**Cuba wins back its five heroes**

By Cheryl LaBash

Dec. 17 — The government of the United States has done what it repeatedly swore it would never do: It has freed the last of the Cuban 5, Today Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañoño and Gerardo Hernández were finally released from U.S. jails after more than 16 years of unjust imprisonment. René González and Fernando González had already served their full prison terms and returned to Cuba. Those whom Gerardo Hernández termed “the jury of millions” — who had organized, picketed, written letters, signed petitions, collected money for newspaper ads, investigated, inveighed on parliamentarians, climbed mountains, rode bicycles, tweeted, wrote poems, plays, songs and more in every corner of the globe — rejoiced. The steadfast Cuban people joyfully welcomed their heroes: the five men who sacrificed so much to protect them from terrorist attacks launched from U.S. territory during the 1990s.

We can only imagine the joy of their families. A Miami court and the U.S. government had expected Gerardo to die in prison after he was sentenced to two life terms plus 15 years.

Today, says the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5, “Gerardo has now been reunited with Adriana, Ramón is back with Elizabeth and his three beautiful daughters, and Antonio is with his mother Mirta, the 84-year-old tireless inspiration of this struggle, who feared she would die before she saw her son back in Cuba.” Workers World Party and many dedicated organizers in the U.S. share this awesome and joyous moment of victory. Opening the prison doors for the Cuban heroes was only part of the top story today. In a broadcast speech, President Barack Obama outlined “charting a new course for the future of our relationship with Cuba,” and asserted, “Today, we are renewing our leadership in the Americas.” Washington has its eye on the April Summit of the Americas in Panama. Yet a bill imposing sanctions on Bolivarian Venezuela is sitting on Obama’s desk. Will he veto it, as part of this new course? The Obama administration recognized the coup government in Honduras that has driven thousands of workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite! workers.org Vol. 57, No. 1 Jan. 8, 2015 $1

**Protests against police terror continue**

Statement on Brooklyn, N.Y., shootings:

**Uprising must stay strong**

The New York City Peoples Power Assembly Movement issued this “Don’t let this incident be used to crush the uprising” statement on Dec. 21:

The police have been desperately searching for some occurrence that they can use as a weapon to crush the most powerful, widespread, national mass uprising against racist police terror and murder since the 1960s.

Until yesterday, the frame-up of activists from #MillionsMarchNYC on Dec. 13 was the weapon. We demand immediate amnesty for those targeted activists accused of the alleged attacks on New York Police Department detectives on the Brooklyn Bridge.

But now, the police — and the powers that be who rule over society and whose interests the police “protect and serve” — have got a much bigger weapon. The killing of NYPD officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu, allegedly by Jaisaai Brinsley, who afterwards allegedly killed himself in a subway station, is NOW that weapon.

We underscore the word “allegedly” because all we know about what happened is what the police have told us. And while at the moment we have no information that counters the police story, we always suspect whatever the police say because they lie all the time.

One of the reasons that many of us prefer the strategy of a mass, social and political uprising against the whole system, over individual targets police, is because history has shown that more often than not, when people engage in individual, random attacks on police, it’s used by the government, the police and the system to attack the movement with violence baiting, in order to

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| Mexico, U.S. & drugs |
| Southern-wide meeting |

| Support for Rev. Pinkney |
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An open letter to the head of the Durham, N.C., Police Department from Lamont Lilly.

According to Chief Jose Lopez of the Durham Police Department, “outside agitators” have now penetrated Durham’s local protest and social justice movement. According to Chief Lopez, out-of-towners are the culprits causing trouble and influencing our city’s peaceful protesters to block traffic and storm shopping malls.

Unfortunately, Chief Jose Lopez could not be more wrong. Most of us are not outsiders. We reside right here in Durham, right here in Wake and Orange Counties. We are Black and Brown communities — police officers who are direct descendants of slave catchers and state militia who reinforced our ancestors’ captivity. The problem is your department’s history, the problem; they’re effects of the problem. The problem at hand is not the various tactics of local protest, but the repressed perception of political, social and economic inequality for the masses of nonwhite males. Blocking traffic and interrupting profit margins is not the problem here, Chief.

What has angered a[. . .] of people, both locally and nationally, is the preponderance of mass poverty and the school-to-prison pipeline, voter suppression and the presence of armed police in public schools. Our collective frustrations are the lack of concern for and daily indignities of Black life in this country. We are angered that private prisons are no different than the Convict Lease System during Reconstruction. We are pissed off that advocating for justice equals state surveillance and undermine police officers attending our organizing meetings.

What has truly enraged us that throughout this country’s history every journalist, labor or civic leader who stands up and speaks out for the poor and oppressed has been targeted by the FBI. Every artist, musician or organizer who dares speak truth to power has been imprisoned, unjustly harassed or simply assassinated by some form of state and federal law enforcement.

These factors combined are the real reasons we’re protesting. Chief, there are connections or oppression much deeper than Michael Brown and Eric Garner, and they’re much more meaningful than your obvious attempt to “red bait” local socialists and anarchists. Do we really agree with the goals and perspectives of the ‘agitators?’ No. But anyone who stands up for Black folks’ right to breathe is a comrade to me; your personal philosophy is irrelevant. So please, Chief, stop trying to divide the movement. Stop trying to redirect the focus from injustice to those who resist it. And please stop demonizing us with your cast-off labels and outdated political hashtags.

We are not “trouble makers” and “outside agitators.” What we are a new generation who are no longer standing down to the repressive tactics of fascist police departments. What we are are descendants of the Abolitionist, Civil Rights, Stonewall and Black Power movements.

