

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**SWP victory against FBI spying
has lasting effect on class politics**
— PAGES 8-11

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 78/NO. 7 FEBRUARY 24, 2014

'Militant' drive kicks off to win 575 long-term subscribers

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Supporters of the *Militant* kicked off a drive to win 575 renewals and new long-term subscriptions Feb. 8, knocking on doors in neighborhoods where workers got introductory subscriptions last fall. The five-week effort will run through March 16. We invite you to join in and help expand the long-term readership of the socialist newsweekly.

Hundreds of the 2,975 readers who signed up last fall will get their final issue in the coming weeks. If you are one of them, please renew now so you don't miss a single week.

"I like the *Militant* because it is a counterbalance to the other news media," Jeremy Ray of Tacoma, Wash., told *Militant* supporter Jeanne FitzMaurice from Seattle when he signed up for his second renewal Feb. 8, this time for six months. "It was the only place where you could see about our strike." Ray is a truck driver for United Natural Foods Inc., organized

Continued on page 3

Protests in Bosnia fight mass layoffs, corruption

Muslim, Serb, Croat workers join fight



Reuters/Antonio Bronic

Demonstrations against widespread layoffs, unpaid wages and government corruption started in Tuzla Feb. 4 and have spread across the country. Above, Feb. 9 action in Sarajevo.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Thousands of workers and youth began demonstrating in cities across Bosnia-Herzegovina in early February, protesting high unemployment, unpaid wages and government corruption.

The demonstrations started in the industrial city of Tuzla Feb. 4. Laid-off workers from four formerly state-owned companies took to the streets to demand pay and compensation for health care and pensions. These companies had been privatized after the breakup of Yugoslavia, as former state bureaucrats sought to enrich themselves, and the enterprises went

Continued on page 5

Washington slashes food stamps, aid to unemployed

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Millions of workers in the U.S. got hit with a double-whammy this month when Congress voted to slash food stamps and refused to extend federal pay for those unemployed more than 26 weeks.

The latest \$8.7 billion cut in food stamps comes packaged inside the 959-page farm bill, which President Barack Obama signed into law Feb. 7. In a statement released after the Senate approved the bill 68 to 32, the president hailed the legislators' "strong bipartisan vote." Some 1.7 million people will be directly affected by the cuts.

This comes on top of the Feb. 6 Senate vote rejecting an extension of federal unemployment compensation for the 1.7 million workers whose benefits have run out since the end of 2013.

The farm bill eliminates what is called the "heat and eat" program, where people in 15 states and the District of Columbia — 850,000 households — who get federally funded home heating assistance subsidies could deduct their utility costs from

Continued on page 7

Minn. exhibit: 'Introduction to fight to free the Cuban Five'



Jessica Smith

Exhibit of watercolors by Antonio Guerrero, depicting first 17 months of U.S. imprisonment of Cuban Five, was attended by 75 people at art gallery in Minneapolis Feb. 7.

BY JOANNE MURPHY

MINNEAPOLIS — Some 75 people gathered at Regla De Oro, a gallery and gift shop here, for the Feb. 7 opening reception of "I Will Die the Way I've Lived," an exhibit of 15 watercolors by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five.

Large photos of the Five — Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González — hung above the store's

main counter, along with a banner calling for their freedom. The exhibit opening included short talks, music and refreshments.

The Five are Cuban revolutionaries who were arrested in Miami in 1998 on frame-up charges that included conspiracy to commit espionage. (See "Who are the Cuban Five" on page 4.)

The watercolors, which depict the 17 months the Five spent in prison in

Continued on page 4

Malaysian students in Egypt discuss working-class politics, Cuban Five

BY JOE YOUNG

CAIRO, Egypt — Seventy-five Malaysian students attended a meeting here Feb. 3 at the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia-Egypt center on "Working-Class Politics in the United States" and the "Fight to Free the Cuban Five." Betsy Farley and Hugo Wils, socialist workers volunteering at the Pathfinder books booth at the Cairo International Book

Fair from Chicago and Manchester, England, were the featured speakers. The book fair is the largest held in the Middle East. They were invited to give the presentations by leaders of the Malaysian youth organization.

During the book fair, Jan. 22-Feb. 6, dozens of Malaysian youth stopped by the Pathfinder booth. These students bought a wide range of Pathfinder titles, including books on Malcolm X and the road to workers power, about the Cuban Revolution and on the fight for women's rights. They engaged in

Continued on page 6

Pussy Riot in NY: Fight for 'Russia without Putin,' prisoners' freedom

BY EMMA JOHNSON

NEW YORK — "We demand a Russia that is free and a Russia without Putin," said Pussy Riot member Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, who appeared at an Amnesty International-sponsored concert at the Barclay Center in Brooklyn Feb. 5 together with band member Maria Alyokhina. Putin is the former KGB political police

Continued on page 5

Also Inside

Prison abuses and torture in
Cyprus fuel protests, suicides 2

NY meeting honors Mandela,
Cuban role in fall of apartheid 4

Syria: Assad steps up bombing,
can't stop Kurds' fight for rights 5

Coca-Cola workers in Spain
strike against plant closings 7

Prison abuses and torture in Cyprus fuel protests, suicides

BY NATASHA TERLEXIS

ATHENS, Greece — On Jan. 14, a 28-year-old Bulgarian immigrant committed suicide in Cyprus' notorious Central Prisons, the fifth to do so over the past eight months. Five days earlier a 22-year-old Romanian immigrant was gang-raped.

"Prisoners have protested over the past two months against intolerable conditions, inadequate access to water and electricity, torture in solitary confinement, sleep deprivation, abusive mandatory hair cuts, including of the prison's imam, and even insufficient food," journalist Manolis Kalatzis told the *Militant*. Kalatzis has been covering prisoners' fights against abuse over the past four years for the Cypriot daily *O Politis*. The paper had been banned by the prison since 2009.

The escalating mobilizations by prisoners forced the ousting of Central Prisons' warden, Giorgos Tryfonidis, said Kalatzis. He was removed hours after publicity got out about yet another suicide attempt, this time unsuccessful, by a young Turkish-Cypriot Jan. 14.

The prisoners' efforts have made other gains, Kalatzis said. "Restrictions on water and electricity use have eased, and *Politis* is now allowed back in the prison."

Central Prisons has been crammed with double the 350 inmates it was built for, Kalatzis said. More than half are immigrants.

The Justice Ministry just decreased the sentences of all prisoners there under pressure to reduce overcrowding, he said.

KISA (Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism), a Cypriot organization that pushes for decriminalization of immigrant workers without papers, has championed the prisoners' fight. Inmates face "institutionalized discrimination and racism," the group says on its website, "especially with regards to the exercise of their religious rights and the exercise of their right to communication and contact with members of their families."

A large percentage of the prisoners are migrants who have been detained for "illegally staying, working and/or falsifying personal documentation," KISA says.



Intolerable conditions in Cyprus' Central Prisons has led to protests and five suicides over past eight months. Special police unit enters prison Jan. 14 after suicide by Bulgarian immigrant.

Gov't challenges right to public trial in NY frame-up 'terror' case

BY JOHN STUDER

In an attack on the constitutional right to a public trial, New York City prosecutors organizing the frame-up conspiracy and "terror" case against Jose Pimentel moved Jan. 29 that an undercover cop and two "confidential informants" should be allowed to testify anonymously in a courtroom cleared of the public.

Pimentel was targeted by the 1,000-strong Intelligence Division and Counterterrorism Bureau of the New York City Police Department, which chips away at constitutional protections and rights of working people under the pretext of "national security."

While then-New York Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said after Pimentel's arrest in November 2011 that the Dominican-born naturalized U.S. citizen had conceived terror plans as a

"lone wolf" who had "self-radicalized," facts showed he did virtually nothing alone. He was prodded and pushed by one of the undercover provocateurs, who kept luring Pimentel to his apartment and giving him marijuana, then recorded what he said. It was there that the snitch goaded Pimentel to put together a pipe bomb and helped him build it.

Now, as the Feb. 24 trial approaches, prosecutor Deborah Hickey says that to reveal the names of the three agents would "endanger the lives of these witnesses and will interfere with several current and future NYPD investigations." The Sixth Amendment constitutional right to a speedy and public trial, she argued, "may on occasion yield to other overriding interests, such as the need to protect the safety of witnesses." If their identities became known, she said, it could "lead to their being harassed, annoyed and humiliated."

Pimentel's lawyers protested the move, saying that Pimentel was a victim of cop entrapment.

When the intelligence cops were prodding Pimentel, they invited the FBI to join in. But the federal snoops declined, twice. When Pimentel was arrested, the FBI said they had not gotten involved because he "didn't have the predisposition or the ability to do anything on his own" and that the zealous participation of the informant would

make it "possible" for Pimentel to argue he was framed.

The FBI refused to file any federal charges against Pimentel.

Manhattan Supreme Court Judge Thomas Farber took Hickey's motion under consideration, saying there is a "very, very, very strong presumption" against clearing the courtroom, but that he was open to keeping the identities of the cops and informers secret.

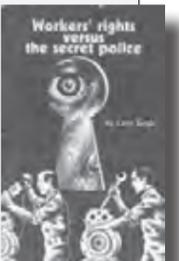
The judge also said he was inclined to reject a prosecution motion to bring in a "terrorism expert" to lecture the jury, saying he didn't want to "turn this trial into a referendum on terrorism."

Workers' Rights versus the Secret Police

by Larry Seigle

Since the inception of the modern revolutionary workers movement in 1848, the ruling classes have responded with police spies, agents provocateurs, and political frame-ups. —\$5

pathfinderpress.com



THE MILITANT

Defend abortion rights worldwide!

