

# WORKERS WORLD



Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

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# From Ukraine to Venezuela U.S. wages dirty wars

By Fred Goldstein

Feb. 24 — Washington has escalated its global campaign of reactionary subversion from Ukraine to Venezuela. A takeover in Ukraine would bring the Pentagon and Wall Street to the borders of Russia. In Venezuela, the Bolivarian Revolution is crucial to the bloc of countries resisting U.S. imperialist domination in Latin America.

The U.S. ruling class would like nothing better than to weaken Russia and return it to the semicolonial status it was heading toward immediately after the collapse of the USSR, when Boris Yeltsin was president. It would also like to return to the era of Yankee imperialist domination of Latin America that prevailed until the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959.

Right now the big imperialist powers in Washington, Berlin, Paris and London, who preach democracy to the skies, are hailing the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Victor Yanukovich in the Ukraine.

To be sure, the Yanukovich government was corrupt and no friend of the working class. It was an instrument of a section of Ukrainian oligarchs. But the same can be said of the forces that overthrew him. Furthermore, he is no different from dozens of government leaders supported by Washington around the world. The corrupt character of Yanukovich has nothing to do with why Washington joined in his overthrow.

The destruction of the Yanukovich government by armed insurrection and the installation of pro-Western puppet politicians is part of a broader strategy by the European Union, in cahoots with the U.S. imperialists, to colonize the former Soviet republics and encircle Russia as part of a new cold war.

Phony call for 'democracy'

Yanukovich was overthrown by a combination of illegal political scheming by the pro-imperialist parties in the parliament, weeks of demonstrations by right-wing,

*Continued on page 9*

*Destroying the Ukraine government through an armed insurrection is part of a broader strategy by U.S. imperialism to colonize the former Soviet republics and encircle Russia. The right-wing forces now running Kiev would let the Ukrainian masses become debt slaves to U.S., French and German banks.*

## Detroiters fight deep pension cuts

By WW Detroit Bureau

Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr's "Plan of Adjustment" is a declaration of war on the city of Detroit's 20,000 retirees and their pensions. The plan, filed Feb. 21 in the city's bankruptcy case, calls for a 34 percent cut in monthly pension payments to non-uniformed retirees.

At a Feb. 22 meeting of the American Federation of State, County and Mu-

nicipal Employees Retiree Committee, Ed McNeil, assistant to the president of AFSCME Council 25 and AFSCME representative to the "Official Committee of Retirees" created by the bankruptcy trustee, stated that the actual cut in total pension benefits amounts to 70 percent for each city retiree.

Yearly cost-of-living adjustments of 2 percent are to be eliminated. Annuity

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# Dave Schechter remembered

**WORKERS WORLD**  
this week...

By Bill Dores

Dave Schechter had two great loves in his life. One was his class: the workers and oppressed. This led him to join Workers World Party. He was a member for 45 years. The other love of his life was his daughter, Karina.

Dave was born in 1942 in Yonkers, N.Y. His parents were communists. His father, William, drove a taxi; his mother, Ruth, was an office worker.

Dave attended Rensselaer College and worked as a math teacher in the New York City school system. Like many young people his age, he was swept up in the great mass movements of the 1960s: the fight against racism and the Vietnam war. In 1968, he joined Youth Against War and Fascism, the youth group of Workers World Party.

The year 1968 was an intense year in the global class war. For instance, in January the Vietnamese people launched the mighty Tet offensive against the U.S. imperialist invaders. In April, the racist U.S. state apparatus assassinated Dr. Martin Luther King, and the entire country exploded in outrage.

For those of us in YAWF, the 1960s were street-fighting years. We were always marching with our bright orange banners, defying the cops who attacked us with clubs, horses and gas. We got arrested so much it seemed like we lived in the Criminal Court building at 100 Centre Street.

Whether it was protesting the Vietnam war or defending the Black Panthers, Dave was always on the front line. He helped disrupt fascist presidential candidate, George Wallace, when Wallace spoke at Madison Square Garden, and Richard Nixon's first inaugural parade in Washington, D.C. He was arrested in 1968 protesting the pro-war movie, *The Green Berets*, and in 1969, when we marched into the middle of a City Hall ceremony welcoming the murderous Israeli prime minister, Golda Meir.

Dave was a member of the United Federation of Teachers, but he marched in support of the Black community when the UFT's racist leadership called a strike against community control. Two years later, however, Dave did go on strike.

On May 5, 1970, the day after the Kent State massacre, Dave worked with his students at Julia Richman High School to organize a strike against war and repression. They specifically demanded the freedom of Bobby Seale, Ericka Huggins and other imprisoned members of the



Dave Schechter and his daughter, Karina.

Black Panther Party. By the end of the week, the entire city school system was shut down. On May 14, Dave was fired for "conduct unbecoming a teacher."

YAWF was the first anti-war group to organize marches and teach-ins in solidarity with the people of Palestine. Dave, whose family background was Jewish, was passionate about that cause. Our Palestine events were routinely attacked by anti-Arab hate groups armed with lead pipes and gas bombs, and Dave always served on security.

## A steadfast revolutionary

Many activists of the 1960s dropped out of political life in the less turbulent 1970s. Dave did not. He remained a steadfast revolutionary and WWP member. He focused on getting Workers World newspaper and our literature, our ideas and program into the hands and minds of our class.

He staffed literature tables and worked on national distribution, taking the paper shipments every week to Greyhound. He sold Workers World newspaper on the trains and took part in our massive poster campaigns. And he prepared the labels every week for the WW paper mailing.

In 1979, Dave and Marcella Melos wed. Their daughter, Karina, was born in 1982. After being fired by the Board of Education, Dave worked 10 years for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and was vice president of the DEP chapter of Local 375 Civil Service Technical Guild. He left that job to become a computer programmer.

Dave was a worker. He was battered by this vile capitalist system. He was laid off several times and had to travel to find work. He had no medical coverage in 2006, when he suffered a stroke that left him partially paralyzed.

For the past seven years, Dave lived in nursing homes. But he was able to come to activities with the help of a wheelchair and the support of Karina, his health aides and his comrades in Workers World Party. He was a member of the Party's People with Disabilities Caucus. He loved movies and going to Central Park when the weather was nice.

Dave is survived and will always be lovingly remembered by Karina and by the Party he helped build.

*A public memorial was held Feb. 22 in New York City for Dave Schechter, who died on Jan. 13.*

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Write to:

Workers World  
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.  
New York, N.Y. 10011  
Phone: 212.627.2994  
E-mail: [ww@workers.org](mailto:ww@workers.org)  
Web: [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org)  
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Editor: Deirdre Griswold  
Technical Editors: Lal Roohk, Andy Katz  
Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson

West Coast Editor: John Parker  
Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe, Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash,

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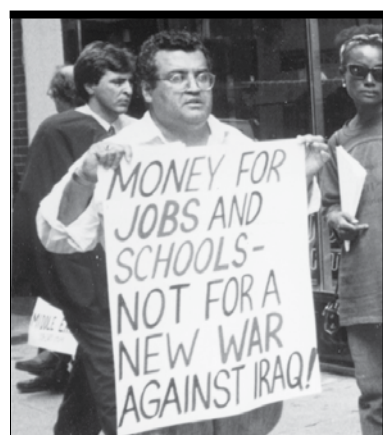
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# Memorial set for Milton Vera

A loving tribute to the late Puerto Rican revolutionary, Milton Vera, will be held on Sat., March 15, at the New York City Solidarity Center, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor, 4 pm. The memorial is being organized by Workers World/Mundo Obrero. Come and share memories, food and music. For information, go to [facebook.com/events/703018389743209/](http://facebook.com/events/703018389743209/). Messages with condolences can be sent to [ww@workers.org](mailto:ww@workers.org) by March 14, with "Vera memorial" in the subject line.

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Workers World Party (WWP) fights for socialism and engages in struggles on all the issues that face the working class & oppressed peoples — Black & white, Latino/a, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women & men, young & old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed, undocumented & students. If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

**National Office**  
147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.  
New York, NY 10011  
212.627.2994  
[wwp@workers.org](mailto:wwp@workers.org)

**Atlanta**  
P.O. Box 5565  
Atlanta, GA 30307  
404.627.0185  
[atlanta@workers.org](mailto:atlanta@workers.org)

**Baltimore**  
c/o Solidarity Center  
2011 N. Charles St.  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
443.221.3775  
[baltimore@workers.org](mailto:baltimore@workers.org)

**Bay Area**  
1305 Franklin St. #411  
Oakland, CA 94612  
510.600.5800  
[bayarea@workers.org](mailto:bayarea@workers.org)

**Boston**  
284 Amory St.  
Boston, MA 02130  
617.286.6574  
[boston@workers.org](mailto:boston@workers.org)

**Buffalo, N.Y.**  
367 Delaware Ave.  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
716.883.2534  
[buffalo@workers.org](mailto:buffalo@workers.org)

**Chicago**  
27 N. Wacker Dr. #138  
Chicago, IL 60606  
[chicago@workers.org](mailto:chicago@workers.org)

**Cleveland**  
P.O. Box 5963  
Cleveland, OH 44101  
216.738.0320  
[cleveland@workers.org](mailto:cleveland@workers.org)

**Denver**  
[denver@workers.org](mailto:denver@workers.org)

**Detroit**  
5920 Second Ave.  
Detroit, MI 48202  
313.459.0777  
[detroit@workers.org](mailto:detroit@workers.org)

**Durham, N.C.**  
804 Old Fayetteville St.  
Durham, NC 27701  
919.322.9970  
[durham@workers.org](mailto:durham@workers.org)

**Houston**  
P.O. Box 3454  
Houston, TX 77253-3454  
713.503.2633  
[houston@workers.org](mailto:houston@workers.org)

**Los Angeles**  
5278 W Pico Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90019  
[la@workers.org](mailto:la@workers.org)  
323.306.6240

**Milwaukee**  
[milwaukee@workers.org](mailto:milwaukee@workers.org)

**Philadelphia**  
P.O. Box 34249  
Philadelphia, PA 19101  
610.931.2615  
[phila@workers.org](mailto:phila@workers.org)

**Pittsburgh**  
[pittsburgh@workers.org](mailto:pittsburgh@workers.org)  
**Rochester, N.Y.**  
585.436.6458  
[rochester@workers.org](mailto:rochester@workers.org)

**Rockford, IL**  
[rockford@workers.org](mailto:rockford@workers.org)  
**San Diego**  
P.O. Box 33447  
San Diego, CA 92163  
619.692.0355  
[sandiego@workers.org](mailto:sandiego@workers.org)

**Tucson, Ariz.**  
[tucson@workers.org](mailto:tucson@workers.org)  
**Washington, D.C.**  
P.O. Box 57300  
Washington, DC 20037  
[dc@workers.org](mailto:dc@workers.org)

## First Trayvon, now Jordan

# No justice, no peace!

By Kathy Durkin

Yet another travesty of justice has just occurred in a Florida courtroom. On Feb. 15, a surprising verdict was announced by a jury in Jacksonville. Barely seven months after a jury in that state acquitted George Zimmerman, Trayvon Martin's killer, Michael Dunn, another racist shooter, escaped conviction for murdering 17-year-old Jordan Davis, although he was found guilty of other charges.

On Nov. 23, 2012, Dunn, who is white, fired off 10 shots with an automatic weapon at a SUV containing four unarmed African-American youth. They were listening to rap music — which their assailant referred to in vile, racist language. Dunn unleashed a barrage of gunfire, killing Davis with three bullets and then continued to shoot at the vehicle as it raced out of the Jacksonville gas station parking lot. The perpetrator fled the scene and drove 200 miles to his home the next day.

Prosecutor Erin Wolfson said that Dunn “thought he got away with murder,” reported Salon on Feb. 16.

At his trial, the shooter alleged that the youth threatened him with a gun and claimed self-defense to justify his fatal actions. This was a fabrication. The prosecutors, Davis' three companions and other witnesses, including Dunn's fiancée, all asserted that there was no gun.

The 12-person jury, which was predominantly white, was split: nine were for finding Dunn guilty of first-degree

murder; three were opposed. The jury agreed to convict Dunn of three charges of attempted murder of the surviving youths: Tevin Thompson, Leland Brunson and Tommie Stornes. The New York Times reported on Feb. 17, “The jury agreed that Dunn was trying to kill the teenagers — not to defend himself — when he got out of his car, crouched and shot several more bullets into the truck as it drove away.”

The judge declared a mistrial on the first-degree murder charge. State Attorney Angela Corey, who was chief prosecutor in Zimmerman's case, has vowed to retry Dunn on that charge. The state is obviously under great pressure because Zimmerman's acquittal set off militant protests across the country demanding justice for Trayvon Martin, also a 17-year-old African-American.

