



LYNCHED IN TEXAS JAIL

Justice for Sandra Bland!

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

How can someone, whose only mistake is to forget to use her car's turn signal when changing lanes, wind up dead in a county jail just a few days later, with a medical examiner calling it suicide?

People from coast to coast are asking that question.

Sandra Bland, a 28-year-old African-American woman, drove from her home in a Chicago suburb to Prairie View A&M University, her alma mater in rural southeast Texas, to begin a new job as a student ambassador to the alumni association. She called it her dream job.

Bland was found hanging with a trash bag around her neck in a Waller County Jail cell in Hempstead, Texas, on July 13.

There have been almost daily protests, vigils, rallies and/or marches since the news broke.

On July 17, this writer joined hundreds who protested at the jail and then marched to the Waller County Courthouse. There a rally was chaired by Kofi Taharka, chair of the National Black United Front. Anti-racist activists from Houston and Austin were joined by local residents of Hempstead, Waller's county seat of just over 40,000 people where 60 percent are white and 30 percent are Black. Speakers included friends of Bland, a sorority sister, PVAM alums and outraged activists.

A few women from Hempstead who were unable to march set up a card table at the jail, offering free cheese sandwiches and sweet tea for protesters. One woman, who goes by Jen Jen, said she was 49 years old and could give 49 reasons why no one should ever want to find themselves inside the jail. "The last time I was picked up I was beaten black and blue, with splotches darker than this skin you see today."

When asked what she was charged with, Jen Jen responded, "Oh, the cops didn't charge me. After they beat me, they let me go, that's all. And you don't even want to hear the stories about things that happen right inside these walls," she said, pointing to the Waller County Jail.

On July 19, PVAM students gathered at the school's fountain to remember and honor Bland. PVAM was founded in 1876 when the Alta Vista plantation near Hempstead was bought and turned into what is now the second oldest state-funded school of higher education in Texas.

Bland was already familiar with Texas and its horrific racist history. She graduated in 2009 from Prairie View, a historically Black universi-

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Sandra Bland



Kindra Chapman

Waller County court house in Hempstead, Texas.



WW PHOTO

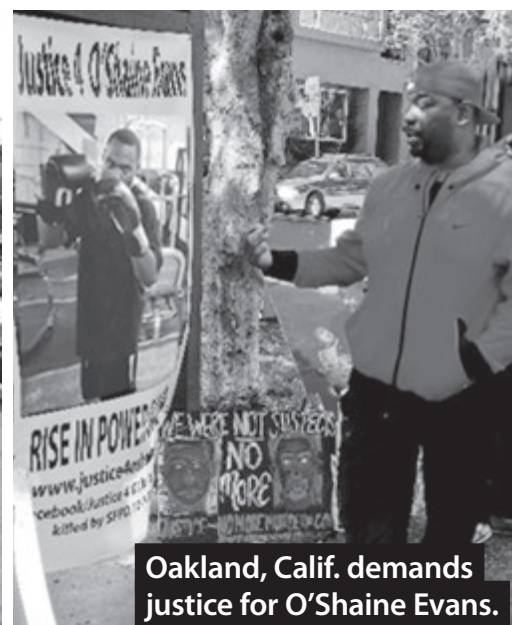
BLACK LIVES MATTER

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Philadelphia protest for Tyree Carroll.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE



Oakland, Calif. demands justice for O'Shaine Evans.

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

Eric Garner Tyree Carroll O'Shaine Evans

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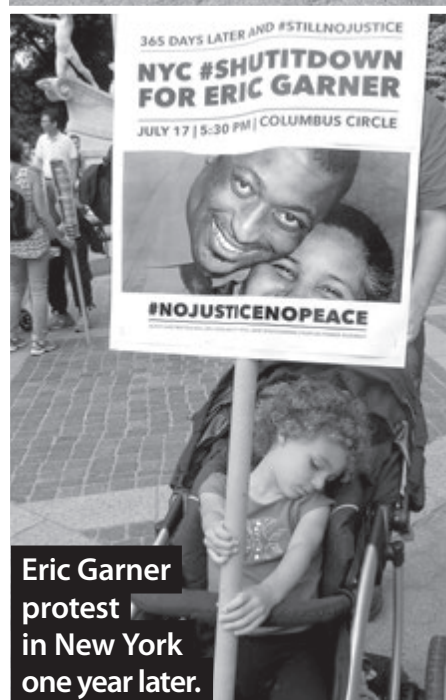
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Eric Garner protest in New York one year later.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Anthropologists confirm Engels Sexual equality is in our genes

By Chris Fry

Marxist thinkers from Frederick Engels to Dorothy Ballan have long maintained that, for most of human existence, the social structure was based on mother-right, or matriarchy, in which a fundamental equality existed between women and men.

Today this period of human social development is often called the primary commune. Some Indigenous communities still live in this social structure.

A recent paper written by nine anthropologists at University College London and published in the May 15 issue of Science magazine not only confirms this idea but adds a strong genetic component to it. Entitled “Sex Equality Can Explain the Unique Social Structure of Hunter-Gatherer Bands,” the study asserts that “within-camp relatedness is reduced if men and women have equal influence in selecting camp members.” The lead author of the study, Mark Dyble, says: “It gives you a far more expansive social network with a wider choice of mates, so inbreeding would be less of an issue.”

Ballan’s pamphlet, titled “Feminism and Marxism,” was published in 1971 on the cusp of the Women’s Liberation movement that was sweeping the U.S. and the rest of the world at that time. Her pamphlet critiqued the bourgeois view that there was an “eternal” conflict between the sexes and that men had always dominated women in society.

No, no, wrote Ballan: “To survive and develop in the struggle against nature with little or no tools, men and women lived and worked cooperatively, equally and communally, with a division of labor that came naturally.”

Ballan noted: “The period of time that began with the transformation from animal to human, and known as the period of mother-right, or matriarchy, was a very long and complex period. If we were to reduce the many hundreds of thousands of years of human development to the scale of one year, the equivalent scale would leave only a few days of historical time to the patriarchy; over 360 days would belong to the matriarchy.”

Ballan cited the work “The Family, Private Property and the State” by Frederick Engels, Karl Marx’s closest collaborator. Engels, in turn, had studied the writings of Lewis Henry Morgan, an American scholar and anthropologist who had lived among the Iroquois and studied their social organization.

“At the dawn of humanity,” wrote Ballan, “group mar-

riage prevailed. Paternity was not even understood, let alone determined. It required no complex scientific reasoning to determine who the mothers were. Therefore children always remained with the mother. As the gens, a unit of blood relative descended through the mother, developed and separated into different units, the men would leave their gens to join the gens of the women, and descent continued through the mothers.”

Eventually, Ballan explained, the circle of marriage evolved from large groups to its last unit, the “human pairing.” “Although this sounds like the modern family unit, we must remember not to look at primitive society through property-tinted glasses. This pairing existed within the gen, which meant that the woman was not materially dependent in any way on the man. The gen was responsible for the material subsistence of all its members, and also mother-right still prevailed.”

It is clear now that gay, lesbian and transgender relationships also coexisted right along with these pairings.

Sexual equality, a ‘human norm’

The article in Science magazine mirrors these findings: “[I]n contemporary hunter-gatherer tribes, men and women tend to have equal influence on where their group lives and who they live with. The findings challenge the idea that sexual equality is a recent invention, suggesting that it has been the norm for humans for most of our evolutionary history.”

Dyble told the Guardian newspaper, “Sexual equality is one of an important suite of changes to social organization, including things like pair-bonding, our big, social brains, and language, that distinguishes humans. It’s an important one that hasn’t really been highlighted before.” (May 14)

Just as Morgan came to his conclusions by studying the Native people living here, particularly the Iroquois nation, so the authors of this current article based their finding on studying the Mbendjele BaYaka people in the Congo and the Agta people in the Philippines. They arrived at astonishingly similar conclusions.

In each of these cultures, human pairings are the norm, but there is no domination by the men over the women. The researchers even measured the food calories that each sex acquired for the community and found the amounts to be equal. Men are also active in childcare.

The Science article continues: “Our results suggest that

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WORKERS WORLD PARTY

Who we are & what we’re fighting for

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

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

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

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

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

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Stop Texas' execution of Bernardo Tercero

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Friends and supporters of Nicaraguan citizen Bernardo Tercero rallied outside of the Nicaraguan Consulate on July 9, to encourage the consul general to intensify efforts to stop Tercero's August 26 execution in Huntsville, Texas. "We are here to urge the Honorable Samuel Trejos, consul general of Nicaragua in Houston, to step up and defend his fellow countryman, Bernardo Tercero, before any more injustices take place," said Tercero's friend Luz Alvarez.

The activists raised with the media the many troubling issues in Tercero's case that must be settled before Texas carries out this execution. Media coverage was extensive, including a TV station from Nicaragua as well as local Houston stations and La Semana and the Houston Chronicle newspapers.

Even though Tercero specifically requested to speak with the Nicaraguan Consulate and the authorities had full knowledge of Tercero's status as a foreign national, they denied him his right, which he has under the Vienna Convention of Consular Relations (VCCR, Article 36). Also, Tercero was only 17 years old when arrested for capital murder. With this age at the time of the crime, he cannot be executed, according to the Supreme Court's Roper v. Simmons ruling in 2005, which declared juveniles ineligible for the death penalty.

Tercero had totally incompetent trial attorneys. Rather than use the funding provided by the court to have a knowledgeable professional assist in obtaining records and conducting background and mitigation investigations in Nicaragua, attorneys instead refunded almost half of the funds to Harris County.

Although the trial court approved Tercero's counsel's request for a forensic psychologist in February of 2000, counsel did not attempt to contact a psychologist until Sept. 29, 2000, less than two weeks before Tercero's trial was set to begin. No psychological testing was ever done, nor was any psychological or other expert evidence, records or testimony offered at trial.

British attorney Peter Bellamy and Tercero petitioned the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to intervene in this case. Bellamy was notified on July 6 that the IACHR accepted the

petition on its merits and will investigate the case. The IACHR has renewed the "protective measures" status of Tercero, which imposes responsibilities on U.S. authorities not to carry out the execution pending the outcome of the commission's investigation of Tercero's petition.

There have been multiple systemic failures in Tercero's case, beginning with his arrest and continuing today, namely a lack of due process at every stage of prosecution, defense and post trial appeal. Until there is a remedy to these, Tercero's sentence must not be carried out.

In the death row visiting area the day after the rally, Tercero told this reporter to convey his gratitude to everyone who is working to help him stop the August execution and bring justice to his case.

As of July 13, Texas had executed 527 people since reinstatement of the death penalty in 1976, nine of them already this year with nine others scheduled, including Tercero. Another foreign national facing execution, Gilmar Guevara, a citizen of El Salvador, was also denied his consular rights under international law. □



WWW PHOTO: TEXAS DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION MOVEMENT.

Death penalty opponents protest outside Nicaraguan Consulate in Houston on July 9.

Appeal filed for Rev. Pinkney

By David Sole

On July 6, a motion for bond pending appeal was filed in the case of Michigan political prisoner the Rev. Edward Pinkney. Attorney Tim Holloway filed the motion along with a 51-page brief in the Michigan Court of Appeals in Grand Rapids. The Michigan chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union also filed an amicus brief in support of Rev. Pinkney, who has long been active in fighting racism and the corporate rule of the Whirlpool Corporation over Benton Harbor, Mich.

Rev. Pinkney was convicted in December on five felony counts of allegedly altering five dates on petitions to recall the mayor of Benton Harbor. No evidence

implicating or naming Rev. Pinkney was ever introduced in court and the jury was told specifically, "You don't need evidence to convict Pinkney." The all-white jury, judge and prosecutor acted, in the words of Rev. Pinkney, "as a criminal enterprise in Berrien County." Rev. Pinkney was sentenced to two-and-a-half to 10 years and is currently

in the Lakeland

Correctional Facility in Coldwater, Mich. The motion reminds the appeals court of the strong family and community ties that Rev. Pinkney has in his hometown. The nonviolent nature of the charges also argue in favor of Rev. Pinkney's release on bond pending appeal. A ruling on the appeal itself might take up to one-

and-a-half years.