The fight to defend a woman's right to choose abortion is at the center of the fight for women's rights and a crucial issue for the working class worldwide. The *'Militant'* covers this fight against moves to restrict abortion rights from the U.S. to Spain to El Salvador and Ireland.



Militant/Mike Fitzsimmons
Rally in Austin, Texas, Jan. 25 defends women's right to choose abortion.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

\$5 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

\$10 for 12 weeks

\$20 for 6 months

\$35 for 1 year

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,
306 W. 37TH ST., 13TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018.

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, A\$8 • United Kingdom, £3 • Canada, Can\$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £10 • France, 12 euros • New Zealand, NZ\$7 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

The Militant

Vol. 78/No. 07

Closing news date: February 12, 2014

Editor: Doug Nelson

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Naomi Craine, Frank Forrestal, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Paul Pederson, Gerardo Sánchez, John Studer, Brian Williams, Rebecca Williamson.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in July, one week in August and two weeks in September.

Business manager: Lea Sherman
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899
Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year

send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

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.

Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: Send €85 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

France: Send 76 euros for one year to Diffusion du Militant, P.O. Box 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris.

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.

'Militant' drive kicks off

Continued from front page by Teamsters Local 117, which was on strike a year and a half ago.

"I hadn't heard about the Cuban Five anyplace else," he said. The Cuban Five are five Cuban revolutionaries framed up in 1998 and imprisoned for working in the U.S. to uncover plans for attacks on the Cuban Revolution by counterrevolutionary paramilitary groups here. "It seems crazy they would be held. They were set up."

The *Militant* regularly covers and champions the worldwide fight to free the Five. Thousands have heard about the five revolutionaries, learned about who they are and been introduced to the fight to win their freedom by the paper.

Watercolor prison paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Five who has been imprisoned for 15 years, are now exhibited in several places across North America to win new support.

"We had a successful Feb. 6 meeting

with over 50 people attending, a significant number new to the fight," wrote John Steele from Montreal. The meeting launched the exhibit at the University of Montreal. "One participant got a one-year *Militant* renewal and others picked up 10 copies of *I Will Die the Way I've Lived* and six copies of *Voices From Prison*."

These two new Pathfinder Press titles are powerful tools in the fight to free the Five. Excerpts from them were featured in the two previous issues of the *Militant*.

They join the arsenal of nine books on special offer that *Militant* supporters are taking with them as they work to win renewals and new subscribers. (See ad below.)

"One subscriber got a two-year renewal, *I Will Die the Way I've Lived* and *Voices From Prison*," reported Seth Galinsky on door-to-door sales in New York Feb. 10. "He said he knows the owner of an art gallery in Harlem and would call them to meet with us about organizing a showing of Antonio's paintings."

Galinsky said some subscribers didn't want to renew. "But a number said we should come back next week," he said. "We also sold two new subscriptions and a couple more copies of *Voices From Prison*."

Supporters are discussing and adopting goals for their areas. We plan to print the scoreboard for the five-week drive in the next issue. As you get going, send in reports on your progress, to share with other *Militant* readers through this column.

To renew, get a subscription or join in the drive: Contact a distributor listed on page 6 or the *Militant* at (212) 244-4899.



Militant/John Naubert

"I hadn't heard about Cuban Five anyplace else," Teamster member Jeremy Ray of Tacoma, Wash., tells Jeanne FitzMaurice from Seattle as he renews his subscription Feb. 8.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution. Speaker: Arlene Rubinstein, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. 4025 S. Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 292-2600.

FLORIDA

Miami

Malcolm X, Revolutionary Leader of the Working Class. Speaker: Dean Hazlewood, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. 7100 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 306A. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

WikiLeaks, Edward Snowden and NSA Spying: Do 'Whistleblowers' Help the Working Class? Speaker: Dave Ferguson, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 22. Reception, 7 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 777 Cleveland Ave., Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

The Fight Against Racism and the Legacy of Malcolm X. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. 806 W. Washington Blvd., Room 202. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.

IOWA

Des Moines

Voices from Prison: Join the Fight to Free the Cuban Five. Speaker: Maggie Trowe, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 707-1779.

TEXAS

Houston

The Syrian Civil War and U.S. Foreign Policy: The Impact on U.S. Workers. Speaker: Cindy Jaquith, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W. 34th St. Suite C-50L. Tel.: (713) 477-7033.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Defend a Woman's Right to Abortion. Thousands March in Spain Against Anti-Abortion Moves. Speaker: Jeanne FitzMaurice. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. 5418 Rainer Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

CANADA

Montreal

Books of Working-Class Revolution Spark Interest: A Reportback from Cairo International Book Fair. Speaker: Joe Young, participant at recent Cairo Book Fair. Sat., Feb. 22, 7 p.m. Followed by fundraising supper. 7107 St-Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

Rail worker donates 'blood money' to build party

Below is a note that Jim Altenberg in San Francisco sent in with a "blood money" donation to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund. "Blood money," as Altenberg calls it, refers to bonuses and other bribes used by bosses to press us to accept wage cuts, concession contracts, dangerous work conditions and speedup.

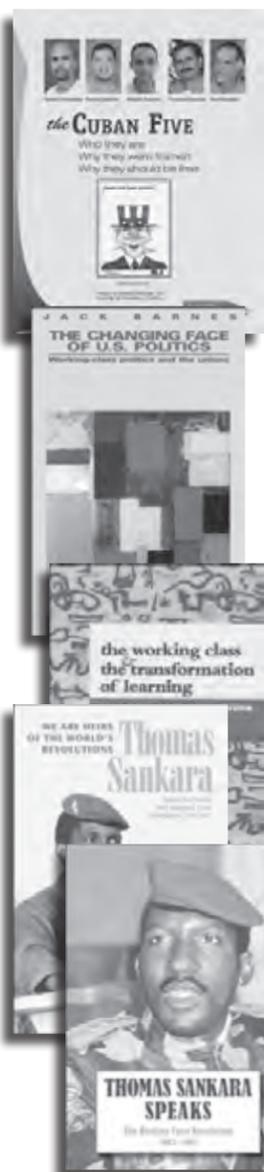
A check is in the mail to the party for \$3,000, "our share" of money "saved" by Amtrak through a concession contract a few years ago. It enabled the company to cut the size of the train crews working on their passenger trains.

While the bosses increased their profits and a few workers got a little money for their acquiescence, two people now do the work of three. Recent railroad disasters from across North America, India, and Spain only highlight what the rail bosses' unrelenting profit drive means every day for anyone who works on, rides or lives around the railroads. This is truly blood money.

I never agreed with the rail bosses' divisive and dangerous scheme, and proudly give this money to the Socialist Workers Party, to tell the truth, fight and take further steps along the road toward workers power.

The Capital Fund finances long-range work of the party. To make a donation, contact a *Militant* distributor near you, listed on page 6.

Special offers with 'Militant' subscription



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 Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions
by Jack Barnes
\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism
by Jack Barnes
\$2 with subscription (regular \$3)

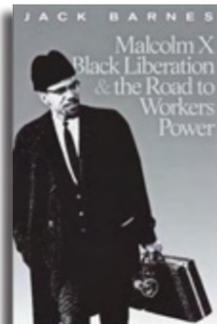
We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions

by Thomas Sankara
Speeches from the Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87
\$5 with subscription (regular \$10)

Thomas Sankara Speaks

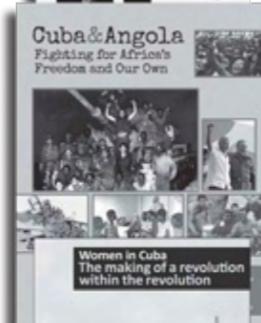
The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987
\$10 with subscription (regular \$24)

See distributors on page 6



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)

NY meeting honors Mandela, Cuban role in fall of apartheid

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK — “The international campaign to free Nelson Mandela from prison is an example today for those who are fighting to free the Cuban Five,” Kenia Serrano, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, said in a video from Cuba shown at a Feb. 8 program at Riverside Church here to celebrate the life of Nelson Mandela.

The event, titled “The Truth about Nelson Mandela: A Revolutionary Fighter. Revolutionary Cuba’s Key Part in the Defeat of Apartheid,” was sponsored by the Ad-Hoc February 8th Nelson Mandela Memorial Committee. Some 250 people attended.

“Nelson Mandela was always very clear about the role of Cuba in the freedom and achievements of the independence of Africa,” Serrano said. “And when we talk about the independence of Africa, we are talking about the defeat of the apartheid regime.”

Following Serrano, a video was shown of Nelson Mandela speaking July 26, 1991, in Matanzas, Cuba, at a celebration of the anniversary of the 1953 opening of Cuba’s revolutionary

war against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. He shared the podium with Fidel Castro, then Cuba’s president, who presented Mandela with the José Martí award, Cuba’s highest honor.

After nearly 28 years Mandela triumphantly walked out of prison, Feb. 11, 1990. Two years earlier the South African army was defeated in Cuito Cuanavale, Angola, at the hands of the combined forces of Cuban volunteers, the Angolan army and volunteers from the South West Africa People’s Organisation. This defeat contributed directly to the release of Mandela, the subsequent independence of Namibia and the fall of the apartheid regime. Some 425,000 Cuban volunteers served in Angola between 1975 and 1991.

“The most important lesson that you have for us,” Mandela told the tens of thousands of Cubans at the rally, “is that no matter what the odds, no matter under what difficulties you have had to struggle, there can be no surrender! It is a case of freedom or death!”

The Cuban and South African ambassadors to the United Nations, Rodolfo Reyes and Kingsley Mamabolo, spoke. Mamabolo was African National Congress representative to Cuba in 1991 and present at the rally in Matanzas. Both were in Angola as part of the fight against the South African army.

