



Latino/a youth in Selma.

Selma 50 years later —

Fight's still on for liberation

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
 Selma, Ala.

A jubilant, determined crowd of more than 100,000 people marched over the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., from morning to afternoon on March 8 to mark the 50th Jubilee anniversary of “Bloody Sunday,” a key event in the Black Civil Rights struggles of the 1960s.

The vast majority of those participating were African American and working class. They came determined to defend their basic rights to assemble and to vote, rights fought for on the bridge on March 7, 1965. And they came determined to “march on” toward freedom.

Represented was the complete breadth and depth of the Black nation within the U.S. — from revolutionaries to social clubs. People marched with their churches and with political organizations like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the NAACP. There were hundreds of Masons in formal black suits and white shirts and the Eastern Star women’s auxiliary in white dresses. There were contingents from historically Black colleges and universities, Black sororities and fraternities, and from Buffalo Soldier Motorcycle Clubs in New Jersey and North Carolina.

A huge GirlTrek contingent marched “for the health of our bodies, our families, our communities,” honoring the names of Nzinga, Harriet, Sojourner, Fannie Lou and Ella on the backs of their blue T-shirts. There was a group from Baltimore Bois, “working to create an alternative space for Black masculinity.”

Representation of multinational working-class unity was strong, with many delegations present, including union machinists from Tennessee and Kentucky, local Montgomery workers with the National Association of Letter Carriers, Atlanta home-care workers building their “Raise Up for 15” campaign, and the Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en La Lucha (Center of Workers United in the Struggle), which is organizing fast food workers. Nineteen busloads of United Auto Workers members from Detroit, Chicago and Greencastle, Ind., had come for the big rally the day before.

Other social justice groups marched,

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Youth protest police brutality on Pettus Bridge.

WW PHOTO: MINNIE BRUCE PRATT

Every issue is a woman’s issue 7



New York City, March 8.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

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ExxonMobil

What's behind Christie's sweetheart deal?

By Stephen Millies

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie says he wants to settle an \$8.9 billion environmental lawsuit against ExxonMobil for just \$250 million. That's not even three cents on the dollar.

Bradley Campbell, former commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, called Christie's proposed settlement "a disgrace." Campbell pointed out that ExxonMobil gave \$500,000 to the Republican Governors Association in 2014, when Christie was chair. (New York Times, March 5)

But it takes more than a single bribe to explain this rotten deal, even if Christie is running for president and hoping for more money from Big Oil. There's a history of Rockefeller family power in New Jersey behind it.

The oil giant and its predecessor companies have been polluting New Jersey's wetlands for over a century. It was held liable for poisoning 1,500 acres around the Bayway refinery in Linden and facilities in Bayonne. Linden became a cancer cluster for New Jersey refinery workers.

Christie is a vicious bully who loves to belittle and humiliate teachers at meetings. He wants to rob public workers of their hard-earned pensions.

But the Garden State governor is the meekest of mice when it comes to standing up to ExxonMobil, which had revenues of \$407 billion last year. According to the World Bank, that's more than the gross domestic product of South Africa's 54 million people.

Even former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, a notorious Tea Party right-winger, put up a bigger fight over the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil tanker spill. "Outrageous! Unbelievable!" she wrote in a July 15, 2008, email in reference to ExxonMobil's legal stalling tactics. (Los Angeles Times, July 11, 2011)

A Rockefeller province

The world's first billionaire — John D. Rockefeller — founded ExxonMobil's corporate ancestor, the Standard Oil Trust, in 1870. Bayonne, N.J., on the Upper New York Bay across from Brooklyn, became Standard Oil's export terminal and the site of a major refinery.

Rockefeller made his money the old fashioned way: He extorted it from railroads and forced them to sidetrack

other companies' tank cars. Competitors were driven to the wall when Standard Oil used creative tactics, like blowing up a rival's refinery in Buffalo, N.Y.

Standard Oil gunmen killed at least nine people during a series of strikes in 1915 and 1916 at the company's Bayonne works. The first victim was John Sterancsak, a Polish-American teenager.

Bayonne's strikebreaking mayor, Pierre Garven, was on Standard Oil's payroll. What a role model for Christie.

In 1894, Henry Demarest Lloyd wrote in "Wealth Against Commonwealth" that Standard Oil had done "everything with the Pennsylvania legislature except refine it." Rockefeller agents also barked out orders to New Jersey legislators.

New Jersey became a Rockefeller province like Venezuela was until Hugo Chávez was elected president and inaugurated the Bolivarian Revolution.

After the oil trust was broken up in 1911, Standard Oil of New Jersey became its biggest remaining piece. Relabeled "Exxon" in 1972, it merged with Mobil — another Standard Oil descendent — in 1999.

Trenton is New Jersey's capital, but real political power in the state flows from the Prudential Insurance headquarters in Newark. John Russell Whitman, spouse of former New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, was CEO of a Prudential subsidiary.

Along with Metropolitan Life and the Equitable insurance companies, Prudential served as a cash cow for decades for Rockefeller interests.

For years following Newark's 1967 rebellion against racism, Prudential refused to invest hardly any money in its hometown. The Black and Latina/o city was economically strangled while corporations shut down factories in Newark and built offices in the suburbs.

So it's not surprising that Christie is holding up Hurricane Sandy money for Hoboken, N.J., despite 80 percent of that city having been under water. Hoboken Mayor Dawn Zimmer said Christie's people threatened to withhold the Sandy money if she didn't approve a giveaway of three blocks to a Rockefeller real estate group. (CNN, Jan. 21)

Gov. Chris Christie is a bully towards poor and working people but he's just another flunky for Rockefeller power. □

WORKERS WORLD

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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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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
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Mundo Obrero: Ramiro Sebastián Fúnez, 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

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

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.
712 Main St #113B
Buffalo, NY 14202
716.883.2534
buffalo@workers.org

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

Frame-up collapses

Victory for Boston school bus drivers

By Tony Murphy
Dorchester, Mass.

The campaign to rehire and win justice for four Boston school bus drivers, illegally fired by the notorious union-busting Veolia Corp., got a big boost on March 5. After only ten minutes of deliberation, the jury voted unanimously to acquit union leader Steve Kirschbaum of all charges brought by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In October 2013, the nefarious anti-worker company Veolia, hired by the city to operate school transportation, fired four leaders of United Steelworkers Local 8751 — Grievance Chair Kirschbaum, Recording Secretary Andre Francois, Steward Garry Murchison and Vice President Steve Gillis — after locking out the workers and falsely claiming that the union had conducted a “wildcat strike.”

The frame-up charges were brought after a June 30, 2014, rally of hundreds of school bus drivers demanding the rehiring of the four. The action ended with an indoor rally in the drivers’ breakroom. Veolia managers provided false statements to the state to make it look like they had been attacked by Kirschbaum and that the premises had been violently entered.

The charges, while totally concocted, were serious. They initially included three felonies — breaking and entering to commit a felony, malicious destruction of property, and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon — as well as trespassing.

The courtroom victory was the result of an eight-month people’s mobilization that included six pack-the-court rallies; national call-in days to both the district attorney and the mayor; and weekly bus yard rallies organized by the local. People’s lawyers Barry Wilson and John Pavlos skillfully and passionately tore the frame-up apart and successfully turned

the tables on Veolia and the political establishment, putting the union-busters on trial.

School bus drivers and community supporters packed the court for three days, transforming the inside of the courthouse into a de facto union hall. During lunch breaks, the drivers held militant picket lines outside the building, carrying placards saying “Drop the Charges” and “No Contract, No Work!”

Dorchester District Courthouse truly became the gathering place for the political movement, as the following activists showed up to support the union: Brock Satter, of the Mass Mobilization Against Police Violence; Sandra Macintosh, of the Coalition for Equal Quality Education; Chuck Turner, former city councilmember; Herculano Fecteau, of the Boston Teachers Union; Tony Van Der Meer, of the Africana Studies Department at University of Massachusetts, Boston; and Moonanum James, co-leader of the United American Indians of New England.

City Councilmember Charles Yancey gave updates to the overflow crowd outside the courtroom, and on two of the three trial days, I-93 protester Tsung attended. Tsung was part of a demonstration in January that blockaded the interstate highway, where a number of activists were arrested, in solidarity with “Black Lives Matter.”

The verdict was not just a victory for this political, social union — which fights for its members while also marching with the Black Lives Matter movement; resolutely defends lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer rights; and stands with Palestine — but a victory for the movement as well.

Union-busters pushed back

What happened in court was a defeat for the union-busters, a setback for Boston’s 1% and a blow to the city’s en-



Steve Kirschbaum, outside Dorchester, Mass., courthouse, where he was acquitted of all charges on March 5.

trenched racist forces, who want to re-segregate public education.

From the moment the four bogus charges were filed against Kirschbaum in July 2014, it was clear that they were part of the union-busting campaign being waged against the local — a campaign exemplified by the November 2013 firing of Kirschbaum and the three other union leaders.

The evidence was so obviously manufactured that in October the judge dismissed the first two charges. On March 5, a working-class jury of six — including two union members — took no time to put the remaining two charges to rest with a not-guilty verdict.

In fact, it was Veolia and its co-conspirators in the city administration who were put on trial. Witness testimony and Kirschbaum’s legal team showed that the events in question, and the illegal firings that prompted the June 30 rally, had everything to do with the fact that the contract was expiring that day at midnight — and that, in violation of the contract, Veolia had attempted to prevent the union from holding a meeting.

Kirschbaum comments on the victory

Kirschbaum told Workers World, “This historic victory for Local 8751 and for the labor and political movement is a confirmation of people’s power. It is a significant defeat for global union-buster Veolia and their city co-conspirators. Now we will fight for the reinstatement of the four union leaders whom Veolia fired in 2013 and for a just contract.

“We have relied on our united rank

and file with solidarity from the communities we serve and the labor and political movement. From day one the fighting rank and file of USW 8751 have been visited by countless ‘Solidarity Boots on the Ground’ contingents from Workers World branches throughout the country, standing shoulder to shoulder with us in the finest tradition of union solidarity, marching in pickets, rallies, packing the court room and doing 101 organizational tasks required to successfully carry out the struggle.

“We will be forever indebted and grateful for this exemplary solidarity in action,” Kirschbaum emphasized. “We know that we will win.”

The not-guilty verdict — which has so thoroughly discredited the version of events put forward by Veolia managers — can only help the campaign to rehire the four. Those in the Boston establishment who were holding their breath over this trial, and hoping to see one of the union’s leaders convicted, are now facing a renewed, re-energized, fighting, militant union that is not afraid to take things to the next level.

Those who know this local also know that its members intend to fight, not only to rehire the four, but also to deepen the Black Lives Matter movement and the struggle against racism; stop the school closings announced by Mayor Walsh; defend public school transportation by keeping middle school students off the subway and on school buses; and defend the righteous I-93 protesters and their First Amendment rights.

UNION!

U.S. computer makers lose markets as More NSA spyware exposed

By Chris Fry

Kaspersky Lab, a well-regarded, Russian-based, computer security company, released a report in mid-February describing a U.S. National Security Agency secret spyware program that lets the U.S. government read all the data on computers’ hard drives.

At the same time, the Chinese government has been demanding that U.S. software companies provide them with the encryption keys to read the data files that their software produces. This would allow China to more effectively fight terrorist groups, but it would also allow the government to detect bribery and corruption, which are central to imperialist domination around the globe.

When the U.S. government, on behalf of the Silicon Valley technology industry, objected to China’s demands, the Chinese government pointed to the sheer hypocrisy of the U.S. position — particularly referring to the scope of NSA spyware activities.

The Kaspersky report reveals just how insidious is the NSA’s new family of mal-

ware. The report calls it “The Equation Family” and states that it “surpasses anything else” the company’s staff has ever seen. (“How the NSA’s Firmware Hacking Works and Why It’s So Unsettling,” wired.com, Feb. 23)

This hacking tool actually places spyware code in a computer hard drive’s “firmware.” That means that existing anti-virus programs cannot get rid of it.

