

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Iran Book Agency reviews
new titles on Cuban Five
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 78/NO. 33 SEPTEMBER 22, 2014

‘Militant’ kicks off fall subscription campaign

Supporters of paper respond to workers’ fights



Militant/Laura Anderson

Alyson Kennedy talks with Steelworker on strike against Sloan Valve in Franklin Park, Ill., July 9.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The New York Labor Day Parade this year was marked by the participation of unorganized workers fighting to unionize as well as union workers involved in recent struggles. Trade unionists who support the *Militant* were among those who marched in the parade, which was a good place for fighting workers to meet each other and took place on the opening weekend of the socialist paper’s international subscription drive. Twenty participants signed up for subscriptions to the *Militant* and several also bought books on special for subscrib-

ers. (See ad on page 3.)

Through the course of the subscription campaign, which runs through Oct. 28, supporters of the *Militant* in the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand will be bringing the working-class paper to doorsteps, actions of labor resistance and social protests.

Carwash workers who recently won representation by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union were part of the New York Labor Day march. Workers at nine car washes have voted to unionize

Continued on page 3

Quebec: Workers framed up for rail disaster win union support

BY ANNETTE KOURI
AND NICOLAS GAGNON

LAC-MÉGANTIC, Quebec — Many working people here back the United Steelworkers union’s defense of workers framed up by the railway bosses and the Canadian government for the deadly July 6, 2013, train explosion that killed 47 people in this

ernment agency that regulates rail, sea and air transportation; and on the locomotive engineer.

Transport Canada continues to deny any responsibility and pins the blame on three rail employees. The three were arrested May 12, charged with 47 counts of “criminal negligence causing death.” They face possible life sentences. Engineer Thomas Harding and rail controller Richard Labrie are members of the Steelworkers union. The third, Jean Demaitre, was manager of train operations.

The train, with 72 tank cars laden with an explosive mixture of crude oil, was parked about seven miles above Lac Mégantic. After a fire broke out on a locomotive, firemen shut down the lead engine, which slowly released

Continued on page 6

town. Instead, they blame the bosses’ drive for profit and the resulting disregard for the safety of rail workers and those who live near the tracks.

The Transportation Safety Board, a federal-government agency that investigates transportation “accidents,” issued a report Aug. 19 placing blame for the disaster on the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway company; on Transport Canada, the gov-

**ONLY WORKERS CONTROL
CAN ENSURE SAFETY!**

— Editorial, p. 9

**Another US gov’t covert
anti-Cuba program exposed**
— see article, page 4

Ukraine gov’t says Moscow starts pullback after cease-fire

BY JOHN STUDER

A cease-fire in eastern Ukraine was announced Sept. 5 by Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and Russian President Vladimir Putin a week after Moscow launched an incursion to prop up embattled separatist units of the so-called People’s Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk.

“According to the latest information I have received from our intelligence, 70 percent of Russian troops have been moved back across the border,” Poroshenko said in a televised address to his cabinet Sept. 10.

He said his government was also working on a bill that would assign “special status” to parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk provinces currently under separatist control, but

Continued on page 6

Kurds battle Islamic State as US widens strikes in Iraq

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

For several weeks, Kurdish forces have been pushing back Islamic State forces in northern Iraq and in the process strengthening their fight for a homeland. At the same time, the Barack Obama administration is expanding military operations in an escalating war that has also drawn in Baghdad, sectarian Shiite militias and Tehran into the battle against Islamic State.

Peshmerga, the army of the Kurdish Regional Government of Iraq, recaptured the strategically important Mount Zartak Sept. 6. The mountain overlooks a plain that stretches to the Iraqi city of Mosul, which the reactionary Islamic State forces overran in June. Its capture is not only impor-

Continued on page 4

Fast-food workers: ‘It’s not just wages, we need a union’



Militant/Eric Simpson

Fast-food workers in some 150 cities joined Sept. 4 protests. Above, action in Oakland, Calif.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Fast-food workers together with union staff and other supporters protested in 150 cities across the United States Sept. 4 demanding a minimum wage of “\$15 an hour and a union.”

Among the demonstrators were stalwarts of the organizing campaign, first-time protesters and passersby who joined in.

The protests were organized by the Service Employees International Union. In New York City, hundreds of demonstrators started out with a picket line in front of the McDonald’s restaurant near Times Square. They rallied later in the day and then marched through midtown to another McDonald’s.

“A friend of mine I used to work with at a McDonald’s in Kansas City,

Missouri, called me and said I had to get involved, that it’s for real,” said Ashley Wiluy, 26, during the afternoon march. She has worked at a Mc-

Continued on page 5

On the Picket Line
— page 5

**Rally backs Teamsters’ strike
at Chicago moving company**

**Railcar workers reject contract
at Ontario Bombardier plant**

**San Francisco Hyatt workers
fight for union recognition**

Scotland independence debate in UK driven by divisions among capitalists

BY PETE CLIFFORD

EDINBURGH, Scotland — After months of public debate, a high turnout is expected in Scotland for the Sept. 18 vote on whether the country should separate from the United Kingdom. In response to a recent poll indicating a slight lead for independence, the British pound took its steepest dive in more than a year.

The competing pro-independence and “Better Together” campaigns are backed by rival factions of the ruling class, both appealing to the “Scottish people” for support. But neither side has anything to offer working people — Scottish or otherwise — who share common interests and concerns throughout the U.K.

The referendum is the initiative of the Scottish National Party, the governing party in the Scottish Parliament led by Alex Salmond.

The SNP announced Aug. 28 the endorsement of the “yes” campaign by 200 business leaders, who promise a road to economic prosperity. “An independent Scotland will recognize entrepreneurs small and large as the real wealth and job creators of the nation’s economic future,” the letter from the 200 said.

Tony Banks, chairman of Business for Scotland, commented, “Our members know Scotland’s balance sheet is relatively stronger than the U.K.’s.”

The factionalism is driven in part by sharpening rivalries that grow out of the worldwide slowdown of capitalist production and trade. Among the key issues is access to tax revenue from North Sea oil. “It’s Scotland’s oil,” declares the Scottish National Party.

The three main parties of British capitalism — Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrats — are united behind the “no” campaign, concerned that the breakup would accelerate the decline of British imperialism.

“Continued union offers greater certainty and stability for our business,” Ian King, chief executive of aerospace giant BAE Systems, said in March, voicing the majority sentiment of the British ruling class.

Salmond has said that an independent Scotland would retain its membership in NATO, keep the

Queen as head of state, seek EU membership and keep the pound sterling as its currency.

More than economic questions are at stake. “For the second military power in the West to shatter this year would be cataclysmic in geopolitical terms,” former NATO Secretary-General George Robertson, a Scot, said in a speech in Washington earlier this year.

The pro-independence section of the Scottish bourgeoisie and meritocratic layers beholden to them have lost interest in maintaining the military power necessary to defend the interests of British imperialism in the world and believe they can do fine without it. The independence campaign has called for the removal of Trident nuclear submarines from their base in Faslane, Scotland, in coming years. While the United Kingdom’s ruling families insist on control over strategic nuclear weapons in the event of a breakup, the prospect of relocation presents political and military problems for them.