“We relied on the Cubans in so many



Above, some of 250 participants in Feb. 8 New York meeting. Inset, Rodolfo Reyes, Cuban ambassador to U.N., who fought as volunteer in Angola, speaks about importance of victory at Cuito Cuanavale in fight to topple South African apartheid regime.



ways,” Mamabolo said, giving the example of an agent provocateur, who poisoned a whole camp of volunteers. “It was the Cubans who flew doctors in and prevented it from being a massacre.”

The victory at Cuito Cuanavale, Reyes said, “was not just a military and strategic victory against the South African army on the field. It was an ethical and moral victory that showed the apartheid regime could be defeated.”

“Cuba, a country born in the combined struggle for independence and for the abolition of slavery, and whose children have African blood in their veins,” has had the privilege of fighting along-

side Africa, he said.

Mariela Castro Espin, director of Cuba’s National Center for Sex Education and a delegate to Cuba’s National Assembly, also spoke. She said it’s important to counter the “fashionable way” that Mandela has been presented in the media in the months since his death. “We need to explain to the new generation that Nelson Mandela was a great revolutionary who fought for the liberation of all the peoples.”

Other speakers were Gail Walker, co-director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization, and civil rights attorney Michael Warren.

Showings of paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five

I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived



Exhibits

Minneapolis February 4-28

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

Montreal, Canada February 10-21

Café Intermed, Pavillion Roger Gaudry, University of Montreal, 2900 Edouard-Montpetit. Schedule: Mon-Thurs., 7:30AM-7PM; Fri., 7:30AM-4PM

Los Angeles March 2-30

Opening reception: Sun., March 2, 2 p.m. Coffee and Crepes, 4545 Cesar Chavez Ave. Tel.: (323) 263-4544; (323) 661-1980. Exhibition schedule: Tues.-Thurs., 10AM-4PM; Fri.-Sat., 12PM-8PM.

Philadelphia Fri., March 21

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

Minn. exhibit: ‘Introduction to Cuban Five fight’

Continued from front page
the Miami Federal Detention Center after their arrest, paint a vivid picture of the routine harassment faced from prison guards and officials, the lack of privacy, the arbitrary cell searches, the shackling of prisoners on their way to court, the brutality of solitary confinement. But they also show the resilience and creativity of workers behind bars, from the board games the Five invented to the elaborate methods of communication and exchange they learned from fellow inmates to bypass prison rules and maintain a sense of social solidarity.

The exhibit, the sixth organized by the Minnesota Cuba Committee, is part of a growing movement around the world fighting to free the Five.

“This is our second exhibit of artwork by the Cuban Five, Jessica Smith, the owner of Regla De Oro, said. “We support the effort to free the Five.” In 2012 Regla sponsored “Humor from My Pen,” the cartoons of Gerardo Hernández. Smith encouraged people to pick up three new books published by Pathfinder Press on the Five: *Voices From Prison*, *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*, and *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*. Smith reported that 35 of the books were purchased at the event and will be on sale at the gallery for the duration of the exhibit.

“It’s astounding how the U.S. government slaps on a label of ‘conspirator’ — a very vague charge — and then unjust-

ly hands out harsh sentences, including life,” said Rafael Espinoza, union representative from United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1189. “That’s why Local 1189 believes workers have to support the Cuban Five.”

Frank Forrestal, speaking for the Minnesota Cuba Committee, informed participants that Fernando González will be released Feb. 27. “Just like the release of René González, Fernando’s will be a boost to the international campaign to free the Five,” he said.

“There’s a growing sense that the continued imprisonment of the Cuban Five is unconscionable,” said Forrestal. “And more than that, their voices are striking a chord with workers behind bars and those who know firsthand the brutality of the prison system in this country.”

“I think this exhibit is a great introduction to learning about the Cuban Five. It’s a powerful way to inform the public,” Steven Nelson, a part-time baggage handler for Delta Airlines and an artist himself, said after viewing the paintings. “I was impressed with the intimate details, not only of his incarceration but of incarceration in general.”

“I really resent our system and our government,” said Thandisizwe Jackson-Nissan, who was active in a recent fight against a cop killing in Minneapolis. “I think they are the biggest criminals in the whole world. If you threaten them in any way, they will try to convince people that you are the criminal.”

“I am just learning about the case,” he said, “but the Cuban Five remind me of Nelson Mandela and Rosa Parks.”

The exhibit runs through the end of February. Two more events are planned: a visit by students from the Perpich School of the Arts Feb. 27, and a celebration the following day of Fernando González’s release from prison.

Who are the Cuban Five?

Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These rightist 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 Brothers to the Rescue aircraft that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

The frame-up and continued incarceration of the Five is part of Washington’s decades-long campaign to punish the working people of Cuba for making and defending their socialist revolution.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013, halfway through his parole.

Syria: Assad steps up bombing, can't stop Kurds' fight for rights

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The first round of United Nations-brokered talks on Syria, held in Montreux, Switzerland, Jan. 22-31, between the Bashar al-Assad regime and opposition forces locked in a three-year-long civil war against Assad's dictatorial rule ended as it began — with daily bombardment by Assad's forces against rebel-controlled areas and efforts to starve out those opposing the government.

At the same time, significant gains have been made by the more than 2 million Kurds living in northern Syria where Kurdish militias have pushed back both Assad and reactionary al-Qaeda forces, leading the Democratic Union Party there to establish a semi-autonomous region.

The "peace" talks also included representatives from Washington, Moscow — which backs Assad — and 37 oth-

er countries. An invitation by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for Iran, another ally of the Assad regime, to attend the conference was subsequently revoked on Washington's insistence.

During the one week that talks were underway, 1,870 people were killed in Syria, including 450 civilians and 40 who died from inadequate access to food and medicine, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Syrian military helicopters have been dropping some 20 "barrel bombs" — steel barrels packed with explosives — daily on working class neighborhoods in Syria's largest city Aleppo and surrounding areas under rebel control.

On Feb. 4, regime bombs hit a mosque being used as a school, killing 11 people. Three days earlier, 34 were killed when barrel bombs hit the al-Bab area.

More than 500,000 civilians in rebel-held areas around Damascus have been besieged for months by government forces, with little access to food and medicine, according to the U.N.

Since the civil war started in March 2011, more than 130,000 people have been killed. Nearly 9 million — almost 40 percent of Syria's population — have been displaced inside the country or are living as refugees in neighboring countries. An estimated quarter-million people in Syria are out of reach of aid deliveries.

Syrian Kurds declare autonomy

Signaling a step forward in their fight against national oppression, Kurds in Syria declared an autonomous government Jan. 21 in Hasakah province in northeast Syria along with the districts of Afrin in the northwest and Kobani in the north. Hasakah, which is 70 percent Kurdish, contains the majority of the country's oil resources and functions as an agricultural heartland.

These areas are commonly referred to by Kurds as Rojava (western Kurdistan). Some 30 million Kurds live in northern Syria, eastern Turkey, northern Iraq and western Iran. They are the world's largest national group without their own country.

Twenty-two cabinet ministers have been named to the new regional government, including Christians and Muslim

Bosnia protests

Continued from front page bankrupt.

Union leader Dzevad Mehmedovic told *Businessweek* that workers at detergent factory Dita had not been paid for 26 months. They were joined by thousands of unemployed workers and youth.

Workers marched again the following day. "We have nothing to eat, and you?" said one placard. The protests continued for several days and spread to other cities, including Zenica, Bihac, Mostar and the capital Sarajevo, where demonstrators shouted "Thieves" and "Revolution" in front of government offices.

"People are hungry, young people do not have jobs, there is no health care insurance, no basic rights," one of the protesters in Tuzla told *Balkan Insight* Feb. 6. "It can't get any worse."

At least 30 protesters and 104 police were injured in Tuzla during clashes in the first three days. According to *channelnewsasia.com*, police and demonstrators "sprayed each other with tear gas." Police also attacked the protest in Sarajevo.

Bosnia is fractured along national lines, codified in the U.S.-brokered 1995 Dayton accords, which ended the 1992-95 war. The republic is divided into a Bosnian Serb republic and a Muslim-Croat federation, which in turn is subdivided into 10 cantons, largely segregated by nationality.

But a striking feature of the protests has been the coming together of Muslim, Croat and Serb workers.

Hundreds gathered in Banja Luka, capital of the Serbian part of Bosnia, Feb. 7 to express solidarity with protesters in other parts of the country. In Belgrade, in neighboring Serbia, demonstrators carried handmade signs. "Support the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina! Today Tuzla, tomorrow Belgrade," read one placard.

"Despair has united the people, Mostar has shown unity for the first time in 20 years," Dzenan Jelin, an unemployed Muslim, told *Agence France-Presse*, at a protest in Mostar, a majority Croatian city.

Officially more than one in four Bosnians is unemployed, but *Associated Press* says the real figure is nearly 40 percent.

Ukraine protests continue, hit censorship in Russia



Reuters/Gleb Garanich

Some 70,000 people filled Kiev's central square Feb. 9 demanding the resignation of Ukraine President Viktor Yanukovich and an end to Russian domination.

The protest movement exploded on the scene in November after Yanukovich, under pressure from Moscow, backed out of a trade deal with the European Union. As part of the arrangement, Russian President Vladimir Putin promised \$15 billion in loans to Ukraine and cheaper natural gas prices. Now angered by Yanukovich's concessions to protesters in hopes of defusing their mobilizations, Moscow has frozen further loan payments and insisted that Kiev pay a \$2.7 billion gas debt.

Workers from across the country continue to come to Kiev for daily protests. The actions are fueled by opposition to Russian domination of the country, the trampling of democratic and political rights in the Stalinist political police tradition by the government in Kiev, and the impact of the worsening economic crisis.

"We don't want our country to be run by criminals. We don't want our children to be without work," Valentina, 64, a retired worker told Reuters.