However, state prosecutors in Dunn's trial, as at Zimmerman's, failed to raise the inherent racism in the perpetrator's murderous actions. This is of enormous concern to members of oppressed communities and to other anti-racist and progressive individuals in view of an alarming number of bigoted vigilante attacks.

This is crucial. On Feb. 17, Color Lines reported that, from prison, Dunn has written letters calling on whites to arm themselves to kill Black people.

This shows not only how dangerous these bigoted assailants are, but also makes even more important the need to overturn all laws that they can use to justify violence.

Dunn now faces at least 60 years in jail; however, his sentence could be reduced to a 20-year term. But Davis' family and supporters want Dunn held accountable for murder.

### The racist use of 'stand your ground'

Many legal experts agree that Florida's “stand your ground” law was at the crux of both Dunn's and Zimmerman's cases. Dunn's attorney cited this law in his behalf, and the judge instructed the jury in its key provisions: the defendant “has no duty to retreat,” has “the right to stand his ground” and the danger faced “need not have been actual,” reported the Miami Herald on Feb. 22.

Dunn claimed he had impunity because of an imagined threat. For three jurors, this took precedence over the life of a Black youth, which this “shoot first” law allows. The jurors in Zimmerman's trial had the same view.

Under the guise of “stand your ground,” says Stephen A. Crockett of The Root, these racist vigilantes can “bear arms and shoot unarmed Black children with impunity.” (Feb. 16) Additionally, the victims' characters, whether they are dead or not, are put on trial.

The right-wing National Rifle Association promotes “stand your ground” laws in every state. Presently, 34 states have a version of it. These laws set the stage for and are used to justify gun violence against people of color, especially Black youth, women, LGBTQ individuals and immigrants.



Jordan Davis, Trayvon Martin

During Dunn's trial, the NRA brazenly pushed to expand Florida's “stand your ground” law to remove all criminal and civil liability for those claiming this defense. On Feb. 11, Think Progress wrote that this would open the door “for more judicial rulings of the sort we have already seen that excuse fatal shootings of unarmed victims.”

On Feb. 20, the NRA-backed bill was affirmed by Democrats and Republicans in a Florida House committee, and is expected to pass in the full Legislature.

Lucia McBath, Davis' mother, asserts, “Florida's ‘stand your ground’ law is the reason my son is dead,” and that also includes the state's culture of “shoot first, ask questions later.” She called for the repeal of all these state laws. (delmarva-now.com, Feb. 22)

Workers World Party stands in solidarity with the families of Jordan Davis and Trayvon Martin, who are campaigning against Florida's “stand your ground” law. WWP seeks the overturning of all laws that embolden bigots to attack oppressed people, often fatally.

Feb. 26 is the second anniversary of Trayvon Martin's death. WW supports all activities in memory of him and Jordan Davis, and calls for justice for them and all victims of racist vigilante and police violence. □

# Truth commission on U.S. racism

By Dolores Cox

In the United States, a country ruled by the ideology and practice of white supremacy since its inception, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission on racism is being proposed. Gloria J. Browne-Marshall, an associate professor of constitutional law at New York City's John Jay College of Law and the author of “Race, Law, and American Society: 1607 to Present,” says such a commission is what the U.S. needs. She is also a legal correspondent, covering the U.S. Supreme Court and major court cases.

An article by Browne-Marshall entitled, “America Needs a Truth Commission on Racism,” ran in Black Star News on April 15, 2013. In it, the author contends that “until America convenes a Truth and Reconciliation Commission on racism, the complete African-American story will not be told.”

The collective history of African-American men, women and children throughout the centuries is one of a multitude of racial experiences. Black people have always been victims of white supremacy: through being enslaved and owned by others, from birth to death; through always being controlled and dominated, always being oppressed and repressed; through movement restriction; through forced medical experimentations and their bodies being branded with hot irons; and through repeated rapes, murders, beatings, whippings and lynchings.

Black people have been forcibly removed from their homes; their property

stolen; their homes, churches, schools and orphanages bombed. They suffered through sharecropping and indebtedness, starvation and homelessness. Their kidnapped, enslaved infants were used as bait to catch alligators. They endured torture and racial terrorism, imprisonment, convict leasing and chain gangs. They experienced the denial of the right to vote, taxation without representation and elimination from jury service.

White supremacy has brought to the Black population kidnappings and disappearances; having to flee for their lives ahead of the Ku Klux Klan like refugees in combat zones, leaving behind family and property; miscegenation laws; retaliation and physical violence following Civil Rights gains; ongoing police brutality and a prejudiced justice system; continued intimidation, humiliation and degradation; persistent discrimination and segregation; excessive stop-and-frisk tactics by the police; and having to live in communities under siege.

Interestingly, while so many whites hate and discriminate against Black people, at the same time they emulate and co-opt “Black” music, dance, slang language, expressions and gestures.

### No 'post-racial' society

African Americans have always needed to struggle and fight for the same civil and human rights and entitlements as white people. Privilege is bestowed upon whites at birth and throughout their lives. Blacks live in a society that refuses to accept the fact that they, too, are fully

human, and should be treated accordingly, and refuses to acknowledge that Blacks also have a right to exist and live in peace.

Although the majority of the world's population are people of color, African Americans in the U.S. have always been singled out as people whom it's “acceptable” to target and prey upon. The U.S. also exports its racism everywhere. The racist treatment of people of color in the U.S. is expanded in the government's foreign policy towards people of color worldwide.

The U.S. is definitely not a “post-racial” society by any stretch of the imagination. “No such decision on racism can be made without first convening a Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” asserts Browne-Marshall.

The first commission on racism in the U.S. followed the Chicago Race Riots of 1919, when 23 Blacks died in attacks on their communities by European immigrants, explains Browne-Marshall. She relates that “in 1997 [former] President Bill Clinton convened a race [initiative] led by renowned Black historian John Hope Franklin.” The President's Advisory Board on Race “met for 15 months, taking testimonies and visiting schools and communities. [It] examined the impact of racism, hoping to build a more united U.S. by embracing common values instead of focusing on divisions.” The commission produced the report “One America in the 21st Century: Forging a New Future.”

The prevalence of intergenerational

trauma results from a legacy of injury. There has been no period of time without racism wherein Black people would have been able to heal their wounds.

Browne-Marshall emphasizes that U.S. racism remains threaded through criminal justice, housing, unemployment and education. “Like oil stains, racism taints the joy of oppressed Americans. Their spiritual wounds are left to fester, for fear that a Truth Commission would unleash uncontrolled emotions and stir prejudices.”

In 1989, U.S. Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) introduced HR 40, a bill which would establish a “Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African Americans.” However, Congress has ignored his proposed legislation. Although he reintroduces it annually, HR 40 has met with little success.

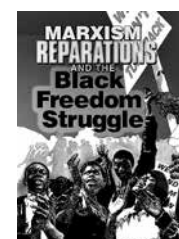
Browne-Marshall says that a Truth and Reconciliation Commission will not end racism. However, for America to move forward, “the Lion must add its story to the history book,” she concludes.

*Read more of this article at workers.org.*

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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

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COVER GRAPHIC BY: SAHU BARRON

# Class struggle vs. collaboration

By Martha Grevatt

Following the vote against union representation at Volkswagen's plant in Tennessee, the United Auto Workers filed an appeal with the National Labor Relations Board. The union is challenging the results based on "a firestorm of interference from politicians and special interest groups," submitting a detailed description of a "coordinated and widely publicized coercive campaign" to "deprive Volkswagen workers of their federally protected right to join a union." (uaw.org) The union is asking the NLRB to order a new election at the Chattanooga factory.

Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee — one of the 20 richest members of Congress at \$60 million — threatened pro-union VW workers that the plant would not get new investments if it became a union shop. Gov. Bill Haslam and several legislators threatened to withhold state financial incentives. Ironically, German union representatives on VW's board intimated they would oppose further investment in a nonunion plant.

While German unions were pushing for unionization, VW sent mixed messages. The UAW was given office space inside the plant, yet an "election agreement" be-

tween the two parties stipulated that the union could not make home visits — an essential component of successful organizing drives. They could not approach workers on the floor, only talk to workers who came to them.

The pact barred "disparaging" comments by either party against the other, yet supervisors were allowed to walk the plant floor wearing intimidating "vote no" T-shirts.

Had the union won, a joint, German-style "works council" would take over many bargaining functions. A clause pledged to maintain a "competitive" wage structure. Thus VW, with the UAW's help, set up a scenario where it would win either way, continuing the business of exploitation with or without a union. The process denied workers the very "voice" that was touted as a reason to vote "yes." The UAW also agreed not to attempt more organizing for at least a year if the vote failed.

## A dead-end strategy

The company could have recognized the UAW without an election — a majority of workers had already signed cards authorizing union representation.

Nevertheless, anti-union forces accused the UAW of being "combative"

and blamed the union for the bankruptcy of General Motors, Chrysler and Ford and even of the city of Detroit. A video by "Southern Momentum" — the name speaks volumes — claimed that Tennessee workers would be paying union dues to support a strike in Detroit.

UAW President Bob King could have responded: "Well, yes, we are combative, but we have to be. These companies have decimated our ranks with plant closings, technology and outsourcing, and keep demanding more concessions. They want two-tier to be permanent, leaving future workers without the decent standard of living that we won through the sit-downs of the 1930s and the long strikes of post-war years. The strike is our only weapon!"

King's actual response was the opposite. "Our philosophy is, we want to work in partnership with companies to succeed," he explained. "We're concerned about competitiveness. ... Those people [the right wing] who attack this are attacking labor-management cooperation." (Washington Post, Feb. 14)

A union that was truly combative might actually have gotten a warmer reception from VW workers. Union opponents claim that what sank the union drive was workers learning that second-tier workers at the Detroit Three plants make less

than VW workers, then finding out about the deal on competitive wages. "We don't need the UAW to give us rights we already have," said Mike Burton, a VW worker who led the anti-union drive. (New York Times, Feb. 14) Burton doesn't say that without a union contract, workers' pay can be slashed at a moment's notice.

VW tried to deny they were in sync with Corker and his ilk. Had the UAW acted as the champion of the working class, rather than as a mediator between classes, they would have exposed this charade. Then, the workers would know they were up against a hostile company with the full weight of the capitalist state behind it. Some workers might still have voted no out of fear, but more might have welcomed the union with open arms.

One thing is clear. Class collaboration is a dead-end strategy. The loss at VW represents a dismal failure of the so-called "partnership."

The UAW's quadrennial convention opens June 1. This huge setback calls for thoroughgoing, wide-open and critical deliberations, leading to a revival of class struggle social unionism.

*Next: The loss and the need to make racism a labor issue*

*Martha Grevatt is a 26-year UAW Chrysler worker.*

## Detroiters fight deep pension cuts

*Continued from page 1*

savings plans, under which pensioners were guaranteed 7.9 percent yearly interest payments on optional contributions to the pension fund, will also be drastically reduced based on alleged overpayments by the Pension Board from 1999 to 2013. The pension cuts are to be applied retroactively to the bankruptcy filing date of June 2013.

In addition to cuts in monthly cash payments, which are deferred wages earned by and belonging to city workers, retirees have already had their medical benefits drastically slashed. Life insurance and death benefits are being eliminated. Dental and vision coverage have ended.

Retired Detroit police and firefighters, who don't get Social Security benefits, are to have their monthly pension checks cut by 10 percent, in addition to the aforesaid annuity reductions and benefit cuts.

Current city employees will have their accrued pension benefits frozen as of July 1. Their credit for pensions based on years worked will stop accumulating as of that date, with the accrued pensions subject to the same reduction as the current retirees.

### Threat to public workers everywhere

The same day EM Orr announced this full-blown attack on city of Detroit retirees, the federal Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed to hear appeals filed by Detroit unions and retirees against the entire bankruptcy filing. These appeals challenge the bankruptcy for violating the Michigan Constitution, which states the accrued pensions of public workers cannot be diminished or impaired.

Orr, the bankers and the capitalists he represents want the Detroit bankruptcy to set a precedent for slashing public pensions in the 24 other states that have similar constitutional protections for public workers.

Orr had the audacity to state that the pension cuts for non-uniformed retirees

will be reduced from 34 percent to 26 percent, and police and firefighters from 10 percent to 4 percent, if the unions and retiree organizations drop their legal challenges.

