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Political prisoner’s health scare ignites mass action

By Scott Williams
Philadelphia

March 31 — At 1 p.m. EDT on March 30, political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal had a medical emergency, and was taken to the Intensive Care Unit at Schuylkill Medical Center in Pottsville, Pa. As of this morning, almost no information has been provided by hospital or prison authorities regarding his health and well-being.

Finally, just before noon today, Mumia’s spouse, Wadiya, and his brother, Keith Cook, were allowed into his hospital room, following a people’s campaign demanding access for the family.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is the legendary Black journalist and theorist. As a youth, he was a Black Panther organizer in Philadelphia in the 1970s. He spent almost 30 years on Pennsylvania death row after he was convicted of first-degree murder on July 3, 1982, for the 1981 killing of a white police officer in Philadelphia.

Mumia has proclaimed his innocence since his arrest on Dec. 9, 1981, which was followed by a sham trial. His state and federal appeals for a new trial to prove his innocence have been systematically denied by the courts.

While in prison, Abu-Jamal has authored six books and recorded hundreds of political columns thanks to Prison Radio. Many of these transcribed columns have

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Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Leslie Feinberg united movements

Some of the participants at memorial for Transgender warrior Leslie Feinberg leading the singing of the Internationale at SEIU building in New York City March 28. See page 5.

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Gas explosion leaves two dead, 25 injured

By G. Dunkel
New York

A little more than a year after a gas explosion in East Harlem left eight people dead, scores injured and two buildings demolished, a gas explosion on Second Avenue in the East Village, another Manhattan neighborhood a few miles away from East Harlem, left two dead, 25 injured and four buildings collapsed.

Four of the injured are still listed as “serious” according to a WNYC broadcast on March 30.

While the National Transportation Safety Board has yet to issue a final determination on the East Harlem explosion, the NTSB’s preliminary findings indicate leaks from gas mains over 120 years old were responsible. Con Edison has admitted that it found an illegal installation of gas lines servicing the renovated apartments at 121 Second Avenue. The company knew that the gas going into that building was only supposed to be enough to supply the sushi restaurant on the ground floor.

What has come out about the latest explosion is a bit more complicated than aging gas mains and a careless supplier.

It involves a landlord who kept her tenants supplied with gas even after Con Edison shut it off, a utility which relies on private contractors to do critical safety inspections that Con Ed used to do; a general contractor who is facing charges of bribing Department of Building inspectors; and a city charged with supervising construction to ensure the safety of its residents but which is really more concerned with increasing real estate values.

Below the surface

Many of New York City, especially in Lower Manhattan, like the East Village (which is conveniently close to Wall Street), are old, dilapidated and subject to intense gentrification. The building which exploded was reported to be more than two years old, who renovated the building’s apartments last summer, seemingly wanted to do the job on the cheap.

Speculation in the coffee shops and buses running in the East Village is that the empty lots will be worth more than when they had buildings on them. Condos in a new building a few blocks away started at $1 million.

Posts and comments on Facebook talk about the uncapping of an outlet in another Manhattan neighborhood in order to put in a new light and finding gas still flowing in the outlet even though the building was converted from gas light to electricity 80 years ago.

In 2004, a woman and her dog were electrocuted by stray voltage from a utility access cover for which Con Edison was responsible. In 2006, the utility admitted that it had found 1,214 electrically charged covers in the past year. (New York Times, March 4, 2006) Two workers in the East Village were seriously burned by a charged cover last year. (Facebook comment) People walking that street saw dogs in the East Village avoid utility access covers, even during warm, dry summer months.

Parts of Manhattan look glibty and spiffy. Underneath this look, however, is an old, crumbling infrastructure that is patched but not truly repaired. Deirdre Simnott, who lives in the East Village, told Workers World: “This was a very scary incident. If it occurred later in the day, many more people might have died. It should be thoroughly investigated, preferably by the federal government, and neighborhood residents should be fully involved.

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 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 56 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, degradation people because of their nationality, sexua l 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 solidarity 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 revo lutions and national liberation struggles liberated ter ritory from their grip. We’ve been in the streets to oppose every one of imperialism’s wars and aggressions.

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Who we are & what we’re fighting for

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Detroit faces massive tax foreclosure crisis

By Abayomi Azikiwe

Detroit

A broad-based coalition of Detroit organizations is fighting for a moratorium on property tax foreclosures on 62,000 homes, apartment buildings, small businesses and lots in the city slated for seizure by Wayne County. Another 15,000 tax foreclosures are scheduled for the broader county.

Tens of thousands more properties will revert back to foreclosure since owners could not pay large back taxes that were established last year. The county treasurer has encouraged people to sign agreements to pay in installments. However, with the city government over-assessing declining properties and at least 40 percent of Detroit residents living in poverty, it is highly unlikely these agreements will be fulfilled.

One woman with disabilities told Workers World she receives $799 in monthly benefits. Yet, in a desperate attempt to stay off homelessness, she signed an agreement with the treasurer’s office to pay $300 a month until her delinquency is paid.

Declare a state of emergency

On March 39, members of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, Detroit Eviction Defense and others attended a Wayne County Commissioners meeting and demanded an immediate halt to the foreclosures. More than a dozen people testified there.

Default water bills have been placed on property taxes in many households. Often, water bills are higher than the owed tax payments.

On March 24, a rally and press conference were held outside the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center before an intervention at the City Council offices.

There, dozens of people testified about the crisis, calling for a moratorium. People explained their plight under the repressive tax law.

Speakers represented the Russell Woods Neighborhood Association, Moratorium NOW! Coalition, Eviction Defense, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, Detroit People’s Platform and We the People. Unaffiliated Detroit residents also participated, seeking a moratorium on their representatives. Although several council members expressed concern and discussed a resolution they were preparing for March 30, the ultimate decisions lie with the county treasurer and Gov. Rick Snyder.

Moratorium NOW! activists distribut ed fact sheets to City Council members, stating, “The funds are sitting in Lansing to stop these foreclosures. According to the January 2015 hearing Michigan’s Hardest Hit Homeowner report, 283 million of the $498 million in federal Helping Hardest Hit Homeowner funds that were promised to the state in 2010 remain unspent.

‘These funds could … pay off delinquent property tax bills for occupied homes and prevent thousands of foreclosures. … Release of these funds will not only stop the destruction of our communities, but provide a long way to resolving the financial crisis in Wayne County and Detroit which in large part is a result of declining revenues as a result of tax foreclosures.’

After the meeting, people marched from City Hall to the Wayne County Treasurer's office.

Community responds to crisis

By March 31, residents will lose title to their homes if delinquent taxes for 2012 are not paid or payment arrangements made. Within six months, the homes could be auctioned off, with unscrupu lous “developers” prioritized over residents who want to repurchase their properties.

