

# WORKERS WORLD



Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

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\$1

# D.C. actions to demand: Free the Cuban Five!

By Cheryl LaBash  
Washington, D.C.

*The writer is a logistics volunteer with the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5.*

May 29 — Worldwide support for the Cuban 5 political prisoners has been pouring in to bolster a week of scheduled solidarity activities here in the political capital of world imperialism from May 30 through June 5. Parliamentarians, authors, attorneys, religious and labor leaders, and cultural representatives from 22 countries will take part in these events.

An important mass public rally will take place on June 1 at the White House at 1 p.m., followed by an ecumenical-cultural event at 6 p.m. at St. Stephens Church, 1525 Newton St. NW, with 1970s' political prisoner Angela Davis, Barbadian musician Mighty Gabby and the D.C. Labor Chorus. Delegations from Quebec, Toronto and cities throughout the U.S. are traveling for these weekend events. Low-cost bus tickets from New York City were made possible by donations from the labor movement.

The International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 initiated the "Second 5 Days for the Cuban 5 in Washington, D.C." Those coming to Washington include a delegation of 30 Cuban Americans who are traveling from Miami to show their support for the release of the Cuban 5.

One of the Cuban 5, René González, was the first of the men to be reunited with his family in Cuba. The other four — Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González — remain unjustly held in U.S. prisons, where they have been since their arrest on Sept. 12, 1998. They are now the focus of this massive campaign, in the U.S. and around the world, to win their release and repatriation to Cuba.

### René González to speak

González is scheduled to speak live from Havana, Cuba, for the first time to the U.S. population, at the May 30 opening press conference. Other speakers at the May 30 opening press conference include Ignacio Ramonet, originally from Galicia in Spain, who is the former editor-in-chief of *Le Monde Diplomatique* and author of "100 Hours with Fidel," a book presenting a political biography of Fidel Castro based on interviews with the Cuban leader. Also speaking are Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers of America and president of the Dolores Huerta Foundation, who was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama in 2012; and Wayne Smith, former chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana during the Carter administration and currently a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy.

Also on May 30, at Howard University Hospital Au-

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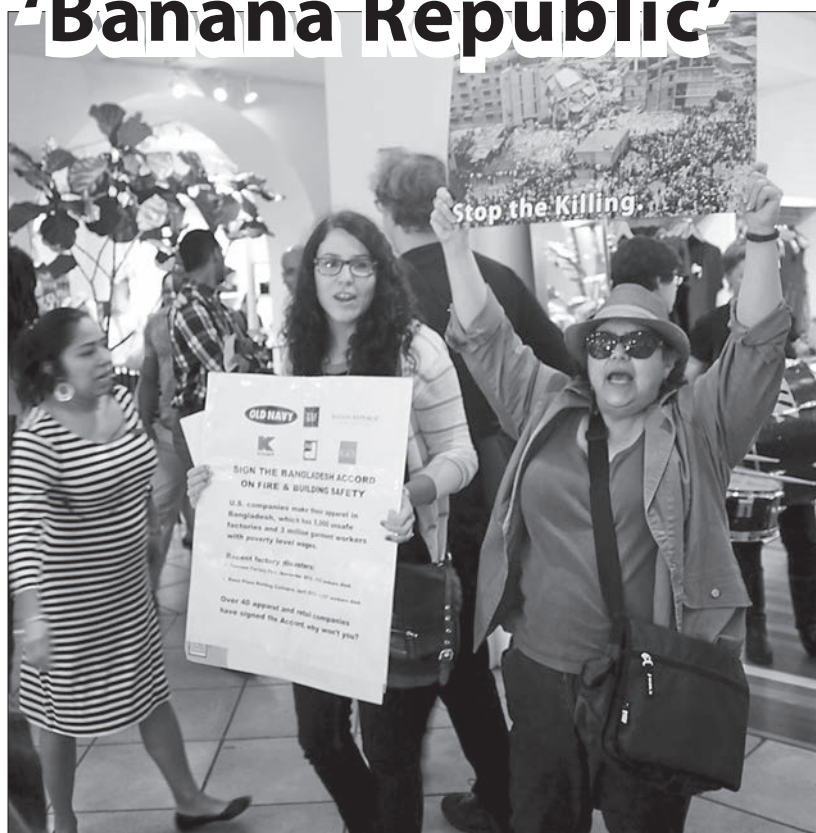
## Chicago's pupils say, 'SAVE OUR SCHOOLS'

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PHOTO: PATRICIA LINAREZ

## Protest invades 'Banana Republic'



Demonstrators demanding safety measures protecting Bangladesh garment workers filled the Banana Republic, then moved to the Gap and Old Navy retail stores in Manhattan with chants, "mic checks" and Rude Mechanical Orchestra sounds (see photo of Banana Republic protest). This May 27 action demanded these stores — along with Walmart, Sears, Target and other U.S. based "big brands" that sell clothes made in Bangladesh factories — sign the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety reached with some European-based retailers. Most U.S. retailers have refused to sign. More than 1,127 garment workers died in the April 24 Rana Plaza building cave-in; 112 died in November's Tazreen factory fire. Occupy Wall Street's 99 Pickets, the International Action Center, and other worker and community activists took part in the direct action.

— Report and photo by G. Dunkel

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**WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER**

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# The challenge of uncovering human prehistory

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF 'MARRIAGE' PART 2

By Bob McCubbin

*Part 1 of this series focused on the counterrevolution in anthropology that arose in response to the work of Lewis Henry Morgan and Frederick Engels, whose findings outlined an evolutionary history of human development. In this installment, we'll raise some preliminary considerations toward an objective, scientific investigation of human prehistory. In following parts of this series we'll take up the discoveries of Morgan and Engels in some detail.*

### A scientific approach to human prehistory

In the present work we are guided by the profound groundwork provided in Engels' "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" and the deft summarization and contemporary application of his work in Dorothy Ballan's pamphlet, "Feminism and Marxism." However, there is no substitute for a serious, focused reading of these two essential works in their entirety.

In later parts of this series we hope to add some of the recent material on human history and prehistory, unavailable to either Engels or Ballan. But, first, we should review some of the insights provided by the groundbreakers.

### A scientific approach to human prehistory

In her introduction to an International Publishers edition of Frederick Engels' "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" (New York, 1972), Marxist anthropologist Eleanor Leacock notes: "Where materials are available for ethnohistorical research into a given primitive culture, they reveal fundamental changes of the type that have been taking place independently in various parts of the world or have been developing rapidly during the recent centuries of colonial rule: the breaking down of the corporate kin group into individual families and the individualization of property rights, the downgrading of women's status, the strengthening of rank, and the usurpation of powers by chiefs — in short, the basis for class society.

"Nonetheless," Leacock writes, "areas where warfare and trade, often in slaves as well as goods, have been causing vast upheavals for up to four or five centuries of European influence and domination are still commonly treated as if reconstructed 19th century social forms represent 'untouched' institutions." (pp. 58-59)

We will avoid the use of the word "primitive" to characterize prehistoric societies, since it needs to be emphasized more and more, as contemporary foraging and hunting groups succumb to the genocidal impact of the world's imperialist powers, how remarkably "civilized" these peoples were in their interpersonal relations and how "scientific" in their use of natural resources in their efforts at survival. However, we can agree with Leacock on the need to apply a very critical eye to ethnographical reports.

### The historical materialist approach

Karl Marx was fascinated by the ethnographic material he found in Lewis Henry Morgan's book, "Ancient Society," but Marx died before he was able to accomplish the task of interpreting it. Engels, Marx's lifelong collaborator, took up the task, resulting in "Origin" and an uncompleted work titled "The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man."

While Marx and Engels were thoroughly cognizant of the difficulties alluded to by Leacock a century later, they had a powerful theoretical tool for use in evaluating Morgan's ethnographic material. Known as "historical materialism," their method broke with the then prevailing approach of European philosophers who, in their various interpretations of the world, assumed the priority of ideas over matter.

Marx's approach emphasized human sociality and production of the wherewithal for life as fundamental to humanity's reality and evolution. Also fundamental to Marx's approach was the inextricable link between material reality and dialectical change. (A very clear explanation of dialectical materialism is given by Russian revolutionary leader, Leon Trotsky, in his book, "In Defense of Marxism.")

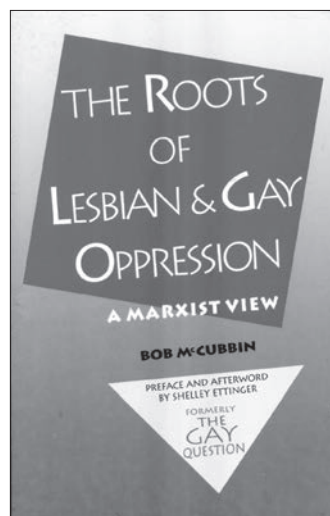
The patterns of life and kinship that Morgan reported on from his personal contact with the tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy, other Native American groups, and reports he received on foraging and hunting groups across the globe offered a material basis for Engels to project the evolution of humanity from communal beginnings, through the various stages of class society, to a communist future — really to a final reclaiming of Homo sapiens' original communal humanity.

Just as the material reality of revolutionary French workers setting up a workers' government in 1871 — the Paris Commune — allowed Marx and Engels to concretize their prediction of workers' political power and of a workers' government that could lay the groundwork for a socialist/communist future, so too, the patterns of life and kinship that Morgan reported on revealed a material basis for projecting the evolution of humanity from communal beginnings, through the various stages of class society, to a communist future, a final reclaiming of our species' humanity.

*Part 3 of this series will examine the findings of Lewis Henry Morgan, the founder of modern anthropology, regarding the role of women in early human societies. As we shall see, understanding the social position of women in foraging and hunting societies is crucial to understanding the forms of marriage that existed in that long period of human prehistory.*

McCubbin is the author of "The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View," World View Publishers, 3rd ed., 1993.

To purchase McCubbin's book *The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression* write to World View Forum 147 West 24 St, Second Floor New York, NY 10011 Send \$10 per book with name, address, phone number. Available at Amazon.com



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## Immigration policy debate

# Silicon Valley 10: Workers 0

By Teresa Gutierrez

*The writer is a May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights co-coordinator.*

The momentum for achieving so-called immigration reform continues to grow in Congress to the point where some Washington insiders describe it as “unstoppable.”

On May 21, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted 13-5 to approve what a May 22 Reuters article called “the biggest changes in immigration policy in a generation.” The bill is so sweeping and far-reaching in scope that this article stated that nothing of comparable scope has been accomplished in Congress since the 2010 elections. That midterm election is when Republicans won overwhelming control of the House.

The bill, now expected to go to the floor in June for full Senate approval, has rare bipartisan cooperation, with four members from each party uniting to develop the 844-page piece of legislation, S.744, The Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act.

Known as the Gang of 8, the bill’s authors are Republican Senators Marco Rubio (Fla.), Jeff Flake (Ariz.), John McCain (Ariz.) and Lindsey Graham (S.C.), and Democratic Senators Chuck Schumer (N.Y.), Dick Durbin (Ill.), Robert Menendez (N.J.) and Michael Bennet (Colo.).

Media publications indicate that it remains to be seen if the bill will move further and reach the House of Representatives, as there are reports of contention about providing federally funded health-care for undocumented people who may become legal residents.

Nonetheless, if you look at “who won what” in this round, it demonstrates that the so-called immigration reform on the table absolutely represents the interest of the ruling class and not at all the interests of the working class, born here or abroad.

### High-tech corporations write amendment

According to various news sources, the high-tech industry can take much credit in influencing the current bill. After five days of hearings, which supposedly were some of the most transparent in a long time, various amendments were added, many that the high-tech industry was behind.

Late May 21, the day the bill passed, Sens. Schumer and Hatch struck a deal to streamline restrictions and regulatory requirements for corporations that aim to hire skilled workers from abroad. These workers are mainly hired through the visa program known as H-1B.

As it stands now, the legislation ups these visas from 65,000 to as many as 180,000. Many of these visas will go to hire highly skilled workers such as engi-

neers and programmers from abroad. An amendment reached as a compromise toward the end of the hearings removes the requirement that companies first have to offer some of these tech jobs to U.S.-born workers.

