



Greek voters reject austerity

By G. Dunkel

Voters in Greece's Jan. 25 parliamentary election rejected the harsh, devastating capitalist austerity program imposed, for the past six years, by the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Commission on the working class in that country.

This first electoral defeat of austerity in all of Western Europe opens up a new stage in the struggle continentwide, especially in countries like Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Italy, where unemployment rates have ranged from 12 to 25 percent since 2010, and workers have been under fierce attack from the bankers and bosses.

Syriza, a Greek party whose electoral appeal grew enormously in the past few years, came in first with 36 percent of the popular vote and 149 of the 300 seats. Syriza's leader, Alexis Tsipras, was named premier Jan. 26. Parties opposing austerity topped 52 percent of the vote.

The two parties — New Democracy and Pasok — that had formed the previous government and had accepted and defended the policy of austerity, faced a crushing defeat. Together, they got only 33 percent of the vote.

The reasons for the popular anger over austerity run deep. Jobs have vanished: the official unemployment rate in Greece is 27 percent, 50 percent for youth under 30. Wages, including the minimum wage, have been slashed along with pensions and health care. Hunger has increased along with suicides.

The governments have raised taxes and fees rapidly and unpredictably, but Greece's total tax income has fallen since the national economy has been rapidly declining. Greece's output of goods and services is now only two-thirds what it was in 2007.

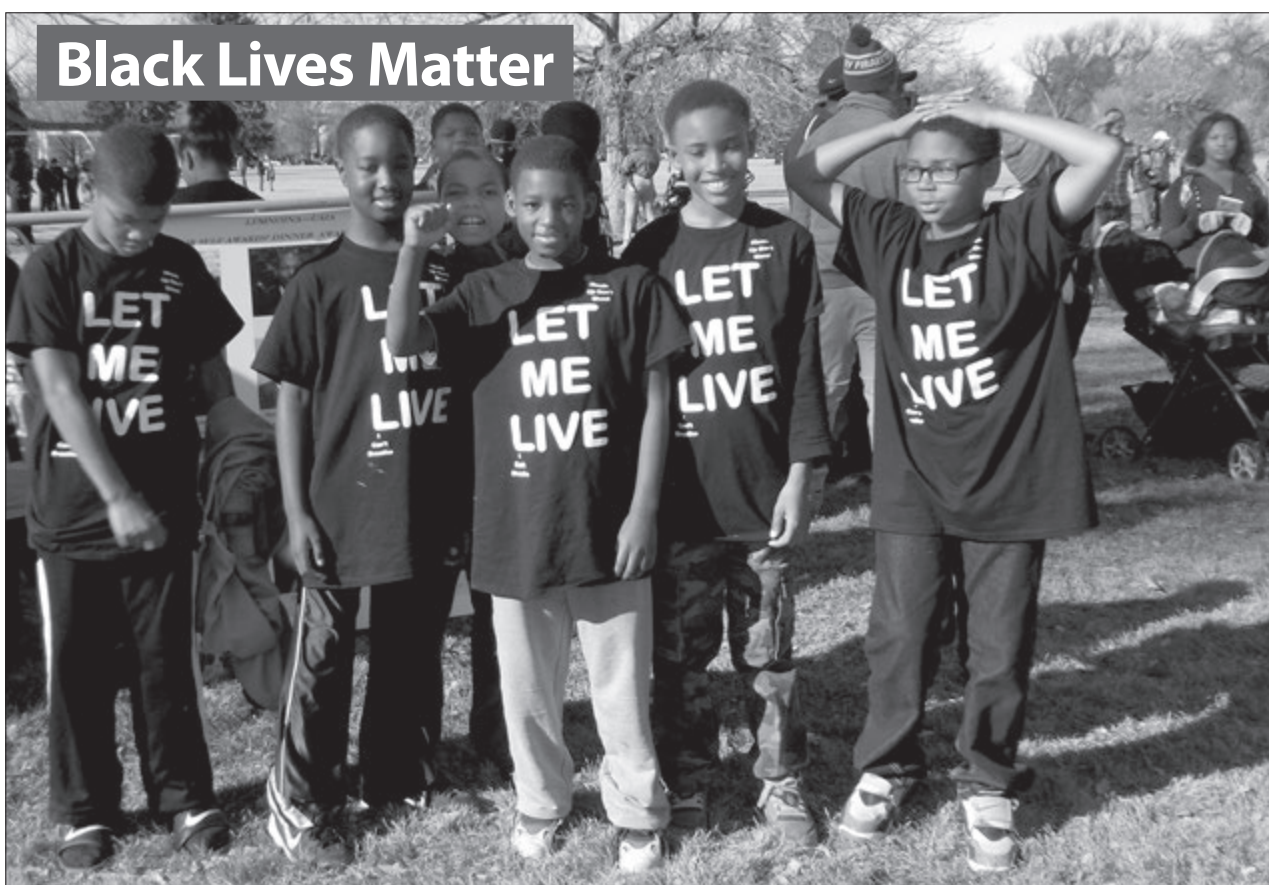
While European bankers and regimes touted austerity as the only way to solve Greece's financial crisis, its debt actually increased. Bankers bought Greek bonds at 10 percent interest after they knew the IMF and the ECB were backing them.

With 149 seats leaving it two short of a majority, Syriza brought in a small, right-wing but anti-austerity party called the Independent Greeks as a coalition partner so it can form a government.

In a speech in front of the University of Athens, Tsipras called the vote result "a victory for all peoples of Europe fighting austerity." He went on to say, "It cancels the memorandums" that enforce Greece's international loan agreements. He proclaimed that his government would negotiate a fair "mutually beneficial agreement," raise the minimum wage to its previous level and cut taxes on the middle class. (Ekathimerini, Jan. 25)

Many leaders of left-social-democratic and "Eurocommunist" parties in southern Europe attended Syriza's concluding rallies, including Pablo Iglesias of Spain's Podemos Party, Jean-Luc Mélenchon of France's Parti de Gauche and Pierre Laurent of the French Communist Party. Syriza supporters in the Greek diaspora

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Youth reclaim MLK Day with militant protests. Here, Denver, Jan. 19. See page 4.

PHOTO: VIVIANA WEINSTEIN

Hands off Boston bus drivers!

By Tony Murphy

The jury trial on trumped-up charges against union leader Steve Kirschbaum will begin on Feb. 2. After months of pretrial hearings and false starts, this founder of the Boston School Bus Drivers Union will be in court facing serious felony charges.

United Steelworkers Local 8751 was already in a fierce fight against global union-buster Veolia, which locked out the union members and then fired four of its leaders in October 2013. As support grew for the campaign to reinstate the leaders — Kirschbaum, Andre Francois, Garry Murchison and Steve Gillis — Veolia resorted in June to manufacturing four felony charges against Kirschbaum.

Everyone watching this case knows that the charges are fraudulent and are meant to break the back of this fighting, majority Haitian and Cape Verdean union. Two of the charges have already been dismissed.

Of course, the obvious falsity of the charges is no guarantee of justice in the capitalist courts.

If an African-American youth can be gunned down or choked to death by police in broad daylight — with video footage of the event to boot — and the perpetrator is never charged for the crime, then a communist,

anti-racist trade union leader can face a fabricated case and be in trouble.

That is why the letter seeking support from organized labor for Local 8751's fight against Veolia was signed by both United Electrical Workers Local 1110 President Armando Robles and Boston Black Lives Matter organizer Daunasia Yancey.

Unions all over the country have responded to this letter with resolutions of support and donations. The Alameda County Labor Council in northern California recently passed a resolution urging support for Local 8751, calling it "as class conscious and as anti-racist a union that you will find anywhere." This resolution follows one passed last year by the San Francisco Labor Council, which was initiated by Transportation Union Local 174, which represents that city's school bus drivers.

This makes support from other school bus driver unions bicoastal — the New York School Bus Drivers Union, ATU Local 1181, issued a letter in October 2013 saying it "stands in 100-percent solidarity with USW Local 8751."

Last year the Boston School Bus Drivers got support from Boston's labor allies — the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, the Greater Boston Labor Council, Boilermakers

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Inequalities spark resistance

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Anti-racists dominate BART commish meeting

By Terri Kay
Oakland, Calif.

An overflow crowd of some 400 people packed the Bay Area Rapid Transit Board of Commissioners' meeting here on Jan. 22, calling for dropping the criminal charges against the Black Friday 14 and BART's demands for financial restitution.

Protesters spilled out into the large lobby, where a boisterous rally was held. Guards prevented many from entering the space.

The arrests occurred when the Black Friday 14, organized by the Blackout Collective, shut down the West Oakland BART station on Nov. 28 — so-called Black Friday. They linked themselves in a human chain from the rail cars to the benches in the station. Their purpose was to stop "business as usual" in opposition to the grand jury's refusal to indict Police Officer Darren Wilson for killing Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo.

Cat Brooks, one of the 14, explained the goal of that action was an "economic boycott of the system that continues to terrorize and kill us." (tinyurl.com/mqsa4xc)

BART has pressured District Attorney Nancy O'Malley to pursue criminal charges against the 14, who are all Black, and to demand restitution of \$70,000 for the business that BART allegedly lost during the shutdown.

Importantly, there were many subsequent Bay Area protests against the grand jury decisions not to indict police officers who killed Michael Brown and Eric Garner. Those in the streets blocked freeways and intersections and closed down other BART stations. Despite the



fact that the groupings at every protest were multinational and many white activists were arrested, almost all of those facing charges for the actions are Black or other people of color, showing the inherent racism of the criminal justice system.

During the Commissioners' meeting, two different groups of Black Friday 14 supporters unfurled banners and led chants, after which they were hauled out by police. Another group stood up to reveal T-shirts with messages supporting the 14. Because so many protesters spoke there, the official agenda was tossed out. Sixty activists, including some of the 14, took the floor and dominated the Commissioners' meeting.

Supporters also presented a petition to drop the charges, signed by more than 11,000 people. At one point, the entire room full of protesters broke out singing "Which Side Are You On?" Finally, Commissioner Rebecca Saltzman declared that she would draft a resolution to drop the charges and demands for restitution and present it to the next board meeting for approval.

The crowd declared victory and filed out of the room singing, promising to return to the board's next meeting at 9 a.m. on Feb. 12 to make sure the resolution passes. Meanwhile, a court appearance for the 14 is scheduled on Feb. 4. Supporters are asked to come out in large numbers for both of these events. □

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Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
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Closing date: Jan. 27, 2015
Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Technical Editors: Lal Roohk, Andy Katz
Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson
West Coast Editor: John Parker
Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe, Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel, Fred Goldstein, Martha Grevatt, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Gloria Rubac
Technical Staff: Sue Davis, Keith Fine, Bob McCubbin
Mundo Obrero: Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Carlos Vargas
Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

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WORKERS WORLD PARTY

Who we are & what we're fighting for

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. □

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

workers.org/wwp

National Office
147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10011
212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org

Bay Area
1305 Franklin St. #411
Oakland, CA 94612
510.600.5800
bayarea@workers.org

Boston
284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617.286.6574
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
367 Delaware Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14202
716.883.2534
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago
27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
Chicago, IL 60606
312.229.0161
chicago@workers.org

Atlanta
P.O. Box 5565
Atlanta, GA 30307
404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore
c/o Solidarity Center
2011 N. Charles St.
Baltimore, MD 21218
443.221.3775
baltimore@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
216.738.0320
cleveland@workers.org

Denver
denver@workers.org

Detroit
5920 Second Ave.
Detroit, MI 48202
313.459.0777
detroit@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
804 Old Fayetteville St.
Durham, NC 27701
919.322.9970
durham@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713.503.2633
houston@workers.org

Huntington, W. Va.
huntingtonwv@workers.org

Los Angeles
5278 W Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90019
la@workers.org
323.306.6240

Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610.931.2615
phila@workers.org

Pittsburgh
pittsburgh@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.
585.436.6458
rochester@workers.org

Rockford, IL
rockford@workers.org

San Diego
P.O. Box 33447
San Diego, CA 92163
sandiego@workers.org

Tucson, Ariz.
tucson@workers.org

Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300
Washington, D.C. 20037
dc@workers.org

WW commentary:

Rich versus poor = class struggle

By David Sole

Jan. 26 — President Barack Obama and the New York Times have apparently just discovered something every worker in the United States already knows: The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

In his Jan. 20 State of the Union address, Obama declared his intention to press for legislation that would help a shrinking “middle class” in the face of widespread wage stagnation. The New York Times followed with statistical reports of declining wages and the growing concentration of wealth in the hands of the richest few. (Jan. 26)

An Oxfam International study revealed that “the richest 1% ... control nearly half of the world’s total wealth” and the “80 wealthiest people ... own \$1.9 trillion ... nearly the same amount shared by ... 3.5 billion people” at the bottom. (Business Day, Jan. 19)

These trends, however, have been going on steadily since the early 1970s. Unions, progressive publications and even the federal government have reported for decades on the deepening impoverishment of the majority of the population.

