

# Fascists overwhelmed

## Surrounded & outnumbered 150-to-1

By Sage Antonia Collins  
Portland, Ore.

June 4 — Over 15,000 anti-fascist protesters surrounded a racist, white supremacist rally in downtown Portland today, only a week and change after the MAX train murders took place. The whole city is still in an uproar over the ugly incident on May 26 where a known white supremacist screamed racial slurs at young Muslim women and then killed the two men and seriously injured another with a knife when they defended the Muslim women.

Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, 23, and Ricky John Best, 53, were killed by the racist. Micah David-Cole Fletcher suffered serious knife wounds but is recovering.

Out-of-state fascists rallying downtown today with a federal permit only added insult to injury.

It comes as no surprise that 15,000 anti-fascists thronged around the rally and drowned out the meager jumble of no

more than 100 police-protected fascists. The counterprotest was attended by labor unions with loudspeakers. Union members led chants such as “Muslim rights, union rights. Same struggle, same fight. Workers of the world unite.”

The sizable Rose City Antifa sang, “Build a bonfire, build a bonfire/Put the fascists right on top./Put the coppers in the middle,/And we’ll burn the fucking lot” to the tune of “Oh My Darling, Clementine.”

After breaking up some fascist infighting, the city, state and U.S. Department of Homeland Security police lined up in riot gear facing the anti-fascists. Police distributed their forces along the massive assemblage on the north side of the square, as the anti-fascists on the west side of the square swelled and took the street. The masses kept the pressure on and made the message loud and clear both in word and deed: Fascists are not welcome here. □

Portland activists, June 4.  
WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY



PORTLAND, ORE.

## HONORING TRANSGENDER WARRIORS

### Leslie Feinberg and Sylvia Rivera

An overflow crowd in Holyoke, Mass., celebrated the Grand Re-opening of the Sexual Minorities Archives and the opening of the Leslie Feinberg Library in the Sylvia Rivera Room on June 3 with fists in the air in memory of those trans revolutionaries and shouts of ‘I believe that we will win!’



PHOTO: MARIAH DIXON-WHEELER AND MONTANA MCKIM, WHITMAN & KATZ VISUALS

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# Hands Off Venezuela! 6-7

By LeiLani Dowell

National actions are being held in response to a call by the International Action Center for Emergency Days of Solidarity with Bolivarian Venezuela, from June 1 through June 10. The IAC’s appeal states in part:

“Make no mistake; what has been happening for the last two months in Venezuela is a counterrevolution by the most reactionary forces of the opposition to President Nicolás Maduro’s government. It is no different from what the U.S. did with [dictator Augusto] Pinochet in Chile in 1973, with the ‘contras’ in Nicaragua in the 1980s and more recently against Libya and now in Syria. It is a ‘regime change’ effort.

“The corporate media — the voice of the



Activists along with Venezuelan delegation attend June 3 film New York City showing, ‘The Revolution Will Not Be Televised’ as part of national days of solidarity with Venezuela.

WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS

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# Labor defends Puerto Rican Day Parade

The following statement was issued by the Workers World Party Labor Fraction. Contact [wwplabor@gmail.com](mailto:wwplabor@gmail.com).

Despite a major political attack on the 2017 National Puerto Rican Day Parade, and on any who are welcoming recently freed Independence activist Oscar López Rivera to New York City this week, the workers' movement will be represented at several events.

We salute the position taken by Service Employees International Union locals 1199 and 32-BJ, as well as the Labor Council on Latin American Advancement chapter, in defense of the Puerto Rican community's right to choose its own heroes. The June 11 parade's labor contingents also include Communication Workers of America Local 1180's Hispanic Committee, Transit Workers Union Local 100 and the National Lawyers' Guild, among others.

A Labor, Community & Faith Breakfast to welcome Oscar López Rivera and a reception for the Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico are also planned.

The class divide is clear when contrasting this to the corporate exploiters who have imposed their logos on the parade in past years, but pulled their financial support last month. Why should any worker side with the likes of AT&T — still denying a good contract to its CWA Mobility workforce; McDonald's — exposed by the Fight for \$15 for its low wages and high rates of sexual harassment; or Coca-Cola — implicated in deaths of Colombian unionists?

We urge all workers' organizations internationally to take action in solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico against the PROMESA austerity that threatens jobs, health and the environment. #DefendPRParade

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- If you find the anti-trans ruling by Trump's Education secretary an outrageous attack on queer children and LGBTQ rights
- If you hate the class system that keeps women and people of color in low-wage jobs
- If you oppose the blatant warmongering targeting Syria, north Korea and Afghanistan
- If you worry that the capitalist crisis is only getting worse under the Billionaire in Chief
- If you're sick and tired of the bankers and bosses getting tax breaks while making the workers pay for the crisis they didn't create
- If you want to fight for a way of life based on economic planning, equitable distribution of wealth and justice for all in a socialist system
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Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it's the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the never-ending quest for ever-greater profits. Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, joblessness and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it.

## Join us in the fight for socialism!

Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black and Brown youth and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you're interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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# Welcome to New York, Oscar!

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Members of the Boricua [Puerto Rican] Diaspora and many supporters of the cause of Puerto Rican liberation are celebrating the presence of former political prisoner Oscar López Rivera in New York City.

The board of directors of the Puerto Rican National Parade of New York had chosen to honor López Rivera. As they explained on their webpage nprdpinc.org: “The decision to integrate López Rivera in the parade was taken to honor the commitment and hard work of thousands of people — Puerto Ricans or not — whose efforts contributed to the commutation of his sentence. At the same time, we seek to make known the history of Oscar López Rivera, the serious colonial situation in Puerto Rico and the questions of identity that continue to arise, even today.”

However, corporate and pro-colonialist voices quickly began to threaten the board’s decision. Corporations, including AT&T, Coca-Cola, the Yankees baseball team, JetBlue, Univision and Goya Foods withdrew their backing. Right-wing political groups and individuals like New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, organizations of police and firefighters said they would not march in the parade. Right-wing Puerto Rican politicians in both the U.S. and Puerto Rico also added their voices to this complaint, including the current governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Roselló, who — incongruously — had asked for the release of López Rivera last year.

To put a stop to the growing divide between Puerto Ricans, López Rivera wrote to the parade’s board rejecting his nomination: “Instead of being honored, I am transferring that honor, as I indicated in a June 1 publication, to our Pioneers who came to the United States and opened doors. ... As I also stated in the published editorial, I will march in the parade as a

humble Puerto Rican and grandfather, who at 74, after serving 35 years in prison, remains committed to help to raise awareness about the crisis in Puerto Rico.” (telemundopr.com, June 2)

The star presence of this Puerto Rican hero in the parade has highlighted what is really happening in the Puerto Rican nation: the struggle for the very survival of Puerto Rican identity that is confronting the immense assault of imperialist capitalism, represented more forcefully in Puerto Rico by U.S. annexationist forces. What has always existed in Puerto Rico since the Yankee invasion in 1898 is again developing: the confrontation between imperialism and independence.

Now that the Puerto Rican people are confronting the murderous onslaught of a fiscal control board — this junta is the true PR government — which represents U.S. capitalist interests imposed by the U.S. Congress itself, attempts are made once again to muzzle those calling for liberation.

On this 60th anniversary of the Puerto Rican Parade in New York — and on the 100th anniversary of the imposition of the United States’ nationality on the Boricua people — it is necessary to recall the origins of the parade.

It was born out of the effort to overcome the racism and xenophobia experienced by the first Puerto Ricans who had to emigrate to New York City in the 1950s. It was to bring a sense of community and Boricua solidarity within the coldness of the city of New York.

But also, author Nelson Denis reminds us in his article, “The Deep Secret of the Puerto Rican Day Parade,” (waragainstallpuertoricans.com), that its origin came only one year after the criminal Law 53 or Gag Law was repealed in PR. Under this law, ten years of prison were imposed on those who carried a PR flag or sang the national anthem, or whoever said a single word against the U.S. tyr-

anny. For nine years the Boricua people lived under this gag, which meant the arrest of thousands. According to the article, 3,000 people were arrested in a single week, including 8-year-olds.

The presence of thousands of Puerto Rican flags in the parade and — by extension — the deep love every Puerto Rican has for that flag, consciously or unconsciously, can be traced back to this prohibition.

Today, most Puerto Rican people reside in the United States as a result of the largest migratory wave in Puerto Rican history, itself caused by the lack of jobs and

resources in the archipelago. Now, when the presence of Oscar López represents that desire for unity while seeking a real solution to the immense social, political and economic crisis of the Puerto Rican archipelago, a solution that could only be for the benefit of the people under independence as the only formula leading to true sovereignty, the intention of imperialism is to muzzle the voices of liberation.

*Joubert-Ceci is editor of the Mundo Obrero page of the weekly Workers World-MO, and a member of the Philadelphia/Camden Boricua Committee.*



After 36 years in U.S. federal prisons for his role in the Puerto Rican independence struggle, hero Oscar López Rivera was welcomed by his enthusiastic and loving supporters in the California Bay Area on May 31. He spoke first to an informal reception and then to a packed house of about 500 people at the First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley.

López Rivera denounced the Board of Fiscal Control, imposed by the U.S. Congress, and the privatization measures it seeks to apply in Puerto Rico to pay off the

island’s illegitimate debt of more than \$70 billion. He told supporters that he plans to concentrate on building a foundation whose purpose is to achieve unity — the Oscar López Rivera Foundation, Libertad.

The exciting event was sponsored by the National Human Rights Network, the National Lawyers Guild and the Welcome Oscar to the Bay Area Committee. It was endorsed by about 50 organizations, including the Anti Police-Terror Project and Workers World Party.

— Report by Terri Kay

## ‘Release Angel Ramos’ autopsy report!’



Workers World Party Bay Area members joined Anti Police-Terror Project and International Longshore Workers Union Local 10 representatives on June 2 in front of the Solano County Courthouse in Fairfield, Calif. They were there to support the family of Angel Rico Ramos, who are demanding that the Solano County Coroner’s office release the autopsy report concerning the police killing of their 21-year-old family member.

Ramos would have turned 22 on June 3, but was shot and killed by a Vallejo police officer on the evening of Jan. 23, as he stood on the second-floor deck of a house during a party. The initial police report claimed he was attempting to stab another young man, but the alleged victim and other witnesses assert that Ramos was unarmed.

The protesting group held space at the Solano County Courthouse for three hours until 1:23 p.m. in remembrance of the Jan. 23 date of Ramos’ murder.

Ramos’ relatives and community advocates have repeatedly requested a copy of the autopsy report, which would provide proof of the officer’s wrongdoing. But it was once again not released on June 2. However, the Ramos’ family and their supporters alerted the coroner’s office that they would continue to protest in greater numbers until the autopsy report is released.

Community members and anti-police brutality activists are concerned about the high level of police killings in Solano County, and they vow to continue demonstrating their opposition to this terror.

— Report by Tristen Schmidt

## For Palestine: Hundreds disrupt Zionist parade

Under the slogan “Celebrate Ending Israeli Apartheid,” over 100 activists disrupted the annual “Celebrate Israel” parade in New York City on June 4. Seven Jewish protesters were arrested. Five of those, identified as queer Jews, interrupted the parade’s LGBTQ bloc with signs saying “No pride in apartheid” and “Queer Jews for a free Palestine.”

Counterdemonstrators, called together by Jewish Voice for Peace and If Not Now, unfurled banners, staged sit-ins and blocked the parade. Thousands, including NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio and New York state Gov. Andrew Cuomo, marched down Fifth Avenue in the annual parade, which has received Israeli govern-

ment funding of nearly \$800,000 over the last seven years.

Organizers said in a press release that they were resisting 69 years of Zionist terrorism, oppression and aggression, and expressing support for Palestine. They condemned Israel’s “apartheid wall and the more than 600 checkpoints, obstacles and other barriers” to freedom of Palestinian movement. A JVP statement also condemned the “exchange programs” between the New York Police Department and Israeli security forces that harm both communities of color and Palestinians.

