End war in Ukraine!

Washington backs bombing on Russian border

By Greg Butterfield

June 8 — Ukraine’s far-right government, backed by Washington, launched a new military offensive against the independent Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics on the night of June 2 through June 3.

The Donbass people’s militia responded quickly, first sending Kiev’s forces scurrying in panic and then digging in for the hard battle for control of Marinka, a city southwest of Donetsk’s capital, against a Ukrainian military increasingly funded by the U.S. and armed with NATO weaponry.

“In the course of [the June 3] fighting and shelling of Marinka and suburban areas of Donetsk, 15 to 20 civilians were killed and dozens injured,” military analyst Colonel Cassad reported on his blog. “Overall, this is the bloodiest day of the war since the end of the battle of Debaltsevo, when the Ukrainian Army suffered huge losses trying to escape.”

Donetsk Deputy Defense Minister Eduard Basurin reported that 20 militia were killed and 100 wounded. Meanwhile, some 400 Ukrainian troops were killed, said Donetsk head Alexander Zakharchenko. Sixty pieces of Ukrainian military equipment were destroyed, including four artillery batteries. (Dan-News.info, June 5)

Though initially centered near Marinka, fighting has now spread across the entire “contact line” between Ukraine and the Donbass republics — the buffer zone established by the Minsk 2 ceasefire agreement of February.

The latest attack by the Kiev junta of oligarchs, neoliberal politicians and fascists comes after a month of steadily growing ceasefire violations by the Ukrainian military, mostly through indiscriminate shelling of civilian targets — including the destruction of the home of 11-year-old Katya Tuv in Gorlovka on May 26. Katya and her father were killed; her young brother was injured; her mother Anna was gravely wounded, losing her arm.

Warnings ignored

It was from the vicinity of Marinka that Ukrainian occupation forces launched many deadly artillery attacks targeting Gorlovka, Donetsk city, and other residential areas.

For weeks, the anti-fascist militias in Donetsk and Lugansk had warned of the quickening buildup of Kiev’s military forces in the region, including heavy weaponry expressly forbidden by the ceasefire agreement.

And for weeks, political leaders of Donbass shouted to the world that new provocations would likely coincide with a major meeting of the European Union powers, timed to help Washington get its way with pursuing the war and extending sanctions against the Russian Federation.

The embattled people of Donbass, the primarily Russian-speaking mining region formerly part of southeast Ukraine, took to the streets in late May to protest Kiev’s continuing war crimes. They recognized that the Tuv murders were the beginning of a new phase of the war that began in April 2014 and has officially claimed 6,400 lives — but far more by most estimates.

The corporate media ignored all the warnings, while U.S. State Department officials denied Kiev’s continuous violations of the ceasefire.

On cue, Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko addressed the Rada (parliament) June 5, claiming that...
Canadian genocide condemned

By G. Dunkel

Beginning in 1820 and continuing until the 1980s in some provinces, Canada had an explicit policy of erasing the culture, languages and religion of Indigenous nations — First Nation, Métis and Inuit — by taking children from their parents and placing them in foster homes or residential schools.

The government separated more than 150,000 children, of whom at least 6,000 died and thousands suffered physical and sexual abuse. The Catholic Church had a major hand in running these schools. Some leaders of Idle No More, a militant Indigenous rights group in Canada, have put to the Catholic Pope to personally apologize for the church’s crimes.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, set up by the Canadian government in national in 2008, released its report of this program June 2. Thousands of people, mainly First Nation and their supporters, as well as contingents of Métis and Inuit, marched from Gatineau, Quebec, across the Ottawa River into Ottawa, the Canadian capital, on May 31. To the demonstrators, the publication of the TRC report officially acknowledged Canada’s policy of “cultural genocide,” which lasted for 160 years.

Melissa Mollen-Dupuis, one of the founders of Idle No More, gave an interview June 7 to the French TV channel TV5, pointing out that Indigenous people had long known about this cultural genocide. They lived it; they felt it and its effects. But the question was: What would be the effect of the TRC report on the broader Canadian public?

Mollen-Dupuis also said there had been “physical” genocide. Canada has had a number of “physical” exterminations — the clearest and most complete being the extermination of the Beothuks in Newfoundland. This occurred in Newfoundland, which at that time was not part of Canada but was part of British North America.

The Beothuks were a First Nation people, related to the Mi’kmaq of eastern Canada, who developed in Newfoundland after the Norse left L’Anse aux Meadows around 1000 C.E.

They had very antagonist relations with the European-origin fisher folk who began to settle Newfoundland in the 16th century, with raids going back and forth. The Beothuks generally lost in any physical confrontation due to the superior arms of the Europeans. They were gradually driven off the coast, where they caught fish and seals that were an important part of their diet, into the interior where they starved.

The 2015 book “Unsettling Canada” presents a summary of the conditions Indigenous people face today in Canada: “Along with suffering all of the calamities of life that hit the poor with greater impact, our lives are seven years shorter than the lives of non-Indigenous Canadians. Our unemployment rates are four times higher. The resources to educate our children are only a third of what is spent on non-Indigenous children. Our youth commit suicide at a rate five times higher.” (page 8)

Canada’s economy heavily depends on resource extraction. Indigenous peoples, while only 4.3 percent of all Canadians, are the majority in two territories: Nunavut and Northwest Territories, which make up most of northern Canada. Indigenous peoples are often the majority in smaller areas in provinces like British Columbia and in territories like the Yukon. These majorities give physical weight to the legal and political demands Indigenous peoples are making, which are well documented in “Unsettling Canada” and on www.idlenomore.ca.

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Welcome, Caitlyn

June 18, 2015

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Workers World Party: Who we are & what we’re fighting for

Hate capitalism? Workers World Party fights for a socialist society — where the wealth is socially owned and production is planned to satisfy human need. This outmoded capitalist system is dragging workers’ living standards while throwing millions out of jobs. It forces you to strive for a better future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet.

