By Fred Goldstein

The new left social-democratic government of the Syriza party was swept into office in Greece on an anti-austerity program on Jan. 25. The party targeted the harsh neoliberal cutbacks, budget cuts and privatization imposed by the “Troika” — the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission.

The new government immediately took concrete measures against the austerity program imposed by the banks. As the Jan. 28 British Guardian put it: “One by one [the austerity measures] were rolled back, blitzkrieg-style, mercilessly, ruthlessly, with rat-a-tat efficiency. “First the barricades came down outside the Greek parliament. Then it was announced that privatization schemes would be halted and pensions reinstated. And then came the news of the reintroduction of the 751-euro monthly minimum wage. … “After that, ministers announced more measures: the scrapping of fees for prescriptions and hospital visits, the restoration of collective work agreements, the rehiring of workers laid off in the public sector, the granting of citizenship to migrant children born and raised in Greece.”

The measures that Syriza announced concerning an end to privatization and restoration of the workers’ standard of living are estimated to cost 13.2 billion euro. Despite the fact that Greece owes the Troika 240 billion euro, the Syriza government did not ask permission to break the austerity pact, which these measures surely do. (As of Feb. 2, 1 euro equals $1.13)

These acts sent a wave of hope through the broad masses and shock waves into the boardrooms of finance capital.

Austerity for masses equals aid to bankers

Previous governments had planned to raise funds by selling off to private capitalists and developers Greece’s two biggest ports, several airports, its power utility, a refinery and other public facilities, along with layoffs and cutbacks in workers’ wages, pensions and health benefits. All this was going to be done to pay for the bank loans made to previous Greek capitalist governments.

It is worth noting that, in fact, the Greek government is not really sovereign. It has no control over its currency, a vital function of any capitalist state. Control of the currency lies in Frankfurt, Germany’s financial center. The background to Syriza’s electoral victory is years of economic hardship, leading to years of mass struggle.
Hate capitalism? Workers World Party fights for a socialist society — where the wealth is socially owned and production is planned to satisfy human need. This outdated capitalist system is dragging down workers’ living standards while throwing millions out of jobs. You’re young, you know they’re stealing your future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet with its unplanned, profit-driven stranglehold over the means of production.

Workers built it all — it belongs to society, not to a handful of billionaires! But we need a revolution to make that change. That’s why for 56 years WWP has focused every year, every year. WWP has had continual coverage of the struggles needed to make revolutionary change.

For the past 38 years, WWP subscribers have helped maintain the paper by joining the WWP Supporter Program. Please help us continue to publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build the means necessary. Those words were first spoken by the Malcolm X, assassinated 50 years ago on Feb. 21, 1965.

If you appreciate this coverage, it’s time to join the Workers World Supporter Program. Please help us continue to publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build the struggles needed to make revolutionary change.

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**U.S. oil workers strike Shell**

The United Steelworkers called a strike on Feb. 1 at nine plants run by Royal Dutch Shell on behalf of several companies, including Exxon Mobil and Chevron. The refinery on strike accounts for 10 percent of U.S. refining capacity; they can produce 1.82 million barrels of fuel a day. This is the biggest walkout since 1980, an action which lasted three months. The union has rejected five offers by Shell since talks began on Jan. 21. Bloomberg reported Feb. 2, “While only one of the nine plants has curbed production amid the stoppage, a full walkout of USW workers would threaten to disrupt as much as 64 percent of U.S. fuel output. Shell and union officials began negotiations amid the biggest collapse in oil prices since 2008.” Analysts estimate that if the strike grows, it could negatively impact the price of oil worldwide.

**Delta flight attendants want union**

Almost 12,000 Delta Airlines flight attendants, approximately 60 percent of the workforce, have signed union cards calling for representation by the Machinists union. If Delta’s more than 20,000 flight attendants elect to join IAM, they will have earned the distinction of leading the largest successful transportation industry organizing drive in history.

Longtime Delta flight attendant Gabe Perez asserted, “We are the reason Delta is the world’s most profitable carrier and leads the industry in almost every financial and operational measure. Yet, we lag the industry in wages, benefits and work rules. That will change once we win our election and negotiate the industry-best contract we deserve.” (Workday Minnesota, Jan. 13)

**NYC retail workers’ organizing pays off**

After eight months of organizing for better working conditions, including more hours, advanced notification of schedules, better pay and dignity, workers at Zara have won their hard-fought battle. According to the workers, the management made the difficult trip through the snow via wheelchairs and scooters to appear at the hearings. Members of the Disabled People’s Liberation Front and militant school bus drivers, 95 percent of whom are Haitian, Cape Verdean and African American, turned out, along with community supporters. All wore bright yellow stickers supporting United Steelworkers Local 8751. Members of the Disabled People’s Liberation Front made the difficult trip through the snow via wheelchairs to support the union. The workers began organizing a ChangeZara last May with the help of the Department Store Union and the Retail Action Project. (afcin.org/blog, Jan. 6)

**FairPoint strikers are determined**

Workers at the New England telecommunications provider FairPoint, represented by Communication Workers Local 1400 and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2327, have been on strike for over 190 days. Almost 2,000 FairPoint workers went on strike in October after management threatened to cut wages, medical benefits and outsource union jobs to outside contractors. Despite a Dec. 30 NLRB decision to dismiss the unfair labor practice charges filed by the union against FairPoint, the workers are not backing down and picket lines continue despite record snowfalls. Although both parties are under a gag order until negotiations are concluded, federal mediators say progress is being made.

**Capitalism at a Dead End**

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

For more information and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to www.LowWageCapitalism.com Available at major online bookstores.