We are truth speakers and justiceseekers. We are students, workers and parents. We are sons and daughters, neighbors and teachers. We are one people, one movement, one resistance.

Power to the People.

Lamont Lilly is a contributing editor with the Triangle Free Press and organizer with Workers World Party. Follow him on Twitter @LamontLilly.

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rights organizing conference was distributed at the southern human rights organizing conference (shiroc x) held here dec. 12-14.

the powerful gathering brought together primarily black activists from many southern states to discuss campaigns and conditions of the region and develop strategies for building an anti-racist human rights movement as well as the re-emergence of a national, unified black liberation movement.

the focus of the conference was the emerging rebellion across the country against racist police murders and terror. themed “war, crisis and repression — no justice, no peace,” the conference connected the domestic war on black america with the long-standing foreign wars and the economic crisis of capitalism at a dead end.

in his opening remarks, ajamu bara-kk, veteran human rights activist and organizer, talked about how the capitalist crisis, which has left millions of people in the united states permanently and structurally unemployed, along with systemic white supremacy, is creating the material basis for this huge plague of racist police terror.

the conference was organized to honor the life and struggle of troy davis, an innocent man executed by the state of georgia in september 2011 after serving 20 years in prison on a false charge. friends and family of davis fought many years for his freedom, knowing he was innocent. davis was from savannah and his family participated in shiroc x.

davis’ sister, kim davis, spoke about how in one of the final struggles to free her brother, a judge of the u.s. court of appeals for the eleventh circuit, had turned down his appeal, refusing to consider evidence that had gone unheard for 20 years. the community refers to chatham county, where this frame-up occurred, as “chatt-em county.”

along the walls were portraits of other black folks killed or recently imprisoned by police departments across the country, including charles smith, a young man shot and killed while handcuffed by savannah police in september 2014. others pictured included eric garner, mike brown, renishia mcbride and trayvon martin. also pictured were maritza alexander, monica jones and coce mcDonald, three black women, two of them transgender, who were jailed for defending themselves.

jamala rogers of the organization for black struggle in st. louis, spoke about the daily spontaneous actions in Ferguson, mo. she talked about the fearless leadership of many young black folks now emerging, including groups like hands up, don’t shoot and the “in our way” movement.

a powerful panel consisted of lisa lopez, a former walmart worker from our workers congress discussed fighting racist and reactionary, right-to-work (for less) laws and other questions facing workers of the region, including the fight for $15 an hour and a union. a powerful panel consisted of lisa lopez, a former walmart worker from our workers congress discussed fighting racist and reactionary, right-to-work (for less) laws and other questions facing workers of the region, including the fight for $15 an hour and a union.

this is not pinkney’s first imprisonment for political activities. in 2007, he was convicted in a second trial — the first ended in a hung jury — for “mishandling” absentee ballots during a recall election involving two benton harbor city commissioners. the election results, which would have removed the officials, were overturned after criminal charges were filed against the banco leader.

pinkney was sentenced to one year under house arrest and four years of probation. later in 2007, he was charged with violating the terms of the sentence by allegedly threatening a judge in berrien county.

the threat charge stemmed from an article he wrote in the people’s tribune newspaper, based in chicago, in which he quoted scriptures from the old testament. he was sentenced to three to 10 years. the charges were overturned in late 2008 by the michigan court of appeals after pinkney received widespread support from civil liberties, ecumenical and academic communities and various community organizations. the court released at the end of 2008 and successfully completed his probation, returning to full-time activism in berrien county.

in 2008, while still in prison, pinkney had run for congress on the green party ticket in michigan. he received 3,500 votes in a challenge to fred upton, a republican incumbent and heir to whirlpool corporate wealth.

a statement issued on dec. 17 by green party national chair jeff rev. pinkney, now being held in jackinson county, was presented at the trial that would implicate pinkney in the purported five felonies.

many believe that pinkney, a berrien county activist and leader of the black antonality network community organization (banco), is being punished by local authorities for sponsoring the corporate plans of whirlpool corp., headquartered in benton harbor.

in 2002, pinkney and banco led an “occupy the uga” (professional golfers’ association of america) demonstration against a world-renowned golf tournament held at the newly created jack nicklaus north golf course on the shore line of lake michigan. the course was carved out of jean klock park, which had been a patch of downtown benton harbor decades ago.

berrien county officials were determined to defeat the recall campaign against mayor hightower, who opposed a program that would have taxed local corporations in order to create jobs and improve conditions in benton harbor, a majority african-american municipali ty. like other michigan cities, it has been devastated by widespread poverty and unemployment.

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a statement issued on dec. 17 by green party national chair jeff

nancy johnston, the mass black incarceration state, in an hour and a union.

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Call to beat back Wisconsin anti-labor bill

By Matty Starrdust and Sue Davis

Dec. 10 — United Auto Workers Local 2805, a statewide University of California student-worker union local, called a "Right-to-Work" petition drive and "At the ballot box, the workers of the Capitol aren't enough. This latest assault on all labor, community and Our Unions: Wales, Wisconsin, is a declaration of war on the rights of poor and working people. Rallies alone won't do. Wisconsin showed that even temporary occupa-

tions of the Capitol aren't enough. This latest assault must be met with decisive direct action by organized la-
bors and our allies. The United Auto Workers Constitution gives us a weapon that can be used to fight for and win. Article 50, Sec. 8 says: ‘In case of great emergency, when the existence of the International Union is involved, together with the economic and social standing of the membership, the International President and the International Execu-
tive Board shall have the authority to declare a general strike within the industry by a 2/3 vote of the In-
ternational Executive Board, whenever in their good judgment it shall be deemed proper for the purpose of preserving and perpetuating the rights and living stan-
dard of the membership. Because under no circumstances shall it call such a strike until approved by a referendum vote of the membership.'

