



AFTER 63 YEARS OF FORCED EXILE Palestinians storm Israel's borders Unarmed marchers shot demanding right to return

By Joyce Chediak

Thousands of Palestinian refugees from Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza surged across fenced off borders and into Israel on May 15, asserting their right to return home. The unarmed protesters were fired upon by Israeli soldiers, killing 16 and wounding hundreds.

These brave, coordinated, "Return to Palestine" marches by the Palestinian people marked "al Nakba," the Catastrophe, the anniversary of the expulsion by force and terror of 750,000 Palestinians from their homes by Zionists in 1948, and the establishment of Israel in its place.

Inspired by protests in much of the Arab world, this was the first time in 63 years that Palestinian refugees marked their expulsion by going to the border in the tens of thousands and calling for their right to go home. It electrified the Arab world and showed that, no matter what forces are arrayed against them, the Palestinian people will not abandon their right to return.

Palestinians marching from Jordan were attacked and stopped by Jordanian soldiers before they reached the border. The Egyptian military fired into crowds to repress them after three days of actions in solidarity with Palestine in Egypt, culminating in a protest in front of the Israeli Embassy. Jordan and Egypt are the only Arab countries that have signed a peace treaty with Israel.

Coordinated actions reflect Hamas-Fatah agreement

Speaking from Gaza, Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haneyya said that Palestinian and Arab blood spilt during Nakba marches suggests that Nakba is being marked with a new spirit and that the Palestinians have begun to "bury the Nakba" for good. He said that the situation marked the "first application" of the recent Fatah-Hamas reconciliation practiced on the ground, as differences were set aside for the greater national interest.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah lauded those Palestinians mowed down as "martyrs" killed by "the Israeli occupation while they were in a demonstration commemorating the Nakba inside the nation."

No Western governments condemn Israeli killings

The Israeli government responded with deadly force against the unarmed protesters, who certainly posed no physical danger. This bloody response made clear who the terrorists

are in this continuing struggle. But neither the U.S. government nor its European allies have issued even one word condemning the murder of Palestinians by Tel Aviv. In fact, while Palestinians mourn their dead, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will be greeted by President Barack Obama in Washington on May 20, and Netanyahu has been asked to address a joint session of Congress!

Meanwhile, on May 16 the Israeli and Egyptian navies together opened fire in international waters on a Gaza freedom flotilla ship, the Spirit of Rachel Corrie, carrying plastic sewage pipes to help restore the devastated sewerage system in Gaza. None of the anti-war activists and journalists, from Malaysia, Ireland, India and Canada, were harmed. The vessel is now anchored in Egyptian waters, about 30 nautical miles from Gaza.

Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt

In **Lebanon** on May 15, thousands of women and men, young and old, secular and religious, gathered in the mountain-top border town of Maroun al Ras, which has a panoramic view of occupied Palestine. For many it was the first time they saw their country, which previously they had only heard described by their elders.

Soon after speakers began addressing the crowds, thousands headed down the opposite side of the mountain — though it was littered with Israeli landmines — towards the border fence. Calling for their right to return, they

Continued on page 10



May 15, New York City, page 10.

WW PHOTO: PAUL WILCOX

50 YEARS AGO Riding South for freedom

3



VICTOR TORO Political refugee fights deportation

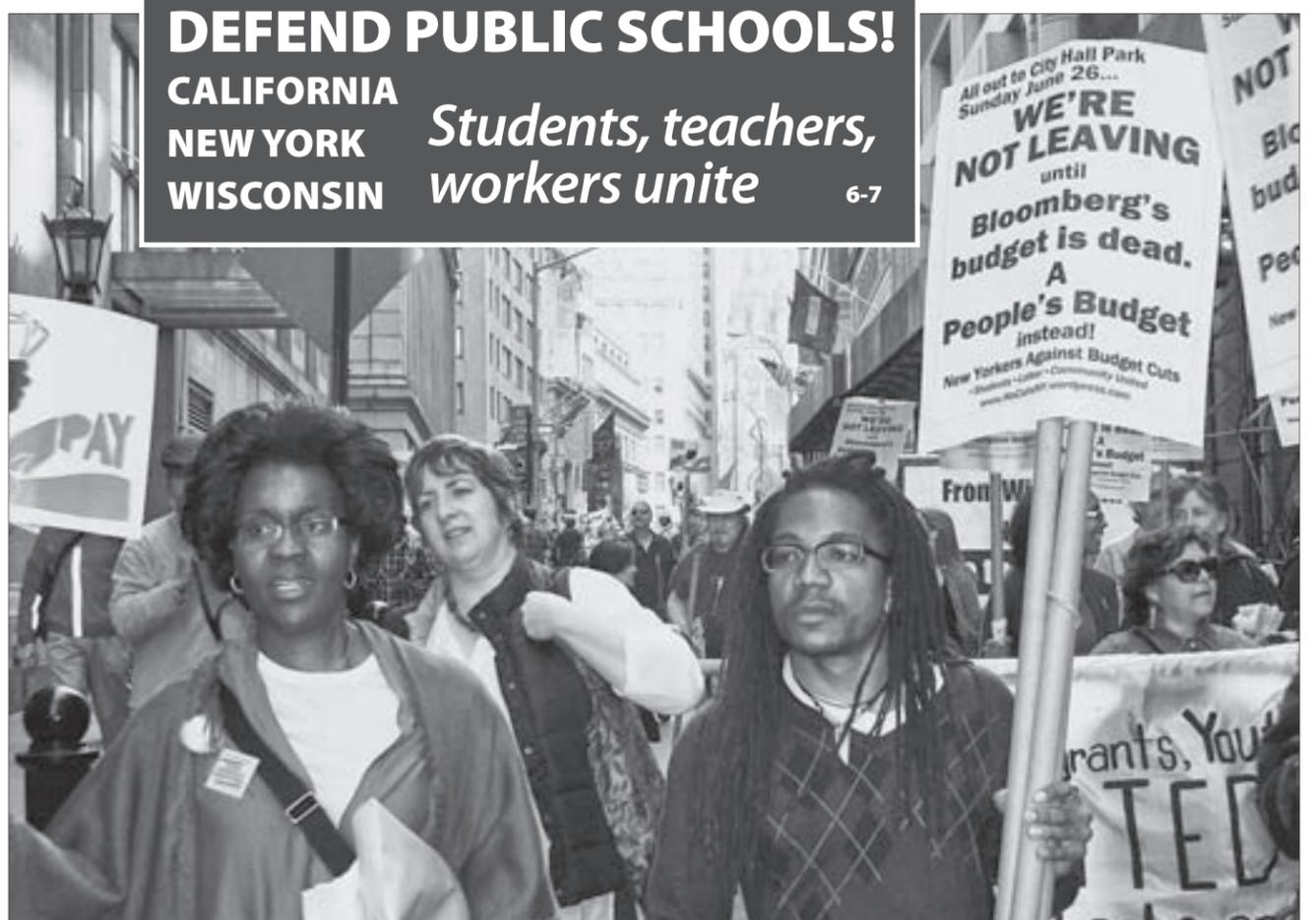
5

DEFEND PUBLIC SCHOOLS!

CALIFORNIA
NEW YORK
WISCONSIN

*Students, teachers,
workers unite*

6-7



Students, youth, workers join to fight austerity in New York City, May 12.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Subscribe to Workers World

4 weeks trial \$4 1 year subscription \$25
 Sign me up for the WW Supporter Program.
 For more information: workers.org/supporters/
 212.627.2994 www.workers.org

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City /State/Zip _____

Workers World 55 W.17th St. #5C, NY, NY 10011

Worker-unemployed solidarity defeats union-breaking injunction

By Martha Grevatt

With 70 percent of Toledo, Ohio's workers unemployed in 1934 — more than double the U.S. average even during the Great Depression — Toledo was an unlikely place for a union drive to succeed. As management at Electric Auto-lite — one of the city's several major auto parts suppliers — impressed upon the workers, they could be fired for any excuse and easily replaced. Yet the victory of the Auto-lite strike is recognized as one of the most important advances in U.S. working-class history.

In February 1934, 13 leaders waged a symbolic strike, earning respect after standing up to the company and winning their jobs back after being fired. Management agreed to recognize the union — Local 18384, a “federal labor union” of the American Federation of Labor — for 30 days. Yet no serious negotiations took place. On April 13, some 400 of the 1,500 production workers began walking a picket line. An equal number continued working inside the plant. The remainder avoided the conflict, staying home.

Company President C. O. Miniger and hated Vice President J. Arthur Minch could not conceive of a union victory. They had a million dollars set aside to break the union. Auto-lite spent \$11,000 in company funds on tear gas and munitions; only General Motors had a more costly arsenal. They hired 300 additional workers and figured that many regular employees would eventually cross the line rather than go hungry. The likely sexist assumption was that the workforce — more than 70 percent female — would capitulate.

Yet for weeks the picketing went on, round the clock. As in the plant, nearly three-quarters of the pickets were women. Strikers were joined by autoworkers from other plants, by members of other unions and by the Lucas County Unemployed League.

The strike wasn't strong enough to stop production, but output was definitely curtailed. Many of the scabs were new hires with no factory experience. Accidental damage to machinery was eating at the million-dollar war chest.

Neither side was advancing against the other, when on May 3 Judge Roy Stuart granted the company an injunction limiting pickets to 25. The judge assigned Sheriff David Krieger, elected with Miniger's backing, the job of enforcement. Auto-lite paid for special deputies — vigilantes hired with no prior experience — whom Krieger employed to break the strike.

At first the injunction was obeyed. The strike committee was militant against the company, but the class struggle was new to them. What to do?

A decisive initiative came, but not from the strikers themselves.

Unemployed workers take the lead

Thousands of unemployed workers — who might otherwise have been easy recruits for Krieger's strikebreaking apparatus — belonged to the Unemployed League. Like the Unemployed Councils led by the Communist

Party in numerous other cities, the Unemployed League had class-conscious leadership. Ted Selander and Sam Pollock were Marxists, members of the American Workers Party. They had spent the past year building the league by holding numerous demonstrations, sitting in at government relief offices and blocking evictions.

On May 5 Pollock, the league's secretary, announced in a public letter to Judge Stuart that the LCUL would “openly and publicly violate an injunction which, in our opinion, is a suppressive and oppressive act against all workers.” Two days later only four showed up — Pollock, Selander, and two Auto-lite strikers. Still, for this act of defiance, they were arrested for contempt of court. The courtroom, however, was packed with supporters, and the next day several dozen strikers and supporters violated the injunction.

Each day the crowd grew, as did the number of arrestees, but after a few days the scene in the jail and the courthouse was so rowdy that Judge Stuart gave up enforcing his ruling. By making the injunction ineffective, the strikers and unemployed scored a morale-boosting victory, and crowds surrounding the plant grew by hundreds

and then thousands. By May 21 there were 6,000 outside the plant.

Auto-lite bought more munitions, and Krieger deputized more strikebreakers, including scabs inside the plant. On May 23 deputies, armed and well-supplied with tear gas, were stationed inside, around and on the roof of the plant.

Hell broke loose when a metal object, dropped from inside the plant, injured striker Anna Hahn in the ear and neck. Pickets attempting to storm the building and apprehend the perpetrator were pushed back by gas fired from inside the plant.

News of the incident spread fast, and by afternoon the rebellious crowd had grown to 10,000. Further attempts at dispersal were met with a hail of bricks and rocks until no window was left unbroken. At this point the plant was completely surrounded, the gates were impassable, and the tear gas supplies were exhausted. The scabs inside were trapped.

It took 1,350 members of the Ohio National Guard — the largest deployment in state history — to temporarily disperse the still-growing crowd and clear a path for scabs and bosses to exit the plant. Production came to a halt. Victory was possible!

Grevatt has been a UAW Chrysler worker for 23 years. Email: mgrevatt@workers.org

Source: “I Remember Like Today: the Auto-Lite Strike of 1934” by Philip A. Korth and Margaret R. Beegle. Michigan State University Press, 1988.

Next: General strike talk!



1934 Toledo Auto-lite strike
PART TWO

You can subscribe at workers.org
Facebook <http://bit.ly/c4ndYg>
Follow Workers World on Twitter
<http://twitter.com/workersworld>

WORKERS WORLD
this week...

★ In the U.S.

