

# TO DEFEND SCHOOLS, IMMIGRANTS Wisconsin youth, workers turn Capitol into tent city

By Ben Carroll  
Milwaukee

The spirit of resistance is alive across the state of Wisconsin. From the first eruption of struggle here in February, when Gov. Scott Walker introduced a union-busting bill, and as attacks on working and oppressed people have broadened and sharpened, youth and students have played a decisive role, helping to advance and build the fightback.

Young people were the backbone of the historic three-week occupation of the Wisconsin State Capitol Building in Madison in February and March. They've led mass walkouts at high schools and universities in solidarity with their teachers and other workers under attack. And they held down a 67-day occupation at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee — the longest such occupation in U.S. history. At each stage of the struggle, young people have led these actions in principled solidarity with workers and oppressed peoples. This solidarity has helped the struggle here mature to the current level.

In the last week alone, young people have helped to lead bold and militant initiatives, including building a "Walkerville" tent city occupation in Madison. This has opened up phase two in the expanding fightback against union busting, austerity and the myriad attacks being directed at workers and oppressed people.

On June 6 the Fire Fighters union, National Nurses United, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and farmers, students and community organizations held a demonstration in Madison of several thousand people against the bud-

get, the union-busting bill and austerity. With the firefighters in the lead, the march stepped off from Fire Station 1, several blocks from the Capitol. After marching through streets around the Capitol, the demonstration stopped in front of M&I Bank.

With chants of "Banks got bailed out, we got sold out," several dozen demonstrators, mostly young people, entered the bank lobby. After a 15-minute stand-off with the police, they were ejected, but the bank had been successfully shut down and the blame for the crisis was placed squarely where it belongs — on the banks.

### Tuition for undocumented students under attack

On June 2 the Joint Finance Committee of the Wisconsin legislature was scheduled to discuss deep cuts to education, including a repeal of in-state tuition for undocumented students. Just two years ago in-state tuition for undocumented students was won in the state, after years of struggle led by Voces de la Frontera, a major immigrant rights group in Wisconsin.

More than 50 high school students from the Milwaukee and Racine areas who are with the youth arm of Voces, YES! (Youth Empowered in the Struggle), packed the meeting shortly before it was scheduled to begin. They were dressed in graduation gowns with signs around their necks that read "What's Next?" More than 50 other students and community members turned out for the meeting.

While the meeting was scheduled to begin at 1 p.m., the committee didn't begin the session until six hours later, around 7 p.m. It was clear this tactic was meant to wait out the immigrant rights activists and supporters, in hopes they would become frustrated and leave. The tactic failed.

Once the meeting started, Voces Executive Director Christine Neumann-Ortiz, former UW Regent

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June 4 education march and rally in Milwaukee.

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On June 4 more than 100 tents went up around the state Capitol in Madison.

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

# Virginia Commonwealth U. acknowledges African burial ground

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

The African-American community won a major victory when the Shockoe Bottom Burial Grounds for enslaved and free Africans were acknowledged as sacred ground in the historic southern city of Richmond, Va. The burial ground had been covered up by a parking lot owned by the Virginia Commonwealth University.

Activists in Richmond had demanded that the university remove the parking lot and establish a memorial in honor of the Africans buried there during the period of chattel slavery. Some reports say that Gabriel, the leader of a slave revolt plot in 1800, was hanged and buried at the site.

Ana Edwards, the chair of the Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project, and Phil Wilayto, the editor of the Virginia Defender newspaper, issued a statement saying, "After a 20-year community struggle, the parking lot itself was closed on May 21. The land was then turned over to the City of Richmond for memorialization."

Just three days after the official closing of the parking lot, city and state officials and community activists attended a ceremony on the grounds of the African burial site. The May 24 event was the culmination of a protracted struggle.

According to the Virginia Defender newspaper, "The site in question was used from approximately 1750 to 1816 as the only municipal cemetery for Black people in the Richmond area. Most of the hundreds if not thousands of people buried there were enslaved Africans or enslaved people of African descent."

The newspaper pointed out the historical significance of the burial ground for people of African descent: "Because of Richmond's central role in the internal U.S. slave trade, it is likely that millions of Black Americans could be descended from the ancestors buried there. The cemetery was abandoned and forgotten until the early 1990s, when a local historian found a reference to a 'Burial Ground for Negroes' on an old city map. Since then, many community organizations and activists have been demanding the land be reclaimed and properly memorialized."

## Significance to the history of slavery and Civil War

Virginia was the first British colony in North America where Africans were imported for the purpose of slavery, starting in August 1619. Throughout the history of slavery in the U.S., some of the most significant revolts to end the system of racial exploitation also took place in Virginia. Three of the most notable rebellions occurred there: the one in 1800 led by Gabriel in Richmond; the Nat Turner revolt of 1831 in Southampton County; and the attack on Harper's Ferry led by John Brown and Osborne Perry Anderson in 1859.

It was just 150 years ago that the U.S. Civil War began, when on April 12 President Abraham Lincoln ordered an attack on the Southern rebels at Fort Sumpter in South Carolina. At the conclusion of the war, it was the African troops fighting under the Union Army who are credited with being the first regiments to enter Richmond. The town was then set on fire by the retreating Confederate soldiers. The African troops played a central role in stabilizing Richmond amid the attacks by the retreating Confederates, who had fought for four years to preserve the slave system.

The recognition of the African burial grounds is significant in that the apologists for slavery have often attempted to revise the history of this period. By refusing to acknowledge the central role of slavery in the economic growth of the United States and as the real cause behind the Civil War of 1861-1865, the ruling class in both the South and the North seek to avoid responsibility for slavery — the horrendous crime against humanity that lasted in the British- and U.S.-controlled territory for nearly 250 years.

In recent years, the demand for reparations for stolen labor during the period of slavery has sparked contentious debates within the U.S. Typically, the white-dominated ruling class has denied reaping enormous profits through the slave system and denied slavery's role in providing the economic resources that led to the rise of industrial capitalism in Europe as well as North America.

## Activists acquitted

Several weeks prior to the memorial recognition ceremony at Shockoe Bottom, Virginia Commonwealth University had four activists — Rolandah "Cleopatra" McMillan, Donnell C. Brantley, Autumn Barrett and Phil Wilayto — arrested for blocking the entrance into the parking lot that covers the African burial ground. These four and others had taped off the entrance to the parking lot and turned cars away for an hour and a half at the entrance.

The action commemorated of the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War. The four activists were taken to court on May 25, but the charges were withdrawn.

Prior to the court hearing on May 25, some 45 people demonstrated outside the court demanding that the charges be dropped. Sixty people were present in the courtroom during the hearing that freed the activists of all charges.

Attorney Steven Benjamin, a well-known legal defense lawyer in the state of Virginia, represented the four pro bono. When the activists walked out of the courtroom in Richmond they broke into chants and cheers in celebration of another victory against Virginia Commonwealth University.

Brantley addressed the media after the hearing and called for the university to assist in the funding of the African Burial Ground's memorialization. She pledged that community activists in Richmond would continue to monitor the handling of the memorial project.

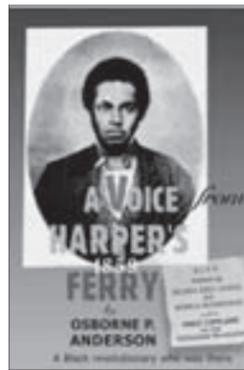
For additional information on the struggle to reclaim Shockoe Bottom, visit the Virginia Defender website at [www.defendersfje.org](http://www.defendersfje.org). □

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

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Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Technical Editor: Lal Roohk

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

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

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**National Office**  
 55 W. 17 St.  
 New York, NY 10011  
 212-627-2994  
[wwp@workers.org](mailto:wwp@workers.org)

**Atlanta**  
 P.O. Box 5565  
 Atlanta, GA 30307  
 404-627-0185  
[atlanta@workers.org](mailto:atlanta@workers.org)

**Baltimore**  
 c/o Solidarity Center  
 2011 N. Charles St.  
 Baltimore, MD 21218  
 443-909-8964  
[baltimore@workers.org](mailto:baltimore@workers.org)

**Boston**  
 284 Amory St.  
 Boston, MA 02130  
 617-522-6626  
 Fax 617-983-3836  
[boston@workers.org](mailto:boston@workers.org)

**Buffalo, N.Y.**  
 367 Delaware Ave.  
 Buffalo, NY 14202  
 716-883-2534  
[buffalo@workers.org](mailto:buffalo@workers.org)

**Chicago**  
 27 N. Wacker Dr. #138  
 Chicago, IL 60606  
[chicago@workers.org](mailto:chicago@workers.org)

**Cleveland**  
 P.O. Box 5963  
 Cleveland, OH 44101  
 216-738-0320  
[cleveland@workers.org](mailto:cleveland@workers.org)

**Denver**  
[denver@workers.org](mailto:denver@workers.org)

**Detroit**  
 5920 Second Ave.  
 Detroit, MI 48202  
 313-459-0777  
[detroit@workers.org](mailto:detroit@workers.org)

**Durham, N.C.**  
 331 W. Main St., Ste. 408  
 Durham, NC 27701  
[durham@workers.org](mailto:durham@workers.org)

**Houston**  
 P.O. Box 3454  
 Houston, TX 77253-3454  
 713-503-2633  
[houston@workers.org](mailto:houston@workers.org)

**Los Angeles**  
 1905 Rodeo Rd.  
 Los Angeles, CA 90018  
[la@workers.org](mailto:la@workers.org)  
 323-515-5870

**Milwaukee**  
[milwaukee@workers.org](mailto:milwaukee@workers.org)

**Philadelphia**  
 P.O. Box 34249  
 Philadelphia, PA 19101  
 610-931-2615  
[phila@workers.org](mailto:phila@workers.org)

**Pittsburgh**  
[pittsburgh@workers.org](mailto:pittsburgh@workers.org)

**Rochester, N.Y.**  
 585-436-6458  
[rochester@workers.org](mailto:rochester@workers.org)

**San Diego, Calif.**  
 P.O. Box 33447  
 San Diego, CA 92163  
 619-692-0355  
[sandiego@workers.org](mailto:sandiego@workers.org)

**San Francisco**  
 2940 16th St., #207  
 San Francisco CA 94103  
 415-738-4739  
[sf@workers.org](mailto:sf@workers.org)

**Tucson, Ariz.**  
[tucson@workers.org](mailto:tucson@workers.org)

**Washington, D.C.**  
 P.O. Box 57300  
 Washington, DC 20037  
[dc@workers.org](mailto:dc@workers.org)

# Geronimo ji Jaga never surrendered

By Stephen Millies

They couldn't break Geronimo ji Jaga. The FBI and Los Angeles district attorney framed the Black Panther Party leader for murder and jailed him for 27 years.

Geronimo spent eight of those years in solitary confinement, with a hole in the floor of his tiny cell serving as a toilet. He was finally released in 1999 after being exonerated of all charges.

Geronimo ji Jaga died on June 2 in Tanzania. He was born on Sept. 13, 1947, in Morgan City, La., 70 miles southwest of New Orleans.

The future revolutionary grew up with the name Elmer Pratt. He lived with six brothers and sisters in a segregated small town. His father had a small scrap metal business.

Elmer Pratt was quarterback of the Morgan City Colored High School's football team. He joined the U.S. Army and fought in Vietnam, becoming a sergeant in the 82nd Airborne. Pratt came home wounded with two purple hearts and other medals.

