

## 'Black Mamas Bail-Out'

# Jailed women freed

By Dianne Mathiowetz

Atlanta

A joyous celebration took place in Atlanta's Howell Park on May 14, as hundreds of people enjoyed a bountiful array of food, music, children's activities and the company of the 17 women bailed out of jail in time for Mother's Day, along with the organizations that made it possible.

"Black Mamas Bail-Out Day" was launched by Southerners on New Ground (SONG), a LGBTQ organization headquartered in Atlanta, to expose the use of bail as an inherently anti-poor and racist measure that keeps thousands of working people in jail before they are convicted of any offense.

SONG's research found that on any given day, some 700,000 people are held in jails in the U.S. solely because they lack the funds to make their bail. They can lose their jobs, housing and children while awaiting their day in court.

Most often these people are arrested for minor offenses such as disorderly conduct, using fighting words, or even jaywalking, loitering or trespass. Police discretion in many of these arrests targets people of color and poor and working-class neighborhoods. People are arrested at traffic checkpoints for unpaid parking tickets, lapsed insurance or the lack of a driver's license. The inability to pay a traffic fine can land a person behind bars.

Some 80 percent of incarcerated women are mothers or caregivers. Their absence from their families injures their children and communities in immeasurable ways.

This creative, political campaign was seized upon by dozens of organizations around the country, stripping Mother's Day of its commercial veneer and truly recognizing the value of women to the well-being and liberation of their families and people.

Black Mamas Bail-Out Day took place in at least 18 cities, from Birmingham, Ala., to Baltimore and from New York City to Oakland, Calif. Tens of thousands of dollars were raised to pay the ransom money known as "bail" for women. Services were offered to help with job placement, housing needs, health and wellness concerns, legal counsel and more.

In Atlanta, women were bailed out of the Fulton County jail on May 11 and from the Atlanta City Detention Center on May 12. At each location, a welcoming group was stationed outside with flowers, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority cards, gift bags and warm smiles.

The women emerged from the jails, not knowing who or how their release had been secured. Upon learning of this community effort to bring them home for Mother's Day, tears of joy were shed, and hugs and smiles were plentiful.

At the May 14 celebration, some of these women's sto-

*Continued on page 5*

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The Philadelphia Student Union led a protest against police violence at the School District headquarters on May 11. Read more on page 4.

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# Domestic violence survivor still trapped in detention

By Terri Kay  
San Francisco

*Bulletin: Yazmin Elias was released from jail on May 15.*

After a "successful" bail hearing at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Detention Center in San Francisco, family and community members were anxiously awaiting the release of domestic violence survivor Yazmín Elias outside the West County Detention Center in Richmond, Calif., on May 11.

Instead, according to a May 12 press release issued by her supporters, they learned that "local entanglement with ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] had led to a bizarre 'catch-22' which unfairly blocked Yazmín's release.

"Specifically, during the 15 months that ICE has detained Ms. Elias in Richmond, she has, of course, been physically unable to attend local court hearings in Sonoma [a California city some 40 miles from Richmond]. Yet, local warrants were issued for Yazmín's arrest, despite the fact she was locked up in ICE custody."

Elias is now being held in the Sonoma County Jail and is to be seen by a judge on May 16. Her public defender, Luis Reyes Savalza, expects her to be released at that time.

"I was already packed up and ready to see my children, and having to deal with this, I'm just so frustrated because they keep playing with my life," Elias said after receiving the news.

A survivor of domestic violence for nearly two decades and the mother of three children who are U.S. citizens, Elias migrated to Santa Rosa when she was four years old. On May 13, she was finally granted a \$25,000 bond by Immigration Judge Scott Simpson; an anonymous donor agreed to post it.



Supporters of Yazmin Elias call for her release in San Francisco on May 11.

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

The May 12 press release states, "Her detention by ICE, despite a local judge ordering her released to continue a substance abuse treatment program for survivors of domestic violence, has sparked serious concerns from advocates of domestic violence survivors."

Community groups also continue to express opposition to the deportation policies of sheriffs in both Sonoma, where Yazmín was turned over to ICE, and Contra Costa [County, Calif.], which maintains a lucrative contract to detain people for ICE. Both sheriffs met with anti-immigrant Attorney General Jeff Sessions prior to his confirmation [as U.S. Attorney General], causing significant controversy."

The California Sheriff's Association actually wrote a letter in support of Sessions' nomination. It was signed by Alameda County Sheriff Gregory Ahern, who has also faced numerous community protests for his cooperation with ICE. □

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# Letter from West Virginia: Appalachia says 'NO' to Nazis

Listening to West Virginia Public Radio on the way to work yesterday morning, I heard a piece about the "neo-Nazi" rally in Pikeville, Ky.

A coalition of fascist and white supremacist organizations calling themselves "Nationalist Front" descended on downtown Pikeville for a rally outside the courthouse. Organizations included the so-called Traditionalist Worker Party, the National Socialist Movement and the League of the South, among others. The TWP's head is Matt Heimbach, who gained infamous notoriety for a 2016 assault on a Black woman, a college student, at a Trump rally in Louisville, Ky.

Much of the radio story involved interviews with local residents who did not appreciate the day's event, and rightfully so. All of downtown Pikeville was shut down for an entire day. Stores and restaurants were closed, and many residents avoided the area out of fear and concerns for safety. It makes sense to report that, when a high-stakes event like this occurs, most people want nothing to do with it. Rather than focus on developing opinions on the issues at hand, they tend to focus on the changes in their community, which would have otherwise experienced a "normal" Saturday afternoon.

So, regarding the immediate sentiment of Pikeville residents, Public Radio was pretty accurate. The problems were with the greater narrative — that the participants were fascists and anti-fascists, both from out-of-state.

So, who was there? Well, I was there. And I saw on one side of Main Street, barricaded in front of the County Courthouse, the aforementioned "Nationalist Front," hereafter to be referred to as "Nazis," all white and nearly all male, who brandished firearms, carried shields and gave "Sieg Heil" salutes.

On the other side, barricaded along the sidewalk, was "the opposition." Men and women, most seemingly working-class, mostly white but also multinational. Between these barricades, down the middle of the street, were various "law enforcement" officers, journalists and photographers.

There seems to be no argument that the Nazis were not from Pikeville and, judging by their pronunciation of "Appalachia," that many of them were not from anywhere even remotely nearby. This is the part that Public Radio got right. These were a bunch of out-of-state Nazis who came to shake up Pikeville for a few hours before moving on to the next town

45 minutes away.

But what about the opposition? According to the radio story, they were all anti-fascists from out of state. This sets up a narrative in which local residents voice their annoyance with out-of-staters from opposing sides coming to town and claiming to speak on behalf of local people.

Not quite the case. It is definitely true that some of the opposition were from other states, but certainly not everyone. For instance, I was standing with "the opposition." The very first person I spoke with on my arrival was a teacher who lives in Pikeville.

And progressive media outlet Unicorn Riot interviewed "a woman who identified herself as a mother against racism in Appalachia [and] wanted to make a statement to the press, but didn't want to show her face on camera because of fear of being targeted by the hate groups converging that day."

She said: "These Nazis said they put a call out to white families. I'm a white mother in Appalachia and I'm here to say Nazis are not welcome in Appalachia. These people say they're for family. ... They're not for family, they're for hate and fear. They want to hear from fami-



PHOTO: GARY DELUKE  
Appalachian opposition to Nazis in Pikeville, Ky., April 29.

ly? I am a mother. And I'm telling them go home. ... Your mothers are probably ashamed of you. If you were actually for family, then I would not be giving interviews under an assumed name or afraid to show my face on camera. ... There is a history of resistance to Nazi propaganda and Nazis in Appalachia, and I'm glad to say that people in Appalachia are standing up for themselves."

She was carrying a sign: "Mother Against Racism in Appalachia."

I stayed until the very end, and when most people had left, there remained a small group, about 30, of self-identified anti-fascist protesters from outside mountain country.

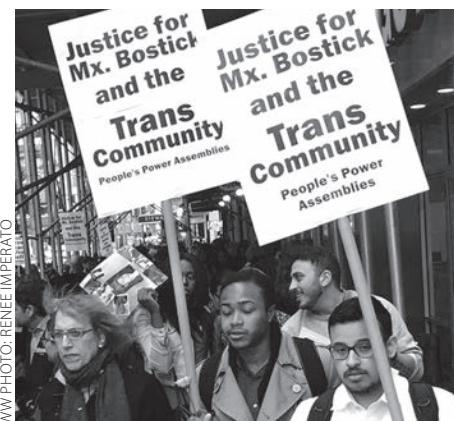
As far as I could see, the rest of the opposition had been folks from various backgrounds who came from different parts of Kentucky and West Virginia, and their message was quite clear: "Nazis are not welcome in Appalachia!"

Gary DeLuke

Pikeville, Ky.

*Gary DeLuke is an Appalachian union organizer and activist.*

# Transgender community unites at Mx. Bostick's memorial



By Renée Imperato  
New York

A vigil for Mx. Bostick, a Black transgender person, was held by the LGBTQ community on May 12. It was organized by trans people of color from the Translatina Network, the Audre Lorde Project, the Anti-Violence Project and other organizations.

Many transgender and cisgender Workers World Party and People's Power Assembly members attended the vigil.

Also in attendance were many members of the Transgenerational Theater Project.

On April 25, at 10 p.m., Bostick was walking past a hamburger joint at 29th Street and 7th Avenue, two blocks from the Pennsylvania Station/Madison Square Garden complex, when Bostick was attacked. Bostick sustained severe head injuries and died 10 days later, on May 4. Only then were the community and the media notified.

Bostick was the tenth trans person known to have been killed so far this year in the U.S. Eight of the ten were people

of color.

Among the speakers at the vigil were Cecilia Gentili of the Translatina Network, activist Tanya Asapansa Walker and Michael Adams, CEO of Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE). Slogans on placards stated: "Justice for Mx. Bostick," "Fight racism" and "Black, Brown, Trans lives matter."

What was demonstrated by the more than 150 people in attendance is that the attacks on the trans and gender nonconforming community will be beaten back on our road to victory. □

## WW Commentary:

# From Alton Sterling to Jordan Edwards, no justice, no peace!

By Monica Moorehead

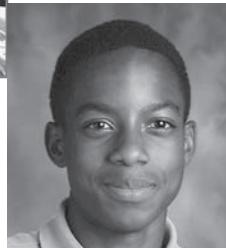
There are many progressive struggles under capitalism, many connected to each other due to systemic inequality. Inside the U.S. — aptly described as the belly of the beast — the struggle against racism or white supremacy is the heart and soul of many issues every minute of every day. Probably the most glaring example is the ongoing police war against Black and Brown people, especially youth.

In 99.9 percent of cases, white police officers who fatally kill Black people either get a slap on the wrist, by being put on a desk job or being fired, or are let off scot-free in order to continue their reign of racist terror. Very rarely do police officers get indicted and charged with murder.

For instance, on May 5, the U.S. Justice Department — now led by U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who has a sordid history of racist, segregationist views — announced that no federal charges will be brought against the two white cops who fatally shot Alton Sterling, a 37-year-old Black man, in Baton Rouge, La., last July outside a convenience store. His murder was captured on videotape that



Alton Sterling



clearly shows the cops holding Sterling down on his back before shooting him.

