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workers.org Vol. 58, No. 23 June 16, 2016 \$1

VERIZON STRIKE WINS Victory for all workers

By Martha Grevatt

June 6 — After 45 days on the picket line, 39,000 striking Verizon workers went back to work on June 4. Members of the Communications Workers and International Electrical Workers are voting, starting now, on a new four-year contract. Voting will be completed June 17.

“Verizon knows that they got their ass kicked and they know it’s time for us to celebrate,” said CWA President Chris Shelton. “This was the best strike I’ve ever seen in my lifetime.”

A IBEW System Council T-6 report to members stated, “We have emerged from an ideological war with a corporation that believed that this was their opportunity to break the union. The exact opposite happened.” The union bargaining council was chaired by IBEW Local 2222 Business Agent Myles Calvey, who was called a “rock star” of the Boston labor movement by a Verizon union steward.

This was the longest strike in recent years and the biggest since the previous Verizon strike in 2011. Then the IBEW and CWA combined had 45,000 members at Verizon. With a loss of 6,000 jobs since 2011, jobs and job security were a major issue in this strike. The job protection language that the unions fought for in the past, which Verizon sought to gut, is mostly intact.

A company proposal to make workers transfer out of state, away from their families and communities — just to keep their jobs — was forced off the table. A major concern of the workers was the outsourcing of call center positions. In the end, Verizon agreed to hire an additional 1,300 call center workers as well as create new technician jobs.

Current workers’ base pay will rise almost 11 percent by 2019. Monthly pension payments to retired workers were also increased.

Strike pushed Verizon back

Verizon made other demands for concessions from the workers, but the strike pushed them back. These included a scheme to freeze pensions after 30 years of service. Under the old contract, pension credits continue to accrue for as long as a worker keeps working. The company also wanted to take away the union’s right to bargain on behalf of retirees.

Verizon’s threat to eliminate the cost-of-living allowance was also blocked. The company lost its bid to make Sunday a regular, straight-time work day. Also, management wanted to pay overtime only when the worker put in more than 40 hours during a week — which is the minimum requirement under the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act. That means workers would lose overtime pay

Continued on page 4

Anti-racist solidarity in PRIDE



WW PHOTO: GARRETT DICEMBRE

Youth in Buffalo, N.Y., support Black Lives Matter and blast violence against trans people. See page 10 for editorial and more articles on LGBTQ Pride.

STOP EVICTIONS Pitched battle in Detroit



3

SOLIDARITÉ, SOLIDARITY With French workers, students

4

#FREEJASMINE

Black Lives Matter political prisoner



5



THE CHAMP

3 perspectives on Muhammad Ali

Muhammad Ali defeats Sonny Liston, 1964.

6-7

FORT DIX 5

Islamophobia crushes justice

8

VENEZUELA

U.S., OAS pushed back

9

SO. AFRICA

Lessons of Soweto uprising



11

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WORKERS WORLD this week

★ **In the U.S.**

Verizon strike wins victory for all workers 1
 Detroit activists fight to stop evictions 3
 Macy's workers vote to strike 3
 Workers say French anti-labor law must go 4
 Free Jasmine Richards! 5
 Black & Latina workers resist nonprofit racism 5
 Racist killer cop indicted in Florida 5
 Muhammed Ali: The People's Champ 6
 Muhammed Ali: A fighter against war and racism 6
 Fort Dix 5 : Community protests Islamophobia 8
 Cuomo tries to quash BDS movement 8
 Zika: crisis of the poor 8
 Philadelphia queer solidarity kicks cops out of Pride 10
 Buffalo anti-racist solidarity in Pride parade 10

★ **Around the world**

Support for Venezuela 9
 Lessons of 1976 Soweto rebellion 11

★ **Editorial**

LGBTQ Pride in fight-back 10

★ **WWP Presidential Campaign**

Muhammad Ali's legacy: He 'shook the world' 7

★ **Noticias en Español**

Trabajadores agrícolas de Nueva York luchan por derecho a organizarse 12

Workers World
 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
 New York, N.Y. 10011
 Phone: 212.627.2994
 E-mail: ww@workers.org
 Web: www.workers.org
 Vol. 58, No. 23 • June 16, 2016
 Closing date: June 7, 2016



Editor: Deirdre Griswold
 Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead; Web Editor Gary Wilson
 Production & Design Editors: Coordinator Lal Roohk; Andy Katz, Cheryl LaBash
 Copyediting and Proofreading: Sue Davis, Bob McCubbin
 Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe, Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel, K. Durkin, Fred Goldstein, Martha Grevatt, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Terri Kay, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, John Parker, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Gloria Rubac
 Mundo Obrero: Redactora Berta Joubert-Ceci; Ramiro Fúnez, Teresa Gutierrez, Donna Lazarus, Carlos Vargas

Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis
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 Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$30; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.
 A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org/email.php.
 Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.
 POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.

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Who we are & what we're fighting for

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

Workers built it all — it belongs to society, not to a handful of billionaires! But we need a revolution to make that change. That's why for 57 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

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

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

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

workers.org/wwp

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Denver
 denver@workers.org

Lexington, KY
 lexington@workers.org

Rockford, IL
 rockford@workers.org

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

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

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

Los Angeles
 5278 W Pico Blvd.
 Los Angeles, CA 90019
 la@workers.org
 323.306.6240

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

Chicago
 312.630.2305
 chicagowwp@gmail.com

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

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

Tucson, Ariz.
 tucson@workers.org
Virginia
 virginia@workers.org
Washington, D.C.
 P.O. Box 57300
 Washington, D.C. 20037
 dc@workers.org

Huntington, W. Va.
 huntingtonww@workers.org

Defying landlords and bankers

Detroit activists fight to stop evictions

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Detroit

Jeanette Shannon was evicted from her Detroit home on June 3 after a protracted fight with fraudulent real estate interests and local courts that favor predatory lenders and banks.

This was a test case for the Detroit Eviction Defense (DED) coalition and other anti-foreclosure activists in the city. In similar attempted evictions during 2012 in another section of northwest Detroit, police had either withdrawn, saying it was a civil matter, or stayed away, allowing the situation to be resolved by activists through political pressure and negotiations with the courts and banks.

This time the eviction was viewed by 100 people, who turned back the dreaded dumpsters twice in two days. But the struggle to save Shannon's home revealed further the political character of the administration of corporate-imposed Mayor Mike Duggan.

Duggan's police officials provided protection for the bailiff and the contract laborers hired to break into the home, trash the property and dispose of Shannon's household belongings in a dumpster parked in an alleyway next to the house.

On June 2, the court bailiff appeared at the Shannon home after 5 p.m., intending to evict the homeowner and her 17-year-old son. The storm door leading into the house was pulled off the hinge.

Several activists who had been keeping vigil in an effort to block the eviction were able to stave off the bailiff. The bailiff then told those outside the home that Shannon had to be out by the next day.

Early the next morning, when the dreaded dumpster was delivered, anti-foreclosure activists keeping watch over the home responded. Then a driver of the vehicle delivering the dumpster attacked, choked and pummeled activists, resulting in a leading member of DED, Bob Day, having his leg broken in two places.

A member of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, Martha Grevatt, was unjustly issued a civil infraction for ostensibly refusing to move her automobile from in front of the Shannon home. Her vehicle was not breaking any parking laws. These orders were motivated by enforcement of the eviction order.

Others at the scene were threatened with felony arrests. Columns of police cars returned after noon that day and attempted to break down the front door.

Having failed to enter through the front, they walked around to the back and barged the door open. They refused access to Jeanette Shannon so she could retrieve her cats. She was later allowed to enter the home to rescue her pets from the bailiff and the hired hands, who went about hauling possessions to the dumpster and boarding up the house.

Mobilization to defend Shannon home

DED, along with other social justice and labor activists, rallied to the defense of the Shannon home due to the compelling character of the case. Similar scenarios have proliferated across the city stemming from the real estate and banking collapse of 2007-08 that left tens of thousands of vacant homes, many of which have been turned over to unscrupulous "developers" and the notorious Detroit Land Bank Authority.

A number of these so-called real estate developers are given preference in purchasing the properties through auctions conducted by Wayne County and the



UAW Local 600 second Vice-President A.J. Freer escorts Jeanette Shannon into her besieged home to retrieve belongings. Bailiff seen wearing badge following behind.



High-ranking Detroit police stand guard over the eviction of Jeanette Shannon. The bailiff is standing between the two uniformed officers.

DLBA. The homes are often sold on "land contracts" because, despite ruling-class propaganda that Detroit is being revitalized with property values and rents increasing, the banks wrote less than 500 mortgages during the entire year of 2015.

After purchasing homes from land contract companies, the residents soon discover there are property tax and other liens on the homes. Others discover they do not even own the homes, since their names do not appear on the deeds.

In the specific case of Jeanette Shannon, according to an entry on the DED website, "Shannon purchased her Detroit home in 2010 from Thor Real Estate LLC for \$15,000 on a land contract — with an understanding that the company was responsible for paying the property taxes, and that the amount for taxes was added into her monthly payment. But the year after she moved in with her daughter and son, she was shocked to be told by Thor's attorney that her house payment was being jacked up by almost \$100 a month to pay the property taxes. That threw her in a panic and she hired an attorney she found through a friend of a relative, who said she was an expert in real estate law." (detroitevictiondefense.org)

As is frequently the situation among Detroit residents, "It was then," reported the DED website, "that Shannon discovered that Thor LLC hadn't paid any property taxes since 2008, two years before her purchase of the property. When she contacted the city, they told her that the prop-

erty tax debt had been sent to the County."

The county of Wayne is designated to collect not only its portion of taxes on properties but also those delinquent payments assessed by the Finance Division of the city of Detroit. Late fees and charges accumulate at the rate of 18 percent annually.

These inevitable burdens placed on homeowners are compounded by the fact that actual appraisals of Detroit homes have not been effectively carried out in two decades, since the 1990s, when banks engaged in predatory lending, in part, by overinflating the worth. Residents would then borrow money against these arbitrarily designated values.

Typically the courts in Wayne County side with the real estate firms and the banks. Only public pressure from activists has won residents' rights to remain in their homes.

Federal funds misdirected to corporate interests

All this is taking place even as the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) on June 1 received \$188 million in federal funds, ostensibly aimed at foreclosure prevention and blight removal.

A struggle is now being waged by the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs to release the federal funds to those who need them. Other organizations are also endorsing the effort, which is tar-

getting not only the Treasurer of Wayne County for not vigorously pursuing the utilization of the federal monies to assist homeowners to remain in these properties, but also the MSHDA and the U.S. Department of Treasury.

The Treasury Department issues the funds and is allowing them to be funneled into the Detroit Land Bank Authority, where massive fraud by administrators and functionaries is currently under investigation by the Department of Justice. So-called "blight removal" efforts are the source of the corruption, as well as the process of emptying the city of its African-American and working class population.

The MSHDA held its monthly board meeting on May 25 in Lansing. The proceedings were streamed to its offices at the state office building at Cadillac Place in the New Center area of Detroit.

A delegation from the Moratorium NOW! Coalition and supporters attended the meeting. During the public comment section they blasted the board for not directing these limited resources to pay delinquent property taxes and water bills for residents of Detroit and Wayne County.

Another action is being planned for the Treasury Department, which by turning over hundreds of millions to MSHDA and the DLBA is facilitating the forced removal of people from Detroit. These efforts will continue over the next several months through various forms of protests and agitation, according to Moratorium NOW! Coalition organizers. □

Macy's workers vote to strike

By Anne Pruden
New York

Workers in service jobs continue to rise up as 5,000 union members at New York-area Macy's department stores voted unanimously to go on strike on June 15 when their contract extension expires. The main issues are health care, pay and work schedules. The workers are represented by Local 1-S of the Department Store Union.