In a TV debate, Salmond railed against benefit and health care cuts imposed by London and used the government cuts as a club against Alistair Darling, a former Labour chancellor of the exchequer and head of the “Better Together” campaign.

Meanwhile, the SNP-led government itself has been chipping away at health care and other social gains in Scotland, alongside their counterparts throughout the U.K. “Look at the cuts in my local hospital St Johns in Livingston,” said Leo Thomson, a health care worker and former coal miner.

While the pro-independence campaign is dressed up in appeals to Scottish nationalism, national sentiments or grievances are much less a factor among workers and farmers than they have been in decades past. Instead, most working people are approaching the referendum from the point of view of how its outcome may affect their living standards and working conditions, under attack by the bosses and their government.

“A ‘yes’ vote would mean all the wealth would be taken out of the hands of Westminster,” said Jamie Devlin, a pest control worker from Glasgow. “It’s not about the SNP, but the Scottish people. Independence will open up change.”

“I am taking home



Control of North Sea oil is among driving forces behind Scottish National Party independence call. “It’s Scotland’s oil,” party argues.

£30 [\$48] per week less now than two years ago and I’m working harder on 10-hour shifts,” said Jacek Kawaleca, one of 1,700 workers, many Polish, who were laid off in February last year when the Halls meat factory in Broxburn closed. Kawaleca, who is now working at a nearby meat plant, said he hadn’t decided how to vote, but feared greater uncertainty with independence.

Retired worker John Murray said he’d vote “no” because he didn’t want to risk losing his state pension.

Meanwhile, what workers have in common throughout the U.K. is brought into sharper focus by initial stirrings of labor resistance. On July 24, for example, 900 workers downed tools the day Prime Minister David Cameron was due to visit the Total oil company construction site for a new gas plant in the Shetlands, a group of islands 100 miles north of the Scottish mainland. Since November 2013, when 47 workers were briefly locked out, there have been ongoing protests by the workers seeking extra pay for housing and travel time.

Last October Salmond helped lead a campaign by oil bosses to pressure workers at the Grangemouth refinery into accepting a no-strike pledge under threat of a lockout and permanent closure.

We need “better than we have now, but we’d be no better off with a ‘yes’ vote and Salmond,” said Linda McKay from Cranhill in Glasgow, who receives disability benefits.

THE MILITANT

Protest killings, brutality by police

The capitalist rulers organize police forces to protect their interests and keep working people “in their place.” From Ferguson, Missouri; to Staten Island, New York; to Chicago and the U.K.; the ‘Militant’ covers fights against cop brutality, killings and frame-ups.



Militant/Brian Williams
Thousands rally Aug. 23 in Staten Island, N.Y., against cop killing of Eric Garner.

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'Militant,' workers' fights

Continued from front page since the WASH New York campaign started two years ago.

Many New York-area airline contract workers won a \$1 an hour raise this year after protests, bringing their wages to \$9 an hour or more, but JetBlue has refused to go along with the raise. JetBlue workers took part in the parade, marching in the Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ contingent.

Also marching in the SEIU contingent were fast-food workers, some of whom had taken part in the Sept. 4 national day of actions for \$15 per hour and a union.

Workers at Mrs. Green's Natural Market in Mt. Kisco, New York, who make between \$8 and \$10 per hour, are planning to resume their organizing drive next month in their fight for a union and higher wages, said Aly Waddy, director of organizing for United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1500 in Westbury, New York. As a result of a fight that included picketing from January to July, "eight workers fired for their support for the union drive have won reinstatement and back wages," said Waddy. But the store has been cutting workers' hours to punish them for their union activity, she said.

"In Yonkers we have fought for day laborers to receive unpaid wages owed them by bosses," said Janet Hernández, wife of a UFCW organizer marching in the UFCW contingent. Hernández works through Catholic Charities with Obreros Unidos de Yonkers (United Workers of Yonkers), an organization of

some 300 day laborers who gather every morning seeking work from construction contractors. "There are many day laborers' organizations in the New York area," Hernández said, "and the different groups are sending representatives to a conference this month." Hernández, who subscribed to the *Militant*, suggested the paper cover the conference.

"We're trying to organize more grocery workers," said Glenroy Alexander, who works in a group home for mentally disabled and is a UFCW organizer. He had signed up for a *Militant* subscription after meeting supporters of the paper a week earlier at the West Indian Day Parade in Brooklyn. This time he bought a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, one of nine books on special for subscribers.

Construction worker subscribes

Sharon Lessington was marching in the large Laborers International Union of North America contingent. She has been a construction worker for 30 years. "At first I was one of the few, but now there are a lot more women in construction," said Lessington, who got a *Militant* subscription.

Trade unionists Rachele Fruit and John Benson brought the *Militant* with them when they joined a Sept. 4 rally in Atlanta of fast-food workers and their supporters demanding \$15 an hour and a union. They met Eddie Foreman, 40, a McDonald's worker from Opelika, Georgia, who drove 100 miles to the rally with four others. They also met Judy Johnson, a member of American

March in Detroit protests Israeli assault on Gaza



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

DETROIT — Some 250 people marched Aug. 31 to protest Israel's assault on Gaza, which ended Aug. 26. Many participants were taking part in the conference of the Islamic Society of North America here. Others came from the nearby Muslim community of Dearborn, Michigan.

— ILONA GERSH

Postal Workers Union Local 32, who had subscribed to the *Militant* at a picket line at Staples. Johnson said the fight against the union-busting effort to run mini-post offices in Staples' stores is not over. "We are picketing in front of two or three Staples a day," she said.

Rail worker Glenn Gales, a member of the Transportation Communications International Union, went to a recent protest in the Washington, D.C., area against the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. "Two

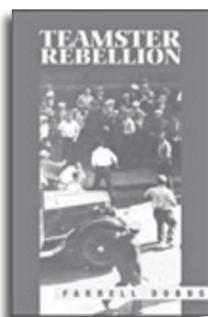
supporters of the *Militant* from D.C., went to Ferguson to join the protests," Gales said, "and the Militant Labor Forum tonight was canceled so that attendees like me could go to the Michael Brown rally."

Ray Parsons, an electrician in Albany, New York, a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and long-time reader of the *Militant*, said he went to an IBEW picnic Sept. 6 where a new *Militant* subscriber, David Ward, introduced Parsons to co-workers involved in a large construction project in nearby Malta, where a worker died in June while installing an air conditioning unit. After discussion, three signed up for the socialist paper.

Mary Martin and John Naubert knocked on the door of Christian Schmorhun, a coffee shop worker, who renewed his subscription for the second time. "I've been feeling complacent without the *Militant* for the past few weeks since my subscription expired," he told them. "I especially like the coverage on Ukraine," adding his family has Ukrainian roots. "The *Militant* is the source of news I tend to trust on all these developments."