The Sterling ruling is far from an isolated one. There are the cases of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., Jamar Clark and Philando Castile in Minneapolis, Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Korryn Gaines and Freddie Gray in Baltimore, and countless more victims whose killers were cops who never faced any jail time.

Even in those rare cases where white police officers have been charged with the murder of Black people, the courts manage to let them off on lesser charges. Killer cop Michael Slager was charged by the state of South Carolina in the mur-

der of 40-year-old Walter Scott, whom he shot eight times in the back in North Charleston in 2015. A mistrial by jury was declared on Dec. 5, 2016, although there was a videotape of the murder. Slager pleaded guilty to federal charges of violating Scott's civil rights on May 2. A sentence has not yet been announced.

A white cop who fatally shot a 15-year-old Black youth, Jordan Edwards, when he shot into a car filled with teenagers April 29 in Balch Springs, a suburb of Dallas, Texas, was only recently charged with murder. The cop, Roy Oliver, turned himself in. The chances of Oliver being convicted are next to none, according to data collected by criminologist Philip Stinson since 2005.

Stinson states, "About 1,000 times a year, an on-duty police officer shoots and kills somebody — and yet only about a handful of times is he charged. Only 29 of the 81 cases — or 36% — have ended with the officer being convicted, with about half convicted by jury trial and other half by guilty plea. Thirty-one of the cases (38%) wound up with a non-conviction, and the other 21 (26%) remain pending." (nydailynews.com, May 8)

And these are general statistics that don't take into consideration when the killer cop is white and the victim is Black.

No doubt the capitalist courts and laws will somehow find convenient loopholes to protect the actions of police like Oliver, while demonizing and dehumanizing their victims. When any police officer is charged with murder or even manslaughter, that reflects the strength of shut-it-down protest in the streets, especially carried out under the banner of Black Lives Matter.

And Black Lives Matter is fighting not only police terror but its presence reflects resistance to other forms of white supremacy, like the recent incident where Baltimore Orioles baseball player, Adam Jones, was forced to endure racist epithets from Boston Red Sox fans. Jones is among a tiny minority of 62 African-American Major League Baseball players who still have to endure racist taunts from majority white baseball fans.

Despite any important concessions made in the struggle against racism from state repression to sports, ultimately it will take a revolutionary transformation of the workers and oppressed to uproot white supremacy from all sectors of U.S. society. □

# Black graduates disrupt Betsy DeVos



Defiant graduates turn their backs on DeVos.

Close to half of the approximately 400 African-American graduates at the historically Black Mary Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Fla., held a protest against the college's commencement speaker, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, during their graduation exercises on May 10. The students and some faculty members made it clear to the school administration before the event that they were opposed to the Trump appointee speaking there and also her receiving an honorary degree.

DeVos, who is thoroughly anti-public education, has described historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) as "real pioneers when it comes to school choice," disguising the fact that these

schools were established for the education of Black people in response to legalized racial segregation. ([guardian.com](#), May 10)

As soon as DeVos started speaking at the podium, a rising chorus of boos could be heard during the program, and then graduates rose up and turned their backs on her. She was forced to cut her scheduled one-hour speech to only 20 minutes. There were so many interruptions that Edison Jackson, the university's president, attempted to quiet the students but to no avail.

A protest was also held outside the graduation with signs that read "Fire DeVos; Save Public Education" and "No justice — no peace."

— Story by Monica Moorehead

## Student Union protests police violence

By Christa Rivers  
Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Student Union, one of a handful of youth-organizing groups in the city, led a protest on the steps of the Philadelphia School District headquarters on May 11. Students, parents, teachers, community members and City Council member Helen Gym spoke about police violence experienced by Black and Brown public school students here.

In 2016, a student at Benjamin Franklin High School was assaulted by police officer Jeffrey Maciocha in a third-floor hallway as the student was trying to find a bathroom. The bathrooms on the other floors were all locked — a practice that is evidence of the criminalization of Black youth, who are not even trusted or permitted to freely use bathrooms!

There is a graphic 13-second video of the student on the ground in what appears to be a chokehold, reminiscent of Eric Garner's murder by New York police officers in July 2014. In response to the 2016 assault, the school district agreed to create a system so that complaints can be filed against school police officers, a demand set forth by PSU.

However, the district's complaint system is sorely lacking and does not address the demands made by PSU. The school district has failed to identify exactly how and where students can make complaints. Plus the system is only online, making it largely inaccessible to students without computer access.

The school district, not an independent entity, will handle oversight of the complaint system. Already unaccountable to its students, and with a vested interested

in protecting the police officers placed in schools, the school district will be the only entity investigating the complaints.

Moreover, the complaint system is not open to the larger Philadelphia community, whose members often experience violence and harassment at the hands of school police.

With lack of independent oversight, it is not difficult to imagine how many more voices of Philadelphia's Black, Brown and other poor and oppressed students will be ignored. Several students who spoke at the rally noted that many district schools have more police officers than guidance counselors.

Policing in a capitalist country, where wealth was built on the backs of slaves, poor people and immigrants and on stolen Indigenous land, is inherently racist and biased according to class. What the student at Benjamin Franklin High School experienced is the exertion of control over his Black body by a white supremacist institution.

What is the purpose of policing in schools? To protect students? It is clear that marginalized and oppressed students need to be protected from police officers, as they all serve to keep oppressed peoples in their "place." It is not enough to be anti-police brutality. We must be completely anti-police.

The struggle against police harassment and occupation of our schools is directly linked to the struggle against police harassment and occupation at Standing Rock; against Immigration, Customs and Enforcement harassment and deportation faced by immigrants; against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land; against the political repres-

### Philadelphia

May 11 protest at Philadelphia School District headquarters.



sion and budget cuts in Puerto Rico; and so on. We must unite against imperialism, capitalism and white supremacy! □

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

### Workers World Forum in Boston



WW PHOTO: STEVEN KIRSCHBAUM

By Diva T. Williams  
Boston

An intergenerational gathering of Workers World Party members, local activists and members of the community arrived for an evening of education and celebration on May 12.

Jonathan Roberts, a Harvard University graduate and member of the Student Labor Action Movement, described the victories won at Harvard recently through student-worker solidarity. More than 700 food service workers, mostly people of color and immigrants, went on strike in response to slashed health care benefits.

Roberts and other student organizers mustered 400 students to occupy an administration building until the decision was reversed. "The fight was about health care, dignity and rights," said Roberts. "I tell students, 'If Harvard doesn't respect the workers, they will not respect the students.'"

The students refused to be moved, neither physically nor ideologically, "until we got confirmation that we won." Roberts concluded, "Clearly we have the power to move things and change things. Without workers, this system cannot exist."

Teresa Gutierrez, a member of Workers World Party's National Committee and a co-founder of the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, spoke of the immigrant community's invaluable contributions to the labor movement.

Gutierrez emphasized the inextricable link between xenophobia, systemic poverty and race. "The attacks on immigrants flow from capitalism ... [which] uses them to exploit cheap labor. ... Class is primary, but racism is not secondary," she said to uproarious applause.

She also emphasized the difference between immigration and forced migration: "We need to educate the movement that we are not all immigrants. Mexicans didn't cross the border. The border crossed them. In the 1800s, half of Mexico was stolen because America wanted to expand slavery."

Gutierrez explained that enslaved Africans were not immigrants, but kidnapped prisoners forced to generate profit for their kidnappers. Indigenous people were driven from their lands by immigrants from Europe. Today, Latinx people flee the instability and war caused by U.S. imperialism. "To fight for immigrant workers is to fight for all of us. It is linked to every struggle," she said. □

## Trump confronted at school commencement

Protesters from Virginia and beyond confronted President Donald Trump and all he represents on May 13 at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. Beginning in the early morning hours, protesters set up a picket line directly across from the university where Trump was the commencement speaker.



WW PHOTO

a strong line for more than three hours. Chants included "No Trump, no KKK, no fascist USA," and a rainbow of placards and banners denounced racism, sexism, bigotry and U.S. wars.

- WW Bureau

Sponsored by the Seven Hills Progressive Society and supported by organizations such as the Roanoke Peoples' Power Network, protesters of all ages, nationalities, genders and sexualities held

# On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

## Strike threat helps film/TV writers win contract

When 96.3 percent of the voting members of Writers Guild West and East authorized a strike in late April if negotiations didn't go their way, the entire entertainment industry became on edge, reported Variety on May 4. Many remember the writers' 100-day strike in 2007-2008, which set the Los Angeles economy back by more than \$2 billion.

That strategy paid off big time on May 2, when union negotiators won "unprecedented gains" that they attributed to members' "near-unanimous backing" of the strike threat. In a letter to the union's more than 13,000 members, they asserted: "We were able to achieve a deal that will net this guild's members \$130 million more, over the life of the [3-year] contract" than what the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers had offered. (New York Times, May 3)

Specifically, the WGAW and WGAE won gains in minimum salaries, a major AMPTP bailout of the union's bankrupt health care plan, a 15 percent increase in Pay TV residuals and a precedent-setting definition of "short seasons." That means that if writers work more than 2.4 weeks on an episode in a limited series (six-week seasons rather than 22 weeks), they are eligible for overtime.

Will this contract set a precedent for other Hollywood unions? The actors' contract with producers expires on June 30. Stay tuned.

## UPS workers fight to keep health benefits

United Parcel Service, which boasts of being the world's largest package delivery company while banking billions in profits annually and showering multimillion-dollar raises on board members, wants to cut vital health benefits for its 12,000 air maintenance workers and retirees. (PR Newswire, May 1) This is an insult to the aircraft engineers and related technicians, represented by Teamsters Local 2727, who perform grueling, health-threatening labor, like luging heavy machinery and aircraft parts and being exposed to toxic exhaust and chemicals during 24/7 shifts that keep UPS flying.

On May 1, these heroic workers published their righteous contract demands in an open letter to UPS CEO David Abney, in the Atlanta Journal Constitution and Louisville Courier-Journal to coincide with the company's shareholders' meeting in Atlanta. (Teamsters Local 2727, May 1)

Their demand letter also coincided with the Kentucky Derby on May 6. In a spectacular show of power and determination, a pro-union banner flew above the event (pictured), highlighting the fact that the UPS CEO and his board get fed while planning to starve the workforce.

UPS aircraft mechanics fly aerial banner over the Kentucky Derby on May 6. "UPS CEO 21% RAISE; TEAMSTER 2727 0%; GREED!!!"

## Solidarity with Charter Spectrum strike

The 1,800 field and cable technicians in the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3 persist in their struggle with Charter Spectrum over health care, pensions and a fair contract. (NY Daily News, May 13) Since March 28, Charter Spectrum has tried to break the strike using divide-and-conquer tactics, blaming it on Local 3 and individual workers — anything but their own corporate greed. But the union, its members and other unions know better.

A ray of solidarity shone when a representative from New York's community action group Parents to Improve School Transportation delivered a message on May 9 from the Boston School Bus Drivers, United Steelworkers Local 8751. The letter pledged unity with the Local 3 struggle and wished Local 8751 members "could be on the picket lines everyday to defend you and the labor movement from this vicious Wall-Street-funded, Trump-inspired Corporate Warfare." Local 8751 also voted unanimously to donate \$500, which will surely come in handy as this battle continues.