It also relaxes the method for determining the yearly number of foreign-born workers the high-tech companies can hire. Known as the Schumer-Hatch compromise, it offers more flexibility to these firms. Before, the firms that applied to hire H-1B workers would have been prohibited from displacing U.S. workers within 90 days, but the deal now requires the firms to only “state” they do not plan to displace U.S. workers.

The captains of high-tech industry were giddy and applauded lawmakers for lifting the visa cap, but especially for making it easier to hire foreign-born workers. These capitalists argued that any hiring restrictions would have slowed their “growth and innovation” by hampering their ability to hire for specialized positions.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka took offense at the concessions and said they were “unambiguous attacks” on U.S. workers. (L.A. Times, May 18)

One deal that could not be made was on immigration rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer families. Despite the “lobbying” of these forces, senators stated that they could not include language allowing family unification for non-straight immigrants because Re-

publicans threatened to walk away. This capitulation showed that profit interests always trump human rights.

Karen Lewis, leader of the Chicago Teachers Union, may have an answer for the high-tech industry and for the Democrats who caved in and sold out the LGBTQ community despite its loyalty to the Democratic Party.

And that is to take the struggle for workers rights to another level and wage class war in the finest traditions of the union movement in this country. Throughout U.S. history, workers in unions as well as from the communities have shown that only a militant struggle can win anything from the capitalist system.

### No to guest-worker status

Workers from India or Pakistan or Mexico or Nigeria have every right to come here and work in this country. They have every right to these jobs. But what they don’t need is a guest-worker program that leaves so many workers, even highly skilled workers in limbo, in depressing stateless conditions, captive to the whims of the bosses, in fear of organizing and fighting for their rights.

This is exactly the kind of immigration reform the Senate is developing at this very moment.

It is not the kind of immigration reform workers have been fighting for for so long.

It is appalling that elected officials went along with the demand for more

guest-worker visas for foreign workers. Not because workers from abroad should be prevented from working here. But because at the very same time that the high-tech captains cry that they need more skilled workers, schools are dangerously being closed around the country. And the possibility for working-class youth to achieve higher education is everyday becoming more and more a distant dream. The impossibility of going to college has become a horrid nightmare for so many young people.

Senator Chuck Schumer has promised that the immigration reform he and his greedy cabal have developed will become permanent legislation. But the working-class movement once it flexes its mighty arms can smash anything that is in its way. Schumer and the rest want more enforcement, more drones at the border, a repressive biometric system, legislation that makes it almost impossible to get legalized, exploitable and controllable guest workers with no rights whatsoever — they want the vast majority of the undocumented deported before the legislation even goes through.

But the many fires of struggle that exist in this country now — whether in the Chicago schools, the restaurants of New York or the universities and churches of North Carolina — all indicate that a mighty fire of struggle is on the horizon. It will one day burn that legislation the capitalist politicians are lauding. □

## Arpaio guilty of racial profiling

By Paul Teitelbaum  
Tucson, Ariz.

In a ruling that came as no surprise to Arizona’s oppressed and terrorized Latino/a community, a federal judge ruled on May 24 that Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio and his officers are guilty of racial profiling. This decision was in response to a class-action lawsuit brought on behalf of five Latino drivers who had been stopped by Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office deputies.

U.S. District Judge G. Murray Snow’s 142-page decision includes Findings of Fact in the case, which covers the period beginning in 2007. They detail the racism that is endemic to the MCSO and cite specific operational plans and instructions given to its 800 deputies on how to target Latinos/as, primarily by conducting traffic stops. (The ruling is posted on the American Civil Liberties Union web site at [tinyurl.com/nj9n8ewe](http://tinyurl.com/nj9n8ewe).)

In December 2011, Judge Snow sanctioned Arpaio for destroying records relevant to the case. This resulted in the un-

derstatement of the statistics cited in the findings as “proof” of racism.

With his recent decision, the judge issued an injunction against Arpaio and MCSO, ordering them to cease and desist from “using race [or Latino ancestry] as any factor in making law enforcement decisions pertaining to whether a person is authorized to be in the country.” Arpaio and the MCSO have ignored previous court injunctions.

Isabel Garcia, community activist, who is the chair of Tucson’s Coalition de Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Coalition), responded to the court’s decision. She told Workers World, “This ruling was a necessary truth-telling. The Arpaio reign of terror on our communities, unfortunately, was permitted for so long by the political forces around us, from the politicians exploiting fear, the conservative and complicit media, big business and even the legal system.”

Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, whose department just locked down the entire city of Boston, Mass., should be very familiar with Arpaio’s terror

campaign. Napolitano was Arizona’s attorney general from 1999 to 2003 and then its governor from 2003 until 2009. It was during her term as governor that Arpaio’s jailers implemented some of the most horrific practices. Napolitano remained silent when Arpaio and his deputies laid siege to the small town of Guadalupe, Ariz., in April 2008. ([tinyurl.com/396bkz2](http://tinyurl.com/396bkz2))

When terror is directed against entire communities of people of color, as in Arpaio’s case, the media never classify that as “terrorism.” When the perpetrators of terror are cops, deputies or border patrol agents, the courts can rarely be counted on to intervene. When they do, the outcome is never justice.

Activists must continue to organize and fight to keep these racist cops, deputies and border patrol agents out of our communities. Terror like that unleashed by Arpaio doesn’t just exist in Arizona. Garcia stressed, “We must continue to challenge those policies like [racist, anti-immigrant law] SB1070, and many Arpaio-like laws that exist across Arizona and the rest of the country.” □

## NEW YORK

# Thousands protest murder of gay man

— Report and photo by Shelley Ettinger

Thousands of people marched through New York’s Greenwich Village the evening of May 20 to protest the murder of Mark Carson. Shortly after midnight May 18, Carson was shot to death by a man yelling anti-gay slurs. Carson, a 32-year-old African American described by family and friends as “a proud gay man,” had been strolling through the springtime Village streets with a friend when he was gunned down. Incidents of violence against lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer people around the country, including New York City, have been on the rise in the last several years, with a disproportionate number of attacks targeting LGBTQ people of color.



# Workers say: 'We will shut city down'

By Scott Williams  
Philadelphia

"Welcome to the city that doesn't pay their workers."

That's how Pat Eiding, Philadelphia council president of the AFL-CIO, introduced the "Mayors' Innovation Summit" of the U.S. Conference of Mayors held in Philadelphia on May 22-24 and hosted by its president, Philadelphia's "Mayor 1%" Michael Nutter.

Nutter has recently overseen the closing of 25 Philadelphia public schools, along with an increase in poverty, imprisonment, police violence and destruction of the public sector union jobs and services due to his forced austerity programs for the people here.

Holding signs which read, "No More Mayor for the 1%, Lets Build a Better Philadelphia for ALL," over 500 workers assembled at the opening of the conference, blocking traffic in front of the nonunion Westin Hotel in Center City.

Leading the demonstration were the city workers of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Councils 33 and 47 as well as Local 1971, with their sea of green and their shrieking whistles. City workers have gone five years without a raise, while their pensions have lost value and their health benefits have become more costly.

"The mayor would rather go to the courts than negotiate," said Pete Matthews, president of District Council 33. "If we don't get a contract we will shut this city down. Not one city worker will work! I don't care what the cost is. People fought life and death for this. This is the biggest fight you have ever seen in this city."

Labor leaders Cathy Scott of AFSCME District Council 47; Yvette Jones of the



Philadelphia AFSCME workers protest at Mayors' Summit May 23.

WW PHOTO: BETSEY PIETTE

Philadelphia Federation of Teachers; John "Johnny Doc" Dougherty of the International Brotherhood of Electricians Local 98; Jerry Mondesire, president of the Philadelphia NAACP; leaders of the Firefighters and Paramedics Union (IAFF 22); and AFSCME's first-ever woman secretary treasurer, Laura Reyes, joined other union members and community organizations in an unprecedented show of union-community solidarity.

Shouting "No contract, no peace!" 400 more people assembled on the second day of the conference and marched to City Hall to deliver a petition with some 3,000 signatures to the City Council to demand a fair contract with no concessions.

While the mayors met with executives from Comcast, Google and Urban Outfitters, Nutter did not once mention the plight of city workers in Philadelphia. Meanwhile, the crisis for city workers and their families has only deepened.

A study by Michael Bognanno, Temple

University associate professor of Economics, reported: "The analysis shows that a significant portion of the combined membership of District Council 33 and 47 are below the poverty line set for a sole earner in a family of four [\$35,310]. The extent of the membership below the poverty line has roughly doubled since 2007, the period of time in which the membership has gone without a pay increase." (dc47afscme.org, see important documents)

## Public sector workers face crisis of capitalism

The budget crisis facing Philadelphia city workers, teachers, firefighters and virtually every other worker for the past five years has been created by the crisis of the economic system of capitalism. Based on a small group of incredibly wealthy people who control the political, economic and social conditions of the rest of humanity, capitalism has reached a dead end.

In effect, the need for capitalist pro-

duction to be profitable, combined with the enormous increase in productivity through new technology, has made it impossible for the capitalist economy to resume growth.

Public workers, who serve the people without regard to whether their work is directly profitable, are under attack by a vast confluence of forces involving Democrats and Republicans, corporate executives and their lobbyists. This coordinated attack on public services on the one hand gives priority to having state and local governments pay back loans and interest to the banks.

On the other hand, these forces seek to create a new profitable sector by privatizing existing public services, like schools. Yet the austerity measures which seek to privatize jobs while busting unions and lowering living standards for millions will never bring the system back to life. Destroying these living wage jobs and replacing them with minimum wage jobs means workers can buy even less of the goods and services they produce. This aggravates the capitalist crisis.

Yet there is a way out. Consider the inspirational words of Pete Matthews in the streets in front of the U.S. Conference of Mayors that were cited earlier in this article. Workers have the ability to shut down every part of society. Not a wheel can turn nor a burger be flipped without the millions of members of the working class.

Now is the time to prepare, to organize workplaces and to unite workers on a common program of demands for our human rights, demands which the capitalists in Washington, on Wall Street and in the City Halls are unwilling and unable to meet. With this, we can begin to build a society run by workers, not Mayor Nutter and his corporate allies. □

# Too many unemployed; jobs fairs close

By Joe Piette  
Philadelphia

Philadelphia has the highest poverty rate of any of the 10 largest U.S. cities: It's 28.4 percent. Some 31 percent of households in North Philadelphia's First Congressional District don't earn enough to buy sufficient food to feed their families.

Of the 10 largest U.S. cities, Philadelphia ranks highest for deep poverty with a rate of 12.9 percent of its population living at half the poverty line or below it; that's 200,000 people. The annual salary for a single person at half the poverty line is \$5,700. It's \$11,700 for a family of four. Given these statistics, it's not surprising that infant mortality rates in this city are the fifth worst out of 200 U.S. cities.

In April, the official unemployment rate in Philadelphia was 6.7 percent for white workers and 13.2 percent for African Americans.

Applications for government services for the unemployed and others in poverty are now handled by phone or over the

Internet. This avoids regular gatherings of many unemployed workers. Job fairs are one of the few times when the jobless come together in large numbers.

## Job fair attendees sign petitions for fair hiring

On May 23, thousands of hopeful job applicants lined up in North Philadelphia to take a chance on finding work at Temple University's Career Fair. The line extended around the block.

As the continuous stream of men and women inched forward, members of the Phair Hiring Coalition gathered signatures on petitions demanding that Temple University increase the number of women, African Americans and Latinos/as working on the school's construction sites.

After two hours — with the line still very long — a Philadelphia cop approached petitioners, asking, "When the Job Fair ends later, and if there are still hundreds of people in line, you're not going to incite trouble, are you?"

Outside the job fair, PHC volunteers

gathered more than 600 signatures on petitions in less than four hours.

The PHC is a network of students, unemployed workers, and community and union activists, which organized weekly picket lines in the spring of 2012 to demand that qualified workers have equal access to living-wage jobs at TU construction sites. In the last few months, activists have collected hundreds of signatures on petitions at area shopping centers.

