

# 'Sarin gas' pretext exposed as Pentagon threatens wider war on Syria

By Sara Flounders

As the danger of a major conflagration in Syria continues to grow, the silence of the corporate media and political establishment is ominous.

The U.S. has dropped tens of thousands of bombs on Syria and sent thousands of U.S. troops to the region. Major world powers are already involved.

The Donald Trump administration threatened a dangerous escalation on June 26 when Press Secretary Sean Spicer claimed Syrian government forces were potentially planning to stage a chemical attack and Washington would make Syria pay a heavy price.

The announcement was made without a shred of evidence. Instead, there were vague claims that U.S. intelligence had "identified potential preparations" for a chemical attack. These were all too familiar, after the phony pretext for the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The White House statement was immediately followed by a Twitter statement from U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley: "Any further attacks done to the people of Syria will be blamed on Assad, but also on Russia and Iran." She was expressing Washington's frustration that despite its bombing sorties and despite pulling 10 other countries into the war, Washington's plan for regime change has failed.

Acting on cue five days after the White House statement, a counterrevolutionary group, Failaq al-Rahman, accused the Syrian army of using chlorine gas against its fighters in battles east of Damascus. The Syrian military immediately denied these charges, calling them a fabrication.

The group making this charge is a past recipient of U.S. military aid and equipment and is affiliated with Washington's client group, the Free Syrian Army. It claimed that more than 30 people suffered gas suffocation as a result of an attack in Ain Tarma, a suburb of Damascus, the capital.

The group, allied with al-Qaida forces, has been fighting both the Syrian government and rival opposition forces in a chaotic internecine conflict in an insurgent enclave in East Ghouta. Thousands of mortar shells and rockets have been fired from this enclave into nearby Damascus over the past few years.

Not only are counterrevolutionary factions in Syria fighting each other, but U.S. government departments are at odds. According to Fox News on June 27, "Several State Department officials typically involved in coordinating such announcements told the Associated Press they were caught completely off guard by the warn-

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## Where is this city — do you know?



PHOTO: KOREA TODAY

This beautiful city is Pyongyang, capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (north Korea). By 1953, at the end of the war in Korea, Pyongyang had been totally destroyed by U.S. bombs. Do the Koreans, who have worked and sacrificed so long to rebuild their country, want war? Absolutely not. Do they need to prevent another U.S. attack? Absolutely yes. They've seen what

the Pentagon has done to Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and many others. That's why they have a nuclear deterrent: to defend their country. The U.S. never signed a peace treaty after the Korean War. The only rational option is for Washington to end its nuclear madness, abandon its war threats, sit down and sign a peace treaty with the DPRK.

-- Deirdre Griswold

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PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

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# Trump's misogyny, a pillar of capitalism

By Sue Davis

President Donald J. Trump did it again. He lambasted a female news reporter with a crude, bullying tweet on June 27. By attacking the appearance and intelligence of Mika Brzezinski, co-host of MSNBC's show "Morning Joe," he pinpointed the two top types of centuries-old condemnation of women.

Though his attack was immediately denounced — from women on both sides of the aisle in Congress to women's, legal and human rights groups — Trump would not have touted his disgusting woman-hating if patriarchy were not one of the pillars of capitalism.

## Women's inequality in U.S.

Examples of women's inequality in the U.S. begin with the pay gap. The latest statistics show that, overall, women make 80 cents for every dollar a white man makes, though women (and men) of color make even less. The Institute for Women's Policy Research estimates it will take until 2059 for white women to reach pay parity, while Black women will wait until 2124 and Latinas until 2248. Outrageous theft!

That means all businesses, corporations and shops alike, steal at least 20 cents from every dollar a woman earns, boosting their profits. According to the Department of Labor's latest statistics, as of 2010, women were 47 percent of the total U.S. labor force: 72 million workers, or 58.6 percent of the 123 million women age 16 years and over. Those 20 cents sure add up!

No wonder the ruling class doesn't want legislation that guarantees ample parental leaves, free child care and universal health care. No wonder one of the main means that ciswomen have to take charge of their lives — birth control — is on the barricades. No wonder transwomen of color are targeted for transphobic assaults and murders. No wonder "every nine seconds a woman in the U.S. is assaulted or beaten," reports the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, while Trump plans to cut funding to prevent it. No wonder U.S. capitalism flexes its military might to bully the rest of the world into doing its bidding, disproportionately affecting women and their children.

Use and abuse of power and control are part and parcel of capitalist class society — whether in the boardroom or

the bedroom, whether through tax laws favoring the rich or low wages that keep poor people poor, whether it's killer police or a brutal fist in the family. You cannot separate patriarchy — men's claim on the right to control women as their private property — from capitalism, which maintains power through private ownership of property.

## The fight continues

Trump's appointment of Eric Dreiband on June 29 to head the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice is another example of his misogyny. Like all his appointees to the cabinet and various departments — who oppose the very premise of their office — Dreiband has spent his corporate career opposing civil rights. He not only represented the Roman Catholic archbishop of Washington, D.C., in the church's 2014 case against the Affordable Care Act's birth control benefit, but he defended the University of North Carolina in a lawsuit related to HB 2, the discriminatory "bathroom bill."

Dreiband has "made a career going against women and LGBT rights," said Jesselyn McCurdy, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Washington legislative office. Vanita Gupta, former head of the Civil Rights Division, said, "Whoever leads the 'crown jewel' of the DOJ 'must have a deep, abiding faith in our nation's civil rights laws ... rights that people have literally died for.'" She called Dreiband "woefully unqualified" because he has no experience in "voting rights, police reform, housing, education and hate crimes." (Rewire, June 29)

It's ironic that Trump's continuing tweets against Mika Brzezinski and co-host Joe Scarborough, which are also viewed as attacks on freedom of speech, coincide with the country's Fourth of July celebration. This national holiday usually involves effusive patriotism and nostalgic hoopla touting how wonderful this country is.

Yet on every international measurement scale, whether women's representation in government, living standards, longevity or infant mortality, the United States is near the bottom of the list of 40 industrial nations.

Take infant mortality. A March 21 nbcnews.com report noted that the U.S. rate of deaths per 1,000 live births declined from 6.9 in 2005 to 5.8 in 2014 — a 15 percent decline, according to the National Center for Health Sta-

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## Solidarity trumps blockade

# U.S. workers welcome Cuban union leader

By Cheryl LaBash

Victor Manuel Lemagne Sanchez, secretary general of Cuba's hotel and tourism union and elected delegate to Cuba's National Assembly, is on a two-week tour of 11 U.S. cities. Landing first in northern California on June 27, Lemagne will conclude his visit in the Baltimore/Washington, D.C. area on July 11.

This is the first multicity U.S. exchange with a representative of the Cuban Workers Central Union (La Central de Trabajadores de Cuba, CTC) since 2000. Lemagne is also the first Cuban elected representative to be granted a U.S. visa.

Lemagne's warm reception from U.S. workers and the organized labor movement is in sharp contrast to the bellicosity displayed by the Trump administration.

In the first two days, Lemagne met with leaders of the San Francisco Labor Council, San Jose/South Bay Central Labor Council and University of California/Berkeley Labor Center. He was received on the floor of the California Senate and Assembly in Sacramento, the first Cuban elected official to be invited there.

Lemagne spoke at an Organize Sacramento reception. UNITE HERE, which organizes hotel, restaurant and casino workers in the U.S., hosted receptions throughout northern California and will do so in Los Angeles and San Diego.

A public event initiated by the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity, and supported by many Cuba solidarity organizations, overflowed the hall of the University Professional and Technical Employees, Communication

Workers Local 9119 at Berkeley on June 29. The meeting featured Lemagne and Clarence Thomas, retired International Longshore and Warehouse Union militant and former Local 10 secretary-treasurer.

### Lemagne: 'We will forge ahead'

Lemagne read a CTC statement responding to Trump's speech in Miami: "We fully support the declarations of our revolutionary government in response to the statement by the U.S. President Donald Trump on June 16 which attempts to bring back the epoch of the Cold War which has been characterized as interventionist, rhetorical and manipulative."

Lemagne explained: "The measures ... have been called national security measures with respect to strengthening the relationship between the U.S. and Cuba, [but they are] actually a step backwards in the small steps forward gained through the agreements with Obama, harming not only the people of our coun-

try but the people of the U.S.

"Every maneuver and aggression by the empire are destined to fail. [Cuba's] response is to continue the economic development of our country. We will continue to forge ahead with infinite loyalty to our revolutionary process. ... We will not be taking any steps backward. We will never give up. History has shown that even in the worst situations we have been able to win over all obstacles."

Lemagne reviewed the history of the U.S. blockade and its cost to health and other essential sectors. He emphasized that Cuba is the only country that U.S. residents cannot travel to freely. A U.S. law prohibits vacationing in Cuba.

Lemagne said that unions in the hotel and tourism sector donate part of their tips to support health care and the fight against cancer. "Over the years I have been a leader in this union, the workers have contributed more than \$23 million to this," he said.

Lemagne stressed that the vast major-

ity of workers in Cuba are union members. Union membership is voluntary, and the workers have participated in updating the Cuban labor code. Assemblies in every sector discussed proposed changes and collected opinions and proposals; 75 percent of these amendments appear in the new code. The code applies at all workplaces. In joint ventures, the property belongs to the state and to the workers and people of Cuba. If managers mistreat the workers, they are removed.

U.S. workers are fighting for benefits in their contracts that already exist in Cuban law, such as health care and vacations, explained Lemagne. "Workers take up issues at monthly workplace assemblies. It is the employer's responsibility to implement the agreements."

### Longshore workers' solidarity with Cuba

"The bonds between U.S. and Cuban workers cannot be broken. Not by any president," Thomas asserted. He reviewed the ILWU's long solidarity with Cuban workers and their unions, predating the 1959 socialist revolution and continuing after it.

In 1947 the ILWU participated in a Havana meeting establishing an international sugar workers' committee. An ILWU representative was elected chair. Cuban union leader Jesus Menendez was elected vice chair, but he was brutally assassinated the next year by U.S.-backed sugar bosses.

As the U.S. began its economic war against the Cuban Revolution, the ILWU maintained political independence from U.S. foreign policy. A rank-and-file union

*Continued on page 4*



PHOTO: TAMIE DRAMER  
Organize Sacramento holds reception, June 28.

## 'Partial' travel ban still demonizes Muslims

By Kathy Durkin

Protests and denunciations of the Trump administration's modified travel ban have broken out in several cities.

The White House intensified its Islamophobia on June 29 with the implementation of a "revised" travel ban against immigrants from six predominantly Muslim countries. It happened only three days after the Supreme Court gave the green light for discrimination against these travelers.

The top court ruled in favor of a "partial ban," to take effect until the justices deliberate on the case in October. Meanwhile, the court said entry could be denied to anyone from those countries without a "connection to the U.S." and to those without a "credible claim of a bona fide relationship with a person or entity," such as a business or school here.

Those coming from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen are prohibited from entering the U.S. for 90 days unless they meet these criteria. Additionally, the ruling gives the government the go-ahead to stop entry for all refugees for 120 days.

