

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
Book fair highlights Haitian culture, Cuban Revolution  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 79/NO. 1 JANUARY 19, 2015

## Fired Delta Air worker wins support in fight for job

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

MINNEAPOLIS — Some 200 ramp workers, flight attendants, union representatives and others attended a Dec. 18 after-work fundraiser to advance the fight to win fired Delta baggage handler Kip Hedges' job back. Hedges, a leader of efforts to unionize Delta Airlines and the campaign for a \$15-per-hour minimum wage for all workers at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, was fired Dec. 2. The company claims Hedges made a "disparaging" comment about the company when he said in an online interview that a lot of workers at Delta earn less than \$15. He has worked for the airline for 26 years.

A Minnesota unemployment insurance judge ruled Dec. 19 that Hedges was eligible for benefits. "The fact that the judge saw this as a wrongful termination shows that if we had a union I would be back at work now," Hedges told the *Militant*, saying his priority "is to help keep the union-organizing campaign going."

The fundraiser took place at a bar  
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## 'Fewer jobs for a decade,' former Treas. Sec'y says

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers has written a widely circulated article, "Reflections on the New 'Secular Stagnation Hypothesis,'" saying, "The idea that depressions were a concept of only historic interest has been belied by the financial crisis and 'Great Recession.'" He laments that in the face of today's crisis, capitalist economic theories are "close to useless."

"It may be impossible for an economy to achieve full employment, satisfactory growth and financial stability simultaneously," he says.

His only answer is for the bosses to continue their grinding offensive against workers' jobs, wages, social benefits and rights.

In the more than five years since bourgeois economists announced that a recovery has taken hold, there has been little in the way of economic recovery for working people. Government statistics posit a gradual decline in official unemployment levels to 5.8 percent in November. But work-

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## Cuban 5 free: New stage in defense of revolution opens

Footing strengthened to fight US embargo



Above, Lisandra Cardoso/Radio Angulo  
Above, celebration in Holguín, Cuba, on freedom for the Cuban Five, one of many actions around the island Dec. 17, the day Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero and Gerardo Hernández were released from U.S. prisons. Inset, Cuban Five, from left, Fernando González, Labañino, Hernández, Guerrero and René González.



BY MAGGIE TROWE

The return to Cuba Dec. 17 of Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and Antonio Guerrero, joining previously released members of the Cuban Five — René González and Fernando González — was greeted with widespread spontaneous mobilization and celebration across the island.

Carrying themselves with the same dignity and firmness of purpose they

had displayed while behind bars, all five volunteered for whatever assignment should be asked of them next to defend and strengthen the Cuban Revolution.

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**NEW BOOK CELEBRATES CUBAN FIVE VICTORY**

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## Socialist Workers Party launches ballot drive for DC City Council



Militant/Anne Parker

Glova Scott, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council Ward 4 in Washington, D.C., and Walmart worker, joins picket by Laborers' Union against Unity Disposal Jan. 4 in Laurel, Maryland. Workers have been on strike since Dec. 26 over safety conditions, pay.

BY ANNE PARKER

WASHINGTON — Supporters of Glova Scott, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in Ward 4 here, began efforts Jan. 3 to collect double the required 500 signatures to put her on the ballot for the April 28 election. Teams of campaign volunteers will fan out in working-class neighborhoods Jan. 10-11 and 17-18 to

go over the top.

Scott works at Walmart and is a member of OUR Walmart, active in the fight to win a \$15-an-hour minimum wage and full-time work for workers at the country's biggest non-government employer.

Going door to door, campaigning and petitioning, and looking to win

**Continued on page 11**

## Provocative ultraleft actions deal blow to fight against police brutality

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — Over the past few months, tens of thousands of working people have taken to the streets to protest the police killings of Eric Garner in Staten Island and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. The actions against cop brutality have

been larger, more multinational and marked by more union involvement than any in decades.

The protests were strengthened by the spread of workers' resistance to the grinding capitalist economic crisis. Some Walmart and fast-food workers

**Continued on page 10**

## 'Militant' beats back censorship at Fla. prison

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a victory against prison censorship, Florida prison authorities overturned the decision of the Taylor Correctional Institution in Perry, Florida, to ban an issue of the *Militant* just one day after the paper was informed about the issue's impoundment.

This advance for workers' rights is the latest of several successful fights the paper has waged against attempts

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Washington rally: 'Reinstate fired Walmart worker'

Kellogg cereal workers at four plants reject concession contract



# SKorea high court sanctions gov't ban of opposition party

BY SETH GALINSKY

In a blow to freedom of association and speech, South Korea’s Constitutional Court banned the Unified Progressive Party on Dec. 19, expelled all five of its representatives from the 300-member National Assembly, confiscated the party’s assets and ruled that the group’s members would not be allowed to form a new party. Chief Justice Park Han-chul said the party was guilty of seeking to “undo South Korea’s democratic order” and bring the country under “North Korea-style socialism.”

President Park Geun-hye hailed the court order, issued at the behest of her cabinet, calling it a “historic decision that strongly protects our liberal democracy.”

Park’s government has also attacked unions across the country, seeking to ban the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union and imprison the leaders of a December 2013 rail strike.

“The court, without any concrete evidence behind it, deemed the UPP’s ‘true motives’ to be coordinating with North Korea because some of its members were saying similar things to Pyongyang,” South Korean daily *Hankroyeh* said in a Dec. 20 editorial.

“Many people who agreed with progressive principles could now see themselves cast out of the system, their political views portrayed as unconstitutional or ‘pro-North Korea,’” *Hankroyeh* said. “Today it’s the UPP that’s being cast out; who knows who will be next?”

It didn’t take long to find out the answer. On Dec. 22 police searched eight locations associated with attorney

Jang Kyung-wook, a member of MINBYUN-Lawyers for a Democratic Society, which has opposed government attacks on political rights. Police also searched offices of the Korean Alliance, which has criticized the government’s foreign policy.

That same day Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency Commissioner Kang Shin-myung announced that police are investigating speakers at two demonstrations against the banning of the Unified Progressive Party, *Hankroyeh* reported, including leaders of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, the Korean Peasants League and the Korea Alliance for Progressive Movement.

The government sought the ban after it arrested Unified Progressive Party members in November 2013 and charged them with seditious conspiracy, incitement and violation of the National Security Law. Party leader Lee Seok-ki and six other members were found guilty of the two main charges, and Lee was sentenced to 12 years in prison.

In February this year, the Seoul High Court overturned the conspiracy charge but upheld Lee’s conviction on the other counts, reducing his sentence to nine years.

On Dec. 22 a Seoul court acquitted four former officials of the union at the Korea Railroad Corp. of charges of obstructing business for leading a three-week-long strike in December 2013. Prosecutors were seeking a five year prison sentence.

“A court ruling in 2006 said that a strike is not obstruction of business even if the government says it is illegitimate



AP Photo/Lee Jin-man

**Protest at Constitutional Court in Seoul, South Korea, Dec. 19 against ruling banning opposition Unified Progressive Party and expelling its representatives from National Assembly. At center is Lee Jung-hee, the party’s candidate for president in 2012 election.**

unless it takes place in a surprise manner. But the strike was announced in advance and the company had time to prepare,” Wol-san Liem, international affairs director for the Korean Federation of Public Services and Transportation Workers’ Unions, told the *Militant* in a phone interview from Seoul Dec. 29. International solidarity with the strike and the accused union leaders “was ref-

erenced by the judge,” Liem said. “The prosecution immediately appealed,” Liem added, expressing concern that unionists could still be convicted. “There have been some pretty bad decisions recently, like the dissolution of the UPP and the Supreme Court overturning a lower court decision in favor of workers at Ssangyong Motor factory.”

## OUR Walmart fighters contribute to party Capital Fund

In Washington, D.C., two members of OUR Walmart — the organization of Walmart workers fighting for higher pay, full-time work and respect on the job — are among the garment, airline and retail workers who recently sent blood money bonuses to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund. Ned Measel and Glova Scott sent \$208 and \$387.75 respectively, which they had been given as part of Walmart’s “MyShare” program.

The company claims this quarterly “profit-sharing bonus” goes up or down depending on “shrinkage” (missing or damaged inventory) and the number of reported employee and customer injuries on company property, Measel told the *Militant*.

Production, holiday and other “bonuses” — designed to bribe workers to accept speedup, unsafe job conditions 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 to help finance the party’s long-range work.

Becky Ellis, who works at a credit union in Minneapolis, sent \$323.80 “for blood money from my boss for back pay for a new contract.”

Dean Hazlewood in Miami sent \$118.38 paid to him from a class-action suit against a former employer in Los Angeles, American Apparel. “This was a place where the air was very dusty, leading to respiratory problems for many, myself included,” he wrote. “Only the bosses had air conditioning, and the hot-air exhaust from their air conditioning units shot straight out onto the production floor to make things even hotter. As garment workers are in the forefront of many labor actions around the world, what better use for this bribe.”

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— MAGGIE TROWE

THE MILITANT

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Courtesy of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio Rally at Ohio Statehouse Dec. 3 to protest bill that would ban abortion after 6 weeks.

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# Corn prices drop below farmers' cost of production

BY KAY MCFADDEN

MUSCODA, Wisc. — Even though grain farmers across the U.S. produced the largest corn harvest in history in 2014, falling prices for their crops are threatening their livelihoods. Now farmers are struggling to figure a way to keep farming in 2015. The price of corn dropped to \$3 a bushel during this fall's harvest, down 23 percent in 2014 after falling 40 percent the year before.

Many farmers were able to keep from going under because they had crop insurance, which guaranteed a price of \$4.62 a bushel for a portion of their crops.

