



Boston's March of the Homeless, April 24. 5

BALTIMORE YOUTH REBEL

'All night, all day, we will fight for Freddie Grey'

As of the evening of April 27, hundreds of Black youth rebelled against the police in west and east Baltimore following the funeral of Freddie Grey. Over 250 were arrested. The Maryland governor has called in the national guard and declared a five-day curfew from 10 p.m. until 5 a.m. starting April 28. Go to workers.org for updates.

PHOTO: RICHARD REILLY

By Baltimore WW Bureau

April 27 — Since the horrific death of Freddie Carlos Grey, who appears to have been tortured by the police, the community here has been protesting practically every day.

Videos of Freddie Grey's encounter with the police on April 12 show him screaming in agony while being dragged to a police wagon. He appears to be injured and in terrible pain. His head is tilted and legs bent. What is also known is that while police drove him around and stopped to shackle his legs, he received no medical attention during this time.

When he finally arrived at the hospital, Grey was unresponsive. His family reports that his voice box was shattered, he suffered massive fractures to three vertebrae and his spinal cord was almost completely severed.

Freddie Grey clung to life for seven days before he died on April 19.

Since then the community has continued to demonstrate. On April 20 at 9 a.m., the Greater Baltimore chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Baltimore People's Power Assembly held a press conference at City Hall at the request of family members, calling for the indictment, conviction and jailing of the six police who killed their son.

That evening, protests continued at the Western District police station, whose headquarters sits in the middle of the neighborhood where Freddie Grey was accosted by police.

In the evening of April 21, 3,000 people gathered at Presbury and N. Mount streets and then marched to the Western District. This outpouring captured the attention of the world. Many of Grey's friends and neighborhood acquaintances, who have borne the brunt of police abuse, harassment, shakedowns and physical brutality, were in the crowd. Many of these youth as well as older community residents felt they could express their anger and frustration. The chant "All night, all day, we will fight for Freddie Grey" has become the protesters' anthem.

By April 22, police began to barricade the streets around the Western District in an attempt to prevent protests at the police station. When residents and supporters could not get in front of the station, they decided to take the protest downtown. Young people poured into the streets and blocked major intersections, including Martin Luther King Boulevard.

On April 23, the Rev. C.D. Witherspoon, president of the Baltimore SCLC and a member of the People's Power Assembly, announced to the media that these groups were launching an independent people's investigation into the details of Freddie Grey's death. Terence Jones, a national civil rights investigator, joined the press conference.

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Eyewitness report: Liberators, not looters

By Lamont Lilly
 Baltimore

April 27 — We could smell the teargas a mile away. Thick clouds of burning smoke spread citywide. The police, the tanks, the helicopters, all present and fully armored. From the moment I stepped off the train, I could feel resistance in the air. At approximately 5 p.m., it was straight from the station to the streets, live.

When you take your time and walk by foot, the intense degree of poverty completely paralyzes you. It shocked me, and I'm from the hood. The absurd number of boarded homes is astounding. The makeshift neighborhoods, comprised of trash, forgotten debris and the countless number of dilapidated buildings, are an absolute travesty in this, the richest country on the planet.

The lack of grocery stores, playgrounds and recreation facilities is apparent. The community's once beloved primary school was closed last year. The wasting away of Black bodies, good people and buried hope. The emphasis on protecting property over suffering



WW PHOTO: COLLEEN DAVIDSON

Youth demand justice for Freddie Grey in Baltimore, April 21.

people. While Freddie Grey (aka Gray) was laid to rest today, these are the images that remain.

For those who aren't poor or never have been, tonight is April 27, the end of the month, which for many people means that food stamps and Electronic Benefit Transfers have run out. At least tonight, poor folks can eat well. Thankfully, the rice and pork chops were sponsored by the people, their courage and the Baltimore Rebellion.

For those who were glued to the corporate media — CNN, FOX News and CBS — you were unfortunately force-fed a slew of lies, stereotypes and propped up images — a ruling-class narrative that intentionally did not capture the spirit of strength, unity, resistance and perseverance of those in rebellion.

Truth is, we didn't see any hoodlums and thugs to-

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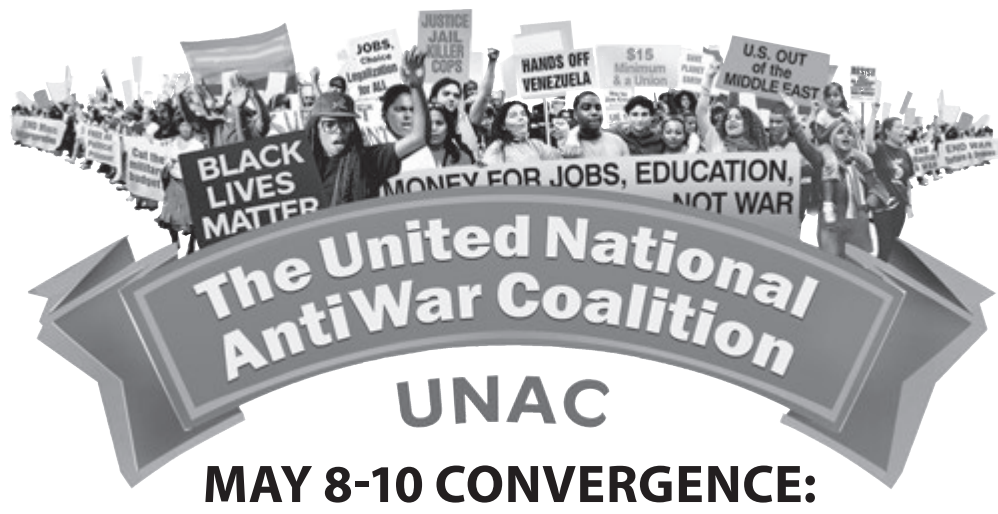
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Unite against wars at home, abroad

By Sara Flounders

The present national upsurge against racist police violence needs the support of every progressive political movement in the U.S.

Every gathering, whatever else is on the agenda, needs to refocus attention on the millions of youth who have heroically taken to the streets again and again in shutdowns and standoffs against police killings of Black and Brown youth. Protesters have consistently gone up against massive police offensives. This is a challenge that cannot be ignored or postponed.

The approach of the United National Antiwar Coalition's conference, titled "Stop the War at Home and Abroad," is an example of the kind of solidarity that is needed. The national conference, to be held in Secaucus N.J., just 20 minutes from New York City's Times Square, is seen as an opportunity to put the anti-war movement on a different footing.

Every panel in the weekend conference is designed to link struggles and connect international movements to resistance in the U.S. fighting racist repression and mass incarceration. The overwhelming police presence in full-body armor, equipped with tanks, drones, stun guns and sound cannons, is the clearest example that the many U.S. wars abroad do come home to U.S. cities.

Over 500 activists are expected to participate at the national weekend conference, which begins on May 8 at 6 p.m. and closes on May 10 at 3 p.m. The national gathering will be live streamed and panels will be avail-

able on YouTube, with assistance from GoProRadio and CPRmetro radio, along with numerous alternative news, social media and video activists.

A youth flyer designed for the conference makes the connection between the U.S. ranking 57th on a world scale in government expenditures for education and first in military spending.

Two formerly imprisoned members of the Cuban 5 plan to Skype in from Havana. Pam Africa will give an update on Mumia Abu-Jamal's grave health crisis. Lamis Deek of Al-Awda NY and Susan Abulhawa, Palestinian author of "Mornings in Jenin," are scheduled to speak.

Ajamu Baraka, Joe Iosbaker, Cynthia McKinney, Ramsey Clark, Medea Benjamin, Glen Ford, Ray McGovern, Imam Malik Mujahid, Anne Wright, Kathy Kelly and three guests from Ukraine (coming with a display showing the burning of the House of Labor in Odessa one year ago) will also participate.

BAYAN Philippine activists, Syrian-American activists and Latin American activists are working on shaping workshops and panels.

A Saturday afternoon panel focusing on the cost of endless war and deepening austerity will include Shafeah M'Balía, Black Workers for Justice in North Carolina; Lawrence Hamm, chair of Peoples Organization for Progress; and Clarence Thomas from the Oakland International Longshore Workers Union local that has scheduled a port shutdown and mass union meeting on May Day against police violence.

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WORKERS WORLD PARTY

Who we are & what we're fighting for

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

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

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

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

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

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As his condition worsens

Demand Mumia's release to a hospital!

By **Betsey Piette**

Political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal's health crisis is grave, and people everywhere are being asked to take immediate action to demand that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections stop their attempt to murder him through medical neglect. Key demands are that he immediately be released to a hospital for emergency care and that he be given compassionate release to be with his family.

On April 24, Abu-Jamal was visited by his spouse, Wadiya Jamal, who reported that his condition had worsened. She saw him again on April 25 and raised the alarm that he appeared even more gravely ill.

On March 30, Abu-Jamal was taken from the prison infirmary at SCI Mahanoy in Frackville, Pa., to a nearby hospital emergency room in Pottsville, Pa., in diabetic shock from a blood sugar level of 779. Since his return to the prison infirmary on April 2, he continues to suffer from a diabetic condition that has not been properly treated and complications from severe eczema that have been mistreated.

There is an additional concern that the infirmary is giving him the drug cyclosporine for his skin condition even though this drug has many known and serious side effects and may interact with diabetes medication.

On April 21, Abu-Jamal was released from the prison infirmary even though he was in no condition to be in general population. His request to be seen by independent medical specialists was denied by the PA Department of Corrections. He remains in need of 24-hour care and su-



Brooklyn, N.Y., April 25.

pervision, too weak to be able to ask for help and at risk of losing consciousness.

This is what happened before when he was rushed to the hospital in March. At that time, another prisoner, Major George Tillery, complained to the guards that Mumia needed immediate medical attention. In retaliation, the prison moved Tillery to another unit.

Wadiya Jamal reported that Mumia has severe swelling in his neck, chest and legs. His skin rash is worse than ever with open sores. No longer in a wheelchair, he can only take baby steps. He was nodding off during the visits with his spouse and unable to feed himself. These are symptoms that could be associated with hyper glucose levels, diabetic shock, diabetic coma, and with kidney stress and failure.

Everyone is urged to call the prison, officials with the Department of Corrections and Pennsylvania's Gov. Tom Wolf,

who in February put a moratorium on the death penalty. Abu-Jamal's prison number is AM 8335. The situation is urgent.

Demand that prison officials call Mumia's spouse and his lawyer Bret Grote to discuss his condition. Demand that Abu-Jamal be seen by a competent doctor immediately and that he be taken to a hospital with emergency doctors capable of providing proper treatment.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN



Mumia Abu-Jamal on April 24. Photo taken during visit by his spouse, Wadiya Jamal.

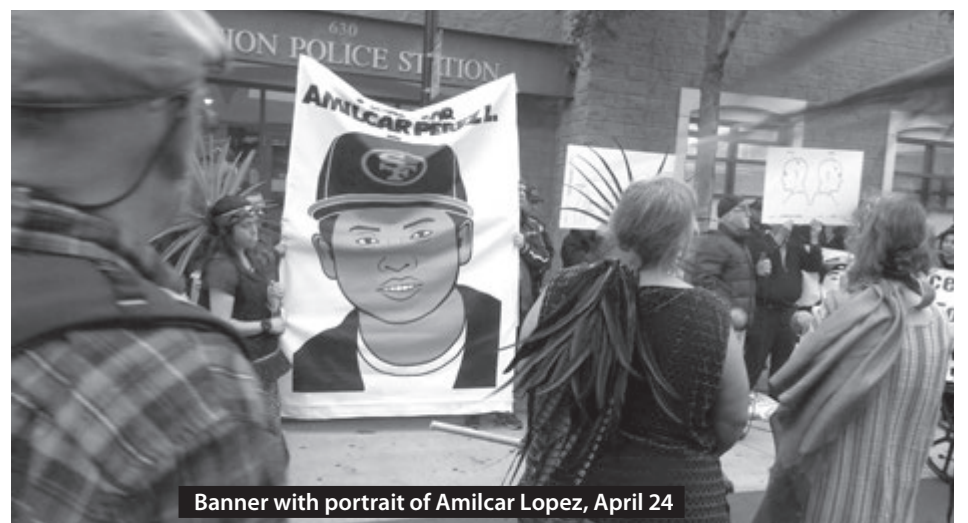
You are further urged to call local news sources in your area that would report on this crisis and to share this concern with your contact lists and via any social media you use.

On Twitter use the hashtag **#MumiaMustLive**.

Every call matters. Every action matters. Speak out now before it's too late! Call and send messages to:

- 1) **John Wetzel**, Secretary of the Department of Corrections
Email: ra-crpdocsecretary@pa.gov
Phone: **717-728-4109**
Fax: **717-728-4178**
Mail: 1920 Technology Pkwy., Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
- 2) **John Kerestes**, Superintendent SCI Mahanoy
Phone: **570-773-2158 x8102** •
Fax: **570-783-2008**
Mail: 301 Morea Road, Frackville, PA 17932
- 3) **Tom Wolf**, Pa. Governor
Phone: **717-787-2500**
Email: governor@PA.gov
Mail: 508 Main Capitol Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120 □

Lopez family exposes terrorist police



Banner with portrait of Amilcar Lopez, April 24

Lawyers representing the Guatemalan family of Amilcar Pérez López held a press conference in San Francisco on April 24, announcing they had filed a federal lawsuit charging the young immigrant "was wrongfully, unconstitutional and illegally killed." His parents, who have been unable to come to the U.S., Skyped in to the press conference.

Later that day, several hundred people rallied in front of the home where López was killed. The Danzantes conducted a ritual dance and later led a march through the Mission District to the Mission Police Station. There, diagrams from an independent autopsy were displayed, showing that, counter to SFPD statements, López was shot with one bullet in the back of his head, four bullets in his back, and a bullet in his arm, clearly indicating he was running away and not threatening the officers who shot him. "Someone charging

at you with a knife held high doesn't get shot in the back of the head," said lawyer Arnoldo Casillas. "How is Chief Suhr going to explain this?"

López was killed by undercover officers Craig Tiffe and Eric Reboli on Feb. 26. SFPD Chief Greg Suhr had claimed that Amilcar had attempted to steal another man's bicycle, but that when the English-speaking officers approached him, Amilcar raised a knife over his head and charged the officers, forcing them to fire. The 21-year-old had come to the U.S. to raise money to support his family in Guatemala and was working full time doing construction. He spoke an Indigenous language, with no English, and some Spanish.

The parents of Alex Nieto, also killed by the SFPD, joined the vigil and march as well. Nieto was killed in nearby Bernal Heights in 2014.

— Story and photo by Terri Kay

Unite against war at home, abroad

Continued from page 2

The Saturday evening panel featuring testimony on the militarization of the police will connect racist police violence and systemic racism to expanding wars abroad. Testimony will include three speakers from the Ferguson resistance: Dhoruba Toure Shakur of Tribe X; Michael McPhearson, co-chair of the Don't Shoot Coalition; and Osagyefo Uhuru Sekou, minister, author and activist; along with Larry Holmes of the Peoples Power Assembly and Michelle Kamal, whose son, Abdul Kamal, was fatally gunned down by police in Irvington N.J.

Local activists in the Peoples Organization for Progress in Newark are mobilizing for the conference as part of building for a major "Peoples March for Justice" in Newark on July 25. Many other action proposals are scheduled. Skills workshops in social media and culture and music are part of the weekend plans.

The United National Antiwar Coalition is an umbrella organization of thousands of progressive, individual activists, and anti-war, social justice, immigration and anti-racism groups. The coalition was formed in 2010 at a conference of 800 activists in Albany, N.Y., where overwhelm-

ing support for ending U.S. aid to Israel was a central decision.

In the past five years, as U.S. wars and destabilization efforts in Libya, Syria, Ukraine and Venezuela have left some forces of the anti-war movement silent and disoriented, UNAC has issued bold statements and held coordinated actions demanding "U.S.Hands Off!" as the only viable solution for peace. In the first days of the Ferguson uprising, UNAC again stepped forward with clear statements of support for the Black Lives Matter movement.

The UNAC conference will be an opportunity to meet and network with activists from across the country and to learn about the many struggles going on today.

Most conferences cost hundreds of dollars to attend, but UNAC organizers are doing their best to keep their event extremely affordable for young activists and working people.

Arrangements to stay at the hotel or to reserve meals can be made directly with the Clarion hotel at a special conference rate. Registration and information on panels and workshops is available at UNACconference2015.org. □

INDIANA

Feticide sentencing denounced as racist

By Sue Davis

For the first time in the United States, on March 30 a woman was convicted and ordered to spend 20 years of a 41-year sentence in prison for child neglect — and feticide! The charges against Purvi Patel, a 33-year-old woman of South Asian descent, were clearly contradictory, but that did not stop prosecutors from using “junk science” to win their case.

