

‘Anti-Zionist, not anti-Semitic’

Chicago Dyke March

opposes ‘pinkwashing’

By Workers World Chicago bureau

The Chicago Dyke March, an annual social justice-oriented queer community celebration, is under attack by the mainstream media for asking several pro-Zionist individuals to leave the June 24 march.

The organizers of the Chicago Dyke March have issued the following statement:

“Yesterday, June 24, Chicago Dyke March was held in the La Villita neighborhood to express support of undocumented, refugee, and immigrant communities under threat of deportation. Sadly, our celebration of dyke, queer, and trans solidarity was partially overshadowed by our decision to ask three individuals carrying Israeli flags superimposed on rainbow flags to leave the rally. This decision was made after they repeatedly expressed support for Zionism during conversations with Chicago Dyke March Collective members. We have since learned that

at least one of these individuals is a regional director for A Wider Bridge, an organization with connections to the Israeli state and right-wing pro-Israel

interest groups. A Wider Bridge has been protested for provocative actions at other LGBTQ events and has been condemned by numerous organizations

(tarabnyc.org/cancelpinkwashing/) for using Israel’s supposed ‘LGBTQ tolerance’ to pinkwash the violent occupation of Palestine.

“The Chicago Dyke March Collective is explicitly not anti-Semitic, we are anti-Zionist. The Chicago Dyke March Collective supports the liberation of Palestine and all oppressed people everywhere. From Palestine to Mexico, border walls have got to go!”

Pinkwashing: Zionist PR

“Pinkwashing” is a public-relations strategy used to portray Israel as the only place in the Middle East that is friendly to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer people. It relies on a broad-brushed slander of the entire Arab and Muslim world, which is presented as “backward.” It is further based on the egregious lie that

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WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN



Black and Brown high school students from the dance group Left Our Mark led this enthusiastically received Workers World Party and People’s Power Assembly contingent in New York City’s huge Pride parade on June 25. The rainbow flag on their signs and banners included black and brown stripes, acknowledging the lives of LGBTQ people of color. Signs included “NYPD out of Pride!” “Drop charges on the

Black Pride 4” and “Queer liberation! Fight for socialism!” Earlier, at a No Justice, No Pride: Reclaim Pride action, a group of LGBTQ activists marched directly in front of the police contingent, carrying a banner reading, “No cops, No banks.” After sitting down in front of the Stonewall Inn and linking arms, 12 were arrested. All were later released.

—Report by Workers World New York bureau

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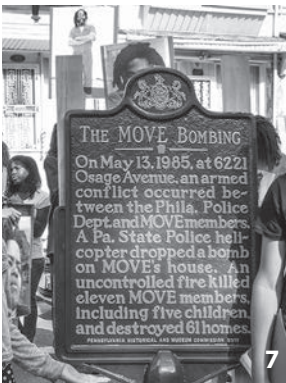


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# Detroit against tax foreclosures and for people’s housing

By Jerry Goldberg

A public forum on June 17 addressed the continuing tax foreclosure crisis in Detroit that has left thousands of families facing imminent eviction from their homes. The forum was organized by the Coalition to Stop Unconstitutional Property Tax Foreclosures, composed of many community groups including the Moratorium Now! Coalition, Detroit BYP100, the Detroit People's Platform, the United Community Housing Coalition and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Bernadette Atuahene, Wayne State University visiting law professor and coalition organizer, described the scope of the crisis. Professor Atuahene explained how between 2011 and 2015, one in four properties in Detroit was foreclosed on for unpaid property taxes by the Wayne County treasurer, a number not seen since the 1930's depression. When you combine the effect of tax foreclosures with the 65,000 mortgage bank foreclosures that also took place, Detroit has approximately one-third fewer occupied homes now than ten years ago.

Property tax rates are calculated based on the home's tax assessment. Atuahene pointed out that despite the Michigan Constitution explicitly providing that no property can be assessed at more than 50 percent of its market value, between 2009 and 2015, 55 to 85 percent of homes in Detroit were over-assessed. The taxes levied based on the inflated assessments on these homes and the ensuing foreclosures for unpaid taxes that occurred, were in blatant violation of the Michigan Constitution.

### Predatory lending targeted Black communities

Professor Atuahene presented data showing how home property values in Detroit declined from \$80,000 in 2007 to less than \$20,000 in 2011, and are at around \$30,000 today. This was a direct result of 65,000 bank foreclosures in the city between 2005 and 2009, when the banks targeted Detroit's African-American residents for predatory, fraudulent, subprime and adjustable rate mortgage loans. Detroit, which formerly had the highest rate of African-American homeownership in the country, now ranks near the bottom.



After foreclosing on families' homes, and being paid off by the government through Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac for their losses, the banks then sold the foreclosed homes at vastly reduced prices to investors. These investors further contributed to the tax foreclosure crisis by renting the properties or placing unsuspecting buyers into land contracts; not paying the property taxes; and allowing the homes to go into tax foreclosure leading to the evictions of unsuspecting occupants. A speaker at the forum, Sonya Bennett, described how this process left her family facing the loss of their home this fall.

Forum speakers also explained how tens of thousands of Detroiters were denied poverty tax exemptions which would have reduced their property tax rates anywhere from 50 percent to paying no taxes at all, when the city and county withheld information about exemption entitlements to Detroit families. A representative of the ACLU described its class action lawsuit challenging the unconstitutional tax assessments and for Fair Housing Act violations in the denial of the hardship exemptions. Monica Patrick, from We the People of Detroit, linked the fight against water shutoffs to the anti-tax foreclosure fight.

### Banks benefit from federal bailout funds

The forum also discussed the denial of federal Hardest Hit Funds to homeowners to pay off delinquent property tax bills. Hardest Hit Funds are the pittance provided homeowners from the \$750 billion bank bailout. The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), which administers the Step Forward program that distributes these federal funds, placed so many impediments to residents' eligibility for them, they made the

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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. 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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New York, NY 10011  
Phone: 212.627.2994



E-mail: ww@workers.org  
Web: www.workers.org  
Vol. 59, No. 26 • June 29, 2017  
Closing date: June 27, 2017

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly  
except the first week of January by WW Publishers,  
147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone:  
212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$30; institu-  
tions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and  
edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to  
Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY  
10011. Back issues and individual articles are available  
on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing,  
Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A  
searchable archive is available on the Web at  
www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription.  
Subscription information is at workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.  
New York, N.Y. 10011.



# ‘Healthcare not Wealthcare!’: Disability rights activists arrested

By Mary P. Kaessinger

“Healthcare not Wealthcare” was a sign left behind at the die-in protest on June 22 inside Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell’s office in Washington, D.C., by members of ADAPT, a disability rights organization. The group was protesting the Republicans’ “rewrite” of the Affordable Care Act.

Over 60 ADAPT members came from across the country to fight for their freedom. If the proposed \$834 billion cut in Medicaid occurs, many people who are disabled and elderly will die or be warehoused in institutions.

Some 43 activists were arrested during the protest. U.S. Capitol Police picked them up off their wheelchairs, dumped some people unceremoniously on the ground, and then carted them outside to be arrested.

In front of McConnell’s office, five Capitol police lifted 29-year-old Stephanie Woodward off her wheelchair. She didn’t go quietly, but shouted, “No cuts to Medicaid!” as she was carried outside. Woodward is an ADAPT member from Rochester, N.Y.

“I was born with spina bifida in 1988,” Woodward told the Huffington Post. “It wasn’t easy for my folks, my mother, a hairdresser, and my father, an electrician, to get me the health care and multiple surgeries I needed.” She has since graduated from law school. Now she has private insurance, but says, “Without Medicaid, I would not be here.” (June 23)

### Save Medicaid!

The same article tells of ADAPT member Laura Halvorson, a 33-year-old Dallas native, who has muscular dystrophy and reluctantly decided not to resist when Capitol police told her to move along. Resisting could have damaged the breathing apparatus attached to her chair, creating a life-threatening situation.

Halvorson requires help with chores like bathing and cooking, so she is trying to obtain a personal care attendant through a Medicaid waiver program. If she can’t get one, she would be forced to live in an institution at twice the cost of

home care, a point stressed by protesters.

Speaking on the June 23 MSNBC show “The Last Word with Lawrence O’Donnell,” Karen Clay characterized this ACA “rewrite” as a decimation: “I cried watching the police carry the disabled activists. What kind of country are we? I was concerned for the safety of the people the police were handling. You need training to know how to handle people who ride in chairs. Their muscles have atrophied and their bones are not used to carrying weight.”

In the interview, Clay talked about her son, Mike Phillips, who has spinal muscular atrophy, is confined to bed, and manipulates a computer to communicate. With a Medicaid waiver he has a personal care assistant who takes him to the movies, Starbucks or out to dinner with friends. “I’m not Ryan Gosling” he quipped, “but I live a good life.”

Medicaid provides essential life support. The program pays home care attendants who provide services needed for daily living, like cooking, bathing and dressing for work. It enables people with disabilities to have access to durable goods, such as wheelchairs and oxygen tanks, and to live as normal a life as possible in the community, to work and to raise families. These things would be impossible without the assistance and necessities jeopardized by this inhumane bill.

To add insult to injury, the funds slashed from Medicaid would be used to subsidize tax cuts for the wealthy 1% — “wealthcare” as the protesters claim. Filling in the gaps would be left to the states; many won’t do it or do not have the money to do so.

The bill was drafted in secret. McConnell has been planning to rush the bill through before the Senate’s July 4 recess. (See editorial, page 10.)

But nobody is waiting to see how the Senate votes. Spontaneous protests are popping up opposing the bill. Planned Parenthood, which would be defunded under the bill, called a demonstration for June 27. Their email read, “This is not a drill. We’re in the fight for our lives.”

### ADAPT’s activism

ADAPT members are fighting hard

because their lives and freedom depend on it. They organized actions at senators’ offices across the country on June 19, 20 and 21, in addition to the Washington protest which made news, even abroad.

Mike Oxford, an ADAPT organizer in Kansas, telling this writer of the strong bond that exists between people with disabilities and their caregiver workers, stressed that the organization campaigns for higher wages for them. They succeeded in Kansas where their hourly pay was raised to \$10.

ADAPT got its start in Denver in July 1978, fighting for the right to ride city buses. Then, 25 activists argued that as taxpayers they had a right to travel on the local buses they paid for. Carrying placards which read, “Taxation without Transportation,” they circled the buses



PHOTO: NATIONAL ADAPT

People with disabilities, caregivers and friends protest life-threatening health care cuts outside the U.S. Senate office on June 22.

and sat down for three days, preventing traffic from moving. At night, they got off their wheelchairs and lay down in the street to sleep.

It took five years and more demonstrations, but ADAPT finally got wheelchair-accessible buses. They did it with humor; their banner read “[We want] to go boldly where everybody else has gone before.” That protest sparked similar demonstrations across the country.

Mary P. Kaessinger is a wheelchair user.

## Vigil against health care cuts



Over 200 demonstrators participated in a June 22 rally in Philadelphia against massive cuts to the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid being planned by Congress and the Trump administration. There were speeches by the Rev. Dr. William Barber II, a leader of the North Carolina Moral Mondays civil rights protest movement; Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower & Rebuild (POWER) leader Rev. Greg Holston; and a number of speakers who will be negatively impacted by threatened loss of health care coverage.