Missing from this ruling is the fact that many people in these countries are fleeing U.S.-led or U.S.-backed wars or drone attacks, with families divided because of these dire circumstances.

The definition of a "bona fide" relationship is a key question. The Trump administration's criteria for who to allow as an applicant's "close family" are based on the most narrow, Eurocentric and heterosexist definition of a nuclear family.

An applicant's grandparents, grandchildren, uncles, aunts and cousins are disqualified, amounting to a racist penalty against refugees from the many cultures that still maintain extended family ties as core relationships.

Refugees in lesbian, gay and transgender relationships and their families of choice are entirely omitted in the criteria for bona fide relationships. Moreover, immigrant rights and refugee aid groups, so important to those whom they assist, do not qualify as bona fide entities.

### Bogus claims of 'national security'

Trump whipped up Islamophobia throughout his election campaign when he said that, as president, he would ensure that no Muslims would be allowed into the U.S. In January, the White House issued a travel ban against all immigrants and visitors from seven, later changed to six, countries with majority Muslim populations, claiming "reasons of national security."

This phony and bigoted allegation was a nod to Islamophobes in the White House, including Steve Bannon, and to far-right forces in the U.S. who backed Trump's presidential bid.

Strong demonstrations took place immediately at airports around the country after customs agents and border guards stopped travelers from these countries at points of entry. Thousands of people raced to airports to show solidarity with their Muslim sisters and brothers. Civil liberties and immigrant rights organizations protested and legally contested the

ban. Some courts blocked it.

Then, in March, the White House maneuvered and issued a "revised" ban, once again prohibiting travelers from six majority-Muslim countries for 90 days, and banning all refugees for 120 days. Citing Trump's anti-Muslim vitriol during his campaign, courts struck down sections of this ban, declaring it was directed at Muslims and, therefore, discriminatory.

But the White House reactionaries persisted and appealed to the Supreme Court, which unanimously agreed that the president can control immigration. Not one justice dissented. The court narrowed the all-out ban imposed in January, but allowed a modified version of it, and criticized lower courts that ruled against it.

The White House is crying "victory" and is aggressively implementing the ban as restrictively as possible. Civil liberties and refugee assistance groups dispute that the Trump administration can bar whomever it chooses, and vow they will monitor and oppose restrictions on who can enter the country. (New York Times, June 26)

The state of Hawaii has already submitted a legal challenge to push back the White House, arguing for the entry of all relatives of U.S. residents. There will be other court challenges.

### Build solidarity with Muslims

Demonstrators say any prohibition against Muslims entering the U.S. is unethical, bigoted and inhumane -- and must be stopped.

Nisrin Elamin, a Sudanese Ph.D. stu-

dent detained at JFK Airport in January while trying to re-enter the country, spoke at a New York City rally on June 29. She stressed, "National security has always been used to justify state violence and surveillance against communities of color in this country." (Time, June 30)

Moreover, the Trump administration's xenophobia has already endangered the safety of Muslims, other oppressed people and immigrants, as white supremacists have been emboldened to commit violent acts.

Maha Hilal, a Muslim-American of Egyptian descent and a steering committee member of D.C. Muslims for Justice, said of the high court's ruling: "Decisions like these which come on the heels of a long history of discriminatory, racist and Islamophobic policies ... magnify the legitimate fear that one will be targeted by state violence or become a target of societal violence."

"The Muslim ban," continued Hilal, means that Muslims "will be viewed almost exclusively as national security pawns. ... The 'war on terror' has always been designed to demonize all Muslims, citizens or not, to justify the most egregious, abusive and racist laws and policies." (tinyurl.com/vf3h87f)

The Supreme Court is an arm of the capitalist state. It is not an impartial, neutral body. That makes it crucial to struggle against the court's most recent ruling. Mobilizations around the country are vital to push back the reactionaries in the White House and Supreme Court and to stop any discriminatory ban against Muslims. □

# Federal workers' union busted by Congress

By Carl Lewis

As a prototype for destroying collective bargaining protections for federal workers, the Trump administration, with the connivance of Congress, has attacked union workers at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

A union-busting bill, the VA Accountability First Act of 2017, initiated by Rep. David Roe (R-Tenn.), will destroy the basic rights of VA employees. The bill was passed on March 17 by the House vote of 368 to 55 and on June 6 by the Senate vote of 93-3. Both votes include so-called “labor’s friends” in the Democratic Party.

The bill prevents union workers from using the full powers of the negotiated grievance procedure and binding arbitration to contest wrongful terminations, demotions and suspensions. It weakens these grievance processes to the point where they are almost meaningless. Workers are left with the “right” to file severely time-limited appeals with the Merit System Protection Board, which many workers refer to as the “Management Supervisors Protection Board”!

To add insult to injury, the bill now bars administrative law judges from mit-

igating any discipline penalties imposed by the VA, like reducing a firing to a five-day suspension, even if the judge rules that the penalty was too harsh or without merit. (Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, June 24, 2015)

Testifying before the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, American Federation of Government Employees President J. David Cox specified what VA workers will lose the following rights: the requirement of 30 days’ advance notice before imposing discipline, seven days to respond to the determination, having a representative present and obtaining an impartial third-party ruling. AFGE represents 230,000 VA employees.

In violation of the Hatch Act, which prohibits politicization in hiring and political favoritism in the federal workforce, union advocates can now be targeted or framed up on spurious charges. The nebulous charge of “poor performer” can now be used as a weapon to fire an employee who may “offend” a supervisor who needs to be held accountable for aggressive abuse of power or other unjust behavior.

The National Federation of Federal Employees and other federal unions are denouncing this so-called “revitaliza-

tion” of the VA as not only an attack on workers but also a way to privatize the hospital system through the so-called “Free Choice Act.” Adrian Atizado, deputy national legislative director of the Disabled Veterans of America, stated that “even with the Choice program, veterans overwhelmingly prefer to use the VA.” (AFGE Week in Review, June 16)

## More union busting down the road

Right now, 76 percent of VA employees are union members. Previously, VA employees could only opt out of union membership on the anniversary of their hiring; now, they can opt out any time. The bill and other legislation targeting federal unions will also disproportionately impact African-American workers, who are 35 percent of the federal workforce and 30 percent of VA workers.

Upcoming legislation proposed by Rep. Jody Hice (R-Ga.) will put “Official Time” — the time allowed union representatives to conduct union business while on the job without loss of pay — on the chopping block. Hice has an “innovative” way to destroy this protection: Union representatives will have their official time subtracted from their pensions when they retire. Official time is a precious benefit

in both the public and private sector. It is used for negotiating contracts, addressing safety issues and being a strong, visible example that the union will protect worker rights.

Also on the congressional agenda is the “pay for performance system” in which a supervisor can pay higher wages to “good” performers and lower wages to “poor” performers. This amounts to a subjective determination of who carries the bosses’ favors.

But VA workers are not alone in their fightback. At Independence Mall in Philadelphia, Environmental Protection Agency employees joined protests on June 22 against cutbacks. Gary Morton, president of AFGE Local 3631, said: “Lead poisoning and soil poisoning — these are the unseen sources of pollution. The Trump administration does not believe in environmental justice and does not want your inner cities to be clean.” Federal workers, from the Social Security Administration, the VA, the EPA and the National Park Service, skipped their lunch break to join the protest. (Phillynews.com, June 22)

Federal workers need to rally together to hold more demonstrations and informational picket lines against this form of vicious capitalist austerity. □

## Philadelphia

# Union workers rally against federal cuts



Workers from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Social Security Administration, the National Parks Service, the Veterans Administration and other federal government departments rallied June 22 in Philadelphia against massive cuts in services being pushed by the Trump administration. The American Federation of Government Employees, the National Treasury Employees Union, the AFL-CIO and other unions rallied in front of Constitution Hall to denounce funding cuts to the EPA by 31 percent, the Labor Department by 19 percent, the Army Corps of Engineers by 16 percent, the Department of Education by 13 percent and Interior by 11 percent. (tinyurl.com/yarfh7ro)

Tens of thousands of jobs will be eliminated if environmental, health care, recreational, educational and other services in every state are reduced. Privatization of Veterans Administration services will impair health care and other veterans’ services as Congress writes rules that benefit for-profit hospitals.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

# Cuban labor leader

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delegation went to Cuba and met with the CTC. The Sept. 9, 1960, ILWU Dispatcher featured the delegation’s favorable report, titled “We met the Cuban people.” ILWU workers’ delegations have visited Cuba frequently, meeting with their class sisters and brothers.

Standing in opposition to Washington’s intense regime-change policies toward Cuba, the International ILWU and Local 10 advocated freedom for the Cuban 5, U.S. political prisoners from 1998

to 2014.

Thomas announced that Lemagne would attend the ILWU’s annual July 5 Bloody Thursday commemoration honoring two dock workers killed by police in 1934, which unleashed the historic San Francisco general strike. Later that day, San Diego will greet Lemagne at an activity hosted by UNITE HERE Local 30.

Other events will take place July 6 in Los Angeles at the UCLA Labor Center; July 7 in Chicago at Workers United with Local 1 SEIU and the Latino Caucus;

July 8 in New York at the New York State Nurses Association hall with 1199 SEIU; and July 10 in Baltimore at the Amalgamated Transit Union hall. (Facebook.com/2017CTC)

## More labor solidarity with Cuba

A California Labor Federation Solidarity resolution urged its affiliated labor bodies to call on elected officials to “endorse unrestricted travel to Cuba” and “officially” support laws that eliminate the embargo on Cuba and the U.S. Naval base at Guantanamo Bay. The CLF is made up of more than 1,200 AFL-CIO and Change to Win unions, representing 2.1 million union members. (calaborfed.org)

Two large delegations of union members and officers attended the May Day celebration in Havana in 2016. The California delegation brought signs from the Fresno-Madero-Tulare-Kings Central Labor Council AFL-CIO, expressing solidarity with the Cuban workers and showing fists made from Cuban and U.S. flags. The Maryland-DC/AFL-CIO president spoke at Cuba’s May 2 Solidarity Conference.

A CTC representative was invited to and attended the April 2017 United Steelworkers convention. And a large California union delegation attended May Day in Havana this year. Their banner was displayed outside Organize Sacramento’s office when Lemagne was there. □

# Battle-tested people with disabilities fight for rights

By Edward Yudelovich

July is widely celebrated as Disability Pride Month in the U.S. This year, the month marks the 27th anniversary of passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act on July 26, 1990. The ADA, a landmark U.S. civil rights bill for people with disabilities, was enhanced in 2008 by the ADAA, Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended.

At least three pieces of legislation recently introduced in Congress threaten the rights and benefits of people with disabilities. The American Health Care Act, renamed the so-called “Better Care Reconciliation Act” by the Senate, would have removed millions of people from Medicaid, the health insurance of millions of people with disabilities.

For instance, the National Alliance on Mental Illness NYC reported that 38 percent of people using its services would be cut from access if this bill were passed. NAMI provides psychological education, research and support for people with emotional and psychological disabilities and their families.

