

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Activists demand No medical execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal

By Joe Piette
 Frackville, Pa.

As we go to print, Department of Corrections officials refused to meet with a delegation of pro-Mumia activists on April 6 in Mechanicsburg, PA. April 10 actions are being organized in the U.S. and worldwide to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

April 3 — Car caravans carrying over 40 people travelled from Philadelphia and New York City today to SCI Mahanoy prison in Frackville, Pa., in an effort to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal. After months of medical neglect, this U.S. political prisoner, who has supporters worldwide, had been diagnosed with and hospitalized for diabetic shock on March 30.

His family, friends and political supporters, many of whom have been actively fighting for Abu-Jamal's freedom for decades, say that the prison authorities exacerbated his illness through bad diet and medical neglect and are trying to carry out an unofficial execution of the prisoner. They are calling for continued protests to prevent this execution.

Abu-Jamal had been rushed to Schuylkill Hospital in Pottsville, Pa., on March 30 for undiagnosed adult-onset diabetes with blood sugar levels over 700. Normal levels fluctuate around 100, and standard diabetes charts show 300 as dangerously high and requiring immediate treatment. After only two days in the civilian hospital, Abu-Jamal was returned late on April 1 to the prison infirmary — the same one that had mistreated his illness for months while his condition worsened.

Today, prison officials initially refused any in-prison visits to the world-renowned former death row prisoner. They relented after six carloads of supporters from Philadelphia, including a van of Philadelphia Student Union high school activists, and more cars from New York City converged at the entrance to the prison.

Those able to visit included Abu-Jamal's brother, Keith Cook, Mike Africa, Johanna Fernandez and I Abdul Jon. They reported on Abu-Jamal's shockingly diminished state of health: His skin was discolored and extremely scarred by severe eczema, and he appeared to have lost 80 pounds.

Although Abu-Jamal was confined to a wheelchair and hampered by slurred speech,

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April 15 protests

ANALYSIS

Turning point for low-wage workers

By Larry Holmes

This April 15 could be the largest united protest of fast food workers ever. Fast food workers, who have been in the forefront of the struggle for \$15 an hour and a union, will be joined by low-wage workers in at least half a dozen industries, including carwash, child care and airport workers; adjunct professors; home care providers; and especially workers in low-wage sweatshops like Walmart and other big box retailers.

These workers will be joined by students planning walkouts at campuses across the country as well as participants of the Black Lives Matter move-

ment. The April 15 mass job actions, protests and marches are likely to reveal something that everyone who dreams of the working class rising against super-exploitation and capitalism has not seen on a level since the 1930s.

This low-wage workers' movement that began with a relatively small number of workers staging walkouts a few years ago is evolving into what it must become in order to advance the entire working class. That is nothing less than a full-scale, uncontrollable uprising of all workers and their allies transcending industries, unions and geography.

What is now clear is that while the symbolic and limited low-wage worker

protests of recent years helped to make the epidemic of low wages a prominent issue and wrestled some very modest gains, such a curtailed struggle, no matter how heroic, could never succeed in forcing major concessions from mega-corporate, low-wage employers like McDonald's and Walmart, especially in this high-tech, low-wage, globalized, finance-driven, permanent-crisis phase of capitalism.

Global capitalist restructuring has altered global working class

The vast restructuring of global capitalism and the global working class, which is still underway — despite the fact that the restructuring is already several generations old — has radically altered the relationship of forces between the working class and capital.

The most important change is that limited and localized workers' struggles, while necessary and inevitable, must be transformed into generalized working-class rebellions — free of the political and ideological, organizational and conceptual boundaries that have long constrained the working-class movement.

The leadership of the labor unions that have been in the forefront of the low-wage workers' protest has thus far played a contradictory role in the development of this struggle. On one hand, the organization of low-wage workers would not be possible at this stage without the resources that labor unions like the Service Employees, Food and Commercial Workers or UNITE HERE have contributed to this fight. We com-

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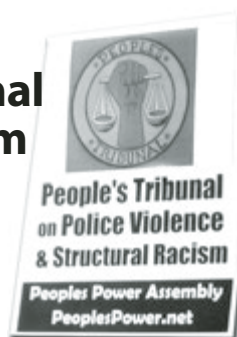
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Poor People's March to End Poverty in Philadelphia organized by MLK D.A.R.E. (Day of Action, Resistance and Empowerment) Coalition, April 4.

PROTESTS VS POLICE TERROR

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• People's Tribunal opens in Harlem



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Activists save Community Garden, for now

“We’re just tired of being pushed out, and we’re not going to have it anymore,” said Linda Grant, one of the Afrika Town and Qilombo community organizers. On April 3, the organizers of the newly created Afrika Town Community Garden called out supporters for a protest to defend the space against bulldozers threatened by the landlord. The community rallied to defend the space and a temporary victory was won, with the threat to raze the space held at bay for the moment.



The beautiful mural and gardens had been completed just weeks before, organized by the Qilombo community center located next door. The formerly unsightly empty lot, full of trash, had been magically converted by volunteer muralists, gardeners and community members into a welcoming community space, a “police-free zone,” as a stand against gentrification in West Oakland.

Organizers have been holding free breakfasts, needle exchanges, self-defense classes and numerous other pro-

grams. They have also painted sidewalks in the block surrounding the space in the Black Liberation colors of red, black and green. They intend to claim a multiblock area in the surrounding neighborhood as Afrika Town.

See video: “Welcome to Afrikatown, home of Qilombo, Oakland, CA” at vimeo.com/123859697

—Story and photo by Terri Kay

Tax refund? Invest in Workers World!

Taxes pay for the U.S. war machine that gobbles up over half the national budget in order to control the global capitalist economy. Due to generous loopholes, Big Oil and Fortune 500 companies like General Electric don’t pay any taxes year after year. And taxes subsidize billion-dollar merchandisers like Walmart and McDonald’s, which pay workers so little they’re forced to rely on government services to keep their families alive.

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Socialism is the only alternative to this rigged system that rewards the rich and oppresses poor and working people, especially Black and Brown youth. Fighting for socialism is the only way to kick the racist, sexist, anti-LGBTQ bosses, bankers and brass into the dustbin

of history.

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And thanks for helping to grow the revolutionary press in the U.S. □

WORKERS WORLD PARTY

Who we are & what we’re fighting for

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

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

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

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

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Detroit

Cop beating caught on tape sparks outrage

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

Millions of people around the United States have seen the video of the brutal beating and choking of Detroit resident Floyd Dent by police in nearby Inkster, Mich. A squad car's dashboard camera documented the Jan. 28 assault and the video has since been widely viewed.

After being pulled over for an alleged stop sign violation, Dent opened his car door and showed his hands. He was immediately dragged from his vehicle, punched, put in a headlock and tasered three times by police. Dent spent two days in the hospital with four broken ribs, a fractured left orbital and blood on the brain.

Dent, a 37-year Ford worker and member of United Auto Workers Local 600, has mass support. Dozens packed the courtroom on April 1 when he pleaded not guilty to drug possession. After viewing the video, a judge had previously thrown out charges of assault and resisting ar-

rest. Judge David Groner granted a two-week postponement for discovery purposes. Close to 100 supporters picketed the Inkster police station that afternoon.

Dent's attorney, Gregory Rohl, is still seeking the names of all the officers involved in the beating as well as the mug shot video that shows the extent of Dent's injuries. Speaking to the media, Rohl challenged the police claim that crack cocaine was found in the vehicle. The video showed a police dog detecting nothing and the bag of "evidence" does not have Dent's fingerprints. Dent also aced a polygraph.

Several hundred people marched April 3 from the site of the beating to the police station. The march was called by the Michigan chapters of the National Action Network along with the Council on American-Islamic Relations and Take on Hate. Supporters included Detroit Black Lives Matter, the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, the Detroit Coalition Against Police Brutality, the Detroit Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, retired Rev.

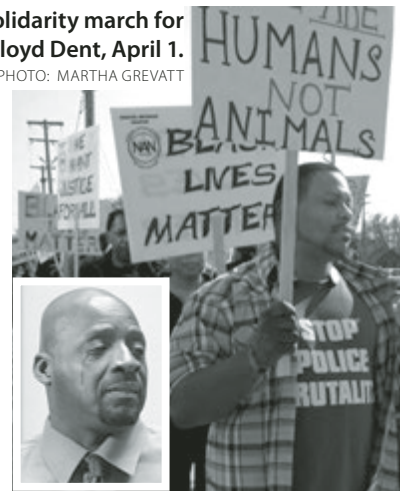
Ed Rowe of Central United Methodist Church, U.S. Rep. John Conyers Jr., former state Rep. Rashida Tlaib and several dozen UAW activists.

The Detroit suburb of Inkster is nearly 75 percent African American. Over 80 percent of the police force is white, including the chief. With the exception of William Melendez, who is Latino, all of the cops at the scene of Dent's beating were white.

Melendez, who was seen punching Dent in the head at least 16 times, earned the nickname "Robocop" during his 16 years on the Detroit police force. By the time his scandal-ridden career there ended in 2009 over falsified reports, he had developed a reputation for wrongfully arresting people, planting fake evidence and lying under oath to cover up his misdeeds. He shot and killed Lou Adkins in 1996 and Ernest Crutchfield III in 2003, both unarmed. At one point, Robocop led the department in citizen complaints and lawsuits filed against an officer.

In 2010, Inkster hired Melendez, fully

Solidarity march for
Floyd Dent, April 1.
WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT



aware of his record. Inkster police Chief Vicki Yost also came from the Detroit force. As partner of officer Eugene Brown when he killed Lamar Grable in 1996, she testified on Brown's behalf in a civil lawsuit. Despite this and other controversies, Yost moved up the ladder in Detroit but left in 2014 to become Inkster's head cop. The protests have demanded that Robocop and Yost be fired. □

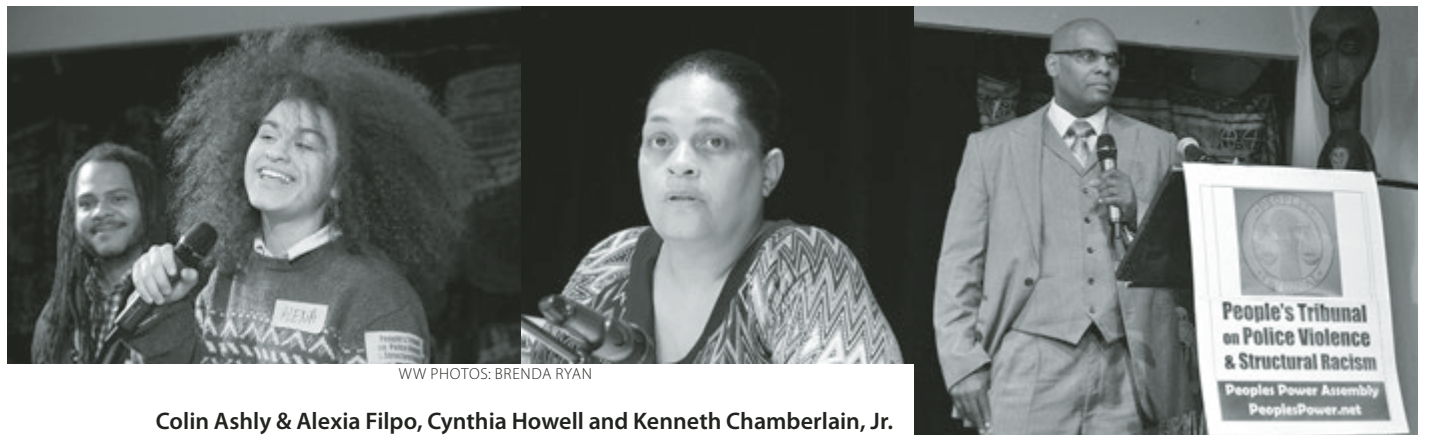
People's Tribunal to fight police brutality launched

By Colin Ashly
Harlem, N.Y.

