

# I AM TRAYVON MARTIN

## Potential for mass movement grows

By Monica Moorehead

March 26 — Exactly one month ago on Feb. 26, Trayvon Martin was just another unknown African American whose young life was tragically and brutally cut short. What a difference a month makes. Today Trayvon Martin's name has become a universal rallying cry for justice in every nook and cranny of the unjust U.S.

His death has come to symbolize every young person of color's nightmare as they rightfully fear becoming a victim of senseless violence — be it at the hand of a police officer, a prison guard or a racist vigilante — because of how they look and dress. Today millions of people, the vast majority of them Black, but also of every nationality, are participating in a "National Hoodie Day." That means they are rallying wearing a hoodie as did Martin the day he was murdered.

Martin was stalked by vigilante George Zimmerman as he was returning home from picking up a can of iced tea and a bag of Skittles for his younger brother in a gated community in Sanford, Fla., where he was visiting his father. On 911 tapes, Zimmerman said that Martin looked "suspicious" because he was wearing a hoodie. The police dispatcher told Zimmerman not to pursue Martin, but he did so anyway. Zimmerman later revised this to

*Continued on page 6*

## Million Hoodie marches demand justice

By Betsey Piette

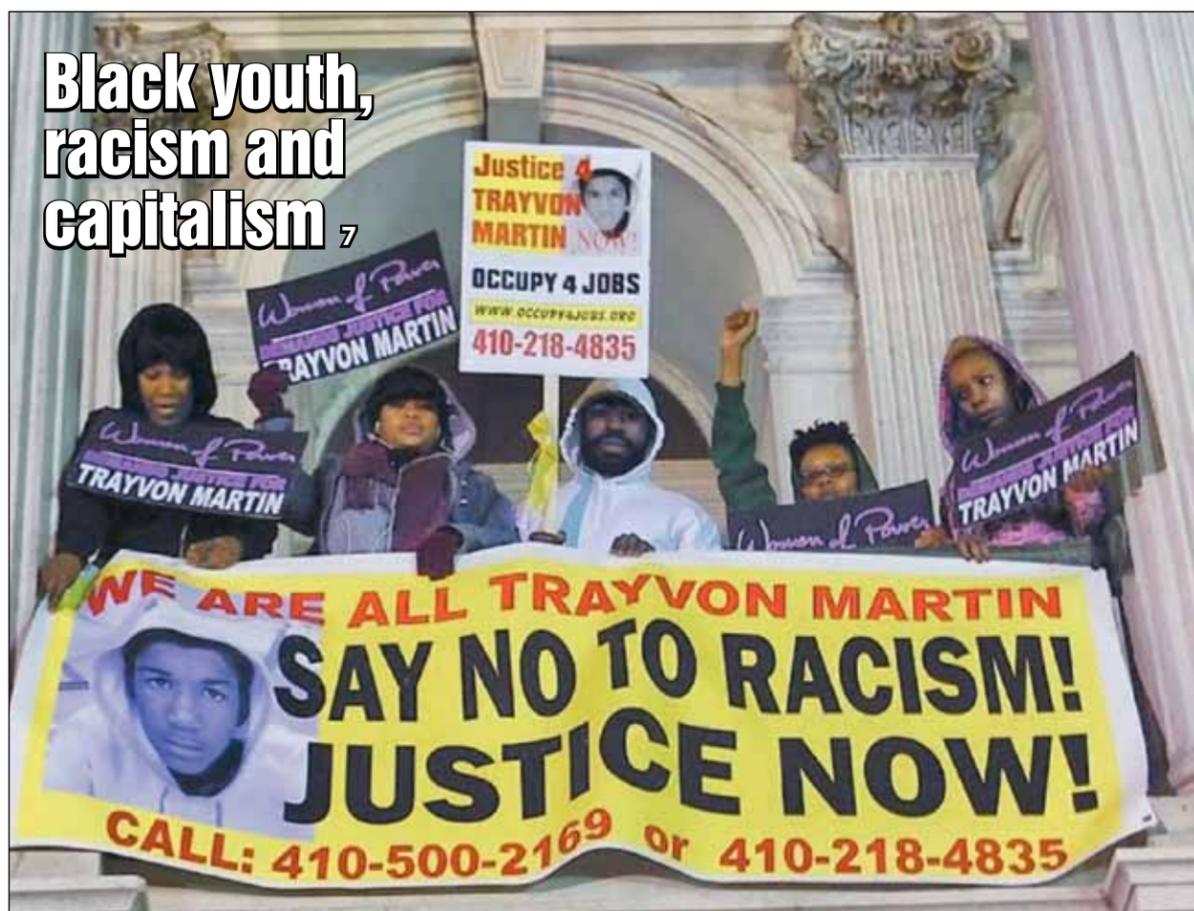
March 26 — The Million Hoodie marches calling for justice for Trayvon Martin and an end to institutionalized racism are spreading like wildfire, with protests from coast to coast.

Fueled by shared outrage that Martin's shooter, George Zimmerman, has not been arrested a month after stalking and killing the African-American teenager vigilante-style in Florida, protesters are turning out in

record numbers in what some are characterizing as a new Civil Rights movement.

Protests took place today across the U.S. to mark the one-month anniversary of Martin's murder in Sanford, Fla., and to demand Zimmerman's arrest. From New York to Los Angeles, protesters have filled the streets carrying signs with Martin's photo. Protesters wore hooded sweatshirts like the one worn by Martin when he was killed.

*Continued on page 8*



Black youth, racism and capitalism 7

WW PHOTOS: SHARON BLACK, ABOVE; JOE PIETTE, BELOW



Protests in solidarity with Trayvon Martin include Philadelphia, March 23 and Baltimore, March 26. Go to pages 6-8.

### BANNED BOOKS

Smuggled to Arizona 2

### WOMEN MAKE HISTORY

Hana Shalabi

Domitila Chúnara 9

### EMPTY HOUSES Editorial 10

QUEBEC Student strike 4

SYRIA Imperialist designs 10

MALI Military coup 11

EUROPE Stop austerity 11

### Subscribe to Workers World

4 weeks trial \$4 1 year subscription \$30

Sign me up for the WWP Supporter Program.

For more information: workers.org/supporters/

212.627.2994 www.workers.org

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

# 'Librotraficantes' smuggle banned books into Arizona

By Gloria Rubac  
On the road from Houston to Tucson, Ariz.

"Librotraficantes" literally means book traffickers, a word created in response to the racist state of Arizona banning Mexican American Studies.

"When Arizona tried to erase our history, we decided to make some more," explained Tony Diaz, founder of Nuestra Palabra, Latino Writers Having Our Say, which organized the Librotraficante Caravan from Houston to Tucson, Ariz. during the 2012 spring break. More than

1,000 "wet books" were smuggled across the Arizona border and set up for underground libraries in four cities.

"This is only the beginning," said Diaz, aka El Librotraficante. "Arizona legislators need to know the whole world is watching. This is just the first chapter in a future book about this civil rights movement that some regime may want to ban someday, just as the book 'Chicano!' about the Mexican-American Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, is now prohibited."

The caravan of activists, authors, teachers, students and professors, along with a film crew and imbedded journalist Belinda Acosta, left Houston on Monday, March 12, after hosting a press conference at Casa Ramirez Folk Art Gallery. A few hours later they set up book stands filled with banned books and held another press conference, which featured banned authors Lorna Dee Cervantes and Carmen Tafolla, in front of the Alamo in downtown San Antonio.

At the press conference, Lee College Honors Coordinator John Britt gifted Diaz with a straw hat once owned by Cesar Chavez. Chavez gifted it to a Lee College dean in 1962 during a United Farmworkers Union march. Britt said he was giving "this little piece of Texas history to Diaz because he walks in the spirit of Chavez."

This was just the first of many emotional and love-filled occurrences on the road to Tucson.

More than 500 people filled the halls in El Paso, Texas, and Albuquerque, N.M., for Banned Book Bashes. Writers read their own works or some of the banned works to the standing-room-only crowds.

In the small but historic town of Mesilla, N.M., the Librotraficantes were hosted for breakfast by writer Denise Chavez. Later the caravan was invited into the beautiful adobe home of the "godfather" of Chicano/a literature, Rudolfo Anaya, whose book, "Bless Me, Ultima," is banned in Arizona. Anaya gave his blessing and then served a lavish lunch to the caravan members and thanked them for bringing banned books into the public eye.

What began only two months ago as a Twitter post quickly grew into a movement to stop the racist policies in Arizona that will deny students their history, culture and literature.

## Ban spurs struggle

Arizona has outraged not only Chicano/a students in the Mexican American Studies program in Tucson, but students and adults from coast to coast in the U.S. On



Librotraficantes with Tucson students.

WW PHOTO

Jan. 10, Arizona State Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal — long opposed to ethnic studies — decreed the MAS program a violation of Arizona House Bill 2281 and suspended it indefinitely.

Racist Arizona legislators were likely trying to prevent Latinos/as from becoming empowered with knowledge when they passed HB 2281. The law prohibits courses which, authorities deem, "promote the overthrow of the United States government," "promote resentment toward a race or class of people," "are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group," or "advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals."

The Tucson Unified School District found only one course that dangerous: Mexican American Studies. All Mexican American Studies classes were cancelled in January. The books taught in that course were ordered removed from classes, creating a de facto ban.

"Removing books by our most beloved authors in front of students during class time was a cultural offense on the same level as denying Rosa Parks a seat at the front of the bus," Diaz explained. "This was so striking, that we had to respond. The Librotraficante Caravan to smuggle books back into Arizona was born. In the process, we have sparked a nationwide movement."

Arizona legislators became expert at making humans illegal in 2010 with SB 1070, which outraged many and generated huge May Day demonstrations around the country. "But they have gone too far," Diaz continued, "by making our books — our thoughts — our culture — our history — illegal."

The majority of the books that are banned are by Chicano/a authors, but also included are Howard Zinn, Mumia Abu-Jamal and Shakespeare.

Right now in Tucson, high school students and their teachers have filed a lawsuit saying that SB 2281 is unconstitutional. A hearing was held on March 13, but no ruling is expected for 30 days. The court said that the 11 teachers who had filed the lawsuit had no standing to sue, so the students are on their own in this historic legal challenge.

Meanwhile, the Librotraficantes are beginning Phase 2 of their goals: setting up the underground libraries in Houston, San Antonio, Albuquerque and Tucson; setting up a Librotraficante speakers bureau; organizing campaigns for school boards in each of the six cities that were visited; planning a Librotraficante Book Festival; raising money for a First Amendment Fund to help attorneys; and inspiring Ph.D.s in Librotraficante Studies. □

## WORKERS WORLD this week...

### ★ In the U.S.

Potential for mass movement grows .....	1
Million Hoodie marches demand justice .....	1
'Librotraficantes' smuggle banned books into Arizona.....	2
Occupy the Justice Department, April 24.....	3
Thousands march against war, bigotry.....	3
Activists demand funding for clean needles .....	3
An Occupier's open letter to Chris Hedges .....	4
OWS march vs. police brutality .....	4
Solidarity with Verizon workers .....	5
Honduran activist tours Wisconsin.....	5
On the picket line .....	5
Racism robs Black youth of their dreams .....	7
Women heroes honored.....	9

### ★ Around the world

Huge march against tuition hikes in Quebec .....	4
Free Hana Shalabi .....	9
Bolivian activist Domitila Chingara, ¡presente!.....	9
Thousands march in India .....	10
Imperialists use U.N. against Syrian government .....	10
U.S.-NATO policies lead to coup in Mali.....	11
Portugal general strike confronts austerity.....	11

### ★ Editorials

19 million empty homes.....	10
-----------------------------	----

### ★ Noticias En Español

Un momento crítico en China .....	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. 54, No. 13 • April 5, 2012  
Closing date: March 27, 2012  
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 Martinez,  
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: \$30; 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 & old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed, undocumented & 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.  
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  
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  
919.322.9970  
durham@workers.org

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

**Los Angeles**  
1905 Rodeo Rd.  
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**  
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

# Occupy the Justice Department, April 24

By Jamila K. Wilson  
Philadelphia

In early February a story appeared that got minimal coverage from local news about a young Black man, Ramarley Graham, 18, in Queens, N.Y. He was chased into his home by New York Police Department cops and shot dead at close range for alleged possession of marijuana. Then came the news about Trayvon Martin, killed by George Zimmerman on Feb. 26.