## Fighting for pay equity in NYC

Legislation introduced by Public Advocate Letitia James and passed by the New York City Council on April 5 bars employers from asking about job candidates' salary history during the hiring process. James based the law on her office's 2016 report that women workers in the city make approximately \$5.8 billion less in annual wages than men. The gender pay gap is worse for women of color: Latinas make 54 percent less than white men, Blacks 45 percent less and Asians 37 percent less.

Another law introduced April 5 by Councilmember Laurie A. Cumbo, who represents Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant district, also helps combat the gap: It would make gender wage data for public sector city contractors available and transparent. (Chief-Leader, April 14) □

# Commuters confront govt-created decay at Penn Station

By G. Dunkel  
New York

Every workday, more than 600,000 people pass through New York's Pennsylvania Station, which now is in a state of advanced and dangerous dilapidation. Almost all of them are workers going to their jobs or home.

Built more than 100 years ago and designed for 300,000 users at most, Penn Station is used and owned by the Amtrak national railroad system, which rents out tracks and facilities to the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) and New Jersey Transit (NJT), two of the largest commuter railroads in the country. New York subways run through its lowest level. In 1967, the railroad sold air rights to a developer who put a major sports complex, Madison Square Garden, and a multistoried office building above the station.

In the past few months there have been two derailments due to rotting wooden ties that connect the rails. The injuries to the passengers involved were minor, since the trains were moving slowly, but the disruptions were major. Service was so messed up that trips that normally take an hour were taking three to four hours.

Amtrak announced May 11 that it will take tracks out of service for most of July and August. This will reduce capacity for the LIRR and NJT by a quarter, knocking out of service approximately 40 of the 160 trains that the two lines run during morning rush hour. It also will impose major service cuts next year.

Maintenance on the tracks, safety and service are not the only problems. In April, Amtrak cops used a stun gun in a dispute with a passenger waiting for a train. That day, some 1,200 passengers had been stuck on a train, which had lost power in the tunnel for a few hours.

When they heard the sound of the stun gun, the passengers thought it was gunfire and began stampeding through the station. They

abandoned their luggage and raced for the exits. People were knocked down, but nobody was seriously injured. Even though Penn Station occupies two whole city blocks, it only has five exits for the 600,000 people who use it.

The lack of exits and the dark, twisty, badly signed and narrow corridors, with low ceilings and no decent public address system, would make fighting even a small fire problematic. Smoke rises, and if the ceiling is high it is possible to escape under it. But for the past 50 years, the trend at Penn Station has been to offer less and less space. When an event at Madison Square Garden lets out, it is tricky to walk through the crowds in the station.

On May 3 around 10 a.m., sewage began leaking into the LIRR ticket area from the office tower above the station, according to NBC news. Amtrak and the LIRR made a point in their announcements that service was not interrupted, even though many passengers complained about the smell. As late as 5 p.m. there was still a trickle of sewage running down the wall.

A couple of days later, on May 5, heavy, intense rain overwhelmed drainage and forced the temporary closure of the main entrance. Other entrances were passable and service continued, but many passengers couldn't get to their trains.

The problems of Pennsylvania Station are striking and replicated throughout the United States. Private institutions, no longer profitable but essential to the economy of an area — in this instance, Penn Station is an essential transportation link in the Northeast — are "rescued" by state institutions.

The state of New Jersey controls NJT, the state of New York controls the LIRR, and the federal government controls Amtrak. Vornado Realty Trust — controlled by Steven Roth, a personal friend of Donald Trump — is the largest property owner surrounding the rail hub. The mechanism to coordinate and adjust the efforts of these four entities is just as dilapidated as the station. □

## Jailed women freed

*Continued from page 1*

ries were shared. One of the most compelling was that of a 71-year-old woman who, having no food at home, went to a nearby store. She was arrested for allegedly stealing a can of peanuts and had been in jail since April, unable to pay the bail money.

Young mothers with small babies in their arms stood before the crowd, speechless in their happiness to be with their children again.

Mary Hooks, co-director of SONG, was

interviewed by media outlets as diverse as Democracy Now! and CNN. It was a sign of the political significance of the campaign in this time of harsher criminal measures coming from the Trump administration, and the growing consciousness of the corporate profiteering that underlies mass incarceration in the U.S.

A similar effort for Father's Day is being discussed. □

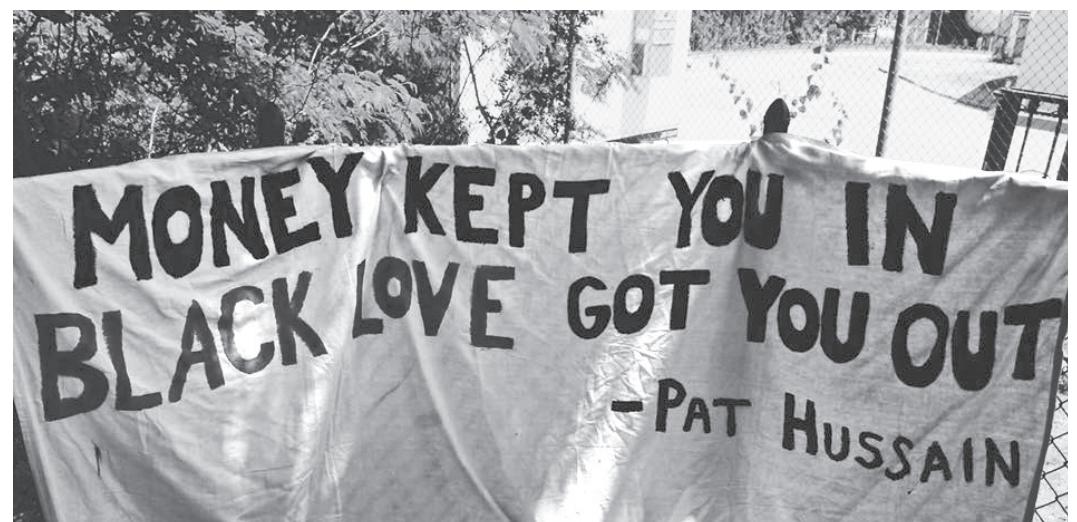


PHOTO: LOVETTE KARGBO-THOMPSON  
This banner greeted the bailed-out women from Atlanta jails. The quote is from Pat Hussain, a founder of SONG and well-known Atlanta leader of the LGBTQ community.

# Behind the firing of Comey

# A struggle within the U.S. ruling class

By Fred Goldstein

The firing of FBI head James Comey by President Donald Trump is a struggle within the U.S. ruling class. It is taking place at the highest levels of the capitalist state. There are no progressive sides in this struggle.

The workers, the oppressed and the radical movement must not get drawn into it. The role of the movement and of the working class is to mount an independent struggle against the attacks coming down on the masses on all fronts — labor, immigrants, women, the environment, Muslims, escalating racist police terror, new draconian drug law enforcement, etc.

These threats can only be thwarted by the fullest mass mobilization and militant resistance.

There is justifiable hatred of the racist, reactionary, militarist, authoritarian, bigot Trump. And Trump is the target of an FBI investigation. This can cause confusion because Trump is so hated that some people might be driven to the “lesser evil” of siding with the racist, repressive, anti-labor, anti-communist, witch-hunting FBI — the U.S. secret police — because of its investigation of Trump.

#### Behind the anti-Russia campaign

A further cause for confusion is that Trump and his administration are being investigated for collusion with the Russians. The U.S. ruling class has been pushing back against Trump since the 2016 election campaign when he made open and repeated appeals for a rapprochement with Russia.

The campaign against Trump's orientation for rapprochement with Russia began as a struggle over foreign policy. It still is. But there is now an added dimension. The anti-Trump forces in the ruling class are now using the issue of alleged collusion with Russia as a political wedge to weaken and possibly get rid of him.

The anti-Russia campaign has been fueled by the Hillary Clinton camp and the Democratic Party leadership. They want to blame Comey and Russia for their electoral loss. Instead of calling for an investigation into racist voter suppression or admitting their bankrupt political campaign was based on the line that “things are great,” the Democrats prefer to blame Comey and the Russians. The anti-Russia campaign has also been fueled by the Pentagon wing of the Republican Party, led by John McCain and Lindsey Graham.

The anti-Russia campaign flows not just from Trump's foreign policy orientation. On the contrary, this campaign would exist regardless of Trump. It flows from the expansionist policy of U.S. imperialism.

The bosses and the Pentagon are opposed to the Vladimir Putin government because it has nuclear weapons, a large army, and is seen as a powerful rival. Part of imperialist expansionism has been the campaign of “regime change” in Syria directed against the independent government of Bashar al-Assad. Russia has enabled Syria to ward off imperialist aggression.

Also part of Washington's expansionism was the sponsorship of a fascist coup in Ukraine. The former president of Ukraine refused to join the European Union and steer Ukraine toward Western imperialism. Washington organized his overthrow by a fascist invasion of the Ukrainian parliament. In reply Moscow supported anti-fascist forces in Eastern Ukraine and supported a move by Crimea to return to Russia.

The anti-Russia campaign now serves as a convenient weapon against Trump because it allows the capitalist establishment to fight him on a reactionary basis. Never mind his anti-Mexican and anti-Muslim racism, his sexism, his war on the environment, his promotion of the racist police, his attacks on job safety and labor standards, etc. The bosses would much prefer to make Russia the issue.

#### The FBI: from Watergate to Trump

The establishment is using the FBI as their weapon to sharpen their attack on Trump. This is nothing new. W. Mark Felt, known as “Deep Throat,” who fed all the information to Woodward and Bernstein at the Washington Post in order to bring Richard Nixon down during the Watergate investigation, became deputy director of the FBI after the death of J. Edgar Hoover.

The spy agency had then, and has now, the means of eavesdropping, surveilling, infiltrating, etc. — all the techniques they mainly use against mass organizations, unions, radicals, liberation organizations. It also has the

means to spy on factions in the ruling class.

The establishment is using the FBI at the moment because the Republicans control the House, the Senate and the White House. Until Judge Neil Gorsuch was appointed to the Supreme Court, the rulers had the option of using the judiciary to challenge Trump, as in the stays of his illegal Muslim ban. That option is now more difficult to use, with Gorsuch on the Supreme Court. So the FBI is the agency of choice.

#### Timing of the Comey firing

At the time of his firing Comey was preparing to step up the investigation of the Trump campaign. Days before his firing, he met with Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein to ask for more personnel and money to pursue the investigation. ([latimes.com](#), May 14)

Trump decided to fire Comey at about the same time. He had a meeting with his Chief of Staff, Reince Priebus; his son-in-law, Jared Kushner; Vice President Mike Pence; and White House Counsel Don McGahn. After the meeting Trump told Rosenstein to draw up a statement supporting the firing of Comey. The statement condemned Comey for, of all things, mishandling the revelation of the Clinton emails 10 days before the election! Rosenstein did not call for Comey's firing. Trump then issued a one-page statement firing Comey for his alleged “mishandling” of the Clinton emails.

Of course, there is no one in Washington or anyplace else who could possibly believe Trump's initial reasoning. It was patently obvious that Comey wanted to advance the investigation of Trump and his group. And Trump wanted to shut down the operation.

Trump also fired Assistant Attorney General Sally Yates after she told him that National Security Adviser Gen. Mike Flynn was dealing with the Russians. She also refused to support the Muslim ban. Trump maneuvered with Kevin Nunes, head of the House Intelligence Committee, who was in charge of leading the investigation into the Trump campaign. The investigation stalled and Nunes had to recuse himself.

