To stop police killings

#Frisco500 occupy City Hall

By Dave Welsh
San Francisco

Inspired by the stamina of the “Frisco Five” hunger strikers, hundreds of chanting supporters occupied the rotunda and grand staircase inside City Hall for seven hours on May 6. Their demand, “We won’t leave City Hall until the mayor fires Greg Suhr,” refers to the top cop complicit in a string of police murders of Black and Brown people in the city.

Dubbed the #Frisco500, the protesters held their ground after the 8 p.m. closing time. Then, in a two-hour struggle, baton-wielding sheriff’s deputies finally succeeded in shoving, hitting, poking, pepper-spraying and dragging them all from City Hall by 10:30. There were 33 arrests and many injuries.

Protesters cited Chief Suhr’s long record of justifying the police killing spree, even in circumstances — as in the cases of Luis Gongora, Mario Woods, Alex Nieto, Kenneth Harding and Amilcar Perez-Lopez — where there was absolutely no justification for the use of lethal force.

Meanwhile, the Frisco Five — Cristina Gutierrez, her son Ilyich Sato, Ike Pinkston, Sellassie Blackwell and Edwin Lindo — were hospitalized after two weeks with no solid food. A day after the battle at City Hall, they decided to end their 17-day hunger strike, at the urging of their supporters, with a call to step up the struggle to end police impunity. “It started with five of us fasting outside the Mission Police Station. Now it’s the #Frisco500,” they said. “Up next is the #Frisco5000.”

Four days earlier, 300 marched from Mission Station, led by the Frisco Five in wheelchairs pushed by medical students in white coats who had been monitoring the fasters’ condition. The marchers briefly took over the major intersection at Market and Van Ness, where a young Black singer gave a slow, moving interpretation of Sam Cooke’s “A Change Is Gonna Come.” By the time they reached City Hall, the crowd had swelled to nearly a thousand. A huge banner stretched across City Hall steps: “No Consequence, No Confidence. Stop Police Impunity.” People chanted: “Back up, back up, we want our freedom, freedom. Racist-ass cops we don’t need to stop police killings #Frisco500 occupy City Hall. ‘em, need ‘em.” Also, “How do you spell murder? SFPD” and “SFPD-KKK.”

While the hunger strikers were upstairs in their wheelchairs, challenging the Board of Supervisors to take police murders seriously, people outside held a speakout. One said, “This has a long history. When the Black Panther Party was formed in Oakland, what were they doing? Trying to stop racist policing in the Bay Area.” One person gave a possible reason for Democratic Mayor Ed Lee’s inaction on the police: that he’s under consideration to be ambassador to China if Hillary Clinton wins the election.

Art Sato, longtime jazz programmer at KPFA radio and father of one of the hunger strikers, said: “As a Japanese American born in a U.S. concentration camp, I want to say to my son, I’m proud of you. I’m proud of Asians for Black Lives.” San Francisco-born, Filipino-American poet Tony Robles read a poem for the Frisco Five: “It took a hunger strike to make me feel alive in a city that feels dead. I’m proud to see the Frisco that I knew, once again.”

The movement to fire Chief Suhr, stubbornly resist—Continued on page 3

Cross-country solidarity with Verizon workers

Philadelphia community support for strikers.

What has happened to jobs?

Editorial: Solidarity with People’s Korea
Panther 21 hero Afeni Shakur, present!

By Lamont Lilly

Afeni Shakur died at the age of 69 on May 2. On April 2, 1969, 21 members of the Harlem Chapter of the Black Panther Party were formally indicted and charged with 156 counts of “conspiracy” to blow up subways and police stations, five local department stores, six railroads and the Bronx-based New York Botanical Garden.

By the early morning hours of April 2, mass sweeps were conducted citywide to round up the Panthers. Five Panthers were charged with murder, a death which had a big red line across her name. The Panthers, with a legal aid, a law enforcement, agencies, ranging from the CIA, FBI and U.S. Marshals to the New York State Police, worked simultaneously to coordinate assaults on Panther home offices and community-based offices. After the raids, 10 Panther men and two Panther women were formally arrested, processed and quickly jailed. To anyone who supported radical politics in the late 1960s, there was no doubt that the indictment of the Panther Party in New York was a political and racist frame-up to not only “disrupt, discredit and destroy,” but utterly dismantle the Black Panther Party from the inside out.

The absurd and excessive nature of such charges was clearly intended as a federal effort to pit chapters and regions against each other in a manner that would totally paralyze Panther leadership and community base. For the Panthers who fortunately weren’t murdered or assassinated, exiled or imprisoned, the courts became the ruling class’s convenient and effective form of legal lynching, a straitjacket beyond the walls — a robbery of valuable time and resources.

Each member of the 21 was held on $500,000 bail, totaling over $2 million. It was not until January 1970 that the first two Panthers were able to post bail. That was 22-year-old Alice Faye Williams, better known as Afeni Shakur.

Self-appointed, Black anointed

In a grievous and tedious trial, Afeni Shakur (facing 30 years of prison time) daringly chose to be her own attorney in court, partly because financial resources were already razor-thin. Afeni, however, methodically conducted her own legal research, her own interviews, as well as in-court cross examinations — fully realizing that “she would be the one serving, not the lawyers.” She was the only Panther who served as her own counsel.

Here was a small-framed, impoverished Black woman from the backwoods of Lumberton, N.C., standing up a full team of New York State prosecutors and — outwitting a full cast of establishment-owned media outlets.

Here was a simple mother with no formal degree going legally toe to toe with COINTELPRO.

Despite the odds, after all the surveillance, wiretaps, wiretapping, infiltration and frame-ups, not one shred of state’s evidence stood up in court. In their undoing efforts to “discredit,” it was revealed during the trial that the Panther Party operated as a collective. The jedi warriors who, under oath, admitted their role as provocateurs.

Though the case of the Panther 21 was the longest trial in New York state history, on her own guts and wit, Afeni Shakur successfully secured her freedom. No money. No attorney. No privilege. Pregnant with her second child, Tupac Amaru Shakur. What Afeni was able to do in that courtroom was nothing short of miraculous. Magical. Mind-blowing.

On May 12, 1971, after two years of legal proceedings, all 21 Panthers were acquitted of the charges. The jury needed a mere 45 minutes to see the truth. Sister soldier, woman warrior

Afeni Shakur may have hailed from the Black Panther Party’s esteemed Harlem Chapter, but her roots were in the Black Belt South. Viciously poor, but still mobile, her family moved to the Bronx when she was 11 years old. Her inquisitive selection for the Black Nationalist scene fit right in there.

Afeni first learned of the Black Panther Party at the corner of 125th Street and 7th Avenue while listening to BPP co-founder Bobby Seale deliver a speech. A dedicated soldier from the very beginning, Afeni always placed principle over profit, the people above her own individual desires.

Black Panther Party member and New York co-defendant Dhoruba Bin Wahad very warmly remembers Afeni as “the type of person that worked hard, who would stay up all night to get leaflets delivered.”

Continued on the next page
Detroiters to bank: Housing is a right!

In her youth, Detroit resident Barbara Campbell was an associate of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Today, as a senior, she has become an anti-foreclosure activist. In a city that has become the country’s foreclosure capital, Campbell is refusing to become a statistic.