"Three dollar corn wouldn't cover your production costs," Randal Jasper, a grain farmer here, told the *Militant*. "If it hadn't been for crop insurance, I would be out of farming."

Farmers get squeezed between seed and fertilizer conglomerates and farm implement companies on one side, who make what farmers call their inputs, and the prices paid by grain processing monopolies and other buyers on the other.

Nearly 40,000 farmers have lost their farms over the last five years. Others have struggled to put off expenditures, postponing purchase of new machinery.

Workers for the agricultural implements bosses are feeling the effect. In August, John Deere announced layoffs of 1,000 workers at its tractor plants in Iowa.

"Next year's insurance payouts will likely be lower because they are based on today's below-cost-of-production

grain prices," Jasper said.

The Farm Bill adopted in 2014 replaced direct payments to farmers with plans for subsidized crop insurance. How these changes will impact small family farmers is yet to be seen and many farmers fear the new government programs. "I don't know if I want to go back in there," said Jerry Hernan, a grain farmer from Blue River, commenting on the government Farm Service Agency.

The cost of the inputs that farmers use to produce their crops are at all-time highs. Seed, fertilizer, pesticides, and other nonland related costs in Illinois have more than doubled since 2006.

The cost of renting crop land to expand production also has skyrocketed. Farmers rent more than half the 250 million acres used to grow corn, soybean and wheat in the U.S. Average rent in Iowa went from \$131 per acre in 2004 to \$270 in 2013.

Negotiating rent cuts is not an easy task. "Every time we go to a landlord they say pay or we won't rent you the land," Hernan said.

Many farmers don't consider cutting back on land rental an option, fearing they won't be able to get it back when prices rise amid fierce competition for finite acreage to plant and grow.

"Some landlords are absentee owners who have land for investment but many are retired farmers or widows who use the rent to pay taxes and have a little income," said Jasper. "It is hard to ask them to take less money when they are relying on it for their livelihood, but I have to. At today's prices, I don't



Inset, Militant/Paul Mailhot

Above, farmer harvesting corn. As price of corn has fallen sharply, cost of seed, fertilizer, agricultural implements and land rent have soared, squeezing working farmers. Inset, Wisconsin grain farmer Randal Jasper.

make as much money from cropping on a farm as the land owner gets in rent."

"I don't know how we will make money in 2015," Hernan said. But both Hernan and Jasper are planning to put crops in the ground.

"I can't just quit farming for a year"

said Jasper. "I have a combine payment, sprayer lease payment, planter payment and a mortgage to pay."

"I don't know what to say. What are we going to do, quit farming because we can't make any money?" Hernan said. "I don't have the answer."

## Migrant woman first ever jailed for having abortion in Malaysia

BY LINDA HARRIS

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Nirmala Thapa, 24, a migrant from Nepal working in a factory in Penang, Malaysia, was convicted Nov. 12 for having an abortion and sentenced to a year in jail. Thapa is the first woman ever imprisoned in Malaysia for terminating a pregnancy.

"I strongly suspect this is a test case to undermine reproductive rights by targeting a vulnerable migrant worker," Dr. Choong Sim Poey of Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia told the *Militant* in a phone interview Dec. 7.

"Abortion is a very common procedure here," he said. Some 90,000 abortions are performed annually in Malaysia. Many migrant women have abortions out of fear of risking their jobs. "If they get pregnant, their employers terminate their contracts and send them back," Choong said, adding that migrant workers are not provided with access to contraception.

Thapa had the abortion at a Penang clinic Oct 9. While in recovery she was arrested during a clinic inspection carried out by Ministry of Health officials.

She was six weeks pregnant at the time of the abortion. Under Malaysian law abortion is legal up to 22 weeks if carried out by a qualified registered medical practitioner who views the continuance of the pregnancy as a risk to the woman's mental or physical health.

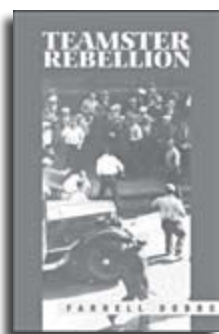
Thapa's doctor was arrested, but not charged. He made a statement saying that he had carried out an abortion, which he considered was legal. Thapa was charged with having induced the abortion herself and was jailed.

Thapa did not have a translator or a lawyer in court. "She pled guilty, but didn't know what she was admitting to," Choong told the *Militant*.

Women's rights groups and legal organizations in Malaysia have spoken out against Thapa's imprisonment. Michelle Yesudas from Lawyers for Liberty called for an immediate appeal of the prosecution and conviction.

Loh Cheng Kooi, from the Joint Action Group for Gender Equality in Penang, appealed for Thapa to be released and compensated. She said that if this case is allowed to set a precedent, then "women will be forced to seek clandestine services for their reproductive health needs. This will eventually result in unsafe abortions."

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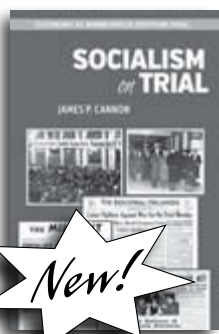


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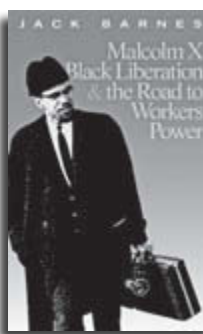
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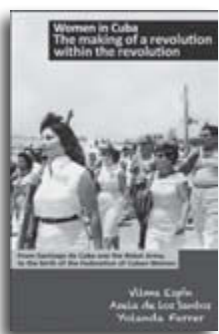
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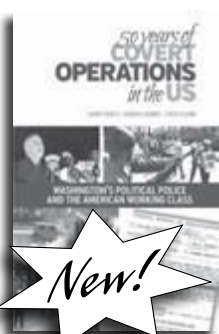
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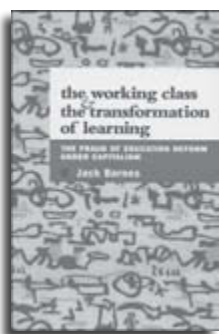
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# Pat Grogan: 45 years in building communist party

BY BARBARA BOWMAN

LOS ANGELES — “We celebrate Pat Grogan’s life today at the same time we celebrate winning the freedom of Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and Antonio Guerrero, meaning that all of the Cuban Five, imprisoned in the U.S. for their defense of the Cuban Revolution, are back in Cuba,” said Pat Nixon, opening a Dec. 21 meeting here to celebrate Grogan’s political work. Nixon is organizer of the Pathfinder Print Project, supporters of the Socialist Workers Party who organize volunteer production work on revolutionary books from Pathfinder Press.

A nearly five-decade builder of the communist movement, Grogan died in San Diego Dec. 1 after a battle with cancer. Fifty people attended the celebration, organized by party supporters in the Los Angeles area, drawing participants from Seattle, San Francisco and San Diego.

“Like many of her generation, Grogan was inspired by the Cuban Revolution, the Black struggle and the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese people during the U.S. war against their country,” said Norton Sandler, a National Committee member of the SWP who co-chaired the meeting.

“Pat met Young Socialist Alliance members selling the *Militant* newspaper when she was a 21-year-old student at Columbia University. She joined the YSA and soon after the SWP, and never looked back,” Sandler said. He pointed participants to attractive displays reflecting different events in Grogan’s political life and the nearly 30 messages sent to the meeting from around the world.

Grogan joined at a time of rapid recruitment to the revolutionary party and quickly became a veteran, Sandler said. She was a leader in the Columbia Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, wrote for the campus paper and ran the first of many election campaigns as a SWP candidate.

Grogan’s political generation participated in the rise of a new wave of struggles for women’s rights, Sandler said. She joined in the SWP’s participation in the fight to legalize abortion in the late 1960s and early ’70s, and later in the fight for the national Equal Rights Amendment.

## SWP turn to industry

In 1976 Grogan was living in Chicago, where she was among the first wave of party members who got jobs in the steel industry to be part of developing working-class resistance there. She joined “Steelworkers Fight Back,” a current in the United Steel Workers that fought to democratize the union and transform it into a fighting instrument capable of resisting the steel bosses’ attacks.

Women had traditionally worked in segregated departments in the steel mills, said Sandler. In the mid-1970s women Steelworkers increasingly won nontraditional jobs in the coke ovens, operating cranes and in the skilled trades, winning support from male co-workers and using the strength of the union to do so. Grogan was part of that fight.

Grogan served for a decade on the SWP National Committee and carried

out a variety of leadership responsibilities, he said. She was a staff writer on the *Militant* newspaper and edited its “Women in Revolt” column. She attended the Socialist Workers Party’s leadership school, where small groups of party leaders studied Marx and Engels for six month stretches. She ran as an SWP candidate for public office in New York, Illinois, Wisconsin and Utah.

Along with longtime party leader Evelyn Reed, Grogan wrote *Abortion Is a Woman’s Right!* which party members and other battlers for women’s rights used then and now. The pamphlet included an interview with Dr. Henry Morgentaler, a champion of the right to abortion in Canada, who was put on trial four times by the Canadian government.

Katy LeRougetel sent greetings to the meeting on behalf of the Communist League in Canada. She related how Morgentaler agreed to an interview, but told Grogan the only time he had was on a flight to Toronto. She rushed to buy a ticket, got on the plane and got the interview.

Linda Harris, a leader of the Communist League of Australia, sent a message about how they use the pamphlet today. “On recent visits we made to Bangladesh and Malaysia, we met young women and men wanting to read and discuss it,” she said.



Pat Grogan speaking at United Steel Workers union women’s conference in late 1970s.



Militant/Nick Castle

Los Angeles meeting Dec. 21 celebrates contributions of Pat Grogan, who helped lead Socialist Workers Party members’ participation in union movement, fight for women’s rights.