Scores of demonstrators (above) held up umbrellas Feb. 9 as a symbol of solidarity with dozens of Putin opponents who were arrested in Moscow the day before after they opened up umbrellas while protesting government censorship of Russia's TV Rain.

— SETH GALINSKY

Arabs, as well as Kurds.

Last fall, Kurdish fighters routed al-Qaeda forces from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and al-Nusra Front, both of which had sought to seize control in the area and impose their rule.

Kurdish advances in Rojava come much to the dismay of Ankara, which has closed its border with Syria and announced plans to fortify a border wall to keep Kurds out. Turkey is home to an estimated 14 million Kurds, who have fought a decades-long struggle for national rights. The main Kurdish group there is the Kurdish Workers Party, which is allied with the Syrian Democratic Union Party (PYD).

"Kurds in Turkey protested against Turkey's planned wall, while we protested on the other side from Syria," journalist Mohammed Sharo told Reuters Jan. 22. "The way I feel now is, let them build the wall. That thing they call a border is no longer really there."

The declaration of the Kurdish provincial government comes after organizers of the Syria conference, including Washington, Ankara and Riyadh, denied a request by the PYD to send a separate delegation to the talks.

One reflection of the gains made by Syrian Kurds is advances by women. The PYD and its military wing, the

Continued on page 7

Pussy Riot: 'Russia without Putin,' prisoners' freedom

Continued from front page

lieutenant colonel who is now president of Russia.

During their one-week visit here they pledged to speak out in defense of prisoners' rights in Russia and elsewhere. They visited with workers incarcerated at New York City's notorious Rikers Island and met with women living in a halfway house in West Harlem.

Jacqueline Moore, 54, who told the *New York Times* she served 16 years for manslaughter, hugged the two Russian women as they left the halfway house, telling them to keep fighting for women's rights.

"We wouldn't just come here for the concert," Tolokonnikova told the *Times* Feb. 9 after visiting the halfway house. "You can learn a lot about a place by its prisons," Alyokhina said.

"First to the prisons!" will be how all future foreign visits will begin, they said.

At the Barclay Center they called for the release of a group of demonstrators who could be sentenced later this month for participation in a march of some 20,000 against Putin on the eve of his inauguration in 2012.

Those prisoners have been treated much more harshly than Pussy Riot ever was, Alyokhina said. They deserve attention "more than we do," she added.

"I expect that, sooner or later, the voice of the people will become so loud that you can't ignore it," Tolokonnikova said.

"In the two years since the act for which we were imprisoned, the situation in Russia has gotten so much worse. And if we couldn't keep quiet about it then, we certainly won't keep quiet about it now," Tolokonnikova told the *Times* editorial board in a Feb. 5 interview.

The two women also solidarized with the protest movement against Russian

domination in the Ukraine, "saying they hope it creates an infectious spirit in Russia," the *Times* said.

Alyokhina, 25, and Tolokonnikova, 24, were convicted of "hooliganism motivated by religious hatred" and sentenced to two years in prison after punk band Pussy Riot performed a brief "prayer" Feb. 21, 2012, protesting against the political repression and policies of Putin's government in Moscow's Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Christ. A third convicted member, Yekaterina Samutsevich, 31, received a suspended sentence at an October 2012 appeal hearing.

"I saw this little totalitarian machine, what it is like from inside," Tolokonnikova told Russia's TV Rain when she walked out of prison Dec. 23. "Russia is really built on the model of the [penal] colony. Therefore it is so important to change the colony now, so as to change Russia along with the colony."

Malaysian students in Cairo

Continued from front page political discussions with the volunteers from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Greece who were staffing the booth.

Ten thousand Malaysian students are currently studying in Egypt, primarily in the medical and dentistry fields. Malaysian students first started attending school in Egypt in 1957 through a program sponsored by the Malaysian and Egyptian governments.

Mohammed Faiz Mohd Yusop, international vice president of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia-Egypt, opened the meeting. He said students would hear from two workers about the struggles of working people in the U.S. and the U.K., and then have ample opportunity to ask questions about socialism, communism, the working class and the Cuban Revolution.

Farley, who works in a steel mill, spoke about the socialist movement in the U.S., and Wils, who is also a factory worker, talked about the Cuban Revolution and the international fight to free the five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and jailed in the U.S. This was followed by more than an hour of discussion with many wide-ranging questions: What alternative do you offer to the Democrats and the Republicans? Why don't workers just choose socialism in an election? What is Obamacare?

Farley explained the capitalist system can't be changed through elections. "We run in elections to get a hearing and defend ourselves against govern-

ment intrusion, but we are building a working-class party to organize to take power out of the hands of the capitalist class." The students, many of whom are studying to be doctors, were interested in Farley's description of Obamacare as "nothing more than an insurance scheme, not health care for all."

Students wanted to know more about socialism and communism. Doesn't the Soviet Union show that socialism isn't the solution? Can't we take the good parts from capitalism and socialism? What's the difference between national socialism and socialism? they asked. One said if socialism was the solution why do so many Cubans go to Florida rather than stay in Cuba.

Cuba shows what workers can do

Unlike what is reported in the capitalist press, "the Cuban Revolution is an example," said Wils. "Cuba shows the working class is capable of making a revolution and start running a nation in the interests of the vast majority. Before the revolution the wealth was controlled by U.S., British and local capitalists. All that changed with the revolution. The leadership organized the workers and farmers. Youth were mobilized to teach hundreds of thousands to read and write. The new revolutionary government nationalized the land and distributed land titles to hundreds of thousands of peasants. Companies were expropriated and workers took control of safety conditions and have a say in how to organize production."

One student asked if there was any chance the Cuban Five would ever be released. "One of the Five, René González, is already out of prison, and Fernando González should be out soon," replied Wils. "But the legal options are all but exhausted to get the other ones out anytime soon. Gerardo Hernández, who has the longest sentence of the Five, explained some time ago that a jury of millions is needed to win their release.

"As struggles develop and more information about their fight and who they are is spread around the globe there will be a chance to win their freedom," said Wils.

One young woman asked Farley why she supports the right of women



Militant/Paul Davies

Betsy Farley and Hugo Wils, socialist workers from Chicago and Manchester, England, were featured speakers at Feb. 3 meeting with Malaysian students in Cairo, Egypt. Topics of meeting were "Working-Class Politics in the U.S." and "Fight to Free the Cuban Five."

to have an abortion. "What about the right of the innocent baby?" she said. Farley explained that the "right of a woman to decide whether and when to have children is fundamental to her full participation in society and the fight to change it. Abortions are performed in every country. Where they are illegal many women are forced into unsafe procedures and many die as a result."

An animated discussion followed the meeting. A few of the women continued the discussion with Farley. One asked, "Do you ever feel discouraged because there hasn't been another socialist revolution since Cuba?" Farley answered no, "because capitalism has no solution to the crisis facing working people in any country. Whether it's the U.S., Egypt, or Malaysia, our job is to join the struggles of the workers to build a leadership that can lead the fight for power. You are studying to be doctors, but some of you will become revolutionaries, too." A couple of the young women smiled and nodded their heads.

"This was an historic meeting for us to have this kind of exchange about the working class,

about socialism, and about the Cuban Revolution," said Yusop in closing the meeting. "We will want to use our center more in this way in the future so that we are knowledgeable about what is happening in the world."

Some of the students returned to the Pathfinder booth in the following days to thank the socialist workers for participating in the meeting at their center. Others brought friends to join the discussions and buy more books.

In all, participants at the Cairo International Book Fair bought 439 Pathfinder books, in English, Arabic and French. Twelve subscriptions to the *Militant* were also purchased, along with 105 single copies of the paper.



Militant/Paul Davies

Malaysian students browse Pathfinder titles. Volunteers sold 439 books at Jan. 22-Feb. 6 Cairo International Book Fair.

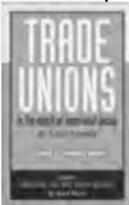
February BOOKS OF THE MONTH

PATHFINDER READERS CLUB SPECIALS

25% DISCOUNT

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

by *Leon Trotsky*
Food for thought and action from three generations of the modern revolutionary workers movement. \$16. **Special price: \$12**



The Struggle Is My Life

by *Nelson Mandela*
\$28. **Special price: \$21**

Socialism: Utopian and Scientific

by *Frederick Engels*
\$12 **Special price: \$9**

Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism

by *Carlos Tablada*
Che Guevara's practical and theoretical contributions on building socialism. \$21. **Special price: \$15.75**



The Last Year of Malcolm X

The Evolution of a Revolutionary
by *George Breitman*
\$16. **Special price: \$12**

La última lucha de Lenin (Lenin's Final Fight)

by *V. I. Lenin*
\$20. **Special price: \$15**

Join Pathfinder Readers Club for \$10 and receive discounts all year long

ORDER ONLINE AT WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM OFFER GOOD UNTIL FEBRUARY 28

IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find distributors of the *Militant*, *New International*, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 4025 S. Western Ave. Zip: 90062. Tel: (323) 295-2600. E-mail: laswp@sbcglobal.net
San Francisco: 5482 Mission St. Zip: 94112-1015. Tel: (415) 584-2135. E-mail: swpsf@sbcglobal.net

FLORIDA: Miami: 7100 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 306A. Zip: 33138. Tel: (305) 757-8869. E-mail: swpmiami@att.net

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 777 Cleveland Ave. SW Suite 103. Zip: 30315. Tel: (678) 528-7828. E-mail: swpatlanta@bellsouth.net

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 806 W. Washington Blvd. Suite 202. Zip: 60607. Tel: (312) 455-0111. E-mail: Chicagoswp@att.net

IOWA: Des Moines: 3707 Douglas Ave. Zip: 50310. Tel: (515) 707-1779. E-mail: swpdesmoines@fastmail.fm

