

# BLACK WOMEN'S LIVES MATTER

## JUSTICE FOR SANDRA BLAND!

By Gloria Rubac  
 Houston

Sandra Bland's funeral on July 25 was attended by hundreds of people in Lisle, Ill., a Chicago suburb. In her remarks, Bland's mother, Geneva Reed-Veal, urged people to continue to demand justice for her daughter on social media.

Since the death of Sandra Bland of Chicago on July 13 in Waller County, Texas, there have been countless actions of people angered, outraged and just sad over her death.

The most recent was a July 26 protest outside the home of Texas trooper Brian Encinia, who arrested Bland. This brought out the cops in full force, looking like an occupying army.

Harris County (Houston) Sheriff's Department's vehicles filled the whole parking lot adjacent to Encinia's apartment complex. Texas State Police, the Harris County Sheriff's Office, the West I-10 Fire Department and several other agencies set up a command post in a nearby parking lot. They came with riot gear and a mass casualty evacuation ambulance. Sheriffs mounted on

horses awaited the militant contingent that caravanned into the Houston suburb of Katy where Encinia lives. It was only after the demonstration that activists found out that Encinia had moved three days earlier, supposedly for his own safety.

African-American activists led this march, which concluded with a rally with community activists speaking out. Several student leaders from Texas Southern University, a historically Black university in Houston, demanded answers regarding Bland's death. Minister Quanell X chaired the rally and challenged the dozens of cops on horses to deal with the many Black men who had gathered. "Your state trooper assaulted a Black woman who was alone and now she is dead. The men of the Black community are saying to this racist white man who mistreated sister Sandra Bland: 'You (were) going to light her up? Now, let's see if you light us all up when we come today.'"

Liliana Castrillón, speaking for the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement in Spanish, said: "Some of you police here today may think you are good cops. But there are no good cops if you don't speak out against the killer



Liliana Castrillón speaking for the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement.

WWW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

cops. You are just as guilty as the one who caused Sandra Bland to be killed. You are just as guilty as those who have pulled the trigger on young Black and Latino men around Texas and the country."

### 'State of emergency'

Members of local and national churches held a news conference outside the Waller County Jail on July 20 to discuss the case. "We picked this location because it is a crime scene," said the Rev. Jamal Bryant from the

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## Poverty & racism intersect with police brutality



People's Organization for Progress march for racial and economic justice. See page 6.

WWW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

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## NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE!

● Baltimore acquittal

● Detroit protest

● Peoples Power Assembly

● Dontre Hamilton

● Kindra Chapman



PHOTO: CLAUDIA PALACIOS

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# The Civil War Lessons for today's struggle

Below are excerpts from the book "The Klan and the Government: Foes or Allies?" written in 1983 by Sam Marcy, the founder of Workers World Party. The entire book can be read online at workers.org.

In the Civil War in the U.S., the bourgeois democratic revolution was aborted. It did result in ending involuntary servitude. It freed the Black people from their legal ties to the slavocracy. But it failed to carry out the rest of the basic and revolutionary measures which were necessary for formal equality with the white population.

Nevertheless, as a result of the revolutionary prosecution of the war against the Southern slavocracy, the Southern slave state governments were immensely weakened and in part replaced through federal intervention and military occupation by the central government.

These measures were made necessary in order to defend the rights of the Black people and to insure that the Southern slave-state governments did not violate the new federal legislation which the U.S. government had promulgated.

The Southern state governments were thus under the jurisdiction of the U.S. military and had to obey its orders. Unable to do anything legally to subvert the new status and rights of the Black people, the Southern planters resorted to building a conspiratorial terrorist organization to supplement the Southern states' legalized governments.

We see therefore that the KKK arose as an illegal, extra-governmental secret apparatus, nourished, promoted, and organized by the then legalized governments of the South. ...

## Need for people's militia

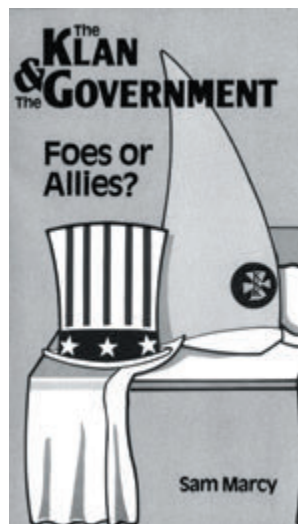
The duty of the federal government in the South under Presidents Lincoln, Johnson, Grant, and Hayes was not merely to juridically proclaim and defend the rights of the freed men and women. Its duty was also to train, educate, and organize them, above all on a military basis so they would be able to properly defend themselves against the violence instigated and perpetrated by the revival of the slavocracy's political power.

It was not enough to have subdued the slavocracy militarily. There had to be a counter-force or a parallel

force as against the armed forces and repressive organs still wielded by the Southern states, notwithstanding the breakup of the old Confederacy.

It's true that the Confederacy seemed crushed and powerless, insofar as exercising its political sway against the Northern bourgeoisie. But the old planter aristocracy was permitted to rebuild and revive on the basis of retaining all its private property and land as well as whatever financial and commercial assets it still had.

Under these circumstances, the economic and state power of the planter aristocracy remained an overwhelming force as against the Black people, notwithstanding the gains made — including those in the state legislatures of the South. What the Black population needed to resist the growth of the KKK was an organized militia, trained, armed, and financed by the federal government to protect and defend their newly won rights and also to contest the planters' right to the land — which the former slaves were entitled to no less than the serfs in Europe during the bourgeois revolutions there. ...



## Treachery of Northern bourgeoisie

The federal government retreated under pressure from many of the capitalists in the North who felt that they had got what they wanted. ... As a result the treacherous bourgeoisie withdrew the federal troops from the South and left the Black people defenseless against the KKK. The Southern aristocracy thereafter began a large-scale campaign to secretly recruit, organize, and promote the Klan as a mass terror weapon with an extra-legal and extra-state character, in order to destroy the ability of the Black people to utilize their newly won legal rights as proclaimed by the Constitution. The right of self-defense was virtually nullified by the withdrawal of federal troops from the South. ...

Bourgeois scholars of Reconstruction, especially the more reactionary ones, underestimate the tremendous role played by the Black people in achieving the victory over the Southern oligarchy. They do everything to belittle the role of Black people and only rarely is there any mention of what W.E.B. Du Bois in his great book "Black Reconstruction" calls the general strike of Black people, that is, the abandonment of service on the plantations and the support it rendered to the Northern army, which was indispensable for the victory over the plantation aristocracy. ... □

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Workers World  
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.  
New York, N.Y. 10011  
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E-mail: ww@workers.org  
Web: www.workers.org  
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Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead; Web Editor Gary Wilson

Production & Design Editors: Coordinator Lal Roohk; Andy Katz, Cheryl LaBash

Copyediting and Proofreading: Sue Davis, Keith Fine, Bob McCubbin

Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe, Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel, K. Durkin, Fred Goldstein, Martha Grevatt, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Terri Kay, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, John Parker, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Redactora Berta Joubert-Ceci; Ramiro Fúnez, Teresa Gutierrez, Donna Lazarus, Carlos Vargas

Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis

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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. □

## Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

## workers.org/wwp

**National Office**  
147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.  
New York, NY 10011  
212.627.2994  
wwp@workers.org

**Bay Area**  
1305 Franklin St. #411  
Oakland, CA 94612  
510.600.5800  
bayarea@workers.org

**Cleveland**  
P.O. Box 5963  
Cleveland, OH 44101  
216.738.0320  
cleveland@workers.org

**Houston**  
P.O. Box 3454  
Houston, TX 77253-3454  
713.503.2633  
houston@workers.org

**Pittsburgh**  
pittsburgh@workers.org  
**Rochester, N.Y.**  
585.436.6458  
rochester@workers.org

**Atlanta**  
PO Box 18123  
Atlanta, GA 30316  
404.627.0185  
atlanta@workers.org

**Boston**  
284 Amory St.  
Boston, MA 02130  
617.286.6574  
boston@workers.org

**Denver**  
denver@workers.org

**Huntington, W. Va.**  
huntingtonww@workers.org  
**Los Angeles**  
5278 W Pico Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90019  
la@workers.org  
323.306.6240

**Rockford, IL**  
rockford@workers.org

**Baltimore**  
c/o Solidarity Center  
2011 N. Charles St.  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
443.221.3775  
baltimore@workers.org

**Buffalo, N.Y.**  
712 Main St #113B  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
716.883.2534  
buffalo@workers.org

**Detroit**  
5920 Second Ave.  
Detroit, MI 48202  
313.459.0777  
detroit@workers.org

**Milwaukee**  
milwaukee@workers.org  
**Philadelphia**  
P.O. Box 34249  
Philadelphia, PA 19101  
610.931.2615  
phila@workers.org

**San Diego**  
P.O. Box 33447  
San Diego, CA 92163  
sandiego@workers.org

**Tucson, Ariz.**  
tucson@workers.org

**Washington, D.C.**  
P.O. Box 57300  
Washington, D.C. 20037  
dc@workers.org

**Chicago**  
27 N. Wacker Dr. #138  
Chicago, IL 60606  
312.229.0161  
chicago@workers.org

**Durham, N.C.**  
804 Old Fayetteville St.  
Durham, NC 27701  
919.322.9970  
durham@workers.org

## Low-wage workers rack up victories

# \$15 per hour — What's next?

By Workers World News Bureau

From coast to coast, momentum continues to build behind the struggle of low-wage workers fighting for \$15 per hour and a union, an effort which began nearly three years ago. The week of July 20 was marked by several major victories for this movement.

On July 21, Los Angeles County approved a \$15 minimum wage to be phased in by 2020. This follows in the footsteps of the city of Los Angeles, which last month passed a \$15 minimum wage that will be implemented on the same time line.

In May, New York state Gov. Andrew Cuomo instructed the state's Department of Labor to convene a wage board to examine wages in the fast food industry. Cuomo's announcement came just weeks after an April 15 mobilization by low-wage workers, the largest day of action to date in the growing movement. Hundreds of thousands had hit the streets across the U.S. and in several other countries.

The day following the announcement by Los Angeles County, the New York state Wage Board concluded its hearings and issued a proposal to raise wages for fast food workers in the state to \$15 per hour. This proposal, which would affect 180,000 workers in the state's fast food industry, is expected to be enacted by Acting Labor Commissioner Mario Musolino in the coming weeks. The recommendation from the Wage Board would institute a \$15 wage in New York City by 2018 and in the rest of the state by 2021.

The victory in New York state is the largest and farthest reaching to date. It follows major cities across the U.S. that have raised their minimum wage to \$15 in recent months — including Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Other cities — Washington, St. Louis and others — are currently considering a \$15 minimum



In Baltimore on May 2, protesters demanded 'a livable wage' as well as 'Justice for Freddie Grey.'

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

wage. Still others have recently passed significant increases just short of \$15, such as Chicago and Kansas City, Mo.

### Where do we go from here?

It goes without saying that these are monumental victories that will have a dramatic impact on the lives of many working people in the U.S. These victories would not have been possible without the bravery of low-wage workers across the country who have relentlessly organized and gone on strike over the last two and a half years. All congratulations are due to them.

When this movement began in 2012, a \$15 minimum wage was scoffed at by every politician and bourgeois policy pundit. Now, \$15 is the baseline of every discussion on the minimum wage in the U.S.

