



April 14, New York City. See page 4.

Dock workers to 'shut it down'

MAY DAY PROTEST OF POLICE KILLINGS

By Clarence Thomas and Cheryl LaBash

On Friday, May 1 — International Workers' Day — the cranes for loading cargo at the San Francisco and Oakland, Calif., ports will be still. The April meetings of both the Executive Board and the membership of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 unanimously endorsed a call for "Union Action to Stop Police Killings of Black and Brown People." A unanimously approved amendment called for the monthly union membership meeting to be held on the May 1 day shift with a march to and rally at Oakland City Hall to demonstrate that the rampant killings by police is an urgent labor issue.

The killing of young Michael Brown by Ferguson, Mo., police on Aug. 9 and the cellphone-videod killing of Eric Garner by New York police on Staten Island galvanized a rainbow movement, led by Black and Brown youth.

Creative and determined protests have interrupted business as usual in streets, highways, shopping malls, restaurants — everywhere. Activists have faced up to tear gas and militarized SWAT (special weapons and tactics) units while chanting "Hands up, don't shoot." Union banners and "Fight for \$15 and a union" militants hit the streets in St. Louis, but organized labor action has been missing until now, even though the police killings continue.

Walter Scott murder and labor

The New York Times printed pictures on its April 8 front page from video capturing the moment when 50-year-old Walter Scott was shot in the back and killed — murdered — by a white cop in South Carolina. But the article didn't mention the Scott family relationship with International Longshore Association Local 1422 in Charleston, or that its union hall became a center for organizing the protests that followed.

Ken Riley, an ILA vice president and Local 1422 president, explained in a condolence statement issued by the ILA: "Walter Scott's brother, Rodney Scott, joined our workforce two years ago. One of Local 1422's dispatchers, Marion Green, and James Gibbs, a foreman, are all close relatives. The Scott family and the Riley family worshipped together for many years ... and remain close.

"Local 1422 recognizes that we have a social responsibility to our community and we take that responsibility very seriously. That is why Leonard Riley Jr. took the lead and arranged the organizational meeting for the protest at the North Charleston City Hall. He and other members also participated in the rally. Local 1422 will

Continued on page 7

Outrage explodes over Baltimore killer cops



Baltimore, April 20. See page 4.

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

Bulletin: As of the evening of April 21, thousands of mainly angry Black youth have spontaneously taken to the streets of Baltimore to protest in front of the police department against the police murder of Freddie Grey. A major protest is scheduled at Baltimore City Hall April 23 to demand the arrests of six white officers for the murder of Grey. Get updates on workers.org

Prison profiteers lobby

Ukraine

Refugee disaster

Global capitalism in a funk

Editorial: Legacy of May Day

Vietnam's tunnels

Bangladesh anniversary

FARC & Colombia

Low-wage workers rock the system



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Farmworkers at march for a \$15/hour minimum wage in Berkeley, Calif. See page 7

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'Extend tax foreclosure moratorium!'

Activists in Detroit picketed the Michigan state building on April 16 to demand a permanent moratorium on tax foreclosures and a reassessment of all homes located in Detroit and Wayne County, needed to reduce grossly inflated tax bills. They demanded the Michigan State Housing Development Authority use the remaining \$250 million in federal "Hardest Hit Homeowners" funds to pay back taxes and keep people in their homes. This money, which was meant to help low-income homeowners avoid foreclosure, is currently tagged for "blight removal," that is, tearing down homes throughout the city.

Popular pressure resulted March 31 in the Wayne County Treasurer's Office announcing a six-week deadline extension for delinquent tax payments. Activists with Moratorium NOW! Coalition say the delay must be extended past May 12 until the crisis can be resolved. There are still 37,000 owner-occupied home seizures pending, and more than 62,000 tax foreclosures overall are set to take place.

— Report and photo by Kris Hamel



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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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Mumia Abu-Jamal

International pressure blocks 'execution by neglect'

By **Betsey Piette**

April 19 — Worldwide pressure on Pennsylvania officials on behalf of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal has halted the state's efforts to execute him by medical neglect. Yet the struggle must continue to assure that Mumia receives the care necessary to reverse the ravages of months of untreated diabetes.

On March 30, Abu-Jamal fainted in the prison infirmary at the State Correctional Institution at Mahanoy in Frackville, Pa. He was rushed to a hospital in Pottsville, Pa., where he was diagnosed with diabetic shock. Although he had exhibited classic symptoms of diabetes and received three blood tests, prison doctors at SCI Mahanoy had never diagnosed or treated his condition.

Prison officials at first tried to keep family and supporters from visiting him but later relented after Abu-Jamal's supporters around the world flooded the prison superintendent and Department of Corrections' officials with thousands of calls. Demonstrators also protested outside the prison, at the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and in several cities.

Abu-Jamal has lost over 50 pounds. He still has fluctuating blood sugar levels and suffers from serious eczema, which has left his skin hard and crusted. His condition is stable, but he is still weak and in a lot of pain. His life remains at risk as long as medical treatment is left in the hands of the same prison infirmary doctors whose negligence nearly killed him.

Prison officials are considering but have yet to approve Abu-Jamal's request to be seen by endocrinology, dermatology

and dietary specialists of his choice.

Billions in profits for prison health care

Mumia's condition highlights the systemic neglect and abuse of prisoners in the U.S.'s vast and ever-growing system of mass incarceration. It is also a clear violation of the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits cruel and unusual punishment. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled this applies to the states.

The U.S. Bureau of Justice reported that some 40 percent of prisoners and jail inmates in 2011-2012 were exhibiting chronic medical conditions such as asthma, cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure — and diabetes. An estimated 80,000 suffer from diabetes, compounded by stress, lack of exercise and diets high in carbohydrates, salt and sugar.

A typical breakfast at Mahanoy, where Mumia is imprisoned, includes both oatmeal and a hefty slice of sugary cake. Compounding the poor nutrition is the sub-par medical care provided by Corizon Health Inc., a for-profit provider that reaps profits of some \$1.5 billion a year from prison health care contracts.

Corizon is the biggest for-profit correctional health provider in the U.S., responsible for prisoners in 27 states. This company is drawing increased scrutiny over allegations that it skimps on care for some of the 345,000 inmates in its charge. The company has paid millions in legal settlements over inadequate or bungled treatment that resulted in the deaths of several inmates. It has been sued for malpractice 660 times in the last five years.

In 2013, despite concerns about Corizon's costs, widespread negligence and abuse of prisoners, Philadelphia Mayor



Marylin Zuniga stood up for justice.

or Michael Nutter renewed the county's contract with this company, accepting its bid over a competing bid from Correctional Medical Care that offered to do the job for \$3.5 million less per year.

Support for students and teacher who spoke up

While the world's attention is focused on demanding the necessary treatment for Mumia, it also must call out the horrific conditions faced by the over 2.4 million other individuals warehoused in U.S. prisons. It must also demand that there be no retribution against individuals who act to shed light on this problem.

A case in point is the suspension of Orange, N.J., third-grade teacher Marylin Zuniga, who supported her students' wishes to send get-well letters to gravely ill Abu-Jamal. The letter writing was voluntary and extracurricular. Nevertheless, the Fraternal Order of Police, sup-

ported by biased news media, called for Zuniga's firing.

Instead of bowing to pressure to resign her post, Zuniga, with the backing of hundreds of Northern New Jersey community activists, stood her ground. People who flooded a school board meeting on Zuniga's case on April 14 discussed their own experiences at the hands of racist police.

Demonstrators demanded that Zuniga be allowed to address the hearing. Zuniga, a first-generation Peruvian immigrant, said, "On February 5, I presented a 'do-now' that stated: What is the main idea of this quote: 'So long as one just person is silenced, there is no justice'? This quote is by Mumia Abu-Jamal. Many of my students took it upon themselves to go home and do research about civil rights leaders discussed in class. In April, I mentioned to my students that Mumia was very ill and they told me they would like to write get-well letters to Mumia." (Newsone.com, April 17)

Zuniga called her students heroes "because they showed compassion, care, and love like any member of the community should show. They were mature enough to do that in a letter and it is incredible and admirable of them as well." High school students from the Philadelphia Student Union, which fights for school reform, also sent letters to Mumia and participated in protests on his behalf.

The fight to secure the medical care Mumia needs and to eventually win his freedom will continue. Demonstrations and other events are being planned over the weekend of April 24-26, when Abu-Jamal turns 61. Many will focus on educating a new generation of activists about his case. □

Prison profiteers drive detention of immigrants

By **Fred Goldstein**

The U.S. prison system is more and more becoming a profit center for big private corporations. The detention of undocumented immigrants fleeing persecution has become a special source of "profit from misery."

A new study from "Grassroots Leadership" documents how the largest private prison corporations in the country, the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and the GEO Group, have spent millions of dollars lobbying the Department of Homeland Security committee in the Senate for harsh immigrant detention laws. Together, they run 90 percent of the DHS detention centers.

These harsh laws ratchet up detentions, which then ratchet up the profits of the CCA and GEO.

The report was timed to coincide with a renewed hunger strike by women and children at the infamous Karnes County detention center for women and children in southern Texas, run by GEO. The hunger strike was launched to protest poor conditions, mistreatment and the unjust detention of families fleeing for their lives. During a previous hunger strike at Karnes this year, 78 mothers signed a letter demanding release for themselves and their children.

Thousands of women and children have been held in detention camps, many

of them unable to pay bail of from \$4,000 to \$7,500. Many have no legal council at deportation hearings. People are held not knowing when their cases will be heard and whether they will be sent back to their home countries to face repression.

Prison lobby spends millions for detentions

In 2009, at a time when detentions were in a multi-year decline, Sen. Robert Byrd, then chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, inserted in an appropriations bill that "funding made available ... shall maintain a level of not less than 33,400 detention beds." The number was raised to 34,000 in 2013.

The DHS interpreted this language as meaning that this number of beds would be filled on a daily basis. This became known as the "immigrant detention quota" or the "bed mandate." The quota became the driver of an increasingly aggressive immigration enforcement policy.

The CCA spent \$10,560,000 between 2008 and 2014 lobbying for tougher immigration enforcement, according to the Grassroots Leadership study. The GEO spent half a million dollars on lobbying between 2011 and 2014.

The coauthor of the report, Bethany Carson, said in a press statement: "The immigrant quota is taxpayer-financed insurance for private prison corporations that the government will maintain their bottom line at all costs. Now we are

seeing these same corporations invest millions in the Congressional committee that created that insurance policy for them." (Common Dreams, April 16)

Prison rule by violence

The DHS gave the CCA the right to run a 50-acre compound in Dilley, Texas, that will ultimately house 2,400 women and children. But this corporation has a history of fostering inmate violence as a method of running its prisons. In 2008, the CCA was charged with having four times as many violent incidents in its Idaho Correctional Center as all the other seven state prisons combined. It was called "the gladiator school" by inmates. (Newsweek, Dec. 20, 2014)

The CCA runs the Dawson State jail for nonviolent offenders in Dallas, called "the worst state jail in Texas" by the Texas Observer. In 2010, 45-year-old Pamela Weatherby died because the prison replaced her diabetes medicine with a cheaper variety of insulin. In 2004, 30-year-old Ashleigh Parker died of pneumonia when the prison authorities denied her life-saving antibiotics.

Rebellions against mistreatment broke out in two CCA-run facilities in Mississippi. Two inmates at the Eloy Detention Center run by the CCA outside Phoenix, Ariz., committed suicide three days apart. Claims of rape and other sexual abuse have been lodged at CCA-run facil-

ities, as well as throughout the detention center system.

