

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Actions in Puerto Rico, Cuba,  
US demand: 'Free Oscar López!'  
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 23 JUNE 17, 2013

## 'Militant covers workers' fights, world events that affect us all'

BY LOUIS MARTIN

At the end of the fourth week of an international campaign to win 2,800 *Militant* subscribers and sell hundreds of books on revolutionary working-class politics, readers and distributors of the socialist newsweekly have netted a total of 1,522. The drive, which is now 3 percent behind schedule, ends June 25.

"The 112 subscriptions sold so far by supporters of the *Militant* in San Francisco have in their big majority been through campaigning door to door in workers' districts here and in Oakland, South San Francisco and Salinas, a farmworkers' center a couple of hours drive to the south," wrote Joel Britton, an organizer of the sales effort. "But a flurry of workers strikes in the Bay Area has presented an opportunity to extend solidarity and win new *Militant* readers."

Linda Miljour, who signed up for a  
**Continued on page 3**

### Spring 'Militant' subscription campaign May 4 - June 25 (week 4)

Country	quota	sold	%	2,800
UNITED STATES				
Seattle	160	116	73%	
Des Moines	140	98	70%	
Twin Cities	140	97	69%	
San Francisco	180	112	62%	
Los Angeles	175	107	61%	
Lincoln	25	15	60%	
Omaha	90	52	58%	
Miami	90	50	56%	
Washington	90	50	56%	
Philadelphia	140	75	54%	
Chicago	180	93	52%	
Houston	140	66	47%	
New York	425	177	42%	
Atlanta	160	66	41%	
Boston	65	26	40%	
Total U.S.	2200	1200	55%	
PRISONERS	15	3	20%	
UNITED KINGDOM				Should be... 1,522
London	160	85	53%	
Manchester	100	69	69%	
UK Total	260	154	59%	
CANADA	120	63	53%	
NEW ZEALAND	70	44	63%	
AUSTRALIA	80	58	73%	
Total	2745	1522	54%	
Should be	2800	1600	57%	

## US drone strikes continue after Obama says 'war on terror' is over

BY JOHN STUDER

A CIA aerial drone strike in Pakistan's tribal agency of North Waziristan May 29 killed Taliban deputy leader Wali ur-Rehman and four to seven others, Pakistani government officials reported. Another drone attack in Yemen killed eight unidentified alleged members of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula June 1, according to *Xinhua*.

The assassination took place six days after President Barack Obama gave a widely publicized speech at the National Defense University announcing the administration's plan to reduce drone attacks, as well as place the strikes under new, more "transparent" guidelines.

The remote-controlled airstrikes are deeply resented by a majority of Pakistanis. At the end of 2012, 80 percent reported an "unfavorable" view of the U.S., according to a Pew Research Center survey.

The drone killings were protested both by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the popular but defeated candidate Imran Khan, a former cricket star. Khan said if he was prime minister, he would order Pakistan's air  
**Continued on page 4**

## Miners, supporters protest Patriot assault on UMWA

Bankruptcy judge backs bosses' union busting



Militant/Jim Garrison

Miners and supporters demonstrate in Henderson, Ky., against bankruptcy court decision giving Patriot Coal green light to tear up union contracts and slash retiree health benefits.

BY BETSY FARLEY AND ALYSON KENNEDY

HENDERSON, Ky. — Determined to continue the fight against Patriot Coal's union busting, some 3,000 miners and supporters demonstrated here June 4 on the grounds of the Henderson County Courthouse.

Coal miners, including a large number of retirees, came in cars, on foot, and in 28 buses from as far away as Alabama, Pennsylvania and the West

Virginia panhandle. Contingents of unionists from the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union; United Steelwork-

**JOIN JUNE 17 MINERS' RALLY!**  
— See editorial p. 9

ers; Service Employees International Union; and United Auto Workers came in solidarity.

The protest was organized by the  
**Continued on page 9**

## Fight to free Cuban 5 pressed at week of activities in Washington



Militant/Seth Galinsky

White House rally June 1 demands freedom for Cuban Five. "We need to reach the American people," said René González from Cuba during week of activity in Washington, D.C.

BY SETH GALINSKY

WASHINGTON — A week of activities here to advance the international campaign to free five Cuban revolutionaries held in U.S. prisons drew hundreds of participants from the United States, Canada and several countries in Europe and Latin America. In addition to a June 1 rally

of 250 in front of the White House, the "Five Days for the Cuban Five" included panel discussions, workshops, cultural events and lobbying.

"We need to reach the American people, and that is the importance of these events," René González told an opening press conference May 30.  
**Continued on page 6**

## Syria civil war deadlocked, battles spread into Lebanon

BY SUSAN LAMONT

As Washington, Moscow and the United Nations strain to pull together an international conference seeking resolution to the civil war in Syria, government troops, aided  
**Continued on page 9**

### Also Inside:

- Profit drive kills 119 poultry workers in China 2
- Conference to discuss lessons in fights for workers power 4
- Peugeot workers end 4-month strike in France 5
- Raising culture of Cuba's toilers began in Rebel Army 8

# Rulings block anti-abortion laws in Arizona, Arkansas

## New restrictions threaten clinics in several states

BY SUSAN LAMONT

Recent court decisions in Arizona and Arkansas have blocked new state abortion restrictions, which are part of mounting curbs on women's rights being floated in states around the country.

An Arizona law barring most abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy was ruled unconstitutional by a federal appeals court May 21. The ruling applies to nine western states, including Alaska, which also has a 20-week limit. A similar law in Idaho was ruled unconstitutional in March.

On May 17, a federal judge in Arkansas blocked implementation of that state's new law barring abortions at 12 weeks until a lawsuit challenging the law's constitutionality is heard.

At the same time, supporters of women's right to abortion in Mississippi and North Dakota are trying to prevent closure of their state's only abortion clinic.

Passage of restrictive bills in Mississippi in 2012 and in North Dakota earlier this year would require doctors working at abortion clinics to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals. In both cases local hospitals have refused to grant them these privileges.

The North Dakota law, the most restrictive in the U.S., includes a provision banning abortions when a fetal heartbeat can be detected, as early as six weeks. When this law was passed in March, "nearly 1,000 people came out to protest," Tammi Kromenaker, director of the Red River Women's Clinic in Fargo, said in a May 24 phone interview. "People who hadn't ever been involved

came to the rallies. That's what we need now, for everyday people to stand up and say, 'This is too much.'"

The New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights filed a lawsuit May 15 in state district court in North Dakota to block the law's implementation. In Jackson, Miss., a federal judge in April stopped for now the hospital admitting-privilege requirement.

At least one clinic, in Knoxville, Tenn., has closed as a result of similar admitting-privilege restrictions.

In April owners of the Hillcrest Clinic in Norfolk, Va., closed the facility after 40 years when the state Board of Health enacted regulations requiring abortion clinics to meet the same building standards as newly constructed hospitals.

Meanwhile, Dr. Kermit Gosnell in mid-May was convicted of first-degree murder in the deaths of three babies allegedly born alive at his Philadelphia abortion clinic and of involuntary manslaughter in the death of a 41-year-old woman, Karnamaya Mongar, an immigrant from Bhutan who was a patient. Gosnell was sentenced to life in prison without parole. State prosecutors had sought the death penalty and opponents of women's rights are using the practices at Gosnell's clinic to stoke opposition to the right to choose abortion and smear providers of the procedure.

As the Gosnell trial was taking place, the anti-abortion group Live Action released an undercover video made at Dr. Leroy Carhart's clinic in Bellevue, Neb., by two women posing as patients. In the videos, Carhart answers questions from

## Profit drive kills 119 poultry workers in China



Reuters

Residents of Dehui, Jilin province, in northeast China, protest June 4 outside a chicken slaughter plant where at least 119 workers were killed and dozens injured a day earlier as a result of the bosses' negligence and lack of concern for the lives of workers. Provincial officials told the media that an ammonia leak sparked an explosion that led to a fire at the Jilin Baoyuanfeng Poultry Co. factory. More than 300 workers were inside the plant at the time. Only one side door was open, with all other exit doors locked, a worker at the plant told the Chinese newspaper *Southern Metropolis Daily*.