It is an understatement to say that Cuomo and similar politicians who have passed these wage increases are

no friends of working people. All of this shows that it is class struggle and the balance of power between workers and capital that is the motive force of history. We must remember that it is militant action by workers, exemplified in the strikes that low-wage workers have conducted, that made these victories possible, not the actions of politicians.

Noticeably absent, however, from these \$15-minimum-wage increases is any discussion of building a union of low-wage workers. This is still a critical question for the movement. As important as these victories are, without an organization of workers to exercise power to enforce and expand upon these accomplishments, there is a very real possibility that they could be vanquished or that the bosses will find ways to undermine them.

This movement — and particularly these \$15 victories — opens space to unleash a much broader, classwide struggle for not just higher wages, but power for

workers in this country to take back from the banks and corporations the wealth that is being stolen from our communities every day. Think of how the struggle could reach new heights if the low-wage workers' movement and the Black Lives Matter movement joined forces in a more substantial way.

Making central the fight against racism and police terror as part of the low-wage workers' movement is even more critical right now. The prospect of this is terrifying to corporations, banks and the politicians who serve them in every office of government.

It seems too that, unfortunately but not surprisingly, many of the unions are reluctant to see this happen. It remains to be seen how they will summarize these recent developments and progress from here. But it will be up to the workers and the rest of the revolutionary movement in this country to help realize the potential that could be seized in this period. □

## BOSTON

### Disabled community marches



WW PHOTO: NAN GENDER

Militant contingent chants: 'Stop police brutality!'

By WW Boston Bureau

The disabled community, children, youth, and members of human service agencies and nonprofit organizations gathered in Boston on July 22 for a march and festivities to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The event was called by Boston's Commission for Persons with Disabilities and other state and local agencies.

Drawing much attention as they rolled and marched along was a militant contingent chanting: "Disabled liberation: Yes! Discrimination: No!" and "Stop police

brutality against disabled people!" The contingent was composed of members of the Stonewall Warriors, the Boston Homeless Coalition, the Women's Fight-back Network, Team Solidarity of Local 8751, and the Disability Caucus of Workers World Party.

The group distributed Workers World newspaper and a Disabled Caucus of WWP statement entitled, "The disability rights movement won the ADA! Let's fight to get it enforced, expanded and funded!" Names were collected for a future meeting on disabilities under capitalism. □

## Verizon workers ready to strike

By Sue Davis  
New York

A sea of red T-shirts flooded the streets, while those wearing them roared with anger in front of Verizon's corporate headquarters in Manhattan on July 25. Some of the shirts read "I can't calm down, I need a contract," "Will strike if provoked" and "We walked before, we'll walk again," referring to a 2011 strike.

The estimated crowd of 12,000 union members and allies, representing 39,000 fixed-line and FIOS workers in nine states from Maine to Virginia, were rallying to tell the giant telecommunications company that they're ready to strike if they don't get a better contract offer by the time the current one expires at midnight on Aug. 1.

Why strike? The contract Verizon brought to the bargaining table June 22 contained significant, deal-breaking cuts: 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.

No wonder that 96 percent of members of the New England Council of the International Brotherhood of Electrical

Workers voted on July 17 to strike, while the Verizon East district of the Communication Workers voted by 86 percent to strike during the week of July 20.

Speakers at the rally included CWA President Chris Shelton, who blasted management for trying to rob workers of their retirement. He ended a rousing speech with the chant: "Ready to fight and ready to win!" Barbara Bowen of the Professional Staff Congress at City University of New York and Secretary-Treasurer Earl Phillips of Transit Workers Union Local 100 gave solidarity messages and offered their support for a strike.

Caesse Villegar, a Black sister representing Cablevision workers, talked about how CWA and IBEW had stood with them during the three-year battle they eventually won and now Cablevision workers would stand by Verizon workers.

Verigreedy lives up to the workers' nickname for Verizon. Listed 15th in this year's Forbes Fortune 500, the company raked in \$29 billion in net income in the last five years and \$4 billion in just the last quarter. The five top executives have been rewarded handsomely, with a total of \$44 million in annual salary and bonuses in 2014. They will never have to worry about their retirement. □

# Cuban flag flies in Washington

By Cheryl LaBash  
Washington, D.C.

In a ceremony attended by some 500 invited guests on July 20, the Cuban flag was raised over the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C., for the first time since 1961, when U.S. imperialism broke relations between the two countries. Other supporters successfully fought back right-wing forces who tried to disrupt the event.

Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, foreign affairs minister of Cuba, told those gathered: "The flag that we revere ... is the same that was hauled down here 54 years ago, which was zealously kept in Florida by a family of liberators and later on by the museum of our eastern city of Las Tunas, as a sort of premonition that this day would certainly come.

"Flying once again in this place is the one-star flag that embodies the generous blood that was shed, the sacrifices made and the struggle waged for more than 100 years by our people for their national independence and full self-determination, facing the most serious challenges and risks.

"Today we pay homage to all those who died in its defense and renew the commitment of the present generations, fully confident of the newer ones, to serve it with honor. ...

"We've been able to make it through to this date thanks to the firm and wise leadership of Fidel Castro Ruz, the histor-

ic leader of the Cuban Revolution, whose ideas we will always revere with utmost loyalty. ... This ceremony has been possible thanks to the free and unshakable will, unity, sacrifice, selflessness, heroic resistance and work of our people, and also the strength of the Cuban Nation and its culture." (en.cubadebate.cu, July 20)

The 30-person delegation from Cuba presented a rich cross section of Cuba's social accomplishments and included former diplomats, artists, deputies, scientists, educators, athletes, farmers and religious people. Of special note were scientist Jorge Berlanga, creator of He-

berprot P, a treatment for diabetic foot ulcers that can prevent 77 percent of amputations; Ernesto Freire Cazañas, who heads the International Department of the Cuban Workers Central Union; and Yunidis Castillo, Paralympics sprinting champion. Many are members of Cuba's Council of State.

A strong delegation of Cuban-Americans celebrated the opening of the renewed embassy, including more than 80 from Florida. Members of Congress and staff included representatives of the Congressional Black Caucus. Attorneys mingled with activists who contributed decades to

defending Cuba's right to self-determination and sovereignty. Most recently this activity focused on the successful return to Cuba of its defensive state security agents known as the Cuban 5, who had been imprisoned in the U.S. since 1998.

The flag-raising celebration energized momentum to press forward on ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade, returning Guantánamo to Cuba and ending the funding for U.S. "regime change" programs aimed at Cuba.

*LaBash is a co-chair of the National Network on Cuba. She attended the flag-raising ceremony.*



PHOTO: ISMAEL FRANCISCO

## Workers distressed as infrastructure crumbles

By G. Dunkel  
New York

From July 20 to 25, there was only one day when New Jersey Transit's service to Penn Station in New York City was not disrupted. Tens of thousands of workers were delayed in getting to work and again in getting home.

The reason for the delays was dilapidation of the electrical system in the tunnels that bring NJ Transit and Amtrak trains

in and out of New York. These tunnels, built by Pennsylvania Railroad between 1904 and 1908, were severely damaged in 2012 by superstorm Sandy. Salty seawater ate away at the concrete walls containing the electric lines.

For Sandy's damage to be fixed, not just patched, the tunnels would have to be taken out of service one at a time, which would reduce their capacity to a quarter of what it currently is. Instead of 23 trains per hour moving during rush

hour, there would be five or six.

The Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission estimates that if both these North Hudson tunnels were to go out of service, it would cost the economy \$100 million a day. Most of this cost would be borne by workers who couldn't get to work or return home, since very little freight moves through these tunnels.

Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx, on a trip to New York during NJ

Transit's problems, called the failure to repair the tunnels "almost criminal" and said their possible failure was the biggest current threat to the country's infrastructure. (Politico, July 21)

The issue of the tunnels' repair is caught up in Republican primary politics. One of the first things Gov. Chris Christie did when he took over in 2010 was to cancel a tunnel project designed to build a new tunnel from New Jersey to Manhattan.

Christie claimed that New Jersey would have to shoulder too much of the cost. His decision also freed up \$3 billion from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which he then allocated to repair roads and bridges that were in a state of decay. That's because New Jersey uses its gasoline tax to pay for their upkeep and Christie has refused to raise the gas tax.

Whether or not Christie is right, governors, mayors and transportation secretaries throughout the United States all point to some other entity, led by somebody who is not a political or financial backer of their administration, as being responsible for maintaining and improving crumbling infrastructure.

For example, the tunnels under the Hudson River are a key part of the Northeast Corridor Rail System stretching from Richmond, Va., to Boston. If they collapse — a not-impossible outcome given their neglect — the million or so people who use this corridor every day in a number of states will be severely affected.

And of course the workers who use this infrastructure are having their standard of living frittered away as it crumbles. They are suffering from a disguised form of austerity that only becomes visible when tolls or fares go up. NJ Transit is raising its fares by 9 percent starting Oct. 1.

Workers have a need and a right to a safe and effective infrastructure. They don't need a capitalist political system that shrugs off their needs and tries to shift the costs of infrastructure maintenance onto their shoulders. □

## 'Locked up, unheard'



The New York Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement held a strong protest at Union Square on July 23. Led by people who have suffered solitary confinement, they built support via this action. Several victims of this cruel form of punishment explained what they had been through. NYCAIC leader Victor Pate spoke of his experience of complete isolation as torture. He explained that even the United Nations has found it to be against international law to keep anyone in isolation for 15 days or more. Meanwhile, over 5,000 of those incarcerated in New York state remain in solitary. Nationwide, many others are tortured in this way, especially political prisoners.

— Report and photo by Anne Pruden

# Activist in Freddie Grey uprising acquitted

By Joe Piette  
Baltimore

Morgan Malachi, one of hundreds of activists facing charges for having protested the Baltimore police killing of Freddie Grey, won an innocent verdict on July 23 in front of three dozen supporters from the Baltimore Peoples Power Assembly and the Philadelphia Coalition for Racial, Economic and Legal Justice.

Malachi was part of the “Philly Is Baltimore” contingent during an April 25 mass uprising in Baltimore against police brutality. She was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and refusal to obey a lawful order. City officials later called in the National Guard and state troopers to enforce a curfew as they tried to crush the justified people’s rebellion by arresting scores of youth.

Since then, officials have been conducting a witch hunt against the protesters, increasing the number of charges against many arrestees. Aljebu-Lan (Key) Marcus, a Philly REAL Justice Coalition activist from the Trayvon Martin Organizing Committee, has had charges of resisting arrest and interfering with an arrest added to charges of disorderly conduct and failure to obey a lawful order.

All this was for protesting racist police killings, which are all too common not just in Baltimore but also in Philadelphia, New York, Oakland, Ferguson, Cleveland and many more U.S. cities. Marcus’ trial is scheduled to take place in Baltimore on Aug. 10 at 8:30 a.m. at Hargrove District Court, 700 East Patapsco Ave. Supporters are encouraged to call

or email Baltimore City State’s Attorney Marilyn Mosby’s office to demand that all charges be dropped: 443-984-6000, mail@stattorney.org.

Baltimore is not alone. Many arrests have taken place in Philadelphia, too, including that of the Mayfair 10, for protesting the police refusal to release the names of the cops who killed Brandon Tate Brown. Another five were arrested at a peaceful #SayHerName vigil when cops rioted, breaking the wrist of a 62-year-old woman.