The Occupy Wall Street movement burst onto the scene in October 2011 condemning the power and privilege of the richest “1%” versus the poverty, unemployment and suffering of the “99%.”

But the last thing Obama or the New York Times intend is to help spur on a mass movement countering these developments. On the contrary, these agents of the 1% — more properly defined as the capitalist class — want to sow confusion and deflect any growing class-struggle movements and mass anger into votes for

the Democratic Party in 2016, even after their disastrous showing in November where only 36.3 percent of eligible voters — the lowest number in 72 years — went to the polls.

Language hides class truth and expanding wealth

The very language used in this public debate is meant to hide the class nature of the U.S. economic system. The president only talks about restoring the disappearing middle class. The “middle” of what is never stated.

The science of Marxism, now 166 years in existence, clarifies that we live in a capitalist economy with a small ruling capitalist class and a large working class. To mention these forbidden terms, however, might promote class consciousness and lead to real class struggle.

By massive struggles of unions and uprisings of oppressed peoples over the past 100 years, a section of the working class was able to secure a more comfortable standard of living. Calling these working-class families “middle class” simply hides that they are part and parcel of the broader working class, all of whom are exploited by and enrich the capitalist class of billionaire bankers and corporate bosses.

As the capitalist system has reached an inevitable dead end, the ruling class is inexorably driven to continue expanding its wealth by driving down wages and eliminating workers’ benefits. Layoffs and mass unemployment are endemic.

Looting the U.S. Treasury is another source of capitalist wealth. A Bloomberg News headline revealed that the “Wall Street Aristocracy Got \$1.2 Trillion”

in the bank bailout of 2008. (Aug. 22, 2011) City of Detroit retirees got a lesson in class relations in 2014 when a federal bankruptcy judge approved cuts to constitutionally protected pensions and medical benefits amounting to over \$6 billion to pay off the biggest banks.

Obama’s speech just lifted the corner of the curtain covering up these facts. His proposals, couched in “middle class” doublespeak, called for free community college tuition, greater tax breaks for lower income people and funds for child care. With the Republican sweep of both the Senate and House of Representatives, there is really no chance of this legislation being passed.

Republican hardliners in Congress lost no time in denouncing the Democrats’ proposals. Some Republican presidential hopefuls, however, picked up on the theme of growing income inequality. Mitt Romney vowed to “end the scourge of poverty” if he makes another bid for the presidency. (New York Times, Jan. 22) Both Jeb Bush and Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell are also cited as urging the Republicans to pay more attention to this issue. The less ignorant among the Republican right wing are realizing that the growing divide between the richest few and the impoverished working class might be dangerous to the success of their party.

The enormous power of the working class

Neither Obama nor the Democrats, both willing tools of Wall Street, really want to unleash the enormous power of an angry working class — the only power that could really challenge the laws of rapacious capitalism. They serve

their capitalist masters best by “keeping hope alive” among the working class that things might get better with time or another election.

But the statistics and graphs filling the pages of the New York Times and the vague references to stagnation and income inequality by Obama are no true measure of the suffering and despair growing among the millions and millions of workers and oppressed people who are finding it increasingly impossible to survive. The class truth must inevitably find its expression in serious struggles.

The Occupy Wall Street explosion of several years ago may have been the opening shot of this fightback. The current “Black Lives Matter” movement, led by African-American youth and joined by all other nationalities, is deeper, more militant and more widespread than Occupy was.

This current uprising is not only about the pervasive police murder of African-American youth. Ignited by the racist killings, it is fueled and sustained by the intractably high unemployment and low-wage jobs among young people. The “Fight for \$15” movement merged with anti-racist protests around the U.S. on so-called “Black Friday.” Demands for jobs and education are seen widely among protesters.

This ongoing Black Lives Matter movement began just a month after the November election with its abysmally low turnout. What we are seeing today is only a prelude to mass uprisings among all sections of the working class that will shake the capitalist system to the core and threaten to bring the whole racist, anti-worker system crashing down. □

Hands off Boston bus drivers!

Continued from page 1

Local 29 and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2222. That support has now expanded to include the Massachusetts Nurses Association and Springfield-based Food and Commercial Workers Local 1549, both of whom have made donations.

Bus drivers join Black Lives Matter protests

Meanwhile, drivers have joined forces with Boston Black Lives Matter, turning out with placards when the organization called a Peoples State of the City Speakout in front of Symphony Hall, while Mayor Martin Walsh was giving the State of the City address on Jan. 13. Homeless advocacy groups joined the action as well.

That action was a first step in the ex-

pansion of Local 8751’s fight against Veolia from a “union struggle” to a “community struggle.” History shows that such struggles against attempts by the super-rich 1% to drive communists out of labor unions cannot afford to be isolated, since they are part of the broader struggle against racism.

The “red purges” of the 1940s and 1950s, when communists and socialists were pushed out of labor unions, are widely seen as the obliteration of social unionism and the consolidation of business unionism — a trend that continues today.

What is not as widely recognized is how this red purge decimated anti-racist consciousness and mobilizing in the unions, which were primarily being organized by communists.

The clearest example of this is the CIO’s attempt in 1946 to organize in the South. The campaign’s leaders were clear

that in order to succeed, they also had to fight racism and take on Jim Crow.

However, that campaign was crushed. Why? Because right at that moment, on the heels of the biggest strike wave in U.S. history, with 4,600 strikes in the year after the war, the ruling class launched a massive purge of communists in the labor movement, aided by many trade union leaders. That attack on leftist unionists included the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 and a host of other anti-union laws.

Racists in the South used this anti-communist frenzy as a cover for their goal of keeping the South segregated. Some accounts of this chapter of labor history describe how the vicious anti-communist frenzy strengthened the Klan and the police and likened the period



Gary Murchison, Steve Kirschbaum, Andre Francois, Steve Gillis



School bus drivers, members of USW local 8751, along with others show support for Steve Kirschbaum on Nov. 24. WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

to that when Black Reconstruction was overthrown in the late 1870s.

The assault on Local 8751 in Boston represents a similar dynamic — an attack on communists in a union serving as a cover for an attack on anti-racist solidarity.

In the 1970s, Boston’s African-American community won the right to desegregated schools. Ever since, that right has been under attack by a series of attempts to re-segregate the public schools.

The Boston School Bus Drivers union has always fought all these attempts — with rallies, coalition building and every available means. It is easy to see why Boston’s elite 1% want to kill this union. It is a progressive, anti-racist base among workers whose jobs are to transport students to and from school and who represent the very symbol of desegregation: busing.

However, the city establishment does not seek only to crush the role that communists in this union have played in opposing racist resegregation of the schools. It also wants to smash the communist belief that the fight against racism is central to the class struggle. This also explains why the corporate media is increasingly trying to demonize the growing Black Lives Matter movement.

It is critical to pack the court on Feb. 2. Say NO to union busting and racism! □

Youth reclaim Dr. King in militant protests

DETROIT:

Rally highlights Selma, Ala.

This year's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Rally and March commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Selma campaign that created the conditions for passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

A standing-room-only crowd gathered Jan. 19 at Central United Methodist Church in downtown Detroit. The 2015 rally was one of the largest since 2004, when the event was founded and organized by the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice. A broader alliance — the Detroit MLK Committee — now organizes the annual struggle-oriented event.

Among many speakers representing many organizations and struggles, people's attorney Alice Jennings addressed the ongoing struggle for water in Detroit. Jennings was the lead counsel in the class-action lawsuit filed in bankruptcy court in July 2014, demanding a moratorium on water shutoffs and the adoption of a genuine affordability plan for residents. Jennings has filed an appeal in federal court after bankruptcy Judge Steven Rhodes refused to issue an order to halt the termination of services to the working people and poor of Detroit.

Jerry Goldberg, of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, spoke about the need to continue the struggle against the banks. He said 62,000 property tax foreclosures are looming while the state government refuses to utilize hundreds of millions of dollars of federal housing assistance funds that could pay all delinquent residential tax bills and therefore avert this disaster. Goldberg called for an immediate moratorium on all foreclosures in Detroit. "We might be down, but we're not out yet!" he exclaimed.

The march through downtown was led by African-American youth carrying a "Black Lives Matter" banner. Other banners and signs read, "Jail Killer Cops," "Stop the Theft of Our Pensions" and "End Poverty, Racism and War." Placards featured photos of Michael Brown, Aiyana Stanley Jones, Eric Garner and other victims of police violence.

The march went past 36th District Court to emphasize the crisis of foreclosures and evictions in Detroit. Then it was on to the Wayne County Jail to illustrate the crisis of mass incarceration of African-American and Latino/a youth. The march continued, proceeding through the Greek Town entertainment and casino district, where people came into the streets to watch and photograph the marchers, who took up several blocks.

Then the march went to the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department head-



HUNTINGTON, W.VA.

quarters, demanding a moratorium on water shutoffs and protesting the regionalization and attempted privatization of the publicly owned system, one of the largest in the U.S. Heading back to the church, demonstrators chanted "No justice! No peace!" "Black lives matter!" "I can't breathe!" and other slogans.

— Abayomi Azikiwe

OAKLAND, CALIF.:

96 hours of direct action

Upwards of 7,000 people marched on Jan. 19, the culmination of 96 hours of direct actions in the San Francisco Bay Area to reclaim the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Starting with a rally at Grant Station (Fruitvale BART, renamed in honor of Oscar Grant), a several-mile march led by children wound through Oakland's eastside neighborhoods to the planned site of a development called Coliseum City.

Dubbing it a "March for Jobs & Economy," organizers from the Anti-Police Terror Project made the connections between police violence and economic violence. An APTP press release said, in part: "We know well the grief that comes when brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, mothers and fathers are gunned down by those who are supposed to 'protect and serve.' We march to reclaim King's legacy and demand an immediate end to the war being waged on Black people in America."

Speakers included the Rev. Wanda Johnson, Oscar Grant's mother; Cyndi Mitchell, sister of Mario Romero; and Dionne Smith, mother of James Rivera Jr. All three had been killed by police. Also speaking were Clarence Thomas, past secretary/treasurer of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local

OAKLAND, CALIF.

PHOTO: DANIEL ARAUZ



Below are reports from several cities about marches and rallies on Jan. 19, the official holiday in memory of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year, outrage at the epidemic of unpunished police murders was reflected in the large and militant participation of young people of color.



ATLANTA

PHOTO: AZI EBRAHIMI

10; Alicia Garza, co-creator of #BlackLivesMatter; and Robbie Clark of Causa Justa. Cat Brooks of ONYX emceed the event, along with Erin Clark.

The APTP has developed a number of demands around Coliseum City. They include: a local hiring policy that ensures 50 percent of the jobs go to Black people and those disenfranchised because they are on probation and/or 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, from janitors to retail clerks.