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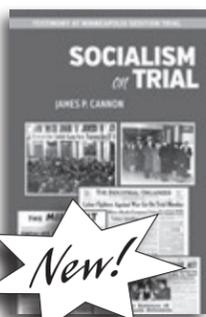


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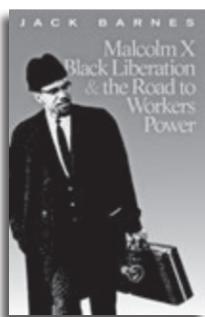
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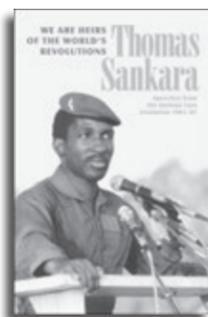
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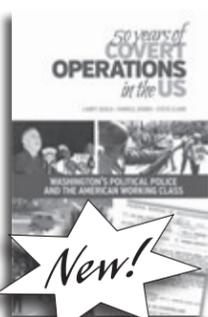
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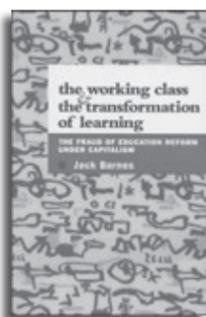
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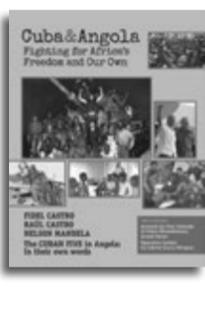
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Kurds battle Islamic State

Continued from front page
tant for defense of the increasingly autonomous Kurdistan, Kurdish elite commander Gene Aziz Oweisi told BBC, but “for the Iraqis it’s important too because it’s a step towards taking back Mosul.” The ground operation was assisted by U.S. airstrikes.

The following day the U.S. military expanded its airstrikes into Anbar province near the Haditha Dam, about 150 miles northwest of Baghdad, repelling attempted advances by Islamic State forces. Since Aug. 8, the Pentagon has conducted more than 140 airstrikes over the past month.

The Pentagon plans to widen U.S. airstrikes in northern and western Iraq and step up efforts to train, advise and equip the Iraqi military under its new centralized government, as well as to provide limited aid to Kurdish fighters.

As for dealing with the Islamic State’s base of operations in Syria, “It may take a year, it may take two years, it may take three years,” said Secretary of State John Kerry at a NATO meeting in Newport, Wales, Sept. 5. “But we’re determined it has to happen.”

Meanwhile, toilers in Syria continue to bear the brunt of a three-and-a-half-year civil war with murderous brutality inflicted on civilians by forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad; Islamic State, which controls one-third of the country’s territory; and other formations.

At the NATO meeting Kerry and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel met with government officials from Britain, France, Germany, Canada, Australia, Turkey, Italy, Poland and Denmark, all of which agreed to back the fight against the Islamic State. On Sept. 8, the 22-member Arab League voted to combat Islamic State forces, though it didn’t explicitly back U.S. military action.

The Canadian government in early September dispatched several dozen military advisers to Iraq to work with

the nearly 1,200 U.S. military personnel in the country, which include special operations forces based in the Kurdish city of Erbil.

London, Paris and Berlin announced they were sending much-needed military equipment to Peshmerga, but little has arrived yet at the front, reported Kurdish news agency Rudaw. Planes carrying military aid are required to first land in Baghdad for inspection before being rerouted to Erbil.

While Tehran is not officially included on Washington’s emerging “coalition” list, both governments are backing the Shiite-dominated government in Baghdad. And while neither the U.S. nor Iranian rulers want to see the establishment of an independent Kurdistan, both are providing some aid to Kurdish forces. When Islamic State forces overran some towns in Iraqi Kurdistan in early August, the Iranian government “was the first state to help us” with weapons and equipment, Kurdish Regional Government President Massoud Barzani told Agence France-Presse.

The Kurds are an oppressed nationality of some 30 million people living in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. They’ve been denied a homeland since the carving up of the Middle East by London and Paris following World War I.

Kurds from Iran also joined the battles alongside Iraqi Kurdish forces. Members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) from Turkey continue to fight under Peshmerga command. The Islamic State combatants “are very scared of death because they are only here to kill people,” Felice Budak, 24, one of a sizeable number of female PKK combatants told *Stars and Stripes*. “I don’t mind doing it over and over again. I’ve already fought in Turkey, Iran and Syria.”

Efforts by Iraq’s new Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to form a government have been fraught with conflict over the rights of Kurds in the autonomous Kurdistan region in north-



Reuters/Ahmed Jadallah

Kurdish Peshmerga troops in Iraq take up position at Khazir front line leading to Mosul, Sept. 7.

ern Iraq. Earlier this year Baghdad stopped paying wages to KRG employees in retaliation for Kurds independently exporting oil through Turkish ports. One such Kurdish tanker with some 1 million barrels of crude has been waiting off the Texas coast since late July while Baghdad wages a court battle to gain control of it.

Origin of ‘Islamic State’

The Islamic State has grown by taking advantage of resentments among Sunnis over discrimination and marginalization under the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government of former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki after the U.S.-led invasion overthrew Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Much of the Islamic State’s core military leadership is drawn from Baathist Party military officers who served under Hussein. Other components include foreign Islamist zealots and fighters from Arab Sunni tribes from Syria and Iraq. In Iraq, for example, members of the Dulaim tribe, comprising 3 million people, held anti-government rallies in 2012. Maliki cracked down on them, leading the tribe to revolt. Eventually many came to back the offensive waged by

Islamic State.

The civil war in Syria began as a popular rebellion in March 2011 against Assad’s repressive rule. Raqqa was the first of Syria’s 14 provincial capitals to be liberated by the Free Syrian Army opposition coalition. Residents formed community groups to support the rebellion, including women’s rights organizations.

The city was heavily bombed by Assad forces, and the Free Syrian Army, which received next to no outside aid, came under fire by anti-Assad Islamist forces that got aid from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies. Islamic State forces, backed by pledges of allegiance from 14 Raqqa clans, took control of the city in November 2013 and much of the surrounding province since then.

As Islamic State was tightening its grip in July 2013, some 300 Raqqa residents took to the streets to protest the group’s kidnapping of oppositionist Feras Al Haj Saleh.

“The overwhelming proportion of civilians are opposed to the Islamic State, and more than half of those are more than against it, they are outraged,” said Raqqa resident Jimmy Shahinian, 25, last August, according to the Syria Deeply website. But “ISIS has the guns.”

Another US covert anti-Cuba program exposed

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The U.S. government carried out a clandestine program from 2009 to 2011 that recruited young Latin Americans to go to Cuba and make contacts through cultural and social activities with hopes of organizing opposition to Cuba’s socialist revolution.

The Associated Press reported Aug. 4 that the U.S. Agency for International Development hired Creative Associates International, a company based in Washington, D.C., to send nearly a dozen young people from Costa Rica, Peru and Venezuela to engage in social activities and to “identify potential social-change actors.”

Creative Associates recruited Fernando Murillo, the 29-year-old head of a “human rights” group in Costa Rica, and sent him to Santa Clara, Cuba, in 2010 to infiltrate a group of artists and musicians called Revolution. Murillo suggested the group organize a series of seminars to attract volunteers, including one on HIV prevention. In this way, Murillo and other operatives aimed to meet Cubans they could encourage to organize against the Cuban government.

When Manuel Barbosa, 25, a disc jockey and a leader of Revolution, found

out Murillo was a provocateur, he was angry. “We didn’t belong to the youth group [Union of Young Communists] or the [Communist] party, but we were revolutionaries,” he said.