**Despite historic blizzard, workers pack court for union militant**

**Bus drivers pack court for union militant**

By Tony Murphy

**Boston**

Feb. 2 — A record-breaking snowstorm has shut down streets, schools and airline flights throughout the Northeast. With 34.1 inches of snow since Jan. 27, this is now Boston’s snowiest week since modern weather records began in 1981, according to the Weather Channel. This did not stop 75 people from packing the courtroom to overflowing at Dorchester District Court today. It was another powerful show of support for the Boston School Bus Drivers Union and its founder Steve Kirschbaum. Getting around in Boston is not easy today. But the militant school bus drivers, 95 percent of whom are Haitian, Cape Verdean and African American, turned out, along with community supporters. All wore bright yellow stickers supporting United Steelworkers Local 8751. Members of the Disabled People’s Liberation Front made the difficult trip through the snow via wheelchairs to support the union. Fueled by subpoena to appear were the bosses of the school bus company, Transdev (formerly Veolia), who sat glumly waiting to be called for the frame-up case they are responsible for.

However, the snow prevented jury selection from taking place today — leading the judge to postpone it to March 3. But before that happened, 21 witnesses for the defense were ordered to appear for the next court date. The prosecution is calling two witnesses.

The 21 witnesses were among over 100 people who were present at an impromptu indoor union rally last June 30. They will testify that the charges against Kirschbaum — trespass and a serious felony “assault with a dangerous weapon” (a table) — are 100 percent false. The nonexistent case is motivated by the desire of the Boston City council to break the fighting school bus drivers union — a desire that also drove the illegal firing of four union leaders in 2013.

The progressive, fightback record of this union was shown by the many community supporters at the trial and afterwards at an indoor courthouse rally. Longtime allies of Local 8751 — former City Councilmember Chuck Twitter, Sandra Moschini, of the Coalition for Equal Quality Education; and Lisa Owens, one of the founders of the youth activist group Free My People — were joined by new supporters such as Jackson. He is the son of a group of Black activists who shut down Boston’s F-193 in protest of racism a few weeks ago. His trial will be on Feb. 20 in Somerville District Court.

Martha Greavel, a United Auto Workers supporter who traveled from Detroit with three youth activists to attend the trial, spoke to the rally about growing national support for the Boston School Bus Drivers Union. A recent resolution was passed by United Steelworkers Local 21929, representing workers at Great Lakes Steel.

This was on the heels of a resolution passed by the Alameda Central Labor Council in California and donations from the Massachusetts Nurses Association and Food and Commercial Workers Local 1549.

Veolia/Transdev and its Boston political backers hoped in July that they could derail the growing support for this community-based social union with the repressive power of the state. Since then, the union has not only continued to fight the attack on its members but also jumped into the national upsurge against police brutality with both feet.

Local 8751 formally endorsed and donated $1,000 to Boston Black Lives Matter. The two groups collaborated on a January protest against Boston’s Mayor Martin Walsh. Today, both supporters and the union’s class enemies could not help but be impressed that — in the midst of a blizzard paralyzing much of the region — the union packed the court with rank-and-file members and political supporters. Local 8751 fights on.

**McDonald’s serves up racist, sexist discrimination**

Ten former McDonald’s workers filed a civil rights suit in Virginia on Jan. 22 against the fast food giant for alleged racial discrimination, wrongful termination and sexual harassment. According to the plaintiffs, 15 Black workers were fired in one day solely because of their race. The suit also accuses a manager of inappropriately touching workers and offering “female employees better working conditions in exchange for sexual favors.”

The lawsuit names both the McDonald’s franchise and the global McDonald’s Corporation as defendants. This is the first case to head to court against the corporation since the Dec. 19 National Labor Relations Board decision that the corporation can be held liable for the actions of its franchises. The plaintiffs are seeking payment for lost wages, emotional distress and other damages. The NAACP and “Fight for $15” are supporting them.

The food industry is notorious for harassment. Some 50 percent of women workers in restaurants say they have been sexually harassed. (Chicago Tribune, Jan. 22)

**Thousands of workers sue TGI Friday’s for wage theft**

A massive wage theft lawsuit against restaurant chain TGI Friday’s will move forward as a collective action suit, said the New York federal judge who granted 42,000 workers conditional certification on Jan. 20. Workers in Massachusetts, New York and Virginia accused the chain of paying below federal minimum wage, withholding overtime pay and forcing employees to forfeit some of their tips and work off the books.

According to a 2014 study, nearly 9 out of 10 fast food workers have had wages stolen. The lawsuit reports it. It’s estimated that the amount of money stolen annually from employees is more than $50 billion. And the problem is increasing. Complaints of wage theft rose 400 percent over the last decade. (ThinkProgress.org, Jan. 23)
Second near-disaster as shale oil train derails

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

For the second time in just over a year, a train carrying Bakken Shale crude oil derailed in Philadelphia, again in an area where potential harm to surrounding communities could have been catastrophic for thousands of people.

Eleven cars of a 111-car CSX train traveling from Chicago jumped the tracks around 3 a.m. on Jan. 31 in a South Philadelphia rail yard. It was near the Lincoln Financial Field sports arena and the Philadelphia Naval Yard. The area is also near Interstate 95, one of the busiest highways in the U.S., and close to waterways.

While none of the derailed cars carrying the crude oil ruptured, this second near-miss has again raised concerns.

A little over a year ago, on Martin Luther King Day, seven cars carrying Bakken Shale crude derailed over the Schuylkill River here in what was described as “a near miss from disaster.” That derailment put several major institutions at risk, including the University of Pennsylvania medical complex, Children’s Hospital and the Veterans Administration, as well as a heavily populated residential section of Philadelphia.

Both accidents were predictable. These mile-long trains carrying oil to the Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery in South Philadelphia run 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There is very little regulation or oversight.

The trains carry crude from shale formations in North Dakota, Colorado and Texas. With over 100 cars, each carrying 30,000 gallons or more of highly volatile oil, they have been described as “ticking bombs.”

Crude oil from the North Dakota Bakken formation contains a high content of combustible gas, making it more volatile than most traditional light crude. Chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process are also thought to contribute to the combustible nature of shale crude.

A runaway train carrying Bakken crude oil derailed and exploded on July 6, 2013, near the village of Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, killing 47 people and demolishing the town center.

At least eight significant incidents involving crude-by-rail have taken place in the U.S. since 2013, resulting in over one million gallons of oil spilled — more than in the previous 38 years combined.