The Pentagon waged a dirty, racist war against the Vietnamese people. At least 3 million Vietnamese were killed. With communist leadership, Vietnam defeated Wall Street's mighty war machine.

The incredible courage and perseverance of the Vietnamese people influenced Asian, Black, Latino and Native GIs. They weren't coming home to take the same old crap.

After Vietnam, Elmer Pratt enrolled in the University of California, Los Angeles under the GI bill. He changed his name in 1968 to Geronimo in honor of the great Native American leader. Ji Jaga refers to an African people who lived in Congo.

Black revolutionaries were inspired by Native people, who never ceased fighting to be free despite centuries of genocide. Leaders of the American Indian Move-

ment said they were inspired by the Black Panther Party.

## Framed for being a revolutionary

African Americans rebelled in 200 cities after the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968. That same year Geronimo ji Jaga was recruited by Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter to the Black Panther Party.

Carter and John Huggins, leaders of the Panthers' Southern California chapter, were fatally shot in a feud with the US (United Slaves) organization, led by Ron Karenga, the originator of Kwanza. Many people believe this feud was provoked by the FBI's Cointelpro campaign against Black activists.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover attacked Dr. King. But his biggest FBI target was the Black Panther Party. Hoover hated the Panthers for spreading revolutionary consciousness while organizing the Breakfast for Children program.

At least 28 members of the Black Panther Party were killed by police. Some Panthers are still in jail today, including Marshall "Eddie" Conway in Maryland, Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa in Nebraska, and Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace in Louisiana.

A few days after Chicago Panther leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were shot to death in a hail of bullets by cops on Dec. 4, 1969, Los Angeles police attacked the local Panther headquarters.

Moving up to the second floor, Geronimo — by now the chapter's acting Minister of Defense — and the other Panthers defended themselves against police gunfire for six hours.

This was enough time for people to come into the streets to prevent the cops from killing the Panthers.

Within a month the Los Angeles FBI



Geronimo ji Jaga

office crafted a Cointelpro plot "designed to challenge the legitimacy of the authority exercised" by Geronimo ji Jaga among Black Panther Party members. Another FBI memo discussed methods to destroy Geronimo "as an effective [Panther] functionary." (Los Angeles Times, May 24, 1994)

To take Geronimo ji Jaga off the streets they framed him for the December 1968 killing of Caroline Olsen. She and her partner Kenneth were robbed and shot on a Santa Monica tennis court. Kenneth Olsen survived.

This crime resulted in lurid headlines about a white couple allegedly killed by Black perpetrators. In 1970 Geronimo was arrested for murder, despite being 350 miles away in Oakland attending Panther meetings at the time of the crime.

According to former FBI agent Wesley Swearingen, the FBI had wiretap evidence proving Geronimo ji Jaga was in the San Francisco Bay area. These wiretap logs were destroyed so Geronimo could be unjustly convicted.

The star witness against Geronimo was Julius Butler, who claimed Geronimo ji Jaga confessed to him about killing Olsen. Butler was a former Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy and FBI informer who had wormed his way into the local Pan-

ther chapter. Butler lied when he denied being an informer.

Another influential witness was Kenneth Olsen, who identified Geronimo ji Jaga as one of the shooters. But before that Olsen had identified another Black man as the culprit.

This key fact — which would have hurt Kenneth Olsen's credibility — was withheld from jurors. One of the jurors, Jeanne Hamilton, later said, "I think that alone would have changed our mind." (Los Angeles Times, May 24, 1994)

It still took the jury 10 days before agreeing to convict Geronimo, who was then sentenced to life imprisonment.

## Worldwide defense effort freed him

Geronimo never gave up despite being beaten by prison guards. He used yoga and "cellisthenics," a physical fitness program he developed, to keep healthy.

His defense lawyer, Johnnie Cochran Jr., never gave up either, calling Geronimo's case the most important in his career.

A worldwide defense effort finally flushed out the truth about the frame-up. Geronimo ji Jaga was released on June 10, 1997. Los Angeles County and the U.S. Department of Justice agreed to pay him \$4.5 million in reparations.

Geronimo spoke at the March 28, 1998, Jericho Movement demonstration in Washington, D.C., to free all political prisoners. He spoke at the Feb. 26, 1999, New York City rally at Town Hall to free Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Whenever you hear the U.S. government complain of "human rights" violations in China, remember that Geronimo ji Jaga spent as many years in jail as Nelson Mandela did in apartheid South Africa.

Long live the memories of Geronimo and Geronimo ji Jaga. □

# The Pentagon & slave labor in U.S. prisons

By Sara Flounders

*Part 1 of this article examined the use of U.S. prisoners, who are paid slave wages for their labor, to produce weapons parts for the military industrial complex. It is available at workers.org.*

It is not only federal prisons that contract out prison labor to top corporations. State prisons that used forced prison labor in plantations, laundries and highway chain gangs increasingly seek to sell prison labor to corporations trolling the globe in search of the cheapest possible labor.

One agency asks: "Are you experiencing high employee turnover? Worried about the costs of employee benefits? Unhappy with out-of-state or offshore suppliers? Getting hit by overseas competition? Having trouble motivating your workforce? Thinking about expansion space? Then Washington State Department of Corrections Private Sector Partnerships is for you." (educate-yourself.org, July 25, 2005)

Major corporations profiting from the slave labor of prisoners include Motorola, Compaq, Honeywell, Microsoft, Boeing, Revlon, Chevron, TWA, Victoria's Secret and Eddie Bauer.

IBM, Texas Instruments and Dell get circuit boards made by Texas prisoners. Tennessee inmates sew jeans for Kmart and JCPenney. Tens of thousands of youth flipping hamburgers for minimum wages at McDonald's wear uniforms sewn by prison workers, who are forced to work for much less.

In California, as in many states, prisoners who refuse to work are moved to disciplinary housing and lose canteen privileges as well as "good time" credit, which slices hard time off their sentences.

Systematic abuse, beatings, prolonged isolation and sensory deprivation, and lack of medical care make U.S. prison conditions among the worst in the world. Ironically, working under grueling conditions for pennies an hour is treated as a "perk" for good behavior.

In December, Georgia inmates went on strike and refused to leave their cells at six prisons for more than a week. In one of the largest prison protests in U.S. history, prisoners spoke of being forced to work seven days a week for no pay. Prisoners were beaten if they refused to work.

## Private prisons for profit

In the ruthless search to maximize profits and grab hold of every possible source of income, almost every public agency and social service is being outsourced to private for-profit contractors.

In the U.S. military this means there are now more private contractors and mercenaries in Iraq and Afghanistan than there are U.S. or NATO soldiers.

In cities and states across the U.S., hospitals, medical care facilities, schools, cafeterias, road maintenance, water supply services, sewage departments, sanitation, airports and tens of thousands of social programs that receive public funding are being contracted out to for-profit

corporations. Anything publicly owned and paid for by generations of past workers' taxes — from libraries to concert halls and parks — is being sold or leased at fire sale prices.

All this is motivated and lobbied for by right-wing think tanks like that set up by Koch Industries and their owners, Charles and David Koch, as a way to cut costs, lower wages and pensions, and undercut public service unions.

The most gruesome privatizations are the hundreds of for-profit prisons being established.

The inmate population in private for-profit prisons tripled between 1987 and 2007. By 2007 there were 264 such prison facilities, housing almost 99,000 adult prisoners. (house.leg.state.mn.us, Feb. 24, 2009) Companies operating such facilities include the Corrections Corporation of America, the GEO Group Inc. and Community Education Centers.

Prison bonds provide a lucrative return for capitalist investors such as Merrill-Lynch, Shearson Lehman, American Express and Allstate. Prisoners are traded from one state to another based on the most profitable arrangements.

## Militarism and prisons

Hand in hand with the military-industrial complex, U.S. imperialism has created a massive prison-industrial complex that generates billions of dollars annually for businesses and industries profiting from mass incarceration.

For decades workers in the U.S. have

been assured that they also benefit from imperialist looting by the giant multinational corporations. But today more than half the federal budget is absorbed by the costs of maintaining the military machine and the corporations who are guaranteed profits for equipping the Pentagon. That is the only budget category in federal spending that is guaranteed to increase by at least 5 percent a year — at a time when every social program is being cut to the bone.

The sheer economic weight of militarism seeps into the fabric of society at every level. It fuels racism and reaction. The political influence of the Pentagon and the giant military and oil corporations — with their thousands of high-paid lobbyists, media pundits and network of links into every police force in the country — fuels growing repression and an expanding prison population.

The military, oil and banking conglomerates, interlinked with the police and prisons, have a stranglehold on the U.S. capitalist economy and reins of political power, regardless of who is president or what political party is in office. The very survival of these global corporations is based on immediate maximization of profits. They are driven to seize every resource and source of potential profits.

Thoroughly rational solutions are proposed whenever the human and economic cost of militarism and repression is discussed. The billions spent for war and fantastically destructive weapons systems could provide five to seven times more

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**PART  
2**

# Detroit celebrates LGBTQ Pride

By Martha Grevatt  
Detroit

Since 1991 the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer community of metropolitan Detroit has held "Pridefest" in suburban Oakland County. From 2002 until last year the festival took place in the border suburb of Ferndale, which has consecutively elected two openly gay mayors and is home to the LGBTQ community center.

This year the statewide civil rights organization, Equality Michigan, decided to bring Motor City Pride to downtown Detroit. Some voices in the LGBTQ community disagreed with the move, raising the argument that Ferndale and the neighboring city of Royal Oak are where the community is based.

Others saw the return to the city as progressive. "I applaud the decision to make Pride bigger and more visible," stated Curtis Lipscomb, executive director of KICK, an agency serving LGBTQ African

Americans. "And because the LGBT community is a rainbow of people, I challenge us to remember that we are all in this movement together." (Between the Lines, June 2)

Holding the June 4-5 event at Hart Plaza — under the theme, "the Hart of the movement" — gave recognition to the fact that tens of thousands of LGBTQ people here are from African-American, Latino/a, Arab and low-income communities. In fact the rainbow did turn out for Pridefest, a record 44,000 strong.

In addition, for the first time in many years Pride activities included a well-attended "Parade for Equality." Spectators applauded as the Moratorium Now! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs marched and chanted "Racist, sexist, anti-gay, Rick Snyder go away!" Not only has Gov. Snyder pushed through anti-union and anti-poor legislation, but he has also opposed health benefits for domestic partners of state workers. □

## TOP 10 REASONS

### Why I, Mitt Romney, feel I must run for president

1. President Obama hesitates far too long before giving Wall Street bankers everything they ask for. As a man of action, I will not hesitate.
2. Although I'm not quite the reactionary, racist bigot that Sarah Palin is, I'm enough of one.
3. In Massachusetts I stood up to the health care industry and only did 98 percent of what they told me to do.
4. My God, *someone* has got to stop the unions — aside from Wall Street, the corporate media, the cops, the courts and, if necessary, the National Guard. I can be that someone.
5. I will cut all entitlements. But since the bank CEOs weren't really entitled to their multibillion-dollar bonuses in the first place, these aren't entitlements and shouldn't be cut.
6. We're fighting too many wars! Instead of waging wars against Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan, my administration would just wage one general war against workers and oppressed here and abroad.
7. It's wrong when reports say that .01 percent of the population owns 40 percent of the wealth. This is a private matter and no one's business.
8. I think that Medicare for seniors should be replaced by a program that recognizes that, no matter what we do, death is inevitable.
9. Taxes should be from earned income. Since the super-rich don't actually *earn* their income, it shouldn't be taxed.
10. Jobs? The problem with unemployment is that wages are too high. I'm not exactly saying we should go there, but there was full employment under different forms of slavery, wasn't there?

