



Cuba removed from U.S. terror list editorial, page 10. May Day in Cuba 2009; sign demands end to U.S. blockade.

## Reign of racist terror

# Cops on killing rampage

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**  
 Detroit

Police agencies in the United States are not moderating their brutal and murderous actions against African Americans and other oppressed peoples. Rebellions in Ferguson, Mo., and Baltimore have shed light on the killing and injuring of hundreds of people every month.

In response to the killings in Ferguson and Baltimore, along with the killing of 12-year-old Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Tony Robinson in Madison, Wis., Walter Scott in North Charleston, S.C., and many others, a wave of demonstrations has swept the U.S. These protest actions, including civil disobedience, have been covered widely through print, audio and television networks as well as social media.

Live streaming and posting of videos of mass unrest illustrate broad interest in the developing struggles. Elected officials are forced to pay lip service to issues involving mass incarceration and the militarization of the police.

Nothing has fundamentally changed, however, as it relates to the repressive character of the state. Policy reforms aimed at creating employment, educational opportunities and housing guarantees are nonexistent.

### Systematic racism, repression revealed

A recent study conducted by a leading British newspaper indicates the magnitude of the problem. The disparate treatment of African Americans when confronted by the police cannot be dismissed as coincidental.

“Black Americans are more than twice as likely to be unarmed when killed during encounters with police as white people, according to a Guardian investigation which found 102 of 464 people killed so far this year in incidents with law enforcement officers were not carrying weapons. An analysis of public records, local news reports and Guardian reporting found that 32% of Black people killed by police in 2015 were unarmed, as were 25% of ... [Latino/a] people, compared with 15% of white people killed.” (June 1)

Many unarmed African Americans are killed as police identify any possible weapon as a threat. The police shooting of Tamir Rice was “justified” because the cops said they thought the youth had a real hand gun.

The two African Americans killed in Cleveland in 2012 after their car was pursued by police were also killed unjustifiably because cops erroneously believed they were armed. People have been gunned down be-

*Continued on page 4*



A national day of protest was held on May 30 to demand the release of the heroic Puerto Rican freedom fighter. López has been incarcerated in the U.S. for 34 years for the “crime” of fighting for the independence of his homeland, Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony. Above, is a protest of 3,000 held in Harlem, N.Y. Go to page 9 to read more.



Peoples’ Power Assembly march for justice for Freddie Grey. May 2, Baltimore.

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**BAY AREA**

# Celebrates Life of Leslie Feinberg

Activists from across the Bay Area turned out on May 31 in Oakland, Calif., to join in the celebration of the life of Workers World Party leader Leslie Feinberg.

For over 40 years, Leslie Feinberg, revolutionary activist and transgender warrior in the LGBTQ community fought for justice. Leslie, who identified as an anti-racist white, working-class, secular Jewish, transgender, lesbian, female, revolutionary communist, died on Nov. 15 last year at age 65. She succumbed to complications from multiple tick-borne co-infections, including Lyme disease, after decades of illness.

There were people who had never met her, but were touched by her writings and revolutionary activism, and there were those who had been in the struggle with her at various points in her life.

The meeting was opened by a beautiful song performed by Tina Shauf from the Filipino women's group, GABRIELA USA. Speakers included Irma Bajar of GABRIELA; Bob McCubbin, author of "The Roots of Gay and Lesbian Oppression" and a representative of the San Diego branch of Workers World Party; and Gloria Verdieu from the San Diego Coalition to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Patricia Jackson of the Gray Panthers organization and Zoe Kastl did readings from Feinberg's universally acclaimed novel, "Stone Butch Blues," and her groundbreaking theoretical and autobiographical book, "Transgender Warriors." Deeg Gold, of LAGAI-Queer Insurrection and Queers Undermining Israeli Terrorism, and Judy Green-span from WWP, co-chaired the meeting. Solidarity messages came from the Freedom Socialist Party and Party for Socialism and Liberation.

The event was convened by Workers World Party, LAGAI-Queer Insurrection, QUIT!, the SF Gray Panthers and GABRIELA USA.

— Story and photo by Terri Kay



# WORKERS WORLD

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## Come out for Pride! Come out for Workers World!

June is Pride month, with rallies and marches all over the world commemorating the 46th anniversary of the historic Stonewall Rebellion. Workers World has a proud history of reporting on the living struggle for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer justice and equality. But Workers World also made a theoretical contribution to that struggle with the publication of WW contributor and staff member Bob McCubbin's book, "The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View" (World View Forum, third ed., 1993).

Drawing on the theoretical work of Frederick Engels and Dorothy Ballan to provide a dialectical materialist explanation of LGBTQ oppression, McCubbin showed how early communal societies accepted all forms of human interrelations, but after material surpluses devel-

oped and male supremacy arose, rigid rules governing gender and sexuality were adopted. That's what we're fighting to end today.

That analysis drives Workers World's view that the LGBTQ struggle is a vital component in the overall struggle to end capitalist oppression.

We invite you to Join the WW Supporter Program, set up 38 years ago to help us publish anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-LGBTQ, working-class truth and build the many campaigns needed to crush capitalism and usher in socialism. Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/.

We are grateful for your help in growing the revolutionary press in the U.S.

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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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## The gov't plans to crush Black Lives Matter uprising

# What is the Left going to do about it?

By Larry Holmes

The government is planning to crush the Black Lives Matter uprising that swept the country in the aftermath of the rebellion against racist police violence in Ferguson, Mo., last year. The repression that is being prepared against this uprising will be far greater than the repression of the Occupy Wall Street movement because the Black Lives Matter uprising poses a vastly greater threat to the system.

Politicians and police officials had hoped that the national uprising would run out of steam. However, the revolt in Baltimore over the murder of Freddie Grey in April — a revolt that quickly spread across the country — is undeniable evidence that the uprising that has shaken the capitalist establishment is not going away.

Local police departments coordinated by the Department of Homeland Security, with the participation of the FBI and the Pentagon, are planning to crack down hard on massive protests against the police. In fact, the new level of coordinated repression has already begun. The deployment of the National Guard in Baltimore and the setting of a curfew constituted a calculated experiment to test how these measures could be used to make mass arrests and break up protests with overwhelming police force.

Over the past few weeks, police have attacked protests against police violence in New York City, Philadelphia, Cleveland and other cities, beating and arresting hundreds of protesters. In Oakland, Calif., a ban on protests after dark has been imposed, and other cities are planning to impose similar bans. So-called “anti-terrorist” strike forces are being organized by the police for the explicit purpose of crushing protests.

Some cities, including New York City, are planning to elevate the charge of resisting arrest from a misdemeanor to a felony. This is just the beginning. The police are preparing for greater repression as they get ready for the anniversary of the murder of Michael Brown in August.

Politicians, along with pro-system civil rights personalities and the media, are providing political cover to the police by echoing the pretext of “stopping violence” for crushing protest.

### The National Question & Black Liberation

How progressive forces, especially white progressives, respond to a crisis like this is a question that Marxists have been grappling with even before Vladimir Lenin declared a century ago that the rallying slogan of the communist movement, “Workers of the World Unite,” must be amended to “Workers and Oppressed of the World Unite.”

Lenin did this out of recognition that the working-class movement could not advance to its goal of socialist revolution unless it embraced and supported the

liberation struggles of those who are super oppressed and super exploited by colonialism and imperialism, including their right to self-determination. Karl Marx was essentially saying the same thing when he said in his groundbreaking book, “Das Kapital,” that “labor in the white skin cannot be free as long as labor in the Black skin is branded.”

For a long time, communists have referred to their understanding and position on the struggle of oppressed people for liberation as “the National Question.”

What is it about the National Question that distinguishes it from all other questions in the minds of communists? Is it morally superior to other issues? No, it is not. The National Question is wholly unique in significance because understanding it, and acting on that understanding is essential to classwide solidarity. To negate the National Question is to surrender to the ruling class its most potent weapon against the working class.

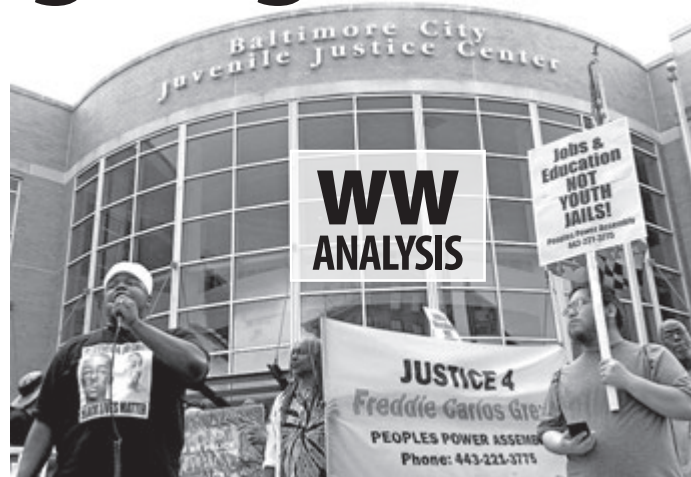
The Black Lives Matter uprising is fundamentally a reincarnation of the Black liberation struggle. The capitalist class understands that its continued existence is dependent upon keeping such a liberation struggle as separate and isolated from the working-class movement and progressive movement as possible. Conversely, the more that the entire movement takes up the liberation struggle, the more difficult it becomes for the capitalist state to carry out massive repression.

Keeping the oppressed isolated is key for the ruling class. The best circumstances for the system to succeed with its plan to crush this uprising of the oppressed is to keep such a struggle geographically, or at least politically, to a greater rather than a lesser extent, isolated from the working-class and progressive movement.

The participation of young white activists in support of the Black Lives Matter uprising has been impressive, even unprecedented. Still, taken as a whole, the Left, specifically the white Left, has largely been missing in action thus far. This is dangerous and it must be rectified.

No doubt, if the capitalist state can get away with isolating and then smashing the Black Lives Matter uprising, then it will feel in an even stronger position to use the same repression against the whole working class. There’s a great deal at stake here, because the crisis of capitalism makes bigger confrontations between capitalism and the working class inevitable if not imminent.

In the 1870s and 1880s, when the working-class movement was fighting for the eight-hour day in the North, Reconstruction in the South — a short period of



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

time right after the Civil War when Black people attained some small measures of power — was being violently crushed by the lynchings and terror of the Ku Klux Klan, with the support of government. The working-class movement in the North did little if anything at all to stop the racist counterrevolution against Reconstruction. Unfortunately, the failure of the broader working-class movement to respond to the national oppression of Black people at the end of the 19th century established a pattern of similar disappointments since that time.

A lot has changed since Reconstruction was crushed; however, none of that change has negated the National Question, as it pertains to Black people.

### The Left must step up

Fast forward to the fall of 2014. Imagine how earthshaking it would have been if the climate change march of several hundred thousand people in September in New York City — which, while certainly not all white, was mostly white — had instead been a solidarity march with the uprising in Ferguson. This is not to say that fighting to save the planet from capitalist pollution isn’t an urgent issue, but rather to point out that at that moment, the more urgent crisis for the mass movement was the Ferguson uprising.

For activists and revolutionaries, whether your primary concern is opposing U.S. imperialism, fighting capitalism, supporting the working-class struggle or fighting for socialism, a deeper look at the significance of the Black Lives Matter uprising should be enough to convince you why it’s crucial, perhaps even decisive that you need to support it.

This uprising has once again demonstrated that the Black Liberation struggle is central to the struggle against U.S. imperialism. This does not take anything away from the many fronts in the struggle against U.S. imperialism across the world; it’s simply an acknowledgment of reality.