In other words, Trump is clearly afraid of the investigation. The ruling class is not quite sure whether Trump's fear is based on political relations with Russian officials or financial relations with the Russian oligarchy, or both. In either case, they do not trust him.

The ruling class is also suspicious because the only big bank that has lent money to Trump in recent years is Deutsche Bank, which was recently fined \$630 million for laundering \$10 billion worth of Russian money. ([cnn.com](#), Jan. 31, 2017) The big New York Wall Street banks won't lend to him because he has gone bankrupt six times, stiffing investors, contractors and workers. ([Washington Post](#), Sept. 26, 2016; [wsj.com](#), March 20, 2016)

#### Obama tried to stabilize the system

When Barack Obama was elected president over John McCain in 2008, he had major support in the ruling class because he was known as a moderate who could reach across the aisle and work out compromises. He was solidly pro-imperialist and pro-capitalist, but compromise was his strong point.

At the end of the George W. Bush administration, U.S. capitalism was suffering from multiple crises that were threatening the stability of the system. Tens of millions of people were without health care and had no prospect of getting any. Two wars raged, in Iraq and Afghanistan. There were 12 million undocumented workers who needed a way to stabilize their situation. Big business was fiercely blocking any attempt to reduce carbon emissions or deal with the alarming rate of environmental degradation. And as Obama took office, the worst economic crisis in 70 years broke out.

During his tenure Obama tried to work on these issues while maintaining and protecting the capitalist system and the profits of the bosses. He got the Affordable Care Act passed, which kept the insurance companies enriched

but managed to cover an additional 20 million people. He dragged the bosses kicking and screaming into the global environment talks and finally got the Paris Accord on CO<sub>2</sub> reduction. He pulled most of the troops out of Afghanistan and withdrew from Iraq. While Obama severely escalated drone attacks, he imposed strict White House control over military operations.

While Obama deported hundreds of thousands of immigrants early in his administration, and got called the “deporter in chief,” he eventually got the Dream Act and other limited protections passed. He issued executive guidelines to Immigration, Customs and Enforcement to deport only those who committed “serious crimes” and said those whose only offense was to cross the border could remain. This was done by executive guidelines.

Finally, he presided over the bailout of Wall Street and promoted the passage of the Dodd-Frank bill, which placed restrictions on the Wall Street financiers and set up some protections for investors.

#### Fear of Trump destabilizing the system

The bosses and the bankers are licking their chops over the prospect of tax cuts, regulatory cuts on safety and environmental rules, tariff protection and other profit-growing measures under the Trump administration.

But the broad capitalist establishment — the corporate media, the think tanks, the academic institutions and the majority of the bourgeois intelligentsia — can see beyond the next profit-reporting quarter. They are fearful that Trump is determined to undo all the carefully worked out stabilizing arrangements at home and abroad that U.S. imperialism has constructed over the decades.

They also worry about his absolute ignorance of imperialist statecraft and his lack of interest in learning. Trump started his presidency by questioning the “one China policy,” which is the bedrock of U.S.-China relations. He took a call from the leader of Taiwan, but was forced to take it back.

He threatened and insulted the presidents of Mexico and Australia in his first diplomatic phone calls and then threatened to tear up NAFTA. NAFTA has brought billions in profits to U.S. industry and agribusiness. He was stopped and had to call the presidents of Mexico and Canada to tell them that he was backing off.

In the midst of the Korean crisis, when U.S. imperialism needed the government in Seoul, Trump told South Korea that it had to pay a billion dollars for the installation of a highly unpopular U.S. anti-missile system and that he was going to tear up the U.S.-South Korean trade pact. National Security Adviser Gen. H.R. McMaster had to call the South Koreans and tell them that the U.S. would pay.

Trump refused to shake hands with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the principal anchor of imperialism in Europe. These are only some of his political gaffes.

Trump's health care bill, which threatens to strip 24 million people of their health coverage, is a disaster which has sparked fear and outrage among millions. His racist attorney general, Jeff Sessions, has reversed the Obama-Holder (former Attorney General Eric Holder) policy of sharply restricting the use of the harshest mandatory sentences. Trump has overturned safe water executive orders. ICE has ruled that everyone in the country who crossed the border is now subject to deportation. Trump plans to undermine, if not overturn, the Dodd-Frank bill. Trump has lifted all restrictions on the military and handed over operational control to the commanders; 3,000 more troops are now headed to Afghanistan.

In short, the Trump administration is moving rapidly to undermine the domestic stability and international imperialist order carefully worked out over decades. He is creating consternation in the upper echelons of the capitalist establishment.

That is what was fueling Comey's investigation. And Trump is trying to shut it down. □

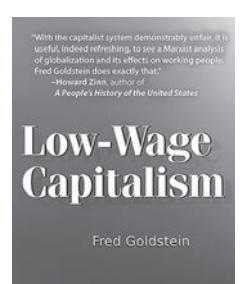


#### Capitalism at a Dead End

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

#### Low-Wage Capitalism

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to [LowWageCapitalism.com](#). Available at all major online booksellers.



# What is driving Sessions' new 'war on drugs'?

By Monica Moorehead

U.S. attorney general Jeff Sessions announced on May 12 that the U.S. Department of "In-Justice" plans to overturn a 2013 policy established by President Barack Obama's former U.S. attorney general, Eric Holder, that instituted minimum prison sentencing for those convicted of drug trafficking, including marijuana.

Sessions, who is openly pro-cop and a die-hard white segregationist from Alabama, is giving local prosecutors around the U.S. the green light to once again unleash the harshest criminal sentences against those charged and convicted as drug dealers and users, especially if they are Black, Brown and working-class youth, for even insignificant amounts of drugs.

In essence, Sessions and his cohorts in the Justice Department are intensifying the so-called "war on drugs" that began in the 1980s under President Reagan, followed in the 1990s by the Clinton administration and the George W. Bush administration in the 2000s. Clinton was the main orchestrator of the preemptive "three strikes, you're out" policy passed in 1994. Under that policy, if you were convicted of three felonies you were automatically sent to prison for life, with no hope of parole.

Due to the overcrowding of prisons and outcry over the racial disparity in drug sentences, President Obama released tens of thousands from federal prisons, many of whom were convicted of nonviolent drug possession, before he left office.

The U.S. still has the highest prison rate in the world, with 25 percent of the world's prison population, at a cost of \$80 billion annually. The rapid rate of mass incarceration has also led to the growth of private prisons for profit, funded by Wall Street investors like CoreCivic (formerly the Corrections Corporation of America).

According to the Washington Post, the U.S. prison and jail population more than quadrupled from 500,000 in 1980 to 2.2 million in 2015. U.S. prisons are filled disproportionately with Black men saddled with lengthy prison sentences — 10 or 20 years and sometimes life without parole for a first drug offense. (May 12)

Michelle Alexander's groundbreaking book, "The New Jim Crow," focuses much attention on how federal drug offense laws disproportionately target people of color, especially young Black men, railroading them to prison and a never-ending cycle of racist marginalization, demonization and poverty.

## Prisons expose capitalism at a dead end

The economic basis for Sessions intensifying these draconian drug laws is rooted in the current global economic crisis, which began in 2007 and was given a Marxist analysis by Fred Goldstein in his 2012 book, "Capitalism at a Dead End."

The first three paragraphs in Goldstein's introduction sum up the current crisis this way: "Capitalism, the system of production for profit, has reached a dead end. The plague of mass unemployment, underemployment, low wages, destruction of benefits, social service cutbacks, and mounting poverty are overcoming the system and bringing unrelieved disaster to the multinational working class and the oppressed peoples of the world. In addition to the threat to the working class, the life-sustaining character of the environment of the planet is in dire danger.

An entire generation of workers is facing a dismal future. For a growing majority, capitalism has in store only unemployment, marginal work and unskilled, low-paid jobs as the system incorporates more and more skills into software and machinery. Technology and the worldwide wage competition orchestrated by the employers continue to drive wages down.

"Among the most poisonous political and social consequences of the crisis are the intensification of racism, the growth of the prison-industrial complex, the rise in the persecution of immigrants and undocumented workers, and the war on women and lesbian, gay, bi and trans people. The ruling class seeks all means to sow division among the masses in order to divert attention from the failure of the economic system and the growth of obscene inequality."

The increase in the murders of Black and Latinx youth

by the police, along with other arms of the repressive state, including legislatures that pass biased, anti-worker laws, the Justice Department, the FBI, the courts, prisons and more, are constant reminders that a tiny clique of billionaire rulers — or the 1% — are fearful of spontaneous rebellions and shutdowns by the unemployed and underemployed masses, inside and outside the prison walls. The multinational working class is a real threat to the stability of the capitalist system.

Sessions has already made it clear that he wants to give the cops carte blanche — protected by biased laws — to carry out their savagery on youth with impunity, including those police departments that were singled out during the Obama administration as being "excessive" in their policing.

Disproportionate numbers of youth of color, along with growing numbers of once privileged youth, are becoming more and more expendable under a capitalist system that cannot provide a future with jobs at a living wage and full benefits.

The various stages of the "war on drugs" reflect the various stages of the cyclical crises of capitalism. But the current stage is now permanent, with no way to go but downward due to, according to Goldstein, "job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high tech age."

Sessions and the current U.S. administration have not only declared open season on the oppressed masses, especially marginalized youth, but also on the progressive movement that has become more radicalized following the Nov. 8 election of Donald Trump. Many youth who were indiscriminately arrested on Jan. 20 in Washington, D.C., while protesting the Trump inauguration, are facing 75 years on excessively harsh felony charges. These charges are meant to have a chilling impact on the movement and on resistance.

The best way to counter this latest attack by Sessions and his ilk is to build an independent, united movement of revolutionaries and progressives to say, "Stop the attacks on oppressed peoples and our movement."

*The writer was the 2016 Workers World Party presidential candidate.*

# The FBI is a racist sewer

By Stephen Millies

Longtime FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover hated the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and wanted him dead. Hoover called Dr. King "the most notorious liar in the country" at a Nov. 18, 1964, news conference. Hoover was furious the Black leader had just won the Nobel Peace Prize.

The FBI boss organized a slander campaign and had his No. 3 man, William Sullivan, write a letter to King urging him to commit suicide. (New York Times, Nov. 11, 2014)

"There is abundant evidence of a major high-level conspiracy in the assassination of my husband, Martin Luther King, Jr.," said Coretta Scott King in 1999. She spoke after a Memphis jury found the U.S. government guilty of conspiring to assassinate Dr. King. (newsone.com, 2014)

The campaign against Dr. King was part of Cointelpro, the FBI's terror program against the Black liberation movement and communists. Anti-war activists were also targeted by the FBI.

Cointelpro coordinated the deadly campaign against the Black Panther Party in which at least 28 Panthers were killed. Among them were Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, who were murdered in Chicago on Dec. 4, 1969. Decades later, Dr. Mutulu Shakur and other Black Panther Party members are still imprisoned.

Hoover died in 1972, and the FBI claims Cointelpro

was terminated in 1971. But the agency's railroading of dissidents to prison never ended.

American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier was framed by the FBI in 1976, and is still in jail. The FBI helped jail Puerto Rican liberation fighter Oscar López Rivera, who has just been released after 35 years in prison.

On May 13, 1985, the FBI worked with Philadelphia police to drop a bomb on the MOVE house. Six adults and five children were killed.

