of Labor Protection at the giant Yuzhmash plant in Dnepropetrovsk. He said the local media and plant administration asked, “Where do they get the money?” when workers began rallying to demand seven months’ wages they were owed.

“It was worth it to protest,” Derkach said. “Workers just received a total of 80 million hryvnia, [\$3.8 million] all of the back pay they were owed. It’s an important result that wouldn’t have happened without the fight.” At the same time, Derkach said, government officials are trying to block attempts to officially register the independent union.

Meanwhile, fighting between separatists and government forces and volunteer battalions in eastern Ukraine is heating up again. Since a cease-fire officially took effect in mid-February, Kiev has completely or partially lost control of 28 towns and villages along the 280-mile front line, according to a government report published May 6. There is frequent shelling in the government-held towns of Shyrokyne, just east of the port city of Mariupol, and in Avdiivka, where the country’s largest coke plant is located.

In an April 27 meeting with Poroshenko, European Union officials made clear they aren’t about to consider Kiev’s request for EU membership, nor for visa-free travel for Ukrainians to

Forest fire threatens Chernobyl radiation release



April 26 marked the 29th anniversary of the 1986 explosion and meltdown of a reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine. Two days later, firefighters were battling the largest forest fire in the “exclusion zone” around the plant in 23 years, shown above. In February, scientists had warned that large amounts of dangerous isotopes remain in the trees near Chernobyl, and wildfires “pose a high risk of redistributing radioactivity.”

Ukrainian officials said May 2 that the fire, which had spread to within 12 miles of the plant, had been extinguished.

The Chernobyl disaster highlighted the brutality and contempt for working people of the Soviet government in Moscow — from the decision to build the plant with no containment structure to the deadly delay in evacuating the area to the rulers’ indifference to the lives of Ukrainian “liquidators,” workers who helped contain and clean up the disaster.

In strong contrast was revolutionary Cuba’s offer of medical care to all who sought it, free of charge. More than 25,000 Ukrainians, overwhelmingly children, were treated at the specially prepared Tará medical facility outside Havana.

A hastily built concrete shell around the still-radioactive reactor is deteriorating. A massive new containment structure is under construction, but funding to finish the project remains shaky. Inset, workers building the new containment shell participate in April 26 memorial ceremony commemorating the disaster.

— NAOMI CRAINE

EU countries. Instead, they insisted that Kiev push harder on “reforms” that are a condition for loans from the EU, International Monetary Fund and other imperialist lenders.

An April report published by the U.S.-Ukraine Business Council gives a glimpse of the economic crisis in Ukraine and how working people are forced to bear the brunt of it. Overall the country’s gross domestic product fell 6.8 percent in 2014, with much sharper drops in mining, manufacturing and construction. By the end of March, consumer prices had soared 45 percent over the year before.

For the report’s authors, the devaluation of the country’s currency and inflation have had “positive impacts” on the budget. Tax revenues increased, while “growth of expenditures was restricted by austerity measures that contained wage costs.”

While the government spent more on paying interest to wealthy lenders and on the military, “these increases were partially offset by declines in social expenditures.” This includes cuts of 8.1 percent in spending for social security and health care, and a 5.9 percent cut in education funding. Pension payments were below budget projections because

“Ukrainian authorities stopped payment of pensions in the territories beyond their control.”

Putin seeks to whip up patriotism

Putin aimed to use the massive military parade May 9 marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe to maintain support for the assault on Ukraine, seizure of Crimea and to tamp down protests against the effects on working people from the stagnating economy. Workers in Russia are increasingly battered by an economic crisis fueled by falling oil prices and imperialist sanctions. There have been a growing number of strikes and protests across the country over unpaid wages and social service cutbacks. Last month a group of construction workers in Siberia painted in huge letters on the roof of their dormitories, “Dear Putin, four months without pay.”

Meanwhile, Putin’s claim that there are no Russian soldiers fighting with the separatist forces in Ukraine is wearing thin. Some Russian troops have given media interviews from Ukraine. And Reuters published an article May 10 interviewing several Russian soldiers who quit the military after being forced to fight in eastern Ukraine.

Help send ‘Militant’ reporting team to Ukraine

A special 10-day *Militant* reporting team comprised of editor John Studer; former coal miner and packinghouse worker Frank Forrestal, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party; and Oksana Demyanovych will be heading to Ukraine May 28. The worker-correspondents plan to meet with fighters for Crimean Tatars’ rights, miners and other workers in Chervonograd, Sokal, Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk, Kryvyi Rih and other cities. To help defray the costs of the trip, please send a check to the *Militant*, earmarked “Ukraine trip.”

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Oakland

Social Disaster in Nepal Magnified by History of Capitalist Exploitation. Fri. May 22, 7:30 p.m. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Malcolm X — Revolutionary Working-Class Leader. Lessons for Fighters Today. Speakers: Aislinn Pulley, Black Lives Matter; Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., May 23. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 2018 S. Ashland Ave. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.