On April 2, community members, activists and organizational leaders packed the historic National Black Theatre in Harlem, N.Y., for the opening session of the People's Tribunal on Police Violence and Structural Racism. Organized by the People's Power Assemblies, the tribunal was organized as the first in a series of events that would amplify the voices of those who have suffered in the racist and violent system in order to draw the connections between police brutality and other forms of systematic racism in the U.S.

The event started with opening remarks by Jonathan McCrory, the director of the NBT's Theatre Arts Program, who welcomed everyone to the space and reminded participants that a heart prepared to give and to be gifted with the healing power of communal stories was an act of liberation.

Larry Hales, an organizer of the PPA, followed with remarks about why this tribunal was so necessary, in this current moment, to bring people together in dialogue about police violence and multiple forms of oppression and begin to discuss collective means of liberation.



Colin Ashly & Alexia Filpo, Cynthia Howell and Kenneth Chamberlain, Jr.

PHOTO: CASEY HUTCHINSON

A panel of various grass-roots activists and family members of loved ones lost to police violence spoke. Kamal Muhammad and Prince Akeem, two youth activists, shared their personal experiences with police. Prince Akeem detailed the way police harassment was normalized in his adolescence, but how a series of incidents with the police eventually led to his path to activism.

Cynthia Howell, niece of Alberta Spruill who died of a heart attack after police mistakenly raided her home in 2003, spoke passionately of her aunt's death and her family's quest for justice. As organizer of Families United For Justice — a group of family members of victims lost to police violence — Howell

emphasized the importance of family members telling their own stories.

Kenneth Chamberlain Jr., son of Kenneth Chamberlain Sr. who was killed by police in 2011, and Joshua Lopez, nephew of John Collado who was also killed by police in 2011, both gave witness to the tragic death of their loved ones.

The event then opened into a town hall in which audience members related their own stories of police violence. Young and old, from California to New York, speakers told harrowing tales of harassment, struggle and tragic loss.

Longtime activists Monica Moorehead and Larry Holmes contextualized the personal testimonies of loss within global, national and local struggles against

gentrification, state violence, the spread of the prison-industrial complex and other forms of oppression.

Throughout the night the impassioned speeches showed the direct costs of police brutality and racism on individuals, families and communities, but they also showed the resiliency of communities and activists who have chosen to speak out in a desire to fight oppression and shut the system down. Many in the audience committed themselves to helping to build the tribunal in the coming months, with the goal of letting the people decide how to counter police terror.

PPA organizers, Colin Ashly and Alexia Filpo, co-facilitated the April 2 program.

Detroit cops cause young autoworker's death

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

On March 30, 24-year-old Anthony Clark Reed died at the hands of Detroit police. The young African-American nursing student, also an autoworker, was stopped by police for an alleged traffic violation for having tinted windows on his vehicle. The windows, however, were factory-installed and thus not likely in violation of any state law.

Handcuffed, the asthmatic youth told police he couldn't breathe.

Officers say they gave Reed two puffs of an inhaler and then performed CPR unsuccessfully. The unconscious Reed was taken to a hospital where he was pronounced dead, allegedly of a heart attack, according to a hospital staff person. (huffingtonpost.com, April 2)



Anthony Clark Reed
PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Reed lost his life just two blocks from his father's Springwells Avenue Baptist

Church in southwest Detroit. The family wasn't notified by police of his death until almost 12 hours after the incident.

"Why wasn't there an officer there to talk to me and tell me why we had lost our only son?" Reed's father, Pastor Kevin Clark, asked. "Why was there complete silence about his death until 8:30 the next morning? ... Something happened that they did not want the public to know about, least of all me."

Clark further stated: "When Detroit police pulled him out of the car he was already in panic mode ... and they hand-

cuffed him, and he's trying to tell them he can't breathe. I believe it caused his death. ... He dropped dead right there, in the hands of Detroit police officers who were negligent."

Reed's friends and family packed a candlelight vigil at his father's church. Compared to the Floyd Dent case in nearby Inkster, Mich., there is not yet mass public outrage over Reed's death. Media coverage has been spotty concerning this police killing, one of more than 300 so far this year in the United States. □

On the picket line

By Matty Starrdust and Sue Davis

Retail workers win wage increases

As campaigns to raise the minimum wage to \$15 continue to grow, some retail giants are acknowledging that struggle by granting minor pay raises to workers. Big box retailer Target, which employs some 347,000 workers in the U.S., announced plans March 18 to increase wages to at least \$9 per hour in coming months. (New York Times, March 19) This followed an announcement by Walmart, which pledged to raise its base pay to \$9 an hour by April and \$10 by next February. (CNBC.com, Feb. 19) While the raises will benefit a total of more than 800,000 workers across the country, these concessions fall well short of workers' demands for union jobs at living wages.

McDonald's "cynical and mean-spirited" stunt

In a move described by workers and advocates as a "cynical and mean-spirited" publicity stunt, McDonald's announced April 1 — April Fool's Day no less! — that the billion-dollar chain would increase average hourly pay from \$9.01 to \$9.90 by July. Buried in the fine print, however, is that the raise will apply only to 90,000 workers at about 1,500 restaurants owned by the fast food giant — only about 10 percent of the chain's more than 14,000 U.S. restaurants. Some 90 percent of its restaurants are franchises whose 750,000 workers will remain unaffected by the wage increase. (reuters.com, April 2)

Even workers whose pay will increase balk at the raise. Russ Davis, executive director of "Jobs With Justice" in Massachusetts, says, "Any raise for somebody who's making that little amount of money is a good thing. But I don't think any of the workers think that \$10 an hour is enough to get by on, especially in Massachusetts." (Boston.com, April 2)

T-Mobile slammed for illegal, anti-union policies

In an unprecedented ruling on March 18, the National Labor Relations Board found telecom giant T-Mobile guilty of illegal labor practices on a national scale. The ruling, which consolidated years' worth of complaints from T-Mobile workers all over the country, found that management's illegal, anti-union intimidation tactics were supported by policies originating from the company's highest levels. Of 13 policies reviewed by the NLRB, 11 were found to be illegal, including punishing workers for discussing working conditions with each other — a necessary step in forming a union that workers have been organizing for with the Communication Workers for many years. Because additional complaints came to light during the trial, another is scheduled for June. Meanwhile, "T-Mobile Workers United" took to the streets in Albuquerque during the Cesar Chavez parade on March 28 to demand union recognition. (CWA-union.org/e-newsletter, March 19 and April 2)

Oil workers remember fallen comrades

March 23 marked the 10-year anniversary of the 2005 Galveston Bay refinery explosion that killed 15 workers and injured more than 170 others. The accident ignited a movement of union and nonunion workers and supporters to demand safety measures at refineries throughout the country. Since then, preventable workplace accidents have injured and claimed the lives of dozens more.

Since February, thousands of United Steelworkers members have struck 15 refineries across the U.S. in the biggest oil refinery strike in decades. Their chief demand is for safer working conditions to prevent further injury and loss of life. As the USW fights for an industrywide contract to ensure the safety of all refinery workers, rank-and-file members vow to continue to "mourn for the dead and fight like hell for the living." (USW.org, March 21)

Union stands up for equality

Indiana's "license-to-discriminate" law, which would grant businesses legal protection to refuse service to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer customers, drew such an intense outcry that Gov. Mike Pence was forced to amend the bill a week after signing it. Along with businesses opposing the law was the public sector workers union, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. Lee Saunders, the union's first Black president, announced that AFSCME would move its 2015 women's conference out of Indiana "as a sign of our disgust and disappointment" with the law, which "sets Indiana and our nation back decades in the struggle for civil rights." (afscme.org/news, March 30) □

Another fatal explosion after gas leak

By Larry Littman
New York

While investigations into the cause of fatal explosions in New York's East Harlem and East Village are still in progress, a couple of things are certain. These so-called accidents are happening more often, and there are potential dangers from gas blasts everywhere.

The March 26 explosion on Second Avenue in the East Village, which left two people dead, injured 22 and destroyed three buildings, was the latest incident in a dangerous trend involving gas and gas pipelines.

From 1994 to 2013, the United States had 745 serious disasters with gas distribution, causing 278 fatalities, 1,059 injuries and over \$110 million in property damage. During that period an additional 110 incidents through gas transmission caused 41 deaths, 195 injuries and over \$448 million in damage to property. And an additional 941 incidents from gas of all system types resulted in 363 deaths, 1,392 injuries and close to \$824 million in property damage. (nhpipelineawareness.org)

Criminal prosecutors and the police believe the explosion in the East Village may have been caused by continued tapping of a gas line. Criminal charges could be filed as a result of the explosion.

Members of Utility Workers Local 1-2 were part of the first responders' team — along with the New York Fire Department, Police Department and emergency medical technicians — to secure the area by shutting down the gas systems, a representative of the union told Workers World.

Meanwhile, displaced tenants are seeking legal counseling and compensation for their losses. A meeting to inform them of their housing and personal property damage rights brought more than 100 victims of the blast together with lawyers and housing activists.

Wasim Lone, director of housing services for GOLES (Good Old Lower East Side), said the group is actively working to provide legal counseling and representation to displaced tenants, as well as tenants who have not lost their buildings but have notices to vacate.

Many of the tenants who lost their apartments and personal property focused on the landlords of the buildings. But Thomas M. Curtis, lawyer for the landlord of two of the buildings, told the April 1 New York Times that Consolidated Edison was to blame.

"I think Con Ed is really culpable here for not shutting off the gas," said Curtis. He added, "[The utility] could have shut off the main valve." At the meeting, attorney Arthur Schwartz urged the tenants to "look

at the broader picture." He continued, "There can be multiple defendants. I believe Con Ed may have some blame here."

In a phone interview with Workers World, Michael McKee, treasurer of the Tenants Political Action Committee, said, "It seems that there was something definitely wrong in the inspection of the site of the explosion. Something is wrong if Con Ed didn't smell any gas there."

Johnnie Stevens, of the People's Power Assembly, agrees. Stevens mobilized an ad hoc group of housing and environmental activists following the gas explosion disaster in East Harlem last year. The group called on the National Transportation Safety Board, which is investigating the Harlem explosion, to fully investigate Con Ed and use its authority to hold a public hearing in East Harlem. The group is now demanding that Con Ed be fully investigated for both explosions.

Rosa Maria de la Torre, organizer of the Chelsea Coalition on Housing, said the hearing must determine what should be done to provide adequate housing for the survivors of the explosion.

Turning to the East Village blast, de la Torre said, "I am horrified by this tragedy and the deaths and the destruction it has caused. But with the growth of pipelines, there are potential catastrophes everywhere."

One of these pipelines, which lies under the West Village and Chelsea, won federal approval to start pumping natural gas despite strong opposition by residents of the area, who fear the project could cause an explosion and environmental contamination. The gas is distributed by Con Ed to Manhattan customers.

The new Whitney Museum, which opens this spring, sits on top of the Spectra pipeline. The Sane Energy Project, which opposed approval of the pipeline, warned of the potential catastrophe in a March 12 letter to the Villager.

"Building the Whitney on top of the pipeline puts visitors, workers and irreplaceable art, not to mention the Renzo Piano creation, at risk," wrote Claire Donahue, program director of Sane Energy. "In the event of an explosion at the site of the vault, a crater at least the size of the museum itself is likely, and would affect an area about a block and a half in radius, with smoke, broken glass, closed streets and secondary fires affecting a much larger radius."

A funeral service for Nicholas Figueroa, one of the two men killed by the explosion in the East Village, was held on April 7.

Littman lives in the area near the Spectra pipeline.

Activists demand no medical

Continued from page 1

they said he was alert. He told them, "I believe in the power of the people."

