



ACADEMY SNUBS 'SELMA'  
EDITORIAL 10

# TO HONOR DR. KING Protests revive struggle legacy

By LeiLani Dowell

National days of action were held from Jan. 15, the birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., to Jan. 19, the national holiday commemorating him. Activists with the People's Power Assembly, the Black Lives Matter movement and many others joined forces to reclaim King's anti-racist legacy and demand an end to police brutality and murder. Events were held in dozens of cities in the U.S. and Canada.

Because of the force of the movement unfurled by the racist cop killings of Eric Garner and Michael Brown last year, the corporate-owned press gave some media coverage to many of the MLK actions. The Jan. 19 New York Times admitted, "Even in small towns, the events of recent years affected the celebrations."

Below are accounts from several cities based on reports by Workers World Party activists.

## Baltimore

A "Strike Against Racism" march and rally tied up traffic in the Harbor East shopping area of downtown Baltimore on the evening of Jan. 15. Some 400 people voiced their opposition to brutal police tactics, including the arrest of a young organizer just a few hours before the rally.

The King Day rally was called by the People's Power Assembly, Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) and the Baltimore chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. There was good representation from unions, including UNITE HERE Local 7 and 32BJ of the Service Employees. Other contingents included the youth group FIST and Workers World Party.

The rally's designated emcee, Sara Benjamin, was picked up by police in front of the college where she was registering for classes. In a deliberate tactic to obstruct and intimidate that day's demonstration, the 23-year-old was arrested and held on a year-old warrant for a misdemeanor.

Benjamin, who is African-American, had traveled to Ferguson, Mo., with her five-year-old daughter to support the movement for justice after the fatal police shooting of unarmed teenager Michael Brown. She came back to Baltimore

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Harlem, N.Y.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

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WW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

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# Ukraine regime reopens war

By Greg Butterfield

Jan. 19 — A horrific war is unfolding on the territory of the former Soviet Union at the behest of Washington and Wall Street. The Kiev regime in Ukraine has ordered jets, missiles, artillery, mortars and land mines to target homes, schools, hospitals and workplaces in the Donbass region.

This is a war of terror waged with U.S. weapons and taxpayer money against an anti-fascist resistance movement, without the knowledge of most workers and poor people in the U.S.

The Ukrainian junta of oligarchs, neoliberal politicians and neo-Nazis installed in Kiev with Washington's support in February 2014 has finally cast aside the last pretense of respecting the flawed ceasefire negotiated at Minsk, Belarus, in September.

On Jan. 18, Kiev officially launched a new military offensive against the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DNR and LC) of the Donbass mining region in the east, where the people had voted overwhelmingly for independence from Ukraine in a referendum in 2014.

Poroshenko, a billionaire oligarch "selected" in staged

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# 19th ANNUAL DINNER

## honors political prisoners



Some of the organizers, former political prisoners, relatives and supporters at tribute dinner, Jan. 17.

All seats at the Service Employees Local 1199 auditorium were full on Jan. 17 for the “19th Annual Dinner Tribute” raising support for political prisoners and funds for prisoners’ commissary needs. The Malcolm X Commemoration Committee called this very moving political program in recognition of political prisoners’ sacrifices and the urgency to defend and support them all. The organizers urged all present to stay in the battle to stop mass incarceration and racist police.

One of the evening’s organizers, Orie Lumumba, stated eloquently, “Our political prisoners of war are people who have dedicated their lives to the transformation of this country; who put the benefit of their communities ahead of themselves; who believed that transformation was not only possible, but was worth dying for to end brutality, racism, economic discrimination, imperialism and war.”

Visit [TheJerichoMovement.com](http://TheJerichoMovement.com) website to find out how you can support their campaigns for prisoners.

– Report and photo by Anne Pruden



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# WORKERS WORLD PARTY

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Hate capitalism? Workers World Party fights for a socialist society — where the wealth is socially owned and production is planned to satisfy human need. This outmoded capitalist system is dragging down workers’ living standards while throwing millions out of their jobs. If you’re young, you know they’re stealing your future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet with its unplanned, profit-driven stranglehold over the means of production.

Workers built it all — it belongs to society, not to a handful of billionaires! But we need a revolution to make that change. That’s why for 56 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

degrading people because of their nationality, sexual or gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling class uses to keep us apart. They ruthlessly super-exploit some in order to better exploit us all. WWP builds unity among all workers while supporting the right of self-determination. Fighting oppression is a working-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles led today by people of color, immigrants and women.

WWP has a long history of militant opposition to imperialist wars. The billionaire rulers are bent on turning back the clock to the bad old days before socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles liberated territory from their grip. We’ve been in the streets to oppose every one of imperialism’s wars and aggressions. □

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# Same-sex marriage battle moves forward

By Martha Grevatt

For almost 400 years, since the first English settlers began stealing land from the original inhabitants of North America, legal practice has been to deny couples of the same sex the right to marry.

The walls of denial finally began to crumble in 2004, when Massachusetts became the first state to grant same-sex couples this basic human right.

The year 2015 may be the year that marriage equality finally becomes enshrined in law throughout the 50 states. On Jan. 16, the Supreme Court of the United States announced that it would hear the cases of couples in four states who sued to overturn their states' marriage bans.

The decision was made after a three-judge panel of the Sixth District Court of Appeals in Cincinnati voted two-to-one to uphold marriage bans in Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee. Up to that point, courts had been ruling in favor of marriage equality, casting down bans in all but 14 states.

The high court was, reportedly, declin-

ing to hear any cases and intended to let the lower court rulings stand unless there was a split in court opinion. With the Cincinnati court ruling — based on a phony “voting rights” argument that an electorate should be allowed to deny civil rights to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities — the decision was made to hear the issue.

If the court rules in favor of the plaintiffs, same-sex marriage bans will be nullified in all of the remaining 14 states. A contrary ruling in favor of reactionary “states rights” arguments — historically the refuge of segregationists — could restore marriage bans in some states.

A large number of holdout states are in the former Confederacy, including Georgia, whose “anti-sodomy” law was the subject of the 1986 Hardwick decision. Then, the Supreme Court upheld the bigoted law criminalizing gay sexual expression.

## Michigan becomes a battleground

The 2003 Lawrence decision overturned Hardwick. Michigan was one of five states with the hateful laws still on the books; its law had been one of the

worst as well, with life imprisonment for a second offense. LGBTQ people have no anti-discrimination protection in state law here and the state legislature has passed a number of bigoted bills, signed by Gov. Rick Snyder.

Thus, it took tremendous courage for two Detroit-area nurses, April DeBoer and Jayne Rowse, to sue the state for the right to jointly adopt the three children they have been raising. Michigan law forced one or the other of them to adopt the children as a single parent. Federal Judge Bernard Friedman determined last year that the adoption rights issue was linked to the right to marry and overturned the Michigan marriage ban that had been passed by voters in 2004.

Similar bans were struck down in Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, until the higher court in Cincinnati upheld them.

DeBoer and Rowse are ecstatic to have their case move forward and be heard by the high court. “Stand up for what you believe, ‘cause that’s what we are doing,” DeBoer said. (Detroit News, Jan. 17)

While a close Supreme Court vote in favor of marriage equality is seen as a

likely outcome, it should not be treated as a foregone conclusion. In 2012, the court only struck down portions of the “Defense of Marriage Act” pertaining to the federal government, leaving state bans in place. It is a sign of strength and decades of perseverance by the LGBTQ movement that these bans are now falling apart.

A second victory took place in Michigan when federal judge Mark Goldsmith, a day before the Supreme Court announcement, ordered the state of Michigan to recognize the 323 same-sex marriages performed in the state during a brief window of opportunity between Judge Friedman’s ruling and its stay by the District Court. Gov. Snyder had denied state marriage benefits to these couples, who have been receiving federal benefits. It is not yet known if Tea Party-associated Attorney General Bill Schuette will challenge Goldsmith’s ruling, which the judge stayed for 21 days to allow for appeal.

The ruling in favor of the 323 is another setback for the forces of bigotry, which have been pushed back repeatedly in the 45 years since the Stonewall Uprising of 1969. □

# Taxes hit the 99% the hardest

By G. Dunkel

The past few years have seen a multitude of protests on income inequality, decrying how the 1% makes so much more than the 99% and how this injustice creates vast inequality, social divisions and growing class anger.

Taxes — local, state and federal — fall disproportionately hardest on people with smaller incomes. But the whole structure of the tax system in the United States is so complicated and so fragmented that it is hard to see what is going on.

On Jan. 14, the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy released its fifth “Who Pays?” report on state and local taxes. Its conclusion is stark: On average, the tax rate for the poorest 20 percent of U.S. residents is twice that of the richest 1 percent. (itep.org/whopays)

The way many states have configured their tax system — where the percentage of income paid in taxes doesn’t depend on one’s income and the state depends on

consumption taxes — makes this problem worse.

There are 10 states where the poorest 20 percent pay up to seven times as much of their income in taxes as the 1%. Washington state is the most regressive, followed by Florida, Texas, South Dakota, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Arizona, Kansas and Indiana.

Another egregious aspect of the U.S. tax system is that income obtained from wealth goes under the rubric of capital gains and is more lightly taxed than income earned by working. Almost all wealth income belongs to the top 10 percent.

Many of the attempts to make these tax systems fairer and less burdensome have helped, but at the cost of making an already complicated system more so. Calls for simplifying it generally lead to putting more of a burden on the lowest paid.

## Other taxes on the poor

Not everyone may pay federal income

taxes, but they certainly pay payroll taxes on all their income — that is, Social Security and Medicare taxes. However, someone making more than \$500,000 a year pays these taxes on only about 20 percent of their income, since these taxes are capped at \$118,500 in 2015.

There is a federal excise tax, currently \$0.184, on every gallon of diesel oil and gasoline sold in the U.S.

Allowing mortgage interest payments to be a tax deduction, a major benefit for homeowners, is another way the federal tax system works against poorer people,

many of whom rent because they don’t have the money to buy.

The 50 states and the District of Columbia each have their own tax code, and each state has its own city and local governments, some of which have their own tax codes.

Each state also has its own excise taxes on fuel, cigarettes, alcohol and tobacco, which affect low-wage earners more than the better off, since they are flat taxes. Sales taxes are another form of taxation with a disproportionate effect on low-wage earners. □



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It’s also possible to contribute there by joining the Workers World Supporter Program and giving either a lump sum or a monthly donation. Be sure to check it out.

And thanks! □

# Black men used for target practice

North Miami Beach, Fla., cops have taken racial profiling to a new level. They’re shooting at old mug shots of Black teenagers.

“Why is my brother being used for target practice?” asked Valerie Deant after she found his picture with a bullet hole in it. Police had left the Medley Firearms Training Center before Ms. Deant arrived with other members of her National Guard unit.

Bird killers, also known as hunters, practice by shooting clay pigeons. Racist police rehearse by shooting at targets of Black people.

Local police Chief J. Scott Dennis announced that no disciplinary action will be taken against the officers. He said that shooting at pictures of African Americans “is vital for facial recognition skills.” (The Root)

Those “facial recognition skills” were apparently used by North Miami Beach police to kill 57-year-old Ernest Vassell, a Black man with autism, on Aug. 31, 2011.

People with disabilities are often targets of police terror. Cops claimed that Mr. Vassell had a toy gun.

Ernest Vassell’s sister, Claire Harding, told WFOR-TV, “That’s no reason for you to kill somebody!”