Four days later, March 1, news of brothers Justin Sipp, 20, and Earl Sipp III, 23, surfaced. They were shot in New Orleans. Justin was killed in a routine traffic stop that turned into a deadly shootout that left two police officers wounded. Earl was shot in the leg and released as soon as his wound was treated. The family has requested an investigation.

New Orleans is no stranger to police misconduct and brutality. Five police officers were found guilty of killing two unarmed Black men, James Brissette, 17, and Ronald Madison, 40, a few days after Hurricane Katrina.

As public outcry began to grow around the Martin case, another unarmed Black man, Dane Scott Jr., 18, was shot from

behind and killed after a highway chase with police on March 14 in Del City, Okla. An investigation into the shooting death of this teen has been requested by State Rep. Mike Shelton.

As millions signed the change.org petition demanding the arrest of Zimmerman, and hundreds of thousands around the country participated in protests and candlelight vigils demanding justice for Martin, a young woman was shot by an off-duty police officer in Chicago on March 21. Reikia Boyd, 22, an innocent bystander, was shot in the head while walking alongside a man who police alleged had a gun. The man was charged with a misdemeanor for aggravated assault. Boyd died on March 22. Her family is demanding an investigation.

These attacks by the state and its self-appointed vigilantes become more credulous when juxtaposed with the 30-plus years of torturous and inhumane conditions in which political prisoners like Russell Maroon Shoats, Leonard Peltier, Eddie Marshall Conway and Mumia Abu-Jamal are forced to exist — just to name a few living in the bowels of the criminal justice system.

“The Mumia struggle is not an isolated

incident, but another incident in how the state seeks to remove revolutionary forces out of our community,” said Philadelphia activist Natasha Danielle.

## End unjust judicial & prison system

The demand for freedom for all political prisoners has been issued to the U.S. Department of Justice. Thousands will meet in Washington, D.C., on April 24, Mumia’s 58th birthday, to demand justice for political prisoners, youth and countless others who have been victimized by mass incarcerations and economically starved by the new Jim Crow caste system.

Immediately after the Dec. 9 National Constitution Center event here, where more than 1,100 people came out to support Mumia Abu-Jamal and other political prisoners, a call for action was issued to “Occupy the Justice Department!” A coalition including the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Educators for Mumia, the Free Mumia Coalition, the International Action Center and Millions for Mumia began planning to get people to D.C. on April 24.

Organizations like Occupy for Prisoners, Decarcerate PA, Occupy Philly, Occupy Wall Street, Occupy NOW DC and

others have joined with the coalition to converge on the Justice Department to demand the end of mass incarcerations, solitary confinement, torture and the death penalty. Their demands include hands off immigrants, the release of all political prisoners, and jobs, education and health care, not jails.

The demonstration will be a joyous event, celebrating the victory the people won in getting Mumia Abu-Jamal off death row. A civil disobedience action will also take place, stressing the immediacy of the need to right the wrongs of this unjust judicial system.

To obtain more information about the action and to sign the pledge to be present at the Justice Department on April 24, visit [occupythejusticedepartment.com](http://occupythejusticedepartment.com). Download the flier and encourage community members and those affected most by police brutality to be present.

In the D.C./Baltimore area a special pre-event teach-in and screening of “Justice on Trial” will take place April 11 at 8:30 p.m. at Busboy and Poets in Washington at 14th and K Streets. For more information on how to get involved and for transportation on April 24, call 215-600-6626. □

# Thousands march against war, bigotry

By Steve Gillis  
Boston

The ranks of the Veterans for Peace—Smedley D. Butler Brigade’s “Saint Patrick’s Day Peace Parade” swelled this year to over 2,000 marchers. They took to the streets of South Boston in defiance of “Southie’s” political misleaders and the U.S. Supreme Court’s history of racist and legally sanctioned, anti-lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer discrimination.

Following the official St. Patrick’s Day parade on March 18, which was filled with dozens of openly pro-war military contingents, the Vets for Peace and their LBGTQ, Occupy Boston, labor, religious and community allies were cheered by tens of thousands of revelers along the official parade route, many of whom joined in, danced in the streets, and gave fists in the air to the Peace Parade’s call to bring all troops home now, turn the war budget into a jobs budget for all, and end the event’s official policy of bigotry and exclusion.

In 1992, the Irish American Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Group of Boston formed a contingent in the official parade, but were met with bigoted epithets and jeers, snowballs and beer bottles. A lawsuit by the Allied War Veterans Council claimed the right of “private” parade sponsors to discriminate against anybody, which the Supreme Court infamously upheld in 1995.

For a second year, Vets for Peace, also officially banned for years by the pro-war sponsors, applied and fought for a separate permit for the same day and same streets, won the right in local courts, and invited all LBGTQ groups, anti-war organizations and unions to take back the streets of South Boston with them in a “Peace Parade.”

U.S. Marines Major General Smedley D. Butler led military actions in many countries during World War I and famously declared in the title of his 1935 book and speech, “War Is A Racket.” Butler would have been proud of Pat Scanlon, a Vietnam War veteran, and South Boston resident and Korean War vet Tony Flaherty, coordinators of the Greater Boston chapter of Veterans For Peace.

With the drums of war beating loudly for new aggression against Syria and Iran



Young activists march in South Boston.

WW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

and hundreds of sons and daughters of South Boston currently deployed, injured and killed in U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, the Smedley Butler Brigade courageously led the way onto West Broadway Street with banners proclaiming, “No War On Iran!” and “Veterans for Peace, Equality, Jobs, Social & Economic Justice.”

MassEquality, Join the Impact Now, the Pride Committee, Dignity Boston and the Stonewall Warriors lit up Southie’s streets with hundreds of rainbow banners

and chants of “Keep the Gae in Gaelic!” and “We’re here! We’re queer! We’re fabulous! Come march with us!” LBGTQ groups also fielded a float with 30-foot banners demanding “Free Bradley Manning” — a heroic gay and trans Army private jailed, tortured and being tried for treason by the U.S. government for exposing hundreds of thousands of pages of U.S. war crimes secrets to Wikileaks.

Hundreds of Occupy Boston activists “mic checked” and brought their anti-corporate energy to the peoples’ parade, turn-

ing the bankers’ and war makers’ traditionally off-limits turf into a neighborhood occupied by young and old speaking truth and justice to power. The Leftist Marching Band filled the air with sounds of historic civil rights and anti-war tunes. Mass Peace Action, an umbrella group for progressive churches, had several large contingents.

The labor contingent’s sound truck played 13 versions of Florence Reese’s union anthem, “Which Side Are You On?” UNITE-HERE chief shop steward Ed Childs and School Bus Drivers’ steward Bob Traynham spoke to the crowds from the truck’s platform about the need of all workers to unite against bigotry to win union jobs for all and to stop the massive social service cutbacks, which are a direct result of the trillion dollar war budget. Members from the Service Employees, United Auto Workers, teachers, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, IWW and other locals quadrupled the size of last year’s labor contingent.

The writer is vice president of United Steel Workers Local 8751 (Boston school bus drivers’ union).

# Activists demand funding for clean needles

By Joe Piette  
Philadelphia

Community activists marched from Love Park to U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey’s office in Philadelphia on March 21, chanting “Clean needles save lives! Lift the ban now!”

ACT-UP Philadelphia (AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power) organized the demonstration as part of a National Day of Syringe Exchange Action to demand once again that the ban on federal funding for syringe exchange programs be lifted. The ban was originally adopted in 1989 and was finally lifted in 2009. Congress reinstated the ban as part of a spending bill in December to fund the federal government through fiscal year 2012.

A 2010 HIV/AIDS report by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health stated “a 70 percent decrease in the reported number of new HIV infections among intravenous drug users [is] attributed to



March 21 protest in Philadelphia.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

the impact of syringe exchanges.” Clean needles also prevent the spread of hepatitis C infections.

According to an ACT-UP press statement: “Safely exchanging dirty needles for clean ones doesn’t encourage people to do more drugs. It does encourage them to take care of themselves, stay uninfected and stop using someday. A 1999 Johns

Hopkins study found that IV drug users that access needle exchange services are three times more likely to seek detox and treatment services than users that do not have access to such programs.”

Nadine Bloch, national organizer of the We Can End AIDS Mobilization, said, “Much like the recent fight over contra-

Continued on page 10

## STUDENT STRIKE IN CANADA

# Huge march against tuition hikes in Quebec

By G. Dunkel

On March 22, between 200,000 and 300,000 students and their supporters — mainly union members and faculty — marched against the Quebec government's proposal to raise tuition by \$325 a year for the next five years. This would amount to a 75 percent increase over the current tuition, which averages \$2,519 a year.

The government has refused to budge on its hike. The minister of finances, Raymond Bachand, declined an offer of mediation by the head of the Université du Québec à Rimouski, saying the government had made its decision more than a year ago and there was nothing to negotiate.

The minister of education, Line Beauchamp, said the hundreds of thousands of students boycotting their classes since February were "perturbing" their lives and called for them to go back to classes. (Radio Canada, March 23) Bachand and Beauchamp are the two ministers of Premier Jean Charest's government who directly deal with this struggle.

The size of the demonstration was limited by the lack of enough buses in Quebec, which is the largest province in Canada, covering a huge area of the country's eastern region. Still, between 3 percent and 4 percent of the 8 million people in Quebec marched. Members of both the Haitian and North African communities



Students march in Montreal against tuition hikes.

in Quebec took part.

The day after the march, the head of the Federation of University Students (FEUQ), Martine Desjardins, and the head of the Federation of High School Students (FECQ), Léo Bureau-Blouin, called a press conference to announce that besides demonstrations already called for the last week of March, they intended to "intensify the struggle."

According to the head of the FECQ: "We must move the mobilization beyond the island of Montreal into Quebec's regions to put strong pressure on the ruling party's deputies. Some of them look on our protests on television as if they were

happening overseas."

The head of the FEUQ asked: "Is this government of Charest so used up that it has started denying reality? Quebec universities spend \$5.5 billion a year. They should manage their expenses more carefully." She doesn't feel that the government "should pick the pockets" of students and their families. (Radio Canada, March 23)

Joël Pedneault, vice-president of external affairs for the Students' Society of McGill University in Montreal, was one of the organizers of the march. McGill is a well-regarded English language university. Pedneault told the Canadian

Broadcasting Corporation on March 24, "Ideally, we are striving for tuition fee reductions and, possibly, free education; that has historically been the demand of the Quebec student movement."

He went on to say, "If the government does not agree to speak with us, then the strike will continue, and after six, seven or eight weeks of student protesting, the universities have to start making arrangements for prolonging the semester, and it becomes a very costly decision."

Even though the cost of going to university in Quebec after the increases go into effect will still be the lowest in Canada, the students are forming a solid block, adopting red as their color and demanding negotiations.

If the boycott continues for weeks, the tourism industry, which depends on student labor for the summer season, is going to be short of the temporary workers on which it relies.

Quebec, the largest French-speaking province in Canada, moved its economy from relying on the extraction of raw materials to a knowledge-based economy, with strengths in information science, biotechnology and communications, by building a highly skilled, well-educated work force.

Now it wants to shift the cost of this education and training onto the workers who receive it. □

## 'You don't speak for me!'

# An Occupier's open letter to Chris Hedges

Chris Hedges, a writer for *The Nation* and former *New York Times* reporter, spoke at the Left Forum's closing plenary on March 18 in New York City.

As someone who was among the thousands of youth on Sept. 17 when the occupation of Zuccotti Park began; as someone who attended some of the early General Assemblies prior to that historic day; as someone who was arrested as part of the OWS Martin Luther King Day actions; as someone who is currently involved in the continuing occupation of Union Square in preparation for the May 1st General Strike, I must say loudly and clearly that you, Chris Hedges, do not speak for me.

The speech you gave at the Left Forum this year, in which you presented yourself as someone with authority and wisdom

needed by OWS, said things that are the opposite of how I and many other OWSers feel.