Hundreds of arrests have taken place wherever outraged youth have protested the killings of Sandra Bland, Mike Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Rekia Boyd, and many more — over 600 Black and Brown men, women, transgender people and even children killed by cops in 2015 so far. The arrests appear to be part of a campaign of repression being coordinated from the ruling circles of capitalist society against the Black Lives Matter movement.

## Right to rebel put on trial

Malachi’s trial was preceded by plea bargain proceedings for another young Black protester, Terry Smith, 26. He has a five-year-old child and his partner is expecting with another child. He was sentenced to 60 days in prison for his part in the uprising against police terror.

During Malachi’s trial, prosecutor Andrew Costinett relied on the testimony of four SWAT team cops. He also exhibited portions of three videotapes in a failed effort to prove that the young Black woman had refused to obey orders to disperse



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Supporters outside courthouse after ‘not guilty’ verdict.

or was disorderly.

The videos showed Malachi using a bullhorn. Baltimore City District Court Judge Flynn M. Owens eventually agreed with Malachi’s attorney, Steve Beatty, that using her First Amendment rights was legal. The judge dropped the disorderly conduct charge.

Beatty further argued that the prosecution’s own tapes from their Foxtrot helicopter revealed that Malachi had been in the intersection facing off against a line of police at 7:18 p.m., but was on the sidewalk when she was arrested at 7:40. The officer on the copter testified that he broadcast: “You must disperse. You cannot block the intersection or you will be

subject to arrest,” three times between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. Two defense witnesses swore they did not hear the police orders to disperse, perhaps because of the overwhelming noise of chanting, yelling and bullhorns in the chaotic scene.

At the end of the proceedings, while Judge Owens praised the police “for their thankless job,” he had to admit that no testimony proved the order to disperse was broadcast between 7:18 p.m. and 7:40 p.m. so there was reasonable doubt. Therefore, he could not find the defendant guilty.

Outside the courtroom, Beatty told reporters this was a victory “for the right to free expression at a time when courts are trying to limit those rights.” □

## Detroit protest says:

# ‘End forced removals of African Americans!’

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire  
Detroit

The corporate media claim that Detroit is being revitalized. A rally and march at Hart Plaza on the Detroit River and at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center (City Hall) on July 21 exposed this false narrative.

The city emerged from a contrived financial emergency and forced bankruptcy late in 2014. Billions were stolen from pensioners and residents, who witnessed private interests seize public assets under the guise of cost cutting. Over 60,000 households still face property tax foreclosures, while billionaires like banker Dan Gilbert and stadium owner Mike Illitch receive hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies.

Despite the media propaganda, the majority African-American population has had no economic revival since the Great Recession began in late 2007. Banks have made over 100,000 foreclosures in this city, while politicians did nothing to protect the interests of their working-class constituents.

African-American shop owners are being driven out of the downtown and midtown areas. Taxi drivers must compete with Uber Technologies, Inc., a transportation service which has generated controversy and protest internationally by super-exploiting its worker-drivers.

On July 21, both shop and restaurant owners rallied, beginning with a caravan from Eastern Market to Hart Plaza. Banks threaten to close Bert’s Market Place, a jazz club and restaurant whose African-American owner, Bert Dearing,



Protesters outside Detroit’s city hall, July 21.

WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

lost it to foreclosure after a lengthy illness. The property was listed on auction.com with a starting price of \$700,000, and Dearing says he has until 2017 to resolve the issue or move.

Bert’s Market Place has been a center for people throughout the city. In 2011, Dearing opened his doors for a fundraiser in support of people’s attorney Vanessa Fluker after she had been fined by a local Wayne County judge. Fluker was known for her militant efforts to save a family’s home by appealing an unjust, implicitly racist decision.

Other small-business owners at the demonstration discussed familiar scenarios. Owners of the buildings where they rent have sold to new interests that want the African Americans and their customers out.

## Taxi drivers join in

Beside shop owners and their supporters, Metro Detroit Cab Drivers Association members were also protesting. They say the growing influence of Uber services puts the local drivers at a disadvantage. Expenses for inspections, insurance and bond-plates fees, along with random stops by the police — who often ticket drivers for spurious violations such as not having an updated log of trips — leave them at a loss.

Longtime activist and professional photographer Kenneth Kabaka Reynolds, who is also president of the Cab Drivers Association, said Uber is “illegal in the state of Michigan and they’re operating with impunity. And if you’re not going to regulate Uber, deregulate the taxicab industry.” (Detroit News, July 15)

During the rally a statement of solidarity was delivered by Cecily McClellan, a leader in the Detroit Active and Retirees Association (DAREA). This organization was formed after Judge Steven Rhodes, who presided over the federal bankruptcy, imposed pension and healthcare cuts.

DAREA’s leaders were the most vocal opponents of the bankruptcy during the 2013-14 proceedings. At present they have filed an appeal in federal court to overturn the attacks against municipal retirees.

After the demonstrators marched from Hart Plaza to City Hall for another rally, dozens of taxi vehicles began to circle the building, the drivers honking their horns in an act of defiance. Later, rally participants marched around the building, chanting slogans against current city policies under the corporate-imposed administration of Mike Duggan, the first white mayor in 40 years.

## Calls for Aug. 29 solidarity action

At that demonstration, members of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs addressed and encouraged participants to endorse the upcoming People’s Assembly and Speak-Out scheduled for Grand Circus Park downtown on Aug. 29. The Moratorium NOW! Coalition reminded the crowd that African Americans still constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of Detroit and that the people of Ferguson, Mo., and Baltimore have spoken to the concrete conditions prevailing in urban areas, pointing the way forward.

If the city administration is ignoring

*Continued on page 8*

## New York march demands

# Justice for Sandra Bland, Kindra Chapman

By Teresa Gutierrez  
New York

On July 22, the New York City Chapter of the Peoples Power Assemblies held a spirited rally and march in solidarity with Sandra Bland and Kindra Chapman. The PPA demanded justice for these sisters' deaths. The two Black women had both been found dead by hanging, in Texas and Alabama jail cells respectively.

Despite a heavy police presence, about 1,000 people began to gather around 5 p.m. in Union Square where PPA organizer Terrea Mitchell opened the rally. She welcomed everyone with an emotional explanation of why the PPA had called the protest on short notice.

Mitchell's rage at yet another Black person killed as a result of detention by police was vivid, as it was for every person who spoke out at the rally. Organizers from several Black Lives Matter groups added their voices, including NYC Shut It Down, trans activists and families of victims of police brutality.

PPA organizer Larry Holmes said that "the killing of Sandra Bland is the killing

of an activist. She was one of us. This is why we must fight until victory is ours." The crowd responded militantly to all calls for fundamental change and revolutionary struggle.

After the short rally, thousands of protesters marched through midtown Manhattan, first on the sidewalk and then in the streets. Once the demonstrators reached Penn Station and marched into it, they got a great response from people waiting for trains.

The protesters then went to Grand Central Station — where Black Lives Matter protests take place on a weekly basis — with their demands for justice and solidarity.

During the march some people sat down in a crossing area. The cops arrested 14 people, including one PPA organizer, who was dragged through the street before being arrested and put into a police wagon.

All those arrested were given desk warrants and were released the same night, some after midnight.

The next step in the struggle in cities around the country will be Aug. 8-9, the first anniversary of the murder of Mi-



Outrage over deaths of Black women in police custody.

PHOTO: CLAUDIA PALACIOS

chael Brown and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. In New York a PPA protest, "One Year Commemoration of the Murder of Michael Brown, the Ferguson Rebellion, & the Black Lives Matter Uprising," will be held on Aug. 9 at 12

noon at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn.

For more information, visit [peoplespowerassemblies.org](http://peoplespowerassemblies.org) and [Fergusonresponse.tumblr.com](http://Fergusonresponse.tumblr.com).

Claudia Palacios contributed to this report.

## At Newark, N.J., protest

# Police brutality, racism, inequality targeted

By Monica Moorehead  
Newark, N.J.

Several thousand people braved a hot sun and no shade in over 90-degree heat to rally and march in Newark, N.J., on July 25. They were protesting police brutality, racial injustice and economic inequality.

The majority African-American crowd, which also included Latinos/as, Asians and whites, youth and seniors, were supporting a demonstration initiated by the Newark-based People's Organization for Progress, chaired by Larry Hamm. Delegations traveled from as far away as Boston, Philadelphia, Richmond and New York City, as well as other parts of New Jersey.

Newark is the most populated city in New Jersey with the second-highest poverty rate: 30.2 percent, based on a family of four making only \$22,000 or less, according to the 2010 U.S. Census.

A main theme of the march and rally was Black Lives Matter, which focused on Black women and men killed by racist terror — such as Sandra Bland and Kindra Chapman, who were recently found dead in jail cells — and others who lost their lives at the hands of police in the Newark area and around the country. Family members, especially mothers of those killed by police, spoke with great emotion at the rally.

A public statement on the "Million People's March" Facebook page from Hamm explains what motivated the march:

"Police brutality is an ongoing, growing and deadly problem in the United States of America.

"It includes the unwarranted and unjustified killing of unarmed people, the use of excessive force, the violation of peoples' constitutional rights, racist and discriminatory practices, criminal activity, corruption and misconduct, increased

militarization of police forces, and the failure of the criminal justice system to hold police accountable.

"Police brutality is not an isolated problem. It is a historical problem with roots that are deep in the social fabric of this country. It must be seen within the broader context of racial and economic injustice and inequality.

"While the victims of police brutality come from all racial groups in society, the vast majority come from African American, Latino, Native American and other communities of color. They are overwhelmingly poor and working class. Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Abdul Kamal, Kashad Ashford and Reikia Boyd are among the recent victims.

"Police brutality has been and continues to be the cause of social unrest in the country. Throughout contemporary U.S. history incidents of police brutality have

sparked explosive episodes of civil rebellion and unrest, with the most recent being that of Ferguson, Missouri.

"The failure of the criminal justice system to hold police officers accountable is causing a political crisis as more people discover that police brutality goes unpunished. Police kill unarmed civilians and are not even charged.

"One grand jury after another fails to indict police officers. The cases of Michael Brown and Eric Garner being the most recent examples. This is perpetuating a growing belief that the criminal justice system is racist and illegitimate.

"For these reasons POP is calling a Million People's March Against Police Brutality, Racial Injustice, and Economic Inequality. We will march to demand an end to police brutality and justice for all of its victims, police reform, and an end to the problems of racial injustice and economic inequality which lead to police brutality." □

## Interview with Nate Hamilton

# 'My brother's killing has opened my eyes'

Nate Hamilton and his family are still fighting for justice for Dontre Hamilton, who was shot 14 times and killed by Milwaukee police officer Christopher

Manney on April 30, 2014. The Hamilton family, along with community supporters, then formed the Coalition for Justice, which since May 2014 has organized

some of the largest demonstrations for justice and against police terror in Milwaukee's history.

On Dec. 22, Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm said he wouldn't pursue any criminal charges against Manney, alleging Manney acted in self-defense. The same day the Milwaukee office of the Department of Justice's United States Attorney issued a statement stating it would undertake a federal review of the case to determine if — under federal civil rights law — there is a legal and factual basis for a federal civil rights prosecution. The Hamilton family met with federal officials on Jan. 16, but have not heard from the Justice Department since then.

In response to mass protests, Milwaukee's Fire and Police Commission in March upheld Manney's firing by the police chief for violating departmental

protocols — not for murder — during his accosting of Hamilton. Manney has appealed this decision in Milwaukee County Court. He still receives a pension.

