



At Chicago airport, April 1.

Chicago strike!

25,000 unite in march vs austerity

By Jill White
Chicago

A one-day strike, initiated April 1 by the 30,000-member Chicago Teachers Union and Fight for \$15, was joined by over 50 organizations, including Black Lives Matter, and thousands of angry students, parents and residents. The target was Gov. Bruce Rauner, who is holding the Illinois state budget hostage in an attempt to destroy all the unions in this state.

The budget's victims are children, students, government and education workers, and social service recipients like the disabled and elderly. State university budgets have been cut by 30 percent; all Illinois college students and even private universities have lost state financial aid.

The strikers connected the financial troubles of the Chicago Public Schools with the broader impact of the statewide budget impasse on low-income families, particularly with regard to higher education. Throughout the day, marchers criticized racism and the police murders of youth of color.

Strike actions began at 6:30 a.m. at every Chicago public school. The CTU helped build coalitions in many communities to raise related local issues.

The youth support group "Project NIA" [in Swahili, "nia" means "with purpose"] led a march from the Illinois Youth (Detention) Center on the Near West Side to Suder Elementary School. Protesters chanted, "We are gonna give you hell! Our city is not yours to sell!" and called for an end to the school-to-prison pipeline. Chicago spends about \$112,000 a year per youth in prison but only \$15,000 per student.

Union says strike is legal

CPS officials filed a charge with the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board against the CTU, claiming the strike was illegal. "We disagree," said CTU spokeswoman Stephanie Gadlin. "The Supreme Court 60 years ago authorized unfair labor practice strikes under the National Labor Relations Action and we believe teachers have those rights." (ctunet.com)

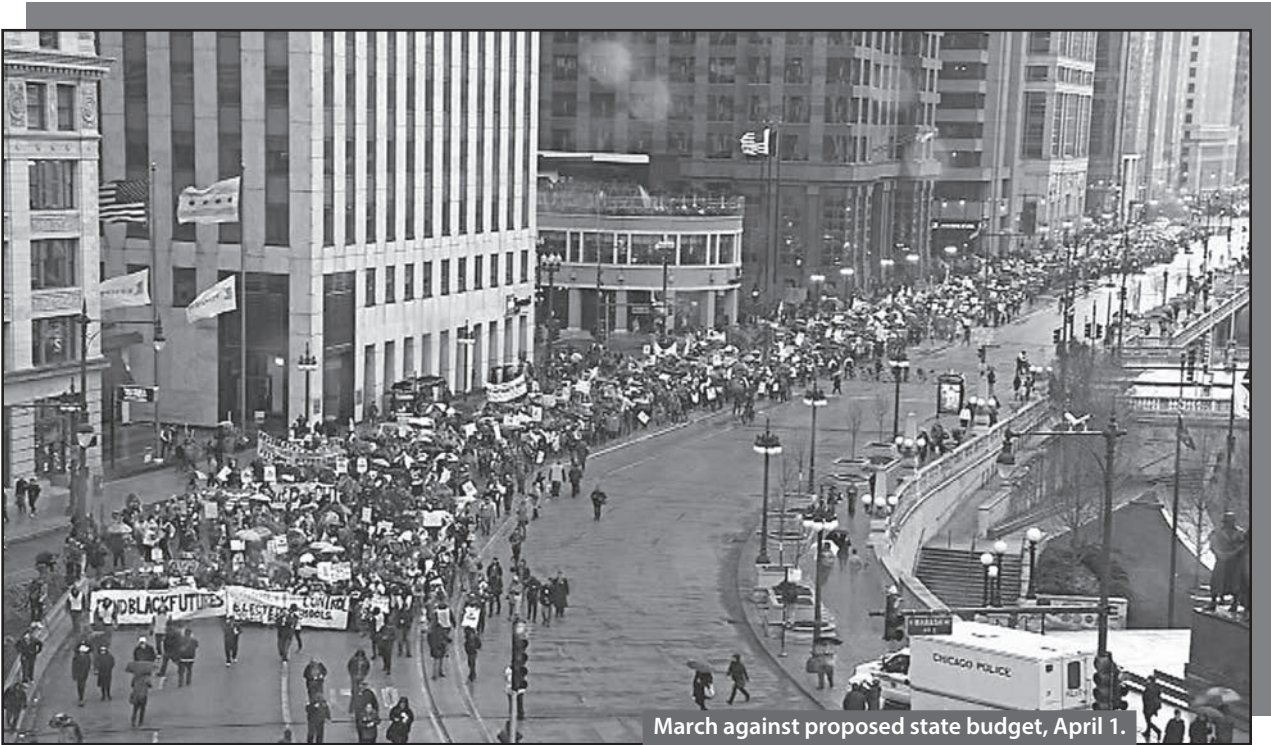
When CPS cancelled school a week early so it could furlough workers and save money, the officials showed they didn't care about parents' childcare needs or children's education.

Gov. Rauner is lobbying for a state takeover of CPS and the option to declare bankruptcy.

Teachers rallied at Northeastern Illinois State University against cuts and in solidarity with Chicago State University, which is scheduled to be shuttered after an early graduation in April. All workers at CSU have already been issued layoff notices and asked to turn in their keys. Chicago State serves predominantly African-American students.

After a rousing action on campus resembling a New

Continued on page 5



March against proposed state budget, April 1.



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We salute the
Chicago Teachers Strike!

10

- WE WON'T GO BACK
Fight anti-LGBT*Q laws 3
- FEDERAL WORKERS
Under attack 5
- HOUSING IS A RIGHT 6-7
- IRAQ
New U.S. war provocations 8
- FRANCE
'Work more, earn less!' 9
- ACT UP
Stages global protest 11

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Virginia Tech

White supremacist protested

By Workers World Staff

During the week of March 20, hundreds of faculty, students, staff and community members held a variety of protests at Virginia Tech University in Blackburg, Va., against white supremacist author Charles Murray.

Murray, author of “Losing Ground” and co-author with Richard Hernstein of “The Bell Curve,” among other books and articles, was given space to speak March 25 by the Virginia Tech administration as part of BB&T bank’s “Capitalism and Freedom” lecture series. BB&T Corp. sponsors similar series and departments currently at over 60 universities, and the bank is known for distributing free pro-capitalist literature such as Ayn Rand books, writing curriculum and more.

According to a report entitled “The Feeding Trough” issued by A Job Is A Right Campaign, the Milwaukee-based Bradley Foundation, the largest right-wing foundation in the United States, supported the writing of the notoriously racist book, “The Bell Curve,” to the tune of \$1 million. The book was co-funded by the Pioneer Society, a holdover from the white-supremacist eugenics movement of the 1920s and 30s.

The book argued that poverty is the result of the existence of a permanent class of genetically inferior people — who just happen to be disproportionately people of African descent. The book ignored the legacy of slavery, the impact of economic conditions, personal dislocations or racial, sexual, gender or other discrimination.

We reject Murray!

Murray’s work is an integral part of Wall Street’s right-wing foundation network that has as its goal to eviscerate all legal, social and other barriers to making profits by capitalists. This includes promoting deregulation and privatization, busting unions, promoting funding for the Pentagon instead of funding for cities such as Flint, Mich., and advocating the destruction of social safety nets such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

Immediately upon learning of Murray’s scheduled ap-



pearance at Virginia Tech, student organizations, the Coalition For Justice and others, including numerous faculty from a rainbow of disciplines, joined together to resist Murray.

“We reject Murray’s work. We oppose the racist, sexist, classist bias in Murray’s writings. His hateful rhetoric and scholarship has been widely critiqued and dismantled,” reads a flyer distributed by Still Concerned: A VT Faculty Initiative.

Protest events included a March 23 Teach-In Against Hate that drew over 200 people, counterlectures and a protest at the site when Murray spoke March 25. On March 21 information about the Murray protests was shared at “Hip Hop for Justice” with Black Workers for Justice members near Virginia Tech.

On March 25, at The Inn at Virginia Tech, the site where Murray spoke for \$10,000, a diverse, multinational, multigendered crowd of all ages participated in a strong “Protest Against Human Inferiority.” Anti-racist banners, signs and chants began an hour before Murray’s arrival. Just before Murray’s speech, the crowd of protesters moved inside the building and set up a two-sided, picket-line gauntlet which all those attending Murray’s speech had to walk through. Dozens honored the “Boycott (Racist) Charles Murray” call by the Coalition for Justice and Still Concerned by refusing to go to the speech and joining the picket line.

The protests against Charles Murray are part of a series of anti-racist, pro-worker actions in central and southwest Virginia in recent weeks. Since Kionte Spencer, an 18-year-old African-American student, was killed by Roanoke County cops Feb. 26, a variety of protests and support activities have taken place.

On Feb. 29 at Radford University in Radford, hundreds came out to disrupt and protest Donald Trump. On March 21, hundreds took part in a “Rally Against Racism” in Lexington to protest the distribution of KKK material there in early March. And on March 26 in Martinsville, a “United We Stand, United We March: A March of Equality, A Rally Against Hate” took place. □

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Who we are & what we’re fighting for

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 outmoded capitalist system is dragging down workers’ living standards while throwing millions out of their jobs. If 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 57 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

degrading people because of their nationality, sexual or gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling class uses to keep us apart. They ruthlessly super-exploit some in order to better exploit us all. WWP builds unity among all workers while supporting the right of self-determination. Fighting oppression is a working-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles led today by people of color, immigrants and women.

WWP has a long history of militant opposition to imperialist wars. The billionaire rulers are bent on turning back the clock to the bad old days before socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles liberated territory from their grip. We’ve been in the streets to oppose every one of imperialism’s wars and aggressions. □

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WORKERS WORLD this week

★ In the U.S.

Chicago strike! 1

Virginia Tech: White supremacist protested 2

Mississippi poised to enact anti-LGBT*Q law 3

No charges filed against cops who murdered Jamar Clark. 3

Alabama community fights environmental racism 3

Boston Women’s Fightback Network celebrates IWD. 4

On the Picket Line 4

Bus drivers bring victory story to Chicago 5

Federal workers under attack 5

New York State budget – no big deal for workers 5

Capitalism = homelessness..... 6

Newark children exposed to lead..... 6

Baltimore tribunal says decent housing a human right! ... 7

Brooklyn, N.Y.: ‘Affordable for WHO?’ 7

Wall Street protest led to organizing anti-war soldiers ... 10

African-American political power and the elections. 11

★ Around the world

Japan’s prime minister defies anti-war public 8

U.S. plans new escalation of Iraq war 8

Sham ‘unity’ in Libya creates divisions 8

Palestine: Thousands protest on 40th Land Day..... 9

1.2 million workers, students reject new labor law 9

NATO intervenes in refugee crisis..... 9

Global ACT UP protests hit Big Pharma 11

★ WWP Presidential Campaign

WWP salutes Chicago teachers strike..... 10

★ Noticias en Español

Dos caras de la campaña Sanders..... 12

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Mississippi poised to enact anti-LGBT*Q law

By Kris Hamel

April 4 — On the evening of Wednesday, March 30, the Mississippi Senate voted to pass the so-called “Protecting Freedom of Conscience From Government Discrimination Act” or “the Religious Liberty Bill.” The state House on Friday, April 1, followed suit and passed HB 1523. However, the bill was delayed by Mississippi Democrats and will face another vote today. The bill is expected to pass, before being sent to Gov. Phil Bryant for his signature. Bryant has said he will sign it.

This fast track to bigotry against the LGBTQ community is being cloaked under the lofty pretense of “freedom of religion.” The heinous law would allow businesses, public employees, organizations and individuals to legally deny LGBTQ people in Mississippi the right to marry, adopt children and have access to housing, jobs and services. Blatant discrimi-

nation would be legal if the existence of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* and queer people was perceived to violate religious beliefs that marriage is only between a man and a woman and that gender is determined at birth.

The Clarion Ledger in Jackson, Miss., further laid out the provisions of the sweeping law on April 1, saying it would:

“Prohibit the government from taking any action against religious organizations that decline to provide adoption or foster care services to married same-sex couples.

“Allow physicians and other medical professionals to deny services related to sex reassignment or ‘psychological, counseling or fertility services’ based upon their religious beliefs.

“Prohibit government from taking action against employers or school officials who establish sex-specific rules and policies concerning who may use restrooms, lockers or dressing rooms.

“Protect individuals whose sincerely held beliefs include that ‘sexual relations are properly reserved’ to a marriage between a man and a woman, raising questions about whether single mothers could be targeted.”