- 1934 Toledo Auto-lite strike, part 2..... 2
- A tribute to anti-racist Freedom Rides..... 3
- The heat's on the natural gas industry 4
- 3 years of constant pressure leads to farmworker victory 4
- Victor Toro continues struggle for political asylum 5
- Stop FBI stops the bank freeze 5
- Confront Wall Street & austerity..... 6
- Thousands in Wisconsin say: 'The fight's not over' 6
- Teachers' 'state of emergency' rocks California..... 7
- Mass arrests at Capitol Rotunda in California 7
- Thousands defend education in San Diego 7
- 'Nakba' remembered in New York 10

★ Around the world

- Palestinians storm Israel's borders 1
- Juliano Mer Khamis, 1958-2011..... 5
- Events in Syria – Which side are you on? 8
- U.S.-backed president installed in Haiti..... 9
- U.S., Iraqi governments kill, torture civilian protesters 9
- Use War Powers Act to stop the bombing of Libya..... 10
- Africa Liberation Day 2011..... 11

★ Editorials

- NATO's crimes from Kabul to Belgrade 10

★ Noticias En Español

- 1ro de Mayo en Colombia 12
- Los Cinco Cubanos 12

Workers World
55 West 17 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: (212) 627-2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org

Vol. 53, No. 20 • May 26, 2011
Closing date: May 17, 2011

Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Technical Editor: Lal Roohk

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson

West Coast Editor: John Parker

Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe, Greg Butterfield, Jaimeson Champion, G. Dunkel, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Gloria Rubac

Technical Staff: Sue Davis, Shelley Ettinger, Bob McCubbin, Maggie Vascassenno

Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Michael Martínez, Carlos Vargas

Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

Copyright © 2011 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at www.workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

JOIN US

Workers World Party (WWP) fights for socialism and engages in struggles on all the issues that face the working class & oppressed peoples — Black & white, Latino/a, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women & men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed & students. If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

National Office
55 W. 17 St.
New York, NY 10011
212-627-2994
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
P.O. Box 5565
Atlanta, GA 30307
404-627-0185
atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore
c/o Solidarity Center
2011 N. Charles St., Bsm.
Baltimore, MD 21218
443-909-8964
baltimore@workers.org

Boston
284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617-522-6626
Fax 617-983-3836
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
367 Delaware Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14202
716-883-2534
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago
27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
Chicago, IL 60606
773-381-5839
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
216-738-0320
cleveland@workers.org

Denver
denver@workers.org

Detroit
5920 Second Ave.
Detroit, MI 48202
313-459-0777
detroit@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
331 W. Main St., Ste. 408
Durham, NC 27701
durham@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713-503-2633
houston@workers.org

Los Angeles
1905 Rodeo Rd.
Suite # 207
Los Angeles, CA 90018
la@workers.org
323-515-5870

Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610-931-2615
phila@workers.org

Pittsburgh
pittsburgh@workers.org
Rochester, N.Y.
585-436-6458
rochester@workers.org

San Diego, Calif.
P.O. Box 33447
San Diego, CA 92163
619-692-0355
sandiego@workers.org

San Francisco
2940 16th St., #207
San Francisco
CA 94103
415-738-4739
sf@workers.org

Tucson, Ariz.
tucson@workers.org

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

Fifty years later

A tribute to anti-racist Freedom Rides

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

May 4 was the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Freedom Rides, a major civil rights campaign that legally broke the back of racial segregation in interstate public travel in the United States. "Freedom Riders," a powerful documentary directed by Stanley Nelson, aired on PBS on May 16 and sparked much discussion on both the historical significance of the Civil Rights movement as well as the current status of African Americans today.

The documentary featured interviews and archival news footage of the period in 1961 when anyone, Black or white, challenging segregation in the South risked imprisonment, torture and even death. During the course of the lunch counter sit-ins the previous year in 1960, a broad-based student movement was formed and organized by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

The Freedom Rides were started by the Congress of Racial Equality, a nonviolent, civil rights organization founded in 1942. On May 14, 1961, a Freedom Ride Greyhound bus was firebombed in Anniston, Ala. The Freedom Riders were then savagely attacked with lead pipes and baseball bats by a racist white mob.

Resisting pressure from the Kennedy administration to abandon the Freedom Rides, SNCC activists based in Nashville, Tenn., under the leadership of Diane Nash, announced that it was essential that the Freedom Rides continue. The documentary exposes the fact that President John Kennedy and his brother, then U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy, were more interested in protecting the image of the U.S. — which appeared increasingly racist — than in supporting the Civil Rights movement, including the Freedom Rides.

Student activist Lucretia Collins summed up the sentiments within SNCC when she said, "In Nashville, we had been informed that CORE was going to have Freedom Rides that could carry people all over the South, and their purpose was to test the facilities at the bus stations in the major cities. Later we heard that a busload of the Freedom Riders had been burned on Mother's Day in Anniston, Ala., and that another bus had been attacked by people in Birmingham." ("The Making of Black Revolutionaries," James Forman, 1972)

Collins went on to stress that "CORE was discontinuing the Freedom Rides, people said. We felt that it had to continue even if we had to do it ourselves. We knew we were subject to being killed. This did not matter to us. There was so much at stake, we could not allow segregationists to stop us. We had to continue that Freedom Ride even if we were killed in the process."

After the continuation of the Freedom Rides by SNCC and their supporters, the federal government was forced to intervene by pressuring the Interstate Commerce Commission to repeal the segregation laws that regulated interstate public transportation. This was only done after hundreds of activists volunteered to be imprisoned on false charges in Parchman Correctional Facility in Mississippi, one of the most notorious prisons in the South. Although many were beaten and tortured in Parchman, racist repression only fueled this heroic mass, anti-racist movement.

Changing the course of history

The Freedom Rides, as the sit-ins had done the year before, provided greater momentum for the Civil Rights movement. Increased mass mobilizations took place throughout the South beginning in Albany, Ga., in 1962, when an anti-segre-



Firebombing of Freedom Ride bus, May 14, 1961, Anniston, Ala.

gation campaign brought out thousands for mass protests and arrests.

In 1963, the Civil Rights movement would advance even further with mass mobilizations in Birmingham involving thousands of students. These demonstrations against segregation would spread throughout the South as well as the North, to cities such as Somerville, Tenn., and Chicago.

These demonstrations during the spring and summer of 1963 led to the first massive protests of the era, in Detroit on June 23 and later the historic March on Washington, D.C., of 250,000 on August 28. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was then passed outlawing racial discrimination inside the U.S.

After the efforts of the Freedom Summer of 1964 in Mississippi and other areas and the voting rights campaign in Selma during early 1965, the Voting Rights

Act of 1965 was passed ostensibly guaranteeing universal suffrage. In 1966, the movement would become more militant when SNCC came out in opposition to the draft and the Vietnam War as well as raising the slogan of Black Power during the "March Against Fear" from Memphis, Tenn., to Jackson, Miss., in June of that year.

Just as it took courage and creativity to break down legalized segregation in the U.S., it will take greater efforts to defeat the ruling class's challenges placed before the people in the current period. Consequently, a broad alliance of the workers and oppressed must come together to take on the austerity measures and repression that are the latest mechanisms designed to further the exploitation and oppression of the majority of people in the U.S.

Go to www.pbs.org to view or for more information about the documentary.

An appeal to WW readers

For more than 50 years, Workers World/Mundo Obrero has contributed a revolutionary Marxist perspective that has shed light on events, both international and domestic, from the point of view of the interests of the working class and the oppressed. It has championed and explained the struggle to end this insatiable capitalist profit system, which is bringing grief to the whole planet.

From the battle lines in Wisconsin, where workers are fighting an anti-union onslaught; to the May Day rallies for immigrant and workers' rights; to besieged Gaza, where the Palestinian people are resisting Israeli aggression, our activist reporters send firsthand accounts and photos that counter the lies and distortions in the monopoly-owned media.

Today, WW/MO is the ONLY socialist/communist newspaper in the U.S. that continues to publish a weekly bi-lingual printed edition, while also putting up a complete PDF version online that reaches hundreds of thousands of readers around the world each week.

Even in this electronic age and despite the costs, we must have a printed edition. The paper must be at every major event fighting injustice. Militant unionists coast to coast order bundles of WW/MO for their members' study. Strikers and anti-war protesters welcome coverage of their struggles and pass the paper on. Prisoners starving for real news of the world outside the walls get free subscriptions; they deeply appreciate analysis of the conditions of racism and economic violence that put them behind bars.



WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

You, our readers, can help

We are asking you to help keep this newspaper going by donating to the WW/MO Spring Fund Drive. Our goal is to raise \$60,000. It's a small budget for a fighting newspaper with a big impact, and that reflects our all-volunteer staff. Unfortunately, the landlord, the printer and the utilities don't volunteer their services. So please give us a hand.

- Fill out the coupon below to make a contribution now to the Spring Fund Drive.
- Join the WW Supporter Program and make a regular monthly or yearly donation.
- Give to the newspaper and the struggle in the future by including WW in your will.

Whatever you can contribute will nourish the fighting spirit that infuses every issue of WW/MO.

Donate to the Workers World National Fund Drive!

YES! I want to contribute to the publication of this workers' weekly newspaper.

Enclosed is my donation of \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$35 \$ _____ Other

I am interested in joining the WW Supporter Program. For more information and to donate, see www.workers.org/supporters. Write checks to Workers World. Indicate if for Fund Drive on memo line.

I would like to give a gift for the future to publish this vital publication.

Please contact me about how to put Workers World newspaper in my will.

Name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone No. _____ Email _____

Organization/Campus/Union _____

Return to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th floor, New York, NY 10011.

To inquire, call 212-627-2994 or email ww@workers.org.



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Focus on fracking:

The heat's on the natural gas industry

By **Betsey Piette**

Things are heating up in the Marcellus Shale region spanning Pennsylvania and New York state. Only this time it's not just exploding natural gas wells or flammable tap water.

Across the two states opponents of fracking (hydraulic fracturing) are upping the ante in their struggle against the powerful natural gas industry. Years of hard work to raise public awareness of the dangers of fracking and organizing to stop this industrial devastation are beginning to pay off.

On May 11 an Exxon Mobil subsidiary XTO Energy was forced to temporarily withdraw its application to drain hundreds of millions of gallons of fresh water from a trout stream tributary to the Delaware River in Broome County, N.Y. This happened after more than 7,100 people sent emails and hundreds more wrote letters to the Delaware River Basin Commission that regulates the 13,539-square-mile watershed. This victory is temporary, however, since the application can be reconsidered in 30 days, but that this opposition sprung up in less than ten days is a big plus.

One day later the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency told the six largest Marcellus Shale natural gas drillers that they had to disclose how and where they recycle drilling wastewater in the area. This is another indication of growing public pressure to regulate gas drilling.

Opposition to fracking in Pa.

Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection had asked the industry to voluntarily comply with requests to stop sending chemically contaminated drilling wastewater to 15 treatment plants after a series of New York Times articles exposed the discharge of wastewater "containing radioactivity at levels ... far higher than the federal regulators say is

safe for treatment plants to handle." (Feb. 28-March 4)

But the DEP's ability to oversee this industry came under serious question earlier in 2011. Michael Kramer, newly elected Gov. Tom Corbett's appointee to head the agency, then issued an email instructing inspectors to run all drilling violations through the DEP's central office before issuing violation notice to drillers. But public outcry forced a formal reversal of this directive.

Corbett came into office in January 2011 with the open backing and financial support of the natural gas industry. Among his first official acts was to repeal outgoing Gov. Ed Rendell's executive order banning additional permits for natural gas drilling on state-owned lands.

Corbett also strongly opposes taxing the natural gas industry, even though polls show Pennsylvania residents overwhelmingly support a gas drilling tax. The state faces a reported budget deficit that will likely result in major cuts in spending for education and public welfare without new tax revenue.

In March, Corbett was quick to reward his gas-industry backers by establishing the Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission to oversee the growing gas drilling industry. The MSAC was stacked with energy executives and campaign contributors, including C. Alan Walker, Corbett's acting secretary of community and economic development. Walker has a history of environmental problems at mines that three of his companies operated.

On April 27 more than 100 anti-drilling activists confronted MSAC's first meeting in Harrisburg, Pa. Protesters rallied outside the hall, as others directly disrupted the proceedings for over two hours.