Second near-disaster as shale oil train derails

By Terri Kay
Oakland, Calif.

At a Workers World Party meeting here on Jan. 31, Imani Henry asked the audience, “How do we ratchet it up in 2015, the year of resistance?” Henry is a longtime activist in the anti-police brutality, anti-war and lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer movements in the U.S. He is also an organizer with the Peoples Power Assembly, which helped to coordinate emergency day-of-day-after-actions in New York and nationally in response to the decision by a Ferguson, Mo., grand jury not to indict the cop who killed a young unarmed Black man, Michael Brown.

The meeting, titled “From NYC to Ferguson to Oakland: The Nationwide Fight Against Police Terror,” provoked a live

WWP hosts resistance fighters

By Terri Kay
Oakland, Calif.

Several hundred Oakland Education Association teachers as well as students and parents rallied outside an Oakland Unified School District Board meeting on Jan. 28. After they went inside, they spoke out against proposals to privatize Fremont, Castlemont and McClymonds High Schools, Frick Middle School and Brookfield Elementary. They also opposed efforts to make it easier for charter schools to recruit public school families.

These measures are tied to changes the OUSD is pushing to the teachers’ union to recruit public school families.

Tribute held for MOVE 9

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

A standing-room-only crowd gathered at the Kingsessing Recreational Center in Philadelphia on Jan. 31 for a celebration of the life of William Phillips, better known as Phil Africa. A MOVE 9 member, he died under suspicious circumstances at Pennsylvania’s SCI Dallas prison on Jan. 10 at the age of 59.

The special tribute shared messages of solidarity and support from people all over the world, including a number of current or former prisoners who came to know Africa during his 37 years of confinement, as well as surviving MOVE 9 members Delbert and Debbie Africa.

Phil was described by MOVE member Sue Africa as a “man well loved by all he touched; a true soldier who is gone, but whose spirit will never die or be forgotten.”

Many speakers remembered him for his skilled art work, often depicting nature. Others spoke of his witty sense of humor, his ability to put anyone in his company at ease and the positive impact he had on their lives. He was described as a prolific writer who sent dozens of letters a day.

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By Dianne Mathiowetz

Atlanta

Kevin Davis’ family and friends are in disbelief and sorrow.

How could police have shot and killed Davis, a hardworking, 44-year-old beloved brother and uncle, a “good guy,” after he called 911 for help?

On Dec. 29, Davis’ girlfriend, April Edwards, was involved in an altercation with Terrance Hilyard, a co-worker whom Davis had befriended and who was staying at his apartment temporarily.

The argument escalated. According to Edwards, Hilyard stabbed her in the arm with a kitchen knife and fled. While Davis was rendering first aid to Edwards, he called 911.

DeKalb County police officer Joseph Pitts came in through the apartment’s front door, unannounced, and shot and killed Davis three-legged dog Tooter, whom Davis had started barking.

As Davis lay bleeding on the floor, he was arrested, handcuffed and charged with aggravated assault on an officer. The popular restaurant worker was taken to Grady Hospital in police custody, which meant his family was not allowed to be with him in his hospital room. Family members beseeched everyone in authority, from police to doctors, to let them visit him — to no avail.

Davis died two days later, on Dec. 31. Only then did police coldly grant them permission to see their family member.

One month has passed since Kevin Davis was killed by a DeKalb County police officer. Despite repeated requests for information about an investigation into this officer-involved shooting, there has been only silence. Since it is common practice to involve the Georgia Bureau of Investigation in such police killings, the community suspects a cover-up in this case.

At an emotional rally at the DeKalb Courthouse steps on the one-month anniversary of his shooting, Delisa Davis, one of his sisters, spoke of the unfeeling attitude of the police, saying her family and Kevin were “dismissed like yesterday’s garbage.” She appealed to the community to help, saying they can’t fight this alone.

The large group walked a few blocks from the courthouse to the downtown Decatur sandwich shop where Davis’ friends and a personable manner had made him a favorite with customers and co-workers alike. Next door is a bike shop where he fixed discarded bicycles to give to neighborhood kids.

The family is asking that people request a GBI investigation into Kevin Davis’ death by calling the DeKalb County Police Department at 678-406-7929 and the DeKalb County District Attorney’s office at 404-371-2585.

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African Burial Ground exposes slavery

By Dolores Cox

New York

Yes, slavery existed in the North, too. New York was one of the largest centers of slaveholding in the U.S. In 1791, a grave site was discovered during a dig for the construction of a new federal building in New York City's Lower Manhattan area. It was 300 years old then. An 18th century map of the area revealed the site was the location of a “Negro Burial Ground” covering six acres, approximately five city blocks.

Africans began arriving in New Amsterdam, a Dutch settlement, in 1624. They were forcibly brought there from the Caribbean and Africa. In 1654, New Amsterdam became the British colony of New York.

The coffins left Wall Street in large horse-drawn, glass-enclosed carriages, followed by a large procession through the streets to the Burial Ground.

The next day's ceremony at the Burial Ground began similarly, included spoken word and several readings of poetry by the late African-American poet Langston Hughes. Several tributary statements were made and others read, including one from Nigeria's President Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. Soil from the Burial Ground containing ancestral spirits was collected to be taken back to Freedom Park, a national memorial gardens in South Africa. After closing remarks, a benediction was given by an Indigenous community representative.

The coffins were lowered into the ground, with flowers and written messages to the ancestors. Subsequently, all coffins, many in crypts, were reburied in their permanent resting place.

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem organized the ceremonies commemorating the heritage of Africans in the U.S., their lives, culture and the role they played in building the country.

In 2006, the Burial Ground was declared a national monument; in 2007 a permanent memorial sculpture was dedicated on the site. Project materials and records were transferred in 2009 from the National Park Service and Army Corps of Engineers to the Schomburg Center. Samples of the Burial Ground remain at Howard University.

In 2006, the Burial Ground Visitors Center was opened, which contains permanent displays and records on the history of slavery and Black Americans in Lower Manhattan.