The FBI was no different under Director James Comey, who was fired by Trump on May 9. Comey continued the racist entrapment of Muslims and Palestinians.

Comey even claimed that police were hindered by a "viral video effect" because they were being filmed while brutalizing people. Comey was endorsing the bogus "Ferguson Effect," which blames the Black Lives Matter movement for a supposed increase in street crime since 2014. (New York Times, May 11, 2016)

## Frame-up agency

From its inception the FBI was used to crush any resistance to capitalism. William J. Burns — head of the strikebreaking Burns Detective Agency — was FBI director from 1921 to 1924.

At the time, judges were issuing union-busting injunctions. A 1922 strike of workers in railroad shops was crushed. But Burns had to be dropped because he was

tied to the corrupt Warren G. Harding administration's Teapot Dome scandal.

Burns' No. 2 man, J. Edgar Hoover, took over. Hoover had helped carry out the roundups and deportations of communists in the 1919-1920 "Palmer raids," named after President Woodrow Wilson's attorney general, Alexander Palmer.

Just like today, immigrant workers were under attack. Among them were the Italian-born anarchist labor organizers Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. They were framed for a payroll robbery in which a guard was killed in Massachusetts.

Despite affidavits by ex-FBI agents Lawrence Letherman and Fred J. Weyand stating that the bureau knew that Sacco and Vanzetti were innocent, the two were executed on Aug. 23, 1927.

The first struggle that Sam Marcy, founding chairperson of Workers World Party, participated in was to stop these Italian-American heroes from being murdered. Although the worldwide movement wasn't able to stop their execution, it was an inspiration for the successful effort to save the lives of the African-American Scottsboro defendants in the 1930s.

Hoover helped instigate the anti-communist witch-hunt that dominated U.S. political life in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. Thousands of activists lost their jobs and dozens were jailed, including Ben Davis, the communist New York City councilperson from Harlem.

The height of the "red scare" was the execution of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg on June 19, 1953. Framed on phony charges of giving "atomic secrets" to the Soviet Union, the FBI used perjured testimony to convict them. In his eulogy at the Rosenbergs' funeral, W.E.B. Du Bois declared these martyrs died because "they would not lie."

The FBI has been a sewer from its inception. It should be abolished, along with all U.S. spy agencies and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement police. □

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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

**Racism, National Oppression and Self-Determination** Larry Holmes

**Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery**

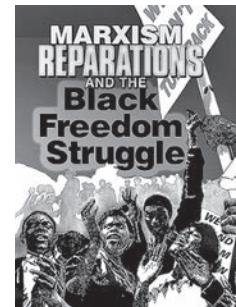
Sam Marcy

**Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** LeiLani Dowell

Available at online booksellers.

**The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead  
**Domestic Workers Demand a Bill of Rights** Imani Henry  
**Black & Brown Unity** Saladin Muhammad  
**Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior** Mumia Abu-Jamal  
**Alabama's Black Belt** Consuela Lee  
**Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? The 1965 Watts Rebellion** John Parker

Graphic by Sahu Barron



# Anti-pipeline occupiers shut down banks

By Jim McMahan  
Seattle

Scores of activists from 350Seattle shut down 13 Chase banks in Seattle on May 8 in alliance with Indigenous people. The action was a confrontation with JPMorgan Chase and other banks to stop their lending for the Keystone XL pipeline, which would extend from Alberta, Canada, into the U.S., carrying oil extracted from Canadian tar sands.

Indigenous leaders have pointed out that tar sands oil uses three times more energy to extract than regular oil, thus

being a cause for global warming. The 1,700-mile Keystone would run across the water-rich Oglala aquifer to southeast Nebraska.

Demonstrators fanned out around noon to Chase banks across the city. At some banks, protesters did skits in the bank in hazmat suits. Other banks were occupied by singing Native drummers. Protesters, holding signs and banners, locked themselves down and made statements at other branches. They chanted, "No coal, no oil! We want our money back!" referring to the billions of dollars in bailout money the banks were given by the federal gov-

ernment during the last recession.

Once the cops finally caught up with all of the actions, 26 people were arrested and jailed. The action received local, national and some international press coverage.

More than 121 First Nations, along with other Indigenous organizations, have signed the Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion. It calls for the banks to divest from all companies building the Dakota Access Pipeline, the Keystone XL (to be built by TransCanada) and the three other pipeline trunks fanning out from the tar sands.

We live on a planet beset by droughts, forced migration, melting ice caps and rising seas. The Donald Trump administration's recent decision to approve the Keystone XL has increased the crisis. It's basically "game over for the climate," according to NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies Director James Hansen, if the Keystone is built to haul the tar sands oil. (New York Times, May 9)

Without the support of the big banks, oil companies couldn't afford to build tar sands projects like Keystone. And Chase is connected to the oil industry as much as any of them. □

## Three years later

# Flint still resists water crisis

By Martha Grevatt

April 25 marked the third anniversary of the ongoing Flint, Mich., water crisis.

Dependency on bottled water has become a way of life. Celebrity and charity donations have slowed. Flint is rarely in the media outside of Michigan, although there has been publicity around a movie about Flint's women activists. It stars Queen Latifah.

Yet despite three years of genocidal neglect, Flint is still attracting new allies.

On April 25 in 2014, the city's water department disconnected from Detroit Water and Sewerage, its provider for decades. Flint residents were unknowingly put in grave danger when the city began getting its water from the heavily polluted Flint River.

People living in Flint noticed right away that their water had suddenly turned brown and had a foul odor. Complaints were repeatedly dismissed for more than a year, until an independent research team from Virginia Tech exposed elevated lead levels in the water. Pediatrician Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha warned that Flint's children had dangerously high blood lead levels. This atrocity only came to light because of the persistence of diligent activists, some of whom saw their own children display visible signs of lead poisoning.

The lead poisoning occurred because the governor-appointed emergency man-

ager running the city decided to save money and not add anti-corrosive chemicals to the water. This is a routine procedure to prevent lead-based pipes from corroding and leaching lead into the water supply. The Flint River water was especially corrosive because of the pollutants that corporations, primarily General Motors, dumped in the river for decades. Besides lead-poisoning a whole generation of children, the emergency manager's decisions led to 12 deaths from Legionnaires' disease.

Emergency managers can be appointed over a city or school district under Michigan's Public Act 436. This racist, union busting, pay-the-bankers-first law was passed by the legislature as a slight variation on Public Act 4, which voters defeated in 2012. Some 50 percent of Black Michiganians have been under emergency management at some time, compared to only two percent of white residents.

Although Flint has switched back to Detroit water, the water is still not considered safe to drink without a faucet filter. Nor is lead the only toxin that water consumers have been exposed to. Showering and bathing continue to cause skin rashes, hair loss and breathing issues, and the state has done nothing to address these concerns. To complicate matters further, researchers have recently determined that while filters block toxic metals such as lead and copper, they are breeding grounds for bacteria.

It has taken this long for the right-wing legislature to approve sending \$100 million in federal funds to fix Flint's pipes. The March 28 settlement of a federal lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan and the Natural Resources Defense Council on behalf of Melissa Mays — the mother of three who leads Water You Fighting For — will bring another \$100 million in state aid and restore delivery of bottled water and filters. Only militant activism forced the government to cough up any of this money. Meanwhile, the program to replace lead service lines is proceeding at a snail's pace, with only 600 of 39,000 pipes switched out.

Flint households have some of the highest water bills in the country. A temporary credit, extended by the state after Gov. Rick Snyder's criminal role in the crisis became a major scandal, has been terminated. More than 8,000 delinquent customers could lose their homes through tax foreclosure, because their water bill has been attached to their property tax obligations. Some have refused to pay for poisoned water; others simply could not afford the high bills. Flint is a majority Black city with half of all households offi-

Camp Promise, May 12.  
WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

cially below the poverty line.

### From Standing Rock to Flint, water is life

Many of the resisters at Standing Rock, N.D., are part of the 16 new encampments that have been established across the country since the brutal eviction of water defenders there, including Camp Promise in Flint's Kearsley Park.

"Camp Promise was created after April 7, after some of our organizers went out to Standing Rock, while the organizers who stayed were also instrumental in drumming up local and online awareness and support from Michigan," explained Aylin Altinok, a Turkish water protector from Michigan who spent time in Standing Rock. "Our goals are to bring a resolution for the Flint water crisis by conducting peaceful demonstrations, community service, etc., while also providing a platform for third-party nonprofits and individuals to improve the quality of life for those living in the community."

The camp has grown to about 20 tents with about 30 campers. Supporters visit the camp on a regular basis.

On May 12, Camp Promise demonstrated outside City Hall to protest the decision to subject delinquent customers to tax foreclosure. A delegation from Detroit's Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs came to Flint. Ann Arbor activists were also there visiting. □

# Science marchers demand 'harm reduction'

By Steven Gillis  
Boston

Thousands of nurses, doctors, lab technicians, environmental professionals, computer programmers and teachers rallied for Science on Boston Common April 22. They were responding to the gangster president's witch-hunt of climate scientists and other threatened budgetary and military attacks.

While this was happening, a smaller contingent of revolutionary-minded scientists gained wide attention marching, handing out flyers and chanting through the crowd, demanding "Supervised Injection Facilities, Now!"

Activists with the SIFMA NOW! Coalition were joined in the march by the Boston Area Drug Users Union, New England Antifa, ACT-UP Boston and Workers World Party-Boston as the "Harm Reduction Contingent."

Spurred to action by the alarming opioid epidemic, the Harm Reduction Contingent included doctors, treatment pro-



'Money for health care and harm reduction, not for weapons of mass destruction!'

fessionals, community activists, union leaders, housing specialists, teachers and many youth and children. This epidemic has killed tens of thousands of people while pouring billions of profits into pharmaceutical companies, police and the prison-industrial complex, cash-hungry banks and other forces of the gangster capitalist economy.

Xr. Andie Michelle Burnham, a local



queer activist and harm reduction specialist who was instrumental in having the city of Gloucester, Mass., declare May 2017 "Harm Reduction Month," was an organizer of the contingent. Burnham explains in literature that the harm-reduction model takes a politically "radical" approach in promoting scientific, evidence-based prevention of overdoses, stopping the spread of HIV and hepatitis

C, and improving the health and well-being of active opioid users.

The harm reduction model is entirely contrary to the lock-em-up "War on Drugs" which has filled U.S. jails and especially targeted Black, Latinx, Indigenous, trans, leftist and poor workers since the time J. Edgar Hoover ran the FBI to today's bigot Attorney General Jeff Sessions' war on civil rights and marijuana.

Harm reduction also conflicts with the general "mandatory abstinence" school of programs. These are mostly based on stigmatization, punishment, confessions and judgmental shaming. Every arm of the capitalist state apparatus, from court sentences to prisons, cops, homeless "shelters" and social service agencies exclusively pushes "mandatory abstinence," say the harm reduction activists.

"The reason we are out here fighting," Burnham told Workers World, "is to uplift the voices and tend to the needs of a universally marginalized group. People who

*Continued on the next page*

# May Day arrestees condemn police violence

By Christian Cobb  
New York City

The May Day Union Square Coalition held a press conference on the east side of New York's City Hall on May 10 to denounce the New York Police Department's racist targeting of protesters at the May 1 protest in Union Square. They demanded the resignation of New York City Police Commissioner James O'Neill, that all charges against those arrested on May Day be dropped immediately, and that

Mayor Bill de Blasio be held accountable.