The appeal also makes the strong argument that there is insufficient evidence to support a guilty verdict. The verdict hinged on the argument made by prosecutor Michael Sepic that Rev. Pinkney was the principal proponent of the recall petitions and could be assumed to have altered the petitions or aided and abetted someone else in doing so.

Pinkney's appeal also challenges Trial Judge Sterling R. Schrock for giving instructions that allowed the jury to convict on no evidence. A major factor in the appeal is that the prosecutor violated Michigan Rules of Evidence, the First Amendment and due process. Throughout the trial, defense and prosecution witnesses were grilled about Rev. Pinkney's speeches, press conferences and community activism — none of which figured in the actual charges and were meant to paint Rev. Pinkney as a radical activist.

It is expected that a three-judge panel could decide on the issue of appeal bond in four to six weeks. □



SCOTUS sides with corporate poisoners

By Chris Fry

Revenue minus cost equals profit. On June 29, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a 5-4 ruling in the case, "Michigan v. Environmental Protection Agency," that declares that corporate profits outweigh any threat to the lives and health of millions of working people and their families, particularly families in the most oppressed communities.

Industry groups and 23 states had challenged the Environmental Protection Agency's ruling that limited mercury emissions from power plants. They argued that the EPA failed to recognize the costs to power plant corporations to

comply with the new regulations, which had taken the EPA several years of study to formulate.

"Mercury is considered one of the most toxic pollutants because studies show that when it falls from the atmosphere, it readily passes from fish and other sources to a pregnant woman's unborn fetus and the fetal brain, causing neurological abnormalities and delays in children. The EPA estimated that 7 percent of [U.S.] American women of childbearing age — millions of women — were being exposed to the pollutant in dangerous amounts." (npr.org, June 29)

In her dissent, Justice Elena Kagan pointed out that complying with the EPA

rules would prevent 11,000 premature deaths annually, along with a far greater number of avoidable illnesses.

Of course, it was the right-wing majority that ruled against the EPA. Justice Antonin Scalia issued the majority opinion, stating, "It is unreasonable to read an instruction to an administrative agency to determine whether 'regulation is appropriate and necessary' as an invitation to ignore cost." (npr.org)

The court majority agreed with the power and coal industry and the EPA that the cost benefits of compliance would amount to only \$4-6 million. The analysts at the EPA did indeed estimate that compliance would cost the industry \$9.6 billion, but also estimated the health and other savings to society would be \$80 billion.

That's the core of this ruling. Counter to Scalia's claim, the EPA workers and analysts did not ignore cost — they calculated it through every stage of their research after they determined that studying the harmful effects of mercury emissions by coal-fired power plants was necessary.

No, the real problem for the right-wing court majority is that these increased costs to reduce poisonous mercury emissions reduces the corporations' profits, whereas the benefits go primarily only to the women and children, to the working class. And for these justices, they count for nothing.

Small community groups and national environmental organizations have built a strong movement to try to protect the populace from industrial poisons like mercury, as well as a whole range of damaging emissions, like carbon dioxide, which is causing global warming. This Supreme Court ruling makes it clear that the fight over the environment is a key component of the global class struggle.

On the other side of this struggle are the coal and oil barons, the Wall Street bankers and their servile courts, all key parts of this social and economic system called capitalism. In the long run, the goal must be to replace it with socialism, which puts the people's lives and health ahead of corporate profits. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.
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Available online and at other bookstores.

Luxury housing abounds while 60,000 homeless

By Anne Pruden
New York

Community and immigrant organizations joined rank-and-file construction union members and church groups for a protest of some 500 people July 15 in Manhattan's Lower East Side. They rallied and marched to demand affordable housing in New York City. Led by mostly people of color, they chanted "60,000 in shelters!" and "Housing is a right — fight, fight, fight!"

This working-class community is known to have been a base for the Young Lords Party, a mainly Puerto Rican revolutionary party that led the struggle in this area against racism, housing discrimination and repressive police in the 1970s. The demand for affordable housing — and that the voice of the community be heard — continues today!

Somewhat ironically, protesters rallied at "First Houses," eight apartment buildings on East 3rd Street between Avenue A and First Avenue where the first public housing for low-income people was built in the U.S. in 1935. The site was designated a landmark in 1974. Such housing became a lifesaver for the working class. But today public housing is threatened by capitalism's privatization — despite, in New York, the lack of affordable housing for 60,000 homeless people!

The New York Daily News reports: "The great shame of the city is that homelessness is at its highest point since the Great Depression. A record 60,000 homeless New Yorkers, including more than 25,000 children, sleep in shelters each night. During the last fiscal year, one in 42 children slept in the homeless shelter system, including one of every 17 African-American children and one of every 34 Latino children." (July 20)

While New York's Mayor Bill de Blasio goes out of his way to present himself as helping to provide affordable housing, developers build in and occupy a growing number of working-class neighborhoods. In a phony deal, Mayor de Blasio claims he is making luxury developers classify 20 percent of their apartments as affordable. But "affordable for whom?" asks the community. This 20 percent is based on the city's market rate, which is not affordable for those with working-class incomes — and definitely not for the 60,000 who are homeless. As working-class families get priced out, people ask if politicians aren't "in bed" with landlords and realtors.

The protest, which demanded the construction of 15,000 housing units for the homeless as well as a \$15-an-hour minimum wage for all, exposed a system that is not working for low-income and unemployed people. They are uniting to fight, knowing the important need to take it to the streets. "No housing, No peace!" □



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

Protesters fight Scott Walker's anti-worker platform

By Workers World
Milwaukee Bureau



PHOTO: MIKE ERDMANN

Hundreds of activists participated in the "Oppose Scott Walker's Wall Street Agenda" protest July 13 at the Waukesha County Expo Center, where Wisconsin Gov. Walker officially announced he's running for U.S. president. Beside the workers who make it run, the suburb of Waukesha near

Milwaukee is a virtually all-white, right-wing, anti-union nest of racist politicians, bankers and bosses.

The day before Walker announced his candidacy, he signed the 2015-17 state budget. It contains possibly the worst austerity measures for poor and working people in state history. The attacks in the 157-page budget pushed by Walker and the right-wing Legislature include elimination of the state's prevailing wage; \$250 million in cuts to the University of Wisconsin System; evisceration of tenure via state statute; and gutting many environmental state agencies and programs. It also requires drug testing for FoodShare participants and codifies a wide range of attacks on women's reproductive freedom and on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities.

The legislation is a continuation of union-busting Act 10 rammed through in 2011 and the implementation of the right-to-work-for-less law signed on March 9. Walker's ongoing pro-Wall Street program has resulted in a plummeting standard of living for poor and working people in Wisconsin, especially people of color.

However, statewide people's resistance has opposed Walker's austerity program of racist union-busting, privatization, deregulation and attacks on women and LGBTQ communities — ever since he became governor on Jan. 1, 2011. To date, the high point of people's resistance occurred when thousands of labor, community, student, other progressive and faith-based forces occupied the state Capitol in February and March 2011 to oppose union-busting Act 10.

Fight racist union-busting austerity

The Waukesha protesters showed the world that people's resistance is alive in Wisconsin. They also appealed to all poor and working people to reject Walker's pro-

gram, which the governor intends to implement countrywide if elected president.

The Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement called on people to join the July 13 protest with their union-community signs, banners and "some noise," as they continue to resist Walker's reactionary program — or to protest in their cities if they couldn't make it to Waukesha.

The WBOPM flier stressed, "Since his election as governor, Walker — on behalf of big business and the banks — has waged unrelenting war on all poor and working people with the evisceration of a variety of progressive laws won in people's struggles over the decades. Only a mass mobilization of all the people of Wisconsin and nationwide can stop and reverse the many attacks on us. We can and must tell those bankers, corporate bosses and their paid flunkey politicians "No more!" We say no to Scott Walker for president!" (tinyurl.com/njoeour)

The protest's comprehensive list of demands called for an end to police killings and jailing killer cops and emphasized that Black, Brown, Native and LGBTQ lives matter. Included was insistence on legalization for all immigrants. A crucial point called for attacks to stop on the disabled, women, seniors, children and youth. Also tax and mortgage foreclosures must be stopped and Hardest Hit Homeowners funds must be used to keep people in their homes.

Other strong, pro-worker demands were for repealing Act 10 and right-to-work-for-less laws; an end to union-busting, pension, wage and benefit cuts and for a living wage for all. While calling for an end to the destruction of public schools and universities, activists asserted that public education is a right and should be fully funded — instead of the government paying for prisons and wars. Protesters also demanded public lighting, expansion of public transit, free health care for all and an end to environmental dangers.

A diverse array of individuals and organizations urged people to protest Walker, his reactionary political cronies and his imperialist backers on July 13. These included the Coalition For Justice, the Latin American Solidarity Committee, the Milwaukee County Labor Council, Queers Against Scott Walker and Voces de la Frontera.

For more information see www.wibailoutpeople.org. □

Sexual equality is in our genes

Continued from page 2

pair-bonding and increased sex egalitarianism in human evolutionary history may have had a transformative effect on human social organization. Many unique human traits such as high cognition, cumulative culture and hyper-cooperation have evolved due to the social organization patterns unique to humans."

The authors also found that, by preventing the narrowing of the families into male-dominated units and by widening the community base, the genetic component of the human species is widened as well. Dangerous inbreeding is avoided, and favorable genetic traits can be more easily integrated into the community.

Private property & oppression of women

There is no recognition of Marxist studies, or even that of the capitalist Morgan, in the Science article. It suggests that an "imbalance" occurred simply with the dawn of agriculture and food surpluses. "Men can start to have several wives and they can have more children than women," said Dyble. "It pays more for men to start accumulating resources and becomes favorable to form alliances with male kin."

But Ballan pointed out: "When social production becomes transformed into private production, the nature of the family changed from a socially cooperative foundation as it existed under the matriarchy to the private foundations of the patriarchy."

Engels put it this way: "The overthrow of the mother-right was the world historic

defeat of the female sex. The man seized the reins in the house also: the woman was degraded, enthralled, the slave of the man's lust, a mere instrument for breeding children. This lowered position of women ... has become gradually embellished and ... clothed in milder forms, but by no means abolished."

Thus it was the rise of the first class society — ancient slavery — that destroyed the egalitarian matriarchy. Slavery gave way to feudalism and then capitalism, which sustains gender inequality to the present day, along with every other form of oppression.

Not satisfied with just academic research on this, Marxists view the legacy of egalitarian matriarchy, of the primary commune, to be a springboard into the present-day struggle against this outmoded, racist, sexist, anti-gay, oppressive class society.

Because of the early level of the productive forces, humans in the original communes faced a tough, uphill struggle against the forces of nature. Yet they provided evidence that we humans can build a powerful social model in which to survive and grow, based on equality and filling the needs of the whole community.

Today, we humans have developed vast powers of production that could be used to satisfy our needs. Instead, in most countries, economic life is chained to the profit motive. To reach the next step on the ladder of social development — the construction of a society that meets the needs of all people on a much higher level — this rotting capitalist system has to be overthrown. □

On the picket line

By Matty Stardust and Sue Davis

'No cutbacks,' say Verizon workers in Northeast

Bargaining began June 22 for 38,000 workers in the Verizon East district of the Communication Workers union and of System Council T-6 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The stakes are very high for the Verizon workers in the New England states, New York and New Jersey, who have rightly nicknamed this telecommunications company "Verigreedy."