For this article include “A Burial Ground and Its Dead Are Given Life” (New York Times, Feb. 26, 2010) and “The African Burial Ground” at un.gov/portal/content/10077.

The right to rebel

The case of Ahmed Evans

By Martha Grevatt

On July 23, 1968, a gun battle between white Cleveland police officers and the Black Nationalist group “Republic of New Libya” ended with an official death toll of three police, three Black snipers and one civilian. The dispute began over ongoing racial harassment of the group’s leader, Ahmed Evans, by white officers. Police accused Evans’ group of shooting first.

Independent journalists and investigators uncovered facts to support Evans’ claim that it was the other way around.

Nevertheless, Ahmed Evans was charged with murder and first-degree murder in the death of the police and another person, dubbed a hero, who was said to have been helping police. Evans also faces three charges specificaly for killing police officers, which was automatically a capital offense in Ohio then, unless the jury were to recom mend a life sentence.

Evans himself had not fired any of the fatal shots. He was charged under state law that allowed a person to be held accountable for an accomplice during an accomplice during a conspiracy.

Mae Mallory, who came to Cleveland in 1961 when Youngstown went on strike, attempted to have her extradited from New York to face trumped-up kidnapping charges, was instrumental in forming the Defense Committee. The 1967 charges had been leveled against her and Robert Williams, a leader of the Black community in Monroe, N.C., who supported the right of armed self-defense against the Ku Klux Klan.

Another lead activist in the Defense Committee, Wilbur Grattan, was a Republic of New Libya member who was beaten savagely by police after trying to attend to a wounded comrade on the night of the shootout. Grattan was a seasoned activist, having been involved with the Southern Tenant Farmers Union in his home state of Alabama.

A year earlier, Ted Dostal, a retired steelworker, and Frances Dostal, a registered nurse, had moved to Cleveland from Youngstown, Ohio, to start a branch of Workers World Party. Understanding the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, these white militants respected the position of Mallory and others that the Defense Committee should be an autonomous Black organization. So they formed “Friends of the July 23 Defense Committee.”

“Conspiracy” charge buries truth

Truth was the first casualty of the prosecution’s determination to send Evans to the electric chair.

A 22-year-old Afri
can-American, by the name of James Chapman, was said to have been aiding police when killed by a Black sniper. An organization that aided widows of slain police officers bro
ted giving $1,000 to Chapman’s widow.

However, a forensic expert testified that Chapman’s wound was caused by a shot fired no more than 18 inches from his head — meaning he had to have been killed by a “sniper,” but by the police he was accompanying, yet Chapman’s death was blamed on the “conspiracy” that Evans was allegedly a party to.

Whether the three police officers were all killed by members of the Republic of New Libya or by their fellow officers was never clearly established. The prosecution based its case on the testimony of gun dealers who claimed to have sold weapons to Evans. With the aim of under
making not only Evans’ defense but the city administration, the prosecution claimed the money used to buy the weapons came from a grant that Evans’ Afro Culture Shop and Bookstore had received from “Cleveland Now!,” an empowerment program initiated by the city’s first Afri
can-American mayor, Carl B. Stokes.
By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Some writers today note that an often hidden and misrepresented anti-slavery rebellion in the United States occurred in Louisiana — located above New Orleans on the Mississippi River — was the largest African uprising during the antebellum period. Historiographical accounts of resistance to slavery among Africans in North America have undergone many revisions. Early 20th century accounts of the slave period were crafted for academia by Southern historians who were sympathetic to planters and business interests that dominated the region. Reactive white professors such as George B. Phillips, a Southerner who taught at the University of Michigan from 1911 to 1929, claimed that the Southern slave system was paternalistic, using largely benign, coercive methods to ensure production quotas. Phillips attributed acts of resistance to criminal activity and refused to acknowledge the humanity of enslaved Africans. However, African and white progressive historians have sought to unravel the repression and conditions that contributed to resistance to enslavement and national oppression. Rather than being considered an aberration in the slave system, the consistency and determination of enslaved African slaves suggest they played a significant role in shaping the character of the repressive mechanism utilized to maintain this exploitative system.

For example, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was implemented at the beginning of the decade that saw the economic decline of the plantation system. The increasing-ly intransigent positions of the Southern planters were, in part, a response to the economic collapse of the post-Civil War period — when resistance to slavery grew substantially.

Origins of 1811 Louisiana slave revolt

A re-examination of historical documents related to the rebellion along the German Coast point to the high degree of organization and discipline exercised by the African leaders who were brought there from Haiti and the region now known as the Dominican Republic. Fortunately, the author's account, the 1804 Haitian revolutionary fighters were killed and 75 others were captured. The 75 Africans who were detained, 25 were prosecuted in a show trial. After a one-day investigation, 16 Africans were condemned to death and taken to their so-called “masters’” plantations, where they were shot to death and decapitated. The Africans’ severed heads were put on poles on the plantations for the purpose of terrifying other enslaved people into submission.

The protest also took up current struggles against police brutality. Demonstrators chanted, “Push back! Push push harder! We’re doing this for Eric Garner!” “Hands up, no turning down! We’re doing this for Michael Brown!” and “End the colorblindness! Those killers must go to jail!” The whole damn system is guilty as hell!”

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Harlem march honors Malcolm X

"Black Lives Matter" movement activists marched and rallied Feb. 1 in Harlem, N.Y., to usher in Black Liberation Month by honoring the memory of Malcolm X. Their goal is to launch a campaign to create a day that notes Malcolm’s important role in the Civil Rights/Black Liberation movements.

A rally near the statue of Adam Clayton Powell outside the State Office Building on 125th Street was followed by a march two miles up Broadway to the Audubon Ballroom on 165th Street, where Malcolm X was assassinated on Feb. 21, 1965, a half-century ago.

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Nicholas Heyward, father of Nicholas Heyward Jr., spoke at the rally. The younger Heyward — he was only 13 years old — was gunned down by a New York City police officer. Heyward and others called for the removal of Police Commissioner William Bratton from his post.