Bigotry laws can be fought, defeated

A fierce backlash in Georgia caused Gov. Nathan Deal, a Republican, to veto a similar law on March 28. LGBTQ and civil rights activists joined large employers and the entertainment industry to condemn HB 757. Deal was forced by this pressure to veto the anti-LGBTQ law and conceded, “I do not think we have to discriminate against anyone to protect the faith-based community in Georgia, which I and my family have been a part of for generations.” (gov.georgia.gov, March 28)

Both the Georgia and Mississippi bills came on the heels of North Carolina’s notoriously bigoted edict passed and signed into law by Gov. Pat McCrory on March

23. HB 2, which requires trans* people to use a restroom in line with their “biological sex” instead of their own gender, also lets trans* people be legally denied public accommodations based on their actual or perceived gender. (See “Protests erupt over bigoted law: Black and trans* people lead way in N. Carolina” in Workers World issue dated April 7 or at workers.org.)

The legalization of LGBTQ marriage on June 26 of last year, the Black Lives Matter movement and other struggles for justice have galvanized this bigoted backlash in the South. It’s up to the people’s struggle to defeat racist and bigoted laws and all reactionary moves. Solidarity and unity, under the leadership of the most oppressed, will be key in these struggles.

(Trans with an asterisk is currently used to indicate the wide spectrum of varying genders of people who do not conform to the either/or of feminine/masculine, female/male.)*

No charges filed against killer cops who murdered Jamar Clark

By Jess Sundin
FightBack News

The following article was published by FightBack News on March 30. (fightbacknews.org)

Minneapolis — All eyes were on Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman today, March 30, as he announced “criminal charges are not warranted” against police officers Mark Ringgenberg and Dustin Schwarze for the shooting death of Jamar Clark. The room and the hallway outside were packed with Clark’s family members and their supporters, who immediately denounced his decision and called for the community to take to the streets and keep up the fight for justice.

After Freeman spent some time praising himself for transparency and reviewing legal statutes related to his decision, most of his presentation outlined a

one-sided police version. He claimed that Clark was acting aggressively, resisting arrest and trying to take an officer’s gun. According to Freeman, when Ringgenberg felt his utility belt slip, he told his partner that Clark was going for his gun. Ringgenberg repeatedly said, “He has got my gun,” and urged Schwarze to shoot Clark. Freeman narrated the video clips he showed, but Jamar Clark’s supporters didn’t buy his story.

Pastor Danny Givens commented, “The video that I watched showed a Jamar Clark that looked concerned about his girlfriend. The video that I watched showed a Jamar Clark that looked tempered. The video that I watched didn’t show a Jamar Clark beating on the door or irate or uncontrollable. The video that I saw didn’t show a Jamar Clark resisting arrest.”

Discounting more than a dozen eye-

witnesses who said they saw Clark handcuffed, Freeman’s decision rested entirely on the testimony of police and paramedics. But the paramedics who were first on the scene were in their vehicle during the police confrontation with Clark. And the others arrived after he was killed. Police say they found handcuffs open, on the grass near Clark’s body, but Ringgenberg and Schwarze claim they never got them on.

Reisha Williams of the NAACP said: “Whether he was handcuffed or not does not give you clearance to kill somebody. He was on the ground, he was already restrained, he had two physical men on top of him. So whether he was handcuffed or not is not the reason why he should have been murdered.”

Freeman also repeated several times that Clark’s last words, as Schwarze held a gun to his mouth, were, “I’m ready to die.” His cousin, Cameron Clark, found

this claim unbelievable. “I know he wouldn’t say that, and I know he wouldn’t grab a gun.” He said Jamar had a new job and was turning his life around shortly before he was killed. Giving voice to the determination of many to continue the fight for justice for Jamar Clark, he said: “We’re not running. We can’t have this. We have to get justice.”

Later today, the Twin Cities Coalition for Justice 4 Jamar Clark will hold an emergency rally at 5 p.m. at James and Plymouth Avenues North, in Minneapolis. A memorial has been maintained there, the place Clark was killed. Organizers will rally with the North Minneapolis community to demand prosecution of the police. Black Lives Matter Minneapolis and the Black Liberation Project also have plans for a “Post Announcement Gathering,” at Elliot Park in downtown Minneapolis.□

Alabama community fights environmental racism

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
Perry County, Ala.

From Alabama to Michigan comes this solidarity message: Black Belt Citizens Fighting for Health and Justice “stand in support of Flint residents and all peoples living in oppressive conditions as a result of racist discrimination.”

As the people of the city of Flint, Mich., fight catastrophic corporate-government collusion in the poisoning of their water supply, folks in tiny Perry County, Ala., are battling coal-ash contamination of its air, dirt and water by a local for-profit landfill. Black Belt Citizens, a grassroots environmental justice group, grew from Black and white residents who formed Concerned Citizens of Perry County in 2003, filed lawsuits to stop the landfill and began educating the public about its dangers.

Perry County’s 10,000 people are about 90 percent African American, descended from sharecroppers on local plantations, where their ancestors were previously enslaved. It’s the birthplace of Black Civil Rights activists Coretta Scott King and Jimmie Lee Jackson, whose murder there sparked the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery March.

A new civil rights movement is strong in the county — against the Arrowhead Landfill, where almost 4 million tons of coal ash were dumped after a 2008 containment failure at a federally run power plant in Tennessee. The landfill in the Perry County city of Uniontown is directly across the street from homes and yards where children play. (motherjones.org, Feb. 29)

Esther Calhoun, president of Black Belt Citizens, says of the landfill: “The smell, the pollution and the fear affect all aspects of our lives. We don’t know whether it’s safe to eat food from our gardens, or simply spend time outdoors.” (tinyurl.com/j3p7ltl)

Coal ash carries toxic substances including mercury, selenium, lead, manganese, chromium, cobalt, magnesium and arsenic. People exposed to the ash have increased health risks, including cancer, to their lungs, liver and kidneys. Physicians for Social Responsibility reports that coal ash is “the second largest source of industrial waste in the country, after mining.” Runoff from coal ash into ground water spreads the risk of pollution. (tinyurl.com/jyx5a9h)

Calhoun praises her community’s resistance: “No one thought that the mem-



Black Belt Citizens from Perry County, Ala., march at Moral Monday, in Montgomery, Sept 22, 2014.

Black Belt Citizens Fighting for Health and Justice gather to strategize near Uniontown, Ala., March 31.

bers of this poor community would fight back or that anyone would listen to us.” She also condemns the Alabama Department of Environmental Management and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for not stopping toxic dumps in a predominantly Black and poor community, adding, “This is a civil rights issue just as much as an environmental and health one.” (tinyurl.com/h8shshpd)

Southern Black communities have long been targeted for city trash and environmental waste dumping. In 1973, in rural Warren County, N.C., 6,000 truckloads of carcinogenic polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) were dumped in the poor Black

community there, despite local civil disobedience and a national outcry. The incident sparked the rise of the U.S. environmental justice movement. (Jaime Swift, “It’s Not Just Flint,” The Grio, Jan. 24)

Mammoth electric utilities are beginning to close down coal-fired plants and to look for somewhere to dump their coal-ash byproduct. The people of Perry County are fighting back, including with this message on social media: #Stand-withUniontown and demand freedom from environmental violence #WeCant-Breathe.

For a timeline of the Perry County struggle go to <http://bit.ly/1Ks7ztX>

BOSTON

Women’s Fightback Network celebrates IWD

By Maureen Skehan
Boston

Under the banner, “Uphold the Legacy of Women’s Resistance,” the Women’s Fightback Network held a powerful International Women’s Day celebration on March 26, uniting the anti-imperialist struggles of women globally, from Puerto Rico and India to Pakistan and Honduras, with the Black Lives Matter, immigrant rights and LGBTQ people of color movements confronting racist police violence, state repression and anti-trans bigotry in the U.S.

The voices of Sweet Honey and the Rock singing “We are the Ones” reverberated through the room as co-chairs Myia X and Rachel Hassinger invited the multinational, intergenerational crowd to share the resistance writings of Lolita Lebrón, Assata Shakur and the Dalit women of India.

Martha Morgan Guevara, a Spanish teacher and volunteer with Centro Presente in East Boston, spoke passionately about her work supporting immigrant families, mainly women and children, who have been forced to migrate to the U.S. from their homelands and are living with severe trauma and the daily threat of deportation.

Sandra McIntosh, teacher and co-chair of the Coalition for Equal Quality Education, paid homage to the women who influenced her life by saying their names, including Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, Shirley Chisholm (the first woman to run for U.S. president), anarchist Emma Goldberg and Berta Cáceres, the Indigenous Honduran activist tragically murdered by U.S.-backed mercenaries in March. She shared with the crowd an old African proverb: “As long as someone remembers you, you will live forever.”

Freelance writer Karina Friedman focused on women political prisoners, highlighting the case of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani-born Muslim activist, mother and honors graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Brandeis University. In 2003, she was kidnapped, imprisoned and brutally tortured under the “global war on terror” and currently remains incarcerated at FMC Carswell, a U.S. military prison in Texas. The WFN, which has joined with

the national Aafia Foundation in demanding her freedom, helped organize a demonstration on the steps of MIT in Cambridge, Mass., on March 8, to raise awareness about Dr. Siddiqui’s unjust imprisonment and demand her repatriation home.

Workers World Party presidential candidate Monica Moorehead spoke on the revolutionary history of International Working Women’s Day and its origins in the heroic struggles of immigrant women garment workers in New York City before the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in 1911. Workers’ strikes shook the capitalist system in the U.S. and inspired women socialists in Europe to call for the creation of a global day of solidarity with women workers’ struggles as a concrete gesture of solidarity.

Moorehead also saluted the Black Lives Matter movement and heroic LGBTQ movements, linking arms in the fight against racism, bigotry and oppression. She addressed the Hillary Clinton campaign, emphasizing how Clinton does not represent the interests of poor and working-class women. Moorehead explained how socialism cannot be voted in and must be fought for by people’s movements; and that racism, sexism and anti-LGBTQ bigotry cannot be voted away. The bourgeois elections come and go every four years but the conditions stay the same or worsen, unless there is an independent fightback movement led by the workers and oppressed to defend our interests.

Revolutionary warrior poet Letta Neely uplifted and strengthened the crowd with readings from her book of poems called “Juba,” including a special tribute to the four little Black girls killed in the church bombing in Birmingham, Ala., in 1963: “Which patent leather shoe belongs to which found leg?” She reminded the crowd that the same oppressive system that bombed those children continues to murder our children today, and urged the crowd to keep building a movement that will sweep away these conditions completely.

Dr. Padma Balasubramanian reported on the student movement in India, its fight against the privatization of education (as demanded by the World



WW PHOTOS: LIZ GREEN

Workers World Party presidential candidate Monica Moorehead.

Trade Organization and the World Bank), institutionalized discrimination against Dalit students (formerly called untouchables), the criminalization of dissent, and state terror against students and academics who speak up. Student communists and socialists are now joining hands with brave students from the Dalit caste to fight the rampant injustices created by capitalism and imperialism.

Rachel Corey, an organizer with the Criminal Justice Policy Coalition, spoke about the growing campaign to stop the construction of a new women’s prison in Massachusetts. She urged the crowd to join the local movement for a moratorium on building any new jails while also calling for bail reform, alternatives to mass incarceration and to vote against the Massachusetts bill S1297.

Professor Susan Massad reported on the March 20 Washington, D.C., anti-Zionist protest outside the annual American Israel Public Affairs Committee Policy Conference, opposing U.S. financial support for Israel. She also gave an update on Palestinian activist and attorney, Rasmea Odeh, who was arrested and imprisoned for “unlawful procurement of naturalization.” On Feb. 25, a ruling from the 6th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals determined that the trial judge who sentenced Odeh, Gershwin Drain, wrongfully barred expert torture witness Dr. Mary Fabri from testifying at the trial. The case will be remanded so that admissibility of the expert testimony can be determined.

Supporters are hopeful that Odeh will get a new trial.

