



May Day in Baltimore.

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Rebellion forces charges against Baltimore cops

By Monica Moorehead

It is no coincidence that Baltimore's state attorney, Marilyn Mosby, announced on May 1 that six police officers had been indicted and arrested for the murder of Freddie Grey, a day before a major march and rally had been scheduled to protest a lack of indictments and arrests of police since Grey's death.

An official autopsy on Grey has not been released yet, although it is public knowledge that at least 80 percent of his spine had been severed between the time of his arrest on April 12 and when he lapsed into a coma and died on April 19. The charges against the officers, three white and three Black, range from involuntary manslaughter to second degree depraved heart murder, the latter charge meaning indifference to human life.

The Fraternal Order of Police in Baltimore and legal experts have criticized the indictments, claiming that there is a "conflict of interest" between Mosby and her spouse, Nick Mosby, a member of the local city council who represents the district where Grey lived. These critics also say that because there are no known eyewitnesses forthcoming in saying exactly what happened to Grey in the police van, convictions of the accused police officers will be next to impossible. The police have called for a special prosecutor to replace Mosby, who is African American.

The fact that any indictments against the police occurred at all is unprecedented. This is especially true in a majority Black inner city like Baltimore, where police terror including occupation is systemic and has lasted for decades. Over the past three years, close to \$6 million in compensation has been paid to victims who brought legal suits against the Baltimore Police Department for its brutality.

The rebellion that took place in West Baltimore and then spread to East Baltimore's commercial area on April 27 may have been ignited by Grey's death, but it was a culmination of many years of pent up anger and frustration on the part of Black youth, who have been treated like prisoners in their own community. The cops have been their jailers and occupiers.

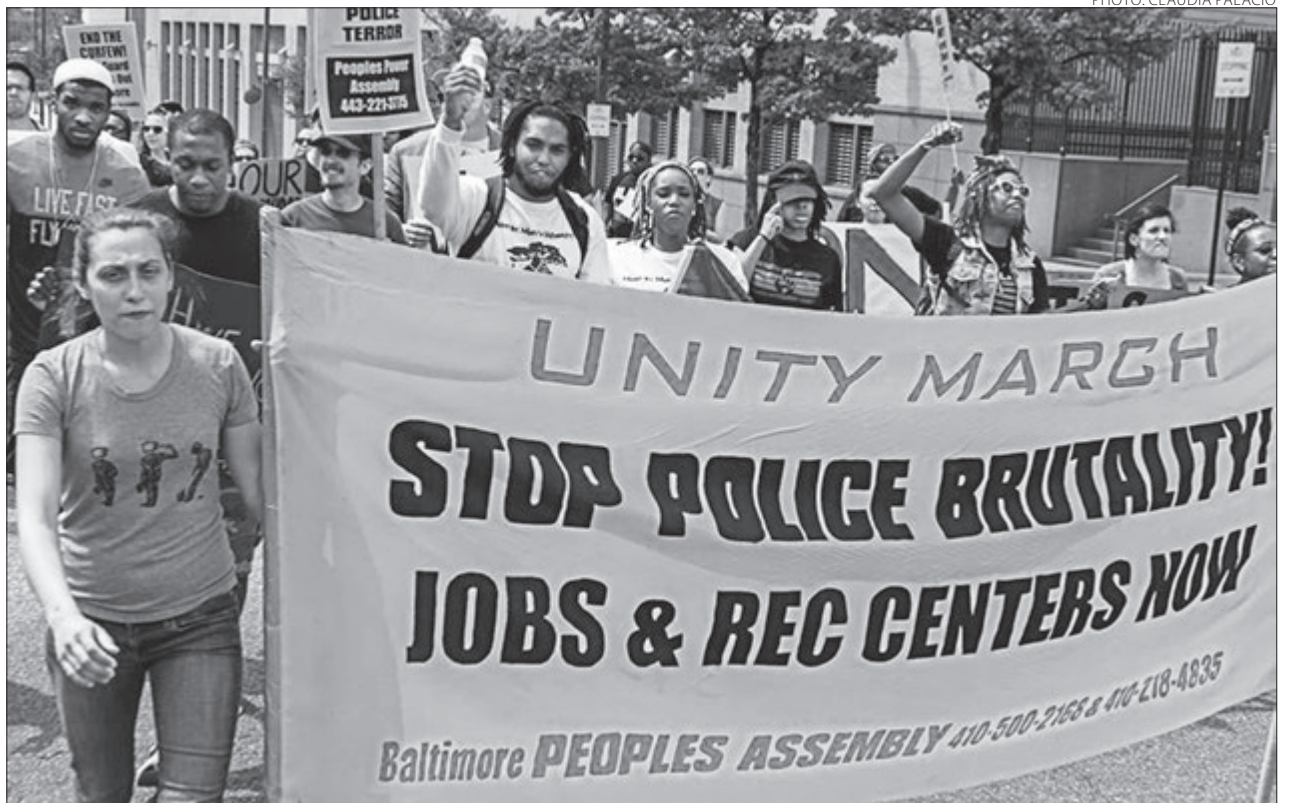
Police riot caused rebellion

Eyewitnesses state that the police sparked the rebellion when they shut down the only way out of the area, closing off a nearby subway and major bus depot that hundreds of students use to get home from the nearby school. Cutting off this path trapped the students.

Based on police rumors of a march from the high school, cops surrounded and trapped huge numbers of people in the area. Police have spread such rumors in the past to cause confusion and dissension among the masses and within the movement.

Recently, cops spread a rumor that the Bloods and Crips youth gangs had united to put out a contract to

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Front banner for May 2 Baltimore march.

PHOTO: CLAUDIA PALACIO

Mumia Abu-Jamal STILL at risk

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Full jails mean capitalist profits

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Fired Boston unionists win by landslide

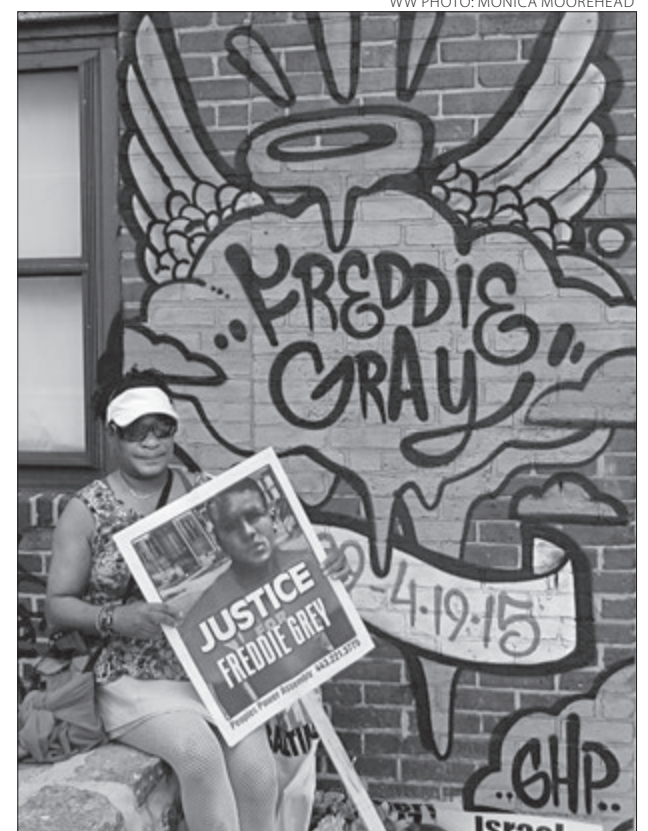
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The corner where on April 12 Freddie Grey was arrested in West Baltimore.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

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MAY DAY

Cuban 5 are home

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Immigrant rights and solidarity with Baltimore

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Supreme Court pressed to grant right to marry

By Martha Grevatt

Last week the Supreme Court of the United States heard arguments for and against legalizing same-sex marriage. Plaintiffs from Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee — where state courts upheld same-sex marriage bans — brought cases opposing the bans before the high court. The court's ruling, expected in late June, will decide whether the U.S. Constitution gives same-sex couples the right to marry. SCOTUS will also decide if states must recognize same-sex marriages conducted in other states or countries. Same-sex marriage is legal in all but 13 states and in 17 countries.

The plaintiffs, 19 men and 12 women, are Black, Latino/a, Asian and white and of different ages and occupations. Most had no activist history but are proud to be fighting for their families and for thousands of couples in their home states.

For the majority of the plaintiffs, the driving issue was the couples' need to be recognized as joint parents. The problem hit home for Kentuckian Pam Yorksmith when she took the child she is raising with Nicole Yorksmith to the hospital. The hospital would not authorize treatment until Nicole, the legal parent, gave permission. Jayne Rowse and April DeBoer, two Michigan nurses, sued the state for the right to jointly adopt the four children they are rearing together.

Jim Obergefell married his partner of 21 years in Maryland in 2013. When John Arthur died of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis three months later, Ohio would not list Jim as John's spouse on the death certificate. Denying the right to marry affects the ability to access death benefits that would normally fall to the surviving spouse.

For 40 years, Luke Barlowe and Jimmy Meade of Kentucky passed as roommates, keeping their 2009 wedding a secret. But when they learned of the lawsuit, Barlowe remembered trying to commit suicide as a teenager. Thinking about the many lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer teens who still kill themselves, Barlowe explained, "We wanted to do this not for us — it does nothing for us — but we wanted to do it for the kids coming up behind us." (Detroit News, April 23)

Huge throngs packed the courtroom and demonstrated outside for marriage equality, greatly outnumbering the bigots damning LGBTQ people to hell. Poll after poll shows a majority of people in this country support the right to marry. Yet, decades after the Women's Liberation movement trashed the stereotype of woman as baby-machine, Michigan's Special Assistant Attorney General John Bursch argued the state had a compelling interest in protecting the "procreative" function of marriage to "serve purposes that, by their nature, arise from biology." (Between the Lines, April 28)

Ban upholders distort human history

Justice Anthony Kennedy is viewed as the swing vote who will decide if the court votes 5-4 in favor of marriage equality or 5-4 against it. He stated during the hearing, "This definition [of marriage exclusive to one man and one woman] has been with us for millennia." Antonin Scalia, expected to vote to uphold state bans, stated, "You're asking us to decide it for this society when no other society until 2001 ever had it."

The notion that marriage as an institution has been with us, unchanged, for "millennia," is contradicted by a mountain of anthropological evidence.

Some 150 years ago, Frederick Engels, Karl Marx's lifelong collaborator, published a historical materialist analysis of human social/sexual relations. "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" traced the evolution of "marriage" from the beginnings of hominid sociality, through various stages of band and tribal society, into the first agricultural settlements that witnessed the rise of private property relations and led to the slave-owning, feudal and capitalist modes of production. With each society's unique economic relationships came an equally unique "definition" of marriage.

Before private property relations dominated society, human social/sexual relationships were freely formed and freely dissolved, with men and women having equal rights in marriage as in all matters of human concern. But with the shift from communal ownership to "private property" — prehistorically an inconceivable notion —

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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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Demanding amnesty and a better contract

Boston school bus drivers vote in fired union leaders

WW PHOTO: TEAM SOLIDARITY

By Brenda Ryan
Boston

In a stunning victory, the militant, fighting rank and file of the Boston school bus drivers' union, United Steelworkers Local 8751, voted in the full slate of Team Solidarity candidates, led by four illegally fired leaders, on the union's Executive Board.

The April 30 election was the largest voter turnout in the history of the local and resulted in an unprecedented landslide vote by more than 3 to 1 for the Team Solidarity ticket. The membership sent a clear message to Veolia/Transdev, the union-busting school bus management company, as well as to Boston Public Schools and Mayor Marty Walsh, that they will fight and win a just contract and the rehiring of their leaders. They will also unite with the communities they serve to struggle for Equal Quality Education.