Abu-Jamal spent almost 30 years on Pennsylvania death row after he was convicted of first degree murder on July 3, 1982, stemming from the 1981 killing of a white police officer in Philadelphia. He has consistently proclaimed his innocence.

Amnesty International maintains that Abu-Jamal's original trial, which was irredeemably tainted by politics and racism, failed to meet international fair trial standards. State and federal appeals for a new trial to prove his innocence have been systematically denied by the courts.

Mass movement saved his life before

Immediately after Abu-Jamal's execution was scheduled in the summer of 1995, a march of 25,000 people in Philadelphia forced the state to rescind the execution. Another 17 years of worldwide protests finally won Abu-Jamal's release from death row in 2012.

Thousands of phone calls and emails to the De-

partment of Corrections since Abu-Jamal was hospitalized forced officials to relent on their refusals to allow family members and friends to visit him.

Nonetheless, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections appears intent on executing him by medical neglect. Had prison doctors diagnosed and treated him for type 2 diabetes — which would be the standard diagnosis for such common symptoms as eczema, skin rashes and frequent urination that Mumia experienced over the previous three months — he would not have needed to be rushed unconscious to the hospital.

Speakers demanded the right of all prisoners to decent health care. They insist prison officials allow specialist doctors of Abu-Jamal's choice to assess, diagnose and treat whatever is the cause of these symptoms.

Following the rally at SCI Mahanoy, the assembly packed up picket signs and banners and traveled 80 miles south to the headquarters of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections in Mechanicsburg, Pa. Officials initially refused to meet with protesters, but as the crowd grew in size — and obviously showed

Venezuela exposes U.S. imperialism as April Fool

By Teresa Gutierrez

U.S. activists were thrilled when an invitation to observe a meeting at the United Nations allowed them to witness a profound event against U.S. imperialism and in defense of Venezuela.

On April 1, April Fool's Day, the only one really tricked was the U.S. government, thinking that it could get away with its escalated aggression against Venezuela with no opposition. As solidarity activists witnessed, the world condemned President Barack Obama's March 9 decree against Venezuela at a "Day of Solidarity with Venezuela" held at the U.N.

Ominously, the Obama administration declared on March 9 that the situation in Venezuela was "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States." Obama sent a letter to Congress announcing that the U.S. would be applying to Venezuela the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. Washington named seven Venezuelan politicians to be targets of this act; enforcement could include seizure of their property in the U.S.

The March 9 decree intensifies U.S. aggression.

This move bodes danger for the Venezuelan people. It signals that the U.S. government is entrenched in continuing and escalating its war of aggression against the Bolivarian Revolution. Ever since 1998, when President Hugo Chávez began to use oil profits for the good of the people and not Wall Street, imperialism has been incensed.

On April 1, huge parts of the world responded by stating their opposition to U.S. aggression, condemning the U.S. decree and declaring their solidarity with Venezuela.

The United Nations Day of Solidarity with Venezuela heard leaders from Cuba, Ecuador, Paraguay, Iran, South Africa, Bolivia, Argentina, Sudan, the Russian Federation, Nicaragua, Syria, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Zimbabwe and Palestine. Each of the speakers from these nations spoke eloquently and boldly against U.S. imperialism.

U.S. activists were pleasantly surprised that a routine U.N. event turned into an inspiring rally of unity and solidarity. Invitees applauded enthusiastically from the balcony, turning the heads of diplomats who appeared very pleased with the support.

Although the March 9 decree is dangerous and must continue to be condemned, to Washington's chagrin it is the U.S. and not Venezuela that is becoming more isolated. On April 3, Telesur reported that the U.S. sub-secretary for Latin America, Roberta Jacobson of the State Department, said that she was "surprised not more countries defended the U.S. sanctions and decree claiming Venezuela a threat," saying "I am disappointed that there were not more countries to defend [the sanctions]."

Furthermore, Jacobson was critical of the solidarity shown by Latin American countries for Venezuela. "The tone that Latin American leaders are using demonizes the United States as if it were the source of Venezuela's problems, and this makes it hard for us to proceed pragmatically," she complained.

Speakers at the April 1 event represented more than just individual countries. Cuba, for example, represented ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance of Our America); Ecuador, CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) which has 33 members. UNASUR (United Nations of South America) was represented by the Paraguayan speaker. The South African speaker represented the Group of 77 including China.

This shows the breadth of worldwide opposition to the decree. In fact, Telesur reports that at least five million tweets from 105 countries were counted on Twitter demanding that Obama repeal the decree.

From the U.S., a broad list of activists also demanded that Obama repeal the decree in an open letter to him. Over 120 people signed, including Ramsey Clark, Noam Chomsky and Eva Golinger.

From Venezuela, President Nicolás Maduro declared March 9 an annual anti-imperialist holiday. President Maduro officially announced the creation of a "Bolivarian Day of Anti-imperialism" to be held every year. President Maduro said that March 9 will be a day to commemorate the Venezuelan people's answer to the executive order released by President Obama on that date.

Venezuela has also initiated a worldwide petition campaign that has already gathered over 6 million signatures and will be delivered to Obama in Panama on April 10.

President Maduro said on Venezuelan national television, "The history books will remember President Obama as the one who tried to intimidate a people and in the attempt, elicited the nationalist, patriotic and Bolivarian spirit of that people." □



Mumia supporters outside of PA Department of Corrections, April 6.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal

they were not in a mood to leave — DOC Press Secretary Susan McNaughton agreed to meet with about 20 supporters who argued for Mumia's life, with many documenting the encounter.

"Millionaire convicted murderer John DuPont was allowed to have his choice of medical personnel treat him," said Joanna Fernandez. "Why can't Mumia?"

"Today is Good Friday, the day Jesus was executed. Haven't you learned anything from that?" said Kevin Price. "It was a state execution back then too!" yelled someone from the back of the crowd.

"We'll be here every day until we get what Mumia needs," said Pam Africa.

The demonstrators demanded a face-to-face meeting with DOC Commissioner John Wetzel on April 6, and only left after McNaughton promised to relay the requests to her supervisors.

A press release from the Campaign to Bring Mumia Home, the Free Mumia Coalition, MOVE, International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Philadelphia International Action Center listed the following demands: no execution by medical neglect and torture; daily visits by Mumia's family, friends and

attorneys; quality health care and treatment for all prisoners; and the release of Mumia Abu-Jamal, all political prisoners and the terminally ill and elderly (over 55) from Pennsylvania prisons!

What you can do to help

People are urged to continue making calls to Secretary of Department of Corrections John Wetzel at 717-728-4109 to demand Mumia be immediately allowed to be treated by doctors of his choice.

On Feb. 13, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf declared a moratorium on the death penalty. Call his office to demand a halt to the state's attempt to execute Mumia through medical neglect: 717-787-2500.

Donations to help pay for lifesaving medical care and other costs can be made through tinyurl.com/nv7jqem.

To view the video, "Mumia's family and supporters present demands to the Dept. of Corrections, Mechanicsburg, PA 4/3/2015" go to: <https://youtu.be/IVSYaj9Ab8U> by Power to the People Radio Program.

To view the video, "April 3 NYC emergency protest: No medical execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal!" go to <https://youtu.be/-kAkhjJsNXQ> by Peoples Video Network. □

Ferguson U.S.A.

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

Transcribed from March 5 audio column posted by prisonradio.org.

With breathless news reports, the U.S. Department of Justice's Pattern and Practice Study paints a damning picture of a long, cruel and bitter train of maltreatment, mass profiling, police targeting and brutality against Black people in the Missouri town of Ferguson.

What may be even worse, however, is how the town's police, judges and political leaders conspired to loot the community — by fining them into more poverty, fines which today account for some 25 percent of the county's budget.

Correctly, cops have been criticized for their juvenile emails and texts of racism and contempt against the local Black community and even Black leaders in Washington, D.C.

There is largely silence, however, over the role of judges, who used their robes to squeeze money from the community, with unfair fines and fees — even using their jails as an illegal kind of debtor's prison.

In 1869, during the reign of England's Queen Victoria, a statute known as the Debtors Act was passed, which forever abolished imprisonment as punishment for debt.

In today's Missouri, it's still used to punish and exploit the poor. But, truth be told, it ain't just Missouri.

Famed Rolling Stone writer, Matt Taibbi, in his 2014 book, *The Divide*, tells a similar tale, but from points all across America — Brooklyn, Bed-Stuy, Gainesville, Georgia, Los Angeles, San Diego and beyond — [where] poor people are being squeezed and squeezed by cops, by judges, by local governments — to part with their last dime — to support a system corrupt to the core.

Taibbi's full title might give us some insight: *The Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap*.

It's the system — one of exploitation or predation, ultimately of capitalism. □



Baltimore activists fight back— Water is a human right!

By David Card
Baltimore

At the end of March, Baltimore city officials announced that they would be turning off the water supply to a huge number of properties in the city and surrounding county in the coming weeks. In total, the city department of public works plans to turn off water to 25,000 properties for \$40 million in unpaid bills. While the debt may seem considerable, the city is ignoring how critical water is for survival and is being dishonest in its portrayal of the situation.

If you listened to the city government, you would think that the debt was racked up merely by “lazy people who don’t want to pay.” The truth is far more complex. Of the 25,000 properties, the ones with the lion’s share of the debt are commercial businesses. It was discovered that 370 businesses collectively owe \$15 million of the total \$40 million. This represents more than a third of the total debt by just over one percent of the properties. That number of businesses is also almost certainly not an exhaustive list of commercial properties included in the 25,000 figure.

While these big businesses have been able to rack up huge arrears into the millions of dollars, the city is now shutting off the water of anyone with a bill over \$250. The hypocritical double standard of the city government is astounding! The city is allowing businesses unlimited access to water to make profits while the people who need water for their survival face an immediate shakedown if they can’t pay.

In a city with as much unemployment and low wages as Baltimore, the last thing that working and oppressed people need is a threat to their water supply. Without water, families are not only unable to drink, but forced into unsanitary conditions where they cannot shower, use



WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

a toilet, clean dishes, etc. Additionally, according to the Maryland Department of Human Resources, a condition of child neglect is when a child is consistently unwashed or with poor hygiene. This means that a family that loses their water supply due to the inability to pay is at risk of having their children taken away and placed in foster care.

These egregious actions on the part of the city government have sparked outrage in the community. A campaign led by the Baltimore People’s Power Assembly; the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Fight Imperialism, Stand Together youth; the Right to Housing Alliance; and others has begun to fight back against this violation of human dignity.

On March 30, a rally was held outside of Baltimore City Hall to call for a moratorium on the water shutoffs and demand

that the banks and businesses pay the outstanding bills in full. There were also calls to either reduce water rates for residents or to make water free altogether.

The people of Baltimore, however, are not alone in this fight. Baltimore has received solidarity from activists around the world, most notably from Detroit, where water shutoffs have been an ongoing issue for years, and from Ireland, where water charges have recently sparked large protests.

Around the world, access to water is increasingly under attack, but people are fighting back. It is becoming clearer that water is something that everyone should have access to, no matter who or where they are. The demand is being raised that from Baltimore to Detroit and from Ireland and Africa to India, access to water is a human right! □

Boston bu against Ve

By Lamont Lilly
Boston

The unique approach of Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751, to unionism and solidarity with the oppressed offers a much needed new blueprint for building power within the community. During my travels there, it was quite inspiring to see a local union work hand in hand with neighborhood youth against police brutality. It was quite encouraging to see the rank and file of the Boston school bus drivers work with parents and community members to organize against school closings and badly timed budget cuts to public education.

USW Local 8751 was founded in 1978 through efforts of the bus driver organizers to desegregate the Boston public schools. It was four years prior, in 1974, that busloads of defenseless children were attacked by racist vigilantes and the Ku Klux Klan in Boston’s Roxbury district. The school bus drivers who worked these desegregation routes were not only physically attacked in the streets; they were harassed on the job by school administrators and parent-teacher organizations. The need for organized camaraderie was a matter of survival.

