

Which way for the climate movement?



Lou Ann Merkle

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

On April 29, more than 200,000 people marched in Washington, D.C., in a powerful show of determination to rescue the earth from the ravages of climate change. Over 370 sister marches took place simultaneously across the United States and in countries around the world from Britain to Brazil, and from Mexico to Kenya and the Philippines.

The size of the crowd in Washington far surpassed earlier expectations by the organizers and the National Park Service. At precisely 2 p.m., virtually the entire march, which at that point extended more than 20 blocks along Pennsylvania Avenue from the Capitol to the White House, grew quiet as people sat down as an ensemble. Drums kept the rhythm as the marchers thumped their chests to show that while coming from many backgrounds, their hearts beat as one.

In addition to the colorful puppets and banners carried by organized contingents, most of the marchers

brought hand-lettered signs, with slogans reflecting a variety of related social concerns (such as “Black Lives Matter”) in addition to that of the environment.

Although the organized trade-union contingents were meager, spirited groups of Native Americans, LGBTQ people, and communities of color—including a number of Washington, D.C., youth—made their presence felt.

“In the face of a federal administration that would rather reap profits than protect people, our communities are rising up,” Jeremiah Lowery, climate justice organizer with the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, said in a press statement on the eve of the march. “In Washington, D.C. and around the world, it’s low-income communities, communities of color, and workers who are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis they did the least to contribute to.”

There is no doubt that the threats by the Trump administration to pull out of the Paris Climate Accords and to rescind environmental measures put in place by Obama—which themselves were far from ad-

(Photo) Philadelphia-area activists joined the crowd of 200,000 on April 29 in Washington.

equate—were responsible for swelling the numbers of people who joined the demonstration.

Only three days before the April 29 actions, Trump and Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke released plans to open federal land across the country, including historic and sacred Native American sites, to fossil fuel mining. At the same time, the administration revealed its plans to roll back environmental protections in ocean waters in order to increase oil exploration and drilling. Twenty-seven areas on land and sea would lose their designations as National Monuments.

“Six months ago, my kids woke up to half a foot of water in our living room,” said Cherri Foytlin, director of BOLD Louisiana and spokesperson for the Indigenous Environmental Network. “Now, Trump wants to open up the Gulf Coast to even more offshore drilling. But we have a message for him: we are not afraid,

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Stop the U.S. bombing of Syria!

By **SOCIALIST ACTION**

On April 6, the Trump administration launched 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles at Syria's al-Shayrat military airfield. The U.S. strikes decimated a number of buildings and airplanes. At least nine civilians and six Syrian soldiers were killed.

Neither Trump nor any other U.S. government agency presented a shred of proof that the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad had used sarin nerve gas in its bombing of al-Qaida/Nusra Front or any other "rebel" held buildings in Idlib province.

History has repeatedly demonstrated the need to view with the greatest skepticism U.S. imperialism's justifications for its endless wars and interventions.

Need we mention the 1964 U.S.-manufactured Tonkin Bay incident, wherein a virtually non-existent Vietnamese navy was accused of attacking a U.S. destroyer? That false flag pretext was employed to launch the Vietnam War, in which four million Vietnamese were slaughtered in a 10-year U.S. conflagration verging on genocide. Or the more recent Iraq "weapons of mass destruction" lie that resulted in the U.S. murder of 1.5 million Iraqis?

Even if the latest sarin gas accusations should prove to be true, we must vehemently reject the warmongers' proposition that the U.S. military behemoth, with 1100 military bases around the world and currently conducting seven simultaneous wars of death and destruction, has any moral, legal, or other right to be the "cop of the world!"

Bomb first! Ask questions later!

Trump and his now bipartisan "Bomb first! Ask questions later" cohorts have



(Photo) Damage at Shayrat airbase following U.S. missile strike.

ignited what could become a catastrophic escalation in the region, which could even pose the threat of a nuclear confrontation.

Immediately before the U.S. missile attack, the Trump administration convened a bipartisan group of 25 Democrats and 25 Republicans for a congressional briefing session. While there was no indication of opposition to the Trump attack, a few, citing the U.S. Constitution, later expressed the need for congressional debate and approval before waging war.

Trump's action came a day after Democrat Hillary Clinton had urged the U.S. bombing of Syria. Today, Trump has adopted a version of Clinton's election-time "no fly zone" advocacy, suggesting that "safe zones" might be established in Syria—that is, land-based regions policed by U.S. imperialism and its allies.

Imperialism's record in Syria

Not one day of the years-long U.S. imperialist-abetted intervention has improved the humanitarian situation of the Syrian people. On the contrary, the U.S.

government's aim—as in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya—is to secure political hegemony in the region so as to better serve its profit-driven corporate clients. In order to accomplish its goals, as it demonstrated during the uprisings known as the Arab Spring, the U.S. must foreclose the possibility of self-determination for the peoples of the Middle East.

In reference to the Obama administration's "red line" threat of war in 2012-13, Trump stated, "These heinous actions by the Bashar al-Assad regime are a consequence of the past administration's weakness and irresolution. President Obama said in 2012 that he would establish a 'red line' against the use of chemical weapons and then did nothing." No doubt Trump is fully aware that Obama's "nothing" included five years of intervention that included CIA and Pentagon training and arming of "rebels" seeking Assad's ouster, a bombing campaign supposedly aimed at ISIS targets but deadly for civilians, and an increasing number of U.S. boots on the ground.

With Syria's U.S.-backed "coalition" allies compelled to retreat from much of the Syrian territory that they previously occupied and terrorized, a bipartisan consensus has now emerged in Washington that Obama's "regime change" orientation cannot be dismissed.

We are witness to a major shift in U.S. policy, in which Democrats and Republicans alike cannot brook a defeat in a war that they early on fueled and promoted. Today's crisis-ridden world economy ruled by the wealthy 1% is compelled to pursue and intensify its wars against working people at home and abroad.

More military strikes threatened

White House representatives state that the administration has not ruled out taking further direct military action against the Assad government. President Trump's national security advisor, H.R. McMaster, stated on April 9 that the U.S. goals of fighting ISIS and ousting Assad from power were "simultaneous."

The Trump administration's bipartisan-supported missile attack is aimed at advancing U.S. leverage at a future bargaining table in a contemplated reconstructed Syria. It is the first taste of the new administration's promise to use the grotesque \$54 billion rise in the trillion-dollar war budget "more aggressively" in the interests of U.S. corporate capitalism.

The need for a united and massive U.S. antiwar movement in the streets of cities across the country has never been greater. Without equivocation, the central responsibility of all antiwar and social justice organizations is to mobilize against all U.S. and allied interventions in Syria and to fully support the right to self-determina-

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JOIN SOCIALIST ACTION!

Socialist Action is a national organization of activists committed to the emancipation of workers and the oppressed. We strive to revitalize the antiwar, environmental, labor, anti-racist, feminist, student, and other social movements with a mass-action perspective. Recognizing the divisions that exist on the left and within the workers' movement, we seek to form united front type organizations around specific issues where various groups have agreement. In this way we seek to maximize our impact and demonstrate the power and effectiveness of mass action.

In the process we hope to bring activists together from different backgrounds into a revolutionary workers' party that can successfully challenge the wealthy elite—whose profit-driven system is driving down living standards and threatens all life on this planet.

We are active partisans of the working class and believe in the need for independent working-class politics—not alliances with the bosses' parties. That is why we call for workers in the U.S. to break from the Democratic and Republican parties to build a Labor Party based on the trade unions.

We support the struggles of those who are specially oppressed under capitalism—women, LGBT people, national minorities, etc. We support the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities, including Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans. We are internationalists, and hold that workers of one country have more in common with workers of another than with their own nation's capitalist class. We seek to link struggles across national boundaries, and to build an international revolutionary movement that will facilitate the sharing of experiences and political lessons. We maintain fraternal relations with the Fourth International.

Socialist Action believes that the capitalist state and its institutions are instruments of the ruling class, and that therefore they cannot be used as tools of the working class but have to be smashed. That is why we fight for revolution. When we fight for specific reforms, we do so with the understanding that in the final analysis real social change can only come about with the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of a workers' government, and the fight for socialism. Our ultimate goal is a truly democratic, environmentally sustainable, and egalitarian society organized to satisfy human needs rather than corporate greed. We invite you to join us in the struggle to make the world a better place!

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Socialist Action newspaper editorial offices: socialistactionnews@yahoo.com
Website: www.socialistaction.org

WHERE TO FIND US

- BOSTON: socialistactionboston@gmail.com
- BUFFALO, NY: wynsocialist@google.com
- CHICAGO: P.O. Box 578428 Chicago, IL 60657, chisocialistaction@yahoo.com
- CONNECTICUT: (860) 478-5300
- DULUTH, MINN.: adamritscher@yahoo.com
www.thenorthernworker.blogspot.com
- KANSAS CITY: kcsa@workernet.org (816) 221-3638
- LOUISVILLE, KY: redlotus51@yahoo.com, (502) 451-2193
- MADISON, Wis.: northlandiguana@gmail.com
- MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL: (612) 802-1482, socialistaction@visi.com
- NEW YORK CITY: (212) 781-5157
- PHILADELPHIA: philly.socialistaction@gmail.com

- PORTLAND, ORE.: (503) 233-1629 gary1917@aol.com
- PROVIDENCE: ADGAGNERI@GMAIL.COM (401) 952-5385
- SALEM, ORE.: ANNMONTAGUE@COMCAST.NET
- SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA: P.O. Box 10328, OAKLAND, CA 94610 (510) 268-9429, sfsocialistaction@gmail.com
- WASHINGTON, DC: christopher.towne@gmail.com, (202) 286-5493

SOCIALIST ACTION CANADA

NATIONAL OFFICE
526 Roxton Road, Toronto, Ont. M6G 3R4, (416) 535-8779
<http://socialistaction.ca/>

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NYC immigrants strike against union busting

By MARTY GOODMAN

NEW YORK—B&H Photo, the nation's largest non-chain photo store, announced during contract negotiations plans to shut down two warehouses in Brooklyn and move facilities 75 miles away to Florence, N.J., by the end of the year. For 330 immigrant B&H warehouse workers who belong to the United Steel Workers (USW) union, the move will bust their union and destroy their jobs. Some workers have slaved there for up to 10 years.

The B&H bosses, whose annual revenue exceeds a quarter-billion dollars, have refused to provide transportation to N.J. for its workers. This blatant union-busting is a cold-blooded attack on the entire labor movement. The workers are mostly from Mexico and Central America. We say, "An injury to one is an injury to all!"

On May 1, May Day, 200 B&H warehouse workers struck against union busting and in solidarity with the national "Day Without Immigrants," which included New York City protests and marches. Outside the Manhattan store about 100 strikers and supporters held a morning picket, chanting, "What's disgusting? Union busting!"

B&H worker Francisco Pimental told the rally, "We are here today to let B&H know that we, the workers, have the power. We will not allow B&H to leave over 300 workers without a job!" Some supporters shouted, "Boycott B&H!" as they leafleted customers.

B&H has been hit with \$43 million in National Labor Relations Board fines in suits launched by the USW for racism and sexism, which included "whites only" toilets, racist pay discrepancies, and discrimination against women, who, if hired at all, are paid less than men for the same work.

In Nov. 2015, warehouse workers fought and won a union recognition vote by a dramatic 200 to 88 at the Brooklyn Navy Yard and Bushwick warehouses. In February 2016, warehouse workers at the Manhattan store, who do not face immediate job loss, also unionized.