Besides building the Coalition for Justice and Mothers United for Justice, while they fight for justice for Dontre, members of the Hamilton family have supported numerous progressive causes. Nate Hamilton, Dontre's brother, recently supported Amalgamated Transit Union Local 998's struggle for a just contract and the protest against Gov. Scott Walker on July 13 in Waukesha when Walker announced he was running for president.

Workers World Contributing Editor Bryan G. Pfeifer interviewed Nate Hamilton July 8 at All People's Church in Milwaukee after a Coalition for Justice meeting.

**Workers World:** What is the status of Dontre's case right now?



Nate Hamilton (right front) with transit union members demanding a just contract.

PHOTO: JOE BRUSKY

PHOTO: BLACK LIVES MATTER ALSO-BIRMINGHAM



These Birmingham Black Lives Matter activists were arrested protesting Kindra Chapman's death.

## BLACK WOMEN'S LIVES MATTER Justice for Sandra Bland!

*Continued from page 1*

Empowerment Movement of the AME Church. "We are in a state of emergency. Here in Texas we are not afraid of ISIS. We are afraid of the police. We need the immediate intervention of the Department of Justice to take this case, not just out of the county but out of the hands of the state of Texas!"

The National Black United Front held a July 21 demonstration outside the Mickey Leland Federal Building in downtown Houston. Co-chairing the rally was the national chair of NBUF, Kofi Taharka, and Jinaki Muhammad, the vice co-chair of Women's Affairs for NBUF. They both stressed that there was a systemic problem with cops killing Black people and it was the system that had to be changed.

A day later, hundreds of protesters gathered in Houston's largest park after

the heat dropped below 90 degrees and marched and rallied until after dark. The multinational crowd was united in their demand that the questions surrounding Bland's death be answered.

Several vigils, marches and prayer gatherings have been held in Prairie View on the campus of Prairie View A&M University, which is in Waller County. PVAMU students have been quite vocal about Bland, who was an alumna of their school. The Hope AME Church held a rally July 26 after hundreds of students marched through the campus mourning her loss.

Many other activities are scheduled and being planned. The outrage of so many is hotter than the 100-degree temperatures in Texas. Trooper Encinia being placed on desk duty is not the answer that religious leaders, PVAMU students or activists from around the state will accept as a solution. □

### Oakland

## Vigil for Sandra Bland

PHOTO: KELLY JOHNSON

Over a hundred people gathered at Oscar Grant Plaza in Oakland, Calif., on July 24 for a "Say Her Name" vigil for the murder of Sandra Bland and countless others. Convened by the Ella Baker Center, it was organized as a speakout against state violence. After introductory remarks and poetry by the poet Camara Brown, the vigil became an open mic for any of the Black women in attendance who wanted to speak. One after another, about 20 Black women made moving presentations about how white supremacy and state violence has affected their lives and their loved ones. In the photo, Brown, on the left, emceed the speakout. □



**Nate Hamilton:** It's in the hands of the U.S. Justice Department, the Civil Rights Division in Washington that is handling the investigation at this point. Mel Johnson, the Assistant U.S. Attorney in Milwaukee, passed it off to them to look it over, to review the decisions he had found. Now we're just in limbo waiting for something to happen.

**WW:** What are your observations and experiences with the Coalition for Justice?

**NH:** I've seen a lot of community leaders. How can we get all of these community leaders to come together, to work together? Whether it's economic or it's social, we all want the same thing — that's a better place to live. There's been a gap and we've been trying to bridge that gap, showing people that we can work together, come together and support each other. We might not agree with everything, but some things we do agree on. We can work together to accomplish the ultimate goal and that's

justice in our poverty-stricken community. We have to come together and work on these things. We can only do it collectively.

**WW:** The ATU Local 998 conducted a three-day work stoppage from July 1 to 4 in Milwaukee and is still fighting for a just contract. You participated in many protests during the work stoppage. Why is the Coalition for Justice supporting the transit workers?

**NH:** The fight for my brother touched me. When I see people stand up for a cause against a system that oppresses, a system that deprives people of what's rightfully theirs, I support that. The transit workers' pensions are rightfully theirs. They worked for that. To strip them of that and their other benefits after putting in so much work is totally wrong.

So anytime I can encourage someone to stand up against the people who hold dollar signs over our heads — and we stand up against that — I'm there. I want to sup-

# Kindra Chapman: #Fight4HerName

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

In Alabama and nationwide, protests continue against the death in police custody of Kindra Darnell Chapman, a Black teenager who died in Homewood City Jail on July 14 under suspicious circumstances. The Homewood police allege Chapman committed suicide after being arrested, but major discrepancies and omissions remain in the official narrative.

Homewood, a suburb of Birmingham, includes the predominantly Black community of Rosedale. According to local Black Lives Matter activists, the Homewood police have a history of "questionable excessive force incidents" in Rosedale. A life-long community resident described the jail as "a hell-hole."

In addition to racist targeting by the police, residents point out that police also harass the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community. According to a friend of Chapman, Juwaun King, 16, Chapman identified as gay from the seventh grade on. King said Chapman planned to go to college, was in a relationship with a woman who was pregnant and was "very excited about the baby — very." King says the official account "doesn't make sense, period. And I decided I have to speak up." ([america.aljazeera.com](http://america.aljazeera.com), July 23)

A BLM-Birmingham delegation rallied outside the jail July 21 to demand information and transparency from the police. After being denied any briefing, even about standard police operating procedures, they walked into traffic on the major commuter artery, U.S. 31, blocked cars and refused to move. Four men and two women were

arrested. One was Tasered by police.

In New York City, a July 22 march for justice for Kindra Chapman and Sandra Bland, dead in police custody in Texas, drew 1,000 people and continued for hours. Protesters also marched for India Clarke, a trans woman of color murdered in Florida on July 21.

Local activists from Operation I Am, an offshoot of the Hands Up Birmingham movement, held a candlelight vigil for Chapman on July 26. About 100 people attended and heard from Linda Chapman, Kindra's grandmother. Linda Chapman and her spouse, who raised Kindra, had previously held a press conference with BLM and the Nation of Islam to stress they did not believe their grandchild's death was suicide, especially given the Homewood Police Department's history.

### 'Jailhouse suicide': new code for jailhouse lynching?

Determined and independent reports by local BLM activists have uncovered numerous discrepancies in the Homewood police account of Chapman's death and raised many troubling questions: Had the police repeatedly targeted Chapman previously for harassment? What, when and where were the actual circumstances of her arrest on July 14?

Most importantly, what were the police doing with Chapman in custody for apparently "a missing forty-five minutes" between the arrest and the arrival at the jail?

Avee-Ashanti Shabazz, a BLM activist video-reporting from Homewood, asks of that missing time, "Was she beaten? Was she tortured? Was she raped?"

In 1975, Joann Little, a 21-year-old African American, was arrested in Beaufort, N.C., for a petty offense similar to that of Kindra Chapman. Little's combative struggle with her white jailer was all that saved her from rape, and perhaps death.

In that fight, her jailer died instead of Little. Through an international campaign for her freedom, she became "the first woman in United States history to be acquitted using the defense that she used deadly force to resist sexual assault." ("Dimension of Criminal Law," by T. Pickard et al.)

In 2015, Kindra Chapman, a slender, five-foot 18-year-old, may have fought for her life and lost. The bruising and trauma to Chapman's mouth, eye and head, seen after her death by a 14-year-old sister, speak to this possibility.

The police insist "suicide." But what if "jailhouse suicide" is now the new cover-up term for "jailhouse lynching"?

There is a long history of police cooperation with lynchings in the South. Sixty-four percent of early 20th century lynching victims were taken to their death from jails. ("Lynching in the New South," by W.F. Brundage) Jefferson County, where Homewood is located, was the site of 29 lynchings between 1877 and 1950 — the ninth highest rate of Southern counties. (Equal Justice Initiative)

Racism and sexism make Alabama jails a particular hell for women. The state's Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women is ranked in the top 10 worst U.S. prisons. (Mother Jones, May 9, 2013) The U.S. Department of Justice found that at least one-third of Tutwiler employees "had sex" with prisoners — rape, under those circumstances.

The Homewood police continue to release information selectively and insist that Chapman's death was by her own hand.

But Joanne Little said, "My life is not in the hands of the court. My life is in the hands of the people." (Workers World, Aug. 8, 1975) The people's struggle continues to unmask the forces of racism, homophobia and state oppression looming behind Kindra Chapman's death. Justice for her name and her memory are now in the hands of the people: #KindraLives and #Fight4HerName. □

*Continued on page 10*

## Obama in East Africa

# U.S. imperialism sows turmoil throughout region

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

July 27 — President Barack Obama's first visit to Kenya and Ethiopia highlighted Washington's imperialist intervention in Africa. U.S. policy is aimed at pulling the two countries into a U.S.-led military alliance and increasing U.S.-based firms' exploitation of Africa's mineral resources.

Obama's trip followed a visit to Washington by Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, who held high-level meetings with Obama and officials from the State Department and Pentagon.

U.S. intervention during the George W. Bush and Obama administrations has decreased stability in the region and increased dependence on the Pentagon. On July 26, the same day that Obama arrived in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, a car bomb exploded outside the Jazeera Hotel in Mogadishu, Somalia, killing 13 people, at least one of whom was a Chinese national.

The president attended a business development conference in Kenya. He emphasized during his trip the much-touted, phenomenal economic growth on the continent.

Kenya is a capitalist country that is heavily dependent upon the marketing of agricultural products, clothing and tourism to the U.S. and West Europe. The East African state has been a longtime U.S. ally since the early days of independence in 1963 under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta, its first president.

Increased exploitation of natural gas and other strategic resources in East Africa failed to relieve economic problems. Unemployment and poverty continue to trap millions, while economic relations with the imperialist states offer no significant prospects for the absorption of large segments of the population into the urbanized labor market. Most people still work in the agricultural sectors of the economy in the production of tea, coffee, sisal and other products.

During the 1990s, Kenya was unable to pay back its high-priced loans to the international financial institutions, which forced it to institute "reforms" that made the country more lucrative for investment from transnational corporations and

banks. Following the passage by Congress of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act under the Clinton administration, Kenyan workers began to produce clothing for export to the U.S. and Europe.

Mineral exploitation in Kenya is limited at present. Offshore, there has been exploration for oil resources near the border between Kenya and Somalia. These new areas of potential investment by transnational petroleum firms may be clearly related to the Kenya Defense Forces' (KDF) intervention in Somalia, which was carried out in late 2011 at the aegis of Washington through the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM).

While in Kenya, Obama opened the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi and pledged over \$1 billion in investments from the U.S. government, along with U.S.-based banks, foundations and donors. Some 50 percent of the investments will go to women and young people, who face obstacles when trying to start businesses, says Obama. They will have to satisfy the demands of the investors.

### U.S. intervention increases, instability grows

While Obama spoke of human and especially women's rights, the major thrust of U.S. policy in Kenya, Somalia and other East African states has been to increase U.S. military intervention and the extraction of minerals, while exploiting labor and importing commodities from these countries.

An article in the Sept. 23, 2014, Somalia Current explained that "Kenya recently awarded six oil and gas blocks to the international oil companies, within Somali offshore territory approximately 120,000 km<sup>2</sup> [46,300 square miles]. Italy, Norway, the USA and France are tended to be exploiting the trans-boundary area. It was apparent that those greedy alliances' aim is to plunder Somalia's offshore hydrocarbon resources and this has become more obvious since Kenya started invading southern Somalia in October 2011 while its allies such as France, Italy and Norway kept quiet about the invasion."

