

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Coal boss indicted in mine blast, his rise linked with union decline
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 78/NO. 46 DECEMBER 22, 2014

Turkish miners fight for wages, job safety

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

The Soma Holding Company, whose contempt for safety led to the deaths of 301 miners from carbon monoxide poisoning at its Eynez coal mine in May, fired 2,831 coal miners in Soma, Turkey, Nov. 30. Besides Eynez, Soma also owns the Ata Bacasi and Isiklar mines.

According to Today's Zaman, a website providing news from the Turkish media, the company shut the Isiklar and Ata Bacasi mines because of an explosion. Then miners got text messages from the company telling them they were fired. The bosses said it "is not able to pay the salaries of the workers that are not working."

"We have to fight for our salaries month by month," Ali Sogut, one of the fired miners from the Ata Bacasi mine, told the *Militant* in a phone interview.

Thousands of miners in the area protested Oct. 27 demanding months of unpaid wages, Sogut said, and police attacked the demonstration.

"They physically attacked miners with sticks and clubs, sending three miners to the hospital," Engin Kursuncu, who works at the Imbatt

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Fast-food workers hold 'Fight for \$15' protests

Walmart, home care workers join actions



Militant/Naomi Craine

Miami McDonald's workers who joined strike for \$15 an hour and a union hold banner Dec. 4.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

"Hold the burgers, hold the fries, make our wages super-size!" chanted more than 100 fast-food workers and their supporters as they crowded into a Minneapolis McDonald's in a 6 a.m. protest Dec. 4.

Twin Cities marchers were joined by representatives of a group of personal care attendants, who care for disabled people on Medicaid in their homes. Twenty-seven thousand of

them won union representation by the Service Employees International Union in August.

Just one week after nationwide Black Friday actions by Walmart workers demanding \$15 an hour and full-time work, thousands of McDonald's, Burger King, Dunkin' Donuts and other restaurant workers and their supporters held "Fight for \$15" strikes and rallies in 190 cities across the country, 40 more than in similar protests in September.

Some of the fast-food workers had

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NY grand jury lets cop off who killed Eric Garner

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — Demonstrators took to the streets in every major city in the U.S. after a grand jury decided Dec. 3 not to indict Staten Island police officer Daniel Pantaleo for the killing of Eric Garner.

Protests against the decision to let Pantaleo walk were fueled by outrage over other police killings: from Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, Aug. 9; to Akai Gurley, shot and

COP BRUTALITY: KEY PART OF CAPITALIST RULE
 — See editorial page 9

killed in a Brooklyn stairwell Nov. 20 by a cop who claims his gun accidentally discharged; to 12-year-old Tamir Rice, shot by Cleveland cops two seconds after they pulled their car up next to him in a city park Nov. 22.

"I can't breathe, I can't breathe," demonstrators around the country shouted, the same words Garner repeated 11 times July 19 while cops choked him and pinned him down on the sidewalk outside a beauty supplies store in Staten Island for allegedly selling loose cigarettes without collecting New York tax.

Grand juries are secret. Witnesses

Continued on page 7

Cuba 'country of honor' at Haiti book fair



Militant/Paul Mailhot

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Socialist workers from the United States and Canada have arrived here to participate in the Dec. 11-14 Second International Book Fair in Haiti. Team members will be promoting Pathfinder books and the *Militant* newspaper and reporting on political developments in the country.

Cuba, which has maintained nearly two decades of extensive medical, education and other campaigns of solidarity with Haiti, is the country of honor. A dozen Cuban publishers, writers and filmmakers have arrived, led by Zuleica Romay Guerra, director of the Cuban Book Institute. Above, part of the Cuban delegation meeting with Jean Mathiot (at left), official of the French Institute of Haiti, which is helping prepare activities during the fair.

Militant readers can contribute to the success of this trip. Send checks to the *Militant* at 306 West 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

— PAUL MAILHOT

Chicago socialist mayoral candidate: 'Workers need own political party'

BY LAURA ANDERSON

CHICAGO — Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor, kicked off his campaign here Dec. 6, joining a rally and march on the West Side protesting police torture in Chicago and the killings of Eric Garner by cop Daniel Pantaleo in Staten Is-

land, N.Y., and Michael Brown, shot dead by cop Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri.

There are more than 100 inmates seeking freedom because they were victims of a notorious cop torture ring on Chicago's South Side, run by for-

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Quebec marches protest cuts in gov't services, attacks on labor

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL — More than 100,000 people marched here Nov. 29 and 25,000 in Quebec City to protest the Quebec Liberal Party government's drive to cut \$4 billion from health, education, child care and other public services.

The protests were organized by

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Fight to free Cuban 5 wins backing at Beirut book fair 7

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Locked-out uranium workers in Illinois win support
 Housekeepers at Harvard-owned hotel strike for unionization

Rally in Brooklyn backs locked-out 'carwasheros'

DC rally backs pregnant workers' rights in UPS case

BY GLOVA SCOTT

WASHINGTON — More than 150 people rallied outside the U.S. Supreme Court building here Dec. 3 for equal rights for workers who are pregnant, as the court heard oral arguments in *Young v. United Parcel Service, Inc.*

Seven years ago, Peggy Young, a UPS driver, was denied light duty while pregnant, despite her doctor's recommendation that she not lift more than 20 pounds. "We're not making an accommodation for her because she is not disabled," the company said. As a result, Young took unpaid leave and lost her medical coverage for childbirth.

Tiffany Beroid, of OUR Walmart, a group of Walmart workers fighting for \$15 per hour and full-time work, spoke at the rally. A customer service manager at the Walmart store in Laurel, Maryland, she was terminated in 2012 after publication of a *Washington Post* article featuring her fight with the retail store for light duty when she was pregnant.

"I had to push carts and lift heavy boxes," Beroid told reporters after the rally, in spite of swollen feet, dizziness and high blood pressure.

In 1976, the Supreme Court ruled that companies that did not include pregnancy disability plans were not discriminating based on gender. Congress responded by passing the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, which says that sex discrimination includes discrimination on the basis of "pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions," and directs employers to treat pregnant workers the same "as other persons not so affected but similar in

their ability or inability to work."

The rally was co-sponsored by 40 groups, including the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Coalition of Labor Union Women, Center for American Progress, NARAL Pro-Choice America, MomsRising and the National Organization for Women. Briefs in support of Young have been filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, a wide range of union organizations, women's rights groups and the U.S. government.

Two dozen anti-abortion groups also filed a brief supporting Young, arguing that failure to defend the rights of pregnant women on the job could lead some to seek an abortion in order to keep working.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Trucking Associations, Inc. were among those filing briefs in support of UPS.

"No women should have to choose between her paycheck and her pregnancy," said Kathleen Morrell from Physicians for Reproductive Health at the rally.

Emma Sholevitz, 27, and eight months pregnant, attended the rally. She was recently fired from her job at General Dynamics as a research technician and



Militant photos by Arlene Rubinstein
Above, rally in front of U.S. Supreme Court Dec. 3 to support rights of pregnant workers, as court debated case brought by Peggy Young against UPS. Inset, Tiffany Beroid, OUR Walmart member fired by retail giant in 2012 for fighting for light-duty work while she was pregnant, speaks at rally.



website developer. Sholevitz had asked supervisors why pregnant employees had to work up to their due date. "My position was terminated," she said.