Barbosa said the idea of a workshop on HIV struck him as “stupid” in Cuba, which has one of the lowest incidents of HIV infection in the world, one-sixth the rate of the U.S. “We’re practically born with a condom in our hand. We’re taught all the ways to protect ourselves on television and in the schools, and HIV/AIDS isn’t a health problem in Santa Clara.” But, he added, Murillo promised money for their project, and the theme was “noble,” so they went ahead with it.

Creative Associates also hired Zaimar Castillo, a young Venezuelan lawyer, and two others, to go to Cuba under the guise of visiting friends. The trio hung out in university dormitories in Santa Clara and cultivated friendships with students, looking to stir up dissatisfaction with the Cuban government, which for more than five decades has represented the political power of workers and farmers.

USAID, which operates under the veil of “humanitarian” missions around

the world, is an arm of the State Department with a history of organizing activities aimed at destabilizing the Cuban Revolution. Alan Gross, a former USAID contractor, was arrested in Cuba in 2009, convicted as a U.S. spy and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Creative Associates International, under USAID direction, was instrumental in the creation of a “Cuban Twitter” project, which was exposed by AP in April. The company’s operatives started a social network called ZunZuneo, designed to attract tens of thousands of Cuban youth with free text messaging with “non-controversial content,” later introducing encouragement to organize anti-government activities. The program, discontinued in 2012, was an embarrassing flop that only fueled widespread distrust of Washington.

“The U.S. government should once and for all end its subversive, illegal and undercover actions against Cuba, which violate our sovereignty and the will expressed by the Cuban people to perfect our economic and social model and to consolidate our democracy,” said Josefina Vidal, Cuban Foreign Ministry Director for North America, in an Aug. 5 statement.

NEW INTERNATIONAL

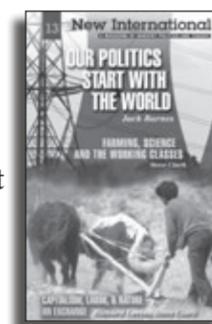
A MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY

Capitalism “reproduces its social relations as a condition of producing its profits. ... Its workings, its blind methods of functioning, keep grinding toiling humanity into the ground.” — Jack Barnes



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ON THE PICKET LINE

Rally backs Teamsters on strike against Chicago moving company

SKOKIE, Ill. — About 150 people rallied at Golan's Moving and Storage, Inc. here Aug. 30 in support of 75 Teamsters union members who went on strike July 27, during peak moving season.

In December, workers voted 62-11 to join Teamsters Local 705 and have been trying to negotiate a contract with wage increases and improved work conditions ever since. Union officials said the company has repeatedly canceled negotiating sessions.

According to workers at the rally, about 14 drivers have crossed the picket line, half after the company met with them individually and gave them wage increases.

"The company steals our wages by making us show up at 6:30 a.m. to get our trucks ready, but we don't get paid until around 8 a.m. when we arrive at the customer's house," striker Martin Cortez told the rally. "When we drive between jobs, we don't get paid either. We don't get a lunch break."

"We have many reasons to be on strike," Javier Torres told the crowd. "We have no benefits. We don't get paid vacations. We don't get any bonuses."

"There is strength in unity and we will be on strike until we get a fair contract," added striker Omar Torres.

Other speakers included represen-

tatives of several area locals of the American Federation of Teachers; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 31; two Service Employees International Union locals; Chicago Federation of Labor; and Teamsters Local 705.

"This is my first time doing anything like this," Jaleel Smith, who started working at Golan's two months before the strike began, told the *Militant*. "It feels good standing up for something, for everybody here. It gives me a sense we can change things for others."

"Everybody was here when I arrived," said Silvio Radu, describing the start of the walkout on a video posted on the *Skokie Review* website. He was hired at Golan's a month ago. "All the people that work hard and that you can trust when you work with them, when you have to pick up something heavy. Everybody was here. So these are the people I trust."

— Dan Fein and Laura Anderson

Railcar workers reject contract at Ontario Bombardier plant

CALGARY, Alberta — A month and a half into their strike, at Bombardier's Thunder Bay, Ontario, plant 81 percent of railcar manufacturing workers voted down the company's latest contract offer Aug. 26. Some 751 out of a workforce of 900 cast ballots.

Fast-food workers: \$15 and union

Continued from front page

Donald's since moving to New York seven months ago. "I have three kids. I need a raise. Everyone has a life to live."

"Ashley told me about the protest," said Danny Nyre, 25, who works at Taco Bell, at the march. "I just had to come. It's going to have a big impact being seen by a lot of people."

Nyre said some co-workers asked him if he was worried about getting fired. "I tell them it's my civil right to protest," he said.

When asked about statements by fast-food restaurant owners that they can't afford to pay \$15 an hour, Nyre said, "That's just BS. Life is different for them than for us."

"We work eight hours a day with no breaks," Carlton Warren, who works at Jack in the Box, said at a 5 a.m. rally outside the restaurant in Houston. "There are people who have worked here 14 years and still get \$7.25 an hour."

"Conditions are bad," Luz Meza, who works at Burger King, said at the Houston rally. "The equipment doesn't work and the ventilation is no good. I got burned and the boss said to put mustard on it. One worker got cut and there were no Band-Aids. There's no sick, vacation or holiday pay."

In the Chicago area, nearly 300 people demonstrated in the rain at a McDonald's in the Cicero neighborhood.

"I earn \$8.25 an hour, which is not enough to pay bills," said Liyah Earl, 19, a worker at McDonald's.

"It's not just higher wages, but the right to a union," Rhonesha Victor told the Oakland, California, rally. "If you only get two hours of work, what's the use? That's why we need union protection." Victor works at KFC/Taco Bell.

In many cities, including New York, Detroit, Chicago, Las Vegas, and Lit-

tle Rock, Arkansas, some of the demonstrators sat down in the streets near the restaurants and were arrested in an act of symbolic disobedience.

Restaurant bosses did not like the protests.

"Doubling wages, how is that even a rational conversation?" complained Rob Green, executive director of the National Council of Chain Restaurants, in a statement calling the actions "disturbing" and "irresponsible."

Dan Fein in Chicago, Eric Simpson in Oakland, and Debbie Lyons in Houston contributed to this article.



Militant/Dan Fein

"It feels good standing up for something," said Jaleel Smith, a striker at Golan's Moving and Storage in Chicago. Workers say company doesn't pay for waiting time or benefits.

Two hundred workers protested in front of Thunder Bay City Hall the day before the vote.

"Bombardier thought that members would accept the offer because the union's bargaining committee was being 'too hard,'" Unifor Local 1075 President Dominic Pasqualino said by phone. "It's the same offer as before. They still want to divide the workers by

imposing a much weaker pension plan on the new employees. The only difference is that they give us a few more nickels on the wages."

— Félix Vincent Ardea

San Francisco Hyatt workers fight for union recognition

SAN FRANCISCO — Hundreds of workers marched through downtown Sept. 1 to back the fight for union recognition at the Hyatt Fisherman's Wharf hotel.

Members of UNITE HERE Local 2 have won union contracts at the overwhelming majority of hotels here. Hyatt Fisherman's Wharf and Le Meridien have been holdouts.