Under Orr's plan, the city, which stopped contributing to the pension plans after the bankruptcy was filed, would not make any contributions until 2023. The reduced pensions are to be funded by a \$365 million donation by charitable foundations; a \$100 million contribution from the Detroit Institute of Arts, which would remain open under private management pursuant to this deal; and a \$350 million contribution from the state of Michigan earmarked to provide some additional benefits to the poorest retirees, also contingent on the unions dropping their opposition. If any of these sources do not make the promised payments, pensions will be slashed even further.

### Media misrepresentations

Much of the corporate-owned media tried to portray Orr's plan as a concession to retirees when compared with other so-called unsecured creditors, holding \$537 million in bonds, who will get only 20 cents on the dollar. But pensions are hardly "unsecured credit." They are deferred wages, owed to city workers for labor already performed, and future payments agreed to in exchange for wage reductions by the workers on numerous occasions in order to preserve city services.

In contrast, in Orr's plan the city will pay 100 percent of the principal owed on the city's \$5.35 billion Detroit Water and Sewerage Department bonds. The DWSD took out bonds totaling approximately \$1 billion in 2011 and 2012, allegedly to raise funds for infrastructure repair.

The local media have not reported that half of this \$1 billion in bonds was turned over to JPMorgan Chase, United Bank of Switzerland, Morgan Stanley and Loop Financial as termination fees for an interest rate swap that defaulted based

on Gov. Rick Snyder's declaration of a state of financial emergency for Detroit. (Bloomberg News, Sept. 13, 2012)

Other bonds totaling approximately \$585 million and backed by state revenue-sharing dollars will also be paid 100 percent. And despite the fact that Orr has challenged the legality of the city's \$1.4 billion in pension obligation certificates, he is offering those holders to settle at 40 percent of value.

### Bank foreclosures not even mentioned

Orr's 440-page statement goes into great depth about the financial crisis which led to the disastrous situation facing Detroit's neighborhoods. However, it avoids any mention of the banks and their role in causing that crisis or any demands on them for restitution for the destruction they caused.

Orr's report documents that after Detroit suffered a two-thirds decline in property values from 1970 to 1990 (caused by Chrysler and General Motors' massive plant closings, also omitted from the report), property values actually increased from 1990 to the mid-2000s as Detroit's neighborhoods and population stabilized.

In the mid-2000s, however, Detroit, an 85 percent African-American city with a high rate of homeownership, was targeted by the banks with racist, predatory, fraudulent mortgage loans and refinancings. From 2004 to 2006, 73 percent of mortgages written in Detroit were subprime. Oppressed homeowners across the U.S. faced a similar nightmare.

The city's Planning and Development Department reported in January 2009 that Detroit had the highest home foreclosure rate among U.S. cities, with 67,000 foreclosed properties from 2005 to 2009, 65 percent of which remained vacant. There were at least another 40,000 mortgage foreclosures from 2009 to 2013, on top of tens of thousands of property tax foreclosures. This foreclosure epidemic caused the destruction of Detroit's neigh-

borhoods and the loss of one-quarter of the city's population.

The centerpiece of Orr's program for "revitalizing" Detroit is a massive blight-removal program to demolish 80,000 vacant buildings in the city. But there is not one word about making the banks pay for the devastation they have wreaked. Instead, pensioners are to take deep cuts in their monthly income.

### Fightback can reverse this attack

The questions now are whether the retirees will lead the way in taking to the streets in numbers necessary to reverse this anti-working class offensive, and whether the union leadership will mobilize its members nationally to come to Detroit, which is ground zero in the war on public unions and in the austerity imposed by finance capital on the world's working class.

Emergency Manager Orr's plan of adjustment has to be approved by U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Steven Rhodes before it is implemented. As in any working-class struggle, it is actions in the streets, not decisions in the court, which will be decisive. It is not too late to turn things around.

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions & Utility Shutoffs, the leading organization challenging the banks in the bankruptcy and destruction of Detroit, along with the grassroots Stop Theft of Our Pensions Committee, National Action Network, Detroiters Resisting Emergency Management, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, and the Raymond and Rosa Parks Institute have called for an Emergency Town Hall Meeting to address the crisis and mobilize for action. The meeting on Sunday, March 2, starts at 3 p.m. at Central United Methodist Church, 23 E. Adams at Grand Circus Park in downtown Detroit.

*For more information, visit [moratorium-mi.org](http://moratorium-mi.org) or [detroitdebtmortorium.org/](http://detroitdebtmortorium.org/)*

# Celebrate Int'l Working Women's Month

## Trailblazing women of our time

Part one

By Joyce Chediak

Did you know that satellites stay in orbit because rocket scientist Yvonne Brill discovered how to keep them there? Or that environmental science was made possible by the research of one botanist, Ruth Patrick? Neither did this reporter, until she read their obituaries.

There are many such women whose life work inspires. Some have received important recognition in their fields. But they are not the national figures and the role models that they should be. Ironically, most can only learn about who these women were, what they did and how they did it after they die, by reading their obituaries.

Instead, the common images of women in the major media are “the glamorous sex kitten, the sainted mother, the devious witch, the hard-faced corporate and political climber,” according to a 2009 UNESCO report. At the current rate of progress on stereotyping women, the report continues, it will take another 75 years to achieve gender equality in the media.

Culled from New York Times obituaries that appeared in 2013, this article focuses on some of the women innovators who made their mark in the physical sciences and other non-traditional fields that are still mostly male bastions. For example, according to a 2011 report by the U.S. Department of Commerce, women had seen no employment growth in science, technology, engineering and math jobs since 2000.

The public view, created and reinforced by the establishment media, is that women in these fields have yet to make their mark. Yet all along, women — though few in numbers — were among the very top

scientific achievers and visionaries. It is a telling comment on the undervaluing of women today that female innovators come to national attention not during their lives, but through the news of their deaths.

This raises the question: How many other women are making major contributions today to science, math, the social sciences, political and social life without their work and lives receiving much visibility in the national press? And what can be done to reverse this?

But let us return to the women. Their obituaries reveal their astounding contributions. But they also uncover the barriers they faced as women, the burdens they carried in their careers due to their gender, and the anti-woman bias that continues even into these write-ups.

These obituaries, printed throughout International Working Women's Month, aim to reclaim these women and tell of what they have done, so that they may take their rightful place on the pages of the people's history.

### She began environmental science

Dr. Ruth Patrick, who died in 2013 at the age of 105, was a botanist who developed the science used today for pollution control and was a pioneer in environmental activism. She was also the foremost authority on U.S. river systems.

Patrick, who began her work in the 1940s, discovered that the number and kinds



of species in a body of water — its biological diversity — reflected environmental stresses. That idea became known as the Patrick Principle; it can also be applied to an entire ecosystem and lies at the heart of environmental science.

“She was worried about and addressing water pollution before the rest of us even thought of focusing on it,” said James Gustave Speth, a former dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Patrick became an adviser to presidents and was the recipient of distinguished science awards. Her work led Congress to pass the 1972 Clean Water Act, which she helped write. But it didn't start that way. One of the few women of her generation to enter the sciences, she was told in 1934 when she began working for the Academy of Natural Sciences that she would not be paid. Patrick worked there for eight years as a “volunteer” before earning a salary. She then went on to become the first woman chair of the Academy's board of trustees.

### A rocket scientist — who followed her husband from job to job

Dr. Yvonne Brill was a rocket scientist who invented a propulsion system to help keep communications satellites from slipping out of orbit. Her work became the industry standard. She was likely the only woman rocket scientist in the country in the 1940s when satellite designs were developed. Brill was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2010.

Despite such amazing accomplishments, her Times obituary began, “She made a mean beef stroganoff, followed her husband from job to job and took

eight years off from work to raise three children. ‘The world's best mom,’ her son Matthew said.”

The second paragraph started with, “But Yvonne Brill, who died on Wednesday at 88 in Princeton, N.J., was also a brilliant rocket scientist. ...”

Many Times readers objected. They pointed out that no male rocket scientist's obituary begins with his family role, and that describing Brill in this manner belittled her work. Additionally, she did not take eight years off to raise her children, as the Times said, but worked part-time as she raised them.

The Times changed the obituary's opening, but not by much, still emphasizing the family role. The final version, which many saw as grating and still containing gender bias, was staunchly defended by the Times obituary editor.

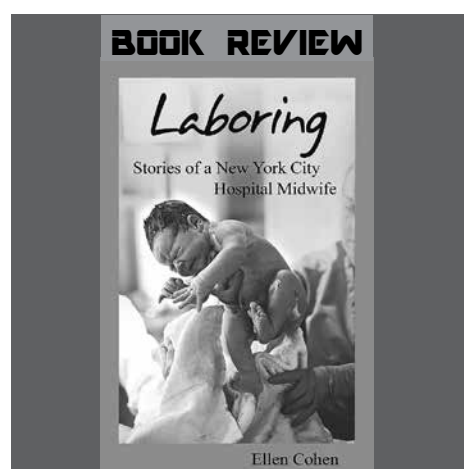
A review of some of her work shows why the Times felt that Brill merited a substantial obituary in the first place. She contributed to the propulsion systems of the first weather satellite; a series of rocket designs that were used in American moon missions; the first upper-atmosphere satellite; and the Mars Observer, which almost entered a Mars orbit in 1992 before losing communication with Earth.

Brill's innovative concepts for satellite propulsion systems and her breakthrough engineering solutions earned her an international reputation as a pioneer in space exploration.

Read the entire article online at [workers.org: tinyurl.com/pcdn6tx](http://workers.org/tinyurl.com/pcdn6tx)



Dr. Yvonne Brill



By Sue Davis

Ellen Cohen, who delivered 1,400 babies over nearly three decades, has written an engaging, poignant memoir, “Laboring: Stories of a New York City Hospital Midwife” (CreateSpace, 2013, 159 pages, \$15.95). Her purpose is “to illuminate the pain, joy and occasional heartbreak of childbirth, as well as shed light on the challenges facing both mothers and midwives.”

Cohen succeeds heroically. Starting the book with a bang, Cohen describes a daunting scene: helping an obviously psychotic woman, full term but in complete denial of her pregnancy, to deliver a healthy baby on a hallway floor. To do that, she relied on a teacher's instruction: “Always ask the patient ... what she thinks is the problem.”

Listening to women lies at the heart of midwifery, which has been practiced for centuries in cultures the world over. Cohen explains why she, a mother of two,

wanted to become a midwife: “I would bring empathetic and empowering care to birthing mothers, my hands and voice the gentle instruments I could offer my sisters in their vulnerable, and most powerful, moments.”

Cohen explores dozens of moments as she chronicles experiences at three New York City hospitals and an HIV clinic, where she participated in research that led to the first breakthrough in preventing mother-to-child transmission of the AIDS virus. Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx, the first place Cohen practiced, may have been understaffed and poorly funded, but, as Cohen witnessed, the team of labor and delivery workers provided the highest quality of care to the multinational population of working and oppressed people it served.

What drives the book is Cohen's description of different situations, like guiding a woman, whose first birth had been a cesarean, to successfully deliver her second child without invasive surgery. One patient, who knew the drill on prenatal care after having five children, was surprised but delighted to deliver twins. During one 12-hour shift, Cohen delivered her personal best: five babies. Imagine the focus and dedication needed to do that!

Dealing with unpredictable demands of

the job were taxing and exhilarating. To fulfill her promise to a young man that he could attend his child's birth, Cohen had to do some quick maneuvering when the baby arrived very fast. With a nurse's help, she adroitly enabled the new father to cut the umbilical cord and hold his child. In one very demanding case, the woman started hemorrhaging after expelling the placenta. Cohen had to reach inside to massage her uterus until she felt it become firm, indicating she'd stopped the bleeding — and saved the mother's life.

### Empowering women

In addition to delivery, Cohen addressed the whole range of women's gynecological needs, providing counseling on prenatal concerns, breast feeding, sex education, contraception and sexually transmitted infections. One example of such counseling reveals Cohen's humor, which she sprinkles generously throughout the book. After urging a noncommittal new mother to think about birth control, the woman admitted she was gay. “That's an effective method,” quipped Cohen.

Dealing daily with blood, sweat and other bodily fluids; diverse patients and family members in a highly emotional situation; and the frantic pace of coaching mothers and catching babies, Cohen

conveys the chaos with excitement, energy and abiding compassion. It's easy to understand why she loved the many challenges of the job as she rose to meet them.

The title of the book, “Laboring: Stories of a New York City Hospital Midwife,” is an apt play on the word “laboring.” It conveys not only the work mothers invest in the birthing process, but the work of the midwives who enable and encourage them.

The book makes a valuable contribution to the women's health and reproductive justice movements by revealing, through exciting real-life stories, the midwives' mission: “to give our patients confidence in themselves and make every woman feel valued as we guide them safely through birth.” Such empowerment of women in this society is unusual, though it should be every woman's right.