The police war against Black and Brown youth, including the mass incarceration of young people of color, is not going away no matter how much talk of reforming the police there is, and no matter how many police departments the Justice Department investigates. In fact, the war is going to intensify. Why? Because the war is a direct consequence of the new globalized, high-tech capitalist order. The police and the prisons are being used to regulate and downsize the labor force. Capitalism no longer has even low-wage jobs for Black and Brown youth, so the system is carrying out social genocide employing gentrification, austerity and police state measures as its primary weapons.

For all who are interested in the working class, for your information, the people being targeted by the police represent the fastest growing segment of the working class. One of the many things that the

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present and any future stage of capitalism is certain to do, is to swell the ranks of the unemployed and underemployed, first amongst young people of color, women, immigrants, those with disabilities and then against the entirety of the working class.

The time has come and gone for antiquated ideas about who is and who is not in the working class to be swept away. The fact is that the composition of the working class, like everything else, is constantly changing, just as the capitalist economy is constantly changing; this is called dialectical materialism. Unless the definition of the working class is constantly revolutionized and made more inclusive of the most oppressed, and moreover, unless the organizations of the working-class movement reflect this constant change — change that must not only affect the organization of the working class but also its ideological direction — the working class will not find the road to the socialist revolution.

The Black Lives Matter uprising is both a rebellion against national oppression and a working-class rebellion. Like all movements, the Black Lives Matter movement is not politically homogeneous. It is nonetheless very radical, very militant, very anti-capitalist and has the potential to become, at least in part, a revolutionary movement that could play a pivotal role in revolutionizing other sections of the working class.

It is no small thing that compared to other phases of the Black Liberation struggle, there are more women and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people playing key roles in the Black Lives Matter uprising. This tends to make the uprising more radical and multinational.

What’s also true is that within this young movement, there is a perception that, generally speaking, the Left, particularly the white Left, is either too weak, too divided and sectarian, or just too conservative to render anything of significance to their uprising. This is one of the reasons why this uprising, by and large, is not looking to the Left for either support or answers. Whether that assessment is fair or not, all should take note. The question is before all of those who consider themselves part of the Left, but are not relating in any meaningful way to this uprising, are you prepared to plead guilty to irrelevance?

The one-year anniversary of the Ferguson Rebellion is a few months away. Before that anniversary, there is the anniversary of the police murder of Eric Garner in Staten Island, N.Y. There is also a major march against police violence planned for Newark, N.J., on July 25. These and other events should give the movement plenty of opportunity to demonstrate its relevance. The question is, will these opportunities be acted upon?

*The writer is the first secretary of Workers World Party.*

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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

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

Available at all major online booksellers.



GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

# Reign of racist terror

## Cops on killing rampage

Continued from page 1

cause police say they allegedly reached for a weapon or possessed a knife or hammer.

Even so-called nonlethal law enforcement tools have been deadly in numerous encounters between the cops and the people.

The same Guardian article notes deaths from “police use of a Taser, deaths caused by police vehicles and deaths following altercations in police custody, as well as those killed when officers open fire. They reveal that 29% of those killed by police, or 135 people, were Black. Sixty-seven, or 14%, were [Latino/a] and 234, or 50%, were white.”

These killings of people from oppressed nations “illustrate how disproportionately Black Americans, who make up just 13% of the country’s total population, according to census data, are killed by police. Of the 464 people counted by the Guardian, an overwhelming majority — 95% — were male, with just 5% female.”

### Detroit killings by police increase

In Detroit three African-American men have died or been killed in the custody of police since late March. None of the officers has been indicted in these deaths.

Anthony Clark, 24, died after being handcuffed outside his car on the south-west side of the city on March 30.

Spokespeople for the police department said he was pulled over because of erratic driving. Clark’s father reported his son suffered acute respiratory problems and had been placed on a breathing machine on several occasions.

The older Clark said the alleged erratic driving was caused by his son’s illness. Clark was in handcuffs when he collapsed. He told police he could not breathe and was allegedly given his asthma rescue inhaler, which didn’t work. Clark died in police custody.

On April 27, Terrance Kellom, 20, was fatally shot 10 times inside his home during a raid by a multijurisdictional



WWW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

**Martin Luther King Day in Detroit. Since March, three African Americans have died or been killed in the custody of police.**

task force consisting of local and federal officers. An Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent Michael Quinn said Kellom came toward him with a hammer, necessitating the shooting.

Kevin Kellom, Terrance’s father, said that his son was never in hiding from authorities and that police claimed they had a search warrant to enter the family home. Kellom said the search warrant only surfaced three hours after his son was shot to death by the ICE agent.

Quinn is a former Detroit police officer with a troubled record. In 2008 he was charged with felonious assault after he was accused of holding a loaded police revolver to his spouse’s head, threatening to shoot her.

While serving 12 years with the Detroit police, Quinn was also sued after he witnessed and participated in an act of brutality by his then partner Eugene Brown, who was involved in numerous police killings of civilians and assaults during the 1990s. Despite this controversial past, Quinn was still hired by ICE, where he has served for seven years.

No charges have been filed against Quinn or the other officers at the scene of Kellom’s killing. Demonstrations occurred in the immediate aftermath of the police action.

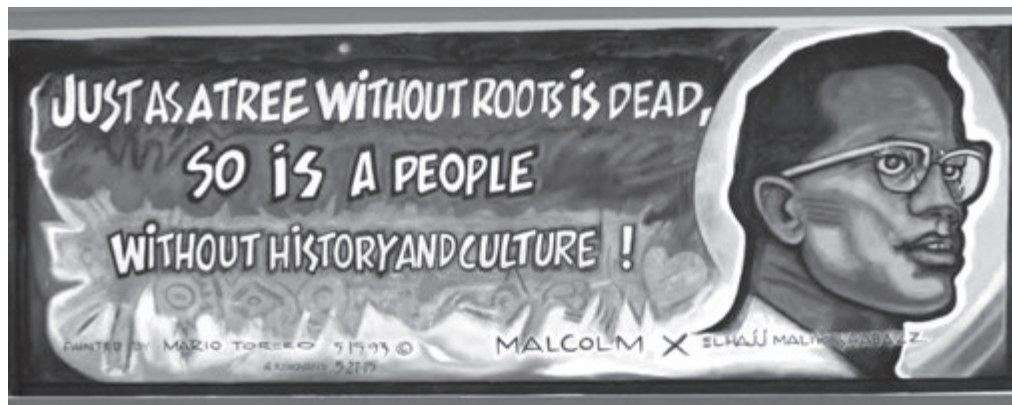
On May 23, Caso Jackson, 25, was killed in a flurry of police bullets after he jumped off a porch at his former home in northwest Detroit. News reports said Jackson allegedly held his estranged spouse and children hostage for several hours.

These police actions reinforce the systematic attacks on residents of Detroit through foreclosures, evictions and utility and water shutoffs. The overall austerity and repressive atmosphere in the city create a sense of siege felt by many youth.

The right to self-determination and bourgeois democracy is becoming more of an illusion in the U.S., particularly in urban areas where joblessness and poverty run rampant. □

## Mural pays tribute to Malcolm X

### San Diego



Activist, visionary muralist and teacher Mario Torero unveiled the renovated Malcolm X Mural at Southcrest Park in San Diego, Calif., on May 29. The inscription on the mural quotes Malcolm X El-Hajj Malik Shabazz: “Just as a tree without roots is dead, so is a people without history or culture.”

In 1993, “artist” Torero partnered with the African-American community, who were the core of the Southcrest Park area at the time, to paint a mural commemorating their hero, Malcolm X. They

Painted the mural on the façade of the Southcrest Recreation Center, finishing on May 15 of that year, near Malcolm’s birthday and in recognition of the Los Angeles Rebellion just a year earlier. The community also renamed the Southcrest facility the Malcolm X Park and Recreation Center.

Over the last 21 years, the mural had come to look very worn-out and dilapidated. Already succumbing to graffiti, it was going to be erased and destroyed until the community came out in support

of preserving it. They found Torero and asked him to repaint it. It took a year to find the necessary funds to get it renovated. Finally, monetary support came from the office of San Diego city Councilperson Myrtle Cole of District 4.

Torero began the renovation work in May and invited the community to the unveiling to celebrate the 90th birthday of Malcolm X and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of his assassination. A special guest, Nathaniel Peterson, representing “the spirit of Malcolm X,” recited one of Malcolm X’s speeches. Also present were representatives from the Southcrest Community Council and the Malcolm X Library, a journalist from Activist San Diego and an organizer from the Committee Against Police Brutality-San Diego, as well as community members. The beautiful, brilliant, bright mural was unveiled, and it will remain in the park for many years to come.

— Story and photo by Gloria Verdieu

## Disabilities caucus condemns attempted execution of Mumia by medical neglect

The People with Disabilities Caucus of the People’s Power Assembly joins the international progressive community in condemning the attempted execution by medical neglect of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Writing from behind the walls of the prison-industrial complex, internationally renowned political prisoner and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal is known for exposing the racist foundation of capitalism, from mass incarceration of people of color in for-profit prisons to U.S. war and intervention abroad.

Unjustly convicted of killing a police officer, Mumia has spent 30 years in prison, until recently in solitary confinement on Pennsylvania’s Death Row. His demand for a new trial and freedom is supported by heads of state and prominent politicians in France, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America and by Nobel

laureates Nelson Mandela, Toni Morrison, Desmond Tutu and others.

Mumia is now seriously ill. He is suffering from life-threatening diabetes, full body skin disease, weight loss of 80 pounds in the last two to three months, extreme dehydration, multiple neurological symptoms, [including] uncontrollable shaking, slurred speech and loss of memory with fugue states. He now uses a wheelchair. Mumia’s family and friends hold the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections directly responsible for neglect, malpractice and inadequately addressing the alarming deterioration of his health. Only if he is released will he be able to get the proper medical care to give him a chance at recovery.

Prisons are a disability issue. Mass incarceration has resulted in the jailing of people with mental, developmental,

emotional and physical disabilities in disproportionately high numbers. Many are unjustly incarcerated. Once in jail, they often receive inadequate treatment for their disability or no treatment at all. This violates Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which guarantees prisoners with disabilities the right to adequate health care.

As activists in the disability rights movement, we demand that Mumia, and all prisoners with disabilities, be immediately granted full medical rights, as protected by the ADA.

We demand that Mumia be able to see a doctor of his choice. We demand that Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has been impris-



Mumia Abu-Jamal visited by Wadiya Jamal.

oned for decades for a crime he never committed, be released immediately.

We urge you to join us in phoning and emailing:

- Secretary of the Department of Corrections, John Wetzel, to demand that Mumia be treated by a doctor of his choice. 717-728-2573;

- Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf to demand that the state halt attempts to execute Mumia by medical neglect. 717-787-2500; fax 717-772-8284; governor@pa.gov

We also urge you to circulate this statement as widely as possible.

People with Disabilities Caucus of the People’s Power Assembly  
Peoplespowerassemblies.org;  
212-633-6646. □

## On the picket line

By Sue Davis

## LOS ANGELES

# Workers Assembly says 'no exemptions'

*The following excerpted press statement was issued May 31 by the Los Angeles Workers Assembly in response to the head of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor who argued for 'union exemptions' for the newly passed \$15-an-hour- minimum-wage increase in Los Angeles. Go to workers.org to read the entire statement.*

### Ironworkers on strike in San Fran.

San Francisco ironworkers, who do very dangerous but essential work on huge construction projects, walked off the job on at least two sites on Sept. 10 and Sept. 11 to demand a re-vote on a concessions contract. A major issue that prompted the wildcat was no translations of the contract into Spanish or Chinese. Some 60 percent of the workers speak Spanish.