There was no reason either for Cleveland cops to kill 12-year-old Tamir Rice,



Racist cops target Black men.

a Black youth with a toy gun, on Nov. 22 last year. The killer cops then tackled Tamir’s sister, who was trying to help her dying brother.

“Robocop” Brian George didn’t need a reason to kill Nicholas Naquan Heyward Jr. on Sept. 27, 1994. The 13-year-old honor student was playing with a toy rifle in the Gowanus Houses of Brooklyn, N.Y.

North Miami Beach is a small town with about 43,000 people. The population is more than three-quarters Black or Latino/a, with a large Haitian community.

Police in North Miami Beach; Ferguson, Mo.; and New York City don’t arrest slumlords or racist bosses. The cops are there to terrorize poor people.

These terrorists in blue need to be disarmed. Power to the people!

— Stephen Millies

# Stop Veolia in Boston and Detroit!

The following message from the four fired leaders of United Steelworkers Local 8751 in Boston was delivered to the Detroit MLK rally and march on Jan. 19.

We're honored to bring greetings on Martin Luther King Jr.'s weekend. Our union for 40 years has sought to live the legacy of Dr. King. At the time of his assassination he was standing with sanitation workers and building for a Poor People's March on Washington, D.C. Our union's always been about more than just grievances and good wages and benefits. We're being targeted because we are a po-

litical union that stands against racism.

Our very history is tied up with the struggle against racism. Whether it was dealing with the rocks and bricks that were thrown at the buses with Black schoolchildren that were going into racist neighborhoods or dealing with our union being 98 percent people of color from the immigrant communities — Haitian, Cape Verdean, Asian, African American — we are united as one. We believe we are living the true legacy of real unionism.

One of our mottos has been that "An injury to one is an injury to all." Every

union, everybody in Boston knows the record of Steelworkers Local 8751. For 40 years we haven't lost anything. We never take the concessions they try to impose on unions. This is why the Veolia corporation, the latest company to run the privatized school transportation in Boston, is after us. They computerized the payroll system so only management can get in, and the result is wage theft. We've filed over 300 grievances, and they have refused to pay most of them. They made our insurance more expensive and took away benefits. They made long-term disability benefits almost impossible to access.

They will keep breaking our contract until somebody stops them, and we're going to stop them!

Veolia was hired like a hired gun here, the same way as in Detroit. It's in water, sewage, transportation and energy, but it really doesn't produce anything. People in Detroit recognize that. What it really is hired to produce is cutbacks, austerity and union busting.

## Fighting Veolia in Boston, Detroit and everywhere

Throughout the world Veolia is known for doing anything for profit, even some of the worst things. Like helping the Israeli government oppress the Palestinian people. Veolia operates a segregated rail line where only Jewish settlers ride one line and only Arab Palestinians ride another line in and out of the West Bank.

Moreover, the very same banks that created the artificial financial crisis in Detroit are Veolia's chief moneylenders.

On the morning of Oct. 8, 2013, drivers in four different yards came into work and asked their boss for a meeting over outstanding issues. Jonathan Steketee,



who the city has now hired to be transportation director, called the police instead of agreeing to meet with the drivers. They came with dozens of officers, as if it had been pre-planned, to all four yards and ordered all the workers to get off the property with their vehicles. Veolia illegally locked out the workers. They created the lie in the media, with the mayor's assistance, that the drivers had gone on a wildcat strike.

Veolia then went after the organizational infrastructure, suspending, out of 900 workers, four leaders, one from each yard. On Nov. 13, 2013, they thought that this union would fall apart when they fired us.

Last year Brother Kirschbaum, founder of the union, was among some 300 supporters, including a father with a set of 18-month-old twins and people in wheelchairs. He was giving a peaceful update. But Veolia got the city to file trumped-up charges and he faces years in jail for felonious assault and trespass.

Now it's important to really own the legacy of the Civil Rights movement, which was uniting the rank and file to take on the bigots and racists, to build a united movement that can bring true justice in our important fights.

Black Lives Matter. Black cities matter. Unions matter. Detroit matters to us, and we are honored to share these words knowing that our struggle matters to you.

**Andre Francois, Steve Gillis,  
Steve Kirschbaum and Gary Murchison**

## On the Picket Line

By Matty Starrdust and Sue Davis

### VW workers not fooled by bosses' pseudo-union plan

After narrowly losing a union election in the Chattanooga, Tenn., Volkswagen assembly plant in early 2014, United Auto Workers organizers now say a majority of workers have signed union cards. Accordingly, plant management has agreed to grant UAW members meetings with company executives and space for organizing meetings on factory property. Conspicuously absent from the agreement, however, is UAW's right to collectively bargain on behalf of the workers. Meanwhile, UAW Local 42 has elected a plant president, is holding meetings and is selecting a bargaining committee.

However, VW really complicated matters last November by setting up a so-called "employee engagement" program which recognizes worker organizations with 15, 30 or 45 percent membership. (An independent auditor confirmed that Local 42 has 45 percent.) VW's plan is remarkably similar to the program that the Tennessee public schools initiated after the state's 2011 Republican super-majority voted to strip the Tennessee Education Association of collective bargaining rights.

In both programs, workers elect representatives to meet with management and arrive at nonbinding, unenforceable agreements about working conditions and salaries. Also in both programs, anti-union lobbyists working through deceptive front groups compete with union reps for workers' votes and policy decisions.

In the public school system, one such group is the Professional Educators of Tennessee, which gets big-bucks funding from groups like the National Right to Work Foundation and the American Legislative Exchange Council. A TEA rep told Labor Notes that PET's role, with one representative on a seven-person panel, has been counterproductive, as it tries to undermine workers' economic issues on the job. He summed it up as "the next step after right to work" [for less].

In the VW plant, the American Council of Employees, a rebranded version of the group that lobbied against unionization in 2014, is another such well-funded, right-wing, anti-worker, pseudo union.

Reportedly, ACE has barely managed to hoodwink 15 percent of the workforce into voting for them, compared to UAW's strong majority. UAW organizers and workers say they will continue fighting for authentic union representation. (Dec. 17) Stay tuned.

### Boston bike-share workers unionize

With a resounding 74 percent majority, workers at the Boston bike-share company Hubway voted Dec. 4 to join Transport Workers Union Local 100. The workers cite unfair wages, dangerous working conditions, and unpredictable and disruptive schedules as their biggest grievances. TWU Executive Vice President John Samuelsen stated, "A union contract will provide them a platform to have real input in giving Boston a world-class bike-share operation, and it will enable us to address current problems, including operational difficulties and safety concerns." Hubway workers join bike-share workers in New York City, Chicago and Washington, D.C., all of whom recently joined TWU Local 100. (laborpress.org, Dec. 15)

### Thousands of Calif. mental health care workers go on strike

Some 2,600 mental health care workers at California's Kaiser Permanente hospitals called a weeklong strike beginning Jan. 12. Workers demanded that Kaiser adequately provide for its psychiatry departments, which they say are dangerously understaffed, forcing patients to endure long wait periods in violation of state law. Kaiser was cited and fined \$4 million by the state Department of Managed Health Care in 2013 for "serious" and "systemic" violations, but workers say the situation has only deteriorated since then. It often takes three to six weeks after a patient is diagnosed to get a follow-up appointment.

Clement Papazian, rank-and-file president of the National Union of Healthcare Workers Northern California chapter for mental health workers, said in a written statement: "For patients suffering from depression, anxiety, and other debilitating mental conditions, these delays are unbearable. Some have even died by suicide during the lengthy delays. As mental health clinicians, we have an ethical obligation to advocate for our patients." Workers hope the strike will compel Kaiser, which has a \$30 billion bank account, to cough up some bucks to fulfill its obligation to patients. (labornotes.org, Jan. 12)

Meanwhile, in separate contract negotiations affecting 18,000 nurses and nurse practitioners at 86 Kaiser hospitals and clinics in northern and central California, the California Nurses Association/National Nurses United finally resolved months of stalled contract negotiations on Jan. 16. The proposed contract calls for hundreds of new nurses to be hired, new workplace protections, increased pay, continued pension plans, and new committees of nurses and nurse practitioners to address standards of care. (abcnews.com, Jan. 17) □

## NYPD charged with illegally targeting Muslims

Over 100 people rallied and heard testimony in Philadelphia Federal Court on Jan. 13 in support of Muslim civil rights and against surveillance by the New York Police Department based on religion. The case against the NYPD's warrantless surveillance program was argued by the Center for Constitutional Rights and Muslim Advocates. An Iraq war veteran, the former principal of a grade school for Muslim girls, Rutgers University students and a coalition of New Jersey mosques are among the plaintiffs seeking damages and other remedies for violations of their rights under the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause and the First Amendment's guarantees on freedom of religion.

In a massive dragnet, the NYPD reportedly infiltrated every mosque within a 250-mile radius of New York City with informants and produced detailed reports on every mosque within a 100-mile radius. According to a press release by Muslim Advocates, the NYPD has spied on mosques, 14 restaurants, 11 retail stores, two grade schools and two Muslim Student Associations in New Jersey alone since 2002. The monitoring included video surveillance, photographing, community mapping and infiltration. All of this was based on religious affiliation, not criminal suspicion.

According to the NYPD itself, more than 10 years of spying failed to produce a single lead. However, the Newburgh 4, Yassin Aref, Sami Al-Arian, the Fort Dix 5 and hundreds of other innocent Muslims were entrapped, dragged through unfair "preemptive prosecution" court

trials and imprisoned through the use of similar spying programs in cities and towns across the U.S. over the last decade. (projectsalam.wordpress.com)

Police violations of civil rights are not new to New York. According to "Mapping Muslims: NYPD and Its Impact on American Muslims" put out by the CUNY School of Law, "Sadly, race and dissent-based surveillance has a long lineage in the NYPD. Police surveillance of dissident and minority groups can be traced as far back as 1904, when the NYPD created an 'Italian Squad' to monitor the practices and activities of Italian immigrants. In 1906 the NYPD had an 'anarchist squad' which focused on harassing anarchists and labor activists. The NYPD's surveillance of political activists of various kinds — communists, anarchists, labor activists and civil rights activists — continued from the 1930s through the 1970s, under various names: the Bomb Squad, the New York Radical Bureau, and the Bureau of Special Services (BOSS)." (The Declaration, Jan. 13)

The NYPD claims it recently disbanded one of the main units through which it conducted surveillance of Muslims. There is no evidence, however, that it has abandoned the underlying, unlawful targeting and profiling of Muslims.

Coming just days after the shooting of 12 journalists in Paris on Jan. 7 at the magazine Charlie Hebdo, the case against the NYPD becomes even more important in stemming racist, anti-Muslim sentiments and practices in the U.S.

— Joe Piette

# Racism and underfunded schools

In 2014, the discretionary budget for one Philadelphia elementary school was just \$160 — roughly the cost of a family's weekly groceries. It was meant to provide books, postage, staff training and supplies for 400 students.

At Philadelphia's highly ranked Central High School, the second oldest continuous public school in the U.S., students started the school year with 50 to 70 of them crowded into classrooms — without enough desks or books to go around.

This is what austerity looks like as globalization and technological advances make educating the working class a low priority for U.S. corporations.

Philadelphia has closed 31 schools and laid off 4,000 teachers, librarians, counselors, nurses and support staff. The deaths of two students have been tied to a shortage of school nurses.

In most schools, teachers and parents are the ones buying paper, pencils, books, food, cleaning supplies and even toilet paper.