NEW YORK

New York

Free Oscar López! Independence for Puerto Rico! Fri., May 22, 7:30 p.m. 939 8th Ave. Room 2A. Tel.: (646) 434-8117.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

How to Advance the Fight Against Police Brutality. Defending the Cuban Revolution Today. Speakers: Omari Musa, Socialist Workers Party, recently returned from Cuba; Glenn Gales, *Militant* supporter. Sat., May 23. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 143 Kennedy St. NW, Suite 15. Tel.: (202) 536-5080.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Oppose Attacks on Remote Aboriginal Communities! Example of Cuban Adult Literacy Campaign Among Aborigines in Outback Towns. Speaker: Linda Harris, Communist League. Fri., May 22, 7 p.m. Upstairs, 2281-287 Beamish St. Tel.: (02) 9718-9698.

CANADA

Montreal

What Does the Election of an Alberta New Democratic Party Government Mean for Working People? Speaker: Michel Prairie, Communist League. Fri., May 22, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St. Denis, Suite 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

UNITED KINGDOM

London

Setting the Record Straight on World War II. Speaker: Hugh Robertson, Communist League. Fri., May 22, 7 p.m. 2nd floor, 83 Kingsland High St., E8 2PB. Tel.: (020) 3583-3553.

—CALENDAR—

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Cuba, the U.S. and the Future of the Revolution. Speaker: Kenia Serrano, member of Cuba’s National Assembly and president of Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples. Sat., June 6, 7:30 p.m. *Teachers Federation, 23-33 Mary St., Surry Hills.* Tel.: 0413-450-981.

CANADA

Calgary

Africa Called, Cuba Answered: Cuba’s Critical Contribution to the Fight Against Ebola. Speaker: Cuban doctor José de Jesús Portilla. Fri., May 22, 7:30 p.m. *Unitarian Church, 1703 1st St. NW.* Tel.: (403) 289-4689 or (403) 971-1948.

Montreal

Africa Called, Cuba Answered: Cuba’s Critical Contribution to the Fight Against Ebola. Mon., May 25, 7 p.m. *Centre St-Pierre, Laure-Gaudreault Hall. 1212 Panet.* Tel.: (514) 991-4388 or (514) 298-6820. info@solidaritequebeccuba.qc.ca.

Toronto

Cuba in the Struggle for a Better World. Speakers: Fernando González, one of Cuban 5, vice president of Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples; Dr. José de Jesús Portilla. Sat., May 30, 7:30 p.m. *Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St.*

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help make this column a voice of workers' resistance!

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

—Maggie Trowe

Saskatoon bus drivers fight for compensation in illegal lockout

CALGARY, Alberta — Public transit bus drivers in Saskatoon are still without a contract and are fighting for compensation for wages lost during a monthlong illegal lockout that ended Oct. 17.

"We're going to remain strong and hopefully we can make headway," transit operator Darryl Strugnell said by phone May 3.

Some 330 members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 615 were locked out in a conflict over wages and pensions. The Saskatchewan Labour Board declared the lockout illegal, but ruled in favor of the city government's unilateral move to downgrade the pension plan.

"Maybe the city's trying to drag it out until we back down," Local 615 President Jim Yakubowski told the *Militant* by phone May 3, "but we're not going to."

—Katy LeRougetel

NetJets pilots, flight attendants protest concession demands

OMAHA, Neb. — NetJets Aviation pilots, flight attendants and other company employees fighting the bosses' concession demands picketed the annual shareholders meeting of Berkshire Hathaway, NetJets' parent company, here May 2.

The demonstration of several hundred was organized by the NetJets Union Coalition, composed of the NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots and the Teamsters union, representing some 4,000 unionized NetJets workers. NetJets provides charter aviation services.

The pilots union has been in contract negotiations for two years with NetJets, and the Teamsters flight attendants for more than four years. The Teamsters also represent mechanics, dispatchers, stock clerks and other ground workers.

"We organized our informational picket in Omaha for the same reason the miners did in 2013," pilots union President Pedro Leroux told the *Militant*, referring to a protest by United Mine Workers-organized coal miners from Deer Creek Mine in Utah. MidAmerican Energy, the mine owner, is a Berkshire Hathaway subsidiary.



NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots

NetJets pilots picket outside Berkshire Hathaway shareholders meeting in Omaha, Neb., May 2, protesting attacks on union.

"Like with the miners, our health care, our pay and safety are all under attack," Leroux said. "If we accepted their contract proposals we would be working more hours for less money and paying more for health care." The company wants to raise the maximum hours pilots can work, he said. "As it stands now they can be forced to work up to 98 hours a week, and that doesn't allow enough time off for rest as it is."

"We have no anti-union [sentiment] whatsoever," Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett said during the shareholders meeting, reported the *Omaha World Herald*, which he owns.

—Jacquie Henderson

London refuse truck drivers strike against cuts in wages, safety

LONDON — More than 100 refuse truck drivers here, employed by the borough of Barking and Dagenham, are fighting the Labour-controlled council's decision to cut their wages by £1,000 (\$1,500) a year, leading to cuts in safety for drivers and those on the road.

The council voted to reduce the 30-minute safety check before the start of the regular workday to 15 minutes. This would cut in half the overtime pay drivers receive for this daily check.

"Cutting back on safety can have lethal consequences," a striker who did not want to give his name said on the May 7 picket line at the Frizlands Lane Depot. The council says cutting the overtime would not compromise safety because drivers could find time when they're on the job to finish the checks.

The drivers, members of the GMB public workers trade union, held three days of protest strikes in March and four days in April. Their next strike is scheduled to last for 13 days starting May 13.