B&H says it must move by 2018 when its lease with the city expires. The warehouse in the Brooklyn Navy Yard is adjacent to a major TV/film studio owned by



Marty Goodman / Socialist Action

Doug Steiner, a pal of "progressive" Democratic Party Mayor Bill de Blasio and a contributor to the mayor's causes, which includes a proposal for a new trolley line stopping at the Steiner studios.

The mayor's campaign to promote corporate media produced in the city stands in contrast to record homelessness and his re-zoning scheme that will gentrify the mostly Hispanic northern Manhattan.

B&H is owned by millionaire Herman Schreiber, a member of the Jewish Satmar Hasidic sect in Brooklyn, who provides B&H jobs for the ultra-orthodox (male) community. Brooklyn's orthodox Jewish leaders have delivered big blocks of votes to de Blasio. In contrast, dozens of other Jewish leaders denounced B&H abuses.

The B&H organizing drive was spearheaded by New York's non-profit Laundry Worker's Center. In 2012, the LWC successfully organized immigrant workers at the "Hot and Crusty" bakery on the upscale Upper

East Side, documented in the award winning film, "The Hand That Feeds."

Conditions at B&H before unionization were a throwback to the 1800s. "They treated us like animals," said Amando Girron, a B&H employee for nine years. Warehouse work included exposure to fiberglass and asbestos, a lack of water, carrying heavy items alone, working 13 to 16 hour shifts with only one 45 minute lunch break, no safety training, not being permitted to leave the warehouse for 30 minutes during a fire in 2014, and dismissals of union supporters.

Rosanne Rodriguez, a LWC co-director, told *Socialist Action*, "These workers are a treasure. They are brave and powerful; they've been fighting for dignity for two years. We cannot let this company run away!" Please show your solidarity when and where you can. Checkout LWCU.org and #BHEXPOSED for picket times, updates, and much more. ■

By BILL ONASCH

Labor Briefing

Movers Become Shakers In D.C.—The motto of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 is *We Move This City*. Their 9000 members keep the second biggest (in mileage) subway system in the USA running—as best they can with the Metro's austerity budget—in addition to dozens of usually standing-room-only bus lines and paratransit services. Their contract with the Washington Metro Area Transportation Authority expired last June.

Local President Jackie Jeter told WAMU radio that WMATA wants \$100 million in take-aways. Included is a wage freeze and denial of pension benefits to new workers, who would be put into the equivalent of 401(k) accounts—with no guaranteed retirement income.

These attacks are nearly identical to those by the Chicago Transit Authority on ATU train and bus locals. In both cities workers have been refusing overtime and working to rule, and there have been selective "sick-outs." Even more importantly, they have been building solidarity among their riders and with other unions and environmental groups. These allies show up to all the public meetings of the transit boss boards and join in frequent ATU demonstrations.

The unions hope that pressure will force the employers to agree to an acceptable contract without a strike that would cause hardship for their passengers, who have been supportive.

Repatriating Jobs—Last year, after a strike involving 40,000 workers, the Communications Workers of America was able to restore thousands of outsourced and offshored jobs to the bargaining unit and to establish a new beachhead in the growing wireless market.

Currently, CWA is involved in tough negotiations with dozens of units of AT&T—

remnants of the original breakup of the old Ma Bell monopoly. About 10 years ago, CWA got a big boost when the carrier acquired unionized Cingular to be the base of today's ATT Mobility—the second largest cell phone network.

But since 2011, ATT has offshored 8000 call center jobs to the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and the Philippines. The union is demanding that those jobs be restored. After a one-day strike purportedly over grievances, the union won a contract settlement covering landline and internet workers in Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas that provides annual wage increases, a \$1000 signing bonus, and two-weeks paid parental leave. And a big breakthrough was achieved when that company unit agreed to hire 3000 union workers for positions currently offshored.

However, other units employing 21,000 union workers in 36 states have yet to budge. At this paper's deadline, the union has served notice that they may walk out at any time.

They Took On the Challenge—After a three week strike, newly organized UAW workers won a first contract at Challenge Manufacturing's Kansas City plant. Lured by generous tax incentives, Challenge opened the plant in 2015 to supply parts to the General Motors Fairfax Assembly plant in Kansas City, Kansas. The new contract meets industry standards for outsourced parts production—but is considerably less than what Big Three UAW members enjoy.

Grounds For Celebration at Philly IA—Last month 1400 baggage handlers, wheelchair attendants, SkyCaps, and other passenger service workers employed

by contractors at Philadelphia International Airport voted overwhelmingly to be represented by Service Employees International Union 32BJ. It took four years of demonstrations, informational picketing, and job actions to get this Labor Board election. The various employers hired by the mostly unionized airlines also agreed to be bound by Philadelphia's "living wage" requirement for contractors on public facilities. That's currently \$12 an hour—hardly a princely sum. But it means more than a \$4 an hour raise for most of these workers—a start to build on.

Preempted Poor—The Fight for 15 and a Union campaign, which includes airport service workers, home care aides, contingent college faculty as well as fast food workers, has also been involved in successful struggles to win higher state and city minimum wage laws. But the bosses and their kept politicians are now using state legislatures to suppress this movement through what has been dubbed "preemption." This refers to legislation, or amendments to state constitutions, prohibiting local governments from setting minimum wage rates higher than those of the state—in many cases no more than the federal minimum—currently a poverty level \$7.25.

Because this affects workers of color most of all, many civil rights groups—above all the NAACP—are joining with unions to fight preemption through demonstrations and civil disobedience. This was a feature of May Day strikes and protests in North Carolina, Minnesota, and Kansas City

It should also be a reminder that the

working class needs a party of our own to win these most basic struggles.

Deserving Honors—On May Day, ABC news reported: "Eight graduate student teachers at Yale University have been on hunger strike since last Tuesday in an effort to push a collective bargaining agreement with the university forward. The protesters, including four men and four women who are part of the new Local 33-Unite Here union, say that their fast is indefinite or until the school's administration agrees to discuss an agreement with the eight departments that joined the union. They say they have only consumed water." ■

Thanks to Mike Elk and Michael Schreiber for contributions to this month's Briefing. If you have a story suitable for this feature please contact billonasch@kclabor.org.

Going to the Left Forum?

Don't miss the four panels sponsored by Socialist Action Newspaper

- The Russian Revolution: Its Meaning for Today
- The March 8 International Women's Day Strike Changed Class Politics
- Can the Democratic Party Be Reformed?
- South Africa Today: Confronting Neo-liberalism

The Left Forum will take place on the June 2-4 weekend at the John Jay Law Center in Manhattan. See www.leftforum.org for schedule and how to register.



May Day marches — a strong show of unity

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Millions of people around the world took part in demonstrations on May Day. Actions included a general strike and mass march, backed by the major unions, to protest government austerity measures in Puerto Rico. This followed a huge general strike in Brazil two days earlier. The May 1 international day of working-class protest is rooted in U.S. workers' actions in the 1880s to demand better working conditions, including the eight-hour day.

For the last decade, the date has been reclaimed in the United States by organizations standing up for the rights of immigrants and low-wage workers. This May Day, in a broad show of solidarity, they were joined by marchers with signs highlighting scores of burning issues—such as affordable health care, racist police violence against Black people, the rights of women and LGBTQ people, and environmental justice.

Chants of “No ban! No wall!” and “No human being is illegal!” alternated with “Black lives matter!” and “Workers united will never be defeated!”

“If the Trump administration has done something very well, it has united lots of communities who otherwise would not be marching together,” Jorge-Mario Cabrera, spokesperson for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, said on National Public Radio from Los Angeles.

May 1 demonstrations took place in at least U.S. 40 cities. Significant numbers marched in the streets—as many as 30,000 in Los Angeles and almost 10,000 in Chicago—though the turnout in some cities was smaller than in previous years and failed to meet the

expectations of organizers.

In many areas, workers observed a “Day Without Immigrants.” Grassroots activists affiliated with Movimiento Cosecha and other groups organized immigrant workers in over 50 cities, plus rural farmworkers, to demonstrate their power as a class by refusing to work or to shop for the day. Cosecha projected that hundreds of thousands of workers would observe their strike call. The actions were endorsed by “partners” in the labor movement such as SEIU, CWA, UNITE HERE, National Nurses United, and Fight for 15.

Some business owners closed their doors to enable workers to attend the protests. But without protection by the unions, some courageous workers who stayed away from work will likely be forced to endure hard personal consequences. Reportedly, over 100 workers were fired following the previous Day Without Immigrants, on Feb. 16. About 20 women, former employees of EZ Industrial Solutions in Michigan, are protesting their February dismissal in a case before the National Labor Review Board.

The May Day protests gained momentum and purpose this year due to Trump’s racist diatribes against Latino and Muslim immigrants, and the accelerated drive by his administration to ban, detain, and deport them. Reports have noted, however, that many immigrants—terrorized by the government roundups—were probably afraid to march openly in the streets.

Trump has pledged to deport at least 3 million immigrants—more than a quarter of the people living in the U.S. without valid documents. That would far surpass the already record-setting quantity of deportations under the Obama administration. Not only

“criminals” are being deported; a quarter of the people swept up in ICE raids since Trump took office had never been charged with a crime.

The largest May Day events appear to have taken place in Los Angeles, where several marches took place. In the largest action, a show of “unity, resistance, and defiance,” over 120 organizations sponsored a downtown march, from MacArthur Park to City Hall, with rallies at both ends.

The Los Angeles turnout of 20,000 to 30,000 was much larger than on May Day 2016, although it was less than the 100,000 that had been widely predicted for this year. Some organizers had even expressed confidence that the size of the crowd would approach or exceed that of the historic May Day 2006 event, when close to half a million marched down Wilshire Blvd. as part of a vast national mobilization in response to the reactionary anti-immigrant bill that had been introduced by James Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.) in the U.S. Senate. But in 2017, the fact that the immigrant community in Los Angeles has been hard hit by raids (two months earlier, ICE detained about 160 people) probably contributed to the smaller than expected number of participants.

New York also saw several marches. Early in the day, 500 protesters marched through Midtown Manhattan and rallied in front of offices of Wells Fargo and JPMorgan Chase & Co. The Rise up New York! coalition targeted the banks because of their dealings with companies that have built or manage immigrant detention centers.

Thousands more took part in separate rallies in Washington Square and Union Square, and many of the marchers later converged in Foley Plaza, where Mayor Bill de Blasio and a series of Democratic Party politicians and union officials addressed them.

In San Francisco, over 5000 marched up Market Street behind a papier-mâché Statue of Liberty. Oakland held several marches and rallies, including a spirited gathering of about 3000 in the heavily Latino Fruitvale Avenue neighborhood.

In Philadelphia, several labor and immigrant groups marched through different parts of the city, and then came together at City Hall. The combined demonstration grew to over 2000 participants. The marchers included members of UNITE HERE, who earlier in the day had staged a rally at Philadelphia International Airport to protest substandard wages and working conditions.

A number of teachers also joined the march. About 1000 teachers did not report for work that day, many of them taking part in a non-sanctioned protest action called by the Working Educators caucus of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT). They were calling attention to the fact that public school teachers have been working without a contract for nearly four years, and have not had a raise for five years. The PFT called its own rally later in the afternoon.