The press conference began with speakers who were arrested on May Day. These included Filipino and Palestinian people who represented the New York Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines, New York City Students for Justice in Palestine, Anakbayan New York and the International League of Peoples' Struggle. They highlighted the violent and aggressive tactics that the police used to arrest and brutalize them. The speakers also addressed who the police are targeting,

which is the most oppressed and vulnerable in the city. They said this was demonstrated by the arrest of people of color, LGBTQ people and women on May Day.

The speakers made clear that they had the legal right to march, as guaranteed to them in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. They described how the police are being militarized and are trying to suppress their freedom of speech and right to assemble.

Showing solidarity with those arrested on May Day, activists who were arrested

at other marches in the city spoke about their experiences. This included people of color and queer people from the People's Power Assembly and ICE-FREE NYC. They asserted that the police target oppressed people and use excessive force in doing so, in an attempt to intimidate them from not entering the streets.

The press conference closed out by condemning the violent reaction of the police to people exercising their right to march. Those present vowed to build broad support for a defense of their rights. □

## A youth's view of May Day

*The following remarks were given by Heather Morris at a Workers World Party meeting in New York City on May 6. Go to [youtu.be/DNgGA-5qOVQ](http://youtu.be/DNgGA-5qOVQ) to view the talk.*

This May Day 2017 was the first May Day that I attended as a young comrade, and it definitely won't be my last. As I rallied with and marched alongside thousands of others who are just as fed up with capitalism as I am, I felt like I was not alone in the daily struggles I experience.

Not only do I have to deal with the oppression I experience daily, as a queer biracial Afro-Latina, but as a young revolutionary I can often feel very frustrated and lonely. As a young woman of color, I sometimes feel as if my voice is insignificant. Not only am I often ridiculed by other youth my age for being a radical, as I am often told that I am too "angry," shamed for "supporting communist 'dictators' who have killed millions" and accused of "hating



Heather Morris, chanting on the mic, at May Day march, NYC.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

men," but I am also told by reactionary adults that I'm too young to know what I am talking about, and that my beliefs are "just a phase."

Not only do I have to deal with all of that stress within my personal life, but as a young person living in the United States in 2017 under the Trump regime, I am uniquely affected by capitalism in many ways that previous generations weren't. As the rich only continue to become richer off the backs of workers, while the cost of living continues to rise and tuition continues to increase; as the military budget increases while the budget for education continues to be cut; as the racist police continue to target us and kill us and as fewer people are able to access affordable health care; as more luxury condos continue to be built while people are pushed out of their communities that they can no longer afford to live in; and as there are still homeless people in the street, I often feel as if I am trapped and have very few opportunities.

I wonder how I could possibly find a job that pays a living wage and be able to afford housing, food and health care. On top of that, it is extremely difficult to be able to handle school while I struggle with mental health problems. Yet, if I don't make it through college somehow, I worry that I'll have to spend the rest of my life working two or three minimum-wage jobs.

As someone who is extremely stressed out from selling my labor to exploitative bosses who barely pay us enough to survive, and who is overburdened with exams to study for and essays to write just to have a shot at a career when I get older, saying "Fuck it!" on May 1 and skipping class and work was powerful and affirming for me. May Day was one of the chances I had to say "No!" to all this bullshit I face under capitalism, and to finally unite with other workers to stand up and fight back.

Despite what many believe, young people and elders alike, my generation is absolutely not as progressive as it seems. As soon as I go back home or back to

school from the Workers World office or after hanging out with other comrades, I am once again reminded that my life as a queer Afro-Latina does not matter. In addition, it is also more difficult to fight back alone.

It's impossible to call everybody out when I hear the words "bitch," "dyke," "hoe" and other slurs being thrown around so casually. It's so annoying to have to hear the phrases "that's so gay" and "she a thot" being used every five minutes. There's absolutely no way I could leave my home without being called in the street, and it's so frustrating to have other guys your age constantly approach you asking for your number without even knowing your name.

The second I'm no longer surrounded by my comrades and friends, I'm suddenly subjected to all this oppressive bullshit again. In addition, people also think I'm weird for being a communist and a feminist. Obviously, I don't want to be friends with reactionaries anyway, but then it becomes even more difficult for me to find others my age that I relate to. It's exhausting, and I often find myself getting burnt out and fed up when I spend too much time away from my comrades.

Not only is it important for us comrades to fight back against capitalism, but it is also important for us to check on other comrades and support each other, as nobody could fight this unfair, fascist, racist, sexist system alone.

Many of us young people who are radical, and especially other queer folk, grow up with extremely conservative parents, even those of us who are people of color. Some of us hide our beliefs from our parents, and that puts a lot of additional stress on us. My parents just think I'm super liberal and don't really understand that I'm a communist. However, I am often told by them and other conservative adults that I don't know a thing about politics and about how this country works. They think my "liberal beliefs" are just a phase and that as I grow older, I will real-

ize that all these conservative adults are right in what they believe.

However, on May Day and at other demonstrations I've attended, I've seen so many adults of all ages there! It felt affirming knowing that there are people out there who have been in the struggle for the majority of their lives. Being surrounded by elders, not only at May Day but within Workers World Party, reminds me that my beliefs and experiences are valid. I am not just "having a phase." My elder comrades inspire me to continue fighting for what I think is right for the rest of my life.

May Day is also important for us young people as we are uniquely affected by capitalism. We face a lot of uncertainty. It is not uncommon for people my age to work multiple jobs. I have a friend who is 17 who is currently working three jobs to help support their family. The minimum wage has not risen in years, and has definitely not adjusted to match rising inflation, the rising cost of living. We're making pennies now compared to what our parents made and to what we need to survive.

The fact that we are living under Trump scares a lot of young people, especially those of us who are marginalized. We feel as if we are powerless and have no voice or control over what will happen to us.

It is becoming more difficult to find affordable housing — rent in New York City is increasing as the city continues to gentrify. College tuition is rising, and more graduates are finding themselves without jobs. Even if we do find a job, many of us are crippled by student debt that we'll have to spend years paying back.

May Day was a huge and very significant demonstration for workers around the world. However, as a revolutionary, it certainly was not the first nor the last demonstration that I will be attending. May Day would not have been made possible without my elder comrades, who have been organizing this for years, and it is important for me to continue to learn from my elder comrades and to continue to organize, as eventually we young people are going to have to grow up and teach the next generation of revolutionaries as well.

Not only did I feel like my voice had finally mattered when I was marching through the streets with thousands of other workers on May Day, but continuing to be a part of a revolutionary cadre is empowering as well. There is strength in numbers, and it is important for us comrades to unite and organize so that we all have the willpower and courage to stand up and fight capitalism together. Like Mao [Tse-tung, the Chinese revolutionary leader,] said: "All reactionaries are paper tigers. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful." □

*Continued from page 8*

use drugs (PWUD) are at the intersects of all communities. The stigma laid against them is often stacked on top of many other layers of identity stigma. These folks are pushed out of homes, denied basic human rights, and are criminalized.

"Drug use is not by any means inherently wrong, and the way we [capitalist society] often approach it is classist at best. We demand an end to the racist, classist War On Drugs! We demand proven harm reduction methods such as syringe access, naloxone access, supervised injection facilities, drug testing kits be available free, on demand, and without apology.

"We demand an end to the stigma that stands between PWUD who experience problematic use, and safe, compassionate, science backed treatment. Uplift people who use drugs! End the stigma! Act Up!"

One week after the Science March, the Massachusetts Medical Society, many of whose members were visible and vocal at the April 22 rally, took an unprecedented, landslide vote to organizationally support the opening of clinics in Massachusetts where drug users may legally inject under medical supervision (SIF).

Various arms of the state and its political leadership denounced this decision. Dr. Barbara Herbert, president of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine, defended it: "It's counterintuitive that you would let people do something that is illegal and dangerous in a setting that is safer ... but in fact, there's good scientific and epidemiologic evidence that it saves lives, and we're in such a terrible epidemic that anything that saves lives, we want to embrace." (Boston Globe, April 30) □

# **WORKERS WORLD** **editorial**



## **Malcolm X, Ho Chi Minh ¡presente!**



We celebrate on May 19 the birthdays of two world-bending revolutionaries, Ho Chi Minh and Malcolm X.

Born in 1890 in central Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh was the Marxist-Leninist communist who forged and led a people's movement and army that defeated the invading imperialist might of both France and the United States and ultimately liberated Vietnam from colonialism.

Born in 1925 in the U.S., Malcolm X was the African-American leader who raised to global attention the concepts of Black nationalism, Black self-defense and the right of self-determination of Black peoples. Malcolm X also made a major contribution to the global movement for Pan-Africanism.

Neither met the other, yet their deeds and words intertwine, and together they continue to inspire us toward revolution.

At this moment, as the U.S. ruling class fans the deadly fires of racist hatred, Malcolm X and Ho Chi Minh unite to give a profound lesson in building international solidarity with oppressed people and nations.

In 1924 — the year before Malcolm X was born — at the Fifth Congress of the Communist International in Moscow, Ho Chi Minh made a presentation during a session on the "National and colonial question." He emphasized the importance of support for the Black liberation struggle in the U.S., saying in part: "It is well-known that the Black race is the most oppressed and the most exploited of the human family. It is well-known that the spread of capitalism and the discov-

ery of the New World had as an immediate result the rebirth of slavery. ... What everyone does not perhaps know is that after sixty-five years of so-called emancipation, [Black people in the U.S.] still endure atrocious moral and material sufferings." ([tinyurl.com/n5nlck6](http://tinyurl.com/n5nlck6))

Forty years later, in 1964, Malcolm X, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, put the Black liberation struggle in a worldwide context, saying: "It is incorrect to classify the revolt of [Black people] as simply a racial conflict of Black against white, or as a purely [U.S.] American problem. Rather, we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter." (Malcolm X Speaks)

And he acknowledged the centrality of the national liberation war led by Ho Chi Minh to that global rebellion, saying: "Viet Nam is the struggle of all third-world nations — the struggle against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism." (1972 interview with Yuri Kochiyama, [tinyurl.com/k93cq2n](http://tinyurl.com/k93cq2n))

The voices of both these revolutionaries ring out with the clarion call of SOLIDARITY as the path to a future of justice and liberation.

They remind us that we of the multinational, multigendered, global working class have a common oppressor in imperialist capitalism.

We can resist its racism, its anti-woman and anti-LGBTQ bigotry, its anti-immigrant hatred.

We can — and must — rise up in resistance. □

## **Save the People's Church!**



PHOTO: FRED FLOREAL

**By Noel Sanders  
Brockton, Mass.**

A mobilizer's meeting was held here on May 13 in to kick off the Campaign to Save Saint Martin de Porres Catholic Church of the Americas, the Peoples Church.

The city of Brockton's racist attack on the church takes place in the context of the tide of fascism and state aggression towards sanctuary spaces. This politically motivated aggression is targeting Bishop Filipe Teixeira, known affectionately as "Bishop T," spiritual leader of the church and of the Cape Verdean Community.

A statement by Bishop T, in three languages, states: "On April 19, 2017, after a nearly decade-long legal battle, Brockton Housing court ORDERED the demolition of our religious sanctuary within 60 days for the false, politically motivated, racist charge of failure to meet the building code/permit and safety issues. Brockton is seeking to silence an outspoken religious leader ... [and] a well-known self-declared sanctuary congregation that is a pillar of support to Brockton's immigrant community. ..."