As workers’ battles against attacks on their unions and their rights became more generalized, the overwhelming majority of SWP members got jobs in basic industry. Grogan continued to help lead party branches and the work of party members in the unions in Milwaukee and Salt Lake City after leaving New York.

“We worked together with other unionists in Salt Lake in the early 1990s to organize tours for Eastern airline strikers, a British coal miner, Pittson Coal strikers, and two members of the African National Congress Youth League,” SWP Los Angeles branch leader and party National Committee member Ellie Garcia told the meeting. “These fighters spoke at union meetings, community halls and in workers’ homes.” At the time Grogan was a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union at the Phillips Refinery and later the United Steel Workers at the Kennecott Copper mine.

Grogan left active party membership in the late 1990s, moving to San Diego along with her companion Jesse Smith and teaching school for the next 15 years. She remained a regular financial contributor to the party.

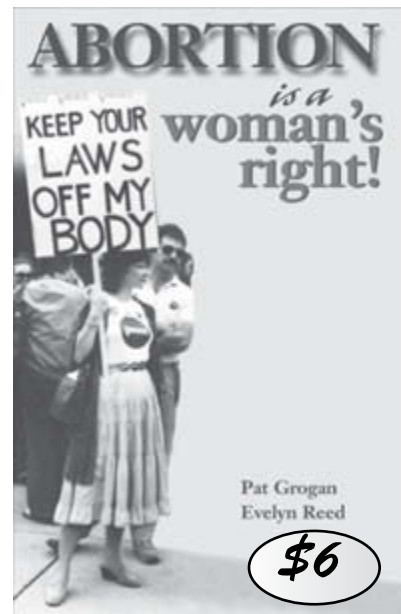
In recent years, she joined the Pathfinder Print Project. Dave Prince, the SWP National Committee member assigned to work with the project, explained that more than 240 volunteers help produce, upgrade and keep in stock more than 300 Pathfinder books and pamphlets used by SWP members and other vanguard workers. Grogan served on the steering committee of the English-French proofreading team.

“The print project is made up in its

majority of comrades like Pat, who were trained through their experience in the party and its work in industry,” Prince said. “It is not possible to imagine an international effort requiring the political commitment, discipline, attention to detail and organization that the print project requires could be led other than by those who got their training through that experience.”

Nora Danielson, a party supporter from San Francisco, explained she had originally met Grogan in the 1970s when both were party members active in defense of women’s rights, and she was glad to have had the chance to work with her again in the print project. “I always enjoyed her forthrightness and the easy way that invited response in kind,” she said. “She had a sharp, clear political mind and heart.”

A fund appeal raised \$1,700 to advance the work of the party.



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## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 19, 1990

As U.S. military forces enter the third week of their occupation of Panama, protest actions against U.S. intervention continue.

In New York hundreds participated in protests January 5-7. Some 400 people attended a January 5 meeting at Local 1199 of the hospital workers union, sponsored by WBAI radio station.

Many of the meeting’s participants joined a January 6 march of more than 700, called by the Committee Against the U.S. Invasion of Panama.

Following the march a forum was held at the Manhattan Pathfinder Bookstore. Some 100 people attended. On January 7 a forum was also held at the Brooklyn Pathfinder Bookstore.



January 18, 1965

NEW YORK — Rank-and-file members of the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) dumbfounded all the “experts” on Jan. 8 when they voted to reject a widely publicized “model” contract and resumed the East and Gulf coast strike.

Acceptance of the contract would have cut the work gang from 20 to 17 men in stages over the next three years and allowed stevedoring companies to introduce major technological changes in handling cargo, while leaving unanswered the crucial question of how many longshoremen — and exactly which longshoremen — would lose their jobs and established working conditions in the process.



January 20, 1940

Without relaxing their main task of ferreting out and framing up militant unionists and unemployed workers, the “G-men” have turned up in New York City a conspiratorial band of Fascists of the “Christian Front,” which had actually begun to collect an arsenal and to train men for the avowed purpose of an armed campaign against radical workers, Jews, and the government.

If the G-men have gone after this Fascist gang it is because the American capitalists do not feel as yet any need for help of this kind. They have sufficient confidence in the ability of their Army and Navy, police and G-men, their courts and prisons, to keep working class protest in check.



# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

## Help make this column a voice of workers' resistance!

As the new year begins, it is worth recalling what we said when we expanded the column last fall. On the Picket Line is dedicated to spreading the truth about the labor resistance that is unfolding today. To be a voice of fighting workers, it 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

### Washington rally: 'Reinstate fired Walmart worker'

LYNNWOOD, Wash. — More than 25 people rallied to demand the reinstatement of Jared Surdam Dec. 20 at the Walmart store here where he was fired at the end of November.

In a letter to supporters, Surdam said he was fired for speaking up for safety on the job after taking part in the Black Friday protest, part of actions across the country organized by OUR Walmart, a union-backed nationwide campaign fighting for \$15 per hour and full-time work. "I brought safety concerns to my store management," Surdam wrote. "When they ignored my concerns, I would bring them up again."

Walmart workers, representatives of Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action, All Pilgrim's Church, the United Food and Commercial Workers, Socialist Workers Party and others gathered to present a letter to the store manager urging Surdam's reinstatement. The letter was signed by Mike Sells, state representative in the 38th legislative district, and Mark McDermott, retired regional director for the U.S. Secretary of Labor, and endorsed by UFCW Local 21, the A. Philip Randolph Institute, Community Alliance for Global Justice, Church Council of Greater Seattle and the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

Surdam's supporters also distributed informational flyers to customers and store workers on his case and recent National Labor Relations Board rulings against Walmart for harassment of OUR Walmart members at two California stores.

"The fight for respect and a living wage is not only a Walmart worker's fight or a fast-food worker's fight, it's our community's fight," said Matt Edgerton, the lead organizer for OUR Walmart in Washington state, in a statement sent to the *Militant*.

— George Lawson

### Kellogg cereal workers at four plants reject concession contract

ATLANTA — In early December union workers at four of Kellogg Company's cereal plants voted 1,268 to 21 to reject a concessionary contract proposal reached in secret negotiations between

the company, international officials of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union and federal mediators.

The proposal would have modified the current master agreement, which expires in October 2015, at the four plants in Battle Creek, Michigan; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Memphis, Tennessee; and Omaha, Nebraska.

"This is worse than the proposal they made before they locked us out," Memphis BCTGM Local 252G President Kevin Bradshaw, an operator in the plant there, told the *Militant* in a Dec. 22 phone interview.

Two hundred twenty-six members of Local 252G were locked out by Kellogg's in October 2013 for nearly 10 months after local members refused to accept the company's plan to hire a lower-paid tier of temporary, part-time workers.

Before the contract vote, BCTGM members received a letter from International President David Durkee urging a "yes" vote, pointing to Kellogg's threats to close one or more plants if the contract failed to pass. International officials said a "confidentiality agreement" with Kellogg and the federal mediators prevented them from informing the locals of the negotiations.

The company's rejected proposals included elimination of cost-of-living adjustments and a leave-of-absence benefit, cuts in health care and establishment of a lower tier of "transitional" employees in all the plants in an arrangement Kellogg calls the "New Workforce of the Future."

— Susan LaMont

### California grocery workers vote to keep union

LOS ANGELES — After organizing to defeat an employer-backed decertification effort, hundreds of grocery workers and their supporters picketed El Super grocery stores Dec. 20-23, urging shoppers to support their struggle and boycott the chain.

The workers, members of the United Food and Commercial Workers, have been without a contract since September 2013.

Only seven of the 46 El Super stores



Militant/Betsey Stone

Members of United Food and Commercial Workers union protest outside El Super grocery store in Arleta, Calif., Oct. 23, 2014. They voted down company-backed proposal to decertify union Dec. 12. Seven of the 46 El Super stores in the region are union-organized.

are unionized. After the company launched a decertification campaign, that effort "turned into a recertification campaign," a union statement said. In a 402-131 vote Dec. 12 workers rejected decertification.

The El Super unionists are fighting for a 40-hour week, sick pay, wage increases and seniority rights.

"The company tried to intimidate us," El Super worker Guadalupe Baleriano told the *Militant* while picketing the East Los Angeles store Dec. 20. "They took away hours from the people fighting for the union. But now we're stronger and more confident. We know who is for the union, and we're not afraid anymore."

— Bill Arth

### Canadian can workers on strike for 16 months win support

TORONTO — Can workers on strike for 16 months here against Crown Holdings' two-tier proposal are winning support.

The 120 members of United Steelworkers Local 9176 have maintained 24-hour pickets since striking Sept. 6, 2013, when Crown, one of the world's largest can producers, demanded cuts in wages, pensions and benefits for new hires.

"They want us gone, but we're not going anywhere," Gary Lytle told the *Militant* Dec. 29 on the picket line. The company is operating with management and strikebreakers.

The strike has received solidarity from unionists in Canada, the U.S., Europe and Turkey. Steve McHugh, a union solidarity organizer, spoke at the Steelworkers District 5 convention in Quebec in November. "Right after I spoke, one local after another started pledging money. We raised over \$45,000," said McHugh.

Crown announced a list of 36 union activists they don't want back in the plant, and plans to retain 80 strikebreakers, leaving only 26 jobs for union members, Local 9176 Vice President Calvin Gillard told the *Militant*.

The USW has called for a boycott of beer in cans.

To express solidarity or contribute money to the strikers, go to the USW Local 9176 website: [www.bottlesnotcans.ca](http://www.bottlesnotcans.ca)

— Tony DiFelice and Annette Kouri

### Chicken butchers in Israel strike for union, permanent jobs

Singing and dancing in a circle, 65 kosher butchers and helpers went on strike at the Milouoff slaughterhouse near Acre in the Galilee region of Israel Dec. 15. They are demanding representation by the Koach La Ovdim (Workers Power) trade union federation and to work directly for the company.