Email: [pwilcox@workers.org](mailto:pwilcox@workers.org)

## To defend schools, immigrants

# Wisconsin youth, workers turn Capitol into tent city

Continued from page 1

and immigrant rights activist Jesus Salas, Milwaukee Public School Board Director Larry Miller, and Racine Education Association member and high school teacher Al Levie stood up and began reading a statement condemning the committee for attempting to eliminate in-state tuition for undocumented students and impose deep cuts on public education. They were all carried out of the meeting by state police and other cops.

For the next hour, various people, young and older, stood up and began reading from the statement, effectively shutting the meeting down. Young people in the crowd also led chants that rocked the room.

More than 30 people were hauled out of the meeting, including Lee Abbott, past co-president of the Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association-American Federation of Teachers at UW-Milwaukee. The following day, when the committee met again, Voces packed the meeting and organized another disruption. Similar numbers of people were removed from that meeting.

### Mass march demands: Hands off public education!

On June 4 a coalition of organizations, including Voces, YES!, Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing,

Milwaukee Teachers Education Association, NAACP and many others, led a spirited, multinational march in Milwaukee against proposed \$1.6 billion cuts to K-12 public education in Walker's 2011-13 budget proposal. Walker is also proposing another \$250 million cut to the UW system and the deepest cuts ever for the Wisconsin technical college system.

The crowd marched from Milwaukee's North Side through the South Side, both predominately Black and Latino/a areas. Students, unionists, teachers and community members participated in the demonstration, which drew several thousand people into the streets.

Denis Montero, a student at Milwaukee Area Technical College and an organizer with YES!, helped lead the youth contingent, which included members of FIST and UWM Occupied. The contingent's energy and militancy were high.

"The march showed the power of the people, the power of the community coming together in this struggle [against the] attack on the working class. These poli-



June 4 education march and rally in Milwaukee.

WW PHOTO: BRYAN PFEIFER

tics are pushing back progress," said Montero. "This march showed that all of these struggles in our community are connected. Our struggle is against injustice, and it is up to the people coming together to push forward progress."

The June 4 march was led by Vel Phillips and others who participated in 1967-era battles for open housing. Phillips was the first Black woman to graduate from the UW-Madison law school, the first woman judge in Milwaukee, the first African-American judge in Wisconsin, and the first woman and first person of color elected Secretary of State in Wisconsin.

Many organizers drew the powerful connection between the Civil Rights and Black Freedom struggles in the 1960s with the struggle against the attacks being waged on working class and oppressed communities today. The march crossed the 16th Street Bridge, a site of historic civil rights marches, on a street that was recently renamed after farmworker organizer Cesar Chavez.

### 'Walkerville' opens in Madison

Taking a page from the youth of Spain, who have been taking over squares and setting up encampments against unemployment and austerity, and the "Hoovervilles" that sprang up during the Great Depression, people again descended on Madison to begin a tent city occupation until the budget is passed. The new tent

city's name: "Walkerville."

On June 4 more than 100 tents went up around the state Capitol. The AFSCME, Service Employees union, Teaching Assistants Association-AFT at UW-Madison, Wisconsin AFL-CIO, UWM Occupied, Bail Out the People Movement, Wisconsin Resists, Wisconsin Wave, Workers World Party and many others pitched tents, visited the encampment, dropped off supplies and/or distributed their literature. Many unaffiliated young people and community members joined the occupation.

Jeremy Kowalski, a member of UWM Occupied, said, "The state capitol is the battleground right now; it always has been. I love the community here in the tent city and being right in the heart of all the action."

Organizers plan to maintain a 24-hour presence at the state Capitol, using the tent city as a staging ground for actions and rallies to intervene as the draconian, racist, sexist budget makes its way through the legislature. Demonstrations are planned for every day around a different aspect of the public sector. For instance, on June 5 the Madison K-12 teachers' union staged a rally of several hundred teachers against the cuts. On the weekend of June 10-12 union members and students from UW-Milwaukee will board at least one bus and camp out for the weekend.

Various organizations have discussed the possibility of broadening the tent city beyond Madison and erecting encampments in Milwaukee and other cities around the state. However the struggle develops over the next few weeks, the occupation itself is a significant and important step forward, demonstrating the fierce spirit of struggle and the righteous indignation at the system that is bubbling across the state.

For more information, visit [www.wisafclcio.org](http://www.wisafclcio.org); [www.wisafclcio.typepad.com](http://www.wisafclcio.typepad.com); [www.vdlf.org](http://www.vdlf.org); [www.defendwisconsin.org](http://www.defendwisconsin.org); and [www.bailoutpeople.org](http://www.bailoutpeople.org).

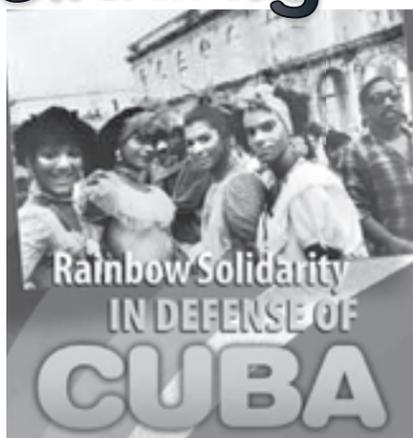
Ben Carroll, a member of FIST and Workers World Party from North Carolina, is in Wisconsin participating in the people's rebellion.

## Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA

Leslie Feinberg, author of *Stone Butch Blues*

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## ON THE PICKET LINE

By Sue Davis

### N.J. public workers rally to defend benefits

Thousands of public workers in many cities in New Jersey rallied May 31 and June 1 against brutal health care cuts and attacks on union rights proposed by anti-union Gov. Chris Christie. Kicking off the "Solidarity Tour for Bargaining Rights and Budget Fairness" at Camden City Hall, civil rights leader Jesse Jackson urged state workers to stand firm against the "toxic wind" that is blowing across the country. "Workers are being dumped on as if you are the reason we're in an economic crisis," he said. "You must not let this governor break your spirit." Jackson accused Christie of hypocrisy for blaming the state's budget deficit on workers while cutting taxes for the rich and for recently using a state police helicopter to take him to a son's baseball game.

Sponsors of the Solidarity Tour included the New Jersey AFL-CIO, New Jersey Black Issues Convention, NAACP, Latino Action Network, Black clergy and many individual unions, including the Communication Workers. (CWA report, June 3)

### Brooklyn hosp. workers protest loss of health coverage

Working in one of Brooklyn's poorest neighborhoods, about 3,400 workers at Brookdale University Hospital have lost health care coverage because the hospital has fallen behind in payments to the workers' benefits fund, claims United Healthcare Workers East, Service Employees Local 1199. So between 400 and 500 workers — nurses, maintenance staff, clerical workers and others — protested in the hospital lobby on May 26, while community members supported them with a picket line outside.

Local 1199 has charged the hospital, which is embroiled in a corruption scandal and is \$23 million in arrears, with violating the local's collective bargaining agreement. (New York Times, May 27)

### Target workers unionizing in NYC area

Think Target has a good reputation as an employer, compared to Wal-Mart? Not anymore. Workers at the Valley Stream store in Long Island, N.Y., sought out the Food and Commercial Workers union because many say they can't raise a family on their wages and they can't afford health insurance. They have to rely on food stamps and Medicaid for their children.

UFCW has now been organizing 5,000 workers at 28 Target stores in the New York City area. The majority of workers at the Valley Stream store have already signed cards choosing UFCW representation; a government-supervised election will be held on June 17. Stay tuned. (New York Times, May 24)

### Hershey: stop child labor in cocoa fields

Concerned chocolate lovers unite! Hershey, one of the biggest U.S. producers of chocolate candy, continues to buy cocoa that is not endorsed by Fair Trade Certification, which works to end child labor, forced labor, trafficking and other labor rights abuses. The International Labor Rights Forum ([www.labor-rights.org](http://www.labor-rights.org)) has called a protest at 10:30 a.m. at the Hershey's store in Times Square on June 8 to ask Hershey to "raise the bar" and start using FTC cocoa. The rally is co-sponsored by Global Exchange and Green America. ([www.change.org](http://www.change.org), June 1)

### Conn. mandates paid sick leave for service workers

On June 4 Connecticut became the first state to mandate paid sick leave for hundreds of thousands of service workers. Now between 200,000 and 400,000 service workers — wait staff, cashiers, fast-food cooks, hair stylists, security guards and nursing home aides — who receive an hourly wage and work for employers with more than 50 staff will be able to earn one hour of leave for every 40 hours worked, with a cap of five days a year. Only San Francisco and Washington, D.C., have similar laws, though such legislation is pending in Philadelphia and Seattle.

The June 5 New York Times noted that, according to the National Partnership for Women and Families, more than 40 million U.S. workers do not have a single paid sick day. There is something very wrong with this picture!

### Sanitation workers in NYC vindicated

Sanitation workers were accused of intentionally slowing down snow removal during a holiday blizzard last year in New York City. But a report, issued June 3 by the city's Department of Investigation, exonerated the workers, totally debunking the accusation of anti-union City Councilperson Daniel J. Halloran. (New York Times, June 4)

WW thinks Halloran should be made to publicly apologize to Teamsters Local 831 for slandering its members' good name. □

# Police racism sparks wildcat taxi strike

By Caleb T. Maupin

Ahmed Deraz was driving to the New Liberty Airport in Newark, N.J., on June 3 around 2:45 p.m. His driving angered Jersey City Police Lt. Pietro Veltre, who was driving an unmarked car with his spouse and infant child and who claims that Deraz cut him off on the Pulaski Skyway. Veltre followed Deraz for eight miles, until Deraz stopped at the airport.

Veltre then reached inside Deraz's car, pulled his keys out, and shouted a slew of profanity and racist obscenities, including a call for Deraz to "go back to your [expletive] country." (nj.com, June

3) Deraz says that after Veltre pushed him in the face, the cop arrested him for a list of offenses, including "assault on a police officer." He was taken into custody. (myfoxny.com, June 3)

In response, 600 of Deraz's fellow cab drivers went on strike. The New York Post reported that taxi service was not available at the busy international airport for five hours. The Newark Taxi Association made clear that it had no role in planning the action, which was initiated solely by the drivers.

One striking cab driver, Paulins Halaire, expressed his out-



Newark, N.J., airport taxi drivers wouldn't pick up fares until the police released a coworker.

rage, saying, "They don't have any respect for us." (nj.com, June 3) According to the Star-Ledger, police on the scene described the event as a near riot.

When Deraz was finally released, the taxi drivers celebrated, and at 8 p.m., cab service resumed. Deraz still faces charges from the incident. □

## Bronx activists:

# 'Defeat Bloomberg cutbacks!'

By Tony Murphy  
Bronx, N.Y.

As workers face mass layoffs, pension theft and cutbacks of every kind, people protest with greater frequency. With the New York City budget up for debate in the City Council this June, these protests are starting to come together.