A demonstration is scheduled March 31 at the Wayne County Treasurer’s office. It was chaotic at the Treasurer's office on March 27 as people crowded inside in a desperate attempt to avoid foreclosure. Members of Detroit Eviction Defense, Detroit Active Retirees and Employees Association (DAREA) and Moratorium NOW! distributed thousands of leaflets there.

At a March 28 demonstration organized by clergy honoring the 50th anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery march, leaflets were distributed calling for people to take action.

On March 29, members of Moratorium NOW! and DAREA leafleted for the March 31 protest door to door in the Boston Edison Historic District, one of the city’s hardest hit residential sections where homes are vacant due to mortgage and tax foreclosures.

No solution by banks or government

Plans undertaken by the Detroit Land Bank Authority, a quasi-governmental agency, and the Detroit Blight Removal Task Force, headed by billionaire banker and corporate mogul Dan Gilbert, have failed to revitalize the city. Bankers’ initiatives have wasted tens of millions of dollars earmarked for blight removal. Federal funds allocated to keep people in their homes are being misappropriated to tear down structures, creating more flight and abandonment in remaining neighborhoods.

Moreover, Wayne County is being threatened with emergency management and bankruptcy, similar to Detroit’s experience in 2013 and 2014. Massive tax foreclosures will not prevent a state takeover of Wayne County’s operations.

A coalition of government manage ment and bankruptcy, the state of Mich igan seized billions of dollars in medical benefits, pensions and public assets and turned them over to private interests. On March 1, the monthly pension payment cuts began for 32,000 city retirees and their families, which were approved in a postbankruptcy “plan of adjustment.” Their health care benefits were severed one year ago, months before the federal court approved the plan of adjustment.

The plan of adjustment is unraveling as retirees face foreclosures and rising health care costs. Corporate-imposed Mayor Mike Duggan, the first white may or in 40 years, has failed to attract invest ments that could create jobs and econom ic opportunities for African Americans, not to mention the city’s population.

Duggan was crying broke by March 29, saying the blight-removal funds were drying up, and more money was needed from Washington to tear down vacant homes in Detroit.

The banks, corporations and their surrogates in government have no real plans to revitalize Detroit. Only a coalition of neighborhood and mass organizations rooted in the working class can create the conditions to overturn the banks-led Duggar-Duggan program of fiscal austerity, mass impoverishment and forced remov als of people from their homes.

Bosss get $243 billion subsidy for paying low wages

By Fred Goldstein

The capitalist class has found more and more ways to pay tens of millions of workers below-subistence wages by shifting what should be the cost of wages onto government at various levels. This shift of wage and benefit costs off the payrolls of the bosses and onto the gov ernment is a windfall subsidy that flows to many of the richest corporations and biggest employers in the U.S. for paying poverty or below-poverty wages.

Every dollar not paid by the corporations to their workers at a livable wage is another dollar in profit for fast food and big-box billionaires, as well as other companies that pay low wages.

Between 2007 and 2011, the federal government spent $242.9 billion a year on sup portments for poor workers, according to a University of California study published in 2013. (Think Progress, Oct. 13, 2013)

The study focused on fast food workers, who represent a typical segment of the low-paid workforce, but included a broader section of low-paid workers. It aimed to calculate the cost to America’s growing low-in come workforce and the want of basic necessities.

The study limited itself to the cost of food stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Ass istance Program or SNAP), the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income work ers, and the TANF program (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; former ly known as welfare). It did not include Medicaid and subsidized housing.

This dramatic subsidy results from a quarter of a trillion dollars needed to supple ment below-subistence wages — flows from the enormous growth of low-wage jobs and the drastic rise in part-time employment in the United States.

Fast food and big-box workers pay below subsistence

Low-wage fast food workers were forced to apply for $7 billion in public ass istance through such programs as Medicaid and CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Program), among others. Low-wage workers at a single 300-employee Walmart Supercenter are on average forced to apply for about $1 million in government benefits just to stay at the subsistence level.

A study by Americans for Tax Fair ness, a coalition of 400 groups, showed that Walmart workers in 2013 were forced to apply for $6.6 billion in food stamps, Medicaid, subsidized housing, etc. Walmart has 1.4 million workers. (Fast Company, April 25, 2014)

Forbes reports that McDonald’s workers had to apply for $1.2 billion in government subsistence benefits and workers at Walmart (Piggly Wiggly, Bell and KFC) needed $648 million.

This situation has been intensified by the growth of involuntary part-time work. In February, 15.3 percent of U.S. work ers were employed part time. In February, it was 18.4 percent. That amounts to 7.4 million workers forced to work part time when they need full-time jobs to survive. (advisepresseers.com, March 9)

Marx on wages and profits

Karl Marx gave a basic definition of wages in his analysis of capitalist exploitation which can help in understanding this situation. Under capitalism, all activities are designed to create surplus value — that is, the value created by the worker but for which he or she is not paid. This part is kept by the boss in the form of profit.

The way the boss raises profits is to take more surplus value. The main way to do this is to lower wages. The bosses get the government to pay for food through food stamps, Medicaid for the poor, subsidized housing, etc. All of these are the basic life that the bosses should pay for by giving workers a living wage. By shifting their labor costs onto the federal government, the bosses raise their profits while paying below-subsis tence wages.

It is the same that is fueling the low-wage workers’ campaign — a just campaign whose goal must be to force the capital ists to pay a living wage, not just a barely subsistence wage, but enough to cover the cost of having a decent life.

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Autoworkers want equal pay for equal work

By Martha Grevatt

Detroit

This year, the United Auto Workers union will negotiate new contracts with auto and truck manufacturers General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, as well as with tractor and farm equipment maker John Deere, and other major corporations. On March 24 and 25, the union held its “Special Bargaining Convention” in Detroit.

Keeping with tradition, the delegations from hundreds of locals, around the country and in Canada and Puerto Rico discussed and passed a 72-page resolution, prepared in advance and reflecting the direction of the UAW’s International Executive Board. The UAW has more than 390,000 active members and more than 600,000 retired members in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.

While there was a controlled and even staged atmosphere, the rumblings on the plant floors could be felt on the floor of the convention. For two days, two-tier pay was the hot topic among the rank-and-file delegates.

Here is the message the shop floor sent to the convention: The companies are making record profits. Every worker deserves a raise. A fight at the bargaining table for “equal pay for equal work” is long overdue.

What is two-tier pay?

Two-tier pay is a capitalist scheme to drive wages down for all workers. As a first step, a union agrees to a permanent lower wage, but only for workers who have not yet been hired. Eventually, through attrition — the loss of higher seniority workers who retire, quit or die — all of the workers left will be those who started at the lower wage. That in itself cuts all workers’ wages.