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 13 Bennington St., 2nd Floor, East Boston. Zip: 02128. Tel: (617) 569-9169. E-mail: swpboston@verizon.net

MINNESOTA: Minneapolis: 416 E. Hennepin Ave., Suite 214. Zip: 55414. Tel: (612) 729-1205. E-mail: tcswp@qwestoffice.net

NEBRASKA, Lincoln: Tel: (402) 217-4906. E-mail: swplinc@windstream.net
Omaha: 3302 Q St. (Upstairs). Zip: 68107. Tel: (402) 779-7697. E-mail: swpomaha@fastmail.net

NEW YORK: Manhattan: 545 8th Ave., Room 1410. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 629-6649. E-mail: newyorkswp@mac.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 3701 Pulaski Ave. Zip: 19140. Tel: (215) 225-1270. E-mail: philaswp@verizon.net

TEXAS: Houston: 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-50L. Zip: 77092. Tel: (713) 476-0733. E-mail: houstonswp@att.net

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 143 Kennedy St. NW, Suite 15. Zip: 20011. Tel: (202) 536-5080. E-mail: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 5418 Rainier Ave. South. Zip: 98118-2439. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: seattleswp@qwestoffice.net

AUSTRALIA

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

CANADA

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

FRANCE

Paris: P.O. 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 40-10-28-37. E-mail: milpath.paris@laposte.net

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: 4/125 Grafton Rd., Grafton. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140. Tel: (09) 369-1223. E-mail: clauack@xtra.co.nz

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: London: First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green Road (Entrance in Brick Lane). Postal code: E2 6DG. Tel: (020) 7613-2466. E-mail: clondon@fastmail.fm
Manchester: Room 301, 3rd floor, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. Postal code: M1 2EH. Tel: (016) 1478-2496. E-mail: clmanchr@gmail.com

ON THE PICKET LINE

Boston school bus drivers rally demands 'hire back 4 unionists'

BOSTON — Some 200 school bus drivers and their supporters marched to the main office of Veolia Transportation Feb. 1, demanding the bosses hire back four unionists fired for participating in actions to defend their contract. The company, which buses some 30,000 students daily, took over the drivers' contract with the city last July.

The rally marked growing support for the drivers' fight. Both the Massachusetts AFL-CIO and the Greater Boston Labor Council joined the protest. Speakers included Rich Rogers, executive secretary treasurer of the Greater Boston Labor Council; Paul Kilduff, president of Boston Metro Local 100 of the American Postal Workers Union; and Andrew Slipp, staff representative for United Steelworkers District 4.

"We have to stick together," driver Marc Girault told the *Militant*. "If we don't stand together we'll never win."

The firings, on a charge of instigating an illegal strike, came out of an

Oct. 8 protest where drivers tried to get the bosses to address the nearly 300 grievances over pay shortages and other contract violations. The company locked the gates and threatened drivers with arrest if they didn't leave.

Veolia issued 864 letters of reprimand to workers and fired four union officials.

"Veolia doesn't care about children's safety at all. They want us to speed up, cutting our hours," driver Tomas Waka said. "We used to have 15 minutes to check the bus — now they don't want to give us time for that. They've been firing drivers. They want to bust our union."

— Sarah Ullman

Coca-Cola workers in Spain strike over plant closures

Workers at Coca-Cola in Spain have launched protest strikes against company plans to close four of 11 bottling plants in the country, affecting 1,250 workers.

On Jan. 31, workers at the plant in Fuenlabrada, a working-class suburb



Protest outside Coca-Cola factory in Madrid, Feb. 2, against plans to shut down four plants.

of Madrid, walked out, shuttering the plant.

Two days later some 2,000 workers, family members and other union supporters marched more than 15 miles from the plant in Fuenlabrada to Puerta del Sol in the city center of Madrid, chanting "No to the closures."

Starting Feb. 3 workers in Alicante

and Feb. 4 in Palma de Mallorca began two-hour strikes on various days, with plans to expand the actions.

In 2012, the Spanish government changed the labor laws, making it easier and cheaper for bosses to fire workers, cut severance pay substantially and allowed bosses to sidestep bargaining with unions during "times of crisis."

Official unemployment in Spain is more than 25 percent and over 50 percent for youth 15 to 24 years old. Sixty percent of young people who actually have a job are on temporary contracts.

— Emma Johnson

Washington slashes food stamps, aid to unemployed

Continued from front page

their incomes, allowing them to qualify for food stamps.

Since 2007 the number of workers receiving food stamps has increased by 21 million to a record high of 47.6 million in 2013, according to Agriculture Department figures. It continued to rise during the nearly five years of so-called economic recovery, as job growth has stagnated with millions of workers unable to obtain full-time work.

These latest cuts come on top of \$5 billion that was eliminated from the program last November, when some temporary benefits incorporated in the 2009 "stimulus" bill expired, reducing food stamp allotments across the board by an average of 5 percent per person.

Senate votes down jobless benefits

The federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation program, which started during the recession in 2008, provided extended jobless benefits of up to 47 weeks after 26-week coverage by most states ended. This program had been reauthorized 11 times since then, but an increasingly contentious debate divided along party lines in Congress has prevented any further extension since it lapsed a month and a

half ago. As a result, some 1.7 million workers have been stricken from the unemployment rolls. And these numbers continue to rise each week.

Some state governments are seeking to cut the number of weeks workers can get unemployment pay. North Carolina, for example, last year cut eligibility to 20 weeks.

The Obama administration sought to win bipartisan support for the deal by throwing in new anti-working-class measures. One that got support from some Republicans would have required unemployed workers to sign papers that they earned less than \$1 million in the previous year.

Overthrowing the universal right to unemployment, any "means testing," would open the door to more and more restrictions.

The January official unemployment

rate declined slightly to 6.6 percent from 6.7 percent in December. But the number of jobs employers added was 113,000, way below meeting the needs of the millions of workers seeking full-time jobs.

For those whose federal unemployment benefits have ended, increasing numbers, out of work long-term, are joining the ranks of the millions no longer counted by government statisticians as part of the workforce. The government counts some of these workers as "marginally attached" or downright "discouraged." It doesn't even acknowledge the several million more who have been "discouraged" for more than a year.

So while official unemployment figures continue to creep downward, actual employment as a percentage of the population stays flat.

Correction

The article "Canada Postal Workers Rally Against Layoffs, Service Cuts" in issue no. 6 should have described the Canada Post and other companies that are owned but not run by the government as "Crown corporations," in reference to the Queen of England who is the titular head of the Canadian government. Instead, it incorrectly listed Crown as a company. The article also said it is illegal for postal workers to strike. While Parliament in 2011 passed a law ordering postal workers back to work, it did not outlaw future strikes.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 24, 1989

LONDON — By 235 to 134, the British Parliament recently approved a new Prevention of Terrorism Act. Since its enactment in 1974 by the then Labour Party government, the law has been subject to yearly renewal.

The new act permits the detention of individuals for up to seven days without charge; confiscation of funds going to the Irish republican struggle; harassment of fundraisers; and stipulates that those convicted of what are deemed "terrorist offenses" serve a minimum of two-thirds of their sentences, rather than half.

The legislation allows the authorities to exclude from Britain people who are British citizens. Some 260 people have been subject to such exclusion orders. The act also permits detention for up to one hour for people traveling between Ireland and Britain. In 1986 alone, some 60,000 were stopped at ports of entry in this way.



February 24, 1964

"There are no political parties claiming any broad base of support" in South Vietnam. That is how one diplomat cynically commented on the attempts of Gen. Khanh, the new ruler, to find a civilian "fig leaf" to cover over his naked military rule.

This revelation confirms that U.S.-supported regimes in South Vietnam, whether Diems, Minhs or Khans, have no support in the population.

The U.S. government justifies its "war for democracy" in that country with claims that "Communists from North Vietnam" are trying to impose an unwanted regime on the South Vietnamese people.

While the warlords and civilian puppets in Saigon have no support, the peasant guerrillas are supported by most of South Vietnam's farmers — the some 10 million poor who live on the land, out of the country's 12 million population.



February 24, 1939

An imposing, fighting demonstration of fifty thousand workers assembled near Madison Square Garden on Monday evening to protest the first big fascist mobilization in New York City.

In addition to the fifty thousand demonstrators who responded to the call of the Socialist Workers Party for a labor rally against the fascist concentration, official police estimates given to the press counted another fifty thousand among the spectators. With few exceptions, the latter made clear their sympathy with the aims and slogans of the demonstrating thousands.

With a brutality recalling the days of Czarist Cossacks, 1,780 of Mayor La Guardia's police, the largest number of cops ever collected in the city against a single demonstration, slugged and trampled under horses hooves scores of workers in an unsuccessful attempt to break up the demonstration.

Syria, Kurds

Continued from page 5

Committees for the Protection of the Kurdish People, have run the region since Assad's forces were pushed out in 2012. It has created both male and female militia groups, with women comprising one-third of the force. And they've had a powerful impact in helping to beat back attacks by Islamist forces.

"When we arrived at the front it was dark, and al-Qaeda was close to our position," Nojan, 20, told Reuters. "We shouted to them that we were women with weapons in our hands, here to defend our people to the death."

"Here," she said, "I not only learned how to carry a gun. I learned how to speak. I became a woman."

Socialist Workers Party victory against FBI

'Fifty Years of Covert Operations in the US: Washington's Political Police'

A new book, *50 Years of Covert Operations in the US: Washington's Political Police and the American Working Class*, is now out in Spanish and will be released in English this spring. The title article, by Larry Seigle, was first published in the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* in 1987. The book also contains "The Imperialist War and the Working Class," written in 1949 by Farrell Dobbs, a central leader of the Teamster organizing drives in the 1930s and national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party from 1953 to 1972. Below is the introduction by Steve Clark, a member of the National Committee of the SWP. Copyright © 2014 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY STEVE CLARK

In August 1987 a federal district judge in New York City issued an injunction ordering that all documents obtained by the government in ways that violate the US Constitution and Bill of Rights cannot be "used, released, or disclosed" by the FBI or other federal police agencies.

