

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

A million march May 1 in Havana for socialism

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 79/NO. 18 MAY 18, 2015

'We're proud of what we've done,' marchers say

BY EMMA JOHNSON

"I'm proud of what we have done, there would have been no indictments without the protests," Carr Kizzier, an English professor at Baltimore City Community College, told Chris Hoepfner at a May 2 rally celebrating the charges filed against six Baltimore cops the day before for their role in the killing of Freddie Gray. Hoepfner was in Baltimore to join in protests there along with Maggie Trowe, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in New York's 11th District. "We will have a walkout and discuss all this on the campus Tuesday," Kizzier said.

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Baltimore: 1,000s march, celebrate as cops charged

Protesters press for vigorous prosecution



Reuters photos: Lucas Jackson

Baltimore marchers May 2. Many resent "thug" slander by president, Baltimore mayor. Inset, celebration day before, after cops who killed Freddie Gray were charged.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

BALTIMORE — "Black lives matter!" was the watchword of rallies and celebrations here after days of protests forced State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby to charge the cops responsible for the death of 25-year-old Freddie Gray.

JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY!

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The courage and determination of working people in the Black community here and those who joined them made it impossible for the authorities to sweep the killing under the rug.

When Gray died April 19 of severe spinal injuries sustained in police custody, protests focused world attention on Baltimore. Tensions mounted when the six officers were suspended

Construction deaths highlight need for unions, fight for safety

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Members of Laborers' International Union Local 79 participated in a Construction Workers Memorial Mass in New York April 28. Hundreds wearing hard hats filed into St. Patrick's Cathedral for a service to commemorate the 16 construction workers killed at work over the past 12 months. Sixteen chairs with hard hats and flowers were set aside for them.

The action was one of many Workers Memorial Day commemorations

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May 1 actions unite labor, immigrant, cop brutality fights

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — This year's May Day demonstrations in the United States were marked by fights against police brutality, opposition to deportations of immigrant workers, and protests by workers at McDonald's, Walmart and other low-paying jobs for \$15 and a union — struggles that are reinforcing and strengthening each other. Charges filed against Baltimore cops responsible for the death in custody of Freddie Gray brought an air of celebration.

It was striking that many actions were organized by unions — just 10 years ago most labor officials would have viewed any May Day action as too radical for union involvement.

International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 organized the May 1 march and rally of 750 in Oakland, California. "Stop Police Terror" and "An Injury to One Is an Injury to

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with pay but not charged. They rose another notch after President Barack Obama and Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake called angry youth "thugs," trying to shift attention away from the brutal police killing of Gray and onto the explosion of anger against it in the city's African-American community.

U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch accused area youth of "shattering of the peace in the city of Baltimore" when anger against decades of cop intimidation and brutality boiled

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Greek workers bear brunt as EU, gov't argue over debt payments

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Workers in Greece, battered since 2008 by the impact of the world contraction of capitalist production and trade, are between a rock and a hard place as the leftist Greek capitalist government faces another showdown with European finance capitalists.

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, leader of the Coalition of the Radical Left party, known by its acronym Syriza, won the Jan. 25 elections promising reforms to capitalism and an easing of the social and economic disaster workers have faced. His government has sought to walk a thin line between promising Greeks he would stand up to Germany while seeking to reach an accommodation with Berlin on paying its enormous debt.

One of the weakest capitalist countries in Europe, Athens has been impacted by disadvantageous trade relations in the EU between southern Europe and the stronger northern exporting capitalist powers, especially

Berlin.

At the same time, the EU itself faces economic stagnation, losing ground to U.S. capital. The European Central Bank announced March 9 it

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Country	quota	sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Houston	10	9	90%
Seattle	125	92	74%
Los Angeles*	110	65	59%
Chicago	155	87	56%
Nebraska*	181	101	56%
Omaha*	170	96	56%
Lincoln*	11	5	45%
New York	355	194	55%
Twin Cities	65	35	54%
Oakland*	180	92	51%
Washington	100	49	49%
Philadelphia	115	51	44%
Boston	63	26	41%
Atlanta	150	48	32%
Miami	45	13	29%
Total U.S.	1654	862	52%
PRISONERS			
	15	12	80%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	105	56	53%
Manchester	100	52	52%
UK Total	205	108	53%
CANADA			
Calgary	50	29	58%
Montreal	75	23	31%
Canada Total	125	52	42%
AUSTRALIA			
	70	27	39%
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Total	2129	1092	55%
Should be	2000	857	43%

*Raised goal

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- Striking oil workers rally at Marathon HQ in Ohio
- Port truck drivers in LA return to work after five-day strike

Beijing seeks to challenge US domination in Pacific

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Over the past few months Beijing has taken steps to back up its claims to the greater part of the South China Sea, carrying out massive dredging in the waters and turning reefs into islands big enough to hold airstrips and military installations.

Newly released satellite images show major Chinese land reclamation on eight reefs in the Spratly Islands. At Fiery Cross Reef a roughly 10,000-foot airstrip is almost finished and a harbor well underway, big enough to accommodate most combat and support aircraft and the largest military vessels in China's armed forces.

Washington is fighting to maintain its domination of the Pacific, conquered with U.S. imperialism's bloody triumph in World War II. The U.S. Navy's supremacy over the South China Sea — with its vital trade routes, potential energy reserves and proximity to allies and rivals — was among Washington's most cherished spoils of the war.

The rapid development of capitalist industry and trade in China over the last 30 years drives the rulers to seek a political and military role in the region commensurate with their economic strength.

To counter China's challenge, President Barack Obama announced a "pivot" to the east in 2011, increasing Washington's military presence in the region. The U.S. government is deepening its cooperation with Beijing's rivals, especially calling on Tokyo to take on a greater role.

At an April 16 seminar in Washington, China's ambassador to the U.S., Cui

Tiankai, said it was "natural" that the reclamation work would include military installations and that there "should be no illusion that anyone could impose on China a unilateral status quo."

Trade worth \$5 trillion passes through the South China Sea every year. The existence of natural gas deposits in coastal areas have led to predictions of major energy reserves there. Beijing's claim to 80 percent of the sea, including more than 40 islands, is contested by the governments of Vietnam, the Philippines and other neighboring states.

In May last year China placed an oil rig for test drilling between the Paracel Islands and Vietnam. During more than two months of drilling there were numerous incidents involving the Vietnamese Coast Guard, Chinese military ships and fishing boats from Vietnam.

In 2012 there was a tense five-day military standoff between Chinese and Philippine maritime forces at the Scarborough Shoal.

While still lagging far behind U.S. naval and air power, China has made substantial military advances, developed a new generation of stealth jet fighters, an aircraft carrier and the world's first land-based anti-ship ballistic missile.

Washington seeks new alliances

Washington is working to put together military, political and trade alliances to counter Beijing's growing influence. By 2020 the U.S. plans to have 60 percent of its warships located in the Pacific.

"I think allies, partners and friends in the region will look to the Japanese more and more as a stabilizing function,"



Above, satellite image shows construction on Fiery Cross Reef in Spratly Islands where Beijing is building 10,000-foot airstrip. Inset: Chinese government claims 80 percent of South China Sea, including islands also claimed by Vietnam, the Philippines and other neighboring states.