The new executive board-elect of the 850-strong union, whose members are largely Haitian, Cape Verdean and , includes President Andre Francois, long-time chief steward; Vice President Stevan Kirschbaum, a founder of the local; Treasurer Georgia Scott, veteran of the 1965 Civil Rights battle on Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala.; Financial Secretary Steven Gillis, the outgoing vice president and benefits administrator; Recording Secretary Claude "Tou Tou" St. Germain, a Fanmi Lavalas activist; Grievance Committee members Garry Murchison, a three-term past president, Frantz Mendes, two-term president, and Richard Laine; Trustees Frantz "Fan Fan" Cadet, Fred Floreal and Judy Long; Guide Chantal Suffrant Casimir; Guards Adriano Barbosa and Ludnay Pierre; and Accident Review Committee members Jerome Samir Stanley, Kathy Moore and Robert Salley. Murchison led the local's last five-week strike in 1991, which ended with a 48-hour occupation of the mayor's office.

Veolia illegally fired Francois, Gillis, Kirschbaum and Murchison in November 2013, following a company-ordered, police department-enforced lockout on Oct. 8, 2013, which occurred after the local requested an emergency meeting. The lockout occurred in the midst of a three-month fight with the new company over wage theft, its refusal to honor the drivers' long-standing contract and Veolia's illegal demand — because it's in violation of the contract — made the day before, that even 40-year veteran drivers must file new hire applications.

A small clique of business-minded, company-inspired opponents, including the current president — who bowed out during the election campaign — tried to turn the membership against Team Solidarity's fighting slate. They bombarded members with the message: "Don't vote for the people who were fired. They won't do you any good."

The climax of year-long bargaining over a new concessionary contract was the company's divisive campaign that included pushing a "final" proposal with no amnesty for the fired leaders and using false "retro-pay" payroll documents produced by management. But the members voted for the new board based on their personal experience with Team Solidarity's leaders, who have filed hundreds of their grievances, administered and defended their benefits, and fiercely fought for them and the union's survival during the nearly two

years since Veolia and the mayor's office began their union-busting assault.

Campaign intensifies to reinstate the four

In the campaign's final week, opponents led a barrage of red-baiting, vicious lies and attacks on the union's political work. The day of the election, the company copied and its collaborators handed out an article from a Zionist website with photos of Kirschbaum and Gillis that linked their support for Palestinian rights with the Boston Marathon bombing.

The company stooges attacked the active support of Team Solidarity for the Black Lives Matter movement and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal; for their solidarity with Cuba; for their opposition to every imperialist war from El Salvador and Nicaragua in the 1980s to Afghanistan, Iraq and Yemen; and for traveling to Venezuela, Colombia and Haiti in support of workers and socialist movements fighting U.S.-sponsored coups and death squads.

Nevertheless, Kirschbaum and Gillis, two well-known socialists, had the backing of the membership. The vote for them and the whole slate of revolutionary-minded candidates is a barometer of Local 8751's general class consciousness. It is, in a much smaller arena, analogous to socialist labor leader Eugene Debs getting a million votes for U.S. president while in jail for opposing World War I. And it brings a tremendous surge of rank-and-file power to the fight against Veolia and its austerity-driven sponsors.

"The air-pressure needle reads like a tornado is coming," Gillis said of the workers.

The union is now intensifying its battle to get the four leaders reinstated. Thousands of leaflets are being distributed throughout Boston, asking people to call Mayor Walsh and demand that he order their rehiring by Veolia — which changed its name to Transdev in the wake of publicity over its international union-busting actions and its infrastructure support for the brutal occupation of Palestine.

The mayor's vendor contract with the company gives the city the sole authority to settle all grievances. Walsh can order the immediate reinstatement of the four with full back pay.

With this election, Team Solidarity has moved from an opposition faction within the local to become the governing body-elect, with a clear mandate to carry forward its militant fightback program.

In addition to demanding the rehiring of the leaders, the local now will intensify activities to unite with the communities against the Boston Public School's massive budget-cutting campaign and raise demands for Equal Quality Education for BPS's predominantly students of color. The mayor's appointed School Committee has voted austerity that calls for closing schools, further privatization through charter school expansion, cutting back summer programs for at-risk youth and nutritional offerings systemwide, kicking middle school students off school buses, as well as reductions in union staff and services throughout the system.

Two-year battle with Veolia

Veolia, a Paris-based global conglomerate,



PHOTO: HOWARD ROTMAN



Above, Team Solidarity activists win Local 8751 election by landslide.

Left, Andre Francois brings union solidarity to community at April 18 rally in Roxbury, Mass.

erated, took over management of Boston school bus transportation on July 1, 2013. Despite signing an agreement to honor all terms and conditions of United Steelworkers Local 8751's existing contract, the company soon violated nearly every article regarding wages, benefits and working conditions. In August 2013, the Steelworkers filed 18 unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board. And on Oct. 7, the company tried to force the drivers to fill out new hire applications.

A critical moment in the battle with Veolia began on Oct. 8. At 5 a.m. that morning, the drivers reported to work and demanded a meeting with the company to discuss the company's total failure to honor the union contract. Veolia's top management and Boston school administrators were for the first time on site at the bus yards before sunrise. Management refused to meet for hours and then called in the police, locked the gates and evicted the drivers and City Councilor Charles Yancey, threatening them all with arrest for trespassing.

The workers' request for a meeting was legally protected union activity and the company's lockout was a violation of the contract and federal law. Veolia then falsely alleged that the members had gone on a wildcat strike, a claim that was trumpeted by former Mayor Thomas Menino, the BPS administration and the Boston media. Veolia then singled out and fired the four union leaders.

Team Solidarity immediately launched an intense campaign to rehire the four and get a just contract. It held near-weekly picket lines and seven Solidarity Day rallies that turned out thousands of union and community supporters, including the Massachusetts AFL-CIO and the Steelworkers International. After a rally and drivers' break room briefing June 30, 2014, the date of the contract's expiration, Veolia managers and the Boston Police Department concocted frame-up felony charges against Kirschbaum, including breaking and entering, trespassing, and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.

For eight months Team Solidarity mobilized support for Kirschbaum, holding pack-the-court rallies, national call-in days to the district attorney and mayor, and weekly bus yard rallies. Team Solidarity's defense team exposed the absurdity and political motivation of the perjured charges during a three-day trial, and on March 5 a jury returned a unanimous verdict to acquit Kirschbaum after only 10 minutes of deliberation.

During the trial, the prosecutor — whose closing arguments were scripted verbatim by Veolia's attorney — asked a union member if Kirschbaum did a good

job fighting for the membership. She replied, "Perfect."

Witness after witness conveyed the uncompromising, relentless commitment of the local. This union has fought for the membership and stood in solidarity with every movement for justice since its formation in the 1970s, when it was on the front lines opposing school segregation and defending students of color from years of violent, racist attacks.

Milt Neidenberg, a decades-long steelworker, Teamsters retiree and ally of Local 8751 since its founding, told Workers World: "Local 8751's fight against Veolia and Boston's power structure is part of a growing, increasingly active, broadening labor movement, such as the national strikes by low-wage workers from Walmart to McDonald's demanding \$15 and a union. Veolia is one of these global giants, whose primary business tactics specialize in union busting as essential to its drive to lower workers' pay [in order] to increase corporate profits and stockholder dividends, which for the 1% now dwarf many nations' economies.

"Veolia low-bids while promising governments a hired gun to privatize transportation, energy, water and environmental resources and waste management," Neidenberg continued. "That's why Scott Walker, Wisconsin's 'Right to Work' governor and Wall Street's Republican presidential nominee, just entered talks with Veolia to privatize his state's water supply. The results are everywhere: war with the unions and service cutbacks and rate hikes for the public. Local 8751's historic electoral sweep for Team Solidarity, a mandate for social unionism, points to the promising potential for waging a successful workers' counter-offensive. It's time for all to step up to their defense and win a victory for all."

In the U.S. transportation field alone, Veolia has attacked rapid transit unions in San Francisco — where two replacements were killed on the tracks during two Veolia-forced strikes in 2013 — as well as Pensacola, Fla.; Phoenix; Las Vegas; Baltimore; Denver; Seattle; Racine, Wis.; and smaller cities from coast to coast. Amalgamated Transportation Union International President Larry Hanley termed that "a path of destruction" and "management train wreck" in his June 2013 report on Veolia. Now is the time for the militant social unionism of Local 8751 to be taken up around the country. Their victories show the power of militant resistance.

To join the fight, call Mayor Walsh today at 617-635-4500, and go to TeamSolidarity.org and "Team Solidarity — The Voice of United School Bus Workers" (tinyurl.com/KY0gHYS) on Facebook. □

May Day in Baltimore

Thousands march for amnesty

for youth



May 2 protest in Baltimore.

By Monica Moorehead
Baltimore

The Baltimore People's Power Assembly called a special rally and march for May Day, also known as International Worker's Day, to demand justice for Freddie Grey and general amnesty for the hundreds of Black youth who were arrested during the April 27 rebellion following Grey's funeral.

Other important demands included the end of a five-day curfew and the immediate withdrawal of thousands of gun-carrying National Guard troops called out by Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan to occupy the Black community.

Not even the presence of the police and the Guard at McKeldin Square could quell the militancy of the crowd.

The May Day march attracted a multinational crowd of more than 10,000 mainly young people, including children, who took to the streets following a brief gathering and rally at McKeldin Square. The square was the site of the Occupy movement's two-month occupation back in 2011 and is designated as a free speech zone.

In 2013, a historic march of 10,000 people demanding justice for Trayvon Martin, the 17-year-old African American murdered by vigilante George Zimmerman in 2012, was also held at McKeldin Square before the assembled masses took over City Hall for four hours.

The May Day march for Grey, the 25-year-old African American tortured to death by six Baltimore police officers, was the largest organized since the one held for Martin. The protesters spontaneously marched to a nearby prison complex, which is presently incarcerating the youth arrested during the April 25 demonstration, those allegedly taking part in the April 27 rebellion, and those arrested subsequently for curfew violations.

Among the many signs in the crowd were ones that read, "Our youth are not thugs and looters." These messages countered the racist, demonizing labels that the mayor, the police and the media are using against rebellious Black youths.

The march then continued on to Pennsylvania and North avenues on the West Side, known as

ground zero of the rebellion, where the crowd had swelled to at least 15,000. There was so much jubilation in the air.

It was at this site on April 27 that a CVS drug store was liberated of goods denied to the Black community, a community that has been decimated by a lack of jobs, water shutoffs, and inadequate food, housing and other necessities of life.

As Colleen Davidson, a leader of Baltimore's revolutionary youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) and an eyewitness to the rebellion, wrote, "Men, women and children were coming into the stores with empty hands and leaving with bags and boxes of the basic necessities of life. Food, drinks, toilet paper, baby food, diapers, etc. — all things that they never had free access to under capitalism. Children were getting their first pairs of new shoes and coming out of the stores smiling with fruit and candy."

"Community members came together and took as much as they could to give out to the people, especially the elderly who weren't able to come out. This all was happening at the end of the month, as food stamps are running out, the stamps being a grudging form of assistance which has already been reduced by the ruling class to the point where most people in cities like Baltimore are hungry and desperate." (workers.org, April 30)

The five-hour march ended at City Hall. There, hundreds of youth stayed at City Hall to hold a speakout and discuss whether to conduct a civil disobedience action to break the curfew, which officially began at 10 p.m. and ended at 5 a.m.