The contractor the butchers worked for was fired by Milouoff, Rafi Kimhi, coordinator of Koach La Ovdim in northern Israel, said in a phone interview Dec. 29. The new contractor said it would not guarantee everyone a job.

The Milouoff butchers work piece rate, receiving 4 to 6 cents per chicken.

The butchers are all *haredim* — ultra-orthodox Jews from North Africa. The other workers at the factory, who raise the chickens, carve the carcasses and ship the product, are Arab citizens of Israel.

"When we started unionizing the butchers, we tried to unionize the other 400 workers too," Kimhi said. "But the company brought in the Histadrut [the largest Israeli union federation] and got them signed up without any contract, to block us from having one big union."

After the slaughter operation shut down, the other workers were laid off, but are following the strike closely, Kimhi said.

— Seth Galinsky

### N.Y. transit workers protest arrest of bus driver

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — Amidst the city's "Vision Zero" road safety campaign that scapegoats bus and taxi drivers for any accidents, police arrested and handcuffed a Metropolitan Transit Authority bus operator here Dec. 23 at a hospital where he was being treated for trauma after the bus he was driving struck and killed a pedestrian.

Bus driver Reginald Prescott, 57, a member of Transport Workers Union Local 100, was charged by cops with failing to yield to a pedestrian and immediately suspended without pay by the MTA.

At the same time, transit bosses press drivers to keep on schedule or face penalties, and the city has cut the speed limit from 30 to 25 miles per hour.

Under "Vision Zero," failure to yield to a pedestrian is now a misdemeanor punishable by up to 15 days in jail and/or a fine of up to \$50.

To protest Prescott's arrest and suspension, bus operators at several Brooklyn depots delayed the next morning's "pullout" for more than an hour.

"WE ARE NOT CRIMINALS!" Local 100 President John Samuelson said in a Dec. 26 statement. Samuelson cautioned drivers to observe all traffic regulations, including the new speed limit. "Should any member of Supervision threaten or harass you in any way to speed up service to make schedule," Samuelson said, drivers should contact the union immediately.

— Jim Watson



PSARA/Garet Munger

Walmart workers and supporters protest firing of Jared Surdam, center, holding letter, at Lynnwood, Wash., store Dec. 20. Surdam was fired after Black Friday Walmart workers' strike.



# Summers: 'Years of fewer jobs'

Continued from front page

ers continue to face a grinding crisis of joblessness and lower wages and hours for those who get work.

Millions without jobs are simply dropped from government statistics, discounted as no longer part of the workforce, and nearly 7 million have been forced into part-time work. Average wages rose only 2 percent last year, less than rising food and health care costs.

This situation results from a long-term crisis of the propertied rulers' industrial profit rates, which has fueled a continued slowdown of capitalist production and trade on a world scale. Instead of investing in plant and production the propertied rulers look to speculation in financial paper for higher returns. And they've targeted workers' wages, benefits and safety on the job to raise profit margins.

Summers notes that "unsustainable finances" have wracked the capitalist system for more than two decades,

referring to rising government debt, budget deficits and falling investment in plant and production replaced with financial speculation upticks ending as the Internet and stock market bubbles of the 1990s and the mortgage bubble of the early 2000s burst.

Following the 2008 crash, the Federal Reserve slashed interest rates to nearly zero in December 2008, hoping to spur economic growth. It then began a "quantitative easing" money-printing scheme in which the government bought \$3 trillion in government bonds and largely worthless mortgage-backed securities to pump money into the financial system over the next six years.

The rulers' aim was to make borrowing cheaper for companies and encourage them to invest in expanding production and hiring workers. But for the great majority of bosses, it remains unprofitable to do so. Instead they've accumulated hoards of cash or invested in stocks or other forms of speculative bets, hoping to turn a profit on the rise or fall of paper values. And for workers, unemployment, underemployment, shrinking wages and more danger to life and limb on the job are the "new normal."

So Summers has a new theory, "secular stagnation," which says it is impossible for capitalism to maintain a "posture of full employment and production" for the foreseeable future.

"Secular stagnation" was posed in the depression of the 1930s, Summers says, but reversed after the U.S. rulers entered World War II, cranking up factories for war production and emerging as the top imperialist power. Resolving today's crisis through a massive imperialist war is not on the table for the capitalist class.

Summers has no answers. He is fearful of the future, saying the situation is "troubling." "Indeed there is the possibility of destabilizing deflation with falling prices leading to higher interest rates leading to greater output shortfalls leading to more rapidly falling prices and onwards in a vicious cycle," he says.

At best, the current crisis is "likely to continue for at least the next decade," Summers writes.

In response to the question "What is to be done?" the noted economist calls upon the propertied rulers to continue their grinding squeeze on the working class, hoping to raise profit rates and

## Thousands in Moscow protest against frame-up



Above, Reuters/Tatyana Makeyeva

Thousands rallied in Moscow Dec. 30, in the face of a government ban, to condemn the conviction of opposition politician Alexei Navalny and his brother Oleg on frame-up fraud charges. Alexei Navalny was given a suspended sentence of three and a half years. His brother was sent to prison for that time.

The sentencing had originally been scheduled for Jan. 15 and opponents of the regime had announced a large protest. On Dec. 29 the government abruptly moved the hearing to the following day, making any protest actions around the verdict "illegal." Pussy Riot released a video Dec. 30 urging people to attend a demonstration. Hundreds of riot police blocked off the area and arrested more than 100 people. Pussy Riot member Maria Alyokhina and others, inset, conducted an all-night protest in sub-freezing temperatures in a giant Christmas ball on Moscow's Manezh Square, in front of the Kremlin. Police arrested and then released her and the other protesters.

Alexei Navalny, who has been under house arrest for nearly eight months, tried to attend the protest but was stopped by police.

The rally occurred amidst a mounting economic crisis in Russia. The worldwide fall of the price of oil — Russia's major export — has sharply affected the economy, with the ruble declining some 50 percent. Economic sanctions imposed by Washington and other imperialist powers have also taken their toll, hitting working people the hardest.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS



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gain time for the capitalist system to recover. However, he cautions the bosses need to keep some "social protections" to blunt working-class resistance.

The whole house of cards is built on one key assumption — that the working class will quietly take the shellacking he prescribes for the next 10 years or so that he believes is the minimum needed for U.S. capital to "recover." But the evidence is to the contrary.

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Walmart workers striking and protesting for \$15 an hour and full-time work, fast-food workers doing the same, rail workers at Burlington Northern overwhelmingly voting down boss demands for a one-person crew on freight trains, skirmishes by workers in other industries, as well as social protests against cop brutality and other actions that reinforce working-class resistance point to a different future.

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# Women at center of struggles as Bangladesh working class grows

BY EMMA JOHNSON  
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

DHAKA, Bangladesh — Struggles by tens of thousands of garment workers here have highlighted the rapid expansion of capitalist production for the world market and the resulting explosive growth and combativity of the industrial working class. Women have been at the center of these battles, gaining experience and self-confidence, which has led to changing social attitudes toward women's place in society.

During a reporting trip to Bangladesh in October, *Militant* reporters spoke with dozens of garment workers and unionists who gave a vivid picture of these developments.

When Bangladesh won independence from Pakistan in 1971, it had little industry and became heavily dependent on U.S. “aid,” which perpetuated underdevelopment. In the late 1970s, however, capitalists in the international clothing trade were attracted to the low wages in Bangladesh. The number of garment factories here mushroomed from nine to 5,000. Many have up to several thousand employees.

More than 4 million rural workers, overwhelmingly women, have migrated to Dhaka and Chittagong to seek jobs in the apparel industry, which generates 80 percent of the country's foreign earnings. While the owners are largely Bangladeshi, the industry supplies major European and U.S. retailers such as Walmart, Sears, Gap, Swedish-based H&M, and Carrefour of France. Bangladesh is now the world's second biggest garment exporter after China.

The industrial revolution in Bangladesh has been marked by brutal conditions, including widespread use of children's and women's labor. At the same time, the concentration of workers has increased their sense of collective power to organize and fight those conditions.

“I started working when I was 12 years old, in 1989,” Kalpona Akter, a longtime trade unionist and now executive director of the Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity, told *Militant* reporters in her office here Oct. 29. “My 10-year-old brother worked in the same garment plant. We helped support a family of seven.”

Akter described work shifts of up to 19 and a half hours. She would work until 3:30 a.m., sleep on the factory floor, and start again at 8 a.m. — often 15 or 16 days in a row.

“It was routine for bosses to slap and beat us and subject us to verbal abuse,” she remarked. “I didn't know anything about my rights when I started.

“Once, the company promised us 10 hours' overtime pay but then backtracked and gave us no extra pay. We said, ‘Enough is enough.’ We had counted on the money for the holidays,” Akter said. Some 1,500 workers went on strike. The bosses paid the overtime premium. “That was my first lesson. They only listen to us when we take to the streets.”

## Surge of union organizing

As tens of thousands of workers engaged in strikes and street protests, they pushed back some of the worst conditions. A 2006 labor law prohibits employment of children under 14 and stipulates a 48-hour workweek with a maximum of 12 hours overtime. Child labor is now rare in the apparel industry, Akter said, but is still widespread elsewhere, especially in agriculture and domestic service.

“There have been important changes over the years, and especially since the Tazreen and Rana Plaza disasters,” she said. “In the last 22 months we have registered unions in nearly 200 garment factories. In all the years before, only a handful of factories had been registered.”

In November 2012, unsafe conditions led to a fire at the Tazreen Fashions plant, trapping workers behind locked doors and killing 112. In April 2013, the Rana Plaza factory building collapsed and 1,129 garment workers were killed.

