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Inspired by Snowden — World slams U.S. spying

By Gene Clancy

Under increasing pressure and scrutiny from civil rights groups, public polls — and even their own imperialist allies — the National Security Agency, which has been carrying out massive programs of domestic spying, is beginning to show serious cracks in its armor of secrecy and criminality.

On Jan. 23, a special “independent” agency within the White House, the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, released a devastating critique of the NSA telephone metadata surveillance programs which systematically scoop up hundreds of millions of emails and store them, along with their contents. According to the 238-page report, the NSA program is unconstitutional and illegal, and should be shut down.

The action of the PCLOB happened not because this agency is really concerned about human rights.

Rather, it was the firestorm of criticism that has followed the revelations of Edward Snowden, the former NSA contractor who revealed the vast scope of spying by the agency. This firestorm has forced the PCLOB to act. Proof? The PCLOB, although established in 2004, never held a substantive hearing until late in 2013. (McClatchy DC, Nov. 14)

How did the Obama administration react? It tried to lessen the PCLOB report’s impact by announcing some “reforms” just days before its release. These “reforms” introduced what were called “safeguards,” but President Barack Obama pointedly defended the legality of the program and kept it in operation.

Obama’s ‘reforms’ won’t help

Meanwhile, a new USA Today/Pew Research Center Poll has found that most people in the U.S. now disapprove of the NSA’s sweeping collection of phone metadata. Most say there aren’t adequate limits in place to what the government can collect. By 73 percent to 21 percent, those who paid attention to Obama’s speech say his proposals won’t make much difference in protecting people’s privacy. (USA Today, Jan. 20)

Unlike other courageous whistleblowers such as Pvt. Chelsea Manning (formerly Bradley Manning), who were thrown into solitary confinement and tortured, Snowden was able to escape and has received temporary asylum in the Russian Federation. This has allowed him to continually release explosive information about the extent of U.S. spying on its own citizens and even some of its imperialist allies. He also can speak to the media worldwide and comment on the intelligence agencies’ impact on U.S. society.

On Jan. 23, Snowden answered reporters and other concerned people via Twitter about his own situation and the extent of illegal spying in the U.S.

“The biggest problem we face right now is the new technique of indiscriminate mass surveillance, where governments are seizing billions and billions and billions of innocents’ communication every single day. This is done not

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WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

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St. Francis of Assisi Church in Milwaukee was packed Jan. 20 for the Justice Coalition’s 13th annual MLK Day program. Featured were longtime leaders within the social justice movements and a presentation on the fight of

low-wage workers. Following the program, a march took place to a prominent Dr. King statue a few blocks away, where an open-mic speakout took place. *For more on MLK Day, see pages 4-5.*

— Report and photo by Bryan G. Pfeifer

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A brief history of 'marriage'

The human capacity for love

By Bob McCubbin

Although the main focus of this series has been on the institution of marriage, there's been little mention of love. On the contrary, as has been noted over and over again, with the appearance of private property and the consequent introduction of economic inequality many millennia ago, economic motives became the dominant force in the institution of marriage.

In Part 18 of this series, we noted Frederick Engels' observation in "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State": "That the mutual affection of the people concerned should be the one paramount reason for marriage, outweighing everything else, was and always had been absolutely unheard of in the practice of the ruling classes; that sort of thing only happened in romance — or among the oppressed classes, who did not count." (New York: International Publishers, 1972, p. 142)

A little further along in that section of "Origins," Engels writes: "Full freedom of marriage can ... only be generally established when the abolition of capitalist production and of the property relations created by it has removed all the accompanying economic considerations which still exert such a powerful influence on the choice of a marriage partner. For then there is no other motive left except mutual inclination." (p. 144)

Still further along, he writes: "What will quite certainly disappear from monogamy are all the features stamped upon it through its origin in property relations; these are, in the first place, supremacy of the man and secondly, the indissolubility of marriage. The supremacy of man in marriage is the simple consequence of his economic supremacy, and with the abolition of the latter will disappear of itself. The indissolubility of marriage is partly a consequence of the economic situation in which monogamy arose, partly tradition from the period when the connection between this economic situation and monogamy was not yet fully understood and was carried to extremes under a religious form.

"Today it is already broken through at a thousand points. If only the marriage based on love is moral, then also only the marriage is moral in which love continues. But the intense emotion of individual sex love varies very much in duration from one individual to another, especially among men, and if affection definitely comes to an end or is supplanted by a new passionate love, separation is a benefit for both partners as well as for society — only people will then be spared having to wade through the useless mire of a divorce case." (p. 145)

In "Feminism and Marxism," the brilliant treatise of Workers World Party founder and leader Dorothy Ballan, she raises the issue of sexual love as she analyzes the social significance of the important technological breakthrough represented by the development of the contraceptive pill: "Like many previous inventions and discoveries, [the Pill] has brought about a virtual revolution in the social relations of many women, particularly as it affects the younger generation. ...

The significant fact is that its simplicity of use has enabled the woman to control to a large degree her procreative function, and with little or no effort or discomfort.

"It is in fact, for her, a technically revolutionary development in her centuries-old struggle to achieve release

from the slavery imposed upon her by her inability to control this vital body function. ... For women, the accessibility of the Pill is in the nature of winning a civil right in the struggle for the rights of women. It obviously does not end oppression and discrimination against women, nor does it put an end to the ideology of male supremacy, but it helps clear some of the ground for the further development of the struggle. ...

"Promiscuity for men has existed as part and parcel of the monogamous family since its inception and has never been considered as affecting the so-called sanctity of the bourgeois family to any substantial degree. What enrages the bourgeoisie about 'free love' is nothing more than the ability of women to participate in sex, and like men, without fear of pregnancy."

The revolutionary task is to set love free

Ballan continues: "On the question of love, Marxists seek to focus not on 'free love' but on how to set love free, that is, to emancipate love from the outmoded, artificial, social restraints which are the heritage of social systems based on class domination and class oppression. ... Love, which implies full freedom in human relations — whether with a marriage contract or not — cannot be the result of a mere relaxation of sex relations. Sex relations will always remain distorted as long as class oppression throttles human relations in general and relations between the sexes in particular." (New York: World View Publishers, 1971, pp. 20-22)

What has developed on an almost global basis since these words were written is widespread social awareness of the prevalence of sexual love between women, between men and between differently gendered people. In the U.S., the struggle for the right of same-sex couples to marry has assumed the form of a mass, grass-roots movement of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people, with many allies among the heterosexual population.

An April 2, 2013, editorial in Workers World newspaper titled "Why same-sex marriage matters" was in response to the arguments concerning same-sex marriage being heard before the U.S. Supreme Court in the previous week. Addressing the solidarity of Workers World Party with this struggle, the editorial explained: "It is not because we've forgotten the history and meaning of marriage, rooted in patriarchy and male supremacy, based on the subjugation of women, devised to maintain class divisions. We have not suddenly become proponents of a historically oppressive institution. Nor do we care what the state thinks of anyone's relationships.

"But marriage in today's advanced capitalist state comprises many legal rights and privileges, and there is a material basis to the fight to open it up. There are major income tax advantages from which couples not permitted to marry are barred. Social Security survivor payments go only to heterosexual spouses. Bosses that provide medical benefits to straight employees' spouses do not have to provide them to same-sex partners. ...

"This is a class issue. This is about workers winning some rights. And, although it should go without saying, we'll say it: When any workers win an advance in their

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Workers World
 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
 New York, N.Y. 10011
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 Editor: Deirdre Griswold
 Technical Editors: Lal Roohk, Andy Katz
 Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell,
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National Office
 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
 New York, NY 10011
 212.627.2994
 ww@workers.org

Atlanta
 P.O. Box 5565
 Atlanta, GA 30307
 404.627.0185
 atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore
 c/o Solidarity Center
 2011 N. Charles St.
 Baltimore, MD 21218
 443.221.3775
 baltimore@workers.org

Bay Area
 1305 Franklin St. #411
 Oakland, CA 94612
 510.600.5800
 bayarea@workers.org

Boston
 284 Amory St.
 Boston, MA 02130
 617.286.6574
 boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
 367 Delaware Ave.
 Buffalo, NY 14202
 716.883.2534
 buffalo@workers.org

Chicago
 27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
 Chicago, IL 60606
 chicago@workers.org
 312.229.0161

Cleveland
 P.O. Box 5963
 Cleveland, OH 44101
 216.738.0320
 cleveland@workers.org

Denver
 denver@workers.org

Detroit
 5920 Second Ave.
 Detroit, MI 48202
 313.459.0777
 detroit@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
 804 Old Fayetteville St.
 Durham, NC 27701
 919.322.9970
 durham@workers.org

Houston
 P.O. Box 3454
 Houston, TX 77253-3454
 713.503.2633
 houston@workers.org

Los Angeles
 5278 W Pico Blvd.
 Los Angeles, CA 90019
 la@workers.org
 323.306.6240

Milwaukee
 milwaukee@workers.org

Philadelphia
 P.O. Box 34249
 Philadelphia, PA 19101
 610.931.2615
 phila@workers.org

Pittsburgh
 pittsburgh@workers.org
Rochester, N.Y.
 585.436.6458
 rochester@workers.org

Rockford, IL
 rockford@workers.org
San Diego
 P.O. Box 33447
 San Diego, CA 92163
 619.692.0355
 sandiego@workers.org

Tucson, Ariz.
 tucson@workers.org
Washington, D.C.
 P.O. Box 57300
 Washington, DC 20037
 dc@workers.org

Shale oil train derails in Philly

By **Betsey Piette**
Philadelphia

On Jan. 20, seven cars of a mile-long freight train operated by CSX Corporation and carrying Bakken Shale crude oil, derailed on a bridge over the Schuylkill River in West Philadelphia. The densely populated area nearest the bridge is home to two major universities, two hospitals, plus thousands of apartment buildings and residential homes. It also borders Center City, Philadelphia's major business and commercial district.

While no explosion resulted from the derailment, similar cargoes of crude oil — described as “oil bomb” trains — have exploded and burned in five other crude-by-rail accidents in the last seven months.

On July 6, 47 people were incinerated and dozens of buildings destroyed when a fireball erupted after a train carrying crude oil derailed in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. Fires and oil spills, but no loss of life, resulted from derailments of trains carrying crude oil near Edmonton, Canada, in October; in rural western Alabama in November; and in northwest New Brunswick, Canada, on Jan. 7.

On Dec. 30, a freight train carrying Bakken Shale crude oil collided with another train in Casselton, N.D., 20 miles west of Fargo, resulting in a fiery explosion. It forced the evacuation of 1,200 residents within a five-mile radius due to the danger of exposure to fumes from burning crude oil. But evacuating tens of thousands of residents within a five-mile radius of the CSX rail bridge in Philadelphia would have been impossible.

Officials from the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board and the Transportation Safety Board of Canada warned on Jan. 23 that “a major loss of life” could occur if rail shipments of Bakken region crude oil are allowed to continue. (Associated Press)

It can take more than five minutes for a single train, carrying around 100 cars, to pass by any given location. There is no limit to the number of cars allowed to carry crude oil. Trains similar to the one that derailed in Philadelphia run through several major U.S. cities, including Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Milwaukee, Kansas City, Topeka, St. Louis and Memphis.

On Jan. 16, more than 400 people packed a community meeting in Washington, D.C., to protest plans by CSX to dig a massive trench less than 50 feet from a residential area in order to carry uncovered freight trains containing crude oil and other hazardous materials.

Federal right-to-know laws exempt shipping companies like CSX from having to disclose what hazardous materials they carry. While CSX has a “voluntary agreement” with some cities that it won't move “unit trains” — those carrying only one type of hazmat cargo — it easily gets around that rule. In Philadelphia, one of the seven cars that derailed was carrying sand. More often than not the additional railcars carry highly inflammable materials such as propane.