In Minneapolis, *Workday Minnesota* reports that May 1 events began with a strike and rally by cleaners at a Home Depot store. The strikers are members of Centro de Trabajadores de Lucha/Center of Workers United in Struggle. “We’re fighting for fair wages, benefits, and the right to form a union without fear of retaliation,” said Elizabeth Mejia Campillo, a CTUL leader.

At noon, University of Minnesota workers held a rally to kick off their campaign for fair contracts covering 4000 clerical, technical, health care, food service, janitorial and other employees. Later in the afternoon, the “Resist From Day One Coalition” marched to Federal Plaza in downtown Minneapolis. ■

Women activists came together on May Day

By ANN MONTAGUE

The organizers of the International Women’s Day Strikes issued a comprehensive statement encouraging women to support the May Day actions this year. It was entitled, “No Ban, No Wall, No ICE,” and said in part, “We come together with the understanding that our exploitation as waged and unwaged workers have a common cause and our oppressions as people of color and immigrants are connected with threads of sexism, racism, anti-blackness, militarism, environmental depredation, homophobia and transphobia. ... Solidarity is our weapon.”

Women activists were widely seen this May Day. They were recognized as leaders of all the movements and struggles that joined together to celebrate this historic worker’s day. In some cities women organized their own contingents in marches.

In New York City, the main base of the March 8 International Women’s Day strikes in the U.S., women rallied at Washington Square on May Day before joining up with the other marches and rallies in the city. The featured speaker was from International Women’s Strike (IWS), New York City.

Ximena Cosmonauta set the tone by welcoming immigrant workers from worker’s centers and unions: “There is no way to talk about women’s freedom if the liberation of some depends on the exploitation of others.”

Women were a large proportion of the 1000 Philadelphia unionized teachers who walked out to protest working conditions and the fact that they have been working without a contract for four years.

Kristin Jones, a teacher from Carver High School, marched on May Day with her two children and spoke for many when she referred to parents who might

have been upset about their children’s losing a day of class. But then she said, “We had to do this!”

Women were also prominent in May Day actions in smaller cities and towns. In Tucson, the Promotoras de Derechos Humanos, and in Salem, Ore., the Adelante Mujeres and the women of MECHA marched together behind their banners.

Other unions and non-union workers organizations made up predominately of women, walked out of work to join marches and rallies. Fight For 15 organized walkouts across the country, as they have been doing for four years. For weeks before May Day they used social media to put out information to non-union workers about their rights under the law to walk off the job for the day.

In Las Vegas an estimated 3000 workers joined the May Day march, called “Unity March For Immigrants.” Most of the marchers were from unions with a

mainly female membership, including many immigrants. Bethany Khan, an official of the 57,000-member Culinary Union led the march. She reports that her union is the largest in Nevada and also the largest immigrant organization—with members from 150 countries. A rally also took place in Reno, sponsored by Women and Children of the Sierra, Reno-Sparks NAACP, Tu Casa Latina, and Chispa Nevada.

SEIU United Service Workers West was particularly visible in Oakland and San Francisco. In addition, women joined a demonstration outside of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Headquarters in the San Francisco Financial District.

Yadira Sanchez, 26, was one of the demonstrators who blocked the doors. “It is our duty to unite together,” she told reporters. “There is growing momentum and people are angry.” ■

Chicago workers take to the streets on May Day

By MARK UGOLINI

CHICAGO—Nearly 10,000 workers, immigration rights activists, and supporters took to the streets on May Day to demand legalization of undocumented workers; an end to terrorizing immigrant communities with raids on homes and workplaces; and an end to criminalization, mass incarceration, and deportations. (See a full list of demands at the link below.)

The primarily Hispanic crowd staged a “Rally for Immigration Justice” in Union Park on the city’s West side and then marched east to Chicago’s Daley Plaza and heard speakers including Tefere Gebre, executive vice president of the AFL-CIO; Karen Lewis, Chicago Teachers Union president; and others.

Chicago May Day, <http://chimagday.com/#>, was sponsored by over 120 Chicago organizations. Among the more prominent were an array of immigration rights groups including Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Mijente, and Arise Chicago. Black rights groups including NAACP Chicago Southside, Black Youth Project 100, and Black Lives Matter were also prominent builders of the protests.

The May Day call was endorsed by the Chicago Federation of Labor, and drew the active support and participation of dozens of labor organizations and trade unions including: Fight for \$15, International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), Service Employee International Union (SEIU), Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA), United Electrical Workers-Western Region (UE), United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), National Nurses United (NNU), and American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Several SEIU union locals and the CTU played prominent roles in providing logistics and marshalling for the event. Hundreds came from surrounding areas, especially DuPage County, where Immigrant Solidarity DuPage organized six busloads of immigrant workers to participate in Chicago’s day of activities.

Despite intermittent rain showers, the three-mile march down Washington St. was militant and spirited. Singing, chanting, and calls for solidarity boomed



(Left) Chicago Teachers Union members protest in June 2016.

from loudspeakers as bystanders along the march route joined in. Hundreds of demonstrators carried colorful flags and signs, some with handmade slogans. “Bridges not Walls” and “We can’t survive on \$8.25!” were among the popular chants.

One of the marchers was eager to speak with reporters. Her parents were without papers when they brought her to the U.S. as a young girl: “I’m a DREAMER myself! And I’m going to college. Today, May 1st, is college decision day, and [we are here] just fighting to keep the programs like DACA alive.”

Earlier in the day protesters rallied in the Pilsen neighborhood’s Tenochtitlán Plaza. One of the city’s historic, predominantly Hispanic communities, Pilsen residents have been frequent targets of ICE raids and harassment. One participant, Rebecca Vosler, a 25-year old Pilsen teacher, told reporters: “How can Chicago claim that they’re a sanctuary city when immigrants aren’t being protected; and then on top of that, how are you protecting workers when the rent is rising, when the wages are low?”

A 42-year-old Pilsen restaurant worker, Israel Gascón, said he was protesting on May Day to take a stand for the working class, pointing out: “There is a war against the workers [and] against immigrants. ... I see my community terrorized by ICE, by this criminalization of particularly the Mexican community.”

Earlier in the day, other groups congregated outside the Cook County Juve-

nile Detention Center to protest police violence, harassment and the wave of arrests of Black and Latino youth. After some speeches, the group marched to join the main “Rally for Immigration Justice” at Union Park.

At Mather High School in Chicago’s West Ridge neighborhood, dozens of teachers gathered to raise their demand for increased public school funding and demonstrate solidarity with immigration rights.

“It’s a day, historically, that the working class in the U.S., which is an immigrant working class, has fought for the eight-hour day, originally, but now for services that will support the future in the neighborhoods, in the schools,” said Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) Vice President Jesse Sharkey. “We’ve seen our schools under a real threat and attack, and we hope that people come out and show solidarity and fight for a future we can believe in.”

In a video May Day Message to CTU members, Sharkey urged support for other victims of the state’s manufactured “budget crisis.” He called for solidarity with students and staff of public universities, especially predominately Black Chicago State University, which has been systematically dismantling by massive budget cuts over the last two years.

Sharkey pledged continued solidarity with state workers who are without a contract and under a union-busting assault from Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner. He also promoted the struggle of over 10,000 nursing-care workers fighting for

a fair contract who are planning a strike later this month.

Previously, the CTU leadership considered a one-day strike on May Day to fight school budget cutbacks and solidarize with immigration rights, but ultimately decided against a strike. Many teachers, they said, were unwilling to give up additional paid teaching days. Instead, the teachers were encouraged to use personal days to attend the May Day protests, and many CTU members did so.

While the Chicago May Day protests were an important expression of solidarity, which brought together a wide array of forces, like others around the country, they were smaller than expected. This may indicate Trump’s xenophobia and virulent racism are having a chilling effect on the immigrant community, heightening fear, and ushering increasing numbers of undocumented workers into the shadows.

Exposed now, more than ever, is the weak-kneed response of the Chicago labor movement, which is fused to the capitalist Democratic Party and the local machine of Rahm Emanuel. The so-called “progressive” labor leaders in this city are a dime a dozen, reined in by their political bosses whose job is to protect the interests of local billionaires like Ken Griffin (the richest man in Illinois) and his friends, their big corporations, their tax-advantaged hedge funds, and their tax-free offshore accounts.

While they posture as defenders of the most oppressed workers, they have been totally unwilling to break ties with the Democrats either in the streets or in the political arena. Rather than token endorsements, resolutions, and flowery-sounding speeches, what’s necessary is a truly massive and powerful display of unity in action.

Undocumented immigrants and other oppressed workers will be further emboldened to take action when a powerful, militant, and combative ally appears on the scene—one that brings the full power of a united Chicago union movement to bear. Chicago’s labor history books are full of examples of heroic labor battles that are both a source for study and a guide to action. ■

By GEORGE SHRIVER

May Day in Tucson: A tradition since 2006

TUCSON, Ariz.—Hopes and expectations were widespread on the eve of May 1, 2017, that the spirit of 2006 might be revived this year. In 2006, as many as 3 million or more undocumented immigrants and their allies poured into the streets on May Day, and the reactionary Sensenbrenner bill, which would have penalized immigrant supporters as well as immigrants themselves, was quickly dropped by the U.S. Congress.

Unfortunately, the hopes and expectations did not become a reality in 2017. A reduced turnout was noted in many parts of the United States—probably due to the failure to mobilize on the part of the official labor movement and other forces that have mobilized for May Day in previous years. Another factor may have been exhaustion on the part of many allies who went out into the streets in large numbers just two days earlier, on April 29, for the People’s Climate Justice actions

Not to be disregarded also were the intimidation and threats from the Trump administration and its repressive agencies built up by previous administrations, such as the “Department of Homeland Security,” Border Patrol, & ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement).

Here in Tucson, likewise, the turnout was not as large, or was about the same, as in the past few years. According to AZ Media, nearly 300 took part in the spirited march led by Calpolli Tenochtitlán after an introductory speech by Isabel García, chair of the Coalición de Derechos Humanos, and brief comments by representatives of the South Side Workers Center, local Dreamers, and Jobs with Justice.

The march went through the mostly Chicano South Side of Tucson, to Armory Park on the edge of the

downtown area. Emceeding the rallies on both ends were Eduardo Quintana, former president of Machinists Local 933, Najima Rainey of Tucson Black Lives Matter, and Sandy Ochoa, formerly of SEIU and currently with “Mi Familia Vota,” a voter registration group.

Fred Yamashita, president of the Pima Area Labor Federation—the local AFL-CIO equivalent of a central labor council—greeted all the labor forces present, including SEIU, Teachers, Steelworkers, Machinists, IBEW (electrical workers), IATSE (theater and stage workers), UFCW (food & commercial workers), Teamsters, & others.

Yamashita explained, “The attacks on labor are growing, and labor too must fight. ... We need to straighten up our own house. You see, it has been reported that 36-40% of union members voted for Donald Trump.”

One speaker whose message aroused strong expressions of solidarity was Linda Robles of the Environmental Justice Working Group, an organization of mainly South Side mothers whose families have been poisoned by chemicals in the groundwater that came from the aircraft and weapons-making industry (primarily Raytheon). Poisoned chemicals also came from the Tucson Airport Authority and the U.S. Air Force at Davis-Monthan air base. Linda Robles called for the government to buy out the homes of families whose water has been poisoned and to pay for their relocation to a safer place.