First of all, the police brutality rained down on OWS by police departments around the country, coordinated by the Department of Homeland Security, is not the fault of the Black Bloc anarchists or any other elements inside OWS. Before a single window was broken or trash can turned over, the NYPD was brutalizing OWS activists. The blood of OWS activists has been spilled by the NYPD without pause or remorse since the beginning of these demonstrations.

By engaging in particular tactics of resistance, correct or incorrect, the Black Bloc is not responsible for the NYPD's behavior. The NYPD has killed Ramarley Graham, Sean Bell and countless other Af-

rican Americans without any provocation. They need no excuse for their viciousness. Don't blame the victims.

In Oakland, Calif., and all across the U.S., many OWS activists are facing serious criminal charges. Why would you divide the movement by trying to label one section as "violent" and "dangerous"? Why would you aid the state in isolating some sections? Aren't the Wall Street bankers the real criminals?

Secondly, the remarks you made about the events of 1989-1991 in Eastern Europe were way off.

When the USSR collapsed and the socialist governments of Eastern Europe were overthrown, this was a huge victory for the 1% against the 99%.

Things like the right to health care, education and employment were abolished. Life expectancy in the Eastern European countries went down by big numbers. Right now, the women of Eastern Europe, who once had paid maternity leave, guaranteed employment, and birth control and abortion on demand, are sex trafficked at higher rates than ever.

The events you described in your speech as being so glorious were simply the 1% taking control of Eastern Europe for themselves. Things for the working class have gotten worse since Wall Street recolonized a big chunk of the globe, with your confessed assistance.

I don't want to model our movement on the events that led to economic catastrophe and mass suffering in Eastern Europe. Rather, the political movements I look to as inspiration for the OWS are the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Chinese Revolution of 1949, the Cuban Revolution of 1959 and other socialist revolutions where the 99% took power away from the 1%.

In addition, I think much can be

learned from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, where young people like us fought to prevent capitalist restoration.

Likewise, the anti-war movement, the Black Liberation movement, the Unemployed Councils and sit-down strike waves of the 1930s have real lessons for OWS on how to fight and win against the 1% here in the U.S.

Many within these movements, just like many of us in OWS, thought of capitalism and U.S. imperialism as the true enemy of humanity. They saw their movements, as we see OWS, as a place to fight to overthrow the system and create a society where the 99% rule.

A new chant has been catching on at OWS rallies in New York. It was on our lips in Union Square on March 21 when they tried to evict us. We also chanted it when we took back Zuccotti with crowds of Left Forum activists.

We chanted, "Just like Ho Chi Minh! Occupy is gonna win!"

When the Vietnamese people kicked the Wall Street bankers out of their country, it was a great victory for all humanity. It took a great deal of militancy and relentless years of heroic sacrifice on the part of the Vietnamese people.

I have no doubt that it will take a similarly long and relentless struggle to bring down the 1% in the U.S. But I'm confident that just as the Soviet people drove the Nazis out of Eastern Europe, the Chinese Red Army drove Japanese imperialism out of their country, and the people of Cuba still stand strong, that just like Ho Chi Minh, we too will win and defeat the 1%!

— Caleb T. Maupin  
OWS activist and Workers World Party youth organizer

## OWS march vs. police brutality

Hundreds marched on March 24 from Zuccotti Park throughout New York City to Union Square, where a new occupation was set up after a police attack and arrests a week earlier. Protesters linked police brutality against members of Occupy Wall Street to the murder of Trayvon Martin and the refusal of the cops to arrest his killer.

— Report & photo by Brenda Ryan



## On the Picket Line

By Sue Davis

### D.C. grocery workers may strike

Negotiations for a new contract for 25,000 grocery workers employed in 126 Giant and Safeway stores in Maryland, northern Virginia and the District of Columbia are going down to the wire, with the current contract set to expire at midnight on March 31. While exact terms cannot be discussed publicly, Food and Commercial Workers Local 400 has let it be known that the corporations are demanding stiff cutbacks and givebacks, though both are rolling in dough. In fact, Ahold, the Dutch company that owns Giant, reported that Ahold USA net sales increased 6.6 percent in 2011 to \$25.1 billion, which is more than half the sales for all its European operations. Safeway CEO Steve Burd is being paid \$11 million, which is more than 500 times the average employee wage. With talk of a strike in the air, both companies have chosen to play hard ball. Recently, they opened three storefront hiring halls next to Safeway stores to recruit and train "replacement workers." Says UFCW Local 400 President Tom McNutt: "Management might think that setting up scab hiring halls right next to the stores where our members work will intimidate them into accepting a contract that puts the American dream far beyond their reach, but instead it's had the opposite effect. We are more united than ever and more dedicated to doing whatever it takes to ensure that retail jobs in the Washington, D.C., area [provide for] health and retirement security." If negotiations do not yield a decent contract by the March 31 deadline, a meeting where Local 400 members will take a strike vote has been scheduled for April 3. Stay tuned. (Union City, Metro Washington AFL-CIO Council online newsletter, Feb. 29, March 3 & 21)

### FedEx to pay \$3 million in bias suit

After the U.S. Department of Labor conducted a routine audit of FedEx's employment practices (audits of all 200,000 federal contractors are conducted periodically), it found that FedEx discriminated in hiring on the basis of sex, race and national origin. Blacks, Latinos/as, Asian Americans and Native-American men and all women were rejected at higher percentages than white men. On March 21, the DOL announced that FedEx had agreed to pay a \$3 million settlement to 21,635 job seekers at two dozen FedEx facilities in 15 states. In addition, FedEx agreed to institute widespread changes to correct its discriminatory hiring practices and to hire 1,703 of those rejected for jobs as part-time package handlers as positions become available. For instance, at the facility in Grove City, Ohio, the study found that 3,898 applicants were discriminated against. They will receive a total of \$617,260 in back wages and 312 job offers. The New York Times quoted a professor of employment discrimination who observed that the settlement was "modest" in financial terms, but its "promise to revamp its hiring practices" was most important. (March 22)

### ILWU Local 10 reaffirms May Day

Ever since 2005, International Longshore & Warehouse Workers Local 10, based in Oakland, Calif., has commemorated May Day, the international workers' holiday inspired by labor's struggle for the eight-hour workday. On Feb. 13, Local 10 passed a resolution reaffirming its commitment to May Day this year. The resolution noted that it's especially important in 2012, given that labor is increasingly under attack; that state legislatures in Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana have enacted or introduced so-called "right-to-work" laws; and that solidarity actions on behalf of the 99% are planned worldwide to challenge the 1%.

### Wage gap narrows but it's not good news

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, the wage gap between what women earn and what men earn narrowed last year. While women earned on average 17.8 percent less than men (82 cents to the dollar), the reason isn't a sign of progress. It's because men's wages have fallen further than women's. While both sets of earnings declined since 2010, men's real earnings declined by 2.1 percent while women's declined by 0.9 percent. "Progress in closing the gender earnings gap has slowed considerably since the early 1990s," notes IWPR. "If the pace of change in the annual earnings ratio continues at the same rate as it has since 1960, it will take another 45 years, until 2056, for men and women to reach parity." That's why the 99% must fight for full employment at equal living wages for all workers. (aflicio.org, March 12) □

# Solidarity with Verizon workers

March 22 was a day of coordinated solidarity actions in scores of cities coast to coast in support of a decent contract and justice for Verizon workers.

In Philadelphia, hundreds of Communication Workers Local 13000 and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers members and their supporters picketed outside Verizon headquarters. In addition to speeches from the union leadership to stand strong in the struggle for a decent contract from the \$100 billion corporation, the diverse crowd heard a strong appeal for union solidarity from Pete Matthews, president of American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Local 33. That union has been fighting for a new contract from the city administration for more than three years.

In Boston, hundreds of unionists and their supporters took to the streets, marching under the slogans "Fight for good jobs, stand up to corporate greed" and "Join the 99% spring kickoff." Organized by IBEW Local 2222 Verizon workers, the protest brought out a broad coalition of the city's unions



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

and community activists, including CWA at Verizon, the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, Greater Boston Labor Council, American Postal Workers Union, Service Employees, UNITE HERE Local 26, Boston Teachers Union, Boston School Bus Union (Steelworkers Local 8751), Jobs with Justice, Boston Firefighters Local 718 and scores of others.

The major thrust of the day's actions was the demand for a just contract for Verizon workers who are continuing to fight against massive

cutbacks and concessions by this greedy 1% corporate giant. Myles Calvey, leader of IBEW 2222, stated: "We need a revolution against the corporate greed of the 1%. Verizon has made tens of billions in profits and its top executives walked away with \$283 million in the last four years. But when it comes to the 45,000 workers who make Verizon's success possible, suddenly the company cries broke."

John Collier, IBEW 2222 leader and labor veteran of 18 years, spoke as one of the 40 workers unjustly fired by Verizon based on false anti-union charges stemming from the August 2011 strike. He and the union are determined to continue the battle until all fired workers are reinstated. Many Occupy Boston activists stressed that the struggle against Verizon represents a vital battle in the war against the attacks of the 1%. IBEW 2222 leaders pledged their continued support and solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street movement.

— Report by Joe Piette in Philadelphia & Steve Kirschbaum in Boston



WW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

## Dr. Luther Castillo

# Honduran activist tours Wisconsin

By Bryan G. Pfeifer  
Milwaukee

Dr. Luther Castillo, a Garifuna doctor from Honduras and a member of the National Resistance movement there, traveled throughout Wisconsin March 14 through 18 as part of a national tour sponsored by the Honduras Solidarity Network. Castillo, a graduate of the Latin American School of Medicine in Cuba, spoke not only on the fight for health care as a human right, but also informed audiences about the Honduran resistance movement that is waging a fierce, ongoing struggle against U.S. imperialism and its puppets in Honduras.

Dr. Castillo received a warm response from students, union members, community and faith-based solidarity activists, and revolutionaries in Racine, Milwaukee, Green



WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

Dr. Luther Castillo with Rachel Corrie's parents, Craig Corrie and Cindy Corrie, in Madison, Wis.

Bay and Madison, and at the campuses of Carroll College, the Milwaukee Area Technical College and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Castillo was interviewed by various people's media, including the internationally renowned WORT radio station in Madison.

In a moving conclusion to his tour, Dr. Castillo met Craig Corrie and Cindy Corrie, the parents of Rachel Corrie, in Madison dur-

ing a March 18 fundraiser for a water filtration system in the Gaza Strip in Palestine. Rachel Corrie was just 23 when she was killed on March 16, 2003, as she stood defending Palestinian homes from demolition by the racist Zionist settler state of Israel.

Members of the International Action Center, the Latin American Solidarity Committee and the Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement accompanied Dr. Castillo during his five-day Wisconsin visit. Numerous progressive organizations endorsed the tour.

To learn more about how to support the Garifuna people, go to [primerhospitalgarifuna.com](http://primerhospitalgarifuna.com). To see more photos and coverage of Castillo's tour in Wisconsin, visit [wibailoutpeople.org](http://wibailoutpeople.org). □

# WE ARE TRAYVON

## Potential for mass movement grows

Continued from page 1

claim that Martin was pursuing him. The armed Zimmerman outweighed the unarmed 17-year-old Martin by 90 pounds.

Martin's girlfriend said that he told her during a call on his cell phone that he was being followed by someone. On the 911 tapes, Martin can be heard crying for help before he was shot to death in the chest. Two female eyewitnesses have confirmed this.

The Sanford police questioned Zimmerman in a squad car for about an hour and then released him. He has never been arrested or charged with shooting Martin. The Sanford police have a sordid reputation of not arresting anyone accused specifically of assaulting Black men.

Sanford is also the city where racist whites drove the legendary Jackie Robinson out of town with death threats. Robinson was playing minor league baseball there in the 1940s before he integrated baseball's Major Leagues in 1947.

Zimmerman has publicly stated that he thought the killing would "all blow over." He has also said that Martin attacked him, attempting to portray himself as the victim. (Los Angeles Times, March 25) Though he apparently hoped these statements would have countered the outrage, they have only added fuel to an incredible brushfire of mass anger from below.