—BRIAN WILLIAMS

the women about how a late-term abortion is done. Carhart, one of a handful of remaining doctors in the U.S. who perform such abortions, was a colleague of Dr. George Tiller, who was gunned down by an anti-abortion rightist in Wichita, Kan. in 2009. Carhart began working at a Germantown, Md., clinic

in December 2010 to continue providing late-term abortions, after Nebraska outlawed the procedure after 22 weeks.

Meanwhile, the Barack Obama administration May 24 filed to delay implementation of a federal court ruling lifting age limits and prescription requirements for the "morning-after" pill.

## 'Blood money' bonuses sent to advance workers' cause

In April and May five workers from around the country sent in a total of \$1,357 in "blood money" bribes from bosses to the Socialist Workers Party's Capital Fund, which helps finance the long-range work of the revolutionary party.

"I just sent a check for \$301 that came from our quarterly production bonus at Electro-Motive Diesel," wrote Laura Anderson from Chicago, in a note accompanying her contribution. "Not all workers received it. If you had missed a day, came late, were injured or sick; if your department scrap rate was too high; and of course if the company's production goal was not made in your department, you did not get a check. Happy to send it so it can be put to good use."

Ellie Garcia, an aerospace worker in Los Angeles, sent in \$336.72. "This one's not for safety, because too many workers were hurt in the last fiscal year," she said.

Robert Dees from Houston sent \$400, given to workers at the door plant where he works. "As before, the boss claimed it was because 'the sales department did well this month,' but in fact it is a small portion of the wealth produced by hard work, lots of overtime, and unsafe working conditions."

If you would like to make a contribution to the SWP Capital Fund, please contact the *Militant* distributor nearest to you. For a directory, see page 8.

—SUSAN LAMONT

# THE MILITANT

## Interest in working-class politics worldwide

*The world capitalist crisis has engendered initial stirrings of resistance by working people along with growing openness to revolutionary working-class politics. The 'Militant' follows these developments from the U.S. to Indonesia to Iran. Don't miss an issue!*



Booth at Tehran's International Book Fair in May. Books by Pathfinder, which took part in fair, were well received by participants.

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Canada: For one year send Canadian \$45 to the Militant, 7107 St. Denis #204, Montreal, Quebec H2S 2S5.

United Kingdom: Send £26 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green Road (Entrance in Brick Lane), London, E2 6DG, England.

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New Zealand: Send NZ\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

Australia: Send A\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia. Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

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

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

# Subscription campaign

Continued from front page

*Militant* subscription, started working as a cashier for Park N' Fly at San Francisco International Airport two weeks before Teamsters members went on strike May 24 against company-demanded concessions. She had been unemployed for a year.

"Jobs are so hard to find," she said, "At least 100 people apply for the same job you are trying to get." Miljour said that for many years she had not read papers or watched TV news, but with the economic crisis "I want to learn more about workers struggles around the world."

"Yes. Isn't it terrible — and not just coal miners! They are doing the same thing to us teachers," said retired school teacher Christine Ethridge in Hueytown, Ala., when John Benson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Atlanta, knocked on her door to show her the *Militant* and discuss the coal miners' fight against Patriot Coal's assault on their union. (See article on front page.)

Ethridge asked Benson how he got involved with the paper and working-class politics. The socialist candidate told her he joined the fight against Jim Crow segregation as a youth.

"Me too," she said. "I had just started teaching and I helped desegregate my school, Hueytown Elementary."

Participating in fights like these — and of the miners today — change how working people look at each other, build solidarity and help us fight better, Benson said.

"Now, you have really given me something to think about," Ethridge responded. She bought a subscription and a copy of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, one

of nine books offered at reduced prices with a subscription. (See ad below.)

Several teams of *Militant* supporters from seven cities fanned out into the Alabama, Kentucky and southern Illinois coalfields to distribute the paper door to door and at mine portals and help build the June 4 miners' protest against Patriot Coal in Henderson, Ky.

Alyson Kennedy from Chicago reported that a total of 70 subscriptions were sold during the several-day effort at mine portals, going door to door in coal mining towns and at the close to 3,000-strong action. This includes 43 subscriptions sold at the demonstration itself.

Over the last few weeks *Militant* distributors have joined with others calling for freedom for the Cuban Five to build and participate in a rally outside the White House June 1. (See article on front page.) Twenty-three subscriptions were sold to participants in the Washington, D.C., protest.

"Next time we meet here, I pray they will all be released," Melinda Banks, a member of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 372, who works for the New York City School Board, told *Militant* supporter Ruth Robinett at the June 1 rally. Banks, who got her subscription at a similar protest the year before, said she really likes the paper and took a few copies and subscription blanks to get others to subscribe.

"I would never have known about the Cuban Five if I hadn't been reading the *Militant*," said Katina Matthews, an IT technician in Houston, who renewed her subscription for the second time and purchased *The Cuban Five*:



Militant/Dag Tirsén

Hugo Wils (left) sells *Militant* subscription to retired merchant sailor and former coal miner Tony Roland in door-to-door sales in Fallowfield, Manchester, England, June 1.

*Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*, a book on special, when *Militant* distributors visited her to discuss the paper. "The way they framed those guys up, you never hear about these things." Matthews also made a donation to the *Militant* Fighting Fund. (See article on page 4.)

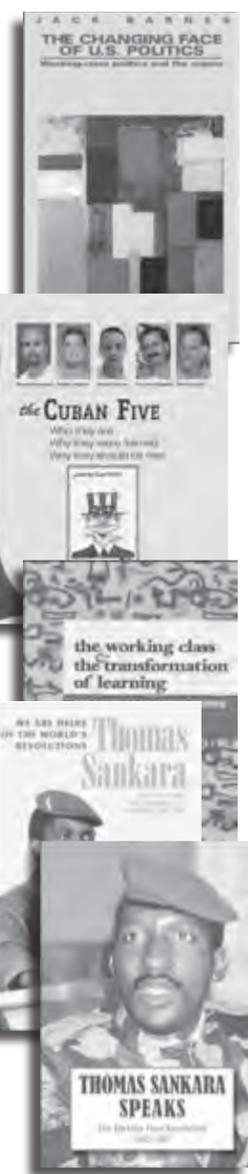
Frédéric-Alexandre Jean-Louis, 21, bought a *Militant* subscription and a copy of the French edition of *The Cuban Five* at a May 18 march in Montreal against the criminalization of immigrant workers. A member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, he is an outside worker in a municipal recycling center. When asked what got him interested in the

paper, he said, "I am for unions."

"*Militant* supporters sold 14 subscriptions going door to door in Woolwich," the neighborhood where Islamist jihadists murdered a British soldier May 22, Hugh Robertson wrote from London. (See "UK rulers seize on Islamist jihadist killing to target rights of workers" in the June 10 issue.)

"What concerns me is the way the government is using this," health worker Liz Morgan said as she picked up a subscription. London Mayor Boris Johnson "has jumped on the issue to argue in favor of the 'snoopers' charter,'" she said, referring to a bill that would give police access to anyone's website activity, emails, mobile calls and social media messages.