In December 2006, under the administration of President George W. Bush, the U.S. encouraged the Ethiopian government to invade Somalia in order to overturn the growing influence of the

Islamic Courts Union. After a two-and-a-half-year occupation, the Al-Shabaab guerrilla movement emerged from the ICU and has continued a war of insurgency against the U.S. and European Union-supported regime in Mogadishu.

At present some 22,000 troops from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) are still occupying the Horn of Africa state. The CIA and the Pentagon regularly conduct drone strikes in Somalia, where they have bases of operation.

### Ethiopia, South Sudan

The 1974 Ethiopian Revolution and its socialist orientation were overthrown in 1991, just months prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Under the Mikhail Gorbachev government, Soviet support for national liberation movements and national democratic revolutionary governments in Africa had decreased, creating a crisis throughout the international community.

The post-1991 counterrevolutionary government in Addis Ababa has been closely aligned with the U.S. and other Western states. Although temporarily withdrawn from Somalia after defeats in early 2009, Ethiopian troops have re-entered the country.

The presence of both the KDF and Ethiopian troops are a cause for concern even within the Somalia Federal Government, which is recognized by Washington and Wall Street.

Obama also addressed the security and political crisis in the newly independent

Republic of South Sudan. This state is the result of a Western-supported secessionist movement that split up the Republic of Sudan, based in Khartoum, which was previously the largest geographic nation-state in Africa.

South Sudan leaders have themselves been split over the future course of the country since December 2013. President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Reik Machar have led separate warring factions in the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army. This has resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people and the deaths of several thousand in a civil war in the continent's, and the world's, most recent state recognized by the United Nations and the African Union.

A joint statement by Obama and Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn praised AMISOM and the others fighting in Somalia against al-Shabaab and announced an agreement for "intelligence cooperation," ostensibly against "terrorism." (White House press release, July 27)

Obama was scheduled to address the AU Commission based in Addis Ababa on July 28, but has no plans to meet with President Robert Mugabe of the Republic of Zimbabwe, who is the sitting chair of the continental body. This reflects U.S. imperialism's hostility to Zimbabwe, particularly since its land reform program of 2000 redistributed white-owned farmland to Africans who had been expropriated during the colonial wars of the late 19th century. □

## Detroit protest says:

# 'End removals of African Americans!'

*Continued from page 5*

African Americans, then we must fill the streets with angry people committed to reversing the downtown area's business-as-usual atmosphere, the activists concluded. Poverty and jobless rates among the people who live in the city hover near 50 percent. There are no plans for the implementation of a jobs program locally or nationally, which means that hundreds of thousands will remain on the margins of the working class.

The theme for the Aug. 29 People's As-

sembly and Speak-Out is "Rally for Our Future: Stop the War on Detroit!" Organizers are circulating leaflets that read, "From Greece to Puerto Rico to Spain and across the United States, workers are fighting back against the austerity being imposed by the banks and financial institutions."

A list of grievances and demands on this leaflet calls for stopping police killings and brutality and jailing killer cops. Other issues include a \$15-an-hour minimum wage, health care for all and single-payer now, halting tax and mortgage foreclosures, along with a demand to release federal Hardest Hit Homeowners funds to keep people in their residences in Detroit and Wayne County.

This demonstration will emphasize the need for a moratorium on water shutoffs and to stop the ongoing attempts to privatize the Detroit Water & Sewage Department, which is undergoing a regionalization process as the Great Lakes Regional Water Authority. The Moratorium NOW! Coalition, along with DAREA, is supporting a petition drive to force a vote to stop regionalization of water services.

Also on July 21, the same day as the demonstrations, the Detroit City Council, in a 5-4 vote, approved a 7.5 percent water rate increase. The state-run Detroit Financial Oversight Committee, which really runs the city in the post-bankruptcy and emergency management period, was behind this increase. These policies will force more people into poverty and threaten to terminate their water services.

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition asks other local, national and international organizations to endorse the Aug. 29 actions. To support the initiative, contact Moratorium NOW! at moratorium-mi.org or call 313-680-5508. □

## FARC announces unilateral ceasefire

*This initiative from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) was announced from Havana, Cuba, where peace talks have been taking place between representatives of the revolutionary forces and the government of Colombia.*

The FARC-EP communicate to all our Blocks, Fronts, Columns, Companies and other political military structures, as well as the Bolivarian and popular militias and subordinate structures, that starting at 00:00 a.m. on July 20, the order is to cease all offensive actions against the armed forces of the State and of public and private infrastructure.

The said order follows the call of the guarantor countries, Cuba and Norway, and accompanying countries Venezuela and Chile, of the peace talks underway in Havana, and of the avalanche of public petitions, letters and messages through social networks addressed to our Peace Delegation by countless personalities

and social and political organizations, churches, community action boards and popular movements in general; therefore it constitutes a serious commitment of our organization, for whose strict fulfillment are responsible each of the leaders and members of the FARC-EP.

This practical measure, of a humanitarian character, constitutes a new gesture on our part with the intention of reaching a pact with the national government on more and more effective formulae of de-escalation of the conflict. We trust therefore that it is regarded and valued in all its dimensions, so that there is no unfortunate repetition of events that only harm the peace and reconciliation purposes.

No unit of the FARC-EP is forced to let itself be struck by enemy forces and has every right to exercise self-defense in case of attack.

We call on all the personalities, institutions, political movements, popular and

social forces that have raised this truly national outcry, to present themselves in an active way in the defense of this new hope that we initiate today in Colombia. No one can steal [from] Colombians their right to live in peace, so it is urgent to close the path to sectors clamoring for war, for bloody solutions, for repression and persecution of the popular movement and its leadership.

The Broad Front for Peace, the Constituent Process, churches and other organizations and interested forces in the oversight of the ceasefire have our trust and collaboration. We believe that the national Government must surround with full guarantees the exercise of this patriotic function, and at the same time advance with greater conviction toward genuine national harmony, based both in the definitive prohibition of violence as in social justice, democracy and sovereignty.

**National Secretariat Of FARC-EP**  
Havana, July 19, 2015



# China, rising wages and worker militancy

By Deirdre Griswold

Workers' wages in the United States have been stagnant since the 1970s in terms of purchasing power. It is common knowledge that it now takes several wage earners in most working-class families just to meet basic expenses. Meanwhile, low-wage workers are on the move, fighting hard for a higher minimum wage and union representation.

Wages in many countries in Europe are also in the doldrums. And the worldwide capitalist economic crisis that started in 2008 has devastated the economies of countries caught in strangling imperialist debt, from Greece to much of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

But there is one bright spot for workers' wages -- although you would hardly know it if you rely on the commercial media for your information.

It is China.

## Steady wage increases

According to all accounts, factory wages in China, which of course started at a much lower level than wages in advanced capitalist countries, have more than tripled in the last decade. Some say urban blue-collar wages have gone up five times in that period. This is not what is happening in other developing countries.

In addition, inflation in China is low -- the present annual rate is 1.4 percent, making those fatter paychecks very real.

Here are some Western sources from this year:

The Economist, March 4: "Since 2001,

hourly manufacturing wages in China have risen by an average of 12 percent a year."

Imagine if workers here had been getting a 12 percent raise every year for the past 15 years! Even with a union contract, wage increases in the U.S. have barely kept pace with inflation.

The Technology section of the New York Times, April 24: "Waves of migrant workers from the countryside filled China's factories for the last three decades and helped make the nation the world's largest manufacturer. But many companies now find themselves struggling to hire enough workers. And for the scarce workers they do find, pay has more than quintupled in the last decade, to more than \$500 a month in coastal provinces."

These reports are directed at U.S. investors, cautioning them that if they want to do business exploiting workers in China, it's going to cost them more than in the past.

Chinese wages have not zigzagged -- they have risen at a very steady pace even as the labor force has increased, especially with people coming from the countryside. Going along with this has been the planned growth of big cities, with new housing, transportation, schools, etc.

## Class struggle alive and well

There are two things to consider in these remarkable changes. One is the struggle of the Chinese workers for a better life, and the other is the response of the Chinese government, led by the Communist Party.

The class struggle by the workers

against the bosses, many of them foreign corporations, is alive and well in China. Worker actions have grown tremendously.

Nothing deserves the label of U.S. government propaganda more than Voice of America. But here's what VOA had to say recently about strikes in China:

"The China Labor Bulletin -- which tracks disputes -- found that there were nearly 1,400 strikes in 2014, and the number of protests has risen even higher in the first two months of 2015.

"We record strikes and collective work protests as and when they happen, and over the last couple of months we've been recording 200 incidents a month, on average," explained Jeffrey Crothall, a researcher with the China Labor Bulletin's Hong Kong office.

"The group recorded 569 protests in the fourth quarter of last year -- three times more strikes than during the same period in 2013. The figure also indicates a sharp increase from 2011, when there were only 185 documented labor protests during the entire year. ...

"The majority of protesters are demanding higher wages, back pay and greater benefits and pensions. ...

"In 1995 China enacted a labor law which granted all workers the right to a wage, rest periods, no excessive overtime and the right to carry out group negotiations. Rapid economic growth in the years since has lifted millions out of poverty, but as the economy cools wages could stagnate and unemployment could rise, and many could start blaming the government.

"Authorities in Beijing, hoping to push local authorities to address the situation, last month issued a notice to local governments to make improving labor relations an 'urgent task.' The directive said officials will work to ensure employees are paid on time and in full, launch programs to provide better labor protections for rural migrant workers, and call on employers to improve workplace safety." (Voice of America, April 9)

To put this in perspective, the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the United States keeps a record of large strikes involving more than 1,000 workers. Last year there were 11 such strikes in the United States, with a total of only 34,000 workers. There used to be hundreds of such large strikes every year, reaching as many as 424 in 1974 and involving 1.8 million workers. But the numbers started to decline in the 1980s.

## Executive killed, state took workers' side

The VOA also noted: "Although many of those participating in the labor protests have been detained, few have been criminally prosecuted."

To understand the phrase "few have been criminally prosecuted," here's one of the most extreme examples: In 2009, an incident occurred involving steelworkers at the Tonghua Iron & Steel Works in Jilin Province in northern China. After a mass meeting addressed by the executive of the steel company that was going to take over their plant, the workers rebelled and beat him to death.

"Chen Guojun, the steel executive who was beaten to death, had threatened 3,000 Tonghua steelworkers with layoffs, which he had said could take place within three days. He also had signaled that larger jobs cuts were likely at the struggling steel mill." (New York Times, July 26, 2009)

What did the Chinese government do about this? "The provincial government of Jilin ordered Jianlong Group of China to abandon a buyout of state-owned Tonghua Iron & Steel Group after workers protesting job losses killed a manager, state-run Beijing News said Monday. The instruction, announced via Jilin's televi-

sion network last night, also ordered Beijing-based Jianlong to never again take part in any reorganization plan of Tonghua, Bloomberg News reported." (New York Times, July 27, 2009)

That was it. The privatization was halted. No arrests, no prosecutions. Isn't that the kind of power that workers should have everywhere?

## Growth of the working class

At the time of the triumph of the Revolution in 1949, China was an impoverished and war-torn country of 542 million. The vast majority were half-starved peasants, recently liberated from the landlords, who had treated them as little better than slaves.

Today it is a rapidly developing country of 1.3 billion. But it was only in 2012 that China's urban population for the first time exceeded those living in the countryside. Today the urban share of the working population is above 60 percent.