LOUISIANA’S African slave revolt of 1811

It continues, “Maroon colonies in the bayou operated as effective bases from which rebels attacked in the years leading up to the German Coast uprising. Copies of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man were found in slave quarters. Battle-hardened warriors from Ghana and Angola also make an appearance in Rasmussen’s version, in which the rebels march in formation and in uniform with cavalry support, not simply to ‘give us free,’ as Cinqué asked, but to take control of New Orleans and establish a black state.”

‘On to New Orleans’

From 200 to 500 Africans participated in the rebellion. Most of them were armed with knives, axes and other weapons; some carried guns.

The revolt erupted on Jan. 8 at Manzell Andry’s plantation in St. Charles Parish, 36 miles from New Orleans. Charles Deslondes — who was brought to New Orleans from Haiti — was a principal figure in the rebellion. He worked as a slave driver on the Andry plantation and occupied a relatively privileged position within the system.

Nonetheless, Deslondes utilized access to the plantation house to organize fellow enslaved Africans; they severely wounded Manzell Andry and killed his son. They further armed themselves and set off, chanting “On to New Orleans” and picking up recruits along the way.

Along the Mississippi River, as they headed to New Orleans, the Africans burned down several plantations and sugarcane mills. White slave owners and their families fled ahead of the approaching rebellion, alerting the authorities.

On the night of Jan. 9, a detachment of U.S. regular troops and a planters’ militia attacked the Africans at the Jacques Ferrier plantation in St. Charles Parish, halting their advance toward New Orleans. During the clashes between the Africans and the plantation system defenders, 66 revolutionary fighters were killed and 75 others were captured.

Of the 75 Africans who were detained, workers.org

Feb. 12, 2015

Page 7
By John Catalinotto

The specter of anti-austerity is haunting Europe’s ruling bankers and bosses. Excitement over Syria’s victory in Greece’s parliamentary election jumped westward along the Mediterranean Sea to Spain as a massive demonstration on Jan. 31 clogged central Madrid’s Puerta del Sol square.

According to the march’s organizers from the new political party “Podemos,” 300,000 heeded their call to march. They shouted: “Tick-tock, tick-tock, now is the time for change!” The change they want is to reject the establishment parties that have cut social security, medical care and education in order to make payments on a $1.2 trillion debt, mostly to German banks.

Podemos grew out of protests by the “indignant ones,” who filled the large squares of cities all over the Spanish state starting May 15, 2011. Although founded as an electoral party just a year ago, in January 2014, Podemos won 8 percent of the vote last May for the European Parliament and already has attracted 320,000 members.

More recently Podemos has been leading in the electoral polls, ahead of the two parties that have alternately governed since 1977: the People’s Party (PP) — a right-wing party now in office — and the Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) — which, despite its name, is a pro-capitalist center party. National elections are scheduled for November.

After the 2008 capitalist economic crisis, Podemos was formed by the working class in Spain nosedived. Even now, after a supposed recovery, there is a 24 percent general unemployment rate, but double that for workers under 25 years of age. Some 20,000 homeowners are scheduled to lose their homes to the banks this year. Popular anger over the worsening conditions turned into opposition to the governing parties and to anyone considered part of the capitalist establishment.

Both the PP and the PSOE enforced the austerity program. Many people within the Spanish state consider these two parties and other government institutions corrupt tools of the ruling class. The people also rejected the royal family, which is steeped in corruption. The government of King Juan Carlos I, for example, chose to abdicate last June in favor of his son, now King Felipe VI, rather than completely discredit the monarchy.

Many Podemos voters and supporters come from the historically left parties, like the United Left (UI). Other had been PSOE voters. Others had abstained. Now millions who hope an electoral change can relieve the overall crisis are looking to Podemos, whose program promises a break with European Union domination and austerity.

Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias had campaigned for Syriza in Greece. The Syriza victory in the Jan. 25 election gave a boost to those in Spain seeking an electoral alternative to the current situation of unemployment and disappearing social benefits. Revolutionary organizations like the Red Network are urging mass mobilizations and preparations for a general strike. These groups see an electoral campaign in Spain as only one part of a struggle against austerity. Last March 22, organizers of a “March for Dignity” gathered over a million people in Madrid to protest austerity. They plan a similar protest this March 21.

By Jerry Goldberg

Detroit

Feb. 1 — When the Troika — the International Monetary Fund, European Commission and European Central Bank — disbursed 226.7 billion euros to Greece between May 2010 and the present, European capitalists and politicians spoke of these funds as if they were a gift to the Greek people. In reality, the funds went almost exclusively to bailing out the banks, provided little benefit to the people and increased Greece’s public debt.

Only 27 billion euros, 12 percent of the total, went to Greece’s governmental operating needs. By contrast, 122 billion euros, or more than half the funds, went to debt servicing. Some 8 billion euros were paid in maturing debt obligations and 40 billion euros in interest. Some 94 billion euros went to replace nonperforming bank loans through new bond exchanges, buybacks and other forms of restructuring — in other words, to make up the losses on worthless bonds issued by the banks. An additional 91.1 billion euros was paid back to the IMF, and 2.3 billion euros were paid in capital to the European Stability Mechanism. (“Where did all the money go?” by Yiannis Mouzakis, tinyurl.com/okux98j.

Especially significant is that the banks and financial institutions which held the Greek debt before 2010 were essentially relieved of the debt by the Troika. They paid back to the IMF, and 2.3 billion euros were paid in capital to the Eurozone Stability Mechanism. (“Where did all the money go?” by Yiannis Mouzakis, tinyurl.com/okux98j.

This is very similar to the U.S. bank bailout that began in 2008, in which the U.S. Treasury and Federal Reserve bought up several trillion dollars in bad debt, particularly mortgage securities, and backed them up with U.S. taxpayer funds through Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Wall Street’s role in Greek ‘debt’

As a result of the Troika’s “bailout,” Greek government debt has grown from 153 percent of the country’s gross domestic product in 2010 to 174 percent today. (“Six key points about Greek debt and the forthcoming election” by Tim Jones, Senate Policy and Campaigns Officer, Jubilee Debt Campaign, January 2013.)