Towns ban gas drilling

Growing opposition to fracking can also be seen in actions taken by two small

townships to limit the power of the gas industry.

On May 13, following an outpouring from residents who demanded protection from the effects of fracking, the Town of Otsego, N.Y., approved, in a 4-1 vote, a ban on gas drilling — the first rural town in that state to invoke home rule to block gas drilling as "undesirable heavy industry." Town Supervisor Meg Kierna says the "town looks forward to having other towns follow suit." (The Daily Star, May 13)

On May 10 the Borough Council of West Homestead, Pa., unanimously adopted an ordinance enacting a Local Bill of Rights banning gas drilling. The ordinance, drafted in consultation with the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, was modeled after a similar ordinance adopted in 2010 by the City of Pittsburgh.

West Homestead Council President Dave Weir stated, "... we are protecting our community's right to clean air and water as guaranteed by the Pennsylvania Constitution. We are protecting the health, safety and welfare of our citizens, and our right to self-govern. We are very comfortable with our decision." (CELDF media release, May 10)

Investigations energize activists

Recent investigations into fracking have helped energize gas industry opponents. On April 16 a leaked Congressional report found that fracking companies can't identify all the chemicals they use.

The report, listing 750 chemical compounds used by 14 oil and gas companies from 2005 to 2009, says drillers injected 94 million gallons of fluid containing at least one chemical deemed a trade secret. "In these cases, the companies are injecting fluids containing chemicals that they themselves cannot identify." (ProPublica, April 18)

The study revealed that methanol, the most widely used chemical in the fracking

process, is a hazardous air pollutant. The list of chemicals contained in this fluid includes 29 known or possible carcinogenic chemicals. It also found that in the Marcellus Shale more than three-quarters of the chemically laden drilling fluid is left underground. The report concludes that the fate of these chemicals "is not entirely predictable."

In 2005 Congress exempted hydraulic fracturing from regulation under the Safe Drinking Water Act because the gas and oil industry maintained that most of the fracking fluid remains underground only temporarily.

On May 9 Duke University released a study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, that found methane levels in private water wells to be 17 times higher than average when within 1,000 feet of a natural gas drilling site.

The team of four Duke scientists tested 68 drinking water wells in the Marcellus and Utica Shale areas of northeastern Pennsylvania and southern New York. While researchers did not report finding fracking chemicals in the wells, they did raise concern for what they felt was a clear correlation between drilling activity and dangerous methane migration into drinking water.

"For the first time, a scientific study has linked natural gas drilling and hydraulic fracturing with a pattern of drinking water contamination so severe that some faucets can be lit on fire." (ProPublica, May 9)

Two rallies are planned to continue putting pressure on Gov. Corbett and the natural gas industry. Organizers who disrupted the Marcellus Shale Commission's meeting plan another protest and lobby day in Harrisburg on June 7. Plans are also under way for a protest in Philadelphia when the pro-drilling industry Marcellus Shale Coalition holds its convention Sept. 7-8. □

3 years constant pressure leads to farmworker victory

By **Ana Maria Reichenbach**
Winston-Salem, N.C.

On May 6, after years of pressure, RJ Reynolds Tobacco Co. finally agreed to engage in discussions with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, a national labor union representing farmworkers in North Carolina.

For the past three years FLOC and community members have flooded the Reynolds American Inc. shareholders' meetings, demanding that the corporation change conditions for farmworkers by pressuring growers and reducing their own profits to give farmworkers a decent life. The bosses had refused to negotiate with FLOC and washed their hands of any responsibility for the human rights abuses, even though it is their corporate greed which causes the deplorable living conditions for nearly 100,000 North Carolina tobacco workers.

During the meeting Justin Flores, a FLOC organizer, made an open and bold invitation to members of the Executive Board and other shareholders to accompany him to the fields so they can visualize the human rights abuses that happen there. His invitation was appropriate, especially because Reynolds deceitfully de-

clares that it supports human rights and that their products come from farms where workers have good working conditions.

Then, unexpectedly, Reynolds, citing a recent study by Oxfam and FLOC that explained the harsh conditions to which farmworkers are subjected, accepted the study's suggestion to create a committee with all stakeholders that would ultimately lead to better working conditions. FLOC members, organizers and supporters celebrated this initiative but still met it with skepticism.

This decision is overdue, as Viridi-

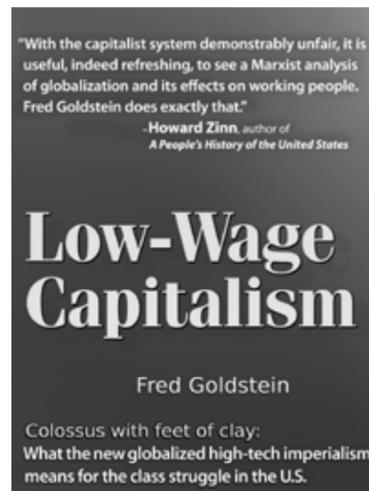
ana Martinez, a former FLOC intern and Dream Team activist, pointed out. There is urgency for change in the fields.

Pressure didn't come just from inside the meeting. Hundreds of farmworkers and supporters outside the Reynolds headquarters picketed and demanded "Reynolds meet with FLOC!" The picket was followed by a march down the streets of Winston-Salem, N.C., to a park for a rally with speeches from AFL-CIO and State Employees Association of North Carolina representatives, along with community members.

Beatriz Maya, FLOC secretary-treasurer, celebrated the victory but urged the activists to keep pressuring Reynolds until there is real change in the fields. The march continued to the Lloyd Presbyterian Church, with the energetic crowd shouting "Workers' rights are human rights!"

The march was possible because of broad solidarity efforts by community members and unions. King J, a leader in the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation, explained, "Our role was to make sure that all the brothers and sisters who were participating made it safely to the march." Also present was Wesley Morris from the Beloved Community Center, which has been supporting FLOC since 2007. "Some of us were proxies. We did outreach, provided chairs and tables, and helped with the food," he said.

Members of FLOC were hopeful after the meeting and expect to be contacted by Reynolds to negotiate the changes. Diego Reyes, son of a North Carolina farmworker, said, "The meeting was very successful. We had a very positive impact both inside and outside of the meeting in the Winston-Salem community, which historically has been involved in this same struggle. Now we are trying to bring real changes to this town to enforce basic human rights." □



LOW-WAGE CAPITALISM

What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

An easy-to-read analysis of the roots of the current global economic crisis, its implications for workers and oppressed peoples, and the strategy needed for future struggle.

Paperback, 336 pages. Includes graphs, charts, bibliography, endnotes and index.

The author is available for lectures and interviews.

www.LowWageCapitalism.com

Available from Leftbooks.com and bookstores around the country

Victor Toro continues struggle for political asylum

By Dee Knight
New York

Exiled Chilean revolutionary Victor Toro and his attorney, Carlos Moreno, spoke at the International Action Center here May 11, explaining the U.S. Immigration Court's rejection of Toro's application for political asylum. The occasion was the release of the complete transcript of Toro's Immigration Court hearings, which began in January 2008 and continued intermittently until December 2010. The complete transcript will be available soon for download from www.May1.info.

"I have won cases with one-third of the evidence introduced in this case," declared Moreno. "Asylum is about persecution because of political belief. In this case they're repeating the persecution again." Moreno said he will soon appeal the case to the next judicial level and take it to the highest court necessary to win.

Toro "deserves to stay here. They owe him asylum because the United States invested more than \$7 million to overthrow the Popular Unity government of Chile," Moreno said. "He's here because of what the U.S. administration did. This debt is not symbolic. They're responsible for his being here." Moreno added that the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, chaired by Idaho Sen. Frank Church, documented these claims in 1975 and 1976.

Following the CIA-engineered murder of President Salvador Allende, a socialist, and the overthrow of his Popular Unity

government on Sept. 11, 1973, Toro was arrested and tortured by the U.S.-backed military dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet. He was among thousands of Chileans, including hundreds of members of the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), who received such treatment.

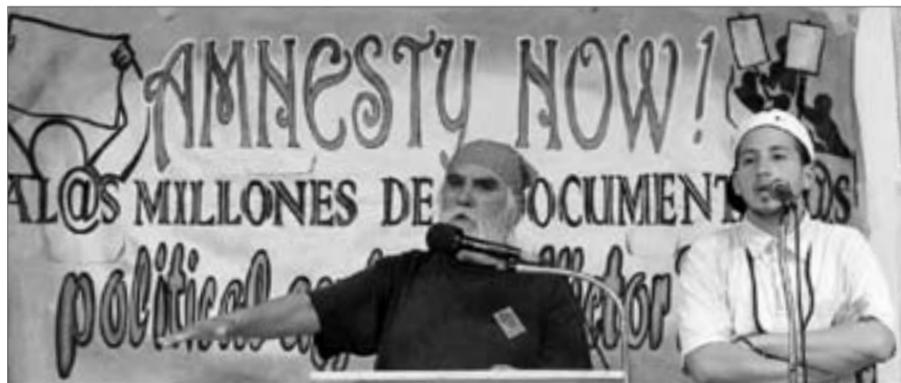
The Immigration Court transcript includes testimony that Toro and his spouse, Nieves Ayress, were tortured extensively while in prison for three years, from 1974 to 1977. In late 1977, Toro was expelled and forced into exile, living first in Sweden and then Cuba until 1983, then in Mexico until late 1984, when he entered the United States by crossing into El Paso, Texas.

Appeals & campaigns planned

Both Moreno and Toro expressed confidence that he would ultimately win his bid for asylum through legal appeals and massive political campaigns. Moreno observed that the government based its rejection on unproven charges that Toro was and remains a "terrorist."

Meanwhile, a known terrorist against Cuba, Luis Posada Carriles, was recently released from deportation proceedings, despite the fact that the U.S. Justice Department had urged the court to keep him in jail because he was "an admitted mastermind of terrorist plots and attacks." (New York Times, April 11)

Moreno said Toro's legal appeals must be combined with massive public pressure on both President Barack Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder. Toro remarked, "Obama could stop my deportation — and all of them — with a stroke of a



Left, Victor Toro at International Action Center meeting, May 11.

PHOTO: KRISTAL CARVAJAL

pen. If he signed a decree to kill Osama bin Laden, he could decree that families be reunited." Toro added, "I don't believe even one 'terrorist' has crossed the U.S.-Mexican border. The real terrorists have come with the aid of politicians and the CIA."

Responding to Obama's May 10 speech in El Paso calling for immigration reform, Toro commented, "Obama says we need to push for immigration reform, but 'this can't be done without the Republicans.' He's saying the Democrats can't do anything without the Republicans — because they aren't real democrats.

"We need to create a huge popular movement against the Republicans," Toro continued. "But our struggle is against the whole system. We have to push for a popular movement of millions against capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression. We've been betting on the popular struggle here — all the struggles we've waged for political asylum and the May 1 movements."

"We can say OK to reform, but without deportations and raids," declared Toro. "We have to unite forces. The only way to win either in the courts or in Congress is if the people move and unite."

Toro noted, "Obama recognizes 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. now. That subtracts the more than 1 million deported during his administration, but is less than James Petras' estimate of 20 million."

Every year, over the past five years, according to Amnesty International, nearly half a million people have crossed the Mexican border to the United States without papers. "It can't be otherwise, with the Mexican crisis. No one can stop people seeking something to eat, for survival," Toro said. "Our people know NAFTA [the North American Free Trade Agreement] means only hunger and unemployment for them."

Concluding his remarks, Victor Toro thanked a long list of supporters and expressed solidarity with the Indigenous Mapuche fighters now conducting a 25-day hunger strike against Chile's anti-terrorist law, which is aimed at Indigenous people. He also expressed solidarity with people everywhere fighting against imperialism. "Don't worry about my personal fate," he said. "The struggle has been launched, it can't be stopped, and that's the important thing." □

Creative Resistance in Palestine JULIANO MER KHAMIS 1958-2011

By Dolores Cox
New York

The life of a beloved freedom fighter, Juliano Mer Khamis, was ended by five bullets on April 4. He was assassinated as he was leaving the Jenin Freedom Theatre, which he co-founded with his mother, Arna Mer Khamis.

Juliano Mer Khamis was a fearless artist and human being. His legacy speaks of the role artistic creation and culture can play as a weapon against oppression, even amidst the most horrible depths of injustice.