Ellen Cohen's tales of multinational teams of workers serving working women of all colors are truly inspiring. Her vision of how best to serve mothers and babies is ideally what should happen in a caring, supportive, egalitarian society.

“Laboring” is available on online bookseller websites. Davis, a longtime reproductive justice activist, wrote the pro-choice novel, “Love Means Second Chances.”

## Memoir of a midwife delivers wisdom, wit

# Jobs & education are rights!

By Joe Piette  
Philadelphia

Why does Philadelphia, a major center of university education in the U.S., have so much poverty?

This city has the second-largest student concentration on the East Coast, with over 420,000 college and university students in the metropolitan area. Temple University is one of more than 80 colleges, universities, trade and specialty schools that together have a total revenue of \$6.73 billion and employ over 31,987 staff, said Axis Philly in October.

Yet Philadelphia, in which people of color make up 59 percent of the population, has the highest rate of extreme poverty of the nation's 10 largest cities, at 12.9 percent, says USA.com. Extreme poverty is defined for a family of three as living on less than \$9,500, stated Chicago Now last March.

The two highest-poverty zip codes in the city border Temple University's 130-year-old campus. However, those neighborhoods, with a near 90 percent African-American and Latino/a population, have not benefited from that institution, which offers only low-wage jobs.

In fact, poverty is widespread in most of Philadelphia. Some 51 percent of the city's households bring home incomes below \$35,000. Of the city's 46 residential zip codes, 24 have poverty rates of more than 20 percent. Three out of every 10 city residents are food-stamp-eligible, reported the PEW charitable trust in January.

Overall, this city has the most uneducated residents of the 25 largest cities. Some 57 percent of adults age 35 and older, and 39 percent of those age 25 to 34, have a high-school diploma or less, reported philly.com in January. Also, 23

percent of adults are college graduates, substantially below the national average.

Just 13 percent of the 2013 entering freshman classes at 11 Philadelphia colleges were from the city. Some 87 percent are from other parts of Pennsylvania, out of state or overseas. These institutions are largely exempt from paying property taxes — one of the main ways Philadelphia raises money for its kindergarten-to-12th-grade school system, reports Axis Philly.

Despite being administered by the state since 2002, public elementary and secondary schools continue to be underfunded. Since 2003, the school district has wasted millions of dollars by increasing enrollment at for-profit charter schools by 219 percent, while decreasing public school enrollment by 26 percent, says PEW.

## Corporations get tax breaks

The high rates of poverty and low educational levels persist even though the Philadelphia regional economy, with an estimated annual output of \$352.7 billion, is the seventh largest in the country, notes PEW. According to the World Bank, if this city were a country, it would be the 32nd largest economy in the world.

The city is home to the Philadelphia Stock Exchange and a number of Fortune 500 companies. Comcast received \$47.25 million in tax breaks and incentives to build its headquarters here, and it's set to receive \$40 million in city and state grants, a \$4.5 million tax break and a 10-year tax abatement for a new 59-floor tower, reports Alter Net on Feb. 13. Ironically, one-third of residents do not have Internet access.

Other corporations headquartered here are insurance companies Colonial Penn,

CIGNA and Lincoln Financial Group; energy company Sunoco; food services company Aramark and Crown Holdings Inc.; chemical makers Rohm, Haas Company and FMC Corporation; pharmaceutical giants Wyeth and GlaxoSmithKline; airplane builder Boeing's Rotorcraft Systems; and automotive parts retailer Pep Boys.

More than 70 percent of multistate corporations in Pennsylvania do not pay any income tax. (institute.org, 2012)

## School to low-wage pipeline

Philadelphia's poorly funded education system has contributed to a grossly unequal state imprisonment rate. The Sentencing Project reports that 305 whites are in prison per 100,000 residents; yet for Latinos/as the number is 1,714 and for Black residents it's 2,792.

Prisons exist under capitalism in part to take potentially rebellious oppressed peoples off the streets. Once out of prison, the stigma of being ex-prisoners means most of the 40,000 adults on probation or parole here are searching for jobs. Or they join the massive ranks of low-wage workers.

Youth who are 16 to 19 years old continue to suffer the worst unemployment rate. White youth unemployment is 18.6 percent, while 35.8 percent of African-American youth look for work, reported the Bureau of Labor Statistics in December.

Statewide, the number of workers being paid the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 or less has almost tripled since 2007, from 2 percent to 5.7 percent of all wage earners. Women make up 66 percent of those workers, said the BLS in 2012. The Restaurant Opportunities Center United asserts 58 percent of workers with incomes below the poverty line are Black, Latino/a and other oppressed people.

## 'Reserve army of labor'

Karl Marx wrote that capitalism needs to maintain a "reserve army of unemployed workers" so businesses can maintain a cheap supply of labor. This includes the underemployed, who involuntarily work at part-time or temporary jobs.

The failure of the ruling class to provide education or living-wage jobs for this city's multinational working class should be seen in this context. The universities could be a useful tool to bring communities out of poverty. Instead, the continued degradation of elementary schools by the corporate-controlled School District and Pennsylvania's governing bodies ensures a ready source of low-wage workers for businesses.

Education is a right in a humane society. But it is a commodity under capitalism. The capitalists need a certain number of educated workers whom they can exploit to make profits. Since business owners no longer need so many highly educated workers, they don't want to pay for better schools.

The movement for the right to an education is intrinsically linked to the fight for jobs and higher wages. The barrier is the same: powerful corporate owners who benefit from keeping workers uneducated, impoverished and forced to work for low wages.

Students and low-wage workers have much to gain by uniting their struggles. Ultimately, only an economy based on human need, not profits, can provide education and jobs for everyone.

*Piette is a member of the Phair Hiring Coalition, working to get Temple University and other North Philadelphia institutions to hire people of color and women on construction projects.*

## 'Free the felines!'

# Pipeline activists to be sentenced

By David Sole

Three environmental activists will be sentenced by a Michigan judge March 5 after their Jan. 31 felony convictions for protesting at a tar sands pipeline construction site. Vicci Hamlin, Lisa Leggio and Barb Carter had their bail revoked and were immediately sent to jail by Ingham County Judge William Collette following their jury trial. They were declared guilty of trespass and "resisting and obstructing" police officers, and face sentences from two to three years in prison.

The three environmental activists carried out a peaceful protest in July 2013 against the expansion of the Enbridge pipeline that carries oil from tar sands. In what many consider an outrageous interpretation of the resisting and obstructing law, felony charges resulted from the protesters' refusal to unchain themselves from heavy machinery.

During the trial, Judge Collette refused to allow the defendants to argue "environmental necessity" as the motivation for their actions, despite a massive spill from an Enbridge pipeline in Kalamazoo, Mich., which contaminated the Kalamazoo River and surrounding land in July 2010. The judge also openly complained

about protesters and threatened action against those who demonstrated outside the courthouse during the trial.

Across the United States, concern is growing about oil and chemical spills. Vast amounts of oil are being carried by pipelines, trucks and trains for the enrichment of the giant oil and chemical corporations. Safety is often neglected in their drive for superprofits.

The U.S. has about 2.5 million miles of pipelines, which suffer hundreds of leaks every year from accident or corrosion. Since 1990, these leaks have spilled over 110 million gallons. (New York Times, Sept. 9, 2011) Growing protests by environmental and community activists have centered around the transportation by pipeline of the heavy oil obtained from tar sands in Alberta, Canada.

## Say NO to Keystone XL Pipeline

Tar sands oil, called diluted bitumen or dilbit, requires higher temperature and pressure to flow through pipes. On average this has led to 3.6 times more oil being spilled per mile than the national average for all pipelines. (SciAm.com, April 4). The Keystone I pipeline started operations in 2010 and has suffered 14 separate leaks. A giant spill occurred on March 31

in Arkansas. And in September, a pipeline run by Tesoro Logistics in North Dakota sprung a leak that went undetected for days. More than 865,000 gallons of oil spread over 7 acres of farmland in one of the largest spills in U.S. history.

Protests across the country are focused on whether President Barack Obama will approve the Keystone XL Pipeline, which would carry 830,000 barrels of tar sands oil each day. The pipeline's aim is to transport "one of the dirtiest, most polluting forms of oil" (Natural Resources Defense Council) almost 1,700 miles from Canada to Texas for export.

The energy corporations' safety failures have also become national news in West Virginia and North Carolina since the year began. A 10,000-gallon spill of a coal washing chemical contaminated the Elk River on Jan. 9. Some 300,000 people living in nine counties around Charleston, W.Va., could not drink or use tap water for weeks. On Feb. 6, a North Carolina facility owned by Duke Energy spilled up to 82,000 tons of coal ash slurry (a waste product of burning coal for power) into the Dan River. An estimated 27 million gallons of contaminated water also spilled. High levels of mercury, arsenic and lead were immediately detected in the river

water, which is used to provide drinking water to communities downstream.

As public anger at the environmental threat by the profit-hungry energy industry mounts and protests spread, it appears that the courts and police intend to increase repression against the people, letting the corporate criminals continue their crimes against the environment.

*For more information on the Michigan Coalition Against Tar Sands and the struggle to "Free the Felines," go to MichiganCATS.org.*

# Solidarity in

By Bryan G. Pfeifer  
San Francisco

Steven Gillis, the fired vice president of United Steelworkers Local 8751 (Boston School Bus Drivers Union), spoke Feb. 7 to a packed hall of San Francisco school bus drivers, members of United Transportation Union Local 1741. The event was a powerful show of solidarity.

Gillis and the San Francisco bus drivers



Lisa Leggio, Vicci Hamlin and Barb Carter in courtroom.  
PHOTO: JEPH FARR

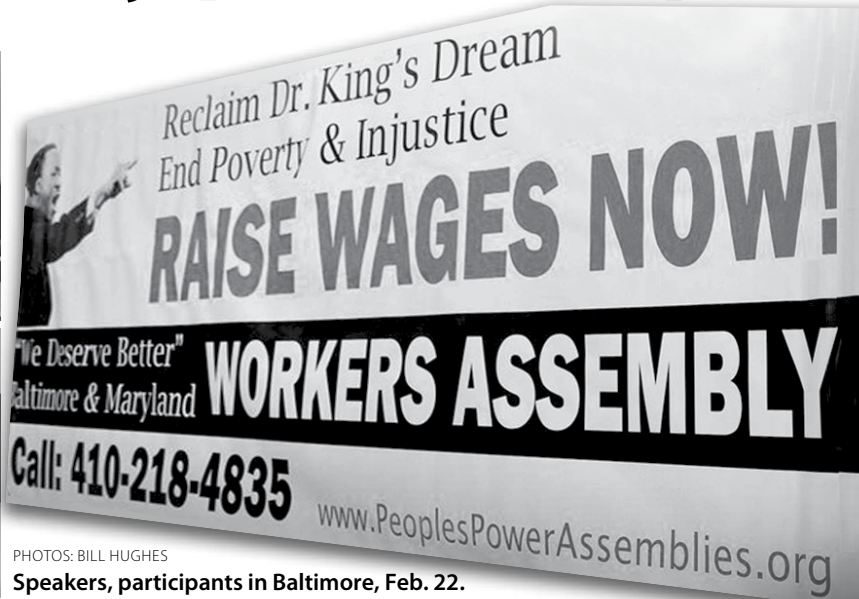
# Workers assembly plans for spring actions

By Steven Ceci  
Baltimore

The “We Deserve Better” Workers’ Assembly convened a very dynamic and enthusiastic regional workers speak-out on Feb. 22 in Baltimore to commemorate the third anniversary of the Wisconsin Capitol occupation and to set plans for actions in the spring.

Youth activists from North Carolina’s Moral Monday struggle; Peoples Power Assembly representatives from New York City, New Jersey and Philadelphia; and local civil rights, union, student and Occupy activists from Washington, D.C., and Maryland, including Baltimore’s communities, testified and deliberated on proposals.

The participants consented on a number of key actions for this spring, including a “May 1st Rise Up Baltimore” protest and strike against low wages; an April 29th call for regional and national protests at the National Restaurant Association Convention in Washington, D.C., which will bring together bosses who have been some of the most vocal in opposing raising the minimum wage; a week of protests from March 7 to March 15 called “March for \$15,” referring to the demand for a \$15 minimum hourly wage; and support for a local March



PHOTOS: BILL HUGHES

Speakers, participants in Baltimore, Feb. 22.



13th march for UNITE HERE Baltimore/Washington International Airport food service workers.