In the interim period, workers work side by side but get unequal pay for the same work. As a leaflet distributed by the rank-and-file group “Autoworker Caravan” points out, this leads to a divisive “us and them mentality” that turns worker against worker and disrupts worker solidarity needed for a successful struggle against the bosses.

Two-tier began in the airline and retail sectors in the 1980s. It is now commonplace in both public and private sector contracts. The first two-tier contract with the UAW was at the construction and mining equipment manufacturer Caterpillar after the company succeeded in breaking a long strike. Two-tier wages then spread to the parts suppliers and to Detroit: the three contracts with General Motors, Ford and Chrysler in 2007.

In reality, there are often more than two tiers of wages in the auto industry. Alongside UAW bargaining with Ford, GM and Chrysler are outside company employees who are paid even lower wages than workers with parts suppliers there are often more than two pay scales.

Autoworkers, especially the vast majority who are unorganized, are part of the low-wage workforce — making little more than their counterparts at McDonald’s and Walmart.

A prime example of low pay is the Lear plant in Selma, Ala., which supplies seats to Hyundai. Workers there are fighting for a living wage. It was announced at the convention that Kim King, a leader in that fight, had just been fired.

Debate over the resolution

Taken in its entirety the resolution was a series of contradictory statements that “We’ve had to fight to win fair contracts” contrasted with support for “the German co-determination model.” The German model is supposed to substitute discussion between the union and management for raw class struggle.

In effect, “co-determination” reinforces collaboration between the union leadership and the bosses by limiting what issues can be addressed through collective bargaining and the grievance process.

Speakers against the resolution opposed the weak and deliberately vague phrase, “bridging the gap,” a slogan repeated throughout the convention. Local union leaders just put the two-tier gap in dollars and cents.

What is two-tier pay?

Delegates also voiced anger about the “alternative work schedules” that undermine the eight-hour day. “You will create a lot of jobs,” said delegate Kathy Smith from Chrysler’s Trenton Engine Plant, because “workers will die” from working long hours and constantly switching from day shift to night shift. The resolution says nothing about restoring the eight-hour day that the workers which past generations fought and died for.

At last year’s Constitutional Convention, the leaders asked for and got a dues increase, with the stated purpose of bolstering the strike fund. Now the union must start talking about using the funds for their intended purpose — to support a strike. Only by fighting for their rights can the auto workers halt the fall in wages and benefits, heal the divisions and strengthen the union.

Martha Grevatt is a 27-year Chrysler worker who represented UAW Local 890 at the convention as an alternate delegate.
Transgender warrior

Leslie Feinberg united all struggles for liberation

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

New York

Workers World Party commemorated and celebrated the life and contributions of our beloved comrade, Leslie Feinberg, with a memorial in New York City on March 28 at the Martin Luther King Jr. Labor Center at 1199 SEIU United Health-care Workers East. Leslie was a member of the party’s national committee.

Feinberg joined Workers World Party in 1975 through its branch in her Buffa-lo, N.Y., hometown and died at age 65 in November after decades of illness from tick-borne diseases. Her last, very delib-erate words were: “Remember me as a revolutionary communist. Hasten the revolution!”

Building on the groundbreaking work of WW member Bob McCubbin in his “Root of Gay and Lesbian Oppression” (1976), Leslie developed the first Marxist analysis of the origins of transgender op-pression in “Transgender Warriors: Mak- ing History” (1997) and numerous writ-ings. She was internationally recognized for this theoretical work, as well as her activism for workers’ rights, lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer liberation; the rights of women, prisoners and people with disabil-ities; and against racism and imperialism.

During her life, Feinberg was clear this work sprang from principles established for Workers World Party by founding comrade Sam Marcy, including his insis-tence that LGBTQ lives were to be honored and LGBTQ oppression was to be fought against as integral to the working-class struggle.

Feinberg requested no memorial except one given by Workers World Party. She asked that this be used to strengthen the party and to bring comrades and friends together to share lessons of political expe-rience relevant to ongoing struggles.

The memorial movingly and amply documented Feinberg’s life dedicated to “hastening the revolution,” and con-tained many pointed and poignant les-sons in building a “workers’ world.”

Building a workers’ world

A program of WW members and friends from across the U.S. offered anec-dotes of moments when Feinberg extend-ed respect, solidarity, empathy, access, compassion, caring, political insight and revolutionary optimism in individual personal encounters and day-to-day po- litical work. Comrade LeLani Dowell, a managing editor of WW, summed up the impact of those moments, “I want to say, that held high, Black and queer and proud, that I and my comrades will forever con- tinue the struggle in Leslie’s name.”

Bob McCubbin placed these moments in context, saying, “Leslie Feinberg spent her whole adult life building a revolu-tionary Marxist-Leninist combat party to overthrow imperialism and build a so-cialist future.”

McCubbin told of meeting with Fein-berg at the beginning of her life in the party; how she talked to him as a worker who had, in her words, “barely completed high school”; how she spoke of the inti-mation of body and ideas, and how the par-ty nurtured her as a worker-intellectual, who then created her groundbreaking theoretical work. McCubbin emphasized that Feinberg — using the Marxist dia-lectical-materialist method to interpret both her own life and that of other work-ers within broad social, political and eco-nomic developments — was able to bring hope to millions that the “capitalist night-mare” could be ended.

Feinberg defined herself as “an an-ti-racist white, working-class, secular Jewish, transgender, lesbian, female, revolutionary communist.” She used the complexities of her identity as the start-ing point for a Marxist-Leninist analysis.

International Action Center co-di-rector and WW secretary member Sara Flounders analysis that Feinberg exemplified the process by which “the oppressed themselves bring their own issues and lives into the struggle” using Marxism as a tool.

Feinberg shared those insights with the working class, not just through her individual writings, but by serving as a managing editor of Workers World news-paper, writing hundreds of articles and serving for some years as editor of the political prisoners’ page. Workers World editor and party secretary member Deirdre Griswold reflected that Feinberg never allowed her individual fame in the wider LGBTQ movement and literary world to be used by the ruling class to di- vide her from the working class. Instead, “remember Feinberg “made people feel the significance of their own lives.”

Bet Power Alwin, director of the Sexual Minorities Archive, spoke of one of Fein-berg’s last acts in support of the political development of the working class and es-pecially of transgender people — the dona-tion of her research library to the Archive, where it will be freely accessible to all.

Rooted in the working class

Feinberg’s deep roots in the working class and her long connection to Workers World Party were highlighted by found-ing comrade Milt Neidenberg. He not-ed that her father, a bitterly anti-union worker at Bell Aircraft in Buffalo, bene-fitted from the successful 1949 strike led by comrades who went on to found WW.