Veolia’s current attack on the Boston School Bus Drivers Union was directed in particular at four members of Local 8751: Recording Secretary and Charleston Chief Steward Andre François; Vice President Steve Gillis; Former President Garry Murchison; and Grievance Chair and union founder Stevan Kirschbaum. In spite of phony felony charges brought against Kirschbaum by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on behalf of Veolia in July of 2014, union members stuck together and remained diligent — work-

ANALYSIS

April 15 protests: Turning point for low-wage workers

Continued from page 1

mend them for this.

However, labor union leaders also bring their conservative, overcontrolling and narrow culture to this struggle as well. This culture is the product of a long, long period of political and ideological stagnation in much of the working-class movement. The good news is that pressure from the workers, along with the growing realization that a limited struggle is not enough, is slowly, unevenly, but surely breaking the chains that have held this struggle back.

There are more and more examples of this workers’ liberation process every day. In New York City, hundreds of low-wage workers were joined by a large contingent of hard-hat construction workers in an April 4 march for \$15 and a union. In Oakland, Calif., community groups were encouraged to select a neighborhood fast food restaurant to help shut-down on April 15. At the New York City press conference announcing the April 15 protest, low-wage workers ended by chanting “Black lives matter,” connecting these two vital struggles.

What organized labor can learn from the Black Lives Matter movement

The organized labor movement can learn a great deal from the example of the

Black Lives Matter uprising of the past six months. For one thing, the massive protests that took place after grand juries failed to indict the police murderers of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., and Eric Garner in New York City were not tightly controlled and organized in a way that discouraged mass participation.

The Black Lives Matter protests were to a large extent uninhibited, militant and liberating manifestations that encouraged mass participation. They also employed tactics that went beyond the bounds of so-called capitalist legality. These protests, many of which went on day after day, occupied highways, bridges, buildings and streets. It was the liberating character of the Black Lives Matter uprising that made them compelling and highly effective.

In December, a national protest against police violence fell on the same day that a national protest for low-wage workers was planned. Both protests were well attended, but the low-wage workers struggle was overshadowed by the protests against police brutality and murder.

Imagine if these two important movements were combined instead of being separate. Indeed, low-wage workers look like the same young Black and Brown people who have become targets of the police. If a way had been found to combine the two movements even for one day,

it would have most likely created even greater fear among the powers that be.

The Black Lives Matter movement is on an organic level; so is the low-wage workers struggle, and the organized labor movement should treat it as such. The political and economic process going on underneath the police war on Black and Brown youth, including mass incarceration, is that capitalism is destroying jobs and vital social services and replacing them with an ever-growing repressive police apparatus. What could possibly be of more concern to the working class than reversing that process?

Low-wage workers struggle vital for entire working class

The working-class movement is going through the birth pangs of what will be — and what must be — a new phase of development for the working class. This is based on the observation of a living process of profound social transformation compelled by the changing nature of capitalism: the deepening of the current phase of the capitalist crisis and its global impact on the struggle between capital and labor.

This new global, technologically advanced phase of capitalist production and reorganization of the workforce is pauperizing the entire working class, eliminating the better-paid sections of the working

class, and laying the basis for the leadership of the working-class movement to be transferred to the growing ranks of low-paid, oppressed workers — Black, Brown, immigrant and especially women.

In a sense it is misleading to refer to the “low-wage” workers’ movement. There may be reasons to continue doing so for a period, but the “low-wage” term tends to reduce the largest segment — and certainly the fastest growing segment — of the working class to a marginal category. This erroneous notion of the low-wage worker somehow being a mere slice of the working class still surprisingly pervades some sections of the labor movement as well as some progressive forces.

These workers laboring in the fast food industry and the Walmart workers who have courageously built the OUR Walmart movement inside the world’s largest billion-dollar corporation — who have sacrificed tremendously, suffering the brunt of both reprisals and firings — are leading the way. It is necessary for the entire union movement, the unemployed, progressive social movements, all the working class and oppressed to embrace their cause, because their movement is like the Black Lives Matter movement — the future of the working class.

Holmes is a leader of the People’s Power Assemblies and Workers World Party first secretary.

Bus drivers stand ground

Veolia

Steve Kirschbaum with journalist Lamont Lilly, right.

PHOTO KEN YARBOROUGH



ers remained inspired and dedicated to one common goal. Just recently, in early March, a jury returned a not-guilty verdict after 10 minutes of deliberation.

Local 8751

The degree of unity of Local 8751 is an inspiration to the working class all over the U.S. ... actually all over the world. Union organizers and rank-and-file members have stood tall against a corporate parasite for 18 months now. The four leaders who were fired (Francois, Gillis, Kirschbaum and Murchison) have since exhausted their employment benefits and have had to depend on allies and fellow union members. In spite of such obstacles, solidarity and team morale remain strong.

Even while fired, the four leaders have continued to organize and build resistance. Weekly rallies and mass meetings have continued to convene at nearby bus yards, union halls and in the community. Solidarity and working-class support have poured in from all over the country. Local organizers have continued to coordinate national call-in days to Boston Mayor Marty Walsh. During the trial of Kirschbaum, every court hearing was completely packed with community supporters through “people’s mobilizations.”

Their goal is not only to get their four leaders reinstated, but to build a local movement against austerity measures, political repression, racism and resegregation. Not only is Local 8751 fighting to

Workers fight back against austerity

By G. Dunkel

The capitalist ruling classes in countries all over the world are pressuring local and national governments to spend less on services like education, health care, public transportation, roads and water, and pay more attention to cutting wages and pensions. Resistance to these austerity policies is growing, as workers showed with major protests in Quebec, Ireland and Belgium.

Quebec

Quebec, nearly as big as Alaska, stretches from the western border of New York state to Newfoundland, far to the east of Maine. The major part of its 8 million people live in the cities of Montreal and Quebec, but some also inhabit remote, isolated parts like the Gaspé Peninsula and Côte du Nord.

Some 50,000 university students all over this vast province have been on strike since March 23, after strike votes on their campuses. Fifteen thousand students marched in Montreal on April 3, defying the cops. Unions and community groups have held smaller protests.

The Montreal protest marked the end of a day in which 133,000 students throughout the province walked out, even though the minister of education called on local campuses to expel student leaders.

These protests and the strike have been called by the Association of Student Union Solidarity (ASSE).

Two thousand five hundred union members formed a human chain around the National Assembly, Quebec’s parliament, on March 30 to mark the end of their contract. They want a 13.5 percent raise over the next three years, while the offer from Quebec’s government is two years of a salary freeze and a 1 percent raise each year of the next three.

There was also a smaller picket line in front of a pediatric hospital in Montreal on April 1 since the government’s budget

cuts are going to severely affect the services it provides.

All these protests are pointing to and supporting the call for a provincewide general strike on May 1.

Ireland

Under pressure from the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the Irish government has imposed a major increase in the amount it charges for water. Tens of thousands have gone to the streets in major protests over this charge ever since it was announced by Prime Minister Enda Kenny.

The last protest took place on April 4 in Dublin, where up to 80,000 people — in a country of 5 million — came out to chant “Enda Kenny, not a penny!” and “No way, we won’t pay!”

Memet Uludag of “People Before Profit” and the Irish Anti-Racism Network, spoke in the context of United Nations World Anti-Racism Day.

“We say today water is a human right. Black and white, we will unite and we will fight. From Bolivia to Detroit to Greece, people have been fighting against cuts, against austerity.” (Irish Times, April 6)

The government has said it won’t compromise, but some members of the Irish Parliament who spoke on April 5 were predicting that the parliamentary regime would fall over this issue.

Belgium

The Belgian government has announced it will raise the age of retirement from 65 to 67 years and change the way raises are calculated, which would cost each worker \$22,000, or six months’ salary, over the course of her or his career.

On March 30, both the Flemish-speaking (Flammond) and the French-speaking (Walloon) unions held a joint demonstration in Brussels against these austerity proposals. Both called for a general strike on April 22 against their employer, the government of Belgium. □



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

Union members and supporters celebrate after a jury acquits Kirschbaum of Veolia’s union-busting charges in Dorchester, MA, March 5.

protect local union rights, they’re fighting to ensure that “Black lives matter” and that children of all races, social strata and ethnic backgrounds have equal access to a good education in Boston. Any union that’s fighting side by side with oppressed communities against poor conditions and gentrification is my kind of union. They also have a strong foundation in the anti-war and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer movements. They have openly advocated for an end to the Israeli occupation of historic Palestine for years and constructed one of the first union contracts to protect LGBTQ workers from on-the-job harassment and employment discrimination.

Resistance to Veolia’s sordid record

Multinational corporate giant Veolia Inc. is a French-based global conglomerate founded in 1853 under the orders of Napoleon III. Veolia’s first order of privatization was the control and supply of water throughout France. Unfortunately, Veolia has since then privatized water in Africa, India and Latin America. Currently, Veolia has accrued more profit from the distribution and resale of water than any other corporation in the world.

Over the years, its trail of corporate greed and worker exploitation has only continued to expand and grow more ruthless. Today, Veolia’s vast business ven-

tures include energy and transportation, waste management and environmental maintenance, television, film and mass media.

According to a recent report by local organizers, in the sector of transportation “Veolia has waged anti-union campaigns against bus drivers from San Francisco, Phoenix, Baltimore and Denver. Veolia assumed management of the Boston public school buses in July of 2013. Since then, Veolia has refused to honor the terms of union contracts, completely ignoring pre-established grievance and arbitration procedures. Since the arrival of Veolia in Boston, bus drivers’ wages, benefits and working conditions have only worsened. Veolia’s corporate strategy of divide and conquer includes union busting and worker intimidation.” (bostonschoolbus5.org)

Boston’s public school bus drivers aren’t just fighting for a better contract and higher wages. They’re fighting for their livelihood and quality of life. They’re fighting for the collective well-being of the entire community. The struggle to reinstate the four leaders who were fired is a direct reflection of the struggle to preserve the entire working class. As they have stood tall, so should we.

Lilly is a leader of the Durham, N.C., branch of Workers World Party. He did support work for Local 8751 in Boston the last week in March.

WORKERS WORLD
MUNDO OBRERO

Arabia Saudita, aliada de EUA bombardea Yemen

Continúa de página 12

cialmente a partir de septiembre, 2014 y continúa hasta hoy.

Egipto pide fuerza militar regional

El presidente de Egipto, Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, presentó una propuesta a la Cumbre de la Liga Árabe en Sharm el-Sheikh el 28 de marzo para establecer una fuerza militar regional que pudiera intervenir en los estados que enfrentan conflictos internos.

Los ataques aéreos saudíes no serán suficientes para detener los avances de los combatientes Houthi ni para estabilizar la situación de seguridad en Yemen basada en los intereses estadounidenses. La TV Al-Manar del Líbano informó el 29 de marzo que Arabia Saudita está desplegando a miles de rebeldes sunitas islámicos para luchar contra el movimiento Houthi.

Al-Manar señaló que “Cinco Estados del Golfo Pérsico — Arabia Saudita, los Emiratos Árabes Unidos, Bahrein, Qatar y Kuwait — respaldados por EUA, han declarado guerra sobre Yemen en un comunicado conjunto. ... El presidente

estadounidense Barack Obama, autorizó apoyo logístico y de inteligencia a las operaciones militares, dijo la portavoz del Consejo de Seguridad Nacional Bernadette Meehan. ... Agregó que mientras que las fuerzas estadounidenses no estaban tomando acción militar directa en Yemen, Washington estaba estableciendo un Centro de Planificación Conjunto con Arabia Saudita para coordinar el apoyo militar y de inteligencia”.