Local 1-S held a spirited rally here on June 2 at the company's historic Herald Square store. That's the site of the perennial Christmas fantasy, "Miracle on 34th Street."

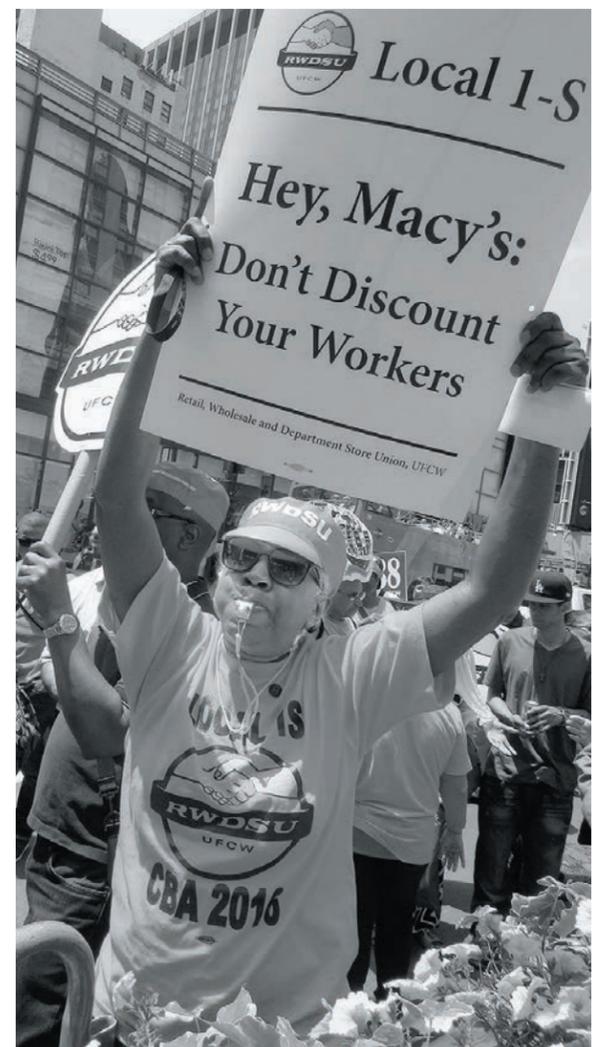
But these workers weren't asking for a miracle. Instead, the local's informal band blared out Aretha Franklin's anthem, demanding: "R-E-S-P-E-C-T!" They handed out fliers explaining: "Macy's has been making demands that would limit workers' pay and weaken benefits. It's time to stand up to corporate greed. ... They shouldn't take from the workers who make this company run." (lsrwsu.org)

Workers at the rally revealed that pay starts at \$9 an hour, while the bosses are now trying to block new city and state laws raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. The company offers new workers fewer benefits, such as sick time, and tries to keep most workers part time. One worker told this reporter that the company has made working on holidays mandatory.

Supporters at the rally included members of the Laundry Workers Center and Make the Road, as well as members of the Communications Workers and International Electrical Workers unions, recently victorious in their struggle against corporate giant Verizon. □

They want decent pay and R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN



Solidarity with June 14 general strike

Workers say French anti-labor law must go

By G. Dunkel

Hundreds of thousands of French workers, youth and students have come out into the streets of France nine times since the middle of March to protest a “labor reform law,” which is so unpopular with the workers that the government had to push it through Parliament’s National Assembly without a vote.

A single national day of protest on June 14 has been called by the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) and the coalition of labor unions it leads. On that day, the French Senate will take up the bill. Nuits Debout (“Up All Night”), a group of mostly youth and students outside the labor movement, has also endorsed this action.

Workers worldwide, including in the United States, inspired by the determination of the French workers, have called solidarity actions for June 14.

Besides the protests, a number of French workers went on strike in May, and some are still out. Railroad workers have been off the job since the middle of May. Even though Prime Minister Manuel Valls and Guillaume Pepy, the head of the SNCF, the corporation in charge of the railroads, tried to use the recent floods afflicting Paris to shame the SNCF workers into returning, the unions stayed strong and are still on strike.

FranceTV.info on June 3 said that most of the street cleaners and sanitation workers in Paris remain on strike. There are continuing reports of blockades at sorting centers outside the Paris-metro-

politan area. Air traffic controllers and Air France pilots are “creating grave problems for the French economy,” stated French President François Hollande — that is, problems for the French ruling class.

Refineries are still shut and tankers remain unloaded, so many French gas stations are running dry. Workers at most nuclear power plants, which supply 80 percent of the country’s electricity, are also on strike, forcing the electricity distribution company to import power at a very high cost.

France’s misnamed Socialist Party, which runs the government, has not only been directing French imperialist interests, but has abandoned any pretense of “being for the workers.” It is competing with the Republicans (LR) and the National Front (FN) for the title of the most effective proponent of austerity for the working class.

Even though austerity programs have been common in developed North American and European economies, the public’s response to them has usually been limited to the ballot box, which has not provided effective resistance. Greece has provided the strongest example of how the workers have been unable to solve their problems by relying on the ballot.

The Party of the Left, under Jean-Luc Melenchon, and the French Communist party, which just finished its 37th congress, are orienting to France’s 2017 presidential elections. But the workers are in the streets and on picket lines in an all-out attempt to defeat the so-called

Socialist Party’s attempt to impose austerity through “labor reform.”

International solidarity grows

International solidarity with the months-long struggle of the French workers has been building. Several sections of the World Federation of Trade Unions have released statements in solidarity with the French workers. A statement issued May 23 said: “The WFTU expresses its indignation against the forced evacuation of oil storage facilities and its full solidarity with all workers in France, who are fighting against the ‘labor’ law of the Social-Democratic government of François Hollande.” (wftucentral.org)

United Steel Workers Local 8751, which represents the Boston school bus drivers, released a statement April 28: “We send our warmest internationalist greetings to the rising working class of France. We hail the upsurge of public and private sector unions, of unemployed, pensioners, students and immigrants, and of everyone under siege by the capitalist exploiters.” A majority of members of this local are originally from Haiti.

An ad hoc coalition in the United States is using social media to organize coordinated protests at French consulates on June 14, the date of the next national protest in Paris. Some initiators of this campaign, members of the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition, were in France on May 1 to celebrate with the CGT the 10th anniversary of the naming of a street, “Rue Mumia,” in St. Denis, a suburb of Paris.

When the Free Mumia Coalition mem-

bers marched with the CGT in the May Day protest in Paris, their contingent was attacked by the cops with tear gas and stun grenades.

The U.S. coalition statement starts: “We, the undersigned, express our support for the ongoing mobilization of France’s workers in a coalition led by the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), and of the Nuit Debout movement consisting primarily of youth and students, against austerity attacks contained in that country’s so-called Labor Reform Law.

“This law, which was pushed through by the government and corporate vultures, will only serve to drive down the standard of living for current and future generations. The multinational French working class is using many forms of strikes, occupations and street protest, all of which illustrate who has the real power in society.”

The statement concludes: “We call on United States and other countries’ unions and other workers’ organizations, community groups and youth groups to exchange information with the French CGT and student leaders via satellite, radio, and written interviews with reliable translators. We further urge everyone to support the June 14 general strike in France via resolutions, educational meetings, and rallies at the nearest French consulate.” (June 6 email)

In New York City, supporters of the French workers will gather near the French Consulate at 934 5th Ave. on June 14 from 4 to 6 p.m. to show solidarity. □

Verizon strike wins victory for all workers

Continued from page 1

rates when they worked weekends, holidays and after eight hours on a given day, unless it added up to more than 40 hours a week.

(The United Auto Workers lost similar overtime pay during the 2009 GM and Chrysler bankruptcies, and it has yet to be fully restored.)

For the first time, low-wage wireless retail workers at two stores — in Everett, Mass., and Brooklyn, N.Y. — have a union contract. This means they are not mere “employees at will.” They have a grievance procedure and a union to defend them from wrongful discharge by this anti-worker company. Before this contract, workers had to jump through hoops to get bonuses for achieving “performance” targets; now these are paid without conditions.

This tremendous breakthrough opens the door for a mass organizing campaign in Verizon’s wireless retail sector. A successful union drive in this sector would reverberate throughout the retail industry and be a major boost to the struggle for a \$15/hour minimum wage, known as “Fight for 15.”

The unions won improvements to a special retirement buyout program, but the company has more leeway in administering the program. Verizon will surely try to use it to reduce the number of higher seniority workers with traditional pensions. Since 2011, newer hires are in a separate 401k pension tier, where they are not guaranteed a specific pension.

There was one key area where it appears the company got what it wanted. Rising health care costs have been passed on to union members in the form of higher monthly premiums, co-pays

and deductibles. Some workers are angry about these higher out-of-pocket costs, which the wage increases might not fully offset.

A sense of power at the point of production

The militant strike was highly effective. The poor service being provided by strikebreakers was driving customers away. Company stock was falling. Beyond that, the potential breakdown of telecommunications — now essential to the basic function of the capitalist economy — was a threat the capitalist state recognized. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez called Verizon and the CWA and IBEW together and pushed them to reach an agreement.

It would be simplistic to analyze this or any strike’s impact only by using a base calculation of the gains and losses on either side. Even those have to be weighted; they must be seen in the context of the time and place in which the terms of a contract — really the terms and conditions that mitigate class exploitation — are fought out.

At one time, the word “concessions” was used to define what the boss could be pressured to “concede” to the union to maintain class peace and avoid disruptions to production. But now, since the Reagan administration broke the air traffic controllers’ strike in 1981, that word is used to mean what workers have been forced to give up — that is, the class opposite.

As early as 1848 in the Communist Manifesto, Karl Marx wrote about unions and strikes. “Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the



Support from Boston school bus drivers.

WWW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

ever expanding union of the workers.”

Solidarity with strikers

The unity of the workers on the Verizon picket lines, which stretched from Massachusetts to Virginia, was tremendous. The strike brought workers of all nationalities, genders, sexual orientations, religions, abilities and ages together. It won the hearts of workers and oppressed people, organized and unorganized.

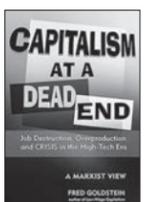
Every union in the country made this strike their strike through material aid, walking with the strikers and adopting stores that they picketed on their own. Philippine unions, who know the super-exploitation of call center workers there, supported the strike.

That Verizon “knows they got their ass kicked” is probably true, although the ruling class may arrogantly try to spin this workers’ victory into its opposite. What really matters is what the work-

ers know. They struck back at the point of production. They stopped a company, hell-bent on breaking their union, in its tracks. They went back to work with a newfound awareness of their collective strength.

The whole labor movement feels ownership of the Verizon win. This strike could mark a historic turning point toward “the ever expanding union of the workers.” □

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Free Jasmine Richards!

Cops turn anti-lynch law on its head

By Scott Scheffer
Los Angeles

Bulletin: On June 7, Superior Court Judge Elaine Lu sentenced Jasmine Richards to 90 days in jail, despite a letter sent to the court from Juror #6, a white male, pleading for leniency. It included the following: “The true injustice and political misstep was the decision to prosecute to the furthest extent of the law.... I ask you please honor this request to deliver the minimum possible sentence for Ms. Richards.”