Even if the user reformats the hard drive and removes all the data, this spyware is untouched. It will hack any new data placed on the hard drive.

The “Equation” malware can even store data, including passwords, before they are encrypted. So, even if the user purchases special software that converts the data into an unreadable format, the NSA spyware can hide the readable files on some “hidden” area of the hard drive.

Even if the infected computer is never attached to the Internet, the NSA can still retrieve these hidden files when the computer is brought through customs, such as at an airport or border checkpoint, or if it is stolen.

Most of the infected computers that

Kaspersky found were in Iran. But the company also found infected computers in Belgium, Germany, Britain, Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories. Moreover, others were found in the U.S. — particularly among those used by Muslim activists and religious organizations. (“Researchers Find ‘Astonishing’ Malware Linked to NSA Spying,” firstlook.org, Feb. 17)

The latest revelations about NSA spyware add to those already made by whistleblower Edward Snowden. They have deservedly hurt global sales of U.S. computers and software.

Forrester Research pegs potential losses at \$180 billion, especially affecting technology firms and managed service providers. “Suspicion of U.S. vendors is running at an all-time high,” says Andrew Jaquith, chief technology officer at the cloud-security firm SilverSky. (“NSA surveillance hurting tech firms’ business,” usatoday.com, Feb. 28, 2014)

Sales of computers and other equipment to China have been sharply affected. It illustrates the fact that ruthless imperialist strategies meant to advance the in-

terests of U.S. big business can blow back to harm some of them.

On the one hand, U.S. corporations and banks hunger for huge profits from exploiting Chinese labor and from selling products, like computers, to the Chinese people. On the other hand, the imperialists’ main goal has always been to destroy the socialist foundations of the People’s Republic of China — to undermine the planned economy and to install a regime subservient to Wall Street’s will.

Bribery and corruption are tools the imperialists use to carry out their goals in China. Refusing China’s demands for the encryption keys allows the U.S. to shield its personnel and collaborators from China’s anti-corruption efforts, but at the same time it undermines the sales of U.S. computers to Chinese people.

The NSA provides no “security” for the workers and poor, either in the U.S. or abroad. Its sole mission is to protect the banks and corporations that feast off the poverty and misery of the world’s people. Only socialism, a system that places people before profits, can harness this technology to serve the workers and oppressed. □

Ferguson, Attica, Zimmerman and the capitalist state

By Fred Goldstein

Several judicial rulings in recent weeks demonstrate the determination of the capitalist government to shield the front-line forces of the repressive, racist state — especially cops and prison guards — from individual punishment.

While city police departments and prisons can be investigated and sometimes penalized, the shooters and the beaters have virtual immunity from individual punishment for their crimes. The ruling class relies upon them and their willingness to directly inflict brutality upon the workers and the oppressed to enforce the racist, capitalist order.

Protecting criminal brutality in Attica

In 2011, George Williams, who is Black, was beaten within an inch of his life by white prison guards at the Attica maximum security state prison in western New York. Three of the guards were indicted for gang violence and were facing 8 1/2 to 25 years in prison on the charges. They had been indicted only because the prison nurse refused to treat Williams after seeing the seriousness of his injuries and ordered him taken to a hospital in Buffalo.

That is how the story got out, leading to the charges. The fact of the beating is not an unusual story in Attica. What is unusual is that the news of this brutality became public.

George Williams ended up with two broken legs, a broken shoulder, a broken eye socket, cracked ribs, and plates and screws in his legs.

The three prison guards recently took a plea deal and wound up with charges reduced to misconduct, a suspended sentence of one year and a guarantee of no jail time. They were let go from their jobs and were free to resume their lives. George Williams is disabled for the rest of his life.

The New York Times did an exhaustive investigation of brutality in Attica, amid cries by advocates of prisoners' rights and even some officials to shut the prison down altogether.

Why would the Times, a mouthpiece for the ruling class, concern itself with the plight of prisoners in Attica?

In September 1971, this prison was the site of the largest, most important and most political prison rebellion in U.S. history. This fact lives in the memories of both the prisoners and the guards. The establishment does not want to risk another rebellion if the prison authorities get so out of control that they detonate an uprising.

Exoneration of George Zimmerman

On Feb. 24 of this year, the Justice Department ruled that George Zimmerman, who shot to death unarmed 17-year-old Trayvon Martin after stalking him in a gated community in Sanford, Fla., was not guilty of any civil rights violations.

Zimmerman was not just a lone racist individual, separate from the capitalist state, when he shot Martin. In fact, he was an informal arm of the Sanford Police Department. Zimmerman was the coordinator of the Twin Lakes community neighborhood watch program. He was directly under the supervision of the Sanford Police Department Neighborhood Watch program and in steady communications with the cops. The Sanford Police Department was long known for covering up racist police brutality inflicted on the Black community of Sanford.

After he shot Martin on Feb. 26, 2012, Zimmerman was taken in by the police for questioning and released on the grounds that there was no evidence against him,

even though the cops had advised him over the phone not to go after Martin. There was no investigation, and the cops gave interviews sympathetic to Zimmerman.

This set off six weeks of national demonstrations, after which Zimmerman was finally arrested and charged. The cops had six weeks to concoct a story and Zimmerman was eventually acquitted using the "stand your ground" defense, a law crafted to protect armed racists. Now the Justice Department, on the flimsy ground of "high judicial standards," has failed to bring charges of civil rights violations in the case.

So Zimmerman was a legalized, racist vigilante, working under the auspices of the Sanford police Neighborhood Watch program and an informal extension of the capitalist state. He was protected by the courts and the federal authorities. He escaped individual punishment and went scot free so that other neighborhood watch types who protect gated communities, or "stand your ground" racists, would not feel vulnerable or inhibited in attacking African Americans, Latinos/as or other oppressed people.

Freedom for torturers at Rikers Island

Rikers Island prison in New York City is an infamous hell hole of brutality, where prisoners awaiting trial are held before being sent to state prison or serve short sentences. This institution has been notorious for years despite reports, journalistic exposés and promises by politicians to change the pervasive culture of violence there.

According to the New York Times, the U.S. Attorney's office in Manhattan issued a damning report about brutality at the jail complex last August and threatened to sue the city unless conditions there improved. In November, Mayor Bill de Blasio declared that ending pervasive violence at Rikers had become a top priority for his administration.

The reports on brutality at Rikers, especially against youth and mentally disabled prisoners, go back to the administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Yet nothing has been done. The prison guards, with the protection of prison officials and their correction officers' "union" of thugs and parasites, continue to brutalize with impunity.

For example, the Times reported on Feb. 21:

"On Sept. 2, four correction officers pulled Jose Guadalupe, an inmate classified in medical records as seriously mentally ill, into his solitary-confinement cell at Rikers Island and beat him unconscious.

"A little over two months later, three guards wrestled another inmate, Tracy Johnson, to the floor, pepper-sprayed him in the face and broke a bone in his eye socket. Then, on Dec. 9, yet another group of officers beat Ambiorix Celedonio, an inmate with an I.Q. of 65, so badly that, as surveillance footage later showed, he had bruises and scratches on his face and blood coming from his mouth."

The Times documented 62 cases of "brutal confrontations" resulting in serious personal injury among inmates between last August and January and cited official statistics of the Corrections Department about the 4,074 times guards used physical force against inmates in 2014, the highest total in a decade.

There are 9,000 prison guards at Rikers. Not one has been indicted or sent to



Attica prisoners present demands during 1971 prison rebellion.

jail. It is almost impossible to dismiss them, let alone charge them with a crime.

Such brutality has become public only because Rikers is the biggest prison in New York City. The regime of prison brutality has grown increasingly severe all over the country in this age of mass incarceration of Black and Latino/a youth and poor people in general. As the prison population grows, the need for control increases and the brutality increases along with it.

To enforce this regime in a country that has 2.4 million prisoners — 25 percent of the world's prison population — but only 5 percent of the world's people, the capitalist class and its state not only need to use brutality but they also need to protect the enforcers of that brutality. No investigations or reports or expressions of outrage will stop prison brutality, except for a prisoner rebellion and outside support from a mass movement.

Ferguson: reining in police to protect police

In the first week of March, the Justice Department made two announcements that seemed contradictory.

On the one hand, Attorney General Eric Holder announced the results of a report saying that the police department and the city criminal justice system in Ferguson, Mo., were riddled with the most pronounced and vile racism. It is so bad that the entire police department might have to be dismantled.

On the other hand, Holder announced that the Justice Department found no grounds for a federal indictment of Officer Darren Wilson for violation of Michael Brown's civil rights. Even worse, Holder and the Justice Department emphatically denied that 18-year-old Michael Brown, who was unarmed, was shot with his hands in the air. Thus Washington lent its full force to the lies of the racist Ferguson district attorney, Robert McCullough, who got the charges against killer cop Wilson thrown out despite eyewitness testimony from people in the community.

Why would the Justice Department charge, on the one hand, that there is endemic racism in the police department, a culture of impunity for arbitrary arrest, brutality and illegal, excessive fines for everything from jay walking to having high grass in your yard that has established a virtual debtors' prison system against African Americans? Why would it at the same time exonerate a racist cop who was seen to shoot Michael

Brown with his hands in the air and who left Brown's body on the street for four hours?

The answer is very straightforward. Both rulings were in the interests of the ruling class. The judgment against the Ferguson Police Department is a message to all the police in St. Louis and beyond to stop playing with fire. Ferguson is a fuse, and St. Louis is a powder keg which could go off if the police killings and targeting of the Black community are not curtailed.

The Ferguson investigation would never have taken place without the rebellion that began there and swept the country, expanding the Black Lives Matter movement. Tens of thousands of youth, Black, Brown and white, mobilized for months, disrupted downtown shopping areas, invaded malls, blocked highways and roads, and generally caused havoc in major and minor cities from one end of the country to the other. The struggle drew in athletes, politicians, cultural figures and celebrities.

The ruling class fears a repeat of this kind of rebellion. They know that this movement could grow even larger and more powerful and draw in broader working-class forces, such as the low-wage workers' movement and other rank-and-file movements, as well as the oppressed and downtrodden in the impoverished communities. This could lead to a challenge to capitalist social stability.

The Black Lives Matter movement forced the federal government to investigate a city of 21,000 people — which is completely out of the ordinary. Right now the Justice Department is investigating the police departments of cities like Cleveland, Philadelphia, Las Vegas, Spokane and Seattle, among others. They all have large urban populations.

The federal investigations in these urban areas with large African-American and Latino/a populations are motivated by ruling-class fear of the spread of social unrest at a time of deep economic crisis, poverty, hunger and unemployment, especially in the oppressed communities.

The investigation of Ferguson, which hopefully will end up alleviating some of the more outrageous aspects of national and racial oppression in the city and surrounding areas, is entirely a byproduct of the heroic and determined resistance of the Black Lives Matter movement. The ruling class knows it and wants to take the steam out of it. In order to do this, sections of the Obama administration want to rein in the cops from acting too

Justice Dept. reports on Ferguson

Sees rampant racism but won't indict killer cop

By Abayomi Azikiwe

On March 4, the U.S. Department of Justice issued two seemingly contradictory reports.

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder officially announced that Darren Wilson, the police officer who had killed unarmed African-American youth Michael Brown on Aug. 9, 2014, in Ferguson, Mo., would not be indicted on federal civil rights violations charges due to lack of probable cause. Wilson, who has since resigned from the Ferguson Police Department, claimed that he felt threatened by the 18-year-old before he drew his weapon and fired numerous shots into the young man's body.

The same Department of Justice also issued a comprehensive report on the systematic discriminatory policies of the Ferguson police. These findings are by no means news to the people of Ferguson

and St. Louis County.