In 2013, CSX reported 212 accidents — 99 of them from derailments. Sixty-four others involved cars carrying hazmat cargo — the highest number for any railroad company in the U.S.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration found that crude-by-rail spills in 2013, totaling more than 1.15 million gallons spilled, were greater than the combined total of 800,000 gallons spilled during the previous 38 years. The 2013 figure does not include the 400,000 gallons from the Casselton spill. (Huffington Post, Jan. 23)

Rail accidents linked to increased Bakken Shale production

These accidents can be linked to the rapid and largely unregulated expansion of shale oil production using hydraulic fracturing. Since 2008, domestic oil production in the Bakken Shale region of North Dakota and Montana has increased by 50 percent, producing up to 7.5 million barrels per day in 2013.

At the highest levels since 1988, oil production in Canada, North Dakota and Texas has exceeded existing pipeline capacity, resulting in a 400 percent increase in crude-by-rail shipments since 2005. The North Dakota Mineral Resources Department estimated that in 2014 around 90 percent of the state's crude oil — almost 1 million barrels per day — will move by freight rail. This also surpasses the estimated capacity of the Keystone XL pipeline, which is only 830,000 barrels per day.

There is an added concern that oil from the Bakken Shale may be more explosive than other types of oil because it contains chemicals, including volatile organic compounds, used in the hydraulic fracturing process. The fracking chemicals may also be the cause of severe corrosion found on the inside of the tanks, covers and valves of derailed cars carrying shale oil.

Spineless oversight

For nearly 20 years, the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board has issued safety guidelines recommending that all tank cars used to carry crude oil be reinforced to prevent punctures should they derail. They have been particularly critical of the thin-skinned and easily explosive DOT-111 railcars that have been linked to some of the deadliest disasters since 2009.

A key problem is that while the NTSB can make recommendations, it lacks the authority to mandate that the industry use either DOT-111 cars manufactured under a new code since October 2011, retrofit existing cars, or take the hazardous railcars out of service.

It is estimated that modifying the DOT-111 rail cars could cost up to \$3.6 billion — an expense that would be passed on to the oil industry and other shippers. (Bloomberg News, Jan. 23) However, rather than use a small portion of their megaprofits to pay for safer rail cars, the energy industry is using the rail disasters to argue for expanded pipeline production.

Proponents for the expansion of the Keystone XL pipeline have been quick to capitalize on the recent surge in train derailments to argue for approval of this widely unpopular construction project.

However, Anthony Swift, an attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, which opposes the construction, points out that the Keystone XL is intended to carry tar sands oil from Canada, oil which is heavier and more expensive to move by rail. Swift notes that energy companies in the Bakken Shale prefer transport by rail since it is more flexible than pipelines. Therefore, shipments by rail are not likely to decrease even if the pipeline is built.

The rate of overall pipeline incidents has also doubled since 2000. Data collected by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration documents 1,887 pipeline accidents between Jan. 1, 2010 and March 29, 2013 — an average of 1.6 incidents per day.

As with increased train derailments, the growing number of pipeline incidents can be directly linked to the expansion of domestic oil and natural gas production due to fracking.

Whether it is safer to transport Bakken crude oil by rail or pipeline is the wrong question to be asking, when there are clearly viable alternatives to domestic gas and oil production. Shale gas and oil production, especially in the Bakken region, releases massive amounts of methane gas (CO₄), further increasing the risk of global warming. It also drains resources away from the development of renewable, non-fossil-fuel-based wind and solar energy.

In 2013, to raise public awareness about the danger of transporting crude oil by rail through densely populated areas, environmental groups — including “350 Maine” and “Maine Earth First!” — led protests and risked arrests



WWW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Derailed train dangles over West Philadelphia.

by physically blocking trains transporting Bakken crude. The environmental groups want a moratorium on the transportation of crude oil by train through the state of Maine. □

Environmental racism grows in N.C.

By **Peter Gilbert**

Although African-American communities in North Carolina are already more than twice as likely as others to be burdened with landfills and other solid-waste facilities, chances are, more environmental misery could be headed their way.

Lawmakers this year substantially limited the protections for such communities provided in environmental justice legislation that the N.C. General Assembly passed in 2007.

That statute prohibited the Department of Environment and Natural Resources from issuing a permit for a new solid-waste facility if “the cumulative impact of the proposed facility, when considered in relation to other similar impacts of facilities located or proposed in the community, would have a disproportionate adverse impact on a minority or low-income community protected by Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964.” This year they added a sentence: “This subdivision shall apply only to the extent required by federal law.”

The full effect of this change is unknown, but the intent is clear: to reduce protections for nationally oppressed and low-income communities that are already disproportionately burdened by landfills. Title VI prohibits racial discrimination in the use of federal money. In its enforcement, federal agencies accept proof of a disparate racial impact, such as the new report shows, without requiring direct proof of discriminatory intent. Unfortunately, Title VI governs only the use of federal money, so that this amendment could make it easier for counties and private solid-waste companies to target already overburdened communities, so long as they do not use any federal money.

Statutory protection of these communities is critical because of the substantial evidence of discriminatory racial impact in citing environmentally hazardous land uses. The State of Exclusion report examines all North Carolina communities where more than 75 percent of the populations are people of color and their access to safe and affordable housing, public infrastructure, equitable educational opportunities and political representation, in addition to studying their exposure to polluting facilities. Across the state, the exposure rate to solid-waste facilities permitted by DENR is 5.35 per-

cent; in other words, on average 5.35 percent of all North Carolinians live within a mile of such a facility.

Double exposure for African Americans

But residents of these communities that are majority African-American have nearly double the exposure rate: 10.36 percent. This disproportionate exposure is even worse in Piedmont counties and in the state's wealthiest 20 counties.

Interactive maps show the location of all permitted solid-waste facilities and their proximity to hyper-segregated-excluded communities. The data show that for some counties the disparity faced by these communities is extreme, with exposure rates several times that of the average county resident. (uncinclusion-project.org)

Randolph County has the worst disparities in North Carolina in exposure to solid-waste facilities between residents of racially excluded communities and the county as a whole. The county is 89 percent white, with 7.9 percent of residents, on average, living within one mile of a solid waste facility. For the few communities that are 75 percent or more people of color, however, the exposure rate increases almost tenfold, to 72.5 percent.

Three of the Randolph's operating facilities, two landfills and a transfer station, are in the historic African-American neighborhood of East Asheboro. The only two other facilities, a closed landfill and a transfer station, are only a couple miles away and are also near majority people-of-color neighborhoods. Most of the rest of the county is less densely populated and over 90 percent white and has no state-regulated solid-waste facilities at all.

Presently, under the new statute, the county seeks to add a massive regional landfill and build it in the same place where the existing facilities already disproportionately burden low-income African-American communities, a location that would have been expressly prohibited under the old statute. The new 200-acre landfill seeks to import waste from the entire Piedmont region, 1,500 tons a day. Allowing it go forward makes those in power complicit in environmental racism and entrenches the severe impacts of racial exclusion in North Carolina.

Peter Gilbert is a member of the Durham, N.C., branch of Workers World Party.

Teachers' unions resist all-out assault

By G. Dunkel

Some \$682 billion in public funds was spent in the United States in 2012-13 on pre-K through Grade 12 education. This vast amount of public money provides a vast market for businesses to exploit, and, where possible, to privatize. (usgov-ernmentspending.com)

The so-called charter schools offer a mechanism for private capital — even if the schools are formally non-profit — to tap into this vast stream of public money. Charter school defenders justify these institutions by claiming they give students and their parents a choice. This explicitly abandons the ideal of quality public education available to all, supported by public funds.

Since charter schools are private institutions, their teachers and other workers are not automatically included in the unions representing public school teachers, and are kept overworked and underpaid. When charter schools need funds, say to pay high salaries to their administrators, and public resources — like space and facilities in public schools

— their management presents them as institutions working for the public good, deserving public support.

Consider one example: Eva Moskowitz, head of the Success Academy Charter Schools in Harlem, reported earning \$475,244 in 2012, more than four times the median salary for New York City principals.

Few charter schools are unionized. Nonunion charters and the layoffs of teachers in school systems where class size has significantly increased have led to a decline in the number of pre-K through grade 12 teachers who are American Federation of Teachers members.

Despite the high cost of education in the U.S., the Programme for International Student Assessment (2012), ranks the U.S. as average in science and reading and below average in mathematics among developed countries.

Anti-union gunslinger hired

Most bourgeois politicians and media blame teachers and their unions for the weaknesses of U.S. education. They suggest that the U.S. “fire its way to Finland,” that is, fire teachers. Finland

generally comes in first or second in the PISA rankings.

Ignoring the deep social issues that affect schools in the U.S. — poverty, racism, homelessness, police violence — these politicians emphasize the need to test students every year to expose the alleged incompetence of their teachers, spending billions on the tests.

Since many parents know their child's teacher is doing a good job, these anti-teacher forces hired Rick Berman, a right-wing, anti-union gunslinger, to run the attack on the AFT. Berman even had a five-story billboard put up in New York's Times Square with a picture of AFT President Randi Weingarten and a caption attacking her union.

Berman writes op-eds slandering the union for protecting senior teachers. He argues for rewarding “individual effort” to separate supposedly “good” teachers from the others instead of training all teachers and giving them the support and security necessary to improve their skills.

The AFT has had some successes in defending tenure, that is, job security. Notably, last week in Baton Rouge, La.,

a court held that “7,000 teachers and school employees ... were wrongfully terminated in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.” They were deprived of the “constitutionally protected property right” to be recalled. (utno.la.aft.org/)

Thousands of teachers and other school employees will get back pay. It took nine years, but the Louisiana Federation of Teachers won its case. Of course Louisiana may appeal.

New York State United Teachers is a statewide federation of AFT and National Education Association locals with 600,000 active members. On Jan. 25, NYSUT called for the dismissal of John King as commissioner of the State Education Department for his failed introduction of the Common Core Curriculum and the high-stakes testing based on it. That's another teacher victory.

More struggles are developing in U.S. education as teachers push back against attacks on them and their unions, which are more and more being seen as attacks on their students as well.

Dunkel has been an elected delegate from his local to the American Federation of Teachers national convention.

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rights, it strengthens the whole struggle of the working class and the oppressed. It builds unity, breaks down artificial barriers within the class, leaves the bosses with one less tool with which to leverage divisions among workers. At the same time, it signals that advances can be won. That even at a time like this, when the bosses and politicians are bulldozing rights and cutting programs, even now we can wring some concessions out of them.”

Love as the basis of human solidarity

Among the nonsexual expressions of human love, unarguably the most important is the love that adults feel for children. Fidel Castro was once challenged by an arrogant bourgeois journalist about the existence of specially privileged people within revolutionary Cuban society. Fidel's response was immediate and constituted an ideological body blow to the dumbfounded representative of U.S. imperialism: “Yes, we have a specially privileged group here. Our children!”

Decadent, late-stage capitalism is in-

The human capacity for love

capable of even approximating the situation in socialist Cuba, where the needs of children are the number one priority, where every child has a safe and secure home, is cared for, loved and offered every opportunity for personal growth and development.

Any Marxist commentary on love as a basic human emotion would be incomplete without a mention of its role in the context of the global struggle for a more just and humane world. What is the profound human solidarity shown by socialist and communist revolutionaries if not a supreme expression of the human capacity for feeling and expressing love?

In the book “Fidel and Religion: Fidel Castro in Conversation with Frei Betto on Marxism and Liberation Theology,” Brazilian liberation theologian Betto asks, “Comandante, is love a revolutionary requirement?”

Castro replies: “If we go back to the first great social revolution — not the first socialist revolution, but the first great social revolution in the last few centuries: the French revolution — it had a three-word slogan: liberty, equality, fraternity. Liberty ... was interpreted in a restricted

way. It meant liberty for the bourgeoisie, for the whites; it didn't mean liberty for the African slaves. After they'd spread their ideas throughout the world, the French revolutionaries even sent armies to Haiti to crush the rebellion of the slaves who wanted liberty. After the independence of the United States, which had taken place before that, the slavery of Africans continued, as did the extermination of the Native Americans and all the other atrocities.