The Freedom Theatre is a community-based theater in the city of Jenin in Palestine's northern West Bank. Its refugee camp is home to 16,000 people, 50 percent of whom are under the age of 20. The camp, surrounded by electric fences, is one of the most deprived areas of Occupied Palestine. Its youth live in poverty and isolation under a repressive occupation, with the constant menace of military incursions.

When the Israeli military invaded Jenin in 2002, part of the refugee camp was reduced to rubble, with almost every child traumatized by fear, frustration and violence after witnessing first-hand or threatened death and destruction. The Freedom Theatre was established to offer a safe space where youth could be free to dream, play, hope and express themselves. Its aim is to heal, help capture lost childhood and provide skills for healthy development.

Juliano Mer Khamis was born in Nazareth to a Palestinian father and a Jewish Israeli mother. He self-identified as 100 percent Palestinian and 100 percent Jewish. His father, Saliba Khamis, was at one

time secretary of the Israeli Communist Party. His mother, also a communist, became an anti-Zionist activist and fearless fighter for peace, justice and human rights. During her pregnancy, at a protest in Israel against the racist imposition of martial law on Palestinian villages, she went into labor. She was rushed to a hospital, but doctors refused to treat her because she was married to an Arab, and she

nearly bled to death.

When Mer Khamis grew up, he joined an elite fighting unit of the Israeli Defense Forces. In 1978, while stationed in Jenin, he refused an order to forcibly remove an elderly Palestinian man from his car. He ended up in a fight with his commanding officer and was subsequently imprisoned. He then left the army.

Beginning in the 1980s he worked as a

film, TV and stage actor. The original Freedom Theatre Project was his mother's vision, and Mer Khamis worked with her on the project, which was partly funded by prize money awarded to her for winning the Alternative Nobel Prize. She died in 1994.

The original Freedom Theatre was destroyed during Israel's 2002 invasion. But in 2006 it was rebuilt and expanded and now offers various programs, workshops and filmmaking training.

Eight years ago Mer Khamis collaborated to produce and direct a documentary called "Arna's Children," which documents the theater's work, the lives and deaths of the children who participated in the plays and theater workshops, and the 2002 unspeakable tragedy of the Israeli invasion. The film won the Best Documentary Feature prize at the 2004 Tribeca Film Festival.

On May 4 a commemoration celebrating the life and work of Juliano Mer Khamis was held in New York City's Church of St. Paul the Apostle. Musical tributes and video slides of Mer Khamis in various settings were shown throughout the evening. Among those present who gave tributes were poet Remi Kanazi; filmmaker Udi Aloni; civil rights attorney Abdeen Jabara; actress Kathleen Chalfant, who read a statement from playwright Eve Ensler; Linda Chapman, representing the New York Theatre Workshop; and playwright Tony Kushner, a Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winner. A quote from Che Guevara was also included.

For more information, visit www.thefreedomtheatre.org. □

Stop FBI stops the bank freeze

By Kris Hamel

A victory was won May 10 by activists fighting FBI repression when the Twin Cities Federal bank reversed its action and released funds held in accounts by Hatem Abudayyeh and Naima Abudayyeh of Chicago. The family's accounts were frozen by TCF on May 6; the TCF branch manager asserted the Bank Security Act prevented him from releasing any assets.

Hatem Abudayyeh is a Palestinian community leader and executive director of the Arab American Action Network. He is one of 23 anti-war, Palestinian and international solidarity activists subpoenaed by a federal grand jury in Chicago after FBI raids last September.

Michael Deutsch, attorney for the Abudayyehs, said, "In my opinion, the bank did not act out of the blue. I suspect that the FBI and U.S. Attorney investigation caused the bank to overreact and illegally freeze the Abudayyehs' banking accounts that had been there for over a decade."

(fightbacknews.org, May 10)

The Committee to Stop FBI Repression reported in a May 16 email that people across the United States called U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald in Chicago and the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control to demand the return of the couple's money and an end to the repression and harassment of activists.

All 23 of the targeted activists remain steadfast in their position that they will not appear before a grand jury.

Hatem Abudayyeh will be a featured speaker at a May 21 meeting in New York City, "Resisting State Repression: Confronting Police and FBI Repression of Communities of Color & Oppressed Nationalities." Sponsored by the New York Committee to Stop FBI Repression, Al-Awda NY and DRUM (Desis Rising Up and Moving), the event starts at 7 p.m. at 56 Walker St. in lower Manhattan.

For more information on this and other anti-repression activities, see www.stopfbi.net. □

Students, labor, community unite

Confront Wall Street & austerity

By Caleb T. Maupin
New York

A broad coalition of teachers, students, labor and community organizations showed a high level of militancy as 20,000 protesters took to the narrow streets of New York's financial district to oppose cuts in education and other social programs. New York City's organized labor turned out in force for the May 12 action.

The United Federation of Teachers, representing all the teachers in New York City's public schools, had some 6,000 members in the streets to oppose billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed layoffs and cutbacks. Other unions that mobilized included Transport Workers Union Local 100, Service Employees Local 32BJ, Communication Workers from both Verizon and the public sector, as well as New York Nurses United. A number of labor leaders spoke during a rally, along with City Council member Charles Barron.

The unions collaborated with the New York Coalition Against Budget Cuts, which mobilized thousands of students and people from community groups. The NY-CABC organized a march from City Hall to Wall Street March 24, in which the largest component was youths and students.

Larry Hales, a key organizer of the March 24 action, told Workers World, "The massive outpouring on May 12 had its roots in the success of the 'Day of Rage' held on March 24. That action inspired many rank-and-file union members, who pressured their union leaders to call and endorse the next large action of forces opposed to massive cuts in public services."

Community, student groups fired up

Community organizations were there. Parent associations and tenant organizations marched, as did the Coalition for the Homeless. Contingents from local child-care centers, which also face cuts, joined the march. Hostos Community College faculty and students, along with part-time faculty and Professional Staff Congress members participated.

Thousands of high school students



were encouraged by their teachers to participate, and they joined them in the streets to defend their education against cutbacks and privatization.

Some sections of the march emphasized opposition to the massive spending on war. Others loudly opposed cuts in AIDS research and treatment. A large contingent raised the demand for a national health insurance plan.

The march stepped off at 4:30 p.m., and despite the efforts of the police, the marchers were soon out in the streets. As the march continued, traffic and business halted as the many thousands of people wound their way through lower Manhattan to Wall Street, the center of world finance capital.

Slogans proclaimed "Make the banks pay!" and "Solve the budget crisis: End the wars, tax the rich!" Chants of "Tax the rich!" and "F**k Wall Street!" were heard by all.

Employees of Wall Street firms gathered around windows and looked down at the massive crowd of working-class people demanding justice.



When the march reached Water Street, police attempted to disperse the march and return to "business as usual" on a Thursday afternoon by pushing a contingent of youth. But when they suddenly moved to arrest two youth in the street, the crowd poured into the street, physically preventing the arrests, amid roars of "Let them go! Let them go!"

Soon, several hundred youth took the corner of Water and Wall streets, chanting "Whose streets? Our streets!" The police pushed to clear the streets, using orange nets and metal barricades. The crowd pushed back.

Police shoved the faces of the young people with their hands, and struck youth who were pinned between the crowd and the nets. Despite this brutality, the confrontation continued, strengthened by the huge numbers of youth who were intent on carrying out an "occupation," despite calls from more moderate march organizers to pull back.

The cops were attempting to defend the "private property" of Wall Street against students and youth who face cutbacks, unemployment and an insecure economic future. The standoff between the youth

and the cops lasted 45 minutes. Some youths attempted to appeal to the police with chants used in Wisconsin, such as "Your job is next!" More radical sections chanted, "Wall Street thugs! Wall Street thugs!" Truckloads of police and metal barricades were used in the attempt to retake control of the area.

In other parts of lower Manhattan, police attempted to prevent people from joining the protest by blocking off entrances to march areas. Lucy Pagoada, a teacher and UFT member, told Workers World, "The police were giving people false directions, and not letting people get anywhere near the march. They had the streets blocked off."

Most participants in the action could see that sentiment for a popular uprising against the capitalist drive to impose austerity on working and oppressed people was widespread. The desire for a more militant resistance movement exists not only among radical forces, but among countless youth who face extreme economic hardship caused by the current crisis.

Given the strength of the May 12 action, some organizers suspect that this summer will see an escalation of the struggle. On one side are labor, students and community organizations. On the other is the capitalist class, which seeks to strip away anything close to a decent life in this time of economic crisis.

Larry Hales and G. Dunkel contributed to this article.

Thousands in Wisconsin say:

'The fight's not over'



An estimated 20,000 poor and working people protested at the State Capitol in Madison May 14. They declared their intention to stop all anti-union and anti-people attacks in Wisconsin. "We have to reclaim our moral outrage, our sense of indignation. We have to keep the pressure on and let them hear us," said Mahlon Mitchell, president of the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin at the main rally at the Capitol.

Other speakers included labor, community and student organizers from unions, including the Teaching Assistants Association-American Federation of Teachers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; the Wisconsin Wave; We Are Wisconsin; and Youth Empowered, the youth arm of Voces de la Frontera, the immigrant rights organization that organized the 100,000-person May Day march and rally in Milwaukee. The Wisconsin AFL-CIO



and its member unions also mobilized for the May 14 action.

A mass march took place in the area, and then thousands listened to the rally at the Capitol, with people spilling into the streets. The banks, corporations and the Pentagon are attempting to continue their attacks on the people of Wisconsin (and across the U.S.) through Gov. Scott Walker and similar politicians. Walker

has announced his intent to eviscerate collective bargaining and push through billions of dollars in cuts to social programs. He is also attempting to pass a racist voter identification bill through the Wisconsin legislature, among other draconian attacks.

But the thousands of poor and working people in Madison May 14 issued their message once again: "The fight's not over."

Teachers' 'state of emergency' rocks California

By Judy Greenspan
San Francisco

The California Teachers Association called a "state of emergency" the week of May 9 in response to massive budget cuts and more than 30,000 teacher and 10,000 other school employee layoffs statewide.

Union actions included sit-ins and occupations of the state Capitol in Sacramento, local protests and legislative lobbying, all of which culminated in large, CTA-led rallies in several cities including San Francisco. All the activities were strongly supported and well-attended by parents, teachers, students, custodians, clerical workers, union representatives and community activists.

According to the CTA, three years of budget cuts, including more than \$20 billion from education, have devastated basic services and caused a statewide crisis of momentous proportions. A CTA fact sheet reveals that budget cuts over the past three years have amounted to the state paying \$3,051 less per student.

The state of emergency, according to Gail Mendes, CTA secretary-treasurer, is a message that "is being sent loud and clear to lawmakers from all over the state to stop these cuts, extend current tax rates, and stop decimating our schools and other essential services."

The week began with a Wisconsin-style rally of several hundred educators, parents and other supporters inside the state Capitol building. After the rally, dozens of protesters refused to leave and were arrested. (See related article, this page.)

On May 11, the United Teachers of Richmond, a CTA local, held a Teacher Appreciation Day in front of the Richmond City Hall. Union members were warmly greeted by Richmond Mayor Gayle McLaughlin, who led the teachers in a chant of "Tax the rich!" McLaughlin, a Green Party activist, read a proclamation declaring today the "Day of the Teacher" and pledging her city's support for struggles against layoffs and budget cuts. Other union members, including Diane Brown, UTR president, lambasted the state for allowing devastating cuts to education and human services.

Another sit-in was held May 12 at the state Capitol building. CTA president, David Sanchez, and about two dozen other labor activists and teachers were arrested.

Unlike the May 9 occupation, the protesters were released very quickly.

The week of protests ended May 13 with rallies in San Francisco, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego and Los Angeles, to highlight the education crisis and state of emergency.

More than 3,000 teachers, school employees, parents, students and others rallied in the San Francisco Civic Center demanding, "Money for Schools! Not for Prisons and War!" Speaker after speaker demanded that the state Legislature bail out the schools and social services, not the banks and the rich.

The musical group "Tired, Angry Teachers" led the crowd in singing, "Where Have All the Dollars Gone?" with the conclusion that they have gone to the prison-industrial complex, to the wars in the Middle East and North Africa, and into the coffers of the billionaires.

People left the rally ready to continue the fight for education, health care, jobs and human needs.