Journalists, activists and other observers have noted the appalling and repressive character of the police in St. Louis County and the exploitative nature of the court system, which entangles African Americans with citations and jail time for failure to promptly pay arbitrary fines.

The DOJ report revealed: "The City budgets for sizeable increases in municipal fines and fees each year, exhorts police and court staff to deliver those revenue increases, and closely monitors whether those increases are achieved. City officials routinely urge Chief Jackson to generate more revenue through enforcement."

In March 2010, a memorandum from the city finance director to Chief Jackson stressed that "unless ticket writing ramps up significantly before the end of the year, it will be hard to significantly raise collections next year. ... Given that we are looking at a substantial sales tax shortfall, it's not an insignificant issue."

Also the DOJ documents that in March 2013, the Ferguson finance director wrote to the city manager noting: "Court fees are anticipated to rise about 7.5 percent. I did ask the Chief if he thought the PD could deliver 10 percent increase. He indicated they could try." The report continues: "The importance of focusing on revenue generation is communicated to FPD officers. Ferguson police officers from all ranks told us that revenue generation is stressed heavily within the police department."

Police guided by racism

It is quite obvious that the city of Ferguson's methodology of law enforcement reflects and fortifies racial profiling and discrimination. Consequently, those most severely impacted by these policies are African Americans, who are systematically targeted for punitive actions by the cops.

The DOJ report substantiates such assumptions by stating unequivocally: "Data collected by the Ferguson Police Department from 2012 to 2014 shows African Americans account for 85 percent of vehicle stops, 90 percent of citations, and 93 percent of arrests made by FPD officers, despite comprising only 67 percent of Ferguson's population. African Americans are more than twice as likely as white drivers to be searched during vehicle stops even after controlling for non-race-based variables such as the reason the vehicle stop was initiated, but are found in possession of contraband 26 percent less often than white drivers, suggesting officers are impermissibly considering race as a factor when determining whether to search."

During the two years leading up to 2014, the FPD wrote four or more citations of African Americans on 73 occasions. Nonetheless, the statistics illustrate that cops issued four or more citations of non-African Americans on only two occasions. The Ferguson police obviously issue certain citations almost exclusively against African Americans.



Between the years of 2011 and 2013, African Americans were cited for 95 percent of "manner of walking in roadway" charges, and 94 percent of all "failure to comply" charges.

Racist emails common

The report also revealed racist emails sent by Ferguson city personnel insulting and mocking African Americans, targeting people from the local area all the way up to the White House. These racist emails were widely circulated even outside city administration circles.

Emails circulated by Ferguson officials in law enforcement and the courts reflect the venomous racism within the municipal system. These electronic notes and "ethnic jokes" draw upon some of the worst stereotypes within U.S. society.

African Americans are accused of not taking care of their children, and of being lazy and criminally inclined. Even President Barack Obama was described as an animal by a Ferguson employee.

These emails continued to circulate and no one was ever held accountable by Ferguson officials. In the aftermath of the release of the DOJ report, a court clerk and two police officers have left their jobs. However, no one has been criminally prosecuted for these offenses.

Darren Wilson remains untouched

Despite the damning proof of blatant racism, police brutality, judicial misconduct and criminal conspiratorial actions, no one has been arrested or indicted for these violations of the law, which the DOJ says contravene the Fourth, Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Darren Wilson, who shot down Michael Brown, was not indicted by the local St. Louis County prosecutor and also escaped any criminal charges from the DOJ.

According to the DOJ, in its statement related to the decision not to indict former Ferguson Police Officer Wilson on federal civil rights violations charges: "The evidence does not establish that the shots fired by Wilson were objectively unreasonable under federal law. When Brown turned around and moved toward Wilson, the applicable law and evidence do not support finding that Wilson was unreasonable in his fear that Brown

would once again attempt to harm him and gain control of his gun."

Such a rationale for not indicting Wilson stems from the same stereotypical reasoning enunciated by this white police officer when he told ABC News in an exclusive interview that he felt mortally threatened by an unarmed African-American youth. These are the same excuses given for decades to justify the police killings of African Americans and other oppressed people in the U.S.

Brown's family to file civil suit

On March 5, the family of Michael Brown announced they would pursue civil litigation against Darren Wilson for the wrongful death of their son. Since the family and the community in Ferguson have been denied redress within the local and federal court systems, they are seeking alternative means to hold Wilson liable for his actions that resulted in the death of Brown.

"There were other alternatives available to him. He did not have to kill Michael Brown," said Daryl Parks, an attorney for the family of the slain teen.

Attorney Anthony Gray said the lawsuit is being worked on and will be filed in the not-too-distant future. "Wilson did not have to shoot and kill Mike Brown Jr. in broad daylight in the manner that he did," Gray said. "The choice to use deadly force was unreasonable and unnecessary." (Globe and Mail, March 5)

The findings of the DOJ report on Ferguson and St. Louis County are not exceptions in the U.S. Such practices involving law enforcement and the courts are commonplace in many municipalities throughout the country.

On March 6, Tony Robinson, a 19-year-old African American in Madison, Wis., was killed by police. The officer involved has not been arrested or indicted and the authorities say the incident is "under investigation."

The pervasive racism in the U.S. was also revealed when an Oklahoma State University all-white fraternity was videotaped chanting slogans saying that African Americans will never join their organization and that they should be hung from trees. Although the group was suspended by their national office and the university has publicly distanced itself from the racist organization, these attitudes are not an anomaly.

It will take a much more broadly organized mass movement to overthrow racism and police brutality. The character of the U.S. capitalist and imperialist system is rooted in racial discrimination and economic exploitation, which must be eradicated for true equality and self-determination to be won by the nationally oppressed. □

Ferguson, Attica, Zimmerman and the capitalist state

Continued from page 4

much like the overseers of a slave plantation.

On the other hand, the refusal to punish Darren Wilson shows that they do not want to punish individual cops. They do not want to remove their immunity from prosecution or jail. The bosses want the cops to keep doing what they do — that is, beat and kill — only with more discretion. Rob and pillage with fines, tickets, etc., but do not go so far overboard as to cause another Ferguson or another rebellion on the scale of Watts in 1965, which was also set off by an incident of police brutality.

Struggle against the state and capitalism

As Marxists have shown time and again, the state is an instrument for the repression of the workers and oppressed by the capitalist class, the ruling class, the billionaire profiteers.

The higher levels of the state — for example, the Justice Department — will try to manage this repressive apparatus so that it does not trigger massive uprisings. But those in suits and ties will also always protect the lower level, the front-line forces of repression in blue.

Therefore the struggle against the police, the struggle against the state must become a struggle against capitalism. The police, the judicial authorities who protect their brutality, the legislatures that authorize them and fund the prisons, cops and courts must be broken up by mass mobilizations and struggle.

Such a struggle is not immediately on the agenda, but it must be raised, and it will be raised at the Peoples Power Assembly Tribunal on April 2 in New York City at the National Black Theater in Harlem. The struggle against the police, against prison brutality, against mass incarceration is in reality a vital part of the struggle against capitalism. □



MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination Larry Holmes • **Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery** Sam Marcy • **Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** LeiLani Dowell • **The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead • **Domestic Workers United Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights** Imani Henry • **Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice!** Saladin Muhammad • **Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior** Mumia Abu-Jamal • **Racism & Poverty in the Delta** Larry Hales • **Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions** Pat Chin • **Alabama's Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation** Consuela Lee • **Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion** John Parker

Available online and at other bookstores.

U.S. ranks as world's worst in jailing women

By Sue Davis

Women are the fastest growing prison population in the U.S. due primarily to harsh sentencing for nonviolent crimes and drug offenses. Over the last three decades the number of women incarcerated has mushroomed, though they account for less than 7 percent of the country's 2.4 million inmates. This gives the U.S. the highest proportion of prisoners of any country in the world.

"In 1977, 11,212 women were in prison," write editors Robin Levi and Ayelet Waldman in the book "Inside This Place, Not of It: Narratives from Women's Prisons." (McSweeney's Books and Voice of Witness, 2011) "As of 2007, that number had increased to 107,000."

"There are now more than 200,000 women behind bars and more than one million on probation and parole," reports the American Civil Liberties Union. "Many of these women struggle with substance abuse, mental illness, and histories of physical and sexual abuse," as well as desperate poverty leading to crimes of survival. (aclu.org)

Racial discrimination against people of color, which permeates every aspect of U.S. life, combined with judicial injustice, means that women of color are disproportionately imprisoned. "African-American

women are three times more likely than white women to be incarcerated, while [Latina] women are 69 percent more likely than white women to be incarcerated," reports a 2012 study on racial disparities in the U.S. criminal justice system by the Center for [U.S.] American Progress.

Another reason for the skyrocketing number of women in prison is the criminalization of domestic violence, which affects between 85 percent and 90 percent of women in prison. Child abuse and sexual violence put them at risk because their survival strategies often include illicit activity driven by threats of violence or coercion. Also, laws passed to help protect women victimized by male partners are subsequently used against them, as in the case of Marissa Alexander.

Alexander was imprisoned for three years for shooting off a gun to prevent an abusive ex-spouse from coming near her and their children. As of Jan. 27, 2015, she must spend two more years in house detention while wearing and paying for a surveillance ankle monitor. (See fact sheet about domestic violence on freemarissanow.org.)

Brutal medical care, rampant sexual assaults

If recent revelations about violent conditions at Attica prison in upstate New

York or Rikers Island in New York City are horrific, women prisoners are forced to live in equally sordid, sadistic and punitive conditions, according to the 13 in-depth narratives in "Inside This Place, Not of It." One of the women quoted a guard as saying, "As long as no one dies on my shift, I don't care what you do to each other."

Though the Hollywood stereotype is of prisoner-on-prisoner violence, that is not the case. Institutionalized abuse can be traced to the capitalist system itself, with the guards as front-line soldiers protecting ruling-class private property.

In the book six women discuss health issues: a forced, medically unnecessary cesarean; ovaries involuntarily, unknowingly removed along with cysts; no care for diabetes and cirrhosis; forced removal of a child following birth; no treatment for hepatitis C or mental illness; and misdiagnosis of HIV for which toxic drugs were taken for 17 years. In the last case, the prison refused to accept responsibility for the misdiagnosis!

Five of the women were raped by or forced to become sexual slaves of guards. At least three of them faced vicious retaliation by other guards when news of the secret relationship was exposed or

the women brought charges against the guards. Retaliation continued when the women were transferred to other prisons.

But four of these women brought charges against their tormentors and stopped the abuse. Another woman reported such widespread opposition by inmates to invasive genital searches in Colorado that the state finally ended them.

Four of the inmates, who can only be heralded as survivors who found strength and self-esteem despite the system, are working to help others. As one summarized, "If I can help anybody avoid what I went through, that's what it's all about."

One woman, a 16-year-old who received a life sentence for murder and became addicted to heroin in prison to numb her pain, but who eventually kicked her habit, started a program to help other juvenile offenders in prison. "Because of my case, my son [16] advocates ... on behalf of youth getting a second chance. ... Me and my son, we're working together to change things."

But the only way to really change things is to "tear down the walls" and the corrupt, criminal capitalist system that relies on racism and mass incarceration at home while waging wars abroad. □

Selma 50 years later

Fight's still on for liberation

Students UNITED on the Pettus Bridge.



Dianne Mathiowetz and Jimmy Raynor crossing the Pettus Bridge.



WW PHOTOS: MINNIE BRUCE PRATT

Ashley Yates, a Ferguson activist with #BlackLivesMatter, commented to the Huffington Post: "Mike Brown is our Jimmie Lee Jackson. We're still seeing this very real history living and repeating itself today. We're seeing the tear gas. ... We're seeing people oppressed for standing up for their rights."

Struggle in the streets

The struggle on the ground and in the streets continues — including in Selma.