The CCA contributed funds to 30 of the 36 legislators in the Arizona state Legislature who drafted SB 1070, which required police to detain people if there is "a reasonable suspicion" that they are undocumented. The legislation was drafted by the American Legislative Exchange Council, a right-wing think tank, while the CCA was present. (Newsweek)

The two private prison corporations, CCA and GEO, whose only product is the misery of the prisoners and detainees in their custody, enjoyed \$48 million in government-guaranteed profits in 2014 and more than \$250 million over the last several years. This money comes from taxpayers, mostly workers and the middle class.

The Grassroots Leadership study uncovers the collaboration between the capitalist state and the corporations in its raw form. As the capitalist class finds it more and more difficult to find profitable investment in the stagnating economy, it resorts more and more to parasitic, unproductive ways of milking the state for profits. Hundreds of millions of dollars that could and should be used for schools, health care, child care, funding of jobs and more is being forked over to private prisons.

That is capitalism. That is the profit system. And that is why it must be done away with. □

Baltimore erupts over fatal police beating

By Sharon Black
Baltimore

Protests over the police killing of 25-year-old Freddie Carlos Grey erupted over the April 18-19 weekend after the announcement of the young African-American man's death on April 18. Grey was brutally and callously dragged to a police wagon after being thrown to the ground because he could not walk. Eventually taken to the hospital, he was put on life support after suffering three broken vertebrae and a severed spinal cord on April 12.

Hundreds of people from West Baltimore went into the streets both days

protesting in front of the Western District police station. At the request of Grey's family, the People's Power Assembly and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference staged a downtown protest and rally in front of City Hall on April 20 at 9 a.m. The protesters then marched to police headquarters, where police blocked the entrance to the station.

This brutal case has garnered national press coverage. The PPA, SCLC and the community have called a planning meeting on April 22 to discuss next steps. Protests are continuing every night at the Western District station. For more information, call 443.221.3775. □

Eric Harris and Tulsa's racist history

By Stephen Millies

White millionaire Robert Bates, a former insurance executive, claims he "accidentally" killed Eric Harris, an unarmed Black man, on April 2 in Tulsa, Okla. Bates, a volunteer reserve sheriff's deputy, says he thought he had pulled a Taser on Harris instead of his gun.

That's the same fairy tale that transit cop Johannes Mehserle told after he killed Oscar Grant III at the Fruitvale Bay Area Rapid Transit station in Oakland, Calif.

Oklahoma has executed 112 people since 2012, but Bates won't be one of them. There's never been a millionaire executed in the United States. Bates has been charged — but only with second-degree manslaughter.

Racism isn't an accident. And it's not an accident that Bates was allowed to roam the streets with a gun and Taser torture weapon, even though he's just a volunteer cop.

Big Oil and racist terror

Tulsa has a long history of racist violence. Between April 30 and May 1, 1921, as many as 300 African Americans were killed by white racist mobs. Incendiary bombs were dropped and rifle assaults on the Black community were carried out from airplanes.

Lurid headlines in the Tulsa Tribune helped spark the bloody terror, which included Black people being hanged in the streets. Copies of the racist Tribune rag for the date of the massacre have mysteriously disappeared from libraries.

The prosperous African-American neighborhood of Greenwood, known as

"Black Wall Street," was destroyed. Hundreds of Black-owned businesses were burned down while thousands of African Americans were forced to flee the city.

The aim of the massacre was to prevent African Americans from benefiting from Tulsa's oil boom.

Big oil continues to dominate Tulsa, a city of 400,000 with a metropolitan region of a little more than 1 million. In nearby Bartlesville are the headquarters of oil giants Phillips 66, which had revenues of \$171 billion in 2013, and ConocoPhillips, which had sales of \$62 billion in 2012. The Williams Companies — whose \$26 billion in assets includes pipelines, natural gas and oil deposits — are also located in Tulsa.

With this amount of loot, it would easy to pay the justified reparations for the racist massacre of 1921. But Big Oil and its local governments haven't paid a nickel to the survivors and their descendants.

Instead they provided a welcome wagon for fascist charlatans like the late Rev. Billy Hargis. For decades the television and radio empire of this segregationist and warmonger spread hate coast-to-coast.

Another favorite of Tulsa's elite was the late faith healer Oral Roberts, who cruelly exploited people with disabilities. He actually tried to establish a medical school. Tulsa's Oral Roberts University, named for this quack, has over 3,000 students.

But there is another Tulsa. Black, Latino and Latina, Native, Asian and white workers and poor people there want justice for Eric Harris. They want an end to police terror and poverty wages. They will lead more struggles in Tulsa and throughout Oklahoma. □

PHOTO: FREEDOM INC.



Madison, Wis.

In southwest Michigan

Justice denied for Civil Rights leader

By Abayomi Azikiwe
St. Joseph, Mich.

Read entire article at workers.org.

Another postconviction motions hearing took place on April 14 in St. Joseph, Mich., involving the conviction by an all-white jury late last year of a leading Black Civil Rights activist, the Rev. Edward Pinkney, who was denied justice by a corporate-controlled racist system in the southwest region of the state.

Rev. Pinkney, of the Black Autonomy Network Community Organization, was in the courtroom in St. Joseph, the seat of Berrien County. Defense Attorney Tat Parish requested that handcuffs be removed from Pinkney. But Judge Sterling Schrock denied the request.

Judge Schrock continues to preside over the Pinkney case. The BANCO leader was convicted on five felony counts of forgery in 2014 involving the purported changing of dates on recall petitions designed to remove Benton Harbor Mayor James Hightower.

Schrock said removing the handcuffs was up to the discretion of the Michigan Department of Corrections. But no MDOC officials were in the courtroom, since Pinkney had been transported to the Berrien County jail the night before the hearing from the Lakeland Correctional Facility in Coldwater, where he is being held on a sentence of 30 to 120 months.

Two motions resulted in decisions that clearly violate the civil rights of Pinkney, a long-time county organizer. The first stemmed from a prosecution motion requesting financial restitution to Mayor Hightower due to purported harm to him by Pinkney during the recall campaign.

The judge ordered Pinkney to pay restitution to Mayor Hightower in the amount

of \$1,736.17, saying the politician suffered economic and psychological damage. Hightower did not even bother to appear in court, and prosecutor Michael Sepic, who submitted the motion, argued on his behalf.

Human Resources Director Susan Leach of Lakeland Hospital, where Hightower is employed, was subpoenaed by the defense to testify. She reported that Hightower is a salaried employee who did not lose any pay during the course of the recall campaign or during Pinkney's trial where he testified. Nonetheless, the court ruled against Pinkney.

The other motion by the defense requested a new trial based on the connection between juror Gail Freehland and the family of Berrien County Clerk Sharon Tyler, who was a key witness in the prosecution of Pinkney.

Relationships were clearly established through a series of witnesses called by the defense, constituting a clear conflict of interest.

Prosecutor Sepic argued the defense arguments seeking to draw connections and social relationships between these personalities involved in the trial were "preposterous" and no connections were established.

Defense attorney Parish replied that "there is every reason to suggest connections," which were not disclosed during the jury screening process.

Judge Schrock denied the motion for a new trial. He re-emphasized that Pinkney did not qualify for bond pending the outcome of his appeal, which is being filed to overturn his convictions on the felony charges.

A demonstration against Whirlpool products sold at Lowe's in Southfield, Mich., is scheduled for April 24 to expose the role of corporations in the politics of Berrien County and southwest Michigan. □

Thousands protest police terror

By LeiLani Dowell

Events were held around the country on April 14 to protest police terror under the theme of "Shut it down." The militant actions, involving many youth activists and organizers, were violently repressed by the police in many areas. Among the cities where protests were held were Atlanta; Chicago; Cleveland; Detroit; Ferguson, Mo.; Gainesville, Fla.; Greensboro, N.C.; Honolulu; Houston; and Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, San Jose and Stockton in California.

In **New York** protesters, including many youth of color, marched for hours from Union Square down Broadway and over the Brooklyn Bridge. They took over the vehicular side of the bridge even when cops tried to prevent them from doing so. Some 50 people were arrested.

After walking out of school earlier in the day in **Madison, Wis.**, and then engaging in street protests, including occupations and cultural activities, youth and student protesters were peacefully assembling for an evening protest when they were surrounded by cops in dozens of vehicles and viciously attacked. At least 10 protesters, including Young, Gifted and Black Coalition leader Brandi Grayson, were arrested and ticketed for municipal citations. Grayson was

violently thrown to the ground and then dragged before she was arrested. The protest demanded justice for Tony Robinson, a 19-year-old African-American youth who was shot dead by Madison cop Matt Kenney on March 6.

"This is a clear example of the state violence we have been talking about for months," said Grayson. "They brutalized me, and they arrested our babies who were mourning and protesting against the police violence that led to the murder of their friend, Tony Robinson."

YGB has also joined with the Coalition For Justice in Milwaukee to protest the murder of Dontre Hamilton, along with organizations such as Wisconsin Jobs Now to demand living wages for low-wage workers and with unions to protest right-to-work-for-less laws.

Black people in Wisconsin face some of the worst conditions in the U.S., including the highest per capita rate of Black prisoners and infant mortality rates three times that of whites. Dozens of Black men and women have been killed by police in the last 10 years. The union-busting provisions of Act 10, right-to-work-for-less, and other austerity laws implemented in the last few years are negatively impacting Black communities the worst.

Toni Arenstein and the Milwaukee WW Bureau contributed to this report.

SYRIA

How NBC lied to promote regime change

By Chris Fry

When artist Frederic Remington cabled back to his publisher from Cuba in 1897 that “There will be no war,” media mogul William Randolph Hearst cabled back: “You furnish the pictures and I’ll furnish the war.” (Time, Oct. 27, 1947).

Hearst, along with news business magnate Joseph Pulitzer, beat the war drums successfully for the first big U.S. imperialist adventure: the Spanish-American War of 1898. The U.S. government succeeded in grabbing Spain’s overseas possessions to begin its own expanding empire, taking over Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

A hundred and some years later, five journalists, including NBC correspondent Richard Engel, were kidnapped in Syria in December 2012 and held captive for several days. After his release, Engel announced that they had been kidnapped and held by Shiite militia forces loyal to the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

Engel, who is fluent in Arabic, also said they had been rescued by forces of the Pentagon-backed Free Syrian Army, af-

ter a deadly gun battle.

NBC News and MSNBC both blamed not only the Assad government but also Hezbollah and Iran for the kidnapping. The rest of the corporate media fell in line behind this story.

At the time, several experts questioned whether Assad loyalists had actually kidnapped the news crew. They said that the kidnapping was more likely conducted by forces within the Free Syrian Army itself, by a group called the North Idlib Falcons Brigade, led by Azzo Qassab and Shukri Ajouj. Many pointed out that these groups have often misled their kidnapping victims into believing that their captors were Syrian government forces.