“Therefore, the French revolution confined itself to liberty for the bourgeoisie and whites, and there was no equality at all, no matter how much philosophizing or talk there was about alleged equality in a society that was divided into classes. ... I believe that only now, with socialism, can the concept of true liberty — full

liberty — equality, and fraternity exist. I think that the precept of loving thy neighbor, of which the church speaks, is very concretely applied and implemented in the human equality, fraternity and solidarity upheld by socialism and in the internationalist spirit.

“I believe that the fact that Cubans go to work in other lands as teachers, doctors, engineers, technicians and skilled workers and that tens of thousands — hundreds of thousands — are ready to do this under the most difficult conditions and at times at the cost of their lives, thus showing a supreme spirit of solidarity in loyalty to their principles, expresses the practical application of their respect, consideration and love for their fellow human beings.” (Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 2006, pp. 256-257) □

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Struggles featured

Here are reports on some of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day events that took place in the United States.

The 32nd Annual Martin Luther King Day event in Seattle was infused with the demand for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage for the U.S. working class. The Jan. 20 march of an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 workers was flooded with “\$15/hr.” and “End Poverty Wages” signs. An early workshop, one of many, stressed building anti-racist unity in this struggle.

At the opening rally at Garfield High School, Aaron Dixon, former Seattle Black Panther leader and author of “My People Are Rising,” was a featured speaker. The 2-mile march to downtown had at least 10 union contingents, along with community and rank-and-file organizations.

At the closing rally, newly elected Seattle City Council member, socialist Kshama Sawant, said: “The landscape of poverty could cause an upheaval for social justice. We need hundreds of thousands of people marching everywhere to make change. I am not going to organize your neighborhood group for \$15 an hour — You must! The struggle is about shaking the founda-

tions of U.S. capitalism. It's about putting the business establishment on notice that we won't be oppressed anymore!”

Houstonians: 'Stop executions!'

The family of a Mexican man set for execution on Jan. 22 in Texas participated in Houston's Martin Luther King parade, calling for a stay of execution for Edgar Tamayo Arias.

The Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement featured the case of Tamayo as well as others with execution dates and several with cases of innocence in the 36th Annual MLK Birthday Parade. As thousands lined the Houston streets, crowds cheered as they saw signs calling Texas Gov. Rick Perry “a serial killer.” Texas has executed more than 500 people since the death penalty was reinstated in the 1970s and Perry has presided at 269 executions since 2000.

Delia Perez Meyer, whose brother Louis Perez has been on death row for 16 years, spoke about her brother to the crowd: “Today we focus on Tamayo's case but also on others who have issues of innocence, like my brother. The Innocence Project in New York has taken his case and we are finally

Richard Sherman & the NFL's exploitation

By Scott Williams

With 55.9 million television viewers watching the National Football Conference championship game on Jan. 19, Seattle Seahawks cornerback Richard Sherman sealed his team's dreams of going to Super Bowl XVIII by tipping away a last minute pass to San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Michael Crabtree in the end zone. This game-changing play occurred within seconds of the end of the game. This tremendous show of athleticism should have been the main headline, but due to the corporate media, the attention of millions of people was diverted to his postgame interview.

Sherman's comments were a simple expression of normal trash talking in the heat of the moment when he stated, "I'm the best corner in the game. When you try me with a sorry receiver like Crabtree, that's the result you're gonna get! Don't you ever talk about me!"

For the following week, people across the media called Sherman a "thug" or many other terms that deemed him less than human. These reactions epitomized the racist cultural attitudes toward outspoken Black athletes, which have happened countless times to many other professional and amateur athletes. Even the great Muhammad Ali — an idol of Sherman's and also known for his brash talking — was demonized and robbed of his heavyweight boxing title for almost four years for refusing to fight in the Vietnam war during the late 1960s.

In many articles online, Sherman has been both defended and humanized. The son of a sanitation worker from Compton, Calif., Sherman graduated from Stanford University with a 3.9 grade point average. Sherman lives the dream of a young Black man who has beaten the odds compared to millions like him who aspire to avoid poverty and incarceration. He has become a successful professional athlete who graduated from one of the top universities in the world.

Defending himself in a press conference days later, Sherman talked about people calling him a thug: "The only reason it bothers me is because it seems like

it's the accepted way of calling somebody the N-word nowadays. It's like everyone else said the N-word, and they said 'Thug' and they're like, 'Ah, that's fine.' That's where it kind of takes me aback and it's kind of disappointing." (Huffington Post, Jan. 22)

It is right to defend Sherman from racist attacks. And many people have. Yet we know that this will happen again. Another bold Black superstar will defy the racist standards of becoming a so-called "model" citizen, whether during an end zone dance or in a postgame interview. And more racist reactions will occur in the media and by fans. But why?

NFL: rich bosses, exploited workers

A deeper analysis of the attitudes toward Sherman must take into account the social dynamics of sports under capitalism. What are the values of sports under capitalism, to people and to the 1%?

If we believe that racism is not inherent, but rather a poisonous ideology that was pushed upon us by the ruling class and reinforced by the media, we have to understand how it is profitable for the rulers to promote racism and how it is possible to change these attitudes.

According to an Aug. 14 article in Forbes titled "NFL Team Values," the combined value of all National Football League franchises is more than \$37 billion. This number is more than the budget of 31 states and ranks the NFL behind Arizona in national rankings. On the Forbes 500 list of corporations, it ranks around number 80, just ahead of Delta, American Express and Phillip Morris.

The NFL, the most popular U.S. professional sport, is more profitable than any other sport, with a 15.4 percent profit margin. According to Business Insider, the lowest valued team, the Jacksonville Jaguars (\$725 million), is still worth more than every professional basketball and hockey franchise and all but five pro-baseball teams. (<http://tinyurl.com/ld36mml>)

According to Forbes, the highest paid NFL player, New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees, made \$51 million between June 2012 and June 2013, not counting his numerous endorsements.



Richard Sherman

Contrast his salary with the minimum annual salary of an NFL player at \$405,000.

While these athletes may be well paid as a whole, they are still workers. Every player is a member of the NFL Players Association, which is a part of the AFL-CIO. The union has fought for players' rights for safety on the field, compensation for injuries that linger long after retirement and basic working standards under a collective bargaining agreement.

Several times the NFLPA has gone out on strike or been locked out by the team owners. In a 2011 lockout by the bosses, the players stood firm with their demands to get a bigger share of the profits made by the owners — many of them billionaires — from the players' ability to perform on the field.

One of the most contentious aspects of any contract is the player salary cap — the maximum amount each team is allowed to pay its players.

Players pay heavy price

Karl Marx came up with the concept of surplus value to explain the difference between the value created by workers and the payment the workers receive for their ability to work. The NFL is an extreme, yet crystal clear example of the extraction of surplus value rooted in worker exploitation. Each team has up to 53 players. The salary cap is \$133 million per team. The 53 players, as well as the coaches, referees, low-wage concession stand workers, and other support personnel make up all the workers and managers who either work for the owners or the NFL hierarchy, either specifically or collectively.

Without these players and staff, there is no NFL and no surplus value, or profits. The highest earning team, the Dallas Cowboys, brought in \$539 million in revenue in 2013. After paying everyone and all the bills, the team had more than \$250 million in profit. The median team, the Carolina Panthers, made around \$29 million in profit. As a whole, Forbes reports that the owners of the league's 32 teams collected over \$1.4 billion in profits in 2013.

Meanwhile, the players pay a huge cost to play this brutal game. According to the NFLPA, the length of an average player's career is only 3.5 years. The average life expectancy of an NFL player is 58. Recurrent concussions, broken bones and torn ligaments are facts of life for an NFL player — devastating injuries that last long after they leave the game.

To maintain this exploitative and profitable game, the ruling class and the owners of the NFL need to portray the players, a majority of whom are African American, as less than human. This ties in deeply with exploitation and oppression throughout society, including the oppression of women, lesbian-gay-bi-trans-queer people and people with disabilities.

For many, the NFL is a favorite pastime, a game they enjoy with friends and family when not working. Yet such a testosterone-driven and violent game is a product of the times. At the center of world imperialism, a system led by the banks and corporations in the U.S., the game represents the values of this society. Whether you like it or not, the essence of the game represents capitalist exploitation and greed. Racism is an important part of sustaining capitalism, because it destroys personal integrity and respect for humanity.

To change a society's culture, you have to change its social and economic relations. Primary to this is to replace capitalist relations with ones that value human life, not as a commodity that makes money for the rich, but rather that serves the people. Then popular sports will show the strength and beauty of humanity — and of such tremendous athletes as Richard Sherman — free from racist demonization. □

at Martin Luther King Day actions

getting the DNA testing we have been asking for these last 16 years. We must stop executions because too many mistakes are made. Dr. King was about justice and that is what we are seeking today."

With signs and banners calling the

death penalty racist and anti-poor, for the release of Mumia Abu-Jamal and for the abolition of capital punishment, the Abolition Movement contingent was received with cheers, raised fists and shouts of "You are so right! Thank you!"



ABOVE, WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC RIGHT, PHOTO: ROBERT MALIN

Rhode Islanders against poverty

The Rhode Island Mobilization Against Poverty was officially launched at the 9th Annual RI MLK All-Peoples Assembly in Providence on Jan. 25. The Mobilization has made a call for a massive united action at the Rhode Island State House on April 2 to defend 80 years of "New Deal" programs: Social Security, unemployment insurance, food stamps, etc., and 50 years of "War on Poverty" programs: Medicare, Medicaid, Head Start, etc.

The RI Mobilization Against Poverty is calling for jobs for all; a WPA-style jobs programs; an "A. Phillip Randolph" minimum wage of \$15 an hour; an economic bill of rights; progressive corporate and

personal income taxes; and "No" to regressive sales taxes.

Mary Kay Harris, one of the 1.3 million workers cut off from unemployment benefits on Jan. 1, chaired the main assembly, as well as a very special Women's Caucus scheduled for the purpose of planning a Women-of-All-Colors Assembly on March 8, International Women's Day.

The women's conference will bring together working-class women of all races and backgrounds from around the region to share their issues and struggles. The event will establish a permanent RI Women's Assembly.

Bill Bateman, Jim McMahan and Gloria Rubac contributed to this article.



WORKERS IN MOTION FOR

Postal workers, supporters demand safer conditions

By Joe Piette
Washington, D.C.

Letter carriers and community supporters assembled in the midst of hundreds of people at the recently dedicated national Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial statue in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 20, the official Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday. King's life was dedicated to making change, and the letter carriers and their supporters were there to demand changes of the United States Postal Service. They were also present to commemorate the life of African-American letter carrier Tyson Barnette, who was slain by gunfire as King was.

Barnette's mother, Bridget Barnette, and six other members of Barnette's family joined the event, traveling 425 miles from their homes in Rock Hill, S.C. They came to join the call for safer working conditions for all letter carriers, almost two months after the 26-year-old was killed while delivering mail in the Washington suburb of Cheverly, Md., at 7:30 p.m. in the dark. The killing of the postal worker, who had just six years seniority, is still unsolved.

Processing delays caused by the elimination of hundreds of processing plants, massive understaffing in the clerk craft, and mismanaged and flawed automation schemes have caused letter carriers' start times to be pushed back to later in the day, when safety issues can become deadly.

"Make changes. Don't let another life be taken with something that can be fixed as easily as pushing the time back in the morning and getting [the letter carriers] started earlier," Bridget Barnette told onlookers.

The rally started at sunset, followed by a march to U.S. Postal Service Headquarters at L'Enfant Plaza. The march took place in the dark to point out that letter carriers' jobs have become more unsafe since the Postal Service instituted later work days. Participants included some of Tyson Barnette's Landover,

Md., post office co-workers, D.C.-area postal workers, and community and postal activists from Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York City.

Organized by Community Postal Workers United, Postal Defenders, and Community Labor United for Postal Jobs and Services, protesters chanted: "No dark deliveries!" and "What do we want? Safety!" in opposition to the large increase in mail delivery shifts after sunset over the last few years.

Communities of color and women are especially hard hit by problems in the post office, which has a workforce that is 21 percent Black, 8 percent Latino/a and 8 percent Asian-American/Pacific Islander and Native American. Women make up 40 percent of the workforce.