### Social media spread national outrage

Although Martin's shooting initially received considerable coverage in the Florida media, it gained national coverage only in early March when Black radio hosts and blogs started to report the story. Tracy Martin and Sybrina Fulton, Martin's parents, consistently kept their son's story in the media with interviews.

Once the 911 tapes were finally released, the case received broader attention from Twitter and Facebook users. A change.org petition calling for Zimmerman's arrest appeared online and has gathered close to 2 million signatures so far.

Tweets of the 911 tapes have been retweeted thousands and thousands of times. The anger does not begin and end with Zimmerman killing Martin. Many

understand a police cover-up is involved. Also, Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law has attracted attention.

Passed in 2005, this Florida law states that any person who "feels" threatened by another person has the right to use a weapon to defend him- or herself without necessarily facing the prospect of being arrested or prosecuted. Similar laws exist in at least 20 other states. Zimmerman has used this law as an excuse for shooting Martin. The police supported his claim of self-defense based on this law, which was rubber-stamped by the National Rifle Association and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

The Sanford police chief has temporarily stepped down due to criticism. State Attorney for Florida's Fourth Judicial Circuit Court Angela B. Corey has been assigned to investigate the case that will be presented to the grand jury on April 10.

The national outcry for justice for Trayvon Martin, spearheaded in the grassroots led by the African-American community, continues to resonate throughout every sector of U.S. society. Several Miami-based high schools staged walkouts last week. Trayvon Martin lived in Miami.

Even President Barack Obama was forced to make a public statement on the case, saying that if he had a son, he would look like Martin. This personal statement prompted attacks by racist right-wingers like Newt Gingrich and Glenn Beck, who accused the president of reverse racism.

The U.S. Justice Department was pressured to announce plans to carry out an investigation regarding Zimmerman's violation of Martin's civil rights.

Well-known celebrities such as Spike Lee, Mia Farrow, Jamie Foxx, Sinéad O'Connor, Ricky Martin and Clay Aiken have added their voices to the demand that Zimmerman be arrested. The entire Miami Heat basketball team, Martin's favorite, led by Dwayne Wade and LeBron James, posed in hoodies with their heads bowed in honor of Martin. They have also worn the words "We want justice" on their sneakers during games.

Amar'e Stoudamire and Carmelo Anthony from the New York Knicks have worn hoodies during pregame warmups. The National Basketball Players Association issued a statement demanding an arrest and accusing the Sanford Police Department of "racial bias."

The entire cast of Broadway musical "Porgy and Bess" took a group picture in their hoodies before a March 25 performance. ESPN, the world's largest sports network, reversed its original policy of not allowing employees to wear hoodies in their online avatars on Twitter.



SANFORD, FLA.

The great singer, Chaka Khan, initiated a song and video featuring other R&B singers like Kelly Price and Luke James honoring the memory of Trayvon Martin. The video shows actors Angela Bassett and Loretta Devine wearing hoodies.

### Parallels with the Emmett Till lynching

The Trayvon Martin case has rightfully been compared to the lynching of 14-year-old African-American Emmett Till, a native Chicagoan. In August 1955, while visiting relatives in Money, Miss., Till was kidnapped by three Ku Klux Klan members, who tortured and then fatally shot Till before tossing his body in the Mississippi River. His so-called crime was allegedly whistling at a white woman. The KKK members were arrested and then acquitted by an all-white jury. These same men bragged about committing the murder in a Life magazine article.

Till's funeral in Chicago attracted at least 50,000 people from around the country. His mother, Mamie Till Mobley, purposely allowed his casket to be opened to allow the world to see his horribly battered and disfigured face. This spontaneous anger transformed itself three months later into the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott.

The one-year-long boycott successfully struck down a racist city law that relegated Black people to the back of the bus. This boycott eventually ignited the historic Civil Rights movement in the South that brought about federal laws desegregating public places and legalizing the basic, democratic right of Black people to vote.

Many compare the initial response to Martin's lynching to what happened after Till's. The important question that begs an answer is this: Will Martin's murder also help spark an ongoing, organized, massive movement against racial injustice?

This is a legitimate question since Martin's lynching is a painful and constant reminder that a racist war exists in the U.S. against people of color, specifically young Black men. Many of the protests around the country have linked Martin's murder to the killings of other young Black men in local areas by either the police or vigilantes like Zimmerman.

Martin's parents initiated a town hall meeting today in Eatonville, Fla., calling for a national movement to evolve so that what happened to their son will not happen to others. While the hall only held 500 people, tens of thousands of people stood for hours outside observing the proceedings on jumbotrons.

Every minute of every day, police stop and frisk thousands for no other reason than walking or driving while Black and Latino/a. The vast majority of millions imprisoned or caught in the vicious web of the U.S. criminal justice system are

poor, young people of color. The global capitalist economic crisis, which has displaced millions of skilled and semi-skilled workers, has totally pushed aside young workers of color in disproportionate numbers. This marginalization has shut the doors to public education and job training for youth.

The corporate media are now making contemptible attempts to justify Zimmerman's actions and dilute the mass anger by reporting that Martin was suspended from school for 10 days for possessing marijuana. This kind of demonization of one's character is nothing new when it comes to youth of color. The big-business media do it to divert attention from the real issues: racist vigilantism and police brutality.

At a March 26 press conference, Trayvon Martin's mother, Sybrina Fulton, stated, "They have killed by son and now they are trying to kill his reputation." (CNN) Attempts are now being made by the media to raise doubts in the minds of the public that Zimmerman, as heard on the 911 tapes, called Martin a racial slur before shooting him and that the screams for help did not come from Martin but from Zimmerman.

All these obvious diversions serve to raise consciousness that capitalism as a racist, divide-and-conquer system offers no bright future for young people, especially for those like Trayvon Martin whose killer is still free to walk the streets. The fact that the vast majority of youth expressing their solidarity with Trayvon Martin are other young Black men who face demonization on a daily basis shows that they have nothing to lose and everything to gain in openly expressing their solidarity with their fallen brother.

Many whites have visibly expressed their anti-racist solidarity in the many protests around the country. A 68-year-old white man, John Carnduff Stewart, was arrested for sending "death threats" to the Sanford police chief due to his outrage at the Martin shooting. Stewart reportedly described the entire police department as being "bigoted" and "unprofessional." (Orlando Sentinel, March 23)

Justice for Trayvon Martin goes beyond Zimmerman's arrest, though that is an important first step. The call for justice must also include a united movement's demand for the right to good paying jobs, education, health care, housing and all human needs that capitalism denies to much of humanity. An International Day of Solidarity with Trayvon Martin has been called for April 10, the first day of the grand jury proceedings.

People in Scotland, Japan, Sweden, Australia and other countries have reportedly already donned hoodies in solidarity with Trayvon Martin. □



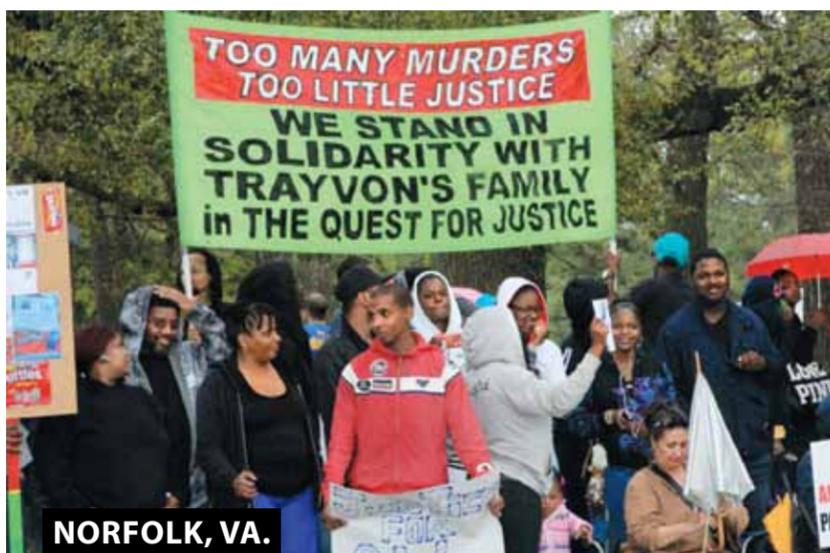
25 children



HOUSTON

WWW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

# TRAYVON MARTIN



NORFOLK, VA.

WW PHOTO: JOHN LONG



LOS ANGELES

WW PHOTO: JOHN PARKER

## Racism robs Black youth of their dreams

By Larry Hales

Trayvon Martin, the 17-year-old Black youth killed by racist vigilante George Zimmerman, was robbed of any opportunities that the future may have held for him. His parents were robbed of their son, his younger stepbrother a guiding hand, his girlfriend, other family members and friends a person who brought them immense joy, laughter, heartache — all the gifts and frustrations that a loved one brings.

And that he was killed

by a man who by his own admission chased him because he was Black and wearing a hoodie, yet still walks free because of some dubiously written law, makes the tragedy that much greater.

Many wonder how Zimmerman remains free when the facts of the case are so clear. Trayvon had no weapon and was significantly lighter than Zimmerman, outweighed by nearly 100 pounds.

Trayvon was the one being stalked and then chased in fear for his life. This was validated by the young woman on the other end of the telephone call with Trayvon as the young man fled.

It would seem that the specific provisions of the Florida "Stand Your Ground" law would contravene the decision of the Sanford Police Department to allow Zimmerman to walk free, citing his right to self-defense.

However, this is U.S. society, where the seeds of white supremacy were first planted, a country built on the most extreme forms of oppression and repression. Therefore a law may be written in general, but the atmosphere is poisoned by racism and national oppression. The Florida statute may state that the person using deadly force has to reasonably believe that his or her life is in danger, Zimmerman may have outweighed Trayvon, and Trayvon's only weapons may have been a can of iced tea and a bag of Skittles, but apparently his Blackness was not only enough to draw suspicion but justified the use of deadly force.

### COMMENTARY

The overwhelming evidence showing that a young Black man was executed by a vigilante and then again by a police force that is on record for covering up crimes, especially committed against people of color, begs the question — what is the value of a Black life?

Justice for Trayvon would mean that Zimmerman is arrested, tried and imprisoned; that the entire police department and the officers involved are fired and then tried for covering up the facts of this case; and that the SYG law, in a racist society like this one, is repealed. That would be merely the beginning.

#### Countless Trayvon Martins

What of Ramarley Graham, the young Black male shot in his bathroom in front of his grandmother and six-year-old brother in Bronx, N.Y., earlier this year?

What of Travis McNeal killed by Miami cops Feb. 11, 2011, when he and his cousin were stopped while driving, or of Decarlos Moore, Joel Lee Johnson and the four other unarmed Black men killed by Miami police last year?

What of 18-year-old Dane Scott Jr. shot in the back by police after a car chase in Del City, Okla., this year?

What about the many more unknown innocent Black men and women beaten, killed or humiliated by police all across the country, or the millions of Black women and men in jail, prison or on parole or probation? These are victims of the racist criminal justice system and of a society that cuts back on spending for schools and allows a greatly disproportionate number of people of color to be jobless, homeless and without hope of finding a well-paying job so they can care for themselves and their families.

The Black unemployment rate is still over 14 percent, and if that number alone isn't enough to indicate how dire the situation is, a more accurate account reveals that only 56.6 percent of the Black population is employed. For Black youth the unemployment rate is

over 40 percent, and the employment ratio is barely over 50 percent.

In his 1967 speech "Where Do We Go From Here," Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated, "Of the good things in life, the Negro has approximately one half those of whites. Of the bad things of life, he has twice those of whites."

That remains so, in housing especially, considering that a large number of people being foreclosed are people of color, with a high number Black. Adjustable rate mortgages were forced on them where the payments quadrupled after four or five years. According to the Center for Responsible Lending, 11 percent of Black homeowners lost their homes from 2007 to the present.

The Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness reports that Black families are seven times more likely to be homeless than whites and 38.8 percent of sheltered people in families are Black. A 2009 Regal Magazine article states that 49 percent of homeless people in total are Black.