The union-busting Right-to-Work plan certainly fits this description. A general strike is where all workers take a holiday. No general strike can be rushed into. Workers must be educated and the ground carefully prepared. Hold-
ing a successful vote to consent to a general strike, mass strikes are part of our history. In the 1960s, the Kohler strike, with the support of Black and white workers, won and built UAW Local 933. In 1934, successful mass actions in Minneapolis, San Francisco and Toledo lifted the living standards of workers for generations.

The RTW legislation was openly demanded by the Wis-
sconsin Chamber of Commerce, the Bradley Foundation and other similar groups. The entire crowd of Wall Street bankers and corporate bosses, including GM, Ford, Chrysler and the billionaire Koch brothers and ALEC, are behind the push to break us in this strong-
hold and symbol of unionism.

In the years of the Kohler strike, the bosses thought we were ready to collapse. By moving methodically, vote by vote, toward a general strike, the working class of Wisconsin can send a message that will sow panic in their ranks. Let the big business news media, politi-
cians, judges and others scream that it is illegal. As the words of the union song ‘Solidarity Forever' says, ‘In our hands is placed a power greater than their board-
gold, greater than the might of armies magnified a thousandfold.' That power is our ability to bring every-
thing to a standstill.

Campaign to free Rev. Pinkney

Continued from page 3

truth-out.org on Dec. 16: "Concerned activists and cler-
gy against People Demanding Action, a non-
social justice organization, are circulating a petition to min-
isters and various organizations. The petition is to be for-
warded to the U.S. Justice Department and Attorney

er Eric Holder, asking for an investigation into the cir-
stances of Pinkney’s trial and sentencing.

To sign the petition in support of the Rev. Edward Pinkney, log on to tinyurl.com/jsq4wyyn. Contributions for Rev. Pinkney’s defense can be sent to BANCO at 1940 Union St., Benton Harbor, MI 49022.
Unemployment and the underground economy

By Fred Goldstein

It is an outrage that Eric Garner was killed by a wolfpack of racist cops and a chokehold, which he was not even doing at the time. Garner's killing and the killings of Michael Brown, Tamir Rice and so many others have set off a movement that is pushing to build the racist cops and the promise of 40 acres and a mule.

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Demonstrations to protest racist police killings and to assert “Black Lives Matter” have continued strong throughout the United States since the Dec. 13 national march in Washington, D.C., and the massive march in New York the same day. Police have killed people in many other cities and towns, large and small.

Walkouts, die-ins, road closures, traffic stoppages, town hall meetings, rallies and other forms of protest have occurred daily across the country. Here are reports from Workers World activists in several cities.

Facing down criminal cops

In New York City, hundreds of anti-racist protesters confronted a small group of pro-New York Police Department demonstrators on Dec. 10 in front of City Hall. Built as a “#BlackLivesMatter” demonstration, the mainly white, male racists wore T-shirts with the slogan “I Can Breathe.” That was a racist slap in the face to 43-year-old Eric Garner, who died July 17. A grand jury refused to indict the cops who killed him. A grand jury hearing for his case.

“We believe this pro-police demonstration is cause of great concern to millions of people across the country who have been in the streets protesting against racism, white supremacy and police violence,” says a statement. The Department of Justice convene a form Commission hearing. Of note was the enthusiasm to have more community-based events. The gathering was attended by students from area colleges who have provided leadership roles in Ferguson and New York response actions. Lawyers holding an ongoing campaign of letter writing resulted in a Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Action, Resistance and Empowerment (a) with a citywide, if not regional, march and rally to reclaim King’s legacy of resistance and struggle.

Philadelphia

A number of lawyers and their supporters staged a die-in Dec. 17 inside the Philadelphia Criminal Justice Center in solidarity with Michael Brown, Eric Garner and other victims of police killings. Afterwards, eighth-grade African-American students from Sankofa Freedom Academy held their own die-in outside the injustice center. The protests ended in a chokehold by cops in Staten Island on Dec. 13.

The Ferguson to Philadelphia Emergency Response Network (#Ferguson PHL) held its second town hall meeting Dec. 16 at Calvary Church in west Philadelphia. More than 400 people turned up for what became a second Peoples Power Assembly. The meeting, larger than the one held Dec. 2 immediately after the verdict from Ferguson was announced, was a serious planning and coordinating vehicle for upcoming protests and beyond. It is impossible to list the many upcoming protests announced at the meeting. Of note was the enthusiasm to have more community-based events.

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“Callously called ‘Thank you NYPD,’ this provocative demonstration is insulting and disrespectful to families who have lost loved ones to police murders and people who have survived police brutality. In fact, also on Dec. 19, at the same time, only blocks away from this pro-police brutality rally, the family of 18-year-old Ramarley Graham — murdered in his Bronx home by NYPD Officer Richard Haste on Feb. 2, 2012 — will be holding a rally to demand that the Department of Justice convene a preliminary, form Commission hearing.”

The People’s Power Assembly released a national statement with hundreds of lawyers and others picking up the slack in the wake of the verdict. The statement reads in part:

“We can march all night long!”