"Hotels workers have to support each other," Alberto Caamal, a server at Hotel Vitale, said during the Labor Day march. Hotel Vitale workers have been waging a fight against management demands to cut benefits. "Workers from other hotels supported our struggle," Caamal said. "So I'm here today."

— Betsy Stone



Militant/Jenny Kahn

Sept. 1 march backed fight by San Francisco Hyatt Fisherman's Wharf workers for union recognition.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 22, 1989

DETROIT TO CASTLEWOOD, Va. — "This is unionism at its best, brother. Join us!" explained the driver of the car leading the 204-car caravan organized by Region 1-A of the United Auto Workers union in Detroit.

"We're going to Castlewood, Virginia, to stand together with the striking coal miners," he would add over the CB radio in response to questions from passing truckers.

The caravan carrying more than 600 Detroit unionists made its way across Ohio and West Virginia into Virginia where members of the United Mine Workers of America have been on strike against Pittston Coal since April.

"No matter where you work — whether it's in a parts plant or in a mine — or what part of the country you live in, you have the same problems," said a Detroit auto worker, explaining why he drove to Virginia.



September 21, 1964

After high-level conferences with General Maxwell Taylor, "our man in Saigon," President Johnson told the nation Sept. 9 that U.S. policy in South Vietnam was enjoying "continued progress." A few days later Saigon underwent its fourth major governmental crisis in a year as General Lam Van Phat tried unsuccessfully to oust the U.S. favorite, Gen. Nguyen Khanh.

The notorious political instability in Saigon reflects the extreme unpopularity of U.S. sponsored regimes in South Vietnam. Washington carries out its thinly disguised intervention in that country's civil war through a gang of corrupt generals and politicians who have no popular support whatsoever. Their various factions, equally hated by the mass of the people, spend most of their energy intriguing against each other for Uncle Sam's support — and his pay checks.



September 20, 1939

NEW YORK — The struggle of East Coast seamen to obtain extra compensation for shipping in war zones received a tremendous boost over the weekend when 46 British sailors joined in the strike that has already tied up six ships.

This display of international solidarity was cheered by 200 American seamen who gathered around.

The British sailors had been hired by the Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey to work on two tankers carrying oil to British ports.

When company busses arrived to take the men on board the ships, a warm discussion on war compensation developed. Out of the 66 present, 46 decided not to sail. They are members of National Union of Seamen of the United Kingdom. They had been hired for \$37.50 a month. Following conferences with officials of the National Maritime Union, the British seamen decided to ask for \$85 a month.

Kiev-Moscow cease-fire

Continued from front page

pledged that they would remain part of Ukraine.

Though Putin denies Moscow's direct involvement, the invasion and supply of heavy weapons are widely confirmed by workers and combatants in Ukraine, as well as by relatives of soldiers, veterans' groups and others inside Russia.

The pro-Moscow forces reneged on an agreement to allow a safe corridor for encircled Ukrainian troops in Ilovaik to withdraw Aug. 29. As the Ukrainian troops left they were attacked and hundreds were killed, wounded or taken prisoner.

The Russian troops "don't take risks. They see us and bomb in a square," Panzer, a Ukraine volunteer fighter south of Ilovaik, told the *New York Times*. "They bomb everything in that square, our positions, a village, homes, everything. We can do nothing; we don't have artillery."

While pro-Moscow forces pushed Kiev's forces back, Ukrainian troops still control a number of eastern cities recently taken from separatists, including Slovansk and Kramatorsk.

Russian troops move south

The Russian regime also sent military units across the southern border, seizing Novoazovsk, opening the possibility of future moves on Mariupol, a port city of half a million and home of the Ilyich iron and steel mill, which employs 27,000 workers.

"We are maintaining production, while people are shooting at each other only kilometers away," Alexander Ilarionov, a smelter production manager, told Reuters, saying that the workers are prepared to defend the plant and the city.

Moscow's intervention in Ukraine

faces opposition in Russia from both working people and a substantial section of the country's capitalist ruling class.

Lev Shlosberg, publisher of *Pskovskaya Gubernia* in western Russia, was brutally attacked and hospitalized after he began investigations into the deaths of dozens of soldiers from Pskov, Russia, who were sent to Ukraine.

The paper printed a recorded conversation between Russian troops in Ukraine in which a soldier says that 80 Russian troops were killed by shelling Aug. 20.

The body of Anton Tumanov, 20, was delivered Aug. 20 to his mother, Elena Tumanova, in Kozmodemyansk, Russia. He was killed in battle in Snizhne, Ukraine, east of Donetsk.

Tumanov joined the Russian army in June, after searching for months for a job. He worked temporary jobs in construction and at a car plant in Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod, but couldn't find steady work, his mother told *Novaya Gazeta*.

"God forbid, they'll send you to Ukraine," I told him," Tumanova said. "He told me the army wouldn't be sent to Ukraine."

Members of his unit, the 18th Motor Rifle Brigade, formation 27777, were sent to Ukraine disguised as Ukraine separatists, Tumanov's fellow soldiers told his mother. Tumanov was one of 120 killed and 450 wounded Aug. 12.

"No to war in Ukraine!" and "Let us not allow Afghanistan 2.0!" read the signs carried by veterans of the Russian war in Afghanistan in Bryansk, near the border with Belarus.

"How will we look the Ukrainians in the eyes if the war ends tomorrow," said Vladimir Barabanov, who served in Afghanistan from 1986 to 1988 and is head



Opponents of Russian intervention in Ukraine protest in St. Petersburg, Russia, Aug. 30. Placard reads, "The Soldiers' Mothers are not foreign agents." Russian officials slandered Mothers as foreign agents after group publicized list of more than 100 Russian soldiers killed in Ukraine.

of the Bezhitsky district Afghanistan veterans' organization.

The Russian Anti-War Movement, formed in Moscow in late August, issued a statement Sept. 6 pointing to the growing number of soldiers who have died in Ukraine "that the government takes pains to cover up" and urging the soldiers' mothers to speak out.

"This bloody war is not being waged for the 'Russian world,' as the Kremlin propagandists try to convince us," the group said. "It is being waged to punish the people of Ukraine who rose up against Yanukovich the thief." Viktor Yanukovich, former pro-Moscow president of Ukraine, was brought down in February by mass demonstrations and street battles, known as the Maidan, the name of the square in Kiev where the actions were centered.

Putin sees czarist continuity

Moscow's intervention in Ukraine has been backed by both ultra-right and petty-bourgeois leftists, ranging from

Marie Le Pen's National Front in France to the Workers World Party in the U.S. At the same time, Putin has made it clear that he sees his actions in Ukraine in continuity with the imperial invasions and wars of Russia's czarist rulers.

In a speech to the Seliger 2014 10th National Youth Forum in Tver, Russia, Aug. 29, the Russian president attacked V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party for the overthrow of the czar and leading the workers, farmers and soldiers to power in 1917. "In the First World War, the Bolsheviks wished to see their Fatherland defeated," Putin said. "And while the heroic Russian soldiers shed their blood on the fronts in World War I, some were shaking Russia from within and shook it to the point that Russia as a state collapsed. ... This was a complete betrayal of national interests."