Chelsea Coalition on Housing for Tenants Rights organizer Johnnie Stevens pointed out that decent wages won through union struggles have allowed postal workers to buy homes and send their kids to college. Recently instituted USPS pilot programs to open retail centers at Staples stores, run by low-paid, nonunion workers, threaten to undermine those wages and have to be stopped by community and postal workers together, he told the crowd.

At the USPS Headquarters, a wreath was handed over to a postal representative as about a dozen cops stood by in front of the building's glass doors. The representative was also given a list of demands printed on a large placard, which included: End delivery in the dark; start letter carriers' shifts earlier; fully staff clerk and carrier positions; adjust overburdened routes; and reopen mail processing plants.

Most D.C.-area television stations covered the rally and march extensively. □



Washington, D.C., Jan. 20.
Bridget Barnette and family speaking to the press.



WW PHOTOS: JOE PIETTE

Pentagon workers strike for raises

By Sue Davis

Low-wage cleaning and concessions workers at the Pentagon building in Washington, D.C., walked off the job for the first time on Jan. 22 in a one-day work stoppage. They were joined by workers from the Air and Space Museum, the Ronald Reagan Building and Union Station, as well as area union and faith-based activists.

The protest was the latest in a series of strikes on behalf of 2 million federally contracted workers who make between \$7.25 and \$12 an hour, with no benefits, sick days or raises. These figures make the U.S. government the largest employer of low-wage workers in the country. The workers are requesting that President Obama issue an executive order requiring that all federal contractors pay a living wage.

A 2013 report by Demos, "Underwriting Bad Jobs: How Our Tax Dollars Are Funding Low-Wage Work and Fueling Inequality," showed that the number of good-paying union jobs that were outsourced to contractors doubled between

1996 and 2009. The report estimated that the government could save close to \$7 billion if the salaries of all chief executive officers under federal contracts were capped at \$230,700, the vice president's salary. That money could then give hundreds of thousands of workers a \$6 an hour raise.

According to a report by the congressional Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee, federal contractors, which collectively received a total of \$81 billion last year, included some the country's worst labor law violators. These contractors paid close to \$200 million in penalties and back pay.

Low-paid federal contract workers have been organizing since last May with the help of Good Jobs Nation, backed by the Change to Win union federation. Already the campaign has led to changes. Not only are about 220 museum workers being represented by UNITE HERE Local 23 in contract negotiations, but the campaign has instigated a Labor Department investigation into wage theft and used community support to avert retaliation against the strikers. (Salon, Jan. 22) □

Airlines grab billions, leave workers in misery

By G. Dunkel

Airlines profits have been bolstered by billions in government subsidies. Meanwhile, wages for airlines' contract service workers have dropped up to 45 percent since 2002.

Some subsidies are visible, according to a March 8, 2013, Boston Globe article: The federal government provides 30 percent of the budget of \$7.6 billion to the Transportation Security Administration, which inspects passengers before they board, and 30 percent of the budget of the Federal Aviation Administration, which supplies air traffic control.

This amounts to about \$3 billion in direct subsidies.

Most airports in the United States are owned by a public entity — a city, county or state or a public entity like the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey. Not making the airlines inspect passengers

and providing services so planes can take off and land amount to other subsidies — which are hard to quantify.

Under the federal tax code of 1986, local and state governments are allowed to issue tax-exempt bonds to finance the expansion of businesses, with the pretext that this creates jobs. The March 4, 2013, New York Times estimated that "more than \$65 billion of these bonds have been issued" since 2003. Businesses save a lot of money using these bonds because they can borrow at a much lower rate.

Politically, since this is a tax-avoidance scheme, there is no dollar amount for critics to point to that goes into the pockets of the super rich .01%.

According to a New York Daily News article of Jan. 21, American Airlines got \$1.3 billion of these bonds to finance its new terminal at Kennedy International. Jet Blue got \$300 million, and a group

of international airlines got \$417 million. Delta got \$800 million in 2010, with an additional \$175 million.

Adding up the subsidies shows that the airlines got nearly \$3 billion in government-subsidized loans on the promise to create more jobs. The airlines then outsourced the work to avoid paying union wages to direct hires.

An airline industry spokesperson made this maneuver clear by pointing out to the Daily News, "Wages and benefits paid by the contractors ... are solely established by the contractors." In other words, don't blame the airlines.

Airlines use lowest-paying contractor

But the airlines decide who gets the contracts based on price, which is based on wages paid. That means airlines sign with contractors that pay less. Local 32BJ of the Service Employee union, which is trying to organize the contract-

ed service workers at all three New York City airports, calls this a "race to the bottom."

Actually, it turns out this is a race to below the bottom.

Workers who may get tips — skycaps who move luggage and workers who push wheelchairs for disabled people — are paid only \$4.40 an hour, which is below the state-imposed \$5.50 an hour for tipped workers. But, according to the Daily News, they can't collect the legally mandated wage until New York state finishes an investigation.

Companies can borrow billions with far less trouble than workers can get the mandated minimum wage. The Port Authority, which owns the airports, could impose a \$15-an-hour minimum as a requirement for doing business on its property, but the PA obviously doesn't want to do anything that hurts the airlines' bottom line. □

FOR JUSTICE

Solidarity Day 2 versus unionbuster

By Tony Murphy

The attempt by Veolia, an international conglomerate, to bust the Boston School Bus Drivers Union has created a widespread fightback movement. Its next focus is Solidarity Day 2 (SD2), a demonstration set for Feb. 1 outside the company's headquarters.

The struggle to rehire the four illegally fired leaders of United Steelworkers Local 8751 has become a household name in Boston's movement. The Massachusetts AFL-CIO has backed the struggle, other unions have signed on, and many community-based organizations — from the Coalition for Equal Quality Education to local African-American radio station Touch 106.1 — are mobilizing for it.

Boston-area union activists with SEIU 1199, the Boston Teachers Union and American Postal Workers Local 100 are supporting the rally, as well as community and activist groups like Nation of Islam, Industrial Workers of the World and Roxbury-based Safety Net. Vans and buses are coming from Baltimore, New York and Rhode Island.

Boston is fast becoming ground zero for the growing movement against Veolia.

At the center of Boston's movement and keeping it alive is the local's dynamic rank and file. Going into the fourth month of the struggle — a time when momentum might be expected to fade — this predominantly immigrant workforce of Haitian and Cape Verdean drivers continues to mobilize in large numbers.

On Jan. 23, more than 100 drivers staged a demonstration/occupation of Veolia's offices during a step 2 grievance hearing about the four fired drivers. Members set up a picket line, then spilled into the central office room, the hallways and adjoining office spaces, refusing the company's orders to leave.

Exuberant mobilizing meetings for SD2 have taken place at the city's four bus yards. The harsh weather has led these impromptu gatherings of dozens of drivers, which are usually called yard meetings, to take place in Veolia buildings, right under the noses of the union-busting bosses. The fired drivers — Garry Murchison, Andre Francois, Steve Kirschbaum and Steve Gillis — have been motivating the crowds with speeches and stacks of leaflets for SD2.

This defiant determination on the part of the school bus drivers has been there from the beginning of this struggle. On Nov. 9, 600 drivers (out of 870) marched through Boston for Solidarity Day 1, and on Nov. 21, 300 packed Boston City Council chambers.

The drivers know that the fight to rehire the union leaders is about resisting a broader, austerity-based attack on their wages and benefits. Since taking over Boston's school bus contract in July, Veolia has switched providers in order to lower insurance benefits, shorted wages due to an unauthorized GPS-based pay system and violated the members' seniority.

Attacks on desegregated education

A known union-buster, Veolia was hired in Boston as part of an orchestrated assault on desegregated education. The successful struggle to win busing and equal-access education in the 1970s has confronted an unrelenting campaign ever since from entrenched racist elements in the city establishment.

In 2009, the Boston School Bus Drivers Union joined educators and community forces in a successful campaign to beat back the "five-zone plan," an attempt by the heads of the Boston Public Schools to reduce the number of schools open to students under a decades-old three-zone plan.

But the forces of reaction haven't giv-



PHOTO: GARRY MURCHISON

en up. This month marks the Boston schools' implementation of an updated incarnation of that plan, with the "zone plan" being replaced by an "algorithm."

Promoted as a neutral, computer-based calculation, the algorithm drastically limits the choice of schools for African-American and Latino/a families. It also dismantles the right to busing won in the 1970s through the people's struggle.

A successful lawsuit by Black parents to desegregate Boston's schools had established the practice of busing, which the movement then protected as a right. Anti-racist demonstrations and the School Bus Drivers Union eventually beat back the fascist, city-backed mobs who had violently attacked Black students.

A Jan. 27 article in the Boston Globe admits that the algorithm replaces the "plan to comply with court-ordered desegregation." It shows that parents and students now face drastically reduced choices in what schools they are allowed to pick.

The new system also separates siblings from each other — unless parents know to request the older siblings' school, which

the article admits they often do not. And it narrows choices even further for students who have special needs requirements.

The article begins with the example of a parent who thought that the elimination of zones meant that she had more choices, not less. Apparently, the Boston Public Schools' promotional campaign on the new system has been more propaganda-based than informational. No wonder. The campaign's billboards across Boston were paid for by none other than Veolia Transportation.

Veolia has become the target of multiple communities and movements in the U.S. On Feb. 8, Local 8751 Vice President and fired driver Steve Gillis will travel to San Francisco for a national conference. "The Fight Against VEOLIA: Stop Privatization, Defend Human Rights & the Environment" will unite many forces fighting the criminal corporation. With its union-busting activities, privatization plans and support for Israeli apartheid, Veolia is inadvertently helping to unite different forces in the political spectrum into a new people's movement in the age of austerity. □

SuperShuttle workers protest Veolia's low wages

By Steven Ceci
Baltimore

One after another, the mostly West African immigrant SuperShuttle workers poured out their grievances in front of the Veolia transportation headquarters in Baltimore on Jan. 20 — the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday — expressing their anger at what they described as near-slavery working conditions. Global transportation giant Veolia, which owns SuperShuttle, is notorious for its anti-worker activities.

Tony Koukou Yovo, who was fired after he spoke out against Veolia's practices, and Patrick Benhene, another outspoken leader, declared their intentions not to be silenced. They were followed by many co-workers, like Mohammad Cisse, who described how he had to sleep in his van to barely break even financially and how his family suffered. Claire Evans, a SuperShuttle leader from Washington, D.C./Virginia, expressed her support for her co-workers. Countless other workers took the microphone describing terrible working conditions and why they were resisting.

Andre Powell, a representative of the "We Deserve Better" Workers Assembly and an American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees delegate to the Baltimore Metropolitan AFL-CIO

Labor Council, who co-chaired the event, told this reporter, "We felt that there was no better way to celebrate Dr. King's day than to be protesting in front of Veolia's headquarters. One of Dr. King's last actions was to defend workers' rights, protesting for striking sanitation workers."

The group rallied for approximately an hour, then marched to North Avenue to take their message to a larger number of people. Prior to the rally at Veolia's headquarters, SuperShuttle workers and Workers Assembly volunteers distributed thousands of flyers and carried a large banner calling on people to support the workers in the official King holiday parade.

The rally and march were sponsored by the "We Deserve Better" Workers Assembly and Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994.

Amy Millar and Josh Ardison, organizers with Local 1994, spoke on behalf of the union. Other speakers included Sharon Black, Workers Assembly representative; Cory McCray, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and a candidate for Baltimore's 45th District seat in the Maryland House of Delegates; and Marice Morales, a Peruvian immigrant. A number of groups and individuals attended in support, including Leon Purnell, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and anti-war and Occupy activists. □

EDUCATIONAL/ACTION CONFERENCE
Join the Fight Against
VEOLIA

Stop Privatization, Defend Labor,
Human Rights & the Environment

SAT • FEB 8 12:30 PM - 6 PM
7:30-10 PM FILM & ENTERTAINMENT

Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts
2868 MISSION STREET • SAN FRANCISCO

The Veolia Group is a French transnational, which plays a growing role in the world economy, pushing privatization of water resources, transportation and other public services. In the Bay Area, Veolia has pushed for the privatization of water treatment in Richmond, which has led to union busting and environmental degradation.