Then a 24-hour vigil began in front of the offices of Pennsylvania Sen. Pat Toomey (R), one of 13 senators respon-

sible for writing the Senate bill. The event was organized by the Pennsylvania Health Access Network.

The Senate leadership is secretly negotiating the bill to repeal ACA that would end coverage for 23 million people and permanently slash funds to Medicaid. It would also give even more power to insurance companies, allowing them to charge more to older people and those with pre-existing conditions. Medicaid funding cuts will disproportionately affect seniors, children, low-income adults and people with disabilities.

Health care is a human right. It should be free for all!

— Story and photo by Joe Piette

## Detroit housing

Continued from page 2

funds virtually inaccessible. In contrast, MSHDA turned over hundreds of millions in Hardest Hit Funds to the Detroit Land Bank to tear down homes with no oversight whatsoever, leading to massive corruption and criminal fraud investigations of the “blight removal” program.

The coalition is demanding a moratorium on tax foreclosures of occupied residences until the taxes are reassessed to their true value and hardship exemptions are provided on a retroactive basis to all families entitled to it. It is also demanding that the Step Forward regulations be rewritten to free up the Hardest Hit Funds to keep families in their homes.

### Make banks pay reparations

In workshops comprised of activists and homeowners facing foreclosures, as well as families who have already lost their homes, the issue of compensation for the tens of thousands of Detroiters who have been displaced was taken up. Several workshops raised how the banks that began the housing crisis in Detroit with their fraudulent practices should be



targeted with a demand for reparations for the harm they have caused. Also, that the 30,000 homes appropriated by the Detroit Land Bank from tax foreclosures be given to Detroit families in need of housing as a result of the illegal practices of both the banks, and Wayne County and city of Detroit officials.

June 28 has been designated “A Day of Action” by the Moratorium Now! Coalition. At 9:30 a.m., activists will attend the MSHDA monthly board meeting at the State of Michigan Building at Cadillac Place in Detroit to address the misuse of Hardest Hit Funds and their immediate release to families in need of aid to save their homes.

At noon on June 28, Moratorium Now! is calling for a demonstration at the Wayne County Treasurer’s Office, 400 Monroe, to demand a one-year moratorium on evictions of any families from occupied, tax foreclosed homes. June 28 is currently the last day before the tax foreclosed homes are designated for auction. Find information on the June 28 demonstrations at moratorium-mi.org. For the Coalition to Stop Unconstitutional Property Tax Foreclosures, visit illegalforeclosures.org. □



# On the picket line

By Alex Bolchi and Sue Davis

## Immigrant farmworkers win union victory in Washington

In a major victory for U.S. farmworkers, about 200 migrants who pick berries for Sakuma Brothers in Burlington, Wash., ratified their first union contract on June 15. This win is stunning, given the workers’ special oppression — they’re from the Mexican states of Oaxaca and Guerrero and speak neither English nor Spanish but Mixtec and Tri- quie. Farmworkers have been legally excluded from organizing, except in California, since 1935.

The Families United for Justice union, which is 500 strong and independent from the AFL-CIO but works with the Washington Labor Council, has a history of success. It played a major role in the Driscoll berry boycott of 2016 — the Driscoll brand distributes Sakuma berries. The boycott was suspended after Sakuma agreed to hold the election. The deal boasts a rate of up to \$15 an hour for experienced workers, seniority rights, “just cause” discipline and a base rate of \$12 an hour — \$1 above Washington’s minimum wage! (NW Publishing News, June 15) FUJ just earned another notch in its stellar history!

## Big rig drivers strike at California ports

Teamsters-organized drivers picketed for a week starting June 19 outside two of the nation’s largest port and rail facilities in Los Angeles and Long Beach. The drivers called the unfair labor practices strike to protest their illegal misclassification as independent contractors by XPO Cartage, a subsidiary of XPO Logistics (whose offices in Commerce, Rancho Dominguez and San Diego were also picketed). Misclassifying lets companies shirk all responsibilities by claiming workers are not employees, leading to enormous profits. This strike spotlights the wage theft from 12,000 big rig drivers, called “sharecroppers on wheels,” at the two ports.

Global giant XPO rakes in millions annually from such customers as Toyota, BMW, P&G and Sony, so it could easily meet the truckers’ demands. However, it’s appealing the California Labor Commissioner’s wage-theft award of \$1 million for five XPO drivers. (teamsters.org, June 19 and 26) WW says: Support all struggles of low-paid, predominantly immigrant contract workers in all industries!

## Immigrant construction workers’ strike in South

Predominantly Latinx construction workers, lured cross-country to Nashville, Tenn., in May by the promise of good jobs, hadn’t been paid for three weeks by Lifestyle Communities. After consulting other construction workers and Workers Dignity (Dignidad Obera), a multicultural workers’ center founded to fight wage theft, which has recovered more than \$330,000 since 2010, about 65 workers went out on May 16 for five days. Last summer non-union Latinx construction workers also struck twice in Nashville when companies failed to provide water during record heat.

“There is most definitely a growing militancy among Latino workers in the South,” Workers’ Dignity organizer Alexa Malischack told Pay-Day.com. In May, 100 Latinx non-union construction workers in Louisville, Ky., went on strike for two days after discovering they were being paid \$14/hour less than whites doing the same work. These workers are now organizing to join Carpenters Local 175. As Payday noted: “With the Latino population growing in the South, many activists say that the key to organizing the South is harnessing solidarity across [nationalities and communities].” (June 22)

## Grad student teachers win contract at UMichigan

After a five-month fight, the Graduate Employees Organization at the University of Michigan, American Federation of Teachers Local 3550, ratified its first two-year contract on April 14. Local 3550, which represents more than 1,800 graduate student instructors and graduate student staff assistants, had to rally, march and stage a two-day sit-in before the administration would bargain seriously. Though they wanted a 5.5 percent wage hike, the workers won an increase of 3.35 percent annually; zero premium in GradCare health insurance and review process for transition-related care; child care subsidy and paid parental leave; and discrimination protections for international grad students.

## Adjunct faculty rally for fair contract at UMass-Lowell

Adjunct faculty at University of Massachusetts-Lowell are fighting an uphill battle for a contract given the administration’s refusal to bargain. United Auto Workers Region 9A, with members in the Northeast and Puerto Rico, called a rally for its members in Local 259 on June 22. A loud brass band led hundreds on a march around campus. The primary slogan and chant were “Equal pay for equal work.” Lowell adjuncts make 32 percent less than adjuncts at four other UMass campuses and have no health care coverage. (Facebook/UAW Region 9A, June 20) WW supports these “precarious” workers demanding social justice! ☐

PART 1

# LITTLE STEEL STRIKE: Capitalists expose their brutality

By Martha Grevatt

The Little Steel Strike was one of the bloodiest strikes in 1937, and a setback for labor in a year characterized by a string of union victories. Scores of unionists, supporters and family members were wounded, and 18 of their slain brothers would never return to work again.

Breaking this strike — under a Democratic administration in Washington and Democratic governors across the Midwest where the pickets were killed — exposed the violent nature of the capitalist state.

“Little Steel” referred to eight companies — only “Little” in comparison to “Big” U.S. Steel — that had formed a bloc to resist unionization. The Feb. 11, 1937, victory of the United Auto Workers against General Motors in the Flint, Mich., sit-down strike had set off a wave of occupations and strikes. Seeking to preempt a strike in March, U.S. Steel agreed to let the Steel Workers Organizing Committee represent workers in its mills. In the next few months about 135 steel companies let SWOC come in. The union, barely a year old, now had 330,000 members.

In taking on SWOC, the eight Little Steel barons were acting on behalf of the ruling class, which wanted to push back the forward march of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (originally the Committee on Industrial Organization). Beginning as a committee inside the craft-based American Federation of Labor, the CIO formed to organize the mass of industrial workers. In 1936 the CIO’s 12 member unions were expelled from the AFL.

Yet workers, inspired by successes in rubber and later in auto, flocked to the militant CIO unions by the millions. Unlike the moderate AFL, whose member unions included some that actually barred African Americans from joining, the CIO opened its doors to the most oppressed. Women, workers of color and immigrants swelled its ranks. SWOC, formed by the CIO in 1936, was no exception.

The Little Steel bosses’ united front — encompassing Jones & Laughlin, Pittsburgh, Crucible, Bethlehem, Youngstown, National, Republic and Inland steel companies, led by the notorious Tom Girdler of Republic — began to crumble in May when J & L signed with SWOC after a 36-hour strike. Then Pittsburgh and Crucible gave in.

### Steel workers unified in strike

The union struck three holdouts, Republic, Youngstown and Inland, on May 26, and shortly

thereafter workers walked out at one of Bethlehem’s plants. SWOC held off taking on National, whose president, Ernest T. Weir, was one of the worst anti-unionists in the whole country. Altogether 92,000 steelworkers in seven states were on picket lines; mills were shut down lock-tight.

Just four days into the strike on May 30, Republic strikers in Chicago were having a Memorial Day social with their families at Sam’s Place, SWOC’s local headquarters. Leo Krzycki, of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and a leading figure in the CIO, pledged support. A statement from the Chicago mayor affirmed the right to peacefully picket. Having that statement in hand, the strikers at the social voted to march to the mill and picket.

“Probably no group of people ever strolled more casually toward death and wounds,” wrote 1930s’ labor journalist Mary Heaton Vorse. “The testimony showed that the police had been eating in the mills and a platoon of fifty policemen was seen walking out of the mills that morning. The testimony goes to show that this was a planned attack; that the police came out with the intention of shooting down the workers and then arresting them wholesale. The police had planned to make this peaceful picket line seem like a Red plot to capture the mills. The brave policemen were to have warded off the revolution. But their plan failed. There were too many witnesses and too many cameramen.” (“Labor’s New Millions,” 1938)

A newsreel showed strike leaders pleading with police to let them pass. Police instead opened fire and clubbed workers mercilessly. One died after some workers tried to get him in a car and drive him to the hospital; police dragged him out of the car and left him to die. Four were dead on the spot. In the next few weeks the death toll climbed to 10, nine from gunshot wounds and one bludgeoned to death. Over 100 were wounded, many incapacitated for life. The injured included infants and children.

Social worker Guadalupe Marshall gave eyewitness testimony to the Senate Civil Liberties Committee, formed to investigate widespread illegal union busting. She was clubbed on the head while trying to assist the wounded and then arrested. Hospitals were overwhelmed with the injured strikers and put out a call for volunteers, but police blocked volunteers from entering to give aid. Marshall was one of many Latinx immigrants who fought valiantly against Girdler and company. (LaFollette Committee, U.S. Senate, [tinyurl.com/ybywnzfr](http://tinyurl.com/ybywnzfr))

Every year, steelworkers and other Chicago unionists gather at the site of the slaughter to remember those who laid down their lives in the service of their class.

*Part 2: Strike violence continues. Seven murdered in Ohio.*



Police fire on workers during the Republic Steel strike, May 30, 1937, in Chicago.

PHOTO: ARKANSAS AFL-CIO

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.

**Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination** Larry Holmes

**Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery** Sam Marcy

**Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** LeiLani Dowell

**The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead

**Domestic Workers United Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights** Imani Henry

**Black & Brown Unity: Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice!** Saladin Muhammad

**Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior** Mumia Abu-Jamal

**Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation** Consuela Lee

**Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion** John Parker

Available at major online book sellers.



# LGBTQ PRIDE IN SOLIDARITY 2017

## Queer, dyke and trans opposition to ‘pinkwashing’

Continued from page 1

the Israeli settler state treats LGBTQ Palestinians as equal to LGBTQ Israelis.

Pinkwashing not only serves to legitimize the Israeli state but also reinforces U.S. imperialist propaganda, which claims that the U.S. wages war in an effort to “liberate” LGBTQ peoples and women in the Middle East and throughout the world — even as LGBTQ peoples face police brutality, added economic hardship and denial of social services here in the U.S.

Another essential component of pro-Israel propaganda is the conflation of Judaism and Jewish identity with the settler state of Israel, a lie which anti-Zionist Jewish organizations, like Jewish Voice for Peace and the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, have rejected. This conflation allows Zionists to smear anyone who criticizes Israel as “anti-Semitic,” providing a cover for Israeli genocide of the Palestinian people, and erasing the voices and work of Jews worldwide who reject Zionism.

Both these propaganda tactics are in full force in the media’s attack on the Chicago Dyke March’s principled opposition to Zionism and pinkwashing. Articles from Newsweek, Haaretz, Pink News, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Unicorn Booty, and Chicago’s Windy City Times refer to the flags as “Jewish pride flags,” with pro-Zionist media outlets like Haaretz, JTA, the Jerusalem Post and others referring to the decision as “anti-Semitic.” The woman who was carrying the Rainbow/Star-of-David flag, Laurel Grauer, identified herself as a Zionist to Chicago Dyke March organizers and also in an interview with JTA, and is the Midwest manager of A Wider Bridge. In a comment on Chicago Dyke March’s Facebook page, Stav Meishar argued that “the flags that ‘triggered’ people were NOT a flag of the modern state of Israel, they are PRIDE flags adorned with the star of David.”

### Zionist Rainbow Flag

Taken separately, neither the Rainbow flag nor the Star of David are inherently connected to Israel. But to argue that their combination is not associated with the Israeli pinkwashing campaign ignores the origin and connotations of the flag, as well as its current extensive use by pro-Zionist LGBTQ organizations and other entities engaged in pinkwashing the apartheid Israeli settler state.

There are a number of variant flags that



combine the Rainbow flag and the Star of David or elements of the flag of Israel. Some versions feature a blue or white Star of David in the center of the traditional Rainbow Pride flag. Others more closely visually emulate the flag of Israel by restricting the rainbow stripes to narrow bands above and below the star, and lastly a version includes the entire flag of Israel in one corner of the Rainbow flag.

The first verified instance of any of these variations that Workers World was able to locate online was at a Pride event in Arizona in 2006. (tinyurl.com/y8gfsnt8) The flag was used by AVIV of Arizona, a LGBTQ Jewish organization affiliated with the openly pro-Israel World Conference of GLBT Jews — Keshet Ga’avah. The organization’s website explains that “the Hebrew name [Keshet Ga’avah] means rainbow of pride and reflects the importance of Israel to our organization,” and highlights that “A Wider Bridge teamed up with the World Congress in 2015 to bring Tel Aviv the first global LGBTQ leadership conference in the Middle East.” In the “mission” section of the site, every image features one variation or another of the Israeli Pride flag. Similar flags are featured prominently on the social media accounts of A Wider Bridge.

The origin of the Rainbow/Star-of-David flag is, as far as WW was able to determine, a Zionist organization, and it is used extensively by Zionist pinkwashing organizations and individuals. Conversely, WW was unable to find any instance of the flag being used or promoted by any explicitly anti-Zionist Jewish organizations.

Only by ignoring the historical and political context of the flag and reducing it to its elements can the media and the Zionists claim that it is a merely Jewish rather than Zionist flag. To ask for the flag’s removal was to oppose Zionism, not Judaism.

Solidarity with the organizers of the Chicago Dyke March! Reject Zionist “pinkwashing” and support Palestinian liberation! □

## San Francisco Trans March



Several thousand people participated in the Trans March, which started at Dolores Park and ended in San Francisco’s Tenderloin district on June 23. API Equality-Northern California, along with Gabriela SF, Ieumsae and VietUnity, organized a militant and colorful contingent “to show our power as Trans and Gender Non-Conforming Asian and Pacific Islander people!”

The contingent made a powerful presence, with chants like “When I say trans, you say justice! Trans justice!” and “One! We are the people! Two! A little bit louder! Three! We want justice for all trans people!” The Korean drummers of Ieumsae added rhythm and enthusiasm to the contingent.

— Story and photo by Terri Kay

## Drop all charges against the #BlackPride4

By Susan Schnur

Several Black queer and trans people and allies gathered at the LGBTQ Pride Festival in Columbus, Ohio, on June 17 with the intent of silently blocking the parade for seven minutes to hold space for Black and Brown queer and trans people.

The activists were protesting the recent acquittal of the police officer who killed Philando Castile. Other important aims were to raise awareness about the violence against and erasure of Black and Brown queer and trans people, and in particular the lack of space for Black and Brown people at Pride festivals and to raise the names of the 14 trans woman of color who have already been murdered this year.

In a June 18 press release, activist Ariana Steele stated that “though our method was a silent, nonviolent, peaceful demonstration, the CPD [Columbus Police Department] immediately opted for unnecessary force in lieu of our civil and human rights. Protesters were assaulted with bicycles, sprayed with mace, jumped on, pushed, pummeled and chased with horses — all within two minutes of the initiation of the roadblock. In the process, four Black protestors were targeted and arrested. The #BlackPride4 were taken into custody and held in a CPD van for four hours in 90 degree heat prior to processing without being provided medical attention.”

The Columbus Police Department has



Supporters gathered outside City Hall on June 17, the day the #BlackPride4 were arrested at the Columbus Pride Parade, to demand their release.

confirmed that the charges for Wriply Bennett, Kendall Denton, Ashley Braxton and Deandre Miles include aggravated robbery, resisting arrest, causing harm to a police officer, failure to comply with a police officer’s order and disorderly conduct.

Later that evening, crowds gathered outside Columbus City Hall demanding the release of the anti-racism protesters and that all charges be dropped. Miles was kept overnight in solitary confinement and charged with felony aggravated robbery for allegedly trying to grab one of the cops’ guns.

At Cleveland Pride on June 24, solitary leaflets demanding the release of the #BlackPride4 and “Black Trans Lives Matter” placards were distributed to parade participants. On June 25, the website No Justice No Pride reported support actions in Seattle, Chicago, Minneapolis and New York City.

A campaign is underway to demand that all charges be dropped against the #BlackPride4. To donate to the defense fund, visit tinyurl.com/donateBlackPride4.

## Fightback unity cheered at Pride



WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

On June 4 in Buffalo, N.Y., youth from Workers World Party, Queers for Racial Justice and other groups marched at Pride in a first-time-together, fightback contingent. They carried banners and signs confronting anti-LGBTQ oppression, racism, sexism, war and Trump’s entire anti-worker program. Placards raised support for

immigrants, the Black Lives Matter movement and defense of trans women of color — raising the legacy of Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera. The contingent’s presence in an otherwise heavily corporate celebration brought wild cheers all along the parade route.

— Report by Tom Answeeney and Garrett Dicembre



Baltimore Pride, June 16.

WW PHOTO: RASIKARUWANPATHIRANA



# Sylville Smith’s life matters

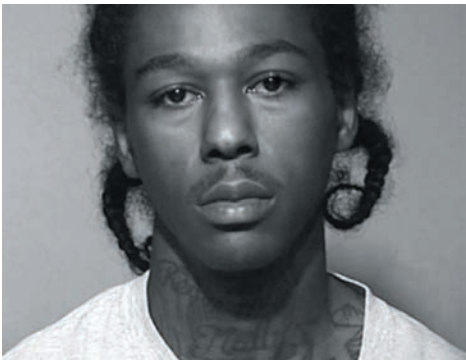
## La vida de Sylville Smith importa

The statement below, issued in English and Spanish by Voces de la Frontera in Milwaukee, condemns the acquittal on June 21 of a Milwaukee police officer in the 2016 killing of community member Sylville Smith.

“We are heartbroken and angry that the criminal justice system has again failed to hold a police officer accountable for killing a Black man,” said Christine Neumann-Ortiz, Executive Director of Voces de la Frontera. “Sylville Smith’s life matters. He was murdered by the same legal system that racially profiles Latinxs, separates immigrant families through deportation and labels millions of people of color as criminals. He was murdered by the same economic system that outsources jobs from good paying factories, defunds public schools and health care, and evicts and forecloses on

Black, Brown and working-class families. We especially urge Milwaukee non-Black Latinx and immigrant community members to protest this verdict. We cannot demand justice for Latinx and immigrant families without demanding justice for Black families separated by the police killings of loved ones. “Voces de la Frontera condena la exoneración del policía de Milwaukee en el asesinato de un miembro de la comunidad: Junio 21, una vez más un policía fue exonerado después de asesinar a un hombre afroamericano, esta vez en Milwaukee. Voces de la Frontera

publicó la siguiente declaración: “Estamos tristes y enojados que el sistema de justicia penal otra vez no ha castigado a un policía por matar a un hombre afroamericano,” dijo Christine Neumann-Ortiz, directora ejecutiva de Voces de la Frontera. “La vida de Sylville Smith importa. Él fue asesinado por el mismo sistema legal que discrimina en contra de los latinxs, separa a las familias inmigrantes por la deportación y nombra a millones de personas de color como criminales. Fue asesinado por el mismo sistema económico que está cerrando las fábricas que proveía trabajos buenos pagados, que está cortando fondos de las escuelas públicas y el cuidado de salud y desaloja a las familias de color



Sylville Smith

y de la clase trabajadora. Animamos especialmente a los latinxs e inmigrantes de Milwaukee a protestar este juicio. No podemos exigir justicia para las familias latinas e inmigrantes sin exigir justicia para las familias afroamericanas rotas por los asesinatos policíacos.” Voces de la Frontera, a national leader in the movement for immigrant and worker rights, is the largest grassroots Latinx membership organization in Wisconsin: [www.vdlf.org](http://www.vdlf.org) □

# Friends and family protest Seattle cops’ killing of mother of three

By Jim McMahan  
Seattle

Two days after the June 16 acquittal of the cop who murdered Philando Castile in Minnesota, Seattle cops murdered a Black mother of three in her own home. The June 18 shooting of Charleena Lyles, who was pregnant, was in front of her children. A gathering of family and friends outside Lyles’ home protested her murder that very day. Lyles had called the cops to report a burglary in her home. Asking for help, she was instead gunned down. Her relatives have stated that she had

recently had some mental health issues and that race was also an issue. Two white cops shot her from close range with five to seven bullets. The Lyles’ family was living in housing for formerly homeless families in Magnuson Park. Seattle, especially in the Black community, faces a huge gentrification crisis leading to homelessness. Since the killing of Lyles, many people are saying that the social service system failed her and that any intervention allegedly on her behalf should have come with a mental health specialist, along with other social services, not by two racist cops. A network of family and friends who

loved and respected Lyles, including the Social Equality Caucus of the Seattle Education Association, held a vigil and press conference outside the Lyles’ home on June 20. Many voiced their outrage and called for justice. City Councilwoman Kshama Sawant, a member of the NAACP and Socialist Alternative, demanded a town hall meeting where the Lyles family can voice their concerns and demand for justice from the police. Word came during the rally that the City Council had agreed to that demand. Then the Lyles family led the crowd, which had swelled to well over 1,000 people, on a three-mile march to the Montlake



Charleena Lyles

Bridge. They chanted, “Charleena! Say Her Name!” At the bridge, cops blocked the way. When the crowd confronted them, the city raised the drawspan of the bridge to shut down its own street to block the march. □

# ‘Juvenile lifers’: Demanding justice in Detroit

By Elle Fox

A group of at least 80 protesters rallied in Erma Henderson Park in Detroit on Father’s Day, June 18, to show their disgust that the state of Michigan has yet to re-examine most of its cases of juvenile incarceration for life without chance of parole. Back in 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that such punishments were cruel and unusual, save for extreme cases where there was no possibility of rehabilitation. In 2016, the court made their decision retroactive so that anyone sentenced before the ruling should have their case re-evaluated.