This is the first time a feticide law — on the books in 35 states — was used to criminalize abortion. (For background, see “Indiana woman criminalized after miscarriage,” workers.org, Feb. 19)

“Purvi Patel is an amazing example ... [that] women’s pregnancies are now becoming the subject of policing, prosecution and severe sentences in an age of mass incarceration,” Lynn M. Paltrow, executive director of National Advocates for Pregnant Women, told Democracy Now! on April 2. The organization supports Patel’s appeal.

This is the second time Indiana has prosecuted a woman of color under its feticide law. Chinese migrant Bei-Bei Shuai was arrested in March 2011 after a failed suicide attempt led to ending her pregnancy. After spending 435 days in jail, she eventually accepted a plea deal for “criminal recklessness” and was released in 2013.

South Asian-American physician and writer Sayantani Dasgupta observed, “The fact that Patel is of Indian origin, a brown woman in the heart of the American Midwest, a South Asian face in the era of post 9-11 racial profiling, is in fact critically important in this narrative of criminalized reproduction.” She cited the Patel and Shuai cases as being driven by the religious right’s critical views of India and China in their global evangelical crusades against abortion. (Salon, April 26)

While calling this case “a clarion call” for women’s reproductive freedom, Dasgupta stated: “This case simultaneously reveals right-wing racist and xenophobic politics. There is an organized backlash to abortion rights happening in this country, married to an anti-immigrant, Islamophobic, apocalyptic fervor that holds fetal ‘citizens’ far more dear than female ones.”

Laws curtail abortion rights

Attacks on women’s health clinics accelerated in the first three months of 2015. The only clinic in Mississippi was vandalized on March 22.

The Guttmacher Institute reported April 2 that state legislators have proposed 332 laws to restrict access to abortion services in 43 states. Of 53 approved, only nine have been enacted. These laws curb access in both early and later months of pregnancy, “leaving women with fewer

options and a greatly reduced time frame to get the care they need.”

Arkansas and Idaho banned use of “telemedicine” for prescribing early medication abortions (such bans exist in 15 states), while West Virginia banned abortions 20 weeks after fertilization without exceptions for rape and incest. In mid-April, Kansas and Oklahoma took the 20-week ban even further by passing a law which prohibits use of the dilation and evacuation (D&E) procedure for abortions after 20 weeks postfertilization. Missouri and South Carolina are considering similar laws, as is Congress.

A major problem, as noted by progressive critics, is that such laws are not based on medical or scientific terms and methods, and they interfere with the practice of medicine and the doctor-patient relationship. The D&E procedure is one of the safest methods for second trimester abortions, which only account for about 8 percent of all U.S. abortions. These bans discount that fetal testing results are often not known until late in the second trimester, when families are forced to make heartbreaking decisions about ending a wanted pregnancy. The struggle on this issue has just begun.

A few pro-reproductive justice measures

After a huge social media campaign to stop the federal human trafficking bill

from including an anti-abortion provision that would have expanded the role of the Hyde amendment (which blocks federal funding for abortions for poor women), the Senate passed the bill without such language on April 22. Now, the survivors’ compensation fund has two separate pools of money: funds from criminal fines will provide survivors with nonmedical services, while only federal funds appropriated originally for community health centers must adhere to the Hyde Amendment. Though this is not a victory, it is a setback for anti-abortion forces.

A hearing was held April 15 on a California bill to regulate anti-choice “crisis pregnancy centers.” The Reproductive Freedom, Accountability, Comprehensive Care and Transparency (FACT) Act would require all licensed facilities in the state that “provide family planning and pregnancy-related services to inform patients about available assistance for affordable contraception, abortion and prenatal care, including how to obtain that assistance.”

An amendment to Illinois’ Health Care Right of Conscience Act, which would have the same effect as the California bill, was introduced April 21. It mandates that all health care providers at 46 community health centers in Illinois must advise clients on the benefits of abortion and make referrals for abortion services. □

Meetings honor Leslie Feinberg

By John Parker and Kris Hamel

Events in Los Angeles and Detroit paid tribute to revolutionary communist, renowned author and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer liberation leader Leslie Feinberg, who died last November.

At the LGBT Center in Los Angeles, Workers World Party hosted a memorial on April 12 for Feinberg. The event was chaired by Judy Greenspan of the Oakland, Calif., branch of WWP, who talked about Feinberg standing up for and getting arrested demanding freedom for CeCe McDonald, a young African-American trans woman in Minneapolis who was jailed for fighting back against racist, anti-trans attackers in 2011.

In building for the event, organizers got very positive responses from those touched deeply by Feinberg’s work, including one of the founders of Black Lives



Matter, Patrisse Marie Cullors-Brignac, who sent the following message: “Leslie had a deep impact on my childhood. I went to see [her/hir] speak multiple times and we shared really lovely space together.”

Bob McCubbin, a member of San Diego WWP and author of “The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression — A Marxist View,” cited Feinberg’s tremendous contributions

in helping the Party understand the special oppression of the trans community. Los Angeles WWP members recounted Feinberg’s contributions to WW newspaper in covering prisoner struggles, authoring the “Lavender & Red” historical series available at workers.org and as a managing editor of the paper.

Feinberg’s anti-racist activism during a Boston Pride march and the 1974 Boston March Against Racism were examples given of how Feinberg helped unify and strengthen the working class. Gloria Verdieu of San Diego WWP introduced a powerful clip of Feinberg’s speech at Madison Square Garden at the Millions for Mumia rally.

A delegation from the Freedom Socialist Party in Los Angeles paid tribute to Feinberg. Yuisa Gimeno from the People of Color Caucus and Muffy Sunde, both lesbians, spoke about the contributions that Leslie made to the movement for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer equality and the fight for socialism.

WWP in Detroit hosted a public meeting on April 25 honoring Feinberg. The program,

chaired by Tachae Davis of the Detroit FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) revolutionary youth group and WWP, featured video clips from two of Feinberg’s powerful speeches, one to a lesbian organization in occupied Palestine in 2007, and one at a rally for political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal held in New York’s Madison Square Garden in 2000.

WWP members Abayomi Azikiwe, David Sole, Martha Grevatt, Kris Hamel and Susan Schnur paid tribute to Feinberg and shared stories and political insights into her/hir contributions to understanding lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer history and oppression under class society. “She was a true worker-scholar,” said Grevatt, “who, with meticulous attention to detail, searched far and wide for evidence of transgender people in human history. The facts proved the theory: that trans people, like women, were held in high esteem through most of human existence.”

Feinberg’s ability to skillfully forge links among the most oppressed sectors of the working class; hir dedication to the fight against racism and national oppression; hir internationalist solidarity, engaging political warmth and fierce warrior presence were described with love and fond remembrance by hir comrades, who vowed to continue to hold high Feinberg’s banner of struggle for the socialist liberation of all humanity. □



Jefferson Azevedo honoring Leslie Feinberg in Los Angeles.

WW PHOTOS

PHILADELPHIA

Justice for Rekia Boyd

In response to the outrageous Chicago court decision exonerating the police in the killing of unarmed, 22-year-old Rekia Boyd, shot in the back of the head by Chicago police Officer Dante Servin, angry Philadelphia protesters on April 20 shut down rush-hour, Market Street traffic outside the 30th Street train station. Police attacked the demonstrators’ right to free speech, arresting Alkebu-Lan Marcus. Protesters followed up by marching in the streets to the 16th Precinct at 39th and Lancaster, and then to the 18th Precinct at 55th and Pine, where Marcus was released. He has been charged with disorderly conduct and three other misdemeanors.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette



How Detroit school crisis unfolded

By Elena Herrada
Detroit

I am a member of the Detroit School Board in Exile. We call ourselves “exiles” because we do not accept emergency management. I was elected and have been on the Board since 2010. During this time, we have been stripped of power and authority. We have seen the state destroy public education and hand off real estate to cronies of the governor and the mayor.

Although the emergency manager law (Public Act 4) was repealed, we were saddled with another emergency manager law — PA 436, which cannot be repealed. All Black cities in Michigan are under “emergency management,” which strips locally elected officials of authority. The State privatizes many of the services and contractors pocket the profits.

Detroit, once a strong union city, is now under a “write in” white mayor who did not even live here long enough to be on the ballot. He was given millions for his campaign by Dan Gilbert, of Quicken Loans, and millions from corporations.

Detroit is among the poorest cities in the country. The City Council has been complicit in the giveaways and has received three pay increases in two years, despite the fact that the city was put into federal bankruptcy by Jones Day, the bankruptcy law firm that took us over.

Here is a chronology of what happened to Detroit Public Schools under state takeover:

Abolishing the elected school board

In 1999, Republican Gov. John Engler signed PA 10 into law, abolishing Detroit’s elected school board and replacing it with a board appointed by Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer and the governor, which had no operational power but to hire a CEO.

At this time, DPS had a \$93-million surplus, rising enrollment and improving test scores. Observers believe that the purpose of the takeover was to control the bond program, which still had \$1.2 billion in 1999. A lawsuit and protests followed.

In 2000, Kenneth Burnley was hired

as CEO. He began predicting the decline of DPS, eventually stating that DPS would shrink to 65,000 students. When Burnley began, DPS enrollment was 162,692 students.

Democrat Jennifer Granholm became governor in January 2003. In April 2004, Burnley announced a projected deficit of \$200 million for the fiscal year ending June 30. This was used as a basis for closing a large number of schools and firing several thousand staff members. Burnley had kept the fiscal crisis secret until more moderate measures could not be employed. Burnley and Granholm arranged a \$210 million, 15-year loan with a 50 percent finance charge as part of the repayment schedule.

In November 2004, a mandated referendum asked whether Detroit voters wanted mayoral control of the schools or a directly elected school board. By a 2-1 margin, voters chose an elected board, despite being outspent 20-1 in the campaign by pro-mayor forces, whose fundraising effort was led by the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce and supported by Gov. Granholm.

By 2006, enrollment dropped to 118,394, a loss of 44,299, or over a quarter of the enrollment from the beginning of the Burnley regime.

‘Financial emergency’ declared at DPS

From 2000 through 2005, Burnley and Govs. Engler and Granholm planned and spent over \$1 billion in bond construction funds at highly inflated prices for new buildings. In 2006, the elected school board was sworn in.

In December 2008, Granholm invoked PA 72 of 1990 to declare a financial emergency at DPS because the elected board had not erased the deficit created by Burnley and Granholm when the district was under their control.

In January 2009, Granholm announced the appointment of Robert Bobb as the emergency financial manager of DPS, after meeting with billionaire Eli Broad, a Bobb supporter, at the presidential inauguration.

As Bobb readied for the position, he and Granholm promised the elected school board that they would abide by the shared power arrangement called for in PA 72.

In March 2009, Bobb assumed the EFM position and told the Board that he controlled “everything that a penny touches,” which meant everything at DPS. The Board president stated publicly that Granholm had lied to them about the shared power arrangement and began to plan a legal challenge.

Two months after his arrival, Bobb announced a plan, with Granholm’s sanction, to seek approval from voters for a \$500 million bond program to build new schools, even as he planned for large-scale school closings. It was adopted in November balloting.

Privatization begins in earnest

Bobb and Granholm partnered with the Skillman Foundation and other groups to promote “Excellent Schools Detroit,” a plan to create a private school network to replace the DPS system, especially at the high school level. The ESD stated in its plan its intention to acquire buildings being built with the 2009 bond

money financed by Detroit taxpayers.

In December 2009, Granholm signed legislation as part of a grant application for “Race to the Top” federal funding that would consolidate Michigan schools with the lowest 5 percent of MEAP [Michigan Educational Assessment Program] scores into one statewide district. State Superintendent Michael Flanagan said then that schools from northern and mid-Michigan would be in the district. He received funding to begin to staff the department shortly thereafter.

In 2010, Bobb was given a second year contract by Granholm with \$505,000 in total compensation, including from private money sources that were also financing the Excellent Schools Detroit. Most private funding sources for Bobb’s pay were kept secret through most of 2010.

In 2009 and 2010, Bobb continued the large-scale school closings while building new school buildings.

In January 2011, Republican businessman Rick Snyder was sworn in as the new governor. PA 4 was signed into law on March 16, superseding PA 72.

In May 2011, Snyder replaced Robert

Continued on page 10

Syracuse student-workers



PHOTO: THE GENERAL BODY

Boston homeless lead march

By Gerry Scoppettuolo

Boston’s organized homeless people continued their fightback against oppressive conditions in city shelters by mounting an unprecedented March of the Homeless on April 23. The march through city streets culminated in a united rally with the immigrant community at the Massachusetts State House.

The march and rally continued the ongoing resistance to Boston’s Long Island shelter disaster of Oct. 8, when the city’s largest shelter was suddenly closed. With just four hours’ notice, 750 homeless residents, 300 of whom were residing in long- and short-term recovery programs, were ousted from the shelter.

Marchers walked a three-mile route past major city shelters — Rosie’s Place, Woods-Mullen, Pine Street Inn, Bridge Over Troubled Waters and St. Francis — picking up homeless people along the way and from the streets. The march followed weeks of intensive outreach by the Boston Homeless Solidarity Committee, an organization of the homeless and their supporters.

Chants included “Housing is a human

right, we have just begun to fight!” Jewel Crutchfield, a homeless African-American woman, heard the chants and rolled herself in her wheelchair out of the St. Francis Shelter. She addressed the crowd: “I lost my housing when rent control was repealed 14 years ago and have been homeless ever since, mostly sleeping on the streets. This struggle is not just about me. It’s about all of us.”

Along the way, organizers Cherai Mills, Cleve Rae and Jesse Maxwell — all currently homeless — made stirring speeches at each shelter the march passed.

When marchers arrived at the State House steps, they united with a rally called by the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition. MIRA was demonstrating against a proposed state law that would bar all so-called undocumented people from applying for public housing.

The March of the Homeless was organized by the Boston Homeless Solidarity Committee with support from the Mass Alliance of HUD Tenants, the Women’s Fightback Network, the National People’s Power Assembly, Boston University medical students and many others. □

Student organizing against Syracuse University austerity cutbacks is accelerating. On April 9, SU student-workers held a rally and march to protest recent SU administration changes to their health care benefits. The changes would raise costs as much as \$1,500 a year for some graduate teaching and research assistants.

Three international graduate student teachers who are also single mothers spoke of struggles over low wages that do not compensate for hours of out-of-classroom work such as grading, preparation or student conferences. The women noted the school does not provide child care for student teaching assistants.

The night before the rally, the Graduate Student Organization passed a resolution to explore unionization with only one “no” vote. At the rally, a member of the Labor Studies Working Group stressed: “[graduate assistants], [teaching assistants] and [research assistants] are fundamentally employees of the University who deserve rights.” When he added that the “best way to claim those rights is to unionize,” the crowd responded with vociferous applause.

Rally-goers then marched through the Student Union, passing under a “SU Wellness Week” publicity banner as they chanted “Poverty wages have got to go!” They continued to the Student Health Center, where the crowd briefly

held the street, shouting: “What do we want? Health care! If we don’t get it? Shut it down!”

The rally continues the student-faculty-staff coalition formed in fall 2014 during an 18-day sit-in by students in the SU administration building. That mobilization, coordinated by THE General Body, was a “united front of 50 student organizations.”

On April 7, TGB held a press conference to stress the gains won from the sit-in, including SU’s divestment from direct fossil fuel investment. Speakers also stressed that the SU administration needed to “divest from corporate ideology,” and criticized the lack of concrete steps to support programs against racism on campus, to end sexual assault and relationship violence, and to provide services for students with disabilities.

One student spoke eloquently of mental health as a disability issue linked to oppression, describing the exhaustion from constantly “mentally fighting” against racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and ableism in “lab rooms, classrooms, dorm rooms, bathrooms, at bus stops.” Rebecca Fuentes, of the Workers Center of Central New York, represented the low-wage worker struggle throughout the U.S. and said to the students, “We are standing with you!”

Story by Minnie Bruce Pratt

Delegation from U.S. learns

Peace process vital to Colombian people

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

The peace process unfolding in Colombia through talks being held in Havana, Cuba, between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) and the Colombian government is crucial to the stability of the region. Any attempt to derail, block or even to proceed in haste will have negative consequences for all these countries, not only for the more than 48 million people who inhabit Colombia.

From April 11 through 17, thirty-two delegates from the United States travelled to Cuba to support this process. They had the unique opportunity to meet with several representatives of the FARC leadership. It was the first time that a U.S. delegation went to Cuba and publicly showed their support for these talks. It should be remembered that the FARC, along with the National Liberation Army of Colombia (ELN), are still on the U.S. State Department's list of "foreign terrorist organizations."

Cuba too, "the Country of Dignity," had been on the State Department's list of countries that sponsor terrorism until President Obama requested its removal. Yet, as of this date, Obama's petition is still pending approval from the U.S. Congress.