As reported this year: “NBC executives were informed of Mr. Ajouj and Mr. Qassab’s possible involvement during and after Mr. Engel’s captivity, according to current and former NBC employees and others who helped search for Mr. Engel, including political activists and security professionals. Still, the network moved quickly to put Mr. Engel on the air with an account blaming Shiite captors and did not present the other possible version

of events.” (New York Times, April 16)

At the time of the kidnapping, U.S. imperialism was waging a media blitz to step up military support to the Free Syrian Army. As progressive journalist Glenn Greenwald writes: “Then-Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee John Kerry was openly discussing ways for the U.S. to aid the rebels to bring about regime change. Sen. Joe Lieberman was saying: ‘I hope the international community and the U.S. will provide assistance to the Syrian Free Army in the various ways we can.’ Then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, while ruling out direct military intervention, said: ‘We have to redouble our efforts outside of the United Nations with those allies and partners who support the Syrian people’s right to have a better future.’” (firstlook.org, April 16)

Backing the murderous organizations fighting the Syrian government was far more important to the executives of the giant NBC Corporation than revealing the truth to the public about who was responsible for the Engel kidnapping. This U.S. imperialist policy has cost the lives of thousands of Syrian people and driv-

en millions from their homes. But to the corporate wizards of NBC and the rest of Wall Street, that means little next to maintaining their grip on the oil treasure in the Middle East.

So what has changed? Why is the true story about the kidnapping coming out now?

The policymakers for U.S. imperialism, facing the unraveling of their political and military strategy in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Libya and elsewhere, are now split on Syria and how to deal with Iran. Is this why NBC and the rest of the corporate media have decided to rewrite the story of the Engel kidnapping to match more closely the current strategy of the Obama administration?

Not that this has stopped the more right-wing imperialist elements from trying to torpedo these moves at every turn. Whatever faction comes out on top, the Engel kidnapping story, as Greenwald describes, “is the type of systematic journalistic deceit and propaganda that we have seen over and over, almost always on the side and service of the U.S. government’s agenda of endless war.” □

Day of Solidarity with Venezuela blasts U.S. threats

By Brenda Ryan
New York

Shouting, “Venezuela is not a threat! Repeal the decree now!” activists rallied in Times Square on April 15 to demand that President Barack Obama keep U.S. hands off the Bolivarian revolution.

The protest was part of the “International Days of Solidarity with Venezuela” called in response to Obama’s declaration that Venezuela is a threat to U.S. security. In the U.S., in addition to New York City, demonstrations were held in Milwaukee, Buffalo, San Francisco and Detroit from April 11 through 19.

On March 5, Obama had issued an executive order calling Venezuela “an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States” and announcing that the U.S. would be levying sanctions on Venezuela under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

Speakers at the rally noted the absurdity of this statement and pointed to the real threats people in this country face: police brutality, unemployment, low wages, poverty, and the lack of housing and education. They also noted the support that Venezuela has given to poor and working people in the U.S., including providing heating oil to people in the South Bronx and New England.

The U.S. demonstrators added their voices to the millions around the world speaking out in support of Venezuela. One speaker reported that Venezuela has collected 13 million signatures from people around the world calling on Obama to retract the executive order, which these millions consider a prelude to invasion.

On April 1, there was a “United Nations Day of Solidarity with Venezuela,” during which leaders from numerous countries condemned the U.S. decree and declared their solidarity with Cuba.

And at the “Seventh Summit of the Americas” in Panama on April 10 and 11, Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, Bolivian President Evo Morales and Ecuadoran President Rafael Correa criticized the U.S.’s hostility to Venezuela and voiced support for Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

The U.S. government has been working to overturn the revolutionary progress in Venezuela ever since the election of President Hugo Chávez in 1998, when the new government began to improve dramatically the standard of living for the poorest people. Now President Maduro is carrying on this legacy, with the support of political and mass organizations in Venezuela.

In New York, people marched from Times Square to the statue of Simón Bolívar at 59th Street and 6th Avenue at the



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Marchers in New York join millions who reject sanctions.

foot of Central Park. Bolívar, “the Liberator,” led the struggle that won independence for Bolivia, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela from Spain in the early 19th century.

In Buffalo, protesters gathered near Buffalo State College. Several people passing by stopped to express their appreciation for the rally and cars going by signaled their support.

The National Call for Solidarity was endorsed by the International Action Center, the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle,

the Alliance for Global Justice, the United National Anti-War Coalition, Honduras USA Resistencia, and the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights.

In Milwaukee the protest on April 19 was sponsored by the Milwaukee Anti-War Committee and supported by numerous labor-community organizations, including the Latin American Solidarity Committee, Fight Imperialism Stand Together, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement and Workers World Party. □

Detroit remembers Viola Liuzzo

By Joe Mchahwar
Detroit

In an era when many Civil Rights icons are unknown to youth, even those in the struggle, people are still working to keep alive the legacy of those who gave everything for justice.

April 11 would have been the 90th birthday of Detroit Civil Rights martyr Viola Gregg Liuzzo. A mother of five and a nursing student at Wayne State University, Liuzzo heeded the call of Dr. Martin Luther King

Jr. to organize in Selma, Ala., following the “Bloody Sunday” voting rights march.

Liuzzo was only in Selma for a matter of days when the Ku Klux Klan caught up with her. On March 25, 1965, Liuzzo, who was white, and Leroy Moton, a 19-year-old African American, were shutting people in and out of Selma when a car full of Klan members maneuvered to drive them off the road. Shooting from their car, the racists hit Liuzzo twice in the head, killing her instantly. Moton was wounded and escaped the attackers.

One of the Klansmen involved in the terrorist attack was an FBI informant. The FBI then led a vicious smear campaign against Liuzzo and her family. Crosses were burned in front of her family’s home in Detroit.

On April 10 this year, Wayne State University granted its first-ever posthumous degree to Liuzzo, an honorary juris (law) doctorate. WSU also placed a plaque on the campus in her memory and created a scholarship in her name at the School of Nursing. A park named after Liuzzo has

been falling into disrepair for years, but a grassroots effort for its revitalization is now underway. Other events around the city also marked Liuzzo’s birthday and contributions to the struggle.

Viola Liuzzo and other martyrs for justice will continue to inspire generations of revolutionary youth. Liuzzo’s courage will be forever ingrained in Detroit’s consciousness.

Joe Mchahwar is a Detroit organizer with the revolutionary youth group FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together).

Wisconsin austerity budget

Teachers, students, parents march against cuts

By Workers World
Milwaukee Bureau

Hundreds of members of the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association, students and community supporters protested in Milwaukee April 18 to end cuts to K-12 and higher education, protest toxic testing and charter schools, and demand adequate resources and services for teachers, staff, students and communities.

The April 18 demonstration is part of a series of mass protests since January when Gov. Scott Walker unveiled his 2015-17 austerity budget. They are a continuation of the people's occupation of the state Capitol in 2011. The effects of the 2013-2015 state budget, which included the largest cuts to public education in Wisconsin history, are now painfully felt in every city, town and village. The vast majority of the state's poor and working people are demanding: Hands off public education!

The 2015-17 proposed austerity budget, like the previous one, attacks every sector of the working class and oppressed, including environmental and prevailing wage laws, unemployment insurance, FoodShare benefits, senior care, project labor agreements and public education. Wall Street organizations such as Americans For Prosperity, American Legislative Exchange Council and the Heritage Foundation are fast attempting to eviscerate progressive Wisconsin laws won decades ago through mass struggle.

On behalf of Wall Street, Walker is now proposing at least a \$300 million cut to the 26-campus, world-renowned University of Wisconsin System. He also wants to sever the system from legislative control and replace it with a



PHOTO: MILWAUKEE TEACHERS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

“public authority” body. Although Walker hasn't revealed specifics, research suggests the governor would appoint all board members of the public authority, leading to even more privatization of the UW System.

Supporters of public education have grave concerns about how these moves would affect state employees. Once jobs are outsourced to private employers at below-poverty wages and inferior or no benefits, those workers would not be eligible for state pensions and health care systems. That would destroy the civil service system and strip tens of thousands of employees of hard-won rights.

The proposed budget cuts would also impose hardships on working-class students, students of color, women and lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer students who already faced tuition increases under both Democratic and Republican administrations. Now the UW System faces limited academic offerings, program closures and staff layoffs.

Education is a human right!

But faculty, staff, students and community supporters of the UW System are not accepting these austerity cuts. The proposals have sparked resistance at UW campuses and beyond statewide.

Protests have been mounted by such organizations as UW Students Against Education Cuts, the UWM

Coalition of Progressive Organizations, United Council, Youth Empowered in the Struggle and numerous faculty senates. Unions such as American Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, which represents UW System faculty and state employees, and a wide array of labor, community and African-American organizations are coalescing to beat back these attacks.

Youth and student led protests have taken place at UW Green Bay, UW Stevens Point, UW Madison, UW Milwaukee, UW Eau Claire and other campuses. More are being organized. Solidarity is being built among many struggles, including public education, low-wage workers, the fight against police terror and union busting.

Ben Herrenbruck, a student at the Milwaukee Area Technical College and a member of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), is participating in many of these protests.

“Education is a human right and should be free. The bankers, corporate thieves and their political servants fear us ... around this slogan because it suggests a fundamental connection among various struggles. More are beginning to realize that austerity in education has the same root cause as other attacks, including police terror against Black, Brown and other oppressed peoples; union busting; low-wages; and imperialist war. The root cause is capitalism. As our resistance takes on an increasingly anti-capitalist character, it's possible to form bonds of solidarity with all sectors of the 99% against the common enemy, Wall Street.”

For more information, visit saveouruwm.com, [facebook.com/groups/UWStudentsAgainstCuts](https://www.facebook.com/groups/UWStudentsAgainstCuts) and wibailoutpeople.org.

Victory for bakery worker

Morima Ortiz and others had been picketing Kenny's Bakery in northern Manhattan for over a year. Ortiz worked there for eight years and says she experienced wage theft and verbal and physical abuse while being paid below the minimum wage. With the help of the Laundry Workers Center, Ortiz won her legal claim. Supporters celebrated her victory on April 13 in front of Liberato restaurant, whose workers are still fighting for their rights.

— Report and photo
by Catherine Zeitz



On the picket line

By Matty Starrdust and Sue Davis

Low-wage restaurant workers: '#StopTheOtherNRA'

Several hundred low-wage restaurant workers and their supporters took to the streets of the U.S. capital on April 15 to rally against the National Restaurant Association, the lobbying group pushing to keep 11 million tipped workers making poverty wages. The protest, organized by Restaurant Opportunity Centers United and its Coalition to #StopTheOtherNRA, included a pop-up “restaurant” that blocked four busy intersections in the D.C. metro area to prevent busloads of NRA lobbyists from meeting with policymakers. The NRA, whose membership includes McDonald's and other Fortune 500 corporate bigwigs, lobbies against initiatives to raise the tipped minimum wage (a measly \$2.13 an hour since 1991!) to the federal minimum wage and give workers much-needed paid sick days.

Protesters called for “One Fair Wage” for all workers. That would help tipped workers, about 80 percent of whom are women, nearly half of whom live in or near poverty, according to the ROC United report released April 14. (ROCUnited.org, April 15)

Equal Pay Day, April 14

On Equal Pay Day, women's, civil rights and labor groups observed that women must work 104 days longer -- until April 14 -- to earn what men earned the previous year. A new study published that day by the National Partnership for Women and Families shows flagrant discrimination exists against all women workers, whose pay averages just 78 cents for every dollar earned by men. This gender-, class- and nationality-based inequality runs rampant through all jobs, careers and professions, from the lowest paid to the highest. But, the study shows, it falls hardest on mothers who work full time, who are paid “just 71 cents for every dollar paid to fathers who work full time, year round. Single mothers are paid just 58 cents for every dollar paid to fathers. And African-American and Latina mothers suffer the biggest disparities, being paid just 54 cents and 49 cents, respectively, for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic fathers.” This causes, says NPWF President Debra L. Ness, “real and lasting damage to women, families, communities and our nation.” (nationalpartnership.org, April 13)

What's the solution? Fight for a living wage for all -- just as thousands of workers did the next day!