"Peggy Young was seven years old when the Pregnancy Discrimination

Act became law," Sharon Fast Gustafson, Young's lawyer, said at the rally "And here we are 36 years later, asking the court to hold simply that the Pregnancy Discrimination Act means what it says."

Correction

The article "Bosses' Blood Money 'Handouts' Go to Party Capital Fund" in issue no. 45 misidentified one contributor. Wendy Lyons from Los Angeles is the Home Depot worker who gave \$29.87 to the fund.

'Blood money' bribes go to party Capital Fund

Ray Parsons, an electrician in Albany, New York, recently turned over a \$100 "safety bonus" to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund. "We all remember how a young electrician apprentice was killed at a nearby job site in September," writes Parsons, who works for a contractor at a large construction site. He pointed out that most workers there see the company's safety programs as a sham.

"I see the party and the *Militant* as an important way for us to strengthen the labor movement," he said.

Naomi Craine and Anthony Dutrow work in a marine hardware plant in Miami that "is very stingy on wages, and doesn't even give out much blood money," Craine wrote. When they received \$30 grocery cards to "enjoy the holidays," they sent it to the Capital Fund for the party "to put to good use."

Contributions from production, holiday and other "bonuses" from the bosses — designed to bribe workers to accept concessions, speedup and wage cuts — are referred to as "blood money" by supporters of the communist movement who turn them over to the party's Capital Fund. These contributions are an important political foundation for the fund, which helps finance the party's long-range work. To contribute, see page 8 for a *Militant* distributor near you.

— MAGGIE TROWE

THE MILITANT

Walmart actions demand \$15/hour, full time

The 'Militant' covers strikes, rallies and sit-ins by members of OUR Walmart and supporters across the country demanding \$15 per hour and full-time work. The movement is growing, reinforced by links with fast-food workers and protests against brutality and killings by cops.



Workers sit in at Washington, D.C., Walmart Nov. 26, part of national protests.

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New Zealand tenants protest gov't plans to sell their homes

BY ANNALUCIA VERMUNT

HAMILTON, New Zealand — Elderly residents of City Council rental housing joined a protest here Oct. 30 to oppose the planned sell-off of their homes to private companies.

At the march and rally of 300 people, staged as a funeral for 344 “pensioner units,” many tenants spoke about their concerns for the future. Local church leaders played a prominent role in the action.

In spite of the protest and opposition voiced at public hearings, the council voted Nov. 27 to sell these units.

The moves at the local level reflect the push by the New Zealand government to deepen a decades-long drive to make state housing a temporary emergency measure for only the most destitute of working people. As part of this drive it is selling off housing stock and looking to charities and other agencies as private providers of social housing.

“There are 365 people in these 344 units,” tenant Audrey Durose told the *Militant* Nov. 8. “Once they are in private hands there is no guarantee they will remain housing for pensioners [retirees]. The council may secure a guarantee for existing tenants, but what happens after that or if the provider decides to sell them? There is no protection.”

Access to affordable housing has become a central debate in New Zealand politics. State housing was a social gain won in the late 1930s as a byproduct of workers’ struggles under depression conditions. Thousands of houses were built, with the stated aim of providing quality housing for workers, for a life-

time, at rents lower than market rates.

Since the 1990s, successive governments, seeking to open up new avenues for capitalist profits, have whittled away at state housing. Most recent policy changes include measures to review all tenancies every three years and subjecting tenants to more restrictive government housing criteria. The government is also extending subsidies to private companies that profit from building housing that is supposed to be affordable for working people, while selling off government-owned housing stock. The government agency Housing New Zealand owns close to 70,000 houses, some 15 percent of the rental market.

Louise Hutchinson qualified as high priority on the “A list” for a house, but more than four months later she is still waiting. In frustration she posted her story on the Internet, headlined “End homelessness in Napier, Hastings and throughout Ikaroa.” She then joined with others to organize a Sept. 17 protest. “I wanted others to be able to share their experiences, and figure out what we can do about it,” Hutchinson told the *Militant* Nov. 9. After the news coverage and protest she was offered a house that was “not fit to live in. I refused it and I am still fighting for a decent home for my family.”

Housing New Zealand has not kept up maintenance on many houses as it presses redevelopment plans.

Hutchinson got support from a group called Tu Tangata Maraenui in the neighboring city of Napier. They have organized protests and sent delegations to Parliament over the redevelopment

‘Socialism 2014’ conference meets in Malaysia



Militant

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — More than 100 people participated in an annual conference organized by the Malaysian Socialist Party here Nov. 21–23. This year’s event was called “Socialism 2014: World in Turmoil — Imperialism and Resistance in the 21st Century.”

Speakers from Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Venezuela, Australia and New Zealand joined those from Malaysia on panels discussing “Middle East — War and Religion,” “Climate in Crisis,” and “Workers Movement — Survival and Revival” among other topics, taking up developments in world and Malaysian politics.

Participants snapped up books from several publishers at the conference. “I want to learn about the fight for women’s rights,” said Maha Ramakrishnan (pictured) picking up titles on women’s liberation and a *Militant* subscription at the Pathfinder book table following a session on “Religion — Unity and Fear (a Malaysian context),” at which a spirited discussion around women’s rights in Malaysia broke out.

— LINDA HARRIS

plans of state housing in their working-class neighborhood.

“We have been fighting for the last two to three years. I am in my 80s but I’ve still got steam in me,” tenant Wilma Rowe told *Militant* supporters when they knocked on her door in Hamilton Nov. 8.

Quebec protests

Continued from front page

Réfusons L’Austérité (We Reject Austerity), a coalition of more than 30 groups, including Quebec’s three main union federations — the FTQ (Quebec Workers Federation), CSN (National Union Confederation) and CSQ (Central Organization of Quebec Unions).

“We are facing a lot of cuts and our wages have been frozen,” Aline McGrath, a child care worker from Malarctic, told the *Militant* at the march here. “I hope this demonstration will push the government to move.” She joined fellow workers on a seven-hour CSN bus trip to participate.

“The government is withholding funds for people who need it and for those who need accommodation because they aren’t able to work, like me,” said Anthony Rivet, a 52-year-old injured worker from Hull.

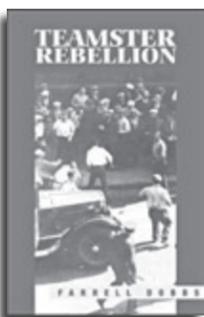
“Our social programs are too precious to put in more peril than they already are,” Louise Gordon, another child care worker and member of CSQ, told the *Militant*.

Fifty workers came to the Quebec City protest by bus from Matane in the Gaspé Peninsula, 250 miles to the northeast, where the proposed cuts will close the local college. Hundreds of Unifor union members from the Outardes sawmill on the North Coast, 10 hours away, and elsewhere in Quebec participated.

Anthony Bossé, a member of the Quebec Federation of Nurses at Laval Hospital in Quebec City, told the *Militant* that the government’s move to combine hospitals, closing some, “will take medical services away from patients.”

Three days earlier some 5,000 city workers in 25 municipalities carried out a one-day strike to protest Bill 3, the Quebec government’s plan to rip up current municipal union contracts and force workers to pay more and receive less in retirement benefits.