Adm. Robert Thomas, the top U.S. naval officer in Asia, told Reuters Jan. 29. "In the South China Sea, frankly, the Chinese fishing fleet, the Chinese coast guard and the [navy] overmatch their neighbor," he said. "I think that JDSF [Japanese Maritime Defense Forces] operations make sense in the future."

Before World War II Japan was the dominant imperialist power in East Asia, with a brutal colonial history that has not been forgotten in Korea, China and elsewhere.

During a visit by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Washington, U.S. and Japanese officials announced new guidelines for greater military cooperation April 27. The agreement reaffirms that the Senkaku Islands, controlled by Tokyo but also claimed by China and Taiwan, are covered by the treaty.

In late 2013 Beijing declared an air defense identification zone over the East China Sea, which so far has been ignored by Washington and Tokyo.

Japan's military spending ranks sixth in the world, second in Asia after China. Abe has said that his "life's work" is to revise the Japanese constitution to remove the restrictions on Tokyo's use of military power imposed as a consequence of its defeat in World War II. In April 2014 the government lifted a nearly four-decade ban on weapons exports.

Over the last few months Washing-

ton has expanded military collaboration with the Philippines and initiated cooperation with Vietnam. Both Asian countries have also established closer military relations with Tokyo.

Washington and Manila announced a 10-year pact April 26 that Evan Medeiros, the National Security Council's senior director for Asian affairs, said was "the most significant defense agreement that we have concluded with the Philippines in decades."

Beijing is "using its sheer size and muscle to force countries into subordinate positions," Obama said April 9. "Just because the Philippines and Vietnam are not as large as China doesn't mean that they can just be elbowed aside."

"The U.S. leader talked about China's 'sheer size and muscle,' but one can see clearly who has the biggest size and muscle in the world," responded Hua Chunying, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson. She said China has "indisputable rights" to the Spratlys and was "protecting its nation's sovereignty."

THE MILITANT

Back workers' fights to organize unions

From the port truckers in California to fast-food and retail workers across the U.S., workers are stepping up fights for better pay, safer working conditions and for unions. The 'Militant' gets out the truth about these struggles.



Militant
Port truck drivers on strike for union recognition picket in Los Angeles April 27.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant's* views. These are expressed in editorials.

'Proud of what we've done'

Continued from front page

"As we marched and chanted, we all discussed the cumulative impact of the protests and how we can make a difference," Trowe told the *Militant*. "The whole city is in a dialogue, it goes on hour after hour, day after day. You act together and talk together, and people ask 'Who are you?' and they tell you what they've been doing and thinking."

"I talked to Leigh Nicholas and Zoe Buckwater from Temple University in Philadelphia," she said. "They have a group on campus called \$15 Now. They came to Baltimore because they see the fight against cop brutality and for a raise in the minimum wage as part of the same fight. Leigh got a subscription, read the paper, then we talked some more. We plan to stay in touch and continue to build the fight together."

"When Kizzier, Nicholas, Buckwater and others asked who we were, we explained my campaign and about the *Militant*," Trowe said. "They were among a number of protesters we met who decided they wanted to subscribe. Kizzier also took advantage of the offer for new readers to get any book published by Pathfinder Press at half price and chose *Malcolm X, Black Libera-*

tion, and the Road to Workers Power by Jack Barnes."

"People want to figure out how we can win, what the connection is between capitalism and racism and between the labor movement and the fight against racism," Trowe said. "We learn from what we accomplished here in Baltimore and take it with us to the next one. There are meetings and discussions and actions taking place across the country."

"Freddie Gray didn't have to die or be treated less than human. This march is putting attention back on what happened to him and against those who call protesters animals and thugs," Aurora Winner, a 21-year-old home health care worker, told Arlene Rubinstein at a demonstration of more than 1,000 people in Baltimore April 29. Rubinstein had come with a group from Washington, D.C., to join the march.

"I hooked up with Winner and marched with her friends, including Elise Heroux, who works at a huge Amazon fulfillment center in a closed General Motors plant," Rubinstein said. "Amazon has a history of mistreating workers," Heroux told me. "We work 11-hour shifts and there is no access to water and not enough bathrooms."



Militant/Naomi Craine

Maggie Trowe, SWP congressional candidate in May 5 election in New York, joins May Day action there organized by trade unions. Laborers' locals had big turnout for march.

Heroux has lived in Baltimore for 10 years and said, "What I have witnessed at the hands of the police taught me that they are gangs that rule these neighborhoods."

Winner decided to take out a subscription to the *Militant*, Rubinstein said. "I called her the next day and she had already read it. 'This paper is awesome,' she said."

Josefina Otero joined an April 29 United Steelworkers rally at Mara-

thon Petroleum's headquarters in Findlay, Ohio, in support of oil workers on strike at the company's facility in Texas City, Texas. In the course of the protest, three workers signed up for subscriptions and another renewed for six months.

The annual Militant Fighting Fund drive makes it possible to get the paper out with the low introductory subscription offer of \$5 for 12 weeks. Workers who have read the paper and come to appreciate it are the backbone of the fund.

"We got \$200 from a new contributor last week when he renewed," Dan Fein reported from Chicago May 4. "He got a subscription a while back at one of the rallies in St. Louis against the cop killing of Michael Brown."

Join in taking the *Militant* to social protests, labor actions and working-class neighborhoods, and please make a generous contribution. Contact the distributors listed on page 8.

Judge strikes down gag law in Pennsylvania

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a victory for workers rights, U.S. District Court Judge Christopher Conner struck down a Pennsylvania gag law known as the "Silencing Act" April 28. The so-called Revictimization Relief Act targets prisoners' right to free speech and the rights of those who publish what they say.

The law was passed overwhelmingly by the Pennsylvania legislature in October, days after Mumia Abu-Jamal delivered a previously-recorded speech to the commencement ceremony at Goddard College in Vermont. It authorizes any county district attorney, the state's attorney general — or anyone else — to file a civil lawsuit to prevent inmates from discussing their case, prison conditions or anything else, on the grounds that it causes a victim or

family member "mental anguish."

"A past criminal offense does not extinguish the offender's constitutional right to free expression," Conner said in his ruling. "The First Amendment does not evanesce at the prison gate, and its enduring guarantee of freedom of speech subsumes the right to expressive conduct that some may find offensive."

Abu-Jamal, 61, is a journalist and former Black Panther Party member who has been imprisoned in Pennsylvania for 33 years on frame-up charges of murdering Philadelphia cop Daniel Faulkner in 1981. He was held in solitary confinement until 2011, after the death penalty imposed on him was overturned.

Along with seven other plaintiffs, Abu-Jamal filed a lawsuit 20 days af-

ter the gag act was signed, demanding an injunction barring enforcement of the law. In January the American Civil Liberties Union filed a second challenge to the law's constitutionality on behalf of Florida-based *Prison Legal News* and 10 other plaintiffs. The judge's ruling combines both cases.

"We are pleased that Judge Conner recognized the harm to free speech rights of people convicted of crimes," Sara Rose, a staff attorney for the Pennsylvania ACLU, told the *Militant* May 4. "This case was about the public's right to hear from these prisoners." The law is "unclear whether an offender includes the accused, the convicted, the exonerated, third parties, or all of the foregoing," the judge wrote. In arguments before Conner March 30, the judge asked Pennsylvania Deputy Attorney General Abbegael Giunta if the act applied to people merely accused but not convicted of any crime. Yes, Giunta replied.