The council's corporate communications manager Von Edomi told the *Militant* May 11 that the change was one



Tufts Labor Coalition/Sofia Adams

Above, Tufts University janitors and supporters protest May 6 against university plan to lay off 35 of the 200 cleaners. Students began hunger strike May 3 to back fight against layoffs.

of many wage cuts across a number of departments. "In the past four years the council has had to make savings of £90 million and the same proposals have affected library staff," he said. He claimed this is not an anti-union attack, because "over 70 percent of the workforce are members of trade unions."

Many residents in the area support the drivers. "You have to be sympathetic," said Robert Fox, a soccer coach, "even though you're not happy with the rubbish piling up."

"More people should be standing up for themselves," said Sharon Lee, a hospital cleaner and Unison trade union member.

One local resident, who would not give his name, opposed the strikers. "They should all be sacked," he said.

Talks are currently being held under the auspices of the government's Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service.

—Jonathan Silberman

Tufts students support janitors' fight against layoffs

SOMERVILLE, Mass. — Five Tufts University students began a hunger strike May 3 backing the fight against the layoffs of 35 campus janitors.

Tufts announced the janitors will be laid off at the end of May. Some 200 janitors, members of Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ, clean the buildings and dormitories on campus.

"We are standing in solidarity with the janitors," said Alison Sikowitz, a student supporter of the hunger strike, which is being organized by the Tufts Labor Coalition. "They will have to do the same amount of work with less people."

The strikers have set up tents in the middle of campus. Each night 20 to 40 student supporters stay there with the hunger strikers. Other supporters join the hunger strike a day at a time.

Campus police placed a metal fence around the tents and refuse entry to anyone who doesn't have a Tufts University ID. Students say the police told them they set up the fence "to keep them safe."

Ten janitors carrying signs demanding "Respect" visited the tent site May 5. Students came out of the penned-in area and warmly embraced them.

Tufts Executive Vice President Patricia Campbell and Vice President of Operations Linda Snyder in an April 27 opinion piece in the *Tufts Daily* claimed they are laying off the janitors "to control tuition costs and offer the financial aid that allows us to admit outstanding students from all socioeconomic backgrounds."

"It's ridiculous," Arismer Angeles, one of the student hunger strikers, told the *Militant*. "The school president's salary is about the same as the amount of money they are trying to save with the firing of the janitors."

—Ted Leonard

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 25, 1990

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — The rise of a militant trade union movement in South Africa over the last decade is a central feature of the unfolding battle against apartheid. Union organizing drives, strike actions, and worker demonstrations are a central part of the growing revolutionary mobilizations here.

Today, after years of hard-fought battles against the employers and the apartheid regime, strong trade unions exist in most industries. From a few tens of thousands in the mid-1970s, 1.5 million Black workers now belong to trade unions.

The nonracial Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is the largest federation in the country.



May 24, 1965

WASHINGTON, D.C. — An audience of some 4,000 sat waiting for the main debate in the historic national teach-in on Vietnam here May 15, when it was announced from the podium that U.S. State Department spokesman McGeorge Bundy had backed out.

A brief statement of "regret" from Bundy was read and the audience listened with subdued anger at the section which said: "Seven hundred faculty members have made a protest against our policy in Vietnam . . . those who are protesting are only a minority — indeed a small minority — of American teachers and students."

There were far more than 700 protesting faculty members in the single audience in Washington.



May 25, 1940

France's black colonial slaves are bearing the brunt of the first battles.

R. Walter Mergusson, war correspondent from the Pittsburgh *Courier*, Negro newspaper, cabled from Paris, May 13:

"Black soldiers from the African colonies of France were sped by motor through northwestern Luxembourg and eastern France to meet the oncoming German war machines."

In other words, the blacks have pushed in to take the heaviest blows of the Nazi war machine at the peak of its strength.

In February there were already 320,000 Senegalese troops at the front, with a total of a million to come, out of a population of eighteen million in French West and Equatorial Africa.

Cuban health workers aid Nepal earthquake victims

BY SETH GALINSKY

Forty-nine Cuban health care workers headed to Nepal May 8 to treat those injured and ill in the wake of the April 25 earthquake and ensuing social catastrophe there.

The volunteers are part of Cuba's Henry Reeve International Contingent of Doctors Specialized in Disaster Situations and Serious Epidemics, organized in 2005 to offer aid to victims of Hurricane Katrina in the United States. Washington refused the offer.

The brigade, named for a U.S. doctor who joined Cubans in their 19th century war of independence, has grown since, carrying out missions in other parts of the world, including aiding victims of the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. The contingent became known worldwide after sending 256 volunteers last year to join the fight against Ebola in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Conakry.

The Cuban internationalists will set up a field hospital in Kirtipur, just outside Kathmandu, one of the hardest-hit areas. The team includes 10 nurses, 25 doctors and paramedics and support and administrative personnel.

At a send-off in Havana, Marcia Cobas, vice minister of Public Health in Cuba, said she was proud that the volunteers and equipment were ready 24 hours after the decision to offer the aid was made.

"It's an honor to continue the course of the contingent and to have been chosen for this task," volunteer José Antonio González, a specialist in wartime intensive care, told Cuba's *Granma* newspaper.

"This isn't for money, if I'm a doctor then I should go to do good wherever," Norbery Jorge Rodríguez de la Paz, one of seven Cuban volunteers who are going on their first internationalist mission, told *Granma*. For 20 of the volunteers this is their second mission abroad; 22 have been part of several brigades.

