



# Historic union victory

## Boston school bus drivers win back fired leaders, stronger contract

By Martha Grevatt

After more than two years of hard-fought struggle, the militant, fighting rank and file of the Boston School Bus Drivers Union — United Steelworkers Local 8751 — has won a historic victory against global giant Veolia/Transdev, one of the most notorious capitalist union-busters, as well as Boston Public School bosses, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh and their media mouthpieces.

Four fired union leaders, out of work since October 2013 on bogus charges of leading a wildcat strike, are back on the job. Transdev bosses were bound and determined that the four would never return. But at 4 p.m. on Dec. 18, after a marathon 25-hour negotiating session, Veolia and city bosses signed comprehensive settlement agreements with the union that reinstated President Andre François, Vice President Steve Kirschbaum, Financial Secretary Steve Gillis and Grievance Chair Garry Murchison.

In addition to reinstatement of the four with full seniority rights and a substantial monetary payment, the local won a contract with economic justice and the protection of 40 years of the collective bargaining process. The contract will be fully retroactive on all wages, pensions and benefits.

The workers will get an immediate 5.5 percent raise and collectively more than \$1.7 million in back wages, going back to the contract expiration date in 2014. Retirement, which will now be after 30 years' service with no age requirement, has substantial increases in severance payments and benefits. Other gains are too numerous to list.

The set of agreements also protects the previously union-run pension plan, which was under attack, and allows the union to immediately enter into grievance settlement directly with the city, without Veolia's interference, for nearly 700 grievances resulting from three years of Veolia's contract violations.

The union/job security guarantee with the city, which mandates that any future company or the city must accept the workers and the full union contract, is extended to 2019. Local 8751 beat back the introduction of radio chip-implanted tracking badges and the use of biometric technology to spy on workers. It also successfully fought to get as much union-protective language as possible to restrain the newly introduced spy cameras on the buses, which have become a regrettable fact of transportation work life. The union plans to continue the battle against the cameras in alliance with the parents and community in the coming period.

For the first time the union has a contract with language protecting trans\* workers from discrimination based on gender identity/gender expression.

*Continued on page 10*



PHOTOS: TEAM SOLIDARITY  
Formerly fired Steve Gillis, Andre François, Stevan Kirschbaum, and Garry Murchison in victory, above. Team Solidarity slate members, left.

## Protesters tell racists: 'Black lives matter!'



WWW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Philadelphia activists confront racist 'Mummers' event, Jan. 1. See page 6.

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# Rev. Pinkney charged for having a Bible

By David Sole  
Detroit

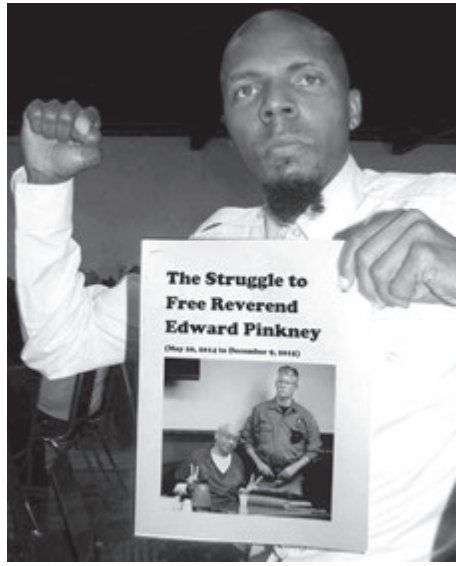
Supporters of a Michigan political prisoner, the Rev. Edward Pinkney, continued their efforts unabated through the holiday season. Behind the walls of the infamous Marquette Prison, attacks by officials also were unrelenting against him.

Forbidden to make phone calls for at least six months, Rev. Pinkney has been able to get out some reports of mistreatment through letters and a prison email system. Just before Christmas, corrections officers wrote up a misconduct “ticket,” charging Rev. Pinkney with having a Bible on his bed. This is another in a long line of “tickets” against him since his transfer to Marquette on Oct. 6. Three other charges were tossed out on appeal through the prison procedure, including a charge of “smuggling” in late November. Two other charges over phone usage were sustained even though no prison rules had been broken. These led to the cancelling of his phone usage.

Rev. Pinkney describes Marquette Prison as “a kind of concentration camp where prisoners ... are assembled to be tortured.” He reports that “the violence is out of control. A fight broke out two beds from me in the black mold room where I am once again sleeping. One prisoner attacked another. It was a big mess. The correction officers pepper-sprayed the whole room and I got sick from the spray. This was after the attack. ... The hatred of some of the correctional officers against Black prisoners is unbelievable.” (posted at bhbanco.org, Dec. 22) Rev. Pinkney has named one particular guard as hostile and aggressive against him — Officer Schretter — and has asked supporters to contact public officials about the mistreatment.

## Demanding the state act

Concern for Rev. Pinkney’s safety has motivated phone call and letter campaigns. Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder and Michigan Department of Corrections Director Heidi Washington have been bombarded for the past month



Lamont Lilly, WWP vice-presidential candidate, at Emergency Conference to Save Rev. Pinkney, Dec. 12.

from concerned individuals across the country. Marquette’s warden, Robert Napel, has also been the recipient of numerous complaints.

A letter from the Detroit office of the American Civil Liberties Union cautioned Director Washington and Warden Napel that the ACLU is investigating the conditions Rev. Pinkney has complained of and that officials could be held legally liable for any official “indifference.”

Attorneys from the Constitutional Litigation Associates based in Detroit, in a letter sent Dec. 28, also let Warden Robert Napel know they are monitoring the situation. This group provided legal aid to Rev. Pinkney in prior cases going back to 2006.

Following the Emergency Conference to Save Rev. Pinkney held in

Detroit on Dec. 12, members of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice (MECAWI.org) began contacting members of the state House and Senate seeking their intervention. Sens. Coleman Young Jr. and Bert Johnson, along with Rep. Rose Mary Robinson, expressed their concern, resulting in an official inquiry addressed to Rev. Pinkney from Keith Barber, legislative corrections ombudsman. Rev. Pinkney was able to reply to Barber, detailing the many threats and dangers he is facing.

Rev. Pinkney was buoyed with the recent filing of an amicus curiae brief by the Michigan state ACLU in support of his appeal against his unjust conviction in the fall of 2014. “The prosecution of Rev. Pinkney was effectively a penalty for his lawful exercise of his First Amendment right to engage in the political and civil life of his community,” the brief stated. “In addition, his trial was tainted by improper references to his controversial, but lawful, First Amendment activities.” (bhbanco.org) It is thought that many months may elapse before the Michigan Court of Appeals hears Rev. Pinkney’s appeal.

Supporters are urged to call and express their concern for Rev. Pinkney’s safety to Keith Barber, legislative corrections ombudsman, at 517- 373-8573. □

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We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

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# DOC's faked evidence shakes Mumia hearing

By **Betsey Piette**  
Scranton, Pa.

The third and final day for Mumia Abu-Jamal's lawsuit against the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections ended on Dec. 23 with the jaw-dropping revelation that the lawyer representing the DOC had knowingly introduced false evidence. In this case, the DOC is the defendant.

The case involves Abu-Jamal's charges of medical misconduct and negligence against the DOC and his request for anti-viral medications to cure his hepatitis C. The hearing was held before U.S. District Court Judge Robert Mariani in Scranton, Pa.

This hearing's resolution holds tremendous potential for the thousands of prisoners suffering from untreated but curable Hep C. To put these numbers in perspective — while 1 percent of the general population has the Hep C virus, for prisoners the number is closer to 17 percent.

The major shocker came as Abu-Jamal's lead attorney, Robert Boyle, cross-examined Dr. Paul Noel, chief medical officer of the Pennsylvania DOC. Boyle asked Noel to confirm that it was his affidavit that DOC attorney Laura Neal had introduced into evidence.

Under oath, Noel responded, "No." He explained that while the document bore his signature it was not the affidavit he had signed. He said it contained a paragraph that he had instructed Noel to omit. Noel testified that he told Neal on multiple occasions that the inserted paragraph was incorrect.

In September 2015, this same altered affidavit was the key piece of "evidence" used by a Pennsylvania magistrate judge to deny a hearing for Abu-Jamal's case.

Attorney Neal had knowingly tampered with the evidence by including an erroneous statement that Abu-Jamal's low hepatitis C viral load level meant he would not sicken for many years. Most hepatitis C experts agree that a patient's viral load has nothing to do with the progression of the disease.

As Neal stumbled with excuses that the information was factually correct, Dr. Noel replied, "But misleading and false in its conclusions." At this point, Judge

Mariani cautioned Neal that she was at risk of "impeaching her own witness."

Dr. Noel acknowledged that another paragraph in his affidavit was also false. This one stated that Dr. Ramon Gadea, the only infectious disease specialist to examine Mumia, "ruled out hepatitis C as a cause for Abu-Jamal's extreme skin eruptions." On the contrary, Gadea's discharge orders for Abu-Jamal following a Sept. 9 consultation stated that hepatitis C could be a secondary cause of the severe skin rash Abu-Jamal still suffered from.

Gadea recommended that Hep C should be treated after ruling out a rheumatoid condition.

After first stating that "it was anything but clear" that Abu-Jamal should get treatment, Noel finally agreed with Boyle that Abu-Jamal's baseline tests for key Hep C indicators were grounds for his receiving the anti-viral cure. Abu-Jamal already has significant fibrosis (scarring of the liver); anemia of chronic disease; low blood platelets; a severe extrahepatic skin condition; and a 63 percent chance of having cirrhosis of the liver.

## Protocols deny care

The DOC has stalled in treating Abu-Jamal and thousands of other prisoners in Pennsylvania's prisons with active hepatitis C and claims that first it needs protocols to prioritize which prisoners would be sick enough to get the costly anti-viral drugs.

Attorney Neal made another blunder by attempting to insert the DOC's new Hep C "interim protocol" into evidence. Claiming that the document had to be kept from public view, Neal insisted that Abu-Jamal's attorneys sign confidentiality agreements not to disclose its contents. They refused.

Before court on the final day, the DOC attorneys again tried to pressure Boyle and co-counsel Bret Grote to sign. Both refused, aware that Prison Radio had already filed a request to view the document under Pennsylvania's "Right to Know" policy.

These protocols contain a number of



Supporters rally on first day of hearing, Dec 18.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

barriers that inmates with chronic hepatitis C have to get through to even be considered for treatment. Yet nothing in the protocols appears to mandate use of the new life-saving anti-viral drugs.

The final hurdle to get "consideration for treatment for Hep C" requires an endoscopy of the throat. Even then, the only inmates who might be treated must have an immediate risk of "blood vessels bursting in their throats." Prisoners might be considered "sick enough to treat for Hep C" if they demonstrate "esophageal varices with a raised portal pressure" as proof of liver cirrhosis. In other words, the sick prisoners must be near death to get this care.

Dr. Noel testified that under the new protocols only five out of an estimated 5,000 prisoners with chronic Hep C were being treated with the new anti-viral drug: 0.1 percent. The number of prisoners treated dropped from around 20 under the 2013 treatment protocol using Interferon. During the 22 months while the new protocols were being developed, no prisoner was treated for Hep C.

Two anti-viral drugs, Sovaldi and Harvoni, have a 90 percent to 95 percent cure rate for chronic hepatitis C. Gilead Sciences, which controls the sale of these drugs, has priced them at \$84,000 and \$94,500 respectively.