The injunction came in connection with Judge Thomas Griesa's decision a year earlier, in August 1986, on a suit filed by the Socialist Workers Party in 1973. The party's aim was to bring into the open decades of covert spying and disruption against the SWP by the federal political police, and to mobilize opposition to these violations of the constitutional rights not only of members and supporters of the party and Young Socialist Alliance, but of other organizations and individuals targeted by covert government operations as well.

Although the Justice Department immediately filed notice after Griesa's

1986 decision that it would appeal, less than two years later the government withdrew its motion.

The fifteen-year-long battle by the Socialist Workers Party, backed by thousands, resulting in that federal court ruling marked a victory for the working class. Moreover, that victory stands and has a direct effect to this day, more than four decades after the suit was filed.

The opening article in this book — "Fifty Years of Covert Operations in the US: Washington's Political Police and the American Working Class" by Larry Seigle — provides an account of that political battle by the SWP and its allies. It was an unprecedented political initiative. A communist organization was filing a suit against the capitalist government, as opposed to being forced to defend itself and its members against a case trumped up by cops and prosecutors. Communist workers — along with fellow unionists, farmers, and supporters of civil rights — were plaintiffs, and government agencies and officials defendants. Not the other way around.

The broadly supported political campaign organized and led by the Socialist Workers Party provided an additional weapon that unionists, Black rights fighters, and others among the exploited and oppressed could use to better defend their own constitutional rights. Above all, it helped keep open political space for working people to speak, organize, and act outside the electoral and judicial arenas — to fight on our own terrain, in the factories, on the picket lines, and in the streets.

A few veteran communists — who had firsthand experience over decades with government frame-ups and attacks on militant workers — initially



Above, editorial cartoon — captioned "I do not note in these activities any gross abuse of authority" — depicts July 1975 statement by then-FBI director Clarence Kelley rationalizing decades of burglaries of working class organizations and government opponents, including of Socialist Workers Party leadership offices. In 1977, Kelley launched lawsuit and campaign to expose and deal blows to FBI spying and attacks on political rights. Above, courtroom drawing of former SWP National Secretary Farrell Dobbs testifying before federal judge Thomas Griesa at 1981 trial of lawsuit. Bottom from left, SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes; civil liberties attorney Leonard Boudin; and John Studer, director of Political Rights Defense Fund, at 1988 press conference after government announced it was dropping appeal of Griesa's ruling that FBI operations against party were unconstitutional and his injunction barring government agencies from using files of illegal spying in any

balked at such an undertaking. Wasn't a lawsuit just asking for trouble? Why set something in motion that will result in government depositions of party leaders? Why end up in a bourgeois courtroom by your own doing?

Such wariness was even greater among some former Communist Party members and others in the CP milieu whose dead-end Stalinist factionalism toward the SWP had ebbed over time, but who still recoiled at carrying out political activity openly as communists, much less in front of federal attorneys and a judge. Among other things, why expose your party's history and political record to public scrutiny?

But the SWP's central leaders, from those in the oldest to newer generations, were convinced that attitudes were changing among workers and farmers in the United States as a result of the political conquests of the Black rights movement, anti-Vietnam War mobilizations, and other social struggles. The capitalist rulers and their government were on the defensive politically as a result of what was becoming known about cop spying, harassment, and disruption of working people and youth engaged in these fights. All this was compounded for the rulers in 1973 by the widely publicized "Watergate" revelations of rampant wiretapping and burglary by the Richard Nixon administration against its domestic rivals in capitalist politics.

All in all, the communist leaders concluded, conditions were unusually good for such a political campaign. The Socialist Workers Party never lies to working people, in the US or anywhere else in the world. Its history and political record are an open book. It has nothing to hide. As these conclusions were confirmed in life over the next fifteen years, initial doubts and hesitations were transformed into respect and support for the SWP's political course in this fight.

After more than seven years of pre-

trial discovery, the lawsuit went to trial in April 1981. The proceedings stretched out over twelve weeks. The court's sweeping 1986 decision in favor of the SWP's suit found no evidence "that any FBI informant ever reported an instance of planned or actual espionage, violence, [or] terrorism" by the party or its members. For the first time ever, a federal court ruled:

- that the use of FBI or other police informers to infiltrate organizations and spy on individuals engaged in political activity, including communists and other working-class militants, is a violation of the guarantee of privacy and freedom of association in the Bill of Rights (during the trial, the government acknowledged that the FBI alone — not counting the CIA, military intelligence, and other agencies among the defendants — had collected or stolen 10 million pages of files on the socialists);
- that burglaries by the cops to steal or copy papers or plant microphones violate Fourth Amendment protections against "unreasonable searches and seizures" (the FBI admitted at least two hundred four "black bag jobs" of party offices just between 1945 and 1966); and
- that surreptitious disruption of party activity and the lives of its members and supporters is against the law (numerous examples of such harassment are described in *FBI on Trial: The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit Against Government Spying* edited by Margaret Jayko, and *Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom* by Nelson Blackstock, both published by Pathfinder).

Following up on those decisions, Griesa one year later issued his injunction "with respect to documents that the Government obtained through clearly illegal activities." The federal judge barred such files from being "used,

Want to read more?....

50 Years of Covert Operations in the US

Explains the origin of the "national security" state in the US, the expansion of presidential powers and the decades-long fight by socialist workers against government spying and harassment. **\$10**

Socialism on Trial

James P. Cannon was the lead defendant in the Minneapolis sedition trial of 18 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the labor movement who were framed up and jailed in 1941 for conspiracy to advocate the overthrow of the US government. In his testimony to the court Cannon presents the communist program of the fighting vanguard of the working class. **\$16**

Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five

The unbending dignity and integrity of the Cuban Five has won them the respect of thousands around the world as well as fellow prisoners. Here three who have known them behind bars speak out. Also accounts of prison life and resistance by Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Elizabeth Palmeiro and Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda. Also in Spanish. **\$7. Special publication offer \$5**

'I Will Die the Way I've Lived'

Fifteen watercolors by Antonio Guerrero for the 15th anniversary of the imprisonment of the Cuban Five. With text by Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino. Also in Spanish. **\$7. Special publication offer \$5**

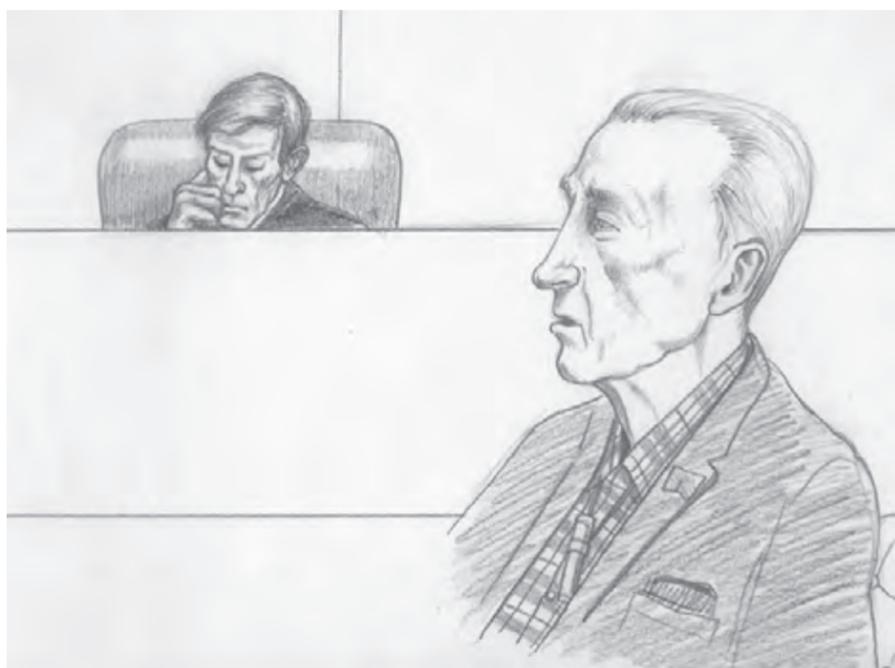
pathfinderpress.com

BI spying has lasting effect on class politics

'Police and the American Working Class' published by Pathfinder Press



ony Savino
— lam-
workers'
73 party
s. Right,
al Judge
liberties
ference
ty were
way.



released, or disclosed by defendants ... for any reason except in compliance with an order issued by this court, applied for on notice, or in lawful response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act.”



Fifty Years of Covert Operations in the US was first published in 1987 in the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*, and then the following year in Spanish as a small book. As the article indicates, it was written before all the matters in the suit had been finally decided by Judge Griesa in 1987 and before the government threw in the towel on appealing in 1988.

In the wake of this outcome of the SWP's fifteen-year battle came two other milestones in the party's long record of defending the political rights of working people, including its own members.

On March 4, 1988, Mark Curtis, an SWP member and worker at the Swift packinghouse in Des Moines, Iowa, was arrested and brutally beaten by cops only hours after taking part in a meeting to defend seventeen co-workers rounded up by immigration cops in a factory raid and threatened with deportation. He was framed up on rape and burglary charges and went to trial in September 1988. A broad international defense campaign called on Iowa authorities to drop the charges and then — following his conviction and sentencing to twenty-five years — to free Curtis from prison. He was released on

parole in June 1996.

