Boston union under siege

‘Which side are you on?’

By Martha Grevatt

“There’s no such thing as neutral. You have to be on one side or the other. In Harlan County there wasn’t no neutral.”

This is how Florence Reece, spouse of National Miners Union organizer Sam Reece, described life in the Kentucky coal fields in 1931.

Sheriff J.H. Blair sent his deputies to the Reece family home looking for Sam, who had learned the law was after him and escaped. The deputies instead terrorized Florence and her children. Incidents like this were commonplace in mining country throughout the 1930s.

After the gun thugs left, Florence Reece composed one of labor’s most beloved anthems: “Which Side Are You On?” Set to the music of a familiar hymn, the song pointedly states, “If you go to Harlan County / There is no neutral there / You’ll either be a union man / Or a thug for J.H. Blair.” The chorus then repeats the question, “Which side are you on?”

With the trial of Boston union leader Stevan Kirschbaum on trumped-up felony charges beginning March 3, this question is as relevant as ever. The union of Boston school bus drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751, is in the crosshairs of the entire ruling-class establishment. There are no neutrals there.

Class struggle in Boston

This historic union, one-of-a-kind in the belly of the beast, has not gone unnoticed by the international capitalist class. The union’s will to struggle has put it in a life-or-death situation with Veolia, one of the largest transnational corporations in the world.

Immediately after the illegal lockout of the bus drivers on Oct. 8, 2013, without bothering to get the union’s version of the events, the ruling establishment launched a red-baiting attack. Employing Cold War McCarthyite rhetoric, the Boston Globe assailed Kirschbaum for his activism, radicalism, militancy and anti-racism, and his Workers World Party affiliation.

The paper’s diatribe portrayed him as “polarizing” and “menacing, narcissistic and dangerously disruptive.” The then mayor, Thomas Menino, attacked Kirschbaum as a “bully” and part of a “rogue element” within the union. But the workers all come to listen and applaud when Kirschbaum speaks at the almost daily rallies at the bus yards. And at each court appearance, co-workers come out in force to show Kirschbaum their solidarity and support.

After the bogus charges were filed, the Globe ran more libelous, “guilty until proven innocent” attacks on Kirschbaum and the union and chastised Local 8751 for “filing dozens of grievances, coddling its lunatic fringe, and ranting about injustices in far-off lands.” With no evidence, the charges — including the two that were subsequently dropped — were presented as fact. In this way, through

Continued on page 4
Youth fight low wages and racist police terror

By Tommy Cavanaugh
Rockford, Ill.

The militant youth group “Fight Imperialism, Stand Together” held a forum in downtown Rockford, Ill., on Feb. 8 that linked the fight against low wages with the struggle against racist police terror. The panel featured two prominent local activists: Denzel Baldwin, a fast food striker and organizer in the fight for a $15-an-hour minimum wage, and Chris Simms, a human rights activist who went to Ferguson, Mo., during the recent rebellion there with continuing local organizing against racism and police brutality. Representing FI$T on the program was Dylan Garcia, a low-wage worker.

The featured guest speaker on the panel was Latonya Lilly from Workers World Party in North Carolina. Lilly connected the local struggles against racist oppression with not only the broader national picture but also the history of internationalism and the resistance against it. The forum brought together organized labor; faith-based organizers; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people; and Black and white youth into a discussion on how to link their organizing efforts and continue to build solidarity for future work.

Thousands at annual NC rights march

North Carolina met to create a youth-centered agenda for action in the coming year.

— Report and photo by DW Durham, N.C., Bureau

Thousands gathered in downtown Raleigh, N.C., on Feb. 14 for the annual “Historic Thousands on Jones Street” march. “HkOnJ” is a coalition of 100 civil rights, faith and labor groups fighting for legislative reform in North Carolina. North Carolina NAACP Pres- ident William Barber III promised during his speech that a recent attacks by the state legislature against voting rights and Medicaid are not reversed by Easter, his organization would restart the Moral Monday civil disobedience actions that led to over 1,000 arrests over the past two years while fighting for justice.