After months of street mobilizations, garment workers forced a 77 percent increase in the minimum wage, changes in the labor law easing some obstacles to union organizing, and a safety and fire accord between unions and companies.

“But we are still far from enjoying dignity — a decent wage, a safe workplace, union rights,” Akter said. “When workers organize, bosses retaliate with harassment, violence, firings and factory closings.” Only a handful of unions have won bargaining rights or contracts.

Even with the raise, the minimum wage, now \$68 a month, remains the lowest among major clothing exporters in Asia. The minimum garment wage is \$156 in China, \$100 in Cambodia, \$90 in Vietnam.

“As a skilled sewing machine operator I earn 6,800 takas [\$85] a month,” said Adilah when we met her and a



Militant/Ron Poulsen

**Oct. 28 protest by unionized garment workers against closing of Ha-Meem Sportswear plant in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Women workers have gained self-confidence in struggle.**

dozen of her co-workers from the Ha-Meem Sportswear factory Oct. 30. She had invited us to her home, a rented room near the plant in the Tejgaon industrial district. Translating for us was Lopa, an organizer for the National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF), which arranged the visit.

“My rent is 5,000 takas and I send 1,000 takas every month to my family in our home village,” Adilah said. Her husband, also a garment worker, earns 6,000 takas. “Even with two incomes it's hard. We have no medical insurance and a visit to the doctor plus the medicine will easily cost 1,000 takas.”

Adilah and her co-workers, members of the NGWF, are fighting to win back their jobs since the owners of Ha-Meem Sportswear closed the plant Oct. 13 in an effort to stop them from organizing a union.

All the workers, most of them in their 20s, said this was their first job. They moved to Dhaka from rural villages to work in garment, but like millions in Bangladesh's working class, they still have strong ties to the land.

“My son, who is in the eighth grade, lives with my parents in our home village,” said Shimul, another Ha-Meem worker. “I can visit him twice a year, during the two Eid [Muslim] holidays.”

Although legally required to provide child care facilities, most garment factories do not, workers explained. When bosses are tipped off that state inspectors will show up, they hastily set up a makeshift “child care” area.

Lopa accompanied us to another apartment to talk with a dozen workers from Nassa Group, a plant of 2,500 where a union-organizing fight is underway. They were among 30 fired after they protested the dismissal of a co-worker for taking two days off to attend her father's funeral in her home village.

“I'm pregnant, so now the company doesn't have to pay the maternity leave that is required by law,” said Shinly, a worker with 14 years' service. She said firing workers who get pregnant is not uncommon.

## Changing attitudes about women

The influx of millions of women into industry and their involvement in union struggles are having a big impact on the working class and Bangladeshi society as a whole, beginning with women themselves.

Shila Begum, a member of the NGWF national committee, said she had been a housewife in the rural southwestern district of Barisal and moved to Dhaka after her husband, a construc-

tion worker, died in a road accident. She worked two years at Rana Plaza, and was one of the survivors of the 2013 building collapse, which damaged her wrist, leaving her unable to work as a sewing machine operator.

“It's important to be active in the union,” she said. “It's our only protection.” The NGWF and other unions have led big mobilizations demanding compensation for survivors of Rana Plaza and orphans of workers killed in the disaster.

Several workers noted that their union involvement has won support from husbands and families who previously opposed women working outside the home. “They don't want the women to die on the job. They don't want starvation wages,” Kalpona Akter said.

“Men's attitudes toward women workers are changing — even compared to a few years ago,” said Nazma Akter, a former clothing worker and today general secretary of the Awaj Foundation, which campaigns for the rights of women garment workers. “Today some men are even cooking and doing the laundry because their wives work long hours.”

“Of course, it's very uneven,” Kalpona Akter said. “My husband wasn't supportive of my union activity, and was even abusive. So I filed for divorce.

“With greater economic independence, you find more and more single mothers here, and the divorce rate is going up. Divorce now is widely accepted in the working class.” Domestic violence, however, is still a taboo subject, she added.

## Migrant workers, rising expectations

Another source of increased working-class expectations here is the 9 million Bangladeshis working abroad — the majority in Saudi Arabia, other Gulf states and Malaysia. In 2013 their remittances totaled almost \$15 billion, 13 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

Several hotel workers in Dhaka told *Militant* reporters they had worked in hotels in Saudi Arabia or Dubai. “Migrants don't have many rights in Dubai,” said Abdul, a 24-year-old room attendant, who asked that his full name not be used. “But there I made four times as much as the 10,000 takas [\$125] a month I get here for doing the same job.”

Abdul said his jobs in the Mideast had exposed him to the world. “My best friend at the Dubai hotel was from Mexico, and I learned a lot from him,” he said.



Militant/Martín Koppel

**Right, Shila Begum, who survived 2013 Rana Plaza factory building collapse, is a leader of National Garment Workers Federation in Bangladesh. At left is Lopa, union translator.**



# Book fair highlights Haitian culture, Cuban Revolution

BY PAUL MAILHOT

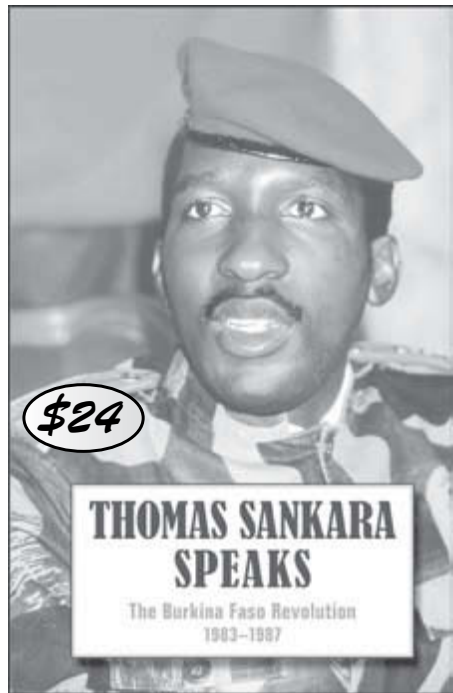
PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — The Second Haiti International Book Fair took place here Dec. 12-14, with thousands of Haitian students, academics and working people visiting the 25 booths from Cuba, the National Book Center of Venezuela, Pathfinder Press and Haitian vendors with books on Haitian culture and history, the Cuban Revolution and world politics, and other topics.

Cuba was the country of honor this year. Led by Zuleica Romay Guerra, director of the Cuban Book Institute, a substantial delegation of Cuban writers, editors and filmmakers participated. Their booth featured books on the political and cultural interrelationships between the people of Cuba and Haiti, and a wide range of books about the Cuban Revolution and its place in the world.

Cuban delegation members also featured presenters at a number of public programs and contributed to the musical and cultural presentations at the fair. *Reembarque*, a film about Haitian agricultural workers in Cuba during the sugar boom of the 1920s and '30s, was introduced by Cuban filmmaker Gloria Rolando at two showings during the fair.

In Cap Haitien, on the northern tip of the island, a program celebrating the life of José Martí was held. Pedro Pablo Rodríguez, one of the editorial directors of the Center for the Study of José Martí in Cuba, spoke at the event. At one of the Port-au-Prince programs Rodríguez explained that Martí, a central leader of the fight for Cuban independence, had visited Haiti on three occasions. He, along with other revolutionaries in the late 1800s, was among the first to challenge the political and sociological justifications for imperialist domination in Haiti.

The revolutionary government of Cuba has maintained a medical mission here since 1998, following the massive damage caused by Hurricane George. The program has expanded over the past 16 years, involving more than 3,500 medical personnel from Cuba who provide their services free of charge. For many Haitians, the Cuban doctors are the only ones they have ever seen.



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

"Cuba has added a lot to the success of the book fair this year," Frantz Carly Jean Michel, director of Haiti's National Directorate of Books, which sponsored the event, told the *Militant*. "There was a lot of interest in the Cuban presence and their participation with music, books and films helped to make the fair more informative and enjoyable."

The guest of honor at the fair was well-known Haitian author Michel Soukar, who has written extensively about the early history of U.S. imperialist domination of the island. As a prelude to the centennial of the first U.S. occupation of Haiti, which lasted from 1915 to 1934, book fair organizers chose Soukar to promote greater understanding of this chapter of Haitian history and its relevance for the current political situation in the country. Today, thousands of United Nations troops under Washington's direction are stationed in Haiti and act as the military force of the country.

Frantz Carly Jean Michel said the fair was an important step forward in promoting culture and learning in Haiti. A special effort was made to bring students from around Port-au-Prince, who came by bus wearing their school uniforms. Many booths offered literature for young adults and children. "Activities in the provinces was another major strength of this book fair over last year's event, which was concentrated in Port-au-Prince," he said.

## Revolutionary literature popular

Pathfinder, a publisher of Marxist and working-class books, had a stand featuring nearly 30 titles in French, including newly published books on the fight to free the Cuban Five — *Voices from Prison: The Cuban Five* and *I Will Die the Way I've Lived*. The Pathfinder booth also offered a selection of writings of revolutionary leaders from around the world in English and Spanish.

Rodney Casseus, a first-year college student, said he was impressed with the breadth of books being offered at the fair and in particular at the Pathfinder booth. "We don't have much access to books about history and culture in Haiti and the world," he said. "There has been a crisis in Haiti for years, and these books make it possible to look at the social and economic problems of the country in a new way."

Many stopping by the Pathfinder stand spoke about the demonstrations in Port-au-Prince and elsewhere in Haiti in recent weeks calling for the ouster of President Michel Martelly and new elections. Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe and several other government ministers resigned Dec. 14, but protests demanding Martelly resign are continuing.