Workers built it all — it belongs to society, not to a handful of billionaires! But we need a revolution to make that change. That’s why for 56 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism, degrading people because of their nationality, sexu- al or gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling class uses to keep us apart. They ruthlessly sub- exploit some in order to better exploit us all. WWP builds unity among all workers while supporting the right of self-determination. Fighting oppression is a building-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles led today by people of color, immi- grants and women.

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

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

workers@wwp
The Indian Removal Act and the Trail of Tears

By Dolores Cox

A grassroots campaign to remove President Andrew Jackson’s portrait from the $20 bill is gaining some traction. Why Jackson especially? A little history is necessary.

On May 28, 1830, President Andrew Jackson signed into law the Indian Removal Act, after having pushed the legislation through Congress. This deplorable act legalized the expulsion of Indigenous peoples from their land on a massive scale.

From the beginning of the 19th century the U.S. government had planned the removal of Indigenous people from their ancestral homelands. As a solution to the “Indian problem,” early proposals allowed the removal of tribes from their homelands only if they agreed to adopt Euro-American behavioral and cultural practices. An 1825 Supreme Court decision declared that the U.S. could dispossess the “Indians” in the “occupied” lands but could not hold title to them.

The United States in 1830 consisted of only states east of the Mississippi River. That area had originally been inhabited by the Indigenous, referred to as Indians or Native Americans. Jackson called for the removal of all the Native people from the South, with resettlement in the West. Ancestral homelands of Northeast tribes were already being confiscated.

Slave-owner Jackson promotes relocations

Jackson was a Southern slave owner and former military commander in wars with Native nations. He was a strong supporter of expanding federal territory westward for white settlers and for ever-enlarging cotton fields. In justifying his relocation policy to Congress, Jackson stated that the demise and extinction of Indian Tribal Nations was inevitable. He viewed the Indigenous as in need of “guidance” and presented the removal policy as beneficial to them. He predicted that Indigenous Nations would face impenetrable economic progress and prosperity of white settlers.

In congressional addresses, Jackson described how the Indigenous “hers” had found the country “covered with forests” and occupied by “savages,” as compared to the “extensive Republic” studded with cities, towns and prosperous farms, embellished with all the improvements which art can devise or in human hands multiplied by more than 12 million happy people.

Slaveworkers also considered slavery as absolutely essential to progress and expansion of the United States. It is no coincidence that the “Indian” territories known as the “Five Civilized Tribes,” as they seemed the most adaptable to white “civilized” culture in their attempts to assimilate and peacefully co-exist.

Pressure, military, and otherwise, was put on the Indigenous to sign removal treaties. They signed in order to appease the government in the hopes of retaining some of their land, or to protect themselves from the onslaught of harassment by hostile whites who squatted on their land, stole their belongings and livestock, and burned their villages. Tribes that resisted resettlement were massacred. These Nations were systematically resisted removal both through wars and nonviolence.

The Seminoles, who protected and harbored fugitive slaves in Spanish Florida before coming to Texas to engage in trade, were expelled by federal troops. Thousands died of hunger, cold, disease and exposure. Forced relocation, until 1838, resulted in close to three-quarters of Indigenous land coming under federal control.

The march westward in 1838-39 became known as the Trail of Tears. More than 10,000 Cherokees were expelled by federal troops. Thousands died of hunger, cold, disease and exposure. Forced relocation, until 1838, resulted in close to three-quarters of Indigenous land coming under federal control.

By Gene Clancy

On May 25, a highly promoted TV miniseries with many big-name stars premiered on the cable network History Channel. It is co-owned by two giant corporations, Hearst and Disney.

According to the title of the already published companion book by Stephen E. Ambrose, “The Conquest of Texas: From the Alamo to the Battle of San Jacinto,” the story is really about the present. The protagonist, Sam Houston, president of the Texas Republic.

The 50-part TV series purports, through a series of stories, or vignettes about some of the main characters in the seditious revolt, to cover the Anglo Texas war against Mexico, from the fall of the Alamo to the battle of San Jacinto, which led to the establishment of the first Republic of Texas before it was annexed by the United States.

According to a New York Times review, the so-called adventure drama is fairly described by the co-executive producer and two giant corporations, Hearst and Disney.

In “The War in Texas,” Lundy says, “This nation’sTTDT [domestic, territorial, territorial, domestic] most famous and most popular SLAVEMARKET therein; the systematic removal of Native peoples from the Southeast focused on five Tribal Nations: the Seminole, Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw and Creek. They were referred to as the five Civilized Tribes, as they seemed the most adaptable to white ‘civilized’ culture in their attempts to assimilate and peacefully co-exist.

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The “Texas Rising” series combined the song with local legends and, according to an article on tshahonline.org, not a shred of historical evidence supports this story, but “Texas Rising” has made this imaginary incident into a major subplot of the series.

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Assata Shakur mural removed

By Workers World Milwaukee bureau

A mural depicting Assata Shakur was removed in May by Marquette University officials after an unrelenting right-wing campaign.

Shakur, a people’s hero and icon of the Black Lives Matter movement, is a former Black Panther falsely accused and convicted of killing a cop in New Jersey in 1973. She escaped prison and has been in exile in Cuba for more than 30 years. The U.S. government has a $2 million bounty on her.

The mural had been on display in the Alumni Memorial Union near the Marquette Gender and Sexuality Resource Center since March. Shortly after the center posted photos of the mural on its Facebook page, a long-time conservative professor, John McAdams, joined a campaign to have the mural removed. McAdams criticized the center on his blog for “glorifying a black militant cop killer.”

Under mass student, faculty and community protest, McAdams, an associate professor of political science, was suspended in 2014 for criticizing a graduate professor of political science, was suspended in 2014 for criticizing a graduate professor for “glorifying a black militant cop killer.”

McAdams critiqued the center on his blog for “glorifying a black militant cop killer.”

Despite a mission statement proclaiming that the university encourages a diverse community with “vigorous yet respectful debate,” university spokesperson-person Brian Dorrington spoke for the Wall Street interests that really run Marquette University, the administrators and Board of Trustees, and the cop, on May 20, when he said: “The facts in this instance are clear: A mural of a convicted murderer has no place here.”