Many blame funding cuts on outgoing Gov. Tom Corbett. While starving Philadelphia schools, Corbett gave corporations

billions of dollars in tax breaks, and he increased funding for prison construction, fueling the school-to-prison pipeline.

The introduction of Common Core State Standard tests, while creating new markets for Microsoft, won't improve education. The devastating cuts turn schools into prisons without bars for students who spend 60 percent of their time taking tests.

Philadelphia's state-appointed School Reform Commission, established in 2002, was designed to replace public schools with for-profit privatized charter schools. Students, parents and teachers have been fighting ever since.

The SRC was supposed to fix a two-year \$115 million deficit. Instead the district's deficit increased 32 percent annually, reaching \$1.1 billion by 2012. Philly schools pay \$280 million in debt service each year — 10 times the national average. Much of this debt stems from interest rate swaps benefiting big banks.

The SRC opened the floodgates to unregulated charter schools that drain \$727 million each year from public school funds. In November, two charter schools closed,

leaving students scrambling for space in already overcrowded public schools.

## Unequal, privatized, for-profit schools

Racism plays a major role in the underfunding of schools. While Philadelphia has only 10 percent of Pennsylvania's student enrollment, the city suffered 25 percent of the state's education funding cuts. Black, Latino/a and Asian students make up more than 72 percent of the district's enrollment. Sixty years after the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision outlawing school segregation, segregation of public schools has surpassed 1954 levels.

For-profit education corporations, such as the Boston Consulting Group, the Walton family, the Gates Foundations, openly advocate replacing teachers with costly technology. Their privatization drive is a vicious attack on unionized teachers.

When the SRC was created, Philadelphia teachers were prohibited from striking. When the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers contract expired last year, the SRC demanded \$131 million in conces-

**Betsey Piette**, of

the Philadelphia branch of Workers World Party, gave this (edited) talk at the WWP national conference held Nov. 15-16 in New York City.



sions. The union refused to accept these draconian cuts.

On Oct. 6 of this year, the SRC announced it was cancelling its collective bargaining agreement with PFT. In response to the SRC's shocking decision, students staged a one-day strike. In the largest rally to date, thousands of workers turned out on Oct. 16, with many calling for a citywide general strike.

Over 50 union leaders signed a letter condemning the SRC's "destruction of collective bargaining," but stopped short of calling members out to support the teachers. Instead, they urged support for Tom Wolf, a Democratic candidate and businessman, who defeated Corbett in the Nov. 4 election. The PFT, rather than mobilizing members to take direct action, turned to the courts where they won a temporary injunction stopping the SRC from implementing contract cuts.

We don't know what will happen next in the education struggle in Philadelphia. We know that relying on elections or the courts to solve a crisis deeply rooted in a failing capitalist economic system leads nowhere.

Severe reduction of workers' wages, racist housing policies, endless war spending and tax cuts for wealthy corporations — not teachers' salaries and benefits — are to blame for funding shortfalls. Taking on the fight for public education means taking out the rotten for-profit capitalist system and bringing in a system of socialism where human needs, including education, are the priorities. □

## FILM REVIEW 'Kill the Messenger'

# Gary Webb told the truth

By Stephen Millies

Gary Webb told the truth about CIA-backed contra terrorists selling drugs to finance their dirty war against Nicaragua in the 1980s. The courageous journalist was hounded to death for linking the crack epidemic with then-President Ronald Reagan's drive to overthrow the Sandinista government.

Ten years after Webb's death in an apparent suicide, the film "Kill the Messenger" captures the story. You can see it now on DVD.

As a reporter for the San Jose Mercury News, Webb spent a year investigating the CIA-contra-crack connection. His three-part series, entitled "Dark Alliance," created a sensation when it was published in 1996. Webb wrote about how contra leaders Oscar Danilo Blandón and Norwin Meneses shipped massive amounts of cocaine to southern California. Drug pushers turned it into crack.

Blandón had fled Nicaragua after dictator Somoza was overthrown in 1979. He was a fundraiser for contra gangsters in the "Nicaraguan Democratic Force." At least 50,000 Nicaraguans were murdered by the contras. Reagan called the contras "freedom fighters."

Congress had cut off funding to the contras because of massive anti-war sentiment. National Security Council staffer and current Fox News commentator Oliver North knew they were engaged in massive drug trafficking.

Blandón was actually hired by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency after spending two years in jail. It's been reported that he's the only foreigner in U.S. history who has not been deported after being convicted of drug trafficking charges.

### An excuse to lock up thousands

There were previous exposés about the CIA's connections with drugs. Almost every Pentagon war results in massive drug running. Alfred McCoy pinpointed the CIA in "The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia." During the Vietnam War, the CIA fueled the heroin plague, with its subsidiary Air America carrying drugs to the U.S. McCoy's book was an unassailable classic, so it's almost never

mentioned in the media.

Associated Press reporters Robert Parry and Brian Barger reported on the contra drug connection in 1985. John Kerry, then a Senator from Massachusetts, held hearings on it in 1989. Kerry was labeled a "conspiracy theorist" for his efforts. Today as Secretary of State he promotes the dirty war in Afghanistan, which under U.S. occupation became the world's biggest producer of opium.

What made Gary Webb's "Dark Alliance" series different was that it directly tied the crack epidemic to contra drug smuggling. An early sensation on the Internet, it garnered over a million hits daily.

The crack epidemic served as an excuse to lock up hundreds of thousands of Black and Latino/a people on drug charges. Webb's articles were welcomed by oppressed people as proving the drug war was aimed at them.

"Kill the Messenger" includes documentary coverage of Congressperson Maxine Waters and other Black leaders demanding the CIA fess up. Then-CIA director John Deutch is seen being forced to come to a public meeting at Locke High School in Watts in 1996. A month later he resigned.

### Killing the messenger

The CIA counterattacked with the help of media owners. The Los Angeles Times assigned 17 reporters to debunk Webb. (The Nation, Oct. 10) The Washington Post and the New York Times also joined the attack.

The managers of the San Jose Mercury News capitulated to this slimy barrage and actually apologized for running "Dark Alliance." Webb was forced to leave the paper's Sacramento bureau. "Killing the Messenger" shows how he refused to cower.

Webb resigned from the paper and later wrote one of the first articles about "Driving While Black" for Esquire magazine. He also published the book "Dark Alliance" (Seven Stories Press, 1999).

In 1998, CIA Inspector General Frederick Hitz substantiated Webb's charges in two reports. Yet Webb became unemployable for telling the truth.

Meanwhile, Judith Miller and Michael Gordon wrote lying articles about Iraq's

alleged "weapons of mass destruction" for the New York Times. Although Miller was let go, Gordon is still the paper's chief military correspondent.

Broke and facing eviction, Webb apparently shot himself twice in the head in 2004.

A fuller version of this review can be found at [workers.org](http://workers.org).



## THE BLACK LIVES MATTER REVOLUTION

# RESIST KILLER COPS!

Fighting racist repression and low-wage capitalism!



Reinstated Gary Murchison, Steve Kirschbaum, Andre Francois, Steve Gillis Drop the frame up charges against Kirschbaum  
Hear: TEAM SOLIDARITY Boston School Bus Drivers Union, Local 8751

On the struggle against racism in education and growing labor/community fightback vs. global union buster Veolia Corporation

#ReclaimMLK reflects the growing national momentum to usher in 2015 as a YEAR OF RESISTANCE against racist police repression, global austerity, mass incarceration, gentrification and low wages and a people's challenge to the attacks on public education, health care and vital services for our communities.

The legacy of Dr. King will be felt not only Jan. 15-19 but throughout the year! Justice for #Eric Garner, #Michael Brown, #Ramarley Graham #Akai Gurley, #Oscar Grant, #Tamir Rice, #John Crawford III and all victims of police terror!



Hear: Larry Holmes, First Secretary of Workers World Party; nat'l coordinator of People's Power Assemblies and organizer of the J15 Strike Against Racism March in New York City.

SAT ► JAN 24  
3 pm

At the Action Center  
284 Amory Street  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
(2 blocks from Stony Brook T stop on Orange Line)



For more info:  
617.522.6626  
[www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org)

# To Honor Dr. King: Protests revive struggle

Continued from page 1

determined to help build the movement against racism in this highly segregated city.

PPA organizer Sharon Black stated, “We will be planning protests at the women’s jail every day until Benjamin is released. We consider her arrest and jailing racist and egregious.”

The next morning, march organizer Andre Powell announced a press conference in front of police headquarters to demand Benjamin’s release and “take up our strenuous objections to the growing repression by the Baltimore Police Department against our protests.”

Benjamin was bailed out Jan. 16 and released a strong statement about her outrageous treatment by police.

## Boston

Those attending Mayor Martin Walsh’s “State of the City” address on Jan. 13 were greeted by picketing community activists, students, union members, homeless people made refugees by the closing of Long Island Shelter and Homeless Services, and Boston Black Lives Matter. The protesters withstood 17-degree temperatures to send a message about the real state of the city.

Black Lives Matter activists demanded an end to police brutality and all forms of discrimination, and full recognition of human rights. Others demanded full employment, decent housing, quality education, and an end to the school-to-prison pipeline, mass incarceration and the prison-industrial complex.

Activists with the Boston School Bus Drivers, United Steelworkers Local 8751, demanded that the city dump the Veolia Corp. (now called Transdev), which has been trying to bust their union, and rehire four fired union leaders. They called on the mayor to use his authority to reach a just contract settlement with the drivers and to drop frame-up charges against Steve Kirschbaum, the chair of the union’s grievance committee.

Two days later, on Jan. 15, activists who described themselves as “a diverse group of LGBTQA, white, pan-Asian and Latin@ people acting in solidarity with Black Lives Matter” blocked traffic on Interstate 93 during the morning rush hour. In a press release, they said they would “place our bodies in the street for ... the same amount of time Mike Brown lay dying in the streets” in order to “disrupt a capitalist structure that has been built on the physical and economic exploitation of Black bodies.” Twenty-nine of them were arrested.

## Chicago

On Jan. 15, Chicago activists and community members, led by youth of color, held a march and rally of about 200 aimed at reclaiming Dr. King’s legacy. The intergenerational coalition included grade and high school students, young adults and longtime activists. Marchers rallied near the University of Illinois at Chicago and then marched to the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center.

## New York

On Jan. 15, the People’s Power Assembly and Occu-Evolve organized a “Strike Against Racism” in New York City in honor of Dr. King’s legacy of resistance. Activists gathered at the African Burial Grounds in lower Manhattan to pay homage to enslaved Africans. Protesters marched to Wall Street and then held a short rally at the Manhattan Correctional

Center to show solidarity with prisoners. A die-in was held at the entrance to the Staten Island Ferry to symbolize the July 17 chokehold death of Eric Garner by police in Staten Island, followed by another rally at City Hall. The day’s event culminated with another die-in at Grand Central Station.

About 700 people gathered in Union Square on Jan. 19 to commemorate King’s life and to demand an end to police killing of Black and Brown people. Black Lives Matter, the Peoples Power Assembly, Ocu-Evolve, the Coalition Against Police Violence and the Green Party all had contingents in the ensuing march to Foley Square. Another mass march was held in Harlem.

Despite a massive ice storm that made travel mostly impossible, more than 80 people attended **Woodstock’s** 25th Annual Birthday Tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. on Jan. 18. Speakers included Pam Africa, of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; Suzanne Ross, of the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC); and Woodstock Town Supervisor Jeremy Wilbur.