This is the first ever Cuban medical mission to Nepal, bringing to 25 the number of Asian countries that have received revolutionary Cuba's medical assistance.

At least 7,675 people in Nepal died

from the earthquake and more than 16,000 are injured. The social disaster was magnified by a legacy of imperialist underdevelopment and exploitation in what is one of the poorest countries in the world. Before the quake, there were only 50 hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants and 30 percent of the hospitals were damaged or destroyed.

"I was very happy to hear that our Cuban friends are coming," Surendra Raj Gosai, president of the Cuba Solidarity Committee of Nepal, said by phone from Kathmandu May 11. Gosai's home was destroyed in the earthquake and like tens of thousands of others he is living in a tent.

"Aid is arriving, but the victims are still not getting it," Gosai said. "The aid is not being properly managed by the government and the international and nongovernmental organizations

'Push for profits before safety' leads to derailments

Continued from front page

plumes of thick black smoke. Townspeople and nearby farmers had to be evacuated.

"This derailment, along with most of the other derailments, can be attributed to lack of maintenance because of the carriers' obsession with doing more with less," Jeff Kurtz, a retired BNSF locomotive engineer from Fort Madison, Iowa, told the *Militant* May 10. "The length and weight of these trains," he said, "will magnify any mistakes that are made and contribute to the degradation of the rails and roadbeds."

Kurtz is a member of Railroad Workers United, which helped lead a successful campaign to defeat the BNSF bosses' demand for a one-man crew on their freight trains in contract talks last year.

Since 2009, crude oil shipments by rail have increased more than 4,000 percent to 434,000 carloads in 2014. Many are transported on mile-long trains filled with more than 3 million gallons of oil, passing over farmlands and through urban centers such as Chicago and Minneapolis.

For the first time since the government began keeping such records, the majority of crude oil delivered to East



Ladyrene Pérez/Cubadebate

On just 24 hours notice, 49 Cuban health workers volunteered to go to Nepal after earthquake. "It's an honor to be chosen," said José Antonio González at May 7 Havana send-off.

also have their own interests."

The situation is getting worse, he said. "We had many aftershocks and that has been followed by heavy rain. And soon the monsoon season is starting." With the rain there is greater danger of epidemics. That's one reason why the people of Nepal appreciate the solidarity from Cuba.

"We know that Cuba has experience in disaster management and they are renowned throughout the world," Gosai said.

Abelardo Cueto, Cuba's ambassador to India and Nepal, told TeleSur that "Cuba travels the world as a sister and will help our Nepalese brothers and sisters."

Coast refineries in February was transported by rail instead of by ship.

"I have real safety concerns for my fellow crew members and the generally 200 or more passengers on my daily run," said Amtrak worker Jack Krueger, a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers who runs trains between Lincoln, Nebraska, and Ottumwa, Iowa. "I meet six or more oil trains. With the increasing number of derailments, all oil and other hazard material trains should take a siding or be stopped on the other track when a passenger train has a meet with them."

Gov't regulations postpone changes

The growing outcry over derailments and tank car explosions led the Department of Transportation to issue new rules May 1 that would require rail companies to upgrade or replace existing tank cars and install new braking systems. Deadlines to implement these regulations are between two to 10 years away.

The government says that tank cars built after Oct. 1, 2015, must have thicker steel walls and thermal "blankets" to reduce the risk of explosion. The generation of "upgraded" tankers built since 2011 — which were involved in all five major oil-car fires this year — don't

have to meet the new standards until at least 2020.

The rules require installation of electronically controlled brakes that stop cars simultaneously rather than sequentially, saying that would prevent "accordion-like" pileups in derailments, but not until January 2021, at the earliest.

The new rules are "very expensive," Norfolk Southern Corp. Chief Executive Charles Moorman told the *Wall Street Journal* May 5. "At a certain point, the economics are such that you can't justify shipping the oil."

"By claiming the problems are caused by not having electric brakes or using a different type of tank car," said Kurtz, "the rail carriers and the Federal Railroad Administration know that they can put off doing something essentially forever. But if you do something about the length and weight of the train, you can do that in the next five minutes."

"The lengthy time to retrofit cars reflects a desire to push profits before safety," said Iowa-based locomotive engineer and Railroad Workers United member Ross Grooters. "Shorter trains and better maintained track would employ more workers and help increase safety of oil by rail."

Joe Swanson in Lincoln, Nebraska, contributed to this article.

'Africa called, Cuba answered' tour begins in Canada

CALGARY, Alberta — José de Jesús Portilla García, director of the Department of Bilateral Collaboration in the Cuban Ministry of Public Health and a doctor who has participated in Cuban medical internationalist missions, will tour Canada May 14-30. He will speak on the theme "Africa Called, Cuba Answered," including the decision of the revolutionary government to send 256 health care workers to the front lines of the fight against Ebola in West Africa.

Cuba currently has more than 50,000 volunteer health care workers aiding people in more than 60 countries around the globe. The internationalists often say, "We don't give what's left over; we share what we have."

Portilla will speak in Calgary; Montreal; Kingston, Ottawa, Hamilton and Niagara, Ontario; Halifax, Nova Scotia; and Vancouver, British Columbia.