Dorrington, of course, said nothing about the innumerable photos, statues and memorabilia littering the Marquette campus and Milwaukee generally that glorify real criminals and murderers such as slave owners, those who’ve committed genocide on Native peoples and plundered whole continents, and the bankers and industrialists responsible for the vicious exploitation, oppression, and murder of workers and oppressed peoples.

Shortly after the mural was removed, the director of the center, Dr. Susannah Bardlow, either resigned under pressure or was fired. There is now a campaign to have her restored to her position. Supporters can email Dr. Michael Lovell, president of Marquette University, at michael.lovell@marquette.edu or call 414-288-7714. A petition can be found at ipetitions.com.

We will not be silenced!

The Coalition of and for Students of Color at Marquette University issued a statement May 18 after the mural was removed:

“Marquette University does not waste a moment. They painted over a mural with inspirational quotes from activist Assata Shakur without asking anyone (the students) if it was ok the same day of graduation. This is an attempt to erase our voice and silence the people, but we refuse to be silenced! MU! Remember you are only functioning because we pay tuition and the Coalition doesn’t believe the mural should have been painted over. This is disrespectful and unacceptable!”

The Gender and Sexuality Resource Center was built after the university administration rescinded a job offer to Jodi O’Brien, a lesbian professor and noted author of gender and sexuality books. The center offers lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students and allies space where they can seek counsel ing and resources. It is also designed to address issues of sexual violence on campus. The center, under Dr. Bartlow’s leadership since 2012, has also become an oasis for students of color on the majority white and affluent campus.

At a time when every progressive law, every policy, every organization and every resource is under attack by the right wing in Wisconsin, the destruction of the mural must be seen as part of the overall effort by Wall Street and their servants to attempt to smash what’s left of the labor-community movement and to make the state a Jim Crow, low-wage, non-union, deregulated playground.

Besides the usual seething racism by right-wing forces against people’s warriors such as Shakur and against all people of color, the mural attack is also an attack on Cuba and the burgeoning youth- and student-led Black Lives Matter movement in Wisconsin. These in-spiring forces have been connecting race, class, gender, sexuality and other issues such as the environment and supporting unions. The right wing is also attempting to divide white workers from their directly needed allies.

As the students, faculty and their supporters fight back, the two quotes from Shakur on the original mural are giving them inspiration to continue the struggle:

“No one is going to give you the education you need to overthrow them. No one is going to give you the education you need to overthrow them. Nobody is going to teach you your true heroes if they know that knowledge will help set you free.”

“Before going back to college, I knew I didn’t want to be an intellectual, spend ing my life in books and libraries without knowing what the hell is going on in the streets. Theory without practice is just as useless as practice without theory. The two have to go together.”

For more information: tinyurl.com/qdkcc74, tinyurl.com/GSRCMarquetteFB and #ASSATAMU #HANDSOFASSATA

Motor City Pride: The fight is not over

By Martha Grevatt

Thousands of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, and their allies, took to the streets June 7 in the annual Motor City Pride parade. Thousands more attended the weekend-long celebration in downtown Detroit.

While the parade and festival celebrated the many aspects of LGBTQ pride, community and culture, organizers acknowledged that the fight against discrimination is not over. “The way we put it, ‘Married on Saturday, fired on Monday,’” said Bill Greene, interim executive director of Pride sponsor Equality Michigan. “People are coming out more, getting married. Unfortunately, the state of Michigan lags behind many states in its friendliness to the LGBT community. Equality Michigan is the statewide LGBTQ civil rights organization that is currently fighting to get LGBTQ protections added to state civil rights laws.

The marriage equality fight was in the spotlight this year, particularly in Michigan, with a Supreme Court ruling expected by the end of this month on whether marriage bans in Michigan and three other states are unconstitutional. A positive ruling will make same-sex marriage legal in the 13 states where bans still remain in place. Festival goers cheered April DeBoer and Jayne Rowse, two Detroit-area nurses and plaintiffs in the Michigan marriage case, as they strolled the grounds with their four adopted children.

Members of the Moratorium Now! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs, Workers World Party and the revolutionary youth group Fight Imperialism, State, and War gathered together with signs supporting the right to marry and declaring that “Black + Trans Lives Matter.” This bold and courageous group formed a steady stream of visitors interested in fighting capitalism.

With inspirational quotes from activist Tupac Shakur on the original mural are giving them inspiration to continue the struggle:

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Pride weekend in Buffalo

By Martha Grevatt

On Sunday, June 7, activists with the Buffalo, N.Y., branch of Workers World Party carried a banner in the Buffalo Pride Parade that was greeted by the huge crowds with roars of approval, applause and high-fives all along the route. It was the only contingent in this year’s parade to raise the urgent need for solidarity with the Black Lives Matter and Trans Lives movements, along with support for the struggles and uprisings against police brutality from Ferguson to Baltimore.

The previous evening, the Dyke March celebrated Buffalo’s lesbian history, including a tribute to those who have died and noting WW Managing Editor Leslie Feinberg’s pioneering role in the struggle.

“I am a veteran of Buffalo Pride Parades,” said WW photo editor and Workers World bureau chief, Ellie Dorritie, Marge Maloney and Garrett Dicembre.
Thousands protest N.J. pension fund cuts

Some 4,000 members of the Communications Workers and other public sector unions turned out on May 12 to protest N.J. Gov. Chris Christie’s latest $1.6 billion cut to the state’s pension fund. The Christie administration has withheld a total of $14.9 billion in pension fund contributions since 2010, from what is already one of the least generous pension plans in the country. Ignoring public sector workers’ right to care for their families after retirement, Christie and New Jersey lawmakers have diverted billions of dollars from the pension fund to corporate subsidies and tax cuts to the rich.