(Email from naminycmetro.org)

Most types of health insurance other

than Medicaid and Medicare have lower or no benefits for psychiatric medical services when compared with non-psychiatric medical care — a very discriminatory policy. Fortunately, this death threat got a reprieve when the Senate announced it lacked the votes for passage.

Two other punitive bills are currently in the House of Representatives: the ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017 (HR620) and the ADA Lawsuit Clarification Act of 2017 (HR1493). Their provisions would delay for six months the ability of wheelchair users and other people with disabilities to secure access to various services through the “reasonable accommodation protections and rights” stipulated in the ADA. Both bills would impose a 60-day period to notify an owner/operator of a problem and 120 days for them to fix it.

## Resistance!

The disabled community has responded to these attacks with resistance.

In Washington, D.C., activists led by ADAPT (Americans Disabled for Accessible Public Transit) held a die-in at the office of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) to protest the cuts to Medicaid on June 22. When the Senate adjourned for a recess, the activists began occupying local offices of some senators.

In Colorado, at Sen. Cory Gardner’s Denver office, ADAPT activists staged a sit-in for 59 hours until they were arrested. They were finally released July 1 after an additional 30 hours in custody.

ADAPT was central to the famous 1990 “Capitol Crawl” in Washington, D.C. Over 60 activists abandoned their wheelchairs and mobility devices and began crawling up the 83 stone steps to the U.S. Capitol building entrance, as people chanted

“What do we want? ADA! When do we want it? Now!” The ADA was passed later that year.

## Disability rights activists speak out

Renée Imperato, a Vietnam veteran with several disabilities, including post-traumatic stress disorder, told Workers World of the extra dangers facing people of color and LGBTQ people with disabilities:

“The safety of disabled people of color and disabled lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people, especially those who use crutches and wheelchairs, is compromised by their skin color and their expression. All people have the right to self-defense by any means necessary. However, often disabled people have more limited options in how physically we can defend ourselves, especially disabled people of color and disabled LGBTQ people, who are the most targeted.”

Imperato added: “The scandalous non-application of the ADA at special events like concerts and sporting events is a fraudulent violation of the disabled’s right to equal access. We demand that all wheelchair ramps be inspected and replaced or retooled when they no longer function.”

Wheelchair user and labor and disability rights activist Mary P. Kaessinger told Workers World of her continuing difficulty in accessing public transportation: “I ride a scooter because of my MS [multiple sclerosis]. When using the New York City subways, one of the biggest challenges is the platform gap. Eighty percent of the time, the level of the subway car floor is 2-to-3 inches higher than the platform.

“I can use the subways only because other passengers, total strangers, recognize my plight and literally lift me and my scooter into the subway car. While some of the service on the MTA buses and trains has improved over the last 20 years, the MTA still has far to go. At least the buses don’t always drive by any more and pretend they don’t see you. But as for subways, there are too few elevators, and it ought to be a priority to maintain the ones they do have.

“There’s nothing more devastating than being stuck underground with no way up.”

Kaessinger concluded: “We demand full access to all buildings and all modes of transportation, and that everyone — the government, Wall Street, big corporations, bosses and all individuals — respect our rights and stop messing with the ADA and threatening our fundamental right to access. We are not begging for a handout. We do not seek or appreciate pity. We are demanding our human rights.

“We do need services and assistance. With it, we are productive people, raising families and contributing to community life.”

## And more resistance

This year, a group of disability organizations and disabled residents brought class action lawsuits in state and federal court, charging that New York City’s subway system is one of the least accessible public transportation systems in the U.S. The city has the lowest accessibility rate — 24 percent — among the 10 largest transit systems.

More than 75 percent of the city’s 472 subway stations do not have elevators, lifts or other methods to make them accessible for people who use wheelchairs and mobility devices or who otherwise can’t use stairs. The lawsuits point out that of the approximately 112 stations that are designated as wheelchair-accessible, only 100 currently offer working elevator service for passengers traveling in different directions. (New York Times, April 25)

Almost three decades after the “Capitol Crawl” people with disabilities continue to have to fight to be treated with the same respect and rights as able-bodied individuals.

One of the first acts of the Hitler regime, which murdered many millions for the crime of being different, occurred on July 14, 1933. The “Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Diseases” was instituted, which called for the mandatory sterilization of all people with

*Continued on page 11*



PHOTO: DENVER ADAPT

## Protests continue over attempts to repeal ACA

By John Catalinotto

Grass-roots action protesting plans to “repeal and replace” the Affordable Care Act continued to spread as June ended, despite the Republican-controlled Congress’s inability to pass new punitive legislation.

According to estimates from the Congressional Budget Office, the bill discussed in the Senate would slash Medicaid funding over the next 10 years by \$772 billion, while cutting taxes on the rich and superrich by \$541 billion.

It would also remove 22 million people from insurance coverage, increase deductibles and raise costs for the elderly and those with illnesses or disabilities.

For many people this is an existential threat. Cuts to Medicaid imperil programs that care for millions of people suffering from opioid addiction. The bill also threatens widespread care for poor women by defunding Planned Parenthood and most of the home care needed by elderly people and people with disabilities.

In a survey of opinion polls taken toward the end of June, as few as 12 percent to 18 percent supported the Senate bill, while 52 percent to 60 percent

were against it, with the rest undecided. (CNBC June 28)

People with disabilities, who would lose enormous support by cuts in Medicaid, continued to lead direct actions that confronted Congress. On June 28, after two days of sitting in at the Denver office of Republican Sen. Cory Gardner, 10 people were arrested, many of them people with disabilities. The demonstrators chanted they would “rather go to jail than die without Medicaid,” according to CNN.

Days earlier, after holding a die-in at Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell’s office, people with disabilities from the organization ADAPT were arrested for their protest of the attacks on Medicaid. (Workers World, June 29)

Along with these direct actions, many of the organizations that oppose the Trump administration for a raft of reasons participated in meetings with members of Congress to argue against cuts to Medicaid and the ACA or held protests outside their offices.

The hundreds of protests were not limited to big cities. Many of them, like the one in Kingston, N.Y., on June 30 outside Republican Rep. John Faso’s office,

raised the slogan of “Medicare for all.”

This slogan is a call for a single-payer or national medical insurance for everyone, similar to that provided in Canada and many Western European countries. Medicare now covers 57 million people in the U.S., including those aged 65 and over, plus 9 million people with disabilities. □

## In Chicago, ‘Healthcare = Life’

Chicago, June 27 — “Don’t Kill Us: Healthcare = Life!” Chicagoans, including dozens of differently abled people, participated in a vigil this evening to demand an end to the assault on health care being crafted by Congress. Speakers bore witness to the vast suffering already



WW PHOTO: NAOMI COHEN

Supporters of single-payer health care march in Kingston, N.Y., on June 30.



being inflicted by the current system, explained that pending proposals to cut back Medicaid would result in thousands of unnecessary deaths and demanded Medicare for all.

— Story and photos by Jeff Sorel

# Hundreds pack town hall to lambaste sheriff

By Terri Kay  
Hayward, Calif.

Hundreds of people, the vast majority opposed to Alameda County Sheriff Gregory Ahern's policies on undocumented immigrants, packed a town hall meeting here on June 30 at which the sheriff was the featured speaker. Held at the Hayward Adult School, far from Bay Area city centers, the event was organized by People Power-Alameda County, a community action group of the American Civil Liberties Union.

ACLU senior attorney Julia Mass spoke briefly, followed by Ahern, whose 20-minute PowerPoint presentation was frequently interrupted by jeers, as people held up signs saying #NotMySheriff.

Mass challenged the sheriff's assertion that he was required to cooperate with

Immigration and Customs Enforcement. She pointed out that San Francisco and Santa Clara counties don't inform ICE as to the documentation status of their inmates. "All the federal statutes say is that an office or entity can't prevent other people from voluntarily providing notice about citizenship and immigrant status," she said, adding, "Nowhere in it does it say that the sheriff's office has to tell ICE when people are being released."

Ahern's response was very revealing. He said he had to cooperate or he could lose his federal grants. Ahern has received significant federal money for his pet Urban Shield weapons and militarization training program, and recently for a major expansion of his Santa Rita jail facility. These projects have been heavily criticized and protested against by activists in the Bay Area.

In response to charges that he reports people to ICE before they've even been convicted of anything — violating the principle of "innocent until proven guilty" — Ahern came back with this Trump-style statement: "I believe that people who are 'evil' and committing violent crimes should go before a deportation hearing." He even talked about possible crimes people may have committed in their native countries, ignoring the fact that many immigrants come here as refugees from persecution by violent governments installed by the U.S. as part of imperialism's drive to control all of Latin America.

More than 100 people lined up at the mic to speak and most lambasted the sheriff over his immigration policies. One quoted from a meeting on April 20, 2016, at which Ahern stated he could tell

who is "suspicious" and who is undocumented based on their "clothing, luggage and language" — in other words, racial profiling.

Another brought up an incident in May when Ahern's deputies profiled and criminalized a street fruit vendor in San Lorenzo. A sergeant named Kelly was quoted as saying, "If you don't enforce this type of selling, it will begin to look like a Third World fruit market."

It was also pointed out that Ahern, in his role as chair of the California Sheriff's Association Political Action Committee, endorsed arch-racist Jeff Sessions' nomination for U.S. attorney general.

Ahern stated several times that he would continue to invite ICE into the Santa Rita jail and share prisoner release dates with the agency. □

## Youth tell ICE: 'Free Maguiber!'

Oakland, Calif. — The California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance held a press conference on the street in front of Alameda County Sheriff Gregory Ahern's office on June 29 calling for the immediate release of Maguiber Ramos Vasquez. The CIYJA says that Ramos, an Alameda father of three, is currently in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement for deportation proceedings "because of local law enforcement's collaboration with ICE."

The group called for help to share Ramos's story as they demand that ICE Field Director David Jennings use his prosecutorial discretion to release him. His spouse is due to have their fourth

child, and his family needs him at home for the birth. Ramos came to the U.S. in 2006 as an unaccompanied minor seeking asylum from gang violence and persecution in Guatemala. He has worked, married and raised his family here.

Readers can sign a petition for his release at [www.bit.ly/freemaguiber](http://www.bit.ly/freemaguiber). Call Field Director Jennings at 415.844.5503 to demand that Maguiber Ramos Vasquez, A#088-451-239, be released immediately.

— Report and photo by Terri Kay



# Oakland Juneteenth takes over land

By Terri Kay  
Oakland, Calif.

June 19 — As part of a national call by the BlackOut Collective and Movement Generation — called "40 Acres 40 Cities Juneteenth 2017" — local Black leadership of these groups took over a vacant lot at the corner of MacArthur Boulevard and 76th Avenue in deep East Oakland.

This action is part of the Black Land and Liberation Initiative.

The national call, published on the Movement for Black Lives website, [m4bl.net](http://m4bl.net), said in part: "On Juneteenth 2017 (Monday, June 19th) Black people across the country will be taking back land and reclaiming space, from vacant lots to empty school buildings. We are taking back land that should be used for the good of the people, land that has historically been denied access to Black people. Through these actions we will confront



the institutions that have been built off the extracted wealth of Black bodies and Black land and the individuals who have profited from them."