Bus drivers vote to unionize

Bus drivers on both coasts have organized successful union drives. Double-decker tour bus drivers working for Go New York Tours elected to join Transport Workers Union Local 100 in a landslide vote on April 14. TWU Local 100 now represents over 40,000 drivers in New York City. Among the drivers' grievances are low wages and denial of bathroom and lunch breaks. (NYDailyNews.com, April 14)

The Teamsters welcomed shuttle bus drivers from five major Silicon Valley, Calif., tech companies on Feb. 17. Drivers at Yahoo, Apple, Genentech, eBay and Zynga voted to organize, citing low wages and unfair scheduling as their main grievances. The drivers seek the same contract won by Facebook drivers earlier that month, which guarantees them \$33,000 more annually in wages and benefits packages. The Teamsters now represent some 65 percent of Silicon Valley shuttle bus drivers. “Our next step now is to move forward and pick up the rest of the drivers,” says Teamsters Local 853 Vice President Rome Aloise. (MercuryNews.com, Feb. 27)

Darigold dairy poisons drinking water

On Jan. 14., a U.S. District Court found that Cow Palace, a dairy supplier in the multibillion-dollar Darigold consortium headquartered in Seattle, poisoned the drinking water of thousands of people in Washington's Yakima Valley. The court found that the dairy consistently ignored U.S. Department of Agriculture recommendations for safe storage and use of cow manure in agricultural fields. As a result, it is estimated that millions of gallons of manure leaked into the residential water supply, endangering as many as 24,000 people. Risks of exposure include cancer, heart disease and stroke.

In a related incident, a Cow Palace dairy worker drowned on Feb. 24 after his truck toppled into a cow manure storage reservoir that had been improperly secured. The United Farm Workers is asking supporters to email Darigold CEO Jim Wegner to demand adequate safety protocols. See the link under Take Action on ufw.org. □

'Fight for \$15' tells bosses to raise wages

By Sue Davis

Low-wage workers in the tens of thousands, in 263 cities and towns, went on strike from coast to coast on April 15 for \$15 an hour and union representation without retaliation. It signaled a growing escalation in the workers' struggle in the U.S.

Joined by protests in 40 countries on five continents — from San Paulo, Brazil, to Seoul; Amsterdam to Auckland, New Zealand; Toronto to Tokyo — April 15 represents an emerging global movement against low wages.

Nothing like this upsurge of working-class protest has been seen in the U.S. since the national May Day demonstration in 2006, led by thousands of migrants from many nations.

Organizers deliberately called the nationwide protest on April 15, Tax Day, to emphasize that taxpayers subsidize mega-billion-dollar imperialist giants like McDonald's and Walmart that pay workers poverty wages. A study, released April 13 by the Labor Center at the University of California Berkeley, reports \$153 billion for such public assistance as food stamps, Medicaid and housing subsidies is needed to sustain underpaid working families.

A report by the National Employment Law Project, also released April 13, found nearly half the U.S. workforce (42 percent) makes less than \$15 an hour. Women and people of color are disproportionately represented in the underpaid workforce, with over 50 percent of African-American workers and nearly 60 percent of Latino/a workers making less than \$15.

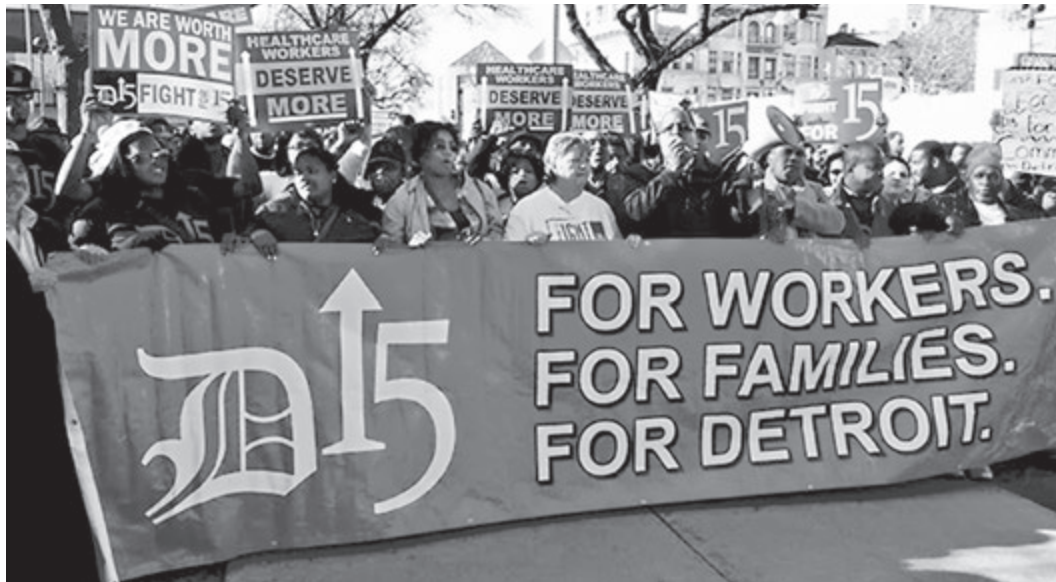
Three more layers broaden struggle

Workers in the fast food industry started this struggle two and a half years ago. This time other sectors were also on board with walkouts, marches, rallies and die-ins, from Atlanta to Los Angeles. In addition to members of community and faith-based groups and unionized workers proudly showing solidarity, three more groups came out, some for the first time: workers in other low-wage jobs, activists in the Black Lives Matter movement and students.

Legions of underpaid, unorganized home care and child care workers, car washers, adjunct and graduate student teachers, retail and dollar store clerks, unorganized construction laborers, airport service and laundry workers, and all kinds of part-time, temporary and contract workers joined the Fight for \$15.

For the first time, manufacturing workers joined the strike. Members of the United Electrical Workers Local 150 in Whitakers, N.C., who work at the Cummins Inc. Rocky Mount Engine Plant, held a press conference to announce their support for Fight for \$15: "Thousands of manufacturing workers, including over 100 RMEP workers, are paid even less than the \$10.10/hr minimum wage President Obama has advocated. We are also fighting against companies' violating our union rights." (UE press release)

Voting spontaneously to walk off the job in Chicago



WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

were a group of about 50 unorganized drivers and security guards at Brink's, the global security company. They're fed up because the company recently reduced its contribution to their 401(k)s; now pays for only five hours of overtime, though they often put in 60- to 80-hour weeks; and new messengers and drivers make less than \$15, while United Postal Service and FedEx workers make over \$20 an hour. (In These Times, April 15)

African-American youth linked the Black Lives Matter movement to the low-wage struggle. A banner headline on the Facebook page of Fast Food Forward proclaims: "Economic justice is racial justice." Dramatic links were made when early-morning demonstrators in Brooklyn, N.Y., picketed a McDonald's wearing T-shirts reading, "I can't breathe, Fight for \$15." And a die-in was staged at noon in front of a McDonald's on the Upper West Side of Manhattan for four minutes and 15 seconds — to symbolize the struggle.

"We joined the Fight for \$15 because, for us, racial justice is economic justice," said Charlene A. Carruthers, national director of Black Youth 100. "We believe that Black workers have paid undeserved debts to greedy corporations for far too long." Her nonprofit organization started

the Black Work Matters campaign, also known as Fight for \$15. (Common Dreams, April 15)

After demonstrating in Memphis, more than 200 workers and students, joined by forces from Little Rock, Tenn., boarded chartered buses and several small vans for the five-hour drive to join the Fight for \$15 action in Ferguson, Mo. College and university students came out in droves, driven by the burden of student loans and foreseeing a debt-ridden future. "It's important for students to be involved," said Robert Ascherman, a student activist from New York University, "because even if we aren't working for McDonald's or Walmart, we are still on McDonald's or Walmart type of wages." Even now, some students have to choose between buying food or buying textbooks.

Mary Kay Henry, Service Employees international president, said that students on 170 campuses were expected to join the struggle. On a recent tour of six colleges, she "saw students everywhere on fire to fight for their future and link arms with these workers ... to change this low-wage economy."

Even the Wall Street Journal, the ruling-class mouthpiece, ran an article April 15 stating that though \$15 an hour for fast food workers "seems a real stretch" ... [it] "may not be such a reach," citing cities like Seattle and San Francisco where workers are now making \$15 an hour and noting struggles in many cities and states to boost their minimum wage.

The working-class genie that popped out of the capitalist bottle on April 15 — asserting the collective might of a determined working class — cannot be shoved back into that bottle.

Coverage of April 15 actions by WW activists in cities around the country is posted on workers.org.



PHOTO: BILL HUGHES

Dock workers to 'shut it down'

Continued from page 1

continue to stand up and speak out against injustice in any form, whether it is racial profiling, racial discrimination or, as in this case, racial homicide." (www.ilaunion.org/news)

The South Carolina AFL-CIO thanked ILWU Local 10 for its solidarity: "You supply courage to the members of the SC AFL-CIO as we continue to address the unwarranted killing of Walter Scott. We will share your message of solidarity and reach out to workers around the country to join with us on May 1st in actions to protest the continuing unjustified killings."

ILWU forged in fighting racism, police killings

Local 10 actions — including rescheduled union meetings — are deep in the union's tradition of fighting racism and injustice. The resolution included some examples.

Every year the ILWU shuts down all West Coast ports to remember "Bloody Thursday" — July 5, 1934. The San Francisco port bosses had unleashed a torrent of vigilan-

tes, mounted police and tear gas to beat back the maritime strikers and reopen the ports. Cops shot two San Francisco workers, Nick Bordoise and Howard Sperry, in the back, killing them near the union hall. Tens of thousands marched in their funeral, sparking the 1934 General Strike.

That massive labor solidarity won union control of the hiring hall and the coast contract uniting all 29 Western ports. It ended the racist shape-up system on the docks that had pitted worker against worker based on race, national origin, kickbacks or other favors — all to the bosses' benefit.

Strike leader Harry Bridges said, "The owners have only one objective, the destruction of labor unions. ... If we can't control the hiring hall, then the right of longshore [workers] to organize is just a farce. ... The unions will be destroyed by discrimination and blacklisting."

Local 10's recent resolution notes that "ILWU has a proud history of standing up against racial injustice, like the 1984 anti-apartheid action and the 2010 shutdown for justice for Oscar Grant." In 1984 South African

cargo sat in the harbor for 10 days. The courts lined up with apartheid, ordering the ILWU to unload the ship, but community pickets blocked the entrance to pier 80, refusing to allow business as usual with the racist apartheid South African regime.

Oscar Grant was killed by a transit cop at the Bay Area Rapid Transit's Fruitvale station on Jan. 1, 2009. It was one of the first killings captured on camera phone. Local 10's Oct. 23, 2010, port shutdown — of the type planned for the May 1 rally at Oakland City Hall — called for: "Stop police brutality! Jail killer cops! Defend jobs and public education! Stop the wars and repression!"

The ILWU's 1971 Convention "voiced strong support for the defense of Angela Davis and pledged a renewed battle against racism." ILWU's policy statement outlined the role of labor: "Because unions must be spokes[people] for all the people who work for a living, and because we must be in advance of all social and economic programs for progress, we have no choice but to take the lead in eliminating the scourge of racism from our land." (ILWU Dispatcher, April 1971) □

As U.S. troops arrive in Ukraine

Opponents of coup regime are murdered

By Greg Butterfield

April 20 — In just four days in mid-April, three well-known critics of the U.S.-backed Ukrainian junta were murdered in the capital city Kiev. These deaths followed more than a dozen other suspicious deaths and alleged suicides of regime opponents.