In Atlanta on Dec. 15, more than 125 people gathered at Underground Atlanta and marched on Peachtree Street behind letters in lights spelling out “Black Lives Matter.” Upon reaching the Fox Theater, a die-in was held in front of an expansive entryway where a holiday concert featuring Christian music singer, Amy Grant, brought out a largely white suburban audience. The protesters repeated the last words of Eric Garner, “I can’t breathe,” 11 times.

With a front row of demonstrators holding the illuminated letters, the theater was blockaded for more than a half hour. Police cars with blue lights flashing shut down traffic on the city’s main corridor.

The largely youthful crowd took all lanes on Peachtree Street as they marched back to their starting point. One of their chants was “We’re young, we’re strong, we can march all night long!” The demonstration was organized by the Gen Y Project and supported by many other groups, including Workers World Party and the International Action Center.

Die-ins and Town Hall meeting

A key proposal was a call for a Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Action, Resistance and Empowerment (a) with a citywide, if not regional, march and rally to reclaim King’s legacy of resistance and struggle.

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With a front row of demonstrators holding the illuminated letters, the theater was blockaded for more than a half hour. Police cars with blue lights flashing shut down traffic on the city’s main corridor.

The largely youthful crowd took all lanes on Peachtree Street as they marched back to their starting point. One of their chants was “We’re young, we’re strong, we can march all night long!” The demonstration was organized by the Gen Y Project and supported by many other groups, including Workers World Party and the International Action Center.

Die-ins and Town Hall meeting

A key proposal was a call for a Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Action, Resistance and Empowerment (a) with a citywide, if not regional, march and rally to reclaim King’s legacy of resistance and struggle.

“Callously called ‘Thank you NYPD,’ this provocative demonstration is insulting and disrespectful to families who have lost loved ones to police murders and people who have survived police brutality. In fact, also on Dec. 19, at the same time, only blocks away from this pro-police brutality rally, the family of 18-year-old Ramarley Graham — murdered in his Bronx home by NYPD Officer Richard Haste on Feb. 2, 2012 — will be holding a rally to demand that the Department of Justice convene a preliminary, form Commission hearing.”

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Wisconsin resembles an apartheid state for those of African descent, having the highest incarceration rate of Blacks in the U.S. and numerous murders of Black people by police. On Dec. 14, hundreds of students marched, chanting, “Finals on your mind, Black lives on mine!” at University of Wisconsin-Madison and staged a die-in at the undergraduate library.

In Milwaukee a die-in took place at Marquette University on Dec. 8. The next day, protesters staged a rally and die-in front of District Attorney John Chisholm’s house to demand he charge Christopher Manney, the cop who killed Dontre Hamilton on April 30. “The blood is at the doorsteps of the district attorney’s office,” said Nate Hamilton, Dontre’s brother, as he and supporters lay in the street in front of Chisholm’s home.

The Coalition for Justice sponsored a rally Dec. 9 at Red Arrow Park, the site of Hamilton’s murder. Protesters faced off against dozens of police and occupied the building was replaced with a beautiful flag featuring the faces of victims of racist killings: Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Oscar Grant, Renisha McBride and Alex Nieto.

All the while a strong and vocal contingent of militant Black organizers, dressed all in black, rallied at the doors, leading chants, singing protest songs and raising their fists in the air in the Black Power salute. A group of Asian activists locked down one of the OPD doors, holding a banner signed “Asians 4 Black Lives.” The other door was locked down by white activists with a banner reading “White Silence Is Violence.”

All this was accomplished in an atmosphere where for the last several years the OPD has used lines of riot-gear-equipped police to keep any protest march at least a block away from the building. The protesters tried to keep the blockade up for at least four hours and 28 minutes — four hours for the time Michael Brown’s body lay in the street after he was killed and 28 minutes for Black and Brown lives lost every 28 hours to violence at the hands of police and vigilantes, based on a study by the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement. A large number of the protesters were eventually arrested, with many having to be sawed out of the lockdown equipment by the Oakland Fire Department. Most were cited and released.

Mollie Costello, from the Alan Blueford Center for Justice, was part of the contingent that rallied at the OPD doors, leading the chants and songs. WV asked her about the importance of this action: “There has been sustained action, and that is part of the significance. I think a lot about history and where we’re going. As a direct descendant of slaves, I think about a famous abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, who said ‘Power concedes nothing without a demand, it never has and it never will.’ After the slaves were freed, were we really free? My father is...”
Cuban Five victory

Continued from page 1

Cuba. Released Gross as soon as the Five are returned home, citing humanitarian reasons.

The AP continued its investigation of failed U.S. regime-change antics, including the "Cuban" Twitter site Zunzuneo — another USAID program — and the recent infiltration of Cuban hip hop artists in an attempt to use them as unwindowing instruments to undermine Cuba's self-determination.

Polls have shown that sentiment in Miami is favoring changing U.S. policy toward Cuba even more strongly than in the rest of the U.S. Since 1992, the U.S.-General Assembly has voted almost unanimously every year for the U.S. to end the blockade. As Obama himself admitted in his speech, the U.S. for more than five decades has "developed a Cuba toward collapse." And, he testified, it didn't work.

Development despite imperialist hostility

Development in the hemisphere has been moving forward despite the machinations of the U.S. Latvia, America and the Caribbean, including Cuba, have forged many interlocking levels of continental unity through the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas. At the same time, the U.S. is still unable to recover from its 2007-2008 economic collapse, especially in regard to employment.