Flagstar Bank has gone to court to have Barbara Campbell evicted from a home she purchased in 2006. After being diagnosed with cancer, she applied for a mortgage modification. Campbell has kidney failure and uses a wheelchair. She had been told to hold off on making payments while her application was being reviewed. “And how the police is exactly, did an about-face, foreseeing on her home for failure to make payments. Since then, her home has been sold more than once, changing hands between Nation- star, Flagstar and Fannie Mae, which is owned by the federal government.

Campbell has fought the eviction and is represented by the heroic people’s lawyer, Vanessa Fluker. On May 5, dozens of supporters pick et- ed a branch of the bank, making it clear to Flagstar that Barbara Campbell is not alone. They chanted, “Housing is a right! Fight, fight, fight!” and “Dreams are for leaves, not the banker thieves!”— referring to the fact that, in Detroit, dumpsters are used to collect yard waste—as well as personal belongings during an eviction. The action was called by De troit Eviction Defense. Members of the Movement Now! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs and several United Auto Workers locals joined the picket line. Campbell, who came to the protest with her son, thanked her community supporters.

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Afeni was the kind of comrade who garnered respect from both the women and the men. As former Black Panther Jas mal Joseph stated, “Afeni taught me more about being a man, more than any other woman or woman.” (thenews.com, May 23) As the only high school student of the Panther 21, Joseph very often looked to Afeni for guidance and leadership.

The name Afeni was given to her by a community elder from South Carolina, a descendant of the Yoruba tradition who chose the name Afeni meaning “lover of the people.” Afeni was the daughter of the Yoruba community elder from South Carolina, a descendant of the Yoruba tradition who chose the name Afeni meaning “lover of the people.”

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ed by the city’s political establishment, is nevertheless gaining momentum. The California Federation of Teachers execu tive council has called for his firing and the appointment of the police who killed Mario Woods. San Francisco Jobs With Justice has called for “new leadership” in the police department. There is also out rage over the police “cover-up” of the killing of Dedric Campbell.

On April 30 to demand justice for Dedric Colvin, a 13-year-old boy who had been “always early by plainclothes police officers. Colvin, who survived, was shot in the leg and shoulder during an encounter with police, who say he was carrying a basketball and a toy BB gun. When his mother tried to assist her son, who was lying on the ground badly wounded, police responded by handcuff ing her. They held her in the jail cell before she was finally allowed to see her son at Johns Hopkins Hospital. The shooting occurred on April 28, the one-year anniversary of the Baltimore Uprising, which came in response to the police killing of Freddie Gray. One year later, many residents are left wondering what happened to the promises made to the community by police officials and lo cal government. Protesters have said they are more committed than ever to fighting police brutality in Baltimore.

— Cody Webb

#Frisco500 occupy City Hall

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Community members raked them over the coals for being “fake investigators” whose purpose was to whitewash the police murders and cool out the commu nity. Minister Chris Muhammad, of the Nation of Islam, sharply questioned the DDJ emissaries, forcing them to admit they had no investigatory powers and were only in San Francisco to “do an as sessment” of the situation. The community is not placing much faith in paper investigations. Their focus is now on direct action to force change. As Alyssa, champion tweet journalist from the days of Occupy Oakland, tweeted from inside City Hall during the May 6 occupation: “I’ve been to a lot of protests — but never seen people hold so strong as tonight, nonviolent but strong and serious. So much respect for the #Frisco500.”

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Resistance to racist police attacks grows

Baltimore Baltimore has become a national focus of protests against police violence and murder and attacks. Here, Baltimore activists describe three recent events in which the Black community and its supporters mobil ized in the fight to bring the police to justice.

On anniversary of rebellion, cops shoot 13-year-old

People gathered in East Baltimore on April 30 to demand justice for Dedric Colvin, a 13-year-old boy who had been “always early by plainclothes police officers. Colvin, who survived, was shot in the leg and shoulder during an encounter with police, who say he was carrying a basketball and a toy BB gun. When his mother tried to assist her son, who was lying on the ground badly wounded, police responded by handcuff ing her. They held her in the jail cell before she was finally allowed to see her son at Johns Hopkins Hospital. The shooting occurred on April 28, the one-year anniversary of the Baltimore Uprising, which came in response to the police killing of Freddie Gray. One year later, many residents are left wondering what happened to the promises made to the community by police officials and lo cal government. Protesters have said they are more committed than ever to fighting police brutality in Baltimore.

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New medical report supports Tyrone West family’s charge

Nearly three years ago, police in northeast Baltimore killed a 44-year-old African-American man. While the details of the so-called death of Tyrone West on July 18, 2013, are for the most part un known, the story is all too familiar in the United States.

Police in an unmarked vehicle made West pull his car over merely for “sus pi cious activity.” At some point, a struggle broke out in which the police attacked West with his batons, fists and pepper spray. The ordeal ultimately killed him.

In a typical cover-up, the medical ex aminer’s report stated that West died from a heart attack due to summer heat and a “pre-existing heart condition” — not from excessive force by several police of ficers who beat him. The police who mur dered him were then cleared of any wrong doing and never charged with any crime. There was one problem with this nar rative: West’s family says he was in good health and had no heart condition.

A recent independent review of the ex aminer’s report by Dr. Williams of Mem orial Hospital in Salem County, N.J., says the evidence points not to a “bad heart” having killed West, but in stead to “positional asphyxiation.” He was suffocated. The family is calling for the body to be exhumed so another autopsy can be performed, this time inde pendently of the police.

This new review of the case is the latest action in a long struggle by West’s family for justice. Towanda Jones, West’s sister, has been a particularly active and visi ble fighter for her brother. For 146 weeks — on every Wednesday since West was murdered by the police — she has held a protest somewhere in Baltimore as part of a series of “West Wednesdays.” The murder of Tyrone West, as well as the complicity of the medical examiner and the ultimate lack of police account ability, is emblematic, on the one hand, of the war being waged by the police forces of the capitalist U.S. government against all nationally oppressed peoples. On the other hand, the tenacity and defiance shown by his family and other groups who have time and again taken to the workers.org May 19, 2016 Page 3
Hundreds of youth serving life sentences

Protest calls for ending ‘death by incarceration’

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

A rally on May 6 called on Pennsylvania to end the legal sentence “juvenile life without parole” (JLWOP), also known as “death by incarceration.” The gathering took place in Philadelphia, which has sentenced more children to die in prison than anywhere else in the world.

The Mother's Day Rally to Restore Families & Communities and Bring Our Loved Ones Home drew close to 100 people in the Arch Street Methodist Church, which had been forced inside because of rain. Speakers included mothers of people serving JLWOP sentences, mothers who have lost children to violence in Philadelphia, prerecorded audio and written statements from people currently serving JLWOP, and other members of the Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration.

Patricia Vickers, Anita Colon, Ellen Melchiondo and Lorraine Hawe exposed raw emotions as they described the pain of having their loved ones held in prison for decades until their eventual death. Kimberly King spoke as a mother doubly affected. Her eldest brother was given a mandatory life sentence without chance of parole 24 years ago. Her younger brother was later killed at 22. “I have forgiven, because in truth, no matter what happens to that young man who took my brother's life, it does not make the pain easier. It does not bring him back. And how can I very well condemn this brother when I ask for forgiveness for my brother?”