In the process of building the May Day March and Rally, a partial gain was won for those who are fed up with capitalism’s two-party Demo-publican shell



game. A majority at the planning meetings voted not to have any politicians on the stage. That decision held firm despite attempts to have Democrat Rep. Raul Grijalva appear.

Grijalva voted for the Congressional bill that, under Obama, set up a colonial board, misnamed PROMESA (an unpromising “promise,” which is now ruling with arbitrary authority over Puerto Rico, trying to impose austerity on that island for the benefit of hedge-fund creditors—an attempt being resisted now especially by the youth of Puerto Rico, most prominently at the University in San Juan.

Grijalva supposedly represents the Mexican-American community in southern Arizona. What is needed is solidarity between two communities being victimized by U.S. imperialism—Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans.

The Tucson Socialists were central to the successful organizing of this year’s May Day event. ■

Big farms produce big flu epidemics



By **BUD SCHULTE** and **JOHN SCHRAUFNAGEL**

Rob Wallace is an evolutionary biologist and the author of *Big Farms Make Big Flu: Dispatches on Infectious Disease, Agribusiness, and the Nature of Science* (Monthly Review Press). Through a dialectical process he shows us how Big Agriculture and its organization and methodology conflict with the epidemiological controls needed to stop flu epidemics from emerging and killing millions of people.

We sat down with Rob Wallace in late November 2016 at May Day Books in Minneapolis. A longer version of the interview can be found at www.socialistaction.org.

John Schraufnagel: Just today, I saw several headlines—Ebola is changing faster than they thought. And new flu outbreaks—I read about one in Sweden. H5N8, I think, is all across Europe now. Is this something new?

Rob Wallace: That's the interesting question. Despite the fact that some of the influenzas are celebrities—H5N1 was at century's turn and then H1N1, the swine flu [that emerged outside Mexico City in 2009]—these are only two of multiple new reassortants that evolved and spread over the past 30 years. And in ways that many scientists would agree have not been seen before. Multiple new strains that have emerged, and largely (in our hypothesis, speaking very broadly), it's because the spread of globalized monoculture hog and poultry production.

Bud Schulte: Explain how segmenting and reassortment work.

RW: Influenza has a segmented genome. It has eight segments. When you have two different influenza types that occupy the same host, they can trade the segments like a deck of cards. Most of the time, the influenza that comes out of that exchange is crap, but every so often you get a Royal Flush from it, and that new combination is much better in a particular host species, or in spreading to humans, than previous combinations.

The recombination accelerates evolution by virtue of the biology of the virus. And that has happened historically—throughout the history of influenza. At lot of the reassortment happens when all the different wild waterfowl species come together in the summer up in the Arctic Circle.

That kind of trading has happened for eons. In influ-

An interview with biologist and author Rob Wallace

enza time, anyway, that's in eons.

That is now also happening within industrial hog and poultry, and [scientists] have been able to track the shift and see this kind of reassortment going on. Typically, as in all organisms, you might have a mutation, a point mutation, within the genetic code at a single nucleotide position that changes the virus. And that still happens, but this reassortment, this trading of whole segments, is an accelerant through evolution that allows the virus to arrive upon entirely new adaptations in ways that point mutation alone wouldn't allow them. Or, in any short order anyway. ...

In the last 30 years, there's been a clear acceleration in the evolution of the virus through this reassortment, and there's a growing understanding among scientists that in all likelihood it's being driven by the industrialization of poultry and hog, which are now traded from one side of the planet to the other, mixing previously isolated strains.

BS: I was an eviscerator at a hog plant. Does this account for the fact that workers would get recurrent flus, especially those that work inside the animals? We thought maybe you'd be immune to it the next year, but no such luck—you get it again and again.

RW: There was a paper I cite in the book in which researchers describe the shifts in the hog industry through the 1990s and its effects on influenza. Before World War II, but especially afterward, you had a Livestock Revolution here in the United States in the poultry sector. You have all the consolidation across the companies and all the big companies—Tyson and others—began to take over production all the way from breeding to distribution. So you reduce the variety of birds, the number of farms declines, and the number of heads per farm increases.

The hog sector followed in poultry's footsteps, and that had a profound effect on everybody associated—not just companies, not just the hog, but the workers involved as well—and the farmers. It is an integrated epidemiology where what happens to the industry affects how the hogs are exposed to the viruses, which affects the workers who are handling them.

Some of the work that I quote in the book describes

how whatever perfect storm may be emerging for influenza—if it is going to make its way out into human populations—in all likelihood, it's going to go through the farm workers who are handling the live hog.

JS: What's behind the obsession with finding "patient zero" whenever there's an outbreak? They are doing so now with Ebola, but I remember in the 1980s, there was a huge "hunt" for the patient zero of the AIDS epidemic.

RW: You can always look at a particular outbreak and try to identify a patient zero, but in many ways the search for patient zero distracts or detracts from looking at the broader picture, from examining the larger social forces—the context—of an outbreak. Explanations compete with each other. One explanation may be favored as a way of avoiding talking about the bigger picture. Something can be true and miss the big picture.

Yeah, Ebola is a virus. Yeah, it can be spread by burial practice. But you are completely ignoring the larger context that is pushing the emergence of multiple pathogens. In this case, our team's conclusion is that the outbreak is an expression of neoliberalism in West Africa. West Africa has long been pillaged, but there is a particular shift that it's undergoing that is connected to a particular type of globalization at this point in time.

Guinea, the epicenter of the West Africa outbreak, had not been long part of that integration, unlike Liberia, which had been on the front end of it since 1925 with the Firestone Rubber Company. Liberia has been pillaged to the point that almost 45% of its land has been leased out to foreign companies. Guinea was kind of trailing on that, but has recently begun to turn in that direction.

So if we look at palm oil, as the land gets eaten up in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, global palm oil looks for other places to grow its crop—the Amazon and the Congo. Even though there aren't foreign companies in Guinea yet, the agricultural sector is changing now. There was pressure on the state to try to develop some response to the changes in the global market, so production went from a parastatal cooperative developing Guinean palm oil to a state company that began to do all the classic development from the second half of Marx's "Capital," Book I. The

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How to counter right-wing speeches

By BRUCE LESNICK

As the effects of the Great Recession linger, the ruling rich are making every effort to ensure that the working class bears the brunt of the economic crunch. In this atmosphere, elements of the extreme right feel emboldened to promote their reactionary wares.

From the increasing visibility of right-wing websites like *breitbart.com*, to well-publicized speaking tours by conservative ideologues like Milo Yiannopoulos and others, to former *Breitbart* editor Steve Bannon's attaining the status of presidential advisor, the message from the top is clear: racism, sexism, and xenophobia will all be used to divide and oppress the 99%. Meanwhile, these same poisonous sentiments are used to divert attention from those actually responsible for and benefiting from the current crisis.

It's natural for any compassionate, thinking person to be angry at the notion of a Yiannopoulos, Bannon, Limbaugh, Beck, Hannity, Coulter, O'Reilly, or Trump being given a prominent platform to promote their reactionary ideology. The question is: what should we *do* about it? What's the best way to counter right-wing propaganda?

How can we most effectively shift the narrative from the phony answers offered by the right to the genuine solutions championed by the revolutionary left? How can we best ensure that the right-wing *talk* doesn't become right-wing *action*? And critically, how can we best harness the power of the 99%—the working-class majority—in this ideological, social, and economic battle?

Pyrrhic victories

On Jan. 20, Milo Yiannopoulos was scheduled to speak before a sellout crowd of 700 at the University of Washington in Seattle. Outside, protesters gathered. Some in the crowd began throwing bricks, fireworks, paint, and other objects. One protester was shot by a Trump/Yiannopoulos supporter. Despite the disturbance, Yiannopoulos was able to complete his talk.

On Feb. 1, Yiannopoulos was scheduled to speak at the University of California, Berkeley. Some among the 1500 protesters at the event threw rocks through campus windows, causing a generator to catch fire. The police responded with rubber bullets and locked down the campus. The event was cancelled before Yiannopoulos could speak. Afterwards, some protesters smashed commercial storefront windows and car windshields. Later, Yiannopoulos was quoted as saying that "the left" was "terrified of free speech and will do literally anything to shut it down."

On April 15, protesters clashed with participants at a pro-Trump rally at a park in Berkeley. Fireworks, bottles, trashcans, and traffic cones were thrown. Eleven people were injured; seven were taken to the hospital. Police used pepper spray on the crowd. In the aftermath of these events, dozens of mainstream as well as right-wing outlets rushed to proclaim: "Berkeley riot lays bare liberal hypocrisy on free speech" and "The hypocrisy of 'love trumps hate' liberals."

Who's responsible for violence?

The narrative that grew out of these events was a gift to the right and corporate elites, making it easier for the powers that be to turn reality on its head.

It's a fact that our society is characterized by rampant inequality, where wealth and power reside in the hands of a tiny minority. But such an imbalance is unnatural and can only be sustained by the use of



(Left) Picketers in Costa Mesa, Calif., at 2015 book-signing by right-wing author Ann Coulter.

Many frustrated radicals and ultra-left activists make a similar mistake. They too have given up on organizing masses of people. Instead, they substitute their own sensational, often violent confrontations for the mobilization of the 99% as a whole. Like liberals, ultra-left radicals hope to shock and shame the corporate establishment into seeing the light.

But an effective movement is not one that is overly concerned with changing the minds of those at the top; it is one that reaches out to those at the bottom. The powers that be cannot be moved by moral or logical arguments because their rule is not based on morality or logic. It is based on economic and political *power*. For this reason, the aim of our actions must be to harness the countervailing power of

millions of working people, and in so doing *force those at the top to change course against their will*. With this clearly in mind, tactics can be chosen which will bring the maximum number of people into action.

A winning strategy

It is counterproductive to seek to prevent right-wing ideologues from speaking. In the first place, it is not their speech that is dangerous, but their policies and actions. In the second place, all of the right-wing talking points can easily be debunked by suitable arguments from the left. Thirdly, history has shown that any restriction of free speech or other democratic rights redounds most severely on the organizations and movements of the left.

However, right-wing propaganda does present a real threat that needs to be answered. What's needed is a response that strengthens our hand, undermines the opposition, makes clear who's responsible for systemic violence, and demonstrates which side has the majority.

The strategy that fits the bill is *counter-mobilization*. Here's how it works: When a right-wing speaker is invited to campus, student and community groups should unite in demanding that an opposing speaker representing a more radical left view be invited as well. Preferably, the event is turned into a debate.

Wherever a right-wing racist, misogynist, or xenophobic speaker is given a platform, mass protests and pickets should be organized outside. The point is not to prevent people from attending or to prevent the speaker from being heard, but to ensure that the speaker's viewpoint does not go unchallenged, and to visibly demonstrate which side has the majority.

When right-wingers move into action, the left should build a bigger, broader counter-action. Right-wing marches and pickets should be met with larger, broader counter-marches and counter-pickets. There's no need to *prevent* the right-wingers from marching. Rather, the aim is to dwarf the impact of the right's action with a suitable, massive counter-action.

Of course, in circumstances when the right resorts to outright violence, the labor movement and its allies must conduct a defense. Organizers are duty bound to prepare in advance to defend our counter-mobilizations against possible attack by reactionary forces.