## Special offers with 'Militant' subscription



### The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

by Jack Barnes

\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

### The Cuban Five

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

from pages of the 'Militant'

\$3 with subscription (regular \$5)

### The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism

by Jack Barnes

\$2 with subscription (regular \$3)

### We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions

by Thomas Sankara

Speeches from the Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87

\$5 with subscription (regular \$10)

### Thomas Sankara Speaks

The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987

\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

See distributors on page 8



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

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

\$6 with subscription (regular \$12)

### Women in Cuba

The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution

by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer

\$10 with subscription (regular \$20)

### Women and Revolution

The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution

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

\$3 with subscription (regular \$7)

### Struggle never in vain

"As an Irishman I know struggle is never in vain," said Tony Roland, a retired merchant sailor, coal miner and participant in the 1984-85 coal strike in Britain, as he signed up for a subscription from another team of *Militant* distributors in the Fallowfield area of Manchester, England. "I see big battles still to come in the years ahead."

At a May 29-30 picket line during a 24-hour strike by Port Waratah Coal Services workers in Newcastle, Australia, coal loader Peter Nilsson and fitter Ben Newman joined with *Militant* distributors Ron Poulsen and Linda Harris from Sydney, selling eight subscriptions and two books. (See article on page 5.)

Both port workers had subscribed to the *Militant* May 15, at a previous four-hour work stoppage held so workers could attend the union meeting. Nilsson had also bought *The Cuban Five* and *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own*.

Nilsson urged coworkers to get the paper because of its coverage of conditions and struggles "overseas that are going to affect us all in the long run," adding that the *Militant* is the best source of information about the "politics that controls everybody's lives."

Join the international effort to increase the circulation of the paper. Call distributors listed on page 8 or contact us at (212) 244-4899 or militant@mac.com.

# US drone strikes continue

Continued from front page  
force to shoot down any drones that entered the country's airspace.

"President Obama embraced drone strikes in his first term," the *New York Times* wrote May 21, "and the targeted killing of suspected terrorist has come to define his presidency."

Drone attacks in Pakistan were greatly expanded under Obama, but have declined over the last two years.

Estimates of the numbers killed range as high as 3,343. Estimates of civilians killed varies widely, as U.S. officials have labeled all military-aged males "combatants." In addition, Obama has significantly escalated the number of what are called "signature strikes," which target groups of unknown people whose observed patterns of behavior fit a profile of suspect activity.

The number of drone strikes in Yemen has fallen in half over the last year and there has been no drone assassinations recorded in over a year in Somalia.

In his May 23 speech, Obama argued that under the "war on terror" targeted assassinations were "effective," "legal" and "just." However, he said, today that war is being won, and

drone strikes can be used more narrowly.

Selection of targets would be more transparent, he said. Killing could be avoided in cases where capture and interrogation was possible. Assassination would be ordered only when there was the threat of continuing and immediate harm to American lives, where no other government would take action and where there was "near certainty" of no collateral damage.

Obama said these goals were recorded in a new Presidential Policy Guidance he signed the day before. However, that document on the new "transparency" of drone protocol is top secret.

Since the talk, comments of administration officials have been more circumspect about the new drone assassination guidelines, particularly in the "Afghanistan theater of war," which is assumed to include Pakistan. Here, all restrictions are off until the war there is "over." And they remain under CIA control, with oversight and sometimes direct involvement of the president.

After the assassination of ur-Rehman, the U.S. refused to publicly confirm or deny any responsibility.

## Active workers conference to discuss lessons in fights for workers power

BY LOUIS MARTIN

"I've learned from reading the *Militant*, from the party. Now more than ever, I appreciate the *Militant*. It's a way of educating the whole working class and what the whole working class has to struggle and go through," said Virgen López, explaining why she decided to attend a July 19-20 active workers conference sponsored by the Socialist Workers

Party in Oberlin, Ohio.

López, who works in a medical office, met distributors of the paper when she worked at Perrigo, a pharmaceutical factory in the Bronx. She got a subscription and got involved in building solidarity with 1,300 sugar beet workers fighting a 2011-2013 lockout by American Crystal Sugar in the Midwest, demonstrations for a woman's right to choose abortion and the fight to win freedom for the Cuban Five and Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera.

"Reading about the Cuban Five and what they go through, and relating that to what the government and courts have done to me, it touches you to be part of the solution," López said.

The presentations and classes will focus on lessons of previous working-class struggles for political power and the involvement of millions of working people as they organize to maintain that power through decisive measures aimed at transforming social relations inherited from capitalism from top to bottom — and transforming themselves in the process.

The conference will draw together members of the SWP and Communist Leagues, supporters of the communist movement from around the world as well as other workers who have been reading and helping to circulate the *Militant*, many as participants in labor battles, protests against police brutality and other social struggles.

Coming a few weeks after the spring *Militant* subscription campaign, the conference will discuss steps to continue expanding the readership of the socialist newsweekly and Pathfinder books in the U.S. and around the world.

To learn more about the conference, call *Militant* distributors in your area (see page 8) or contact us at (212) 244-4899 or themilitant@mac.com.

## Unions, youth demand political rights in Turkey



Reuters/Umit Bektas

Tens of thousands of youth, middle-class professionals and unionists took to the streets of Ankara, Turkey's capital, June 5. Actions in Istanbul and more than 67 other cities have also occurred over the past week.

The protests began in response to police attacks on actions to prevent the government from razing Taksim Gezi Park, the last park in Istanbul's city center, and turn it into a shopping mall. The actions expanded to press for more political space in the country.

Two youth have been killed, thousands injured and more than 1,700 arrested by the regime of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Two of the country's largest labor federations, the Confederation of Public Workers Unions and the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions, called a two-day strike beginning June 4 in solidarity with those opposing the regime's repression.

—JOHN STUDER

## 'Militant' supporters set goals for new contributors to fund

BY LEA SHERMAN

"I first got involved with the *Militant* around the fight by the Utah coal miners to win a union and the Militant Fighting Fund's efforts to defend the paper against a lawsuit brought by the coal company," said Howard Allen, pointing to the article "Militant Fighting Fund Grew Out of Involvement in Utah Miners' Battle" in the June 10 issue. The Utah miners' three-year fight began in 2003.

Allen, who is retired from the merchant marine and lives in New Orleans, first signed up for a *Militant* subscription in September 2005, shortly after Hurricane Katrina hit the city. He was among the many working people of New Orleans who organized to get supplies to hurricane survivors, amid government indifference and widespread cop harassment.

When Jacquie Henderson from Houston visited Allen last week, he renewed his subscription and gave \$10 to this year's Militant Fighting Fund, an annual drive that helps finance the socialist newsweekly.

"We have to support each other," said Debbie Dennison, a nurse on strike at the Regional Medical Center in San Jose, Calif., when she picked up the *Militant* on the picket line and contributed \$4 to the fund.

The seven-week fund drive is essential for meeting the paper's operating expenses and financing reporting trips to respond to workers' struggles and international political developments. So far, \$39,621 has been received toward the goal of \$118,000.

Supporters of the *Militant* in many cities across the U.S. and beyond have set goals for winning first-time contributors. San Francisco-area supporters took a goal of getting 30 new contributors to

the fund, gaining 14 so far.