In addition to legislative repression, the extralegal, white-vigilante Ku Klux Klan is still active in Alabama. On the morning of March 8, threatening Klan leaflets were discovered throughout Selma, including at a traveling display against prison expansion created by Michael O.G. Law of Philadelphia. The wheels of his truck were also sabotaged.

Robert Jones, the grand dragon of the Loyal White Knights of the KKK, admitted in an Al.com interview that the Klan left about 4,000 flyers in the Selma and Montgomery area over the last two weeks, with propaganda against immigration and "against King," referring to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

A local group resisting this racist, divisive propaganda is Students UNITED, a multinational organization of students from elementary through college age. Their goal is to provide all Selma children, 60 percent of whom live in poverty, with more educational chances. With art and protest, they emphasize "UNITY" and explicitly denounce racism in Selma. They have participated in protest marches against a recent public memorial to KKK founder Nathan Bedford Forrest.

On Jubilee March morning, Students

UNITED led a march of about 2,000 people to demand the renaming of the Pettus Bridge. Edmund Pettus was a Confederate officer, adherent of white supremacy and thought to be a Klan member.

Through the Jubilee weekend there was intense organizing for renewed, unified, grassroots struggle. At a series of workshops at the Brown Chapel AME Church, people came together to address problems of voting rights restrictions, immigration rights, pollution and environmental dangers, poverty and cuts/elimination of Medicaid, labor rights and lack of living wages, and the criminal injustice system. There were speakers on rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people; unemployed people; and women.

The Rev. William Barber, president of the North Carolina NAACP, spoke for an "anti-racism, anti-poverty, anti-war agenda." Rev. Barber is a leader of the "Moral Mondays" movement against austerity assaults on public services and needs.

There were powerful, militant attacks on the ruling class, and a call for building a people's campaign for voting rights and against poverty.

The weekend was a momentous gathering together of mass movements — those who are in the streets now, together with Black Civil Rights and Nationalist "foot soldier" veterans who militantly fought and won against Jim Crow segregation.

In this gathering, people were striving for stronger unity and the possibility of tremendous motion forward. Their watchword was "March on!"

Minnie Bruce Pratt was born in Selma, Ala. Other contributors to this story were Dianne Mathiowetz, Jimmy Raynor and Anne Pruden.

Continued from page 1

asserting solidarity and overlapping connections in struggle. These included an informal Muslim group carrying solidarity signs in Arabic, as well as Planned Parenthood, the Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice and a group calling for same-sex marriage rights.

Alabama has passed some of the most reactionary laws in the U.S. relating to immigrant rights and women's reproductive access. Currently, the Alabama State Supreme Court is denying same-sex marriage rights in defiance of a U.S. federal court ruling.

'Bloody Sunday' and Ferguson

Mary Stephens, a nurse from Macon, Ga., commented to USA Today that she would not describe the "Jubilee Weekend" as a celebration, saying: "It is a continuation of the fight we have had for the past 50 years, and more."

On "Bloody Sunday" in 1965, Alabama State Troopers and white supremacist vigilante squads brutally attacked a march over the bridge that was protesting the killing of voter rights activist Jimmie Lee Jackson. Stark images were seen worldwide of white police beating unarmed,

nonviolent protesters with clubs, teargassing them and running them down with horses. The resulting wave of organizing, including the historic Selma-to-Montgomery march, built mass pressure that led to passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act by the U.S. Congress.

Those rights have been steadily under attack in recent years. Important sections of the 1965 Act were voided by a 2013 U.S. Supreme Court decision in a suit brought by white voters from "white-flight" Shelby County, Ala. In speeches over the Jubilee weekend, former U.S. presidential candidate the Rev. Jesse Jackson said, "Selma was trumped and defeated by Shelby." President Barack Obama and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder conceded that voting rights were "under siege."

Unacknowledged by these speakers is the increasing state repression of oppressed communities and against in-the-streets movement organizing.

In the fall of 2014, a full-scale police and military assault was launched against the African-American community of Ferguson, Mo., as people protested the killing of unarmed teen Michael Brown by a local white police officer. Protests against police racism and brutality subsequently spread nationwide and still continue.

On International Women's Day Marches, rallies target police violence and low wages

By Workers World Bureau

Ever since the first International Women's Day was observed in 1911, women all over the world have been commemorating IWD with marches, rallies, speak-outs and meetings. Women in the U.S. are no exception. Spurred on by the rising of working women in the fight for \$15 an hour and a union and the upsurge of the national Black Lives Matter movement, IWD events were held from coast to coast over the March 6-8 weekend. A roundup of international activities will be featured in next week's issue.

March, rally, solidarity in Chicago

Students, women and supporters braved the cold in Chicago March 6 to demand "Food as a Human Right." They marched on the Federal Building to demand an end to food stamp cuts, which were estimated at \$5 billion last year, affecting 22 million children. Marchers shouted, "Save the burgers, save the fries, make our wages supersized" in support of the fight for \$15 and unionization in front of two McDonald's.

At the Chicago Board of Trade building and in front of several banks, chants like "Feed the people, not the banks" expressed people's demands to hold the food industry accountable for spreading poor health and environmental damage in the interest of making corporate profits.

At a forum held in People's Temple, speakers, including Kris Hamel from the Detroit Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions, and Utility Shutoffs, talked about building united struggles to fight against government austerity measures and for the most basic of human rights like access to quality food, water and health care.

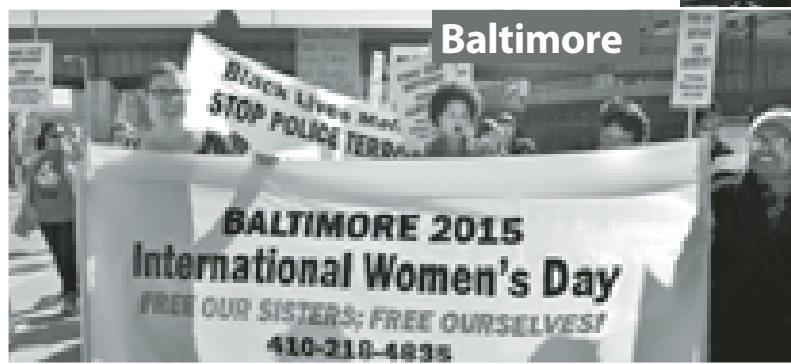
Two daycare workers discussed not being paid for three months because of recent daycare cuts by the state of Illinois, leaving children and mothers in desperate need. Kyra Blackburn from Malcolm X College expressed fury over the killings of Black youth and supported women leading united fightback struggles.

Denzel Baldwin, a McDonald's worker from Rockford (Ill.) Fight for \$15, gave a moving talk about the need for a living wage. A father of two, including a child with a disability, Baldwin spoke about the greed of corporations making huge profits off the backs of exploited workers who should have the right to unionize.

On March 8, a coalition of Chicago organizations continued the IWD celebration with a lively rally in support of Rasmia Odeh, the Palestinian leader who is being sentenced to jail on March 12 in Detroit on trumped-up charges of "unlawful procurement of naturalization." The meeting was endorsed by a coalition of progressive Chicago organizations, including the Committee to Stop FBI Repression, the US Palestinian Community Network, Freedom Road Socialist Organization and the Chicago Branch of Workers World Party.

Marching in New York City to 'End state repression'

Hundreds of multinational women activists gathered in the busy shopping area of Herald Square in Manhattan, N.Y., on March 8 under the political theme of "End State Repression, Police Terror and U.S.



WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

Militarization." Initiated by the International Working Women's Day Coalition, whose motto is "Every issue is a woman's issue," groups organized contingents with powerful banners and placards. Many were in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. There were also signs showing Black women fatally killed by the police, including Kyam Livingston and Shantel Davis.

Delphine Matthews opened the Herald Square rally by telling the crowd about the police killing of her son, Frank McQueen, in Chester, Pa., last June. Matthews and her granddaughters travelled from Philadelphia to participate in the protest. Other speakers included representatives from the Laundry Workers Center, May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, Asian Pacific Islander Peoples' Solidarity, 15 NOW, Gabriela USA, Parents to Improve School Transportation, Radical Women, Socialist Alternative and Workers World Party.

Following the rally, a spirited protest surprised shoppers with drumming and chants en route to a police precinct on West 35th Street near 9th Avenue. Speakers connected the struggles to free Palestinian political prisoner Rasmia Odeh, cuts in public education and police brutality to the built-in violence of capitalism at home and imperialism abroad. A group from 15 NOW and the Peoples Power Assembly carried out a direct action inside a McDonald's in solidarity with the fast food workers. While some marchers picketed and held an impromptu speak-out outside Penn Station, others went inside the busy terminal, chanting, "No justice, no peace! No racist police!" in the Amtrak station.

The march ended at the Solidarity Center on West 24th Street with a final speak-out and cultural performances, along with lunch. Speakers included activists with such groups as Haiti Liberte, Women Workers For Peace, Picture the



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

Homeless, Coalition for Public Education, Honduras Resistencia USA, Ayotzinapa Student Front, International Migrants Alliance, Chelsea Coalition for Public Housing, Peoples Power Assemblies and Transport Workers Union Local 100.

Former political prisoner and people's lawyer Lynne Stewart paid homage to exiled revolutionary Assata Shakur, and Esperanza Martell spoke about the ongoing struggle to free Oscar López Rivera. Pam Africa from the MOVE organization spoke on environmental destruction. The rallies were chaired by Monica Moorehead, Elma Relihan, Candice Sering and Brenda Stokely.

Baltimore women demand: 'Free our sisters; free ourselves'

Women activists from the Peoples Power Assembly, Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) youth group, students from local colleges and many women organizers of recent protests for the Black Lives Matter movement dramatically reclaimed International Working Women's Day in Baltimore on March 8.

The group held a spirited march to the Women's Detention Center at East Eager Street and Fallsway, with chants like "Boom, boom, up, up with the woman, boom, boom, down with the system." The protest took over the street in front of the Women's House of Detention where the group held a speak-out on issues impacting women, including jobs, jails, police terror, low wages, violence and reproductive rights.

March organizers were inspired to march to the women's jail in part because of the first public IWD activity in many years in New York City initiated by the

Cops gun down Guatemalan immigrant

Amilcar Pérez-López, 21 years old and a Guatemalan immigrant, was killed by two undercover San Francisco police officers in front of his home in the Mission District on Feb. 26. Cops claimed he was attempting to steal a bicycle and did not drop a knife he was holding. Neighbors say he was actually trying to retrieve his cell phone, could barely speak English and had already dropped the knife before he was shot and killed.

The San Francisco Police Department held a town hall meeting on March 2 to attempt to win the public to their side of the story. The crowd that turned up at the elementary school where the meeting was held rejected the cops' fictions. Speaker after speaker denounced the undercover

cops, notorious in the community, and challenged the need to use lethal force. The mother of Jamaican-born O'Shane Evans, killed by the SFPD last October, spoke angrily about the treatment of immigrants and the SFPD's callous disregard for human life. Following the town hall meeting, on March 7, both a vigil for Amilcar and a march against this latest police killing were held.

Report and photo by Terri Kay



San Francisco



Oakland

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

Women of Youth Against War & Fascism, who marched to the women's jail in 1970. They were equally inspired to show solidarity with women who have currently borne the brunt of the injustice system.

The march ended at the Unitarian Church where activists were greeted by a dinner prepared by the men of the Peoples Power Assembly and Baltimore International Workers of the

World. After dinner, local women activists were presented with awards and then talked about the causes they embraced, such as OUR Walmart, the Mexican student movement, the PPA and BLM movement, and the Palestinian struggle to end Israeli occupation. Tawanda Jones was recognized as an anti-police brutality activist who fought for justice for her brother, Tyrone West. A proposal to organize for the April 4 protest for a \$15 minimum wage and justice for low-wage workers was also passed.

Celebrating women's resistance in Oakland, Calif.