Kemp Songster, a 44-year-old serving a life sentence at Graterford Prison, spoke via phone to the rally. Imprisoned since the age of 16 after he was convicted of first-degree murder for stabbing another teenage runaway, he described how he has matured, taking advantage of every educational opportunity available to him in prison and mentoring other prisoners. “Some of us never stop looking for ways to express how deeply ashamed and sorry we are,” Songster said. “What we bring to the table will never measure up to what we took from the table.”

Melchiondo added, “I recently spent the day at Muncy [Women's Prison] at an event to honor the women serving juvenile life without parole, and I can tell you not one of them is irreparably corrupted. In fact, I firmly believe it is humanly possible to predict that. Perhaps it is the city and the state that are irreparably corrupted.”

School-to-prison pipeline

The United States is the only country that sentences people to life without parole for crimes committed before turning 18. Some 500 people sentenced to life in prison when they were juveniles are being held in Pennsylvania's prison system — more than in any other state. Philadelphia accounts for over 300 JLWOP sentences — more than from any other city.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that mandatory JLWOP sentences are unconstitutional. The court's 2012 decision in Miller v. Alabama found that mandatory life sentences for children violate the 8th Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment. In January, the Supreme Court clarified that the decision applies retroactively. Yet in Pennsylvania, people serving JLWOP are still awaiting relief from these unconstitutional sentences.

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The Sentencing Project, “Juvenile Life Without Parole: An Overview,” the court emphasized several points in reaching its conclusion. “Researching the root causes of the harshest sentences — more than from any other state. Philadelphia employs a security agency that patrols local housing projects and has earned the disdain of many Rockford residents throughout — officers before being seen by a doctor, giving them enough time for surgery and then thrown in jail without pain medication. Winston was charged with two counts of second-degree assault, two counts of resisting arrest, failure to obey, obstructing an officer, and possession of a firearm not to exceed 5 inches.

Winston has since been released, and is undergoing therapy. The Baltimore Sun reported last month that she was shot in the leg. "I'm being kept alive," she told the newspaper. "I'm just grateful to be alive."

Policy officials and news reports have claimed Blake was armed with a gun, even when he was shot. "If they shot him and killed him, and nothing will be done," Blake's mother said in an interview with the Baltimore Sun.

Police officials and news reports have claiming he was armed with multiple guns. Yet no guns have been produced by the police nor any evidence shown to support claims that he was a threat. The coroner's office has confirmed that the cause of Blake's death was gunshot wounds, but has not said how many times he was shot or where on his body.

The names of the Metro officers have not been released, and they have not been charged in the killing. Family members are demanding charges be brought against them and plan to continue to hold demonstrations until justice has been delivered. Another protest has been called for May 23. "We demand that the city of Rockford bring charges,“ Blake's family said in a statement.

Justice for Jovan!

By Andrea Bahuelos and Tommy Cavanaugh
Rockford, III.

Dozens of family and community members marched in downtown Rockford on May 3 chanting “Justice for Jovan!” to protest the murder of Valentia Fresco, whose name was the last name shared by Jovan Blake, a girl of five children, Blake had a girlfriend with whom he had planned to build a life. Blake was gunned down by two Metro Enforcement officers on April 16 across from Auburn Manor while he was celebrating his 34th birthday.

Blake was shot and killed by police after a car chase. Multiple witnesses said police officers had chased Blake's car through the city after he was seen driving a black Honda Accord. Blake was shot and killed by police officers after a car chase. Multiple witnesses said police officers had chased Blake's car through the city after he was seen driving a black Honda Accord.

Winston's brother, who was not named but who is described as a black family man, told the police that Blake was shot and killed by police officers after a car chase. Multiple witnesses said police officers had chased Blake's car through the city after he was seen driving a black Honda Accord.

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Palestinians speak of ‘the Catastrophe’

By Dolores Cox
New York

Two Palestinians, 86-year-old Mariam Fathalla and 23-year-old Amena El-Ashkar, speaking at an event at New York University’s School of Law on May 2, described what the establishment of the apartheid state of Israel has meant for Palestinians over the last 68 years. A third guest speaker, Umm Akram, was unable to attend due to imposed travel restrictions. Palestinians called the 1948 establishment of Israel “the Nakba” — the Catastrophe! It marked the beginning of a nightmare for Palestinians who were forcefully removed from their homeland, took place safety. After his injury and loss of his job, Salinas filed a medical appeal with the company’s Israeli division to investigate the practice and continues to profit from the profits made on Palestinian land that is now Israeli owned.

Amena El-Ashkar is the granddaughter and great-granddaughter of Nakba survivors. Born in a Lebanese refugee camp, she moved to the U.S. and described what life is like in a refugee camp. Some live in shared tents with no privacy, electricity, adequate cooking facilities or toilets. Others live in dilapidated homes on dilapidated streets. There is a high incidence of child mortality. A friend of hers recently committed suicide.

The Israeli government’s continuing recruitment of Jews to Israel and the expansion of illegal settlements in occupied Palestinian territory has added to the ongoing misery of Palestinians. Settlers repeatedly commit acts of harassment and violence upon the Palestinians and their homes, sometimes forcing them to suffer no protection from the settlers, instead arresting and jailing the victims, including children.

El-Ashkar showed videos of refugee camps in Jordan, which she said are the same type as those in Lebanon. As many as 100,000 people live in each of these camps. Israeli checkpoints are everywhere and military forces continue to kill people.

Israel’s invasion of Lebanon resulted in the deaths of women and children refugees. Undocumented Palestinians in Lebanon have no right to legal residence or to marry. Refugees are not allowed to attend public schools. If they are able to find employment, they are paid less than other workers. Registered Palestinian refugees, like herself, have ID cards but experience difficulties in leaving Lebanon due to legal and institutional barriers imposed by the Lebanese government. Palestinian refugees are stateless and fall under a special category of foreigners.

In refugee camps, reconstructions materi- als and supplies have been restricted for the past 68 years.

El-Ashkar added that “the world has forgotten our oppression. We need the international community to care about Israel’s ethnic cleansing and genocidal agenda. Palestinians see in the diaspora, along with their allies, must unite and give support. Resistance by any means is necessary. Palestinians see the only solution as being the right of return.”

May 15 will mark the 68th anniversary of the mass expulsion of the Palestinian people from their homeland. They and their descendants yearn for the right of return and celebrate resistance to colonialism. End the occupation! □

Workers Memorial Day fights for job safety

Minnie Bruce Pratt
Syracuse, N.Y.

April 28, Workers Memorial Day, commemorates the 140 years since the L.L. Bliss & Co. fire in倒霉, injured or killed on the job. That’s not unlike what Salinas chalked out the outline of a fallen worker on the pavement in downtown Syracuse, N.Y. The construction worker, who lived and worked in the city, was killed in a recent workplace accident. The memorial, with a rose in hand, is a symbol of remembrance for those who have lost their lives at work. Today’s observance, like all others, is an opportunity to mourn those who died on the job, including Sean Tilghman, a 26-year-old worker at Upstate Medical Center, who died last week of work injuries. Tilghman, like others, died on the job, including Sean Tilghman, a 26-year-old worker at Upstate Medical Center, who died last week of work injuries. Some of the workers killed, injured or expelled. Her father, who witnessed the murders, died at the scene of a heart attack.

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No RE/MAX sales of Palestinian land!

Speakers from two groups concerned with the rights of Palestinians spoke to the international shareholders’ meeting of RE/MAX company in Denver on May 5, asking them to set up a committee to investigate the practice by the Israeli real estate firm RE/MAX of selling land, houses and buildings stolen from the Palestinian people.