To contribute, contact distributors listed on page 8, or send a check or money order made out to the Militant, 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

### Militant Fighting Fund

May 4 - June 25 (week 3)

Country	Quota	Paid	%
<b>UNITED STATES</b>			
<b>Boston</b>	\$3,500	\$1,995	57%
<b>Des Moines</b>	\$2,600	\$1,214	47%
<b>San Francisco</b>	\$13,500	\$6,062	45%
<b>New York</b>	\$20,000	\$8,626	43%
Lincoln	\$200	\$75	38%
Twin Cities	\$5,500	\$2,055	37%
Seattle	\$8,500	\$3,035	36%
Omaha	\$600	\$183	31%
Los Angeles	\$8,500	\$2,378	28%
Chicago	\$9,500	\$2,150	23%
Atlanta	\$9,000	\$1,686	19%
Philadelphia	\$4,300	\$685	16%
Miami	\$3,000	\$329	11%
Washington	\$7,800	\$4	0%
Houston	\$4,000	\$0	0%
Other		\$650	
<b>Total U.S.</b>	<b>\$100,500</b>	<b>\$31,127</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>\$7,000</b>	<b>\$3,091</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>	<b>\$5,500</b>	<b>\$3,950</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>	<b>\$1,160</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>			
London	\$2,000	\$0	0%
Manchester	\$600	\$150	25%
<b>Total UK</b>	<b>\$2,600</b>	<b>\$150</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>FRANCE</b>	<b>\$350</b>	<b>\$143</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$117,100</b>	<b>\$39,621</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>Should be</b>	<b>\$118,000</b>	<b>\$50,571</b>	<b>43%</b>

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

#### San Francisco

**Decades of Cuban Rightists' Attacks Against Revolution's Backers in U.S. and Puerto Rico: A Working-Class Response.** Speaker: Willie Cotton, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 14, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission Blvd. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

### IOWA

#### Des Moines

**U.S. Rulers Take Aim at Workers' Rights: An Injury to One Is an Injury to All.** Speaker: Helen Meyers, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 14, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 707-1779.

### MINNESOTA

#### Minneapolis

**The Terrance Franklin Case: Fight Cop Brutality.** Speaker: Diana Newberry, Socialist Workers Candidate for Minneapolis City Council. Fri., June 14, 7:30 p.m. 416E Hennepin Ave., Suite 214. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

### AUSTRALIA

#### Sydney

**Women and the Cuban Revolution.** View Federation of Cuban Women documentary "With Our Memory on the Future." Fri., June 14, 7 p.m. Upstairs, 3/218-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Tel.: (02) 9718-9698.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

### Hospital workers strike in Bay Area

SAN FRANCISCO — Picket lines went up outside University of California hospitals throughout the state May 21-22 in a two-day strike against staffing reductions, cuts in retirement plans and other contract demands.

“There’s no question we needed to strike,” said Oscar Cedillos, one of hundreds of workers at the picket line outside the University of California San Francisco Medical Center.

Cedillo, who has worked for 11 years as a janitor at the complex, pointed to the hospital’s expansion of temporary and part-time work as a key issue. Strike demands include limiting the use of contractors and a way for part-time workers to become full-time.

The striking workers, members of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3299, included respiratory therapists, nursing aides, lab technicians, radiologists and others. They were joined on the picket lines by members of the University Professional and Technical Employees union as well as workers in the UC Hospital Service Unit, who walked out in solidarity with their fight.

Local 3299, which has some 13,000 members, has been in negotiations since June 2012 over a new contract.

Workers on the picket line told the *Militant* that recent layoffs at the hospital have led to understaffing that threatens patient safety. Strike demands include setting up “safe staffing committees” that would give workers a say in staff-to-patient ratios.

During the same week as the strike at UC hospitals, nurses and technicians carried out a seven-day strike at Sutter hospitals in Oakland and nearby cities. It was the ninth walkout of members of the California Nurses Association at Sutter in the last two years.

“This has been a tough battle,” said Pat Jackson, a nurse with almost 30 years experience, as she walked the picket line at the giant Sutter complex at Alta Bates Summit in Oakland. “Sutter has a lot of resources they are using against us. With what we are facing today, our unions have to be strong.”

Coinciding with the final day of the walkout at Sutter, members of the California Nurses Association in San Jose carried out a two-day strike May 23-24 at Good Samaritan Hospital and Regional Medical Center.

—Betsy Stone

### San Francisco Giants concession workers fight for pay raise

SAN FRANCISCO — Chanting “Enjoy the game, don’t eat the food,” 750 members of UNITE HERE Local 2 picketed the baseball game between the Colorado Rockies and San Francisco Giants at AT&T Park here May 25 as part of a one-day strike.

“A 25 cents an hour raise is an insult,” said Bruce Sylvester, a porter with 16 years on the job, in reference to the wage offer from Centerplate, the San Francisco Giant’s concessions company. The workers haven’t had a raise since March 2010 when the last contract expired, according to KCRA.com.

Many fans expressed support for the pickets. “Beer sells for \$5.50 a glass. Surely, they can give some of the profits to the workers,” said Mary Smith as she took a leaflet.

—Jeff Powers

### Australia coal loaders protest attacks by port bosses

NEWCASTLE, Australia — Some 225 coal loaders at Port Waratah Coal Services here struck for 24 hours May 29-30 as part of a campaign of work stoppages and other actions to protest the port bosses’ push for a contract targeting permanent jobs and union conditions.

Workers gathered outside the gates of the Port Waratah terminals at Carrington and Kooragang May 29 as they came off the job. At Carrington, they were greeted by dozens of fellow unionists and port workers, including tugboat and other seamen also organized by the Maritime Union of Australia, a major union in the dispute.

Bosses are pushing for greater “flexibility” in work hours and the use of outside contract labor, as well as to end court arbitration in resolving disputes between workers and the bosses.

The Maritime Union of Australia, Australian Manufacturing Workers’ Union, Transport Workers’ Union, and the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union have been the main unions in joint negotiations with Port Waratah over the past nine months.

Ben Newman, an AMWU delegate on the joint Single Bargaining Unit negotiating with Port Waratah, told the *Militant* that the main sticking point has been around workers’ input in work rosters and other job conditions, including safety issues.

“This is heavy industry where an accident is not a cut but a crushed arm or potentially a fatality,” Newman said.

“Both sides would like to resolve the dispute,” Port Waratah spokesperson Paul Chamberlin told the *Militant* May 30. He said he couldn’t comment on the substance of the negotiations.

The Newcastle facilities are the largest and most efficient thermal coal loading service in the world, according to the website of Port Waratah Coal Services.

Thermal coal prices have fallen about 30 percent from their peak two years ago, as supply has overtaken demand on global markets. The Australian Coal Association says about 9,000 jobs have been cut in the last 15 months from an



Militant/Betsy Stone

Hospital workers picket University of California San Francisco Medical Center May 22 during two-day strike against staff reductions and expansion of part-time and temporary work.

industry that directly employs about 50,000. Mining companies are continuing to fill export contracts from mine stockpiles while cutting production.

—Ron Poulsen

### Peugeot workers end 4-month strike in France

PARIS — Workers at the Peugeot Aulnay plant here voted May 17 to approve an agreement and end their strike. According to the daily newspaper *Figaro*, “both the unions and management made concessions.”

Peugeot announced a year ago its intentions to close the auto assembly plant of 2,800 in 2014. On Jan. 16, 520 workers struck, demanding a job for all those laid off and early retirement at age 55. Production was crippled. According to the CGT, the main union involved, Peugeot currently has a backlog of 14,000 orders. After four months, 210 workers remained on strike.

The agreement provides for an end to disciplinary actions against former strikers and allows those who accept transfers to another plant to choose where. It also provides substantial one-time payments for workers who resign.

Workers organized frequent protest actions during the strike, including demonstrations inside Peugeot and other car factories, protests at appearances of government ministers and a sit-in at the

headquarters of the bosses’ federation. They often outmaneuvered CRS riot police, turning up in one place while hundreds of cops waited for them elsewhere.

Some 850,000 euros (\$654,800) were raised from unions, workplaces, labor actions and other sources, Jean-Pierre Mercier, CGT representative at Aulnay, told the *Militant*. Several times strikers took over highway tollbooths, letting cars through for free and collecting voluntary contributions for the strike.

“For four months, hundreds of workers have succeeded in preventing a victory by the Peugeot bosses, whose main stockholder, the Peugeot family, is one of the richest and most powerful in France,” said a May 17 statement from the strikers’ general assembly. “Against them, strikers also faced the government, which fully supported the Peugeot family and its shareholders and which mobilized the government’s resources against the strike.”

Peugeot announced May 22 that it would begin national discussions with unions on May 29 to establish “a new social contract” — code for attacks on wages and work conditions, similar to the agreement put together by Renault two months ago.