The meeting ended with a revolutionary salute from Myia X to the founding members of the Women’s Fightback Network, now celebrating 15 years of organizing together. X said:

“Solidarity is our most potent weapon, so let’s keep building and uniting our struggles to confront and abolish the system that oppresses us.” □



Myia X



Martha Morgan Guevara, Sandra McIntosh, Karina Friedman, Padma Balasubramanian, Rachel Corey and Susan Massad

On the picket line

By Matty Starrdust and Sue Davis

Massachusetts teachers’ unions endorse trans* rights bill

Despite a wave of reactionary, anti-trans* legislation sweeping the country, most recently in North Carolina, the two largest teachers unions in Massachusetts have taken a bold stance for equality. (Trans* is used with an asterisk to indicate the spectrum of all the different genders of people who do not conform to the either/or of male/female or masculine/feminine.) The Massachusetts Teachers Association and American Federation of Teachers announced March 14 their support for a bill that would ban discrimination on the basis of gender identity in all places of public accommodation. The bill specifically protects the right of trans* people to use public restrooms or locker rooms in line with their gender identity. That right is under attack in state legislatures in Illinois, Mississippi, Tennessee and elsewhere. (transequality.org)

Massachusetts banned anti-trans* discrimination in public schools, as well as employment, housing and lending in 2011, but lawmakers left out public restrooms and locker rooms. However, trans* access to these facilities has been successfully implemented for five years in Boston Public Schools. According to Tom Scott, executive director of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, which endorsed the bill, “We’ve done it in the schools, and I think that it can be done outside the schools.” (Boston Globe, March 14)

California farmworkers march for overtime equality

Farmworkers in California, organized by the Farm Workers, are observing “Cesar Chavez Month” — the period between the influential labor organizer’s March 31 birthday and the anniversary of his death April 23 — by staging protest marches with supporters in agricultural centers, demanding the same overtime pay that most workers get and denouncing presidential candidate Donald Trump.

The mass labor struggles of the 1930s won passage of the landmark 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act, which guarantees a minimum wage and overtime for most U.S. workers. However, in a last-minute concession to Southern politicians and farmers who depended on super-exploited Black labor, legislators excluded farmworkers, as well as domestic and tipped workers, from the law’s protections. All these groups, including majority Black and Latino/a farmworkers, continue to be paid lower wages and enjoy fewer benefits.

During the month, thousands of marchers will demand passage of AB 2757, which would mandate overtime pay for farmworkers who work more than eight hours a day or 40 hours a week, to be phased in by 2020. Supporters can sign a pledge and donate to the march effort at action.ufw.org/page/s/otpledge.

Companies required to report union-busting efforts

Bosses have long used intimidation and anti-union propaganda to try to stop labor organizing efforts, but only recently has hiring anonymous anti-union “consultants” become common. It’s estimated that today they are hired by 75 percent of companies fighting unions.

On March 23, the Department of Labor issued a new rule requiring companies to publicly report, as of July 1, all use of labor consulting firms and the amount of money spent on them. Federal law has required unions to publicly report the amount of money they spend on union campaigns since 1959. (New York Times, March 24)

Many of these viciously anti-worker firms go so far as to advertise their rates of success and some even offer money-back guarantees. For in-depth information about them, visit jwj.org/unionbusters-101.

Tyson forced to pay Iowa workers overtime

The Supreme Court sided 6-2 on March 22 with thousands of workers at a pork processing plant in Storm Lake, Iowa, who banded together in a class-action suit to recover overtime pay from Tyson Foods. By deciding the plaintiffs could rely on statistics to prove their case, the court limited the sweep of its 2011 decision in Walmart Stores v. Dukes, which threw out an employment discrimination class-action suit brought on behalf of 1.6 million women workers and made it harder for workers, investors and consumers to join together to pursue claims. The workers sued in 2007 under the Fair Labor Standards Act, arguing they should have been compensated for the time it took to put on and take off the safety equipment they were required to wear while they worked. A jury agreed that Tyson was guilty of wage theft and awarded a \$5.8 million judgment in favor of roughly 3,300 workers. (New York Times, March 23)

WW hopes this ruling will help other workers whose bosses have refused to pay for the time they must spend preparing for and cleaning up after work. □

Bus drivers bring victory story to Chicago

By Martha Grevatt
Chicago

Two leaders of the Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751, arrived in Chicago on April 2. Union Trustees Fred Floreal and Frantz “Fanfan” Cadet came to tell over 2,000 union activists attending the Labor Notes conference about their great victory against the Velolia/Transdev transnational corporation.

After 26 months of struggle, this union-busting company was forced to reinstate four unjustly fired union leaders. The union won an excellent contract. The brothers received a tremendous response when they spoke to over 100 people at a transit workers meeting during the conference. After the conference, at a meeting hosted by Local 8751, they led a rich discussion about the victory with labor, political and youth activists. □



Bus drivers and supporters at Labor Notes meeting.
WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

Federal workers under attack

By Carl Lewis

Congress has unleashed a number of right-wing bills that would erode job security, pay, and, for federal workers, the very right to join and be represented by a union. One of the more restrictive attempts at union busting is cutting down the right of union representatives to use what is called “official time” to both represent and negotiate labor contracts for workers. Official time simply means that union representatives can take time to represent and negotiate for an employee, on their regular pay, without taking their own leave time.

The proposed legislation also demands that agencies that have unions in place report the amount of official time taken by union officers to assist and bargain for federal workers. The purpose of this demand is to slam unions by restricting if not eliminating official time and to convince the public that it is a waste of taxpayers’ money. Without the right to official time, unions cannot effectively defend workers against arbitrary and capricious discipline, unjust firings and reduction in pay. The president of an American Federation of Government Employees local told Workers World of yet another

attempt at union busting: “AFGE is the largest union representing federal workers (600,000); however, a recent ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals narrows the definition of who can be protected by a union, by reclassifying employees as ‘security sensitive’ the same way that the National Security Agency, the FBI, and the CIA classifies those employees as ‘critically sensitive’ and thus prevented from exercising their union rights. Therefore, those employees would have no appeal rights.” The Obama administration is also proposing legislation that would change the definition of what a “security, and/or a critically sensitive position” is. In the Aug. 21, 2013, edition of the Washington Post, the paper’s expert on federal employees, Joe Davidson, referred to the absurdity of these rulings regarding “critically-sensitive” positions, especially for civilians who work at military bases. In the court ruling referenced

above, a low-grade worker who managed inventory at a commissary, which is basically a supermarket, was described as in a “critically-sensitive position.” In the same article, Davidson writes that, according to Tom Devine, legal director of the nonprofit Government Accountability Project, “The worker is defenseless.” The court backed the Obama administration’s argument that the Merit Systems Protection Board, which hears appeal rights from federal workers, cannot review or overturn an agency’s decision to take disciplinary or adverse actions against an employee’s sensitive position. Meanwhile, Devine added, the administration is proposing regulations that would make nearly all federal jobs eligible for a sensitive designation. In summation, unions in the federal sector are hampered by a myriad of federal and agency laws, rules regulations and policy that restrict the rights and activities of federal workers. □

Chicago strike!

Continued from page 1

Orleans funeral march, with coffins and a jazz band to symbolize the death of public education, protesters marched to a McDonald’s in solidarity with the fight for a \$15 an hour minimum wage. Supporters then got on buses to join the city-wide downtown rally for the teachers. Black Youth Project 100 held a teach-in at Chicago State. CSU senior Darren Martin told the paper Catalyst Chicago that it would be hard to find another university that has a resource center for African-American males, a president who talks with students one-on-one and a diverse faculty “who looks like you.”

‘Not a moment but a movement’

CTU President Karen Lewis, who received her teaching credentials at CSU, explained: “It’s not just us. This is not a moment. Brothers and sisters, this is a movement.” Over 100 striking teachers at a Southwest Side school left the picket lines for a short time, but not for a rest. They marched over to the factory where Nabisco/Mondalez makes Oreo cookies. There, they joined forces with the Bakery Union (BCTGM) to oppose company plans to close the factory and move to Mexico, in order to undermine the union and drive down wages. The popular chant was “Teachers, Nabisco workers, we are with you!”

Four Chicago school buses ferried workers attending the national Labor Notes Conference to the Chicago Department of Aviation administration building, where airport workers are fighting for \$15 and a union. Canadian postal workers, members of the United Electrical Workers union, printers, retired government workers and an airport worker from El Salvador, Magdalena Hernández, SITIAPES, joined CTU members and airport workers. A CDA official called security and demanded the group move away from the

door, prompting a picket line. Those rallying then explained that the administration was refusing to meet with the unions. Service Employees union Local 1 spokesperson, Izabela Miltko, told the April 1 Chicago Tribune, “Nearly 100 baggage handlers, custodians, cabin cleaners, security officers and wheelchair attendants walked off the job at O’Hare [Airport], joining their peers at eight other airports across the country participating in 24-hour strikes on March 31.” At the mass rally outside the Illinois State Building downtown, CTU President Lewis spoke to the crowd of over 25,000. “This is what happens when we come together and stop fighting each other and know who our enemies are,” she said. “Instead of somebody telling us why we shouldn’t be in the streets, we should take the street.” The march then proceeded down Michigan Avenue, blocking traffic in a sea of red — the color of CTU shirts and hoodies. This coming together of workers — from college professors to the most oppressed and exploited food workers to youth of color resisting police killings — is what solidarity looks like. Calling for a citywide strike against attacks happening across the state and around the world is how movements are built and victories are won. Demonstrators showed they appreciated a statement from the Workers World Party Moorehead-Lilly presidential campaign — Monica Moorehead is a former public school teacher — titled “We Salute the Chicago Teachers Strike! Shut down Racism, Capitalism and Injustice.” The candidates wrote: “The CTU is leading the way towards a better world, a world in which youth of color, immigrants, Black people, LGBTQ people and all working-class people are valued and whose needs are put first. We stand in total solidarity and admiration for this fighting organization and its allies.” □

New York State budget – no big deal for workers

By G. Dunkel
New York City

The new, New York state budget for 2017 is both a detailed spending plan and a list of policy declarations. It went into effect on April 1, as soon as the Legislature passed it and the governor signed it. Since the deal was struck early in the morning of April 1, details are still to be announced, but the policies clearly favor the wealthy and well-off. How much of an increase in the minimum wage you’ll receive depends on where you live. It will reach \$15 an hour in New York City, but only at the end of 2018. Westchester County and Long Island, where average incomes are greater than in the city, won’t reach a \$15 an hour minimum for nearly six years. The minimum in the rest of the state will reach only \$12.50, and that figure in 2021. In New York City, 27 percent of all households earn less than \$25,000 a year according to the Census Bureau. If this involves an individual working 40 hours a week, this means they are paid about \$12 an hour. A mandatory minimum of \$15 an hour could put another \$6,000 a year in their pockets. Besides splitting the state by regions and allowing small businesses an exemption for the minimum-wage increase, this budget includes provisions that allow bosses to avoid paying the higher minimum if the economy worsens. The executive branch of the state government can

impose its own judgment on this. Gov. Andrew Cuomo made a big deal out of income tax cuts that will cost the state more than \$4 billion annually by 2025. Income tax cuts generally benefit the people with the highest incomes — otherwise known as the rich. Many of the wealthiest New Yorkers have already figured out how to game the tax system so that their “adjusted gross income” is zero or even negative, which means they pay no income taxes. (New York Times, March 29) The budget saves the City University of New York from Gov. Cuomo’s threatened \$485 million cut to the city budget. But it keeps his administration’s policy of underinvestment in CUNY and the working-class students it serves. It also fails to include any back pay for CUNY employees, who have not had a new contract for five years and so have had their wages frozen at the 2011 level. Barbara Bowen, president of the Professional Staff Congress, which represents the faculty and some staff at CUNY, in a letter to the PSC’s members, wrote, “I do not see the economic justice in a budget that adheres to a completely artificial requirement for economic austerity and fails to invest adequately in the public university that serves the working class.” The PSC intends to keep on bargaining for a new contract with the CUNY administration and to organize a vote to authorize a strike. □

Capitalism = homelessness

By Stephen Millies

Nearly 24,000 children sleep every night in New York City municipal shelters, according to the Coalition for the Homeless. But not a single child is homeless in socialist Cuba.

Money isn't lacking for housing in the capital of capitalism. Seven years ago, Zeckendorf Development sold condos costing \$2 billion at their palace overlooking Manhattan's Central Park. (Vanity Fair, September 2008)

That's enough dough to build 10,000 apartments at \$200,000 apiece, which could house most of New York City's homeless children. But there isn't any profit doing that.

Ironically, it is both luxury housing and slums that make the most money for landlords and banks. The first family of New York's "high society," the Astors, were the biggest slumlords in the Western Hemisphere.

There's also loot for bottom feeders like the late Lyn Nofziger, who bought up Baltimore slum properties while working for President Ronald Reagan. (Baltimore Sun, Oct. 6, 1993)

The owner of the Milwaukee trailer park where author Matthew Desmond lived while writing "Evicted, Poverty and Profit in the American City" rakes in \$400,000 a year.

Under capitalism, even items absolutely essential to human life like housing or food have to be sold for a profit. If the capitalists could bottle the atmosphere, they would sell it to you.

President Franklin Roosevelt declared in 1937 that one-third of people in the U.S. were "ill-housed." Millions of sharecropping families were living in shacks.