The delegates had a glimpse of the enormous challenges and difficulties of this process, which has many enemies who want to keep war raging in Colom-

bia. There is a confidentiality clause that forbids anyone participating actively as a silent witness in the talks, from disclosing sensitive information. Nevertheless, the delegation was able to get a clearer picture of its progress through meetings with the FARC peace delegation and FARC legal advisers, a Colombian government representative and the ambassadors of Cuba and Norway, countries which are guarantors for the talks.

It should be stressed that even though the talks are described as taking place between the government and the FARC, the reality is that the process embraces a vast number of other civil and social organizations from Colombia that have been an active part of it. In several regions of Colombia, the United Nations, the National University of Colombia and the Episcopal Conference have sponsored assemblies to gather feedback and proposals from the people.

The FARC also has a website where people can directly make suggestions. As a result, the proposals that the FARC submits to the process reflect the sentiments of the majority of Colombian people.

Women and the LGBT communities have been active participants.

A special aspect has been the inclusion of the victims of the conflict. According to a U.N. report, the majority of victims have been targets of the state and paramilitaries' violent actions. Sixty victims travelled

from Colombia to Cuba to testify.

Bilateral ceasefire, a necessary demand

As stated above, reactionary forces within Colombia want to suspend the talks and work actively to pursue this aim. Among them are big landowners and paramilitaries, including ex-President Álvaro Uribe.

One example of these obstacles is what happened in Cauca on April 14-15. During a confrontation between FARC guerrillas and the Colombian army, eleven soldiers and one guerrilla died. Immediately, and without any investigation, the government and right-wing forces accused the FARC of breaking the indefinite, unilateral ceasefire that the insurgent group had declared four months earlier. However, when the FARC announced this ceasefire, they made it clear that they will defend themselves if attacked.

As a retaliation for what he called "an attack of the FARC" on April 15, President Juan Manuel Santos announced that the army would resume the bombardments of FARC encampments that had been suspended for several weeks. Now, the region of Cauca is once again dangerous for the poor peasants and Indigenous communities who live in the area. Since Santos' announcement, eight Indigenous men have already been killed by paramilitaries in the Cauca and Chocó regions.

This climate of constant war endanger-



FARC-EP Commander Marco León Calarcá with Berta Joubert-Ceci in May 2014.

ing the poorest communities is a threat to the peace process. For this reason, the FARC has demanded since the beginning a bilateral ceasefire, which the government has consistently refused. The insurgency has declared a unilateral ceasefire several times, but the government's response has been an intensification of its aggression, causing more deaths and despair to the civilian population.

The demand for a bilateral ceasefire is echoed by the Broad Front for Peace, an organization that investigates the FARC unilateral ceasefire. In its IV report, dated April 22, the Front stated that there is "provocation and constant siege on the part of the government that takes advantage of a militarily armed actor that has decided to not attack them while they discuss peace." They also reported that so far this year 19 human rights advocates have been killed. □

Latin America beats back U.S. imperialism at summits **PART 1**

Taken from a talk given at a Workers World Party forum on April 17 in New York City.

By Rebeca Toledo

U.S. imperialism got a good, old-fashioned shellacking at the VII Summit of the Americas and the People's Summit in Panama from April 8 to 11.

But first, let's look back to December 2014. U.S. President Barack Obama's announcement that the U.S. would be normalizing relations with Cuba after decades of trying to overthrow the revolutionary government signaled a major setback for imperialism. Washington had failed and finally had to admit it.

As Argentine President Cristina Fernández said at the Summit, "[The only reason] Cuba is here, and we're witnessing this meeting between two leaders, shaking hands and so on, is because Cuba fought for more than 60 years with unprecedented dignity." Cuba's presence at the Summit was a victory for the Cuban people and for all revolutionaries and an-

ti-imperialists the world over.

On April 14, it was also announced that Obama has recommended to Congress that Cuba be taken off the U.S. terrorist list, a list that shouldn't even exist seeing that the real terrorists are the ones making it.

Cuban President Raúl Castro's speech at the Summit showed that Cuba has its eyes wide open when dealing with U.S. imperialism. Castro quoted from U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Lester Mallory's 1960 memo: "The majority of Cubans support Castro. An effective political opposition does not exist; the only foreseeable means of alienating internal support [for the government] is through disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship; to weaken the economic life of Cuba, denying it money and supplies to decrease monetary and real wages; to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."

Castro continued: "We have endured severe hardships. Actually, 77 percent of the Cuban people were born under the

harshness of the blockade, but our patriotic convictions prevailed. Aggression increased resistance and accelerated the revolutionary process. Now, here we are with our heads up high and our dignity unblemished."

Castro also defended Venezuela, called for the decolonization of Puerto Rico and said, "We should all multiply our assistance to Haiti and support a fair and deferential treatment of the Caribbean countries in their economic relations as well as reparations for damages brought on them by slavery and colonialism."

Another U.S. offensive fails

After Obama announced the opening of an accord with Cuba, he wanted to make it clear to the right-wing forces within the U.S. ruling establishment that U.S. imperialism wasn't actually going soft. In early March, he signed an executive order declaring that Venezuela posed an extraordinary threat to U.S. national security and ordering sanctions against seven Venezuelan officials. The decree was a complete miscalculation on his part, as it aroused an unprecedented uproar of protest throughout Latin America and the world. Every single Latin American and Caribbean country denounced the decree as heavy-handed and called for Obama to revoke it immediately.

Venezuela's campaign to collect signatures worldwide to deliver to Obama at the Summit, resulted in 13 million signatures, 3 million from Cuba alone. U.S. Sub Secretary for Latin America Roberta Jacobson said she was "disappointed that there were not more countries to defend the sanctions." On April 9, Obama ate his words, declaring that Venezuela poses no threat to the United States. He ended up having to meet with President Nicolás Maduro during the Summit.

In his speech, Maduro demanded the

decree be revoked and made it clear that Venezuela is anti-imperialist. "Obama, if you do not recognize our 21st century revolution you will continue to fail."

Parallel 'People's Summit'

In parallel with the official summit, more than 3,500 delegates from workers' organizations, trade unions, peasant organizations, Indigenous peoples, students, women, social and popular movements throughout Latin America and the Caribbean attended a People's Summit in Panama. This summit's final declaration stated its unconditional support for both the Cuban Revolution and the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela.

The declaration demanded the decolonization of Puerto Rico; freedom for Oscar López Rivera, who has served 33 years in U.S. prisons for fighting for his homeland's independence; the immediate end of the occupation of Haiti; the return of the 43 students of Ayotzinapa in Mexico; and economic equality: a redistribution of wealth and an end to poverty. It also expressed solidarity with the peace process being held in Cuba between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) and the Colombian government.

President Maduro and President Rafael Correa of Ecuador were among the speakers at the People's Summit. Correa stated, "We will no longer tolerate interferences, interventions or unilateral actions, nor will we ever be anyone's backyard."

History of Latin American summits

The U.S. administration of Bill Clinton had initiated the "official" summits as part of the Organization of American States, with the first held in December 1994 in Miami to focus on the Free Trade Area of the Americas. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

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Venezuelan representative speaks

Venezuelan Consul General Jesus Rodriguez Espinoza was a special guest speaker from Chicago at the April 27 weekly meeting of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions, and Utility Shutoffs and the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice in Detroit. Rodriguez discussed the U.S. destabilization campaign against the Bolivarian Revolution aimed at reversing the gains of the revolution since 1998. Rodriguez was given a T-shirt in support of the freedom of Rev. Pinkney by Yvonne Jones, retired city of Detroit employee. This photo shows Rodriguez, left, talking with Fight



Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) activist Joe Mchahwar of Detroit.

— Caption & photo by Abayomi Azikiwe

Losing and winning strategies

Forging real union solidarity

By Workers World Milwaukee Bureau

On March 9, Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin signed the “Freedom To Work” bill, which made so-called “right to work” legal in a state which has had a closed-shop labor law since the militant battles of workers and their communities won that concession in the 1930s.

The right-to-work-for-less (a more accurate name) law follows Wisconsin’s Act 10 of 2011. The right-wing legislature is now gearing up to potentially gut laws such as the prevailing wage, project labor agreements, workers’ compensation and others.

Moments after Walker signed the RTW law, hundreds of students of color and white working-class students and youth engaged in a sit-down in the streets of Madison and later briefly occupied the state Capitol. They were responding to the police murder of Tony Robinson, a 19-year-old African American killed in Madison on March 6, as well as the ongoing austerity inflicted on their generation by Wall Street, Walker and the cops.

Besides a few individual union members, organized labor was absent during this protest. This was despite organized labor having received mass statewide support from youth and student organizations — such as the Young, Gifted and Black coalition in Madison — during the RTW and Act 10 fights.

Although there are notable exceptions by some unions and labor-oriented organizations, such as the Milwaukee Teacher Education Association, Wisconsin Jobs Now and Voces de la Frontera, the overall pattern of organized labor in Wisconsin has been to steer clear of the Black Lives Matter movement and the struggles for justice for Dontre Hamilton and Tony Robinson.

Led by the Wisconsin AFL-CIO, the unions are not seriously taking up and supporting the issues of the oppressed — specifically fighting racist police terror and killings. This is a central reason why unions find themselves being pummeled.

Black people in Wisconsin have faced semi-apartheid, genocidal-type conditions for decades. The unions, however, have been largely silent when it comes to speaking out against racism and supporting the struggles of the oppressed. Walker and other Wall Street political servants have been able to take advantage of this, utilizing racist electoral campaigns and other programs modeled on the “Southern strategy” of pitting white workers against their allies in the oppressed communities.

Other major reasons for the Act 10 and RTW defeats are organized labor’s support for and deference to the Democratic Party and lack of an internationalist, class-conscious ideology. Because of this, working-class combat tactics and strategies, rooted in workplaces and communities, are minimal. And although there were protests, sometimes with thousands at the state Capitol in opposition to RTW, they were mainly a defensive response to the unfolding austerity.

Losing tactics and strategies

Despite Act 10 and RTW being passed in Wisconsin, Michigan and other states, along with other vicious attacks on unions in Indiana, Illinois and elsewhere, the Wisconsin AFL-CIO and the national AFL-CIO have relied almost exclusively on narrow trade union tactics that have been ineffective for many years.

Hundreds of thousands of union members are just a few hours away from or

close to Madison. But the national AFL-CIO sent out emails directing members to contact Wisconsin legislators to try to stop RTW, instead of directing those members to shut down Madison.

The call for a general strike or “stand still” both in 2011 and during the RTW fight was rejected outright by the majority of union leaders. This call was proposed by a leader of the Machinist’s union, Defeat Right To Work In Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Bail Out The People Movement (wibailoutpeople.org).

In efforts to defeat RTW, various private-sector unions engaged in “coalitions” with their class enemies — the trade and construction companies — instead of with community organizations.

Instead of mobilizing broad-based, union-community efforts to reverse Act 10, the majority of private- and public-sector unions in Wisconsin urged their members to engage in wasted attempts to pressure Democratic and Republican Party politicians to reverse the anti-worker law.

At the very time when every sector of the working class and oppressed is facing brutal austerity and cutbacks — and possibly even more attacks from the right-wing-controlled 2015-17 Wisconsin legislature — the union leadership is sticking to failed business union tactics.

Unions could instead mobilize statewide strategies for a working-class offensive, such as shutting down Madison through a “work holiday” or general strike and directing members to support the youth- and student-led movements like Black Lives Matter or the environmental justice and public education battles going on throughout Wisconsin.

Even after all the austerity measures implemented in the state since 2011, there was still a fightback spirit from workers wanting to defeat the right-to-work-for-less law. But the unions didn’t channel that opposition into direct action which could have succeeded in beating back RTW.

A winning strategy

Karl Marx, the founder of scientific socialism, delivered an address to the General Council of the International Workingmen’s Association (the First International) in 1866. Included was a section on “The Future of the Unions.” This passage, along with many others, is as relevant today for the labor movement as it was back in 1866 when it was first delivered:

“Apart from their original purpose, [the unions] must now learn to act deliberately as organizing centers of the

Black Lives Matter activists stand with unions in Madison in February.



WW PHOTO

working class in the broad interest of its complete emancipation. They must aid every social and political movement tending in that direction. Considering themselves as acting as the champions of the whole working class, they cannot fail to enlist the [unorganized] into their ranks. They must look carefully after the interests of the worst paid trades, such as agricultural laborers, rendered powerless by exceptional circumstances. They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions.”

Marx also wrote: “Labor in the white skin can never free itself as long as labor in the black skin is branded.”

There are many historical precedents in the United States for a militant, union-community, classwide approach, including the Industrial Workers of the World and the Congress of Industrial Organizations in the 1930s. Then socialists and communists played fundamental roles in organizing sitdown strikes, winning unions for workers, stopping evictions and other actions on behalf of the workers and community. Current examples include the immigrant rights movement and the low-wage workers’ struggle, which are often one and the same.

International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10’s call for “Union Action to Stop Police Killings of Black and Brown People” by shutting down West Coast ports on May Day is a splendid example of an internationalist, classwide approach and a model that should be followed by unions across the U.S.

In addition to job actions, unions should be sending delegations to Black Lives Matter protests and offering every resource they have to the youth and students fighting police terror. Solidarity statements are welcomed and needed, but what’s also useful are union halls and other resources openly available to communities to fight back against austerity. Union halls should be open 24/7 so workers and community activists can organize, hold class-conscious cultural events and offer places of refuge for those fighting killer cops and other outrages.

Organizing the mighty working class

Women, people of color and lesbian,

gay, bi, trans and queer people, as well as low-wage and unemployed workers, have the knowledge, creativity and yearning to struggle against the ruling class, and should be welcomed by the unions. These sectors of the working class could be hired as union organizers; in turn, they could assist in elevating leadership from the most oppressed communities.

Unions need to support all progressive struggles in Wisconsin, not just attend their own protests. Organizing independently of the two capitalist political parties into formations such as the Southern Workers Assembly, where all organized and unorganized workers are welcome, should be supported by the unions, which could play a central role in the development of these organizations.

Unions could co-sponsor with community groups mass educational events explaining to union and community members how unions and progressive laws were won in Wisconsin, and why it was necessary to fight the capitalists in order to win collective bargaining, workers’ compensation and many other rights that are fast being stripped away by Wall Street and its political servants.

The Wisconsin AFL-CIO could sponsor mass union delegations to May Day and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day actions — and not just mobilize for their own events like Labor Day.

Ben Herrenbruck, a Milwaukee Area Technical College student and member of FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) from Milwaukee, has participated in numerous Black Lives Matter and anti-RTW protests in the recent period. Herrenbruck told WW: “Now more than ever, after the police murders of Dontre Hamilton and Tony Robinson and the passage of right to work in Wisconsin, the need to tie the anti-police terror struggle and all community issues with labor struggles is critical.

“There’s almost certainly going to be a youth uprising somewhere soon that will be of greater magnitude than Ferguson,” said Herrenbruck. “Will white workers and organized labor stand behind their sisters and brothers of color and work to ensure mutual survival? Or will they stand by, thus giving credit to the right-wing claim that labor unions have outlived their usefulness?” □

Morgantown, West Virginia

Activists for unity here, worldwide

Building left unity was on the agenda in Morgantown, W.Va., where the inaugural Mid-Atlantic Solidarity Conference was held April 18. The conference was coordinated by the Left Alliance at West Virginia University. Members of the following groups in the region attended the conference: the Appalachian Left, Workers World Party, Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), Kentucky Workers League, Fairmont State Gay/Straight Alliance, FIRSTHAND Coffee Co-op, Mountaineers for Fair Labor, Gender Equality Movement, GetEqual, WV Mountain Party, Sierra Club and Planned Parenthood.

Workers World Party held a panel titled “Empire in Crisis: Uniting the Strug-



gles to Defeat Racist State Terror, Austerity and Endless War” featuring three speakers: Sara Benjamin, Scott Williams and this writer.

The Left Alliance hopes to make this event a regular occurrence and looks forward to building a unified left movement in the region.

The following day on April 19, the Left Alliance, Appalachian Left, Kentucky Workers League, Workers World Party and FIST demonstrated in front of the Mountainlair Student Center at WVU as part of the International Day of Solidarity with Venezuela. Protesters received a great deal of favorable feedback as they waved a Venezuelan flag and held signs calling on President Obama to remove the sanctions on Venezuelan officials. The protesters also called for the U.S. to immediately cease activity aimed at undermining the Bolivarian Revolution, such as the recently defeated coup attempt on Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

— Story and photo by Benji Pyles

BALTIMORE

Justice for Freddie Grey! FIST says No to police terror!

The following statement (lightly edited) on the police killing of Freddie Grey was issued April 21 by Baltimore FIST — Fight Imperialism, Stand Together — a revolutionary youth group dedicated to fighting police terror and capitalism.