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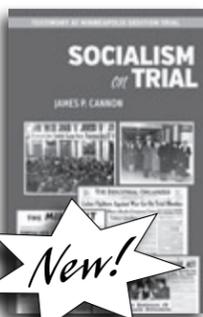


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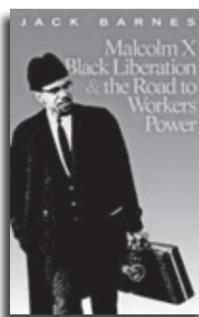
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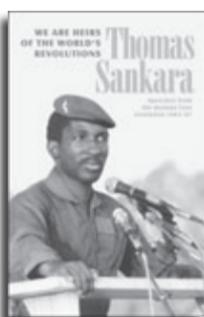


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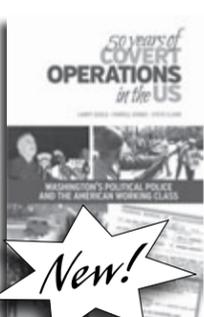
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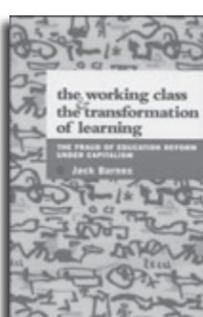
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US sanctions, oil price drop take toll on Russian toilers

BY NAOMI CRAINE

The sharp drop in oil prices in recent months — driven by high levels of oil production from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern monarchies and the growing volume of fracked U.S. oil — is battering the economies of Russia and other countries that are dependent on petroleum exports, such as Venezuela and Iran. In Russia, which is also being squeezed by sanctions imposed by Washington and the European Union, workers and farmers are especially hard hit, as the government of President Vladimir Putin acts to protect the interests of the capitalists for whom he rules at the expense of the wages and living conditions of the toilers.

“It is now a frequent practice to have a 2-3 month delay in wage payment,” especially in the automotive and metal industries, Boris Kravchenko, president of the Confederation of Labor of Russia, wrote in September. “The number of industrial protests is growing.”

Oil and natural gas account for 70 percent of Moscow’s exports, and revenue from the industry provides about half of the government’s budget. Since June the price of the crude Russia sells has fallen from over \$100 per barrel to below \$70. To balance, Moscow’s budget requires oil at \$100 a barrel.

High energy prices were the basis for the relatively high 7 percent Russian economic growth rate from 2000 to 2008, giving the appearance of a strong, stable economy and rising economic power. Now that illusion is crumbling.

Sanctions imposed by Washington and EU governments, supposedly to punish Moscow for intervening in

Ukraine, are also taking a toll, cutting off access for Russian employers to global credit markets. In response, the Russian government has used a large portion of its currency reserves to try to prop up the ruble. The value of the Russian currency has plunged roughly 40 percent this year, which pushes up the price of many goods, including basic food staples.

The Russian economy is sliding toward recession in 2015, Deputy Economy Minister Alexei Vedev told reporters Dec. 2. He estimated inflation will hit 9 percent by the end of this year, the official unemployment rate will rise to 6.4 percent, and real wages will shrink some 3.9 percent. The net capital outflow from Russia will hit \$125 billion for 2014.

Several thousand health care workers and others marched in Moscow Nov. 30, protesting government plans to close 28 hospitals in the Russian capital and lay off up to 10,000 doctors. “Health care is falling apart, social care is falling apart, education is falling apart,” one doctor named Tatyana told reporters. “In the medical professions salaries are being slashed. They take away all the bonuses, but increase the amount of work.” Similar rallies took place in St. Petersburg, Vladivostok and other cities.

Putin’s ‘State of the Union’

In an annual presidential address Dec. 4, Putin said his government aims to “work towards prosperity and affluence.” While couched in language about advancing “the people” that will sound familiar to workers who have listened to a “State of the Union” speech by a U.S. president, the content was to prop up the interests of the bosses. “It’s imperative that labor productivity be increased by no less than 5 percent annually,” he declared, demanding working people produce more and get less. He said the



Thousands protest in Moscow last month against government-proposed health care cuts. City administration plans to close 28 hospitals and lay off up to 10,000 doctors by early next year.

government should “lift restrictions on business as much as possible.”

While saying he would improve “education, health care and the social welfare system,” Putin admitted that schools are significantly overcrowded, with nearly 2 million children attending a second shift. The next day, Putin ordered the government to cut spending in real terms by 5 percent on everything except the military and police for 2015-17.

He blamed the falling ruble and rising inflation on “speculators,” rather than admit the real impact of the plunge in oil prices.

Putin’s speech did little to reassure Russian capitalists, who are increasingly nervous about the economic situation and Moscow’s war policy against Ukraine. “The superficial analysis of the situation reflected a disconnect with real life, an ‘alternate reality’ in which the Kremlin now seems to live,” Sergei Aleksashenko, former deputy chairman of the Russian Central Bank, told *Time* magazine.

Putin also used the speech to once again justify Moscow’s annexation of Crimea from Ukraine earlier this year, and its intervention in support of sepa-

ratist forces in southeastern Ukraine. He presented the Maidan protests in defense of Ukrainian sovereignty last February as an “armed coup.” He blamed Washington for developments in Ukraine and Moscow’s economic crisis. If none of the events in Ukraine had happened, he said, Washington “would have come up with some other excuse to try to contain Russia’s growing capabilities.”

The record of U.S. imperialism from Vietnam to Iraq certainly makes these charges seem plausible to many people. But Putin turned reality on its head, claiming Moscow, which oppressed Ukraine economically and politically for decades, is a champion of Ukrainian sovereignty.

Putin’s real worry is that workers and farmers in Russia will emulate the mass mobilizations that marked the Maidan protests in Ukraine that overthrew the pro-Moscow regime of President Viktor Yanukovich. The *Moscow Times* reported that riot police Dec. 2 raided a seminar taking place south of Moscow titled “Maidan: Organizing the Space of Freedom” and detained 25 people for several hours, before releasing them without charges.

Fast-food workers hold ‘Fight for \$15’ protests

Continued from front page

taken part in the rallies organized by OUR Walmart, a group of workers at the retail giant, and Walmart workers joined in some of the Dec. 4 protests. “Today went really well. Our main point is that the fight for \$15 and a union is growing,” Erica Concepcion, 20, who works at Dunkin’ Donuts for \$8.50 an hour in Boston, told the *Militant*. “You shouldn’t have to work two or three jobs in order to survive.”

The actions drew in participants from beyond hamburger and donut chain workers to convenience store, airport and home health care employees. A national “Home Care Fight for \$15” was launched in September. And the protests were reinforced by the explosion of opposition to grand jury decisions to not indict the cops who killed Eric Garner in Staten Island and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.

The growing protests captured the attention not only of millions of workers who earn the minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, but of the propertied rulers who are watching it spread closely.

“Employees From Increasingly Varied Workplaces Demand Higher Minimums,” the Dec. 4 *Wall Street Journal* reported. “The people in Ferguson are fighting for their rights, just

like the people in fast food are fighting for their rights,” Carlos Robinson, 23, a Burger King cook in St. Louis who gets \$7.75 an hour, told the big-business daily.

In Miami some 100 demonstrators, including Walmart workers and airport food workers, marched through the heart of the Little Havana district. When police prevented them from entering a McDonald’s restaurant, the crowd chanted, “I can’t breathe.” This was what Eric Garner repeated numerous times as he was being choked to death by New York police in Staten Island.

“We’re living paycheck to paycheck,” Janice Williams, 54, a school cafeteria worker married to a McDonald’s employee, told the *Militant* in Atlanta, where some 80 fast-food and home health workers, as well as members of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and Concerned Black Clergy, marched. “When we get this \$15, we can finally take a vacation. As it is now, we can’t even pay our bills.”