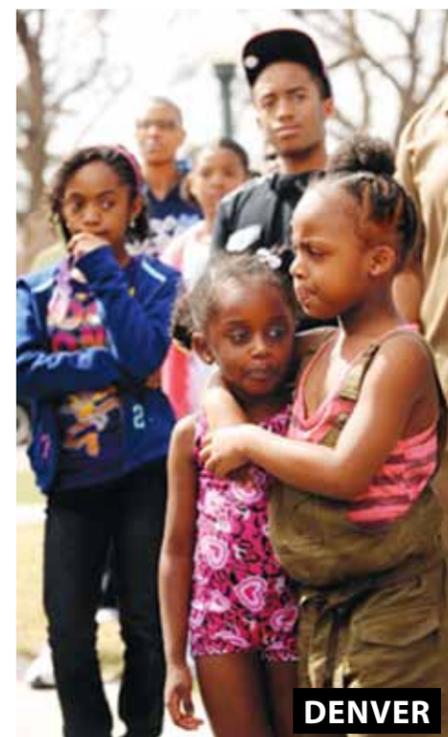
Those who live in poverty or near poverty number are about 150 million. The official poverty threshold for a family of four is \$24,343, and even a family with a household income of \$49,000 struggles.

The average Black household income measured in 2011 was \$32,000, a decline of 3.2 percent from the prior year.

Though the statistics appear stark enough, it is important to elucidate the reasons behind the conditions that Black people in the U.S. and all people of color really face.

#### What is the value of a Black life?

To repeat, what is the value of a Black life? All life is precious. But a system that places the profits of a few over the needs of the many turns the just mentioned mantra on its head. How can life be pre-



DENVER

scious if the necessities of it are commodities to be sold for profit? How can life be precious if much of humanity is engaged in selling their labor to make wealth they will never see for a wage designed to ensure that the buyer of the labor gets their profit and becomes richer still?

It is people of color, Black, Latino/a, Indigenous, Arab and Asian who disproportionately live on the fringes, suffering from years of conquest, genocide, slavery, apartheid and racism — all symptoms of national oppression. Because of their conditions, they are the greatest impetus for change.

National oppression is a byproduct of the for-profit system, a weapon to keep working people and their families from seeing their commonness, to keep people fighting amongst one another over differences in culture, religion and other beliefs.

Trayvon Martin had his life to look forward to. He was just beginning to dream, to piece together what he wanted his adult self to be, but he was a victim of the racism that pervades U.S. society. He was no less than any other 17-year-old, and he may have gone on to do great things, become a leader or a scientist — one will never know.

But, what is sure, is that for any young person, especially an oppressed person, to be guaranteed to reach their full potential, the society that has created disproportionate suffering and hardship based on skin color must be thrown into the dustbin of history, and a new one must be born. Trayvon may have been the leader of such a struggle, but as it is, it will have to be waged in memory of him and all those young Black and other oppressed youth who were victimized until they were sent to an early grave. □



BROADWAY CAST OF "PORGY &amp; BESS", MARCH 25, NYC.



MILWAUKEE

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

# Million Hoodie marches demands justice

Continued from page 1

One of the largest demonstrations to date took place in **SANFORD** on March 22 just a few miles from the gated housing complex where Martin was killed. An estimated 30,000 to 40,000 people filled Fort Mellon Park and marched to protest the lack of an arrest after his death.

Sanford's population is only 50,000.

Many people traveled from as far away as Memphis and Atlanta to join Martin's parents, Tracy Martin and Sybrina Fulton, and civil rights activist Rev. Al Sharpton in demanding an investigation. Another protest took place the next day in Tallahassee, Florida's state capital. Between 600 and 1,000 people marched to one of Tampa's busiest intersections on March 25.

Across **FLORIDA**, by the hundreds and thousands, students walked out of more than 40 schools on March 23, chanting "Justice for Trayvon!" The first student walkout was at Carol City High School in Miami, where Martin was a student last year.

Occupy Sarasota activists exercised their fully restored "chalking rights" by writing the slogan "Justice for Trayvon" on sidewalks in Five Points Park. On Feb. 25, one day before Martin was killed, an Occupy Sarasota activist was arrested for writing political slogans in the park "without a permit." The ACLU successfully challenged that ruling.

## No justice! No peace!

On March 21, thousands of outraged people gathered at **UNION SQUARE IN NEW YORK CITY** to protest Martin's brutal murder. Most of the youthful crowd of Black and white people wore hoodies in honor of Martin, whose mother told those gathered that "Our son is your son" and "This is not a Black and white thing. This is a right and wrong thing."

Organized largely through Twitter, between 5,000 to 8,000 people filled the plaza outside **PHILADELPHIA's** Amtrak station on March 23 to kick off a march through city streets starting at 7:17 p.m., the exact time Trayvon Martin was killed.

"We're trying to bring awareness about the injustice that's going on in Florida, the streets of Philly and other cities in America," said rally organizer Jason Moody, 32, of #OnTheCornerstone(d), an online radio station and community organizing group. (Philadelphia Inquirer, March 24)

At Love Plaza, Rep. Ron Waters, chairperson of the Pennsylvania Black Legislative Caucus, told the crowd: "We want justice for our people, but there is no justice in the criminal justice system. ...

There is no reason why we occupy more prison cells than anybody else in this nation. No reason why more of us are dying. No reason why our schools are failing."

Pam Africa, of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, addressed the crowd at a concluding rally in Love Park. Several participants of Occupy Philadelphia joined the event.

Similar to Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law that Zimmerman claimed gave him license to kill Martin, Pennsylvania passed a "Castle Doctrine" in 2011 under Gov. Tom Corbett — despite opposition from many who fear it would be used to mask widespread vigilantism like Zimmerman's actions in Florida.

**BALTIMORE'S** downtown felt liberated on March 26 when thousands of people took over the streets and marched to the central headquarters of the local police department and then to City Hall. Protesters took over the City Hall balcony and filled the square, rallying until nighttime as they defied police orders to move off the building. They connected the tragedy of Trayvon Martin with local issues, including the case of a 15-year-old African-American Northwestern High School student who was beaten by a community patrol group in a wealthy community.

The march, organized by the Baltimore Southern Christian Leadership Conference, All-Peoples Congress, Occupy 4 Jobs Network and the National Action Network, grew when contingents from various schools joined the crowd. The protesters were ecstatic when they took over six blocks in front of police headquarters, when their numbers swelled to close to 10,000.

Under rainy skies in **WASHINGTON, D.C.**, on March 24, thousands protested at Freedom Plaza in support of Trayvon Martin's family. D.C. radio host Joe Madison from WOL 1450 called Martin's death a modern-day version of the Emmett Till slaying. "They've been killing Black men since Black men landed on this continent. This isn't just about today." (Afro.com, March 25)

In downtown **CHICAGO** around 500 people rallied at noon on March 24. Speakers included exonerated former Illinois death row prisoner Darby Tillis and Airicka Gordon-Taylor, a relative of Emmett Till. Speakers linked Martin's death to the harassment of Blacks by police and urged the crowd not to let the 17-year-old's death be in vain.

Participating organizations included the Illinois Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, the October 22nd Coalition to Stop Police Brutality, Workers World

Party, the Prisoners of Conscience Committee, Progressive Labor Party, Answer Coalition and International Socialist Organization. Chairman Fred Hampton Jr. and the POCC also organized a rally on Chicago's West Side at "the Wall" — a mural of Chairman Fred Hampton Sr., who was murdered by Chicago police in 1971.

On March 23 in **CLEVELAND**, 200 people marched from Public Square to the Cuyahoga County Justice Center for a rally called by the Oppressed Peoples Nation. Around 75 people, mostly youth, came out the next day. Both actions were organized through Twitter.

Weekly rallies are being planned for every Saturday until Zimmerman is arrested and convicted.

A March 26 rally was called on short notice by students from the **ATLANTA** University Center, which is a complex of historically Black colleges and universities. Seven thousand people wearing hoodies and gathering at the State Capitol building closed the road in front of the capitol and filled the block between the two cross-streets.

More than 1,000 people demonstrated at the Liberty Pole in downtown **ROCHESTER, N.Y.**, an action that drew support from members of Occupy Rochester. They called for justice for Trayvon Martin and to prevent this from happening in Rochester. City Councilmembers Adam McFadden and Ruth Scott, both African Americans, expressed hope that this terrible crime will draw the Rochester community together.

Over a hundred marched from the **ALBANY, N.Y.**, City Court past the Governor's Mansion and City Hall before a rally on March 24. In Cambridge, Mass., 800 people came out to show solidarity with Trayvon Martin on March 22 in a rally organized by the Harvard Black Student Association.

## Making the connections

At Sunday services at the Hartford Memorial Baptist Church in **DETROIT** on March 25, the Rev. Charles C. Adams gave his sermon in a hoodie. He approached the pulpit with a can of iced tea and a package of Skittles in hand. The 10,000-member church is one of many organizations standing up across the U.S. to express outrage over Martin's death. On March 26 thousands rallied in downtown Detroit.

On March 22, dozens of community members from the African-American community and allies in **MILWAUKEE** held a candlelight vigil at the Dr. King Community Center Park.

This protest was sponsored by the National Black United Front and supported by Milwaukee Inner City Allied Congregations for Hope, Occupy The Hood, Occupy Milwaukee and the WI Bail Out the People Movement.

While condemning the lynching of Trayvon Martin, speakers also denounced the Milwaukee police department's ongoing terrorism in the Black and other oppressed communities. Several officers have been placed under administrative review due to community pressure after they were found to have been forcing Black community members — both men and women — to pull down their pants during stop-and-frisk searches. Other charges include planting drugs, death threats, and illegal search and seizures.

On March 23, a "Justice for Trayvon Martin and Bo Morrison" protest was held at the police administrative building in downtown Milwaukee. Morrison, 20, was murdered vigilante-style March 3 in Slinger, Wis. Morrison was hiding on Adam Kind's porch next door to a loud late-night party to avoid being arrested for underage drinking. Because Wisconsin

passed a "Castle Doctrine" law, similar to Pennsylvania's, in 2011 under Gov. Scott Walker, the police have refused to arrest Kind. Further protests demanding justice for Morrison are planned.

## Calls for unity to fight racism

Neither torrential rain nor a heavy police presence kept nearly 100 people from demonstrating in **LOS ANGELES** on March 25, where they produced their own storm of protest and anger over the racist killing. Speakers at the rally highlighted the blatant and brutal racism condoned and facilitated by local and state police in Florida and recognized the similarities to institutionalized racism perpetrated by the Los Angeles police.

The rally was organized by Occupy the Hood LA. Jefferson Azevedo, a member of the Central Area Neighborhood Council, spoke for Workers World Party, saying that we all need to get involved any way we can to fight injustice and join an organization that works toward unity. Ron Gochez of Unión del Barrio and the Southern California Immigration Coalition spoke of the need for unity of African, Mexican and Latin American peoples who face repression: "We're going to eventually be in the trenches together, so we might as well get to know each other."

About 150 to 200 people gathered for a protest rally in the City Heights district of **SAN DIEGO** on March 25.

A crowd gathered outside the S.H.A.P.E. Center's Harambee Building in **HOUSTON** March 26 to tell the world, "We are Trayvon Martin." Drummers arrived early and kept the pace during the two-hour rally. Whole families came out with their children and elders sat on chairs under the trees. Texas Southern University students rallied earlier on campus and were still pumped when they spoke. Victims of police brutality added their powerful presence.

Around 300 marched in **DALLAS** on March 23. More than 500 turned out in Phoenix on March 25, and another 500 people demonstrated in Wichita, Kan.

Around 600 people rallied in **NASHVILLE, TENN.**, on March 24, calling for justice for Martin at the base of Capitol Hill. Close to 400 came out in the rain in Norfolk, Va., on March 23. Hundreds of people turned out for rallies in Greenville and Columbia, S.C.