Thomas P. Hoch, Vice President of Veolia Transportation Services was hired to represent BART management in recent negotiations and he attacked the ATU 1555, SEIU 1021 and AFSCME 3993 union locals. Veolia is also involved in privatizing transportation services and attacking unions such as the Boston School Bus Drivers USW 8751, where they have blatantly violated their union contract and fired four of the union leaders. The union leaders are still fighting to get their jobs back.

Globally, the Veolia/Transdev group is the largest water privatization company and various environmental groups have tracked its record of destruction and corruption. In the occupied West Bank, subsidiaries of the group operated segregated buses to illegal Israeli settlements; they operate an illegal settler dump and run a light rail system that sustains the Israeli settlements around Jerusalem. Communities all around the world have organized against Veolia and managed to get their cities and unions to pass anti-privatization resolutions declaring their cities "Veolia Free".

In light of the importance of Veolia's role in the U.S. and internationally, we will be having an international education conference. Topics to include Veolia's labor, environmental and human rights record. What poor and working people can do about Veolia.

For registration, endorsements & contact:

415.282.1908 missionculturalcenter.org/events.html

Watch live on kpfa.org/kpfa-live-stream-channel [fbl.me/fightveolia](https://www.facebook.com/fbl.me/fightveolia)



REGISTRATION 12:30 p.m.

OPENING PANEL 1 p.m.

►George Figueroa BART ATU 1555*

►Charles Smith AFSCME 444,*

delegate Alameda Labor Council

►Steve Gillis VP USW 8751*, Boston School Bus 5

INTERNATIONAL PANEL 2:15 p.m.

►Omar Barghouti Co-founder

of the Boycott National Committee, Palestine

►Hugh Lanning Fmr. General Secretary

Public & Commercial Services Union, UK,

Chair, Palestine Solidarity Committee

►Dalit Baum Middle East Program, AFSC

REGIONAL PANEL 3:45 p.m.

►Erin Diaz Director, Public Water Works! campaign,

Corporate Accountability International (Boston),

The St. Louis Coalition to Dump Veolia

►Rebel Fagin N. Coast Coalition for Palestine

►Mikos Fabersunne

Chair, Davis Committee for Palestinian Rights

►Clarence Thomas

ILWU Local 10 Executive Board*

►Nancy Murray

The Boston Coalition for Palestinian Rights

WORKSHOPS: EDUCATION & ACTION 5:15 P.M.

Labor and Privatization

Organizing in Local Communities

FILM SCREENING 7:30 p.m.

*Even the Rain and Jack Hirschman 2006

San Francisco Poet Laureate & music by Dave Welsh



* for identification only



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Philadelphia police assault of Black youth sparks outrage

By **Betsey Piette**
Philadelphia

Before her students left Mathematics, Civics and Sciences Charter School to play in a basketball game, Victoria Joyner gave them all hats and scarves to wear because the temperature on Jan. 7 was in the single digits.

A short while later, one of the students, 16-year-old Darrin Manning, was brutalized by the Philadelphia police, who claimed that Manning and his friends caught their attention as they stood near a subway stop because their faces were covered with ski masks and they were running.

Manning said his mind was on the game when he got off the subway near Broad Street and Girard Avenue with a dozen teammates in uniform. While his friends ran when the cops approached, he had been taught to respect the cops and he hadn't done anything wrong, so he stopped and tried to comply with the cops.

Manning claims he was roughed up, placed in handcuffs, and that during a pat-down, a female officer pulled his genitals so hard one of his testicles ruptured. The next day, Manning underwent emergency surgery. Ikea Coney, Manning's mother, stated that doctors say his injury may have left him sterile.

Speaking at a community rally in support of Manning at the Catalyst for Change Ministries in West Philadelphia on Jan. 24, Manning's basketball coach

Dan Jackson said he asked the youth why they ran from the police. They told him: "We are scared of the cops and we don't know what they might try to play on you. They were all white and we are all Black."

Manning, an honor student with no criminal record, has been charged with three misdemeanors, including resisting arrest. His mother is concerned that the criminal charges may jeopardize scholarships that he has already been awarded. Officer Thomas Purcell, the white officer who stopped Manning, has had two prior citizens' complaints lodged against him for false arrests.

Manning's family and his attorney Lewis Small are calling on Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams to file charges against the officers involved and to prosecute the female officer who illegally searched Manning for indecent assault of a minor.

Epidemic of police brutality

This incident has sparked local and national outrage as yet another example of the epidemic of police brutality against Black and Brown youth across the U.S. In Philadelphia, the police department's history of brutality has led to numerous lawsuits, including a 2011 case filed by the American Civil Liberties Union challenging police abuse of the city's stop-and-frisk policy.

In a report issued in March 2013, two years after a settlement in which the city

agreed to provide better training of police, the ACLU found that while the number of pedestrian stops had declined nearly 15 percent since 2009, stops without reasonable suspicion were still targeting African Americans and Latinos/as in 76 percent of the cases.

Just two months earlier, on Nov. 4, Temple University students rallied against police brutality in response to a string of beatings and assaults by campus police and Philadelphia cops. The organization People Utilizing Real Power called the action to encourage people to speak out against brutality in order to protect their communities after 23 people were killed or wounded by Philadelphia police in the first six months of 2013.

That rally on Temple's North Philadelphia campus was surrounded by signs of rapidly encroaching gentrification. Numerous "luxury apartment" and newly constructed high-rise student housing units have pushed out longtime residents, who are mainly poor and Black.

The subway stop where police attacked Manning and his teammates is located just blocks south of Temple. Despite the bitter cold, over two dozen protesters, including members of PURP and several Temple students, gathered there on Jan. 23 to protest the police



Darrin Manning

attack on Manning.

Several of the community activists who attended the Jan. 24 community rally also called for continued organization to resist the police brutality and to win justice for Darrin Manning. Gabriel Bryant, with the Askia Coalition against Police Brutality, stated that even if Manning had not been an A student, he did not deserve what he got. Bryant described the three-year intense struggle that won Askia Sabur's release following a brutal beating at the hands of Philadelphia police in 2010.

Meighan Dorr described the culture in Philadelphia since police were able to jail Mumia Abu-Jamal over 30 years ago: "The police don't care. They say, 'Bring it on.' We got schools closing at an alarming rate. We need to have some power."

One young victim of the Philadelphia police stop-and-frisk policy, Anthony Torrance, described being stopped five times. He called police brutality an epidemic and urged those present to stand up and do something. □



Why each \$1.3 million GM invests creates just one job

By **Fred Goldstein**

On Dec. 13, General Motors announced with great fanfare that it was going to invest \$1.3 billion, mostly in Flint, Mich., to "create or preserve" 1,000 jobs. The company did not say how many of the jobs would be preserved — how many workers would be saved from layoffs — and how many would be new.

Giving GM the benefit of the doubt, let's say that all those 1,000 are new jobs. Do the math and you find that each added job takes a \$1.3 million investment. If only 500 new jobs resulted, that would be an investment of \$2.6 million per job.

In fact, GM says that it has invested \$10.1 billion in operations since it emerged from bankruptcy in 2009 and that this has "created or kept" 26,500 jobs — or \$380,000 per job.

At this rate of hiring, the hundreds of thousands of autoworkers and other workers laid off during the economic crisis in Michigan have little to cheer about. The mass of workers in Detroit, who face the destruction of their city and severely high rates of poverty and unemployment, can take little solace in the announcement by GM billionaires that they have "created or preserved" 1,000 jobs.

With Gov. Rick "right-to-work-for-less" Snyder on the platform together with United Auto Workers officials, GM announced it would put \$600 million into a new paint shop at the Flint assem-

bly plant. It also designated \$493 million for a new 10-speed transmission at the Romulus Powertrain plant. And there was \$121 million for a new "logistics optimization center" at the Detroit-Hamtramck plant.

Paint shops in the auto industry are highly automated. GM will undoubtedly put in the most modern equipment at the transmission plant. And the logistics optimization center is focused on cutting jobs out of the supply chain. So much for job creation.

This GM situation illustrates that the new high-tech era has made investment so expensive that creating new jobs has become monumentally difficult under the capitalist profit system.

Irreversible mass unemployment

This is something that Karl Marx pointed out over 150 years ago when he analyzed the capitalist system and its laws of development. Marx explained that as the capitalist system develops, the struggle of the capitalists for profits throws them into competition with each other. In this competition each one tries to introduce technology that compels fewer workers to turn out more and more products or services in less and less time.

This law has been confirmed by developments over the last 60 years. Bloomberg's Business Week, voice of the billionaires, ran an article in its Jan. 27 edition crudely entitled "Factory

Jobs Are Gone. Get Over It." The article showed that manufacturing output in the U.S. has more than tripled since 1953. At that time there were 16 million manufacturing workers. In 2012 there were only 12 million. So output went up by 300 percent while employment went down by 25 percent. Productivity in manufacturing, or output per worker per hour, went up 189 percent just between 1980 and 2012.

The scientific-technological race by the bosses — which forces fewer workers to be more productive and raises production so the company can capture more market share from its rivals — has reached the stage at which permanent mass unemployment and underemployment have become irreversible.

What goes for GM goes for the entire auto industry, for manufacturing and for the capitalist economy in general.

GM, like Ford, Chrysler, GE, Caterpillar, IBM, Walmart, McDonald's and other corporate giants that dominate the system, cannot invest anywhere near enough to employ the tens of millions of unemployed and underemployed.

This is the age of low-wage capitalism. Low wages are being imposed throughout the capitalist system. Fast food workers, big-box store workers, airport workers, janitors, nursing home workers, home health care workers, security guards, and tens of millions of others work for survival wages. Even the new workers who will be hired at GM will be

making \$13.50 or \$14.50 an hour — less than \$30,000 a year.

The needs of capital are to make profits. The bosses will hire only enough workers to fit their profit needs. Capital is so productive now that if it were to expand its production, it would rapidly create far more goods than the mass of the working class could buy. So the bosses hold back on investment, which means holding back on hiring or resorting to firing where that will "create or preserve" their profits.

In his fundamental work, "Wage-Labor and Capital," Marx wrote about this process of using technology against the workers in the war for profits.

"This war has the peculiarity that its battles are won less by recruiting than by discharging the army of labor. The generals, the capitalists, compete with one another as to who can discharge the most soldiers of industry."

Instead of applauding the bosses for creating a handful of jobs, they should be denounced for the millions of jobs they have destroyed and the millions of workers they have driven into poverty, low-wage jobs, and lives of permanent suffering and insecurity.

Goldstein is the author of "Low-Wage Capitalism" and "Capitalism at a Dead End," which has been translated into Spanish as "El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida."

Books available at Amazon.

Solidarity with Guadeloupe's unions

By John Catalinotto

Jocelyn Lapitre, a leading trade unionist from Guadeloupe, visited New York from Jan. 21 to Jan. 24 to garner support and solidarity for his organizations, the General Union of Workers of Guadeloupe (UGTG) and the Coalition Against Exploitation (LKP), both of which are facing a harsh attack.

Those attacking are the French authorities who rule that Caribbean island from 5,000 miles away. The UGTG and LKP led the 44-day general strike in early 2009, which won significant wage and benefit increases for Guadeloupe's working class.

The UGTG's deputy secretary general faces trumped-up charges based on an accidental death of a young man whose motorbike crashed into a strike barricade four years ago. Three other unionists face equally dubious charges stemming from a labor action in 2006. The French government and the bosses also refuse to live up to the concessions they agreed to when the 2009 strike ended.

While Lapitre was in New York, WW interviewed him and listened to two radio interviews. This article is mainly based on information and quotes from those discussions.

"I've come here to seek international solidarity," said Lapitre, "from trade unionists in the United States. This will be important for our defense and our victory. I've spoken with leaders in one of the Teamsters unions and we have connected with people on New York's Central Labor Council.