Temple currently has more than \$400 million in active construction projects, but according to the university's own statistics, residents from the neighborhoods surrounding the school have labored only 8 percent of the total number of hours worked. People of color make up 89 percent of the populations of North Philadelphia communities — in one of the poorest congressional districts in the country — and they are not being hired for these construction jobs.

Temple officials met with PHC members last year with unsatisfactory results. The university recently agreed to a second meeting with the PHC on June 6. At that meeting, activists will hand over the petitions gathered at the job fair, along with those gotten earlier.

## Job fair for former prisoners cancelled

Each year, 35,000 men and women return to Philadelphia from federal, state and local prisons. They have limited prospects for finding work. When a job fair for unemployed, formerly incarcerated women and men was announced for May 17, more than 3,000 people lined up outside

the Municipal Services Building in Center City with resumes in hand.

Organizers of the "Job Fair for Ex-Offenders" were overwhelmed when three times the expected number of applicants showed up. Everett Gillison, deputy mayor for public safety, said the event was publicized on social media and it snowballed. He claimed that the designated space for the event could not handle the crowd, so officials closed it down shortly after it began.

The disappointed veterans of this country's massive incarceration system were told to go home. Officials promised to reschedule the event for a later date at the Convention Center.

Thousands of students walked out of their schools three times in May to protest the unending budget cuts in the educational system. Guidance counselors and librarians are the latest victims. Extracurricular activities are on the chopping block, too, as Philadelphia schools are deliberately dismantled.

Hundreds of city workers who are members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Union, with the active support of other AFL-CIO locals, rallied on May 22 and 23 to demand a fair contract after five years of futile negotiations with a big-business-controlled city administration.

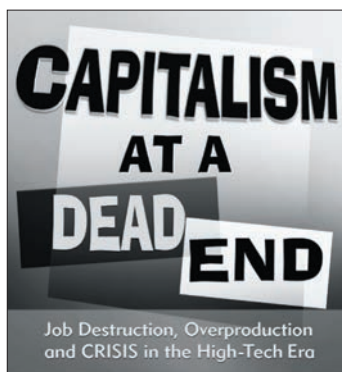
The potential of the unemployed, youth and labor joining together in one militant working-class coalition would cause the bosses in the corporate suites in Philadelphia's most expensive buildings to shake in their boots. □

## Capitalism at a Dead End

Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

For more information on this book and other writings by the same author, Fred Goldstein, go to [LowWageCapitalism.com](http://LowWageCapitalism.com)

Available at Amazon and other bookstores.



# Central Park 5, Jena 6 and the Scottsboro Brothers



By Tony Murphy

The corporate-owned media reviews of the movie “The Central Park Five,” just released on DVD, focus mainly on the pathos and injustice of wrongful incarceration.

They’re downplaying the more political message of the film, which exposes the oppressive and racist nature of the state — and the media — under capitalism in the United States.

That’s because this film is now out in the world — it was also aired on PBS and shown at dozens of film festivals — when public opinion is turning against “stop and frisk,” and the phrase “mass incarceration” has been popularized by Michelle Alexander’s book, “The New Jim Crow.”

Alexander shows how locking away African-American and Latino/a youth hides the oppression that was so evident under racist Jim Crow segregation. Lately, however, this feature of capitalism has become too obvious to ignore.

On May 15, a judge threw out the indictment of the cop who gunned down Ramarley Graham after chasing the unarmed 18-year-old African-American youth into his house in February 2012. The police killing of Kimani Gray this March 9 sparked two weeks of protests in New York’s East Flatbush.

The big-business media want to avoid the political conclusions of the movie, as well as its potential lessons — especially when its case is compared to the famous Scottsboro Brothers trial: that the best hope for beating back repeated racist outrages and attacks may be in strengthening the workers’ movement overall.

“The Central Park Five” exposes the deliberate way the New York Police Department good-cop/bad-cop coerced the youth into giving false confessions. On TV detective shows, this kind of tactic is celebrated and treated as heroic.

But the film exposes it as devious, bullying and integral to the racist character of mass incarceration. This part of the film is so damning to the NYPD that the police agency’s number-one defender among the media, the New York Post, has engaged in outright denial. A recent Post editorial claimed there was no evidence of coerced confessions from the Five.

You can’t watch the film and conclude there were no coerced confessions. That would be like watching the movie “Titanic” and saying no ship sank.

Because the film exposes how African-American and Latino youths were framed for sexual assault, many have compared the case to that of the Scottsboro Brothers. This was the 1931 frame-up of nine African-American youth in Alabama for the rape of two white women.

One striking similarity to that case is the racist depiction of African Americans



The Central Park 5

as preying on white women — a staple of the Jim Crow South transplanted to New York City in 1989.

## International campaign helped free Scottsboro Brothers

The important difference was how the struggle to free the Scottsboro Brothers was made into an international campaign.

In both cases, a swift trial, a racist media campaign and a useless legal defense whisked the Black youth into jail. But the 1931 conviction of the Scottsboro Brothers was followed by appealed cases, retrials and more retrials, along with mass rallies in the U.S. and overseas. The largest demonstration for justice in the Scottsboro case actually happened in Germany in 1932.

That’s because socialists at the time decided to make the Scottsboro Brothers case a national and international campaign — one that would win justice for the Brothers but also put capitalism itself on trial.

This ultimately led to the Scottsboro Brothers being freed from jail.

What’s so striking about the Central Park Five, in comparison, is that when the actual rapist confessed in 2002, four of the Five had already served their entire sentences. They were already out of jail; their young lives already stolen.

The difference between the two eras is the broader political climate. During the 1930s, there were mass demonstrations for jobs, factory sit-ins, antiforeclosure actions — and the influence of socialism on workers in the U.S. was at its peak. The Russian Revolution had happened only 14 years earlier.



Scottsboro Brothers

like Wallace and Caseptla Bailey, Wallace’s mother, that made the case of the Jena Six a nationally known struggle. Jena is the small, majority-white Louisiana town where white students hung two nooses on a high school tree.

A series of schoolyard fights over this resulted in six African-American students being outrageously charged with attempted murder on Dec. 4, 2006.

Wallace and Bailey were the backbone of the drop-the-charges campaign that culminated in tens of thousands of people marching in Jena in September 2007.

This received widespread attention. What most people don’t know is that Wallace is now in jail serving a 15-year sentence.

Two weeks after the official reduction of charges that freed the Jena Six, helicopters, dogs and 150 cops descended on the African-American section of Jena in a drug raid that swept 12 people into jail, including Wallace, on July 9, 2009. The frameup charges against her were based on the video testimony of a lone police informant.

No drugs were found in Wallace’s home, of course. But she has been in jail since May 31, 2011, serving a 15-year sentence.

What, of course, is so unfortunate is that the powerful movement that freed the Jena Six was not organized for Wallace and the other targets of the raid on Jena’s Black community.

The Jena situation and Wallace’s case should not be a secret. There should be massive demonstrations for her release the way there were for the Jena Six or the Scottsboro Brothers. If these demonstrations include a demand for jobs instead of jails — a demand that resonates with every sector of society — it could help break the case out of isolation. □

There was a thriving working-class movement, which was able to wrest Social Security, unemployment insurance and the Works Projects Administration from the capitalist government.

Yet the same conditions that created the culture of fightback in the 1930s exist right now in 2013. With mass layoffs, joblessness, the sequester and attacks on unions, the situation cries out for a fighting workers’ movement as well as a more ideological socialist movement.

## Fallout from Jena Six case

Without a stronger movement overall, the fight against racist outrages can achieve heroic heights, but still be pushed back hard by the state. A perfect current example is the drug frameup of Catrina Wallace, one of the central organizers of the struggle to get the charges dropped on the Jena Six. Wallace is the sister of one of the Jena Six, Robert Bailey.

It was the tireless organizing of people

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

*Taken from a May 18 audio column from prisonradio.org. The writer is a political prisoner at SCI Mahanoy in Frackville, Pa.*



## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights**

**& Global Justice!** Saladin Muhammad

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

**Racism & Poverty in the Delta** Larry Hales

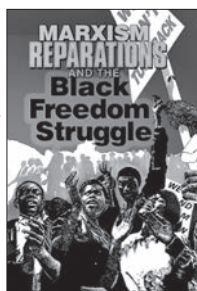
**Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions** Pat Chin

**Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping**

**and Segregation** Consuela Lee

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

Available at Amazon and other bookstores around the country.



GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

## Malcolm Latif Shabazz

It was with deep and profound shock and sorrow that I received the news of the tragic — one might say incomprehensible — death of Malcolm Latif Shabazz, the grandson of Black Nationalist leader and icon, Malcolm X.

Born Oct. 8, 1984, several decades after the assassination of his grandfather, Malcolm had the lean, angular beauty of his famed forebear, so much so that a shadow of grandfather was reflected on his face.

But his face bore far more for there, in his eyes, dwelt the unmistakable glint of the pain of those once imprisoned. His bit came in the midst of his childhood, a boy’s mistake that instantly transformed

into the unthinkable — an arson that took the sweet life of his grandmother, Dr. Betty Shabazz, and scarred a child forever.

The details of his passage into eternity aren’t clear, but it seems Malcolm, while on vacation in Mexico, got into a rumble with locals over a bill. And the locals, none too fond of Yankees anyway, beat the young man to death.

In his relatively short life, Malcolm traveled perhaps as much as his grandfather, visiting France, Libya, Venezuela and, alas, Mexico.

Malcolm Latif Shabazz, the grandson of Malcolm X, was 28 years old when he returned to his ancestors. □

# Foreclosure struggles escalate in U.S. cities

By Mike Shane

Anti-foreclosure activists and foreclosed homeowners escalated their struggle against the federal government during the week of May 20. In Washington, D.C., and in San Francisco, activists occupied the Department of Justice offices and demanded that U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder jail the bankers. Holder enraged homeowners in early March when he testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that the banks were too big to prosecute.

In Detroit, homeowners, foreclosure fighters and unionists rallied against Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, government agencies which now do most of the foreclosures and evictions in the Motor City and around the U.S.

For two days, foreclosed homeowners and supporters, led by the Home Defenders League and Occupy Our Homes, rallied in Washington, demanding the prosecution of the banks. The banks and financial institutions created the foreclosure and economic crises through criminal actions such as race- and sex-based predatory lending and other schemes.

On Monday, May 20, about 500 protesters surrounded the DOJ building in Washington, closing down Constitution Avenue and blocking the three main entrances.

Despite the nonviolent nature of the protest, several people were violently



Coordinated protests hit bank housing foreclosures. Washington, D.C., May 20.

PHOTO: OCCUPY OUR HOMES

tased by cops, including Carmen Pittman, an activist from Occupy Our Homes Atlanta, whose grandmother's home had been foreclosed. In a video seen around the world, several large police officers can be seen subduing the slender African-American woman while another officer sadistically and casually jolts her with 50,000 volts of electricity.

By Tuesday, more than two dozen protesters had been arrested. Activists noted that in contrast, not one banker has ever been arrested for the massive fraud and racist criminal acts that have caused millions of families throughout the U.S. to lose their homes.

The Home Defenders League reported on May 22, "All 34 arrestees are now free and are not being charged with anything! Their courage and bravery [are an] inspiration to all of us."

## Bay Area and Detroit activists vs Feds

On May 20 in San Francisco, anti-foreclosure activists occupied the northern California office of the DOJ in support of the actions in Washington. They attempted to get bureaucrats in that office to fax a letter to Holder demanding the prosecution of "bankers too big to jail."

That same day, Detroit Eviction Defense, in collaboration with the United Auto Workers union, held a people's hearing and rally of several hundred people targeting Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the Federal Housing Finance Agency for the role they have played in the destruction of neighborhoods due to mass foreclosures throughout metropolitan Detroit.

The FHFA is the agency that controls Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the taxpayer-owned mortgage giants that have evicted families from more than 15,000 homes

since 2008 in Detroit alone.