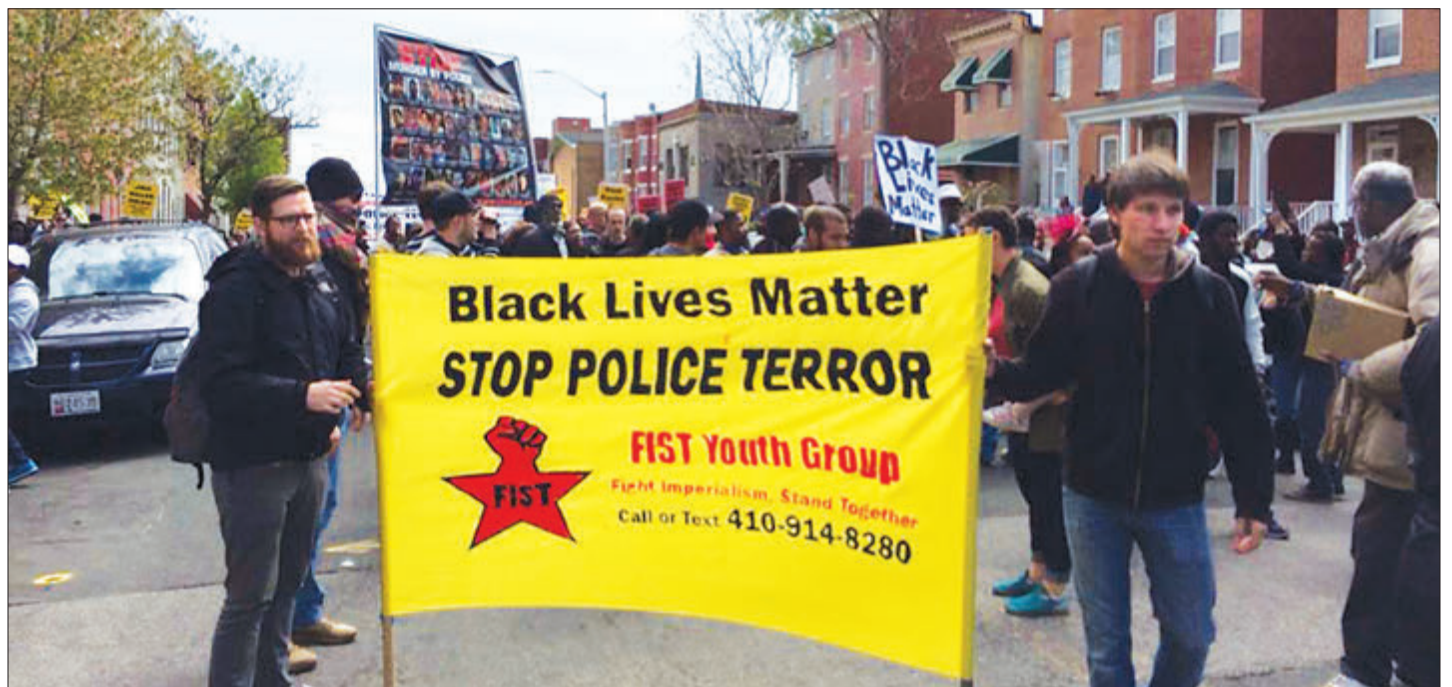
On April 12, a 25-year-old Black man was harassed and eventually killed by the Baltimore City Police Department. His name was Freddie Grey, and although the exact details of his death remain unclear, what happened to him is no mystery. The circumstances surrounding his death are especially appalling and illustrate the brutal, racist nature of the police under capitalism.

Cell phone video from a nearby witness clearly shows Grey lying on the sidewalk, screaming in pain while three police officers drag him to his feet and into a police van.

The woman recording the video is heard exclaiming that Grey's leg looks broken. In addition, his head is hanging, not in a natural position. The police show no concern for his well-being, and it has been reported that he was additionally restrained inside the van.

After Grey was in the van, there are conflicting accounts of what happened next. Originally it was claimed that he was taken to the Western District police station before an ambulance was called for him. Later, the police claimed that they took him straight to a hospital.

Regardless of the exact timeline of events, Grey's lawyer reported that by the time Grey was in the hospital, three of his vertebrae were broken and his spine was 80 percent severed.



April 25 demonstration to demand justice for Freddie Grey.

WW PHOTO: CALEB MAUPIN

The Baltimore Police Department inflicted these obscene wounds, which caused Grey to fall into a coma soon after the incident. On April 19, Freddie Grey was dead.

FIST is in the streets fighting for justice

On the day before he died, protests were held at the Western District police station to demand accountability for what at the time was a case of brutal police assault but not yet murder. Grey's death on April 19 only raised the level of anger in the community, and hundreds of people took to the streets of Baltimore to protest yet another death at the hands of the police. Since then, protests have

not stopped, and they are expected to continue.

Grey's murder represents another case in a long line of racist police terror and occupation in Baltimore City and beyond. The police in the United States trace their roots directly to the era of slavery. The ancestors of police departments were the men who would hunt down enslaved Black people who had escaped to freedom and return them to brutal exploitation.

The modern police forces that exist now came about with the development of capitalism and have existed solely as a means of oppression. At all times, they have been an instrument of class rule,

used by the exploiters to repress workers and oppressed peoples.

We in FIST stand firmly in solidarity with Freddie Grey and all victims of police brutality. In Baltimore, FIST will be in the streets fighting for justice for Freddie Grey and demanding that the murderers who killed him be brought to justice. In conjunction with other groups, we are also raising the demand that the police be placed under direct, democratic community control as a first step toward their eventual disarmament and abolition.

Black lives matter! End police terror! Justice for Freddie Grey!

— Baltimore FIST

'All night, all day, we will fight for Freddie Grey'

Continued from page 1

ence and began immediately interviewing witnesses.

Protests continued the entire week, including a rally later that day at City Hall called by the Rev. Jamal Bryant, followed by a youth march downtown.

On April 25, the Baltimore chapters of the PPA and the SCLC, along with many other groups, called for a citywide march downtown from the spot where Grey had been dragged to the police wagon. Over 5,000 people joined, including supporters from as far away as Ferguson, Mo., New York City and Philadelphia, and marched throughout the downtown to City Hall.

Youth rebel; protests continue into night

After the rally at City Hall ended, hundreds of protesters marched back to the Inner Harbor, a tourist and business area, and to the Camden Yards stadium, where an Orioles baseball game was beginning. Police in riot gear faced off with demonstrators, swinging billy clubs and attempting to push them out of the intersection of Pratt and Light streets. The same thing happened at the Camden Yards location. At one point, reported a participant, a cop yelled, "Get these n— off the streets."

It was at this point that police cruiser windows were broken. Later, windows of several downtown stores were broken, including The Gallery, an upscale Inner Harbor mall, and a 7-Eleven.

Protests also continued at the Western District police station. At around 10:30 p.m., police phalanxes donned riot gear and charged protesters at the Western District, while defiant youth yelled and

screamed. Police swept streets in this besieged neighborhood and clubbed and arrested people.

Some 35 people, four of them minors, were arrested.

Workers World reporters have yet to find out the extent of the charges on which many of these youth are being held. Legal support is being organized, and youth are slowly being released.

PPA organizers call for solidarity and amnesty

On the night of April 26, the Baltimore PPA held an emergency protest at Central Booking, where arrestees were being held. Speakers expressed the community's support and demanded amnesty for all arrestees.

Baltimore PPA organizer Sharon Black stated, "The anger, pent-up frustration and rage that many people across this country have witnessed on their television screens is based on decades of racist abuse and neglect in communities all across Baltimore. It is about police terror, and it is also about unemployment and low wages, decaying housing and lack of services. Just two weeks ago, prior to Freddie Grey's murder, the city announced water shutoffs to 25,000 households."

The Baltimore PPA and the Baltimore SCLC have been organizing against police terror for many years. They have heard first-hand accounts from youths as young as 12 about being handcuffed, driven around in police cruisers, terrorized and then released. Women have spoken about sexual assaults by police. Beatings and shakedowns are common.

The Rev. C.D. Witherspoon explained,



Baltimore youth faces down militarized police.

PHOTO: RICHARD REILLY

"Freddie Grey is not the first victim of police murder in this mostly Black city. His name is added to a whole long list of victims: Tyrone West, Darin Hutchins, Anthony Anderson, George King, Maurice Johnson and many others."

He delivered a strong message to the protesters: "We cannot allow the city, police or media to divide us. We cannot equate property damage with the loss of human life. Freddie Grey cannot be brought back to his family or friends; a window can be repaired. We intend to be here for the youth now and here for them in the long haul."

The Baltimore Police Department and Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake have issued statements referring to protesters coming from "outside" to stir up trouble. Protest organizers from Baltimore have clearly stated they believe the mayor and the police department are attempting to distract attention from the real issue: indicting, convicting and jailing the six police who killed Freddie Grey.

Andre Powell, a state worker and

union activist, stated, "If the mayor is indeed worried about 'outsiders,' then get the cops out of the community. The majority of them do not live in the city, and they constitute a virtual occupation army. Tell Governor Hogan to withdraw the State Police he has deployed."

Larry Holmes, a national organizer of the People's Power Assembly from New York City, who came to assist Baltimore activists, stated, "I'm proud to be an outside agitator!" He explained that police terror and racism are a national problem.

Sunday's wake and today's funeral drew over a thousand people. Throngs couldn't get into the church and passing cars honked their horns.

Note: Workers World uses the spelling "Grey" out of respect for Freddie Carlos Grey. Many friends and family in the community have confirmed that this was his preference and not an "alias," as police have claimed. Other media are calling him "Freddie Gray."

After Ferguson, police counterattack

Mass resistance is the answer

By Fred Goldstein

April 27 — The arrogant defiance and evasive obstructionism that the Baltimore police have put up in the face of the video showing them dragging a limp Freddie Grey into a police van are typical of the hardened attitude of police departments across the country.

The Baltimore police are accustomed to harassing, brutalizing and killing Black people with impunity. Like their counterparts in cities across the country, from Philadelphia to Tulsa, from Los Angeles to Cleveland, New York City, Albuquerque, Portsmouth in Virginia, Pasco in Washington state and other cities and towns, large and small, the Baltimore police are used to being a virtual law unto themselves. All the police killing that has gone on since Ferguson shows that they want to keep it that way.

In the month of March, 111 police killings were recorded. Apologists for the police say the killings have not increased recently; there are just more videos. But the fact is that in March there were 36 more recorded killings than in February. (thinkprogress.com, April 1) In the first three months of 2014 there had been 244 killings by police; this year there were 297 in the same period. These figures are compiled by private groups because no national statistics are kept.

The exposure of killer cops on video and in the capitalist media has not slowed down police departments across the country. If anything, the cops have been more murderous than ever, despite the exposure. The only thing that can push them back is the kind of mass resistance that was shown in Baltimore this weekend and, for months after the killing of Michael Brown last August, in Ferguson, Mo., and around the country led by Black Lives Matter.

Ruling class support for police

What is important is that the cops have the backing of powerful sections of the

ruling class. For example, some of the biggest banks, war contractors, medical institutions and other corporations in Baltimore have watched day after day, year after year, as the cops brutalized the African-American community.

JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Citigroup, Wells Fargo, Bank of New York Mellon, U.S. Bank, HSBC, Capital One and the other largest banks in the country have a major presence in Baltimore. The Johns Hopkins medical empire is the biggest employer there.

Maryland has 12 major military installations and 16 of the top 25 aerospace companies in the country. It has 70 of the top 100 defense contractors in the country, including Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman and Raytheon.

The rich will not stop the brutality because the cops protect their interests 24/7.

Washington shows support at NYC funeral

What is true for Baltimore is true for the country at large. The cops are acting in concert with their political allies and powerful forces in the ruling class to undermine any attempt to curb their brutality.

The funeral in New York City for the two cops killed in December was an important message not only to the thousands of police from New York but also to police chiefs from all around the country who attended the funeral. They saw Vice President Joe Biden, FBI Director James Comey, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New York City Police Commissioner William Bratton all get behind the cops. They also saw hundreds of cops turn their backs on Mayor Bill De Blasio in open defiance — with no adverse consequences to them — because he had criticized them.

This manifestation of support for the cops by the highest officials in the capitalist state was meant to answer the growing Black Lives Matter movement. It was a major pledge of support and encouragement to the cops.

This political approval comes at a time when the FBI and the Department of

Homeland Security have used the cover of “fighting terrorism” to arm the cops to the teeth with combat weapons. These agencies have also tightened the police networks nationally. The upper echelons of the capitalist government have served as a national political force to defend the cops.

Resignation of Eric Holder

There is also a sense of victory among the cops and their champions in the ruling class over the unexpected resignation of Attorney General Eric Holder shortly after he visited Ferguson and expressed sympathy with the Black community. The timing of his resignation cannot be ignored.

Holder visited Ferguson on Aug. 20. He spoke at Florissant Valley Community College, where he addressed the mistrust of the cops by the community. “I understand that mistrust,” he said at Florissant Valley Community College. “I am the attorney general of the United States. But I am also a black man.” (www.justice.gov)

Holder told of being stopped by law enforcement officers in the Georgetown section of D.C. while running and again, for no good reason, while driving on the New Jersey Turnpike. He had his car searched, which he said was “humiliating” and left him “angry.”

Holder rubber-stamped the exoneration of Darren Wilson, who killed Michael Brown. But then he issued a report on Ferguson that was a scathing indictment of the cops and the racist city officials. It forced high-level resignations. Holder also launched dozens of investigations of abuse by local police departments.

Despite being a loyal servant of the ruling class, one month after his Ferguson visit, on Sept. 25, Holder resigned.

Which way will Loretta Lynch go?

Loretta Lynch, an African-American chief U.S. prosecutor from Brooklyn, has just been approved to become the next U.S. attorney general. It took six months to get consent from congressional Republicans, who obstructed her nomination in a struggle over abortion funding.

The ruling class is trying to steer her in a pro-police direction. The New York Times ran a major story by Matt Apuzzo on April 23 stating:

“As a career prosecutor with a law-and-order reputation, [Lynch] comes into office with strong relationships with many of the police groups who have felt unfairly criticized during a spate of high-profile episodes of African-American men dying at the hands of white officers.”

The Times continued: “Mr. Holder recently completed a nationwide tour of minority neighborhoods to discuss policing. Ms. Lynch plans a similar tour of police departments, signaling a change in approach ... she has also described, in passionate and personal terms, how law enforcement is a force for good in minority neighborhoods.”

Whether Lynch will actually play the role that is expected of her remains to be seen. But whatever she does as attorney general, the police are not likely to reconcile themselves with her — because she is a Black woman and because she prosecuted the police who assaulted Abner Louima in New York City. While the police attitude will not change, the shift at the top of government is key in this case.

Mass resistance the only answer

As the cops continue with their racist aggression, the only answer is mass resistance. Raising calls to stop killer cops and to disarm the police are appealing and inspiring slogans. They should be raised everywhere. But they must be accompanied by mass confrontations with the police. The police can also be effectively pushed back by the “no business as usual” tactics of disruption adopted by the Black Lives Matter movement after Ferguson. These tactics interfere with the business interests of the bosses.

The militant struggle of the youth of Baltimore against police violence hopefully will spread to broader sections of the masses. This is the only language the cops and the ruling class understand. □

Cop charged for autoworker’s near-lynching

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

All too often racist police get away with murder. Brutal physical assaults against people of color go unpunished. Rarely are violent police charged for the crimes they commit, and in most cases they don’t even lose their jobs.

Instead, the victims are treated as perpetrators. That’s what happened to Floyd Dent, a 57-year-old African-American Ford worker whose near-murder outside Detroit was seen by millions on video. Their own crimes apparent, cops then concocted evidence to charge Dent with assault, resisting arrest and drug possession.

Now that Black Lives Matter has emerged as a powerful, growing movement that won’t back down, the masses in the streets are scoring a few — far too few — victories.

Floyd Dent won a small but significant victory against systemic racism in Inkster, Mich., possibly one with historic ramifications, when the state took action against the police.

William “Robocop” Melendez, who was seen punching Floyd Dent repeatedly after a traffic stop, was charged by Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy with one count of assault and one of abuse of a pris-

oner. These two charges combined carry a maximum 15-year sentence. Before the charges were announced, Melendez was fired by the city of Inkster, where the beating took place. After Worthy’s announcement, Highland Park, where he worked part-time, also relieved him of his duties.

Why Melendez is ‘Robocop’

The actions taken against Melendez are long overdue. He earned the nickname Robocop during a long, sordid career on Detroit’s force. That’s where his modus operandi was to brutalize and terrorize and then plant “evidence” on and write phony reports about his victims.

Melendez fatally shot two African-American men. He finally resigned for filing false documentation after his propensity to lie became scandalous. Nevertheless, Inkster and Highland Park, two majority-Black suburbs of Detroit, hired this brutal cop.