After the march, youth gathered at Estey Hall at Shaw University, the birthplace of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, to hold the first Black Lives Mat- ter Youth Assembly. Youth and students from across the state discussed on how to link their organizing efforts and coalition building for the New Poor Peo- ple’s Movement. The marchBuild a powerful grassroots movement to build the power of the people and fight for a better future.

Celebrating a freedom fighter’s release

In spite of freeing weather, hundreds of people filled the auditor- ium of The Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educa- tional Center in Harlem, N.Y., on Feb. 15, to see former political prisoner Sekou Odinga. This wel- come home celebration followed his release from a U.S. prison on Nov. 25, after serving a 34-year sentence.

Sekou was honored for his role in the Black Panther Party, the Black Liberation Army, and for being a Muslim, New Afrikan and prison and warrior of war. He was unjustly frauded on six counts of attempted murder of police for “fighting for the freedom of Black people and the building of the Republic of New Africa.” (sekouodinga.com)

Odinga was targeted by COINTELPRO, the FBI’s infamous counterintelligence program, which was aimed at the Civil Rights and Black Liberation movements, and other po- litical movements in the United States from the mid-1960s up through 1971. When he was captured in 1981, he was tortured. Odinga was convicted in 1984 and sentenced to a prison term of 25 years to life.

Sekou Odinga thanked his attorney, Lynne

Hate capitalism? Workers World Party fights for a social justice society — where the wealth is socially owned and production is planned to satisfy human need. This outmoded capitalist system is dragging down workers’ living standards while throwing millions of jobless workers into poverty, if you know you’re stealing your future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet with not only the broader national picture but also the history of internationalism and the resistance against it. The forum brought together organized labor; faith-based organizers; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people; and Black and white youth into a discussion on how to link their organizing efforts and continue to build solidarity for future work.

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you

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By Gloria Rubac

Houston

Jim Crow justice: These three words describe why Rodney Reed, an African-American man, has been on Texas’ death row since 1998, facing a March 5 execution date. Reed was convicted of murdering Stacey Stites, a white woman with whom he had an intimate relationship in Bastrop, Texas.

Jim Crow justice encompasses the racism of police departments in Texas’ small towns and the racism embedded in the psyches of the Bastrop residents who comprised Reed’s all-white jury. It includes the racism that threatened potential witnesses who could have testified about Reed’s whereabouts the night of the murder — if they had been called by defense lawyers to the stand — that severed Reed’s two Black court-appointed attorneys so much that they wouldn’t stay overnight in Bastrop during the trial.

Reed’s case is a troubling mixture of prosecutorial misconduct, police corruption, poor defense and institutional racism. New evidence of his innocence has surfaced as it is discovered. The Campaign to End the Death Penalty, based in Austin, Texas, states that the overwhelming need for a new trial is indisputable.

Since Reed’s execution date was announced at a Bastrop hearing last November, activists have turned up the heat on the Texas death row fighter’s release.

On Feb. 12, Reed’s attorneys filed a motion for a new trial and a stay of execution. The motion includes affidavits from family friends and former workers, corroborating Reed’s alibi and racism in Reed’s case. The documentary, “Dead Man Talking,” on Feb. 16.

Strong evidence supports call for new trial

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Detroit youth: ‘I stand with Boston bus drivers’

Detroit is hundreds of miles from Det-roit, but the fight of Steelworkers Lo-cal 8733 to beat the union-buster Veolia Corp. matters to workers and youth here.

The school bus drivers’ union was cre -ated in 1978, but their story really begins in 1974 with the struggle to desegregate Boston schools. When desegregation be -gan, racists organized anti-integration protests drawing thousands. They infil -trated parent-teacher organizations to get the numbers out.

Anti-racists mobilized, weakening the racists. This led up to the 20,000-strong 1974 National March Against Racism. Some of the march organizers went on to form the union. When the racists saw their mass base diminished, they at -tracted parent-teacher organizations to the union. The union’s will to struggle has put it in a life-or-death situation with one of the Earth’s largest transnational corpo -rations, Veolia.