At the insistence of UAW Vice President Cindy Estrada, the FHFA had agreed to send a delegation to Detroit to witness the destroyed neighborhoods in the city — FHFA officials repeatedly claimed that they were successfully helping families stay in their homes. The UAW planned to rent a bus to take the FHFA officials on a tour of several neighborhoods to see firsthand how ineffective the federal programs to "help homeowners" really are. Following the bus tour, the FHFA officials were to arrive at UAW Local 600's headquarters for a people's hearing where they had agreed to listen to the testimony of many homeowners victimized by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

In a press release, the UAW stated, "Fannie and Freddie have declared a moratorium on foreclosures in areas stricken by Hurricane Sandy. Estrada and organizers from Detroit Eviction Defense argue that they should do the same for Metro Detroit, flattened by banking fraud, mass unemployment, and the resulting storm surge of foreclosures. They are also calling on Fannie and Freddie to reverse their current policy of refusing to lower the principal on 'underwater' loans where the balance owed is higher than the plummeting market value of the home."

At the last minute, just days before the May 20 scheduled tour and hearing, the FHFA withdrew and said it would not be sending a delegation to Detroit. The agency cited concerns from their legal counsel that it would be "awkward" to hear testimony from homeowners who are in litigation, fighting eviction by the federal government.

"They can run, but they can't hide," said Steve Babson, an organizer with Detroit Eviction Defense. Actions by anti-foreclosure protesters in Washington and San Francisco have proved this point. □

## 'Pathways' program to gut City University of New York

By Heather Cottin  
New York

A cabal of bourgeois higher education policy wonks, media moguls and bankers have devised a scheme that undermines the academic foundation of the 166-year-old City University of New York. CUNY is the largest urban university in the United States and provides education to more than half a million students on 24 campuses.

In September, the CUNY administration is set to implement the "Pathways" initiative, which will eliminate a number of classes — and jobs for the teachers who teach them. Barbara Bowen, president of the Professional Staff Congress, the CUNY teachers' union, has called the program an imposition of "austerity education."

A PSC fact sheet says Pathways "will save the University money, and ... prepare CUNY students for low expectations in the austerity economy." (psc-cuny.org)

Pathways is supported by such institutions as Goldman Sachs, Clear Channel, General Electric, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, IBM, the Helmsley group, Walmart and a score of other capital management groups, corporations and private foundations. It is part of a "Master Plan" developed by CUNY management in 2012. (cuny.edu) The PSC fact sheet asserts, "Pathways assaults faculty power and governance; it is a dramatic step towards the corporate, management-driven university."

While the Master Plan for CUNY involves almost \$6 billion in capital improvements, no money is allocated in the budget for wage or salary increases for CUNY workers.

Under the direction of CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, whose salary tops half a million dollars, the Pathways program excluded any input from the faculty or the union. The CUNY administration strategically selected professors whom the

administration's corporate, intellectual and financial backers know they can depend on to support Pathways.

The students most affected are at CUNY's community colleges, where the majority of CUNY students begin their higher education. These students have been told that Pathways will make it easier for them to transfer to the four-year schools. The administration has boasted that Pathways will reduce the number of courses needed for graduation and suggested that this is an advance for students.

But it is an attack on New York City's working class and their historic right to a comprehensive education. It also endangers the integrity of the entire CUNY system.

### Thousands of teaching jobs, classes under attack

Pathways, in nearly every department and school, will eliminate thousands of classes and end science labs in the community colleges. Few part-time teachers, called adjuncts or contingent workers, know what is in store. For example, at LaGuardia Community College most introductory history courses will be eliminated. In the spring 2013 semester, 25 adjuncts were teaching two to three history courses. Beginning in September, LaGuardia will eliminate 22 of these positions.

Adjunct teachers earn about \$25,000 in wages per year if they work every term, including summer. They have no tenure, limited health care and narrow pension rights. They do not have sick days or paid pregnancy leaves. Yet adjuncts teach more than half the courses in the CUNY system. Across the United States, adjuncts represent about 70 percent of all university and college teachers. (chronicle.com, Nov. 5, 2012)

The PSC has gathered petitions and filed lawsuits accusing the CUNY administration of attacking "the principles of shared governance and academic free-

dom." (psc-cuny.org)

The union is currently conducting a "No Confidence in Pathways" referendum among the full-time teachers at CUNY. However, the exclusion of adjunct and part-time staff from this vote has angered the workers whose jobs are in jeopardy. They say that preventing adjuncts from participating in the union leadership by claiming the tactic is part of a larger strategy has denied the majority of CUNY teachers their democratic rights.

The adjuncts remain without a voice in the union vote. PSC President Barbara Bowen has told them to wait until the lawsuits against the university have been adjudicated, which could take years. (LaGuardia Community College PSC meeting, May 14)

Many adjuncts are unaware that they are about to be laid off. CUNY's full-time professors, whose starting salaries are more than double those of adjuncts, do not want to consider a strike. But the union slogan, "An injury to one is an injury to all," expresses the view of the thousands of their fellow union members whose jobs are in peril.

This crisis occurs in the midst of an austerity program that is riding the backs of workers everywhere. In New York City, according to Bowen, 134 municipal unions are without a contract. A large rally at City Hall of all these unions is set for June 12.

Meanwhile, as public workers, CUNY adjuncts are forbidden from striking under New York State's Taylor Law. Under that law, a worker is fined two days' pay for each day on strike. But, as Bob Dylan sang, "When you have nothing, you have nothing to lose."

Contingent teachers and staff, facing financial oblivion, have nothing to lose by striking. Students at CUNY have nothing to lose by organizing against Pathways.

Cottin is an adjunct teacher at LaGuardia Community College.

## Despite heroic unif Chicago bo

By Eric Struch  
Chicago

Despite a heroic series of demonstrations led by the Chicago Teachers Union that involved support from school pupils and community organizations, the Chicago Board of Education and the right-wing, anti-people, anti-Black administration of Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel closed 50 schools in a decision that took less than two minutes.

The May 22 decision means that 27,000 children will have to change schools in the fall school session.

CTU President Karen Lewis said this in her statement responding to the closing: "The parents are amazing leaders in their school communities, and because of this administration's actions we have all become closer and more united. We must resist this neoliberal savagery masquerading as school reform. We must resist racism in all of its forms as well as the escalating at-

## Twin disasters

# Tornados & capitalism smash Oklahoma

By Gene Clancy

On the afternoon of May 20, a force equal to 600 times the Hiroshima atomic bomb's power struck the city of Moore, Okla. The giant tornado, 1.3 miles wide, cut a swath over 17 miles long, killing at least 24 people, ten of them children, and injuring 327 others. Over 13,000 homes and other structures were destroyed, with property damage expected to top \$2 billion.

Located just a little south of Oklahoma City, Moore lies in what has come to be called "Tornado Alley," a region crossing several states where tornadoes occur with great frequency each year, especially during the spring.

The twister was rated by the National Weather Service as an EF5, the most powerful rating given, and produced wind speeds of 200 to 210 miles per hour. According to engineering experts, a wind speed of 160 mph or greater is sufficient to turn any unsecured object of any weight (including automobiles) into rapidly accelerating projectiles.

In winds of 190 mph or greater, a 40,000 pound container secured to a concrete slab would be turned on its side and begin to roll with the slab attached. If dirt or sand is incorporated into the wind, as is often the case in a tornado, the force measured in pounds per square inch is 40 to 100 percent higher! (pssurvival.com)

Little wonder that the tornado which swept through Moore literally flattened everything in its path.

This was not the first time that Moore has been flattened. In 1999, the most powerful windstorm in recorded history hit the city with winds which reached 302 mph and killed even more people than the most recent storm. In all, four powerful, devastating tornadoes have hit Moore since 1998.

Each time, the people of Moore were given between 10 to 30 minutes warning during which they were supposed to either flee or protect themselves from these behemoth storms.

### Profits before people

If a large community were located in an area where such destructive force is unleashed on a more or less regular basis, it would seem reasonable to provide a

stormproof shelter of some type for every resident.

Unfortunately, big business and its lapdog politicians have a firm grip on Oklahoma, just like they have on most places in the U.S.

When the suggestion to provide safe rooms at least for schools was broached after the 1999 tornado, the politicians called the proposal "too expensive." The two schools in Moore where children died had no shelters because they hadn't an adequate budget for them.

On May 22, Moore's mayor, Glen Lewis, said he would propose an ordinance "in the next couple of days" at the Moore City Council that would modify building codes to require the construction of reinforced shelters in every new home in the town of 56,000. (AP, May 22)

But the cost of this would be borne by the residents, and, if passed, would only apply to new construction.

It may very well be that a project of this size and scope would need federal resources; resources such as a modest part of the hundreds of billions of dollars in spending on military bases and other "defense" projects which have been poured into Oklahoma since World War II, and continue to this day. Over 37 billion federal dollars were spent on the military in Oklahoma in 2009 alone. (usgovernmentspending.com)

At an average estimated price of \$4,000 per shelter (AP), every one of the 13,000 homes and schools destroyed in Moore could have been equipped with a shelter for approximately \$52 million, a little more than one thousandth of the amount spent on the military in Oklahoma in 2009.

The politicians in Washington, including those who represent Oklahoma, apparently would rather fund an enterprise which takes thousands of lives, rather than one which could save lives and provide good-paying jobs.

When \$50 billion in disaster aid for the victims of Superstorm Sandy came before Congress this year, three of Oklahoma's five representatives and both of its senators were among the "no" votes. With a total disregard for his "constituents," at least one of them, Sen. Tom Coburn, still says

that any "additional federal aid to help tornado victims and to rebuild devastated areas of his state should be financed with cuts to other programs" [such as food stamps]. (AP, May 21)

A federal action that will even raise the probability of future disasters, scheduled Sequester cuts will drop by 7 percent the budgets of those agencies that run weather detection programs.

Moore is in a poor area. Forty-two percent of the students of Cleveland County, where Moore is located, receive subsidized school lunches. Some 17 percent of the population has no health insurance whatsoever.

### A heroic, resilient working class

Much of the mainstream media's coverage of the events in Moore has praised the courage and resiliency of Moore's people, who performed many heroic acts. They especially singled out elementary school teachers who covered their young students with their bodies during the storm.

But the people of Oklahoma have a long history of not only resiliency but struggle.

It started with Native people who were transported against their will to the Oklahoma region during the 19th century. At that time, the region was called "Indian Territory," and was envisioned as a large collection of concentration camps. Thousands of Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole and other Indigenous people died while making the trek or trying to eke out an existence on the poor soils and dry climate.

In the 1890s, even this last refuge was stolen by a series of laws that turned over much of the territory to railroad and other business interests, and to white settlement.

But the working classes of Oklahoma did not simply roll over. In 1916, one quarter of the Oklahoma votes cast for president were for the Socialist Party candidate, Eugene V. Debs, who was in jail for opposing World War I. In 1917, an orga-

nization called the Working Class Union, composed of poor whites, African Americans and Indigenous people, organized an armed rebellion in southeastern Oklahoma against the recently instituted national military draft. Sam Marcy, the founder of Workers World Party documented this struggle in a book entitled "The Bolsheviks and War." (1985)

A period of horrific repression and reaction during the 1920s was accompanied by the discovery of oil. Within a short time, the political landscape came to be dominated by big petroleum interests.

During the 1930s, in addition to the mass suffering caused by the Great Depression, Oklahoma was at the epicenter of another capitalist created disaster: the Dust Bowl. High prices for agricultural products during and after World War I encouraged overplanting and poor plowing methods. Outside business interests leased thousands of acres and introduced machinery which denuded much of the land. Combined with a drought which lasted for nearly 10 years, the land simply blew away.

The Dust Bowl was an early symptom of the effects of global warming, which has also been cited by scientists as a cause of the increasing frequency and intensity of severe weather phenomena, including tornadoes.

Thousands of Oklahomans, derisively called Okies, were forced to migrate to other areas to find work, a process documented by books like John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath" and the songs of Woody Guthrie.