A week before the Curtis trial opened, the Socialist Workers Party registered a victory in another defense campaign, one it had been fighting for eleven years with widespread support. On August 31 the US State Department dropped once and for all the government's effort to deport Héctor Marroquín, a Mexican-born member of the Young Socialist Alliance and SWP and plaintiff in the party's lawsuit, and granted him permanent residency.



The 1986 federal court decision that the president of the United States “cannot have discretion to behave unconstitutionally” stands today in face of the unrelenting expansion of executive and police powers during four Republican and Democratic presidencies since the ruling came down: those of George H.W. Bush, William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama.

The Obama White House — and the meritocratic professional, academic, and other bourgeois-minded individuals from whom the administration enlists its staff and organizes its support — is taking this tendency to new heights. “Wherever we have an opportunity and I have the executive authority to go ahead and get some things done, we're just gonna go ahead and do 'em,” the president said in a CBS “60 Minutes” interview in December 2011.

The record bears him out — from the acceleration (and political rationalization) of expanded Internet and phone

wiretapping in the US and abroad; to the more than 400 “unacknowledged” murderous drone attacks since early 2009 in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia; to a sharp increase of deportations of immigrants and “silent sweeps” of workers without papers in factories and other workplaces; to IRS targeting of tax records of “Tea Party” and other conservative groups; to stepped-up surveillance of email and phone records of journalists and criminal prosecution of their sources under the Espionage Act of 1917. This tendency can also be seen from the current administration's harsher penalties against US and foreign companies accused of violating Washington's embargo of Cuba, and unilaterally stiffened sanctions against Iran; to its circumvention of congressional review of presidential appointments and federal budget matters; to steeply escalated expansion and use of federal regulations, bypassing the need to submit new legislation for discussion and vote; and more.



The victory in this long political battle by the Socialist Workers Party has bolstered its ongoing efforts since the mid-1970s to ensure the maximum possible protection for financial contributors to SWP campaigns, including campaigns for public office.

In April 2013 the Federal Election Commission extended for four more years the party's exemption from requirements that candidates must file names of both their contributors and vendors from whom they buy printing or do other business. The FEC ruling cited the 1986 federal court decision as well as some seventy declarations from workers and others who have supported communist candidates and public activities of the SWP. These declarations documented firings, police spying and harassment, and right-wing threats and assaults on the party and its members and supporters since 2009, when the previous FEC exemption had been granted.

The “government hostility and public and private harassment against the SWP was pervasive,” the FEC ruled, and “thus continues to provide support for the SWP's current request”

to extend the disclosure exemption it has fought for and won six times since 1974. This was a victory not only for the SWP but for all working people and for constitutional rights. It was the first successful push-back in some time by a working-class organization in face of years of escalating political, social, and economic “regulation” by employers and their government.

Among liberals, the crusade for political “transparency” and financial “disclosure” is a sacred cause. But its papers over fundamental class realities and conflicts — above all that not only all economic and financial power, but all political and military power too, rests in the hands of the capitalist class. That's the source of the hypocrisy about “transparency” and of the damage government-imposed “disclosure” inflicts on the exploited majority.

The demand for an end to secret state diplomacy, business secrets, and covert domestic cop-operations has been and remains part of the program of the communist movement. Each step toward putting an end to the ability of the propertied rulers to legally operate in secrecy is an advance for working people in the US.

Imposed on working-class parties such as the SWP, the unions, Black rights groups, or farm protest organizations, however, “disclosure” and “transparency” are instruments to unleash the capitalist government, cops, and right-wing outfits and individuals to probe, disrupt, and try to destroy the workers movement. They are a political obstacle to organizing effective defense of those threatened by government assaults and to mass independent working-class action to advance the interests of working people.



Fifty Years of Covert Operations in the US points to the century-and-a-half-long proletarian course that made possible what the Socialist Workers Party accomplished through its political campaign to expose government spying and harassment and mobilize opposition to it. From the moment the SWP filed its lawsuit in 1973 through the 1981 trial and posttrial proceedings,

Continued on page 10



AP Photo/Don Ryan

International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 members in Longview, Wash., protest lockout by EGT Development Sept. 7, 2011. Recently released government files show federal spies targeted the union battle and efforts of others to back their fight.

50 Years Covert Operations

Continued from page 9

the article says, the government

kept trying to prove that the party said one thing in public and something different in its closed meetings. They tried to establish that the party maintained dual structures, one for public purposes and the other hidden from view. In every case, the facts showed the opposite. While a workers' party has the right, in fact the responsibility, to protect the privacy of its members and supporters from the bosses and the police, it has no right to keep its ideas, methods, and organizational concepts hidden from working people....

As the trial demonstrated, the FBI's accusation of conspiracy and hidden goals were *pure projection*. It turned out to be the White House and FBI, not the SWP, that conceal their aims and methods. It turned out to be the White House and FBI, not the SWP, that maintain a covert structure to carry out what they cannot openly proclaim. It turned out to be the White House and FBI, not the SWP, that rely on conspiratorial modes of operation to achieve their goals behind the backs of the people of the United States.

The article traces the expansion of Washington's political police since US imperialism's repressive response, in the aftermath of World War I, to the Bolshevik-led October 1917 revolution in Russia and forging of the Communist International two years later — and their impact on workers and farmers in the United States who sought to emulate those revolutionary examples. The government's aim above all was to crush the newborn communist organizations in the US founded in 1919. (Already in those years, J. Edgar Hoover headed the Justice Department cop agency that targeted communist and anarchist workers, their organizations, and Black leaders such as Marcus Garvey and A. Philip Randolph. That agency became the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1935, and Hoover remained its director until his death in 1972.)

This book puts a special focus on the Democratic administration of President Franklin Roosevelt in the late 1930s, as

the US rulers prepared to enter the imperialist slaughter of World War II. It describes the growth and consolidation of the "national security" state in the wake of Washington's military, political, and economic victory in that war over its imperialist rivals, both "foes" (Germany, Austria, Italy, and Japan) and "allies" (the United Kingdom, France, and others).

The 1941 conviction and imprisonment of eighteen leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and class-struggle Teamsters leadership in Local 544-CIO in Minneapolis was a turning point in the buildup of US capital's political police. The frame-up was the Roosevelt administration's first use of the Smith "Gag" Act outlawing advocacy of revolutionary ideas, which the Democratic president had signed into law the previous year. The real "crime" of these working-class leaders was that they were effectively organizing political opposition within the unions to Roosevelt's drive to whip up popular support for the US rulers' war aims that workers and farmers would be sent to fight and die for.

During the 1981 trial of the SWP's lawsuit, a chief government witness, Robert Keuch, an associate deputy attorney general, was questioned by an attorney for the SWP about Roosevelt's 1939 executive order directing the FBI to step up its "investigation" of "subversive activities." Keuch replied that "there are simply ways that individuals and groups can act that may not necessarily constitute violations of the criminal statutes" (translation: that are legal even under US bourgeois law). The White House was concerned first and foremost about those "who were trying to influence public opinion to keep the United States out of war, to keep us neutral," the Justice Department official testified.

The "crime" of "trying to influence public opinion" about the coming war was sufficient for Roosevelt to shred the Bill of Rights.

This new edition includes the article "Imperialist War and the Working Class" by Farrell Dobbs, which deals with these origins of Washington's "covert war" at home. Dobbs was a convicted Smith Act defendant, a leader of the Teamster organizing drives in Minneapolis and the upper Midwest, and then a central leader of the SWP for decades. He wrote this piece in 1949 as an introduction to the third edition of *Socialism on Trial*, the trial testimony by SWP national secretary James P. Cannon.

Dobbs also recounts and condemns the Smith Act prosecution in New York in early 1949 of eleven leaders of the Communist Party, which is described in the opening article in this book. All were convicted, and ten were given the maximum sentence of five years. Dobbs, who covered this nine-month frame-up trial week in and week out for the *Militant* newspaper, points to the political blow the Communist Party leadership dealt to the working-class movement by its refusal to defend the



Minnesota Historical Society

Teamsters union strikers stand up to cops and thugs in Battle of Deputies Run in Minneapolis, May 22-23, 1934. On eve of World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt organized frame-up of leaders of Minneapolis Teamsters and SWP for effectively organizing resistance in unions to U.S. war efforts. Right, 1941 issue of *Industrial Organizer* reports on opening of trial.



first Smith Act defendants during the 1941 trial in Minnesota.

In fact, the CP leadership publicly welcomed the Minneapolis indictments and campaigned in the unions to quash support to the defendants. Earl Browder, the party's general secretary, and other CP leaders went so far as to prepare a dossier for the Justice Department in hopes of bolstering the government's case against the SWP leaders and union militants. Philip Jaffe, a former Communist Party leader, in the 1975 book *The Rise and Fall of American Communism*, details the contents of the dossier he received a copy of from Browder.

The CP leadership's trampling on elementary working-class solidarity is also recounted in the 1993 book *Advocate and Activist: Memoirs of an American Communist Lawyer* by John Abt, the party's longtime chief counsel and one of its leading cadres going back to the 1930s. The CP "made a terrible mistake in not defending the SWP" during the Minneapolis trial, Abt said.

Abt had accepted the CP leadership's course at the time, he acknowledged. "Little did we know," he said, "that in the postwar period the Smith Act would become the primary legal weapon to attack our Party and imprison its leaders."

Little did we know! The truth is that the SWP and Teamster defendants and their supporters explained this time and again to anyone who would listen in the labor movement (and many did, as shown by the endorsement of their defense effort, the Civil Rights Defense Committee, by some 150 international and local unions, representing over five million workers, as well as by hundreds of other individuals and organizations).

Some four decades later, Abt said, he participated in a meeting of the Communist Party's national leadership, urging it to support the SWP's lawsuit against federal police spying and harassment. He pointed to lessons from what the CP leadership had done in 1941. But Abt was voted down, "and the Party again refused to defend the SWP against government persecution."