Veolia is a beast with a thousand heads, created by an imperial decree of Neapo -lis in 1832 to supply water to the French public. Its very inception was a historic act of privatization! Today, Veolia makes more profits off of water than any other corporation. Veolia handles waste management, energy and transportation — traditionally public-sector industries.

Veolia is a hired gun used to privatize and bust unions. In the apartheid state of Is -rael, Veolia runs segregated buses. Veolia’s tentacles even stretch deep into the entertainment and sports worlds. It owns several of the biggest television channels and film studi -os around the globe. Universal Music Group is an arm of Veolia. When A. Philip Randolph organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Ark -ans for participating in Black Lives Matter.

The struggle of the Boston school bus drivers, and Detroit are linked, not only by racist national oppression but in the struggle against Veolia. Following some 30,000, water shutoffs, Veolia has become a consultant in the push to privatize the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department. Like the courageous school bus drivers, we have to struggle to win.

Joe Mchahar is a member of DETROIT FIST and Workers World Party. This article was adapted from a talk he gave at last year’s Notes for the Legacy of Malcolm X. Mchahar has been to Boston twice to help in the effort against Veolia.

### Boston union under siege

United Electrical Workers Union and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union — still exist today.

Eleven unions that refused to abide by the CIO’s Political Action Committee, among them were the National Negro Congress, the Congress of Span -ish-Speaking Peoples and the Committee for the Defense of the Foreign Born.

The police asked them to leave, but work -ers — like our union, members of the United Steelworkers — now on strike, are striking for the envi -ronment and the right of self-determination for the Palestinian people. Their union was one of the first to have a rights clause for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and queer people, and showed its solidarity with a float in last year’s Pride march. Of course the union has united with the “Black Lives Matter” movement. The school bus drivers have fought against every form of division im -posed on the working class. The union af -fords workers one of the highest standards of living among bus drivers in the U.S.

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Struggle wins Walmart raises

By G. Dunkel

Walmart is the largest private employer in the United States, hiring around 1 percent of all U.S. workers. Its announcement that it will raise what it pays to $9 an hour was followed by a 40-hour week and a fixed schedule. The company's actions come after the National Retail Federation warned that raising wages would hurt small and medium-size retailers. The NRF said that raising wages would increase costs for small and medium-size retailers, who already face high overhead.
Two police officers in Emeryville, Cali., a town located between Oakland and Berkeley, gunned down and killed Yuvette Henderson, a 38-year-old Black woman, of two, in a parking lot on Feb. 3, over an alleged shoplifting incident in the Emeryville Home Depot store. Two weeks earlier and half a block away, when a white man named Sebastian Ledwick fired on police officers, the cops first retreated and then apprehended him without killing him.

That same reaction more violently against a Black woman cornered in a parking lot than against a white male firing deadly shots at them is itself proof of racial bias. Such racist injustice has provoked national demonstrations on a broad scale since last August. It is no surprise then that on Feb. 21, coinciding with the national commemoration of the assassination of Malcolm X, people shut down the Emeryville Home Depot for five hours.

Henderson had been identified by a Home Depot security guard for alleged shoplifting. After she left Home Depot, Henderson tried to flag down a passing bus. “We (saw) a woman running, holding her purse and waving her hand,” said Marilyn Tjerino, who was riding the AC Transit 31 line on her way home. “The girl did not have no gun. She was waving her hands.” (@B_A_Simons on Twitter)

Henderson was cornered by the Emeryville Police Department at the Extra Space Storage Facility garage in Oakland, a few blocks from the Home Depot. She was shot at seven times with the bullets coming from three weapons, including a military-grade, automatic AR-15 rifle, the same weapon used by the U.S. military in wartime.

Police originally claimed that officers were “advised” that the suspect was armed with a gun. Issued at the time with authority, this statement has since been edited out of original media reports. Now, the police claim they asked Henderson to drop her weapon and when she refused, they shot and killed her. Police have never stated that Henderson pointed a gun at them. Henderson fired no shots.