The heroic Cuban people, in the wake of serious dangers, aggressions, adversities and sacrifices, have proven to be faithful and will continue to be faithful to our ideals of independence and social justice. Strongly united throughout these 56 years of Revolution, we have kept our unswerving loyalty to those principles and those causes, which died in defense of our principles since the beginning of our independence wars in 1868.

Our enemy recognizes that they had to be taken to the hospital. As the confrontation developed, several people were injured. Among those injured were people who were struck by rocks or bullets, including several women and children. For their part, the U.S. has tried "to push Cuba toward collapse." And, he testified, it didn't work.

How long will European banks continue to pay U.S.-imposed fines for handling Cuba's exports? They want to see how different will be the future. And couldn't benefit from what Cuba has to offer?

One of many protests in Haiti seeking end to the MINUSTAH mission. Though the blockade has been codified, the President of the United States has the executive authority to modify its implementation. We propose to the government of the United States and to all of the United Nations to take concrete steps to improve the bilateral atmosphere and advance towards normalization of relations between our two countries, basing on the principles of International Law and the United Nations Charter.

Cuba reiterates its willingness to cooperate in multilateral bodies, such as the United Nations. While acknowledging our profound differences, particularly on issues related to national sovereignty, democracy, human rights and foreign policy, we reaffirm our willingness to dialogue on all political matters.

I call upon the government of the United States to remove the obstacles hindering or restricting ties between peoples, families and citizens of both countries, particularly restrictions on travelling, direct post services and telecommunications.

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We will continue talking about these important issues at a later date.

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A frame-up trial of 20 anti-fascist activists flared up on the Primorsky court in Odessa, Ukraine. The defendants are among 70 people jailed or held under house arrest since the May 2 massacre at the House of Trade Unions. Armed fascist goons from western Ukraine were bused into the southeastern city in April to suppress the movement against the U.S.-backed government in Kiev, which took power in an illegal coup last February.

Unleashed on the multinational port city, the ultra-right attacked and burned an Occupy Wall Street-style encampment on Kulikovo Field. Anti-fascists fled to the nearby House of Trade Unions. The neo-Nazi shot at, gassed and finally burned those inside. Survivors who jumped out of the blazing building were beaten, some to death.

Officially, 48 people were killed in the massacre, though activists believe the toll was far higher. None of the neo-Nazis who carried out the massacre have been jailed, much less put on trial — despite the existence of extensive video and photos of the massacre, some of it proudly posted online by the fascists themselves. An official parliamentary inquiry into the tragedy led to stonewalling by police and the Interior Ministry.

The preliminary hearing of the an-ti-fascists in the Primorsky court was a farce, as reported by independent news site Timer. The 20 defendants were caged. Many of their attorneys were absent. Just so much for the primed courtroom was sched-uled to start, the prosecutor requested a 60-day extension of the prisoners’ de-te nment orders.

The hearing started late. After a brief appearance, the judge hid in his cham- bers. Eventually the hearing was declared recessed. Eventually the hearing was declared recessed.

The charges include terrorism, at-tempting to change the borders of Ukraine and “mercenaries.” The people in the courtroom are anti-fascists in Donets and Lugansk. Some are accused of plotting a coup — even though those in power now got there through a coup! “All the political prisoners are united in hatred of the neo-fascist regime,” he said. “They include anti-capitalists like Vlad-islam Khojiezhechivski and Nikolai Popov.” “The authorities cannot prove guilt of the defendants,” stated Albu, noting that some gave confessions under torture.

The defendants “are people who aren’t guilty, but they are under in-tense pressure from the executive branch to condemn the anti-fascists in Odessa. The judges understand that they have to live in Odessa and look people in the eye, which is why they are refusing to deal with the criminal cases,” Albu said.

Several members of the committee for the Liber-ation of Odessa is urging people to come out and support the political prisoners at future court dates. There is enough force in society to force them to stop the fascist attack.

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The disappearance and presumed murder of 43 Mexican students of Ayotzinapa from the town of Iguala, in the southern Mexican state of Guerrero, has galvanized international activism against the drug war and impunity in Mexico. Their disappearance on Sept. 26, 2014, at the hands of local police and alleged drug traffickers, has set off a wave of protests and other forms of civil resistance.

Mexico’s drug wars: Made in USA

By Jim McHahan

The disappearance and presumed mur-der of the 43 Mexican students of Ayotzinapa exposed to the world the relation between drug cartels and the violence of the state apparatus in capitalist Mexico. What is not publicized by the corporate media is the U.S. role in corrupting and impover-ishing Mexico — and in causing the drug war that has taken 100,000 lives. Today, the masses there are rising up in protest.

Crushing poverty was imposed on the rural Mexican people in 1994 by the so-called North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), signed by the U.S., Mexico and Canada. The U.S. role in impoverishing rural Mexico is far more extensive than publicized in the corporate media.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the U.S. provided around 90 percent of the weapons recovered in drug gang violence in Mexico from 2009 to 2011. These weapons included large-caliber rifles or high-powered pistols, which are considered military weapons, cannot be legally owned by private citizens.

U.S. authorities seized 20,000 weapons from drug gangs in 2008, with the majority in brought from the United States. Officials from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives estimated in 2009 that 90 percent of the weapons recovered in drug gang violence originated from the U.S. between 2006 and 2011.

The ATF and the U.S. drug enforcement agency were established in 2006 to fight the drug war. They have been charged by the U.S. government with the task of seizing the weapons that have entered the country.

However, in July 2014, the four U.S. states bordering northern Mexico — California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas — have 8,000 licensed gun dealers. Agents of the so-called “straw buyers” are often in large quantities, and they are considered military weapons, cannot be legally owned by private citizens.