This giant banked \$9.6 billion in profits in 2014, with \$44 million in salaries for its top five executives. Cutbacks would include steep decreases in pension benefits, huge increases in workers' medical costs, unlimited reassignment of job locations, elimination of job security and expanded outsourcing of jobs — on top of an existing two-tier wage system for new hires.

Though Verizon offered modest wage increases in its last three-year contract, one worker in CWA 1101 told a WW staffer that "the hike in medical costs was so big, it amounted to a wage cut." The worker also described management's heightened level of harassment. Verizon's contract offer would, according to Dennis Trainor, CWA District 1 vice president, at a June 22 rally in Rye, N.Y., "slash thousands of jobs and leave our remaining members with a diminished standard of living." (standuptoverizopn.com, June 23)

No wonder IBEW locals voted 96 percent on July 17 to call a strike if contract negotiations fail by Aug. 1 when the contract expires. CWA is holding strike votes the week of July 20. The two unions have called a united rally in New York City on July 25.

Solidarity in the labor movement is always needed, especially when the stakes are so high in a struggle affecting so many workers. Steve Gillis, financial secretary of the Boston school bus drivers' union, United Steelworkers Local 8751, told WW, "The relationship with IBEW 2222 is key to us; they've hosted our defense committee in their building for nearly two years now. We go back together to the NYNEX strike in 1989. USW 8751 passed a resolution at our July 16 membership meeting to endorse the rally that Local 2222 called July 30 and voted money to go to their strike fund." Local 2222 represents over 4,000 workers in the greater Boston area.

United flight attendants' global day of action

In the five years since Continental Airlines was absorbed by United Airlines in 2010, business has been booming. United's profits in 2015 are projected to be more than five times higher than in 2013, its operating profit in 2015-17 is expected to be \$5 billion or more in each year, and CEO pay has risen 32 percent. However, United's 24,000 flight attendants are still stuck negotiating for a bigger piece of the pie. That's why thousands of flight attendants and supporters, organized by the Association of Flight Attendants, a unit in the Communication Workers union, held a day of action in its 16 base locations around the world on July 16. The workers are demanding a unified contract safeguarding terms won by both Continental and United flight attendant unions before the merger.

CWA President Chris Shelton told protesters at Washington Dulles Airport, "Flight attendants are helping United Airlines generate huge profits, making it one of the most profitable [airlines] in the nation. But when it comes contract time, United says no, none for you. What you're doing today is showing them that you're not going to be pushed around." (CWA-union.org, July 16) Contract negotiations continue. Stay tuned.

Farm workers entitled to paid break time

In a unanimous decision, the Washington (state) Supreme Court ruled July 16 that farms paying workers by the amount of produce they pick must provide separate hourly pay for break time. In 2013, some 900 berry pickers at Sakuma Brothers Farms filed a class action suit charging that they were denied paid rest breaks in violation of state law. Sakuma argued that the workers' piecemeal pay rate factored in pay for break time. According to the court, that scheme "encourages employees to 'work harder' by skipping breaks" and effectively shortens break time and frequency.

Sakuma agreed to pay the workers \$850,000 in back wages to settle their lost pay claim, and it has since switched to an hourly pay system with time set aside for rest. While the pro-worker ruling may motivate some Washington farms, which employ an estimated 200,000 seasonal workers, to switch from piecemeal pay schemes, it remains to be seen "whether the ruling will actually result in the workers being paid more, or whether companies will simply restructure the way they pay," noted the July 16 Associated Press. □

Auto contract talks begin—time to dump two-tier!

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

On July 12, contract talks between General Motors and the United Auto Workers began with the traditional, much-photographed handshake between the union and company heads. The next day, negotiations with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles began the same way — except reporters snapped FCA CEO Sergio Marchionne and UAW International President Dennis Williams hugging. Ford talks start July 23. All of the negotiators, from both union and company, wore matching shirts embroidered with both the union and corporate logos.

Despite the presentation that auto workers and bosses make one team, there is wide speculation on the possibility of a strike. While President Williams insists on avoiding a strike if at all possible — calling it "a failure to the bargaining teams" — many workers say they are ready to strike for a decent contract.

In June of last year, at its Constitutional Convention, the UAW's leadership convinced the delegates to approve a dues increase to bolster the strike fund. To make the strike threat effective as leverage, however, the UAW should have begun strike preparation meetings in all of its GM, Ford and Chrysler locals well ahead of the start of negotiations. A viable strike threat takes more than a bank account.

The most contentious contract issue reported widely in the capitalist media is that over two-tier pay. Under the current contract, which runs from 2011 to the coming September, workers hired after October 2007 earn \$9 to \$12 less per hour than those hired previously. This arrangement is divisive and discriminatory. It means workers who do the same job side by side have vastly different pay rates.

UAW Chrysler members came very close to rejecting two-tier

pay when it was introduced in the 2007-2011 contract. Even then, restrictions limited the number of so-called "entry level" positions. The contract also allowed new hires to eventually move up to "traditional," that is, higher and equal pay. The 2009 bankruptcy process allowed GM and Chrysler to sidestep the contract and eliminate these restrictions.

The talk on the floor is that workers should vote down any contract that doesn't get rid of two-tier. President Williams says he supports this point, but it's unclear whether he will insist on it during the ongoing negotiations. At the March "Special Bargaining Convention," Williams thwarted attempts by delegates to change the phrase "bridging the gap" to "eliminating the gap," which meant he was unwilling to commit to fighting to end two-tier pay immediately.

Meanwhile, CEO Marchionne has been getting a lot of press ink over his statements opposing the wage differential. But does this mean second tier workers get a big raise or first tier workers take a cut?

Workers with higher seniority have had no pay raises since 2006. They already took a cut in 2009 when the cost-of-living allowance was eliminated. They are unwilling to see their wages frozen for another four years — let alone reduced — knowing the Detroit Three automakers have made billions in record profits. Workers' concessions have made the bosses richer.

Marchionne has indicated that in exchange for wage parity, he seeks some kind of "flexible" pay scale. This would include a formula for wages similar to that for so-called profit-sharing bonuses. Currently, the workforce only gets the annual bonus if profits pass a certain threshold. Apparently, Marchionne's latest scheme would also cut wages if sales or profits decline. The FCA boss's justification is that "the downturns in this industry are lethal enough to kill you." (Wall Street Journal, July 14)

In fact, both Chrysler and Fiat, the merger of which created FCA, have lasted over a century through numerous downturns, including the most recent recession. Workers historically have suffered when there is a downturn. That's why the UAW has fought for and won — often through long strikes, other times with only a strike threat — contractual provisions to protect workers' incomes against fluctuations in the capitalist economy.

COLA was implemented as an anti-inflationary measure. Supplemental unemployment benefits helped workers maintain a decent standard of living during layoffs. Job security language limited the number of weeks during a contract that a worker could be laid off.

The bankruptcy allowed management to gut or weaken all of these worker protections in the 2009 contract modifications. But the bosses want more. Instead of protecting workers from circumstances outside our control, Marchionne wants a contract that protects his bottom line from cyclical crises of overproduction that are a built-in feature of his capitalist system. Thus, he employed a clumsy tautology — "lethal enough to kill you" — to make a case for cutting wages when the next inevitable downturn hits.

If a flexible wage formula is implemented at FCA, Ford and GM will want the same. Will Dennis Williams agree to such a preposterous demand? Reportedly, "UAW President Dennis Williams agreed that the union needs to protect the profitability of Fiat Chrysler." (Michigan Radio, July 14).

What workers want and need is something else entirely. The UAW must insist on equal pay for equal work, that is, to eliminate two-tier pay; no hidden pay cuts and a long-overdue raise in the share of the wealth that the members produce. It may be time to dust off a time-tested weapon — and strike!

The writer has been a UAW Chrysler worker for 27 years.

Celebrate the Cuban Revolution and Support Workers World

On July 26, 1953, revolutionaries stormed the Moncada Barracks in Santiago, Cuba. Less than six years later, Fidel and his guerrillas ousted the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship, marching into Havana during the first days of January 1959.

That same year, Workers World newspaper began to publish. After years of anti-communist reaction, the Cuban Revolution helped revive interest in revolutionary socialism in the U.S. It found an eager supporter in this newspaper. The more outrageous the anti-Cuba propaganda of the big business press, the harder Workers World fought to tell the truth about this great victory over U.S. imperialism.

When, on Jan. 3, 1961, the U.S. announced to the United Nations

that Washington was breaking diplomatic relations with Cuba, Workers World's first editor, Vince Copeland, led a protest inside the U.N. chamber. His booming voice could be heard on WNYC radio shouting that Ambassador James Wadsworth "speaks for the bankers, not the people."

Anti-Cuba propaganda turned into sabotage and an outright CIA-directed invasion that April. Workers World closely covered the efforts of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, the Committee to Defend Francisco Molina and other organizations in solidarity with the Cuban people. And when the Kennedy administration threatened a nuclear attack in 1962, Workers World's front page demanded "Hands off Cuba!"

Cuban troops helped liberate Angola from racist colonial rule. Tens of thousands of Cuban medical workers have gone to Africa, Latin America and Haiti to fight disease. Cuba even offered to send doctors to U.S. regions shattered by Hurricane Katrina. But Washington said "no."

In the early 1990s, Cuba endured great economic hardship after the USSR fell and the U.S. tightened its blockade of the socialist island. Workers World helped build the Peace for Cuba International Appeal, which brought thousands to New York City's Javits Center in January 1992, calling for an end to the blockade, the travel ban and all intervention against Cuba.

The brutal blockade has failed

Continued on page 9

Philadelphians march against police brutality

Twenty-two-year-old Tyree Carroll was stopped April 3 by Philadelphia police for riding his bicycle the wrong way on a one-way street. The stop escalated into a violent beating of the unarmed Black man by up to 24 cops, who charged him with assault and drug-related charges. A bystander released a videotape of the incident July 8, which has been widely viewed. (<https://youtu.be/i6tSI-Ff8Qs>)

Family and friends have formed the Justice for Tyree Campaign, which has put together 14 demands, including the resignation of Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey, the immediate firing of all officers involved in the incident, and that Carroll be released from jail, where he is still being held.

About 100 community members

marched July 18 demanding, “Not one more police beating of our children!”

Police brutality has a long history in this city. A recent U.S. Department of Justice report revealed nearly 400 deadly force incidents between 2007 and 2013, disproportionately against Black civilians. Police dropped a bomb on a home to oust a political group named MOVE in 1985, killing 11 men, women and children and burning down the whole neighborhood. Political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal was falsely convicted of the murder of a police officer and still languishes in prison 34 years later. And relatives are still demanding justice for Brandon Tate-Brown, killed by Philly cops last Dec. 16 during a traffic stop.

—Story and photo by Joe Piette



Justice for O'Shaine Evans

On July 18 in San Francisco, the families of O'Shaine Evans, Kenneth Harding Jr. and James Rivera held a “Celebration of Life” for their loved ones, whose lives were stolen by police terror, as well as to celebrate the birthday of Nelson Mandela, who was born on July 18, 1918. Evans was killed by San Francisco police on Oct. 7, just yards from the South Park neighborhood where the celebration was held. Harding was killed by the San Francisco police on July 16, 2011, and Rivera was killed by two Stockton, Calif., police officers and a San Joaquin County sheriff on July 22, 2010.

Other families who lost their loved ones

to police terror came in support as well, including the families of Pedie Perez, killed by the Richmond police on Sept. 14, 2014; Antonio Guzman Lopez, killed by San Jose State University police on Feb. 21, 2014; and Idriss Stelley, killed by San Francisco police on June 13, 2001. A number of supporters came to share food, love and memories. Several people performed for the crowd, including Antoinette Gaggero, singing “It’s Been a Long Time”; Teresa Smith, who sang “Amazing Grace”; and Carquinez, who did a social justice hip-hop song.