Durante la Cumbre de la Liga Árabe, el presidente egipcio Al-Sisi declaró que una fuerza regional era esencial para “defender a nuestra nación [árabe]”. (Washington Post, 30 de marzo) Su régimen militar egipcio, sin embargo, ha sido hostil a los árabes palestinos y ha cooperado con Israel, especialmente al bloquear la frontera con Gaza.

Dado que la mayor parte de las armas y el intercambio de inteligencia de esa fuerza regional en Egipto y el Consejo de Cooperación del Golfo serán proporcionados por el Pentágono, será capaz de llevar a cabo solo aquellas acciones que estén de acuerdo con los objetivos de la política exterior de Washington y Wall Street. □

150 years after U.S. Civil War

Anti-racist struggle continues

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**

Confederate Army forces retreated from Richmond, Va., in early April 1865 in the face of advancing Union troops, many of whom were Africans.

Soon the Union forces reached the last capital city of the secessionists. The Confederates had set fire to large areas of the city, but the African troops helped to restore order in those areas.

This historic anniversary in United States history is being recognized this year. Nonetheless, the conclusion of the Civil War, which lasted from 1861 to 1865, represents the beginning of efforts to reconstruct the U.S. without slavery and national oppression — a quest that has still not been realized in 2015.

The Confederate military forces believed that if they abandoned Richmond they could continue the war against President Abraham Lincoln, but their cause was lost. Absent a central focus and with demoralization widespread among the secessionist troops, they were doomed to disorganization without real reason to continue the fight.

Just a few days later, the Confederates surrendered to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox. The conclusion of the Civil War saw the legal end of slavery with the passage of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, setting the stage for Reconstruction.

Post-Civil War struggle for Reconstruction

Even with the passage of the 13th Amendment, the state governments established from 1865 to 1867 were dominated by former Confederates, who passed “Black Code” laws that maintained white dominance and denied due process to African people. It was not until the national election of 1866 and the actions of the Radicals and their allies in Congress during 1867 that some move-

ment took place in granting citizenship rights to Africans and organizing the South into military districts.

Then President Andrew Johnson was outraged by Congress assuming the authority over Reconstruction. Later he barely escaped impeachment and by the end of 1867 fell from political grace. By the time he left office at the end of 1868, Johnson had issued a general amnesty for the former Confederate leadership.

During this period the 14th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified granting citizenship rights to former slaves. By 1869, the 15th Amendment gave voting rights to African-American men. It was not until 1870 that the first African Americans entered the U.S. Congress — Joseph H. Rainey from South Carolina and Hiram Revels of Mississippi.

However, at the conclusion of the Civil War in 1865, the Ku Klux Klan was formed in Tennessee by Nathan Bedford Forrest, a former slave trader and Confederate general. Forrest had been responsible for one of the most egregious atrocities of the war, committed in April 1864 at Fort Pillow, Tenn., where hundreds of enslaved African troops as well as Union whites were massacred. Starting in 1865, the Klan organized openly and conducted a ruthless terror campaign in all the states throughout the South. Soon it was battling the Reconstruction process.

Eventually in 1876, after a disputed national presidential election, the federal government largely abandoned the Reconstruction policy. Although in several states including Tennessee, South Carolina and North Carolina, African Americans would continue to hold office through the 1880s and 1890s, by the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the experiment in democracy was completely overthrown.

By 1877, the federal government had withdrawn its forces from the South, prompting decades of reaction character-

Christianburg Institute, a Freedmen's Bureau School, founded during Reconstruction in Va.



ized by peonage, sharecropping, tenant farming, lynching and repressive laws. The failure of Reconstruction ushered in another century of national oppression.

Lynchings reinforce legal segregation

Lynching became common throughout the South and many areas in the North. Thousands of African Americans were summarily beaten, tortured and killed.

Peonage, sharecropping, tenant farming and contract labor laws created conditions analogous to those that prevailed during slavery. In 1896, the Supreme Court in its Plessy v. Ferguson decision consolidated federal law in favor of legalized segregation.

It would take until 1954 for this decision to be reversed, with specific reference to public education. A mass Civil Rights struggle beginning in December 1955 set the stage for a renewed effort to eradicate U.S. apartheid.

The first federal law in support of equality since Reconstruction was passed in 1957, relating to the ability of the Justice Department to enforce voting rights. By 1960, students took the lead through the sit-in movement and the Freedom Rides to militantly make a move toward the eradication of legalized segregation and for universal suffrage.

Continuing relevance of Civil War and Reconstruction

It is now 50 years since the height of the African-American national movement characterized by mass demonstrations and urban rebellions, which prompted the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But Black people are still not fully liberated. A renewed struggle against racism and national oppression emerged during 2014 in response to heightened police repression and economic exploitation.

A century and a half later, we have the advantage of looking back at the historic

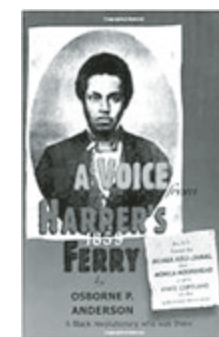
developments during the Reconstruction and Civil Rights eras of African-American history. At present the world capitalist system, headed by the U.S., is facing the worst crisis since the Great Depression.

Even though monumental changes have taken place in the political and economic systems in the U.S. and the world since the slavery period, the U.S. is still fundamentally a class-dominated society, with the corporations and banks controlling all social institutions. The whites-only signs have been removed, but the barriers to social progress and genuine freedom remain.

While a president of African descent, Barack Hussein Obama, now sits in the White House, police and other agents of the racist-capitalist state can kill the oppressed at will. Demands for the prosecution of cops who violate the rights of African Americans are routinely ignored.

Therefore, the contemporary phase of the struggle must be designed to overturn racism, national oppression and economic exploitation at its roots. A new system of relations between national groups emphasizing the right to self-determination and full equality has to emerge if true liberation is to be achieved.

To wage such a campaign for total freedom, the oppressed must be organized independently of the capitalist- and imperialist-dominated parties. Only a party of the working class and the oppressed can assure the eradication of injustice and class oppression. □



A Voice from Harper's Ferry, written by Osborne P. Anderson, a Black revolutionary who was there. Essays by: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Monica Moorehead and Vince Copeland on the 'Unfinished Revolution.'

Available at online and other bookstores.

As U.N. shirks its responsibility

Cholera in Haiti increases

By **G. Dunkel**

In October 2010, some of the troops in the United Nation's military forces introduced cholera to Haiti. Since that time, 800,000 people or 6 percent of the country have gotten the disease, and 8,000 or so have died. There have been 32,000 cases and 480 deaths in the Dominican Republic and 700 cases and three deaths in Cuba.

Cuba has had the largest and most significant contingent of medical workers in Haiti following the earthquake, with 1,200 there by 2010. Another 550 Haitian doctors have been trained in Cuba.

Some progress has been made over the past three years in reducing both the number of new cases and the death rate from cholera in Haiti, which is the epicenter of this epidemic

But during the first 10 weeks of 2015 there has been a sharp increase in the number of cases of cholera, with more than three times the number of cases during the same period in 2014. This increase worries public health workers in Haiti because it comes right before the rainy season, which starts in May.

Haiti Libre, one of the major online Haitian news services, writes that this increase is due to “under-financing” and the resulting “diminution of on-the-ground humanitarian services.” (March 28)

The U.N. denied its responsibility for years. Then, in the face of incontrovertible evidence, the U.N. admitted its fault. Nevertheless, with the support of the U.S. and French governments, the U.N. fought off lawsuits in U.S. courts that would have required it to pay for the damages it caused by introducing cholera in Haiti.

In Haiti, more than 25 percent of the people live on less than \$1 a day. Only 2 percent live on more than \$10 a day. Given the dire poverty, when international aid slackens, it is very hard for the Haitians to make up for the gaps. This is true even when they know what should be done.

Some 300,000 Haitians are still living in tents, as they have been since the 2010 earthquake, and subsisting on \$1 a day. They cannot afford to buy hand soap, toilet paper or a bottle of clean water, which is what they would need to do to prevent cholera.

The infrastructure to publicly supply water that is safe to drink doesn't exist in Haiti, nor does safe disposal and treatment of human wastes.

The U.N. admits Haiti's problems. Together with the Haitian and Dominican governments and regional Latin American and Caribbean councils, the U.N. has put together a so-called plan to fix Haiti's structural problems, which would remove the threat of cholera.

The U.N. has spent billions on Mi-

nustah. This is the name of the U.N. military forces that occupy Haiti. Minustah was first installed to give a U.N. cover to a U.S.-led occupation, with support from the French and Canadian governments. Minustah's main objective is keeping the Haitian people under control.

To live in health is a basic human right, which the U.S. and its junior imperialist partners, France and Canada, have denied the Haitian people through the U.N. and Minustah. □

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

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Black Youth: Repression & Resistance LeiLani Dowell

The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead

Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice! Saladin Muhammad

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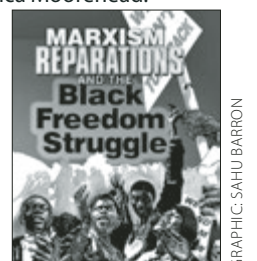
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Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker

Domestic Workers United Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights Imani Henry

Available at online and other bookstores.



GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

Even as State Dept. reneges on terms

Washington finally deals with Iran

By Fred Goldstein

April 6 — The agreed nuclear framework negotiated between the Iranian government and an unholy alliance of imperialist bandits, in addition to China, must be put in proper perspective.

Whatever the terms of the framework agreement, and whatever the ultimate outcome of the negotiations, the fact is that the imperialist powers have had to sit across the table and agree, in one form or another, to Iran's right to a nuclear program and to lift the sanctions.

This is a position Washington had refused to accept for 12 years.

In fact, Washington refused to negotiate with Iran for decades. Instead, it dealt with Teheran with sanctions, attempted counterrevolution, invasion, bombing threats, vilification, attempted isolation and a long campaign to bring about economic collapse and "regime change." This campaign has been going on without letup since day one of the Iranian Revolution and the establishment of the anti-imperialist Islamic Republic in 1979.

Of course, the details of the final accord — if there is one — are all-important. But the fact that Iran is still standing as a sovereign and independent anti-imperialist country, and has forced imperialism to recognize it, is a historic testament to the will and resistance of the Iranian people.

Three groupings in U.S. ruling class

There are three basic groupings in the U.S. ruling class with regard to the negotiations.

The first is the regime-change grouping that has never left the scene and was invigorated by George Bush's "Axis of Evil" speech in 2002. In this grouping are both John Bolton, a Republican neo-conservative and former U.S. ambassador to the U.N., and Lindsey Graham, a Republican senator from South Carolina.

Bolton wrote an op-ed piece in the New York Times of March 25 titled "To Stop Iran's Bomb, Bomb Iran." He went on to say that "military attacks should be combined with vigorous American support for Iran's opposition, aimed at regime change in Teheran."

Lindsey Graham, on the other hand, wants to sanction the government to death.

The second grouping is the Obama camp, which wants to sell this deal to the ruling class here on the basis of it facilitating a broad realignment in the Middle East. Iran would presumably move to become a "respectable" member of the "community of nations," and this would weaken the resistance front of Iran, Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas. It would also bring some relief to U.S. imperialism, which is deeply mired in crisis, from Afghanistan to North Africa.

This geostrategic realignment is most likely wishful thinking on the part of a besieged imperialist government unsuccessfully trying to put out fires in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Nigeria, etc. Much of the ruling class here is skeptical about such a scenario.

Then there is a third grouping. It does not believe that the anti-imperialist government of Ali Khamenei is going to help imperialism out of its dilemma. This grouping has no illusions about realignment, but wants a deal to contain Iran's nuclear program.

James Baker of Texas, a former government official high in the Reagan and first Bush administrations, is in this

third grouping. He told Fareed Zakaria on CNN on April 4 that realignment "is a very difficult concept to believe. ... If we can get an agreement that is verifiable, that is tight ... that would be a very good accomplishment whether there was a geostrategic realignment or not."

