

‘Militant’: Fighting tool for working class today

BY EMMA JOHNSON

As labor battles and social protests spread today the *Militant* is an irreplaceable tool, both as a voice for getting the truth out about our struggles and a place to discuss how best to build the revolutionary working-class movement.

What causes police brutality — is it a few “rotten apples” or an integral part of capitalist rule? How can we unify the working class and rebuild our unions into fighting instruments? These are critical questions for workers. This is why we’re getting a broad response among working people to

Continued on page 3

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April 11 - June 2 (week 2)

Country	quota	sold	%
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Houston	10	4	40%
New York	175	69	39%
Washington	100	37	37%
Brooklyn	180	62	34%
Oakland*	180	60	33%
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Philadelphia	115	27	23%
Boston	63	14	22%
Atlanta	150	27	18%
Miami	45	6	13%
Total U.S.	1654	572	35%
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Manchester	100	40	40%
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Montreal	75	14	19%
Canada Total	125	35	28%
AUSTRALIA	70	16	23%
NEW ZEALAND	60	15	25%
Total	2129	727	36%
Should be	2000	571	29%

*Raised goal

After refugees drown, rally in UK says ‘Open the borders!’

BY PETE CLIFFORD

MANCHESTER, England — “With the war and devastation in Syria you have to choose between life or death, what would you do here if you faced this situation?” said Haytham Alhamwi, a refugee from Syria, speaking at a 50-person protest here April 25 that called for opening U.K. and European Union borders. The action was initiated by the Communist League after the April 19 drowning of up to 750 immigrants trying to get refuge in Europe on a boat from Libya.

“With nearly 2,000 drowned since the start of the year there is only one answer that can both provide a safe haven and end the succession of deaths at sea,” said a statement building the action by Paul Davies, Communist League parliamentary candidate for Manchester Central in the May 7 elections. “I call for the U.K. and EU to open their borders.”

The majority of the 35,000 who are estimated to have made the attempt are Syrians, fleeing the bombs and

Continued on page 9

Social disaster in Nepal magnified by history of capitalist exploitation

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The massive earthquake that struck Nepal April 25 with its rising toll of deaths, injuries and devastation was a social disaster magnified by a legacy of capitalist exploitation and neglect in one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Toilers in the capital Kathmandu and surrounding areas have been hard hit, and no aid had been delivered yet to most of the rural areas closest to the epicenter several days after the disaster struck.

“No one from the government has come to offer us even a glass of water,” Sarga Dhaubadel, a student outside Kathmandu, told Reuters. “Nobody has come to even check our health. We are totally on our own here.”

Nepal sits on some 92 different active fault lines and geologists had warned new quakes were likely. Little

Join in on May Day!

Support struggles for
wages, unions, against cop
brutality, deportations

For more info on May 1 actions
in your area contact *Militant*
supporters listed on page 8.

Join protests against cop killing of Freddie Gray!

Social movement against police violence grows



Militant/Seth Galinsky

Members of health care workers union 1199SEIU join April 23 rally outside Baltimore City Hall demanding prosecution of cops responsible for the death of Freddie Gray.

BY SETH GALINSKY

BALTIMORE — The killing of Freddie Gray — and the cops’ claim they didn’t use violence against him while in police custody — has provoked outrage here and around the country. Thousands have taken to the

streets in this city day after day to demand the cops responsible be prosecuted. They have gotten growing solidarity from actions in New York; Boston; Minneapolis; Washington, D.C.; Ferguson, Missouri; and other cities.

After some protesters and youth ex-

JOIN BALTIMORE PROTESTS!
— Editorial, page 9

ploded in anger April 27 over Gray’s death and years of police harassment and abuse, throwing bottles at cops and trashing property, Gov. Larry Hogan declared a state of emergency and called in 2,000 National Guard troops. Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake imposed a weeklong nighttime curfew. More than 1,000 additional cops have been sent from New Jersey and Pennsylvania to join Baltimore’s 3,000-strong force.

Government officials — from Pres-
Continued on page 4

Ukraine miners march for jobs, pay — met with gov’t slanders

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Some 3,000 miners from across Ukraine rallied in Kiev April 22 at the conclusion of a two-day national congress to organize a broader fight to defend their jobs, livelihoods and the sovereignty of Ukraine, in face of an economic crisis and government “reforms” that are devastating for working people.

The government’s response was to slander the miners, claiming their actions are orchestrated by mine owner

Continued on page 9

Inside

LA port truckers strike,
demand union recognition 4

Tour demands truth about 43
disappeared Mexican students 6

Why winning higher wages
doesn’t cause prices to rise 8

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Washington state farmworkers
win solidarity in US, Mexico

New Zealand fast-food workers
push back ‘zero-hour’ contracts

Protests halt sale of WWII art by jailed Japanese Americans

BY PATTI Iiyama

Confronted with outraged protests by Japanese Americans, the Rago Arts and Auction Center April 15 canceled the sale of 450 photos, artworks and mementos produced in the concentration camps where Japanese Americans were held by the U.S. government during World War II.

Three months after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941, 120,000 men, women and children were rounded up from the West Coast. They were incarcerated behind barbed wire in 10 concentration camps in remote deserts and swamps. Two-thirds of those held illegally without trial were citizens of the United States. Their sole crime was their Japanese ancestry.

These artifacts represent the spirit and determination of a people asserting their humanity in the face of barbed wire and soldiers in guard towers with machine guns. They were given, not sold, to historian Allen Eaton while he was researching what became *Beauty Behind Barbed Wire: The Arts of the Japanese in Our War Relocation Camps*, published in 1952. Eaton told the incarcerated Japanese Americans he intended to exhibit the art to publicize the injustice of the camps.

Japanese Americans on the West Coast had been given 72-hours notice to dispose of their property; they could pack only what they could carry in two bags per person. They lost their farms and crops, fishing boats, small businesses, homes and personal possessions. Released after the war, many

found their livelihoods gone and their lives shattered.

After Eaton and his wife died, the collection ended up in the hands of John Ryan, whose father had done contracting work for Eaton. In the midst of the fight against the auction, Ryan revealed his identity, saying he needed the money “because a family member in financial difficulty needed help,” the *New York Times* reported April 17.

“It is a betrayal of those imprisoned people who thought their gifts would be used to educate, not be sold to the highest bidder in a national auction, pitting families against museums against private collectors,” Satsuki Ina wrote in the online petition against the auction,

Rago Art and Ryan were intransigent: the auction would take place as scheduled.

The auction touched a raw nerve in the Japanese American community. Thousands of Japanese Americans and their supporters posted their opposition to the auction on social media. The online petition garnered 7,500 signatures in five days.

“We are outraged by someone profiting off of our suffering,” Nancy Ukai Russell, an initial organizer of the protests, told the *Militant*. “This sale is commodifying a people’s history.”

The impact of the protests against the auction was reinforced by widespread coverage in the *Times*, an Associated Press release that circulated widely and in other media.

Art by those unjustly interned given to Cuban museum



Militant

HAVANA — Members of Tsukimi Kai, a group of primarily Japanese Americans visiting Cuba as part of a two-week exchange with Cubans of Japanese descent, donated two books featuring artwork produced by Japanese Americans incarcerated in internment camps by the U.S. government during World War II. The books were presented to Moraima Clavijo Colom (center, holding books), director of the National Museum of Fine Arts here. The April 1 presentation honored an exhibit of prison paintings on display at the museum by Antonio Guererro, one of the Cuban Five who recently returned to Cuba after more than 16 years in U.S. prisons.