Veterans of the campaign that began two years ago are organizing strikes at some of the fast-food stores and standing up to the intimidation from the bosses.

“I’ve been on four or five of these strikes, and each time they threaten me with firing or they write me up,”

Ana Mosquera, a Wendy’s worker who gets \$7.25 an hour and brought a co-worker to join a 100-person action in Houston, told the *Militant*. “But so far I’m hanging in there.” The marchers, including SEIU Local 1 office cleaners who struck for higher wages in 2012, held rallies in English and Spanish outside of Taco Bell and McDonald’s.

In 2012 bosses pooh-poohed the demand for \$15 an hour, but the uptick in working-class and social resistance today, reinforced by newfound confidence from a modest increase in jobs in the U.S., is making it a watchword. “A wage of \$15 per hour is now the battle cry for low-wage workers nationwide,” said a Dec. 4 article in *Fortune*, a U.S. business magazine.

The minimum wage, which has been \$7.25 since 2009, is more than some workers are paid. A Labor Department study released on the day of the fast-food protests found “pervasive minimum wage violations in California and New York, with more than 300,000 violations in each state monthly.”

Helen Meyers in Minneapolis, Kevin Dwire in Boston, Naomi Craine in Miami, Cindy Jaquith in Houston and Rachele Fruit in Atlanta contributed to this article.

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San Francisco

Why Did Workers Vote Against Their Class Interests in November Elections?
Speaker: Betsey Stone, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 19, 7:30 p.m. 4804 Mission St., Ste. 206. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

—CALENDAR—

ILLINOIS

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Exhibit: “I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived,” 15 Watercolors by Antonio Guerrero. Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Dec. 12 through spring 2015. Centro Autonomo de Albany Park. 3460 W Lawrence Ave. Sponsored by the Chicago Cuba Coalition and Centro Autonomo de Albany Park. For more information call (312) 952-2618 or (773) 952-2618.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help make this column a voice of workers' resistance!

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

—Maggie Trowe

Locked-out uranium workers in Illinois win support

Locked-out Honeywell uranium conversion workers, members of United Steelworkers Local 7-669 in Metropolis, Illinois, are exposing the company's disdain for safety as they win support and solidarity from other unionists.

The union called attention to the six-minute release of toxic uranium hexafluoride gas from the plant into surrounding areas that was observed by pickets Oct. 26 and demanded an investigation by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Honeywell initially said the gas release never left its property but later reversed its stance. The commission announced Nov. 6 that Honeywell officials should have reported the gas emission as an emergency "alert" classification.

Honeywell management, which has been operating the plant with strike-breakers since it locked out union workers Aug. 2, announced Nov. 20 the plant would be shut for the first quarter of 2015 for maintenance.

"The shutdown announcement and Honeywell's reversal on the UF6 release show what a big deal that event was," local President Stephen Lech said in a phone interview. The union is maintaining picket lines and filed unfair labor practice charges against the company Nov. 10.

"We're planning to visit a number of Steelworkers locals between now and the end of the year," he said.

Members of Women of Steel from several Steelworkers locals in northwest Indiana delivered two vanloads of food and are raising funds to buy toys and door prizes to bring to the locked-out workers' Christmas party Dec. 13.

"We encourage anyone who wants to back our fight to attend," Lech said.

—John Hawkins

Housekeepers at Harvard-owned hotel strike for unionization

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Housekeepers at the DoubleTree Hotel in nearby Allston, who have been trying for more than a year to win representation by UNITE HERE Local 26, organized a one-day strike Nov. 20. That evening some 700 students, unionists and others rallied on the Harvard University campus here to support them. Harvard owns the Hilton-operated hotel and made a \$22.6 million profit from it in 2012.

The housekeepers, who have to prepare 14 two-room suites per shift, carried out their action under the slogan "No More Pain!" Harvard food service workers, members of Local 26, earn \$21.73 per hour. DoubleTree housekeepers were paid \$15 per hour until they began their unionizing effort last year, which spurred the bosses to increase their pay to \$18. Unionized hotel workers in Boston make more and clean half the number of rooms.

"It's not fair that they won't listen to us," housekeeper Sandra Hernandez

said at the rally. "Harvard is the richest university in the world." Local 26 organized teams of strikers, students and supporters throughout the day to pass out fliers and collect 3,000 signatures on cards backing the workers' fight. Harvard students and university employees joined strikers as they visited the campus dining halls during lunch.

The next morning Local 26 members and some Harvard students accompanied housekeepers as they returned to work to make sure that hotel management did not retaliate.

—Kevin Dwire

Brooklyn gas workers push back concessions

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — Members of Transport Workers Union Local 101 overwhelmingly approved a contract with National Grid gas company Nov. 11.

Hundreds of unionists and supporters rallied Oct. 9 in front of the company's downtown building here against bosses' demands for a wage freeze and increased health care costs. Four days later the unionists voted to authorize a strike. An agreement was reached Oct. 14 that included a wage increase of 14.25 percent over five years and elimination of the temporary worker classification.

Claude Ross, a heavy equipment operator, coming out of the contract vote meeting, said what was presented seemed fine. "But, it's too soon. We don't really know what they took away."

"Overall I'm happy with it," Greg Bimbaras, a shop steward, said.

Johnny Woo and Jae Woo, father



Militant/Sara Lobman

Locked-out "carwasheros" and supporters rally at Vegas Auto Spa in Brooklyn, N.Y., Nov. 22.

and son, both were happy with the contract. "I didn't think we'd get a good contract," Johnny Woo said. "But the union is strong. The fellows stayed together."

—Candace Wagner

Rally in Brooklyn backs locked-out 'carwasheros'

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — Several dozen unionists, community activists and family members rallied Nov. 22 in support of nine locked-out car wash workers at Vegas Auto Spa here, who have been organizing to win union recognition with the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union and back wages owed for overtime work paid at the straight-time rate.

The Nov. 19 lockout by owner Marat Leshehinsky came as a surprise to the workers, who call themselves "carwasheros."

"He never said anything," Juan Calel told the *Militant*. "We came in the morning and he said it was closed."

Calel said workers at the car wash had started talking to each other some months ago about poor wages and conditions. "There's no safety, there's lots of chemicals and no protection — no gloves, no masks, no safety glasses," said Angel Revoledo.

Vegas Auto Spa attorney Stephen Hans told the *New York Daily News* that the union is using pressure tactics against a mom-and-pop operation. "That's a lie," Calel responded. "He owns another car wash, a rim shop, and has apartments."

—Tony Lane

Texas aerospace workers end one-month strike

HOUSTON — Striking Teamster members at the Zodiac Seats US plant in Gainesville, Texas, voted Oct. 25 to approve a new contract and end a strike that began Sept. 23. More than 1,000 workers produce airplane seats there.

The issues in the strike were work environment, seniority rights and schedules, Terry Johnson, Teamster Local 767 vice president, told KTEN-TV. The company proposed 10- or 12-hour shifts with no overtime pay.

"The biggest issue was seniority," Johnson told the *Militant* in a phone interview. "The company wanted to be able to move any worker to any location without regards to seniority, and if you made four mistakes in a year you were terminated. It was a way to get rid of people, but the company didn't win that."