Neidenberg first met Feinberg when she spoke at a 1968 street meeting for the United Farm Workers in Buffalo. Her commitment to labor militancy stretched from then through the 1994 founding of Pride at Work, to which she helped contribute the word “transgender” to its self-definition, and the 2002 Harvard Living Wage sit-in struggle. She was a proud member of United Auto Workers Local 1981, the National Writers Union. Because discrimination against her as a transgender person made it impossible for her to get steady work, Feinberg earned a living for most of her life through a series of low-wage temp jobs. And as a trans person, she also experienced violence, constant physical abuse, threats and dis-respect, as comrade Tom Scakhill reflect-ed. These experiences grounded her com-mitment to medical care and access for transgender people, her work for women’s access to reproductive health care, and in clinic defense against 1992 and 1998 anti-abortion assaults in Buffalo.

Comrade René Imperato noted that Feinberg’s “contributions to all of hu-manity” included “fighting in the streets” — through street rallies, marches and demonstrations and in literal street bat-tles. He defended the “opposition of Im-perato and Feinberg fought side by side against bigots attacking gay and trans people — mostly people of color — at a bar once located only 100 yards from the meeting hall.

Feinberg’s fighting spirit continued through her 2002 arrest to protest the im-prisonment of African-American trans woman CeCe McDonald, jailed for “dar-ing to hit back against those who would kill her,” as comrade Kris Hamel, a WW managing editor, recounted.

A video was shown of Feinberg’s speech to a standing-room-only Madi-son Square Garden event to free political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Feinberg was one of the founders of Rainbow Flags for Mumia, which organized the meeting in 2000. Comrades spoke of her key roles in other anti-racist campaigns that WW took on, from the 1979 school desegrega-tion struggle in Boston to the 1988 anti-Klan march in Atlanta.

‘Only socialism will free us all’

Throughout the memorial, comrades and friends emphasized that Feinberg always used insights into her own oppres-sions to forge connections with all oppressions, including international sol-diarity with countries under assault by neocolonialism and imperialism. Her very first Workers World demonstration was in support of Palestine in 1973, as comrade Betsy Piette noted, and comrade Joyce Chediac spoke of her last in-ternational travel in 2007 in support of ASWAT, an organization of Palestinian lesbian women.


We mourned comrade Leslie Feinberg as comrade Pam Parker sang Nina Sim-one’s “I wish I knew how/It would feel to be free /I wish I could break/All the chains holdin’ me.” And as we mourned as comrades Martha Grevatt spoke the po-ezey Lenin quoted on Frederick Engels’s death: “What a torch of reason ceased to burn, what a heart has ceased to beat!”

We vowed to emulate Feinberg when WW secretariat member and a WW managing editor Monica Moorehead said, “Leslie Feinberg, you fought for your own liberation and that of your class until the very end.”

And at the end, we affirmed Feinberg’s commitment to a revolutionary commu-nist workers’ by singing the “Inter-na-tionale,” the revolutionary anthem of the world working class: “Arise ye pris-oners of starvation, Arise, ye wretched of the earth, … The earth shall rise on new foundations, … We have been naught, we shall be all!”

Note about pronouns: Leslie said in a personal encounter “For me, pronouns are always placed within context.” Over the years, comrades and friends have related to Leslie through a range of pro-nouns. But Leslie’s preferred pronouns with close friends and family were she/ her and ze/zir, and thus the former have been used here.

Minnie Bruce Pratt is Leslie Feinberg’s partner and spouse of 22 years.
Big business media criminalizes victims of police killings

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan African News Wire

To further illustrate the widespread law-enforcement abuses in Ferguson, Mo., and throughout the United States, Jeffrey Williams, charged with the shoot- ing of two Ferguson cops, has said that he was forced to confess after suffering inju- ries from the police. Williams' sustained injuries were advocated by his attorney, Jerrell Christmas. He said, "Every one of you are a part of this victory. I know the truth behind the slogan, 'Hands up, don't shoot.' It's what the corporate media wants to stop.

'His heater was not only a fierce weapon, said Christmas, of Williams, who was accused in the March 12 shooting of the two Ferguson police officers. (Press TV, March 18)

Christmas said his client was in a "tremendous amount of pain" resulting from being pistol-whipped while in police cus- tody. "I think under these circumstances he would have said anything... Anytime someone is questioned without counsel and then I see that kind of brutality, then I'm suspicious about any statements that he may have voluntarily given."

Newspaper launches new attack

During the course of one week the Washington Post published at least three articles suggesting that former Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson would be upheld. The jury was made up of African Americans such as the Madison cop killing the Black, Brown, other people of color. The DOJ report, which was cit- ed in the article, attempted to justify the killing of Brown by saying that he had committed a robbery and, when stopped, reached into the police ve- hicle, punched Wilson and attempted to grab his gun. The grand jury testimony presented by Dorian Johnson, who was with Brown when he was killed by Wilson, was ignored by the Washington Post.

This is not the first time that an attempt has been made to criminalize Brown, Johnson and the entire movement that ig- nited in Ferguson and spread around the country demanding an end to racist police killings. Since the beginning of the demon- strations and rebellions on Aug. 9, the Fergu- son police, prosecutors and the city ad- ministration have maintained that Wilson did nothing wrong by shooting to death an unarmed African-American youth. The Washington Post in these articles attacked the Black Lives Matter move- ment and emphasized that the facts in the DOJ report were at variance with actual developments conveyed by eyewitnesses. This big business newspaper insists in so many ways that those people who were on the scene when Brown was killed and left to lie in his blood for four hours were not to be believed, but the cops and those there, including the DOJ investigators, are the only ones to be tak- en seriously.

Attempt to dampen outrage at police actions

Corporate media pundits across the country picked up on the Washington Post articles and then claimed that Brown was aggressively pursuing Wilson, so the slogan "Hands Up, Don't Shoot" should have never been used. This represents a renewed attempt by sections of the rul- ing class not only to convict Brown in his own death, but to slander the anti-racist movement that has grown up in the after- math of the Aug. 9 killing and subsequent deaths of African-American youth at the hands of police around the U.S. According to these media, African Americans such as Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Aiyana Stanley-Jones, Dontre Hamilton and so many others — do not deserve the support of the people. Such reasoning represents the de- gree to which the ruling class in the Unit- ed States, imbued with racism and class bias, despises the masses of the people. This is why the DOJ report serves to pervert the status quo, by presenting the contradictory narrative that the Fergu- son and St. Louis County police, courts and municipal administrations engage in systematic campaigns to profile, penalize, criminalize and cover up injustices com- mitted against African Americans, yet at the same time this racist regime and its agents should not be held accountable for its actions. Since there are no crimi- nal charges against police for oppressing African Americans with unjustified cita- tions, jail and prison sentencings, beat- ings and even death, then these criminal actions by the police will continue unim- peded by the judiciary of the state and country.