— Story by Minnie Bruce Pratt





# ‘We’re in this to win!’ Fight for affordable housing not over

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Atlanta

Without warning, in the early morning hours of June 2, dozens of Georgia State University police raided Tent City, built at the site of Turner Field, the former home of the Atlanta Braves baseball team. They slashed the tents, knocking them over, destroying the contents and threatened people with arrest as they scrambled to get their belongings.

The residents of the neighborhoods surrounding the stadium, along with students at GSU and other colleges, plus anti-displacement activists, had erected a collection of tents on April 1 at the intersection of Hank Aaron and Ralph Abernathy boulevards, abutting Turner Field.

It was a visible sign of the fierce determination of area homeowners and renters not to be ignored and dismissed by the new owners of the property, GSU and Carter Developers, as they planned their multimillion dollar “redo” of the area.

The historically Black working-class area just south of the state Capitol building has long been targeted for “urban renewal” schemes, first with the construction of interstate highways that divided the community and separated it from downtown Atlanta, and then with the building of Fulton County Stadium, followed by the Olympic Stadium, which

then became Turner Field.

Massive parking lots surrounded the sports arenas, with their concrete surfaces directing rainwater into people’s adjacent homes. Beyond the home games of the baseball season, with its traffic jams and littering, noisy fans, the acreage belonging to Turner Field saw little use and provided the neighborhoods nothing but barren landscapes most of the time.

Immediately upon learning that the Braves were moving to the suburbs and that the city would be selling the property, residents of the Peoplestown, Mechanicsville, Summerhill and Pittsburgh neighborhoods, along with other community organizations, began an extensive outreach effort to establish what people wanted from the redevelopment.

Numerous committees were formed; meetings were held for over two years; residents traveled to other cities to see how their process had worked. All this hard work culminated in a document called the “Community Benefits Agreement” (CBA) which outlined areas such as jobs and job training, education initiatives, transportation, green spaces, sidewalk and lighting, and security issues, which would be signed by the purchasing entities and included in the planning of the new office, retail, housing, university and athletic buildings.

A major concern the CBA dealt with

was the displacement of longtime residents who owned small bungalows, or renters of single homes or apartments. A key demand is protection for these community elders.

Already, speculators have bought rental property and evicted the tenants in preparation for selling the land again at a higher price.

The Turner Field Benefits Coalition members have spoken at countless public meetings, organized demonstrations, marches and sit-ins, held numerous press conferences and earned the support of many in this city, whose own neighborhoods are being transformed by high-priced, high-rise condos and luxury housing.

The crisis of affordable housing is extreme in Atlanta, with increased migration from the suburbs and the growing high-tech industry, tourism and corporate construction. At the same time, Atlanta has tens of thousands of low-wage workers who service this growth but can barely find housing on their meager pay.

### Community, student support

For months, GSU, the major partner in the purchase with Carter and some smaller developers, refused to meet with the Turner Field Benefits Coalition. GSU President Mark Becker has refused to meet with his own students, many of whom live in the affected area, to discuss how the university can be a good neighbor that improves the quality of life for old and new residents. Instead, students have been arrested and charged with trespass on their own campus for attempting to speak with him.

On April 1, following a large march through the neighborhood, which ended at Turner Field, the tents were erected and the occupation began. It received ongoing media coverage.



PHOTO: WGCL

For 63 days, there was a 24-hour presence despite intense heat, soaking rain, tornado-like wind and constant surveillance by police agencies. Senior residents and students from GSU, Morehouse, Spelman, Agnes Scott, Emory and other schools shared stories and food together; there were movie nights and music performances; other organizations held their meetings at Tent City in solidarity.

Every day, cars passing by the busy intersection were greeted with signs denouncing displacement and demanding a voice in the future of their neighborhood. Honks of support and waves would always bring cheers from the Tent City inhabitants.

Then recently, a press release was issued declaring that an agreement had been made with a group led by Suzanne Mitchell, the sister-in-law of the Atlanta City Council president. This “behind closed doors” move backfired and a press conference that brought out several elected officials — including city council members, candidates for the 2017 city mayoral race and state representatives — prompted negotiations to begin between the coalition, GSU and Carter.

At these meetings, authorities had stated that they would not have an issue with Tent City remaining until late August. Sherise Brown and Allison Johnson, two of the neighborhood leaders, stated that it was exactly this kind of false promise that made them determined to win a signed agreement.

They shared the sentiment upon standing at the now cleared space that was Tent City: “They may have knocked down our tents but not our spirit. We’re in this to win!” □

## Rally against ‘back-in-the-day’ firing

Before unions were recognized in the auto industry, a worker could be fired for the slightest infraction, even laughing or talking.

Things are different now in a union shop — but not as different as one might think. In Macomb County, a county north of Detroit credited with delivering Michigan to Trump in the November election, things are still a lot like the old days. There, at McLaren Hospital, an African-American woman lost her job for “slamming her hand on a desk and making an audible sigh.”

Krystal Benson, chief steward with American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 2569 and a hospital employee for three years, was also fired after being accused of putting her hand on her hip — hardly grounds for discharge! In her words, she had been “experiencing racial discrimination, being stereotyped, harassed, intimidation tactics and unfair labor practice.” Her termination came after an argument with a white supervisor.



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Macomb County is less than 9 percent Black, and Black residents make up only one-quarter of Mt. Clemens, where the hospital is located. The Trump election has emboldened racists, especially where they are the overwhelming majority.

On June 3, Benson gathered outside the hospital with family members, co-workers and supporters from the Moratorium NOW! Coalition. Protesters carried signs charging the hospital with racism and demanding Benson be rehired. More protests are planned.

— Story by Martha Grevatt

## Lower East Side not for sale

By Anne Pruden  
New York

Working-class tenants from Manhattan’s Lower East Side communities protested at City Hall again on May 31. They exposed the collaboration between New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and real estate developers. Their actions are displacing the residents of Chinatown and their Latinx neighbors by building luxury megatowers for the rich.

Speakers from the Citywide Alliance against Displacement and the National Mobilization against Sweatshops called for de Blasio to be fired. Protesters held placards and banners in Spanish, Chi-



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

nese and English which criticized de Blasio and City Council member Margaret Chin for approving construction by the Extell Development Company of a luxury skyscraper on the Lower East Side — in clear violation of the community’s zoning

Continued on page 8

## Va. community defense Rooting out white supremacy



WW PHOTO

By Workers World Staff

Fighters against white supremacy took to the streets June 3 in Charlottesville, Va., for a “Community Defense Against Fascism” protest.

Starting with a rally at the University of Virginia Rotunda, speakers from Charlottesville, Roanoke, Baltimore and elsewhere denounced the latest actions of white supremacists. Those bigots have been defending the statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee in one of the city’s main parks. The protest also roundly criticized the actions of police to protect racists and the Jim-Crow-type conditions still prevailing in the city and state, from anti-union policies to segregated housing. A strong point was made that money the U.S. government spends on war could be used for people’s needs.

After the rally, dozens of multinational, all-age and all-gender protesters took

the street for their march to “Lee Park,” where the Lee statue still stands despite a City Council vote that it be taken down. A judge recently put a stay on that decision. Along the march route, the protest, which included many children, was ambushed and attacked by Charlottesville and other police who screamed, threatened mass arrests and rammed vehicles into protesters. A few protesters were temporarily detained and given tickets.

Despite this police terror, protesters marched on to “Lee Park” with their banners and signs declaring “Jobs Not Racism,” “Smash White Supremacy,” “No Human Being Is Illegal” and other slogans. They joined with another people’s rally taking place there that included speakers, cultural events and discussion of future plans to root white supremacists out of Charlottesville and to continue building a broad-based people’s united front movement. □



# Mumia supporters tell Philly DA: ‘Open the books!’

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

On May 30, demonstrators outside the Philadelphia district attorney’s office demanded its compliance with an order by Common Pleas Judge Leon Tucker to release all files and related documents showing any role played by former District Attorney Ronald Castille in proceedings against political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. May 30 was the court deadline for compliance with the order.

Calling on the DA to “open the books,” activists denounced the decades of corruption rampant in the Philadelphia DA’s office and its legacy of racist collusion with the Fraternal Order of Police. The FOP heavily financed Castille’s election campaign for the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Tucker’s order was in response to an April appeal filed on Abu-Jamal’s behalf. The appeal argued Mumia’s constitutional right to due process was violated when former DA Castile presided over the case in his role as a Pennsylvania Supreme Court judge. The argument is based on Williams v. Pennsylvania, a 2016 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that a judge should not rule in a case in which they had prior significant or personal involvement as a prosecutor. Castille ruled on appeals by Abu-Jamal and 13 other defendants despite requests he recuse himself since their cases had been prosecuted by his district attorney’s office.

Judge Tucker had ruled the DA’s office had to turn over all records regarding Castille’s involvement in Mumia’s case. The order included all pre-trial, trial, post-trial and direct appeal proceedings; memos and communications between Castille and his staff; and any public statements Castille made about Mumia’s case during or after his tenure as district attorney of Philadelphia.

### Blowing the lid off the Philly cover-up

In the latest attempt to deny justice to Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Philadelphia district attorney’s office submitted an eleventh hour response to Tucker’s order on May 30. Its two-page cover letter denied any “direct involvement” by Castille. The office submitted only 54 pages of court filings already part of the case’s public re-

cord, and included nothing that could not be found by perusing existing court records.

In other words the Philadelphia DA’s office is still hiding the truth.

Ronald Castille was assistant Philadelphia district attorney at the time of Abu-Jamal’s 1982 trial and also when his office opposed Mumia’s direct appeals in 1988. Under Castille, the infamous “Jack McMahon training tape” was produced to instruct Philadelphia prosecutors to ignore a U.S. Supreme Court ban on racial discrimination in jury selection. The tape taught prosecutors how to keep Black people off juries, stating: “Blacks from low-income areas are less likely to convict. ... You don’t want these people on your jury.”

The May 30 filings from the DA’s office contained nothing about this jury training tape or any of the other legal issues in Mumia’s appeal to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Activist attorney and Abu-Jamal supporter Rachel Wolkenstein said: “The DA’s response is another attempt to conceal the judicial and prosecutorial misconduct that resulted in Mumia’s frame-up conviction and death sentence. The papers submitted are simply what was part of the public record. There is no attempt to assert that they looked for drafts of their filings, memos circulated between DA’s, notes of consults on how to make their legal argument.

“We need to publicize the DA’s refusal to comply with the scope of the judge’s discovery order, and demand that the entirety of the police and prosecution files need to be opened and turned over to Mumia. Free Mumia now!”

### Breaking the mainstream media silence

The DA’s office refusal goes hand-in-hand with the state’s efforts to silence and intimidate Abu-Jamal supporters. When the demonstrators showed up for the press conference and rally outside the DA’s office, they were met with steel barriers and heavily armed police.

Demonstrators stood their ground and



Philly supporters of Mumia Abu-Jamal march on May 30 to demand district attorney’s office comply with court order in his favor.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

eventually ended up surrounding the police. People walking by stopped to listen to rally speakers and eagerly took fliers explaining the case. Local mainstream media have consistently chosen to ignore Abu-Jamal’s appeal and Tucker’s ruling, focusing attention on charges against current District Attorney Seth Williams for petty corruption.

The rally gathered a broad coalition of groups under the umbrella of the Mobilization for Mumia. Speakers at the press conference included Pam Africa with International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Johanna Fernandez with the Campaign to Bring Mumia Home, Zayid Muhammad with the Newark Peoples Organization for Progress, Deandra Jefferson with the REAL Justice Coalition, Gregory Muhammad with the Prison Reform Ministry and Diane James from Decarcerate PA.