The spirit of California’s anti-lynching law has been turned on its head in a case targeting a young anti-racist organizer. Outrage is spreading over last week’s conviction of Jasmine Richards, also known as Jasmine Abdullah, the founder of the Pasadena chapter of Black Lives Matter. The charge is so-called “felony lynching,” which is the attempt to take a person out of police custody by force.

Richards has been kept in custody and faces a possible sentence of one year in

state prison.

Richards was referred to as “the first political prisoner of Black Lives Matter” by New York Daily News columnist Shaun King in his June 2 column. BLM called for supporters to attend court when Richards will be sentenced on June 7 at 8:30 a.m. at the Pasadena Courthouse, 300 E. Walnut St.

Richards was arrested in August 2015 by Pasadena police on the “lynching” charge and two lesser charges. Her arrest came a few days after a demonstration calling for justice for Kendrec McDade, an African-American teenager shot to death by two Pasadena cops who claimed they thought he had a weapon. While McDade was in fact unarmed, both cops were cleared of wrongdoing.

Richards had made the McDade case an organizing priority. She was singled out by police at one of the BLM’s rallies protesting the killing of McDade. The cops claim that on Aug. 29, as Richards led a march past a restaurant, protesters removed someone from their custody

PHOTO: DEMOCRACY NOW!
Jasmine Richards in court said: “It is our duty to fight for our freedom.”



whom they were arresting on a matter unrelated to the protest. No one was arrested at that time. It was only on Sept. 2 they arrested Richards and charged her with “felony lynching.”

Twisting a progressive law

Richards was arrested for supposedly violating a law that — like anti-lynching statutes in many other states — was enacted after decades of campaigning by the likes of Ida B. Wells, many African-American women in the Anti-Lynching Crusaders grouping of the NAACP, and many other progressives who fought for a federal anti-lynching law. No records were kept before 1882, but at least 3,500 African Americans were murdered from 1882 to 1968, according to records compiled by the Tuskegee Institute. Lynchings were likely to have been at least as frequent earlier, especially after

Reconstruction ended.

Racist mobs murdered Black people with impunity, hanging them, burning them alive and shooting them. Many attempts at a federal anti-lynching law were defeated, but pressure and publicity finally began to force many states, counties and cities to enact some form of anti-lynching law. Even after many of the laws were in place, lynchings occurred with alarming frequency. Yet in all the years since anti-lynching laws have existed, only one white person has been convicted of first-degree murder.

The prosecution of Richards was dishonest and should have fallen apart. The anti-lynching law is supposed to be applied when a “riot” occurs or when a group removes someone from police custody by physical force. During the years when so many lynchings happened, there

Continued on page 10

Black & Latina workers resist nonprofit racism

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

The Black and Brown Workers Collective and supporters took to the streets on June 1 to call out racist, classist, transphobic and homophobic policies and practices in the HIV/AIDS nonprofit sector in Philadelphia. Marchers chanted: “No more racist organizations!” and “Blood in our communities! Money in their pockets!”

The protest specifically targeted Philadelphia FIGHT, an AIDS service agency, for raising the money for its expenses off the needs of Black and Brown communities while discriminating against workers who come from these communities. BBWC represents current and former workers at FIGHT, the Mazzone Center, GALAEI (the Gay and Lesbian Latino AIDS Education Initiative) and other nonprofit agencies.

Led by Black and Latina workers who lost their jobs for speaking out against oppressive work conditions, the march



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

stopped by outreach offices of the nonprofit in Center City Philadelphia. FIGHT had put its main office in lockdown status in response to the protest, which came six weeks after BBWC presented FIGHT director Jane Shull with a list of proposals to improve conditions for workers of color. Shull was informed that BBWC would return if she failed to respond.

The June 1 protest began at the AIDS Activities Coordinating Office of the

Philadelphia Department of Health, one of the FIGHT funders. BBWC demonstrators delivered a list of demands that included the firing of Shull.

The BBWC “Call to Action” enumerated 18 institutional practices at FIGHT that adversely affect Black and Brown workers, particularly those who identify as transfeminine.

Demands included immediate compensation for overtime labor of Black and Brown workers; an immediate stop to FIGHT sharing the medical history of Black and Brown employees with other frontline workers; and additional pay for bilingual workers for translation services they provide, which are currently not compensated.

Other demands include evaluation of FIGHT’s hiring and firing practices to more equitably represent communities most impacted by the current HIV/AIDS epidemic; termination of specific staff

whose policies were cited as particularly racist and offensive; and funded equal access to ongoing professional development for Black and Brown workers.

Black and Brown workers have been targeted and even fired for speaking out against FIGHT’s oppressive practices. Shani Akilah, who is one of those fired, said: “Workers are united to demand justice and a change in organizational culture. FIGHT has a long history of this type of discrimination. We are tired of the retaliation. Workers who are still on their jobs are united with us.”

Victoria Lopez worked at FIGHT as a phlebotomist for three years and then was forced to leave because of sexual harassment unaddressed by management. She was also asked to provide translation services with no additional compensation.

Viviana Ortiz, another former FIGHT worker, was sexually assaulted and harassed by a participant in the program. She charged management with failing to protect her and other Black and Brown employees. Speaking outside FIGHT’s Center City office, Ortiz asserted that if she were a “blue eyed, blonde-haired staff person, the client would be long gone.”

While specifically targeting Philadelphia FIGHT, BBWC organizers emphasized that discrimination in hiring and promotion of Black and Brown workers permeates nonprofit agencies serving as “gatekeepers” for community services.

In Pennsylvania, the private nonprofit sector employs almost 15 percent of the state’s workforce, more than any other sector. In Philadelphia and surrounding counties, employment in private nonprofits is closer to 40 percent. A 2013 study by Nonprofit HR Solutions found only 32 percent of U.S. nonprofits reflect the diversity of the communities they serve in hiring and promotional practices. (tinyurl.com/j29uqnm)

As the BBWC workers marched through Center City, they received an outpouring of support from people on the streets. Members of the Philadelphia Coalition for R.E.A.L. (Racial, Economic and Legal) Justice, Philadelphia Black Lives Matter, the Womanist Working Collective and Workers World Party joined in the action. For more information, contact blackandbrownworkerscollective@gmail.com. □

Racist killer cop indicted in Florida

By Chris Fry

A Florida cop who shot and killed musician Corey Jones in October 2015 was finally indicted by a Palm Beach County grand jury for manslaughter and attempted murder on June 1. Nouman Raja, who shot Jones, could face life in prison if convicted.

A city housing authority worker and a popular church band drummer, Corey Jones was beloved by family and friends in the African-American community of Boynton Beach. He had just turned 31 when he was cut down. Public meetings of hundreds demanded “Justice for Corey Jones!” The Black Lives Matter movement amplified pressure on Florida officials to fully investigate Jones’s killing and prosecute his killer.

In a statement, Jones’s family said they were relieved Raja was charged for this “reckless” act, adding, “While we understand that nothing can bring back our

son, brother and friend, this arrest will send a message that this conduct will not be tolerated from members of law enforcement.” (theguardian.com, June 1)

On the night of Oct. 18, Jones was on his way home from a music gig when his van broke down on an interstate highway in Palm Beach County. Fearful of being robbed of his expensive musical equipment, he owned and carried a properly licensed pistol.

Plainclothes cop Nouman Raja pulled up in an unmarked van, got out and confronted Jones while Jones was on his cell phone speaking to a roadside service center. What happened next was recorded in shocking detail on Jones’s phone. At no point in the recorded conversation did Raja identify himself as a cop.

Raja shouted, “Get your fucking hands up! Get your fucking hands up! Drop!” He then fired his revolver three times as Jones threw his gun into the grass and started to run away. Raja waited ten sec-

onds, and then fired three more shots. Two bullets struck Jones’s arms, and one hit his chest and passed through his heart.

Jones’s body was found nearly 200 feet away from his car. His gun, unfired and with the safety on, was found near his car where he had thrown it, far away from his body.

“There is no question that Jones ran away from Raja,” court documents state in the Guardian article. “Despite this observation, realizing that Jones had thrown his handgun in the grass near the rear of Jones’s vehicle, Officer Raja continued to fire at Jones as he ran away.”

Indictment of this killer cop is a great victory, a rare exception in this era of nonstop police murders. The Raja indictment shows that growing outrage and community pressure, expressed by the Black Lives Matter movement, is having a strong impact on the racist police, the courts, and the social and economic system that stands behind them. □

COMMENTARY

The People's Champ — beautiful, brilliant and great



By Larry Hales

The champ has passed. “The Greatest” has gone. Muhammad Ali is dead. It was a foregone conclusion that this day would come — “the day” when everything a person has been ends with one final exhalation. It comes for everyone.

When it was announced that Muhammad Ali was hospitalized yet again, this time with a respiratory illness, it seemed, sadly, that it was only a matter of time. And it was. Surrounded by family, he passed quietly of septic shock on June 3.

Since his death, Muhammad Ali has been lauded in major bourgeois media, in minor sources, in print and in every form of media around the world. He is remembered by people too young to have seen him box and by revolutionaries and reactionaries. Everyone has something to say about Muhammad Ali.

Who was Muhammad Ali? This can be confusing. People are complex. History is too; it is dialectical. So the ideas and beliefs of an individual, like society as a whole, are affected by the real world around us. Changes are due to objective and subjective factors.

A simpler way to say it is that the political tumult of the 1960s era that produced Muhammad Ali was no more by the 1980s. So the Muhammad Ali who supported Ronald Reagan was a different Ali. The revolutionary fervor around the world had quieted, and the Black Liberation struggle that he championed had been violently repressed by the police, the FBI, the military and the courts.

Years of reaction followed, with the destruction of the industrial heartland due to high technology, and the capitalists' drive to find higher rates of exploitation in the Third World, coupled with an assault on workers and oppressed people in the United States.

Even then, one cannot say that Muhammad Ali's unfortunate support for Reagan or other right-wing politicians defined his post-boxing life. The establishment that embraces him today portrays him as just an icon, a person with nebulous politics, who was loved and respected by all, who could shake hands with Fidel Castro or Nelson Mandela and then sit down with Bill Clinton in the White House.

The people who eulogize Muhammad Ali today would lambaste the Ali whom we hold close. They wanted to silence him at the height of his physical prowess and political significance.

A symbol for the oppressed

Who was Muhammad Ali? In three words, he was beautiful, brilliant and great. He was our Blackness, our expression through and through — and yet, still more. He was a symbol for all despised and oppressed people who yearn and struggle for more. He was our “religion” — what Karl Marx called “the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions.” He was everything that we were and are — upfront and defiant for all to see how magnificent and brave we are and must continue to be.

The dialogue will continue about Ali's political importance. But what made him the Greatest must be reclaimed.

It was not only boxing that made Ali great and the champ. His skill as a boxer is part of it. Some might sum up boxing as he once did, “Boxing is a lot of white men

watching two Black men beat each other up.” That description brings to mind the first chapter in Ralph Ellison's book, “Invisible Man,” sometimes presented as a short story called “Battle Royal.”

It would be difficult to argue against that perception. Most fighters are from the oppressed world. Consequently, so are most fans, except those who can afford to see the biggest fights and those who profit the most are white.

It is the hurt game, a brutal contest. It is, perhaps, a contradiction for this writer, a revolutionary, to enjoy.

In the pantheon of boxers

Boxing is a sport of science and skill. It is a chess match that requires a great deal of thinking and certain physical attributes. Ali possessed it all. It is difficult to rank athletes from different eras because scientific advances have made training more efficient and helped increase the performance level of athletes.