At approximately 9:45 p.m., a group of 90 youth sat in a wide circle discussing civil disobedience to the curfew. Steven Ceci, a PPA organizer who was a part of this group, told WW, "Fox News reporter Geraldo Rivera waded into the group picking

fighters. At exactly 10 p.m., without warning, police charged into the group, beating people and arresting 50 youth."

Since martial law was established on April 28, the right to habeas corpus has been suspended, meaning that the police and local officials can hold protesters in jail for an indeterminate amount of time without the right to a hearing or an attorney.

On May 2, the Baltimore PPA and its supporters from other cities joined community residents at Presbury and N. Mount streets in West Baltimore, the corner where, on April 12, Grey was videotaped being dragged to a police wagon. There, the demonstrators held a short rally followed by a several-mile march of hundreds to City Hall to join thousands for a rally protesting police brutality. People had travelled from New York, North Carolina and Pennsylvania to join the march.

At the May 2 march, the police viciously attacked protesters and arrested those who defied the curfew. The arrests included legal observers and medics. The curfew officially ended on May 3 as growing protests and challenges to it were intensifying and the monetary losses of local businesses forced to close early were skyrocketing. The governor announced that the national guard will be pulled out in increments. Sharon Black, a volunteer organizer with the PPA, told Workers World, "It is crucial that we keep the pressure on to demand amnesty for all arrestees." □



WW PHOTO: MONICA MORREHEAD

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

On the picket line

By Matty Starrdust and Sue Davis

Calif. nurses strike for health coverage, safety

Some 5,000 registered nurses, organized by the California Nurses Association and National Nurses United, went on a one-day strike or marched on picket lines April 30 after contract negotiations with the Sutter Health hospital corporation hit a dead end. Despite raking in more than \$3 billion in profits over the last five years and paying its CEO an obscenely high \$6 million salary in 2013, Sutter continues to demand cuts to nurses' health care plans and dangerously low staffing levels at its hospitals.

Emergency room nurse Debra Bucculatto told the press: "We need adequate health care for ourselves and for our families along with staffing conditions that are safe. As it is, Sutter is trying to cut corners despite tremendous profits, but nurses deserve basic essentials ... [like] quality health coverage and safe staffing." (National Nurses United, April 29) Sutter hospital nurses were joined by thousands of nurses at Kaiser Permanente and Providence Health hospitals in various cities who also walked off the job to protest corporate policies that promote profit above decent health care.

Federal contracted employees demand living wage

While politicians campaign across the country making empty promises about "economic opportunity" and a fair shot at the "American dream," workers at the U.S. Senate's own cafeteria struggle just to make ends meet. That's why contracted food service and janitorial workers at U.S. federal buildings in Washington, D.C., went on a one-day strike April 22 to demand fair wages and collective bargaining rights.

President Obama's 2014 executive order raising federal contract workers' minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour isn't enough, said Bertrand Olotara, a single father who earns \$12 an hour as a cook in the Senate cafeteria. "Even though I work seven days a week — putting in 70 hours between my two jobs — I can't manage to pay the rent, buy school supplies for my kids or even put food on the table," he wrote in an April 22 op-ed in *The Guardian*. "I hate to admit it, but I have to use food stamps so that my kids don't go to bed hungry."

With support from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, workers rallied outside the Capitol Building to demand \$15 an hour and a union for all federal contract workers, who number about 26 million, or 22 percent of the civilian workforce. (AFSCME.org, April 22)

Mourn the dead, fight for the living

Every year on April 28, Workers' Memorial Day, laborers throughout the world pay tribute to those who have been killed on the job or injured by their work and pledge to renew the struggle for workplace safety. In 2013 in the U.S. alone, 4,585 workers died as a result of workplace accidents and an estimated 50,000 died from occupational diseases, as detailed in the AFL-CIO's 2015 edition of "Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect." Nearly 3.8 million work-related injuries and illnesses were reported, but because many are not reported, the true toll is more than two to three times greater, or 7.6 million to 11.4 million injuries each year. (aflcio.org, April 23)

Among those taken by workplace tragedies in 2015 was 40-year-old construction worker Trevor Loftus, who was killed April 24 in New York City in a freak accident when the hydraulic system on the crane he was operating failed, crushing him. (New York Daily News, April 24) Workers need strong, fighting unions to ensure workplace safety and a totally different economic system where human lives are valued above profits.

Labor opposes Trans-Pacific Partnership

The organized labor movement, along with national environmental and immigrant rights groups, has taken a strong, united stand against the trade agreement called the Trans-Pacific Partnership, whose details are hidden from the public. At a New York City rally on April 27, residential service employee Steve Ellwood, a member of Service Employees 32BJ from the Bronx, said the TPP would "devastate workers' rights, encourage more outsourcing of already scarce jobs, compromise food safety, imperil environmental standards and give multinational corporations the right to sue the government if they do not like the city's laws and regulations. ... We want NYC to be a 'TPP-Free Zone.'" (Labor Press, April 28) □

Fighting police brutality on May Day

Longshore workers shut down Bay Area ports

By Terri Kay
Oakland, Calif.

May 1 — Once again the membership of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 did a remarkable deed when it led U.S. labor on May Day 2015 by voting to shut down all Bay Area ports and march to Oakland City Hall to stand up against police terror. The political focus, at the time of that decision, was the April 4 police killing of Walter Scott in South Carolina. Scott had strong family ties to the International Longshore Association there, and ILWU Local 10 voted to show solidarity with the ILA.

“I put forth the resolution to shut down the port because I am proud of my union’s history of resistance, and I felt it was time labor came out loudly against police terror,” said Stacey Rodgers, the ILWU member who initiated the port action. “We are in an historic moment in our country. Labor has always been part of the historic moments in this country, and we continue that legacy on May Day.”

Then Freddie Grey was killed by the Baltimore police.

Today, International Workers’ Day, the ILWU membership and well over 1,000 community members came out strongly to

show their anger about recent police killings and all the cases of police terror. Local 10 and a number of community groups and other unions organized a rally at the Port of Oakland, a march through the Acorn Projects in West Oakland and a rally at Oscar Grant Plaza in front of Oakland City Hall.

At the port, longshore workers spoke out against police terror, including the family of Jeremiah Moore, an autistic man shot by police in Valejo, Calif., on Oct. 20, 2012, and the uncle of Pedie Perez, an unarmed man shot by the Richmond Police Department on Sept. 14.

The ILWU drill team led the march. Marchers carried banners, including one reading, “Justice for Yvette.” Yvette Henderson was killed Feb. 3 by Emeryville police. Also, “May Day! Fight for Freddie Gray,” “No execution by medical neglect, Free Mumia Abu-Jamal,” and “Stop police terror, ILWU Local 10.”

Students in the playgrounds of both an elementary school and a high school on the march’s path waved and chanted jubilantly as the protesters passed. Marchers even stopped to teach them chants like, “All night, all day, we will fight for Freddie Grey.”

Cat Brooks, of ONYX and the Anti-Police Terror Project, said in a press



WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

ILWU Local 10 stops work to protest police brutality.

release, “The only way this country is going to take us seriously is if we interrupt their commerce and impact their bottom line. Simply appealing to their humanity doesn’t work. If that was the case, the epidemic of Black genocide at the hands of police would have ended decades ago.”

In a message read to the crowd at Oscar Grant Plaza, Clarence Thomas, of Local 10, said, “This mobilization today is

beyond protest. It is an act of resistance. Local 10 is shutting down the movement of international cargo. By silencing the cranes at the ports, we, the working class, make our voices heard loudly around the world today. ... The supreme task of labor is to challenge corporate America — head on — as part of a new peoples’ movement for all workers and the oppressed in this country.” □

Eyewitness report on Baltimore Rebellion



By Colleen Davidson
Baltimore

April 27 — Last night, some comrades and I went to the front lines of the rebellion in Baltimore, at North Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue. As we got closer to the neighborhood, folks in the community saw our signs calling for community control of the police and justice for Freddie Grey, and raised their fists in the air as they walked by.

When we got within a block of the action, the smoke from the burning CVS was so thick, it was hard to see and breathe. It wasn’t until the smoke dissipated for a moment that a line of riot cops appeared, waiting, clearly looking for blood as they stood with their batons and shields. Apparently, they were furious because of the brave fighters whom they had fought with earlier that day, who had reportedly caused many police injuries, including broken bones.

The streets were littered with smashed glass, broken police shields and garbage. A police car was on fire. The protesters

moved forward and the officers retreated a few steps. We linked arms on the front lines. The police came towards us, shouting in unison, “Move back!” banging their sticks on their shields with each step forward that they took. We stood our ground until the police physically shoved us back with their shields and shot pepper spray into the line.

They started throwing flash grenades, tear gas canisters and smoke bombs, some of which were hurled back into the line of cops. People were screaming. Others had to hold back their friends, who were crying out in frustration, trying to move towards the police. One man who was not even fighting was grabbed by the police and pulled behind the police line. We couldn’t see him on the ground but we saw about 12 batons coming up above the officers’ heads and coming down on him. They made a wall so we couldn’t get past to help him. Clearly, they didn’t want recordings by witnesses of the savage beating that he was enduring. Everywhere around us looked like a war zone.

The real destruction

At a certain point, we had to leave to get back to the office for a national conference call on the Baltimore Rebellion. As we left, we looked around the community at the houses. Empty, boarded up houses, that was the real destruction. And it had nothing to do with the protesters but rather with decades of racism, oppression and neglect. Homes were boarded up and falling apart, blocks and blocks of housing projects, and litter and trash lined the streets that the city has abandoned while they regularly bring street cleaners through the richer white neighborhoods. Then we started passing by stores that were being “looted.”

Men, women and children were coming into the stores with empty hands and leaving with bags and boxes of the basic necessities of life. Food, drinks, toilet paper, baby food, diapers, etc. — all things that they never had free access to under capitalism. Children were getting their first pairs of new shoes and coming out of the stores smiling with fruit and candy.

Community members came together and took as much as they could to give out to the people, especially the elderly who weren’t able to come out. This all was happening at the end of the month, as food stamps are running out, the stamps being a grudging form of assistance which has already been reduced by the ruling class to the point where most people in cities like Baltimore are hungry and desperate.

Some of the “shoppers” looked at us suspiciously, and people said: “Hey, get what you need, and get enough to last you a long time. We are with you.” I have never seen such joy and hope in the impoverished communities in Baltimore. They were finally getting what they needed, wanted and deserved as human beings.

Colleen Davidson is an activist with Baltimore FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together). Go to fightimperialism.org.

Rebellion forced charges against Baltimore cops

Continued from page 1

kill police. This was a lie. The truth was that these youth gangs had announced a truce with each other in order to unite and protest police repression. They had marched together at an April 25 protest.

Following Grey’s April 27 funeral, people as young as 12 years old were confronted with pepper pellets, a form of rubber bullets. One of these pellets struck a reporter, Shawn Carrié, on the scene. The reporter was later arrested and spent 49 hours in jail, according to the May 2 issue of The Guardian. (theguardian.com)

Stores at the Mondawmin Mall had windows smashed. Youth then escaped the police and headed to nearby Pennsylvania Avenue, the closest commercial area, and finally to the intersection of North and Pennsylvania avenues in the Black community.

WW correspondent Lamont Lilly, an eyewitness to the rebellion, described the conditions he saw in Baltimore: “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 amount 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 people. While Freddie Grey was laid to rest

today, these are the images that remain.” (workers.org, April 28)

As has been stated by People’s Power Assembly organizers, while the battle is far from over, the people in the street recognize that the indictments announced by the State’s Attorney’s Office were a direct result of the youth rebellion and the continuous protests led by the community since Freddie Grey’s death, which have been spectacular and ongoing. The PPA is calling for a people’s tribunal against police violence and structural racism to be held in Baltimore on June 6. □



May 2 march, Baltimore.