The rapidly growing working class has many grievances and is not passive. The workers are militant, organized and demanding what they know to be their right: a stable life with decent pay and working conditions.

Since the turn to the right within the leadership of the Communist Party of China in the late 1970s, led by Deng Xiaoping, China has opened up to capitalist ownership. But the recent stock market crash there, which cost many Chinese their savings, showed that illusions about instant riches under capitalism can come up against the basic irrationality of the capitalist system.

The outcome of the crash, just like the big gains being made by the workers, shows something else, too. The state in China does not act the way capitalist states do in the rest of the world. To call China a capitalist country is wrong.

In order to modernize, the CPC has allowed many features of capitalism to exist there, and the capitalists have done despicable things like not paying workers, subjecting them to long hours and unsafe working conditions, etc. The growth of millionaires and even billionaires has fueled corruption of government officials and antagonized the workers.

But alongside the capitalist-owned businesses is an increasingly powerful and modern state-owned infrastructure, through which long-term socialist planning is carried out.

The government was able to stabilize the financial markets in the most recent crash -- something capitalist governments cannot do without taking it out of the hides of the masses. How many capitalist countries could survive a drop in the stock market of more than a third without resorting to draconian measures?

Even more important, the state controls the planned development of the country in both economic and social terms.

Organizations struggling for an international agreement on carbon dioxide emissions to counteract global warming were enthusiastic when, at the end of June, China made public its detailed plan for economic development over the next several decades. While still allowing for China's growth, it laid out exactly how the country will move away from fossil fuels as well as, for example, reforesting vast areas to sequester carbon now in the atmosphere.

No capitalist country has presented any such commitment to the future. How can they, when the corporations and banks are in vicious competition with each other to control and use all the levers of government to enhance their own profits, above everything else? □

## Thousands attend funeral for Philippine insurgent

By Lydia Bayoneta

On July 10, ten thousand Filipinos came to pay their last respects and tribute to their beloved Leoncio Pitao, also known as Commander Parago of the New Peoples Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

On June 28, Ka (Comrade) Parago was assassinated by the U.S.-backed Philippine government's military while he was being treated for an illness. Vanessa Limpag (Ka Kyle), a young medic who was providing treatment, was also gunned down. Both were unarmed.

Mourners poured in from the various communities of the Davao region and the surrounding provinces of Surigao and Agusan in Mindanao, in the southern Philippines.

Families came with their young children to see the legendary people's hero for the last time. Ka Parago, often referred to as "tatay" (father) by the masses of people, was a veteran of over 37 years in the struggle for national liberation and socialism, starting with the fight against the U.S.-backed Marcos dictatorship up to and including the current regime of Benigno S. Aquino III.

Born the son of poor peasants, Ka Parago witnessed and endured injustice and oppression committed against the farmers and the poor by the Philippine government military forces at the behest of the Philippine ruling elite and transnational corporations.

Busloads of farmers and Indigenous peoples constituted the most numerous participants in the funeral march. The Manila Times described the people's faces as somber but determined. (July 10) The Almendras Gymnasium in Davao

City was filled to capacity; when the number of chairs ran out, people stood or sat on the floor. Thousands more encircled the building outside.

Ka Parago's coffin was draped with the hammer and sickle flag of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The program went on for hours accompanied by impassioned songs, poems and chants hailing Leoncio Pitao as a dedicated defender of the poor and oppressed.

Along the march to the memorial park, thousands of red flags were carried and participants wore red T-shirts which bore the image of their fallen hero. Thousands of onlookers gathered to watch as the march wound its way through the city. Many boldly chanted, "Long live the New Peoples Army!" (davaotoday.com)

Meanwhile, a group of graffiti artists carried a stenciled face of Ka Parago and the text, "Sampa sa NPA" (Join the NPA). They painted it on walls and posts as the march edged its way forward.

The Revolution Trade Union, a part of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, had this to say about Ka Parago's death:

"Ka Parago is gone, but the revolutionary fervor which he has inspired as a brilliant commander of the New Peoples Army, as a father of the poor and downtrodden, and as a true servant of the people, has produced Paragos a thousand times over. These Paragos are now waging a people's war in the countryside and leading the national democratic revolution towards a bright socialist future." (Manila Times, July 10)

Long live the Filipino struggle for liberation and socialism! Long live the New Peoples Army! Ka Parago presente!



Commander Parago

## WORKERS WORLD

### editorial

# Capitalism's war on children

The Black Lives Matter upsurge gained national and international prominence almost a year ago in the aftermath of the police murder of 18-year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo. The next day, Aug. 10, a heroic rebellion led by Black youth exposed an ongoing racist war and occupation by local and state police, with the backing of the U.S. military.

The upsurge continues to this day. It helps expose the links between political and economic repression, as workers and oppressed peoples worldwide bear the brunt of mass austerity in the form of low wages, unemployment, union busting and slashing of social services — accompanied by mass incarceration and police and vigilante terror.

A big part of this repression is the role that poverty plays, especially among the most vulnerable in society — children — including those living in the U.S. This is illustrated by a study released July 14 by the Pew Research Center, which analyzed several years of U.S. Census Bureau data.

The study shows that the overall poverty rate for children in the U.S. decreased to 20 percent in 2013 for Latino/a, Asian and white children combined, from 22 percent in 2010. However, for Black children alone, the poverty rate rose to 38.3 percent — close to four times the rate for white children at 10.7 percent. It also states that 30.4 percent of Latino/a children and 10.1 percent of Asian children live in poverty. Notably, growing numbers of Latino/a children are living in poverty relative to the increase in the overall Latino/a population.

The federal poverty level in 2013 was set at \$23,550 for a family of four, that is, two adults and two children.

The Pew study does not mention the poverty rates for children whose parents are undocumented. Many of these parents are locked away indefinitely

with their children in detention centers by Immigration Customs Enforcement working in tandem with local authorities.

There is also no mention at all in this particular study of the poverty rate for Indigenous youth in the U.S., especially those living on reservations. According to Theresa M. Pouley, the chief judge of the Tulalip Tribal Court in Washington state and a member of the Indian Law and Order Commission, at least 25 percent of Indigenous youth live in poverty, an alarming number compared to the general Indigenous population, which numbers officially under 1 million. (Washington Post, March 9, 2014)

Child poverty in the U.S. must be viewed within the context of the global poverty rate for youth. The United Nations reports there are an estimated 1 billion youth whose families live on \$2.50 a day or less. According to the U.N. Children's Fund, at least 22,000 children die each day from starvation, malnutrition, chronic disease, lack of sanitation and other conditions stemming from poverty.

Capitalism exploits much of the world's resources and super-exploits the peoples of oppressed nations through low-wage and slave labor to make profits for the small elite class of the super-rich. This brutal system is to blame for the genocidal war that has already claimed an untold number of young people's lives and threatens to claim millions more — especially those of people of color living in both the developing countries and the richer capitalist countries.

It will take a united global class struggle to uproot this oppressive system and replace it with a socialist system to ensure that human needs are met first and foremost, from the cradle to the grave, without the threat of state repression, especially from the police. □

## Interview with Nate Hamilton

# My brother's killing has opened my eyes'

*Continued from page 7*

It cuts down our ability to provide for people in this city. A lot of that money is going to other counties, other districts.

But when you look at the union, the union protects. The union strengthens the people, gives them some type of protection. When they try and take that protection away from people and allow elected officials or higher-ups to shrink the working class, that's completely wrong. My brother's killing has opened my eyes to all of the other fights, all of the other disadvantages that our people are suffering from.

I have to be a part of it. I have to put some energy toward it, and maybe give some insight about these situations, so that I can raise my kids to be more aware, more conscious of the community that they live in.

**WW:** You suggested to the Coalition for Justice members tonight [July 8] that they support the "Oppose Scott Walker's Wall Street Agenda" protest on July

13 in Waukesha. That day, Walker will announce his intention to run for U.S. president. Why did you suggest coalition members and supporters participate in that protest?

**NH:** For one thing, when it came to this nation's problem about police brutality, where was Scott Walker? He was nowhere to be found. He's only worried about his personal agenda. He's doing so many things behind closed doors, and then he presents them to people, thinking that it works for us. Wisconsin is built off of the hard work of Milwaukeeans. A lot of their revenue comes from Milwaukee's work. And we're not respected.

Scott Walker doesn't give this state the attention that it needs — so how can he give the nation the appropriate attention that it needs? He hasn't upped the job level in Milwaukee. Walker is destroying low-income people in Milwaukee. He's trying to change public open record laws. He's trying to change so much. Do these things benefit the working people here in our communi-

# Bernie Sanders flunks first big test

By John Catalinotto

At the Netroots Nation gathering of progressive political activists in Phoenix this mid-July, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders encountered the first real-time challenge in his new role as aspiring 2016 candidate for president in the Democratic Party. When challenged on stage by representatives of the Black Lives Matter movement to come out clearly against racism and killer cops, Sanders failed miserably.

This took place on July 18, when former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley and Sanders were opening a session at the Netroots convention — arguably the largest gathering of progressives in the U.S. — to discuss their candidacies and program. It was just a few days after Sandra Bland had been found asphyxiated in a rural Texas jail, killed for the crime of being Black while driving.

Outraged by this new atrocity, a group of about 50 Black Lives Matter activists, who were also invited to speak at the gathering, interrupted O'Malley and demanded the candidates recognize the Black women victims of police racist terror.

Surprised, O'Malley blurted out, "Black lives matter. White lives matter. All lives matter." This was the wrong answer, given who it is that the cops have been shooting, and he was righteously booed.

Sanders, aware of what was happening, was still arrogant enough to give his standard stump speech, which doesn't mention racism at all. When the BLM people kept interrupting him, Sanders walked out on them.

Sanders emphasizes economic issues, more jobs and a higher minimum wage. Creating jobs for young people, he argues, will automatically make life better for African Americans.

The BLM people pointed out what should be obvious: Michael Brown of Ferguson, Mo., was on his way to college and Sandra Bland had just landed a good



Dontre Hamilton  
PHOTO: HAMILTON FAMILY

ty? No. It really helps [officials] hide more information, to be more secretive.

This is the "democracy" that I thought I lived in, but it really seems like it's a dictatorship when it comes to Scott Walker. We will not live under his dictatorship in Wisconsin — nor in our nation.

**WW:** Any last words?

**NH:** The importance of this movement — the Black Lives Matter movement, the movement against injustice — can never die. It can never stop. We can never let up. We always have to continue to press the issues. We have to continue to aggravate. We have to hold the people opposing us and committing injustice accountable. We can't turn our backs on injustice. We can't turn our backs on the movement. We can't turn our backs on the poor.

For more information on the struggle for justice for Dontre Hamilton, see [facebook.com/justicefordontre](https://facebook.com/justicefordontre) and [#DontreHamilton](https://twitter.com/DontreHamilton).

job at a college in Texas. That didn't stop them from being victims of institutional racism in its crudest form.

Sanders should know that anyone for equality and justice in the United States has to both demand full employment and unite all people against racism. Only by building solidarity of white workers with the anti-racist struggle can you unite all workers and poor to battle the bankers and bosses.

By the next day, O'Malley had apologized, Sanders had added "Black lives matter" to his stump speech and was reading the names of Black victims of police shootings. Hillary Clinton topped them by saying it without benefit of a confrontation. Electoral opportunism had adjusted slightly to the left for the time being, under the impact of the BLM protest. On July 23, Time magazine headlined an article, "#BlackLivesMatter Is Winning the 2016 Democratic Primary."