Some scribes rank Ali at the top of the pantheon of boxers; some rank him in the top five. Often these rankings are culled together by people who have never been punched in the face. But it would not be sacrilegious to rank Sugar Ray Robinson as history's greatest fighter and Henry Armstrong second, with Ali third, or maybe lower, but definitely in the top six. Robinson and Armstrong were tremendous athletes and fighters who accomplished amazing feats. Armstrong held belts from three different weight classes at the same time.

Ali's abilities and accomplishments put him in a unique class. He was the fastest heavyweight the world had ever seen, in terms of hand and foot speed. But it was his hands and the spectacle of the dizzying blur of combinations he would throw that held many people in awe. He was also light on his feet for someone of his size. He could move backwards and laterally while popping a jab. He could set his feet, uncork a right hand and then dance away before his opponent could respond. His balance was like a dancer's, and his punches had power from both the torque generated and the leverage he was able to get.

If someone were looking to create another Muhammad Ali, that person would need to take the hand, foot speed and balance of an early Floyd Mayweather; the reflexes of a prime Roy Jones Jr.; the combination of speed and power of Shane Mosley; the clowning of Emanuel Augustus, and then put them all on a 6-foot-3-inch frame. Then add the buttery voice of Sam Cooke, the skill with vernacular of Michael Eric Dyson and the sing-song quality of the delivery of rapper Method Man — and you get Muhammad Ali.

Ali made the violence of boxing almost beautiful to watch. When his reflexes dulled and his feet lost their speed, it was his ring intelligence and his superior will that defeated opponents. He faced some of the most efficient punchers in heavyweight history — Liston, Shavers, Foreman, Ron Lyle, Joe Frazier — and he beat them all.

Who could forget Ali's fight against George Foreman and the images of Ali surrounded by throngs in the Democratic Republic of Congo? Foreman was the establishment's pick, a powerful fighter with a more fearsome reputation than Sonny Liston. Ali took Foreman's every punch and taunted his foe, wearing him down before coming alive to knock him out in the eighth round. It was a demonstration of his in-ring greatness,

as he suggested it would be.

The ‘People's Champ’

The fighter is part of the “champ,” just a piece of what made Ali great. That part can't be separated from the whole; without it he would not have had the world's stage or drawn such ire from bourgeois politicians and their media mouthpieces.

What made him the “People's Champ” and greater than even his in-ring exploits is what Ali did with his fame and allure. When he joined the Nation of Islam in 1964, it made more of a political statement than it would today, though it remains one.

Ali said then: “I am America. I am the part you won't recognize. But get used to me. Black, confident, cocky; my name, not yours; my religion, not yours; my goals, my own; get used to me.” His statement symbolized the period of revolution against Western imperialism and white supremacy, as well as the Black Liberation struggle in the U.S.

Ali stood to lose everything he fought for, but that threat did not cow him. He said what the Black masses felt. At a time of American apartheid, when Civil Rights leaders were being jailed, beaten and assassinated, he stood up as a Black nationalist and taunted the dominant nationality unceasingly. He couldn't be controlled or ignored.

The Civil Rights Movement was still the predominant wing of the Black political movement. But Ali's presence was an important component of what would become the most feared wing of the Black struggle — the Black Liberation movement.

When Ali was drafted into the Army, he could have stated that he was a conscientious objector solely on religious grounds. But he insisted, “No Viet Cong never called me n—r.”

Ali's further elaboration set the world

afire: “Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go ten thousand miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights?”

His internationalist sentiment exposed the great hypocrisy of why the U.S. claimed it was in Southeast Asia. Even if it was not understood that the U.S. had material interests and ideological reasons for waging war against the people of Southeast Asia, Ali's refusal and explanations hit home. It was like Langston Hughes' character Jesse B. Semple, an everyman, learning Internationalism and Anti-Racism 101.

‘I've been in jail for 400 years’

Ali explained, “I ain't draft dodging. I ain't burning no flag. I ain't running to Canada. I'm staying right here. You want to send me to jail? Fine, you go right ahead. I've been in jail for 400 years. I could be there for four or five more, but I ain't going no 10,000 miles to help murder and kill other poor people. If I want to die, I'll die right here, right now, fightin' you, if I want to die. You my enemy, not no Chinese, no Vietcong, no Japanese. You my opposer when I want freedom. You my opposer when I want justice. You my opposer when I want equality. Want me to go somewhere and fight for you? You won't even stand up for me right here in America, for my rights and my religious beliefs. You won't even stand up for my rights here at home.”

This stance helped to unify the sentiments of Black people across the country and usher in further militancy in the anti-war movement and the Black struggle. Jim Brown, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Bill Russell, Willie Davis, Curtis Stokes and others, athletes at the prime of their careers, made their objections to the war public in a unified way.

A fighter ago

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Muhammad Ali died June 3 after a decades-long battle against Parkinson's disease.

In addition to being a phenomenal athlete, he made great contributions to the anti-war and anti-racist movements.

Ali, then known as Cassius Marcellus Clay, won the Chicago Golden Gloves title in amateur boxing in 1959 and 1960. In subsequent bouts, he won unanimous decisions over Gennady Shatkov of the Soviet Union and Tony Madigan of Australia, and then decisively beat favorite Zbigniew Pietrzykowski of Poland.

Clay, then 18, came to world attention in 1960 after winning a gold medal for the U.S. in light heavyweight boxing at the Rome Olympics. There, he won his first fight against Yvon Becot of Belgium.

In 1960, youth in the U.S. South initiated the sit-in movement, demanding an end to legalized segregation in restaurants and other commercial establishments. On Feb. 1, in Greensboro, N.C., four students from the North Carolina Agricultural and Industrial College, attended by African Americans, sat down at Woolworth's Department store in a “whites only” section.

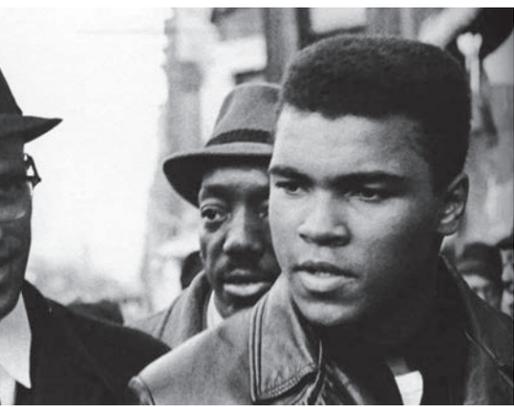
They sparked a nationwide struggle. By April, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was formed.

This militance on social issues was matched by the strong, dominant presence of African-American athletes at the Olympic games in Rome in 1960. There, the advancements that African Americans made in international sports were highlighted. Their presence in the games directly challenged segregationists, who still controlled Southern and national politics.

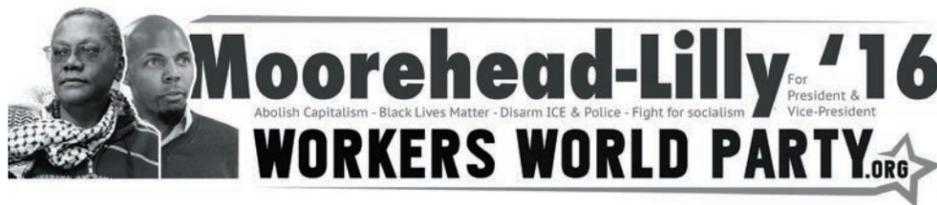
The July 16, 2012, Examiner published during London's Olympic Games recalled, “Not since Jesse Owens in the 1936 Summer Games in Germany had African-American athletes captured the Olympic world stage as in 1960. ... Sprinter Wilma Rudolph was the first woman to win three Olympic Gold Medals. Decathlon Gold Medal winner Rafer Johnson was the first African-American Olympic Captain. African-American athletes won a total of 22 medals, 16 of which were gold.”

Becoming Muhammad Ali

After Clay won the heavyweight boxing championship against favored titleholder Sonny Liston on Feb. 25, 1964, he announced his membership in the Nation of Islam, and declared that his new name



Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali



Moorehead is the 2016 presidential candidate of Workers World Party. Her vice presidential running mate is Lamont Lilly.

Muhammad Ali's legacy: He 'shook the world'

By Monica Moorehead

Ali's stance resulted in the loss of his license to fight, his championship belts, money — and his best fighting years. He knew of this possibility and remained resolute. When he returned to the ring, his physical talents were somewhat diminished. Reflexes and speed are the first things a fighter loses.

Beloved worldwide

This is the Ali that the world — outside of mainstream bourgeois circles — remembers. It is why he could travel anywhere in the world — to Cuba, Iraq, Libya, the Congo, Philippines and elsewhere — and people by the tens of thousands would gather and wait to see him. This is why he was respected by revolutionaries and anti-imperialists.

It is also why a reviled, bourgeois, reactionary demagogue like Donald Trump or any other politician might speak glowingly of him today, but would have hated him 50 years ago. Throw a rock in any direction, and you might hit someone who speaks of Ali as if they are memorializing the same man the oppressed do. They lie.

That is not our Ali. Our Muhammad Ali was not safe. Our Ali spoke like us and for us. We keep him close to our chest, and that is the Ali we mourn. Our Ali believed in doing the impossible: "Impossible is just a big word thrown around by small men who find it easier to live in the world they've been given than to explore the power they have to change it. Impossible is not a fact. It's an opinion. Impossible is not a declaration. It's a dare. Impossible is potential. Impossible is temporary. Impossible is nothing."

He was The Greatest. We will remember him as we fight on. Ali presente! We will win. ☐

Like millions of people around the world, the Moorehead/Lilly 2016 election campaign mourns the profound loss of "The Greatest," Muhammad Ali. The three-time heavyweight boxing champion suffered from Parkinson's disease for over 30 years before succumbing to septic shock due to respiratory failure. When Ali was named the "greatest sportsman of the 20th century" by Sports Illustrated in 1999, very few could deny it.

When he became champion in 1964 after beating Sonny Liston, a brash 22-year-old, Ali, known then as Cassius Marcellus Clay, stated boldly that he "had shook up the world." Little did he know how prophetic those words would become.

Ali's prominence as a great fighter would eventually extend beyond the boxing ring. He evolved into the most popular symbol worldwide for racial pride and against the U.S. genocidal war in Vietnam. What gets lost in all the accolades for Ali since his death — including from those who once despised him — was that Ali did not take his heroic stances in a social vacuum. He was influenced by political and economic conditions, especially the oppression of the Black masses and their massive resistance during that historic era.

Like many idealistic young African-American athletes, Ali had hoped that winning a gold medal at the 1960 Olympic games in Rome would help him strike a blow against racial segregation in his hometown of Louisville, Ky. It did not.

In reaction to being denied the right to eat at an all-white lunch counter, a justified, enraged Clay stated publicly that he would throw his gold medal in the river. This occurred before the massive upsurge

led by students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities against segregated lunch counters throughout the South.

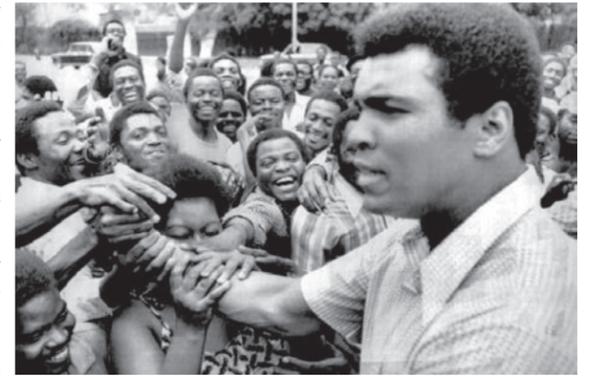
When Clay embraced Black Nationalism by converting to the Muslim faith, joining the Nation of Islam and changing his name in 1964, the demand for Black Liberation at home and abroad — in the form of the Civil Rights Movement here and the anti-colonial struggles for national independence on the African continent — were impacting oppressed peoples, including Ali.