The assembly also took up a special statement and call for solidarity with low-wage workers and voted to make organizing to support SuperShuttle workers at BWIA a priority this spring. This includes holding a major Baltimore rally and fundraising dinner and supporting a bill in Annapolis, Md., which requires that contract workers be declared workers, allowing them to organize a union.

The overwhelming theme of the as-

sembly was support and solidarity with the new and dynamic low-wage workers’ struggle. Many of these workers participated in the assembly, including the co-chairing of the two sessions. Participants concluded that the fight for jobs and justice, and against austerity and attacks on the union movement, and the struggle against racism and for immigrant rights are very much connected to this fight.

The assembly also voted to support the homeless; to take up the fight to defend the rights of jobless workers and the community in general, which is fighting

to strike down employment and housing applications that use people’s conviction records to deny employment, and to oppose the Trans Pacific Partnership.

Among the major highlights of the day were the testimonies of SuperShuttle drivers and representatives of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994.

Postal workers showed two special videos highlighting their fight for justice. There was loud applause when two younger activists spoke on the need to support immigrant rights and oppose racism and racist violence. □

# Broad backing for minimum wage raise

By Chris Fry

Low-wage workers are carrying out a determined and heroic struggle to force giant corporations like McDonalds, Starbucks, Walmart and others to increase their pay beyond the current starvation wages. Many workers have been penalized. Some have been fired.

But they have also won important victories. For example, on Feb. 19, Gap Inc. announced that they will increase the starting pay for their workers to \$10 an hour.

And these struggles have won broad public backing, with the vast majority favoring an increase in the federal minimum wage. According to two recent polls — CBS News and Pew Research — 72 percent and 73 percent respectively of those asked, support raising the minimum wage to at least \$10.10 an hour from the current \$7.25 an hour, which is the Democratic Party proposal before Congress. Even half the Republicans polled support this hike. (CNN.com)

The law would also raise the base wage for tipped workers from the current \$2.13 an hour (frozen for two decades), to \$4.90 an hour in a three-step increase. Then, it would remain at 70 percent of the new minimum wage. The current ratio is 29 percent.

Of course, a raise to \$15 an hour is needed to help lift these workers, mostly women, many Latino/a and African

American, out of poverty. Many low-wage and pro-worker groups, including Workers World Party, are demanding this. The \$10.10 proposal would still leave more than 9 million workers, more than 40 million people when their families are taken into account, below the poverty line.

But giant corporations have called on their political servants in Washington to block any raise in the minimum wage. For decades, they have used their vast technological resources and armies of low-paid workers in Asia, Eastern Europe and elsewhere to amass huge fortunes while they close down operations in the U.S. This has forced many workers to slave away for a meager pittance at fast-food restaurants, department stores and other low-wage shops. This has been a gold mine for these giant companies.

Republican congresspersons like John Boehner adamantly oppose any increase in the minimum wage. They are using the same false argument now as they did in 1938 when the first minimum wage law was passed: “When you raise the cost of something you get less of it,” he said, then adding, “The very people the President purports to help are the ones who are going to be hurt by this.” (Washington Post, Jan. 28).

According to this logic, raising the minimum wage would “force” these corporate giants to fire thousands of workers.

Of course their political ancestors

mouthed the same kind of nonsense to try to foster child labor and to oppose the eight-hour day.

## Numbers tell the truth

The right wing cited a Feb. 18 Congressional Budget Office study, which estimates that 500,000 low-wage workers may lose their jobs if the minimum wage is increased to \$10.10 an hour. At the same time, the CBO study estimates that some 900,000 workers would be lifted over the official poverty level. For 16.5 million workers, higher earnings would occur during an average week in the second half of 2016 if the \$10.10 option was implemented. (cbo.gov).

The CBO study admits tremendous uncertainty about its unemployment projection for this law, and much well-respected research has been presented to show that the effect of raising the minimum wage for workers would cause little or no job loss.

For example, counties were compared in Pennsylvania and New Jersey when New Jersey raised the minimum wage and Pennsylvania did not. Unemployment did not go up in the New Jersey counties.

It is clear that far more people would be helped than hurt by even this most modest increase.

The right wing also often asserts that it is teenagers who mostly are subject to the minimum wage law. But another CBO study revealed that, from 1979 to 2011,

the share of workers earning less than \$10 per hour aged 25 to 64 grew from 48 to 60 percent, while the share of those with at least some college education grew from 25 to 43 percent. (Jan. 7)

Many union leaders have voiced strong support for an increase in the minimum wage. Some trade unionists and community groups have backed the low-wage workers where it counts — at demonstrations and on the picket lines.

Some unions actually have contracts that peg members’ pay to an index based on the minimum wage. When the minimum wage goes up, so do the wages of these union workers. This kind of solidarity infuriates big business and their Wall Street Journal mouthpiece. When explaining why unions support a hike in minimum wage, the WSJ states scornfully: “The real reason is that some unions and their members directly benefit from minimum wage increases — even when nary a union member actually makes the minimum wage.” (online.wsj.com, Feb. 25).

But it is precisely this solidarity among all workers to support the struggle by low-wage workers that is so needed right now. Big business will do everything in their power to squeeze every penny out of these workers and drive them more and more into poverty. The only thing that can and will stop them is a united working class supporting those who are so righteously demanding and deserving a living wage. □

## the drivers’ seat

received each other warmly. UTU members presented Gillis with donations to assist in the fightback against corporate giant Veolia, which locked out the school bus drivers and fired four members of the elected union leadership last fall. Discussions centered around the current struggle in Boston to reinstate the four fired drivers, including Gillis, and how to build more solidarity between transportation workers and all other workers internationally.

Gillis traveled to the Bay Area Feb. 6-10 as part of the international fightback campaign against Veolia. He was a featured speaker at the Join the Fight Against Veolia: Stop Privatization, Defend Labor, Human Rights & the Environment conference held Feb. 8 in San Francisco. (See “Workers, activists fighting Veolia hold international conference” at workers.org.) □

WWW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER



Steve Gillis, third from left, Feb. 7.

# N.C. students walk out to fight cuts

By Dhruv Pathak  
Greensboro, N.C.

**“If they won’t let us dream,  
we won’t let them sleep.”**

— Anders Lustgarten, playwright

Frederick Douglass once said: “Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.” History is riddled with stories of courageous marches, protests and too many martyrs. Most think that we don’t make history anymore. This is not true. We the youth, the students, the people make history every day. In line with that, my friends, including organizers, came to the University of North Carolina-Greensboro to stage a walkout on Feb. 19. At 1 p.m., we walked out of our classes and came together in order to fight back against the rising cost of higher education.

This walkout of 500, mostly students, became the talk of the campus. People were clearly angry or at least paying attention to their newsfeed. It was a dreary morning but miraculously the sun was shining bright when the rally was set to begin. Slowly but surely, students, faculty and staff started to gather at our student center on the Elliot University Center lawn.

Our agenda was clear: we are tired of the rising costs of higher education when it should be free for everyone. Administrators’ pockets are bloated, students are being left in deprived conditions and our faculty is being left to wither on the vine. So we are sick and tired of this vicious circle of the capitalistic system saddling us with insurmountable debt with zero guarantee of a decent-paying job. This is why we fight.

Speakers were mostly comprised of students, but we had two incredibly indignant faculty members who enraged the crowd with hard-hitting, eye opening facts. Our topics ranged from cuts to “marginalized” studies to undemocratic

university practices to bloated administration. From the get-go, it was clear that regardless of what we talked about the whole day, people were angry and it was going to stay that way.

**“No ifs, no buts, no education cuts”**

A lot of people who criticized what we did, said that we should work with the administrators and “our” N.C. General Assembly to come up with solutions to fix these issues. We always have and will use the “proper” channels first because we are told that it is effective and it works. But when going to the administration doesn’t work, when writing letters to our politicians doesn’t work, when going to listening forums doesn’t work, what do we do then? We take the power into our own hands; we no longer ask to be heard but we demand it!

A quick history lesson is when the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed. Was that done because Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson invited the Civil Rights organizers to lunch to hash it out? No, it was done with years and years of mass civil disobedience, direct action and making uncompromised demands.

We celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. every year here in Greensboro. Do you think he would have taken kindly to the notion of negotiating with our oppressors? I can’t speak for him but I can assume he wouldn’t.

Not only was there anger seeping from the crowd Feb. 19, but the air was filled with solidarity. Students supported both the Portland, Ore., and University of Illinois teachers who went on strike. Even going past simple student solidarity, most were excited to hear one of our speakers talk about the fight for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage and worker-student solidarity.

Our walkout evoked tons of emotional outpour, ranging from anger to disappointment; the walkout showed that

students are far from being apathetic. But many are scared, feel hopeless and are still left with grand illusions of the higher education dream. Our generation is not lost, but we are facing some serious issues that will make a revival of struggle challenging but inevitable. This starts with an organized few engaging the general populace. However, with undying, uncompromising passion for social change that I know exists in every one of us, this world can become a more just

place; it just has to start somewhere.

Feb. 19, 2014, showed us a lot about the future of the movement, specifically the student movement here in North Carolina. It showed us that one, mass mobilization is possible; two, students are not apathetic; and three, the struggle cannot stop now. We have to keep going. So long as the capitalistic war on students continues, so does our fight. Do you think we are giving up that easily? Not a chance. Don’t believe us? Just watch. □

## UIC strikes

# Low-paid adjuncts supported

By G. Dunkel

The repetitious argument about how a college education leads to higher-paid, more secure jobs overpowers both the huge explosion of student debt — to well over \$1 trillion — and the fact that much of this college education is provided by low-paid, highly insecure, contingent workers, generally called adjuncts.

The data on this phenomenon are voluminous, fragmented and contested. The American Association of University Professors and the American Federation of Teachers, Higher Ed Division, both assert that between 65 and 75 percent of all college teaching is done by adjuncts. And almost all of these adjuncts get paid less than \$30,000 a year, which is underpaid work which, nevertheless, requires an advanced degree.

Adjuncts get far, far less than the administrators — deans, chancellors, provosts, vice presidents and presidents — whose base salaries generally run between \$200,000 and \$400,000.

The strike that Local 6456, University of Illinois at Chicago United Faculty, held Feb. 18 and 19 was strongly supported by both the full-time and part-time faculty, even in departments like engineering, where sympathy for militant action is generally rare. Graduate student teachers, whose contract has a no-strike clause, had to continue teaching, but they and a number of students joined the picket lines and rallies the UICUF held on campus.

According to the union’s website, statements of support also came in from the National Nurses United, the Rutgers



PHOTO: LOCAL 6456

Council of AAUP, the Illinois Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers. ([uicunitedfaculty.org](http://uicunitedfaculty.org))

So much support and encouraging emails came from students, both current and former, that a number of teachers told the Chicago Sun and the local NBC station how encouraged they were.

In a statement, Joe Persky, UICUF president, said: “The heart of UIC is its faculty and its students, but the Illinois Board of Trustees short change them both. They take more of our students’ tuition money, and even with hundreds of millions in profits each year and more than a billion dollars in reserves, they refuse to pay professors what they’re worth. Many of the faculty who teach our first-year students make only \$30,000 a year! The administration’s priorities don’t match our mission, and after trying to negotiate a fair contract for eighteen months, they left us no choice but to strike, which only strengthened our unity and resolve. It’s time for the University to get as serious as we are, and settle this contract now.” ([uicunitedfaculty.org](http://uicunitedfaculty.org))

For decades, in thousands of institutions of higher education, highly paid administrators have been trying to turn highly skilled college teaching into low-paid work. UICUF’s strike is part of an effort to push back this trend. □

## Youth say:

# Arrest killer cop

Protesters continue to demand justice in the killing of 13-year-old Andy Lopez on Oct. 22, 2013, by Sonoma County, Calif., Sheriff’s Deputy Erik Gelhaus. Lopez was killed for having a toy rifle in his hands. Andy’s Youth, a solidarity group, called a march on Feb. 17 demanding that the Santa Rosa Police Department show the public their findings and conclusions in their investigation. About 200 people, mostly youth, marched from the Old Courthouse in downtown Santa Rosa to the Santa Rosa Police Headquarters, where they held a youth speak-out.

Andy’s Youth stated: “The people have lost confidence and no longer believe that Jill Ravitch, along with the Sonoma County District Attorney’s Office, can,

with the highest level of moral and ethical standards, without bias, and with full transparency and impartiality, conduct any form of investigation. To assume that Jill Ravitch or the Sonoma County District Attorney’s Office can perform their duties and prosecute these killer cops whenever the issue of police brutality arises is laughable and preposterous!”