Activists in **Buffalo** held a “March and Rally for Justice” on Jan. 19 called by the

Buffalo Anti-Racism Coalition. Speakers demanded “economic justice [and] an end to mass incarceration, ... the school-to-prison pipeline, and to systemic racism and militarism that murders poor, black, and brown people across the planet for the sake of profit.”

## Philadelphia

Some 10,000 people took to the Philadelphia streets in what participants and organizers are calling the biggest Martin Luther King Jr. Day march in the city’s history. Billed as the “MLK Day of Action, Resistance and Empowerment,” two rallies and a march through Center City raised three general demands: an end to stop-and-frisk police tactics and the creation of an empowered police review board; a citywide minimum wage of \$15 per hour and the right to a union; and a fully funded, community-controlled school system.

Speakers included Tanya Brown and Abbas Sabor — whose family members were brutalized by Philadelphia police — student activists, and faith and labor leaders. Civil rights attorney Michael Coard discussed the brutal treatment of Black people by Philadelphia cops and courts. Anti-gentrification organizer and profes-

sor of African Studies Dr. Tony Monteiro spoke about Dr. King’s relevance to the ongoing struggle against institutional racism.

By all accounts, the stated purpose to “reclaim MLK Day” in the name of militant direct action was a resounding success.

*Ellie Dorritie, G. Dunkel, René Imperato, Monica Moorehead, Matty Starrdust and J. White contributed to this report.*

# Protesters take on cop ‘summit’

Philadelphia community members protested outside of a private meeting between U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey on Jan. 15. Among the protesters were the mothers of two Philadelphia-area men gunned down by police. The meeting, which was inexplicably shielded from public view, was one in a series of summits between Holder and law enforce-



City Hall, New York, Jan. 15

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL



New York

WW PHOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD



Detroit



Buffalo, N.Y.

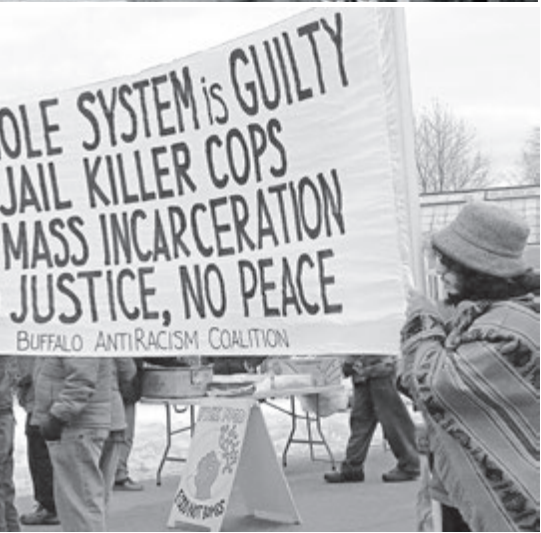


Chicago

WW PHOTO: J.

# King legacy

WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH



WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

## Arrested protest leader: 'Strengthened by this experience'

Sara E. Benjamin works with the Baltimore People's Power Assembly. On Jan. 15, just hours before a rally against police brutality she was scheduled to chair, she was arrested and held for more than a day. Below are excerpts from her longer statement, available at workers.org.

By Sara E. Benjamin  
Baltimore

We have a big movement here in Baltimore around police brutality, with a proposal for community control inspired by the 1971 Black Panther Party. We are demanding that the police be made accountable for their actions in the community they are supposed to serve and protect.

I attended and helped to promote and organize all the recent protests around police brutality, including the Jan. 15 Strike Against Racism rally and march. My involvement with the People's Power Assembly soon became known through coverage in the local news.

The Baltimore Police Department has tried hard to stop or water down the movement and has targeted core leaders in a number of ways — from tapping comrades' homes to following us.

In Baltimore there are masses of people who are aware of the sick effects of capitalism. I see hopelessness in my city, where people are jobless and without health care. Young Black males have turned to gangs because that's the only family they know. Mamas and Daddies are strung out on drugs and/or are in jail.

The People's Power Assembly represents everything that the people of the

city need: housing, health care, livable wages, jobs and an end to police brutality.

On Jan. 15, the PPA had our "Strike Against Racism, No Business as Usual" rally and march on Dr. Martin Luther King's birth date. We were organizing for months. At the same time, a bench warrant was issued in my name, which is common in a "failure to appear" involving a court case. The case was for a simple assault that happened a year prior.

I had been planning with my Public Defender to find a way to turn myself in that would not cause me to miss too much time with my 5-year-old daughter. I had talked to the woman while at the Baltimore Solidarity Center, which I believe was tapped by the BPD.

### Cops use a 'wanted' poster

On the day of the rally and march, I went to Baltimore City Community College and later waited for the bus to get my daughter from school early, so we could both attend the protest.

At the bus stop an unmarked police car came up and two male officers approached me with a "Wanted" poster. They took me to the Central District building, where dozens of police officers were gearing



Baltimore, Jan. 15.

PHOTO: BILL HUGHES

up in helmets and body shields for "this dumb-ass protest," as one called it.

Law enforcement knew who I was. I was put in protective custody [solitary]. When I asked why, a guard said, "Because you are the director of an organization."

I understood then that the BPD planned to incarcerate a core leader of People's Power who is Black and a mother. I got out on \$100 bail at roughly 10:00 p.m. the following day.

I understand now how important my role is in this movement. I was strengthened, not broken by this experience and am more determined to speak out, give back, educate and move my people so that one day we can be completely free.

The government has a way of making the innocent look like criminals and the true criminals look innocent.

I appreciate the outpouring of love I have received from comrades and want to say, "Thank you." Together we can bring about real, lasting change. □

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

## 96 hours of action vs police terror

By Terri Kay  
Oakland, Calif.

Activists here launched a plan for 96 hours of direct action to reclaim the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and keep the fire lit in the rebellion against police violence. The Anti-Police Terror Project, through a series of spokes-council organizing meetings, facilitated the coordination of numerous independently organized direct actions throughout the four-day MLK weekend Jan. 16-19.

Beginning early Friday morning, Jan. 16, the Third World Resistance for Black Power locked down the front and back doors to the Oakland Federal Building for the purpose of "reclaiming MLK's legacy of militant internationalism [by] linking third world struggle with Black resistance." They held the doors at the Federal building for four and a half hours.

Simultaneously, hundreds of other protesters under the name BART (Bay Area

Rapid Transit) Friday shut down San Francisco's busy downtown Montgomery BART station, the Embarcadero station and the Powell St. station in rolling blockades, armed only with spoons. The spoons were used to create a deafening clang on the metal poles inside the stations.

Demands were to disarm the notorious BART police, provide discount fares for low-income riders and drop the charges and ransom against the BART 14. The BART 14 were arrested after an action by the BlackOut Collective on "Black Friday," Nov. 28, when they chained themselves to BART rail cars, shutting down the Transbay system for several hours.

Later, a group of Black organizers walked into Oakland's recently inaugurated Mayor Libby Schaff's office and read a series of demands, while others shut down an Oakland foreclosure auction.

### Protesters with disabilities lead action

On Saturday morning, a large group

### Bay Area, Calif.

of protesters with disabilities led a silent protest outside a Berkeley City Council hearing on Berkeley police actions during recent protests in that city about the murders of Michael Brown and Eric Garner. The group highlighted the slogan "Black Disabled Lives Matter." Kayla Moore, a Black woman with disabilities, was killed by Berkeley police in 2013.

On Sunday, Jan. 18, protesters held a die-in at the Oakland Walmart, holding signs about John Crawford, a young Black man who was killed by police inside an Ohio Walmart as he was holding one of the store's BB guns.

Other protesters disrupted shoppers at a high-end Emeryville shopping center, which was built on the shellmounds (burial grounds) of the indigenous Ohlone people. A die-in was also held in the street



after a showing of "Selma" at an Oakland movie theater. In San Francisco, a 12-hour sleep-in took place to defend the right to rest outside the Powell St. BART station, where many homeless people are constantly criminalized by police.

The 96 hours culminated Jan. 19 with a Jobs and Economy march in Oakland, starting at the Fruitvale BART station where Oscar Grant was killed and ending at Coliseum City, a development project planned for East Oakland. The Anti-Police Terror Project demands a local hiring policy that ensures 50 percent of the jobs go to Black people and the disenfranchised on probation and parole; a Health Impact Assessment that lays out how many Oakland residents will be displaced as a result of this development and other undesirable outcomes; and a commitment to providing living-wage jobs with benefits to all employees of the Coliseum City project.

The APTP is a project of the ONYX Organizing Committee that, in coalition with other organizations like the Community Ready Corps, the Alan Blueford Center for Justice, Workers World, Healthy Hoodz and the Idriss Stelley Foundation, is working to develop a replicable and sustainable model to end police terrorism in the U.S.

## Target Philadelphia

ment officials throughout the country aimed at "fostering trust" between police and the public.

Protesters held an open mic session to air grievances against Philadelphia police, demand justice for victims of police brutality and urge members of the community to join the growing movement against systemic racism and police occupation of oppressed neighborhoods.

— Story and photo by Matty Starrdust



# Isabel Rosado: Puerto Rican fighter

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Known simply as “Isabelita” or “Doña Isabelita,” throughout her life, Isabel Rosado was an icon of the struggle for Puerto Rican independence and sovereignty. When, on Jan. 15, her remains were sown in the soil of her beloved hometown of Ceiba, thousands of Puerto Ricans shared their many memories of her. They had come from the islands — Puerto Rico is an archipelago made up of Isla Grande (Puerto Rico), Vieques and Culebra, plus many uninhabited islands — and from abroad. Rafael Cancel Miranda, nationalist hero and former political prisoner, and Alicia Rodríguez, also a former political prisoner, led the mourners.

For over a century, Isabel Rosado had witnessed the process of colonization and participated in the struggles of the Puerto Rican people for their total emancipation. That was her life. She was an extraordinary woman, who evolved from an individual to become one with and live in solidarity with the people until the last moments of her life. Above all, she was one with the struggles to free the political prisoners who fought against colonialism.

Her latest project was to demand freedom for Oscar López Rivera. We recall her image with pictures of this political prisoner, whom imperialism still holds after more than 33 years in custody, simply for advocating Boriken independence.

Isabelita was born on Nov. 5, 1907, in

Ceiba, a coastal town in the northeast of the largest island, just nine years after the 1898 Yankee invasion. At the University of Puerto Rico, she studied to become a teacher, like many women of that time, and worked at this job mainly in rural schools.

## Isabelita, nationalist fighter

The Ponce Massacre of Palm Sunday, March 21, 1937, had the greatest impact on Isabelita and united her from then on with the anti-colonial nationalist struggle. This atrocity occurred at the start of a march of members of the Nationalist Party to protest the imprisonment of its leader, Don Pedro Albizu Campos. Under the orders of the then Yankee governor, Blanton Winship, a massive contingent of police made an all-out attack on the protesters, leaving 19 dead, including 14 nationalists, and over 200 injured. The outrage that Isabelita felt impelled her to join the party and become a faithful collaborator of the Maestro (Albizu Campos).

Imprisoned three times, she spent more than 11 years behind bars. The first time was in 1950 for violation of Law 53, also known as “the Gag Rule.” This was the first anti-sedition legislation passed in Puerto Rico, patterned on the anti-communist Smith Act in the United States. This law was finally repealed in 1957.