"Guadeloupe is a French colony. They call it an "Overseas Department" (DOM),



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Jocelyn Lapitre, Guadeloupe union representative.

which means there are representatives in the French National Assembly, but the big decisions are made by a prefect, which means by the government in Paris, 5,000 miles away. These decisions are not in the interest of the 400,000 people of Guadeloupe.

"Our union confederation, the UGTG, and the broader political organization that includes community and political organizations, the LKP, do not just represent the workers' economic demands. Both organizations support the struggle for the independence of Guadeloupe from France. And we want to remain independent from U.S. imperialism too.

"We made 130 demands on the bosses and government in 2009. They agreed to bargain on 20 of them. We finally ended the strike when they made some import-

ant concessions, which we considered a victory," said Lapitre.

French colonialists on anti-union offensive

In an article published March 15, 2009, WW reported: "The Accord [on Guadeloupe] includes the following: a 200-euro (\$260) wage increase per month; an average 6 percent reduction in the price of water; the hiring of 22 Guadeloupean teachers on the waiting list; measures to aid farmers and fishers, including the setting aside of 64,000 hectares (158,000 acres) of farmland for future use; lower bank

service rates; lower interest rates on loans, which are still being negotiated; a housing rent freeze and ban on evictions; improvements in union rights through the appointment of mediators to resolve outstanding conflicts in some major industries; and provisions for cultural development." (workers.org/2009/world/guadeloupe_0319/)

The 2009 strike aroused sympathetic solidarity struggles in Martinique and Guyane, also French "Overseas Departments" in the Caribbean region, and in Réunion island in the Indian Ocean.

Lapitre said that the French colonialists were renegeing on all the concessions. In addition, there were regular layoffs of workers. "Now, unemployment affects 30 percent of the active work force and 60 percent of the youth. And they are go-

ing after our leadership. They hate that we beat them in 2009 and they want revenge. They want to punish our victorious union just like the slaveholders have always tried to punish the Haitians for having defeated Napoleon in 1804."

In mid-January, three leaders of the Union of Health Care Workers (UTS) — affiliated with the UGTG — were summoned to appear before the Criminal Court at Guadeloupe's capital, Pointe-à-Pitre, to face charges dating back to strike actions of 2006.

Deputy Secretary Charly Lendo of the UGTG will appear before the courts on April 8. He has been charged with indirect, involuntary manslaughter. Workers had set up some barricades in 2009. A young man crashed his motorbike into one of barricades and died. "Ten people involved in the barricade were first charged," Lapitre told WW, "but nine were released. This important union leader was targeted."

The UGTG, which celebrated its 40th anniversary of fighting for workers' rights and for the independence of Guadeloupe on Dec. 5, will hold its 40th National Convention at the end of March and beginning of April. Three days after the convention's last session, Lendo's trial will begin. The UGTG would like it if a U.S.-based union organization could send one or more representatives to attend the convention and the opening of the trial and participate in a news conference.

For more information, see the website or contact the Guadeloupe Haiti Tour Committee at P.O. Box 7631, New York, NY 10150; email ghaititour@gmail.com; or call at 646-657-7207. □

Cuban leader Ricardo Alarcón on Amiri Baraka

By Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada

Alarcón was president of Cuba's National Assembly of People's Power and a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba until 2013.

*Beautiful black women,
it is still raining in this terrible land.
We need you. We flex our muscles,
turn to stare at our tormentor,
we need you. Raining.
We need you, reigning, black queen.*

(from the poem "Beautiful Black Women" by Amiri Baraka)

Amiri Baraka died on Jan. 9 in Newark, N.J., not far from where he had been born 79 years ago with the name of Everett LeRoi Jones. Those who were close in the intensive care ward of the hospital where he spent his last month say that poetry also accompanied him to the end.

I met him back in the sixties of last century, when he was known as LeRoi Jones. Despite his youth, he was already a recognized writer. He had published "Blues People: Negro Music in White America," an essential text considered "the first great history of black music written by an African-American," plus several collections of poems and a play, "Dutchman," which received the Obie Award and has been performed many times and made

into a film. One of his poems, "Black Art," became the main poetic manifesto of the Black Arts Literary Movement.

He was, even then, one of the clearest minds of the New York intellectual milieu, whose work transcended U.S. borders. He was beginning a long and fruitful career, which would include university teaching and would extend for half a century.

His career was not limited to artistic and literary creation or his intense intellectual activity.

He belonged to that rebellious generation which, within the belly of the beast, wanted to conquer the sky. A tireless social activist, his life is inseparable from the struggle against racism and imperialism synthesized in the Black Power movement, of which he was a guide and one of its main inspirations. He was also an inspiration for the Puerto Rican Young Lords, who fought for equality and the independence of their homeland. Very soon, the FBI identified him as "the person who is likely to emerge as the leader of the Pan-African movement in the United States."

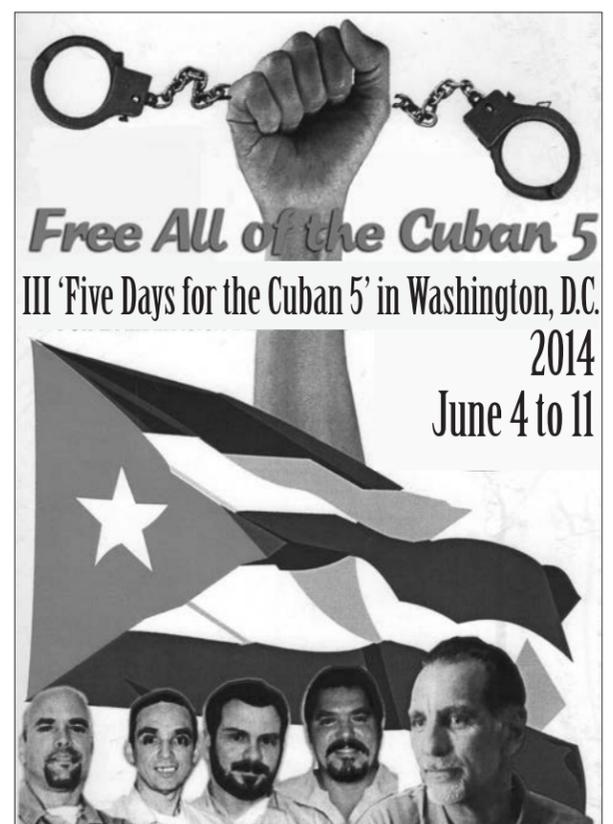
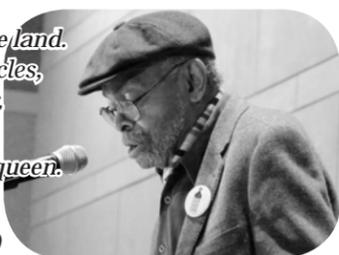
He came to Cuba in 1960 and wrote "Cuba Libre," a beautiful testimony of solidarity with our people and our Revolution, published in Evergreen Review. It received the Longview Award for best essay of the year. He reiterated his friendship through his "Declaration of Conscience," and by organizing hundreds of intellectuals and young Americans into the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. He was always with us and never gave up.

More than once he was imprisoned and suffered mistreatment and abuse. In 1967, during the popular rebellion in Newark, he was brutally beaten and kidnapped by racist police. The angry protests of Blacks in the streets, and the supportive wave which swept the world driven by Allen Ginsberg, Jean-Paul Sartre and other intellectuals, saved him from death.

He survived and led an unwavering life, always clinging to his youthful ideals, confident until his last

day that another world, that of freedom and socialism, is possible. He will remain with us.

This CubaNews translation from Spanish was edited by Walter Lippmann.



WORKERS WORLD
editorials

The planet's parasites

It should come as no surprise to any worker that the rich are getting richer, while the majority of people around the world are getting poorer. Yet, the latest statistics on the global concentration of wealth in the hands of a few are still stunning.

A report entitled, "Working for the Few," issued on Jan. 20 by Oxfam, a British-based, anti-poverty organization, declares that the world's 85 richest individuals own a total of \$1.7 trillion, which is equivalent to the wealth held by the poorest 3.5 billion people — half the world's population. Further, nearly half of the planet's wealth — a gargantuan \$110 trillion — is owned by the richest 1%.

The pages of this newspaper have stated that the super rich benefited from the recent global financial crisis, while the masses of the world's people fell further behind. Oxfam also notes this development and points out that the world's billionaires garnered 95 percent of the post-crisis growth, a trend it says is especially true in the United States. Workers World has noted the mammoth corporate profits made during the U.S.'s "jobless recovery," and the further impoverishment of the working class here, as millions remain unemployed or underemployed and need food stamps and other social benefits to survive.

What can political activists do while fighting along with the workers and oppressed in our cities in this period? We join with all those who demand higher corporate taxes, more government programs, including unemployment insurance and food stamps, higher wages, collective bargaining rights and every other economic right and social benefit for the majority of people.

However, we say that the struggle has to go further and hit hard against the capitalist system itself. Economic and social inequality is inherent in this system, rooted in the private ownership of the means of production.

Pennsylvania

Voter ID law struck down

By **Betsey Piette**
 Philadelphia

Civil rights activists in Pennsylvania won a victory on Jan. 17 when the state's Commonwealth Court judge, Bernard L. McGinley, struck down that portion of a repressive state law that requires voters to show photo identification at the polls.

The ruling followed nearly two years of litigation and hundreds of protests statewide by the bill's opponents. The plaintiffs, including the NAACP, the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters and Philadelphia's Homeless Advocacy Project, cited problems voters encountered while attempting to secure the state's voting-only ID cards. Several registered voters failed to receive cards they had applied for prior to the 2012 election.

In 2012, 10 states — Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin — passed restrictive voter identification or ID laws. These laws require documentation often difficult or impossible to obtain in order for voters to secure a photo ID. Pennsylvania's law was considered one of the strictest.

Restrictive voter ID legislation has

The bosses' exploitation of the multinational working class is also intrinsic to capitalism. With profit making and filling the bosses' coffers the goal of all production, laborers are paid only a fraction of the value they produce. Workers' labor has created all of the capitalists' wealth. The owners have created nothing.

As the capitalists accumulate more wealth from exploiting and super exploiting their workforce, they reinvest money, purchase companies and expand, always looking to increase their riches on the backs of those who produce everything.

In fact, in their ferocious war on the working class here and worldwide, the corporate bosses are trying to break unions and drive down wages, while fighting higher minimum wages, always searching the world for cheaper labor to maximize profits and increase their wealth even further.

No matter how much wealth the capitalist class owns, the riches will not "trickle down" to the workers. In fact, as the Oxfam study shows, with phenomenal wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, it has not helped the majority of the world's people. In fact, they've lost ground. Unemployment, hunger, homelessness and other inhumane indicators of capitalism are on the rise worldwide.

WW wants to get rid of this system of exploitation. We say it is time to kick up the struggle a notch and aim it against capitalism in order to end inequality, injustice, oppression and impoverishment forever.

Only socialism can move society forward, as the means of production would be transferred from ownership by a few to the collective hands of the multinational working class. Then, all the fruits of our labor would be used for the good of humanity — for housing, health care, education, nutritious food and everything else. □

been introduced in 34 states — representing a push back to the days of racist Jim Crow legislation. By making voting costlier and therefore harder for seniors, the poor, married women and people of color, these laws constitute a new "poll tax." In addition, more than 4.4 million formerly incarcerated people are permanently disenfranchised in all but two states.

Many of the voter ID laws were based on "model" legislation written by the American Legislative Exchange Council. This right-wing, corporate-sponsored group helped develop Florida's infamous "Stand Your Ground" law, used by vigilante George Zimmerman to justify killing African-American teenager Trayvon Martin in 2012.

Among the primary partners in ALEC are David and Charles Koch, also the major force behind recent efforts to re-segregate public schools in North Carolina. Their father, Fred Koch, founder of Koch Industries, one of the largest private corporations in the U.S., earned notoriety in the 1950s as a founding member of the neo-Nazi John Birch Society, a primary opponent of desegregation.

A longer version of this article was published on workers.org on Jan. 25.

Christie's 'Bridgegate' — Follow the money

By **Deirdre Griswold**
 New York

The sordid workings of bourgeois politics have been in the spotlight in the New York-New Jersey area for several months.