The workers are also demanding a cost-of-living wage because they continue to make about what they earned in 2005. "No on new contract, strike for fair wages" read the main banner. Picket signs read "Cost of living soars, wages are ignored" and "We can't afford to live where we work." One worker, a member of Ironworks Local 377, told the Labor Video Project that San Francisco has the highest cost of living in the world, but ironworkers in New York City make twice what workers in San Francisco make. For more details about the wildcat, view videos on youtube.com/laborvideo, Sept. 11 and Sept. 12.

### 'FedEx workers are FedEx employees'

Just in time for Labor Day, federal appeals courts in California and Oregon ruled that FedEx workers in those states are employees, not contractors. The judge in San Francisco noted that the contract the workers must sign "gives FedEx a broad right to control the manner in which the drivers perform their work." This includes specifying the uniforms they wear, their personal grooming and the vehicles they drive, including the dimensions of shelving and paint color. Though the company does not dictate working hours, it organizes the drivers' workloads so they work between 9 1/2 and 11 hours a day and tells them what packages to deliver on what days and at what times.

"This ruling will have seismic impact on this industry and the lives of FedEx Ground drivers in California," said Beth Ross, the drivers' attorney there. (SFgate.com, Aug. 28) For instance, now drivers will be able to sue for overtime pay, employer contributions to Social Security and Medicare, unemployment benefits, sick pay, family leave and workers' compensation. The ruling affects 2,300 full-time drivers who worked for FedEx between 2000 and 2007 in California and 360 in Oregon. FedEx is appealing the rulings.

These decisions, along with a similar ruling about McDonald's workers on July 29 by the National Labor Relations Board, could — should — have wide ramifications in industries that deliberately hire contractors to "employ" their workers. For instance, workers who drive trucks loaded with Walmart goods from California ports to inland warehouses have been fighting for years to be categorized as Walmart employees. Workers, often immigrants, who are contracted to provide janitorial work, package delivery, home-care services, construction and even some professional services like writing are deliberately cheated out of a living wage and employee protections while 1% owners revel in their stolen wealth and class privilege.

According to the Leonard Carder law firm where Ross works, she is pursuing a national suit against FedEx.

### Paid sick days for 6.5 million in Calif.

A California law granting 6.5 million low-wage workers, or 39 percent of the state's workforce, paid sick days was signed into law on Sept. 10; it will go into effect July 1, 2015. Home-care workers, however, were excluded. But unions vowed to continue the fight until they are also covered. Similar policies were passed covering Connecticut workers in 2011 and workers in New York City earlier this year. However, unlike the earlier laws, this one will apply to businesses large and small. (afclio.blog.org, Sept. 11)

### Minn. home-care workers vote union

A large crowd at the Minnesota AFL-CIO Labor Pavilion at the Minnesota State Fair applauded Aug. 26 when it was announced that the 26,000 home-care workers in the state will now be represented by SEIU Healthcare Minnesota. To gain the right to join a union, the workers, predominantly women, many of whom are women of color and/or immigrants, had to first change state laws and then fight off court challenges bankrolled by the National Right to Work Committee. "With our collective voice, we will be stronger in our fight for improvements for both workers and the people we serve," said Rosemary Van Vickle, a home-care worker from Crosby. Key issues for the workers are better pay and benefits and more access to training, with improved quality of care for clients. (workdayminnesota.org, Aug. 26) □

An announcement reported in the Los Angeles Times by Rusty Hicks of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, which leads the Raise the Wage Campaign, is disturbing. Mr. Hicks says that companies with workers represented by unions should have leeway to negotiate a wage below that mandated by the law. This statement is a betrayal of the labor movement, putting negotiations behind closed doors above organizing the power of the people to win \$15.

Labor unions have a history of being the backbone of social and economic justice and need to be strengthened, not weakened. Not only does the proposal discourage workers from wanting to join unions, but it also encourages businesses to create company unions for the purpose of paying their workers lower than the minimum wage.

Does the federation believe that union members would be making too much with a livable wage and ... scaring companies which would have negotiated better health care and benefits, and that those companies would not accept company unions more readily? It throws solidarity out the window, especially with those courageous low-wage workers fighting nationwide for \$15 and a union. It also assumes that \$15 is more of a "cushion" rather than a basic amount for survival.

Union membership has declined because of the collaboration between big business and a union leadership too weak to put up a real fight against the offshoring of jobs, cutbacks in wages and pensions, and right-to-work initiatives designed to

bust the unions, all with the help of both the Democratic and Republican parties. So why weaken them further?

All of this has occurred along with technological advances in production that produced a global capitalist crisis of overproduction. This crisis is accompanied by demands for austerity, with finance capital — the banks — insisting that debts to the banks be paid with money that should be used for social services.

Besides workers' pensions, guess what is always on the chopping block in finance capital's austerity demands? Minimum wage standards. This federation/campaign policy facilitates the demands of monopoly finance capital groupings.

The Ballot Initiative for a \$15 Minimum Wage, which would take effect immediately upon voter approval, now becomes even more urgent. The people need to make that decision, not the politicians and those willing to compromise basic union principles.

The Los Angeles Workers Assembly is glad that all of the pressure created by organizations and activists forced the City Council into action. However, their proposal falls far short of the immediate need to end poverty wages. It consists of an increase to \$15 per hour stretched out into segments of about \$1 per year, ending in 2020 at \$15. Then, the wage level will remain stagnant until cost-of-living increases begin in 2022.

The Raise the Wage campaign collected 100,000 petition signatures that were non-binding suggestions for the City Council.

Imagine if the same money and resources were instead used to get the 62,000 signatures necessary for the official, binding Ballot Initiative initiated by the L.A. Workers Assembly. Every worker in Los Angeles could have been receiving the \$15 minimum wage by now. Instead we are left debating the efficacy of a sub-minimum wage.

For 35 years wages have gone down and profits have soared, leaving the greatest gap in history between rich and poor. But the gap also weighs disproportionately on communities of color and women. According to a City of Los Angeles study last year, 83 percent of workers making less than \$13.25 an hour in Los Angeles are people of color, and the majority are women.

The Black Lives Matter movement has highlighted the unequal treatment of people of color by law enforcement, and furor over police abuse has at the same time aimed a spotlight on the fact that people of color have suffered most from the growing wage gap. Workers of color — and women too — need the benefits that come from being in a union: job security, health care, retirement benefits and the right to a living wage.

The fight for a living wage is linked to the fight for social equality, and a successful strategy cannot reinforce inequality. #15Matters. □

# Walmart workers hold hunger strike to press demands

By Dante Strobino  
Los Angeles

May 28 — Two dozen Walmart workers started a hunger strike for 24 hours on May 27, sleeping in tents occupying the front lawn of their workplace in downtown Los Angeles. Their goals were to win a wage-raise to \$15 an hour, be assigned to work on regular work schedules and protest against retaliation. Several hundred other workers, supporters and union members from across California gathered at the store and marched downtown with them.

Even after the Los Angeles City Council voted May 19 to raise the minimum wage a dollar each year until it gets to \$15 per hour by 2020, workers are still fighting for \$15 an hour to be put in place immediately. They need this much to survive when faced with rising costs of rent, food and other necessities.

The action was planned in response to Walmart's laying off more than 2,000 workers in the last month. The layoff involved closing five stores, including the temporary closure of a store in the nearby Los

Angeles neighborhood of Pico Rivera. Workers from that store were not given proper notice and no recall rights to get their jobs back once the store re-opens.

Daniel J. Coles II, OURWalmart member and Walmart worker, told Workers World, "The Walmart workers fasting action was to demand that Walmart management stop retaliation against Walmart associates for speaking up about the working conditions."

Walmart is also preparing for its annual shareholder meeting on June 5 in Fayetteville, Ark. These meetings have been the site of major protests by workers the past two years.

Just two days before the rally, the L.A. County Federation of Labor President Rusty Hicks stated that he was campaigning the L.A. City Council to write rules allowing exemptions to the minimum wage for unionized workplaces into the new wage ordinance. This surrender of a wage gain upset many workers and union members, who are worried that it would

lead unionized workers to have lower wages than non-union workers. They believe it will encourage companies to set up fake company unions to avoid paying workers a city-approved minimum wage.

Ricardo Rodriguez, president of United Electrical Workers Local 1077, representing newly organized low-wage rail crew transport van drivers, stated in a May 31 Los Angeles Workers Assembly statement in response to Hicks: "The City Council resolution speaks for itself. All workers should benefit from the wage increase, whether they are union or not. Our local members and all workers deserve at least \$15 per hour now." □

WW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO



## From Spain to Canada

# Austerity pushes voters leftward

By Deirdre Griswold

Capitalist austerity programs are nothing new to people living in oppressed countries, most of which are former colonies or neocolonies dictated to by the powerful financial institutions of the U.S. and Europe.

Under their “structural adjustment programs,” the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have forced scores of countries, especially in Africa and Latin America, to cut to the bone public spending on health, education, infrastructure and other vital services. It was all done so the transnational banks could continue to receive huge interest payments on the “indebtedness” hanging over countries whose resources have been stolen for more than a century by the very same imperialist powers.

The consequences have been horrendous. Desperate emigration from these countries has ballooned as their economies have imploded. Even the Ebola epidemic that swept Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea in West Africa last year was directly linked to cuts in public health demanded by “structural adjustment” schemes, according to an analysis in a preeminent British medical journal. (The Lancet, Dec. 22)

But the demands of the bankers haven’t stopped there. In recent years, especially since the 2008-2009 global capitalist economic crisis that has never really been overcome, austerity has also become a byword in many developed capitalist countries.

By 2011, austerity measures had been enforced in many European countries by long-established bourgeois political parties that were used to serving the class interests of the financiers and CEOs in times of relative growth and stability. Some were social-democratic parties that at one time had even presided over concessions that helped raise the working class’s standard of living. Suddenly, they found themselves confronted with very large anti-austerity demonstrations, mainly by workers in the public sector but also involving great masses of people who were feeling the cuts most deeply.

These huge demonstrations in country after country began to affect the political climate, undermining the incumbent parties as the voters looked for ways out of their suffering. The biggest break so far, of course, has been in Greece, where,

this January, a relatively new electoral formation, Syriza, was catapulted into leading the government on the promise that it would refuse to carry out the cuts that Europe’s imperialist bankers had demanded in social services, particularly government pensions.

Even though the Greek crisis has not been resolved and the threats being made against Syriza by the financiers, especially the German banks, have grown in stridency, the political fallout against established ruling parties elsewhere continues to grow, taking many forms.

From Greece and Spain to Ireland, Scotland and even Canada, voters have been drawn to parties, some of them brand-new, that attack austerity and promise to find a way out of the budget cuts that the politicians in office defend as absolutely necessary.

### Conservative setbacks in Spanish state

The latest setback for the incumbents came in Spain, where voter support for the left-wing coalition Podemos in local and regional elections on May 15 brought some surprises. Podemos, like Syriza, has quickly gained support by promising not to impose austerity measures on the people.

In Barcelona, the second-largest city in the Spanish state and capital of semi-autonomous Catalonia, the new mayor will be Ada Colau, head of Barcelona en Comú, a coalition of leftist parties that includes Podemos. Two years ago, Colau, 41, made headlines when she was arrested while occupying a bank in an anti-poverty protest.