PHOTO: CLAUDIA PALACIOS

For immigrant and workers' r

Workers World Bureau

From April 30 to May 3, people in many U.S. cities held rallies, marches and other events in solidarity with the rebellious youth of Baltimore protesting police brutality. On May 1, immigrants, including many from Latin America, organized and called demonstrations for immigrant and workers' rights, but they also stood in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and its latest manifestation in Baltimore. Workers World reports on some of these activities here.

In the tenth such march since hundreds of thousands of mostly immigrants brought International Workers' Day back to **New York City** with a bang in 2006, the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights first gathered for a rally in Union Square Park and then marched to the federal buildings downtown. This year the thousands of people in the march were swelled by an influx of people even younger than the immigrant workers — youth, Brown, Black and white, who had come out in response to a call by organizers to show solidarity with the rebellious youth of Baltimore and demand justice for Freddie Grey.

Police did their worst, setting up metal fences to keep the popular demonstration separate from people along the long route of march downtown. This could not stop many of the bystanders from raising their fists and their voices to show they were with the marchers.

Across the continent, hundreds came to the May Day March and Rally in downtown **San Diego** organized by the May 1st Planning Committee. Babies in strollers, toddlers, high school and college students, youth from Association of Raza Educators; MECHA-Lincoln High School; Association of Chicano Activists, San Diego Student Union; International Peoples Uhuru Movement are a few organizations that participated. The theme was "Worker Rights Are Human Rights."

The rally, which began with traditional drumming and dance by Danza Aztec, focused on workers directly affected by the main points of unity. A group of youth carrying flags from many countries, with a banner that read "Workers United for Dignity and Justice," led the march. They also carried signs and wore T-shirts that read "All Mothers Are Workers," "Don't criminalize the Workers" and "Fight for 15, Union Yes." Midway through the march was an amazing performance by Mujeres en Resistencia Cultural Peace in front of the courthouse across from the Hall of InJustice in downtown San Diego.

Police brutality and terror are on everyone's mind. Marchers shouted "Hands Up! Don't Shoot!" as the police rode bicycles and walked on the side trying to keep marchers on the path. People were literally grabbing from distributors' hands the Workers World flyer headlined "Baltimore Youth Rebel." Families in San Diego have not forgotten the many lives stolen by the police and border patrol. We must continue to fight for dignity and justice. We will win.

Madison's May Day rally began at Brittingham Park along West Washington Avenue, followed by a march to the Wisconsin Capitol. Organizations such as the Young, Gifted and Black Coalition, the International Workers of the World and Union de Trabajadores Inmigrantes

WW PHOTO: GLORIA VERDIEU



San Diego



Buffalo, N.Y.

Top right: Crystal Richardson, of Coalition for REAL Justice spoke on struggle for justice for Freddie Grey, and in defense of youth rebellion in Baltimore



Milwaukee



New York City

sponsored the events. Protesters united a variety of demands, including justice for Freddie Grey, Tony Robinson, Dontre Hamilton and all those killed and tortured by cops and vigilantes. Demands included an end to raids and deportations; an end to austerity, including union busting in Wisconsin; and an end to the medical neglect and torture of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

A diverse, multinational crowd of protesters marched to **Milwaukee's** Red Arrow Park on April 30 to commemorate the life of Dontre Hamilton, a 31-year-old African-American man. One year ago on that day, Dontre was shot 14 times and killed at the park by white Milwaukee cop Christopher Manney. Led by Dontre's family, those participating demanded Manney be brought up on federal charges. In December 2014, Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm announced no criminal charges would be filed against Manney. Manney had been fired in November 2014 due to mass, militant protests led

by the Coalition For Justice in Milwaukee and people's solidarity from around the world. That decision was upheld by the Fire and Police Commission in March.

The struggle for justice for Dontre continues. Maria Hamilton, Dontre's mother and a leader of Mothers For Justice United, is helping to organize a Million Moms March May 9 in Washington, D.C. This event is being led by mothers who have lost loved ones due to the scourge of police and vigilante terror against primarily Black and Brown communities.

For more information: facebook.com/justicefordontre; facebook.com/mothersforjusticeunited or #JusticeForDontre.

People gathered at **Albany, N.Y.**, police headquarters in the Arbor Hill neighborhood on May 2, both to protest the police Taser death of Donald "Dontay" Ivy on April 2 and to stand in solidarity with the Baltimore protesters demanding justice for Freddie Grey.

Ivy, who suffered from paranoid schizophrenia and also heart problems,

was taking a late night walk when he was confronted and attacked by Albany police. Ivy died after being Tasered an unknown number of times.

The rally was called by Capital Area Against Mass Incarceration. Many held signs saying "Black Lives Matter" with "#Shutitdown" at the bottom.

Chanting "All night, all day, we will march for Freddie Grey," over 200 people rallied April 30 on the **Syracuse** University Quad in New York state. The first speaker read a message from the three co-founders of Black Lives Matter, noting they were all lesbian, gay, bi and trans women: "We stand in solidarity with the people of Baltimore and the millions of Black people across the country who are tired of poverty, racism and state-sanctioned murder."

Defending Baltimore protesters who liberated needed supplies from stores, fiery speakers named the seizure of Indigenous lands by U.S. colonizers as the real looting, pointing out that included the ground Syracuse University sat on.

The crowd shouted out the names of Black people killed by U.S. police, then marched

Fights, against police murders



PHOTO: JOE BRUSKY



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Philadelphia

the people in Baltimore to demand justice for Freddie Grey and all victims of racist police violence. The large rally was called by the Buffalo Anti-Racism Coalition.

Recognizing the potential for an uprising in response to police brutality in **Philadelphia** like that in Baltimore, the Philly Racial, Economic And Legal (REAL) Justice Coalition called a “Philadelphia Is Baltimore Solidarity Rally” for April 30. Over 2,000 people responded in one of the largest demonstrations against the epidemic of police murders of Black and Brown youth held here so far.

This is the first major street event that the Black youth-led coalition initiated since it formed in December 2014 after the massive protests calling for justice for Michael Brown and Eric Garner. REAL Justice has held twice-a-month town hall gatherings since then, each drawing between 100 to 400 people.

The rally outside City Hall was followed by several hours of marching and confrontations with police on bicycles and horses as it zigzagged through Center City, effectively shutting down major streets during rush-hour traffic. A march against traffic on Market Street was greeted with honking horns and fists raised by motorists.

The march was fully in support of the rebellion of the youth of Baltimore and the stand the community there took in response to the violent murder of Freddie Grey by the police. Like Baltimore, Philadelphia has experienced hundreds of murders of Black and Brown youth by police who have never been brought to justice. It has high rates of poverty, gentrification, unemployment, redlining and underfunded schools. The boarded-up row houses in Freddie Grey’s neighborhood could be any community in Philadelphia.

The REAL Justice Coalition also strongly opposed the sending of Pennsylvania state troopers or Philadelphia police to Baltimore. The event was also used to mobilize people to travel to Baltimore for a rally there on May 2.

A highlight of the march was a stop outside the federal prison on Arch Street near 7th Street. Protesters stood on lamp poles waving banners as the crowd chanted “Prisons are concentration camps for the poor.” Prisoners inside responded with pumped fists and flashing lights to signal their solidarity.

Philadelphia’s 8th annual May 1st march, organized by the Mayday USA Education Committee, began with a “15Now” rally in front of McDonald’s at 40th and Walnut streets and ended in Clark Park with speakers and a picnic. The Philly Coalition for REAL Justice raised the political level of the event by giving marchers signs with photos of Black workers who have been killed by the police above the slogan “Black Lives Matter to Labor.” Temple University Professor Anthony Monteiro drew loud applause when he spoke on labor’s need to support the Black Lives Matter movement and for unions to end their support for the Fraternal Order of Police.

Brenda Ryan, Heather Cottin, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Joe Piette, Gloria Verdieu, Workers World Milwaukee Bureau, Chris Fry, Betsey Piette, Ellie Dorritie and Gene Clancy contributed to these reports.



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN



Upstate New York



Syracuse, N.Y.

ore. Top center: Protesters demanding justice for Dontre Hamilton march to Red Arrow Park, April 30.

downtown to the county jail and to the “Jerry Rescue” monument. This statue celebrates an 1851 public rescue when a Syracuse anti-slavery, abolitionist crowd stormed the city jail and freed William “Jerry” Henry, who had been arrested by U.S. marshals under the Fugitive Slave Act.

Latino and Latina immigrant farmworkers held their first-ever May Day march in **upstate New York** at Marks Dairy Farms in **Lowville** on May 1. The dairy workers were protesting the violent beating and firing of Francisco, a worker who objected to being ordered to work on his only day off. They demanded dignity and respect, safe working conditions, and an end to wage theft and physical and verbal violence.

People gathered to support them, some driving hundreds of miles from Brooklyn, Staten Island, Rochester, Syracuse, Marietta, Canton and elsewhere in New York. The action was called by the May 1st Agricultural Workers Committee, the Workers’ Center of Central New York and the Worker Justice Center of New York.

May 1st organizer José Canas spoke of May Day solidarity across borders: “As we march in

Lowville, workers in my country of El Salvador are marching for their rights — our families are marching for our rights and theirs.” He also emphasized how dairy workers’ labor creates mega-profits for transnational businesses. New York state is fourth in U.S. production of milk and first in yogurt. Lowville is home to the plant that is the largest maker of Kraft Philadelphia cream cheese in the U.S.

Chanting “El pueblo unido jamás será vencido” (“The people united will never be defeated”), the crowd marched on dirt roads through the farm, past giant milking barns as huge tanker trucks thundered by.

New York farmworkers live in isolation, fearful of deportation raids, subject to unsafe working conditions and brutal work schedules. Some live in conditions of virtual indentured servitude. Farmworkers are specifically excluded from some basic U.S. worker rights like the right to a day off, the right to be paid overtime and the right to form a union.

Nearly 200 militant demonstrators seized the streets of **Rochester, N.Y.**, on May 1 in solidarity with the protests in Baltimore over the murder of Freddie Grey and against police brutality locally. Despite a large police presence and without a permit, the demonstrators took over entire streets, beginning in the poor and working-class neighborhoods and winding their way through downtown. They frequently slowed or stopped traffic as they proceeded to single out and denounce a who’s who of local symbols of oppression, including the Public Safety building.

The demonstration was organized by BLACK (Building Leadership and Community Knowledge), an organization of students at the University of Rochester. They were joined by a number of organizations including the People’s Power Assembly.

On May 3, traffic at the heavily traveled intersection in the Kensington-Bailey area of **Buffalo** crawled to a halt as protesters came out in solidarity with

Punishment for profit:

The economics of mass incarceration

By Joyce Chediak

“Mass incarceration on a scale almost unexampled in human history is a fundamental fact of our country today — perhaps the fundamental fact, as slavery was the fundamental fact of 1850.” (“The Caging of America” by Adam Gopnik)

The excessive arrests and unjustified long-term imprisonments of mostly people of color, and the devastating effects these measures have on whole communities, have been exposed and denounced by community, religious, human rights, legal and advocacy organizations, and individual researchers.

Then why is it so hard to stop?

Because for a very powerful few, mass incarceration is not a bad thing at all. It is the source of fabulous profits. For them, prison equals profits.