When Ali refused to be drafted into the U.S. military in 1967 due to his faith, he defiantly stated that no Vietnamese person ever called him the N word and therefore he had no quarrel with the Vietnamese people. Ali took on this heroic stance simultaneously with a powerful anti-war movement — a movement that embraced him after the racist U.S. government stripped him of his heavyweight title.

Towering figure of resistance

For almost four years, before the U.S. Supreme Court overruled his draft conviction, Ali was denied the right to defend his title during the prime years of his career. Once his title was stolen from him, Ali was invited to speak at many college campuses to explain his anti-war position. He became the most recognizable Black activist who stood up to the U.S. war machine's genocidal war in Vietnam. Ali was viewed as both a victim of and a resister against the U.S. government.

To this day, the government has offered no formal apology to Ali and his family for its vindictive ruling.



Muhammad Ali in Kinshasa, Zaire (Congo) in 1974.

Ali's rebellion against white supremacy and the status quo endeared him to millions of people worldwide, including today's younger generation. Black Lives Matter activists are seeking to know more about what Ali stood for. How many seasoned activists even know that decades ago Ali supported the right of return of the Palestinian people and visited refugee camps in southern Lebanon?

The lasting legacy of Muhammad Ali should be examined and understood: how he played a historic role in a particular epoch of the class struggle and how that struggle impacted him as an individual. One cannot be separated from the other. This is important, as bourgeois historians are now seeking to coopt and sanitize what he did and why he did it.

Muhammad Ali was a fighter on many fronts, refusing to bow down to white supremacy and U.S. imperialism on his own rebellious, powerful terms. Workers World Party joins millions of people around the world in declaring that Ali will always hold a special place, inspiring millions to shake the world collectively for a social revolution. Muhammad Ali ¡Presente! ☐

ainst war and racism

was Muhammad Ali. Consequently, he became a target for the ruling class and the corporate press.

Ali invited Malcolm X to Miami for the Clay vs. Liston fight. After returning to New York, Malcolm X took Ali on a tour of the United Nations and introduced him to African and other diplomats. In December 1963, Malcolm X had been silenced for 90 days by NOI leader, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, over his "chickens-coming-home-to-roost" statement about President John F. Kennedy's assassination.

Developments in March 1964 broke the relationship between Ali and Malcolm X. Chicago NOI headquarters informed Malcolm X of his indefinite suspension, and barred him from speaking at mosques or publicly on behalf of the organization that he had made famous worldwide.

Malcolm X announced at a March 12 press conference in Harlem that he was forming a separate mosque. His efforts took on a more direct political character when he asserted that the new Muslim Mosque, Inc. would engage in voter registration and perhaps form a Black political party.

Ali and Malcolm X met for the last time publicly in Ghana in West Africa in May 1964, when the country was led by



Muhammad Ali and President Kwame Nkrumah.

President Kwame Nkrumah, the founder of modern Africa and a proponent of Pan-Africanism and socialism. When encountering Malcolm in an Accra hotel, Ali refused to address him.

Acrimony between Malcolm X, who formed the Organization of Afro-American Unity in June 1964, and the NOI escalated into an ideological and personal conflict. Relations were so strained that when Malcolm X was assassinated on Feb. 21, 1965, the federal government and corporate media tried to blame the NOI.

Resistance to the draft

Ali was drafted into the U.S. military in 1966 and refused induction in early 1967, saying he had no quarrels with the Vietnamese people. The boxing establishment took his title away, while the courts convicted him of violating the Selective Service Act and sentenced the champion to five years in prison. He remained free on bond, while appealing the sentence and speaking out across the country.

Ali's stance was shared by thousands of African Americans, whites and others who objected to serving in a war of genocide against the Vietnamese people. The NOI and organizations in the struggle, such as SNCC and the Black Panther Party, opposed the war and pledged their solidarity with the National Liberation Front of Vietnam.

Ali won back his right to participate in professional boxing in 1970 when a ruling allowed him to fight again for the first time in over three years. By March 1971, he lost his title to Joe Frazier at New York's Madison Square Garden. On

June 28, the Supreme Court unanimously overturned Ali's conviction for refusing the draft.

Ali regained the title in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) in October 1974, defeating George Foreman, the 1968 Olympic gold medal heavyweight boxing winner. Then, thousands of people from throughout Africa and the world visited the country. Famous Black artists, including James Brown, B.B. King, the O'Jays and Miriam Makeba, performed in several concerts.

Even though Zaire was a neocolonial outpost of reaction and counterrevolution across Africa, the African masses expressed their solidarity with Ali as illustrated in the documentary "When We Were Kings."

Ali fought a victorious bout with Joe Frazier in the Philippines in 1975. His contests afterwards led to both victories and defeats before he retired in 1981.

The life of Muhammad Ali illustrates the role of African Americans in sports and its relationship to the broader struggle against national oppression. His death has highlighted the great contributions he made as an athlete and fighter against imperialist war and for social justice for oppressed peoples. ☐

Fort Dix 5 Community protests Islamophobia

By Joe Piette
Camden, N.J.

Brothers Eljvir, Dritan and Shain Duka were convicted eight years ago of participating in a plot they had literally never heard of, in an atmosphere of Islamophobia fueled by ambitious politicians and sensationalist media headlines. The Duka brothers received life sentences plus 30 years for their disputed role in a government-manufactured “conspiracy” to attack Fort Dix, a U.S. military base in New Jersey.

On May 31, U.S. District Judge Robert Kugler, the same judge who sentenced the brothers originally, denied their appeal for relief post-conviction because of ineffective counsel. The three Muslim men argued their convictions should be overturned, since their attorneys improperly prevented them from testifying during their 2008 trial.

Mohamad Schnewer, Serdar Tatar and the three Duka brothers were entrapped by two informants in an FBI sting operation for the alleged plot. The U.S. attor-

ney prosecuting the case was Chris Christie,

now governor of New Jersey and a supporter of right-wing presidential candidate Donald Trump.

On June 1, Duka family members, area Muslim residents and community activists from Philadelphia, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and New York gathered at the Federal Courthouse in Camden, N.J., to express outrage at the judge’s denial of the brothers’ appeal.

Robert Boyle, Shain Duka’s attorney, said in a press statement read to the press: “The government used highly paid informants that manipulated the Dukas into making theoretical statements that the government then used to charge them with terrorism. No act was ever committed by them. No act was ever planned by them. Nor did they agree to commit any illegal acts. The result is that hard-working young men with devoted families are serving sentences of life without parole. This case was not about fighting terrorism. It was about feeding fear.”



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

In front of two large, colorful banners, supporters held black and white placards reading: “Justice for the Ft. Dix 5. Islamophobia convicted the Duka brothers. Free them now.”

The Free the Fort Dix 5 Support Committee organized the press conference in less than 24 hours. Muhammed Malik of the FFD5SC told the two dozen participants: “Continue to come out and oppose Islamophobia, which is attempting to entrap people, which is attempting to reduce Muslims to animals. We want to make sure we continue to stand up and fight back.”

Justice denied once again

The brothers’ appeal hearing, held in January, was limited to a narrow point of law: whether the men’s not testifying materially affected the outcome of the case. District Judge Kugler’s denial of their appeal came down to his belief in the credibility of the original lawyers rather than

the word of the men he put in jail for life. Those lawyers said they offered to let the men testify. The men said they were denied the opportunity to speak to the jury in their own voices.

A statement by The National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms emphasized: “This decision further illustrates the injustice that Muslims have faced at the hand of the courts and makes it impossible to envision a legal system where Muslims have a legitimate chance at gaining justice. The NCPFC ardently believes in the innocence of these men and will continue to campaign on their behalf until they are released.”

Attorney Boyle, in a statement declaring Shain Duka’s intention to appeal again, said, “Those of us who are not Muslim must join with our Muslim brothers and sisters and others of good will to secure justice for the Dukas and other victims of government misconduct.” □

Cuomo tries to quash BDS movement

By Joe Catron
New York

Before marching in the annual “Celebrate Israel” parade in Manhattan on June 5, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed an executive order requiring public agencies controlled by his executive branch to divest from companies and institutions that “participate in boycott, divestment, or sanctions activity targeting Israel.”

The order, announced to a beaming crowd of Zionist leaders and business executives at the elite Harvard Club, also requires the commissioner of the Office of General Services to compile and maintain a list of targeted entities.

“Cuomo’s action has the ugliest attributes of McCarthyism: identifying organizations that engage in speech we dislike and ‘Let’s blacklist them,’” Baher Azmy, executive director of the Center for Constitutional Rights, told the Associated Press. “This is a well-orchestrated, well-funded, organized strategy to disproportionately punish U.S.-based activists. Really ugly.” (AP, June 5)

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, launched by Palestinian organizations in 2005, continues to expand in its tenth year, driving corporate giants like Veolia, Orange, CHR International and G4S from the Israeli market; pushing Israeli enterprises, including SodaStream and Ahava, out of the occupied West Bank; and winning campaign victories.

The BDS movement demands that Israel end its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantle the “Apartheid Wall” in the West Bank, extend full equality to its own minority of Palestinian citizens and allow the return of Palestinian refugees ethnically

cleansed from their homes.

Announcing his broadside, Cuomo peppered his speech with predictable bluster: “If you boycott against Israel, New York will boycott you. If you divert revenues from Israel, New York will divert revenues from you. If you sanction Israel, New York will sanction you.”

But it is not immediately clear who his order, which mentions only public investments in entities that support BDS, might actually affect. None of the companies that have changed their policies following massive campaigns have acknowledged the role of BDS, much less endorsed it.

Gilad Erdan, Israeli public security and strategic affairs minister, railed that “BDS was a factor in the decision of security company G4S to sell their operations in Israel.” However, the British-Danish security conglomerate, a contractor with Israeli prisons and occupation forces, demurred, preferring to cite “strategic and commercial grounds” for its decision.

The company’s claim has an element of truth. BDS has always sought to impact its commercial targets by impacting negatively on their bottom lines, that is, lowering their profits, rather than through moral appeals. And organizations whose support it has sought and won, like the United Church of Christ and the United Electrical Workers, have no stock to buy or sell.

While time will tell, Cuomo’s order reads as if it had been carefully drafted to avoid any practical consequence, including an inevitable legal challenge on constitutional grounds.

But political grandstanding or not, Cuomo’s action joins a growing raft of measures by Israel and its allies to repress a global surge of solidarity with Palestinians.

French courts have convicted a series of BDS activists on grounds of “discrimination,” with four in the city of Toulouse currently facing charges for distributing flyers encouraging the boycott of Israeli goods.

While Cuomo snickered on Sunday that passing legislation can “often be a tedious affair,” nine states, as well as Nassau County, New York, have enacted anti-BDS bills over the past year. These measures range from rhetorical denunciations of the movement to attempts to impose policies against it like Cuomo’s, with similarly unclear results.

Last month, BDS co-founder Omar Barghouti announced that Israel had refused to renew his travel document, imposing an effective travel ban on him.

“Having lost many battles for hearts and minds at the grassroots level, Israel has adopted since 2014 a new strategy to criminalize support for BDS from the top,” Barghouti told the New York Times June 5 after Cuomo’s announcement.