June 18, in Detroit, organizing against ‘cruel and unusual punishment’ of young people imprisoned for life. WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

Michigan currently has 363 people who were imprisoned as juveniles and who are serving life sentences without parole, most of whom have not had their sentences re-examined. Michigan ranks second in the nation for the most juveniles sentenced to life without parole. At the protest were about a dozen individuals who had been previously imprisoned, including two who had been sentenced to life without parole. They were able to at-

tend because they were granted releases after the state re-examined their cases. Family members of those unfairly incarcerated and those formerly imprisoned, as well as activists from the area, attended the protest. Members of Amnesty International, activists involved in fighting the legislation, and many people personally affected by this injustice addressed the protest. Efrén Paredes Jr., who is still serving a life sentence, called in to the event. His voice, broadcast for everyone to hear, told what the struggle is like on the inside. In 1989, Paredes was incarcerated for life without the chance of parole at the age of 15. Paredes paired with Elena Herrada, a professor at Marygrove College and

Wayne County Community College who is engaged in the fight for criminal justice reform, to organize the event. They also created an online petition demanding passage of state prison reform that would impact every prisoner in Michigan. The link to the “Support Michigan Prison Reform” petition is [tinyurl.com/mipr2017/](http://tinyurl.com/mipr2017/). Among the demands are relief for prisoners serving life and long indeterminate sentences, and ending mandatory minimum sentencing and incarceration for victims of abuse who defend themselves. Other important issues include stopping predatory prices on phone calls home. □

# On Al-Quds Day, ‘Israel out of Palestine!’

Several hundred people rallied in front of Chicago’s Israeli Consulate on June 23 and then marched through the Loop to commemorate Al-Quds Day, an international day of struggle against Israel’s occupation of Palestine. The action was called by People United Against Oppression and co-sponsored by the Muslim Congress, Answer Coalition, Neturei Karta, Refuse Fascism and Workers World Party. — Report and photo by Jeff Sorel



# Justice for Nabra vigil

By Milwaukee Workers World bureau

A multinational crowd of supporters joined a #JusticeforNabra vigil at O’Donnell Park in Milwaukee on June 23 to denounce the June 18 murder of Nabra Hasanen in Sterling, Va. The slain 17-year old Muslim teen was brutally attacked and killed by a man with a baseball bat on her way home from a Ramadan-related event. She was wearing a traditional Muslim headscarf at the time. A diverse rainbow of organizations from the Arab, Muslim, Latinx, African-American and other communities participated. Youth and students played a significant role in organizing this event.



WW PHOTO

Vigil organizers stated: “We cannot separate this terrible act of violence from the current political moment, a moment where Black lives are under increased attack, where individuals like Nabra’s murderer are emboldened by the anti-Black, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim rhetoric, where communities are pitted against one another.” (For complete statement, visit [tinyurl.com/yczvtz2h/](http://tinyurl.com/yczvtz2h/)) □





# United National Antiwar Coalition: Determined to link struggles

*This report from United National Antiwar Coalition is based on a full report and videos at [UNACpeace.org](http://UNACpeace.org) and [UNACconference2017.org](http://UNACconference2017.org).*

As activists met June 16-18 in Richmond, Va., for the United National Antiwar Coalition 2017 conference, titled “Stop the Wars at Home and Abroad: Building a Movement Against War, Injustice & Repression,” the U.S. military was shooting down another Syrian plane and the cop who murdered Philando Castile was being acquitted.

Despite these realities, the conference and the movement took a huge step forward. More than 300 people registered for the conference, coming together from 31 states as well as nine foreign countries: Canada, Colombia, Hungary, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine and Venezuela.

The conference was the most diverse by age, race and geography than any antiwar conference or meeting in the U.S. in recent history. UNAC shows an independent path against neoliberalism, imperialism and racism, and true resistance at a pivotal moment.

Hosted in Richmond by the UNAC-affiliated Virginia Defenders for Freedom, Justice and Equality, the conference presented panels and workshops on the wars

abroad and the wars at home on people of color, workers, immigrants, Muslims and others. The entire conference was professionally live-streamed and recorded by Other Voices, Other Choices, with producer Wilton Vought. The recordings can be seen and heard at [tinyurl.com/yd7vrq9e/](http://tinyurl.com/yd7vrq9e/).

This was the first time UNAC attempted a conference in the U.S. South. This was due to the number of groups from the South that have recently joined UNAC and an increased pace of struggle in that area.

Speakers at the conference recognized that we are at an extremely dangerous time with current expanding, unending wars; millions of displaced refugees; more than 800 U.S. military bases around the world; the threat of nuclear annihilation; and climate destruction. At the same time, at home, the social safety net is being ravaged; repression of dissent is rising; mass incarceration accelerates; wages and standard of living stagnates; and the obscenely wealthy are raking it in. Now, more than ever, we need a strong, unified coalition of antiwar and justice movements to fight back against the imperialist war system and win!

Panels included speakers from UNAC-affiliated groups and friends. Each panel focused on international or domestic issues, but all had speakers who addressed the connection to both wars abroad and wars at home.

Two sessions of workshops were held on such topics as NATO expansion, building the antiwar movement, drone warfare, environmental justice, the “color revolutions,” the peace process in Columbia, youth activism, the Black Alliance for Peace, the importance of an anti-imperialist perspective, and a training session for security and defense at rallies and more.

The final panel of the weekend, held on Sunday morning, June 18, was called “Building a More Powerful Movement for Justice and Peace.” On this panel, leaders of several organizations with different experiences contributed their ideas in the hope of building a stronger movement. This was followed by the presentation of an action proposal and an open mic to discuss the proposal and how best to move forward. Based on the discussion, the unanimously adopted proposal was modified.

The action proposal started with a reaffirmation of the coalition’s founding prin-

ciples: “UNAC reaffirms its commitment to the organization of independent, mass action, united front mobilizations against all U.S. wars at home and abroad. Unity in action against the endless imperialist wars for power and profit is inseparable from the same necessary unity at home against the inherent racism, sexism, homophobia and anti-working class policies generated by a society ruled by the one percent.”

The proposal went on to assert that UNAC will organize and support actions along these lines and will expand our leadership bodies to broaden and strengthen our coalition.

The conference concluded with a march from the Richmond Conference Center to Richmond’s African Burial Ground in Shockoe Bottom, once the epicenter of the U.S. domestic slave trade, where conference participants pledged support for the ongoing struggle to reclaim, expand and properly memorialize the site.

The conference represented the rapidly changing consciousness of people in the U.S. It represented the coming together of the antiwar movement with a section of Black leaders and international guests who have a clear understanding of what is needed for today’s movement. □

## Youth remember MOVE with historic marker

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

Due to the hard work and dedication of middle school students from the Jubilee School here, there is finally a historic marker on Osage Avenue and Cobbs Creek Parkway in remembrance of the 11 MOVE members, including five children, who died in a purposely uncontrolled fire on May 13, 1985.

A very moving ceremony was held June 24 to unveil the marker, which will serve as a permanent reminder of the murder of the MOVE members. In 1985, Philadelphia officials, including the mayor, police commissioner and fire commissioner, ordered a bomb dropped on MOVE’s West Philadelphia row home. In addition to the deaths, the resulting fire also destroyed the entire two-block area.

The Jubilee students described the attack on MOVE as “one of the worst cases of police brutality in America.”

Speaking as a collective voice, five Jubilee students described how the marker project began as part of a field trip to the area on May 13, 2016.

The students went to Osage Avenue to commemorate the MOVE bombing and to witness the impact first hand, including the poorly rebuilt houses, many now uninhabitable. The trip’s goal was to uncover why the city wouldn’t acknowledge what

the police did in the Philadelphia Black community over 32 years ago. During this visit, they noticed there was no marker, applied for it and started raising funds.

Students repeatedly asked why those responsible for the murderous assault were never held accountable. They said this failure helped pave the way for the current epidemic of police brutality.

The marker unveiling was part of a campaign called “Songs of the Children Movement: A Campaign against Police Violence,” which was begun in 2015 by Jubilee students to speak out against social injustices. The students chose this title because they wanted to use poetry as a “message builder.”

The young students also led three marches of hundreds of children to confront police brutality and to abolish the city’s “Stand Your Ground” and “Stop and Frisk” laws. On March 18, 2016, they held a silent march with drums, inspired by W.E.B. Du Bois’ march against lynching in the early 1900s.

Several of the remaining Osage Avenue residents supported the students’ efforts and attended the June 24 unveiling. Ramona Africa, the sole surviving MOVE member to escape the fire, spoke publicly at the site for the first time since 1985.

Over 150 people came to the unveiling, with speakers including renowned Philadelphia poet Sonia Sanchez. Young



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

The five Jubilee student organizer-leaders at MOVE memorial unveiling, Philadelphia, June 24.

MOVE members attended, carrying large pictures of nine MOVE members imprisoned since 1978 as the result of an earlier Philadelphia attack on the group. Several were grandchildren of MOVE members killed in the 1985 fire.

In their year-long campaign, the students stood their ground and eventually won out against efforts of the historical commission to include wording that would imply there was “a gun battle” at the site instead of an overwhelming attack by 100 police with water cannons, tear gas and heavy machine gun fire.

City officials claimed the group had not filed paperwork needed to place the

marker on the public parkway. This delayed the marker’s placement. Jubilee School principal Karen Falcon, who said that the students submitted all necessary paperwork, stated, “It still feels like the city isn’t fully owning up to it in some sense.” ([billypenn.com](http://billypenn.com), June 23)

The final wording on the marker reads: “The MOVE Bombing — On May 13, 1985, at 6221 Osage Avenue, an armed conflict occurred between the Phila. Police Dept. and MOVE members. A PA State Police helicopter dropped a bomb on MOVE’s house. An uncontrolled fire killed eleven MOVE members, including five children, and destroyed 61 homes.” □



PHOTO: PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATION FOR PROGRESS

Marching through downtown Newark, June 24.

