

MASS MARCHES AFFIRM

'Black Lives Matter'



By Monica Moorehead

The four-month uprising against police violence received a tremendous boost on Dec. 13 — a national day of actions called by Ferguson and St. Louis, Mo., organizers. In many U.S. cities, thousands — and even tens of thousands — of determined and militant activists and ordinary people took to the streets to demand justice for Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Akai Gurley, John Crawford, Trayvon Martin and all victims of racist police and vigilante terror.

Reports confirmed that crowds were very multinational — Black, Brown, Arab, Asian, Native and white and overwhelmingly youthful. December 13 was one of 11 days, from Dec. 10 to 21, of coordinated actions called under the Twitter hashtag #ThisStopsToday. The number “11” symbolizes how many times Eric Garner responded, “I can’t breathe,” as Staten Island police put him in a chokehold, which eventually led to his death on July 17.

On Dec. 3, a Staten Island grand jury exonerated white police officer Daniel Pantaleo of any guilt in Garner’s murder and refused to indict him on any charges.

This legal decision came on the heels of another racist ruling announced on Nov. 24: White killer cop Darren Wilson would not be indicted for the murder of 18-year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson on Aug. 9. Brown was attempting to surrender before Wilson shot him in the head.

Brown’s death sparked a more than week-long rebellion, followed by sustained resistance in Ferguson led by Black youth. They expressed their own anger at police repression and occupation by chanting, “Hands up, don’t shoot”

The Brown and Garner families are asking the Department of Justice to bring federal charges against the killer cops for violating the civil rights

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SPECIAL BULLETIN: CUBAN 5 FREED!

Dec. 17 — As we go to press, it has been announced by the Obama administration that the remaining incarcerated Cuban Five — Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero and Ramón Labañino — have been released from U.S. prisons.

The Cuban Five heroes have been imprisoned in the U.S. since 1998 for trying to stop terrorist attacks against socialist Cuba. See workers.org for more.



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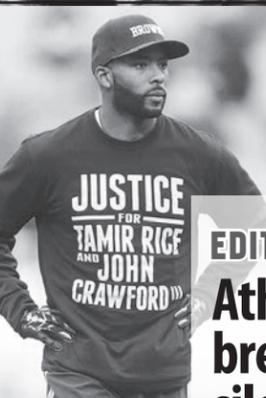
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Andrew Hawkins



PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL



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Court rules for Albert Woodfox, now let him go!

By Kathy Durkin

Forty-two years in solitary confinement is 42 years too long. Albert Woodfox should be released now from a Louisiana prison. On Nov. 20, the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed. The three-judge panel ruled unanimously to uphold a lower court's decision to overturn Woodfox's conviction for killing a prison guard.

On Feb. 26, 2013, U.S. District Court Judge James A. Brady had reversed Woodfox's conviction on the basis that racial discrimination was involved in grand jury selection in his 1998 retrial. The same judge had made the same ruling in 2008, but it was reversed under a reactionary federal law. Louisiana's attorney general has appealed the recent appeals court's decision.

Supporters from around the country attended Woodfox's hearing before Judge Brady in May 2012. Workers World activists were there and reported on it, reviewing the long fight for justice and freedom by the Angola 3: Woodfox, Robert King and Herman Wallace.

Published in WW on June 8, 2012, the article said, "Woodfox's case began 40 years ago, deep in rural southern Louisiana, when he and two other young Black men, Herman Wallace and Robert King, were silenced for exposing racial segregation, systematic corruption and horrific abuse in the biggest prison in the U.S. at that time, an 18,000-acre, former slave plantation called Angola.

"Protests such as hunger strikes and work stoppages were organized by prisoners, as were political education classes. A chapter of the Black Panther Party was formed. Prisoners called for investigations to uncover numerous unconstitutional and inhumane practices.

"After a prison guard was killed in a 1972 rebellion, officials framed the three activists and threw them into solitary confinement." King got out of prison in 2001. Wallace was released a year ago, but died of cancer three days later.



Albert Woodfox

Woodfox was imprisoned at Angola for 40 years, and then transferred to David Wade Correctional Center. He has been kept in solitary the longest of any U.S. prisoner. Woodfox maintains his innocence; the facts are on his side.

After the favorable decision in 2013, ruthless Louisiana prison officials retaliated and stopped Woodfox's contact visits without explanation. After protests, the visits were reinstated but with such complex regulations that it is nearly impossible for him to have visitors. Prisoners in Louisiana do not have the legal right to see visitors.

Supporters of Woodfox have initiated a campaign, "Give Albert a hug for the holidays," and request letters be sent to Secretary of Corrections Jimmy LeBlanc, asking that Woodfox be allowed to have visitors. LeBlanc's address, fax and phone numbers, and a sample letter can be found at the Angola 3 News blog (angola3news.blogspot.com/). Also, send holiday greetings to Albert Woodfox, #72148, at David Wade Correctional Center, 670 Bell Hill Road, Homer, LA 71040.

The fight is far from over. Free Albert Woodfox. □

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WORKERS WORLD PARTY

Who we are & what we're fighting for

Hate capitalism? Workers World Party fights for a socialist society — where the wealth is socially owned and production is planned to satisfy human need. This outmoded capitalist system is dragging down workers' living standards while throwing millions out of their jobs. If you're young, you know they're stealing your future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet with its unplanned, profit-driven stranglehold over the means of production.

Workers built it all — it belongs to society, not to a handful of billionaires! But we need a revolution to make that change. That's why for 55 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

degrading people because of their nationality, sexual or gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling class uses to keep us apart. They ruthlessly super-exploit some in order to better exploit us all. WWP builds unity among all workers while supporting the right of self-determination. Fighting oppression is a working-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles led today by people of color, immigrants and women.

WWP has a long history of militant opposition to imperialist wars. The billionaire rulers are bent on turning back the clock to the bad old days before socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles liberated territory from their grip. We've been in the streets to oppose every one of imperialism's wars and aggressions. □

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Michigan transgender rights' struggle

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

The victories for marriage equality represent a huge advance for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer movement in the United States. Two-thirds of the U.S. population now live in states that permit or recognize same-sex unions. It is wholly possible that the U.S. Supreme Court will compel states that still discriminate against same-sex couples to allow them to marry there. Polls show that a majority of people in many states support the progress that has been made.

It would be easy, but wrong, to conclude that LGBTQ oppression has been eradicated. Only 18 states have laws making it illegal to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in jobs, housing and public accommodation. Some of those 18 states do not protect the transgender community; the laws do not cover gender identity or gender expression.

Most states, including those where same-sex marriage is legal, do not give recognition to men and women whose gender identity differs from the gender assigned to them at birth. Even after having surgery, most transgender people cannot get their gender listed on a birth

certificate, driver's license or state identification. The negative ramifications are many; state voter ID laws, for example, leave transgender voters disenfranchised.

Bigotry disproportionately impacts trans women of color, who are attacked and murdered on the street.

This disparity of justice under the wide umbrella of the LGBTQ community is potentially divisive. For many years gay-identified moderates failed to stand with the trans community, citing bogus concerns that potential straight allies would be "alienated."

Discriminatory 'non-discrimination' bill

In Michigan, "moderate" Republicans introduced a phony "non-discrimination" bill that would widen the gap between who is legally protected and who isn't. The bill amends the state civil rights statute known as the Elliott-Larsen Act, passed in 1976, to include "sexual orientation" but not "gender identity/gender expression."

State House Speaker Jase Bolger and Rep. Frank Foster introduced the bill just months after an all-inclusive bill was proposed by State House Democrats. Why not just get behind the original bill?

The divide-and-conquer tactic is how

the ruling class keeps the working class — or in this case, an oppressed grouping within the working class — from uniting against the capitalist system of exploitation.

Fortunately, Michigan's LGBTQ advocacy organizations united to reject this sleazy maneuver to divide our community.

"We have no intention of leaving the transgender community behind," said Emily Dievendorf, Equality Michigan's executive director. "We also are faced with the reality [that this] glaring omission impacts the entire community. As LGBTQ victim and legal advocates can tell you, many lesbian, gay and bisexual people are also fired because of their gender expression. Any bill which is not fully inclusive is inadequate."

The House Commerce Committee, under pressure from Bolger, adjourned without moving the fully inclusive bill

out of committee.

The LGBTQ movement is being attacked for its principled stand. Ingrid Jacques, a Detroit News editor, in a front page article stated that "this time you can't blame the Republicans," who were supposedly lined up to vote to add "sexual orientation" to Elliott-Larsen. She blamed "the ACLU of Michigan, Equality Michigan and others [that] wouldn't even consider legislation that didn't specifically name transgender individuals, along with gays and lesbians."

At an update meeting Dec. 7, Dievendorf explained that the inclusive bill is not a dead letter. The committee could hold another hearing or the House could vote to move it out of committee. The hearing that was held Dec. 3 did not allow victims of anti-LGBTQ discrimination to testify. "We will kill the bill that has sexual orientation only," Dievendorf stated. □

Attacks step up against reproductive justice

By Sue Davis

A controversial issue raised in the Nov. 4 election was "personhood" — whether fertilized eggs should be defined as persons, with full human rights from the moment of conception. Promoters of such laws seek to outlaw women's right to abortion and several types of contraception.

Such ballot initiatives were decisively defeated by 63 percent in Colorado and 64 percent in North Dakota. Similar initiatives were defeated in 2008 and 2010 in Colorado and in 2011 in Mississippi.

But Tennessee voters passed a personhood amendment to the state constitution by 53 percent. It will now read: "Nothing in this Constitution secures or protects a right to abortion or requires the funding of an abortion" and authorizes elected officials "to enact, amend, or repeal statutes regarding abortion." The Nov. 6 Nashville Tennessean noted that one newly elected legislator pledged to promote abortion restrictions in January.

RH Reality Check concluded that the Colorado and North Dakota initiatives "failed because their proponents weren't secretive" about the laws' restrictive effects, "while the extreme anti-choice ramifications of Tennessee's new policy aren't as immediately obvious." (Nov. 6)

How the initiative was fought in Tennessee also had a strong bearing on its passage, noted RHRC. Women from out-of-state have one-fourth of the state's abortions. So anti-choice forces depicted this "not as a story of desperate women doing what they need to survive, but as 'abortion tourism.'" While pro-choice advocates argued that women came because needed health care was lacking in eight surrounding states, the right wing's coded language demonized women seeking abortions from out-of-state. RHRC concluded that "long-standing narratives about gender, sin, and sexuality have the power to shift votes."

But the repercussions of such personhood initiatives — and all anti-abortion

legislation — have more serious implications for all women. "Such laws are increasingly being used as the basis for arresting women who have no intention of ending a pregnancy and for preventing women from making their own decisions about how they will give birth," wrote Lynn M. Paltrow, executive director of National Advocates for Pregnant Women, and Jeanne Flavin, sociology professor and NAPW board member, in the Nov. 8 New York Times.

For instance, a judge in Washington, D.C., in 1987, ordered a critically ill young woman who was 26 weeks pregnant to have a cesarean section, which he understood might kill her, but might save the fetus' life. Neither survived.

In Iowa, a woman seeking help at a hospital after falling down a flight of stairs was arrested for "attempted fetal homicide." After a woman was forced to have a cesarean she didn't want, a court stated her rights "clearly did not outweigh the interests of the State of Florida in preserving the life of the unborn child."