They explained "Why June 19th": "Juneteenth is our time to be celebrate our formal emancipation from chattel slavery and to remind ourselves that we still ain't free. It is a time to recognize all we have done for ourselves, all we have built for ourselves, all we have given the world and all of our resilience. At the same time, we remind ourselves that we must continue the fight

Movement sees takeover as test case for reparations.

PHOTO: ROSE BERRY

for true reparations that includes both making amends for past harm and repairing our relations so that such harm doesn't continue and never happens again."

Workers World spoke to Quinton Sankofa of Movement Generation, one of the leaders of the Oakland action. He explained how this initiative was rooted in discussions his group had with the BlackOut Collective dating back to late 2015. Movement Generation brings an ecological perspective to the struggle for Black liberation.

Again from the national call: "We see Black folks collectively engaging in land reclamation with the goal of shifting our relationship to the land, engaging in healing while creating hubs for movement work to be housed, cultivated and birthed."

Sankofa talked of his group's considerations about "how do we take and reclaim the land." He said Oakland is one of the most rapidly gentrifying places in the country and added that just as the current president of the U.S. doesn't try to couch his objectives with moderate terms, it is necessary for Black people to be bold and assertive in challenging how land is owned, managed and used.

The lot they took over on June 19 is owned by a nonprofit called Hello Housing. It's one of a number of lots the city of Oakland repossessed and then sold, 34 of

them going to Hello Housing for \$13,500 each. Movement Generation and the BlackOut Collective see this takeover as a test case for reparations, said Sankofa.

Sankofa described that step one of their process was to notify the community that the land should be given to the community for free, not bought and sold. They would like to center this initiative on the most oppressed, those who don't have homes. He said there should be no rent; it should just be free. He talked about how 80 percent of homeless people in Oakland are Black.

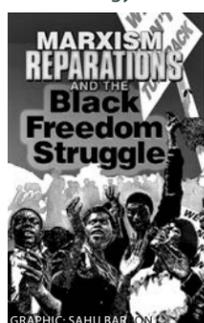
Today's action, as described by Sankofa, was the opening of a park, in the short term, with a play structure they were almost finished assembling, plus a community bench and a community mural. They are intentionally installing semipermanent structures that are hard to remove until the community decides what to do with the lot for the long term. They removed a couple of gates in order to enter the property that morning.

Sankofa emphasized that they were demanding productive reparations, not just consumptive. He said their target was not Hello Housing. Instead, they are targeting capitalism itself, including private property ownership, "anti-Black racism" and "the myth of white supremacy."

As he spoke, in addition to the building and assembly which was underway by various volunteers, some children were on-site. The children were given free bag lunches and were led in various children's activities by teen and adult volunteers. A community barbeque was planned for the evening. □

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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



- Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination** Larry Holmes
  - Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery** Sam Marcy
  - Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** LeiLani Dowell
  - The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead
  - Domestic Workers United Demand a Bill of Rights** Imani Henry
  - Black & Brown Unity: Human Rights & Global Justice!** Saladin Muhammad
  - Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior** Mumia Abu-Jamal
  - Alabama's Black Belt: Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation** Consuela Lee
  - Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? 1965 Watts Rebellion** John Parker
- Available at major online book sellers.

## Berkeley, Calif.

# Residents tell City Council: No 'Urban Shield'!

By Dave Welsh  
Berkeley, Calif.

Some 400 people packed a special City Council meeting here on June 20 to demand that Berkeley end its “shameful collaboration” with federal police and spy agencies. But the council, while widely hailed as “progressive,” ignored the near-unanimous popular opinion and voted to continue three controversial police programs:

1. City participation in a Regional Intelligence Fusion Center and its “suspicious activities” domestic spying operation, coordinated nationally by the FBI and used locally to spy on Black Lives Matter demonstrations.
2. City participation in the Urban Areas Security Initiative — and its annual \$5 million Urban Shield weapons and SWAT team training expo — aimed at militarizing and increasing federal control over local police forces under the Department of Homeland Security. UASI promotes the model of the “warrior cop.”
3. The city’s acquisition of a \$205,000 bulletproof armored personnel carrier, partly funded by DHS (presumably anticipating some future wave of ‘civil unrest’ in this small city).

The Longfellow Middle School auditorium was filled to overflowing for this third marathon City Council debate on the subject, this one lasting nearly seven hours. People lined up at the mic to ask the city to make a clean break with these potentially dangerous police programs.

Local educator Steve Martinot summed it up: “These young people came and spoke beautifully and eloquently about what it is like to face the horrors of police impunity and militarization. Speaker after speaker warned against the police state.”

Many spoke of the racist impacts of these federal police programs. Sharif Zakout, with the Arab Resource & Organizing Center, said, “I want to be absolutely clear that Urban Shield was developed in response to 9/11 and the Patriot Act

and is an Islamophobic and racist program.” AROC is part of a broad Stop Urban Shield Coalition, whose mobilization succeeded in driving the racist program out of Oakland in 2015. That was the year when “Black Rifles Matter” was the most popular T-shirt sold at the Urban Shield police expo.

### Beloved former mayor berates council for caving in

Former mayor Gus Newport scolded the City Council for going along with the various schemes for empowering the police. “I cut my teeth in the Civil Rights movement by getting brutalized by police at the age of 11,” he said. “I would hope that you all have the principles, the heart and the concern for the people of Berkeley to make sure these [police programs] do not go any further.”

Berkeley resident James McFadden said the Intelligence Fusion Center and UASI “are part of a continuous effort to consolidate federal control over local police ... that escalated after 9/11 with the passage of the Patriot Act and creation of Homeland Security.” He said Berkeley, for example, should not be collecting data that can help Immigration and Customs Enforcement round up immigrants for deportation. “We don’t need a militarized surveillance state, or if unrest grows, a police occupation force as we saw in Ferguson, Missouri,” he added.

A young woman from the Filipino youth organization Anakbayan urged rejection of the police programs, commenting: “As Berkeley gentrifies, police brutality increases.”

When the council withdrew for rest breaks during the long meeting, Stop Urban Shield organizers used these occasions to do “mic checks,” leading chants and updating the audience on some confusing agenda changes decreed by the mayor.

### Why is Berkeley cooperating with the Feds?

A postal worker asked: “Why is Berkeley cooperating with the FBI — with its



WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

Berkeley community tries to stop Urban Shield at City Council hearing, June 20.

long and grim history of suppressing dissent; busting unions; conducting political witch-hunts; disrupting the Civil Rights and Black liberation movements and the American Indian Movement, including spying on, assassinating and imprisoning their leaders? Do we really want to be part of a national police network headed by ‘America’s top cop,’ the arch-racist attorney general Jeff Sessions? Now is the time to draw the line.”

The new mayor, Jesse Arreguin, a Democrat elected with the support of Bernie Sanders, voted with the majority of the council to continue Berkeley’s participation in UASI and Urban Shield, although he did vote to pull out of the Intelligence Fusion Center.

After the vote, city resident Marc Sapir was inspired to write an angry open letter to a longtime council member with a certified “progressive” reputation who nevertheless could not bring himself to oppose the police on these issues. “The reason why the Democratic Party cannot pull out of its tailspin is because its duplicity, like yours, is just as real and just as transparent as that of the Republicans,” said the open letter. Sapir chastised the council for failing to “subordinate policing power to popular will.”

### ‘Show some courage!’ and ‘Be a fearless city!’

Not everyone on the City Council caved in to the police, however. Newly elected council member Cheryl Davila, an African-American woman, was steadfast in opposing all three of the pro-police measures, with support from council member Kate Harrison. This was not appreciated by the mayor, who rudely cut Davila off three times during the meeting. But the soft-spoken Davila persisted, calling on her colleagues to “show some courage,” and stressing the need to “be a fearless city” by ending participation in the federal police programs. “We are a sanctuary city,” she said. “We have to protect every one of our people.”

When the votes were announced, many in the audience rushed the stage and raised a banner opposing police militarization. Most council members promptly scurried away. Police officers responded violently, arresting two young protesters, mauling others and using their batons to bloody several heads, apparently including that of a 73-year-old man. Cheryl Davila, who had remained in the auditorium, was overheard commenting to the police, “You don’t have to break their arms!” □

## Fed lifts restrictions on banks

By G. Dunkel

The U.S. Federal Reserve has announced it will now permit the biggest banks to pay out in dividends and bonuses up to 100 percent of their profits, up from 65 percent last year.

A government bailout averted an even more devastating crash during the economic crisis of 2007-08. In February 2009, the U.S. Congress allocated \$750 billion to bail out the biggest banks, ones that Congress called “too big to fail,” and imposed some restrictions on them.

Bankers chafed at the restrictions that the Federal Reserve placed on their ability to make risky bets and pay big bucks to investors and bank officers.

Of course, the restrictions that the Federal Reserve put on bank payouts didn’t completely rule out big bonuses and big profits.

Even in 2009, for example, Goldman Sachs announced \$13.4 billion in profits (Annual Report) and forked out \$5.3 billion in bonuses. JPMorgan Chase had third quarter profits of \$3.6 billion that year.

But the banks wanted more, in both profits and disbursements. The 2010 Dodd-Frank law — with its “stress tests” and requirements that the 34 banks which

control “more than 75 percent of the total assets of all U.S. financial companies” must show plans for dealing with another economic catastrophe — caused them to feel restrained, even though their economic and political power was growing. The Federal Reserve system’s Comprehensive Capital Analysis and Review of June 2017 has details of those restrictions.

Whether Donald Trump’s election and the current bubbling up in the stock market had a direct connection to the Federal Reserve’s recent decision is unclear. The Fed did declare that all the country’s 34 largest banks passed the stress test for the first time since it was given seven years ago.

Even Wells Fargo, recently charged with creating as many as 2 million unauthorized bank and credit card accounts, got a passing grade.

The June 28 Financial Times published its quick, preliminary estimate that the payouts now allowed — including stock buybacks, dividend increases and bonuses — will total \$100 billion. But they will probably go higher.

In capitalist society, exploitation and all economic activity begin when money is loaned to bosses, which lets them buy labor power and the means of production.

The bosses control (own!) what the workers produce — which is all the wealth. The profit they make is used to pay back the loans they get, in part, and is deposited back in the banks, in part, for use of other capitalists.

As Fred Goldstein pointed out in *Workers World* on Oct. 24, 2009, “The banks are tied to big oil, big industry, the insurance companies, all the hedge funds, the private equity funds, the mortgage brokers, the stock exchange and every other institution in society that thrives off the stolen labor of the workers.”

It’s interesting to note that the banks are not promising the people who deposit money in CDs and saving accounts any raise in the interest they get paid.

Federal Reserve chairperson Janet

Yellen spoke in England before the British Academy on June 27 about the “positive results” of the stress test. She was so enthralled by the results of the reforms made to the banking system after the 2007-08 crisis that she claimed another meltdown unlikely “in our lifetimes.” (U.S. News, June 27)

She avoided ruling out a meltdown completely. So she added, “I do think we’re much safer, and I hope that it will not be in our lifetimes, and I don’t think it will be.”