## ‘They stole us, they sold us, they owe us!’

By Stephen Millies

Over a hundred people marched through downtown Newark, N.J., on June 24 demanding reparations for the African Holocaust. Called by the People’s Organization for Progress, the demonstration was greeted by people at bus stops with clenched fists.

Larry Hamm, chairman of POP, quoted Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois that at least 150 million people were sto-

len from Africa during the trans-Atlantic slave trade. World capitalism was built upon this colossal crime, along with the genocide committed against Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas.

Hamm noted that New Jersey’s history was intertwined with slavery. The state legislature initially refused to pass the 13th Amendment banning slavery.

Among the huge companies that have benefited from racism is Prudential Insurance, whose headquarters the demonstrators marched past. Prudential sold

“Jim Crow” policies at higher rates to African Americans for decades.

Omwale Clay, of the December 12th Movement, led the crowd in chanting, “They stole us! They sold us! They owe us!” a powerful slogan which D12 originated. Glen Ford, of the Black Agenda Report, pointed out that 150 years ago the biggest U.S. capitalist investments were enslaved Africans.

Other organizations that participated included the Nation of Islam, the Black Lives Matter movement and BAYAN. □



# Oscar López boosts struggle for Puerto Rican independence

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Oscar López Rivera’s presence in circles of the Boricua diaspora at this crucial moment in the history of Puerto Rico represents a great boost towards the unity and the advancement of the struggle for decolonization and independence as the only way forward for true sovereignty.

López Rivera’s recent visit to New York had several purposes: to meet with political activists, attend the June 11 National Puerto Rican Day Parade and testify at the June 19 meeting of the United Nations’ Special Committee on Decolonization.

Many meetings and events were held during the days prior to and after the June 11 parade, not only with the diaspora, but also with labor and other activists. One was a breakfast sponsored by the SEIU Local 1199 of health care workers, where several well-known figures attended, including renowned sister Pam Africa.

## Puerto Rican Day Parade

In May, the Parade Board had decided to dedicate the parade to López Rivera and nominated him as National Freedom Hero. Within days, most of the corporate sponsors — Coca-Cola, JetBlue, Goya Foods, the Yankees, Univision, etc. — withdrew their sponsorship. Police, firefighters and other groups associated with “law and order” or sympathizers of the pro-statehood status formula refused to attend.

Puerto Ricans who favor independence then launched a boycott campaign aimed at these firms’ social media. Many of those commenting expressed their satisfaction, stating, “We got our culture, our parade, back,” referring negatively to the commercialization of the parade in the last decades.

The result was a magnificent demonstration of Puerto Ricans’ fierce determination to prevail despite the criminal attacks of the colonial powers. Thousands of Boricuas attended. Floats and contingents did not simply advertise commodities as in the past, but carried signs and banners demanding independence. They demanded the ousting of the dictatorial Fiscal Control Board, the “junta” that the U.S. Congress set up as a collection agency to grab the enormous — and illegitimate — debt that has been imposed on

Puerto Rico.

It was not just a Puerto Rican Day Parade. It was a protest, a march for sovereignty and independence of a nation. López Rivera, standing on a float in the front of the march, was able to appreciate the enthusiasm of a rebellious diaspora in the very heart of Wall Street’s city.

## Testimony at the U.N.

That same enthusiasm surrounded López Rivera when he testified at the United Nations on June 19. Received with a standing ovation, he spoke movingly for 20 minutes — a special time concession. The Puerto Rican governor’s representative criticized this concession.

Below are excerpts of his presentation, entitled:

**“What has United States colonialism done to Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican people?”**

“Today there are over five million Puerto Ricans living in the diaspora, while there are less than three-and-a-half million living in Puerto Rico. ... I have seen an accelerated gentrification process constructing condominiums costing one million dollars or more.

“Since I am familiar with what gentrification does to poor people, I know the luxury condominiums are not being built for them. ... In Culebra, Vieques and around the coast of Puerto Rico, where the beaches are the most beautiful, the construction of luxury building is already overtaking the landscape.

“The colonialists who administer the colony give incentives to the builders and to buyers who are foreigners, and deny providing incentives to [Puerto Rican] small businesses and small home owners.

“It has been the goal of the U.S. government, since it invaded and occupied Puerto Rico, to depopulate it. ... And the last wave began 17 years ago. More than one million Puerto Ricans have moved to the diaspora, causing the biggest brain drain in Puerto Rico’s history, because most of the emigrants are professionals. ... If the School of Medicine



Puerto Rican national hero Oscar López Rivera in New York.

PHOTO: PRENSA LATINA

in Puerto Rico graduates 100 doctors, 85 percent of them have to emigrate.

“Any country that loses two-thirds of its population, including its best developed human resource, cannot see itself having a strong economy and good quality of life for its citizens. ...

“What the Fiscal Control Board is making the colonialist administrators of Puerto Rico do is more worrisome. ... By August, 169 schools will be closed. Teachers will be losing jobs, and communities, especially the poorer ones, will be losing their schools. Behind the scenes, the colonialists are pushing more and more their privatization plans. They aren’t satisfied that privatization in Puerto Rico has played a major role in bringing the economy to its worse conditions in Puerto Rico’s history. ...

“It is threatening the future of the University of Puerto Rico. The goal of the Fiscal Control Board is to take away close to half a billion dollars from the university’s budget. At the same time, it is looking for ways to raise the tuition and to force the University of Puerto Rico to close some of its eleven campuses and to sell much of its property, especially land that it has been using for experiments in the past.

“What the Fiscal Control Board seems to be doing is trying to privatize the university system. All the money that will be taken away from the public education system will be used as payment to fill the coffers of the banks and hedge funds. While Puerto Ricans

will be poorer and more destitute, the colonialists and the banking industry will become richer. Thus, Puerto Rico is being made poorer and poorer and at the same time depopulated of its native population.

“In spite of the fact that the future of Puerto Rico looks very bleak, many Puerto Ricans believe this is the best moment to wage an effective decolonizing process. We know that the majority of Puerto Ricans love Puerto Rico, our national identity, our culture, our language and our origins. We see the potential that Puerto Rico has to become a strong nation and an asset to the economy of Caribbean and Latin American countries. We have the human resources and the other basic resources to transform Puerto Rico into the edenic garden it has the potential of being.

“Because this is such a moment, we are asking this Committee to take the issue of the decolonization of Puerto Rico to the General Assembly and ask it to fulfill its responsibilities to bring to an end the colonization of Puerto Rico by the U.S. government.

“I hope you will do whatever you can to bring to an end the colonial status of Puerto Rico, to help us make Puerto Rico the nation it has the potential of being, and to be part of the community of nations.

“Thank you. En resistencia y lucha siempre, Oscar López Rivera.” (minhpuertorico.org)

# New neoliberal party monopolizes French parliament

By G. Dunkel

The new centrist and neoliberal party, la République en Marche (LREM), is only 14 months old, but it was still able to field candidates in all of France’s 577 election districts for the National Assembly and win a solid majority of 308 seats on June 18. Another center-right party and a solid ally of LREM won 42 seats.

This LREM majority is going to let the new president, Emmanuel Macron, elected earlier this spring, push through two major projects: thoroughly revising France’s labor law to make it easier to fire workers and harder for workers to organize and protect the rights they have won in the past.

Macron says he will give the cops permanent authority they now have under

France’s state of emergency laws — to impose house arrests and to search homes, offices, phones and computers without a judge’s order. The large West and North African and Arab communities in France are particular targets of these measures.

Two-thirds of French workers, according to Le Monde, abstained from voting in parliamentary elections — and not because they assumed LREM would win and represent their interests. Two workers’ parties — the French Communist Party (PCF) and France Unbowed (FI) — did better than expected.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the leader of FI, spoke June 18 in Marseille where he was elected to the National Assembly. He characterized the abstentions as a “civic general strike” and proclaimed that the struggle was not over.

Historically, French workers have not relied on elections but taken their protests to the streets with mass marches and general strikes. Sometimes the workers win; sometimes they lose. But the French bourgeoisie usually know they have been in a serious struggle.

Only two of the 577 candidates LREM fielded were workers, according to Le Monde, which carefully examined all of their profiles. Even though over half LREM’s candidates were women and a surprising number were from France’s Arab and African communities, most were executives, small business owners, professionals and intellectuals, graduates of France’s top schools. Half of LREM candidates were under 47, again unusual in France. (June 8)

The French Socialist Party held 280

seats in 2012, but won only 30 in this election. Even though it has been a major French party since World War II, the pro-imperialist Socialist Party’s future is shaky.

The French neofascist party, the National Front, which came in second in the presidential race with a third of the votes, only managed to win eight seats, though early projections estimated it would win 50.

Only 25 percent of the representatives in the National Assembly before this election managed to hold onto their seats. The French political scene has been thoroughly disrupted. Despite this, the basic role of the French state — to suppress French workers and promote French imperialism — hasn’t changed. □



# Bolivarian Venezuela resists USA and OAS plots

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

In Mexico, the government of Enrique Peña Nieto ignores the just demands of the mothers and fathers of the 43 Ayotzinapa student teachers and continues to kill, threaten and snoop with illegal eavesdropping — as in the Pegasus case, which involves Israeli software sold to the Mexican government for the surveillance of journalists.

In Honduras, activists continue to be murdered.

In Colombia, threats and killings continue against Indigenous people, peasants, union leaders, human rights defenders and other activists.

Yet the Organization of American States doesn't even mention these crimes and instead attacks the Bolivarian government of Venezuela, calling it repressive and covering up what is really going on in that country.

It is U.S. imperialism — which in the first place created the OAS in 1948 to subjugate the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean — that is using it now to promote an aggressive campaign against Venezuela. Since April, when the OAS illegitimately discussed the situation in Venezuela — in the absence of the Venezuelan representative — the OAS has convened two more meetings to justify an intervention in the Bolivarian country. But such discussion violates Article 1 of the OAS Charter itself, which states:

“The OAS has no powers other than those expressly conferred on it by the present Charter, none of whose provisions authorize it to intervene in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of the Member States.”

But for its hostile campaign against Venezuela, Washington depends on the rightist liar Luis Almagro, who as OAS Secretary General leads that intervention with the active support of the governments of Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Peru, among others.

This OAS campaign has three basic demands:

- Schedule immediate elections
- Release “political prisoners”
- Respect the decisions of the Venezuelan National Assembly, whose majority opposes the government and where right-wing political organizations such as MUD and Primero Justicia, intellectual authors of the days of violence, are found.

We need to remember that the National Electoral Council has already published the municipal election agenda for December 2017, but the opposition is trying to unconstitutionally accelerate this process. The so-called “political prisoners” have been responsible for destabilizing the country and for 43 deaths caused by their calls for violent



Venezuelan commune movements march in support of the upcoming Constitutional Assembly and the struggle for the Bolivarian Revolution.

PHOTO: AVN

“guarimbas” (street clashes) in 2014.

But the attempts of imperialism to attack Venezuela through the OAS have so far failed. In the last two meetings — on May 31 in Washington, D.C., and on June 19-21 in Cancún — Almagro failed to obtain the majority vote needed to approve intervention. These plans also include the intention to suspend the processes begun by President Nicolás Maduro on May 1 for the July 30 election of members to the Constitutional Assembly. The final aim is to secure the necessary international diplomatic cover to force foreign intervention in Venezuela with the pretext of solving a “humanitarian crisis.”