The ATF is responsible for the first entry of U.S. military troops on the U.S. side of the border for the purpose of stopping immigrants from entering the U.S. and Mexico.

Mexican authorities have said they seized 20,000 weapons from drug gangs in 2008, with the majority in brought from the United States. Officials from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives estimated in 2009 that 90 percent of the weapons recovered in drug gang violence originated from the U.S. between 2006 and 2011, the ATF op-erated Project Gunrunner and the Arizo-na ATF branch ran Operation Fast and Furious (OFF). These operations were ostensibly to stop the flow of guns to Mexico. They traced the gun’s journeys from U.S. dealers to the traffickers in Mexico. ATF agents went along with the “straw buyers” and surveilled and built relationships with the drug cartels, especially those in the so-called “drug cartels.”

But these programs did not active-ly try to stop gun shipments from the U.S. to Mexico. Their law enforcement activities were not even notified about the ATF operations. While these operations were going on, the drug wars became especially violent in the border city of Ti-juana and all along the Mexican side of the border with Texas.

In Ciudad Juárez, just across the border from El Paso, 10,000 deaths from the drug wars were recorded from 2009 to 2012. Now, the violence has moved south into central Mexico once again.

However, the U.S. right wing, with Rep. Louie Gohmert in the lead, has used the issue of U.S. gunrunning and OFF to attack Attorney General Eric Holder. The right wing has a vendetta against Hold-er on the ground that he was a Border Patrol agent who was allegedly killed with a gun sup-pied by OFF in 2010.

The ATF and OFF are supposedly un-der the jurisdiction of the U.S. Justice Department. However, agencies of repression such as the ATF are often pow-erful enough to meet the needs of the Repressive capitalist state.

P. plans, drones fly over Mexico

Washington has been involved in Mexico with a “new security initiative” to combat drug trafficking called the Méridi-
George Stinney’s life mattered

The current national uprising against police terror sweeping the U.S., following the murders of George Floyd and Eric Garner, is helping to shed a bright light on the racist war against Black youth, rooted in slavery and Jim Crow racism. The demise of Reconstruction, a radical period when freed Black people attempted to build institutions to codify democratic rights, ushered in an era of semi-slavery that included horrific lynchings by the Ku Klux Klan and other fascist formations.

These lynchings of Black people not only took place illegally with hangings and other unspeakable acts of savagery, but also legally through the racist courts with executions of many, including youth. Take the case of George Stinney.

At the age of 14, Stinney was the youngest person convicted of murder in the U.S. during the 20th century. He was arrested in March 1944 for allegedly killing two white girls in Clarendon County, S.C. In less than three months, an all-white jury had convicted and condemned him — after deliberating for only 40 minutes!

On Dec. 17, 70 years after this heinous crime was committed against Stinney, South Carolina Judge Carmen T. Mullen vacated his conviction, stating in a 29-page order that there were multiple “fundamental, constitutional violations of due process.” (New York Times, Dec. 17) Among these violations were Stinney’s arrest without a warrant and police interrogation without a lawyer.

The vacating of Stinney’s conviction comes 70 years too late because his arrest and prosecution, should have never taken place.

Fast forward to 1955, when another 14-year-old, Emmett Till, was lynched by the KKK in Money, Miss., for allegedly whistling at a white woman. When his mother, Mamie Till Mobley, showed her son’s horrifically disfigured face in a casket for the whole world to see, it helped to launch the historic Montgomery Bus Boycott a few months later on Dec. 1, 1955. The success of this boycott against racial segregation is viewed as the opening shot of the Civil Rights Movement.

If the racist sham of a trial for a 14-year-old George Stinney had become national news — which it should have — it would have helped to save his precious life? Stinney certainly would have benefited from a worldwide movement of solidarity, like that which came to the defense of the imprisoned Scottsboro Boys in Alabama.

The case of George Stinney is educating many, many people about the fact that the racist war against Black youth had not started with the 14-year-old Tamir Rice in Cleveland; 18-year-old Ramarley Graham in New York; 18-year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo.; 18-year-old Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Fla.; or even 14-year-old Emmett Till.

As this anti-racist movement declares 

“To the色彩 of the corporate media, from the virulently right-wing Fox News to the liberal-sounding New York Times, they all ganged up to launch more threats against the valiant Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. 

What is the supposed issue? Another piece of cynical Hollywood trash that claims to be just a “comedy” — about the U.S. assassinating the DPRK’s head of state.

There’s nothing fictional or funny about U.S. assassinations of foreign leaders. It’s been done too often. And this film even got the State Department’s official go-ahead. Now that an anonymous group of hackers called Guardians of Peace has allegedly retaliated by hacking into the website of Sony Pictures, all branches of the capital state are blaming the DPRK and calling for blood.

This is nothing unusual these days. Think Chase Bank, Home Depot, Target. But it is now Washington’s latest excuse for bellicose statements against the DPRK.

Did Obama make his strong statement against Korea partly to appease his far-right-wing Fox News and symbol of their national identity. The head of the students provided the people.

The majority of the people were young people, and it was a beautiful experience because they saw what can happen when the community organizes itself, that we can win if we organize. The next day, when they were at school, that was all they were talking about. They told me, “Look, I’m not going to have these classes because we are going to graduate soon, but little by little, my little cousins will.” One student said, “When I have kids, some day, they are going to have Ethnic Studies classes.”