This middle grouping leans toward accepting the nuclear framework agreement and the future negotiations. But the relationship of forces within the camp of the political advisers outside Congress is one thing. The Congress itself, which is leaning way to the right, is another.

Under ordinary circumstances this framework would most likely be accepted by the ruling class. But politics has gone so far to the right in the U.S. that there is a significant possibility that right-wing, militarist elements will scuttle the framework during or after the negotiations. Huge amounts of money are now flowing to the right-wing forces aligned with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and are dedicated to destroying the framework before any agreement can be reached.

State Department spin

The State Department has issued a so-called Fact Sheet giving its spin on the talks. It is designed to sell the deal to the ruling class here. It also aims to lock in the Iranians to provisions they did not agree to. The State Department is treating this document as a legally binding agreement when it is in fact only the agreed-upon framework for further negotiations.

The Iranian government has vigorously objected to this "spin" document, claiming it reneges on the agreement that sanctions would be lifted as soon as an accord was officially agreed upon. Secretary of State John Kerry and company have described a drawn-out, indefinite process for lifting the sanctions once Iran "has taken all of its key nuclear-related steps."

The State Department Fact Sheet talks of Iran being able to engage in "limited" research. The Iranian document does not contain the word "limited." There is also a dispute over the number of centrifuges the Iranians will retain.

Nuclear terror states vs. Iran

The dramatic negotiations and all the big business commentary have left out one monumental fact: It is atrocious that a group of imperialist countries that persist in stockpiling perhaps 10,000 nuclear weapons combined, not to mention the U.S. client state of Israel with hundreds more nuclear weapons, have the audacity to use methods of extortion — sanctions — to limit Iran's nuclear development.

But the most atrocious part of this arrangement is that the imperialists are pretending to prevent something that the U.S. government knows the Iranians are not trying to do: develop a nuclear weapon. Developing a nuclear weapon under conditions of nuclear threat and encirclement is something they have every right to do, but the government long ago deemed this unwise, unnecessary, and religiously and morally wrong. In fact, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei issued a fatwa against the development of nuclear weapons.

In 2005 the fatwa, which is more binding on Iranian Muslims than the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, was announced by IRNA, the Iranian news agency. It was also presented to the Board of Governors



of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Aug. 10, 2005.

The IRNA posting said, "The Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has issued the Fatwa that the production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons are forbidden under Islam and that the Islamic Republic of Iran shall never acquire these weapons." (juancole.com/2012/04/) Khamenei has declared weapons of mass destruction un-Islamic and their use to be a sin.

In fact, it is precisely because Iran is not intending to develop a weapon that the government is open to wide inspection and significant reduction of nuclear enrichment.

Dangers of the negotiations

In any negotiations between a superpower such as the U.S. and a country like Iran, there is always the fear that the smaller country will be overwhelmed and forced into dangerous concessions that compromise its sovereignty and independence.

In this light it is perfectly understandable that revolutionary Marxist, working-class, anti-imperialist partisans of Iran worry about, above all, the inspections process.

Iran is strong enough to give leeway on enrichment. As long as they have their peaceful nuclear program and infrastructure intact, the Iranians can afford to compromise.

If, however, the imperialists are allowed to take advantage of an unlimited inspections regime to undermine the security of the country and gain military and intelligence advantages that could be used in times of conflict or for sabotage, then the question of national sovereignty comes into play.

The U.S. Fact Sheet has described the right of the IAEA to get access to "suspicious sites" or investigate allegations of "covert sites or facilities" anywhere in the country. This open-ended language will hopefully be clarified by the Iranian government in such a way as to prevent the unlimited access that is implied by the State Department.

The concern about dangerous or unwarranted concessions arises because the Iranian regime has a dual character. On the one hand, it is an anti-imperialist

government with a clerical leadership. On the other hand, it is a capitalist regime. And despite the anti-imperialist nature of the present leadership, bourgeois moderates in Iran have significant political strength. There is an understandable fear that they may have a negative influence on the outcome of the negotiations.

Decade of threats and sanctions

But so far the Iranians have stood up to a decade of threats and sanctions. It is unlikely they will compromise their sovereignty at this point.

Iran was sanctioned three times by the U.N. Security Council — in 2006, 2008 and 2011. Each set of sanctions was stronger and broader than the previous one. It was further sanctioned by the U.S. Congress with drastic measures in 2010 and 2011. And it was sanctioned by the European Union in 2010 and 2012. All the sanctions were explicitly aimed at ending Iran's enrichment program and dismantling its nuclear program.

In 2009, the U.S. fomented the so-called Green Revolution aimed at a counterrevolutionary overthrow of the government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and its replacement by pro-imperialist elements. That effort was defeated.

During all that time the Iranian government increased its enrichment facilities, increased the percentage of enrichments, developed an anti-ballistic missile, created higher-grade uranium, and more and better centrifuges. Teheran never buckled under the most extreme sanctions enforced by the entire gang of imperialist robbers.

To be sure, Iran wants to be free of the sanctions. It wants normalization of relations. Iran will be forced into compromises — but hopefully on the basis of sovereignty, independence and holding imperialism at bay.

It must be remembered that the background to these negotiations is not only the hardships being suffered by the Iranian people, but the growing and deepening regional crisis, from Afghanistan to North Africa, of U.S. imperialism and its partners in crime in London, Paris and Berlin — not to mention the global capitalist economic crisis. These are among the reasons that brought the imperialist side to the negotiating table. □



WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

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WORKERS WORLD editorial

Outrage pushes back bigoted Indiana law

From the minute Indiana Gov. Mike Pence passed the bigoted “Religious Freedom Restoration Act,” the law permitting businesses to discriminate against lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer peoples has faced the fury of LGBTQ people and their allies throughout the country.

On April 2, Pence, trying desperately to recover from the backlash, announced a series of changes to the law that prevent businesses from using it to refuse “to offer or provide services, facilities, use of public accommodations, goods, employment, or housing” based on “race, color, religion, ancestry, age, national origin, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or United States military service.”

As a result, CNN notes, “the state has now enacted protections based on sexual orientation for the first time in its history.” (April 2)

The law must be seen in the context of a legacy of bigoted, anti-worker attacks throughout much of the history of Indiana. The state was a major center for the Ku Klux Klan, with some 20,000 registered members of the arch-racist organization in the 1930s. (workers.org, June 22, 2006)

Of course, repression always breeds resistance, and the legacy of fightback in Indiana matches the efforts of bosses and the bigots (who are, most often, one and the same). In 1893, socialist Eugene V. Debs formed the American Railway Union, whose 150,000 members would make it one of the largest unions in the country a year later. Steven C. Pitts, reviewing the book “Black Freedom Fighters in Steel,” notes that in northwest Indiana, “the battle against racism was central to the advancement of rights for all workers in the workplace and within the union.” (muse.jhu.edu)

In recent years, the Hoosiers Anti-Racist Movement has been monitoring and

exposing the activities of neofascists in the area. Part of this work included defending the Tinley Park Five, a group of white antiracist anarchists who were imprisoned after they broke up a meeting of racists in a Chicago suburb. (workers.org, June 8, 2012)

And on March 30, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees announced it was pulling its three-day national women’s conference, scheduled to be held in October and expected to generate a half-million dollars, from Indianapolis in response to the bigoted act. (indystar.com, April 3)

Massive protests against the bill were held outside Lucas Oil Stadium prior to the NCAA’s Final Four men’s basketball tournament April 4 in Indianapolis, as well as outside the state Capitol there.

The attack on LGBTQ people in Indiana is part of a larger onslaught against workers’ ability to survive under low-wage capitalism. Indiana in recent years has seen a precipitous decline in union membership, well below the national average and less than half of what it was 25 years ago when it was one of the highest in the country. (blogs.butler.edu, April 30, 2013) This decline is directly related to the state’s imposition of so-called “right-to-work” (for-less) laws and stripping Indiana public unions of collective bargaining rights.

The bill must also be placed side by side with the recent conviction and sentencing in Indiana of 33-year-old Purvi Patel, a South-Asian-American woman, to 41 years, with 20 to be served in prison, for the conflicting charges of feticide and child neglect. (See workers.org, “Indiana woman criminalized after miscarriage,” Feb. 19: tinyurl.com/qx2yebo)

Continued resistance will be needed to win true liberation for LGBTQ people, women, people of color and all workers. □

At Summit

U.S. pushes ‘dissidents’

By Cheryl LaBash

The “VII Summit of the Americas,” to be held April 10-11 in Panama City, Panama, is of particular interest since Latin American and Caribbean states firmly told the Organization of American States there would be no further summits where Cuba was excluded, forcing the U.S. to agree.

Although Cuba will attend, including Cuban President Raúl Castro, Prensa Latina reported, “Sources of the Cuban Foreign Ministry insisted over the last few days that attendance of their country to the Panama venue (April 10-11) is ‘dissociated’ from the projected final document titled Mandates for Action.” (April 4)

The OAS, which prepared the final document, also credentialled the four official parallel forums: social, youth, business and rectors of universities.

As projected by President Barack Obama in his Dec. 17 address, which opened discussions toward normalized diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba, the official forums will showcase paid “human rights” agents.

“However, groupings such as the Nation-

al Hostosian Independentist Movement of Puerto Rico, which works for the independence of that Caribbean island associated to the United States, and environmentalists, trade unionists and a wide variety of profiles did not receive OAS approval.

“The OAS gave credentials to figures from different Cuban and Venezuelan anti-government groupings financed by the United States and inserted by Washington and the OAS as part of the denominated civil society.

“There are about two dozen Cuban counterrevolutionaries (residents in Cuba and abroad and financed from abroad) authorized to participate in the social forum, and others are included in several U.S. nongovernmental organizations opposed to the Caribbean island.” (Prensa Latina, April 4)

While the diplomatic promoter of U.S. interests, the OAS and VII Summit get the headlines, Telesur reports a new, special U.S. force to be deployed to the Palmerola base in Honduras. The 250-person combat unit is “designed to intervene in critical situations.” Three thousand U.S. Marines are scheduled for September

Protest, boycott specter makes –

Anti-LGBTQ laws bad for business

By Fred Goldstein

It is rare when the capitalist class openly reveals its relationship to its political servants. But in the cases of the bigoted so-called “religious freedom” laws passed in Indiana and Arkansas, some of the biggest corporations in the U.S. panicked in the face of mass outrage and protests and pressured two right-wing Republican governors to shift course.

Passage of the “Religious Freedom Restoration Act” in Indiana was right-wing revenge for a string of court rulings upholding marriage equality, victories won through of decades of struggle by millions.

The backdrop to the corporate opposition to the two laws legalizing discrimination against lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer people is the rising tide of support across the country for LGBTQ rights, including marriage. Same sex marriage is now legal in 37 states. A growing majority supports marriage equality — 60 percent in a CBS poll this year. The Human Rights Campaign reports 69 percent support for a federal civil rights bill.

It is the mass opposition to bigotry that set off alarm bells in the heads of the corporate CEOs. The capitalist class is a calculating class, and they immediately saw sales and profits in Indiana melting away as a boycott movement against these bigoted laws mushroomed.

Indiana Gov. Mike Pence and his legislative cohorts had to be strong-armed by the bosses, however. Right-wingers like him have been defiant in the face of popular protest in the past. Pence is a favorite of the Koch brothers; they contributed \$200,000 to his campaign funds in 2012. He will attend a conference of the Koch brothers’ political arm, Americans for Prosperity, in Dallas along with Ted Cruz, Rick Perry and Rand Paul. (realkochfacts.com)

There were huge mass demonstrations protesting the law. But after the protests the corporate roof fell in on Pence. The Indiana Star, the voice of big business in Indianapolis, ran a March 31 front-page

banner headline: “Fix This Now!” Star columnist Matthew Tully put it plainly: “Pity those corporate leaders trying to lure top talent to Indiana. Or city leaders now facing another obstacle in their way as they bid for hotly contested conventions.”