—Story and photo by Terri Kay

NEWTON KNIGHT— abolitionist guerilla leader in Mississippi A hidden history of the Civil War

By Paul Wilcox

Ever hear of the First Alabama Cavalry, or the name Newton Knight? Not likely. The capitalist media have always promoted stories of “former Confederate soldiers” who loyally served the Confederacy, loved Gen. Robert E. Lee, had no issue with slavery and so on. But there is another story, a hidden history, of poor white opposition to the Confederacy and to slavery.

Newton Knight was a poor white farmer who fought the Confederacy with all his might. The First Alabama Cavalry was an anti-slavery pro-Union cavalry, mostly white but also Black, about 2,000 in total, whose members fought the Confederacy and eventually were escorts for Gen. Sherman during his historic march through Georgia in 1864.

By far the greatest opposition to slavery came from the enslaved themselves, who always had escape in mind, aided both the Union army and Confederate deserters, fought for the right to fight the Confederacy, and heroically struggled for their freedom at every turn. But there was also significant opposition to the Confederacy from poor whites in every slave state.

There is no better example than Knight, the leader of a guerilla group that fought the Confederacy and declared the “Free State of Jones” in Jones County, Miss. In 1921, Knight, aged 84 and living in obscurity, called on Meigs Frost, a reporter for the New Orleans Item, to tell his story and “get the true facts about Jones County during the war.” His life story was recorded in “The State of Jones” by Sally Jefferson and John Stauffer. (Doubleday, 2009)

Mississippi, a land of large plantations

and small farms, was the largest cotton-producing state in the South — cotton produced by the backbreaking forced labor of enslaved Africans. It was a land of rich, slave-owning aristocrats, 500,000 enslaved people, and poor white farmers.

Jones County contained some of the poorest soil and poorest farmers in the state. It also had no sympathy for the slave owners. In 1861, the vote in Jones County was overwhelmingly for the anti-secession candidate. But the delegates in Jackson, Miss., represented only the powerful, not the popular, and Mississippi was the second state to secede. Many suspected of Union sympathies were lynched. It was a reign of terror.

Knight, well known for his anti-slavery views, joined the Confederate army under threat of arrest and served as a hospital orderly, deserting soon after. He hid out in the swamps of northern Mississippi, learning what life was like for a runaway slave, and that the enslaved people aided Confederate deserters. He wasn’t captured without a fight. Manacled, flogged and taken to prison, Knight was given a choice: fight for the Confederacy or face a firing squad. But it wasn’t long after that that he deserted again, after Vicksburg, Miss., fell to the Union.

This time, Knight found company with large bands of fellow deserters and organized. According to Jefferson and Stauffer, “The Newton Knight who returned to Jones County after Vicksburg was a strike-first killer and dedicated enemy of the Confederacy.” As many as 200 in number, the former soldiers elected Knight their captain, calling themselves “The Jones County Scouts,” and declared

independence from the Confederacy.

It didn’t take long for the Scouts to make a name for themselves, raiding Confederate supply convoys, distributing food to destitute families and helping to free any enslaved people that they could. For example, once the guerilla band seized the local Confederate conscription officer and “in broad daylight called him outside and voted on whether to hang him. He was ‘paroled’ after swearing to leave and never again enter the county.”

According to local legend, when Major Amos McLemore of the Confederate army visited Jones County in 1863 to search out deserters, Knight shot him point blank in the head with a shotgun at a local tavern. However, “no one in the room could identify the attacker.”

The Scouts had strong allies in the Black population, giving them food, ammunition, information and other supplies. There is no hard information about the composition of the guerilla army, except that “every day more blacks liberated from plantations came into the swamps to join the struggle.”

Many enslaved people risked life and limb to help, particularly Rachel, an enslaved person, who married Knight after the war. According to Jenkins and Stauffer, “They had an agreement, she would provide him with food and he would work to secure her freedom.” Knight was as good as his word. Eventually, he committed a “crime” in post-Reconstruction Mississippi by recognizing their own children and fighting for their right to attend school. Rachel and Newton were buried together outside a cemetery, because it



Newton Knight

was also “illegal” to have integrated cemeteries at the time.

The Confederacy responded with fierce repression against the guerillas. Like the Pentagon did in Vietnam 100 years later, the slaveowners’ army tried to force them out of the swamps by torturing their families, ruining their farms, stealing their food and animals, and beating their spouses and children. An entire regiment of about 500 soldiers was sent to terrorize Jones County. Ten guerrillas were lynched, left hanging as a warning to others. But as soon as the Confederate army left to other war fronts, the Scouts reorganized. Eventually 53 scouts escaped to join the Union army.

Newton Knight must rank among the heroes of the Civil War. Thousands of poor whites throughout the South followed his example and became pro-Union. It is no accident that his story was drowned out in the mythology of the neofascist post-Reconstruction period. As false as the racist myth of the “happy” slave of Disney cartoons is the myth that every poor white farmer of the Civil War South was racist and 100-percent loyal to the Confederacy.

Due to the Civil Rights Movement, the new Black Lives Matter movement and the campaigns against the Confederate flag of slavery, the truth about the anti-slavery struggle continues to surface. According to Jenkins and Stauffer, “Newton Knight had more in common with the slaves he had met in the swamps, who treated him better and showed him more basic humanity than the Confederate authorities who claimed to be his countrymen.” □

Alabama: #JusticeForKindraChapman

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

In Alabama, a Black teenager has died in police custody under suspicious circumstances. Kindra Darnell Chapman, 18 years old, was arrested July 14 by the Homewood city police, allegedly for stealing a cell phone on the street. Homewood is a suburb of Birmingham.

Charged with first-class theft, a felony charge for a typically third-class misdemeanor offense, Chapman was processed at 6:02 p.m., seen alive at 6:30 p.m. and found dead in a jail cell at 7:42 p.m., allegedly a suicide by hanging using a bed sheet. (WBRC, Huffington Post)

Community sources on social media point out that no bed sheets are provided in the jail's holding cells. They also point to the notoriously racist behavior of the Homewood police, with accounts of guns being pulled on people of color as well as threats, harassment and violence against local anti-police-brutality organizers, including the tasing and beating of a Black Lives Matter activist.

"Operation I AM," a local group that emerged from the Birmingham Hands Up movement, has launched a campaign demanding information and answers about Chapman's death from the Homewood Police Department. (facebook/handsupbirmingham)

In a phone conversation with WW, an Operation I AM organizer said that in addition to holding police accountable, the effort is to warn the police that "the public eye is on you now."

He added: "The time for action is now. We can't wait anymore for it to happen next door. Birmingham is next door. This happened to somebody who had a life they were trying to live." Paraphrasing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., he emphasized, "If you have injustice anywhere, it is a threat to justice everywhere."

Organizers are discussing an added dimension to Chapman's death as a hate crime. Local Black Lives Matter activists state that Chapman was part of the lesbian, gay, bi and trans community.

Though how Chapman might define hir identity cannot now be known, it is probable the Homewood police perceived Chapman to be a lesbian or trans* person. Chapman's Facebook page, now down, featured a photo of hir girlfriend, who was pregnant, and an ultrasound image. Friends affirmed Chapman was excited about the possibility of a baby coming, and strongly doubted hir death was a suicide.

A record number of LGBT homicides have been reported in 2015. There were 14 in the first two months alone, with half of those deaths being trans* women of color. An earlier report recorded 18 LGBT homicides in 2013, with almost 90 percent of those killed being people of color. More than two-thirds were transgender women. (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs)

Operation I AM, local BLM activists and others are organizing a July 22 protest, #KindraLives, in Homewood. In New York City, the People's Power As-



PHOTO: OPERATION I AM

Kindra Darnell Chapman, 18 years old, died in police custody.

semblies have also called a rally on July 22 for Chapman and Sandra Bland, an African-American woman who died July 10 in police custody in Texas.

Rise in Alabama racist acts

Open displays of aggressive racism are on the rise again in Alabama. Two days after Chapman's death, carloads of white men flying Confederate flags and yelling racist slurs terrorized a Black neighborhood in the small town of Clanton, 50 miles south of Birmingham.

The men were local, calling out the names of some of the neighborhood people in their threats. Residents defended themselves with baseball bats. (WIAT)

The attack followed a July 4 pro-Confederate flag march in Clanton, one of more than 50 such rallies in the South,

as reported by the white-supremacist group, Council of Conservative Citizens. (conservative-headlines.com)

The Saturday after Chapman's death, Linn Park in Birmingham was the site of a pro-Confederate flag rally after the city's Parks and Recreation Board voted to remove a Confederate monument erected there in 1904. (ABC 33/40)

That rally was sponsored by Alabama Flaggers, a chapter of a regional movement with the motto "This Flag Never Comes Down." Speakers included Justin Burton, who has ties to the white-supremacist, anti-Semitic "League of the South," as well as the CCC. (restoringthehonor.blogspot)

There are long-standing connections between white-supremacist groups and Alabama police. In June, the Southern Poverty Law Center exposed one member of the Anniston, Ala., police department as the chairman of a League of the South chapter, and another city cop as having attended a League convention.

In 1961, the Ku Klux Klan firebombed several buses in Anniston carrying Freedom Riders. State and local police looked on as a white mob viciously beat Black and white civil rights activists testing a U.S. Supreme Court decision desegregating interstate travel.

The Freedom Rides continued, following the leadership of student activists like Diane Nash of Tennessee, who said: "We can't let them stop us with violence. If we do, the movement is dead." (Rosetta Ross, "Witnessing and Testifying," 2003) □

Activists launch cop watch campaign

By David Card
Baltimore

The Baltimore People's Power Assembly held a People's Tribunal Against Police Terror on June 6 that brought many members of oppressed communities out to testify about their experiences with the police. One of the resolutions adopted by that tribunal was to launch a campaign to teach people in the oppressed communities of Baltimore about their legal rights with regards to the police, as well as to set up "Cop Watch" teams to film the police on the job.

On July 13, the first training session in the "Know Your Rights" campaign was held. The room was packed as a video was shown giving a basic rundown of how to conduct oneself when confronted by the police and what one's legal rights are in that situation.

Activists then came up with a plan to bring the program to the com-

munities themselves. Instead of holding meetings that community members have to travel to to attend, the People's Power Assembly has planned to set up educational programs on street corners inside oppressed communities themselves. In this way, the most exploited people, who may not usually come out to a political meeting, can be reached directly.

The importance and impact of this campaign is twofold. Firstly, the "Know Your Rights" portion of the campaign will give people some improvement in their individual legal circumstances. When a person refuses an unlawful search that would have incriminated them, or knows that they do not have to speak with the police, this can potentially lead to a more

Baltimore

favorable conclusion to their legal situation. Beyond the immediate individual legal outcomes, when people collectively begin to know their legal rights within bourgeois law, they will start to discover just how much of what the police do is actually illegal, even in their system. This will show more and more clearly the necessity of changing the entire system.

The "Cop Watch" portion of the campaign, then, is an extension of that raised consciousness. In this modern period, cameras capable of recording video have become ubiquitous. In the hands of politically conscious people, these can be used to expose the brutality that the police commit on oppressed people every day. These videos will further increase the level of resistance to police terror by exposing the police for the lying terrorists

that they are and drawing more and more people into the struggle.

These impacts ultimately reduce the morale and political power of the police. If the police know that they are dealing with an educated and organized group of people, and that they are being recorded, it could cause them to think twice about their actions. With each beating and murder committed by the police that is exposed, their support will continue to plummet.

In the end, however, this campaign will only make serious change as part of a broader struggle against police terror. That is why, in Baltimore, the People's Power Assembly has raised the demand of placing the police under full democratic community control. Only then, in conjunction with the education and politicization of the people, will we be able to defeat police terror. □

One year after his murder

Struggle for justice for Eric Garner continues

It was one year ago on July 17 that 43-year-old Eric Garner, an African-American father of six children, died of a heart attack after a white police officer, Daniel Pantaleo, put him in a chokehold while several other officers slammed his head and body to the ground on the streets of Staten Island, N.Y. Garner repeated, "I can't breathe," over and over before losing consciousness.