The potential to re-open Mumia’s conviction case is dangerous to certain people in high places. The case is rife with suppression of evidence of innocence, evidence tampering by the police, and coercion of witnesses to identify Mumia as “guilty.” The Pennsylvania injustice establishment has consistently lied about the facts of the case and demonized Mumia. Politicians have used the case to win votes through racially divisive law-and-order politics.

Continuing to break the establishment silence, the activists took to the streets after their press conference. Occupying all lanes of Market Street, they marched to the offices of the Philadelphia Inquirer and later FOX News to deliver press packets with information on Mumia’s appeal. Hundreds of fliers were distributed along the way. □

Taken from a May 30 audio recording on prisonradio.org

## From Mumia Abu-Jamal My Heartfelt ‘Thank You!’

Several days ago I received a message from both of our lawyers, Bob Boyle and Bret Grote, informing me that the latest lab tests came in from the Discovery Requests.

And they told me that the hepatitis C infection level is at zero and as of today I’m Hep C free.

This is in part due to some fine lawyering by Bret and Bob, who, remember, filed the suit while I was in the throes of a diabetic coma, unconscious and thus unable to file for myself.

But it’s also due to you, the people. Brothers and sisters who supported our efforts, who contributed to this fight with money, time, protests and cramming courtrooms on our behalf, who sent cards, who prayed, who loved deeply.

I can’t thank you all individually, but if you hear my voice or read my words know that I am thanking you, all of you. And I’m thanking you for showing once again the Power of the People.

This battle ain’t over, for the state’s cruelest gift is my recent diagnosis of cirrhosis of the liver. With your love we shall prevail again. I thank you all. Our noble doctors, Corey Weinstein, who told us what to look for, and Joseph Harris, who gave me my first diagnosis and who became the star of the courtroom by making the mysteries of Hep C understandable to all. An internist working up in Harlem, Dr. Harris found few thrills better than telling his many Hep C patients that they’re cured.

This struggle ain’t just for me y’all. Because of your efforts thousands of Pennsylvania prisoners now have hope of healing from the ravages of hepatitis C. “Let us march on til victory is won.” So goes the old Negro spiritual, the Black National Anthem. We are making it a reality. I love you all.

From prison nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal. □



# What Mumia means to the youth

*The following talk was given by Christian Cobb at a June 1 forum on “Mumia Abu-Jamal Victories and Historic MOVE Conference” in New York City, which also featured MOVE members Pam Africa and Ramona Africa; lawyers Bob Boyle and Rachel Wolkenstein; and long-time Puerto Rican activist Esperanza Martell. The meeting was chaired by Suzanne Ross from the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal.*

I’m here today to talk about what Mumia Abu-Jamal means to the youth. I will do that by talking about what he means to me. Prior to getting involved with Workers World Party, I had not heard of Mumia Abu-Jamal. When I stepped through these doors, I couldn’t not hear the name Mumia Abu-Jamal: from stories of other people’s visits to his court cases to the necessity of his freedom and to the impact he had, has, and will have as a freed man on the movement.

So I began to learn and I began to share in the inspiration that my new comrades shared about this amazing man. From stories about Mumia joining the Black Panthers when he was 15 years old to him standing up against Mayor Rizzo in the 1970s to how he was also a MOVE sup-

porter. Then I learned more about how he was framed for the death of a white cop in 1981 and sentenced to death in 1982.

We all know the real reason why he was sentenced. It was because he was a Black Panther and a Black revolutionary.

That is why when I heard that there was a new court hearing, all I had to know was where do I sign up. Myself and other comrades went down to Philly to pack the courtroom and to join in with demonstrations outside demanding the freedom of Mumia as well as all political prisoners.

I stayed outside, where I learned the chant: “Brick-by-brick, wall-by-wall, we’re going to free Mumia Abu-Jamal!” Many of us lined the sidewalk chanting, holding up signs and passing out literature to those walking by and to those going to and from

the courthouse. We also wished Mumia a “Happy Birthday” as well, since it was, in fact, his birthday that day.

Finally, Mumia’s lawyers came out and spoke about how the hearing had gone. They talked about how they had fought to get a right to discovery on former Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Ronald D. Castille. They stated that they didn’t know how long it was going to take to get the judge’s decision.

But in that space, surrounded by Mumia’s supporters, hope was everywhere. If you breathed, it filled your lungs. Everyone knew he would win the right to discovery. Everyone knew that one day Mumia would be free.

Now, Mumia has won the right to discovery on that judge, who should have never been his judge in the first place. Now he is one step closer to being free!

He will be free! Leonard Peltier will be free! The Move 9 will be free! Just like Oscar López Rivera was freed. Just like Chelsea Manning was freed. All political prisoners will be free! Free them all!

So I came away inspired and motivated, having seen the impact that People Power can have on a case, and seeing the impact that Mumia had on everyone who was gathered there, especially the varying generations.

All the work that the elders have done is impressive. And they have done a lot of work. Workers World Party has been involved in the fight to free Mumia since 1995. That’s now over 20 years. The party was vital to a huge 1995 rally, where over 10,000 people filled the streets of Philly to protest Mumia’s execution date. And they stopped his death.

The fight kept continuing to 2010, when Mumia was successfully taken off of death row.

This fight has continued for so long because Mumia has been able to inspire each succeeding generation, from the 1980s to the 1990s to now. Through the work he continues to do even now behind bars and at the age of 63, he is able to reach the youth. He still talks about

*Continued on page 8*



# Protest at OAS says ‘U.S. hands off Venezuela!’

By Washington D.C./  
Baltimore Bureau

Facing off against close to 100 angry pro-U.S. protesters who had blocked the entrances of the Organization of American States headquarters in Washington, D.C., supporters of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and the Bolivarian revolution held their ground, chanting “USA, hands off Venezuela!” and “Violence in Venezuela — Made in the USA!” on May 31.

The pro-Bolivarian protest was called in response to a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of American States, during which OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro planned to promote sanctions against Venezuela. The U.S. ruling elite, the Pentagon and the U.S. government have used this tactic against countless countries in order to undermine and destroy people’s gains.

The protest also came 10 days after Orlando José Figueras, an Afro-Venezuelan, was set on fire on May 21 for allegedly being in favor of the revolution. The racist hate crime has horrified people around the world.

The counterrevolutionary forces outside the OAS justified the attack, saying that Figueras deserved to be burned to death because he was stealing. He has since died of his extensive injuries.

Supporters of the Venezuelan revolution carried pictures of the attack and pointed out the class differences between Figueras and those gathered against Maduro. Almost every pro-U.S. supporter was white and wore designer clothes.

Steven Ceci of the People’s Power Assembly pointed out that the majority of that crowd had arrived in fancy coach buses. He added, “You can see the class differences also by what they were yelling at us, things like ‘You dirty poor people’ and calling us homeless.”

Basma Gregg, an 18-year-old African-American Muslim woman and Workers World Party spokesperson, stood on the front lines despite taunts by counterrevolutionary protesters. She an-



WWW PHOTOS: RASIKA RUWANPATHIRANA

Washington, DC.

grily expressed that “if the United States and OAS get their way, the people of Venezuela will suffer.”

She exclaimed that young people, particularly Black and Brown youth, were dying in the streets of the U.S. at the hands of racist police, and that this was what these pro-U.S. supporters were trying to bring to Venezuela: a system that despises the poor and working-class people. ([tinyurl.com/yddmh7z5](http://tinyurl.com/yddmh7z5))

Gregg added later in a public post: “I broke down in tears ... because of the ignorance of the upper-class Venezuelans that were protesting against us. When the Venezuelan economy goes completely down the drain because of U.S. intervention, those same upper-class, white-privileged Venezuelans will be safe and sound in this country, while their families suffer and are ripped to shreds by this government that they think is ‘oh-so-great.’ Do me a favor, and ask Syria and Puerto Rico how they feel about U.S. intervention.”

She and David Card, another young Workers World activist, pointed out that the opposition are terrorists who are attacking the gains that Venezuelan people have made through the Bolivarian revolution, including in health care and educa-



tion, and increases in the minimum wage. Workers World Party representative Sharon Black added: “We should never forget that Venezuela is the fourth-largest oil-producing country. It is imperative that the poor and working class around the world unite to say ‘No’ to intervention in Venezuela and to defend the Bolivarian revolution. This is our battle, too.”

She affirmed that Workers World Party and others will be continuing our protests in support of the Venezuelan people and the Bolivarian revolution. A protest is scheduled in Baltimore on June 8. See [iacenter.org/4832/venezuela/](http://iacenter.org/4832/venezuela/).

The May 31 pro-Bolivarian revolution protests were called by a large cross section of groups, including the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle of New York, Workers World Party, Baltimore Venezuela Support, the FMLN, Trabajador Unidos de Washington D.C., the Answer Coalition, CISPES — the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, the Latin American and Caribbean Action Network, Brazilian Expats for Democracy, the Cuba and Venezuela Solidarity Committee, the Alliance for Global Justice, the People’s Power Assembly and Pan-African Community Action. □

## ‘The revolution is coming!’

The following excerpts are from a talk given by Faiquan Sells at a May 20 Workers World forum in New York City titled “Black Lives Matter, Trans Lives Matter, USA out of Everywhere!”

Continuing countless imperialist wars; executive orders banning citizens of whole countries (which are all in either Africa or the Middle East); a constant threat to your health care being taken away.

A system that only works to keep all wealth and resources in the hands of 1% of the entire population, while everyone else is left to find means to survive in a system that was meant that they do the exact opposite.

A system where health care, education, property ownership and resources are privileges for the wealthy few instead of basic rights for all. This economic system, capitalism, was never meant to benefit the working class.

Capitalism was never meant to benefit the poor. And every single U.S. president, every single U.S. politician who is currently holding, or has held, elected office in this country, is a champion of this system, while at the same time voicing crocodile tears of concern for the people.

The current president of the United States, Donald Trump, is continuing what imperialists and capitalists have been doing in this country since the late 1400s: exploiting land that doesn’t belong to them (North Dakota pipeline, invading Middle Eastern nations for no good reason, etc.), enacting legal racism (banning citizens from six Black and Arab coun-

tries, deporting immigrants, etc.), continuing decades long wars in the Middle East and elsewhere, policing other nations that the U.S government perceives as hostile to U.S “national interests,” among so many other atrocities that are so numerous, I would lose patience listing them all.

Fortunately, all of the above is making it easier for socialist organizations and parties to attract younger people! According to Motherjones.com and splcenter.com, the number of socialist organizing committees and organizations as a whole has nearly doubled since Donald Trump has been elected. The major contributing factor in this spike in membership is people between the ages of 18-34.

Membership of various communist organizations, including Workers World Party, has increased primarily due to the fascist, sexist, homophobic and racist positions that the Trump administration represents. It is important to note that what Trump represents, capitalist and imperialist forces also represent, and young people are taking notice. And they are fucking tired!

Tired of the tax dollars coming out of our paychecks, which we are already getting shortchanged out of anyhow working to make the CEOs rich, and funding imperialist wars overseas which we did not agree to support or partake in whatsoever.

I still can’t, to this day, understand why men make decisions regarding women’s bodies. The young masses are tired of the same bullshit that capitalist politicians, Democrat and Republican alike, spew out on the campaign trail, only to get elected and not do a single damn thing for the constituents who elected them.

### A renewed interest in socialism

Young people are realizing, more and more, that no matter whomever they elect, things stay the same. Young people are realizing, more and more, that in order for things to change to their satisfaction, the entire system must be changed!

The renewed interest in socialism and communism among young people is vital, as we are the ones who will carry the torch and continue the fight for socialism. If there is no one to continue our struggle, if there is no one to continue fighting for socialism, then there will be no more fight for socialism. In that regard, I am personally thankful for the election of Donald Trump. He is racist and unqualified as shit, but his fascist, homophobic, racist views, as well as him being unqualified for the position he was elected to, are some of the very reasons we have some of these beautiful young comrades in our presence today.