The three killed were former parliamentary deputy Oleg Kalashnikov and journalists Sergei Sukhobok and Oles Buzina.

Immediately after Buzina's death near his home in Kiev on April 16, Ukrainian Interior Ministry advisor and parliamentary deputy Anton Gerashchenko posted on his Facebook page: "Everyone who was involved in the organization and financing of Antimaidan or other unlawful acts against Maidan and feels a threat to their life, please contact the law enforcement agencies, so as not to follow the path of Kalashnikov and Buzina." (mk.ru) In other words: Turn yourself in or be killed.

Maidan was the pro-imperialist, anti-communist movement that carried out an illegal coup against the elected government of Ukraine in February 2014. Antimaidan was the name given to the anti-fascist resistance which arose throughout the country after the coup. In the primarily Russian-speaking southeastern region, Antimaidan gave birth to a struggle for independence.

The murders occurred shortly after a Ukrainian website called Mirotvorets ("The Peacekeeper") published extensive personal information on the targets. The website, which calls itself a "resource for Ukrainian law enforcement," maintains an extensive hit list of figures considered enemies by the junta.

An investigative report published at politrussia.com says: "The website The

Peacekeeper is being used as a 'bulletin board' for imminent death notices against those who dare to speak the truth about what is really going on in Kiev. Keep in mind that the website is actively supported by the advisor to the Interior Minister of Ukraine, Anton Gerashchenko."

An analysis of the website found that it was registered in Texas under a bogus name, and is connected to NATO's main web domain. The full report, with relevant screenshots, is available in English at the website slavyangrad.org.

Meanwhile, an April 17 report in the Kyiv Post, an English-language mouthpiece of the far-right government, said a group taking its name from the Ukrainian Insurgent Army had claimed responsibility for the assassinations of Kalashnikov and Buzina, along with several others over the past month.

Repression mounts

The assassination campaign takes place in the context of three key political developments: The April 10 ban on communist propaganda, symbols and "glorification of Soviet history" enacted by the Verkhovna Rada, or parliament; a law passed the same day enshrining as "freedom fighters" ultraright Ukrainian nationalist groups that collaborated with Nazi German occupation during World War II and the CIA during the Cold War; and the arrival of U.S. troops on Ukrainian soil.

Some 290 commandos of the U.S. Army's 173rd Airborne Division arrived April 17 in Lvov, western Ukraine, after what Russian media called a military parade of hundreds of kilometers from Italy through Eastern Europe.

Along with British, Canadian and Polish commandos, these U.S. troops are to provide training to the Ukrainian Nation-

al Guard, a body created after the Maidan coup to incorporate fascist gangs into the state apparatus.

U.S. forces are to drill with the Azov Battalion, which is dominated by the neo-Nazi Right Sector movement. The battalion has been accused of numerous human rights violations in the junta's brutal war against the independent Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics of the Donbass mining region.

Denis Pushilin, chief negotiator for Donetsk, said of the U.S. troops' arrival: "This is a conscious policy. In combination with the moving up of military equipment [Kiev's buildup of heavy weapons in violation of the Minsk II ceasefire], this is meant to escalate the conflict." (Novorossia Today, April 17)

The Azov Battalion has embraced its new official relationship with Washington. Korrespondent.net published photos on April 16, obtained from the Associated Press, of Azov forces near the occupied city of Mariupol in the Donetsk People's Republic. They are shown flying the U.S. flag alongside those of Ukraine and the Right Sector.

When Right Sector forces destroyed a monument of Soviet leader V.I. Lenin in occupied Kramatorsk on April 17, amateur video showed the fascists flying the U.S. flag.

Right Sector and other Nazi groups marched through the center of Odessa, a multinational port city in southeastern Ukraine, on April 17 chanting, "Great Ukraine is for the white man," "One race, one nation" and "Hang the communists," according to Odessa's dumskaya.net. The march was escorted by the police.

The same day, at a protest against utility rate hikes and pension cuts, 53 opposition activists were arrested and detained by police, aided by Right Sector

and Maidan goons. (rusvena.su, April 17)

One year ago, on May 2, 2014, neo-Nazis, including members of the Azov battalion, massacred at least 48 antifascists at the House of Trade Unions.

Communists declare: 'It's time to act'

The revolutionary communist organization Union Borotba (Struggle), in an April 19 statement on the assassinations, said: "We appeal to everyone to ... realize that fascism has come to our house."

"The ruling elite, which unleashed a fratricidal war, which pushed the people into poverty, misery and injustice, cannot rely on the support of the majority of people. To preserve their political power, the ruling group has to rely on terror. Any attempt at dissent is suppressed in the most brutal manner."

"The collapse of the economy, mass impoverishment and widespread injustice necessarily lead to social upheaval. And the junta has decided to take preventive measures, knowing that a wave of popular protests could sweep it away."

Borotba declared further: "We can say with certainty that these killings signal the beginning of a new phase of the civil war in Ukraine. If the earlier confrontation followed the line of junta [and] supporters against the people of the southeast, now the representatives of yesterday's elite have been unwittingly drawn in. ..."

"The cruelty of the authorities will only increase. And anyone who is not satisfied with what is happening in the country must understand that it is impossible to remain silent. It's time to act."

"We encourage everyone to prepare for the fight. We will have no freedom from the Nazis unless we free ourselves," the statement concluded.

The full statement can be read in English at borotba.su. □

Imperialist wars, repression underlie

Refugee crisis in Mediterranean

By G. Dunkel

A ship with 700 refugees on board capsized south of the Italian island of Lampedusa in Libyan waters on April 18. It was the latest episode in the huge humanitarian crisis caused by a flood of refugees crossing the Mediterranean.

The Italian and Maltese coast guards, as of April 19, had saved only 50 people and estimated that 650 others had died in this incident.

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimates that 1,600 refugees leaving from Libya have died in 2015, while 35,000 have made their way to Europe. Last year, around 219,000 people crossed the Mediterranean, while 3,500 lives were lost. Most crossings are attempted in the summer when the weather is calmer.

In November of last year, after Italy ran out of money to run its search-and-rescue operation called Mare Nostrum and asked the European Union for funds, northern European countries like England, Germany and Holland insisted on a border interdiction program. Called Triton, it is the proximate cause of the large spike in casualties.

By the end of April 2014, only 90 people had died crossing the Mediterranean, the UNHCR estimates, compared to the 1,600 so far in 2015.

Among the welter of what capitalist politicians in Western Europe call "solutions" to this problem, one element stands out — the situation in Libya. German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said, "The first thing" to be done is "to try to get a government of national unity in Libya." (AP, April 19)

But it was the French and British air forces, with connivance and intelligence support from the U.S. Pentagon, that in 2011 destroyed Libya's infrastructure and opened the road for local warlords to compete for booty. Before the imperialists overthrew the government led by Moammar el-Gadhafi, Libya had the highest standard of living in Africa and attracted immigrants. The imperialist crushing of the Libyan state has reversed that.

Now, people from all over Africa, from Ghana to Somalia, who are fleeing civ-



U.S./ NATO bombs Libya in 2011.

il war, poverty and political repression, and make their way to Libya, do so in the hope of reaching Western Europe from there, as 219,000 people did in 2014. (UNHCR, April 17)

Very few of the poorest Africans try to get to Europe — they don't have the money to even start. But for young Africans from families with a bit of money, often workers or farmers, or for some who have managed to get an education, Europe is a beacon.

Hoping for salvation for themselves and their families from the political repression and violence that U.S. imperialism and its junior partner France are employing to control Africa, they take the chance.

Greece, Turkey and the Mideast

The UNHCR estimates that 4 million Syrians are refugees from the violent civil war that the United States and its European allies, like France and Great Britain, plus its allies in the Middle East, like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, have fomented, instigated and manipulated.

The U.S. government is pouring arms into this area with big and profitable deliveries of advanced aircraft, missiles, bombs and other weapons, replenishing what has been used up by the fighting in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Saudi Arabia spent \$80 billion last year, and Qatar, a tiny country,

just signed an \$11 billion contract with the Pentagon for Apache attack helicopters. (New York Times, April 18) The U.S. also wants to up the ante in its proxy struggles against Iran and its allies.

Many refugees from the fighting that follows these arms deliveries have wound up in Turkey. The UNHCR estimates that there are at least 1.9 million refugees in Turkey, mainly from the Syrian civil war.

Refugees in western Turkey can cross a few miles of water to get to Greek-owned islands, and many of them do so. Hundreds a day are landing on small islands so lacking facilities that they wind up sleeping in sheds or courtyards. (Ekathimerini, April 17)

Since Greece is the poorest country in Europe, its strategy of dealing with this massive increase of refugees is to fairly quickly give them travel documents and send them on. But this strategy is getting entangled with Greece's financial struggles with Germany and other prosperous European states.

Refugees in eastern Turkey appear to take a different route. Some smugglers obtain large ships from Syrian business people, load them with refugees and then send the ships towards Italy. The captain and crew abandon the ship after leaving it on autopilot, trusting that the Italian coast guard will intercept it before there is an accident. (New York Times, Feb. 2) □

What does it mean for workers?

Slowdown, unemployment plague world capitalism

By Fred Goldstein

The finance ministers of the largest capitalist economies exuded gloom and pessimism at the recent Washington meeting of the G-20. "Six years after tackling the global financial crisis, the world's top economic policy makers are struggling to exit crisis-management mode and lift growth out of a long-term funk," wrote the Wall Street Journal on April 19.

The underlying concern was that since the so-called "recovery" began in 2009, the global economy has been in a steady state of slow growth and stagnation.

The International Monetary Fund issued warnings about so-called "emerging markets." China had its slowest growth in 10 years. Russia is in a recession. Brazil's growth has slowed to a crawl. Investors are starting to pull their money out of many countries.

The U.S. capitalist economy is growing anemically, while Japan and Europe are stagnating at best. The Greek debt crisis is coming to a head as the IMF and the European bankers try to force further austerity on Greece's Syriza government. Worries about a Greek default, which could destabilize the eurozone, haunted the G-20 meeting.

Behind this condition of slow growth and stagnation is capitalist overproduction. This is the underlying malady behind the gloom at the G-20, although no one will say it -- mostly because they don't know it.

Working class and capitalist economic 'growth'

Why should workers be concerned about the slowing rate of growth of the world capitalist economy?

"Growth" under capitalism is an increase in overall economic activity. But economic activity under the profit system is also the process of exploitation of workers. The two things are inseparable.

The aim of the capitalists is to expand their exploitation of the workers and to increase their profits. That is what growth means to them. To workers capitalist growth means more jobs. All workers must sell their labor power to a boss and enter into the relationship of exploitation in order to live. The alternative is unemployment under capitalism.

Workers get paid for only part of the time they work during the week. But they must work for the whole week. Usually they get paid just enough to stay alive while the boss gets to keep what they create during the entire week. The boss sells the product or service for money and profits from this surplus -- the unpaid labor time the workers put in.

Every year tens of millions of potential workers enter the workforce around the world. If the capitalist economy does not grow fast enough to employ, that is, to exploit these new workers, as well as to

employ the workers already in the workforce, then mass unemployment, part-time and temporary jobs steadily expand with population growth.

When more and more unemployed workers are seeking scarce jobs, which comes with low growth, the bosses can hire at lower and lower wages -- unless the workers have a union, a good contract and are organized to defend their rights.