Yes, right-wing speakers must be challenged. But this is best achieved in a way that brings the largest possible number of people into struggle against their policies. Counter-mobilizing does this while defending civil liberties, making it clear that it's the ruling rich, their gendarmes, and their right-wing hangers-on who are responsible for initiating any violence. ■

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enclosures and all the stuff that he described for early capitalist agriculture in England—you can see it being played out in Guinea.

And so, the state company starts to violate the commons, enclose it, consolidate, select for a particular type of industrial hybrid palm oil, and clear the land so you can start producing at scale.

Our hypothesis was that this had an effect on the ecology. If a bunch of host species in the forest die out, then their pathogens die with them. But some

of those [host] species are going to prosper. You have some bat species, bird species, and monkeys that are quite adaptable and can prosper and do quite well in this new agro-forestry. Some bat species, which are documented Ebola carriers, are *attracted* to the palm oil, and that increases the interface between humans and bats....

Pathogens and their outbreaks are a mirror, a reflection of our mode of civilization. And the ones that win out are telling us something about ourselves. The biology of the pathogen matters because it is figuring out something about the nature of our social organi-

zation and what it does. Our effects are profound and far and wide.

Every one of those pathogens—HIV, Ebola, and so on—going all the way back to the beginning of civilization, are marginal at first, and then when we change something in the landscape or in our cultural practice, a new ecosystem niche opens up, and the pathogens take advantage of it—a nice convergence of biology and ecosystemic circumstance. Every new emergent pathogen, all the way back, can be explained that way...

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The extraordinary Lynne Stewart



By JEFF MACKLER

Memorial meetings for Lynne Stewart took place in New York City on April 22, and in the San Francisco Bay Area on May 5-6.

Peoples' attorney Lynne Stewart died on March 12. Two incidents serve to highlight her extraordinary life in the service of humanity.

Charged with "conspiracy to aid and abet terrorism," Lynne took the witness stand in early 2005 at the close of her nine-month frame-up trial presided over by Federal District Court Judge John Koeltl in New York City. Stewart was asked by her attorney, Michael Tigar, why she had issued a press release on behalf of her client, the "blind" Sheik and Egyptian cleric, Omar Abdel Rahman, when she knew that doing so was a violation of a Special Administrative Order (SAM) that prohibited Rahman from engaging in contact with anyone, anywhere, other than his attorneys. Rahman had been falsely convicted in 1995 of participating in a New York City terrorist conspiracy and was serving a life-sentence in Rochester, Minn.

The answer to that question stood at the core of her case. "Why not just appeal the SAM's restrictions to a higher court?" Tigar continued. The remainder of her life in prison rested on Lynne's answer.

The jury, 12 New Yorkers, sequestered during a trial in the same courtroom where in 1953 Julius and Ethel Rosenberg had been sentenced to execution at the height of the McCarthy era, listened more than intently. The stakes were high. The prosecution was demanding a 30-year jail sentence.

Lynne's sensational trial had all the earmarks of a government preparing to shred whatever semblance of fair play remained in the criminal "justice" system—all in the name of its "war on terrorism." To put an attorney in jail for diligently representing her client was close to unprecedented—"a chill on the bar," significant parts of the legal profession proclaimed.

The obliging Judge Koeltl, undoubtedly aware that government prosecutors aimed to directly link Lynne to terrorism, by hook or by crook, allowed the horror of the Sept. 11, 2001, Twin Towers terrorist bombings to enter and pervade his courtroom. He chose to base his heinous decision on the findings of an FBI search of Lynne's law offices, where photos of Osama Bin Laden and other terrorists around the world were found. The judge disregarded the fact that all the photos and related files on worldwide terrorist activities belonged to one of Lynne's co-defendants, her professional Arabic translator, Mohamed Yousry, whose NYU Ph.D. thesis and associated research on terrorism had been approved by his faculty adviser.

Attorney Michael Tigar objected to the introduction of this material as hearsay—that is, as having no connection to Lynne or to the case at hand. In U.S. law the introduction of hearsay "evidence" is virtually banned. But Tigar's motion was essentially circumvented by Koeltl with a deadly twist. He agreed that the material was hearsay and instructed the jury that it was not to be considered as fact or having any relation to the charges against Stewart. Yet he nev-

ertheless allowed its introduction, as he explained, to "enable the jury to learn about the mind of the defendant." I will never forget Koeltl's vicious and duplicitous words.

His decision squared with the prosecution's objective to link Stewart and her two co-defendants to terrorist activities everywhere. Delighted, the terrorist show trial was on as prosecutors proceeded to flood the walls of the courtroom, replete with giant and multiple theater-sized screens, with photos of terrorist activities—all aimed at associating Lynne with the government's conception of an ongoing "worldwide terrorist conspiracy."

In the end, some 90 percent or more of Lynne's nine-month trial focused on this hearsay evidence, while the prosecution presented just a single witness to state that he had issued the SAM to Lynne. Not a single witness testified that Lynne had any connection to terrorist activities.

Thus, Lynne's answer to the question as to why she didn't appeal this SAM to a higher court was crucial to her life itself. She might have argued that the SAM itself was ambiguous, that in the normal course of events when an attorney violates a SAM they are reprimanded or punished by being denied contact with their client for three months, and/or required to sign a new SAM.

I paraphrase Lynne's remarks as I remember them in that rapt courtroom. I was astonished when she stated, "I have a friend in prison, Mumia Abu-Jamal. He filed a lawsuit to prevent his prosecutors from opening his mail, including from his attorneys." Lynne continued, "Mumia Abu-Jamal won that suit but it took him some five years. My duty to my client required that under such circumstances, we not wait five years with regard to a harmless press release."

Here was Lynne, at her personal, uninhibited, spontaneous best and craziest. With her life on the line she decided to bring the case of a dear friend and a convicted world-renowned "cop-killer," Mumia Abu-Jamal, to the attention of the New York jury. No serious attorney would have recommended it. But Lynne, cut from another cloth, believed that Mumia's case needed to be once again brought to public attention.

Her remarks were not scripted, not carefully presented to evoke sympathy, not offered to mitigate her SAM violation, but only to tell the jury, and the world, who she was—a human being who stood by Mumia to the end. This single incident tells us precisely what Lynne's life and record as a people's lawyer for the poor and oppressed was all about.

The final question asked to Lynne by her attorney was the clincher. "Lynne," said Tigar, "if you had to do it all over again, would you have issued that press release?" I was within some 15 feet of Lynne and holding my breath for her answer. Lynne, once again, had a choice, the easy road of contrition, apology, and a plea for forgiveness, or the road to hell—in Lynne's mind to socialist heaven—paved only with Lynne's life-long humanistic and loving intentions and faith that she could penetrate the hearts and minds of the jury.

She responded, as her eyes welled up with tears. "I

would hope," she began and then paused. "I would hope that I had the courage to do it again." She paused again, unable to speak—momentarily overcome by her emotions. She continued, "I would do it again!"

No apologies from Lynne Stewart. No legal or self-serving pleas to the jury that she had made a mistake and should have taken the SAM to the courts. Lynne's response evoked the passion of a movement fighter, of a champion of all that is beautiful in the human soul. Needless to say, Lynne presented her persecutors and the jury with all the "facts" they needed. She was convicted.

Five years after her 2005 "terrorist conspiracy" conviction, when I headed Lynne's defense committee on the West Coast, Lynne was cruelly sentenced to 10 years in a Texas prison, after vindictive federal prosecutors appealed the Federal Court judge's sentence of some 30 months.

After serving three years in prison, the United National Antiwar Coalition and all of Lynne's supporters mounted a great campaign that won the support of 70,000 social activists across the country. Lynne, cancer ridden, was finally granted "compassionate release" following her prison doctors' diagnosis that she had less than a year to live. Lynne beat the odds and spent almost three years in freedom, continuing her lifelong commitment to defending all those victims

of capitalist injustice.

Lynne was among Mumia Abu-Jamal's most ardent supporters. Her court cases included some of the seminal Weatherman contests in the 1970s as well as an amazing victory on behalf of Larry Davis, who defended himself against a multiple cop-shooting invasion of his house, when a number of the shoot-first police were killed. Notwithstanding Davis's drug-dealing record, his victory was hailed from the windows and rooftops of Harlem's Black community, where wanton police murder of the innocent is the rule, not the exception. Only the most oppressed can fully understand the dimensions of the Larry Davis court victory. Lynne did too, a rare exception.

Pilloried by the corporate media, who mocked her every success in the rigged criminal "justice" system, Lynne never bent to her accusers' contempt for an attorney who stood up for those on the other side of the class line, as Lynne aptly described it, no matter how unpopular her client.

Ralph Poynter, Lynne's husband and partner, was a fighter for the oppressed in his own right. The two were inseparable. Lynne was always surrounded by family and loved ones, with children from her first marriage, and Ralph's too, as well as kids they had together, and grandkids—all filled with admiration for Grandma Lynne, all the recipient of Lynne's warmth, dedication, mindfulness and love.

Lynne was fond of saying, including to *The New York Times* reporter who interviewed her at her home a few weeks before her death, that she had no intention of leaving this earth quietly. Quoting Dylan Thomas, she told *The Times*, whose reporter followed on the next day with a contemptuous hate piece reflecting his corporate masters' ire for everything wonderful in Lynne life and struggles, that she had no intention of "going gently into that good night."

That was Lynne's credo, her detractors notwithstanding. Always with the words of poet Dylan Thomas in mind, Lynne insisted:

"Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rage at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

And she did, until her longstanding breast cancer had spread throughout her body, including her brain. Ralph explained a few days before Lynne's passing on March 12 that her days were numbered, after two strokes rendered her in a near coma. But he told me that Lynne was still able to muster a faint smile as I challenged her to yet another dance in the months ahead and to continue debating our movement differences on this or that question that often found us in delightful exchanges over the years.

Donations to Lynne's final family expenses can be sent to: Lynne Stewart Organization, 1070 Dean St., Brooklyn, NY 11216, 1st floor. (Make checks payable to Lynne Stewart Org.) ■

Jeff Mackler is the past West Coast Coordinator of the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee.

Remembering James Connolly

By BARRY WEISLEDER

"James Connolly and the Reconquest of Ireland," by Priscilla Metscher. (Minneapolis: MEP Publications, 2002), 243 pages.

The aftermath of the 101st anniversary of the Easter Rising is a good time to become (re)acquainted with the views of the great Irish republican socialist, James Connolly. Though many of today's Irish nationalists and "socialists" pay homage to him, they support parties that collaborate in the partition of Ireland, and that vote for capitalist austerity measures.

As Priscilla Metscher's well written, amply annotated book implies, this is worse than ironic. She presents a comprehensive survey of Connolly's politics, as they evolved between 1896 and 1916. Each chapter links his writings and speeches to the momentous events of his time.

James Connolly was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1868 of Irish immigrant parents and grew up in the slums of that city. He started to work at about age 10 as a printer's devil, then in a bakery, then in a tiling factory. At 14 he joined the army and was sent to Ireland, where over the next seven years he saw first-hand the oppression of the Irish people. Back in Scotland he joined the socialist movement, standing (unsuccessfully) as its candidate for municipal office in 1894. He knew about the Land League in Ireland, and as a socialist, realized the importance of British workers' support for the freedom struggle in Ireland.

Connolly learned that the struggle of the Land League was diverted by adoption of the single-plank electoral platform of Home Rule, counter posed to independence from Britain. His remedy was the organization of a working-class party that would go beyond the liberal aims of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

With a few fellow workers, Connolly founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party in 1896. As the name suggests, it set to unite the struggle for national freedom with the socialist emancipation of the working class. Its programme proclaimed the need for nationalization of railways, canals, banks, and the "gradual extension of the principle of public ownership and supply of all the necessaries of life" (all quotes are from the book).