What was Garner's "crime"? Selling loose cigarettes to support his family. This horrific murder was captured on video tape by Ramsey Orta, a Puerto Rican activist, who has been imprisoned in Rikers Island for prior charges in retaliation for bringing this video to the attention of the entire world.

A grand jury refused to indict Pantaleo for murder or for any lesser charges last November, allowing this killer cop to walk free. This travesty of justice prompted large demonstrations in New York, including die-ins during rush hour in Grand Central Station, and elsewhere around the country.

On July 13, the city of New York settled a \$5.9 million claim with the Garner family to avoid a full-blown liability lawsuit. The family had originally sued the city for \$75 million.

On July 17, various actions were held in Staten Island, Manhattan and Brooklyn, not only to mark the one-year anniversary but to draw attention to the ongoing epidemic of police murders of Black men and women and other people of color, including LGBTQ people.

In Manhattan, hundreds of activists gathered at Columbus Circle for a rally followed by a march to Union Square. Along the way, protesters blocked traffic at 34th Street and 7th Avenue, leading to the arrest of more than 20 activists on disorderly charges.

The Manhattan protest was initiated by Black Lives Matter NYC, Millions March NYC, NYC ShutItDown and Peoples Power Assemblies.

— Story and photo by Monica Moorehead



PPA speaker, Terrea Mitchell

Actions in solidarity with Greece's workers

WW PHOTOS: KRIS HAMEL, ELLIE DORRITIE, SHARON BLACK AND ANNE PRUDEN

In response to a call for global actions in solidarity with the besieged people of Greece, protests were held in a number of U.S. cities.

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs organized protesters outside a JPMorgan Chase bank in downtown **DETROIT** on July 15 for a busy lunchtime speakout and show of solidarity.

City of Detroit retirees whose pensions have been slashed spoke about the austerity they have gone through and why many of the same banks that destroyed Detroit are now going after Greece. Speaker after speaker appealed to the many young workers on the street, urging them to learn about what has happened in Greece and is soon to hit the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico.

All the speakers and demonstrators educated the sidewalk audience about the onerous nature of usurious bank indebtedness and why worldwide solidarity is needed to beat back austerity and stop the insatiable greed of finance capital.

Also on July 15, a small but enthusiastic crowd, including a few Greek nationals, gathered at Oscar Grant Plaza in downtown **OAKLAND, CALIF.**, to express solidarity. Signs included "Austerity for bankers, not Greek workers" and "Bankers: Hands off Greece. Cancel the debt." Flyers explaining how only mass resistance can stop the bankers' rule were distributed to pedestrians as they headed home from work. The rally was called by Workers World Party and endorsed by Marcha Patriótica Colombia, the Bay Area Latin America Solidarity Coalition and the International Action Center.



Activists in **BUFFALO, N.Y.**, held a rush-hour rally on Main Street in front of the Bank of America headquarters on July 15, the day of international solidarity. Speakers raised such demands as "No to austerity," "No to pension cuts," "No to privatization," "Cancel the illegal debt" and "Make the banks pay" — while downtown workers and transit travelers stopped to listen and applaud.

In **PHILADELPHIA**, people gathered at City Hall to show support for the Greek workers' struggle against austerity. Speakers from various political organizations spoke about the necessity for workers everywhere to support those who fight back against imperialist exploitation. Demonstrators then marched to

the German Consulate to demand real debt relief for Greece and to make the connection between mass incarceration of Black and Brown people in the U.S. and the austerity regime in Greece — both serve the bankers at the expense of the people.

In **BALTIMORE**, the majority of protesters came from the Greek community. Workers World newspaper and a leaflet were distributed to passersby. The action was covered by two television stations and one newspaper.

Actions were also held in New York City and Los Angeles on July 15 and in Chicago on July 14.

Kris Hamel, Terri Kay, Ellie Dorritie, Matty Stardust and Sharon Black contributed to this article.

Tribunal on crimes against Filipino people says: 'Guilty!'



The People's Verdict, a Bay Area International Peoples' Tribunal Event, was held at the Bayanihan Community Center in San Francisco on July 18. It followed the closing of the International Peoples' Tribunal on Crimes Against the Filipino People, held from July 16 to 18 in Washington, D.C.

Tribunal attendees heard live, video and written testimony from the victims of human rights violations and their families. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark was the lead

prosecutor in the trial of accused criminals, headed by Philippine President Benigno S. Aquino and the U.S. government as represented by President Barack Obama.

The gathering in San Francisco heard a summary of the charges and then watched a video of the Tribunal's jurors presenting their conclusions. As the crowd on the video broke out in cheers and applause when a guilty verdict was read, so did those who assembled in San Francisco. The Tribunal delegation will deliver the verdict to the Philippine Embassy and White House in Washington on July 20. For more information, see internationalpeopletribunal.org.

— Report by Terri Kay

Ebola Virus Disease not yet defeated in West Africa

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

Even though the three states where the Ebola Virus Disease struck last year have been declared free of the epidemic, cases have been reported over the last several weeks in Liberia.

This West African state has maintained close ties with the U.S. since its founding as a republic in 1847. Freed enslaved Africans from the U.S. and their descendants have constituted Liberia's governments for nearly 170 years.

President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, one of only two African women presidents on the continent, continues to rely on funding and political direction from Washington. Thousands of Pentagon troops were deployed to Liberia at the height of the EVD crisis in 2014. They were downsized after the number of cases drastically declined.

Recently Liberia has recorded two deaths from the dreaded disease. On July 16, a nurse died in a hospital in the capital, Monrovia, soon after she was checked in.

This woman became the sixth case of EVD since it reappeared in June, after no cases had been reported for more than two months. The latest victim lived in Montserrado County, where Monrovia is located. It has been suggested that the Monrovia case is linked to five others from neighboring Margibi County.

Reports say that the nurse was caring for her son who became ill. Health authorities in the country are track-

ing up to 140 people who may have had contact with the latest victim.

"We have asked all county health officers to be on the alert," said Francis Kateh, Liberia's chief medical officer. "We are not saying the other counties have Ebola. But we need to alert them so that we wouldn't experience the previous outbreak." (USA Today, July 16)

Ever since December 2013, when the most recent epidemic was first recognized, there have been 27,600 EVD cases, with more than 11,000 deaths. Liberia was the hardest hit, with more than 4,800 deaths.

EVD was first recognized in 1976 in Zaire, now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo. There have been several outbreaks in nearly four decades, with the 2013-15 epidemic the most widespread and lethal.

The outbreak of EVD in Liberia came only a decade after a 14-year civil war which killed thousands and displaced many others. The already-limited infrastructure in the country was severely damaged during the conflict.

The war also compounded the inherently dependent relations with the U.S. Since the 1920s, international banking interests and mining corporations have largely controlled the Liberian government.

Such an outbreak of EVD was bound to cause extreme distress on the population and the economy, given the country's inadequate resources to build medical clinics and hospitals and to train healthcare personnel. The blockading of large swaths of urban and rural areas

during the height of the outbreak took a devastating toll on agricultural production, local commerce and delivery of social services.

Sierra Leone and Guinea report cases

Sierra Leone and Guinea, the other two West African states which constituted the epicenter of the outbreak, have also reported several Ebola cases in recent weeks.

The political history of Sierra Leone, a former British colony, is similar to that of Liberia. The country was established in the early 19th century for the resettlement of freed Africans after the conclusion of the war between London and its 13 colonies that became known as the United States.

The Liberian civil war during the 1990s spilled over into Sierra Leone, doing damage to the society that it has still not fully recovered from. With the conclusion of the war more than 10 years ago, the Pentagon has utilized the country as the training ground for the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). Soldiers trained by the U.S. Army Africa, a wing of AFRICOM, have been deployed to Somalia as participants in the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), which is financed heavily by Washington and the European Union.

Ghana's Daily Graphic reported, "The outbreak reared its head at a time when the country's health officers were unprepared for the Ebola battle. The unpreparedness

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Nuclear agreement – A historic moment for Iran

By Sara Flounders

The agreement reached July 14 between Iran and the “5+1,” the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (U.S., Britain, France, Russia and China) plus Germany, is a huge achievement — for Iran.

Whenever any oppressed country, besieged by imperialism, is able to gain a treaty, gain even a temporary agreement or forestall an outright war while maintaining its sovereignty, it should be acknowledged as a victory over U.S. intransigence.

Speaking with reporters in Vienna, Iran Foreign Minister Javad Zarif called the agreement a “historic moment.” “We are reaching an agreement that is not perfect for anybody, but it is what we could accomplish, and it is an important achievement for all of us,” he stated.

U.S. imperialism has attempted through decades of ever-tightening economic sanctions, endless forms of industrial sabotage, political subversion, assassinations, isolation, military encirclement, destabilization campaigns and endless media vilification to bring down the Iranian government and restore a subservient regime such as ruled Iran before the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

The complete failure of these decades-long efforts has finally forced a new agreement. But this limited agreement does not mean an end to Washington’s continuing efforts to sabotage Iran’s independent development. The 159-page agreement and the complex inspections and conditions for step-by-step lifting of the walls of sanctions provide numerous opportunities to use the International Atomic Energy Agency inspections to continually investigate and gain access to all manner of Iranian facilities and to make new demands, create new crises or attempt to sabotage the whole agreement.

The agreement on the part of U.S. and Western corporate power is based on the arrogant hope of ensnaring Iran in a web of economic indebtedness, political compromises and social instability to ultimately regain control of Iran’s rich resources. So the agreement is hardly a finished product. It reflects an ongoing struggle.

U.S. military threats will continue and possibly escalate through constant movements of aircraft carriers and all of their accompanying warships, destroyers, jet bombers and Trident nuclear submarines, capable of destroying all life on earth in one launch, off the coast of Iran. U.S. wars in the region directly and through its proxies of Saudi Arabia, Israel and countless mercenary, marauding bands will continue.

Sanctions = extortion

Sanctions are a form of warfare. They are economic extortion by a group of nuclear-armed pirates. The sanctions on Iran predate Iran’s decision to revive a nuclear energy program that had begun, with full U.S. support, during the rule of the brutal, U.S.-backed Pahlavi monarchy. U.S. sanctions began soon after the Iranian Revolution along with the seizure of Iranian assets held in U.S. banks.

These were followed by U.N. Security Council sanctions, imposed under U.S. pressure in 2006, 2008 and 2011, and by European sanctions in 2010 and 2012. Finally, U.S. sanctions legislation demanded that every country in the world participate in a blockade of Iran or face severe U.S. penalties and be cut off from the vast network of U.S. banking, loans and credits.

Russia and China were consistently for ending the sanctions. They face sanctions and encirclement themselves. The Western imperialist powers of Germany, France and Britain — the European Union — were willing to participate if U.S. schemes could be accomplished and the sanctions could achieve the goal of regime change. But in the long run the European powers have little interest in doing what is not favorable to their own capitalist interests. In the 5+1 talks, divisions among the European imperialists became an added pressure, making it difficult for the U.S. to make impossible demands or to just walk away from the negotiations.

While creating enormous hardships and shortages, the sanctions failed to destabilize the government or create an overwhelming reactionary upsurge. By the time of the agreement, the Iranian government was even able to bring inflation, due to shortages, down to 15 percent annually from the almost out-of-control 45 percent.

The immediate money flowing to Iran under the agreement is Iran’s own money. Billions of dollars of Iranian assets had been unilaterally seized and many Iranian assets frozen. Over the course of 20 months of

painstaking negotiations, Iran regained \$12 billion of its own money. While this is hardly a gift from the banks that illegally held it, its return is a significant accomplishment. There are more than \$100 billion in Iranian funds seized and frozen in accounts around the world. Hundreds of billions more were confiscated through lost oil and gas revenue due to the blockade.