## The prison health racket

The latest guidelines from the American Association for the Study of Liver Disease and the Centers for Disease Control recommend that all chronic Hep C

patients be given the anti-viral drugs without regard to severity of symptoms. Despite the recommendations from these reputable health specialists, Dr. Jay Cowan, whose company, Correctional Medical Associates, oversees medical care in Pennsylvania prisons, testified that the DOC was justified in using their "risk stratification" policy to treat only the sickest patients — those most

likely to die without the drugs.

CMA is a subsidiary of Corizon Health, the country's largest for-profit medical services provider for prisons, jails and other detention facilities. The deaths of hundreds of prisoners under their care has resulted in numerous lawsuits against Corizon.

Under cross-examination, Boyle asked Cowan to consider, if he had a patient in his private practice with significant chance of liver fibrosis, "would you treat the patient with the new anti-viral direct acting drugs?"

Cowan responded, "If they could pay \$90,000 for the treatment."

In evidence submitted to the court, Abu-Jamal's attorneys noted that the cost of treating Abu-Jamal's skin rash stemming from untreated Hep C was over \$160,000. That is, it would have been less expensive to treat earlier with the anti-viral drugs.

Judge Mariani's ruling is not expected for at least six weeks. During that time, the court has to produce written trial transcripts, and the attorneys on both sides will submit written briefs for the judge to review. There will be no additional hearings in Scranton. Mariani's ruling can also be appealed by either party involved.

At the end of the very tumultuous final session, Dr. Joe Harris, the former Black Panther Party member and hepatitis C expert who has served as a medical consultant for Abu-Jamal, said, "This was a Brown v. Topeka [Board of Education] landmark moment for all prisoners suffering from Hep C." □

## Oakland, Calif.

# 7th annual Oscar Grant vigil held

By **Terri Kay**  
Oakland, Calif.

The seventh annual vigil to honor the memory of Oscar Grant was held on Jan. 1 at the Fruitvale Bay Area Rapid Transit station, where Grant was killed by BART police officer Johannes Mehserle. The 22-year-old father was handcuffed and lying face down when Mehserle shot and killed him on Jan. 1, 2009. After the community erupted in protest, Mehserle was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter in Los Angeles, where he was tried after winning a motion for change of venue.

In attendance at the vigil were Grant's mother, Wanda Johnson; his young daughter, Tatiana; and his uncle, Cephus "Uncle Bobby" Johnson; among others. A number of community members and family members of other victims of police killings spoke, including Minister Keith Muhammad; Sheikh Hashim; Lau-

rie Valdez, spouse of Antonio Valdez, who was killed by the San Jose State University police; Rosemary Duenez, mother of Ernest Duenez, who was killed by the Manteca police; and Cyn-di Mitchell, sister of Mario Romera, who was killed by the Vallejo police.

The most touching part of the vigil was when Jack Bryson read a poem written by Tatiana Grant, thanking supporters and saying that if she had known it was the last time she would talk to her father, she wouldn't have let him leave. Tatiana was four years old when Oscar was killed.

Controversially and to the surprise of many, the vigil organizers also invited BART Chief of Police Kenton Rainey to speak. In response, the Anti Police-Terror Project issued the following statement later that day:

"Although we stand in total support and solidarity with the Oscar Foundation, Wanda Johnson and the Grant



WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

family, we stand in strong opposition to ANY representative from the BART Police Department being given a platform to propagate a perspective that they are in compliance and/or in support of the people's interests.

"It is our position that police departments cannot be reformed. They serve as the military arm of the white supremacist, predatory apparatus, in this case the Bay Area Rapid Transit Agency.

"We acknowledge that we can and must

engage in the reform arena in order to get relief, or what the Panther Party called survival programs. BART Police Department and every other policing agency in the United States is, and will always be, the military arm of the ruling elite. This has been and remains our position. We stand in solidarity with the families and disenfranchised masses that are being terrorized by police agencies in Oakland, San Francisco, Chicago and across the U.S." □

# Muslim workers fight for right to pray

By Martha Grevatt

Cargill, an international conglomerate with 155,000 employees in 68 countries, claims that “we help people thrive.” The 190 workers the company fired in December from its Fort Morgan, Colo., meatpacking plant would likely disagree.

Cargill employs about 2,000 workers at the plant; around 600 are Somali immigrants. Until December these Muslim workers were allowed to pray in the plant at the times prescribed by their faith — which vary depending on the season. They were not given any extra time away from their jobs as meatcutters, but were able to use their paid breaks and unpaid lunchtime to pray in the “reflection room” provided by the company.

On Dec. 18 they were abruptly told, “If you want to pray, go home.” (Denver Post, Dec. 31) Not accepting what they saw as an affront, 200 Muslim workers, most of them Somali, walked off the job on Dec. 21. After refusing to return to work until their religious rights were restored, 190 workers, some with as much as 10 years’ seniority, were fired two days later. Under company policy they cannot reapply for their jobs for six months.

This firing was a blatantly illegal act of religious discrimination. Employers are legally required to make accommodations so that workers need not choose between working and following their faith. Courts have ruled that denying such accommodations violates Title VII of the 1964 federal Civil Rights Act.

Title VII has meant, for example, that a Seventh Day Adventist cannot be forced to work on Saturday. Yet, according to the Denver Post, plant manager Michael Martin claims, “Accommodation is not guaranteed every day and depends on changing factors in the plant.” In other words, the company will respect your civil rights but only if its production schedules — driven by the profit motive — allow.

Cargill claims to be “committed to feeding the world in a responsible way, reducing environmental impact and improving the communities where we live and work.” (cargill.com) The company’s record, including this latest outrage, tells a different story.

In 2002 Teamsters in Cleveland were forced to

strike the company’s salt mine over egregious concessionary demands. The International Labor Rights Fund sued Cargill in 2005, along with Nestle and others, charging involvement in human trafficking and forced child labor in Mali. In 2011 Cargill was the subject of one of the largest meat recalls on record.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is negotiating on behalf of the fired workers to reverse the racist, anti-immigrant, Islamophobic firings.

## Where is the union?

Workers at the Cargill plant are represented by Teamsters Local 455. Yet the local’s website has no information about this important workers’ struggle. There should be at least a grievance over the mass firings, first and foremost on the basis of discrimination. Most, if not all, union contracts prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion and national origin, among other categories.

Even if only one or two union workers were facing discrimination, the union’s obligation would be to uphold civil rights and oppose divisive prejudice that threatens solidarity. At Cargill the issue affects about 600 Somali Muslim immigrants — over 33 percent of the workforce.

There is another grievable matter: Were the workers afforded their legal right to have their union representative present when they were dismissed? The union could also file a “past practice” grievance, over the company’s sudden, arbitrary suspension of a practice allowing workers to pray every day in accordance with their beliefs. Past practices, unwritten but generally accepted by both parties, are legally binding under a collective bargaining agreement.

If this multinational Teamster local challenges these illegal firings, it will strengthen solidarity and help the workers fight for better wages. Right now the average wage is \$14 an hour, not enough to support a family. Moreover, this struggle could be the basis for a labor-community coalition against Islamophobia, jointly spearheaded by CAIR and the Teamsters. Whether it is Donald Trump or companies like Cargill that is the enemy, the labor movement must take a stand wherever bigotry raises its ugly head. □

# Racism a major factor in denying pay to student athletes

By Chris Fry

College sports are big business. In 2013, football revenues topped \$3.4 billion, doubling over the last 10 years. (businessinsider.com, Dec. 17, 2014) This vast amount rivals the revenue of the National Football League at \$6 billion and the National Basketball Association at \$5 billion. (usatoday.com, March 20, 2014)

The three-week March Madness men’s college basketball tournament in 2015 earned \$900 million in TV revenue for the National Collegiate Athletic Association. (cbsnews.com, March 20)

And where did this vast amount of cash go? Much of it went to marketing and concession companies, banks for servicing debt, and, of course, the “corporate executives” at the NCAA, and the athletic departments and head coaches. At most colleges and universities, almost no money goes to the academic departments.

Only a tiny fraction of this revenue goes to the young people who must spend long hours in practice, in transport to various stadiums and arenas, and in competition, where their long-term health is under constant threat from injury. Denied the right to form a union by the NCAA and the courts, the players can receive only tuition, room, board and books, amounting to less than \$50,000 a year. College players are denied pay for the long hours of work they put into the sports.

Many college athletes, who often come from poor and oppressed communities with underfunded

schools, are shepherded into classes where they receive no education at all.

Defending this outrageous exploitation of the young players, NCAA President Mark Emmert told the press that “one of the biggest reasons fans like college sports is that they believe the athletes are really students who play for a love of the sport.” (dailykos.com, Dec. 30) Emmert’s salary in 2014 was close to \$2 million, not including any perks.

## Racist views toward Black athletes

The Washington Post recently published the results of a study conducted by professors from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and California State at Long Beach. The study revealed that the “public’s” negative attitude towards paying college athletes is rooted in racism. The majority of male college football and basketball players are Black. (washingtonpost.com, Dec. 30)

In 2014, surveys showed that while only 28 percent of whites favored paying college athletes, 52 percent of Black respondents favored paying them. This new study split the white respondents into two groups. Before asking whether college athletes should be paid, one group was shown pictures of young Black men with popular African-American first and last names. The other group was shown no “American” names or pictures at all.

Those whites who were shown the names and pictures were typically much more negative about pay-

## On the Picket Line

By Matty Starrdust and Sue Davis

### Labor against racist police in San Francisco

The San Francisco Labor Council, a coalition of 150 unions representing over 100,000 workers in the Bay Area, spoke out against the Dec. 2 police murder of Mario Woods. In a resolution dated Dec. 14, the council calls for an investigation into Woods’ death and for the San Francisco district attorney to “prosecute the police who fired their guns to the fullest extent of the law, up to and including charging them with murder.” The resolution also notes that “use of deadly force by police officers against Black and Brown males is occurring regularly across our nation” and as a result “has made even minor interactions with law enforcement potentially life threatening.” (For resolution, see [slaborcouncil.org](http://slaborcouncil.org).)

Mario Woods, a 26-year-old Black man, was gunned down by at least five cops in the rapidly gentrifying Bayview Hunter’s Point neighborhood. Video shows Woods slowly walking away when police opened fire, shooting him 20 times. Protests demanding justice for Mario Woods, including school walkouts, vigils and traffic disruptions, have rocked the Bay Area. (workers.org, Dec. 16)

### Netflix expands parental leave policy to hourly workers

After Netflix announced Aug. 4 that it would offer a year of paid parental leave for salaried employees (the highest such benefit in the country), three workers’ and women’s advocacy groups demanded Netflix expand coverage for maternity, paternity and adoptions to lower-paid hourly employees. Ultra Violet’s petition had nearly 50,000 signers. On Dec. 9, Netflix bowed to pressure and now offers streaming workers 16 weeks at full pay, 14 weeks for customer-service workers and 12 weeks for DVD-by-mail workers. To sign a new petition demanding Netflix offer all workers the same benefit, see [weareultraviolet.org](http://weareultraviolet.org).

It’s criminal that out of 185 industrialized countries in the world, the U.S. and Papua New Guinea are the only ones without national paid parental leave! Since 1993, the U.S. offers only 12 weeks of unpaid leave for workers at companies with 50 or more employees. A tiny percentage of U.S. workers receive paid leave — at the discretion of private companies and in California and New Jersey.