“We want the District Attorney Jill Ravitch and the Santa Rosa Police Dept. to: 1. Provide the people with a copy of an unaltered, SRPD report; 2. Indict Erik Gelhaus with the crime of murder; 3. ID the “Unnamed Deputy” who was in the patrol car when Erik Gelhaus murdered Andy Lopez; and 4. Disqualify the So. Co. DA’s Office.”

— Report by Terri Kay

## Georgia:

# Repeal ‘stand your ground’ law

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Atlanta

Feb. 10 — With the murders of Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis on their minds, 24 Moral Monday Georgia activists crowded into the offices of state Sen. Jesse Stone to demand a fair and full hearing on Senate Bill 280, which would repeal Georgia’s “stand your ground” law. Just days before a hearing on the repeal bill, Stone had allowed only one speaker five minutes to offer testimony supporting the law’s elimination, despite a packed room of people wanting to speak.

Within minutes, armed Capitol police entered the office and shouted out orders to be quiet and to leave. The group, led by Rev. Timothy McDonald, included students from Morehouse and Spelman colleges, housing justice activists and the president of the state National Organization for Women. It also included veteran Civil Rights, faith-based, workers’ rights and lesbian-gay-bi-trans-queer community leaders.

The protesters faced down the belligerent cops and repeated their intention to meet with their elected representative. Stone remained hidden in his office as all 24 were arrested. Many members of the media were forced out of the area under threat of arrest. Police gave orders in a way that made sure news crews couldn’t

see what was happening as the 24 activists were being handcuffed and taken away.

Some 100 more opponents of the “shoot first” law, which allows an unreasonable “fear” as legal justification for murder, quickly ended the simultaneous outdoor rally and moved to the gated area where the arrestees were being put in police vehicles.

In an attempt to drown out the chanting crowd, the cops turned on squad car sirens. The deafening noise just fired up the protesters, so the sirens were soon shut off. The youth-led rally continued with teenagers and children demanding a future without racist violence. The police vehicles were forced to inch their way through the fist-raised crowd, as activists chanted, “No justice, no peace!”

All 24 protesters were booked and released within 12 hours. They were met outside the Rice Street jail by Moral Monday Georgia supporters.

Georgia’s “stand your ground” law was enacted in 2006. It expands the concept of self-defense in the face of a violent threat to safeguard a life into the use of deadly force for a perceived threat with no requirement to retreat. Recent history makes it clear that “stand your ground” laws promote deadly racial profiling of youth of color, who are deemed “threatening” to the racist George Zimmermans and Michael Dunns of the world. □



## From Ukraine to Venezuela

# U.S. wages dirty wars

Continued from page 1

pro-West forces, and finally, by threats and violence from fascist shock troops who took command of the streets and spearheaded the takeover.

The big business media portrayed this as a contest between the western Ukrainians, who want to align with “democratic” Europe and the West, versus the eastern, Russian-speaking Ukrainians, who want to align with autocratic Russia.

This is a completely superficial view that conceals the essence of the conflict. With Ukraine facing imminent bankruptcy, Yanukovich was vacillating over whether to align the country’s economic relations with Europe or Russia. The EU offered paltry loans that would impose conditions of austerity and privatization and hinge on the release of right-wing, pro-EU billionaire politician Yulia Tymoshenko from prison.

### EU, U.S., IMF take over Ukraine

Russia, on the other hand, offered a \$15 billion loan, a one-third reduction in the price of gas and favorable trade relations. Yanukovich, whose base is in the Russian-speaking East and South of the country, decided to accept Russia’s terms. This infuriated the EU, Washington and all the oligarchs, bourgeois and middle-class elements who wanted to integrate with Western capitalism and imperialism.

The right-wing forces who now prevail in Kiev preferred to put Ukraine in the position of becoming a debt slave to German, French and U.S. bankers and the IMF. This is the same agenda imposed on Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy, as well as several countries in Eastern Europe. These forces would sacrifice the national economic interests of Ukraine, and especially the interests of the working class, to be with Western imperialism. They chose bondage to Western finance capital rather than emergency assistance from Russia.

This is not to say that the capitalist, expansionist Putin regime, in making its offer, was guided by anything other than a desire to retain its sphere of influence in the former Soviet republics for the benefit of Russian oligarchs, bankers and industrialists who are living off the spoils they plundered when they broke up the economy of the Soviet Union.

### Fascist shock troops pave the way

But in the struggle between Russian capital and Western imperialism, the worst outcome is for Washington, Wall Street and the Pentagon to extend their reach to the borders of Russia and gain domination over the former Soviet republics. U.S. imperialism is a far more dangerous enemy to the people of the world than Russia. Their victory in Ukraine would strengthen their empire and give them more resources to oppress and exploit workers in the U.S.

The political victory of Western imperialism was carried out with fascist intimidation and without a shred of capitalist democracy. Laws were passed and the Ukrainian Constitution was changed by a rump parliament. Members opposed to the right-wing takeover were physically attacked or intimidated by the anti-Semitic, ultra-nationalist Svoboda Party inside the parliament and by the anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi forces of the Right Front in the streets. Illegal votes were taken in an atmosphere of terror and intimidation while over 100 mem-

bers opposed to the right-wing takeover were absent and there was no quorum.

The parliament took charge of the police and ordered them to retreat from the battle in Independence Square just as the fascists were getting more and more aggressive. The withdrawal of the police from the square — the site of government buildings, including the presidential quarters — set the stage for fascist squads, under the command of the Right Front, to take charge of the entire area. In the midst of the crisis, Yanukovich fired the head of the armed forces, indicating the military was letting the fascist offensive proceed.

As shown by the now infamous “f... the EU” phone call between U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Victoria Nuland, Washington was vying with the EU for control of the situation and discussing who to pick to lead the new government, while relying on the fascists to get rid of the elected government of Yanukovich.

Right now, fascists in Ukraine are burning down Ukrainian Communist Party headquarters, toppling statues of Lenin and defacing monuments to heroes of the World War II victory over Nazism. With the stench of fascism all around, the imperialist powers are feverishly working to fashion a new government that will align with the West.

The parliament has issued a warrant for the arrest of former president Yanukovich for “mass murder.” This is completely fraudulent. The fascist forces in the square were armed, not only with clubs but with firearms. They were threatening the government with violence. Ultimatums were issued for the resignation of Yanukovich and force was imminent if he did not resign.

Police were attacked and the government did what any government would do: it fired in self-defense against an invasion by armed fascists. People died on both sides of the conflict, including police. As to the “civilians” who were killed, it should be noted that the fascists were “civilians.” If anything, the Yanukovich government was much too vacillating in its own defense.

### Tymoshenko reports to her masters

Once the government was overthrown and Yanukovich fled from Kiev, Yulia Tymoshenko, who led a similar pro-Western coup in 2004 (the so-called Orange Revolution), was released from jail. She rushed to the platform in the Maidan and harangued the crowd, promising to integrate with Europe, among other things.

Her first phone calls were “with Angela Merkel as well as with Stefan Fule, a top European Union official, and with Sens.

John McCain, R-Ariz., Christopher Murphy, D-Conn., and Richard Durbin, D-Ill. Tymoshenko also met with ambassadors from the United States and EU countries.” (New York Times, Feb. 24)

### Clinton: ‘re-Sovietize’ the republics

As to imperialism’s broad strategy, it was to keep Ukraine from joining the Russian-sponsored Customs Union, an economic alliance of Russia with Belarus and Kazakhstan. Last November, the EU tried to get Ukraine to join the so-called Eastern Partnership. Yanukovich, along with leaders of several other former Soviet republics, turned it down, and the whole scheme to absorb the republics into the EU fell apart.

In December 2012, then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, speaking in Dublin, revealed the attitude and strategy of U.S. imperialism: “There is a move to re-Sovietize the region. It’s not going to be called that. It’s going to be called Customs Union; it will be called Eurasian Union [proposed by Putin in 2011] and all of that. But let’s make no mistake about it. We know what the goal is and we are trying to figure out effective ways to slow it down or prevent it.” (upi.com, Dec. 7, 2012)

Of course, the last thing on the mind of the Putin regime is to “re-Sovietize” anything. He heads a counterrevolutionary, capitalist government. Clinton was merely trying to redbait the Russian government.

However, the fascist armed insurrection in Ukraine’s Independence Square is the means to accomplish the goals stated by Clinton and the State Department. Ukraine is to become a vassal state to the EU, the U.S. and the IMF and be cut off from its natural, regional alliance with the Customs Union.

### Venezuela under U.S. attack again

In the Western Hemisphere, Washington is also fighting to set up a “democracy” for the capitalist oligarchs in Venezuela in much the same way they are bringing “democracy” to Ukraine — by organizing and financing a right-wing mobilization in the streets of Caracas, San Cristobal and other cities. Fortunately, the masses in Venezuela, unlike in Ukraine, are mobilized to defend the Bolivarian Revolution established by Hugo Chávez.

Furthermore, the politics of the struggle are clearly understood by the Venezuelan masses and the entire progressive population of the world. The goal of Washington is to overthrow the Bolivarian Revolution and restore the domination of U.S. imperialism in the country.

Washington lost that domination when Chávez came to power in 1998. He took control of the oil revenues and cre-

ated institutions to empower the masses and improve their health, education and living conditions on a wide scale, eventually declaring socialism as the goal of the revolution.

The pro-U.S. right-wing was defeated in a coup attempt to oust him in 2002, and has lost election after election, by large margins, since then. It has been unable to regain political power by democratic, parliamentary means. Thus the CIA, the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie, working with the reactionary regime in Colombia, embarked on a new campaign of subversion and destabilization to destroy the government of Chávez’s successor, President Nicolás Maduro.

Washington has unleashed aggressive right-wing forces led by Harvard-educated Leopoldo López. López has ties to Colombia’s former president, Alvaro Uribe, who ruled by death squad. López is now in jail for his role in organizing demonstrations of youth in the wealthy areas of Caracas and fomenting a violent attack on government installations.

The wealthy business community in Venezuela has continued to destabilize the economy by hoarding goods, causing serious shortages for the masses. The resulting price increases and inflation are then blamed on the Maduro government.

The masses in Venezuela are in a more advantageous position than the working class in Ukraine. They are far more organized, politically conscious and determined to defend the revolution, which has brought real gains for the people. But given the U.S. record of counterrevolutionary subversion in Chile, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and many other countries in Latin America, this campaign must be taken deadly seriously.

Unlike in Venezuela, in Ukraine the masses have already suffered a setback in the West of the country. It remains to be seen if a counter-offensive can be mounted in the Russian-speaking eastern, industrial section of the country, where there is deep opposition to the right-wing takeover. The parliament has just passed a law that says the official language is Ukrainian only.

However, if the imperialists are able to implement their austerity programs, the economy is more privatized and Western corporations move in for the kill, the working class is going to see clearly what the present right-wing takeover was about. This will lay the basis for a new chapter of resistance by the working class in Ukraine.

Goldstein is the author of “Low-Wage Capitalism” and “Capitalism at a Dead End,” which has been translated into Spanish as “El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida.” The books are available on Amazon.

“With the capitalist system demonstrably unfair, irrational, and prone to intermittent crises, it is useful, indeed refreshing, to see a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on working people. Fred Goldstein’s *Low-Wage Capitalism* does exactly that.”

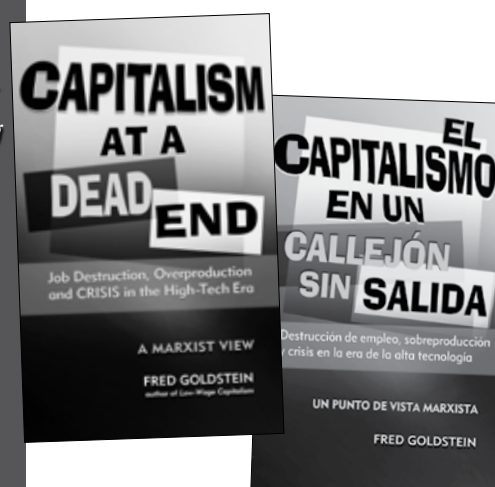
— Howard Zinn

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# Russell Maroon Shoats OUT OF SOLITARY

Any victory, big or small, for the working class and oppressed population, is a step in the right direction.

Even those steps that leave us unsatisfied can cheer us. There were a few in mid-February that fit this category.

Russell Maroon Shoats was finally released from solitary confinement in his Pennsylvania prison into the general prison population. Shoats is a former Black Panther and political prisoner who had been kept in solitary — that's U.S. torture — for the past 22 years.