Hundreds of Alabamians gathered around the **MONTGOMERY** Civil Rights Memorial for a candlelight vigil on March 22, chanting "I am Trayvon! I am Trayvon!" People said they were there to overcome the wrong of Martin's death and work together to make it right. William Black, 22, a young African-American from Pittsburgh living in Montgomery, noted that no matter where he lives, he feels judged due to unjust stereotyping. (waka.com, March 25)

These protests come at a time when the doors to education are being shut to Black and other oppressed youth and when the global capitalist economic crisis is turning away youth seeking jobs by the millions. They come at a time when more prisons are being built, while schools are being closed. They come at a time when blatant racism, police brutality and attacks on voting rights are the order of the day.

But these demonstrations also come on the heels of Occupy Wall Street protests that target the glaring economic and political disparity between the wealthiest 1% and the majority 99%. Those protests provide an example that it is possible to fight back.

Sharon Black, Eugene Clancy, John Long, Monica Moorehead, John Parker, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Andre Powell, Jimmy Raynor, Gloria Rubac, Susan Schnur, Gerry Scoppettuolo, Eric Struch and Gloria Verdieu contributed to this article.

## INT'L DAY OF JUSTICE 4 TRAYVON MARTIN

# TUES ► APRIL 10

A Florida grand jury is scheduled on April 10 to 'consider' whether to arrest the vigilante who lynched by bullet our brother & son, Trayvon Martin, on Feb. 26.

## TAKE TO THE STREETS

6 pm ► Gather @ Union Square 14th Street & Broadway

The People's Power Tour and Occupy 4 Jobs urges all organizations, activists and communities to **UNITE AS ONE** to tell the grand jury that we demand the arrest of George Zimmerman and hold the police responsible for him walking the streets free.

### ■ JUSTICE FOR RAMARLEY GRAHAM

And All Victims Of Police Brutality

### ■ STOP THE RACIST STOP & FRISK POLICY

### ■ JOBS NOT JAILS: A Massive Jobs Program for Youth

No Jail or Police & Vigilante Terror ■ Stop Deportations of Undocumented Workers

### ■ NO MORE CUTS in Education, School Closings

■ Teacher and Faculty Layoffs ■ End Tuition Hikes

### STOP THE WAR AGAINST YOUTH

Call 212-633-6646 for more information and to get involved.

# Free Hana Shalabi

By Gene Clancy

Hana Shalabi is a hero of the Palestinian resistance. She is now at risk of imminent death after being on a hunger strike since Feb. 16 to protest her arbitrary detention by Israeli security forces.

The Israeli Prison Service announced that it had transported Shalabi to the Meir Hospital in Kfar Saba pursuant to a Physicians for Human Rights' recommendation, as her health has seriously deteriorated. Reportedly, however, she was refused admittance and was returned to a prison clinic.

Unsurprisingly, Ofer Military Court on March 25 rejected Shalabi's legal appeal

against being held in administrative detention.

Thirty Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails have gone on hunger strike in solidarity with Shalabi, including 72-year-old Ahmad Al-Hajj Ali, one of 24 elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council being held by Israel without charges or trials.

Ran Cohen, a PHR doctor, examined Shalabi and reported that she "is suffering ... low blood pressure, severe weakness and inability to move about on her own and serious pain throughout her body. [She] has lost 14kg (31 lbs), her muscles are wasting and she is in excruciating pain." (Associated Press, March 20)

PHR's statement expressed concern over IPS' conduct, including pressuring Shalabi to end her hunger strike and threatening to force-feed her, despite its prohibition by international treaties. It "called upon the local and the international community to act immediately and intervene" for her release and to protest Israel's use of administrative detention.

Like thousands of others incarcerated, Shalabi's "crime" is wanting to live free on her own land in her own country.

On Feb. 16, 50 Israeli soldiers and an intelligence officer, with attack dogs, ran-



freehana.org

sacked Shalabi's home in Burquin in the Occupied West Bank and arrested her only four months after she was released in a mass prisoner exchange, after her two-and-a-half-year incarceration.

Soldiers handcuffed and blindfolded her, ordering her to remain on the floor of a military jeep on her knees. When she moved, she was threatened. Her brother, Omar, who was also attacked, heard the intelligence officer say, "Hana must die." (Electronic Intifada)

At Salem Detention Center, she was beaten and then transferred to HaSharon Prison in Ramallah. Immediately, she began a hunger strike in protest. For several days she was held in solitary confinement as punishment for resisting her detention through a hunger strike.

Israel is holding 320 Palestinians under its lawless administrative detention. Denied due process, prisoners are not told why they are detained, nor can they dispute the reasons. They can't present evidence on their behalf, are not officially charged and have no right to a trial. The six-month detentions can be arbitrarily renewed.

Shalabi is an international hero for resisting U.S.-backed Israeli repression and occupation. Women demonstrated on the West Bank and in Gaza on International Women's Day March 8 demanding her freedom. Solidarity actions have been held in several countries.

On March 25, hundreds of students, African National Congress ministers and Palestinians demonstrated at Abu Dis University, in Occupied Palestine, to support Shalabi. There, 55 students are on a solidarity hunger strike and promise more actions.

The U.S. government calls Israel "the most democratic in the Middle East," but the people of the world know the truth. □

## Women heroes honored



An International Women's Day program commemorating women fighters throughout the Americas who led past struggles for social equality and revolution was held in the Bronx, N.Y., on March 24. Activists from Women Workers for Peace, La Peña del Bronx and other groups wore stunning traditional clothing while giving tributes to such heroic

women as Manuela Zaens, Juana Azurduy, Policarpa Salavarrieta, Harriet Tubman, Frida Kahlo, Violeta Parra, Lolita Lebron, Mama Tingo, Vilma Espin, Comandante Ana Maria, Rosalina Tuyuc, La Caci que Silvia Carrera and Juana Ramirez.

— Report & photo by Monica Moorehead

## Bolivian activist Domitila Chúngrara, ¡presente!

By Donna Lazarus

Bolivian working-class leader Domitila Chúngrara succumbed to cancer on March 13 at age 74, in Cochabamba, Bolivia. President Evo Morales declared three days of national mourning and posthumously awarded Chúngrara the Condor of the Andes honor, the highest distinction the state can confer on a Bolivian citizen.

Chúngrara's life in struggle began in 1937 at the Siglo XX tin mine where her father was a union leader and political activist. Exiled to Pulacayo, where the family endured terrible hardship, Chúngrara met and married a man who subsequently became a miner at Siglo XX. Bolivia's tin mines were nationalized in 1952, and a new national labor federation was established, the COB (Bolivian Workers Central).

In 1961, the Housewives' Committee (el Comité de las Amas de la Casa) was formed by spouses and widows of miners at Siglo XX, and was soon extended to other nationalized mines. Chúngrara began working with the organization almost as soon as it was founded, and was named Secretary General. The committee organized marches and hunger strikes when miners were arrested, and demanded payment of the workers' wages, food and medicine for their children.

When Che Guevara arrived in Bolivia in 1967, Bolivia's long tradition of labor activism was challenged by U.S. political and corporate interests, strengthening the conservative sectors of Bolivian society with the encouragement of President René Barrientos. He ordered the military to massacre striking miners at the Catavi



and Siglo XX mines the night of San Juan in June 1967, using the guerrilla struggle as a pretext.

Chúngrara survived the massacre and organized a mass procession to the cemetery which has been memorialized in the film, "The Courage of the People" (El coraje del pueblo), in which she reenacts her part in the demonstration and struggle. She shouted, "Murderers!" from atop the cemetery's wall, and then was spat upon, beaten, jailed and lost her unborn baby. Eduardo Galeano, author of "Open Veins of Latin America," has described Chúngrara's ordeal in "Memory of Fire III: The Century of Wind."

### Hunger strike for justice

Chúngrara was also a mother, a mother who took her five children to the Cathedral of La Paz, along with four other

mothers from the Housewives' Committee and their children, to begin a hunger strike in December 1977 against the repressive regime of Hugo Banzer and to demand total amnesty for the 348 union and political leaders in exile. The church supported their struggle and by early January 1978, over 1,000 people were on hunger strike, then 1,500, then 2,500 and then thousands and thousands across Bolivia. Banzer was forced to capitulate and had to sign a formal agreement with the human rights groups supporting the miners' movement. The five women and the struggle of Bolivian workers forced Banzer to leave office in 1978.

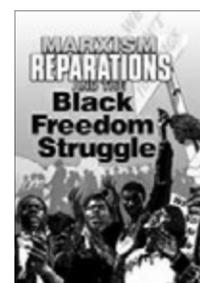
Even before leading this massive act of resistance to repression, Chúngrara represented Bolivian workers in the International Women's Year Tribunal held in Mexico City in 1975. While there she met

Moema Viezzer who was instrumental in compiling and publishing Chúngrara's landmark, "Let Me Speak!"— her life story as a woman from Bolivia's mines. The book gives voice to the critical role women activists play in the struggle, and to all the men and women that work at the mines.

Chúngrara and her children were forced into exile in Sweden by the government of Luis García Meza after she participated in the Bertrand Russell Tribunal on human rights in 1980. She was unable to return to Bolivia until 1982, just before the massive neoliberal structural undoing of Bolivian society which closed the state-owned mines and threw 30,000 miners out of work. Some of her children decided to stay in Europe.

In the last decade or more, Chúngrara focused her energies on the Mobile School for Political Training that she founded to bring political consciousness, popular history and activism to new generations in impoverished neighborhoods of Cochabamba, populated largely by families of ex-miners.

As Chúngrara said, "The people are always there, and I've never lacked for solidarity wherever the people are. The people will always be with me in the struggle." □



**MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle**

Available at Amazon.com and bookstores around the country. Online: workers.org/reparations

# 19 million empty homes

Statistics are kept on a global basis that supposedly quantify the level of social development of a country — figures on infant mortality, life expectancy, educational levels and more. Countries that have been enslaved by colonialism and imperialism are usually rated as having very low levels of development.

But where are the statistics on the cruel and irrational discrepancies that are rife in the so-called developed countries?

One such figure that should be emblazoned across the headlines and should make the television anchors shed real tears is instead found mostly in technical reports on the web.

It is this: As of the last count by the Census Bureau, there are almost 19 million EMPTY housing units in the United States.

Many are brand new but have no buyers; people can't afford them. Others have been lived in for years, but now lie empty after their occupants were chased out and their belongings dumped on the street by foreclosure enforcers.

Allowing an average of only three people per housing unit, the statistic above means that at least 57 million people in the U.S. who are now homeless, in shelters, doubled or tripled up with relatives or friends, or living in trailers,

campers or other vehicles, could have a real home to live in.

What is preventing this?

In olden times, people lacked decent shelter because there wasn't any. The means of production were not developed enough for most people to live in more than a shack. Even earlier, during the long period of communal society, humans worked together to build group homes that saved on scarce fuel, aided in rearing children and promoted cooperation.

By contrast, today everything can be had in abundance — at least, the potential is there. But you have to have money to realize that potential.

Welcome to capitalism. It leads to society being divided in a never-ending struggle between those with capital, the less than 1%, and the people who do the work, the 99%. It also leads to the cruel and absurd contradiction of hunger amid record crops, homelessness amid a glut of houses, and people dying with nothing to their name but huge debts after a lifetime of hard work.

This newspaper hates capitalism and all it has done to the world. We exist for the day when a workers' revolution can bring economic life into harmony with human needs and bury the very idea of a few profiting from the misery of the many. □

# Thousands march in India



PHOTO: SOCIALIST UNITY CENTER OF INDIA (COMMUNIST PARTY)

Nearly 100,000 members of the Socialist Unity Center of India (Communist) Party from every major city and town in India converged on the capital city of Delhi in a massive rally on the anniversary of Karl Marx's death, March 14.

For months before the rally, every SUCI(C) member gathered signatures in a massive organizing campaign. They gathered petitions to present to the Indian government. Thousands of people took month-long treks to cities, towns and "even to remote villages, traveling hundreds of miles to reach out to every citizen." (suci-c.in).

The party members who went to Delhi brought trunks filled with the 37.5 million signatures they had collected demanding an end to unemployment, high prices for food and transportation, child selling, sex trafficking, privatization, and corrupt connections between the Indian government and the banks and corpo-

rations. They demanded an end to the "sordid state of the health and education sectors." They also opposed any U.S. attempts to "subvert the sovereignty of Iran, North Korea or any other country."