Now, more than ever, is the time to strike down the system that oppresses us. Our forces are expanding. And we will continue to work as hard as we can to continue to expand. Imagine if people, in the tens of millions, filled the streets, powerfully declaring that this regime is illegitimate and demanding that it not be allowed to rule!

The whole political landscape would be dramatically transformed. Every faction within the established power structure would be forced to respond — and all this could well lead to a situation in which this fascist regime is actually prevented from ruling.

With all this being said, the revolution is coming! Everyone against smashing the capitalist system will be skipped when our revolution train goes express. □





# SOLIDARITY WITH VENEZUELA

## Cuba explains why

*The imperialist media have joined that belonging to the Venezuelan oligarchy to poison public opinion against the Bolivarian government there. In an attempt to counter this venom, Workers World publishes here some excerpts of news and analysis from Cuba, a reliable and prestigious source. The first is an excerpt from President Raúl Castro's June 1 speech to a session of the National Assembly, published the next day in Cuba's official newspaper, Granma.*

### Support for Bolivarian Venezuela

In this very session, in representation of the genuine will of our people, the Cuban Parliament approved a declaration of support to the people and government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

On this issue, I would like to emphasize that it is necessary to denounce and stop the aggression against this sister country. Imperialist economic and political interests are attempting to deny its people the right to exercise self-determination. Joining the unilateral, arbitrary and unjust sanctions of the United States, are intervention in internal affairs by the OAS and various governments, as well as defamation and crude manipulation of reality — all directed toward overthrowing the constitutional government elected by Venezuelans.

Many of those leading protests and seeking international recognition are the same individuals who were involved in the 2002 military coup, in the oil sabotage of 2003 and in the violent, seditious actions of 2014.

A hypocritical attempt is made to justify foreign intervention, claiming that they want to help the Venezuelan people, but the only way to do so is by demonstrating in action full respect for the sovereignty of Venezuela and encouraging constructive, respectful dialogue, as the only means to address disagreements.

If, in reality, there is concern for human rights and personal security, the pro-coup violence which has caused death and injury must be unequivocally condemned. Images of youth being hit, punched and burned alive by violent

oppositionists remind us of the worse acts of fascism.

I reiterate our solidarity with the Bolivarian Chavista Revolution, with the civic-military union of the Venezuelan people and with the government led by constitutional President Nicolás Maduro Moros.

*For entire speech, see [tinyurl.com/yd3925al](http://tinyurl.com/yd3925al)*

### Script for plans to destroy Bolivarian Revolution written in Washington.

*(Granma, May 25)*

Breaking the law, creating a parallel government, organizing alternative economic institutions, harassing public officials, destroying property, hoarding of goods, marching, obstructing social events, boycotting elections, disrupting schools, using false identities, seeking arrests, launching hunger strikes and overwhelming the state administrative systems — are only a few of the 198 methods to overthrow governments proposed by CIA coup expert Gene Sharp, more than 40 years ago.

Finding just one of these techniques that has not been used against Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution is difficult.

These last several years, President Nicolás Maduro's administration has faced particularly intense attacks and the implementation of so-called non-conventional war, based on psychological manipulation, social protest, coups and irregular armed struggle.

Unlike traditional conflicts, non-conventional wars are based on promoting confrontations between authorities and the population, to undermine the government's ability to function, leading to its demise without the use of a foreign military intervention.

Perhaps the clearest example of this kind of warfare is the operation carried out by U.S. and Western powers against the government of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya. Bands of opponents, armed and advised from abroad, carried out the dirty work on the ground, while NATO provided air support, and the transnational corporate media manipulated the facts presented to the public.

### Venezuela, a case study

Despite the defeat of the 2002 coup attempt — by a massive mobilization of the Venezuelan people ... Chávez was confronted by protests and sabotage, of different proportions, until his very last days.

When the Bolivarian leader died in March of 2013, and his successor, Nicolás Maduro, took the reins, the right wing and their foreign advisers activated the most aggressive tactics of their non-conventional war strategy, in hopes of dealing the revolution a final blow.

### More than street barricades

The mounting violence of protests taking place recently in Venezuela is reminiscent of the street barricades and fighting (guarimbas) which occurred in February of 2014, leaving 43 dead and more than 800 injured.

But this last wave of violence appears to be better organized and more extensive.

The attack by armed opposition gangs on the Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías Maternal-Infant Hospital, with 54 children inside, would qualify as a war crime before any international court.

The Venezuelan right, traditionally divided given its personal rifts, with various individuals competing for power, is, on the contrary, united in following the non-conventional script written in Washington. Violence is the only common ground.

Repeated calls for street demonstrations, despite the fact that more than 40 lives have already been lost in this round of guarimbas, along with the opposition's refusal to participate in the Constituent Assembly, make clear, once again, that the only solution the opposition offers is an end to the revolution, by any means and regardless of consequences.

The continuity of the social project begun by Hugo Chávez — which has forever changed the reality of this country to benefit the poor — is not all that is at stake.

The counterrevolutionaries outside the OAS had a script. They were practiced and stuck to their line. In addition to providing human mouthpieces that amplify the lies in the media, they also attacked Venezuela's international solidarity. Part

of the script says Venezuela sends oil to Caribbean countries and Cuba while Venezuelan people starve and die. This is a dagger at ALBA and the solidarity agreements in Latin America and the Caribbean that break with the imperialist economic domination. They hate Cuba and say that socialism stifles creativity. The attack is not only against Venezuela, but also against Cuba and any attempt to develop outside of imperialism.

*For entire article: [tinyurl.com/y9sakl9u](http://tinyurl.com/y9sakl9u)*

### What is Petrocaribe?

An article by Rachel Glickhouse on May 10, 2013, published by the Americas Society, explains the Petrocaribe organization. One can easily see why U.S. imperialism would adopt policies aiming to destroy such an organization as well as other international initiatives by Bolivarian Venezuela that strengthened the sovereignty of the countries south of the United States.

Under the administration of late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, an energy bloc emerged to provide low-interest oil sales to nearby countries facing expensive imports. As a region, Caribbean countries spend around 13 percent of GDP on oil imports, while Petrocaribe, the Venezuela-led organization, allows governments to pay for petroleum over time.

Venezuela offers oil agreements to member countries, which must pay 60 percent of the bill within 90 days. The remaining 40 percent can be financed over 25 years at 1 percent interest, should oil prices stay above \$40 per barrel. Financing takes into account the current cost of oil, allowing for more favorable terms when the cost of oil is higher. Countries may also offer goods and services to pay off oil shipments, ranging from food such as beans and sugar to human capital such as doctors.

There are now 18 members of Petrocaribe: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Suriname, and Venezuela.

*For entire article, see [tinyurl.com/ybebz64v](http://tinyurl.com/ybebz64v)*

# National call says: 'Defend Venezuela!'

*Continued from page 1*

Pentagon and White House — have set up an international campaign of blatant lies that try to present the terrorist actions of the fascist hordes as repression from the Revolutionary Government [of Venezuela]. The truth is that these terrorist acts are directed against the state's buildings and agencies and against the supporters of the revolution. The aim of these protests is to create chaos in order to declare a 'humanitarian crisis' and demand U.S. intervention.

"State agency buildings have been destroyed, an entire fleet of public buses burned, a health facility for women and children attacked. More than 60 people have died and hundreds wounded during these protests. These are not 'pro-democracy peaceful' protests, as the media try to portray. Criminal groups and thugs are involved; children, paid

by the opposition with U.S. aid money, are also involved. The fascist, hateful and racist character of the attacks includes setting people on fire, stabbing and beating them while shouting racist insults.

"The Organization of American States has been the principal body working on behalf of the U.S. to launch an international campaign against Venezuela. As a result, Venezuela left the OAS.

"Now there is a real danger of a military intervention. Two days after Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos met with President [Donald] Trump in Washington, Colombian army tanks were mobilized to the border with Venezuela.

"During these days, we aim to: expose the U.S. government and media's role; show the truth behind these demonstrations; and express solidarity with the Bolivarian people and their government."

### Solidarity from coast to coast

A determined crowd picketed at the Ron Dellums Federal Building in **Oakland, Calif.**, on June 2 to demand "U.S., CIA, hands off Venezuela." Holding signs in defense of the Bolivarian Revolution and against U.S./OAS threats against Venezuela, the picketers faced jeering chants from a small but

vocal group of right-wing Venezuelans.

The pro-Maduro forces chanted, "Not U.S. land, not U.S. oil — Hands off Venezuelan soil;" "No more wars for Big Oil, Hands off Venezuela;" "U.S, CIA, Hands off Venezuela;" and "U.S.A. makes endless war; Venezuela feeds the poor."

The event was initiated by the IAC, the International Committee for Peace, Justice, Dignity, and the Haiti Action Committee. Endorsers included the Answer Coalition; Arab Resource and Organizing Center; Bay Area CISPES; Bay Area Latin America Solidarity Coalition; International League of People's Struggle-U.S.; Marcha Patriótica de Colombia/California Chapter; Socialist Action; San Francisco County, Santa Cruz County & Sonoma County Peace and Freedom Party; Task Force on the Americas; United National Antiwar Coalition; and Workers World Party.

Workers World Party's **Durham, N.C.**, branch sponsored a film screening of "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" in solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution



WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

in Venezuela on June 4 at the Durham Solidarity Center.

In **New York City**, a viewing of the same film on June 3 was attended by a large multinational, multigenerational and multigender audience. William Camacaro, of the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle of New York, brought a delegation of Venezuelans to the screening, which was sponsored by the IAC and WWP. A protest in solidarity with the Venezuelan Revolution will take place at New York's Times Square on June 6.

Other actions are being planned in Atlanta; Boston; Buffalo, N.Y.; Detroit; Houston; Huntington, W. Va.; Los Angeles; New York City; Philadelphia; Portland, Ore.; Rochester, N.Y.; and Salt Lake City. For more information visit [iacenter.org/4832/venezuela/](http://iacenter.org/4832/venezuela/).

*Terri Kay and Sara Flounders contributed to this report.*



FIRETHISTIME.NET



# Sexual Minorities Archive reopens with Leslie Feinberg Library

By Gery Armsby  
Holyoke, Mass.

After a long fight against landlords and banks, June 3 marked a victorious “Welcome Home” to the Sexual Minorities Archive in its new Holyoke, Mass., location. The occasion also celebrated the opening of the Leslie Feinberg Library, housed in the SMA’s new Sylvia Rivera Room.

Gathered in the packed house were SMA supporters, community members and activists, including renowned poet and Workers World managing editor Minnie Bruce Pratt, Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse and a delegation from Workers World Party’s Boston branch.

SMA’s archivist-activist founder, Ben Power, told the group, “We almost lost this precious 43-year-old LGBTQ national archive.” Power explained the root causes that necessitated relocating the archive from its former site in Northampton, Mass., and struggling to obtain a new home: “We had to fight back against a combination of two forces: trans discrimination and gentrification.”

The SMA is a grassroots collection of LGBTQIA historical books, films, photographs, periodicals, letters and more. Directed by Power, the archive rescues records of queer and trans people’s history and prevents important documents from becoming inaccessible for future research, enjoyment and publication.

As the archive’s largest recent addi-

tion, the Leslie Feinberg Library is a unique collection of over 1,250 books and pamphlets donated to the SMA by the late author-activist and leading WWP member. Among them are many items used in Feinberg’s research for the book “Transgender Warriors,” a groundbreaking Marxist-materialist analysis tracing transgender history and delineating the class roots of trans oppression.

### LGBTQ history ‘comes home’

The room housing this collection is fittingly named in memory of Stonewall combatant Sylvia Rivera, who worked tirelessly to create liberated LGBTQ territory and often faced off against anti-trans evictions and gentrification. Sylvia, along with Stonewall comrade Marsha P. Johnson, founded Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (S.T.A.R.) in 1970 and later “Transy House” to support Black and Latinx, working-class, homeless queer and trans youth. Feinberg requested that SMA dedicate hir materials to this revolutionary LGBTQ hero.