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

— Terri Kay

HUNTINGTON, W.VA.:

'Black Lives Matter'

Nearly 300 marchers turned out in Huntington, W.Va., to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The march, coordinated by the local NAACP branch, was attended by diverse organizations and activists, including various churches and clergy as well as the Muslim Association of Huntington, the Marshall University Muslim Student Association, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, Workers and Students for Appalachian Socialism, Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) and Workers World Party.

This year's march took on a far more militant tone than prior ones. This is partly in response to the recent movement against racist police terror that targets people of color and partly to the capitalist economic system not being able to provide a humane and dignified existence to the masses of working class and oppressed peoples throughout West Virginia and Appalachia at large. Marchers enthusiastically hoisted signs with slogans connecting these struggles: "Stop the racist war on youth. We need union jobs and free education," "Dismantle the police state" and "Dr. King's dream: End poverty, raise workers' wages."

An African-American woman told this writer that West Virginia has no street named after Dr. King. Referring to the late Sen. Robert C. Byrd, she sarcastically exclaimed, "But we sure have enough buildings named after that racist KKK leader!"

— Benji Pyles

'Which side are you on?'

"Black Lives Matter" rang out from the pulpit of the famed Ebenezer Baptist Church to the streets of Atlanta on Jan. 19. That phrase was repeated in the impassioned remarks of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s daughter, Rev. Bernice King, at a packed interreligious service and again on the hundreds of signs and banners carried by many marchers in the annual parade.

In addition to contingents of union members, faith groups, students, progressive and community organizations, this year the youth injected creative and bold actions into the march in response to the police killings of Michael Brown, Eric Garner and others.

With their mantra of "We have a duty to fight for our freedom, we have a duty to win," they dramatized the staggering impact on communities of color of police terror, mass incarceration, poverty and joblessness by staging several die-ins during the route to the King gravesite.

They sought to bring forth the legacy of the Martin Luther King Jr., who marched and confronted police and other racist authorities, was arrested and jailed, and disrupted the status quo, to the dismay of other leaders.

Led by many young women of color, they raised the role of Black women in the struggles of the past and present. Their signs named Black and transwomen also killed by the police.

Upon reaching the end rally site on Auburn Avenue, in front of the graves of Dr. King and Coretta Scott King, they marched to the stage where Aurielle Marie, the young woman who initiated #ItsBiggerThanYou, delivered a powerful speech describing the intense conditions facing youth that compel them to rise up and fight back. She called for support, especially from the veterans of past struggles, and closed by asking, "Which side are you on?"

— Dianne Mathiowetz

DENVER:

Huge march reclaims Dr. King

Denver's annual MLK Day march was the largest, most serious and struggle-oriented in years, with as many as 50,000 marchers. Most were youth, who sang, chanted and lay down in the street during a die-in. Reclaiming Dr. King meant there were no speeches by politicians, expensive sound equipment or television screens.

In addition to community organizations, there were members of the Black Buffalo Soldiers, African-American Rodeo, the ACLU, NAACP, Jewish groups, numerous churches, teachers and high

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People with disabilities are half of people killed by cops

Disability rights groups battle racist police murders

By Joyce Chediak

Disabled-rights groups are among the most energetic advocates of solidarity with African-American victims of police murder.

Some 34 disability activist groups across the country have signed a statement protesting the police murders of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, expressing solidarity with their families and communities, and urging all to do so. (tinyurl.com/qabbdn8, Aug. 15)

This statement's signers are both national and local groups, including organizations from Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, California, New York State and New England. They include the National Council on Independent Living and four local independent living centers; several autism groups, including Autism Women's Network; Little People of America; Queerability and other LGBTQ disability groups; several student groups; Help Educate to Advance the Rights of the Deaf; the Peoples With Disabilities Caucus of the Peoples Power Assembly; and Parents to Improve School Transportation.

The statement calls upon everyone to oppose "the criminalization and dehumanization of our citizens" especially of "communities viewed as 'other' to the American majority — young men of color, people with disabilities, LGBT individuals." For these communities, "statements such as 'they didn't comply,' they were 'bad kids,' 'they were being belligerent,' 'they looked suspicious' often warrant a death sentence."

Half of people killed by police have disabilities

People with disabilities are themselves dramatically more likely to be killed by police. According to a 2013 report by the Treatment Advocacy Center and National Sheriffs' Association, between 1980 and 2008 "at least half of the people shot and killed by police each year in this country have mental health problems." (tinyurl.com/mjs670a)

In many cases police were responding to requests for assistance from family or neighbors to get mental health care for the person.

People who, for example, are hearing impaired, autistic, have difficulty processing verbal information, or for other reasons of disability react atypically when

approached by police are much more likely to be tasered, beaten and arrested.

The Lead On Network statement cites such several such cases:

Keith Vidal, 18 years old, who had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, was tasered, then shot and killed in North Carolina when his family called for the police to help calm him down.

Gilberto Powell, 22, who has Down Syndrome, was severely beaten by Florida police outside his home when a cop suspected he had a weapon and tried to pat him down. Powell did not understand and ran. The "suspicious" bulge in his pants was a colostomy bag.

Barry Montgomery, 29, diagnosed with schizophrenia and Tourette's syndrome, and who is nonverbal, was beaten and tasered by California sheriff's officers for 25 minutes when he was confronted about the smell of marijuana in his general area and did not respond. Montgomery sustained massive permanent injuries.

In capitalist society there are many forms of bigotry. There is often an intersection of racism and discrimination against people with disabilities. Disabled activists also cite the racist strangulation of Eric Garner, who told police 11 times that he couldn't breathe. Police supporters are now blaming Garner for his own death because he was obese, asthmatic and had a heart condition.

Ethan Saylor killed for wanting to watch a movie twice

Disabled activists note the similarities between the police murder of Garner and of Ethan Saylor, a white man with Down Syndrome, asphyxiated by police in Frederick, Md.

On Jan. 12, 2013, Saylor, who was 26 years old, weighed 350 lbs, and was reported to have an IQ of 40, was at theatre with a caretaker watching the movie "Zero Dark Thirty." He was so taken with the movie that he wanted to stay and watch it again. Saylor did not understand that he would have to purchase more tickets, and neither he nor the caretaker had the money to do so.

Police called to remove Saylor from the theatre were told by the caretaker of Saylor's condition, and advised not to remove Saylor by force. The caretaker pleaded with the police to just "wait it out," and informed them that Saylor could not handle being touched and would "freak out."



Ethan Saylor

The caretaker wrote in her statement to the Sheriff's Department, "Next thing I know there are I think three or four cops holding Ethan, trying to put him in handcuffs."

According to witnesses, three deputies fell on top of Saylor on an inclined ramp. They placed three sets of handcuffs on him, and he was laid face down for several minutes, then suddenly grew quiet and unresponsive. His last words before he died were, "Mommy! It hurt!"

Saylor's throat cartilage had been fractured while his heart was still beating, and the death was ruled a homicide, as it could have been caused only by a direct blow or manual strangulation. Despite this ruling, just as with the police killings of Eric Garner and Michael Brown, local law enforcement called all the shots at the grand jury investigation, which cleared the deputies who killed Saylor of any wrongdoing.

It gets worse. With the police let off the hook, Saylor's disability and weight are now being cited as having caused his death. The sheriff reportedly said that Saylor died because of a "medical emergency." The coroner also blamed Down Syndrome and size for the death. (CNN, Dec. 4)

In the police murders of Saylor in 2013 and of Eric Garner in 2014, both victims were obese and were strangled by police who lay on top of them while applying pressure to their throats. Grand juries refused to indict police in both cases. Part of the social exonerated of the police in both cases was to blame both victims for their own deaths by citing their disabilities.

Garner: Killed, then sneered at for his disabilities

Rampant racism and ableism have been especially vicious in the high-pro-

file case of Garner, who has been ridiculed and blamed for his own death because he was obese and had asthma and a heart condition. Representative Peter King (R-New York), speaking on CNN, thanked the grand jury for not indicting policeman Daniel Pantaleo, saying, "You had a 350-pound person who was resisting arrest. The police were trying to bring him down as quickly as possible." King claimed, "If he had not had asthma and a heart condition and was so obese, almost definitely he would not have died."

Pantaleo's attorney and police union officials made the same argument.

This view was expressed more crudely on PoliceOne.com. Comments on the site about the deceased Garner include, "This guy would have died going up a flight of stairs," "He died because of his preexisting medical conditions," and "His family should sue Papa Johns, Dominos, Pizza Hut, Burger King, McDonalds."

Call issued to transform the system

The disabled community has responded in its Aug. 15 statement mentioned above by holding the system as a whole responsible, and calling for everyone to unite to fight for justice for all:

"When a system that is designed to protect and serve is fueled by fear and anger, that is not merely a surmountable problem. It is a catastrophic failure of the system, and it demands transformation. Such a failure represent a lack of leadership, a corruption of institutions, and a distressing willingness to purposely and violently silence the voices of entire communities marked as different, non-compliant, and suspicious. ...

"We have allowed problems of marginalization, exclusion, inaccessibility, dissemination, sexism and bigotry, problems that affect us all — to instead be addressed by a few, and have been content that it is a disability problem or a race problem or a gender problem or sexuality problem rather than admit that it is a problem for all of us.

"As members of a community that supports justice and inclusion, we do not have the luxury to stand by when injustice is blatantly taking place in any form, nor should we be satisfied to wait for other communities to ask for our help. Civil rights, respect and justice are due to all. We will not remain silent." (tinyurl.com/qabbdn8) □

Continued from page 4

school students. There were signs relating Palestine to Ferguson, Mo. Some protesters carried painfully personal signs about arrests, shootings and jailings of Black men by police.

— Viviana Weinstein

SEATTLE:

Protests block interstates

One of the largest MLK Day marches in recent years — between 5,000 and 10,000 multinational demonstrators — took place in Seattle on Jan. 19.

Marching from Garfield High School in the Black community to the Federal Courthouse downtown, the demonstration protested the regime of racist police violence both locally and nationally, from Ferguson to New York.

A rally with entertainment was held in the morning after 16 workshops covering



Detroit's Central Methodist Church, set up here for MLK Day 2015, has been a staunch supporter of the Civil Rights Movement for more than half a century.

many political organizing, community, economic and labor issues. Then the march took off, stopping at two different jails. At the juvenile jail, a rally was held to protest the school-to-prison pipeline.

Another rally at the county jail focused on the disproportionate number of Black prisoners.

After the final rally at the courthouse, two groups of demonstrators blocked traf-

fic to protest racist police murders. Interstate 99 was blocked in the heart of downtown; the entrance to I-5 was also blocked. Some 19 protesters were arrested.

— Jim McMahan

PHOTO: MONICA KISH

Paul Robeson gave voice to the trees and forests

By Henry Hagins

If Paul Robeson were alive today, he'd be toasting and defending people's hero Ramsey Orta (who filmed the police killing of Eric Garner) and roundly condemning the rigged-grand-jury decisions, escape hatching the police murderers of Garner, Tamir Rice and Mike Brown, in particular, and the countless other ones that indignantly join them.

Robeson would also point to the oppressive machinery of the state as being ultimately responsible for this continued outrage against the most vulnerable populations in society, easily determining that this practice is totally unacceptable!

And he'd heartily salute the valiant folks of Ferguson, Mo., especially the youth, for refusing to be intimidated by the contorted face of militarily armed and trained police, National Guard and intelligence personnel, dispatched to contain livid community residents and their supporters.

The state's response to a crisis they created was to "send in the troops," like they've done in Iraq and elsewhere, over its sordid imperial history, thus earning the Indigenous people's enmity and contempt by their mere presence as invaders and occupiers. Ferguson is a first cousin to Detroit 1967 — in a whole lot of ways!