In Madrid, the rightist People’s Party has been in power for some 20 years. Its candidate in the recent mayoral election, Esperanza Aguirre, is a countess by marriage with big funds at her disposal who terror-baited the left. The outcome of the election is still in doubt. A leftist judge, Manuela Carmena, came within one percentage point of defeating the countess. One of them will have to form a coalition with the middle-of-the-road Socialist Party in order to take office.

Carmena, who back in the days of fascist dictator Gen. Francisco Franco saw five of her colleagues gunned down in her law office and joined the outlawed Communist Party, was the candidate of a leftist coalition called Ahora Madrid, backed by Podemos. Whether or not she becomes mayor, the election marks a departure from the past.

### Irish referendum, Scottish votes

The question of austerity has also figured in recent popular votes in Ireland, Scotland and the Canadian province of Alberta.

The referendum in Ireland on May 22 that approved same-sex marriage astounded many around the world who hadn’t realized the strength of the progressive movement there in standing up to the Catholic Church. The popular vote was celebrated as a demonstration of unity and against bigotry that will serve the Irish people well in their struggle for relief from austerity measures.

Before the vote, Joe Higgins, a member of Dáil Éireann (Ireland’s house of representatives), released a statement saying, “I would particularly appeal to the anti-austerity, progressive movements across the country to support the referendum and to use their networks and organizations to mobilize the Yes vote on Friday to make sure that we banish this form of inequality as a step in our fight for full equality.” (Anti-Austerity Alliance)

In the 2011 Irish election, Sinn Féin, the party most closely associated with the long struggle for independence from Britain, had for the first time received a strong vote after calling for a nationwide referendum on whether an IMF bailout agreement should be scrapped.

In the vote for members of the British Parliament this May 5, the Scottish National Party swept the election in Scotland, winning 56 of the 59 seats. Two weeks before the election, SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon had released a party manifesto that emphasized it would fight austerity throughout the UK, “pledging to fight for public spending increases and end cuts across Britain.” (BBC News, April 17)

Last September, the Scottish Nationalists came within six points of winning a referendum on independence, after pledging they would end austerity if elected.

### Big Oil upset in Alberta

On the other side of the Atlantic, the struggle against austerity figured in the defeat of the Progressive Conservative Party in Alberta, long considered the most conservative province of Canada. Years of a booming economy dependent on exploiting tar sands and other oil deposits had earned Alberta the nickname of “the Texas of Canada” and entrenched a well-heeled political establishment. But

when oil prices began to drop last year, the braggadocio by Alberta’s politicians about the province’s oil riches was replaced by their demands for budget cuts and tax increases — on the people, but not the corporations.

That was the undoing of provincial Premier Jim Prentice, who was replaced this May 24 by Rachel Notley of the New Democratic Party. Notley promised to raise corporate taxes in order to reduce fees and roll back cuts in services. The NDP raised its number of seats in the provincial legislature from four to 54 out of the total of 87 seats — an incredible win that broke an 80-year grip on the province by center-right governments.

### Women — and revolution

In Spain, Ireland, Scotland and Alberta, women have played leading roles in these electoral victories, in most places leading their parties’ tickets. This is not by accident. Budget cuts in areas like health, education and other public services hit women the hardest — both because they make up the majority of the workers in these fields and because they are often mothers and homemakers who rely on getting decent services for their families.

Where women were once considered either apolitical or a conservative force in politics, they are now taking the lead in demanding — and attempting to carry out — progressive change.

The question now is, what happens next? The people have spoken, making clear that they are sick and tired of the tyranny of the superrich who control the financial superstructure of capitalist society. But even this very tangible political expression of disaffection from the status quo doesn’t change that much. Elected officials come and go; the state itself, which rests on violence and repression, remains. Winning an election is not the same as unseating the ruling class from its control over economic and political life.

This is not to diminish the importance of this shift in the desires of the electorate. Consciousness is changing under the hammer blows of monopoly capital, and understanding who is your enemy is a necessary precondition to any effective social movement for change.

Outraged voters of today can — and must — become the revolutionaries of tomorrow, because this vicious system of exploitation is not going to go away. It has to be taken down. □

## NEW YORK

# ‘Strong rent laws now!’



“We are tired of being displaced, extorted, harassed and ignored. We will continue to bring our grievances to the doorsteps of the powers-that-be until we are heard. New York City is facing a massive housing crisis, and the stakes are now higher than ever. On June 15, NYC’s rent regulation laws are set to expire,” stated protest organizers led by Brooklyn’s Crown Heights Tenants Union.

Blocking four lanes on East 3rd Street near Gov. Cuomo’s Midtown Manhattan office on May 28, determined protesters held a huge banner reading “Cuomo: Strong Rent Laws Now” and “Housing Justice Is Racial Justice.” Fliers were distributed to motorists explaining why the protest brought traffic to a standstill.

Several TV stations and newspaper reporters rushed to cover this while the police came much later. Connecting the need for affordable housing with New York’s long history of racist housing policies, the flier mentioned landlords’ history of redlining policies and how now the developers seek to cash in on gentrification, as they deny tenants their rights in an attempt to evict them.

NYC’s vacancy decontrol provisions eliminated 300,000 rent-regulated apartments where the majority of tenants are working class and people of color. The protesters’ statement offered: “This is why, as low income communities of color, we are taking matters into our own hands. With the recent upsurge of the Black Lives Matter movement, we have seen that the only way policymakers listen to disenfranchised people is when we take to the streets and disrupt business as usual. Cuomo has the power to change rent laws by June 15th in favor of low and moderate income New Yorkers.”

— Story and photo by Anne Pruden

# Global economic slowdown and the Greek crisis

By Fred Goldstein

June 1: U.S. Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew sounded the alarm recently about the Greek debt crisis on his way to a G-7 finance ministers' meeting in Dresden, Germany.

"Brinkmanship is a dangerous thing when it only takes one accident," Mr. Lew said at the London School of Economics. "No one should have a false sense of confidence that they know what the result of a crisis in Greece would be." (New York Times, May 27)

His statement of alarm came as the leftist Greek government headed by Syriza was being pressured by European bankers to crack down on its already suffering working class as the June 5 deadline to pay the IMF 300 million euros approached. (USD \$334 million)

The International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Union are demanding that Greek pensions be sacrificed, workers' collective bargaining rights be cut back, and wages for workers be slashed in order to pay hundreds of millions in government debt.

Lew's statement is revealing. It is an admission that the world capitalist system is fragile, unpredictable and unstable. What he did not say is that a Greek default on the extortionate debt owed to the European banking institutions could trigger a repeat of the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008, which set off a world financial crisis.

Capitalist finance is carried on in secrecy by the myriad of monetary gamblers, investment bankers, hedge funds and so on. Financial operations, just like capitalist production, are anarchic, unplanned and strictly driven by the never-ending, frantic search for profit.

Thus, no one in the hierarchy of financial officials in Washington, London or Berlin has any idea of the consequences of a major default by the Greek government.

Commenting further on Lew's address, the same New York Times wrote: "United States officials, though, have expressed concern about the wider consequences for the world economy and international politics."

More importantly, noted the Times, there is "also concern that problems in Europe could hurt the United States economy at a time when American growth appears to be slowing."

## U.S. economy contracted in first quarter

The U.S. economy is more than slowing. It contracted 0.7 percent in the first quarter of 2015. U.S. exports fell; consumer spending slowed down; capitalist investment declined by 2.8 percent, the sharpest decline since 2009; and the final sales of actual goods and services decreased by 1.1 percent, the biggest fall since 2009.

The pundits have tried to brush this off

as due to cold weather and the West Coast port strike. But cold weather and a single strike cannot plunge a \$15 trillion economy into an economic contraction. The so-called "recovery" is anemic at best and is headed downwards.

The U.S. contraction is part of a general global slowdown. The economies of Russia, Canada, Brazil, Venezuela, South Africa, Argentina and Switzerland, among others, are all contracting sharply. South Korea is flirting with recession. Japan is in a state of meager growth.

The European Central Bank has initiated a \$1.6 trillion bailout for the banks and corporations in the eurozone — pumping in over \$60 billion a month. But it has hardly resulted in any economic growth — except for the stock markets — and has not brought regional unemployment below 10 percent.

## On the Titanic without lifeboats

Stephen King from HSBC, Britain's largest bank, issued a report entitled "The World Economy's Titanic Problem." Commenting on the report, the May 24 London Telegraph talked about being afloat in a world recession without lifeboats.

The Telegraph said the report showed that each of the past four recoveries had been weaker than the one before. The average global growth rate had fallen from 4.5 percent to nearly 2 percent.

The report revealed that with all the hoopla about the economy gaining from a drop in oil prices, 100,000 workers across the oil and gas belt have been laid off. The so-called windfall turned into layoffs and did not do anything to bolster the capitalist recovery.

The Telegraph also showed that the world economy has been dependent on the growth of the Chinese economy and that the Chinese economy is also slowing down. The Royal Bank of Scotland showed that China accounted for 85 percent of all global growth in 2012, 54 percent in 2013 and 30 percent in 2014. It is likely to fall to 24 percent this year. Andrew Roberts from RBS says, "If there is only one statistic that you need to know in the world right now, this is it."

The main point of the HSBC report was that, in the event of a new global recession, the capitalist states have no way to ease a future crisis. They have already poured huge amounts of money into the economy and lowered interest rates to near zero to combat the last crisis.

## Unemployment, underemployment: a global plague

Even before the next crisis, the global working class is plagued by unemployment and underemployment. About 75 percent of the world's workforce have no permanent jobs. While well over 200 million are officially unemployed, the number of temporary and part-time workers

is growing even faster than actual unemployment. Child labor is conservatively estimated by the U.N. at 73 million, many working in near slavery conditions.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, whose members include all the major capitalist powers, anticipates growth of the "precarariat," a term that trivializes what Marxists call the reserve army of the unemployed and underemployed.

"In this situation, already tense areas of the world will almost certainly become more turbulent. The Middle East and North Africa, for example, have the highest youth unemployment in the world, close to 30 percent. And there, as in much of the less-developed world, it is the more educated young people, those with degrees, who have the highest rates of job insecurity." (CBS News, June 1) These figures are, if anything, conservative.

## Greek debt crisis coming to a head

It is against this background of a smoldering global economic, social and political crisis that Lew issued his alarm, aimed at forcing a settlement of the Greek crisis before it explodes in a default, which could easily begin to spread among other European debtor countries.

The IMF, ECB and EU, as well as U.S. imperialists, are not just being arbitrary in trying to force the Greek government into a humiliating capitulation. The fact of the matter is that if the bankers make any concessions to the Greek government, the masses in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Cyprus and other European countries, who have suffered under the heel of debt extortion by the bankers of Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands and bondholders everywhere, could easily rebel and demand concessions and an end to austerity.

European loans and currencies could be destabilized and the eurozone could come apart. The eurozone, as it stands, is an instrument for domination by the German imperialists above all, as well as the French, Italian, Dutch and other bankers. The IMF, which is demanding over a trillion euros from Greece and taking a hard line, is dominated by U.S. bankers.

Yew was trying to find wiggle room to avert the crisis by appealing to the German ruling class to let up. The European Central Bank, dominated by the German bankers, as well as the Deutsche Bank are demanding a reduction in Greek pensions, changes in labor law calculated to weaken unions and lower wages, as well as widespread privatization of public facilities.