The total cost to government of incarceration is \$70 billion a year. The privately run prison industry, which feeds on mass incarceration, is one of the fastest growing and widest reaching of U.S. industries. In 2009 alone, when most industries were in a slump, the prison industry brought in \$34.4 billion in revenues. (“Prison Labor and Crime in the U.S. — Inmate Facts and Stats,” a report to the Black Congressional Caucus at tinyurl.com/pxkgd6u)

The rate of profits from prison industries is comparable to what U.S. companies extract from exploiting labor markets in the global South, without the need to pay the added transportation costs. There is virtually no overhead for these corporations, because the prisons are paid for and prisoners are housed at tax dollar expense.

Secret corporate cheerleaders of mass incarceration

This is why some of the world’s most powerful financial institutions — Bank of America, Goldman Sachs Group, JPMorgan Chase & Co. and others — are the primary investors in the prison-industrial complex and the secret cheerleaders of mass incarceration.

That’s why virtually every major company and employer — from the U.S. military to Exxon, to McDonalds, to Victoria’s Secret — and a great many minor ones, profit directly or indirectly from low-cost prison labor. This reach is so vast that the products of prison labor touch virtually every part of life, from the food we eat, the jeans we wear, the phones we use, to how our pensions are invested.

That’s why the judiciary, the courts, the police, the legislatures and even whole federal agencies have become apologists for, encouragers of and accomplices in punishment for profit, having had their palms amply greased by its main corporate players.

Legislation that enables financial gain from prisons, such as mandated harsh sentences for nonviolent crime, were actually written by the prison profiteers, then passed by legislatures in their pay.

Prison labor has taken the place of many jobs. So punishment for profit contributes to unemployment, undermines workers’ demands for living wages and creates obstacles to trade union organizing.

How did this happen?

Emergence of the prison-industrial complex

The term “prison-industrial complex” was coined in 1997 by activist and former political prisoner Angela Davis to describe the high rate of profit made by the corporations running prisons, the merger of these companies with the biggest banks and businesses, and the devastating effect this phenomenon has had upon the working class, communities of color and the socially vulnerable.

Before 1980, there were no private adult prisons in the U.S. Private companies began to run state and federal prisons in the 1980s, under President Ronald Reagan. These corporations were given a huge boost in the 1990s by President William Clinton, whose cut to government jobs provided a golden opportunity for private firms seeking to run prisons. “Punishment for profit” was off and running.

Since then, there has been an explosion in private companies providing goods and services to government agencies involved in punishment. This includes contract prison labor, construction of pris-

ons, surveillance, tech vendors, prison food providers, medical services, phone service for prisoners, private probation companies, investors in these companies, and the lobbyists that represent the businesses seeking to expand the prison system.

Revenues increased 500 times

Two of the largest private companies now running prisons are the Correction Corporation of America (CCA) and the GEO Group. There were no private prisons before 1980. From then until 2009, these two corporations increased their role to running 264 prisons with more than 100,000 prisoners. (“Prison Labor and Crime in the U.S.”) The CCA’s revenues increased 500 times in the last two decades. (Mother Jones, Sept. 19, 2013)

Then there’s the work that inmates do inside the institutions. Prisoners toiling often for pennies an hour and sometimes without any pay at all, totaled at least \$2.4 billion in sales, and maybe as much as \$5 billion. (tinyurl.com/pxkgd6u)

The private companies get a cheap, easy labor market, where they don’t have to provide benefits or sick days, there is no union organizing, and if a person refuses to work they can be locked in solitary confinement.

We pay the overhead!

These businesses have virtually no overhead costs in the prisons because the cost of incarceration and the source of their cash-cow profits are tax dollars.

While money is steadily cut from social programs, tax subsidizing of prison profiteers does not come cheap. The Vera Institute for Justice states in its report, “The Price of Prisons,” that the cost to taxpayers of incarcerating one inmate in fiscal 2010 was \$31,307 per year, and in Connecticut, Washington state and New York,” It’s anywhere from \$50,000 to \$60,000.”

The American Civil Liberties Union reveals that the national yearly figure for incarcerating people with mental illness, a vulnerable population jailed at disproportionately high rates and suffering greatly in jail, is more than \$63,000 a year. (ACLU report, July 2014, tinyurl.com/mng4ya2) All of this is paid for by U.S. workers.

Some 600,000 to 1 million of the 2.4 million U.S. prisoners toil in 300 factories in a 21st century form of slavery. (www.phewacomcommunity.com) El Diario-La Prensa of March 10, 2008, writes that the companies contracting private prison labor contain “the cream of U.S. corporate society: IBM, Boeing, Motorola, Microsoft, AT&T, Wireless, Texas Instrument, Dell, Compaq, Honeywell, Hewlett-Packard, Nortel, Lucent Technologies, 3Com, Intel, Northern Telecom, TWA, Nordstrom’s, Revlon, Macy’s, Pierre Cardin, Target Stores and many more.” The whole capitalist establishment is in on it.

A system ‘too vast to boycott’

Bob Sloan, who wrote the “Prison Labor and Crime in the U.S.” report, unearths and exposes businesses involved in prison labor. He found that McDonald’s uniforms are made in jail. Kmart and J.C. Penney sell jeans sewn by inmates in Tennessee. (www.dailykos.com, Dec. 13, 2010).

And then there’s food production. In July/August 2008, Mother Jones magazine reported that in California alone, prisoners were processing “more than 680,000 pounds of beef, 400,000 pounds of chicken products, 450,000 gallons of milk, 280,000 loaves of bread, and 2.9 million eggs.” Signature Packaging Solutions, a Starbucks subcontractor, was using prisoners to package holiday coffees.

Inmates are producing airplane parts, medical supplies and much more. They are even raising seeing-eye dogs.

Investors in prison labor and the prison-industrial complex include the oil giants ExxonMobil Corp. and Chevron, Koch Industries, a host of utility companies, and insurance companies such as GEICO, State Farm and Fidelity Investments, which holds the 401(k) and retirement counts of millions of people, according to Sloan.

Involved in punishment for profit are a host of giant pharmaceutical companies, including Bayer, GlaxoSmithKline, Merck & Co. and Pfizer. Also making gain from the misery of those behind bars are Caterpillar Inc., International Game Technology, virtually all the



telecommunications companies, and transportation companies such as American Airlines, Boeing and United Parcel Service, says Sloan. So the hotel and airline reservations we make for vacations are often handled by prisoners. And this is just a sampling.

Sloan concludes, “The Prison-Industrial Complex is simply too vast to avoid or boycott — in a manner typically used by consumers and concerned citizens.”

To get your job back ‘go to prison’

Factories are closing and workers being laid off because it’s cheaper for the bosses to get prisoners to do the work.

In Texas, a factory fired its 150 workers and contracted the service of prison-workers from the private Lockhart Correctional Facility in that state, where circuit boards are assembled for companies like IBM and Compaq.

The federal government is in on this, too. It owns Federal Prison Industries, operating in 83 federal prisons and employing more than 13,000 inmates at from \$0.23 to \$1.15 an hour. FPI collected more than \$900 million in revenue in 2011. It produced more than \$100 million in military uniforms in 2012. (“More Jobs Lost as the Government Decides to Have Military Uniforms Made by Convicts,” Business Insider, Sept. 7, 2012)

In 2012, Tennier Industries fired more than 100 employees after losing its military uniform contract to FPI. That year, American Apparel closed an Alabama plant employing 175 for the same reason. The workers there had made \$9 an hour, and had benefits.

A disgruntled Kurt Courtney, director of government relations at American Apparel, told CNN on Aug. 14, 2012, “The only way for workers to get jobs back is to go to prison.”

U.S. prison labor is even replacing labor markets in poor and oppressed countries. A company that operated a maquiladora (the Spanish term used for a foreign-owned assembly plant on the Mexican side of the U.S./Mexico border) closed down its operations there and relocated to San Quentin State Prison in California. “[Former] Oregon State Representative Kevin Mannix recently urged Nike to cut its production in Indonesia and bring it to his state, telling the shoe manufacturer that ‘there won’t be any transportation costs; we’re offering you competitive prison labor (here),’ according to the El Diario article.

Prisoners replacing farmworkers

Fruits and vegetables are often picked by immigrants, many of them undocumented. The Obama administration, however, has deported undocumented workers in record numbers, while it slowed the legal flow of contracted agricultural workers into the country. At the same time, more states are issuing fines to farmers and agricultural businesses who hire undocumented workers.

With fewer workers available to pick crops at the going wage, the prison-industrial complex has happily stepped in to fill the gap. Today, prisoners pick onions in Georgia, watermelons in Arizona, apples in Washington and potatoes in Idaho.

For a capitalist, what’s not to like?

Profiting from people in jail is undeniably a horrible form of exploitation, destructive to all working people and to society as a whole. This is the raw face of capitalism in the 21st century, without the ideological touch ups provided by Wall Street public relations firms or the corporate media.

The drive for ever greater profits is built into the capitalist system. Money gravitates to where the rate of profit is the highest, regardless of the social cost. This is why virtually all the corporate establishment sharks are in a feeding frenzy over the profits to be made off of punishment.

For a capitalist, what’s not to like?

Next: The terrible human toll. How do the prison profiteers get away with it?



Global activists say Stop Mumia's murder by medical neglect!

By **Betsey Piette**
Philadelphia

Intensive worldwide efforts have been ramped up to raise awareness of the dire health crisis facing Mumia Abu-Jamal since April 26, when his spouse, Wadiya Jamal, sounded the alarm over his deteriorating condition. They demand that Pennsylvania stop its effort to murder the political prisoner and renowned journalist by medical neglect.

Wadiya Jamal visited her spouse on April 24 and 25 and reported that Mumia's condition was worsening, especially after SCI Mahanoy prison doctors dosed him with the drug cyclosporine. Its dangerous side effects seemed to exacerbate his condition. This drug is contraindicated for people with diabetes; Mumia has adult onset diabetes.

So many calls flooded the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections' phones that officials complained they could not make outgoing calls. A half-page ad in the New York Times of April 29 addressed the crisis. Several people traveled to the state Capitol building in Harrisburg for a press conference and to visit Gov. Tom Wolf's mansion on April 29.

A video addressing the state's attempt to murder Mumia produced by Steve Vittoria, director of "Long Distance Revolutionary," was widely circulated. View it at tinyurl.com/It67357.

Mumia was wrongfully convicted of killing a Philadelphia police officer in 1981. He was incarcerated and sentenced to death. He was imprisoned on death row until 2011, when a global movement finally pressured the courts to rescind the death sentence. In 2012, he was transferred to general population at SCI Mahanoy in Frackville, Pa.

In January 2015, Mumia began to develop serious skin allergies. Due to mistreatment and misdiagnosis by doctors



Supporters fight for Mumia's life at Pennsylvania governor's residence.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

at the prison infirmary, his condition worsened, leading to complications of adult onset diabetes. On March 30, when his blood sugar and sodium levels were at potentially fatal levels of 779 and 168 respectively — and he had collapsed from diabetic shock — he was transferred to the intensive care unit in Schuylkill Medical Center in Pottsville, Pa.

Three days later, Mumia was returned to the prison infirmary, into the hands of the same doctors who had failed to diagnose his diabetes despite administering three blood tests.

In spite of insulin treatments and some adjustments to his diet, Mumia's health has deteriorated. His symptoms include uncontrolled diabetes, blood in his urine, the loss of over 65 pounds, uncontrolled hand tremors, slurred speech, memory loss and a painful skin disease with open sores. His skin has hardened and his body is partly disfigured, particularly on his neck and face.

Proper medical care is a right!