"The Act ostensibly affects protected — and critically important — speech, including: pardon applications, clemency petitions ... public expressions of innocence ... or any public speech or written work whatsoever, regardless of the speaker's intention or the work's relation to the offense," Conner wrote.

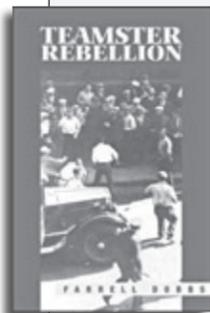
The attorney general's office told the media they are reviewing whether to appeal. State Rep. Mike Vereb vowed to rewrite it if no legal challenge is made.

Prison denies adequate medical care

Abu-Jamal's health has been deteriorating amid inadequate treatment and neglect in prison. The same day as the hearing before Judge Conner, March 30, Abu-Jamal was rushed to the Schuylkill Medical Center with his blood sugar dangerously high from complications of diabetes. He was sent back to prison two days later, and has been in and out of the prison infirmary since.

Continued on page 9

Book specials for subscribers



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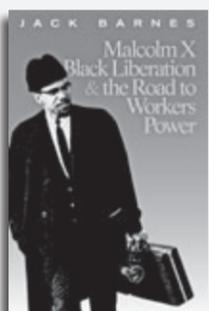
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Militant Fighting Fund

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UNITED STATES			
Twin Cities	\$3,600	\$2,360	66%
Philadelphia	\$3,200	\$1,600	50%
Atlanta	\$8,600	\$3,130	36%
Oakland	\$13,500	\$4,710	35%
Nebraska	\$3,500	\$1,161	33%
Lincoln*	\$200	\$100	50%
Omaha	\$3,300	\$1,061	32%
Boston	\$3,750	\$1,200	32%
Los Angeles*	\$8,000	\$2,450	31%
Washington	\$8,000	\$2,310	29%
Chicago	\$10,000	\$2,725	27%
New York	\$20,000	\$3,910	20%
Seattle	\$8,600	\$680	8%
Miami	\$2,000	\$105	5%
Total U.S.	\$92,750	\$26,341	28%
CANADA			
Calgary	\$2,900	\$1,015	35%
Montreal	\$4,400	\$390	9%
Total Canada	\$7,300	\$1,405	19%
NEW ZEALAND	\$4,400	\$1,999	45%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London*	\$2,000	\$500	25%
Manchester	\$600	\$90	15%
Total U.K.	\$2,600	\$590	23%
AUSTRALIA	\$1,350	\$700	52%
FRANCE	\$300	\$120	40%
Total	\$108,700	\$31,155	27%
Should be	\$115,000	\$49,286	43%
Raised goal *			

May Day marches, rallies

Continued from front page
All” read the lead banner.

Local 10 held the protest in place of their monthly eight-hour “stop-work meeting,” effectively shutting down the Port of Oakland for the day.

Relatives of Bay Area youth killed by cops spoke at the action. “We got the cop who killed Oscar Grant charged, convicted and sent to jail,” Grant’s uncle, Cephus Johnson, told the crowd. A Bay Area transit cop shot Grant in 2009 as he lay face down. “We need the community and labor working together.”

International Workingmen’s Day, May 1, was born in the United States in 1886 as part of the fight for the eight-hour day, and became a day of international working-class protest.

Because of these traditions, and the manipulation of the date by Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, conservative U.S. labor officials boycotted May Day, and the rulers organized “Labor Day” in September.

That changed in 2006 when millions of immigrants took to the streets nationwide against a draconian anti-immigrant bill in Congress. Proclaiming “We are workers, not criminals!” they organized the first political strike in U.S. history, reconquering May Day for the entire working class.

This year there were two May Day marches in New York City, each with

about 1,000 participants. One was organized by Labor Rights, Immigrant Rights, Jobs for All, a coalition of the New York State and City labor councils and more than two dozen union locals. It began outside the home of Alice Walton, one of Walmart’s owners.

Hundreds of construction workers from Laborers’ International, including a number of women unionists, marched along with government employees, operating engineers, nurses, building workers and community groups. A Walmart worker spoke at the rally. She was one of more than 500 who lost their jobs when the retailer shut its Pico Rivera, California, store April 13 to retaliate against workers joining labor actions.

The march organized by the May 1 Immigrant Rights Coalition gathered in Union Square, drawing a wide variety of immigrant organizations, university students and fighters against police brutality who chanted “Black Lives Matter” and called for prosecution and conviction of the cops who killed Freddie Gray in Baltimore. One contingent called for freedom for Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López and several demanded justice for 43 Mexican students from Ayotzinapa disappeared by municipal police in Iguala, Mexico, last September.

There were several demonstrations across Washington state. “My mother was deported in 2007 and my brother was deported a year later,” Claudia Loza, a student from Evergreen College, told the Seattle rally of more than 1,000. “I’m here standing for my family and standing for all the families that have been separated.” Several hundred farmworkers and their supporters marched in Yakima, behind a “No deportations” banner.

Hundreds of high school students walked out of class in Minneapolis to protest the killing of Freddie Gray, feeding into a march by the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee.



Militant photos. Inset, Arnold Weissberg
Above, longshore workers at front of May Day march in Oakland, California. Inset, fast-food workers lead chants at rally in New York.



Marches took place in Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Boston, Pittsburgh and other cities.

May Day worldwide

Tens of thousands joined May Day actions in Bangladesh, Brazil, Ecuador, Indonesia, Spain, Greece and other countries.

Tens of thousands marched to Zócalo Plaza in Mexico City. One contingent in the march was led by relatives of the 43 disappeared students and by farmworkers from the San Quintín Valley in Baja California who won a wage increase in an April strike. Some signs read, “We support Baltimore, San Quintín, Ayotzinapa.”

May Day protests of 150,000 in South Korea were the largest ever, *Hankyoreh* newspaper said. A main demand was increasing the minimum wage, currently about \$5.17 an hour.

Demonstrators were also joined by about 100 family members of the victims of the 2014 Sewol ferry disaster, which killed 294 passengers.

The week before cops fired water cannons and tear gas at a demonstra-

tion of tens of thousands in support of the Sewol families, who are demanding an investigation into government responsibility for the disaster.

Clint Davis in Washington state and Mark Schaefer in Oakland contributed to this article.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Oakland

Who Killed Doctors Hospital? The Only Public Hospital that Served the Working People of Richmond, California. Fri., May 15, 7:30 p.m. 675 Heegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Moscow Troops Out of Ukraine! End the Sanctions Against Russia! Speaker: Ilona Gersh, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 15, 7:30 p.m. 2018 S. Ashland Ave. Tel.: (312) 952-0628.

NEBRASKA

Omaha

Ukraine: The Fight for Workers’ Rights and the Example of Cuba’s Internationalism. Speaker: Frank Forrestal, *Militant* reporter who visited Ukraine and Cuba last year. Video presentation of “Cuba and Chernobyl.” Sat., May 9. Dinner, 6:30; program, 7:30 p.m. 3302 Q St., 2nd Floor. Tel.: (402) 779-7697.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Baltimore Protests and the Global Fight Against Police Brutality. Speaker: Mike Tucker, Communist League. Fri., May 15, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 188a Onehunga Mall. Tel.: (09) 636-3231.