Michelle Shepard and Warren Williams are the officers responsible for the execution of Henderson’s death. Both have been placed on paid leave during the investigation. Williams was wearing a body camera which was turned off during the shooting.

Some 200 people attended the Feb. 21 rally at the Emeryville Police Station, organized by the Anti-Police-Terror Project. Henderson’s brother spoke for her at the rally. People from families of other victims of police killings spoke as well. Ca. Dine Williams spoke about her brother, O’Shane Evans, killed by the San Francisco Police Department last Oct. 7. La Meche Williams spoke about her brother, Mario Romero, who was killed by the Vallejo police, and Dionne Smith spoke about her son, Jermaine Warner Jr., killed by the Stockton Police. About 400 people participated in the event during the rally, march and Home Depot shutdown.

March and lock-down

The protesters marched two miles from the police station to the Home Depot store, where they joined the Black Out Collective and Black Lives Matter-Bay Area. These groups, in coordinated action, had locked down the three front doors of the store with their bodies, along with activists from Asians for Black Lives and the Bay Area Solidarity Action Team. The entire front entrance to the store was also blocked off by the protesters with yellow tape lettered, “Crime Scene” in black. They erected a siege tower, at the top of which Cat Brooks of ONXY sat during the entire five-hour siege.

Three Anti-Police-Terror Project demands decorated the tower: “Release the video tapes” (by Home Depot, the EPD and the OPD), “leave without pay for the officers involved while they are being investigated and ultimately their termination from the EPD” and “the immediate return or destruction of all military styled weapons and accessories from the OPD and the EPD.”

Two other families of victims of police killings joined the crowd at the Home Depot and spoke about their loved ones. Cyndi Mitchell spoke about her brother, Mario Romero, who was killed by the Vallejo police, and Dionne Smith spoke about her son, Jermaine Warner Jr., killed by the Stockton Police. About 400 people participated in the event during the rally, march and Home Depot shutdown.

March condemns killing of immigrant worker by cops

Here in Pasco on Feb. 21, demonstrators took over the huge cable bridge crossing the Columbia River after marching through central Pasco for two hours chanting, “We are all Antonio!” and “Justice now!” There were farmworkers, many carrying the flag of the United Farm Workers Union. The mainly Latinx/a marchers rallied on both sides of the Franklin County Hall in Pasco. Then the march went to the cable bridge, which demonstrators blocked for over an hour by moving slowly. Cars honked in support throughout the day.

Zambrano-Montes’ house had burned down two weeks before he was murdered, traumatizing the person who was to become another victim of police violence. The government could have provided him with housing. But instead, the state murdered him with 13 bullets. His plight represents that of all immigrant workers who are cheated for their labor and then met with the greatest hostility by a racist government acting lawlessly.

Justice for Tamir Rice and Tanisha Anderson

It has been over three months since Cleveland police brutally murdered two people in one month — 12-year old Tamir Rice and before him Tanisha Anderson.

Courtney Drain, an activist in the fight against police violence, was arrested on Feb. 9 at a Cleveland City Council meeting for holding up a sign calling for justice for Tanisha Anderson. Anderson was killed by Cleveland police on Nov. 20 after her family made a 911 emergency call for help getting their daughter to the hospital. In stead police held her down on the ground, suffocating her.

The people scored a huge victory on Feb. 23, when Drain had his ticket for disorderly conduct thrown out in Cleveland court. He received no fine for court costs. The judge asked how it could be disorderly conduct when there is no law against holding up a sign at Council meetings.

On Feb. 21, Sabrina Fulton, mother of murdered teen Trayvon Martin, spoke to an overflow crowd at the Cleveland Public Library. Fulton had spent the morning with Samaria Rice, mother of Tamir Rice. When the two women entered the hall, everyone leapt to their feet to applaud the women for their incredible courage. Fulton encouraged everyone to stay active and never stop fighting for justice.