Karl Marx as a guide for today

This was all explained by Karl Marx over 150 years ago. He wrote for the working class and for those who wanted to organize against capitalism. His analysis is highly important for understanding what the bosses are doing today.

Here in the U.S., the capitalist class has been struggling to expand its profits of production since the global financial and economic crisis of 2007-09 ended. To be sure, speculative paper profits of bankers, hedge funds, private equity funds, Wall Street gamblers and other parasites have grown enormously in recent years. But this is largely based on the Federal Reserve Board pouring trillions of dollars of cheap money into the economy.

However, the industrial and service parts of the "real" economy have been up against world capitalist overproduction, limited markets and expanding production capabilities due to technology.

Marx explained in the third volume of his fundamental work, "Capital," what measures the capitalists take to bolster their profits when they are facing a decline. He listed some of them in a famous chapter titled "The Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Decline."

Here are some of the measures he outlined that tend to drive up profits:

- Intensification of exploitation of the workers.
- Lowering wages to below subsistence.
- Mass unemployment or increasing the reserve army of unemployed.
- Promoting foreign trade to gain additional profits abroad.

These are the same measures that are negatively affecting the working class today.

Intensification of exploitation

Intensified exploitation means expanding the output that workers create in less and less time, often for lower wages. This is precisely what the working class is being hammered with, not only in the U.S. but around the world.

Automation on the production line, in the restaurants, hospitals, big box stores, fast food outlets is the rule today. Bar codes, computerized cash registers, robots in warehouses, centralized communications systems in stores and factories, and so on have eliminated jobs, destroyed skills and put pressure on the remaining workers to work faster.

Development of computerized effi-

What Marx warned the workers about 150 years ago:

- ▶ Intensification of exploitation of the workers.
- ▶ Lowering wages to below subsistence.
- ▶ Mass unemployment or increasing the reserve army of unemployed.
- ▶ Promoting foreign trade to gain additional profits abroad.

These are the very measures that the working class is experiencing today.

ciency programs, monitoring of workers, GPS (global positioning system) spying and directing workers in transport, Internet-based outsourcing of medical services and legal briefs, ordering and monitoring of production, automated ports, container ships, management software that can reach around the globe, and many more technologies are the modern, high-tech version of what Marx called the intensification of exploitation.

Lowering wages below subsistence

All these technologies make the skills of the workers obsolete by putting their skills into machines and software, thereby destroying jobs and skills that once paid livable wages. Millions of workers with jobs now live in poverty and need government assistance to survive. This is what Marx called lowering wages below subsistence level.

What Marx projected is now a global phenomenon. The Global Wage Report 2014/15 of the U.N.'s International Labor Organization says, "Wage growth around the world slowed in 2013 to 2.0 percent, compared to 2.2 percent in 2012, and has yet to catch up to the pre-crisis rates of about 3.0 percent.

"Even this modest growth in global wages was driven almost entirely by emerging G-20 economies, where wages increased by 6.7 percent in 2012 and 5.9 percent in 2013.

"By contrast, average wage growth in developed economies had fluctuated around 1 percent per year since 2006 and then slowed further in 2012 and 2013 to only 0.1 percent and 0.2 percent respectively."

World 'reserve army of unemployed'

The millions whose jobs have been eliminated through technology and speed-up now swell the "reserve army of unemployed" that Marx referred to a century and a half ago.

Again this is a global matter.

The ILO reported: "Almost 202 million people were unemployed in 2013 around the world, an increase of almost 5 million compared with the year before. This reflects the fact that employment is not expanding sufficiently fast to keep up with the growing labor force."

The ILO further reported that in 2013, over and above the 202 million unemployed, there was an additional 62 million job gap, including 32 million new job seekers and 23 million people who

became discouraged.

If current trends continue, said the ILO, and they are expected to at best, unemployment will rise by another 13 million by 2018.

It should be noted that the ILO, as an organ of the U.N., is a very conservative organization which tends to produce statistics that tone down the facts exposing world imperialism.

Unemployment in the U.S. is in the tens of millions, but the growing "reserve army of unemployed" is a permanent feature of capitalism at a dead end -- the phase in which the workers are now living.

Exporting their way out of crisis

Washington and Wall Street are desperately trying to expand exports by promoting the Trans Pacific Partnership agreement, which is calculated to break open the markets of 12 countries and give corporations virtually sovereign economic power in the region. Washington is also scheming for a European Free Trade Agreement.

In general, the big imperialist countries are trying to export their way out of their crises. They want to gain a trade advantage over their rivals and engage in unequal trade with oppressed countries.

The big capitalist economies have become massively productive through technology; they all suffer high unemployment and have lowered wages. So production quickly outstrips the market for the goods produced.

But as each country tries to export its way out of the crisis in the home market, global overproduction will expand, laying the basis for new and even greater crises.

In Marx's time, foreign imperialist investment was not a dominant factor in the world economy. That is because imperialism developed after Marx died. He would surely have included it in the capitalists' struggle to raise profits, and it must be included today.

So workers should be deeply concerned about what the world's financiers are saying. The big business experts cannot really predict anything very precisely, because their unplanned market system is chaotic. But it is clear that world capitalism has not revived and is not reviving. Even the pro-capitalist pundits can see this.

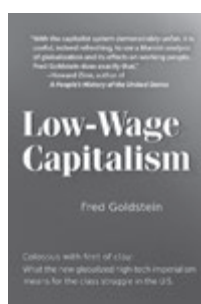
The working class, the labor movement, the oppressed communities, the students and youth should take the worries of the ruling class as a potential threat to the working class. When the bosses become gloomy about their economy, they are preparing to further push their crisis onto the masses.

The time to alert the workers and begin organizing a massive pushback is now.

Goldstein is the author of "Low-Wage Capitalism" and "Capitalism at a Dead End," which can be ordered from lowwagecapitalism.org.

Low-Wage Capitalism

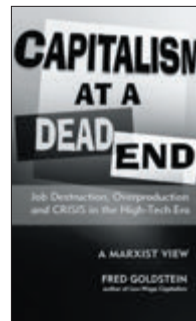
What the new globlized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.



Capitalism at a Dead End

Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to www.LowWageCapitalism.com
Available at Amazon and other bookstores.



WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Legacy of May Day today

Next year will mark the 130th anniversary of the founding of May Day. Also known as International Workers Day, May Day is still commemorated more consciously abroad — with demonstrations, protests, strikes and other militant actions worldwide — than where it originated: in the United States.

On May 1, 1886, the American Federation of Labor organized militant actions demanding the right of all workers to an eight-hour workday. On that day, workers walked off their jobs and withheld their labor from being exploited by the bosses.

Martha Grevatt, a long-time Chrysler autoworker, wrote about the origins of May Day: “About a quarter of a million took part in many cities, but Chicago, with its militant, left-wing labor movement, had the largest demonstration. There, tens of thousands laid down their tools, and women and men poured into the streets. The demonstrations continued past May 1, and on May 3 police attacked and six workers were killed.

The next day a protest over the killings was held in Haymarket Square. A bomb was thrown, a policeman was killed, and a struggle broke out that left seven police and four workers dead. Eight workers’ leaders were convicted of murder, five of them sentenced to death. Four were hanged and one reportedly committed suicide. The other three were eventually pardoned.” (workers.org, March 23, 2012) Those who were hanged became known as the Haymarket Martyrs.

Fast forward to Philadelphia, May 13, 1985, when a powerful bomb was dropped from a State Police helicopter on the home of the MOVE family. The bomb created an incendiary fire that caused the horrific deaths of 11 MOVE members, including children, and the massive destruction of at least 60 houses in the majority Black, working-class neighborhood.

What do these two important events, occurring a century apart, have in common? They both expose the naked terror of the repressive state apparatus under capitalist class society, especially the role of the police.

In Haymarket Square, unarmed workers fighting for a larger piece of the value they create, in the form of livable wages and better working conditions, were fatally shot, followed by the unjust hanging of four of their compatriots. No police were arrested for these crimes.

In the case of the MOVE bombing, no police or other officials who sanctioned the bombing were arrested. The only surviving MOVE member of the bombing, Ramona Africa, spent seven years in prison. And why was MOVE targeted by the state? Their outspokenness on the issue of police brutality. The 30th anniversary of this government-sanctioned crime will be commemorated this year on May 13 in Philadelphia, along with demanding the release of the MOVE 9 members, who have been unjustly imprisoned since 1978.

Both of these examples prove in theory and practice a basic tenet of Marxism, discussed in Vladimir Lenin’s 1916 pamphlet “State and Revolution.” It explained that “the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by

another; it is the creation of ‘order,’ which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between classes.”

The pamphlet goes on to say that the “state is a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively cannot be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable.”

How does the state — which includes the armed bodies of men and women, the prisons, the courts, Immigration Customs Enforcement, the military, the media and more — manifest itself today? The most obvious example is the outright racist war of mass incarceration and police and vigilante terror against Black, Brown and Indigenous youth, who face no prospect of good-paying jobs, a decent education or a bright future under capitalism.

To its credit, the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights is holding a major May Day rally and march in New York City’s Union Square, demanding: “From Ferguson to Ayotzinapa to NYC: No more police terror; we want jobs, \$15 an hour and a union; end militarization of the border and police departments; legalization, not deportations; solidarity, not war.”

The capitalists are driven by their system to make more and more profits, not to meet human needs like jobs, health care, food, shelter, education and equality. This is the irreconcilable antagonism based on one class oppressing another that exists today. A socialist revolution on a global scale can begin the process of eradicating this antagonism in order to fulfill the needs of humanity.

The state, which exists under capitalism to serve the greed for profits of the corporations and banks, has proven time and time again that it is no friend of the workers and oppressed peoples, who are the vast majority on the planet but suffer in the billions from unmet human needs. This massive suffering has become exacerbated since the current capitalist economic crisis reared its ugly head in 2007.

Hasn’t the time come for the people to demand that the state be disarmed and eventually abolished, along with the rotten capitalist system that it serves? In the spirit of International Workers Day, which calls for the empowerment of the entire working class, Workers World responds with a resounding: YES!

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination Larry Holmes

Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy

Black Youth: Repression & Resistance LeiLani Dowell

The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead

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

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

Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal

Racism & Poverty in the Delta Larry Hales

Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions Pat Chin

Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation Consuela Lee

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

Available online and at other bookstores.

Vietnam 40 years after liberation Visitors flock to the tunnels of Cu Chi

By Paul Wilcox and Joyce Chediak
Cu Chi District, Vietnam

WW PHOTO: JOYCE CHEDIAC

Vietnamese children at rehearsal for victory commemoration.

Ho Chi Minh City, known as Saigon before its liberation, is a fast-moving metropolis of more than 10 million people. Preparations for April 30, the 40th anniversary of the unification of north and south Vietnam and the decisive defeat of the U.S. invasion and occupation, can be seen all over.

Red flags of Vietnam and the Vietnamese Communist Party fly everywhere. Billboards announcing the anniversary abound. Hundreds of exuberant children gather in a downtown park rehearsing for commemoration ceremonies and posing for pictures.

However, no place in Vietnam more embodies the revolutionary heroism that made this victory possible than this small suburb of Ho Chi Minh City. The guerrilla tunnels of Cu Chi District testify to the determination of a people to win their independence against a foe far superior in technology but far inferior in motivation, morale, creativity and sheer determination to resist.

The tunnels have been preserved and turned into a national museum.