Some of the largest corporations and biggest politicians, in Indiana and around the country, made public statements without even bothering to send Pence a private message. Angie’s List announced the suspension of a \$40 million expansion project. Eli Lilly, with \$37 billion in assets, condemned the law. Apple, Gap and even NCAA officials followed suit. Some 70 tech industry executives, including from Microsoft, CISCO and Netflix, signed a statement denouncing the law. (Huffington Post, April 1)

The “fixed” law only eliminates its most onerous provision, striking language allowing “religious freedom” to override ordinances in ten localities that ban anti-LGBTQ discrimination. In the rest of the state, where discrimination is legal, the revised law fosters the kind of bigotry that leads to discrimination.

When Walmart speaks, Hutchinson listens

In Arkansas, Gov. Asa Hutchinson was about to sign a similar law when he saw what happened in Indiana. He stated at a press conference that his son had signed a petition urging him to veto the law. What he did not mention was that Walmart CEO Doug McMillon said the bill “threatens to undermine the spirit of inclusion present throughout the state of Arkansas and does not reflect the values we proudly uphold.” (NPR, April 1)

The racist, anti-worker, low-wage corporation that has been sued for wage theft, sexual discrimination, abuse of immigrant labor, etc., suddenly discovered “inclusion.” But that is because huge numbers of people come to their national headquarters in Benton, Ark., to do business. A boycott of Arkansas would threaten their profits.

One slap in the face from Walmart and Hutchinson had second thoughts about signing the bill! It was “corrected” to narrow its scope to government, eliminating language that could give private businesses a license to discriminate.

The false issue of religious freedom is used by the right wing, as in the Hobby Lobby case, as a smokescreen for bigotry. In reality, laws introduced by bigots wearing religious camouflage should be scrapped, not “fixed.” □

ade of Cuba, “among other topics affecting the underdeveloped America, like poverty and the rising power of the progressive forces.” Attending will be 2,000 social movement delegates, including Bolivian President Evo Morales and representatives from the countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America. The attendees will be treated to a concert by Cuban singer-songwriter Silvio Rodríguez. (Prensa Latina, April 5)

U.S. radio collaboration looks at Summit

The National Network on Cuba and the Pan African radio network are collaborating in a weeklong series of online and over the air broadcasts discussing the Summit of the Americas. A resource page is under construction at NNOC.info. Additional programs are welcome. Source material is appreciated. Contact: nnoc20012002@yahoo.com □

Casualties mount in U.S. proxy war in Yemen

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Despite daily airstrikes by Saudi Arabia since March 26, the Ansurallah (Houthis) fighters seized the presidential palace in the southern city of Aden the following week.

Subsequent reports claim that the Houthis occupying the palace were forced to retreat by military forces still loyal to ousted leader President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. Saudi bombing of the area and air drops to Hadi loyalists are designed to halt the advances and consolidation of power by the Shiite Islam movement that is supported politically by Iran.

Casualty figures have increased as fighter jets deployed by Riyadh pound residential sections of cities and villages throughout the Middle Eastern state. Officials from the International Committee of the Red Cross say that the humanitarian situation is worsening daily; they describe horrendous conditions on the ground. Civilian residents are fleeing for shelter, further aggravating the overall social and economic crisis in the country.

Contested neighborhoods and commercial areas in Aden are littered with corpses, while the wounded flood into hospitals and clinics. Yemeni officials estimate that at least 185 people have been killed in Aden, while some 1,282 are wounded. Hospitals there have counted the figures of noncombatants since March 26, says al-Kheder Lassouar, Aden's health department director. (BBC, April 5) Not counted are Houthis and loyalist forces who are also victims of aerial bombardments and gunshot injuries.

According to the BBC, casualties are much higher in various regions of the country. Clashes across Yemen have led

to more than 500 deaths and some 1,700 injured since March 26, said United Nations humanitarian administrator Valerie Amos.

Robert Mardini, ICRC director of operations in the Middle East, added, "Our relief supplies and surgical personnel must be allowed to enter the country and safely reach the worst-affected places to provide help. Otherwise ... many more people will die. For the wounded, their chances of survival depend on action within hours, not days." On April 6, the organization entered Aden with water, food and medical supplies.

In addition to the struggle between the Houthis and Hadi supporters, Al-Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic State have reportedly entered the fray, seeking to carve out territory for further expansion.

U.S. imperialism's strategy in the region

The Obama administration has said little about the current situation in Yemen. One hundred Special Forces along with diplomatic personnel were evacuated weeks ago.

Yemen was championed as a so-called "counter-terrorism success story" just months ago. Pentagon and CIA-backed airstrikes and drone attacks have killed many targeted Islamic leaders and civilians, who have been in the vicinity of Washington-ordered aerial assaults.

President Hadi's ascendancy to power was the result of Washington's direct intervention in 2011 and 2012, which sought to manage the transition from Ali Abdullah Saleh's rule. Nonetheless, in today's struggle, forces allied with Saleh have joined the Houthis in opposition to the Saudi air strikes and interference in Yemen's internal affairs.

The U.S. military has its hands full in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan where wars of regime change and purported "democracy building" have gone awry. In 2011, the Obama administration initiated the destabilization and massive bombing of Libya, displacing Col. Muammar Gadhafi's Jamahiriya political system, destroying national institutions, and causing dislocation and economic decline there.

Corporate media report that counterattacks by forces loyal to the Saudi-backed, ousted Hadi regime were bolstered by arms drops from Riyadh. They structure the struggle in Yemen as a proxy war with Saudi forces on Hadi's side battling Iranian influence.

In fact, Washington is using its regional pro-Western allies to carry out bombings intended to bolster U.S. corporate, financial and strategic interests in the region.

Moreover, most of the weapons, including fighter aircraft utilized by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council, made up of reactionary oil-rich monarchies, come from the U.S. and EU member states. The political independence exerted by Yemen's Houthi movement is a concern of Washington and Wall Street, given their overall aim is to secure and expand U.S. interests on behalf of the super-rich.

Yemen is the poorest country in the Arabian Peninsula, but it borders wealthier oil-rich Persian Gulf states. The waterways surrounding Yemen, including the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, have strategic significance for U.S. imperial-

ism regarding commercial shipping as well as military dominance.

'Humanitarian' interventions debunked

Developments in Yemen, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Libya illustrate clearly that there is no such thing as a "humanitarian" imperialist intervention. Conditions in all these states have worsened as a result of the so-called "war on terrorism" and disingenuous efforts to "build democracies" in Africa and the Middle East.

Although majority-Democratic Party congresses elected in 2006 and 2008 and the Obama administration were sent to Washington with a mandate to end wars of aggression and work toward a sustainable economic revitalization in the U.S., they have failed to do so.

This starkly reveals the imperialist character of both dominant parties. Consequently, in the 2010, 2012 and 2014 elections, the Democratic Party's electoral base among the working class and nationally oppressed expressed their opposition to these failed promises by staying away from the polls, with the exception of the re-election of Obama in 2012.

The peoples of the Middle East and Africa must rebuild their societies and national and regional institutions independent of imperialism. So, too, the working class and the oppressed inside the U.S. have no alternative other than to break with the Democrats and construct an independent movement, based on their political and class interests. □

At human rights talks

Cuba shows Black Lives Matter

By **Cheryl LaBash**

On March 31 in Washington, D.C., the U.S. and Cuba held the first meeting on the topic of human rights. Cuba proposed this sub-discussion of the ongoing talks aimed at normalizing diplomatic relations and opening embassies that was launched on Dec. 17 by presidents Raúl Castro and Barack Obama.

The Cuban News Agency reported: "The representatives of the island expressed their country's concerns regarding human rights in the United States.

"We expressed our concerns regarding discrimination and racism patterns in U.S. society, the worsening of police brutality, torture acts and extrajudicial executions in the fight on terror and the legal limbo of prisoners at the U.S. prison camp in Guantánamo," said the head of the Cuban delegation to the talks, Pedro Luis Pedroso. ... The island's delegation also put forth its concern about the limitation of labor rights and union liberties." (April 1)

This principled position is in line with Cuba's historical diplomacy from the earliest days of the Revolution. In 1960, U.S. government and New York hotel owner harassment of the Cuban delegation to the U.N. General Assembly sent them to Harlem's Hotel Theresa. There, the Black community and leaders like Malcolm X warmly embraced the Cubans.

The Sept. 27, 1960, New York Times summarized Fidel Castro's General Assembly speech. It ends this way: "In one word, we are in favor of all the noble as-

pirations of all peoples. That is our position. There we stand. We are on the side of the just.

"In consequence, the General Assembly of the Cuban people proclaims to America and proclaims it here to the world the right of the peasants to own their land, the right of the worker to the fruit of his labor, the right of children to education, the right of the sick to be given medical assistance and hospitalization, the right of youth to work, the right of students to receive free scientific and experimental training and education, the right of the Black and the Indian to full dignity of mankind, the right of women to full civil, social and political equality, the right of the old to a secure old age, the right of intellectual artists and scientists to fight with the fruit of their labors for a better world and the right of states to nationalize imperialist monopolies, thus rescuing the national resources and wealth: the right of countries to trade freely with all people of the world, the right of nations to their full sovereignty, and the right of people to turn their military fortresses into schools and to arm their workers, because in this, we, too, have to be arms conscious, to arm our workers to defend ourselves from imperialist attack and arm our workers, our peasants, our students, our intellectuals, the Blacks, the Indians, women, youth and the old and all the oppressed and exploited so that they themselves can defend their rights and their fate.

"Some wanted to know the line followed by the revolutionary government of Cuba. There, gentlemen, you have our line." □

Bay Area shows support for Caravana 43 from Mexico



By **Terri Kay**
Berkeley and San Francisco, Calif.

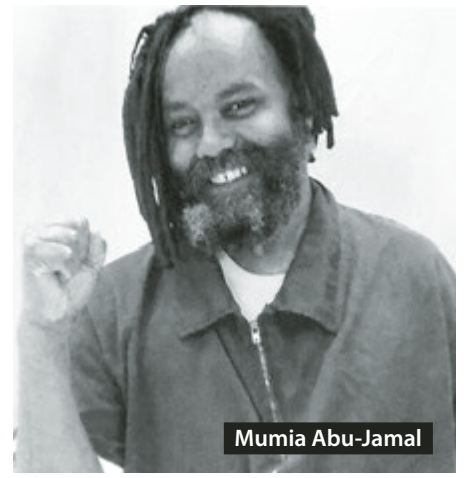
April 6 — Parents and students with the Caravana 43 traveled to the Bay Area, where supporters organized five days of rallies, marches, forums, vigils and press conferences April 2-6. The visit will culminate this afternoon with a picket line at the Mexican Consulate in San Francisco. Hundreds of supporters turned out in both Berkeley and San Francisco with signs and banners in support of this grassroots struggle, led by the parents of disappeared Normalista students in Mexico. The disappearance of these youths has shaken the Mexican government to its core.

The group's website states: "Caravana 43 is a project developed with the purpose of bringing to the United States parents and classmates of the 43 Normalista students who disappeared on September 26, 2014, in Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico. There are three Caravanas covering over 40 cities from the U.S./Mexico border along the Pacific, Central and Atlantic region states. The main aim is to provide an international forum for the parents who have lost their children in a government

of systemic violence and impunity. Another important goal of the Caravana is to shed light on U.S. foreign policy, specifically the Mérida Initiative and its connection to socioeconomic conditions and violence in Mexico." (caravana43.com)

At the April 2 opening rally, one of the parents requested that supporters "ask the U.S. government to stop sending weapons to Mexico. ... If the government must fall, so be it!" The next day, at a forum on the University of California at Berkeley campus, a parent, referring to Mexico, said: "If you vote, you should burn your ballot. ... The people put the government in and can take it out."