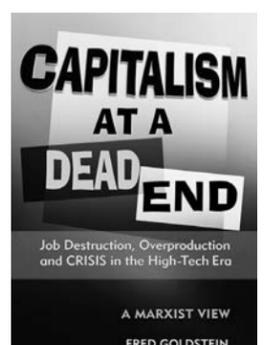
That is not so much an analysis as it is a reflection of the ruling class’s attitude that their system will last forever, and if it goes into a tailspin, their capitalist government will rescue them — and make the workers pay for it. □

## Capitalism at a Dead End

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

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to [LowWageCapitalism.com](http://LowWageCapitalism.com)

Available at all major online booksellers.



Excerpted from *TeleSur English*, this article opens a compelling analysis of how Marxism can be used to take apart the recent capitalist media attacks on the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela. For the complete article go to [tinyurl.com/yx2gyfaj](http://tinyurl.com/yx2gyfaj).

# What Marxism teaches us about protests in Venezuela

By Ramiro S. Fúnez

Freedom. Democracy. Stability.

These are the demands that mainstream media will have you believe are behind ongoing anti-government opposition protests in Venezuela, which have since claimed over 50 lives.

Borrowing plot lines from “David and Goliath,” the alphabet soup of corporate news outlets perpetuates the same ill-conceived dichotomy. On one side are the powerless, peace-loving democrats protesting for political freedom. On the other side is the powerful, violent authoritarian government fighting against those demands.

This narrative, indisputably dominant in mainstream media, is intentionally designed to engender support for regime change in Venezuela. Outlets like CBS, CNN, NBC, ABC, Fox News and The New York Times, for example, are owned by wealthy global elites who are top investors within the military-industrial complex and profit handsomely from endless war.

Publications like the Miami Herald exemplify mainstream media’s drive for war by publishing pieces suggesting “What Trump should do about Venezuela’s drift toward a full-blown dictatorship.” This falls entirely in line with their wealthy corporate backers, who salivate over the idea of recolonizing and privatizing Venezuela’s vast oil resources.

Their rallying cries for U.S. action against Venezuela resemble those made against Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya before their respective invasions in 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2011. Anyone who has closely followed these

invasions, however, can attest to the central role inaccurate mainstream media reports have played in facilitating their disastrous outcomes.

Let’s not forget that in 2003, for example, establishment news propagated a disastrous lie: the claim that the Iraqi government was then in possession of “weapons of mass destruction.”

But as the U.S.-led Iraq Survey Group was forced to admit in 2003, there was zero evidence that the Iraqi government had produced or stockpiled any weapons of mass destruction since 1991. That was the year United Nations sanctions were imposed against the administration of former President Saddam Hussein.

The results of this lie, as history has shown, were catastrophic. Tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians and combatants died, thousands more were violated and injured, and entire cities were left in ruin.

Moreover, the same media outlets that served as cheerleaders for this illegal invasion, “justified” with unsubstantiated claims, are the same ones that beat the drums of war against Yugoslavia in 1999, Afghanistan in 2001 and Libya in 2011. And in present times, they’re beating the drums of war against Venezuela.

That’s why those who truly want to understand what’s going on in Venezuela can’t rely on publications that have the economic interests of their wealthy corporate backers at heart. Those seeking the truth about protests in Venezuela must ground their investigation in the interests of the working class masses who would be most affected by any attack or invasion. . . .



CHART: TELESURTV.NET/WHAT-MARXISM-TEACHES-US-ABOUT-PROTESTS-IN-VENEZUELA-

Marxism, a method of studying and responding to world events, is best suited for this since it is fundamentally based on advancing the best interests of workers, the majority, and not wealthy elites, the minority. And as will later be shown, it demonstrates that the worker-led government is truly promoting freedom, democracy and stability, not the Wall Street-backed opposition.

One of the biggest problems inherent in mainstream media coverage of protests in Venezuela is their method of analyzing them.

If you take a close look at most articles or videos produced by establishment publications, you’ll notice an underlying trend. They discuss present-day turmoil in Venezuela without providing adequate historical context.

Not only do they intentionally leave out the incessant economic and political attacks waged against the Bolivarian Revolution since taking power in 1999, which have hampered the government’s ability to advance peace and stability. They also fail to mention what the country was like

before 1999 when late President Hugo Chávez took office and began radically improving conditions for Venezuela’s working-class majority.

Since the early 2000s, for example, supermarket owners affiliated with Venezuela’s opposition have hoarded food products so they can resell them at higher prices and make large profits. Food importing companies owned by the country’s wealthy right-wing elite are also manipulating import figures in order to raise prices on goods.

In 2013, former Venezuelan Central Bank chief Edmee Betancourt reported that the country lost between US\$15 billion and US\$20 billion the previous year because of hoarding and price manipulation.

Right-wing sabotage of Venezuela’s ... economy, which has been waged on numerous fronts since 1999, serves to bolster political attacks against the government. This tactic of destabilization, expounded upon by U.S. political scientist Gene Sharp, has been used against governments opposed to Wall Street from time immemorial. . . . □

## Pentagon threatens wider war on Syria

Continued from page 1

ing, which didn’t appear to be discussed in advance with other national security agencies.”

British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon said the U.S. had not shared any evidence of a specific threat of a chemical weapons attack.

### Media self-censorship escalates

The major corporate media gave headline coverage to the unsubstantiated charges against Syria. But questions and controversy were buried deep within the articles.

Overtly suppressed by all major corporate media in the U.S. and Britain was an exposé released June 25, the day before the White House statement, by award-winning investigative journalist Seymour Hersh.

Hersh challenged the U.S. claim that the Syrian government had launched a sarin gas attack in April. According to Hersh, only the German publication, *die WELT*, was willing to publish the fact that Trump had ignored intelligence reports from U.S. agencies when he ordered a “Tomahawk” missile attack on the Syrian air base on April 6.

Hersh is neither a revolutionary nor a left-wing journalist. He never attacks U.S. imperialism in general. But his carefully calibrated exposés, usually carried in major U.S. and British publications, have criticized egregious acts in U.S. wars, such as the mass murder of villagers in My Lai, Vietnam, in 1969.

Major U.S. and British media carried his exposés on Korean Air Flight 007 in 1986, an exposé of Israel’s nuclear arsenal in 1991, and President Bill Clinton’s bombing of the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Sudan. In 2004, he reported on U.S. systematic torture of hundreds of detainees at Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq.

Hersh’s exposés and analyses have won the Pulitzer Prize, Polk Award and National Book Award. Yet he had to go to Germany to get his latest exposé published.

That none of the major U.S. or British publications would touch it shows broad ruling-class support at the highest levels for a continued and expanded U.S. war against Syria. This was also shown by the general applause from Republican and Democratic politicians as well as the corporate media when Trump launched the April 6 attack. They described him as “presidential” for that.

It was the first praise since the election coming from Democratic Sen. Chuck Schumer and Democratic House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi.

### Frustration with Syria’s success

The new charge of a “potential” gas attack comes amid growing U.S. frustration after years of covert efforts to overthrow the sovereign government of Syria have failed.

Aid funneled through Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to tens of thousands of mercenary and reactionary forces have also failed to bring down the Damascus government.

The war has displaced almost a third of the Syrian population and created millions of refugees. But the Syrian government’s success shows it benefits from the deep determination of millions of Syrians to maintain Syria as a secular and sovereign state.

In September 2014 the Obama administration began direct bombing of Syria, claiming to be targeting the so-called Islamic State group (IS). The Syrian government has consistently opposed this direct military intervention and past covert intervention.

The Pentagon then pulled Britain, France, Turkey, Australia, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Jordan and Morocco into its air campaign. After a year of the bombings, the Syrian government appealed to Russia for air support.

Israel has also used every opportunity to bomb Syrian government forces, the latest being on July 1.

### Further provocations as millions oppose wider war

In May the U.S. military attacked Syrian ground forces near the Al Tanf Crossing on the Iraq-Syria border. The Syrians were engaged in a campaign to open the major highway to Damascus and clear the surrounding region of military saboteurs.

U.S. and British Special Forces were in the area advising and providing advanced offensive weapons to a Syrian mercenary group called the Revolutionary Commando Army. To protect these covert forces, the U.S. bombed Syrian troops using the preposterous claim of self-defense. U.S.



PHOTO: PRENSA LATINA | INTERNET@GRANMA.CU \SANA

Syria, after six years of U.S.-manufactured war.

and British Special Forces are in another country attacking soldiers of that country who had not attacked or killed any of them. How could that be self-defense?

A U.S. jet shot down a Syrian fighter jet west of Raqqa on June 18. General Joseph Dunford, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, resorted to using a 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force as legal justification. The AUMF was worded to target governments and individuals who supported the Sept. 11, 2001, World Trade Center bombing.

The Syrian government has never attacked the U.S. It is fighting against al-Qaida and IS. Meanwhile U.S. allies such as Israel, Saudi Arabia and Turkey have aided al-Qaida and IS in Syria.

Despite wholesale media censorship and complete support from the political establishment for continuing the war on Syria — both Republicans and Democrats, from Trump to Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders — polls show millions are opposed to this war.

The movement against U.S. wars must be more confident and outspoken in mobilizing opposition.

The growing danger of a wider war forces this onto our agenda. □

# Israel seizes Palestinian women leaders

By Joe Catron

Israeli occupation forces seized at least 11 Palestinians in a series of pre-dawn raids across the occupied West Bank on July 2.

They included Khalida Jarrar, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and Khitam Saafin, president of the Union of Palestinian Women's Commit-



Khitam Saafin

tees and a member of the secretariat of the General Union of Palestinian Women.

After a raid on Jarrar's home, her daughter Suha reported: "I kept demanding they allow me to see my mom, so the female soldiers called male soldiers into the room and they handcuffed me with plastic ties, hit me in the head and made me get on my knees in the middle of my bed.

"They made me sit like that, without proper clothes, for more than half an hour. If I moved even a bit to get comfortable they would point their guns and scream at me." (middleeasteye.net)

Israel previously held Jarrar, now the thirteenth PLC member in its prisons, for 14 months in 2015 and 2016, using both charges of "incitement" and affiliation with a banned organization — the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which she represents in the PLC — and "administrative detention," or internment without charge or trial.

"The legal system [in the occupied Palestinian territories] is a comprehensive system of military law devoted to suppressing activists' rights and violating

their dignity at every stage of the detention process," Jarrar said after her 2016 release. (jps.ucpress.edu)

A prominent advocate for Palestinian political prisoners, she chairs the PLC's commission on prisoners and is vice-chair of Addameer Prisoner Support and the Human Rights Association's board of directors, as well as the group's former executive director.

After Jarrar's detention, Addameer called it "an attack against Palestinian political leaders and Palestinian civil society as a whole."