While prison doctors seemed incapable of properly diagnosing and treating Mumia's increasing health crisis, the Department of Corrections denied his grievance requesting to be seen by medical specialists of his choice. Yet, when John E. du Pont, an heir to the famed chemical empire fortune, was imprisoned, the same officials granted him access to private doctors. Mumia deserves the same treatment.

When Mumia's lawyer, Bret Grote, attempted to visit him on April 27, he learned that Mumia had been sent to the prison infirmary. Yet prison officials denied him access despite laws allowing uncontested lawyer-client visits. Then, no one had received calls from Mumia in the days following the visits with Wadiya Jamal on April 24 and 25, raising grave concerns that his condition, untreated and misdiagnosed by prison doctors, could result in his death.



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

On April 29, activists from Philadelphia, New York and Harrisburg, Pa., staged a press conference at the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg to demand that Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf intervene. They brought letters from South Africa's Bishop Desmond Tutu and other renowned world leaders to deliver to Wolf, who in February 2015 declared a statewide moratorium on the death penalty. Protesters called the actions of prison doctors "a death sentence by medical neglect."

The combined pressure of phone calls, ads and direct actions finally resulted in prison administrators allowing the doctors of Mumia's choice to review his medical records. While not allowed direct access, these doctors will be able to consult Mumia by phone to advise him on what treatments would be best. On medical advice, Mumia stopped taking the cyclosporine.

Grote was finally allowed to visit Mumia at the prison infirmary on May 1. Pam Africa, who saw him on May 2, reported that "while his condition seems somewhat better, Mumia is still far from being out of the woods." She urged supporters to continue to pressure the state.

These partial victories came about only because the movement to free Mumia has been relentless. The growing connections between the campaign supporting Mumia, the Black Lives Matter movement against police violence and the struggle against mass incarceration have also played a key role. □

Colombia talks — in Cuba

Women combatants want to achieve peace

By **Martha Grevatt**

Peace talks between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) and the Colombian government, taking place in Havana, Cuba, are making some progress despite many challenges.

From April 11 through 18, 33 United States and other international solidarity activists had the opportunity to meet in Havana with FARC-EP plenipotentiaries, as well as representatives of the Colombian government and the guarantor countries, Cuba and Norway, along with the FARC-EP legal advisors from Spain.

One of the most illuminating sessions was our meeting with the "Sub-Commission on Gender." This body was established to make sure that any agreements between the parties "advance the cause of women, make sure their position is advanced, recognize women's central role and empower women to improve their position," according to Victoria Sandino, a leading FARC-EP representative on the sub-commission.

The women of FARC-EP took seriously the demands that were raised by Colombian women during many exchanges. As a consequence, the Sub-Commission on Gender was created.

Many of these proposals from orga-

nizations of women and of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people were made through a process that includes a website set up by the FARC to submit suggestions, which are then presented to the "Table of Conversations" (that is what they call the arena of talks between the FARC-EP and the government). The process is a democratic one that allows the Colombian masses to make their concerns and suggestions heard. Over 100,000 suggestions have been received.

Women suffer disproportionately from the consequences of the war, which the Colombian government, with Washington's backing, wages against the people. Women have been made widows. They comprise 70 percent of the millions of displaced. They experience workplace discrimination. They see their children murdered. And to earn income, they become "mules" who smuggle illegal drugs out of Colombia. As political prisoners and prisoners of war, they are subject to torture and sexual violence.

All of this came to light when both sides at the Table of Conversations listened to testimonies from victims of the conflict, a process the FARC-EP insisted on. Of the 60 witnesses, six were from women's organizations and two from LGBT groups. Their proposals were integrated into the process of talks. Some 80 percent of Co-

lombian women have been victimized some way or another by the war. "But," Sandino stressed, "we aren't only victims, we are actors, we are political agents. We have been fighting and making demands."

While the Colombian government also is represented on the sub-commission, it became clear to us that the FARC-EP women were its driving force. All of the seven women and one man who spoke to our delegation about the sub-commission were from the FARC-EP side of the table. "Women combatants want to achieve peace," they explained.

Speakers also dispelled some of the myths about the women in the guerrilla army. The capitalist media have portrayed FARC-EP women as sex slaves of male combatants, making false claims of forced abortions and innumerable other abuses. In fact, women have always played leading roles since the FARC's founding in 1964 and comprise at least 30 percent of all combatants. Many play leading roles at the regional level.

All women receive the same training as men — training that includes "learning the root causes of oppression, the ethical and moral values of being a revolutionary, and the humanitarian values we are fighting for."

The rights of women and children, including those who experience domestic

abuse, are attended to in areas under FARC-EP control. When asked about the fact that the top leadership — the FARC Secretariat — is all men, the speakers stated that the goal is to improve, that "we are in a perpetual state of growing, becoming better than we were."

LGBT rights are respected and protected

The Sub-Commission on Gender is also reviewing all agreements to make sure LGBT rights are respected and protected. "We have the utmost respect for people wherever they come from, sexually speaking," a member of the group stated. "As a matter of principle we would never discriminate against anyone for their sexual orientation."

The delegation enjoyed this rare opportunity to learn how real peoples' democracy — a process that makes an extra effort to make the most oppressed voices heard — can be conducted even under the most extreme conditions of war, repression and neoliberal austerity.

Martha Grevatt represented the International Action Center on the delegation, sponsored by the Alliance for Global Justice. The delegation also included representatives of the National Lawyers Guild and several Latin American solidarity groups.

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Disarm the Pentagon

The perpetual warfare state headquartered in Washington, D.C., and extending to military bases and deployments around the world has a multitude of victims.

Let's start with the ones right here in the United States.

While media attention has died down since last summer, the crisis at the Department of Veterans Affairs has continued. Millions of veterans of the many, many U.S. military deployments of the last half century continue to despair of receiving even the most urgent medical care at VA hospitals.

In an emergency vote, Congress last August approved an additional \$16.3 billion for the VA's annual budget, bringing the funds allocated for 2015 to a whopping \$164 billion. But there has been no improvement in the length of time ailing veterans must wait to be seen.

"Nearly 894,000 appointments completed at VA medical facilities from Aug. 1 to Feb. 28 failed to meet the health system's timeliness goal, which calls for patients to be seen within 30 days. More than a quarter of those appointments involved a delay of longer than 60 days. ... The number of medical appointments that take longer than 90 days to complete has nearly doubled." (Associated Press, April 9) The long delays have led to many deaths.

These delays are worst at VA hospitals in the poorest states of the South and West, precisely where working-class youth have few options except unemployment, low-wage jobs, prisons — or the military. Racism makes it even worse for young Black, Latino/a and Native women and men, who are first avidly sought by recruiters and then neglected once they come home with physical and/or mental disabilities.

As of 2013, almost 9 million vets were enrolled with the VA. And this in a country that has not officially declared a war since the 1940s! These figures alone show that the oh-so-patriotic imperialist strategists who decide that conquering other lands is good for capitalist profits don't give a fig for the people — either in the countries they destroy or at home.

Now let's lift our eyes from our immediate surroundings and look around at the rest of the world. The suffering from war — shock and awe, drone strikes, mopping-up operations, peacekeeping efforts, whatever the Pentagon and State Department policy wonks decide to call it — in the oil-rich lands of Western Asia and North Africa makes the horrors faced by veterans here seem mild by comparison.

First Afghanistan, then Iraq, Syria,

Libya, now Yemen — these countries have been torn apart by wars originating from the U.S. and paid for largely by U.S. taxpayers. Israel's constant war against the Palestinians is also bankrolled by Washington. The people in the U.S. didn't ask for this carnage — they're just stuck with the bills for whatever the bought-and-paid-for politicians decide.

While veterans here despair over the treatment they get on their return home, what must life be like for those in countries where whole villages have been obliterated by high-powered bombs directed by unseen hands, sometimes on the other side of the world? What is it like for survivors trying to "get on with their lives" when so many friends and relatives are dead or disabled? And what about those who landed in U.S. military and CIA torture chambers?

Out of the chaos and disruption caused by these wars, new political and military forces have arisen. What seems to unite many is intense hatred for the invaders, those responsible for the ruination of their ancient lands. Their resistance then becomes the new excuse by the imperialists for even greater intervention.

The Fertile Crescent is not the only area of the world seen as a target for conquest by Pentagon war hawks, Wall Street and the huge "defense" industry. NATO, which incorporates the European imperialists but hops to the Pentagon's tune, has been pushing ever eastward in Europe. The coup in Ukraine, scripted by the State Department even down to picking the president, relied on fascist thugs in the streets. The resistance in eastern Ukraine — the Donbass region — surprised the coup makers in Kiev, who want the U.S. and NATO to rescue their increasingly unpopular and bankrupt regime.

Just as ominous are the moves being made by the U.S. to further unleash imperialist Japan's war-making capabilities in order to threaten China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Prime Minister Shinzō Abe of Japan, who refuses to apologize for his country forcing Korean women into sexual slavery at its military brothels during World War II, was just in Washington making agreements with the Obama administration to increase their joint military efforts in the North Pacific.

From the vets here to the embattled Middle East, to eastern Europe and the growing war threats in Asia, there are millions of reasons to fight the U.S. war machine. Stop the Pentagon-Wall Street war machine! □

U.S.-backed Saudi Coalition kills Yemeni civilians

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

Fighter aircraft from the Saudi-Gulf Cooperation Council coalition continued their massive bombing operations in Yemen during late April by attacking the international airport in the capital of Sanaa. The U.S.-backed Saudis present this struggle as a proxy war against Iran, with these latest attacks aimed at blocking Iranian aid to the Ansurallah movement (the Houthis), who have popular support in the large swaths of Yemen's territory that they control.

Despite Washington and Tehran's agreement over Iran's nuclear energy program, the U.S. government has not lessened its hostility towards Iran. The Pentagon is providing fuel for the Saudi-GCC war planes and intelligence support, which has resulted in the massive destruction caused by the bombing that began on March 26. Driven out from its important military base in Yemen earlier this year, the Pentagon sees a victory in Yemen as central to U.S. imperialist interests in the region.

The April 28 British Guardian noted: "Iran's state news agency IRNA said Saudi jets tried to force what it said was an aid plane back after it entered Yemeni airspace, but the pilots had ignored these 'illegal warnings.' The jets then bombed Sanaa airport as the plane was making an approach to land, forcing it to turn back, IRNA added."

Saudi Arabia seeks to reinstall the fugitive president, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who Riyadh claims represents the only "legitimate" government over Yemen's 25 million people.

Air war devastates civilians

Although the Saudi-GCC coalition claims that its air campaign is restricted to military targets, the Human Rights Watch organization has documented attacks on civilians and residential areas, including attacks with U.S.-supplied cluster bombs. Strikes on Sanaa's airport also prevented crucial medical supplies and relief aid from reaching those in need.

Yemeni-based al-Masirah television reported that an Iranian plane which turned around at Sanaa's airport was slated to transport injured bombing victims to Iran for medical treatment. One aviation official said an airport in Hodeidah, Yemen's fourth-largest city, had also been bombed, but still appeared operational.

Officials said aid flights would be diverted to Hodeidah pending large-scale repairs at Sanaa airport. Further attacks were carried out in many provinces' residential areas. There is also intense fighting in the oil-producing Marib province east of Sanaa, in Taiz in

central Yemen and in the southern port city of Aden.

Fierce clashes in Aden

Aden was the scene of fierce clashes on May 2 and 3 in the central Mualla and Khor Maksar districts near the commercial port. Reports have surfaced that Saudi-GCC Special Forces have landed in Aden and are fighting alongside the anti-Houthi militias known as the Southern Popular Resistance.