Under this gag rule, any pro-independence activity was prohibited, including the simple possession and exhibition

of the Puerto Rican flag. After the 1950 Jayuya Uprising, Isabelita was arrested. Thanks to the sympathy shown by her people and her students, her sentence was reduced to 15 months in prison and the loss of her job in the public sector.

The second imprisonment in 1954 was the longest. It followed the armed attack on the U.S. House of Representatives by Nationalist Party members Lolita Lebrón, Irvin Flores Rodríguez, Rafael Cancel Miranda and Andrés Figueroa Cordero. Isabelita had gone to New York City with the mission of organizing tasks leading to a revolution in Puerto Rico, including attacks on key positions in the U.S.

After she returned to the island some days later, police assaulted and fired on the Nationalist Party headquarters. Besides Isabelita, Albizu, Don Pepe Sotomayor, Torresola Doris Pérez Roura and Carmine Pérez were arrested there. Dona Isabel and Carmine Pérez were sentenced to 17 years in prison for defending themselves and for weapons possession. Through a writ of habeas corpus they succeeded in getting out after 11 years.

During that long incarceration, Isabelita became known for helping and defending the rights of women in prison.

## A special mission in Vieques

Albizu had assigned Isabelita the task of driving the U.S. Navy from the island municipality of Vieques, a task that marked her nationalist activity.



Isabel Rosado at 105.

The photo that swept the world in 1979 became famous. It showed the 72-year-old woman with her small body trapped under the weight of a large policewoman who was handcuffing her face down on the sands of the municipality of Vieques for “invading” the marina in an act of civil disobedience. Years later, in 2003, the U.S. Navy finally had to pull out of Vieques.

Thanks to Isabelita, the historic role of Gen. Antonio Valero de Bernabé Pacheco has become known widely. This Puerto Rican fought for the liberation of several Latin American countries and alongside Simón Bolívar during the war in Peru. That his statue was erected in the Puerto Rican town of Fajardo is due to the tireless work of Isabel Rosado Morales.

Isabelita ¡¡¡PRESENTE !!! □

# The truth about unions in Cuba

By Cheryl LaBash

In his Dec. 17 announcement of U.S. “policy changes” toward Cuba, President Barack Obama stated, “We believe that Cuban workers should be free to form unions.”

What in the world could he mean? More than 90 percent of Cuban workers are union members already. Compare that to the U.S., where in 2013, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 11.3 percent of the workers are union members. Isn't it U.S. workers who need more freedom to join unions?

Then on Dec. 22, the U.S. State Department offered \$11 million in U.S. tax dollars to fund programs proposing to foster “civil, political and labor rights in Cuba.” What? The U.S. budget has \$11 million to spend for “labor rights” in Cuba when more than 50 percent of the families of U.S. public school children are so poor they are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches? (New York Times, Jan. 16) What is this really about?

The 1959 Cuban revolution overturned the capitalist economic system there. But the unification of the Cuban unions into the Workers Central (Central Trabajadores de Cuba, CTC) goes back to 1939, 20 years before the revolution triumphed. The unions are voluntary, self-financed, independent organizations. Union membership dues equalling 1 percent of wages are directly collected in the workplace, not through payroll deductions.

## What workers' democracy looks like

Cuba is a workers' state building socialism. The wealth created through production of goods and services is used to

improve the lives of all the people, not to profit just a few. Their unions are directly involved in solving the many challenges that confront Cuban society — which include the weight of the unilateral U.S. economic, financial and commercial blockade, layered on top of hundreds of years of colonial underdevelopment.

Proposals to initiate or change laws are discussed in every workplace, in neighborhood assemblies and in mass organizations like the Federation of Cuban Women. The amendments and comments made are recorded, considered and alter the final outcome. The Economic Guidelines adopted at the Sixth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party were shaped through extensive consultation with the Cuban people — not just Party members. Three million people discussed them in 163,000 meetings. Cuba's total population is around 11 million.

Economic decisions in the U.S. are made by the bosses, bankers and an insatiable, profit-maximizing capitalist class. These decisions are increasing social inequality and economic insecurity for the working class while they enrich the top tenth of the wealthiest 1 percent.

Unions may fight for a better deal under the for-profit economic system, but in this era of capitalism at a dead end, it is often a losing battle. Leaps in productivity, rather than lightening the burden of the working class, instead result in unemployment, bankrupt cities and growing income inequality. It is “experts” trained by the banks and corporations, not workers or unions, who write the laws on economic matters for the legislators to rubber stamp.

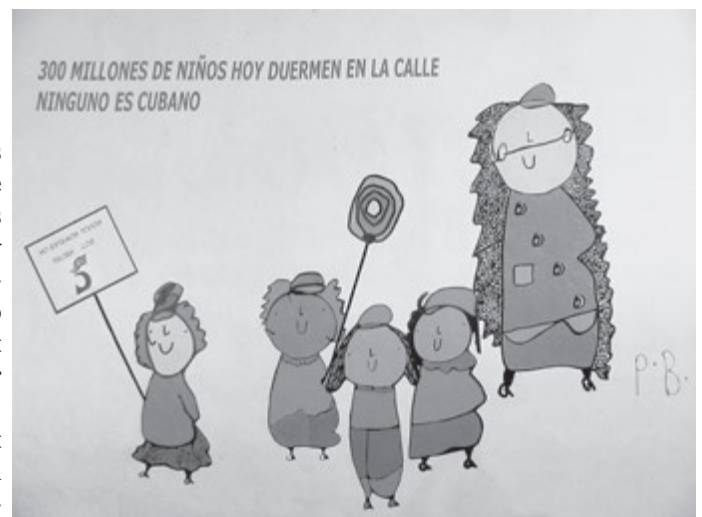
Cuban workers are the leading force in building socialism and guaranteeing

that the basic needs for a dignified life are available to all. This includes free, quality health care and education, plus access to culture and sports. At the convention center in the city of Holguín, a mural points out that “300 million children sleep in the street today; not one of them is Cuban.” This is the result of their socialist economy.

On Jan. 15, the Cuban News Agency (ACN) reported something far outside the experience of workers in the U.S. The CTC, Cuba's equivalent to the AFL-CIO, called on workers to hold assemblies in all work centers so that managers could report to the workers about the adopted economic plan and budget for the year. They said, “It is not possible to meet a production plan without the active participation of labor collectives, which have the capacity to use their potential in terms of the efficiency we as unions know they have.”

At the close of the National People's Power Assembly's fourth session, Cuban President Raúl Castro Ruz elaborated: “The fact that in our social system, trade unions defend workers' rights is a secret to no one. To effectively do so, trade unions should be the first to look after the interests of any given workers' group, but also the interests of the entire working class, which are essentially the same interests defended by the entire nation.”

“We cannot leave any room for selfishness and greed to thrive and consolidate



This mural on the wall of ExpoHolguin in Holguin, Cuba, was painted by Spanish artist Paco Bernal Gil. It reads, ‘300 million children sleep in the street today; not one of them is Cuban.’

among our workers. We all want and need better salaries, but first we have to create wealth and then distribute it according to the contribution each one can make.”

But what happens to workers in the U.S. when productivity increases? The Labor Department reported on Jan. 9 that wages had declined in December, even though official employment had improved a little. Wall Street economist Diane Swonk explained it this way:

“This is still a buyer's market in terms of labor. For all the good news on unemployment and the number of jobs we've created, if these wage numbers are to be believed, employers still have their pick.” (New York Times, Jan. 10)

That explains why the U.S. ruling class got Congress to put \$11 million into setting up a phony program to get their claws into Cuba under the cover of promoting the “freedom to organize unions.” What the bosses here really want is to have their pick of wage slaves who must sell their labor power on the “free” market, instead of workers planning and ruling their socialist destiny. □



## AFRICA

# French racism, repression ignite protests

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

More protests took place throughout the Muslim world after the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo once again highlighted a cover cartoon that was deliberately offensive to Islam.

The magazine's office was attacked and 12 staff members killed on Jan. 7. According to French police, two brothers of Algerian descent, Cherif and Said Kouachi, who had lived their lives in the impoverished suburbs outside of Paris, were responsible. They were killed soon after in a shootout with police. Amedy Coulibaly, a French citizen of West African origin, was killed along with four other people on Jan. 9 in what police said was a hostage-taking episode linked to the magazine shootings.

Since these events, the French government under François Hollande has intensified its repressive apparatus, targeting largely African, Middle Eastern and Muslim communities in France.

Dozens of Muslims have been arrested by police and intelligence services.

The official French position, along with their allies in Europe and North America, is that the so-called "ideology of radical Islam" is the central problem fomenting terrorist attacks. There has been very little discussion in the corporate media about the overall social conditions facing Africans, Arabs and Muslims in France or on the African continent.

## Muslims demonstrate across Africa

Demonstrations have taken place in Algeria, Senegal, Sudan, Mauritania and Niger, where a French cultural center was attacked on Jan. 16. All these states have large Muslim populations, and many viewed the cover of the latest Charlie Hebdo magazine as an affront to their re-

Protest in Algiers, Jan. 16.



ligious beliefs.

In addition to the demonstrations in Africa, similar protests have occurred in Yemen, Pakistan, Turkey, Jordan and other countries. In many of these demonstrations people who gathered outside French embassies clashed with police.

In Niger, at least 10 people were killed during three days of demonstrations during Jan. 16-18. In Niger's second-largest city, Zinder, a French cultural center was damaged during protests.

Other demonstrations were reported in regional cities like Maradi, 360 miles east of Niamey, the capital, where two churches were struck by arson. Another church and a residence of the foreign minister were said to have been torched in the eastern town of Gouré.

Niger has a population of 17 million, most of whom are Muslims. A former French colony, Niger is rich in mineral resources, mainly uranium, but the people are poor. The uranium mines are largely controlled by Areva, a French multinational based in Paris.

Niger has U.S. and French military contingents stationed on long-term missions. The U.S. Africa Command operates a drone station inside the country.

The French and the U.S. are using Niger to carry out a counter-insurgency war

against what these imperialist states describe as terrorist groups that have established bases in northern Mali. The military presence of Washington and Paris in no way benefits the masses of working people, farmers and youth in Niger.

## France distorts freedom of expression, liberty

France, a longtime colonial and neocolonial power in Africa, is upholding the right of satirical publications to insult oppressed groups inside France, while it carries out policies of discrimination and oppression against those whose ancestry is rooted in Africa and the Middle East.

The domestic racism in France is a direct outgrowth of capitalist policies of slavery, colonialism and imperialism in operation since the 18th century. Due to the legacy of postcolonial French domination and exploitation of its former colonies, societal development has been stifled, creating the conditions that drive the large-scale migration of African people.

At the same time, the overall economic conditions in France itself are by no means good. Unemployment has hovered over 10

percent for many years, and successive regimes have failed to bring down the high rates of joblessness and poverty which are greatest among people of color.

Consequently, the character of immigration policy, the existence of racism and anti-Islamic bigotry, and the failure of integration or assimilation cannot be overlooked when analyzing the current social crisis in France. This is coupled with the disastrous foreign policy of Paris, which in recent years has bombed Libya and also provided material and political support to the rebels fighting against the government of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

The French government is well aware that its citizens have been recruited to serve in rebel groups that France claims to oppose in both Iraq and Syria. In fact, Hollande has admitted that his government has supplied Syrian rebels with arms to fight the secular government.