Though the party had prepared huge tents to accommodate the massive crowd overnight, a storm destroyed the communal kitchens, tents and the facilities for drinking water. But, according to the organizers, there were "no murmurs of discomfort, no dampening of the spirit, no derailment of the firm resolve of organizers, volunteers and participants." Instead SUCI(C) members called it "an ordeal which served as an occasion to renew their revolutionary mettle."

Although the participants stopped traffic and hundreds of onlookers surged into the streets to join the protest, no word of the biggest march in Delhi's history was broadcast on India's corporate-owned media.

— Heather Cottin

## SYRIA

# Imperialists use U.N. against government

By Joyce Chediak

The Syrian government agreed to accept the joint U.N.-Arab League-Kofi Annan plan for a ceasefire on March 27, according to Annan's spokesperson. The former U.N. general secretary then demanded that Damascus "put its commitments into immediate effect." (CNN.com)

The terms of the agreement have not been released, nor is it clear if the agreement will hold. But one thing is certain: The Arab League and U.N., especially former U.N. head Annan, are not playing an impartial role in Syria. They are providing a cover for imperialist intervention meant to weaken the Assad government. Their goal is not to help the Syrian people, but to tighten the West's grip on the strategic, oil-rich Middle East.

No matter what Washington shouts about human rights, the Assad government's alleged excesses or mistakes are not really the issue. The Pentagon and Wall Street seek to break the anti-imperialist alliance among Syria, Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon, and return the area to direct imperialist slavery. The question is: Who will prevail in the Middle East, imperialist or anti-imperialist forces?

The day before this agreement the White House and Turkey announced plans to expand "nonlethal" assistance to the Syrian opposition, including the so-called Free Syrian Army. They are sending communications equipment and medical supplies. All this contributed to the pressure on Damascus.

U.S.-NATO intervention in Libya began with such nonlethal aid to the opposition. This quickly led to eight months of so-called humanitarian bombing, which destroyed Libya's infrastructure and left untold numbers dead.

According to recent Wikileaks reports, NATO commandos are already on the ground in Syria.

### Annan fronts for imperialist intervention

Russia and China, concerned about how naked imperialist aggression in the Middle East would affect their interests, vetoed two U.N. Security Council resolutions condemning Syria. By doing this they denied the U.S. and NATO the diplomatic cover it needed for upping its aggression. So Washington, London, Paris and others turned to Annan to fill this need.

Annan's rounds of shuttle diplomacy, one-sided calls for a Syrian government ceasefire and for outside "humanitarian" aid, are really calls for foreign intervention. They have so far provided justification for the open Western "nonlethal" support for the Syrian opposition.

This is not the first time Annan has played this role. In 2004, as U.N. secre-

tary general, he bestowed a U.N. mandate on the U.S., French and Canadian intervention that deposed Haiti's constitutionally elected Lavalas government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Annan's stated reasons were the same then as now: an alleged impending "humanitarian catastrophe."

Annan provided a similar U.N. cover for French imperialism to tighten its colonial grasp on the Ivory Coast in 2006.

The Arab League's "peace proposals" are also designed to impose a pro-imperialist settlement on Syria. Leading the charge against Syria is Saudi Arabia, a notorious violator of human rights, especially those of women. The Saudi government provided troops and tanks in 2011 to help the Bahrain government repress demonstrations demanding political freedom and economic equity.

### Abuses in Bahrain & Israel ignored

The Western powers, their clients in the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League, and Turkey have accused the Assad government of atrocities and claim they want to save and protect the Syrian people. Consider their hypocrisy and silence on the question of human rights in Bahrain and Israel.

Twenty Bahraini doctors and nurses are about to be tried for a second time on fabricated charges of "subversion" for treating demonstrators wounded by that government's repeated brutal crackdown against protests.

These medical personnel were previously convicted by a military tribunal and sentenced to up to 15 years in prison. World-renowned surgeon Ali Al Ekri was assaulted and arrested while performing surgery.

These crimes against humanity don't get front-page play in the establishment media. Western officials are not lining up to denounce the government there for "killing its own people." Bahrain's government is a U.S. ally, and Bahrain is home to the U.S. Fifth Fleet.

On March 26, the Israeli government cut all ties to the U.N. Human Rights Council and forbid its entrance into the country. Why? Because the council adopted a resolution this March condemning Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and Gaza, and announced plans for a fact-finding mission to investigate. The White House is stone silent about this arrogant disregard for a U.N. agency. Why? Israel is the Pentagon's most strategic ally in the Middle East.

Instead, all attacks are focused on Syria, a key country in the Middle East, which the U.S. and European imperialists seek to reconquer. The imperialists seek to misuse the mass uprising in that region so they can destroy all manifestations of democracy, human rights, independence and self-determination.

The imperialists must be stopped at all costs. □

## Activists demand clean needles

Continued from page 3

ception and health care plans, we cannot continue to let politics get in the way of saving lives." (c2ea.org/news)

Three representatives delivered 5-foot-high paper "invoices" to the extremely conservative senator's office. One bill was for \$618,900, the cost for a lifetime of HIV treatment.

The other invoice totaled 8 cents, the cost of a clean syringe. □



### GAZA: Symbol of Resistance

A book of articles from WW, edited by Joyce Chediak

Available at Amazon and bookstores around the country. <http://gazaresistancebook.com>

# U.S.-NATO policies lead to coup in Mali

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

A soldiers' mutiny has led to a military coup in the West African state of Mali. Rebellious troops and forces loyal to President Amadou Toumani Touré exchanged fire near the presidential palace in Bamako, Mali's capital, on March 21.

Rebel soldiers then seized the state radio and television station. On March 22, a group of soldiers appeared on national television identifying themselves as the National Committee for the Reestablishment of Democracy and the Restoration of the State. The committee's spokesperson, Lt. Amadou Konaré, said that the soldiers had taken control of the state due to the inability of President Touré's government to "fight terrorism."

No images of the president were seen, and since March 21 there has only been one brief statement over Twitter attributed to Touré, saying there has been no coup but only a mutiny. Nonetheless, it is quite obvious that a change of power has taken place in Mali with Capt. Amadou Sanogo claiming to be in charge of the new military regime.

An ongoing conflict with the Tuareg people in the north of the country had accelerated over the last few months. The Tuareg, who are dispersed in several states in West and North Africa, have been politically marginalized since the post-independence period going back to the 1960s.

## What's behind the coup?

The latest developments and rebel statements imply that the government's failure to effectively contain or defeat the Tuareg rebellion in the north has created tremendous tensions within the military and the Malian society as a whole. President Touré was at the end of his term and would have voluntarily stepped down in a matter of weeks.

Why then did the lower-ranking military officers stage a coup at this point? Let's examine the burgeoning Tuareg rebellion that is related to the U.S.-NATO war against Libya that began in February 2011.

Several thousand Tuaregs from Mali and other countries in the region had lived for many years in Libya and maintained an alliance with the late Col. Moammar Gadhafi's government. Many Tuaregs fought alongside the Libyan army in defense of the country from the U.S./NATO-backed National Transitional Council that overthrew that government and murdered Gadhafi in October 2011.

Following Gadhafi's death, thousands of Tuaregs relocated from Libya to Mali. Unrest soon spread throughout the northern region, and an existing Tuareg rebellion was reconstituted as the Azawad National Liberation Movement (MNLA).

The fighters who had returned from Libya were well-trained and armed. They began to reassert their influence, causing monumental problems for the Malian military and the central government based in the south of the country in Bamako.

MNLA fighters took over several important northern towns over a period of two months beginning in early 2012. Their advances on the battlefield also prompted desertions by the Malian army, creating panic in the capital and in the city of Gao.

According to Malian newspaper columnist Adam Thiam, "The Libyan crisis didn't cause this coup but certainly revealed the malaise felt within the army." (BBC News, March 22)

In the BBC interview an anonymous government official indicated that the military coup was probably planned in advance and was not totally a surprise. This official said that "nobody could now pretend they were not warned. Many within the government felt something

could happen, we just didn't know when and how. The anger was just too high."

President Touré had himself staged a military coup in 1991 against another regime of soldiers. However, he turned over power to a civilian government in 1992 and won the 2002 and 2007 presidential elections.

The MNLA reacted favorably to the coup but pledged to continue its struggle for the emergence of what it calls an independent Tuareg state. The organization says it may benefit from the current situation in the capital.

In the BBC interview a spokesman for the MNLA in the Mauritanian capital of Nouakchott, Hama Ag Mahmoud, said that the MNLA was "not interested in Bamako, but Kidal, Timbuktu and Gao. These mutineers will not have the firepower to resist against us. They will have to sign a peace agreement at some point." Mahmoud had previously served as a minister in the former military regime of Gen. Moussa Traoré, who was overthrown by President Touré in 2002.

Some Malian governmental officials have blamed NATO for the escalation of the crisis in the north. In neighboring Senegal, University of Dakar Prof. Abdul Aziz Kebe told the BBC, "Western powers have underestimated that getting rid of Gadhafi would have severe repercussions in the Sahel region."

The Associated Press reported March 26, "Sources in Mali and neighboring Niger said Monday the rebels hope to take Kidal without a fight. The sources asked not to be named because the situation is dangerous."

## Imperialism's role in Mali

Mali's civilization extends back at least 1,000 years. The area was colonized by France during the 19th century and in 1960 gained national independence.

During the first eight years of inde-

pendence, Mali's political direction was socialist-oriented. The first post-independence leader, President Modibo Keita, was a close ally of Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah and Guinean President Ahmed Sekou Touré. Keita was overthrown in a military coup in 1968.

Lately, Mali has been a partner in the so-called "war on terrorism" in West Africa. The Associated Press reported that "Mali is at the heart of a Western-backed initiative to fight al-Qaida's thriving African wing."

Mali has been a member of the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative, which is an interagency plan by the U.S. government that combines efforts by both civil and military agencies ostensibly designed to fight "terrorism." The military component of TSCTI consist of the U.S.-led "Operation Enduring Freedom—Trans Sahara." Mali has held joint military exercises with the U.S. Africa Command, known as AFRICOM, and receives arms from Washington.

Mali is the third largest producer of gold on the African continent. Companies such as the London-listed Randgold Resources are producing gold there, and have interests affected by recent developments in the north.

Nick Holland, the CEO of Gold Fields, the world's fourth largest gold producer, said his firm would continue mining in Mali. (Reuters, March 26)

The current situation in Mali is developing rapidly. On March 26, demonstrations involving a thousand people in the capital opposed the coup.

These developments illustrate that the imperialist war in Libya is causing greater instability in North and West Africa. The escalating military intervention in Africa by the U.S. and NATO is creating more uncertainty and greater resistance on the part of the African masses against foreign interference in their internal affairs. □

# Portugal general strike confronts austerity

By John Catalinotto

Center stage for the class struggle in Europe moved from Greece to the Iberian Peninsula as March was ending. A successful general strike in Portugal on March 22 "showed the strength and determination of workers to continue the struggle against the 'package' that increases exploitation and impoverishment, and for defense of workers' rights and the future of Portugal," according to the major CGTP-IN labor confederation. (cgtp-in.pt, March 23)

The package is a new collection of labor laws that extends the weekly working hours, makes it easier to carry out layoffs, weakens the union side in collective bargaining, increases unemployment, job insecurity, wage and pension cuts, deterioration of working and social conditions, and is a huge step backwards for workers.

Last year, a coalition of right-wing parties took over the parliamentary government. The package, however, was also supported by the Socialist Party, considered the electoral "left," along with the more right-wing parties. Only the Communist Party and the Left Block rejected the package.

As in Greece, the local Portuguese ruling class — with the support and under the pressure of the European Union, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund — called the Troika — is attempting to impose this package as

part of a general austerity on the Portuguese workers.

The March 22 general strike is the latest of a series of strikes and mass demonstrations resisting the austerity that have involved as many as 3 million of Portugal's 11 million people.

Most of the European working class is suffering from the economic crisis. Official unemployment in Portugal is bad enough, at nearly 15 percent. In Spain it is over 23 percent.