UNITED KINGDOM

London

Earthquake in Nepal: A Social Disaster Magnified by Imperialist Exploitation. Speaker: Ólöf Andra Proppé, Communist League. Fri., May 15, 7 p.m. 2nd Floor, 83 Kingsland High St. E8 2PB. Tel.: (020) 3583-3553.

Manchester

Working-Class Resistance Today: From Fight for \$15 to Growing Protests Against Police Brutality in the U.S. Speaker: Hugo Wils, Communist League. Sat., May 16, 6 p.m. Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. M1 2EH. Tel.: (016) 1478-2496.

Auto workers discuss fight to end two-tier wages

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

CHICAGO — With contracts covering some 137,000 workers at the “Big Three” — Ford, General Motors and Chrysler — set to expire Sept. 14, United Auto Workers members are discussing how to reverse the two-tier wage concessions exacted by the bosses in 2007 and fight to boost wages.

Amid rising resistance by fast-food and Walmart workers fighting for \$15 an hour and a union and spreading battles by African-Americans and their allies

protesting police brutality, delegates to the union bargaining convention met in Detroit in March to debate priorities.

“Delegate after delegate argued against Tier 2 during the first day of the two-day convention,” reported *Automotive News* March 24. Scott Houldieson, vice president of UAW Local 551 in Chicago, took the floor wearing a T-shirt that read “No More Tiers.”

Efforts by delegates to pass a motion committing the union to eliminate the divisive tiered-wages system were not successful.

During the 2007 financial crisis the bosses demanded and UAW members agreed to two-tier wage schemes at all three companies. Workers hired after the contract made around \$14 per hour, about half the wage of workers hired before 2007. In 2011 UAW officials promoted another concession contract in which second-tier workers got small raises. UAW members hired before 2007 haven’t received a wage increase in 10 years.

Meanwhile, the auto bosses are floating the idea of bringing some jobs now outsourced to nonunion parts suppliers back into Big Three plants, and back into the UAW, but as a third tier of even lower-paid workers, Bloomberg Business reported March 23.

“No one wants two tiers,” Akira Montgomery, an assembly worker, told the *Militant* during the shift change at Ford’s Chicago Assembly Plant April 24. “The same work should get the same pay.” Assembly workers in the first tier make \$28 an hour on average, while second-tier workers start at \$15.78 and top out at \$19.28.

“The tier system is a way to divide and cause animosity between the members,” said Steve Sowell, a forklift driver and Local 551 member for 16 years.

“We need to get rid of the two-tier system,” Curtis Dudley said. “I was hired five years ago in the second tier, I’m in the first tier now. This is for my co-workers.

“The idea of a third tier is no deal,” he added.

At a GM-owned subcompact assembly plant in Lake Orion, Michigan, some workers who do nonassembly jobs, such as “kitting” together parts, are already paid less than the second tier.

As car sales have increased, the Big Three have hired more than 20,000 new workers since 2010. There are 52,000 hourly workers at Ford today compared with 36,000 in 2011.

Ford, GM and Chrysler together have made more than \$70 billion in operating profits since the last UAW contract.

—CALENDAR—

CALIFORNIA

Richmond

Absolved by Solidarity: Paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five Political Prisoners, Recently Freed After 16 Years in U.S. Prisons. Exhibit and book presentation. Sat., May 30, 2 p.m. Richmond Public Library, 325 Civic Center Plaza. Tel.: (510) 620-6561.

NEW YORK

New York

March to Free Oscar López! Puerto Rican Independence Fighter Jailed in U.S. for More than 33 Years. Sat., May 30. Assemble: 11 a.m. 125th Street and Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. For more info: www.freeoscarnycmay30.org.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help make this column a voice of workers' resistance!

This column is dedicated to spreading the truth about the labor resistance that is unfolding today. It seeks to give voice to those engaged in battle and help build solidarity. Its success depends on input from readers. If you are involved in a labor struggle or have information on one, please contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

—Maggie Trowe



Militant

Amid rolling one-day strikes, some 4,000 members of the Washington Education Association and supporters rallied in front of Washington state Capitol in Olympia April 25 to protest failure of state legislature to fund smaller class size mandated by 2014 ballot initiative.

Washington state teachers protest lack of funding

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Some 4,000 teachers and supporters protested at the state Capitol here April 25. The rally, organized by the Washington Education Association, was backed by many unions.

The protest took place amid a series of statewide rolling one-day strikes involving some 3,000 teachers. More strikes are planned through mid-May.

The teachers are protesting the state senate vote to increase class sizes in grades 4 to 12, to mandate use of state test scores in teacher evaluations and to shortchange teachers' pay and benefits, which haven't increased in six years.

The unionists demand the legislature fund smaller class sizes in every grade level as required by state ballot initiative 1351, which was passed by a 51 percent majority last fall. Some 12,000 additional teachers would have to be hired to bring the state's pupil-to-classroom-teacher ratio to the national average.

The Washington legislature is under state Supreme Court order to increase public school funding by 2019.

"I would like kids to get the support they need in order to be successful," Kimberly Rodriguez, a teacher in the North Shore District, told the *Militant*. "For this we need more support in the classroom, more funding, more teachers' assistants and smaller class sizes."

"It hurts me when I see I can only do so much and kids are being left behind. We can't let that happen," said Maynard Garritty, a teacher in Redmond. "It is time to hold the legislators' feet to the fire. They give huge tax breaks to corporations and undermine kids' future."

—Edward Foote

Port truck drivers return to work after five-day strike

LOS ANGELES — Port drivers here fighting for Teamster union representation and classification as employees, not owner-operators, ended a five-day strike May 2.

Picket lines were organized at four

trucking yards — Pacific 9 Transportation, Intermodal Bridge Transport, Pacer Cartage and Harbor Rail Transport.

Mobile picket squads out of Teamsters Local 848's hall in Long Beach went to several other sites in the port as well. To avoid having other traffic interrupted, most port terminals did not accept trucks from the four struck companies. Picketing continued at those that did until they agreed not to accept these trucks.

Members of the United Nurses Association joined the picket line April 30.

This was the sixth strike organized by port truck drivers in Los Angeles over the last 20 months. The truckers demand to be paid as employees. As "business owners" they are paid by the load with no compensation for waiting time and are responsible for costs of fuel, parking, insurance and maintenance, which sometimes results in negative "pay."

"Bosses make the federal government think we are owner-operators, but the

Construction deaths highlight need for unions

Continued from front page

around the country organized for the thousands killed and millions injured or sickened on the job over the past year, victims of the bosses' relentless drive for speedup and profit and against the unions.

One of the latest casualties in New York was Trevor Loftus, 40, who died at a midtown Manhattan hotel construction site April 24.

The number of Latino workers killed on the job is rising, a 2015 AFL-CIO report titled "Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect" says.

In New York City, 74 percent of fatal falls among construction workers were Latino or immigrant workers, the Center for Popular Democracy reported in September 2013. Of these, 86 percent were working for a nonunion boss.

Federal and state government agencies tasked with monitoring mine, mill and factory bosses' compliance with safety regulations are notoriously inef-

Striking oil workers rally at Marathon HQ in Ohio



Militant/Josefina Otero

FINDLAY, Ohio — Chanting "No contract, no peace," some 50 workers, including striking oil refinery workers, other members of the United Steelworkers and supporters, rallied at the Marathon Oil headquarters here April 29 as company shareholders met. Tony Morgan, a committee member of USW Local 13-1 on strike against Marathon in Texas City, Texas, and Chad Culbertson, president of Local 1-346 that is striking the BP-Husky refinery in Toledo, Ohio, were among several unionists attending the meeting to present the strikers' side.