### What the media hides

This intervention is at the level of “international diplomacy” that under the guise of seeking “democracy” reflects what’s happening on the ground. Together with the Venezuelan counterrevolutionaries, the U.S. is attempting to force regime change. Under headlines such as “Crisis in Venezuela,” the news media want to project the image that “the people” in general oppose the government.

This could not be further from the truth. The fact that these media hide what is really happening is in itself a crime of gigantic proportions. They try to justify the right-wing terrorism against people who support the revolution and the vandalism that destroys state institutions providing basic services of transportation, health care and education to citizens. As a result of violent actions that began on April 1, according to reports from Venezuela, around 90 people have died and more than a thousand have been wounded. ([tinyurl.com/ya6wqsbe](http://tinyurl.com/ya6wqsbe))

The international media omit the details of the cruel methods of the counterrevolution’s violent confrontations that illustrate its aggressive nature. The demonstrators are described as peaceful people who only want a country in peace. But

while the forces of the Bolivarian state are prohibited from using their weapons against demonstrators, and may only use tear gas and water cannons, the counterrevolutionary terrorists are attacking with deadly homemade weapons.

The media omit reporting the findings of the Sebin, the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service of Venezuela, which has been apprehending and dismantling some counterrevolutionary cells.

For example, in early June the Sebin captured Yeison Rodriguez. An article from Telesur on June 10 reported that Rodriguez was “accused of engaging in violent acts and assaults in several communities in Caracas (the capital) and in Miranda state (center) .... According to the director of Sebin, they obtained evidence of plans to attack members of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces as a political target, accompanied by recordings of telephone conversations that Rodriguez held with several people, evidence of their participation in the actions carried out by the treasonous squads financed by the opposition.”

“The Sebin director also said that Plaza Altamira, located in the Chacao municipality, governed by opposition mayor Ramón Muchacho, is the center of operations of reactionary opposition sectors.

“In turn, he warned about the existence of evidence that shows the connection of the citizen Yeison Rodríguez with the government of Miranda state, which is in the hands of the opposition leader Henrique Capriles.”

### Bolivarian Armed Forces, target of counterrevolution

Violent groups fired incendiary bombs at the Carlota Air Base on June 22. They alleged that a young man was shot and killed point blank at the hands of an Air Force sergeant guarding the base. The opposition has spread this story as “proof” of government repression.

After investigations, the person who was identified as responsible is being subjected to relevant legal processes.

However, it’s necessary to emphasize the following: What is happening in Venezuela is a strong counterrevolutionary attack trying to overthrow the legitimately constituted government. It is a coup attempt.

How do you respond to an attack on a military base? We must point out that the counterrevolutionaries have tried at least 10 times to attack the base.

Felipe Marcano makes an interesting claim in his article “La Carlota, military base under siege; Why insist on its assault?”

The author writes: “The siege of the military base of La Carlota, in the capital of the republic, its assault and the seizure

of its facilities by ‘peaceful, defenseless, young, heroic demonstrators’ seeks: the demoralization of the FANB (Armed Forces of the Bolivarian Nation) troops, their dissatisfaction and withdrawal of support for the Nation State and the Bolivarian Constitution, and to provoke a bellicose and forceful response from the government, so as to expose it as a failed Nation State drifting into national and international turmoil, using this as a pretext for foreign intervention to overthrow the government and the republican institutionality.” (aporrea.org, June 24)

If we recall the beginning of the Cuban Revolution with the assault on the Moncada Barracks in 1953 — in that case on behalf of the poor and exploited people, unlike the counterrevolution in Venezuela that operates to benefit the oligarchy and imperialist powers — we will realize the importance of an attack on military installations.

### Bolivarian people continue to struggle

The total lack of coverage by the corporate media of what is happening in the inner base of the revolution, the poor neighborhoods, is also significant.

The actions of the masses concern not only their demonstrations in defense of the revolution, but above all their daily life and strong decision to guide the country on a path of peace, working daily, developing skills, building the homeland, as people say there.

And, above all, emphatically rejecting the violent processes of the counterrevolution.

It is these core people who are the key to success. Hence the importance of the Constitutional Assembly, which would give the people the opportunity to forge their own future and to deepen the revolution.

### International support

The situation in Venezuela is highly complicated. The Bolivarian revolutionary process and its future are currently the main topic of debates throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Revolutionary groups and parties analyze not only present and past events, but the very behavior of the revolutionary government — its successes and its errors, its deviations in deepening the revolution toward socialist development — and many even offer recommendations.

These analyzes run from the most critical of the government of Nicolás Maduro to those who excuse all its actions. What unites the great majority of these analysts is their defense of the Bolivarian process in the face of the U.S. imperialist onslaught.

Today they see this process as crucial for the very survival of the progressive gains and movements in the region.

Along with these debates, there has been a great wave of solidarity with the government and with the Bolivarian people.

These expressions of solidarity include messages, street actions, forums, resolutions and statements from governments such as Cuba, which show unconditional support for the revolution. One of the most recent solidarity actions came not from Latin America but from Mozambique in Africa.

It is up to the progressive movements in the United States to increase and expand their solidarity with the Bolivarian revolution by exposing, denouncing and combating the imperialist policy of the Pentagon, the White House and Wall Street.

Say no to the intervention of the OAS/USA in Venezuela!

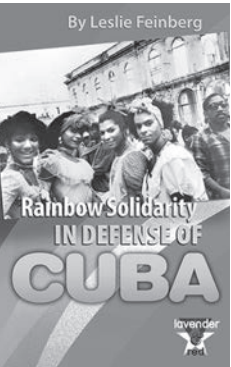
Long live the Bolivarian Revolution and the international peoples’struggle! □

## Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA

By Leslie Feinberg, author of ‘Stone Butch Blues’

Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba documents revolutionary Cuba’s inspiring trajectory of progress towards liberation of sexualities, genders and sexes. This ground-breaking book reveals how the Cuban Revolution has grappled with the pre-revolutionary legacy of 450 years of persecution and exploitation of homosexuality.

Rainbow Solidarity answers the demonization of the 1959 Cuban Revolution by Washington and the CIA, Wall Street and Hollywood by demonstrating that the process of solving these problems is the forward motion of the revolution.



**Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba** is an edited compilation of 25 articles from the *Workers World* newspaper series by Feinberg entitled *Lavender & Red*, online at [workers.org](http://workers.org).



Available at major online booksellers



# ‘Obamacare’ vs. ‘Trumpsick’

This week, Republican senators are squabbling over the details of just how they plan to remove more than 20 million people from health insurance coverage. That’s really what their plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act means.

As of June 26, they haven’t passed their bill. What will happen if they do?

In brief, it would remove people from Medicaid and close down nursing homes. It would remove millions of poor women from care that has been provided by Planned Parenthood at women’s clinics in places where no other such care is available. It would close clinics that treat people addicted to opioids — drugs whose overdoses killed 58,000 people in 2016.

To rub salt in the untreated wounds of the people, the ACA’s replacement would cut taxes for the rich and even more for the super-rich. It would shift costs for health care and health insurance to people who can afford it least.

Whatever the ACA’s shortcomings, what the current president, Paul Ryan and the congressional Republicans are doing by “repealing and replacing” it would prolong suffering and condemn to death hundreds of thousands of people in the United States.

Thirteen white male senators debated and drafted the new bill behind closed doors. These millionaire senators — whose own health care and that of their families is guaranteed — thus avoided having their contempt for the poor aired before the population.

But the senators finally showed their contempt publicly when they had the Capitol cops brutally expel the courageous people with disabilities who protested.

The best first step this summer of 2017 is to mobilize the majority of the people who want to stop Congress from eliminating the ACA.

Even with the ACA, the U.S. capitalist health care industry produces more profits than care delivery. This lucrative profit center costs over \$3 trillion, 17.8 percent of the gross national product. That’s nearly double the profit proportion in Britain, Germany or Canada. And

it delivers less overall care.

This mammoth industry often fails to produce health. It always produces profits: profits for private insurance companies, for private hospital owners, for pharmaceutical cartels and for medical equipment manufacturers.

The drive for ever increasing profits determines what services are offered, what are delivered, who gets them and who is denied them.

While the ACA succeeded in giving more than 20 million previously uninsured people access to health insurance, it did so by expanding Medicaid and subsidizing insurance companies. It did nothing to control the prices and profits of the health care industry.

So the second step is to fight for what is called a single-payer system. It not only expands access to care, it eliminates excess administrative costs imposed by private insurance companies — including their profits. In capitalist countries where such a system exists, there is more control of costs for procedures and medicines.

Medicare, available to most people in the U.S. over 65 years old and some people with disabilities, provides a model. Single-payer is a version of “Medicare for all” that is easily understandable and already has polling support from a third of those asked.

Workers World supports real socialist medical care. This can only take place in a socialist society that removes profits as the driving force of this industry, profits that increase the costs of medicines, equipment and care. That’s why we fight for a socialist society that places all the means of production into the hands of the workers.

What faces the U.S. workers now is a murderous attack, an attempt to replace the ACA — also called Obamacare — with “Trumpsick.” If workers here can mobilize first to stop that attack, we can then move to fighting for “Medicare for all.” In that struggle, Workers World will continue to expose the pernicious role of capitalism that puts the drive for profits before the care of the people. □

# Behind the Grenfell Tower disaster: CAPITALISM

By Kathy Durkin

Capitalist greed is the root cause of the raging inferno that killed at least 79 residents of Grenfell Tower in London on June 14 and left hundreds homeless. It began and spread through unsafe building materials that even some capitalist countries have barred from use.

The British government is guilty of neglect and prioritizing cost-cutting above all in maintaining and renovating the high-rise building. Of lesser — or no — importance to the British rulers was ensuring safe public housing for the multinational working-class and poor families, including many immigrants, who lived there.

Protesters, including survivors, community members and other progressive forces immediately mobilized to demand that the empty luxury housing in that area house all survivors of the catastrophe. Labour members of Parliament called for uninhabited housing in wealthy Kensington, where Grenfell Tower was located, to be provided for them. Calls resounded for Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May’s resignation and for criminal prosecutions of those responsible for the fire.

People came from all over Britain to express their solidarity with the victims. Across the country and worldwide, people expressed outrage at the British government’s callous disregard for human life.

May and her Tory colleagues were shaken to the core by this crisis and the domestic and global reaction. The government quickly announced that it had purchased 68 apartments in the posh Kensington Row complex for those displaced by the fire. (Guardian, June 21)

For years, Grenfell Tower residents had complained of the 24-story building’s dangers — no alarm system, no sprinklers, no fire escapes, no evacuation plan and only one exit. Showing disdain for the tenants, the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council, the building’s owner, and its management company, ignored them. Racism and class contempt factored into their neglect.

Residents’ complaints grew louder in 2016, when a contractor, the Rydon Group, refurbished Grenfell Towers, cutting costs at every corner to maximize profits. Dangerous work imperiled tenants during the renovation. Unsafe materials were used to cover the building’s façade. Called “cladding,” the material in

this case was made of aluminum-composite panels encasing flammable insulation. This type of cladding easily ignites, allowing a fire to climb quickly up the exterior of the building and spread inward to the apartments.