The word from Shoats' supporters is that the political prisoner is very happy with this development and thanks those who have petitioned and struggled on his behalf. (See [pennsylvaniaiprisonwatch.blogspot.com/](http://pennsylvaniaiprisonwatch.blogspot.com/)).

This is good news for one of the 2,800 prisoners held in solitary in the Pennsylvania prison system.

Lest anyone think that our calling this practice "torture" stems only from Workers World's position that the entire prison system should be torn down, we direct their attention to a United Nations report:

In August 2011, Juan Méndez, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture, stated that solitary confinement "may cause serious psychological and physiological adverse effects on individuals" and "violate the international prohibition against torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment." He called for the absolute prohibition of solitary confinement in excess of 15 days.

In the U.S., there are about 80,000 prisoners held in solitary, and most are

held for months, some for years and some for decades.

There are 3,800 prisoners held in solitary in New York state. Their average stay is five months. Another step in the right direction took place in New York when to settle a suit brought by prisoners, the prison authorities agreed to put some limitations on the use of solitary as punishment. (New York Times, Feb. 20)

The new guidelines, if enforced, will mainly be for prisoners less than 18 years of age — who will get more exercise time — and those with developmental disabilities, whose solitary confinement should be limited to 30 days. That means 15 days over the torture level.

While this is an improvement, it also means that up to this year, prisoners with developmental disabilities and young prisoners have not only been held behind walls, they couldn't even see out a window.

The police, judicial and prison system in the capitalist U.S. is aimed first of all at protecting property. It is blatantly racist, vindictive and employs solitary confinement as a major form of torture held over the heads of the 2.4 million prisoners. This is the largest percentage of the population imprisoned for any country, and on top of this, it is quadruply biased against African Americans and doubly against Latinos/as.

We join every struggle to free individual political prisoners and to stop the torture of solitary, and we celebrate every victory. But we know this prison system will be the source of continued oppression until we can end it. Tear down the walls! □

# LBJ: His REAL legacy

Capitalist democracy gives those who really run the country — the billionaires — the opportunity to blame the voters for whatever becomes unpopular. You elected him, didn't you? Why are you complaining?

The Vietnam War became tremendously unpopular. So did the system of segregation that shackled the Black population in the South, as well as the racism in the North that kept African Americans in the poorest housing, schools and jobs — and still does.

During the six years that Lyndon Baines Johnson was president — 1963 to 1969 — the resistance to both the war and racism hit a high point. Mass rebellions broke out in the oppressed Black communities. Youth from all backgrounds were joining the Freedom Rides, tearing up their draft cards and refusing orders to go to Vietnam and kill people.

Whether he wanted to or not, Johnson in that period faithfully executed the orders of the geopolitical planners for U.S. imperialism, who saw Southeast Asia as a potential source of enormous profits.

We are now hearing from LBJ's descendants that he didn't deserve the reputation he got during that period. The popular chant "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?" probably still haunts them. His younger daughter, Luci Baines Johnson, recently told the New York Times: "No matter how hard he tried, he didn't seem to be able to get out of that quagmire." (Feb. 15)

They want him to be remembered fondly for signing the Civil Rights Act 50 years ago, along with implementing many social programs of the 1960s under the guise of the War on Poverty, etc., rather than for escalating the war and

putting down rebellions at home.

But bourgeois historians tend to forget that it was the mass and determined Civil Rights Movement that pushed him to sign the laws and implement these progressive programs.

But the same year that Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, he also made J. Edgar Hoover head of the FBI for life — the same Hoover who targeted the anti-war and Black Power movements and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. LBJ was recorded calling Dr. King racist epithets in conversations on the White House phone.

As early as Jan. 30, 1968, the Vietnamese proved in the Tet Offensive that they had the loyalty of the people in South Vietnam as well as in the north of the country. They carried out incredible attacks on U.S. military targets inside the south's largest cities — without anyone tipping off the occupiers in advance.

Johnson announced on March 31 of that year that he wouldn't run for re-election. If he really had been against the war, why didn't he run so he could sign the order to bring the troops home? That's what the people wanted. But Johnson probably worried that he would suffer the same fate as John F. Kennedy if he did what the people wanted and got out of the war.

It wasn't until 1973, when the U.S. military command literally faced mutiny by its own troops, that the U.S. ruling class decided to cut its losses by signing the Paris Peace Accords and began withdrawing. Even then, the war continued for two more years, until the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam chased the last Marine from the roof of the U.S. Embassy in Seoul.

Johnson's responsibility for the war — which killed millions of Vietnamese, Laotians and Cambodians and left its scars on a generation of young people in the U.S. — can't be eradicated from the history books. What should be added to those books, however, is the culpability of the billionaire ruling class that really runs this country. Johnson was carrying out their bloody orders when he sent young draftees to Vietnam and unleashed the FBI on Black and Brown people here.

Bourgeois politicians come and go, but we won't be free of war and oppression until the one-tenth of 1 percent and their profit system have been dealt with. □

# Free Mumia 60th birthday events

By **Betsey Piette**  
Philadelphia



A broad coalition of individuals and organizations committed to seeing political prisoner and world renowned journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal released from prison will hold a series of events to celebrate his 60th birthday in Philadelphia from April 24 to 26.

The kick-off event on April 24 will be a special program dedicated to the late Black playwright and activist Amiri Baraka, his spouse, Amina Baraka, and the Black arts movement. The ticketed program will feature Cornell West, the Last Poets, Marvin X, Ewuare Osayande, Taina Asili, video presentations from Angela Davis and Mama Charlotte O'Neal, a live jazz band and dinner.

On April 26 there will be a "Sons and Daughters of the Revolution" march from the former Black Panther Party headquarters in Philadelphia at 19th and Cecil B. Moore Street to the historic Church of the Advocate at 18th and Diamond Street.

There, the march will join a Celebration of Life dedicated to the legacies of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Father Paul Washington, Ed Robinson and Marshall "Eddie" Conway. This event will feature Dead Prez, Immortal Technique, Jasmiri X, Dice Raw, a street fair, speakers, information tables, vendors, a health pavilion, and workshops on the school to prison pipeline, women in prison, political prisoners and more. The event is borrowing on a similar

Celebration of Life festival held outside the church in 1985.

Co-sponsors of the activities include the Campaign to Bring Mumia Home, the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the International Action Center, the Coalition to Free Mumia (NYC), Educators for Mumia, and the Committee to Save Mumia. Information on all events during the three-day period can be found at [bringmumiahome.com](http://bringmumiahome.com).

In December 2011, nearly three decades of relentless struggle on Abu-Jamal's behalf resulted in lifting the death sentence he had faced since 1982, when he was unjustly convicted for the murder of a Philadelphia police officer. Abu-Jamal was released to general population in SCI Mahanoy where he still faces a life in prison despite ample evidence of his innocence.

That the Fraternal Order of Police is still determined to silence Abu-Jamal is evident in their recent attacks on Debo Adegbile, President Obama's nominee to the U.S. Department of Justice, because of his legal advocacy work for Abu-Jamal. While an attorney for the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund, Adegbile provided support for attorneys who successfully argued for relief of Abu-Jamal's 1982 death sentence due to erroneous instructions given to the jury by the prosecutor.

However, the FOP's attacks may have backfired. Not only was Adegbile's nomination approved by the initial Senate panel, but the publicity surrounding his nomination helped renew attention to efforts to release Abu-Jamal.

Minister of Confrontation for the MOVE organization, Pam Africa, told Workers World: "The power of the people stopped the state from executing Mumia in 1995. Now it's on us to keep this struggle going and to reach out to young people who were not yet born when Mumia was imprisoned in 1982. We won't stop until Mumia is home." □

# Reinstate African-American

Workers World Philadelphia Bureau

On Feb. 12, a press conference and community rally were held here at the District 1199C hall of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, a division of the American Federation of State, City, and Municipal Employees, to launch a campaign to reinstate Anthony Monteiro, Ph.D., an associate professor of African-American Studies at Temple University. The midday event, organized on short notice, was attended by more than 100 people.

Monteiro, a noted W.E.B. Du Bois scholar, led protests last spring when Teresa Soufas, dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Temple, attempted to appoint a white woman professor to head the African-American Studies Department, one of the oldest in the U.S. After successfully supporting efforts to have African-American scholar Molefi Kete Asante, Ph.D., ap-

pointed to the position, Monteiro received a notice from the university in January that his year-to-year contract would not be renewed for the 2014-15 academic year.

Monteiro, who had been promised tenure at Temple when he was hired in 2003, described his firing as a "retaliatory act" initiated by Soufas, not only for his role in the fight against her appointee, but for his long-time work in the community around Temple where he lives.

In addition to the 2013 protest, Monteiro organized on-campus events honoring Pam Africa and hosted the campus premier of "Long Distance Revolutionary," an award-winning documentary about political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Monteiro also hosted a book party there for Russell Maroon Shoats' "Maroon the Implacable," which took up the issues of mass incarceration, political prisoners and solitary confinement.

Monteiro recently wrote several articles

## South Africa

# Strikes, poverty and elections

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

National elections will be held in the Republic of South Africa on May 7. The ruling African National Congress, after two decades in power, hopes to maintain control of the post-apartheid state.

The ANC, a liberation movement turned into a political party, has held enthusiastic rallies in various parts of the country. An election manifesto calls for creating 6 million jobs and accelerating land reform, which has been stalled since 1994.

Meanwhile, there are attempts to build electoral opposition to the ANC. The Democratic Alliance, headed by Helen Zille, is the largest opposition bloc in parliament. It organized a march to the national headquarters of the ANC in Johannesburg, which led to tense confrontations between supporters of the DA and the ANC, especially its youth wing.

Zille, the former mayor of Cape Town, has sought to recruit Africans into the opposition party, which is perceived as a white-dominated alliance between former Nationalist Party members, liberals and opportunistic elements disgruntled with the ANC.

The DA had announced it would include on its ticket the former Black Consciousness Movement activist Dr. Mamphela Ramphele — a comrade of BCM founder Steve Biko, who was killed by the apartheid state in 1977. Ramphele's Agang Party recently merged with the DA. However, this short-lived political marriage of convenience ended before it started, when acrimony surfaced between Zille and Ramphele.

### Role of workers and youth in election

The ANC is seeking to appeal directly to the so-called “born free” generation that grew up after the first non-racial democratic elections of 1994. It also seeks the majority of the working-class vote throughout the country.

A strike in the world's main platinum-producing region in the Northwest is a major factor in the upcoming elections and the overall economic future of South Africa. Some 80,000 miners, members of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union, have been on strike for nearly four weeks.

Recently, the owners of Anglo-American Platinum (Amplats) filed court papers against AMCU to end the strike.

An article in the Feb. 17 Financial Times says there is a worldwide glut of platinum, which is used in the production of catalytic converters for automobiles, and that Amplats and other platinum owners are preparing for a protracted struggle with organized labor. These developments will test the ANC's ability to resolve the current crisis, as the bosses have threatened to lay off up to 14,000 workers.

Referring to the ANC's bid to remain politically dominant in South Africa, the article notes, “Concerned by job losses set against a backdrop of an unemployment rate that is close to a quarter of the working population, the ruling African National Congress has kept pressure on companies to keep mines open.”

AMCU is a staunch rival of the National Union of Mineworkers, previously the largest affiliate of the 2-million-member Congress of South African Trade Unions. Allied with the ruling ANC, COSATU was formed at the height of the liberation struggle in 1985.

In August 2012, police shot dead 34 striking AMCU miners at Lonmin's Marikana mine. On Feb. 16 the British news service Reuters called it “South Africa's bloodiest security incident since the end of apartheid in 1994,” but revealed its true concerns in the very next sentence: “The killings spooked investors and hit

the country's credit ratings.”

Another miners' union, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, currently the largest COSATU affiliate, has announced it will not support the ANC in the upcoming elections.

This union has said that the interests of the working class are being subordinated to the maintenance of state power by the ruling party. NUMSA is demanding a special national congress of COSATU to address the suspension of the union's former secretary-general, Zwelinzima Vavi, who has been accused of violating union rules.

### Upcoming elections raise questions

These divisions within COSATU and the role of AMCU in the platinum sectors raise a number of questions regarding the upcoming elections and the future of working-class politics. Will NUMSA eventually call for the formation of an independent labor party as an alternative to the ANC-COSATU alliance, or is it prepared to stay within the coalition and fight for its views?

In addition, what impact will the AMCU-led strikes have on the mobilizations by the ANC for the May 7 vote? Will the votes of the working class in South Africa, which is 70 percent unorganized by any union, be influenced by the political struggles taking place within the labor movement and the attacks on the ANC by the DA?