New York's billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg is proposing to eliminate 6,000 teachers' jobs. He'll shut down more than 20 schools, along with 20 fire houses and more than 20 hospitals. He'll cut \$100 million from public libraries. His budget slashes child-care and senior services and housing subsidies, and it eliminates thousands of city workers' jobs.

On June 4 leaders and members of several Bronx and northern Manhattan organizations held an Action Assembly to plan resistance to the mayor's banker, anti-people budget. The meeting was the first of several action assemblies called by New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts. Others are planned for Manhattan's Lower East Side on June 10, Brooklyn on June 11 and Staten Island on June 14.

The question taken up by these assemblies is simple: how to stop Bloomberg's disastrous budget of

layoffs and cutbacks, which will be voted on sometime this month. The Bronx assembly came up with a bold answer: Go to the June 14 public employees' rally at City Hall and — taking a page from the inspiring public square occupations from Egypt to Wisconsin to Spain — stay there until the budget is either voted down or stopped.

Whether the goal of stopping Bloomberg's banker budget is successful or not, the assembly members vowed to continue the campaign so that it grows into a larger anti-austerity movement and People's Assembly later this year.

All this is happening as the federal government is holding the gun of the "debt ceiling" deadline to the people's head in order to extort another \$1 trillion in cuts, which include cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and public employee pensions. In New York state, Gov. Andrew Cuomo got the State Assembly and Senate to pass a similar budget: cutting taxes for the corporations and the rich while drastically slashing education, social services and the public sector in general.

Of course, there was no "ceiling" when the federal government handed Wall Street banks and firms \$12 trillion to back up the money they gambled away. Now that the economy has stalled and production is down, the same Wall Street crooks need more money to play with — so they're coming after pensions and social programs.

### Bronx Action Assembly unites against cutbacks

The leaders in the Bronx Action Assembly took a major step against this onslaught of cutbacks on June 4 by bringing their various organizations together under one roof. Representatives from groups such as the People Power Movement, Bail Out the People Movement, Picture the Homeless, The Freedom Party, Students United-CUNY, Coalition for Public Education, South Bronx Community Congress, CASA and members of several public sector unions — all

came together to fuse their separate struggles into a broader campaign against cutbacks.

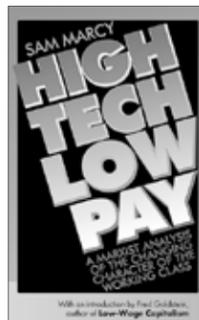
Mark Torres, a teacher and a leader in the People Power Movement, told the assembly about Fight Back Friday, an anti-school-closings movement he plans to expand into a campaign for greater popular control of schools. Referring to Bloomberg's "mayoral control" of the city's schools — which the mayor has used to push an anti-union, charter-school agenda — Torres said, "Mayoral control of schools is nothing but a dictatorship."

Another assembly participant, Johnnie Stevens, a member of Parents to Improve School Transportation — PIST — told Workers World that the NAACP and United Federation of Teachers had filed a joint suit recently against the growth of union-busting charter schools.

Each assembly speaker, whether from the postal workers union, student struggles or homeless organizations, spoke about how their particular struggle could play a role in this month's showdown against Bloomberg's cuts.

On June 3 some 15,000 firefighters marched across the Brooklyn Bridge. This came after a series of separate but significant New York demonstrations this spring: On March 24, New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts held a rally and march on Wall Street that gathered 5,000 people, many from American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees unions. Thousands joined the April 9 "We Are One" demonstration in Times Square, and 10,000 joined the May 1 convergence of union and immigrant workers. The May 12 Wall Street march brought out 20,000, including thousands of teachers.

With the May 12 organizers, now called Beyond May 12, supporting the call of NYABC to stop Bloomberg's cuts, a more unified movement — one that can possibly stop the banker's budget in its tracks — is now growing. □



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## Climate &amp; planning

# The other crisis that is undermining capitalism

Tuscaloosa, Ala., April 28.



By Deirdre Griswold

The ink wasn't even dry on last week's Workers World article dealing with climate change when tornadoes swept through western Massachusetts on June 1, killing at least three people and devastating more than 20 communities.

Scientists can't say if a particular storm or set of storms was caused by global warming. Massachusetts has experienced tornadoes before, although rarely. But what scientists are saying with certainty is that the planet is heating up, that warmer temperatures cause more precipitation in some areas and drought in others, and that the frequency and severity of storms has been increasing.

There is also no doubt that the rise in temperatures is due to human burning of fossil fuels, which causes greenhouse gases (GHGs) to collect in the atmosphere and trap heat that otherwise would radiate away from the earth.

## Three decades of conferences

These facts have been known or suspected for decades. The First World Climate Conference was held in February 1979 in Geneva, sponsored by the World Meteorological Organization of the United Nations. Nine years later the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was set up to centralize data and issue reports to inform the public on what was happening.

That was followed in 1992 by the creation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at what became known as the Earth Summit. In the almost two decades since then, the parties to the UNFCCC have held annual meetings. The data presented there have shown that the process of climate change is moving much faster than originally anticipated. But no binding agreement on

reducing GHGs has been reached among the member nations.

The main obstacle has been the imperialist U.S. government. In March 2001, President George W. Bush rejected the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement that set very modest limits on GHGs and had been signed in 1992 by his father, the first President Bush.

When Barack Obama was elected in 2008, there was hope among climate activists that this would put the U.S. back on track to cooperate with a world agreement to reduce GHGs. But that was blown out of the water in 2009 at the 15th Climate Change Conference, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, a gathering that aroused great hope and was attended by ministers and officials from 192 countries. Obama himself went there and blocked the conference from issuing a binding resolution

that world scientists had labored over for months and that would have taken effect after the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012.

Thus, it was with a sense of great frustration and even desperation that Bolivia in April 2010 hosted a World People's Summit on Climate Change and Mother Earth Rights. It reaffirmed the damage being done to the environment, especially in countries oppressed by neocolonial capitalism, and called for respecting the rights of the earth. Some 15,000 people attended from all over.

It needs to be understood that even if GHG emissions were right now to be cut to nothing, the planet would continue to warm for quite a while because of the persistence of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. And the chain effects of that would continue to be felt for centuries. (IPCC, "The Long-Term Perspective," 2007)

There are two urgent needs, immediate and long-term: 1) to prepare for the consequences of sea-level rise and more extreme weather, both of which are sure to come, and 2) to reorganize human life and activity on this planet so GHGs can be reduced to a level where the earth's temperature and climate can eventually recover some equilibrium.

The first reaction to such a daunting prospect is likely to be despair. If the huge inequities in the world can't be righted, and are only getting worse, what hope is there that the governments of the rich imperialist countries, the ones responsible for the vast majority of the GHGs emitted over the last two centuries, will shoulder the burden of rectifying global warming and rebuild their societies accordingly?

No, there is no chance of that happening. The capitalist governments are already in chaos over the irrational workings of their economic system, and won't even address the severe social problems of unemployment, ballooning health costs and the education crisis.

Prepare better shelters for when a deadly storm strikes? Build sturdy homes for the millions who live in flimsy trailers and substandard housing? Build a mass transit system that would reduce auto emissions? All these things — and much

more — need to be done. And there are plenty of people looking for work who would love to do them. But that won't happen — not under capitalism.

## Think outside the box

This article is not meant to belittle the many struggles that environmentally conscious people are engaging in to ameliorate the effects of global warming. Rather, it is to get all of us to think outside the box.

The box is this profit system. It is self-perpetuating, even when it's in crisis, until a force emerges strong enough to oust the super-rich class of property owners from their seats of economic and political power.

And that force is the working class and all those oppressed by capitalism. It is the only force able to paralyze the system just by withholding its labor — as seen recently in microcosm in Wisconsin and much bigger during the Great Depression of the 1930s, when the workers fought tooth and nail to build industrial unions and there was a great leap forward in progressive consciousness on all social questions.

The multinational working class, especially in the imperialist countries, is being walloped by the capitalist bosses and the state and is starting to fight back. It is in the process of painfully developing its own world view, one in solidarity with the workers and oppressed peoples of the planet. Internationalism of the workers is absolutely crucial in this time of a global network of exploitation created by the

transnational banks and corporations.

The environmental movement is also being walloped. It needs to develop class consciousness, to identify clearly the root cause of this problem: capitalism. It needs to understand that the super-rich will never become its partners in facing up to the GHG crisis.

Private property divorces the owners of the means of production from the harmful consequences of their productive processes. When the factories, the mines and most of the infrastructure of society are owned and operated to produce maximum profits for a few, then "social responsibility" is just a charade, a cover-up, the spending of a few dollars on look-good projects to hide the fact that the major decisions are calculated to increase the bottom line. And that bottom line leaves out the costs to society. Global warming is one of those costs.

It is a huge problem and can only be truly solved by planning on a mass scale. For planning like that to happen, there will have to be a social revolution. The workers and their allies will have to take over the means of production and operate them on an entirely new basis: not to produce profits for the few, but to meet the needs of the many, including the need to have a sustainable, healthy world.

A tall order? Yes. But capitalism is in crisis and social revolution is more and more on people's minds. The Bolivia conference showed that. It's time for climate activists in the U.S. to think outside the box of capitalism. □

**PART  
2**

## Pentagon & slave labor in U.S. prisons

Continued from page 3

jobs if spent on desperately needed social services, education and rebuilding essential infrastructure. Or it could provide free university education, considering the fact that it costs far more to imprison people than to educate them.

Why aren't such reasonable solutions ever chosen? Military contracts generate far larger guaranteed profits to the military and the oil industries, which have a decisive influence on the U.S. economy.

The prison-industrial complex — including the prison system, prison labor, private prisons, police and repressive apparatus, and their continuing expansion — are a greater source of profit and are reinforced by the climate of racism and reaction. Most rational and socially useful solutions are not considered viable options. □

"With the capitalist system demonstrably unfair, it is useful, indeed refreshing, to see a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on working people. Fred Goldstein does exactly that."

—Howard Zinn, author of  
*A People's History of the United States*

## Low-Wage Capitalism

Fred Goldstein

Colossus with feet of clay:  
What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

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## Zelaya returns to Honduras

# The struggle continues

By Heather Cottin

More than 1 million Hondurans welcomed “Mel” Zelaya back to the land from which he was kidnapped during a U.S.-sanctioned military coup on June 28, 2009. He arrived at Tegucigalpa’s Toncontin airport on May 28.

The return of Manuel Zelaya Rosales, the democratically elected president of Honduras, was facilitated by the Cartagena Accord, which guaranteed his safety and legitimized the Front for the National Popular Resistance of Honduras (FNRP).

Zelaya has come home to a very different Honduras. The resistance movement did not exist two years ago. Now it is an organized force in every department and city. Honduras is still the poorest country in Central America, and its population is still predominantly made up of peasants. However, one of the most sophisticated and fearless resistance movements in the Americas has developed there. It was this movement that brought Zelaya home.

Hundreds of thousands of Zelaya’s supporters gathered to hear him speak on May 28 in “Isis Obed Murillo Square,” as the Honduran Resistance has named it. Zelaya spoke at the spot where soldiers assassinated 19-year-old Isis Obed Murillo in the first weeks of the fascist coup. Murillo is considered the first martyr of the resistance movement.