Tatars active in politics in Crimea have faced harassment since the peninsula was forcibly annexed by Moscow in March. Most Crimean Tatars, who, as an entire people were rounded up by the regime of Joseph Stalin and deported to Kazakhstan and Siberia in Russia in the 1940s, are strong opponents of Moscow's occupation.

Leaders of the Tatar Mejlis (council) have been special targets of the Russian secret police and Crimean authorities. Moscow banned former Mejlis central leader Mustafa Dzhemilev from entering his Crimean homeland for five years in April. About 100 Tatars who blocked roads in May protesting Moscow's refusal to allow Dzhemilev into the country were slapped with fines. Some now face criminal investigations for "extremist behavior."

On Sept. 4, 15 riot and local cops showed up at the homes of several families in the Nizhnegorsk district, claiming they were searching for weapons and drugs, but only confiscating books and religious literature.

Since Russia took over, Crimean authorities have also searched schools, looking for titles on a list of more than 2,000 books that are banned in Russia.

On Sept. 9 a half dozen plainclothes cops entered the boarding school for gifted students in Tankove, heading straight for the library. They seized three books and wandered around the school demanding that all Crimean Tatar national symbols be taken down.

That same day 30-40 students gathered on the steps of the Crimean Industrial Pedagogical University and sang the Ukraine national anthem in protest against the appearance of the speaker of the Moscow-imposed Crimea State Council.

Quebec: Workers framed for rail disaster

Continued from front page

the train's air brakes. The hand brakes then failed and the train rolled downhill, gathering speed before derailling and exploding in the center of town.

The Transportation Safety Board noted earlier in the year that the rail company had filled out documents claiming the crude in the tank cars was a less explosive grade of oil than it was. The board also noted that all the tank cars on the train were an older model, known to be vulnerable to explosions.

Transport Canada allowed Montreal,

Maine and Atlantic Railway to use the older cars in deference to company complaints that buying safer cars would cut into its profit margins. For the same reason Transport Canada gave the company permission to operate its oil trains with a single-person crew.

According to the Safety Board, transportation of crude oil by train in Canada has increased from about 500 carloads in 2009 to 160,000 in 2013. Yet the number of rail inspectors has remained the same since 2004.

In an Aug. 19 statement, the day the

safety board's latest report was released, Steelworker officials said, "It is time to stop using workers as the scapegoats."

The union-sponsored Justice for USW Rail Workers fund has received more than \$120,000 from 10 Steelworker locals, as well as the Quebec branch of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

Militant supporters from Montreal and Quebec visited Lac-Mégantic Aug. 17 and spoke with many in the town's working-class neighborhoods. Many spoke of Harding as a hero because they say he risked his life after the derailment to uncouple five cars that had not yet caught fire, averting a larger disaster.

The Red Cross collected more than \$15 million from across Quebec, but residents criticized the arbitrary manner of the aid distribution. "Because I had not lost my apartment — I was able to move back in after one month — and I was able to find another job, even though it was a seasonal job and did not last that long, I was cut off from any further help from the Red Cross," Julie Lessard, who had worked at Dollarama, which was destroyed by the fire, told the *Militant*.

The explosion site, which is still contaminated, cuts the town in two, forcing a four-mile detour for many residents going to work or to shop.

Donations for the defense of Harding and Labrie can be made at www.justice4USWrailworkers.org.



Bosses' profit drive superseded safety of rail workers and those who live near tracks, leading to July 6, 2013, oil-train derailment that killed 47 people in town of Lac-Mégantic, Quebec.

Iran Book News Agency reviews titles on Cuban 5

Below are reviews by the Iran Book News Agency of *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five and I Will Die the Way I've Lived*. The books were published in Iran by Talaye Porsoo, which translated the Pathfinder books of the same titles into Farsi from English. The semiofficial news agency published the reviews together July 22 under the headline "I Will Die the Way I've Lived: Paintings by a Cuban who ended up in U.S. prisons." Translation of the review is by the Militant.

Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five and *I Will Die the Way I've Lived* are the most recent books published by Talaye Porsoo. They are recent additions to other books by the publisher on the Cuban Five, focusing on the life and stories of the Five in prison.

"Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González, are known to millions worldwide as the Cuban Five, framed up and imprisoned by Washington more than fifteen years ago," explains the back cover of *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five*.

"Their crime? Gathering information for the Cuban government on the plans of murderous Cuban American paramilitary outfits in Florida that for decades have operated with impunity on U.S. soil. Why? To prevent future deadly attacks, in Cuba and the U.S. as well. And they proudly affirm they would do the same again.

"The voices heard here allow us to reach through the bars intended not only to confine the Five but to reduce them to 'convicts' and 'victims.' Their revolutionary integrity, resilience, humanity — and humor — emerge ever more clearly. Above all, we see the respect they've earned among others behind prison walls. And why the same thing is increasingly true among working people across the U.S. who themselves know firsthand the wheels of capitalist 'justice.'"

Chapters in the book include: "Preface," "Friendship with René Changed My Life," "In Prison I Saw Fernando's Spirit of Resistance," "How We Got Out of the 'Hole,'" "Ramón Is Someone You're Proud To Know," "They Offered 'Whatever You Want' — If I Would Become A Traitor," "Salute To Nelson Mandela," "The Torture of Campos," "From the Hole," "In the U.S. Prison System, Just Going To Trial Earns You Respect," "I'll Never Allow Them the Pleasure of Destroying our Family," and "Why Do We Fight for the Five? Because We Are Fighting for Ourselves."

Some of the words published here are tributes by their fellow inmates whose lives were transformed by friendship with one or another of the five Cubans during their time together in prison. Another part consists of articles, poems and messages written by one or another of the Cuban Five themselves. Others are interviews with them, spreading the truth about their prison experiences around the world.

This book is published along with another book that contains 15 high quality watercolor paintings by Antonio Guerrero, with the title *I Will Die the Way I've Lived*, and two other books, *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*, and *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own*. [The latter book has not yet been published in Farsi.]

Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five is translated by Naser Yekta in 104 pages with a run of 1,000 copies and a price of 4,500 tomans [\$1.50]. It is published by Talaye Porsoo.

'I Will Die the Way I've Lived'

I Will Die the Way I've Lived is a collection of 15 paintings that Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five imprisoned in the United States of America, painted in commemoration of the 15th year of their imprison-



Semi-official Iran Book News Agency posted on its website July 22 reviews of *I Will Die the Way I've Lived* and *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five*, both recently published in Farsi.

ment. This collection has been displayed in Cuba, the United States and other countries. The writings in the book describe the atmosphere in which these paintings were created.

Antonio Guerrero learned to paint for the first time while imprisoned in the U.S. prison in Florence, Colorado. His fellow prisoners guided him, and by reading books he became his own teacher.

In the first description by Guerrero about these paintings, we read: "You have to try to do something from the inside out, rather than keep painting from the outside in," insisted Arthur, my brother-in-arms and fellow artist. A photographer and art critic, he told me this after seeing and photographing many of my works.

"I spent several weeks repeating his words to myself and making them mine. Then one day images began to take shape in my mind. I made sketches and then painted them on watercolor paper as colors started

to appear.

"All the images had one thing in common. They recalled the unjust, cruel treatment we received from the very first day of our detention. They portrayed moments during the seventeen months of isolation we survived in the punishment cells of the Federal Detention Center in Miami — the 'hole.' After I finished painting fifteen, I decided to stop. That number coincides with the number of years of captivity we will complete on September 12, 2013."