The Greek government has so far held the position that it is not going to default on its obligations to the people. Days after Yew made his appeal, Alexis Tsipras, head of the Greek government and leader of the leftist party Syriza, wrote an article in the French paper Le Monde denouncing the "absurd demands" of the IMF,

ECB and EU. He came close to threatening default and denounced "doctrines of extreme neoliberalism." (London Telegraph, May 31)

Meanwhile, Syriza's Left Platform called for a "counterattack" against the creditors. The Left Platform submitted an immediate program to the Syriza central committee that was defeated by a vote of 95 to 75. The majority, led by Tsipras, called for an "honorable compromise." (versobooks.com, May 28)

The Left Platform program stated:

"It has now become clear that the 'institutions' are not striving for what some are calling an 'honorable compromise.' An 'honorable compromise' cannot exist anyway by means of privatizations and new burdens on the popular classes, and it certainly cannot exist without a real end to austerity, without a restructuring of (the biggest part of) the debt and without adequate provision of liquidity for the revitalization of the economy. What the ruling circles of the EU, the ECB and the IMF are ruthlessly and consistently aiming for in the last four months, is to strangle the economy, to milk even the last euro from the country's reserves and to push an 'unprotected' government to full submission and exemplary humiliation."

The specific demands of the Left Platform call for a complete rupture with the creditor institutions and include:

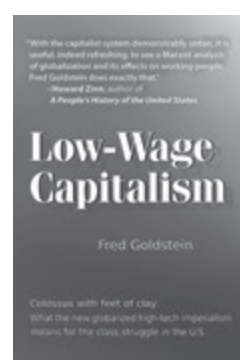
"The immediate nationalization of the banks; the immediate and full reintroduction, as well as safeguarding and practical implementation, of labor legislation and rights to trade union organization; the termination of all protections for the country's scandal-immersed oligarchy; the suspension of privilege, privileging adjustments and immunity for big economic interests; the substantial taxation of wealth and large properties, as well as the taxation of top earners and of high corporate profitability."

This is a left social-democratic program, which is silent on the crucial issue of preparing the masses for a counterattack by the financial oligarchy and capitalist establishment. To implement this program would require the intervention of the working class and the preparation of emergency measures in all spheres of society.

The secretariat of Syriza issued a call for the national mobilization of the people, which was unfortunately omitted from the Left Platform demands.

At this point there is little room between rupture and capitulation. For the progressive and revolutionary working-class forces in Greece and throughout Europe, the correct course is to promote, support and prepare for a break with the financial powers.

If implemented, that could open up a struggle that could eventually, under the correct leadership, be directed at capitalism itself. □



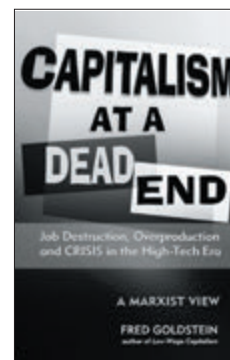
## Low-Wage Capitalism

describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class in the United States of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx's law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval.



## El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Fred Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión.



## Capitalism at a Dead End

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

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to [LowWageCapitalism.com](http://LowWageCapitalism.com)

Available at all major online booksellers.

# Donbass protests demand Justice for victims of U.S.-Ukraine war

By Greg Butterfield

With sorrow and rage, people in the Donbass region have ripped aside the veil of U.S. diplomatic maneuvering to reveal what is truly happening there: ongoing war crimes against children and other civilians by forces loyal to the extreme right-wing Ukrainian government backed by Washington.

In several mass outpourings in late May, residents of the primarily Russian-speaking region — formerly part of eastern Ukraine, now the independent people's republics of Donetsk and Lugansk — honored their dead and demanded an end to Kiev's constant violations of the Minsk-2 ceasefire signed by Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany in February.

On May 29, thousands of people attended the funeral of 11-year-old Katya Tuv and her father Yuriy in Gorlovka, Donetsk. The Tuv family home was destroyed during heavy shelling of the town by Ukrainian forces on the night of May 26. Katya's mother, Yekaterina, lost her arm and her younger brother was also badly wounded.

"Once again, the Ukrainian side showed that it won't carry out the peace agreement," charged Donetsk leader Aleksandr Zakharchenko. "They prefer to violate it blatantly." (Novorossiya Today, May 29)

In Donetsk's capital city, some 7,000 people protested on May 28, two days after the slaughter of the Tuvs. A Requiem ceremony followed on June 1 for at least 69 children killed since the start of the Kiev regime's "Anti-Terrorist Operation" against Donbass in April 2014.

Also on May 27, thousands of people braved pouring rain in Alchevsk, Lugansk, for the funeral of assassinated Commander Alexei Mozgovoi and four of his companions of the Ghost Brigade anti-fascist militia and two civilians, all killed in an attack on May 23.

Since early May, the Donetsk and Lugansk militias have recorded dozens of daily violations of the ceasefire by the



Protest against the bombing of Gorlovka in the capital of Donetsk, May 28, 2015.

Ukrainian Armed Forces, fascist battalions and mercenaries — sometimes up to 50 in a single day with increasing casualties. Gorlovka is one of the hardest-hit cities.

## Behind the crisis: Washington and Wall Street

Increasingly, people in the Donbass are looking beyond the immediate threat posed by the coalition of oligarchs, neo-liberal politicians and neo-Nazis that seized power in Kiev last year, and working to draw the world's attention to the force behind it: U.S. imperialism.

Direct talks in Sochi between U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on May 12 had led to speculation that some deal might be in the works to tamp down the war in Donbass. Six days later, Republican neoconservative U.S. Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, one of the architects of the February 2014 coup that brought the Kiev junta to power, visited Moscow for talks about Minsk-2 (the cease-fire agreement signed last February).

After Washington's latest round of diplomatic maneuvers, during a meeting in mid-May with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, President Barack Obama declared that "Russia occupies a more aggressive stance" on Ukraine, TASS News Agency reported. This sig-

naled that the Democratic-Republican bloc backing Ukraine's war in Donbass continues and will still try to shift blame for the crisis onto Russia.

An even clearer signal was the approval of a \$17 billion U.S./International Monetary Fund emergency bailout, part of a \$40 billion package including loans and other credits, to stave off default by the collapsing Ukrainian economy.

The integration of neo-Nazi "volunteer battalions" into the Ukrainian military structure also continues, as does the U.S. Army's training of Kiev's fascist National Guard.

Taking his cue from Washington, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko denounced the leaders of Donetsk and Lugansk, saying he would never negotiate with "homeless people, atheists and parasites who were given weapons, unable to feed themselves, [with an] irresponsible attitude towards children and the elderly." (Gazeta.ru, May 29)

He conveniently left out the fact that Ukraine and its Western allies have imposed an economic blockade on the Donbass, and that he is responsible for the bombing of children and the cutoff of pensions to seniors.

The surprise appointment of fugitive ex-President of Georgia and noted U.S. puppet Mikhail Saakashvili as governor of Ukraine's embattled Odessa region on May 29, and the concentration

of junta military forces there, may signal increased repression not only for the multinational port city, but also for neighboring Moldova, whose oligarchic government is closely allied with Kiev. (Timer-Odessa.net)

## 'Now is the time to stand up'

Citing intelligence reports, Donetsk Defense Ministry spokesperson Eduard Basurin warned that a team of U.S. chemical weapons specialists are traveling to Ukrainian-occupied Mariupol, where they may assist the Kiev junta's forces in carrying out a provocation in order to charge the people's republics with "crimes against humanity." (News-Front.info, May 29)

How will the anti-war and other people's movements in the U.S. respond to Washington's role in these war crimes?

In a powerful video appeal, Russell Bonner Bentley, an anti-fascist Donbass militia volunteer known as "Texas," took viewers on a tour of the bombed-out remains of the Tuv family home in Gorlovka.

Speaking directly to U.S. workers and activists, Bonner Bentley said: "This is what the United States is doing in Ukraine. All the people that have been killed, all the homes like this that have been destroyed, are only because this war was started by the U.S. government. ...

"What kind of person are you? You see this video, you know what's the truth. If you vote for Obama, you vote for Bush, you vote for Hillary Clinton, what kind of person are you to do that?" he asked.

"This is your responsibility. [U.S.] Americans are like the 'good Germans' who supported Hitler and said we don't care what the Nazis do in other countries as long as we have our jobs, watch sports and drink beer. ...

"Are you going to be on the side of the people who do this? If not, now is the time to make your move," declared Bonner Bentley. "Now is the time to go to the street. Now is the time to stand up."

The video (in English with Russian subtitles) can be viewed here: [youtube.com/watch?v=62r1GiD7JLc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62r1GiD7JLc)

# New Yorkers protest assassination of Donbass leader

Special to Workers World

Anti-war, community and solidarity activists gathered at the statue of Latin American liberation hero Simon Bolivar in Central Park May 27 to honor assassinated Donbass leader Alexei Mozgovoi and four members of his Ghost Brigade militia.

The International Action Center initiated the memorial, answering a call by communists in Lugansk for solidarity actions to coincide with Mozgovoi's funeral there.

Holding signs declaring "Mozgovoi

Lives" and anti-fascist flags, activists demanded a halt to Ukrainian military attacks and the economic blockade of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. They distributed leaflets to passersby calling for an end to Washington's economic, political and military support of the far-right Kiev regime.

Anna Rebrii, a student activist whose family lives in Ukraine and Lugansk, told the group: "This act of international solidarity is important. A revolutionary might be killed, but the revolution goes on."

"Mozgovoi was one of the most com-

mitted and radical leaders of the anti-fascist resistance in Donbass," said Greg Butterfield, of the IAC. "He was not only committed to defending the people of Lugansk and Donetsk from the war unleashed by Ukrainian fascists and U.S. imperialism. He was committed to building a new society based on freedom and social justice for all working people.

"Commander Mozgovoi was also an internationalist who understood that Novorossiyan and Ukrainian workers must unite on a class basis to destroy the fascist junta in Kiev," Butterfield noted.

"We hear all the time from the U.S. corporate media and Washington officials that the people of Donbass live in fear under the rule of 'Russian invaders' and 'terrorist separatists.'

"These are lies meant to distract people from the fact that both Democrats and Republicans are united in sending billions of dollars and weapons to the illegal regime in Kiev, while cutting desperately needed



Showing respect for martyred Alexei Mozgovoi.

social programs here at home.

"It's meant to distract us from the fact that U.S. troops are training neo-Nazis in Ukraine to kill civilians in Donbass, while racist police murder Black and Brown people from New York to Baltimore to Ferguson," charged Butterfield.

Other speakers included Russian community activist Andy Aero; Comrade Shahid, of the Pakistan-USA Freedom Forum; trade unionist Mike Gimbel; IAC Co-Director Sara Flounders; and Bill Dore, of Workers World Party.

FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together), Party of Communists USA and U.S. Friends of the Soviet People also participated in the memorial. □



## WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

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— Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,

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

Foreign Minister of Nicaragua's Sandinista government.

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Oakland, Calif., May 30.

# In New York and the Bay Area with one voice: Free Óscar!

By Berta Joubert-Ceci  
Harlem, N.Y.

The streets of Harlem saw the largest mobilization to date calling for the release of Puerto Rican political prisoner Óscar López Rivera on May 30. More than 3,000 people, marching under the slogan, “One voice for Óscar,” demanded President Barack Obama immediately release the Puerto Rican patriot.

López Rivera, 72, is now the longest-held Puerto Rican political prisoner. On May 29, he completed 34 years in the empire’s prisons — 12 of them in solitary confinement. He was accused of “seditious conspiracy” for belonging to the Puerto Rican Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN). This same charge was used against Nelson Mandela in apartheid South Africa before his release from prison. The FALN, based in Chicago, was fighting to free the Puerto Rican colony from its U.S. yoke.