The two books were *Topaz Moon*, featuring the work of renowned artist Chiura Obata while imprisoned in the Topaz, Utah, concentration camp, and *The Art of Gaman*, by Delphine Hirasuna. Both included signed dedications by the authors saluting the Cuban Five. Kimi Kodani Hill, granddaughter of Obata and author of *Topaz Moon*, wrote, “In honor of the Cuban 5: The power of creativity vs. confinement remains steadfast. Thank you for your beautiful art.”

Director Colom asked the meaning of “gaman.” Tour presenter Patti Iiyama (kneeling, at left) said it means enduring hardship with patience and dignity. “Nothing could be more appropriate for art produced by those unjustly imprisoned,” said Colom.

— JERRY FREIWIRTH

At least three chapters of the Japanese American Citizens League planned to come to New Jersey to demonstrate outside the auction, along with a number of church groups. Several *taiko* drum groups volunteered to play. A New Jersey Islamic group asked to participate.

The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, which runs a center at the site of one of the concentration camps, made an offer of \$50,000 to buy and display the entire collection, almost double Rago’s estimate of the collection’s worth. The offer was refused.

After the cancellation of the auc-

tion, Ryan brushed aside the wishes of the Japanese American protesters. He announced that he and his family would try to find a home of their choosing for the collection.

“These irreplaceable works represent the struggles and indomitable spirit of our community against a great injustice,” George Takai, known for his portrayal of Sulu on Star Trek, wrote on Facebook. The protesters had enlisted his help to try and mediate the dispute. “They are shining symbols from a dark time — a chapter that we must never repeat, and never forget. Now, we can ensure that these pieces are not lost to history.”

THE MILITANT

Halt deportations of immigrant workers!

From California to Texas inmates in immigration jails have conducted hunger strikes against abusive treatment and deportations. The ‘Militant’ covers these fights, explaining how they are in the interest of all working people and key to unifying labor against bosses’ assaults.



Protest March 31 backs women with children jailed at Texas detention center.

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The Militant

Vol. 79/No. 17

Closing news date: April 29, 2015

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Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in August and one week in September.

Business manager: Lea Sherman
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Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

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Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$55 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland 1140, New Zealand.

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‘Militant’: A tool for workers

Continued from front page
the *Militant’s* seven-week international campaign to win 2,000 new and renewing subscribers along with raising \$115,000 for the Militant Fighting Fund by June 2.

And why many take advantage of the offer to buy any Pathfinder book or *New International* at half price with their subscription.

“The *Militant* has been with us from the very beginning and it has reported the truth about our fight,” Familias Unidas President Ramón Torres told participants at one of two events supporting the farmworkers fight for a contract at Sakuma Brothers Farms in Burlington, Washington.

On April 25, supporters from Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and New York traveled to Baltimore to join in protests against the cop killing of Freddie Gray. During the day they signed up 10 new readers participating in the actions and going door to door.

Workers at the April 24 afternoon shift change at the Ford plant gate in Chicago were interested in the paper’s coverage of labor and social struggles. United Auto Workers members’ contracts at General Motors, Ford and Chrysler expire in September. Six signed up for sub-

scriptions and 21 bought single copies. On April 25 supporters from Atlanta took the *Militant* door to door in Douglasville, Georgia, a city of 30,000 people 20 miles west of Atlanta. Three days earlier a hydrogen sulfide leak at the Asphalt Refining and Technology Company there killed one worker and injured three. Seven people signed up for subscriptions and two bought copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

“We smell that gas a lot,” bakery worker Maggie Lightfoot, 28, told *Militant* supporters at her doorstep. “They shouldn’t have that refinery right where residents live.”

Exposure to high concentrations of hydrogen sulfide can quickly lead to death. The worker who died was sprayed in the face by the gas and died from asphyxiation after inhaling it.

Volunteers in Los Angeles and Oakland participated in the *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books April 18-19, selling 52 subscriptions. The new readers also picked up 86 books at half price. Another 36 books were sold at full price.

“Based on the tremendous response we have gotten so far, we raised our goals,” Bill Arth reported April 27. “Just today five strikers at the Port of Los An-



Arrin Hawkins
Maurice Carroll outside his house in West Baltimore, Maryland, April 25, tells Glova Scott, SWP candidate for D.C. City Council Ward 4, about experiences when cops jailed him in 2013.

geles and Long Beach signed up when we joined their picket line.”

New subscribers in Oakland gave nearly \$100 to the Militant Fighting Fund. A long-term subscriber in Wisconsin made a first-time contribution of \$100. A retired seaman in Australia who gets the *Militant* around to his friends sent in \$50. The fund helps make it possible for the *Militant* to offer the special introductory subscription of \$5 for 12 weeks to new readers.

On April 26 Michel Prairie and Philippe Tessier from Montreal drove 30 miles south to Mont-Saint-Grégoire, a town of 3,000, to visit Mario Giugovaz, 79, a working farmer originally from Croatia. He recently sent in a two-year renewal and asked if they could come out and get his contribution to the Militant Fighting Fund.

“When I was young I listened on shortwave radio to programs from Dakar, Senegal, and the United States,” he said. “I was struck by how the same facts would be explained differently according to the interests of each country. I like the *Militant’s* point of view.”

Giugovaz got five books, among them the French-language editions of *New International* nos. 12 and 13 and *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs.

Join in winning new readers to the socialist newsweekly and please send a generous contribution to the fund. Contact a distributor listed on page 8.

Social disaster in Nepal magnified by exploitation

Continued from front page
to reach many of these villages is on footpaths now blocked by landslides.

As of April 28 Nepal’s Ministry of Home Affairs confirmed more than 4,600 people dead and at least 9,200 injured. Over 400,000 houses have been destroyed or damaged. And these figures don’t include many more in unreachable rural areas. Only 13 helicopters are involved in rescue operations nationwide, reported the *Himalayan Times*.

The country’s prime minister the same day said the death toll could reach 10,000.

Aid from Washington and imperialist countries in Europe has been little and late. Secretary of State John Kerry said \$10 million is being provided, and a U.S. relief response team of just 70 people arrived April 27. The British government

made \$7.5 million available to charities, and the governments of Germany, France and Spain said they would offer some financial support soon.

The Chinese and Indian governments both sent search-and-rescue teams, but four Indian air force aircraft carrying aid supplies and personnel couldn’t land in Kathmandu April 27 because they said the airport was overwhelmed.

Poorly constructed buildings

In Kathmandu, many small poorly constructed brick apartment buildings for working people collapsed, while most modern structures were unaffected. “People have built buildings without pillars, without iron rods in the concrete and with very loose concrete,” Youraj Sharma, who works in the construction industry, told the *New York Times*.

Nepal has vast hydropower potential, but the electrical system is so inadequate that power was out up to 14 hours a day in the capital before the quake.

The country has been prone to earthquakes over the centuries, with significant tremblors striking about every 75 years. But little has been done in recent years to employ new technology to reduce their devastating impact.

Earthquake early-warning systems have been developed but are expensive to deploy and maintain. They’re in operation in just a few countries, including the U.S. and Japan.

“If Nepal had a seismic network,” Peggy Hellweg of the Berkeley Seismological Laboratory at the University of California told Reuters, “people in Kathmandu would probably have had 15 to 20 seconds warning.” That could have been enough to take cover under tables or escape collapsing buildings.

Nepal, with a population of 28 million, has nearly 50 percent unemployment and inflation of almost 10 percent. The country’s biggest source of income is remittances from workers abroad, amounting to as much as 25 percent of the country’s gross domestic product. Last year some 1,500 Nepalis a day left for jobs abroad, according to the government. More left unofficially over the border to India.

According to the Nepal Child Labor Report, about 1.6 million children are working in different industries despite the fact that child labor is illegal. Most are under the age of 14, the majority girls, reported the *Diplomat* magazine.