Like many others who stopped by the booth, Rodney Casseus said he is opposed to the policies of the current regime, but sees the opposition forces organizing many of the protests against Martelly as cut from the same cloth as the discredited ruler. "This is an opposition that still favors the interests of the rich, not those of the people."

Working people in Haiti are still staggering from the effects of the



Militant/Linda Joyce

Pedro Pablo Rodríguez, left, of Center for Study of José Martí in Cuba, speaks at Dec. 12 program on Martí's life attended by 30 Haitian students. Other members of Cuban delegation, from left, José Pérez Baujín, Laura Ruiz Montez, Teresa Cárdenas and Yunier Riquenes García.

devastating 2010 earthquake that left 100,000 dead and tens of thousands more without housing, clean water, sanitation or health care. There are still tent cities around Port-au-Prince that were set up as temporary housing four years ago. Working people have to spend hours each day traveling to work or getting necessities, since many roads remain damaged and there is a dearth of public transportation.

"In a country where 60 percent of the population depends on farming for their livelihood, the conditions in the countryside are worse in many ways," Cantave Jean-Baptiste, an agronomist who was part of a powerful peasant movement in the 1980s in the fight against the hated Duvalier family dictatorship, told the *Militant*. "Haitian farmers are isolated and forced to deal with all of their problems individually," he said. "There are no cooperative movements or government programs to help farmers."

"Farmers in Haiti today use many of the same tools — oxen and plows — that were used in colonial times, and even those tools are not effective on

the mountainous terrain that many are farming," said Cantave Jean-Baptiste.

He also pointed to the "long history of struggle for the land in Haiti that will develop again in the future." He bought a number of books at the Pathfinder stand that feature the lessons of the alliance of workers and farmers in struggles around the world.

Books by Thomas Sankara, the leader of the 1983-87 Burkina Faso Revolution, were among the most popular works at the Pathfinder stand and rapidly sold out. Spurred by interest in the recent mass mobilizations in Burkina Faso that toppled the regime of Blaise Compaoré, many visitors asked the socialist workers from the United States and Canada volunteering there to tell them about the Burkina Faso Revolution and the political course of Sankara.

In all 288 books were snapped up at the Pathfinder booth over the three-day fair. Organizers invited Pathfinder to come back next year, and to come and join the many Haitian groups who will be organizing activities next July 15 to mark the 100th anniversary of the first U.S. occupation of Haiti.

## Fired airline worker fights for job

Continued from front page

and restaurant near the airport. Fellow baggage handlers and several flight attendants who are also organizing to join the Machinists union, joined members of Service Employees International Union Local 26, Machinists Local 1833, officials of the Minneapolis AFL-CIO and activists in the campaign to raise the minimum wage at the airport. Hedges and the Machinists union are appealing his firing.

Steve Hunter, secretary-treasurer of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, presented Hedges with a \$5,000 contribution to the fight to get his job back.

"The firing of Kip Hedges is simply outrageous. Freedom of speech, freedom to organize and form a union are still constitutional rights," Rose Roach, executive director of the Minnesota Nurses Association, told the *Militant*. "Nurses stand in solidarity with our brother Kip."

"The firing of Delta baggage handler Kip Hedges for organizing to raise wages for airport workers is wrong," U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison said in a statement protesting Hedges' firing and supporting the fight for higher wages for airport workers. "Working Americans shouldn't be intimidated

for joining together to demand better working conditions." Ellison sent a letter of support for Hedges to Delta and to the secretary of labor.

Hedges spoke before the Metropolitan Airports Commission Dec. 15, supporting efforts of workers for contractors at the airport to get paid sick days and urging commissioners to join in denouncing his firing. "I would like you to make it clear to Delta Airlines that they stand alone on this," he said.

As dozens of workers and their supporters held up signs saying, "Still Fighting for PAID SICK DAYS," the commission voted unanimously to require airport subcontractors to meet the workers' demand.

"We are trying to bring airport workers together because so many work for poverty wages and little or no benefits like vacation, sick days and health insurance," Abera Siyoun, a cart driver in the terminal who works for Air Serv, told the *Militant*.

Hedges also spoke at the St. Paul AFL-CIO regional labor federation Christmas party and received a \$500 donation.

More than 10,000 signatures have been collected on an online petition protesting the firing.



# Cuban Five have been ‘Absolved by Solidarity’

Absolved by Solidarity, a full-color book of new paintings and text by Antonio Guerrero, has just been released by Pathfinder Press. Guerrero is one of the Cuban Five freed Dec. 17, 2014. Below are introductory comments from the new book by Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder and the book’s editor.

On December 17, 2014, more than sixteen years after the battle began, Cuban president Raúl Castro informed the world that Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, and Antonio Guerrero were home. They join René González and Fernando González on Cuban soil.

Across the island Cubans poured into the streets from factories, schools, and offices expressing their joy. Supporters around the world joined in celebration.

Gerardo Hernández gave voice to the sentiments of each of the Five when he told a national television audience in Cuba, “We’ve turned the page on the pain and abuses of prison. We’re on a new page now,” ready for new battles. “You can count on us for whatever is needed,” he told President Castro, who welcomed them at the airport.

Above all, it was the firmness, dignity, courage, and discipline of the Five that made possible the hard-fought victory won by the people of Cuba, their government, and a “jury of millions” around the world.

As Washington moves toward establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba for the first time in more than half a century, a new front has now opened in the decades-long battle to defend Cuban independence and sovereignty. Raúl Castro explained it unflinchingly in his message to the Cuban people: “In no way has the heart of the matter been solved. The economic, commercial, and financial blockade, which causes enormous human and economic damages to our country, must cease.” The battle to advance and defend Cuba’s socialist revolution continues as it has since January 1, 1959.

*Absolved by Solidarity* was on its way to press the day its principal author and artist was freed from prison. The printing was postponed long enough to record that victory on the cover and add these few words and photographs. Publication of this powerful portrait of sixteen years of struggle could not be more timely. In its pages you will find not a backward glance at the “pain and abuses of prison.” You will find the dignity, strength, and humanity of the Cuban Revolution and the five unbowed soldiers who have become the face of that revolution the world over.

*Absolved by Solidarity*, indeed. As promised by Fidel, they have returned.

Mary-Alice Waters  
December 20, 2014

## New Washington sanctions aim to isolate, destabilize Venezuela

BY MAGGIE TROWE

President Barack Obama signed bipartisan legislation Dec. 18 imposing sanctions on some Venezuelan government officials, accusing them of violating the rights of protesters during anti-government demonstrations in Venezuela last year.

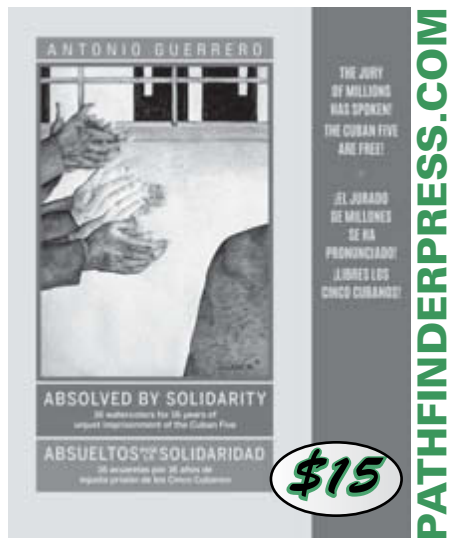
The sanctions deny travel visas and freeze any U.S. assets of current and former Venezuelan officials deemed by Washington to have been responsible for arrests, deaths and injuries during protests against the government of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro between February and May 2014.

“The U.S. is trying to isolate Venezuela because Venezuela opposes U.S. domination of the economies of Latin American countries,” William Camacaro, senior analyst at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs and a member of the Bolivarian Circle of New York “Alberto Lovera,” told the *Militant* in a phone interview Jan. 5. “Venezuela has long opposed the U.S. embargo against

Cuba, which still exists despite the re-establishment of diplomatic relations.”

Since the election of President Hugo Chávez in 1998 Washington has backed efforts to overturn the Venezuelan government — including the failed 2002 military coup against Chávez — and end its close trade and diplomatic ties with revolutionary Cuba.

“We have special relations with Venezuela,” Cuban President Raúl Castro told the Cuban national assembly Dec. 20. “We will continue supporting it amid attempts to destabilize the legitimate government of President Maduro.” Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, who met with Maduro in Caracas Jan. 2, condemned the sanctions.



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The Cuban Five address the political and economic challenges facing the Cuban Revolution Dec. 21 on Arleen Rodríguez’s “Light in the Darkness” radio program in Havana.

## New stage in defense of revolution

Continued from front page

The leadership caliber of the five revolutionaries was evident when they were invited to take part in the Dec. 21 “Light in the Darkness” program on Radio Rebelde (Rebel Radio) hosted by Arleen Rodríguez. While behind bars, the Five had sometimes been able to pick up the radio signal of the Sunday night program dedicated to the fight to free them.

The Five were asked about their impressions of Cuba after their long absence. Each spoke of the economic and social challenges in Cuba, their confidence in the Cuban people and their commitment to the revolution. Each acknowledged the impact on the economy, the infrastructure and on revolutionary consciousness of the U.S. trade embargo and the “special period,” the decade of severe economic crisis in the 1990s caused by the precipitous end of aid and favorable trade relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe following the collapse of those countries’ governments.

“Sometimes I see Cuba and try to think about a country that suddenly lost 75 percent of its trade, and had the capacity to go through the special period and emerge as we have,” said René González. “There’s something in the spirit of our people that made this possible.”

During their imprisonment, the Five followed news and politics in Cuba and the world. “The compañeros in our Interests Section in Washington always sent us a big folder each week with everything published on Cuba, so we were well informed on what was happening,” Hernández said. “We know well the negative effects the special period had not only economically, but on people’s consciousness.” He added that the Five “have full confidence in our people to move forward.”