Hypocrisy of nuclear threat

The greatest hypocrisy was that of countries with stockpiles of nuclear weapons sanctimoniously lecturing and wringing their hands at Iran’s development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. They endlessly claimed it was a threat to world peace and used it as leverage to achieve concessions. Meanwhile, the U.S. has aided Israel in building hundreds of nuclear weapons, continually threatens first strikes against countries with no nuclear weapons and is further modernizing its own nuclear stockpile.

Of course the negotiations were never really about nuclear weapons. The “great Iranian nuclear threat” was just a pretext to pull in other countries.

As a signer of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran — unlike Israel — has the right to enrich uranium to any levels. But in order to end the economic strangulation, Iran agreed to a deal that severely limits it from what every other one of the 93 signers has the internationally recognized right to do.

Nevertheless, it is no small accomplishment that Iran was able to maintain its right to a peaceful nuclear program

Wall Street considers Iran a threat

Wall Street and the dependent proxy states in the region — especially Israel, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies — consider Iran a threat. Why? Ever since the Iranian Revolution broke decisively over U.S. corporate domination of its resources and liberated Iran’s oil and gas resources from the unequal contracts serving the giant oil corporations Exxon, Mobil and Shell, it has served as a revolutionary example.

Iran has a capitalist class that is anxious to increase its own profits and position. But the Iranian Revolution was forced to make a sharp break with imperialist domination as the only way forward. A radical Muslim clerical leadership with a strong anti-imperialist focus has maintained this fundamental break for 35 years.

By developing its economy independent of Wall Street theft and domination and controlling its own resources, Iran has transformed itself within three decades from an underdeveloped country with massive poverty into a modern state with a highly educated population. While capitalist relations prevail, the population was still able to win guaranteed, comprehensive, free medical care; free education, including at the university level; a modern infrastructure; and housing with full electrification.

Women’s education has improved from majority illiteracy to full literacy. More than 60 percent of university students are now female.

Who are the hawks?

In applauding the new nuclear agreement, some U.S. peace forces describe it as a victory over Iranian “hawks” and an easing of a war threat from Iran. This is totally misleading. The war threat on a global scale, and most especially in the Middle East, and the responsibility for war, invasion, occupation and cynical sectarian divisions lies with U.S. militarism. The most powerful U.S. corporations — Big Oil and the military industries that profit from war — drive the right-wing forces mobilizing against any normalization of relations with Iran.

They realize that with the end of sanctions, foreign investors will not have gained unlimited access to Iran. As the March 30 Wall Street Journal laments: “The country launched a privatization program a decade ago that has, albeit fitfully, moved share ownership from companies directly controlled by the government into the hands of Iranian pension funds. Those pension funds are also controlled by government entities — leaving the bulk of the market still under government sway, a concern for some potential investors.”

Israel and Saudi Arabia, as dependent U.S. proxies in the region and whose position and billions of dollars in military equipment are based on their role promoting war and instability, are both threatened by any form of agreement with Iran.

These driving interests are the basis of the large militarist factions in the U.S. ruling class that are still determined to push for war with Iran. They have plans to

mount a massive media and lobbying campaign in the 60 days that the U.S. Congress has to approve the agreement. “Bomb Iran” is their theme. “War is inevitable” is their message. War profits is their motive.

It is the hawks like Sen. John McCain, funded by powerful U.S. corporations with a profitable stake in war and militarism, that are determined to sabotage even this short-term agreement. These are the hawks who have lined up a series of right-wing and reactionary think tanks to mobilize a multimillion dollar campaign to defeat the agreement in Congress and possibly to incite military provocations.

A multimillion dollar TV, print, radio and digital campaign will be paid for by well-funded think tanks such as United Against Nuclear Iran, Secure America Now, the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, the American Security Initiative and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. They are all busy preparing a full court press in Congress and public opinion.

But the problem U.S. banks and corporations face is that with this agreement finally set, there is a stampede to Tehran. Business hotels in Tehran are packed and U.S. corporations fear being left out of the deals being made, based on Washington’s own intransigence.

Those forces in the U.S. ruling class that are more aware of the shrinking position of U.S. power, including the fallout from its disastrous wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, are anxious to achieve a regional realignment. They desperately hope to weaken the alignment of Iran, Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas through sectarian division and destabilization.

They well understand that it was the revolutionary overturn of the brutal U.S.-imposed Iranian monarchy in 1979 that fundamentally decreased U.S. influence in the entire region.

The unsolvable contradiction is that U.S. imperialism has both failed to destabilize Iran and has utterly failed to stabilize its rule in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan, despite massive destruction. Its plans for a quick overturn in Syria have also met determined resistance, despite billions of dollars in funds, equipment and the training of mercenary forces.

This agreement may be only a temporary reprieve. But for Iran it is a hard-fought step forward in a continuing struggle to maintain both Iranian sovereignty and economic development in the face of U.S. imperialist threats and provocations. □

Celebrate the Cuban Revolution and Support Workers World

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to overturn the Cuban Revolution. Now Washington is discussing normalizing diplomatic relations with Havana. Workers World supports Cuba’s precondition that the U.S. close its illegal base at Guantánamo and the torture prison there and return Guantánamo to the Cuban people.

Assata Shakur, an African-American freedom fighter, has lived in exile in Cuba for 31 years. Washington wants her sent back to the racist hellholes of mass incarceration here. We support Cuba’s insistence that its sovereignty be respected, including the right to give shelter to those fleeing repression.

Our readers are familiar with Workers World’s support for the IFCO/Pastors for Peace caravans that carry medical and other essential supplies to the island and the yearly Venceremos Brigades. You know our role in the campaign to free the Cuban 5 heroes.

We hope you will help us keep up this tradition of standing firmly with Cuba and its people. Donations from our supporters have been a big factor in getting our pro-Cuba writings in print, distributed and posted online at workers.org.

We invite you to donate to the Workers World Fund Drive, our biannual fundraising campaign. Send checks to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor, New York, NY 10011, with your name and address. Indicate for “Fund Drive.”

Also, please join the 38-year-old WW Supporter Program and make a regular donation, no matter how modest. Go to workers.org/donate/ or send checks to the above address; write “For WWSP.”

We appreciate your help in growing the revolutionary media in the U.S. □

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Is prison clemency the answer?

On July 16, President Barack Obama made a visit to a federal prison in Reno, Okla., to bring attention in his own way to the criminality of the U.S. criminal justice system and its biased laws, especially toward people convicted of nonviolent drug offenses. It is the first time that a U.S. president has ever visited a federal correctional facility. Obama stated that as a youth who smoked marijuana and tried cocaine, he could have easily found himself in the same situation as hundreds of thousands of people like the six prisoners he spoke to in the prison. HBO is scheduled to air that interview as part of a Vice documentary sometime in the fall.

Just three days before his visit, on July 13, Obama commuted the sentences of 46 people convicted of nonviolent offenses, mostly associated with either drug use or petty drug sales. On the White House Facebook page was a statement that those granted clemency had sentences ranging from 20 years to life. There are debates in Congress on sentencing “reform” for nonviolent offenders. While this is truly a national and even international scandal of epic proportions, it is just the tip of the iceberg, especially when it comes to targeting people of color and the poor.

It is important to raise first and foremost that the U.S. has the world’s largest prison population at 2.2 million people, marking a 500 percent increase over the last 30 years. According to the Sentencing Project, half of all federal prisoners were convicted of drug charges, with a 13 percent increase of prisoners in state prisons since 1980. The majority of these prisoners, federal and state, had no prior criminal record. These numbers don’t even include the thousands of immigrants, including women and youth, held in detention centers.

To expose the racist institutionalized

sentencing policy for these so-called crimes, two-thirds of the prison population are people of color, with one out of 10 Black men in their thirties in prison on any given day. The “war on drugs,” which intensified under the Reagan administration in the 1980s, has evolved into a genocidal war on people of color, especially in the African-American community. Coupled with daily police and vigilante killings of Black men and women, including trans people, and fueled by an unprecedented economic crisis of no jobs and low-wage jobs, this genocidal war is becoming more and more devastating.

To break this down even further, an April 20 Upshot analysis pointed out that there are 1.5 million missing Black men in the U.S.: missing meaning they have suffered either early deaths or mass incarceration. The study goes on to say that more than one out of every six Black men who today should be between 25 and 54 years old has disappeared from daily life. Any discussion that is taking place in Congress or the White House is tantamount to putting a Band-Aid on a cancer when it comes to any kind of prison reform. Providing clemency for a handful of victims is a good start, but it’s far from the solution.

The truth of the matter is that the entire U.S. prison system cannot be reformed, but has to be uprooted from the bottom up. Federal and private funds in the billions of dollars, which are invested in prisons for profits, should be put into a massive jobs program, including job training, that will pay a living wage and provide benefits.

This is the only solution that will begin the process of decriminalizing young workers of color. And this solution can only come about with a united anti-capitalist struggle of all the workers and the oppressed. □

Ebola Virus Disease not yet defeated

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of government to face such a battle was clearly manifested by the few ambulances allocated to referral hospitals in the district headquarters towns. Although some districts have gone for months without recording any case of Ebola, new cases are still being recorded within the Western Area in which the capital city is situated, as well as Portloko and Kambia in the north of the country.” (July 16)

In the same report, William Sao Lamin, a programs officer for the non-governmental organization Health Alert, told Politico SL that Sierra Leone’s medical sector encompasses a staff of 6,000 serving 1,200 health units and 19 referral hospitals across the country. More than 150 of these health officials succumbed to EVD, including 12 physicians.

Lamin explained that prior to the outbreak, the health sector was already strained with acute shortages of qualified personnel. “The volunteers in the hospitals cannot be relied upon as they are untrained and unpaid,” he stressed.

One of the physicians who died from EVD, Dr. Shek Umar Khan, was the only virologist in the country attached to the

Lassa Fever Unit in the Kenema Government Hospital.

In Guinea — a former French colony which has undergone several military mutinies and coups since the country’s founder, President Ahmed Sekou Toure, died in 1984 — the social and economic conditions have not been conducive to the building of health care treatment centers with trained personnel. Guinea has been cited as the source of the outbreak in late 2013, which spread rapidly into Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The World Health Organization, which monitors the number of cases and coordinates responses in conjunction with regional governments, admits that it failed in not moving rapidly enough to stem the tide of the epidemic. WHO officials now say they are far more prepared to address the cases that have surfaced over the last few weeks.

Vaccine testing continues

Efforts to develop a vaccine have met challenges in West Africa over the last several months, with the decline in the number of infections. Meanwhile a trial involving an inhaled vaccine in monkeys

Justice for Sandra Bland

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ty just 45 minutes from Houston.

Bland outspoken against police brutality

Bland was active in condemning the deaths of Black people at the hands of cops, from Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., to Eric Garner in Staten Island, N.Y. She posted on Facebook about the danger from cops and even made videos condemning murders by police. Now her friends and supporters are tweeting at #SandraBland, #JusticeforSandy and #IfIDieInPoliceCustody.

Over the last year, exposure of U.S. cop killings of young Black people has escalated. In response, the Black Lives Matter movement is now active all over the country.

Texas has a sordid history of racist murders. In the early 1900s there were lynchings of Black people all over the state. Two of the most infamous were in Waco — of Allen Brooks in 1910 and Jesse Washington in 1916.

During Brooks’ trial, allegedly for assaulting a white child, an angry mob took him from his armed guards in the courtroom and hanged him from a pole at Elk’s Arch, reported the Dallas Morning News.

According to blogger Michael W. Waters, Washington was castrated, his fingers cut off, and his body lowered and raised over a fire for two hours before being dragged through town. His body parts were later sold as souvenirs. (Huffington Post, July 17)

In recent decades the cops in every major city in Texas have murdered and maimed African Americans — including Black Panther leader Carl Hampton in Houston in 1970.