Despite the reactionary climate which exists in Oklahoma and across the U.S. today, the working classes of Oklahoma will not only survive; they will see to it that one day the workers will be able to get rid of capitalism and have a much better chance of dealing successfully with truly natural disasters. □

## ed march

# ard closes 50 schools

tacks on the working class and the poor. Our movement will continue." (dianeravitch.net, May 22)

CTU, which is American Federation of Teachers Local 1, had just reelected Lewis, its popular, struggle-oriented leader who has provided bold leadership in resisting Emanuel's war on public education and oppressed national communities.

### Emanuel's racist attacks on public education

Emanuel has been waging a war against public education. City Hall and the heads of the Chicago Public Schools system claim that many schools in the city are "underutilized." They use this as an excuse for their plans to shut these schools down.

The truth is that most CPS schools are overcrowded and underfunded. And the schools targeted for closing are almost exclusively located in Black or Latino/a communities.

CPS has also waged a war on Black teachers, drastically reducing their num-

bers ever since the years when Mayor Richard M. Daley ruled the city with an iron hand. Emanuel has continued and expanded Daley's racist policies, and is in the process of trying to create a two-tiered, apartheid, "separate but equal" school system. That would have underperforming, non-union charter schools for working-class and oppressed nation communities and well-funded magnet schools and private academies for children of the bourgeois brahmins, represented by the Emanuel administration.

The Board of Ed is facing a lawsuit, filed by Black parents and the parents of disabled children, charging that the school closings violate the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Illinois Civil Rights Act.

### 'Hands off our schools'

A three-day march began on May 18 at the Jesse Owens Elementary School located on 12450 South State Street. Students, parents, teachers and supporters



West Pullman school Chicago.

WWW PHOTO: PATRICIA LINAREZ

marched for justice.

CTU Recording Secretary Michael Brunson told the demonstration: "We have had enough. For too long there has been an assault on public schools, public services and public properties. We will not let you take our public schools. The mayor and the school board are about to make the largest school closing in the history of this nation." (chicago.cbslocal.com, May 18)

West Pullman elementary school students were present at the march for justice. "Hands off our schools," they demanded.

On May 20, after a morning filled with marches and demonstrations in communities whose schools are targeted to be closed, CTU members and their allies marched on City Hall with chants like "Hey Rahm, let's face it, school closures are racist!"

Adapting a popular slogan from the movement to free Black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, they chanted, "Brick by

brick, wall by wall, no school closings, save them all!"

CTU activists and allies delivered a petition to the mayor's office demanding a moratorium on school closings and then blocked access to ground-floor elevators at City Hall, underlining their commitment to keep the schools open. Some 26 people were arrested in this bold civil disobedience action.

The demonstrators, nearly 1,000 strong, then took over the nearby intersection of LaSalle and Washington on their way to the Daley Center for a huge rally, which included many students, parents and teachers.

The only way to stop the Emanuel administration and CPS from pushing forward their racist privatization agenda is the path of struggle opened up by Karen Lewis and the CTU.

Patricia Linarez contributed to this article.

# Ho Chi Minh's role in Vietnam's liberation struggle

— Naomi Cohen

## The Tet Offensive of 1968

This year is the 45th anniversary of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, which began on the night of Jan. 30, 1968, and continued throughout Vietnam for several months. This military offensive was launched by the National Liberation Front simultaneously in 140 cities and towns throughout South Vietnam and took the U.S. military and its puppet forces completely by surprise. As Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett wrote in his 1968 book, "Vietnam Will Win," "The NLF forces, without any modern means of transportation or communications attacked almost every major military and administrative installation in South Vietnam in complete secrecy under the noses of the most sophisticated military machine that has ever taken the field. ... [including] the U.S. Embassy, the 'Presidential Palace,' the joint U.S.-Saigon armed forces headquarters, and the South Vietnam naval headquarters."

Although the Pentagon and President Johnson declared the offensive a failure, it completely exposed the bankruptcy of the puppet regime in Saigon and the U.S. military in Vietnam. It was a dramatic illustration of the popular character of the Vietnamese liberation struggle. Within months, President Lyndon Johnson announced that he would not run for re-election.

The youth group of Workers World Party, Youth Against War & Fascism, was the first organization to call a demonstration against the Vietnam War in 1962, when President John F. Kennedy sent 12,000 so-called advisers to Vietnam to prop up the puppet regime of Ngo Dinh Diem in the South. We are proud to say that President Ho Chi Minh heard of the YAWF demonstration at that time and told a reporter visiting in North Vietnam that this was the kind of solidarity the Vietnamese needed in the struggle.

A few years later, comrade Deirdre Griswold (now the editor of Workers World newspaper) was sent as a representative of YAWF to work with the Bertrand Russell War Crimes Tribunal, which indicted the U.S. for war crimes in Vietnam.

## French leave, U.S. takes over south

Within months of their defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the French were forced to enter into peace talks in Geneva and leave Vietnam. However, the Vietnamese were denied in the Geneva Accords what they had won on the battlefield. Vietnam was divided into north and south. The independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was recognized, but the elections that were supposed to be held to reunify the country within two years were cancelled by the U.S.-backed puppet in the south, Ngo Dinh Diem. Washington backed Diem until 1963 and then installed one puppet government after another in Saigon, clearly determined to continue the occupation of the country, much as it had done in south Korea.

Vietnam, a relatively small and underdeveloped country, was now forced to fight on for another 21 years against the Pentagon war machine, which fielded an army of more than half a million U.S. troops at one time. To grasp how Vietnam could win this historic victory one must understand the decisive role played by political class consciousness and strong organization.

Wilfred Burchett, an Australian journalist who lived in Southeast Asia for many years, wrote the following in his book titled "Vietnam Will Win!" published in 1968:



## PART 2:

### From 1954 to 1975 defeat of U.S. imperialism

*Part 2 of an article to commemorate the anniversary of Ho Chi Minh's birthday on May 19. It covers Vietnam's war of liberation against U.S. imperialism. The first part ended with the 1954 military victory against French imperialism. Both parts are based on presentations by Naomi Cohen at a Workers World Forum on Jan. 30 with an introduction by LeiLani Dowell on the 1968 Tet Offensive; the talks can be found online at workers.org.*

"One did not have to spend very much time with a unit of the National Liberation Front forces to realize that political factors dominate all others in military planning and execution." New recruits "receive 15 days of education and training before they are given a gun. ... The first five days are devoted exclusively to political education."

Thus, the Vietnamese recognized that to carry out the program of liberating their country, they needed a politically conscious and motivated fighting force and population. There was no separation between the trained fighters and the general population, which cooperated with the resistance in the millions and provided them with food, shelter and intelligence.

The NLF was fighting a people's war. This is precisely why the U.S. military carried out so many massacres of the civilian population as the war continued. Having won the vast majority of the people over to the resistance, the NLF was in fact indistinguishable from the people.

When it became clear that the rural population was feeding and sheltering the resistance fighters, the U.S. tried to herd the people into "strategic hamlets," which were nothing but concentration camps, to try to cut off support to the NLF fighters. The Pentagon used chemical warfare, dropping Agent Orange to defoliate jungle hideouts and destroy crops. When these tactics didn't work, relentless bombing of so-called "free-fire zones" followed.

A new book by Nick Turse titled, "Kill Anything That Moves," documents the war crimes committed by the U.S. forces in Vietnam. Based on newly released classified information, it shows that massacres of the population like the one at My Lai were the rule and not the exception.

That millions of people were driven off the land into urban areas meant NLF sympathizers and spies were everywhere. In fact, after the Tet offensive it was revealed that the chauffeur for the U.S. ambassador in Saigon was in the NLF and led the storming of the Embassy grounds during the offensive. After the war, it was also revealed that the head of NLF intelligence in Saigon was a woman who had worked in a U.S. officers' club, gathering information as she waited on tables.

## U.S. forced to negotiate

In 1968, following the Tet Offensive, the U.S. was finally forced to agree to open up negotiations to end the war. In another dramatic first, the Vietnamese showed the world how seriously they took the role of women in the war effort when they appointed Madame Nguyen Thi Binh as head of the delegation for the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam to the Paris peace talks.

Madame Binh had been an activist in the Vietnamese communist movement since 1948 when she was 21 years old. She was imprisoned by the French in Saigon between 1951 and 1953. During the war against the U.S., she became a member of the Central Committee of the NLF and vice chair of the South Vietnam Women's Liberation Association. In 1969 she was appointed the foreign minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and played a major role in the Paris peace negotiations, facing numerous threats by then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to unleash nuclear weapons on Vietnam.

The Vietnamese liberation forces always made sure to highlight the leading role that women played in the struggle against the U.S., sending delegations of women fighters and former prisoners to many international conferences. Some of us from Youth Against War and Fascism had the honor of attending one such conference in Toronto, Canada, in 1970. A number of the Vietnamese women there had been imprisoned in the infamous tiger cages built to torture Vietnamese prisoners of war. Some of them had walked for over a month through jungles and under threat of carpet bombing to get to where other transportation could take them to the conference.

While the Tet Offensive was a blow to the U.S. ruling class and its puppet forces and politically exposed U.S. lies about the nature of the war, the Pentagon and the Nixon administration were determined to continue the war. They decided to step up the massive bombing of North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Meanwhile, the anti-war movement and the anti-war sentiment among GIs, many of them conscripted into the military, grew exponentially. In August 1966, heavy-weight champion Muhammad Ali refused to be inducted into the army, saying, "The Vietcong never called me [the N word]." By April 1967, Martin Luther King had already made his famous speech against the war at Riverside Church. The Tet offensive accelerated the decline of support for the war, and the U.S. war effort was clearly coming apart on both fronts.

## 'Vietnamization' fails, Vietnam wins!

Nixon and the U.S. generals were forced to declare the "Vietnamization" of the war, that is, the withdrawal of U.S. forces, but they stepped up the arming and training of puppet troops and launched massive attacks on the liberated territories in the south. It became clear that another offensive had to be launched to counter these attacks and blatant violations of the 1973 peace agreements. General Van Tien Dung, chief of staff of the Vietnam Peo-

ple's Army, wrote about the preparations for the final battles in a book published soon after the 1975 victory, titled "Our Great Spring Victory."

The Political Bureau of the Vietnam Workers Party and the Central Military Committee concluded that the Saigon troops were growing weaker militarily, politically and economically; that the U.S. was in no position to re-enter the war and would not be able to rescue the puppet Saigon regime.

Just as they had done massive preparation for the siege of Dien Bien Phu and for the Tet Offensive, they prepared to launch the spring offensive of 1975. In under two months the Saigon regime collapsed and all of the South was liberated by April 30, giving us those unforgettable images of the South Vietnamese collaborators with the U.S. scurrying to the top of the U.S. Embassy to flee Saigon in U.S. helicopters. Saigon was soon to be renamed Ho Chi Minh City in a reunified Vietnam.

Of course, in the aftermath of the war, the U.S. never paid a cent of the reparations that it was supposed to contribute to the rebuilding of the country. It left only a legacy of death and destruction, with an estimated 13.5 million people killed, wounded or made refugees. An estimated 40,000 Vietnamese have died since 1975 as a result of the unexploded bombs left on the land, and untold millions suffer from the effects of chemical warfare that could affect the population for generations to come.

Perhaps the slogan that best summarizes the legacy of the Vietnamese liberation struggle was raised by the Black Panther Party when they said, "The power of the people is greater than the man's technology." But the power of the people had to be organized. The Vietnamese people, who began their war of liberation with only bows and arrows, were organized by communist revolutionaries into the most determined and experienced anti-imperialist fighting force ever seen. This is how they defeated the most powerful military on earth.

Ho Chi Minh and his comrades were not only wise in military tactics, but they knew how to reach out to every progressive layer of Vietnamese society — from religious groups, to minority peoples, to students, intellectuals, workers and peasants — to forge unity in the struggle. And beyond that, they knew how to reach out to workers and oppressed peoples around the world to win allies and strengthen their fight. In other words, communist politics and organization were the key to their victory.

Ho Chi Minh died in 1969, leaving a last testament that he wrote in May of 1969. Here is a small excerpt:

"Our countrymen in the South and in the North will certainly be re-united under the same roof. We, a small nation, will have earned the signal honour of defeating, through heroic struggle, two big imperialisms — the French and the American — and of making a worthy contribution to the world national liberation movement. ...