Strikers occupied the GM plants in Flint, Mich., as FDR spoke. Many people knew about the Soviet Union's socialist five-year plans that built entire new cities, like the steel town of Magnitogorsk.

Public housing began to be built in the United States in the late 1930s, but it wasn't to the liking of the real estate lobby.

Wisconsin Sen. Joe McCarthy started his anti-communist witch-hunting career by labeling public housing a red plot. ("PR!: A Social History of Spin" by Stuart Ewen)

Urban removal

McCarthy and the landlords didn't have to worry. There were plenty of dead presidents to be made from the housing shortage following World War II.

Senator Robert Taft — who co-sponsored the union-busting Taft-Hartley bill — was also responsible for the 1949 Housing Act. Taft was such a right-winger that he attacked the prosecution of Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg.

New York's public construction czar Robert Moses turned federal "slum clearance" programs into a weapon of urban removal. This bigot refused to provide "luxury items" like toilet seat covers and closet doors to public housing residents.

Moses had 7,000 mostly Puerto Rican families evicted to construct Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Many more

people were displaced by highways he had constructed, like the Cross-Bronx Expressway.

As many as 500,000 people were thrown out of their homes by Robert Moses, according to "The Power Broker" by Robert Caro.

New York's "progressive" Mayor Bill de Blasio is ramming through zoning changes that will drive more poor people out of gentrifying neighborhoods.

His Housing Authority refused to turn the heat on in some projects until the outside temperature dropped to 20 degrees. (New York Daily News, March 31, 2015)

Housing apartheid

Developer William Levitt kept Black families from buying houses when he started Levittown on Long Island in 1947. As late as 2009, the Census Bureau estimated that less than 1 percent of the 53,000 people living there were African American.

Neither did Metropolitan Life Insurance allow Black families into its Stuyvesant Town complex on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

MetLife was a cash cow for the Rockefeller dynasty. During the Great Depression, MetLife President Frederick Eckler approved a \$40 million loan to start building Rockefeller Center.

Lee Lorch and Grace Lorch were evicted by MetLife for inviting the African-American Hendrix family to live with them at Stuyvesant Town. Grace Lorch was later one of those comforting Elizabeth Eckford, one of nine Black students

trying to integrate Little Rock's Central High School in 1957. (New York Times, March 1, 2014)

African Americans were also frozen out of 12,000 apartments at MetLife's Parkchester complex in the Bronx until after Dr. King was assassinated in 1968.

Only struggle forced the LeFraks and Trumps to open their apartments and co-operatives to Black and Latino/a families in Brooklyn and Queens.

A simple solution

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, there's a national shortage of 7.2 million apartments and homes that poor families can afford. Over 450,000 families in New York City pay at least half their income on rent. (cbcny.org)

One of the Cuban Revolution's early achievements was limiting any family's combined rent and utility bill to only 10 percent of their income. Mansions were taken over to house poor people.

There's a housing crisis in the United States, but there's no housing shortage. Millions of apartments and homes are kept off the market by speculators and banks.

We need to take them over, like poor and working people in Cuba did. Zeckendorf's condos in New York City should belong to homeless children and their families.

That's what Workers World Party presidential candidate Monica Moorehead and vice presidential candidate Lamont Lilly are fighting for. □

Newark children exposed to lead

By Lyn Neeley

Nearly half the schools in Newark, N.J., were temporarily shut down on March 9 when elevated levels of lead were found in the drinking water.

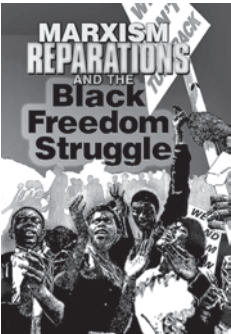
Responding to a lack of funding and community control, Larry Hamm, chairman of the People's Organization for Progress (POP), told Workers World, "We are outraged at the discovery that schools in Newark had unacceptable levels of lead in the water." He said POP is "calling upon the state and the federal government to do what needs to be done to clean and purify public school water."

Mayor Ras Baraka said: "A lot of our buildings are old. That speaks to infrastructure, the reason why we need new schools." (AP, April 1)

Hamm said it was "ironic" that at the same time the story broke that children in 11 New Jersey cities had higher levels of lead in their blood than children in Flint, Mich. (myCentralJersey.com, Feb 3), POP was holding a demonstration condemning the lead poisoning in Flint's water.

Newark schools tested above the Environmental Protection Agency's safe level for lead of 15 parts per billion.

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle



An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.

Available at major online booksellers.

State officials took over the management of Newark schools in 1995 after the Abbott vs. Burke ruling mandated that the state fund 28 "unconstitutionally substandard" urban school districts at the same level as the state's wealthiest districts. Newark's schools are among the poorest in the U.S. and many buildings are over 100 years old.

Hamm said that due to lack of money, children were still being denied a thorough education. With state funding has come state supervision of the schools, taking power out of the hands of the communities. "The state was to supervise the schools for five years," he said, "but 20 years later they are still in control. The state appointed its own superintendent with veto power over the school board." The schools were supposed to improve, but the reality is that conditions have gotten worse. Hamm said the situation was comparable to that in Flint, where after the city went bankrupt, the state took over and administrators, to save money, switched the water supply from the Detroit reservoir to the highly polluted Flint River.

In 2003, the EPA offered to help monitor lead levels in Newark public school water, but city officials rejected the EPA proposal, claiming the city already had a plan to install new fountains and lead filters. Part of the city's plan was to have school employees run the water for 30 seconds before children came to school. However, school staff and community organizers said those rules were not consistently enforced. Many teachers said they were never told to run the water and that water filters, which need replacing every six months, had not been changed in five years. (WNYC, March 17)

In 2002, when dangerously high lead levels were found in schools in Camden, N.J. — another poor, majority Black city — bottled water was provided at a cost

of \$75,000 a year. Fourteen years later, instead of the lead pipes being replaced, Camden students are still drinking bottled water. And now, Newark students and staff are getting bottled water for drinking and to prepare food in the cafeteria.

Schools just tip of the iceberg

Older housing units in Newark also have lead pipes or lead soldering within pipes, which leaches into the drinking water. Lead poisoning can also be caused by lead-based paint found in old housing units and in soil along highways, even though the U.S. banned leaded gasoline in 1996.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 24 million dwellings in the U.S. have deteriorated lead paint, which contaminates house dust. Eating lead paint chips is dangerous but swallowing or breathing contaminated dust or soil causes the most insidious lead poisoning. Once these small particles get into the body, they are easily absorbed.

Children living in older housing are at greatest risk. In Newark, more than 30 percent of the housing was built before 1950. Levels of lead in paint were as high as 50 percent. Lead-based oil paint was banned for use in housing in 1971. (Childhood Lead Poisoning in New Jersey Annual Report, 2010)

Monica Moorehead, Workers World 2016 presidential candidate and a New Jersey resident, points out that "Newark is the most populated city in New Jersey with the second-highest poverty rate." Those with the lowest incomes live in the oldest housing, where their health is compromised by lead paint and pipes. People who are better off have moved to newer homes in the suburbs.

Effects of lead poisoning

Children and developing fetuses are at the greatest risk of lead poisoning because

their growing bodies absorb and retain lead more easily. Children with poor diets, lacking nutrients like calcium, absorb lead more easily. Each year in the United States, 310,000 children ages one to five years old test positive for unsafe levels of lead in their blood. (Kidshealth.org)

Chronic exposure to small amounts of lead causes neurological and behavioral damage that may be irreversible: reduced IQ, shorter attention span and problems with social interactions. Lead poisoning also causes anemia, hypertension and problems with the renal (kidneys), immune and reproductive systems. High lead exposure can cause coma, convulsions and even death. Lead damage to red blood cells limits the amount of oxygen they can carry to organs and tissues.

Lead is stored in teeth and bones, where it accumulates over time and may be released back into the blood during pregnancy, where it can be absorbed by the fetus. Most lead ends up in the bones, interfering with the production of blood cells and the absorption of calcium.

Reparations and community control

Districts and teachers are often blamed for children not performing well in school when, in fact, this problem can reflect the effects of lead poisoning, economic inequality, environmental racism and an imposition of state control. What's needed is money for new housing and water pipes, and community control of the agencies that affect people's lives.

City Council member Eddie Osborne said Newark should act fast and hire an environmental consultant to perform the study, and that Newark residents "cannot wait for a state or federal agency to return our phone calls for answers." He said, "We need our own consultants, our own access to data and solutions, and we need it now!" (NJ.com, March 21) □

Baltimore tribunal says Decent housing is a human right!

By Carl Lewis
Baltimore

In response to the deplorable and inhuman conditions of this city's housing projects, several groups came together on April 2 for the first-ever citywide Tribunal on Housing.

The Baltimore People's Power Assembly, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Ujima People's Progress Party sponsored the event at the St. Vincent DePaul Church in the heart of downtown Baltimore.

For months, the People's Power Assembly had interviewed and gathered information, photos and petitions from residents who have been lodging complaints against the Baltimore City Housing Authority and its commissioner, Paul Graziano. They gathered data at McCullough Homes, Poe Homes, Latrobe Homes, Douglas Homes, Perkins Homes and, last but not least, Gilmore Homes, where the arrest and killing of Freddie Grey in police custody had set off widespread protests.

The trigger that led the PPA to mobilize in the communities was when a city employee, Lucky Crosby, who monitored homes needing repairs, heard a number of complaints from residents who had been threatened or coerced into having sex in return for repairs. When Crosby reported these documented incidents, he was terminated by the Baltimore Housing Commission. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 647 is in litigation defending Crosby, who is an executive board member of the union, over punishment he received for whistleblowing on these events.

Housing Commissioner Graziano had known for some time that this extortion for repairs was going on. The PPA issued him a summons to appear before the tribunal. Sharon Black told reporters on March 29 that the summons was delivered to Graziano's office and date-stamped by the BHC Legal Department. "We will see if he abides by the summons," Black said. "Graziano can't say he doesn't know — as he did during the 'sex for repairs' scandal. All he has to do is attend and hear from the residents themselves and see the doc-



Baltimore Tribunal on Housing, April 2.

umentation that our residents have collected. Public housing is slum housing and is a violation of the United Nations charter on human rights."

The PPA presented photos for the judge and jurors to examine as well as testimony from residents of different housing projects. Graziano was found guilty by the tribunal for the following housing code violations: no heat; mold; pest infestations, including mice, roaches and bedbugs; broken windows and doors; unhealthy water; broken plumbing; overcrowding; broken appliances; holes in ceilings and walls; broken railings; and lack of timely repairs, despite repeated requests by the residents.

The judges were Lenora Knowles of the People's Power Assembly, Ariane McBride of the People's Power Assembly and Nnamdi Lumumba of the Ujima People's Progress Party. The broadness of the tribunal was reflected in the jurors: Leo Burroughs, Committee of Concerned Citizens; the Rev. Annie Chambers, Big Mamma's House; President Anthony Coates, AFSCME Local 647; ShaiVaughn Crawley, youth activist; Lucky Crosby, fired housing worker; attorney Carl Gentile, Union Labor Activists; Colleen Gillian, Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) youth group; President Kenneth Gwee, Christian Leadership for Economic Development; Courtney Jenkins, Postal Workers Local 181; President Lorraine Ledbetter, Poe Tenants Association; Kira Lynae, Baltimore Workers World Party;

Amy Millar, Food and Commercial Workers union Local 1884; Gary Nelson, city firefighter; Leon Purnell, board member SCLC, Men's and Families Center, East-side; Torianne Tots, student at Maryland Institute College of Art; and Floyd Vines, J. Van Story Branch Senior Housing.

Many individuals and residents testified. President Anthony Coates of AFSCME Local 647 said these problems have been ignored for 13 years. A housing project activist said the ultimate goal of the city is to privatize housing, pointing out that \$600 million of Baltimore city taxpayers' money went to Harbor East for business development, while the city has 30,000 vacant and boarded-up homes.

PPA activist Steven Ceci played a tape recording of a McCullough Homes manager threatening residents who go to the tribunal with eviction. Commissioner Graziano was also present at that confrontation to back up the manager's threat. Floyd Vines, an electrician for city maintenance workers at the J. Van Story Branch of Senior Housing, said that "corruption is so deep in public housing that it is unfathomable."

President Lorraine Ledbetter of the Poe Homes Tenants Association testified that every time money was invested in the University of Maryland, Baltimore, adjacent to Poe Homes, both the city and the university promised they would also invest monies to rehabilitate Poe Homes. In 15 years, over \$1 billion was loaned or invested in the UMB, yet Poe Homes

still had a deficit. Ledbetter questioned why so much money went to wealthy white men for business development and not to provide housing and jobs for people living in the housing projects.