“We must pay homage to those we’ve lost in this struggle, to those who offered their lives,” said Zelaya. (Real News Network, June 3)

Since the coup nearly two years ago, and during the regime of Honduran President Porfirio Lobo Sosa, more than 200 Hondurans have been assassinated. More than 4,000 cases of human rights violations

have been documented between June 2009 and the end of 2010, according to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. (Inter Press Service, May 30)

Lobo came to power in an illegal, fraudulent election held under the auspices of Roberto Micheletti’s government and backed by the U.S. Micheletti had been named the de facto president after the golpistas (coup plotters) kidnapped Zelaya and sent him into exile. The Organization of American States cast out Honduras from the organization six days after the coup.

### Why and how Zelaya returned

The plan to repatriate Zelaya was in part an attempt to short-circuit the Honduran Resistance movement. The United States sought to get Honduras back into the OAS. Diplomatic efforts among Colombia’s President Juan Manuel Santos, Venezuela’s President Hugo Chávez and Lobo resulted in the Cartagena Accord, which cleared the way for Zelaya’s return.

On June 1, four days after Zelaya returned, Honduras was allowed back into the OAS, even though the forces that engineered the coup were never tried or held responsible for their actions — normally a requirement for readmission of a government into the OAS. (IPS, June 3) Ecuador pointed out the impunity of the coup plotters when it opposed the reintegration of Honduras into the OAS; it was the only country to do so.

The Cartagena Accord, said Zelaya, “opens the gates of ALBA [the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas trade agreement] for Honduras,” a reference to his attempt to join ALBA, which both Lobo and Micheletti opposed.

Yet Zelaya provided legitimacy for the

Lobo government when he said, “If the government recognizes the rights to the people, President Lobo will be acknowledging the democratic rights that have been violated, and then the international community has the obligation to recognize the rights of the President [Lobo] and his government.” (Infolatam/Efe Tegucigalpa, May 28)

In fact, under the Cartagena Accord, the assassins, torturers and rapists of the Micheletti and Lobo regimes have immunity from prosecution. As Lobo said on June 1, after Honduras was readmitted to the OAS, “We have created a Secretariat of Human Rights and Justice, and in this government we are not going to persecute anyone. Let’s turn the page and look towards the future.” (Global Issues, June 3)

The Lobo and U.S. governments seek to steer the Resistance away from revolutionary struggle, but this will prove difficult.

Bertha Oliva of the Committee of Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared in Honduras welcomed Zelaya’s return, but said, “We do not see any indications of how and when those responsible for the crimes against humanity committed during and after the coup will be punished.” (IPS, May 30) She further commented on June 3, “There is a feeling that the OAS allowed Honduras to return without taking into account the state of human rights, and we hope this will not fuel the impunity that surrounds human rights crimes.” (IPS)

More than 20 human rights organizations signed a statement opposing the readmission of Honduras into the OAS. Signers include groups representing jurists, women, members of Indigenous and Afro-Honduran communities, and lesbians, gay, bi, transgender and queer people. (www.cejil.org)



Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on May 28.

On May 27 the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH), the country’s main Indigenous coalition, pledged to “deepen all our efforts at denouncing the criminal dictatorship led by Porfirio Lobo Sosa. We will not forget. We will not forgive, and we will not reconcile.” (Europa Press, May 19; Honduras Culture and Politics, May 24, May 27)

COPINH denounced the Lobo regime’s repression — the killings of activists and journalists, the massacres of peasants, the disappearances, the brutal evictions, the militarization of Indigenous communities and the privatization projects “for the benefit of the oligarchy and transnational capital.” (Vos el Soberano, June 2)

Zelaya’s return is a great victory for the people. However, the Honduran Resistance will not stop. The FNRP is organizing a National Constituyente, a plan to restructure Honduran society and reapportion their national resources. The people need clean water, jobs, education, health care, decent housing and justice. They will accept nothing less. They are organized everywhere and they aren’t going anywhere. □

## DETROIT Autoworkers’ meeting builds solidarity with workers in Latin America

By Martha Grevatt  
Detroit

An important meeting took place on June 4 at Solidarity House, the headquarters of the United Auto Workers. For the first time here, about 60 UAW staff, officers and rank-and-file members learned about and discussed the dire situation facing workers in Honduras and Colombia.

Gail Presbey, director of the Carney Latin American Solidarity Archive and a professor at University of Detroit Mercy, reported on her recent trip to Honduras in a delegation sponsored by School of the Americas Watch. She opened her presentation with two photos: one of overthrown President Manuel Zelaya; the other of President Porfirio Lobo Sosa shaking hands with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Presbey explained that Washington opposed Zelaya because he had tripled the minimum wage and was favoring peasants against rich landowners, while Lobo is rejected by most Hondurans. With Zelaya out, the Pentagon wants to increase the number of U.S. military bases in Honduras from one to three.

Under Zelaya, Honduras had also decided to stop sending members of its military to the School of the Americas in Ft. Benning, Ga., for training. In Honduras, Colombia and much of Latin America, the

paramilitaries, police and military who terrorize workers have received “counter-insurgency” training at the SOA. For 20 years SOA Watch has been protesting every year outside the school’s gates, demanding this terrorist training school be shut down.

The focus of Presbey’s talk was on the heroic resistance of Honduran teachers, who have been holding mass protests against the privatization of public education. Teachers have been shot to death. One teacher died after she was hit by a tear gas canister and, while on the ground choking from the gas, was deliberately run over by a car.

A current strike in Honduras against privatization has 98 percent participation, and some teachers are on hunger strike. The government has suspended 300 teachers and threatened another 5,000 with suspension. When college students demonstrated in solidarity with the teachers, they were gassed and forced to retreat to the presumed sanctuary of the campus; there the police beat them.

An audience member pointed out that the company hired to develop the privatization plan in Honduras is working to dismantle public schools in Detroit — after having achieved the same goal in post-Hurricane-Katrina New Orleans.

The meeting also featured Gerardo Cajamarca, who is the U.S. representative of Sinaltrainal, the food and beverage union

of Colombia. Cajamarca fled the death squad terror in his country in 2004 and, with the assistance of the Steelworkers union, gained political asylum in the U.S.

### Colombian unionist speaks

Cajamarca described the horrible suffering of the Colombian working class. In a country of 44 million people, 2.5 million children are working, many for U.S. transnational corporations. Ten million people have been displaced from their land. Corporations such as Coca-Cola, Chiquita and Occidental Petroleum employ right-wing paramilitaries to terrorize workers who are trying to unionize. Chiquita publicly admitted giving \$2 million to the paramilitaries, along with 5,000 bullets. More than 3,000 union activists have been assassinated over the past 25 years, with 51 killings in the past year alone.

Cajamarca charged the Colombian government, which has allowed the death squads to function with impunity, with “genocide” and “systematic terrorism” against the unions as well as the Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities that have been forced off their traditional lands.

Cajamarca spoke at length on the need to defeat the proposed U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. When the agreement was negotiated between U.S. President George Bush and Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, the Colombian Congress rati-

fied the treaty. According to Cajamarca, 44 percent of those congresspeople had ties to the paramilitaries. “We have death squads making laws that Obama says we have to sign,” Cajamarca stated. “A Nobel Peace Prize winner wants to ratify agreements signed by terrorists.”

The meeting’s sponsor, UAW Friends of SOA Watch, brought Cajamarca to Detroit for several reasons. One was to build a Coca-Cola boycott, which is officially supported by the UAW. Eight Coca-Cola workers in Colombia have been assassinated in an attempt to intimidate Sinaltrainal supporters. Coca-Cola workers in other countries have met a similar fate.

During the discussion, a rank-and-file Ford worker described how, after Cajamarca addressed her union meeting earlier that day, the members voted overwhelmingly to ban Coca-Cola products at their hall and work to make the plant Coca-Cola-free.

The UAW Friends of SOA Watch also hopes to broaden labor support for the struggle to “stop killing our sisters and brothers” and to send a busload of Detroit labor activists to the annual protest at SOA gates next November.

UAW Civil and Human Rights Director Miguel Foster, Steelworkers Sub-Regional Director Al Cholger, and retired UAW International Representative Frank Hammer addressed the meeting as well. □

## GREECE, SPAIN

## European workers battle bankers' attack

By John Catalinotto

Some 80,000 people marched down the streets to Syntagma Square in Athens, Greece, on June 5 on the 12th straight day of protests emulating the uprising of youth in Spain. In Greece organized struggles over the past 18 months have also included general strikes led by the PAME labor confederation.

In Puerta del Sol, Madrid, a meeting of people representing the encampments or occupations of main squares in 56 cities in the Spanish state since May 15 called for organizing mass mobilizations on June 11 and 19. They also urged that decisions on continuing the occupations be made locally.

In both countries the actions targeted austerity programs and intervention in the national economies by the "Troika": the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission.

These issues were also central to Portugal's June 5 national election. The ruling "Socialist Party" — socialist in name only — had been imposing the Troika's austerity on the workers.

The election results were easy to predict. As in Spain's May 22 local elections, there were many abstentions in Portugal — 41 percent plus 4 percent blank votes, with many voters defecting from the SP. The Communist Party's electoral coalition made small gains. The "Social Democrats" — really a rightist party — will lead the new right-wing coalition government, and have promised an even harsher application of anti-worker austerity.

These countries have relatively weak economies in the euro zone, as do Ireland and Iceland. The worldwide economic crisis, which began in 2007 with the housing price and financial collapse and which was



Protest in Syntagma Square in Athens, Greece, on June 5.

then exacerbated by austerity programs, has led to official unemployment rates ranging from 13 percent in Portugal to 15 percent in Ireland, 16 percent in Greece and 21 percent in Spain. Workers are also reeling from cuts in government services and generally lower wages and pensions.

#### Austerity aimed at aiding banks

The Troika goals are not to help the people, but to prevent these countries from defaulting on their payments to the big banks that loaned them money in the first place, as well as maintain the strength of the euro.

These financial bodies offer loans with strings attached so that the banks — which are based in the more powerful countries like France and Germany — will be repaid on schedule. To qualify, the administrations have to cut their national budgets and privatize government assets. In every case this means cutting social benefits to the working class, hiring fewer government workers, slowing the economy and increasing unemployment. Increased unemployment leads to lower wages.

Reports in the capitalist media give the impression that the Troika is "aiding" the

countries in economic trouble and their people. This is as far from the truth as the lie that NATO is bombing Libya to protect its civilians. Indeed, the Troika is waging war on the working class of Europe, forcing wages and social benefits downward in order to assure loan payments to the rich and powerful banks.

The Troika is intervening in the peripheral countries of Europe much as the IMF did with its "structural adjustment programs" in Asia, Africa and Latin America. It robs the countries of sovereign control of their economies by imposing austerity programs and demanding privatizations, while holding the club of refusing new loans.

Something similar happens within the United States. Financial institutions, through undemocratic government bodies, have taken over the running of city and even state budgets to assure the repayment of loans and bonds to the banks. It is another tactic in waging class war against the workers and especially against cities with a majority African-American or Latino/a population and administration.

#### The Greek experience

In May 2010 the ECB and the IMF

came up with the first "bailout" of Greece. The 110 billion euros loan (currently worth about U.S. \$155 billion) was aimed at paying the banks and propping up the euro. In return — and despite a series of general strikes — the government imposed cuts in benefits, government layoffs, etc.

While the austerity did much to harm the workers in Greece, it did nothing to stabilize that country's debt payments. Now, a year later, the Troika is back offering another loan. And Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou on June 6 offered a program to cut another 6.4 billion euros from the budget. It's another blow aimed at the workers on behalf of the big banks.