The demonstration in Harlem reflected the broad support López Rivera has won in the past year. Based on protesting the violation of his human rights, the campaign has even added the voices of rightist politicians. A prime example of this is the letter from the U.S. Congressional Hispanic Caucus — which includes right-wingers like the Cuban Ileana Ros-Lehtinen — calling for the prisoner’s release. It was recently sent to Obama.

Óscar López’s relatives led the march. His only daughter, Clarisa López, traveled from Puerto Rico the preceding night, after participating in demonstrations on the island. His brother, José López Rivera, a renowned teacher and community activist in Chicago, traveled here.

Also present were Puerto Ricans who hold political offices in Puerto Rico, such as the mayor of San Juan, and others who do so in the United States, including the New York City Council president, plus

WW PHOTO:  
BERTA JOUBERT-CECI  
Clarisa López, Oscar’s daughter, second from the left, on front banner, New York City, May 30.



state and national legislators with varying levels of progressive credentials.

Although news media coverage highlighted the presence of political and religious leaders, it was the Latino/a people, mostly Puerto Rican, with supporters from the Dominican, Mexican and other Latin American nations, who were the most significant march participants.

Most contingents could be identified by their banners as belonging to pro-Óscar collectives. Also participating were organizations supporting other political prisoners, like Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier. Organized labor had a strong presence, including a large contingent from 1199 SEIU, led by its vice president, Estela Vázquez. Members of solidarity movements and the U.S. left were also present.

## The people in the street

The marchers came from 25 states, with many contingents identified by their hometowns in Puerto Rico. This reflected the immense wave of immigration in recent years that the Caribbean country’s devastating economic situation has provoked.

Alongside the march, another phenomenon occurred on the sidewalks. Many people who had been unaware of Óscar’s

case wanted more information. During spontaneous gatherings, people explained the case and discussed Puerto Rico’s economic crisis. Many people wanted to know how to join the movement in New York City to free Óscar.

From tall residential buildings, people waved Puerto Rican flags and shouted slogans to greet the marchers. A Puerto Rican music shop, where gigantic Puerto Rican flags waved, played a song calling for Óscar’s freedom. It was written by Puerto Rican Danny Rivera.

## Campaigns in Puerto Rico and Latin America

In Puerto Rico, the movement for Óscar has grown — as in the past the successful struggle to get the U.S. military off the island of Vieques grew. On the 29th day of every month, the “Free Óscar” movement and the women’s group “34 for Óscar” hold activities. The women’s organization, which organizes protests in Puerto Rico and New York, includes “34” in its name to show the number of years of his incarceration.

On May 29, the Second Walk for Óscar was held. It passed through 40 towns on the island in 34 days, carrying information about the case and collecting resolutions of support from those municipalities.

But the solidarity extends beyond Puerto Rico. In Cuba, there have been many events and conferences, including a demonstration called by the Organization of Solidarity of the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAL) at the Puerto Rico Mission in Havana.

In Venezuela, an Óscar López Rivera Solidarity Committee was formed in a neighborhood named after Óscar López Rivera, created by the Gran Misión Vivienda. President Nicolás Maduro has actively supported the cause of the patriot’s liberation. So, too, have other Latin American leaders, including former Uruguayan President José Mujica and Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega.

Public meetings supporting Óscar and Puerto Rico were held in more than 10 Latin American countries on May 29 as a result of decisions agreed to in the Final Declaration of the Summit of the Americas held in Panamá. In Panamá, Spain and Germany, public meetings and petitions called for Óscar’s release.

Many well-known individuals have also spoken out in favor of Óscar, such as Nobel Prize laureates Rigoberta Menchú from Guatemala and Desmond Tutu from South Africa.

The time has come to free Óscar López Rivera and Puerto Rico! □

# U.S. State Department tells Haiti: No money, no elections

By G. Dunkel

The Haitian parliament was essentially dissolved months ago when terms for all its members, except 10 senators, ran out. President Michel Martelly, who can’t run again, has been ruling by decree. Martelly’s prime minister, Evan Paul, holds office only on a de facto basis, since the Parliament has been dissolved and thus can’t approve his appointment.

Back in March, the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) set the schedule: Two-thirds of the Senate and the entire lower chamber of deputies will be elected Aug. 9; the presidential election will be held on Oct. 25, with a run-off, if necessary, on Dec. 27; local and municipal elections will be held on the October date.

Some Haitian political organizations like the progressive Dessalines Coordination and its allies oppose holding elections while the U.N.’s Minustah are enforcing a military occupation of the country and U.S.-imposed Martelly is president.

But many other groups have decided to participate.

The CEP announced May 15 that 1,515 candidates from 98 parties will be running in the parliamentary elections.

## Support for Fanmi Lavalas

May 19 saw a major outburst of popular support for Fanmi Lavalas, the political party founded by former President Jean Bertrand Aristide. Thousands of excited and militant supporters went from Aristide’s house in Tabarre to accompany Dr. Maryse Narcisse, Fanmi Lavalas’s candidate for president, to the election offices.

Earlier, Narcisse made two trips to

Boston to solicit support in its Haitian community, meeting with community activists and Haitian trade unionists.

The CEP reported May 23 that 70 people had registered as candidates for president and that challenges to their qualifications had been raised against 23 of them, including Narcisse.

Two days after the Fanmi Lavalas rally, U.S. State Department Haiti Special Adviser Thomas C. Adams told a group of Haitian journalists in Washington that the State Department judged now was an “opportune” time for Haiti to change its electoral schedule. It doesn’t have the money to carry it out. (Haiti Sentinel, May 22)

For the past 10 years, the tactic that the United States and the Haitian bourgeoisie have used to keep Fanmi Lavalas from winning elections is to keep them off the

ballot. But now the U.S. has lost control of the electoral process. Many fairly well-known progressive candidates are on the ballot, like Moïse Jean-Charles of Platfòm Pitit Dessalines. These candidates tend to get the votes of Haitians who vote their choice rather than vote for the lesser of two evils.

Washington remembers what happened in 1990. By a landslide, Jean Bertrand Aristide beat the U.S.-backed candidate, who outspent him 60 to 1. That U.S. defeat threatened Washington’s control of Haiti, which required two decades of intervention to restore.

To avoid a similar setback in the upcoming elections, Washington is now raising the possibility of cancelling the elections altogether.

It’s hard to lose an election that isn’t held. □

# WORKERS WORLD

## editorials

### The real terrorist

On May 29, as part of its stated intentions to improve relations with Cuba, the United States formally removed the island nation from its list of “State Sponsors of Terrorism,” even as it maintained its decades-old illegal blockade.

For most people around the world, the fact that Cuba was on a list that should not even exist represents a high in imperialist arrogance and hypocrisy, coming as it does, from the biggest sponsor of terrorism in the world. Over 3,000 Cubans have been killed in U.S.-sponsored terror attacks since 1959, while the perpetrator of a terrorist bombing that brought down a Cuban airliner walks around freely in the United States.

A major plank of U.S. foreign policy is the targeted assassination of “high value targets” (translation: human beings the CIA wants to kill) using drone aircraft or special forces. This particular “kill list,” as the CIA likes to call it, was recently extended to include U.S. citizens. Thousands of civilians, family members, members of wedding parties, etc., have been killed as well. The U.S. has also supported client states such as Israel and Saudi Arabia in such activities.

According to international law, a blockade is an act of war. Since 1992, the U.N. General Assembly has passed annual resolutions with almost unanimous votes calling on the U.S. to end its illegal blockade of Cuba. Supporting these resolutions, Cuba detailed the many hardships inflicted on the Cuban people, but the United States has remained unmoved in its hostility to Cuban socialism and its priority of human beings over profit.

The Congressional Accountability Of-

fice recently reported that from 1996 to 2011, Congress appropriated \$205 million for Cuban “democracy” assistance. Most of this went to the U.S. Agency for International Development, a notorious front for CIA operations. Congress has also allocated more than \$25 million per year to fund TV Marti and Radio Marti, which beam anti-socialist, anti-Cuban propaganda from the U.S. to Cuba.

Investigative reporting by the Associated Press exposed the smuggling into Cuba of military grade communications by Alan Gross (who was caught and jailed) and the ZunZuneo caper to set up a Cuban social media like Twitter, secretly paid for by the CIA.

Some capitalist intellectuals and apologists for imperialism have attempted to justify the gross hypocrisy of U.S. diplomacy with the doctrine of “American Exceptionalism.” This chauvinistic, racist idea asserts that the United States, because it is such an exceptionally “good” force in the world, has a responsibility to maintain and expand an “American Empire,” and should therefore not be accountable to international law. (Marilyn B. Young, “One Empire Under God,” *European Contributions to American Studies*, May 2004)

This rubbish must be exposed for what it really is: an ideological weapon used to pummel any nation or individual who dares to stand up to U.S. imperialism.

This is especially true when it comes to Cuba, which has become a beacon for poor and oppressed people the world over. If it wants to normalize relations with Cuba, the U.S. should first end its illegal blockade. □

### FIFA, DoJ and imperialism

The sudden, dramatic arrest of nine high-ranking officials of the top worldwide soccer organization and five corporation executives on charges from the U.S. Department of Justice threw up some big questions before the billions of fans of the world’s most popular sport. Here are two:

What is the role of the International Federation of Football Association, or FIFA by its French acronym, the private organization that is responsible for the organization of the World Cup of soccer, which started in 1930, and the Women’s World Cup, which began in 1991?

Why has the U.S. Department of Justice headed an international sting operation that involves mostly targets who are not U.S. citizens in a sport that is vastly popular outside the United States?

Now soccer’s appeal in the U.S. may be growing, especially for women’s sports. In fact the upcoming June 6 opening of the Women’s World Cup in Canada may leap it forward. But this doesn’t really affect our questions.

FIFA’s tournaments bring in billions of dollars. Their host countries attract hundreds of thousands of tourists. The soccer World Cup is even bigger than the Olympics and the National Football League’s Super Bowl.

We have no “inside” information about FIFA. But Workers World has a

clear view of how large private corporations function in a world dominated by imperialism. Their goal is to maximize profits. That means constantly increasing the exploitation of their workers and of whole oppressed nations.

It also means using all measures, including bribes and intimidation — in the case of the U.S. this includes threatening war — to pin down new markets at profitable prices. It means risking all sorts of illegal activity — from banks laundering illicit drug cash to gun running — that will keep the profits pouring in. That’s capitalism.

Oil giants, big pharma, the military-industrial complex and the giant imperialist banks all keep tight relations with governments to grease the profit machine. Why should it shock us that FIFA might do the same?

From what we have learned about FIFA and its top executives, we know the reelected top executive Sepp Blatter is a misogynist who has belittled the role of women players. His Islamophobe policy from 2007 until 2014 was to disallow hijabs on the field, thus banning Muslim women from the sport. We know FIFA allowed some questionable construction in Brazil and some deadly construction

### Puerto Rico, the colony, part 2: Puerto Ricans resist



By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Puerto Rico has been selling itself off since the 1990s, when the telephone company was privatized under Gov. Pedro Rosello. Since then, all Puerto Rico’s governments have been privatizing all public property, including the airports, health services, roads, the valuable pineapple industry, etc. The slogan of the progressive independence movement since then has been, “Puerto Rico is not for sale.”

The “reconfiguration” of schools is actually another attempt to privatize education. The few agencies that remain under public control do so thanks to the ceaseless struggle of their workers. The class-conscious union UTIER, for example, has defended the nationalized Electric Power Authority tooth and nail.