## General strike in the Spanish state

In Spain, Portugal's neighbor, the rightist-led government is also attempting to reduce workers' rights through a so-called Labor Reform. The so-called Socialists (PSOE) also pushed concessions on the workers when they led the government until last year and also support the "reforms." During that time, the leadership of the union confederations (UGT and CCOO) that supported the "left" government signed onto an agreement that avoided strikes.

There was one general strike called on Sept. 29, 2010. The union leadership only partially mobilized support for it. Between that time and now, the only successful general strikes have been in the Basque Country and in Galicia. These are areas where labor militancy combines with the movement for national demands against the centralized Spanish state, and where the unions have a distinctly different leadership than in the federal unions.



PHOTO: PCP

In that time period, there has also been an upsurge of struggle from the "Indignant ones." Young people, facing at least 45 percent unemployment rates and unable to even begin adult life, took over the central squares of dozens of cities last spring.

For March 29, the UGT and CCOO have called a general strike. While there is skepticism about the union leadership, most Spanish progressive activists will be participating in and trying to build the strength of the strike, as will the most mil-

itant rank-and-file workers. Some may be doing this even while they are contesting the role of the leadership.

Meanwhile, the assault on the Greek workers continues unabated, and, as rallies in solidarity with the Greek people have shown, in more and more countries throughout Europe the working class is becoming conscious that they are under a general attack by the European bankers and business class — who have the backing of Wall Street. A united fightback is required. □

## La expulsión de Bo

# Un momento crítico en China

Por Fred Goldstein

Es ya conocido a nivel mundial que Bo Xilai, un alto miembro de los 25 que tiene el Politburó del Partido Comunista Chino, ha sido destituido de su puesto clave como Secretario del Partido de la importante rama de Chongqing del PCC.

Esta movida llega justo cuando el PCC se preparaba para elegir a un nuevo liderazgo este otoño. Bo había estado considerado como un claro candidato para el Comité Permanente de nueve miembros del Politburó. Esto ahora está fuera. Esta es la primera brecha abierta en el liderazgo del PCC en dos décadas.

Bo era conocido por tratar de revivir la cultura de Mao Zedong a través de varios programas públicos. Enfatizaba la intervención del Estado en la economía y abogaba la planificación de masivos proyectos de vivienda de bajos ingresos para los/as trabajadores/as migrantes y otros/as, así como la lucha para reducir la desigualdad en general.

Bo también ha sido conocido por la feroz campaña contra la corrupción en la que se alentaba a las masas a señalar funcionarios corruptos y mafiosos. Varios miles de personas fueron detenidas, entre ellas empresarios, y muchos fueron enviados a la cárcel. El oficial más alto de la policía en Chongqing fue ejecutado durante la campaña contra la corrupción.

Bo fue eliminado después de un incidente en el que el posterior jefe de la policía de Chongqing, Wang Lijun, quien trabajó con Bo en una campaña anticorrupción ampliamente celebrada, huyó de Chongqing el 6 de febrero hacia el Consulado de Estados Unidos en la cercana ciudad de Chengdu donde pidió asilo político.

Según el gobierno chino y fuentes del Partido, Wang dijo tener documentos incriminatorios contra Bo. Wang fue trasladado del Consulado y ahora se encuentra bajo arresto en Beijing.

Ha habido mucha especulación acerca de Bo y Wang y lo sucedido. Mucho se ha citado el extravagante estilo personal de Bo, su ambición, una lucha por posiciones entre facciones dentro del liderazgo y así sucesivamente. Quizás todos estos factores jugaron algún papel en su deposición.

Pero una cosa está clara. Los imperialistas todos han tomado una posición contra Bo y se agrupan de ver su caída.

De hecho, no existe evidencia de que Bo intentaba abandonar la dependencia del capitalismo en el desarrollo de China que siguió a la muerte de Mao. Por el contrario, su perspectiva está plenamente dentro del marco general de utilizar el capitalismo y la inversión extranjera para hacer crecer la economía en Chongqing. Pero dentro de ese marco, destacó la llamada "tercera mano," la necesidad de que el Estado desempeñe un papel significativo en la economía, para garantizar el bienestar de las masas y para reducir la desigualdad como una cuestión prioritaria.

### El efecto de la crisis capitalista mundial

Es importante poner esta lucha en un contexto más amplio con respecto a la crisis del capitalismo global y su efecto sobre

la economía china y la lucha política y las luchas de las facciones dentro de China.

La crisis económica en el mundo capitalista ha debilitado de manera muy fundamental el argumento de que China debería poner su destino y su futuro en manos del desarrollo capitalista y el mercado mundial capitalista como una estrategia fundamental.

El colapso en 2007-2009 del sistema financiero capitalista mundial y el mercado global, el consiguiente desempleo masivo, la especulación salvaje, la sobreproducción, la dislocación económica, la avalancha de quiebras, las vueltas de los mercados de valores y las continuas amenazas en el horizonte deben rondar a todos los dirigentes de China y dar municiones a todos aquellos que se oponen al continuo desarrollo del capitalismo en China.

Los imperialistas y las fuerzas más pro capitalistas en el PCC y el estado saben esto. Por lo tanto se han apresurado a fortalecer su posición frente a la monumental evidencia del fracaso del capitalismo y sus peligrosos efectos en China durante 2008 y 2009.

Actuaron justo cuando el cuerpo legislativo de China se preparaba para examinar y aprobar diversos planes y cuando el tema del futuro liderazgo estaba en discusiones privadas.

Es significativo que el Banco Mundial presentara un documento de 448 páginas justo a tiempo para el XVIII Congreso Nacional Popular el mes pasado, titulado "China 2030". Lo que hace la presentación pública de este documento tan inquietante es que fue co-escrito por el Centro de Investigación de Desarrollo del Consejo de Estado, el órgano ejecutivo superior en China. Liu He, quien trabajó en el documento y se reúne regularmente con los funcionarios estadounidenses, es asesor de la Comisión Permanente del Politburó, quien ha argumentado públicamente que debe utilizarse la presión extranjera para impulsar reformas capitalistas en China.

Para subrayar la naturaleza colaborativa del documento está su subtítulo: "Construir una Moderna, Armónica y Creativa Sociedad de Altos Ingresos". El término "sociedad armoniosa" es el lema de los actuales líderes de China, Presidente Hu Jintao y el primer ministro Wen Jiabao.

El mundo pudo ver un vídeo distribuido en línea en febrero que mostró a Du Jianguo, redactor de una revista sobre el medio ambiente en China, interrumpiendo una conferencia de prensa por el presidente del Banco Mundial Robert Zoellick mientras Zoellick revelaba su documento. Delante de la prensa mundial, Du se levantó y denunció el documento como "inconstitucional", diciendo que "subvertiría al sistema económico básico del socialismo". Antes de que fuera empujado fuera de la plataforma por la guardia de seguridad, Du caracterizó al documento de los banqueros como "tóxico" con el propósito de capturar a los mercados chinos para

los capitalistas internacionales. (Wall Street Journal, el 23 de febrero)

### Intento del Banco Mundial para promover la contrarrevolución

Este documento es parte de los antecedentes de la lucha entre facciones en China. Representa un nexo más firme y peligroso entre el imperialismo y la facción llamada "reforma", la facción pro capitalista más agresiva en China.

El resumen ejecutivo del documento dice:

"En primer lugar, implementar reformas estructurales para fortalecer los cimientos para una economía basada en el mercado redefiniendo el papel del Gobierno, reformando y reestructurando las empresas y los bancos estatales, desarrollando el sector privado, promoviendo la competencia y profundizando reformas en el sector agrario, del trabajo y de los mercados financieros. Cuando una economía se acerca a la frontera tecnológica y agota el potencial para adquirir y aplicar la tecnología del extranjero, el papel del Gobierno y su relación con los mercados y el sector privado tiene que cambiar fundamentalmente. Mientras que proporciona relativamente menos bienes 'tangibles' y servicios públicos directamente, el gobierno tendrá que proporcionar más bienes y servicios públicos intangibles como sistemas, reglamentos y políticas que aumenten la eficiencia de la producción, promuevan la competencia, faciliten la especialización, mejoren la eficiencia de la asignación de recursos, protejan al medio ambiente y reduzcan los riesgos e incertidumbres.

"En el sector empresarial, el enfoque tendrá que ser más reformas de empresas estatales (incluyendo medidas para recalibrar el papel de los recursos públicos, introducir prácticas de gobernanza corporativa moderna incluyendo la separación de la propiedad de la gestión administrativa e implementar la diversificación gradual de la propiedad cuando sea necesario), el desarrollo del sector privado y menos barreras a la entrada y la salida, y aumento de la competencia en todos los sectores, incluyendo en las industrias estratégicas y fundamentales. En el sector financiero, sería necesario comercializar el sistema bancario, permitiendo gradualmente que las tasas de interés sean fijadas por las fuerzas del mercado, profundizar el mercado de capitales y desarrollar la infraestructura legal y de supervisión para garantizar la estabilidad financiera y construir cimientos creíbles para la internacionalización del sector financiero de China".

En otras palabras, el Banco Mundial, con la colaboración del Centro de Investigaciones de Desarrollo del Consejo del Estado, está recomendando que las empresas estatales sean reducidas a dispensadores de servicios y consejos estatales, que se retiren de la producción de acero, energía, infraestructura y otros

"bienes tangibles", y que se deje todo eso a los capitalistas privados. Recomiendan además que el sistema bancario sea integrado al capital financiero imperialista mundial y que la planificación estatal sea reducida a una nulidad.

En resumen, abogan la destrucción de las mismas estructuras socialistas que mantienen la unidad de la sociedad china y que ha permitido resistir la crisis capitalista más grave desde la Segunda Guerra Mundial.

El que un representante del máximo órgano del estado ayudase a formular este documento contrarrevolucionario, asociando públicamente su nombre a él y exhortando su adopción, muestra la degeneración de secciones claves de la más alta dirección y, dentro del aparato de estado más amplio, destaca la influencia perniciosa del capitalismo desatado en China.

Esto explica la interrupción urgente de la conferencia de prensa de Zoellick y la resistencia que surge de diversos sectores en China. Eso no quiere decir que el punto de vista representado por el documento del Banco Mundial vaya a ser victorioso. Hay muchas fuerzas en China, incluyendo a los/as trabajadores/as y campesinos/as, que resistirían firmemente cualquier intento de aplicar plenamente este programa.

Christine LaGarde, jefa del Fondo Monetario Internacional, también eligió el momento del Congreso Nacional para presentar una declaración que alababa la economía china. Este acto fue sin duda, coordinado con la presentación del Banco Mundial de "China 2030".

La gravedad de la lucha sobre el futuro de China también estalló abiertamente en el Foro Económico Mundial en Davos, Suiza en enero.

"Un grupo de oradores chinos advirtió en tonos severos el viernes por la mañana [27 de enero] en Davos, que la reforma del libre mercado en el país está estancada y que China está regresando hacia un mayor control estatal de la economía.

"Hu Shuli, editor de la revista Caixin y ampliamente reconocido como líder de la facción 'reformista' de China, inició un foro al identificar el atraso de la reforma económica como uno de los dos riesgos principales que puede impedir el progreso de la economía china, junto a la debilitación de las exportaciones a raíz de la crisis de la zona euro". (Wall Street Journal, el 27 de enero). Otros participantes chinos estaban de acuerdo.

La crisis del capitalismo mundial ha desatado esta lucha en un momento crucial de cambio del liderazgo chino. El derrocamiento y la humillación pública de Bo, que sacó a la luz esta lucha, pueden ser mejor entendidos en términos de una lucha sobre las reformas capitalistas que se están profundizando peligrosamente. Con Bo o sin él, continuará esta seria lucha.

Para quienes creen que ha habido una completa restauración del capitalismo en China, todo este asunto puede parecer de poca importancia. Pero para los/as obreros/as y campesinos/as de China y para el resto del mundo, la cuestión de detener el avance de la contrarrevolución es de suprema importancia. □

## LIBERTAD POR LOS CINCO CUBANOS

Agenda la fecha del 17 al 21 de Abril: 5 Días por los 5 Cubanos en Washington D.C. [www.thecuban5.org](http://www.thecuban5.org)