—Deborah Liatos

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 22, 1989

MIAMI — On December 7 a Dade County jury convicted Miami cop William Lozano of two counts of manslaughter for the January 1989 killing of two young Black men. Lozano shot them while they were riding a motorcycle in the community of Overtown on Martin Luther King Day. Clement Anthony Lloyd died of gunshot wounds and his passenger, Allan Blanchard, died from injuries in the crash that resulted.

The verdict was welcomed by many in Miami, especially in Black communities where the news of Lozano's conviction brought cheers. Horns were honked and people danced in the streets of Overtown.

More than 200 people rallied in an Overtown park after a march led by People United for Justice.

Right-wing Cuban and Colombian radio stations are raising the funds for the appeal.



December 21, 1964

NEW YORK, Dec. 14 — An overflow crowd of about 1,500 cheered Malcolm X, Dick Gregory and Sheik Abdul Rahman Muhammed Babu, a leader of the January revolution in Zanzibar, at a rally of the Organization of Afro-American Unity. The audience responded with rousing applause to a message of solidarity with his "brothers and sisters of Harlem" from Cuban leader Che Guevara. Speakers at the rally demanded: "Hands off the Congo!"

Malcolm X began his remarks with an attack on the press. He pointed out that "the press is so powerful ... it can make a criminal look like the victim." The Congo is a good example of what the press does, he explained. U.S.-supplied planes are dropping bombs on villages in the Congo — blowing up defenseless women and children — and the press makes "mass murder — cold-blooded murder — look like humanitarianism."



December 23, 1939

Swiftly putting teeth into last week's action of the League of Nations against the Soviet Union, the Allied Supreme War Council, in a three-hour session Tuesday, decided — in the words of Associated Press — "to give all moral and material aid possible to Finland without weakening its own war with Germany."

The decision means virtually war against the Soviet Union except that, as with so many of the wars in the last two decades, it is not officially declared.

With "poor little Finland" as a pretext, and immeasurably aided by Stalin's cynical and obviously false alibis for the invasion, the imperialists have moved against the Soviet Union with a brazen boldness which scarcely would have seemed possible a month ago.

This move by the imperialists was however, projected long before they found a pretext.

Massey Energy boss indicted in 2010 W.Va. coal mine blast

Union buster's rise to prominence linked with UMW decline

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Donald Blankenship, former CEO of Massey Energy, was indicted by a federal grand jury Nov. 13 on charges related to the deaths of 29 miners from a massive explosion in April 2010 at the nonunion Upper Big Branch Mine in Montcoal, West Virginia. Safety conditions at the mine were horrendous, as the indictment details. But the story not being told is how this notorious union buster rose to prominence as head of one of the largest coal operations in the country and its interconnection with a decades-long drive by coal bosses to push back safety rights and deal blows to the United Mine Workers union in their drive for profit.

Blankenship is charged with conspiracy to violate safety laws, conspiracy to impede federal mine safety officials, making false statements to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and securities fraud. The first count, a misdemeanor, carries a potential prison term of up to one year, while the security fraud count of lying to investors has a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. The trial has been set for Jan. 26.

The indictment says that Blankenship fostered "the practice of routine safety violations" to "produce more coal" and "make more money." Between January 2008 and April 2010 the mine was cited 835 times for mine safety violations, including inadequate ventilation. Miners were forced to work and travel through unsafe areas, including an area more than 100 feet long and 20 feet wide where most of the mine roof had fallen in and a section filled with up to four feet of water. Blankenship ordered his supervisors to stop doing "construction jobs" and instead "run coal."

"The carnage that was a recurring nightmare at Massey mines during Blankenship's tenure at the head of that company was unmatched," stated UMW President Cecil Roberts in a Nov. 13 news release. But the assault on miners' life and limb developed over many years, the result of Massey mines becoming largely nonunion under Blankenship's management. And union membership at other major coal operations also has steadily declined.

The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration has issued more than 7,000 notices of coal dust and ventilation violations at underground mines this year, reported the *Los Angeles Times*. In their pursuit of profits coal mine bosses routinely violate workers' safety rights, knowing full well that it's cheaper to pay the minimal fines imposed by MSHA than to slow down production and take steps necessary to mine safely.

Miners for Democracy

In the early 1970s a fighting union movement emerged in the coalfields determined to get rid of a union leadership that looked the other way from employer safety violations and bargained away miners' rights in every contract. This movement, known as Miners for Democracy, revolutionized the United Mine Workers of America. Miners won the right to read proposed contracts in advance and vote on them. Union safety committees were empowered to shut down production in response to unsafe working conditions. Union democracy and working-class solidarity marked the miners' union. "No contract, no work" was the rallying cry of the union.

The revolution in the union was coupled with a social movement in the coalfields to beat back black lung, a debilitating and often fatal disease caused by breathing coal dust. Actions like a 23-day strike by 45,000 coal miners in 1969 and a series of marches on the West Virginia state capitol in Charleston pressured the federal government to pass the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act and set black



Militant/Steve Marshall

United Mine Workers and supporters block road leading into Pittston coal plant, April 1989. Despite call for limited "selective strike" against company, thousands of miners and other unionists rallied to back Pittston fight, including Machinists on strike against Eastern Airlines.

lung benefits.

In 1984, A.T. Massey Coal refused to sign the national contract agreement between the UMW and Bituminous Coal Operators Association. Instead of "no contract, no work" and organizing the entire union membership to take on the union-busting gauntlet thrown down by the company, the union leadership organized a 15-month "selective strike" that ended in defeat. Some 2,500 Massey miners went out by themselves and returned to work at the end of 1985 without a contract after a debilitating and isolated strike.

Blankenship rose to prominence leading A.T. Massey's attacks on the union, becoming company head five years later. "The union and the communities are just going to have to accept" the company's drive to increase profits, Massey point-man Blankenship says in the video "Mine War in Blackberry Creek," the *Militant* quoted in a review in its July 4, 1987, issue.

The government teamed up with coal operators in a further blow against the UMW. In 1985 a federal court fined the union \$1.3 million in a lawsuit filed

by Massey over picketing at one of its mines.

In August 1987 Donnie Thornsby, president of UMW Local 2496, along with David Thornsby, James Darryl Smith and Arnold Heightland from eastern Kentucky were rousted from their beds by the FBI and Kentucky police SWAT teams. The four miners, who had been on strike against Massey two years earlier, were convicted in federal court in December. They were framed up on charges of killing Hayes West, a nonunion truck driver, during the strike. The UMW national leadership refused to mount a campaign in their defense and they spent more than two decades in prison.

In February 1988, Pittston Coal Co., following Massey's example, refused to sign the industrywide contract negotiated with the BCOA. The following April, UMW officials called a selective strike of 1,700 miners against the company. But this time mine workers and thousands of other union stalwarts, including Machinists on strike against Eastern Airlines, responded by

Continued on page 9

Turkish miners fight for wages, job safety

Continued from front page mine, told the *Militant*.

More than 500 miners began a march to Ankara Oct. 28. That same day, a flood trapped 18 miners at the Ermenek coal mine, 250 miles south of Ankara.

"We had walked 13 miles, but when we heard about the flood we stopped to discuss what to do," explained Sogut. "Most went back to Soma, but hun-

dreds changed direction and started marching to the area where the flood happened. Then the police blocked us." Eighteen died at the Ermenek mine.

As a result of these protests, Sogut said, the government paid the miners' salaries. But a few days after the mass firing, Soma Coal Enterprises said it would not provide severance pay.