The Asharq Al-Awsat news agency said that the Saudi Defense Ministry spokesperson, Brig. Gen. Ahmed Asiri, had denied that Saudi-GCC coalition forces had troops in Aden.

Reports that three Saudi troops were killed on Yemen's border reveal that despite the intensive bombing by Riyadh and its allies, the Ansurallah fighters can still strike in the border areas. (Associated Press, May 1)

Al-Qaida elements, financed by Saudi Arabia, are also involved in the war against the Ansurallah movement. Although Washington says that its "war on terrorism" is targeting al-Qaida of the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen, the U.S. now seems to be focusing its attack on the Ansurallah.

The bombing of Yemen has still not produced the results sought by Riyadh and its reactionary allies.

Egypt extends deployment

Egypt's military-dominated government of President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi announced on May 3 that it would continue intervening in Yemen in alliance with Saudi Arabia. Egypt's state media have raised questions of whether this policy will end in disaster should high military casualties occur in Yemen. Egypt's army has only been effective repressing Egyptian civilians, while in Yemen it would face an experienced guerrilla movement with popular backing.

On May 3, Reuters reported that the Egyptian government would extend its deployment of some of its military by three months to "continue participating in a Saudi-led coalition that has been launching air strikes in Yemen. Egypt ... is a close ally of Saudi Arabia and has said it is participating in the alliance targeting Yemen's Houthi rebels, who are allies of Iran." Since the Egyptian military ousted Mohamed Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood administration nearly two years ago, Egypt's economic situation has deteriorated.

The Egyptian regime is largely dependent upon assistance from the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. Consequently, the stakes are high in the Washington-backed war in Yemen, where the defeat of the Saudi-allied forces would be a tremendous blow to imperialist objectives in the Middle East. □

WORKERS WORLD
MUNDO OBRERO 

Luego de Ferguson, policía contraataca: Resistencia en masa es la respuesta

Continua de página 12

actitud de la policía no varíe, el cambio en el tope del gobierno es clave en este caso.

Resistencia de masas es la única respuesta

Mientras la policía continúa con su agresión racista, la única respuesta es la resistencia de masas. Demandas que exigen un alto a policías asesinos y el desarme de la policía, son consignas atractivas e inspiradoras. Debían ser planteadas en todas partes. Pero deben ir acompañadas de

enfrentamientos masivos con la policía. La policía también puede hacerse retroceder de manera efectiva por tácticas de interrupción de la vida cotidiana adoptadas por el movimiento BLM después de Ferguson. Estas tácticas interfieren con los intereses comerciales de los patronos.

La lucha militante de la juventud de Baltimore contra la violencia policial ojalá se extienda a sectores más amplios de las masas. Este es el único idioma que la policía y la clase dominante entienden. □



WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

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President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009;

Foreign Minister of Nicaragua's Sandinista government

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On 40th anniversary of Vietnam's victory

The power of people's war and global anti-imperialist solidarity

By Dee Knight

It took 30 years of hard fighting, but the last weeks were like a blur. First a lightning assault in Vietnam's Central Highlands. Then rapid attacks on the coastal cities of Hue and Danang. Then the People's Liberation Armed Forces converged on Saigon from all sides. The puppet government leaders and hangers-on raced for helicopter liftoffs at the U.S. Embassy, along with Western journalists, embassy staff and camp followers.

The People's Army now had tanks and artillery as well as large-scale regular forces. In every town and village, they met with people's militias and irregular troops who "opened the door" for them. The forces of the Saigon puppet army scattered in the face of their assault.

This April 30 marks the 40th anniversary of Vietnam's 1975 Great Spring Victory. This long, unrelenting war — first against Japan in 1945, then France (supported by the U.S.) from 1945 to 1954, and then directly against U.S. imperialism — defined an era. In 1966, Che Guevara called for "Two, three, many Vietnams!" Vietnam-style struggles emerged in the Portuguese African colonies of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola. They achieved victory alongside the Vietnamese. Guerrilla uprisings also surged forth in Central America.

The Vietnamese victory march was planned months in advance. All aspects of the previous 30 years of struggle came into play. There was the Ho Chi Minh trail — a network of roads through jungles and mountains used to funnel a steady supply of weapons, ammunition and food from north to south despite endless U.S. bombing. The tunnels of Cu Chi were strategic underground command and recovery centers. The 1968 Tet Offensive had showed the world what the Vietnamese resistance was capable of.

Supreme Court and the right to marry

Continued from page 2

societies became divided into classes of exploiters and exploited. Not only were the products of human labor appropriated by the dominant class, but human beings themselves, especially children and "wives," were treated as the property of men.

What about same-sex marriage? Information about that, which Engels lacked, is now readily available. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have always been part of the human family. They openly "married" same-sex and same-gender partners in pre-class, tribal societies and continued to do so, but in secret, under the tyranny of patriarchal, class society.

That global tyranny is being challenged by powerful social forces, such as the women's and LGBTQ movements. The reactionary, unelected Supreme Court feels the heat. The long-repressed dream of open, legal marriage is close to realization.

One day the burgeoning movement of workers and oppressed will replace dead-end capitalism with a new communalism — socialism — a rational system where people's needs come first.

Bob McCubbin contributed to this article.

All these successes were based on the strategy of people's war.

"The outstanding characteristic of people's war in our country is that armed struggle and political struggle are very closely coordinated, supporting and stimulating each other," wrote Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, founder of the People's Liberation Armed Forces (PLAF). "So the slogan 'Mobilize the entire people, arm the entire people and fight on all fronts' has become a most lively and heroic reality."

All efforts by the U.S. to defeat this core strategy — such as the "pacification" and "strategic hamlets" programs — were hopeless. "When a whole people rises up, nothing can be done. No money can beat them," Gen. Giap told the Liberation News Service in 1969. "That's the basis of our strategy and tactics, which the Americans fail to understand."

"All 31 million of our people are valiant fighters," Gen. Giap said, "using a small force to fight a bigger one, defeating a stronger force with a smaller one, combining big, medium-sized and small battles, stepping up big-unit fighting and at the same time carrying out widespread guerrilla warfare, constantly striking the enemy from a strong position and achieving very high combat efficiency, becoming ever stronger and winning ever bigger victories as they fight." (Speech in Hanoi, Dec. 21, 1968)

Mobilization of the entire people meant women, men and children, young and old, countryside and city, north and south. The Saigon puppet administration was penetrated by patriotic spies at all levels. One famous example of the women fighters is the iconic photo of a small peasant woman brandishing her AK-47 as she

guided her huge, humbled captive — a downed U.S. bomber pilot — through the forest. Then there is the story of the attentive waitress at a Saigon officers' club frequented by U.S. commanders. After the victory she was publicly honored as a colonel in the PLAF.

The entire world came to know Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, who represented the National Liberation Front in the Paris peace talks.

The revolution's leaders were tempered by decades of struggle. For example, Le Duc Tho, famous in the West as Vietnam's lead negotiator in the Paris Peace Talks — who was awarded but rejected the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973 rather than accept it together with war criminal Henry Kissinger — signed the 1975 battle plan for the final spring offensive, on behalf of the Workers Party leadership. Born in 1911, Le Duc Tho had helped found the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930. French colonial authorities imprisoned him from 1930 to 1936 and again from 1939 to 1944. After his release in 1945, he helped lead the Viet Minh, the Vietnamese independence movement against the French, until the Geneva Accords were signed in 1954. From 1948 until 1975, he was a leading organizer for the southern front.

After signing the 1975 battle plan, Le Duc Tho rode to the command center in the Central Highlands, down the Ho Chi Minh Trail by motorcycle, at the age of 64. There he remained, helping to coordinate offensives in three directions until the final march into Saigon.

Global solidarity and int'l socialist collaboration

Vietnam's victory was global. The Sovi-

MAY DAY – HAVANA



PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

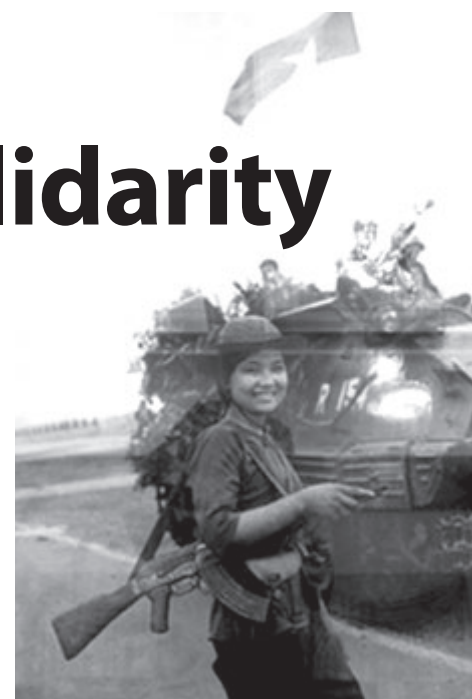
Five Cuban heroes led the 2015 May Day "United in the Construction of Socialism" march in Havana, and then joined Cuban President Raúl Castro and Bolivarian Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro under the statue of José Martí in Revolution Square. On Dec. 17, the U.S. released the last three of the Cuban 5 — Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez, Ramón Labañino Salazar and Gerardo Hernández Nordelo — from 16 years of unjust imprisonment, and they returned to Cuba, where they joined their comrades René González Sehwerert and Fernando González Llort, who had been released earlier. Washington also recognized that day the legitima-

cy of Cuba's socialist government. Cuba's victory celebration is continuing.

Workers, organizers and activists from North America, Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean joined the Cuban people on May Day — but the day was especially meaningful for the tireless organizers who brought the cry to free the Cuban 5 to every corner of the globe.

Following May Day, the five Cuban heroes are heading to Venezuela in an act of solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution and a human response to President Barack Obama's sanctions imposed on Venezuela and other destabilization schemes.

— Workers World Bureau



April 30, 1975: Guerrilla Nguyen Trung Kien guides the liberation army to attack the Presidential Palace.

et Union, its eastern European allies and the People's Republic of China provided arms, ammunition, food and much more. Anti-war movements in countries across the globe provided very substantial moral support. In the United States, anti-war forces, together with the explosive Black Liberation movement, spawned a large-scale resistance to the war among youth who refused to be part of the war effort. The result was a virtual strike of GIs in the combat zone, as well as rebellions at U.S. military bases across the U.S. and around the world.

The AK-47 rifles used by the Vietnamese People's Liberation Armed Forces were made in Czechoslovakia. The anti-aircraft weapons, as well as trucks, tanks and artillery, were made in the USSR and China. Vietnam was the front line in a global war against U.S. imperialism, and this gigantic solidarity effort was a material factor in Vietnam's victory.

Gen. Giap said in 1968 that "the army and people in North Vietnam have shot down more than 3,200 of the most up-to-date aircraft of the United States, killing or capturing a sizable number of top American pilots, and have sunk or set fire to hundreds of enemy vessels. The so-called air superiority of the U.S. imperialists — the chieftain of imperialism which used to boast of its wealth and weapons and which is notorious for its cruelty — has received a staggering blow at the hands of the Vietnamese people." (Army Day speech, Dec. 21, 1968) This was three years before the PLAF knocked out 30 B-52 Stratofortresses — a third of the U.S. B-52 fleet — while resisting Washington's last-ditch Christmas bombing of North Vietnam on the eve of the Jan. 27, 1973, peace agreement.

In 1968, Gen. Giap spoke of "all 31 million Vietnamese" fighting U.S. imperialism. Today the population is more than 90 million, making Vietnam the world's 13th most populous country. In 1965, Ho Chi Minh said no matter how many and how much the U.S. might kill and destroy, "We will build up our country many times more beautiful." Since 2000, Vietnam's economic growth rate has been among the highest in the world.