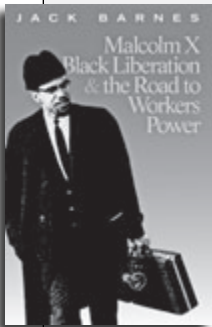
Workers in Nepal are resisting boss and government attacks. In January, for example, health trade unions conducted “relay hunger strikes” with demands that included overtime incentive, food, lodging and an increase in rural allowances, reported the *Himalayan Times*.

Some 5,000 doctors struck April 1 in solidarity with a doctor on a hunger strike demanding medical services for all citizens and affordable medical training, reported Al-Jazeera.

Militant Fighting Fund April 11- June 2 (Week 2)

Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
Twin Cities	\$3,600	\$1,870	52%
Philadelphia	\$3,200	\$900	28%
Atlanta	\$8,600	\$2,080	24%
Oakland	\$13,500	\$2,185	16%
Boston	\$3,750	\$600	16%
Brooklyn	\$10,000	\$1,483	15%
Nebraska	\$3,450	\$490	14%
Lincoln	\$150	\$50	33%
Omaha	\$3,300	\$440	13%
Chicago	\$10,000	\$1,365	14%
New York	\$10,000	\$957	10%
Seattle	\$8,600	\$680	8%
Los Angeles*	\$8,000	\$550	7%
Miami	\$2,000	\$0	0%
Washington	\$8,000	\$0	0%
Total U.S.	\$92,700	\$13,160	14%
CANADA			
Calgary	\$2,900	\$965	33%
Montreal	\$4,400	\$390	9%
Total Canada	\$7,300	\$1,355	19%
NEW ZEALAND	\$4,400	\$1,232	28%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	\$1,000	\$355	36%
Manchester	\$600	\$90	15%
Total U.K.	\$1,600	\$445	28%
AUSTRALIA	\$1,350	\$545	40%
Total	\$107,350	\$16,737	15%
Should be	\$115,000	\$32,857	29%
Raised goal *			

Book specials for subscribers



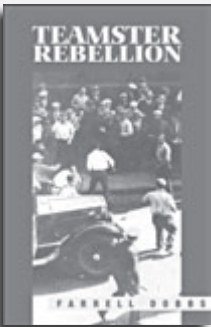
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Oil strike for safety continues against four holdout refineries

BY ANNE PARKER

TOLEDO, Ohio — “We are striking for safety and against the elimination and combination of jobs,” said Brandy Hoffman, a striking member of United Steelworkers Local 1-346 at the BP-Husky refinery here, while attending a spaghetti dinner fundraiser at the union hall April 26.

USW members at the Toledo refinery and the BP refinery in Whiting, Indiana, have been on strike since Feb. 8 and are holding strong.

Steelworkers at two refineries in Texas — LyondellBasell in Pasadena and Marathon’s Galveston Bay facility in Texas City — also remain on strike, after rejecting “last, best and final” contracts from bosses there. They have been out since Feb. 1.

Previously 7,000 oil workers had been on strike at 15 facilities. Most companies signed a pattern agreement negotiated with Shell Oil, but these four refinery bosses refused, pushing for cuts.

“I started out on one job and soon was working five different ones on rotation,” said Hoffman. “It takes a long time to learn one job. What if you don’t know which valve to turn if there is an abnormal situation?”

Hoffman said she initially supported

going to 12-hour shifts in 2010. “But had I known what it would lead to I would have voted it down.”

Bob Hicks, another member of Local 1-346, told the *Militant* at the dinner that the company’s fatigue policy says the boss only has to let you off two days within a 21-day period. “So they can work you 19 days straight, 12 to 16 hours a day. They force you to work. It happens all of the time.”

“There used to be 200 maintenance workers,” said Hicks, who has worked in maintenance for five years. “Today we are less than 70 USW members, the rest were replaced with contractors.”

In a letter to Local 1-346 members, the union said that the company proposes eliminating current maintenance positions and other jobs and giving management discretion on filling vacancies and changing jobs and assignments.

While walking the picket line, Matt Seedorf said his weekly picket shift will end soon. “I just got a temporary job planting test plots with corn and soybean seeds from Sandusky, Ohio, to South Bend, Indiana. I’ll be making less than half of what I used to make” at BP-Husky.

“The company wants more contractors,” he said. “We’re rebuilding hydrogen compressors, dangerous work that needs to be done by the same workers instead of different people every time.”

LA port truckers strike, demand union recognition



Militant

LOS ANGELES — Dozens of port truckers, members of the Teamsters union and others, picketed Intermodal Bridge Transport April 27. “We’re fighting because we’re misclassified as owner-operators instead of employees,” José Antonio Portillo told the *Militant* on the picket line. Portillo has worked as a truck driver there for seven years.

Picket lines were organized at four trucking yards — Intermodal Bridge Transport, Pacific 9 Transportation, Pacer Cartage and Harbor Rail Transport. This is the sixth strike organized by port truckers here in the last 18 months.

“I have 14 years with IBT,” Martín Rosales told the *Militant*. “We don’t have benefits or medical services. We pay diesel, insurance, lease. More than 10 percent of what we gross goes to truck insurance.” “We have tried to organize a union here but have never been able to,” he said. “If we don’t win we know they may fire us because they did it to drivers at TTSI.”

After a five-day strike last July Total Transportation Services Inc. fired 35 strikers. Workers struck there again in November.

But workers can win, Rosales said. Port truckers at Shippers Transport Express scored a victory Jan. 9 when the company agreed to recognize Teamsters Local 848, reclassifying its drivers as employees effective Jan. 1. “Shippers Transport is 100 percent union,” he said.

— DEBORAH LIATOS

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA Oakland

Who Killed Doctors Hospital? The Only Public Hospital that Served the Working People of Richmond, California. Fri., May 8, 7:30 p.m. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Is Obama’s Immigration Reform Executive Order a Step Forward for Working People? Speaker: Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 8, 7:30 p.m. 2018 S. Ashland Ave. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Working-Class Resistance Today and the Road to Workers Power: Fight for \$15 and a Union, Jail Cops Who Kill Working People! No Deportations! Speaker: John Naubert, Socialist Workers Party; others. Fri., May 8. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: Dinner \$7, program \$10. *Bethany United Church of Christ*, 6230 Beacon Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

CANADA

Calgary

North America: Growing Working-Class Resistance and Fight Against Cop Brutality. Speaker: Michel Dugré, Communist League. Fri., May 8, 7:30 p.m. 4909 17th Ave. SE. Tel.: (403) 457-9044.

Montreal

Open Canada’s Doors to the Refugees of the World Fleeing the Impact of World Capitalist Crisis. Speaker: Jim Stanton, Communist League. Fri., May 8, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St. Denis, Suite 204. Tel.: (514) 452-3750.

UNITED KINGDOM

London

What the General Elections Results Reveal About Politics in the U.K. Speaker: Jonathan Silberman, Communist League parliamentary candidate for Hackney North and Stoke Newington. Fri., May 8, 7 p.m. 2nd floor, 83 Kingsland High Street, E8 2PB. Tel.: 07521-364496

Join protests against cop killing of Freddie Gray

Continued from front page

ident Barack Obama to Rawlings-Blake — have smeared these workers and youth as “thugs” and “criminals.”

Gray, 25, was arrested April 12 after cops claimed he “fled unprovoked upon noticing police presence” in an area known for drug dealing. After detaining him they say they found a knife. One video shows Gray, held down by cops, with his legs folded back “in a pretzel type of move,” the man who filmed it told the press.