Included in the group were a Normalista student who escaped, joined by his brother and father. These family members had originally gone to the town of Ayotzinapa to bring him home, but wound up joining with him and others in their six-month struggle to find the missing students and get justice. The Normalista student challenged the Berkeley students not to "rest on their laurels," referring to the radical reputation of the university, but to challenge the government here regarding all the police violence he had heard about in the U.S. □



Mumia Abu-Jamal

Problema de salud de Mumia Abu-Jamal enciende acción de masas

Por Scott Williams

31 de marzo – A la 1 pm del 30 de marzo, el preso político Mumia Abu-Jamal tuvo una emergencia médica y fue llevado a la Unidad de Cuidados Intensivos del Centro Médico Schuylkill en Pottsville, Pensilvania. Hasta ahora, no se ha proporcionado casi ninguna información por las autoridades del hospital o la prisión relativas a su salud y bienestar.

Finalmente, antes del mediodía de hoy, a la esposa de Mumia, Wadiya, y a su hermano Keith Cook, se les permitió visitarle en el hospital luego de una campaña exigiendo acceso de la familia.

Mumia Abu-Jamal es el legendario periodista y analista político negro. En su juventud en la década de 1970, fue organizador de las Panteras Negras en Filadelfia. Pasó casi 30 años en el corredor de la muerte de Pensilvania tras ser injustamente declarado culpable de asesinato en primer grado el 3 de julio de 1982, por el asesinato en 1981 de un policía blanco de Filadelfia.

Mumia ha insistido en su inocencia des-

de que fue detenido el 9 de diciembre de 1981 y condenado en una farsa de juicio. Sus apelaciones estatales y federales para demostrar su inocencia en un nuevo juicio han sido sistemáticamente negadas.

En prisión, Abu-Jamal ha escrito seis libros y grabado cientos de columnas políticas gracias a la Prison Radio. Muchas de estas columnas transcritas han sido leídas en todo el mundo por activistas políticos que buscan un análisis de la situación en EUA. Ha tenido apoyo internacional a su empeño de luchar por su libertad y continuar su labor periodística en el vientre del sistema carcelario racista y anti-pobre en solidaridad con las/os trabajadoras y oprimidos del mundo. Millones de personas han marchado por su libertad y luchado para sacarlo del corredor de la muerte, del cual finalmente fue retirado en 2012 después de casi 31 años.

Sin embargo, Mumia sigue cumpliendo una sentencia de cadena perpetua sin posibilidad de libertad condicional por un asesinato que no cometió. La lucha para liberarlo continúa.

La preocupante hospitalización de

Abu-Jamal viene meses después de la muerte del líder de MOVE Phil África, quien murió en circunstancias sospechosas el pasado enero en la Institución Correccional Estatal en Dallas, PA. Phil África fue llevado en secreto de la cárcel a un hospital en Wilkes Barre, Pensilvania, sin ningún contacto con sus amistades y familiares durante varios días antes de su trágica muerte.

Con esta trágica pérdida fresca en la mente de MOVE y partidarios de Mumia, más de 15 personas viajaron de inmediato a donde Mumia fue hospitalizado para exigir más información. A su llegada, al hermano de Mumia, Keith Cook, se le impidió la visita. Cook fue parte de una delegación a Harrisburg, capital de Pensilvania el 30 de marzo para impugnar la Ley de Alivio por Revictimización, que niega los derechos de la Primera Enmienda a las/os prisioneros de Pensilvania.

En un intento por saber más sobre la condición de Mumia, sus partidarios estaban a pocos pies de distancia de la puerta del hospital en el Centro Médico de Schuylkill; sin embargo, cuatro policías

impidieron su camino, bloqueando las respuestas que buscaban. Cientos de partidarios/os han llamado a John Kerestes, Superintendente de la prisión SCI Mahanoy. Esto llevó a la oficina de Kerestes a apagar su teléfono, obligando a las personas interesadas a dejar mensajes.

Sin lugar a dudas, más apoyo a Mumia seguirá llegando hasta que él esté seguro y en última instancia libre de este sistema carcelario racista.

La vida de Mumia está en peligro. Se alienta a los medios de comunicación y a las personas preocupadas por la salud de Mumia, comunicarse con las siguientes personas e instituciones responsables de la asistencia sanitaria de los presos de Pensilvania y exigir respuestas sobre la condición médica y los derechos de visita familiar de Mumia:

John Wetzel, Secretario DOC – 707-728-4109; crpadocsecretary@pa.gov
Tom Wolfe, Gobernador de Pensilvania – 717-787-2500; governor@pa.gov
John Kerestes, Superintendente de Prisión – 570-773-2158; contactdoc@pa.gov □

Arabia Saudita, aliada de EUA bombardea Yemen

Por Abayomi Azikiwe

El Consejo de Cooperación del Golfo, bajo la dirección de Arabia Saudita, anunció el 26 de marzo que comenzó a bombardear posiciones Ansurallah en Yemen.

Al mismo tiempo, el régimen egipcio, producto de un golpe de estado militar en julio 2013 que derrocó al gobierno electo encabezado por la Hermandad Musulmán, ha dado pasos hacia la formación de una fuerza militar regional para intervenir en la región de África del Norte y Asia occidental.

Detrás de estos movimientos agresivos de potencias regionales, está la escalada militar de Washington en la región, destinada a ampliar los intereses corporativos, financieros y estratégicos de los ricos de EUA.

A principios de marzo, el gobierno de Obama anunció planes para mantener una fuerza de ocupación en Afganistán. Mientras tanto, la guerra dirigida por la OTAN para cambio de régimen continúa en Siria donde los combatientes del Estado Islámico y otros grupos de oposición tratan de derrocar al presidente Bashar al-Assad. El Pentágono ha bombardeado Iraq y la vecina Siria, y ha desplegado más de 3.100 soldados estadounidenses para entrenar al ejército iraquí. Tales “asesores” a menudo allanan el camino a una invasión terrestre.

Al igual que George W. Bush, Obama está utilizando el terror para promover los intereses imperialistas. Con el ejército estadounidense atado con ataques aéreos y operaciones terrestres en Irak y Siria, EUA está tratando de utilizar los regímenes regionales pro-occidentales para desatar campañas de bombardeos e invasiones diseñadas para apoyar los intereses de EUA sin necesidad de utilizar grandes cantidades de tropas terrestres estadounidenses.

Política exterior EUA desestabiliza Yemen

La operación de bombardeo por Arabia Saudita representa el colapso de la política

exterior de EUA en Yemen. Recientemente, el Pentágono retiró 100 fuerzas especiales y personal diplomático. Jeff Rathke, portavoz del Departamento de Estado de EUA, dijo: “Debido a la deteriorada situación de seguridad en Yemen, el gobierno de EUA ha trasladado temporalmente a su personal fuera de Yemen”. (BBC, 25 de marzo)

Rathke subrayó que el gobierno de Obama continuará apoyando la “transición política” del Estado y vigilando las “amenazas terroristas” que salen de Yemen, el país más subdesarrollado en la región.

Arabia Saudita ocupa un vasto territorio con una población de 31 millones y enorme riqueza petrolera concentrada en la familia real. Las fuerzas militares de Arabia Saudita compran cientos de miles de millones de dólares en armamentos y aviones de combate fabricados por EUA. El empobrecido territorio de Yemen en la esquina sureste de la península arábiga es sólo una cuarta parte de Arabia Saudita, pero la población de Yemen es grande, 25 millones.

La retirada del Pentágono de la base aérea de al-Anad ocurrió el 20 de marzo después de una supuesta ofensiva por los combatientes de al-Qaida en la cercana al-Houta. Según se informa, al-Qaida pronto se vio obligado a retirarse de la ciudad como consecuencia de las operaciones defensivas de las fuerzas militares de Yemen.

Fuerzas militares del Pentágono estacionadas en la base estaban entrenando soldados yemeníes presuntamente para apoyar su lucha contra al-Qaida. Desde hace años, EUA ha atacado con aviones no tripulados, asesinatos selectivos y otras actividades encaminadas a la supresión de cualquier levantamiento popular.

El Consejo de Cooperación del Golfo se compone de todas las monarquías petroleras reaccionarias del Golfo, entre ellas Bahrein, Qatar, Omán, Kuwait y los Emiratos Árabes Unidos, así como Arabia Saudita. La monarquía saudí ha enmarcado el

conflicto actual como una batalla contra la influencia iraní en Yemen. Bombardeos aéreos saudíes han matado y herido a decenas de civiles yemeníes.

El movimiento Ansurallah, más comúnmente conocido como Houthi, ha estado en conflicto con el gobierno yemení, respaldado por Occidente durante más de una década.

Los medios de comunicación occidentales enmarcan la lucha en Yemen, que involucra el movimiento Houthi, como una guerra de poder guiada por fuerzas saudíes en el lado del gobierno luchando contra la influencia iraní. Como la clase dominante saudita es suní y la iraní chiita, esta guerra de poder exacerba la hostilidad sectaria en toda la región y aumenta la inestabilidad global. Washington trata a Arabia Saudita como su cliente amigo y suministra – principalmente vende – armas y apoyo militar y de inteligencia a su familia gobernante.

Además de la lucha de los combatientes Houthi contra el gobierno del Presidente Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, un movimiento secesionista está creciendo en el Yemen del Sur donde existía una república de orientación socialista entre 1967 y finales de 1980. Recientemente hubo grandes manifestaciones donde se veía la bandera de la República Democrática Popular de Yemen.

Eventos recientes en Yemen

Combatientes Houthi se apoderaron de Saná, la capital de Yemen, en septiembre, incluyendo el parlamento. Recientemente, tomaron Taiz. Arabia Saudita tomó medidas cuando el movimiento Houthi estaba a punto de lanzar una gran ofensiva en la sureña ciudad portuaria de Adén.

La Organización Internacional para las Migraciones anunció el 30 de marzo que 45 personas murieron y otras 65 resultaron heridas en ataques aéreos contra el campamento de desplazados en el noroeste del país. (AFP)

Pablo Marco, gerente de operaciones de Médicos sin Fronteras en Yemen, dijo que cuerpos de civiles y personas heridas en el ataque aéreo fueron trasladadas al Hospital de Haradh cerca del campamento en la provincia de Hajja. (PressTV, 30 de marzo)

Press TV también informó que el campamento de al-Mazrak ha albergado a los yemeníes desplazados por los conflictos, los cuales se han intensificado desde 2009, llamando al bombardeo del campamento una escalada de la operación saudí: “Los ataques aéreos comenzaron la noche del domingo (29 de marzo) y continuaron sin cesar por casi nueve horas. ... Riyadh dice que ha lanzado los ataques aéreos, los primeros el 26 de marzo para defender el “gobierno legítimo” del presidente prófugo de Yemen, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, quien huyó a la capital saudí el mismo día. Riyadh se ha comprometido a continuar el bombardeo hasta que Hadi haya sido restablecido”.

La monarquía saudí ha intervenido antes en Yemen, tratando de reforzar el gobierno del ex presidente Ali Abdullah Saleh. Éste fue obligado a dimitir después de un levantamiento nacional en 2011.

Informes recientes sugieren que las fuerzas militares yemeníes leales a Saleh se han opuesto a los ataques aéreos saudíes y están trabajando con los combatientes Houthi. Esta alianza ha dado una ventaja decisiva a las fuerzas Houthi en su ofensiva en el sur del país. (New York Times, 25 de marzo)

Los Houthis son un grupo chiita zaidi situado en Yemen. El movimiento toma su nombre de Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi quien lanzó un levantamiento en 2004 y se dice que fue asesinado por las fuerzas armadas yemeníes en septiembre de ese año. Liderado por Abdul Malik al-Houthi, el movimiento ganó sustan-

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