However, the study by Mouzakis, cited above, notes that beginning in 2003 and continuing until today, Greek government revenues have exceeded expenses, with no financing needed to cover state operations. If Greece did not pay off its debt to the Troika — and through the Troika to the banks and financial institutions — it would be able to maintain its operations and likely increase services to the people, which have been devastated by the Troika’s debt to the banks. Canceling the debt to the banks, instead of hobbling Greece, would likely raise the people’s standard of living.

Wall Street played its own role in creating the Greek financial crisis, while profiting from it. In 2001, the investment banking firm Goldman Sachs engineered a deal with Greece that allowed the country to mask its real deficit in order to adopt the euro as its currency. Goldman Sachs engineered a “derivative” — a cross-currency and interest rate swap — in which it advanced 2.8 billion euros to Greece to eliminate 600 million in euros owed by Greece at the time.

By 2005, when Goldman Sachs sold the swap to the National Bank of Greece, the amount owed by Greece had jumped to 5.1 billion euros. In addition, Goldman Sachs pocketed a $300 million fee for engineering this deal. (New York Times, Feb. 14, 2008.)

Goldman Sachs underwrote similar swaps for the city of Detroit, which cost the city $865 million in termination fees on swaps tied to pension obligation certificates, and $357 million on swaps tied to water infrastructure bonds.
Greek masses expect change
Maneuvers begin as bankers push back

Continued from page 1

Greek masses expect change

By Gene Clancy

The austerity program imposed on Greece in 2010 by the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund has had a devastating effect. Greece was a developed European country of some 11 million people, including 1 million immigrants. As in the U.S., 80 percent of its workers are in service industries, especially tourism, in Greece. But it has a significant industrial sector and its merchant navy is the largest in the world, followed by Japan.

Greece, which occupies the southern part of the Balkans, has the largest economy in that region and has attracted many economic immigrants from other Balkan countries. Between 1995 and 2005, testifying to a sharp labor shortage, workers in Greece put in the most hours per year of any European nation. (Groningen Growth and Development Centre, Oct. 6, 2008)

It has also attracted refugees fleeing war and repression in the Middle East.

The 2008 capitalist recession and the austerity program imposed on Greece have had major impacts on the rates of poverty, unemployment and economic growth.

Poverty: In 2009, one year before the imposition of austerity, less than 3 percent of the population had incomes below the poverty line. By the end of 2013, 44 percent were living in poverty. (Policy Analysis Group, Athens University) Some 70 percent of Greek children live in jobless households. (Greek Reporter, May 29, 2014)

Unemployment: In 2010, the IMF projected unemployment would peak at nearly 15 percent by 2012. But one year later official unemployment had climbed to 25.6 percent and by 2014 it stood at 27.7 percent.

Economic growth: The IMF in 2010 also predicted that the economy would “follow a V-shaped pattern” — a short sharp contraction (depression) followed by a quick recovery and steady growth after 2012. Instead, Greece’s gross domestic product had declined by nearly one third by the end of 2014. This is on a par with what the Great Depression of the 1930s did to the United States.

Greece has been in depression for the last five years, with the official unemployment rate at 25 percent, 50 percent youth unemployment and an estimated half of the population living in dire poverty. People have been forced to forage in garbage dumps for food and household supplies. People have turned to alcoholism and food in the forests, and subsist on food banks that have been set up in towns and cities.

This is the result of the global capitalist financial crisis. But it is aggravated by the fact that Greece has been in the vise-like grip of the predatory bankers in Europe, led by German bankers and the government of Angela Merkel, with the support of the entire banking establishment of the continent.

Years of struggle against austerity

But there has been fighting resistance. Mass anti-austerity demonstrations have occurred in Greece since May 5, 2010, when two people were killed.

From May to July 2011, the "indignados" (“indignant ones,” a term originating in Spain) occupied squares all over Greece, and on June 5 of that year up to 500,000 people gathered outside the Greek parliament. The protest was violently suppressed by the police.


Over the years there have been numerous mass demonstrations, sit-ins, occupations, strikes and general strikes. There were two general strikes in 2013, in April and November. Many have been called by the Greek Communist Party, which has a long history of class struggle and militant resistance and a strong base in the working class. Syriza’s base is more general, among unorganized workers, the youth and pauperized small business people. It also made gains among the Greek military and police.

This is the background to the Syriza electoral victory. The demonstrations, as frequent and strong as they have been, were not able to force the Greek political establishment to back off austerity. The parties and politicians of the two main parties are tools of the bankers, the developers, the ship owners and the big business media. Mass resistance so far has been unable to end the cruel “economic waterboarding,” as Yannis Varoufakis, the new Greek finance minister, calls it.

So the Greek masses turned to a parliamentary solution, voting out the traditional capitalist parties and voting in Syriza.

Syriza’s contradiction: trying a ‘new deal’

But having won office, Syriza is now faced with an enormous contradiction. On the one hand, the leadership, headed by Alexis Tsipras and Yannis Varoufakis, is determined to negotiate a “new deal” with the banks — to give Greece respite from austerity and from a harsh loan repayment schedule in order to allow the economy to grow.

There are two parts to their demands. The first, and most fundamental, is that they want Greece’s debt to be cut in half. Second, they are trying to loosen the pay-rental regime — lower interest rates, more time for payment, tying payment to economic growth and so forth. Both Finance Minister Varoufakis and Prime Minister Tsipras have said they intend to honor the debt, but they want the amount and the terms of payment to be modified.

Within hours of the Syriza victory, German President Angela Merkel said she ruled out any debt reduction. German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble warned Greece about its negotiation tactics on writing off debt. In an interview with the London Guardian on Jan. 30, Christine Lagarde, head of the IMF, said that it is “payback time” for Greece and “parents must pay their taxes.”