Below we see some of the paintings of this book.

I Will Die the Way I've Lived: 15 Watercolors by Antonio Guerrero for the 15th Anniversary of the Imprisonment of the Cuban Five in the United States has text by Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and is translated by Naser Yekta in 35 pages, with a run of 1,000 copies and a price of 7,000 tomans [\$2.20]. It is published by Talaye Porsoo.

Who are the Cuban Five?



Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the 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 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, on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government's 1996 shootdown of two Brothers to the Rescue planes 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.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013 and Fernando González on Feb. 28 this year.

UK event backs Cuban 5: 'They are not broken'



Militant/Dag Tirsén

MANCHESTER, England — More than 30 people attended the opening of "I Will Die the Way I've Lived" at the Nexus Art Café here Aug. 14. The exhibit contains 15 watercolors by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five revolutionaries jailed in the United States (see box at left).

Janet Cunliffe, above, a founder of Joint Enterprise, Not Guilty by Association, was a featured speaker. Her son, Jordan Cunliffe, has been locked up in a British prison for the last seven years. He was framed up on murder charges under the Joint Enterprise law, which makes anyone found guilty of being an accomplice or encouraging a violent crime subject to a similar punishment as the perpetrator. Jordan, who suffered from an eye disease that left him legally blind at the time, "did not murder nor witness any murder," she said.

A selection of letters written during the past 13 years by the Cuban Five to Jenni Ford, a member of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, were displayed at the café entrance. "What strikes me is that there is no anger or hatred in those letters," said Steve Boyle, a factory worker who attended the opening. "They are not broken."

— HUGO WILS

Capitalist system dehumanizes and alienates workers

Below is an excerpt from *The Marxist Theory of Alienation* by Ernest Mandel and George Novack. In the book *Mandel (1923-1995), a European leader of the Fourth International, and Novack (1905-1992), a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, explained that alienation is not an eternal condition of humanity, but rather a product of social relations under capitalism that can be overcome with the rise of a working-class fight for power.* Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Under capitalism workers are “dehumanized and degraded to the status of things” and forced to compete for jobs. As they resist bosses’ attacks and build a revolutionary movement to fight for power, they strike at the source of alienation. Above, workers in Honda plant in China. Inset, Chinese Honda workers strike in 2010.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

It is necessary to analyze the economic foundations of capitalist society in order to bring out its characteristic processes of alienation.

(1) Capitalism emerges as a distinct and separate economic formation by wrenching away working people from precapitalist conditions of production. Before capitalism could be established, the mass of direct producers had to be separated from the material means of production and transformed into propertyless proletarians. The processes of expropriation whereby the peasants were uprooted from the land and the social elements fashioned for the wage labor required for capitalist exploitation in Western Europe were summarized

by Marx in Chapter XIX of *Capital*.

(2) However, the alienation of the producers only begins with the primary accumulation of capital; it is continually reproduced on an ever-extended scale once capital takes over industry. Even before he physically engages in the productive process, the wage-worker finds his labor taken away from him by the stipulations of the labor contract. The worker agrees to hand over his labor power to the capitalist in return for the payment of the prevailing wage. The employer is then free to use and exploit this labor as he pleases.

(3) During the productive process, by virtue of the peculiar divisions of labor in capitalist enterprise, all the knowledge, will and direction is concentrated in the capitalist and his superintendents. The worker is converted into a mere physical accessory factor of production. “The capitalist represents the unity and will of the social working body” while the workers who make up that body are “dehumanized” and degraded to the status of things. The plan, the process, and the aim of capitalist production all confront the workers as alien, hostile, dominating powers. The auto workers on the assembly line can testify to the truth of this fact.

(4) At the end of the industrial pro-

cess the product which is its result does not belong to the workers who made it but to the capitalist who owns it. In this way the product of labor is torn from the workers and goes into the market to be sold.

(5) The capitalist market, which is the totality of commodities and money in their circulation, likewise confronts the working class—whether as sellers of their labor power or as buyers of commodities—as an alien power. Its laws of operation dictate how much they shall get for their labor power, whether it is saleable at all, what their living standards shall be.

The world market is the ultimate arbiter of capitalist society. It not only rules over the wage-slaves; it is greater than the most powerful group of capitalists. The overriding laws of the market dominate all classes like uncontrollable forces of nature which bring weal or woe regardless of anyone’s plans or intentions.

(6) In addition to the fundamental antagonism between the exploiters and the exploited, the competition characteristic of capitalism’s economic activities pits the members of both classes against one another. The capitalists strive to get the better of their rivals so that the bigger and more efficient devour the smaller

and less productive.

The workers who go into the labor market to sell their labor power are compelled to buck one another for available jobs. In the shop and factory they are often obliged to compete against one another under the goad of piece-work.

Both capitalists and workers try to mitigate the consequences of their competition by combination. The capitalists set up trusts and monopolies; the workers organize into trade unions. But however much these opposing forms of class organization modify and restrict competition, they cannot abolish it. The competitiveness eliminated from a monopolized industry springs up more violently in the struggles between one aggregation of capital and another. The workers in one craft, category or country are pitted, contrary to their will, against the workers of another.

These economic circumstances generate unbridled individualism, egotism, and self-seeking throughout bourgeois society. The members of this society, whatever their status, have to live in an atmosphere of mutual hostility rather than of solidarity.

Thus the real basis of the forms of alienation within capitalist society is found in the contradictory relations of its mode of production and in the class antagonisms arising from them. ...

These internal social antagonisms are not everlasting. They do not spring from any intrinsic and inescapable evil in the nature of mankind as a species. They were generated by specific historico-social conditions which have been uncovered and can be explained.

Now that humanity has acquired superiority over nature through triumphs of technology and science, the next great step is to gain collective control over the blind forces of society. There is only one conscious agency in present-day life strong enough and strategically placed to shoulder and carry through this imperative task, says Marxism. That is the force of alienated labor incorporated in the industrial working class.

The material means for liberating mankind can be brought into existence only through the world socialist revolution which will concentrate political and economic power in the hands of the working people.

September BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Death row inmate freed after 31 years

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The widely publicized exoneration of a death row inmate convicted of rape and murder 31 years ago has intensified opposition to the death penalty.

Henry McCollum, 50, and his half brother Leon Brown, 46, were convicted in 1983 for the rape and murder of 11-year-old Sabrina Buie. Both were sentenced to death, but Brown's sentence was reduced to life after they won retrials in the early 1990s. A state superior court judge overturned their convictions Sept. 2.

McCollum was 19 and Brown 15 at the time of their trial, in which no physical evidence linking them to the crime was presented. Central to the prosecution's case were confessions from both young men that their attorneys maintain were coerced. Both men are mentally disabled.

The prosecution alleged a cigarette at the crime scene was that of the defendants, but recent tests found the DNA on the cigarette was from Roscoe Artis, who is serving a life sentence for a similar rape and murder of another woman four weeks after Buie was killed.