### Minimum wage hikes in 14 states

On Jan. 1, the minimum wage in 14 states rose. The raises range from a nickel an hour in South Dakota to a full dollar in Alaska, Nebraska, California and Massachusetts. The last two states are the first ones with a \$10 wage floor. Eight out of the 14 have a wage of \$9 or more. The minimum wage is even higher in New York for fast food workers: \$10.50 in New York City and \$9.75 elsewhere in the state. The District of Columbia, Maryland, Minnesota and Nevada will raise their wage floors later in 2016. Due to broad popular support, 29 states now offer wages higher than the federal minimum of \$7.25, set in 2009.

Many cities and counties — Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco and smaller West Coast cities — are gradually phasing in a \$15 minimum wage. Several states and cities have \$15 minimum wage laws for public sector and government-contract workers. Gov. Cuomo announced Nov. 10 that he would raise New York state workers’ wages to \$15. (Huffington Post, Dec. 23) The struggle for \$15 and a union continues!

### Anti-union attacks continue at Trump Hotel

Reactionary billionaire presidential hopeful Donald Trump mounted a legal challenge to the union drive at the Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas. A majority of the 500 workers voted Dec. 4-5 to join the Culinary Workers and Bartenders unions, both affiliates of UNITE HERE. Hotel management filed an objection to the election with the National Labor Relations Board on Dec. 14. While noting that Trump “insists on being treated fairly as he campaigns,” food service worker Jeffrey Wise said: “I also want to be treated fairly. My coworkers and I participated in a democratic election process.” Statistics show that Trump workers make at least \$3 less an hour than workers doing comparable jobs at unionized hotels in Las Vegas. (thinkprogress.com, Dec. 15)

This is the latest in a series of Trump attacks on the hotel workers, who are majority women and 80 percent Latino/a immigrants and people of color — two groups which Trump has viciously denigrated in his campaign. Hotel management was cited by the NLRB in 2014 for illegally suspending five workers for wearing union buttons at work and in August 2015 for illegal surveillance, intimidation and physical assault while trying to stop unionization. □

Continued on page 10

## WW commentary

# Racist police violence & the need for socialist revolution

By **Monica Moorehead**

“According to [Karl] Marx, the state [comprised of armed bodies of men and women such as police; prisons; courts, etc.] is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another; it is the creation of ‘order,’ which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between classes. ... The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without. ...

“Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of ‘order’; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state.”

These quotes come from the pamphlet “The State and Revolution: Class Society and the State,” published almost a century ago by Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the first successful socialist revolution in the former Soviet Union. Lenin based much of his writings on the groundbreaking book, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State” by Frederick Engels, who collaborated with Karl Marx in writing “The Communist Manifesto.”

When it comes to the current epidemic of racist police violence and state terror sweeping the U.S., Lenin’s writing on the state is just as applicable today as when it was written on the eve of the Russian Revolution nearly 100 years ago.

Police brutality isn’t a new phenomenon inside the U.S. or in any society divided into the haves-nots and the haves, the oppressed and the oppressor, workers and bosses. This type of repression comes in many forms, including racial profiling, frame-ups, beatings, torture, mass incarceration and more. But in the current political climate, it has been the killings by the police of young Black and Brown people that have taken center stage — and rightfully so.

### Resisting police murders

The Black Lives Matter movement, launched in 2012 via social media by Black women and trans women in response to the murder of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin by wannabe cop vigilante George Zimmerman in Sanford, Fla., continues to lead the heroic resistance against police violence with militant shutdowns of malls, traffic and even airports, like in Minneapolis on Dec. 23.

This movement made a global impact with the rebellion in Ferguson, Mo., that erupted in August 2014 with the fatal police shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown. The names of the victims whose lives have been tragically cut short by police violence are mainly unknown. However, some victims, such as Eric Garner, John Crawford III, Laquan McDonald, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray and Sandra Bland, have become household names because of cell phone video recordings revealing what led to their deaths.

However, it is the case of Tamir Rice,

the 12-year-old African-American youth fatally shot in a Cleveland park on Nov. 22, 2014, that has once again made national news. Rice was carrying a toy gun when two white officers shot him mere seconds after they drove up beside him. Within the next four minutes not only didn’t the police provide any medical aid to Rice, who lay on the ground bleeding to death, but they physically attacked Rice’s sister who tried to comfort him, followed by Rice’s older brother and mother. The excuse given by the cops for killing this child? They “feared for their lives.”

Over a year later on Dec. 28, a secretive Cuyahoga County grand jury issued no criminal indictments against the cops, one of whom had a longstanding reputation for “a dangerous loss of composure” and being “emotionally unfit” before joining the Cleveland Police Department.

### Racism and class

The New York Times published an editorial on Dec. 29, “Cleveland’s Terrible

## Some Harvard medical scientists are urging that the police killings of Black people be officially deemed a public epidemic — and for good reason.

Stain,” stating, “Tamir Rice of Cleveland would be alive today had he been a white 12-year-old playing with a toy gun in just about any middle-class neighborhood in the country on the afternoon of Nov. 22, 2014.

“But Tamir, who was shot to death by a white police officer that day, had the misfortune of being black in a poor area of Cleveland, where the police have historically behaved as an occupying force that shoots first and asks questions later. To grow up black and male in such a place is to live a highly circumscribed life, hemmed in by forces that deny your humanity and conspire to kill you.”

The police not only behave as an occupying force in the Black community, but ARE an armed occupying force in many U.S. urban areas, very similar to Israeli occupying forces in Gaza and the West Bank.

The police killings of Black people reinforce institutionalized racism, rooted in the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow. Tamir Rice is the modern day Emmett Till, the 14-year-old African American lynched 60 years ago in Mississippi.

Some Harvard medical scientists are urging that the police killings of Black people be officially deemed a public epidemic — and for good reason. ([tinyurl.com/jj6uum7](http://tinyurl.com/jj6uum7))

### Police war against Black America

According to the [mappingpoliceviolence.com](http://mappingpoliceviolence.com) website, at least 336 Black people were killed by the police in 2015 out of 1,152 killed overall. Black people are three times more likely to be killed by the police than whites per 1 million people. Thirty-three percent of unarmed Black people were killed compared to 18 percent of unarmed whites.

The website reveals that in 14 U.S. cities only Black people were killed by police, including Baltimore and St. Louis. These statistics are alarming, considering the fact that Black people comprise no more than 13 percent of the general

Upper photo: Heroic youth faces down police in Ferguson, Mo., August 2014.

Lower photo: Monica Moorehead, left, with Jeralynn Blueford, mother of 18-year-old Alan Blueford, murdered by Oakland, Calif., police on May 6, 2012.



ers and oppressed who are forced to sell their labor power in order to survive.

While it is important for the progressive sectors to continue to show the utmost solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement on a daily basis, especially when a police atrocity occurs, it is also the duty of the movement to help generalize the struggle. It is an important development that many young whites, attracted to the Occupy Movement which was repressed several years ago by the police, have joined the ranks of the Black Lives Matter struggle.

The movement must agitate for disarming the police, which is part and parcel of the overall demand for community control of the police. It shows a level of understanding that the real aim of the police is not to protect and serve, but to terrorize and oppress the workers and oppressed as a class.

And just as the police cannot be reformed, neither can the capitalist system, which plunders the earth for resources, exploits workers’ labor and destroys people’s lives to make profits. The interests of the workers and bosses are on opposite ends of the spectrum, and therefore there can be no compromise or mediation, which is why the state is needed.

As long as capitalism exists, the police will exist, along with other forces of repression. This situation cries out for a socialist revolution that will get rid of the capitalist system root and branch. There is no other way out of this archaic morass in the long run.

Socialism, as an economic system, will allow the workers of all nationalities and skills to produce for the needs of the people, not to make profits for greedy bosses. Under socialism, police will not exist to oppress the masses because the masses will be running society, not the tiny minority of billionaires and millionaires. In socialist Cuba, the police exist to protect the gains of the revolution, not to repress the people.

Under socialism, Black children like Tamir Rice and all children will have their human needs met, from the cradle to the grave, free from violence and want.

*Moorehead is the 2016 WWP presidential candidate, along with her vice-presidential running mate, Lamont Lilly.*

### From mass struggle to revolution

Under capitalism, the predominant form of class rule, the police as a force cannot be reformed because the super-rich class needs this repressive force to protect its profits out of fear of rebellion by the masses against deteriorating conditions.

All the laws and the courts, which include the judges, prosecutors, grand juries and more, exist to protect the police no matter their criminal behavior. The statistics mentioned above confirm this reality. The police are not workers because they are alienated from the rest of society — the majority of whom are work-



## Philadelphia

# Struggle continues aga

## Black Lives Matter disrupts 'Mummers' event

By **Betsey Piette**  
Philadelphia

Calling for “no business as usual while police kill Black and Brown people daily,” the Philadelphia Coalition for R.E.A.L. (Racial, Economic and Legal) Justice led a protest at the 116th “Mummers” Parade, held annually in Philadelphia on New Year’s Day. Around 150 people took part in the action, called to bring attention to the police murders of more than 1,100 people in 2015.

After initially entering the parade at the start, then rallying near City Hall, where news media were concentrated, protesters marched to a point where they were able to breach police barricades and briefly stop the march. They then wove back through hostile spectators, used the underground subway concourse to regroup and resurfaced near City Hall for a final rally.

The annual Mummers Parade, featuring string bands, floats and elaborate outfits, might seem like Philadelphia’s version of Mardi Gras — except for the glaring exclusion of people of color.

Coalition organizer Erica Mines called the Mummers Parade “an in-your-face reminder of this city’s and this country’s racist double standard for people of color. When white people litter, drink and urinate in public, it’s ‘tradition.’ Meanwhile, prisons overflow with Black and Brown people jailed for nonviolent offenses. The mere suspicion of a petty crime is used to justify police murders of people of color.”

Philadelphia’s ordinance banning carrying open beer containers in public is frequently used to arrest and fine people in communities of color. Yet it was flagrantly and repeatedly violated by Mummers and by the mainly white audience that showed up to watch the



Activists confront racists and bigots, Jan. 1.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

event. As early as 9 a.m. until well into the evening, everywhere one looked people carried open beer cans and liquor bottles, often while chatting with police.

Megan Malachi, an organizer of the protest and a member of Action Against Black Genocide, said, “The Mummers parade has historically been a racist, white parade.” As a child, her parents did not allow her to attend because of the racist attitudes exhibited by those marching or attending the event.

Throughout their 116-year history, the Mummers have demonstrated a consistently blatant pattern of racism; sexism; anti-lesbian, -gay, -bi, -trans and -queer bigotry; and ridicule of immigrants. For decades — until protests by African-American communities threatened to permanently end the event in the early 1960s — white, mainly male Mummers strutted in public in blackface, often in women’s clothing. Another protest by women in 1972 targeted the blatant sexism.

### Racist mockery still abounds

In response to mounting criticism, this year’s event was supposed to be “more diverse.” A limited number of Black, Lati-

no/a and LGBTQ brigades were invited to participate. However, most were scheduled in the early hours of the parade, when few spectators were on hand to watch. Despite this alleged inclusiveness, several of the Mummers’ brigades continued to use stereotypes to mock the people they historically excluded.

And despite agreements with the city 50 years ago to end these insulting practices, a year ago, on Jan. 1, 2015, Mummers in blackface carried signs mocking the Black Lives Matter movement. This same racist mockery was evident again this year.

Members of the Sammar Strutters, including children, appeared in brownface dressed as Mexican stereotypes. Another brigade marched in costumes that bore a disturbing similarity to the Ku Klux Klan’s pointed white hoods.

The Finnegan New Year’s Brigade attacked the trans\* community, centering their act around Caitlyn Jenner’s transition. Group members carried signs attacking Jenner. A member of the group was caught on video shouting “Fuck the gays!”