A peer-reviewed study published in 2013 by NAPW documented "413 arrests or equivalent actions depriving pregnant women of their physical liberty during the 32 years between 1973, when Roe v. Wade was decided, and 2005. ... Since 2005, we have identified an additional 380 cases," with more arrests every week. The organization attributes that to "what the Guttmacher Institute describes as a 'seismic shift' in the number of states" with anti-abortion laws.

Though voters in Mississippi, South Dakota and Florida defeated curbs on abortion, anti-abortion legislation will surely be raised at all government levels in 2015. That means all progressive forces must intensify the fight for reproductive justice so all women have access to abortion care and pregnant women's right to medical privacy and bodily integrity is guaranteed. Solidarity with low-income and oppressed women is key, as their rights are the most endangered. □

Tribute to Leslie Feinberg

She brought 'trans' into labor's vocabulary

By Martha Grevatt

In 1895, the year that Frederick Engels died, a 25-year-old V.I. Lenin wrote a tribute as an introduction to the first Russian language edition of Engels' works. He opened with two lines from Russian poetry:

*"What a torch of reason
ceased to burn,
What a heart has
ceased to beat!"*

These lines, which I first came across as a communist youth, came back to me again when I had to put together some thoughts about Leslie Feinberg. One could not help but notice her mind and her intellect, whether hearing her speak for the first time or again after many times. Or even in a short and pleasant conversation.

Leslie was a patient but unyielding teacher. She taught us the word "transgender" as soon as it entered the English language. In 1994, at the founding convention of Pride at Work, I knew — thanks in part to Leslie — that it would not do to call ourselves just a lesbian and gay labor organization. Before the convention closed I made sure to make a motion to call ourselves the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Labor Organization. It passed unanimously. Back then it was a vanguard position. Now it is the norm in the LGBTQ movement and Leslie deserves some credit for that.

Leslie and I shared the experience of being queer in a factory environment. We worked in some horrible sweatshops, she in Buffalo and I in Cleveland before I landed a UAW Chrysler job. I have met worker intellectuals in the factories, but too often they look down on their own class and tend to embrace capitalist individualist ideology. If anything, they embrace it more than their coworkers. Leslie was also a self-taught worker intellectual, but one who hated capitalism and fought for socialism.

As a writer and editor, she absorbed vo-



Leslie Feinberg in 1992

PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

cabulary. I remember writing about when George Bush stole the election in Ohio in 2004. I sent the email with the word "malfeasance" in the subject headline — but I didn't use it in the article headline because I thought the word was obscure. But when the next issue of the paper came out, sure enough, the headline referred to "electoral malfeasance in Ohio."

Leslie loved words and words loved Leslie. But Leslie loved much more than language. She loved the species for which language is unique — she loved humanity. She loved her class, the working class, and fought for the most oppressed. She knew, even in her failing years, that three words — "Free CeCe McDonald," chalked on a courthouse wall — would speak volumes.

A warm and loving heart has ceased to beat, and the only real tribute we can pay is to fight a little bit harder ourselves for the communist future. □

Beyond police bullets and chokeholds

Growing incarceration rates for African Americans

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**

Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Since the police killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., on Aug. 9, and then the failure of a grand jury to indict white police officer Darren Wilson, mass demonstrations and rebellions have erupted across the country, bringing national and international attention to the plight of African Americans at the hands of law enforcement, the grand jury system and prosecutors.

Missouri is a southern border state with a long history of racial segregation. But in the But in New York City's Staten Island borough, African Americans have also been unable to win justice, as illustrated by a grand jury's refusal to indict another white police officer in the killing of 43-year-old Eric Garner, despite the officer's illegal chokehold being caught on videotape and seen by millions.

Assumptions surrounding the criminality of African Americans are deeply rooted in the period of slavery. After the Civil War, mechanisms were put in place to continue the containment, oppression and exploitation of the descendants of enslaved Africans.

Despite the heroic and pioneering role of African Americans in making social gains during the period of Reconstruction, the system of racialized subjugation was reinstated through a series of structural barriers, including unjust laws, police terrorism, lynching and penal labor camps.

The Civil Rights and Black Power

movements created the conditions for the formal dismantling of segregation laws, but the actual structural barriers and methods of repression have continued, often more sophisticated and insidious. Assumptions related to the inherent criminality of African Americans provide a rationalization for police violence against the community, as well as discriminatory treatment within the overall criminal justice system.

Study substantiates continuing trend

The most recent figures on incarceration rates in the United States, based on the 2010 census, further confirm that the U.S. imprisonment rate for African Americans reveals a deeply racist society.

A report released in 2011 by the Aspen Institute, entitled "Race, Crime and Punishment: Breaking the Connection in America," illustrates how the racist assumptions still prevalent in the criminal justice system serve to perpetuate a racially stratified society. Civil rights laws may imply that all are equal before the system, but the culture of law enforcement and the grand jury system work to imprison African Americans and exonerate the police.

The introduction to this study says: "More than 2.3 million people in America are in jail or prison. Sixty percent are African American and Latinos."

Moreover, nearly 7 million people are under some form of correctional supervision through probation, parole or community service. This means the U.S. has the largest per capita prison population

in the world.

Official census figures indicate that African Americans constitute approximately 13 percent of the U.S. population but 40 percent of the prisoners. Those designated as "Latinos" represent 15 percent of the overall population but are 20 percent of those imprisoned.

The Aspen Institute report states: "Black-white differences in incarceration rates are most dramatic: an estimated 4,777 black males were locked up for every 100,000 black males in the free population, compared to about 727 per 100,000 white males. A stunning 11.7 percent of black men in their late twenties were incarcerated. ... Black men of all ages are five to seven times more likely to be incarcerated than white males of the same age. These racial patterns hold up across gender, criminal offense and regional categories."

The rates of imprisonment for this oppressed nation within the confines of the U.S. reflect a systematic racial targeting of the community. The rates of incarceration have accelerated over 500 percent since 1970, despite a series of civil rights bills and executive orders between 1957 and 1968 that ostensibly outlawed discrimination in voting rights, access to public accommodations, employment and housing.

The broader social implications of this disparate rate of incarceration are acknowledged by the Aspen Institute report: "Of all the statistics portraying racial inequity in our country, this is the most alarming: it indicates the failure of

so many of our society's institutions; it predicts dire consequences for millions of children and families of color who are already at socioeconomic disadvantage; and it challenges the very definition of our democracy."

Worse than apartheid

In fact, the rates of incarceration for African Americans are far higher than what existed in South Africa at the height of the struggle against apartheid, according to New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof in a series of articles entitled "When Whites Just Don't Get It."

Despite the existence of civil rights laws, there has been a sharp rise in the use of lethal force against African Americans. The growing awareness and sensitivity to such levels of police and criminal justice system violence will inevitably necessitate ongoing anti-racist demonstrations.

These mass protests and rebellions will result in further actions of repression by law enforcement agencies, which are heavily equipped with military hardware supplied by the Pentagon. No matter how many "retraining" exercises the police are subjected to, unless there is a fundamental transformation in the system of national oppression and economic exploitation, the conditions of African Americans cannot change for the better.

The Obama administration and its Wall Street and Pentagon backers have no intentions of addressing these issues. Only a mass revolutionary movement can wage an effective struggle against racism in all of its manifestations. □

Meeting in Harlem says

Black lives matter, from Ferguson to West Africa

By **G. Dunkel**

Harlem, N.Y.

An all day rainstorm could not keep people from attending a Solidarity Rally Against Ebola, Stigma and Racism at the National Black Theatre in Harlem, N.Y. on Dec. 9. The program sponsored by the African Ebola Crisis Committee and the International Action Center showed what a people's response to an epidemic, led by those most affected, would look like.

A banner read: "Fight Ebola, not wars; Black lives matter from Ferguson to Staten Island to West Africa."

Two of the speakers, Taegbo Porte and Oretha Bestman Yates, are originally from Liberia and represent the Liberian community centered in Staten Island. They explained that Ebola came after a decade of civil war devastated the infrastructure of their country.

This outbreak of the disease is now adding tremendous strains to Liberian society and increasing the misery of the poorest Liberians. Ebola survivors face social isolation, which makes it very hard to find food and shelter. Those living under quarantine and patients' families face starvation.

Oretha Bestman Yates, president of the Staten Island Liberian Community Association, said that her group is raising funds to feed Ebola victims and survivors. She appealed for donations to the



Above, Dr. Margaret Stevens with Essex Students, Above right, Sahid Koromah

Staten Island Liberian Community Association Ebola Fund; see tinyurl.com/kh3p9yr.

Sahid Koromah, representing the U.S. Sierra Leonean Association, said that the number of people with Ebola in Sierra Leone surpassed that of Liberia, and that his group is working people-to-people, not with the government.

Donat Bukaba, a representative of the Rwandan community in the New York metropolitan region, raised that young children from Rwanda — an African country thousand of miles away from any Ebola cases — were kept out of school in Connecticut because the frenzy over the disease had created a stigma against all

Africans. He called for the unity of all African communities in the U.S.

Dr. Margaret Stevens, director of Urban Issue Institute at Essex County Community College in New Jersey and on the National Board of Veterans for Peace, said that Essex students are working on radio lessons for countries where classes are closed because of Ebola.

Marcelo Maia of ACT-UP NY, discussed the stigma he faced around HIV-AIDS. His group held a rally at Bellevue Hospital on "ACT-UP Against Ebola."

Larry Holmes, of the Peoples Power Assembly, told of the current struggle against police violence in the U.S. He explained that the struggle to overcome

Ebola in West Africa has been intensified due to the devastation left by the former colonial powers in the three countries: the United States in Liberia, Great Britain in Sierra Leone and France in Guinea.

Charles Jenkins, president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists in New York, said that TWU Local 100 will set up a committee concerned with Ebola as part of their health care work.

Gail Walker, co-director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization/Pastors for Peace, talked about the contributions Cuba is making. The socialist country has sent hundreds of doctors to West Africa.

Dr. Hillel Cohen, an epidemiologist, talked about the necessity for medical quarantines and isolation. If done humanely and justly, with economic compensation, including wages, paid to the ill, it would cost billions of dollars. That is why the big Western countries, like the United States, Britain and France, skirt this issue.

Larry Hamm of the Peoples Organization for Progress said: "Racism, colonialism, imperialism, capitalism are deadly diseases that kill more people than Ebola. The spread of Ebola is a manifestation of underdevelopment."

Continued on page 5

CIA torturers 'exposed' but protected

By Fred Goldstein

The Senate Intelligence Committee's report on CIA torture reveals in detail the unrestrained brutality its operatives have carried out at secret sites around the world. Reading the disclosures in the 500-page executive summary of the committee's findings is somewhat comparable to witnessing the strangling of Eric Garner by the police in Staten Island or hearing the testimony of witnesses who saw the unarmed, 18-year-old Michael Brown shot down in cold blood in Ferguson, Mo.

The whole world saw on television the killing of Garner, father of six, in cold blood by the cops. And the world was rightfully outraged when his killer was set free. The whole world is now reading detailed accounts of the most vile torture and murder. And it is equally outrageous that the CIA operatives and private contractors who did the actual torture have been protected from prosecution by the system.