—Derek Jeffers and Jacques Salfati, workers at Peugeot’s plant in Poissy

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



June 17, 1988

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Speaking at a rally here of 1,000, mine union President Richard Trumka announced that every union-organized mine in Alabama would be idled June 9. The action, he said, will voice miners’ opposition to impending changes in federal mine safety standards.

The call for United Mine Workers members to take action to defend health and safety on the job was greeted with enthusiasm by unionists and other activists participating in the June 4 Jobs with Justice rally.

Among the proposed changes is a modification in the regulation governing the amount of methane allowed in an underground mine. Methane is an explosive gas that is a common cause of mine explosions. Another proposed change would allow the operators to get away with lowering standards for mine ventilation.



June 17, 1963

It is ten years now since Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were railroaded to the electric chair at the height of the witch-hunt and cold-war hysteria. On June 19, 1953 they were electrocuted despite their pleas of innocence and worldwide appeals for clemency from such notables as the pope and the president of France. This was the first peacetime execution on espionage charges in U.S. history. It is an ineradicable blot on this country’s record.

At the same travesty of a trial, and on even flimsier evidence, Morton Sobell was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment for “conspiracy to commit espionage.” Despite constant appeals, his case has never been reviewed and he still languishes in prison. Doctors, emphasizing his poor health, have joined many prominent persons in urging his release. Though he is eligible for parole, it is denied him.



June 18, 1938

Under the leadership of its newly-formed “War Cabinet,” Japan is making a desperate effort to push its robber war in China to a rapid conclusion.

The chief manifestation of the new drive was 16 days of unremitting aerial bombardment of the thickly-crowded civilian quarters of Canton. Nearly 4,000 men, women and children were killed by this merciless aerial offensive which continued without let-up while the powers delivered so-called humanitarian protests to Tokyo.

Chiang Kai-shek left Canton to its fate. Not a single Chinese airplane rose to repel these unprecedented attacks. There were only the feeble puffs of futile anti-aircraft batteries which were no menace at all to the attackers.

In Tokyo, effort is being pushed to hasten plans for the immediate economic exploitation of North China.

# D.C. events for Cuban Five

Continued from front page

González, one of the Five, spoke via Internet from Havana. Having won his battle to return to Cuba in May, he continues to fight to free his four comrades, who are serving sentences from 17 years and nine months to a double life term plus 15 years. (See “Who Are The Cuban Five?” below.)

“The American people have been denied knowledge” about the trial and frame-up, González noted. He emphasized the need to win broad support — a “jury of millions” — in the political fight to free the Cuban revolutionaries.

Despite the U.S. government’s efforts to isolate and break them over the past 15 years, González said, the long stints of solitary confinement and other abuses meted out to the Five in federal prison have “made us stronger.” And “the political nature of the case helped us with the general prison population,” he said. They have “a lot of respect for us.”

The press conference was chaired by Alicia Jrapko, coordinator of the International Committee to Free the Cuban Five. Also making remarks were journalist Ignacio Ramonet, former editor of *Le Monde Diplomatique*; Wayne Smith, head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana during the James Carter administration; and Dolores Huerta, a founder of the United Farm Workers.

## Cuban Five in Angola

That evening more than 100 people participated in a panel discussion on the “Role of Cuba in Africa and the Cuban Five in Angola,” held at the Howard University Hospital auditorium.

Three of the Five — René González, Fernando González and Gerardo Hernández — were among 375,000 Cuban volunteer combatants who between 1975 and 1991 helped the newly independent nation of Angola defeat invasions by the white-supremacist regime in South Africa, with U.S. backing. That internationalist mission was key in forging the generations of Cuban revolutionaries the Five are part of.

The event was opened by Howard University students Daina Lawes, speaking on behalf of students and faculty in the Political Science department, and Nishaun Battle from Students Against Mass Incarceration. Eugene Puryear, a leader of the ANSWER coalition and 2008 vice presidential candidate of the Party for Socialism and Liberation, gave brief remarks and introduced the panel. The featured speakers were Alberto Carmo Bento Ribeiro, Angola’s

ambassador to the U.S.; José Ramón Cabañas, chief of the Cuban Interests Section; Glen Ford, executive editor of *Black Agenda Report*; and Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press.

Ford noted Cuba’s record of internationalist aid to Africa, from the column of Cuban fighters led by Ernesto Che Guevara that joined the liberation struggle in the Congo in 1965 to the tens of thousands of Cuban doctors, teachers and other volunteers working throughout Africa today. The shared historical and cultural legacy of Cubans and Africans, he said, was underscored by the name the Cuban government gave the Angola mission — “Operation Carlota,” after a Cuban slave who was executed for leading a rebellion in 1843.

Angolan Ambassador Bento Ribeiro said Cuba’s support was decisive to preserving Angola’s independence. It also led to the independence of Namibia, he said, and gave impetus to the mass struggle that won Nelson Mandela’s release from prison and overturned apartheid in South Africa.

“We had powerful enemies,” Bento Ribeiro said. In 1975 forces backed by Zairean President Sese Seko Mobutu, “a puppet of the Americans and an instrument of its policies,” invaded Angola from the north, while South African forces moved in from the south. Their aim was to block the government led by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola from declaring independence.

“The myth of the invincibility of the apartheid regime was definitively defeated” in the victory of Cuban and Angolan forces over South Africa’s army at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in 1988, the Angolan ambassador said. Expressing gratitude for Cuba’s aid he said, “My small contribution is to be here to help liberate the Cuban Five.”

The nearly 16-year internationalist mission had a deep impact in Cuba itself, said Mary-Alice Waters, noting remarks by Raúl Castro, then head of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces, at a 1991 ceremony welcoming home the final volunteers.

“Without Angola we would not be as strong as we are today,” Castro told the Cuban people.

“That is the most important understanding we can take from this meeting,” Waters said. “Those not willing to fight for the freedom of others will never be able to fight for their own,” she said, quoting Fidel Castro, the longtime central leader of the Cuban Revolution.

## Who are the Cuban Five?

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the activities of Cuban-American counterrevolutionary groups operating in southern Florida. These paramilitary outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other deadly attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with “conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information.”

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shoot-down of two aircraft flown by the counterrevolutionary group Brothers to the Rescue that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years.



Top: Bill Hackwell; Inset: Militant/Paul Pederson

Top, press conference May 30 opening week of activities for Cuban Five in Washington, D.C. Addressing media by Internet from Cuba is René González. Inset, Chief of Cuban Interests Section José Ramón Cabañas speaks later that day at Howard University as part of panel discussion on “Role of Cuba in Africa and the Cuban Five in Angola.”



None of the volunteers “thought we did anything special,” said Cabañas, who was himself a combatant in Angola in 1987-89. The experience René, Fernando and Gerardo had there “helped them face what they’ve been facing in jail these 15 years,” he said.

“Usually when people talk about the mission, they mention the men, but don’t forget the women,” Cabañas, added, to applause. “There were a lot of women who fought in Angola.”

During the discussion after the presentations, Waters responded to a comment from the audience about the disproportionate numbers of Blacks in U.S. prisons today. “What the Cuban Five faced through the entire ordeal,” she said, “is what millions of working people in the U.S. face — the 2.5 million who are today incarcerated, the 5 million living under one or another form of supervised release, as René was.

“There is hardly a working-class person, especially among African-Americans, who haven’t themselves been in jail, or have a family member, close friend, or coworker who has experienced the reality of the U.S. courts and prisons,” Waters said.

“When they learn the facts and see how the Five conduct themselves, they identify with them and gain respect for their integrity, steadfastness and principles,” she said. “These ordinary working people, men and women ‘from nowhere,’ whose capacities are so discounted by the powers that be — they are the ones we can count on as part of the ‘jury of millions.’”