About 300 people marched and rallied in Oakland, Calif., on March 8 in a "Speak out for Justice and Celebrate Women's Resistance and Power." The event theme was "Uphold the Legacy and Power of Women's Resistance Here and Abroad." Speakers showed the interconnections of many issues, including the fight against gentrification, the struggle to free Rasmia Odeh, the need to defend Korean immigrant Nan Hui against deportation and separation from her young daughter, and the fight for justice for Mario Romero.

Initiated by Gabriela San Francisco and endorsed by numerous international, national and local groups, including Workers World Party, the event included numerous cultural performances at the Lake Merritt Amphitheater.

J. Hill, Monica Moorehead, Sharon Black and Terri Kay contributed to this report, which Sue Davis edited. Read more details about this roundup at workers.org.

Madison, Wis.

Mass rally at Capitol hits cop killing of Black youth

By Heath Tschetter
Madison, Wis.

Protests continue here over the March 6 police killing of Tony Robinson, a 19-year-old Black man who was shot five times in the chest while unarmed.

Almost immediately after police officer Matt Kenny killed Robinson, hundreds came out to protest near the scene where the murder took place in Robinson's residence near Willy Street and Few Street.

A March 6 media release by the Young, Gifted and Black coalition read, "Given the racial disparities in Madison, we have known our city is no different. Young, Gifted and Black will continue to fight against this state violence against Black people and for justice for Anthony Robinson." YGB, which formed in the wake of the Ferguson protests, has been leading demonstrations for months against police terror, mass incarceration and other forms of state violence against people of color.

Killer cop Kenny has a history of violence in the Madison Police Department. He shot to death another unarmed individual in 2007. Nevertheless, Kenny has received a commendation by the MPD, which clearly defends his actions.

Robinson's grandmother, Sharon Irwin, and aunt, Lorien Carter, spoke to the gathering crowd March 6.

Referring to police killings of young Black men such as Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner and others, Ir-

win said: "This can't go on anymore. It's going on across the United States and it's ridiculous. You [police] don't have a license to kill."

Carter said family members were not allowed to see Robinson after he was pronounced dead. "We were told he was evidence," Carter said. "He wasn't referred to as 'his son' or 'your son,' just 'evidence.'"

Robinson's family said that Anthony had just graduated early from Sun Prairie High School and was planning on studying business at Madison College. The capitalist media have already begun to attempt to assassinate Robinson's character.

The police killing of Robinson is not unusual in recent history. From Ferguson, Mo., to Wisconsin, incidents like this happen every day in the United States. Dozens of Black and Brown people have been killed by police in Milwaukee, Madison and elsewhere over just the past two decades in Wisconsin, all ultimately killed for the color of their skin and being poor.

In Milwaukee, the struggle for justice for Dontre Hamilton rages on. Hamilton was shot 14 times and killed instantly by killer cop Christopher Manney last April 30 at Red Arrow Park in Milwaukee. Manney was fired late last year but has an appeal hearing March 19, which the Coalition for Justice is mobilizing for.

Under the banner of Black Lives Matter, activists have resisted in Wisconsin and nationwide, telling the racist cops



Madison, Wisc., March 7.
The Capitol has been the site for labor and Black Lives Matter protests.

PHOTO: HEATH TSCHETTER

and politicians that modern lynching will not be tolerated. These ongoing actions include street demonstrations, direct action and civil disobedience inspired by the revolutionary resistance of the people of Ferguson.

Stop police-state terror!

On March 7, hundreds at a YGB organizing meeting in Madison decided the next actions in response to Robinson's killing. Following the meeting, a protest took to the streets with a lead YGB banner declaring, "Black Lives Matter."

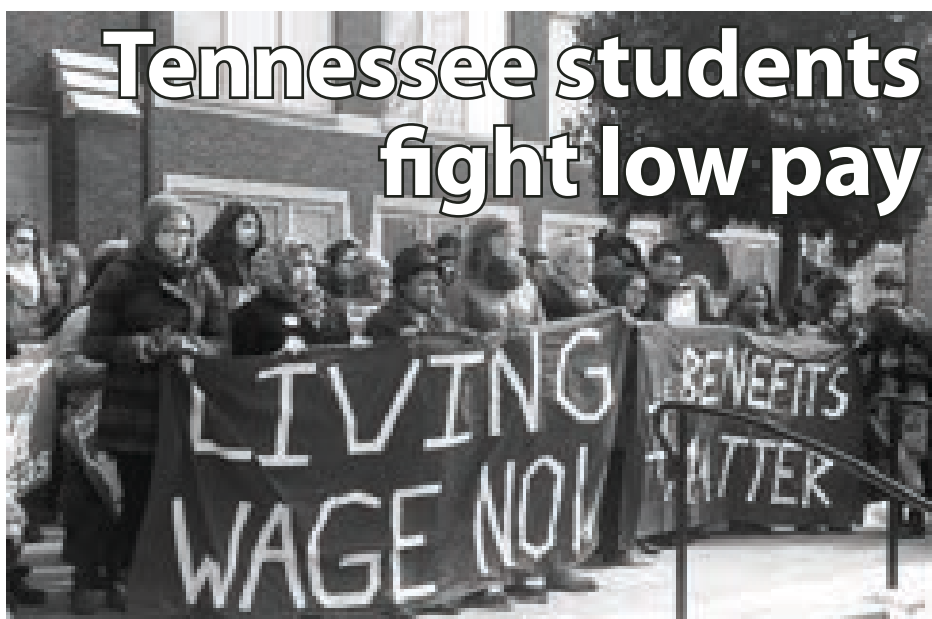
Members of the Coalition for Justice, including Maria Hamilton, the mother of Dontre Hamilton and Occupy The Hood members from Milwaukee, participated in these actions. Many working-class white youth are also demanding justice for the Robinson and Hamilton families and others whom Wisconsin police have killed. On March 8, hundreds participated in Madison in a Kid Action and Candlelight Vigil for Robinson.

The YGB and Coalition for Justice aim to call actions to inspire people to resist the system that criminalizes and kills people of color.

On March 11 at 3 p.m. in Madison, poor and working people will rally against the New Jim Crow and demand justice for Tony Robinson, meeting at Worthington Park at the corner of Darbo Drive and Rosemary Street in the Darbo neighborhood. A student walkout at Edgewood High School is also scheduled. All protesters will converge at a protest location of the 1%.

A statement from Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) says the youth group stands "firmly opposed to racist killings whether in Ferguson, Gaza or Madison. Down with the racist police state! Justice for Tony Robinson and all others who have been harmed or killed by police terror!"

Heath Tschetter is a member of Janesville, Wis., FIST. For more information, go to wibailoutpeople.org.



The United Students Against Sweatshops 2015 conference at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville did more than talk. Hundreds of marchers rallied on Feb. 20 in protest at campus buildings associated with Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam, who has proposed to cut state employee longevity pay and make other attacks on public workers' benefits.

Since they agree that "Low pay is not okay," USAS organizers also demanded living wages. With chants and songs, they took the fight for \$15 an hour minimum wage inside the local McDonald's, the fast food symbol of corporate exploitation. A three-campus effort to support university workers is ongoing.

USAS also considers the struggle to put people ahead of profit an international one. Support for the Boycott Divestment Sanctions movement and Palestine was strong. The conference closed late on Feb. 21, but at 6 a.m. the next morning, road warriors boarded a bus rolling off to Atlanta's convention center to confront Jansport, a VF apparel brand, at Campus Market Expo 2015 (CAMEX2015).

On Feb. 23, Atlanta's WRFG.fm Labor Forum radio show interviewed Kalpona Akter, director of the Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity, and Mahinur Begum, a survivor of the Rana Plaza factory collapse that killed more than 1,100 mostly young women workers. Two USAS organizers also reported why they took banners and leaflets to CAMEX2015 to demand Jansport sign the Bangladesh Fire and Building Safety Accord. That action kicked off the National "End Deathtraps" Worker Campaign to let universities know it is not OK with students to buy apparel from businesses profiting from unsafe labor conditions.

For a report on a USAS meeting in Louisville, Ky., about the campaign, go to tinyurl.com/pt7k55r/.

— Photo and report by Cheryl LaBash; Dianne Mathiowetz contributed to this story.

Public hearing demanded for 2014 East Harlem explosion

By Larry Littman
New York City

One year ago on March 12, a horrendous explosion in East Harlem killed eight people and injured many more. For the victims of the blast who survived, the passing of time has not dulled the experience.

Many still suffer physically and emotionally from the impact of the explosion, which demolished two five-story apartment buildings just north of 116th Street. The two buildings together, 1644 and 1646 Park Ave., contained 15 residential units, plus an evangelical church and a piano store.

The terrific blast also impacted surrounding buildings and businesses. The city's Comptroller's Office has received over 200 notifications that people intend to sue for charges ranging from wrongful death to property damage. Residents of one nearby building, 1652 Park Ave., have formed a tenants' association as a result of the explosion.

The National Transportation Safety Board conducted on-site testing following the explosion, and is now continuing to investigate the cause of the blast. Testing at the site revealed that Consolidated Edison pipelines dated back over 100 years.

New Yorkers in Solidarity with the Victims and Community of East Harlem is an ad hoc group of tenant and environmental activists mobilized by community organizer Johnnie Stevens. This group has

requested that the NTSB use its authority to call a public hearing in East Harlem so that community residents and small businesses may determine what aid is needed and what must be done to prevent such a disaster and accompanying displacement from recurring.

The group delivered 620 signed petitions to the NTSB supporting the call for a public hearing.

The danger of gas-related explosions continues to plague New York as well as the rest of the country. There are tens of thousands of cast iron and steel gas mains lurking beneath U.S. cities and towns. These pipes have been a long-time target of government regulators and safety advocates as well as NTSB accident investigators.

The New York-based Center for an Urban Future reported that New York's aging infrastructure "could wreak havoc on the city's economy and quality of life." (nycfuture.org, March 2014)

A pipeline under New York's densely populated Greenwich Village and Chelsea communities won approval by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission despite concerns by community organizers and activists. They fear an explosion could occur if the pipes distributing gas to Con Ed's Manhattan customers were damaged.

The Sane Energy Project, a group opposing the pipeline, also cited fears of radon, a chemical element found in the gas that can cause lung cancer. □

Five derail in just 10 weeks

Stop crude oil 'bomb trains'

By **Betsey Piette**

March 7 — In the past three days, two trains carrying crude oil derailed and exploded in North America, one March 5 in northwestern Illinois near the Mississippi River and one March 7 in Gogama, Ontario, the second such incident in Canada in three weeks. These wrecks follow a fiery explosion February in West Virginia and a January derailment in Philadelphia.

When a CSX train carrying 3 million gallons of North Dakota crude oil derailed in Fayette County, W.Va., on Feb. 16, huge fireballs shot hundreds of feet into the sky, houses burned and at least 2,400 residents were evacuated. The train had jumped the tracks, sparking a fire that lasted over three days and left area residents worried about long-term water quality in a nearby river.

No one was injured in a remote area of northern Ontario on Feb. 15 when a 100-car Canadian National Railway Co. train carrying crude oil derailed and caught fire. In 2013, however, an unattended crude oil train rolled into the center of Lac-Megantic, Quebec, unleashing a major fire that destroyed dozens of buildings and killed 47 residents.

Federal authorities from the Department of Transportation predicted that these dangerous derailments could become commonplace in upcoming decades. The DOT anticipated an average of ten incidents a year costing billions of

dollars and endangering large numbers of people. Beating that estimate, there have now been five such incidents in 2015 in just over two months.

Most trains involved were carrying highly combustible crude oil from North Dakota's Bakken shale formation. These potentially deadly "bomb trains" are becoming all too common.

There are currently no federal regulations for oil extracted by hydraulic fracturing in shale regions. The oil contains extremely high levels of volatile components, including propane and butane, from chemicals used in the fracking process.

The energy industry has resisted demands to extract these components from the oil prior to shipping, claiming it's too expensive. The more gaseous mixture happens to bring a higher profit for the energy industry.