Soon after the charges against Melendez were announced, Inkster Police Chief Vicki Yost resigned. Like 80 percent of Inkster police, Yost is white. Inkster’s population is 75 percent Black. Before she became Inkster’s top cop, Yost too had a racist reputation in Detroit, where she had testified on behalf of her partner after he killed an unarmed man.

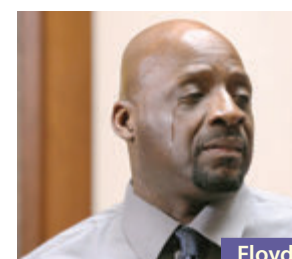
The phony drug charges against Dent have now been dropped. A month earlier a judge dropped the other charges after seeing the video. Dent and attorney Greg Rohl are not satisfied with this victory, however, which was only won after hundreds demonstrated and packed the courtroom. Rohl wants the eight white cops who witnessed and participated in the horrific assault to also be charged.

The systemic racism of Inkster and Henry Ford

Inkster’s very existence is rooted in racism. In 1917 the Ford Motor Company began construction of the gargantuan River Rouge complex in Dearborn, Mich., where Ford moved its world headquarters soon thereafter. Dearborn was off-limits to Black people, including the many who found jobs at the Rouge plant.

Henry Ford promoted segregation by financing the growth and development of adjoining Inkster. Black autoworkers were able to purchase affordable homes, enjoy good city services and live close to the plant. Yet Ford’s “benevolence” was illusory; Black workers were paid \$4 a day during the Depression, but \$3 were deducted to fund Inkster’s expansion.

The Rouge plant itself once employed 100,000 workers, but now there are just



Floyd Dent

over 50,000 hourly Ford workers in the whole country. Plant closings and the elimination of jobs through technology have impoverished Inkster. The state of Michigan seized financial control of the city and dissolved its school district.

Police brutality is a huge issue in Inkster. After the Dent case became public, attorney Rohl received over 20 calls alleging mistreatment by the city’s cops. An April 3 march supporting Dent also demanded “Justice for Inkster.”

Orville Hubbard, Dearborn’s mayor from 1948-78, was known during his tenure as the most segregationist mayor north of the Mason-Dixon line. Everyone knew his slogan, “Keep Dearborn clean,” really meant keep Dearborn segregated. Today the population of Dearborn is still less than 5 percent African American.

However, 40 percent of Dearborn residents are of Middle Eastern descent. The Council on American-Islamic Relations and the anti-Islamophobia group Take on Hate sponsored the April 3 march. A contingent of several dozen Arab youth followed the banner of Take on Hate to show solidarity with Dent. □

Anniversary evokes solidarity actions for Bangladesh workers

By Kathy Durkin

On the second anniversary of the collapse of Rana Plaza in Dhaka, Bangladesh, a Day of Global Actions on April 24 demanded justice and compensation for the victims and their families. Two years earlier, in the worst garment industry disaster in history, 1,138 mostly women workers died and 2,500 were injured.

The horrific cave-in, with its massive loss of life and devastating injuries, showed the world the brutal working conditions and starvation wages experienced by Bangladeshi garment workers. It exposed the ruthlessness of Western clothing brands that seek to maximize profits, while neglecting the safety and health of the workforce that toils in the factories. It revealed the brutal reality of capitalist globalization.

Protests in Europe, North America, Asia and elsewhere demanded that all giant retailers doing business in Bangladesh sign the Bangladesh Fire and Safety Accord and pay the full amounts owed to the \$30 million compensation fund for injured workers and deceased workers' relatives. Activists called for changes in the global garment industry and the honoring of workers' rights, including collective bargaining. The National Trade Union Federation of Pakistan came out in solidarity with their Bangladeshi sisters and brothers.

At Rana Plaza's site, some 2,000 survivors, victims' relatives, labor unionists and other allies gathered for a commemoration. A lead banner asserted "Compensation and workplace are our rights now," and a march reinforced these demands. Kalpona Akter, director of the Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity, a leading pro-worker force inside the country, told Walmart and other global brands to pay in full.

At this event, Nilufar Begum, a disabled worker, told Euronews he had not received compensation. He said, "I can't support my family, my children can't go to school." (April 24) Benar News noted the same day that 159 missing workers' families have gotten nothing. Several claimants report not getting payments or only woefully inadequate sums.

There is no hospital providing long-term care for the injured. Rafiqul Islam Shujon, president of the Bangladesh Garments and Industries Labor Federation, said many of the injured have difficulty coping. He told Benar News in the same article that the claim by the government and garment bosses that adequate aid is being provided is "a travesty of truth."

'A global workers' victory'

A months-long campaign successfully pressured The Children's Place to contribute more money than the paltry \$450,000 they had initially paid. Only hours before

Rana Plaza protests San Francisco, right and New York City, April 24, below.

PHOTOS: TOP, IRMA BAJAR; BELOW, ERIC DIRNBACH



a protest was set to take place on April 24 outside the retailer's store in New York's Union Square, word came that the company had relented and wired another \$2 million to the compensation fund.

Mazeda Uddin of the Alliance of South Asian American Labor spoke at the New York action, relocated to a nearby Zara store. Referring to The Children's Place's payment, she said: "Our Bangladeshi garment workers' victory is not an individual victory. It is a global workers' victory." She said that the 5,000 claimants "will be helped by this Trust," and she hopes "other brands and retailers will follow in the same steps to fulfill the goal of having \$30 million in the fund."

Other speakers at the Zara rally — including Dolly Martinez of the Retail Action Project; Sharlene Santos, former Zara worker; Sara Flounders, co-coordinator of the International Action Center; and Joe Lombardo of the United National Antiwar Coalition — called for solidarity with Bangladesh's workers. Nearly 40 organizations endorsed this action.

The corporations still owe \$6 million to the compensation fund. International pressure is aimed at companies that have paid nothing, such as J.C. Penny, and those coming up short. This includes Inditex, the world's largest garment retailer and owner of the Spain-based Zara clothing chain, which has pitched in only \$1 million. Inditex's founder, Armanio Ortega Gaona, is the world's fourth wealthiest person!

Demand justice!

After the militant protests in Dhaka and other cities in Bangladesh following the disaster, Rana Plaza owner Sohel Rana and 11 factory owners and engineers were jailed. All but Rana and one factory owner have been released on bail. There is no movement within the legal system to mete out justice to them for their crimes against the dead and injured workers. As usual, the Western clothing brands' owners and CEO's are let off without any punishment whatsoever.

The working conditions are still horrific in many plants: Harassment and sexual assaults are common; sanitation facilities and water are dirty; paychecks are held back; and overtime is denied. The "official" minimum wage hike is still a starvation wage. Moreover, while some union organizing is occurring, hostile garment bosses and the government stymie other drives.

Some 40 percent of the plants are failing to implement the fire-safety measures in the agreement. Since the Rana Plaza disaster, 31 workers have died and 900 others have been hurt in factory fires.

What can workers, students and other activists do from afar to show solidarity? The most important tasks for allies of the Bangladeshi working class are to demonstrate, keep up the pressure on Western companies and oppose capitalist globalization altogether. □

Eyewitness report:

'Liberators, not looters'

Continued from page 1

night. We didn't see any thieves, looters or rioters. All we saw were liberators — parents, workers and youth who heroically chose to liberate the bare necessities denied to them for months, years and several decades now.

The oppressed have spoken

So what if people were taking some damn medicine?! Pharmaceutical companies are making billions off the poor, and could not care less about them. Yes, poor people were taking diapers and toilet tissue, tube socks and boxes of cereal; these are the basic needs they've been denied. I don't blame them for taking fresh food, new shoes, clothing and water. These are the basic needs capitalism refuses to provide.

After needs, wants and desires were also met. Contrary to popular belief, poor people like televisions, too, just like rich folks do. Think about it; home appliances and laptops surround you every day, yet you have no means to acquire any of these things. You see them on billboards and watch them advertised on commercials, but for you — no! You get nothing. So when human need is denied by brick walls, two-inch glass windows and security cameras,

something has to give, and I can assure you, it will not be the oppressed!

What people saw tonight on the big-business-owned TV news were the youth and families who U.S. capitalism has thrown away. You can't deny jobs, justice and self-respect and not expect rebellion. The Black masses are burning tonight because Amerikkka has burned them — us — for centuries now.

This is bigger than Freddie Grey, Walter Scott and Rekia Boyd, much bigger than Baltimore and Ferguson, Mo., put together. This is the underclass reclaiming their human existence from a country that denies them the right to breathe, the right to live without police occupying their front step.

We weren't thugs and hoodlums tonight; none of us were. We were tired of being tired.

The oppressed have spoken in their own language tonight, loud and clear. The question is: Will you hear us and join the fight?

Lamont Lilly is a contributing editor at the Triangle Free Press and frequent contributor to Truthout, Dissident Voice, The Durham News and Black Youth Project. He is currently a visiting organizer with the Baltimore branch of Workers World Party.

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

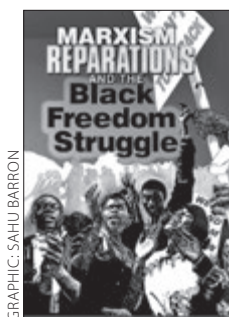
Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal

Racism & Poverty in the Delta Larry Hales

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

Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? The 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker

Available at online bookstores.



How Detroit school crisis unfolded

Continued from page 5

Bobb with Roy Roberts.

Fight continues

In June, Snyder announced his plan to create the Educational Achievement Authority, which included the involvement of Eastern Michigan University. While the original 2009 plan was to include other school districts, the EAA only put DPS into this "statewide" district.

In 2012, Roberts announced the creation of eight "self governing schools" under the supervision of charter operator Doug Ross, who was placed on the DPS payroll to perform this function. Ross is also a partner with Excellent Schools Detroit.

Roberts transferred 15 DPS schools into the EAA — including the newly built Mumford High School, which was not

among the lowest performing schools — and closed another 14 schools, bringing the DPS well under 100 schools and a projected enrollment of only 50,000 students.

In July 2012, Roberts announced terms of employment that overrode the Detroit Federation of Teachers' contract, negating the power of the teachers' voice and their influence in DPS. The power shift enhanced the central administration's ability to dispose of teachers and programs unilaterally, including support for special needs students, as well as music and arts education.

The Detroit School Board in Exile continues to oppose the EAA, emergency management, charter schools, privatization of services, school closures, and attacks on the students and teachers of Detroit Public Schools. □

One year after massacre

Odessa resists fascist occupation

By Greg Butterfield

One year after 48 anti-fascist activists died by bullets, flames and beatings at the hands of Ukrainian neo-Nazi gangs in Odessa, this city on the Black Sea is living under occupation.

Yet the fighting spirit of this multinational port city — the very antithesis of the white supremacist, neoliberal-fascist regime installed by Washington in Kiev last year — refuses to be snuffed out.

Whether protesting the bogus trial of 20 anti-fascist activists, now detained for nearly a year, tortured, and caged during every hearing; or organizing among Ukraine's besieged minority nationalities; or holding monthly commemorations of the May 2 martyrs despite violent attacks — Odessans continue to resist in ways, large and small.

From April 27 to May 2, people will hold dozens of commemorations in cities and towns from the Donbass to Russia, across Europe and around the world, to mark the first anniversary of the Odessa massacre.

And people in Odessa plan to mark the anniversary on the square near the House of Trade Unions, despite threats from fascist groups. Other residents will commemorate the victims by placing lit candles in their windows at sundown.

Odessa has become an international rallying cry against the brutality of Ukraine's capital, Kiev, and its U.S.-NATO backers, and their war against the independent Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics.

Those who fell fighting the fascists in Odessa — like communist youths Andrei Brazhevsky of Borotba (Struggle) and Vadim Papura of Komsomol — have become symbols of this modern anti-fascist struggle.

It was on May 2, 2014, that the city was changed forever.

After several weeks of mass protests by Odessa residents against the coup in Kiev, in late April last year the city was

flooded with neo-Nazi gangs and paramilitary groups from Western Ukraine.

Despite this, a several-thousand-strong May Day march was held, led by activists from the Kulikovo Field protest encampment.

The following day, the fascists struck. Under the guise of a "Ukrainian Unity" parade for fans of the local soccer team, the neo-Nazis launched a violent attack on passersby in the Greek Street shopping district.

While anti-fascists mobilized to hold them back, the fascists next targeted the Kulikovo encampment, burning it to the ground. Activists retreated to the nearby House of Trade Unions as the fascist bands began shooting and throwing Molotov cocktails.

The neo-Nazis shot people through windows. They flooded the building with tear gas to force them outside. They set fires that gutted the hall and burned many bodies nearly beyond recognition.

Many who fled the building or jumped from upper floors were beaten to death on the ground with bats and chains. Some escaped, but with serious injuries.

In the end, survivors, all slandered by the media, were arrested or forced into exile, while the murderers walked free. Officially, 48 people died on May 2. But many anti-fascists believe the number was far higher.

An "official" investigation by the junta came to nothing, as the oligarchs, government officials and fascist leaders naturally refused to cooperate.

Mass arrests show regime's weakness

Today, any protest against the regime faces vicious repression by the police and fascist gangs that continue to occupy Odessa. Mass arrests are becoming more common, showing the fundamental weakness of the regime. The people remain determined to resist.

Here are a few recent examples:

Representatives of the region's many nationalities formed a public association

called the Popular Rada of Bessarabia (PRB). More than 100 representatives of seven ethnic communities took part in the founding congress on April 6, including Bulgarians, Gagauzians, Russians, Armenians, Romani, Moldovans and Poles.

The congress called for great autonomy for regional and ethnic groups, in response to the suppression of language and cultural rights by the U.S.-backed Kiev regime.

Shortly afterward, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) — the country's equivalent to the FBI — detained 20 leading PRB members. (Dumskaya, April 8)

"Ukraine's security services have unleashed real terror against our activists," said a PRB statement. "Dmitry Zatuliveter, chair of the organization's presidium, has disappeared, and the attempts to contact him have proved futile so far." (TASS, April 8)

Thirty PRB activists were detained during a protest on April 16. A courageous team from PRB picketed the SBU office on April 22, demanding the release of those arrested, Timer reported. (Timer-Odessa.net)

Then on April 10 — as the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) in Kiev was busily passing laws outlawing communism and glorifying those who collaborated with Nazi occupiers during World War II — dozens of people waving red flags and wearing the banned orange-and-black St. George's Ribbon confronted visiting oligarch President Petro Poroshenko and his far-right supporters.

"Before the arrival of Poroshenko, the SBU conducted mass arrests of people with different political views," reported the Committee for the Liberation of Odessa, which is organizing an independent investigation of the May 2 massacre. "As a result, dozens of people guilty of nothing were sent to Ukrainian prisons. Under threats and torture, many were forced to slander themselves and admit to actions they did not commit." (2May.org, April 14)

PHOTO: 2MAY.ORG



House of Trade Unions burns during Odessa massacre, May 2, 2014.

On April 16, masked Right Sector fascists seized 50 people gathered outside Odessa City Hall for a protest against utility price hikes and other austerity measures, turning them over to the police. (Timer-Odessa.net)

On the night of April 12-13, leaflets were posted around the city signed by the Committee for the Liberation of the Black Sea:

"In 2014, after the fascist coup in Kiev, the masters of life tore off the mask of democracy and mercy, and we saw the same thing that our parents and grandparents saw in 1941. ... We are burned alive, shot in the squares and thrown in jail because we do not want to live by the rules of the fascist junta.

"There will be no mercy from the Kiev Nazis, acting on orders from the U.S. and EU! Residents of the Black Sea! Do not be silent! Start the resistance! Let it burn under the feet of the Nazi executioners!"

Vasily Vovk, head of the SBU investigative department, worried to the media that the May 2 anniversary could see "destabilization" in the fascist-occupied cities of southeastern Ukraine, or even the proclamation of a "People's Republic of Odessa." (Timer-Odessa.net, April 25)

Kiev and its imperialist backers should be worried, declared the Committee for the Liberation of Odessa.

"The anti-fascist movement will only become more radical, knowing that if the government will jail anyone for their political stance, for holding a red flag or reading a book by Lenin — then there is no reason to sit back and be silent." □

Lugansk: Left forces unite at conference

By Greg Butterfield

The unity of leftist forces in the embattled Donbass region, formerly part of southeastern Ukraine, took a big step forward on April 9 with the founding of the Forum of Communist, Socialist, Workers', Environmental and Anti-Fascist Forces in Lugansk, capital of the Lugansk People's Republic.

The forum was initiated by the Communist Party—Lugansk City Committee and includes the Union of Left Forces, Communists of Lugansk, the Communist Workers' Organization, Intellectuals for Socialism, the Lenin Communist Youth Union, the Union of Women Workers, the Union of Soviet Officers, the Green Ecological Union and other groups.