His tour will culminate in Toronto May 30, where he will join Fernando González, one of the Cuban Five, at a forum at the United Steelworkers union hall titled, "Cuba in the Struggle for a Better World." The Cuban Five were reunited on Cuban soil last December, more than 16 years after they were arrested and railroaded to prison by the U.S. government.

The tour is organized by the Canadian Network On Cuba. For more information, email Isaac Saney, CNC Co-chair at isaney@hotmail.com or call (902) 449-4967.

— MICHEL DUGRÉ

For further reading ...

Absolved by Solidarity

16 Watercolors for 16 Years of Unjust Imprisonment

by Antonio Guerrero

\$15 English/Spanish

Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution

by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, and Yolanda Ferrer

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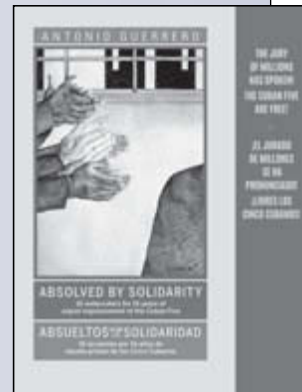
Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

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\$7 Also in Spanish, French, Farsi, Swedish

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‘Cuba has the right to choose its own destiny’

Gerardo Hernández of Cuban Five speaks at international solidarity conference with Cuba

The following are remarks by Gerardo Hernández at the conclusion of the International Solidarity Conference with Cuba held May 2 in Havana (see accompanying news article on front page). The translation from Spanish is by the Militant.

Thank you!

Brothers and sisters from all over the world, thanks to all of you! And when we say thank you, it's not a formality. In our hearts we know that we are here in Cuba to a large extent because of the efforts of many *compañeras* and *compañeros* all around the world. It was you who did not rest for a day since our arrest and who made this joyful day possible.

You are representatives of a much broader number of sisters and brothers from different countries who couldn't be here. We ask that when you return home, please convey our sincere thanks to all those who in one way or another contributed, be it with a letter or the smallest act of solidarity and support to our cause. Every single one was important.

It was the combination of all these actions and efforts that brought us here with our families and with our people. So we will never tire of thanking you.

What a historic day yesterday, after having dreamed so much about a May Day in our own country!

For many years on May Day, our routine in the different prisons was more or less the same: we'd try to get close to a TV and see if they broadcast some scene, however small, of our people marching. Sometimes they did.

Can't hide Cuba revolutionary spirit

As much as they want to hide the reality of Cuba, how can you hide millions of revolutionaries in the street? You can't. There are some who try to hide the achievements of the Cuban Revolution and smear it. But however much they try, they cannot hide the revolutionary spirit of millions of Cubans who every day, and especially every May Day, come out and defend our revolution. That is why in prison we would sit in front of a TV near our cells, and the images of our people, our workers, gave us a tremendous injection of encouragement.

Yesterday, that dream of joining together with our people on May Day came true. And the joy was even



Gerardo Hernández, third from right, on stage with recipients of certificates recognizing their work in the fight to free the Cuban Five

greater because all of you were here, representing the *compañeros* from so many countries who worked for so long in the battle for our freedom.

We saw many familiar faces there, as well as others we are getting to know. Many of you we knew only by name and in the past few days some have come up to us and said, "I am so-and-so" and we joined in a hug. It may be hard to believe, but many of the names we know still don't have faces associated with them, a result of the isolation we were subjected to for so long. Now we've met. Today we're a big family, which must unite more and more to go forward to the battles ahead.

Over there I see the picture of Oscar López. We still face the battle to free him too, so that he can enjoy freedom as we do today. We still have Mumia Abu-Jamal. We still have Leonard Peltier. We still have other *compañeros* who are political prisoners. The committees in solidarity with the Five that supported us so much must see what we can do to end these injustices

too.

We want Oscar and the other *compañeros* to know that the Five, now that we are free, will continue remembering you and supporting you.

Likewise, we are ready to join with you to back any just cause wherever our efforts may be needed. Have no doubt that here in our country we will always support you whenever we are asked and we will be ready to do what we can for any cause that summons our modest efforts.

And now, what's next? What do we do? You will tell us. The blockade remains in place, and we cannot rest as long as it exists. We have to keep on fighting. And if some day the blockade is lifted, we must keep fighting to ensure that no one will ever attempt to reimpose it.

We cannot rest. Revolutionaries cannot rest. We have to remain firm. As our *compañeros* were chanting yesterday, "*¡Que no, que no, que no nos da la gana de ser una colonia norteamericana! ¡Que sí, que sí, que sí nos da la gana de ser una nación*

latinoamericana!" ("No, no, no, we don't want to be an American colony! Yes, yes, yes, we want to be a Latin American nation!")

‘Era of colonialism is over’

We'll have to continue to remind them that the era of colonialism is over. That we are free and sovereign countries — no more interference in our internal affairs. We have the right to choose our own destiny and our own path.

We count on you to keep reminding the empire every day of its existence. We count on you to continue moving forward. The Cuban people count on you to keep joining with us in support, as you have done for more than 50 years, during these times of challenges — challenges that we will take on. The efforts of all of us together will continue to be decisive.