Honoring the memory of Paul Robeson is no ceremonial gesture. Why? As a highly recognized and accomplished artist on many levels, he helped set a riveting standard about what creative people are "obligated" to do — if they are "organically" joined to progressive needs of humankind — and, that is, to "fight for freedom or slavery." Paul Robeson devoted his life to humanity's highest ideals in the most extraordinary ways. Few rival his fields of significance.

The essence of who this gentle giant really was is in his classic work, "Here I Stand," issued by Beacon Press in 1958. This rugged Rutgers alumni clearly states his own case, partially seasoned by the hostile atmosphere he endured as a mem-

ber of the school's football team and as a "rare" student on campus.

In spite of tremendous pressure, Robeson distinguished himself as a student and as a human being in ways that are still marveled. Gil Noble, the late host of the New York-based

ABC show, "Like It Is," did an exceptional documentary on him entitled "The Tallest Tree in the Forest" in 1977. Noble did another outstanding one about Robeson around 1999, also called "Here I Stand."

Both provide fitting tributes to an extraordinary artist who'd been deeply influenced by his dad and the historic period in which he grew up and greatly influenced.

Accolades and descriptions of his noted accomplishments are too voluminous to detail here, but we include some highlights that undergird his designation as a "Renaissance man," who without hesitation offered his skills and talents in loyal service to the delight, liberation and advancement of people, in the millions, around the planet. The decades between the 1920s and early 1960s reflect his greatest works.

Never forgot his roots in the working class

As one of Harlem's own, Robeson was a central and unavoidable figure in its glorious Renaissance. His connections to Langston Hughes, Hubert Harrison, Lena Horne, Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, Nicolás Guillén, Pablo Neruda and Tony Benn modestly point to the magnitude of people he knew and interacted with, including countless ordinary folk who rightly and proudly claim they knew him, too.



He and his spouse, Eslanda Goode Robeson, went to Spain in the 1930s to help boost the morale of U.S. volunteers in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade fighting with anti-fascist forces against Francisco Franco, who saw the world through Hitler's eyes.

Robeson generously supported the coal miners in their march for better wages and working conditions in Wales and Scotland. His roots lay deep with the common folk of his ancestry and with those around the world.

Once you heard his organically melodious baritone voice, in any language, you were never the same. Standing-room-only throngs flooded his guest appearances in the Soviet Union in particular.

And when J. Edgar Hoover and Joe McCarthy tried to intimidate him during the anti-communist witchhunt in the 1950s, Robeson told them in effect "to speak to the hand." The State Department took away his passport and encouraged promoters to cancel their contracts with Robeson. Yet his voice still reached Canada and England through the benefits of the technology of the time! With great dignity and determination he refused to bow to government pressure.

And Paul Robeson never backed away from his love and support of the Soviet

people, expressing his open admiration for their stunning defeats of Hitler's armies at Leningrad and Stalingrad during World War II and elsewhere.

Robeson respected the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro and collaborated with Albert Einstein, progressive groups and individuals to combat lynchings, racism and other forms of oppression in the United States and around the world. He even did a benefit concert for Japanese Americans rounded up and forced into internment camps during World War II. He never abandoned the notion that "An artist [in whatever genre] must elect to fight for freedom or slavery." ("The Whole World in His Hands," Susan Robeson, 1981)

He lived by uncompromising example.

In a nutshell, Paul Robeson urged the people to use their talents, whatever they are, in service to humanity. Think he had it right. □

A night in 1968 to remember:

How Glenville Rebellion won community control

By Martha Grevatt

The police practice of murder, brutality and harassment of Black communities is not a new phenomenon. Nor is resistance to it.

On July 23, 1968 — the night of what is known to history as the Glenville Rebellion — Black revolutionaries fought back in self-defense.

Glenville is part of Cleveland, which, as in 1968, is a flashpoint in the struggle against racism and the police.

Some of those joining with youth in the streets demanding justice for Tamir Rice were in the Black Liberation movement at the time of the rebellion. Workers World spoke with Don Freeman, co-editor and co-publisher of Vibration Magazine. Now in its 47th year, Vibration "focuses on the exploitation and oppression of all oppressed people on the earth, especially African-Americans in the USA."

In 1967, Carl Stokes was elected mayor of Cleveland, making him the first Black mayor of a city its size. A year later the mayor's brother, Louis Stokes, was elect-

ed to the U.S. House of Representatives. Prior to Stokes' election, Flint, Mich., and Gary, Ind., elected their first Black mayors. The period was one of ascendancy of African Americans to political office.

"Mayor Stokes had already developed relationships with several people on the East Side, folks from the 'hood," Freeman explained. "In fact, Cleveland was one of the few cities in the country not to erupt. Leaders in the community knew this was the best way to save lives."

The Cuyahoga River divided the highly segregated city's east and west sides. The mayor was able to call on volunteers to patrol the streets after the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Corporations — through their "philanthropic" arms, by which they return a small portion of the wealth created by workers back to those they have impoverished — had a stake in keeping the city rebellion-free. They gave massive funding to Cleveland Now!, which Mayor Stokes initiated to combat poverty, encourage Black cultural pride and promote a sense of empowerment.

One of the community leaders to receive Cleveland Now! funds, having been part of the mayor's peacekeeping after the King assassination, was the Black Nationalist leader Ahmed (formerly Fred) Evans. Evans' Afro Culture bookstore and cultural center received a \$10,000 grant for an African crafts program.

Evans: 'We were ambushed'

Cleveland police, however, had harassed Evans prior to Stokes election, repeatedly threatening to shut down his bookstore. The election of a Black mayor only intensified police antagonism toward the Black community and to Evans in particular. Evans and his group, the Republic of New Libya, felt increasingly threatened by the regular surveillance of his home by white police. They purchased weapons for self-defense.

The FBI reports — based on the word of a questionable informant — stated that Evans' group was planning to assassinate moderate Black leaders on July 23. It became a hot topic at City Hall.

On the evening of July 23, City Council-

man George Forbes and former Cleveland Browns' defensive back Walter Beach met with Evans to try to calm down the situation and address his longstanding grievances with the police. As they spoke two unmarked cars faced Evans' apartment from opposite directions, both full of police, all of them white. Forbes' attempts to get them to leave were unsuccessful.

Hours later the shootout between armed members of Evans group and police began.

Police claims that New Libya started the fight, firing on the surveillance vehicles and a tow truck, were presented as undisputed truth by the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Evans and his associates were alleged to have called for a tow to lure police into an ambush.

Facts contradicting the official version were later brought to light by Louis Masotti and Jerome Corsi in their report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, which later became the book, "Shoot Out in Cleveland."

"We were ambushed, not the police," Evans told Masotti and Corsi. By his ac-

CIVIL RIGHTS TO BLACK POWER 1965-1966

The Alabama freedom movement

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

With the release of “Selma,” tremendous interest has been generated among youth activists about the struggle for voting rights as it reached its apex in March 1965.

This campaign for the ballot in Dallas County, Ala., where Selma is located, did not begin when the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference intervened in early January 1965. In fact, as the film mentions, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee organizers had worked in Selma for at least two years prior to SCLC’s arrival.

Prathia Hall, a SNCC field secretary, says in a first-person account in “Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts of Women in SNCC,” “In early winter 1963, SNCC field secretary Bernard Lafayette was beaten and jailed in Selma, where he and his wife, Colia, had been working alone.

Immediately afterward James Forman, executive secretary of SNCC, came to Southwest Georgia and said, “Come on, Prathia, we need you in Selma.” (University of Illinois Press, 2010, p. 470)

Hall explains, “The members of the Dallas County Voters’ League had been working there for ages; they were part of that longtime movement struggle. They had done some voting rights work, and small numbers of schoolteachers and other middle-class black people had been registered. League members also had filed some related lawsuits.”

example of community control. On July 24, after discussions with Black leaders in his periphery, he ordered all white police and nonresidents, as well as National Guardsmen on standby in case of further violence, to stay out of the area where the shooting took place.

For that one night the streets were patrolled by Black peacekeepers. The rebellion raged for five days, with widespread expropriation and torching of white-owned businesses, but there were no more casualties.

“The circumstances that bred racial violence in Cleveland in the summer of 1968 have not changed significantly since then,” Masotti and Corsi concluded when their report was published in May 1969.

How are things different in 2014? “Believe it or not, it’s worse now,” said Freeman, who still lives in Glenville. “There was no killing of 12-year-olds like Tamir Rice. It has taken the three deaths — Michael Brown, Eric Garner and Tamir Rice — to bring the anger of African-American people and our allies into the streets to say, ‘No more.’ Whether it makes a difference will depend on the movement not fading.”

Next: The railroading of Ahmed Evans As a child Martha Grevatt participated in the Civil Rights Movement in Cleveland. Susan Schmur contributed to this article.

When SNCC workers arrived in the early 1960s, they worked with high school students living in the projects. Hall stresses, “The 1965 Selma Movement could never have happened if SNCC hadn’t been there opening up Selma in 1962 and 1963. The later, nationally known movement was the product of more than two years of very careful, very slow work.”

Malcolm X’s intervention

After Dr. King and SCLC went to Selma in early 1965, Malcolm X, the founder of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), spoke in early February at Alabama’s Tuskegee Institute, a historically African-American university 80 miles from Selma. Malcolm had broken with the Nation of Islam nearly a year earlier, pledging to work in an alliance with the Civil Rights Movement, particularly with the youth.

Fay Bellamy Powell, a former U.S. Air Force member, was recruited into SNCC in late 1964 and wound up in Dallas County, running the organization’s office and conducting press work. She found out, along with Silas Norman, also of SNCC, the details of Malcolm X’s itinerary at Tuskegee.

On Feb. 3, Powell and Norman arrived at the packed campus auditorium, which was standing room only. They got inside and spoke with Malcolm after his lecture, which consisted of an extended question-and-answer period.

These SNCC workers invited Malcolm to come to Selma the following day to address a group of youth working in the movement. Malcolm immediately agreed. They arrived at Brown’s Chapel A.M.E. Church on the morning of Feb. 4 and were swarmed by U.S. and European reporters.

Powell described this experience in the same book, “Each morning Brown’s Chapel would fill with elementary, junior high and high school students. They were the core of the Selma Movement and took part in all the demonstrations. Usually these morning sessions were lively and noisy. On the day Malcolm spoke, although the church was packed with young people, there was no noise, no shuffling of feet, no coughing, no squirming. Only Malcolm’s voice could be heard.” (p. 474)

When Powell and Norman drove Malcolm to the Montgomery Airport, he said the OAAU planned to send organizers into the South and asked if SNCC would work with them. Powell reported, “Silas and I answered Malcolm’s question with an enthusiastic ‘Yes!’ and asked that he return in the not too distant future. Three weeks later, Malcolm was assassinated. That was a dream deferred.”

Roots of Black Panther Party in Alabama

After the Selma to Montgomery march, Stokely Carmichael, a SNCC field secretary later known as Kwame Ture, became the Lowndes County project director. Working with local students and community activists, they formed the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO), an independent political party whose symbol was the black panther.

Gloria House, then a University of Cal-

ifornia graduate student, went to work in Alabama as a SNCC field secretary in the summer of 1965. The Aug. 20 murder by racists of white Episcopal seminarian Jonathan Daniels in Hayneville, in Lowndes County, prompted House to return as a full-time Civil Rights worker for SNCC that fall.

House wrote in the same book, “In Lowndes we organized the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, which initiated the formation of an independent black political party. Influenced by the defeat of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), we chose to create a separate political party instead of seeking admission into the Democratic Party. Jack Minnis, a researcher in SNCC’s Atlanta office, discovered a provision in the Alabama Administrative Code that allowed independent parties to enter county elections if certain stipulations were met.” (p. 509)

House noted, “SNCC workers spread the idea of independent black political parties from Lowndes County to other Alabama counties where black people constituted sizable majorities. Later I moved into Selma to help other SNCC organizers establish the Freedom Party of Dallas County. The fruits of our labor in the Alabama independent parties were not immediately reaped in the 1966 elections, but rather in 1970, when black people in a handful of counties won positions in local government. These officials subsequently organized a statewide coalition of independent parties, determined to win representation for black voters on a state level.” (p. 510)

The rise of Black Power

In this context, Stokely Carmichael contested and won the chairmanship of SNCC in May 1966. On June 5, James Meredith, who had desegregated the University of Mississippi in 1962, set out alone in a “March Against Fear” from Memphis, Tenn., to Jackson, Miss.