In a separate incident, a gay man out walking his dog with friends was attacked by a group of drunken Mum-

mers, who punched him in the face and yelled anti-gay slurs before retreating into the crowd.

Yet the only people the police arrested were two Black activists from the groups protesting the racist and anti-LGBTQ parade. Police made no effort to stop the Mummers and their supporters who spat on demonstrators, called them the n-word, and threw bottles and cans at them.

In addition to signs and chants against police brutality, protesters addressed city, state and national policies that continue to target immigrants and refugees; the serious underfunding of Philadelphia public schools; gentrification; U.S. military actions in the Middle East; environmental concerns; and the fight for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage. Philadelphia’s SugarHouse Casino, long a focus of the pro-union, low-wage workers struggle, was the major sponsor of this year’s Mummers parade.

“This parade has gone on far too long,” said coalition organizer Erica Mines, speaking at the protesters’ closing rally near City Hall. “Even these new ‘multicultural’ divisions, added in an effort to include more minorities in the parade, are too little, too late. The Mummers, as a historic institution, has done nothing but make a mockery of minorities. It’s a slap in the face. We are not in the 1950s.”

Without this protest, it’s unlikely that several news sources would have come out against the blatant racism of this event. Even Philadelphia Mayor-elect Jim Kenney was forced to tweet against the attacks on the trans\* community. Several news outlets covered the protest. An editorial by the independent online Philadelphia Declaration was headlined “These Mummers Cannot be Reformed.” ([phillydeclaration.org](http://phillydeclaration.org), Jan. 2) □

## Minneapolis

## Protests shut down mall and airport

By **Loretta VanPelt**  
Bloomington, Minn.

*The following article is reprinted from Fightback!News. See [fightback-news.org](http://fightback-news.org), Dec. 24.*

Just two days before Christmas, Dec. 23, and despite a failed lawsuit that asked courts to force organizers to cancel, Black Lives Matter protesters descended on the Mall of America to protest the police murders of Jamar Clark and other African Americans.

Hoping to intimidate protesters, MOA security checked the bags of everyone entering the mall and locked all stores on the east side of the mall. Stores announced they would close “because of the Black Lives Matter protest” and said shoppers who didn’t leave the store would be locked inside.

Hundreds of police from several metro area departments, wearing riot gear or bulletproof vests and wielding three-foot long batons, set out barricades around the rotunda, which was decorated with 44-foot-tall silver

Christmas trees. Just as the police put the mall on lockdown, protesters put their fists in the air and marched silently out of the mall to board trains to the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International airport, where both terminals were shut down. Major roads and light rail service were also disrupted.

According to organizers, “We have endured an armed white supremacist terrorist attack where five of us were shot; police violence in the form of mace, batons and less lethal projectiles; over 50 arrests on highway 94 and at the Fourth Precinct; and freezing temperatures to demand justice for Jamar Clark. If it’s not clear yet: We won’t stop until we get it.” They demand release of the tapes of the police killing; prosecution of the police involved; federal domestic terrorism charges against white supremacists who shot five protesters; and “disinvesting from police and investing in Black futures.”

### Youth out in big numbers

The protest comes two days after a

grand jury in Texas gave the decision not to indict Sandra Bland’s killers. This is why the Minneapolis demands [are] not just prosecution of the police who killed Jamar Clark, but a special prosecutor and no grand jury.

This was a coordinated effort nationwide to disrupt airports and public transit. Other actions happened in Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Chicago and Chattanooga, Tenn. At the airport, Black Lives Matter Minneapolis said they wanted to bring attention to the “airport’s discriminatory profiling practices against Black people and anyone who is perceived to be Muslim, as part of a larger system that continues to kill and harm Black people without any justice. The continued relentless violence against Black people is appalling and morally repugnant. The fact that Black people get constantly harassed by police forces at every level, local and federal, in airports, malls, and on the streets of America is no longer acceptable.”

Youth were out in big numbers at this

particular protest, including at Terminal 2 (formerly called the Humphrey Terminal), where they led chants.

Arrests were made at both the mall and the airport, including Alex Clark, a cousin of Jamar Clark. “As we were marching out of the mall with everyone else, police came up, called Alex by name, and placed him under arrest, claiming they had a warrant. They refused to say where the warrant was from or where they were taking him,” said his friend Jess Sundin, of Freedom Road Socialist Organization. “There’s no way he was pulled from the crowd because of any warrant. Alex was targeted because he’s been leading the fight to win justice for his cousin.”

Clark and most of those arrested were released [the same] night, but one protester is being held without charge. According to Betsy Foxman, “David has not been charged with anything but is on a 36-hour probable cause hold. He needs to be charged with something so bail will be set and he can be released on bail.” □

# inst racism & killer cops

## Justice denied for Tamir Rice



By LeiLani Dowell

Protests were held around the country to demand justice for Tamir Rice, the 12-year-old Black child killed by cops in Cleveland, in response to the long-expected grand jury decision, finally announced on Dec. 28, not to indict the police officers who killed him.

After 13 months of stalling, word went out at 1:40 p.m. on Dec. 28 that Prosecutor Timothy McGinty would announce the grand jury's decision at 2 p.m. that same day.

Knowing that McGinty had done everything he could to make sure that no charges would be filed against officers Timothy Loehmann and Frank Garmback, the angry response by activists in Cleveland was immediate. By 4 p.m., people had started gathering at the Cudell Recreation Center playground, where Rice was gunned down on Nov. 22, 2014, for the crime of "playing while Black."

Protesters chanted and marched on the streets of Cleveland, shutting down traffic in all directions on a day with the worst weather of the month. Nothing was going to stop the anti-racist fighters, who traveled more than 3 miles in icy rain to the First District Police Station, the murderous cops' precinct.

The next day, more than 200 demonstrators gathered at the downtown Cleveland "Justice Center" — aka police headquarters — and again took to the streets. Demanding the resignation of racist Prosecutor McGinty, they avoided police roadblocks and sat in at intersections. When protesters attempted to enter the entrance ramp to the Interstate 90/Interstate 71 Innerbelt Bridge, police started to march in military formation, blasting sirens and threatening arrests. A strategic decision was made by those present to avoid arrest that night but to continue marching and blocking streets around Cleveland's casino.

Militant downtown protests continued on Dec. 30 and Dec. 31 in Cleveland, and on Jan. 1, almost 300 people gathered on the city's West Side to go to the home of Prosecutor McGinty. A die-in was held on the sidewalk with folks lying down for four minutes — the amount of time Rice

lay bleeding as the cops stood around, figuring out how to twist their story.

The march and die-in were led by Rice's family members, whose main demands are the immediate termination of Officers Loehmann and Garmback, a federal Department of Justice investigation of McGinty and his removal as Cuyahoga

was met with an immediate wave of anger and protest in cities and areas around the United States. Some of these protests are described below.

In **New York City**, anti-racist activists took to the streets that very day, gathering at Washington Square Park in Manhattan, and then marching to and over the Brooklyn Bridge. Two days later, the Dec. 21 nonindictment of Sandra Bland's killers in Texas was protested at a two-hour vigil in New York's Union Square.

The rapid response to the Rice decision came from an ad hoc coalition formed by members of the city's movement against racist police killings. Months ago, Black Lives Matter NYC, the People's Power Assembly, NYC Shutdown and Millions March NYC had agreed on a protest time and place. After going over the bridge, the marchers took over busy Brooklyn stores like Target, crowding the escalators and shaking the building with chants.

A rally of about 200 was held Jan. 2 at Oscar Grant Plaza

in downtown **Oakland, Calif.** "Bay Area Rises Up for Tamir" was the title of this action, called by Black Lives Matter Bay Area and the Last 3 Percent Coalition in solidarity with Tamir Rice's family. Mama Ayanna Mashama opened the rally with libations. Other speakers included Adam Jordan Wills, from the Anti Police-Terror Project and Ada Henderson, the mother of Richard Perkins Jr., who was killed by the Oakland Police Department on Nov. 20, allegedly holding a pellet gun.

The **Baltimore** People's Power Assem-

bly called for an emergency protest in response to the Tamir Rice and Sandra Bland nonindictments. With one day's notice, close to 100 protesters took to the streets Dec. 29.

Activists gathered at the intersection of 33rd Street and Greenmount Avenue in Baltimore's working-class Eastside. They rallied and gathered supporters from the community who joined the march to North Avenue, where the group took over the streets before being surrounded by police.

Despite the heavy police presence, the PPA held an impromptu people's assembly in the middle of the intersection. Community residents and PPA members spoke out at the microphone about current police abuse, joblessness and oppression in Baltimore.

The group ended with the Assata Shakur chant ["It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love each other and support each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains."] and marched back to the original gathering point.

**Syracuse, N.Y.**, activists demanded justice for Rice on Dec. 30 by rallying downtown in the shadow of the Chase Bank building. Protesters held up giant letters that spelled out Rice's name. Curbside speakers included a white former law enforcement employee who said he had quit that system and stated unequivocally, "We are living in a white supremacy world." The rally was initiated by the Syracuse Community Choir and the Syracuse Peace Council, with participation by the Syracuse chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Council, Central New York Veterans for Peace, the Palestine Solidarity Collective and others.

After holding a rally in downtown **Detroit** on Dec. 29, a group from Black Lives Matter Detroit drove to Cleveland to join the protest there. Called out by the Buffalo Anti Racism Coalition, a crowd gathered in downtown **Buffalo, N.Y.**, at the U.S. Attorney's office on Dec. 30.

*Ellie Dorritie, Martha Grevatt, Tony Murphy, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Susan Schnur and the WW Baltimore Bureau contributed to this article.*



County prosecutor, and a DOJ investigation into Rice's shooting and murder.

Black Lives Matter Cleveland, Black on Black Crime Inc., the Black Man Army, the Greater Cleveland Civil and Human Rights Network, the Cleveland Immigrant Support Network, the Ohio Student Association, Showing Up for Racial Justice Northeast Ohio Chapter and the Tamir Rice Justice Committee were all part of this powerful action.

As stressed by Black Lives Matter Cleveland organizers, Cleveland won't rest until there is justice for Rice. They are prepared to take their demands to the Republican National Convention, to be held in Cleveland July 18-21, and beyond.

### Coast-to-coast response

The Dec. 28 nonindictment of Rice's killers in the Cleveland police department

## Tamir never had a chance

By Donnie M. Pastard  
Cleveland

Tamir never had a chance. Within two seconds, two bullets were pumped into his stomach, and they never tried to give him first aid.

Tamir never had a chance. Before the grand jury was chosen, Prosecutor Timothy McGinty released a report from a so-called independent panel that concluded the shooting was "reasonable" by the Cleveland officers because they feared for their lives.

Tamir never had a chance, because the

county prosecutor pleaded for the grand jury not to indict. So, the case was sabotaged from the beginning to the end.

The mayor and the chief of police want the people of Cleveland to wait on the process.

We waited on the process for Michael Pipkins. We waited on the process for Brandon McCloud. We waited on the process for Timothy Russell. We waited on the process for Malissa Williams. We waited on the process for Tamir Rice.

So tell me — how long is the process?

*Donnie Pastard is a long time Cleveland community activist.*

## Slain child's family: 'Race is still a problem'

*The following is a Dec. 28 statement from Tamir Rice's mother, Samaria Rice, following the announcement that no indictments of the cops responsible for Tamir's death were handed down by a grand jury in Cleveland.*

My family and I are in pain and devastated by the nonindictment of officers Timothy Loehmann and Frank Garmback for the murder of our beloved Tamir. After this investigation — which took over a year to unfold — and Prosecutor McGinty's mishandling of this case, we no longer trust the local criminal-justice system, which we view as corrupt.