On behalf of the family members of the Five, whom you received in your countries with great hospitality and looked after with so much warmth and

Continued on page 9

Int'l conference: ‘Step up fight to end US embargo’

Continued from front page

conference, thanked participants for their role in the worldwide campaign to win the freedom for the five Cuban revolutionaries — Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González — who spent a decade and a half in U.S. prisons for their actions defending the Cuban Revolution. The delegates represented 205 trade unions, political parties and Cuba solidarity groups. A majority came from across Latin America; others were from the United States, Canada, European countries, and as far away as South Korea. There were 200 union delegates from Cuba.

The purpose of this year's gathering, larger than in previous years, was building on the victory won Dec. 17 with the return home of Hernández, Labañino, and Guerrero. They joined with Fernando González and René González, released earlier from U.S. custody after serving their entire sentences. All five participated in the conference.

Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Ana Teresita González Fraga told the audience that the beginning of Cuban-U.S. talks on re-establishing diplomatic relations — unilaterally broken off by

Washington in 1961 — is a victory that registers the strength and dignity of the Cuban people and their revolutionary government.

However, normalization of relations is not possible without the U.S. government ending its more than 50-year-long economic war against Cuba, she said, compensating Cuba for the economic and social damage it has caused, returning the territory it occupies at the Guantánamo naval base, and ending its subversive action programs aimed at Cuba, including its hostile radio and TV broadcasts. "It will be a difficult, complex and lengthy process," González said, adding that Havana is engaging in these talks with full awareness of "the profound differences" between the two governments.

Kenia Serrano, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), called on the international delegates to continue to tell the truth about the Cuban Revolution — including its exemplary record in defense of human rights — and to "multiply your efforts in the struggle to end the economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed by the U.S." Serrano urged participants to build coordinated actions around the

world Sept. 16-19 protesting the U.S. embargo.

Serrano underscored Cuba's unwavering defense of the Venezuelan government in face of U.S. sanctions and other attacks on that country's sovereignty. She noted that the Obama administration's announcement that it intends to remove Cuba from Washington's list of "state sponsors of terrorism" was a step forward, but added, "We oppose the U.S. government's unilateral placing of any country on such a list. They have no right to do so."

Some 30 delegates from unions, solidarity groups, political organizations and individuals took the floor during the discussion period.

Afterward, Hernández, Labañino, Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González were awarded the CTC's 75th anniversary medal for their outstanding contributions to the defense of the country. Each of the five, on behalf of the CTC and ICAP, presented certificates to nearly a dozen individuals representing trade unions, solidarity organizations and others in several countries whose contributions to the fight to free the Cuban Five deserved special recognition.

East Coast March Free Oscar López!

Puerto Rican
independence
fighter
jailed in U.S.
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New York City
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Assemble 11 am
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Adam Clayton Powell Blvd.

For more info:
www.freeoscarnycmay30.org

Participation in Cuban Revolution transformed women

Below is an excerpt from the introduction to Women and the Cuban Revolution, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. The book contains speeches by Fidel Castro and Federation of Cuban Women's leader Vilma Espin. It includes several important Cuban documents: "Thesis: On the Full Exercise of Women's Equality," "Maternity Law for Working Women," and excerpts from the Cuban Family Code. The book is a good companion to Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution, also published by Pathfinder. Copyright © 1981 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ELIZABETH STONE

For the masses of people, men and women alike, life in prerevolutionary Cuba was hard. Malnutrition and hunger were widespread. Half the population lived in thatched huts, shacks, or single-room slum housing. Half the people were without electricity. Half didn't have running water or inside toilets. One quarter were completely illiterate. Chronic unemployment was as high as it was in the U.S. during the depth of the 1930s depression.

Contraception was generally unavailable and abortion was illegal. Even when women were able to obtain birth



Bohemia

Cuban women learning jobs that were previously reserved only for men, November 1962.

control devices, husbands often considered the use of them a threat to their manhood. The general lack of medical care meant that 80 percent of all babies were not born in hospitals. Many died at an early age.

Women suffered most from all the effects of underdevelopment. It was they who did household chores without benefit of electricity and running water. They were the ones with the highest rate of illiteracy. The economic stagnation and low level of industrialization — products of imperialist exploitation — meant that it was almost impossible for a woman without education or a skill to get a job except as someone else's personal servant. ...

The struggle begins

The women who joined the struggle against the dictator Batista in the 1950s had already begun to show the way. They played an important role in that fight. Women organized demonstrations and worked in the underground, collecting supplies for the guerrillas, selling bonds to raise money, creating hospitals, sewing uniforms, and hiding revolutionaries in their houses. They served as messengers and spies. There are many stories about the role women played in transporting weapons under their skirts through the streets of Santiago and the other centers of revolutionary activity.

Some women became guerrilla fighters. Individual women fought on different guerrilla fronts and there was also a

group of women combatants called the Mariana Grajales Platoon, named after the Black woman active in Cuba's first war of independence. This legendary unit grew to the size of a company during the final stages of the revolutionary war and was maintained afterwards. ...

One of the first activities to draw in large numbers of women was the creation of the militia. As the revolution deepened with the carrying out of the land reform and the nationalization of large imperialist holdings, the U.S. government and counterrevolutionaries within Cuba began to organize armed opposition. Bombings, sabotage of factories, and the burning of sugarcane fields went hand-in-hand with the threat of military attack from the United States. To help counter this a popular militia was organized in the workplaces and schools, and women who worked or who were students joined it.