Mike French, unit chair of Steelworkers Local 2324, was at the rally. His local was locked out April 16 by AP Green Refractories near Oak Hill, Ohio, when the union would not accept new hires getting \$12 an hour and no benefits.

Two carloads of USW Local 979 members who work at ArcelorMittal in Cleveland came to the rally. Their contract expires Sept. 1.

"I have never been so proud of being a Steelworker, as I am today," Culbertson told the crowd. "We will not allow them to stand on the backs of our members."

"When we were locked out, other unions came and helped us, so now we're supporting them," said Trevor Barrientos, a Steelworker at Cooper Tire here, where the union fought a three-month lockout in 2011-12.

Steelworkers from AK Steel in Mansfield, Ohio, also attended.

A tentative agreement was reached between USW Local 7-1 in Whiting, Indiana, and BP April 29. If the contract conforms to the national pattern oil bargaining agreement approved by Steelworkers on March 12, it will be sent back to USW Local 7-1 for a vote. Picket lines remain up.

— JOSEFINA OTERO AND ALYSON KENNEDY

Josefina Otero is a member of USW Local 7139-05 in Washington, Pennsylvania

truck is IBT [Intermodal Bridge Transport], the insurance is IBT, the cargo and permit is theirs," said driver José Antonio Portillo.

"The customer pays the company \$45 an hour for waiting time. Of that we get \$20 an hour," added driver Jerry Johnson.

"The company receives money for diesel from the customer but only pays the driver a percentage," said Portillo.

A solidarity picket and rally of 150 port truckers and supporters was held at

an entrance to a Union Pacific rail yard here April 29. Teamsters, sanitation workers and others took part.

"I used to work at Walmart," Venanzi Luna told the rally. "On April 13 Walmart shut the Pico Rivera store and fired 530 associates. They say it was plumbing. Our store is very active" in the fight for \$15 and a union. "We know it's retaliation. We are always going to stand strong no matter what they do. OUR Walmart workers are with you."

—Deborah Liatos

Protests erupt after police beat Ethiopian Jew in Israel

BY SETH GALINSKY

Outraged at the police beating of Damas Pakada, an Ethiopian Jewish soldier in his Israeli army uniform, thousands took to the streets in Israel. Demonstrators carried signs in Hebrew that said “Black Lives Matter” and chanted, “Violent cops should be in jail.”

Both Haredim — ultraorthodox Jews — and Arab onlookers expressed sympathy with the Ethiopians during the first protest, which blocked roads and a light rail line in Jerusalem April 30, the *Jerusalem Post* reported.

“There is systematic, institutionalized racism in Israel,” Efrat Yerday told the *Militant* by phone from Beersheva May 4, “and we won’t take it anymore.” She is a graduate student at Ben-Gurion University and a spokesperson for the Israel Association of Ethiopian Jews.

Some 120,000 black Ethiopian Jews live in Israel, just 1.5 percent of the population. Although they are citizens, they face widespread discrimination in housing and employment, and racist treatment by the cops.

After he was beaten, Pakada was arrested and accused of attacking the police. But a nearby apartment building security video posted online later that day showed the cops beating Pakada without any provocation.

“We don’t trust the authorities and especially the police because they are very easy with violence,” Yerday said.

Police attacked a protest of thousands in Tel Aviv May 3, firing water cannon, stun grenades and tear gas and arresting 26 protesters. Some 50 people were injured, including 23 cops, as protesters fought back.

“Many Israeli people came to give solidarity at the demonstration,” Yerday said. “At the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jewish students showed up wearing black shirts,” in support.

Ayman Odeh, chairman of the mostly Arab Joint List, which is the third largest bloc in the Knesset, Israel’s parliament, marched in the Tel Aviv protest May 3. “I promise to stand and struggle by their side until there is a more equal and just society here, in which there is no difference between black and white, man and woman, Jew and Arab,” he said.

As the outrage mounted, Prime Min-

ister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Pakada May 4, telling him he “was shocked by the image” in the video.

At the same meeting, Police Insp. Gen. Yohanan Danino said he had fired a cop who beat Pakada. “Usually this is a long process,” he said, apologizing to Pakada, “but in this case, we took action immediately.”

People in Israel have been closely following the fight against the police killing of Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Yerday noted. “It’s the same fight, the same thing, the way they treat black people here.”

‘Open UK borders to immigrants from Africa, Mideast’

BY PAMELA HOLMES

LONDON — “The labor movement must fight to open the U.K.’s borders to immigrants fleeing Africa and the Middle East,” Jonathan Silberman, Communist League parliamentary candidate for Hackney North and Stoke Newington, told those at a candidates’ debate here April 26, organized by the *Hackney Citizen* newspaper. The election is set for May 7. “This is a life-and-death question for the working class, part of a class-struggle course of organizing all workers, native- and foreign-born.”

The candidates had been asked what should be done about the growing number of immigrants trying to get to Europe from North Africa and the Middle East and the April 19 drowning of more than 700 in the Mediterranean Sea.

Conservative candidate Amy Gray blamed “people traffickers” for the deaths. “The Conservative government is still putting 0.7 percent of GDP into aid to improve conditions there,” she said. “It’s used Britain’s military power to stabilize the region and is sending a well-equipped battleship.”

“For every £1 of aid, £10 are taken out of the Third World,” said Liberal Democrat Simon de Deney. “We have a moral responsibility as a richer country to do something to help.”

“We should help genuine refugees but not economic migrants,” said Keith Fraser of U.K. Independence Party. Green Party candidate Heather Finlay said her party favored renewed search-and-res-



Keren Manor

Thousands protest in Tel Aviv May 3 following cop beating of Ethiopian Jewish soldier. Demonstrators said “Black Lives Matter,” comparing their fight to protests in Baltimore.

cue operations in the Mediterranean and “controlled immigration.”

“To say that ‘something must be done’ is not an answer, and who is this ‘we’ in the U.K.?” Silberman asked. “The British rulers have historical responsibility for conditions in Africa and the Middle East — through colonialism and slavery, imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation. The government’s military interventions in the region, including the murderous 2011 bombing of Libya supported by the opposition Labour Party, also contributed.”

“Workers have to see the immigrants as part of ‘us,’” he said. “And the ‘they’ are the propertied rulers and their governments who have created this crisis.”

Labour Party candidate Diane Abbott said she had spoken in the House of Commons against the government’s refusal last October to support Mare Nostrum, a European search-and-rescue operation in the Mediterranean. She said the effect was to “let them drown.”

The bombing of Libya “was an ill-thought-out intervention in another country,” she said. Abbott, a member of the left-wing Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs, didn’t mention she had voted in favor of the bombing.

Nationally the Labour Party has introduced a 10-point program, vying with the Conservatives to further reduce immigration and restrict the rights of immigrant workers. Their plan calls for increasing the border patrol and barring

immigrant workers from social benefits for at least two years.

Four candidate debates in the district have drawn some 500 people. The other three were hosted by the Keep Our NHS Public (National Health Service) campaign, St. Mary’s Church and the Petchey Academy high school.