Another political conquest of the SWP's political campaign against the White House and federal police agencies is that Griesa's rulings made no distinction between party members

and supporters who are US citizens and those who aren't. Both are covered by the decision and injunction (although the court took no position on concrete residency or deportation matters).

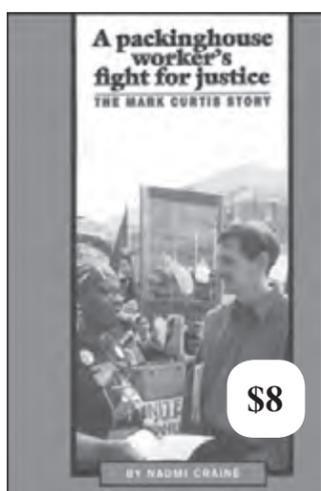
Among the federal agencies who were defendants in the party's suit was the US rulers' immigration police. At the time it was called the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Today it's known as the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Changing names notwithstanding, it is known and despised as *la migra* by working people who are its targets and by millions of others who know how the capitalists use it to divide and weaken the solidarity and fighting power of the working class, unions, and protests against discrimination of all kinds.

Deportations, in fact, were among the first and most brutal clubs wielded by bosses and their government in the repressive drive against the workers movement in the aftermath of World War I. In what became notorious as the Palmer Raids, named after the US attorney general at the time, more than 3,000 anarchists, communists, and other working-class militants were arrested and 750 deported in 1919 and 1920.

Since then repeated attempts by the rulers to use this weapon against cadres and leaders of the Socialist Workers Party have been fought back by the party, often mobilizing broad international support in the unions and among other supporters of political rights. In addition to the Héctor Marroquín case noted earlier, these have included unsuccessful attempts to deport:

- Carl Skoglund in the 1940s and 1950s, a Swedish-born founding leader of the communist movement and SWP and one of the eighteen imprisoned socialists and Teamster leaders during World War II;
- Joe Johnson, a party member, whose fight in the mid-1960s was waged using the pamphlet, *They Have Declared Me a Man Without a Country*; and most recently
- Róger Calero, a Nicaraguan-born SWP leader and staff writer for the socialist newsweekly the *Militant* who in 2003 pushed back *migra's* efforts to deport him upon his return from a reporting trip to Cuba and Mexico and who won restoration of

Continued on page 11



Pathfinder Press.com

Fifty Years of Covert Operations in the United States

Continued from page 10

the permanent residence status he had had since 1989.



For communist workers, defending ourselves is not primarily a question of legal arguments and courtroom tactics, although revolutionary-minded workers approach these matters with the utmost proletarian discipline and attention to detail.

Like everything else in the class struggle, how working people defend ourselves in face of frame-ups and other government assaults is above all a *political* question. It is part of the working class advancing along the revolutionary course toward replacing the state power of a tiny minority of propertied families — the dictatorship of capital — with that of the great majority, workers and farmers.

This has been true from the beginning of the modern working-class movement. Two outstanding examples can be singled out: the defense campaign led by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels well over one-hundred sixty years ago to free eleven of their comrades framed up in Germany for “conspiracy” to overthrow the Prussian government after the defeat of the 1848–49 revolutions across Europe (what was known as the Cologne Communist Trial); and the amnesty campaign that in 1955 won the release of Fidel Castro and other combatants tried and convicted by the US-backed dictatorship in Cuba for their insurrectionary attack on the Santiago de Cuba and Bayamo army garrisons on July 26, 1953. The Moncada assault and the political course led by Castro, its principal organizer, opened the revolutionary struggle that would lead in 1959 to the triumph of the Cuban Revolution against the tyranny of Fulgencio Batista.

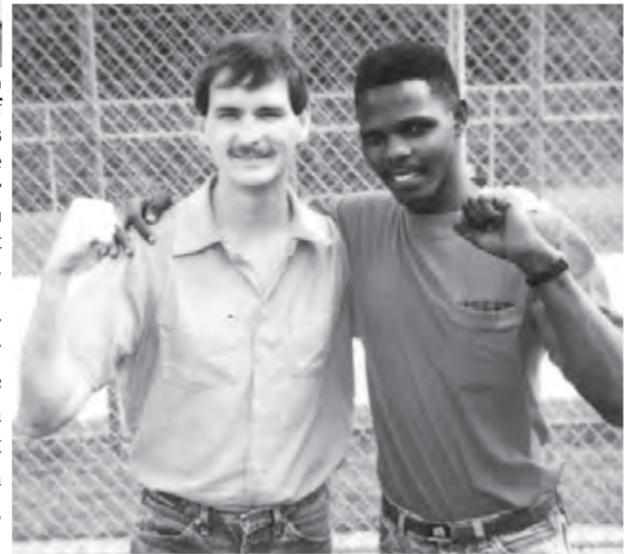
The trial testimony, courtroom statements, and other defense documents prepared by working-class leaders in the course of such battles are themselves often transformed into powerful instruments of revolutionary propaganda.

Such was the case with Karl Marx’s *Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne* written during and just after the 1852 trial in which seven of the eleven defendants were convicted. Marx proved the point in those pages that a “conspiracy” trial by the ruling class and its government “does not require any indictable action” and is “merely a pretext for burning political heretics in a legal way.”



Top photo: Militant/Eric Simpson

SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes speaking at 1988 rally on eve of trial of packinghouse worker Mark Curtis, left, arrested, beaten and framed up by Des Moines, Iowa, cops. “They will not prevent Mark from continuing to be the same person he is today,” Barnes said, “no matter where he finds himself, for however long.” Right, Andile Yawa, a leader of African National Congress Youth League, visits Curtis in 1992 in Iowa state prison after his conviction. After eight years of international defense campaign, Curtis won release on parole in 1996.



Such was the case with James P. Cannon’s testimony at the 1941 Smith Act trial, published as *Socialism on Trial* and sold ever since as an introduction to the communist program.

Such was the case with Fidel Castro’s prison reconstruction of his 1953 courtroom speech, *History Will Absolve Me*, which became the unofficial program of the July 26 Movement, clandestinely circulated in the thousands throughout Cuba during the revolutionary struggle.

Such was the case with Nelson Mandela’s “I Am Prepared to Die,” his statement from the dock at the 1964 trial that condemned him to prison for life as punishment for his leadership of the revolutionary fight to bring down South Africa’s white supremacist regime.

As “Fifty Years of Covert Operations in the US” is being released in this new edition, working people in the United States and worldwide are learning about and being won in growing numbers to another international defense battle — the fight to free five Cuban revolutionists held behind bars in the US since 1998.

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González — known to millions as the Cuban Five — were railroaded to prison by Washington on a grab bag of trumped-up “conspiracy” charges. They had been gathering information for the Cuban government

on plans by murderous Cuban American paramilitary groups in Florida that have operated with impunity on US soil, in order to help put a stop to violent attacks in Cuba, the United States, Puerto Rico, and elsewhere.

During their 2000–2001 trial and sentencing in Miami, the Five conducted themselves with pride and dignity as they defended their revolutionary principles and rebutted the charges fabricated against them by federal authorities. Above all, they refused to cop pleas. Each said at their sentencing hearings, and have repeated many times since, that he would act in the same way again in order to halt further deaths from assassinations and bombings. As Gerardo Hernández — given the most draconian of the sentences, a double life term — expressed it, “It is for this blood that I made the pledge to sacrifice even my own life.”

Over the years since their incarceration, the Five have won the respect of fellow prisoners for their integrity, their daily leadership example, their consideration for others behind bars whose conditions they share as brothers, and their patient explanation of the Cuban Revolution whose proletarian internationalist and socialist values they exemplify in their political convictions and their conduct.

Neither the “capitalist justice” meted out to the Cuban Five over three administrations — Clinton, Bush, and Obama — nor the exemplary way the five revolutionaries have acted in face of it, are something new for the communist workers movement in the US and around the world. Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, pointed to these realities of capitalist rule and the class struggle in a talk to a September 1988 rally in Des Moines, Iowa, on the eve of the opening of the trial of Mark Curtis.

“Mark Curtis will not get a fair trial,” Barnes told the more than 400 participants in that meeting. “The courtroom

is not where innocence and guilt will be decided, and it is not where justice will be found.”

“The presumption of innocence has taken hundreds of years for working people to win,” Barnes said. It is “one of the most important milestones on the march to human solidarity.”

When workers are in the dock, however, from the point of view of the capitalist rulers, “It’s the presumption of guilt that dominates in the ‘democratic’ United States,” he said. The employers and their government “want workers in the meatpacking industry, paperworkers, miners, workers of all kinds who will fight, to get the message that there are limits on your fighting.”

That’s why the worldwide defense campaign was so important, Barnes said. The capitalist rulers misjudge revolutionary-minded fighters, just as they misjudge the power of solidarity in the working class and among other defenders of political rights. Whatever the verdict at the trial, he insisted, “There is no way on earth they will succeed in their goal. They will not put Mark Curtis in prison for twenty-five years. They will not get him down on his knees.

“They will not prevent him from continuing to be the same person he is today, fighting for the same things, believing the same deeply held convictions, saying them openly to the entire world. He will continue to do all this, no matter where he finds himself, for however long.”

That has been true for many thousands of working-class fighters who’ve been framed up and railroaded to prison along the long and winding revolutionary road toward power by workers and farmers in the US and the world over. It will remain true. And it’s the most important lesson running throughout the pages of this book.

January 2014



Bill Hackwell

June 1, 2013, protest at White House aimed at advancing international campaign to free Cuban Five, five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned on frame-up charges in U.S. since September 1998. Since their incarceration, they have won respect from fellow prisoners for their integrity, daily leadership example, consideration of others and patient explanation of Cuba’s socialist revolution whose values they exemplify.