People's Judge Ariane McBride, herself a transitional housing resident, testified about transitional housing: "It is where the residents, mostly women and children, are waiting to move into established housing projects. However, the complex also is in need of repairs and is severely mismanaged." Inspectors and managers make "sur-

prise visits" and then blame residents for the disrepair, including broken lights and appliances. Most of the young residents with children are too scared to speak out, and so far six to seven families have lost their transitional housing status, meaning they are evicted and cannot apply for public housing for three years.

One of the jurors said: "We cannot be color blind. This is a city that is almost 70 percent Black. This is a trend happening in all the large metropolitan areas of the U.S.: move Black people out of the city and give them Section 8 housing in the suburbs, then attract white yuppies into gentrified areas of the city, where they can spend their dollars and enhance the growth of the city, similar to the situation in D.C., where wealthy white folks are becoming the majority of residents."

The tribunal concluded with a number of action proposals: a fact-finding commission to continue the work with a follow-up meeting in May; a protest and caravan to Graziano's residence; a campaign to demand jobs for housing project residents, especially the youth; that union apprentice training be given to carry out repairs and that the workers be paid \$15 an hour; a campaign to stop gentrification; getting a city statute for greater whistleblower protection; and demanding a meeting with the Housing and Urban Development official at the national level. All the judges and jurors noted this will be a protracted struggle and not a "one-shot deal." □

Brooklyn, N.Y.: 'Affordable for WHO?'

By Anne Pruden
New York

March 30 —"Luxury high-rises are being built in our neighborhoods; rents and property taxes keep going up and up; and long-term residents are being displaced! This is why the Brooklyn Anti-gentrification Network is fighting to change the city charter to make community boards elected, not appointed, and to give them veto power!" said organizer Alicia Boyd.

Speaking today at the entrance to Brooklyn's City Hall, Boyd was among activists throughout the city who see their community boards powerless to stop developers. The gentrification of the city has a racist character, which was protested at the rally and covered by local news outlets.

New York City's Mayor Bill de Blasio recently chose to ignore that most community boards don't approve of his deal with developers to rezone. Developers claim that affordable housing is offered in 20 percent of the high-rise apartments now displacing housing for working-class

families. Speakers today explained that alleged affordability is fixed on the income of wealthy neighborhoods. De Blasio's term "affordable" sounds good, but isn't applicable for most Brooklyn neighborhoods where people of color have waged many battles to obtain housing in recent decades.

BAN is using street rally tactics, including going door to door and holding town hall meetings. The protesters' determination was heard in the chant "Whose city? Our city!"

A few days later, more than 100 East New Yorkers met at a community church on a bitterly cold April 3 to ride the long distance to Manhattan's City Hall. There, they appealed to a mayor who boosts an affordable housing plan that is really a plan of, by and for real estate developers — not for the working class and people of color. Speakers explained their plight in different ways as the large crowd of East New Yorkers covered the wide steps leading to the City Hall entrance.

They had the support of a Latina tenant



Manhattan City Hall, April 3.

W PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

leader from the southwest Bronx who spoke about demanding a "No" vote to rezoning their East New York neighborhood that would require only 3 percent of 6,000 new units to be affordable. The mostly Black and Brown tenants in the area are mostly low income.

Chants included: "Hey de Blasio, where we gonna go?" "Hey hey, ho ho! Luxury condos have got to go!" "What's not for sale? East New York!" and "Our community! Our plan!" Speakers mentioned with pride a fair housing plan that these tenants have developed. □

Japan’s prime minister defies anti-war public

By John Catalinotto

As 40,000 Japanese anti-war protesters were demonstrating in Tokyo on March 22, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s cabinet approved the enactment of two security laws that the demonstrators believe violate pacifist clauses in Japan’s constitution.

The rules will allow Japanese imperialism to use its military in a more aggressive way than at any time since 1945,

under the pretext that an ally of Japan is under attack or that Japanese lives are threatened. Although U.S. imperialism imposed a pacifist-leaning constitution on Japan following its victory in World War II, Washington has currently urged the Japanese government to expand its military role in East Asia.

Washington’s strategy envisages Japanese and south Korean forces operating under U.S. leadership while confronting China and the Democratic People’s Re-

public of Korea. This is much like the way British, French and German armed forces operate in Europe under NATO command — which is always U.S. command. The U.S. has been especially provocative toward north Korea (DPRK), refusing to finally sign an agreement ending the 1950-53 war and normalizing relations.

In the late summer of 2015, when plans for this new militarization were first announced, more than 100,000 Japanese and Okinawans demonstrated against



them. Okinawa is an island group 400 miles south of the main Japanese islands, with a non-Japanese population and the lion’s share of U.S. military bases. It is a center of anti-war activity directed against both the Japanese and the U.S. military machines. □

U.S. plans new escalation of Iraq war

By John Catalinotto

At a briefing with U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter on March 25, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Joseph Dunford told the press that “the secretary and I both believe that there will be an increase to the U.S. forces in Iraq in the coming weeks.” (CNN, March 25)

This statement from the top military officer confirms signals that the Pentagon is planning a new escalation of military intervention in Iraq 13 years after the U.S.-British invasion in March 2003 and five years after the incomplete pull-out of U.S. troops.

CNN reported that a U.S. defense official told the news agency that the U.S. currently has “between 4,500 and 5,000 troops in Iraq on a regular basis, about 1,000 over the stated limit of 3,800,” including “200 Special Operations Forces whose presence is not publicly acknowledged.”

Just days before this announcement, the U.S.-led “coalition” carried out a bombing raid on Iraq’s second largest city, Mosul, home to 1.5 million people, targeted because it has been run by Islamic State forces for more than a year. The “coalition” consists of more than 60 countries backing the Iraqi regime, including NATO countries and the Gulf monarchies, but most of the actual bombing is done by the Pentagon.

According to an interview with Iraqi scientist Dr. Souad Najj Al Azzawi in the German daily newspaper, Junge Welt, on March 31, the March 19-20 attack on Mosul occurred in the middle of the day, which she “can only interpret as that they were intentionally planned and directed against the population, against civilians. This is a war crime.”

Dr. Al Azzawi Najj said the bombers “used bunker-busting weapons. This destroyed the main building of the university, the Science College, the Women’s

College, the students’ dormitories” and other civilian buildings. “So far from what we know, 90 people were killed and another 155 injured.”

This year the anniversary of the 2003 U.S.-British invasion — which was based on imperialist lies about non-existent “weapons of mass destruction” — fell just as the U.S. was bombing Mosul and two days before the bombing in Brussels. The number killed in Mosul was more than twice that killed in Brussels, although it was barely reported in the corporate media in the imperialist countries.

In her remarkable March 29 article in TruePublica.org.uk commemorating the 2003 invasion, anti-war British journalist Felicity Arbuthnot pointed out it was the anniversary of “the biggest terrorist attack in modern history ... the illegal invasion and destruction — ongoing — of Iraq.” (tinyurl.com/z3nmg92)

“March 20,” the journalist continued, “marked the thirteenth anniversary of

an action resulting in the equivalent of a Paris, Brussels, London on July 7, 2005, often multiple times daily in Iraq ever since. As for September 11, 2001, there has frequently been that death toll and heartbreak every several weeks, also ongoing.”

Reliable sources state that 1.5 million Iraqis died during the invasion, the ongoing occupation and the internal fighting provoked by the U.S., British and other occupying powers. Another 5 million were driven into internal and foreign exile. The Islamic State group would never have existed in Iraq without this invasion.

If the Pentagon and the administration of President Barack Obama are planning an escalation of U.S. forces in Iraq to conquer Mosul and other cities in the north, anti-war forces in the U.S. will need to confront this challenge — to bring it to the streets and to all the meetings involving the upcoming national elections. □

Sham ‘unity’ in Libya creates divisions

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Five years after the U.S.-led destabilization and bombing of Libya began, imperialist attempts to establish a stable neocolonial-dominated regime have not materialized.

On March 19, 2011, the Pentagon and other NATO forces began the aerial bombardment of the formerly prosperous nation-state. After seven months of airstrikes and support for an imperialist-directed ground operation by proxy rebel militias, thousands were dead and millions displaced amid the ruins of hundreds of development projects and government institutions.

Leaders of the U.S., Britain, France, Italy and other Western countries, in cooperation with their allies in Africa and the Middle East, lauded the Libyan war as a success story in the remaking of the region, where rebel forces would do international capitalism’s dirty work. Hillary Clinton, then secretary of state in President Barack Obama’s first administration, laughed at the lynching of former Libyan leader Col. Moammar Gadhafi, saying, “We came, we saw, he died.”

Libya is now one of the poorest states on the continent and a source of instability throughout large sections of Africa and the Middle East. The once lucrative oil industry — which supplied resources for building hefty national budget surpluses — has all but failed. Substantial sections of extraction locations and refineries have been destroyed in fighting between rival groups backed by Western-allied governments, including Qatar,

Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Under Gadhafi, Libya enjoyed widespread recognition and respect among African Union member-states. The transition from the Organization of African Unity to the AU in 2002 was based upon the Sirte Declaration drafted by OAU affiliates in 1999.

Many of the declaration’s ideas and the AU’s founding documents attempted to address the need for greater African unity in economic, political, telecommunications, technical and military spheres. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana’s leader from 1951 to 1966 and an OAU co-founder, called for a united government of Africa as the best method to fight imperialist dominance.

The Gadhafi government adopted this idea of fostering cooperation and coordination across the African continent. These political activities alarmed the West, prompting the destabilization and overthrow of the Libyan state, which remains in shambles.

‘Unity’ regime elusive

Recent attempts to install a new, so-called “unity government” have prompted the Tripoli-based faction to declare a “state of emergency.” This grouping drove out the internationally recognized rival group now based in Tobruk.

Mediacratictimes.com website reported on March 25: “The reasons for the declaration were not officially stated but there are reports that the arrival of some members of the U.N.-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli provoked it.”

Numerous analysts view the GNA’s imposition as causing more chaos and in-

stability. For instance, when the aircraft with German diplomat Martin Kobler, U.N. envoy to Libya, was unable to land on March 23 in Tripoli, the Libyan capital, he tweeted, the “U.N. must have the right to fly to Tripoli.”

Neither of the rival regimes has authorized the GNA, which announced in early March that it was assuming control on the basis of a petition signed by a narrow majority of Libya’s so-called “lawmakers.”

The plan for a coalition junta is designed to pave the way for a 6,000-person Pentagon/NATO-led intervention force under the U.N. rubric, brokered by Kobler. Having lost faith in local militias and political surrogates to provide stability in Libya, the U.S. and other NATO states plan to send in a military force to impose a neocolonial-dominated regime that would ensure compliance with Washington, London, Paris and Brussels’ foreign policy imperatives.

Stratfor Enterprises, a global intelligence firm, said on its website on March 21, “Western forces may soon intervene in Libya. ... Two governments have been created ... [though] neither recognized the legitimacy of the other. This is particularly problematic since Western intervention is contingent on a viable, singular Libyan government.”

The publication stresses that the putative success of the U.N.-engineered GNA could depend on the Misrata militia, which helps prop up the General National Congress regime that has taken over Tripoli. This militia gained a reputation during the 2011 war of regime change as extremely violent and racist in the campaign to overthrow Gadhafi’s Jamahiriya system.

Stratfor emphasized: Recently, “senior members of the Misratan militia have publicly supported the unity government, calling on the head of Libya’s Tripoli-based government to resign and cede power to the GNA’s proposed prime minister, Faiz Serraj.” This militia has ramped up its cooperation with the West, and is being trained by U.S. and British special operations forces. Stratfor continued: “Its support for the new government will play an important role in the GNA’s success. Other militias in western Libya have joined the Misratan militia in backing the unity government.”

Jordan’s ‘special forces’ to embed with British

The British Guardian newspaper reported on March 25 that Jordanian King Abdullah attended a U.S. Senate briefing in January. He confirmed that Britain’s Special Air Services had been operating in Libya since the beginning of 2016. He revealed that Jordan’s “special forces” will “be embedded” alongside the British.

Abdullah said, “Jordan is looking at al-Shabaab” and “We need to look at all the hotspots in the map. We have a rapid deployment force that will stand with the British and Kenya and is ready to go over the border [into Somalia].”

Libya has become a pariah throughout North and West Africa due to the lawlessness characterized by human trafficking and harboring of extremist, destructive groups; an ongoing economic crisis exemplified by serious damage to the oil industry; and the growing presence of U.S. and British special forces and intelligence personnel. □

Thousands protest on 40th Land Day

PALESTINE

By Joe Catron

Thousands demonstrated in occupied Palestine and throughout the world on March 30, marking the 40th Land Day. The annual event commemorates the killing of six Palestinian citizens of Israel, who were protesting the Zionist state's expropriation of more than 5,000 acres of land in 1976.