At the same time as President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro announced the freeing of Hernández, Labañino and Guerrero, they announced Washington and Havana would resume diplomatic relations.

However, as Castro cautioned that day, “This does not mean the heart of the matter has been resolved. The economic, commercial and financial blockade, which causes enormous human and economic damage to our country, must cease.”

Moves by the Obama administration and articles in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and other capitalist media in the week following the announcement confirmed that the U.S.

ruling class wasn’t backing off one inch from its more-than-five-decade effort to overthrow the Cuban Revolution.

Increasing numbers of the propertied rulers back trading the Five for U.S. spies and opening discussion of diplomatic relations as steps to take advantage of new openings to undermine the Cuban Revolution. The move is based on the success of the imperialist embargo grinding on Cuban workers and farmers, not its failure.

In addition, freeing the Five and relaxing a “pointlessly harsh policy,” as the *New York Times* said in a Dec. 17 editorial, is aimed at removing an obstacle to broader efforts by Washington to step up activity, court influence and confront competitors throughout Latin America.

### Pivot to Latin America

Noting that for more than 50 years “Washington’s squeeze on Havana has poisoned its relations with the region,” a Dec. 22 *Financial Times* editorial praised Obama’s move. “Rapprochement vaporizes a rhetorical bludgeon that U.S. critics have routinely used to cudgel Washington,” it said.

The Obama administration, portraying the Cuban government as a weakened foe and the socialist revolution as a failure, is deepening its intervention in class relations in Cuba with the aim of strengthening counterrevolutionary and pro-capitalist layers. This includes backing “dissidents” and “independent” librarians and journalists, as they describe counterrevolutionaries supported and financed by the U.S. government and its various agencies, in the name of “democracy”; more contact with those running businesses; and more leeway to expand access to U.S. propaganda on the internet.

“We certainly hope that the Cuban government will allow us to engage with those who are self-employed, those who are entrepreneurs,” said Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Roberta Jacobson, the administration’s lead negotiator in upcoming talks with the Cuban government in Havana, in a Dec. 30 Public Broadcasting Service interview.

Asked about critics of the new policy who say the U.S. is throwing a lifeline to Cuba, Jacobson replied, “Well, I don’t think that’s true. For one thing, the embargo is still in place.”

The Five were arrested and jailed in 1998 by the Clinton administration on frame-up charges of conspiracy to commit espionage and, in the case of Hernández, conspiracy to commit murder.

Continued on page 10

## — CALENDAR —

### WASHINGTON

#### Seattle

**Guest Gallery Exhibition:** “I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived.” Work by Antonio Guerrero for the 16th anniversary of the imprisonment of the Cuban Five. Jan. 14 – Feb. 22.  
**Special Event:** John Martinez, co-chair of the Human and Civil Rights Committee of AFT Local 1789, speaks about the exhibit and the case of the Cuban Five. Wed., Jan. 28, 6:30 p.m. Both at Columbia City Gallery, 4864 Rainier Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 760-9483.



# Ultraleft acts blow to cop brutality fight

**Continued from front page**  
fighting for \$15 an hour, a union and a 40-hour workweek; health care workers in 1199SEIU; and other unionists have joined the protests. In addition, broader labor struggles and the mobilizations against cop brutality have reinforced each other.

More people see police brutality and intimidation are directed at the entire working class. While African-Americans are disproportionately targets, thousands of Caucasians, Latinos and Asians are also victimized by cops every year.

The protests were dealt a blow by the effects of provocative ultraleft actions at demonstrations in New York, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere that created an atmosphere in which a disturbed individual like Ismaaiyl Brinsley felt encouraged to assassinate two New York police officers, Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu, Dec. 20. Just before killing Ramos and Liu, Brinsley posted a message on Instagram: “They take 1 of ours ... let’s take 2 of theirs,” according to the New York Police Department. The killings undermine the moral high ground taken by the protest mobilizations denouncing cop attacks on the lives, safety and dignity of working people.

The Brown and Garner families condemned the assassination of the cops. “Anyone who’s standing with us, we want you to not use Eric Garner’s name for violence, because we are not about that,” Gwen Carr, Garner’s mother, told reporters.

“The killing of the cops was a cowardly act,” Chuck Ferrell, a nurse, told the *Militant* Jan. 5 near the March Houses, a public housing project just blocks from where the two cops were shot. “Nobody wants to see a life taken, cop or civilian.”

“But too many unarmed men, especially Black men, are getting killed by

the police,” he said. “The men in blue have too much power, they go around with Courtesy, Professionalism and Respect written on the side of their police cars, but they don’t show any respect.”

The cops, capitalist media and politicians — from liberal Mayor Bill de Blasio to the conservative *New York Post* — seized on the killings to call for a halt to the demonstrations.

### Provocations undercut protests

At two of the largest protests against police brutality Dec. 13, 10,000 in Washington, D.C., and more than 25,000 in New York, small provocative ultraleft groups put forward slogans that ran 100 percent counter to the aims of the protests and the overwhelming majority of participants. In New York, a group in the protest chanted, “What do we want, dead cops!” In D.C., some protesters involved in an attempt to take over the speakers platform carried signs that said, “‘Hands up don’t shoot’ didn’t work. Fists up, fight back.”

Such unchecked provocative conduct from within the protests — in the absence of a proletarian leadership strong enough to build a disciplined movement — created an atmosphere where a Brinsley could feel encouraged to act.

### Protests spread after Garner’s killing

The July 17 attack on Garner was caught on tape and posted widely on the Internet, seen by millions. Garner did nothing to provoke the attack and can be heard saying “I can’t breathe” 11 times while undercover cop Daniel Pantaleo applied a chokehold and his fellow officers piled on Garner’s back.

The Dec. 3 grand jury decision not to indict Pantaleo fueled even larger and broader protest actions. “After Michael Brown was killed there was a lot of ‘he said, she said,’ over what happened,” Brooklyn resident Ferrell noted. “But

with Garner, it was all on tape, there was no question at all.”

NYPD rules ban chokeholds that prevent breathing, but don’t explicitly bar those that compress the carotid arteries, like the one used by Pantaleo in the assault on Garner. Despite the “ban,” the chokehold is standard operating procedure for New York police — and for cops across the country. According to a city government report, the use of the hold is going up. *Police* magazine wrote in its Jan. 30, 2014, issue that the goal of the widely used “carotid restraint” is to render the person being arrested unconscious in 7 to 10 seconds to make it easier for cops to put on handcuffs.

Cops and their apologists argue that use of such chokeholds — like the use of Tasers — are progressive reforms that prevent deaths, allowing cops to bring suspects under control instead of shooting them dead. These methods protect both the cops who use them and those they subdue, they say, but “unfortunately” sometimes kill people.

The fact is Pantaleo and the cops who assisted him were acting like all cops are trained and conditioned to act, to “protect and serve” the interests of the propertied rulers and to make sure working people know their “place.”

### Cops, politicians seize opportunity

The cops and their supporters seized on the killing of Ramos and Liu to slander the entire protest movement, charging that by criticizing the cops, they opened the door to the cops’ deaths.

Mayor de Blasio called for a moratorium on protests against the killing of Garner, at least until after the two officers were buried. When the next protest did take place, the *New York Daily News* — which had editorialized for the indictment of Pantaleo — ran a banner front-page headline telling marchers “Have You No Shame?”

The *New York Post* went to town on de Blasio, claiming that an ear-



*Daily News*, which had editorialized for indictment of cop Pantaleo in killing of Eric Garner, ran cover Dec. 24 condemning police brutality protests after two cops were killed.

lier statement to ABC’s “This Week” about telling his son, who is Black, that he needs to be careful when stopped by the police because of his race encouraged attacks on cops by protesters.

Thousands of cops turned their backs on the mayor when he spoke at Ramos’ funeral Dec. 27 and again at Liu’s funeral Jan. 4. “I did turn my back out of disgust on how the country feels about cops,” an NYPD lieutenant told the *Wall Street Journal* after Liu’s funeral.

According to the *Post*, the cops also staged a “virtual work stoppage” resulting in a 66 percent drop in arrests since the shootings and a more than 90 percent drop in parking tickets.

While the protests against police brutality have subsided for now, the cops will continue to act as the propertied rulers demand: to treat working people as an outlaw class that must be kept in check. Police brutality is part of their program and more beatings and killings are inevitable.

As workers continue to come together to fight against the relentless attacks of the bosses and their government, they will construct a leadership capable of restraining ultraleft disruption and taking on cop brutality and killings as they transform themselves on the road to overthrowing capitalist rule.

## New stage in defense of Cuba

### Continued from page 9

der, for which he received a double life sentence plus 15 years. Hernández was a special target of Washington’s frame-up because he served as organizer of the network of Cubans who volunteered to gather information on paramilitary forces in southern Florida who had carried out violent attacks on the island and against supporters of the Cuban Revolution in Puerto Rico and the U.S.

The strength and honorable conduct of the Five behind bars, the unwavering support they received from the revolutionary government and people of Cuba, and a growing international campaign to free them led to the December victory.

“The effort of each and every one of you has contributed to making this triumph possible,” wrote Hernández and his wife Adriana Pérez in a Dec. 31 message to all who supported them over the years. “For more than 16 years the

Five have dreamt about this happiness that we are now living. Your continued struggle on our behalf has made this all possible. And today, as we are showered with the love of our people, the gratitude for all the sisters and brothers, from around the world, who have supported us during this time is multiplied.

“On behalf of the Five and our families we wish you a happy and very successful 2015,” they said, “and congratulate you on the 56th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution.”