The video shows the cops dragging Gray handcuffed, screaming in pain, as they put him in the back of a police van. A second video shows the van stop a few minutes later as cops pull Gray out, put him in leg irons and then back inside. The cops stopped a third time to sit him back up from the floor of the van.

Injuries from being transported in police vans are so common in Baltimore that residents have a name for it: the “rough ride.”

On April 30 Deputy Police Commissioner Kevin Davis reported a private surveillance video revealed that the van had stopped in a desolate area an additional time. “That’s new to us,” Davis said.

Baltimore Police Commissioner Anthony Batts says it is unknown how Gray’s spinal column became 80 percent severed and his windpipe crushed. He died a week later. Six cops involved have been suspended — with pay, which has added to the outrage.

Daily protests grow

West Baltimore is 97 percent Black. Unemployment is double the city average. It is full of abandoned row houses, sandwiched between occupied homes and empty lots.

“The police commissioner promised us they’re going to investigate,” Gray’s brother-in-law Juan told a rally at City Hall April 23. “It’s not about Black, white or Mexican anymore. We’re fighting for the same things. The mayor is Black and she’s turned her back on us.”

In addition to the mayor, the police commissioner, the city’s lead prosecutor and half of Baltimore’s cops are Black.

“They don’t live the way we live,” unemployed carpenter Leon Park told the *Militant*.

Park was there when the cops put the leg irons on Gray. “I heard Freddie calling for help,” Park said. “I saw the cops around him and they told us to back off or they would arrest us. They thought they could sweep this under the rug, but we won’t let them.”

“The cops get away with so much,” Keisha Turner, who knew Gray, told the *Militant*. “OK. Freddie ran, young people they run a lot. Is that a reason to deserve to die?”

More than 1,000 people from Baltimore and beyond marched April 25. City and police officials slandered those who came to march from other cities, saying their act of solidarity was the work of “outside agitators.”

After Gray’s funeral April 27, some youth smashed car windows, broke into some stores and fought with riot-gear-clad cops. Some 235 people were arrested and at least 20 cops injured by the end of the day.

Democratic and Republican party politicians from the White House to Baltimore City Hall berated the demonstrators. Obama said April 28 that he condemned the “criminals and thugs who tore up the place,” for not protesting in what he called “the right way.” Being a cop is “a tough job,” he said, and those

who had looted should “be treated as criminals.”

In her first statement since being sworn in as the new U.S. attorney general, Loretta Lynch, the first Black woman to hold the post, took aim not at the cops responsible for Gray’s death, but at “senseless acts of violence by some individuals in Baltimore that have resulted in harm to law enforcement officers, destruction of property and shattering of the peace in the city of Baltimore.”

Long history of police abuse

A September article by the *Baltimore Sun* exposed widespread cop brutality here.

The paper reported that over the past four years more than 100 people have received some \$5.7 million after winning court cases or settlements over cop brutality.

“Those cases detail a frightful human toll,” the *Sun* said. “Officers have battered dozens of residents who suffered broken bones — jaws, noses, arms, legs, ankles — head trauma, organ failure, and even death, coming during questionable arrests.”

Working people and youth in Baltimore have welcomed those who come to advance the fight for Freddie Gray.

The rising social movement challenging racist brutality and cop violence — from Staten Island to Ferguson and now Baltimore — is reinforced by growing labor resistance, from the fight for \$15 an hour and a union among Walmart and fast-food workers to rail and oil workers demanding control over safety on the job.

More than 1,000 people marched in Baltimore April 29. A large protest has been called here for May 2.

—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

Washington state farmworkers win solidarity in US, Mexico

SEATTLE — Berry pickers fighting for a union in the Skagit Valley north of here are building links of solidarity with other farmworkers in the U.S. and Mexico and with workers and young people who support their struggle. And they back the fight for \$15 an hour.

"We pick fruits and vegetables for everyone," Ramón Torres, president of Familias Unidas por la Justicia (Families United for Justice) told a meeting of more than 60 students at Seattle University April 20. "We deserve fair wages, medical benefits, and good working conditions. The only way we can achieve this is to have a union contract."

Familias Unidas, organized in 2013 by farmworkers at Sakuma Brothers Farms, is also calling for a boycott of berries sold under the Driscoll label, which Sakuma supplies.

Torres was joined by Alfredo Juárez and Alicia Santos García, high school students who work at Sakuma Farms and are members of the union's 10-person leadership committee, and Edgar Franks from Community to Community Development, which has provided support for the union from the beginning. The meeting was sponsored by Moral Mondays, an initiative of Black Lives Matter at Seattle University.

"We go to work at 5 a.m., rain or shine," Juárez said. "One day when I felt sick and asked the foreman if I could go home, he said, 'If you don't go back to work, the family will have 12 hours to clear out of company housing.'"

The union won a \$500,000 settlement in 2014 for workers shortchanged by Sakuma Farms on their wages. Payments were scheduled to begin April 26.

"The strawberry harvest has begun in California," Torres said. "Pickers get about 30 cents for the baskets of berries that sell for \$6 in the stores. Can we get paid \$15? I think so."

Familias Unidas supported the recent strike of farmworkers in the San Quintín Valley in Baja California, Mexico. The farmworkers union there, the Alliance of National, State and Municipal Organizations for Social Justice, announced April 8 that they were joining the boycott of Driscoll, which also buys berries from their area.

Sakuma Brothers said they will institute a \$10 an hour minimum wage plus a production bonus this year.

"We want \$15 an hour, no piece rate, and overtime pay," said Torres. "We want a union contract."

"The new company CEO is the third union buster they've hired. I don't think he'll succeed," he said.

Information on Familias Unidas can be found at www.boycottsakumaberries.com.

—John Naubert

New Zealand fast-food workers push back 'zero-hour' contracts

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Workers organized by the Unite union held protests here and in four other New Zealand cities April 15 demanding McDonald's and Wendy's end zero-hour contracts and schedule minimum guaranteed hours of work a week.

Under zero-hour contracts workers have no assurance of a regular schedule.

Confidence is up after Burger King, Hell's Pizza and Restaurant Brands, which operates the franchise for Pizza Hut, Carl's Jr., KFC and Starbucks in New Zealand, ended the abusive zero-hour practice.

More than 100 people marched up Queen Street, a busy shopping area, stopping outside stores to cheer or boo according to the stance of the company on zero hours. The march stopped and picketed outside two McDonald's restaurants.

"Secure hours are important for us," Mobeen Iqbal, a McDonald's worker in Grey Lynn, told the *Militant*. "We have



Militant/Annalucia Vermunt

Rally outside McDonald's in Auckland, New Zealand, demands guaranteed hours and regular work schedules.



Militant/Naomi Craine

Members of New York State Nurses Association rally in front of Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn, New York, April 16, demanding increase of nurse-to-patient ratio to improve care.

families to support. They can change our hours from week to week and we can't live like that."

"Bosses play favorites," a worker named Katerina said. "Some get all the hours while others are not getting shifts. My boss told me I could only get graveyard shifts."

Jacinta Anderson told the picket line rally that her boss at McDonald's refused to pay her the 50 cents an hour minimum wage increase that went into effect April 1. He claimed that because she was in the union she was not entitled to it.

"When I returned from a two and a half week holiday the boss had arbitrarily cut my hours," McDonald's worker Mario Vaniecivich told the protest.

—Annalucia Vermunt

New York nurses rally against understaffing

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — Nurses organized by the New York State Nurses Association rallied at 14 hospitals across New York City April 16 to win support for their fight for better nurse-to-patient ratios. The association represents more than 37,000 registered nurses in the state.