In 1903 Connolly helped to write a manifesto for the Socialist Labour Party of Scotland, which more clearly expressed the need for a working-class party, the concept of the class struggle, and the aim of wresting control of the state from the capitalist class.

Its immediate demands combined with a vision of profound change involving workers' control of industry and a cooperative agricultural system. Under the slogan "agitate, educate, organize," working-class power should be spread by all means, including elections. But he maintained that the election of a majority of Socialist Republicans to parliament would not herald the dawn of the socialist republic. It would, however, represent "the moral insurrection of the Irish people": "their desire for separation from the British Empire," which could be converted into a military insurrection by the use of "a small expeditionary force and war material."

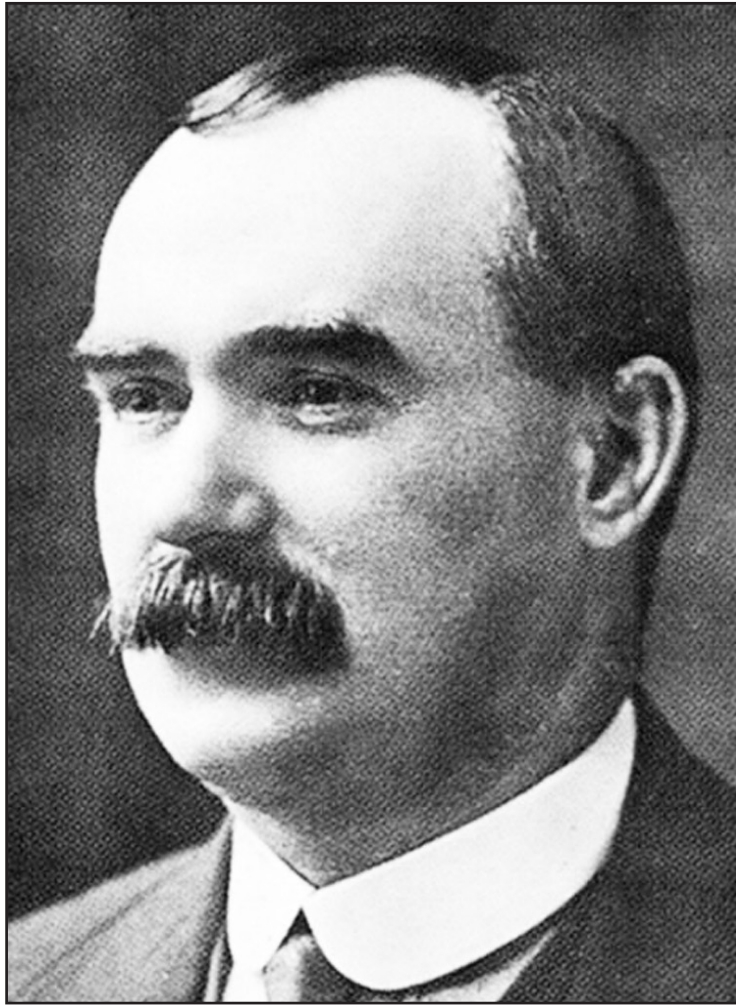
Connolly rejected the conspiratorial methods associated with the failure of the Young Irelanders and the Fenians. He wanted to make republicanism a public issue, to purge it of "the odor of illegality," and to change it from the "politics of despair" into the "Science of Revolution." In the process, he tried to convert "advanced nationalists" to socialism, making a key distinction between bourgeois liberals and anti-imperialists.

He realized that the limits of constitutionalism (legislative reform of the structure of government) are dictated by the very nature of the state "created by the propertied classes for their own purposes."

The election of a majority of Irish Socialist Republicans to parliament would be a preliminary step, but only a step, towards the "revolutionary reconstruction of society." The latter is the task of the working class, in which he included the rural peasantry.

How would this be done? "The governing power must be wrested from the hands of the rich peaceably, if possible, forcibly if necessary." Expect the rulers to resist fiercely. Connolly's answer, like Malcolm X's many years later, was simply: *by any means necessary*.

The ISRP was a tiny propaganda group. Connolly tried to forge it into a disciplined body, equipping it with a vital tool of education and organization—the party newspaper. Connolly was the editor and publisher of the *Workers' Republic*. He used the pages of the *WR* not only to present socialist republicanism to the general public, but also as a weapon against the



Home Rule party and the United Irish League, exposing their capitalist interests in "making terms with the Imperial government."

The ISRP was internationalist. It held the first public meeting to protest against the Boer War in 1899. "Every war now is a capitalist move for new markets, and it is a move capitalism must make or perish." The spectacle of imperialist war reinforced Connolly's belief that it was unlikely that the capitalist class as a whole would yield up its privileges peacefully.

Frustrated by the slow progress of the ISRP, Connolly emigrated to the United States in 1903. Over the next seven years, he became an organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), and a member, and critic, of Daniel De Leon's Socialist Labour Party.

The SLP was sectarian on political and trade-union issues, quite evident in its strident propaganda against Catholicism and its dual-unionism stance. De Leon provoked a split in the IWW, driving the latter even farther away from campaigning on political issues and towards anarchism.

In 1908, after quitting the SLP, Connolly joined the Socialist Party of America, attracted by its mass base and growing left wing, notwithstanding its political reformism. But the idea of industrial unionism stayed with him, making him a sharp opponent of the craft unionism of Samuel Gompers and the American Federation of Labour.

In "Socialism Made Easy," Connolly subordinates the political struggle for state power to the everyday battle at the work place to control industry.

His concept of the party is "one Socialist party embracing all shades and conceptions of Socialist political thought." But he contradicts that view by reiterating the vanguard role of the socialist party, and moreover, by asserting the importance of political action before economic battles.

His major work, "Labour in Irish History," shows the development of a national self-consciousness in Ireland, the result of centuries of oppression and of action against it. With that book, which he regarded as part of the literature of Gaelic revival, Connolly set out to map an Irish path to socialism. A free Ireland would take its distinct place in the world: "the internationalism of the future will be based on the free federation of free peoples."

Sadly, his vision of freedom was impaired on women's emancipation. While in the forefront of the fight for women's suffrage, Connolly opposed divorce, and rejected any attempt "to identify Socialism with any theory of marriage or sexual relations."

The Belfast to which Connolly returned in 1910 was a scene of sweated labour and miserable wages. Industrial unrest in 1909 and 1911 led to a major confrontation in 1913, the Dublin Strike and Lockout. Tens of thousands joined the struggle, which was met with stiff employer intransigence and unbridled police brutality. The strikers implored the British Trades Union Congress to take sympathy strike action, to isolate Belfast from international trade and

commerce. But the TUC refused, signaling the end of an inspiring chapter.

Connolly was quick to point out that the growth of unions and labour federations did not necessarily mean a great increase in solidarity and revolutionary spirit; it often led to increased bureaucracy and alienation of officials from the rank and file.

It was during the Dublin strike that the Irish Citizen Army and the Irish Volunteers were founded, which paved the way to the Easter Rising of 1916.

Meanwhile, the First World War raged across Europe. At an international conference of socialists in Zimmerwald in 1915, Russia's Bolshevik Party leader V.I. Lenin said, "Turn the imperialist war into civil war." Connolly agreed. The suppression of Irish nationalist papers, plus other restrictions of civil liberties, and the threat of conscription by the British crown, led him to say, "constitutional action in normal times ... revolutionary action in exceptional times. These are exceptional times." He turned to making the Citizen Army into a disciplined force.

The book chronicles the series of unfortunate events that doomed the Easter Rising, which began April 24, 1916. Connolly, vice president of the rebel Irish Republic, was injured while defending its headquarters in the Dublin Post Office. He was captured and shot in Killmainham Jail by the British.

Lenin observed that a revolutionary situation was growing in Ireland, but was not fully developed. Still, this uprising was no putsch.

It was a true popular rebellion, however premature. The historical tragedy was that James Connolly and Padraic Pearse, president of the provisional government, were eliminated just prior to the revolutionary situation that soon emerged in 1918-20.

An important political error in Priscilla Metscher's book is its claim that Connolly subscribed to a "stages" concept of the revolution, such as outlined by Lenin in his early "Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution." The truth is that both Lenin and Connolly recognized certain phases of the struggle, but they rejected any notion of stages in which the interests of the working class should be subordinated to those of the capitalists, domestic or foreign. As Russia demonstrated, it was a *permanent revolution* that ushered in the workers' state that began socialist construction.

In his "Re-Conquest of Ireland," Connolly replaces the term "Workers' Republic" with "Co-operative Commonwealth," which he defines as "a system of society in which the workshops, factories, docks, railways, shipyards, etc., shall be owned by the nation, but administered by the Industrial Unions of the respective industries." This is clearly not a blueprint for a bourgeois state.

What stood in the way of Connolly's dream? It was the absence of a strong revolutionary workers' party, and the lack of a revolutionary socialist-led labour movement. But that takes little away from the fact that James Connolly was one of the greatest socialist leaders of the 20th century. ■

... U.S. bombing of Syria

(continued from page 2)

tion of the Syrian people.

The defeat of imperialist intervention is the prerequisite for the Syrian masses to organize their own independent class-struggle forces aimed at fully meeting the needs and aspirations of Syria's workers and farmers as they strive in the future to build a socialist society. Today's U.S.-backed Syrian "rebels," if they exist at all, are ever demanding that the U.S. bomb Syria to smithereens. Indeed, these "rebels" are increasing integrated into and indistinguishable from the terrorist/jihadist al-Qaida-affiliated Nusra Front. They offer nothing in the way of liberating ideas and action for the Syrian people.

The days ahead will prove to be a critical measure of the antiwar movement's capacity to unite and stay the hand of the world's most dangerous superpower. ■

Mumia fights for a new trial

Marty Goodman / Socialist Action



By JEFF MACKLER

On Mumia Abu-Jamal's birthday, April 24, about 125 demonstrators mobilized outside Philadelphia's Court of Common Pleas in solidarity with Mumia's effort to reverse his 1982 frame-up murder conviction and win a new trial that could lead to his freedom.

Mumia Abu-Jamal has been imprisoned for 36 years, and was on death row for 30 of those years. His fight for a new trial and freedom has been supported by organizations ranging from Amnesty International and the NAACP to the European Parliament and scores of national and local trade unions and city governments in the U.S. and abroad.

Represented by Judy Ritter, Mumia's Philadelphia-based attorney, and Christina Swarms, of the NAACP's Legal Defense and Education Fund, Mumia petitioned the court for a new Post Conviction Relief Act hearing based on last year's U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case of *Williams v. Pennsylvania*.

The *Williams* decision reversed a death-penalty conviction on the grounds that "it is a violation of the due process right to an impartial tribunal free of judicial bias if a judge participating in a criminal appeal had a significant personal involvement as a prosecutor in a critical decision in a defendant's case." In Mumia's case, Philadelphia's Senior Assistant District Attorney, Ronald Castille, served as a prosecutor in Mumia's 1982 trial. Castille, who in the name of the state of Pennsylvania authorized a racist video instruct-

ing state prosecutors how to exclude Blacks from juries, later refused to recuse (remove) himself from adjudication of Mumia's Pennsylvania Supreme Court appeals between 1995 and 2008, when he was a member of that court.