As it did of its supporters marched out- side the enormous international head- quarters of the real estate firm, speakers from Code Pink and Heartland described how the company was building and selling homes on Palestinian land that is now restricted only to Jews, essentially build- ing Jewish-only communities. RE/MAX sells properties within illegal Jewish settle- tlements in the occupied West Bank. RE/MAX International has condoned this practice and continues to profit from the sales of these Palestinian homes to Jewish-only buyers.

The demonstrators outside held signs saying, “No open house on stolen land.” “Code Pink for a just RE/MAX,” “Deny- ing Palestinian homes perpetuates vio- lence” and “Profits from pain is inhuman.” Police threatened to arrest protesters if they went onto the massive RE/MAX property, but allowed them at the entrance, where they were visible to pass- ersby in the busy street. According to spokesperson Saadia Behar from Jewish Voice for Peace, organizations responsi- ble for the action also included Colora- dans for Justice in Palestine, Friends of Sabeel, Code Pink and Heartland.

— Report and photo by Vivian Weinstein

May 9 — Workers on strike against communications giant Verizon entered their fourth week in nine Eastern and Atlantic Coast states. The workers perform demanding “wire-line operations” — installation, repair and technical support for landlines, high-speed Internet and television services. Their nonstop call center work, every minute of it regulated by Verizon, is rated the third most stressful job in the country. (tinyurl.com/zlwvqjgk)

Workers hoisted signs reading “Verizon is Veri-Greedy,” blasting the company’s attempts to exploit them. CWA District 2-13 analyzed the company’s proposed contract in detail. A 7.5 percent pay raise would be eaten up by rising out-of-pocket health care costs. Pensions, paid leave and disability benefits would be reduced. Call centers would be closed, jobs outsourced overseas and job security gutted by “flexibility” language allowing management to manipulate workers’ hours and job assignments. (district2-13.cwa-union.org)

Verizon demands that workers accept “forced relocation” assignments, losing their jobs unless they take any assignment within 80 miles of their current job. This would have workers commuting to their jobs two to four hours a day, with additional transportation costs, as well as having to leave home before dawn and getting home too late to do more than say “good night” to their loved ones.

On May 4, International Workers’ Day, Verizon cut off all health benefits to strikers. CWA issued a statement that “no striking member or family member will go without medically necessary health care during the strike” and pledged to pay the costs. CWA noted Verizon made a $4 billion profit off the workers’ labor in the first quarter of 2016 alone and said the company’s “heartless move” proved the strike’s necessity. (tinyurl.com/4wcmjo)

Thousands of workers called May 5 at over 400 protests supporting strikers, who are holding the line for workers’ rights. A wide spectrum of people participated, including those in states where Verizon workers aren’t striking, workers in other unions, workers not yet represented by unions and community activists fighting for justice on many issues.

**CROSS-COUNTRY SOLIDARITY**

In Albuquerque, N.M., union leaders organized a militant protest outside a Verizon shareholders meeting. Four days after Verizon canceled all striking workers’ health insurance, the company’s shareholders voted not to limit “golden parachutes” for executives in management, even if triple the executive’s base salary. In response, union members and community supporters dropped a 70-foot banner that read, “Verizon: Good Jobs, No Greed,” across the busy Rio Grande Boulevard and lay down on the banner, blocking traffic. Fifteen people were arrested as 250 supporters continued to protest outside the meeting.

At a raucous May 2 unity rally in Dewitt, N.Y., a suburb of Syracuse, striking workers taunted a giant blow-up rat with a sign proclaiming Verizon CEO Lowell McAdams “the biggest rat of all.” McAdams had shown up in person at the call center picket line, attempting to intimidate the workers, which is a violation of National Labor Relations Board rules. Support at the rally included CWA and IBEW locals from Binghamton, Buffalo, Elmira, Syracuse and Utica, as well as members of the Teamsters, teachers, postal workers and office workers unions. United Auto Workers Local 624 retirees showed up — local legends because, even as the company’s board members were enjoying their retirement, many of them African American. Union jobs at Verizon are some of the only jobs left with decent wages, benefits and safe working conditions. And being union, these workers have anchored communities across Virginia for decades. (from Joe Piette)

Striking Verizon workers from CWA Local 2204 drove more than three hours on May 2 from southwest Virginia to a rally in Durham, N.C. Joining them in solidarity were members of Electrical Workers Local 130, the North Carolina Public Service Workers Union: “Raise Up for 15,” low-wage workers; “Black Lives Matter for Darrielle Miller” (Miller was a Black youth killed by an North Carolina state trooper); and campaigners against a new jail and for a People’s Budget respecting the labor of city workers. (from Dante Stroboni)

*Continued on page 11*

**HELP GERAWAN FARM WORKERS**

After more than 15,000 supporters of Gerawan Farming tree fruit workers signed a petition urging California’s Fresno County agricultural commissioner to quickly investigate a pesticide spraying incident on Feb. 22, the agency replied that the investigation could take two years! But the agency is supposed to protect the workers. Only days after the spraying of three pesticides by a neighboring farm did the workers learn that people should get medical help right away. But Gerawan sent the workers immediately back to the fields and only later that day, after they developed headaches, burning eyes and upset stomachs, were they seen by a doctor. The workers, who have been struggling since 1992 to be represented by the Farm Workers, asked supporters to sign their petition, action. (ufw.org/2years, telling the agricultural commissioner to stop delaying and protect Gerawan workers. (ufw.org, April 13)

**FIGHT VERSUS VERIZON**

**Wide support for striking workers**

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Fifteen striking workers arrested at Verizon shareholders’ meeting, Albuquerque, N.M.

PHOTO CREDIT: CWA

Management called cops in to remove the activists, but they did not budge until they were ready to move on to their next action. (from Tony Murphy)

In Philadelphia, members of CWA, Philadelphia Jobs with Justice and other activists came out on May 5 to picket the Verizon store at Jefferson Station on Market East, letting Verizon and passersby know its workers deserve fair pay and benefits. (tinyurl.com/zl9cmjo)

Workers came together in Huntington, W.V., to picket Verizon Wireless in solidarity with CWA and IBEW workers. Members of the Service Employees, Stewards and workers和支持者 unions took to the street. The Appalachian Workers Alliance took part as well.

Sebs receive Southern hospitality — NOT

Picket lines, sponsored by CWA locals 2204 and 2201, are up in Roanoke, Lebanon and all over the rest of Virginia at Verizon call centers and tech sites. Despite injunctions and other challenges, both active and retired members are in good spirits, keeping the pickets strong.