"We're uniting for our patients and we're asking management to prioritize safe RN

and caregiver staffing levels that have proven to save lives," Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, a registered nurse at Montefiore Medical Center and president of the New York State Nurses Association, said in a press release that day. "There are times when we're caring for 9 or 10 patients — even more — and it's not possible to give each patient the attention that they need."

Informational picket lines were maintained all day, swelling at the shift changes as nurses joined in before or after work.

At the Brooklyn Hospital Center, a nurse who declined to give her name told the *Militant* that understaffing was the worst she had seen in her 37 years of nursing. "I believe health care is a human right," she said, adding that after hearing from friends who traveled to revolutionary Cuba about health care there, she is eager to visit the island.

During the picketing, a woman jumped out of a van distributing potato chips and handed bags of chips to picketers. "Good luck," she said as she jumped back in the van and took off to a round of cheers by the nurses.

Hundreds of nurses rallied and lobbied in Albany, the state capital, April 21 calling for passage of legislation to set minimum nurse-to-patient ratios and create universal single-payer health care in the state.

—Drew Hardy

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



May 11, 1990

MANCHESTER, England — On April 25 heavily armed squads of police and prison officers moved to end the 25-day protest at Strangeways prison here. After a long and tense day, the protesters were forced to give themselves up.

The action, the longest prison protest in Britain, succeeded in focusing attention on the barbaric conditions that exist in British prisons and elicited broad sympathy. The four-week protest involved prisoners in 20 of Britain's 125 prisons.

Strangeways, located just to the north of Manchester's center, was designed to hold 970 prisoners. The prison population had risen by 150 to 1,650 in the past few months.



May 10, 1965

May 1 — Fidel Castro delivered a blistering attack on the United States today in response to the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic and in commemoration of May Day.

"Few actions have so exposed the criminality and cynicism of U.S. imperialism," Castro stated in reference to the Marine landings in Santo Domingo.

He pointed out that the invasion of Santo Domingo violated every treaty that the U.S. had made with Latin American nations. Answering the U.S. lie that the Marines had been landed to save U.S. citizens, Castro pointed out that in the days of civil strife before the landing, where many Dominicans had been killed, not one American citizen had even been injured.



May 11, 1940

Technological unemployment, threatening the livelihood of every worker in the steel industry, has fixed itself as the most pressing and permanent problem confronting the Steel Workers Organizing Committee. Since 1926 when the continuous hot-strip mill was first introduced, 100,000 employees have lost their jobs with the gradual displacement of the old hand mill for the more efficient hot-strip mill. Today 15 men in the hot-strip mills can produce as much as 100 in the hand mills.

Gradually the steel workers employed and unemployed have begun to realize what is happening and the murmurs of discontent have been changed into a new cry: "A Six Hour Day with Eight Hour Pay."

Tour demands truth about 43 disappeared Mexican students

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — Some 700 people marched to the United Nations here April 26 to demand the truth about what happened to 43 teaching students who were attacked by police in Iguala, Mexico, last September.

Ten relatives, classmates and professors of the disappeared students crisscrossed the U.S. in three caravans over the last month, joining public forums and protests in more than 40 cities to expose contradictions in the Mexican government's account and to demand a full and impartial investigation.

"We will not rest until the students are found and those who are responsible are brought to justice," Felipe de la Cruz told the crowd here. Cruz is one of the caravan participants and a professor at the Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Teachers College in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero state, where the disappeared students were enrolled.

"You are not alone," protesters chanted, after Cruz and other relatives and students spoke.

Marchers held aloft photos of each of the missing students, elaborate hand-painted banners and homemade signs. Participants came from around the Northeast and from other cities where the caravans had stopped. The march was sponsored by the Caravana 43 NYC coalition, which organized campus meetings and protests in Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Manhattan during the week leading up to the U.N. march.

Ten students came from the University of Richmond in Virginia. "We de-

cided to come after we heard the parents speak on our campus," Melisa Quiroga-Herrera told the *Militant*. "We want to stop these kind of things from happening."

Drug gangs rule many towns

Tomás Espinosa, a construction worker in Philadelphia, said he came to "be in solidarity with the people of Guerrero."

"The government is corrupt and in many towns it is the drug gangs that rule, not the government," he said.

"The disappearances are nothing new," said Cirilo Cortés, a garment worker from Jersey City, New Jersey. "But this time they went too far."

"There are problems in the U.S. with police brutality," Cortés added. "But in Mexico they are worse." According to Mexican government figures, more than 25,000 people are "missing" there, 3,000 in the last year alone.

The 43 missing students were part of a group of between 90 and 100 who traveled to the town of Iguala in Guerrero state from nearby Ayotzinapa Sept. 26. They were preparing to join a demonstration in Mexico City Oct. 2, to commemorate the massacre of students there by the Mexican army and police in 1968.

According to the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center of the Mountain, which is working closely with the families of the disappeared, the Ayotzinapa students had taken possession of three buses from a private company in Iguala for use in traveling to the action.

At about 9 p.m. they were on their way out of town when Iguala police in-



Militant/Naomi Craine

N.Y. march to U.N. April 26 culminates national tour of relatives, friends of 43 students disappeared by Mexican police. Tour strengthened fight to force truth from Mexican government.

tercepted the buses and opened fire. Student Aldo Gutiérrez was badly wounded and is brain-dead. A number of students were detained by police patrols.

At 11:30 p.m. community organizations, journalists and others arrived on the scene in response to calls by the students who had escaped. At midnight, during an impromptu press conference, a pick-up truck approached with armed men who opened fire. Two students, Daniel Solís Gallardo and Julio César Ramírez Nava, were killed and five people seriously wounded.

The students scattered again. Some took refuge in a private clinic, where they were harassed by a Mexican army patrol and prevented from getting immediate medical attention for a wounded classmate.

The next day a third Ayotzinapa student, Julio César Mondragón, was found dead outside of town, his face torn off and showing other signs of torture.

According to the Mexican attorney general, the attack was orchestrated by Iguala Mayor José Luis Abarca and his wife, Maria de los Angeles Pineda, who were working with the Guerreros Unidos drug cartel. He said the police in Iguala turned the students over to the cartel, which then killed them and burned their bodies beyond recognition at a garbage dump in the neighboring town of Cocula. Abarca, Pineda and about 100 Iguala and Cocula cops and alleged cartel members have been arrested and charged in the crime.

Unanswered questions

"The whole town of Iguala knew the attack on the students was taking place," Vidulfo Rosales Sierra, a lawyer with the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center who accompanied the caravan members, told a meeting of 100 at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York April 24. The Mexican army patrol that was in the area has never explained "what they were doing at the time and why they didn't intervene to stop it."

Despite the government's claim that the bodies of all the students were incinerated at the Cocula dump, only one body has been positively identified with DNA testing.

Unless there is physical proof the students are dead, Rosales said, the search must continue. For the government, "the case is closed," he said. "But we can't accept this as the

truth without scientific evidence."

Iguala is not the only town run by the drug gangs, he said. What happened on Sept. 26-27 "is just the tip of the iceberg." While looking for the Ayotzinapa students, both government forces and volunteers uncovered several other mass graves.

The members of the caravan called for Washington to end the Mérida Initiative, a program that has provided more than \$2.3 billion to the Mexican government since 2008 to train and arm the Mexican police and army for the "war on drugs." Many of the weapons end up in the hands of the drug cartels.

Mexico is the United States' third-largest trading partner. U.S. exports to Mexico reached \$240.3 billion in 2014 and nearly 80 percent of Mexico's exports go to the U.S. This does not include the drug trade, which is estimated to bring in more than \$6 billion a year.

A source of superprofits for U.S. imperialism, Mexico has a foreign debt of more than \$400 billion.