Power explained that before hir death in 2014, Feinberg offered to donate the library when the SMA was facing eviction — in a gesture of support to generate momentum in the search for a new home.

Minnie Bruce Pratt told the crowd the SMA “represents the ongoing struggle to take the reality that is in our hearts, the one we long for so much, that place of justice ... where there is no racism, no eco-

WW PHOTOS: MAUREEN SKEHAN



WWP Boston comrades and friends (left to right) Gery Armsby, Diva Williams, Xr. Andie Michelle Burnham, and SMA supporter Er. Andrea Voisseau, director of Intersex International.

omic injustice, no women’s oppression, no anti-LGBTQ oppression ... and make it be the world.”

“Leslie had revolutionary hope,” Pratt continued. “And by that I don’t mean uninformed or fantasy hope. I watched Leslie look at who was in struggle ... and plan how to encourage that hope and help make justice happen. With this way of looking at the world, Leslie sent hir books to where they could be used — a place where everyone can use them to make the world better and to bring change — to the SMA!”

Pratt then read poems that reflected on the life she shared with Feinberg, offering personal and political insights on a treasured figure in the LGBTQ liberation and working-class struggle.

Later, a declaration was brought from the city of Holyoke and read aloud by its mayor, welcoming, the SMA and officially making June 3 Sexual Minorities Archives Day.

WWP Boston members Frank Neisser

and Steve Gillis recalled Boston initiatives that Leslie supported and helped organize, from the historic 1974 Boston March Against Racism, to Leslie’s support for striking students and dining hall workers at Harvard University, to hir role as Boston Pride Grand Marshal in 1998, leading the parade despite the police trying to cancel it.

This writer briefly conveyed their appreciation of Sylvia and Leslie’s vision for a world without oppression, and especially recalled their encouragement of young activists, palpable not only in Sylvia and Leslie’s public leadership, but also deeply felt in the way they nurtured, supported and cared about queer youth.

Three younger trans-identified candidates and friends of WWP Boston also spoke. Nat Heathman, Christine Allsopp and Mx. Andie Michelle Burnham shared impressions that Feinberg’s work has made upon them, and the ways in which learning about “trans warriors” who came before both validated and inspired the organizing of this year’s Stonewall Warriors contingent in the Boston Pride Parade, which will march as an “anti-capitalist, anti-racist, trans liberation” contingent on June 10. □

## 80 year anniversary ‘Battle of the Overpass’

By Martha Grevatt

May 26 marked the 80th anniversary of a bloody example of capitalist violence against unions: the “Battle of the Overpass.” The world was exposed -- and not for the first time -- to the brutality of a U.S. fascist by the name of Henry Ford.

From 1935 to 1937, organized labor was on the march. Hundreds of sit-down strikes had won union recognition in a range of industries. A 44-day occupation of General Motors plants in Flint, Mich., forced the world’s biggest corporation to recognize the United Auto Workers. A 31-day strike forced Chrysler to follow suit. The organizing of GM and Chrysler, along with smaller auto companies and parts suppliers, brought 400,000 members into the UAW.

Ford, however, remained unorganized. Henry Ford believed “labor union organizations are the worst thing that ever struck the earth.” (Mary Heaton Vorse, “Labor’s New Millions”)

Ford had introduced the moving assembly line in 1913. “Fordism” was synonymous with a ruthless production system that assigned every worker to a mindlessly simple task, such as attaching a specific part or installing one screw. Ford workers were fired for little infractions, such as sitting down or talking.

Ford ran his dictatorship with his second-in-command, Harry Bennett -- a prizefighter whom Ford recruited to run the “Service Department.” The department would routinely beat up union supporters inside the plants.

Bennett’s goons were involved in the violent assault on the 1932 Ford Hunger March, which was called by the Unemployed Council and the Communist Party. Five workers were murdered and scores more were injured and arrested. The massacre took place outside the massive Ford

Rouge complex, the heart of Ford’s operations in the Detroit suburb of Dearborn.

Dearborn was a company town; the mayor was a cousin of Henry Ford. “Handbill distribution” was illegal without a special permit. Nevertheless, the UAW secured a permit to distribute leaflets on May 26, 1937. The headline on the flyer was “Unionism not Fordism.”

The union’s Women’s Auxiliary planned to distribute on an overpass, crossing Miller Road, that workers used to enter the plant. The location was just a short distance from the site of the 1932 tragedy.

An advance team of UAW officials and volunteer organizers arrived to greet the women. They were joined by news reporters and sympathetic clergy.

As they climbed the stairs leading to the overpass they were immediately set upon by Ford’s Service Department. Local 174 President Walter Reuther was clubbed, kicked, dragged by his feet down two flights of iron stairs, and picked up and slammed to the pavement repeatedly. Bob Kanter and Tony Marinovich were thrown from the top of the overpass to the street 30 feet below; Marinovich suffered a brain injury. Richard Frankenstein was grabbed by the arms and legs and kicked in his privates. William Merriweather’s back was broken.

While the beatings were in progress, the Auxiliary arrived by streetcar with armfuls of leaflets. Auxiliary Commander Catherine “Babe” Gelles attempted to pull three Service Department men off a union man. The heroic Gelles was also the founder and leader of Detroit’s Women’s Emergency Brigade. It was patterned after the militant Flint Brigade, which played a pivotal role in the GM sit-down.

Gelles and the other women were beaten mercilessly and called sexist slurs. Altogether, 60 people were injured, some permanently. East Side Regional Director J.J. Kennedy later died of his wounds.

Thinking he could cover up his role, Henry Ford claimed that “loyal Ford employees” committed the violence.

Photographers and reporters were beaten, their cameras and notebooks confiscated. However, one photographer managed to toss his camera into a waiting car, which sped away with the damning evidence. What became known as the “Battle of the Overpass” was front-page news the next day in Detroit. Ford stopped advertising in Time after the magazine made the battle a feature story.

Leafleting continued even after the May 26 bloodbath. Despite the fascist-like atmosphere inside the plant, Ford workers continued to sign up to join the UAW.

After a hard-fought, seven-day strike, in which African-American union and community leaders played a critical role, the UAW finally won recognition at Ford in 1941. □

## Lower East Side not for sale

Continued from page 4

regulations. The city’s rules mandating an environmental impact study are being ignored in the interests of the rich.

These tenants are challenging the realtors’ and politicians’ actions, as their movement also defends nearby public housing that is endangered by the same players for the ruling class.

Much is known about Gary Barnett, Extell’s president and founder. He serves his class by being an executive board member of the Real Estate Board of New York. His “leadership” is being attacked by anti-gentrification forces who criticize his exploitation of EB-5 and other tax abatement programs, which amount to corporate welfare. Yet realtors are using these policies to build luxury high-rise

condominiums, such as One57, close to Central Park on what is called “Billionaires’ Row.”

Such tax abatements were intended to provide housing with lower density and to benefit less affluent tenants, not to benefit real estate moguls. The One57 skyscraper has a penthouse apartment that sold for more than \$100 million! (Business Insider, Jan. 30, 2015)

Barnett also made local news two years ago, when he strongly supported separate entrances, known as “poor doors” entrances, for low-income tenants who live in luxury buildings. Public protests stopped that practice. The strong demonstrations of anti-racists with the anti-gentrification movement can take back our neighborhoods. □



SMA Director Ben Power, poet-activist Minnie Bruce Pratt in the Feinberg Library.



# ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI and behind the lies on Afghanistan

By Deirdre Griswold

The recent film “War Machine,” made by Brad Pitt and released by Netflix, centers around an egotistical general commanding U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Its message boils down to this one truth: If you invade someone’s country, they’re going to shoot at you and tell you to get out. A whole generation has grown up since the U.S. CIA first began training and arming a covert opposition force in Afghanistan in 1979. The first regular U.S. armed forces were sent there in 2001. Since then, hundreds of thousands of U.S. soldiers have been sent to Afghanistan, allegedly to “help” a succession of Afghan governments that were put in place by the occupiers.

This war began under President Jimmy Carter, a Democrat, and has continued throughout the terms of Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Now Donald Trump is considering an increase in the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan from 8,400 to 50,000. (bloomberg.com, May 17)

It is the longest U.S. war ever. Why? Today, it is supposedly a war against the Taliban, ISIS and al-Qaida. But these groups are descended from the “warlords” that the CIA first turned into fighting units against a government led by the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan, which had taken power in 1978.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, who died last month at the ripe old age of 89, was the foremost architect of that vicious war as Carter’s national security adviser. Once it became known that the CIA had created a covert army in Afghanistan, the story given out by the U.S. government was that it was helping the Afghan people resist a Soviet invasion. This became the rationale for an increasingly bloody and expensive war that eventually overthrew the progressive government of Afghanistan.

But Brzezinski himself later bragged that the CIA operation had begun six months before the Soviet Union sent troops to Afghanistan. In fact, the Soviet intervention was not an “invasion.” It had been requested by the Afghan government to defend it against the CIA’s covert war.

**Brzezinski bragged the truth**

Brzezinski revealed the truth to the French paper *Le Nouvel Observateur* in 1998: “According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the Mujahadeen began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan on Dec. 24, 1979. But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise. Indeed, it was on July 3, 1979, that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention.”

Asked by the interviewer if he now regretted anything, Brzezinski replied, “Regret what? That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap and you want me to regret it?” (*Le Nouvel Observateur*, Jan. 15-21, 1998)

The timing of the covert CIA operation had already been revealed by former CIA Director Robert M. Gates in his book “From the Shadows” (Simon & Schuster, 1996). Gates wrote: “The Carter administration began looking at the possibility of covert assistance to the insurgents

opposing the pro-Soviet, Marxist government of President Taraki at the beginning of 1979. On March 5, 1979, the CIA sent several covert action options relating to Afghanistan to the SCC [Special Coordination Committee].” A meeting of the SCC “was finally held on July 3, 1979, and — almost six months before the Soviets invaded Afghanistan — Jimmy Carter signed the first finding to help the Mujahedin covertly.”

Yet, despite these admissions by top government officials, the narrative in the U.S. media continues to be that the U.S. set up, armed and trained the “Mujahedin” to counter a Soviet “invasion.” So that was just a cover story. What were the real reasons for the U.S. spending billions of dollars and destroying half the country in an effort to bring down the government of Afghanistan?

To answer that question, it helps to know a little about Afghanistan’s history and how it had remained independent for more than a century, even as the European and U.S. imperialist powers seized much of Asia, Africa and Latin America as their colonies or neocolonies.

**1839-1919: Three British invasions fail to conquer Afghanistan**

Britain, which controlled neighboring India, invaded Afghanistan three times — in 1839, 1879 and 1919 — but could not keep a puppet colonial regime in power there. Each time, popular uprisings drove out the British troops. However, London did force the Afghan government to accept British influence over its foreign policy, and in 1893 the British drew up the Durand line. This supposedly temporary division became the border between Afghanistan and British India — the part that today is Pakistan.

The last invasion, in 1919, provoked an uprising that overthrew the government of Habibollah, who had capitulated to the British. Inspired by the success of the Russian Revolution, the new regime of Amanollah then signed a treaty of friendship with the Bolshevik government, being one of the first countries to do so. From then until the 1970s, Afghanistan would not join any military alliance against the USSR.

**1965: PDPA launched to end feudalism, gain women’s rights**

The People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan was formed in 1965. Its program was anti-feudal and included land reform, canceling the debts of the peasants and democratic rights for women, including an end to the dowry and establishing education and health care open to all women and men.

By the 1970s, the Afghan government of Mohammad Daoud was moving to the right in its domestic policy and toward NATO in its foreign policy. The vast and mountainous countryside was under the iron grip of feudal landlords. In Kabul and a few other cities, however, the PDPA had developed much support among students, especially young women, as well as low-paid civil servants and soldiers.