Along with the neighboring Donetsk People's Republic, Lugansk broke away from Ukraine after a far-right coup in Kiev outlawed the Russian language and took other repressive measures against the primarily Russian-speaking populace and other national minority groups. In May 2014, the people of Donetsk and Lugansk voted overwhelmingly for independence from Ukraine in a popular referendum.

The coup had put into power in Kiev a junta of oligarchs, neoliberal politicians and fascists. Since April of last year, this

junta has waged a brutal war against the people's republics with support from the U.S. and other NATO powers. The Kiev junta has also carried out repression against anti-fascist and anti-austerity protesters throughout Ukraine.

"The outbreak of war a year ago pushed the residents of Lugansk to the brink, and plunged the region into chaos and destruction," says the unity statement adopted by the Forum. "Many of our compatriots have died or lost loved ones, some lost their homes, and some were forced to emigrate.

"Because of the military aggression and economic blockade by Ukraine, the economy is destroyed: the leading production facilities and enterprises are paralyzed. Thousands of people lost their jobs and opportunities to earn a living, the most vulnerable people — the elderly, children and the disabled — were left without pensions and benefits, and hunger and poverty knocked on the doors of tens of thousands of families.

"It is clear," the statement continues, "that humanitarian assistance cannot solve a hundredth part of the problems." The Russian Federation is the only country that has provided significant humanitarian aid.

"We, the representatives of communist, socialist, workers', environmental and

anti-fascist organizations, believe that the revival of Lugansk should begin and march under the banner of social justice, equality and fraternity. Only the socialist path of development will be able to successfully overcome the consequences of this military-humanitarian catastrophe."

The statement cautions: "Authorities should not return to the discredited policy of appointing protégés of the oligarchic clans that robbed the Lugansk region for years.

"The Red traditions of the region — from Kliment Voroshilov to the present day — have always been strong in our land, and just as in 1917, Lugansk should be a harbinger of the coming global left turn." Voroshilov was the Soviet officer charged with organizing the defense of Leningrad, now called St. Petersburg, during the 900-day siege by the German army during World War II.

The unity statement also presents an action plan, which includes returning the region's large enterprises and major industries to public ownership; guarantees for civil rights for all regardless of nationality, language or religious beliefs, "in particular to ensure full employment, fair wages and social security"; preventing land-grabs by absentee landlords and the domination of capitalists over the region's

economic and political life; and measures to eradicate fascism and uphold the true history of anti-fascist struggle during the Soviet era.

"We are convinced that uniting our forces will give Lugansk a unique chance to create a truly equitable social order, with working people at its center," the unity statement concludes.

'Anti-fascism, Internationalism, Solidarity'

Building international solidarity is crucial to the left in Donbass. The Lugansk left unity forum, together with the Donbass Anti-fascist Committee based in Rome, have called for an International Solidarity Forum on the theme of "Anti-fascism, Internationalism and Solidarity," to be held on May 8 in Lugansk.

This historic conference will be the first gathering of the international left in the Donbass People's Republics.

It coincides with the 2nd Anti-fascist Caravan to Donbass, initiated by Italian Communist punk band Banda Bassotti. The first caravan travelled to Donetsk in fall 2014, and was so successful that Lugansk leaders invited the caravan to return for the 70th anniversary celebrations of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany on May 9, 2015.

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Police use tasers to kill disabled, people of color

By Edward Yudelovich

According to a 2012 Amnesty International report, tasers used by police in the U.S. resulted in the deaths of more 500 people between 2001 and 2012.

A November 2014 United Nations Committee Against Torture report condemned U.S. police violence, torture and the use of tasers, particularly against African-American, Latino and Latina youth.

The use of electricity as a form of torture was pioneered by Adolph Hitler's Nazi regime during which people with emotional, psychological and mental disabilities were often targeted.

In early April, an unarmed, "mentally ill," African-American man, Donald "Dontay" Ivy, 39, died in police custody in Albany, N.Y., after being tasered by officers. Ivy's family described him as "a paranoid schizophrenic who suffered from heart problems, but kept to himself and was not violent by nature." (Timesunion.com, April 3)

According to the police, three officers approached Ivy, citing "suspicious activity." Ivy allegedly became "aggressive" and ran away from the officers, who tasered and tackled him to the ground. They said he continued to struggle after being handcuffed. After Ivy lost consciousness, the officers say they tried to revive him, but without success.

Why did police stop Ivy? According to Timesunion.com, as of April 23 the Albany Police Department still has not answered that question publicly more than three weeks after Ivy's death.



"Dontay" Ivy

Family members say the department has told them that officers suspected Ivy had a gun or another weapon because his shirt was pulled down over his left hand as he walked along Second Street in the Arbor Hill neighborhood. "Police told the family the officers noticed the covered hand as they drove by in a patrol car," said Chamberlain Guthrie, Ivy's cousin. That led the officers to turn the car around and confront Ivy.

Officers asked for ID and Ivy provided it. One of the officers then frisked Ivy from behind, finding no weapon. The officer then tried to frisk Ivy from the front — and that's when police allege that Ivy lunged forward and provoked the confrontation that led them to tase Ivy.

In a prior interview with the Times Union, acting Chief Brendan Cox said Ivy broke free and ran away from the officers. Cox also said Ivy continued to struggle after he was handcuffed.

Ivy, who had a heart problem, died on the sidewalk just 150 feet from his sister's house, where he lived.

Guthrie says the description of Ivy's

behavior doesn't match the man he knew. "He was the most reserved, nonviolent person that you would ever meet," Guthrie said. "So I doubt very much that he lunged. That wasn't his demeanor. That wasn't his personality." (Timesunion.com, April 23)

Collin Donnaruma, president of the Capital Region chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union, said: "The role of the police in that situation is to diffuse the situation. They should have training to deal with someone with that condition. They shouldn't be tasing them and shooting 50,000 volts of electricity into someone who it turns out had a heart condition."

Tasers are lethal weapons too!

Recent history has shown that tasers are extremely dangerous and are not a safe and humane alternative option to guns as many law enforcement and government officials have often claimed.

A recently surfaced video shows the driver of an automobile burning alive inside his car after a Border Patrol officer used a taser on the man and set the vehicle on fire in late March 2012. The footage, which became public in March as the result of a lawsuit filed by the family of the victim, shows a blue Ford Focus and its lone occupant, 25-year-old Alex Martin, going up in flames after an officer from the United States Border Patrol agency discharged his stun gun and "accidentally" ignited gas fumes inside the car.

Martin's family sued the U.S. Border Patrol following the 2012 altercation, and their attorney says a newly surfaced dashcam recording shows law enforcement's

unwillingness to assist as the man burned alive. "For some reason, even though each of those cars had a fire extinguisher readily within reach, none of them used their fire extinguishers — or tried to use their fire extinguishers, or tried to help Alex — who was burning to death inside this car," Gene Iredale, the attorney for Martin's family, told the Guardian recently. "You'll see in this video they just walk away and consult with each other." (theguardian.com, March 30)

Disarm the police!

Every 28 hours in 2012 someone employed or protected by the U.S. government killed a Black man, woman or child according to the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement's 2013 report: Operation Ghetto Storm: 2012 Annual Report on the Extrajudicial Killings of 313 Black People by Police, Security Guards and Vigilantes.

"At least half of the people [annually] shot and killed by [U.S.] police ... have mental health problems," stated a 2013 report by the Treatment Advocacy Center and National Sheriffs' Association, which assessed 1980-2008 data.

Workers and oppressed people with and without disabilities have the unconditional right to demand complete immediate disarmament of the police as well as the right to self-defense and protection against the current menace of U.S. police terror and their arsenal of guns and tasers.

Edward Yudelovich, *Workers World Party People with Disabilities Caucus organizer*, has an emotional disability.

From Los Angeles to Baltimore

'Marxism and insurrection'

The brutal suppression of the Los Angeles insurrection offers a classic example of the relationship of bourgeois democracy to the capitalist state.

Marxism differs from all forms of bourgeois sociology in this most fundamental way: All bourgeois social sciences are directed at covering up and concealing — sometimes in the most shameful way — the predatory class character of

present-day capitalist society. Marxism, on the other hand, reveals in the clearest and sharpest manner not only the antagonisms that continually rend asunder present-day bourgeois society but also their basis — the ownership of the means of production by a handful of millionaires and billionaires.

Material wealth has been vastly increasing along with the masses' productivity of labor. But only 1 percent of the population amasses the lion's share of what the workers produce, while a greater and greater mass is impoverished.

Oppression of a whole people

One cannot apply Marxism to any meaningful extent without first recognizing the existence of national oppression — the oppression of a whole people by capitalist imperialism. This is one of the most characteristic features of the present world reality.

The state in its essential characteristics is the organization, to quote Engels, of a "special public force" that consists not merely of armed men and women but of material appendages, prisons and repressive institutions of all kinds.

Most noteworthy are the prisons — more and more of them — calculated to break the spirit of millions of the most oppressed while pretending to some mock forms of rehabilitation.

In general then, the Los Angeles insurrection shows that democracy is a veil that hides the repressive character of the capitalist state.

The state grows in proportion as class and national antagonisms develop. Democracy is merely a form which hides the predatory class character of the bour-

geois state. Nothing so much proves this as the steady and consistent growth of militarism and the police forces in times of peace as well as war.

The ruling class continually cultivates racism to keep the working class divided, in order to maintain its domination. This is as true at home as it is abroad. The forces of racism and national oppression have been deliberately stimulated by Pentagon and State Department policies all across the globe.

Marxism on violence

After every stage in the struggle of the workers and oppressed people, there follows an ideological struggle over what methods the masses should embrace to achieve their liberation from imperialist monopoly capital. There are always those who abjure violence while minimizing the initial use of violence by the ruling class. They denounce it in words, while in deeds they really cover it up. Yes, indeed, they readily admit the verdict in the Rodney King beating was erroneous, unfair. But — and here their voices grow louder — "The masses should not have taken to the streets and taken matters into their own hands."

The Marxist view of violence flows from an altogether different concept. It first of all distinguishes between the violence of the oppressors as against the responsive violence of the masses. Just to be able to formulate it that way is a giant step forward, away from disgusting bourgeois praise for nonviolence. It never occurs to any of them to show that the masses have never made any real leap forward with the theory of nonviolence. Timidity never made it in history.

We reprint here excerpts from the article "Marxism and insurrection" written on May 14, 1992, by Sam Marcy, founder of Workers World Party. For the full article, go to workers.org/marcy/cd/samla/la/larebo1.htm.

Indeed, Marxists do prefer nonviolent methods if the objectives the masses seek — freedom from oppression and exploitation — can be obtained that way. But Marxism explains the historical evolution of the class struggle as well as the struggle of oppressed nations as against oppressors.

As Marx put it, "force is the midwife to every great revolution." None of the great revolutions has ever occurred without being accompanied by force and violence. And it is always the oppressor — the ruling class and the oppressing nationality — that is most congenitally prone to use force as soon as the masses raise their heads.

How much real difference is there between the suppression of the Paris Commune in 1871 and that of the revolutionary rising of the masses in Los Angeles in 1992? The brutal suppression differs only in magnitude and not in essence. While it might seem that in Los Angeles national oppression alone is involved, in reality it derives from the class exploitation of the African-American masses dating back to the days of slavery.

Watts and social legislation

The Watts, Detroit, Newark and other rebellions in the 1960s did win significant concessions that eventually were enacted into law. They became the basis for a temporary improvement in the economic and social situation of the oppressed people.

None of the progressive legislation, up to and including affirmative action, would have been enacted had it not been

Left forces unite

Continued from page 11

Up to 100 anti-fascists and solidarity activists from 12 countries are expected to participate in the caravan from May 5 through 11.

The invitation for the International Solidarity Forum appeals "to all progressive forces whose goal is the triumph of the ideals of justice, equality and fraternity to take part in the International Solidarity Forum in support of the Donbass struggle against fascism, Nazism, capitalism and imperialism. We invite all who advocate communism-socialism, all who choose a revolutionary path for liberation of the world's peoples from the yoke of neoliberalism.

"The objective of the forum is to create tools for analysis of the current situation in the Donbass region and the world, prospects for the future, and above all, to formulate specific proposals for action. Our hope is to reach an agreement of international forces to organize a global mobilization."

For more information, visit the Donbass International Forum at Facebook.com/aisforum.

Continued on page 13

Pentagon threatens Iran, supports aggression against Yemen

By Fred Goldstein

April 27 — The Pentagon has engaged in a sharp escalation of military tensions in the Middle East by sending nine warships, including an aircraft carrier and a guided-missile cruiser, to waters off the coast of Yemen.

The naval armada has a dual purpose: to push back the popular forces of the Ansarullah (the Houthis) and at the same time to threaten the Iranian government.

The Ansarullah are fighting against the Saudi/U.S. puppet in exile, President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. Hadi was driven out of the country and is now in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, waiting to be restored to power by Saudi jets and U.S. and Egyptian ships.

The Pentagon has sent the warships off the coast of Yemen to support the Saudi bombing campaign against the Ansarullah. Egyptian warships also patrol the coast. The Saudis, supplied with U.S. targeting, have bombed hospitals, schools, mosques and airports on the pretext that weapons were hidden there. The naval blockade choked off ports and airports, blocking food and other vital imports to one of the poorest countries in the region.

“The goal of the movement of American ships is to strengthen the siege imposed on Yemen and put the Yemeni

people under collective punishment,” charged Houthi Politburo member Mohammed al-Bukhaiti. (Reuters, April 21)

But despite over a month of Saudi bombing and thousands of civilian casualties, the Ansarullah still control the capital of Sanaa and most of the major port city of Aden. They have recently continued an advance on the southern city of Taiz.

On April 20, the Saudis carried out an airstrike on a Scud missile base in Sanaa. The resulting explosion impacted a residential area of over half a mile. The blast damaged embassies and other buildings, wounding two Indonesian diplomats.

But the U.S.-backed bombing campaign, arms embargo and sanctions on Ansarullah leaders has both failed and backfired on Washington.

The Saudis are becoming more hated and thoroughly discredited for their ruthless and failed air campaign. The more discredited the Saudis become, the more discredited their Washington sponsors become. The U.S. imperialists are having second thoughts, and have allowed the U.N. Security Council to call for a cease-fire. Of course, the U.N. is demanding that the Ansarullah withdraw from territories they have taken.

Pentagon crashes nuclear talks

Meanwhile, the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt was moved to the

Gulf of Aden off the coast of Yemen from the Persian Gulf. The carrier has over 60 war planes and a crew of 5,000. It has since returned to the Persian Gulf. In addition the U.S. sent the guided-missile ship USS Normandy to accompany the Roosevelt.

The pretext for sending this massive display of air and fire power is to keep Iran from sending weapons to the Ansarullah in Yemen. Such a claim, if it weren't so serious, would be laughable. An aircraft carrier and its associated warships, destroyers, frigates and so on are weapons of major warfare. You don't block supply ships and their military escorts with an aircraft carrier and a guided-missile ship. It is like taking a pile driver to crack a walnut.

The purpose of this display of firepower was to warn the Iranian government of Washington's willingness to deploy its most powerful weapons of conventional warfare.

The Pentagon considers itself a sovereign power, free to roam the seas with massive firepower to threaten and bully the peoples of the world who will not bow down to the dictates of Washington and Wall Street. It treats waters thousands of miles from U.S. shores as “U.S. lakes.”

The Pentagon does not need 60 warplanes in the area. The Saudis have an oversupply of U.S. warplanes and bombs and are using them daily. The U.S. high

command has admitted that the warships are not for Yemen but to keep their “options” open against Iran. (CNN.com, April 22)

This is all about threatening the Iranian government and perhaps trying to force it into concessions in the nuclear talks, or even to break up the talks altogether.

The Iranians have military vessels in the area to escort and protect their cargo ships from piracy. Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari stated, “This presence [of the Iranian flotilla] continues in the free waters, including the Gulf of Aden, to fight against piracy, according to the plan which was drawn at the request of the International Maritime Organization, and no one can warn the Iranian warships [to move away] and this has not happened yet.” Sayyari was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of military parades held in Tehran to mark Army Day. (Fars News Agency)

The most important point of this entire episode, as far as the anti-imperialist movement is concerned, is that the U.S. imperialist navy has no business in the Gulf of Aden, the Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean, the South China Sea or any other body of water. The U.S. anti-war movement should demand that the Pentagon stop threatening the peoples of the world in order to make the world safe for U.S. imperialist corporations. □

Iran calls for ceasefire in Yemen

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has outlined a proposal for the cessation of hostilities in Yemen through an April 17 letter to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

This plan involves four demands: an immediate ceasefire, a halt to attacks by Saudi-Gulf Cooperation Council-led warplanes, provisions for a safe corridor to provide much needed humanitarian relief and the resumption of political dialogue. This proposal came just one day after the U.N. secretary general called for an immediate ceasefire.