There was a big hue and cry from counterrevolutionary elements about women's incorporation into the militia. They questioned the "morals" of women who dressed like men, wore pants, and carried guns. When the militia women went out to drill, they were sometimes greeted with rocks. There were also many supporters of the revolution who questioned whether women belonged in the militia. But every able-bodied person was needed to defend the country, and eventually most revolutionaries were won over. ...

In 1961, the campaign to wipe out il-

literacy was organized. It was a gigantic effort. A hundred thousand youth between the ages of ten and eighteen left their schools and went into the countryside as literacy *brigadistas* to teach people how to read and write. Over half of these *brigadistas* were girls and young women.

Fifty-five percent of those who learned to read and write were women. This was accomplished despite considerable resistance to including women in the campaign. *Lucía*, a Cuban movie produced in the 1960s, portrays a typical example of such resistance when Lucía's husband tries to prevent her from attending literacy classes and she fights back against this. For thousands of women like Lucía, learning to read was a first step toward greater self-confidence, a sense of their own worth and dignity, and more control over their lives.

For the young women and girls who went out to teach, the experience was a wrenching break from the past. Until then, some of them had not even been allowed out of the house alone. Now they were traveling to the most remote parts of the countryside and mountains, where they shared the life of poverty of the peasants, not only teaching but also working with them in the fields. ...

Along with the literacy drive came other bold educational efforts. A school was set up in Havana for 20,000 maids. As their employers left for the United States, these former maids were trained as child-care workers, bank workers, and taxi and bus drivers.

Special schools were set up for former prostitutes too, where they could live, receive an education, and learn skills which would prepare them to be integrated into the labor force. ...

Fidel Castro and other leaders often spoke in those years about the important role of women in the revolution. This and educational tools such as the movie *Lucía* helped combat backward attitudes. But the key consciousness-raiser was the experiences of the women themselves. It was their participation and accomplishments that gave women a new consciousness of their worth and political importance. And this confidence grew as more and more people began to realize that the full participation of women was essential to the very survival of the revolution.

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OFFER GOOD UNTIL MAY 31

End US embargo of Cuba!

“And now, what’s next?” Gerardo Hernández, one of the Cuban Five, posed to participants in the international solidarity conference with Cuba held in Havana May 2. The fight to free the Cuban Five ended in victory last December.

Hernández’s speech was a call to action to *use* that victory to advance the ongoing fight to end Washington’s barbarous embargo and to defend Cuba’s sovereignty and its socialist revolution.

We join Hernández in pledging to step up the battle to win the release of Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López, who has been in prison in the U.S. for nearly 34 years. Build and join the East Coast march to free López in New York May 30!

Don’t make the mistake of thinking it was negotiations with Washington that won freedom for the Five, Hernández said. It was the mobilization of millions, the combined effort of all those who raised their voices and extended a hand of solidarity in the struggle.

And the value of the fight is not just the end result, he said, but the daily impact of solidarity in breaking the isolation that the rulers try to impose.

That support made it possible for the Five to keep up their spirits in prison. It continues, every day, to help the revolutionary toilers in Cuba stand firm.

“Cuba has not moved away even a tiny bit from its principles,” he added. This includes the moral values, the attitudes of solidarity that developed in struggle as Cuban toilers made and today defend their revolution. They are demonstrated in the conduct and character of the Cuban Five, and in the proletarian internationalism of the volunteers who fought and defeated the apartheid South African invasion in Angola, to those providing medical care from West Africa to Nepal today.

Join in demanding: End the U.S. embargo, return Guantánamo to Cuba, end Washington’s ceaseless attempts to overturn Cuba’s socialist revolution.

Help get out the truth about the Cuban Revolution. As we do so, working people around the world can learn how Cuban toilers overthrew the rule of capital, transforming themselves in the process, built a workers and farmers government and reorganized society based on human need, not profit — an example for all of us to emulate.

‘Right to choose its own destiny’

Continued from page 7

affection, we want to express our special thanks. In prison we always received reports from them about how much love, affection, and solidarity they received from you on every tour in your countries.

Dec. 17 was a big victory for all of us — for Cuba and for people around the world. I once heard a compañero, who was involved in solidarity with us, say, “We did what we could, but in the end it wasn’t us who got them released, the negotiations got them released.” Do not make that mistake. We were freed thanks to you.

It would have been very difficult to successfully negotiate the release of three unknown individuals who didn’t interest anyone — the three who remained in prison. That is something you must always bear in mind. It was the combined effort of each one of you, every grain of sand you contributed, that made it possible for us to be here today enjoying the affection of our people.

Not only that, keep in mind that those 16 or 15 years of prison were made up of months, days and hours. Our resistance in those prisons had to be waged hour by hour. Hour by hour we had to think about something with which to keep up our spirits, from which to draw the strength to resist. In prison we saw people who took their own lives, unable to endure the conditions. I could give you first and last names.

We had to draw strength from somewhere. And you should know that one of our sources of inspiration, along with the example of our heroes and martyrs, of our leaders, along with the example of the Cuban people’s sacrifice, selflessness, and struggle, another of our sources of inspiration that strengthened us was thinking about all of you, it was precisely your solidarity and your support.

Today, the strength of the Five is praised and recognized. But the strength of the Five is nothing more than the strength of the Cuban people. For more than 50 years we have been standing up to the biggest empire known to humanity, and it has not been able to break us.