These policies in Libya and Syria are compounded by French interventions in African states over the last few years — in Gabon, the Central African Republic, Libya, Ivory Coast, Niger, Mali, Chad, Somalia, Djibouti and other states. Despite its proclaimed altruistic motivations in Africa, the result of this unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of these countries has caused further instability and economic stagnation. □

## Puerto Rican patriot comes home



Hugs and cries of joy from a group of relatives, friends and political activists greeted Puerto Rican patriot Norberto González Claudio on Jan. 15 at the Luis Muñoz Marín Airport Terminal in San Juan, Puerto Rico. González Claudio had been arrested in the United States for his role in the robbery of \$7.2 million from a Wells Fargo armored car carried out by Los Macheteros-People's Army in Hartford, Conn., in September 1983.

— National Hostosiano  
Independence Movement

## Ukraine regime reopens war

Continued from page 1

elections, rejected a last-minute proposal from Russian President Vladimir Putin to prevent the resumption of war, reported Russia's Foreign Ministry. (ITAR/TASS, Jan. 18)

"A total of 56 shelling attacks from 82 mm to 152 mm weapons have been recorded over the past 24 hours," reported Donetsk Defense Ministry Deputy Commander Eduard Basurin on Jan. 19. "A total of 44 people have been injured and nine people killed in the DNR over the past day, including a child who is in severe condition." (RT.com) All schools in the DNR have been ordered closed.

On Jan. 19, the Third City Hospital in Donetsk suffered a direct hit from a Ukrainian GRAD missile. A doctor was severely wounded and later died. Five others were injured. The children's ward was evacuated to a bomb shelter. (Novorossia.su)

The city of Gorlovka was shelled continuously for 24 hours, residents reported, with dozens killed.

During the ceasefire, while Kiev continually violated its terms, the Russian Federation discouraged the Donetsk and Lugansk militias from responding. Both people's republics are dependent on Russia for humanitarian aid due to the blockade by Ukraine and its U.S./European allies.

Freed from this constraint, the people's militia moved decisively to expel Ukrainian troops from the Donetsk airport

and advanced to the outskirts of occupied Mariupol. Militia forces repelled attempts by Ukrainian forces to re-enter the airport and push into the city limits of Donetsk.

Piles of U.S.-made weapons were recovered from the liberated areas of the Donetsk airport. (South Front, Jan. 18) Zakharchenko reported that Ukraine used banned chemical weapons there.

## Pretext for war

On Jan. 12, a civilian bus just through a Ukrainian military checkpoint was destroyed near the village of Volnovaha in Donetsk killing 10 people and wounding 13. After participating in the "solidarity march" with French imperialism in Paris on Jan. 11, Poroshenko seized on the bus tragedy to charge the Donbass people's militias with "terrorism" for allegedly targeting the bus.

The people's militias and Donetsk government denied the charges, pointing out that they had no weapons in firing range, and called for an independent investigation. Experts say the bus appears to have been destroyed by a landmine placed by Ukrainian forces.

Poroshenko moved up a vote in the Rada (parliament) to authorize three new mobilizations (military drafts) for 2015, of up to 104,000 people, raising the size of the Ukrainian military to 250,000. (Sputnik News, Jan. 15)

After terrorizing the populace of Donbass and launching a war that has killed nearly 5,000 people since April — ac-

ording to official United Nations figures — Poroshenko staged a phony "memorial march" for the 10 bus victims in Kiev on Jan. 18. At the same moment, his regime was raining bombs on the people of Donetsk. (Novorossia.su)

In an emergency statement Jan. 19, Donetsk Prime Minister Alexander Zakharchenko charged Ukraine with using "the truce in order to arm themselves ... Ukraine shoots homes and civilians: children, the elderly and women. It applies the methods of terror. ... However, the armed forces of the Donetsk People's Republic are prepared to respond to all these machinations. Our counterattack has already started." (Anna-News, Jan. 19)

## U.S. talks 'freedom,' makes war

The Ukrainian military's intensification of war crimes is in line with the tasks Washington has assigned its clients in the Kiev coup government. These were enshrined in the "Ukrainian Freedom Support Act," passed with near unanimous bipartisan support by the U.S. Congress on Dec. 4 and signed into law by President Barack Obama on Dec. 18.

The congressional vote opened the floodgates to a new war buildup by the far-right regime in Kiev, aimed at destroying the anti-fascist resistance in the Donbass — the industrial and mining region encompassing Donetsk and Lugansk, formerly part of southeastern Ukraine — and putting NATO's threats on Russia's western border.

Already, on Dec. 13, Ukraine's State Aviation Service suddenly closed three major airports in eastern Ukraine. Reports quickly surfaced from local anti-fascist partisans and Russian intelligence that U.S. C-130 Hercules transport planes were unloading at Zaporizhia behind "hastily erected defensive towers." (ITAR/TASS, Dec. 16)

Military analyst Boris Rozhin said that, "At the current pace, with weapons aid and technology from abroad, the restoration of the junta's combat troops to pre-July levels can be expected by mid-January." (Col. Cassad blog)

For Washington, establishing a NATO military presence in Ukraine is vital to its long-term strategy of regime change in Russia and ultimately breaking up the Russian Federation.

As if on cue, Kiev's Rada voted Dec. 23 to abolish Ukraine's nonaligned status, deepen cooperation with NATO and "achieve the criteria necessary for the acquisition of membership." (Timer.od.ua, Dec. 24) An official NATO mission opened in Kiev just over a week later, on Jan. 1. (Ukraine.ru)

The courage and determination of the people's militias and the residents of Donbass is not in doubt. But to triumph over the enormous forces arrayed against them, they will need the solidarity of anti-war and working-class movements around the world.

A fuller version of this article is at [workers.org](http://workers.org).

## WORKERS WORLD editorial

# Racist Academy behind snubbing of 'Selma'

Institutionalized racism in the U.S. comes in many forms — some of it subtle, some not so subtle. The not so subtle, to put it mildly, includes the police murders of Black and Brown people, especially youth, too numerous to mention here. Heroic national resistance to this police terror began on Aug. 10, one day after the fatal shooting of 18-year-old African-American Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo. This resistance, with all its ebbs and flows, continues today with many protests Jan. 15-19 that honor the struggle legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Almost five months after Ferguson, the movie "Selma" opened in limited release. It quickly became one of the top two best-reviewed movies, alongside "Boyhood." Read our review of "Selma" at workers.org.

The brilliant director Ava Duvernay directed "Selma." Duvernay made Golden Globe history when she became the first African-American woman nominated for best director. David Oyetokunbo Oyelowo, an actor from a Nigerian family who was born in Oxford, Britain, was also nominated for best actor for his powerful portrayal of Dr. King.

The drama depicts the events leading to the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery, 54-mile march to pressure the Lyndon B. Johnson administration to pass the Voting Rights Act, which was enacted later that summer. Duvernay paid homage to the role in the struggle for the right to vote of women like Diane Nash, Annie Lee Cooper and Viola Liuzzo.

Despite op-eds attacking the film for alleged historical "inaccuracies," much of which focused on LBJ's views on civil rights, there was great anticipation that the film would receive multiple Academy Award nominations, especially for best film, best director, best actor and more.

When the Academy Award nominations were announced on Jan. 15, Dr. King's birthday, the film only received two nominations: for best film and best original song.

This blatant snub of such an astounding film immediately sent shockwaves of deep anger and chagrin throughout the film industry and among moviegoers in the U.S. and worldwide.

There has been much speculation about why "Selma" was essentially dissed by the almost 6,000-member Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. For instance, Paramount Pictures did next to nothing to promote the film, even neglecting to send out individual DVDs to the Academy members in a timely fashion.

Many people dismissed the LBJ controversy as bogus, since other biopics — like "Lincoln" — distorted the truth about Abraham Lincoln's role in freeing enslaved African people. Some even stated that the film came out too late for Academy Award consideration, which doesn't hold water. Many of the best films are purposely released toward the end of the year so they are easily remembered once film critics' awards and nominations are announced.

The bottom line is that "Selma" became the latest target of an Academy that to this day is still 93 percent white, 76 percent male and on average 63-years-old. That Cheryl Boone Isaacs, a Black woman, was voted in as the Academy president in 2012 cannot hide the 87-year-old sordid history of the most prestigious

institution in Hollywood. The deck was stacked against Duvernay, who is both Black and a woman.

### #OscarsSoWhite

As a result of these statistics, #OscarsSoWhite became the number one hashtag on Twitter on Jan. 15. Not since 1998 have all 20 nominations for best actress, best actor, best supporting actress and best supporting actor included no people of color.

To the left of the Academy Awards are the Independent Spirit Awards handed out the day before the Oscars. To ISA's credit, this group not only nominated "Selma" for best film, best director and best actor, but also Bradford Young for best cinematography and Carmen Ejogo for best supporting actress for her unforgettable portrayal of Coretta Scott King.

Workers World urges its readers to hurry — not wait — to experience this astounding film. It truly captures the spirit of Dr. King and the heroic Civil Rights Movement in Alabama that is impacting today's mass struggle against racism, bigotry and all forms of inequality.

The cast of "Selma" wore "I Can't Breathe" T-shirts and held their hands up during the protests against police violence and did special screenings of "Selma" in Ferguson and for youth around the country during the King holiday weekend. The cast's commitment reflects the consciousness of making this history relevant to today's growing anti-racist mass resistance. □

## Crown Heights, Brooklyn:

# 'No heat – no peace!'



After three mostly below-freezing days without heat or hot water at an apartment building at 1045 Union St. in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and calls to New York City's emergency hotline made in vain, Brooklyn's Crown Heights Tenants Union called an emergency protest on Jan. 10.

More than 30 people joined the rally/protest in front of the apartment building. The mostly women of color — members of the Crown Heights Tenants Union Local #3 [ZT Realty tenants] — chanted "No justice! No rent!" Two TV stations arrived to cover this action.

Then came several cops, inspiring the tenants to chant demands that the landlord be arrested. Said tenant Shirley Coit: "I've been here 30 years. ZT Realty is the worse management. Three days without heat! I was crying. I know they want us out. It's just to harass you out. But they can't move me! I'll stay and fight! We all will!"

# Why the lies about Korea?

By Deirdre Griswold

If you listen only to Hollywood and Washington, you would think that the northern half of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, is a terrible place where the people live in prison-like conditions and the leaders ("dictators") are totally irrational.

So why is the regime in the southern part of Korea, which is not only aligned with the U.S. politically and militarily but also occupied by almost 30,000 U.S. troops, so afraid of the truth that it just deported a Korean-American woman, Shin Eun-mi, because she dared to say something nice in public about the north?

And why, if it's so "democratic," did the south Korean regime in December ban the only real opposition party, the United Progressive Party, arrest some of its leading members and eject its five elected deputies from the parliament? The party was reported to have around 100,000 members and advocated for the reunification of the Korean nation.

South Korea's current president, Park Geun-hye, is the daughter of Park Chung-hee, a military dictator who, in the words of the Dec. 18 New York Times, "ruled the country with an iron fist from 1961 to 1979." During that period, the prisons were full of progressives. Park was so hated that the Korean CIA assassinated him so that another general, Chun Doo-hwan, could take his place. In 1980, after an uprising for democracy in the southern city of Gwangju, Chun ordered the massacre of some 2,000 people, most of them students.

All this had the approval of the U.S. government. On May 17, 2014, to commemorate the anniversary of the Gwangju massacre, the Japan Times ran an article called "Dying for Democracy." It explained that "Government

documents obtained through Freedom of Information requests in the 1990s reveal U.S. complicity in sanctioning the deployment of South Korean military forces to quash popular rebellion in the spring of 1980 that facilitated the Gwangju massacre." Under the Status of Forces Agreement that has been in place ever since the Korean War, the U.S. has supreme authority over the armed forces of south Korea.