Feb. 22 was the three-month anniversary of the murder of Tamir Rice outside a Cleveland recreation center. Despite the fact that this horrific crime was caught on camera, the guilty police are still working. Ignoring the driving snow and falling temperatures, more than 130 people participated in the outdoor vigil, called by Cleveland’s “Candlelight Vigil for Tamir.” Samaria Rice spoke to everyone and told the crowd about Tamir, her youngest son. Over 100 police squad cars observed the peaceful protest. The police were not patrolling Cleveland’s roads, which were littered with accidents due to the whiteout lack of visibility and icy conditions. Even with people trapped in cold cars with possible injuries, cops give priority to repression.

The 50th anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X was commemorated in many cities throughout the U.S. on the weekend of Feb. 21-22, with events that included street actions against police terror, speak-outs, forums, vigils and more. A common thread running through many activities was the use of Malcolm’s legacy to forward the current fight against all forms of imperialism, especially racism and national oppression, in the form of the Black Lives Matter movement — by any means necessary. Workers World Party held forums and participated in numerous events with other progressive forces to honor this great anti-racist, anti-imperialist leader. Several activities are described below.

The Baltimore chapter of WWP and Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) youth group held a special joint forum to honor Malcolm X on Feb. 22. Despite a major snowstorm, the Baltimore Solidarity Center meeting space was packed. All seats were filled by a diverse crowd of mostly young activists of all nationalities.

The event featured Larry Holmes, first secretary of WWP, who spoke on the legacy of Malcolm X and what it means for the Black Lives Matter movement.

The program and discussion lasted more than three hours because of the number of lively questions and comments. The majority of participants came from the Black Lives Matter movement.

It was standing room only at the Malcolm X branch of WWP hosted by Detroit WWP and FIST on Feb. 21. Chaired by Tahche Davis, a member of both groups, the program included a video of an interview with Malcolm X as well as talks and a delicious soul food dinner.

Marcina Cole spoke on the struggle for free political prisoner Rev. Edward Pinkney of Benton Harbor, Mich., who is scheduled to be sentenced on Feb. 27. Pinkney was convicted on charges of allegedly forging dates on petitions to oust him from public office.

The New York City branch of WWP held “A Tribute to Malcolm X” forum at the Solidarity Center on Feb. 21. Despite a winter storm, a standing-room-only crowd participated in a more than two-hour dialogue on how the contributions made by Malcolm X impact the Black Lives Matter movement today.

Opening remarks were made by Alexia Filpo and Colin Ashely from the Peoples Power Assembly; Simone Gamble from Brooklyn’s East Flats Bushwick Cop Watch; Ramiro Finoz from WWP and Larry Holmes from WWP. Three videos featuring Malcolm X were played.

The program included a video of an interview with Malcolm X, starring Denzel Washington. After the movie, a political discussion was held on how Pan-Africanism, international solidarity, the right of Black people to self-defense and other concepts popularized by Malcolm X apply to today’s movement against white supremacy and for Black Liberation.

The Durham, N.C., branch of WWP held a “Malcolm X: Black Liberation and Black Thread running through February 21st at the Hayti Heritage Center. Featured speakers included Manzoor Cheema from Muslims for Social Justice and Larry Hales from WWP and PPA. The meeting explored the movement that Malcolm came to inspire and represent, his thoughts, political practice and militancy.

Other Malcolm X/Black History Month WWP forums are scheduled for Philadelphia on Feb. 24 and Boston on Feb. 28. Contributors to this article include Sharon Black, Ellie Dorrity, Kris Hamel, Andy Katz and John Parker.


WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

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The following article, slightly edited, is reprinted here courtesy of Red Flag, the magazine of the Revolutionary Communist Party, CP USA, a "Marxist-Leninist" group FIST — Fight Imperialism, Stand Together.

By Danielle Boachie

Lorraine Hansberry: Political activist, artist

In 1866, right after the Civil War, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, which ostensibly provided citizenship rights to African people as well as provisions to stop the widespread discrimination in housing. But the law was largely ignored for decades.