The next evening the Cuban Interests Section hosted a reception. Among participants were parliamentarians, attorneys, artists, political activists, and others, a number of them from other countries, including Canada, Brazil, Ecuador, Cuba, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, United Kingdom, Belgium, France and Greece.

## Protest at White House

Joining the June 1 action outside the White House were two busloads from New York and dozens of demonstrators from other cities, including vanloads from Montreal and Chicago.

Speaking at the rally, Andrés Gómez, president of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, said a contingent of 38 Cuban-Americans organized by the Alianza Martiana had come from Miami to participate in the activities to free the Cuban Five.

Other speakers included Alison Bodine from Vancouver Communities in Solidarity With Cuba; Santos

Crespo, president of Local 372 of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees in New York; Denis Lemelin, president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers; Omari Musa of the Socialist Workers Party; Gloria La Riva from the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five; Meches Rosales from the May 1 Immigrant Rights Coalition; Gilberto Villa from Casa de las Américas in New York; and Gail Walker, co-executive director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO)/Pastors for Peace.

“More people have to be made aware of the injustice,” Belinda Banks, who came on a union-sponsored bus, told the *Militant*. “The same government that keeps the Cuban Five in jail puts hardships on families.” Banks works for the New York City school board and is a member of AFSCME Local 372.

“I wasn’t surprised our government would do a frame-up job,” said Michael De Barra, an unemployed worker from Chicago attending his first such demonstration. “I’m learning about the Five and the Cuban Revolution at the same time.”

“I went to Cuba in 2009 on vacation and there were billboards about the Five everywhere,” said Myriam Marceau, a university student from Montreal. “That’s how I first found out about them.” Marceau was active in student protests against tuition hikes in Quebec earlier this year.

The fight to free Oscar López Rivera, a fighter for Puerto Rican independence jailed in the U.S. for 32 years, “is the same as the fight for the Five,” said longtime independence supporter Rita Rodríguez.

Later that evening, nearly 300 people crowded into Saint Stephen’s Church for an event that included several religious figures and featured Angela Davis, who in the 1970s was framed up and jailed by the U.S. government when she was a leader of the Communist Party USA.

Also joining events during the Five Days for the Cuban Five were a number of participants in the annual congress of the Latin American Studies Association, held here May 29-June 1. An information booth on the defense campaign was staffed throughout the congress. Among the 4,000 people at the gathering was a delegation of more than 70 from Cuba; 12 Cubans were denied visas by the U.S. government.

Next week’s *Militant* will carry further coverage on the week of activities for the Cuban Five.

# Actions in Puerto Rico, Cuba, US demand 'Free Oscar López'

Puerto Rican political prisoner in US jails for 32 years

BY SETH GALINSKY

Growing support for freedom for Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera was shown by protest actions in Puerto Rico, the United States and Cuba May 29, the anniversary of his arrest and imprisonment 32 years ago. In five cities in Puerto Rico hundreds of people took turns staying in mock prison cells to draw attention to the frame-up and attempts by the U.S. government to break López's spirit.

"The fact we are living through an economic crisis is helping to wake people up," said Rafael Cancel Miranda, in a recent phone interview. Cancel Miranda spent 28 years in U.S. prisons for his activities in favor of independence for Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony. "Even I was surprised at how many people wanted to identify themselves with Oscar. It's like they were freeing themselves at the same time."

López, now 70 years old, was arrested May 28, 1981, and accused of being a member of the Armed Forces for Puerto Rican Liberation (FALN). He was sentenced to 55 years in prison on trumped-up charges of "seditious conspiracy," despite no evidence he had participated in any violent acts. Fifteen more years were added to his sentence in 1988 after he was framed up on charges of attempting to escape. For the first 12 years of incarceration, he was kept in solitary confinement and is currently being held at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Ind.

Born in San Sebastián, Puerto Rico, López grew up in the U.S. He was drafted into the U.S. Army and sent to Vietnam as an infantryman in 1965. When he returned to Chicago, he helped form

the Committee for the Freedom of the Five Puerto Rican nationalist prisoners, who had been jailed in 1953 and 1954. He was also active in fights for bilingual education and against racist discrimination.

López was offered parole in 1999 by President William Clinton, along with 13 other Puerto Rican political prisoners held in the U.S. He refused because two prisoners, Carlos Alberto Torres and Haydée Beltrán, were not included. If López had accepted, he would have been released in 2009.

In July 2010, after Torres was released, López applied for parole. Following a January 2011 hearing, the parole commission denied the request and ruled that López could not reapply until 2026.

Participation in the mock jail cells in Puerto Rico exceeded all expectations, Eduardo Villanueva Muñoz, said in a phone interview. He is a spokesperson for the Human Rights Committee, which initiated the mock cells in five cities: San Juan, Ponce, Arecibo, San Sebastian and Mayagüez.

"At first we thought one person would spend one hour in each cell. Then, as participation grew, we went to one every 30 minutes, then every 15 minutes," Villanueva said. "Finally we had to put two people in each cell at a time." More than 1,000 spent time in



May 29 meeting in Havana for Oscar López. Second from left is Ricardo Alarcón, flanked by René González, one of Cuban Five now back in Cuba, and González's wife Olga Salanueva.



Supporters of the fight to free Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López from U.S. prison gather outside mock cells at San Juan, Puerto Rico, Plaza de Armas, May 29. A thousand people took turns in cells in five cities on island to highlight conditions López has faced.

the cells and thousands more came to show their support.

"We also have the support of the different unions and churches," he said. "The imprisonment of Oscar is an injustice and an abuse."

Even the mayors of Ponce and San Juan and other leaders of the two main bourgeois parties on the island — the Popular Democratic Party and the New Progressive Party, both of which oppose independence — took stints in the cells.

On May 30 the Puerto Rican Senate passed a resolution calling on President Barack Obama to free López.

## Oscar and the Cuban Five

The May 29 event in Havana was sponsored by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). Among those attending the meeting were René González, one of the Cuban Five, recently returned to Cuba after

13 years imprisoned in the U.S.; Rosa Aurora Freijanes, the wife of Fernando González, one of the four members of the Cuban Five still in prison; and ICAP President Kenia Serrano.

Until recently Fernando González was also imprisoned in Terre Haute and was cellmates with López. Freijanes said at the meeting that López's experience facing the hardest conditions in U.S. prisons earned the respect of her husband.

"Washington raised up its hate, frustration and resentment against [Oscar] and against Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, Fernando and René in the face of the rebelliousness of two fraternal peoples who have never renounced their independence," Ricardo Alarcón, member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba, told the meeting. "Oscar López should be freed immediately and without conditions."

## Chicago meeting concludes '32 days for 32 years' events

BY LAURA ANDERSON

CHICAGO — More than 100 people attended a meeting here May 29 to demand freedom for Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera and celebrate completion of a protest called "32 Days for 32 Years." During the monthlong protest, 32 volunteers took 24-hour stints in a mock prison cell set up in the front window of Batey Urbano, a Puerto Rican youth center in Humboldt Park, to symbolize the conditions under which López has been held during much of his incarceration.

"Similar events took place today in New York, Cleveland, Orlando, Philadelphia, and several cities in Puerto Rico, including Caguas, Ponce, San Juan, Arecibo, Aibonito, and Mayagüez," Alejandro Molina, co-director of the Boricua Human Rights Network, told the crowd.

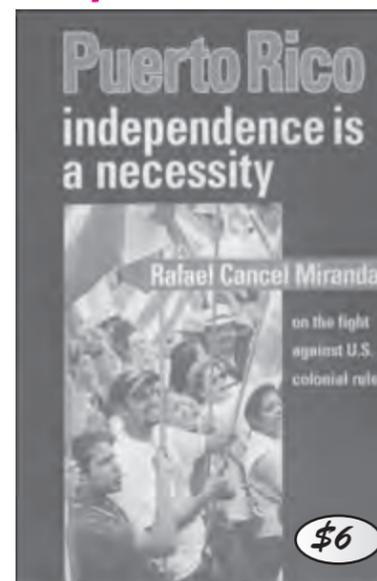
"I went to prison for refusing to testify before the grand jury investigating Oscar," José López, Oscar's brother, told the meeting. "Fifty-two people went to jail for refusing to testify."