A little while ago we heard our compañera from the Foreign Ministry [Deputy Minister Ana Teresita González Fraga] give a magnificent report. And I thought: Wow, after more than half a century, spending billions of dollars with the aim of isolating Cuba and its revolution in the world, what have they accomplished? That we don’t have diplomatic relations with Micronesia. And I have no doubt that at some point we will have that too.

Who became isolated? Cuba? No, the empire became isolated. Now the empire is starting to acknowledge that, and it’s important to point that out as well. Yes, we are having talks. Yes, we want to improve relations. But Cuba has not moved away even a tiny bit from its principles. Today we are affirming the same things we were affirming in 1959.

They were the ones who said, “We have nothing to negotiate with Cuba as long as the Castros — as they put it — are in power. As long as they have that revolution, as long as Cuba remains socialist, we will have nothing to negotiate with them.”

Well, here we have Raúl Castro in power, and here we have our socialist revolution.

And just as we have absolute confidence in the capacity of our people, in our people’s spirit of struggle and sacrifice, to keep moving forward in the battles we have ahead of us, we have confidence in the support, solidarity, and fighting spirit of all of you to continue fighting alongside us.

Many thanks, brothers and sisters.

Families of victims of police brutality march in DC



Militant

WASHINGTON — Several hundred protesters joined two dozen mothers of young men killed by police across the country to march to the Justice Department May 9, waiting nearly an hour until officials came out to speak with leaders of the action, then rallied in a nearby park.

“My son Joseph N. Cooper Jr., who was 21 years old, was killed here by an off-duty police officer in 1995,” Lorita Geddie, who carried a photo of her son, told the *Militant*.

A large contingent came from Milwaukee, including Maria Hamilton, organizer of the event, whose son Dontre was killed by cops there April 30, 2014; Andrea Irwin, whose son Tony Robinson was shot seven times and killed by Madison cop Matthew Kenny March 6; and Sonya Moore, whose son Derek Williams was killed by a Milwaukee cop in the back of a squad car in 2010.

On May 12 hundreds protested in Madison, Wisconsin, after Dane County district attorney Ismael Ozanne announced no charges would be filed against Kenny. “This is not over,” Irwin told the crowd. Protesters yelled back, “This is not over!”

Comfort Oludipe held a large photo of her son Emmanuel Okutuga, killed by Montgomery County, Maryland, police in 2011.

Iris Baez, Hawa Bah and Juanita Young, mothers of men killed by the New York police, drove here for the two days of activity.

Heidi Keilbaugh came from Salt Lake City to protest the police killing of her partner James Barker while he was shoveling snow Jan. 8. Other contingents came from St. Louis and Silver Spring and Prince Georges County, Maryland.

— MAGGIE TROWE

Chicago cop torture victims

Continued from front page

the cops’ practices and prevented the city government from sweeping the cases under the rug.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel agreed April 14 to support the ordinance, saying his goal was to “close this book — the Burge book — on the city’s history, close it and bring closure for the victims.”

“It’s a great start for the city of Chicago to acknowledge the truth about what happened,” Mark Clements told the news media in response. Clements spent 28 years in prison for crimes he did not commit, after being tortured by Burge’s cops when he was 16. “More needs to be done about the many survivors of torture who are still in prison.”

According to the *Chicago Sun Times*, city officials say 55 torture victims are potential recipients of the reparations.

Clements was asked by the press if he would accept money from the reparations fund if he were found eligible. “No, I won’t accept it,” he said. “It’s too low. I spent 28 years being legally lynched.”

In 1993 the Chicago police department finally fired Burge. In 2006 a special Cook County prosecutor’s investigation concluded Burge and his gang had carried out torture, but that the statute of limitations had run out for prosecution of their crimes.

Burge was later convicted of perjury for lying about one case of torture and spent about four years in federal custody, partly under home confinement.

The ordinance, originally introduced in 2013 at the urging of Chicago Torture Justice Memorials, apologizes to the torture victims and sets up the reparations fund, as well as free enrollment in

city colleges, and priority access to job training, housing, counseling and other social services. It calls for Chicago public schools to teach a history lesson on the Burge torture cases. It also calls for “local law enforcement officials to provide evidentiary hearings to the torture survivors who remain behind bars,” to have a chance to show their confessions were coerced.

Torture survivors, friends, family and supporters celebrated their victory at a luncheon, and later that evening at a party in Hyde Park. They said they had no intention of closing up shop.

“Today is a good start. But when we get out of prison we have nothing,” Stanley Wrice told the *Militant*. Wrice was convicted of rape and sentenced to 100 years in prison in 1983 after being tortured by the cop thugs. He was released after 31 years and is now on staff for the Chicago Innocence Project. “There are still around 100 in prison from Burge’s torture and forced confessions.”

“My son Michael Johnson was arrested when he was 17 years old and tortured,” said Mary L. Johnson. “He has been in prison now 30 years. I was the first one to write up a complaint against the torture and forced confessions and speak out on the issue.

“The six indictments of cops in Baltimore are a victory too,” she added, “and I am glad people went into the streets.”

“We have just begun,” said Carolyn Johnson, whose son Marcus Wiggins was tortured in 1991 when he was 13 years old. “Now we have to get my baby and all the others out of jail.”

Dan Fein contributed to this article.