Danielle Boachie

policing and policing of chatted slaves. Through the decades of work done by the Abolitionist and Civil Rights movements, the majority of the community has gained access to certain rights and privileges not previously afforded it, but the recognition of our humanity has only rearranged the American system of nonviolence as an effective response is to make the horrifically incorrect assumption that the playing field is equal, and that we can simply negotiate our way through this injustice.

No matter how many times I wish it were true, the facts exist: Black lives do not matter in this white supremacist, capitalist society. The social role of the police is to maintain the status quo, contemporary "law enforcement" evolved from the institution of the capture, commitment that the playing field is equal, and that we can simply negotiate our way through this injustice.

By Abayomi Azikiwe

It is 50 years since Lorraine Hansberry, a renowned playwright and political activist on the left, died on Jan. 12, 1965. Only 34, she had led a full life and intersected in many of the most important developments in the African-American liberation movement of the 1960s.

Hansberry was born in Chicago during the Great Depression. Her father, Carl Hansberry, played a pivotal role there in the struggle to end restrictive housing covenants. Following the decision of the Supreme Court in 1948 in the case of Breen v. Breen, a landowner in a previously all-white neighborhood, the future of the community was contingent on the recognition of the African-American people's right to live in safe housing without being "forced into ghettos, dealt with cultural structures and institutions that preserved racism as a system of privileges built on the supposed threat perceived by white society. The dominant narrative is that the color of his skin and the supposed threat perceived by white officials must be acknowledged if we want to begin to understand why our people are disproportionately murdered.

The country's increasingly militarized police force is conditioned to see Black men as criminals rather than as the people who have died so far in this struggle have been Black women. Yet, discussions of powerlessness are constructed to embody cisgender femininity, leaving the violence inflicted on Black female bodies a peripheral concern. The dominant narrative of bodies impacted by police brutality, despite the many Black women who have died at the hands of the system. The burden of Black liberation does not rest solely on the experiences of Black men, and should include the experiences of Black women. Yet, discussions of powerlessness are constructed to embody cisgender femininity, leaving the violence inflicted on Black female bodies a peripheral concern. The dominant narrative of bodies impacted by police brutality, despite the many Black women who have died at the hands of the system.

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Shantel Davis, 20 (New York, 2012) — suffocated by police holding her face down on a mattress. She suffered from schizophrenia.

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On February 28, 2012, unarmed Black teen Trayvon Martin was murdered in a neighborhood vigilante. On July 17, 2014, 12-year-old Tamir Rice was murdered by a police officer. On November 24, 2014, Officer Darren Wilson was not charged with the fatal shooting of the unarmed Black teen, Michael Brown, back in August. On Nov. 22, 2014, Officer Dante Servin was acquitted of murder in the murder of unarmed Eric Garner by a police officer.

Yvette Smith, 47 (Texas, 2014) — single mother murdered by police while asleep in her home.

Aiyana Jones, 7 (Michigan, 2010) — murdered by police while asleep in her home.

Tarika Wilson, 26 (Ohio, 2008) — killed by police while helping her 1-year-old child.

As we have seen, dominant discourses fail to recognize the violence experienced by Black women. As we have seen, dominant discourses fail to recognize the violence experienced by Black women. As we have seen, dominant discourses fail to recognize the violence experienced by Black women. It is no surprise that a country built on “Institutional Racism” as a living, breathing, confessing and economic exploitation. Her expression of the African-American people's rights to world peace and racial equality.

Hansberry also developed an interest in African affairs. She later studied African culture and history with W.E.B. DuBois at the Jefferson School for Social Sciences in New York. She wrote a paper for the DuBois course on the Belgian Congo, illustrating her burgeoning consciousness of African affairs and anti-colonialism.

All three of these organizations — the YPL, the Jefferson School — had been established by the Communist Party, and Hansberry was an active member in one previously all-white neighborhood, a group of white residents organized mobs and legal challenges to stop the sale, citing "law enforcement" evolved from the institution of the capture, commitment that the playing field is equal, and that we can simply negotiate our way through this injustice.