The *Hackney Gazette*, a local weekly paper, organized an online debate and reported, “Mr. Silberman, 63, promises to ‘champion the struggles of workers and farmers resisting the bosses’ attacks on wages and conditions, or battling racism, police brutality, national oppression or assaults on women’s rights and other indignities.’”

People attending the debates raised a range of questions — asking what could be done about the erosion of living standards and job security, the social crisis working people face today and political instability and war in many parts of the world, as well as the decline of education, housing, the National Health Service and the environment.

Silberman soapboxed on High Street, attracting interest and one instance of anti-Jewish harassment. Some workers said they were interested in the demand to open the borders.

“I mentioned that my family, who were Jewish, were only able to get into England from Germany in 1933 because by chance my grandfather had a British passport,” Silberman said, referring to the way the rulers in both the U.S. and the U.K. resisted opening their borders.

1938 fight: Open US doors to Jewish refugees

BY NAOMI CRAINE

“Open the Doors!” declared the editorial in the Oct. 29, 1938, issue of *Socialist Appeal*, a predecessor to the *Militant*. As the Nazi violence against Jews in Europe intensified, the paper publicized the efforts of militants of the Socialist Workers Party to initiate and advance actions to demand Washington allow refuge to those fleeing the impending Holocaust. This effort is described in the Pathfinder pamphlet *Socialists and the Fight Against Anti-Semitism*.

Repression and assaults against Jews had been mounting in Germany and beyond. Prison camps were established and by the end of 1933 estimates were some 80,000 were held in 65 German camps.

After the German invasion of Austria

in 1938, Secretary of State Cordell Hull urged U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt to “get out in front and attempt to guide the pressure, primarily with a view toward forestalling attempts to have the immigration laws liberalized.” Roosevelt announced an international conference to aid refugees, boasting that the U.S. was a haven for the oppressed. But, he said, Washington would not raise its immigration quota, nor did it ask any other government to do so.

Instead, the conference would focus on raising “assistance” funds. A year later, the fund’s bank account stood at just \$9,672.

In contrast, leaders of the Socialist Workers Party in June 1938 helped organize the American Fund for Political Prisoners and Refugees. It not only raised relief funds for those fleeing

Europe, but carried out meetings, educational work in the unions and public protests to demand the government open the doors to all refugees.

After the November 1938 anti-Jewish *Kristallnacht* pogrom in Germany, the *Socialist Appeal* carried a front-page statement by the National Committee of the SWP. “The American working class means it seriously when it says that it detests Anti-Semitism,” it said. “Show the victims of the Fascist terror that you mean it seriously, by stretching out to them the hands of fraternal solidarity, by demanding of the American government the free and unrestricted right of asylum for the Jewish scapegoats of Fascist barbarism!”

Today, the call to “open the borders” is once again part of the fight for international working-class solidarity.

For further reading ...

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A million march May 1 in Havana for socialism

BY JACOB PERASSO
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA — In a massive show of support for Cuba's socialist revolution, more than 1 million working people marched here May 1, International Workers Day. Hundreds of thousands more joined actions in other cities and towns across the country.

Marching at the head of the Havana demonstration were the five revolutionaries — popularly known here as the Five Heroes and around the world as the Cuban Five — three of whom spent more than 16 years in U.S. prisons for their actions in defense of the Cuban Revolution. The victory registered by the dramatic release on Dec. 17 of Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and Antonio Guerrero was visible in the celebratory mood of the marchers. The three joined Fernando González and René González, who served their entire sentences and returned to Cuba a short time before.

In proud recognition of the thousands of Cuban internationalist medical volunteers serving in countries around the world, the lead contingent was made up of some 50,000 health care workers, including 100 who recently returned from West Africa after more than six months there fighting the deadly Ebola epidemic.

Two days later, a brigade of medical volunteers left Havana for Nepal to provide care for survivors of the earthquake that has devastated that Asian nation.

"United in the building of socialism" is the theme of this celebration, Ulises Guilarte de Nacimiento, general sec-



The Cuban Five (with family members) and Orlando Cardoso Villavicencio, all Heroes of the Republic of Cuba, head 2015 May Day march in Havana. Top, banner reads, "United in the building of socialism."

retary of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), told the throng. "It captures our determination and our hopes, present and future; the strength of a working class in power, whose platform of united class action raises the banners of safeguarding peace, of solidarity and of brotherhood among peoples."

Amid chanting, singing and dancing, wave after wave of workers marched across the Plaza of the Revolution with colorful banners identifying their unions and workplaces and a multitude of handmade signs. A light rainfall only fueled the festive militancy of the crowd. Numerous workers remarked to *Militant* reporters that the march was noticeably more spirited than in recent years.

The Five Heroes and family members joined Cuban President Raúl Castro and the guest of honor, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, on the reviewing stand.

Referring to the recently initiated discussions between the Cuban and U.S. governments on re-establishing diplomatic ties, Guilarte emphasized, "We will only advance toward normalization of bilateral relations on the basis

of respect for the sovereignty and independence of Cuba, which includes the lifting of the [economic] blockade and the return of the territory occupied by

the Guantánamo Naval Base."

He reiterated unequivocally the solidarity of the Cuban government and people with the government of Venezuela. "We firmly reject all foreign interference as well as actions of destabilization, violence and economic war that violate the constitutional order, sovereignty, independence and self-determination of the Venezuelan people, he said.

Some 2,000 guests from around the world participated in this year's May Day activities in Cuba, which included the march and an international solidarity conference the following day.

Forum in central Nebraska discusses Cuban Revolution

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

GRAND ISLAND, Neb. — "My interest in Cuba goes back to the 1980s. On a visit to Nicaragua I saw a big effort to help get people back on the land, and I saw Cuba helping, especially with free health care provided by their medical volunteers," Ron Todd-Meyer, president of the board of directors of Nebraskans for Peace said at an April 26 forum here. "Then I returned here to find that so many farmers were being forced off their land by bank foreclosures."

"As a recently retired farmer, I look at farmers in Nebraska raising crops of corn and soybeans that people in the world can't afford to buy and I think something is wrong," he said.

The forum, whose theme was "What Will Changes with Cuba Mean for U.S.-Cuba Relations?" was organized by Central Nebraska Peace Workers, a chapter of Nebraskans for Peace. Two dozen people attended.

Brian Whitecalf, organizer of Peace Workers, introduced the panel of Todd-Meyer; Hendrik van den Berg, professor of economics at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and former U.S. Embassy employee in Latin America; Rebecca Williamson, chair of the Omaha Socialist Workers Party, who attended the Havana International Book Fair in February; and Jackson Meredith, of the Black Cat House, who helped organize several protests in Lincoln this year against police brutality and for a woman's right to choose abortion.

"Cuba has doctors in 68 different countries. They're not there for money, but to help people in need," Meredith said. He condemned the economic em-

bargo of Cuba, saying the U.S. "doesn't just prevent U.S. trade, they also block other countries from trading with Cuba. They have been trying to punish the Cubans for their actions independent of the U.S. for the past 55 years."

In answer to a question suggesting that Washington's Cuba policies bent to "vocal anti-Cuban forces in Miami," Van den Berg said, "I think it is more accurate to say that the U.S. government acts throughout Latin America to promote the interests of big business. In Cuba they haven't been able to do that since 1959. So they try to use the people who were rich landowners and businesspeople in Cuba, who left for Florida, to help them speak and act against Cuba. But we should be clear about who is using whom."