Architects and building experts blame this flammable cladding for the conflagration.

Arconic, a cladding manufacturer, admitted on June 22 that its flammable panels were used in Grenfell Tower. A mere \$6,377 more would have purchased non-combustible cladding for the entire building!

An extensive June 25 New York Times article on the disaster points to “failure of government oversight, a refusal to heed warnings” and corporate-friendly Conservative and Labor governments’ drive “to free businesses from the burden of safety regulations.” Fire safety laws were weakened and fire inspections reduced. Pro-business politicians decided that “cost concerns outweighed the risks of flammable materials to be used in façades.”

## Safe housing is a right!

About 800 households were evacuated on June 23 from Chalcots’ five public housing high-risers after fire inspectors determined that the buildings were dangerous. The British Guardian newspaper reported on June 26 that, to date, 75 housing towers across England had been found to have unsafe cladding in post-Grenfell Tower fire inspections.

Diane Abbott, Labour Party MP and shadow home secretary, blamed the Conservative government for the disaster, saying hundreds died. She stressed: “Grenfell Tower is not just an accident. Those hundreds of people who died are a direct consequence of Tory attitudes in social [public] housing. The Tories think people in social housing are second-class citizens ... and they are offering them second-class standards of safety.” (Independent, June 24)

In 1987, Abbott was the first Black woman elected to Parliament, and still faces racism and misogyny.

Fire survivors, community members and progressive activists are seeking the truth about the number of casualties. Many people suspect a cover-up, with information being withheld to assuage growing anger and “unrest,” says Labour MP David Lammy. There is concern about the status of apartment subletters, visitors and undocumented immigrants, whose families fear deportation if they inquire about their relatives.

John McDonnell, Labor Party shadow chancellor, said the victims were “murdered by political decisions” made over recent decades. He cited austerity measures, such as the closing of fire stations and elimination of 10,000 firefighters. (Guardian, June 25)

British capitalists, including landlords, aim to maximize profits. Building expensive housing for the rich is very lucrative. Public housing is a low priority, with costs minimized and safety coming last. Profits trump human need, even human life.

Only continuing struggle will bring justice for the Grenfell Tower victims. □

## Capitalism at a Dead End Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

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# Come out for Pride! COME OUT FOR WORKERS WORLD!

June is Pride month, with rallies and marches all over the world commemorating the 48th anniversary of the historic Stonewall Rebellion. Workers World has a proud history of reporting on and participating in the living struggle for LGBTQ justice and equality. In the forefront these days is fighting for trans and gender nonconforming people, like making sure youth and adults can use the public bathrooms of their choice and ending the increased violent attacks on and murders of trans women of color.

Workers World made an early and vital theoretical contribution to the LGBTQ struggle with publication of WW contributor and staff member Bob McCub-

bin’s 1976 book, “Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View” (World View Forum, third ed., 1993). Drawing on Frederick Engels and Dorothy Ballan to provide a dialectical materialist explanation of LGBTQ oppression, McCubbin shows how early communal societies accepted all forms of human interrelations. But after the development of surpluses and then male supremacy, rigid rules governing gender and sexuality became the norm. That’s what we’re fighting to end today.

That analysis drives Workers World’s view that the LGBTQ struggle is a vital component in the overall struggle to end capitalist oppression. So if you want to

fight for the liberation of LGBTQ people, it’s time to join the struggle against capitalist exploitation and help build Workers World newspaper.

We invite you to join the WW Supporter Program, set up 40 years ago to help us publish anti-racist, anti-sexist, pro-LGBTQ, working-class truth, and to build the many campaigns needed to crush capitalism and usher in socialism. Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or donate online at workers.org/donate/. We are grateful for your help in building the revolutionary press in the U.S. □



# Cuba: Refuge for U.S. civil rights fighters

By Chris Fry

On June 16, Donald Trump, while announcing the rollback of President Obama’s modest improvements in U.S. imperialism’s posture towards revolutionary Cuba, demanded Cuba return freedom fighter Assata Shakur.

As part of the Cuban government’s overall response to Trump’s attack, Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez rebuffed Trump’s demand: “Regarding the issue of the so-called ‘U.S. fugitives in Cuba,’ I can reaffirm that, under our national law and international law and the Latin American tradition, Cuba has granted political asylum or refuge to U.S. civil rights fighters. Of course these people will not be returned to the United States, which lacks the legal, political, and moral foundation to demand this.” (telesur.net, June 20)

In May 1973, Assata Shakur, former Black Panther Party activist and member

of the Black Liberation Army, was in a car stopped by New Jersey state troopers. A shootout broke out. One trooper and the car’s driver were killed, and Shakur was severely wounded.

Another trooper initially testified that Shakur shot and killed the cop, but then admitted he lied. In her trial, it was revealed that Shakur never even touched a weapon let alone fired one. The police bullets that pierced Shakur had severed nerves in her arms and shoulders, making it impossible for her to fire a weapon.

Nevertheless, an all-white jury, including five friends and family of N.J. state troopers, convicted Shakur of murder simply because she was present at the shootout. She was sentenced to life in prison.

Assata Shakur received horrible treatment in prison. In 1979, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights wrote: “One of the worst cases is that of Assata Shakur, who spent over twenty

months in solitary confinement in two separate men’s prisons subject to conditions totally unbefitting any prisoner. Many more months were spent in solitary confinement in mixed or all-women’s prisons. Presently, after protracted litigation, she is confined at Clinton Correctional Facility for Women in maximum security. She has never on any occasion been punished for any infraction of prison rules which might in any way justify such cruel or unusual punishment.”

Assata Shakur gave birth to her daughter, Kakuya Shakur, in 1974. While in the hospital she was beaten and restrained by prison guards. On Nov. 2, 1979, with the help of BLA members, Assata Shakur escaped from the New Jersey Clinton Correctional Facility. The FBI and local police conducted a massive, nationwide manhunt for Shakur, including warrantless searches through a whole apartment building in Harlem.

In 1984, Shakur managed to reach Cuba, where the government immediately granted her asylum. She was reunited with her daughter in 1985. In 1987,

she published her autobiography, and in 1997, she wrote the book “Still Black, Still Strong” with Dhoruba bin Wahad and Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Black Lives Matter co-founder Alicia Garza wrote: “When I use Assata’s powerful demand in my organizing work, I always begin by sharing where it comes from, sharing about Assata’s significance to the Black Liberation Movement, what its political purpose and message is, and why it’s important in our context.” (thefeministwire.com, Oct. 7, 2014)

Assata’s pledge affirms: “It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love and protect one another. We have nothing to lose but our chains.”

U.S. imperialism has long sought to reimprison Assata Shakur. New Jersey and the federal government have offered a \$2 million bounty for her capture. But revolutionary Cuba has long stood on the side of the oppressed people of the U.S. and around the world. No amount of bullying by Boss Trump is going to shake its resolve. □

# Haitian workers strike for \$12.50 a day

By G. Dunkel

For the past few years, workers in Haiti’s textile sector have been struggling to raise their minimum wage from 350 gourdes (currently about \$4.75) to 800 gourdes (about \$12.50) a day and to have the eight-hour day respected by employers.

Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world, according to U.N. statistics. Less than 30 percent of Haitians have a regular job, relying on catch-as-catch-can to survive. Still, inspired by May Day, workers in Port-au-Prince’s Sonapi Industrial Park, Carrefour neighborhood, at the airport, and joined by workers in the Caracol Industrial Park in northeast Haiti, walked out repeatedly in May under the leadership of their unions.

Even though police attacked the strikes, and the bosses and the political establishment, including President Jovenel Moïse, soundly condemned them, the bosses felt that enough wasn’t being done. Lost production cost them millions.

In an attempt to defuse the situation, President Moïse appointed a new council to study the minimum wage issue, with both union and bosses’ representatives included.

That still was not enough for the bosses. They fired 47 leaders of the job actions in Port-au-Prince and 15 leaders at Caracol. These workers were from a coalition of independent labor unions, GOSSTRA/CTSP, which represent textile workers and are associated with Batay Ouvriye (Workers Struggle), which fights for workers’ rights.

A letter signed by André Apaid, an owner of Interamerican Wovens SA, a textile company with 1,500 employees, justified the firings by claiming the actions of the union leaders forced the workers to go out. It ignored the real and substantial support for these strikes. Apaid was a leader of the Group of 184 which financed the 2004 coup against Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The role of the United States in all these maneuvers and manipulations is not always obvious. It’s well known that these factories produce for large U.S. companies, such as Levi Jeans and Fruit of the Loom. But programs that give such factories special tax and customs benefits in the U.S. market, and the earlier U.S. State Department opposition to raising the minimum wage, are not well known at all.

In 2008, Congress passed a generous, duty-free trade bill called HOPE II. And the U.S. Agency for International Development provided technical assistance and training programs to Haitian textile companies to help them take advantage of the new legislation and low-cost manufacturing for companies like Levi Jeans.

In 2011, Haiti Liberté, based on secret U.S. Embassy cables provided by WikiLeaks, was able to establish that “The U.S. Embassy in Haiti worked closely with factory owners contracted by Levi’s, Hanes, and Fruit of the Loom to aggressively block a paltry minimum wage increase for Haitian assembly zone workers.”

Haitian workers must fight not only their own bosses and politicians, but the U.S. foreign policy establishment as well. □

## Milwaukee says

# ‘Hands Off Cuba & Venezuela!’



Defending socialism, Cuba and Venezuela in front of U.S. Federal Courthouse, Milwaukee, June 24.

By WW Milwaukee bureau

In a spirited display of internationalism, dozens of Milwaukee residents participated in a “Trump, Hands Off Cuba and Venezuela” rally June 24 at the U.S. Federal Courthouse.

Speakers from the Milwaukee Coalition Against Trump, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Latin American Solidarity Committee, Stop the Wars Committee, Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement, Wisconsin Coalition to Normalize Relations with Cuba and Workers World Party denounced the Trump administration’s latest efforts to tighten the U.S. blockade against socialist Cuba, to escalate attacks on people’s Venezuela and to support the banks’ takeover of Puerto Rico.

The rally honored the late president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez. As buses driven by members of Amalgamated Transit Local 998 rolled by the rally site, speakers noted that current President Nicolás Maduro is a former bus driver.

Speakers and literature portrayed Cuba and Venezuela as beacons for the world’s poor and oppressed, highlighting their numerous advances in housing, literacy, health care, food, culture, sports, LGBTQ and women’s rights, food production and more.

In contrast, within the USA, oppressed people in particular suffer daily from lack of access to basic human needs and face epidemic levels of police terror. These

occur despite Trump’s, and before him Obama’s, rhetoric and lecturing other nations on “human rights.”

Just days before the June 24 rally, the police officer who murdered 23-year-old African-American Sylville Smith last August in Milwaukee, was acquitted by a jury. Smith is one of dozens of Black and Brown people the Milwaukee police have killed, raped and terrorized with impunity in just the last few years.

In socialist Cuba, on the contrary, people of African descent, Indigenous and other oppressed people, women and LGBTQ people are guaranteed basic human rights. Efforts are ongoing to overcome 500 years of colonialism and neo-colonialism on the island. Similar efforts are being made in Venezuela.