"My ultimate wish is that our entire Party and people, closely joining their efforts, will build a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous Vietnam, and make a worthy contribution to the world revolution."

And indeed they did. Long live the example of the Vietnamese revolution!

*A source of much information on Ho Chi Minh's life is "Ho Chi Minh, A Political Biography" by Jean Lacouture, 1968.*



## Sweden

## Immigrant communities rebel

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Many were shocked at the week of rebellion that began May 19 in the suburb of Husby just outside Stockholm, Sweden, a city which is known for its social services programs, clean commercial districts and neighborhoods. The rebellion that spread to other regions of the country illustrated the anger and frustration of young people, who are largely descendants of immigrants from Western Asia and Africa.

The resistance began when police actions resulted in the death of a 70-year-old Portuguese immigrant in Husby. Officials claimed he had threatened the officers with a machete. Neighborhood sources said that it was no machete, but a knife.

Also, no one was being held hostage, as news reports had indicated and the other person with the man in his apartment was his spouse. Apparently the couple had problems with some youths in the neighborhood, and when police arrived the couple was responding to an already tense and hostile dispute.

This conflict may have been the spark that ignited a week of arson against vehicles and buildings and attacks on businesses, the police and firefighting forces. The underlying reasons, however, are that many youth within this Scandinavian state are jobless and all from these communities are subject to police harassment.

During the week, the rebellions spread to other Swedish cities: Malmo, Gothenburg, Orebro and Akersberga. Reports indicate that at least 100 people have been arrested and no deaths reported since the demise of the initial victim.

Sweden's center-right governments have deeply cut social service programs over the last decade during a gradual eco-



Protest against police violence in Husby, northern Stockholm, Sweden, on May 22.

economic decline during the 1990s and the overall world capitalist crisis that has hit all of Europe since 2007. The suburban areas around Stockholm and other cities are now home to immigrants from Iraq, Iran, Kurdistan, Turkey and Somalia, et al., and their Sweden-born children, along with a new influx of refugees from Syria in response to the Western-backed war of aggression and regime change.

The growing immigrant communities make up about 15 percent of Sweden's population. A far-right party has surfaced, the Swedish Democrats, which is gaining support among the Europeans and seeking to politically exploit the latest events. The SD now has 20 representatives in the country's 349-member Parliament. Jimmie Akesson, the party's leader, has called for the deportation of noncitizens involved in what he calls criminal activity.

Making matters even worse, center-right Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt of the Moderate Party, called the young people in the streets "hooligans" (Reuters, May 23). He refused to consider racism, growing inequality, lack of

opportunity and police brutality as being central to the rebellion.

#### Youth condemn racism

Barbo Sorman, a spokesperson for the opposition Left Party, pointed to these ills and added that "Sweden was starting to look like the United States." (New York Times, May 27)

Sweden, though it remained capitalist and aligned with the imperialist West, had a social democratic government for 40 years until the 1970s. This brought more extensive social programs and avoided extreme poverty. Since the 1990s, when there was an economic downturn, these social programs have declined. The rightist regime has continued to cut these programs.

According to a report issued by the United Nations-affiliated Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Sweden has the fastest growing rate of income inequality among all the 34 OECD members. This is a similar pattern within most Western capitalist states, which in part is the result of government

policies that allow unregulated profit making efforts by the wealthy.

The unrest in Sweden follows similar outbreaks in other European states. This includes England, where, two summers ago, dozens of cities were hit by rebellions in response to police brutality and the cutbacks in social services that disproportionately impacted Blacks and other oppressed groups within the society.

In Paris beginning in 2005, widespread attacks on private property and the police spread throughout the country's immigrant suburbs. Racism and the lack of economic opportunities were also behind the rebellions there.

North African-origin and African immigrant communities are trapped outside the major French cities in suburbs where there are very few jobs, and police patrol these areas as if they are war zones.

Barar Mohamed, a 15-year-old youth whose parents are immigrants from Somalia, pointed out: "So maybe I am lucky to be in Europe. Compared to people in Somalia, maybe I am lucky. But I have hardly ever even met them, and this is where I live, and I have to live with police brutality, and I don't have the same chance as the Swedish kids. I am Swedish. I am Swedish." (Independent, May 26)

As the economic crisis persists in Europe and the immigrant communities continue to be used as scapegoats for the decline in living standards and the growing class divisions, more rebellions will take place throughout the continent. Working-class Europeans have no choice but to join alliances with the people of color communities to form a united front against austerity and the assaults on the social service programs that had been conceded to the workers' struggles during the Cold War period following the end of World War II. □

## Obama's peace rhetoric masks U.S. aggression

By G. Dunkel

A violent, worldwide war against "terror" engenders resistance. These are not just outbreaks of individual rage as in Boston or London this spring. The hunger strike at Guantánamo, where prisoners from all over the Muslim world are using their only weapon, their lives, to resist their unending imprisonment by fasting, reflects this resistance. In Yemen and Pakistan, two countries subjected to an intensification of drone strikes under the Obama administration, there have been mass protests.

When President Barack Obama spoke May 23 at the National Defense University — a Pentagon sponsored institution of "higher" strategic studies — he tried to diffuse this rising resistance. At the same time, he maintained the right of the United States to use force and violence whenever and wherever it wants to and can get away with it.

For an example of a change that is not really a change, Obama said, "Now, going forward, I've asked my administration to review proposals to extend oversight of lethal actions outside of war zones that go beyond our reporting to Congress." (whitehouse.gov, May 23) He says his administration will "extend oversight," probably by letting the Pentagon control the drones instead of the CIA. He doesn't say he will stop these attacks.

Later in this speech, he claims these strikes are "effective" and "legal."

In Pakistan, a new government has just taken office. Pakistani human-rights attorney Shahzad Mirza Akbar told Al-Jazeera that drones will be a big challenge for the incoming government, which will face legal problems if it does not challenge these strikes. Other Pakistani opposition leaders, like Shireen Mazari, a member of Imran Khan's political party, which is considered as the main opposition to the governing party, criticized Obama's position as "absurd." (Washington Post Blog, May 24)

Facing mounting pressure from the Yemeni people and tribal leaders, Obama finally admitted what everybody had assumed for nearly 600 days. That's the amount of time since U.S. drones killed Anwar Awlaki and three other U.S. citizens in Yemen.

Obama and his Department of Justice tried to justify this killing by claiming Awlaki was the chief of external operations for al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and that it was impossible to indict and extradite him from Yemen. But then they didn't try to indict him under the U.S. justice system and ignored the fact that Yemen kept him in prison for 18 months at U.S. request in 2006 and 2007. ("Dirty Wars," by Jeremy Scahill, pp. 185-190)

What makes the U.S. justification for this assassination even more suspect is that a few weeks after Anwar Awlaki was

killed, so was his son, Abdulrahman Awlaki, along with some of his cousins who were sharing a table with him at a cafe. It's hard to believe the unnamed U.S. officials that claim this assassination was "unintentional."

Abdulrahman Awlaki was 16, born and raised in the U.S., with firm ties to his school and all the pursuits of a typical U.S. teenager. He hadn't seen his father for years, so he came to Yemen to visit his grandparents and to find his father.

Medea Benjamin of the anti-war women's group Code Pink interrupted Obama's speech several times to protest Abdulrahman's murder and the prison camp at Guantánamo. If Abdulrahman's killing was "unintentional," which the U.S. claims, there is really no effective control of drone strikes.

If it was intentional, given the context of his life, it says something even worse — punishing the son for what the father did.

Guantánamo, which Benjamin raised

as she was being dragged out, was a major issue in the 2008 presidential campaign. Both Obama and John McCain said they would close it. Five years later, it is still open.

In his speech, Obama admitted, "Gitmo [Guantánamo] has become a symbol around the world for an America that flouts the rule of law." And, "We spend \$150 million each year to imprison 166 people, almost a million dollars per prisoner."

But Congress, according to Obama, won't let him move prisoners, either to the U.S. for trial, or to their home countries. Fifty-six Guantánamo prisoners have been cleared of all charges by military and CIA investigators, but are still being held.

If Obama, as the courts have held, has the right to imprison whomever he wants during war time, he also has the right to release them. The Guantánamo prison has already released around 600 prisoners. Why not the rest? □

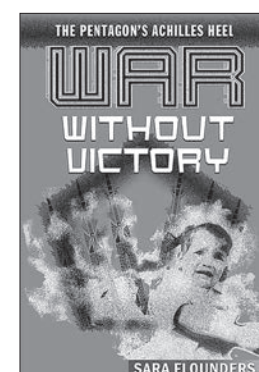
## WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

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

— Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, Pres. of U.N. Gen. Assy., 2008-2009, Foreign Min. of Nicaragua's Sandinista gov. 1979-1990

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## Gay scouts in the BSA

On May 23, 61 percent of 1,400 voting members approved a measure to allow openly gay youth to participate in the Boy Scouts of America -- one of the largest youth organizations in the U.S., with the participation of more than 2.6 million young people. The new membership policy, set to go into effect on Jan. 1, states that “no youth will be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone.”

The majority of Boy Scout troops are hosted by churches and religious organizations throughout the country. While teaching boys important leadership and camaraderie skills, the 103-year-old organization also serves them a hefty dose of patriotism and religion. The Boy Scout Oath or Promise states, “On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country.” (usscouts.org) This ideological platform attempts to divide young working-class men from their brothers and sisters around the globe.

And yet, this vote by the membership remains an important victory, similar to the overturning of “don’t ask, don’t tell” in the pro-imperialist, sexist, anti-worker U.S. military. The vote is a result of struggle -- in this case, the struggle of former Boy Scouts and troop leaders who were ousted for being gay, along with their allies. In the 13 years since the Supreme Court ruled that the organization had a right to discriminate, these forces have successfully pressured a number of businesses to withdraw their sponsorship from the Boy Scouts.

The vote in favor of inclusion reflects the changing consciousness of people in

the U.S. and around the world in terms of rights of lesbians, gay men, bi, trans, queer people. In large part, it suggests an effort by the organization -- whose numbers have been steadily dwindling for years -- to avoid becoming irrelevant bucking the tide of pro-LGBTQ sentiment.

The decision helps lessen the stigma of being gay -- especially for the many young gay men who suffer from depression and often turn to suicide. As the numbers of murdered LGBTQ people rise in the recent period, this vote helps affirm that even the most deep-seated bigotry -- coming from right-wing churches -- can be defeated.

The struggle continues, however. The BSA refused to even vote on its ban against gay adults, who are still not allowed to participate or have leadership roles. The ban on LGBTQ adults will paradoxically force young gay men to leave the organization the minute they turn 18.

This is workplace discrimination; while many of the scouting leadership roles are voluntary, there are also paid positions in the BSA. It also sends the bigoted and completely bogus message that gay adults are predators who must be kept away from young children.

Many LGBTQ people and allies are saying that overturning the ban on gay leadership in the Boy Scouts is inevitable, given the recent ruling on youth and society’s continually evolving consciousness. When this occurs, it will result from the same impetus for all LGBTQ victories -- the struggle of LGBTQ people and their allies for their rights. □

## U.S. hands off Syria, Venezuela!

Recent U.S. threats against Iran, Syria and, yes, Venezuela show that this time of capitalist economic crisis brings with it the danger of new imperialist wars and interventions.

In late May -- in news that got more publicity in the Israeli media than in the U.S. -- the U.S. Senate unanimously approved a resolution backing up Israel if it launches an attack on Iranian nuclear facilities. The Senate, in other words, told the Obama administration it was not being aggressive enough.

While President Barack Obama and his team have aimed to protect and expand U.S. imperialist interests using economics, diplomacy and military threats, some in the U.S. ruling class apparently want more muscle. Sen. John McCain, for example, made a surprise visit May 27 to the “Free Syrian Army” to underline what his faction sees as the need to send even more arms to kill Syrians. Some European imperialists agree, and the European Union has now removed its official embargo on weapons to the opposition against Bashir al-Assad’s government.