25 million people at risk

Since 2008, rail shipments of oil increased from 9,500 carloads to around 500,000 in 2014. The oil trains travel through towns and cities unprepared to respond. There has been "no corresponding increase in safety preparedness plans," according to the Center for Biological Diversity.

A study by the CBD released Feb. 19 estimates that 25 million people in the U.S. live in the one-mile evacuation zone near rail lines, which is recommended by the U.S. Department of Transporta-

tion. When a tank car containing crude oil catches fire, federal guidelines call for the evacuation of people living within a half mile.

The study raised concern that oil trains routinely pass within a quarter mile of streams, lakes, wetlands, reservoirs, the Hudson, Mississippi and Columbia rivers, the Puget Sound, Lake Champlain and Lake Michigan. The CBD called for a moratorium on "bomb trains" until safety can be ensured. (biologicaldiversity.org)

In Philadelphia alone an estimated 704,000 people live or work within a half mile of CSX and Norfolk-Southern rail lines that run through the region. These tracks are traversed several times a day by mile-long trains with over 100 cars, most filled with oil from North Dakota.

Most people in Philadelphia are probably unaware that their lives are at risk. Local officials say they can do little to regulate the railroads, which come under federal jurisdiction.

Between 45 to 80 trains carrying shale crude oil travel through Philadelphia each week. The majority carry the volatile North Dakota crude. Two oil-train derailments already occurred in Philadelphia — one in early 2014 when several cars skipped the track and hung precariously over the Schuylkill River; the second in January when a CSX oil train left the tracks in a rail yard in South Philadelphia near Interstate 95.

Neither incident resulted in explo-

sions or oil spills, yet both served to expose the city's glaring lack of any viable evacuation plan or campaigns to raise public awareness of the potential risk. On the contrary, what has come to light is city officials' reluctance to disclose the schedules of oil-trains on "public security" grounds.

Philadelphia public safety officials say they have an emergency evacuation plan, yet denied a 2014 right-to-know request from environmental activist Mary Donahue, who wondered what "they don't want the public to know." (Phila.com, Feb. 22) Other activists have questioned whether there really is a plan.

A public hearing on the danger of train derailments in Philadelphia is planned for March 12.

Putting profits before people

Philadelphia is not the only major city facing this threat. Trains carrying millions of gallons of crude oil routinely travel through major cities, including Seattle, Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Washington, D.C., Harrisburg, Pa., and Albany, N.Y.

North Dakota crude oil production is over 1 million barrels a day and 90 percent moves by freight rail. Even if the Keystone XL pipeline were to be completed, it has a capacity to move only 830,000 barrels a day.

Fracking for North Dakota crude oil is a billion dollar business, and railroads

Continued on page 10

UAW, take heed!

VW workers need a fighting union

By **Martha Grevatt**

Just over a year ago the National Labor Relations Board conducted a union representation election at the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tenn. Presumably, with the company's signed pledge not to engage in anti-union intimidation, it was an easy win for the United Auto Workers.

Yet the union narrowly lost the election. A key factor in the surprise, 712-626 vote was the virulent anti-union crusade by right-wing forces. In particular, Tennessee Republican Sen. Bob Corker threatened workers' jobs, claiming that if workers went union, the company would not bring new work into the plant. With the backing of the National Right to Work Foundation, Grover Norquist and other right-wing funders, the group "Southern Momentum" broadcast this threat and built the "vote no" campaign through the Internet, Facebook, billboards and anti-UAW T-shirts worn by plant management.

Corker's "bombshell" turned out to be a complete lie. After the vote VW said that its decision to launch a new SUV at the Chattanooga plant had nothing to do with the outcome of the union election.

Now, Southern Momentum has reinvented itself as the American Council of Employees. The latest incarnation is far more insidious. ACE is signing up members in the plant as if it were a bona fide union. It is being characterized as such by the media: The Associated Press, Reuters, the Chattanooga Times Free Press and the Detroit Free Press all call ACE a "rival" or "alternative" to the UAW. International Business Times tagged it an "an-

ti-UAW union."

VW management has recognized both the UAW and ACE under its "Community Organization Engagement" policy. Any group having at least 15 percent of VW workers as members is entitled to meet on company premises and bring its concerns to management on a regular basis. How often meetings take place and with what level of management depends on whether that group can claim 15, 30 or 45 percent of the workforce. Any group that reaches one of these tiers functions as a nonmajority, "members only" organization that meets and discusses but does not engage in collective bargaining.

VW's open shop policy reflects its willingness to work with the UAW to establish a German-style "works council" while at the same time wanting to stay in the good graces of Corker and Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam, who hold the purse strings to hundreds of millions of dollars in tax incentives.

ACE has barely reached the 15 percent threshold. Meanwhile, the new UAW Local 42 has topped 45 percent and claims a majority. The spread shows that most workers — angry over issues such as unsafe conditions that cause injuries, the firing of injured workers and having to rotate shifts every week — realize only a real union can give them the voice they need.

"They're [referring to ACE] not a labor organization," said UAW International Secretary Treasurer Gary Casteel, who dealt with Corker's shenanigans firsthand as regional director last year. Yet Casteel has not demanded that VW oust the fake union from the plant. ([Chattanooga Times Free Press](http://ChattanoogaTimesFreePress.com), Aug. 30)

The German auto union IG Metall took a stronger position. IG Metall President Detlef Wetzel stated that "cooperation between Volkswagen and anti-union groups or yellow unions" was unacceptable. ([AP](http://AP.com), Nov. 14)

Chattanooga teachers' union activist Chris Brooks, who organized community support for the UAW drive last year, called ACE a pro-company "yellow union ... crafted by the business community for the sole purpose of advancing the interests of the business community while publicly proclaiming to actually be a 'union' and providing 'representation' to the workers."

Brooks points out that ACE's mailing address is that of Evans, Harrison and Hackett PLLC, the law firm of attorney Maury Nicely, who headed Southern Momentum. Leaked emails expose collusion between Nicely, anti-UAW VW worker Mike Burton, South-Carolina-based union-busting consultant Jim Gray, former VW plant manager Don Jackson, the Chattanooga Regional Manufacturers Association and the local Chamber of Commerce. (chactivist.com)

The name "yellow union" refers to company-funded "unions" and also to worker groups that claim no company sponsorship but accept funds from corporate-funded union-busting organizations. Often employing violence, these company unions were created to make it impossible for the militant unions in the Congress of Industrial Organizations to bargain collectively. Corporate-funded groups like the Open Shop Committee — then as now — claimed to be for the "right to work." The CIO called it what it was: "the tyrann-

ny of the open shop."

Company unions crumbled in the 1930s as workers flocked in droves to the CIO.

Company union makes a comeback

ACE is not directly funded by VW — that would still be illegal — but has the financial backing of powerful ruling-class forces in a "right-to-work" state with an ugly history of segregation and animus towards unions.

Thus, there exists, in 2015, a scenario at VW that recalls the days before the UAW abolished open shop tyranny — through militant sit-downs at GM and Chrysler and the 1941 strike at Ford. Why is the UAW letting VW engage with this right-wing, anti-union, corporate front group as if it were a union?

The International UAW leadership is pursuing the same dead-end strategy with VW — that of "partnership" to keep the firm "competitive" — that it maintains with General Motors, Ford and Chrysler. Now, workers who want and need a union are frustrated by their UAW leadership, who seem more interested in setting up a works council than in demanding safety on the job.

Nevertheless, the UAW has a foot in the door and that is of paramount significance. The UAW's presence at VW could open the door to bringing much-needed union representation to all of the European and Asian auto "transplants." This would impact class relations throughout the South. For the UAW to succeed, however, the only way for it to move forward is to become a fighting union again.

Martha Grevatt is a 27-year UAW Chrysler worker.

WORKERS WORLD editorial

Defend Venezuela, end the sanctions!

President Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela deserves the highest praise and support for firmly rejecting the latest round of U.S. pressures designed to undermine and topple the Bolivarian Revolution.

On March 9, the Obama administration announced more sanctions on Venezuela, calling the country and its leaders “an extraordinary threat to the national security of the United States.”

Such a declaration is not just an incredible, bold-faced lie. It is also the kind of language that allows branches of the U.S. government to step up their subversive efforts against Venezuela in very material ways — through economic sabotage, clandestine operations and outright military moves.

Maduro answered this attack, saying, “President Barack Obama, representing the U.S. imperialist elite, has personally decided to take on the task of defeating my government and intervening in Venezuela to control it.” He called it a “colossal mistake” and “imperialist arrogance” and saluted those Venezuelan officials facing U.S. sanctions as “heroes.” “I congratulate them,” said the former bus driver and union leader, adding that “it’s an honor” to be included on the U.S. sanctions list.

What is the Bolivarian Revolution anyway? It is a valiant effort by the Venezuelan masses and their leaders to break away from the domination of U.S. capital and reorient their country toward building cooperation with other nations in the region. It is a struggle to overcome the terrible heritage of centuries of exploitation, pillage of the land and extermination of Native peoples that characterizes all the Americas. It is a movement to unite all those who have been oppressed and exploited in order to establish new relations based on solidarity and mutual respect.

It was the election of Hugo Chávez to four terms as president, with mass support for his revolutionary plans, that opened the door for Venezuela to take on this role. For decades, this oil-rich country had been under the domina-

tion of the U.S. It was sharply divided between a small, very privileged class of well-paid servants doing the bidding of the imperialist oil monopolies, and millions of urban and rural poor, who lacked food, schools, medical care and any political input.

Chávez himself was hardened in his opposition to the sell-out governments when, as an officer in the military, he was called on to put down food riots in Caracas in February 1989. The Venezuelan people, even those in the capital city, were starving.

Today, the Bolivarian government’s subsidy of food prices, so everyone gets fed, is criticized in the imperialist media as a source of economic crisis. No, it is U.S. sanctions and the falling price of oil on the world market that have created difficulties for the Venezuelan people — that and the deliberate sabotage of the economy by counterrevolutionary elements who want to go back to the bad old days when the propertied classes lorded it over the masses. This elite has received all kinds of clandestine support from U.S. intelligence agencies.

Maduro’s charge that the U.S. has been trying to overthrow the progressive Bolivarian governments is no fantasy, despite constant U.S. denials and sugarcoating by the corporate media. Anyone interested in the details can readily find them on venezuelaanalysis.com, which publishes online extensive interviews with experts like former CIA officer Philip Agee, who describes in detail how such subversion works.

For example, the U.S. Agency for International Development — long known as a CIA front — has developed elaborate regime-change plans through its Office of Transition Alternatives. While always wrapping their bloody counterrevolutionary efforts in lofty terms like “promoting peace and democracy,” these documents, available through Wikileaks, confirm what Maduro and other Venezuelans are charging.

Now is the time! Be in the streets to support Venezuela and the Bolivarian Revolution! □

WORKERS WORLD MUNDO OBRERO

EUA en el Proceso de Paz de Colombia

Viene de la página 12

género. Ha habido audiencias especiales con organizaciones de la mujer y de la población LGBT de Colombia. Se estableció una Comisión Histórica del Conflicto y sus Víctimas para estudiar las causas con la vista dirigida hacia el fin del conflicto.

Las FARC han propuesto la celebración de una Asamblea Nacional Constituyente donde sea el pueblo quien decida el futuro de la implementación de los acuerdos.

Necesidad de acompañamiento del proceso

El proceso, aunque avanza, se enfrenta a poderosas fuerzas en su contra. Una exigencia de las FARC ha sido el cese al fuego bilateral para que así las negoci-

aciones se puedan celebrar en un ambiente de paz. Hasta ahora, el gobierno ha rechazado esta propuesta. El pasado 17 de diciembre, sin embargo, la insurgencia fariana anunció un cese al fuego unilateral e indefinido para demostrar su anhelo de consecución de paz.