Repressing a general strike — the first mobilization by Palestinians on land seized by Israel in 1948 — the Zionist forces also wounded 100 people and detained hundreds more.

Today these events are remembered as the start of the organized struggle by Palestinians against ethnic cleansing and land theft in the heart of the Zionist occupation.

"We stand here today at the memorial of our six martyrs who were killed defending their land," Mohamed Barakeh, chair of the Arab Higher Monitoring Committee, said during the wreath-laying ceremony at a commemorative monument in Sakhnin. "Khadija Shawahneh, Khader Khalaila, Khair Yassin, Mohsen Taha, Raafat al-Zuhiri and Raja Abu Raya, we will not forget you."

The committee, which coordinates political activities among Palestinian cit-



PHOTO: JOE CATRON

Land Day 2014 in the central Gaza Strip's Maghazi refugee camp.

izens, called for a general strike and protests against ongoing attempts to seize Palestinian land.

"In 1976, demonstrators protested against the confiscation of 20,000 dunums [about 4,900 acres] of land, while today Israel has plans to confiscate 800,000 dunums [about 198,000 acres] in the Negev Desert," Ayman Odeh, leader of the Hadash party and chairman of the Joint List of Palestinian factions, said in Sakhnin.

Major demonstrations took place across the Negev and Galilee regions where Palestinian survivors of Zionist ethnic cleansing operations in 1948 maintain a strong presence. Palestinians also mobilized throughout the West Bank

and Gaza Strip, Palestinian territories occupied by Zionist forces and subjected to military rule in 1967.

North of Gaza City, hundreds marched toward a checkpoint in Beit Hanoun, calling for the right of return by Palestinian refugees who make up more than two-thirds of the Gaza Strip population.

"Palestinians are entitled to their land and they will give up not one inch," Hamas leader Yahia Moussa told the crowd.

Near Ramallah, university students cut through a section of the infamous "Apartheid Wall," hoisting a Palestinian flag over expropriated farmlands before Zionist forces repelled them with tear gas, rubber-coated steel bullets and concussion grenades.

Occupation troops also fired tear gas at demonstrators in Nablus and outside Ofer prison, which holds Palestinian political prisoners southwest of Ramallah.

An annual Land Day report by Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel described the racist allocation of land by the Israeli state, as well as Zionist "national institutions" like the Jewish National Fund. "In 2015,

Arab towns in Israel received only 4.6% of new housing units and only 2.5% of reduced-cost housing units," despite Palestinians comprising 20 percent of the population and its poorest sector, with more than half the population in poverty, the report found.

In the United States, the National Lawyers Guild filed a complaint to the Internal Revenue Service against the tax-exempt status enjoyed by the JNF, which manages land ethnically cleansed of Palestinians for the exclusive benefit of Jews.

"For nearly 70 years Palestinians have been resisting Israel's continued theft of our land," said Nick Sous of the U.S. Palestinian Community Network, part of a coalition of Palestinian and solidarity groups supporting the complaint. "So many Palestinians have been directly impacted by Israel's stealing their land with the support of the JNF and it is shameful that the IRS actually awards people who donate to support these illegal actions by allowing them to get a tax write-off."

USPCN called on its allies to sign a petition at uspcn.org and consider further actions in support of the campaign.

Catron is a member of Al-Awda New York: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition and an organizer with Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network.

France

1.2 million workers, students reject new labor law

By G. Dunkel

"Work more, earn less!" Give your boss more flexibility so you can be "laid off more easily!" were some of the key criticisms of the new labor law that French workers explained to TV reporters were why they were protesting on March 31 in Paris and 250 other French cities and towns.

The General Confederation of Workers estimated that 1 million workers, from both the private and the public sectors, also took part in the protests, along with 200,000 university and high school students and youths.

"No more steady jobs" and "No reward for all the studying we've done!" were the negative comments on the new law from the students who marched with the workers.

The unions representing most of the students participating in the protest issued a statement the day before explaining why they acted: "For the youth, this proposed

labor law is a signal to increase inequality and poverty with no job security."

Public transportation in the Paris metropolitan area, as well as a number of other urban areas, was severely disrupted. The seven unions that issued a call for the general strike estimated thousands of work stoppages occurred. (Le Figaro, April 2)

Le Point, the French weekly political and news magazine, published a public opinion poll April 3 that estimated 56 percent of the public supported these demonstrations.

High school students came out in part to support their teachers, who were on strike, and because cops brutalized a high school student in Paris during a smaller protest the week before. A video showing this brutality got over 2 million views on YouTube. The cop was arrested, and will go on trial in May on charges of unnecessary violence.

In Rennes, the cops beat a 60-year-old

militant worker who wanted to occupy Parliament Square. His union is firmly defending him from the serious charges he faces, bringing this attack to the attention of the national media. (Libération, April 3)

Especially in Paris and Rennes, there were confrontations between cops and youthful protesters.

After the March 31 protest, a few hundred people gathered in Place de la République to show they wanted to continue the struggle even after the march was finished. They discussed what had happened, what should be done next and other issues roiling French politics, like terrorism, housing and employment. The cops evacuated them around 5 a.m., but, as organizers, they reacted by putting out a call on social media for a gathering the evening of April 1.

A few thousand people showed up, according to some videos posted on Twitter using the tag #NuitsDebouts. The gatherings spread throughout France. As of

April 3, there were 18 such gatherings, according to a map on the Twitter page.

These Nuits Debouts, or Up All Night, like Occupy sites in the U.S. in 2011, have set up canteens, plus tables and tents to protect the books and leaflets being distributed. Participants are consciously trying to build a mass movement.

Another signal that a mass movement is building is that the left-of-center newspaper Libération is putting out a children's book for ages 8 to 12 on the issues involved in the struggle against the revision of the labor law.

The unions intend to keep on protesting until the bill for a new labor law is withdrawn. The Socialist Party, which manages the government of capitalist France, is split by the attempt to impose the new law, with many rank-and-file members opposing it. Prime Minister François Hollande has insisted he will impose the anti-worker law. Whether he can will depend on the level of mass resistance. □

NATO intervenes in refugee crisis

By G. Dunkel

The intensity and dangers of the conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa have caused hundreds of thousands of refugees to flee from their homelands in desperation every month.

European television and YouTube show who is fleeing: infants; toddlers; children; pre-teens; women, some in the last stages of pregnancy; people with disabilities who are in wheelchairs or on crutches; and men of all ages, from the young and fit to the elderly and frail. They are coming off the boats on the Greek islands or are piled up in Athens ferry terminals, public parks or are under tents in the rain and mud at Idomeni on the Macedonian-Greek border.

According to figures released by

the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 38 percent of the arrivals since Jan. 1 are children, 21 percent are adult women and 41 percent are adult men. These percentages didn't change much from 2015.

They are not people who would spend a lot of money — sometimes all they have — to take the risk of suffering a serious accident or dying to travel long distances under harsh and nasty conditions, if there were any safe, realistic alternatives.

The number of migrants who entered Europe in 2015 through the Aegean Sea's Greek islands — many of which are extremely close to Turkey — is slightly over 1 million; 92 percent came from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Nearly 450,000 migrants landed on the Greek island of Lesbos last year.

As of March 23, some 149,208 migrants have entered Greece this year. The European Union's decision to send all refugees who land in Greece back to Turkey if they came after March 20 has created chaos.

Oxfam denounced this development as "an offense" to Europe's values. Other nongovernmental organizations said that the mass expulsions that they foresee happening violate international law. The NGOs have to get permission from the police to enter the new detention centers that Greece has set up for the migrants.

The UNHCR, Doctors Without Borders (Médecins sans Frontières), Save the Children, Oxfam and other well-known NGOs have withdrawn their operations in Greece and the Aegean Islands, or they plan to do so soon.

Adding to the complexities and confusion around the migrant issue, Turkey's government indicated it would cancel the deal if its citizens do not get the right to travel to the EU without visas by the end of 2016, an arrangement which was part of its deal with the EU.

The Greek Communist Party (KKE) issued a statement on March 8 that pointed to the causes of this crisis: "the wars and interventions unleashed by the USA, NATO and the EU in the wider region of the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa." The KKE says "The victims of wars, interventions and reactionary regimes have the right to seek a safer life in other countries." (inter.kke.gr) The anti-imperialist statement says that the only permanent solution to these

Continued on page 10

WWP salutes Chicago teachers strike

Workers World Party's 2016 Presidential Election Campaign released the following statement on April 1.

On April 1, 25,000 members of the Chicago Teachers Union alongside over 50 community and union organizations will launch a massive strike against the status quo, against the racist capitalist ruling class of Chicago.

This strike promises to spread the power of solidarity like wildfire across this country. Not only are Chicago teachers fighting for working conditions and students' learning conditions, they are fighting for all of the demands that impact working-class and oppressed people. Strikers will be marching on the Cook County Jail to demand an end to the school-to-prison pipeline. Strikers will be marching with the Fight for \$15

campaign, demanding an immediate rise in the minimum wage for all workers. Parents will be demanding an end to racist standardized testing schemes. Still more will be demanding an end to charter schools, the privatization of education and the death grip of cutbacks, which have destroyed public education.

In the past few months, Chicago has been on fire with struggle. The rebellion against the Chicago Police Department's killing of Laquan McDonald, a student at Sullivan House High School in Chicago, was supported by the CTU. McDonald was a student with special needs, much like thousands of the people of color who languish in the prisons across this country and never receive the mental health care they need.

Chicago's Black Lives Matter movement has rightfully called for the remov-



al of "Mayor 1%" Rahm Emanuel. This energy spilled onto the national scene as, months later, thousands of Chicagoans shut down racist presidential candidate Donald Trump's rally. In this context, the strike of the Chicago teachers promises to be an important moment in a growing tide of people's struggle.

By going on strike, the Chicago teachers and their allies show the power of unity and solidarity as the main weapons to fight back against endless austerity, mass incarceration, racist police brutality and union busting. We know this social justice union model will spread to cities across this country that are under assault by Wall Street.

The CTU is leading the way towards a better world, a world in which youth of color, immigrants, Black people, LGBTQ people, and all working-class people are

valued and whose needs are put first. We stand in total solidarity with and admiration for this fighting organization and its allies.

Workers World Party's 2016 Presidential Election Campaign, including presidential candidate (and former public school teacher) Monica Moorehead and vice presidential candidate Lamont Lilly, encourage all progressive people to build solidarity with the struggle in Chicago by escalating the struggle against racism, austerity and injustice in their cities.

We fight for revolutionary socialism, a system in which unions, community organizations and the people run society for their own needs, not to serve the profit goals of billionaires and Wall Street.

We encourage you to learn more about our campaign at WorkersWorldParty.org.



50 years ago

How Wall Street protest opened door to organizing anti-war soldiers

By John Catalinotto

April 12, 1966. Fifteen young women and men slipped into the New York Stock Exchange. They didn't belong there. They had no money to invest in stocks, nor did they care if the market was down or up that day.

They had another purpose. They had informed a few reporters that they were planning something dramatic, asking the reporters to keep the action secret. The young people hoped to make their move before police or guards could stop them.

Although a war was on and both Vietnamese and U.S. troops were dying, the only weapons these youth carried were leaflets and banners. They were sending a message.

On the trading floor, hundreds of brokers were staring up at the Big Board that showed up-to-date information on all the important stocks. The 15 young people moved to the edge of the balcony that overlooked the arena of frantic trading. On a signal, some threw leaflets 30 feet down to the floor while three others unfurled a banner right across the Big Board.

'Big Firms Get Rich, GIs Die'

A sudden silence was followed by a collective howl from below as the brokers read "Stop the War in Vietnam" and, in bigger letters, "Big Firms Get Rich, GIs Die."

"GI" was the popular term for a lower-ranking enlisted or conscripted person in the U.S. Armed Forces. Its use began in the 1930s, apparently from the military jargon referring to all sorts of equipment: "General Issue." By 1966, some 200,000 of these GIs, mostly from the Army and Marines, were in Vietnam fighting a war against the Vietnamese people.

Lyndon Baines Johnson was president of the United States. Following a supposed confrontation between North Vietnamese patrol boats and U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin in August

1964 that was later exposed as faked by the Pentagon, Johnson gained Congress's authority to escalate U.S. intervention in the war. Johnson planned to increase the number of U.S. troops there to 380,000 by year's end and finally to 540,000.

Toward the end of March 1966, there were peace marches in New York, Washington, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston and San Francisco, numbering at most in the tens of thousands. Their dominant slogans were pacifist: "End the war," "Negotiate Now."