On April 20, Zarif published a letter in the opinion and editorial section of the New York Times stating Iran's will-

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ingness to cooperate with other regional states and the international community in solving the crisis of the numerous wars in the Persian Gulf and the broader Middle East. The foreign minister stressed that Tehran's recent agreement with the United States and European Union addressing its nuclear program could serve as an impetus for serious multilateral talks on other issues.

Zarif noted that without a broader framework for resolving ongoing interventions and humanitarian challenges, the current atmosphere of dialogue could easily be lost to open confrontation over Yemen, Iraq, Syria and other countries. The foreign minister stressed: “The Iranian people have shown their resolve by choosing to engage with dignity. It is time for the United States and its Western allies to make the choice between cooperation and confrontation, between negotiations and grandstanding, and between agreement and coercion.”

This same letter goes on to emphasize that “if one were to begin serious discussion of the calamities the region faces, Yemen would be a good place to start.”

Operation Decisive Storm, the bombing campaign of the Saudi-GCC alliance against the Ansurallah or Houthi forces in Yemen, is a manifestation of U.S. imperialist efforts to continue its proxy war against Iran. The expansion of the war in Yemen has implications for developments in Iraq and Syria, as both states have spoken out about their strong opposition to the bombing of Yemen and the threat of a possible ground invasion by Egypt and Sunni-led rebel groups that are funded by Riyadh.

“We do not need permission from the [United Nations Security Council] to defend our country, al-Houthi said, stressing, “The Yemeni people have the right and legitimacy to defend their land. ‘Our great people will not surrender, they will stand.’” (April 19)

The Ansurallah leader said that the objective of the Saudi-GCC bombing is to “return Yemen to the Israeli and U.S. identity.”

Meanwhile, the Saudi-GCC alliance continues its bombing in 18 out of 22 provinces in Yemen, displacing 150,000 people, killing an estimated 2,600 people, most-

ly civilians, and wounding 2,900 others.

A further escalation in the bombardments took place on April 20, when homes were destroyed in Sanaa killing at least 15 people. Oxfam, the London-based organization, reported that many civilians have been targets of the attacks. The group said that one of its food storage warehouses, where no arms or fighters from the Ansurallah are based, was struck, even though the coalition knew of all the locations. (NY Times, April 20)

Bombing of Yemen threatens broader war

The bombing in Sanaa on April 20 set off another round of diplomatic wrangling. The Iranian foreign ministry summoned the Saudi Arabian ambassador in Tehran to express displeasure at the current situation. Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said in Jakarta that the government was opposed to the bombings, which have resulted in the wounding of two of its diplomatic personnel.

A Yemeni television station, al-Yemen al-Youm, was hit by the Saudi-GCC bombs on April 20 leaving three of its staff dead. The area around Faj Attan has been a frequent target of the air campaign over the last few weeks.

Iran in recent statements has expressed its willingness to become more directly involved in the Yemeni situation, warning Saudi Arabia and the U.S. that any attack on its territory will be met with fierce retaliation.

Just one day before, the commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Forces, Brig. Gen. Ahmad Reza Pourdastan, warned Saudi Arabia in the Press TV report, “The Saudi Arabian army has no war experience and is very fragile and if it is confronted with a war of attrition, it should await crushing blows and it will suffer heavy defeat.” □

Ansurallah leader says U.S. at the root of war in Yemen

Since March 26, the Saudi Arabian air force in alliance with other Gulf Coop-

eration Council states, without any semblance of a U.N. or international mandate, has carried out the massive bombardment of Yemen. There has also been a naval blockade denying much needed food and other goods entry into the most underdeveloped territories in the region.

Nonetheless, the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution on April 14 imposing an arms embargo on the Ansurallah movement demanding that they withdraw from areas where their fighters have control. The resolution also placed asset freezes and travel bans on key leaders of the Houthis.

The U.S. supplies the Saudis and the GCC with fighter planes, weapons, intelligence support and refueling that is facilitating the bombing of Yemen. The Ansurallah is a Shia-based movement that has taken large swaths of territory in the north, central and south of Yemen.

In a television address aired over Press TV, the Ansurallah leader, Abdel-Malik al-Houthi, blamed the U.S. for the war against his country. He charged the Pentagon with pointing out areas in Yemen to be attacked.

“We do not need permission from the [United Nations Security Council] to defend our country, al-Houthi said, stressing, “The Yemeni people have the right and legitimacy to defend their land. ‘Our great people will not surrender, they will stand.’” (April 19)

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WORKERS WORLD

editorial

GAZA & BALTIMORE

Gaza is the world's biggest prison. Nearly two million Palestinian people are locked up there by Israel's military blockade.

Last year, racist Israel killed over 2,000 Palestinians in Gaza, including 547 children. The Pentagon rushed in more bombs when the Zionist state ran low on ammunition.

Baltimore, similar to Palestine, is under a racist military occupation. The Baltimore police force — the sixth largest in the 26th largest U.S. city — treats Black people like prisoners. According to the 2010 U.S. census, while 72 percent of the Baltimore population are people of color, 46 percent of the police are white.

Parts of the Baltimore Black community look like a burnt-out war zone. The latest atrocity is mainly white Baltimore cops torturing to death Freddie Carlos Grey, whose spine was at least 80 percent severed while in police custody.

The killing of Grey — a 25-year-old African American — was a breaking point for Baltimore's Black majority. Continuous demonstrations have erupted in the city, echoing the protests in Ferguson, Mo., against the police killing of Michael Brown.

Generations of African Americans in Baltimore have endured police terror. Maryland was a slave state and Baltimore's cops were slave catchers.

Legendary jazz singer Billie Holiday grew up in Baltimore. Her most famous song, "Strange Fruit," bitterly attacked lynching.

The overwhelming number of today's lynch victims are those murdered by racist police and vigilantes.

One of those lynched in Baltimore was Joe Wilbon, a skilled auto mechanic who had just opened his own shop. A police wolf pack beat up Wilbon on June 5, 2000, when he was trying to fix a car for one of his customers.

Cops later dropped Wilbon off at Mercy Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The city refused to release his autopsy for months.

Baltimore's mayor at the time was Martin O'Malley, who may run for U.S. president. O'Malley's "zero tolerance" campaign against petty misdemeanors egged

on police terror. Joe Wilbon's blood is on O'Malley's hands.

According to the Palestinian prime minister's office, one out of five Palestinians has been jailed, at one time or another, by Israel. Nearly a million African Americans are presently in prison according to the NAACP.

Over two-thirds of Maryland's 21,000 prisoners come from Baltimore, which has just 13 percent of the state's population.

The economic war against Black workers helps fuel the pipeline to prison, particularly for African-American youth. Five out of six factory jobs in Baltimore have been destroyed since 1970.

Thirty thousand workers were employed at Bethlehem Steel's Sparrows Point complex just outside Baltimore. But nobody works there anymore at what was, 45 years ago, the world's biggest steel plant.

Frederick Douglass was a caulker in a Baltimore shipyard. All three of Bethlehem Steel's shipyards in Baltimore were shut down, costing thousands of jobs. Maryland Dry Dock closed down too.

Thousands more jobs were stolen when the General Motors, Western Electric, Armco Steel, London Fog and Koppers plants were liquidated.

Baltimore is one of the world's greatest ports, but automation has eliminated jobs on the docks wholesale.

While the good paying jobs have disappeared and Baltimore has become more impoverished, the financial aristocracy's wealth has skyrocketed. Two Baltimore stockbrokers — Legg Mason and T. Rowe Price — have between them nearly one-and-a-half trillion dollars in assets under management.

This vast amount of wealth shows the money is there for jobs, schools and free health care. These are human rights that the workers of Baltimore, especially the most oppressed, need — not police terror and mass incarceration.

Israeli terror, financed by the U.S., cannot extinguish the Palestinian freedom struggle.

Neither can the Black freedom struggle be stopped. Black and Palestinian lives matter. □

Solidarity needed as earthquake devastates Nepal

By Chris Fry

A powerful earthquake struck the impoverished country of Nepal on April 25. The original quake measured 7.8 on the Richter scale, with strong aftershocks measuring up to 6.7 causing further damage and injuries.

As of April 27, the death toll has passed 3,800. Thousands more are injured, with millions of people forced to live outside without shelter in freezing temperatures.

The capital city of Katmandu, home to 1.2 million people, has been devastated. Tens of thousands are living on the streets. So far the government response has been weak: "It became clear that the Nepalese authorities were ill-equipped to rescue those trapped and would have trouble maintaining adequate supplies of water, electricity and food." (New York Times, April 26)

UNICEF officials announced that at least 940,000 Nepalese children in areas affected by the earthquake are "in urgent need of humanitarian attention." (telegraph.co.uk, April 26)

The U.S. has pledged a paltry \$1 million in assistance to a country of 30 million people.

Outside of the capital, particularly near the epicenter of the quake west of the capital, communities have been cut off from communication by landslides. Their fate remains largely unknown. One village of 3,000 people in the Gorkha district managed to report that every house was destroyed.

Helicopter rescue operations have begun, but they are devoted to removing the foreign tourists from Mount Everest, where they had gathered for the mountain climbing season. The villages in the countryside, where most of Nepal's people live, have so far been left on their own.

Nepal is one of the poorest countries

on the planet. The literacy rate is around 72 percent for men and only 45 percent for women. Health care falls far short of the people's needs. Sixty percent of births are unattended by any medical professionals, causing many maternal and infant deaths as well as other severe complications. Close to 30 percent of Nepal's children less than five years old are malnourished.

One-third of Nepal's children under the age of 14, some 2 million, are forced into child labor. In the extremely exploitative brick manufacturing industry, for example, some 28,000 children work at the kilns, half under the age of 14. (theguardian.com, Feb. 12)

This catastrophe will only worsen the desperate plight of Nepal's people.

It took a decades-long struggle led by Maoist Communist parties to finally force the removal of the U.S.- and British-backed absolute monarchy in 2008 and establish parliamentary rule. Some 17,000 people lost their lives in these struggles. But despite the strong organization of these parties in Nepal, the country itself remains bitterly divided and still under the grip of multinational corporations.

Earlier this month, millions of Nepal's workers poured into the streets, many waving flags with hammers and sickles, as they conducted a nationwide general strike. They had called this strike to promote constitutional changes that would give more rights to ethnic minorities living in the various regions of the country.

This terrible crisis in Nepal calls for solidarity from workers' organizations all over the world. U.S. and Western imperialism, which have long profited from the superexploitation of that country, have the responsibility of immediately providing all necessary emergency assistance to Nepal's people with no strings attached. □

EDUARDO GALEANO

His 'Open Veins' laid bare ravages of imperialism

By Berta Joubert-Ceci
Philadelphia

Eduardo Galeano, the Uruguayan writer most famous for his "Open Veins of Latin America," died April 13 of lung cancer at the age of 74. Written in the early 1970s, his book exposed the devastating ravages of imperialist domination in Latin America and the Caribbean, much as Walter Rodney's book, "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa," did for that continent.

Galeano's "Open Veins" is required reading for those who want to learn about Latin America. Over the years, it has become a textbook of knowledge on the subject, in a way that ordinary textbooks cannot achieve. Its impact has been impressive.

Seven years after publication, Galeano himself wrote: "Seven years have gone by since 'Open Veins of Latin America' was first published. This book was written to have a talk with people. ... The most heartening response came not from the book pages in the media but from real incidents in the streets.

The girl who was quietly reading 'Open Veins' to her companion in a bus in Bogotá, and finally stood up and read it aloud to all the passengers. The woman who fled from Santiago in the days of the Chilean bloodbath with this book wrapped inside her baby's diapers. The student who went from one bookstore to another for a week in Buenos Aires' Calle Corrientes, reading bits of it in each store because he hadn't the money to buy it."

It is a book that has many stories surrounding it. For example, while it was banned by several Latin American dictatorships, the book was allowed in the military jails of his native Uruguay for the first few months of the dictatorship because they thought it was a medical textbook, an anatomy book! Of course, once they realized their mistake, it was forbidden.

Translated into many languages, "Open Veins" once again became a hit in 2009 when Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez gave a copy to President Barack Obama during an OAS Summit, in that

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May Day Is International Workers' Day! Build Workers World, a workers' newspaper!

May Day began in the 19th century with strong demonstrations by thousands of women and men for the eight-hour workday.

Since 1959, Workers World has reported on and supported the struggles of the working class, with special attention to movements led by people of African descent, Latino/a, Asian, Arab and Indigenous communities.

Today, this newspaper focuses on the fight for justice for immigrants, who face low wages, harassment, detentions and deportations. Our pages promote the Fight for \$15/hour minimum wage for immigrants, people with disabilities, youth and all low-wage workers, including women, the majority earners of \$7.25 per hour or less.

Workers World reports on the growing Black Lives Matter Movement, which protests the epidemic of racist police and vigilante violence and mass incarceration throughout the U.S.

The newspaper presents anti-imperialist news and analysis, siding with workers and oppressed people abroad who face capitalist globalization's low wages and austerity, as well as U.S./NATO drones, wars and occupations.

Workers World boldly states that socialism is the only way to guarantee jobs, food, housing and medical care for the majority of people — and end the rule of the super-rich 1% and their racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQ bigotry, the gouging of workers and war.

Our readers' donations pay to publish this partisan newspaper in print and online. If you appreciate its news and analysis, write a check to the Workers World Fund Drive. Send it to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor, New York, NY 10011.

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EU, U.S. imperialism to blame

1,300 African, Asian migrants drown in Mediterranean

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

An accident on a substandard boat resulted in the deaths of over 900 refugees from Africa, the Middle East and Asia on April 19. Many of the passengers seeking asylum in Europe were locked in the lower decks of the vessel, which was overloaded with people fleeing Africa from Libya. Only days earlier another boat had sunk with 400 victims.

Although there was emigration from Africa and the Middle East to Europe prior to 2011, the crisis has recently surpassed anything seen in recent history. Just since the beginning of 2015, it is estimated that over 1,800 people have died in the Mediterranean en route to southern Europe.

These events are treated in most of the corporate media as tragic accidents. But the full responsibility for these tragic deaths lies with world imperialism. Globalization and climate change have sharpened poverty throughout Africa and Asia, and NATO's wars and proxy wars against Iraq, Syria and especially the 2011 war on Libya have directly doubled and tripled the number of people seeking asylum in Europe under desperate conditions.

War on Libya, 2011

Four years ago, the United States and NATO engineered and carried out a brutal war against the people of Libya, first by financing and coordinating counterrevolutionary militias to attack and seize cities and villages in the east of the country. The then-Jamahiriya government headed by Col. Moammar Gadhafi mobilized military forces and volunteers to take back areas overrun by the rebels.

By March 19, the rebels were in retreat

and the Pentagon-NATO alliance embarked upon a massive naval blockade, arms embargo and aerial bombardment of Libya, the most prosperous state in Africa at the time. After over seven months of bombing and rebel activity, the imperialists declared victory, placing in government many individuals who had not been in Libya for decades.

Libya now has two rebel regimes claiming authority over the state, with additional militias a law unto themselves. The country's economic status has deteriorated. Once chair of the African Union under Gadhafi, Libya is now a haven for criminal and reactionary tendencies.

In addition to the destruction of Libya by the West, the Middle Eastern nation of Syria has been subjected to a similar destabilization campaign through a U.S.-NATO funded and strategically directed civil war, which has made millions of refugees and prompted a mass exodus.

In the Horn of Africa, war is still raging in Somalia and spilling over into Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti through the failed attempts by Washington to shape the political structures which govern Mogadishu and its environs. The 22,000-member African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somalia Federal Government are largely subsidized by the U.S. and the European Union.

Hundreds of thousands of additional internally displaced persons and refugees are relocating out of the East African states of Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Pentagon maintains a large military base in Djibouti at Camp Lemonnier where the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) directs its operations in the region.

21st century 'Atlantic Slave Trade'

Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi

the stage name that the United States give themselves when they do theater?"

In 2009, Galeano came to Philadelphia to speak at the Free Library, promoting his latest (and last) book, "Mirrors: Stories of Almost Everyone," another required reading about world history. During the Q & A period, a woman asked what advice he would give to the youth of Latin America. His response was quite interesting, as if he were waiting for the occasion to make the point about U.S. domination to U.S. audiences.

He said: "No, no, please. Déjame en paz [Leave me alone]. I do not want to give advice. It is like we are all trained by this USAID habit. It is not a good habit of feeling or thinking or knowing, that these nations have been chosen by God to save other nations; so they would have the perfect recipe to save countries and save people. And each time they have saved a country in Latin America, they have left dictatorships that lasted 20 to 30 years, like in the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, everywhere. Nations saved by them become giant jails and cemeteries. So what I would say is please, don't save me. I don't want to be saved."