The anti-racist movement can only view these latest attempts to slander the struggle as a continuation of a pattern extending back 150 years, since the end of the Civil War and legalized slavery and the beginning of Reconstruction. To even suggest that the "Hands Up, Don’t Shoot" slogan is based on falsehood is tantamount to saying that “Freedom Now,” “By Any Means Necessary,” “Black Power,” “All Power to the People” and other slogans that grew out of the Afri- can-American liberation movement of the 1960s were advanced from untruths.

Shoot racist illegal murderers

The only real counterweight to the institutional racism practiced not only in Ferguson but across the U.S. is the popular movements organized and led by the people. The police killings of Mi- chael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Freddie Gray and the countless others continue to be guided by the groundwork of oppression that grew up spontaneously in cities and towns across the country. African Ameri- can police must be stopped — not only by police and vigilantes with very little political response. This is why it has never been illegal in the U.S. for cops or others to kill Afri- can Americans. Many of the lynchings carried out from the 1880s through the Great Depression — nearly 6,000 docu- mented and many more unrecorded — in- volved the participation of the police and the courts. Photographs and eyewitness accounts of these atrocities were shared through postcards and public festivals. The U.S. federal government never passed one anti-lynching bill despite the widespread public awareness, press ac- claims and protests against this form of egregious mob violence.

As a result of mass people's resistance led by the Hamilton family, Christopher Manney, the cop who shot and killed Dontre Hamilton, will not get his job back. Manney shot Dontre Hamilton 14 times on April 30, 2014, at Red Arrow Park in downtown Milwaukee, killing him instantly.

On March 29, after a five-day hearing, three Milwaukee County Circuit Court judg- ers, who served as the jury to decide whether Manney would be reinstated, rendered a decision that Manney’s firing would be upheld. The three judges made up of chairperson Sarah Morgan, vice chairperson Kathryn Hein and attorney Steven De- Vogelaere to establish if Manney violated any of the city’s personnel rules, the jury used the lowest burden of proof — a preponderance of the evidence.

In a March 24 statement, the Coalition for Justice in Milwaukee issued a statement that reads: “Just as people have read the book and made up our brains to all of us. Our deepest thank you is extended to all of the folks who have come out and stood with us, marched through the streets, went to jail, came to meetings, made signs and post- ers, wrote letters, made phone calls, sent emails, posted on social media, talked to your neighbors and friends, etc. Each and everyone of you are a part of this victory.

This is for us; United! We love you all and we are honored to stand side by side with you in this war on injustices!”

The coalition added: “We will win, but we haven’t fully won yet. It doesn’t stop here, and in order to continue to make changes to this city we must continue to organize and mobilize, plan and practice, agitate and demonstrate, educate and emanci- pate. We need you to join us. Come fight with us.” (facebook.com/justicefordonte)
Gov’t report reveals extent of police shootings

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

The ink had barely dried on a U.S. Department of Justice report made pub-

lished on March 23 citing excessive police shootings in Philadelphia when police shot and wounded a 24-year-old man as he ran from them on March 24.

The DOJ’s Office of Community Or-
eted Policing Services (COPS) report is en-
mga706) It documents patterns of the PPD’s use of deadly force and other questionable practices from 2007 to 2013.

The report cites a lack of transparency in the department’s shooting review process and criticizes its inadequate training.

Specifically, a provision of the PPD’s existing “use of deadly force” policies prohibits officers from filing reports if indi-

viduals to subdue them, yet that is what happened on March 24. The DOJ found 394 officer-involved shootings in Phila-

delphia averaging one per week — in the seven-year period. Some 540 officers, the majority white men, fired their guns; 68 were involved in multiple shootings. In nearly 3-in-5 shootings, two or more police officers were involved. Fifty-nine victims were unarmed.

The report asserts “significant strife between the community and the depart-

ment.” More than 90 percent of the peo-

ple shot by police were Black, Latino or Latina, averaging 29 years of age but as young as 13. Given these statistics, it ap-

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One hundred thousand workers joined a general strike to protest. Nairobi was paralyzed for nine days. It took a mobilization of the British army and colonial police to crush this uprising.

Freedom demanded that an armed struggle be launched. Kenya’s Land and Freedom Army was born.

Kenya’s colonial governor, Evelyn Baring, responding by declaring a state of emergency on Oct. 20, 1952. The governor’s family controlled Barings Bank, founded in 1762 by the slave trader Francis Baring. Baring himself was named a baron in 1906.

Media helped Lynch freedom fighters

Shakespeare’s play, “Richard III,” probably slandered this king. That’s not surprising since Queen Elizabeth I—a member of the Tudor family gang that wasted Richard’s Plantagenet family and seized the throne—was then ruling England.

But Shakespeare’s slanders were nothing in comparison with the world capital-ist media lies against freedom fighters in Kenya, who were labeled “Mau Mau.”

Sixty years ago, the media called Jomo Kenyatta the “terrorist” who became the first president of independent Kenya, a “terrorist.” His son, Uhuru Kenyatta, is Kenya’s current president.

That’s not a story. That’s history.

According to Caroline Elkins’ Pulitzer Prize winning book, “Imperial Reckoning,” Baring garnered a conviction by paying the judge a 20,000 pound bribe. Baring hoped Kenyatta’s frame-up would demoralize Africans. It ignited years of guerrilla warfare instead.

Mau Mau fighters liberated weapons and ammunition from the colonialist army and police. Mau Mau-supporting blacksmiths made hundreds of rifles. Britain mobilized 550,000 soldiers and cops to fight the Mau Mau. The Royal Air Force bombed guerrilla strong-holds in Aberdare Forest and Kirinyaga. Caroline Elkins estimated that the colonial forces threw 300,000 Kenyans into concentration camps and forced another million into 800 “emergency villages” built with the Africans’ own slave labor.

For Africans in Kenya, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was their Hitler. Guards used Asian dogs to mall women inmates at the Athi River camp, and the guards themselves clubbed prisoners arriving at the Manyani camp.

Six hundred children were confined in Kamati camp alone. Almost none survive.

Prisoners labeled as “hard-core Mau Mau” were selected to bury the children. “They would be tied in bundles of six to eight,” recalls former inmate Helen Macharia.

Uncle Sam helped this genocide by furnishing Nairobi, Mau Mau a support base. At the moment, the U.S. is still financing Nairobi’s Embakasi Airport. It was built by the slave labor of Mau Mau prisoners.

Where is Kenya’s Field Marshal Kimathi buried?

By Stephen Millies

The British ruling class has lavished millions to reburial King Richard III, who was killed 530 years ago. Almost $3 million was spent on the tomb alone. (The Telegraph, March 22)

Yet British colonialism still refuses to reveal where the body of Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi is buried. Kimathi, a legendary Kenyan Land and Freedom Army, was hanged on Feb. 18, 1957.

Being captured with a loaded revolver was enough to send this African freedom fighter to the gallows.