The Five are moving on to new challenges and responsibilities. “We have turned the page on the suffering and abuses of prison,” Hernández said on the popular “Mesa Redonda” (Round Table) television program Dec. 18. When asked if he would continue to draw the political cartoons that were shown around the world during his imprisonment, Hernández said he would consider it “if I have time.”

### ‘My heart is singing for the Cuban Five’

*Letter from Iris Baez, Mothers Against Police Brutality*

*Below is a statement by Iris Baez in solidarity with family members of the Cuban Five celebrating the release and return to Cuba of the Cuban revolutionaries. Baez is the mother of Anthony Baez, killed by a chokehold by New York cops in 1994.*

December 17, 2014

Dear Sisters in the Struggle,

It is with great joy to hear that your loved ones are being released from a U.S. prison. I hope that they are healthy, strong and will be in their homes very soon. This release is far overdue. My heart is singing and I know the Cuban people will receive them with great joy. I am the mother of Anthony Baez, Jr. who was killed by a New York police officer in 1994. Along with many other parents who have lost their children to police violence, I have been in the struggle fighting for justice to end police brutality.

My son Anthony Baez was murdered with an illegal chokehold by a police officer while other police looked on and did nothing. These police officers then turned around and committed perjury in the court. Since 1994 I have learned that this is the American way of justice.

I have been speaking out against police brutality and for a more just world — free of racism and violence.

It is from my personal experience that I understand your pain. Just to think that as mothers and wives daughters and sons you all have been struggling to the day when all the Cuban 5 would be free. We have all been waiting for this day for over 15 years.

And I have been praying and speaking out on behalf of the Cuban 5 and it gives me great strength and greater love to see my brothers walk free. Please embrace Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González for me and all of the parents struggling for justice.

Yours truly,  
*Iris Baez and family*  
Mothers Against Police Brutality



# Greetings to workers behind bars!

The *Militant* sends New Year's greetings to fellow workers behind bars. Nearly 2.4 million people in the U.S. are locked up and millions more are on probation. Some 11 million working people will have spent time behind bars this year.

We join with millions in Cuba and worldwide to celebrate the return of Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero and Ramón Labañino to Cuba Dec. 17, the last three members of the Cuban Five who were held in U.S. prisons, framed up 16 years ago for their actions in defense of the Cuban Revolution. Their victory should be used to extend solidarity to all political prisoners and advance their fights for freedom, including Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera, in prison for 33 years; Native American activist Leonard Peltier; Mumia Abu-Jamal; the Omaha Two, Mondo we Langa and Ed Poindexter; and others.

Prosecutors, cops, the courts, prison officials and guards treat those who are locked up as beasts who deserve whatever they get. This mirrors the class bias of their masters — the propertied ruling families — who can only maintain the dictatorship of capital, based on the exploitation of wage labor, by treating the working class as outlaws requiring constant surveillance, harassment and intimidation.

The capitalist “justice” system has been placed in the spotlight by growing mobilizations spurred by cop killings of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Akai Gurley and countless others — Black, Caucasian, Latino and Asian.

The number of “exonerations” are growing with nearly 1,500 prisoners released in the past 15 years,

as cop frame-ups are exposed.

The efforts of tens of thousands behind bars to use hunger strikes and other protests to demand their rights and assert their dignity has won grudging gains from some prison authorities. Victories have been won in the U.K. recently and at Taylor Correctional Institution in Florida on the right of inmates to get books and newspapers, including the *Militant*.

Esaw Garner, widow of Eric Garner, killed by N.Y. cops, has explained her husband's killing was not a question of race. She's right, the working class — the revolutionary class — is the target.

Because of their national oppression and record of uncompromising struggle against it, African-American workers disproportionately suffer police brutality, harassment and imprisonment. For the same reasons, they have been in the forefront of battles for union recognition and workers' rights.

The fights against police brutality and killings by the cops reinforce expanding fights by Walmart, fast-food and airport workers for \$15 an hour and a union and by rail workers fighting for job safety. And more unions are joining the fight against police brutality.

Recent revelations of the scope and brutality of CIA torture — from waterboarding to “rectal rehydration” — are of little surprise to those who have experienced the U.S. “justice” system. Washington's brutality abroad is an extension of the brutality the rulers mete out every day here at home.

We stand with workers behind bars in your fights for dignity, respect and democratic rights.

## ‘Militant’ beats back censorship at Fla. prison

Continued from front page

by prison officials in Florida to ban delivery of the *Militant* to readers behind bars over the past year and a half.

On Dec. 16 the *Militant* received a notice that authorities at Taylor had impounded issue #41, dated Nov. 17, 2014, from a reader who has been receiving the paper for nearly two years.

The notice claimed the paper “presents a threat to the security, good order, or discipline of the correctional system or the safety of any person.” It cited an ad for *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes, saying it promoted “a book disrespecting authority” and a full-page article reporting on the fight to win freedom for the Cuban Five, five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in the U.S. for 16 years. Taylor authorities said the article showed “Contempt for US Government.”

The book ad included a quote from Barnes saying, “The purpose of the cops is to punish, not patrol. The purpose of the cops is to keep workers in line, to make an example of you if you come from the wrong class — and more so if you also happen to be the wrong color or the wrong nationality.”

The article on the Cuban Five was titled ‘Unbroken Tide of Solidarity Will Carry Us Home’: Sister of Antonio Guerrero Talks About Brother's New Prison Paintings at Colloquium for Cuban 5 in Havana.”

On Dec. 19, Benjamin Stevenson, the Florida American Civil Liberties Union attorney representing the *Militant*, requested the Florida Department of Corrections' Literature Review Committee “grant more time to file an appeal because of the holidays,” Stevenson said in a Dec. 30 phone interview. “But they said there would not need to be an appeal because two days earlier they had decided to override Taylor Correctional Institution's

censorship.”

The Literature Review Committee “approved this issue for inmate use. It should be in the hands of your subscriber soon,” Marty Morrison, Library Services Administrator of the Florida Department of Corrections, wrote to Stevenson that day.

The censorship move by prison authorities at Taylor Correctional Institution targeting promotion of literature concerning the nature of the police under capitalism and the fight to free the Cuban Five occurred amidst a groundswell of protest against police killings of Eric Garner in New York and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Ironically, Florida's prison Literature Review Committee overturned the ban on the *Militant's* coverage of the Cuban Five the same day that the three remaining incarcerated Cuban revolutionaries were freed from U.S. prisons and returned to Cuba.

Previous successes in pushing back censorship moves in Florida state prisons include winning a reversal in October 2013 on impounding an issue reporting on initiation of a hunger strike in California prisons. Several months later subscribers incarcerated at the Blackwater River Correctional Facility in Milton, Florida, had several issues impounded, which authorities upon being challenged reversed as a “clerical error.”

The paper has also won similar battles in Washington state and at the high security U.S. Penitentiary in Florence, Colorado.

Publications such as the *San Francisco Bay View* and *Prison Legal News* that, like the *Militant*, champion the rights of workers behind bars and report on their fights for respect and dignity also find themselves forced to fight to defend their right to reach subscribers and the right of prisoners to read the news they want.

## DC socialist campaign

Continued from front page

new readers for the *Militant* newspaper, the socialist campaign is getting a good response.

Saul Hernandez, a bartender who lives a few blocks from Scott, signed her petition Jan. 3, getting an introductory subscription to the *Militant* and the booklet *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*.

“I heard about them and I'm glad they are free,” Hernandez told Scott. Hernandez explained that he left Chile after the ousting of the Salvador Allende government there. Allende was overthrown by a U.S.-backed military coup in 1973. “The U.S. closed its doors to me and others like me who tried to come here,” he said.

“The U.S. government's goal remains to overthrow the Cuban Revolution,” Scott said. “My campaign demands an end to Washington's brutal, more-than-half-century-long embargo of Cuba and normalization of relations. We demand an end to their violation of our right to travel to Cuba and learn about their revolution for ourselves.”

Scott and campaign supporters joined about 40 trash haulers picketing against Unity Disposal Jan. 4 in Laurel, Maryland. The workers, members of LiUNA, the Laborers' Union, went on strike Dec. 26, and the company is hiring replacement workers.

Strikers Martin Puesan and Esteban Zelaya told Scott they face lack of safety on the job, no overtime after 40 hours and discrimination. “They use a kind of arithmetic where the more you work, the less you get paid,” said Puesan. “This is our third time on strike in just a few years. We win a little and they take it back.”

“You're a member of OUR Walmart and I applaud you,” Raymond Diaz, an organizer for LiUNA, said. “It's like we are the peasants and they are kings and the queens. They treat all of us workers like we are disposable.”

“I applaud and support your strike,” said Scott. “The problem we face is the capitalist system. The bosses rule through the two-party system, where the only alternative they offer working people is the lesser evil. We need to build our own party — a labor party, based on the unions. Fighting for a labor party would unite us as a class,” said Scott.

One thing that struck campaign volunteers was how seriously workers read the campaign literature. Luis Chiliquinga, a McDonald's worker, met up with Scott Jan. 4 to find out how he could help the petitioning effort. Chiliquinga is involved in the fast-food workers' campaign for \$15 per hour and full-time.

After going over the campaign flier point by point, Chiliquinga had a suggestion to clarify the campaign's demands to defend working farmers. “There are rich farmers and there are poor farmers,” he said.

“You're right, we can make it clearer,” Scott said. “The Socialist Workers Party fights for a government guarantee to cover production costs for working farmers to assure them a decent living, as well as access to government-financed affordable credit.”

### Corrections

In “Washington, D.C., Rail Workers Push Back 12-Hour Shift Plan” in the Dec. 29, 2014, On the Picket Line column, the unions mentioned should have been listed as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART).

In “Striking Toronto Can Workers Win Solidarity in Philadelphia” in the same issue, the Canadian Steelworker quoted is Cheryle Dollimore.

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