Teachers and supporters defend education in Sacramento, Calif.



WW PHOTOS: JUDY GREENSPAN

The writer is a Richmond public school teacher and a member of the United Teachers of Richmond.



California education

Mass arrests at Capitol Rotunda

By Dave Welsh
Capitol Rotunda, Sacramento, Calif.

A crowd took over the state Capitol Rotunda on May 9 to kick off a week of protest against looming draconian cuts to the California education budget.

Led by students and teachers noisily chanting, "Tax, tax, tax the rich! We can fix the deficit!" and "Bail out the schools, not the banks!" the demonstrators marched and danced around the rotunda for half an hour before sitting down on the marble floor for an hour-long speakout. In the end at least 65 were arrested and spent the night in jail.

Betty Olson-Jones, Oakland Education Association president, said: "We are not just here to lobby. We're here to raise some hell. Band-aids won't do it. There is money in this state." A teacher held up a sign: "California: Eighth largest economy in the world, 43rd nationally in per-pupil spending."

Students came from all over the state, including a busload from Santa Cruz. Some thought they might follow the example of Wisconsin and occupy the Capitol. "They want to shut down the schools, and shut down our minds and creativity,"

said one student. "Will we just sit here and allow that to happen? Occupy! Occupy!"

"This society is very unequal," said a community college student. "Their plan is to make it even more unequal. We need to take over the Capitol."

A young woman student stated, "The future is so bleak for us students. We have nothing to lose."

They chanted, "No cuts, no freeze! Education should be free!" They sang, "We shall not be moved" and "Get up, stand up! Stand up for your rights!" and invoked the history of the Civil Rights movement.

People lined up to take turns speaking. When the California Highway Patrol tried to use bullhorns to disperse the gathering, people shouted, "There's a line!" informing the CHP that they had to get in line like everyone else if they wanted to speak.

As protesters were being arrested, San Francisco City College professor Rodger Scott raised the question: "Is this a public building? Are we the public?" Among those arrested were veterans of the early April occupation of the Washington state Capitol and the early May occupation of the Sacramento state administration building — part of a wave of protest to defend public education.

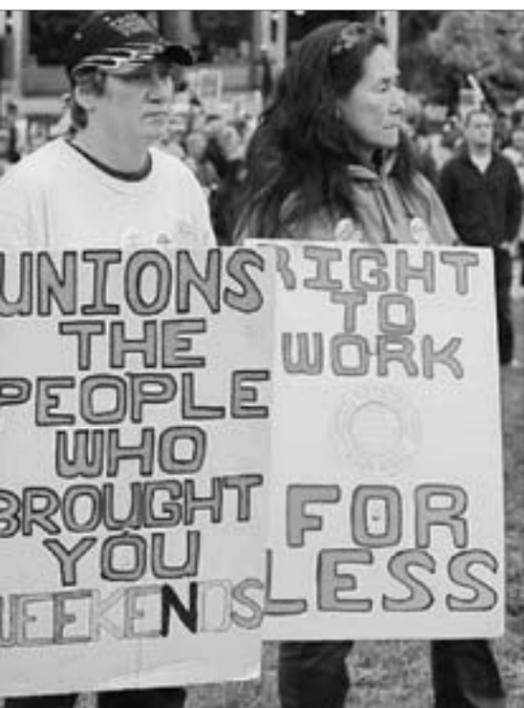
Arrestees spent as long as 17 hours in custody. Some had to wear plastic-strip handcuffs for as long as 10 hours.

Among protesters there were several schools of thought about tactics. Top leaders of the California Teachers Association focused on backing Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown's program of extending some regressive taxes — such as the sales tax — as a way of raising money for education. Many rank-and-file teachers and students countered with a plan to raise taxes on corporations and the rich, which Gov. Brown and most fellow Democrats have opposed.

Both Republicans and Democrats propose devastating multibillion-dollar cuts to education in California, with or without any tax increase.

On May 12 in Oakland, Calif., six Oakland Education Association members held a sit-in at a Wells Fargo Bank to demand that the big banks — which have racked up huge profits, received fat government bailouts, and often pay little or no taxes — fund the shortfall in the education budget. "Which has priority," asked one sign, "bank profits or the future of our kids?"

Welsh was among those arrested on May 9 at the Capitol Rotunda in Sacramento.



For updates, information, and how to support the people's struggle in Wisconsin: www.wisafclcio.org, <http://wisafclcio.typepad.com/>, www.vdlf.org, www.defendwisconsin.org, www.bailoutpeople.org,

— Report and photos by Bryan G. Pfeifer



San Diego

Thousands defend education

Thousands of southern California teachers, other education workers, students and parents rallied in a San Diego bay-front park on the afternoon of May 13. At least two busloads came from as far away as the city of El Centro in Imperial County. It was all part of a statewide mobilization that included simultaneous rallies in four other California cities. Their

message to the California state government was strong and clear: Stop the attack on public education! Cuts hurt kids!

A host of educators, other school workers, union leaders and students addressed the crowd. Hundreds of small pink ribbons covered the ground abutting the speakers' platform. The ribbons represented the 4,000 San Diego County

school employees who recently received pink slips — they were laid off.

A counterprotest, called by the local Tea Party, was clearly a dud. Fewer than ten right-wingers stood forlornly near the entrance to the park as public education supporters continued to stream into the rally an hour after it had begun.

— Report and photo by Bob McCubbin

Events in Syria – Which side are you on?

By Sara Flounders

When U.S. imperialism engages in an attack on any government or movement, it is cowardly to be neutral and rank betrayal to stand on the same side as the imperialist octopus, which seeks to dominate the world. This has been an ABC for workers' movements through 150 years of class-conscious struggles. It is the very basis of Marxism.

A social explosion is shaking the Arab world. U.S. imperialism and all the old regimes tied to it in the region are trying desperately to manage and contain this still unfolding mass upheaval into channels that do not threaten imperialist domination of the region.

The U.S. and its collaborators are also trying to divide and undermine the two wings of the resistance — the Islamic forces and the secular nationalist forces — which together overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorships in Egypt and Tunisia. There is now a concerted U.S. effort to turn these same political forces against two regimes in the region that have opposed U.S. domination in the past — Libya and Syria.

Both Libya and Syria have their own development problems, which are exacerbated by the general global capitalist crisis and decades of compromise imposed on them as they tried to survive in a hostile environment of unrelenting attacks — political, sometimes military and including economic sanctions.

The U.S./NATO bombing of Libya has clarified where imperialism stands regarding that country. Syria is also targeted by imperialism — because of its refusal to recognize the Zionist occupation, its assistance to Hezbollah in their struggle to end the Israeli occupation of Lebanon and its strategic alliance with Iran.

Syria's internal situation may be difficult to understand, but in this unfolding struggle clear statements of support for the Syrian government and against U.S. destabilization efforts have come from Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Hezbollah Secretary General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon and several exiled leaders of Hamas, the Palestinian organization that was elected by the people of Gaza. These political leaders have experienced first-hand U.S. destabilization campaigns that used corporate media fabrications, externally financed opposition groups, targeted assassinations, "special operations" sabotage and well-trained Internet operatives.

On the side of the supposedly "democratic opposition" are such reactionaries as Sen. Joseph Lieberman, chair of the powerful Senate Homeland Security Committee, who called on the U.S. to bomb Syria next, after Libya. Outspoken supporters of the opposition in Syria include James Woolsey, former CIA director and adviser to Sen. John McCain's presidential campaign.

Wikileaks exposes U.S. role

An article entitled "U.S. secretly backed Syrian opposition groups" in the April 18 Washington Post described the Wikileaks report on U.S. diplomatic cables. The article summarizes what these State Department cables reveal about the secret funding of Syrian political opposition groups, including the beaming of anti-government programming into the country via satellite television.

The article describes the U.S.-funded efforts as part of a "long-standing campaign to overthrow the country's autocratic leader, Bashar al-Assad," which began under President George W. Bush and continued under President Barack Obama, even though Obama claimed to be rebuilding relations with Syria and posted an ambassador to Damascus for the first time in six years.

According to an April 2009 cable signed by the top-ranking U.S. diplomat in Damascus at the time, Syrian authorities "would undoubtedly view any U.S. funds going to illegal political groups as tantamount to supporting regime change." The Post article describes the links between the U.S.-funded opposition Barada TV and the role of Malik al-Abdeh, who is on its board and distributes videos and protest updates. Al-Abdeh is also on the board of the Movement for Justice and Democracy, which his brother, Anas Al-Abdeh, chairs. The secret cables "report persistent fears among U.S. diplomats that Syrian state security agents had uncovered the money trail from Washington."

Role of Al-Jazeera

Perhaps the most revealing challenge to and exposé of the destabilization campaign in Syria came with the resignation of Ghassan Ben Jeddo, the best-known journalist with Al-Jazeera's television news programs and chief of its Beirut bureau. Ben Jeddo resigned in protest of Al-Jazeera's biased coverage, especially noting a "smear campaign against the Syrian government" that has turned Al-Jazeera into a "propaganda outlet."

Al-Jazeera favorably covered the unstoppable mass upsurge of millions in Egypt and Tunisia. However, this satellite news channel has also extensively reported every claim and political charge, regardless of how unsubstantiated, made by the political opposition in both Syria and Libya. It called for U.S. "humanitarian" intervention, no-fly zones and the bombing of Libya. It is important to understand Al-Jazeera's position as a news corporation, especially when it claims to speak for the oppressed.

Al-Jazeera, which is based in Qatar, never reports that 94 percent of the workforce in Qatar is made up of immigrants who have absolutely no rights at all and exist in conditions of near slavery. Al-Jazeera gives little coverage to the brutal



Palestinians carry a fallen comrade shot by Israeli soldiers in the Golan Heights, May 15.

repression of the mass movement in the absolute monarchy of Bahrain, which is just next door to Qatar and is now occupied by Saudi troops.

Is this censorship because Al-Jazeera TV News is funded by the absolute monarch of Qatar, the Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani? Al-Jazeera never mentions the huge U.S. Central Command military air base right there in Qatar. Drones on secret missions throughout the region regularly take off from this base. Qatar has also sent planes to participate in the U.S./NATO bombing of Libya, and it works closely with the U.S. State Department in supporting U.S. intervention in the area.

Facebook and counterrevolution

The CIA and the National Endowment for Democracy have become expert at utilizing a barrage of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to overwhelm targeted governments with millions of fabricated messages, wild rumors and images.

Fabricated alerts about struggles and splits among rival factions in Syria's military leading to resignations turned out to be false. For example, Major Gen. al-Rifai (Ret.) denied as baseless news broadcasts over satellite television that he was leading a split in the military. He added that he had retired 10 years ago.

Izzat al-Rashek of the Hamas Politburo and Ali Baraka, Hamas representative in Lebanon, denied published claims that the leadership of this Palestinian resistance organization was relocating to Qatar from Damascus. Ali Baraka explained that this was a U.S. fabrication to pressure Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah and obstruct Palestinian reconciliation while raising conflict between resistance movements and Syria.

The Syrian government has charged that snipers fired into demonstrations, shooting army and police in an effort to have police open fire on demonstrators.

Rumors, anonymous Internet postings and satellite television reports aimed at heightening sectarian differences are part of the destabilization campaign.

Dual character of Syria

It is not difficult to see why U.S. imperialism and its pawns in the region, including Israel and the corrupt dependent monarchies of Jordan, Qatar, the United Arab

Emirates and Saudi Arabia, would want to see "regime change" in Syria.

Syria is one of the few Arab states that have no relations with Israel. Several Palestinian resistance organizations have offices-in-exile in Syria, including Hamas. Syria is allied closely with Iran and with the Hezbollah organization in Lebanon.

Syria today is not socialist nor a revolutionary country. Capitalism with its resulting inequality has not been overturned. There is a capitalist class in Syria. Many within it have benefited from "reforms" that sold formerly state-owned industries to private capital. Thus, the Syrian state represents contradictory forces.

Years of U.S. sanctions and past destabilization efforts have also had a cumulative effect. The state apparatus, ever fearful of continuing outside intervention, has become fearful of change.

Impact of Iraq war

The massive U.S. invasion and destruction of neighboring Iraq, the Bush-Blair discussion of a similar attack on Syria in 2003, and the harsh new sanctions on Syria have added intense pressure.