But Sanders — assuming he wants to present himself as a candidate of the poor and disadvantaged — had failed his first important test.

### The Sanders candidacy

As a mayor, congressperson and senator in Vermont — whose population is just over 1 percent African American — Sanders has built a following by supporting government programs that aid poor people. He shows up at every grassroots organization meeting in this small state and has built a loyal electoral following. Sanders identifies as an independent and sometimes has even called himself a "socialist," although the latter isn't visible on his "Meet Bernie Sanders" presidential campaign website.

In the Senate he has introduced legislation to put \$1 trillion into rebuilding the infrastructure, which will allegedly create 13 million jobs. With Rep. John Conyers (D-MI), he has also proposed the Employ Young Americans Now Act, providing some \$5.5 billion to employ 1 million people between the ages of 16 and 24.

In the reactionary cesspool of U.S. capitalist electoral politics, such a program places Sanders to the left of the other corporate candidates in the Democratic Party. Sanders' campaign rallies have attracted as many as 10,000 people, much larger crowds than those of other candidates, including those of well-funded Hillary Clinton. The very size and energy of these rallies — should they continue — make them an important political phenomenon.

Basically Sanders is part of the Democratic Party, which is pro-capitalist and pro-banker and supports U.S. military interventions all around the world, from Palestine to Libya to Yugoslavia — as Sanders did. Without his taking a clear anti-racist stand, it should be hard even for political liberals to consider Sanders a progressive alternative to Clinton.

The important question for real socialists and communists is not so much whether the Democratic candidates adopt some mild anti-racist rhetoric. The real question is whether those tens of thousands attracted to Sanders' economic program are looking for a real alternative. Can they be won away from electoral politics to the independent working-class struggles in the streets?

This means fighting not only for a higher minimum wage, for unions and against U.S.-led imperialist wars. It means joining Black Lives Matters and others in the streets who battle the institutional racism shown by killer cops. □

## Interview with Maxim Chalenko

# 'Donbass needs international solidarity'

*Excerpts from a Workers World interview with Maxim Chalenko, secretary of the Communist Party, Lugansk Regional Committee in the Lugansk People's Republic (LC). Chalenko helped organize the Donbass International Forum titled "Anti-Fascism, Internationalism, Solidarity" held on May 8 in Alchevsk. The complete interview is posted online at workers.org.*

**Workers World:** Why did you decide to organize an international solidarity forum this spring?

**Maxim Chalenko:** There were two reasons: First, it was the landmark 70th anniversary of the victory of socialism over fascism [the Soviet defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II]; second, and most important, the left-wing in Donbass is in great need of international support

and assistance from allied organizations.

In spite of high ideals, the movement of the People's Republics along the socialist path has not been simple and unambiguous. Yes, at the initial stage, all the revolutionary movements of the streets and squares were associated with anti-fascism and the desire of the majority of the population to take the socialist path. But the socialistic character of the republics remained only in form but not in essence.

The forum was significant in that it gave youth of Europe and the world an understanding of the conditions in which we are fighting today. ... One of the main objectives was to consolidate the efforts of leftist and anti-war organizations of the world on the issue of Donbass.

The forum brought together a large number of left-wing organizations interested in the anti-fascist resistance in the

Donbass. Our situation is quite unusual, and I'm aware of the many contradictions and disputes among leftists around the world in relation to our assessment of events, and most importantly, how communists, internationalists and anti-fascists should operate in these conditions.

Even during the forum, on a par with the wishes for victories in the struggle against fascism in Ukraine, there were questions about the role of the left in the events in Ukraine and Donbass. What position should we take in a situation where the main question is which side to take in a geopolitical confrontation? The answer is very complex and the opinion of one person or national organization is not enough.

The second key objective of the forum [was] to begin a dialogue about the role of the left in events spurred by the geo-

political confrontation in southeastern Ukraine.

**WW:** The forum also announced the creation of an international solidarity committee. What will this body do?

**MC:** We are working for the creation of an international solidarity movement with Donbass, which we hope will be a platform to define a unified ideological position on the situation here and the forms and methods of work for left-wing political forces in these conditions.

*Among the eight projects of the international solidarity movement, which Chalenko outlined, are setting up a Committee for Solidarity with Donbass in every country in Europe and around the world, publishing analysis of the situation in the Donbass, and organizing solidarity actions.*

## Attack U.S. imperialism?

# Why a former German finance minister just did

By John Catalinotto

Oskar Lafontaine, former German finance minister and political leader of, first, the Social Democratic Party, and most recently the Left Party, shocked the pro-U.S. German media and political world with his June 23 comment written on FaceBook: "Fuck U.S. imperialism." He was commenting on the visit to Berlin of U.S. Defense Minister Ashton Carter, whose purpose was to enlist Germany in the military escalation directed at Russia.

Lafontaine represents a leftist view. His position, however, with or without the F-word, represents many ordinary people in Germany who want no part of a war with Russia. It also represents a large sector of the German ruling class that hates following a foreign policy that harms German business interests, while serving Washington's geopolitics. As a former cabinet member himself, Lafontaine is well aware of ruling-class opinions.

U.S. and German imperialism have been political and military allies since soon after Germany's defeat in World War II in 1945. This alliance, however, is not the same as a convergence of interests in all spheres. Germany has been forced to be subservient to the U.S. Even the substantial economic investment and trade between the two countries fails to eliminate imperialist economic competition.

Lafontaine gave a context to his strong word choice. It was a reply to U.S. State Department's Victoria Nuland's comment in February 2014. Nuland, a notorious anti-Russian neocon, commenting on the European Union's less aggressive policies regarding Ukraine, said "Fuck the EU." Given German imperialism's leading role in the European Union, what Berlin heard was "Fuck Germany."

The U.S. has insisted that the EU countries impose economic sanctions against

Russia. Through NATO, Washington is also moving troops and weapons into countries that border Russia. They plan the largest war exercises in Eastern Europe since the collapse of the Soviet Union, also directed against Russia. This escalation raises the risk of a wider war than that going on now in Ukraine, and one that threatens Germany much more than it does the U.S.

### Non-leftist Germans speak out against anti-Russia policies

As the danger of war grows, dissident voices have been raised in Germany. Not just from leftist politicians like Lafontaine, but from rightist and centrist politicians. This includes allies of the late leader of the rightist Christian Social Union in Bavaria, Franz-Joseph Strauss, who held cabinet offices and led the CSU for decades until his death in 1988. Strauss was considered the furthest right of mainstream German politicians.

One such CSU ally, Wilfried Scharnagl, recently wrote a book, "In the Abyss: A Polemic for a Different Approach toward Russia." In this book, he argues for improved German-Russian relations. He points out that in carrying out this diplomacy, one has to put oneself in the position of the opponent.

In a June 23 interview with the German daily newspaper Junge Welt, Scharnagl said, "My perspective is that in 1989 in the time of historical turning after the collapse of the Soviet empire [sic] the West did not make use of the opportunity to build a new and peaceful European order together with Russia, but instead resumed the old habits."

Scharnagl criticized the German media for analyzing relations with Russia all in "black-and-white," and not seeing or giving any credit to Vladimir Putin's point of view. Of course Scharnagl was criticized

as being "pro-Putin" by these same media, when it should be obvious he was laying out what he saw as a better policy for defending German imperialist interests.

"In U.S. politics," Scharnagl continued, "there are forces that demand a much sharper line against Russia in the Ukraine crisis, for example, sending extensive arms supplies to Ukraine, than the Europeans want to do. Germany under Chancellor Angela Merkel is firmly and resolutely against this policy of delivering weapons, and she comes under fierce and unspeakable attacks from U.S. political leaders such as Senator [John] McCain and his friends." He implied that the German media is influenced by these attacks.

Three former German chancellors, Social Democrats Helmut Schmidt and Gerhard Schroeder, and Christian Democrat Helmut Kohl, all said they thought it was a mistake not to have invited Putin to the G7 summit in Elmau, Germany, which would have made it a G8 meeting.

Schmidt, a Social Democrat like Schroeder, has called sanctions against Russia "stupid," saying: "It would be better, in the interest of peace, to sit down and talk instead of threatening sanctions." (Reuters, March 27)

Kohl said: "The upheaval in Ukraine was not handled intelligently. There's also been a lack of sensitivity with our Russian neighbors, especially with President Putin."

Schroeder has a long-term friendly relationship with Putin. Because of this and his record of keeping Germany out of the U.S./British-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, he has been attacked by pro-U.S. politicians and media in Germany. He too, however, is an imperialist politician who led Germany during its participation in the U.S.-NATO war against Yugoslavia in 1999.

### Economic roots of rivalry

That the opinions of these German politicians have a base in the ruling class can be seen in the comments of Folker Hellmeyer, the chief economist at Bremer Landesbank, in the June 6 issue of German Economic News. This banker says that because of the U.S. sanctions against Russia, "German exports declined year-over-year by 18 percent in 2014, and by 34 percent in the first two months of 2015." He says it is really worse because of "secondary

effects," such as that "European countries with strong business in Russia, including Finland and Austria, are economically hit very hard. These countries consequently place fewer orders from Germany."

Hellmeyer adds that the even greater problem is the breakdown of trust between Russia and the EU that makes future long-term projects questionable. "The people in Germany and the EU will pay the price through lost prosperity and stability. The unmeasurable damage lies in an elevated geopolitical risk situation for the people in the EU."

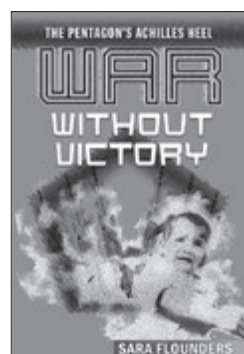
Regarding Ukraine, Hellmeyer referred unfavorably to Nuland and added: "The fact is that by the coup in the Ukraine, an oligarchy friendly towards Moscow was replaced by an oligarchy now oriented toward the United States. This is geopolitics, which benefits third forces, but definitely not Germany, not the EU, not Russia and not Ukraine."

That these German ruling-class politicians and bankers — and we've quoted only a few of them — take issue with U.S. aggressive policies illustrates the serious contradictions between German and U.S. imperialist interests. It can mean, for one thing, that the U.S. will step up its already interventionist policies to influence German internal politics in order to prevent any rapprochement between Germany and Russia.

Preventing such an alliance has been a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy since the end of World War II. During the existence of the socialist Soviet Union, there was really no possibility that capitalist West Germany would or could ally with it against the U.S. But Russia is a capitalist country. It no longer poses a threat to German capitalists; a realignment is at least conceivable, whether or not it is likely.

Also, if open argument exists within the German ruling class about Germany's relations with the U.S. and Russia, there will be an opening for leftist, working-class and anti-war politics in Germany. Lafontaine's comment is itself proof of that opening.

For U.S. anti-war forces, pointing to the disagreements with Germany makes another argument that exposes U.S. aggression in Ukraine and the dangers that U.S. militarism can lead to a wider and more dangerous war. □



## WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

*"By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity."*

— Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,  
President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009;  
Foreign Minister of Nicaragua's Sandinista government.

Available on amazon.com and bookstores around the country.  
PentagonAchillesHeel.com

Editorial del 21 de julio 2015

## ¿Es el indulto presidencial la respuesta?

El 16 de julio, el presidente Barack Obama hizo una visita a una prisión federal en Reno-Oklahoma para a su manera, llamar la atención a la criminalidad del sistema de justicia penal de Estados Unidos y sus leyes sesgadas, sobre todo hacia las personas condenadas por delitos no violentos de drogas.