Prosecutor McGinty deliberately sabotaged the case, never advocating for my son, and acting instead like the police officers' defense attorney. In a time in which a nonindictment for two police officers who have killed an un-

armed black child is business as usual, we mourn for Tamir, and for all of the black people who have been killed by the police without justice. In our view, this process demonstrates that race is still an extremely troubling and serious problem in our country and the criminal-justice system.

I don't want my child to have died for nothing and I refuse to let his legacy or his name be ignored. We will continue to fight for justice for him, and for all families who must live with the pain that we live with.

As the video shows, Officer Loehmann shot my son in less than a second. All I wanted was someone to be held accountable. But this entire process was a charade.

I pray and hope that the federal government will investigate this case. □

# Chicago cops kill two more, protests mount

By Jill White  
Chicago

Dec. 30 — Police here shot and killed Quintonio LeGreir, 19, a college student home on break from Northern Illinois University, and Bettie Jones, a downstairs neighbor, on Dec. 26. Jones was 55, the mother of five and a community activist in the organization Action Now. Both victims were Black.

The police statement reads, “The 55 year old female victim was accidentally struck and tragically killed ... deepest condolences to the victim’s family and friends.”

Janet Cooksey, LeGreir’s mother, told Chicago station WBBM her son was an honor student in college and high school, who suffered some emotional problems. “Seven bullets were put in my son, seven. Eight shots were fired. One hit an innocent lady who was just opening her door. Something is wrong with this picture.”

Residents at the scene said police could have used a stun gun or other non-lethal means to subdue LeGrier. Jones just opened her door, waiting for police to respond, then was shot along with LeGrier.

A vigil was held in support of Jones’ family on Dec. 29, bringing together neighbors and community members questioning this unnecessary killing. Friends and relatives of LeGrier wrapped blue and white balloons around a basketball goal during a candlelight vigil across the street from the high school from which he graduated.

## Mayor held responsible

Meanwhile, protesters marched in front of Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s home. They held him responsible for the recent rash of police murders and the city’s cover-ups. The call for his resignation has been getting louder and louder and includes a demonstration at City Hall set for Dec 31.

Following the double killing, Emanuel cut short his family vacation and returned to Chicago. He issued a statement calling for a review of the shootings by the Independent Police Review Authority. But, according to the Better Government Association, the IPRA has investigated nearly 400 police shootings since 2007 and found only one to be unjustified.

Several demonstrators were taken in ambulances to the hospital after falling in



Chicago protesters demand Mayor Rahm Emanuel resign.

the snow on the unshoveled sidewalk in front of Emanuel’s home. Will Emanuel be ticketed and charged for unshoveled walkways? Others in Chicago now face a fine, recently increased from \$50 to \$500.

A wrongful death lawsuit was filed Dec. 28 on behalf of Quintonio LeGrier. The lawsuit says LeGrier never had a weapon and did nothing to suggest he was a threat before police opened fire. The civil suit also alleges police forced his father to go immediately to a police station to answer questions, even while his son was dying.

The suit states there is a video of at least some of the incident as it unfolded. One of the eight shots fired hit LeGrier in the buttocks, indicating he had his back turned to police.

## Laquan McDonald shooting

Meanwhile, Jason Van Dyke, the officer charged with first-degree murder in the shooting death of Laquan McDonald entered a not-guilty plea at his arraignment on Dec. 29. His lawyer is asking for a change of venue, claiming Van Dyke cannot get a fair trial in the Chicago area. But the family is asking that the entire trial be televised to hold public officials accountable to the people of Chicago.

There is an atmosphere in the city of the “people versus the police” and a challenge to the cops’ technique of acting at will with violence and impunity. Well-known Chicago activist Mike Siviwe Elliott was arrested early in Dec. 29 while

exercising his right to observe and video an officer who was getting rough with a young woman on a commuter train.

When Elliott pulled back his hand from the officer trying to snatch his phone, he was accused of assaulting the officer and placed under arrest. His phone has been turned over to State’s Attorney Anita Alvarez. Elliott’s press statement said, “My arrest is further evidence that the police here are not being held accountable on any level,” and it is part of “a violent backlash to the countless nonviolent protests and demands of Chicago activists for justice and police accountability.”

People of Chicago are demanding an end to police murders and government cover-ups. They are building coalitions around the city to end police killing of Black and Brown youth. A true people’s tribunal is needed to build unity and expose the real role of the police in Chicago and around the country.

The cops’ role is to protect the private property of the rich from the masses through racism and state repression. On Feb. 20, a meeting at the United Electrical Workers Hall at 37 S. Ashland in Chicago is scheduled. Speakers will address building a movement to stop police terror in our cities. The movement will fight for the freedom of political prisoners, including Mumia Abdul-Jamal in Pennsylvania and Rev. Edward Pinkney in Michigan. For more information contact [www.facebook.com/ChicagoWWP](http://www.facebook.com/ChicagoWWP). □

# Korean union leader charged

By Martha Grevatt

Since its founding in 1996 during a massive strike against anti-labor legislation, the 20-million-member Korean Confederation of Trade Unions has been in the forefront of resistance in south Korea. On Dec. 9, KCTU President Han Sang-gyun, who had spent the prior few weeks in the Jogye Buddhist temple in Seoul, was arrested. Han, who remains in detention, is accused of inciting violence during a Nov. 14 mass labor and farmer demonstration that was brutally attacked. He is the first to be receive the heavy charge of “sedition” in 29 years. One participating farmer remains in a coma after a water cannon assault by police.

The demonstration was called to oppose labor law changes proposed by President Park Geun-hye — changes that would force more workers, especially youth, into precarious or temporary work. Han, who had been living for months in the KCTU office to avoid arrest on previous charges, emerged to lead the demonstration. After the protest, he sought refuge in the temple.

While there are no laws granting sanctuary in the country, state authorities do not typically enter a temple to carry out an arrest. In Han’s case, the temple was surrounded by 2,000 police. A similar number of monks and young Buddhists were guarding the temple entrance to protect Han. “If the police raid the temple it ... will be tantamount to a state clampdown on the Jogye Order and on the whole Buddhist movement in South Korea,” the Order said in a statement. (Guardian, Dec. 9) Han turned himself in voluntarily, according to the KCTU. Currently several dozen union leaders are in prison.

Han is a true hero of the Korean working class. In 2009, he led a 77-day occupation of SsangYong Motors, a car company that produces for the domestic south Korean market. The main demands were against layoffs. The workers survived several police eviction attempts. Workers on the roof suffered skin burns from chemicals dropped on them. On Aug. 4, police stormed the plant, which



Union leader Han Sang-gyun taken into police custody.

600 workers were still occupying. Over 100 were injured, including two forced off the roof by water cannons. During the three years Han served in jail for his role in the occupation, 28 SsangYong workers died of injuries and conditions related to police attacks.

Because of their courageous sit-down strike, the Korean Metal Workers Union won some language limiting layoffs. Then, when SsangYong began renegeing on the agreement in 2012, Han and two other autoworkers climbed to the top of an electrical pylon. Han’s aerial protest lasted 177 days.

Han told Foreign Policy in Focus magazine, “We have no choice but to fight. KCTU is calling for a general strike despite all this because without a fight, what’s left of organized labor — the only means to defend the rights of workers can ultimately become obsolete. The lives of 20 million workers are on the line. ...

“And this time, it will not be a one-day strike. We’re talking about stopping production, freight trucks stopping in their tracks, railroad and subway workers on illegal strikes, and paralyzing the country so that the government will feel the outrage of the workers. That’s what we’re preparing for.” (Nov. 12)

On Dec. 22 and 23 there were mass demonstrations calling for Han’s freedom. □

# U.S. ambassador butts into Haiti election

By G. Dunkel

Jan. 3 — Thousands of Haitians protesting in the streets against the patently fraudulent presidential elections held Oct. 25 led the Provisional Electoral Commission to suspend the second round of voting set for Dec. 27.

The Haitian media received a call from de-facto Prime Minister Evans Paul on Dec. 24 that a new “independent” verification commission would be announced at 6 p.m. After they examined the history of members of this commission, it was clear that they all had strong ties to the present regime led by Michel Martelly. (sentinel.ht, Dec. 28)

But before this third report “verifying” the conduct of the Oct. 25 election was issued, U.S. Ambassador Peter Mulrean weighed in on the results. In interviews with La Nouvelliste, the largest daily paper in Haiti, and Radio Télé Kiskeya, a radio station with a large following, he blatantly asserted that the U.S. Embassy had observers throughout Haiti who “did not see any fraud.” This was also the conclusion of the Organization of American States and European Union observers. Mulrean said the out-

come should be respected.

The State Department’s coordinator for Haiti, Kenneth Merten, in an interview with the Voice of America picked up by La Nouvelliste, said he was confident that the commission would set the runoff between Jovenel Moïse (LAPHE) and Jude Célestin (PHTK), who came in first and second respectively in the first vote.

Given that Washington, the imperialist power controlling Haiti, spoke so firmly, the verification commission verified what it was told to verify. President Michel Martelly announced the new date in his Independence Day speech on Jan. 1, the day Haitians celebrate their long war that won freedom from French colonialism and ended slavery in 1804.

The 1990 election in Haiti that put Jean-Bertrand Aristide in office was the first election that brought the Haitian people into political life beyond simply standing in line and voting. Currently, thousands of protesters come out in the streets throughout the country, responding to calls from a radio show and word of mouth. Setting the date of the election doesn’t settle how the Haitian people will respond to a president imposed by Washington. □



# Changing the environment From Kyoto to Storm Frank

By Deirdre Griswold

Jan. 4 — The spread of human beings to every continent on our planet has been accompanied by great challenges and great innovations. Homo sapiens became the dominant life form around the globe because of our ability not only to adapt to our environment — all species have adapted, evolved or perished — but also to change the environment itself to meet our needs.

So successful have we become at altering the environment that now it appears this has turned into its opposite. Global warming and climate change, resulting primarily from industrial growth and the burning of fossil fuels, pose enormous dangers not only to humans but to a wide array of animal and plant species.

People in some of the most developed countries were reminded of these dangers in late December and early January as flooding in the Mississippi Valley and throughout Ireland, Wales, England and Scotland reached historic proportions.

These floods were not the worst to affect large populations in recent years — there have been much bigger disasters in Asia, Africa, and Central and South America — but they show that extreme weather, predicted for decades by climate scientists, is indisputably underway, and will spare no country.

In the United States, the Mississippi River and its tributaries, after heavy rains instead of the usual seasonal snows, reached record flood levels in some areas at the end of December, leading to widespread destruction in Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma and Arkansas. More than two dozen deaths have been reported so far.

More flooding is expected over the coming weeks as the crest in the river moves downstream to Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana.

Starting on Dec. 30, the storm, which

British meteorologists named Frank, battered the coastal and northern parts of Ireland, Wales, England and Scotland for several days with high winds and drenching rain, before turning further north, toward Greenland. While damage was widespread, deaths appear to have been kept to single digits. A final accounting was not available as of this writing.

As it veered farther north, Storm Frank also brought rain and melting temperatures to areas above the Arctic Circle — an unheard-of scenario during the North Pole winter. Scientists maintain that the severity of the disasters in both the U.S. and Europe can be traced to global warming, which has pumped moisture into the atmosphere. Last year, 2015, was the warmest year on record.