El presidente Santos, quien se encuentra en estos momentos en España, dijo, según un artículo publicado el 2 de marzo por Telesur que “Estamos llegando al momento de iniciar la discusión del cese al fuego bilateral. Precisamente mañana martes viajan cinco generales en servicio activo de la República y un almirante, quienes irán a La Habana para iniciar este proceso”.

El pasado 24 de octubre, las FARC

Chávez lives! The struggle continues!

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY



Organizations opposing U.S. intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean held a rally in solidarity with Venezuela’s Bolivarian Revolution in San Francisco’s Mission District on March 5: “On the second anniversary of Hugo Chávez’s death, we celebrate his legacy, embodied in the people and their struggle.” Several dozen people heard speakers describe Washington’s latest attempt to support a coup against democratically elected President Nicolás Maduro. The crowd chanted, “¡Chávez vive vive! ¡La lucha sigue sigue!” (“Chávez lives! The struggle continues!”).

Stop crude oil ‘bomb trains’

Continued from page 9

have become the primary method of transport to expanding East Coast refineries. The two richest men in the U.S., billionaires Warren Buffett and Bill Gates, have controlling shares in BNSF Railway and the Canadian National Railway Co. In 2014 Canadian National had profits of \$59.2 billion.

While the overall number of train accidents in the U.S. has decreased in recent years, the number of dangerous crude-oil train derailments has grown. The trains carrying oil are longer, heavier and more difficult to control or stop. The train that derailed in Ontario in February was over a mile long and weighed 14,355 tons.

In many cases the aging railway infrastructure, especially bridges, was never designed to carry such heavy loads. Class 1 tracks have a weight capacity of around 286,000 lbs., or 143 tons. The Federal Railway Administration does not keep data on bridge inspections, and most states don’t employ workers dedicated to inspecting bridges.

The railroad industry has called for tighter regulations, and is receiving greater scrutiny from some government agen-

cies. But the refineries and the oil industry that own the cars have resisted making changes, including upgrading tank cars, because that cuts into their profits.

Many of the initial accidents were blamed on outdated DOT-111 tank cars that were never designed to carry volatile crude. Changes in DOT regulations due to take place in May 2015 require the use of newer, supposedly more resilient CPC 1232 models. However, most of the recent explosive derailments involved these “safer” cars.

Also, simply reducing the speeds at which the trains travel through heavily populated areas may not solve the problem. The train involved in the Lac-Mégantic disaster was stopped at the time.

Concern for human life and the environment must be put before the greed of the energy industry’s drive for higher profits. Until the safety issue is addressed there needs to be a moratorium on train transport of crude oil. Unless these corporations take measures to address growing safety concerns, millions of people remain sitting ducks — potential victims of corporate greed, just waiting for disaster to happen. □

presentaron en La Habana a 18 nuevos miembros que integrarán la Sub Comisión Técnica sobre cese al fuego bilateral y dejación de armas “que tendrá el propósito de contribuir en el análisis de experiencias, generación y discusión de iniciativas y propuestas que, respecto a estos asuntos, puedan servir de insumos para agilizar y facilitar las discusiones de los plenipotenciarios de Gobierno Nacional y las FARC-EP, que permitan la concreción de acuerdos que conduzcan al fin del

conflicto. Los acuerdos sobre estos sub puntos se construirán en la Mesa de Conversaciones”. (resistencia-colombia.org/)

Como se ha expuesto, los diálogos se encuentran en una etapa crucial donde los movimientos solidarios, particularmente en EUA tienen un papel esencial de expresar solidaridad con la insurgencia y el pueblo colombiano, exponer el papel criminal de EUA y presionar a la Casa Blanca para que abandone cualquier intento de socavar los diálogos. □

Battling local and U.S. bosses

Women in Bangladesh fight oppression

By Coleen Davidson

As I walked through the streets of Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital, I became aware of so much suffering, especially for women. I saw a woman who was forced to leave her crying infant lying on a blanket alone on the sidewalk as she ran around frantically begging for money so that she could feed herself and care for her child. Another time, I saw a woman sitting in the street, crying and cradling her mother's head as her mother lay dying.

Capitalism hurts all working women. In the United States, sexism and patriarchy are highly prevalent, and women are faced with income inequality, violence, discrimination and harassment. In oppressed countries that are superexploited by U.S. and other imperialist monopolies and by the local capitalists, such as in Bangladesh, life for women is a living hell. But in Bangladesh, the women are fighting back.

When I arrived in Dhaka, I witnessed this nightmare first hand. Women make up the majority of the homeless population. Women walked through the streets of Dhaka quickly and quietly with their eyes down. I later learned that this is due to the fact that women are often afraid of leaving their homes and walking around the city out of fear of being raped, which is something that happens every single day in the city of Dhaka.

The poverty and suffering that I witnessed are commonplace for women in Bangladesh, but women are not passive.

I heard Lucky Akter, general secretary of the Bangladesh Student's Union, explain that "in Bangladesh, women struggle everywhere. The fight against patriarchy is in every sphere of life. Women are contributing to the economy but still they are suppressed. In this neoliberal era, women are considered as a commodity. Capitalism shows fake respect towards women."

Speaking of history and current movements led by women, she added: "Begum Rokea (1880-1932), the legendary torchbearer of women's education in our country, struggled against all social and religious dogmas that hinder women's education. In our Language movement

(1952) and in the War of Independence (1971) girls from universities and colleges played a great role. Very recently, in the Movement Against War Criminals (2013) we, the girls, led from the front. All this activism through history has put impetus in women's empowerment in our country."

In addition, women from the Socialist Student Front of Bangladesh play a huge role in the struggle. One notable victory occurred in 1998. A Jahangirnagar University student named Manik, who was a member of the student group of the Awami League, which was the ruling party at the time, held a celebration on campus. Believe it or not, he was celebrating the fact that he had raped his 100th victim.

A movement led by the women in the Socialist Student Front started what can only be described as a revolution in the student government of the university. After a long and difficult struggle, the movement had Manik expelled. Nevertheless, not one of his 100 victims pressed charges, out of fear for their safety and of social stigma.

In Bangladesh, women make up 85 to 90 percent of the sweatshop work force. Women are working 10 and 12 hours a day, seven days a week, and are paid only between 30 and 38 dollars a month. Everyday, they endure harassment and the threat of sexual violence, which is very common in these factories. They live in extremely cramped living quarters and struggle with illness and injuries as a result of their unsanitary and horrific working conditions.

Corporations based in the U.S. are thrilled with the massive profits they obtain through the horrific exploitation of the women of Bangladesh, and even fight to lower wages of the women who are already barely surviving as it is. In 2013, there was a devastating factory collapse that killed over 1,100 workers, mostly women.

In the aftermath of this catastrophe, U.S.-based corporations such as Walmart and Gap refused to sign onto an accord that would require factories to have safety upgrades to avoid another disaster.

The U.S. government claims to care about human rights. Unfortunately, this is a blatant lie, and they only pretend to

care about human rights when it benefits their imperialist agenda, such as demonizing workers' states, where it is impossible for them to exploit the workers.

The U.S. government encourages and offers incentives to U.S. corporations to establish factories in Bangladesh, which they do in order to maximize profits. The U.S. federal government even has its uniforms made in Bangladeshi sweatshops, while U.S. officials condemn poverty there out of the other side of their mouth.

Bangladesh provides a clear example

of the way that capitalism and imperialism hurt women and further oppression. We must unite as the global working class to fight for socialism so that one day all women can be free.

The writer was part of a delegation of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) from the U.S. progressive youth movement that attended the 30th anniversary meeting of the Socialist Student Front of Bangladesh, the revolutionary youth organization of the Socialist Party of Bangladesh.

Two years after factory collapse Bangladeshi workers address students

By Justin Stanley
Lexington, Ky.

Mahinur Begum went to work on the morning of April 24, 2013, even though she knew she shouldn't.

"We knew the building was unsafe, but we went anyway," she recalled. Her workplace was a garment factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh, called the Rana Plaza. That day, during her shift, the building collapsed.

Speaking to a packed room of students and activists on March 3, Begum described the collapse of the Rana Plaza building. "The first thing we heard was the sound. Then I was struck by falling machines and concrete," she said through an interpreter. "After 18 hours, I was pulled out of the rubble. I had lost a toe," she added. A total of 1,129 people were killed. Begum was among the more than 2,500 who were injured. She spoke at the invitation of UK (University of Kentucky) United Students Against Sweatshops, a student organization that is lobbying the university to break ties with garment companies who refuse to adhere to new safety regulations.

Rana Plaza stands as the worst disaster

in the bloody history of the Bangladeshi garment industry. Kalpona Akter, a trade union activist who is traveling with Begum, noted that 80 percent of Bangladesh's foreign currency comes from the garment industry. Many legislators are also factory owners. In response to a question from the audience, Akter said that no mainstream political party in Bangladesh is concerned with workers' rights. The owner of the Rana Plaza has been linked to the ruling Awami League.

Conditions for garment workers are Dickensian. Both Begum and Akter said that 14-hour shifts are routine, and that factories are rife with verbal and physical abuse. An average month's pay is the equivalent of \$68, which meant that when Begum was released from the hospital, she had to borrow money from her neighbors to pay for medicine.

When asked what people in the U.S. could do to help, both women responded simply, "We need your solidarity." More information about USAS's "End Deathtraps Campaign" can be found at usas.org/2015/03/02/enddeathtrapstour01/.

Stanley is a member of FIST - Fight Imperialism, Stand Together - residing in Lexington, Ky.

Detroit protesters stand with Greece

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Activists with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition demonstrated in bitterly cold weather in front of Chase Bank here to show Detroiters' solidarity with the people of Greece. The protesters demanded: "From Detroit to Greece, stop attacks on the working class; cancel the debt; stop pension cuts, foreclosures and water shutoffs." This action against austerity took place downtown on Feb. 27, the day severe cuts to city of Detroit retirees' pensions went into effect.

The working class in Greece has been suffering for five years from a capitalist depression exacerbated by austerity and economic strangulation imposed at the behest of the banks and financial institutions.

A Moratorium NOW! press release stated: "Austerity in Greece has meant conditions much like those faced by Detroiters: A poverty rate of 44 percent, up from just 3 percent in 2009; a 27.7 percent unemployment rate; and

240,000 people with their utilities shut off. In response to these conditions, Syriza was elected to office in Greece on a promise to end the austerity imposed on the working class by the banks and the Troika (the European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund). U.S. financial institutions have swindled huge profits off the backs of the people of Greece, Detroit and around the world."

The largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history concluded last year in Detroit, all for the benefit of the banks and to the detriment of workers, retirees, residents and social services. The city was devastated by the actions of banks and financial institutions, some of which are also strangling Greece.

In Detroit, these usurious swindles caused mass home foreclosures and evictions, the exodus of almost one-quarter million residents in only a decade, the robbery of municipal retirees' pensions and health care benefits, and in 2014, the shutting off of water to more than 30,000 people. Now some 62,000 homes face tax

foreclosures.

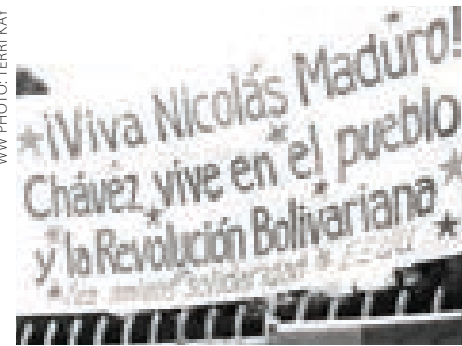
Moratorium NOW! noted: "The banks and their capitalist allies are trying to economically strangle Greece, refusing to renegotiate loans and threatening to cut off Greece from the international market. They forced Syriza (Coalition of the Radical Left) leaders into a temporary deal where promised funds would be released in exchange for the new Greek government pulling back on most of its anti-austerity plans and ceding approval over future measures to the Troika. But this deal is bound to collapse as it offers no real relief to the Greek working class. ...