According to the June 6 International Business Times, "Eurozone finance ministers must also approve Greece's new budget — international lenders have demanded that Athens speed up its public sector job reductions and privatization scheme to raise 50 billion euros by the end of 2015." The government must also sell off an additional 10 percent of the national Telecom firm so that, at the end, Deutsche Telecom will own 40 percent.

A mass uprising confronting the economic crisis has flared up around the world, from Tahrir Square in Cairo — where, combined with workers' strikes, it removed the dictator — to the Capitol in Madison, Wis., to Puerta del Sol in Madrid and Syntagma Square in Athens. In Greece, due to the class-struggle-oriented leadership of PAME and the strong role of the Communist Party (KKE) in the resistance to austerity, there is the best opportunity to date in Europe to join the youth uprising to organized workers' struggles.

But whatever the outcome of an individual skirmish, it is apparent that this class battle won't end soon. □

## An appeal to WW readers

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

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

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

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



WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

#### You, our readers, can help

We are asking you to help keep this newspaper going by donating to the WW/MO Spring Fund Drive. Our goal is to raise \$60,000.

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WW PHOTO

# YEMEN Saleh forced to leave: What next?

By G. Dunkel

Before dawn broke June 5, as the news spread that Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh had left for medical treatment in Saudi Arabia, fireworks filled the sky. As one Yemeni blogger put it, the party started at 6 a.m. To celebrate, people sacrificed cows and goats in "Change Square," the site of the large encampment that had been peacefully pressuring Saleh to leave for the last four months.

One woman in a burqa explained to Reuters, "This is the best Eid we have ever had with Saleh leaving." Eid, used here figuratively, is the Muslim festival marking the end of Ramadan.

The forces loyal to Saleh had launched eight hours of retaliatory attacks June 4 on the home of the al-Ahmar family, which has been directing the tribally based, armed opposition from the Hashid confederation against Saleh.

The June 5 Yemeni Times speculated that the attack on Saleh was an "inside job." The June 5 New York Times published a report that the "precision of the

strike and its timing — just as the officials arrived for prayers" supports the contention that some inside information about what Saleh was doing had been given to one of his opponents.

An "inside job," otherwise known as an assassination attempt, would mean that Saleh has lost the confidence and support of some of his close collaborators.

Even though Saleh has left, along with some of his closest supporters, his sons and nephews still retain their security and military posts. According to a June 6 NPR report, there was renewed fighting in the capital, Sana'a, with six casualties.

The big bourgeois media like the New York Times, the Washington Post, CNN and the Wall Street Journal are all concentrating on the role of Saudi Arabia's very small, hereditary ruling class, which has been financially supporting reactionary sheiks and local rulers in Yemen for decades (see the book "Yemen: Dancing on the Heads of Snakes"). They're also focusing what the U.S. is doing to arrive at a "stable" arrangement between the competing tribes and the various, competing

dissident factions in the army.

The fact that U.S. Ambassador Gerald Feierstein met Yemen's Vice President Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi while the celebrations of Saleh's departure were still going on was widely reported. What they talked about wasn't revealed.

## U.S. & Saudi Arabia cooperate in Yemen

According to the May 12 Yemen Times, the Yemen Human Rights Network reported earlier in May that "2009 and 2010 witnessed huge external interventions in Yemen by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the USA, which developed into direct military action that killed Yemeni citizens, all under the pretext of fighting Al-Qaeda and curbing the Houthi movement."

Thousands of protesters in Yemen's industrial center, Taiz, had gathered in that city's central square for months to demand Saleh's departure. Last week they were ousted from the square with live fire, bulldozers and water cannons. Dozens were killed — some estimates talk of hundreds — but there was nothing more

than a brief mention in the capitalist media.

Armed tribesmen from the Taiz area gathered together and drove off the army, allowing peaceful protests to continue under armed guard.

The big-business media have played down reports of the Taiz massacre. To expose Saleh's massacres would damage his image as the only possible force for stability in Yemen.

What is also ignored in media accounts of Yemen is that the masses are in motion, trying to push forward their demands through collective action — something that underlies all the maneuvering between the armed factions with their intricately intertwined histories and rivalries.

Videos, not just from Al-Jazeera and Reuters, are starting to appear on YouTube, showing huge mass demonstrations in places like Al Baydha, where thousands of people marched in May against Saleh.

The people of Yemen want Saleh out and an end to foreign intervention, and they are acting to get what they want. □

# House vote fails to end war in Libya

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

A historic vote on the application of the 1973 War Powers Resolution has upheld the Obama administration's continuation of large-scale bombings aimed at overthrowing the government of Libya.

The War Powers Resolution was passed as the result of the struggle to end the U.S. occupation of Vietnam.

Since March 19 the Pentagon and NATO forces have carried out thousands of bombing missions on the oil-producing North African state of Libya, despite the lack of any explanation or consultation with Congress, let alone the people of the U.S.

On June 3 the House of Representatives took up two resolutions related to the war against Libya. The one sponsored by Ohio Congressperson Dennis Kucinich called for the cessation of hostilities against Libya within 15 days. The other, sponsored by Republican House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio, criticized the Obama administration for not seeking approval for the Libyan war, but allowed the bombing and regime-change policy to continue.

The Kucinich resolution was voted down 265-148, while the Boehner-sponsored initiative passed 268-145. The Boehner resolution called for banning ground troops and a detailed review of Libya policy from the White House within 14 days.

In a letter to members of Congress, Kucinich asked: "How do we deal with the failure of a President to adhere to the Constitution? If Congress does not challenge a President's dismissal of the clear meaning of Article 1, Section 8, then we will have tacitly endorsed a President's violation of the Constitution and guaranteed the perpetuation of future constitutional transgressions. A mild rebuke alone of the usurpation of a constitutionally mandated war power is insufficient to defend the Constitution." (thenation.com, June 3)

A Senate resolution, co-sponsored by Republican John McCain of Arizona and Democrat John Kerry of Massachusetts, supported the ongoing bombing under the guise of enforcing U.N. Resolution 1973. Several weeks earlier McCain visited the rebel-held city of Benghazi and called for the Obama administration to recognize the rebel forces as the "legiti-

mate government" of Libya.

The June 3 vote followed widespread criticism and condemnation of the U.S./NATO war against Libya. On April 9-10 thousands demonstrated in both New York and San Francisco against all wars of occupation in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Palestine as well as Libya.

An International Action Center petition to Congress drew attention to the violation of constitutional law even within the imperialist government's own legal system. Although the petition probably played a role in prompting a debate within Congress, the majority within the House of Representatives went on to uphold the illegal war.

The IAC is an anti-war and anti-imperialist organization and is committed to defending and supporting the right of oppressed nations to self-determination. Its opposition to the regime-change policy against Libya speaks to a deeper level of crisis within the U.S. political system, where wars are initiated and continued in contravention to massive opposition from the people within the country and internationally.

Kucinich stressed: "Our loyalty to NATO and to our President, regardless of party affiliation, does not trump our loyalty to the United States Constitution." Yet it should be remembered that the U.S. Constitution grew out of the settler-colonial quest for land, resources and slave labor that resulted in the enslavement of Africans and the repression and exploitation of working people and the oppressed as a whole.

## U.S. hands off Libya! A pamphlet now available online containing articles reprinted from the pages of

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- **U.S. steps up drive to conquer Libya** Fred Goldstein, March 30
- **Imperialists escalate bombing operations over Libya** Abayomi Azikiwe, March 31
- **War in Libya: it's about oil** Tony Murphy, March 31

The current war against Libya represents the continuation of the imperialist legacy of the U.S. under successive Democratic and Republican administrations. There has not been any serious consideration of the will of the people in regard to the war against Libya, nor in regard to other theaters of conflict and oppression that are directly or indirectly supported by Washington.

## NATO war intensifies

British "Apache" attack helicopters were introduced against the Libyan people in June, when positions were struck in the eastern oil-producing city of Brega. In addition, French Gazelle and Tiger helicopters carried out attacks in the same region.

In order to justify the usage of these helicopters in what is being called "Operation Unified Protector," NATO forces claimed that the Gazelle and Tiger helicopters destroyed 15 Libyan military vehicles and five army command posts. Yet U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973, which provided the pseudo-legal and political justification for the war against Libya, was purportedly only geared toward implementing a "no-fly zone" to protect civilians.

Not surprisingly, passage of U.N. Resolution 1973 was utilized to launch a full-scale attack against Libya that not only has resulted in deaths of civilians, the destruction of the country's infrastructure and the dislocation of its people, but ultimately sought the removal of the government of Libyan President Moammar Gadhafi and the installation of a pro-Western puppet regime.

Despite an aerial assault and naval blockade against the Libyan people that has lasted for nearly three months, the government has not fallen and has prevented the opposition Transitional National Council from extending its influence outside of Benghazi and other areas in the east of the country. The western port city of Misrata has been virtually destroyed by NATO forces and their rebel allies in order to establish a beachhead against the government in that region.

In further attempts to disrupt Libyan governmental operations, NATO aircraft bombed the state broadcasting facilities on June 6. In the western part of the country, fighting has escalated in the city of Yefren, located in the Nafusa Mountains.

## Ground invasion anticipated as refugees die at sea

There are continuing reports that NATO forces are preparing for a ground invasion of Libya. The Guardian in Britain reported that video footage from Al-Jazeera reveals the presence of Western troops in the country. In the video, the report states, a group of men "is seen talking to rebels and then quickly leaving on being spotted by the television crew." (May 30)

This is further confirmation of numerous other reports that have been published since early March that British special forces, MI-6, the CIA and Egyptian special forces have been operating in Libya, assisting the rebel TNC.

Meanwhile the plight of refugees fleeing from the fighting has worsened. Tunisian Coast Guard officials reported on June 5 that the bodies of 26 people were found after drowning in the Mediterranean Sea.

A Reuters press agency report revealed June 5: "A small flotilla of fishing boats overloaded with refugees was stranded for days off Tunisia's coast, and when help arrived, some boats capsized as people stampeded to get off, sending some into the water, aid officials said. Tunisian officials say the death toll could eventually reach about 250."

The humanitarian situation in the North Africa region is reaching critical proportions. Anti-war forces must continue to protest the war and demand a ceasefire and the withdrawal of all U.S. and NATO troops from the country. □

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workers.org/2011/world/libya\_booklet

# One war, two fronts

**M**ore and more in this period of prolonged, unprecedented stagnation of the capitalist system, the rulers are resorting to war. War abroad and war at home. War against the nations they want to plunder and war against the workers they want to own lock, stock and barrel.

How else can one describe the offensive against the unions, against immigrants, against teachers, but as a war against the working class? A war felt most severely by those already most oppressed — people of color and women especially, whose options have been so cruelly limited.

This war was planned in the boardrooms and in the corporate think tanks. It is being carried out by executives who demand lower wages and higher profits, as well as by bought-and-paid-for politicians, lawyers and judges who conspire to make laws penalizing workers while legalizing criminal activity by the banks and corporations that have left millions without jobs, stable homes or any security in their lives.

It is no coincidence that at the same time that this war against the workers inside the U.S. is intensifying, the shooting, bombing war against people of other countries is deepening too.

What has Libya done to the United States to justify 50 days of merciless bombing of its capital city?