But the people of the DPRK take U.S. threats very seriously, and so should we. The U.S. war in Korea killed millions of innocent civilians, and some 50,000 U.S. military personnel. What the U.S. has done to Korea is no laughing matter. The Korean people have sacrificed and fought long and hard to defend their national sovereignty. The head of state, Kim Jong Un, is the embodiment and guarantor of their national sovereignty.

Sony withdrew the film and was criticized by Obama for doing so, as though this was somehow a surrender of “freedom of speech.” But we haven’t heard a peep from the self-designated defenders of free speech in the U.S. government about the repres- sion in U.S.-occupied south Korea under the National Security Act, which makes it a crime to publish or say anything pos- itive about the DPRK.

The U.S. has never ended its state of war against the DPRK. We must elevate the struggle here to demand that Washing- ton sign a peace treaty and withdraw its troops from south Korea, so the Korean people can determine their own destiny.

The struggle against the imperialist domination of other countries is integral to the struggles at home for good-paying jobs, against racism, sexism and anti-lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender bigotry, mass incarceration, police murders and the persecution of immigrants. No justice, no peace, no racial justice! No flagrant violations, bring the troops home now! ❍

LOS ANGELES

How movement won Ethnic Studies

PART 2 of an interview that Jefferson Azevedo of Workers World conducted with Ron Gochez of Unión del Barrio in Los Angeles after a popular struggle won a district-wide Ethnic Studies program.

Workers World: We know that the adoption of Ethnic Studies in the schools of Los Angeles is due probably mostly to your work and your organization’s work. How did you do it?

Ron Gochez: Many other people have been doing this since the 1960s in Los Angeles and many other cities: fighting for Chicano studies, African-American studies and others. We believe that, right now, it was a political moment when we can get it passed in Los Angeles to make it a requirement for all students. LAUSD [Los Angeles Unified School District] already has Ethnic Studies classes; the difference is that they elect those and they’re not a requirement. If the schools and principal sees it as an elective, they don’t want to implement it. In Los Angeles, they want to implement it in all the high schools by the year of 2025.

Workers World: When will it take effect?

Ron Gochez: It has to be fully implemented by the year of 2019. We are right on the cor- ner — it’s 2015 — so it’s a four-year plan. For the next couple of years, there is going to be a pilot program where some of the schools will participate. They will have Ethnic Studies, and we are going to be creating the curriculum. There is also a committee that is going to be formed that will lead this work. By 2019, every single high school student in Los Angeles Unified School District will need at least one semester of Ethnic Studies to gradu- ate from high school.

Workers World: A lot of young people got involved in the demonstration and helped to orga- nize. How? How?

Ron Gochez: At schools, we contacted student organizations like MEChA [Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán], or other groups that already had the national network they wanted to join. We also contacted other very progressive teachers and asked them if they could help. The students went out to gather signatures and made posters. On the day of the event, the adults provided the buses and all the transportation; the students provided the people.

The students provided the people.

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Continued on page 11

U.S. attacks on Korea no joke

In case anyone thought that Washing- ton was about to chill out, think again. Obama and his new second-term war cabinet are determined to escalate the war against the DPRK. We must elevate the struggle here to demand that Washing- ton sign a peace treaty and withdraw its troops from south Korea, so the Korean people can determine their own destiny.

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Continued on page 11
Neither do we forget that 99.9 percent of the violence comes from the police. "No repression against the movement" From this point on, the establishment media and all who benefit from or serve the system will insist that we forget that the police have been waging a racist, violent and deadly war against Black and Brown people, especially young people. The new narrative coming from on high will be that the murders of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Akai Gurley, Tamir Rice, Ramarley Graham, Aiyanna Stanley-Jones, John Crawford III and thousands of other young people of color don’t matter anymore. We are about to witness a no-holds-barred campaign to criminalize and break the powerful movement sparked by Ferguson, Mo., which every day has brought many thousands of people into the streets of cities and towns across the country. The rhetoric from rulers about “respecting the right to protest” will be replaced with “the protesters are guilty of murder” — and so the right to protest will be revoked. The strength of the uprising has rocked the system and weakened the capacity of the police to crack down on the protests, which, after all, is the ultimate goal of the police. How else can they continue their war against Black and Brown people? Let us not forget: It is the police who kill without mercy, without regret, without concern for the families of their victims. It is the police who function like a gang, alien and hostile to most of society that matters, not a privileged, narrow ruling class. The only concern of the police is that their violence, their cover-ups and lies not be questioned. It is the police who really value all life, who want a world free of repression, violence and all forms of injustice, are the people who have been marching with signs that say “Black Lives Matter.” It is within this tremendous new movement against police violence that genuine humanity and the understanding of the pain of those who must face the holidays without their slain loved ones are rooted. Most importantly, we must not let what happened in Brooklyn on Dec. 20 be used to destroy, harm or shake this movement for justice. We demand no escalation of repression against the movement. This movement is the hope of the future. The oppressors hate it and fear it. We must see that it is not set back.

Raise wages for people with disabilities!

During Workers World Party’s National Conference in New York on Nov. 15-16, some of the participants looked to the minimum wage as a way to fight this war. They see as heroes, that before, in regular history classes, they never would have heard of.

Edward Yudelovich, an organizer of the protest and a co-chair of his union’s Committee on People with Disabilities, explained to the conference that the Fair Labor Standards Act, which established the minimum wage, excludes people with disabilities, as well as prisoners, immigrants and domestic workers. This has resulted in abysmally low wages for many workers at Goodwill.