On April 26, 1978, even as the arch-imperialist and billionaire Nelson Rockefeller was on his way to visit Daoud in Kabul, the government launched an assault on the PDPA, arresting almost its entire



Zbigniew Brzezinski, sighting down the barrel of an AK-47 machine gun looking toward Afghanistan, in the Khyber Pass, Pakistan.

leadership. This came right after a massive funeral for members of the PDPA who had been killed by Daoud’s police. Clearly, Daoud meant to assure the U.S. that his regime could repress any opposition that might arise to its pivot toward imperialism.

Within a day, however, army units had mutinied and liberated the PDPA leaders from their prison cells. In one case, soldiers used a tank to break down the walls of the jail where PDPA leader Nur Mohammad Taraki was being held. Taraki went on to become head of what was known as the Saur Revolution.

**1978: Revolution begins land reform, ends bride-price**

The U.S. Department of Defense has published “Country Study” books about countries around the world. They contain useful information meant for U.S. government employees sent abroad and can be more truthful than the propaganda put out by other government bodies, because the people using these books need to know what conditions are really like in the countries they are being sent to.

The version of “Afghanistan — A Country Study” that was published in 1986 contains startling admissions that go against the established government narrative about Afghanistan. For example, it says that “when the PDPA took power, it quickly moved to remove both landownership inequalities and usury.” The book added that the PDPA also canceled mortgage debts of agricultural laborers, tenants and small landowners. It set up extensive literacy programs, especially for women, and printed textbooks in many languages spoken in different parts of Afghanistan.

Said the Pentagon book, “The government trained many more teachers, built additional schools and kindergartens, and instituted nurseries for orphans.” Among the very first decrees of the revolution were to prohibit bride-price and give women freedom of choice in marriage.

This should be kept in mind today, when the propaganda machine prettifying U.S. imperialism’s long war of oppression in Afghanistan makes it seem that defending women’s rights is among Washington’s top priorities.

But in 1978, when Brzezinski and the Carter regime launched the war against the Afghan revolution, they knew it was a progressive regime trying to move this very underdeveloped country out of feudal oppression. That didn’t stop them from arming and financing a counterrevolution.

Within a few years, the contras who had been armed, trained and financed by the CIA were assassinating idealistic young teachers, women and men, who had gone to the countryside to teach literacy to the people.

One of these contras was Osama bin Laden. Under the excuse that it was defending “freedom of religion,” the U.S. undermined the secular government of the PDPA by creating an army that opposed the PDPA’s progressive reforms in the name of fighting for an Islamic state.

At the same time, however, U.S. imperialism was trying to undermine the Islamic republic in Iran, which took power in 1979 after a huge revolution there against the Shah, a puppet who had been put in power by the U.S. and British oil companies. That revolution also encompassed many progressive, secular fighters, but the Islamic leaders had the strongest organization among the masses and proved capable of driving out the Shah and his grouping.

**Religion is not the real issue**

Clearly, the issue of religion is not what motivates the imperialists. Nor do they care about women’s rights. They will use any excuse and make any temporary alliances as they try to reassert their economic domination of the region. What motivates them is their need to plunder the world, especially the areas rich in oil, for the benefit of the billionaire U.S. ruling class.

But when you invade a country, the people will shoot at you and tell you to get out.

That is what has happened in Afghanistan. Once the progressive forces were destroyed, there was a vacuum of leadership to resist the imperialists, who still occupy the country and hand pick its government officials. The armed resistance to this has, for now, coalesced around forces organized on a religious basis, some of whom espouse an extremely reactionary agenda. Nevertheless, they have won many recruits who are even willing to sacrifice their own lives in order to get the U.S. out.

No amount of escalating the supposed “war on terror” can erase this terrible situation. On the contrary. Every bomb dropped on villages in Afghanistan only intensifies the hatred of imperialism, no matter what form it takes. Every political attack on Muslims by Trump or his counterparts in Europe only deepens the anger of those who are oppressed.

In any kind of war, it is the ordinary people, whether soldiers or civilians, who bear the brunt of the suffering. It is the wealthy who have the means to protect themselves even as they profit from a victory.

The “war on terror” has taken its toll not only on the people of Afghanistan but also on people just walking the streets of major Western cities, who are made to pay for the crimes of the ruling classes. It has taken its toll on young soldiers who are told nothing about Afghanistan’s history and who, if they survive deployment to that war zone, have to fight just for decent medical care back in the U.S.

This war is not in the headlines, even when the blowback from it is. It will go on forever — unless the people stop it. U.S. out of Afghanistan! □

**WAR WITHOUT VICTORY**  
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# When racism does not discriminate

It is a universally undisputed fact that the Cleveland Cavaliers’ LeBron James is considered the greatest basketball player active today. Among his many unprecedented honors, he has won the National Basketball Association’s regular season Most Valuable Player award four times. A three-time NBA champion, James has won three MVP Finals awards since he entered the NBA in 2003 as the number one draft pick when he was only 18 years old. James is currently playing in his eighth consecutive NBA Finals against the Golden State Warriors, an NBA all-time record.

James, an African American, was born and raised in Akron, Ohio, by a single mother. His brilliant basketball talent has made him a multimillionaire and a global icon, especially with the help of social media. Now 32 and the father of two sons and a daughter, James has also been outspoken when it comes to racism. He and his teammates wore hoodies in solidarity with Trayvon Martin, the unarmed Black teenager murdered in 2012 by a racist vigilante. This heinous crime helped to spark the international Black Lives Matter movement.

James wore an “I can’t breathe” practice shirt following the murder of Eric Garner, a Black man choked to death by white New York police officers in July 2014 — one month before 18-year-old Michael Brown was murdered by a white police officer in Ferguson, Mo.

LeBron James’s celebrity, however, could not stop him and his family from recently experiencing a racist attack. On May 31, the racist N-word epithet was scrawled on a gate outside his home in the exclusive Brentwood section of Los Angeles. As of early June, no one had been brought in for questioning, much less arrested.

In response to this incident, James stated at a news conference in Oakland,

Calif., on May 31, a day before game one of the NBA Finals: “No matter how much money you have, no matter how famous you are, no matter how many people admire you, being Black in America is tough. And we’ve got a long way to go for us as a society and for us as African Americans until we feel equal in America.” (usnews.com, May 31)

How prophetic his statement was. Considering that just one day before the racist slur was discovered, on May 30, five police officers were fired for the slaughter of two young Black people, Marquintan Sandlin and Kisha Michael, who had been fatally shot multiple times while unconscious in a car. This incident took place in Inglewood, also part of Los Angeles County, on Feb. 16 of last year. Protests led by the families of the victims and the community demanded more transparency from the police about what led to the incident where five officers shot into the car at least 20 times. Along with this demand should be the bigger question: Why weren’t these officers arrested and charged with murder?

As most Black Lives Matter activists know all too well, when killer cops are either fired or put on a desk job, it reeks of another coverup in the ongoing racist police war on Black and Brown people.

So what is the lesson to learn from these two incidents?

Laws under capitalism protect the police from any kind of real justice, unless there is a powerful movement to bring pressure from below. And it does not matter whether the victim is as well known as LeBron James or not known previously to the public, like Marquintan Sandlin, Kisha Michael, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, Rekia Boyd and countless others. No person of color is immune from the stain of racism, which can only be thoroughly washed away by a socialist transformation of society. □

# Riders with disabilities show righteous anger

By John Steffin  
New York City

The Metropolitan Transit Authority has never produced an official map of the New York City subway system that only shows stations with accessibility for people with disabilities. That is because it would be embarrassing. More than 75 percent of subway stations would have to be removed — revealing the lowest rate of accessibility of any city in the United States. While the MTA is considered a “public-benefit corporation,” it is clear who is not considered part of the public: people with disabilities.

Actions at the May 24 MTA board meeting only made this more obvious.

Early that morning, around 60 people with disabilities gathered at the New York City Transit Office to speak during the public comments session of the monthly MTA board meeting. This was no small accomplishment, as it is considerably more difficult for riders with disabilities to get around the city compared to nondisabled riders. From lack of service and chronic delays to packed buses and outright abandonment by the Access-a-Ride system, riders with disabilities go

through hell to get where they are going.

But regardless of these riders’ commitment to raising their concerns and advocating for their rights, the MTA had no interest in hearing the grievances of those who made it to the MTA office that morning. After a few speakers were allowed to talk about their issues with the transit system and Access-a-Ride program, the MTA ended the public comments session early. The dozens of riders who hadn’t spoken yet were told they could present at the end.

This decision by the MTA exemplified a stunning ignorance of the struggle that riders with disabilities have in the city. Many of them could not afford to wait until the end because they would miss their rides home, or they had places to be and needed extra time to get there given the lack of reliable service. The anger at the MTA for leaving the room to conduct its meeting in private was so great that riders with disabilities left the meeting in angry protest.

This obvious discrimination is incredibly dangerous behavior by the MTA, especially when people with disabilities are under attack. Trump’s budget is cutting services for people with disabilities left and right — from Meals-on-Wheels

# Filipino women against modern day slavery

The following edited statement was issued by GABRIELA USA on May 18.

The Atlantic magazine published an article in the June 2017 issue entitled, “My Family’s Slave,” by journalist Alex Tizon. His article regarding the story of Eudocia Pulido, known as “Lola,” and her forced migration and exploitation as a modern-day slave in the United States highlights the current conditions facing Filipino women.

Eudocia Pulido’s story cannot be understood outside the context of Philippine society and history — which is rooted in U.S. imperialism and neoliberal economic policies that have caused the systemic suffering of many underpaid domestic helpers like Lola.

The Philippines is one of the largest labor exporters in the world with 6,000 Filipinos, 60 percent of them women, leaving the country every single day in order to work. This is because of rampant poverty, joblessness, and landlessness inside the country.

The women are lured to apply for positions that do not exist, with promises of legal status and decent wages. Instead, they become undocumented, and are drowning in debt and isolated in a foreign country. Thousands of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) end up working in virtual slavery.

Recruiters and employment agencies take advantage of these women by charging them exorbitant fees, demanding loan “repayments” and threatening them or their families with deportation or physical violence. Living in fear and with no place to go, many OFWs endure the discrimination, abuse, and exploitation in order to survive.

It is important that we not whitewash the writer’s parents and family’s crimes of slavery, imprisonment, and trafficking. Tizon’s account of Eudocia Pulido’s story does not exonerate him from his family’s complicity in the abuse and exploitation of another human being. Also, it is critical to recognize that this particular experience is not an isolated one — and it

stems from the Philippines’ feudal, patriarchal, and imperialist structure.

The commodification and exploitation of generations of Filipino women continue to be an inherent effect of the country’s ever-worsening conditions. These will persist and generate many more stories like Eudocia Pulido’s until comprehensive and fundamental socioeconomic and political changes are made to address the root causes of the country’s poverty.

Members of GABRIELA USA continue to take action and call for an end to the exploitative system in the Philippines. We denounce the Philippine government for neglecting its own people inside the country and lack of protections for OFWs abroad. In addition, we uplift the voices of Filipino migrant women and encourage them to tell their own stories.

GABRIELA USA seeks to empower migrant women to know and understand their rights, to fight back against oppression and exploitation, and to participate in the movement for national democracy in the Philippines. If you are moved by Lola’s story, we encourage you to join a chapter of GABRIELA USA and join the fight against feudal-patriarchy and the systems of power that allow women like Lola to be forced into exploitation.