Ritter and Swarms, according to virtually all Mumia supporters present in the courtroom, presented a clear case for the applicability of *Williams* to Mumia's conviction and demanded the reversal of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's findings and a new trial.

Philadelphia Deputy District Attorney Ronald Eisenberg, who had unsuccessfully argued the *Williams* case before the U.S. Supreme Court, represented the DA's office at the April 24 hearing. His central argument to reject Mumia's new PCRA petition was that, although Castille had officially signed off on all of the state's briefs in Mumia's case, there was no evidence of his direct involvement. Mumia's team refuted this specious argument and requested full discovery of Castille's papers to prove otherwise. Eisenberg also argued that the 2016 *Williams* case was not retroactive—that is, it did apply to Mumia's prior conviction.

Presiding Judge Leon W. Tucker made no rulings on any of the above contested issues but indicated that he would render a decision soon. Indeed, he did so just a few days later—and in a dramatic fashion that represented a first and major legal victory for Mumia in his renewed fight for freedom. Tucker ordered the Philadelphia District Attorney's office to turn over to Mumia's attorneys within 30 days all records and memos regarding Castille's involve-

ment in Mumia's case; pre-trial, trial, post-trial and direct appeal proceedings; communications between Castille and his staff; and any public statements Castille made about Mumia's case during or after his tenure as district attorney of Philadelphia. Mumia was given 15 days to file amendments to his post-conviction petition. The clear implication of Tucker's granting of discovery is that he is favorably inclined to apply the *Williams* decision if Castille's direct involvement in Mumia's case can be established.

Activists and legal observers at the April 24 hearing believed that Tucker appeared sympathetic to key arguments presented by Mumia's attorneys. But they remain skeptical, if for no other reason than Mumia's appeals, always in accord with established court decisions and legislation, have been repeatedly denied—so much so that the term "Mumia exception" has become commonplace with regard to the operations of the U.S. criminal injustice system.

Contrary to the requirements of U.S. "law," Mumia was convicted by a mainly white jury, from which Blacks had been systematically excluded. He was physically banned from the courtroom during much of his trial. Eyewitnesses to his innocence were intimidated to alter their testimony or otherwise prevented from testifying at his trial, and "evidence" was manufactured by corrupt police, state investigators, and prosecutors.

In another landmark case, last month Pennsylvania Department of Corrections officials unsuccessfully sought to avoid a court order instructing prison authorities to administer Mumia's long-sought anti-viral medication—with a 95 percent cure rate of Hepatitis C. Mumia is now receiving this life-saving medication, but only after a two-year delay, during which time his Hepatitis C disease, contracted through a 1981 blood transfusion after a police officer shot him, had developed into cirrhosis of the liver, the extent of which is still unknown.

Mumia has become a stunning symbol of the brutal racist and class-biased system of injustice that permeates U.S. society today—a gulag system, in which nearly 7 million human beings are incarcerated or subjected to "criminal" oversight jurisdictions, the largest number and percentage of a population of any country in the world.

Were it not for 36 years of national and international mobilizations to save Mumia from the executioners' grasp, he would have been "legally" murdered long ago. Indeed, the latter end was sought by prosecutors and the Fraternal Order of Police for three decades, and only ended when a critical court victory ruled that a state prosecutor's closing remarks at Mumia's trial were fundamentally flawed.

Given the choice of granting Mumia a new trial, in which evidence of innocence could be presented for the first time—thereby exposing the monstrous police/prosecutor frame-up of Mumia—or agreeing to a new sentence of life imprisonment, Pennsylvania officials opted to forego efforts to kill Mumia, who is now serving a life term at SCI Mahoney in Frackville, Pa. Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! ■

... Climate march

(continued from page 1)

and we will not stop fighting. With 100 and 500-year storms now coming every year, we are fighting for our lives."

Scorn for Trump and his policies favoring Big Oil was likewise widespread in the Science Marches, which brought out tens of thousands on the previous weekend, Earth Day.

The Washington march on April 29 was sponsored by the People's Climate Mobilization, a coalition that had the active support of over 900 environmental, labor, and social justice organizations. The PCM was founded three years earlier around the giant September 2014 Climate March in New York City.

A lingering criticism of the 2014 action was that, despite its massive size, it yielded relatively few organizing projects in its wake. In contrast, the PCM is now trying to carry the momentum forward, and particular attention has been given in PCM literature to the situation of front-line, indigenous, and working-class communities in the climate fight.

"Today's actions are not for one day or one week or one year," PCM national coordinator Paul Gestos states. "We are a movement that is getting stronger everyday for our families, our communities and our planet. To change everything, we need everyone."

But in order to achieve real "change," our goals and strategy need to be hammered out and made precise. Unfortunately, the movement to combat climate change has lagged in promoting a broad and democratic discussion, while key figures in the current leadership have allowed themselves to be lured into supporting proposals that fall short of the major tasks ahead.

Just days before the April 29 climate mobilization, Democratic Party Senators Bernie Sanders, Jeff Merkley, and Cory Booker announced that they were sponsoring a new bill that, among other provisions, would mandate a U.S. transition to 100 percent renewable energy no later than 2050. The bill, dubbed the "100

by '50 Act," was immediately embraced by several environmental leaders. Jason Kowalski of 350.org cheered it on as the "North Star" of the climate movement. Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, touted the bill in an April 19 *Nation* article as being able to bring about "an end to fossil-fuel infrastructure."

McKibben claimed correctly that the U.S. needs to undertake a "World War II-scale mobilization for clean energy," but he was far off the mark in implying that passage of the Senate bill would launch an effort at anywhere near that level. During the war, the government essentially took control of the entire economy. The total output of U.S. manufactured goods increased 300 percent from 1940 to 1944, mainly due to government orders and investment.

In 1945, the U.S. devoted over 41 percent of the economy to war spending, whereas the Sanders-Merkley bill would allocate less than 1 percent of the \$18.5 trillion U.S. economy to protecting the climate.

Should climate activists rally around the "100 by '50 Act?" In a *Common Dreams* article, Ezra Silk, director of strategy and policy for The Climate Mobilization, gave strong arguments against that course. He believes that by establishing 2050 as the target year for 100 percent renewable energy, the bill falls far short of what is necessary and thus "fails to meet the challenge of this historic moment."

Silk pointed out that even the makers of the bill admit that it stands little chance of passage in the Senate, and so, "why not go big [in establishing goals] and try to actually solve the climate crisis?" He stressed that "for humanity to have a good chance of holding warming permanently below 1.5°C (which itself is far too high for safety), there is no carbon budget left to burn. ...

"That means we need to stop emitting greenhouse [gases] right now. And according to climate scientist Michael Mann, even if we did that, the current carbon dioxide concentrations of approximately ~405 ppm are already high enough to produce a catastrophic 2°C of warming, which would devastate African farmers' ability to grow food and would cause a large-scale release of greenhouse gases from thawing permafrost."

Ending the climate crisis, Silk wrote, would require at the very least:

- 1) Building a zero greenhouse gas emissions economy in 10 years or less.
- 2) Tackling all sources of greenhouse gas emissions—including the food system.
- 3) Safely removing all the excess carbon from the atmosphere to get back to pre-industrial greenhouse gas concentrations.

Silk expressed a favorable opinion of the Democratic Party, and of Bernie Sanders in particular as a "trusted messenger" of the climate movement. We think his enthusiastic trust in Sanders is misplaced, but we strongly agree with his criticisms of the Merkley-Sanders-Booker bill.

Giving active support to the bill would drive the climate movement into an unnecessary detour, a diversion. The snail-paced provisions of the bill, even if they were enacted, would prolong the lives of the automobile and fossil fuel industries at the world's expense. And more fundamentally, it is unrealistic to expect the U.S. Congress, which is entirely beholden to the corporate and banking interests that profit from fossil fuels, to undertake the systematic planning necessary to combat climate change.

The first task of the U.S. climate movement is to mobilize millions of citizens in mass action to confront the governmental and corporate purveyors of climate change with hard demands of what needs to be done. An essential tool in this process would be democratic regional conferences, in which the environmental movement can interact with organizations of workers, community groups, and oppressed people to plan our strategy and goals and to build a united coalition of struggle.

It is essential that the trade unions give muscle to this movement, mobilizing their members and the entire working class in the effort. Ultimately, it will be the working class and its allies—those who suffer the most from climate change and environmental degradation—who will take charge of restructuring the economy for human needs instead of profits, and of building a fully democratic and sustainable society. ■

By BARRY WEISLEDER

During the three days of the Ontario NDP Convention, April 21-23 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, the party's left wing won several significant policy and procedural victories. Leader Andrea Horwath adapted to the situation, somewhat desperate to present a progressive face to the sparse crowd, and to a somewhat indifferent electorate. The provincial Liberal government of Kathleen Wynne is in crisis, while the Tories led by Patrick Brown lead in the latest opinion polls.

"Pharmacare for Everyone" is now a central plank in the NDP platform for the 2018 Ontario provincial election. Dental Care was part of the same policy adopted, but so far is being ignored by Horwath. Still, the gain registered for free medical drugs coverage is major, and it is in large part due to the foundation building work and steady agitation of the Socialist Caucus over the past five years. Moreover, it took a successful floor challenge to the resolutions appeal committee, which tried to bury these linked issues in a long list of motions.

Similarly, delegates raised the priority of a resolution calling for free post-secondary education, and passed it handily. This was a welcome riposte to Horwath who sidelined a similar policy adopted at the previous provincial convention. A motion calling for a big increase in welfare rates carried too.

In the mandatory Leadership Review vote, 89 per cent said no to opening up a leadership contest. This was hardly a surprise given that the next provincial elec-

Northern Lights

News and views from SA Canada

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tion is a mere 14 months away. Noteworthy is the fact that over 11 per cent expressed non-confidence in Horwath so late in the process, reflecting simmering discontent with the 2014 ONDP election campaign and the leader's performance since then.

Former OFL President Sid Ryan made two inspiring speeches at a floor mic. One called for public ownership of Hydro in its entirety. That prompted Horwath to quote Ryan, somewhat sheepishly but approvingly, and state that the party will strive for public ownership of both electricity generation and transmission lines in Ontario.

Scores of delegates wore SID stickers, encouraging him to run for federal NDP Leader. The four registered NDP Leader candidates (Peter Julian, Niki Ashton, Guy Caron and Charlie Angus) cruised the outer hallway, chatting and glad-handing, but not matching the excitement that Sid Ryan and the left generated. Sadly, on April 26, Ryan pulled the plug on his potential candidacy, citing personal reasons,

ONDP's Horwath shifts slightly to the left



plus his lack of French.

Socialist Caucus members distributed nearly 600 copies of *Turn Left* magazine, and collected over \$245 in donations. And that was quite an achievement, given that this ONDP convention was rather poorly attended. According to the Credentials Committee, only 738 delegates arrived,

out of 1059 who "registered," and 1347 who were eligible to participate. An underwhelming turnout of 54 per cent of those eligible to be delegates should be a source of concern for the party brass.

Socialist Caucus and Momentum candidates for provincial Executive did well. They received 7.4 to 40 per cent of the votes cast by delegates in a range of elections, held either on the main floor or in regional caucus meetings. Dirka Prout, John Orrett, Jason Baines and this writer earned the best results. This represents an improvement on our average scores at the federal NDP convention in Edmonton in April 2016.