The young people at the Stock Exchange had a clearer view of the war, shaped by the gut revulsion they felt when seeing photos of Vietnamese peasants burned to death by napalm bombs that Dow Chemical manufactured. They knew the Vietnamese were determined to fight until they won. They were also sympathetic to the rank-and-file U.S. troops who were drafted or induced to enlist and then sent to die so that the stockholders of companies like Dow Chemical would grow richer.

The slogan, "Big Firms Get Rich, GIs Die," reflected an ideology. The ideology condemned the U.S. war against Vietnam as a bosses' war. It was fought for their profits. These were the profits of the military-industrial complex, but also the profits of all the bankers and superrich who wanted to keep exploiting workers all over the world.

The GIs were working-class youth used as cannon fodder; that is, they were sent to kill and die to expand the interests of the rich.

The slogan's delivery also expressed an attitude: In your face. The Stock Exchange traders picked up on this attitude and, taking no chances, they soon had a hard, transparent wall installed on the balcony to separate future visitors from those trading in the blood money of the big firms.

Implicit in the slogan was an approach toward the GIs themselves. These young protesters were active in Youth Against War and Fascism, the youth organization

of Workers World Party. They considered the ordinary soldiers and sailors — Air Force, Coast Guard, Marines and Women's Army Corps members; and WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) — to be their class brothers and sisters.

In April 1966, most of the YAWF members could not imagine how quickly so many GIs would break with their early anti-communist indoctrination and resist the war machine. Nor did these youth realize how soon they would begin to help organize the American Servicemen's Union.

Breaking the chain of command

Over the next nine years, hundreds of dissident, mainly anti-war newspapers were published by GI groups. Half a dozen were regularly published newspapers with four to eight tabloid pages. The most consistent was the newspaper of the American Servicemen's Union, "The Bond," which was published monthly for most of the period from 1967 to 1974.

Dozens of smaller sheets were published by ASU chapters. They all reflected a widespread and heartfelt rebellion, as did the many hundreds of other newspapers and newsletters.

Even a voice from the Pentagon had to admit that the GI resistance had become an enormous problem for the generals. A little more than five years after that Wall Street demonstration, a provocative article entitled "The Collapse of the Armed Forces," by military historian Marine Lt. Col. Robert Debs Heinl, was to show how

much the GIs had broken with military indoctrination.

In the article, Heinl wrote, "By every conceivable indicator, our army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and noncommissioned officers, drug-ridden, and dispirited where not near mutinous." (Armed Forces Journal, June 7, 1971)

By 1968, hundreds of Black troops were refusing riot-control duty in U.S. cities. By 1970, whole units on active duty repeatedly refused to go on offensive missions in Vietnam.

If pushed too hard by their officers, sometimes one or more of the troops would kill the officer. This practice gave birth to a new verb, "to frag," because often the elimination of the officer was carried out by rolling a fragmentation grenade into his tent. In 1970, exactly 109 fraggings occurred in Vietnam, according to Lt. Col. Heinl.

Within a year of the Stock Exchange protest, many of the 15 young people had turned their ideology and attitude into concrete acts of solidarity with the lower ranks of the armed forces. They were protagonists in this history of the struggle by GIs and their supporters to resist the war within their own organization — the American Servicemen's Union.

This article is adapted from a chapter in Catalinotto's forthcoming book, "Turn the Guns Around: Mutinies, Soldier Revolts and Revolutions."

NATO intervenes in refugee crisis

Continued from page 9

crises is the overthrow of the exploitative system that creates them.

The KKE sees NATO's intervention in the Aegean Sea as "using the refugee issue as a pretext" to prepare for other interventions in the area, in Syria and in other countries, which "will sharpen the problem of the refugee flows." It could also, says the KKE, open up the possibi-

ty of abolishing Greece's sea borders.

As long as the misery and suffering that U.S. and European interventions create throughout the world intensify, the flow of refugees to what they see as "safe havens" will continue. Mass expulsions and the closure of borders will direct human migration into different directions — but besieged people will continue to seek safety, as is their human right. □

Global ACT UP protests hit Big Pharma

By **Gerry Scoppettuolo**

In a highly organized act of international solidarity, 25 groups led by ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) carried out marches and protests on April 1 against the drugs-for-profit industry, declaring with one loud voice, “People before profits!”

Protesters marched and rallied in Ahmedabad, India, and New York City; in Johannesburg, South Africa; and Boston; in Paris; San Francisco; Brazil; Sydney; London; Paris; New Dehli; Tokyo; and Washington, D.C. (thebody.com, April 1)

Pfizer Pharmaceuticals was targeted by ACT UP **New York**, Health Global Access Project and others. Pfizer is relocating to Ireland to take advantage of lower corporate taxes there. Greed has no borders for Pfizer, which earned a net income of \$31 billion for the years 2014 and 2013 (\$12 billion of which was paid to stockholders). Even this was insufficient for CEO Ian Reed, who described 2015 as a “transformational year” in a report to stockholders. (pfizer.com)

ACT UP **Boston** marched on the Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development, which released a report in January claiming that it costs drug companies \$2.9 billion to bring a new drug to market. This is an increase from their 2001 estimate of \$802 million per drug. (“The Truth About the Drug Companies,” Marcia Angell, 2005) Tufts refused, then and now, to disclose the names of the pharmaceutical companies whose data was used in the report.

ACT UP **London** marched on Gilead Pharmaceuticals, the leading producer of HIV/AIDS medications, including the most-prescribed HIV med, Atripla, as well as Truvada. Truvada costs 446 pounds per month (\$634 per month in U.S. dollars) — too expensive for use by the British National Health Service. (theguardian.com, April 1) In 2015, Gilead earned an incredible \$18 billion on sales of \$32 billion — a profit rate of 56 percent. (Gilead 2015 Earnings Report)

Reaching a new level in the struggle, ACT UP Paris, New York, London, Boston and other members of this new international coalition are increasingly target-



ACT UP Boston action, April 1.

WW PHOTO: GERRY SCOPPETTUOLO

ing the profit system itself, going beyond the demands of decades ago to rush new meds to market to save lives as soon as possible. In recent years, the focus of lobby groups like AIDS United, Treatment Action Group, AIDS Action Council and others has been to urge immediate generic pricing or lower prices for particular medicines.

However, the deepening of the capital-

ist crisis has caused more and more activists to recognize that the drive for profits, as part of capitalism’s inherent and systemic greed, must be dealt with directly as a class struggle. Reforms are totally inadequate to save lives when those that need medicines cannot afford them.

Scoppettuolo is a member of ACT UP Boston and co-founder of ACT UP Nashville (1988-1992).

African-American political power and the elections

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

The role of African Americans is pivotal during the last two months of primaries and caucuses in approximately 20 states.

Both candidates for the Democratic nomination, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Sen. Bernie Sanders, have made special appeals to win over the African-American electorate.

This process goes back at least to 1960, when a re-emergent Black electorate swung its support to Democratic candidate Sen. John F. Kennedy in a significant move that landed him in the White House. Nonetheless, numerous militants from the period, such as Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael, criticized the Kennedy administration for its failure to protect Civil Rights workers as well as its failure to navigate legislation through Congress to protect the social and political rights of nationally oppressed African Americans.

On Aug. 6, 1965, the Voting Rights Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The bill was the product of the escalating struggle of the African-American people during the mid-1960s to demand full equality and the right to self-determination.

Voting Rights restrictions reinstituted by Supreme Court

Nearly five decades later, on June 25, 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the enforcement provisions of the Voting Rights Act by a 5-4 ruling in the case of Shelby County [Ala.] v. Holder. This decision eviscerated the authority of the Justice Department to monitor and intervene when issues related to ballot access and legislative representation are involved. Recently deceased Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia remarked at the time that such a bill in the modern period represented some form of “racial privilege” for African Americans. This statement was made at a time when the Great Recession had devastated African Americans in the areas of home foreclosures, job losses, declining income and household wealth.

A New York Times article said the ruling “effectively struck down the heart of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by a 5-to-

4 vote, freeing nine states, mostly in the South, to change their election laws without advance federal approval. ... At the core of the disagreement was whether racial minorities continued to face barriers to voting in states with a history of discrimination.” (June 25, 2013)

Representing the majority in the decision, conservative Justice John G. Roberts wrote, “Our country has changed. While any racial discrimination in voting is too much, Congress must ensure that the legislation it passes to remedy that problem speaks to current conditions.”

Laws instituted by various states to enhance barriers to ballot access were vindicated by the ruling. In the same New York Times article, authorities in Texas “announced shortly after the decision that a voter identification law that had been blocked would go into effect immediately, and that redistricting maps there would no longer need federal approval.”

These and other measures, such as the denial of ballot access for those having criminal records, disqualifies approximately 25 percent of African-American voters in Florida. Overall, some 1.3 million people in this Southern state were missing on voter rolls at the time of the primary elections on March 15.

Mass struggle escalates in response to right-wing offensive

No concrete measures were ever initiated to address these concerns under the administration of President Barack Obama. The elections in 2010, 2012 and 2014 witnessed the transformation of the Democrats from a majority to a minority in Congress.

The absence of an effective political alternative both within and outside of Congress resulted in the deepening of a right-wing political agenda that has enhanced the capacity of the capitalist class to dominate the workers and oppressed generally. State repression by the police and intelligence agencies reinforces the system of exploitation with impunity.

Nearly all the mass demonstrations and rebellions since 2012 have been in response to the cop and vigilante killings of African Americans and Latinos/as. These protests and acts of property destruction have prompted the stark dis-

play of militarization at all levels of law enforcement, which have been supplied by the federal government with automatic weapons, armored vehicles, tanks, chemicals, batons and sound devices designed to repress and disperse crowds.

Shifting political attitudes in 2016

New polls indicate that the Sanders campaign has gained significant support in the African-American community in the Midwest and West Coast. One recent poll indicated that within a period of two months, Sanders now leads Clinton among African-American voters in Wisconsin prior to the April 5 primary.

A March 31 Huffington Post article notes, “On February 27th, Hillary Clinton led Bernie Sanders among African-American voters by 52 points. By March 26th, she led Sanders among African-Americans by just nine points. And today, Public Policy Polling, a widely respected polling organization, released a poll showing that Sanders leads Clinton among African-American voters in Wisconsin by 11 points.”

The poll suggests that “in short, the Clinton campaign is in the midst of an historic collapse — much of it due to the unraveling of support for Clinton among nonwhite voters — and the national media has yet to take any notice.” Primary elections in the next few weeks will prove or disprove these assertions.

This trend was illustrated in Michigan during early March and was reflected in the questionably close margins of victory by Clinton in Illinois and Missouri, along with the overall lack of enthusiasm for the former secretary of state’s second presidential campaign.

At any rate there is a degree of desperation in the Clinton campaign particularly in reference to the outcome of the Wisconsin primary. Clinton held campaign rallies in African-American neighborhoods in Milwaukee during the last week of March.

In two major events, U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore, Wisconsin’s sole African-American member of the House, stood next to Clinton on stage. Moore welcomed Clin-

ton at a Boys and Girls Club by claiming that the former New York senator and first lady had helped African-American youth in South Carolina while working for the Children’s Defense Fund. (WPR.org, March 31)

Need for independent political action

What do African Americans have to gain from their continued support for centrist Democratic candidates, in light of the history of the 1990s under Clinton and the last eight years of the Obama administration? Joblessness, poverty, mass incarceration, police terrorism and entrenched institutional racism remain structural barriers to socio-economic advancement and political empowerment.

The apparent shift in outlook toward the Sanders campaign illustrates the discontent among numerous Democratic Party constituencies, of which African Americans are an indispensable grouping. Clinton’s reliance on elected officials and party organizational structures has not been nearly enough to sustain a series of victories in the South and other areas during the early phase of the campaign.

Questions are being raised in the electorate over the role of the “superdelegate” process, in which committed forces, most representing party bosses, maintain the capacity to override electoral losses suffered by Clinton in several key states, including Michigan, Alaska, Hawaii and New Hampshire. This will become a critical debate in light of several polls that show Sanders running a much stronger campaign against Republican frontrunner Donald Trump in the general elections in November.

These shifts in political views must lead toward greater political independence during the primary process, the national elections and beyond. Ultimately, African Americans, the nationally oppressed from other communities and the working class in general must break with the Democratic Party to establish their own organization that will speak in their name and fight for a program of total liberation and genuine socialist construction. □



Dos caras de la campaña Sanders

Por Fred Goldstein

La campaña de Bernie Sanders tiene un doble carácter. Por un lado, ha desenterrado y dado voz a la oposición generalizada contra Wall Street y la masiva injusticia y desigualdad económica. Pero por el otro, Sanders corre bajo el Partido Demócrata, que por generaciones ha sido y es controlada por los mismos oligarcas financieros contra los cuales las/os partidarios de Sanders se están rebelando.