Speakers noted how Venezuela now uses its oil profits to benefit the poor and working people of that country. Even in the United States when oil prices were high, many workers benefited from the free or discounted oil that Venezuela’s state-owned company CITGO provided. Especially during winter, access to this subsidized heating oil was a life-and-death matter.

In the spirit of the late President of Cuba, Fidel Castro, the June 24 Milwaukee rally brought together a united front of poor and working people to declare to Trump and his Wall Street backers: End the U.S. Blockade of Cuba Now! Hands Off Venezuela! U.S. Out of Puerto Rico! □



Haitian textile workers on strike for higher wages, better working conditions, access to social services.

PHOTO: TELESUR





Oscar López Rivera, página 8, en inglés.

# Venezuela resiste ataques OEA/EUA

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Mientras en México el gobierno de Enrique Peña Nieto ignora las justas exigencias de las madres y padres de los 43 normalistas de Ayotzinapa y sigue matando, amenazando e interviniendo con escuchas ilegales – como en el caso Pegasus, que involucra al gobierno israelí en la venta al gobierno mexicano de “software” para la vigilancia de periodistas; en Honduras se siguen asesinando activistas; y en Colombia continúan las amenazas y muertes contra indígenas, campesinos, sindicalistas, defensores de DDHH y otras/os activistas, la OEA ni les menciona, ocupándose solo de atacar al gobierno bolivariano de Venezuela tildándolo de represor y ocultando lo que realmente sucede en ese país.

Es Estados Unidos, a través de esta organización que creó en el 1948 para someter a los pueblos de Latinoamérica y el Caribe, el impulsor de una agresiva campaña contra Venezuela. Desde abril, cuando ilegítimamente la OEA discutió la situación de Venezuela – lo cual va en contra el artículo 1 de la misma Carta de la OEA que dice: “La OEA no tiene más facultades que aquellas que expresamente le confiere la presente Carta, ninguna de cuyas disposiciones la autoriza a intervenir en asuntos de la jurisdicción interna de los Estados miembros” – ha convocado dos reuniones más para avalar su intervención en el país bolivariano. Para eso cuenta con el derechista y mentiroso Luis Almagro quien la lidera junto al acompañamiento activo de los gobiernos de México, Argentina, Brasil, Colombia y Perú, entre otros.

Sus demandas son básicamente tres: un calendario electoral inmediato; liberar “presos políticos”; y respetar las decisiones de la Asamblea Nacional de Venezuela, esta última con mayoría opositora al gobierno, donde se encuentran organizaciones como la MUD y Primero Justicia, autores intelectuales de las violentas jornadas. Hay que recordar que ya el Consejo Nacional Electoral ha publicado la agenda de elecciones para diciembre, sin embargo la oposición intenta acelerar inconstitucionalmente este proceso. Los llamados “presos políticos” han sido responsables de desestabilización del

país y de 43 muertes provocadas por sus convocatorias a las violentas “guarimbas” en 2014.

Pero los intentos del imperialismo de atacar a Venezuela a través de la OEA hasta ahora han fracasado. En las últimas dos reuniones – en mayo en Washington y en Cancún del 19-21 de junio – no se ha logrado la mayoría necesaria para aprobar los planes injerencistas, que incluyen además la intención de suspender los procesos del 30 de julio para elegir miembros a la Asamblea Constituyente que el presidente Nicolás Maduro propuso el pasado 1 de mayo. El propósito final es lograr el resguardo diplomático internacional necesario para forzar una intervención de fuerzas extranjeras en Venezuela bajo la excusa de solucionar una “crisis humanitaria”.

## Lo que los medios ocultan

Esto es a nivel de “diplomacia internacional”, que bajo el disfraz de búsqueda de “democracia”, refleja lo que en el terreno, EUA junto a la contrarrevolución está haciendo para forzar un cambio de régimen en ese país. Bajo titulares como “crisis en Venezuela”, los medios noticiosos quieren proyectar la imagen de que es “el pueblo” en general quien se opone al gobierno.

Nada más lejos de la verdad. El hecho de que estos medios oculten lo que realmente ocurre, constituye de por sí un crimen de proporciones gigantescas, pues intentan justificar el vandalismo de la derecha en contra de personas afines a la revolución y la destrucción de instituciones del estado que ofrecen servicios básicos de transportación, salud y educación a la ciudadanía. Como resultado de estas acciones violentas que comenzaron el 1 de abril, según reportes desde Venezuela ya han muerto cerca de 90 personas y han resultado heridas más de mil. (tinyurl.com/ya6wqsbe)

No relatan los detalles de los métodos crueles de esas confrontaciones violentas de la contrarrevolución que indican su naturaleza agresora. La pintan como manifestantes pacíficos que solo quieren un país en paz. Mientras a las fuerzas del Estado se les prohíbe el uso de armas en las manifestaciones, pudiendo solo usar gases lacrimógenos y cañones de agua,

la contrarrevolución se aprovecha para agredir con armas mortales de fabricación casera.

No reportan por ejemplo los hallazgos de la Sebin, el Servicio Bolivariano de Inteligencia Nacional de Venezuela que ha ido aprehendiendo y desarticulando algunas células contrarrevolucionarias.

Por ejemplo, a principios de junio capturaron a Yeison Rodríguez. Un artículo de Telesur del 10 de junio informó que éste fue “acusado de generar actos violentos y asedios en varias comunidades de Caracas (capital) y del estado Miranda (centro)”.... Se obtuvo prueba de los planes de ataque a los integrantes de la FANB (Fuerzas Armadas Nacionales Bolivarianas) como objetivo político”, escribió el director del Sebin, acompañado de grabaciones de las conversaciones telefónicas que sostuvo Rodríguez con varias personas, en las que se evidencia su participación en las acciones desarrolladas por las escuadras sedicionistas financiadas por la oposición”.

“El director del Sebin también denunció que la Plaza Altamira, ubicada en el municipio Chacao, gobernado por el alcalde opositor Ramón Muchacho, constituye el centro de las operaciones de sectores reaccionarios de la oposición.

“A su vez, alertó sobre la existencia de pruebas que evidencian la vinculación del ciudadano Yeison Rodríguez con la gobernación del estado Miranda, que está en manos del dirigente opositor Henrique Capriles”. (tinyurl.com/ycdvgrvt)

## Fuerzas Armadas Bolivarianas, blanco de la contrarrevolución

El jueves 22 de junio, grupos violentos arremetieron con bombas incendiarias contra la Base Aérea Carlota. Un joven opositor resultó muerto presuntamente por disparo a manos de un sargento de la Policía Aérea que custodiaba la base. La oposición ha difundido este hecho como “prueba” de la represión del gobierno. Tras investigaciones, se identificó al responsable quien está siendo sometido a los procesos pertinentes de ley.

Sin embargo, hay que resaltar lo siguiente. Lo que está sucediendo en Venezuela es un fuerte ataque contrarrevolucionario que intenta derrocar al gobierno legítimamente constituido, un intento de golpe de estado.

¿Cómo se responde frente a un ataque a una base militar?

Aquí debemos señalar que los contrarrevolucionarios han tratado de atacar la base al menos en 10 ocasiones.

Es interesante el postulado que Felipe Marciano expone en su artículo ‘La Carlota, base militar bajo asedio; ¿por qué insistir en su asalto?’

En él dice el autor: “El asedio a la base militar de La Carlota, en la capital de la república, su asalto y toma de las instalaciones por, “pacíficos, indefensos, jóvenes”, heroicos manifestantes busca: la desmoralización de la tropa, de la FANB, su descontento y retiro de apoyo al Estado Nación, a La Constitución Bolivariana, una respuesta bélica y contundente del gobierno, un Estado Nación fallido que derive en conmoción nacional e internacional como pretexto a la inter-

vención extranjera para derrocar al gobierno y la institucionalidad republicana”. (aporrea.org, 24 de junio)

Si recordamos el inicio de la Revolución cubana con el asalto al Cuartel Moncada, – en ese caso a favor del pueblo pobre y explotado, a diferencia de la contrarrevolución en Venezuela que opera a beneficio de la oligarquía y los poderes imperialistas - nos daremos cuenta de la importancia de un ataque a instalaciones militares.

## Pueblo bolivariano sigue en la lucha

Es también significativo la total falta de cobertura por los medios corporativos de lo que sucede en las entrañas, en los barrios pobres, las acciones del verdadero pueblo: no solo de sus manifestaciones defensa de la revolución, sino sobre su diario vivir y su fuerte decisión de encaminar al país por un sendero de paz, laborando diariamente, desarrollando capacidades, construyendo patria, como suelen decir allá. Y sobre todo, rechazando tajantemente los procesos violentos de la contrarrevolución.

Es este pueblo quien tiene la clave del éxito. De ahí la importancia de la Asamblea Constituyente, que daría la oportunidad al pueblo de ser su propio forjador del futuro y de profundizar la revolución.

## Apoyo internacional

La situación de Venezuela es pero-grulladamente altamente complicada. El proceso revolucionario bolivariano y su futuro está siendo el tema principal en los debates actuales en todo Latinoamérica y el Caribe. Los entes revolucionarios, analizan no solamente los hechos presentes y pasados, sino la actuación misma del gobierno revolucionario – sus aciertos y sus errores, sus desviaciones en alcanzar la profundización de la revolución hacia el desarrollo socialista, e incluso muchos ofrecen recomendaciones.

Estos análisis van desde los más críticos del gobierno de Nicolás Maduro, hasta los que disculpan todas sus acciones. Lo que sí une a la gran mayoría de estos es la defensa del proceso bolivariano frente a la embestida estadounidense imperialista. Hoy este proceso lo ven como crucial para la misma sobrevivencia de los avances y movimientos progresistas de la región.

Aparte de estos debates, ha habido una gran ola de solidaridad con el gobierno y con el pueblo bolivariano. Estas expresiones solidarias abarcan desde mensajes, acciones en la calle, variados foros y resoluciones, hasta postulados de gobiernos como el de Cuba, que manifiestan un apoyo incondicional hacia la revolución. Una de las más recientes acciones de solidaridad llegó no desde América Latina, sino desde África, en Mozambique.

Queda a los movimientos progresistas en Estados Unidos, aumentar y expandir su solidaridad con la revolución bolivariana exponiendo, denunciando y combatiendo la política imperialista del Pentágono, la Casa Blanca y Wall Street.

¡No a la intervención de la OEA/EUA en Venezuela!

¡Viva la Revolución Bolivariana y la lucha de los pueblos a nivel mundial!

## El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

La tesis de este libro es que la crisis económica, que se inició en agosto de 2007, marcó un punto de inflexión en la historia del capitalismo. El autor sostiene que el sistema no se recuperará, no volverá al ciclo capitalista normal de auge y caída.

Durante décadas, la clase capitalista ha utilizado la revolución tecnológica digital para aumentar la productividad del trabajo a un ritmo récord. Menos trabajadores producen más bienes y servicios en menos tiempo con salarios más bajos. El resultado es una serie de “recuperaciones sin empleos” que hace que las cosas vayan aún peor.

Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión.

El continuo estancamiento y el desempleo generalizado provocarán inevitablemente un resurgimiento de la lucha de clases que no se ve en EE.UU. desde la década de 1930; esta vez se dirigirá contra el propio sistema.

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