In a statement, the PFLP urged "the Palestinian masses to escalate the popular movement to support the struggle of the brave prisoners in Israeli jails, for Jarrar and Saafin and the prisoner Muhammad Allan, on hunger strike for 25 days."

July 7 will be the 30th day of Allan's strike. To support his demand for freedom, Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network will protest that day



Khalida Jarrar

outside the Best Buy store in New York's Union Square, at 4th Avenue and East 14th Street, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

The store sells products made by Hewlett Packard, which holds extensive contracts with Israel's prison system, military forces and other occupation infrastructure. □

## Israeli youth say no to military

By Michael Kramer

Atalya Ben-Abba, a young Israeli woman, was released on June 27 after spending 110 days in an Israeli military prison. She had refused to be drafted into the Israeli military.

On her release she stated: "I walk out of military prison with my head held high, alongside many supporters who, like me, understand that refusing to take part in the occupation is a necessary, moral choice. There have been other conscientious objectors who came before me and others will follow, part of a growing movement of youths who aren't afraid to say 'enough is enough.'"

(972mag.com, June 27)

Ben-Abba added that she refused "to participate in a system that uses violent means to oppress another people, has imposed an occupation upon it for 50 years, and is imposing a siege, the consequences of which are yet to be seen."

Previous Israeli draft resisters include Aiden Katri, a transgender political activist who was sentenced to prison in March 2016. She called for "an alliance of the victims of oppression." She has since been released. (972mag.com, March 30, 2016)

In a long statement released prior to her jailing, Katri explained that "as someone who believes in gender equal-

ity, I cannot ignore inequality in other issues. Arabs and Jews live in this country as two different classes; Israelis and Palestinians live under two different legal systems. It would be absurd to strive for justice in the context of injustice. I struggle against my oppression — my gender oppression as a trans woman and my ethnic oppression as a Mizrahi Jew [Jews from the Middle East], and if I turn a blind eye to an oppression of another people this would be hypocrisy."

While refusing to serve in the Israeli military as a political statement is not yet a mass movement, large numbers of Israeli youth find their own ways to avoid service by other means, including

medical and religious deferments or by emigrating from the U.S.-armed and -financed settler state to start a new life somewhere else. Germany has become a popular destination.

Ben-Abba, Katri and other draft resisters have broken from the Zionist consensus that is built around the cult of the so-called Israeli Defense Forces. Instead they have consciously sided with the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people. This is an important victory for the Palestinian resistance.

*Kramer served in the Israeli military during 1972-75 and is a member of Veterans for Peace/Chapter 021 (northern New Jersey).*

## IRELAND

# Working-class activists defeat Labour-State assault on right to protest

*Excerpted from a report by Ian Ó Dálaigh, general secretary of the organization Éirígí in Ireland, writing in a personal capacity.*

On Nov. 15, 2014, a spontaneous protest took place in Jobstown, Tallaght, an overwhelmingly working-class area in southwest Dublin. Labour Party leader Joan Burton, who at the time was also tánaiste [26-county deputy prime minister], was delayed in a car for just over two hours by a sit-down protest.

The protest was directed against the vicious austerity measures of the Fine Gael/Labour coalition [government]. These measures included cuts to social welfare benefits, disability benefits, and pensions, and attempts to impose a water tax. As both minister of social protection and tánaiste, Burton played a key role in these attacks.

Nineteen of the protesters (18 adults and one teenager), including our own Scott Masterson, were arrested and charged with false imprisonment in the wake of this. The teenager has already been convicted.

To term a two-hour delay in a car — while surrounded by police — as false imprisonment was absurd, and the charges set a very dangerous precedent. Under this definition, any temporary delay or obstruction at a protest or picket, which for example inconveniences a politician, could be deemed "false imprisonment." This was about intimidating people and criminalizing protest — and nothing more.

During the course of the trial, which commenced on April 24 this year, the state also attempted to further attack the right to free speech and the right to politically organize. Using the spurious cover of "potential jury tampering," they demanded that the accused should remain silent about the case. The state sought to ban the accused from speaking publicly about the case during the trial and even to impose a ban on solidarity pickets in front of the Criminal Court of Justice.

They failed on all counts, just as they eventually failed in their attempts to undermine the right to protest by convicting the Jobstown accused.



PHOTO: ÉIRIGÍ

Scott Masterson's [attorney], in her closing statement to the jury, suggested that Scott should be thanked by the Irish people for his part in the Jobstown protest. She made the point that the Labour Party are guilty of political treachery, and that people have the right to protest against that treachery — which is exactly what Scott and the other defendants were doing.

The trial ran for just over eight weeks, culminating on June 29, when the jury gave a unanimous "not guilty" verdict for the Jobstown 7. The Jobstown Not Guilty campaign is now calling for the immediate dropping of all charges against the other 11 accused, as well as the quashing of the conviction of the 17-year-old in relation to the protest. □

# WORKERS WORLD

## editorial

### Why all workers should support **REPARATIONS**

More than 100 people marched through downtown Newark on June 24 demanding reparations for the African holocaust. The marchers received an overwhelmingly friendly response from bystanders.

July 12 marks the 50th anniversary of the four-day Newark rebellion, sparked by the vicious beating of a Black cab driver by white police. State troopers and National Guard soldiers, along with the nearly all-white police force, attacked crowds of Black youth with clubs and bullets. When it was over, 26 people, mostly African Americans, lay dead.

Then, as now, the roots of such rebellions reached deeper than the daily racist attacks on Black youth by white cops, as terrible as those are. Job discrimination, redlining, segregated schools and other aspects of institutional racism have combined to oppress and exploit African-American people.

This oppression is not a sidebar to capitalist production. It is, and always has been, at the core of this economic and social system, which exploits the labor of millions of workers and directs the surplus value they produce into the pockets of parasitic billionaires who control the state. Many of the banking houses, insurance companies and financiers that funded the industrial revolution in Europe and the U.S. accumulated their initial capital from huge slave plantations in the colonies and the U.S. South. Many of today's big Wall Street firms owe their beginnings to slavery. Their continuing robbery of oppressed communities has only piled more wealth into their vaults.

The brutality of slavery, with its torture, rape and murder, is beyond measure. But the immense wealth created by the labor of millions of unpaid enslaved people has been calculated. Among many published studies, one authored by University of Connecticut researcher Thomas Craemer estimates the value of that plunder as \$6 trillion to \$14 trillion at today's value. And that covers just the period between the founding of the U.S. in 1776 and the Civil War. (newsweek.com, Aug. 19, 2015)

Since the dawn of capitalism, workers have waged an unrelenting struggle with the capitalist class over the surplus value their labor has created. This struggle takes many forms. For example, Wall Street, using Trump and other capitalist politicians, now aims to sharply reduce that portion of the surplus value that is used to purchase health care for the workers and poor through Obamacare, Medicare and Medicaid. This fight addresses whether billions of dollars of wealth produced by the workers will be used for their families' health care or instead to fund tax breaks for the billionaire class.

For the working class as a whole, the struggle for reparations is a front in that same battle. The issue is not how long ago slavery existed or how reparations may be distributed. It is whether the immense value accumulated from the unpaid labor of enslaved people should go to their working-class descendants to uplift their living standards, which are far below those of many other workers.

Even though he speaks of the working class and calls himself a socialist, Bernie Sanders refused the advice of Ta-Nehisi Coates and other Black activists who urged him to include support for reparations in his presidential campaign program. Sanders invoked the difficulty of getting it through Congress, but that can be said of any righteous demand for the workers, including single-payer health insurance, which he does advocate.

By contrast, Workers World Party's 2016 presidential ticket of Monica Moorehead and Lamont Lilly made the demand for reparations number one on their list of campaign planks. As a Marxist-Leninist, multinational, working-class party, Workers World recognizes that supporting the call by oppressed communities for reparations is essential to unite the working class in the struggle to overturn this racist system and transfer all the wealth now monopolized by the banks and bosses into the hands of the class that produced it. □

## Stop DA office coverup, free Mumia now!

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

For the second time, Common Pleas Court Judge Leon Tucker ordered the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on June 22 to release its files pertaining to any role played by former District Attorney Ronald Castille in the case of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

As Tucker decreed in the court's initial order on April 28: "[T]he discovery production shall include any and all documents or records in the possession or control of the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office" that show Castille's "personal involvement in the case." It said records should include but not be limited to memoranda regarding this case during pretrial, trial, post-trial and direct appeal proceedings.

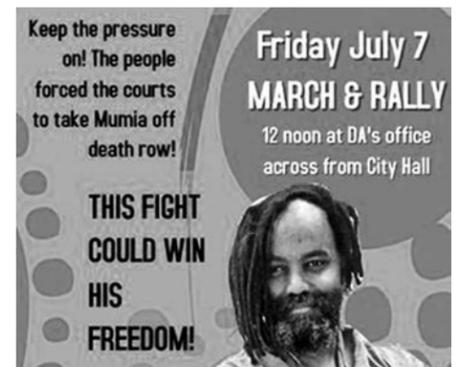
The order also covered any notes or memoranda on meetings between Castille and his staff regarding the case, as well as press releases or other public statements by Castille about the case.

During his tenure as DA, Castille ran for election to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. His campaign rhetoric made repeated references to his role in bringing about dozens of death row convictions, as well as his strong support for the Fraternal Order of Police. The FOP, notorious for urging Abu-Jamal's execution, was a major Castille campaign donor.

Castille had been assistant DA at the time of Abu-Jamal's 1982 trial, and was Philadelphia DA when his office opposed Abu-Jamal's direct appeals in 1988. Abu-Jamal's current discovery petition concerns the fact that Castille, then a justice on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, refused to recuse himself when the case came before his bench.

In June 2016, the U.S. Supreme Court made a landmark decision in *Williams v. Pennsylvania* that judges must remove themselves from any case they had a hand in prosecuting. Castille was the DA and later state Supreme Court judge in the *Williams* case. Currently, 14 Pennsylvania prisoners, including Abu-Jamal, are fighting for appeals on similar grounds.

In response to Tucker's initial order, the DA's office released a meager 50 pages of public record, continuing their out-



FACEBOOK: MOBILIZATION4MUMIA: TINYURL.COM/T23YQY2

rageous cover-up. Tucker's latest order gives the DA until July 7 to comply or face sanctions.

#### All out for July 7 Philly protest

Supporters of Abu-Jamal will rally outside the Philly DA's office at noon on July 7 demanding it give up the files. Demonstrators will have blown-up, poster-size copies of Tucker's order so that passersby can see the DA cover-up for themselves. They are also urging people to continue a phone-in campaign to first assistant DA Kathleen Martin, at 215.686.8000, with the message: "I'm calling regarding Judge Tucker's ruling about discovery in Mumia Abu-Jamal's appellate cases. The DA's office needs to release all his files immediately."

The Philadelphia DA's office has a history of cover-up and corruption. It has also served as an important launchpad for political careers, including those of Castille and former DA Ed Rendell, who subsequently became mayor of Philadelphia, governor of Pennsylvania and head of the Democratic Party's National Committee. Former DA Lynne Abraham, known as the "death penalty queen of the world," was responsible for issuing warrants that police used to launch their deadly attack on the MOVE organization in Philadelphia in 1985.