*GABRIELA USA is a grass-roots-based alliance of progressive Filipino women organized in the United States which seeks to wage a struggle for the liberation of all oppressed Filipino women and the rest of our people. While we vigorously campaign on women-specific issues, such as women’s rights, gender discrimination, violence against women, and women’s health and reproductive rights, GABRIELA USA also addresses national and international economic and political issues that affect Filipino women. GABRIELA USA is an overseas chapter of GABRIELA Philippines, and is a member organization of BAYAN-USA and the International Women’s Alliance. See GABRIELAUSA.org.*

# Why Nicaragua refused to sign

*The capitalist media have denounced Trump’s pullout from the Paris Accord, saying that the U.S. joins the only other two countries that did not sign — Syria and Nicaragua. This is supposed to ridicule Trump and the U.S. without explanation. Nicaragua, in fact, has a very cogent explanation for its refusal to sign. The pact favors imperialism to the detriment of the oppressed countries and lets the polluters off the hook. Below are excerpts from a Time magazine article of May 31 outlining Nicaragua’s well-reasoned explanation.*

to Social Security’s program for people with disabilities.

What we need is a transit authority of the people. But what we have right now is a transit authority for the rich. It’s not like lack of service is due to a shortage of resources. If it were, we would ask the MTA how it could spend billions of dollars expanding the 7 line into Hudson Yards in mid-Manhattan. But, of course, we don’t have to ask them how. We know where their priorities are: working for the convenience of ruling-class elites who work and live in places like Hudson Yards, instead of serving people with disabilities across the five boroughs.

People with disabilities ought not to be reminded every day that they live with a disability. A better transit system is possible for all. But people with disabilities and those without them have to unite and fight for it. □

Paul Oquist, Nicaragua’s representative at the 2015 talks in Paris, has called the climate deal a “path to failure.” One of the primary reasons is that the deal is not binding — in other words, there are no punishments for countries that fail to live up to the commitments they make as part of the deal, other than “naming and shaming” them, as critics have put it.

**It doesn’t go far enough**

Oquist also objected to the agreed-upon goal of limiting the global temperature increase to 2 degrees Celsius, noting that the emissions targets, as well as the voluntary nature of the agreement, would likely result in increases of more like 3 or 4 degrees Celsius, according to the Financial Times. “We do not want to be accomplices to the death, damages and destruction that a 3C or 4C [warmer] world will represent,” he said in 2015.

“It’s not a matter of being trouble mak-

*Continued on the next page*



# Trump, the ruling class and the Paris Accords

By Fred Goldstein

Donald Trump has confirmed his right-wing ideological alliance with the ultra-chauvinist Steve Bannon faction in the White House by announcing that he is going to “pull out” of the Paris Accords on combatting climate change. His speech announcing the so-called pullout was also a campaign speech for the 2020 presidential election.

In fact, Trump did not need to pull out of the agreement. The agreement is non-binding. It has no teeth. It has no mechanism for enforcement. It has no way of checking on compliance. Everything is voluntary. And Trump is taking measures to undermine U.S. compliance, anyway, by attacking the Clean Power Plan, which limits the leasing of federal lands for coal mining and other polluting activities.

To be sure, Trump’s denunciation of the Paris Accords is reactionary. It was a totally political move, calculated to appeal to the most backward, chauvinist elements of his political base and his most right-wing backers in the ruling class.

But Trump and Bannon did not do it alone. The decision was backed by the billionaire Koch brothers, natural gas billionaire T. Boone Pickens, head of the Senate Republicans Mitch McConnell and Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, among others.

Twenty-two Republican senators from oil, gas and coal states signed a letter to Trump urging him to reject the Paris Accords. These 22 senators have received at least \$10 million in gas, oil and coal money since 2012. (Guardian, June 1)

### Why the ruling class uproar over Trump pullout?

However, there was a general uproar against Trump’s move by large sections of the ruling class. This does not mean that big business CEOs have turned into environmentalists. On the contrary. The Paris Accords would allow the bosses to slow down climate change somewhat, while at

## Paris accords

ers,” he told Climate Change News the same year. “It’s a matter of the developing countries surviving. Four degrees is not a survival track in the Sahel with the Sahara advancing. Four degrees is not a survival track for India or Pakistan with the glaciers melting in the Himalayas. Four degrees is not a survival track for southeast Asia with the typhoons.”

Oquist also said the agreement doesn’t hold larger countries — like the U.S. — sufficiently accountable, given that they historically have produced far more carbon than small countries like Nicaragua. “[The idea of] universal responsibility — [that] everyone is responsible — is a spin on historical responsibility, because everyone didn’t create this problem,” he told Democracy Now in 2015. “Nicaragua has 4.8 million tons of emissions a year, and that’s 0.03 percent of [global] emissions. Do we feel responsible for having caused climate change? No, not at all. Are we doing something about it? Yes, we’ve gone from 25 percent renewable to 52 percent renewable since 2007, and in 2020 we’ll be 90 percent renewable.”

Larger countries, he said, can afford the necessary measures to reduce emissions in a significant way, “and they’re the ones who have the CO2 that can be cut.” □

the same time preserving, if not enhancing, their profits. No, their deepest concern about the pullout is over the potential loss of energy technology markets.

As Forbes magazine, a mouthpiece of big business, put it: “[T]he point here is that the evolution to a carbon-constrained world is underway and the technologies to facilitate that are now mainstream. China has fully embraced that evolution, vowing to help lead the charge along with the advanced economies of the world.”

Forbes continued, “Most of the business community, including international energy companies, urged the administration not to withdraw,’ Ambassador Richard Morningstar said, who is the chair of the Global Energy Center at the Atlantic Council. ‘By this action we are ceding leadership on climate and new technologies to China and Europe.’” (June 1)

Listen to the point of view of the former deputy director of Greenpeace, Ken Ward, who is going on trial soon on felony charges for shutting down an oil sands pipeline to prevent harm to the climate.

“The value of the Paris agreement is in its aspirational goal of limiting temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, not in its implementation mechanisms, which are voluntary, insufficient, and impossible to monitor. But that modest goal will be breached shortly, which makes the agreement a kind of fig leaf, offering political cover to those who would soft-pedal the runaway climate crisis a while longer.

“The U.N. Conference of the Parties is certainly not the organization to constrain powerful, retrenched fossil fuel interests and other bad climate actors and rogue climate states. The Paris agreement affords oil, gas and coal companies a globally visible platform through which to peddle influence and appear engaged on climate change while lobbying for business as usual. That won’t save the climate.” (The Hill, May 31)

Companies like Exxon, BP and Shell, among others, have protested the pullout by Trump. But these companies have been under attack globally for their devastation of the environment. The accords give them a “fig leaf” while in no way actually constraining them. With no monitoring, no enforcement and no punishment, it is up to the capitalist government in Washington to compel compliance.

Many of the giant companies financed the Paris meeting. If all the commitments made in Paris by all the countries were kept, the climate would still be in grave danger at a rise of 2 degrees Celsius in the atmosphere. The oppressed countries wanted the target for temperature rise to be no more than 1.5 degrees, but they lost out.

This weak agreement leaves the monopolies a free hand to revise, cheat, conceal and go ahead with business as usual.

While Obama was putting some soft pressure on them, Trump has given them a free hand and has assisted by attacking existing regulations.

To be sure, the big imperialists are concerned for the future of their system. They have seen first hand what happened during Hurricane Sandy. Flooding literally shut down Wall Street, as well as knocking out power to all of lower Manhattan in New York. It is costing billions of dollars to repair the subways and tunnels in the city.

Furthermore, the accelerated occurrence of tornadoes, hurricanes, excessive rainfall, floods, droughts, forest fires and

other climate disasters that are televised have an impact on local, state and federal government, as well as insurance companies and destroyed businesses. The cost is running way into the tens and even hundreds of billions of dollars.

That is the way Wall Street and big business see it. They could not care less for the broad mass of people who suffer devastating losses, injury and death as a result of climate change. The capitalists are worried about the threat to their financial and physical structure in the future.

### Pentagon and bankers fear climate change

The Climate and Security Advisory Group, a voluntary, nonpartisan group of 43 U.S.-based senior military, national security, homeland security and intelligence experts, including the former commanders of the U.S. Pacific and Central commands, issued a briefing book in 2016.

National Geographic reported last year: “The briefing book argues that climate change presents a significant and direct risk to U.S. military readiness, operations and strategy, and military leaders say it should transcend politics. It goes beyond protecting military bases from sea-level rise, the military advisers say. They urge Trump to order the Pentagon to game out catastrophic climate scenarios, track trends in climate impacts and collaborate with civilian communities. Stresses from climate change can increase the likelihood of international or civil conflict, state failure, mass migration and instability in strategically significant areas around the world, the defense experts argue.” (Nov. 15)

The briefing book leaves out that the Pentagon is one of the world’s biggest polluters.

As an example of the military’s problem, its naval base in Norfolk, Va., has been repeatedly flooded in recent years, interfering with military readiness to deploy the means of aggression. The Pentagon has hundreds of port bases that are threatened with similar obstacles from the rising tide of the oceans. Of course, island and coastal Indigenous civilizations, from Fiji to Bangladesh, face disaster.

Citibank is a global bank with branches in well over a hundred countries and a heavy stake in protecting U.S. and world imperialism. Citibank costed out the consequences of climate change for the world imperialist system in 2015.

“A new report from Citibank found that acting on climate change by investing in low-carbon energy would save the world \$1.8 trillion through 2040, as compared to a business-as-usual scenario. In addition, not acting will cost an additional \$44 trillion by 2060 from the ‘negative effects’ of climate change.

“The report, titled Energy Darwinism, looked at the predicted cost of energy over the coming decades, the costs of developing low carbon energy sources, and the implications of global energy choices.” (ThinkProgress, Aug. 31, 2015)

### China’s environmental challenge to U.S. big business

It is reported that GE and other industrial companies urged Trump to stay in the pact. These companies have already geared up their corporate plans to grab market share of renewables like wind and solar. GE makes wind turbines. Numerous companies make solar panels, instruments and devices for the new technology. They have already invested based upon the Paris Accords. They fear that not being at the table would mean they would

lose out to China and Europe as new technologies and new markets expand.

The bosses in the U.S. also have to worry about their cars and other carbon-emitting commodities meeting international standards or being shut out of overseas markets. In other words, the Paris agreement was all about profits and protection for the corporations and the imperialists.

China’s National Energy Administration has laid out a plan to spend more than \$360 billion through 2020 on renewable power sources like solar and wind. Thanks in large part to Chinese manufacturing, costs in the wind and solar industries are plummeting, making them increasingly competitive with power generation from fossil fuels like coal and natural gas. (Obama put a 76 percent tariff on Chinese solar panels, driving up the costs for U.S. consumers.)

The New York Times wrote on Jan. 5: “Even the headline-grabbing numbers on total investment and job creation may understate what is already happening on the ground in China. Greenpeace estimates that China installed an average of more than one wind turbine every hour of every day in 2015, and covered the equivalent of one soccer field every hour with solar panels.” China has also embarked on a reforestation program that will absorb massive amounts of CO2 from the atmosphere.

So it is easy to see why Jeff Imelt, CEO of GE, and his fellow bosses are angry at Trump for putting them at a disadvantage, not only to China but also Europe, and particularly German imperialism.

### Means of pollution are means of production

The workers and the oppressed should take sharp note of the fact that so many ruling figures and institutions have vowed to remain in support of the agreement. New York state, California and Washington are among the 30 states that have a network, United States Climate Alliance. About 180 cities are also forming a similar network. And big corporations are vowing to keep going with the Paris Accords.

What this means for the masses is that the ruling class is defying the White House and promoting its own environmental program, independent of the central capitalist state, including the Environmental Protection Agency.

In other words, Trump has control of the White House and the Republicans have control of the Congress, but the bourgeoisie have control of the means of production. And it is control over the means of production — the power plants, the oil wells, the natural gas, the coal mines, the factories, the means of transportation, etc. — that gives the bosses control over the CO2 emissions, the water supply, the air quality, the chemicals in the earth and so on.