Es la primera vez que un presidente de EUA ha visitado una cárcel federal. Obama declaró que como joven que fumaba marihuana y experimentó con cocaína, él fácilmente hubiera podido encontrarse en la misma situación que cientos de miles de personas como los seis presos con quienes habló en la prisión. HBO en el otoño, sacará al aire la entrevista como parte de un documental de Vicios.

Sólo tres días antes de su visita, el 13 de julio, Obama conmutó las sentencias de 46 personas condenadas por delitos no violentos, en su mayoría asociadas con el consumo de drogas o su venta en pequeñas cantidades. En la página de Facebook de la Casa Blanca aparecía una declaración diciendo que los que habían recibido indulto tenían sentencias que iban de 20 años a prisión perpetua. Hay debates en el Congreso sobre "reforma" de sentencias para delincuentes no violentos. Si bien esto es realmente un escándalo nacional e incluso internacional de proporciones monstruosas, es sólo la punta del témpano, sobre todo cuando se trata de apuntar a personas de color y a personas pobres.

Es importante plantear, ante todo, que EUA tiene la población carcelaria más grande del mundo con 2,2 millones de personas, lo cual marca un aumento de 500 por ciento en los últimos 30 años. Según el Proyecto de Sentencias, la mitad de todas/os los presos federales fueron condenados por drogas, con un aumento del 13 por ciento de las/os prisioneros en las cárceles estatales desde 1980. La mayoría de estas/os presos, federal y estatal, no tenía récords penales anteriores. Estas cifras ni siquiera incluyen los miles de inmigrantes, incluyendo mujeres y jóvenes, que están confinadas/os en centros de detención.

Para exponer el racismo institucionalizado de la política de imposición de los denominados delitos, vemos que las dos terceras partes de la población carcelaria son personas de color, y uno de cada 10 hombres negros en sus años treinta está en prisión en un día cualquiera. La "guerra contra las drogas", que se intensificó durante el gobierno de Reagan en la década de los 80, se ha convertido en una guerra genocida contra la gente de color, especialmente en la comunidad afroamericana. Junto a los asesinatos diarios de hombres y mujeres negras por la policía y vigilantes, incluyendo los asesinatos de personas trans, y alimentado por una crisis económica sin precedentes donde no hay empleos y los que hay son con salarios bajos, esta guerra genocida es cada vez más devastadora.

Desglosando esto aún más, un análisis de Upshot del 20 de abril señaló que 1,5 millones de hombres negros en EUA han desaparecido: lo cual significa que han sufrido ya sea muertes tempranas o encarcelamiento masivo. El estudio revela que más de uno de cada seis hombres que hoy debería estar entre los 25 y 54 años de edad, ha desaparecido de la vida cotidiana.

Cualquier debate que esté teniendo lugar en el Congreso o la Casa Blanca es equivalente a poner una curita en un cáncer cuando se trata de cualquier tipo de reforma penitenciaria. Darle indulto a un puñado de víctimas es un buen comienzo pero está lejos de ser la solución.

La verdad es que todo el sistema penitenciario de EUA no puede ser reformado, sino que tiene que ser desarraigado desde sus raíces. Los miles de millones de dólares en fondos federales y privados que se invierten en las cárceles para obtener ganancias, deben ser puestos en un programa de empleo masivo, incluyendo entrenamiento para trabajos que paguen un salario digno y proporcionen beneficios.

Esta es la única solución que iniciaría el proceso de despenalización de las/os trabajadoras jóvenes de color. Y esta solución sólo puede venir con una lucha anticapitalista unida de todas/os los trabajadores y las/os oprimidos. □

## ¡Justicia para Sandra Bland! Linchada en cárcel de Texas

Por Gloria Rubac

¿Cómo puede ser que alguien, cuya única falta fue olvidar usar la luz direccional de su auto al cambiar de carril, termine muerta en una cárcel del condado a sólo unos días del arresto y que un médico forense lo califique de suicidio?

La gente de costa a costa se está haciendo esa pregunta.

Sandra Bland, una mujer afroamericana de 28 años de edad, conducía desde su casa en un suburbio de Chicago a la Universidad Prairie View A&M (PVAM), su alma mater en el sureste de Texas, para comenzar un nuevo trabajo como embajadora de estudiantes en la asociación de antiguos alumnos. Ella decía que era el trabajo de sus sueños.

Bland fue encontrada ahorcada con una bolsa de basura alrededor de su cuello en una celda de la cárcel del condado de Waller en Hempstead-Texas, el 13 de julio.

Ha habido protestas, vigilias, mítines y / o marchas casi a diario desde que se supo la noticia.

El 17 de julio, esta escritora se unió a cientos de personas que protestaban en la cárcel y luego marcharon a la Corte del Condado de Waller. Allí hubo una concentración presidida por Kofi Taharka, presidente del Frente Unido Nacional Negro. Activistas anti-racistas de Houston y Austin se unieron a las/os residentes locales de Hempstead, sede del condado de Waller de poco más de 40.000 personas donde el 60 por ciento es blanco y 30 por ciento negro. Las/os oradores incluían a amigas/os de Bland, una hermana de su sororidad, ex-alumnos de PVAM y activistas indignadas/os.

Algunas de las mujeres de Hempstead que no podían marchar, organizaron una mesa ofreciendo sándwiches de queso y té dulce gratis para las/os manifestantes. Una mujer, que se hace llamar Jen Jen, dijo que tenía 49 años y podría dar 49 razones por las que nadie debería querer encontrarse dentro de la cárcel. "La última vez que fui apresada, me moretearon, con manchas más oscuras que la piel que usted ve hoy".

Cuando se le preguntó por qué fue acusada, Jen Jen respondió: "Oh, la policía no me puso cargos. Después de que me golpearon, me dejaron ir, eso fue todo. Y no quisieras saber las historias sobre las cosas que suceden dentro de esas paredes", dijo señalando a la Cárcel del Condado de Waller.

El 19 de julio, las/os estudiantes de PVAM se reunieron frente a la fuente de la escuela para recordar y honrar a Bland. PVAM fue fundada en 1876 cuando la plantación de Alta Vista cerca de Hempstead fue comprada y convertida en lo que hoy es la segunda escuela de educación superior más antigua financiada por el estado en Texas.

Bland ya estaba familiarizada

con Texas y su horrible historia racista. Se graduó en 2009 de Prairie View, una histórica universidad negra a sólo 45 minutos de Houston.

### Bland abiertamente contra brutalidad policial

Bland protestaba en contra de las muertes de los negros a manos de la policía, desde Michael Brown en Ferguson-Missouri, a Eric Garner en Staten Island-NY. Ella publicó en Facebook sobre el peligro de la policía e incluso hizo vídeos condenando los asesinatos de la policía. Ahora sus amigas/os y simpatizantes están twitteando en #SandraBland, #JusticeforSandy y #IfIDieInPoliceCustody.

En el último año, la exposición de los asesinatos de jóvenes negros en EUA a manos de la policía se ha intensificado. En respuesta, el movimiento "Las Vidas Negras Importan" (Black Lives Matter) ahora está activo por todo el país.

Texas tiene una sórdida historia de asesinatos racistas. A principios de los años 1900 había linchamientos de negras/os por todo el estado. Dos de los más infames sucedieron en Waco - el de Allen Brooks en 1910 y de Jesse Washington en 1916.

Durante el juicio de Brooks, supuestamente por agredir a un niño blanco, una turba enfurecida lo arrebató de las manos de sus guardias armados en la sala del tribunal y lo ahorcaron de un poste en el Arco de Elk, informó el Dallas Morning News.

Según el bloguero Michael W. Waters, Washington fue castrado, sus dedos cortados, y su cuerpo subido y bajado sobre una fogata durante dos horas antes de ser arrastrado por la ciudad. Las partes restantes de su cuerpo fueron luego vendidas como recuerdos. (Huffington Post, 17 de julio)

En las últimas décadas la policía en todas las ciudades grandes de Texas ha asesinado y mutilado a afroamericanos - incluyendo al líder de las Panteras Negras Carl Hampton, en Houston en 1970.

A nivel nacional, ahora hay una lista de mujeres que han sido asesinadas por la policía como lo fueron Michael Brown y Eric Garner: Sandra Bland, Kindra Darnell Chapman, Tanisha Anderson, Yvette Smith, Rekia Boyd y Aiyana Stanley-Jones de siete años de edad, nombrando solo unas pocas.

Emily DePrang, escribió en el semanario progresista The Texas Observer en 2014, señalando que la policía de Houston literalmente, queda impune. Ella escribió que entre 2007 y 2012, según los registros del Departamento de Policía de Houston (HPD), tiroteos mortales de la policía ocurren en Houston en promedio de uno cada tres semanas. Cada tiroteo por un oficial del HPD es investigado por las divisiones de Asuntos Internos y de

Homicidios del HPD.

DePrang escribe: "Cada muerte fue encontrada justificada. Los grandes jurados del Condado de Harris (Houston) han absuelto a oficiales del HPD casi 300 veces seguidas. Ningún policía de Houston ha sido acusado de un tiroteo en una década".

### Mayor cantidad de policías asesinos en Texas

Dice el refrán, ¡"Todo es más grande en Texas"! El dicho es cierto cuando se trata de la herencia de linchamientos y el número de policías asesinos. Texas es también número uno en las personas sin seguro médico, y se ejecutan a más personas que en los siguientes ocho estados combinados. Sin embargo, Texas está cerca de la parte inferior en la lista de financiamiento de la educación.

En el plazo de un año, tres casos de terrorismo contra mujeres negras en Texas se han convertido en noticia nacional.

En agosto pasado, la policía paró a Kametra Barbour y sus cuatro hijos pequeños y los retuvieron a punta de pistola en Forney. Ni el coche ni las/os pasajeros coincidían con la descripción dada a la policía en un despacho 911.

En junio, cerca de Dallas, Dajerria Becton de 15 años de edad fue lanzada al suelo, con la cabeza en la tierra. El policía McKinney detuvo a Dajerria presionándole la cabeza con su rodilla luego de una fiesta en la piscina.

Y ahora, Sandra Bland fue detenida por falta de uso de la señal de tráfico y arrestada en el condado de Waller mientras iba de camino para comenzar su nuevo trabajo, encontrándose linchada en la cárcel a los pocos días en circunstancias sospechosas.

Cómo alguien puede pasar de ir conduciendo a su nuevo trabajo a muerta en la cárcel en cuestión de días es impensable - excepto quizás para las/os afroamericanos en Texas. Activistas negras/os a menudo señalan que conducir mientras se es negra/o puede ser un delito capital en Texas, lo que puede resultar en una pena de muerte no oficial en terreno abierto.

Se planean más protestas, vigilias y manifestaciones para Sandra Bland mientras las comunidades esperan los resultados de la autopsia independiente que su familia ordenó. Muchas preguntas aún deben ser respondidas. Quienes están involucradas/os en el movimiento anti-racista no tienen confianza alguna ni en los Rangers de Texas ni en el FBI que ahora están investigando la muerte de Bland. La indignación, la tristeza y la determinación de obtener justicia no se disipará con facilidad, ni debiera serlo.

Rubac es portavoz del Movimiento Abolición de la Pena de Muerte de Texas en Houston.