The most recent scandal to rock the foundations of the DA's office was the high-profile trial of current DA Seth Williams on several counts of corruption and fraud. Among the charges he faced was taking money — intended to pay for his aging mother's nursing home bills — to finance his own lavish lifestyle.

In a surprising turn of events, Williams pled guilty to one count on June 29. The judge immediately revoked his bail, sending Williams directly to federal prison to await sentencing in October. With all the evidence against him, Williams likely took the plea deal to seriously reduce the potential 20-year sentence.

Elected as DA in November 2009, Williams had adamantly held out for two years against a federal Supreme Court order to release Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row. He finally announced in December 2011 that his office would no longer appeal the ruling or seek the death sentence.

The humanitarian thing to do at that time would have been to release an innocent man who had been unjustly jailed and tortured for 30 years. Instead, Williams stood with the widow of the police officer whom Abu-Jamal had been accused of shooting as she publicly called for Abu-Jamal's death.

Evidence increasingly supports Abu-Jamal's claims that racism, corruption and judicial misconduct at all stages of his trial were the reasons he was convicted. Now, with the chance of a legal victory that could potentially release him, it is more important than ever to be in the streets to demand "Free Mumia now!" □

#### DETROIT:

## 'Stop foreclosures, water shutoffs!'

Activists held a day of protest against property tax foreclosures and water shutoffs in Detroit on June 28. Members of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, Michigan Peoples Defense Network, Detroit Active and Retired Employee Association and other organizations first attended a 10 a.m. Michigan State Housing Development Authority board meeting to demand that federal Hardest Hit Funds be used to stabilize communities and not further the "cleansing" of working and oppressed people from the city. Later, the same organizations picketed the Wayne County Treasurer's office during the noon hour to insist that a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions from occupied homes be declared to help maintain communities that are being devastated by the policies of the banks and their surrogates in local and state government.

— Report and photo by Abayomi Azikiwe,  
Pan-African News Wire



## Fracking Colorado, part 2:

# Impact on environment and people

By Viviana Weinstein  
Denver

To a person who grew up in the New York/New Jersey area, the dark smog that used to hang over the city was a fact of life. Before one saw any blue sky, there was always a blanket of smog created by chemical and organic compounds — byproducts of widespread industrial activity.

Members of Native nations or people who grew up in Colorado are now appalled at how areas of beauty have been torn up and transformed into huge industrial sites — this in a mad rush to profit off the oil and gas “gold rush.” The extraction of coal oil and gas in Colorado has greatly increased levels of dangerous chemicals and ground-level ozone. These are byproducts of the “rush.”

This is especially dangerous to the elderly and to children, as it causes and intensifies respiratory illnesses. Even when the air looks relatively clear, gases like methane and benzene affect the health of Colorado residents.

Nurse Suzanne Cabral was interviewed by the Colorado Independent, an online news source, about the health impact of fracking operations on people who live nearby. Clusters of health problems occur at those sites, including low birthweight infants and newborns with neural tube defects. Many suffered nosebleeds, headaches and sleep disturbances. Cabral is now an advocate for the members of her Thornton community. (August 2016)

Children living near well sites have an increased incidence of asthma from being exposed to benzene, a known carcinogen emitted from the wells. Fracking wastewater is often placed in lined con-

tainment ponds or injected into wells up to 10,000 feet deep, polluting drinking water. It has also caused earthquakes.

Farmers are concerned about potential harm to their animals, which are breathing these industrial gases and dust, drinking the water and eating grass affected by the pollutants.

Thousands of old, abandoned 19th- and 20th-century mines are currently deteriorating, leaking and spewing massive toxins into our rivers and waterways. The costly cleanup is being paid for by this generation in the 21st century.

The unknown miles of pipelines, leaking wells and crumbling well casings threaten Colorado water, air and land — with no oversight. When energy company executives leave Colorado, their pockets are stuffed with money. But future repair costs and unknown planetary damage will inevitably fall on Colorado workers and their families, as in the past. Corporations are rarely held financially responsible for the damage they do.

Profits from these industries should be set aside to repair the damage done and to transition to safer, nontoxic ways to provide energy.

### Capitalism pits workers against the environment

In the interest of making a lot of money with minimum investments, capitalists put workers in a bind. Workers are aware of the dangers of fracking to people, animals and the environment — yet they need higher-paying jobs. Under capitalism, workers know they are disposable, so they fight to keep their jobs despite knowing their work harms them, their children and the planet.

Abolishing fracking for oil and gas would have long-term health and planetary benefits. Workers who lose their dirty, dangerous jobs could be retrained in safer, cleaner energy employment.

The myth has been perpetuated that because natural gas burns cleaner, releasing less carbon dioxide, methane and other pollutants than coal and oil, it could be a “bridge fuel” until renewable, less polluting and cheaper options became available. This myth allowed energy companies to keep producing unlimited gas and oil from fossil fuels through fracking.

However, over the last 20-plus years, scientists have observed extreme weather events and climate warming. Rigorous scientific climate studies completed in 1990 by world-recognized climate scientists through the United Nations left no doubt about global warming’s causes and effects. (Ross, Gelbspan, “The Heat Is On”)

### Fracking releases methane, increases global warming

Scientists now know that fracking for gas and oil releases large amounts of methane gas, which traps much more heat on our planet than carbon dioxide. That means the planet is warming much more rapidly and intensely because of methane. The heat is causing droughts that affect agriculture and kill crops, leading to hunger and forcing people to flee from drought-stricken or flooded areas. Recent satellite studies show that not only the atmosphere above the drilling sites has accumulated greater than expected amounts of methane — but this has occurred all over the planet.

Some of this methane comes from the

production process and the wells. Some comes from higher temperatures in the Arctic, where melting ice is releasing methane trapped in the ice and permafrost there.

Either way, the release of methane contributes to the earth’s warming. As more ice melts, more methane is released. Rapid trapping of intense heat creates a vicious cycle. Melting ice is visible and the sea rise is measurable. But the gas is invisible, so it is easy for nonscientists to dismiss it. However, the studies are conclusive.

ExxonMobil commissioned a study in the 1980s which came to the same conclusions. However, oil companies hid the study’s results and falsely spread the idea that scientists were not in agreement or the conclusions were still debatable.

Scientists have sounded the alarms on global warming. It is causing displacement and extinction of some animals. It is also increasing bacteria, viruses and other disease-causing life forms, which flourish in places where they have never existed before because the climate was much cooler.

It is crucial to recognize and stop this profit-driven industrial activity and burning of fossil fuels. Continuing on this trajectory will keep warming the planet, which will cause not only extreme weather events — but starvation, drought and the development of new diseases or their eruption in locations where they have never before existed.

Scientists do not know at what point global warming will have gone too far. The clock cannot be turned back. But they do agree that the danger to the planet is of such urgency that today’s situation cannot be allowed to continue. □



## ¡Justicia para Philando Castile!

Continúa de página 12

Esta ley tenía como objetivo aniquilar al Partido de las Panteras Negras para la Autodefensa, como se llamaba entonces. Las Panteras Negras llevaban un libro de leyes en una mano y una escopeta descargada en la otra mientras observaban a la policía.

Alegando que estaban armados y peligrosos era la excusa para que la policía matara a los miembros del Partido Panteras Negras. Entre las víctimas estaban Fred Hampton y Mark Clark, quienes fueron asesinados en sus camas en Chicago el 4 de diciembre de 1969.

Casi 50 años después, tampoco se supone que las/os pobres tengan derecho a la libertad de expresión en la Primera Enmienda. Legisladores estatales en Arizona y Texas el año pasado introdujeron proyectos de ley para impedir la videograbación de la policía (Arizona Republic, 12 de enero de 2016).

### ¿Qué se necesita? Millones en las calles

Minnesota es considerado un estado liberal. Pero entre 2000 y junio de 2016, es decir, antes de la muerte de Philando Castile, 147 personas fueron asesinadas por la policía de Minnesota (Star Tribune, 7 de junio de 2016).

El asesinato por ahorcamiento en masa más grande en la historia de EUA ocurrió en Mankato, Minn., el 26 de diciembre de

1862, cuando 38 hombres indígenas Santee fueron ejecutados (Unitednativeamerica.com).

Después de atacar a los inmigrantes somalíes que vivían en Minnesota, Donald Trump llegó a 44.000 votos de ganar ese estado.

El racismo es rechazado por muchos trabajadores en Minnesota que están consternados porque el asesino de Philando Castile ha quedado libre. “Philando era un hombre bueno que es extraño por la gente que lo amaba y por cientos de niños y educadores en las Escuelas Públicas de San Pablo”, dijo la presidenta Denise Specht de Education Minnesota, un grupo de trabajo afiliado a la AFL-CIO.

“Más de 100.000 niños de Minnesota que se parecen a Philando despertarán mañana en una sociedad que todavía los trata de manera diferente a los niños blancos”, dijo Specht. El Local 320 de los Teamsters declaró orgullosamente a su miembro Philando Castile como un hermano sindical.

Pero, ¿dónde está la declaración del presidente de los Teamsters Jimmy Hoffa Jr.? ¿Y por qué el presidente de AFL-CIO, Richard Trumka, está en silencio? Detener los asesinatos policiales racistas es una cuestión sindical.

Se necesita un movimiento de millones para detener a la policía racista. Cada protesta es un paso hacia su construcción.

## Battle-tested people fight for rights

Continued from page 5

diseases considered hereditary. It specified many disabilities, including mental illness. The Nazis’ Big Lie was that people with disabilities were of “less value.”

The escalating terror and attacks in the U.S. against people of color, women, LGBTQ people and people with disabilities have been met with escalating resistance from the oppressed who plan to sweep today’s Big Lie — “lesser value” bigotry — into the dustbin of history.

Che Guevara, one of the greatest champions of the oppressed in human history, was also a person with a disability — asthma. He once proclaimed: “If you

tremble at indignation at every injustice, then you are a comrade of mine.”

This month, you can join a July 9 Disability Pride parade in New York City organized by a coalition of disability rights groups. The parade gathers at Union Square at 10 a.m., with an 11 a.m. march, ride and roll up Broadway to Madison Square Park for a Disability Rights Festival from 12 noon to 3 p.m. Parades this year are also planned in other cities, including Chicago and Boston.

*Edward Yudelovich is a person with emotional and one-sided hearing loss disabilities.*

## Trump’s misogyny, a pillar of capitalism

Continued from page 2

tistics. But it’s a national embarrassment that the rate in the nation’s capital, a largely Black city, is 7.9. Compare that to Cuba’s rate of 4.3 in 2016. (Cuban Ministry of Health, Jan. 1)

Why the difference? Cuba is a revolutionary socialist country that nationalized the big estates and businesses, many U.S.-owned, beginning in 1960, so it’s able to provide universal health care and free education, while striving to eradicate all forms of racism and chauvinism against women and LGBTQ people. It puts its resources where its principled politics are, despite Washington’s decades-long trading blockade.