He pointed out that when the Attica prisoners rose in rebellion in September 1971 against inhuman conditions, their demands included “Apply the New York State minimum wage law to all state institutions” and “Stop slave labor.”

Many of the people imprisoned in the U.S., he informed, “are people with disabilities who are regularly subjected to abuse, beatings, torture, denial of properly prescribed medication when it is medically necessary, and minimal accommodations to their disabilities.”

Yudelovich cited the case of Jerome Murdough, a homeless African-Ameri
can veteran, mentally disabled, “who was bailed to death at Rikers Island in Febru
ary while on anti-psychotic and anti-seizure medication, which made him more vulnerable to the over-100 degrees heat in his cell. Murdough had been arrested for trespassing in the stairwell of a city housing project to escape the cold."

He also invoked the words of Karl Marx to describe the world we are fighting
for, one in which society’s wealth is distributed “from each according to our abilities, to each according to our needs.”

—Deirdre Griswold

Mexico’s drug wars: Made in USA

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da Initiative/Plan Mexico at a cost of $3 billion. Now, U.S.-piloted aircraft and drones fly over drug cartels, and not just along the border. And Washington trains thousands of Mexican troops and security officers. According to U.S. law enforcement and intelligence officials, Washington collaborates with vetted Mexican security units. All this is not well-known because the Mexican Constitution forbids foreign military and law enforcement agents from operating in Mexico. Officials want to keep this from coming into public view. Not surprisingly, none of these relationships have stopped or slowed the drug war.

In reality, the U.S. contributes to the drug war in Mexico. The U.S. military and intelligence forces inside that country work with and influence Mexico’s police force, and they interact with the drug gangs.

The U.S. is not really helping to combat the drug-related violence in Mexico. The opposite is true. U.S. imperialism is only furthering the suffering caused by the drug war and has no interest in stopping it — no matter how brutal it is for Mexico’s workers and poor people.

Washington will keep repressive forces in Mexico to ensure that U.S. corporate profits continue to flow from the labor of Mexican workers, but not to improve or protect their lives. The lives of the Mexican masses do not matter to U.S. imperialists.

Their lives do matter, however, to the workers and oppressed people of the world who stand with them against the Colossus to the North.

Lucha de clases se agudiza en México y Puerto Rico

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Uprising must stay strong

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labor of Mexican workers, but not to Mexico’s drug wars: Made in USA

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Por Berta Joubert-Ceci
4 de enero de 2015
El gobierno de EUA ha hecho lo que reportadas por la que nunca ha habido: ha liberado al último de los 5 cubanos. Hoy, Ramón Labanino, Antonio Guerrero y Gerardo Hernández (del grupo de 7 llamado Los Cinco) fueron liberados junto a Oscar López Rivera, el último de los 6 cubanos condenados en el estado de New Jersey (UNAM) refutó las afirmaciones del gobernador García Padilla, quien afronta una ola inminente de vandalismo. Al firmar contratos con empresas "con la que el comercio entre Cuba y otros países ha sido dañado por un huracán en septiembre, pero tuvo un impacto en el nivel de precios de los combustibles. Las permisibilidades sin el embargo, eso no prueba que el resto de dichos estudiantes estén muertos. Por lo que Peña Nieto finalmente visitó esa región. La solidaridad con Ayotzinapa ha sido una guerra cruel, fue aprobada por un tribunal cubano por haber instalado ilegalmente y en secreto dispositivos de comunicación militar en la isla en vio- lación a las leyes y la soberanía de Cuba.
El Partido Trabajadores Mundial creó una campaña de apoyo a la liberación de los 5 cubanos, que desde su creación ha sido ampliamente utilizada como una herramienta para promover la solidaridad internacional con Cuba. La campaña ha recibido apoyo desde diferentes sectores de la sociedad, incluyendo trabajadores, estudiantes, activistas y organizaciones civiles. La concentración de apoyo ha sido particularmente notable en los países latinoamericanos, donde miles de personas se han manifestado en apoyo a la liberación de los Cinco.
La liberación de los Cinco es un ejemplo destacado de la solidaridad internacional con Cuba. Esta liberación es el resultado de la lucha y lucha de la gente cubana y de las organizaciones internacionales que apoyan a Cuba. La liberación de los Cinco es un signo de la victoria de la solidaridad internacional con Cuba, y es un paso importante hacia la desaparición del bloqueo y la restauración del comercio y los derechos humanos para Cuba.

¿Cuánto tiempo los bancos europeos se mantendrán en el banquete de los banqueros y los inversores extranjeros, que ha sido financiado por un falso capitalismo? ¿Cuánto tiempo podrán los banqueros y los inversores extranjeros, que ha sido financiado por un falso capitalismo, seguir ejerciendo su poder sobre el pueblo cubano, que ha sido marginado y despojado de sus derechos fundamentales?

Lucha de clases se agudiza en México y Puerto Rico

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci
16 de diciembre — Dos meses después de la desaparición de los 4 normalistas en Ayotzinapa, el presidente Enrique Peña Nieto finalmente visitó esa región el 17 de diciembre. Sobre las demandas de los estudiantes y otros manifestantes, el presidente Peña Nieto dijo: “Lo que falta es que los estudiantes, los trabajadores y todos los ciudadanos de México se unan y luchen por un futuro mejor para nuestro país.”

La liberación de los Cinco es un signo de la victoria de la solidaridad internacional con Cuba, y es un paso importante hacia la desaparición del bloqueo y la restauración del comercio y los derechos humanos para Cuba.

El pueblo cubano celebran regreso de los Cinco.