The police and the CIA are two arms of the capitalist state. The police are tasked with controlling the domestic population, and in particular oppressed communities and rebellious workers. The CIA is in charge of subverting the resistance to U.S. imperialism abroad. In both cases, the government at all levels, backed by the capitalist ruling class, has rallied to protect these two wings of its repressive apparatus from being weakened.

Five-year struggle over torture report

The release of the Intelligence Committee's report culminates a five-year phase of inner struggle within the government. In January 2009, newly elected President Obama had gone on television to announce that he was not interested in any investigations of what went on, saying, "We need to look forward as opposed to looking backward." Shortly thereafter, he announced that he was outlawing the use of torture, which had previously been authorized by the Bush administration.

A month later, the Senate Intelligence Committee — under Chairperson Dianne Feinstein, Democrat from California, and Vice Chair Kit Bond, Republican from Missouri — voted 14-1 to open up an investigation into torture.

From that moment on, a five-year struggle ensued in which the White House, the Justice Department and the State Department, allied with the CIA, all worked to stifle the congressional investigation and keep the committee report from seeing the light of day. The presentation of the much-censored — "redacted" — document is the final outcome of that struggle within the capitalist establishment.

Unbridled brutality

Even with the redactions, the report has taken many people's breath away. It contains vivid accounts of prisoners be-



ing hung from the ceiling naked; forced to stay awake for up to 180 hours — more than a week — in a box which did not allow them to stand or sit; being placed in ice baths; having pulverized food forced up their rectums; being waterboarded up to 183 times; being threatened with death; being threatened with an electric drill while hooded; having their families threatened with death; and so on.

One man held in the infamous "snake pit," a CIA prison in Afghanistan, died of hypothermia after being chained naked to a concrete floor in a cold cell. Another died from abuse after being repeatedly dragged up and down a hallway outside his cell.

And these are only some of the details finally revealed in the executive summary of the report after years of negotiating and haggling with the CIA and the White House over their demands to exclude damning information.

White House, Justice Department obstruction

It is important to know that Feinstein is no enemy of the growing "surveillance state." She is a friend of the National Security Agency. In 2013, she crafted a bill that "would both make permanent a loophole permitting the NSA to search for Americans' identifying information without a warrant — and, civil libertarians fear, contains an ambiguity that might allow the FBI, the DEA [Drug Enforcement Administration] and other law enforcement agencies to do the same thing." (Guardian, Nov. 15, 2013)

Nevertheless, the CIA forced the Senate committee to operate out of a CIA facility in northern Virginia. The agency hacked into the committee's computer three times and stole documents. One of the stolen documents was a highly critical review of CIA practices commissioned by former CIA Director Leon Panetta.

The CIA insisted on reviewing all of the 6 million documents the committee used. Thus, the time of completion of the Senate report was stretched from a year to five years. Justice Department head Eric Holder early on said he did not intend prosecutions. He later opened up an investigation of two CIA agents but found no one criminally culpable.

Secretary of State John Kerry went to the committee and warned against making the report public. The White House, before the investigation had barely gotten under way, said it was not interested in prosecution, despite pleas from the committee to withhold judgment.

When Feinstein discovered that the CIA had hacked into the Senate committee's computers, current CIA Director John Brennan denied it and opened up a lawsuit against the committee for "stealing" the Panetta report. Only when CIA Inspector General David Buckley admitted the hacking did Brennan back down.

Inner conflict goes back decades

Feinstein and the Intelligence Committee are part of the establishment. This is a struggle to restrain the CIA, which has a huge budget, global resources, massive technology and operates lawlessly — not

as a so-called "rogue" agency but with the support of the highest-level authorities.

In fact, the committee report let the high-ranking officials in charge at the time this torture was carried out — George Bush, Dick Cheney, CIA Director George Tenet and lawyers like John Yoo of the Office of Legal Counsel — completely off the hook and kept the focus on low-level CIA operatives. But the real torturers were the highest members of the administration that devised and authorized these brutal practices.

Dick Cheney, who called the report "crap" in an interview on Fox News, blew the cover off this narrow view. When asked about Bush, Cheney told a Fox interviewer: "I think he knew certainly the techniques, we did discuss the techniques. There was no effort on our part to keep him from that."

"The notion that the committee's trying to peddle, that somehow the agency was operating on a rogue basis, and we weren't being told or the President wasn't being told, is just a flat out lie," Cheney later added. To back up this assertion, Cheney recommended to viewers to read Bush's book.

In fact, this struggle goes as far back as the Watergate era and the Ford administration. The CIA was caught doing internal spying on behalf of President Richard Nixon and plotting assassinations of foreign leaders. A high-ranking congressional investigative committee, the Church Committee, was formed. Its chairperson was Sen. Frank Church, Democrat from Idaho. Among the members of the committee was the right-winger Barry Goldwater of Arizona.

The committee revealed that the CIA had plotted the murder of Patrice Lumumba, first president of the Congo; of Gen. René Schneider, an anti-Pinochet general in Chile; and tried numerous times to assassinate Fidel Castro, among others.

At that time, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, both members of the Ford administration, tried to undermine the Church committee and strenuously supported the CIA, which was under attack. Cheney withheld many documents from the committee. Later, in the George W. Bush administration, they were architects of the torture program. Cheney has now gone public supporting what the CIA did.

Only mass struggle can push back CIA, Pentagon and police

Today, as then, it is a struggle to retain some semblance of civilian control over the growing strength of the aggressive right-wing forces of the state, represented in this case by the CIA. Both the CIA and the Pentagon have a permanent tendency to want to take the state in tow and free themselves from any external authority.

V.I. Lenin said that democracy is the best shell under which capitalism can function. And the Pentagon and the CIA need that shell to cover up and carry out their nefarious activities and acts of aggression. But they also want to dominate the shell. Any kind of democratic restraints, even of a bourgeois character, is antithetical to the very spirit and essence

Both the CIA & the Pentagon have a permanent tendency to want to take the state in tow and free themselves from any external authority.

of these two authoritarian institutions. The struggle over the CIA torture report is another phase in the struggle against the tendency to disregard their need for the democratic shell.

This report was done in the manner of the loyal bourgeois opposition. It was not meant to threaten imperialism or capitalism. It was meant to strengthen the system and shield the U.S. imperialists from world criticism and retaliation.

It didn't use the word "torture." The document mostly revolved around the argument that torture didn't work to produce effective intelligence. There was no demand for prosecution, even though every act of torture is a violation of international law, which states that all acts of torture must be investigated and prosecuted.

There was no mention of the killer drone program, which is operated jointly by the Pentagon and the CIA. And, of course, there was no criticism of the policy attempting to conquer the Middle East, take over Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, and overthrow the government of Syria. But this is what the CIA program of torture was intended to effectuate.

The working class and the oppressed have a stake in the outcome of this struggle. They need to push back against the reactionary forces of the CIA, with its programs of unbridled torture, assassination and subversion. To do so is an act of proletarian internationalism and solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the world. It also serves the goal of pushing back the war drive.

This cannot be done by pro-imperialist forces within the capitalist establishment. They are weak, conciliatory and loyal to the system of exploitation and oppression in general, even if they disagree with the right wing on tactics.

The CIA and the racist police can only be pushed back if they fear the wrath of the organized masses of people. This is what is building in the struggle against racist police brutality, and this is what is also needed to push back the CIA, the Pentagon and the warmakers.

Note from Workers World editors:

**Stop Torture!
Accountability: YES
Impunity: NO**

A petition on this subject initiated by two former UN Assistant Secretaries-General, UN Humanitarian Coordinators for Iraq: Hans von Sponeck and Denis Halliday, is available in full at tinyurl.com/l3oflzw.

The petition ends, "We, signatories from all parts of the world, therefore urge the U.S. government and its attorney general, to start a judicial process with a sense of urgency in compliance with principles of equality before the law. If they fail to do so, other international bodies, such as the International Criminal Court, will have the obligation under international law to assure that justice is done."

Continued from page 4

Johnnie Stevens, IAC speaker, wrapped up the meeting by pointing out it was "a step in building solidarity with the African communities and the health care workers." He stressed, "We must become a fist to crush racism and Ebola."

Cultural contributions to the evening included Liberian vocalist David Mell performing his "Prayer against Ebola," (video at tinyurl.com/myzrawo) and the precision rhyming of hip hop originators Rodney C! Stone and the Ground Breakers with two songs on Ebola Awareness (listen at thedrammehinstitute.org/news)

Sara Catalinotto and Johnnie Stevens contributed to the article. See a slide show of the program at tinyurl.com/kobdla3.

CLEVELAND

No let up in fight to stop police killings

By Martha Grevatt

Since the killing of 12-year-old Tamir Rice on Nov. 22 by a white Cleveland police officer, the movement against racist police brutality in this city has maintained strength and intensity. Tamir Rice's name is also being raised in the protests around the country against police terror, and is now known internationally.

For the second week in a row, hundreds of activists marched on City Hall. On Dec. 8, most of the marchers then filed into the weekly City Council meeting. Dozens were soon escorted out of council chambers after chanting and shouting demands. Members of Mayor Frank Jackson's cabinet fled the room after being confronted by Councilmembers Jeff Johnson, a former state legislator, and Zack Reed.

Protesters demanded the firing of officers Timothy Loehmann, who fatally shot Tamir Rice, and Frank Garmback, who

was with Loehmann and participated in the attempted cover-up. Upon arriving at the scene, Loehmann immediately fired two shots into Rice, who at that moment was not even holding what turned out to be a toy gun. Now, city officials and even the police's so-called "union" appear willing to let "bad apple" Loehmann become a casualty. They feel the heat for what a recent Department of Justice report termed a widespread "pattern or practice" of police abuse in Cleveland.

A week of daily protests, including die-ins and blocking traffic, followed the City Hall action. Activists are also demanding justice for Tanisha Anderson, who, too, was killed in November, a victim of a "takedown" maneuver by city police. They had arrived after family members requested an ambulance to take her to the hospital.

Protesters demonstrated on Dec. 11 outside the home where she was killed.

The "pattern or practice" of police kill-

ings — almost always of African Americans — has existed in Cleveland as long as anyone can remember.

"This goes back to Michael Pipkins," said longtime activist Donnie Pastard. Pipkins was killed in 1992 by police using a chokehold technique similar to that applied against Eric Garner in Staten Island, N.Y., in July.

Activists picketed City Hall for a year, finally achieving a victory when the City Council voted to ban police use of chokeholds. What followed this victory, however, was an increase in fatal police shootings. In fact, Pipkins' killer, Michael Tankersley, was kept on the police force and was involved in the deadly shooting of a Latino man, Illuminado Lopez, in 2011. (ABCnewsnet5cleveland, Aug. 1, 2011)

The people of Cleveland, like the rest of the country, want the killings stopped now.

Susan Schnur contributed to this article.