The following day he was shot and wounded by a white racist in Mississippi. In response, SCLC, the Congress on Racial Equality and SNCC, pledged to continue the march to Jackson, the state capital.

During the march through the Delta region of Mississippi, Willie Ricks, now known as Mukasa Dada, mobilized sharecroppers and youth through the slogan “Black Power.” Carmichael used the slogan in a speech on June 16 after being released from a six-hour jail stint for defying the police over erecting tents for the marchers at a local high school in Greenwood:

“We have begged the president. We’ve begged the federal government — that’s all we’ve been doing, begging and begging. It’s time we stand up and take over. Every courthouse in Mississippi ought to be burned down tomorrow to get rid of the dirt and the mess. From now on, when they ask you what you want, you know what to tell ‘em. What do you want? The crowd shouted back ‘Black Power!’ Willie Ricks jumped to the stage and lead the chorus of chants saying: ‘We want Black Power!’” (Taylor Branch, “At Canaan’s Edge: America in the King Years 1965-1968,” Simon & Schuster, 2006, p. 486) □

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.



Saudi oil and U.S. hypocrisy

By Sara Flounders

Few events expose the utter hypocrisy of U.S. politicians' grand words about democracy so starkly as their praise for the recently deceased King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. For decades U.S. imperialism and all the imperialist powers have given political, military and diplomatic support to the corrupt feudal family that rules Saudi Arabia, the world's largest exporter of oil.

Heads of state abruptly changed plans and rushed to Riyadh to greet the 79-year-old new ruler King Salman. President Obama, British Prime Minister Cameron accompanied by Prince Charles, French President Hollande, Afghanistan President Ghani, Spain's King Felipe VI, Turkish President Erdogan and

Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif were all anxious to be assured of the regime's continuation.

Saudi Arabia is an absolute and brutal dictatorship. The country is named after the royal Saud family that has expropriated the country's fabulous oil wealth, and treats it as a wholly owned family asset. Their control is maintained by massive state-organized repression. All forms of political dissent and social organization, from political parties to trade unions, are banned under pain of death.

Executions by decapitation in public squares are held on average once every four days. Capital crimes include adultery, homosexuality and political opposition to the regime. Public stonings are also a common form of execution. Other punishments include eye gouging, limb

amputation, tooth extraction, surgical paralysis and public lashings.

Wealth and poverty

Government departments are treated as fiefdoms. Their enormous budgets are unaudited and at the family's personal disposal. Personal and state funds are completely commingled. All family members are guaranteed astronomical monthly allowances from birth, the amount depending on their proximity to the king's inner circle. The Saud family, with almost 4,000 members, extends privileges up to 30,000 others related by marriage.

The cabinet is made up of Saud family members. The key ministries — interior, foreign affairs, the military commands, National Guard and regional governorships — are held exclusively by family members.

The government does not gather data on poverty, literacy, unemployment or health coverage. However, the Saudi newspaper Okaz reported in July 2012 that 60 percent of the population lived below the poverty line.

A third of the country's population of 27 million are immigrants with no rights, no status and no social benefits, who make up 80 percent of the work force.

Saudi unemployment is estimated at 10 percent by the CIA World Factbook, but 28 percent among young men aged 15 to 24, who lack needed skills. Women are not considered part of the work force.

Women enslaved

Women in Saudi Arabia have the lowest literacy in the region. More than 1.5 million migrant women work in domestic slavery. A 2012 report from the International Trade Union Confederation on workers' rights in Saudi Arabia reported alarming levels of child labor, discrimination and forced labor.

All women, regardless of their class

position, have no rights to employment, property or education. They cannot step one foot out of their homes unless covered head to toe in a long black abaya and accompanied by a male family member.

Women in powerful positions in the West ignore the reality of Saudi women. For example, Christine Lagarde, head of the International Monetary Fund, hailed King Abdullah as "a strong advocate for women." (Washington Post, Jan. 23) U.N. World Food Program Executive Director Ertharin Cousin praised King Abdullah: "He was a true humanitarian leader, always on the side of the world's hungry poor." (www.un.org, Jan 23)

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon joined in the imperialist outpouring of praise, expressing in the same statement his gratitude for the king's "generous humanitarian and developmental support" throughout the Middle East.

Because Wall Street, U.S. oil corporations, military industries and banks reap such enormous profits from this gang of thieves, they have done everything possible to arm, train and reinforce the Saudi military. The role of the corporate media is to provide a veneer of respectability to this family of looters.

This narrow ruling elite relies on five U.S. military bases, Western arms and military training for its protection and survival. The U.S. Fifth Fleet, based in nearby Bahrain, defends the status quo with aircraft carriers, 20 ships, nuclear submarines, 103 strike aircraft and 20,000 sailors and marines.

In return, the Saudi royal family pays protection money to U.S. military industries like Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics and Boeing. Billions also go to British, French and German military corporations. The Saudi military budget in 2013 was \$67 billion, the fourth largest in the world, after the U.S., China and Russia.

Saudi spending on weapons comes to 9.3 percent of its gross national product, the highest in the world. The economy is the least diversified of any oil-producing country, with more than 90 percent of its export earnings coming from oil. Virtually everything else must be imported.

Until the 1970s, four U.S. companies were the sole owners of Saudi oil — free and clear of taxes and duties. As revolutionary upheavals in the region led many countries to demand full control of their resources, Saudi oil was carefully nationalized into a conglomerate called Aramco. Exploration, drilling, pumping, transport and the building of pipelines, ports and terminals were all structured to return maximum profits to U.S. corporations. While the Saud family can take immense wealth for themselves, the vast majority of these funds must be held in U.S. banks or be used to purchase U.S. materials.

Contras and terror militias

This opaque, unaudited economy makes Saudi Arabia a perfect conduit and funding source for U.S. wars, military adventures and secret agencies. At the same time, the U.S. State Department can claim that it knows nothing about who is funding terrorist militias — from the Nicaraguan contras in 1983 to ISIS in 2015.

When Congress denied funding for the reactionary contras in the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan covertly arranged for the Saudis to send them weapons to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Saudi money was a key component in the CIA's war against the



WW commentary:

Pentagon out of Yemen!

By Chris Fry

Yemen, with a population of some 24 million people, is the poorest country in the Middle East. To its north lies the brutal, oil-rich kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To its east are Oman and the rest of the wealthy Gulf kingdoms. Yemen's own oil resources are running out, as is its meager water supply. Only 2 percent of its land can grow crops.

Millions of Yemenis have been forced to migrate to other countries, particularly to Saudi Arabia, where they are treated as slave labor. Yemen has become a transit point to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states for the sex-slave industry.

Yemen is located between the Persian Gulf to the east and the Red Sea to the west. It borders the narrow Bab el Mandeb strait at the entrance to the Red Sea and the gateway to the Suez Canal, one of the world's most important shipping lanes. So Yemen has long been targeted by Western imperialism. Until the incredibly late date of 1967, south Yemen, then called Aden, was a British colony.

After winning independence, a leftist government in South Yemen, called the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, instituted many reforms, particularly in women's rights and education. After the fall of the Soviet Union, however, South

Yemen was forced to reunite with the Saudi-influenced, right-wing state to the north, under the brutal U.S.-backed dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Saleh ruled the country for 31 years. He supported the U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. He signed on to Washington's "war on terror," particularly after the U.S. Navy ship Cole was bombed while docked at Yemen's port city of Aden in 2000. Saleh opened the door to the dreaded U.S. assassination drones, which have killed many Yemeni civilians in dozens of attacks.

In 2011, during the "Arab Spring," more than 3 million people demonstrated. Some of the protests were attacked and dozens of people were killed and wounded. Saleh was ousted and Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi became president.

Yemen remains wracked with internal conflict between militia factions, however, including an Iranian-supported group called the Houthis, as well as al-Qaida of the Arabian Peninsula. President Hadi continued to allow the Pentagon free rein to use its universally hated drones in Yemen. At least 200 U.S. soldiers, including commandos, are stationed in Yemen, as well as an unknown number of CIA operatives.

On Jan. 23, the Houthi faction forced the resignation of Hadi and his cabinet.

This has touched off large demonstrations throughout Yemen, both for and against Hadi.

Washington is trying to whip up public opinion in the U.S. to support a new military intervention in Yemen. "A dangerous situation just went from bad to worse with grave implications for our counterterrorism efforts," said Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), a member of the House Intelligence Committee. "Our relationship with the Yemen government has been vital in confronting [al-Qaida] and keeping the pressure on its leadership, and every effort must be made to continue that partnership." ("Yemen chaos threatens U.S. counterterrorism efforts," Washington Post, Jan. 22)

At the same time, the Obama administration is desperately trying to "persuade" the Houthi faction to drop its opposition to U.S. drone attacks so that the Pentagon can continue its campaign. ("U.S. Teams up with Rebels Taking over Yemen," wnd.com, Jan. 25) That could be a tough sell, since U.S. ally Saudi Arabia had recently launched air strikes against the Houthis' strongholds.

Washington's war in Yemen only adds to the suffering and misery of the Yemeni people. No U.S. intervention! Stop the drone strikes! Withdraw all U.S. troops from Yemen now! □

Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

By Fred Goldstein

On Jan. 21, the apartheid Zionist regime of Benjamin Netanyahu was authorized by the United Nations General Assembly to host the first-ever conference devoted to the rise of worldwide “anti-Semitism.”

A letter endorsing the conference was signed by the governments of 40 countries, including the U.S. and every member of the European Union. While the discussion on the conference contained references to the rise of extreme right-wing parties in Europe, the press coverage emphasized attacks on Jewish targets by Muslims in general. (New York Times, Jan. 24)

This is part of a campaign by the European imperialists and Israeli propagandists to fully equate the racist, scapegoating, anti-Semitic fascism of the oppressing ruling classes with anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish acts carried out by oppressed Muslims. At the same time, it is an attempt to divert attention from charges now before the International Criminal Court in the Hague for Israeli war crimes committed against the Palestinian people during the 2014 attack on Gaza.

The imperialist and Zionist strategy is to identify the racist, anti-Semitic persecution of the Jewish people by European fascism with the acts of reprisal, retaliation and resistance of Muslims against Zionism and colonial oppression.

Making opposites equal: a big lie

The imperialist rulers apply the same term to describe political acts that are diametrically opposite to one another. The term anti-Semitic is applied equally to, on the one hand, Greece’s pro-Nazi Golden Dawn, the undercover anti-Semites of the French National Front and Germany’s Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA) and, on the other hand, to Hamas, Hezbollah and Muslim individuals or groups that attack Jews in Europe and the U.S.

These latter attacks by Muslims arise

In a way, the hatred and prejudice directed at Muslim peoples is an updated version of anti-Semitism, as it is used to divide the masses and find scapegoats in a period when European capitalism is mired in mass unemployment, stagnation and recession.

out of rage against the crimes of torture, bombing, drone attacks, occupation and terror campaigns like the 2014 Israeli 50-day war against Gaza, in which over 2,000 Palestinians were killed, the vast majority of them civilians, including women and children whose homes, schools, hospitals, water supply, etc., were ruthlessly destroyed.

Under such circumstances there may be many misguided but understandable acts of violence directed against Jews and other targets associated in the minds of the attackers with the suffering of their people. This association is deepened by the fact that Netanyahu and the Israeli regime repeatedly associate all Jews with Israel and Zionist ideology. The only way to put an end to such anti-Jewish acts is for the imperialists and the Zionists to cease their aggression, which is the ultimate provocation and source of all violent resistance.