Protesters wore red T-shirts and carried signs demanding that Christie “Tax millionaires! Fund the pensions!” and “Don’t bank on retirees.” Protesters and union leadership vowed to continue the fight for their hard-earned pensions, chanting “We will be back!” (CWA-union, May 14)

Wash. state workers walk, demanding promised raises

In the largest coordinated job action since their successful strike 14 years ago, thousands of the workers in 40,000 member Washington Federation of State Employees (an affiliate of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) walked out of more than 70 work sites on May 28. They were demanding that the Legislature end the stalemate on their negotiated 4.5 percent pay raises. The walkout comes a week after a salary-setting board OK’d 11 percent raises for legislators while the Senate continued to reject modest raises for state employees — 3 percent on July 1 and another 3 percent on July 1 of next year. These would be the first raises for state employees in seven years. For two years, they took 3 percent pay cuts, furloughs and layoffs.

(The Stand, May 19)

Because of the Senate’s latest budget plan unveiled on May 28, which holds WFSE’s contract hostage, the state government may be shut down on July 1, temporarily laying off thousands of WFSE members. (wfse.org, May 28) Stay tuned.

Tobacco workers protest at Reynolds stockholders’ meeting

At the May 7 stockholders’ meeting of tobacco giant RJ Reynolds in Winston-Salem, about 30 allies of tobacco workers made compelling statements about unhealthy, unsafe, unjust conditions in the fields. This is the eighth year that the Farm Labor Organizing Committee has attended these meetings to pressure Reynolds to sign an agreement guaranteeing labor rights for tobacco workers. Board chairperson Wajnert rebutted their demands with a bold-faced lie, calling their demands “illegal and unworkable.” Outside, several hundred FLOC supporters led a loud, colorful, forceful march through the streets. To support FLOC demands, sign the petition on the website of the International Labor Resistance Forum. (ilrf.org) ¡Hasta la victoria!

ROC haunts restaurant industry trade show

Restaurant Opportunities Center United (ROC) haunted the country’s most powerful employer lobby group, the National Restaurant Association, at its trade show in Chicago on May 16-19. ROC held numerous impromptu protests calling for a meeting with NRA President Dawn Sweeney. During one talk, with Sweeney on stage, several workers stood up holding signs and chanting “$2.13 is not the American Dream [sic]!” The figure $2.13 is the federal minimum wage for tipped workers, including servers, bartenders, hosts, bussers and dish washers. ROC statistics show that the vast majority of servers are women, often women of color, immigrant and rural, who use food stamps at double the rate of the rest of the U.S. workforce, are three times as likely to live in poverty and face obscenely high rates of sexual harassment. While ROC’s activities surely got Sweeney’s attention, the press also took notice.

N.Y. Gov. Cuomo orders raise for fast food workers

In a May 6 op-ed in the New York Times, N.Y. Gov. Andrew Cuomo addressed low wages in the state’s fast food industry: “Fast-food workers and their families are twice as likely to receive public assistance compared with other working families. ... While wages in the state’s fast food industry: “Fast-food workers and their families are twice as likely to live in poverty and face obscenely high rates of sexual harassment. While wages in the state’s fast food industry: “Fast-food workers and their families are twice as likely to receive public assistance compared with other working families. ... While wages in the state’s fast food industry: “Fast-food workers and their families are twice as likely to receive public assistance compared with other working families. ... While wages in the state’s fast food industry: “Fast-food workers and their families are twice as likely to receive public assistance compared with other working families. ... 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Demonstrators gathered outside the Wayne County Treasurer’s office in the Greektown section of downtown Detroit on June 8 to protest the tax foreclosure of more than 25,000 homes. Activists had stopped the mass foreclosures, originally slated for March 31, by bickering the site and causing the treasurer to enact two short moratoriums. The last foreclosure extension expired June 8.

This time protesters took the street, much to the chagrin of police who repeatedly ordered the crowd, to no avail, to get back on the sidewalk or face arrest. Shown here are activists with banners who blocked the street to keep police from other demonstrators.

Organizers with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs called the action “the launch of a summer of resistance to stop foreclosures and water shutoffs and defend the people of Detroit against bankers, developers and their politicians.”

— Report and photo by Kris Hamel

Detroiter demand: Stop mass tax foreclosures

Walk-ins protest proposed education cuts

By Workers World Milwaukee bureau

Hundreds of educators, staff, parents, students and community supporters participated in walk-ins at 17 Milwaukee public schools on June 5. Participants are engaging in ongoing protests at schools and other locations in Milwaukee and statewide. They’re demanding that numerous provisions in the state’s tiny budget that would result in the dismantling of public education be taken out.

The proposed state budget now before the right-wing legislature calls for the takeover (privatization) of Milwaukee public schools, millions in cuts for K-12 and higher education, and the elimination of tenure and shared governance in the University of Wisconsin system. This is among other austerity provisions in efforts to benefit Wall Street interests, in particular the banks and bondholders.

On June 11, a statewide protest at the state Capitol called “Another Budget Is Possible” will take place. For more information and to join the struggle, visit tinyurl.com/mnbbm, tinyurl.com/oaycomy and wibailoutpeople.org.

Oil strike not quite over

After four months on the picket line, workers at the BP Husky refinery in Toledo, Ohio, are starting to return to work. United Steelworkers Local 1-346 was the most recent local to ratify a local agreement in the national oil strike that began Feb. 1 and at one point involved 15 refineries across the country. That leaves only the Texas City, Texas, Marathon works still out.

Local 1-346, like all 30,000 USW members in the oil industry, wanted to save jobs and stop excessive overtime for the sake of safety. The local was up against a particularly hostile management. Refinery manager Mark Dangler even wrote an anti-union op-ed piece that was published in the March 3 Toledo Blade. Dangler made the outrageous claim that “the strike is about union clout, not safety or pay.”

The contract, which the union leadership did not recommend, passed by a slim majority of strike-weary members. It allows BP to cut 28 out of roughly 300 jobs as workers quit, retire or die. This was a setback but not a total defeat for the union, as Dangler and his team wanted unlimited powers to eliminate positions as workers leave.