WW PHOTOS: G. DUNKEL



WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

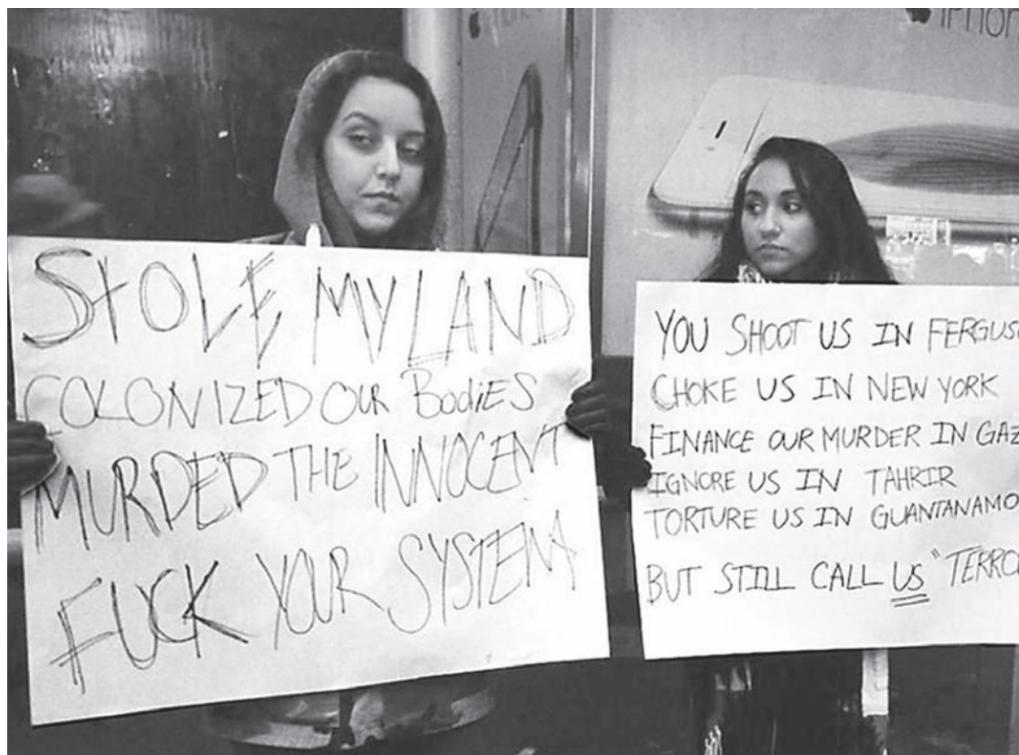


PHOTO: KEEGAN STEPHAN

'BLACK LIVES MATTER'

Continued from page 1

of their loved ones.

Social media, especially Twitter and Facebook, have been critical tools in providing information about U.S. and worldwide actions against police terror, sometimes called on one or two days' notice.

Below are eyewitness reports of some of the actions which took place. There were protests in Denver, Boston, Los Angeles and in some smaller cities as well.

New York City

The New York Police Department estimated that 50,000 to 60,000 people participated in the #MillionsMarchNYC that gathered at Washington Square Park near New York University. They marched to various sites, including the busy shopping area at Herald Square, Union Square, 1 Police Plaza, eventually crossing over the Brooklyn Bridge.

The police were forced to shut down huge intersections in Manhattan to accommodate the crowds; this led to people's occupations. These numbers helped to dash the hopes of despised Police Commissioner Bill Bratton. He had predicted that the protests would eventually "petter out" following the Garner grand jury

hearing. (New York Times, Dec. 14)

The march was led by activists carrying huge placards that together made up a display of Garner's eyes. The spirited crowd was very young, half people of color and half white. They vigorously chanted for hours. The signs and chants reflected anti-police, anti-racist and anti-capitalist sentiments.

The marchers were densely packed as they walked uptown, especially on both sides of Sixth Avenue for at least 20 blocks.

Labor unions were represented at the demonstration, including the Communications Workers Local 1180 and other CWA locals, 1199SEIU Health Care Workers East, Professional Staff Congress, United Auto Workers and District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Once activists reached Brooklyn, they marched to East New York to the Pink Houses, the projects where New York Police Department officers shot to death 28-year-old Akai Gurley in an unlit stairwell. The marchers also protested in front of the 75th Police Precinct where Gurley's killer is stationed.

The police claimed protesters "attacked" some officers as they were cross-

ing the Brooklyn Bridge. Eric Linsker, a City University of New York adjunct professor, was arrested and charged with felonious assault against two police officers. The NYPD is now threatening to crack down on the protests.

— **Toni Arenstein, John Catalinotto, Paul Wilcox, Edward Yudelovich**

Baltimore

The People's Power Assembly helped to organize thousands of people, mainly Black youth, to protest police brutality. Despite police trying to block the marchers and vans, protesters shut down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard on both sides of the highway leading to I-95.

They liberated the area for over an hour and held a people's assembly while everyone sat and blocked traffic. The police surrounded the protesters with horses, as helicopters loomed, and threatened to arrest them, but there were too many protesters.

The cops were put on the defensive as word got out via social media that the protesters' constitutional rights were being threatened. Finally, the PPA ended the long night with a rally.

— **Sharon Black**

Washington, D.C.

A "Justice for All" march attracted between 30,000 and 40,000 people in Washington, D.C. The National Action Network initiated the demonstration led by Rev. Al Sharpton and some of the families impacted by police brutality. Some 400 people traveled from Ferguson to D.C. The crowd was two-thirds Black.

Handmade signs were seen everywhere and a huge banner, stating: "In Georgia, We Can't Breathe." An African-American man held a sign that read: "146 Years Is Enough Patience." Another sign read, "You'll Never Really Get Justice On Stolen Land!" Members of 1199/SEIU held up flags and signs. The United Federation of Teachers, Transport Workers Union Local 100 and Communities of Change were there.

Marchers went from Freedom Plaza to the Capitol. There was a militant spirit to the rally, as every speaker began by saying, "Hands up, don't shoot!" which was followed by "I can't breathe!" and "Black lives matter!"

Rally speaker Newark, N.J., Mayor Ras Baraka stressed, "We can't breathe under continuing Jim Crow oppression."

The Ferguson speakers were all youth.

Durham youth vs. cops

The writers are organizers for the revolutionary youth group "Fight Imperialism, Stand Together," and below they describe a militant protest in Durham, N.C., on Dec. 5 against racist police terror.



By Danielle Boachie & Andy Katz
Durham, N.C.

We live in a society where cops can kill an unarmed Black man, and the only person that gets indicted is the bystander who videotaped the lynching. It is a society where a seven-year-old Black girl is shot by police while asleep in her home. One where a single mother is shot by a deputy when she opens her door. Although police officers claimed she was armed, there was no evidence of that, and the police later altered their statement.

This is a society where unarmed youth of color are murdered for no other reason than existing. This is why we took to the streets on Dec. 5 — for Eric Garner, Aiyana Stanley-Jones, Yvette Smith, Mike Brown and countless others. The reality is that people of color are lynched each day by the racist state.

Our injustice system inflicts its white supremacist violence without repercussions or accountability. Despite the slogan and hashtag "Black lives matter" and the assertion that "lives of color matter," they do not actually matter in this society — not to state authorities, not to the police, nor to the ruling class they serve.

More than 200 of us took to the streets of Durham, N.C., on the chilly night of Dec. 5. There were die-ins in front of the gleaming glass of the Durham

Performing Arts Center. We built a human shield between it and the looming county jail on the adjacent block.

Our incarcerated sisters and brothers watched out of their windows as we demonstrated in solidarity with those who have been victimized or brutally lynched by the state, the apparatus of violence. We shut down both lanes of Highway 147 for more than an hour, chanting "Black lives matter!" between the idle cars. For over four hours, we challenged the Durham police. We were not deterred by their riot gear, clubs, assault rifles and sound cannons. In the end, 31 of us were trapped, corralled, beaten and arrested by these racist cops.

For years, Durham has felt the burning pain of systemic police brutality and murder, particularly against people of color. Derek Walker, a Black man, was killed last year by the Durham cops in the very square where we began our march. In 2013, Chuy Huerta, 17 years old, was shot to death while handcuffed in the back of a cop car. Also last year, José Ocampo was gunned down on Park Avenue. No cops were punished in any of these cases, not even indicted.

It is in these moments that our collective rage is too much to contain. It is when our anger pours into the streets that we are reminded of who our real enemies are, and just how much it will take to win. One arrestee, a young woman, told us that during her detention, five male cops took her into a room and lectured her on why her actions were wrong. These cops

contend that "white supremacy does not exist," and police exist to "serve and protect." They try to justify the murders of Mike Brown and Eric Garner by claiming they were "criminals."

The reality is that the police state is our class enemy. It is they who imprison us, beat us, lynch us. They enforce the status quo by any means necessary. Their overwhelmingly violent response to protests shows us clearly that we do not own the streets. They simply allow us to use them, forcing us to adhere to their rules that maintain capitalist class society. The cops function to serve and protect the capitalist class and their property. In every strike, protest and revolution, the cops are positioned against the people.

The Dec. 5 protest, however, showed us the power and strength that comes with unity. When we are in the streets, we scare the shit out of the cops, the police chief and the ruling class. We know this because of their responses with riot gear, guns and tear gas. They are threatened by our presence — for history proves that when people are organized and in the streets, change occurs.

They taunt us with their oppressive, capitalist police state violence, but we fight back. We are here to disrupt and challenge the system and shut it down. We are here to make change — as their "justice" is an illusion. Since the cops won't stop killing, we won't back down. Fight Imperialism, Stand Together will be fighting and organizing in the streets, from Durham to Baltimore and from New York City to Detroit. We hope to see you at the barricades. □



New York, Dec. 13



PHOTO: DELORES LEMON-THOMAS

Oakland, Calif.



PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

One young African-American activist said he got arrested five times in Ferguson for protesting — and after each arrest, he went back out on the streets and "got right back in the cops' faces."

A young African-American woman said, "This is not about Black versus white. This is us against the system. What we're doing is what the system doesn't want to see: Black faces, white faces, Asian faces, all marching together." However, she said, "In D.C., we don't say 'Hands up, don't shoot' anymore. 'Hands up' is the universal sign of surrender. We've tried that and it hasn't stopped the genocide of Black and Brown youth. Now we say, 'Fists up, fight back!'"

Reverend Sharpton stated, "As inspiring as it was to see the first Black president sworn in, I've been equally inspired today to see young whites marching holding up signs that say 'Black Lives Matter.' The media won't show that."

Sybrina Fulton, Trayvon Martin's mother; Lesley McSpadden, Michael Brown's mother; Gwen Carr, Eric Garner's mother; John Crawford II, John Crawford III's father; Kimberly Ballinger, Akai Gurley's partner; and other relatives of police brutality victims were on stage

at the rally's end. This was very moving.

It is impressive that a national mobilization in Washington happened on the same day that 60,000 marched in New York City. The march's main political theme was the demand that the federal government supersede local and state-sanctioned grand juries with those under the auspices of appointed special prosecutors.

— Tony Murphy

Oakland, Calif.

Chinasa Ozonsi is a member of the California State East Bay Black Student Union and an organizer for the Millions March in Oakland. She told WW that 8,000 people attended the day's demonstration in Oakland, and 2,000 participated in San Francisco.

Ozonsi said, "The mission of the event was to have Black and Brown people be at

the forefront, to be the spokespeople and articulate the woes, sorrows and voice of the Black community. What touched me was the amount of non-Black and -Brown people who marched with us with signs saying, 'Black Lives Matter.' It's vital for us to acknowledge and appreciate all of our allies. What really stood out to me was all the non-Black people who were out there with us. I felt so alive and so important. It was a beautiful, beautiful thing."