Syriza’s strategy is to use the antago- nism between the Merkel government to garner sympathy in other European capi- tals. Varoufakis immediately went to Paris to press this case. The French finance minister is sympathetic to Syriza, which has a long history of class struggle called by the Greek Communist Party, in April and November. Many have been set up in towns and cities.

This struggle must not be lost. No one can afford to stand aside. Fascists like Golden Dawn are waiting in the wings to see if the masses will be left in the lurch. Then Golden Dawn and the right wing can move in to capitalize on the suffering and rally the forces of fascism and an- ti-immigrant pogroms.

Opening for revolutionary left

All the more reason that the left, espe- cially the revolutionary left, must be in the forefront of the struggle and win over the masses. If Syriza should falter or succumb to imperialist pressure on the implemen- tation of austerity, then the left must be prepared to step in and give leadership.

In order to obtain a parlia- mentary majority, has made an unsavory alli- ance with the anti-immigrant, homopho- bic right-wing Greek Independence Party. This party has been given the post of heading the Defense Ministry, which is extremely dangerous. The Greek military historically has fascist sympathies. This position gives the military a listening post at Syriza cabinet meetings.

It would be much better, if without joining the government, the Greek Com- munist Party and other left parties could pledge a united front in voting for genu- ine anti-austerity measures in the parlia- ment as well as unity in the streets. Then Syriza would be assured of a parlia- mentary majority on its anti-austerity pro- gram, even if it ruled as a minority gov- ernment. Then it would not have to rely on the Independence Party.

On the other hand, it is very encourag- ing that the new Podemos Party in Spain, an anti-austerity party, was able to rally several hundred thousand people in Mad- drid in the wake of the Syriza electoral victory. This points toward the need to broaden the struggle to all of southern Europe, as well as Ireland — to every- where where the working class and the popu- lation are living in a state of debt slavery to the banks.

The bankers have been threatening the Greek people with being put out of the eurozone if the government defaults or the agreements are violated. They hope that threatening conditions of financial chaos and economic ruin will force ev- eryone to fall back in line. But should Greece have to exit the eurozone — should the bankers try to plunge the country into a state of eco- nomic dislocation and strangulation — that would be the signal for the working class to fight the crisis by seizing con- trol of the economy and reorganizing it on a socialist basis.

The long struggle of an international struggle to overturn capital altogether is the only permanent way out of the present crisis.

Basic facts about Greece

By Gene Clancy

The austerity program imposed on Greece in 2010 by the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund has had a devastating effect.

Greece is a developed European country of some 11 million people, including 1 million immigrants. As in the U.S., 80 percent of its workers are in service industries, especially tourism, in Greece. But it has a significant industrial sector and its merchant navy is the largest in the world, followed by Japan.

Greece, which occupies the southern part of the Balkans, has the largest economy in that region and has attracted many economic immigrants from other
Bratton and protests

New York Police Commissioner William Bratton, in a speech to the Police Foundation on Jan. 29, announced the formation of a new unit to combat “terrorism and protests.”

Here’s the New York Times report on his speech:

“The new unit, to be made up of roughly 350 officers and to be called the Strategic Response Group, will be created in the coming months, Mr. Bratton said. Officers assigned to it would be equipped with heavy protective gear and machine guns and would receive advanced training in counterterrorism tactics and ‘advanced disorder control,’ he said. ‘It is designed for dealing with protests like our recent protests or incidents like Mumbai or what just happened in Paris,’ Mr. Bratton said.”

In New City! Where the streets are densely packed with people. The cops are threatening to use machine guns on protesters, lumping them in with ‘terrorists.’

Bratton was appointed by Mayor Bill de Blasio, who was endorsed by the unions, whose spouses and children are African-American, and who campaigned at least once to use the tactic of stop-and-frisk, which over the years ensnared hundreds of thousands of young people, almost all from the Black and Brown communities.

The published report on Bratton’s speech must have kicked up quite a furor, because four days later another article appeared in the Times “clarifying” Bratton’s remarks.

“The idea of equipping officers with heavy weapons and protective gear to monitor protesters drew immediate criticism last week, and on Monday, Mr. Bratton sought to clarify his statements.

“I may have in my remarks or in your interpretation of my remarks confused you or confused the issue,” he told reporters.

What’s changed is the economic crisis behind last February’s coup and every-thing unleashed since on the people of Ukraine from defaulting on its debt.

The Kiev government was put in power by a coup backed by U.S. and European Union imperialism and depends on openly fascist and neo-Nazi militias.

The Kiev junta lost an estimated 300 to 350 killed and wounded soldiers during Jan. 15-22. The Kiev junta lost 1,200, wounded, prisoners of war and missing in the vicinity of the Donetsk airport alone.

Wptnagon to train neo-Nazi troops

The same day the trolley bus passengers were massacred in Donetsk, Jan. 22, Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, head of the U.S. Army in Europe, was in Kiev. There he met with wounded Ukrainian soldiers and thanked them for their service.

Hodges also met with the commander of the Ukrainian armoured forces and the head of the fascist National Guard, which reports to far-right Interior Minister Arsen Avakov. He announced that U.S. troops will soon be deployed to Ukraine to train National Guard troops.

To mark Hodges’ visit, the U.S. Embassy in Kiev, in its first tweet, declared that Hodges had met with wounded Ukrainian soldiers and thanked them for their service.

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Syria says Israeli attack helps al-Qaida

By Chris Fry

"How can you say that al-Qaida doesn’t have an air force? They have the Israeli air force," Syria President Bashar Assad told an American reporter. ("Assad: Israe-li strikes in Syria benefit al-Qaida," jpost.com, Jan. 25)

President Assad’s comments came a week after an Israeli airstrike on Quneitra, Syria, killed six Hezbollah soldiers and six Iranians, including the Hezbollah Commander Jihad Mughniyeh and Iran-ian General Mohammad Ali Alibabadi.

In retaliation for this unprompted at-tack, on Jan. 28 Hezbollah forces from Lebanon fired anti-tank rockets at an Israeli column in northern Israel, killing two soldiers and wounding seven. In the ensuing battle, a Spanish U.N. soldier was also killed.