La respuesta masiva a los llamados de Sanders de dividir los bancos y hacer que los ricos paguen por la educación universitaria, la atención de salud universal, el aumento del salario mínimo y así sucesivamente, es totalmente comprensible. Después de décadas de austeridad, retiro de subsidios, rompimiento de sindicatos, racismo y encarcelamiento masivo, no es de extrañar que las reclamaciones de Sanders hayan caído como lluvia sobre hierba seca.

Pero a la larga, el camino para hacer frente a los bancos, los multimillonarios y la corrupción, no se encuentra a través de la política electoral y el Partido Demócrata. Se encuentra a través de la movilización de masas y la lucha independiente. Las/os seguidores de Sanders eventualmente van a tener que enfrentarse a esta dura verdad.

Dicho esto, cualquiera que sea el resultado final de las primarias del Partido Demócrata, en la actualidad es innegable que la campaña de Bernie Sanders ha dado expresión a la ira acumulada contra Wall Street y la maquinaria política del Partido Demócrata. Hillary Rodham Clinton, amiga de Wall Street, halcón pro-Pentágono y política tremendamente oportunista, representa dicho establecimiento.

Cuando Sanders comenzó su campaña denunciando no sólo a Wall Street, sino a la cúpula de los monopolios corporativos, fue considerado como un candidato de poca envergadura, quien en el mejor de los casos sería una mera novedad en la campaña.

Como senador de un pequeño estado rural y quien se autodenomina socialista democrático, él estuvo fuera del club de senadores millonarios y se esperaba que fuera un candidato marginal en las primarias demócratas.

Pero en solo semanas después de que anunció su candidatura y comenzó su campaña, los medios de comunicación capitalistas comenzaron a notar que estaba atrayendo enormes multitudes en los campus universitarios, en las ciudades, en las zonas rurales, donde quiera que iba. Su público oscilaba desde unos miles hasta 28.000 en un mitin en Oregón.

La gran popularidad de la campaña Sanders, especialmente, pero no exclusivamente entre jóvenes blancas/os, trabajadoras/es y mujeres jóvenes, sorprendió a los medios capitalistas y al establecimiento político.

Cabe señalar que Sanders ya ha ampliado su atractivo a las/os afroamericanas y latinas/os, con un número de prominentes líderes de los derechos civiles, figuras políticas y artistas haciendo campaña por él.

Occupy Wall Street en las urnas

El mensaje de Sanders tiene un gran parecido al que Occupy Wall Street abogó.

En septiembre del 2011, OWS tomó el Parque Zuccotti en Manhattan, estableciendo una asamblea general en las calles y denunció la enorme desigualdad en EUA. Este movimiento puso la consigna “Somos el 99%”. Se opuso al 1% que controla

grandes cantidades de riqueza. OWS se dedicó a la acción directa.

Las asambleas se extendieron rápidamente a muchas ciudades de EUA, mostrando que OWS tenía millones de simpatizantes pasivas/os. Incluso la prensa corporativa tuvo que fingir simpatía por un tiempo, hasta que la policía sistemáticamente expulsó las asambleas de las calles con brutalidad y arrestos. El desarrollo de este movimiento, y sobre todo su amplio apoyo, tomó a la clase dominante totalmente por sorpresa. Desde el punto de vista sesgado en sus salas de juntas y haciendas, los gobernantes siempre subestiman la ira del pueblo.

Y así como subestimaron al OWS, así también subestimaron el odio por Wall Street y la gran desigualdad que ha dejado a toda una generación sin un futuro. Las condiciones económicas y sociales han empeorado desde el 2011.

La campaña Sanders es, en cierto modo, una continuación de OWS en forma electoral. En ello radica el atractivo de Sanders y es la base de su inesperado éxito electoral.

En contra de la máquina

Para el 20 de marzo, Sanders había acumulado más de 6 millones de votos, sin contar los estados caucus de Iowa y Nevada. Incluso entonces, sus votos apenas reflejaban la popularidad de su mensaje anti-banquero y anti-multimillonario. Ha recaudado \$140 millones en repetidas contribuciones pequeñas de una base récord de 2 millones de contribuyentes, más 4 millones en donaciones individuales.

Sin embargo, no todas/os sus seguidores pueden votar en las primarias por una variedad de razones - obstructivas calificaciones de votantes, límites de edad, conflicto con la escuela, etc. Para cuando termine la campaña, Sanders probablemente ganará millones más de votos.

Su amplio apoyo es considerable, ya que la campaña va contra dos de las maquinarias políticas más poderosas de la política capitalista, la de Clinton y la del presidente Barack Obama que se han combinado para bloquearlo en todos los sentidos posible. Estas maquinarias están profundamente arraigadas a nivel nacional y han existido desde hace años.

La campaña presidencial de Hillary Clinton ha estado activa desde 2007. Después de que perdió a Obama en 2008, reanudó su campaña en silencio durante su administración. Ella había sido senadora de Nueva York, el hogar de Wall Street, y luego se convirtió en secretaria de estado, donde trabajó estrechamente con el Pentágono.

Sanders comenzó sin ningún tipo de organización que podría ni remotamente parecerse a la maquinaria de Clinton.

Parcialidad de medios corporativos

Sanders también enfrenta a los medios de comunicación capitalistas. Los medios están utilizando a Donald Trump para aumentar sus índices de audiencias y acumular ganancias. El 29 de febrero, el Hollywood Reporter citó al gerente general de Les Moonves de CBS sobre Trump y el “circo” republicano: “Puede que no sea bueno para EUA, pero es muy bueno para la CBS”.

Moonves continuó: “Está entrando dinero y esto es divertido. Nunca he visto nada igual, y va a ser un año muy bueno para nosotros. Lo siento. Es una cosa terrible de decir. Pero, sigue, Donald. Sigue adelante”.

A Moonves casi no le importaría tener a millones de televidentes que probablemente verían a Sanders diariamente como Trump se ve. Pero Sanders ha atacado a

demasiados millonarios y multimillonarios y no acepta su dinero. Así que para los magnates de los medios, la política viene después de los índices.

Las redes son corporaciones multimillonarias. Se sienten bien publicando a Trump. Pero entre Sanders y Clinton, todas ellas están con Clinton. “Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting” escribió el 20 de marzo que el Washington Post publicó 16 artículos negativos sobre Sanders en 16 horas. El Post es propiedad de Jeff Bezos, cuya fortuna de Amazon.com está valorada en \$50 mil millones.

El New York Times ha marginado la campaña Sanders a tal punto que sus propias/os lectores se rebelaron y el editor público del Times tuvo que reprender públicamente a la administración.

El Informe Tyndall, que escruta la cobertura mediática de la campaña, informó que en 2015 Clinton recibió 121 minutos de cobertura (excluyendo las audiencias sobre sus emails) y Sanders recibió 20 minutos.

Los medios quieren ocultar el importante apoyo sindical para Sanders. Las/os Trabajadores de la Comunicación, la Asociación Nacional de Enfermeras, las/os Trabajadores de Correos y más de 40 sindicatos locales le han apoyado. Todos los sindicatos que avalaron Sanders preguntaron a sus miembros de base.

Los sindicatos que avalaron a Clinton, lo hicieron por vía ejecutiva, sin consultar a las bases. Pero debido al fuerte apoyo en las bases sindicales para Sanders, la dirección de la AFL-CIO no ha podido respaldar a Clinton.

Billonarios y banqueros temen Sanders

Los banqueros, financieros y jefes de grandes empresas quieren enterrar a Sanders. Lloyd Blankfein, CEO de Goldman Sachs, es tal vez el banquero más poderoso e influyente en EUA. Sanders lo señaló por su codicia y su culpa en la crisis financiera. Blankfein respondió el 3 de marzo en la CNBC, diciendo de la campaña de Sanders que “Tiene el potencial de ser un momento peligroso, no sólo para Wall Street, no sólo para las personas a las que señala, pero para cualquiera que está un poco fuera de línea”.

¿A quiénes se refería Blankfein? Son los 18 principales criminales corporativos que Sanders citó por evasión masiva de impuestos, cómplices de la crisis económica de 2008. Incluyen a Brian Moynihan, CEO de Bank of America, el banco que recibió \$1,3 mil millones de dólares en el rescate del gobierno; Blankfein, de Goldman, que recibió \$824 millones de dólares del plan de rescate del Tesoro; James Dimon de JPMorganChase, que recibió \$416 mil millones en un rescate; Boeing; GE; y así sucesivamente.

Sanders enumera todos los puestos de trabajo que las corporaciones trasladaron al exterior, los miles de millones en impuestos que hubieran tenido que pagar si no fuera por los paraísos fiscales en el exterior y el hecho de que muchos de ellos pagaron cero impuestos. (Trueactivist.com)

Estas decisiones administrativas deben ser a lo que Blankfein se refería al decir “un poco fuera de línea”.

Elecciones capitalistas y lucha de masas

Las reglas de la política electoral capitalista en EUA son extremadamente restrictivas, incluso comparándolas con otros países capitalistas. El ganador se lleva todo, lo que descarta la representación proporcional. Para cualquiera que no sea del Partido Demócrata o Republicano, solo

para inscribirse existen requisitos onerosos de petición. Las campañas son extremadamente caras, lo cual ha facilitado que los ricos controlen totalmente el proceso de elección — incluso antes de la decisión “Ciudadanos Unidos” por el Tribunal Supremo que eliminó el límite de donación.

Solo en raras ocasiones puede una campaña primaria presidencial ser utilizada para expresar la oposición de las masas. Esto pasó en 1968 cuando el senador Eugene McCarthy abrió una campaña contra la odiada guerra de Vietnam. Sucedió de nuevo en 1984 cuando Jesse Jackson emprendió una campaña contra el reaganismo, la austeridad y el racismo.

Ahora ha ocurrido con Sanders. Sin embargo, las/os progresistas y revolucionarios no deben pasar por alto el lado negativo de Sanders y el señuelo engañoso del Partido Demócrata. Sanders todavía no ha acogido plenamente el movimiento las Vidas Negras Importan y la lucha contra el racismo y la brutalidad policial. Él todavía no ha denunciado el mar de trillones de dólares de gasto militar que quita el dinero de los servicios sociales. Ha sido ambivalente sobre Cuba, defendiendo sus logros sociales en un momento y al otro diciendo que es una dictadura. Él es partidario de Israel y tiene muchas otras contradicciones.

Además, todos los verdaderos avances de las masas no han venido a través de las elecciones sino a través de la lucha. Los derechos sindicales, el seguro social y los beneficios sociales fueron ganados en los años 1930 con marchas, huelgas generales y huelgas de brazos caídos. Los derechos civiles fueron ganados a través de la lucha de millones de afroamericanas/os y blancas/os progresistas que se enfrentaron a la policía. Medidas contra la pobreza fueron ganadas por rebeliones en ciudades de todo el país. Los derechos de la mujer fueron ganados con marchas y protestas. La lucha por los derechos de gays, lesbianas, bisexuales y transgéneros comenzó con la Rebelión de Stonewall. La cruel legislación anti-inmigrante fue derrotada por la histórica huelga de millones de inmigrantes el 1º de mayo de 2006.

Reformas son siempre reflejo de lucha anterior

Sobre todo, mientras la auto descripción de Sanders como socialista demócrata haya legitimado el término socialismo, él es de hecho, un reformador liberal del capitalismo. Quiere hacer que el sistema de explotación capitalista sea más humano. El o la verdadera socialista se pone en pie en la plataforma de abolir el capitalismo.

Romper los bancos no es suficiente. No es suficiente frenar la avaricia corporativa. Mientras que los bancos y las corporaciones tengan el control de la economía, tienen decenas de miles de hilos por los cuáles pueden controlar el gobierno, el estado, el tesoro y la vida económica del país.

El verdadero socialismo busca abolir por completo el sistema de la esclavitud del salario y colocar la economía en manos de las/os trabajadores y oprimidos. La economía debe ser manejada de manera planificada para el beneficio del pueblo y no para ganancias de ninguna clase. Esa es la forma de acabar con la desigualdad de ingresos, la injusticia, y toda clase de opresión.

Hay una manera de registrar el apoyo para el socialismo revolucionario sin apoyar al sistema de dos partidos capitalistas. Voten para Monica Moorehead para presidenta y Lamont Lilly para vice presidente en la lista electoral del Partido Workers World/Mundo Obrero. □