Some 4,000 miners were laid off in September by the Yildiz Madencilik mining company in the Black Sea province of Zonguldak, the center of coal mining in Turkey. The mine bosses said the layoff was because a new mine safety code adopted by the Turkish parliament was bankrupting them.

The mining disaster in Soma May 13 led to widespread protests and outrage over the response by the Turkish government and mine officials. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan described the deaths of the 301 men as "usual things" when he visited the area. Photos of Erdogan's aides kicking demonstrators fueled the protests.

Can Gurkan, CEO of Soma Coal Enterprises Inc., who claimed the Eynez mine was "a first class workplace," was arrested May 20 along with seven other mine executives on charges of "causing multiple deaths by negligence."

A September report from the Soma public prosecutor on the mine disaster — the worst in Turkish history — pointed to gross negligence leading to the deaths, including inadequate ventilation, flammable equipment, defective gas masks, lack of gas sensors and other serious safety violations.

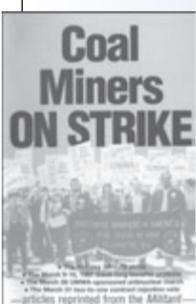
On Nov. 5 prosecutors announced they were seeking life imprisonment for eight mine executives, including Gurkan, and two to 15 years in prison for 29 others. On Nov. 25, a Turkish court threw out the indictment.

Manisa Bar Association Chairman Zeynel Balkiz announced that another indictment would be submitted within a month.

Meanwhile, Energy Minister Taner Yildez told reporters in Ermenek that a preliminary report said the flood was caused by water built up over years in older sections of the mine. Three mine owners have been detained as result of the investigation.

The miners' protests have called attention to the fight for safety in Turkey. The *Economist* reported Nov. 29 that 14,455 workers have died in industrial accidents there since 2002.

Yasemin Aydinoglu contributed to this article.



Coal Miners on Strike

from the pages of the 'Militant'

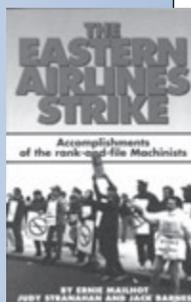
"Under the 1974 contract, union safety committees were authorized to pull miners out of an area of 'imminent danger.'" Articles on the 111-day 1977-78 strike, the 1981 strike and contract rejection vote, the fight for health benefits and compensation for black lung victims, and more. \$7

The Eastern Airlines Strike

by Ernie Mailhot, Judy Stranahan and Jack Barnes

The story of the 686-day strike in 1989-91 in which a rank-and-file resistance by Machinists prevented Eastern's union-busting onslaught from becoming the road to a profitable nonunion airline. \$12

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Fight to free Cuban 5 wins backing at Beirut book fair

“We want to help lift the wall of silence imposed by the big media chains, especially in the Arab countries, and inform people about the case of the Five,” Wafica Ibrahim, national coordinator of the Lebanese Committee in Solidarity with the Cuban Five, told the *Militant* in a Dec. 9 phone interview. She described the response the committee has received to its stand at the Beirut International Arab Book Fair.

“We have books, flyers, and pamphlets,” she said. “We are promoting two new books in Arabic, *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five* from Pathfinder Press and *Empire of Terror* by Alejandro Castro Espín. Two days ago we sold 15 copies of *Voices From Prison* and eight copies of *Empire of Terror*.”

“The stand has become a kind of tribune. People come to talk about Cuba and to ask where things are at with the Five,” Ibrahim said. Many people have heard about the case from coverage on the TV station Al Mayadeen. “Some students said they had made photocopies of *Voices From Prison* and handed them out. They’re coming back tomorrow to talk more,” she said.

Tens of thousands have visited the fair, “not just Lebanese, but people

from other Arab countries as well,” she said.

Below is an article about the stand published Nov. 30 by the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina titled “Cuban Anti-Terrorist Struggle Comes to Beirut Book Fair.” Translation from Spanish is by the *Militant*.



BY ULISES CANALES

At the initiative of the Lebanese Solidarity Committee for the Freedom of the Five Cuban Heroes (L4C5), titles such as *Empire of Terror* by Alejandro Castro Espín and *Voices From Prison* are sharing a space at the 58th International Arab Book Fair of Beirut with books from the Arab Literary Patrimony Publishing House (EPLA).

Sweet Abyss, The Forbidden Heroes and *The Arab Peoples as Seen by José Martí* in Spanish, English and French, round out the display that also includes postcards demanding U.S. President Barack Obama free the Cuban antiterrorists.

Activists of the L4C5 will later mail the postcards to Obama, one of its members explained as young people came to the booth looking for posters of the Argentine-Cuban guerrilla fighter Ernesto Che Guevara and reproductions of Cuban flags.

“Cuba is winning so much support because it’s a symbol of revolutionary struggle, because its people are strongly committed to their land and to their patriotic values, and because they have known how to face great challenges,” said Ghassan Khalidi of EPLA. “We’d like to do more than share a booth — we’d like to go there and fight alongside them if necessary.”

The book by Castro Es-



Lebanese Committee in Solidarity with the Cuban Five

Lebanese Committee in Solidarity with the Cuban Five booth at Beirut International Arab Book Fair in December featured two new books in Arabic, *Empire of Terror* by Alejandro Castro Espín and *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five* from Pathfinder Press.

pín, promoted by All Prints Distributors and Publishers, is “an indictment of imperial ideology and the methods the oligarchy of global power uses against the interests of the peoples in order to attain their hegemonic goals,” explained Wafica Ibrahim.

Ibrahim, who translated the book to Arabic and is the national coordinator of L4C5, told Prensa Latina that the 266-page book is an effort to portray, from a military and economic perspective, the mentality of the U.S. rulers obsessed with national security.

Voices From Prison from Pathfinder Press includes accounts of the life in prison and the resistance

of Gerardo Hernández and Ramón Labañino who, along with Antonio Guerrero, René González, and Fernando González, were given lengthy sentences following a Miami trial plagued with arbitrary injustices.

René González and Fernando González are now free in Cuba after completing their entire unjust sentences.

The book fair, Lebanon’s largest literary event and one of the oldest in the Arab world, was inaugurated Nov. 28 by Prime Minister Tammam Salam at the International Exhibition and Entertainment Center in Beirut, where it will remain until Dec. 11.

Cop who killed Garner let off

Continued from front page

are called entirely by decision of the prosecutor without a judge present, and prosecutors run roughshod over the rights of those forced to testify.

In the case of cops who commit crimes, however, grand juries such as the one in Staten Island are routinely used to make sure no charges are brought.

NBC TV news reported Dec. 5 that in the Garner case Staten Island District Attorney Daniel Donovan instructed the grand jury to consider manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide charges. The records of the Staten Island grand jury have not been made public, unlike the grand jury proceedings in the case of Darren Wilson’s killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson.

The prosecutor “was asking all the questions toward Eric,” Ramsey Orta told the *New York Daily News*, describing being called before the grand jury. Orta filmed a widely viewed video of the cops attacking Garner. “What was Eric doing there? Why was Eric there?” Nothing pertaining to the cop choking him.”

One difference between the killing of Brown and that of Garner is that the entire police assault on Garner was caught on video.

“Every time you see me, you want to mess with me. I’m tired of it. It stops today,” Garner, 43, can be heard telling two undercover cops.

Pantaleo grabbed Garner around the neck and with the help of three other cops threw him to the ground and kept him in a chokehold. Pantaleo pushed Garner’s head to the sidewalk and held him down with his knee while other officers piled on his back and handcuffed him.