This writer was able to ask the last question, about Cuba, and Galeano ended his presentation saying: "In all Latin America now, as part of a wave of new energies of change, energies of dignity and solidarity, Cuba has been a source of inspiration for all of that dignity and solidarity."

Eduardo Galeano, ipresente!

likened the current situation in the Mediterranean to the Atlantic Slave Trade because of the high percentage of refugees who die trying to reach Europe. Most migrants head toward Italy from Libya, as Italy's island of Lampedusa, part of Sicily, is closest to the African ports. Wracked by high unemployment from the capitalist economic crisis, Italy has also had the migrant crisis dumped in its lap by the wealthier EU countries.

Though Italian capitalism is part and parcel of the imperialist EU, out of desperation Renzi called on the EU bloc to make a "long-term investment" on the African continent.

In Germany, the major EU power, the Angela Merkel government held a minute of silence in Parliament. She did not, however, even acknowledge that the EU forced Italy to cut back on its rescue missions of migrants by refusing to finance them.

Some Western media outlets have drawn attention to the root cause of the horrendous situation involving migrants. The Guardian newspaper noted that "a large number of these people are displaced by wars. The top three nations from which maritime refugees to the EU come are Syria, Afghanistan and Eritrea. The country where they are most likely to start their journey is Libya, which is now effectively a failed state. In other words, many are running for their lives through countries we have bombed. Those in the West who insist we cannot take in 'the world's misery' must, at the very least, acknowledge how much of that misery we are responsible for." (April 26)

Imperialist war and genocide

In response to the situation in the Mediterranean, Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat said, "Gangs of criminals are putting people on a boat, sometimes even at gunpoint. They're putting them on the road to death, really, and nothing else."

It's "genocide — nothing less than geno-

cide, really," Muscat told CNN. (April 19)

Nonetheless, at an emergency summit in Brussels, the EU called for the further militarization of the Mediterranean. Several countries, including Germany, held a meeting on April 23 where further assistance was requested to destroy the vessels that transport migrants. Such an approach will only cause more deaths as the migrants will seek even less secure crafts to cross the sea.

The problems stem from the crisis of world capitalism and burgeoning racism in the foreign policy of Western states. In attempts to control the regions of Africa, the Middle East and Asia, the U.S. and its allies are creating deeper crises through dislocations and deaths.

Within Europe there is a fierce debate and political struggle over immigration from African and Asian states. Numerous political parties and fascist groups have sprung up to oppose migrants from countries in the South.

The ruling parties in Europe and North America have also stepped up their attacks on migrants. At the same time the wars of regime change utilizing aerial bombardments and surrogate armies are fueling the desperation and shattering of postcolonial nations and communities.

The Guardian article points out, "Around 3 billion people live on less than \$2.50 a day. The global 99% did not come about by accident. It's the result of centuries of colonization, decades of imperialism and the current corruption that has allowed a handful of people, in different ways at different times, to steal natural resources and pilfer public goods."

In the U.S. the narrative surrounding the migration crisis is also framed in the context of criminality of those providing transportation to migrants for money. There is no acknowledgement that Wall Street, Washington and, in the last few years especially, NATO and the Pentagon have created the problem by making it impossible for people to survive in their home countries. □



Eduardo Galeano

way introducing it to a new generation of readers.

Galeano's style is unique, presenting facts and giving lessons of history in a beautiful and exciting prose, submerging the readers in pages of fascinating developments, helping them to understand the most complex historical processes with ease.

He wrote novels and political articles exposing imperialism and right-wing oppressive governments. They were published in many journals, newspapers and magazines around the world. His last article, on December 2014, was about the case of the 43 students disappeared at Ayotzinapa in Mexico.

Latin America was not his only subject; he wrote about oppression, dictatorships, inequality, racism and political subjugation. His Gaza article in 2012 condemning the massacre of Palestinians by Israel is a good example of how he connects the U.S. to international crimes. In it he writes: "The so-called international community: Does it exist? Is it anything more than a club of merchants, bankers and warriors? Is it anything more than

Latin America beats back U.S. imperialism at summits

Continued from page 6

between the U.S., Canada and Mexico, which the Mexican people have been suffering from ever since, had just gone into effect earlier in 1994.

The Soviet Union had collapsed in 1991 and U.S. imperialism began to reclaim and superexploit all the potential markets from which it had previously been barred. The OAS had excluded Cuba since the U.S. ordered the island's expulsion in 1962. Only in 2009 did an OAS general assembly meeting reinstate Cuba. Because of the OAS's bitter historical record against the revolutionary government, Cuba refused to return.

Some 20,000 people came from all over the world to protest at the third Summit, held in Quebec City in 2001, soon after the 1999 World Trade Organization meeting and the first mass anti-globalization protests in Seattle in 1999. In 2001, Cuba's exclusion was protested, the U.S.'s "War on Drugs" became a point of contention, and Hugo Chávez, who had been elected president of Venezuela in

1998, raised the idea of "participatory" as opposed to "representative" democracy.

In Mar del Plata, Argentina, in 2005, U.S. President George W. Bush got his own good, old-fashioned shellacking. The U.S. was still hell-bent on pushing through the FTAA. In response, the ALBA Express — a train headed by Evo Morales (then a Bolivian presidential candidate), Cuban singer Silvio Rodrigues and legendary Argentine soccer player Diego Maradona — came with thousands of protesters to the Summit to bury the FTAA. That's exactly what happened as Brazil and Argentina refused to sign on to the FTAA.

In 2012 in Colombia, many government leaders, including host President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, said there cannot be another summit without Cuba.

During the progress of the Summits of the Americas from 1994 to 2015, a strong alliance of leftist governments arose. Chávez finally broke Cuba's isolation in the early 2000s. Politically and economically, Latin America and the Caribbean started to reject U.S. hegemony. In Part II, details of these changes will be highlighted. □



30 de abril 1975: Guerrillera Nguyen Trung Kien guía al ejército de liberación para atacar el Palacio Presidencial.

Delegación investigadora estadounidense al regresar de Cuba concluye que 'proceso de paz de Colombia debe continuarse'

20 de abril de 2015 – Treinta y tres activistas viajaron a la Habana, Cuba, del 11 al 18 de abril para participar en una delegación investigadora relativa a las negociaciones de paz de Colombia que tienen lugar allí. Las/os participantes eran de varios estados de Estados Unidos (Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Kentucky, Michigan, Nueva York, Pennsylvania y Texas) así como de Colombia, Costa Rica y Puerto Rico. Algunas/os representan el Gremio Nacional de Abogados (NLG), el Centro de Acción Internacional (IAC) y el Grupo de Trabajo de las Américas. La delegación viajó bajo los auspicios de la Alianza para la Justicia Global (AfGJ).

Las actuales negociaciones de paz en

Colombia comenzaron en octubre de 2012, luego de que representantes del Gobierno y las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) acordaran un marco para poner fin al conflicto y lograr una paz duradera. Hay cinco temas en la agenda: 1) desarrollo rural integral; 2) participación política; 3) drogas ilícitas; 4) derechos de las víctimas; y 5) el final del conflicto. Los negociadores han llegado a acuerdos parciales sobre los tres primeros puntos. La actual ronda de negociaciones aborda los puntos 4 y 5.

La delegación se reunió por separado con negociadores de las FARC-EP y del gobierno colombiano, así como con las subcomisiones sobre género y sobre las

víctimas. También se reunió con representantes de los dos países garantes – Noruega y Cuba. Como resultado, las/os delegados están ahora mejor informadas/os sobre el proceso de las negociaciones.

Los estimados sobre el número de víctimas del conflicto oscilan entre 1,5 millones a más de 6 millones. Más de 90.000 personas han desaparecido, más de 220.000 han muerto (80% de ellas civiles), y de cuatro a 6 millones de personas han sufrido desplazamiento interno – siendo la mayoría mujeres y niños.

La ONU ha estimado que paramilitares con vínculos con el gobierno y con empresas transnacionales han sido responsables de más del 80% de las víctimas.

La Delegación estuvo de acuerdo en que el proceso de paz debe seguir adelante. De acuerdo con la delegada Pamela Brubaker “Nos hemos convencido, después de una semana de intensas discusiones, de la urgente necesidad de implementar un cese bilateral al fuego entre las partes negociadoras”. Martha Grevatt habló a nombre del grupo diciendo: “Estamos en solidaridad con el pueblo de Colombia – mujeres, campesinos, estudiantes, sindicatos, LGBT – que se han unido en organizaciones y movimientos con una visión de una nueva Colombia, construida sobre una base de igualdad, justicia social y una paz duradera. Esto es lo que quiere la mayoría en Colombia”. □

El poder de la guerra popular y la solidaridad antiimperialista mundial

Por Dee Knight

Tomó 30 años de dura lucha, pero en las últimas semanas todo era como un tornado. Primero, un asalto relámpago en las tierras altas centrales de Vietnam. Luego, ataques rápidos en las ciudades costeras de Hue y Danang. Después, las Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Popular convergieron en Saigón desde todos los puntos. Los líderes del gobierno títere y otros parásitos corrieron para subirse a los helicópteros en la Embajada de Estados Unidos, junto con periodistas occidentales, personal de la embajada y sus secuaces.

El Ejército Popular ahora tenía tanques y artillería, así como fuerzas regulares a gran escala. En cada pueblo y ciudad, se reunían con las milicias populares y las tropas irregulares que les “abrían la puerta”. Las fuerzas del ejército títere de Saigón se dispersaban frente a este asalto.

Este 30 de abril se conmemora el 40º aniversario de la Gran Victoria de Primavera de Vietnam en 1975. Esta larga y continuada guerra – primero contra Japón en 1945 y luego Francia (con el apoyo de EUA) en 1945-1954 y después directamente contra el imperialismo estadounidense – definió una era. En 1966, el Che Guevara hizo un llamado “¡Dos, tres, muchos Vietnam!” Luchas al estilo de Vietnam surgieron en las colonias africanas portuguesas de Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique y Angola. Lograron la victoria junto a la vietnamita. Levantamientos guerrilleros también surgieron sucesivamente en Centroamérica.

La marcha de la victoria vietnamita fue planeada con meses de antelación. Todos los aspectos de los últimos 30 años de lucha entraron en juego. Allí estaba la ruta Ho Chi Minh – una red de carreteras a través de selvas y montañas utilizadas para canalizar un suministro constante de armas, municiones y alimentos de norte a sur a pesar de los incesantes bombardeos de Estados Unidos. Los túneles de Cu Chi fueron centros estratégicos de mando y recuperación subterráneos. La Ofensiva de Tet de 1968 había mostrado al mundo lo que la resistencia vietnamita era capaz.

Todos estos éxitos se basaron en la estrategia de la guerra popular.

“La característica sobresaliente de la

guerra popular en nuestro país es que la lucha armada y la lucha política están estrechamente coordinadas, apoyándose y estimulándose entre sí”, escribió el general Vo Nguyen Giap, fundador de las Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Popular (FALP). “Así que el lema “Movilizar a todo el pueblo, armar a todo el pueblo y luchar en todos los frentes” se ha convertido en una realidad más viva y heroica”.

Todos los esfuerzos de EUA para derrotar esta estrategia central – como los programas de “pacificación” y “aldeas estratégicas” – fueron inútiles. “Cuando un pueblo entero se levanta, nada se puede hacer. Ningún dinero puede ganarles”, le dijo el general Giap al Servicio de Noticias de Liberación en 1969. “Esa es la base de nuestra táctica y estrategia que los americanos no entienden”.

“Todos los 31 millones de personas de nuestro pueblo son luchadores valientes”, dijo el general Giap, “por medio de una pequeña fuerza para luchar contra una más grande, derrotando una fuerza más fuerte con una más pequeña, combinando batallas grandes, medianas y pequeñas, intensificando la lucha masiva y al mismo tiempo llevando a cabo una guerrilla generalizada, constantemente golpeando al enemigo desde una posición de fuerza y alcanzando una alta eficiencia en el combate, llegando a ser cada vez más fuerte y ganando victorias cada vez más grandes a medida que luchan.” (Discurso en Hanoi, 21 de diciembre, 1968)

La movilización de todo el pueblo significaba mujeres, hombres y niños, jóvenes y longevos, del campo y de la ciudad, de norte y sur. El gobierno títere de Saigón fue penetrado por espías patrióticos en todos los niveles. Un ejemplo famoso de las combativas mujeres es la foto icónica de una pequeña campesina empuñando su AK-47 mientras guiaba a su enorme y humillado cautivo – un piloto estadounidense derribado – a través del bosque. Luego está la historia de la atenta camarera en un club de oficiales en Saigón frecuentado por los comandantes estadounidenses. Después de la victoria, ella fue honrada públicamente como coronela de la FALP.

El mundo entero conoció a Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, quien representó al

Frente de Liberación Nacional en las conversaciones de paz en París.

Los líderes de la revolución fueron fortalecidos por décadas de lucha. Por ejemplo, Le Duc Tho, famoso en Occidente como el principal negociador de Vietnam en las conversaciones de paz de París – a quien le fue concedido el Premio Nobel de la Paz en 1973 pero lo rechazó por no aceptarlo junto al criminal de guerra Henry Kissinger – firmó el plan de batalla 1975 para la ofensiva final de primavera, en nombre de la dirección del Partido de los Trabajadores. Nacido en 1911, Le Duc Tho había ayudado a fundar el Partido Comunista de Indochina en 1930. Las autoridades coloniales francesas lo encarcelaron de 1930-1936 y nuevamente de 1939 a 1944. Después de su liberación en 1945, ayudó a dirigir el Viet Minh, el movimiento de independencia vietnamita contra los franceses, hasta la firma de los Acuerdos de Ginebra en 1954. Desde 1948 hasta 1975, fue un organizador líder del frente del sur.

Después de firmar el plan de batalla 1975, Le Duc Tho fue hasta el centro de mando en las tierras altas centrales, por la Ruta Ho Chi Minh en moto a la edad de 64. Allí permaneció, ayudando a coordinar las ofensivas en tres direcciones hasta la marcha final en Saigón.

Solidaridad mundial y colaboración socialista internacional

La victoria de Vietnam fue global. La Unión Soviética, sus aliados de Europa de Este y la República Popular de China proporcionaron armas, municiones, alimentos y mucho más. Los movimientos contra la guerra en los países de todo el mundo proporcionaron apoyo moral muy importante. En Estados Unidos, las fuerzas contra la guerra junto con el explosivo movimiento de Liberación Negra generaron una resistencia a la guerra a gran escala entre los jóvenes que se negaron a ser parte del esfuerzo guerrillero. El resultado fue una huelga virtual de los soldados rasos en la zona de combate, así como rebeliones en las bases militares estadounidenses en EUA y en todo el mundo.

Los fusiles AK-47 utilizados por las Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Popular vietnamita fueron hechos en Checoslova-

quia. Las armas antiaéreas, así como camiones, tanques y artillería, fueron hechas en la URSS y China. Vietnam fue el frente de lucha en una guerra global contra el imperialismo estadounidense, y este esfuerzo de solidaridad enorme fue un factor material en la victoria de Vietnam.

El general Giap dijo en 1968 que “el ejército y el pueblo en Vietnam del Norte han derribado más de 3200 de los aviones más modernos de los Estados Unidos, matando o capturando un número considerable de los mejores pilotos estadounidenses, y han hundido o prendido fuego a cientos de naves enemigas. La llamada superioridad aérea de los imperialistas estadounidenses – el jefe del imperialismo que se jactaba de su riqueza y armas y que es conocido por su crueldad – ha recibido un duro golpe a manos del pueblo vietnamita”. (Discurso del Día del Ejército, 21 de diciembre, 1968) Esto fue tres años antes de que las Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Popular derribaran a 30 bombarderos estratégicos subsónicos B-52 – un tercio de la flota B-52 estadounidense – mientras resistían el atentado desesperado de Washington en la Navidad de 1972 en Vietnam del Norte en la víspera del acuerdo de paz del 27 de enero de 1973.

En 1968 el general Giap habló de “los 31 millones de vietnamitas” luchando contra el imperialismo estadounidense. Hoy, la población es de más de 90 millones, lo que hace de Vietnam el decimotercer país más poblado del mundo. En 1965, Ho Chi Minh dijo que no importaba cuánto EUA pueda matar y destruir, “construiremos nuestro país muchas veces más hermoso”. Desde 2000, la tasa de crecimiento económico de Vietnam ha sido una de las más altas del mundo.

El verdadero legado de Vietnam, según lo declarado por el general Giap, es que “el mito de la invencibilidad de los Estados Unidos . . . se está derrumbando irremediablemente. No importa cuán enorme sea su potencial militar y económico, nunca tendrá éxito en destruir la voluntad de un pueblo que lucha por su independencia. Esta es una realidad reconocida ahora en el mundo entero.”

Todas las citas son de “El arte militar de la guerra popular: escritos selectos de Vo Nguyen Giap”, Monthly Review Press, 1970.