While only revolutionary socialism can lay the basis to end all forms of oppression, including woman-hating, a lot can be, and has been, won under this system through struggle. When this writer first researched the wage gap in 1970, it was 59 cents on the dollar.

But it’s essential to remember that our hard-fought gains can be pushed back by reactionaries like Trump and his gang of warmongers and billionaires if we don’t keep fighting. They control the state, so uprooting that has to be our ultimate objective as we struggle to end sexism, racism, LGBTQ bias and all forms of exploitation and oppression. □



## Prisionero de Pennsylvania combate prisiones tóxicas

Por Bryant Arroyo

*Este es el texto ligeramente editado de un discurso pronunciado para la Conferencia Nacional de Convergencia 2017 por la Lucha contra las Prisiones Tóxicas, celebrada el 3 de junio en Denton/Ft. Worth, Texas. Los comentarios de Arroyo fueron grabados para la ocasión por Prison Radio.*

Hola ecologistas, bioneros, protectores de los bosques tropicales, opositores de OGM, innovadores de Green Tech, líderes indígenas y activistas de justicia social y ambiental reunidas/os hoy aquí. Quiero agradecerles su magnánima invitación a unirse a todos los “reguladores ambientales” en esta conferencia sin precedentes.

El medio ambiente incluye todo lo que rodea a un individuo: el aire que uno respira, el agua que bebemos y el lugar en el que vivimos. Como tal, el medio ambiente sirve como un factor de protección y promueve el bienestar general físico, mental y espiritual. ...

Es por eso que estamos aquí para luchar deliberadamente contra prisiones tóxicas en apoyo de quienes están dentro de la Nación de Prisioneros. Creo que es importante que se oigan las voces de todas/os los que son directa o indirectamente afectados por la construcción de este proyecto masivo de \$444 millones, el plan propuesto por la Oficina Federal de Prisiones (OFP) para construir su instalación sobre una mina de carbón tóxico en el condado de Letcher, Kentucky.

Me gustaría comenzar citando las pa-

labras de Margaret Mead: “Nunca dudes de que un pequeño grupo de ciudadanos reflexivos y comprometidos pueda cambiar el mundo. De hecho, es lo único que alguna vez lo ha hecho”.

Muchos estados ya han aprendido una lección dolorosa en su trato con proyectos como el propuesto por la OFP. Y esto se debe a que en cada uno de esos casos, las consecuencias trágicas de permitir que proyectos similares funcionaran en esas comunidades no se hubieran podido apreciar plenamente hasta que fue demasiado tarde para detener la devastación tanto a vidas humanas como al medio ambiente.

De hecho, con demasiada frecuencia, el problema es que las personas en esas comunidades no están conscientes de que las compañías tienen un conjunto específico de criterios para dirigirse a su próxima comunidad de víctimas, es decir, comunidades con altas tasas de desempleo donde la gente tiene problemas financieros. Y una vez que estos factores están en juego, obtuvieron lo que necesitaban para poner su pie en la puerta.

Lamentablemente, incluso cuando algunos puedan sentirse temerosos de las potenciales malas consecuencias de tener estos proyectos en sus comunidades, esas preocupaciones reales compiten con el temor de un futuro financiero incierto para ellas/os y sus familias. Es aquí cuando comienza la danza de seducción por parte de estas corporaciones gigantes y la OFP.

Primero, vienen a la comunidad a ofrecer un futuro brillante para aquellos que

apoyan los planes de la OFP prometiendo trabajos bien pagados. Después, para acabar con las preocupaciones reales sobre la salud personal y el daño ambiental del sitio tóxico, traen a sus presuntos expertos en sus costosos trajes con un aire de respetabilidad, pretendiendo ser pilares de la sociedad, cuando no son más que entes contratados que entran en una comunidad confiada hablando la última jerga científica que suena impresionante. Con la habilidad de un diestro mago, completan el engaño iniciado por los ejecutivos de la compañía.

El trágico éxito de este engaño se refleja en la disposición con que los ciudadanos que pagan impuestos reciben voluntariamente a estos terroristas ambientales corporativos en sus comunidades, sólo para arrepentirse más tarde cuando la vida de sus ciudadanos que pagan impuestos es devastada por un ambiente inhabitable y sus cuerpos quedan plagados de enfermedades terminales.

Uno de los ejemplos más contundentes que tenemos de que este proyecto se está proponiendo sin tener en cuenta las consecuencias para la justicia ambiental, la calidad del agua, los derechos de los reclusos, las especies en peligro de extinción y la falta de evaluación de alternativas al encarcelamiento, pueden encontrarse en la declaración sobre el impacto ambiental [sitio Letcher]. Ahí es donde la OFP dice que han “determinado que no hay nueva información relevante a las preocupaciones ambientales y cambios apreciables a un impacto potencial como resultado de las modificaciones al sitio de Roxana”.

(Tinyurl.com/ycpp774f)

Está muy claro en esa parte de la declaración, que la OFP no tiene la menor idea de qué impacto perjudicial tendría en la vida humana y el medio ambiente la construcción de esta instalación federal encima de un sitio minero tóxico que cuesta a los contribuyentes \$444 millones del presupuesto federal.

En luz de esta revelación, tenemos que preguntar, ¿puede alguien ver la locura en esto? De hecho, a la OFP no le importa hacer experimentos para recolectar datos en los que cerca de varios miles de presos federales, oficiales de correcciones federales, personal civil y el resto de la población de la comunidad del sitio de Roxana se reducirían al estado de conejillos de indias. De hecho - ratas de laboratorio.

En conclusión, hay dos razones para hacer algo: una buena razón, [y] también la razón real. ¿Hay alguna viabilidad económica para desperdiciar los \$444 millones de los contribuyentes en una prisión federal que eventualmente promoverá la enfermedad y el cáncer, causando enfermedades tanto a los prisioneros federales como a los funcionarios civiles?

Combata la OFP y evite que construyan en un sitio de minas tóxicas en Roxana. La lealtad mutua es nuestro sistema de apoyo. Ese es nuestro contrato. ¡Protestar! ¡Luchar, luchar, luchar!

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## ¡Justicia para Philando Castile!

Por Stephen Millies

Millones de personas vieron el repugnante video de Philando Castile muriendo desangrado en su automóvil el 6 de julio de 2016. El policía Jeronimo Yanez disparó contra el hombre negro siete veces después de detenerlo en Falcon Heights, Minnesota, un suburbio de St. Paul.

Millones escucharon a la amiga de Castile, Diamond Reynolds, gritar: “Por favor, no me digas que se ha ido. Por favor, oficial, no me diga que usted acaba de hacer esto a él. Solo buscaba su licencia y registro, señor.” (Associated Press, 7 de julio de 2016)

Y ahora millones de personas están indignadas porque el 16 de junio Yanez fue encontrado “no culpable” de homicidio en segundo grado y de dos cargos de descarga peligrosa de un arma de fuego.

Tanto Diamond Reynolds como su hija de cuatro años, que estaban en el coche, también podrían haber sido asesinadas. Después de ver a su novio tiroteado, Reynolds fue esposada por la policía.

“El sistema sigue fallando a los negros”, dijo Valerie Castile, la madre de Philando Castile (Huffington Post, 16 de junio). Ciento sesenta años después de la infame decisión Dred Scott de la Corte Suprema de EUA, los negros aún carecen, según las palabras del fallo, “de cualquier dere-

cho que el hombre blanco deba respetar”.

La noche del veredicto más de 2.000 personas tomaron las calles de St. Paul, comenzando en el Capitolio estatal. La Unidad de Respuesta Urgente #Justice-4Philando fue iniciada por muchas organizaciones locales (Fight Back News, 16 de junio).

La gente bloqueó la Interestatal 94 y la línea del tren ligero. “Sin justicia, no hay paz, enjuicien la policía” fue una de las consignas. Dieciocho personas fueron arrestadas (CNN, 16 de junio).

Seiscientas personas marcharon a través de Harlem, Nueva York, el 17 de junio. Empezaron en la calle 116 y Malcolm X Boulevard y finalizaron frente al Trump Tower en el centro de la ciudad. La policía de Nueva York continuamente trató de bloquear a las/os manifestantes.

### Vidas de Teamsters negros importan

Philando Castile era un trabajador, miembro del Local 320 de los Teamsters. Había estado empleado en las cafeterías de las escuelas públicas de St. Paul durante 14 años. En el momento de su asesinato, Castile era supervisor de servicios de nutrición en la Escuela Montessori J.J. Hill.

Las/os niños amaban a Philando. “Él era [tan] maestro como cualquier maestro en ese edificio”, dijo Joan Edman, un trabajador jubilado de la escuela. “Él

recordaba sus nombres. Recordaba quién no podía tomar leche. Sabía lo que podían comer y lo que no podían”, dijo Edman, quien agregó que “quinientos niños reales están directamente afectados”.

“Él era una persona amable y afectuosa que trabajaba en la escuela, él no debía estar muerto”, dijo Andrew Karre, cuyo hijo de ocho años va a la escuela Montessori. (Time, 7 de julio de 2016)

Nada de esto le importaba a la policía, que detuvo a Philando Castile 52 veces en 14 años (New York Daily News, 9 de julio de 2016). Conducir mientras se es negro es un verdadero delito, y Castile se llevó la pena de muerte.

### Segunda Enmienda ‘Sólo para los blancos’

Philando Castile le dijo al oficial Yanez que tenía un arma y que tenía licencia para portarla. (Chicago Tribune, 14 de julio de 2016). Mientras Castile cumplía con la solicitud de mostrar su identificación, el oficial Yanez lo mató.

¿No tienen los afroamericanos el derecho a la Segunda Enmienda de poseer armas de fuego?

De hecho, a los negros se les niega incluso el derecho a la autodefensa. Un aparcerero negro de diecisiete años, Samuel Osborne, fue enfrentado en su choza en Carolina del Sur por su casero blanco

William Walker el 17 de agosto de 1941. Walker estaba borracho y llevaba una pistola calibre .32.

Temiendo por su vida, Osborne buscó su rifle y mató a su ofensivo jefe. El derecho de Osborne a la autodefensa no le importó al juez Strom Thurmond, quien sentenció a Osborne a la silla eléctrica (Columna de Lars-Eric Nelson, New York Daily News, 8 de enero de 1999).

El súper racista Thurmond sería más tarde elegido gobernador de Carolina del Sur y también pasaría 46 años en el Senado de EUA. El apoyo de Thurmond fue vital para poner a Richard Nixon en la Casa Blanca.

Cada vez que la policía mata a una persona desarmada dice que tiene miedo por su vida. Pero matar a un racista borracho que apuntaba un arma, envió a Samuel Osborne a la silla eléctrica. El adolescente negro fue ejecutado el 19 de noviembre de 1943.

Cuatro meses después, el Estado Palmetto electrocutó a George Junius Stinney, un niño negro de 14 años, cuyo juicio por cargos falsos de asesinato duró sólo dos horas.

El gobernador de California Ronald Reagan firmó la Ley Mulford en 1967, prohibiendo el porte de armas. La Asociación Nacional de Rifle guardó silencio.

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