We put the “Free Syrian Army” in quotes as there is nothing “free” about this collection of pro-imperialist reactionaries. They represent foreign imperialist interests more than Syrian ones, and rather than an army, they are a collection of terrorist gangs with conflicting interests.

The Obama faction may be trying -- using their own evaluation of how to advance U.S. imperialism -- to avoid another draining war in West Asia. Whether that is true or not, however, it is using Washington’s economic, diplomatic and the potential of its military power to remove the rightfully elected Bolivarian government of Venezuela.

In that country, U.S. strategy, now that the unifying and charismatic Hugo Chávez has died, is to wear away support for the progressive government led by newly elected President Nicolás Maduro. At this point the Venezuelan oligarchs and their political representatives -- especially presidential loser Henrique Capriles Radonski -- are following the U.S. lead.

Just after the election -- which Capriles and the U.S. have refused to recognize, even after recounts and international verification -- Capriles’ fascist forces rioted and murdered 11 people. This move failed. Capriles’ Movement of Democratic Unity (MUD) also failed to rally the Organization of American States to attack Maduro. And the more independent Latin American regional organizations backed the legitimate Venezuelan government.

Capriles, with complete U.S. backing, developed an economic offensive to erode support for the government. This was done successfully and brutally against the 1970s Salvador Allende government in Chile. In Venezuela now, supermarket chains belonging to opposition millionaires are artificially causing shortages in everything from food to toilet paper. The media, owned by the viciously anti-Bolivarian and anti-poor millionaires, spread rumors and speculation to help keep the country in a climate of permanent tension.

Just as the progressive and anti-war movement here in the center of world imperialism must demand “Hands off Syria” and “No attack on Iran,” so must we rally to strengthen solidarity with Bolivarian Venezuela under serious attack from imperialism and its local oligarchy. □

## SUPPORT WW: A VOICE FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER RIGHTS

Ever since the Stonewall Rebellion erupted on June 28, 1969, Workers World has covered the global struggle to end bigotry against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities and all forms of anti-LGBTQ discrimination, persecution and violence.

WW has defended the rights of LGBTQ people in the U.S. by protesting Anita Bryant’s vicious campaign against equal legal protection in the 1970s; by heralding the struggle for comprehensive medical treatment and care for people with HIV/AIDS in the 1980s; by promoting the movement to end state laws banning gay sex and against the Defense of Marriage Act in the 1990s; and by demanding equal marriage and family rights in the 21st century.

In the month of May, for instance, WW reported on the huge outpouring of protest on May 20 in New York City after the vicious murder of Mark Carson, a proud gay African-American man, on a Greenwich Village street not far from the Stonewall Rebellion. And in the May 30 issue, WW reported on the hate-crime murders of three African-American transwomen in Baltimore; Oak Ridge, Fla.; and Cleveland. Our coverage of Cemia “CeCe” Dove’s murder exposed the disrespect and insensitivity of the Cleveland press.

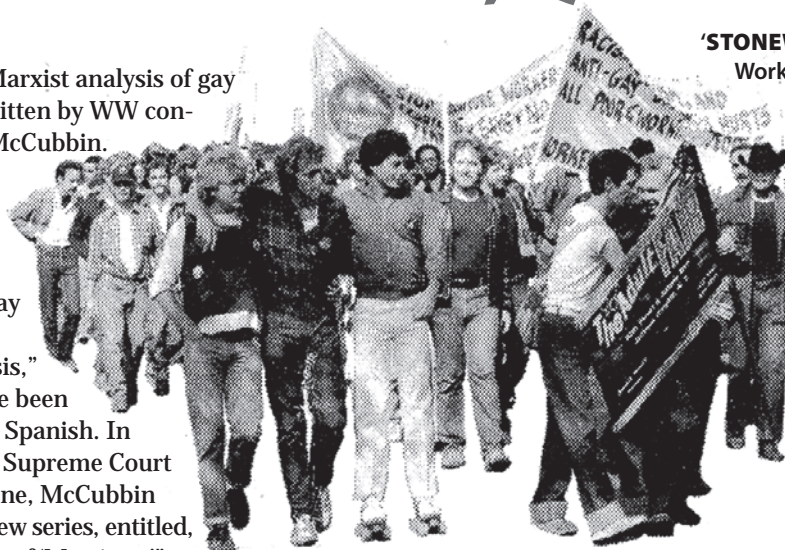
WW has consistently backed up our activist coverage with a Marxist analysis of LGBTQ oppression. In the early 1970s, WW ran a series of articles with the first

modern-day Marxist analysis of gay oppression, written by WW contributor, Bob McCubbin.

That soon led to publication of his book, “The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist Analysis,” which has since been translated into Spanish. In anticipation of Supreme Court decisions in June, McCubbin has started a new series, entitled, “A Brief History of ‘Marriage.’”

Then in the 1990s, WW managing editor and globally recognized transgender warrior, Leslie Feinberg, wrote a series of 25 articles in WW, which were then published as “Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba,” followed by the series “Lavender & Red,” about socialism and the LGBTQ struggle. In 2012, Feinberg wrote another series of articles in defense of African-American transgender woman, CeCe McDonald, who was charged with manslaughter after she defended herself from a racist, brutal, bigoted attack.

When it comes to reporting on LGBTQ issues and struggles, Workers World newspaper is light-years removed from the big-business press. That’s because we don’t have to toady to big-business advertising or pander to the backward ide-



‘STONEWALL MEANS FIGHTBACK!’ read one of the Workers World banners at the first PRIDE march on Washington, D.C., 1976. The popular round emblem with double fists was designed by revolutionary artist Bill Haislip.

- To oppose imperialist wars and occupations
- To save the environment and block destructive capitalist ventures like fracking
- To support the People’s Power Assembly movement
- To fight for a socialist future to meet people’s needs

We’re looking forward to the challenges ahead. But we need your help. We moved our office at the beginning of the year, and we’re still recovering from that strain on our resources. Please give as generously as you can.

Contribute to Workers World because you care about the struggle to end capitalism. Give because you want to help build a workers’ world.

You can become a member of the Supporter Program by contributing a lump sum of \$75, \$100, \$300 or more. Or send a monthly donation starting with as little as \$6, \$10 or \$25.

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ology of the 1%. We rely on support from our readers like you to bring working-class truth into the streets to build the struggles:

- To challenge racist police terror and mass incarceration targeting people of color -- Black, Latino/a, Indigenous, Arab, Muslim, Asian and the undocumented
- To fight for the rights of women and lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer communities -- from reproductive justice to same-sex marriage
- To save and expand our schools, hospitals, post offices, libraries, public services and facilities for people with disabilities
- To demand a federal program to create jobs or income for all, with a vitally needed pay increase for low-wage workers

## Gerardo Hernández:

# We will always be the Cuban Five

A May 3 message about his Cuban 5 comrade René González, who is being allowed to stay in Cuba.

He could have used the same reasons of those who very soon decided to plead guilty and cooperate with the authorities. After long years of separation, he already had at his side Olga and Irmita and had been able to enjoy for just four months the newborn Ivette.

What to do? Cling to the principles, leaving the three of them alone in a strange country and face again years of separation? Or “negotiate” and give them what they asked for in exchange for forgiveness and a new life? In his mind there

was never a doubt, nor was there in his conduct a moment of hesitation.

Prosecutors knew they had very little against him, and tried to get him out of the way with offers. It bothered them that he sang “El Necio” (“The Fool”) and so they got tough on him. No one saw him crying when they separated Olga from the girls and they threw her into a cell. He had to do that in silence, as we all did because of the indignation and pain we felt when we heard the news, but we never noticed even minimal despair from him.

He fulfilled with dignity every day of his sentence, and came out with his head held as high as when he went in, but yet he still had to suffer the loss of his broth-

er and his father in solitude.

Today each one of the Five is a little more free. Part of us wanders through the streets of this island with him, and we can almost breathe the air, and bathe under the sun.

Someone asked me if we will now say that we are not five, but four. That would be a mistake! We are five and we will continue to be five! Today we have to continue the fight not only for the other four, but for Rene as well, because we know him, and we know that he will never be really free until we're all back in the homeland. The difference now is that this battle, which will be until the end for the Five, has from this day on a new standard bearer.



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez, Fernando González Llorit, Ramón Labañino Salazar, and René González Sehwert.

Congratulations, Rene! Your four brothers celebrate with you, proudly! □

## SOUTH AFRICA

# Mineworkers union asks 60 percent pay raise

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

South Africa's miners have been forced to threaten strikes following an announcement that thousands of workers would be laid off. The mining industry, one of the most important sectors of South Africa's economy, has been the scene of protracted struggles since mid-2012, when a series of wildcat and protected work stoppages slowed down or stopped production throughout the country.

The National Union of Mineworkers, an affiliate of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), on May 17 raised to the Chamber of Mines a demand for a 60 percent pay increase. The bosses have reacted with hostility to this demand, and their financial consultants have claimed that this escalating tension between the mining unions and the owners has sharpened the already unstable situation involving the South African economy.

A press release issued by NUM states, “The union demands that surface workers should receive a minimum amount of R7000 (\$750) and underground and

opencast workers minimum should be set at R8000 (\$850) per month.” For all other categories, the NUM has demanded 15-percent raises and also wants to increase the job categories at which workers are rated. (May 17)

“These demands are informed by many studies which have revealed that cash wages received over time has indeed been growing but, the disposable wage has been under severe strain due to the effects of inflation and other expense incurred to maintain a worker's modest lifestyle,” says Frans Baleni, the NUM General Secretary.

NUM has also placed other demands involving housing, transportation and insurance before the mine owners. The union is currently awaiting a response prior to the beginning of negotiations in June.

### Lonmin workers' struggle

In the platinum industry, in which 34 died at the hands of provincial police during the Marikana massacre, and 16 other workers died in other incidents before and after the massacre, resistance is continuing. The African National Congress government established the Farlam Com-

mission to investigate the circumstances surrounding last Aug. 16's police killings.

The Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union is seeking recognition as the principal bargaining unit for the Lonmin Mines at Marikana. This is a major challenge to the NUM's leading role in the platinum mines in the area. At present NUM is still the official representative of the workers.

The AMCU claims that it has more worker members than NUM at the Marikana mines. The NUM is saying that even if this is true, it should still be allowed to represent its supporters within the mines as a minority unit.

Up to now, a union that represents 50 percent of the workers plus one is officially recognized as the representative of the workers at a mine. The AMCU says the NUM should leave the Lonmin mines around Marikana and allow the AMCU to lead.

“We admit that for many years on the issue of threshold, it was 50 plus one,” said NUM spokesperson Lesiba Seshoka.

“As a union we have lost the majority at Lonmin,” he said. “We are prepared to

give Amcu the opportunity to lead. But they must give us the space to exist, as we did when they were a minority.”

This situation is complicated due to the fact that NUM, through COSATU, maintains its alliance with the ruling ANC government. National elections are scheduled for 2014 and traditionally the ANC has relied on its majority support from the trade unions in order to secure large margins of victory.

With problems continuing in the mining industry, the ruling party is concerned that the loss of support from workers in the platinum industry around Rustenburg could weaken its political base.

With the overall decline in prices and earnings within the gold and platinum sectors in South Africa, the bosses will continue to pressure the workers through threats of downsizing and the closing of production facilities. Until the mining industry is taken over by the workers through a process of nationalization under employee control, the bosses will remain obstinate in their responses to the demands for higher wages and better living conditions. □

## D.C. actions to demand: **FREE THE CUBAN FIVE!**

Continued from page 5

ditorium, a forum and film will highlight the role of Cuba in liberating Southern Africa from colonialism and apartheid, resulting in the independence of Namibia and the release and subsequent election of Nelson Mandela.

Three of the Cuban 5 — Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González and René González — served in Cuba's internationalist forces there. Among the speakers will be José R. Cabañas Rodríguez, chief of the Cuban Interests Section — the equivalent of an embassy if the U.S. and Cuba had normal diplomatic relations — who also participated in Cuba's internationalist campaign in Africa. Clips from “Cuba, an Africa Odyssey,” a documentary made by an Egyptian director for French and German TV, will be shown.