### 'Human rights' farce in south

Contrary to all the headlines here demonizing north Korea, it is the regime in the south that is so hated by a large number of its people. This came out when a hugely overloaded ferry boat full of hundreds of students capsized, drowning more than 300 people on April 16. It turned out that the rich owners, who had strong political connections to the south Korean government, had flouted numerous safety rules in order to pack more people onto the ferry — and make more money.

Now the U.S. is behind an investigation of "human rights violations" — not in south Korea, but in the DPRK. This investigation will be taking testimony in south Korea, where it's a crime, under the National Security Act, to say anything good about the north and people are arrested for resending Twitter posts from the DPRK. (NY Times, Dec. 19)

During all this, the leader of the Workers' Party of Korea, Kim Jong Un, in his New Year's address, reiterated the willingness of the DPRK to meet with the leaders of the south in order to defuse tensions on the Korean peninsula and find ways to allow families divided for over 60 years to visit one another. This has undoubtedly struck a strong chord in both the north and the south.

This is the backdrop for the screaming headlines in the U.S. accusing the DPRK of "cyberterrorism" for allegedly hacking the Sony Corp. over its crudely nauseating film "The Interview." The State Department admittedly worked with the filmmakers to create a film that promotes the violent assassination of the DPRK's leader, treating it as a big "joke."

Many experts had expressed doubt that the DPRK was behind the attacks on Sony. So now the U.S. government, in a newly disclosed National Security Agency document, brags that it hacked into the DPRK's computer systems as early as 2010, and that's how it knew.

Since Washington seems to know so much about the DPRK, it must also know that there is very strong sentiment in both the north and the south to get the U.S. and its troops out, so the Korean people can determine their own destiny. But you won't find that in U.S. headlines.

*Deirdre Griswold has visited both south and north Korea. In 2004 she spoke at a mass rally in Gwangju, south Korea, commemorating the 1980 massacre.*

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.



GRAPHIC BY SAHU BARRON

Available at major online booksellers.

— Photo and story by Anne Pruden

# French, EU imperialists ramp up Islamophobia

By Fred Goldstein

French, U.S. and British imperialism and their partners, each in their own way and for their own aims, are determined to escalate wars abroad and repression at home.

The French ruling class has imposed an undeclared state of siege on its own Muslim population and has used troops in North and West Africa to repress rebellions protesting the publication of Islamophobic cartoons in the magazine Charlie Hebdo.

French President Francois Hollande, of the misnamed “Socialist Party,” has declared that France is “at war,” echoing a previous statement by Prime Minister Manuel Valls. France has deployed 122,000 heavily armed troops and police throughout the country and has declared a “high alert.” Soldiers and police with heavy weapons patrol the streets, train stations and other public places. Raids have been carried out and dozens of people arrested.

In neighboring Belgium, the authorities deployed 300 troops to Antwerp and Brussels, carried out sweeps and shot two people dead in a raid in the town of Verviers. In Germany, Interior Ministry spokesperson Tobias Plate spoke of an “abstract high danger” as the authorities deployed 250 police in pre-dawn raids. The racist frenzy in France led to the stabbing death in a village outside Avignon of a Moroccan man, Mohamed El Makouli, by an Islamophobic neighbor.

## Imperialists step up international aggression

The European imperialists are doubling down on their attacks abroad as well. The French government is flying Mirage jets over Iraq in a joint operation with the U.S. Instead of addressing the crushing poverty and racism suffered by the millions of French youth and workers of African or Middle Eastern ancestry, the answer of the regime is to deploy troops and step up surveillance in the oppressed communities and at airports.

Instead of pulling back from war on Muslim people in Iraq, Syria and North and West Africa, the Hollande regime is pressing ahead with the policies that led to the attacks against the unspeakable racism and chauvinism expressed by the

cartoons of Charlie Hebdo.

Hollande and his fellow imperialists organized a mass march in Paris on Jan. 11 allegedly for “free speech,” which defended and celebrated the magazine that insulted the religion of nearly 2 billion oppressed people worldwide. In fact, you do not have to be religious at all to be revolted by the arrogant, insensitive depiction of the Prophet Muhammad in sexual

**The background to the rise of Islamophobia is the growing economic crisis that is engulfing Europe. Islamophobia has become the battle cry of the ultra-right and fascist forces in Europe, just as racism, sexism and anti-LGBTQ bigotry make up the battle cry of right-wing extremists and fascists in the U.S.**

poses and other objectionable images.

Hollande is partly motivated by the fact that his popularity in France was at a dismally low point before the crisis. And he is struggling to fend off challenges from the fascist National Front Party, led by Marine le Pen, who got a quarter of the vote in the 2014 election for the European Parliament. It is characteristic of social democrats such as Hollande that the way they fight the right is to move to the right themselves and occupy the political territory of the National Front.

President Obama and his administration have been trying to bob and weave through the crisis. The Obama administration stayed away from the Paris demonstration. Attorney General Eric Holder, who was in Paris just blocks away at a conference, stayed away from the march.

## Washington is universally hated by Muslims

This is for purely imperialist purposes. Washington is the most universally hated power by Muslims — from the Middle East to Pakistan, to Afghanistan to Yemen and Somalia, and other parts of the world — for its wars of aggression, its drone strikes, its torture policies, its massacres of civilians, its prisons from Abu Ghraib to Guantanamo, and more.

The recent exposure of the CIA torturers in the Senate Intelligence Committee

report is filled with graphic descriptions of U.S. torture. These have been read around the world. Washington is trying to placate Muslim public opinion and has even banned references to “Islamic extremism.” In addition to the fact that the neocons and militarists in Washington despise French imperialism and do not want to increase its prestige, they certainly did not want to be identified with

defense of the insult to the Prophet Muhammad at a time when they are escalating their attacks on Muslims in Iraq and Syria and at home.

Washington and the Pentagon have no intention of pulling back on their aggression. Obama held a joint press conference on Jan. 16 with his junior partner, British Prime Minister David Cameron, to announce common measures to “fight terrorism.” Cameron announced new cooperation in the war in Iraq and in Ukraine, among other gestures of imperialist subordination.

But Washington intends to keep leadership of the imperialist assault against the oppressed. While in Paris during the march, Eric Holder announced that the administration will host a summit in Washington on Feb. 18 on preventing violent extremism.

Washington recently announced a new deployment of 1,000 U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey. They will be used to train carefully vetted, Pentagon-approved Syrian counterrevolutionaries in order to build up a 5,000-person force to continue the war against the Islamic State.

Washington is also behind the counterrevolutionary government of Petro Poroshenko in Ukraine, which is planning a new offensive to try to recapture the east from anti-fascist forces of resistance to a U.S.-Europe takeover.

## Rise of Islamophobia

The background on the rise of Islamophobia is the growing economic crisis that is engulfing Europe. Islamophobia has become the battle cry of the ultra-right and fascist forces in Europe, just as racism, sexism and homophobia make up the battle cry of right-wing extremists and fascists in the U.S.

Fascist, Islamophobic and anti-Semitic parties exist in France, Germany, Britain, Belgium, Sweden, Greece and other countries in Europe. Prior to the most recent publication of cartoons defaming the Prophet Muhammad, there were demonstrations throughout Europe demanding crackdowns on immigration and immigrants.

In recent days specific Islamophobic demonstrations have taken place in Germany and France. It is an illusion that Islamophobia can be stopped by a government ban of right-wing demonstrations.

The social soil for political reaction exists in France, for example, where the official unemployment rate is 10 percent and youth unemployment is 20 percent. At the same time, unemployment rates have reached 40 percent in the oppressed neighborhoods.

French capitalism, and European capitalism in general, has been unable to lift itself out of the global capitalist crisis which began in 2007. There has been no recovery for the European working class. Unemployment in the eurozone, as in France, is above 10 percent, and youth unemployment is double that. In some countries such as Greece and Spain unemployment is between 15 and 20 percent.

This is part of a general crisis of overproduction that has plagued the global profit system and which is intensifying every month. Right now the right wing has seized the advantage and is feeding on the discontent of the masses to garner support for divisive, racist ideology. This is aggravated by the inability of the capitalist governments to turn the economic situation around.

Persistent and growing unemployment should be a signal for a revival of the working-class movement. It is high time for the communists and progressive, anti-racist, anti-imperialist and pro-working class forces to unite to defend the Muslim population and push back the fascists. □

# Pentagon deploys more troops

By Chris Fry

With an air of absolute cynicism, the Pentagon announced on Jan. 16 that it will send 400 combat troops and 600 other personnel to the Mideast to train Syrian so-called “moderates” to fight forces of the Islamic State (ISIL). Congress has allocated \$5 billion to fund this program.

The U.S. war machine will set up training sites in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, three repressive regimes that are among the most willing U.S. agents in West Asia. This increases the already existing training program run by the CIA.

Not long ago, the troops now supporting ISIL were part of the same U.S.-backed campaign to overturn the government of Bashar al-Assad in Syria and install a new regime completely under the thumb of U.S. imperialism. The U.S. labeled the groups it supported as “democratic forces,” calling their campaign of terror and

atrocities “a popular uprising.”

But Washington has lost control of some of its hired guns in Syria. ISIL forces not only refused to follow the CIA’s orders, they attacked the U.S.-installed Iraq regime, seized oil wells, and even looted banks and threatened Iraq’s Kurdish region. Now the U.S. government calls ISIL its enemy — along with the Assad government.

Why? With the Mideast holding the vast bulk of the world’s oil supply, the number one mission of the U.S. military is to keep the flow of oil to its refineries, the flow of cash into its bank vaults. Navy ships and planes are on constant patrol in the Persian Gulf. U.S. military bases dot the region. Washington arms the most repressive regimes to the hilt. And, of course, the Zionist regime in Israel remains the prime garrison of “friendly” military force to U.S. imperialism in the Middle East.

All of this force is designed to do one thing: prevent the impoverished people of the region from seizing control of the vast wealth lying right under their own feet. ISIL threatens to disrupt this flow of wealth to Wall Street, even though its reactionary ideology harms solidarity among the oppressed peoples of the region.

Washington’s new “training” strategy makes one thing crystal clear — the forces the U.S. is arming and backing to destroy the Syrian government are not for “democracy.” They are foot soldiers for the oil companies in the Middle East, to be used to fight any target chosen by the Pentagon and Big Oil.

To build solidarity with the peoples of the region, progressives and anti-war forces in the U.S. need to stand up against the new war plans from the White House and Pentagon.

U.S. out of the Middle East! □

WORKERS WORLD  
MUNDO OBRERO

## Asesinatos en París

Continúa de página 12

todos los días y de todas las formas.

Pero el “derecho” del Ku Klux Klan, la Sociedad de John Birch, el Partido de Té, etc. a difamar a las/os afroamericanos, latinos, inmigrantes, mujeres, comunidad lgbt, debe ser suprimido por el propio pueblo en una lucha contra estos agresores. De la misma manera, las fuerzas progresistas de Francia deben despertar y sofocar las fuerzas racistas generadas por el imperialismo francés.