## Criminal sabotage of climate agreements

Young people now in college weren't even born yet when climate scientists first began to present the alarming news about greenhouse gases and global warming to the world. This finally led, in 1997, to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was agreed to by 36 industrialized countries, including the U.S. That protocol committed them to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to 7 percent below their 1990 level by 2008-2012.

The U.S. government signed the protocol in 1998 — but never ratified it, unlike the other 35 signatory countries. Then George W. Bush openly repudiated the agreement in March 2001, the first year of his presidency. Without the U.S., at the time the biggest polluter in the world, the protocol would have little effect. So as far as the U.S. was concerned, the Kyoto Protocol was dead on arrival.

The blanket of carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere continued to rise steeply.

The story of the growing threat posed by global warming, while certainly not ignored by the capitalist media, is rarely if ever linked to the wars of the last quarter century: the war against Iraq, begun in 1991 under President George H.W. Bush; the invasion of Afghanistan in November 2001 (a war which continues to this day) after Bush's repudiation of the Kyoto Protocol; the second Iraq war begun in March 2003, again by the junior Bush; and the current war against the government of Syria, begun late in 2011 under Barack Obama by opposition forces supported by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

Also not mentioned in connection with the climate threat is the war to destroy the government of Libya. That North African country had raised its standard of living to the continent's highest.

In all these conflicts and others in Africa and Asia, control over the world's oil has been a major factor. And petroleum, after coal, is the major source of greenhouse gases.

These wars have killed hundreds of thousands, displaced millions of people, and cost trillions of dollars — money that could have been used during this critical period, when scientists knew what was happening, to restructure energy production, transportation and housing to reduce the burning of fossil fuels.

## Nothing inevitable about climate change

The disasters now facing much of the world were not inevitable. They are not punishment for "man's greed and sins." They don't arise from overpopulation or humanity's "hubris." They are the product of the growth of the productive forces under a particular political and economic system: capitalism, which took root only a few centuries ago.

Earlier societies had their environmental problems, too. But even though

technology then was at a much lower level, the people came up with ways to do what was needed to ensure food sources and shelter.

One of the most remarkable undertakings — started 2,250 years ago in China during the Qin dynasty — was a massive land reclamation and flood control project that involved diverting water from the Min River, which periodically flooded uncontrollably, to the other side of a mountain range where the soil was good but too dry to farm.

To break through the mountain, workers for seven years burned piles of hay on the surface of the rocks to make them hot and then poured cold water to cool them rapidly, "letting the nearly instant contraction crack them open. The cutting eventually led to an opening 70 feet wide, and the Min River waters ... began to course through it the moment the final wall was broken open." (From "The Man Who Loved China," a book about Simon Winchester, a British scientist sympathetic to the Chinese Revolution who spent the early 1940s accumulating massive data about China's early scientific discoveries.)

The anniversary of this event is celebrated to this day in China, as it brought stability to an area that had known devastating natural catastrophes and resulting famines.

The Min River project showed that the people, when mobilized and motivated to solve a huge problem, have the persistence and ingenuity to do whatever it takes to win success.

The question we have to ask in light of today's disasters and rising threats is this: Knowing what we do now, what is standing in the way of taking meaningful action to prevent the worst from happening?

*Next: An economic and social system in rapid decline.*

## Arctic climate change threatens turmoil

By G. Dunkel

The Arctic has been warming more rapidly than any other area on Earth. Since it is sparsely populated, with not much capitalist economic activity, not a whole lot of attention has been paid to this aspect of climate change.

But when the North Pole was warmer than Chicago on Dec. 30, a host of news outlets from USA Today to Fox News decided to cover this phenomenon.

The same storm, which British meteorologists named Frank, brought torrential rain, flooding and tornadoes to the U.S. Midwest. When it hit the Atlantic, it turned north, punched through the jet stream between Iceland and Greenland, and dumped a very warm mass of air into the Arctic.

The temperature at the North Pole, according to Arctic News blog, was around 33 degrees Fahrenheit, about 50 degrees warmer than normal. It was quite an anomaly.

When the storm hit Iceland, it produced a huge pressure drop of 54 millibars in 18 hours. A "bomb" cyclone is defined as dropping 24 millibars in 24 hours, so Frank was even more drastic. Frank was among the five most powerful storms ever to hit Iceland, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Videos posted on Iceland Monitor showed rocks as large as basketballs being blown down the main road in eastern Iceland. It's the only road.

The glacier melt from Greenland has created a layer of relatively colder fresh water in large areas of the North Atlantic that prevents the warmer water pushed into the Arctic Ocean by the Gulf Stream from losing heat to the atmosphere. Parts of the Arctic Ocean have seen big spikes on the order of 7 to 10 degrees Celsius in temperature. (Arctic News, methane blog)

In the blogs about warming and climate change in the Arctic, one theme that comes up from time to time is that scientists don't understand the interaction of all the phenomena they are studying: how glacier melt affects sea currents, how currents affect the jet stream, how warmer land temperatures affect wind and its velocity.

They see huge dangers. Vanishing ice cover in the Arctic means it will absorb more solar energy — snow and ice reflect much of the energy that hits them. Since the Arctic Ocean is relatively shallow, less ice means more water interchange between upper and lower levels, which could release billions of tons of methane frozen on the bottom. Methane is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Disco Bay in Greenland, well above the Arctic Circle, in August.

## Economic effects

Most of the people living in the Arctic are Indigenous. They rely on harvesting marine mammals, fish, caribou and musk ox for a substantial part of their diet. How big this harvesting is varies from area to area, but nowhere is it insignificant. The only exception is Iceland, which has some industry — aluminum production — and commercial fishing and tourism.

Climate change can affect an abundance of resources. It can also affect the conditions needed to harvest those resources. For example, the Yupik people of St. Lawrence Island can't use the currently too-thin ice surrounding their island to reach the seals and walrus that are still fairly abundant in order to harvest them.

Shell Oil spent over \$7 billion explor-

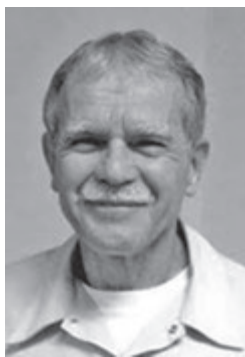
ing the Arctic and found that conditions there, even with more ice-free periods, are still too extreme to allow it to successfully extract oil.

An ice-free Arctic might allow more ship traffic. But Christian Haas, a researcher at York University in Toronto and a colleague with Environment Canada, did a study in 2015 which concluded, "Commercial traffic hasn't really increased in the Northwest Passage at all." (Washington Post, Sept. 10)

Indigenous people in the Arctic need economic development that offers them jobs, while preserving their access to traditional sustenance. Working people in the lower latitudes need to avoid disasters that would deleteriously affect the climate where they live. □

## WORKERS WORLD editorial

# FREE Oscar López Rivera, NOW!



The Dec. 31 New York Times editorial titled “Mr. Obama’s Trickle of Mercy” sharply criticized Barack Obama’s miserly use of the presidential clemency process, which has only released 95 federal prisoners who were serving “absurdly long” prison sentences.

Oscar López Rivera was not among the 95, but after 34 years, he certainly should have been. Instead, on Jan. 6, as he marks his 73rd birthday in the Terre Haute, Ind., Federal Penitentiary, millions of people will redouble their campaigns to free him.

That President Obama has chosen to ignore López to this point is an example of the special punishment meted out to men and women of uncompromising principle and conscience. López was convicted of “seditious conspiracy” along with other Fuerza Armadas de Liberación Nacional members. But it was his political beliefs, his lifelong commitment to Puerto Rican independence and self-determination for the Puerto Rican people, that were unforgivable to the profiteering U.S. bankers and bosses and their courts. Now his comrades have been freed and returned home. It is past time for López, too.

All of Puerto Rico — from the independence movement to the proponents of U.S. statehood and commonwealth, to the youth and students fighting for education, to the Puerto Rican workers fighting pension cuts and austerity — demands freedom for López. The support is so strong that the governor of Puerto Rico officially visited López in prison. And in the Puerto Rican diaspora, in the schools and community organizations that López and his brother helped to lead in Chicago, in New York City, where the City Council endorsed a resolution to free him, the voices are loud and united for López’s freedom.

Since 1898, when the U.S. defeated Spain and occupied Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines in its imperial expansion beyond the North American continent, the struggle for self-determination and independence against colonialism has been irrepressible. In Cuba, liberated territory has been won. The struggle continues in Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

Free Oscar López Rivera and all political prisoners! Free Puerto Rico! □

## Historic union victory Boston school bus drivers win back fired leaders, stronger contract

*Continued from page 1*

### Solidarity with Team Solidarity

This long struggle was led by the fighting Team Solidarity, whose François-Kirschbaum slate swept the union election in April 2015 after political frame-up charges against Kirschbaum fell apart in court. The whole rank and file was ready to walk out at a moment’s notice if necessary. “Will strike if provoked” was the slogan on the back of the Team’s popular T-shirts and hoodies.

Team Solidarity was not fighting in isolation. The struggle to rehire the four union leaders brought in many allies who know Local 8751’s consistent and principled activism against racism and austerity as well as its internationalism and labor solidarity.

Boston school bus drivers, who are 98 percent Haitian, Cape Verdean, African-American, Latino/a and other workers of color, battle racism on and off the job every day. They won the support of Boston’s most prominent labor and Black community activists, who, seeing the racist, union-busting character of the attack on a majority-Black union, coalesced for the first time to win justice for the fired leaders.

The last 25-hour session accurately reflected the forces in this historic battle. On the union side were the fired four, the Solidarity Team, Steelworkers International lawyers and staff, and community leader Chuck Turner via phone. On the management side were Veolia’s local, national and international bosses, including the infamous Thomas P. Hock, whose think tank has been breaking transit unions for

40 years; the top brass of Boston Public Schools; and Mayor Walsh and his staff and chief financial officers. The Solidarity Team was able to keep them from leaving the hotel where the negotiations occurred and made them stay up all night to complete the agreements.

The tireless, indefatigable leadership of veteran Black community leaders Chuck Turner and Mel King on behalf of the union and the four fired leaders broke new ground for labor/community solidarity — which will carry on in 2016.

### Red-baiters crushed

This was truly a fight to defend the historic leadership role of Workers World Party in the union, which WWP members helped found four decades ago. The Veolia bosses and the city bourgeoisie made it clear that their chief and most critical goal was to drive the reds out of the union, jail them and send a message to the rank and file and the union movement as a whole that radical union activism is a thing of the past.

Immediately after the alleged wildcat — which was really an illegal lockout on the part of Veolia — the Boston capitalist media ran vicious red-baiting articles attacking Kirschbaum for being a member of Workers World Party; Gillis is also a member. But the bosses messed with the wrong union — and the wrong revolutionary, multinational, working-class party.

Workers World Party sent delegations from around the country to help with organizing ongoing community support and solidarity. Fundraising efforts made it possible for the four fired leaders to



Team Solidarity. Local 8751 President Andre François is speaking on the top right.

## ‘Free Bowe Bergdahl’

*The following is the statement of Veterans for Peace on the case of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl.*



Veterans For Peace is dismayed by the Army’s decision to charge Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl with desertion and endangering troops, for which, if convicted, he could potentially face life in prison. We believe that Sgt. Bergdahl should be freed from the Army with an Honorable Discharge.