Nationally, there is now a list of women who go with the Michael Browns and Eric Garners killed by the cops: Sandra Bland, Kindra Darnell Chapman, Tanisha Anderson, Yvette Smith, Rekia Boyd and seven-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones — to name a few.

Emily DePrang, writing in the progressive weekly The Texas Observer in 2014, noted that Houston cops are literally getting away with murder. She wrote that between 2007 and 2012, according to Houston Police Department records, deadly police shootings happen in Houston on average of one every three weeks. Every shooting by a

HPD officer is investigated by HPD’s Internal Affairs and Homicide divisions.

DePrang writes, “Every killing was ruled justified. Harris County (Houston) grand juries have cleared HPD officers for on-duty shootings almost 300 times in a row. No Houston officer has been indicted for a shooting in a decade.”

Texas has more killer cops

In Texas, the saying goes, “Everything’s bigger in Texas!” The saying is true when it comes to the legacy of lynchings and the number of killer cops. Texas is also number one in uninsured people, and it executes more people than the next eight states combined. However, Texas is near the very bottom in funding education.

In one year’s time, three instances of terrorizing Black women in Texas have become national news.

Last August, cops pulled over Kametra Barbour and her four young children and held them at gunpoint in Forney. Neither the car nor the passengers matched the description given to police in a 911 dispatch.

In June near Dallas, 15-year-old Dajerria Becton was thrown down, her head shoved to the ground, and she was held down by a McKinney cop’s knee after a pool party.

And now, Sandra Bland, stopped for failure to use her traffic signal and arrested in Waller County while en route to begin her new job, was found lynched in jail under suspicious circumstances a few days later.

How someone can go from driving to a new job to dead in jail in a matter of days is unfathomable — except perhaps for African Americans in Texas. Black activists often point out that driving while Black can be a capital offense in Texas, resulting in an unofficial, on-the-spot death penalty.

More protests, vigils and demonstrations are planned for Sandra Bland as communities await the results of her family’s independent autopsy. Many questions must still be answered. Those who are involved in the anti-racist movement have absolutely no confidence in either the Texas Rangers or the FBI, which are now investigating Bland’s death. Outrage, sadness and determination to find justice will not dissipate easily, nor should it.

Rubac is a longtime spokesperson for the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement in Houston.

has shown positive results, according to researchers.

Despite a considerable amount of discussion since 2014 about the development of a vaccine, no medicines have been approved that can cure the disease in humans. Scientists claim that a treatment known as TKM-Ebola-Guinea has the ability to kill the Makona strain of the virus, at least in primates. The vaccine has not been tested on humans. (Tech Times, April 23)

Vaccine researchers have revealed that the drug is made by Tekmira Pharmaceu-

ticals Corp. and is supposed to work by blocking genes that replicate the virus.

In another trial ZMapp, an Ebola drug manufactured by Mapp Biopharmaceutical, cured primates in lab experiments. Nonetheless, the primates were infected with another strain of EVD.

“We can’t say for certain that an experimental drug that works against one strain will work in another, even if they’re almost identical genetically,” noted Thomas Geisbert of the University of Texas Medical Branch, who is a senior investigator in the study. (Reuters, April 22) □



Alto al dominio banquero en Grecia Resistencia masiva debe decir ¡NO!

Continua de página 12

leales a Syriza en una lucha común contra la Troika. Por lo tanto, desperdiciaron la oportunidad de conducir al movimiento más amplio hacia una dirección de izquierda y revolucionaria, que podría haber ayudado a evitar una capitulación, o para prepararse para ella cuando llegó.

Esperamos que los sucesos actuales hagan a todas las fuerzas de izquierda repensar y reagruparse para la lucha más amplia

y unida posible para revocar esta última capitulación ante las exigencias de austeridad de los poderes financieros.

Las sonrisas pueden todavía borrarse de las caras de los parásitos financieros y las bolsas de valores del mundo capitalista, si un poderoso movimiento de masas monta un contraataque. Ha llegado el momento de superar las diferencias y lanzar una lucha que sacudirá la Merkel, Holland y todos los banqueros de Europa y EUA. □

GREEK DEAL:

More hardship for workers, more money for bankers

By Fred Goldstein

July 20 — The bailout deal signed by Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and the European bankers has brought more hardship to the Greek workers, more money to the bankers and shows that electoral politics without vigorous class struggle is a dead end for the working class.

Cutting pensions and raising sales taxes on items needed to survive so that bankers can be paid are a crime against the working class. Yet that has been agreed to by Tsipras and his new-found bourgeois allies: the center-right New Democracy party, the bourgeois social democrats in PASOK and the To Potami party. They made up the votes he needed in Parliament due to defections from the Syriza delegation.

As the banks reopen on a limited basis, new taxes are being imposed on the masses. A value added tax, or sales tax, has now been placed on restaurants, taxis, other forms of transportation, some types of meat, milk, cooking oil and many other basic necessities. The sales taxes are severe, going from 13 percent to 23 percent — almost doubling this regressive form of taxation that falls heaviest on the workers, the poor and the elderly.

These increases are being imposed on a basically impoverished population that is in the midst of a Great Depression. The Greek economy has shrunk by 25 percent; there is 26 percent overall unemployment and 50 percent youth unemployment. One-third of pensioners are in danger of falling into poverty.

Over 2.5 million people — in a country of 11 million — have no health insurance. Some 800,000 people are estimated to lack unemployment insurance, which also carries medical insurance. Health care spending was 9.3 percent of the budget in 2012; it had already fallen to 5 percent under the existing banker-imposed austerity program, and will now decline further.

It is no surprise there was a 35 percent increase in the suicide rate during the first two years of austerity. (Newsweek, July 15)

Bankers repaid as cuts are enacted

The cruel farce of a so-called bailout for the Greek government was played out today as Brussels transferred 7.16 billion euros to Athens. This bailout payment had been allocated to the Greek government long ago and was held in a European Union fund euphemistically called the Emergency Financial Stability Mechanism.

The bankers had refused to release the money until the Greek financial system was on its knees and the banks were closed down.

The money was released after the Greek government, backed by the Parliament, put into place the sales tax increases and ratified pension reductions along with attacks on union rights that make it easier to fire workers. The Greek government also had to transfer 50 billion euro to a privatization fund. All these were called “confidence-building” measures. These cuts were a prior condition to beginning negotiations with the bankers on an additional 80 billion euro bailout going forward.

Once the bankers were “confident” that the Greek government was implementing draconian austerity measures, Brussels sent the emergency funding.

Where did the money go? It went to paying the European Central Bank 4.2 billion euro, the International Monetary Fund 2.05 billion euro and the National Bank of Greece 500 million euro. The relatively small amount left over was deposited in escrow to be available to London and other non-eurozone countries as security in case they suffer any future losses from the bailout process.

Not one euro went to the Greek government for expenses to relieve the suffering of the Greek people.

Debt relief scam

Two days before the deal was made in Brussels by the eurozone ministers and Tsipras, the IMF issued a report saying that while “reform” — read austerity cuts — was absolutely essential, Greece would need massive debt relief because the debt could not be paid. This was directed against the German bankers and their bloc of countries in the eurozone. In the end the final agreement said there would be “no haircuts” — no reduction in the debt principal.

The IMF has threatened to refuse to participate in the bailout without debt relief for Greece, perhaps including a 30-year moratorium before the debt has to be paid. This may seem like a generous gesture, but it is entirely self-serving for the financiers.

In the first place, the Greek government is insolvent and cannot pay the debt. So any debt payment will have to be financed by loans from the IMF, the European Central Bank or European bankers directly.

With the Greek government indebted for over 300 billion euro and about to negotiate another 80 billion euro loan, the entire debt structure will become a danger to the bankers themselves.

So a moratorium on debt payments is actually a moratorium on having to make more risky loans to Greece.

Secondly, if the debt is unsustainable, that means default is on the agenda. Greece has already missed two loan payments to the IMF. But if a loan is in default, it has to be marked down on the books. It is no longer an asset and the amount of the write-down must be replaced by additional capital contributions by the bank. So a moratorium on debt payment turns the unpayable loans into “performing” loans that are deferred for a given period of time. This protects the balance sheets of the banks.

What is ‘Europe’?

The euro bankers and the Tsipras faction of Syriza tried to terrorize the masses into accepting the austerity deal with the threat of “leaving Europe.” Leaving the eurozone — that is, leaving the euro currency — was made equivalent to leaving Europe, meaning the European Union.

But it should be remembered that the British ruling class refused to give up the pound when the common currency union was formed. So did Denmark and other countries. These countries are not in the eurozone. They are in the European Union while retaining their own currency and their financial sovereignty.

When Britain and Denmark refused the euro, they were given an “opt out” option, even though every EU country is supposed to apply to become a member of the eurozone.

So the Greek government would be following a precedent if it demanded an “opt out” of the euro, while retaining membership in the EU. This would mean that Greeks could continue to travel throughout Europe without having to apply for visas while retaining the common benefits of being in the EU.

But even while that should be legally and politically possible, the ideological damage in promoting the idea of “Europe” without applying a Marxist, class approach is extremely dangerous and all too common.

The EU is a group of capitalist states, ruled by exploiting and plundering ruling classes. Their motivation for sustaining “Europe,” that is, the EU, is to be able to compete economically with U.S. imperialism and Japan. The capitalist classes of Europe were willing to set up a structure by which Wall Street and Washington would face common tariff barriers, commercial rules and regulatory oversight.

Also, by centralizing power in a Brussels-based bureaucracy, the European bankers could reverse gains the working class had won in countries where workers were organized in strong unions and workers’ parties, such as France and Italy.

U.S. imperialism, on the other hand, wants a stable European capitalist structure to endure for a number of reasons. First, the corporations and bankers want a large uniform market where they can invest and conduct commerce across borders with a very large population. The European Union encompasses 508 million people; the eurozone covers 338 million of them.

Second, they do not want political conflict to endanger the NATO alliance in any way. This is their bulwark for world domination, second only to the Pentagon itself. While the German imperialists hold economic sway over Europe, Washington wants to ensure its military sway over a unified NATO and European alliance.

Opposed to these capitalist interests in Europe is the multinational European working class, exploited by the capitalist classes of Europe, the U.S. and Japan. The European working class is filled with immigrant workers who suffer severe oppression, which is getting worse.

Europe, for the workers, should signify a continent-wide proletariat that must unite in common cause against the collective power of capitalist Europe, as well as show its international solidarity with the workers and the oppressed of the world. Some of these states are rich; some are poorer, like Spain, Portugal, Italy, Ireland and Greece. But they are all dominated by the exploiting classes, and must be fought as such.

Parliamentary road alone leads to a dead end

If the latest Greek crisis and the capitulation to the bankers mean anything, it is that all electoral activity of the masses has to be subordinated to, and integrated with, the organized, militant class struggle.

In the long run, elections under capitalism can, at best, only be a measure of the maturity of the working class, as Frederick Engels famously said. They can provide an indicator of when the working class is ready to bid for power.

Cutting pensions and raising sales taxes on items needed to survive, so that bankers can be paid, is a crime against the working class.

But long before that point is reached, the obsession with elections as the fundamental lever in making gains for the working class must be abandoned. The latest experience of the betrayal of the Greek masses underscores this point.

Greece held two elections in five months. The first was an election in January that Syriza won with 35 percent of the vote — as the party opposing austerity. The second was the July 5 referendum on austerity, in which 61 percent voted No.

To accept the deal, the Tsipras faction used a vote in Parliament — an indirect vote — to overturn the direct vote of the masses that had firmly rejected austerity. Defying his own party, Tsipras really had no right to represent Syriza. The Political Secretariat of his party opposed the deal; the Central Committee of 201 voted it down with 109 votes against. (sputniknews.com, July 15) Some 33 Syriza MPs voted no, six abstained and three Syriza ministers resigned, including the speaker of the Parliament and a leader of the Left Platform.