Cu Chi District’s proximity to Saigon, where the U.S. and its puppet forces were based, and to land and river routes to that city, made it strategically significant. It was the only sizable area in the south of Vietnam where troops could move easily, even during the monsoon season.

Tunnels spanned 150 miles

A guide explains that the tunnels were painstakingly dug by hoe, with the earth taken out in baskets. Their excavation began in the 1940s. Despite the immense difficulty of life in the tunnels, where air, food and water were scarce, and health problems — especially malaria — were common, the tunnels provided shelter from bombing attacks and a place to launch attacks on French and later U.S. soldiers and the South Vietnamese colonial army.

At the height of the U.S. war, the tunnels extended over 150 miles in length and several stories deep, starting about 40 miles north of Saigon and extending to the Cambodian border.

They grew to house entire underground villages with living quarters, kitchens with hidden smoke vents, factories for turning unexploded U.S. bombs into weapons, hospitals and bomb shelters, schools and fighting areas. There were even theaters and music halls to



provide diversion for the fighters — mostly peasants from the area.

Some underground rooms have been recreated and a small section of the tunnels enlarged for tourists to enter.

The tunnels were used by the liberation forces to infiltrate Saigon with intelligence units, Communist Party cadre and sabotage teams. The 1968 Tet Offensive was prepared, and troops and supplies assembled, through the Cu Chi tunnels.

When the U.S. unknowingly set up a base in Cu Chi right over the tunnels, it found it was constantly attacked from within the base. A special team of U.S. soldiers sent into the tunnels to fight encountered hidden booby traps made from sharpened bamboo sticks covered with animal dung to cause infection. On exhibit are examples of these traps, with labels like “clipping armpit trap,” “door trap” and “folding chair trap.”

Next the U.S. sent specially trained dogs to locate the tunnels. The Vietnamese fighters began to wash with U.S. Army soap and wear captured U.S. Army uniforms to confuse the dogs with a “friendly smell.”

Most bombed area in history

The Pentagon’s response was barbaric. Cu Chi became the most shelled, gassed, bombed, devastated and defoliated area in the history of warfare. It was declared a “free-fire zone,” the target of random artillery fire, with pilots encouraged to drop unused bombs and napalm there before returning to base.

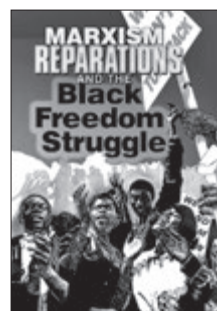
So many defoliants were dropped and the area was so heavily carpet-bombed that it became known by the U.S. command as the “white zone” for its absence of vegetation. But the tunnels still served as shelters and the liberation fighters still made their way through these tunnels to Saigon.

Today the “white zone” is once again green with fields of rubber plants and vegetables. The villages forced underground are now repopulated. They have been singled out as “heroic villages” and the district renamed “the Iron Land.”

According to Trip Advisor, the Cu Chi tunnels are the second most popular tourist destination in Vietnam. Of the thousands of comments and reviews online over the last few years, nearly 90 percent said their visit was a very good or excellent experience. The most popular tourist place in Ho Chi Minh City is the War Remnants Museum, formerly called the War Crimes Museum.

Comments of tourists from around the world found on Trip Advisor include:

“Tells the story of Vietnamese ingenuity, resilience and tenacity to defend their land against a superior force ... how they



GRAPHIC BY SAHU BARRON

Two years after Rana Plaza disaster

Bangladeshi garment workers need justice!

By Kathy Durkin

The struggle for justice and compensation for the Rana Plaza workers is far from over two years after the deadliest disaster in garment industry history.

On April 24, 2013, a building housing several factories collapsed outside Dhaka, Bangladesh, killing 1,138 workers, mostly young women, and injuring 2,500 others.

It has taken a struggle by injured workers and families of the deceased, union organizers and global allies just to gain some workplace safety measures and a modicum of financial compensation for the victims and relatives.

Bangladesh garners \$20 billion a year from garment exports. Its 5,000 factories produce millions of garments a year for major U.S. and European retail giants. Worldwide sales enrich global brands such as H&M, Primark, Walmart, The Gap, Mango and Benetton. These companies demand quick, cheap production and low wages for the 4 million, mostly female, workforce. Implementing safety measures cuts into their mega-profits.

Some 29 global brands had contracts with Rana Plaza's manufacturers and bear responsibility, along with local plant owners, for the catastrophe. Blame can also be assigned to Washington, London, Paris, Madrid and Rome for not insisting on safe working conditions in factories producing goods for Western companies.

Bangladesh's government is not blameless either. Its officials notoriously collaborate with local bosses to curb labor costs and suppress union activity so Western corporations can maximize profits. A working-class hero, Animul Islam, organizer for the Bangladesh Center

for Worker Solidarity, was tortured and killed in April 2012. No one has been held responsible for his murder.

The catastrophe at Rana Plaza unleashed a militant struggle among the country's apparel workers, who demanded justice for their dead and injured sisters and brothers. This, along with a world outcry, pressed the government to arrest the factory owners and Sohel Rana, owner of the building. They face murder charges. Last summer, the country's anti-corruption commission also charged Rana and 17 others with construction violations. Even that light charge took a struggle.

The continuing, intense class struggle has pushed for workplace safety, higher wages and union rights. The official monthly minimum pay was increased from \$38 to \$68 — still a starvation wage, but many companies do not even pay that. Verbal and physical abuse are rampant in the plants, as are forced 14-hour shifts.

Garment workers and their advocates in Bangladesh and abroad pushed for the legally binding Bangladesh Fire and Building Safety Agreement. It requires corporations that contract clothing manufacturing there to fund factory safety inspections and upgrades. More than 150 brands signed on — but not Walmart and The Gap, which established a weaker, nonbinding plan. Apparel workers are still dying and being injured by the hundreds in factory fires.

Demand full compensation

Workers and activists in Bangladesh and their allies abroad compelled many Western brands to contribute to the \$30 million Rana Plaza Donors' Trust Fund.

However, some retail giants have eluded responsibility and paid nothing, as they are not legally required to support dead workers' children or unemployed disabled workers.

Many of those injured cannot work or are discriminated against and not hired. Some have post-traumatic stress disorder and cannot work. During the two years of waiting for compensation, some died because they could not pay for needed medical care.

Because some global brands that contracted with Rana Plaza manufacturers have come up short on their contributions, \$8 million is still owed to the fund. Mango, Matalan and Inditex will not reveal how much they donated, reported the Clean Clothes Campaign on April 17. It also said that Walmart and The Children's Place are among companies that underpaid and are being pressed to increase their funding. Because of the shortfall, thousands of disaster survivors and victims' relatives have received only partial payments.

Global solidarity is vital to this cause. After a mass campaign and petition with 1 million signers, Benetton buckled and contributed \$1.1 million on April 17, but activists point out the company owes millions more. A campaign is aimed at The Children's Place, a major contractor of labor at Rana Plaza factories, which paid only \$450,000 to the fund. It is being urged to donate \$8 million — less than half of CEO Jane Elfers' 2012 salary.

Kalpona Akter, executive director of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity, and 26 others were arrested for trespassing in March at The Children's Place in Secaucus, N.J., as they tried to

deliver a letter to officers. All charges were subsequently lowered and/or dismissed. These activists ask consumers to pressure the retailer to fully meet its trust fund obligations.

Global actions from April 18 to 24 call for all brands doing business in Bangladesh to sign the safety accord and for companies owing compensation funds to Rana Plaza victims and relatives to pay in full.

Bangladeshi bosses and the biggest corporations cannot stop the workers from demanding their rights and gaining support from others. The class struggle continues. Some strong unionization drives are succeeding, while others are still pushing for legal recognition.

Moreover, the bosses cannot prevent Bangladeshi workers from gaining international allies. Our Bangladeshi sisters and brothers request and need global solidarity. They ask activists to keep the pressure on the retail giants. Let us show solidarity by demanding full compensation for all Rana Plaza victims and survivors from culpable U.S. companies.

Global corporations sweep the earth searching for the cheapest labor in their "race to the bottom." They disregard workers' safety and lives; their only goal is to maximize profits. Their greed has no limits. If workers are injured or die in industrial accidents, they are replaceable, their lives expendable. This is the mindset of corporate owners and CEOs.

Brutal, low-wage capitalism is not a policy. It is the essence of capitalist globalization, of imperialism; it is what creates mega-profits. For the sake of our Bangladeshi sisters and brothers, let us oppose the whole rotten system. □

'Colombian peace process must go forward'

Below is a statement issued on April 20 by a fact-finding delegation that traveled to Cuba to assess the peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP. International Action Center representatives Martha Grevatt and Berta Joubert-Ceci were part of the 33-member delegation.

Thirty-three activists traveled to Havana, Cuba, on April 11-18 to participate in a fact-finding delegation concerning the Colombia Peace Negotiations taking place there. The participants were from several U.S. states — Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania and Texas — as well as Colombia, Costa Rica and Puerto Rico. Some represented

WW PHOTO: BERTA JOUBERT-CECI
Several members of U.S. delegation with FARC representatives.



the National Lawyers Guild, the International Action Center, and the Task Force on the Americas. The delegation went under the auspices of the Alliance for Global Justice.

The current Colombian peace negotiations began in October of 2012, after representatives of the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army (FARC-EP) agreed on a framework to end

the conflict and achieve a lasting peace. There are five agenda items: 1) comprehensive rural development, 2) political participation, 3) illegal drugs, 4) rights of victims and 5) the end of the conflict. The negotiators have reached partial agreement on the first three items. The current round of negotiations is addressing items four and five.

The delegation met separately with negotiators from FARC-EP and the Colombian government, as well as the sub-commissions on gender and on victims. They also met with representatives of the two guarantor countries — Norway and Cuba. As a result, the delegates are now informed about the process of the negotiations.

Estimates of the victims of the conflict range from 1.5 million to over 6 million. More than 90,000 people have disappeared, over 220,000 have been killed, 80 percent of them civilians, and as

many as 6 million people have been internally displaced, the majority women and children.

The U.N. has estimated that paramilitaries with ties to the government and transnational corporations have committed over 80 percent of the casualties.

The delegation agreed that the peace process must go forward. According to delegate Pamela Brubaker, "We have become convinced, after a week of intense discussions, of the urgent need to implement a bilateral ceasefire between the negotiating parties." Martha Grevatt spoke for the group saying, "We stand in solidarity with the people of Colombia — women, campesinos, students, unions, LGBT — who have come together in organizations and movements with a vision of a new Colombia, built on a foundation of equality, social justice and a lasting peace. This is what the majority in Colombia wants." □

Continued from page 10

turned bomb scraps into traps, tires into sandals and how they dug their tunnels, hide the air vents and camouflage it."

"It is no wonder that the high-tech American army were out maneuvered."

"It was their way to have surprise attacks and vanish unobserved. ... Great people of a great country — what suffering they went through for their freedom."

"The Vietnamese people lived in these small tunnels during day time, to come out only at night to do cultivation so that they are not attacked by the Americans during the war."

'Babies were born here.'

"It was absolutely fascinating to see these tunnels and all the preserved evidence of the ingenuity, resilience and determination of a people ... who, on our admittedly brief experience, seem to naturally be so gentle."

"In these tunnels you can see why the Viet Cong won the war."