An African-American contingent marched from Telegraph Avenue and 20th Street to Oscar Grant Plaza for a first rally. Then everyone marched to the Alameda County Courthouse for another rally. The Berkeley Black Student Union also led a march from University of California/Berkeley to the courthouse.

The program at the second rally included Wanda Johnson, Oscar Grant's

mother; Sara O'Neal performing a song/poem; and spoken word artist, Imani Love. At an open mic session, a reverend from St. Louis spoke. He had brought Michael Brown Sr. to the San Francisco Bay Area for several speaking engagements following the Dec. 13 march.

— Terri Kay

San Diego

San Diego held a rally and march in Balboa Park in solidarity with the national actions. It was organized by United Against Police Terror and AFirm.

After the rally, a second meeting was held at the Malcolm X Library, organized by students, 80 percent of whom were of African descent. This meeting drew even more youth. The library opened up another room because of the large turnout, which was unexpected.

— Gloria Verdieu

Xmas 1914

Rank & file imposed truce in imperialist war

By Henry Hagins

The “Christmas Truce of 1914” was a short-lived, unofficial lull in combat between two antagonistic rival forces, determined to exercise military, political and economic supremacy over each other in Europe and in the colonized world, to which these imperial powers lay arrogant false claim. One of the bloodiest episodes in human history, the war was largely played out on the battle-scarred lands of France and Belgium, starting in August of 1914.

As an undeclared truce, started by rank-and-file soldiers on trench-carved terrain, the truce was seen taking place in sporadic locales all along the Western Front, on both sides. The truce is said to have been started first by German soldiers singing Christmas carols, followed by like responses from the other side.

However, by New Year’s Day of January 1915, soldiers of these imperialist armies had been forced to return to the senseless slaughter that left millions dead, missing, wounded and/or mentally scarred for life at its inglorious end.

We are virtually at the doorstep of its 100th anniversary. The Herculean efforts to oppose the war, led then by Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks in tsarist Russia, remain applicable to this day and summon the critical need to revisit them with an unavoidable urgency. Contrary to the massive hype that is obsessively promoted in this country, it is U.S. imperialism that continues to threaten peace and human development throughout the world. Anti-war forces in this country are duty bound to help dismantle its deadly tentacles.

It is of paramount importance to understand that wars generated by capitalism and imperialism serve the class interests of those in power, at the awesome expense of the working class, which is used as cannon fodder to fight in them. In stark contrast, wars of national liber-



ation become imperative when activated to free a nation or territory from colonial or neocolonial rule, after all other political efforts have failed or been exhausted. This was especially true in the 20th century. Nations under imperial attack today have the right to use this option when their sovereignty is severely threatened or violated. It is known as self-defense.

Europe’s two armed camps

Prior to the outbreak of the war itself, much of Europe had been divided into two armed camps, under an alliance system that required “backup” if any member nation was assaulted by hostile forces. “An attack against one was an attack against all.” For the sake of brevity, the two armed camps were comprised on one side by the Triple Alliance, made up of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey, and on the other side by the Triple Entente, made up of England, France and Russia, with Serbia as an ally of Russia.

The immediate cause of war is attributed by some circles, but not all, to the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie by Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip in June of 1914. Along with other Serbian nationalists, Princip wanted independence from Austria. The “fuse” had now been lit. By August of 1914, “the powder keg of Europe” had exploded. The carnage would last four years, at the cost of 20 million lives, ending on Nov. 11, 1918.

Horrors of trench warfare

The many hardships and grotesque horrors of trench warfare fed the nagging desire for peace by rank-and-file soldiers on both sides of Europe’s Western Front, on the eve of Christmas, 1914. Begun, first, by German soldiers singing Christmas carols, they were later joined by English, French and Belgian soldiers responding in kind. These war-weary combatants, singularly and collectively, made peaceful gestures toward each other across the devastated terrain called “No Man’s Land.”

Unofficial and short-lived, the truce was experienced all along most of the Western Front from Christmas Eve to New Year’s Eve. Some officers supported or tolerated the truce, while others called their troops “mutineers” and threatened them with death by firing squad if they did not cease fraternization with the enemy immediately. Soldiers from opposing sides openly shared cigarettes, cakes, beer, food, souvenirs and pictures of loved ones. They played soccer and held joint-burial ceremonies together, among other countless gestures of goodwill and comradeship.

The act of this fraternization is itself one of the most heroic chapters in the history of the working class, because it exposed the bankruptcy of imperialist wars. Workers do not benefit from them. And, in significant respects, it can be seen as a delayed reaction to what Lenin and those determined

Bolsheviks tried to head off at the Stuttgart and Basel conferences of 1907 and 1912, respectively, before the outbreak of the war itself, when the revolutionary wing of the international workers’ movement fought to prevent its onset.

Even though the truce was of extremely short duration, the example the worker-soldiers gave fundamentally challenged the authority of kings, czars, kaisers and prime ministers to commit them to capitalist war. Imagine what a sustained resistance to this war would have looked like. One of the most effective tools for defeating imperialism is the refusal to fight for it.

I’ve a strong sense that our comrade Andy Stapp, the late founder of the anti-war American Servicemen’s Union, understood the power of this resistance in a basic and organic way. We still cherish his most heroic example.

To learn more about imperialist wars, must reads include “The Bolsheviks and War,” by Workers World Party founder Sam Marcy, and “All Quiet on the Western Front,” by Erich Maria Remarque, also made into a film. Another good anti-war movie is “Paths to Glory,” starring Kirk Douglas. I also recommend Wallace Terry’s best seller, “Bloods — An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans.”

Note from WW editors

The Veterans Peace Council of Metro New York will sponsor a commemoration of the World War I Christmas Truce on Saturday, Dec. 20 at 7:30 p.m. Renowned folk musician John McCutcheon will perform at the Great Hall of The Cooper Union in honor of the centennial of the truce created by soldiers fighting on opposing sides of the front line during the early months of the Great War.

The concert is sponsored by the Veterans Peace Council of Metro New York. For more information see veteranspeacecouncil.org.

Washington inflames ‘new Cold War’ with Russia

By Greg Butterfield

By an overwhelming vote of 411-10, House Republicans and Democrats alike voted “Yes” on Dec. 4 to an inflammatory resolution threatening war with Russia and supporting the repressive, far-right coup regime in Ukraine.

Although the resolution was symbolic and not attached to any specific legislation, Rep. Dennis Kucinich, one of the handful who voted against the resolution, denounced it as the declaration of “a new Cold War” by Washington. (RT.com, Dec. 5)

On Dec. 11, the millionaires’ club known as the U.S. Senate unanimously passed legislation to impose new sanctions on Russia and increase military aid for Ukraine’s brutal war against the independent Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics of Novorossiya — including, for the first time officially, “lethal aid.” (Sputnik News, Dec. 12)

That’s right, unanimously — including, that is, supposedly progressive senators like Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders, both of whom have been previously exposed by the anti-war movement for their support of apartheid Israel. This more dangerous bill must now pass the

House. But after the earlier vote, there is little doubt that it will.

Washington already arming Kiev

Since the U.S.-backed overthrow of Ukraine’s elected president last winter, Washington and Kiev have painted Moscow as the aggressor, despite the fact that it has only acted defensively against the attempted encroachment of NATO to Russia’s western border.

In less than a year’s time, dozens of fictitious claims of “Russian invasions” have been made by U.S. and Ukrainian officials and repeated ad nauseam by the big business media — without a shred of proof.

Publicly, President Barack Obama called on Congress not to approve “lethal aid” for Ukraine, but only so-called non-lethal aid — that is, military equipment that doesn’t include weapons. In fact, the U.S. has been providing weapons and ammunition all along through intermediary NATO puppet regimes, like Poland, to the junta of oligarchs, neoliberal politicians and neo-Nazis that seized power in Kiev last February.

According to documents published in late November by the hacking group CyberBerkut, the U.S. has been covertly arming Ukraine directly, while also paying its

military officials lavish amounts of money.

And more is in the pipeline — including 400 sniper rifles, 2,000 assault rifles, 720 hand grenade launchers, 200 mortars, 150 Stinger missiles and 420 anti-tank missiles. (Sputnik News, Nov. 25) Some of the documents even bear Obama’s and Secretary of State John Kerry’s signatures!

“After examination of just several files, there is the impression that the Ukrainian army is a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces,” said a CyberBerkut statement. “The volume of U.S. financial assistance amazes.”

The documents, barely mentioned in the Western media, can be viewed online at cyber-berkut.org/en/. CyberBerkut obtained the documents after reportedly gaining access to a mobile device belonging to a member of Vice President Joe Biden’s delegation to Kiev on Nov. 20-21. Biden was there to show the squabbling factions in Kiev who’s boss: Washington and Wall Street.

After parliamentary elections held on Oct. 26, Biden’s job was to weld the unwieldy group — united mainly by anti-communist and anti-Russia ideology — into a workable puppet regime that can establish a military and political beach-

head for NATO on Russia’s doorstep.

Part of the deal was arranging for the ultranationalist Ukrainian government to appoint three foreigners to its new cabinet, including Natalie Jaresko, a long-time U.S. State Department employee, as the country’s new finance minister. Oligarch President Peter Poroshenko granted Jaresko Ukrainian citizenship so she could legally take the position.

Jaresko’s Horizon Capital investment fund received \$150 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development — one of the agencies funding counterrevolutionary subversion around the world, from Kiev to Caracas.

U.S. votes against anti-Nazi resolution

While Biden was laying down the law in Kiev, in a committee of the United Nations, 30 countries, including Russia, Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia and Vietnam, proposed a resolution titled “Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fueling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance.” The resolution called for reaffirming the Durban Declaration of the 2001 U.N. Conference Against Racism.

On Nov. 21, when the resolution came

Class struggle sharpens in Mexico, Puerto Rico

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Two months after the disappearance of the 43 normalistas (education students) in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, Mexico's President Enrique Peña Nieto finally visited that region on Dec. 4. He went, not to offer support to the students' families, but to inaugurate a bridge that had been damaged by a hurricane in September 2013 and to announce some economic initiatives.

Peña Nieto ignored the massive and now generalized protests that have swept Mexico condemning the government's lack of effective action to find the missing students and fully investigate and punish the perpetrators. Instead, he told the Mexican people to "overcome" Ayotzinapa and "move forward." These words added to the fury of the masses of people who demand his resignation.

Three days later, the Argentine forensic team involved in the identification of human samples allegedly found at a garbage dump in Cocula reported that a genetics laboratory in Austria had identified remains of one of the 43 students, Alexander Mora. According to many specialists in Mexico, however, that does not prove that the rest of the students are dead. Therefore, the people still demand from the regime: "Find them alive."

Using a rational interpretation of facts, a team of scientists from the National Autonomous University (UNAM) refuted the government's claims that the students had been incinerated and their ashes packed in bags found in a river — claims based solely on alleged testimony of three witnesses. Scientists asserted that the temperature needed to fully cremate a human body was impossible to reach through the methods the attorney general reported.