"There's more interest in the Cuban Revolution today," said Williamson, "because more working people here are standing up and demanding dignity, a living wage and a safe workplace. Just look at the actions of fast-food and other workers across the country this month. Look at the actions of working people in city after city from all kinds of backgrounds against police brutality and killings."

"As the movement broadens," she said, "and workers and farmers get more confidence from organizing for their rights, they want to learn about how Cuban workers and farmers made a revolution and began to build their society based on human solidarity."

At the end of the meeting Whitecalf encouraged people to join in a rally May 5 here to demand driver's licenses for immigrants.



Many workers and youth who marched on May 1 in Havana carried homemade signs.

How the FBI targeted SWP, Black struggle for disruption

Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom by Nelson Blackstock is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. It provides details on the disruption program carried out by Washington's political police for decades against the workers movement, fighters for Black rights and others. Much of what is known about this covert and illegal program was forced to light through a successful lawsuit brought by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance against FBI spying, harassment and disruption. The excerpt below is from the chapter "A special hatred for Blacks." Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Clifton DeBerry, 1964 SWP presidential candidate (left), and Malcolm X, at January 1965 Militant Labor Forum in New York, were among the targets of FBI Cointelpro disruption.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY NELSON BLACKSTOCK

If you had picked up a copy of the *Militant* in late July 1961, you would have noticed that two of the six pages in the paper were devoted to the Socialist Workers party candidates in the upcoming New York City elections. The official trade-union movement was deep in the morass of Democratic party politics, where it remains today, and the SWP was offering the voters of New York an alternative. Four working-class candidates were running for the top positions.

The candidate for Manhattan borough president was a Black man named Clarence Franklin. "I live in a one-and-a-half-room apartment in a crowded tenement in Manhattan and I have to pay 40 percent of my total monthly wage for rent," Franklin wrote in the *Militant*. He offered a socialist solution to New York's housing problem.

At the New York FBI office there were people who pored over that issue of the *Militant* with unusual care. J. Edgar Hoover had recently sent out special instructions for FBI agents to be alert for possible Cointelpro operations, and someone in the New York office spotted the opportunity for a vicious attack against both the Black movement and the SWP.

The vast FBI arrest files told them that Clarence Franklin had some years earlier acquired a criminal record. That fact is not very unusual; many Black workers in this society find themselves in trouble with the law. But the agents in charge of Cointelpro thought they could use his record to embarrass him and the SWP and to drive a Black activist out of politics.

One of the things that come through clearest in the Cointelpro papers is that the FBI reserved a special hatred for the Black civil rights movement, and Black members of the SWP were singled out for special attention.

Cointelpro files document a pattern

of systematic sabotage directed at the Black movement that makes the Watergate break-in and Donald Segretti's dirty tricks against the Democrats look like college pranks. Segretti and other Watergaters have been sent to jail, but the conspirators responsible for Cointelpro have yet to be charged with breaking any law.

Clarence Franklin was born into a family of Mississippi sharecroppers in 1932. When he was ten years old he moved to New York, where his mother went to work as a housecleaner. When he was fourteen he got a job setting pins in a bowling alley. Through the years Franklin found work as a dishwasher, porter, and construction laborer. Along the way he picked up an arrest record.

One might assume that a law enforcement agency such as the FBI would have noted with satisfaction that Franklin had not been charged with violating any law in several years and was currently engaged in perfectly legal activity—running for public office.

However, the FBI had different concerns. "Careful consideration has been given to the fact that the SWP in New York City is now getting some propaganda attention through the press, television and radio because it has succeeded in placing on the ballot four candidates for office in the New York City fall elections," the FBI wrote.

In a subsequent memorandum not printed here, the FBI elaborated. "The SWP has met with little or no opposition in carrying forth its aims and purposes and in securing positions on the ballot for its candidates. It is felt that some disruptive action should be taken. . . ."

The FBI evidently used one of its numerous agents in the news media—this one at the *Daily News*—to break the "story." The *News* published a story on Franklin's arrest record on election day. It is worth noting that the rules of fair play between Democratic and Republican politicians brand as "unfair campaign practices" eleventh-hour charges that are impossible to answer before the voters go to the polling place. This, of course, did not stop the FBI. . . .

Sabotaging a civil rights case

The next set of documents concerns a 1964 FBI plot. The aim was to sabotage the defense of a group of civil rights workers facing prison in Monroe, North Carolina.

These FBI papers accord SWP leader George Weissman the dubious distinction of being the first publicly known subject of an FBI poem. The poet tried to frame Weissman on charges of stealing money from the Monroe home of Dr. A.E. Perry, head of the Committee to Aid the Monroe Defendants (CAMD) and vice-president of the Monroe NAACP.

The poem, along with a clipping from a North Carolina newspaper showing that Weissman had been in Perry's house at the time of a robbery, was sent to a carefully selected FBI mailing list.

In 1964 George Weissman was managing editor of the *Militant*. He had first visited Monroe in 1958 to report on the notorious "kissing case." Robert F. Williams, president of the Monroe NAACP, had received attention in the press by organizing armed defense guards, which put a stop to a series of Ku Klux Klan assaults on the Black community. . . .

In retaliation against the Black community, the local racist authorities charged two Black youths, eight and ten years old, with "assault upon a white female" for the crime of being kissed by a white playmate.

The two were tried and committed to a reformatory "possibly until they are twenty-one."

May BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Join the fight against police brutality!

We are reprinting here an updated editorial the Militant released after our last issue was published. We don't know where the next incident of police brutality will occur, only that it will, given the nature of capitalism and the role of the police the bosses deploy to defend their rule. Join us in this fight.

We join in celebrating the filing of criminal charges May 1 against six Baltimore policemen for the killing of Freddie Gray. We call on workers, farmers and youth to press for their vigorous prosecution.

Join the demonstrations in Baltimore. Help initiate actions where you live to protest this and other cop brutality.

Killings of African-Americans at the hands of police are nothing new. Black lives matter! What is new is the growing refusal of working people — Black, Caucasian, Latino, all of us — to accept these moral outrages without a fight.

Political representatives of the capitalist rulers — Democrats, Republicans and “independents” who trail after them — aim to divide and weaken our struggles and corral us into bourgeois politics. Obama scolds us to fight the “right way” and smears workers as “thugs” and “criminals.” So does Baltimore’s mayor, labeling protesters “outside agitators” to boot.

Attorney General Loretta Lynch says the explo-

sion in Baltimore was “a shattering of the peace.” But there is no peace anywhere cops kill and brutalize workers with impunity.

The way to stay the hands of killer cops is to build a powerful, disciplined working-class social movement. As we do, we will transform ourselves, recognizing through struggle our own worth, our own dignity. We’ll gain confidence together.

More and more working people will see the need to break from the bosses’ parties and build a labor party based on the unions. A party to unite workers and our allies fighting cop brutality, for \$15 and a union and against capitalism’s wars and social catastrophes.

We can look to the example of the Cuban Revolution, where ordinary men and women, workers and farmers like us, took power out of the hands of the U.S.-backed capitalist rulers, changing themselves in struggle, and reorganized society based on human needs not profit.