The true legacy of Vietnam, as stated by Gen. Giap, is that "the myth of the invincibility of the United States ... is collapsing irretrievably. No matter how enormous its military and economic potential, it will never succeed in crushing the will of a people fighting for its independence. This is a reality which is now recognized throughout the entire world."

All quotes are from "The Military Art of People's War: Selected Writings of Vo Nguyen Giap," Monthly Review Press, 1970.



Primero de mayo en Cuba

PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

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Luego de Ferguson, policía contraataca: Resistencia en masa es la respuesta

Por Fred Goldstein

El desafío arrogante y el obstruccionismo evasivo que la policía de Baltimore ha manifestado ante el video que les muestra arrastrando el cuerpo inerte de Freddie Grey en un furgón policial son típicas de la actitud endurecida de los departamentos policíacos en todo el país.

La policía de Baltimore está acostumbrada a acosar, cometer atrocidades y matar gente negra con impunidad. Como sus contrapartes en ciudades de todo el país, desde Filadelfia a Tulsa, desde Los Ángeles a Cleveland, Nueva York, Albuquerque, Portsmouth en Virginia, Pasco en el estado de Washington y en otras ciudades y pueblos, grandes y pequeños, la policía de Baltimore está acostumbrada a ser en sí una ley virtual. Todos los asesinatos por la policía desde Ferguson demuestran que así quieren continuar.

En el mes de marzo, se registraron 111 asesinatos policíacos. Los apologistas de la policía dicen que los asesinatos no han aumentado recientemente, sino que hay más videos. Pero el hecho es que en marzo hubo 36 muertes más registradas que en febrero. (thinkprogress.com, 1º abril) En los primeros tres meses de 2014 hubo 244 homicidios cometidos por la policía; este año hubo 297 en el mismo período. Estas cifras son compiladas por grupos privados porque no se mantienen estadísticas nacionales.

La exposición de la policía asesina en videos y en los medios de comunicación capitalista no ha frenado los departamentos de policía en el país. Al revés, la policía ha sido más asesina que nunca, a pesar de la exposición. Lo único que les puede hacer retroceder es el tipo de resistencia masiva que se vio en Baltimore este fin de semana y por meses después de la muerte de Michael Brown el pasado agosto, en Ferguson, Misuri, y alrededor del país liderado por Black Lives Matter, BLM (La vida de las/os negros importa)

Apoyo de la clase gobernante a la policía

Lo importante es que la policía tiene el respaldo de poderosos sectores de la clase gobernante. Por ejemplo, algunos de los mayores bancos, contratistas de guerra, instituciones médicas y otras corporaciones de Baltimore han observado día tras día, año tras año, como la policía torturaba a la comunidad afroamericana.

JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Citigroup, Wells Fargo, Bank of New York Mellon, U.S. Bank, HSBC, Capital One y los otros bancos más grandes del país tienen presencia importante en Baltimore. El imperio médico Johns Hopkins es el mayor empleador allí.

Maryland tiene 12 instalaciones militares importantes y 16 de las 25 empresas aeroespaciales del país. Tiene 70 de los 100 mayores contratistas de defensa en el país, incluyendo Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman y Raytheon.

Los ricos no detendrán la brutalidad porque la policía protege sus intereses todo el tiempo.

Washington muestra apoyo en funeral de NYC

Lo que es válido para Baltimore es válido para todo el país. La policía está actuando en concierto con sus aliados políticos y fuerzas poderosas en la clase dirigente para socavar cualquier intento por frenar su brutalidad.

El funeral en la ciudad de Nueva York para los dos policías asesinados en diciembre fue un mensaje importante no sólo para los miles de policías de NY, sino también a los jefes de policía de todo el país que asistieron al funeral. Vieron como el vicepresidente, Joe Biden, el director del FBI James Comey, el gobernador de NY Andrew Cuomo y el comisario de la policía de NY William Bratton estaban con la policía. También vieron a cientos de policías dar la espalda al alcalde Bill De Blasio en abierto desafío y

sin consecuencias adversas para ellos — porque les había criticado.

Este apoyo a la policía por los más altos funcionarios del Estado capitalista estaba destinado a responder al creciente movimiento BLM. Fue una importante promesa de apoyo y aliento a la policía.

Esta aprobación política se produce en un momento en que el FBI y el Departamento de Seguridad Nacional han utilizado la excusa de “luchar contra el terrorismo” para armar a la policía hasta los dientes con armas de combate. Estos organismos también han reforzado las redes policiales a nivel nacional. Las altas esferas del gobierno capitalista han servido como una fuerza política nacional para la defensa de la policía.

Renuncia de Eric Holder

También hay una sensación de victoria en la policía y sus campeones en la clase dominante por la inesperada renuncia del fiscal general Eric Holder, poco después de su visita a Ferguson donde expresó su solidaridad con la comunidad afroamericana. El momento de su renuncia no puede ser ignorado.

Holder visitó Ferguson el 20 de agosto. Él habló en el Colegio Comunitario Florissant Valley, donde habló sobre la desconfianza de la comunidad con la policía. “Entiendo la desconfianza”, dijo. “Yo soy el fiscal general de EUA. Pero también soy un hombre negro”. (www.justice.gov)

Holder relató ser detenido por agentes de la ley en el sector de Georgetown en Washington, D.C. mientras corría, y otra vez, sin ninguna razón, mientras manejaba por el New Jersey Turnpike. La policía registró su coche, y dijo que fue “humillante” y lo dejó “enojado”.

Holder aprobó la exoneración de Darren Wilson, quien mató a Michael Brown. Pero luego publicó un informe sobre Ferguson que era una acusación mordaz de la policía y los funcionarios racistas de la ciudad. Obligó renuncias de alto nivel. Holder también lanzó docenas de investigaciones de abuso por departamentos locales de policía.

A pesar de ser un leal servidor de la clase dominante, un mes después de su visita a Ferguson, el 25 de septiembre, Holder renunció.

¿Qué camino va a ir Loretta Lynch?

Loretta Lynch, una fiscal general afro-americana de Brooklyn, acaba de ser aprobada para ser la próxima Secretaria de Justicia de EUA. Tomó seis meses para obtener la aprobación de los republicanos del Congreso, quienes bloquearon su nominación en una lucha sobre la financiación del aborto.

La clase dominante está tratando de dirigirla en una dirección pro-policía. El New York Times publicó un artículo por Matt Apuzzo el 23 de abril declarando:

“Como fiscal de carrera con una reputación de ley y orden, [Lynch] entra al cargo con fuertes relaciones con muchos de los grupos policiales que se han sentido injustamente criticados durante una serie de episodios de alto perfil de hombres afroamericanos muriendo a manos de oficiales blancos”.

The Times continuó: “El señor Holder recientemente completó una gira nacional de barrios de minorías para discutir el trabajo policial. La Sra. Lynch planea una gira similar de los departamentos de policía, lo que indica un cambio en el enfoque... ella también ha descrito, en términos apasionados y personales, cómo la policía es una fuerza de bien en barrios de minorías”.

Aún está por verse si Lynch realmente desempeñará el papel que se espera de ella. Pero haga lo que haga como fiscal general, no es probable que la policía se reconcilie con ella—porque es una mujer afroamericana y porque procesó al policía que agredió a Abner Louima en la ciudad de NY. Aunque la

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EDITORIAL

Gaza y Baltimore

Gaza es la prisión más grande del mundo. Casi dos millones de palestinas/os están encerrados allí por el bloqueo militar de Israel.

El año pasado, el estado racista de Israel mató a más de 2.000 palestinas/os en Gaza, incluyendo 547 niñas/os. El Pentágono proporcionó más bombas cuando el Estado sionista quedó corto de municiones.

Baltimore, al igual que Palestina, está bajo ocupación militar racista. La fuerza policial de Baltimore — la sexta más grande en la 26ta ciudad más grande de EUA — trata a las/os negros como prisioneros. Según el censo de 2010, mientras que 72 por ciento de la población de Baltimore son personas de color, un 46 por ciento de la policía es blanco.

Partes de la comunidad negra de Baltimore parecen como zonas quemadas de guerra. La última atrocidad es la de policías de Baltimore torturando hasta la muerte a Freddie Carlos Grey, cuya columna vertebral fue cercenada al menos 80 por ciento mientras estaba bajo custodia policial.

El asesinato de Grey — un afroamericano de 25 años — fue un punto de explosión para la mayoría negra de Baltimore. Manifestaciones continuas han estallado en la ciudad, haciéndose eco de las protestas en Ferguson, Misuri, contra el asesinato policial de Michael Brown.

Generaciones de afroamericanas/os en Baltimore han sufrido terror policial. Maryland era un estado esclavista y policías de Baltimore eran cazadores de esclavas/os.

La legendaria cantante de jazz Billie Holiday, creció en Baltimore. Su canción más famosa, “Extraña fruta”, atacó amargamente el linchamiento.

La inmensa mayoría de las víctimas de linchamiento hoy son aquellas asesinadas por la policía y los vigilantes racistas.

Uno de los linchados en Baltimore fue Joe Wilbon, un experto mecánico de autos que acababa de abrir su propio taller. Como una manada de lobos, la policía golpeó a Wilbon el 5 de junio del 2000, cuando trataba de arreglar el auto de uno de sus clientes.

Luego, la policía dejó a Wilbon en el Hospital Mercy donde fue declarado muerto. Por meses, la ciudad se negó a revelar su autopsia.

El alcalde de Baltimore entonces era Martin O’Malley quien podría postularse a la presidencia de EUA. La campaña de “tolerancia cero” de O’Malley contra delitos menores incitó terror policial. La sangre de Joe Wilbon está en las manos de O’Malley.

Según la oficina del primer ministro palestino, uno de cada cinco palestinos ha sido encarcelado, en un momento u otro, por Israel. Casi un millón de afroamericanas/os están actualmente en prisión según la NAACP.

Más de dos tercios de las/os 21.000 prisioneros de Maryland viven en Baltimore que tiene solo el 13 por ciento de la población del estado.

La guerra económica contra las/os trabajadores negros ayuda a alimentar la ruta a la cárcel, sobre todo para las/os jóvenes afroamericanos. Cinco de cada seis puestos de trabajo en fábricas en Baltimore han sido destruidos desde 1970.

Treinta mil trabajadoras/es estaban empleados en el complejo de Sparrows Point de Bethlehem Steel en las afueras de Baltimore. Pero ya nadie trabaja allí en lo que era hace 45 años, la planta de acero más grande del mundo.

Frederick Douglass era calafate en un astillero de Baltimore. Los tres astilleros de Bethlehem Steel en Baltimore se cerraron, a un costo de miles de puestos de trabajo. Maryland Dry Dock también cerró.

Baltimore es uno de los mayores puertos del mundo, pero la automatización ha eliminado puestos de trabajo en los muelles.

Mientras han desaparecido los empleos bien pagados y Baltimore se ha empobrecido, la riqueza de la aristocracia financiera ha aumentado. Dos corredores de bolsa de Baltimore — Legg Mason y T. Rowe Price — tienen entre ellos casi billón y medio de dólares en activos bajo su gestión.

Esta gran cantidad de riqueza muestra que hay dinero para empleos, escuelas y atención médica gratuita. Estos son los derechos humanos que las/os trabajadoras/os de Baltimore, especialmente las/os más oprimidos, necesitan — no el terror policial y la encarcelación en masa.

El terror israelí, financiado por EUA, no puede extinguir la lucha por la libertad Palestina.

Tampoco no se puede parar la lucha por la libertad negra. Las vidas negras y palestinas importan. □