In early January, the story came out that Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey had made a whole lot of commuters furious because his deputy chief of staff, working in cahoots with two Christie appointees at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, had arranged last September for the closing of two of the three entry lanes onto the George Washington Bridge in Fort Lee, N.J. The bridge is the main artery connecting New Jersey to New York.

For four days there was one hell of a traffic jam. Tens of thousands of workers couldn't get to their jobs. Ambulances and other emergency vehicles got stuck and couldn't respond to calls. Traffic backed up so far into Fort Lee that some kids couldn't even get to school.

Why would Christie want to do such a thing? Because Fort Lee Mayor Mark J. Sokolich had refused to endorse Christie's campaign for re-election — or so the story went.

Adding more spice to the tale was speculation over how this might damage or even torpedo Christie's chance to get the Republican nomination and run for president in 2016. Christie himself, naturally, has denied any knowledge of what was going on. His underlings have either been fired or resigned, like the deputy whose email gloated over the planned closing: "Time for some traffic problems in Fort Lee."

More than meets the eye

Perhaps one of the reasons this story received national attention was that it seemed to be a most risky and disproportionate retaliation — making Christie and his appointees look stupid as well as venal. Some media called the traffic tie-up a "crackpot scheme."

But information has started to come out that puts "Bridgegate" in a new light.

What had been represented as the spiteful act of a peeved politician may have had a much weightier motivation: It appears that some of Christie's corporate pals wanted him to lean heavily on Fort Lee Mayor Mark Sokolich because they needed the mayor's okay on a development scheme worth at least a billion dollars.

Asking what could have motivated this enormous and planned traffic jam, Patrick McGeehan wrote in the Jan. 17 New York Times: "Just a block from the three lanes that usually funnel traffic from Fort Lee onto the bridge lie 16 acres of prime land that form the centerpiece of the borough's grand redevelopment plan. Two neighboring projects there promise to spend about \$1 billion to create a complex of luxury apartments, stores, offices and entertainment facilities."

Assemblyman John S. Wisniewski, a leader of one of the state committees looking into Bridgegate, told McGeehan: "A real estate development of this size involves a lot of money. ... The actions taken and the response that it generated are so disproportionate to the failure to get an endorsement from the mayor of Fort Lee that it raises my suspicion that this was done for some other reason."

McGeehan says Wisniewski told him that the real estate developments were not a focus of the committee's investigation. "But, as a real estate lawyer himself, he said he knew that the large sums of money involved in building often fueled corruption among elected and appointed officials. ...

"That it could be the key to understanding why two executives at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey — Bill Baroni and David Wildstein — would have schemed to disrupt traffic around the bridge for four days last fall 'is as plausible a theory as any,' he [Wisniewski] said.

"The only direct reference to the [real estate] developments in the documents gathered in the investigations so far," adds McGeehan, "came in a desperate plea Mayor Sokolich sent to Mr. Baroni, who was the deputy executive director of the Port Authority, on Sept. 12, the fourth straight day that traffic was snarled in his borough.

"Near the end of the two-page letter, Mr. Sokolich asked, 'What do I do when our billion — dollar redevelopment is put online at the end of the next year?'" (New York Times, Jan. 17)

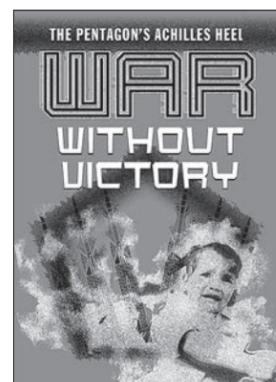
Port Authority: playground for the banks

The Port Authority has always been a playground for New York's wealthiest banks and real estate interests. Was the mayor, at his wit's end over this manufactured traffic disaster, trying to placate the powers-that-be by asking them what he had to do to make this and future attacks go away?

The banks and corporations right now are sitting on trillions of dollars. They are desperate to invest this money where they are guaranteed a big return. A modern high-rise complex just two blocks from the GWB has their salivary glands working overtime.

Another New Jersey scandal fits the same pattern. Mayor Dawn Zimmer of Hoboken, N.J., another small city directly across the Hudson River from Manhattan, has told federal investigators that Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno, a Christie appointee, threatened her with cutting funds provided by the federal government, but managed by the state, to rebuild after widespread destruction caused by Hurricane Sandy — unless Zimmer approved a "redevelopment" project in Hoboken favored by the governor.

And who is behind this Hoboken "redevelopment"? The Rockefeller Group,



WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

"By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity."

— Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,

President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009;

Foreign Minister of Nicaragua's Sandinista government

Available on amazon.com and bookstores around the country
 PentagonAchillesHeel.com

Anti-NATO forces retake areas in Libya

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

For nearly seven months in 2011, NATO planes — particularly from the U.S., France, Britain and Canada — carried out a massive bombing campaign in Libya intended to overthrow the government of Muammar Gadhafi.

After getting the U.N. Security Council to pass a resolution imposing an arms embargo on Libya and then another authorizing a so-called “no-fly zone” in which only their planes could fly, the imperialists succeeded in having Gadhafi captured and brutally killed, opening the way for the establishment of a new regime that would further their interests in that oil-rich North African country.

Now, just two and a half years later, this puppet government is losing ground in southern and western Libya to pro-Gadhafi forces, who have taken back several towns and an air base.

These developments have prompted French Admiral Edouard Guillard to appeal for a renewed imperialist intervention in Libya, claiming that developments on the southern border could lead to a “terrorist threat.” (Washington Post, Jan. 27)

Guillard claimed that any intervention would require the “consent” of the neo-colonial regime that these same imperialists set up in Tripoli. It is headed by Prime Minister Ali Zeidan and the General National Congress.

Since mid-January forces that remain allied with the former Jamahiriya political and economic system set up by Gadhafi have taken control of several cities and towns in the south. Clashes have also

been reported around the capital of Tripoli, where nationalist forces have fought pitched battles with militias and military forces backed by the GNC regime. (Libya Herald, Jan. 20)

The withdrawal of the Tebu, who are dark-skinned Africans, from an air base at Tamenhint created the conditions for the seizure of this important location by pro-Gadhafi forces on Jan. 21.

According to a Jan. 22 Saudi Gazette report, “The Tamenhint air base 30 km northeast of Sebha is reported to be back in pro-Gadhafi hands after Tebu forces from Murzuk who were guarding it withdrew. They unilaterally pulled out Monday evening [Jan. 20] claiming that the government was deliberately exploiting clashes in Sebha between Tebus and Awlad Sulaiman in order to divert attention from moves to replace it with a new administration.”

These events have sent shockwaves throughout the GNC and Zeidan, its weak and vacillating prime minister, who is allied with the United States and other imperialist states responsible for installing the current regime. The situation in Libya has clearly shown that the current regime has failed to stabilize its rule. Militias set up to bring down the Gadhafi regime are reportedly in open defiance of Zeidan and other “authorities” in Tripoli.

Oil is the major export of the North African state. The industry has been largely shut down after workers and militias at several drilling facilities and ports took control of production and threatened to engage in trade with foreign firms without the consent of Tripoli. Zeidan has limited support even within the GNC; the Islamic Justice and Construction Party recently resigned from the government over political differences with the prime minister.

Draconian laws enacted

Nonetheless, it is in the south that the green flag of the Jamahiriya is being openly flown in defiance of the imperialist-backed regime. This is causing panic in the government, which passed a new law banning satellite television networks that have been broadcasting pro-Gadhafi news and commentaries.

According to a Jan. 26 report from AllAfrica.com, Decree 5/2014, entitled “Concerning the Cessation and Ban on the Broadcasting of Certain Satellite Channels,” instructs the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Communications and Media to “take necessary steps required” to halt the transmission of all satellite television stations hostile to the regime in Tripoli. The decree further instructs the government to “take all measures” against states or businesses in territories from which the channels are broadcast if they fail to block the transmissions.

This ban on satellite stations that have taken a pro-Gadhafi position in their editorial content includes the al-Khadra Channel and al-Jamahiriya.

Dissatisfaction is growing among the Libyan population. Once the most prosperous nation in Africa, with a standard of living that exceeded several European countries, the conditions inside the country have drastically deteriorated since the 2011 imperialist-imposed counterrevolution. The decline in living standards, the failure of the regime to rein in the militias that terrorize the population, the collapse of the oil industry and widespread corruption have drawn broad criticism, even among the favored elites.

Another decree issued in January prohibits scholarship students and public employees from speaking out against the conditions prevailing in Libya. According to AllAfrica.com, “It calls on Libyan

embassies abroad and others to draw up lists of names and refer them to the Prosecutor General for prosecution.”

Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan

There is no benefit for the masses in oppressed nations where the U.S. and other imperialist states have overthrown governments and installed puppet regimes. The situation in Libya is mirrored in Iraq, where people are dying every day from internecine conflict and the overall horrendous conditions prevailing among the majority of the population.

Over 100,000 people have died in Syria over the last three years since the U.S. and Saudi Arabia promoted a counter-revolutionary assault on the population. The current Geneva II talks in Switzerland are ostensibly designed to reach a political solution in Syria, but the U.S. and its allies are continuing to finance and coordinate those seeking the overthrow of the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

Anti-war and anti-imperialist groups in the Western states should oppose this military and political interference into the internal affairs of African, Middle Eastern and Asian states — such as Afghanistan, where after 13 years the Pentagon-NATO forces are no closer to victory than in 2001. The U.S. and NATO must be forced to withdraw their occupying forces and shut down their military bases.

Those oppressed nations under imperialist occupation should be paid reparations for the destruction carried out by Western military forces. The resources utilized to maintain these occupations should instead be redirected to rebuild the cities and towns here that are facing an unprecedented economic crisis through austerity and massive poverty. □

Continued from page 10

which built Rockefeller Center. It is represented by the law firm Wolff & Samson, whose head, David Samson, was appointed chair of the Port Authority by Christie.

Bribers and bribees

While a few reporters for the capitalist media, like McGeehan, are digging around for more information about the role of Big Money in all this, most are content with seeing some political hacks' heads roll.

Will the cutthroat billionaires of the Rockefeller Group be penalized for any of this? Never. This system is designed to send poor people to prison for 15 years for such “crimes” as selling a little marijuana. But the money men who, for example, get their underlings to bribe inspectors to keep unsafe mines and factories open, rarely get even a slap on the wrist.

Those receiving bribes, if they are small enough to actually need the money, might do a little time if they're caught. But the millions of dollars that corporate donors shower on their chosen candidates at election time are perfectly legal. In effect, this money is bribery in advance for the anti-worker, anti-poor legislation the public servants of big business are committed to.

On the other hand, elected officials, especially those representing oppressed, working-class communities, are disproportionately the focus of racist “sting” operations and found guilty of allegedly taking bribes.

But when are the bribers ever punished?

Take a bribe and you might go to jail. Give a bribe and you might become governor or head of the Port Authority. It's the capitalist way. □

Inspired by Snowden —

World slams U.S. spying

Continued from page 1

because it's necessary — after all, these programs are unprecedented in U.S. history, and were begun in response to a threat that kills fewer Americans every year than bathtub falls and police officers — but because new technologies make it easy and cheap.

“I think a person should be able to dial a number, make a purchase, send an SMS, write an email or visit a website without having to think about what it's going to look like on their permanent record. Particularly when we now have courts, reports from the federal government and even statements from Congress making it clear these programs haven't made us any more safe, we need to push back.” (freesnowden.is, Jan. 23)

Snowden also slammed the egregious abuses of the NSA and referred to the PCLOB report which had come out the same day:

“When even the federal government says the NSA violated the Constitution at least 120 million times under a single program, but failed to discover even a single ‘plot,’ it's time to end ‘bulk collection,’ which is a euphemism for mass surveillance.”

A sordid history

The developments within the NSA which have been exposed by Snowden

are only the latest in a long history of such activities both within the United States and abroad.

Many people are aware of the Cointelpro program of the FBI, which conducted not only illegal spying and dirty tricks, but outright assassinations against members of the Black Panther Party, individuals such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and groups and individuals opposing the Vietnam War during the 1960s and 1970s.