Queen Victoria’s storm troopers seized Kenya in 1895. Aristocrats stole the land with Lord Delamere alone grabbing 300,000 acres.

Africans were forced at gunpoint into “native reserves,” which were modeled on Indian reservations in the United States.

Oppression sparked resistance. When 8,000 Africans rallied in Nairobi on March 14, 1922, to protest the exiling of African children from the United States. Indian reservations in the United States.

160,000 acres.

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Traveling from Detroit to Moscow

FIST report on anti-imperialist conference

By Tom Michalak

Moscow

As I arrived at the Hotel Metropol in Moscow, directly from the entrance to Red Square, I saw the Anti-Maidan demonstration being set up to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the neofascist coup in Ukraine, whose social support came from repressive demonstrations in Maidan Square in Kiev.

Nearly 100,000 people marched in Moscow, representing various political forces in Russia, including the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, Russian nationalist organizations, Greens and Nightwolf Bikers, among many others.

Their aim was to send a message that a “Russian Maidan” or a color revolution in Russia or a Western non-governmental organization would be resisted. It was a show of strength by the great Russian bear.

I went to Moscow as part of a small delegation of peace activists from the United States. Our goal was to demonstrate that among working people of all countries, cooperation is possible and in our best interests.

The other delegates were Oscar Lopez Rivera, an immigrant rights activist with “Youth Empowered in the Struggle,” and Joel Leslie of Free Roots [Dijabl] Defense Committee and the Step FBP Repression.

Demonizing Russia and expanding NATO

In the last few years, the mouthpieces of the Pentagon and State Department and their obedient media have once again begun hyping up the imaginary threat of the “great Russian bear in the Kremlin,” endlessly ploting the demise of the so-called “Land of the Free.” As Russia has begun to get back on its feet after the overthrow of the Soviet Union and the abolishment of socialist measures during the turbulent 1990s, it has once again started to stand up against Russia.

Iran and Syria from U.S. imperialism, while based on self-interest, is nevertheless very much appreciated by these countries as well as by anti-imperialist activists around the world.

With the Russian government refusing to be pushed around at will by the U.S., it is facing “consequences.” Since 1990, NATO has expanded into 12 countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, most of them are former members of the Warsaw Pact, which was the military alliance of the Soviet Union and its allies, NATO is thus encircling Russia militarily and politically. The goal is to intimidate and apply pressure on Russia, just as the U.S. did to the USSR decades ago, which had a significant role in the USSR’s dismemberment.

Since the U.S./EU-backed coup in Ukraine, where the U.S. State Department handpicked the Kiev junta leadership, the Russian government has defended its interests. From Moscow’s viewpoint, the Kiev coup was one intervention, one attempt to take too far the expansion of NATO. Russia’s defense interests are standing up for itself and its allies. Russia’s defense is forever altered by this conflict that threatens two nuclear powers, it could mean the end of humanity.

Our host during our tour in Moscow was an elderly leader of the Anti-Globalization Movement of Russia. This is not a homogenous organization that supports one particular Russian current. Some of its members subscribe to Korean socialism and some are “Putinites,” that is, champions of the Russian president, someone more tender for the West. The underlying current among the membership is staunch opposition to Western imperialism and the belief that all nations have the right to self-determination.

On the wall in the group’s office are framed photographs of Hafez and Bashar al-Assad of Syria, Kim Il Sung of social-ist Korea, Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara of Cuba, Maozammar Gadhafi of Libya and Omer Torrijos of Panama—all political leaders that U.S. imperialism has demonized.

The Anti-Globalization Movement held weekly demonstrations in solidarity with the Cuban 5 political prisoners as well as a demonstration in solidarity with the “Black Lives Matter” movement outside the U.S. Embassy.

Human toll in Donbass bombing

In Donbass, the southeastern region in Ukraine that is in the grip of the Kiev regime, the U.S.-armed and -directed Ukrainian army indiscriminate-ly bombs the civilian population. In the last year, an estimated 6,000 people have died in the fighting, many of whom are noncombatants.

While in Moscow, I visited a hospital where seven Ukrainian children are being treated for injuries sustained in the shelling. One was a 10-year-old boy named Vanya, who is a famous case.

One day when Vanya and his five-year-old brother were playing outside in the garden, the junta’s shelling struck their home, blowing it completely to ground. Vanya’s brother died, and Van-ya’s legs were blown off, he lost one arm, and his head was blinded by shrapnel.

We visited others whose conditions were not as serious, but whose lives will be forever altered by this conflict that they had no responsibility for starting and had no say in. The head doctor at the facility has publicly called for Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, President Barack Obama, Germany’s Angela Merkel and Russian President Putin to conduct their negotiations over the conflict. And we know that can be aware of the human toll at stake and to highlight who is being the brunt of the suffering.

Most of the attendees at the Anti-Globalization Movement conference held in Moscow in late February were young and belonged to the organization. Besides

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Why U.S. rulers fear new investment bank

By Deirdre Griswold

Britain, France, Italy and Germany have agreed to join in establishing an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. China has already announced it will put up $50 billion in initial capital.

It is too early to say what role this bank will play or how it will affect other countries modernize their infrastructure. Negotiations among the principals on how it is organized and protected are expected to take place for at least a year. What will emerge cannot be predicted at this time.

But one thing is very clear: Wall Street and Washington are fuming over the fact that the European imperialist countries are joining in, despite strong U.S. pressure against it.

Criticism of the new development bank by the U.S. has begun, with government officials telling the media they fear it will undermine the “good work” done by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which, they say, have aided developing countries while imposing regulations to protect the environment and help the poor.

You’re choking on this outrageous lie right now. So are we.

Tons of both popular and scholarly analyses of these institutions, and especially of the “structural adjustment programs” they have forced down the throats of poor countries, show that the kind of “development” they foster has usually done just the opposite: stripped countries of needed government services, increased their indebtedness and hurt the environment, all to benefit the financial institutions of the imperialists.

Take the West African countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, for example, which have been going through the most horrible public health emergency caused by the spread of the Ebola virus. These countries are so poor that, even after Liberia declared an end to new cases, a televised news report on the return of a score of students to classes pointed out that their grammar school, which when full serves 4,000 students, has no electricity and no running water.

On Dec. 22, The Lancet, a preeminent British medical journal, published a commentary called “The International Monetary Fund and the Ebola outbreak.” It reads: “A major reason why the outbreak spread so rapidly was the weakness of health systems in the region. ... Since 1990, the IMF has provided support to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, for 21, 7 and 19 years, respectively, and at the time that Ebola emerged, all three countries were under IMF programs. However, IMF lending comes with strings attached — so-called ‘conditionalities’ — that require recipient governments to adopt policies that have been criticized for prioritizing short-term economic objectives over investment in health and education.”