Apart from the sell-off, the government wanted to pay the debt by applying tax measures that the working class would have to pay. While transnational giants and megastores like Walmart take in billions in profits while paying minimal taxes, if any, the government loaded a tax on sales and services of 11.5 percent — the IVU — with the possibility of imposing a Value Added Tax later. In fact, the 16 percent VAT that García Padilla wanted to impose was rejected by the legislature in mid-May due to the population’s massive rejection of this tax.

These measures are excessive in the extreme, with dire consequences for the already impoverished population.

#### The people reject these measures

Along with the general consensus of the people against the VAT of 16 percent, the resistance among students and union workers is even stronger.

On May 25, the students of the University of Puerto Rico, known for their militancy, which prevented the privatization of the UPR a few years ago, were holding an assembly to determine how they will proceed in the fight against the new taxes. For weeks now, they have been organized

on their 11 different campuses and have joined students from other schools. Various actions have been taken, including 48-hour stoppages and a major mobilization at the Capitol building on May 13.

The students’ slogan is “Neither IVU nor VAT. Let those on top pay.” Not only do the students reject these measures, but they also offer alternative steps to the government to confront the crisis. For example, “eliminating the tax exemptions now maintained by the state and offered to multinational companies. ... and recommend amending Article 6.8 of the Constitution, which gives priority to debt repayment over services to the people.” (Facebook: Radio Huelga)

The teachers, on the other hand, led by EDUCAMOS and ÚNETE, are calling on teachers and parents to demonstrate on May 26 against the Department of Education and protest school closings.

In an article, Puerto Rican writer Nelson A. Denis, author of the newly released bestseller, “War Against All Puerto Ricans,” offers an easy solution to solve the debt crisis: end the Cabotage Act. This act, better known as the Jones Act of 1920, requires that all goods that travel between the U.S. and Puerto Rico do so on U.S.-flagged vessels. Let’s explain this in brief: The value of U.S. protectionist quotas, taxes, fees and surcharges of ships and ports, which are the most expensive in the world, under this act are transferred to the Puerto Rican consumers, making the merchandise extremely expensive.

Denis concludes, “From 1970 to 2010, the Jones Act cost Puerto Rico \$29 billion. Projected from 1920 to the present, this cost was equivalent to \$75.8 billion. Ironically, this \$75.8 billion cost exceeds the amount of the current public debt.” (Latinorebels.com)

The Jones Act is but another expression of colonialism. So to solve the debt once and for all, what is essential is the independence of Puerto Rico.

¡Viva Puerto Rico Libre! (Long live free Puerto Rico!) □

in Qatar — where 1,200 immigrant, low-paid, virtually slave workers have died on the job since 2010.

We have no sympathy for the FIFA execs. We save our solidarity for the exploited construction workers, who are paid pennies, and the exploited soccer players, few who achieve star salaries.

On the other hand, we are suspicious of the Justice Department’s decision to stick U.S. imperialism’s fist into another international arena. Why? Did the U.S. give a go-ahead to the DoJ when it lost out to Qatar for the 2022 games? Is it to punish Russia — which will host the 2018 games

— as part of the Ukraine offensive?

Right at home there are even more serious gangs than FIFA. For example, the giant transnational banks whose speculation exacerbated the capitalist collapse of 2008, and whose executives have well-earned the new term “banksters.” Pharmaceutical companies that use skulduggery to extend their patents. Weapons manufacturers who employ retired generals to twist arms. Police departments all over the U.S. who arrest, kill and occupy based on racial bias.

It would be much more impressive if the DoJ picked one of these to reel in. □

# No end in sight to U.S.-coordinated war against Yemen

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

Another Shiite mosque was bombed in Sunni-dominated Saudi Arabia on May 29, as Saudi airstrikes continued against Yemen.

The war in Yemen is over whether the people of that country, the most underdeveloped in the region, can achieve and maintain their right to self-determination and sovereignty.

The fighting began after the Ansuralah, also known as the Houthis, rebelled against the regime of Yemeni President Abd-Rabbu Hadi in late March. Hadi left the country and sought support from the monarchy of Saudi Arabia and the generals now running Egypt, both of whom are major U.S. military clients in the region.

U.S. government designs to control the Yemeni people, along with their land and waterways, have been a focus of Washington and Wall Street for many years. The withdrawal from Yemen in March of Pentagon Special Forces and State Department personnel preceded aggressive military actions on the part of the Saudi Arabian and Gulf Cooperation Council regimes, which take their foreign policy initiative from imperialism.

## Clashes intensify war for control

On May 31, aircraft from the Saudi-GCC alliance struck Yemeni positions throughout the country, according to people on the ground. Aerial bombardments hit what was said to have been an air base near Sanaa airport and a military outpost supposedly working with the Ansuralah.

The Yemeni television network al-Masira, which is allied with the Houthi movement, said the Saudi-GCC coalition carried out 25 bombing missions in the northwest provinces of Saada and Hajja, very close to the border with Saudi Arabia. Additional reports said Saudi ground forces were shelling the same areas.

## Fight to save Milwaukee public schools

By **Workers World Milwaukee Bureau**

Parents, students, educators and community members held a school defense action at Milwaukee's Auer Elementary School on May 27. Hundreds locked arms and surrounded Auer, saying, "Hands off our locally controlled public schools and public education!"

The right-wing Wisconsin State Legislature and Gov. Scott Walker are now allegedly debating the 2015-17 state budget. This legislation contains some of the most vicious attacks in the history of the state in many areas, particularly public education. Hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts for K-12 and higher education and expanding voucher schools statewide are top budget austerity goals.

The proposed Milwaukee plan would take over so-called "failing" schools in the Milwaukee Public School system and hand them over to capitalist corporations to operate. The "Opportunity Schools Partnership Program" (OSPP) would be run by a commissioner to be appointed by Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele, a leading capitalist in the Wisconsin Democratic Party. The commissioner would have parallel authority with the elected Milwaukee Public School Board and would be accountable only to the county executive.

The 55 schools listed as potential targets have predominantly Black or Latino/a student populations and are in parts of the city devastated by decades of deindustrialization and lack of social-safety nets.

All MPS workers at schools taken over would be fired and forced to reapply for

People living in Saada told Reuters press agency May 31 that territory held by the Ansuralah was bombed intensively by war planes.

There were also renewed heavy artillery clashes along Yemen's border with Saudi Arabia, as the war entered an even more deadly and protracted phase.

In the central Yemeni city of Taiz, which has been a major center of armed struggle between the Saudi-backed Hadi militias and the Ansuralah, Saudi-led air strikes on these forces were centered on a mountaintop area and a nearby Special Forces base.

There are claims that during the month of April, Saudi-GCC war planes used cluster bombs in the region of Saada. Human Rights Watch asserted on May 31 that these weapons, which are controversial and banned in various countries, were used against civilian populations. According to a statement issued by HRW senior researcher Ole Solvang, "These weapons can't distinguish military targets from civilians, and their unexploded sub-munitions threaten civilians, especially children, even long after the fighting."

Saudi government officials did not respond to these allegations.

Earlier, on May 27, an estimated 40 people, the majority civilians, were reported killed during fighting between Ansuralah and Saudi military units along the border. Local fighters working with the Houthis have been engaging Saudi ground forces in the area and also taking the war into the Saudi kingdom.

One resident told Reuters on May 27, "Houthi gunmen were attacking Saudi border positions from this area, but the coalition's planes have not hit the Ansuralah and bombed civilians (instead)."

It was also reported by the state news agency Saba on May 27 that Saudi-GCC air strikes on a Yemeni Special Forces base took place against allies of the Ansuralah in central Sanaa: "Around 40 people were martyred and more than 100 others were wounded, according to a preliminary toll, in the bombing operations executed by the Saudi aggression's planes on the Sabaaeen area in the capital Sanaa today."

The Red Sea port city of Hodeida, which contains a naval base, was also hit on the same day by Saudi-GCC bombers. According to the same Reuters report: "The naval base was bombed by aircraft and ships. Large parts of it were destroyed and two warships were hit, and one of them, named the Bilqis, was destroyed and sank onto its side, and five gunboats shelled the administrative buildings of the base."

U.S., Saudi-GCC seek to contain Iranian influence

Saudi Arabia is a theocratic monarchy in which Sunni Islam is the official state religion. Bombings have continued against Shiite mosques in eastern Saudi Arabia. On May 29 during prayers a car bomb exploded at the entrance to one such mosque in Dammam.

## Defend Yemeni people confronting Saudi aggression



Saudi Arabian bombs kill Yemeni civilians.

The following is a statement for a petition received from the Kolkata, India, based International Anti-imperialist Coordinating Committee (IACC) on May 28.

Following the various forms of Saudi-led aggression against Yemen, without distinction between persons and things, since March 26, 2015, causing the death of hundreds of Yemenis, be these children, women, old people, etc. ...

Feeling painful vis-à-vis this people's grievance as a result of the aggression against a sovereign state, member of the United Nations and Arab League, in a confrontation of a people looking for future and self-determination, as well as getting out of dependency.

Since this aggression against Yemen and Yemenis is unjustified, this imposes a duty on the Arab and Islamic worlds and all free people all over the world to sustain this struggling people against Saudi-led killing and its destructive apparatus.

We call upon you to take part in launching a large defensive campaign for the right of Yemenis to face off Saudi-led aggression and its impacts and to call its perpetrators to account notably after posing a threat to the international peace and safety and committing dangerous international crimes punishable under international law and modernized nations' laws, most notably:

1. The crime of aggression represented, pursuant to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3314 and the statute of the International Criminal Court (repeated in article 8), by the use of armed force against territories' safety, sovereignty or political independence of another state ... through bombarding this state or attacking its armed forces since March 26, 2015.

2. War crimes represented, pursuant to the statute of the International Criminal Court (Article 8), by committing gross violations of Geneva Accords through delib-

News reports said the bombing of the al-Anoud mosque resulted in 21 people killed and 120 others injured, in what is described as the most violent of such attacks in Saudi Arabia in years. Just one week earlier, a similar attack took place in Qatif.

For over two months, the Pentagon and the CIA have been supplying war materials and reconnaissance information to the Saudi-GCC forces in their bombing and ground campaign against Yemen.

The U.S. and its Saudi-GCC allies view the war as an effort to contain and lessen the influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Arabian Peninsula.

While Washington has been participating in talks with Tehran over its nuclear program, the administration of President Barack Obama has not altered the decades-long U.S. hostility toward Iran since its revolution of 1979. That revolution toppled the regime of Shah Reza Pahlevi, who owed his position to U.S. and British oil companies that put him in power in 1953 through a CIA-directed coup. □

erate killing, causing severe suffering for people, vast destruction of properties and conducting attacks against civilian locations as a part of a "plan, general policy or in the framework of a large-scale operation." A Yemeni army spokesman announced hundreds of civilian deaths and the destruction of thousands of housing units, hundreds of civil facilities as well as health, educational and archaeological sites.

3. Crimes against humanity based, according to the Statute of the International Criminal Court (Article 7), upon a large-scale or systematic attack against a group of civilians with the aim of perpetrating deliberate killing, genocide and various nonhuman acts causing severe suffering to people. Saudi-led aggression has been exerting violations against civilians and civil facilities within a large-scale comprehensive war.