When it was learned scabs were staying at a Holiday Inn in Lebanon, Va., site of a call center and picket line, they didn’t stay there long after hearing a hearty southern Virginia welcomed. Many strikers, mostly women, many of them African American. Union jobs at Verizon are some of the only jobs left with decent wages, benefits and safe working conditions. And being union, these workers have anchored communities across Virginia for decades. (from Bryan G. Pfeifer)

In Charlotte, N.C., a solidarity picket was organized at a Verizon store following a leaders’ training session of members of “Fight for 15” from throughout the South. Many attending are part of the on-going Southern Workers School, busy developing workers’ organizations in “right-to-work” states. (from Joe Piette)

Charlotte CWA and IBEW locals helped organize and attended the rally. Picketers

Continued on page 11

**On the picket line**

By Sue Davis

Calif. farm labor board rules in favor of Farm Workers

The full California Agricultural Labor Relations Board issued a unanimous decision April 15 decisively affirming the 2015 opinion by an ALRB administrative law judge who found the giant Fresno-based tree fruit grower Gerawan Farming guilty of committing numerous violations of California labor laws. The ruling set aside the 2013 election aimed at decertifying the Farm Workers from representing the fruit pickers and dismissed the decertification petition. Among labor law violations, the judge ruled that Gerawan became a principal party to the decertification, though employees filed it. Gerawan permitted anti-union signature gathering during work while prohibiting comparable pro-union activity; and Gerawan granted a wage increase during the campaign, a blatantly unfair labor practice, and again the solicited grievances against the union. Gerawan vows to contest the ruling. Stay tuned. (Los Angeles Times, April 19)

Help Gerawan farm workers protest pesticide spraying

People’s Power Assembly in New York at Verizon shareholders meeting, Philadelphia, March 11

PHOTO: CWA

People’s Power Assembly in New York at Verizon shareholders meeting, Philadelphia, March 11

PHOTO: PEOPLES POWER ASSEMBLY NYC

Gerawan Farming tree fruit workers signed a petition urging California’s Fresno County agricultural commissioner to quickly investigate a pesticide spraying incident on Feb. 22, the agency replied that the investigation could take two years! But the agency is supposed to protect the workers. Only days after the spraying of three pesticides by a neighboring farm did the workers learn that people should get medical help right away. But Gerawan sent the workers immediately back to the fields and only later that day, after they developed headaches, burning eyes and upset stomachs, were they seen by a doctor. The workers, who have been struggling since 1992 to be represented by the Farm Workers, asked supporters to sign their petition, action. (ufw.org/2years, telling the agricultural commissioner to stop delaying and protect Gerawan workers. (ufw.org, April 13)

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The question of what has happened to jobs in the United States is of course of the utmost concern to millions of workers here. It has been proven in so many studies that the percentage of decent-paying jobs has been steadily declining for a long time. And when — not if — the financial markets go through another crisis, the pressure on jobs and wages is sure to grow even more acute.

This fact is so broadly acknowledged that high-profile candidates in this year’s presidential election have focused on it, knowing what they have to say will appeal to many voters. The Trump and Sanders campaigns are of course very different in their approach to this question — Trump stirs up anger and nationalism toward “outsiders” whom he blames for the loss of jobs, Sanders calling for help more corporations to move their manufacturing and assembly operations offshore.

But, however, ignore the real reason behind the decline in jobs. A recent report verifies that manufacturing jobs are not just being moved to lower-wage countries, they are actually “disappearing.” And it’s not only in the developed imperialist countries.

In an April 26 New York Times article titled “The Mirage of a Return to Manufacturing Greatness,” Eduardo Porter wrote that mechanization of agriculture has eliminated millions of farm workers’ jobs here. He adds, “In America’s factories, jobs are inevitably disappearing too. But despite the political rhetoric, the problem is not mainly globalization. Manufacturing jobs are on the decline in factories around the world.”

“The observation is uncontroversial,” said Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel-winning economist at Columbia University. “Global employment in manufacturing is going down because productivity increases are exceeding increases in demand for manufactured products by a significant amount.”

“Nothing no matter how high the tariffs Mr. Trump wants to raise to encircle the American economy, he will not be able to produce a manufacturing renaissance at home. Neither would changing tax rules to limit corporate flight from the United States, as Mrs. Clinton proposes.…”

“Over the course of the 20th century, farm employment in the United States dropped to 2 percent of the work force from 41 percent, even as output soared. Since 1950, manufacturing’s share has shrunk to 8.5 percent of nonfarm jobs, from 24 percent. It still has a ways to go.

The thinking of manufacturing: employment is global. In other words, strategies to restore manufacturing jobs in one country will amount to destroying them in another, in a worldwide zero-sum game.

“The loss of such jobs has created plenty of problems in the United States. For the countless workers working in key developed reaches of the world, it adds up to a potential disaster.”

Don’t dare mention the ‘C’ word!

The elephant in the room that none of the establishment political parties address is that capitalism has entered a stage when technology has become so advanced that human labor is being reduced to a minimum in many areas of the economy. Workers who agriculture and manufacturing undertake an ‘army’ — that is, relatively pros-

perous and able to find work in less dan-

gers, dirty and tedious jobs. How quickly things change! Today, the labor is that is this produced “middle class” — in reality, the workers who earn a wage adequate to raise a family — is dis-

appearing.

What has changed is not at all difficult to understand if we apply Marxism to the task. In a fact, a number of books have been written on the subject. The famous book, published in 1986 with the publication of “High Tech, Low Pay” by Workers World founding chairperson Sam Marcy and continuing with “The Wage-Capitalists” in 2003 and “Capitalism at a Dead End,” in 2012, both by WW contributing editor Fred Goldstein. All three books by truly Marxist, class-struggle approach to understanding what is happening and how to fight in the interests of the working class. (See works.org)…”

‘High tech, low pay’

Written at a time when the computer-driven technological change still permeated bourgeois econ-

omies, Marcy’s book showed that the op-

posite was happening in the United States — that the introduction of high technolo-

gy in many industries was already, even in the 1980s, piling down wages and de-skilling much of the workforce.

Goldstein’s books deal with what is now so apparent — the globalization of the production and distribution of commodities. That has brought hundreds of millions of workers into competition in a worldwide labor market just as the number of available jobs is shrinking.

What drives this new stage of capital-

ism is what has always driven capitalist accumulation: the compulsion for profit. With the new technologies available, the high paid technicians and professionals that have the means to introduce labor-saving de-

vices on a massive scale — robots, com-

puter-driven assembly lines, GPS track-

ing, etc. — can undercut their competitors by shedding labor.

In Marxist terms, this means a great-

er today, however, it takes a hell of a lot of money to start up most businesses. Let’s look at just one such business for a minute, for it tells us a lot about how capitalism func-

tions today.

Just a decade ago, a teenage undocu-

mented immigrant from Mexico named Jordi Muñoz made it to San Diego, Calif. Muñoz is a computer genius, a self-styled nerd who was able, practically on his own with very little formal schooling, to invent a workable drone. He picked up much of his knowledge by going online and dis-

ussing with the "open source" communi-

ty. The program was made up of many people and it took him three years to polish. However, Muñoz didn’t have any money, but his technical expertise was so impressive that he got financial backing to start producing drones, which he called 3D Robotics. Eventually, rich people invested more than $300 million in his company, and today it is manufacturing nonmilitary drones. But the problems did not end. Muñoz, of course, must feel very happy that his in-

credible talent has helped produce jobs for his fellow Mexicans.

But here’s the kicker to this “success story.” This company, now valued at more than $3 billion, has created jobs for about 60 people in Mexico and 90 in the United States.

Sixty Mexican workers! Compare that to the many millions of Mexicans in farm families who have been uprooted because they couldn’t compete with low-cost, mechanized U.S. agriculture, which has flooded their country since the NAFTA trade agreement went into effect in 1994. Next: Why expelling fewer workers leads to a declining rate of profit. There’s only one way out, but it’s not popular on Wall Street.

High tech, low pay

A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class by Sam Marcy

This prophetic book written in 1968 shows why high technology under capitalism is NOT a path to the future of workers. The most privileged can benefit everyone leads to lower wages and layoffs for the workers. Marcy, a long-time organizer, discusses various forms of flightback.