Millions of workers and peasants from Mexico have emigrated to the U.S. and are a significant component of the U.S. working class, giving the fight for the truth about the Ayotzinapa students increased resonance.

Protest marks one year since SKorea ferry disaster



Militant/Janet Post

PHILADELPHIA — A protest here April 19 marked the one-year anniversary of the sinking of the Sewol ferry off the coast of South Korea that killed 294 passengers, including 245 Danwon High School students from Ansan City, a disaster caused by the drive for profit and the me-first morality of capitalism.

The ferry — whose owners had remodeled to jam in more passengers and cargo, making it top heavy — capsized April 16, 2014, en route from Incheon to Jeju Island. In addition, the cargo was not properly balanced. When the ferry began to sink, crew members — half of them temporary workers with little safety training — told passengers to stay put. The captain and most of the senior crew members abandoned ship. To make matters worse, the Coast Guard rescue operation was late and botched.

"There has not been a comprehensive investigation on what caused the Sewol to sink, why the passengers were not promptly rescued, and why the sunken ship has still not been salvaged," said a statement by People in Solidarity with the Families of Sewol Ferry, which sponsored the action here, including a march to the Museum of Art, one of several memorial events around the world.

Kwang Jang had his head shaved as part of the action. "The cutting of the hair traditionally signifies our determination and that we will do whatever it takes to demand justice," said Andy Lee, a student at the University of Pennsylvania.

— JANET POST

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"The biggest nightmare in Latin America ... the economic and social reality that hundreds of millions of workers and peasants wake up to every morning ... is the outcome of the lawful workings of capitalism in the imperialist epoch"

— Jack Barnes

pathfinderpress.com

Washington's 55-year economic war on Cuba

A new chapter opens in struggle to defend Cuba's sovereignty, socialist revolution

BY SETH GALINSKY

On Dec. 17 Barack Obama in Washington and Raúl Castro in Havana announced simultaneously that their two governments would seek to re-establish diplomatic relations. This opened a new chapter in the decades-long struggle to defend Cuba's sovereignty and its living socialist revolution.

But "this in no way means that the heart of the matter has been solved," Cuban President Castro said at the time. "The economic, commercial and financial blockade, which causes enormous human and economic damages to our country, must cease."

The 55-year-long U.S. embargo of Cuba, which is still in place, has no parallel in modern times.

When U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista fled the island nation on Jan. 1, 1959, in the face of a massive popular uprising led by the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army, Washington hoped that it would just mean a change in the faces in government, and soon things would get back to business as usual.

But Fidel Castro, his fellow revolutionaries and the workers and farmers of Cuba were dead serious about changing social relations from top to bottom and defending Cuba's sovereignty.

Before 1959, 60 percent of grain, 37 percent of vegetables, 84 percent of cooking oils and 80 percent of canned fruit consumed in Cuba were imported, mostly from the United States. Cuba's main product was sugar, accounting for 80 percent of exports to the United States.

At the time of the revolution 75 percent of all the cultivated land was held by just 8 percent of land owners. Some 700,000 peasants held no land at all. Cuba's 500,000 sugar workers were employed only during the four months of the harvest and barely scraped by through eight months of "dead time."

But this only paints part of the picture. Famous for its tobacco, Cuba imported cigarettes from the U.S.; it exported sugar, but imported candies; tomatoes grown in Cuba were sent to the U.S. to be processed and returned as tomato paste, puree and sauce, for the profit of U.S. capital.

In May 1959 the first agrarian reform law was passed, expropriating the large plantations, eliminating the system of rents and mortgages crushing the peasantry, and granting land to those who worked it.

Worried about the direction things were going, capitalists in Cuba began sabotaging production. By mid-1959, Washington was backing armed counterrevolutionaries operating on the island.

Washington starts economic warfare

Washington instructed the three companies that dominated the importing, refining and distributing of oil in Cuba — U.S.-based Esso and Texaco along with British-Dutch Shell — to cut their production, causing a fuel scarcity.

When the Soviet Union agreed to sell oil to Cuba at favorable prices and to transport it, the three companies refused to refine it. On June 28, 1960, the revolutionary government took over the Texaco refinery in Santiago de Cuba



"This building is the property of and occupied by the workers who are ready to give their lives for national sovereignty," reads Revolutionary Union banner over the entrance to U.S.-owned Cuba Electric Co. in Havana, August 1960. "We support nationalization."

and three days later Esso's and Shell's.

A week later President Dwight Eisenhower took the first open measure of economic warfare against the revolution, canceling Cuba's quota for sugar exports to the U.S.

On Aug. 6, 1960, Fidel Castro announced the expropriation of 26 U.S.-owned companies. As Castro read out the name of each company at a large rally, the crowd shouted out, "That's what it *used* to be called."

Workers and their trade unions organized armed workers militias to guard the installations against U.S.-backed attempts to sabotage them.

On Oct. 19 the Eisenhower administration officially imposed a sweeping trade embargo, prohibiting all exports to Cuba except food, medicine and medical supplies.

The *Militant* campaigned to tell the truth about the revolution, the mass mobilizations and the murderous response by Washington. Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Farrell Dobbs demanded the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Guantánamo Bay naval base and urged workers to go to Cuba to see the revolution for themselves.

The revolutionary government launched a national literacy drive in 1961, with thousands of young volunteers heading from the cities into the countryside.

In April of that year, 1,500 mercenaries armed, trained and deployed by Washington invaded Cuba near the Bay of Pigs. In less than 72 hours Cuba's revolutionary militias, police and armed forces routed them. On the eve of the invasion, Fidel Castro declared the revolution's socialist character.

By the end of 1961, the embargo was ravaging the island's economy: 25 percent of buses were not running, half of the train cars were out of service and nearly 75 percent of Caterpillar tractors were broken down due to lack of spare parts. From 1962 to 1963 trade with the U.S. and other capitalist countries fell by 60 percent. Many factories were paralyzed.

In February 1962, President John F. Kennedy extended the embargo. The Feb. 12, 1962, *Militant* pointed out the new measures only cut off "what little

trickle of trade still existed."

With no possibility to trade with the U.S., Havana turned to the Soviet Union, which ignored the embargo and became Cuba's main trading partner. But they couldn't make up for all Washington had cut off, and life became more difficult for Cuba's workers and farmers.

When the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union collapsed at the start of the 1990s, Cuba lost more than 80 percent of its trade virtually overnight, what Cubans sometimes call a "second blockade." Over the next decade Washington tightened the embargo even more, including stepping up sanctions on any other countries that dared trade with Cuba. Their goal was to bring the Cuban people to their knees.

The U.S. embargo has continued — as state policy — under 11 U.S. presidents, Democrats and Republicans alike, including Obama. The Cuban government estimates that "at current prices, during all these years, the blockade has caused damages of more than \$116.8 billion."

Isolated, Washington shifts tactics

While Washington's brutal embargo has made life more difficult for working people in Cuba, the gains won by the toilers and their spirit of internationalism and self-sacrifice continue to inspire determination to defend and advance their revolution. And the embargo has

isolated Washington, especially across Latin America.

So the propertied rulers decided to shift tactics, charting a new offensive in their continuing drive to bring the revolution's downfall.

Wall Street Journal columnist Peggy Noonan reflected the hopes of U.S. rulers when she wrote Dec. 18 that ending the embargo will open the door not just to more "American tourists and businessmen, American diplomats, American money, American ways and technology," but an expansion of capitalist business in Cuba that will eat away at the revolution.

But the revolutionary determination of Cuban workers and farmers, and the caliber of the revolutionary leadership — Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, Che Guevara and many others — demonstrated over decades defending their conquests are a serious obstacle to Washington's hopes.