The authors add that “economic re- forms and adjustments” have led to “required reductions in government spending, prioritization of debt service, and bolstering of foreign exchange reserves.” In other words, recipient countries — which should be receiving reparations for all the wealth extracted from them by colonial rule — have instead been forced to cut back on health care, education and other services in order to pay interest on loans.

Breton Woods, the IMF and World Bank

Why does the U.S. ruling class feel particularly threatened by this new China-headed development bank? Because U.S. banks have dominated the financial architecture of the capitalist world for decades. The U.S. emerged from World War II as the undisputed global industrial and financial powerhouse, while Europe and Japan were in ruins and all their involvement in the war world were suffering.

The intention of the U.S. imperialist ruling class to translate its military and industrial muscle into financial domination over the rest of the world was made clear even before the war ended, with the founding of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944. This conclave in New Hampshire of the soon-to-be-victorious Allied powers was dominated by Washington and London. It established the “tradition” that the president of the World Bank would always come from the U.S.

One can read many critiques of these institutions. One was an interview by Greg Palast with Joseph Stiglitz, a former chief economist of the World Bank, member of Bill Clinton’s cabinet and chair of his Council of Economic Advisers who turned against his former boss. Stiglitz told Palast that when nations are “down and out, [the IMF] squeezes the last drop of blood out of them. They turn up the heat until, finally, the whole cauldron blow up.” He referred to these social explosions as “IMF riots,” pointing to what happened when the IMF eliminated food subsidies in Indonesia in 1998, when it made Bolivia increase water prices in 2000, and when it raised the price of cooking gas prices in Ecuador in February 2001. “(IMF’s Four Steps to Damnation,” The Observer, April 29, 2001)

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the people have tried to get rid of government that served as tools of these imperialist-dominated financial institutions and have looked for other ways to climb out of poverty. In Latin America, the result has been ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America) — an alliance of countries, led by Venezuela, that is trying to break free of the stranglehold over their economies imposed by U.S. imperialism for nearly two centuries.

The anti-colonial revolutions that began in Asia in the 1950s and spread throughout the so-called Third World in the 1960s and 1970s cannot be changed by the IMF. Breton Woods was the answer of the imperialists: Keep the masses of people enslaved, don’t give them a chance to live.

Washington’s objections to the new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank have nothing to do with anything except the fear of U.S. capitalist monopoly. These bank directors are being losing their grip on what has been their main tool for world domination. As a backup, of course, they have the Pentagon, making the struggle against the imperialist war ever more urgent.

Women fight back against racist killer cops

By John Parker
Los Angeles

Women leaders in the anti-police brutality struggle that reaches from Oakland, Calif., to New York City gathered at the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice here on March 22 to discuss the growing movement against racist police terror and the growing number of women being targeted.

Gloria Verdieu, from San Diego’s Committee to Stop Police Brutality and People’s Power Assembly, set the tone throughout the meeting as she emphasized this Workers World-sponsored event.

Verdieu presented a powerful slide show with the faces of women who have lost their lives to police terror all across the United States. Although most were women of color — since people of color are the primary targets of police attacks — the multinational character of the victims underscored the fact that no one is safe from police murder. Verdieu said the killing of women by police can no longer remain invisible to this movement.

The slides concluded with out the meeting, intensifying every speaker’s words.

Ishthyne Robinson, of Mothers Against You-Know-Who, spoke about her loss of two children to police terror, while emphasizing that she didn’t want her pitty for any other reason but the message she wanted was for people to join the movement against police killings and to examine and eliminate whatever distractions they might keep that keep them from fighting back against police repression.

The gathering also heard from Cat Brooks, the leader of the Anti-Policie Terror Project and co-chair of the ONYX groups that have courageously participated in militant actions in Oakland, including the shutting down of the Bay Area Rapid Transit system. Brooks inspired the audience with her description of how the APTP is organizing communities, including political education on tactics, messaging and activism, with an emphasis on maintaining leadership by people of color.

A ‘beautiful new movement’

Lesbian activist Teresa Gutierrez, a Workers World Party leader and co-chair of the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, gave a rousing talk of the solidarity made by Patricia Arquette at the Oscars against people of color and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities. That, said Gutierrez, was an action that made her feel this was a movement that could be reversed.

She explained how fighting for those in the streets of Ferguson and against the attacks on LGBTQ people were women’s issues that strengthened all women.

Gutierrez said that white women especially had to champion those struggles, not denigrate and counterpose them as Arquette did. These remarks were especially acclaimed by members of the African-American Caucus of the Service Employees’ Union Long Term Care Workers who attended the meeting. They told about their union’s campaign to raise the minimum wage to $15.

All the speakers were excited about the youth who activated this nationwide movement against police terror. Danielle Longchamps, a leader of the youth organization Fight Imperialism Stand Together in Baltimore, highlighted the work being done in that city by several organizations to keep the Black Lives Matter movement active there. She gave a personal account of the daily challenging

Women face as they combat racism, police terror and the unfortunate tolerance that enables the objectification of women. Longchamps said this sexist objectification of women must be fought, especially by those organizations which consider themselves progressive.

Commenting on the success of the meeting, Maggie Vassaccesano, of Workers World Party in Long Island, New York, co-ordinated the event, said, “There’s a beautiful new move and have looked for other ways to climb out of poverty. In Latin America, the result has been ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America) — an alliance of countries, led by Venezuela, that is trying to break free of the stranglehold over their economies imposed by U.S. imperialism for nearly two centuries.

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Continued from page 1

been read all over the world by political activists seeking analysis of the situation in the United States. He has found international support for his determination to fight for his freedom and continue his journalism in the belly of the racist, anti-poor prison system in solidarity with the world’s workers and oppressed. Millions of people have marched for his freedom and fought to get him off death row, from which he was finally removed in 2012 after almost 31 years. Despite being off of death row, Mumia is still serving a life sentence without possibility of parole for a killing he did not commit. The struggle to free him continues.

Abu-Jamal’s worrisome hospitalization comes only months after the death of MOVE leader Phil Africa, who died under suspicious circumstances at the State Correctional Institution in Dallas, Pa., in January. Phil Africa was secretly taken from the prison to a Wilkes Barre, Pa., hospital without any contact with his friends and family for several days before his shocking death. With this tragic loss fresh in the minds of activists and Mumia supporters, more than 15 people travelled immediately to where Mumia was hospitalized in order to demand more information. Upon ar-

rival, Mumia’s brother, Keith Cook, was not allowed to visit his brother. Cook was part of a delegation in Harrisburg, the Pennsylvania capitol, March 30 to challenge the Revictimization Relief Act, which denies First Amendment rights to Pennsylvania prisoners.