These debates and political struggles

within the union movement are coupled with continuing unrest in the townships over service delivery issues. Millions still remain without adequate housing, public education, utility services, living wages, land and environmentally safe communities and municipalities. The DA is attempting to channel this unrest into its electoral campaign to weaken the ANC's two-thirds majority within the national parliament.

The ANC is seeking to run on its record of home constructions, affirmative action within government and private industry, building a rapid transit train system, healthcare reforms and its influence in foreign policy areas — such as the Southern African Development Community, joining four other nations in the BRICS grouping (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and hosting the World Soccer Cup in 2010, among other developments.

President Jacob Zuma said recently, “When 95 percent of households have access to water, the 5 percent who still need to be provided for feel they cannot wait a moment longer. Success is also the breeding ground of rising expectations.” (Reuters, Feb. 13)

South Africa has the largest economy and working class on the continent of Africa. The outcome of the May 7 elections will portend much for the immediate future of the class struggle in Africa.

Read the entire article at [workers.org](http://workers.org).

## Solidarity with Bolivarian revolution



A rally in solidarity with Venezuela was held in San Francisco's Mission District on Feb. 17 demanding U.S. hands off Venezuela and solidarity with the Bolivarian revolution. The rally was initiated by the Answer Coalition and endorsed by such groups as the Bay Area Latin America Solidarity Committee, Marcha Patriótica Colombia-CA Chapter and Workers World Party. Speakers included Pierre LaBossiere, from the Haiti Action Committee. The rally was called in response to the Feb. 12 attack on peaceful marches in Venezuela to commemorate the 200th anniversary of La Victoria of the Independence war. Gunmen fired into crowds, killing three and injuring dozens more.

— Photo and report by Terri Kay

## studies, Professor Monteiro

in the wake of the deaths of Nelson Mandela and Amiri Baraka. He hosted W.E.B. Du Bois symposiums at Temple in 2012 and 2013. In 2012 he initiated a Saturday Free School at Temple University for people from the community to discuss philosophy, history, economics and literature.

In 1991 Monteiro participated in a delegation that met with Fidel Castro on Cuba's role in Africa, and has been a consistent supporter of the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution.

### Wide local, national support for Monteiro

Speakers at the press conference linked Monteiro's firing to efforts to drive long-standing, low-income residents of color from the area and limit their access to higher education at a school originally founded to serve area residents. Children in a housing project next to the campus say they have been harassed by police and told, “You don't belong here.”

Temple is located in a historically African-American area of Philadelphia that has been under intense gentrification for several years. The campus is adjacent to two of the poorest zip codes in the city.

Longtime community resident and activist Sacaree Rhodes stated, “Temple needs to know that the African-American Studies Department cannot exist without the support of the Black community.” She urged participants to call Temple President Neil Theobald to push Soufas out and reinstate Monteiro.

Temple students Kashara White and Walter Smolarek, from People Utilizing Real Power, described Monteiro as “one of the best teachers” they had and promised to galvanize student support. Last November PURP held a protest against growing incidents of brutality targeting Black and Latino/a students by campus and city police.

Monteiro also received support from

State Representative Curtis Thomas; Pastor Renee McKinsey, of the Church of the Advocate; Ryan Boyer, business manager of Local 332 Laborers District Council; Robert Gray, of the African American Freedom and Reconstruction League; and Joe Piette, of the Phair Hiring Coalition.

Professors Mark Taylor, from Princeton Theological Seminary, and Johanna Fernandez, from Baruch College, members of Educators for Mumia, read from a letter calling for Monteiro's reinstatement that was signed by more than 60 noted academics, including Lewis R. Gordon, Cornel West and Farah Jasmine Griffin.

Henry Nicholas, president of 1199C Hospital Workers Union, reported that 59 building projects are currently promoting gentrification in Philadelphia's Black communities. Nicholas offered the hall as meeting space to Monteiro and his supporters, noting, “This is an issue we should use to unify us.” □

## AFRICA & IMPERIALISM

Articles by Abayomi Azikiwe from the pages of Workers World

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## EE.UU. respalda el terror contra Venezuela

19 de febrero de 2014  
Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

La actual violencia por parte de las fuerzas derechistas opositoras a la Revolución Bolivariana, son una continuación del asedio que comenzó cuando el entonces presidente Hugo Chávez aprobara las 49 leyes económicas dentro del marco de una Ley Habilitante en el 2001. En ese entonces, particularmente la Ley de Tierras y la Ley de Hidrocarburos representaron la primera amenaza de la Revolución al poder económico de la burguesía compradora y sus aliados internacionales. Esto sucedió años antes de que el Comandante Chávez declarara el Socialismo como una ruta para la Revolución.

La amenaza era tal, que en diciembre de 2001, la Federación Venezolana de Cámaras de Comercio - FEDECAMARAS - junto con las empresas de medios de comunicación privados y la Confederación pro-empresarial de Trabajadores iniciaron acciones para desestabilizar el país, incluyendo paros laborales. Éstas culminaron con el Golpe de Estado de abril 2002 y el sabotaje petrolero 2002-03.

De ahí en adelante, aunque han cambiado los actores, las fuerzas tras el asedio son las mismas: la oligarquía venezolana, junto a fuerzas extranjeras amparadas e incitadas por las organizaciones del Departamento de Estado de los EE.UU., principalmente la USAID y la NED.

Luego de la muerte de Chávez, las fuerzas derechistas y EE.UU. han incrementado la campaña desestabilizadora contra la Revolución, pensando que el actual Presidente, Nicolás Maduro, no tendría

el poder de convocatoria de su antecesor. Sin embargo, hasta la fecha, todos sus esfuerzos han sido en vano. Sobre todo, luego de que en las elecciones municipales de diciembre pasado, la mayoría del pueblo demostró su respaldo cuando las fuerzas bolivarianas consiguieron una amplia mayoría ganando el 75,5 por ciento de los municipios.

### Nueva campaña de terror de la derecha

No resulta extraño que ahora, luego de que se aprobara la nueva Ley Habilitante propuesta por el presidente Maduro que dará mayor control al Estado de las divisas y recursos financieros, la ultraderecha intensifique el continuo plan de golpe de estado.

Éste se intentó el 12 de febrero, mientras el país celebraba el Bicentenario de la Batalla de La Victoria y Día de la Juventud con una multitudinaria marcha por la capital.

En una ola de violencia que intenta reproducir el golpe de estado del 2002, turbas de jóvenes derechistas arremetieron contra edificios gubernamentales, incluyendo entre otros, el del Ministerio Público, el Canal estatal Venezolana de Televisión y destruyendo casi totalmente la fachada de la Fiscalía General de la República. También destruyeron facilidades del Metro, vehículos, quemaron basura y llantas, entre otras acciones violentas.

Una confrontación con una manifestación pacífica de jóvenes revolucionarios dejó un saldo de tres muertos, más de 60 heridos y decenas de arrestados.

Días antes, en el estado de Táchira en la frontera con Colombia, grupos dere-

chistas apedrearon la residencia del gobernador donde hay instaladas facilidades de rehabilitación que ofrecen terapias gratuitas a la población.

### ¿Quiénes son los principales sujetos opositores?

Estas turbas responden al llamado de Leopoldo López, el autor intelectual, dirigente del Partido Voluntad Popular y candidato de la burguesía de Chacao, una de las zonas más ricas de Caracas, sede de las protestas opositoras quien le dijo a la prensa que las movilizaciones terminarán "cuando logremos sacar a quienes nos están gobernando". (Telesur)

López es producto de la Escuela Kennedy de Gobierno de la Universidad de Harvard y de la Universidad de Kenyon de EE.UU. Fue alcalde del Chacao pero el Tribunal Supremo de Justicia lo inhabilitó para cualquier cargo público por haber recibido ilegalmente para su organización política Primero Justicia, fondos de PDVSA a través de su madre quien entonces era funcionaria de la estatal.

Tiene nexos con el ex presidente paramilitar colombiano, Álvaro Uribe con quien recientemente se reunió y en rueda de prensa expresó que la conversación se ha "focalizado principalmente en cómo recuperar la seguridad de Venezuela". (VTV Multimedia) Es de conocimiento público que los paramilitares colombianos se encuentran infiltrados en Venezuela para ocasionar violencia y a ayudar a la oposición en sus planes desestabilizadores.

Ahora, aunque aparentemente se encuentra en el país, es prófugo de la justicia venezolana, que ha dictado una orden

de arresto por su participación en los actos violentos.

Junto a López, está también la diputada opositora María Corina Machado, otra hija de la élite, cabeza de SUMATE, organización derechista que recibe fondos de la USAID.

### Venezuela desafía amenazas de EE.UU.

No hay duda alguna de que Leopoldo López está avalado por los EE.UU. El presidente Maduro denunció el 16 de febrero en televisión nacional que el gobierno de EE.UU. le exigía que "se siente a dialogar con la oposición, que liberen a todos los detenidos de los disturbios recientes y en tercer lugar, amenazaron con que "el arresto del señor Leopoldo López, podría causar consecuencias negativas con su ramificaciones internacionales", por lo que "solicitó que se detuviera las medidas judiciales contra él". (VTV)

La respuesta de Maduro fue "Son exigencias inaceptables e insolentes ... Para el gobierno de Estados Unidos los derechos humanos son los derechos de la Derecha para delinquir. ... No habrá fuerza que nos detenga a los bolivarianos. En Venezuela estamos dispuestos a llegar hasta las últimas consecuencias en la defensa de la paz y la democracia".

Anunció además que expulsará del país a tres funcionarios de la embajada estadounidense por estar participando en reuniones conspirativas contra el Gobierno venezolano. Informó además que el lunes 17 de febrero llamará a las y los presidentes de América Latina y se declara en campaña para denunciar las amenazas del Gobierno de Estados Unidos. (VTV) □

## Tributo a Miguel Cruz Santos

### En la celebración de una vida dedicada a la revolución comunista

By Tom Soto

Miguel Cruz Santos, luchador incansable por la clase obrera y defensor del socialismo murió en San Juan, Puerto Rico, el jueves 6 de febrero de 2014 a la temprana edad de 56 años.

Un homenaje en su honor se celebró el 9 de febrero en la Funeraria Ehret donde cientos de activistas, sindicalistas y socialistas elogiaron el trabajo de su vida. Asistieron también su esposa Oui Belissa, su hijo Miguelito y los miembros del Partido Comunista de Puerto Rico, del que Miguel fue miembro fundador.

Miguel fue un profesor que influyó políticamente a miles de estudiantes y trabajadores a lo largo de su vida. Miguel había sido miembro del anterior Partido Comunista cuando se disuelve en la década de 1980 y se comprometió entonces a la resurrección del Partido.

Ante todo Miguel era un leninista, impartiendo clases sobre el material-

ismo histórico y trabajando en el movimiento de los maestros en Puerto Rico por la participación democrática de los trabajadores. Recientemente, se oponía militantemente a la reducción por el gobierno de Puerto Rico, de los beneficios de jubilación para los maestros a fin de pagar por la crisis de la deuda actual del capitalismo.

Miguel era un anti-imperialista que se opuso a todas las guerras de Estados Unidos contra los países oprimidos toda su vida. Fue un defensor de la Unión Soviética y trabajó incansablemente para formar alianzas con los revolucionarios en República Dominicana, Cuba, Colombia, Nicaragua, El Salvador y Venezuela.

Miguel fue miembro fundador del Comité de Solidaridad con Cuba, la Brigada Juan Rius Rivera, el Frente Socialista, Refundación Comunista y la Escuela Vladimir Lenin. Miguel y su esposa Oui Belissa también fundaron el periódico anticapitalista: Abayarde Rojo.

Miguel fue un luchador en pro de la clase obrera y fue también un internacionalista. En tiempos más recientes, trabajó incansablemente para expulsar a la Marina de los EE.UU. de la isla de Vieques; se opuso a las guerras de Esta-



15 agosto 1958 — 6 febrero 2014

dos Unidos contra Yugoslavia e Irak, y fue delegado a la Asamblea Sindical que lanzó la Huelga General del Pueblo en 1998 para oponerse a la privatización de la Compañía de Teléfonos de Puerto Rico.

El espíritu de lucha de Miguel y su compromiso con la construcción del socialismo y el comunismo eran los pilares de su vida. Sus camaradas, activistas y

compañeros del sindicato y socialistas presentes en el homenaje elogiaron el trabajo de su vida y se comprometieron a continuar y avanzar la lucha por un futuro socialista.

**Miguel Cruz Santos, ¡Presente!**

*El escritor era amigo de Miguel Cruz Santos y asistió al memorial.*

¡Libertad para todos de Los Cinco Cubanos!