Continued from page 8

to a vote, 117 countries voted in favor. Only three voted no — the United States, Canada and Ukraine. The European Union member nations and Australia — Washington's junior partners in its Ukrainian adventure — were among 55 countries that abstained.

The three countries that voted against the resolution each offered different, yet telling, excuses. Washington claimed the resolution was "politically motivated" by Moscow. Canada objected to references to the 2001 Durban Resolution, which reaffirmed the longstanding U.N. consensus that Israel's ideology of Zionism is a form of racism. Kiev's excuse was openly anti-communist, objecting that "Stalinism and neo-Stalinism are not condemned as strongly as Nazism." (Truthout, Dec. 5)

Ukraine was an integral part of the socialist Soviet Union for many decades, and it was the Soviet Red Army, along with communist Ukrainian partisans, that liberated the country from Nazi occupation during World War II. Today, many factions of the Kiev government glorify the era of fascist collaboration under war criminal Stepan Bandera.

And while the U.S. is arming Ukraine's fascists under the table — and perhaps soon overtly as well — Canada is sending military police to provide training and act as "advisers."

The youth and working-class people fighting police brutality here have nothing to gain from yet another drive to war by the superrich, this one raising the danger of a major war with Russia. Instead, they have a common struggle with the people of Novorossiia — against fascism, racism and imperialism. □

Since the very beginning, the students' relatives and other demonstrators have accused the government of covering up the disappearances.

Solidarity with Ayotzinapa has been international, including from the United States, and not only from Mexicans living abroad, but from various organizations as well.

On Dec. 10, the Ayotzinapa case reached millions of people throughout the world when Adán Cortés Salas, an UNAM student who traveled to Oslo, stood up and walked in front of Malala Yousafzai right after she received the Nobel Prize, shouting, "Please, Malala, México, please" while carrying a big Mexican flag stained with red.

Capitalist crisis hits poor and workers in Puerto Rico

The year 2014 brought an increase of attacks on poor and working people in Puerto Rico as a result of its colonial status, which is profoundly affected by the U.S.-led capitalist crisis. As the year ends, the colonial government headed by Alejandro García Padilla has imposed several anti-people measures, including an increased tax on oil and derivatives from \$9.25 to a whopping \$15.50 per barrel. "La crudita" (the little crude), as it is known on the island both as a descriptive name for the crude oil, and as a cruelty, was passed by both Representative and Senate chambers in the Legislature.

According to Gov. García Padilla, this is necessary to fund the Government De-

velopment Bank, which is the main fiscal body that "funds" entities from municipalities to special government projects. These include private-public associations, highways and public transportation, etc. Like many government institutions, however, this one has been marked by bad management and corruption — an inherent part of capitalism.

This tax increase will not only affect the price of gasoline, but will deal a blow to the whole energy sector — the basis of the island's economic development. The national energy agency, the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA), has been slated for privatization for a long time. This project has failed to date thanks to the actions of its workers, organized into the class-oriented union UTIER. This time García Padilla has again obeyed Wall Street and the bondholders in the United States by signing contracts with U.S.-based firms for "guidance." He is also trying, unsuccessfully, to solve the desperate insolvency of the government, whose credit has been rated by U.S. firms as "junk."

One of those offering guidance is Lisa Donahue, managing director of AlixPartners. She speaks no Spanish and is being paid \$9.7 million as the fiscal and operations restructuring officer. According to its website, "AlixPartners is a leading global business advisory firm of results-oriented professionals who specialize in creating value and restoring performance at every stage of the business life cycle. We thrive on our ability

to make a difference in high-impact situations and deliver sustainable, bottom-line results."

On Dec. 15, Donahue's plan will be presented, not to the people of Puerto Rico, but to the bondholders in New York. It lays off workers, decreases retiree benefits, increases customers' electricity bills, and eliminates subsidies and generating plants.

Through its consulting firms, Wall Street also aims to privatize education in Puerto Rico. Last year, the Boston Consulting Group slated 100 public schools for closure. Despite resistance from teachers' unions, students and their families, 70 were closed. This time the BCG is going to the jugular, slating 580 schools, or about one-third of all public schools in Puerto Rico, for closing.

But neither the colonial regime nor its Wall Street masters should expect an easy ride. The unions have vowed to struggle and win. On Dec. 14, many teachers' and education-related unions marched through the streets of Old San Juan distributing information about these attacks and about demands for free public education. They ended at the governor's house, where he refused to meet with them, so they handed a statement with their demands to one of his aides.

The year 2015 promises to be one of great suffering for the Puerto Rican masses, with more migration to the United States, but also — and most importantly — an increase in combativity in class-oriented unions. □

Ramón Labañino Salazar: a prison visit with a Cuban hero

By Cheryl LaBash
Ashland, Ky.

We sat in the last three seats of the last neat row of red plastic chairs. It was the visitors' room of the federal prison here on a rainy but not so cold Saturday morning in December. A door across the room opened and there he was, Ramón Labañino Salazar. Although other prisoners were also joining loved ones and visitors, Ramón filled the room with his warm smile. Strong and tall, he joined us. Elizabeth Palmiero, Ramón's spouse, graciously shared her precious and limited face-to-face visiting time with me and joined our conversation.

Ramón expressed gratitude to the solidarity movement on behalf of all five of the Cubans arrested on Sept. 12, 1998. He sends five hugs to everyone who contributed to the efforts large and small that have brought us to this point over more than 16 years of struggle. Ramón reviewed the victories won, including the appeals and resentencing that reduced his unbelievable life plus 18 years, to a still wildly excessive 30 years.

Unless you are Cuban, unregistered foreign agents in the U.S. with false identities are usually deported to their home countries. Ramón noted that the U.S. deports many, many people every day.

He credited the solidarity movement for the victorious appeals and the resentencing that reduced all the vindictive life sentences except the still outstanding double life plus 15 years for Gerardo Hernández. And Ramón stressed once again — at a time when pressure grows on the Obama administration to begin



As we go to press the three members of the Cuban Five remaining in U.S. prisons have been freed — Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero and Ramón Labañino. See page one bulletin.

changing its relationship with socialist Cuba — that there will be no settlement without including Gerardo. Ramón said he has asked that all resources that might be used on his behalf be used instead for Gerardo Hernández's case.

In particular, Ramón viewed the next year, especially the next months leading up to the April 2015 Summit of the Americas, as a critical time to expand the movement that will open the prison doors for Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero and him.

As with Mumia Abu-Jamal's commentaries from prison, Ramón's views and insights engage events beyond the prison wall and these Ohio River hills. He is very aware of and in solidarity with the anti-racist mass movements literally filling the streets and highways in cities across the United States, provoked when police officers were given official impunity to kill unarmed Black men like young Mike Brown and Eric Garner. He also closely follows the current events in Mexico, where a countrywide movement demands justice for the 43 disappeared Ayotzinapa students.

On Dec. 13, 2001, Ramón Labañino was sentenced. As the thirteenth anniversary approached, I reviewed his statement to the court on that date in the face of what for some would have been a devastating life sentence plus 18 years. In the Ashland Federal Correctional Institution visitor's room, it was the same optimistic, confident and firm man committed to saving lives and preventing terrorism who had 13 years ago made the following statement:

"Gentlemen of the prosecution, whether you like it or not, Cuba is an independent and sovereign country. It has its own legitimate government, its own president, its own martyrs and heroes, and its own convictions. Cuba is not different from the United States. And, gentlemen, Cuba must be respected!"

"We know that efforts were made to ensure an impartial trial. But the city of Miami is not a place where goals like these can be achieved when it comes to Cuba. Perhaps that was the most critical error in our case: holding the trial in this city.

"If preventing the deaths of innocent human beings, defending our two countries from terrorism, and preventing a senseless invasion of Cuba is the reason I am being sentenced today, then, let that sentence be welcomed.

"I will wear the prison uniform with the same honor and pride with which a soldier wears his most prized insignia.

"This has been a political trial, therefore, we are political prisoners.

"All of the evidence is here; this is where history is written. And it is history that will do us true justice." □

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Athletes break their silence

The current national uprising against police violence dominates the U.S. political terrain. The revolt began with the Ferguson, Mo., rebellion, ignited by the broad daylight police murder of African-American 18-year-old Michael Brown by a white cop on Aug. 9. Black youth who racist white police officers humiliated, terrorized and demonized day in and day out proclaimed defiantly in the streets that enough is enough — despite the cops' tanks, rubber bullets and tear gas.

This resistance Ferguson youth started has spread like an inferno throughout every part of the U.S. in the last four months. It gained greater momentum on a national scale when a grand jury denied justice to 43-year-old African-American Eric Garner by refusing to indict the white cop who killed him, even though millions heard Garner plead, "I can't breathe" on video. This ruling came just nine days after a grand jury had refused to indict Darren Wilson for murdering Brown.

The cop murders of Brown and Garner and the response to them have helped bring necessary national attention to other police murders, especially of Black and Brown youth like Tamir Rice, John Crawford III and Akai Gurley — to name a few.

The growing mass struggle has also impelled famous athletes to stand up against police brutality in greater numbers than since the height of the Black Liberation struggle in the 1960s. Many athletes are wearing "I can't breathe" T-shirts. This includes entire National Basketball Association teams and star players such as the Los Angeles Lakers, notably Kobe Bryant; the Cleveland Cavaliers, notably LeBron James; the Chicago Bulls, notably Derrick Rose; the Sacramento Kings and the Phoenix Suns. Entire college basketball teams like the Georgetown Hoyas and the Notre Dame women's squad have done the same.

The professional athletes getting the most attention play the most popular sport in the U.S.

under the National Football League. This was brought home when five members of the St. Louis Rams came out on the field Nov. 30 with their hands up — emulating Michael Brown's "Hands up, don't shoot" — and when the Cleveland Browns' Andrew Hawkins wore a "Justice for Tamir Rice and John Crawford" shirt during the Dec. 14 pre-game warm-up. These actions enraged police departments in their respective cities. All the players are Black.

The St. Louis and Cleveland police departments demanded apologies from the players and the teams' management. No apologies happened. That indicates the powerful impact this uprising has had on athletes of color. It even affects the rich bosses of these teams, who fear any backlash from their own players and fans.

In a moving Dec. 15 interview, Hawkins explained, with tears in his eyes, that when he witnessed the video tape of 12-year-old Rice being killed in a park by Cleveland police, he thought about the safety of his 2-year-old son and also the pain the Rice family is going through. He also stated that although he was worried about the reaction he might receive by wearing the shirt, he felt he had no other choice. (cleveland.com, Dec. 15)

Seventy percent of the NFL players are African American and other players of color. Even though racist police want them silent, more and more are speaking out over injustice. Despite being well-paid, they still feel the sting of racism. And on the other side of the barricades, the police are feeling the well-deserved sting of deepening animosity and isolation from mainstream U.S. □



Notre Dame women's basketball team.

Rev. Pinkney

Jailed for fighting racist power structure

By Abayomi Azikiwe
St. Joseph, Mich.

Another racist injustice has been committed. On Dec. 14, Berrien County Judge Sterling Schrock sentenced the Rev. Edward Pinkney, leader of the Black Autonomy Network Community Organization, to 30 to 120 months in jail after a trial by an all-white jury.