In addition, the prosecution never gave defense attorneys evidence that called into question their clients' guilt. "I was told that the police file on Henry's case had been lost," Kenneth Rose, McCollum's attorney for the last 20 years, wrote in the Sept. 5 *Charlotte Observer*, "so I could not tell how much evidence police had to ignore to pin this crime on two disabled boys with no history of violence." Prosecutors finally turned over the file this year.

Despite the controversy surrounding the conviction of McCollum and Brown, the case was cited by Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia in 1994 as justification for the death penalty. "How enviable a quiet death by lethal injection compared to that," Scalia wrote, after describing Buie's rape and brutal murder, in a decision declining to review a Texas death-penalty case.

Attorneys for the two men plan to seek pardons. A pardon would allow each to claim up to \$750,000 compensation for wrongful conviction.

After his release, McCollum expressed his support for the 152 men still on death row in North Carolina. While in prison he watched 42 men taken to execution. McCollum himself would likely have been executed if not for a series of lawsuits that have held off North Carolina executions since 2006.

"You've still got innocent people on North Carolina death row," he told the *New York Times*. "You've got some guys who should not have gotten the death penalty. That's wrong. You got to do something about those guys."

Since 1989, 312 people in 36 states have been exonerated through post-conviction DNA testing.

Cruel and unusual punishment

The exoneration of McCollum and Brown comes in a year when several botched lethal-injection executions have made it easier for working people and others to see the death penalty as cruel and unusual punishment, which is banned by the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

In Ohio in January Dennis McGuire died after a 26-minute ordeal involving a new and untested drug "cocktail."

In April in Oklahoma, Clayton Lockett, given a lethal injection, writhed in pain for 43 minutes before he died. A report authorized by Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin stated Sept. 4 that his executioners had botched the insertion of the intravenous needle.

In Arizona in July Joseph Wood gasped for breath for nearly two hours after receiving the same two drugs that had been administered to McGuire.

Since 2009, when the main producer of lethal injection drugs ceased production in the face of growing worldwide opposition, officials in several states have been experimenting with new drug combinations, as well as discussing bringing back the electric chair, firing squads and the gas chamber.

Thirty-nine people were executed in 2013, including 16 in Texas, seven in Florida and six in Oklahoma. Eighteen states and the District of Columbia have abolished the death penalty.

At the beginning of this year, 3,070 people (nearly a quarter of them in California alone) were on death row, compared to 517 in 1968. The figure jumped to 1,050 in 1982, and has been above 3,000 since 1996, the year the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which narrowed the grounds for prisoners to appeal convictions, was signed by President William Clinton.

Earl Ringo Jr. was executed by lethal injection in Missouri Sept. 10, the eighth execution in the state this year.

The 15th Annual March to Abolish the Death Penalty will be held in Houston Oct. 25.

—EDITORIAL—

Only workers control can enforce job safety

Last year's deadly oil train disaster that devastated Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, was not an isolated incident. It's an example of a growing pattern driven by oil and rail barons' thirst for profit as they react to the opportunities of an oil boom and sharpening capitalist competition.

Capitalists' disregard for safety that led to the deaths of 47 people in Lac-Mégantic and the subsequent effort by the bosses and the Canadian government to frame up rail workers underscore the need for working people to bring union power to bear and wrest control of railroad operations. Only the working class puts the lives of workers and those who live near rail lines ahead of profits. And only fighting unions strong enough to bring trains to a halt can put working-class priorities and morals into practice.

With government collusion, rail bosses intentionally hide the volatility of fracked crude and fight tooth and nail to put off safety upgrades that government agencies themselves are demanding. At the same time, rail workers are pressed to work on shrinking crews, take on more responsibilities, run longer trains and work shifts with less downtime. And when something inevitably goes wrong, workers are framed and branded as criminals.

Oil train derailments and volatile shipments through residential areas are rapidly rising. The amount of crude spilled in train accidents last year — 1.15 million gallons — far exceeds the total of the previous five decades.

Passenger train derailments are also increasing. Just last month, two crew members on a Union Pacific freight train in Arkansas were killed in a head-on collision.

Over the past month, workers on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and their families have been protesting demands by bosses, given a green light by some union officials, to reduce the crews on main-line freight trains to one engineer. These protests deserve the support of all working people.

Immediate measures workers and our unions should demand include: reduce train length to 50 cars, reinstitute the eight-hour day with adequate rest, return the caboose to the rear of every train and double the crew size to four — two on the engine and two in the rear.

With a fighting union movement, rail workers could press for control over safety operations and force rail bosses to open their books for public inspection to reveal how they operate and collude with government agencies against us. They could back demands of working farmers across the Midwest, who face a shortage of rail cars to haul their crop to market as rail barons divert the needed cars to more profitable traffic in shale oil.

The owners of the railroads, factories, mines and mills are targeting the living standards, working conditions and safety of all workers. Today we are beginning to see initial stirrings of resistance. Workers can take the moral high ground as the only true defenders of industrial safety and fight for workers control under union power to enforce it. Such a course would win solidarity from working farmers and strengthen our unions as instruments of class combat that champion the interests of all working people and boost their confidence.

Correction

In the article "Hotel Workers in Quebec End Strike after 21 Months," in the "On the Picket Line" column in the Sept. 15 issue, the *Militant* incorrectly reported that the Hotel des Seigneurs workers "voted 90 percent on July 30 to end their 21-month strike, but nonetheless refused to accept the hotel bosses' concession demands." The workers voted 90 percent to reject the bosses' concession demands. At the same time they took down their picket lines, because, as the local president explained, "There's now nothing to negotiate."

—LETTERS—

Thanks for the paper

Thank you for the paper. If I had the extra money I would be happy to pay for it. I just don't have it. Nineteen cents an hour does not go far.

A prisoner
Pennsylvania

'Tells truth loud and clear'

I can't tell you how much I look forward to each new edition of the *Militant*. It is like a banquet for a starving sister or brother. There are so few voices telling the truth today and the *Militant* tells it loud and clear.

I am a retired firefighter paramedic and I was disabled in the line of duty. I had to accept a meager disability pension from our state pension fund. The fund has billions of dollars in it, yet the greedy political lap dogs of the ruling class continue to cut our pensions and benefits at every chance, so that they can give more tax breaks to the corporations and their loathsome capitalist masters. It is up to the *Militant* to inform and inspire workers, farmers, students and all of our oppressed sis-

ters and brothers to rise up and break their chains!

Enclosed is a check for \$100. Please use it for a one-year subscription and whatever is left for subscriptions for prisoners of this system, whether their bars are steel or slave wages.

Tim Close
Columbus, Ohio

Mention Cesar Chavez

I want to thank you for sending me these issues free of cost. As I promised, I am spreading the word on the movement for the working class with your paper. Although incarcerated, I have spoken to others here, which led me to a very good article in the recent *Low Rider*

magazine on Cesar Chavez. His film is out in theaters now. And mentioning him in your paper on farmers' struggles and how he fought for the rights of all workers will open the eyes of more Latinos and bring awareness to your cause.

A prisoner
Florida

From solitary, requests paper

I am contacting you from solitary confinement of a maximum security prison, where I've been for the past 114 straight months. Inmates are not allowed to work while housed here, therefore I am unable to purchase a subscription to the *Militant*. I humbly request the paper be sent.

A prisoner
Pennsylvania

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the *Militant* and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.