Rise of fascism and Islamophobia coincide

It is no accident that the rise of fascism in Europe today coincides with the rise of Islamophobia. In fact, Islamophobia is being used as a tool by the ruling class now, just as they used anti-Semitism in the 1930s. In a way, the hatred and prejudice directed at Muslim peoples are an updated version of anti-Semitism, as it is used to divide the masses and find scapegoats in a period when European capitalism is mired in mass unemployment, stagnation and recession and there is growing discontent with the capitalist governments and traditional political parties.

If a world conference is to be authorized by the U.N. General Assembly — which is supposed to be a parliament of nations but is really an instrument of imperialism — the conference should be on the rise of fascism and Islamophobia among the capitalist powers.

The Israeli settler regime has long branded every act of resistance by the Palestinian people over 67 years of brutal and expanding occupation as “anti-Semitic” and “terrorism.” This poisonous and confusing terminology has been adopted by the European imperialists. It has helped to stir the pot of Islamophobia and served to intensify the exploitation and oppression of the Muslim populations of Europe — and the U.S.

Anti-Semitism long practiced by European ruling classes

Anti-Semitism is a term aptly applied to the scapegoating and practices of ex-

propriation of Jewish property by the European ruling classes, from before the time of the Spanish Inquisition to the Nazi Holocaust, in which millions of Jews were exterminated in death camps. Nor should it be forgotten that the Nazis also targeted and killed socialists and communists, Roma people, lesbian and gay people, people with disabilities and progressive people of all types.

The French ruling class was filled with anti-Semitic elements. Hitler found a sympathetic section from which to form the Vichy government of France in 1940. Under General Philippe Petain, the Vichy government deported over 700,000 Jews to the death camps. Similar internments and deportations were carried out in northern Italy under the fascist regime of Mussolini, but on a lesser scale.

The British aristocracy also had a strong pro-Hitler wing, led by Sir Oswald Mosley and his British Union of Fascists. Mosley was far from an incidental figure in British aristocratic society. In 1920 his wedding was attended by hundreds of guests, included such European royalty as King George V and Queen Mary, as well as the Duke of Brabant — later to become King Leopold III of Belgium.

The anti-Semitism of the British ruling classes goes back to the 12th and 13th centuries, culminating in the expulsion of all the Jews from England in 1290 by King Edward I.

In fact, the Munich pact, by which the British imperialists recognized Hitler’s takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1938, was carried out by the pro-Nazi appeasement wing of the British ruling class and was calculated to give Hitler a green light to attack the USSR.

More recently, the Ukrainian right-wing, pro-U.S. puppet regime in Kiev was catapulted to power in a fascist-led coup by descendents of groups that collaborated with the Nazis in World War II and who still have allegiance to battalions that fought with Hitler.

These are the ruling-class forces that turned to fascism and anti-Semitism in the 1930s and used the Jewish people as scapegoats. The capitalists backed the fascists when they needed scapegoats to direct mass hostility toward the Jews because capitalism was crumbling during the Great Depression. At the same time, the fascists wiped out the trade unions and all forms of working-class organization.

To equate these reactionary forces and their monstrous persecution and crimes against the Jewish people and all humanity with the angry resistance and retalia-

tion of the Muslim and other oppressed peoples who carry out anti-Jewish acts is to conceal the reality of ruling-class manipulation of ideology through the false application of terminology.

The acts of retaliation against Zionism for its genocidal policies or for the oppression of Muslims by French or U.S. imperialism are carried out by people who do not have F-16s, Apache helicopters, laser-guided bombs, Abrams tanks, drones, A-10 killer planes, Cruise missiles and all the modern armaments needed to defend against U.S., British, French and Israeli aggression.

‘Secularization’ a cover for anti-Islamic discrimination

The Hollande government in France, where there is currently more than 10 percent official unemployment and much higher youth unemployment, is now sponsoring a new program on “secularization.”

Under the new law, which will cost 250 million euros and go into effect in September, students and parents will be required to sign a “secularism charter.” Schools will be urged to have regular ceremonies in which students salute the flag and sing the national anthem. Some 1,000 teachers will undergo training to implement the new law.

The new regulation was prompted by the fact that in dozens of schools across the country, students refused to take part in a moment of silence for the victims of the Charlie Hebdo attack.

The secularism charter, passed in 2013, was used to outlaw wearing headscarves in public schools. This was clearly directed at the religious practices and preferences of Muslim girl and young women students. As such it was a violation of freedom of religion.

The secularism charter was supposed to be based on a 1905 law separating church and state. That law was aimed at curbing the reactionary influence of the Catholic Church hierarchy. Catholicism had been made the state religion in 1801 by Napoleon Bonaparte. After that the church was dominant in schools, hospitals, charitable institutions, etc. Divorce was illegal in France. The 1905 law came after the notorious Dreyfus case, in which the anti-Semitic officer corps of the French military framed a Jewish captain for treason and sent him to prison.

So the secularism charter, which was meant to curb the power of the reactionary clerical hierarchy, is now being used to deny freedom of religious practice to Muslims in the name of “French Republican values.”

The hidden relationship between the rise of fascism in Europe and the rise of Islamophobia was revealed in the recent resignation of a leader of the Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West, which has been carrying out anti-Islamic demonstrations in Dresden. Lutz Bachmann was forced to resign after a photo on his Facebook page was made public showing him made up with the hairstyle and mustache of Hitler.

As part of this Islamophobic campaign, Netanyahu, Hollande, Merkel, Cameron and Obama want to draw an equal sign between the bloody fascism against the Jews on one hand and the desperate resistance and profound anger of the Muslim people against the overwhelming armed might of world imperialism, which is trying to subdue the entire Middle East, western Asia and most of the world, on the other. □

Saudi Arabia

progressive Afghan regime that began in 1979. Working with Washington, it has also funded reactionary militias in Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon that have metastasized into a viciously sectarian and destabilizing force throughout the Middle East.

Prince Bandar bin Sultan, a former Saudi ambassador to Washington from 1983 to 2005, is considered a mastermind of the Saudi terror network. He is now director general of the Saudi Intelligence Agency.

Saudi wealth also keeps other military dictatorships in the region afloat. In Egypt, the Saudis provided \$1 billion to help General al-Sisi’s coup against the elected Morsi government. After the coup they pledged an immediate \$8 billion to stabilize the military regime and have now committed more than \$20 billion to maintaining that dictatorship.

The continued rule of the House of Saud is based on a thin, corrupt layer of extreme privilege. Dependent on immigrant labor, foreign trainers and technical experts, it is hated by its own people. U.S. imperialism has staked its continued domination of the region on a detested and narrow grouping that lacks popular support or legitimacy. □



WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

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WORKERS WORLD editorial

What Obama left out

The “State of the Union” is the annual presidential speech that is supposed to report on how things are going for the people of this country.

In thousands of protest rallies and marches over recent months, especially since the events in Ferguson, Mo., people have vented their great anger and pain over police killings of youth of color and the official cover-ups that have followed. Major highways have been shut down and countless die-ins held in public places. To an amazing extent, a large number of those on the sidelines, including people directly inconvenienced by traffic tie-ups, have cheered and waved in approval.

A historian of this period would certainly expect that, of all the promises made by the president, bringing justice to those targeted by police terrorism would have been at the top of the list of his State of the Union.

Plus, in the last two presidential elections, a majority of voters cast their ballots for a Black president, indicating they want to see an end to the brutal, racist history of this country. Being for racial justice and reining in police brutality are popular in the United States.

So how to explain that Obama made only one mention of Ferguson and the police in his 28-minute speech, and that came toward the very end? Here’s what he said:

“We may have different takes on the events of Ferguson and New York. But surely we can understand a father who fears his son can’t walk home without being harassed. Surely we can understand the wife who won’t rest until the police officer she married walks through the front door at the end of his shift.”

He didn’t even mention the brutal killings of so many Black youth by the police. Just “harassment.” But as for the police themselves, the message is that their lives are in grave danger.

It should be remembered that, according to the government’s own figures as compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, police don’t even appear in the 10 most dangerous occupations.

If the White House is truly concerned about protecting the lives of those most

likely to be killed on the job, then Obama should have mentioned the fishers, lumberjacks, construction workers, trash collectors, miners, agricultural workers, pilots, roofers, iron workers and truck drivers who take their lives in their hands every time they go to work — and generally earn much less pay than the police.

We all should know that presidential speeches are very carefully vetted by the people who wield real political power. Their decision to treat the issue of racist police violence in this minimalist way reveals so much about the true character of the U.S. government. In many ways, the elected officials, both the presidency and the Congress, are just civilian window dressing for the state and its brutal role of suppression.

Because of the many battles fought by workers and oppressed peoples over centuries, the government does perform a number of useful services: Medicare and Medicaid, the postal service, inspections of meat and produce, the establishment of parks and schools, to name just a few. But these useful things constantly get underfunded and subverted in order to put more resources into what the ruling class — the one-tenth of the 1% — consider the real function of the state: repression.

The police, the National Guard and the prison-industrial complex are a vital part of internal repression, just as the Pentagon, the CIA and other bodies, some of whose budgets are totally secret, carry out external repression. The lion’s share of our taxes are spent on state violence against those who have the most reason to rebel because they are exploited and oppressed by capitalism here and imperialism abroad.

Not even a president is allowed to criticize these bodies, no matter how blatantly they carry out systematic terror — whether in the dungeons of Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo, in Rikers Island and all the “supermax” U.S. prisons, or on the streets of Ferguson and Oakland, Calif.

That leaves it up to the workers and oppressed themselves to organize and make the revolutionary changes that will never be made by the political machine of the billionaire class. □

Black History Month matters: Support WW



The Black Lives Matter movement, which started in response to the killing of unarmed Michael Brown by a racist cop in Ferguson, Mo., is the latest heroic chapter in the centuries-long struggle to end the vile saga of racism and national oppression, including slavery, that permeates the history and everyday reality of life in the United States.

Black History Month, founded in 1926, is in essence Black Liberation Month. As part of our commemoration, Workers World will write about some of the many sacrifices and struggles carried out by people of African descent to throw off their chains and end institutionalized racism.

But WW doesn’t just cover the Black struggle in February. We write about the struggle against racism in depth all year, every year. WW has had continual coverage of the ongoing protests in Ferguson and the national movement that exploded after grand juries failed to indict the racist cops who killed Brown and unarmed Eric Garner in Staten Island, N.Y.

Our coverage of the Black struggle here and

around the world is based on the principle of supporting national self-determination: Oppressed people have the right to fight to end all forms of inequality and injustice — by any means necessary. Those words were first spoken by the great Malcolm X, assassinated 50 years ago on Feb. 21, 1965.

If you appreciate this coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program. Please help us continue to publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build the struggles needed to make revolutionary change. For the past 38 years, WW subscribers have helped maintain the paper by joining the WW Supporter Program. We invite you to sign up today! Write checks to Workers World Fund Drive. Send them to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor, New York, NY 10011. Include your name and address. Or donate online at workers.org/articles/donate/. 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! □

Greek voters reject austerity

Continued from page 1

held meetings and rallies leading up to the vote and celebrations afterwards.

Bankers, governments insist on austerity

The European bankers and imperialist economists have announced they will resist any major debt restructuring. Johan Van Overtveldt, Belgium’s finance minister, told a Belgian TV channel: “We can talk modalities, we can talk debt restructuring, but the cornerstone that Greece must respect the rules of monetary union, that must stay as it is.” (AP, Jan. 25)

Europe is in the midst of a financial crisis, which has had a major impact on Greece. This crisis has led the European Central Bank to announce a program of “quantitative easing,” which will involve buying 60 billion euros worth of bonds for the next 18 months.