What gives the imperialist governments of Europe and the U.S. the right to drop “bunker-buster” bombs on the same building where Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi just a week earlier met with South African President Jacob Zuma and accepted his proposal for a cease-fire? Zuma was there representing the countries of the African Union. This response by NATO is a clear warning to all of Africa: Don’t oppose us or you will be next.

Bunker-buster bombs — the most destructive weapon of all, short of nuclear

bombs! And all in the name of protecting innocent civilians. Has there ever been a more flimsy excuse given by any of the predatory colonial powers as they carved up the world? And now it’s happening again.

What gave the U.S. the right to destroy Iraq? Like Libya, Iraq before the U.S. invasion had used much of its oil money to develop schools, hospitals and a modern infrastructure. Now it is all gone and Iraqis are lucky if they get a trickle of water or electricity each day.

Afghanistan was a much poorer country, but it too has suffered terrible destruction at the hands of the imperialist forces.

Unable to jump-start their economies, the imperialists are resorting to war spending and plunder. For the workers, this only makes the situation all the worse. What is the choice for millions of young workers today? With tuition going up and jobs as scarce as hen’s teeth, they face unemployment, jail or the army.

The oil profiteers demanding war and intervention in North Africa and the Middle East, the financial crooks who swindled millions out of their homes here, and the bosses who are refusing to hire workers and are shutting down factories are all part of the same class: the class of billionaires who will do anything to keep their fortunes growing.

But they are uniting the workers as never before. Class consciousness is growing, from Los Angeles to Wisconsin to North Carolina. Along with this rising anger against capitalism at home is coming a growing appreciation for the struggles of the oppressed elsewhere, from Tahrir Square to Mexico City, Athens and Madrid.

International working class solidarity is the answer to the Pentagon-Wall Street-industrial complex. It is the antidote to bunker busters and union busters. Let’s make it grow. □



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# The worst people

The flag-waving, “Mission Accomplished” crowd is having a hissy fit. All because of a yearbook put out by the students of Russellville Middle School in Arkansas.

Fox News is suggesting there should be an investigation. Gosh, what would they find? Subversives?

It seems someone — undoubtedly one or more students — got creative and inserted a list of the “Top 5 worst people of all time.” It had Hitler on it, plus Osama bin Laden and Charles Manson. So far no feathers ruffled.

But then they had the audacity, the sheer mind-boggling nerve to add — George W. Bush and Dick Cheney!

The sky fell in. The yearbook adviser, who said she hadn’t noticed, was called on the carpet. The school

tried putting black tape over the list. (The yearbook had already been printed.) But the tape was easy to pull off. Which, of course, everyone did.

There used to be a saying, “Out of the mouths of babes.” The dictionary says it means “something that surprises you because it shows an adult’s wisdom and understanding of a situation.” Kids in middle school are no longer babes, but they are kids. Grownups think they have to tell them what to think — but these kids are old enough to have minds of their own.

Thanks, whoever you are at Russellville Middle School, for affirming that this rising generation already has a lot of wisdom and understanding of the political situation.

— Deirdre Griswold

# Gil Scott-Heron: an appreciation

By Larry Hales

Gil Scott-Heron passed away at 62 on May 27 in New York City. He had been hospitalized at St. Luke’s Hospital where he went to get treatment after returning ill from a touring trip in Europe.

This is an appreciation not only of his cultural contribution but of his life. The words above are originally from the song “The Vulture” on Gil Scott-Heron’s first studio album, “Small Talk at 125th and Lenox.” They’re also used in the song “Your Soul and Mine” on Heron’s last album, “I’m New Here.”

“I’m New Here,” released in 2010, is seen by some as Heron’s most introspective studio album. It is spare, terse, yet dense, a contradiction, but fitting. Only 29 minutes in length, his words, in that craggy voice, may live on in your thoughts. After a few listenings, you want to hear it again, to hear him utter those words and bare himself, like he was sitting next to you, and the life in his eyes and the words coming from his mouth intoned in a way that sounds as if it hurts, so personal, so raw.

It took a decade and a half for new material from Gil Scott to be released. To cycle through “I’m New Here” knowing nothing of the 40 years that he had been performing — of the dozen or so studio albums and live recordings — is to be presented with someone tortured, who has lived an interesting, harsh life. It presents a person not afraid — not what usually passes for bravery in musical pop culture where a singer warbles about love lost — and of deeper, more profound social loss and despair.

For instance, the song “I’ll Take Care of You,” originally from Brook Benton, may be a song of personal love, but in Gil Scott’s hands and from his mouth it is a song of two people in their later years, lost and downtrodden, who have seen social and personal struggle and have found love, and he urges her not to worry.

*So, if you see the vulture coming  
flying circles in your mind;  
Remember, there is no escaping  
for he will follow close behind.  
Only promise me a battle  
for your soul  
and mine.”*

Gil Scott-Heron



**WW**  
Commentary

**His music reflected  
social upheavals**

Some may point to the difficulties in Gil Scott’s life in the decade that separated “Spirits” (1994) and “I’m New Here.” Almost every article since his passing mentions drug addiction, the stints in prison and whether he had HIV. Some writers speak of the irony of his earlier music like “Home Is Where the Hatred Is,” when he talks of the hardships faced by Black people in the ghetto and how heroin ravaged the Black community in the 70s and how he himself became an addict.

However, it’s better to point to the decline of the great social movements that inspired him — including the smashing of the more revolutionary wing and the long period of retreat, reaction, devastation — in particular of the Black working class in the inner city because of deindustrialization and the commodification of Black musical culture by popular media.

Unfortunately there is not space here to go over the entire discography of Gil Scott-Heron, though there should be pages, classes even, dedicated to studying the brilliance in his music and how he seemed to reflect the overarching mood, as any good socially conscious artist does.

In “Winter in America” and “We Almost Lost Detroit,” released in 1974 and 1977 respectively, Gil Scott is able to evoke the mood of the period. In “Winter

## SOUTH AFRICA

# Albertina Sisulu of ANC honored

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

One of the stalwarts of the African National Congress, the ruling party that led the struggle for a nonracial, democratic South Africa, passed away on June 2 at the age of 92. Nontsikelelo Albertina Sisulu, whose spouse was the late Walter Sisulu, was one of the remaining legendary figures from the 1940s who played a pivotal role in the national liberation movement against settler colonialism and apartheid.

Sisulu was at the forefront of the struggle for freedom for nearly 50 years. The party's statement on her passing said, in part, "While the family has lost a mother, a grandmother and a great grandmother, the ANC and the country have lost an irreplaceable leader, a role model and a constant reminder of dedication and selflessness. She embodied grace and humility." The ANC also said, "She has long been a loved and respected leader in her own right." (anc.org.za, June 3)

Nontsikelelo Thethiwe was born into a Mfengu family on Oct. 21, 1918. She was the second child of a peasant farmer and migrant worker who were from the Eastern Cape, where she was born. She attended Mariazell College in Matatiele in the Eastern Cape and trained to be a nurse in Johannesburg.

In 1944 she joined the ANC. Later she worked within the ANC Women's League, where she played a leading role. In 1954 Sisulu was a founding member — and later president — of the Federation of South African Women, an alliance of forces from the African, Indian, "Coloured" and progressive white communities.

During the 1950s the ANC led mass campaigns, which defied the racist apartheid system's unjust laws. The majority African population was segregated and forced to work for slave wages in the mines and service sectors of the economy.

## 1956: 20,000 women defy apartheid in Pretoria

On Aug. 9, 1956, 20,000 women marched on the capital of Pretoria to de-

mand an end to the pass laws and other racist restrictions on Africans and other oppressed groups. Sisulu was a leader of this historic march, the largest mass demonstration of the period. A famous slogan from that march, which became known worldwide, was: "You have struck a woman. You have struck a rock." South Africa now commemorates Aug. 9 as Woman's Day.

"I was there when the 20,000 women marched to Pretoria to protest to Strydom about passes," explained Sisulu. She added, "I was among the women who closed the schools when Bantu education came in [and set up alternative classes]." (South African Star, May 9, 1984)

The apartheid government responded to the growing struggle in the 1950s by persecuting and imprisoning leaders of the liberation movement and banning them from political activity. By 1960, when police opened fire on unarmed protesters at Sharpeville, killing 69 people and wounding many others, the ANC was banned and forced to operate underground.

Nonetheless, by the following year, the organization formed Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), its military wing, which initiated a campaign of sabotage and armed struggle to overthrow the racist regime.

Sisulu was heavily involved in the ANC's organizational work during this period. Maureen Isaacson explained that on June 19, 1963, she became "the first woman to be imprisoned under the notorious 90 Day Act which allowed the state to hold suspects for 90 days without being charged. She told Drum magazine that 'the loneliness was unbearable' and she was threatened that the state would take her children from her." (Sunday Independent, June 7)

in America," a somber song appearing to lament the waning of the fervor of the 60s and 70s, he seems to be hinting at reactionary times to follow.

"We Almost Lost Detroit" is about a partial meltdown of the Fermi 1 nuclear reactor 30 miles outside of Detroit. One can't help but link it to the devastating effects of deindustrialization on Detroit, a process that was just picking up in the late 70s.

Gil Scott's relevant music was about social struggles, from the U.S. to South Africa, across the world. In 2010, after his last album debuted, though having just gotten out of prison with very little money, he turned down a concert in Israel out of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. There are other, more well known, richer artists who decided to play in Israel because they deemed that their music was beyond politics.

Gil Scott knew that artists have a social responsibility and that culture is of the world as it is and not above it. Despite needing money, he followed his conscience and didn't betray his principles. For instance, in October 1981, he, along with flutist Dave Valentin, performed two benefit concerts for the All-Peoples Congress in Detroit.

Gil Scott didn't completely lose his optimism, and though his last album is melancholic, as evidenced by his cover song

"I'm New Here," he is looking back over his life, his mistakes and over the social periods he lived through.

It is easy for so many to have gotten lost over the past 30 years. Media have become used more for social control. Young people are indoctrinated and inundated with the values of a decadent society.

Shortly after the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion — when Hip Hop music was still reflecting the conditions in the inner city — Gil Scott released his "Message to the Messengers," imploring Hip Hop musicians to know the importance of the message. In the song he states, "Hey, yeah, we the same brothas from a long time ago/ We was talkin' about television and doin' it on the radio/What we did was to help our generation realize/They had to get out there and get busy cause it wasn't gonna be televised/We got respect for you rappers and the way they be free-weighin'/ But if you're gon' be teachin' folks things, make sure you know what you're sayin'."

And who can forget his most famous contribution that ends with: "The revolution will not go better with Coke/The revolution will not fight the germs that cause bad breath/The revolution WILL put you in the driver's seat/The revolution will not be televised/WILL NOT BE TELEvised/The revolution will be no re-run, brothers/The revolution will be live." □



By 1964 Sisulu was banned by the government for five years and confined to the district around Johannesburg. That year, her spouse, Walter Sisulu, along with other ANC leaders including Nelson Mandela and Govan Mbeki, was sentenced

to life imprisonment in the notorious Rivonia Treason Trial and was jailed at Robben Island. He served 25 years.

Albertina Sisulu was banished for nearly two decades until 1989, on the eve of the 1990 unbanning of the ANC by the Nationalist Party government. She also spent time in prison. The longest term of eight months was after violating banning orders so that she could attend the funeral of ANC Women's League veteran Rose Mbele. Her children also were frequently detained, held incommunicado, banned and exiled.