"Our wonderful people's lawyer, John Pavlos, is now exploring all legal tactics. It was the people that built our church; we have faith that it will be the people, our congregation, with solidarity from all of our supporters, who will defend our church now!"

The Bishop has been a friend of Workers World Party for decades. The alliance has been a two-way street; members of WWP helped build his church from the ground up. WWP's Boston branch held a significant presence at the meeting. Veteran party members, young candidates, and friends of the party came in full force to plan further action.

He has been a strong ally to every oppressed population he encounters. As a person of faith, Bishop T believes that having a moral compass means that it is wrong to be silent in the face of injustice.

Bishop T was clearly strengthened by the support he received, including a recent national call-in day to demand the city keep its hands off the church. The event concluded with activists orchestrating a citywide canvass at local businesses. The supporters vowed to fight until the city retracts its push for demolition, and to not stop until Bishop T is exonerated and the church is saved!

To join this battle, follow Bishop T on Facebook or contact him via email at [bishopteixeiraofsjc@gmail.com](mailto:bishopteixeiraofsjc@gmail.com). □

## **WW newspaper censored by ICE**

**By Terri Kay  
San Francisco**

This reporter attended a rally on May 11 in support of domestic violence victim Yazmin Elias at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Detention Center on Sansome Street. A number of Yazmin's supporters lined up in front of the building waiting to be admitted to attend the hearing. This reporter handed many of them a copy of Workers World newspaper.

An ICE security guard who witnessed this came out of the building and told each of those holding the paper that they would not be allowed inside with the paper. Most felt compelled to return the paper so they could go into the hearing, although one person tucked it inside his jacket.

I asked the guard if this "rule" applied to all newspapers or just to Workers World. He claimed it applied to all newspapers.

In fact, when people entered the building, they were subjected only to a typical security check — putting their things in



Protest at ICE Detention Center on May 11.

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

a plastic bin and then walking through metal detectors. No one was questioned about whether they were carrying any newspapers, and no one was searched for newspapers or other literature.

Workers World is taking steps to challenge this censorship by the state. The ICE incident comes immediately after Workers World newspapers were stopped for a month from entering the Pennsylvania prison system. The reason given by prison authorities was that the papers contained articles in support of May Day general strikes. □

## **RESIST NOW! Invest in Workers World!**

- If you agree with WW that Trump's mass deportation plan must be stopped
- If you believe the racist establishment — from killer cops to the injustice of the courts — has to go
- If you find the anti-trans ruling by Trump's Education secretary an outrageous attack on queer children and LGBTQ rights
- If you hate the class system that keeps women and people of color in low-wage jobs
- If you oppose the blatant warmongering targeting Syria, north Korea and Afghanistan
- If you worry that the capitalist crisis is only getting worse under the Billionaire in Chief
- If you're sick and tired of the bankers and bosses getting tax breaks while making the workers pay for the crisis they didn't create
- If you want to fight for a way of life based on economic planning, equitable distribution of wealth and justice for all
- If you're lucky enough to still have a decent-paying job
- Then please invest some of your hard-earned dollars in Workers World!

The WW Supporter Program was founded 40 years ago so our subscribers and friends could help build the only revolutionary socialist weekly in the U.S. that is still printed as well as on the web. Despite the fact that the paper is produced entirely by the volunteer labor of contributing writers, editors and production staff, the cost of printing and mailing the paper 51 weeks a year is a huge expense. Not to mention the monthly overhead for our easily accessible Manhattan office. That's why we're asking you to join the WW Supporter Program today to help us deliver the worker-oriented, Marxist-based, revolutionary class truth you've come to depend upon.

When you join the Supporter Program for \$75 a year, you receive a year's subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends. For \$100 a year you also get a new publication or book from World View Forum. For \$300 (\$25 a month) or more, you get your pick of five books. Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at [workers.org/donate/](http://workers.org/donate/); it's easy to set up monthly deductions. We are grateful for your help in building Workers World — for today and for the future! □

# LA protest for Palestinian hunger strikers

John Parker of the International Action Center spoke at a May 13 protest in solidarity with 1,500 Palestinian hunger strikers who were on the 27th day of a salt water diet. The protest was held at the Westwood Federal Building in Los Angeles. It was organized by the Arab-American Committee for Support of the Palestinian Prisoners Hunger Strike. The rally was emceed by Amani Al-Hindi Barakat.

On the far right in the picture is Aarab Marwan Barghouthi (in a blue shirt and wearing sunglasses), who joined the demonstration. Aarab is the son of Marwan Barghouthi, a Palestinian political prisoner and leader of the current hunger strike.

Parker spoke at the protest and participated in the salt water challenge, now popular on social media, to show solidarity with hunger strikers on the same diet.



He challenged so-called progressives who continue to support the U.S. military and financial assistance that allows Israel's apartheid, occupation and torture in government prisons, to also take the challenge. □

PHOTOS: MIKE CHIKEY  
Inset: Taking the "salt water challenge," in solidarity with Palestinian hunger strike.

# Venezuela in Big Oil's crosshairs

By Chris Fry

It's about oil. Again.

Anti-war activists will vividly recall how President George W. Bush set the stage for invading Iraq by falsely claiming that the Saddam Hussein government possessed "weapons of mass destruction." But it was clear that the real reason for the war was to control Iraq's vast reserves of oil. Millions of Iraqis and thousands of U.S. soldiers lost their lives because of Big Oil's greed.

"Before the 2003 invasion, Iraq's domestic oil industry was fully nationalized and closed to Western oil companies. A decade of war later, it is largely privatized and utterly dominated by foreign firms. From ExxonMobil and Chevron to BP and Shell, the West's largest oil companies have set up shop in Iraq." (cnn.com, April 15, 2013)

For more than a decade, Washington has targeted the government of Venezuela for an Iraq-style regime change. Venezuela has now the largest confirmed oil reserves in the world. Venezuela first nationalized a portion of its oil industry in 1976, but giant companies like Exxon and BP retained control of huge portions of oil production, and U.S. and Western European companies owned much of Venezuela's other industries.

That all changed under the leadership of Venezuela's Presidents Hugo Chávez

and Nicolás Maduro. Big oil companies like Exxon have been kicked out. The telecommunications, electric and many other industries have been nationalized.

Revenue from selling oil, which makes up 95 percent of Venezuela's exports, began to be distributed among the poor. The poverty rate fell from 50 percent to 30 percent. With the assistance of revolutionary Cuba, health care and education became free. Venezuela now has the highest literacy rate in the region.

The Venezuelan government, through its oil company CITGO, helped many poor people in the U.S. survive the cold winter months for several years.

And most importantly, a powerful mass movement was created among the poor called Bolivarianism, named after Simon Bolívar, the 19th-century revolutionary who led the independence movement in Latin America against Spain. Time and again the poor have poured into the streets to back their leaders facing relentless attacks from the right.

This has earned the Venezuelan government the wrath not only of the rich in Venezuela but also of U.S. imperialism, which engineered a failed coup attempt against Chávez in 2002. The collapse of oil prices in 2015 has caused Washington to step up its campaign to create a counterrevolution in Venezuela to let the wealthy take back "their" oil from the Venezuelan people.

In March 2015, Washington declared Venezuela to be a "national security threat" and issued sanctions against prominent leaders of the country.

Citibank closed down its operations in Venezuela in July last year. President Maduro called this an economic "blockade." He announced, "No one stops Venezuela!" (reuters.com, July 12)

In March of this year the main leader of the Venezuelan right-wing "opposition," ignoring the fact that President Maduro's term of office does not expire until next year, repeated his call for the Venezuelan military to conduct a coup d'état against the government, while also mobilizing armed gangs to attack government institutions and security forces.

Wall Street think tanks like the Council on Foreign Relations and the Center for Strategic and International Studies falsely proclaimed that Venezuela is undergoing a "humanitarian crisis," complete with medicine shortages and mass starvation. Their solution? "The current U.S. administration should lead a regional coalition to halt the implosion in Venezuela." (csis.org, April 11)

The CSIS is even calling on the Venezuelan government to drop its own currency and accept "dollarization."

In April, Admiral Kurt W. Tidd, the Pentagon's top official for Latin America, issued an ominous report to the Senate Armed Services Committee. He stated,

"The growing humanitarian crisis in Venezuela could eventually compel a regional response."

Both Russia and China have recently made large bank loans to Venezuela. Echoing the infamous "Monroe Doctrine," Adm. Tidd continued, "Over the past decade, China, Russia and Iran have established a greater presence in the region. These global actors view the Latin American economic, political and security arena as an opportunity to achieve their respective long-term objectives and advance interests that may be incompatible with ours and those of our partners." (telesur.net, April 6)

That same Senate committee has sponsored legislation from both Republicans and Democrats. Accusing the Venezuelan government of corruption and participating in the drug trade, it calls for more sanctions against Venezuela. The groundwork for a U.S. invasion is being laid step-by-step.

But the Venezuelan people are strong. When the rich organized a "women in white" demonstration in Caracas May 6, they were met by thousands of "women in red" ready to defend their government against the wealthy oligarchs and U.S. imperialism's threats. (reuters.com, May 7) The anti-war movement here must stand by them and defend Venezuela from Big Oil and its Pentagon henchmen.

Hands off Venezuela! □

## 'Anti-fascism is a duty' *An interview with Eleonora Forenza*

By Greg Butterfield

*Eleonora Forenza is a member of the European Parliament and the Communist Refoundation Party of Italy. She is accompanying the 3rd Antifascist Caravan to Donbass, organized by the revolutionary musical group Banda Bassotti. The Europe-wide caravan promotes solidarity with the people of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, which broke away from Ukraine after a U.S.-backed, far-right coup in 2014. Since then Ukraine's war against the republics has continued. Workers World spoke to Forenza before she departed.*

**Workers World:** Tell me about your background. How did you become involved in leftist politics?

**Eleonora Forenza:** I think I became a feminist as a very young girl. I was denied the right to play in a soccer tournament in my neighborhood in my hometown, Bari, because only boys were allowed. So I started studying feminism. Then I got involved in politics during high school, getting close to leftist ideas

and communism. I've been a militant of the Communist Refoundation Party since 1995, when I was 18, and I still am today.

**WW:** As a member of the European Parliament, what initiatives have you taken to represent workers and anti-fascist forces?

**EF:** My main commitment has been to work in the international trade commission of the European Parliament. Along with my colleagues of the United European Left group, I'm fighting against the free trade treaties that the European Union is negotiating with the U.S. and Canada (T-TIP and CETA). It is a key battle against the extension of neoliberal policies that are eroding the rights of the workers and the welfare state throughout Europe.

I'm also deeply involved in the struggle to ensure gender equality in every kind of policy of the EU.

**WW:** Is it difficult to present an alternative view on the situation in Ukraine and Donbass to the European Parliament and the media?



Eleonora Forenza, member of the Communist Refoundation Party in Italy.

**EF:** It certainly is. Most mainstream media are delivering a totally rigged story about what happened and what's still happening in Ukraine. I hope that being the first European Parliament member to be in Donbass will help to break through this media blockade and start a discussion about the huge political problem that Ukraine is today, especially for the EU.