The five felony charges stemmed from a successful recall petition drive against Benton Harbor Mayor James Hightower, who is seen as a tool of the Whirlpool Corp. and the political power structure in the area. Hightower had opposed a tax measure that would use corporate resources to rehabilitate Benton Harbor in the interests of its poorest residents.

This is the second time in seven years that the BANCO leader has been convicted on charges related to efforts to hold local officials accountable to the people.

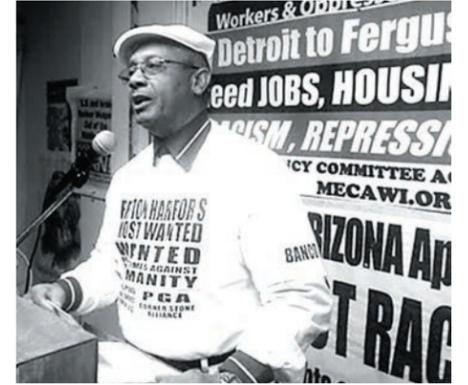
Activists from various cities were outraged at what they saw as a total travesty of justice. They pointed out that police who have been videotaped killing African Americans were allowed to go free, while Pinkney was convicted of forging documents and sentenced to prison without any material evidence.

The prosecution presented no eyewitness testimony to implicate Pinkney in the alleged crimes committed. The prosecutor and judge admitted the evidence was circumstantial, and could present no clear-cut motivations for Pinkney to have changed dates on the recall petitions.

The courtroom was overflowing for the sentencing hearing. Armed white Berrien County sheriff deputies guarded the doors.

Before the sentencing Pinkney told the court he was not guilty and "would not admit to something I did not do. I am hurt that this jury convicted me without any evidence." Judge Schrock lectured Pinkney and said his sentencing was designed to send a message.

While the judge said that people have a right to seek the recall of a public official,



Rev. Edward Pinkney, October 2014

he then sentenced the community leader to a lengthy prison term.

The area has an extensive history of racism and police repression. Benton Harbor's African-American community faces conditions of poverty, unemployment and police brutality.

BANCO's organizing efforts have exposed the mad drive of corporate entities in the county to maximize profits at the expense of the most oppressed and exploited. Racism and criminal justice bias permeated the preliminary hearings, the trial and the sentencing phase.

Defenders of Pinkney placed the sentencing in the broader context of the racist attacks against African Americans — from Ferguson, Mo., and New York City to California. Protesters have drawn the links among police repression, judicial misconduct, the grand jury system and corporate rule over U.S. cities and suburbs. Their demonstrations have closed down streets, shopping malls, highways and low-wage employment centers.

Throughout the state of Michigan, majority African-American municipalities have been taken over by politicians operating on behalf of the banks and multinational firms.

Developments in Berrien County serve to illustrate the character of the current crisis and the willingness of people to resist this renewed onslaught by the ruling class.

A more detailed article is available at workers.org.

BERKELEY

Community rallies to save Post Office

By Judy Greenspan
Berkeley, Calif.

At noon on Dec. 6, more than 150 people gathered on the steps of the main Berkeley Post Office to demand that this historic building not be sold. Supporters sang "We Shall Not Be Moved" for an infomercial that organizers hope "will go viral."

The protest marked the longest occupation of the Berkeley Post Office, which has lasted over 40 days. A local group of homeless activists called "First They Came for the Homeless" has led the effort to occupy the area outside the building.

This group had previously set up a protest encampment outside the local Staples store. Staples has forced its low-paid, non-union workers to perform U.S. Postal Service jobs, thereby aiding the closure of U.S. post offices. Every Staples store has a USPS sign in its window and contains a mailing station similar to those at the post office. En-



Berkeley, Calif., Dec. 6: Stopping raid and saving P.O.

campment organizers say Staples aids the union-busting efforts to privatize the USPS. Through its information booth,

the encampment is fighting to "Save the Public Commons," which includes the public services of the USPS.

Local organizer and Berkeley attorney Moni Law announced at the rally that Hudson McDonald, one of the largest developers in Berkeley, had recently backed out of an earlier commitment to purchase and develop the main Berkeley Post Office. Law challenged the crowd to continue its efforts to stop all attempts to close the historic building.

Dave Welsh, a retired postal worker, singer and activist, talked about the importance of the continued occupation of the post office. "On Thursday, December 4, we received word that the encampment was being raided by the postal police inspectors. We brought a large group down to support the encampment. The tents were confiscated but the information booth remains."

Welsh described some victories in the national campaign to Save the People's Post Office. He credited the success in stopping the closure of the Berkeley Post Office to the strong support of the local community. □

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Italy and Belgium

General strikes rock Europe

By Martha Grevatt

“Sciopero generale” in Italy. “Algemene staking” and “grève générale” in Belgium. In any language the words “general strike” elicit fear among the ruling class. Hence the financial press, including the Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg News and London’s Financial Times, covered the recent general strikes in Italy and Belgium extensively. Although these corporate media thieves won’t admit it, a general strike — whether citywide, regional, national or transnational — represents the elevation of the class struggle from a narrow struggle around specific economic demands to a classwide struggle around broad political demands.

1.5 million Italians strike over ‘anti-worker’ law

The two Italian labor federations that called for a one-day general strike Dec. 12, CGIL and UIL, gave the clearest accounts of the success of the massive job action. The appeal “to the squares” — to rally in the plazas instead of going to work — led to mass rallies in at least 54 Italian cities and towns. The squares were packed to overflowing as at least

1.5 million workers stayed off the job to protest Prime Minister Matteo Renzi’s misnamed “Jobs Act.”

Every sector of the working class took part. Air and surface transport ground to a standstill. Schools were closed. Automotive and other manufacturing workers stayed away from the factories. An estimated 50,000 students turned out, some joining the battles with police in Milan and Turin.

Had the third labor federation, CSIL, not opposed the tactic of the national strike, hundreds of thousands more workers would have been in the streets.

Prime Minister Renzi deliberately refers to his bill as the “Jobs Act,” using the English wording to encourage an association with President Obama’s bill of the same name. Just as the U.S. bill has not made a dent in unemployment here, so the Italian version will not create a single job. What it does instead is overturn a 1970 law that made it hard for bosses to lay workers off.

Renzi’s twisted logic argues that public and private sector bosses will be more likely to hire workers as regular employees if they can fire these workers at will! These employers have already increased

hiring temporary workers to get around the current law that protects workers based on seniority.

To refute Renzi’s argument, all one has to do is look at the situation in the U.S. Here most workers lack protection from layoffs and firings. This has not constrained the huge expansion of the temporary, part-time and precarious workforce.

Clearly, the large numbers of young workers and students who joined the strike see through Renzi’s claim that his bill will reduce youth unemployment, now over 40 percent.

Belgian strike hits austerity

Ruling-class stressors remained high over the weekend following the Italian strike in anticipation of another action expected to halt the Belgian economy on Dec. 15.

“There has never been as strong a strike in a common front, from north to south and from east to west,” stated Marie-Helene Ska, federal secretary of the union federation CSC. (7 Sur News, Dec. 15)

Six hundred flights were cancelled at the Brussels airport, and nearly all bus or rail transportation was shut down. Pick-

ets shut Antwerp and Ghent ports and closed schools, hospitals, factories, oil refineries, stores and cultural institutions. Roadblocks and barricades across the country demonstrated the power of the workers to stop business as usual. Scuffles with police were widespread.

Unions called the general strike, following weeks of strikes and huge demonstrations, to block new governmental austerity measures. Prime Minister Charles Michel has proposed a new round of budget cuts, elimination of annual inflation-based pay raises, raising retirement age from 65 to 67, and other austerity measures.

“Paralysis” is how the ruling-class media described the state of the Belgian economy when the strike was in progress. The powerful expressions of workers’ power there and in Italy should be closely followed by workers here. General strikes of a political nature — the last one here was the immigrant workers’ mass walkout on May Day 2006 — would give a strong and proper response to high unemployment, falling wages, union busting as in “right-to-work” (for less) laws, police brutality, and the multitude of attacks on workers and the oppressed. □

Indigenous peoples, climate activists march in Lima

By Chris Fry

Some 15,000 people demonstrated in Lima, Peru, on Dec. 11 during the United Nations Climate Change Conference, called “COP 20.” Marchers included many from Indigenous communities as well as environmental activists from around the world, particularly from poor countries.

This was the largest climate change event in Latin America since the World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, which was held in Bolivia in April 2010 and attended by up to 30,000 people. That conference was openly anti-imperialist.

This year in Lima, demonstrators marched to the U.N. conference and then across town to protest in front of the plush Hilton Hotel, where some 500 corporate leaders were having their own “World Climate Summit.”

These capitalist bigwigs had gathered

to put pressure on the delegates from 195 countries attending the U.N. conference. They insist that any agreement to reduce carbon emissions and help the communities that already feel devastating effects from global warming must not challenge the imperialist profits-before-people system.

U.S. talks ‘tragedy,’ pushes weak deal

The U.S. delegation was headed by Secretary of State John Kerry. In his speech, Kerry admitted that the world is “still on a course leading to tragedy.” He said that an agreement is “not an option — an urgent necessity.”

Nevertheless, the U.S. delegation did everything it could to ensure that any deal



Alliance for Global Justice marches in Lima at Climate Change Summit.

PHOTO: RICK JORDAN JR.

protect pristine forest land. In fact, many Indigenous people are actually being evicted from their land, even though they are the victims, not the producers, of global climate change.

People from Africa and Latin America are particularly hard hit by the REDD program.

Meanwhile, giant corporate mining, logging and oil-producing operations that emit billions of tons of carbon dioxide and other pollutants every year continue unabated.

It should be noted that marchers from U.N.-sponsored organizations were forbidden from putting Kerry’s name or even “U.S.” on their signs and banners.

The Peru U.N. climate conference is meant to be a prelude to a 2015 climate conference in Paris where a final international agreement will supposedly be signed. But because of imperialist opposition to any meaningful change, the agreement reached in Lima is weak and virtually meaningless.

Dipti Bhatnagar is with Friends of the Earth International, where she is the climate justice and energy coordinator. She traveled to Lima from Mozambique, where she lives. Bhatnagar gave a reporter her take on the conference and the demonstrations:

“Lima, COP 20, is doing nothing to actually stop the climate catastrophe. But people are acting. There’s mass mobilizations. There will be an action here at 11:00 a.m. There will be a die-in, talking about justice, talking about impacted people, energy, food, the real issues that people care about. And we were talking about seeds earlier. So our slogan is: ‘They buried us, but they didn’t realize that we were seeds.’ So we grow, and the movement will continue to grow on the road to Paris and beyond.” (democracynow.org) □

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New York, 13 de diciembre.

WW/MO PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Unidad contra el racismo en protestas

Por Fred Goldstein

El 8 de diciembre, las protestas en varias ciudades del país contra los asesinatos de personas negras por la policía entraron en el sexto día consecutivo. Ya fuera en Tampa, Miami y Atlanta o Berkeley, Los Ángeles, Sacramento y Seattle; Austin, Houston y Tucson o Minneapolis, Chicago, Boston, Nueva York, Filadelfia y decenas de otras ciudades - los gobernantes estadounidenses fueron testigo de las manifestaciones más extendidas y sostenidas en décadas.