### International solidarity

On June 3, the Central Trabajadores de Cuba — the Workers Central Union of Cuba — is holding a meeting at the theater of the Lazaro Pena workers' school to coincide with a meeting of union members at Local 140 of the Postal Workers Union.

Committees in solidarity with the Five in Canada, Mexico, Spain, Argentina and Ukraine also reported plans for actions in solidarity with the ones in Washington during the week.

A complete, updated schedule of events is available at theCuban5.org.

### Unjustly incarcerated

Armed only with courage, the Cuban 5 tried to stop anti-Cuba terrorism by infiltrating the Florida anti-communist organizations that carried out hotel and restaurant bombings inside Cuba during the 1990s. This wave of bombings killed a young Italian man, Fabio DiCelmo, on Sept. 4, 1997. The exiles' aim was to further destroy the blockaded Cuban economy by disrupting the tourism industry and starving the Cuban people into accepting U.S. capitalist domination.

Many of the Cuban 5's supporters worldwide — not to mention the millions in Cuba — consider them real heroes who defended their country while carrying out a real battle against terror attacks on civilians in Cuba. For this the U.S. hit them

with long prison sentences.

Although René González's prison term ended on Oct. 7, 2011, he was forced to remain on supervised release in the Miami area for three additional years. However, while on an authorized two-week trip to Cuba following the death of his father, González — who was born in Chicago and moved to Cuba with his parents when he was five — was permitted to remain permanently in Cuba after renouncing his U.S. citizenship in May.

In an extralegal punishment, González' spouse, Olga Salanueva, was repeatedly denied a U.S. entry visa for the full term of his imprisonment and supervised release, depriving them of the human right of family visits.

The George W. Bush administration and the Barack Obama administration that followed both claimed to be waging a “war on terror.” But what they were really doing was using “terror” as a pretext to terrorize people from Afghanistan and Pakistan to Yemen, from Iraq to Somalia, with military occupations, drone strikes, assassinations, renditions and torture.

In a new example of the U.S. government's outrageous attempts to intervene abroad to stifle anything related to Cuba, the Office of Foreign Assets Control intercepted funds to purchase French author Salim Lamrani's books from his U.S. publisher. Lamrani reported this from his book tour in Britain. The book the OFAC is targeting for allegedly violating the over 50-year U.S. economic blockade of Cuba is entitled “The Economic War Against Cuba.” Lamrani will also present this book in Washington.

In its news releases about the broad series of scheduled events, the International Committee to Free the Five states its answer to all these attacks on Cuba: “Enough is enough.” It is time to release the remaining Cuban 5 and seek a dialogue with Cuba — something demanded by all governments in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as the overwhelming majority of the world's people represented at the United Nations General Assembly, who year after year vote against the U.S. blockade.

Free the Cuban 5! □

¡Proletarios y oprimidos de todos los países uníos!

EDITORIAL:

## El verdadero escándalo del IRS

Los políticos republicanos y los medios de comunicación reaccionarios se han unido a los ultraderechistas del Partido del Té en un ataque a gran escala contra el Servicio de Impuestos Internos (IRS por las siglas en inglés) y, por extensión, contra la administración de Barack Obama. En lugar de confrontar este ataque injustificado y sin fundamento directamente como se merece, los demócratas han cedido, forzando al IRS a pedir disculpas a los ricos ultraderechistas.

Esta es una lección que no debe perderse la clase obrera y las comunidades oprimidas aquí en los Estados Unidos que necesitan destruir la ofensiva de la derecha: con los demócratas no se puede contar para esa lucha.

En resumen, lo que consiste es que muchos grupos vinculados ideológicamente y en muchos casos organizacionalmente, a los fanáticos del Partido del Té, han solicitado exención de impuestos bajo la provisión dentro del código tributario conocida como "501(c)(4)". La aceptación de la aplicación permite deducciones para contribuciones a estos grupos. Según la regla fiscal, el grupo exento de impuestos debe centrarse principalmente en el bienestar social. Éste, "no debe estar organizado con fines de lucro y deberá utilizarse exclusivamente para promover el bienestar social".

Los grupos conectados al Partido de Té son todo lo contrario. Hacen todo lo posible por destruir y eliminar el bienestar social. Por ejemplo, atacan el Seguro Social y el Medicare, también los programas como cupones para alimentos y Medicaid. También intentan romper los sindicatos.

El Partido del Té entró en prominencia nacional a través de sus ataques desde la derecha al programa de cuidado médico de la administración de Obama en 2009-2010. Con importante apoyo financiero de los multimillonarios y pro-fascistas hermanos Koch y otros financiadores súper ricos, el Partido del Té y sus grupos aliados condujeron una campaña contra demócratas e incluso algunos republicanos que estos grupos consideraban demasiados "liberales".

Estos reaccionarios súper ricos ahora quieren deducciones fiscales, mientras presionan y abogan por eliminar todos sus impuestos. Ni siquiera quieren pagar una cuota por el poder del estado que protege su propiedad privada.

Así que era perfectamente razonable y eficiente que la agencia de IRS que tenía la tarea de investigar la legitimidad de las solicitudes de 501(c)(4) seleccionara para investigar las que llevaban "Tea Party" o "Patriot" por nombres. Estos grupos que odian el "bienestar social" suelen ser impostores de acuerdo a las normas de los impuestos.

Como parte del aparato del gobierno, el IRS estaba haciendo su trabajo legal. En este caso trataba de evitar que un pequeño grupo de personas muy adineradas abusaran de una exención tributaria-- abusándola para promover políticas ultra derechistas y cabildar en el Congreso.

Debemos señalar aquí que no son solamente las organizaciones más pequeñas del tipo Partido del Té que cometen fraude impunemente al no pagar impuestos por interferencia política abierta, sino también grupos gigantescos como el de Karl Rove, el Crossroads GPA, que recauda más de quinientos millones de dólares y empuja cada elección nacional hacia la derecha con su propaganda reaccionaria.

Si bien este reciente conflicto es entre facciones rivales de la clase gobernante, tiene un impacto en la clase trabajadora. Ni el Partido del Té, ni los Republicanos, ni los Demócratas representan los intereses de la clase trabajadora, pero está en el interés de la clase trabajadora el destrozarse la ofensiva de la ultra derecha. La lección aquí es que en lugar de entrar en conflicto con los derechistas, la administración Obama y el Partido Demócrata en general han abandonado a los/as trabajadores/as del IRS dejándoles a merced del viento. Los demócratas también se han retirado de conflictos con la jerarquía militar sobre Afganistán, y han incumplido las promesas electorales de aumentar los derechos de los/as trabajadores/as a sindicalizarse.

Los/as trabajadores/as y las comunidades oprimidas deben organizarse independientemente del Partido Demócrata. No pueden confiarse en los funcionarios y representantes del Partido Demócrata para llevar a cabo una lucha contra la extrema derecha y los súper ricos. Esto debe hacerse en los lugares de trabajo, en las comunidades y en las calles. □

## Las mentiras del occidente sobre Siria

Por Prashanth Kamalakanthan

Hay el siguiente mito sobre el intervencionismo occidental en Siria: el papel de Estados Unidos y otras naciones occidentales ha sido el de reforzar elementos moderados dentro de una amplia coalición contra el gobierno para luchar por la libertad contra un régimen tiránico. Tan reciente como el 28 de febrero de este año, el secretario de estado John Kerry afirmó que Estados Unidos estaba por primera vez enviando "ayuda no letal" a la oposición Siria, posición pública que ha mantenido durante los recientes llamados para duplicar la ayuda a los rebeldes sirios y llegar a una meta de más de mil millones de dólares en ayuda internacional.

Y luego está la realidad de los verdaderos intereses del occidente en el conflicto sirio, en el cual más de 70.000 personas han muerto y sobre 1 millón desplazada. Desde al menos principios del 2012, la CIA ha estado enviando grandes cargamentos de armas a Siria a través de apoderados regionales. Muchas de estas armas a su vez han caído en manos de militantes sunitas extranjeros trabajando con Jabhat al-Nusra-- un grupo caracterizado como terrorista por los EE.UU. y afiliado al al-Qaeda--que ha emergido como la fuerza militar principal de la oposición. (New York Times, 8 de diciembre de 2012)

Un comunicado oficial del Departamento de Estado con fecha del 11 de diciembre de 2012 documenta cómo "desde noviembre de 2011, el Frente al-Nusra se atribuyó casi 600 ataques... más de 40 ataques suicidas con pequeñas armas y operaciones con artefactos explosivos improvisados en los centros de ciudades principales... [donde] numerosos sirios inocentes han muerto".

El New York Times mostró el 27 de abril que el vínculo entre la ayuda occidental y la fuerza del frente al-Nusra de al-Qaida es intencional y estratégica. Confirmando que la oposición siria está dirigida enteramente por afiliados de al-Qaida, el informe señala claramente que: "en ninguna parte de Siria [que está] controlada por los rebeldes no hay en realidad un fuerza de combate secular. ... Nusra se ha responsabilizado de una serie de atentados suicidas y es el grupo preferido por los yihadistas extranjeros en Siria".

Independientemente del carácter en sus comienzos en marzo de 2011, el conflicto sirio se ha convertido en una guerra de poder regional entre militantes equipados y capacitados por el occidente y un régimen políticamente desfavorable. Hay pocas pruebas que sustenten las afirmaciones de los Estados Unidos y sus aliados de que alguna vez hubo alguna facción secular moderada entre la oposición militar. Por el contrario, los datos demuestran abrumadoramente cómo el occidente, por años ha

equipado a sabiendas a militantes extremistas con poca consideración por la vida civil.

Intereses geoestratégicos de Estados Unidos

Los motivos para la violenta incursión aparecen como era de esperarse, arraigados en intereses geoestratégicos y no humanitarios. Irán firmó recientemente un acuerdo de 10 mil millones de dólares para un gasoducto con Siria e Irak —rechazado vehementemente por Estados Unidos— que traería hidrocarburos iraníes al Mediterráneo así como a Rusia, que ha intentado ampliar su influencia en el desarrollo de la energía de la región.

Un informe publicado el 2 de enero por la experta en energía Ruba Husari en el Centro de Carnegie Sobre el Medio Oriente, observa que aunque Siria no es gran productora de petróleo o gas, su localización "ofrece acceso a entidades sin litoral mediterráneo en busca de mercados para los hidrocarburos y a los países que buscan acceso a Europa sin tener que pasar por Turquía" y que "nuevas oportunidades surgirían bajo un nuevo régimen sirio".

La "nuevas oportunidades" inmediatas que impulsan la intervención incluyen el acceso sin trabas al desarrollo energético de la región otorgado a las corporaciones occidentales. Este proceso ya está en marcha. La Unión Europea ha levantado las sanciones y está comprando petróleo de los mismos yacimientos petrolíferos en Siria que han sido usurpados del gobierno sirio por militantes de al-Nusra. La estrategia a largo plazo es la de aislar y debilitar el régimen iraní mediante la eliminación de un importante socio regional, Siria, despejando así el camino para imponer el control imperialista sobre las extensas reservas de energía que abarca desde la Cuenca del Caspio hasta el Golfo Pérsico.

Dudosas declaraciones de funcionarios occidentales y de Israel, redactada en idioma sospechoso de probabilidad desconocida como "variable confianza" y "pruebas limitadas", ahora han acusado al régimen de Assad de uso de armas químicas, una obvia "línea roja" para una respuesta militar directa por parte de los Estados Unidos y sus aliados.

Nada menos que la funcionaria de las Naciones Unidas Carla Del Ponte, quien colaboró con la guerra de Estados Unidos y la OTAN contra Yugoslavia, expone la acusación sobre armas químicas. Ella dice que si se utilizaron armas químicas, fueron las fuerzas anti-Assad que las utilizaron. (Reuters, 5 de mayo)

La rancia y transparente retórica del occidente sobre la promoción de los derechos humanos y la democracia, no puede tolerarse sobre Siria. Lo que se está construyendo es una descarada intervención imperial, que no tiene real respeto de los derechos humanos o de la vida. Esto debe ser reconocido universalmente. □



### El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

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

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

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

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

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