Bowe Bergdahl is a prisoner of war, three times over. First, the U.S. government sent him on Mission Impossible, to salvage its illegal, immoral and unwinnable war in Afghanistan. Then, he was captured by the Taliban, who held him prisoner under brutal conditions for five years. Now, Sgt. Bergdahl is prisoner to an orgy of militaristic politics in the most fear-mongering election year in memory. Republican front runner Donald Trump has publicly called Bergdahl a “dirty, rotten traitor” and suggested he should be executed.

Did Sgt. Bergdahl walk away from his post in Afghanistan? Yes, by his own account he did so, in order to bring attention to poor leadership, which he believed was endangering his fellow soldiers. Resistance to Mission Impossible takes many forms. Bowe Bergdahl may not have been explicitly protesting against the war in Afghanistan, but by taking drastic action he sent a distress signal.

Bergdahl is charged with “desertion to avoid hazardous duty” and “misbehavior before the enemy,” which, respectively, carry maximum sentences of five years and life in prison. Charging him with

serious crimes in a General Court Martial appears to be a political decision. It overrides the recommendation of the Army’s own investigating officer, who said that Bergdahl’s

actions did not warrant either jail time or a punitive discharge. The investigating officer recommended, at most, a Special Court Martial, which can mete out a maximum sentence of one year in prison.

Bowe Bergdahl is clearly not guilty of desertion. It cannot be proven that he was attempting to avoid hazardous duty or to remain away from his unit indefinitely. The “misbehavior before the enemy” charge asserts that Bowe Bergdahl’s actions put his fellow soldiers at risk. It has even been said that soldiers died looking for him. However, no evidence has been provided to back up this claim.

It was the U.S. government that put our soldiers at risk by sending them to invade Afghanistan and to occupy it for going on 15 years. Nearly 2,200 U.S. soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan, including six who were killed just this week by a suicide bomber at Bagram Air Force Base. None of these soldiers died as a result of Sgt. Bergdahl’s actions.

Bowe Bergdahl is being made the scapegoat for the disastrous U.S. occupation of Afghanistan, which has caused the deaths of tens of thousands of Afghan men, women and children.

Bowe Bergdahl remains a prisoner of war. Veterans For Peace demands that Sgt. Bergdahl be freed immediately with an Honorable Discharge.

Veterans For Peace is also concerned about the 9,800 U.S. troops who remain in Afghanistan, hostages to a failed policy, with targets on their backs. The U.S. government should withdraw all U.S. troops from Afghanistan immediately and finally bring that long U.S. war to an end.

Free Bowe Bergdahl!  
U.S. out of Afghanistan!

## Racism in denying pay to student athletes

*Continued from page 4*

ing college athletes than the other group.

This racist attitude is a reflection of the capitalist racist ideology, not a cause. It is used as a cover for the NCAA racist policy. The same corporate heads and their media and political minions that have campaigned against paying college athletes have long fought against affirmative action programs at universities across the country. They back the murderous cops versus the Black Lives Matter movement, and they fight tooth and nail against the \$15 an hour struggle by low-wage workers.

When Black football players at the University of Missouri threatened to boycott practices and games to demand the ouster of the college’s president, who had done nothing to stem racist attacks on Black students, right-wing state legislators threatened to take back even the meager tuition payments from those athletes, in fear of growing resistance.

Of course, bankers and corporate heads care nothing about the plight of students at all. College tuition costs have skyrocketed, and the average college debt for students has reached more than \$30,000.

And for those students who do manage to finish their studies and graduate, many discover that for all their efforts, all they

*Continued on page 11*

# Algerian independence leader dies

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

A co-founder of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) in 1954 has died in exile in Switzerland.

Thousands attended the funeral of Hocine Ait Ahmed in his home village, named after him, in the Berber-dominated Kabyle region of Algeria. Although he had been in opposition for well over five decades, the FLN government of Abdelaziz Bouteflika paid respects to the fallen leader, who fought gallantly and suffered immensely in the struggle against French imperialism.

Hocine Ait Ahmed was imprisoned by the French colonialists in 1956 and was not released until the ceasefire of 1962, which led to the independence of the North African state under the leadership of Ahmed Ben Bella. Ait Ahmed was known as a founding member of what was described as the “Sons of Toussaint,” a group of nationalist leaders who initiated the armed struggle on Nov. 1, 1954.

The North African state of Algeria had been a colony of France since 1830. A system of national oppression and economic exploitation was instituted that lasted until the early 1960s.

## Eight years of mass resistance, armed struggle

During the course of the liberation movement, at least 1 million Algerians died through French massacres, mass detentions and tactics aimed at starving out the freedom fighters, who fought tirelessly using popular demonstrations, general strikes and armed resistance.

On the night of Nov. 1, 1954, a series

of attacks by the FLN launched the guerrilla war for independence from France. Within a couple of hours, operations took place from one end of Algeria to the other, revealing to Paris that the attacks were well organized.

The colonial governor-general immediately asked for reinforcements from Europe. Three units of Public Security Guards, including 600 troops, quickly arrived, signaling an escalation of efforts to repress the uprising.

Despite the widespread killing of Algerians and the system of detention, torture and attempted isolation of the revolutionary forces, the FLN prevailed. France could no longer justify to its population the tremendous cost of the war in money and lives.

Ait Ahmed broke with other leaders of the FLN and the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic to form an opposition party, the Socialist Front Forces (FFS), in 1963. He had serious differences with other leaders in the FLN over the type of political system instituted during the postcolonial period of the 1960s.

He was imprisoned by the Algerian government in 1964 under threat of death. He escaped from prison and went into exile in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1966.

Nonetheless, he returned to the country on numerous occasions but never came to terms with the FLN government, which is backed by the military.

Ait Ahmed relocated to Algeria in 1989 after the FFS was legalized. After the nullification of the election results of 1992, which seemed to have been in favor of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), Ait Ahmed went back into exile in Switzerland due to the serious security situation in the coun-

try. Nevertheless, he stood as a candidate in presidential elections in 1999, but pulled out in the middle of the campaign along with five other candidates, arguing that the election process was structured in favor of Bouteflika.

The civil war that erupted after the 1992 political crisis lasted for nearly a decade. A number of smaller Islamic-oriented opposition forces remain in conflict with the largely secular government in Algiers.

An overview of the history of the FFS published by medea.be states, “Participating for the first time in parliamentary elections, the FFS became the third most important political party during the December 1991 elections — after the FIS and the FLN, the former single party — and the leading party in the Berber regions. Its relative success is partially explained by its demands for a multilingual Algerian society where Berber and French would be recognized alongside Arabic.”

The same report noted that the FFS strongly condemned the interruption of the electoral process in January 1992 and that as institutions were set up controlled by the army “the FFS has always called for the re-establishment of the democratic process (it supports the principle of a proportional representation voting system which would bring the FIS back to its true electoral proportions).”

Ait Ahmed’s health began to fail in 2012, and he soon stepped down in 2013 as leader of the FFS. He died in Lausanne on Dec. 23.

## Recognition by Algiers of his contributions

His death prompted the government in Algiers to declare him a national hero

and designate his memorial as a state funeral, which was broadcast live on television. Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, also a veteran of the struggle for independence, declared eight days of mourning after Ait Ahmed’s death. A wake was later held at the headquarters of the FFS.

Ait Ahmed did not want to be buried alongside other FLN veterans in Algiers, so he was interred in the hometown named after him. The funeral cortege travelled 100 miles southeast from Algiers to his village.

Covered in Algeria’s national flag, the coffin was transported in an ambulance through the village, where tens of thousands filled the streets. “Today and tomorrow, Hocine lives!” they chanted. “Algeria, free and democratic!”

Algeria, despite its contentious postcolonial political history, remains a secular state that refrained from participating in the imperialist destruction of Libya in 2011, led by the United States and NATO. The Algerian government, along with Syria, voted against the Arab League endorsement of a so-called “no-fly zone” implemented over Libya in March 2011 by the Pentagon-NATO forces and their allies.

The war against Libya and the toppling of its Jamahiriya system developed under the late Col. Moammar Gadhafi, who was killed in October 2011, has turned Africa’s most prosperous state into a source of instability, human trafficking and mass poverty. Imperialist states are attempting to deploy ground troops in Libya under the guise of fighting the so-called Islamic State, which has established a base in Sirte and other sections of the oil-rich nation. □

# New York law targets BDS activists

By **Minnie Bruce Pratt**

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel’s apartheid policies won big victories in 2015, 10 years after BDS was launched by Palestinian civilian organizations. Now, a vicious campaign is targeting Palestine supporters at the state and national levels in the U.S. through “enemies list” laws aimed at BDS advocates.

In New York state, Senate Bill S6086/Assembly Bill 8220 has been introduced to punish people, companies and non-profit organizations that support boycotting Israel because of its attacks on the Palestinian people. The bill would create

*Continued from page 10*

can get are low-wage, dead-end jobs with no real future.

Still, a college education greatly increases the labor power of the future workers who obtain it. Since that increased labor power benefits the capitalist class that exploits it, the capitalists are the ones that should pay for it, not the students or their families.

The tiny group of capitalists that have created this situation for our youth try to pin the blame for it on the oppressed. Denying pay to student athletes only benefits the corporations that feast off of the college sports programs. It provides no benefit at all to any student or any of their families supporting them.

Buying into racist ideology is a dead end. Solidarity with Black student athletes and the oppressed communities in general is the only real path to success for all students and workers. □

a list of people “engaging in actions that are politically motivated and are intended to penalize, inflict economic harm on, or otherwise limit commercial relations with the state of Israel or companies based in the state of Israel or in territories controlled by the state of Israel.”

Individuals, organizations and companies on the list would be denied access to grants, funding or contracts with New York state. For instance, a church, mosque or synagogue participating in a rally advocating for BDS could potentially lose state funding for its homeless shelter or its community food bank program.

To get off the list, accused individuals or groups would be required to sign a statement repudiating a boycott of Israel. This parallels the notorious 1950s McCarthyite policing of people’s political beliefs, when to receive government scholarships, for example, students had to sign loyalty oaths to the Constitution.

## Petition drive launched

The Syracuse-based Palestine Solidarity Collective has launched a petition drive to inform people about the BDS movement and to alert people to the reactionary New York state bill.

The petition reads in part: “[New York] Senate Bill S6086/Assembly Bill 8220 seeks to criminalize political action. ... In effect, this law would grant the state the power to coerce those who wish to support

Palestinian human rights and the call for BDS. ... The Bill conflates BDS with anti-Semitism. ... BDS is not anti-Semitism because it targets the expanding and illegal occupation by the state of Israel and its military, which uses disproportionate and illegal forms of violence against Palestinian civilians.” (tinyurl.com/np8hvj)

In a sustained attack on BDS, similar laws have been passed by the Illinois and South Carolina legislatures and are under consideration in California, Florida, Massachusetts and New Jersey. (palestinelegal.org/legislation/) An anti-BDS clause was attached to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, a major U.S. “free trade” deal with the European Union that was OK’d by Congress in July.

The current anti-BDS campaign is a reaction to powerful BDS initiatives against Israel. In a stunning victory, a seven-year BDS campaign drove French-based corporate giant Veolia out of Israel in 2015, forcing it to sell off all subsidiaries there. Veolia was deeply invested in infrastructure projects in illegal Israeli settlements, and its withdrawal reportedly cost it billions of dollars.

BDS economic muscle helped cut foreign direct investment in Israel by 46 percent in 2014, according to separate United Nations and World Bank studies. A Rand Corp. analysis projected BDS could cost Israel between 1 and 2 percent in annual national income over ten years.