And over recent months, the movement’s website, bdsmovement.net, was hit with a series of Distributed Denial of Service attacks that online security firm eQualit.ie described as having “a level of sophistication and commitment not generally seen.”

“These latest cyberattacks against BDS seem to be part of a full-fledged Israeli war on the movement that includes McCarthyite legal repression, use of intelligence services and yet more funding for ‘brand Israel’ propaganda,” Mahmoud Nawajaa, general coordinator of the Palestinian BDS National Committee, said in a statement on June 2.

Catron is a member of Al-Awda New York: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition and an organizer with Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network.

Zika:

By Lyn Neeley

As the thermometer soars past 90 degrees and Zika arrives in the Southern states, summer won’t be fun and games, especially for women, Black people and the poor. Zika is arriving.

Hot, moist climates, extreme poverty, crowded neighborhoods, stagnant water pooling in refuse and drainage ditches, still no federal funding or coordinated prevention plan, reactionary abortion laws: a bad recipe for the rampant spread of Zika-carrying mosquitoes.

The World Health Organization encourages countries heavily affected by Zika to use “both old and new approaches to mosquito control as the most immediate line of defense.” (theguardian, Feb. 16)

Zika is a women’s issue

This month a New Jersey woman gave birth to the third baby in the U.S. with Zika-related microcephaly. She acquired Zika while visiting Honduras.

Over 150 pregnant women in the U.S. have reported Zika-like symptoms, and another 129-plus are in U.S. colonies, mainly Puerto Rico. (CDC, May) Women are desperately seeking more information about Zika, a looming crisis that can affect the lives of women and their families.

A new report shows women of reproductive age (from 15 to 44) are 90 percent more likely than men to be infected with Zika through sexual transmission. This means more babies may be born with virus-caused microcephaly due to sexual transmission than was previously thought, making the need for access to contraception even more important as Zika spreads. (Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, May 26)

Zika reaches a fetus by crossing cells into the placenta. The virus kills developing nerve cells in fetal brain tissue. (Lan-

Support for Venezuela as Latin American unity pushes back OAS

By Cheryl LaBash

A campaign against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela by Secretary General Luis Almagro of the Organization of American States was pushed back on June 1. A special meeting of the OAS Permanent Council declared its “respect for the nonintervention principle in the domestic affairs of the States; and that every State has the right to choose, without external interference, its political, economic, and social system and to organize itself in the best way suited to it,” and “support for all efforts of understanding, dialogue and the constitutional procedures.”

This last point supports the initiative for dialogue facilitated by the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), although it does not mention the organization by name. More importantly, it recognizes the legitimacy of the Bolivarian Constitution, a target of the anti-Chavista right wing.

The Cuban Ministry of Foreign Relations in a June 2 statement supported Venezuela’s “difficult but victorious diplomatic battle against the interventionist plans of imperialism and oligarchies.”

The statement added: “All appearances indicated that a triumphal parade was at hand, but the Secretary General, OAS bureaucrats and their ghastly mentors forgot that we do not live in 1962 when with shameful complicity the organiza-

tion tried and convicted socialist Cuba. ...

“The Ministry of Foreign Relations considers what has now occurred in Washington as new evidence that Our America has changed, although the OAS continues to be an unreformable instrument of U.S. domination over the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, a reminder of what President Raul Castro Ruz said ... when paraphrasing Jose Marti, he asserted, “Before Cuba returns to the OAS, the northern seas will unite with the southern seas, and a snake will be born from the egg of an eagle.” (minrex.gob.cu)

The OAS has formally rescinded the suspension of revolutionary Cuba. Yet Cuba was finally invited to attend the OAS-sponsored April 2015 Summit of the Americas in Panama only after the countries of Latin America refused to have a summit without Cuba.

In 2011, 33 of the 35 countries in the Western Hemisphere united in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, omitting imperialist U.S. and Canada. This development followed the defeat of the U.S.-inspired Free Trade Area of the Americas and the birth of the solidarity trading bloc, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America — Peoples’ Trade Treaty, as well as other continental self-governing bodies like UNASUR and PetroCaribe.

Conspiracy vs. Venezuela made in USA

The draft declaration attacking Bolivarian Venezuela had been submitted by the delegation of Argentina, with co-sponsorship of the U.S., Honduras, Peru, Mexico and Bahamas. But Washington started the attack with its Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act, which went into effect on Dec. 18, 2014 — the day after the U.S. released the last three members of the Cuban 5 and presidents Raul Castro and Barack Obama committed to normalizing relations between the U.S. and Cuba.

On March 8, 2015, President Barack Obama declared Venezuela “an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.”

The OAS secretary general, allied with the Venezuelan oligarchy, sought to line

up another weapon against Bolivarian Venezuela to justify imperialist intervention — including military intervention.

Journalist Berta Joubert-Ceci described the warm-up for the special meeting of the OAS Permanent Council: “To fulfill his role serving U.S. interests, Secretary General of the Organization of American States Luis Almagro announced on May 13 from Miami that the OAS should apply its Democratic Charter against Venezuela. For the OAS to arrive at a decision, Almagro requested that the National Assembly of Venezuela report on the political situation. Almagro made the announcement at the two-day conference called the ‘Concordia Summit,’ at which 200 rightist representatives of public and private sectors gathered to analyze the situation on the continent.

“It’s enough to see the names of the participants to guess its agenda: Luis Alberto Moreno, president of the Inter-American Development Bank, and former presidents and prime ministers, including Luis Alberto Lacalle of Uruguay, Sebastián Piñera of Chile, Jorge Quiroga of Bolivia, Alvaro Uribe of Colombia and José María Aznar of Spain.

“Incidentally, it was at this summit where Uribe called for foreign military intervention to help the Venezuelan opposition.” (workers.org, May 24)

On Feb. 15, Venezuela objected to Almagro posting on the OAS website a Washington Post opinion piece by editorial writer Jackson Diehl, “A revitalized voice for the Americas.” Diehl lauds Almagro for intervening in the Venezuelan parliamentary elections with an open letter attacking the Venezuelan government. “He’s also intervened in Haiti’s election crisis, a corruption scandal in Guatemala and a border dispute between Colombia and Venezuela,” Diehl writes.

Venezuela says of Diehl’s right-wing history: “On various occasions he has expressed frustration that the U.S. government has not dealt more aggressively with the Venezuelan government (despite the fact that the Bush administration endorsed the 2002 coup). In August 2004, Diehl stated that ‘It is virtually unprecedented for Washington to do so little about such a considerable Latin America

menace; Venezuela, after all, is of greater economic and strategic importance to the United States than were El Salvador and Nicaragua in the 80s’ [where the U.S. government supported death squads and CIA-trained insurgents].” (alba-tcp.org)

At its close on June 4, the Seventh Association of Caribbean States Summit held in Havana presented a special communiqué in support of the Bolivarian government of Venezuela.

Letter defends Venezuela

A May 31 protest letter to Almagro signed by at least 81 concerned organizations and individuals from the U.S. and Canada was hand-delivered to the OAS headquarters in Washington, D.C., the site of the special meeting.

The signers said they were “deeply concerned by your intervention in Venezuela on behalf of the opposition United Democratic Roundtable (MUD) and its allies in Washington as well as your relentless attacks on the administration of President Nicolás Maduro.

“Far from helping Venezuela move toward a peaceful and cooperative resolution of these challenges, your intercessions over the past year have served to exacerbate the conflict. We urge you to avoid further partisanship and play a more constructive and impartial role in promoting peace and dialogue. For an example of a such an approach one only need look to the mediation efforts of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), which has the backing of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.

“We are particularly concerned about your strong support for the MUD’s efforts to pressure the OAS into invoking the Inter-American Democratic Charter against the Maduro government; your attempts to cast doubt on the democratic legitimacy of last December’s legislative elections during the weeks preceding the vote; your intense lobbying in favor of the highly controversial amnesty bill; the selective nature of your expressions of indignation over violations of human rights; and your failure to denounce Washington’s increasingly belligerent posture towards Caracas.”

Read the full letter at infoamericas.info.

crisis of the poor

cet, March 15) Zika reproduces in these neural cells and infects neighboring cells. The virus also damages cells that insulate neurons in a fetus and in adults. (Cell Stem Cell, May) Even tiny amounts of virus can cause damage throughout pregnancy, especially in the first trimester.

The World Health Organization reported in June evidence of a wider range of abnormalities than was earlier expected from Zika-related births: eye defects, hearing loss, impaired growth, spasticity, seizures and irritability.

In Brazil, nearly 1,000 babies have been born with microcephaly since the Zika outbreak last October. Abortion is illegal and contraception hard to find in Brazil, but Southern states in the U.S. also have severe anti-choice laws. In Texas, so many women’s clinics have had to shut down that 25 percent of women seeking abortions live over 140 miles from a clinic. Long distances, loss of a workday, no money for child care and transportation put women, especially poor women, in a tough situation. “Between 100,000 and 240,000 women of reproductive age living in Texas tried to end their pregnancy on their own,” reported ThinkProgress on March 30.

Zika is a class and race issue

By the end of June, Zika is expected to hit the South, where over 20 percent of the people live in poverty. But this figure doesn’t show the huge white-Black poverty gap.

For example, Wilcox County, Ala., is the poorest county in the U.S. Not for white people, though. The poverty rate among the county’s white population is just 8.8 percent, compared to 50.2 percent for the Black population. The trend is similar in other Black Belt counties. (Al.com, May 2015)

Due to poverty, Southerners have a higher incidence of chronic illnesses and other poor health outcomes. More people live without health coverage or Medicaid. The gender-wage gap is highest in the South, with the biggest discrepancy in Louisiana, where women make 65.9 cents for every dollar a man makes. (U.S. News, September 2014)

Extreme poverty makes it unrealistic for people to follow recommendations for preventing Zika: install window screens, air conditioning, drainage pipes, clean up standing water, get regular medical check-ups. “Another thing Southern states have in common is Republican political leaders that have spent the past decade shrinking the social safety net.” (Huffpost Business, July 2014)

The poorest counties will continue to have the worst mosquito control programs, because there is no central planning or funding in the U.S. for this crisis. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cut \$44 million in April from its fund that helps state and local governments prepare for public health emergencies. (NPR, May 19)

Money for vaccines and Zika research

There are five possible vaccines that

may be ready to test by September. However, “A top health researcher said he is worried a lack of funding may dramatically impede the search for a Zika vaccine, as the House and Senate prepare to lock horns over how much funding to provide the Obama administration to deal with the virus.” (Washington Examiner, May)

Oxitec, a British biotech company, engineered and tested genes designed to reduce populations of the Zika-carrying mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*. Both are inserted into male mosquitoes that don’t bite humans when released into the wild. One gene causes males to bear infertile offspring; the other gene kills future offspring.

Although Oxitec claims a 90 percent success rate during field tests in the Cayman Islands, Panama, Malaysia and Brazil, those rates may be controversial. Last month the company announced an expansion of the program it calls the Friendly *Aedes aegypti* Project.

Pending FDA approval, Oxitec hopes to conduct trials in the Florida Keys this summer.

Opponents of the field trials include the Florida Keys Environmental Coalition, which carries signs reading “No Con-

sent” into heated public meetings. They argue that with so many variables in nature, we should be more careful. Besides, the program is expensive for developing countries and poor Southern communities. Oxitec’s bioengineered mosquitoes would cost Brazil \$10 per person, twice the country’s current annual budget for Zika control.