But Tsipras, knowing he could not sell this betrayal in his own party, made a deal ahead of time with the bourgeois parties to override the referendum.

In Greece, as well as elsewhere in Europe, there is an overemphasis on elections; the class struggle has taken a secondary place. This is just the reverse of what it should be. The class struggle against the bosses and their stooges in Parliament and in government should be primary.

This message should also be heard in the United States, as the ruling class gears up for its quadrennial presidential charade in which the masses “choose” which leaders of the oppressing and exploiting class will rule.

The labor movement and militant workers should not be pulled into running after Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders or any other candidate who wants to preside over the capitalist state. That is the lesson of Greece.

Goldstein is the author of two books, “Capitalism at a Dead End” and “Low-Wage Capitalism.” More of his writing is available at lowwagecapitalism.org and on his Facebook page.



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FOTO: ALABAMA COALITION FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE

Alto al dominio banquero en Grecia Resistencia masiva debe decir ¡NO!

Por Fred Goldstein

14 de julio - Con pistola en la cabeza, los dirigentes de Syriza encabezados por Alexis Tsipras, han cedido ante los poderes financieros de Europa encabezados por los banqueros alemanes. Los términos del acuerdo dictan dificultades aún más graves para las masas griegas y una dominación absoluta de los bancos internacionales sobre Grecia.

Este acuerdo reemplaza el "No" rotundo de las masas griegas a la austeridad en el referéndum del 5 de julio. El voto del 61 por ciento en contra de los banqueros mostró que existe una amplia base para una resistencia masiva.

[Nota de traducción: A la fecha de escribir este artículo] El último acuerdo aún no ha sido aceptado por el Parlamento griego.

Pero antes de la sumisión en Bruselas, Tsipras había arreglado forzar una aceptación general de cualquier acuerdo que firmara el Parlamento. Lo hizo en colaboración con los otros burgueses y partidos social demócratas griegos - los mismos que hicieron campaña por el voto de "sí" en el referéndum. Lo hizo sabiendo que parte de su propio partido se rebelaría.

Los términos del acuerdo firmado por los 19 países de la zona euro requieren que Grecia acepte para el 18 de julio, una subida de impuestos, reducciones de pensiones y otras condiciones onerosas.

El imperialismo alemán ha conseguido el respaldo de un fuerte bloque de países y la colaboración del gobierno capitalista francés para aplastar a Grecia y hacer un ejemplo del liderazgo Syriza. El Banco Central Europeo obligó a cerrar los bancos griegos cortando el flujo de fondos, amenazando con un caos financiero y estrangulación económica.

Las masas en Grecia habían iniciado una rebelión electoral contra la austeridad bajo la dirección de Syriza y la agrupación de Tsipras. Esta rebelión interfirió con el proyecto de la Unión Europea de tener a los países más débiles de Europa en el férreo control de los poderes financieros en Berlín, París, Bruselas, Amsterdam y otros. Este proyecto ha estado en marcha desde el colapso de la URSS y Europa del Este.

La dirigencia socialdemócrata Tsipras no estaba preparada para realizar la rebelión. Ahora, el objetivo de los poderes financieros es humillar y derrocar al gobierno y destruir a Tsipras frente a su propio pueblo como una lección para todos los demás que podrían rebelarse contra la austeridad exigida por las potencias europeas - y por el Fondo Monetario Internacional, encabezado por EUA.

Términos de más austeridad

La "troika" - el FMI, el Banco Central Europeo y la Comisión Europea - y el gobierno griego, junto con los otros partidos burgueses griegos, han firmado términos que profundizarán la esclavitud de la deuda griega. Los siguientes son aspectos destacados del acuerdo firmado en Bruselas por los 19 países de la eurozona.

El gobierno griego ha acordado some-

terse a la supervisión del FMI; permitir que una maquinaria supervisada active recortes automáticos del gasto si los excedentes presupuestarios quedan cortos; "ambiciosas reformas de las pensiones", es decir, recortes a las/os pensionistas; a la "modernización de la negociación colectiva", es decir menoscabar derechos sindicales; y reforma de la "acción industrial", es decir, medidas contra el derecho de huelga.

El acuerdo obliga al gobierno llevar a cabo "reformas del mercado de productos" que eliminan cualquier protección de precios de medicamentos con receta, leche y pan, entre otras cosas; proceder a la privatización de la red eléctrica nacional (ADMIE); transferir "activos griegos valiosos" a un "fondo independiente" (en Luxemburgo), que privatizaría los activos para pagar la deuda.

No habrá reducción del principal, los cientos de miles de millones de euros contraídos con los bancos - no "recorte de pelo" - solamente una posible bajada de las tasas de interés y una posible extensión de los plazos de amortización. Pero no ha habido ningún compromiso en absoluto de cualquier alivio de la deuda.

El gobierno debe presentar la legislación económica a la troika antes de que se presente al Parlamento o al público. Estos compromisos se requieren antes de que comiencen las negociaciones para un futuro rescate.

Necesaria la resistencia de las masas

Independientemente de si el gobierno cae, es necesario que haya un nuevo liderazgo de la resistencia en Grecia para movilizar la lucha de masas, tanto en el país como para ganar la solidaridad en toda Europa para rechazar este acuerdo antes de que se aplique plenamente. Una respuesta unida de las masas debe ser llamada inmediatamente para decir ¡No! - No a una mayor austeridad, no a pagar esta deuda ilegítima.

Una reunión de emergencia podría ser convocada por las fuerzas progresistas y de izquierda griegas y representantes de las fábricas, comunidades, jubiladas/os, escuelas y universidades, y del campo, así como los pequeños negociantes, para formular un programa alternativo y un plan de agitación con resistencia constante de las masas para revocar el acuerdo.

El objetivo debe ser el de obstaculizar la aplicación de las extremas medidas de austeridad dictadas por el capital financiero europeo, con Wall Street en el fondo, y acordado por el desventurado gobierno de Tsipras. La unidad más amplia posible de la resistencia se debe lograr en los próximos días.

La primavera pasada el Parlamento griego liderado por Syriza autorizó un estudio realizado por el Comité Opuesto a la deuda. (Ver Workers World, "Comité de Deuda griega," el 6 de julio). Aunque presentado dentro de un marco capitalista, los argumentos son la base legal para rechazar la deuda exorbitante a los banqueros. El informe proporciona evidencia de que la deuda es "ilegal, ilegítima y odiosa".

El informe concluye: "El Comité considera que Grecia ha sido y sigue siendo

víctima de un ataque premeditado y organizado por el Fondo Monetario Internacional, el Banco Central Europeo y la Comisión Europea, dirigida exclusivamente a desplazar la deuda privada al sector público".

Romper con el euro vs esclavitud de la deuda

Como recientemente hemos escrito en estas páginas, un compromiso por adelantado por los líderes Syriza de permanecer en la zona euro fue una señal clara a los banqueros que los financistas tenían la ventaja y recurrirían a la estrangulación financiera, que es exactamente lo que han hecho.

Cualesquiera que sean las dificultades de romper con el euro para liberar a Grecia del control financiero absoluto de Frankfurt, el BCE, y el capital financiero alemán, europeo y estadounidense, deben ser enfrentadas. Los preparativos técnicos y el proceso de educación para explicar a las masas deberían haberse llevado a cabo hace mucho tiempo. Como muchas fuerzas de izquierda han señalado, es mejor que pasar por dificultades temporales que someterse a la esclavitud de una deuda y saqueo financiero permanente.

Las fuerzas de izquierda en Syriza han llamado a salirse hace mucho tiempo. Incluso los economistas keynesianos burgueses Paul Krugman y Joseph Stiglitz han sugerido que Grecia estaría mejor si saliera del euro.

Stathis Kouvelakis, miembro del Comité Central de Syriza y maestro en Londres, citó a Thanassis Petrakos, uno de los tres oradores del grupo parlamentario de Syriza y un destacado miembro de la Plataforma de Izquierda, que declaró:

"El 'no' del referéndum fue radical y clasista. Algunos camaradas de alto rango insisten en una lógica de 'no hay otra manera.' Debemos prepararnos para salir de la zona euro y decir esto claramente al pueblo. La izquierda tiene un futuro cuando abra sus alas a lo desconocido, no a la nada. Aquellos que insisten en la opción de permanecer en el euro a cualquier precio podrían saber que es un desastre. Necesitamos una salida preparada para abrir un camino nuevo. Los primeros pasos son el control público de los bancos y del banco central griego y una ofensiva contra la oligarquía." (Revista jacobino, 10 de julio)

Sólo la izquierda y las fuerzas revolucionarias pueden preparar el camino hacia delante - la lucha para revocar el acuerdo y para romper con el euro. Bajo un nuevo liderazgo izquierdista podría haber una campaña masiva para superar el miedo a una ruptura.

Las posibilidades de sobrevivir a una ruptura con el euro podrían ser ilustradas concretamente. Por ejemplo, podría redactarse planes para formar comités locales para asegurar el suministro de alimentos y llevar a cabo su distribución, sobre todo a las/os pobres. Estos comités también podrían estar facultados para suprimir el acaparamiento, monitorear a los capitalistas contra la especulación y el acaparamiento de beneficios, asegurar servicios médicos, etc.

Cabe señalar que una nueva moneda

soberana podría ser empleada para poner las masas de desempleadas/os, especialmente los jóvenes, de vuelta a trabajar; aumentar enormemente la producción; y superar la depresión en la que Grecia se encuentra ahora.

Por supuesto, la nacionalización de la banca y de los sectores estratégicos de la economía serían pasos fundamentales para recuperar la soberanía sobre la economía.

Tales medidas podrían ir acompañadas de negociaciones internacionales para establecer patrones de comercio alternativo en caso necesario, tanto de importación como de exportación. Esto sería en previsión de obstrucción comercial por la UE. Debería ser posible abrir conversaciones con todos los gobiernos que elogiaron el "No". Los países de América Latina en la ALBA (Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América) vienen a la mente.

El pasado abril, el embajador griego a Irán fue recibido por el presidente Hassan Rouhani. "En la reunión (el Presidente) dice que Grecia tiene muchas capacidades en diversos campos y la economía de Irán y Grecia pueden complementarse entre sí. "El embajador griego, a su vez, dijo: "Grecia busca lazos estratégicos con Irán y está en contra de la política de imposición de sanciones para aislar los países". (Agencia de Noticias de Irán, 20 de abril)

Tsipras recientemente hizo un viaje a Rusia para discutir un gasoducto, lo que también abre posibilidades de mantener comercio fuera del euro. Si fuera necesario, podrían establecerse relaciones de trueque temporales. Esta táctica fue utilizada con éxito por parte de Irán para evitar los efectos de las sanciones de EUA.

En cualquier caso, la lógica de permanecer en el euro a toda costa ha transformado al gobierno Syriza de opositor de la austeridad, a ejecutor de la austeridad. Este ciclo debe romperse.

Parásitos capitalistas vitorean

En este momento los mercados de valores de todo el mundo van en aumento al propagarse la noticia de la firma del acuerdo de austeridad del gobierno griego. Los millonarios y multimillonarios que especulan con las acciones están babeándose al tener la sensación de que los bancos van a exprimir aún más la sangre de las masas griegas.

Hay una celebración obscena en los círculos financieros sobre el ataque previsto por los bancos al pueblo griego - las/os trabajadoras, pobres, jubiladas/os, las/os jóvenes. La oligarquía financiera mundial está a la espera de que la Troika apunte los bancos griegos para que Grecia pueda pagar a los acreedores.

Hay aquellos en la izquierda que consideran la capitulación de Tsipras como inevitable y utilizan esto como una razón para abstenerse de la lucha. En particular, el Partido Comunista Griego retuvo a su amplio seguimiento entre los sectores militantes con conciencia de clase de la clase obrera organizada, de unirse con las fuerzas anti-austeridad más amplias

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