But the most dislocating factor is never discussed in the corporate media: To escape the last eight years of U.S. occupation, more than 1.5 million Iraqis have flooded into Syria, whose population in 2006 was 18 million. According to a 2007 report by the office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Refugees, this influx impacted all facets of life in Syria, particularly the services offered by the state to all citizens and refugees.

The unexpected arrival of these Iraqi refugees has strained Syria's infrastructure, including guaranteed free elementary and high schools, free health care, housing availability and other areas of the economy and has increased costs across the board. The prices of foodstuffs and basic goods have gone up by 30 percent, property prices by 40 percent and housing rentals by 150 percent.

Iraqi refugees also benefited from Syrian state subsidies in gasoline, food, water and other essential goods provided to everyone. Such a large mass of unemployed people led to the lowering of wages and increased competition for jobs. The impact of the global economic downturn during this difficult period added to the problems. (Middle East Institute, Dec. 10, 2010, report on Refugee Cooperation)

In its recent public statements, the Syrian government has recognized the importance of making internal reforms while maintaining national unity in an extremely diverse country that has historic differences in religion, tribes and regions and now contains almost 2 million refugees.

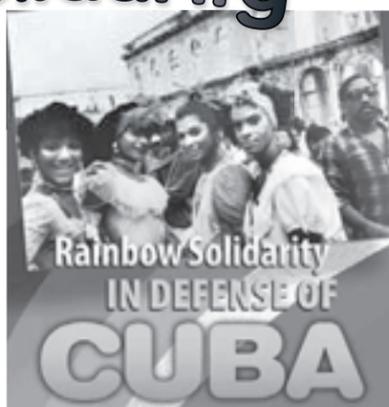
The diverse nationalities, religions and cultural groupings in Syria have every right to be part of this process. But what they need most is an end to constant, unrelenting U.S. intervention. U.S. hands off! □

Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA

Leslie Feinberg, author of Stone Butch Blues

This ground-breaking book documents revolutionary Cuba's inspiring trajectory of progress towards liberation of sexualities, genders and sexes.

Available at Leftbooks.com



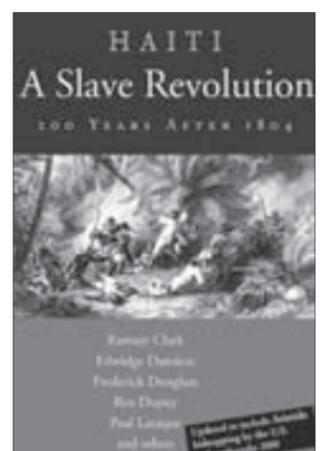
HAITI: A Slave Revolution

200 Years after 1804

Updated 2010: Includes the coup against President Aristide and the January 2010 earthquake.

Authors include: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Ramsey Clark, Pat Chin, Edwidge Danticat, Frederick Douglass, Greg Dunkel, Ben Dupuy, Sara Flounders, Stan Goff, Kim Ives, Fleurimond Kerns, Paul Laraque, Maud LeBlanc, Sam Marcy, Franz Mendes & Steve Gillis, Felix Morriseau-Leroy, Johnnie Stevens, Abayomi Azikiwe, Larry Hales, Monica Moorehead, Saeed Shabazz.

Books available from Leftbooks.com



U.S.-backed president installed in Haiti

By G. Dunkel

Michel Martelly, a former singer whose stage name was “Sweet Mickey,” was sworn in as Haiti’s president May 14. His inaugural speech promised major changes to rebuild a Haiti still devastated by the earthquake of Jan. 12, 2010.

Preparations for his inauguration cost “only” \$4.5 million, and each of the three private banquets celebrating his inauguration charged “only” \$500 a seat. (Miami Herald, May 13) The International Monetary Fund estimates that 80 percent of the Haitian people live on less than \$2 a day.

That Haiti is devastated is undeniable. More than 700,000 people whose homes were destroyed in the earthquake are still living under tents and tarps in camps located helter-skelter throughout Port-au-Prince and its surroundings. Conditions in these camps are deplorable. Basics like sanitation and water are at best inadequate and at worst nonexistent. Jobs are few. Hunger and physical violence, mainly directed at women, run rampant.

Some 300,000 to 500,000 people, according to the U.N.’s International Office on Migration, have moved to rickety housing in damaged shantytowns, set up tents on rubble-strewn family property, or gone to live with relatives in the provinces.

While estimates vary, the IOM says that just 31,656 transitional homes — temporary shelters — had been built by the end of 2010. (Greenwire, Jan. 12)

As for Martelly’s promise of free education, sources in his campaign indicate it will go into effect at the end of his five-year term and probably only go up to grade four. (Haïti-Liberté, April 20)

Most Haitians support Fanmi Lavalas, the party of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Because it was excluded from the ballot, less than 25 percent of Haitian voters went to the polls in both rounds of the election. Martelly got about 16 percent of the possible votes in a country where voter turnouts have frequently been in the 80 percent to 90 percent range.

Martelly’s platform: repression

Martelly does not have an electoral mandate, even by the elastic standards the U.S. big-business press uses for right-wing Haitian politicians.

Two of Martelly’s platform planks show his real orientation toward smashing the Haitian people’s resistance to the abominable poverty in which they are mired.

Martelly has made it clear that he wants to reestablish the Haitian army, which Aristide disbanded in 1995. It was the U.S. that originally set up the army in 1928 to replace the one it had disbanded in 1916 when the U.S. invaded Haiti for the first time. Its only function is to repress domestic dissent and carry out coups when the U.S. decides a president has gone too far.

During his campaign, Martelly also promoted the Base Michel Martelly, mod-

eled after François Duvalier’s Tonton Macoutes. According to journalist Kim Ives, “For \$30, ... potential voters could join the Base Michel Joseph Martelly and invest in a pink plastic membership card, with photo, which promises many advantages (such as a job, say) when the Martelly administration comes to power. The move ensures prepaid voter participation and an esprit de corps among the loyal.” (Guardian, March 22)

As Ives noted, during the Duvalier period, “Every Macoute received a card that afforded him many privileges, like free merchandise from any store he entered, entitlement to coerced sex, and fear and respect from people in general.” The Macoutes became one of the world’s most notorious death squads.

During the years before the first coup against Aristide in 1991, Martelly ran a nightclub that was a hangout for leaders of the death squads that the army unleashed against Aristide’s movement.

Martelly, U.S. pawn

The first round of presidential elections in November 2010 was so marked by fraud, incompetence and a nearly total lack of concern for procedures that 12 of the candidates, including Martelly, asked for a do-over. The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) dilly-dallied, admitting that Mirlande Manigat came in first but asserting that Jude Celestin was second and Martelly a close third.

The CEP didn’t come to a firm decision

until after the Organization of American States did a cursory examination of the voting tallies and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton went to Haiti and told the Electoral Council to put Martelly on the ballot for the second round.

Immediately after being declared the winner, Martelly got on a plane to Washington and met with the State Department, the World Bank, the IMF and all the heavy-hitters. He made a point of getting a photo-op with both Hillary and Bill Clinton. The latter is co-chair of the Interim Reconstruction Commission, which controls any aid Haiti gets.

Ever since 1990, when the Haitian people decisively defeated Marc Bazin, the candidate favored by U.S. imperialism, in an election that was really a mass movement, Washington has been scheming to regain total political control of Latin America and the Caribbean and secure its hold over Haiti’s strategic location and all its resources. As long as Martelly suits their needs, they will back him. When he doesn’t, they’ll dump him.

Haitian workers held a protest outside the still-ruined presidential palace while the inauguration was taking place. For the Platform of Public Enterprise Employees, who were laid off when state companies like Teleco were privatized in 2010, it was their 99th demonstration to demand 36 months of layoff pay. They also want ex-president René Préval put in jail for not giving them what the law requires. (Miami Herald, May 14) □

U.S., Iraqi governments kill, torture civilian protesters

By Gene Clancy

May 8 — “If you don’t stop your political opposition activities, we will kidnap you, rape you and videotape the rape.” This threat was made against Fatima Ahmed, a political activist, by armed men who came to her home during a “Day of Rage,” a kind of mass outpouring which has characterized many of the revolutions taking place across the Middle East and North Africa. (Amnesty International Report, April 2011)

Unlike others, this uprising and the merciless repression which has followed it have been virtually ignored by the mainstream media. It took place in Iraq, a country which is still occupied by tens of thousands of U.S. troops, and whose puppet government is completely under the thumb of the United States.

A survey of media coverage of the protests in Iraq found that since February most of the world’s media “forgot about the country. Today, there is hardly anything about the demonstrations that continue in Iraq.” (blogspot.com, May 6)

Tens of thousands of Iraqis have taken to the streets since early February to protest against the lack of water, electricity and other basic services, rising prices, unemployment and endemic corruption, and to demand greater civil and political rights. Major protests were held throughout Iraq on Feb. 25, centering on the nation’s high unemployment, corruption and poor public services.

During the protests, crowds stormed provincial buildings, freed a number of political prisoners and forced local officials to resign. At least 29 people were killed as a result, with the deadliest repression of protests in northern Iraq.

In that northern Kurdistan region of Iraq, demonstrators protested against the two main parties that have dominated local politics for decades and monopolized state resources. From the beginning of the invasion, these two parties were friendly to the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

Protesters carrying a banner with the slogan “Iraqi Rage” held a demonstration on Feb. 25 in Mosul calling for better services and an end to corruption. The successful popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt in early 2011 encouraged Iraqis to defy new restrictions imposed by the puppet government and to come out into the streets.

Since then, there have been scores of protests all over Iraq calling not only for civil and political rights, but also for an end to the U.S. occupation. On March 8, thousands gathered to celebrate International Women’s Day. Almost without exception, these peaceful protests have been met with vicious repression, torture and threats warning demonstrators not to protest in the future.

The AI report found evidence that the U.S.-backed Iraqi police and armed fore-



Protest in Baghdad, Feb. 25.

es “contravened international standards, most notably the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (Basic Principles) and the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials ... and used excessive force, in some cases leading to deaths.”

They also engaged in systematic torture. Dr. Pishtewan Abdullah, an Iraqi Kurdish medical doctor with an Australian passport and a resident of Australia,

was visiting Kurdistan in February when he was arrested and tortured in Erbil. On Feb. 25 he was wearing a T-shirt with “No to corruption, yes to social justice” written on the front and “The demands of people should not be answered by bullets” on the back.

“The [attackers] put me in a car and drove away. There were many Asayish [Special Iraqi police trained by the U.S.] officers, and they started kicking me and beating me. I was taken to a small room. Every five minutes two or three Asayish officers came to the room and beat me. I was kicked and punched for about four hours. There was blood coming from my nose, ears, arms, back, thighs, my right eye. Every five minutes they would have a break, and then two different officers would replace them. ... They were swearing at me, swearing at my wife and kids.” (Amnesty International)

The U.S. government, which claims to be so concerned about civilian deaths in Libya and elsewhere, should be exposed for its repressive role in occupied Iraq. □



GAZA: Symbol of Resistance

A book of articles from WW, edited by Joyce Chediac

The story of how Gazans withstood blockade and bombardment, refusing to give up the right to determine their lives and to choose their government; how Gaza’s courage inspired a movement determined to break the blockade and deliver aid; exposes the forces behind the punishment of Gaza, and how a people’s media is breaking the mainstream media’s information blockade.

Order from [www. Leftbooks.com](http://www.Leftbooks.com)

NATO's crimes from Kabul to Belgrade

Over the course of the last 20 years NATO has been revealed as the top criminal conspiracy of the world. It's the mob boss of all mobsters. NATO, an imperialist military alliance led by the U.S., terrorizes whole continents. From Kabul to Tripoli, NATO is raining death from the skies.

The actual bombings, deaths and destruction are, of course, more of a problem for humanity than the hypocrisy and lies NATO tells. The hypocrisy simply adds insult to injury. Thus NATO not only bombed and killed 11 imams in Libya, but it murdered these religious leaders — who were trying to negotiate an end to the civil war — in the name of “protecting civilians.”

Now that there is no Soviet counterforce to hold their arrogance in check, the leaders of the imperialist powers — and NATO is their weapon of choice — have no shame. They no longer need to even think about a serious military opposition, although that doesn't stop them from squeezing taxes out of the workers here, so the military-industrial complex can charge cost overruns for more doomsday weapons.