With over a million visitors every year, the Cu Chi tunnels are living proof that, despite the many thousands killed in the war, the Vietnamese won not only freedom for their country but the hearts and minds of the workers and oppressed peoples of the world. □



Sobre Cuba, Irán, Ucrania:

Obama, un centrista, cede a la derecha

Por Fred Goldstein

Los vericuetos de la política exterior del Presidente Barack Obama, desde Cuba a Irán a Ucrania, muestran la capacidad de la derecha para socavar las políticas de las fuerzas centristas dentro de la clase política de la clase dominante. Esta es una expresión de las fuerzas expansionistas y militaristas que tienen raíces profundas dentro del capitalismo estadounidense.

La iniciativa de Obama de abrir relaciones con Cuba es un ejemplo clásico.

Las grandes empresas estadounidenses han crecido cada vez más frustrada con su aislamiento en América Latina. El gobierno de Obama quiere poner en marcha la Asociación Trans-Pacífica, la Iniciativa Latinoamericana de Libre Comercio y otros acuerdos comerciales.

El aislamiento de Estados Unidos se debe en gran parte a la popularidad de la Revolución Cubana en América Latina. Cuba ha resistido el bloqueo económico, la invasión, la subversión y los intentos de asesinato por la CIA desde 1959. Washington finalmente ha tenido que pedir conversaciones sobre relaciones diplomáticas.

Pero Obama, con el fin de demostrar a la derecha, las rabiosas fuerzas anti-cubanas en la política de Estados Unidos que no se ha "suavizado", anunció poco después de la apertura con Cuba que Venezuela era una "amenaza de seguridad nacional" para los EE.UU. y se impusieron sanciones dirigidas a funcionarios del gobierno de Maduro.

Esta demanda indignante creó una tormenta de fuego en América Latina apenas antes de que Obama tenía previsto asistir a la Cumbre de las Américas en Panamá del 10 al 11 abril.

Fue un burdo intento de dividir a Cuba y Venezuela. Pero fracasó y al contrario se encontró con la amenaza de que este intento socavaría aún más la posición de Estados Unidos en América Latina y el intento de la administración para abrir las relaciones con Cuba, que iba a asistir a la reunión por primera vez.

De hecho, Obama tuvo que retirar esta amenazadora caracterización de la derecha de Venezuela con el fin de evitar un colapso de toda su intento de mejorar las relaciones de EEUU con América Latina en la reunión de Panamá.

El presidente Raúl Castro de Cuba dio una acusación mordaz histórica de Washington en su discurso ante la cumbre. En él declaró: "Venezuela no es, y no puede ser, una amenaza para la seguridad nacional de una superpotencia como Estados Unidos. Consideramos que es un hecho positivo que el presidente de Estados Unidos ha admitido.

"Yo debería reafirmar nuestro apoyo, decidido y leal a la hermana República Bolivariana de Venezuela, al gobierno legítimo y la alianza cívico-militar encabezada por el presidente Nicolás Maduro, y para el pueblo bolivariano y chavistas de ese país que lucha por seguir su propio camino".

Este es un caso claro de la administración centrista Obama que escucha a la banda derechista y subestimación com-

pleta del sentimiento anti-imperialista, pro-Venezuela, a favor de Chávez y anti yanqui de las masas latinoamericanas.

Líder iraní empuja contra Kerry

En el caso de Irán, el gobierno de Obama, mientras sostiene las negociaciones nucleares, está tratando de ejecutar una maniobra diplomática que espera llevar a Irán hacia el Occidente y conseguir que abandone su apoyo a las fuerzas anti-imperialistas en el Medio Oriente.

Esta maniobra es probablemente una quimera completa, derivada de una ilusión por parte de la administración Obama. Y subestima seriamente el poderoso sentimiento anti-imperialista, anti-Estados Unidos que prevalece en Irán.

Después de meses de negociaciones, las dos partes habían acordado un marco para futuras negociaciones - denominado Esbozo del Acuerdo. Pero está en peligro por el deseo de la administración Obama de aplacar a la derecha.

A raíz del anuncio del Esbozo del Acuerdo, el secretario de Estado John Kerry preparó una llamada "hoja de datos", diseñada para mostrar a la derecha cuan rudo EE.UU. ha estado en las conversaciones. Esta hoja informativa no fue aceptada por la parte iraní y más o menos representó la lista de deseos de Washington.

Entre otras cosas, la hoja de datos, decía que las sanciones se le levantarían a Irán sólo después de que este haya cumplido de manera verificable con todos los términos del acuerdo - es decir, las sanciones relacionadas por Estados Unidos iban a durar más que el tiempo del acuerdo.

También agregaba que no podía haber inspecciones de los "sitios sospechosos" fuera de la cadena de suministro nuclear conocido - lo que significa que cualquier reclamo de sospecha podría ser investigado, presumiblemente incluyendo instalaciones militares.

Estas son sólo algunas de las afirmaciones de Washington de que los iraníes han denunciado como "giro".

Toda la estrategia recibió un rechazo pesado cuando el Líder Supremo iraní Ali Jamenei afirmó rotundamente que "a menos que todas las sanciones económicas fueran levantadas en su totalidad en el primer día de la implementación de cualquier acuerdo," no habría acuerdo. Además, declaró que no habría inspecciones de sitios militares de Irán. (New York Times, 09 de abril)

Jamenei también dijo que las declaraciones públicas de EE.UU. sobre el acuerdo son "defectuosas, incorrectas y en contradicción con los hechos". Y expresó fuerte desprecio por los EE.UU., y lo describió [a EE. UU.] como "obstinado, engañador, indecente y dado a puñaladas por la espalda."

Jamenei representa el legado de la Revolución iraní de 1979, que fue una gran conmoción social. La revolución derrocó al carnicero asesino Sha de Irán, que había sido puesto en el cargo en el año 1953 a través de un golpe de estado por CIA. En el golpe de Estado, EE.UU. acaparó al petróleo iraní y estableció bases militares para proteger los intereses petroleros de Wall Street.

El pueblo iraní soportó un cuarto de siglo de represión y tortura bajo la SAVAK entrenado por Estados Unidos, la policía secreta del Sha. Ellos libraron dos años de lucha continua y sufrieron grandes bajas antes de que Shah abandonara el trono en 1979.

El petróleo se nacionalizó, las bases estadounidenses fueron desmanteladas y los líderes religiosos establecieron la República Islámica, independiente de y en oposición al imperialismo estadounidense y británico, los dos colonizadores de Irán.

Washington ha subestimado una vez más el fervor anti-imperialista de una gran parte de las masas iraníes, que todavía está vivo y persiste después de décadas de sanciones, amenaza militar, sabotajes y trucos sucios.

Ahora, con el fin de mostrar la dureza, la administración Obama acaba de anunciar la prueba de una nueva bomba "bunker buster", presumiblemente capaz de penetrar en los sitios profundos en Irán. Además, ha anunciado que va a impedir a que Irán "arme al grupo Huthis" en Yemen, ayudando a Arabia Saudita a bombardear e invadir a ese país.

Los imperialistas estadounidenses han invadido a Irak y Afganistán; dirigieron el derrocamiento del gobierno de Libia; están tratando de derrocar al gobierno sirio; han apoyado a los sauditas a invadir Bahrein y Yemen; han respaldado a Israel, que ha invadido Egipto, Siria, Cisjordania y Gaza; respaldaron a Irak cuando este invadió a Irán.

Mientras tanto, el gobierno iraní no ha enviado tropas a invadir a ningún país. La hipocresía de EE.UU. no tiene límites.

EE.UU. sostiene régimen desacreditado en Kiev

En Ucrania, Washington y la Unión Europea fomentaron un movimiento de derecha en las calles de Kiev y otras ciudades a partir de noviembre de 2013 hasta febrero de 2014. El objetivo era empujar a Ucrania en sentido contrario al de Rusia y vincularlo a la Comunidad Económica Europea.

En la plaza Maidan en Kiev, capital de Ucrania, decenas de organizaciones no gubernamentales europeas y estadounidenses fomentaron un movimiento que hiciera que el primer ministro Viktor Yanukovich negociara un acuerdo con la UE. Yanukovich accedió a celebrar las elecciones para diciembre del 2014.

En el momento que habían terminado las negociaciones, el Departamento de Estado de Estados Unidos, bajo la influencia de la neoconservadora Subsecretaria de Estado Victoria Nuland, organizó escuadrones de matones fascistas para invadir al parlamento, expulsar a Yanukovich y establecer un régimen títere de Estados Unidos. EE.UU. escogió al nuevo primer ministro, Arseniy Yatsenyuk.

Este golpe de estado fascista provocó una gran rebelión en el centro industrial de Ucrania del este. Desarrollaron movimientos separatistas antifascistas. El pueblo de Crimea votó para reunirse con Rusia. Y comenzó una guerra de resistencia antifascista.

El gobierno de Estados Unidos está respaldando un régimen oligárquico reac-

cionario en Kiev. Este régimen depende principalmente de las fuerzas fascistas por el poco apoyo social y militar que tiene. El ejército ucraniano es totalmente no confiable. Las fuerzas de Kiev han sido expulsadas de la mayor parte del este de Ucrania.

El gobierno de Kiev está totalmente en bancarota y ha tenido que recurrir a un préstamo de emergencia del Fondo Monetario Internacional de \$18.5 mil millones - y no hay forma real para devolver el dinero solo sacando el dinero del sudor de las masas ucranianas.

El gobierno de Estados Unidos ha agudizado las tensiones con Rusia, y ahora está en la posición de tener que apuntalar militarmente al régimen de Ucrania. Imperialistas europeos están tratando de guiar a algún tipo de acuerdo para poner fin a la lucha y restaurar la estabilidad. Pero al mismo tiempo, el Pentágono está enviando a sus fuerzas para entrenar a la escoria fascista en el ejército ucraniano. Además, el Pentágono y la OTAN han movido las fuerzas a los estados clientes bálticos y de Europa de Este.

El gobierno de Obama, al permitir que los derechistas se hagan cargo de la política de Ucrania y que llevara a cabo un golpe de estado, se ha enrollado con otra crisis militar y geoestratégica en sus manos. Cuenta con la posesión de un régimen desacreditado en bancarota que depende de derechistas y fuerzas fascistas. Todos sus planes para penetrar Ucrania gradualmente, por la subversión, se han esfumando.

Este es otro caso de subestimar totalmente el sentimiento antifascista y anti-imperialista de las masas ucranianas. Fue un error total de cálculo basado en aplacar al grupo derechista y militarista en el establecimiento político de la clase dominante estadounidense.

El panorama general es que la clase dominante en su conjunto ha considerado la época desde el colapso de la URSS y Europa del Este a principios de los años 1990s como de reconquista de todo lo que había perdido el imperialismo durante el siglo 20.

El ala derecha en los EE.UU.— los John McCain, Lindsay Graham, Henry Kissinger y su calaña — representa el sector más agresivo y expansionista de la clase dominante que se esfuerza por alcanzar la dominación global total.

Centristas como Obama que se desvían aún ligeramente de este programa, son castigados y puestos bajo presión y ataque.

No es que la administración de Obama está tratando de inaugurar una nueva época de paz. De ningún modo. Sin embargo, Obama reconoce algunas de las debilidades del imperialismo estadounidense en Latinoamérica, Oriente Medio, África del Norte, etc. y está tratando de apuntalar su posición en lugares donde es débil con el fin de recuperar la iniciativa para las grandes empresas estadounidenses y el Pentágono.

El centrismo siempre termina aplazando a los derechistas en una crisis — a pesar de que el ala derecha está totalmente fuera de contacto con la realidad de que el sentimiento de la mayoría de la humanidad es anti-imperialista. □