Oxitec supporters say engineered mosquitoes will replace harmful, ineffective insecticides that can’t reach areas indoors and will increase mosquito resistance over time. With 3,000 mosquito species on earth, the technology targets only the invasive species *Aedes aegypti*. Disease-carrying mosquito bites from 100 species make them the most deadly animal on earth, killing over 700,000 people a year. (Smithsonian, June)

It’s time for the U.S. to approve substantial funding to deal with the Zika crisis — not just take money allotted for Ebola and other tropical diseases. It’s time to fund research for vaccines and technologies to curb the Zika crisis. It’s time to bail out the Southern states to stop the spread of Zika and provide contraception, abortions and women’s health care. It’s time to subsidize families with children who will live with microcephaly. □

WORKERS WORLD editorial

LGBTQ Pride in fight-back

June is the month we mark our calendars to honor and celebrate the fightback courage and resistance of the LGBTQ community. Pride Month originated in rebellions by LGBTQ people in 1966 at Compton's Cafeteria in Los Angeles and in 1969 at The Stonewall Inn in New York, sparking the modern gay liberation movement in the U.S.

What we should mark in our hearts to remember every day of the year is that those rising up in righteous anger were mostly trans people of color, gay youth hustling to survive on the streets, draft-resisting crossdressers, gender nonconforming lesbians, drag queens and kings — a complex spectrum of people of transmasculine and transfeminine identities and expressions.

Those rising up were, in fact, the very kinds of people targeted this year by the "bathroom bully" legislation against trans people in North Carolina, which also eliminated protections for lesbian, gay and bisexual people and for workers. Other states are making their own anti-trans laws, including Michigan with two hateful bills.

The people rising up on those hot summer nights in the 60s were resisting the state. They were resisting the police. They rose up because their small gathering places got raided by the same cops who routinely brutalized them for being queer people, poor people, people of color on the streets and in the bars.

Compton's and Stonewall were rebel-

lions by these LGBTQ people against state-sanctioned racist police repression.

So this Pride month let us honor the lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, gender-queer and non-binary people who have led and are leading resistance to racism and poverty, to state legislative violence, to police brutality.

We honor Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, Latina and African-American trans heroes of the Stonewall Rebellion. We honor CeCe McDonald, African-American trans woman who fought back against white supremacy and was sent to prison for it — and we honor our comrade Leslie Feinberg and the people worldwide who defended CeCe.

We honor the queer and gender-nonconforming founders and leaders in the Black Lives Matter movement, including Jasmine Abdullah Richards, targeted by the Pasadena police and recently convicted of a trumped-up felony charge for going to the aid of someone harassed by the cops.

We honor the queer and trans people of color leading the effort to overturn the bigoted HB2 legislation in North Carolina — those who are marching, sitting in, disrupting and creating a new future, those who are leading an LGBTQ rebellion that chants along with Assata Shakur, "It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love each other and support each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains." □

Free Jasmine Richards!

Continued from page 5

were numerous deadly riots of white mobs attacking African Americans. Just as often, cops willingly turned over African Americans to murderous mobs.

Richards was represented by long-time civil rights attorney Nana Gyamfi, who pointed out that the person the cops claimed was removed from their custody was never even handcuffed, and there was no "riot" at all.

The so-called justice system belongs to those who have much to fear from a strong anti-racist movement, and this conviction is a reminder of that.

Jasmine Richards, a courageous woman, a skilled and determined young organizer, is the first African American to ever be convicted of so-called "felony lynching." Black Lives Matter organizers are calling on supporters to pack the courtroom and are pushing for an outcome that will mean no more jail time.

Every progressive should check out BLM online to figure out how they can help in this important case. We need to unite to turn back attempts by the cops and courts to criminalize anti-racist activists. Free Jasmine Richards! Black-Lives Matter! □

Are you a WW Supporter?

- ▶ If reading WW has convinced you that the racist establishment — from killer cops to the unjust court system — has got to go
- ▶ If you find the bigoted anti-trans law passed in North Carolina an outrageous attack on the rights of all queer communities
- ▶ If you hate the class system that keeps mostly women and people of color in low-wage jobs
- ▶ If you're sick and tired of bankers and bosses making workers pay for the crisis they didn't create
- ▶ If you worry that the capitalist crisis isn't going away anytime soon



- ▶ If you want to fight for a better way of life based on economic planning, equitable distribution of wealth and justice for all
- ▶ If you're lucky enough to still have a job

Queer solidarity kicks cops out of Pride

By **Matty Stardust**
Philadelphia

Members of Philadelphia's multiracial LGBTQ community came together to oppose the nomination of the Philadelphia police Gay Officers Action League as grand marshals of the 2016 Philly Pride Parade.

Pride, formerly known as "Gay Pride," is a yearly celebration of the June 1969 Stonewall Rebellion, where queer and trans people fought back against state-sanctioned police violence in New York City's Greenwich Village. Armed with rocks and bottles, the multinational grouping of LGBTQ people at The Stonewall Inn held the cops under siege for four days. The rebellion is widely considered a turning point in the struggle for queer and trans liberation.

The nomination of cops to lead this year's parade in Philadelphia not only represents a gross revision of Pride's revolutionary history. It's also a racist attack on the members of the community who continue to be plagued by police abuse, most significantly transgender people of color.

Organizers published an open letter signed by dozens of community members and groups opposing the choice, explaining: "In the midst of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, which affirms the value of Black life and fights anti-Black racism and police violence, choosing GOAL as the grand marshals for 2016 is a move

that is at best privileged and isolated, and at worst directly undermines this critical work." (Trentonian.com, May 23) A petition opposing the selection picked up more than 350 signatures in less than a week.

Despite this outpouring of grass-roots opposition to the disgusting pro-cop spectacle, Philly Pride staff remained unresponsive, except to call an emergency meeting where they shamelessly defended their corrupt actions. A grouping of anti-racist LGBTQ individuals, including survivors of police terror, attended the meeting. There they promised civil disobedience, in the true spirit of Stonewall, if the cops were allowed to lead the parade.

Finally, amid growing public pressure and mobilizations for militant anti-cop demonstrations, the cops themselves caved under the pressure. In a May 26 press release posted to GOAL's Facebook page, the group announced that "after calls from concerned members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) communities, the greater Philadelphia chapter of the Gay Officers Action League (GOAL) respectfully declined the honor of appearing as Grand Marshals in the Philadelphia Pride Parade." (facebook.com/phillygoal)

Organizers will continue to meet to plan how to further defend the anti-racist, revolutionary history and future of the queer liberation movement. □

Buffalo

Anti-racist solidarity in Pride parade



On June 5, a youth contingent of Workers World Party and the International Action Center marched in the Buffalo Pride parade in anti-racist solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and against transphobic violence. This militant contingent was unique given the

many corporate entries in the parade and drew a tremendous response from the crowd. Everywhere people raised fists and loudly cheered on the contingent, whose demands included an end to racist police brutality and anti-trans violence.

— Report and photo by **Garrett Dicembre**

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LESSONS OF 1976 SOWETO REBELLION

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

On June 16, 1976, students in the Southwest Townships (Soweto) outside of Johannesburg, South Africa, stayed home from school to protest the Bantu educational system enacted by the racist apartheid regime in the early 1950s.

The Bantu Education Act of 1953, drafted by H.F. Verwoerd, who became prime minister in the 1960s, was also protested by the African population. Those 1950s demonstrations were eventually crushed by the colonial settler regime's security forces.

Nevertheless, the struggle that began that June played a major role in the overall battle that eliminated the apartheid system from South Africa.

Bantu education was designed for Africans. Its intent was to convey that the majority population should not pursue equality with whites. One unintentional consequence of that act was to increase enrollment of Africans in the school system, which then provided a base for expressing mass discontent with the system of racist oppression.

In 1976, the Nationalist Party government declared that educational instruction would be conducted in English and Afrikaans, the tongue of the country's dominant oppressors. Students who had been radicalized planned to take action to oppose the language policy and the deplorable educational system.

The action committee of the Soweto Students Representative Council reportedly called the June 16 march and initially involved two high schools: Naledi High in Naledi and Morris Isaacson in Mofolo. Other accounts contend that the main focus of activity was Phefeni Junior Secondary, located near Vilakazi Street in Orlando. (sahistory.org.za)

Phefeni was near the railway station where many students got off the trains to join the demonstration. The plan was that students from Naledi High were to march from this direction and later mobilize students from the schools on the way toward Morris Isaacson.

Students from Morris Isaacson were to march from their school and connect with others until they arrived at a central location. There, they would continue collectively, in a disciplined manner, to Orlando Stadium. Other schools also par-

ticipated in the demonstration, bringing thousands of youth into the streets.

Police encountered young people who were peacefully protesting. They first threw teargas into the crowd and later fired live bullets, initially striking at least four students. After the first massacre, people scattered, enraged by the outrageous killings of youth.

Soon enough the West Rand administrative buildings and vehicles were burned to the ground. Stores selling alcoholic beverages were looted and burned. Other clashes with the police took place where dozens of students were murdered near the Regina Mundi church in Orlando and the Esso garage in Chiawelo. When students were halted and dispersed by the police in one locality, they swiftly moved on to other areas.

By the end of the uprising's first day, most of Soweto, including Diepkloof, were impacted by the unrest. The apartheid authorities closed all schools early, and many students headed toward home, while townships were ablaze.

As demonstrations spread to Cape Town and other regions of the country, hundreds of people were killed in the following days. The protests spread across the country, joined by more youth and workers.

Armed and mass struggles grew

The 1976 strikes and rebellions enabled the banned and exiled national liberation movements to recruit youth fleeing the country, as well as those who remained there. African National Congress leaders escalated efforts to provide political and military training to a new generation of youthful militants.



Both the ANC and its breakaway Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania experienced a boost in membership and affiliation. By 1980, the armed struggle escalated: Fuel production refineries were bombed by the ANC on June 1. The attacks on refineries coincided with the apartheid Republic Day.

A new generation of resistance took hold, leading to the mass upsurge of the 1980s involving the formation of unions, civic organizations, a cultural revival and more consistent armed struggle, which led to the racist system's demise by 1994.

The apartheid regime attempted to ruthlessly suppress the national liberation struggle through mass incarceration, targeted assassinations and massacres of protesters and strikers. It also conducted cross-border raids into neighboring Frontline States accused of harboring guerrillas from Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the ANC's military wing.

ANC offices and training camps in Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Botswana were raided and bombed by the South African Defense Forces.

More than 1 million died in the struggle to free South Africa and Namibia, including during efforts to drive out the SADF from southern Angola in the 1970s and 1980s.

Socialist Cuba provided hundreds of thousands of volunteers in the fight to defeat the SADF in Angola. The South West Africa People's Organization in Namibia also waged a heroic campaign from 1960 to 1989, which led to that country's independence in 1990.

Lessons of the liberation movement

Today, 22 years since the ANC's ascendancy to power in South Africa, the struggle is by no means over. Advances have been made in acquiring power, construction of homes, provision of water to township and rural residents, and the expansion of educational opportunities and medical care. However, South Africa's national wealth has not been transferred to the African majority.

Legitimate grievances remain, which are reflected in the ongoing unrest among the African working class and urban residents. Yet the U.S. government — which reaped tremendous benefits from corporate investments in the apartheid system — is still seeking to undermine the ANC government.

The ANC is facing formidable challenges in local governmental elections in August. The rand, the national currency, has declined in value. That and rising unemployment rates fueled by capital flight by mining firms and financial institutions have worsened the country's economic crisis.

What lessons can youth in the U.S. and other Western countries learn today from these struggles? Like the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, South Africa's revolution was based on national and class oppression.