Members of Local 234 in Texas City rejected the company’s offer on May 18, and the proposed state budget now before the right-wing legislature calls for the takeover (privatization) of Milwaukee public schools, millions in cuts for K-12 and higher education, and the elimination of tenure and shared governance in the University of Wisconsin system. This is among other austerity provisions in efforts to benefit Wall Street interests, in particular the banks and bondholders.

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PHOTO MEFA

Marathon is still trying to gut safety provisions that previous owner BP agreed to after a 2005 explosion killed 15 workers. On top of that, management wants workers to wear pants that would allow the company to call them to work outside of their regular scheduled hours, with only an hour’s notice.

USW Local 7-1, at the other struck BP refinery in Whiting, Ind., was also one of the last to get a local agreement. There, the contract passed in early May, with 92 percent of the members voting for it. “We got the safety stuff the workers wanted,” said Local 7-1 Director Mike Millsap. “I think it shows that when pushed, workers are willing to stand up.” (Northwest Indiana Times, May 17)
Workers World and FIST at Left Forum

By Scott Williams

New York

More than 1,300 speakers and thousand sof activists and academics met in New York City from May 29 through May 31 for the annual Left Forum, this year with the theme “No Justice, No Peace: For the struggle against U.S. war and the potential for building united struggle against imperialism. Nick Maniace from New York FIST debated members of the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee, along with other socialist organizations, on the defense of countries oppressed and exploited by U.S. imperialism, with particular focus on U.S. imperialism’s intervention in Syria. Organizers of the People’s Power Assembly in New York, including Claudia Palacios, Colin Asby and Ramiro Fínez from FIST, discussed the question of national oppression and liberation within the context of the Black Lives Matter movement. Monica Moore-head, editor of “Marxism, Reappraisals and the Black Freedom Struggle,” and Workers World Party’s First Secretary Larry Holmes joined the panel as well, discussing the need for broader sections of the left to stand in solidarity with the struggle against police brutality and against broader state repression of the movement.

There were also important panels on struggles in Latin America, the fight to free political prisoners Mumia Abu-Jamal, Oscar Lopez Rivera, the MOVE 9, and more.

While the Left Forum is often dominated by academics and left organizations that take few positions against U.S. imperialism, with particular focus on U.S. imperialism’s intervention in Syria. Organizers of the People’s Power Assembly in New York, including Claudia Palacios, Colin Asby and Ramiro Fínez from FIST, discussed the question of national oppression and liberation within the context of the Black Lives Matter movement. Monica Moore-head, editor of “Marxism, Reappraisals and the Black Freedom Struggle,” and Workers World Party’s First Secretary Larry Holmes joined the panel as well, discussing the need for broader sections of the left to stand in solidarity with the struggle against police brutality and against broader state repression of the movement.

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The following press statement was released by the Baltimore People’s Power Assembly and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference on June 4. The groups held a press conference at 2011 N. Charles St. in Baltimore on June 5.

“The Baltimore City Police Department and all concerned: We will not be intimidated, silenced or stopped! Our organizations and organizers will continue to stand strong until justice is won for Freddie Grey and all of the victims of police terror. We look forward to a strong day on June 6.”

This past Tuesday [June 2, Baltimore People’s Power Assembly organizer] Sharon Black’s car was shot up with what appears to have been a 357-magnum weapon. Bullets went through several layers of steel from back to front, aimed at the driver’s headrest. The rear window was also shot up.

Black, her son Steven Ceci and a guest from South Central Los Angeles, John Parker, were at her East Baltimore row home after returning from work at the PPA’s nearby offices when all three heard five to six gunshots several yards from the residence at approximately 11 p.m.

This attack is combined with a series of threats on phone calls to both the PPA’s phone line and Black’s personal phone, including a barrage of robotic phone calls to both phones and disruptions to the organization’s communications systems.

Black and the Rev. C.D. Witherspoon, president of the Baltimore City Southern Christian Leadership Council, jointly stated: “We take this attack and other threats very seriously and want to send a clear message to the Baltimore Police Department, the Fraternal Order of Police, and any and all forces that may wish us harm, that we will not be intimidated, silenced or stopped in our continuing fight for justice for Freddie Grey and all victims of police terror. We want to say to all of our concerned friends and supporters: We are stronger than ever and look forward to a vibrant and productive assembly this Saturday, when we will not only hear from the victims of police abuse but plan our next steps toward ending police terror and winning jobs and livable wages now.”

Saturday’s [June 6] Assembly will take place at New Unity Church, 100 W. Franklin St., Baltimore, MD 21201 (corner of West Franklin and Cathedral streets) from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

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Along with testimony from victims of police terror, the assembly resolved to call for national actions on the Aug. 9 anniversary weekend of the Ferguson rebellion along with a number of local actions and campaigns, including a “Know Your Rights/Cop Watch” campaign, local protests in defense of arrested youth, and “Black women and girls lives matter” protests on June 20 and June 21.

Workers World will print an extensive article on the tribunal in next week’s issue.

Operator’s car shot up in Baltimore

Oakland police take another young Black life

By Terri Kay

Oakland, Calif.

Oakland Police Department officers took yet another young Black man’s life on the morning of June 6. According to initial reports, the man was unconscious behind the wheel of his car, which was stopped at the curb in a lane which exits from I-580 near the Lake Merritt shopping district. The police were called by PPA’s nearby offices when all three heard five to six gunshots several yards from the residence at approximately 11 p.m.

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A highlight was when McQueen’s sister, Genita Beckham, read the poem “America’s Problem: Black Man” from “My Way of Saying Thank You,” one of McQueen’s three published books, revealing the talent lost when cops killed her brother.

—Story and photo by Joe Piette

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Baltimore people’s assembly a resounding success

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Can U.N. talks bring peace to Yemen?