The important point about all this is that if there is ever to be an effective policy to combat climate change — a policy in the interests of all humanity, a policy that does not depend on maintaining the profits of the polluters — then the means of production, the source of the pollution, must be taken out of the hands of the bourgeoisie and put into the hands of the workers and the oppressed. In other words, socialism is the only way out of the oncoming climate disaster.

*Goldstein is the author of “Low-Wage Capitalism” and “Capitalism at a Dead End”, available at online booksellers.*



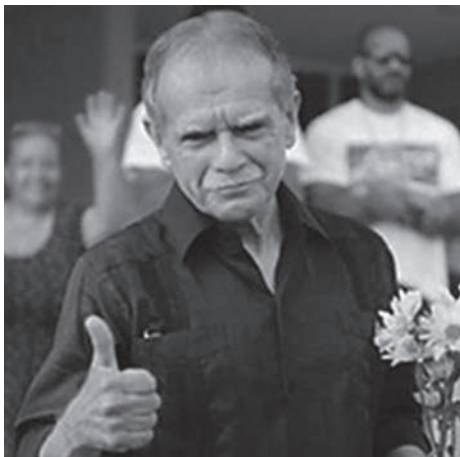


PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

# ¡Bienvenido a Nueva York, Oscar!

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Miembros de la Diáspora Boricua y muchas personas solidarias con la causa de la liberación puertorriqueña celebran la presencia del ex prisionero político Oscar López Rivera en la Ciudad de Nueva York.

La junta directiva del Desfile Nacional Puertorriqueño de Nueva York había seleccionado honrar a López Rivera. Como explican en su página [nprdpinc.org](http://nprdpinc.org), “La intención de integrar a López Rivera en el desfile es para honrar el compromiso y el trabajo duro de miles de personas, puertorriqueños o no - cuyos esfuerzos contribuyeron a la conmutación de su sentencia. Al mismo tiempo, buscamos dar a conocer la historia de Oscar López Rivera, la grave situación colonial en Puerto Rico y las cuestiones de identidad que siguen surgiendo, incluso hoy”.

Sin embargo, voces corporativas y colonialistas rápidamente comenzaron a amenazar. Las corporaciones, entre ellas la AT&T, Coca-Cola, los Yankees, Jet-Blue, Univision y Goya Foods retiraron sus auspicios. Grupos y personas políticas de derecha como el gobernador de NY Andrew M. Cuomo, la policía y los bomberos dijeron que no marcharían. Políticos derechistas puertorriqueños tanto en EUA como en PR también unieron sus

voces a esta protesta, incluyendo al actual gobernador de PR Ricardo Roselló quien – incongruentemente - había abogado por la excarcelación de López Rivera.

## López Rivera escribe

Para dar fin a la creciente división entre las y los puertorriqueños, López Rivera escribió a la Junta del Desfile rechazando su designación: “En vez de ser homenajeado, estoy otorgando ese honor, como indiqué en una publicación el 1 de junio, “a nuestros pioneros que vinieron a Estados Unidos y abrieron puertas”... “Como también manifesté en el editorial publicado, marcharé en la parada, como un humilde puertorriqueño y abuelo, quien a los 74 años, tras servir 35 años en la cárcel, continúa comprometido a ayudar a levantar consciencia sobre la crisis en Puerto Rico”. ([telemundopr.com](http://telemundopr.com), 2 de junio)

La presencia estelar de este héroe boricua en el desfile ha resaltado lo que realmente se perfila en la nación puertorriqueña: la lucha por la sobrevivencia misma de la puertorriqueñidad frente al inmenso ataque del capitalismo imperialista, representado con más ímpetu en PR por las fuerzas anexionistas a los Estados Unidos. Vuelve a desarrollarse lo que siempre ha existido en PR desde la invasión yanqui en 1898: la confrontación

entre el imperialismo y la independencia.

Ahora que el pueblo boricua se enfrenta a la asesina embestida de una Junta de Control Fiscal – el verdadero gobierno en PR - que representa los intereses capitalistas estadounidenses impuesta por el mismo Congreso de los Estados Unidos, se intenta amordazar nuevamente las expresiones de liberación.

En este aniversario número 60 del Desfile Puertorriqueño de NY - y a los 100 años de la imposición de la nacionalidad estadounidense sobre el pueblo boricua - hay que recordar los orígenes del desfile.

Nació por el esfuerzo de superar el racismo y la xenofobia que experimentaron las y los primeros boricuas que tuvieron que emigrar a NY en los años 50. Para traer un sentido de comunidad y solidaridad patria dentro de esas frías entrañas neoyorquinas.

Pero también nos recuerda el autor Nelson Denis en su artículo *The Deep Secret of the Puerto Rican Day Parade* (El profundo secreto del Desfile Puertorriqueño) [waragaininstallpuertoricans.com](http://waragaininstallpuertoricans.com), que su origen solo fue apenas a un año de haberse derogado la criminal Ley 53 o Ley de la Mordaza en PR. Bajo esta ley se imponían diez años de cárcel a quienes tuvieran una bandera de PR, a quienes cantaran

# Una tragedia y una victoria

## Editorial WW-Mundo Obrero

Tanto la supremacía blanca como la intolerancia fanática contra las/os musulmanes y otras/os inmigrantes no son sólo deplorables. Son asesinas y deben ser combatidas. Durante las últimas semanas se ha visto tanto una tragedia como una victoria en esta lucha tan importante.

En Portland, Oregón, varios hombres blancos que llegaron a la defensa de dos mujeres musulmanas en un tren el 26 de mayo fueron apuñalados, dos de ellos hasta la muerte, por un hombre blanco que gritaba palabras de odio anti-musulmán. No cabe duda de que este comportamiento violento y vicioso ha sido estimulado y reforzado por el racista de la Casa Blanca.

Pero también demuestra que hay muchas personas valientes en este país dispuestas a oponerse a la ofensiva racista que Trump y sus compañeros de la clase dominante han desatado deliberadamente para desviar la atención de su criminal desmantelamiento de la red de seguridad social en la que millones confían, por inadecuada que sea.

En el mismo período, una victoria histórica del pueblo contra la supremacía blanca fue ganada el 19 de mayo en Nueva Orleans.

Ese día, la estatua del general confederado Robert E. Lee fue sacada de su pedestal y llevada a un lugar desconocido. Lee fue el comandante en jefe de los ejércitos de los “Estados Confederados de Estados Unidos”, secesionistas y esclavistas del siglo XIX. Su estatua fue el último de cuatro prominentes monumentos de los ECEU que fueron removidos recientemente en Nueva Orleans.

Durante las últimas seis décadas, activistas anti-racistas y por los derechos civiles han luchado por la eliminación de estos símbolos racistas. La última lucha, dirigida por Take ‘Em Down NOLA, comenzó en el 2015.

Esto coincidió con una ola de acciones contra las banderas y los monumentos confederados provocados por el asesinato masivo de feligreses negros en una iglesia de Charleston, Carolina del Sur, por el blanco supremacista Dylann Roof el 17 de junio de 2015. Diez días más tarde, la activista Bree Newsome escaló heroicamente el asta en el capitolio estatal de Columbia, y físicamente eliminó la bandera confederada.

## Larga historia de racismo y lucha en Nueva Orleans

Las/os activistas de NOLA contra las estatuas confederadas, poseían determinación similar mientras persistían con marchas y mítines para retirar estos símbolos mientras las autoridades de la ciudad y del estado permitían que racistas, neofascistas y miembros del Ku Klux Klan acamparan por semanas para “custodiar” los monumentos.

Los racistas parecían dispuestos a disparar a la gente para mantener en su lugar algo más que los monumentos que se avecinaban, algo más que una versión mentirosa de la historia que deliberadamente no recuerda que Nueva Orleans fue una vez el mayor mercado de los Estados Unidos para la venta de personas africanas esclavizadas.

Lo que estos derechistas quieren preservar es el sistema de racismo y opresión económica que los monumentos siguen representando.

¿Podemos olvidar el tratamiento asesino de las personas negras en Nueva Orleans durante y después del desastre del huracán Katrina? El racismo institucionalizado tiene una larga historia.

Después de la abolición de la esclavitud y del fin de la Guerra Civil, y durante la época de la Reconstrucción, los poderes económicos se esforzaron por negar la libertad legal y económica a los afrodescendientes en los EUA. Una táctica fue la infame sentencia *Plessy v. Ferguson*, de 1896, de la Corte Suprema de EUA que dio el visto bueno a las leyes racistas de “Jim Crow” separadas-y-desiguales. El caso fue traído originalmente por Homer Plessy, un hombre de color libre arrestado y condenado después de desafiar la segregación al sentarse en un vagón para blancos en un ferrocarril de Nueva Orleans.

Es significativo que la primera estatua confederada arrancada en Nueva Orleans celebraba la Batalla de Liberty Place, cuando una insurrección en 1874 por una organización racista paramilitar trató de derrocar al gobierno estatal birracial de Luisiana elegido por negros libres y blancos aliados.

No es casualidad que en la actualidad haya una mayor organización por elementos fascistas y neonazis de derecha, algunos de ellos en defensa de banderas y monumentos confederados. Estas tácticas tienen por objeto impedir la solidaridad de las/os trabajadoras mediante la creación de divisiones por nacionalidad, religión, trabajo, y otras diferencias.

Este aumento en la reacción terrorista se produce en un momento en que las/os trabajadoras y oprimidos se están levantando mientras las corporaciones cortan puestos de trabajo en busca de

el himno nacional, a quienes dijeran una sola palabra en contra de la tiranía estadounidense. Por nueve años el pueblo boricua vivió bajo esta mordaza que significó el arresto de miles – según el citado artículo fueron arrestadas 3.000 personas en una sola semana, incluyendo niños de 8 años.

La presencia de miles de banderas puertorriqueñas en el desfile – y por extensión – el profundo amor a esa bandera de toda persona boricua se remonta tal vez a esta prohibición, consciente o inconscientemente.

Hoy, cuando la mayoría del pueblo boricua reside en los Estados Unidos como resultado de la ola migratoria más grande de la historia de PR por la falta de empleos y recursos en el archipiélago. Ahora, cuando la presencia de Oscar López representa ese afán de unidad, de búsqueda de una solución real a la inmensa crisis social, política y económica del archipiélago boricua, solución que solo podría ser en beneficio del pueblo bajo la independencia como única fórmula de verdadera soberanía, se pretende amordazar las voces libertarias.

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mayores ganancias y la administración Trump intenta destroz la red de seguridad social con el fin de financiar la máquina de guerra imperialista. Una vez más, las grandes empresas necesitan en el terreno las amenazas estilo KKK contra los avances progresistas.

Pero tenemos que recordar que los “líderes” con mentalidad klan también están en trajes, uniformes y túnicas judiciales. Están presentes en las salas de juntas corporativas, legislaturas, tribunales y fuerzas policiales.

Las directivas y leyes que prohíben la remoción de los monumentos de ECEU han sido aprobadas por el gobernador de Alabama y la legislatura de Carolina del Norte. A nivel nacional, la racista administración Trump ataca a los pueblos y trabajadoras/es oprimidos, intentando hacer retroceder sus logros de décadas.

No estamos en una lucha por los “símbolos”. Estamos en una lucha por la justicia y la libertad que se ha librado en esta tierra desde que los primeros “conquistadores” europeos invadieron el hogar de los pueblos indígenas y procedieron a enriquecer la clase dominante europea mediante el genocidio, la esclavitud y la opresión.

Nueva Orleans nos ofrece otra historia, si aprendemos. La rebelión más grande de esclavos en EUA ocurrió allí en 1811, conducida por Charles Deslondes. Llamada la Rebelión de la Costa Alemana, fue llevada a cabo por un ejército heroico de más de 200 personas luchando con azadas, hachas y cuchillos de caña por su libertad - física, jurídica y económica.

A medida que las estatuas caen, Nueva Orleans nos ofrece la lección de resistencia continua - y el ejemplo de la victoria. □