Pantaleo told the grand jury that “it was never his intention to injure or harm anyone,” his lawyer told the press.

The autopsy report said that the primary causes of Garner’s death were “compression of neck, compression of chest and prone positioning during physical restraint by police.” The medical examiner classified it as “homicide.”

Many politicians and commentators who backed the decision not to indict Wilson in Ferguson distanced themselves from the Staten Island grand jury decision. They pointed to the fact there was a fight between Wilson and Brown in Wilson’s police car and to the testimony of some witnesses that after running away, Brown turned and advanced toward the cop, showing Wilson was justified in feeling threatened.

“I think anybody who looks at the [Garner] video would think this was the wrong judgment,” conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer said, calling the grand jury decision not to indict Pantaleo “totally incomprehensible.”

State laws are written to offer maximum latitude to the cops. The *New York Post* used this in their effort to justify the killing. Referring to “ubiquitous allegations that cops are treated ‘differently’ than ordinary citizens in deadly-forces cases,” columnist Bob McManus said, “Indeed they are — and it is the law itself that confers the privilege.” By arguing with the cops and not immediately submitting to arrest, Garner “was a victim of himself,” McManus said.

NY mayor: unite cops, community

In a Dec. 3 statement liberal Democrat New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said his goal is bringing “police and commu-

Continued on page 9

Now in Arabic!

Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five

by Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and Rafael Cancel Miranda

Also available in Spanish, English, French and Farsi



pathfinderpress.com

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.”

A growing international campaign is fighting for the release of Hernández, Labañino and Guerrero.

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder, on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shoot-down 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.

Cuban armed forces: only revolutionary army in world

Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. Below is an excerpt from the interview with Gen. Enrique Carreras, considered the father of revolutionary Cuba's air force. Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party; Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and editor of the book; and Martin Koppel conducted the interview on Oct. 24, 1997, in Havana. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution
Gen. Enrique Carreras, seated second from right in first full row, at 1993 meeting of Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. "Source of Revolutionary Armed Forces traditions are peasants, workers and students who joined Rebel Army," Carreras said in interview.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BARNES: In the United States we tell revolutionary-minded workers and young people that the living traditions of the Cuban armed forces represent for us today what the young fighters in the soldiers' soviets in Russia meant for toilers the world over in 1917. It has the same kind of political attraction to revolutionists as the army Lenin and the Bolsheviks forged seventy years ago to defend the young Soviet workers and peasants republic against the counterrevolutionary bandits of that time, and against the invading imperialist armies that backed them.

Right now, the FAR [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba] is the only revolutionary army working people

and youth in the United States today have a chance to see. And they need to learn about and understand a revolutionary army, because some day they are going to be soldiers in such an army.

No worker in the United States has ever known a general like those in the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba. Young workers who've served in the U.S. army know the officer corps as a caste who consider the ranks to be trash — just pieces of meat to be trained, used, and disposed of, dead or alive. That is one of the reasons the generals of the FAR who spoke to the young people from the Americas taking part in the youth festival last summer had such a tremendous impact on them. Young fighters in the United States had the opportunity to learn about some very important history, the traditions of a revolutionary army.

Many revolutionary-minded workers in the United States study the Russian revolution, and they develop a pretty good feel for the workers' soviets — the mass councils of workers' delegates that grew up in the heat of battle and formed the foundation of the new revolutionary government. Workers and other young people in the United States even develop somewhat of an understanding of the peasants' soviets, although fewer and fewer of them today have ever been on a farm. But they have a much harder

time understanding the soldiers' soviets, since it's even a step or so further removed from anything they've ever experienced, even indirectly. So we tell them: learn what you can about the armed forces in Cuba, and you'll have about as good a feel for the soldiers' soviets as is possible short of major new revolutionary developments.

Traditions of Cuban army

CARRERAS: If you'll pardon my saying so, armies have their own traditions. The Soviets have theirs, of course, very strong ones. We have our own traditions — very appealing ones, which we fight to maintain and guard.

Who were our soldiers in Cuba's war of independence from Spain? The slaves, the peasants — that's who joined up as soldiers together with Carlos Manuel de Céspedes to liberate Cuba and put an end to slavery. During the revolutionary war against Batista, the majority of the soldiers who joined the Rebel Army were peasants, as well as workers and students. That's the source of our traditions. And you can't transfer experiences from one country to another.

I've seen firsthand the traditions of other armies, traditions very different from our own. For one thing, we are incapable of laying a hand on a soldier. That is the greatest abomination we can imagine. Yet once, right in front of sev-

eral of us, I witnessed a Soviet general strike a soldier for being drunk. I can put up with a lot, but seeing that made me so angry I had to get out of there. Laying a hand on a soldier shows a lack of respect, and that's something we do not allow. That's just the way we are.

BARNES: Yes, and your traditions are more like those of the young working-class and peasant soldiers in the soviets of 1917 who gave everything when Lenin and the Bolsheviks called on them to defeat the imperialist invasion and the counterrevolutionary armies of the landlords and capitalists. That is what we have always believed.

The example of Che is part of your traditions, too, and this month, October — here in Cuba, in the United States, and elsewhere — we've been commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the combat waged in Bolivia by Che Guevara and his comrades. For Che the military, the political, and the economic were not separate, unconnected arenas, but instead parts of an integrated strategy to fundamentally transform society and in the process transform the human beings engaged in that revolutionary activity. Could you tell us a little more about what Che's example means for the cadres and leaders of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, and for the Cuban people?

Che Guevara

CARRERAS: Che is the greatest exponent of the Latin American revolution. As Fidel explained in Santa Clara last week, few individuals have done what Che did to point the way for humanity — to give everything, as he did. I flew with Che a number of times. I got to know his personality. Che foresaw and spoke about many of the things that are happening to us in Cuba today. He was a man of great foresight, like Fidel — who has even greater foresight. Both of them were able to see things far down the road, and that proved decisive in helping us emerge victorious from the most difficult moments the revolution has passed through.

The image of Che can be found wherever there is a young person who wants to change humanity. Che does not represent only armed struggle, only Cuba, only Argentina. No, he represents the image of the new man.

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Cop brutality: Key part of capitalist rule

The *Militant* salutes the tens of thousands of workers, farmers, youth and other opponents of police brutality across the country and around the world who have marched demanding New York cop Daniel Pantaleo be held accountable for the killing of Eric Garner. But while the video of the assault leaves no doubt what happened, the grand jury decision not to indict the cop who choked Garner to death, like the Missouri decision in the cop killing of Michael Brown the week before, was no surprise.

The propertied rulers, who hold state power and whose wealth comes from exploiting workers, see us as an outlaw class that must be intimidated, divided and punished. Cops, prosecutors, grand juries, plea bargaining, courts and prisons — the whole capitalist “justice” system — exist to do that.

The bosses and the Democratic and Republican party politicians who represent them need the repressive forces of the state. The crisis-wracked capitalist rulers have tossed millions out of work; intensified production, threatening life and limb; and slashed social programs, spawning labor resistance, social protest and growing discussion of the need for the working class to chart a political course independent of the bosses and their parties.

Daniel Pantaleo and other killer cops are not “bad apples.” They are just doing their job serving the rulers. And part of the deal is impunity for the violence they inflict on workers.

Prosecutors use the grand jury to go after working people and, when necessary, to make sure there are no charges when the accused are from the gang

in blue.