Yet despite their overwhelming military might, NATO has won no wars nor stabilized any conquests lately. Their arrogance leads them to underestimate their enemy: the world's people, who resist being recolonized. The imperialist armies have spent 10 years in Afghanistan and sent 150,000 troops there, but they still can't get control of that country. The U.S. invaded Iraq and still has less control there than the ruling class bargained for. And although Libya has only 6 million people, the NATO big shots project it will take months of bombing to achieve their objectives.

On top of all this, the swelled NATO heads may be underestimating another people. After decades as an anti-Soviet alliance, NATO's first actual war was against Yugoslavia. In 1999, NATO celebrated 50 years of its existence with a 78-day bombing run against Serbia, do-

ing much damage to Belgrade, Novi Sad and some industrial areas of the former Yugoslavia and killing thousands of people. The Pentagon still has an enormous military base, Camp Bondsteel, in the Kosovo province the imperialists want to wrench from Serbia.

Do the NATO tops think the people of Serbia have forgotten all this? They have chosen Belgrade, the capital of Serbia — and once of all Yugoslavia — as the site of NATO's June 13-15 Strategic Military Partner Conference. This is the part of NATO aimed at integrating countries that used to be socialist into the military alliance. Now the unemployed youth of what have become capitalist countries can be cannon fodder for imperialist adventures in Africa and Asia or be used to surround Russia.

There are already plans for a protest — in the form of a concert — during the NATO meeting. Opponents of NATO's war against Yugoslavia and the overturn in Serbia are leading a campaign against the conference. It was at open-air concerts in 1999 that Belgrade's people defied the NATO bombers. Now the organizers are promoting a petition that demands canceling the conference and expelling all the “advisers” from NATO countries now running ministries and institutions in Serbia. See <http://goo.gl/WK6bW>.

Workers World offers our solidarity to the people of the former Yugoslavia who are resisting NATO. We hope this is another example where the imperialists have underestimated the people. We want NATO and U.S. troops and bombs out of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, just as we want them out of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Libya. We must stop the superrich from plundering our budget here just so they can better plunder the rest of the world.

Besides our solidarity, we should remember that the next NATO summit will be held in 2012 in the United States. They haven't announced a date or venue yet, so let's keep an eye on it. □

Petition to use War Powers Act to stop the bombing of Libya

The International Action Center has prepared a petition to demand that the U.S. Congress use the War Powers Act to force the administration to stop the Pentagon's participation in NATO's war of aggression against Libya. Below are excerpts from the IAC statement.

On May 19 the war against Libya will reach its 60-day mark. On that date this criminal war will be in explicit violation of the War Powers Act.

The War Powers Act is a U.S. law that grew out of the struggle against the war in Vietnam. It requires a president involved in a military conflict lasting longer than 60 days to come before Congress for authorization to continue the war.

Knowing that this war is immoral, illegal and based on lies, the Obama administration has refused to address the reasons behind initiating yet another war after years of death and destruction in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq.

In the past 57 days of a war that was promoted as a “humanitarian intervention” to enforce a “no-fly zone,” the U.S.

and NATO have conducted more than 2,500 bombing missions.

A May 13 NATO bombing killed 11 Islamic religious leaders and injured 47 other members of a highly publicized, unarmed religious peace delegation of 150 imams and other Islamic leaders. The NATO command has acknowledged the attack occurred.

This was a deliberate, targeted massacre by U.S./NATO aircraft. The religious leaders were gathered to attempt a meeting of peace and reconciliation with the NATO-supported opposition.

With the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression having a continued impact on the peoples of the U.S. and the world, we must stand up and demand the end to the bombings and other destabilization efforts against Libya, and all other forms of hostility against this African country.

Read and sign online petition at iacenter.org/africa/libyawarpowersact to send messages to Congress and the administration and U.N. figures.

NEW YORK

'Nakba' remembered



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Palestinians and supporters from the metropolitan New York City area gathered on May 15 to mark Al Nakba, the date in 1948 when they were expelled from their country, and Israel was created on occupied Palestine. After a rally at the United Nations to assert their rights under international law, the protesters marched to busy Times Square. This was part of internationally coordinated actions asserting the right of the Palestinian people to return to their original towns and villages in Palestine.

— Joyce Chediak

After 63 years of forced exile Palestinians storm Israel's borders Unarmed marchers shot demanding right to return

Continued from page 1

climbed and placed Palestinian flags on the fence. Some began throwing stones at soldiers so far off they could barely be seen.

The soldiers opened fire, and 11 people were killed and about 100 wounded. Participating in the action were the Palestinian ambassador to Lebanon, Abdallah Abdallah, and representatives from Hezbollah, and the Future Movement, which is aligned with it.

Four people were killed and four others critically hurt by Israeli gunfire after hundreds of protesters from a **Syrian-held part of the Golan** breached the fence and entered the part of the Heights annexed by Israel. Syrians and Palestinians broke through the fence from both sides, greeting relatives arbitrarily separated by the border. Israeli troops fired live rounds and tear gas at the protesters.

In **Jordan**, police intercepted and stopped several thousand Palestinians from marching to the border with Israel, injuring at least 25. “The people want to liberate Palestine,” was one of the slogans the young people chanted earlier near the Israeli Embassy in Amman. “We are ready to die for Jerusalem. The right of return is sacred.” (AFP, May 15)

In **Egypt**, a huge crowd gathered in support of Palestine on May 13 in Cairo's Tahrir Square. Many had intentions of traveling to the border crossing with Gaza on May 15, to demand that the blockade of Gaza be broken. The Egyptian government, however, set up checkpoints and closed the bridge and tunnel into the Sinai Peninsula to stop this from happening.

As an alternative, Egyptian and Palestinian protesters gathered for hours at the Egyptian Embassy in Cairo on May 16, waving Palestinian flags and burning an Israeli flag. They demanded the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador and the closing of the embassy. At least 350 pro-Palestinian demonstrators were injured, and over 150 were arrested when Egyptian police

and military violently crushed this protest, firing live ammunition, tear gas grenades and rubber bullets at the crowd.

Spirits remained high, however, with youth grabbing the tear gas canisters and throwing them back at the army. Men and women raised a chant that is now well known in Egypt: “We are not afraid! We will not bow down! We have gotten used to bullets!”

A day of mourning and determination

There are now more than 4.8 million Palestinian refugees officially registered with UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, throughout the Arab world, including Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinian refugees are the longest-lasting and largest refugee population in the world. They live in limbo, a stateless people denied their human rights both internationally and in the countries where they live. Conditions for Palestinians are by far the worst in Lebanon.

May 16 was declared a day of mourning in all 12 Palestinian camps across Lebanon as families of the 11 people killed prepared to bury their dead.

All work stopped in Lebanon's southern Palestinian camps to make way for mourners who gathered in their thousands to bid farewell to Imad Abu Shakra, 18; Abdel Rahman Said Sobhi, 20; and Mohammad Abu Shleeh, 28, three of those killed. Similar funerals were held in Al-Bass and Burj Al-Shamali camps near the southern port city of Tyre.

“In Ain el-Helwi, the bodies of Abu Shakra, Sobhi and Shleeh were held up high by procession members, who also carried banners and chanted slogans reflecting their deep longing for their loved Palestine.” The men had “sacrificed their lives for the right to return,” read one banner. “We will fight, we will die, we will return to Palestine,” read another. (Beirut Daily Star, May 16) □

Africa Liberation Day 2011

Imperialist wars threaten continent

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

On May 25, people all over the world will recognize the 48th anniversary of Africa Day — also known as Africa Liberation Day. On that date in 1963 the Organization of African Unity was formed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with more than 30 member states. In 2002, the OAU was transformed into the African Union, with a commitment to establish stronger institutions aimed at fostering economic development, political unity and full equality for women.

Although 1963 represented a watershed in regard to the liberation struggles of peoples of African descent on the continent and throughout the world, the specter of neocolonialism was very much in evidence. Just three years prior to the founding of the OAU, imperialist intervention in Congo illustrated that the independence movement would be forced to defend itself against post-colonial efforts aimed at continuing political and economic domination.

It would not be until 1994 that the last vestiges of white minority political rule would be eliminated, with the ascendancy of the African National Congress to power in the Republic of South Africa.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European socialist countries two decades ago, Africa has been forced to grapple with its own challenges aimed at genuine national self-determination and independence amid a renewed push by the imperialist states, led by the U.S., to accelerate the rate of exploitation of the continent and its resources.

Over the last two decades the U.S. has escalated its military involvement on the African continent. In 1992, the George H. W. Bush administration sent thousands of marines into Somalia under the guise of providing humanitarian relief. In 1998, the Clinton administration would bomb a pharmaceutical plant at al-Shifa in Sudan, Africa's largest geographic nation-state.

Also in 1998, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright encouraged the Western-backed regimes of Uganda and Rwanda to militarily invade the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo, which had recently overthrown the neocolonial puppet, Mobutu Sese Seko. The result of this adventure would be millions dead in a war that lasted until 2003 and drew in the progressive governments of Namibia, Zimbabwe and Angola in defense of the DRC.

In 1996, the U.S. encouraged and coordinated its Ethiopian client-regime to intervene in Somalia in order to stop the Union of Islamic Courts from taking over that Horn of Africa country and exercising political independence. The resistance

forces reconsolidated under the banner of al-Shabab and are still battling military forces supported by hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars annually.

The formation of the Pentagon's Africa Command (Africom) in 2008 put the continent and its supporters on notice that the imperialists would intensify their quest for further domination of territory, waterways, labor and resources. These efforts were enhanced by the establishment of a U.S. military base in the Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti and war "games" conducted in various regions throughout continent.

An even more dangerous situation began on March 19 when U.S./NATO forces began bombing the North African state of Libya and providing material and political assistance to anti-government rebels who have consistently refused, along with their imperialist backers, to enter into negotiations for the cessation of hostilities.

The war in Libya has spread to the border areas with Tunisia and Egypt as well as the Mediterranean Sea, where refugees die every day from thirst and starvation. Hundreds of thousands of Libyans, along with guest workers, have fled the country — many to Europe, where they meet vicious racial discrimination and exploitation.

Africa and the global class struggle

The U.S./NATO intervention in Libya must be viewed within the context of the popular uprisings that have swept various states in North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf. Catching imperialism off guard, the rebellions and strikes in Tunisia and Egypt led to the departure of longtime Western-backed puppet leaders in Tunis and Cairo. Yet the revolutionary struggles in both Egypt and Tunisia have still not reached fruition. The most principled elements within the democratic and workers' movements call for deeper reforms to bring about the transformation of these neocolonial client states.

Absent the seizure of power by the workers, youth and farmers of Tunisia and Egypt, the existing regimes, even without their longtime dictatorial leaders, are being used by the imperialists against the people and government of neighboring Libya. The Tunisian government has allowed the anti-government rebels in Libya to utilize border areas in their imperialist-backed war against Tripoli, and Egypt has sent special forces into eastern Libya to assist in the U.S./NATO war of aggression.

With the political situation in Tunisia and Egypt still unresolved, it is not surprising that recent demonstrations in Tunisia have called for a "second revolution" and that in Cairo the anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist character of the weekly



Memorial to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in Accra, Ghana

demonstrations has increased. In Egypt, a new coalition of left organizations has been formed to advance the class character of the struggle.

The growing interest in left politics was seen on May Day. "Red flags were waving yesterday as thousands of Egyptians celebrated Labor Day in Cairo's Tahrir Square. Workers from different factories across Egypt, the newly founded Federation of Independent Labor Unions as well as several leftist parties rallied to celebrate their new freedoms. ... Although leftist groups have been a central part of the opposition movement, it is unique that they can rally so openly for their cause. The workers' demands during the May Day demonstration included the raising of the monthly minimum wage, salary increases 1,500 percent higher than what exists at present and the nationalization of major industries inside the country." (Al-Jazeera, May 2)

In South Africa, with an even larger organized working class than Egypt, two recent developments illustrate the central role of trade unions in the struggle for genuine liberation on the continent. Members of the National Union of Mineworkers, in a protracted labor dispute with the Canada-based Eastern Platinum's Crocodile River mining project, have occupied two facilities demanding decent wages and better working conditions.