"The FBI was looking for him for seven years. Our family was terrorized and my mother's house was in a state of siege," López said. "But people had the courage to stand up and fight back."

López noted that a meeting to support the fight was also taking place in Havana.

"I'm proud to say that today Ricardo Alarcón gave a speech where he said in Cuba, they have a slogan: 'Libertad por los nuestros [Free our people] — Oscar Lopez and the Cuban Five.'"

## For further reading



"Our people are becoming aware of their own strength, which is what the colonial powers fear"

— Puerto Rican independence leader Rafael Cancel Miranda.

[www.pathfinderpress.com](http://www.pathfinderpress.com)

## Socialist NY mayor candidate: 'Independence for Puerto Rico'



Militant/Deborah Liatos

NEW YORK — Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor, was one of the speakers at a May 29 rally of 50 here to demand freedom for Oscar López Rivera, sponsored by the ProLibertad Freedom campaign.

"The Socialist Workers campaign calls for independence for Puerto Rico and freedom for Oscar López Rivera," Fein, a factory worker, said. "Some ask how can Puerto Rico survive without the U.S.? I answer, 'Look to Cuba. Workers and farmers took political power there and for more than five decades have used their power to advance the interests of the toiling majority.'"

Fein encouraged participants to also back the fight to free the Cuban Five.

—DEBORAH LIATOS

# Raising literacy, culture of Cuba's toilers began in Rebel Army

Below is an excerpt from *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. The Spanish-language edition is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for June. The excerpt is from an interview with Cuban Brig. Gen. Harry Villegas in Havana in 1998. It was conducted by Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Well-known by his nom de guerre Pombo, Villegas fought alongside Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara in Cuba, the Congo, and Bolivia. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*



"As the guarantor of the revolution, the Rebel Army had to raise the educational and cultural level of the people," said Harry Villegas. Above, Rebel Army volunteers at Níco López School for Recruits, established by Che Guevara in Las Villas, December 1958. Fight to eradicate illiteracy and raise cultural level of working people began before triumph of 1959 revolution among recruits to Rebel Army led by Fidel Castro as they fought in mountains of Sierra Maestra.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

WATERS: I'd like to go back to the early days of the revolution and your experiences as a young soldier under Che's command at La Cabaña. There is a very specific thing related to culture and education, to the social aims of the Rebel Army, that we'd like to ask you about.

One of the recent "biographies" of Che quotes from some dispatches sent by U.S. embassy personnel to Washington during the first months of 1959. The communiqués express concern over what was happening in the garrison at La Cabaña. Che, they reported, was doing something with very dis-

turbing implications. He was organizing a department of culture within the Rebel Army and teaching soldiers to read! The Department of Culture was also doing things like organizing concerts, poetry readings, and ballet performances right there in La Cabaña, not for the officers but for all the soldiers. The dispatch said this was very worrisome, because it showed Che's communist tendencies.

I think this captures something very important, on both sides. The U.S. government had good reason to be afraid, of course. When education and the cultural conquests of all previous civilization become the property of the working class, when working people take this as their right, their prerogative, the rulers should tremble. A new ruling class is in the process of asserting itself. The incident also captures the importance that not only Che but the entire leadership of the Rebel Army gave to education, to broadening the cultural horizons of working people. It captures the class character . . .

VILLEGAS: . . . of the revolution.

WATERS: Yes, and the aspirations of working people to transform themselves, to educate themselves, to be the bearers of culture into the future that

they alone can build.

VILLEGAS: Che felt that the task of creating and developing the Rebel Army's Department of Instruction and Culture at the time was not only to encourage the creation of cultural works. Che was the first one to start a campaign for literacy. Because there is no culture without literacy.

The Rebel Army was an army of people with humble origins. If you read the book *Secretos de generales*, you'll see that almost all the generals interviewed come from families of workers or peasants. That was the composition of the Rebel Army. That's why the first thing we did was set up schools to eradicate illiteracy. The Department of Instruction was created, and everyone who couldn't read and write was enrolled in these schools. Che looked for teachers and the work began.

As part of all this, a movement was created to bring cultural works to those who had never seen them before, to the members of the Rebel Army. We had a large theater in La Cabaña, a huge theater that could hold the entire garrison. Plays were put on there, ballet performances, and other cultural presentations. Movies were brought in, and other compañe-

ros would join us for discussion after a movie was shown. The purpose of all this was to raise the cultural level of the army, which at that time was very low. Almost all of us were peasants.

I think the North Americans must have been worried, thinking that culture for workers and peasants was a sign of communism. But our purpose was to create a movement that later grew very powerful in the army, with the aim of becoming participants in culture, making it our own. So a group of amateurs developed, which put on plays, performed songs, held festivals. All these things were promoted as part of the process of creating a higher cultural level. . . .

At the time, when the party had not yet acquired a mass size, the armed forces was the most authentic representative of the people's interests, of the interests of the workers. That was where you found the best of the country's working people. The people trusted the armed forces, and they still do. Fidel once said, and Raúl repeats it every day, that the Rebel Army is the soul of the revolution. Raúl says the armed forces continue to be the soul of the revolution. And it is true. The people see the armed forces as the representative of the revolution.

Of course, there are still a lot of people who were among the original founders of the armed forces, people of very humble origins. Raúl has been at the helm of the armed forces, and this has guaranteed that they do not go off track. Raúl is a very strict person; very fair, but he demands that those serving under him be held accountable for their errors. The people have tremendous trust in the armed forces.

WATERS: The policy on education and culture that Che put in practice at La Cabaña was not his policy but the policy of the revolution. It was first implemented by the Rebel Army in the Sierra, wasn't it?

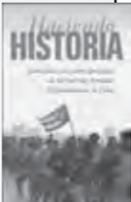
VILLEGAS: Yes, Fidel and Che began it in the Sierra. As the guarantor of the revolution, the Rebel Army had to raise the educational and cultural level of the people. That's where the literacy campaign began. Then it was extended to the entire population. But it started with the Rebel Army.

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## Join June 17 UMW A rally in St. Louis

The *Militant* urges working people to step up efforts to mobilize solidarity with coal miners battling the drive of Patriot Coal to gut the union contracts of active miners and slash health care for thousands of retirees. The United Mine Workers union has set the next protest action for June 17 in St. Louis.

The federal bankruptcy court in St. Louis came down decisively on the side of the coal bosses May 29. Under the capitalists' bankruptcy laws — written by them to serve their interests — payments to bondholders come first, then company bosses, followed by stockholders and corporate vendors. Workers, who produce all the wealth, are dead last. While debts to the bondholders are sacred, the union contract means nothing.

All the weapons of the bosses' state apparatus — their courts, their cops, their prisons — are used to reinforce their rule and defend their profits. When any working-class battle gets too hot, the bosses' political power is brought to bear.

That's why many workers' battles in recent years — from the fight against the lockout at American Crystal Sugar to school bus workers in New York to the Patriot miners — not only require determi-

nation, militancy and solidarity, but pose the need for an independent working-class political course.

We can't rely on "friends of labor" in the Democratic or Republican parties, and we can't rely on the courts — that's the bosses' turf where they tie up our struggles in red tape. The only way we can register victories on their turf is when we win them through struggles.

The outcome of our struggles depends on the ever-expanding union of the workers, how well we organize and win solidarity. As we fight and our numbers, confidence, competence and strength grow, the relationship of class forces shifts in our favor. The bosses laws, cops and courts become less effective tools against the struggles of working people.