CAPITALISM AT A DEAD END
Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era by Fred Goldstein

Available at online major bookstores
Saint-Denis celebrates 10th anniversary of Rue Mumia Abu-Jamal

By Betsey Piette

Saint-Denis, France

Back on April 30, 2006, the Paris sub-urb of Saint-Denis adopted a courageous move by dedicating a street to Mumia Abu-Jamal that défiant act sparked a frenzy of efforts to remove the sign, led by the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police with backing from right-wing media and ultra-nationalists. Their reactionary campaign continues to this day.

Today, May 19, 2016, Saint-Denis celebrates the 10th anniversary of Rue Mumia Abu-Jamal, the street that has defied all efforts to tear it down. They were joined by representatives from other cities in France that had named Abu-Jamal an honorary citizen. Nine months after this delegation from the U.S. also participated in the ceremonies.

Following the street dedication, a lunch and artistic performance were held. The art performance included a historically significant black church in Philadelphia strongly engaged in the struggles of Black people; Estela Vasquez, first executive vice president of Local 1199-SEIU, the major U.S. hospital workers union; Marilyn Zuluiga, a young teacher whose third-grade class went on a school trip on the day she was killed in a gun attack.

For Saint-Denis, dedication of this street is not just an act of resistance, it is an act of struggle.

Saint-Denis has a long history of naming its streets after individuals who have contributed to the global fight against colonialism, racism and imperialism. The city has a Rue Amilcar Cabral and a Rue Mandela, as well. Pierre Paillard, a member of the delegation said: “It is very rare for the city to name a street after someone who is still alive. Having this street named for Mumia helps our city take a stance in the struggle for liberation of all people.”

Paillard noted that the last 10 years have seen dramatic changes in France, including cuts in education and recent attacks on workers’ longstanding rights. The street-naming ceremony came just days after hundreds of thousands of French students, workers and youth took to the streets on April 28, for the fourth time in two months, to demand that the government withdraw a new labor law that would eliminate the 35-hour work week and other benefits. Protests in most major French cities included a one-day general strike that shut down thousands of workplaces, schools and universities. The day after the Saint-Denis ceremony, an estimated 64,000 to 100,000 workers and students flooded the streets of Paris and other French cities on May Day — International Workers’ Day. The French Parliament is slated to officially begin discussing the new law on May 3.

The law would have a particularly egregious effect on workers in Saint-Denis. Many are under 30 and most make half the average wage found in other areas in France. With growing gentrification over the last 15 years, more than a quarter of Saint-Denis’ population can’t afford housing in Paris. In response to this crisis, Saint-Denis has created “social housing” for 80 percent of its residents so they can remain in the city.

“We can’t stop the ‘free’ market but we can keep control of space and grounds to prevent market speculation,” Paillard told the delegation. In the last 12 years, Saint-Denis has also added more schools, including the one where the community centre lunch is held. Under French law the municipality is responsible for education facilities while the state pays for teachers’ salaries — severely underfunding those in Saint-Denis.

The tenth anniversary embodies the international solidarity that time and again has proved critical to winning victories in the struggle, including Abu-Jamal’s release from death row in December 2011. It contributes today to the fight to demand that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections reverse Abu-Jamal and other Pennsylvania prisoners with desperately needed medicine to cure hepatitis C.

French supporters of Abu-Jamal have sent over 3,000 petition signatures to support the demand that Abu-Jamal get the medicine he needs. Petitions are still being collected and can be signed online through www.iacenter.org/mumiahpecsign. Signed petitions will be delivered to Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf in Harrisburg, Pa., at a date to be determined.

The example set by the people of Saint-Denis is one that speaks to the global power of oppressed peoples to struggle against all odds, knowing that without struggle there can be no victory. It is with this understanding that the fight must continue until Mumia Abu-Jamal, an innocent man, truly wins his freedom from prison.

Voters reject Islamophobia and racism as Sadik Khan elected mayor of London

By Carl Lewis

Sadik Khan, a center-left member of Britain’s Labor Party and a first-genera-
tion son of immigrants from Pakistan, has been elected mayor of London, becoming the first Muslim mayor of a major Western capital. Khan comes from a working-class family; his father was a bus driver for 25 years and his mother was a seamstress. Sadik Khan ran against Zac Goldsmith, the son of the British Conservative Party last September. Khan has since dismissed “Goldsmi-
ders” calls for a freeze on transportation investment and sanctions against the racist “Britain First Movement,” to whip up radical Muslim extremists.

Goldsmith’s 80-page “Manifesto for All Lon-
dons” calls for a freeze on transportation investment and sanctions against the racist “Britain First Movement,” to whip up radical Muslim extremists. Khan’s 80-page “Manifesto for All Lon-
dons” calls for a freeze on transportation investment and sanctions against the racist “Britain First Movement,” to whip up radical Muslim extremists.

Their goal is to create an anti-greyɹnory frenzy that will keep the working class divided and confused. Revolutionary parties must fight against racism and anti-immigrant discrimination which is most often directed against people of col-
or, who are the most exploited.

The election of Sadik Khan has much broader implications than simply a pos-
tive judgment on the part of the people on the election itself. It is a strong sign that the most vile racism and xenophobia has been rejected by a majority in the British capital. Let it be a step toward building working-class unity.
Workers battle anti-labor 'reforms' on May Day

By Betsey Piette

Upwards of 500,000 workers and other students took to the streets of Paris and other cities across France on Interna- tional Workers Day, just three days after the government's worst attempt of a one-day general strike on April 28 against proposed labor "reforms" that would remove protections and benefits workers have won over de cades of struggle.

Two hours after the demonstrators set foot off Paris' Bastille Square, police chose to confront around 200 youthful protest ers near the front of the march, blocking the way. In full riot gear, including shields and clubs, cops launched tear gas and stun grenades at the marchers. The youth responded with bottles and rocks.

After two hours of confrontation, po lice withdrew, letting marchers proceed toward the Place de la République, where students and young workers have held on going "Up All Night" ("Nuit Debout") oc cupations since March 31. France's Presi dent François Hollande's proposed labor reforms would make it even harder for students and younger workers entering the workforce to secure full-time jobs.

The labor changes, currently being debated in the National Assembly of France, would also abolish the current 35-hour maximum workweek, remove protections against excessive overtime and facilitate layoffs.

Workers along the parade route held signs and against police disruptions. Massive contingents organized by the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) carried signs opposing the labor reform.roll the Communist Workers' Party of France (PCOF) and the New Anti-Capitalist Par ty also had large contingents.

A delegation from the U.S. in France to observe the tenth anniversary of the assassina tion of street for political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, also participated with their hallers. Across France, May Day marches took place in 300 other cities.

The growing and unrelenting struggle against the anti-labor bill appears to be having a noticeable effect. The legislation has softened some provisions of the bill, it reportedly still lacks enough support to be adopted by France's National Assem bly. It was also voted scheduled for May 19. Piette was part of the Mumia Abu-Jamal delegation.
There seems to be an unwritten law among the colonizers and imperialists that the peoples they have attacked the most must be made impossible to resist.

U.S. history is replete with examples. None is more repugnant than the universally offensive treatment heaped on the people of People’s Korea by the U.S. political establishment and media.