By Abayomi Azikiwe

at ‘restoring power’ to his government

that upcoming United Nations-sponsored U.S.-brokered talks, discussions were

upon restoring Hadi’s government to
di-backed political forces of fugitive Ye-

U.S. appears to recognize

the U.S.-led coalition’s massive bombing campaign in Yemen, the Ansarullah and Saleh-loyal forces are taking the war into eastern Saudi Arabia. Cross-border attacks into Saudi Arabia have resulted in dozens of casualties. A missile launched from Yemen on June 8 was reported to have fatally struck two Saudi soldiers. These deaths were acknowledged by the Riyadh-led coalition. (Al-Arabiyah, June 8) Just a few days before, at least four Saudi troops were killed in a similar attack.

According to a June 8 media release carried by the official Saudi Press Agency, the GCC-backed coalition will lead a mem-

papers that analyzed the ongoing war in Yemen. The author explores the complexities of the conflict, featuring eyewitness accounts from the people of Yemen.

This slightly edited report is one of several eyewitness accounts provided by International Action Center and FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) youth organizers, Caleb Maupin, who took part in a humanitarian aid mission to Yemen in May.

When it was announced that our ship will dock in Djibouti and my and possible independence must also be taken into account in projecting the future of the country. Al-Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic State are also active in Yemen. The U.S. has for years launched drone attacks resulting in many deaths, including people who held U.S. passports, claiming to target the AQAP.

fighting continues in the south

Intense battles are still raging in the southern port city of Aden, where the Ansarullah are regaining territory they lost in recent clashes with militias backed by Saudi Arabia and the GCC and given air cover by Pentagon-coordinated aircraft. Reuters reported on June 3, “Saudi-led air strikes killed a group of around 20 Houthis fighters outside the southern Ye-

sarullah are regaining territory they lost in recent clashes with militias backed by Saudi Arabia and the GCC and given air cover by Pentagon-coordinated aircraft. Reuters reported on June 3, “Saudi-led air strikes killed a group of around 20 Houthis fighters outside the southern Ye-

May 29 — The mission of the Iran Shahed Rescue Ship, which Maupin, who took part in a humanitarian aid mission to Yemen in May, was a great honor. While I was on the Rescue Ship, I had the honor of having in-depth conversations with Red Crescent Society volunteers. Many of them have spent years working in international operations. They have been all over the world, throughout the Middle East and to Latin America, Asia and Europe, and they have sometimes been in very dangerous situations.

One of the volunteers told me his (Red Crescent) story. He said how his two older brothers died in the Iran-Iraq war during the 1980s. He told of his mother, after losing her two oldest sons in that horrific war, had psychological trauma for the rest of her life. He told of going to Iraq in the after-

I was unable to communicate with many of the others on board. If I had, I am sure I would have heard many more amazing stories.

Eyewitness Yemen rescue ship

 Attacks turn away medical volunteers

This slightly edited report is one of several eyewitness accounts provided by International Action Center and FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) youth organizers, Caleb Maupin, who took part in a humanitarian aid mission to Yemen in May.

By Caleb Maupin

Tehran, Iran

on board the Iran Shahed Rescue Ship.

A great honor

When it was announced that our ship was unable to go to Yemen, these volunteers were disappointed but not defeated. They wanted to go to Hodiedah and help those who needed them. They felt they had a moral responsibility to go to Yemen. They were so let down, unable to do what they had set out to do.

These volunteers are from a different country, half a world away from where I was born in Ohio. They have a different religion and a different political perspec-
there is hope for a better world. [36x48]never be, driven from the human psyche.

kind of solidarity has not been, and will pressed,” as Shia Muslims put it.

edge. Within the human spirit, there is a nature that the apologists for capitalism [36x1127]purchasing three week-long, all-inclusive stays at the resort. The imperialist overlord of the working class and the weaker nations.

The occasion for Poroshenko’s bombastic speech was the Rada’s adoption of a law allowing “admission of the armed forces of other states on the territory of Ukraine” for “international peacekeeping and security.”

The law also states that “potential carriers of nuclear and other types of weapon of mass destruction are permitted — for short-term accommodation.”

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The people of Telmanovo mourned at the funeral of 4-year-old Vanya Nestev.

Preparing for war, not peace Fighting continued June 8 around Donetsk, Gorlovka, Maryinka, where tanks and artillery shelled Shyrokyne, according to Timer.od.ua.

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End war in Ukraine! Washington backs bombing on Russian border

Continued from page 1 there were more than 9,000 Russian troops in three tactical groups on Ukrainian territory.

“I wonder how he counted them?” was the caustic response of Donetsk leader Zakharchenko. “The Ukrainian president’s talent is unique. It is very difficult to hide 9,000 troops of the Russian Armed Forces, not only from the [Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe], but also from us....

If there were 9,000 [Russian forces] here, I wouldn’t be explaining what happened in Krasnogorovka or Mariinka. We would talk about [fighting in] Kiev or Kharkov.” (Dan-News.info, June 5)

On June 6-7, to discuss how to punish Russia.

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On June 8, some 40,000 people massed in the nearest major city, Munich, in the largest of the protests. On June 8 in Elmau, some 7,000 mostly youthful protesters climbed right up to the security fence and the thousands of cops separating the powerful heads of state from the people they pretend to rep-
Bruce Jenner, the 1976 decathlon champion and Olympic gold medalist, came out as transgender to an international audience when a two-hour interview with Diane Sawyer aired on ABC on April 24. A record-breaking 20 million viewers watched the interview — really a mini-documentary — and heard Jenner speak his (the pronoun he used at the time) truth: “I am a woman.”

In a two-part E! special, “Keeping Up with the Kardashians: About Bruce” in May, Jenner stated: “The only thing I want out of this is just to help people. Not just the trans community — it’s really bigger than that, it’s so much more. ... We need more tolerance in this world towards our fellow [people]. We are all human beings put on this earth; we need to learn to live together.”

Caitlyn Jenner was introduced on June 1 when the July cover of Vanity Fair magazine was unveiled. Millions of people around the United States and the world applauded Jenner’s courage, at age 65, to put on this earth; we need to learn to live together.”

And yet, trans people courageously live their lives in ways they choose, and become political leaders in struggles for liberation.