But the German government insisted on imposing conditions that will keep Greece from getting any ECB funds designed to restart economies threatened by deflation, unless Greece continues to meet the restrictions imposed by its bailout. (Financial Times, Jan. 22)

The Greek government and its new prime minister, Alexis Tsipras, are facing a difficult challenge: how to restart the economy and improve people’s lives un-

der the threat of a huge debt that bankers insist they pay.

Syriza is a new party, just coalescing as an electoral coalition in 2004 and not formally becoming a party until 2013. It is an amalgam of so-called democratic socialists, left-wing populist and green left groups, as well as Maoist, Trotskyist and Eurocommunist groups that split from the Greek Communist Party (KKE) in the 1990s. Despite its electoral appeal, Syriza has little influence in the union movement, where the KKE is strong.

(The January 2015 issue of the magazine *The Jacobin* has a detailed article dealing with the history of the factions inside Syriza.)

While Syriza will hold government office, Greece’s finances will still be subject to European, especially German banks. And the Greek state -- the army, which made a coup in 1967 that lasted seven years, and the police -- still answers to NATO and the Greek ruling class. In addition, there is the threat from an anti-immigrant fascist party, Golden Dawn, which got 6 percent of the vote even though its leaders were running for parliament from jail.

To confront these obstacles, the Greek workers not only will need to mobilize for struggle but will also need the solidarity of workers throughout Europe and the United States. □

GERMANY

Stop PEGIDA!

By Victor Grossman

Excerpted from *Berlin Bulletin No. 83*, Jan. 21, 2015.

Recent events here in Germany remind me of a playground seesaw, with constant ups and downs of one side and the other.

All autumn, we watched the upward swing of “Patriotic Europeans Against Islamization of the West” (PEGIDA) most rapidly, but not only, in Saxony’s capital Dresden [in southeastern Germany]. Its main features were a fast-talking, shady leader, Lutz Bachmann, with some eerie charisma, plus foggy dissatisfaction with just about everyone and everything: most politicians, the media, but especially poor job, rent and pension situations and fears for the future, plus, most dangerously, the channeling of such fears and worries into a dull hatred of anything and anyone “foreign,” especially the often arbitrary placement of newly arrived Syrian and Iraqi refugees into hitherto closed communities.

PEGIDA’s Monday “walks,” although ambling and nonviolent, disturbingly recalled the murderous stamp of booted, brown-shirted marchers of a previous generation. And some gimlet-eyed neo-Nazis reinforced such recollections.

But soon, all over Germany, the other end of the seesaw swung upward. More and more thousands demonstrated against the hatred crowd, welcoming asylum seekers and reassuring peaceful Muslim families long resident in Germany. They greatly outnumbered and at times blocked the path of the PEGIDA people -- everywhere but in Dresden. In Leipzig, Dresden’s rival in Saxony and with a very different heritage, never a royal court but open to trade fairs since 1165 and book fairs since the 17th century, PEGIDA rallied 4,800 marchers in early January -- but its opponents were 30,000.

Then came the “Charlie Hebdo” murders. Would narrow, blind distrust of “those Muslims,” dormant but present among about half the population, witness a new, upward PEGIDA thrust? It did -- but, happily, only in Dresden. Five days after the murders in the Rue Nicolas-Appert, 25,000 people marched in Dresden, the city on the Elbe River, but everywhere else they were a small minority. At the far-off mouth of the Elbe, in Hamburg, only opponents of racism demonstrated. Leaders from almost all parties joined at Berlin’s Brandenburg Gate with organizations of Turks in Germany to oppose both bloody violence and murder but also Islamophobia. Even Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke up, stating surprisingly that “Islam belongs to Germany” -- almost a heresy only a few years ago.

That day, the marchers reached a strength of 25,000, while 8,000 courageous opponents used big brooms to “clear their streets of racist garbage.” Elsewhere the reaction to the murder was very strong; tensions heightened.

Such P.R. opportunities seemed to pay off. For Wednesday, Jan. 21, PEGIDA called for 60,000 supporters to gather in hitherto unfriendly Leipzig (there to be called LEGIDA). They later scaled that down to 40,000, but a police force of 4,000 visored police still moved in from all over Germany.

A day before the big event, a Facebook “selfie” of Bachmann was unearthed showing him mustached, combed and leering uncannily like Hitler. “Only a joke,” he explained. Even less a joke were his Facebook references to refugees as “a dirty mob,” “trash” and “animals.” Due in part to these discoveries, but also because his numbers were an empty boast, an estimated 10,000 to 15,000

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Ukraine

Mariupol and imperialist hypocrisy

By Greg Butterfield

In the early morning hours of Jan. 24, three GRAD missiles struck a residential area on the outskirts of Mariupol, the second largest city in the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR), formerly part of southeastern Ukraine. Reports indicate that at least 30 people died and nearly 100 were injured.

Mariupol, a port on the Azov Sea, has been occupied by forces loyal to the U.S.-backed Ukrainian junta of oligarchs, neo-liberal politicians and fascists since last summer. Neo-Nazi "volunteer brigades" hold strategic positions in the city to prevent any uprising. Local residents, along with the rest of Donetsk and Lugansk, voted overwhelmingly for independence from Ukraine in a referendum last May 11.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, himself an oligarch, immediately blamed advancing forces of the Novorossiyan People's Militias for the missile strike in Mariupol. He was on a visit to Saudi Arabia, where he was paying homage to another dictator favored by Washington, King Abdullah, but cut it short due to what he called "a crime against humanity."

A crime it was indeed. But there is no reason to accept the junta and its Western backers' version of events — they are

guilty of numerous war crimes against the people of Novorossiya, as the historically Russian-speaking area is known. And there are many reasons to doubt it.

In situations like this, it is crucial to ask: Who stands to gain?

Of course, accidents can and do happen in wartime. But there is nothing for the anti-fascist resistance forces to gain by attacking their own people. And there is everything to gain for Kiev and Washington, in their campaign to discredit the People's Republics and justify NATO expansion to Russia's border.

Leaders of the Donetsk People's Republic emphatically deny Kiev's charge. "The militia forces in the area of Mariupol have no artillery systems that can bombard the specified zone," said a statement from the militia headquarters. "From our position the location is too far away.

"According to our information, the fire came from the area of Stary Krym, where Ukrainian troops are located. From the information we have today, we make the assumption that this is a provocation of the Ukrainian military." (Novorossia Today, Jan. 26)

Indeed, carrying out attacks on civilian targets has been the junta's modus operandi since it launched its misnamed "Anti-Terrorist Operation" last April. All through the autumn and early winter,

when the Minsk Accord ceasefire was supposedly in effect, both Nazi-dominated volunteer battalions and the National Guard routinely shelled homes, schools, hospitals and civilian infrastructure in the Donetsk capital and other cities.

Since Jan 18, when Ukraine unilaterally reopened hostilities, its army and militias have killed hundreds of civilians throughout the region. The Ukrainian armed forces have terror-bombed the city of Gorlovka nonstop, dropped cluster bombs in Stakhanov and used illegal chemical weapons as they retreated from the Donetsk airport.

Just two days before the Mariupol attack, during the morning rush hour on Jan. 22, a Ukrainian artillery shell hit a trolley bus in central Donetsk, slaughtering 13 people and injuring 20 more. There was no outcry about the attack from Kiev or the West — because there was no way for the imperialists to blame the anti-fascists.

Within hours of the Mariupol attack, monitors from the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, officially a "nongovernmental organization" but in reality a tool of the European Union imperialists, issued a preliminary report blaming the Novorossiyan forces. The same OSCE has failed innumerable times to condemn attacks by Ukrainian forces. Its

true role is so well known that people on the street in Donetsk had to be restrained from attacking the monitors when they visited the site of the bus massacre.

At an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council on Jan. 25, U.S. junior partner Britain attempted to push through a resolution condemning the Mariupol attack as the work of the "Russian-backed separatists." The resolution was rightly vetoed by the Russian Federation.

Alexander Zakharchenko, prime minister of the DNR, told a Jan. 24 news conference: "Today we launched an offensive against the Ukrainian forces around Mariupol, and God willing, in a few days we shall close the Debaltsevsky cauldron. And this will be the best memorial to the victims, because we will avenge them all. We will punish those who pulled the trigger, pressed the button and sent the shells flying that killed our countrymen. Those who were shot in Gorlovka, who were shot in Makeyevka, Yenakiyevo, Shakhtarsk, Zhdanovka, Kirov ... we will avenge each of our children, elders and all innocent victims." (DNR.Today)

Anti-fascists in the U.S. also say: "Victory to the Novorossiyan people's militia! Long live the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics! Down with the Ukrainian junta and U.S. imperialism!" □

Haiti

The disaster of 12 January 2010: 5 years!

By Isabelle L. Papillon

Reprinted with permission from Haiti-Liberté, Jan. 14-20. Excerpted here, the full text is available at workers.org.

It was 4:43 p.m. on a Tuesday afternoon when an earthquake of magnitude 7.3 struck Haiti for 35 seconds. This disaster, on a scale never seen before, caused a huge loss of life and significant property damage. According to statistics, more than 300,000 people were killed, thousands injured; between 1.3 million and 1.5 million people were thrown into the streets, homeless; and 100,000 to 200,000 homes were destroyed or damaged, including 42 public buildings, 1,350 educational institutions and 50 hospitals.

The damage was estimated at 120 percent of Haiti's gross domestic production and over \$13 billion in total cost. Taking advantage of the absence of the state authorities, the major Western powers strengthened their guardianship of Haiti, and conflicts broke out for control of the international airport, which ultimately was taken over by the United States.

In the days and months that followed this unparalleled disaster, thousands of nongovernmental organizations invaded the country. They acted as they saw fit. Millions of dollars were wasted and some people got rich at the expense of victims.

Five years after the earthquake of Jan. 12, 2010, more than 200,000 victims are still living in tents in several camps in Port-au-Prince, Leogane and Jacmel, in subhuman conditions, without water, without electricity, unemployed and under constant threat of forced eviction [to camps for internally displaced people]. In these IDP camps, people are plagued with lack of security, rape and thievery.

Ten months after the earthquake hit, soldiers of the United Nations occupation forces (Minustah) introduced a cholera epidemic into the country, resulting in thousands of deaths added to earthquake victims.

Frankly, after five years, there is some reconstruction beginning on the offices of the Directorate General of Taxes (DGI) on John Paul II Street, which will house the Ministry of Interior and decentralized ad-

ministrative offices; there is also reconstruction at the spot where the Department of Trade and Industry was located and repair of the old local Bank of Paris.

The work on other premises has not yet begun. This is the case for various public places, including the Carrefour of the Airport and Delmas. The amounts involved in the reconstruction were diverted by the administration of the arrogant [President Michel] Martelly and the leaders of the Interim Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti [which ex-President Bill Clinton co-directed].

This Jan. 12, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the commemoration of the earthquake, the social conditions of millions of victims have not improved. Hundreds of people have taken the streets to protest against this fact.

On Jan. 11, around 11:30 a.m., four people, including three girls, died following a fire that destroyed a camp for displaced people called "Kan Pèp pwogresis Deye Loj," located in the municipality of Delmas, near the road to the international airport. Thirty others, including

four children, were severely burned and transported to hospital.

All the tents and belongings of the 250 families living in the camp since Jan. 12, 2010, were swept away by the flames. When firefighters arrived, there was nothing left to save.

On the other hand, the Collective of Organizations for the Defense of the Right to Housing held a peaceful march on Jan. 12 in Port-au-Prince to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the earthquake. Demands for decent housing for the tens of thousands of displaced people have dominated the anniversary along with questions about the use of funds earmarked for reconstruction.

So five years after the earthquake of Jan. 12, 2010, the situation of victims has not changed. They are only moved from one place to another, still living in subhuman conditions. Only the mobilization of the victims and the Haitian people in general will be able to change the living conditions of the people.

G. Dunkel translated this article to English.

Stop PEGIDA!