4. The crime of genocide based, according to 1948 convention and the statute of the International Criminal Court, upon intentionally abolishing a national, ethnic, racial or religious group — partly or completely — through murdering, physically inflicting or subjugating individuals of the group to harsh conditions. Aggressors have been surrounding Yemeni shores, bombarding transportations carrying essential food and relief stuffs, and targeting food industries in order to starve and abolish — even partly — Yemeni people considered as fighters and actors against their will.

All these crimes have been perpetrated before the world's very eyes. Let's work together to stop them from killing this struggling people and not to let the perpetrators go scot-free.

To sign the petition, which has also been published in Arabic, French and Spanish, go to this link:

<http://www.medhr.org/default1.aspx>



Baltimore, 2 de Mayo.

## ¿Qué va a hacer la Izquierda con el plan del gobierno para aplastar el levantamiento La Vida de Negros Importa?

Análisis de Workers World-Mundo Obrero

Por Larry Holmes

El gobierno tiene la intención de aplastar el levantamiento La Vida de Negros Importa (BLM por las siglas en inglés) que se extendió por el país a raíz de la rebelión el año pasado contra la violencia policial racista en Ferguson-Misuri. La represión que se está preparando en contra de esta sublevación será mucho mayor que la represión del movimiento Occupy Wall Street debido a que el levantamiento BLM plantea una amenaza mucho mayor para el sistema.

Políticos y funcionarios policiales esperaban que el levantamiento nacional perdiera fuerza. Sin embargo, la revuelta en Baltimore por el asesinato de Freddie Grey en abril — una revuelta que se extendió rápidamente por todo el país — es prueba innegable de que el levantamiento que ha sacudido al establecimiento capitalista no va a desaparecer.

Los departamentos de policía locales coordinados por el Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, con la participación del FBI y el Pentágono, están planeando romper con fuerza las protestas masivas contra la policía. De hecho, el nuevo nivel coordinado de represión ya ha comenzado. El despliegue de la Guardia Nacional en Baltimore y el establecimiento de un toque de queda constituyeron un experimento calculado para probar cómo se podrían utilizar estas medidas para hacer arrestos masivos y disolver las protestas con fuerza policial abrumadora.

Durante las últimas semanas, la policía ha atacado las protestas contra la violencia policial en Nueva York, Filadelfia, Cleveland y otras ciudades, golpeando y arrestando a cientos de manifestantes. En Oakland-California se ha impuesto la prohibición de protestas por la noche, y otras ciudades planean imponer prohibiciones similares. Las llamadas fuerzas de ataque “anti-terroristas” están siendo organizadas por la policía con el propósito explícito de aplastar las protestas.

Algunas ciudades, incluyendo Nueva York, tienen previsto elevar el cargo de resistirse al arresto, de un delito menor a un delito grave. Esto es solo el comienzo. La policía se está disponiendo a ejecutar una mayor represión mientras se preparan para el aniversario de la muerte de Michael Brown en agosto.

Los políticos, junto con personalidades de los derechos civiles a favor del sistema y los medios de comunicación están proporcionando cobertura política a la policía repitiendo el pretexto de “detener la violencia” para aplastar la protesta.

### La Cuestión Nacional y la Liberación Negra

Cómo las fuerzas progresistas, especialmente las/os progresistas blancos, responden a una crisis como esta es una pregunta con que las/os marxistas han estado lidiando incluso antes de que Vladimir Lenin declarara hace un siglo que la consigna del movimiento comunista, “Trabajadores del mundo, uníos”, debía ser modificada a “Los trabajadores

y oprimidos del mundo, uníos”.

Lenin hizo esto reconociendo que el movimiento obrero no podría avanzar a la meta de la revolución socialista a menos que incluyera y apoyara las luchas de liberación de quienes están súper oprimidos y súper explotados por el colonialismo y el imperialismo, incluyendo el derecho a la autodeterminación. Karl Marx esencialmente decía lo mismo cuando dijo en su libro pionero, “El Capital”, que “la fuerza de trabajo en una piel blanca nunca podrá ser libre mientras la fuerza de trabajo en una piel negra esté marcada con hierro candente”.

Durante mucho tiempo, las/os comunistas se han referido a su comprensión y su posición sobre la lucha de los pueblos oprimidos por su liberación como “la Cuestión Nacional”.

¿Qué distingue a la Cuestión Nacional de otras cuestiones en las mentes de los comunistas? ¿Es moralmente superior a otros temas? No, no lo es. La Cuestión Nacional es única en importancia porque entenderla y actuar en base a ese entendimiento es esencial para la amplia solidaridad de clase. Negar la Cuestión Nacional es entregar a la clase dominante su arma más potente contra la clase obrera.

El levantamiento del BLM es fundamentalmente una reencarnación de la lucha de Liberación Negra. La clase capitalista entiende que su existencia depende de mantener la lucha de liberación lo más aparte y aislada posible del movimiento de la clase obrera y el movimiento progresista. En cambio, mientras más el movimiento entero abraza la lucha de liberación, más difícil resulta que el estado capitalista lleve a cabo una fuerte represión.

Mantener a las/os oprimidos aislados es clave para la clase dominante. Las mejores circunstancias para que el sistema tenga éxito con su plan de aplastar este levantamiento de las/os oprimidos es mantener esta lucha geográfica, o al menos políticamente aislada de la clase obrera y el movimiento progresista.

La participación de jóvenes activistas blancas/os apoyando el levantamiento BLM ha sido impresionante, incluso sin precedentes. Sin embargo, tomado en su conjunto, la izquierda, en concreto la izquierda blanca, ha estado en gran parte ausente hasta el momento. Esto es peligroso y debe ser rectificado.

No hay duda de que si el estado capitalista tiene éxito en aislar y luego aplastar la sublevación BLM, se sentirá en una posición aún más fuerte para usar la misma represión contra toda la clase obrera. Hay mucho en juego aquí, porque la crisis del capitalismo hará inevitable si no inminente, confrontaciones más grandes entre el capitalismo y la clase obrera.

En los años 1870 y 1880, cuando el movimiento obrero estaba luchando por la jornada de ocho horas en el Norte, la Reconstrucción en el Sur—un corto período después de la Guerra Civil, cuando el pueblo negro logró algunas medidas pequeñas de poder—estaba violentamente aplastada por los linchamientos y el terror del Ku Klux Klan, con apoyo del go-

bierno. El movimiento obrero en el Norte hizo poco, si acaso hizo algo, para detener la contrarrevolución racista contra la Reconstrucción. Por desgracia, el fracaso del amplio movimiento obrero para responder a la opresión nacional del pueblo negro a finales del siglo 19, estableció desde entonces un patrón de decepciones similares.

Mucho ha cambiado desde que la Reconstrucción fue aplastada; sin embargo, ninguno de esos cambios ha negado la importancia de la Cuestión Nacional respecto al pueblo negro.

### La izquierda debe involucrarse

Vamos al otoño de 2014. Imagínese lo trascendental que habría sido si la Marcha de Cambio Climático de varios cientos de miles de personas en septiembre en la ciudad de Nueva York—que, aunque ciertamente no eran todas blancas, eran mayoritariamente blancas—se hubiera convertido en una marcha solidaria con el levantamiento de Ferguson. Esto no quiere decir que la lucha por salvar al planeta de la contaminación capitalista no sea un tema urgente, sino más bien señalar que en ese momento, la crisis más urgente para el movimiento de masas era la sublevación en Ferguson.

Para las/os activistas y revolucionarios — ya su principal preocupación sea oponerse al imperialismo de Estados Unidos, luchar contra el capitalismo, apoyar la lucha de la clase obrera o luchar por el socialismo — una mirada más profunda a la importancia del levantamiento BLM debería ser suficiente para convencerle de que es fundamental, quizás incluso decisivo la necesidad de apoyarlo.

Este levantamiento ha demostrado una vez más que la lucha por la Liberación Negra es central para la lucha contra el imperialismo estadounidense. Esto no quita nada a los muchos frentes en la lucha contra el imperialismo de Estados Unidos en todo el mundo; es simplemente un reconocimiento de la realidad.

La guerra de la policía contra las/os jóvenes negros y latinos, incluyendo el encarcelamiento masivo de estas/os jóvenes, no va a desaparecer no importa cuánto se hable de reformas de la policía, y no importa cuántos departamentos de policía investigue el Departamento de Justicia. De hecho, la guerra se va a intensificar. ¿Por qué? Porque la guerra es una consecuencia directa del nuevo orden capitalista globalizado basado en la alta tecnología. La policía y las cárceles están siendo utilizadas para regular y reducir la fuerza laboral. El capitalismo no tiene ya ni siquiera empleos de salarios bajos para los/as jóvenes de color, así que el sistema está llevando a cabo un genocidio social utilizando aburguesamiento de comunidades pobres, medidas de austeridad y de estado policial como sus armas principales.

A quienes les interesa la clase trabajadora, quiero informarles que las personas que están siendo atacadas por la policía representan el segmento de más rápido crecimiento de la clase trabajadora. Una de las muchas cosas que la presente y

cualquier etapa futura del capitalismo hará, es engrosar las filas de las/os desempleados y subempleados, primero entre las/os jóvenes de color, las mujeres, las/os inmigrantes y las personas con discapacidades, para luego ir contra la totalidad de la clase trabajadora.

La hora más que ha llegado para descartar las ideas anticuadas sobre quién es y quién no es de la clase trabajadora. El hecho es que la composición de la clase trabajadora, como todo, está en constante cambio; lo mismo que la economía capitalista cambia; esto se llama materialismo dialéctico. A menos que la definición de clase trabajadora esté continuamente revolucionada y sea más inclusiva de las/os más oprimidos, y aún más importante, a menos que las organizaciones del movimiento trabajador reflejen este constante cambio — cambio que no solo debe afectar a la organización de la clase trabajadora sino también su orientación ideológica — la clase trabajadora no encontrará el camino de la revolución socialista.

El levantamiento de BLM es tanto una rebelión contra la opresión nacional, como una rebelión de la clase trabajadora. Como todo movimiento, el movimiento BLM no es políticamente homogéneo. Sin embargo, es muy radical, muy militante, muy anti-capitalista y tiene el potencial de llegar a ser, al menos en parte, un movimiento revolucionario que podría desempeñar un papel fundamental en revolucionar a otros sectores de la clase trabajadora.

No es poca cosa que comparado con otras fases de la lucha de Liberación Negra, haya más mujeres y lesbianas, gays, bisexuales y personas transgéneras jugando un papel clave en el levantamiento BLM. Esto tiende a hacer el levantamiento más radical y multinacional.

Lo que también es cierto es que dentro de este joven movimiento existe la percepción de que, en general la izquierda, sobre todo la izquierda blanca, es o demasiada débil, demasiada dividida y sectaria o simplemente demasiada conservadora para aportar algo importante a este levantamiento. Esta es una de las razones por las que este levantamiento en general no está buscando el apoyo o respuestas de la izquierda. Ya sea la evaluación justa o no, todas/os deberían tomar nota. La pregunta para todas/os quienes se consideran parte de la izquierda, pero que no se están relacionando de una manera significativa con este levantamiento es: ¿Está usted dispuesta/o a declararse culpable de irrelevancia?

El primer aniversario de la Rebelión de Ferguson es dentro de pocos meses. Antes de ese aniversario, es el aniversario del asesinato policial de Eric Garner en Staten Island-NY. También habrá una gran marcha contra la violencia policial que tendrá lugar en Newark-Nueva Jersey el 25 de julio. Estos y otros eventos deben dar al movimiento muchas oportunidades para demostrar su relevancia. La pregunta es: ¿Se actuará ante estas oportunidades?

*El escritor es el primer secretario del Partido Workers World-Mundo Obrero.*