Of this, she remarked about her experience as an activist in South Africa, "Over the years I got used to prison, banning and detention. I did not mind going to jail myself and I had to learn to cope without Walter. But when my children went to jail, I felt that the oppressors were breaking me

at the knees." (anc.org.za, October 2010)

Between 1976 and 1983, the struggle inside South Africa consolidated around the formation of many organizations that followed the ANC's ideology. In 1983, Sisulu helped to form the United Democratic Front and was co-president for a time. The UDF reopened a new alliance for mass struggle that resulted in the social explosions of the period between 1984 and 1994 when the ANC came to power.

Sisulu was elected to the South African parliament when it took power in 1994 and held that position for four years. This occurred in the aftermath of countrywide elections that created the first representative government since the European settlers began their occupation in the mid-17th century.

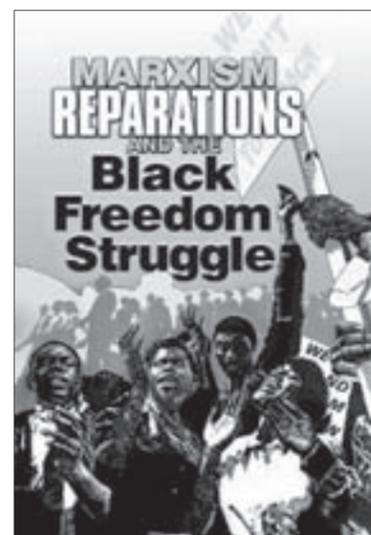
The South African government announced that because Sisulu "was a national leader," "we [will] accord her a dignified funeral which is befitting for a leader of her stature." President Jacob Zuma ordered all national flags flown at half-mast until June 11, the date of the liberation movement veteran's funeral, which will be held at Orlando Stadium in Soweto. (gov.za, June 5)

Albertina Sisulu's historic role in the South African liberation struggle will live forever. □

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## El Pentágono y la mano de obra esclava en las cárceles de EE.UU.

Por Sara Flounders

Prisioneros que ganan 23 centavos la hora en las cárceles federales de EE.UU. están fabricando componentes electrónicos de alta tecnología para los misiles Patriot Advanced Capability 3, lanzadores de misiles TOW (sofisticados misiles anti-tanque dirigidos por cable y con seguimiento óptico) y otros sistemas de misiles guiados. Merece la pena leer un artículo escrito por el periodista e investigador financiero Justin Rohrlich del World in Review para entender las implicaciones de este siniestro hecho. (Minyanville.com)

El creciente uso de las industrias de la prisión, que pagan salarios de esclavitud, como una forma de aumentar las ganancias de las gigantescas corporaciones militares, es un ataque frontal a los derechos de todos/as los/as trabajadores/as.

El trabajo penitenciario — sin protección sindical, ni pago por horas extras, sin días de vacaciones ni pensiones, beneficios de salud o Seguro Social — también fabrica componentes complejos para los aviones de combate F-15 de la McDonnell Douglas/Boeing, los F-16 de la General Dynamics/Lockheed Martin y los helicópteros Cobra de la Bell/Textron. El trabajo penitenciario produce gafas de visión nocturna, chalecos antibalas, uniformes de camuflaje, equipos de radio y comunicación, y sistemas de iluminación y componentes para cañones antiaéreos de 30 mm a 300 mm, además de rastreadores de minas terrestres y equipos electro-ópticos para el telémetro láser del vehículo Bradley de combate de la BAE Systems. Los prisioneros reciclan equipos electrónicos tóxicos y reconstruyen vehículos militares.

El trabajo en las cárceles federales es contratado por UNICOR, anteriormente conocida como Federal Prison Industries, (Industrias de Prisiones Federales) una corporación cuasi-pública, con fines de lucro dirigida por la Oficina de Prisiones. En 14 fábricas de prisiones, más de 3.000 prisioneros fabrican equipos electrónicos para la comunicación por tierra, mar y aire. UNICOR es ahora el trigésimo noveno mayor contratista del gobierno de EE.UU., con 110 fábricas en 79 centros penitenciarios federales.

La mayoría de los productos y servicios de UNICOR son contratados por órdenes del Departamento de Defensa. Gigantes

multinacionales compran partes ensambladas en lugares donde la tasa de los salarios es de las más bajas del mundo, para luego revender el armamento final recibiendo una de las tasas más altas de ganancias. Por ejemplo, Lockheed Martin y Raytheon Corporation subcontratan componentes, luego los ensamblan y venden los sistemas de armamento avanzado al Pentágono.

### Aumento en ganancias y lugares de trabajo insalubres

Sin embargo, el Pentágono no es el único comprador. Las corporaciones de EE.UU. son los traficantes más grandes de armas del mundo, mientras las armas y los aviones de guerra son los productos de mayor exportación de EE.UU. El Departamento de Estado, el Departamento de Defensa y los diplomáticos estadounidenses presionan a los miembros de la OTAN y a los países dependientes para que gasten miles de millones de dólares en compras de armas que generan mayores ganancias corporativas, dejando a menudo a muchos países sumidos en una enorme deuda.

Pero el hecho de que el estado capitalista haya encontrado otra forma más para drásticamente reducir los salarios de los/as trabajadores/as sindicalizados/as y garantizar aún mayores ganancias a las empresas militares, cuyas armas producen tantos estragos en el mundo, es un hecho ominoso.

De acuerdo con CNN Money, la altamente calificada y bien remunerada “fuerza laboral en la industria aeroespacial se ha reducido en un 40 por ciento en los últimos 20 años. Como muchas otras industrias, el sector de defensa ha ido subcontratando calladamente la producción (y los puestos de trabajo) a mercados laborales más baratos en el exterior”. (24 de febrero) Parece que con el trabajo en las prisiones, estos puestos de trabajo son también subcontratos internamente.

Mientras tanto, los dividendos y las opciones que reciben un puñado de accionistas principales y los paquetes de compensación de los ejecutivos de las corporaciones militares superan el total del pago de los salarios a los más de 23.000 trabajadores/as encarcelados/as que producen las piezas para UNICOR.

El trabajo de la prisión es a menudo peligroso, tóxico y desprotegido. En

la FCC Victorville, una prisión federal ubicada en una antigua base aérea estadounidense, los presos limpian, revisan y vuelven a montar tanques y vehículos militares regresados del combate y cubiertos de municiones tóxicas, polvo de uranio reducido, y otros productos químicos.

Una demanda federal por las prisioneras, sus familiares y los/as trabajadores/as del servicio de alimentos en la FCI Marianna, una cárcel de mujeres de seguridad mínima en Florida, señaló que el polvo tóxico que contiene plomo, cadmio, mercurio y arsénico envenenó a quienes trabajaron en la fábrica de reciclaje electrónico y de computadoras de UNICOR.

Las prisioneras trabajaban allí cubiertas de polvo, sin equipo de seguridad, ni protectores, ni filtración de aire o mascarillas. La demanda explicó que el polvo tóxico causó graves daños al sistema nervioso y reproductivo, daño pulmonar, enfermedad ósea, insuficiencia renal, coágulos de sangre, cánceres, ansiedad, dolores de cabeza, fatiga, lapsos de memoria, lesiones de la piel y problemas circulatorios y respiratorios. Esta es una de ocho instalaciones de reciclaje en prisiones federales que emplea 1.200 prisioneros/as administradas por UNICOR.

Después de años de quejas, la Oficina del Departamento de Justicia del Inspector General y el Servicio de Salud Ocupacional Federal estuvieron de acuerdo en octubre de 2008 declarando que UNICOR ha puesto en peligro la vida y la seguridad de un número incalculable de prisioneros/as y personal. (Prison Legal News, 17 de febrero de 2009)

### Racismo y prisiones de EE.UU.

Estados Unidos encarcela más personas per cápita que cualquier otro país del mundo. Con menos del 5% de la población mundial, Estados Unidos encarcela más del 25 por ciento de todas las personas encarceladas en el mundo.

Hay más de 2,3 millones de prisioneros/as en prisiones federales, estatales y locales en EE.UU. El doble de esa cifra está bajo libertad condicional o en probatoria. Decenas de miles de otros/as prisioneros/as incluyen inmigrantes sin documentos que están enfrentando deportación, prisioneros/as que están esperando ser sentenciados/as, y delincuentes jóvenes en categorías consideradas como detención o reformatorios.

El racismo que prevalece en cada aspecto de la vida en la sociedad capitalista — desde los empleos, los ingresos y la vivienda, hasta la educación y las oportunidades — está más brutalmente reflejado en quienes quedan atrapados/as en el sistema de prisiones en EE.UU.

Más del 60 por ciento de prisioneros/as en EE.UU. son personas de color. Setenta por ciento de quienes están siendo condenados/as en virtud de la ley de los tres avisos en California — que requiere sentencias obligatorias de 25 años hasta cadena perpetua después de tres condenas por delitos graves — son personas de color. Nacionalmente, el 39 por ciento de hombres afro-americanos en la edad de los 20 años está en prisión, en libertad condicional o en probatoria. Estados Unidos encarcela a más personas que Sud África bajo el apartheid. (Linn Washington, “Incarceration Nation”)

La población de las prisiones estadounidenses no es solamente la más grande en el mundo — sino que está creciendo persistentemente. La población de las prisiones estadounidenses es cinco veces más de lo que era hace 30 años.

En 1980 cuando Ronald Reagan se hizo presidente, había 400.000 prisioneros/as en EE.UU. Hoy el número excede los 2,3 millones. En California la población de las prisiones aumentó de 23.264 en 1980 a 170.000 en 2010. La población de las prisiones en Pensilvania aumentó de 8.243 a 51.487 en esos mismos años. Ahora hay más hombres afro-americanos en prisión, en libertad condicional o en probatoria que los que fueron esclavizados en 1850, antes del comienzo de la Guerra Civil, según la profesora de leyes Michelle Alexander en el libro “The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness.”

Hoy en día, la increíble cantidad de uno de cada 100 adultos en EE.UU. está viviendo entre rejas. Pero este crimen que rompe familias y destruye vidas, no está distribuido de manera uniforme. En las zonas urbanas mayores, la mitad de los hombres negros tiene un récord criminal. Esto significa una perpetua discriminación legalizada en los préstamos estudiantiles, asistencia financiera, acceso a vivienda pública, hipotecas, el derecho a votar y, por supuesto, la posibilidad de encontrar empleo. □

## Libertad para los cinco cubanos

### ¿Quiénes son los Cinco Cubanos?

Los Cinco Cubanos están cumpliendo largas e injustas sentencias en prisiones de EE.UU. por defender a su patria — Cuba — de grupos terroristas del exilio Cubano en Miami. Los Cinco Cubanos fueron arrestados en 1998 por monitorear las actividades de esos grupos violentos e informar a Cuba sobre sus planes. Por casi 12 años, estos cinco hombres han permanecido en prisiones de EE.UU. y como un castigo adicional, a dos de ellos se les ha negado el derecho humano básico de recibir visitas de sus esposas. Únase a personas de todas partes del mundo — parlamentarios, Premios Nobel, sindicalistas, activistas comunitarios — que se han pronunciado contra el injusto encarcelamiento de los Cinco Cubanos y continúan demandando su libertad. Para más información visite: [www.thecuban5.org](http://www.thecuban5.org)



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Schwerert, Fernando González Llort y Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez.