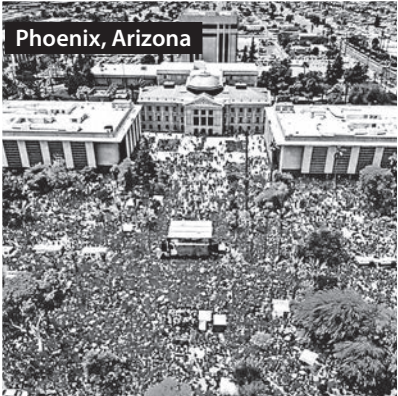


As teachers walk out

Arizona ablaze with #RedForEd

By Otis Grotewohl

The spreading education workers' struggle is ablaze in Arizona. On Thursday, April 26, an estimated 75,000 public school employees refused to report to work and began a historic walkout. Helicopter photos showed a red river of people advancing through the streets in Phoenix toward the Capitol.



On Friday, the school workers were back, rallying in the tens of thousands. Speakers in Phoenix included representatives of the Arizona Education Association, Arizona Educators United, students, the Latinx community and parent-teacher organizations. The protests continued on Monday, April 30, and on Tuesday, May 1—International Workers' Day.

School workers are demanding restoration in public funding to the 2008 level for devastated schools, competitive and lasting salary increases for all education workers and no new tax cuts for the rich until per-pupil spending is at the national average.

Just before the walkout date, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey signed a tax break for coal mining companies that will cut state revenues by \$12 million to \$30 million a year.

According to AEA President Joe Thomas, 78 percent of its teachers voted for the action. This is the first statewide education workers strike ever in Arizona, and potentially the largest U.S. education walkout ever, as 820,000 of the state's 1.1 million students could be affected. (tinyurl.com/ycpz3k6f)

Learning from West Virginia

Arizona teachers and school support staff in Arizona paid close attention to the West Virginia education strike in February and began taking matters into their own hands in early March. After a private Facebook page, "West Virginia Public Employees UNITED," was used to organize actions and communicate before, during and after the strike, Arizona school employees started their own grassroots-led Facebook group called Arizona Educators United.

According to Labor Notes, "30,000 people joined [AEU] within the first 10 days," with 45,000 members by mid-April. In solidarity, supporters of AEU not working directly for the public school system also set up "Arizona Parents and Allies United" on Facebook.

Noah Karvelis, a K-8 music teacher in Phoenix and organizer for AEU, created the #RedForEd movement on social media to unite education workers throughout the state. Red was the color worn by West Virginia school workers during their 1990 and their most recent strike. It has traditionally been the chosen color of most working-class as well as socialist struggles internationally.

The first #RedForEd event, organized by AEU, was

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Workers World Party contingent in Union Square on May Day in New York City.

WW PHOTO

UNITE TO STOP WAR ON IMMIGRANTS

3



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

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Protesters call on Philadelphia Orchestra to cancel trip to Israel.

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HOW KOREANS FORGED UNITY

8

MARX@200: Class struggle in the age of Trump

2018 marks the 200th anniversary
of the birth of Karl Marx.

The revolutionary ideas, tactics, and
strategies developed by Marx and his
co-thinker Frederick Engels have in-
formed revolutionaries and struggles
all over the globe, from Russia, China,
Cuba and Korea to Haiti, Palestine,
the Philippines and Burkina Faso.

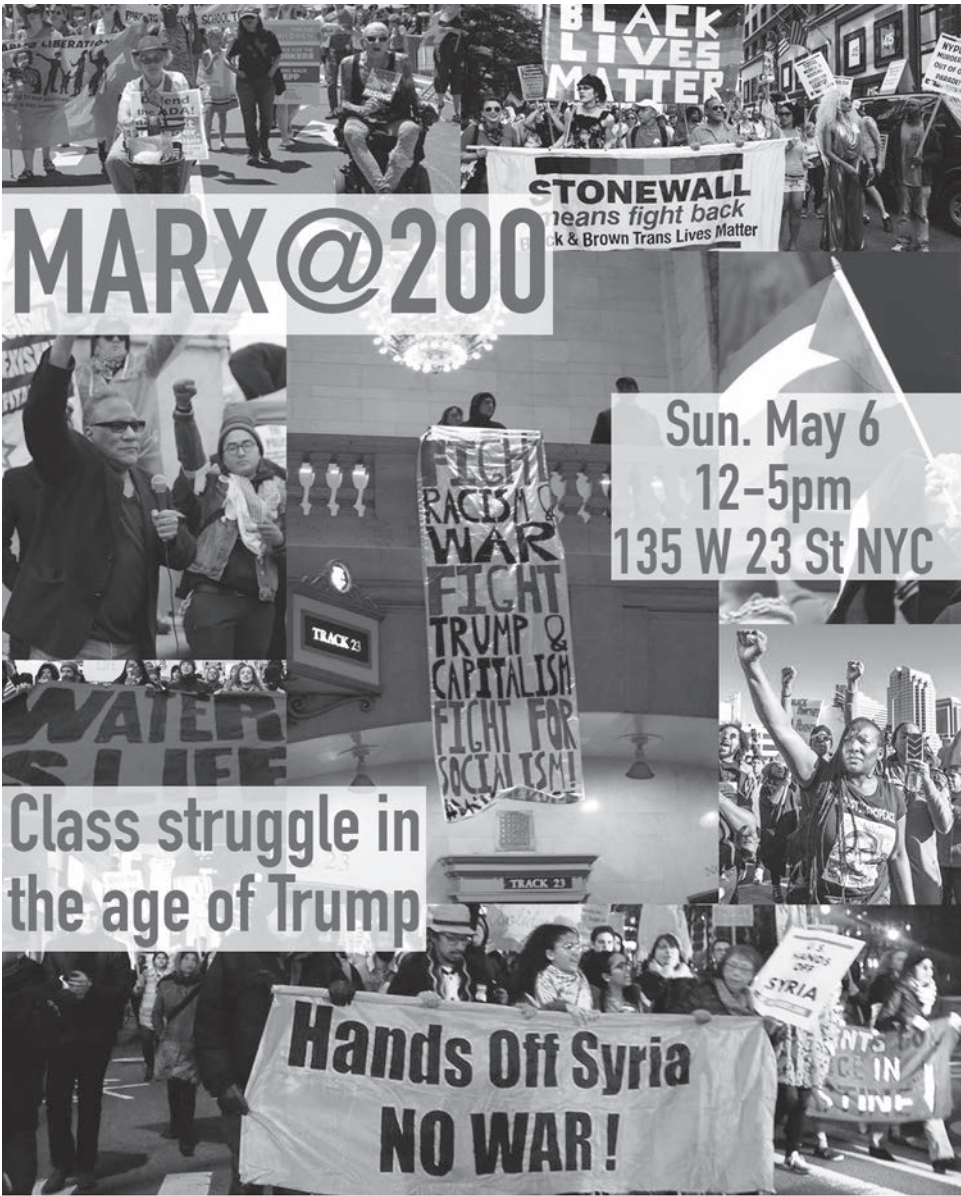
Today a new generation of revolution-
aries is grappling with Marx's legacy.
What is the working-class struggle
today, in the age of globalized
capitalist exploitation and Trump's
white supremacist onslaught,
police murders and ICE round-ups?

Hear Larry Holmes. First Secretary
of Workers World Party, and a diverse
group of new and veteran activists
sharing their perspectives:

- Why Black Lives Matter
is a class issue
- Are workers still
a revolutionary class?
- The role of migrant workers,
prisoners and sex workers
in class struggle
- Women and LGBTQ workers
- Significance of teachers' strikes
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war & climate change

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experiences, ideas and questions.

Event will be live-streamed at
Facebook.com/WorkersWorldParty



**In the United States of North America, every independent movement
of the workers was paralyzed so long as slavery disfigured a part of
the Republic. Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where
in the Black it is branded.**

— Marx, Capital, Volume I, Chapter 10 (1867)

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ON MAY DAY 2018

Worker unity needed vs. brutal war on immigrants

By Teresa Gutierrez

The migrant sector of the global working class in 2006 revived May Day in the U.S., staying away from their jobs and thereby making a genuine contribution to the class struggle in this country.

The situation of migrants and refugees around the world has become a global humanitarian crisis, one that revolutionary and communist organizations must struggle to deal with. Allies of migrant workers often refer to “a war on immigrants.” This war is harmful and dangerous not just to migrants, but to all workers, here and around the world.

It was not started by Donald Trump or Attorney General Jeff Sessions, but they are absolutely escalating it. In fact, at a recent Trump rally he asked, “Any Hispanics in the room?” The large crowd of bigots booed a thunderous response.

Undocumented workers are not the only ones who have become victims of the anti-immigrant terror sweeping the country. U.S. citizens are also being rounded up and held for long periods of time by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, despite providing proof of citizenship.

Wrongful arrests are being made “based on incomplete government records, bad data and lax investigations,” according to information obtained through “lawsuits, internal ICE documents and interviews.” (Los Angeles Times, April 27) A U.S. citizen, originally from Mexico but living in New York, was held for three years, despite his son repeatedly showing officials his father’s passport.

This wave of terror affecting mostly people of color began under the Democratic administration of Barack Obama in 2012 and 2013. His aggressive policies forever

earned him the title “Deporter in Chief.” But the abuses continue today, and the anti-immigrant hype has intensified, accompanied by white supremacist demagoguery.

One detainee, a 10-year-old boy, was held in a detention center all alone in Texas for two months. His family lived in San Francisco. Another heartbreaking story is that of Davino Watson, a U.S. citizen of Jamaican background living in New York, who was arrested by ICE in 2008 and held for three whole years.

Watson told the L.A. Times, “You feel hopeless. It was hard to understand. I spent many nights crying.” Persevering and working on his case from prison, he finally won his freedom. To add salt to the wound, however, Watson was released from a detention center in rural Alabama, where he knew no one. He was given no money, was sent out in prison clothes and was forced to go up to strangers at a gas station to borrow someone’s phone. Watson was lucky not to have run into some Klan members or racist police, or he might never have made it home.

Backlogs affect most vulnerable

The Trump administration has kept the promises he made to his racist nativist base. While all his shenanigans dominate the news cycle, brutal changes in immigration policy are being made behind the scenes.

It is now harder to get an H-1B visa to work in this country. This especially affects spouses, mainly wives, from India,

aggravating economic hardship for their families.

A travel ban targets Muslim communities. When first issued, it led to a righteous outcry of support for migrants and refugees. But this ban is still making its way through the courts, and on April 25 the Supreme Court implied at a hearing on the case that a third attempt would succeed if the administration could prove its grounds.

The Trump administration has opposed DACA (Deferred Action for Child Arrivals), and to this date the legislation remains in limbo, meaning that about 800,000 Dreamers are anxiously living in uncertainty.

Early this year, the administration changed the asylum process, leading to more denials and more deportations. The New York City Anti-Violence Project says there are likely thousands of LGBTQ asylum seekers in danger of violence if they returned home, who are stuck in a backlog of applicants that has grown to unmanageable levels. (Daily Beast, April 27)

Despite these restrictions, the Washington Office on Latin America points out: “There has indeed been a sharp rise in asylum seekers from Central America’s Northern Triangle region (Hondura,

Guatemala and El Salvador).” More individuals from this region sought asylum from 2013 to 2015 than in the previous 15 years combined, but not because of “loopholes.” Washington and Wall Street’s foreign and economic policies as well as the lucrative drug industry have forced millions to migrate. Hondurans, for example, are fleeing their country because of a fraudulent election supported by Washington that installed a repressive government.

Banks as money launderers

The State Department reported four years ago that “trafficking organizations earn between \$19 billion and \$29 billion every year from selling marijuana, cocaine, heroin and methamphetamines” in U.S. cities. (NPR, March 20, 2014) That money must be laundered somewhere.

Wall Street banks profit the most. This lucrative industry fills their coffers while drug cartels destabilize the countries of Central America, causing so many to leave their homelands. These migrants have earned asylum a hundred times over.

When children arrive in the U.S. after a terrifying journey, they are terrorized even further. “Federal Agencies Lost

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WW PHOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD

Free all political prisoners! Boston welcomes Puerto Rican freedom fighter

By Sam Ordóñez
Boston

Puerto Rican activists, freedom fighters and supporters gathered here on April 28 in the Villa Victoria Center for the Arts to welcome freedom fighter Oscar López Rivera, released from a U.S. prison in 2016 after almost 36 years. A delegation from Workers World Party-Boston was among those greeting this heroic freedom fighter.

Villa Victoria has been the heart of the Puerto Rican diaspora in Boston since 1968, when a struggle stopped the city of Boston from bulldozing the apartment complex in the South End where the diaspora was concentrated. This victory gave the area its current name and led to the establishment of the Villa Victoria Center for the Arts to encourage cultural development in the community.

Fittingly, the first cultural performance of the night consisted of two poems by “poet laureate of Villa Victoria” Pedro “Flako” Cruz. The night ended with a performance by local hip hop group The Foundation Movement, who credited the Villa Victoria Center for the Arts as the place where they met.



WWP Boston delegation with Oscar López Rivera.

WW PHOTO: CREDIT TK

Banners decorating the walls called for the release of all political prisoners, prominently featuring Black liberation fighter Mumia Abu-Jamal and Native freedom fighter Leonard Peltier. Kazi Toure, a former political prisoner and longtime leader of the Jericho Movement, introduced Oscar, whom he had met while the two were in Leavenworth.

Oscar stated that he owed his freedom

to the support and solidarity he had received while in prison. He highlighted the many Puerto Rican political prisoners who had been freed, stating that the Puerto Rican people should feel proud of this achievement. He also called for supporters on the outside to express their solidarity and love with political prisoners still behind the walls.

Speaking on the imprisonment of Ana

Belén Montes, a former U.S. intelligence analyst who was convicted of giving secrets to the Cuban government, Oscar emphasized: “The United States government is one that cannot do anything but provoke hatred and fear. And it is that hatred and fear that is used against Cuba. And it is used for countries like Syria and for every nation that it cannot control, from the Rio Grande all the way to Tierra del Fuego — any place in the world that it cannot control.

“This nation was founded on hatred and fear, and it will continue doing the same thing unless we choose to struggle to end hatred and fear in this country,” Oscar elaborated. “Until this government that tries to rule the world is brought to an end, we will continue having a world full of hatred and fear because that’s what this country promotes.”

Ending on a message of hope, Oscar stated, “We should think of the world as one. We should see the world for its potential. We should do everything to make sure that we live in harmony among ourselves and with love in our hearts and to make this planet one that will guarantee every future generation lives in peace and in dignity, and lives not to destroy life but to enjoy life.” □

Demanding subway accessibility

Protesters shut down MTA event

By Tony Murphy
New York

With the main rallying cry for greater subway accessibility, protesters disrupted and ultimately shut down an April 26 public appearance at the City Museum of New York by two Metropolitan Transportation Authority board members.

MTA head Joseph Lhota was unable to utter a single word. The next morning, the moderator of the event, Sarah Maslin Nir, was on a talk show on union-busting Spectrum News, complaining about the “missed opportunity” to discuss issues surrounding the subway. And the night before, when she announced from the stage that the event was being cancelled, Nir complained, “My First Amendment rights are being violated.”

As a New York Times reporter, Nir is unlikely to perceive the true character of what happened that night: the boiling mass anger about the oppressive conditions underground — which, in addition to inaccessibility, include the subways’ constant fare hikes, crumbling infrastructure and racist cop harassment of Black and Brown riders — reached a point where it had to explode above ground.

This eruption prevented the hated MTA from using a genteel \$30-a-head museum forum — complete with onstage couch and glasses of wine poured by the moderator — to get a public-relations makeover.

The City Museum protest was not the only disruption that night. Across town, the Rent Guidelines Board meeting was also disrupted by tenants opposing rent increases. With signs declaring, “We are tenants, not ATMs,” protesters crashed the gathering, at which the board voted for an increase in rent-stabilized apartments. An online report of the meeting described the tenants’ intervention as the “deafening sound that had enveloped the Cooper Union Hall.”

Subways in dismal shape

The demand for transit accessibility, expressed recently by lawsuits and protests that 75 percent of subway stations lack elevators, has been amplified by the overall shockingly dismal state of the subway, which is punishing the city’s working class with maddeningly constant delays.

In addition to stations either not having elevators or having elevators that break down or are filthy, some of the



Protesting both racism and lack of accessibility, People’s MTA unfurled a banner: ‘Our subways need elevators, not racist Broken Windows Policing!’

stations require wheelchair users to ride along a dangerously narrow platform edge between a wall and the tracks. At the Broadway/Lafayette station, this is required three times — a total of six if a rider makes a round trip.

The rampant delays that affect all riders are inspiring neighborhood-specific Facebook pages, some of which have thousands of members sign up in a matter of days.

On April 25, the morning before the people’s shutdown, malfunctions on the 2 and 5 lines prevented Bronx subway users from getting to work in Manhattan during rush hour. That same day, the online New York City Patch reported: “Signal problems at the City Hall station delayed the N, R, Q and W lines; problems at the 9th Avenue station in Brooklyn delayed the D line; and problems at Metropolitan Avenue delayed the G line.”

In fact, the 6 train — the closest line to the museum where the phony forum was scheduled to take place — was shut down due to electrical problems mere minutes before the start of the program. After the program started, people were still arriving late, frustrated and angry, from yet another subway delay.

Knowing the mass hatred for the MTA, organizers of the event attempted to prevent the protest, which was called jointly by The People’s MTA, Rise and Resist, and the anti-police-brutality group Why

Accountability. Two days before the event, the moderator sent this private Facebook message to The People’s MTA:

“This is Sarah Maslin Nir, the reporter from the Times who is hosting the Lhota talk this week. I love that you are organizing around it! Civic engagement is where it’s at! I was wondering if we could speak on the phone, perhaps there might be a better way to be heard. We could hold a listening session during the reception, or perhaps your group could bring fliers with info to be distributed afterwards? I am a firm believer in everyone’s 1st amendment rights, so if you want to protest that’s cool, but maybe there is a way to include these issues so you’d get a better platform?”

Recognizing this as a ploy to prevent a protest from interrupting her program, organizers ignored it and went ahead with their plans. This included disrupting the program right at the start by unfurling a banner with the words “Our subways need elevators, not racist Broken Windows Policing!”

Mayor’s solution? More cops

The slogan referred to Mayor de Blasio’s decision two weeks earlier to expand the bogus New York Police Department program known as “Neighborhood Policing” into the subway. “Broken Windows Policing” is the phrase used by the NYPD to describe its racist policing approach.

De Blasio’s announcement came right on the heels of the NYPD assassination of Saheed Vassell in Brooklyn’s Crown Heights neighborhood.

Community activists have long described the Neighborhood Policing program, or Community Policing as it is also known, as a public relations cover for the true police program of racist harassment, occupation and killings. Activists in the Coalition to End Broken Windows have also described how its community meetings are used by cops to gather intelligence on African-American and Latinx residents.

For his part, de Blasio has solidarized himself with the police’s racist harassment of riders who can’t afford \$2.75, saying that “fare-beating” is “not an economic issue” — that people who jump turnstiles “have money in their pockets.”

The banner was unfurled by People’s MTA leaders Mary Kaessinger and Teresa Gutierrez. Kaessinger, who uses a wheelchair, began the disruption with a mic check, saying, “We are here today because the subways belong to the people!”

The host then offered the microphone to the two in a phony attempt to include the protesters in the “discussion.” Knowing this would give credibility to whatever self-serving lies and justifications the MTA board members would uttered later, the protesters rejected this and addressed the crowd directly.

“We can’t afford to take cabs! This is a crisis!” said Gutierrez.

“We can’t be peaceful about this! We have to fight — we go to board meetings every month, and nothing happens. They don’t listen to us!”

After that, Nir’s many attempts to regain control of the meeting were drowned out by more shouting from the crowd, as protesters stood up, one by one, with signs that read “Elevators NOW,” “Stop the Racist Harassment of Black and Brown Riders” and “Stop the Delays.” When she got the nod from Lhota, Nir ended the meeting, informing all attendees that the museum would refund the \$20 to \$30 they had paid to get in.

Protesters went outside for a celebratory demonstration. Kaessinger congratulated the crowd, stating, “I think we got our point across!” Gutierrez added, “It was right to disrupt! If they don’t give us any peace on the subway, we’re not going to give them peace anywhere!”



Tenants are demanding a rent freeze.

Tenants shut down rent board meeting

All out for June 14 protest

By Kathy Durkin
New York

Hundreds of angry tenants drowned out members of the Rent Guidelines Board at an April 26 meeting at Manhattan’s Cooper Union Hall. Demanding a rent freeze, the crowd yelled, “If we don’t get it, shut it down!”

The militant rally with loud chanting by tenant groups, public housing recipients and community organizations took place at the auditorium’s entrance. They prevented the hearing from starting on time.

The board meets annually to set rent increases for the city’s 1 million rent-stabilized apartments, which house about 2 million people. Since 2013, tenant pres-

sure has exerted some control on landlord greed, even winning rent freezes for one-year leases for two years and keeping increases fairly low. This year, organized tenants, many of them Spanish-speaking Latinx immigrants and low-wage workers, demanded a rent freeze once again.

Over 10 tenants’ rights organizations mobilized to intervene, including CASA, Metropolitan Council on Housing, Real Rent Reform, Northern Manhattan Is Not for Sale!, Good Old Lower East Side, Make the Road New York! and others from the Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan.

But the landlords and big real estate interests had another agenda. They sought a 4 percent raise for one-year leases and a 7

Continued on page 8

DA caves to cop pressure

Denies justice for Mumia

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

April 30 — Despite District Attorney Larry Krasner’s campaign promises to address decades of injustice in the Philadelphia DA’s office, it was evident at a hearing for Mumia Abu-Jamal today that the “Mumia exception” — where legal precedent applies to everyone but Mumia — is still the rule.

The hearing was the continuation of more than a year of court sessions before Philadelphia Common Pleas Court Judge Leon Tucker. They involve a petition by Abu-Jamal based on a 2016 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Williams vs. Pennsylvania*, that found it unconstitutional for Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Ronald Castille to rule on an appeal case in which he had played a significant role as Philadelphia DA. In effect, Castille would have ruled on his own earlier conduct.

At a hearing for Abu-Jamal’s appeal on Jan. 17, Assistant DA Tracey Kavanagh had sought a 60-day extension, stating that Krasner’s office wanted to review the outstanding *Williams*’ cases, of which Abu-Jamal’s is one, in order to standardize their approach to all cases relating to the SCOTUS decision.

That hearing was initially intended to include testimony on a 1990 memo from former Assistant DA Gael McLaughlin Barthold responding to Castille’s request for status updates on capital cases, including Abu-Jamal’s.

When the 60-day extension expired on March 26, the DA sought more time for a newly hired paralegal, Ryden Nelson, to conduct an “exhaustive search” of all files related to the capital cases listed in Barthold’s memo.

Three days before the April 30 hearing, DA Kavanagh issued a letter to Judge Tucker claiming that their “exhaustive search” had not found the missing Castille memo. It concluded: “Although Mr. Castille was the District Attorney when defendant’s (Abu-Jamal’s) direct appeal was pending and then presided as the Justice/Chief Justice over defendant’s PCRA appeals in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, it is the Commonwealth’s position that he did not have the requisite ‘significant, personal involvement’ in a ‘critical decision’ in this case to give rise to a substantive due process violation as set forth in *Williams*.”

Abu-Jamal’s attorneys, Judith Ritter and Sam Spital from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, challenged the Assistant DA’s claims, noting there had been no indication that paralegal Nelson had reviewed Castille’s personal file on the case. Spital raised that the Commonwealth’s failure to produce the relevant memo favorable to the defense should warrant a finding of “adverse inference” in favor of Abu-Jamal.

Judge Tucker granted the defense the right to depose Barthold regarding the missing memo and to file an amendment to their original petition. The next in-court hearing is scheduled for Aug. 30.

FOP threatens to fill courtroom

It was also apparent that public pressure from the Fraternal Order of Police to fill the court and protest outside Abu-Jamal’s hearing may have influenced the DA’s decision. The Philadelphia Inquirer posted an op-ed piece on April 26 by Maureen Faulkner, widow of police officer Daniel Faulkner, whom Abu-Jamal was convicted of murdering. Abu-Jamal has steadfastly maintained his innocence.

Faulkner openly challenged Krasner



Hundreds march through central Philadelphia on April 30 demanding justice for Mumia.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

“to fight to keep” Abu-Jamal in prison and claimed “Gov. Wolf and Krasner have politicized the use of capital punishment and life sentences in Pennsylvania.” The opinion piece ended with: “We ask Krasner to set aside his desire for social and legal reconstruction and aggressively perform the duties of the job he swore to perform, and fight for all victims of murder and violent crime. If you agree, please call Krasner and respectfully advise him you expect the same thing.”

Using a long defunct Facebook page, “Justice for Danny,” the Fraternal Order of Police called for a demonstration outside the court on April 30 and for Faulkner supporters to fill the seats starting at 8 a.m. Calls by Abu-Jamal supporters to “Pack the Court to Free Mumia,” which also involved an outside rally scheduled for 8 a.m., had circulated for weeks through fliers and social media.

The FOP’s evident attempt to intimidate Abu-Jamal supporters may have

backfired, as hundreds of them turned out today starting at 7:30 a.m., demonstrating outside and standing in line for over an hour to get seats in the small courtroom. Despite those already waiting, Faulkner and about a dozen FOP supporters, who arrived around 8:30 a.m., were given an entire row, while over 40 of Abu-Jamal’s supporters were forced to squeeze into the remaining seats.

Sitting in a section of the courtroom reserved for media, this reporter witnessed the community liaison staff person for the DA’s office make a point of assuring some of the FOP members sitting in the row behind the media that they had nothing to worry about. He specifically pointed out the concluding paragraph of Kavanagh’s letter.

Friends of millionaires and politicians get ‘extraordinary relief’

In the weeks leading up to Abu-Jamal’s hearing, DA Krasner called for Philadel-

phia rapper Meek Mill to get a new trial because the cop who testified against him was known to lie on the witness stand. Under extensive pressure from Mill’s supporters — who include millionaire entertainers, sports team owners, Pennsylvania Gov. Wolf and former DA Ed Rendell — the Pennsylvania Supreme Court granted “extraordinary relief” for Mill and released him on April 24, Abu-Jamal’s birthday.

Although there is ample evidence that Abu-Jamal’s case was rife with police corruption, coerced witnesses, missing evidence and now a missing memo, DA Krasner bent to pressure from above — in this case the media and the FOP — and failed to do the right thing.

After the court adjourned, hundreds rallied outside the courthouse and then marched through Center City to the DA’s office, vowing to continue the pressure to win justice for Mumia!

Video of the protest can be found at tinyurl.com/y92jeezn. □

Veterans of anti-racist struggle honor Mumia and Bell

By Henry Hagins
New York

An overflow assembly of Mumia Abu-Jamal supporters packed the meeting hall of the International Action Center on the afternoon of Sunday, April 29. They came to defend Mumia before his pivotal April 30 court hearing in Philadelphia, to pay tribute to the hard-won release from prison of ex-Black Panther Herman Bell and to hear in-the-trenches activists give a historic assessment of the current domestic and world situation.

The crowd-drawing event was headlined under the theme “Which Way Forward with Anti-Imperialist Consciousness and Resistance?” Reprising the spirit of the Afro-Asian 1955 Bandung Conference in Indonesia, an artistically compelling flyer listed the highly regarded presenters, including Estela Vázquez, vice president, Local 1199 SEIU; Mireille Fanon Mendes-France, president, Frantz Fanon Foundation; Professor Tony Monteiro, W.E.B. Du Bois scholar and teacher; Sara Flounders, co-director, International Action Center; Pam Africa and Dr. Suzanne Ross, International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; a supporter of Bolivarian Venezuela; and Glenn Ford, Black Agenda Report.

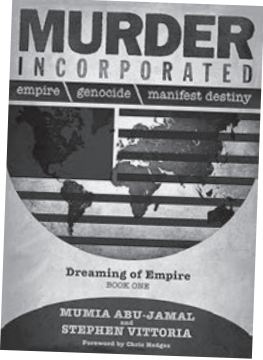
The impressive meeting centered around the “hot off the press” release of

Mumia’s newest book, “Murder Incorporated: Empire/Genocide/Manifest Destiny,” co-authored with Stephen Vittoria. It sold at a brisk pace.

After spending 45 years in prison, Herman Bell was finally released on April 27 over strong opposition from the NYC Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association, the Piagentini family and Mayor Bill de Blasio.

Prior to Bell’s release, inflammatory labels such as “cop-killer” were hurled in his direction in a cruel effort to derail his dues-paid release and ignoring the fact that the parole board had determined that after 45 years of imprisonment and stringent review, Herman Bell had met the conditions for parole in full. While this story is tragic, history shows that police are not sacred cows, as evidenced in the Eric Garner tragedy of four years ago. And we must never forget Ramsey Orta, who has been persecuted by police ever since releasing his video of the police chokehold that killed Garner.

Bell’s case goes back more than 45 years and reflects the turbulent period that began during the Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War eras. It included issues around this country’s history of rampant police brutality against people of color. It is interesting to note that the family of slain officer Waverly Jones was more conciliatory than the Piagentini family, even though they both lost loved ones in



Mumia Abu-Jamal’s newest book, the shootout that involved Bell.

In a statement circulated by the Campaign to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Bell family said his release “is a result of important and urgent changes in the criminal legal system and parole regulations that are part of nationwide efforts to end mass incarceration. Let us hope that Herman’s release brings inspiration for more change.”

It is important to remember that the inflammatory term “cop killer” is used to obscure the notion that political prisoners exist in the United States. Denial allows the state and news media to criminalize actions that challenge the racist and repressive nature of this society. The decades-long incarcerations of Mumia and other political prisoners are egregious violations of the human rights that the U.S. piously claims to uphold, but violates massively on a daily basis.

The struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal will continue because he’s been innocent from jump-street and the evidence proves it. A luta continua! May Herman Bell enjoy the peace he so rightfully deserves!

Hagins is a member of the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition in New York City.

Colorado teachers walk out, surround Capitol

By Viviana Weinstein
Denver

Over 10,000 teachers surrounded the state Capitol in Denver on Friday, April 27, making their loud voices heard. They were demanding legislators reverse the cuts in education, which have hurt teacher pay and pushed Colorado’s standing almost \$2,800 below the national average in per-pupil spending. Rural schools are hurting the most. The day before, over 2,000 teachers had come to protest.

When rallying teachers were asked how to pay for education, many said that lawmakers must commit to freezing corporate tax breaks of all kinds until funding for education reaches the national average. One man questioned the wisdom of the U.S. spending tens of millions of dollars to lob missiles for “no purpose” — referring to the latest U.S. bombing of Syria. The estimated minimum cost of the weapons used in that April 14 strike is



WW PHOTO: VIVIANA WEINSTEIN

Colorado teachers rally at the Capitol in Denver, April 27.

\$165 million. (businessinsider.com)

There is a connection between U.S. yearly military spending of over \$1 trillion and the continuous cuts to education. The needs of the people suffer from enor-

mous expenditures on the many wars and military bases that suck so much from the federal budget.

In an attempt to stop the teachers’ protests, Republican state senators intro-

duced Senate Bill 264, which threatens fines and jail time for striking teachers.

But out on the march there was no fear. Solidarity was strong and public support overwhelming. □

As teachers walk out Arizona ablaze with #RedForEd

Continued from page 1

March 7. Teachers, paraprofessionals, classroom aides, school bus drivers, school cafeteria employees, secretaries and custodians all over the state sported red clothing. As they made “selfies,” posting pictures on social media explaining why they were fighting for public education, #RedForEd began to go viral.

Arizona education workers continued to wear red every Wednesday as school workers began to strike in Oklahoma and walked out in Kentucky. In Arizona, teachers and school support workers quickly began holding informational pickets, walk-ins and rallies at the Capitol. They mobilized a huge protest against reactionary Gov. Ducey during his weekly hate-filled radio show.

Ducey has made it clear that he is against any type of action that defends public education. Despite crumbling public schools and miserably crowded classrooms, he used the fake argument that if schools shut down as a result of a walkout, “our kids are the ones who lose out.” (Arizona Family, April 19) Ducey is the former CEO of Cold Stone Creamery and a previous board member of a union-busting outfit misnamed “Teach for America.”

Why teachers are walking out

Shortly after AEU organized #RedForEd Wednesdays, the AEA offered solidarity and support. The two organizations are asking for five concrete demands. The first and foremost among Arizona education employees is a 20 percent salary increase. Elementary level teachers’ salaries are comparable to those of Oklahoma teachers, and secondary level teachers’ pay to West Virginia teachers — almost rock bottom in U.S. teacher salaries.

AEU and AEA are also fighting for competitive pay for all education employees and that the salary increase be a permanent increase, as opposed to just a one-time bonus.

Education advocates want public school funding raised back to its 2008 level. A recent study by the Joint Legislative Budget Committee shows that Arizona spends roughly \$924 less per pupil in inflation-adjusted dollars today than it did 10 years ago. While the Arizona Leg-

islature was still in session, AEU focused its attention on combating a reactionary school voucher bill, SB 1467, which would take money from public schools and give them to private schools. In the West Virginia victory, strikers defeated charter school and school voucher bills.

After feeling the heat from the #RedForEd movement, Gov. Ducey announced a “plan” to raise pay to 20 percent by the year 2020 and increase public education funding by \$371 million by 2023. But Arizona education workers saw this proposal as too little, too late — an insincere offer that does nothing to improve pay for school support staff. Instead, the reactionary governor’s weak offer appears to be just another tactic to divide the working class. Teachers marching on April 26 also said they emphatically refused raises that would come at the cost of cutting social services for poor, Latinx or disabled students. (Payday Report, April 26)

Finally, AEU and AEA activists are making it clear they do not want to see any more tax breaks for the rich. While state funding for Arizona students and public schools has steadily decreased in the last ten years, tax breaks for Arizona’s top 1% have increased. Education workers in West Virginia, Oklahoma and Kentucky correctly took aim at the energy bosses and extraction industries in their states as the root of the budget problems. Arizona school employees are also directing their anger at the state’s big business.

Fighting racism through education struggles

The education workers’ walkout comes after decades of struggle by Latinx teachers and supporters against racially discriminatory funding of school districts in their communities. In 2010, the Arizona State Legislature passed a law against teaching Mexican-American history in the Tucson public school system. This was only defeated in December 2017 when a federal judge ruled the law unconstitutional. According to Payday Report, the state’s student population is 45 percent Latinx, and over half of the student population is children of color.

Arizona has a brutal history of racism, massacre and exploitation against Indigenous nations and Latinx people, who have faced centuries of settler colonialism. The

state did not recognize Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday as a federal holiday until 1992, only then bowing to the economic pressure of a massive peoples’ boycott. Another boycott of Arizona was initiated after the state Senate passed SB 1070, representing and endorsing the virulently anti-im/migrant actions of racist Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County.

Support for the education workers’ strike was emphatic in rural San Luis, Ariz., on April 26, when teachers marched and gathered with students and community members at the Cesar Chavez Cultural Center. Chanting “Fund our schools” and clanging cowbells, they hung a #RedForEd placard on the statue of farm workers union leader Chavez. (Phoenix New Times, April 27)

The unity and militancy of education workers demanding increased support for public schools and for their students is a huge blow to the white supremacist state structure

Education workers strike in the global class war

The strikes and walkouts, which started in West Virginia and spread to Oklahoma, Kentucky and Arizona, are primarily being waged in “right-to-work” (for less!) states where work stoppages of any sort are illegal. It’s important to acknowledge the fact that these struggles are majority-women, rank-and-file-led.

There are rumblings that educator work actions may soon begin in Arkansas, Mississippi and South Carolina. Many of the education workers in these states undoubtedly voted for the racist Republicans, but the walk-ins, walk-outs and outright strikes are a clear action against the right-wing agenda set by reactionaries backing privatization and profit.

Arizona Gov. Ducey is a Republican, like the governors of West Virginia, Oklahoma and Kentucky who attempted to break the public education workers’ actions. But Democratic governors have also been antagonistic toward public sector unions, despite the fact that the union bureaucracy donates millions of dollars to that party of capitalism each election cycle through political action committees.

The capitalist Democratic Party is no alternative, typically showing its true anti-union colors in areas where it is the ma-

jority party, in an attempt to contain and stop militant mobilizations. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has called teachers’ unions a “selfish industry.” (New York Daily News, Jan. 23, 2015)

Education workers in so-called “blue states,” such as Colorado and Wisconsin, have already participated in rebellious walkouts. Three thousand teaching and research assistants struck at Columbia University in New York City on April 24 over the university’s refusal to even participate in negotiating a contract.

Teachers in Puerto Rico, led by the courageous Puerto Rico Teachers Federation (FMPR), have struck against colonialism: the closing of public schools, speeding privatization through charter schools and racist gutting of public services in order to service big banking debt. FMPR has a history of standing up to U.S. imperialist big business. (See “FMPR: ‘A fighting instrument,’” Workers World, April 19.)

That education workers’ strikes in the U.S. have inspired working people throughout the globe is a nightmare for the billionaire class. Rank-and-file education workers are realizing what a mighty power they have when they fight collectively.

Otis Grotewohl is a WWP member and union activist in West Virginia who was involved there in the education workers’ strike and is monitoring other education strikes.

Puerto Rican



Puerto Rican teachers protesting attacks on public education on April 27 are attacked by police, tear gassed.

Milwaukee teachers defend public schools

By Workers World Wisconsin bureau

Thousands took the streets in Milwaukee on April 24 to defend public education and to stop austerity in a “Pick-et to Defend Our Schools” action called by the Milwaukee Teachers’ Education Association. A flood of united teachers, students and community members filled and overflowed the area in front of the Milwaukee Public Schools central office and stretched for blocks. (www.facebook.com/MTEAunion/)

The MTEA is putting up a valiant fight in many directions against a 5 percent cut to the MPS budget. Milwaukee is a majority Black and Brown city and gets thousands of dollars less per student from state funding than suburban schools. So this is also a mighty struggle by the MTEA to prevent the racist funding inequity from worsening.

Since the late 1980s, Milwaukee has been the laboratory for “school choice” and also “welfare reform” — right-wing initiatives aimed at privatizing education and cutting support for poor and oppressed people. In 2011, the infamous Act 10, the so-called Wisconsin Budget Repair Bill, was proposed by Republican Gov. Scott Walker and passed by the state legislature. The bill was one of a slate of racist, union-busting, austerity measures pushed by the Bradley Foundation, the Mackinac Center, the Koch brothers and other billionaires.

Since the right-wing victory in 2011, the assault on Wisconsin public services has been used as a model for other austerity attacks. Similar programs were enacted

in Indiana and Michigan in particular, and are now being attempted federally, as the U.S. government is desperate to fund its military expansion. Some politicians maneuvering for austerity cuts at the federal level gained experience at the state level in cutting public service to the bone. Vice President Mike Pence honed his skill at implementing and administering such attacks as governor of Indiana.

Strengthening the federal attempt at austerity attacks is the increased connection between ruling-class forces, from the South to the North, such as arch right-wing billionaire Art Pope of North Carolina, who now chairs the board of the Milwaukee-based Bradley Foundation.

In addition, the predatory role of big banking and finance capital has to be called to account. Banks, having made high-interest loans to beleaguered cities, swoop in to demand cuts to public budgets in order to get blockbuster profits in interest. In the worst situations, as in Detroit and in Puerto Rico, management of public resources is handed over to a board essentially appointed by the banks, with public services like education gutted or turned “for-profit.”

But the thousands in Milwaukee streets on April 24 are part of a recent defiant national surge of education workers against this ax of austerity.

In West Virginia, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Arizona, Colorado and elsewhere, public school work-



Milwaukee teachers, school workers, students and community members picket to defend their schools on April 24.

ers, including teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, janitors, school counselors and aides, are now militantly resisting the budget cuts that have been underway for over a decade.

The most massive education strikes have had success in “right-to-work” (for less!) states where public employees are by law denied the right to strike. But when 400 Georgia school bus drivers began a sickout on April 19 to protest stalled negotiations over pay, health benefits and working conditions that endanger students, eight of them were immediately fired. Hostile Dekalb County school management declared the sickout to be illegal in the right-to-work state and appeared to be targeting driver leaders.

Solidarity is needed! What a sight and inspiration it would be if teachers, school staff, students, parents and community supporters would take their yellow school buses in the thousands to Washington, D.C., in June to demand an end to right-to-work-for-less. That would be an emphatic “no!” to anti-worker rulings like that anticipated from the U.S. Supreme Court in the pending public service employees’ union case, Janus v. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. That would be an emphatic “yes!” to solidarity if they linked up with the June mass action in D.C. of the Poor People’s Campaign, renewing the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s call to end racism, militarism and poverty. □

School bus battles roll on

By Sara Catalinotto
New York

“Experienced drivers! Safe children!” chanted New York City school bus drivers and attendants in Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1181, along with representatives of school bus riders’ families and retired teachers. They were rallying together on April 24 to defend employment protection provisions (EPP) in school busing contracts.

The contracts, between the New York City Department of Education and private companies for fall 2018 to summer 2023, involve routes for pre-kindergarten and early intervention students with disabilities.

If EPP is not enforced, companies can deviate from the labor contract pattern, reducing benefits and wages while ignor-

ing citywide seniority. This can lead to low standards, exploitation and worker turnover, which is bad for the children. The companies hire people who are desperate for jobs, while expert drivers and matrons stay unemployed.

Protesters contend this has occurred in route contracts that the DOE has previously awarded to non-EPP companies, despite a determined 2013 strike.

People rallied in two shifts of about 50 people each, starting at noon, some arriving in yellow school buses. They gathered across from the New York State Supreme Court where a court hearing was held at 2 p.m. on the status of the EPP in contracts. Forty EPP supporters went inside, but the courtroom lacked enough seats for all of them.

Seventeen school bus companies have sued to try to remove the protective pro-

visions from the contracts. A federal court denied the companies, but a state court granted a temporary injunction in their favor. Bidding on driver routes is now “postponed until further notice.”

Parents to Improve School Transportation (PIST NYC) submitted an affidavit to the court testifying that job security and an attractive benefits package for the workers translates to stability plus safety for the children. The PIST document emphasized that the children have a civil right to special education transportation, which is enhanced by having an experienced crew on each vehicle.

The judge heard oral arguments from both sides, and is expected to issue a writ-

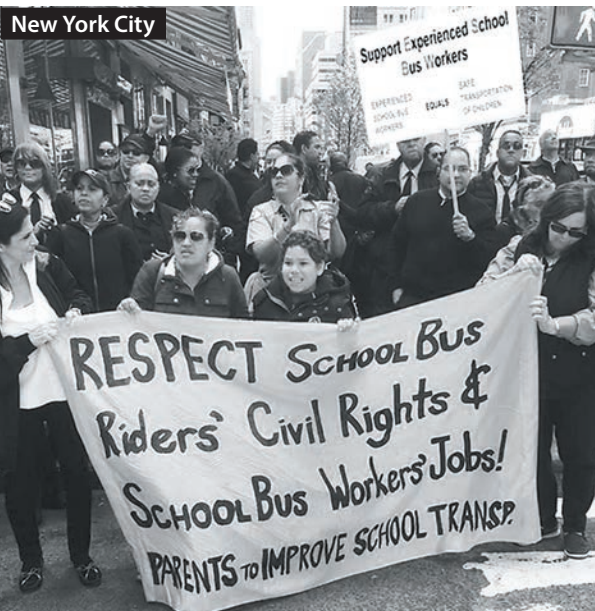


PHOTO: ATU ORGANIZERS FACEBOOK

ten decision, with no date specified as of April 24.

Other school bus battles are heating up in Georgia and California. DeKalb County, Ga., drivers, who have no union, staged an informal sickout in April to protest conditions and low pay. Eight participants were fired by the school district, but are fighting back with support from the Industrial Workers of the World in that region. To support them, see tinyurl.com/ya53ufjh.

Los Angeles Unified School District school bus workers (along with special education aides, cafeteria workers and other school staff) voted April 14 with a 94 percent overwhelming majority for their union’s bargaining team to authorize a strike if negotiations fail. Service Employees Local 99 organized a weekend strike captain training session for April 28. For more information, see tinyurl.com/y9xfdr6t.

The writer is a founder of PIST NYC. Other parents as well as teachers in MORE-UFT who were present at the rally contributed to this article.

teachers fight ‘disaster capitalism’

Excerpted from an April 28 message from Mercedes Martinez, president of the Teachers’ Federation of Puerto Rico (FMPR).

On April 18, the Oversight Fiscal Board, imposed by the U.S. Congress, submitted different fiscal plans for our country. ... It’s Disaster Capitalism on hormones. This will mean thousands of [school worker] layoffs, hundreds of school closures, added to Law 85 that now allows 10 percent charter implementation beginning August 2018.

[Teachers] are facing the biggest attack ever. We had a National Assembly that determined to strike May 1. If the government does not revoke these measures, on

May 2 we will go to the governor’s mansion to demand he attends to our proposals. If they insist, during the week of May 7-11 we are planning a boycott against standardized testing.

[April 27] we had a civil disobedience action, which ended in police brutality against all the teachers that were protesting, being pepper sprayed. It was a protest against school closures and all these measures. ... Police brutality was implemented against the protesters. Teachers resisted.

We expect more repression on May 1, and we will not back down.

Please send a solidarity message/video to Facebook mercedes.martinez.754.



PHOTO: MERCEDES MARTINEZ

Peace in Korea? The ball is in Trump’s court

By Deirdre Griswold

With the leaders of both the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and South Korea having declared they are ready to end the state of war between the two that has existed since 1950, the ball is now in the U.S. court.

Donald Trump has accepted an invitation to meet with Kim Jong Un, leader of the DPRK, but no date has been set. Meanwhile, Trump has brought into his administration two very extreme war-hawks, John Bolton and Mike Pompeo. Will they set the policy, or did he bring them in to keep an eye on them? With Trump, it’s hard to know.

The real problem, of course, is not between the two Koreas. The problem is the continuing U.S. military occupation of South Korea, which has driven a wedge between north and south since 1945. A peace treaty between the two would undermine the excuse given by Washington for the continued U.S. occupation: the claim that the Koreans in the south need to be defended against their fellow Koreans in the north.

The desire of most South Koreans to

break down these barriers was clearly seen during the Winter Olympics, when they gave an ecstatic welcome to the joint North-South Olympic team marching under one flag. In the stands, only U.S. Vice President Mike Pence showed extreme hostility to this development, slouched down in his seat and not even standing for the South Korean national anthem.

For years, ever since the U.S. flew Syngman Rhee, who had been living in the United States for decades, back to Seoul and installed him as the first president of the newly created nation of South Korea, Washington has been used to calling the shots there.

Growth of people’s movement in south

No more. A people’s movement in the south has survived and grown stronger in the long struggle against U.S.-supported, brutal military dictatorships and corrupt politicians in the pockets of the chaebol, the large industrial conglomerates run by a few wealthy families.

For years South Korean unions have militantly and tenaciously fought for workers’ rights. As recently as 2015, hundreds of police stormed the headquarters

of the Korean Public Service and Transport Workers’ Union during a strike by truckers. But the reactionary government that ordered the attack is now gone, and its president, Park Geun-hye — the daughter of a general who had earlier ruled the country through an open military dictatorship — has been imprisoned for corruption.

To achieve the downfall of the Park regime, South Koreans demonstrated every weekend for a solid year. At times, the number of people participating in these rallies exceeded a million.

It is this kind of disciplined and militant organization on a mass level that has changed the political landscape in the south and laid the basis for a historic meeting between the DPRK’s Kim Jong Un and Moon Jae-in, now the leader in the south. Their recently announced agreement to end the formal state of war that has existed since 1950, and their symbolic act — when both stepped across the border line at Panmunjom that divides Korea — must have brought tears to the eyes of so many Koreans who have lived with the terrible sorrow of families divided for generations.

DPRK refuses to bow down

What has brought about this new relationship? In addition to the strength of the people’s movement in the south, credit must go to the steadfastness of the people and leaders of the DPRK. They have refused to knuckle under despite years and years of U.S. sanctions and war threats, with annual war “games” taking place on their borders that simulated an invasion and the “decapitation” of their leaders.

Instead of folding, the leadership put their scientists to work and developed a nuclear defense for the country — an achievement that astonished the imperialists, who have stockpiled thousands of these fearsome weapons precisely in order to subjugate the rest of the world to their will.

With this in hand, the leaders of the DPRK and South Korea are now ready to sit down and discuss with the U.S. how to end the war crisis that has existed for so long. It’s the duty of those of us in the U.S. to struggle to get the ruling class here to accept the reality and abandon their efforts to sabotage the prospects for peace in Korea. ☐

IN INDIA

As repression grows, so does class struggle

By Harmony

Indian police forces claim to have killed more than three dozen communist guerrilla fighters in late April raids against the forces of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) in the Gadchiroli district. To add insult to injury, during one raid the leftists are said to have been sitting at dinner while marking the founding of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), a precursor to the current Communist Party of India (Maoist), when they were attacked.

The Central Reserve Police Force, in league with C-60, an elite unit of Gadchiroli district police, said they had carried out a series of “encounters” (battles) with the Maoists. In the first, six revolutionary militants engaged in a gunfight with police and were killed. The police claim to have then surrounded a camp of approximately 100 Indian communists and opened fire. At the time, the people were resting and unable to defend themselves.

The police claim that they took not a single casualty, even as 16 communist fighters were gunned down, has prompted skepticism about what really happened. Many of the Maoists are said to have fled to the Indravati River in order to escape, leaving 15 more dead. In total, 37 communists, mainly women and children, were gunned down by the police.

The Communist Party of India (Maoist) has yet to respond or make any statements about this travesty. However, the police claim to have killed three of their higher-ranking leaders.

The massacre the week of April 22 is only part of a series of battles that have been taking place in India over many years. In 1967 in Naxalbari, an area in West Bengal, the peasants started a struggle over land rights. They peacefully stood up in opposition to the big bourgeoisie to claim the crops that were rightfully theirs. In response, the police murdered nine peasants.

Ever since then, the Naxalites, as these revolutionaries are called, have taken up arms in the name of the peasantry, of

their martyred leader Charu Majumdar and of the leader of the Chinese Revolution, Mao Zedong.

The battles between the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and the police forces are not the only recent revolutionary activity in India.

In response to the rising suicides of thousands of farmers — suicides that followed increasing government land theft and financial ruin — the All-India Peasants’ Union declared a Long March. This

Long March, consisting of 40,000 Indigent farmers, some too poor to afford shoes, went all the way from deep in the Maharashtra state to the capital of Mumbai, a distance of 100 miles. The marchers carried the red hammer-and-sickle flags of revolution. They demanded land rights and loan waivers that had previously been promised but not properly implemented. They also called for an end to land-seizing by the government and fair compensation for their labor. The

Long March was organized with assistance from the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

India’s revolutionary movement is gaining steam as a reaction to the big bourgeoisie taking more and more from the people. The tactics of the semi-fascist Modi government against the people will one day not be enough to stem the tide of revolution, and India, like the rest of the world, will be red with the flags of revolution. ☐

Tenants shut down rent board meeting

All out for June 14 protest

Continued from page 4

percent increase for two-year leases. The board, which is heavily weighted toward realtors, adopted a preliminary resolution by a 5-4 vote, which would allow for up to 2.75 percent hikes for one-year leases and up to 3.75 percent for two-year leases, to take effect Oct. 1. If these rates are made permanent in the final vote on June 26, the board would be handing landlords the highest rent hikes in five years.

Tenants ‘raised hell’

Tenants loudly denounced the board’s vote. Standing, they yelled: “Shame! Shame! Shame!” and “Fight! Fight! Fight!” They called out, “Shut it down!” Anne Pruden, a Workers World activist from Brooklyn, reported that the tenants “raised hell, disrupted and shut down the hearing.” It was over.

Tenants are organizing their next steps. They will speak out at the board’s five hearings in June and at its session at the end of that month when the board’s final vote is taken. They must mobilize; they have no alternative. Many NYC residents live on fixed incomes, have low-earning, minimum-wage jobs and must feed their families. The cost of living is soaring, but incomes are not.

A March for Tenants’ Rights and an End to Homelessness is being organized

for June 14 in Bryant Park by Real Rent Reform, a tenant, community and labor coalition. A major target is Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who has prioritized allocating subsidies to billionaire developers while ignoring the crisis in private and public housing for the city’s multinational working class, elderly and disabled populations.

Homelessness at 1930s’ Depression level

Met Council reports that more than half of New Yorkers pay over 30 percent of their income on rent. The lack of affordable housing exacerbates the crisis of homelessness, now at the highest level since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Over 63,343 homeless people live in city shelters, including 23,314 children — a number 82 percent higher than 10 years ago. Families comprise three-quarters of those living in shelters, says the Coalition

for the Homeless. Thousands more, many suffering from multiple health problems, sleep on the streets or on subways.

Income inequality and racist discrimination result in disproportionate numbers of people of color being included among the homeless: 58 percent of shelter residents are African American and 31 percent are Latinx. These populations are among the city’s lowest-paid workers.

Every day, greedy landlords enforce evictions of people who don’t have attorneys to fight the landlords’ Park Avenue law firms. In addition to job loss and low wages contributing to homelessness, tenants often must flee overcrowded or unsafe housing conditions and domestic violence — with nowhere to go.

The struggle for affordable housing should be part of every progressive agenda. Housing is a right! ☐

Coming soon

Two new compilations of articles from Workers World newspaper

■ Every Issue Is a Woman’s Issue

■ Class War in West Virginia: Education Workers Strike and Win!

Despite thousands of casualties Palestinians continue to resist Israel’s blockade of Gaza

By Sam Ordóñez

Heroic demonstrations against the Israeli occupation of Gaza continued on April 28 for the fifth week. Every Friday since March 30, the Great March of Return has brought thousands of demonstrators, armed only with their unbreakable resolve, to the militarized fence surrounding the Palestinian enclave.

The demonstrations are scheduled to continue until May 15, the day of the “Nakba” or “Catastrophe,” when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forced to flee their homes in the 1948 war that established the state of Israel.

According to Reuters, three Palestinians were killed and another 600 wounded by the Israeli Defense Forces on the last Friday. This brings the total casualties since the beginning of the Great March of Return to 42 Palestinians dead and over 5,000 wounded. Israel has deployed snipers and tear gas against the unarmed demonstrators since the demonstrations began.

Conditions in Gaza have been described as “the world’s largest open-air

prison,” as Israeli occupation forces have blockaded the small strip by land and sea since 2007, restricting the supply of key necessities, including medicine. The territory, which depends on Israeli-controlled power plants for electricity, receives only about four hours of energy a day.

The Great March of Return has demanded not only an end to the siege conditions experienced in Gaza, but the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes and villages in what is now Israeli-controlled territory. The images of thousands of unarmed protesters confronting occupation soldiers week after week in defiance of the violence used against them is reminiscent of the struggle against South African apartheid.

Israeli authorities have attempted to lay the blame for the horrific scenes coming out of Gaza at the feet of Hamas, the Palestinian organization that controls the territory. But it was the Israeli state that ordered snipers to fire on unarmed demonstrators, authorized the use of live ammunitions and tear gas, and intentionally deprived the people of Gaza of electricity and medicine. It was also

the Zionist project that forced Palestinians from their homes in the first place, and has continued to expand deeper and deeper into Palestinian territory.

Progressive people in the United State must unite not only to condemn the crimes of the Israeli government, but also to end the complicity of the U.S. government in those crimes. In addition to weapons sales and billions in yearly military aid, the U.S. has long protected Israel from international consequences, for example, by using its veto power in the United Nations Security Council to block an investigation into Palestinian deaths, days after the Great March of Return began.

Israel returns the favor by acting as the Pentagon’s attack dog against countries in the area that refuse to surrender their sovereignty, like Syria, Iran and Yemen.

Through military aid, diplomatic support and economic ties, the U.S. has enabled the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people. Washington has dropped all pretenses of neutrality since the election of Donald Trump, who in February

announced he would move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem.

On April 13, the same day the IDF gunned down unarmed protesters, the imperialist militaries of the U.S., Britain and France launched a total of 105 missiles at Damascus to “punish” the Syrian government for alleged chemical attacks. In truth, these missiles made it impossible for international investigators who arrived the next day to determine what had happened.

But the imperialists were silent when Israel used white phosphorus against Gaza in 2009, and of course, there has been no talk now from the capitalist politicians of any “humanitarian intervention” to protect the Palestinian people. The hypocrisy of the U.S. government is rarely so blatantly exposed as when it remains silent about the crimes of Israel.

As the Palestinian people continue their heroic resistance against Zionist occupation, it is the duty of progressives living in the belly of the beast not only to continue to draw attention to their struggle, but to demand an end to U.S. support for Israeli apartheid. □

WEEK 4 ‘Don’t prettify Israeli oppression’

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

For the fourth week in a row, Philadelphians gathered outside the Kimmel Center on April 28 to protest the Philadelphia Orchestra’s upcoming trip to Israel. Activists performed street theater, showed a video projected on an outdoor screen, spoke and chanted before a scheduled concert.

The campaign urging the orchestra to cancel its trip was given new energy following the publication of an opinion piece in the Philadelphia Inquirer on April 27 by one of the campaign organizers.

Author Susan Abulhawa wrote: “By performing in Israel, the orchestra will

provide musical accompaniment to the world’s last settler-colonial state, at a time when other artists are canceling appearances there following the Palestinian call for a global boycott (BDS) of Israel, modeled after the South African anti-apartheid boycott.

“Among the strategies Israel has launched to combat BDS is ‘Brand Israel,’ a propaganda initiative that seeks to exploit culture to divert attention from Israeli crimes. Arye Mekel, Israeli deputy director general for cultural affairs, explained it as the ‘way you show Israel’s prettier face.’

“The Philadelphia Orchestra’s trip to Israel is part of this strategy. ... The itinerary (open to orchestra members and patrons joining the trip) boasts multiple

visits with military personnel, including a ‘VIP visit to an IDF [military] base.’ This is the same military that has killed 42 Palestinians and wounded 5,000 more in the span of just four weeks. A video of snipers celebrating after shooting an unarmed Palestinian man in December was leaked and immediately went viral. In response, Israel reprimanded the person who filmed the shooting and is seeking to criminalize future videos of crimes against Palestinians.” □

Protesters call on Philadelphia Orchestra to cancel trip to the ‘last settler-colonial state.’
WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE



France: Class war and imperialist war

By Rémy Herrera

April 22 — France is no stranger to strikes and demonstrations. But in this early spring, the atmosphere is unusually tense. The president’s statements and media reports that order is being restored are so frequent that one can only suspect something serious is in the works.

Dissatisfaction has risen a notch in recent weeks, thanks mainly to President Emmanuel Macron. He says he’s paying close attention to the protests and is ready to hold talks with his critics, but he orders all those on the move beaten back.

In mid-April, he sent 2,500 soldiers to evacuate about 100 radical activists from the “zone to defend” (ZAD) in Notre-Dame-des-Landes in western France. These activists, from ecological and autonomous movements on the extreme left, had prevented construction of an airport there. They continue to occupy parts

of the area, which they have transformed into open-air squats, seeking alternative, collective agricultural spaces and rejecting private individual ownership.

The day after the soldiers intervened, five times as many people joined the “Zadists” to face the “forces of order.”

Macron launches riot police

At the same time, Macron launched the CRS riot police to dislodge students occupying the Sorbonne and Tolbiac to protest “educational reforms.” Students immediately occupied — or reoccupied — other universities, as in Nanterre, and even Sciences Po, a highly prestigious school from which the French president himself graduated. In Lille, students were forced to take their exams between two rows of police officers.

Some 300,000 people came out across the country for the national “interprofessional day of action” called by the CGT

union confederation on April 19. In Paris the demonstrators were met with water cannons and tear gas grenades, although nothing serious justified the repression.

Lacking popular support, Macron sought to demonstrate his strength by sending troops to attack the peaceful resistance. Since the big banks support him, it’s true he has something to feel strong about — strong enough to declare class war. And he can defy the people, in the name of “necessary reforms,” in contempt of social dialogue.

Today, Macron wants to break the backbone of the workers’ movement. He takes aim first at the railway workers, who stand at the forefront of the defense of public services and who enabled the protests to crystallize. Macron is acting like Britain’s Margaret Thatcher did in the 1980s when the Conservative government broke the miners’ strike.

On April 3, however, the first day of

the 36 national strikes planned by the French rail unions, the Anglo-French company Eurostar bosses, in charge of the high-speed railway service connecting France to Britain, tried to move workers from the Leyton depot in east London to Paris. Thanks to a joint action by the CGT and the RMT — the British trade union covering the transport sector — French and British workers organized to stop the scabbing. This illegal attempt to break the strike by using British employees was foiled by international workers’ solidarity.

The stakes in this struggle are high. Two visions of society are at odds: One, presented as “outdated,” is that of solidarity, social justice, renewed hope for youth and a common future; the other, neoliberal, the strategy of the elites, is destined to fail and leaves the majority of the population stuck in its tracks.

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WORKERS WORLD editorial

Who made off with the school money?

Teachers and all school workers are on the march, protesting pay so low some have to sell their blood to make ends meet. They are also marching for their students, who are trying to learn in overcrowded, mold-infested rooms using outdated, battered textbooks duct-taped together.

School bus drivers, teachers' aides, cafeteria workers are also fighting for job security and to keep their first-in-the-morning and last-in-the-afternoon steady presence for the children.

The big business media have made much of the fact that school worker actions are happening in Republican-dominated states that "went for Trump" in 2016. But education workers are not marching because of who they might have voted for.

They are rising up because their work with students and their workplace conditions have been devastated by austerity attacks. Education funding has withered while megabucks have gone to the already super-rich bosses and the military/industrial/banking complex.

In Puerto Rico, members of the Teachers' Federation (FMPR) have been tear-gassed and attacked by police for protesting the predatory Big Bank interests now deciding the fate of public schools there. The U.S.-imposed Fiscal Control Board is hell-bent on closing hundreds of schools and firing school workers.

After the Great Recession of 2008, banking interests gained a chokehold in Puerto Rico as it struggled with heavy municipal debt. Current FCB members, who were then banking executives, arranged loans, got big "fee service" payoffs and millions in interest for their banks. Now the banks want to loot public programs to get more millions — including closing and privatizing schools.

A similar fate befell Detroit, Mich., after its city bankruptcy. Detroit teachers held months of rolling "sickouts" there in 2015 and 2016 to protest the takeover of public schools by bought-and-paid-for politicians who placed bank profits before the lives of children.

In recent strikes in West Virginia and Oklahoma, education workers pointed to Big Oil as the major reason why pay for predominantly women teachers had hit rock-bottom, relative to that in the rest of the U.S., with school funding still at 2008 levels. In Oklahoma, where education funding dropped almost 24 percent over six years, Big Energy pays single-digit taxes on gross production, while some companies given tax loopholes pay nothing at all. (See previous Workers World articles on both state strikes.)

An Oklahoma student carried a sign at one demonstration against the hostile state legislators: "If we bled oil, maybe they'd care." West Virginia taxes on oil and gas are at a small 5 percent, and were reduced in previous years even as public services desperately needed funding.

Teachers are marching in Colorado, where the state has underfunded educa-

tion by \$6.6 billion since 2009. Teacher salaries after inflation dropped 17 percent in the last 15 years. (Colorado Education Association)

Instead of taxing Big Energy businesses, Colorado has funded education by taking money out of teacher and school worker paychecks.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government is desperate to find money for its ongoing military expansion. Trump's 2019 federal budget would boost defense spending by \$777 billion over the next 10 years, while deeply cutting nonmilitary programs. (vox.com)

And who benefits most from all the wars? Why, Big Oil, of course, along with the war industries.

Under the proposed budget, funds for the Department of Education would be cut by over \$3 billion, while private school vouchers and other "school choice" programs paid for with taxpayer money would increase by over \$1.6 billion. Also cut would be grants for summer- and after-school programs and other services that support students who are low-income, first-generation or have disabilities. (Washington Post, Feb. 16)

The result is an across-the-board federal reduction in funding for public schools. This will affect school workers coast-to-coast — from the Los Angeles bus drivers, special education aides, cafeteria workers and other school staff who recently voted to strike, to the Georgia school bus drivers in DeKalb County, a majority Black workforce, attempting to organize there.

Schools are getting hit because Big Brass want the bombs and drones, and the military-industrial complex wants its mega-profits.

Up against these mammoth forces, school workers are fighting back and asserting their power to withhold their labor to win better lives for themselves and their students. Despite being denied the right to strike in many "right-to-work" (for less) states, despite being threatened with jail and loss of their jobs, they are defying state governments and walking out.

These education workers are reforging a labor movement in solidarity with their communities.

On the frontline in the war now underway on peoples' needs, education workers, alongside the children in their schools, see every day the impact of Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids on im/migrant families, the terror of racist police violence on Black and Brown communities, the sickness and pain from privatized poisoned water systems and for-profit food, and the injustice of the school-to-prison pipeline.

The school workers are defending public education, each other, their students and their communities. Their outrage is spreading, and they are saying: "We won't back down!"

We are with them, and we say: "Make the banks, the bosses and the military brass pay!" □

Indigenous women & the land vs. settler colonialism

Part 2 of a talk by Mahtowin, co-leader of United American Indians of New England, at an International Working Women's Day forum on March 17 sponsored by the Boston branch of Workers World Party.

Mni Wiconi! Water is Life!

I want to dedicate my talk this afternoon to Berta Cáceres, an Indigenous defender of the land and water who was murdered by the Honduran government and paramilitaries, and to all the Indigenous and other water and land protectors throughout these continents, and to our Afro-Brazilian sister Marielle Franco who has just been assassinated. Let's also remember especially our relatives in Puerto Rico, Haiti and Palestine, in particular Ahed Tamimi and the other women and children who are imprisoned by the Zionists. I also want to express my solidarity with Black struggles here and around the world.

It has been really exciting to read about South Africa beginning the very necessary process of taking land back from white farmers there — from the settlers — so that African people would have more land. This hunger for the return of the land is strong among colonized and formerly colonized peoples everywhere. The question of land is central. When settlers dispossess people of their land, it means trying to disappear a whole people. The theft of land is what supports all the other realities on that land.

Sometimes, though, progressive people here do not realize that they too are living on stolen land. Stolen land is not something that just happens somewhere else. We have multiple oppressed nations within the U.S. and all our struggles here are happening on stolen land. The issue of protecting the land and returning the land to Indigenous nations is a fundamental one that underlies everything.

Settler colonialism and capitalism alter our relationships with land and water

There are two aspects of settler colonialism and its "kissing cousin" capitalism that I want to talk about: how they bring about violence against the land and against women, because the two are very much intertwined.

When you hear Indigenous people saying that "the Earth Is Our Mother," that is not just a quaint expression. It is an attempt to explain how deeply interconnected we are. In a traditional Indigenous view — and Indigenous nations are not all the same, this is generalizing — the land and water are our lives, our communities, entirely part of our bodies, not separated from our bodies. The water is part of our bodies. Everything is tied to land — how we treat each other, how we organize ourselves politically, how we treat the land. When we are removed from our land, when our land and water are abused, those are attacks on our bodies.

By contrast, the constant demand of settlers is for property and expansion. Settler colonialism and capitalism reduce our relationships to land as being no more than relationships as property to be bought and sold and exploited. They often also reduce people to property, so stolen Africans became chattel slaves. Indigenous people became slaves early on in many regions and also wards of the government who were not permitted to feed themselves, whose children were



Awaken humanity! There is no time.

kidnapped and who needed passes from the white agent to leave their reservations.

The remaking of land and bodies into property was necessary for settlement on stolen land. Native people were forced off those lands. Black people were landless — almost by definition — and very often worked the land for settlers. When Black people had land, it was because it was considered worthless, or because they were placeholders on the land who could be removed if the white settlers decided they wanted it.

For instance, the Gullah communities were pushed out when whites wanted to develop the coastal areas of South Carolina where they lived. We see this at play now in the gentrification that pushes Black and Brown people out of their communities. It was okay for them to live in and buy houses in a community at one point. Now they are no longer allowed to be there. Familiar, right?

Now, sometimes people say that "Gentrification is the new colonialism." It's not. Colonialism is the new colonialism — because it has never ended. Yet the underpinnings of settler colonialism certainly have led to gentrification.

The capitalist desire for profits at any cost and the settler-colonial contempt for the land as a living being leads to every sort of environmental violence — land and bodies of water, especially in certain communities, are violated through resource extraction, pipelines, waste dumping, toxic water — such as in Flint, Mich., or on the uranium-mining-tainted Navajo reservation.

This environmental violence is an attack on our physical bodies, because of our relationship with the land and water and because of the consequences that we experience.

Gendering of settler colonialism

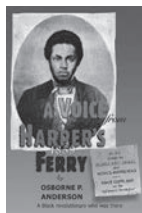
Land is also viewed as being passive, awaiting the active extraction of resources and profits. In other words, land is a woman, according to settler colonialism. Women's bodies are also viewed this way, as something to be exploited.

Settler colonialism has been heavily gendered. Many Indigenous nations here had an understanding of people being more than one fixed gender — what we now call Two Spirit people — and viewed gender as fluid. In addition, some Native nations had more than two genders. But the settlers imposed gender binaries, which was a direct attack on Two Spirit people as well as on the leadership of Indigenous women.

The very category of who is, and who is not, considered to be a woman is a tool of settler violence. The state uses gender

Continued on the next page

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A Voice from Harpers Ferry
Osborne P. Anderson's account of the raid on Harper's Ferry appeared in pamphlet form in 1861 right after the start of the Civil War. Includes essays by Mumia Abu-Jamal, Monica Moorehead and Vince Copeland.



The Klan & Government: Foes or Allies?
Examines the special relationship with the state that has allowed the Ku Klux Klan to exist for over a century despite its criminal history of lynchings, murders, and intimidation.



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violence to enforce white supremacy, anti-Blackness and settler colonialism.

Native women are attacked to destroy our families and our nations. Our women were excluded from treaty and other negotiations in the past and are largely excluded even from modern colonial systems of leadership. Even now, relatively few women are bureaucratic Bureau of Indian Affairs or Indian Act chiefs.

Settler colonialism has used gender to colonize through centuries of rape and sexual mutilation and through the widespread sexual violence of the residential schools and in foster care.

Capitalism — the economic system under which we live — commodifies our bodies and lands and resources. When we are viewed as property, we are given different valuations. People who are disabled or trans, LGBTQ or Two Spirit are usually on the lowest rungs.

The lives of Indigenous women are considered utterly worthless. That is part of why it was perfectly acceptable to the U.S., Canadian and Peruvian governments to sterilize thousands of Native women not that long ago. They did this in Puerto Rico, too. We and our children are disposable.

At the same time, Indigenous women are fetishized as being exotic and readily available to white men. You just have to look at a costume catalogue to see all the so-called “Pocahotties” costumes represented.

This violence spills into our family life — more Indigenous children are now being put into the foster care system than were put into the residential schools. This foster care is also done for profit, especially with all the privatized foster care centers that exist now. □

Worker unity needed vs. brutal war on immigrants

Continued from page 3

Track of Nearly 1,500 Migrant Children Placed With Sponsors” read a headline in the April 26 New York Times. Imagine a mother in Guatemala who has not heard from her child learning that. The Times writes: “The children were taken into government care after they showed up alone at the Southwest border. Most of the children are from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala — and were fleeing drug cartels, gang violence and domestic abuse, government data show.”

This comes after a scandal two years ago when this same agency disclosed that eight children had been “inadvertently” placed with human traffickers, who forced them to work on an egg farm in Ohio. The news that 1,500 children are lost should provoke a massive outcry. It has not.

No sanctuary anywhere

Wherever migrants or refugees go, whether it is at home, school, work or just walking in the street, ICE or the police can descend on them and lock them up. Workers going to court for routine check-ups on their immigration status are detained and often deported, despite their status being on hold in the system.

Amtrak and especially Greyhound have seen more Border Patrol agents coming on board and asking everyone for identification. The American Civil Liberties Union is arguing that “Greyhound has the right and the responsibility to its passengers to demand a warrant” before Border Patrol get on buses.

Trump has vilified the “sanctuary city” concept to continue his racist narrative that migrants are all “killers and thieves.”

PRIMERO DE MAYO:

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estableciendo las conexiones entre los movimientos de lucha en cada corriente de liberación. En el movimiento Las Vidas Negras Importan, la violencia entrelazada que enfrentan las mujeres de color ha sido puesta en primer plano por las acciones de #SayHerName. Muchas de las trabajadoras de educación en huelga en West Virginia y Oklahoma han citado las marchas de mujeres de 2016 como inspiración. En las recientes manifestaciones provocadas por la masacre en una escuela secundaria de Florida, las/os jóvenes han planteado militantemente el problema de prisión en vez de escuela, la policía racista, la violencia estatal y la guerra imperialista de EUA como inextricablemente ligadas a la “violencia armada”.

Lecciones indelebles de resistencia provienen de pueblos originarios que todavía luchan por la Tierra, y se oponen a las tuberías explotadoras y contaminantes de petroleras en Standing Rock y en otros lugares. Quinientos años después de la incautación y colonización de las tierras indígenas, financiadas por capitalistas europeos de esa época, los pueblos indígenas siguen luchando.

Podemos estudiar y aprender de los cientos de años de resistencia en las rebeliones de personas esclavizadas africanas en EUA: en Carolina del Sur, 1739; Nueva York, 1741; la costa alemana en Louisiana, 1811; Nat Turner en Virginia, 1831; y un sinnúmero de otras no registradas. Podemos aprender de la resistencia de Haití en 1804, cuando las personas es-

esperanza, resistencia, solidaridad

clavizadas ganaron su libertad librando su propia guerra de liberación.

Podemos animarnos con la resistencia del Movimiento de Million Worker March el Primero de Mayo de 2005. Iniciado por sindicalistas negros con conciencia de clase en la costa oeste, la costa este y el sur de EUA y respaldado por el Partido Workers World-Mundo Obrero. Esta acción tuvo como objetivo el 1 de mayo afirmar que las/os trabajadores deben luchar independientemente en su propio nombre, liberadas/os de los partidos demócrata y republicano.

Podemos energizarnos con el renacimiento histórico del Primero de Mayo 2006 con las huelgas lideradas principalmente por trabajadoras/es de bajos salarios y las/os inmigrantes en todo EUA, enardecidos por el reaccionario proyecto de ley Sensenbrenner. El estado de California esencialmente se cerró con una huelga general ese Primero de Mayo, mientras millones marcharon a nivel nacional. Esta acción masiva fue organizada por trabajadoras/es del Caribe, México y América Central, quienes traían la experiencia de la lucha contra la devastación en sus países de origen por el imperialismo económico y militar de EUA por dos siglos de bloqueos, monopolio de “libre comercio”, invasión y ocupación.

Ahora todas/os los trabajadores en EUA están tratando de sobrevivir a la ruina de la misma economía de austeridad. Los esquemas de privatización de los grandes bancos y las finanzas se roban lo que el pueblo se ha ganado para su bien común. La explotación capitalista

está destruyendo los sistemas de agua, de transporte, los sistemas educativos desde Detroit y Flint, Michigan, hasta Puerto Rico.

Mientras tanto, la supremacía blanca está siendo brutalmente movilizada por las fuerzas antiobreras del capitalismo en un último intento por evitar la lucha unitaria. ¡Tenemos que derrocar la supremacía blanca como las/os luchadores por la libertad de Durham, Carolina del Norte, derrocaron un monumento racista!

El Primero de Mayo es un llamado internacional para abolir el capitalismo y reemplazarlo por un sistema socialista que otorgue poder a todas/os los trabajadores sin importar nacionalidad, género o identidad, orientación sexual, habilidades, edad, empleado o desempleado, en sindicato o no, o trabajando en la economía familiar.

Mientras más de nuestra clase, la clase trabajadora multinacional y multigeneracional desarrolle un odio más profundo al capitalismo y una mayor apertura a la construcción de una sociedad socialista que priorice las necesidades humanas, la solidaridad es nuestra mejor herramienta y nuestra mejor arma. □

France: Class war & imperialist war

Continued from page 9

How long will this majority — the world of labor — shrink from confronting the privileged minority that is crushing it?

How can workers find unity?

On April 19, workers in the chemical, electrical and gas industries entered the battle. A war of attrition — the regime against the workers — is at hand. The question asked this April 19 is the right one: How can the workers find, in their common struggles, the conditions for unity? Despite splits among the unions — in which younger generations are discovering what their elders have long known: that the social-democratic factions betray the workers — a labor front is emerging.

Certainly, for the time being, the forces of the political left are not up to the challenges. The refusal to discuss the impact of the euro as the common currency, as well as the straitjacket imposed by the big European bankers and bosses, blocks advancement. Only this lack of organization on the political left allows the bourgeoisie to continue to sleep easily. Meanwhile, the far right — the National Front and its fellow thinkers — is keeping a close watch.

Monarchical France first conquered Algeria in 1830 as the French rulers were crushing a revolution at home. In 1848 France again massacred Algerians fighting for liberation while also turning its guns against the workers’ revolution at home. In both 1830 and 1848, an imperialist war was needed in tandem with the class war at home.

Similar music is being heard today. Last week Macron sang to us the “chemical weapons” verse sung by George W. Bush 15 years ago as a pretext to invade Iraq. Macron then obediently went to war behind Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Theresa May to bomb Syria. These are the warrior faces of capitalism.

Herrera is a Marxist economist, researcher at Centre National Recherche Scientifique, working at the Centre d’Économie de la Sorbonne, Paris. Translation: WW staff.

Our goal is to prosecute every case that is brought to us.” His remarks and a Trump tweet were directed specifically against the heroic caravan that has made its way from Central America through Mexico, arriving near the end of April in the Tijuana-San Diego area.

Which way forward to defend migrants and refugees?

What will it take for the labor movement, the women’s movement, and all progressive and working-class movements of every age, ability, gender and race to unite and rise up in a militant and revolutionary struggle to stop the war on migrants and refugees?

This modern war on migrants, which began in 2005, is rapidly creeping into a fascist state of terror. Children are literally being torn out of the arms of their parents and jailed, placed in strangers’ homes, forced to work in factories or lost altogether. Tens of thousands die in the desert, much like those brave souls who have died in the Mediterranean.

No place is safe, neither the homeland you want to return to nor the nation that defiled your homeland.

This growth of police-state tactics affects not only migrants, refugees and the undocumented, but all workers. It is meant to divide and conquer by whipping up whites against all people of color.

Workers and oppressed must not be distracted by Trump’s shenanigans. Experienced, ruthless warmongers and white supremacists like Jeff Sessions are running Washington and carrying out terrorist policies.

Migrants and refugees are but one sector of the oppressed who are being terrorized. Black Lives Still Matter. Trans Lives Still Matter.

In this wave of terror lies the sea of resistance. □



Protesta 30 de abril en Filadelfia: ‘Meek está libre, ahora liberar Mumia’

Por Betsey Piette
Filadelfia

El rapero Meek Mill fue liberado de prisión el 24 de abril luego de que la Corte Suprema de Pensilvania ordenara al juez de Filadelfia Genece Brinkley, quien encarceló a Mill en noviembre de 2017 por violación de libertad condicional, que lo liberara inmediatamente.

Una semana después de que el fiscal de distrito Larry Krasner llamó a un nuevo juicio para Mill, la corte estatal concedió “extraordinario alivio” por dudas sobre la credibilidad de Reginald V. Graham, el oficial que lo arrestó.

Graham, acusado de mentir para asegurar la condena de Mill, estaba en una lista de 29 “policías faltos de confianza” que la oficina de Krasner hizo pública en marzo. Esta lista de “No llamar” se usó para advertir a los fiscales contra el uso de estos oficiales como testigos porque su mala conducta había planteado problemas de credibilidad. A ningún abogado defensor, incluyendo los de Mill, se le informó sobre la existencia de esta lista hasta su reciente publicación.

Mill declaró: “Aunque estoy bendecido por tener los recursos para luchar contra esta situación injusta, entiendo que mucha gente de color en todo el país no tiene ese lujo y planeo usar mi plataforma para arrojar luz sobre estas cuestiones. “(Philadelphia Inquirer, 25 de abril)

Deandra Patrice Jefferson, con el grupo contra la brutalidad policial Philly REAL Justice, dijo: “El caso de Meek es representativo de lo que sucede en las cortes de Filadelfia todos los días. Estamos claros de que el sistema aquí está corrupto. Este caso fue clave y un catalizador para muchos problemas”.

Mill tiene un amplio equipo de apoyo formado por abogados, atletas, artistas y políticos, incluidos el actual gobernador de Pensilvania Tom Wolf y el ex gobernador Ed Rendell. Rendell también ocupó los cargos de fiscal de distrito y alcalde de Filadelfia, así como también jefe del Comité Nacional Demócrata.

¿‘Alivio extraordinario’ para Mumia?

Casualmente, Mill fue liberado el día del cumpleaños del prisionero político más famoso de Filadelfia: Mumia Abu-Jamal, ex miembro del Partido Panteras Negras y renombrado periodista. Abu-Jamal es una de las “muchas personas de color” sin el lujo de contar con el apoyo de políticos adinerados.

De hecho, Rendell jugó un papel clave al oponerse a los intentos de Abu-Jamal de ganar un juicio justo. El gobernador Wolf se ha negado reiteradamente a cumplir con las/os seguidores de Abu-Jamal, aceptando sólo a regañadientes cajas de peticiones pidiendo el tratamiento de hepatitis C para Abu-Jamal y otros 6.000 prisioneros de Pennsylvania en 2016.

Desde su arresto en diciembre de 1981 en relación con el tiroteo del policía de Filadelfia Daniel Faulkner, el caso de Abu-Jamal ha estado plagado de corrupción judicial, incluida la coerción de testigos y la retención de información para la defensa.

Al menos 15 de los 35 policías involucrados en la recolección de pruebas en el caso fueron posteriormente declarados culpables de falsificación de pruebas en otros casos. El estado también afirmó que no pudo realizar pruebas de balística de rutina que hubieran probado si Abu-Jamal en realidad disparó su arma o si su arma había sido utilizada.

Fotos de Polakoff refutan testigos de la fiscalía

En 2011, el investigador alemán Dr. Michael Schiffmann de la Universidad de Heidelberg descubrió 26 fotografías tomadas por el fotógrafo independiente de Filadelfia Pedro Polakoff, una de las primeras personas en llegar al lugar después de la muerte de Faulkner.



MO/WW FOTO: JOE PIETTE

Desde Meek a Mumia, ¡libére a todos!

Polakoff ofreció sus fotos a la policía y a los fiscales, pero nunca se usaron en el juicio de Abu-Jamal de 1982 ni en las audiencias posteriores a la condena.

Polakoff le dijo a Schiffmann que era la “escena de crimen más desordenada que he visto”. No estaba asegurada, un hecho también declarado por el periodista de Filadelfia Linn Washington Jr. Las fotos disputan fuertemente testigos de la fiscalía. Si las fotos de Polakoff hubieran sido entregadas a la defensa, podrían haber destruido completamente el caso del estado.

En el juicio de 1982, todos los testigos de la fiscalía declararon que Abu-Jamal estaba sobre Faulkner — quien yacía en la acera — y le disparó varias balas de calibre .38, una de las cuales lo mató al instante. Aunque supuestamente erraron varios disparos, las fotos de Polakoff no muestran evidencia de que las balas calibre .38 que no hirieron a Faulkner, dieran en la acera. No hubo evidencia de fisuras, agujeros o concreto roto en la acera.

El taxista Robert Chobert, testificando por la fiscalía, afirmó que se estacionó justo detrás del patrullero de Faulkner con una vista directa del asesinato. En la foto de Polakoff del auto de Faulkner, el taxi de Chobert no se ve por ningún lado. También era muy improbable que Chobert, en libertad condicional en ese momento y conduciendo un taxi sin licencia, se hubiera estacionado detrás de un carro de policía.

Otras fotos de Polakoff muestran al policía Steve Forbes sosteniendo las armas recuperadas en la escena con sus propias manos, incluso cambiando las pistolas de una mano a otra. En el juicio de 1982, Forbes negó tocar directamente las armas.

Tan dañinas como estas fotos son para el caso de la fiscalía, sin un nuevo juicio para Abu-Jamal, siguen siendo inadmisibles como evidencia. El estado tiene conocimiento de esto, por lo que ha hecho todo lo posible para evitar que haya otro juicio.

El 30 de abril se exigirá: ‘¡Krasner, libere los archivos!’

El 30 de abril, las/os partidarios de Abu-Jamal estuvieron llenando la sala del tribunal y las calles, para exigir que el fiscal Krasner haga lo correcto y publique todos los archivos relacionados con el papel del ex fiscal Ronald Castille en este caso.

Una sentencia del Tribunal Supremo EUA de 2016 — Williams vs. Pennsylvania — determinó que Castille había violado los derechos constitucionales de Terrance Williams, ya que había desempeñado un papel directo en ese caso como fiscal pero luego, al convertirse en juez del Tribunal Supremo del Estado, se negó a descalificarse cuando el caso compareció ante ese tribunal para una audiencia. El caso de apelación actual de Abu-Jamal se basa en esta sentencia.

Si Meek Mill mereció un “alivio extraordinario” porque la fiscalía retuvo pruebas de que un policía mintió, Mumia Abu-Jamal merece ser liberado inmediatamente porque la oficina del fiscal tiene cajas con amplia evidencia de que el manejo de este caso por parte de la fiscalía fue corrupto desde el primer día. □

PRIMERO DE MAYO: esperanza, resistencia, solidaridad

EDITORIAL

La esperanza y la resistencia se levantan en el Día Internacional de las/os Trabajadores de 2018 cuando oleadas de huelguistas se extienden por EUA y Puerto Rico. Miles de maestras/os, conductores de autobuses, trabajadoras/es de cafetería, consejeras/os escolares, conserjes, asistentes de aula y otras/os marchan desafiadamente.

Están saliendo de sus escuelas a las calles, a los pasillos del gobierno estatal, para enfrentar los ataques de multimillonarios de derechas que tienen la intención de destruir la educación pública y atacar el bien público. Están marchando de West Virginia a Kentucky, de Oklahoma a Arizona, de Wisconsin a Georgia y más allá.

¿Esta oleada de acción continuará y se extenderá a otras/os trabajadores en otros empleos y lugares? La respuesta está en nuestras acciones colectivas.

En primer lugar, podemos y debemos construir una fuerza inquebrantable en las luchas de las/os trabajadores forjando solidaridad con otras/os trabajadores. Debemos estar al lado de las/os demás en las luchas contra: la supremacía blanca, agresiones a refugiadas/os y migrantes, ataques a mujeres, islamofobia y anti LGBTQ, falta de respeto y barreras para las personas con discapacidades.

Debemos comprometernos unas/os a otras/os: “Lucharé por usted como si su lucha fuera la mía”. ¡Porque lo es!

Eso significa proporcionar solidaridad material y real a las/os refugiados y trabajadores inmigrantes que son secuestrados y encarcelados todos los días por el Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas desde California, hasta el norte de Nueva York. Eso significa unirse a Las Vidas Negras Importan para exigir justicia para las víctimas del terror policial; defender a las/os trabajadores negros, que son blanco de los supremacistas blancos, y son arrestados ya estén sentados en un Starbucks en Filadelfia, o abatidos mientras trabajan en Waffle House en Nashville, Tenn., o en estén en la misma iglesia de la luchadora por la libertad Denmark Vesey en Charleston, Carolina del Sur.

Debemos defender a las mujeres que les imponen la opción inhumana de violación y abuso sexual, o sus trabajos, desde trabajadoras agrícolas hasta actrices. Debemos luchar para garantizar la protección en el lugar de trabajo a lesbianas, gays, bisexuales, trans y homosexuales y para revertir las viles leyes anti LGBTQ.

Mientras el gobierno y el ejército EUA continúan empujando la intolerancia anti-musulmana para aumentar los ataques contra las personas en EUA y también para lanzar una guerra contra Siria e Irán, debemos exponer cómo el presupuesto de guerra sangra la vida de todas/os los trabajadores, drenando dinero para la atención de la salud, la educación y las esperanzas de jubilación.

Debemos exponer a todas/os, que las/os trabajadores con discapacidades están en peligro hasta el punto de perder sus vidas por las medidas de austeridad tales como exigir que las personas trabajen para obtener Medicaid, recortar los presupuestos escolares para que haya menos ayudantes de educación especial o recortar el acceso al transporte público.

En un nivel práctico, esta solidaridad del Primero de Mayo puede llevarse a cabo en acciones cotidianas, con apoyo a los derechos de las/os trabajadores en los piquetes, donde sea que estemos, a marchar y reunirse semanalmente en solidaridad con las luchas locales. Podemos hacer visible que “estoy luchando por su lucha como si fuera la mía”.

La esperanza ya es visible en la forma en que se están

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