Through our struggles against capitalist exploitation and oppression, working people in the millions can begin to recognize their worth and capacity, becoming the kind of men and women capable of waging a struggle to wrest political power from the bosses and begin reorganizing society in the interests of the vast majority worldwide.

Solidarity with the miners! Join the next rally on June 17!

## Miners protest Patriot Coal assault on union

Continued from front page

United Mine Workers of America in response to a pro-company ruling May 29 by U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Kathy Surrat-States.

That ruling gives Patriot Coal the green light to eliminate its collective bargaining agreements with the UMW A and slash health care benefits for more than 20,000 retired miners and their spouses.

In a statement after the ruling, Patriot bosses said they will recognize existing union contracts through July 1 by which time they intend to have new agreements in place with major concessions.

Surrat-States callously acknowledged that for many retirees her ruling will mean "making a choice today over medicine or food."

"This means some people are going to die," Darryl Hedgepath told the *Militant* the day before the rally.

A member of UMW A Local 1793, Hedgepath runs a scoop at Patriot Coal's Highland No. 9 Mine in Waverly. Two days after the court ruling, he said, the company announced things would change.

"They said we would not get the \$1.50 pay raise we're supposed to get in July," Hedgepath said. "Next year they will take away one week's paid vacation. At the end of the shift that night the company had constructed gates at the entrance to the parking lot."

"I have brothers who work in a nonunion mine," said Conrad Wolfe, 32, who also works at Highland No. 9. "The thing they get from the company is to keep the union out. Now they are worried because they know that if we lose, they are not going to gain anything."

In 2007, Peabody Energy created Patriot by spinning off many of its mining operations in West Virginia and Kentucky, including all its union mines east of the Mississippi. A year later Patriot bought Magnum Coal, a company created in 2005 by Arch Coal to take over all its union mines.

"We will continue to meet with the company this week to see if there is a way forward," UMW A President Cecil Roberts said May 29. "We have long acknowledged that Patriot is in trouble, because it can no longer pay Peabody and Arch's bills. We remain willing to take painful steps to help Patriot get through the rough period it faces over the next couple of years."

Bennett Hatfield, Patriot's president and CEO, called the ruling a "major step forward." He said he would continue to talk to the union to find a "consensual resolution."

Today's rally was the latest in a series of protest actions involving thousands of miners and other unionists. UMW A officials announced the next rally against Patriot will take place in St. Louis

June 17 and that protests will continue throughout the summer.

The union filed suit in Charleston, W.Va., alleging that Peabody and Arch violated the Employee Retirement Income Security Act by illegally dumping contractual obligations when they created Patriot and Magnum. It also announced plans to appeal the court decision.

Roberts told the West Virginia *MetroNews* that a strike now would be "high risk," since it could put Patriot out of business.

Bobby Stone and Rick Lowell, both retired from Peabody Camp No. 1 Mine with close to 56 years of work between them, told the *Militant* that their pensions and health care are on the chopping block.

"We retired early in order to be guaranteed a pension and health care. All the corporations are watching this to see if they can do the same thing. Every union man and woman in the country needs to get involved in this fight," Lowell said.

"We came out today to support the mine workers," Wilbert Robinson, a USW retiree from Alcoa Aluminum in Evansville, Ind., and Midwest representative of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, told the *Militant*. "The judge made the wrong decision. Mining is a dangerous and heavy job. Look around and you can see that a good number of the retirees are disabled and need the medical coverage."

"We brought a bus of 56 retired UAW members because the UMW A has supported us going all the way back to the 1930s," said Kathy Fowler, president of UAW Local 10 in Doraville, Ga.

### 'This fight is far from over'

UMW A International Vice President Steve Earle chaired the rally, drawing cheers from the large crowd when he said, "The UMW A is here to stay. We have a message to the judge that this will not be the end. This fight is far from over."

Calling the bankruptcy court decision "a new victory by the robber barons," Kentucky State Rep. Brent Yonts told rally participants they should urge Congress to "change the bankruptcy laws so we don't allow this to happen to working people."

Among other speakers at the rally were Roberts, Kentucky AFL-CIO President William Londrigan, UMW A International Financial Secretary-Treasurer Dan Kane, Kentucky State Sen. Jerry Rhoads, and Henderson County Judge Executive Hugh McCormick.

"The intent of the judge's decision is pretty clear to me," said Guy Scisney, 66, who works at Highland No. 9. "It was to bail the company out and give us the shaft."

## Civil war in Syria

Continued from front page

by Hezbollah forces, took control of Qusayr June 4, ending a two-week battle for the strategic city, which had been held by the opposition for nearly a year. Qusayr is close to the border with Lebanon and a connecting point from Damascus to coastal cities where President Bashar al-Assad has support.

The *Financial Times* commented June 5 that the fall of Qusayr "cements a stalemate" in a war that began in March 2011, has cost the lives of 80,000 people and displaced millions. "The combined forces loyal to the Assads still cannot regain control of large, mostly rural swathes of Syria; while rebel forces are still too fragmented, ideologically divided and poorly armed to depose the regime," the paper said.

Growing involvement by Hezbollah on the side of Assad highlights the conflict's spreading impact on the bordering nations of Lebanon and Israel.

Hezbollah (Party of God) is a Shiite Islamist political and military organization based in Lebanon with direct ties to the Iranian government. It was formed in 1982, following Tel Aviv's invasion of Lebanon.

A rocket attack hit Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs of Beirut May 26. Dozens of people have been killed and more than 200 wounded in May in Tripoli in fighting between Lebanese supporters and opponents of Assad, Associated Press reported June 1.

In the course of the war, at least 1 million Syrians have sought refuge inside Lebanon, a country populated by 4 million people.

Israel carried out several airstrikes in Syria last month to block shipments of missiles from Iran to Hezbollah. The Israeli rulers are concerned about containing the influence of Tehran, a long-time ally of Assad, as well as the political instability that the war and possible demise of Assad brings. Tehran has increasingly stepped into the fray, bolstering the military capacities of its Hezbollah proxy with help from detachments of Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon told a Knesset committee June 3 that the government's policy is not to intervene in the Syrian civil war as long as it does not hurt Israeli interests, as in the transfer of advanced weaponry to Hezbollah, the *Jerusalem Post* reported. "Syria is split," Yaalon said. "Assad controls only 40 percent of the territory and the rebels control at least four neighborhoods in Damascus."

The Israeli rulers' concern with the weakening of the Assad regime — which they have been able to count on to maintain the status quo in the region — was clearly expressed in May 29 statements by Israeli Finance Minister Yair Lapid. He appealed to the ultra-Orthodox Haredi community, which historically has been exempt from compulsory military service, to comply with a Supreme Court ruling last year aimed at ending those exemptions. "If Syria crumbles and thousands of Al Qaeda terrorists are on our northern border, this is also happening to you," he said. "We need you too, weapon in hand, protecting our life and yours." The Israeli government is encouraging Arab Israelis, who are also currently exempt, to volunteer for civilian national service.

### Washington 'late' on Syria

Comments by Secretary of State John Kerry June 3 that the U.S. is coming "late" to efforts to end the civil war in Syria reflects tensions within the U.S. ruling class and sharp debate over the Obama administration's course of avoiding any direct involvement in the military conflict.

"We are trying to prevent the sectarian violence from dragging Syria down into a complete and total implosion where it has broken up into enclaves, and the institutions of the state have been destroyed," Kerry told the press.

The *New York Times* reported June 5 that "senior United States, Russian and United Nations officials failed ... to find enough common ground among themselves and antagonists in Syria's civil war to convene" an international conference to discuss resolving the conflict. Washington and Moscow agreed at the beginning of May to hold such a meeting. The Obama administration insists that Assad cannot be part of any future government in Syria. Moscow remains a strong ally of Assad.

As for the bourgeois opposition in Syria, it is split over participating in any international conference at this time.