Cop cams, “retraining” sessions, review boards or other “reforms” can’t prevent police brutality, nor will federal prosecutors deal more justice than local ones.

Knowing the deck is stacked in the capitalist justice system, workers need to jealously guard our rights, among them the right to be represented by a lawyer, to remain silent, to go to trial without facing additional penalties and protection against “double jeopardy.”

Blacks are victims of police brutality in disproportionate numbers. Because of gains registered by powerful struggles by African-American toilers, from Radical Reconstruction after the Civil War to the mighty proletarian movement that overthrew Jim Crow segregation, the rulers take special efforts to “police” them.

But police violence is aimed at all workers. The majority of those killed by cops in the U.S. every year are Caucasian. Police brutality is a crucial issue for the labor movement.

As Walmart workers and fast-food workers struck and marched recently, they chanted Eric Garner’s last words, “I can’t breathe,” and many joined protests against the grand jury verdicts. Those protests drew large numbers of Caucasian, Black and Latino workers, including many unionists.

This bodes well for the fight against capitalist exploitation and police brutality. It points to the possibility and necessity of mounting a revolutionary struggle to replace the dictatorship of capital with rule by the vast majority — workers and farmers.

Grand jury lets cop off who killed Garner

Continued from page 7

nity closer together and changing the culture of law enforcement.” He is doing so, de Blasio said, through reducing stop-and-frisk, retraining cops, lowering the number of marijuana arrests and launching “a new pilot program for body cameras for officers to improve transparency and accountability.” A few days later, when asked about the grand jury decision, he replied, “I support the process.”

De Blasio neglected to mention one of the central policies of his administration, so-called broken windows policing, where cops systematically write out tickets and arrest people for lesser “offenses,” like the move to arrest Garner for selling individual cigarettes without charging sales tax. Arrests for peddling and panhandling have more than tripled since de Blasio took office.

“It’s so easy to get a grand jury to indict a civilian,” Constance Malcolm told the *Militant* Dec. 6. “But all the cop has to say is he feared for his life, like the cop said in my son’s case, and there’s no indictment.” Malcolm has helped spearhead protests since her unarmed son, Ramarley Graham, was shot dead in 2012 by cop Richard Haste in the bathroom of Malcolm’s home. A grand jury indictment of Haste was thrown out on a technicality and a second grand jury refused to issue charges against him.

Malcolm scoffed at de Blasio’s call for police reform. “I can’t say I’m for the body cameras either,” she said, noting that the whole incident with Garner was

videoed. “The cops have a badge and a gun and think they can do anything.”

Malcolm was at the front of one of the largest actions against the Garner verdict, a march of 5,000 in Manhattan Dec. 4. As in other actions nationwide, protesters chanted, “No justice, no peace, no racist police.” Many held signs that said, “Black lives matter.”

A large number of those demonstrating were union members, including SEIU1199 health care workers and members of the United Federation of Teachers. Malcolm is a member of 1199. One striking side of the Dec. 4 action here was its breadth. Close to a majority were Caucasian, reflecting the growing solidarity against police brutality and greater interest in taking action among workers, no matter what their skin color.

Most killed by cops are Caucasian

While Blacks are disproportionately victims of police killings — young Black men are 21 times more likely to be killed by cops than young Caucasian men, the *New York Times* reported — the majority of those killed by cops across the U.S. are Caucasian. Fox News reported that 123 Blacks and 326 Caucasians were shot dead by police in 2012.

“Even though I kind of expected the verdict, it’s really frustrating that the police are not held accountable,” said Luna Lorde, a nurse who lives on Staten Island. “It’s not that race isn’t involved, but it’s also about abuse of power.”

Staten Island high school student Allison Hagan said that there are many viewpoints about the decision not to indict Pantaleo among people she knows, “but I think it’s messed up.”

“The police officer who killed Eric Garner should face some consequences, whether it was intentional or not,” said Staten Island resident Roxanne Ingoe. “But the police department and the prosecutors, they stick together to present a united front.”



Militant/Dan Fein

Chicago march Dec. 6 protests killings of Garner and Brown.

SWP campaign

Continued from front page

mer Police Lieut. John Burge to force false confessions and railroad workers to prison.

“Some of my opponents in the mayor’s race say that cops wearing cameras is the solution to cop killings,” Fein told fellow protester Valerie Hale, a member of Save Our Sons Ministry. “But the Eric Garner incident was videotaped and that didn’t prevent the Staten Island prosecutor and grand jury from letting the cops who killed him walk. The problem is not the lack of cameras — it’s the fact that the police defend the dictatorship of capital. They serve and protect the propertied owners, not working people. Disciplined mass protests can slow down the cops — that’s why we are here today marching.”

“I’m here because I don’t like ignorance or cop brutality,” Mansfield Whiting, who used to work in a plastics factory and is looking for work, told Fein.

“I’ll take any job at this point,” he said. “How can anyone find a job with a living wage or medical insurance?”

“We must rely on workers’ collective power and solidarity,” Fein said. “The workers movement needs to organize its own political party, a Labor Party, to champion the interests of working people.”

“You have my support,” said Whiting, who volunteered to help get the word out about Fein’s campaign.

Fein, a 69-year-old factory worker and long-time trade unionist, is one of 11 candidates in the Feb. 24 “nonpartisan” election for mayor.

Rahm Emanuel, the incumbent, left his post as White House Chief of Staff for President Barack Obama to run for mayor in 2011. He led an assault on Chicago teachers, forcing them on strike in 2012. The strike won broad support among working people, who were looking for a way to push back attacks by the employers and city government.

Cook County Commissioner Jesus “Chuy” Garcia, another Democrat, is running against Emanuel. Karen Lewis, who was president of the Chicago Teachers Union during the 2012 strike, is backing Garcia, as are other liberals. Lewis had threatened to run against Emanuel herself, but dropped out of the race after she became seriously ill.

If no candidate wins more than 50 percent of the vote, there will be an April 7 runoff between the top two contenders.

Fein has been participating in and promoting actions by workers at Walmart, fast-food restaurants and elsewhere fighting for \$15 an hour, full-time work and union representation. The Chicago City Council recently approved a proposal from Emanuel to raise the city minimum wage to \$13 an hour by June 2019. Instead, Fein demands the city meet the demands of the protesters, and not put it off to the future.

As SWP candidate for governor last fall, Fein joined and built solidarity with striking teachers in Waukegan and auto mechanics at Al Piemonte Chevrolet in East Dundee.

Fein is also campaigning to back the fight of immigrant workers against government efforts to criminalize and deport them. There are 525,000 undocumented workers in the state of Illinois, mostly in the Greater Chicago area.

Union buster indicted

Continued from page 6

mounting solidarity actions. Some 30,000 miners in 11 states walked out two months later, determined not to suffer another Massey-like debacle.

Both the number of coal miners and the proportion who are members of the UMW has declined dramatically over recent decades. Only about one-quarter of working miners are members of the UMW today, down from 43 percent in 1994. Today there are 73,160 active miners, down from 175,000 30 years ago. Black lung is once again on the rise, particularly among younger miners.

The new generation of miners increasingly works in nonunion mines. Future Upper Big Branch disasters can only be prevented by growing working-class resistance out of which a strong mine workers union can be rebuilt. What’s needed is to organize the mines and use union power to enforce safety on the job, and fight the Blankenships and his kindred spirits who run the coal industry.

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