That leadership continuity was strengthened by the experiences of more than 425,000 volunteers who fought against the forces of apartheid South Africa defending the sovereignty of Angola, helping lead to the overthrow of the white supremacist regime. And it has been reinforced with the return of the Cuban Five, revolutionaries who spent 16 years in U.S. prisons, framed up for their work preventing paramilitary groups from launching attacks on the island.

"Under today's conditions, dangers are going to arise and we have to be vigilant. They will try to corrupt us and buy us off," René González, one of the five, told students in Havana Feb. 19. "They will try to create a class in Cuba — the class that fortunately we were able to kick out in 1959. They're going to try to create it here again," he said. "That means there will be work to do, and all of us will have to join in."

Cubans — and those who look to the example of the revolution worldwide — will fight to loosen every aspect of the embargo and open the doors to foreign trade, travel and normalized relations. As they do so, they will fight to defend Cuba's socialist revolution.

It is a testimony to the strength of that revolution that 55 years after the start of the embargo, Cuba stands as a living example of why working people the world over should emulate their example.

For further reading

To Speak the Truth

Why Washington's 'Cold War' Against Cuba Doesn't End
by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara \$18

Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution

A Marxist Appreciation
by Joseph Hansen \$25



Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters
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Why winning higher pay doesn't cause prices to rise

The article below presents excerpts from *Wages, Price and Profit* by Karl Marx. The pamphlet is available from local distributors listed below.

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Opponents of the current fight for a \$15 an hour minimum wage and unionization often argue that if wages go up, prices will too. Therefore, they contend, workers fighting for higher pay actually hurt themselves and workers in other industries.

This false claim was the subject of a debate 150 years ago in the International Workingmen's Association, led by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. In 1865, amid a strike wave and campaign to raise wages in Europe, a member of the International's General Council from England, John Weston, argued the same point. Marx answered him, tearing apart the rationalizations the bosses use to justify their entire wages system.

The resulting pamphlet, published initially in English under the title *Value, Price and Profit* and later under the more accurate title *Wages, Price and Profit*, makes for valuable reading today. It concludes with Marx offering three resolutions, which were adopted:

"Firstly. A general rise in the rate of wages would result in a fall of the general rate of profit, but, broadly speaking, not affect the prices of commodities.

"Secondly. The general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise, but



Procession of striking shoe workers fighting for higher pay in Lynn, Massachusetts, 1860. Fights like this are essential to slow ravages of capitalist exploitation, Marx explained in 1865, and lay basis for unions to fight for "ultimate abolition of the wages system."

to sink the average standard of wages.

"Thirdly. Trades Unions work well as centers of resistance against the encroachments of capital. They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organized forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system."

Value is produced by social labor

To explain why wages don't determine prices, and why workers are correct to fight for a greater portion of the wealth they produce, Marx gives a concise explanation of how the capitalist wages system works.

The value of a commodity, that is anything produced for exchange, is determined generally by "*the quantity of labor necessary* for its production in a given state of society." The price of that commodity will fluctuate based on supply and demand, but over time will average out to its value.

When a worker is employed by a capitalist, "what the working man sells is not directly his *Labor*, but his *Laboring Power*," Marx notes. The value of this labor power "is determined by the *value of the necessities* required to produce, develop, maintain, and perpetuate the

laboring power" — the worker's food, housing, etc.

In the course of each workday, a worker produces more new value than what's needed to replace their wages. Marx gives the example of a spinner in a cotton mill, who may produce the value of his wages in six hours' work. But the boss demands 12 hours work, saying he's hired the spinner for the whole day. The value produced in the additional hours goes to the capitalist. "It is this *sort of exchange between capital and labor* upon which capitalistic production, or the wages system, is founded."

This surplus value, produced by workers' labor, is the source of all profits, including the rent and interest that the boss may pay to the landlord and the bank.

Since the new value produced through labor is divided between the worker and the capitalist, "if wages fall, profits will rise; and if wages rise, profits will fall," Marx says, "but all these variations will not affect the value of the commodity."

Capitalist tendency is to lower wages

"The general tendency of capitalistic production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages, or to push the *value of labor* more or less to its *minimum limit*," Marx notes, impelling workers to fight for higher wages.

When labor productivity rises, for example, the value of workers' wages is produced in less time, and the boss pockets more profit. "Although the laborer's absolute standard of life would have remained the same, his *relative* wages, and therewith his *relative social position*, as compared with that of the capitalist, would have been lowered. If the working man should resist that reduction of relative wages, he would only try to get some share in the increased productive powers of his own labor."

Monetary inflation often erodes the buying power of workers' wages, causing their standard of living to deteriorate unless they fight for higher pay.

The length of the working day and the intensity of labor are also fronts in the struggle between labor and capital. By fighting to limit the working day to "rational dimensions," the workers "only set limits to the tyrannical usurpations of capital," Marx says. "Time is the room of human development. A man who has no free time to dispose of, whose whole lifetime, apart from the mere physical interruptions by sleep, meals, and so forth, is absorbed by his labor for the capitalist, is less than a beast of burden."

And during downturns of the business cycle workers regularly see their wages decline. "If, during the phases of prosperity, when extra profits are made, he did not battle for a rise of wages, he would, taking the average of one industrial cycle, not even receive his *average wages*, or the *value* of his labor."

If workers didn't fight to raise wages and improve their conditions "they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement," Marx said. In these skirmishes they "are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction."

"They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the *material conditions* and the *social forms* necessary for an economic reconstruction of society," he concludes. "Instead of the *conservative* motto: '*A fair day's wages for a fair day's work!*' they ought to inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword: '*Abolition of the wages system!*'"

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Join fight against Baltimore cop brutality!

We call on workers, farmers and youth to join in the movement demanding the arrest and prosecution of the cops responsible for the killing of Freddie Gray. Join the protests in Baltimore! Help initiate solidarity actions where you live.

We can make a difference in preventing the cops and government officials from sweeping Gray’s death under the rug.

Killings of workers, disproportionately African-American, at the hands of police is nothing new. What is new is the growing refusal of working people to accept such morality without a fight and how each of our struggles reinforce one another.

Political representatives of the capitalist rulers — Democrats and Republicans — aim to divide and weaken our struggles and corral them into bourgeois politics. Obama lectures us about fighting the “right way” and calls protesters “thugs” and “criminals.” Baltimore’s mayor joins in, adding “outside agitators” to the smears.

Attorney General Loretta Lynch said the explosion in Baltimore was “a shattering of the peace.” But there is no peace in U.S. cities and towns where cops kill and brutalize workers with impunity.

The way to stay the hands of killer cops is to build a powerful, disciplined proletarian social movement.

As we do so, we will transform ourselves, awakening through struggle to our own worth and dignity. We’ll gain confidence together. Through our experiences, more and more working people will see the need to break from the capitalist parties and build a mass revolutionary movement capable of ending the bloody dictatorship of capital.

We can emulate the Cuban Revolution, where ordinary men and women, workers and farmers like us, fought and took power out of the hands of the U.S.-backed capitalist rulers and reorganized society based on human needs, not profit.

Today, the fight to force the prosecution of those responsible for Freddie Gray’s death builds on battles against the killing of Walter Scott in South Carolina, Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York, and many more. The protests draw support from those demanding \$15 an hour and a union at McDonald’s and Walmart, from rail and oil workers fighting for more control over working conditions on the job — and vice versa.

See you in Baltimore!

Rally in UK says ‘Open the borders!’

Continued from front page

sieges of the dictatorial Bashar al-Assad regime there as well as the reactionary Islamic State. Others are fleeing fighting and dire living conditions in Nigeria, Eritrea and Mali.