Conclusion apparent: even at an ONDP convention such as this, it is clear that radical socialists can count on a significant base of support, demonstrating strong roots, and showing the progress of efforts to construct a revolutionary presence inside the actually existing workers' movement in English Canada. ■

... North Korea

(continued from page 12)

That war saw U.S. and allied troops slaughter some 1.5 million Koreans and Chinese, with the latter entering the war only after General Douglas MacArthur, defying President Truman's orders, crossed the Yalu River, intent on invading China as well. Some convincing figures put the number of Koreans and Chinese lost at more than triple this figure! U.S. troop losses were 30,000.

As with the Vietnam War, which began little more than a decade later and saw the U.S. murder 4 million Vietnamese, the Korean War was undertaken by U.S. imperialism in the name an anti-communist crusade. The now dominant post-World War II U.S. military power proceeded to extend its imperial control around the world, including through the 1953 CIA coup that overthrew the popular and elected government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossaddegh in Iran and U.S. military support the same year to a coup that installed a dictatorship in Guatemala, which slaughtered 400,000 indigenous peasants to defend "U.S. interests."

In the U.S. during the same period, the McCarthy-era Cold War witch hunt was launched, which sought to

eliminate basic civil liberties and imprisoned, in the name of "national security," many those who refused to repudiate their political ideas. Witch-hunting legislation aimed at purging communists and socialists from the U.S. trade unions and from public employment more generally was approved by compliant courts.

Today, the Trump administration's dangerous saber-rattling has met with across-the-board bipartisan support—this time with stated or implied threats of war, if not nuclear war.

North Korea and Syria are placed front and center in the U.S. crosshairs one day, while China and Russia are demonized and threatened the next. Meanwhile, U.S. troops, overt and covert, are in combat throughout the Middle East and beyond.

Out Now!

The antiwar movement's historic demand, "U.S. Out Now!" has rarely been more urgent. And we must add: "No to the Obama-era 'Pivot to Asia,'" where 60 percent of the entire U.S. armada is today stationed in the Pacific region. "Self-determination for all oppressed nations!"

With regard to nuclear weapons, any sane movement must stand opposed to their very existence, not to mention their deployment. We hear no U.S. government objections today to the nuclear weapons of the U.S.-backed

Pakistani dictatorship, or to those of the murderous Indian regime of the reactionary Narendra Modi, or to those of the racist, colonial settler state of Zionist Israel. These repressive governments, we are assured by U.S. imperialism, can be counted on to act responsibly! And there is no mention in the corporate media that South Korea itself stands awash with nuclear weapons in the hands of the still present U.S. military.

The Trump administration, which has embraced authoritarian governments the world over (Philippines, Saudi Arabia, India, etc.) as "friends and partners who share the goal of fighting terrorism," has made clear, as in the past, that U.S.-backed dictators require no condemnation! In the well-chosen words of an earlier U.S. imperialist president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, referring to Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, "He may be a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch."

With regard to U.S. threats of war against North Korea, we must begin our response to this existential threat to all humanity by demanding the immediate, unconditional, and total abolition of U.S. imperialism's nuclear arsenal. This is the starting point of building a world free from all nuclear weapons. We must reject any "rights" or justification of U.S. imperialism in proclaiming itself the bully cop of the world. ■

... Big farms produce big flu epidemics

(continued from page 7)

If neoliberal deforestation and mining is driving the emergence of multiple pathogens, where's the money that is funding that deforestation? This is why in the book I talk about how Hong Kong and New York and London should be considered "hot spots" of disease. That's where the sources of capital that are driving the deforestation and development originate.

But it is not just the public health scene but the broader media and political consciousness that is organized around accepted premises that are required to continue a system that exploits people here in the States and abroad. I see it time and again in public health: brilliant, good hearted people, doing the right thing but repeatedly arriving at the wrong conclusion because they accept the premises of the system that drives the outbreaks and on which they rely.

BS: In your opinion, what should we be doing differently, and why aren't we doing what we should be doing?

RW: If you look at the genetics of influenza or Ebola or HIV, they are evolutionary machines. They speed through point mutations with extraordinary speed to the point where—and I describe this in the book—their evolution violates our notion of cause and effect. HIV or influenza weekly come up with solutions to

vaccines or drugs that we haven't even invented yet.

This is why any effort going toe-to-toe with influenza, Ebola, or HIV is a losing battle. I'm not opposed to vaccines or drugs or medicine more generally, but the notion that you are going to go toe-to-toe with that kind of evolutionary machine is ridiculous. We don't have the capacity to do that. So we have to address the broader sociological and ecological context and hopefully maneuver our way to arrive at a détente with many a pathogen. We could maneuver a lot of pathogens to a place where they couldn't do as much damage.

Except, we're going in the other direction! If I wanted to select for a strain of influenza that would do maximum damage and spread around the world, I would produce my hog and poultry exactly the way agribusiness does it. That arises out of the fact that Big Ag separated out ecology from economy. And that goes deep into the heart of the Victorian origins of capitalism and the capacity of the bourgeoisie to manipulate the world, which includes the premise that as a class they can separate themselves out from the world they seek to manipulate.

I get asked all the time if there is a right way to mass produce food, but the people who ask me don't want the answer I give. Immediately, we could institute

three practical changes that would maneuver dangerous disease out of poultry and livestock:

If agriculture is about piling in 15,000 birds together, that's going to select for greater virulence. Well we can't do that anymore, so somehow we have to space them out a little bit more across the food landscape.

And we can't do genetic monoculture anymore; there have to be different varieties. And we have to allow them to reproduce on site, to allow the immune resistance to develop to any circulating pathogen. Agribusinesses don't do that now. The birds and hogs can't reproduce on site—all the breeding is done offshore and for morphometric characteristics, not for immune response. We want our birds that are infected and survive to be able to pass on their immunological adaptations to the next generation. That's how nature works to our benefit.

So there! Three immediately practical things! But those are things that would in essence end the business model of livestock production—because the whole point of raising them as monoculture now is to make a shitload of money.

The system says it wants solutions in the concrete, but in this case these can't be applied unless the broader shifts in our economic structure are imposed as well. And they must be. As the farmers will tell us, we've reached a boundary condition. We've come up to a point where the economics cannot survive the epidemiology it produces. ■

Nuclear insanity! *U.S. threatens N. Korea*



By JEFF MACKLER

In the days of my youth, our local peace group began its protests against U.S. nuclear weapons—atomic bombs at that time—by marching across the radius of total incineration, in our instance, the distance from the Ohio-based Strategic Air Command (SAC) Wright Patterson Air Force Base to a location nine miles away. Everything within that radius, we proclaimed in 1959, with facts to prove it, would be totally obliterated, pulverized, reduced to ashes should the area surrounding the SAC base be hit by an A-bomb.

The A-bombs—the bombs that the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945—were soon supplanted by hydrogen or H-bombs, whose destructive power was 5000 times greater. Scientists at that time warned that 10 such bombs dropped in key urban areas across the U.S. could obliterate much of the U.S. population, while reducing the country to an uninhabitable radioactive nightmare.

Today, there are many thousands of such weapons. If deployed, the insane but not unthinkable obliteration of the earth's people and much of non-human life itself would be assured.

Yet this insanity is routinely contemplated by U.S. imperialism's chief representatives, whether they be Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, or Donald Trump—none of whom has declared that the use of these doomsday weapons is unthinkable. To the contrary, President Obama authorized the development and production of a "modernized" nuclear weapons program at a cost of \$1 trillion over the course of the next 30 years.

Last month's dropping on Afghanistan of the GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB, nick-named by the sick-minded military bureaucrats, "Mother Of All Bombs") was a warning to North Korea and Syria that the U.S. behemoth had new horrors to inflict on anyone who challenged imperial prerogatives.

U.S. President Harry Truman, a "civilized" president from a middle-class lineage, authorized the dropping of the two A-bombs, nick-named "little boy" and "fat man," on Japan. Some 250,000 people, almost all ci-

vilians, were incinerated, with the rationale that this was preferable to a land-based U.S. invasion of Japan, which Truman argued would have been even more costly in terms of the loss of American lives.

Subsequently, historians have demonstrated that the U.S. was much more concerned that their agreement with their Soviet Union wartime ally for a joint U.S.-Russian invasion of the Japanese mainland would give the U.S. a reduced postwar role in the occupation of conquered Japan. The A-bomb amounted to a warning to the Soviet Union (which had no nuclear weapons at the time) to stay out. Subsequent research also demonstrated that the Japanese government had already accepted the basic surrender terms demanded by the U.S. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were obliterated nonetheless, a warning to the entire world.

In recent weeks, some 46 of the 47 major U.S. newspapers editorialized in support of Trump's bombing of Syria, without a shred of proof to confirm Trump's sarin gas allegations. (See Socialist Action's statement of the U.S. Syria bombing on p. 2) We hear few, if any, voices among the nation's ruling elite warning against the Trump administration's nuclear weapons arsenal or related war threats against North Korea. U.S. imperialist wars, always justified in advance by the intense demonization of its intended victims and associated pretexts justifying war, are the rule in what passes for "our civilized nation."

The colonial history of Korea

North Korea is once again in U.S. gunsights, including endless caricatures of the "boy dictator" head of state, Kim Jong-un, not to mention the never-denied U.S. cyberwar directed at North Korean military installations. (North Korea is ruled by a repressive Stalinist regime that oversees a fundamentally capitalist economy with the military bureaucracy at its center, but it is the task of the Korean people, not the United States, to overthrow it.)

What is left out of this warmongering hyperbole is the colonial history of Korea, including the U.S. post-World War II occupation of the South, where the vast

majority opposed the U.S. occupier's slaughter of the social forces allied with the Korean Communist Party/Workers Party of Korea.

From 1905 to 1945 Korea had been occupied by Japan, which sought its permanent incorporation into the Japanese Empire, including the banning of much of Korean culture and the Korean language itself. In opposition to the Korean people, the U.S. occupiers in the South, as they did in Vietnam, initially sought to maintain the previous Japanese-created government infrastructure and personnel as well as the associated semi-feudal social relations.

Korea's post-World War II history is not qualitatively different from Vietnam's in many respects. The northern portion was liberated from the Japanese occupation by the Soviet army, aided by the Korean resistance; Vietnam was liberated by the Russian-allied Vietnamese Communist Party, led by Ho-Chi-Minh.

After the war, the southern part of Korea, by "agreement" with the Stalinized Russian CP, which subordinated support for national liberation struggles to accommodation with imperialism to preserve the privileges of the Stalinist bureaucracy, was ceded to U.S. imperialism. The latter immediately moved to wipe out the Korean Communist forces.

For most of South Korea's history, the U.S. occupiers installed a series of dictators, beginning with U.S.-educated Princeton graduate Syngman Rhee in 1945. Rhee led the infamous Bodo League massacre or "summer of terror" in 1950, which murdered 100,000 (some estimates put the number at 200,000) Koreans charged with being "communist sympathizers" while orchestrating the U.S.-backed South Korean Army's incursions into the North.

The insightful Washington, D.C. journalist I.F. Stone authored a valuable book, "The Hidden History of the Korean War 1950-51," that refutes the U.S. McCarthy-era pretext that the Korean War began only with the invasion of 50,000 North Korean troops. Actually, the attempt by Northern forces to re-unify the country had great popular support in the South.

(continued on page 11)