Less well-known are the activities carried out by such groups as the CIA and the NSA. According to U.S. law, the operations of these groups are supposed to be confined to overseas enemies.

In 1967, pressed by the Vietnam War and rebellions in many U.S. cities, President Lyndon Johnson unleashed the CIA on his internal enemies. “In a blatant violation of his powers under law, the director of central intelligence became a part-time secret police chief. The CIA undertook a domestic surveillance operation, code-named Chaos. It went on for almost seven years.” (Tim Weiner, “Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA,” p.285)

According to then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, in a report to President Gerald Ford, “the CIA ... spied on the left, wiretapped newspaper reporters, and placed them under surveillance, conducted illegal searches, and opened un-

counted sacks of mail.” (Weiner, p. 337)

According to one history of the CIA, Kissinger “did not dare put in writing the contents of the ‘horrors book,’” which included documents about the many assassinations carried out by the CIA over many decades.

Lest anyone think that these outrages are vestiges of the past, the Obama administration has not only asserted its right to assassinate U.S. citizens in theory, but has exercised it in practice. In September 2011, the U.S. military killed U.S. citizen Anwar Awlaki in a drone strike in Yemen, along with U.S. citizen Samir Khan, and then, in circumstances that are still unexplained, two weeks later killed Awlaki's 16-year-old son Abdulrahman with a separate drone strike in Yemen. (The Guardian, Feb. 5, 2013)

According to the legal brief defending these actions put out by the U.S. Justice Department, all the evidence against a victim cannot only be collected in secret, it remains forever secret and is not subject to any judicial oversight.

The long history of U.S. imperialism's criminal spying and even murder may be nefarious, but it is not invulnerable, thanks to the courageous actions by individuals such as Manning and Snowden. Most important is the outrage and fight-back of the masses of people both inside and outside the boundaries of the U.S. □



Huelga de maestros cierra escuelas en Puerto Rico

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci
Traducción: Ana Jones

Miles de maestros y maestras, estudiantes y sus familias, así como organizaciones progresistas, sacudieron al gobierno local de Puerto Rico lanzándose a las calles el 14 y el 15 de enero para exigir que los maestros no sean los que carguen con el costo de la grave crisis económica de Puerto Rico.

La insolvencia de la economía puertorriqueña

Desde el pasado otoño, la empresa financiera estadounidense Moody's ha amenazado con bajar la clasificación crediticia de Puerto Rico a la clasificación chatarra debido a las dificultades con el pago de la deuda pública, que asciende a \$70 mil millones.

Durante décadas, el gobierno de la isla ha estado vendiendo bonos para mantener la parasitaria economía colonial. El dinero que se obtiene de la venta de estos bonos se ha usado para la nómina de los empleados públicos, la construcción de infraestructura — muchas veces innecesaria — y principalmente para pagar la deuda del país.

Ninguna parte significativa del producto de estos bonos se ha usado para crear empleos sólidos que eliminarían el desempleo crónico, el cual a noviembre de 2013 alcanzaba la elevada cifra de 14,7 por ciento. (tradingeconomics.com)

Debido a la triple exención contributiva sobre los intereses pagados por el gobierno de Puerto Rico a nivel local, estatal y federal y el altísimo rendimiento de los bonos de Puerto Rico, estos gozan de gran demanda en el mercado financiero de los EE.UU. Además, existe la seguridad de pago ya que la constitución de la isla garantiza a los bonistas que se les pagará de manera preferente antes que a cualquier otro acreedor. Los bonos de Puerto Rico están en más del 70 por ciento de fondos de bonos municipales en todo los Estados Unidos.

Los gobiernos embaucan al pueblo

Desde el 2006, es decir, desde antes de la gran crisis financiera en los EE.UU., la economía de la isla ha ido en picada. Hay un dicho muy conocido en Puerto Rico: "Cuando en Estados Unidos hay catarro, en Puerto Rico nos da pulmonía". Este dicho expresa la condición colonial: todo indicador económico se agrava en Puerto Rico porque la isla carece de autodeterminación para establecer una trayectoria que beneficie al pueblo puertorriqueño en vez de Wall Street.

Cada una de las administraciones lo-

cales, sea el Partido Nueva Progresista (PNP), favorecedor de la estadidad, o el PPD, el Partido Popular Democrático que favorece la colonia — partidos que se alternan el gobierno cada cuatro a ocho años — ha impuesto medidas de austeridad que han sumido cada vez más al pueblo en la pobreza y ha embaucado la isla mediante la privatización y tasas contributivas regresivas.

El actual gobernador es Alejandro García Padilla, del PPD. En sus promesas de campaña destacó su "voluntad" de gobernar en favor del pueblo. Sin embargo, en aras de satisfacer a los inversionistas de EE.UU., en el poco tiempo que ha ocupado el cargo desde enero de 2013, ha impuesto muchas medidas que van en contra del pueblo. Ha privatizado el aeropuerto y carreteras, aumentado los cargos de servicio de agua y alcantarillado en 60 por ciento, aumentado la edad de retiro y reducido las pensiones de los empleados públicos.

Ahora García Padilla exige una reducción en el sueldo de los maestros y maestras de las escuelas públicas. Hay más maestros en la isla que empleados de gobiernos: 42.000 maestros activos y 38.000 retirados. El magisterio no recibe el Seguro Social, de manera que toda reducción en sus pensiones los dejará con poco o ningún ingreso.

El 24 de diciembre, como despiadado regalo de Navidad, el gobernador firmó la Ley 160 que reduce las pensiones de los maestros y los jueces.

Los maestros y maestras se resisten y llaman al paro

Este ataque más reciente, junto con el anuncio de la "reforma" de las pensiones provocó una fuerte resistencia entre el pueblo. Los maestros y maestras, quienes ya estaban organizados en un Frente Amplio, afirmaron que no se quedarían cruzados de brazos y convocaron un paro de 48 horas para los primeros dos días de clases, el 14 y el 15 de enero.

El Frente en Defensa del Sistema de Retiro de Maestros se compone de seis organizaciones principales: Educadores para la Democracia, Unidad, Cambio, Militancia y Sindicalismo (EDUCAMOS), Unión Nacional de Educadores y Trabajadores en la Educación (UNETE), la Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (AMPR), la Asociación Nacional de Puerto Rico de Directores de Escuela (ONDEPR) y la Organización de Directores y Administradores de Escuela (ODAE).

Eva Ayala, líder principal de EDUCAMOS y una de las principales líderes del Frente, habló con Workers World/Mundo Obrero el 19 de enero acerca del

paro, las reuniones con el gobernador, las demandas y estrategia del Frente, la situación de los maestros y los próximos pasos en la lucha.

Ayala catalogó el paro de "muy exitoso" y compartió algunas de las experiencias y reacciones. A pesar de que hablaba con voz ronca — resultado de las actividades y estar vociferando bajo la lluvia, que le produjo un catarro — expresó el entusiasmo que sienten los maestros y maestras en huelga.

"Esto fue una huelga en todos los barrios de Puerto Rico. Asumí la tarea de visitar varios pueblos y fue bien interesante ver que había marchas en cada pueblo que visité, de maestros y maestros, de padres y de estudiantes. Fue algo nunca antes visto en Puerto Rico.

"Pensé que si había marchas en todos los lugares de Puerto Rico el primer día, entonces habría un mar de gente el día siguiente, y así fue. He asistido a muchas protestas en mi vida, pero nunca había visto algo como esto.

"El éxito se dio porque aún las organizaciones de maestros que no tienen tradición de protesta se involucraron". Señaló que las/os miembros de esas organizaciones empujaron a su liderazgo conservador a tomar acción. Las/os organizadores dividieron la isla en cuatro regiones y visitaron cada región para explicar la situación a las maestras y maestros, las/os estudiantes y las comunidades.

Otra de las razones del éxito, expresó, fue la participación de las organizaciones de los directores y supervisores de las escuelas, que por lo regular son conservadoras.

"Cuando me preguntaron el día antes cuántas personas participarían, dije un 82 por ciento, a base de las respuestas que habíamos recibido de los maestros, pero se superaron nuestras expectativas". Todas las escuelas estaban cerradas.

Otro factor que Ayala enfatizó, aparte de la participación de los estudiantes y los padres, fue la participación del sector sindical. "Un elemento que nunca se ha visto en estas acciones fue la participación de todos sectores sindicales, alentando a los padres a que no enviaran sus hijos a la escuela, expresando una tremenda solidaridad, ayudando con la logística, etc. No hay duda de que los maestros están en pie de lucha".

"Algunas personas lo calificaron como 'el paro perfecto'".

Demandas y estrategia del Frente

Moody's le exigió al gobierno de Puerto Rico que rebajara las pensiones de los maestros y maestras para evitar que se calificaran los bonos como chatarra. La demanda de los maestros es breve y al grano: Que no se toque el fondo de retiro de los maestros.

Ayala expresó, "Sabemos que hay déficit; la Junta de Retiro necesita \$333 millones para resolverlo. Pero tenemos una estrategia que le llevamos al gobernador".

Entre los nueve puntos de la estrategia se encuentra el aumento de un 1 por ciento a las empresas extranjeras. Una de las razones que la economía está en ruinas es que Puerto Rico es un paraíso

contributivo para las empresas extranjeras. Aún después que la legislación de exención contributiva se derogó en 1996, las contribuciones bajas y disposiciones especiales para estas empresas hacen que todavía sea un buen negocio para éstas. Esto en efecto le transfiere dinero del pueblo de Puerto Rico a los bolsillos de los financieros de Wall Street.

Ayala expresó, "Estas empresas extranjeras obtienen más de \$30 mil millones de ganancias al año y solo pagan el 4 por ciento al gobierno. Este por ciento se eliminará en el 2017. Este [1 por ciento] aumento solo se podría asignar al sistema de retiro de los maestros".

Ayala nos recordó que las/os maestras "no han tenido un aumento salarial en más de una década y con nuestro sueldo tan bajo hemos tenido que pagar por los materiales que hacen falta en las escuelas, tales como papeles, copias, pintura para los edificios, computadoras, etc."

El gobierno, que es un gobierno colonial, se encuentra en un callejón sin salida. El gobernador García Padilla se reunió con el Frente en cuatro ocasiones antes de la huelga y prometió que no les haría daño. Pero él es un instrumento del imperialismo, un administrador colonial que no tiene ningún poder. Muy obedientemente firmó la ley preparada por Wall Street en contra de la agencia más grande de la Isla, el departamento de educación. En el proceso, afectó directa o indirectamente a todo el pueblo de Puerto Rico.

Los próximos pasos

Enfatizando que "En PR, el 82 por ciento del magisterio son mujeres. Un alto porcentaje de estas, son jefas de familia. En el nivel elemental, la proporción de mujeres supera el 90 por ciento. Esto implica que el desmantelamiento del Sistema de Retiro para Maestros afecta principalmente al sector de las mujeres. Por eso siempre hemos dicho que la lucha magisterial en nuestro país, y en este caso, la lucha en defensa de nuestro sistema de retiro, tiene rostro de mujer".

La lucha no ha acabado. Se ha establecido un Comité de Diálogo con la participación del Frente, el Gobierno y la Arquidiócesis. El comité tiene unas escasas semanas para realizar su trabajo.

El 14 de enero, el primer día de la huelga, el Tribunal Supremo de Puerto Rico detuvo la implementación de la ley sobre el retiro de los maestros, hasta que se realice un estudio por parte de un comisionado especial quien deberá tomar una determinación final a más tardar el 7 de febrero.

Las/os maestras continúan con sus manifestaciones y usando camisa negra los miércoles, así como continúan denunciando esta crítica situación.

Con respecto al comité, Ayala dice que el Frente ha advertido que si no se ven los resultados, continuarán con la lucha en las calles.

Mientras tanto, el Frente indica que tiene una urgente necesidad de fondos para trabajar y organizar y piden que envíen sus cheques de aportación a EDUCAMOS, P.O. Box 642, Comerío, PR 00782. □