Today the fight to keep the spotlight on the prosecution of those responsible for Freddie Gray’s death builds on battles against the killings of Walter Scott in South Carolina, Eric Garner in New York City and many more. The protests draw support from those demanding higher pay at McDonald’s and Walmart, from rail and oil workers fighting to impose safe conditions on the job and in surrounding communities.

Each new battle reinforces others. Join us!

Charges filed against cops in Baltimore

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over and they threw bottles at police and destroyed property in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood where Gray lived.

The rulers’ violence-baiting failed to suppress the outrage around Gray’s death. Sustained daily marches and protests took place here and spread to other cities.

The Maryland State Medical Examiner ruled that Gray’s death was a homicide.

On May 1 Mosby charged Officer Caesar Goodson Jr. with second-degree depraved heart murder, involuntary manslaughter, second-degree assault, manslaughter by vehicle and misconduct in office. Goodson drove the police van for 45 minutes with Gray handcuffed and shackled inside. Officer William Porter and Lt. Brian Rice were both charged with involuntary manslaughter, second-degree assault and misconduct in office. Rice, Officer Edward Nero and Officer Garrett Miller were charged with false imprisonment. Sgt. Alicia White was charged with manslaughter, second-degree assault and misconduct in office.

Three of the cops are Black and three are Caucasian.

Mosby concluded Gray was arrested illegally and that the accused officers repeatedly ignored his appeals for medical attention.

Sense of accomplishment

As word of the charges spread that day, a sense of accomplishment spread among working people in the city, punctuated by spontaneous celebrations.

“These charges are an important step in getting justice for Freddie,” Richard Shipley, Gray’s stepfather, told the *Baltimore Sun*.

Many also pointed out how the protests against Gray’s killing built on similar fights in Ferguson, Missouri; Staten Island, New York; and North Charleston, South Carolina. Cops across the country are now on notice that acts of brutality are likely to be seen and protested.

The mood continued May 2, when several thousand marched and rallied in front of City Hall. Some 500 more came out the following day. The crowd both days was in its majority African-American, but significant numbers of Caucasians, Latinos and Asians joined in.

“It touched me to see Black, white, Asian and Arabic people coming together for Freddie Gray and Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown and Eric Garner,” Jeff Wilson, 43, an African-American nurse, told the *Militant* at the May 2 rally. “I told my sons, we’re going to go and make a difference.” They carried signs reading,

“My life matters” and “All lives matter.” Wilson, who lives in Delaware, said several years ago a friend was shot in the chest and killed by police.

“I’ve been out here pretty much all week,” said Rodney Lewis, 60, a forklift driver on disability who is Caucasian. “I got one of the flyers and started coming.” Lewis said he gets stopped frequently for a burned-out taillight or minor vehicle code violations.

Many people expressed anger at the thug-baiting comments of the president and the mayor. “I’ll bet they’re sorry they said that,” Janice Grand, 81, of Aberdeen, Maryland, a veteran of the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery civil rights march, told the *Militant*. “Hung by the tongue, I would say.”

Many people used the victory to spur other fights against police brutality and frame-ups. Inez Blue, 59, a custodian, carried a picture calling attention to the case of her brother, Anthony Blue, who has been incarcerated since being convicted on murder charges in 1976 when he was 19 years old. He pled not guilty but was defended by a state-appointed lawyer.

Anthony Roebuck, 22, an African-American soldier, drove to the May 2 rally with others from Dayton, Ohio, where he is stationed. They publicized the case of John Crawford, a 22-year-old African-American killed by police in a Walmart in Beavercreek, Ohio, when he walked around with a toy pellet gun.

“I had my brief moment of joy,” said Breana Franklin, a private duty nurse and student. “But I refuse to be blinded by the politicians and their smokescreens. With racism, if you are part of the system, it doesn’t matter the color of your skin, you act the same.”

Speaking of the accused officers, Franklin said, “I believe they might get convicted, but it won’t be on the worst charges and not all of them.”

The cops, the Fraternal Order of Police and numerous politicians have already begun to organize a campaign against the prosecution, claiming the “mood” against cops in the country is like a lynch mob. They seized on the shooting death of New York police officer Brian Moore May 2. “Our city is in mourning,” New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said May 4.

The curfew imposed by Rawlings-Blake was lifted May 3. The same day Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan ordered the National Guard to begin pulling out some 3,000 troops.

Nearly 500 people have been arrested since April 23 at demonstrations, rallies and other actions protesting Gray’s killing. The cops say they plan to track down and prosecute as many as possible.

Greek workers

Continued from front page

was launching a “quantitative easing” program, buying up mountains of debt in hopes of boosting economic activity.

Running on the slogan “Hope is coming,” Syriza promised to restore pensions, create jobs, stimulate the economy and renegotiate the onerous payments on the \$264 billion debt, which is greater than the country’s annual gross domestic product.

The new government got agreement from European capitalists Feb. 20 for a four-month grace period to work out a plan on debt repayment, and \$7.6 billion in funds contingent on more attacks on working people — cutting pensions and making it easier for employers to fire workers.

A meeting of eurozone finance ministers April 24 accused Athens of not driving those measures through and refused to release the funds. Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis responded that the government was a few weeks away from insolvency.

The condition of the working class in Greece is dire. Some 27 percent of the working-age population and more than half of Greek youth are out of work. About 45 percent of wage workers make less than \$817 per month — the minimum wage before it was cut 22 percent in 2012. And an estimated 1 million workers are paid with delays of up to five months, according to the labor ministry.

“The lower classes have been forced to foot the bill for the crisis, while the rich have gotten richer,” Panos Efthymakis, 31, who works in shipping at the port of Piraeus, told the *Militant* recently. “The bosses feel they can blackmail you, threaten you by pushing you around with the fear of unemployment.”

Many workers have hopes in Syriza. Georgia Oikonomou, one of 595 janitors fired by the finance ministry in 2013, has been participating in a tent encampment protesting the firing for nearly a year.

“The minister of labor was here the other day, and he said it wouldn’t be long before Parliament passes a bill concerning our case,” she said. “However, we are staying right here until we are actually reinstated. Nearly all of us are women in our 50s. It’s impossible to find another job.”

European and U.S. finance capitalists are now debating whether the eurozone governments and institutions holding Greek sovereign debt should take another “haircut” — write down outstanding Greek loans, as they did once before in 2012 — to give the capitalist government in Athens some time to implement further cuts.

Tsipras warned April 28 that he might hold a referendum by Greek voters if creditors don’t back off from insisting on a “vicious circle of austerity.”

The government has difficulty paying pensions and public sector salaries, and on April 18 ordered 1,500 state institutions — including municipalities, hospitals and universities — to transfer their cash reserves to the central bank in short-term “repurchase agreements.”

Natasha Terlexi and Georges Mehrabian in Athens, Greece, contributed to this article.

Pa. gag law overturned

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“Mumia needs his own doctors to examine and physically touch him,” said Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal in a May 4 phone interview from Philadelphia. “Now his doctors can only talk to him by phone. It’s impossible for them to evaluate the situation and find out what is really going on with him.”

“We are fighting to keep the pressure on so his doctors can examine him,” she said.

To join in demanding Abu-Jamal be allowed to get needed medical attention from his own doctors, call Secretary John Wetzel at the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections at (717) 728-2573.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.