In an attempt to learn more about Mumia’s condition, Mumia supporters were feet away from his hospital door at the Schuylkill Medical Center; yet four police officers stood in their way, block-
ing the answers they sought. Hundreds of supporters have called SCI Mahanoy Superintendent John Kerestes. This led Kerestes’ office to turn off his phone, fore-
caring concerned people to leave messages. Undoubtedly, more support for Mumia will be forthcoming until he is safe and ultimately free from the racist prison system.

Mumia’s life is in danger. The media and people concerned about Mumia’s health are encouraged to contact the following individuals and institutions responsible for the health care of Penn-
sylvania prisoners and demand answers regarding Mumia’s medical condition and family visitation rights in this urgent case.

To keep informed on how to help Mumia Abu-Jamal and his family and friends, see iacenter.org.

Top: Mumia Abu-Jamal is held at this hospital in Pennsylvania. Above: Mumia Abu-Jamal supporters outside March 30 court hearing on state’s attempt to stop prisoners from speak-
ing out — aimed at the Black political prisoner.

The Black Lives Matter movement & supporting WW

The Black Lives Matter movement, which started in response to the killing of unarmed Michael Brown by a racist cop in Ferguson, Mo., is the latest heroic chapter in the centuries-long struggle to end the vile saga of racism and national oppres-
sion, including slavery, that witnesses the history and everyday reality of life in the United States. WW writes about the struggle against racism in depth every year. Our coverage of the Black struggle here and around the world is based on the principle of supporting national self-determination: Oppressed people have the right to fight to end all forms of inequality and injustice — “by any means necessary” — Malcolm X.

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Washington's Saudi ally bombs Yemen

By Abayomi Azikiwe

March 30 – The Gulf Cooperation Council, under Saudi Arabia’s direction, announced on March 29 that it would begin a massive aerial bombing Ansaurrell positions in Yemen. At the same time, the Egyptian regime, product of a July 2013 military coup, and Western-backed Saudi Arabia, is supporting a massive aerial bombing deterrent in Yemen, which involves the Houthi movement, as a proxy war guided by the U.S. government to battle Iranian influence. Because the Saudi ruling class is Sunni and the Iranians are Shiites, this proxy war excites sectarian hostility in the entire region and increases overall instability. Washington treats Saudi Arabia as a key ally in the region, as it has supplied billions of dollars worth of arms – weapons and military and intelligence support to its ruling family.

In addition to the struggle of Houthi fighters against the Saudi-led coalition, Mansour Hadi’s government, a secessionist movement is rising in Yemen’s South, where a socialist-oriented revolutionary movement is making substantial gains beginning in September 2014 and continuing through today.

Recent events in Yemen

Houthi fighters took over Sana’a, Yemen’s capital, in September, including the parliament. Recently, they took over Taiz. Saudi Arabia took action when the Houthi movement announced their intention to launch a major offensive in the southern port city of Aden.

The International Organization for Migration announced on March 30 that 45 people were killed and 65 others wounded in air attacks on a displaced persons’ camp in the country’s north-west. (AFP)

Pablo Marco, Doctors without Borders’ director in Yemen, said at least 13 people had been killed and 70 wounded in the airstrike which was carried out to Haradh Hospital near the camp in Hajja province. (Press TV)

Press TV also reported that the al-Mazrak camp has sheltered Yemenis displaced by conflicts, which have intensified since 2009, calling the camp bomb attack an escalation of the Saudi operation: “The airstrikes began late Sunday (March 29) and continued unabated for almost nine hours. ... Khwaied says it has launched the airstrikes, the first round of which was carried out on March 26, to defend the ‘legitimate government’ of Yemen’s fugitive president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, who fled to the Saudi capital on the same day. Ri- yaz Abdulnour, a Houthi official, said ‘the bombing until Hadi is reinstated.’”

The Saudi monarchy has intervened in Yemen before, seeking to bolster former President Ali Abdullah Saleh’s government. He was forced to resign after a nationwide uprising in 2011. Recent reports suggest that Yemeni military forces loyal to Saleh have opposed Saudi airstrikes and are working with Houthi fighters. This alliance has formed, according to Press TV, a defensive stance in their offensive in the country’s south. (New York Times, March 29)

Houthi are a Zaidi Shiite group located in Yemen. The movement takes its name from Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, who launched an uprising in 2004 and reportedly was killed by Yemeni army forces that September. Led by Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, the movement made substantial gains beginning in September 2014 and continuing through today.

Egypt calls for regional military force

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi presented a proposal to the Arab League Summit in Sharm el-Sheikh on March 28 to establish a regional military force that would intervene in states facing internal conflicts. Saudi airstrikes will not be enough to halt the Houthi fighters’ advances or to stabilize the security situation in Yemen based on U.S. interests. Al-Manar Television of Lebanon reported March 29 that Saudi Arabia is deploying thousands of Islamic Sunni rebels to fight against the Houthi movement.

Al-Manar noted, “Five Persian Gulf States — Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait — backed by the U.S. have decided to launch a new war on Yemen in a joint statement. ... U.S. President Barack Obama authorized ... logistical and intelligence support to the military operations, National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan said. ... She added that while U.S. forces were not taking direct military action in Yemen, Washington was establishing a Joint Planning Cell with Saudi Arabia to coordinate U.S. military and intelligence support.”

During the Arab League’s summit, Egyptian President Al-Sisi argued that a regional force was essential to “defend our [Arab] nation.” (Washington Post, March 30) His Egyptian military regime, however, has been hostile to Palestinian Arabs and has cooperated closely with Israel, especially by locking down the border to Gaza. Since the bulk of arms and intelligence sharing for such a regional force in Egypt and the Gulf Cooperation Council will be provided by the Pentagon, it will be able to carry out only those actions that are in accord with Washington and Wall Street’s foreign policy aims.

Azikiwe is the editor of Pan-African News Wire, where a version of this article was originally published.

The Gulf Cooperation Council is a group of reactionary oil-rich monarchies on the Arabian Peninsula; these states are dependent on U.S. imperialism and have now started bombing Yemen.
El llamado a la solidaridad internacional en la lucha por la igualdad y la justicia para las mujeres fue fuerte y claro el 17 de marzo cuando representantes de la Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres celebró su reunión anual en el Centro de Iglesia de las Naciones Unidas en la ciudad de Nueva York. La consumada educadora, activista y actriz Vivien Burrows, representante de la FIDM ante la ONU, abrió la reunión con un breve video y lideró una entusiasta ovación celebrando la libertad de los 5 cubanos, a quienes Estados Unidos encarceló injustamente durante 3 años. Alicia Oroño de Colombia, presidenta de la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas y coordinadora de la Oficina Regional de América Latina y el Caribe de la FM, presidió el ramo. Señaló que la organización, fundada en 1945 por mujeres socialistas y comunistas, celebra su 70 aniversario dedicada a la solidaridad internacional y a la lucha por la paz.

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