Since occupying the south of Korea in 1945, the imperialists have tried to defeat the Korean people’s efforts to build socialism and overcome the pervasive devastation they inherited from decades of Japanese colonial rule. From 1950 to 1953, the Pentagon launched one of the most unequal wars in history against the DPRK. But this time, the Korean Revolution succeeded anyway in the northern part of the peninsula. Showing incredible morale and bravery, the Korean people liberated Korean people in the DPRK under the leadership of the legendary Kim Il Sung and the Workers’ Party fought the invaders to a standstill and then rebuilt their country.

So the imperialists, while still occupying the south and holding annual “war games” that threaten the DPRK with both conventional and nuclear weapons, have intensified their assaults against the leaders of north Korea.

Workers with a message to celebrate in this remarkable Congress of your Party. The Korean revolutionaries have shown the world that a determined and politically conscious people can take on any challenges and succeed when imbued with the spirit of unity, courage and independence.”

Since this was written, the news from Pyongyang is that Kim Jong Un has been elected chair of the Workers’ Party of Korea and is stressing the policy of “byungjin,” which means the simultaneous buildup of both economic and military strength, including nuclear weapons. As the U.S. has threatened the DPRK with nuclear attacks ever since the 1950 war, the development of such weapons by the Koreans can only be seen as a necessary defensive measure.

Ever since 1953, the Koreans have asked for negotiations to end that war with a peace treaty, and the U.S. has refused. All progressives must continue to demand that Washington abandon its futile attempts to overthrow the DPRK and sign a peace treaty NOW!
Behind internal struggle in South Africa

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Two opposition parties in South Africa — the Democratic Alliance and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) — are seeking ways to not only gain votes in the upcoming local elections but also discredit and bring down the African National Congress government.

An impeachment vote against President Jacob Zuma on April 5 failed in the Parliament, where the ANC controls 54 percent of the seats. The Constitutional Court ruled unanimously on March 31 that Zuma should pay back some state funds used for upgrades to his Nkandla residence. The ANC government accepted the high court’s decision and agreed to comply with its orders.

However, in a separate decision, a South African court ruled “that the decision by prosecutors to drop a corruption case against President Jacob Zuma seven years ago was irrational and should be set aside, opening the way for the ‘783 charges against him to be reinitiated.” (BusinessDay, April 12)

This latest decision has encouraged the opposition to renew calls for Zuma’s resignation. The president says he has no intention of resigning and it appears that the majority in ANC leadership structures are supporting him.

Local elections scheduled for August

Local government elections scheduled for August will be a political test for both the ruling ANC and the opposition in Parliament.

At present the Democratic Alliance, a party creating greater reliance on neoliberal policies, controls approximately 22 percent of the seats in Parliament. The Economic Freedom Fighters, headed by former ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema, has 6 percent.

Malema and other former ANCYL leaders were expelled from the ANC in 2012 after being accused of indiscipline and corruption. Malema and his comrades formed the EFF and ran candidates in the recent general elections.

The EFF has called for the nationalization of South African agricultural land and mines. It has demanded that Zuma resign. The EFF is perceived in a bloc with the DA in the failed impeachment resolution. On several occasions EFF MPs have physically removed from Parliament due to disruptive tactics.

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to attack developing brain cells in fetal nerve tissue. (Cell Stem Cell, March 29)

The findings are a breakthrough for scientists who can now focus on developing a Zika virus vaccine and preventing widespread infections. A possible vaccine could be ready to test by September.

Zika is also linked to Guillain-Barre syndrome, in which the immune system attacks nerve cells, causing weakness and paralysis. The symptoms include myelitis and acute disseminated encephalomyelitis (ADEM) which may be Zika-related.

ADEM is an autoimmune syndrome that targets the spinal cord or central nervous system, causing weakness, numbness, loss of balance and vision. (Reuters, April 11)

Continued from page 6

got out leaflets to cars and street traffic at rush hour. The rally was highly visible, with a large drop in the prices of export commodities and prompted a large drop in the value of the national currency. The views of the two main allies of the ANC government, COSATU and the South African Communist Party, will be critical leading up to August when local elections are held. Both COSATU and the SAPC have come out in support of the ANC for local offices.

A May Day statement from the SAPC reads, “Let us defeat the strategic agenda of imperialism and monopoly capital. Let us consolidate and accelerate a second radical phase of the National Democratic Revolution. … Let us close ranks on the basis of a strategic program and activist organization and mobilization focused on the needs and aspirations of the workers and poor of South Africa. To do that — we must say NO to the politics of money; NO to the politics of gatekeepers; and NO to the politics of personal ambition and opportunism.”

(sacp.org.za)

Fight versus Verizon

In an April 24 interview with Al Jazeera, Malema told the Qatar-based satellite network that the EFF would “run out of patience very soon and we will remove this government through the barrel of a gun.” Malema went on to say, “We will fight. We have the capability to mobilize our people and fight physically.”

ANC spokesperson Zizi Kodwa replied: “The ANC is taking the EFF’s call to violence, are inflammatory, treasonous and seditionous and should be treated with extreme seriousness. They also are in clear violation of the Constitution and the Charter on Elections Ethics signed by a number of political parties — including the EFF, last month.”

Kodwa told the Citizen newspaper, “We have opened a case of high treason against Julius Malema in his personal capacity as well as the EFF, following his recent comments about being prepared to re- move a democratically elected government using underhanded means and force. We are doing this on behalf of all South Africans to defend and protect our hard-won freedom and democracy.” (April 26)

In the Citizen article, Congress of South African Trade Unions President Sdumo Dlamini, a close ally of the ANC, described Malema’s latest remarks as reckless. COSATU spokesperson Sisele Pama emphasized: “In any other situation, it would be easy to say that Malema’s statements can be disregarded, but given the various coalitions making calls to topple the ANC government, this is something that must be taken very seriously by law enforcement.”

U.S. accused of regime-change agenda

The government has accused the U.S. State Department of being behind a regime-change agenda in the country. ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe said earlier in the year that the U.S. Embassy was recruiting and coordinating opposition forces bent on overthrowing the government.

These events are taking place amid an ongoing global capitalist economic crisis that has driven down the prices of export commodities and prompted a large drop in the value of the national currency.

Detroit youth resist U.S. role in Syria

By Tom Michalak
Detroit

On May 6 at downtown’s Hart Plaza, Detroit FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) held a counterdemonstration in defense of the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The FIST action was an answer to global events organized by the so-called #Aleppo-on-fire campaign, which supports the intervention of U.S. and NATO forces and the miennamed Free Syrian Army in the Syrian war. The campaign falsely claims people in the Syrian city of Aleppo are being killed by President Bashar al-Assad and the Syrian Army.

At their protest, anti-imperialist activists loudly chanted slogans denouncing U.S./NATO and their allies for fuelling the five-year conflict in Syria. They fiercely opposed any further imperialist involvement in any capacity.

Not forgotten were the imperialists’ interventions in and subsequent obliteration of Libya as a functioning society. It is clear that the U.S., NATO and states subservient to them have no intention of opposing any further imperialist involvement in any capacity.

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In Detroit, even when the #Aleppo-on-fire burning demonstrators outnumbered the anti-imperialists at least 3 to 1, the latter remained militant and determined to defend a banner calling for a halt of U.S./NATO/Israeli attacks on Syria. A verbal and potentially physical confrontation was maintained with resolve defiance, even in the face of overwhelming numbers around arm’s reach.