Sobre todo, el movimiento en EUA tiene que protegerse contra el aumento del racismo, la islamofobia y la intensificación de la actividad policial a nivel local y federal. □



## Racismo e imperialismo detrás de asesinatos en París

Por Fred Goldstein

El domingo 11 de enero, una masiva manifestación tuvo lugar en París en solidaridad con los miembros del personal de la revista de caricaturas satíricas Charlie Hebdo, quienes fueron asesinados el 7 de enero, como también un policía musulmán y cuatro clientes de una tienda judía de comestibles muertos en dos ataques armados esa semana.

El objetivo principal de los asesinatos era el personal de la revista. La revista había publicado reiteradamente caricaturas insultantes al Islam y al profeta Mahoma. Estaban en el proceso de diseñar otra caricatura ofensiva cuando fueron asesinados.

Las autoridades francesas han identificado a los atacantes como Said Kouachi, de 34 años, su hermano Cherif, de 32 años, y Amedy Coulibaly, de 32. Los hermanos eran ciudadanos franceses de origen argelino y Coulibaly era de ascendencia africana occidental. Por supuesto, toda la información sobre estos ataques se encuentra en manos de las autoridades policiales y de inteligencia francesas. Nada de lo que dicen debe ser aceptado automáticamente.

Por otro lado, mientras que algunos piensan que el ataque fue un montaje dirigido por París, el movimiento tiene que lidiar con esto como un asunto político y no depender de las teorías conspirativas, a menos que una nueva información significativa salga a la luz.

Los asesinatos por supuesto, han sido condenados día y noche por los grandes medios empresariales en Francia, Europa y EUA. Pero los asesinatos también han sido condenados por el líder de Hizbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, así como por Hamas. Ambos grupos de la resistencia han sido heroicos en su lucha contra el estado sionista de Israel y sus amos imperialistas. Hamas, por supuesto, ha liderado la lucha en Gaza contra la ocupación israelí.

Para las/os progresistas y revolucionarios, los acontecimientos plantean varias cuestiones y dificultades. ¿Debemos condenar los asesinatos? ¿Se debe llamar masacre al ataque, considerando que, en promedio por 51 días cada día, el verano pasado se mataron cuatro veces más personas en Gaza por parte de Israel? Pero los medios de comunicación y líderes políticos no llaman a eso una masacre.

La terminología misma es un arma en la lucha, y el lenguaje utilizado por la clase dominante no puede adoptarse de forma automática, no sea que se nos malinterprete.

¿Cómo nos oponemos a los asesinatos sin que parezca que estamos con el imperialismo o que toleramos políticamente los ataques de los caricaturistas contra el Islam, que constituían lo que muchos consideran un discurso de odio?

Es seguro que el tipo de ataques llevados a cabo en París no avanzó la lucha de millones de musulmanes oprimidos/os, ya sea en Europa o el Medio Oriente. De hecho, les facilitaron a los imperialistas movilizar a su propia población y apoyar la represión anti islámica y la intervención militar. Incluso el propio Nasrallah fue citado diciendo que el ataque probablemente hizo más daño al Islam que las car-

icaturas. (Huffington Post, 9 de enero)

### Los mayores terroristas denuncian el terrorismo

Por otra parte, las denuncias más fuertes contra el terrorismo han venido de los terroristas más grandes del mundo - EUA, Francia, Bretaña y otras potencias europeas. Tratan de utilizar el repudio de los ataques para hacer avanzar sus objetivos de represión racista de las/os residentes islámicos, aumentar la vigilancia, y escalar los bombardeos y operaciones militares en Irak, Siria, Yemen, Pakistán, Afganistán y otros lugares.

Ya el racista Departamento de Policía de Nueva York (NYPD por sus siglas en inglés) ha utilizado la situación en París para intensificar su vigilancia y crear falsas amenazas a la seguridad a fin de ampliar sus operaciones. Estos pronunciamientos alarmistas y la táctica del NYPD sin duda van dirigidos a socavar el movimiento La Vida de los Negros Importa (Black Lives Matter) y pulir la deteriorada imagen de la policía.

Las grandes potencias terroristas mundiales quieren ocultar el origen de los ataques de París. Estos ataques deben considerarse en el contexto de más de tres décadas de guerra contra los países musulmanes, principalmente por EUA, pero en colaboración con otros, incluyendo a Francia.

Glenn Greenwald hizo un recuento de los bombardeos desde 1980: "Irán (1980, 1987-1988), Libia (1981, 1986, 1989, 2011), Líbano (1983), Kuwait (1991), Irak (1991-2011, 2014-), Somalia (1992-1993, 2007-), Bosnia (1995), Afganistán (1998, 2001-), Sudán (1998), Kosovo (1999), Yemen (2000, 2002-), Pakistán (2004-) y ahora Siria." (The Intercept)

### Silencio sobre la masacre imperialista

Mientras se muestran fotos horribles de las secuelas del ataque contra Charlie Hebdo, fotografías similares de familias asesinadas por ataques de drones estadounidenses en Pakistán, Yemen o Somalia no son mostradas. Ni el jefe del gobierno francés, quien dice: "Estamos en guerra con el islam radical", quiere traer a colación el hecho de que "Francia ha emergido como uno de los más activos invasores en el mundo musulmán, llevando a cabo operaciones militares en Libia, Mali, Chad, Costa de Marfil, República Centroafricana, Yibuti, Abu Dabi, Afganistán, Irak y Siria. Los críticos acusan a Francia de tener una nueva era de colonialismo en el Medio Oriente y en África." (Eric Margolis, Common Dreams, 10 de enero)

Los crímenes de guerra de los Estados Unidos están grabados en la memoria de las masas musulmanas: imágenes de Afganistán arrasado por bombas inteligentes, bombas láser, bombas revienta-búnker y las llamadas bombas de fragmentación —bombas de 5,000 libras que estallan por encima del suelo y matan todo dentro de un radio de 100 yardas. Hay un número incalculable de muertos y millones han quedado sin hogar sólo en Afganistán. Esto fue seguido por el bombardeo de "choque y pavor" de Irak, incluyendo los ataques de EUA en Faluya, que destruyó virtualmente esa ciudad de

300.000. Luego vinieron las imágenes de Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo y otras cámaras de tortura montadas por el ejército estadounidense y la CIA.

Los franceses colonizaron Vietnam, Camboya y Laos, así como partes del norte y oeste de África al comienzo del s. XIX. La Legión Extranjera Francesa, una fuerza mercenaria, era famosa por su brutalidad en la época colonial francesa. Los crímenes del imperialismo contra las/os musulmanes y otros pueblos colonizados son demasiado extensos para enumerarlos aquí. Este es el trasfondo de los ataques de París.

El movimiento no debe dejar que la oposición a los asesinatos disminuya la resistencia a la intervención EUA-Francia en Irak, Siria y el norte de África sólo porque estos imperialistas por el momento están luchando contra ISIS o al-Qaida. Las fuerzas reaccionarias de ISIS y al-Qaida deben ser derrotadas por las fuerzas progresistas y revolucionarias dentro de la sociedad islámica, no por el imperialismo. Una victoria para Washington o París sería un revés para las/os oprimidos del mundo.

### Libertad de expresión y cuestión nacional

Es una característica de la sociedad capitalista francesa y el imperialismo francés tratar la cuestión nacional negándose a reconocer su existencia. Este insensible chovinismo nacional ha formado actitudes. De hecho, la izquierda francesa descaradamente ha adoptado esta actitud. Esto tiene que ver con el ataque más reciente.

Según el New York Times del 8 de enero, "En 2012, cuando los editores de Charlie Hebdo desafiaron la recomendación del gobierno y publicaron crudas caricaturas del Profeta Muhammad en poses desnudas y sexuales, las autoridades francesas cerraron embajadas, centros culturales y escuelas en unos 20 países" anticipando una reacción violenta.

El editor Stephane Charbonnier, quien fue asesinado el miércoles, era intransigente y había tenido custodia policial desde 2012. Arriesgó su vida por el derecho a insultar a mil millones de oprimidos/s sin restricción o inhibición.

Según el NY Times, "En el pasado, Charbonnier prometió que sus caricaturistas seguirían burlándose 'hasta que el Islam sea tan banal como el catolicismo'. . . [en] su estridente esfuerzo, y a veces impulsado comercialmente a ofender cada piedad islámica . . . Charlie Hebdo estaba en la vanguardia de la oposición al Islam conservador".

Charbonnier ponía un signo de igualdad entre la religión de los colonizadores — la religión de las Cruzadas y los misioneros que estaban en la vanguardia de la esclavitud colonial — y el Islam, una religión practicada principalmente por los pueblos oprimidos que fueron conquistados por el colonialismo y que han sido atacados repetidamente por las fuerzas militares de Washington, Londres, París, Berlín, Roma, etc.

### Equiparando falsamente oprimidos y opresores

Esta actitud es un reflejo de la sociedad

de la clase dominante francesa. Cuando los franceses colonizaron Argelia, clasificaron al pueblo argelino como francés y llamaron Argelia una provincia de Francia. Incluso llegaron a poner delegados títeres en el parlamento francés para mantener la ficción de que "Todos somos franceses".

En 2005, cuando jóvenes principalmente árabes y afro-musulmanes/es de los suburbios de París se rebelaron durante tres semanas contra la pobreza, el desempleo y la falta de oportunidades, una de sus demandas era exigir al gobierno francés que mantuviera estadísticas sobre el número de personas en Francia de origen extranjero. Argelinas/os, norteafricanas/os y sus descendientes que viven en Francia no se cuentan como extranjeras/os. Solo se cuentan como "ciudadanos franceses" y por ende no pueden probar discriminación por motivos de raza o nacionalidad.

Imagínese si las/os afroamericanos no fueran contados como tales o si las/os chicanos no fueran considerados como latinos por el gobierno de EUA. Nunca podría haber un programa de acción afirmativa si todo el mundo fuera solo un "americana/o".

Esta es la actitud chovinista que hay detrás de la revista Charlie Hebdo. Supuestamente Charbonnier era "un izquierdista". Pero ningún izquierdista genuino, y menos ningún comunista, podría ignorar la cuestión de opresión nacional. Esto no es una cuestión de "libertad de expresión" sino más bien una cuestión de discurso de odio que tiene como resultado alentar a la derecha y las fuerzas racistas para llevar a cabo discriminación, acoso y violencia contra las/os musulmanes.

El segundo partido en las últimas elecciones de Francia y una fuerza amenazante es el Frente Nacional, una organización fascista que ha hecho de la islamofobia y restricciones a la comunidad musulmana el centro de su programa. Estas caricaturas alimentan el frenesí de islamofobia, no solo en Francia, sino en Alemania donde la organización Europeos Patrióticos Contra la Islamización recientemente organizó 18.000 manifestantes en Dresden. El Partido Democrático Sueco que es anti-islámico, atrae 15 por ciento del voto. El Partido Independiente del Reino Unido, el partido Aurora Dorada en Grecia y otros partidos derechistas, fascistas e islamofóbicos, están creciendo en el ambiente de la crisis económica capitalista.

El alto desempleo y la pobreza están creando las bases para el racismo y las tácticas de dividir y conquistar.

El derecho democrático de la libertad de expresión para las/os progresistas, las/os trabajadores, las comunidades oprimidas y todas las organizaciones que tengan que luchar contra la reacción capitalista es extremadamente importante. Este derecho, sin embargo, está muy restringido en la sociedad capitalista porque los ricos son los dueños de los medios de comunicación, los editoriales, los estudios cinematográficos, las grandes empresas de publicación y suministros de papel, etc., así que la burguesía puede tener su punto de vista presentado a todas horas,

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