Workers World Will continue to stand with the most oppressed and fight for full civil rights and liberation for all trans people. We applaud Caitlyn Jenner’s public declaration and all that she has done to encourage, inspire and raise the spirits of Jenner as well and affirms her right to self-determination. Moreover, we recognize that it is the decades-long movement for basic rights and liberation of and by trans people that built the platform Jenner now stands on as a transitioning, proud and out trans woman.

We fight against the legalized discrimination, oppression and violence facing many trans people, preponderantly transwomen and trans people of color. Many trans people face rejection, homelessness, poverty and other oppressive and demeaning social problems. It is illegal in most states to discriminate against trans people in jobs, housing and other areas. According to a report issued in January by the Human Rights Campaign and the Trans People of Color Coalition, violence against and killing of trans people is a “national crisis.”

... And yet, trans people courageously live their lives in ways they choose, and become political leaders in struggles for liberation.

... But these limited discussions fall short of overcoming the severe, illegal and reprehensible web of laws and regulations that make up the blockade of Cuba. Washington’s small steps forward, however, could dramatically change the situation.

Each new discussion falls short of overcoming the severe, illegal and reprehensible web of laws and regulations that make up the blockade of Cuba. Washington’s small steps forward, however, could dramatically change the situation.

Legal and political discussions are a victory for the Cuban Revolution, which is already a respected international factor. The United Nations and the U.S. government are negotiating to improve relations with the United Nations, and on 19th of May, 2015, the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to end each year. That vote was a victory for the Cuban people without an affidavit, a license or a pledge to abide by the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Asset Control regulations.

Obama can do more

But Obama himself has not done everything he has the power to do. In a Feb. 12 Granma interview, Josefina Vidal, director general of the U.S. division of Cuba’s Ministry of Foreign Relations, said, “The blockade has not ended..... The president of the United States has options, I would say unlimited, to gut the blockade of its fundamental content. According to the attorney’s who are advising us on this issue — because it is a question which has its complexities from a legal standpoint — there are only a few questions which the president cannot modify, because they are prohibited by law. ....”


Three steps forward, with limitations

On May 29, Secretary of State John Kerry officially signed papers removing Cuba from the U.S. “terrorism” list, a unilateral designation for states which the U.S. considers to be terrorist. Washington is hostile to. Kerry’s papers included no apology, much less reparations for the harm done to Cuba by the terror campaigns launched from U.S. soil. Admitted terrorist and con- victed murderer Louis Alphonse Carbon, and others live free in Miami today, protected by U.S. imperialism.

Regarding travel to Cuba, U.S. residents still cannot buy an airline ticket from a U.S. airport to a Cuban airport without filling out an affidavit and pledging to keep all records of the trip available for government inspection for five years. Plus the trip cannot be a “vacation,” as vacations to Cuba are expressly prohibited by U.S. law.

Because of U.S. restrictions, the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., has had to operate without a bank account for more than a year. A Florida bank has finally agreed to accept its business. According to Cuba’s chief negotiator, in the discussions with the U.S., even this step forward had to receive a U.S. license in compliance with U.S. blockade regulations.

As we all know, President Obama signed on Dec. 17 that Meridian and Visa issued by U.S. banks could now be used in Cuba, the fine print still leaves the dependent to the issuing bank based on blockade restrictions.

Cuba is not our enemy

Signed in September 2014, Obama’s Presidential Determination letter re-...
Down with Greek austerity

Let the bankers pay!

By Fred Goldstein

Since February, shortly after the elec-
toral bloc Syriza won Greece's national ele-
ctions on an anti-austerity program, nego-
tiations have been ongoing and forth-
forth between Syriza and the Troika over
Greek government debt. The Troika re-
fers to the International Monetary Fund, the
European Central Bank and the Eu-
ropean Commission.

In the latest developments, the Greek
government skipped a payment to the
IMF of 300 million euros due on June 5
and is scheduled to bundle it with sub-
sequent payments on June 30. Also, the
Coalition of European Parties has an-
nounced mass demonstrations in the up-
coming weeks.

It is important to grasp the nature of
the present negotiations and this strug-
gle. It is a struggle over concessions. It is
a struggle by the Syriza government to
loosen the vice-like grip of austerity that
has brought until now suffering to the
Greek workers and to ward off new at-
tacks on pensions and wages.

Syriza: reformists trying to hold off
an attack

Syriza is not trying to overthrow Greek
capitalism. Perhaps a more revolutionary
struggle could eventually emerge, but
even the most revolutionary leadership
must understand that at this point the
main axis of the struggle is to ward off
the blows of finance capital aimed at the
workers and to arrest the most extreme
measures of austerity. Slogans against
Greek capitalism and for socialism must
be raised for the sake of the future of the
struggle. But at the same time all efforts
must be made to strengthen the immedi-
ate fight against austerity.

It is also important to understand the
forces in the struggle. Syriza is a left so-
cial-democratic formation with different
currents in it. The leadership, represent-
ed by Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, is
not at all revolutionary. It is adminis-
tering the Greek capitalist state, which
is based on capitalist exploitation and
wage slavery. Whatever these leaders
say, they are in the position of upholding
Greek capitalism and for socialism must
be proven to the people and frighten the bankers, but
also could also set off solidarity struggles
throughout Europe.

This is what the bankers in Berlin, Par-
is, Brussels and Washington fear most.
The Political Secretariat of Syri-
zas recently called for a national mobili-
ization. But so far the Tsipras leadership
has been nonstruggle. It does not match its
defiant words in parliament and in public
commentary with defiance deeds.

The Greek masses should not have to pay one more euro to the Troika. The onerous debt imposed by the financial vultures who prey on the working class should be thoroughly repudiated.

On the other side is the Greek so-
cial-democratic government. The Greek
government is not financially sovereign.
It cannot issue its own currency under
the rules of the eurozone. It cannot fi-
cance its way out of debt. It is totally de-
pendent on funds from the ECB. And it is
subject to harsh retaliation if it defaults.