Also in response to the Israeli attack, Hamas in Palestinian Gaza organized a strong solidarity demonstration with Hezbollah. Some demonstrators even breached the walls of the U.N. compound in Gaza. Hamas officials said their action "reaffirms Hezbollah’s right to respond to the Israeli aggression, especially fol-lowing the attack in Quneitra." (CNN.com, Jan. 28)

At first glance, it may seem strange that Israel, supported and armed to the teeth by the U.S., would launch an attack on allies of the Assad government in Syr-ia when Syria is waging a fierce defense against invading forces of the Islamic State (ISIL). The U.S. is waging its own air campaign against ISIL in both Syria and Iraq. Hundreds of U.S. troops are being deployed to Iraq, where they are to train Syrian anti-government militias to fight ISIL.

But of course there is nothing strange about it at all. The U.S. is still seen the Assad government in Syria as an obstacle to its dominance over the oil-rich Middle East. Regime change in Syria is still a top item on Washington’s agenda. So it doesn’t complain when Israel attacks Hezbollah, an ally of the Syrian government.

Of course, this attack also meshes with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanya-hu’s re-election campaign in the Zionist garrison state. Continued war against its Arab neighbors and the Palestinian peo-ple is the foundation of Israel’s existence.

This war, which has cost so many lives and caused 9 million people to flee their homes, according to the U.N., is not in the interest of the Jewish people, but it has won the enthusiastic support of Wall Street and its minions in Washington.

It is time for all progressive people to stand in solidarity with the Arab people in the Middle East against these U.S.-Isra-eli criminal attacks!

Syrian soldiers stand next to a mobile artillery unit near the border with Syria in the Golan Heights.

Anti-Islam frenzy in France

Continued from page 8

When the escolta’s principal slapped him on the back of his head and said, “Stop digging. You won’t find a machine gun to kill us all.” Although Ahmed is diabetic, he was deprived of his insulin. He was taken to the police station, and then his father was notified. (Libération, Jan. 28)

A report claims the French ministry of education is investigating 200 reported cases of “supporting terrorism” through-out France. (AFP, Jan. 14)

These cases suggest widespread resis-tance to the current campaign of promot-ing French imperialism and an anti-Islam frenzy under the guise of advancing “the republican values of the French state.”

Given all the heavy state artillery di-rec ted against an 8-year-old who dared to say, “Je ne suis pas Charlie” (“I am not Charlie”), it was interesting to look at French reviews of “The Interview,” the U.S. film about a CIA plot to assassinate Kim Jung Un, leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. In the re-views by Le Figaro and Le Point, there wasn’t a word about this crude film ex-tolling terrorism.

For the French and other imperialists, “terrorism” only flows out of the resis-tance of the oppressed.

The case of Ahmed Evans

Continued from page 6

July 23 Defense Committee held a demon-stration outside the courthouse during the trial. At the time, picketing a court-house was illegal. Mae Mallory was ar-rested, along with Ted Dostal, who was standing on the sidelines as a sympathet-ic observer. Both were charged with con-tempt of court.

On May 12, 1969, jurors returned a verdict of guilty on all counts and with-out mercy. Before being sent to death row, Evans stated, “The electric chair or fear of anything won’t stop the Black man of today.”

Just as today there is widespread an-ger everywhere over the police killing of 12-year-old Tamir Rice of Cleveland, “There was outrage all over the country when the Evans verdict was announced,” recalls Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of the Pan-African News Wire. “I was in eighth grade in Detroit and students walked out when they got the news. They were at-tacked by Detroit police.”

Both Dostal and Mallory were also found guilty. Mallory moved to Tanzania to avoid being forced to serve an outra-gous one-year sentence. Dostal was sent to the workhouse on a six-month sentence. He was released early when he was about to play a lead role in a strike of inmates.

No one was ever charged in the killings of Ameri-Beier Katz, Malik Ali Bey or Non-du Bey, the three Republic of New Libya members shot to death.

Ahmed Evans’ death sentence was lat-er commuted to life in prison, where he died of cancer in 1978. He was a commit-ted revolutionary to the end.

Mae Mallory left Africa when it was safe to return to activism in her home town of Brooklyn, N.Y., where she spent her last years. Wilbur Grattan, a frequent driver on the Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravan, and Ted Dostal and Frances Dos-tal, fixtures of the Cleveland progressive movement, stayed in the struggle to the end. The four remained lifelong friends and all would have been in the streets with the youth of today, blocking high-ways, staging die-ins and getting in the faces of the racist cops. —
Lo que Obama omitió

El “Estado de la Unión” es el discurso presidencial anual que supuestamente se realiza por el presidente — en este caso, Barack Obama — en el acontecimiento que se conoce como el discurso de estado de la Unión. El propósito es informar a los estadounidenses y al mundo sobre la situación de cualquier país que Ud. no se queje de que el gobierno no logre lograr lo que se dice que el gobierno debe lograr. En el pasado, el discurso de estado de la Unión ha sido un momento importante para que el presidente se dirija a los ciudadanos y les hable de los temas que considera importantes para el país.

En este caso, el discurso de estado de la Unión de Barack Obama contará con una serie de temas que el presidente ha seleccionado como prioritarios para el bienestar de los estadounidenses. Algunos de estos temas podrían incluir la economía, la salud, la seguridad, la educación, la política exterior y otros aspectos de importancia para el país.

El discurso de estado de la Unión es un momento en el que el presidente tiene la oportunidad de hablar sobre los temas que considera importantes para el país y de hacer un balance de lo que se ha hecho durante los últimos meses. El presidente también tendrá la oportunidad de hablar de las metas que tiene para el próximo año y de explicar cómo espera que se logren.

El discurso de estado de la Unión es un momento importante para el presidente, ya que es un momento en el que puede ejercer su influencia en el país y en el mundo. El discurso también es una oportunidad para que el presidente se dirija a la nación y le hable de los temas que considera importantes para el bienestar de los estadounidenses.

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