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Carl Hansberry filed a lawsuit against the practice of covenants in 1940 from the U.S. Supreme Court. The Hansberry v. Lee decision constituted the beginning of the end of restrictive covenants.

Hansberry's work on the left

During the late 1940s, Lorraine Hansberry attended the University of Wisconsin and joined the Young Progressives of America (YPA) and the Labor Youth League (LYL). These organizations were committed to ending the Cold War, working for world peace and racial equality.

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By Fred Goldstein

Feb. 24 — The leftist Syriza government in Greece has accepted a negotiated retreat from its election promises after a faceoff with the European bankers, by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. This ends the latest phase of the struggle of the Greek people against austerity. But this struggle, while it may be paused, must not be allowed to end.

What has ended is the idea of getting out of debt slavery to the predatory bankers of Europe through negotiations, without breaking with the euro currency zone altogether.

The phase of conciliation — of trying to placate the financial powers in Berlin, Paris, Rome, Madrid and Amsterdam through negotiations and appeals to reason in order to get their consent to lift the chains of debt slavery imposed on the Greek masses — has proven illusory. While the negotiations may go on for a while, this strategy can never be taken seriously again by the Greek population.

After two weeks of negotiating with 18 hostile governments and finance ministers, the newly elected government headed by Alexis Tsipras reversed its fundamental positions. It had earlier pledged to break with the austerity regime imposed on Greece by the Troika — the International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank and European Commission. Previous regimes agreed to these onerous conditions in return for bailout loans to Athens.

With money flowing out of Greek banks at a rate of 2 billion euro a week and the ECB choking off all credit, the new government is already extricating itself from the agreement that it would seek unpaid changes in the terms of the 230 billion euros Greece owes the “institutions.”

While the German bankers were squeezing Syriza so hard that it faced a choice of financial collapse or political humiliation — if it agreed to remain in the eurozone.

In the settlement now cautiously and formally agreed to by the European finance ministers, the Syriza government has agreed to live within the basic guidelines of austerity established and expanded by the Troika, remained in a face-saving measure as the “institutions.”

The IMF and the ECB are already expressing concerns about the agreement. This latest agreement with the “institutions” is unstable. It could be upset by either a rebellion among the Greek masses or even harsher intervention by the bankers, or both.

But at the moment there is a temporary break in the struggle. And it is necessary to assess what happened in order to go forward. There are many aspects of the struggle to review.

First of all, what was the meaning of the Syriza victory and, more important than that, what was the meaning of the surge in Syriza’s popularity after it made bold pledges to defy and turn back austerity, which capitulated Syriza into office a month ago with 36 percent of the vote.

After it won and continued to make its pledges, in September, the Syriza leadership would stay within the equivalent of the Great Depression. Production has plunged 23 percent in five years. Unemployment is officially 25 percent; youth unemployment is officially over 50 percent. Almost half the population is living at or under the poverty line. People have been foraging for food and firewood in the forests, going through garbage dumps and eating in bread lines. They are living without health care, social services, electricity, transportation and so on. Under these conditions, the Syriza campaign against austerity brought about a massive surge forward.

Use ‘breathing space’ to prepare for struggle

Right now there is a four-month “breathing space” before the next battle with the European bankers over austerity. That is when the present loan agreement runs out. That breathing space should be used to prepare for the next phase of the struggle — if the struggle doesn’t start before then.

The German and other European bankers have no intention of letting Syriza give the Greek people any fundamental relief in the overall austerity conditions. These bankers aim to squeeze every euro possible out of the hideous austerity measures. The conditions of hardship will continue and the population’s discontent will deepen.

Not enough to merely denounce Syriza

To merely denounce Syriza and stand back, the saying goes, is to not fight for socialism and for confining the struggle to capitalism.