In the U.S., African Americans and Latinos/as face high rates of joblessness, poverty, police repression and mass incarceration. Linking the plight of the youth to that of the working class was fundamental to Southern Africa's liberation movement as a whole.

The U.S. 2016 presidential campaign, focused entirely on the two major capitalist parties, the Republicans and the Democrats, is not seriously discussing issues related to oppressed peoples' social conditions. This reality suggests the need for independent self-organization within a framework such as the ANC, along with its allies in the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

Lessons from the Soweto uprising and the struggle that followed — which included the working class and peasantry — should be considered as a way forward to realize self-determination and social emancipation in the U.S. The capitalist relations of production in South Africa and the U.S. must be overturned to obtain genuine liberation and social justice. □

SOUTH AFRICA



Which road to liberation?

A MARXIST VIEW

By Monica Moorehead

By **Monica Moorehead**, first printed in 1993

- How the disintegration of the Soviet Union impacted the struggle against apartheid.
- The historical relationship between the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party. What this important alliance means for the masses.
- Has the bourgeois revolution been achieved in South Africa? How does it fit with the worldwide revolution described by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the Communist Manifesto in 1848?
- Why it is important for revolutionaries and progressives to understand the role of the state, particularly in South Africa.





Libertad para Oscar López Rivera, ¡YA!

Trabajadores agrícolas de Nueva York luchan por derecho a organizarse

Por Minnie Bruce Pratt

Trabajadores agrícolas luchan valiente y tenazmente por el derecho a organizarse en Nueva York. Actualmente, no hay una protección jurídica en el estado para impedir que los patronos despidan a las/os empleados solo por haber conducido acción colectiva con tal de mejorar las condiciones en el trabajo.

El 10 de mayo, el trabajador Crispín Hernández, junto con dos centros de trabajadores de Nueva York – el Centro de Trabajadores de CNY (WC-CNY) y el Centro de Justicia de Nueva York en Rochester (WJC) – presentaron una demanda en contra del estado de Nueva York, exigiendo este derecho a protección. La Ley Estatal de Relaciones Laborales de Nueva York de 1936 (SERA) excluyó específicamente a los trabajadores agrícolas del derecho a negociación colectiva. A pesar de que la Constitución estatal de 1938 concedía tal derecho a todas/os los trabajadores sin excepción, a los trabajadores agrícolas de Nueva York jamás se les ha otorgado totalmente el derecho a organizarse debido a la exclusión del SERA.

A través de la demanda, Hernández y los centros de trabajadores exigieron que el derecho a organizarse se aplique a los trabajadores agrícolas.

El 10 de mayo, en una conferencia de prensa en Albany Hernández dijo: “Sin trabajadores del campo, no habría leche, no habría frutas o verduras, pero nos tratan como esclavos, peor que a las vacas. Queremos poder mejorar las condiciones de trabajo sin miedo o intimidación. Creemos que nuestras vidas son importantes, y que todos los seres humanos merecen ser tratados con dignidad y respeto”.

La demanda se basa en la flagrante supresión del derecho del demandante principal Crispín Hernández a reunirse libremente con otros trabajadores y con el Centro de Trabajadores para hablar sobre preocupaciones por las condiciones en el trabajo.

Cuomo cede ante trabajadores

El 11 de mayo, el gobernador Andrew Cuomo anunció que el estado no se opondrá a la demanda. Este promotor de acontecimiento da esperanza de que habrá una decisión exitosa y una victoria histórica para los trabajadores agrícolas. La Unión de Libertades Civiles de Nueva York (NYCLU) representa a Hernández, al WC-CNY, y al WJC.

La organizadora principal del WC-CNY Rebecca Fuentes, en una entrevista con Workers World-Mundo Obrero (WW-MO), destacó que la lucha avanza gracias al liderazgo de los mismos trabajadores agrícolas y la dedicación del WC-CNY a lo largo de los años para “educar, agitar, y organizar” a trabajadoras/es que viven en áreas rurales apartadas. (New York Times, 5 de mayo).

Desde 2012, siendo aún adolescente, Hernández trabajaba doce horas al día, seis días por semana, en la finca Marks Farms situada en Lowville-NY. Era tanta la presión que a veces no podía comer o ir al baño en todo el día. Él era la única fuente de ingreso para su numerosa fa-

milia extendida de aproximadamente doce personas.

Marks Farm, un importante productor de leche en Nueva York, tiene 10.000 animales y 60 trabajadores. Hay 60.000 trabajadores en las lecherías del estado, las cuales alcanzaron los \$6,34 mil millones en ventas en el 2014.

En el 2015, Hernández y otros trabajadores entablaron conversaciones con Fuentes sobre temas de seguridad en el trabajo y para organizar clases de inglés. Una noche, después de las horas de trabajo, mientras se reunían en un apartamento pequeño que un trabajador alquilaba al dueño de la granja, el hijo del dueño llegó y ordenó a Fuentes que se fuera de “su propiedad.” Ella citó la decisión del fiscal general de Nueva York la cual dice que las/os trabajadores agrícolas pueden tener invitados en sus habitaciones y rehusó irse a menos que los trabajadores se lo pidieran.

Los trabajadores insistieron, diciendo que ella era su invitada. Ahí fue cuando el dueño notificó tanto a la policía del condado como a la del estado, quienes interrogaron a Fuentes, a Hernández, y a otros trabajadores. Al ser amenazada con arresto, Fuentes otra vez citó la decisión del fiscal general. Los trabajadores desafiaron al dueño y a la policía al insistir que se quedara y las autoridades se fueron.

Una semana después Hernández y Saúl Pinto, junto con Fuentes y otros voluntarios del WC-CNY, caminaban de tráiler a tráiler para hablar con los trabajadores sobre los derechos que tienen cuando el hijo del dueño les observe. El día siguiente Hernández y Pinto fueron despedidos.

Fuentes dijo a WW-MO que si la concesión de Cuomo se confirma con una decisión positiva, la protección legal se garantizará para todas/os los trabajadores agrícolas de Nueva York por hacer lo que hicieron Hernández y los otros cuando fueron despedidos. Esta acción llamada “actividad concertada,” incluye acciones de las/os trabajadores tales como la formación de comités para hablar sobre problemas en el trabajo o para representar a compañeros de trabajo ante el patrono para exigir mejores condiciones de trabajo.

‘Actividad concertada’ puede incluir el pedido de un día libre cada semana, que el patrono repare maquinaria defectuosa, o que provea equipos de protección. Generalmente, los dueños hacen que los empleados de vaquerías compren sus propios guantes largos para protegerse los brazos contra las infecciones y los desechos de los animales. Fuentes añadió que la ‘actividad concertada’ es la táctica usada eficazmente por las/os trabajadores no sindicalizados con baja paga como las/os de McDonald’s o Walmart.

Fuentes dijo que ganar la demanda legal daría a los trabajadores “una herramienta para resistir” – y firmemente declaró: ¡“Estamos resistiendo!”

Herramienta poderosa

Una victoria significaría que Hernández y otros trabajadores agrícolas tendrían una herramienta poderosa para desafiar la amplia gama de condiciones horribles bajo las cuales trabajan.



FOTO: WORKERS JUSTICE CENTER NY

Relatos de Hernández y del trabajador agrícola José García, expuestos por NYC-LU, cuentan de días trabajando doce horas con sueldo bajo y sin pago de horas extras; lesiones en el trabajo sin atención médica y falta de equipo de protección para prevenir lesiones; aislamiento rural extremo y falta de transporte para ir a obtener recursos; racismo, intimidación verbal, y asalto físico por supervisores y dueños.

Los trabajadores agrícolas en Nueva York tienen una tasa de mortalidad veinte veces más alta que la del trabajador promedio en el estado. Algunos trabajan de 90 hasta 95 horas por semana, operando maquinarias peligrosas bajo condiciones extenuantes. (nyclu.org, 10 de mayo)

Para las trabajadoras agrícolas mujeres, una victoria ofrecería una manera de luchar en contra de la violación y el acoso sexual. Las trabajadoras agrícolas mujeres enfrentan una tasa altísima de estos delitos, de acuerdo a un estudio del Centro de Investigación Periodística del 2013. Las mujeres son particularmente vulnerables debido a su estado de documentación, aislamiento rural o social, o por ser el sostén primario para sus hijas/os.

Esta victoria también dará una herramienta a las/os trabajadores agrícolas para oponerse a la aceleración del trabajo y la exigencia de aún más trabajo con salarios de hambre como es la línea de producción agraria, especialmente en el área de productos lácteos. En los EUA, la tecnología y la especialización han incrementado en nueve los rebaños de las granjas lecheras en los últimos veinte años. En el Noreste, granjas con por lo menos 700 vacas generaron casi el 50 por ciento de la leche producida en 2014. (D.P. Blayney, “Changing Landscape of Milk Production,” 2002)

Las/os trabajadores agrícolas típicamente enfrentan amenaza e intimidación si exigen mejores condiciones de trabajo a sus patronos. En el estado de Nueva York, muchas/os trabajadores son mejicanos y centroamericanos y si se enfrentan a los propietarios de las granjas, enfrentan también una posible deportación o la pérdida de una visa de trabajo continuo.

La extensión del derecho a organizarse para las/os trabajadores del campo de Nueva York rompería el tramo de 80 años de injusticia racista que comenzó en 1935, cuando la Ley Wagner estableció la Junta Nacional de Relaciones del Trabajo. Esta ley excluía específicamente a los trabajadores agrícolas del derecho a organi-

zarse y negociar colectivamente a lo largo de los EUA. (National Advisory Committee on Farm Labor, “Farm Labor Organizing 1905-1967: A Brief History,” 1967).

La exclusión surgió por la presión de los propietarios de la clase dominante blanca del segregado Sur estadounidense, decididos a excluir a los trabajadores agrícolas afroamericanos de la posibilidad de sindicalizarse. Campañas organizativas efectivas por parte de trabajadores agrícolas y aparceros, como el Sindicato de Trabajadores Campesinos del Sur, se extendió por la región durante la década de 1930, a menudo bajo el liderazgo socialista y comunista. (R. Kelley, “Hammer and Hoe,” 1990).

Pero incluso con un triunfo histórico de la demanda, Hernández y otras/os trabajadores agrícolas todavía no tendrían el derecho al pago de horas extras, seguro de desempleo o compensación de trabajadores, negados bajo las leyes existentes de Nueva York.

Carly Fox, abogada del Centro de Justicia para Trabajadores de Rochester, dijo que su organización ha estado luchando durante casi quince años por la aprobación del Acta de Normas Justas para Trabajadores Agrícolas, la que garantizaría los derechos adicionales.

El 15 de mayo, comenzó en Long Island una marcha de 200 millas en apoyo al proyecto de ley y se manifestarán el 1 de junio en Albany exigiendo un “sí” para el Acta.

En un email a WW-MO, Carly Fox de WJCY dijo que “Las/os trabajadores agrícolas nos alimentan, es ya es hora que Nueva York los trate con dignidad y respeto.”

Mientras tanto, los trabajadores agrícolas y los centros de trabajadores seguirán reuniéndose en granjas lejanas en Nueva York para educar, agitar, organizar y reunir.

Hay una canción que fue famosa en la década de los 1970, durante la huelga de Trabajadores Agrícolas y de la lucha por el reconocimiento sindical en California. Todavía está siendo cantada frente a Marks Farm en Lowville-Nueva York.

El picket sign, el picket sign
Lo llevo por todo el día
El picket sign, el picket sign
Conmigo toda la vida
The picket sign, the picket sign
I carry it all day with me
The picket sign, the picket sign
With me throughout my life. □