Just a short drive from the two clashes happening in Detroit is the city of Dearborn, with the largest Arab population in the U.S. Since the beginning of the conflict, many sizeable demonstrations in support of the Syrian government have occurred in that city, with nothing comparable in favor of U.S. imperialist intervention.

International Workers Day

Continued from page 9

Venezuela and across the Caribbean Sea, hundreds of thousands of people of all ages, led by 40,000 teachers and students, marched to marks May Day Proclama- tion on May Day, under the banner of “For Cuba: Unity and Commitment.” Some 2,000 international guests attended.

In addition to the massive numbers who honored the Revolu- tion’s leader, Fidel Castro, on his upcom- ing 90th birthday, and carried posters bearing his picture, and photographs of President Raúl Castro and revolutionaries Che Guevara. They denounced the U.S. blockade and its plans to destabilize pro-government movements in Latin America, and demanded the return of the illegally U.S. occupied Guantánamo Naval Base.
Por Abayomi Azikiwe

En la tarde de hoy 3 de mayo, se anunció por los medios de comunicación que las/os maestros de Detroit se anotaron una victoria más, cuando el administrador de emergencias de las Escuelas Públicas de Detroit, Stephen Rhodes, anunció que terminará la junta que se les debía a las/os maestros durante los meses de verano. La batalla continúa para conseguir los fondos adecuados para una educación de calidad para las/os jóvenes de Detroit; para detener que los fondos públicos sean desviados a pagar los servicios de la deuda; y para restaurar el control local de las escuelas públicas de Detroit a esta ciudad de mayoría afroamericana.

Al igual que ayer, miles de miembros de la Federación de Maestros de Detroit llaman hoy diciendo que están enfermos/os en la histórica Iglesia Metodista Episclina que permitía a los estados esclavistas “contribuciones” fue ser el autor de la demolición oficial de la bandera de la Confederación de Estados Unidos. También fue John C. Calhoun, un graduado de Yale, quien se benefició de la acumulación de capital de los esclavistas africanos durante siglos que escondió en los coches, moho, hongos y otras condiciones inseguras. Muchas escuelas carecen de una ventilación adecuada, y la temperatura en los locales está o muy caliente o muy fría. La crisis también se refleja en la apertura de decenas de escuelas charter en Detroit; lo que es un sistema de fondos que desesperadamente se necesitan.

Por otra parte, la disminución de la matrícula del EPC, en parte como resultado de la epidemia de desahucios y ejecuciones hipotecarias de la última década que forzó la salida de más de 200.000 personas de la ciudad, se ha traducido en el cierre de más de 200 edificios escolares. Muchas de estas escuelas abandonadas han sido objeto de vandalismo y desaparición de cobre, hierro, ladrillos, aparatos eléctricos y otros materiales, convirtiéndose en un alijo de droga para los delincuentes, facilitando aún más el subsuelo del pequeño y el deterioro de comunidades.

Los servicios de la deuda tienen prioridad sobre la educación

Desafiando a sus estudiantes, el presidente de las Escuelas Públicas de Detroit, Mike Ilitch, tomó el control del EPC en 1999, el distrito tenía un superávit de $200 millones, con menos de $100 millones en fondos de bonos aprobados por las/os votantes para mejorar los edificios escolares y otras obras de infraestructura. Según los registros oficiales, el EPC tiene una deuda de $8,35 millones, con porciones sustanciales debidas a los bancos y tenedores de bonos.

Las protestas llegan cuando el gobierno de Michigan está rechazando el proyecto de ley para dar a “fondos” a las escuelas públicas de afroamericana. La delincuencia declinó con el Senado del Estado estableció dos distritos, uno con $355 millones en fondos; y el otro con $200 millones para financiar las operaciones. El proyecto de ley eliminaría la actual Junta Escolar elegida de Detroit y la sustituiría por una junta esencialmente impotente, cuyos conocimientos y habilidades se han nombrado por una comisión designada por el reaccionario gobernador y enenador de Flint, Rick Snyder, así como el alcalde de Detroit Duggan.

Sin embargo, la reacción Cámara del Estado rechazó este proyecto de ley, debatiendo en vez uno que limitaría la financiación escolar a $500 millones. - Sólo los servicios de la deuda serían pagados - con provisiones que contienen ataques punitivos contra los derechos de las/os maestros de Detroit. El proyecto de la Cámara elimina cualquier supervisión de las escuelas, las cuales han proliferado en el pasado a pesar de su fracaso en la educación de las/os estudiantes de Detroit.

En los últimos dos días se ha revelado que la deuda - la que los administradores de las Escuelas Públicas de Detroit - deuda acumulada bajo la dirección de varios gestores de emergencia designados por el estado - el más reciente, anunciado previamente, lo que requiere al menos $160 millones para cumplir con las demandas de los inquilinos de los edificios. Además, un informe salió a la luz indicando que los gestores de emergencias utilizaron $1,8 millones para gastos operacionales de los fondos federales destinados a necesidades especiales de las/os pensionados de maestros/os. En lugar de las demandas de maestros, las/os deudas son utilizadas para pagar el servicio de la deuda a los bancos e instituciones financieras que educar a las/os estudiantes.

Más ataques a Detroit

Los fondos federales de vivienda, supuestamente destinados a mantener la estabilidad en los barrios ayudando a las/os residentes con el pago de los hipotecas, los saqueadores de la propiedad y las infladas facturas de agua, en cambio se están utilizando para derribar casas y negocios vacantes. El gobierno federal está investigando irregularidades en los gastos para la demolición coordinados por la Autoridad de Banco de Tierras de Detroit. El Grupo de Trabajo de Remoción de Territorios de Detroit, que identifica viviendas y tierras para la demolición, está presidido por el multimillonario Dan Gilbert, jefe de Quicken Loans. El grupo Gilbert representa un claro con- xefcto de intereses. Gilbert actualmente está siendo demandado por el Departamento de Justicia de los Estados Unidos, que denunció a las empresas por igual sobre vivienda, educación, oportunidades para saquear la riqueza producida en las comunidades de Detroit. Gilbert ha gastado $150 millones de los proyectos de la cárcel nueva debido a excesivos costos, y el reaccionario gobernador y enенador de Detroit, Rick Snyder, así como el alcalde de Detroit Duggan.

Justicia Frank Murphy y las facilidades de la Administración de la Universidad de Yale en el condado de Wayne. Los fondos federales de vivienda son destinados a mantener la estabilidad en los barrios ayudando a las/os residentes con el pago de los hipotecas, los saqueadores de la propiedad y las infladas facturas de agua, en cambio se están utilizando para derribar casas y negocios vacantes. El gobierno federal está investigando irregularidades en los gastos para la demolición coordinados por la Autoridad de Banco de Tierras de Detroit. El Grupo de Trabajo de Remoción de Territorios de Detroit, que identifica viviendas y tierras para la demolición, está presidido por el multimillonario Dan Gilbert, jefe de Quicken Loans. El grupo Gilbert representa un claro con- xefcto de intereses. Gilbert actualmente está siendo demandado por el Departamento de Justicia de los Estados Unidos, que denunció a las empresas por igual sobre vivienda, educación, oportunidades para saquear la riqueza producida en las comunidades de Detroit. Gilbert ha gastado $150 millones de los proyectos de la cárcel nueva debido a excesivos costos, y el reaccionario gobernador y enенador de Detroit, Rick Snyder, así como el alcalde de Detroit Duggan.

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