En el pasado ha habido innumerables manifestaciones locales contra asesinatos particulares por la policía en este país. El asesinato de Michael Brown, Oscar Grant, Sean Bell, Amadou Diallo y Trayvon Martin y el estrangulamiento letal de Eric Garner han llevado a muchas protestas, pero la lista nos lleva al pasado, cuando Michael Stewart fue asesinado en 1983, Eleanor Bumpurs en 1984 y muchos más.

Desde que el Partido de Panteras Negras señaló a la policía como una amenaza nacional en 1966 haciendo un llamado al derecho a la auto defensa, no se ha visto una condena tan masiva contra la policía calificándola como institución racista, agregando más de 100.000 manifestantes que han participado en las protestas.

Las Panteras Negras en ese entonces enviaron un poderoso mensaje de energía política y resistencia militante a un gobierno racista con su histórico programa de 10 puntos, que fue respaldado en la acción por patrullas callejeras armadas y con servicios como el programa de desayuno para niñas/os. Sin embargo, su heroica lucha no tuvo la clase de respuesta unitaria que hemos visto desde la rebelión en Ferguson, Misuri en agosto.

Consignas de lucha y tácticas militantes

Hoy el pueblo negro, especialmente las/os jóvenes, han salido por decenas de miles a las calles decidido a poner fin a la brutalidad policial y al asesinato de las/os negros bajo el lema "La vida de los negros importa". Siguiendo su ejemplo, gente de todas las nacionalidades, incluyendo decenas de miles de blancas, principalmente jóvenes, junto a latinas/os e inmigrantes han salido a las calles en una muestra de unidad contra los asesinatos policiales racistas. Y toman su señal del del liderazgo negro.

Este nuevo movimiento ha intensificado el ataque político contra todo el sistema policial, los grandes jurados, los tribunales y las autoridades políticas que los apoyan. Ha habido muchas consignas de lucha. Pero la consigna popular "Eric Garner, Michael Brown, cerremos todo el sistema"! es un lema amenazante para la clase gobernante, sobre todo cuando se grita al unísono de un extremo al otro del país.

Lo que empresarios y autoridades temen es que la consigna pueda evolucionar hacia la exigencia de que el mismo sistema capitalista sea derrocado.

No son sólo las consignas, sino el espíritu y las tácticas preocupan a las autoridades. Puentes, carreteras y túneles han sido bloqueados. Trenes locales han sido retrasados. Ha habido manifestaciones alterando centros comerciales y centros de ciudades. El tráfico en calles concurridas y vías públicas ha sido detenido. Ceremonias sacras por los días festivos han

sido interrumpidas. Y esto se ha hecho en una ciudad tras otra, día tras día.

Solidaridad y unidad

Los estrategas de la clase gobernante han visto sin duda la diferencia entre hoy y la década de los 1960, cuando las Panteras Negras y otras organizaciones afroamericanas militantes y organizaciones de las/os oprimidos, como los Young Lords, los Brown Berets y otras, estaban luchando contra la represión policial.

Durante ese período, el movimiento contra la guerra fue masivo, con por lo menos un millón de activistas. Sin embargo, las grandes masas del movimiento político y antiguerra, en su mayoría blanca, se mantuvieron al margen mientras la represión policial desataba su furia.

La sede de las Panteras en Oakland, California, fue allanada. Huey Newton, el fundador del partido, fue perseguido y buscó asilo en Cuba. Al tesorero del partido, Bobby Hutton, lo mataron disparándole 12 balas mientras se rendía a la policía. El presidente del partido, Bobby Seale, y la líder Ericka Huggins fueron falsamente incriminados de asesinato en New Haven, Connecticut. Los líderes Fred Hampton y Mark Clark fueron ejecutados mientras dormían en Chicago. El FBI y J. Edgar Hoover, a través de COINTELPRO — una operación secreta de sabotajes, engaños y asesinatos — dirigieron el asesinato de Bunchy Carter y John Huggins. En Nueva York, 21 miembros de las Panteras de la costa este fueron encarceladas/os durante nueve meses y juzgadas con acusaciones falsas. George Jackson fue asesinado en la cárcel.

Al mismo tiempo, la Nación del Islam fue acosada, mezquitas invadidas, y Malcolm X asesinado en 1965.

Trabajadores negros organizados en el Movimiento Sindical Revolucionario en las plantas de automóviles fueron perseguidos. Muchas otras organizaciones de resistencia afroamericana, como la República de Nueva Afrika, fueron atacadas.

A diferencia de hoy, el apoyo blanco para estas organizaciones negras de lucha durante ese periodo se limitaba a una sección de la izquierda militante que estaba ideológicamente comprometida con la solidaridad.

Pero ahora, decenas de miles de jóvenes blancas/os y adultos se han unido a la lucha negra contra el racismo en las calles. Las/os afroamericanos, al menos por ahora, no tendrán que soportar los asesinatos y palizas por la policía en aislamiento. Las/os jóvenes, tanto negros como blancos, han salido a las calles con indignación ante las atrocidades racistas de la policía. Esto va más allá del movimiento político tradicional, negro o blanco. Forma la base de un movimiento futuro de resistencia unida cuyo carácter aún está por determinarse.

Militarización de la policía: red de represión

La militarización de las fuerzas policiales de Estados Unidos en las últimas dos décadas debe verse a la luz de las rebeliones presentes y futuras. Desde el comienzo de la llamada "guerra contra las drogas" en la década de 1970, la policía comenzó su programa de militarización, vinculándose con la Administración para el Control de Drogas [DEA por las siglas en inglés]. Washington hizo disponibles equipos

SWAT (tácticas y armas especiales) y armas de asalto de alto poder a la policía.

Después del 11 de septiembre de 2001, bajo la cubierta de la llamada "guerra contra el terrorismo", el Pentágono y el Departamento de Seguridad Nacional aumentaron enormemente el poder militar de la policía con miles de millones de dólares en armas de asalto de alto poder y entrenamiento en tácticas militares — tanto para control de multitudes como para operaciones especiales de asaltos.

Desde que Barack Obama asumió el cargo la primera vez, su administración, a través del Pentágono ha dado a la policía para junio de este año, "decenas de miles de ametralladoras; casi 200.000 barriletes de municiones; miles de piezas de camuflaje y equipos de visión nocturna; y cientos de aviones, carros blindados y silenciadores. Los equipos SWAT de la policía son ahora desplegados decenas de miles de veces cada año, cada vez más para trabajos de rutina". Los videos de reclutamiento "muestran clips de oficiales asaltando casas con granadas de humo y disparando armas automáticas". (New York Times, 8 de junio)

La Seguridad Nacional [DHS], a través de FEMA [Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias], reparte mucho más dinero a los departamentos de policía que el Pentágono — más de \$34 miles de millones desde el 11 de septiembre. Lo hace a través de dos agencias, una que equipa a los estados (Programa Estatal de Seguridad Nacional) y otra que equipa a las ciudades (Iniciativa de Seguridad para Áreas Urbanas). Por ejemplo, el estado de Misuri recibió \$ 3,98 millones de DHS, mientras St Louis recibió \$3 millones. (The Guardian, 20 de agosto)

Esto tiene importancia tanto militar como política. El DHS entrena a policías estatales y locales en operaciones, tácticas, estrategias, tecnología y uso de armas. El Pentágono les entrena en el uso de otros equipos.

Esto significa que la policía está ligada al DHS y al Pentágono. Los Departamentos de policía y sus dirigentes están absorbidos en las redes de las fuerzas armadas. Son parte de un aparato nacional de represión y espionaje. Como tal, la policía se ha elevado por encima de su antiguo estatus de ser una banda puramente local de opresores y ahora coordina con Washington a través de DHS especialmente.

Rebelión de Ferguson hizo temblar autoridades

A pesar de toda la supuesta preocupación en el establecimiento capitalista sobre la militarización de la policía, ésta no va a cambiar fundamentalmente. Si por el momento se han retirado las medidas abiertas de terror militar vistas por primera vez en las calles de Ferguson, están siendo mantenidas en reserva en previsión de una necesidad de intimidación y represión futura.

Lo que las autoridades temen es que las masas en las comunidades se envuelvan en el movimiento contra la policía, la pobreza, el hambre y el desempleo, contra los sistemas abandonados de educación, la falta de vivienda y asistencia médica y la opresión general. Esta es una receta para una rebelión mucho más poderosa y más profunda.

Otra pesadilla para los patronos es que la clase trabajadora como tal — la cual ha

sido golpeada por despidos, ejecuciones hipotecarias, bajos salarios y la austeridad en general — siga el ejemplo de la juventud y entre en acción.

El movimiento sindical a todos los niveles debería entrar en la lucha contra el racismo. Es de profundo interés a las/os trabajadoras y la clase obrera en su conjunto mostrar solidaridad contra el estado racista porque este estado es también el enemigo de las/os trabajadoras en todos los conflictos laborales, de cada esfuerzo organizativo y de todas las comunidades de la clase trabajadora.

Comisión Kerner

Después de las rebeliones en Harlem, Watts, Newark, Detroit y otras ciudades que habían empezado en 1964, el Presidente Lyndon Johnson, nombró una comisión especial con carácter de emergencia en 1967 para investigar los levantamientos.

La comisión de 11 miembros que representaba ambas cámaras del Congreso, al sector empresarial y todas las facciones de la clase dominante a excepción de la ultraderecha, se llamó la Comisión Kerner. Se publicó un informe muy anunciado que concluía que: "Nuestra nación va hacia dos sociedades, una negra, una blanca — separadas y desiguales".

La comisión recomendó una serie de reformas en todo, desde empleos a la educación, viviendas, salud y beneficios sociales. De implementarse con el fin de corregir la opresión nacional y lograr la igualdad económica y social, hubiera costado cientos de miles de millones de dólares.

Huelga decir que las recomendaciones no fueron sino solo palabras. Treinta años más tarde, después de la rebelión en Los Ángeles por la puesta en libertad de los policías que golpearon a Rodney King — visto en video por todo el mundo — otra comisión fue nombrada, la cual mostró que nada había cambiado desde 1968.

Hoy, el sistema capitalista está en una crisis mucho más profunda que en la década del 60. La clase dominante está menos inclinada a hacer concesiones que no sean cosméticas, lo que no va a cambiar el sufrimiento de las masas. El marxismo expone que el estado es un instrumento de la clase capitalista y los gobernantes con ansias de ganancias no harán nada para debilitar ese estado.

El establecimiento capitalista está a la defensiva en este momento. Se hace pasar por simpatizantes de las protestas contra los asesinatos policiales. Pero el movimiento no debe olvidar lo que pasó a Ocupar Wall Street. La juventud de OWS tomó el establecimiento por sorpresa. Los medios de comunicación capitalistas tenían que fingir tener simpatía porque la población en gran parte se oponía a la obsecena desigualdad económica. Al elevar la consigna del 1% frente al 99%, OWS se hizo popular inmediatamente. Pero pronto la clase dominante mostró sus verdaderos colores y comenzó a reprimir por todo el país.

El movimiento actual está más extendido y será más difícil de desviar y reprimir. Pero nadie debe bajar la guardia ni un momento y confundir la simpatía hipócrita de las/os presentadores de noticias y columnistas como otra cosa que una falsa fachada, la cual será echada a un lado si el establecimiento capitalista se siente cada vez más amenazado por el movimiento de masas en las calles. □