This amounts to a rationalization for not giving this struggle revolutionary critical support because it is being led by Syriza. The struggle between capitalism and socialism has never been the ‘work of capitalism but can be a bridge to socialism.

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For more information on these books and workers.org

March 5, 2015

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West Virginia

Oil train derails, explodes

By Benji Pyles
Huntington, W.Va.

A 109-car CSX train derailed along the Fayette-Kanawha county line just 33 miles southeast of Charleston, W.Va., on Feb. 16. The result was a crude oil spill into the Kanawha River and massive fires that consumed the homes of at least 7 people, causing one home to catch fire. About 1,000 people were evacuated from the affected area and two public water infrastructure systems were damaged.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin has permitted Fayette and Kanawha counties under a state of emergency to take action to determine the cause of the incident.

Eyewitness Randy Fitzwater told West Virginia’s MetroNews: “I heard this loud noise, and I thought a jet plane might have flown over my house real low... and then I heard an explosion, and I looked out my window and saw a very bright fire,” he said. “I think I could see this big ball of flame. I thought a jet airplane had crashed.”

David McClung said he “felt the heat” of the explosion and thought a jet airplane might have crashed. He added, “I went inside and I could smell oil.”

By July 1, in an accident involving a train carrying Bakken crude oil thousand 47 people in the small town of LaMétagne, Quebec.

Just in the last year, crude oil trains have twice derailed in Pennsylvania. And in March, a similar event took place in northwestern North Dakota.

Despite the huge amount of abandoned arms and war material, much of it from the United States and other NATO powers, the retirement of Soviet leader V.I. Lenin to mark their second independence day, the people marched in Moscow Feb. 21 to protest war criminals.

The independent people’s republics of Donetsk and Luhansk — which of the two big, pro-impeachment factions have every interest in confronting Netanyahu and the Israeli state against Putin’s attempt to join the demonstrations planned against U.S.-backed, Israeli war criminal Netanyahu.

See International Action Center at tinyurl.com/od83mhv/.

Protest war criminal

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International forum supports Palestine

The International Forum for Justice in Palestine drew hundreds from Palestine and Palestinian solidarity activists from around the world to Beirut Feb. 22-23. Organized by Ma’an Bashour and the International Arab Center for Communication and Solidarity, the forum included representatives of all the major Palestinian organizations. There were also representatives of Hezbollah, Amal and other resistance groups in Lebanon; Syria in Greece; the Tunisian Popular Front; ambassadors from Venezuela, Cuba, Sudan, Iran and Syria; and popular organizations from Ireland, Canada, France, Turkey, Algeria, Yemen and India, among others.

The delegation from the United States included anti-war and human rights activist Ramsey Clark, former U.S. Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, human rights attorneys Abdeen Jabara and Cur- tis Cobbler, Brian Becker of ANSWER, Lamont Lilly of FIEST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) and Sara Flounders of the International Action Center.

Lilly (above) addressed the international forum on the Black Lives Matter movement and the links of solidarity with the Palestinian people fighting for their homeland and self-determination. He told the officers that they were changing the rules at the last minute, and that the streets of this densely populated city ran with the blood of the demonstrators. Mayor Sisowat and his team, or did not respect them, police sent 30 people to the hospital.

The confrontation between the demonstrators and the security forces escalated further when a group of the demonstrators were attacked by a group of the police. The police used batons on the demonstrators and the protesters responded with self-defense.

India

Police attack demonstrators

By John Catalinotto

Under the normal rules of demonstrations of workers and poor people in Kolkata, India, people are allowed legal and peaceful means to press their demands. The police have used force to suppress such peaceful means of protest, such as peaceful disobedience mobilizations, are allowed in a stipulated area without police attack. The police have arrested over 30,000 people, young and old, men and women, as they marched for workers’ demands on Feb. 20 in West Bengal city, and changed the rules at the last minute, and the streets of this densely populated city ran with the blood of the demonstrators. Mayor Sisowat and his team, or did not respect them, police sent 30 people to the hospital.

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Gobierno Bolivariano detiene intención de golpe

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

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