(mondoweiss.net, Dec. 30)

A 2015 cultural boycott of Israel reinforced the economic boycott, supported by over 1,000 artists, writers and musicians, including Lauryn Hill, Alice Walker and Arundhati Roy. A parallel academic boycott has international support, including U.S. professional groups like the National Women’s Studies Association.

A growing international movement against racism has linked Palestinian struggles to the Black Lives Matter movement, with chants and signs asserting, “From Ferguson to Palestine, occupation is a crime,” at many protests. U.S. student divestment campaigns have proliferated, and student-worker movements have weighed in, as when United Auto Workers Local 2865, representing all graduate students in the University of California system, endorsed BDS in 2014.

International unions have passed BDS resolutions, including the Arab Labor Union and Canada’s Central Council of the Confederation of National Trade Unions. The United Electrical Workers Union became the first major U.S. national trade union to adopt BDS.

The Palestine Solidarity Collective petition against the New York state “enemies list” bill has been signed by organizations including Labor for Palestine, the International Action Center, Jews for Palestinian Right of Return, Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network and the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation.

To sign as an individual or group, go to tinyurl.com/np8hvj

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Equipo Solidaridad. Arriba a la derecha, André François, presidente del sindicato BSDU-USW-8751.

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## La lucha de las mujeres saudíes

Ningún país del mundo es más brutal y opresivo en su tratamiento de las mujeres que Arabia Saudita. El estado saudí, que es controlado oficialmente por los hombres de la familia real, ha mantenido a las mujeres acorraladas e inmovilizadas en una telaraña venenosa de restricciones religiosas y legales, como víctimas de una monstruosa tarántula.

Este diciembre, la monarquía que gobierna este rico y poderoso reino de petróleo hizo una concesión. Por primera vez, se permitió que las mujeres votaran y se postularan a puestos en los consejos municipales en las elecciones locales.

Fue una concesión muy pequeña. Aún queda todavía una montaña de restricciones a la vida y las acciones de las mujeres. Pero las mujeres sauditas han tenido que luchar muy duro para llegar hasta aquí. De una población total de 20 millones, sólo 131.000 mujeres estaban registradas para votar, pero cerca del 82 por ciento de ellas emitieron sus votos. Diecinueve mujeres ganaron escaños en los consejos municipales, que, como todos los órganos políticos en Arabia Saudita, sólo tienen una función "consultiva" - las decisiones son tomadas por el príncipe.

Las candidatas no podían hacer campaña directamente - no se les permitió mostrar la cara a los hombres, quienes tenían que hablar por ellas. No podían conducir un auto a los sitios de votación ni a las reuniones de sus campañas. A las mujeres no se les permite conducir en Arabia Saudita.

A pesar de todas las restricciones, 979 mujeres tuvieron el valor de postularse para un cargo. La reacción de las mujeres sauditas a las elecciones fue mixta. Unas lo vieron como una gran victoria; otras estaban escépticas y lo vieron como un mero espectáculo por parte de los gobernantes. Se esperaba una apertura a las mujeres pues había sido decretada en 2011 por el entonces rey Abdullah, ya fallecido.

Algo importante a tener en cuenta: Este cambio electoral involucra sólo a las ciudadanas sauditas. Hay millones de trabajadoras/es inmigrantes en Arabia Saudita, mayormente de África y Asia, que no tienen ningún derecho. Muchas son mujeres que hacen trabajo doméstico por poca paga, si acaso se les paga. Muchas son víctimas de abusos sexuales por parte de sus empleadores y no tienen ningún recurso legal. Estas elecciones no tenían ningún efecto directo en sus vidas.

Arabia Saudita es uno de los principales socios de EUA en el Medio Oriente. Entre 1950 y 2006, una quinta parte de las ventas de armas de EUA fue a Arabia Saudita. Se dan miles de millones de dólares cada año para que los saudíes puedan comprar carísimo equipo militar estadounidense, engordando así las cuentas bancarias de los especuladores de la guerra. Más recientemente el Pentágono ha proporcionado drones, fuerzas especiales y coordinación militar para la ofensiva asesina saudita contra las fuerzas rebeldes en el país de Yemen, el país más pobre de la región.

Mientras los políticos capitalistas en EUA les gusta alegar que han ayudado a presionar a Arabia Saudita a que conceda más derechos humanos a su pueblo, la verdad es todo lo contrario. Ha sido el apoyo de Washington y otras capitales imperialistas que han montado una camarilla de aristócratas saudíes despóticos en una potencia militar y económica que se opone a todo cambio progresista en la región. □

## Histórica victoria de sindicato de conductores de autobuses escolares de Boston Líderes despedidos son reintegrados y ganan beneficios

Por Martha Grevatt

Después de más de dos años de ardua lucha, las militantes bases del Sindicato de Conductores de Autobuses Escolares de Boston (BSDU-USW-8751) (Sindicato de Trabajadores del Acero - Seccional 8751) han obtenido una histórica victoria contra el gigante mundial Veolia / Transdev, una de las empresas antisindicales capitalistas más infames; contra los patronos de las Escuelas Públicas de Boston, y contra el alcalde de Boston Marty Walsh y sus voceros mediáticos. Cuatro dirigentes sindicales que fueron despedidos en octubre de 2013 con falsas acusaciones de liderar una huelga sin autorización (wildcat strike), regresaron a trabajar. Los patronos de Transdev habían jurado que los cuatro nunca volverían. Pero a las 4 pm del 18 de diciembre, después de una maratónica sesión de negociación de 25 horas, Veolia y los patronos de la ciudad de Boston firmaron acuerdos integrales con el sindicato, reincorporando al presidente André François, al vicepresidente Steve Kirschbaum, al secretario de finanzas Steve Gillis y al presidente de querellas Garry Murchison. Además de la reincorporación de los cuatro con plenos derechos de antigüedad y un sustancial pago monetario, la seccional ganó un contrato con justicia económica y la protección de 40 años de proceso de negociación colectiva. El contrato será totalmente retroactivo para todos los beneficios salariales, pensionales y de prestaciones.

Las/os trabajadores recibirán inmediatamente un aumento del 5,5 por ciento y colectivamente más de \$1,7 millones en salarios atrasados, que se remonta a la fecha de vencimiento del contrato en 2014. La jubilación, que ahora será después de 30 años de servicio sin requisitos de edad, tendrá incrementos sustanciales en beneficios y pagos por despido. Hay otros beneficios demasiado numerosos para enumerarlos.

El conjunto de acuerdos también protege al plan de pensiones que anteriormente estaba administrado por el sindicato pero que estaba bajo ataque. Permite además que el sindicato entre inmediatamente en el proceso directamente con la ciudad, sin la interferencia de Veolia, para solucionar las casi 700 querellas resultantes de tres años de violaciones de contrato por Veolia.

La garantía de seguridad sindical y de trabajo con la ciudad, que ordena que cualquier futura empresa o la ciudad debe aceptar a las/os trabajadores y el contrato sindical completo, se extiende hasta 2019. La Seccional 8751 logró que no se introdujeran las placas de identificación con chip implantado para seguimiento por radio y el uso de la tecnología biométrica para espiar a las/os trabajadores. También luchó con éxito para obtener la mayor cantidad de términos de protección sindical posibles para frenar la reciente introducción de cámaras espías en los autobuses, las cuales se han convertido en un hecho lamentable de la vida laboral en el transporte. El sindicato tiene previsto continuar la batalla contra las cámaras en alianza con madres y padres y la comunidad en el próximo período.

### Solidaridad con el Equipo Solidaridad

Esta larga lucha estuvo liderada por el aguerrido Equipo Solidaridad, cuyos candidatos François y Kirschbaum, barrieron las elecciones sindicales en abril de 2015, luego de que el montaje de cargos políticos contra Kirschbaum se vino abajo en la corte. Toda la base estaba lista para una huelga en cualquier momento si era necesario. "Iremos a huelga si nos provocan" era la consigna en las populares camisetas del equipo.

El Equipo Solidaridad no estaba luchando de manera aislada. La lucha por reconstruir a los cuatro dirigentes sindicales atrajo a muchas/os aliados que sabían del ac-

tivismo coherente y de principios de la S-8751 contra el racismo y la austeridad, así como su internacionalismo y su trabajo sindical solidario.

Las/os conductores de autobuses escolares de Boston, que son 98 por ciento de Haití, Cabo Verde, afro-americanas/os, latinas/os y otras/os trabajadoras de color, batallan contra el racismo todos los días tanto dentro como fuera del trabajo. Ganaron el apoyo de las/os activistas laborales y comunitarias/os negro más prominentes de Boston, que, al ver el carácter racista, antisindical del ataque a un sindicato mayoritariamente negro, se unieron por primera vez para clamar justicia para los dirigentes despedidos.

La última sesión de 25 horas refleja con precisión las fuerzas en esta batalla histórica. Por el lado del sindicato estaban los cuatro despedidos, el Equipo, los abogados y el personal del Steelworkers Internacional y el líder de la comunidad Chuck Turner por teléfono.

Por el lado de la patronal estaban los jefes locales, nacionales e internacionales de Veolia incluyendo al infame Thomas P. Hock, cuyo grupo de expertos ha estado destruyendo sindicatos de tránsito durante 40 años; los altos mandos de las Escuelas Públicas de Boston; y el alcalde Walsh con su personal y directores financieros. El Equipo pudo evitar que abandonaran el hotel donde se produjeron las negociaciones, haciéndoles permanecer toda la noche.

### Vencidos los anticomunistas

Esta fue realmente una lucha para defender el histórico papel de liderazgo del Partido Workers World-Mundo Obrero en el sindicato, que los miembros de WW-MO ayudaron a fundar hace cuatro décadas. Los patronos de Veolia y la burguesía de la ciudad dejaron claro que objetivo más importante era sacar a los rojos del sindicato, encarcelarlos y enviar un mensaje a las bases y al movimiento sindical en su conjunto que el activismo sindical radical es una cosa del pasado.

Inmediatamente después de la supuesta "huelga no autorizada" - que fue realmente un bloqueo ilegal (huelga patronal) por parte de Veolia - los medios de comunicación capitalista de Boston publicaron feroces artículos anticomunistas atacando a Kirschbaum por ser miembro del Partido WW-MO; Gillis también es miembro. Pero los patronos se metieron con el sindicato - y el partido revolucionario, multinacional de la clase obrera - equivocado.

El Partido WW-MO envió delegaciones de todo el país para ayudar con la organización constante de apoyo y solidaridad de las comunidades. Los esfuerzos de recaudación de fondos hicieron posible que los cuatro líderes despedidos pudieran sobrevivir más de dos años sin un cheque.

El sindicato, sabiendo que tenían el pleno apoyo de las/os compañeros de WW-MO, literalmente hizo retroceder todas las condiciones onerosas que la patronal trataba de atar al acuerdo de reincorporación, incluyendo restricciones indignantes sobre organización política, concesiones de contratos y el abandono de los pedidos de agravios.

Una vez que se firmaron los acuerdos, lo único que quedaba era que la membresía ratificara el contrato. Esto sucedió la noche del 22 de diciembre en una reunión sindical masiva. El voto fue unánime. Eso significa que al día siguiente, dos días antes de Navidad, los dirigentes despedidos podrían volver a trabajar.

Con las bases y la comunidad detrás de ellos, y alentados por la solidaridad del WW-MO, la 8751 venció y propinó un duro golpe a los rompe-sindicatos y propinó de austeridad racistas y anticomunistas del establecimiento político de Boston, y a la odiada Veolia que emplearon para llevar a cabo su ataque. □