In Kiev, there's patently fascist members of the government, and fascist militias are fighting on the ground. That is not acceptable. The extension of NATO toward the Russian border is certainly not helping out.

**WW:** What made you decide to participate in the caravan?

**EF:** I decided to join the caravan be-

cause what is happening in Donbass is too often forgotten. In my mind I still see images of the Odessa massacre [when neo-Nazis murdered more than 40 anti-fascists on May 2, 2014]. And above all because anti-fascism is a duty for every leftist militant. We're experiencing war near the very heart of Europe.

**WW:** What will you investigate on your trip?

**EF:** We have a very busy schedule of meetings with leftist parties, unions and institutions of the independent republics of Donbass. We will ask about the political situation in Donbass today, how the population is facing the conflict and what people need most. Our caravan will also bring material aid for the people, especially for children.

**WW:** You were the European United Left's candidate for the European Parliament presidency. How will you use your position to share truthful information about Donbass and build solidarity?

**EF:** I was a candidate for the presidency of the European Parliament in January 2017. I was supported by my group, European United Left/Nordic Green Left. Unfortunately, a member of the Popular Party, a conservative group, won the election. I will nevertheless continue my commitment to the Donbass cause in every possible way. □



## Las falsas noticias sobre desempleo

Editorial WW-MO 14 de mayo de 2017

Pocos trabajadoras/es se alegran del informe del Departamento de Trabajo sobre la tasa de desempleo que cayó a 4,4 por ciento en abril.

¿Por qué deberían hacerlo? Mientras que la tasa de desempleo ahora coincide con el nivel de mayo de 2007, justo antes de la última crisis económica capitalista, todavía deja a 7,1 millones de personas "oficialmente" desempleadas.

Incluso el Departamento de Trabajo admite que 5,3 millones de personas que se cuentan como empleadas, están obligadas a trabajar a tiempo parcial, a pesar de que quieren y necesitan puestos de trabajo a tiempo completo. Otras 1,5 millones de personas "no fueron contadas como desempleadas porque no habían buscado trabajo en las cuatro semanas anteriores a la encuesta", según la Oficina de Estadísticas Laborales.

Muchas personas con discapacidades no están incluidas entre las desempleadas. Los 2,2 millones de miembros de la

clase obrera encarcelados ni siquiera son consideradas/os. Tampoco las miles que recogen latas y botellas por una pequeña cuota de depósito en Nueva York y algunos otros estados.

Mientras que la tasa de desempleo más reciente para las/os blancos es de 3,8 por ciento, la cifra de trabajadoras/es negros es más del doble, con un 7,9 por ciento. "Empleado último, despedido primero" sigue siendo el estándar racista para las/os afroamericanos.

En el apogeo de la "prosperidad" capitalista, las/os trabajadores negros y sus familias siguen estancados en una recesión. Es una depresión para las/os adolescentes negros, cuya última tasa de desempleo es de 29,3 por ciento.

Por lo general, una caída del desempleo se acompaña de un aumento de los salarios. Las/os trabajadores se sienten más seguros de tener puestos de trabajo mejor remunerados o exigir aumentos.

Pero esta vez no. El aumento promedio del salario de 2,5 por ciento en los últimos

12 meses fue casi eliminado por la inflación, que aumentó un 2,4 por ciento. Para las/os trabajadores que reciben el miserable salario mínimo federal de \$7,25 por hora, la inflación significó un recorte salarial.

Todos los ataques dirigidos contra los sindicatos, incluso contra las/os trabajadores públicos, han tenido su efecto. Durante los últimos 40 años, miles de bastiones sindicales han sido cerrados por los capitalistas aprovechando la automatización.

Tener millones de desempleadas/os es una necesidad para las ganancias capitalistas. Frederick Engels, el compañero de trabajo de Karl Marx, llamó a las/os desempleados un "ejército industrial de reserva".

Los capitalistas lo saben bien. Samuel Insull - cuyo imperio de servicios utilitarios Midwest se desplomó durante la Gran Depresión - se jactó de que "la mayor ayuda a la eficiencia del trabajo es una larga fila de hombres esperando en la puerta". Refiriéndose a las mujeres y los hombres

que buscan desesperadamente un trabajo.

Las/os trabajadores soportan tanto abuso porque saben que el patrono puede contratar a alguien para reemplazarlos.

Mientras que millones necesitan un trabajo, millones de trabajadoras/es están obligados a trabajar dos puestos o más de trabajo con el fin de pagar su vivienda. "La condena de una parte de la clase obrera a la ociosidad forzada por el exceso de trabajo de la otra parte, y la inversa, se convierte en un medio de enriquecer a los capitalistas individuales", escribió Marx en "El Capital".

El movimiento obrero necesita luchar por una semana laboral de 30 horas sin recorte de salario.

El primer plan quinquenal de la Unión Soviética abolió el desempleo en 1930. La planificación económica socialista hizo que el empleo fuera un derecho de todas/los trabajadores soviéticos.

Tenemos que luchar por una revolución socialista que abolirá el desempleo y la pobreza para siempre. □

## FLINT Y DETROIT

### Decenas de miles enfrentan ejecuciones hipotecarias y cortes de agua

Por Jerry Goldberg  
10 de mayo

Más de 8.000 familias de Flint, Michigan, están enfrentando la pérdida de sus casas debido a facturas impagadas por agua envenenada. Las facturas morosas de agua, que totalizan \$5 millones en los últimos dos años, ahora están siendo insertadas en los impuestos a la propiedad, sometiendo a las familias a la ejecución de impuestos.

Fue durante este período de dos años que las/os residentes de Flint descubrieron que sus hijas/os habían sido envenenados con plomo. Esto sucedió porque el "administrador de emergencia" designado por el estado - un dictador - decidió dejar de obtener agua de la ciudad de Detroit y traerla en cambio, desde el Río Flint. Su decisión de no gastar dinero en aditivos anticorrosivos causó que el plomo en las viejas tuberías se vertiera

en el suministro de agua.

Hasta el día de hoy, las/os residentes todavía no pueden beber su agua sin filtros, se ven obligados a depender del agua embotellada, y sufren erupciones cutáneas, pérdida de cabello y problemas respiratorios al Ducharse. El proceso de sustitución de las líneas de servicio de plomo está avanzando muy lentamente; la mayoría de las tuberías siguen siendo de plomo.

Lo que hace esta política aún más ofensiva es que \$200 millones de dólares federales permanecen sin gastar, dinero que podría pagar estos impuestos atrasados. Estos fondos son lo que quedan de la asignación de Michigan bajo el programa de ayuda a las/os propietarios más afectados. Del fondo de rescate de 750.000 millones de dólares del Fondo de Rescate de Activos en Problemas, se dieron solo unos \$9.000 millones a nivel nacional y \$761 millones para Michigan para mantener a las familias en sus hogares.

Sin embargo, en lugar de usar estos fondos federales para su propósito, la Autoridad de Desarrollo de la Vivienda del Estado de Michigan, [MSHDA por siglas en inglés] que administra los fondos, está desviando la gran mayoría de este dinero para derribar viviendas. Los programas de "eliminación del deterioro urbano" en Detroit y Flint operan sin supervisión y han estado sujetos a auditorías federales y estatales por corrupción. Por el contrario, MSHDA crea tantos obstáculos para las familias pobres que tratan de acceder a estos fondos para pagar cuentas de impuestos morosos e hipotecas, que resulta en que a los propietarios a los que se destinaron los fondos se les niega toda asistencia.

En la ciudad de Detroit, la Autoridad del Agua de los Grandes Lagos ha iniciado una nueva ronda de interrupciones del suministro de agua, con 18.000 hogares enfrentando cortes. Eso en adición de los 83.000 cortes de agua residenciales

que ocurrieron en los años 2014-2016. (bridgem.com, 2 de mayo) Treinta y un mil viviendas ocupadas en Detroit también están sujetas a incautación por el Condado de Wayne para ejecuciones hipotecarias este año.

En 2015, los Relatores Especiales de las Naciones Unidas para el Agua y la Vivienda declararon la crisis de Detroit una crisis "retrógrada", es decir, producto de un sistema capitalista desarrollado que retrocede en satisfacer las necesidades más básicas de la población como resultado de la avaricia corporativa .

La nueva Coalición para Detener las Ejecuciones Hipotecarias está celebrando una asamblea en junio para galvanizar la lucha contra ejecuciones hipotecarias de impuestos y apagones de agua en Detroit y Flint.

Para obtener más información, visite [moratorium-mi.org](http://moratorium-mi.org) o únase a Moratorium NOW! Coalition en Facebook. □

## ¡A defender Venezuela!

Editorial WW-MO

Según un artículo de Reuters del 3 de mayo, "un influyente grupo de senadores republicanos y demócratas estadounidenses introdujo una amplia legislación ... para hacer frente a la crisis en Venezuela, incluyendo la sanción de individuos responsables de socavar la democracia o involucrados en la corrupción".

Esta cita necesita traducción, ya que realmente significa: Algunos altos halcones millonarios del Senado quieren arrebatar los impuestos de las/os trabajadores para derrocar al gobierno electo y popular de Venezuela.

Que el imperialismo estadounidense trabaja para socavar el gobierno bolivariano en Caracas no es nada nuevo. Washington incluso promovió un golpe militar contra Hugo Chávez en 2002. El pueblo

venezolano derrotó el golpe y fortaleció la revolución venezolana.

Financiación más temprana y mucho mayor para los esfuerzos estadounidenses en el cambio del régimen — es decir contrarrevolución — han sido sepultados en los presupuestos de la CIA, la USAID y otros órganos de intervención imperialista disfrazados de promotores de la "democracia". Ahora, los promotores de la intervención imperialista como los republicanos Marco Rubio y John McCain y los demócratas Ben Cardin y Dick Durbin están dando al esfuerzo encubierto de los EUA, la bendición abierta del Senado.

Cualquier que piense que el Senado tiene como objetivo salvar la democracia debe volver a pensar sobre su agenda. Pronto, el Senado llegará a algún compromiso podrido sobre la nueva "Ley de

Salud". Los millonarios senadores determinarán cuántos millones de residentes estadounidenses demasiado pobres para pagar los costos médicos deben ser echados a la tumba más cercana.

¿Tiene el Senado realmente el objetivo de detener la corrupción gubernamental? Podría comenzar por hacer algo para detener a la pandilla de la familia Trump de beneficiarse de todo, desde casinos a campos de golf a estancias en hoteles con la marca presidencial.

No, lo que el Senado está apuntando es contra la soberanía e independencia de Venezuela. El Senado odia cualquier intento del presidente venezolano Nicolás Maduro de mejorar las vidas de los pobres de ese país a costa de los oligarcas y el imperialismo.

En complicidad con los ricos y reaccio-

narios de Venezuela, el imperialismo estadounidense ha perturbado la economía del país. En connivencia con los medios corporativos, ha exagerado la profundidad de la crisis para crear un pretexto para la intervención. En confabulación con la Organización de Estados Americanos - otra creación de los Estados Unidos - ha señalado al gobierno venezolano para "cambio de régimen".

Para aquellas/os que quieren defender la independencia de los países del sur de los Estados Unidos, es esencial en este momento defender al gobierno bolivariano de Venezuela de este ataque imperialista.

¡Abajo el plan de sanciones del Senado!  
¡EUA: fuera de Venezuela!  
¡Chávez presente!  
¡Maduro presidente! □