Some passing by the speakout stopped to listen. One picked up a subscription to the *Militant*. A Syrian TV channel covered the protest.

Nearly 4 million have fled Syria to neighboring countries and up to 6.5 million are internally displaced, Alhamwi, who is a leader of the British Syrian Community of Manchester, told the crowd. “But the U.K. has only agreed to admit 500 as refugees.”

“Across Europe working people solidarize with these workers,” Davies told the gathering. He described how crowds gathered the night the boat capsized in Catania, Sicily, to aid those who survived.

“These values of working-class solidarity are in total contrast to that of the capitalist governments of the EU, who seek to use immigration laws to restrict the numbers who come,” Davies said. “These deaths are no accident, they are a direct result of these policies. The bosses and their governments want immigrant workers to arrive desperate and prepared to accept any wages or conditions to have a life.”

“People are running away from war. But where do the wars come from, they come from capitalism,” Kazim Asutay from the Kurdish Cultural Centre told the crowd. Asutay and the Centre helped win support for Kurds fighting Islamic State in Kobani, Syria, and promote the broader fight for a Kurdish homeland.

“The Mediterranean Sea is carpeted with desperate people. They risk their lives because the odds for them are better here,” said Amanda Jones-Said, who works for the refugee support group Rainbow Haven. “We should ensure their stories are heard by demanding they be allowed to come safely over land, not by sea.”

Capitalist powers in Europe scuttled an Italian-organized Mare Nostrum search-and-rescue program last October, which had saved an estimated 100,000 lives of immigrant workers on boats crossing from Libya last year. It was replaced by a smaller, weaker program known as Triton. The switch was made because the rulers believed robust rescue efforts encourage “smugglers and migrants to organise more trips,” the *Guardian* reported the day of the disaster.

“The U.K. and EU governments blame the small-time traffickers, but if the borders were open there would be no market for the traffickers,” said Catharina Tirsén, Communist League candidate for the Bradford ward of Manchester City Council.

The question of immigration and refugees has been hotly debated as the May 7 election nears. In addition to those fleeing from the Middle East and Africa, the largest number of immigrants in the U.K. come from Europe, especially eastern Europe. There is free migration between EU-member countries. The Conservative government has called for restrictions on immigration, but has not stopped the flow.

The opposition Labour Party issued a 10-point immigration plan April 28 aimed at further reducing immigration and restricting the rights of immigrant workers, including those from the EU. The plan calls for putting an additional 1,000 agents on the border, setting a firm cap on workers from outside the EU, preventing immigrant workers from claiming social benefits for at least two years and requiring those who get jobs in public positions in government services to speak English.

“Most workers I talked to campaigning door to door were angered by the U.K. government’s response,” Davies told the *Militant*. “Though few agreed right away when I told them I was calling for the government to open the borders, people wanted to discuss it.”

Davies and campaign volunteers distributed his campaign statement at an April 23 picket line at the University of Salford protesting the sacking of two lecturers and at a vigil the following day protesting the U.K. government’s response to the refugees’ deaths.

“We can’t take them all, our housing can’t deal with it, our transport infrastructure can’t deal with it,” said Philip Eckersley, a parliamentary candidate in Manchester Gorton for the U.K. Independence Party, at an April 22 candidates’ debate. The party is known for its opposition to immigration. “People shouldn’t have to get on a boat to get a job, they should be able to get a job in their own country,” said Kevin Peel, Labour Party candidate for the City Center ward of Manchester City Council.

Other capitalist parties in the election back further restrictions on immigrant entry to the U.K.

“It’s capitalism that relegates some to a second-class status,” Davies told the audience. “It serves the propertied rulers’ interests to keep us divided and competing for jobs and housing. But it’s in our interests as workers to overcome this. These workers can teach us a lot from their experiences fighting the Assad regime in Syria and other struggles about how to do battle with the government and employers here.”

“The U.K. government ended its support for naval search and rescue operations in October 2014. They bear responsibility for what has happened,” said Davies at a second debate April 24. “In fact, they don’t intend to actually stop immigrants. They want this source of labor, but as desperate cheap labor to force down wages and erode conditions to bolster their profits. Calling for opening the borders is the strongest way workers can deal a blow to this.”

Ukraine miners

Continued from front page

Rinat Akhmetov.

“Today, miners have to stand up for protection of independent Ukraine,” Mykhailo Volynets, chairman of the Independent Trade Union of Coal Miners of Ukraine, said in a statement released April 24. “This time in the energy industry.”

Nearly 800 delegates took part in the April 21-22 miners congress, called jointly by the independent miners union — formed more than 20 years ago in a wave of strikes and protests by miners — and the Trade Union of the Coal Mining Industry, the long-standing “official” union with historic ties to the government.

Delegates to the congress denounced “the policy of the government of Ukraine, which is to overcome the financial crisis at the expense of the working class of the country and other socially disadvantaged groups, particularly pensioners,” a statement said.

While Kiev withholds wage payments and skimps on investments needed to keep production going at state-owned mines, it has moved ahead with “reforms” — attacks on wages and social benefits — demanded by imperialist banks as a condition for loans to keep the government solvent. A law took effect April 1 cutting many retirees’ pensions by 15 percent.

The miners congress called for a reversal of these social cuts and opposed the importation of coal and electricity, especially from Russia, which occupied Crimea last March and is sending troops and heavy arms to back separatists who have seized sections of Ukraine’s Donetsk and Luhansk provinces. The delegates called for funding to keep production going at state-owned mines, payment of months of back wages owed to miners and safer working conditions. They demanded the dismissal of Volodymyr Demchyshyn, the minister of energy and coal, who said April 21 that 11 more state mines may be closed.

“I wish [government officials] would get into the mine and see the conditions we work in,” Myroslav Sanin, a young miner from the Chervonohrad mine in the Lviv region, told the *Kiev Post* at the April 22 protest. “We don’t have normal equipment to work with, and our salaries are low and they cut our subsidies.”

Volynets said that miners will launch nationwide strikes if their demands continue to be ignored.

Government tries to discredit miners

Mustafa Nayem, a well-known former journalist, now a member of parliament closely allied with President Petro Poroshenko, posted a memo on his blog April 24 he said was leaked from the DTEK coal and energy conglomerate owned by Akhmetov. The unsigned document, which DTEK officials deny, supposedly outlines plans to instigate miners’ protests.

Both Poroshenko and Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk attacked the miners’ protests. Poroshenko said “certain oligarchs” were behind them and claimed demonstrators had been paid to participate.

“The Independent Trade Union of Coal Miners of Ukraine is an organization that defends interests of miners and Ukrainian working people and works to improve and develop the energy potential of the country,” Volynets responded. “We have never cooperated and will never collaborate in favor of oligarchs, business or political powers.”

Poroshenko says he is waging a campaign to rein in oligarchs and bring transparency to business and politics. Oligarch is the term widely used to refer to a layer of billionaires, many formerly part of the Stalinist ruling bureaucracy, who built capitalist empires by plundering privatized state enterprises during and after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The sustained mass popular protests that toppled President Viktor Yanukovych in February 2014 targeted not only his subservience to Moscow, but also the corruption and cronyism of this wealthy layer he, as well as Poroshenko and Akhmetov, was a part of.

Poroshenko dismissed Igor Kolomoisky as governor of Dnepropetrovsk March 25. Kolomoisky is the billionaire co-owner of Ukraine’s largest private bank and has long controlled the oil company Ukrnafta through a 42 percent stake. When the government moved to assert control over Ukrnafta, masked gunmen thought to be working for Kolomoisky surrounded the company’s headquarters March 22.

Poroshenko’s business empire is booming. His personal income reportedly increased sevenfold last year.