The European bankers control the
money. The ECB is dominated by Ber-
lin. It can shut down the Greek financial
system at any time by withholding funds
from its banks. Money is the starting
point of all production and commerce under
capitalism, and the bankers con-
troul the money.

The relationship of forces is clearly
unfavorable to the Syriza government in
the present crisis. The question of leav-
ing the eurozone and issuing drachmas,
the former Greek currency, is one possi-
bile scenario. It should be explored and
preparations made for such an eventual-
ity — if that becomes necessary.

Syriza's true leverage: mass mobiliza-
tion and bankers' fear

At the negotiating table, the Syriza
government has some leverage.
First, the euro bankers and the U.S.
bankers fear that unknown crises could
result from a Greek default. They fear a
default could set off a chain of defaults,
such as happened when Lehman Broth-
er was allowed to fail in 2008.

This is a passive advantage held by Athens — if they can hold out. But the
major card has not been played. The
factor that would give greater leverage
to Greek negotiators is for the masses to
be out on the streets, fighting militantly
against austerity.

Given the extraordinary imbalance in
the relationship of forces between the
Greek government and the euro bank-
ers, it is incumbent upon the govern-
ment to mobilize the masses. A strong
mass fightback would not only electrify
the people and frighten the bankers, but
also could also set off solidarity struggles
throughout Europe.

The global capitalist financial crisis
struck in 2008. Since 2009, all the Greek
governments have acted as vassals for the
German, French, Dutch, U.S. and oth-
er bankers. These governments passed
austerity budget against austerity budget.
These vassals from the New Democracy
Party and PASOK (so-called "socialists")
followed the dictates of the Troika.

The global financial crisis bankrupted
the Greek government. The government
in Athens owed hundreds of billions of
euros in debt to bankers and private
bondholders. In order to protect those
bankers and bondholders against a pos-
sible Greek government default on its
debts, the Troika lent "bailout money" to
the government, on the condition that it
impose austerity on the workers.

It was the banks that were actually be-
ning bailed out, not the Greek masses. For
example, between March 2010 and 2012,
the Greek government made 23 pay-
ments to the Troika, amounting to 260.9
billion euros. At least 77 percent of that
money went to the financial sector. (The
International Attac network)

One Greek capitalist government after
another paid hundreds of billions of euros
to the bankers, who had caused the cri-
sis in the first place. They are now profit-
ing from it. The Greek governments have
been paying the bankers who looted them
banking system and have taken from the
workers and with money gained from
cutbacks in pensions, wages, layoffs and
privatizations of public facilities.

These governments have been a
willing partner of a vicious cycle. For five
straight years, without letup, they at-
tacked the working class in order to pay
the rich. Half the population is now in
poverty. Production is down over 25 per-
cent. Unemployment is sky high. Hunger
is everywhere. Greece is suffering from
a Great Depression of its own. The Troi-
ka has been demanding draconian cuts
— and each government has dutifully con-
formed.

Syriza is the first government since
the crisis began that has said "Enough!"
and tried to put a stop to the auster-
ity measures. But it has few means to
do this without the combative mobilization
of the working class, the youth, the op-
pressed and all the victims of austerity.

Greek Communist Party to mobilize

It is a good omen that the Communist
Party of Greece (KKE) has called a mass
mobilization for June 11 and another
on June 25. Through years of class strug-
gle and the fight against fascism and
reaction, the party has earned a good
following among the workers. Since the
negotiations began with the Troika in Fe-
bruary, the gap has widened and now is
very clear.

Hopefully, the KKE will find a way to
attract the broader masses and to win in
an active and combative formative and
to the struggle for socialism.

This has been their program.
But this can best be done by directing
their fire at the Troika as the main enemy
and supporting the demand for lifting the
austerity alongside raising the anti-cap-
italist struggle. It is urgent that the masses
see this first and foremost as the KKE
and the workers in the unions pushing against
finance capital, fighting the new
attacks and battling to lift the austerity.

If the Syriza leadership falters and
yields to demands for austerity, then a
revolutionary left that has been in the
struggle against austerity will be in a
credible position to step in and give
leadership.

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En Nueva York en una sola voz: ¡Liberen a Oscar!

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Las calles de Harlem en Nueva York, vieron la más grande movilización que se haya dado hasta la fecha por la excarcelación del prisionero político puertorriqueño Oscar López Rivera. El 30 de mayo, más de 3,000 personas bajaron por la avenida del pueblo en la calle 135 de Harlem en Nueva York, con miles de personas gritando en las calles de Harlem, se veían banderas puertorriqueñas ondeando en el cielo mientras se explicaba el caso de Oscar a la vez que ondeaban gigantescas banderas boricuas. El pueblo en la calle marchó, encontrando banderas boricuas en cientos de edificios y gobiernos. Muchas personalidades también se manifestaron en favor de Oscar como parte de la ofensiva de Ucrania. 

El pueblo en la calle

Los/as marchantes llegaron desde 25 estados y muchos contigüos se identifican con sus ciudades de origen en la isla. Reflejando esto la inmensa ola migratoria que en los últimos años se ha producido dada la devastadora situación económica que atraviesa el país caribeño. 

Era el día de la Marcha peligrosa, un movimiento que no tiene precedentes en la historia de Nueva York y de la historia de los derechos humanos. Días atrás, el Comité de Solidaridad Oscar López Rivera en un vecindario creado por Rivera, se formó un Comité de Solidaridad Oscar López Rivera en un vecindario creado por el mismo. 

La manifestación en Harlem reflejó el apoyo que en el último año ha conseguido el caso de López Rivera. 

La campaña basada en la violación a los derechos humanos, ha logrado sumar las voces de miles de asistentes que se ve por el caso que el Caucus Hispano del Congreso estadounidense – el cual incluye a derechos como la cubana Yolanda Rosario, la cubana María Elisa y otras – se expresan en favor de la liberación de López Rivera. 

Llegan a las calles de Harlem 

La mayoría de los contingentes dejan la marcha en la página 10