Canadian television reported that workers "drove through a security gate and proceeded underground to damage electrical and pumping equipment at the Zandfontein and Maroelabult mines, according to the company. Roughly 180 members of the NUM then occupied the mines to protest failed negotiations. ... The Congress of South African Trade Unions, which was called in to negotiate with the workers, has accused mine management of racism, union bashing and unfair treatment of pregnant employees. The revolt follows a first-quarter 2011 loss of \$5.6 million for the company." (CTV.ca, May 12)

In another development, the union federation COSATU, with more than half a million workers, issued a statement May 13 opposing the proposed merger of South Africa's major retail company,

Massmart Holdings, with the U.S.-based Wal-Mart. "Wal-Mart has the reputation of being anti-union and in the process denies workers their rights. Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa gives workers the right to fair labor practices, to form and join a trade union, to participate in the activities and programs of a trade union and to strike."

Socialism and African liberation

These efforts by the workers, revolutionary youth and progressive states in Africa have attracted the hostile attention of U.S. imperialism and its allies. In Zimbabwe the decade-long land redistribution program and the economic indigenization plans to place Africans in control of the major industries within the country has prompted Western destabilization efforts as well as sanctions.

Following its Sept. 1, 1969 revolution, Libya nationalized the oil industry and removed the U.S. military presence. The Libyans also forced Italy, the former colonial power and now one of the imperialist states joining in bombing Libya, to apologize for its earlier occupation and pay reparations. Libya has supported national liberation movements throughout the world, including those operating inside the U.S. and Europe.

Kwame Nkrumah, the founder of the modern state of Ghana and a leading advocate in the struggle for liberation and socialism in Africa during the 1950s and 1960s, pointed out when he was president of this West African state, "We have embarked on the socialist path to progress. We want to see full employment, good housing and equal opportunity for education and cultural advancement for all people up to the highest level possible." (Africa Must Unite, 1963)

Moreover, Nkrumah stressed that to achieve genuine liberation and socialism the workers, youth and farmers must be organized into a revolutionary party. Nkrumah identified the organized working class as the foundation for the building of a revolutionary party committed to building socialism and African unity.

According to Nkrumah, "The growth of this new African trade unionism is linked up with the future of Africa. Such a dynamic force, allied to political action, is the surest means to routing out of our continent the last remnants of colonialism and exploitation, since it will stimulate the effectiveness of the nationalist movements." (Africa Must Unite)

The Pan-African revolutionary theoretician and practitioner goes on to point out, "Just as political independence could not have been attained without the leadership of a strong, disciplined party, so Ghana's economic independence and the objective of socialism cannot be achieved without decisive party leadership. I am convinced that the Convention People's Party, based as it is on the support of the overwhelming majority of the people, is best able to carry through our economic plans and build a socialist state. ... It is entirely Ghanaian in content and African in outlook, though imbued with Marxist socialist philosophy." (Africa Must Unite)

Consequently, the struggle against neocolonialism and imperialism will be won through the development and strengthening of a revolutionary party based on socialism and rooted in the working class. This belief has been tested in all revolutionary movements in the modern period, from China to Cuba, and will also hold true for all working people throughout the world. □



WW PHOTO/MO FOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Subscribe To Workers World /Subscribete A Mundo Obrero

☐ \$4 for 4 weeks/ por 4 semanas de prueba ☐ \$25 for one year/ por un año

Mundo Obrero/Workers World Newspaper 55 W. 17th St. #5C, NY, NY 10011

212.627.2994 workers.org mundoobrero.org

PRIMERO DE MAYO EN COLOMBIA

La represión no detiene masiva marcha

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Mientras el Tratado de Libre Comercio entre Estados Unidos y Colombia está siendo empujado por la administración del presidente Barack Obama, el gobierno colombiano continúa violando los derechos humanos de sindicalistas y activistas sociales. Sin embargo, esta vez no es por el presidente paramilitar Álvaro Uribe, sino por el nuevo presidente “democrático” Juan Manuel Santos, ex ministro de defensa de Uribe.

El Primero de Mayo, cientos de miles de personas marcharon en Colombia en honor de los mártires de Chicago que se manifestaron en 1886 por los derechos de los trabajadores: Ellos inspiraron a generaciones de trabajadores/as por todo el mundo a defender la bandera de la lucha internacional de la clase obrera y la solidaridad. Los/as colombianos/as también marcharon en oposición al presidente Santos. Su mensaje era urgente: No al Plan Nacional de Desarrollo y a la firma del TLC con EE.UU.

Santos está impulsando leyes para reformar la educación y la salud dirigidas a

la privatización de estos esenciales servicios, lo que hará peligrar aún más el acceso a la educación y la salud para la gran mayoría de los/as colombianos/as. Ya las corporaciones transnacionales de EE.UU. mantienen bajo su control gran parte de las riquezas naturales, riquezas que pertenecen al pueblo colombiano. Un TLC destruirá completamente la economía tal como lo hizo en México.

Marchas masivas se realizaron en muchas ciudades. La mayor manifestación fue en Bogotá, donde más de 200.000 personas convergieron pacíficamente en la central Plaza Bolívar. La marcha fue denominada “Primero de Mayo Unitario”, para resaltar la unidad entre los diversos grupos sociales, estudiantiles, juveniles y organizaciones sindicales.

Las fuerzas del gobierno, la Policía Nacional y el ESMAD (policía antimotines) atacaron furiosamente a los/as manifestantes con una gran cantidad de gases lacrimógenos, granadas de choque y ladrillos. Activistas señalaron que agentes del Estado se habían infiltrado en la manifestación para provocar el ataque. La Coordinadora de Organizaciones y Movimientos Socia-

les de Colombia emitió una declaración pública al final del día diciendo que 65 personas fueron detenidas y 17 heridas en Bogotá. (www.polodemocratico.net)

Esta violencia se repitió en las ciudades colombianas de Cali, Medellín y Facatativá donde incluso fueron atacados jóvenes y personas con discapacidades físicas.

Solidaridad internacional mantiene vivos al movimiento obrero y activistas sociales

Colombia sufre el mayor número de asesinatos de sindicalistas al año. Si no fuera por la atención y la solidaridad del movimiento sindical y las fuerzas progresistas a nivel internacional, el número sería aún mayor.

Esta ha sido la situación durante muchos años. Sin embargo, ahora es aún más importante el mostrar solidaridad con nuestras hermanas y hermanos en Colombia, ya que la imagen pública de la nueva administración colombiana se pinta como “justa” y “amigable” con el fin de obtener la aprobación del TLC.

Sin embargo, el hecho brutal es que las mismas fuerzas que operaban bajo Uribe son las que están llevando a cabo la repre-

sión. Simplemente están escogiendo a las víctimas de manera más selectiva. El Primero de Mayo por ejemplo, dirigentes de SINALTRAINAL, el sindicato de trabajadores de Coca-Cola, fueron golpeados y arrestados. El padre de un joven asesinado en mayo de 2005 fue detenido por defender a los/as jóvenes en la marcha, y la policía disparó una granada de gas lacrimógeno a un representante de la oposición del gobierno de Bogotá.

Santos está decidido a terminar con “el conflicto”, la lucha que por décadas tiene la insurgencia armada, no a través de una solución política negociada, sino por la vía militar. En el proceso, está criminalizando toda oposición a sus políticas neoliberales, desde la oposición electoral y las luchas obreras hasta los/as estudiantes que protestan la privatización de la educación. Días antes de la marcha del Primero de Mayo, los medios de comunicación anunciaron que “agentes del terrorismo” estarían participando en las marchas. Con este enfoque, Santos está incrementando la represión y la estigmatización de la protesta social, haciendo extremadamente difícil al pueblo el expresar su oposición. □

LIBERTAD PARA LOS CINCO CUBANOS



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, René González Sehwerert, Fernando González Llort y Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez.

El arte de Antonio Guerrero, San Diego, el 6 de mayo.



MO FOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN

Periodistas conspiran contra los Cinco Cubanos

Por Cheryl LaBash

La Asistente Fiscal de EE.UU. en Miami Carolyn Heck Miller, una vez más intentó bloquear la justicia en el caso de los Cinco Cubanos el 25 de abril al desestimar la propuesta de pedir la revisión de la condena a cadena perpetua de Gerardo Hernández. Heck Miller también desestimó una apelación similar de hábeas sometida para Antonio Guerrero.

La lucha para liberar a los Cinco continúa tanto en los tribunales como en todos los ámbitos desde su detención el 12 de septiembre de 1998. Cada paso revela nuevos hechos para ampliar el apoyo a estos cinco hombres heroicos que son abusados como sustitutos de la revolución socialista que defendieron y que el imperialismo de EE.UU. no ha podido destruir.

Los Cinco monitoreaban las actividades de los paramilitares anti-cubanos en la Florida que estaban involucrados en atentados con bombas y otros ataques violentos que han cercenado más de 3.000 vidas humanas desde 1959, principalmente en Cuba, pero también en los EE.UU. y otros países. En la década de 1990 los hoteles turísticos de Cuba se convirtieron en blancos de un intento por bloquear el

desarrollo económico de Cuba tras el colapso de sus principales socios comerciales socialistas de Europa del Este, como fue la Unión Soviética.

Una de las varias cuestiones presentadas en la acción legal presente es que “el gobierno de EE.UU. había estado pagando por lo menos a 10 periodistas de Miami — considerados como ‘entre los más populares en el sur de la Florida’ — para avanzar una campaña de propaganda contra Cuba”. (<http://tinyurl.com/3k8pq62>) De acuerdo a los documentos que salieron a la luz pública a través de las peticiones por la Ley de Libertad de Información pedidos por el Comité Nacional por la Libertad para los Cinco Héroes y la Asociación para la Justicia Civil de Washington, DC, estos “periodistas ampliamente leídos en Miami estaban recibiendo un sueldo del gobierno en los meses previos y durante el juicio de los acusados, y los artículos que publicaron aseveraban la culpabilidad de los acusados”.

En agosto de 2005, un panel de tres jueces de la Onceava Corte del Circuito de Apelaciones unánimemente anuló las

convicciones de los Cinco Cubanos, citando que había una publicidad extensa antes y durante el juicio que contribuyó a formar una “tormenta perfecta” contra los acusados en Miami. Aunque esa decisión más tarde fue revocada por la corte en sesión completa, reconoció el efecto de estos “periodistas” por todo un año antes de que el Miami Herald hiciera conocer que eran propagandistas pagados por el gobierno estadounidense.

Como resultado de esa tormenta, Hernández fue sentenciado a dos cadenas perpetuas más 15 años adicionales, y está actualmente encarcelado en Victorville, en el estado de California. Antonio Guerrero, René González, Fernando González y Ramón Labañino están también encarcelados injustamente en prisiones estadounidenses con sentencias muy largas.

El prejuicio de Heck Miller

Luis Posada Carriles, quien se auto describe como el cerebro de las campañas de terror contra Cuba, estuvo involucrado en los bombardeos de hoteles en La Habana y en el primer bombardeo en el aire de un avión comercial. En el año 2000 fue detenido poseyendo explosivos C-4 y declarado culpable de intentar asesinar al entonces presidente cubano Fidel Castro

y a muchas otras personas inocentes en una universidad de Panamá.

Durante un reciente juicio por perjurio contra Posada en El Paso, Texas, la Fiscal del Departamento de Seguridad de la Patria, Gina Garrett-Jackson testificó que ella le pidió a Heck Miller considerar cargos criminales contra él. Según el Diario de El Paso escrito por el abogado José Pertierra, Heck Miller no estaba interesada en hacer eso. (counterpunch.org, 21 de enero)

Pertierra escribió que “Heck Miller es la fiscal de Miami que insistió en llevar el caso de los Cinco a juicio, rehusó mudar el caso fuera de Miami, y fue instrumental en asegurar que fueran impuestas sentencias injustamente prolongadas.

“Increíble pero cierto, como nos hemos enterado hoy ella es también la fiscal en Miami que decidió no insistir en cargos criminales contra Luis Posada Carriles en el 2005: el hombre que dirigió la campaña terrorista contra Cuba que los Cinco intentaron impedir para salvar vidas”.

Son los esfuerzos grandes y pequeños de organizar, que cuentan la historia de la lucha para construir el movimiento para liberar a los Cinco Cubanos lo que finalmente los devolverán a su casa y a sus seres queridos en Cuba. Como dicen los/as cubanos/as: “Volverán”. □