Continued from page 10

bigots and unhappy fools showed up in Leipzig. Though protected by the police, they were met at every turn by at least 20,000 counter-demonstrators. Then, in the evening of the eventful day, Bachmann found it necessary to quit his leadership job.

Victor Grossman was a foot soldier in the U.S. war machine who took refuge in the German Democratic Republic in 1952 and has lived in eastern Germany ever since. The entire article is on workers.org.



La verdad sobre los sindicatos en Cuba

Continúa de página 12

"No podemos dejar espacio a que se desarrolle y fortalezca el egoísmo y la codicia entre nuestros trabajadores. Todos queremos y necesitamos mejores salarios, pero antes hay que crear la riqueza para luego distribuirla según el aporte de cada cual". (granma.cu)

Pero, ¿qué pasa con las/os trabajadoras en los EUA cuando aumenta la productividad? El Departamento del Trabajo informó el 9 de enero que los salarios

habían disminuido en diciembre a pesar de que el empleo oficial había mejorado un poco. La economista de Wall Street Diane Swonk lo explicó de esta manera:

"Esto sigue siendo un mercado de compradores en términos de mano de obra. Con todas las buenas noticias sobre el desempleo y el número de puestos de trabajo que hemos creado, si uno cree en estas cifras salariales, los empleadores todavía pueden seleccionar". (New York Times, 10 de enero)

Eso explica por qué la clase dominante de EUA logró que el Congreso pusiera \$11 millones en la creación de un programa falso para poder poner sus garras en Cuba bajo la cobertura de promover la "libertad de organizar sindicatos". Lo que los patronos aquí realmente quieren es tener su selección de esclavos asalariados que deban vender su fuerza de trabajo en el mercado "libre", en lugar de que las/os trabajadoras sean los agentes de planificación que puedan decidir su destino socialista.

Isabel Rosado, un siglo de lucha independentista

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Conocida simplemente como “Isabelita” o “doña Isabelita”, Isabel Rosado ha sido referente de la lucha por la independencia y soberanía puertorriqueña. Cuando el pasado 15 de enero sus restos fueron sembrados en su querida ciudad natal de Ceiba, muchas fueron las memorias compartidas por miles de puertorriqueñas/os tanto en las islas – Puerto Rico es un archipiélago (Isla Grande-[Puerto Rico], Vieques y Culebra, además de muchas isletas no habitadas), como en el exterior. Rafael Cancel Miranda, héroe nacionalista y ex prisionero político junto a Alicia Rodríguez, también ex prisionera política, despidieron el duelo.

Más de un siglo de ser testigo del proceso colonizador y de las luchas del pueblo puertorriqueño por su total emancipación, esa fue la vida de Isabel Rosado. Mujer extraordinaria que dejó de ser individuo para convertirse en pueblo, solidaria hasta sus días finales sobre todo con las luchas para liberar a las y los prisioneros políticos que luchaban contra el colonialismo.

Sus últimos reclamos fueron para exigir la libertad de Oscar López Rivera. Recordamos su imagen con fotos de este prisionero político, a quien el imperialis-

mo aún retiene por más de 33 años simplemente por abogar por la independencia de Borikén.

Nacida en Ceiba, ciudad costera al noreste de la isla grande un 5 de noviembre de 1907, apenas nueve años después de la invasión gringa. Estudió, como muchas mujeres de esa época, magisterio en la Universidad de Puerto Rico, ejerciendo esta labor principalmente en escuelas rurales.

Isabelita, combatiente nacionalista

Fue la Masacre de Ponce el domingo de ramos, 21 de marzo de 1937 lo que impactó a Isabelita y la ató por siempre a la lucha nacionalista anticolonial. Este horrible incidente ocurrió al comenzar una marcha de las/os miembros del Partido Nacionalista para protestar por el encarcelamiento de su líder máximo, Don Pedro Albizu Campos. Bajo las órdenes del entonces gobernador gringo, Blanton Winship, un masivo destacamento policial arremetió contra las/os manifestantes, dejando al final 19 muertos, 14 de ellas/os nacionalistas y más de 200 heridos. La indignación que sintió Isabelita la hizo integrarse al Partido y se convirtió en una fiel colaboradora del Maestro (Albizu Campos).

Estuvo encarcelada en tres ocasiones, pasando más de 11 años en prisión. La

primera fue en 1950, por violación a la Ley de la Mordaza o Ley 53, la primera legislación anti-sediciosa aprobada en Puerto Rico que finalmente se derogó en 1957. Esta ley estaba basada en la anti-comunista Ley Smith estadounidense. Bajo esta ley se prohibía toda actividad independentista, incluyendo hasta la posesión y exposición de la bandera puertorriqueña. En esa ocasión Isabelita fue arrestada luego de la Insurrección de Jayuya, y gracias a la simpatía demostrada por su pueblo y sus estudiantes, su sentencia se redujo a quince meses en prisión, siendo destituida como trabajadora en el sector público.

El segundo encarcelamiento, en 1954, fue el más prolongado, a raíz del ataque armado al Congreso de Estados Unidos por la/os miembros del PN Lolita Lebrón, Irvin Flores Rodríguez, Rafael Cancel Miranda y Andrés Figueroa Cordero. Isabelita había ido a la ciudad de Nueva York con la misión de organizar tareas conducentes a la revolución de Puerto Rico, incluyendo ataques a posiciones claves en EUA. Días después, de regreso a la isla, la policía arremete disparando contra la sede del partido donde se encontraban además de Isabelita, Albizu, don Pepe Sotomayor, Doris Torresola Roura y Carmín Pérez. A doña Isabel y a Carmín Pérez las condenaron a 17 años



Isabel Rosado

de prisión por auto defenderse y por posesión de armas, pero por un recurso de Habeas Corpus lograron salir a los 11 años.

Durante ese largo encierro, Isabelita se destacó por ayudar y defender los derechos de las mujeres en la cárcel.

Vieques, su misión especial

Albizu le había dado a Isabelita la tarea de sacar a la marina de guerra estadounidense de la isla municipio de Vieques, tarea que marcó su activismo nacionalista.

Famosa es la foto que recorrió el mundo en 1979 cuando a sus 70 y pico de años, su menudo cuerpo se veía atrapado bajo el peso de una corpulenta mujer policía en las arenas de la isla municipio de Vieques quien la esposaba, cara en arena, por “invadir” los terrenos de la marina en un acto de desobediencia civil. Años después la Marina estadounidense salió de Vieques en el 2003.

Gracias a Isabelita, la figura del General Antonio Valero Pacheco de Bernabé es conocida. Este general puertorriqueño luchó por la liberación de varios países latinoamericanos y batalló junto a Simón Bolívar durante la guerra en Perú. Su estatua en Fajardo se debe a la incansable labor de Doña Isabel Rosado Morales. Isabelita ¡PRESENTE! □

La verdad sobre los sindicatos en Cuba

Por Cheryl LaBash

El presidente Barack Obama en su anuncio del 17 de diciembre sobre los “cambios de política” hacia Cuba, declaró: “Creemos que los trabajadores cubanos deben tener libertad para formar sindicatos”.

¿Qué estará diciendo? Ya más del 90 por ciento de las/os trabajadores cubanos son miembros de sindicatos. Compare eso con los EUA, donde en el 2013, según la Oficina de Estadísticas Laborales, sólo el 11,3 por ciento de las/os trabajadores son miembros de sindicato. ¿No serán las/os trabajadores estadounidenses las/os que necesitan más libertad para afiliarse a un sindicato?

Luego el 22 de diciembre, el Departamento de Estado de EUA ofreció \$11 millones de los dólares de los impuestos pagados por las/os estadounidenses, para financiar programas que proponen fomentar “los derechos civiles, políticos y laborales en Cuba”. ¿Que, qué? ¿El presupuesto de Estados Unidos cuenta con \$11 millones para gastar en “derechos laborales” en Cuba, cuando más del 50 por ciento de las familias de las/os niños estadounidenses en escuelas públicas son tan pobres que son elegibles para almuerzos escolares gratuitos o a precio reducido? (New York Times, 16 de enero)

¿De qué se trata realmente?

La revolución cubana de 1959 derrocó allí el sistema económico capitalista.

Pero la unificación de los sindicatos cubanos en la Central de Trabajadores de Cuba, CTC, se remonta al 1939, 20 años antes del triunfo de la revolución. Los sindicatos son organizaciones independientes, voluntarias y autofinanciadas.

Las cuotas de membresía del 1 por ciento de los salarios se recaudan directamente en el lugar de trabajo, no a través de deducciones de la nómina.

Muestra de democracia obrera

Cuba es un estado obrero que está forjando el socialismo. La riqueza creada a través de la producción de bienes y servicios se utiliza para mejorar la vida de todo el pueblo, no para beneficiar a unos pocos. Sus sindicatos están implicados directamente en la solución de los muchos desafíos que enfrenta la sociedad cubana – que incluyen el peso del bloqueo económico, financiero y comercial unilateral de Estados Unidos, impuesto además de los cientos de años de subdesarrollo colonial.

Propuestas para iniciar o cambiar leyes se discuten en cada lugar de trabajo, en las asambleas de barrio y en las organizaciones de masas como la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas. Las enmiendas y observaciones realizadas se registran, son consideradas y alteran el resultado final. Los Lineamientos Económicos, adoptados en el VI Congreso del Partido Comunista de Cuba fueron forjados a través de una amplia consulta con el pueblo cuba-

no – no sólo con las/os miembros del partido. Más de ocho millones de personas (8,9) las discutieron en 163.000 reuniones. La población total de Cuba es alrededor de 11 millones.

Las decisiones económicas en los EUA son hechas por los patronos, los banqueros y por la insaciable clase capitalista para maximizar sus ganancias. Estas decisiones están aumentando la desigualdad social y la inseguridad económica para la clase obrera, mientras enriquecen la décima parte del 1 por ciento más rico.

Los sindicatos pueden luchar por un mejor trato en el marco del sistema económico de ganancias, pero en esta época de capitalismo en un callejón sin salida, a menudo es una batalla perdida. Los saltos en la productividad, en lugar de aliviar la carga de la clase trabajadora, resultan en desempleo, ciudades en bancarrota y una creciente desigualdad de ingresos. Son los “expertos” entrenados por bancos y corporaciones, nunca las/os trabajadores o sindicatos, quienes escriben las leyes sobre asuntos económicos para que las/os legisladores las aprueben sin cuestionamientos.

Las/os trabajadores cubanos son la fuerza principal en la construcción del socialismo y en garantizar que las necesidades básicas para una vida digna estén disponibles para todas/os. Esto incluye la atención gratuita y de calidad de la salud y la educación, además de ac-

ceso a la cultura y el deporte. En el centro de convenciones en la ciudad de Holguín hay un mural que señala que “300 millones de niños duermen en la calle cada noche; ninguno de ellos es cubano”. Este es el resultado de su economía socialista.

El 15 de enero, la Agencia de Información Nacional (AIN) informó algo muy fuera de la experiencia de las/os trabajadores de los EUA. La CTC, equivalente en Cuba a la AFL-CIO, llamó a las/os trabajadores a que realizaran asambleas en todos los centros de trabajo para que las/os administradores pudieran informarle sobre el plan económico adoptado y el presupuesto para el año. Dijeron: “No es posible cumplir con un plan de producción sin la participación activa de los colectivos laborales que tienen la capacidad de utilizar su potencial en términos de eficiencia que nosotros como sindicatos sabemos que tienen”.

Al cierre del cuarto período de sesiones de la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular, el presidente cubano Raúl Castro Ruz explicó: “Para nadie es un secreto que en nuestro sistema social los sindicatos defienden los derechos de los trabajadores y para lograrlo efectivamente deben ser los primeros en velar no solo por el interés de un colectivo laboral determinado, sino por los intereses de toda la clase obrera, que son en esencia los mismos que sostiene la nación entera.”

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