Some of the protesters outside Chase Bank, Feb. 27.

WWW.PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

"It's time to draw the line against the criminal banksters and to say PEOPLE come before profits. We'll beat them back in Greece and across the world, and reverse the attacks on Detroiters imposed by emergency management and the state in service to the banks." □



San Francisco, 5 de marzo.

EUA en el Proceso de Paz de Colombia

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

El pasado 20 de febrero se anunció que Estados Unidos enviaría un representante a los diálogos de paz entre el gobierno colombiano y las FARC-EP que se llevan a cabo en La Habana, Cuba. Ese mismo día, la Delegación de Paz de las FARC emitió una declaración saludando este paso y diciendo en parte que “lo consideramos una necesidad, tomando en cuenta la presencia e incidencia permanente que Estados Unidos tiene en la vida política, económica y social de Colombia, pudiendo ahora, entonces, coadyuvar al establecimiento de la justicia social, la democracia verdadera y la superación de la desigualdad y la miseria, que es la manera de ir abriendo el camino cierto hacia la paz”.

Diferente perspectiva estadounidense

Según reporta el Depto. de Estado EUA en su página web, durante una reunión en diciembre 2014 el presidente Juan Manuel Santos le pidió al secretario de estado John Kerry que EUA debía “tomar un papel más directo y estar más directamente en apoyo del proceso de paz”.

El escogido por EUA fue Bernard Aronson, ex-subsecretario de Estado para Asuntos Interamericanos de 1989-1993, envuelto en los procesos de paz en El Salvador y Nicaragua. En El Salvador, rehusó firmar un pedido para recortar los fondos estadounidenses a los escuadrones de muerte y sobre Nicaragua es conocida su frase “el gran mito del siglo 20 es que el fascismo de izquierda es diferente del fascismo de derecha”. (“Contra Aides”, Mother Jones, Oct. 1987)

Aronson está en la Junta de Dirección del Instituto Nacional Democrático (NDI por las siglas en inglés), organización creada por el gobierno EUA a través de la infame Fundación Nacional para la Democracia que otorga fondos para los grupos opositores de derecha en Latinoamérica. También tiene conexiones financieras, habiendo servido de Consejero para Goldman-Sachs y fundando su propia firma ACON Investments.

Pero es el propio Aronson durante la rueda de prensa del 20 de febrero, quien deja ver el papel de EUA en las negociaciones colombianas. Al decir que EUA estará junto al gobierno de Santos, ya de por sí deja claro la intención partidista, reforzado cuando declara que es tiempo que las FARC renuncien para siempre a la violencia, sin siquiera mencionar la violencia del estado. Y termina aludiendo a las riquezas de Colombia cuando menciona que “el Banco Mundial dice que Colombia es el mejor lugar de América Latina para hacer negocios”. (state.gov)

Si bien es importante la presencia de EUA en el proceso de paz por las razones expuestas por las FARC, es esencial repasar brevemente el papel de la injerencia estadounidense en Colombia, pues esa es precisamente lo importante de su presencia.

Injerencia de EUA en Colombia

Es muy extenso el papel intervencionista por lo cual sólo se mencionarán

brevemente algunos datos. Pero lo suficiente para recordar que gran parte del sufrimiento del pueblo colombiano ha sido engendrado en la Casa Blanca, el Pentágono y en las oficinas de las grandes multinacionales mineras, petroleras, químicas y de agricultura estadounidenses con la complicidad de las élites y el gobierno colombiano.

Comenzando con las violaciones y masacres de campesinos bananeros por la United Fruit en 1928 donde cerca de dos mil trabajadores fueron asesinados, hasta el más reciente terrorismo de Chiquita, Dole, Del Monte y Coca Cola pagándole a paramilitares para violentar y hasta asesinar a sus trabajadores.

El sospechado papel de la CIA, todavía en proceso de investigación por el rechazo de la CIA de dar a conocer documentos clasificados, en el asesinato del líder Jorge Eliécer Gaitán en 1948 que dio a lugar un proceso de la Gran Violencia que perdura hasta hoy.

El papel de EUA en el mismo establecimiento de fuerzas paramilitares incluso antes de la fundación de las FARC-EP. El Plan Laso de bombardeos y aniquilación en contra de la resistencia campesina en Marquetalia, que llevó a la fundación de la insurgencia de las FARC.

Sin olvidar al Plan Colombia comenzado en 1999, que ha resultado en un gran aumento del conflicto social con enormes repercusiones en cuanto al incremento de pobreza, enfermedades, violaciones de los DDHH y laborales, masacres, envenenamientos en masa y destrucción de cultivos de pan coger por químicos de la Monsanto, desplazamiento de millones de colombianas/os, etc.

Es por esto que la responsabilidad de los EUA en la perpetuación de la guerra contra el pueblo colombiano tiene que ser parte de este proceso de paz.

Logros de Diálogos de Paz

Los diálogos, que comenzaron con reuniones exploratorias en 2011, han sido una esperanza del pueblo colombiano para finalmente lograr es paz tan esquiva. Ha sido un proceso único con grandes avances y enormes obstáculos y dificultades.

Hasta la fecha, se han logrado acuerdos parciales en las áreas de desarrollo agrario, participación política de la insurgencia y solución al problema de drogas ilícitas. Actualmente se está discutiendo el punto de las víctimas del conflicto.

El aspecto del desarrollo del proceso merece un artículo aparte pero es necesario mencionar la activa participación de organizaciones y del pueblo colombiano, incluyendo a víctimas del conflicto, que han enriquecido los diálogos con sus aportaciones. Cinco grupos de víctimas viajaron a la Habana en diferentes ocasiones para intervenir directamente en el proceso.

Durante estos dos años se han celebrado diversos foros en Colombia para aportar sugerencias. Se constituyó una subcomisión de Género para asegurarse que la nueva Colombia que surja de estos diálogos sea una sin discriminación de

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Por lo que luchan las mujeres

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El Día Internacional de la Mujer es un buen momento para examinar algunas luchas cruciales de las mujeres, incluyendo la equidad de remuneración y salarios decentes.

Este tema surgió notoriamente en los Premios Oscar del 22 de febrero cuando una conocida actriz, Patricia Arquette, destacó en su discurso de aceptación que es hora de que las mujeres en EUA tengan derechos igualitarios e igualdad salarial. Ciertamente.

Tras la ceremonia, la actriz habló tras bastidores sobre la discriminación por edad en Hollywood, donde los salarios de las actrices se reducen substancialmente al envejecer. Pero añadió que era tiempo que “toda la gente gay y la gente de color por quienes hemos luchado, ahora peleen por nosotras”.

Esto creó un escenario de “nosotras contra ellas”, dejando implícitamente fuera a las mujeres de color y a las comunidades de lesbianas, bisexuales y transgénero. Hizo recaer la responsabilidad sobre quienes sufren de más opresión y discriminación – y quienes están peor remuneradas/os—para que luchen por celebridades muy bien pagadas.

Inmediatamente se hicieron sentir las objeciones en los medios de comunicación social por mujeres afroamericanas, latinas y personas LGBT. Estas comunidades han estado luchando duramente por trabajos decentes, igual pago, así como por el fin a la intolerancia y la discriminación.

Las protestas “Las vidas negras importan” contra los asesinatos por la policía racista, así como la brutalidad contra las personas LGBT, muestran abiertamente que continúa una opresión profunda. Es deber de toda persona progresista apoyar tales luchas sinceramente – en palabras y en hechos. ¡Oponerse a la brutalidad policial es un tema de la mujer!

Con relación a la igualdad de remuneración, las mujeres ganan en general 78 centavos por cada dólar que los hombres ganan en EUA. Sin embargo, las mujeres afroamericanas ganan 64 por ciento, las mujeres indígenas 59 por ciento y las latinas 54 por ciento.

Las mujeres representan dos terceras partes de quienes ganan el salario mínimo (\$7,25 por hora) o menos, y a menudo, involuntariamente, trabajan a tiempo parcial sin beneficios. El treinta por ciento de las madres solteras, el 35 por ciento de las mujeres indígenas, el 25 por ciento de las mujeres afroamericanas y latinas, y el 20 por ciento de las mujeres inmigrantes, viven bajo el nivel de pobreza.

¿Quién se beneficia del pago de salarios inferiores, doblemente explotando a las mujeres de color? Los propietarios capitalistas de las corporaciones, bancos y bienes. Sus directores ejecutivos también se benefician. Los patronos obtienen ganancias de la labor de sus trabajadoras/es mientras les pagan sólo una fracción del valor que producen.

Esa es la base del sistema con fines de lucro capitalista y cómo se hacen multimillonarios. Mientras el valor neto de las 400 personas más ricas de EUA en 2014 fue de \$2290 mil millones, \$270 mil millones más que el año anterior según Forbes, las/os trabajadoras/es están perdiendo

do ingresos reales.

Si a las 72 millones de mujeres en la fuerza laboral se le pagara lo mismo que a los trabajadores hombres mejor pagados, el total ascendería a cientos de miles de millones de dólares. Si a todas/os los trabajadores se les pagara la totalidad del valor de lo que producen, ascendería a millones de millones. Pero estos parásitos corporativos pagan lo menos a sus empleadas/os, yendo tan bajo como sea posible – a menos que haya una lucha para sacarles salarios más altos.

Veamos a Walmart: 500.000 trabajadoras/es acaban de ganar un aumento salarial inmediato de \$9 por hora, pasando a \$10 el próximo año, por las fuertes y valientes protestas con apoyo sindical y comunitario. Sin embargo, incluso con estos aumentos, ¿pueden las madres solteras, muchas de las cuales sólo les asignan tiempo parcial, pagar el alquiler y cubrir las necesidades de sus hijos?

Walmart es propiedad de la familia Walton. Cuatro de sus miembros, con valor total de \$158 mil millones, están en la lista Forbes de las 10 personas más ricas de EUA. Su riqueza proviene de la explotación de sus trabajadoras/es, especialmente las mujeres. En el 2011, 1,5 millones de mujeres demandaron a Walmart por discriminación en salarios y otras formas de discriminación, pero la Corte Suprema siempre a favor de las empresas, se negó a apoyarlas.

Congreso bloquea derechos de igualdad, y aumentos salariales

¿Qué no cuadra? No hay ni siquiera una Enmienda de Igualdad de Derechos, una ley sencilla que indique igualdad de las mujeres, porque los millonarios derechistas montaron una campaña para derrotarla. Sus políticos en el Congreso también han obstaculizado la Ley de Sueldos Justos porque daría a las mujeres más instrumentos legales para luchar contra la discriminación salarial. Se niegan a aumentar el salario mínimo federal a \$10, lo que ayudaría a todas/os los trabajadores con salarios bajos, aunque eso no pagaría las facturas de hoy.

Patronos reaccionarios se han opuesto a toda medida que ayudaría a las mujeres obtener la igualdad de derechos e igualdad salarial, mientras tratan de eliminar la atención de salud reproductiva y otros cuidados de salud. Sus aliados en las legislaturas de 22 estados se niegan a ampliar Medicaid para personas de bajos ingresos, incluyendo a las madres solteras.

En el Día Internacional de la Mujer, en espíritu de solidaridad vamos todas/os a unirnos en la lucha por un salario mínimo de \$15 por hora, empleo a tiempo completo, programas sociales ampliados y el fin de todas las formas de discriminación. Este es el momento para que las mujeres nos unamos y luchemos por la igualdad real, y ser solidarias con nuestras hermanas más oprimidas – y oponernos a este sistema racista, sexista, homofóbico y xenófobo.

Eso es lo que representa el Día Internacional de la Mujer y lo que sus fundadoras socialistas intentaban que fuera. La lucha contra el duro trabajo casero, la pobreza y la opresión de las mujeres es una piedra angular de la lucha para poner fin a este vicioso sistema capitalista. □